



May 2012, Issue 40

Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

See all issues to date at the 503rd Heritage Battalion web site:
http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



Thank you for your service.

(Photo by Ed Kearney, B/2/503d at Arlington Cemetery)



Chaplain's Corner

Band of Brothers

It is a privilege and opportunity to share this Chaplain's Corner with you. I am, of course, aware that the trooper that I follow, Chaplain Connie Walker, leaves deep tracks and I am privileged not only to follow him, but to have had the opportunity to serve with him.



Cap

Perhaps you haven't had the opportunity to be around Chaplain Walker during your tour with the "Herd", but I was and he made a definite impact on my life. The most memorable time was on June 29, 1966 (Operation Yorktown) when our company, A/2/503d, met up with the 308th Viet Cong Main Force Battalion. Tuff day! Hard fought battle and Chaplain Connie was with us...and touched our lives. On that day he was everywhere with comfort, assurance and prayers. For his actions on that day he would be awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action. We who were there will remember, and be thankful for his service and valor. (See Issue 38, Pages 26-27).

Here's where I'm going with you during my time in the Chaplain's Corner. Walk with me and let me share thoughts on where we were, are and might be. Stay with me--because this introduction sets the scene for all I want to share with you during these months we'll be together. Here's my Scripture... Isaiah 6:8:

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send. And who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'"

Let me set the stage. **Band of Brothers**, where does that term come from? Where have you seen it used? Maybe in the book by Stephen Ambrose on WWII about Company E, 506th Airborne Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division? The name of the book, *Band of Brothers*, or the movie by the same name actually comes from a play *Henry V* written by William Shakespeare.

The story was taken from a historical confrontation called the **Battle of Agincourt** that was fought in the year 1415. The English army is in France and at war with France. They are encircled and outnumbered 5 to 1 by the French. Additionally, they are short of supplies and need to breakout and reach the coast for supplies and reinforcements. It doesn't look good!

Shakespeare's *King Henry V* calls his men together and casts a vision with his call to battle. He convinces his men that fighting in this noble cause was worth their very lives. It will be a battle, the King tells them, that they do not want to miss...for it will be talked about until the end of the world. His speech convinces his men.

Listen to the Kings words:

*"This story shall the good man tell his son
That this day shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be
remembered-
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother;
And gentlemen now back in England now abed
Shall think themselves cursed they were not here.
And hold themselves cheap while any speak
That fought not with us this day.
But we—shall be remembered
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."*

In both illustrations, the play and the book, I sense a bond in the men, and it is just as possible with us who served in 2/503rd in the Pacific, Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan. Perhaps you'll agree that there is a present, potential and much needed cause that we who did and still serve with the 2/503 need to reach out to one another...a bond of concern and outreach for a brother. For after all, remember who we are:

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

First, men in our society, even men we have served with, feel and have felt the pressure to achieve, to earn, to conquer and to win...and to do all things on our own. On the other hand, James, in the book of *James Chap 5: 16*, would encourage each of us to develop deep and caring relationships with other men. To help, watch over, and pray for each other. A man who doesn't have at least one other man to whom he can be accountable regarding his hurts, failures, temptations, as well as his joys and victories is a prime candidate for anger and bitterness.

Question: Who are those brothers in your unit, chapter, neighborhood, maybe even in your home that you can reach out to? Who are those brothers whose lives that can be changed simply by reaching out and sharing with them in time of need? Who can you and I turn to and be accountable to? Who do you know that needs a friend right now, and who can help them? Here's the answer from the Scripture...

"Here am I, send me."

So we're walking together and sharing about what is happening and what needs to be done when we see a need. And for sure--we know who can make an impact on the needs that are around us! Here's the answerer:

"We few, we happy few, we Band of Brothers."

Thanks for stopping by the Corner.

Jack Kelley

Reverend Jack Kelley, LTC (Ret) (then Captain), served during June-December 1966 as Company Commander of A/2/503rd. In January 1967, he moved to Brigade Headquarters and became the Aide to Brigadier General John R. Deane, the Brigade Commander. His last assignment with the Herd was as the S-3 of the 3/503d in January 1970. Welcome aboard Cap!



~ Dwight D. Eisenhower ~

My fellow Americans:

Three days from now, after half a century in the service of our country, I shall lay down the responsibilities of office as, in traditional and solemn ceremony, the authority of the Presidency is vested in my successor.

This evening I come to you with a message of leave-taking and farewell, and to share a few final thoughts with you, my countrymen.

Like every other citizen, I wish the new President, and all who will labor with him, Godspeed. I pray that the coming years will be blessed with peace and prosperity for all.

Our people expect their President and the Congress to find essential agreement on issues of great moment, the wise resolution of which will better shape the future of the Nation.

My own relations with the Congress, which began on a remote and tenuous basis when, long ago, a member of the Senate appointed me to West Point, have since ranged to the intimate during the war and immediate post-war period, and, finally, to the mutually interdependent during these past eight years.

In this final relationship, the Congress and the Administration have, on most vital issues, cooperated well, to serve the national good rather than mere partisanship, and so have assured that the business of the Nation should go forward. So, my official relationship with the Congress ends in a feeling, on my part, of gratitude that we have been able to do so much together.

We now stand ten years past the midpoint of a century that has witnessed four major wars among great nations. Three of these involved our own country. Despite these holocausts America is today the strongest, the most influential and most productive nation in the world. Understandably proud of this pre-eminence, we yet realize that America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.

Throughout America's adventure in free government, our basic purposes have been to keep the peace; to foster progress in human achievement, and to enhance liberty, dignity and integrity among people and among nations. To strive for less would be unworthy of a free and religious people. Any failure traceable to arrogance, or our lack of comprehension or readiness to sacrifice would inflict upon us grievous hurt both at home and abroad.

Progress toward these noble goals is persistently threatened by the conflict now engulfing the world. It commands our whole attention, absorbs our very beings. We face a hostile ideology -- global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method.



Unhappily the danger it poses promises to be of indefinite duration. To meet it successfully, there is called for, not so much the emotional and transitory sacrifices of crisis, but rather those which enable us to carry forward steadily, surely, and without complaint the burdens of a prolonged and complex struggle -- with liberty the stake. Only thus shall we remain, despite every provocation, on our charted course toward permanent peace and human betterment.

Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. A huge increase in newer elements of our defense; development of unrealistic programs to cure every ill in agriculture; a dramatic expansion in basic and applied research -- these and many other possibilities, each possibly promising in itself, may be suggested as the only way to the road we wish to travel.

But each proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs -- balance between the private and the public economy, balance between cost and hoped for advantage -- balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable; balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between actions of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration.

The record of many decades stands as proof that our people and their government have, in the main, understood these truths and have responded to them well, in the face of stress and threat. But threats, new in kind or degree, constantly arise. I mention two only.

A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction.

Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peacetime, or indeed by the fighting men of World War II or Korea.

Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience.

(continued....)



The total influence -- economic, political, even spiritual -- is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades. In this revolution, research has become central; it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly. A steadily increasing share is conducted for, by, or at the direction of, the Federal government.

Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been overshadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.

The prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present and is gravely to be regarded. Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific technological elite.

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system -- ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.

Another factor in maintaining balance involves the element of time. As we peer into society's future, we -- you and I, and our government -- must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow.

Down the long lane of the history yet to be written America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful

fear and hate, and be instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect.

Such a confederation must be one of equals. The weakest must come to the conference table with the same confidence as do we, protected as we are by our moral, economic, and military strength. That table, though scarred by many past frustrations, cannot be abandoned for the certain agony of the battlefield.

Disarmament, with mutual honor and confidence, is a continuing imperative. Together we must learn how to compose differences, not with arms, but with intellect and decent purpose. Because this need is so sharp and apparent I confess that I lay down my official responsibilities in this field with a definite sense of disappointment. As one who has witnessed the horror and the lingering sadness of war -- as one who knows that another war could utterly destroy this civilization which has been so slowly and painfully built over thousands of years -- I wish I could say tonight that a lasting peace is in sight.

Happily, I can say that war has been avoided. Steady progress toward our ultimate goal has been made. But, so much remains to be done. As a private citizen, I shall never cease to do what little I can to help the world advance along that road.

So -- in this my last good night to you as your President -- I thank you for the many opportunities you have given me for public service in war and peace. I trust that in that service you find some things worthy; as for the rest of it, I know you will find ways to improve performance in the future.

You and I -- my fellow citizens -- need to be strong in our faith that all nations, under God, will reach the goal of peace with justice. May we be ever unswerving in devotion to principle, confident but humble with power, diligent in pursuit of the Nation's great goals.

To all the peoples of the world, I once more give expression to America's prayerful and continuing aspiration:

We pray that peoples of all faiths, all races, all nations, may have their great human needs satisfied; that those now denied opportunity shall come to enjoy it to the full; that all who yearn for freedom may experience its spiritual blessings; that those who have freedom will understand, also, its heavy responsibilities; that all who are insensitive to the needs of others will learn charity; that the scourges of poverty, disease and ignorance will be made to disappear from the earth, and that, in the goodness of time, all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love.



Dwight D. Eisenhower



The Kid Next Door

Sunlight haloed her silver hair as the Ft. Benning sun brought its sweltering heat to bare. Beside her stood a young man dressed in an uncomfortable suit and hair too long to pass inspection. She adjusted his hair, held his hand and waited.

Our little band was composed of former brigade members, active duty soldiers and next-of-kin. All with a common bond to the 173d; standing side-by-side and close enough to read the monument names. We were here to honor our brother Sky Soldiers and give witness to still more additions to the granite etched role of combat fallen comrades.

Reminding me of Abe Lincoln in *The Rail Splitter* painting, he reluctantly represented the best of America. He could have been the kid next door from *Anywhere, USA*. Standing by his mother on a summer's day, a study in humility, it was a Norman Rockwell moment for sure.



The kid next door...

With hand over heart; face taunt with sincerity, his eyes lifted to the colors. The blue ribbon slid from under the open collar. A metallic flicker caught the morning sun. He tucked it back in, pulled up his suit-coat and never took his eyes from the red, white and blue.

There were bugle calls to stir the soul; a well-executed rifle volley and a chaplains' prayer. Association leadership had indeed carried out their duties above and beyond the call. But most impressive of all was when this reluctant young man finally spoke.

Initial speaking requests had been respectfully declined. But at his mother's urging, Sal Giunta accepted. This fine young man, former 173d trooper serving in Afghanistan and holder of our nation's highest honor, began to address his 173d family.

Tell-tale tears rolled discretely across our cheeks. For most of us, this was a family moment. Our brother paratrooper, one of our living recipients of the Medal of Honor, expressed in everyday language the patriotism, love, and devotion we all felt.

Sal never once referred to the medal as his. It was always "Ours".

He had expressed the same sentiments months before when the President of the United States placed the coveted Medal of Honor around his neck. He made us all feel proud for standing to the colors, for giving our best; for being 173d *All The Way!*

Reportedly, the 173d Airborne Brigade remains the most decorated battle group in American history. We could not have a better Sky Soldier representative than Staff Sergeant Sal Giunta, the kid next door with The Medal of Honor.



...the man and men of war

Whatever your unit tie may be, you *might leave the unit but the unit will never leave you*. Please continue to support the 173d Memorial Foundation. Our brothers have laid down their lives for us; it's time to standup for them.

Paul Epley
173d BDE PIO RVN (PFC retired)
Attached to 2/503d and all our battalions



173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation

The 173d Spartan Club

In 480 BC, three hundred Spartans stood in a rocky mountain pass at Thermopylae and for seven days held off the mighty Persian army, allowing Greek forces to muster and eventually defeat the invaders. Three hundred warriors preserved the cradle of civilization. Three hundred Spartan Warriors made a difference.

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation needs the support of 300 warriors to preserve and maintain our Memorial that was dedicated in June 2010 at the National Infantry Museum campus near Fort Benning, Georgia.

The Memorial Foundation requires a minimum of \$5,000.00 annually for basic maintenance costs (electricity, landscaping and irrigation). In addition to periodic costs of adding new information to the Memorial, funds will be required for maintenance, minor repairs, insurance and the Foundation's administrative costs. To ensure perpetual care for the Memorial, the Foundation has established an endowment fund goal of \$300,000., raised over ten years, in addition to annual donations received from other sources.

The Foundation is seeking 300 warriors willing to help preserve our legacy and maintain our memorial. This letter constitutes your invitation to become a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation's *Spartan's Club*.

We ask each Spartan Club Commander to pledge between \$200.00 and \$1,000.00 for each of the next ten years. We ask each Spartan Club Centurion to Pledge between \$173.00 and \$199.00 for the same period and each Spartan Club Lancer to pledge between \$25.00 and \$172.00 for a similar period. If the Spartans contribute an average of \$100.00 each for the next ten years, the Foundation Endowment Fund will achieve its objective. Each Spartan Club member will receive periodic communications regarding events held at the Memorial, as well as receiving recognition in our annual programs and reports.

As with the Spartans at Thermopylae, the burden of preserving our memorial and heritage is shared equally regardless of position, title and rank. Membership in the Club is open to all Sky Soldiers, their families, and military and patriotic organizations and friends of the 173d. As in the past, we hope that you will accept this challenge and support your memorial.

Ken Smith, Chairman
173d Memorial Foundation

The 173d Spartan Club

I/We wish to share the honor of preserving our memorial and heritage as a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation *Spartan Club*.



Beginning in 2011, and for nine succeeding years thereafter, I pledge to donate the following amount each year to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation:

As a **Spartan Club Commander** (\$200.00 or more)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Centurion** (173.00 to \$199.00)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Lancer** (\$25.00 to \$172.00)
\$ _____

(Please print)

Full Name: _____

Primary Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Please mail your signed pledge form and your check (payable to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation) to:

173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation
1160 Lake Royale
Louisburg, NC 27549

Pledges may be paid electronically by going to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation website at www.173dairbornememorial.org and clicking on the tab, "Memorial Donations."

To assist you in remembering the timing of your annual pledge donation, the Foundation will send you electronically or by mail a brief reminder.

Note: The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Fund has been granted 501(c)3 status by the Internal Revenue Service. Contributions may be deductible under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.



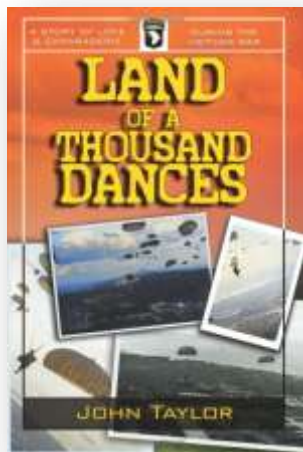
An Excerpt

Sergeant Kalama brought 1st Platoon together in a huddle like a football coach giving his players a pep talk before the opening kickoff. “All right, listen up! We’re not expecting a hot LZ, but the gunships are gonna make a couple of runs and fire up the area to make sure anyway. But everyone should be ready for a firefight as soon as we leave the birds. We’ll lock and load prior to boarding, but I want each squad leader to personally check each man to make certain *all* safeties are on. We don’t want any accidental discharges and shoot down one of our own birds.” Kalama paused and scanned the taut faces surrounding him and then continued on in a reassuring voice. “You all know what has to be done. We’ve practiced bird assaults back at Campbell. Just listen up and follow your squad leaders and everything will work out fine. It’s gonna be real confusing out there. Twice as confusing as any training maneuver we’ve ever done ‘cause there’s a fear factor we have to deal with now. It’s natural to have fear, but you can’t let fear gain control. OK, the birds are comin’ in, so let’s form up with the first lift on line.”

The Huey’s settled in to land on the road in a long column and the first lift surged toward them. The deafening roar of the rotor blades and the dust storm they caused contributed to the confusion and disorder. Brian joined Willie, Fred and most of first squad and clambered aboard their Huey into the cramped passenger cabin. When the first lift finished loading, one after another the Huey’s rose in the air and flew in a loose formation toward a range of hills silhouetted against the early morning sun.

The Huey’s doors were open and Brian was thankful for the cool flow of air that swept through the cabin and helped clear his head. The hollow feeling sank to his legs and they felt numb. He turned his head and looked out at the valley below, at the rice paddies which reflected the sun like mirrors. He watched a lone farmer use a water buffalo to plow through the muddy water. The scene seemed peaceful, tranquil, and totally removed from the mission before them. Then a thought struck him that seemed so absurd, so senseless that it defied all logic. They were actually en route to kill people. Brian looked toward the low-lying hills where they were headed and imagined soldiers not so different from themselves, maybe cooking a meal or attending to some other mundane task, unaware that an armed force of men was fast approaching to murder them.

They were almost there now. Up ahead, Brian watched the gunships streak in low and rake the ground with cannon and machine gun fire. Geysers of rice paddy water sprouted into the air from the explosions, and machine gun rounds danced across the surface, forming lines and crisscrossing patterns. The sound of the firing caused a young black trooper Brian met briefly the day before to lower his head on his chest. Brian saw his shoulders shake and knew he was crying. Brian returned his attention to the gunships as they made a second run over the LZ. The gunships fired furiously, but Brian did not see any signs of return fire. Maybe it was all a mistake.



Maybe there were no VC waiting down there. Maybe it was just another fiasco, another dry run that they would all laugh and kid each other about when they return to base camp. Thinking this made Brian’s hollow feeling subside and he hoped that the war would wait another day.

Now, the gunships finished and it was their turn. The Huey’s came in low and hovered a few feet above the rice paddies. Brian looked down at the murky water and thought how cool it would feel when he fell into it. Then he followed Fred and Willie and jumped clumsily, splashing into the foot deep rice paddy and falling head first into the turbid water. He struggled to his feet and the wind from the rotor blades ripped at him and chilled his soaked body. The only sound came from the Huey’s engine and the blast of air that whipped up the rice paddy water into pellets that stung the skin on his face and arms.

The rotor blades and wind subsided as the Huey soared away, and for the first time Brian heard multiple cracks from small arms fire. The firing seemed to be going on all around him. He sloshed through the water aimlessly, searching for some reference point to which he could start forward. Then he saw Lieutenant Edwards, Sergeant Kalama, and Nick Cepeda crouched next to a rice paddy levee. The lieutenant squatted over a vinyl-covered map and talked on the radio at the same time. Kalama studied a steep hillside about a quarter of a mile away through a pair of field glasses. Just as Brian joined them, a shout caused Kalama to adjust the binoculars down from the hillside to a rice paddy levee about two hundred meters away.

“Medic!” the voice screamed again. “Doc, Doc, over here!”

“**John Taylor’s *Land of a Thousand Dances*** is a fast-paced, gripping novel of a war found and a war lost. More than that, it is also about love found and lost and then, with time, found again. Set during the Vietnam War, it is more than another war novel. It is about the cost of war on the soldiers that fight it, and those left behind and struggling to understand it. It is the Vietnam War’s *From Here To Eternity*, only with a better storyline and style. As a combat medic during the war, Taylor knows his way around the Army and the jungle warzone, so that what you get here is a book that bleeds authenticity. Buy this book. You won’t be disappointed.” – **Kregg Jorgenson**, author of *Acceptable Loss* and other books of the Vietnam War era.

John Taylor served with Bravo Company, 2/503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), and a tour of duty with the 1st Brigade 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. After a thirty-one year career in law enforcement, John retired from the Oakland Police Department in 2002 and now makes his home in a small town in Northern California.



Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and at Barnes & Noble. The author reports it was awarded second prize in two novel-writing contests: the Southwest Writers Contest and the Branson Stars & Flags contest.



U.S. troops spearhead Viet fight

By John Hughes
Staff Correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

With U.S. Paratroopers in the Ho Bo Woods

In the world at large the quest for peace continues. But for the American paratroopers assaulting this forested Viet Cong redoubt, the war remains very realistic.

Back at the headquarters briefing room in Saigon, even at brigade headquarters in the field, the world of these paratroopers looks neat enough on the war maps. There are lines drawn around it. And it has a crisp, efficient, name: "Tactical area of responsibility."

New pattern

But on the ground itself their world looks far from tidy. It is hot and dusty, shared with persistent mosquitoes at night and hungry red ants by day. It is a world of matted brush and alien, eerie, tropical forest.

And always there lurks the murderous presence of the Viet Cong, the cunning enemy with the sniper-scope, the booby trap, the buried mine, the poisoned stake, the hidden gunport.

In North Vietnam there may be a pause. But in the South the war continues without pause. And from actions such as this one in the Ho Bo Woods, the largest American operation of the war, a new pattern is emerging for the use of American troops.

Upon the arrival of regular American units last year it was said they would be used to guard base areas, freeing more South Vietnamese troops for combat. If anyone believed that at the time, it is no longer true today.

It now seems clear that units such as the tough and proud 173d Airborne Brigade, with its equally tough and proud attached Australian battalion, are being used as shock troops to crack some of the toughest Viet Cong strongholds.

If the initial assault is successful, South Vietnamese troops will come in to continue the fight and hopefully to secure. Ultimately behind them would come the police and civilian authorities to pacify the area and wean its loyalties away from the Viet Cong.

But for the moment there is not much talk about "pacification" in the Ho Bo Woods. To our rear is the crack of the big guns and the "whump" of the mortars and the whirring of shells through the air.

Above, armed helicopters pour machinegun fire into Viet Cong positions ahead and occasionally, with an angry "whoosh," release podfuls of rockets. Then Skyraiders, the sturdy old faithfuls of this war, wheel in with an air strike.

And out in front the troopers on foot pursue this dangerous and dirty war which sends young men back with sorrow in their eyes and tension chiseled into their exhausted faces.



173d paratroopers entering the Ho Bo Woods

"Pacification" is not much talked about today in the Ho Bo Woods. Instead the immediate object is to "sanitize" the area, to kill or capture the Viet Cong, and to clear the area of civilians.

(continued...)





HHC/1/503d troopers on 13 Jan 66 with suspected VC sympathizers in Ho Bo Woods

Out of the woods and down the tracks they came, the women, the children, and the aged. No young men, for this is 100 percent Viet Cong territory and the able-bodied men are away fighting elsewhere. Or in these woods, waiting for the Americans.

At the forward command post these refugees, for that is what they now become, are given initial screening by field interrogators, given C rations, and held for Truck Transport to the rear.

Tragic cargo

A child screams. An old lady sobs. Then with incredible gentleness a detail of burly paratroopers swing young and old alike up over the truck tailgates.

With tragic irony this refugee compound is sited next to the emergency landing pad in which medevac helicopters race back with American wounded.

Impassively the refugees watch as the choppers clatter down, the corpsmen race out through the dust from the whirring vanes. To the hospital tent the walking wounded get a shoulder. The stretcher cases are run in at the double, four corpsmen to a litter. Then there is the silence which seizes all as the motionless forms covered by ground sheets are moved in without urgency.

It is the husbands and fathers of those refugees who have killed these Americans in the Ho Bo Woods.

Snipers at work

The full Viet Cong regiment which the Americans are hunting in the woods has not, at the time of writing, been found, but there are snipers enough in the trees, and machine gunners in the concealed bunkers, and marksmen beneath camouflaged traps who pop-up and fire at the Americans from the rear and flanks, then vanish without trace.

A 19-year-old corpsmen with the Australians was shot in the head from a distance of 18 inches. The fire came from a concealed gunport not much bigger than the size of an American silver half dollar. He fell dead upon the man he had crawled out to save.

Upon these tunnels and bunkers the troops are using flamethrowers and explosives. Some are so extensive and complex that they defy destruction. On these the American are using a type of riot gas which makes them untenable without masks for anything from 4 to 12 months.

This is the world of the men fighting their way into Vietnam's Ho Bo Woods.





VFW DISCUSSES ISSUES WITH PRESIDENT

Protecting VA budget and stopping negative DOD proposals lead agenda



VFW's DeNoyer meets with the president
(White House photo by Pete Souza)

WASHINGTON — The national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. met with President Obama this afternoon to discuss issues important to veterans, service members and their families. Topping the agenda was protecting the Department of Veterans Affairs from mandatory budget cuts should sequestration occur, and VFW opposition to certain Defense Department proposals that could jeopardize the continued existence of the all-volunteer force.

“The president has been consistent in word and action on protecting and increasing the Department of Veterans Affairs budget, and he pledged to continue to do so even in these tough budget times. We gratefully appreciate that commitment,” said Richard L. DeNoyer, a retired Marine and Vietnam combat veteran from Middleton, Mass., who leads the 2 million-member VFW and its Auxiliaries.

“The advocacy work he and First Lady Michelle, and Vice President Joe and Dr. Jill Biden, continue to do for our military and veteran families everywhere has been outstanding,” he said, citing as examples the passage of advanced VA budget appropriations, the Family Caregiver Bill, and just this week, bringing financial relief to thousands of service members and veterans whose homes may have been wrongfully foreclosed upon since 2006.

Discussed with the president was the VFW’s opposition to certain DOD proposals that would significantly raise healthcare fees on military families and retirees, and change the current military retirement system. DeNoyer also expressed his concern about the negative impact sequestration would have on overall force readiness and national security.

The VFW national commander said that ensuring the security of the nation is expensive, but that cost pales in comparison to asking people to voluntarily do more for their country in a few short years than most Americans do in a lifetime.

“In my travels to Afghanistan, Europe, the Pacific and around the country, the number #1 issue from the troops is what the Pentagon is doing to their pay and benefits,” said DeNoyer. *“I am honored to carry their concerns to the Oval Office, because as the nation’s largest and oldest major combat veterans’ organization, one of the reasons why the VFW has maintained its relevancy for more than a century is we work hard to defeat any proposal that negatively impacts national security or the many people programs we fought equally hard to create within DOD and the VA.”*

Also addressed was the need for full funding of those organizations charged with returning missing Americans from current and previous wars and conflicts—the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, and the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs.

“The president fully agreed that there is no mission more sacred than to recover our fallen from the battlefield and return them home to their families,” said DeNoyer. *“The VFW is very comforted to hear that, because the upcoming renewal of recovery operations in North Korea is a new mission requirement that must come with additional funding so that all missing Americans from all wars and conflicts receive the same highest recovery priority,”* he said.

“I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to sit down and address these VFW issues with the president, and I look forward to discussing them further in the near future,” he added.

DeNoyer to Congress: “Don’t Balance Budget on Backs of Disabled Veterans and Military”



~ This Month in History ~

"They were the best of times; they were the worst of times."

May 1965

1st: U.S. military strength in Vietnam is approximately 23,000.

1st: Battle of Dong-Yin, a naval conflict between ROC and PRC, takes place.

1st: Spike Jones, composer (Spike Jones Show), dies at 53.

2nd: Responding to a VC assault on the U.S. Air Force base at Pleiku, South Vietnam, President Johnson authorizes Operation Rolling Thunder. The operation is a bombardment campaign meant to cripple North Vietnam's transportation system and its industrial centers in order to halt the flow of men and supplies into the South.

3rd: Cambodia drops diplomatic relations with the US.

3rd: 1st use of satellite TV, Today Show on Early Bird Satellite.

4th: Willie Mays 512th HR breaks Mel Ott's 511th.

5th: 1st large-scale US Army ground units arrive in South Vietnam. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) deployed to the Republic of Vietnam on 5 May 1965 on Temporary Duty (TDY) status, the first army "combat" maneuver element to arrive in Vietnam. On 5 August 1965 the TDY status was changed to Permanent Change of Station (PCS).

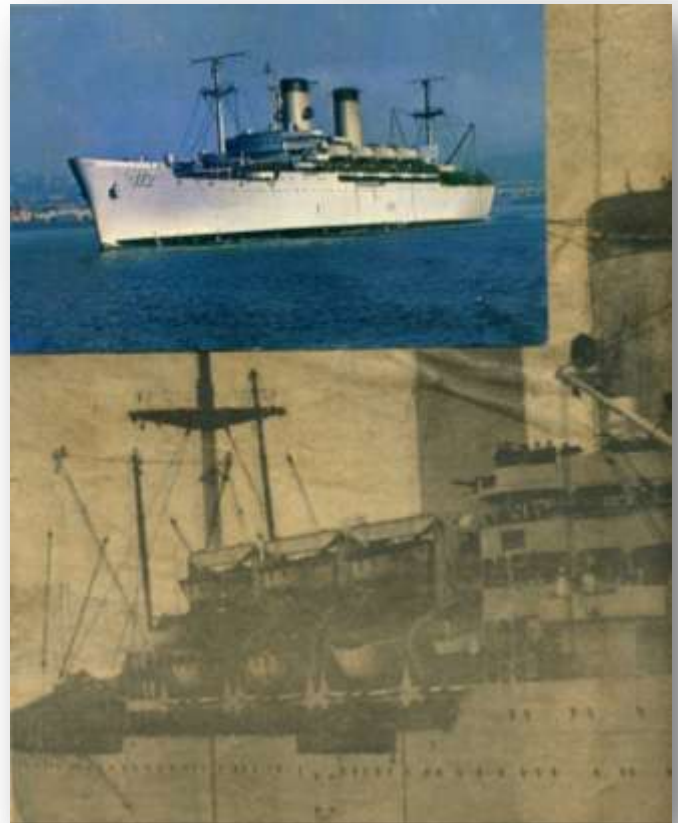


173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) arrive RVN

2/503d Enroute to TDY in a place called Vietnam



(Photos from "Top" Jim Dresser, A/HHC/2/503d)



Where the hell are the C-130s! We ain't sailors!

(continued....)



The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

5th-9th July: Operation Opord conducted in Bien Hoa area. Initially, the 173d was assigned to defend the Bien Hoa Air Base. The brigade routinely conducted sweeps up to 15 kilometers around the base, with company size operations often being the norm.



“Sky Soldiers”

The 173d Airborne Brigade has a long and distinguished history of over 45 years of service spanning almost 88 years. The Brigade originally was activated in 1917 as the 173d Infantry Brigade and assigned to the 87th Infantry. The Brigade deployed to France as part of the Division, but did not see any major combat action. The Brigade was demobilized in January of 1919 at (then) Camp Dix, New Jersey.

The Brigade went through a series of re-designations and reorganizations, culminating in the re-designation in February 1942 as the 87th Reconnaissance Troop, 87th Division. The Brigade experienced extensive combat in Europe as part of General George S. Patton's Third Army, to include the battle of the Bulge and the Rhine river crossing. In 1945, the brigade again was deactivated, this time at Fort Benning, Georgia. In 1947, the Brigade was briefly activated as the 87th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, deactivating again in December 1951.

The greatest chapter of the Brigade's history began in 1963. The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) was activated on the island of Okinawa on March 26, 1963. The "Sky Soldiers" as the nationalist Chinese paratroopers called the 173d, made thousands of parachute jumps in a dozen different pacific area countries. The Brigade was the first Army combat brigade sent to the republic of South Vietnam in May 1965. In the combat operations to follow, the paratroopers made their superb training payoff. They were the first to go into War Zone "D" to destroy enemy base camps; they introduced small, long range patrols; they fought the battles of the iron triangle, conducted the only major combat parachute jump in the Tay Ninh area, and blocked NVA incursions during the bloodiest fighting of the war at "Dak To" during the summer and fall of 1967, culminating in the capture of "Hill 875". Elements of the Brigade conducted an amphibious assault against NVA and VC forces as part of an operation to clear the rice growing lowlands along the

"Bong Song" Littoral. The paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade wear their combat badges and decorations with pride. During more than six years of nearly continuous combat in Vietnam, the brigade earned four unit citations, had 13 Sky Soldiers earn the Medal of Honor, and over 130 troopers were awarded the Distinguished Service Crosse. Over 1700 Sky Soldiers were killed in action and more than 8,300 were wounded in action. These 10,000+ casualties incurred by the Brigade were five times greater than the 187th Airborne Regiment in Korea, four times greater than those suffered by the 11th Airborne Division in the Pacific in WWII, more than twice those suffered by the 101st Airborne Division in Europe in WWII, and two thirds of those suffered by the entire 82nd Airborne Division in WWII. The Brigade took part in 14 designated campaigns and conducted the only U.S. mass combat parachute assault of the Vietnam War. Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne are proud to carry forward the lineage of the heroic paratroopers of the 503rd Infantry Regiment of WWII. The Brigade was deactivated on 14 January 1972 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. On 12 June 2000, the colors of the 173d Airborne Brigade were unfurled for the first time over Italian soil in Vicenza, Italy, as the Brigade began another chapter in its proud history. On 26 March 2003, the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team again became the only line Airborne unit to perform a combat jump when it parachuted 1000 paratroopers into Northern Iraq to open the northern front in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



L-R: Medics of the 1/503d on Okinawa, Lawrence Joel and friend Alfred Rascon. Both men would later earn the Medal of Honor for their heroic actions during combat in Vietnam.

(continued....)



This was the largest combat parachute operation since WWII. The jump was the longest combat operation in airborne history, over 1800 miles from Vicenza to Iraq. The Brigade participated in numerous designated campaigns in Iraq. In March 2004, the Sky Soldiers returned from combat operations in Iraq. Nine Sky Soldiers died and approximately 95 were wounded in Iraq during the deployment. The Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade have continued their training and preparation to meet the challenges of the war on terror, seeing multiple tours of combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, and is now gearing-up for yet another tour of duty in Afghanistan.

The "Herd"

Thanks to John "Dutch" Holland with Bravo Company, 1/503d for his recollection of how the 173d Airborne got the nickname of *The Herd*:



Dutch...one of the *Best of the Best*

"The term *Herd* is used with pride by veterans of the 173d Airborne Brigade. This nickname was coined by Colonel 'Rawhide' Boland of the 1/503d. Colonel Boland, while on leave, heard, liked and bought a copy of Frankie Laine's old song *Rawhide* from the TV series of the same name. The colonel on returning to camp played the song over the PA system during all battalion formations. We as paratroopers had to run to and from all these formations, and with the roads being unpaved kicked-up quite a cloud of dust. One of his staff remarked that we looked like a herd of cattle and you can guess the rest. Colonel Boland was given the name 'Rawhide' and the battalion was referred to as the Herd. The rest of the brigade adopted the name once in Nam and no one is sure when or how that began.

Colonel Boland is alive and kickin' and still signs his name as 'Rawhide Boland.'"

Some of the lyrics to *Rawhide*

Rollin' Rollin' Rollin'

*Keep movin', movin', movin',
Though they're disapprovin',
Keep them doggies movin' Rawhide!*

*Don't try to understand 'em,
Just rope and throw and grab 'em,
Soon we'll be living high and wide.*

*Boy my heart's calculatin'
My true love will be waitin',
be waiting at the end of my ride.*

*Move 'em on, head 'em up,
Head 'em up, move 'em out,
Move 'em on, head 'em out Rawhide!
Set 'em out, ride 'em in
Ride 'em in, let 'em out,
Cut 'em out, ride 'em in Rawhide.*

*Rollin', rollin', rollin'
Rollin', rollin', rollin'
Rollin', rollin', rollin'
Rollin', rollin', rollin'
Rawhide!*

11th: Viet Cong overrun South Vietnamese troops in Phuoc Long Province north of Saigon and also attack in central South Vietnam.

12th: The Soviet spacecraft Luna 5 crashes on the Moon.

13th: The first bombing pause is announced by the U.S. in the hope that Hanoi will now negotiate. There will be six more pauses during the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign, all with same intention. However, each time, the North Vietnamese ignore the peace overtures and instead use the pause to repair air defenses and send more troops and supplies into the South via the Ho Chi Minh trail.

13th: Viet Cong attack the U.S. Special Forces camp in Phuoc Long. During the fighting, 2nd Lt. Charles Williams, earns the Medal of Honor by knocking out a Viet Cong machine-gun then guiding rescue helicopters, while wounded four times.

14th: 2nd Chinese atom bomb explodes.

(continued...)



16th: B-52 bomb accident destroys much of USAF base at Bien Hoa, South Vietnam killing 26 airmen.



“After the explosions, a great number of Generals and their staffs came to Bien Hoa to see for themselves what had happened. The Air Force Inspector, General, Lt. General William K. Martin, convened an Investigation Board headed by Major General Gilbert L. Meyers. General Westmoreland along with retired Four Star General Maxwell D. Taylor, Ambassador to Vietnam, also came to see the extent of damage so they could brief their superiors. The Maintenance Officer (Dennis E. Hickey) had a one-on-one conversation with General William Westmoreland. ‘He just wanted to know what I thought might have caused the disaster.’ Later in his book, General Westmoreland said that Bien Hoa looked worse than Hickam Field after the Pearl Harbor Attack.”

18th: Gene Roddenberry suggests 16 names including ‘Kirk’ for Star Trek Captain.



19th: U.S. bombing of North Vietnam resumes.

19th: Patricia R. Harris named 1st US black female Ambassador (Luxembourg).

20th: Hanoi restates its peace proposal which "Washington" has already rejected.

21st: Over 30,000 people attend a three-day anti-war teach-in at U.C. Berkeley. Among those in attendance are novelist Norman Mailer, socialist leader Norman Thomas, philosopher Alan Watts, civil rights activist Bob Moses, and Mario Savio, a prominent leader of the Free Speech Movement. The event, organized by the Vietnam Day Committee (VDC), will be the largest of its kind held during the Vietnam War.

22nd: Buddhists demonstrate against RVN Government at US Embassy Saigon.

22nd: "Super-cali-fragil-istic-expi-ali-docious" hits #66.

25th: Muhammad Ali KO's Sonny Liston in 1st round for heavyweight boxing title.



25th: Martial law imposed in Hue after serious disturbances.

27th: Lt Gen Nguyen Khanh takes over SVN government from Premier Tran Van Huong in bloodless coup.

27th: United States warships begin bombardments of National Liberation Front targets within South Vietnam for the first time.

30th: Viet Cong offensive against US base at Da Nang, begins.

31st: Brooke Shields, New York City, model/actress (Blue Lagoon, Suddenly Susan), is born.

(continued....)



May 1966

2nd: Secretary of Defense McNamara privately reports the North Vietnamese are infiltrating 4500 men per month into the South.

4th-6th: Operation Dexter conducted in Tan Uyen area.



Slicks landing men of the 173d Abn Bde near Tan Uyen on May 4, 1966

13th: Federal education funding is denied to 12 school districts in the South because of violations of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

14th: Political unrest intensifies as South Vietnamese troops loyal to Prime Minister Ky overrun renegade South Vietnamese Buddhist troops in Da Nang. Ky's troops then move on to Hue to oust renegades there. Ky's actions result in a new series of immolations by Buddhist monks and nuns as an act of protest against his Saigon regime and its American backers. Buddhist leader Tri Quang blames President Johnson personally for the situation. Johnson responds by labeling the immolations as *"tragic and unnecessary."*

15th: South Vietnamese army battle Buddhists, about 80 die.

16th-8th June: Operation Hardihood conducted in Phuoc Tuy Province.



2/503d on Operation Hardihood
(Photo by Jack Ribera, A/2/503d)

16th: Janet Jackson, Michael's sister, born in Gary, Indiana.

19th: A tortoise, reportedly given to Tonga's King by Capt. Cook in 1773, dies. (May we have a moment of silence please).

19th: The 1/503d Infantry became engaged with an estimated fifty (50) VC. The firefight that ensued resulted in twenty (20) VC killed with minimal friendly casualties.



21st: "Downtown" by Mrs. Miller hits #82.

21st: Muhammad Ali TKOs Henry Cooper in 6 for heavyweight boxing title.

25th: 1st Aviation Brigade arrives for operations in Vietnam.

26th: Buddhist sets self on fire at US consulate in Hué, South Vietnam. A 17-year-old Buddhist girl has committed suicide by setting herself alight in a street in the city of Hue. She was protesting against the South Vietnam regime. It is the fifth such death in three days. A girl of 19 set herself alight two days ago outside a pagoda in Saigon and a monk did the same in the mountain town of Dalat. In June 1963 Buddhist monk Quang Duc became famous when he was photographed setting himself alight in a suicide protest against the South Vietnamese government then under Ngo Dinh Diem.



Quan Duc immolates himself in Saigon square.

30th: 300 US airplanes bomb North Vietnam.

30th: Graham Hill wins Indianapolis 500 car race (232.2 kph).

30th: US launches Surveyor 1 to Moon.

(continued....)



31st: Student David O'Brien and three friends burn their draft cards on the steps of the South Boston Courthouse in protest of the war in Vietnam.

Late May to June '66: In late May 1966, the North Vietnamese 324B Division crosses the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and encounters a Marine battalion. The NVA holds their ground and the largest battle of the war to date breaks out near Dong Ha. Most of the 3rd Marine Division, some 5,000 men in five battalions, heads north. In Operation Hastings, the Marines backed by South Vietnamese Army troops, the heavy guns of U.S. warships and their artillery and air power drive the NVA back over the DMZ in three weeks.

May 1967

1st: Ellsworth Bunker replaces Henry Cabot Lodge as U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.

1st-4th: Operation Fort Wayne conducted in War Zone "D".



1st: Elvis Presley & Priscilla Beaulieu wed in Las Vegas.



Sgt. Presley and Priscilla on the day he left Germany

2nd: The U.S. is condemned during a mock war crimes tribunal held in Stockholm, organized by British philosopher Bertrand Russell.

5th-17th: Operation Dayton conducted in Phuoc Tay Province.



6th: 400 students seize administration building at Cheyney State College.

8th: Muhammad Ali is indicted for refusing induction in US Army.

9th: Robert W. Komer, a former CIA analyst, is appointed by President Johnson as deputy commander of MACV to form a new agency called Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) to pacify the population of South Vietnam. Nearly 60 percent of rural villages in South Vietnam are now under Viet Cong control. \$850 million in food, medical supplies, machinery, and numerous other household items will be distributed through CORDS to the population in order to regain their loyalty in the struggle for the "hearts and minds" of common villagers. CORDS also trains local militias to protect their villages from the Viet Cong.

11th: 100,000,000th US phone connected.

13th: In New York City, 70,000 march in support of the war, led by a New York City fire captain.

17th-23rd: Operation Cincinnati conducted in Bien Hoa/Long Binh areas.



18th-26th: U.S. and South Vietnamese troops enter the Demilitarized Zone for the first time and engage in a series of fire fights with NVA. Both sides suffer heavy losses.

18th: Silver hits record \$1.60 an ounce in London.

19th: US bombs Hanoi.

19th: USSR ratifies treaty with England & US banning nuclear weapons in space.

20th: 10,000 demonstrate against war in Vietnam.

22nd: President Johnson publicly urges North Vietnam to accept a peace compromise.

23rd-31st: Operation Winchester conducted in Pleiku.



24th: AFL grants a franchise to Cincinnati Bengals.

27th: Australians vote in favor of a constitutional referendum granting the Australian government the power to make laws to benefit Indigenous Australians and to count them in the national census.

28th: USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalitinsk, USSR.

30th: Claude Rains, actor (Invisible Man), dies at 77.



Claude Rains

(continued...)



May '67: Desperate air battles rage in the skies over Hanoi and Haiphong. America air forces shoot down 26 North Vietnamese jets, decreasing the North's pilot strength by half. In the Central Highlands of South Vietnam, Americans intercept North Vietnamese Army units moving in from Cambodia. Nine days of continuous battles leave hundreds of North Vietnamese soldiers dead.

May 1968

3rd (begun April 30th): The Battle of Dai Do occurs along the Demilitarized Zone as NVA troops seek to open an invasion corridor into South Vietnam. They are halted by a battalion of U.S. Marines nicknamed "The Magnificent Bastards" under the command of Lt. Col. William Weise. Aided by heavy artillery and air strikes, NVA suffer 1568 killed. 81 Marines are killed and 297 wounded. 29 U.S. Army are killed supporting the Marines and 130 wounded. For the time being, this defeat ends North Vietnam's hope of successfully invading the South. They will wait four years, until 1972, before trying again, after most of the Americans have gone. It will actually take seven years, until 1975, for them to succeed.

5th: Viet Cong launch "Mini Tet," a series of rocket and mortar attacks against Saigon and 119 cities and military installations throughout South Vietnam. The U.S. responds with air strikes using Napalm and high explosives.



“Smoke rises from the southwestern part of Saigon on May 7, 1968 as residents stream across bridge leaving the capital to escape heavy fighting between the Viet Cong and South Vietnamese soldiers.” (AP photo)

Mar. '68- Jan. '69: Operation Cochise conducted in Bon Son area.



8th: Jim (Catfish) Hunter of Oakland pitches perfect game vs Twins (4-0).

10th: An NVA battalion attacks the Special Forces camp at Kham Duc along the border of Laos. The isolated camp had been established in 1963 to monitor North Vietnamese infiltration. Now encircled by NVA, the decision is made to evacuate via C-130 transport planes. At the conclusion of the successful airlift, it is discovered that three U.S. Air Force controllers have accidentally been left behind. Although the camp is now overrun by NVA and two C-130s have already been shot down, Lt. Col. Joe M. Jackson pilots a C-123 Provider, lands on the air strip under intense fire, gathers all three controllers, then takes off. For this action, Jackson is awarded the Medal of Honor.

10th: Peace talks begin in Paris but soon stall as the U.S. insists that North Vietnamese troops withdraw from the South, while the North Vietnamese insist on Viet Cong participation in a coalition government in South Vietnam. This marks the beginning of five years of on-again off-again official talks between the U.S. and North Vietnam in Paris.



“This is a general view of the first meeting between the United States delegation, left, and North Vietnam delegation on the Vietnam peace talks at the international conference hall in Paris, May 13, 1968.” (AP photo)

15th: 1st AL game played in Milwaukee is a 4-2 California win against Chicago.

19th: 20th Emmy Awards: Get Smart, Mission Impossible & Barbara Bain.

21st: Nuclear-powered sub USS Scorpion, with 99 men reported missing & is later found at the bottom of the ocean off the Azores.

(continued....)



25th: Gateway Arch in St. Louis dedicated.

27th: Thailand announces it is to dispatch a further 5,000 troops to Vietnam.

27th: In United States v. David Paul O'Brien, the U.S.

Supreme Court rules that the criminal prohibition of draft card burning does not violate the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech.



May 1969

May: The number of U.S. troops in Vietnam peaks at 543,000. President Richard Nixon announces his plan for "Vietnamization" of the war—that is, training and transitioning South Vietnamese troops to assume the roles that have been fulfilled by American troops—and promises to withdraw 25,000 American soldiers.

10th Mar. – 24th May: The 173d Airborne Brigade conducted its 50th operation, Operation Darby Punch II, in and around the city of An Khe. Combat Reports from 1st Battalion, 503rd Spring Operation Darby Punch II.



15th Apr. '69 – 1st Jan. '71: In Binh Dinh Province On April 1, 1970, 3rd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (-) continued operations in Area of Operations Rock with negative contact. At 3:35 a.m. LZ Uplift received one incoming 82mm mortar round. At 4:45 a.m. Company A (-) was placed on 30 minute standby by 173d. Between 4:35 a.m. and 5:05 a.m. LZ Uplift took 14 incoming 82mm rounds. A Flaeship and Gunship were called in and expended all ordinance with unknown results. Total U.S. casualties were 29 WIA. Company B's 3rd Platoon found one .50 caliber ammunition can at BR 839796 with bandages and methiolate belonging to one male. Also found were unknown-type batteries (C type), U.S.-type stationary and assorted documents. LZ Uplift went on red alert status later in morning due to enemy activity. LZ English and LZ Bits were mortared.



May 1969: The *New York Times* breaks the news of the secret bombing of Cambodia. As a result, Nixon orders FBI wiretaps on the telephones of four journalists, along with 13 government officials to determine the source of news leak.

5th: Ben Alexander, actor (Frank Smith-Dragnet), dies at 57.

7th: Lt General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., USMC, becomes deputy director of CIA.

10th-20th: "Forty-six men of the 101st Airborne die during a fierce ten-day battle at 'Hamburger Hill' in the A Shau Valley near Hue. 400 others are wounded. After the hill is taken, the troops are then ordered to abandon it by their commander. NVA then move in and take back the hill unopposed. The costly assault and its confused aftermath provokes a political outcry back in the U.S. that American lives are being wasted in Vietnam. One Senator labels the assault "*senseless and irresponsible.*" It is the beginning of the end for America in Vietnam as Washington now orders MACV Commander Gen. Creighton Abrams to avoid such encounters in the future. 'Hamburger Hill' is the last major search and destroy mission by U.S. troops during the war. Small unit actions will now be used instead. A long period of decline in morale and discipline begins among American draftees serving in Vietnam involuntarily. Drug usage becomes rampant as nearly 50 percent experiment with marijuana, opium, or heroin which are easy to obtain on the streets of Saigon. U.S. military hospitals later become deluged with drug related cases as drug abuse casualties far outnumber casualties of war."

10th: Apollo 10 transmits 1st color pictures of Earth from space.



Apollo 10 photo of our home

(continued....)



11th: Monty Python comedy troupe forms.

14th: President Nixon, during a policy address on Vietnam, proposes an "8-point peace plan" that would include mutual withdrawal of all non-Vietnamese forces to designated bases over a 12-month period, after which remaining troops would be totally withdrawn from S. Vietnam. The offer is rejected by Hanoi.

15th: Emmitt Smith, running back (Dallas Cowboys, 3-time NFL rushing leader) is born.

16th: US nuclear sub Guitarro sinks off SF.

16th: Tucker Carlson, American television commentator is born.

20th: US troops capture Hill 937, Hamburger Hill, Vietnam.

May 1970

1st: May Day, the traditional Communist holiday. A combined force of 15,000 U.S. and South Vietnamese soldiers attack NVA supply bases inside Cambodia. However, throughout this offensive NVA and Viet Cong carefully avoid large-scale battles and instead withdraw westward, further into Cambodia, leaving behind their base camps containing huge stores of weapons and ammunition.

1st: Students at Kent State University in Ohio organize a massive public demonstration against the American invasion of Cambodia.

1st: President Nixon calls anti-war students "*bums blowing up campuses.*"

2nd: Senators McGovern, Hughes, Cranston, Goodell and Hatfield announced they planned to introduce an "end the war" amendment which would work by suspending funds for military operations in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

2nd: American college campuses erupt in protest over the invasion of Cambodia. On the second day of anti-war demonstrations at Kent State University, students torch the R.O.T.C. building on campus. In response, the mayor of Kent, Ohio asks the governor to call in the National Guard.

2nd: 1st woman jockey at Kentucky Derby (Diane Crump).

4th: At Kent State University in Ohio, National Guardsmen shoot and kill four student protesters and wound nine. In response to the killings, over 400 colleges and universities across America shut down. In Washington, nearly 100,000 protesters surround various government buildings including the White House and historical monuments. On an impulse, President Nixon exits the White House and pays a late night surprise visit to the Lincoln Memorial and chats with

young protesters.

"Mary Ann Vecchio gestures and screams as she kneels by the body of a student lying face down on the campus of Kent State University, Kent, Ohio on May 4, 1970.

National Guardsmen had fired into a crowd of demonstrators, killing four." (AP Photo)

(continued....)



Screaming Eagles capture Hamburger Hill, only to give it back....SOP.



22nd: US Astronauts Stafford & Cernan pilot Apollo 10 LEM 9.4 mi (15km) above lunar surface.

31st: "Gitarzan" by Ray Stevens peaks at #8.

31st: Stevie Wonder releases "My Cherie Amore".



6th: In Saigon over the past week, 450 civilians were killed during Viet Cong terrorist raids throughout the city, the highest weekly death toll to date.

9th: 100,000s demonstrate against Vietnam War.

9th: A peaceful anti-war rally held at the Ellipse in Washington, DC was attended by about 80,000 people including about 10 members of Congress.

12th: Construction workers in New York City march in support of Vietnam War policy.



“American flag-bearing construction workers, angered by Major John Lindsay’s apparent anti-war sympathies, lead hundreds of New York City workers supporting U.S. war policy in Vietnam in a demonstration inside a barricaded area near Wall Street in lower Manhattan, May 12, 1970. More than 1,000 police were on the scene to prevent possible clashes with anti-war student demonstrators, who were among office workers along the barricades.”
(AP photo)

14th: Police shoot and kill two students during anti-war protests at the historically black Jackson State College in Mississippi. Though the incident is similar to the shootings at Kent State, it receives far less attention from the press.

14th: Billie Burke, comedienne/actress (Glinda the good witch-Wizard of Oz), dies at 84.



15th: France performs nuclear test at Muruora Island.

15th: Immediately after seeing the photos of the Kent State tragedy, published in *Life* magazine, musician Neil Young takes a walk in the woods and then sits down to compose the song "Ohio," with the chorus line: "Four dead in Ohio" (lyrics below). It is performed by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, and becomes the protest anthem of a generation. David Crosby cries when the group finishes recording the song in the studio.

*Tin soldiers and Nixon coming,
We're finally on our own.
This summer I hear the drumming,
Four dead in Ohio.
Gotta get down to it
Soldiers are cutting us down
Should have been done long ago.
What if you knew her
And found her dead on the ground
How can you run when you know?*

18th: Tina Fey, American writer/actress is born.

20th: 100,000 march in NY supporting US policies in Vietnam.

22nd: Arab terrorists kill 9 children & 3 adults on a school bus.

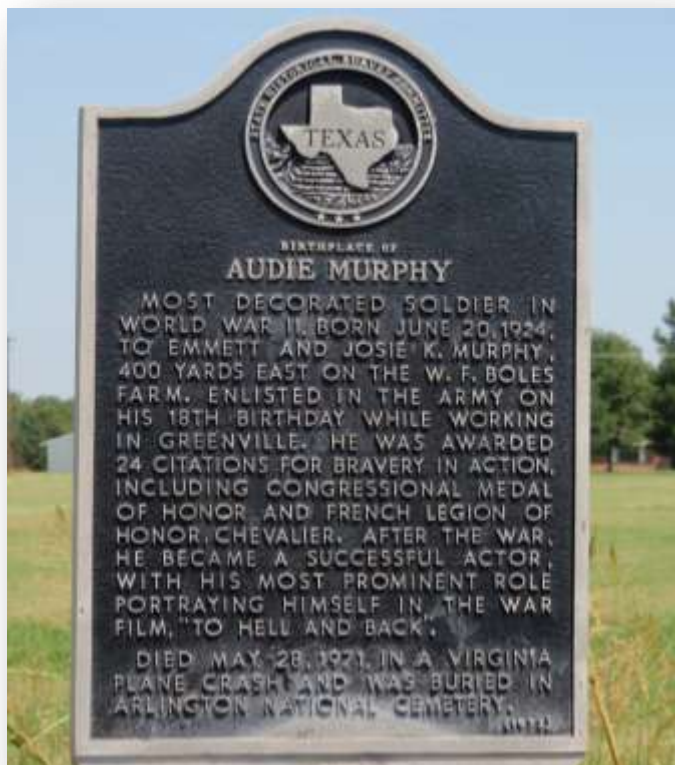
22nd: Mel Stottlemyre sets record by walking 11, but wins 2-0. (**Note:** The editor of this newsletter once singled off Mel Stottlemyre in an off-season game...no shit. His claim to fame).

(continued)



May 1971

- 1st:** Amtrak Railroad begins operation.
- 3rd-5th:** Nixon administration arrests 13,000 anti-war protesters in 3 days in Washington.
- 5th:** Race riot in Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York.
- 8th:** Joe Frazier beats Muhammad Ali at Madison Square Garden.
- 10th:** US special delivery rates go from 45 cents to 60 cents.
- 16th:** 1st class postage now costs 8 cents (was 6 cents).
- 18th:** President Nixon rejects 60 demands of Congressional Black Caucus.
- 19th:** USSR launches Mars 2, 1st spacecraft to crash land on Mars.
- 20th:** Tony Stewart, American race car driver is born.
- 20th:** Pentagon reports blacks constitute 11% of US soldiers in SE Asia.
- 21st:** National Guard mobilizes to quell riot in Chattanooga, Tennessee.
- 26th:** Soviet Union's Concorde, TU-144, makes its 1st appearance.
- 28th:** Audie Murphy, most decorated WWII veteran, actor (Whispering Smith), dies at 46.



30th: US Mariner 9 1st satellite to orbit Mars launched.

May: The House and the Senate vote to withdraw all U.S. troops in Vietnam by year's end.

May 1972

- 1st:** South Vietnamese abandon Quang Tri City to the NVA.
- 2nd:** J. Edgar Hoover, first Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (1924-72), dies at 77.
- 4th:** The U.S. and South Vietnam suspend participation in the Paris peace talks indefinitely. 125 additional U.S. warplanes are ordered to Vietnam.
- 4th:** Viet Cong forms revolutionary government in Quang Tri South Vietnam.
- 8th:** In response to the ongoing NVA Eastertide Offensive, President Nixon announces Operation Linebacker I, the mining of North Vietnam's harbors along with intensified bombing of roads, bridges, and oil facilities. The announcement brings international condemnation of the U.S. and ignites more anti-war protests in America. During an air strike conducted by South Vietnamese pilots, Napalm bombs are accidentally dropped on South Vietnamese civilians, including children. Filmed footage and a still photo of a badly burned nude girl fleeing the destruction of her hamlet becomes yet another enduring image of the war.
- 9th:** Operation Linebacker I commences with U.S. laying mines in Haiphong harbor.



On 17 May 1972, Haiphong, North Vietnam, a US jet bombs warehouses and shipping areas in Haiphong, Vietnam.

(continued.....)



15th: The headquarters for the U.S. Army in Vietnam is decommissioned.

15th: George Wallace shot & left paralyzed by Arthur Bremer in Laurel, MD.

15th: The island of Okinawa, under U.S. military governance since its conquest in 1945, reverts to Japanese control.

16th: Dan Blocker, American actor (Hoss-Bonanza), dies at 43.



17th: According to U.S. reports, Operation Linebacker I is damaging North Vietnam's ability to supply NVA troops engaged in the Easter tide Offensive.

20th: Walter Winchell, columnist/narrator (Untouchables), dies at 75.

22nd-30th: President Nixon visits the Soviet Union and meets with Leonid Brezhnev to forge new diplomatic relations with the Communist nation. Nixon's visit causes great concern in Hanoi that their Soviet ally might be inclined to agree to an unfavorable settlement of the war to improve Soviet relations with the U.S.

26th: Nixon & Brezhnev sign SALT accord.

28th: White House "plumbers" break into Democratic National HQ at Watergate.

30th: NVA attack on Kontum is thwarted by South Vietnamese troops, aided by massive U.S. air strikes.

May 1973

10th: Due to continued bombing of Laos and Cambodia, the House voted (219-188) for the first time to cut-off Indochina funds.

13th: Bobby Riggs beat Margaret Smith Court in Mother's Day tennis match in California.

14th: Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In, last airs on NBC-TV.

14th: Skylab launched, 1st Space Station.

14th: US Supreme Court approves equal rights to females in military.

17th: Senate Watergate Committee begins its hearings.

22nd: President Nixon confesses his role in Watergate cover-up.

31st: The Senate took strong action prohibiting the use of any funds appropriated by Congress to be used for combat activities in Laos or Cambodia.

May 1974

9th: Congress begins impeachment proceedings against President Nixon stemming from the Watergate scandal.

18th: India becomes 6th nation to explode an atomic bomb.

24th: Dean Martin Show, last airs on NBC-TV.

24th: Duke Ellington, blues singer, dies of cancer at 75

28th: 26th Emmy Awards: MASH, Alan Alda & Mary Tyler Moore win.

May 1975



On 1 May 1975, in Hong Kong, US Ambassador to South Vietnam shows grim face as he is surrounded by press men on the USS Blue Ridge in the South China Sea, 4/30. He abandoned the US embassy in Saigon just before the Saigon government surrendered to the Viet Cong and evacuated to the ship with other embassy staffers.

4th: Moe Howard, [Moses Horowitz], comedian (The Three Stooges), dies at 77.



Larry, Mo and Curley

(continued....)



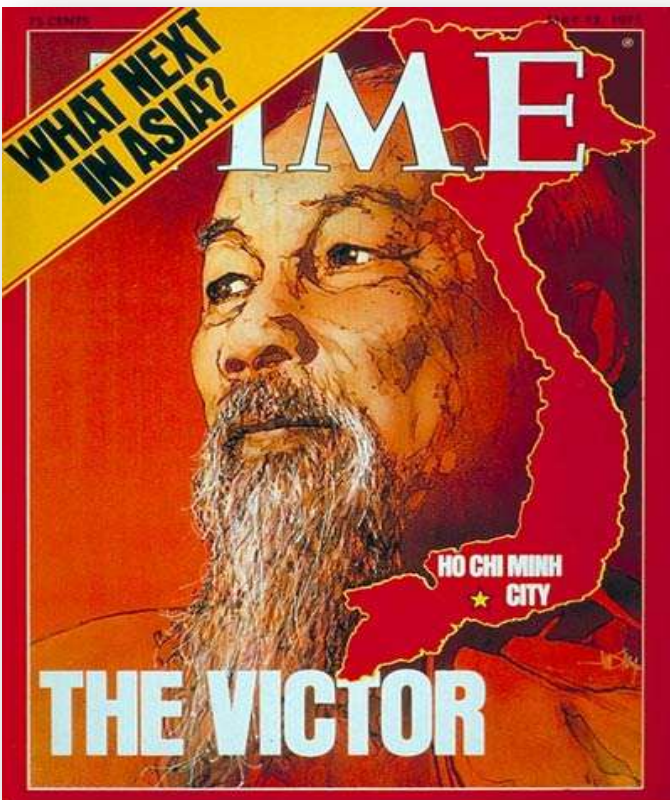


On 6 May 1975, in El Toro Mas, California, former South Vietnam Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky talks with newsmen after his arrival on the U.S. mainland with a group of other refugees aboard a military transport plane from Guam and Honolulu. Asked if he wanted to become a U.S. citizen Ky replied that it was too soon to decide, "I just want 48 hours of sleep."

7th: President Ford declares an end to "Vietnam Era".

12th: US merchant ship Mayaguez seized by Cambodian forces.

12th: Just days after the government of South Vietnam surrendered to the VC and North Vietnamese armies, Ho Chi Minh appears on the cover of *Time* magazine, this time with the heading, "The Victor."



14th: French press reports massive deportation from Cambodia.

14th: US forces raid Cambodian island of Koh Tang to free Mayaguez ship.



"On 15 May 1975, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, the victorious North Vietnamese forces parade through the streets of Saigon."

16th: Muhammad Ali TKOs Ron Lyle in 11 for heavyweight boxing title.

22nd: Lefty Grove, American Baseball Player dies (b. 1900).

22nd: Jackie "Moms" Mabley, comedienne (Amazing Grace), dies at 81.

27th: Ezzard Charles, heavyweight boxing champion (1949-51), dies at 53.

Under Communist leadership, Vietnam has failed to make its mark on the world. The new Vietnam needs to focus on the future.

April 30, 1975, holds great significance for the Vietnamese. For some, it is the day when their country was lost. For others it is the day when their country, once divided between North and South, was finally reunited.

For them, April 30 is a date to be celebrated. Ultimately, however, it is the day when Saigon fell to the Communists, and Vietnam and her citizens were forever changed. In wars there are winners and losers; and for those loyal to the government of South Vietnam or opposed the Communist regime, they were the defeated, forced to flee and settle abroad.

Yet, in an ironic twist of fate, these refugees have by and large succeeded in integrating into their new community and rebuilt their lives.

Conversely, those who remained behind, willingly or unwillingly, were subject to poverty and poor leadership of a single-party state. (*Asian Sentinel*)



----- 'I STILL GOT ONE ARM, SO COME ON AND FIGHT' -----

Heroic Army Sergeant Defies Death

By Richard Growald
United Press International
July 31, 1966

SAIGON July 30 –The Viet Cong machine gunner fingered his trigger and waited.

Twenty feet away a United States Army paratroop sergeant came crawling toward him.

The Communist fired his bullets laying open the ribs and chest of Sgt. Charles B. Morris. It should have been the end for the sergeant but it was only the beginning.



FOR FIVE HOURS the Galx, Charlie Va. soldier fought although wounded again and again. He led his men, cheered them, nursed them, saved their lives and turned his ordeal into triumph.

The special kind of glorious madness that was Sgt. Alvin York's in the First World War and Sgt. Audie Murphy in the Second World War belonged to Morris that dark morning on June 29 on a jungle plain 33 miles southeast of Saigon.

He led a squad, and the squad led the 3rd Platoon, Company A of the 173rd Airborne's 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion. The platoon was out alone and Morris had sighted something odd.

TO THE 34-YEAR-OLD veteran of Korea and the Dominican crisis, some broken twigs and some large, freshly dug holes, meant guerrillas were near. Morris spread his squad out in firing positions and crawled forward.

He did not know how close trouble was until the Viet-Cong machine gunner snapped off the eight rounds that opened his chest. Bleeding heavily Morris fired back and killed the gunner.

He kept crawling. A few feet from the gun, Morris pitched a grenade. The blast killed the rest of the gun crew and smashed the gun.

The sergeant then crawled as fast as he could to scout other gun positions.

Then he sneaked back to his platoon leader, and reported two 50-caliber machine guns, two 30-caliber mortar positions and trenches filled with guerrillas.

He refused first aid and a medic's attempt to inject morphine to ease his pain. He broke away to lead his squad to better firing positions. *Closer, he said, closer.* He placed his men only 20 yards from the Communists. The 3rd Platoon was doing none too well.

THE MORTARS AND machine guns began cutting into the platoon. Morris, feeling woozy, crawled to a medic, but a Viet-Cong recoilless rifle killed the medic.

The sergeant treated himself, leaped up and began running back to his platoon. A Communist grenade blast knocked him down.

Morris rolled over and reached his men, doing the medic's work. Pfc William Marshall of Detroit yelled: *"Sarge, I think I just lost my arm."*

Morris found that Marshall was correct. The young soldier also lost a foot. Pfc Thomas S. Shasteen of Pomeroy, Ohio, later reported: *"Marshall told me he owed his life to Sergeant Morris. He told me that after he was hit, the Sergeant crawled to his side, giving encouragement and all possible aid...He found some morphine and injected it into Marshall"...* The Sergeant saved at least five wounded men from dying, his commanders said. The youngsters knew. *"Did you see how Sergeant Morris performed?"* asked Edward Balls Rye, N.Y.



What was left of the 3rd Platoon, A/2/503d. Operation Yorktown, 6/23/66 -7/8/66, Xuan Loc Province, RVN. (Photo from Bob "Doc" Beaton A/2/503 collection)

BALLS WATCHED MORRIS get a tourniquet on a wounded medic's leg just before another mortar round killed the medic. Sixty feet in front, the Communists tried psychological warfare. *"Die, Americans! Die, Americans!"* they shouted in English.

(continued...)



Morris answered:

"Come on, come on out and fight comrades!"

Pfc Edward C. Anderson of Germfask, Mich., remembered later that his wounded sergeant hollered: "I still got one arm and one leg so come on and fight!"

Morris had been wounded again. His wounds were telling and he passed out.

When he came to Morris returned to his men and his rifle. He was treating another wounded paratrooper when a grenade blast ripped his right hand, slicing off a finger.

WITH HIS RIGHT HAND almost useless, Morris grasped grenades in his left hand and pulled the pins with the thumb of his right hand. He halted a Viet-Cong. The he passed out again.

When he came to his sight was blurred, but the battle raged.

Morris noticed his men were taking machine gun fire from the rear. All of his men nearby were wounded. So Morris and another wounded man inched back to silence the machine gun.

The machine gun killed Morris' companion. A grenade peppered Morris' body with more fragments. Slowly, painfully, the sergeant crawled behind the body of the dead American. Using it to support his rifle, he began firing. He silenced the machine gun.

When Morris returned to the platoon he found only nine men in fighting condition. Exposing himself again and again, he dragged the wounded to an area where, with the least amount of shifting, they could make a last stand.

The chances of survival did not appear too good.

MORRIS THOUGHT of his wife, Mary, and his son Douglas Charles, 9.

When a relief force finally arrived, Morris still was dragging himself from man to man, praising his fighters and telling the wounded to "hang on...hang on boy."

He handed the fresh troops documents he plucked from Communists bodies. The documents showed how two Viet-Cong regiments were waiting to ambush another paratrooper unit.

The new troops offered to carry Morris to a helicopter. Morris, who was later hospitalized, refused.

"I've been crawling for five hours on this battlefield. Just show me where the choppers will land and I will crawl there also," he said.

Morris was still being treated for his wounds at the hospital at Vung Tau this week.

His commanding officer said he is recommending Morris for a high award for valor.

Medal of Honor Presentation at White House

SSGT Charles B. Morris

December 24, 1931 – August 22, 1996

(Photos from his buddy Jim Healy A/2/503d)



National Veterans Golden Age Games

May 31 – June 5, 2012 - St. Louis, Missouri



About the National Veterans Golden Age Games

Life begins at 55, at least it does for more than 700 Veterans competing in this national event, the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States. It is the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It is one of the most progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports programs in the world, offering 14 different sports and recreational activities.



www.va.gov/adaptivesports

Contacts

Event Director

Dewayne Vaughan
(202) 632-7138

Local Host Coordinator

Maura Campbell
(314) 894-6113

Media Contact

Anthony Hardman
(734) 845-5059

Sponsors & Hosts

Presented by VA, Help Hospitalized Veterans and Veterans Canteen Service (VCS), with financial assistance from corporate sponsors and individual donors.



Athletes at the Arch

Registration for the 26th National Veterans Golden Age Games in St. Louis is now open! The Games will be held May 31 – June 5 offering exciting competition for Veterans age 55 and

older who receive care at the VA. NVGAG 2012 is also a qualifying event for the 2013 National Senior Games. See you in St. Louis!



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



2012 Currahee Reunion, 3rd Battalion 506th Infantry Regiment (Airborne), May 2 - 5, 2012. Hilton Garden Inn, Columbus, GA

Contact:
Hoyt Bruce Moore, III
Web: www.506infantry.org/reunion.htm



Casper Platoon Reunion 2012, June 28 - July 1, 2012, Hilton San Francisco Financial District, San Francisco, CA

Contact:
Steve Greene, Reunion Chairman
Web: greenaire@mac.com



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, June 6 - 10, 2012, Lexington, Kentucky hosted by Chapter 17. See early notice on Pages 28-41.

Contact:
Dave Carmon
Eml: dcarmon@roadrunner.com
Web: www.skysoldier17.com



101st Airborne Division Association 67th Annual Reunion, August 14-17, 2012. Marriott Nashville Airport, Nashville, TN.

Contact:
Phn: **931-431-0199**



Recon, HHC, 2/503 '66-'67 is having a reunion in Lexington, Kentucky the same days as the 173d Association annual reunion next month.

Contact:
Jerry Hassler
Eml: hassler173@juno.com



56th Annual Reunion of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, September 23 - 26, 2012. Holiday Inn, Richmond Intl. Airport, Sandston, VA.

Contact:
Nancy Young, Secretary
Eml: youngncy@comcast.net

~ Other Reunions ~

Battle of the Bulge Veterans, September 26-30, 2012. New Orleans, LA.

Contact:
Doris Davis
Phn: **650-654-0101**
Eml: doris@battleofthebulge.org
Web: <http://www.battleofthebulge.org/>



4/503d Reunion, Friday, June 8, 2012. We're going to do it during the annual 173d Association reunion in Lexington, KY. Jerry Downard, Donnie Farmer and Joe Fleisch are taking the lead. More later, but mark your Calendar.

ACTUNG!

LOOK FOR DETAILS IN FUTURE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER FOR THE THIRD 2/503d VIETNAM-ERA REUNION TO BE HELD IN COCOA BEACH, FLORIDA. START SAVING YOUR P's FOR...

"2ND BAT ON THE BEACH"



2012 Combat Infantryman's Reunion, October 18-21, 2012. Nashville, TN.

Contact:
Web: <http://cibassoc.com/>

Note: If you're aware of any upcoming Airborne reunions please send details to: rto173d@cfl.rr.com



Sky Soldiers.....Fall In!

Dear Sky Soldiers & Friends of Sky Soldiers:



On behalf of all members of Chapter 17 and our 2012 Reunion Committee, I hope you'll make plans now to attend this year's 173d Airborne Brigade Association Reunion in beautiful Lexington, KY next month. A registration form is

included on Page 30 of this newsletter along with complete details about our reunion.

Reunion Central will be the Hyatt Regency Hotel, where old friends, comrades and their families will be gathering.

The centerpiece of this year's reunion includes *Operation Corregidor II*, an interactive presentation by paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought in the Pacific during WWII. The unique venue selected for this historic event will be the Kentucky Theatre, a short walk from the hotel. Following their remarks and a brief video presentation of the 503rd from WWII, we'll open the floor for some Q&A. We hope you will be sure to attend this once-in-a-lifetime event and personally meet these men of the *Greatest Generation* during the reunion. The 173d will further honor these troopers at the closing banquet.



The Hyatt....Reunion Central

We look forward to welcoming you to Lexington, Kentucky for some *History, Horses & Hooch*; but most of all, in *Airborne Brotherhood!*

All the Way!

Roy Scott
President
173d Airborne Brigade Association

Please visit our reunion website at:
<http://www.skysoldier17.com/Reunion.htm>



The Kentucky Theatre, site for *Operation Corregidor II*



(continued....)

We're still looking for Sky Soldiers to sign-up for our golf outing, so be sure to register early for that.



The 2012 173d Reunion

Lexington, KY

June 6 -10, 2012

Hosted By Chapter 17

Room rate 115.00 plus tax per night with Free Parking

New Registration fees:

Sky Soldiers 99.00

Spouses & Guests 75.00

Gold Star 75.00

Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner

The Hyatt is taking reservations now.

Call 800.233.1234

Ask for the 173 Airborne guestroom block or code G-173A.

Also use this code when making reservations on-line
at the Lexington-Hyatt website - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Information and Forms will be posted soon at www.skysoldier.org and www.Skysoldier17.com



~ REUNION PROGRAM ~

Hosted by Midwest Chapter 17



June 6 - Wednesday

0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
 0900 – 2230 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
 0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
 1800 – 2000 President's Reception @ Jasmine-Franklin

June 7 - Thursday

0700 – 1230 Golf Outing TBA GC
 0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
 0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
 0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
 1300 – 1600 Operation Corregidor II, Kentucky Theatre

June 8 - Friday

0830 – 1030 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast @ Regency 1
 0900 – 1100 Board of Directors Meeting @ Regency 3
 0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
 0900 – 2200 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
 1000 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
 1100 – 1500 Kentucky Veterans Memorial – Frankfort – VFW Lunch

June 9 - Saturday

0830 – 1000 Ladies Brunch @ Bluegrass Pre-function Area
 0900 – 1130 General Membership Meeting @ Regency 1&2
 0900 – 1700 Registration @ Regency 1 Foyer
 0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
 0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room

Banquet

1800 – 1845 Cocktail Hour @ Bluegrass Ballroom
 1845 – 1900 Post Colors/Convocation @ Bluegrass Ballroom
 1900 – 2035 Dinner @ Bluegrass Ballroom
 2035 – 2115 Speakers & Awards @ Bluegrass Ballroom
 2115 Retire the Colors

June 10 Sunday

0800 – 0900 Memorial Service @ Regency 1
 1130 Reunion Closing

BE SURE TO ATTEND OPERATION CORREGIDOR II



173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION 2012 REUNION

JUNE 6-10, 2012, LEXINGTON, KY

~ Registration Form ~

Please print. Copy form for additional guest(s)

My Name: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Brigade Unit Served With: _____

Dates served: _____

Registration/Event Fees

(Check boxes)

- Per Sky Soldier Association Member \$99.
- Per Each Guest. (Number of Guest(s) ____) \$75.
- Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner
- Per Child or all other extra dinner only guests \$40.
- Per Gold Star Family Member \$75.
- Per Active duty Soldier (Not on Orders) \$75.
- Per Active Duty Soldier on Orders Free (i.e. Command, Color Guard)
- Per Vendor Table \$75.
- Ladies Brunch (Number attending ____) Includ
- Per player in Golf Tournament (No: ____) \$45

Enclosed is my check for this Total Amount: \$_____

Please make Check Payable and Mail to:

Midwest Chapter 17
 P.O. Box 09640
 Columbus, OH 43209

Hotel Reservations:

Hyatt Regency – Lexington, \$115.00 + tax per night.
 Reservations: 1-800-233-1234
 Request group rate for 173d Airborne Assn. guestroom block or code G-173A. This is also the code to use if making reservations on-line at - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Overflow Hotel:

To be announced



"HISTORY, HORSES & HOOCH"



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / May 2012 – Issue 40

Page 30 of 70



OPERATION CORREGIDOR II

Midwest Chapter 17 is proud to announce we have invited five paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought throughout the Pacific during WWII along with their companions to attend next month's 173d Association reunion in Lexington, KY as guests of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade and friends of the 173d and 503rd. This is *troopers honoring troopers* and is not sanctioned by either the 173d or 503rd Associations. *It's a paratrooper thang.*

In 2010, at the annual reunion in N. Myrtle Beach, SC hosted by South Carolina Chapter 30, five (5) troopers of the 503rd attended as guests of troopers of our Brigade and friends of the 173d and 503rd. As honest Abe said,

“Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure,”

and that's just what we'll be doing in Lexington, honoring these men.

Of the over 3000 paratroopers who served with the 503rd during WWII, sadly, less than 100 men are still with us. We hope you'll join in not only helping out with the funding (until sufficient funds have been raised), but also attending our reunion next month and meeting these troopers personally and attending the WWII interactive presentations.

To date we've raised over 2/3 of the funds needed to cover the cost associated with inviting these troopers of the 503rd and their spouses or a family member to the reunion. For information about donating to this worthy effort, please contact rto173d@cfl.rr.com for details, or use the form on the following page to send in your donation -- please don't contribute if you're having financial difficulties.

As of now these Sky Soldiers and friends of the 173d and 503rd have made contributions. Our thanks to each of you for keeping alive *The Airborne Spirit!!*

Steve Abdalla, 2/503, 3/503 Ron Amyot, 2/503
Ed Anthony, 172d Mid John Arnold, 1RAR
Jim Baskin, 4/503 Bob Beemer, 2/503
Kane Benson, 1/503 Jerry Berry, 4/503
Don Bliss, Caspers Pat Bowe, 2/503
Wayne Bowers, 2/503 Bravo Bulls, 2/503
Jim Brookmiller, 4/503 Bob Bruce, 1/503
Bob Carmichael, 2/503 Leta Carruth, 2/503 Friend
Mark Carter, 173d LRRP Chapter 27, Australia
Chapter 30, 173d Bob Clark, 1st, 5th, 7th SF

Honoring Our WWII 503rd Troopers

Harry Cleland, 2/503 John Cleland, 3/503, 173d Bde
Dave Colbert, 2/503 Jim Cole, 2/503, 3/319th
Art Coogler, 1/503 Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP
Gary Davidson, 2/503 Terry Davis, 2/503
Mike de Gyurky 2/503 Bruce Demboski, 2/503
George Dexter, 2/503 Roger Dick, 2/503
Tom Dooley, 2/503 Joe Drabin, 2/503
Jim Dresser, 2/503 Frank Dukes, 2/503
Tony Esposito, 2/503 Scott Fairchild, 82nd Abn
Pat Feely, 2/503, B Med Paul Fisher, 3/503
Craig Ford, 1/503 Joe Franklin, 173d Bde
Jim Frelak, Cowboys A.B. Garcia, 2/503
Tony Geishausser, Cowboys Jim Gettel, 2/503
Larry Goff, 173d Johnny Graham, 2/503
Jim Green, 2/503 Bernie Griffard, 2/503
Frank Guerrero, 4/503 Steve Haber, 2/503
Eddie Hair, 1/503 Larry Hampton, 1/503
Tom Hanson, 3/503 Bill Harlan, 2/503
Mike Harris, 2/503 Matt Harrison, 2/503
Jerry Hassler, 2/503 Hank Hatch, 2/503 Eng.
Dennis Hill, 1/503, 3/503 Vince Hoang, SVAF
Dick Holt, 2/503 Nick Hun, 2/503
Johnny Jones, 2/503 Peter Kacerguls, 3/503
Ken Kaplan, 2/503 Ed Kearney, 2/503
Jack Kelley, 2/503, 3/503 Dave Kies, 2/503
Bill Knapp, 2/503 Bobby Kohaya, 2/503
Gary Kozdron, 1/503 John Kyne, 2/503
Joe Lamb, 2/503 David Leung, 1/503
Dave Linkenhoker, 2/503 Joe Logan, 2/503
Roy Lombardo, 2/503 Bob Lucas, 2/503
Richard Martinez, 2/503 Tom McGall, 101st
Jackie "Mom" McIntyre, 42d IPSD Friend
Tom McIntyre, WWII Navy Pat McShane, 173d
Bill Metheny, 4/503 Mark Mitchell, 2/503
Jim Montague, 2/503 Butch Nery, 4/503, N75
Bill Nicholls, 2/503 Joe Nigro, 101st
Hal Nobles, 3/503 Bill Ostlund, 173d
Jack Owens, 2/503 Larry Paladino, 2/503
Jerry Patterson, 2/503 Alfred Paul, 2/503
Ed Perkins, 2/503 Lou Pincock, 2/503
Jack Price, 2/503 Gary Prisk, 2/503
Dick Prosser, 2/503 Dan Reed, 2/503
Bill Reynolds, 2/503 Jack Ribera, 2/503
Jim Robinson, 2/503 Lee Robinson, 2/503
Graham Rollings, 2/503 Marjorie Royer, 173d Friend
Andy Russell, 2/503 Jack Schimpf, 2/503
Roy Scott, 3/319 Bill Shippey, 2/503, N75
Steve Skolochenko, D Maint Ken Smith, 2/503
Lew Smith, 2/503 Tim Smith, 173d Friend
Jerry Sopko, 4/503 Larry Speed, 1/503
Jim Stanford, 2/503 George Stapleton, 3/503
Kaiser Sterbinsky, 2/503 Mike Sturges, 2/503
Bob Sweeney, 2/503 Marc Thurston, 2/503
Alt Turner, 2/503 Steve Vargo, 2/503
Jerry Wiles, B/2/503 Ron Woodley, 2/503
Bill Wyatt, 2/503





~ OPERATION CORREGIDOR II ~



Honoring our WWII 503rd Paratroopers at 173d Reunion in Lexington

Yes! I am honored to support bringing to the 173d Airborne Brigade Association's annual reunion in Lexington, KY as guests of our Brigade, paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought in the Pacific during WWII.

My name: _____ Unit: _____

To help offset the cost for this, enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____.

Please add to note line "503rd Guest Donation" and mail check payable to:

**Midwest Chapter 17, 173d Abn Bde
P.O. Box 09640
Columbus, OH 43209**

Note: Your donation, not to exceed \$100., will be used to help defray the cost of hotel rooms, reunion registrations and special gifts to our 503rd PRCT guests on behalf of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep).



L-R: WWII 503rd PRCT troopers who attended the Myrtle Beach Reunion in 2010 as guests of our Brigade: Chet Nycum, Chuck Breit, Charlie Hylton, the late Paul Hinds and John Cleland.



Chuck teaching lyrics to *Blood on the Risers* to 1st Bat's Craig Ford in SC.



Charlie ready to burst out in song before doing a mean Texas 2 Step.



You could hear a pin drop as Chet told of his PLF on *The Rock*.



Honoring those 503rd super troopers at 173d reunion in Myrtle Beach, SC, 2010.



"Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure"

~ President Abraham Lincoln





~ Operation Corregidor II ~

During our 173d reunion next month in Lexington, KY, the Chapter 17 reunion steering committee has secured the *Kentucky Theatre* just a couple blocks from reunion central at the Hyatt Hotel, to serve as site for *Operation Corregidor II*, the interactive meeting with WWII 503rd troopers; *Operation Corregidor I* having been held in N. Myrtle Beach at our 2010 reunion, and *Operation Corregidor* having been held on Corregidor in 1945. This historic building will be ideal for this gathering of paratrooper warriors and their families. Chapter 17 is even providing popcorn and cold drinks!



Publicity stunt for an early “talkie” featuring The Marx Brothers. (Courtesy, University of Kentucky Photo Archives)

More than just a movie house...

The Kentucky Theatre is a familiar Landmark to generations of Lexingtonians. It’s richly ornamented walls and glowing stained glass fixtures have hosted gala events and entertained overflowing crowds. They have also endured hard times and disasters, both natural and manmade. And so it stands today, a true palace of memories, a hall full of comedy, tragedy, drama, adventure, and just plain fun.

We hope you enjoy this brief look at her history and join us soon to continue the tradition by making some memories of your own.

1965

The Sound of Music. Thousands lined up daily to see this summer’s timeless hit.



The present Kentucky Theatre auditorium (by Lee P. Thomas)



October, 1921
Construction plans announced. The Builder, Lafayette Amusement Company offered \$20 in gold to name Lexington’s “palatial new photoplay house”.

The winner, of course, was the “Kentucky.”

April 24, 1927

Enter the “talkies”. In a major marketing coup, the Kentucky was the first to introduce Warner Brothers’ vitaphone sound films to Lexington.



Operation Corregidor II
coming next month to the Kentucky



The concession area (by Raymond Adams)



OPERATION CORREGIDOR II

*an interactive meeting with
WWII paratroopers from the
503rd Parachute Infantry
Regiment*

DICK ADAMS
RAY BASHAM
CHUCK BREIT
TONY CICCHINO
JIM MULLANEY
TONY SIERRA

Hosted by: Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade & Their Friends

*Tony Geishauser,
Moderator*

*Seating opens at 1300
Program begins at 1330*



KENTUCKY THEATRE

214 E. Main Street, Lexington, Kentucky

THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 2012

Graphics by Ashley Bowers, daughter of Wayne Bowers C/2/503d





~ HONORED WWII 503rd PRCT GUEST ~



Richard “Dick” Adams

Richard (Dick) Adams was born in New York City on 21 July 1922. His father served as a Sergeant in WWI and a Colonel in Army Ordnance during WWII.



Dick at a spry 89

Dick was inducted into the Army in 1943. After Basic Training at Ft. Benning, GA, and some time with the ASTP and the 20th Armored Division, Dick volunteered for jump training at Ft. Benning. In October of 1944 he was shipped to New Guinea, then to Leyte and ultimately to Mindoro. He and the other replacements were scheduled to join the 11th Airborne, but Col. Jones, CO of the 503rd, had other ideas. Dick was assigned to HQ Company 3rd Bn in an 81mm mortar platoon. On 16 February 1945 he jumped onto the Corregidor golf course, and ended up in a tree in Crockett Ravine. He spent a good part of the first day getting injured troopers to the aid station.

When General MacArthur returned to Corregidor on 6 March, Dick was there. He is in the background (red arrow) of this picture of MacArthur in a Jeep. The picture is on display in the museum on Corregidor.



After the Negros campaign and occupation duty in Japan, Dick returned home and joined the National Guard as Operations Sergeant in the 165th Inf. and left the Guard after 20 years as a Master Sergeant.

Dick has a law degree from St. John University and is retired from General Motors. It was at GM that he met his wife of 34 years, Nancy. They have two daughters. Kim, age 31, is a preschool drama teacher. She is

married and lives in Fenton, MI with her husband, Christian. Alyson, age 29, is a Captain in the Air Force, stationed at Hurlburt Field in Florida. Dick and Nancy live in Farmington Hills, MI with Dakota (Rottweiler), Cole (cat) and Heidi (African gray parrot). All are healthy and happy.

In 2012 Dick returned to Corregidor with his wife and two daughters. They were fortunate to be accompanied by a group of people very knowledgeable about Corregidor and WWII in the Philippines. Included in the group were Steve and Marcia Kwiecinski, who live on the Rock and conduct private and group tours (Steve’s dad was a defender of Corregidor and was a POW). Peter Parsons, writer, director and producer of video documentaries, came to interview Dick for a documentary he is working on. Peter was a child in 1941 living in Manila, and has vivid memories of that time. He currently lives on Luzon. He is the son of Navy Commander Chick Parsons who organized and directed the missions to supply and assist the guerrilla resistance movement in the Philippines. Also there was Carl Welteke, a retired Navy diver who lives in Subic Bay and has explored nearly every inch of Corregidor and Bataan, accompanied by John Moffitt, an extraordinary photographer who documents everything with his camera. Rounding out the group was Paul Whitman, author, lawyer and webmaster for the 503rd Heritage Battalion website.

Remembering the trip, Dick wrote:

“The Rock once again is a lush tropical island with beautiful sunsets and panoramic views of Bataan. But, protruding from the carpet of green are the grey stone memories that I recall when I think about February, 1945. The Mile-Long Barracks, the curved line of the officer’s quarters, the buildings at Middleside, Malinta Hill, the dock at Bottomside, the road around Malinta Hill toward Monkey Point are all lined with memories in spite of their green covering. The parade ground is still there minus the shell holes, but the golf course is unrecognizable...no shell holes or blown-off trees, just waist high green. The lighthouse, two water tanks and the old white metal flag pole still stand.”



Trooper Dick Adams





~ HONORED WWII 503rd PRCT GUEST ~



Raymond Morris Basham

Raymond Morris Basham was born January 25, 1923, in Bowling Green, KY. Ray lived there with his mother, father, who was a city fireman, four sisters and two brothers. He was educated in the city school system, enjoyed hunting and fishing, and worked hard at riding his bicycle through the city streets delivering the daily newspaper.



Medic Ray

From reading those daily papers that he delivered he said, *"I knew the war was coming"*, so at 17 he joined the Army National Guard and in January 1941, he volunteered for active duty. He was sent to Camp Shelby, MS. He liked the Army life but after the War started in Dec. 1941, he became unhappy with the unit he was assigned to because, as he stated, *"They could not pass on inspection"*. When the Army requested volunteers for the new elite paratrooper units he eagerly volunteered and was assigned in July 1941 to the 503rd at Ft. Benning, GA for paratrooper training. After completing training there he was assigned to advanced training at Ft. Bragg, NC. The 503rd sailed for Australia on Oct. 1942 aboard the now infamous Poelau Laut. The trip took 42 days of hardship for the troopers aboard. The troops had only two meals per day and poor at that. The sleeping areas were crowded and many soldiers were sick which made living conditions miserable. Ray said that many hot nights he would sleep on topside with only a blanket in order to have some fresh air to breath. Needless to say he and all were glad to reach Australia on Dec. 2, 1942. He said the Australian people were kind and generous people who greeted them with good food and hospitality.

After jungle war training in Australia the 503rd started their war campaign in the Pacific. Ray jumped at Markham Valley and was wounded at Noemfoor. A blast came far too close and knocked him unconscious. While at the field hospital being treated for a concussion and burst ear drum, the doctors told him he would be headed home but after two weeks he was sent back to his unit. Ray was awarded the Purple Heart for his wounds.

He served with the 503rd during the Corregidor invasion and was greatly disappointed because he did not get to jump on Corregidor. The casualties were so great the

first day he and his Co. B were sent ashore in navy boats on Feb. 17th. The recapture of Corregidor came at a high price for the 503rd, and for Ray who was a medic, the worst was the explosion at Monkey Point. He and fellow soldiers at their commanders' orders had just moved to the bottom of the hill when it exploded. He thought he was dead and when he discovered that he was not, he began doing his best to help the other soldiers who were wounded. He was surrounded by soldiers who had been with him the entire war who were mortally wounded. Ray was present when his Commander Jones presented the return of The Fortress of Corregidor to Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and the American flag was raised. It was a proud day.

The Army points system sent Ray home in July of 1945, and he was discharged at Camp Antebury, IN, on August 3, 1945. Ray returned home and by Oct. 23, 1945, had married the girl left behind, Mary Katherine Basham. They have two daughters and two sons.

Ray spent many years working in the construction business and built many businesses, homes, and numerous buildings on the campus of Western Kentucky University at Bowling Green, KY. He retired from the FMC Co. at the age of 62 and now enjoys the retired life with his wife at Rockfield, KY.



Ray...one of the first paratroopers

Ray loves his country and is a true patriot. The flag flies in his front yard daily. For him, it will always be, *"All the Way"*.

Airborne!





~ HONORED WWII 503rd PRCT GUEST ~



CHARLES E. "CHUCK" BREIT

Charles E. Breit (Chuck), was born December 25, 1925, in Philadelphia, PA. At age 17 he enlisted in the Army in May, 1943. He took his basic training at Camp Croft, SC, during which time he volunteered for the paratroops. Chuck started jump school at Ft. Benning, GA in early 1944, and upon completion volunteered for demolition training (at age 16 he had prior experience in demolitions working for the Cleveland Wrecking Company in Philadelphia and Camden, NJ).



Dapper Chuck

In October 1944, he shipped overseas to New Guinea where he joined the 503rd PRCT. He then went to Mindoro, Philippines, where he was assigned to Regt. Hdq. Co., demolition platoon. Then Corregidor. Chuck's job there was demolition and he was a flame-thrower man. He landed in a shell hole right in front of the long barracks which was his mission to secure. Upon landing the demolition groups gathered together and did just that. After two weeks of bitter fighting the island was secured by the Rock Force. Chuck was proud to serve as one of General MacArthur's honor guards along with his assistant flame-thrower, Johnnie Banks. He was there to watch (then) Col. Jones say to General MacArthur, **"Sir, I present you the fortress Corregidor."**

After Chuck landed he marked the spot and later was able to retrieve his chute and sent it home with a wounded comrade, Cpl. Vincent A. Minkler. It now stands in the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, GA, where it is a memorial to all the members of the 503 who jumped on Corregidor Island. Returning to Corregidor 50 years later with his wife Dee, he found the shell hole still there. *"Cold chills and deja vu indeed,"* he thought.

After his discharge on February 10, 1946, Chuck joined with a 17th airborne vet and formed an air show, *"Bobby Ward's Sky Devils,"* which lasted about three years. Utilizing his paratrooper training he performed delayed drops, wing walking and other stunts at fairs and carnivals all across the country. His partner had been an automobile stunt driver prior to the war so that was added to their repertoire. They then joined *"Kochman's*

World Champion Hell Drivers" performing head-on collisions, ice crashes and numerous other stunts. Chuck also doubled for Clark Gable in one of his movies.

The show wintered in Miami, FL, and in 1952 Chuck met another ex-paratrooper from the European theatre who was working as a painter of radio and t.v. towers. Now ready to leave the road and wanting a warm climate, they joined forces and in 1952 he founded *"Breit's Tower Service."* BTS remains the oldest tower company in the southeast today under the direction of his son.

Chuck retired in 1996, and he and Dee were finally able to leave the Miami life in the fast lane to a place in west central Florida on a beautiful river. He stays very busy with home renovation projects and restoration of their 1940 45' ELCO yacht upon which they lived for 25 years in Coconut Grove, FL.

Chuck has stayed active and involved in the 503rd PRCT Association WWII, serving as national president from 1991-1993, and again from 2006-2008, and is a current board member. He is also the Deep South Chapter president and has been for 6 years. Chuck and Dee have a contented life and enjoy travel and visits from old friends.

Interesting anecdote regarding Chuck:

My wife was standing next to me when I opened the envelope with Chuck's brief bio and photos. Before reading his bio, she picked up his photos and looked at this picture of him in his chute and said, *"He looks like Clark Gable!"* Ed



Chuck, driving the girls crazy!

All the Way!





~ HONORED WWII 503rd PRCT GUEST ~



Anthony “Tony” Cicchino

Following is some brief background information about my life.

At seventeen I joined the army and did my basic training at Camp Croft, South Carolina. From there I went to Fort Benning, Georgia for parachute training. Following five weeks of parachute training, two weeks later I was on my way to join the 503rd RCT, in New Guinea. I served in the Service Company my entire time with the 503rd.

After returning stateside I held several jobs, but I was not at my best. I reenlisted and was posted to Europe for four years.



Paratrooper Tony

Following discharge from the army, I went to work as a vending machine repairman until 1957. I then bought a liquor bar in New Jersey, and in 1962 I sold the business and moved to Florida where I went back into the liquor industry where I remained until 1980, when I retired.

My wife and I traveled a lot until she passed away in 2008.

Today I’m retired and living in Boynton, Beach, Florida with my friend Theresa Poklop.



Tony embarking on a life’s journey like no other

Once a Paratrooper...Always a Paratrooper



Tony, far right, with his buddies. Those daring young men in their jumping machines. *Airborne!*





~ HONORED WWII 503rd PRCT GUEST ~



James Mullaney

Jim Mullaney was born August 14, 1920 in Louisville, Kentucky. His family consisted of one brother and three sisters. His brother was five years older than him and two of his sisters were older. All are deceased now.



Jim's brother died in a Japanese prison Camp on February 3, 1945 in Japan. He was on two of the Japanese "Hell Ships" transporting prisoners from Subic Bay to the home islands to prevent their rescue by the advancing American forces. The 503rd was on Corregidor about the time of the Japanese ship sinkings. "So close and yet so far," says Jim.

Jim went to Louisville Male High School and got his first taste of the military in their ROTC. After graduating he joined the army reserve. It was 1939. He was called to active duty in January 1942 - three weeks after Pearl Harbor.

He was sent to Fort Benning (Harmony Church Area) for a refresher course. An officer interviewed anyone who might be interested in the Airborne. After seeing the paratroopers in training there he became more than interested, and wondered if he might be good enough to someday be one of them.

After completing the "refresher course" he received orders to report to Lawson Field for Jump School; Class 18A - April 1942. Jim completed jump school in early May 1942, then proceeded to Fort Bragg where he joined the 503rd Parachute Battalion. There were no regiments then.

A short time later - about two weeks - the 503rd Regiment came into existence. Jim was assigned to "H" Company and stayed with the Company for the entire war.

On October 10, 1942, he left Bragg and took a train ride to Camp Stoneman in California. After about a week there he and his buddies were taken to San Francisco and boarded a Dutch Ship, manned by Dutch officers with a *Java-neese* crew (people from Java). They sailed to Panama where they picked up the 501st Battalion and headed west for Australia. "We saw neither ship nor plane till reaching Brisbane about 32 days later," says Jim.

Anchored in the harbor for about a day, they then headed north in the Great Barrier Reef to Cairns, Australia. Upon disembarking, the Australian army took them by trucks about twenty miles south, where they parked alongside a road with dense jungle on each side where they camped, sleeping on the ground that night.

Jim and his fellow paratroopers erected tents and were there for the next several months. "Strange land - even stranger animals - snakes too - bandicoots - wallabys - kangaroos. And thousands of exotic birds." Jim recalls. They spent several months there conducting endless training in ungodly heat and rain. Several people went to the front in New Guinea during this period. In August they were shipped out to Port Moresby.

They prepared for their first combat jump on the north side of the island at Nadzab in the Markham Valley. After the jump, and their first taste of combat, Jim and his buddies returned to Port Moresby for more training and many new replacements.

"We moved around the island - went to the north side - Buna - Gona - Dobadura - and then to Dutch New Guinea and landed on the beaches of Hollandia," says Jim. They were stationed near Cyclops airfield.

The 503rd PIR conducted patrols almost daily and prepared for the Noemfoor Island jump which they made on July 4, 1944. They spent several months on hellish patrols in the muddy paths of that hellish island. "On one patrol three 'H' Company men were eaten by the Japs. But that's another story," Jim says.

The 503rd pretty well conquered the island by late August. They then prepared for the Philippines. They boarded a ship which was part of the largest convoy Jim had ever seen. They landed at Leyte Island but didn't leave the beach, where day and night they had a ringside seat to the Japanese suicide planes sinking their ships offshore.

Soon, Jim and his men were alerted to move to Mindoro Island - about ninety miles south of Manila. They landed on the beach at Mindoro in late December, where for the next few weeks they witnessed the largest air battles they ever saw.

The night after Christmas a Japanese cruiser sat offshore lobbing star shells over their dug-in positions. One explosive round hit their area but was a dud. It was thirty-two inches long and eight inches in diameter. "Lucky it was a dud or I wouldn't be here today," quips Jim. Things then calmed down.

They were given replacements - men and weapons - watches - anything they wanted. They knew something very big was in the offing. Even the food improved.

It was a short flight to Manila Bay and Corregidor. Jim and his buddies made the famous combat jump at 8 a.m., February 16, 1945. **Jim, an original jumper** A fourth jump was called off on Negros Island which had fallen into allied hands. They took a very short barge ride to Negros from Panay.

"I was there until November 1945, and received orders to journey home. After several days on Leyte I boarded a ship called the 'Hugh Rodman' and headed for home sweet home. Got there in early December. God Bless America."





~ HONORED WWII 503rd PRCT GUEST ~



Tony N. Sierra



Proud 503rd Paratrooper Tony

I am honored to be asked to participate in this endeavor. Being a trooper of the 503rd has been the highlight of my life.

I was born in Chihuahua, Mexico and brought to Phoenix, Arizona as a baby. I grew up in very humble circumstances. My single mother worked all her life as a washer-woman and housekeeper to the 'ritzies' in Arizona to support me and my two brothers and my sister.

I joined the army when I was seventeen, the war just having started. I was ordered to Camp Roberts, California for basic infantry training. At Camp Roberts two paratroopers set up shop in the cafeteria to recruit new jumpers. When I saw them in their dress jump suits and the trimmings, mainly the wings, I was instantly sold. Of course, they emphasized that my choices were very limited; either I do nothing AND BE ASSIGNED TO ONE OF THE INFANTRY DIVISIONS BEING ORGANIZED AT THAT TIME, OR BE SELECTIVE

AND JOIN THE CREAM OF THE CROP... THE U.S. PARATROOPERS.

When I arrived at Benning I was at first concerned I would be unable to compete with others and do the things one does to train and harden for the troopers. But once I started I loved it and hardened mentally as well as physically, to finally end up a proud trooper of the 503rd.

Additionally, I was in time able to prod my younger brother to also go to Benning; he ended up with the 101st Airborne Division, jumping on D-Day -- another proud trooper in the Sierra family.

As the years have passed my fellow troopers have become my family, and I cannot imagine what my life would have been if I had never become one of them.



Before Corregidor combat jump

I loved the 503rd and all the men I've met over the decades. It is a sad thing, but we know all things must come to an end. Very few 503rd men are left, but I don't for one minute forget any of those who were my brothers.

Sincerely,

Tony N. Sierra
Second Squad, Third Platoon
D Company, 2nd Battalion
503rd Regimental Combat Team



Tony, second from right in back row, with his squad in New Guinea.





~ OPERATION CORREGIDOR II ~



Tony Geishauser

Moderator

After three and a half years in the US Marine Corps Reserve and attending college in Maine, Tony was bored with college and wanted adventure flying helicopters in Vietnam in 1966. It didn't matter that he had never seen a helicopter up close and personal before that time. The Army radio ads were doing their job and enticed him to sign up and be all he could be.



Tony Geishauser
Major (Ret)
Cowboys

Tony was lucky enough to be assigned to Company A, 82nd Aviation Battalion - known as the "Cowboys." Based out of Bien Hoa, Vietnam, their primary mission was to fly combat and support missions for the 173d Airborne Brigade.

On Tony's first combat flight in Vietnam, he was flying in a flight of four helicopters with his best friend from flight school in the helicopter behind him. Just before landing at a "secured" LZ, Tony's flight was taken under fire by a lone VC firing an AK-47. The helicopter in front of him was hit and the one with his friend, Jim, in it was hit. Tony soon found out his friend was shot in the head and killed instantly on his first flight.

Tony went on to support his beloved "Sky Soldiers" after that tragic first flight. The largest battle he was a part of was on Operation Silver City in the jungles of War Zone "D". His helicopter was loaded with hot A rations for the 2/503d which was located in an LZ area called Zulu Zulu. Unknown by anyone at the time, the battalion was surrounded by nearly 2,000 VC and NVA regulars.

Tony's helicopter was shot down almost as soon as it arrived which began an epic battle where upwards of 500 NVA and VC were killed to the 2/503d's 11 KIA and nearly 200 WIA.

Tony retired as a major and a Master Army Aviator and has had a successful Public Relations and Media relations career in Texas.



Tony, a young chopper pilot in Vietnam, 1966.

Tony will be moderating the meeting with WWII 503rd troopers in Lexington, as he did at the 173d reunion in N. Myrtle Beach in 2010.



Tony's bird at its final resting place.

Note: At the 173d reunion in Ft. Worth years ago Tony made a speech during a reception for 2/503d troopers. In reference to 'spilling our eggs' at Zulu-Zulu, he stated, "*Cowboys may be late sometimes, but we always deliver,*" upon which he presented us with 300 coupons for free breakfast at MacDonald's.



"THREE FLASHLITES ON CORREGIDOR"

Louis G. Aiken, Sr.

(Photo & story courtesy of the 503rd Heritage Battalion web site)



There were not many incidents that were actually funny during the Corregidor operation of February 1945. However there was one incident that I have remembered down through the years that was funny when it occurred and I laugh every time I think of it or tell it to someone else.

This situation or incident occurred not too long after the First Battalion arrived on the island. We in B Company were assigned an area to search out, reconnoiter etc., off Topside on the Ft. Drum side of the island.

Lt. Wirt Cates, a very good officer, was "B" Company CO and Lt. Raymond Barnowsky was a platoon leader. We had covered a good bit of the area assigned, caves etc. and had found no evidence of live enemy. The company came to a stop on a trail and I could tell there was some kind of a discussion going on at or near the entrance of a cave. Shortly Lt. Barnowsky started back down the trail, stopping periodically to discuss something as he progressed toward my squad and platoon. He finally reached my position and asked if I or any member of the platoon had any flashlites. I stated that I didn't know, but however I would inquire. I asked him who wanted the flashlites and just what was their intended use, hell it was broad daylight.

He explained to me that Lt. Cates had come upon a cave with quite a large opening or crawl area. Lt. Cates, it seems, believed that this particular cave had the potential of being a storage area as it developed into the mountain or rock formation of the island, and he wanted to explore this possibility but to do so required the use of flashlites. His specific request was for three (3) flashlites and he had directed Lt. Barnowsky to locate at least three (3) flashlites. Basically this is what Lt. Barnowski explained to me in answer to the question I has asked.

When he had finished explaining to me what the situation was he paused a second and stated,

"You know Sgt. Aiken, he (Lt Cates) evidently intends to hold a flashlight in each hand and put one on his pistol belt, because I sure as hell don't intend to go into that cave with him".



503rd troopers on *The Rock*. The early Tunnel Rats.

I looked at ole Barnowsky for a second and I burst out laughing as did several others near us. Lt. Barnowsky just grinned and moved on searching for flashlites.

Yes, he found the three (3) and yes, Lt. Cates and someone else, not Lt. Barnowsky, entered the cave or crawl area of the cave. Yes, there was a Jap or Japs in the cave and shortly after entering the cave Lt. Cates and whoever it was with him came out very hurriedly. Wm. Arris can probably give you a better description as to why they came out very *fast*, he was much closer to the situation than I was.

I think white phosphorous grenades were introduced into the cave and one lone Jap soldier banzied "B" CO of the 503 RCT, and as he cleared the mouth of the cave he charged with a broken Samurai sword. He was quickly relieved of his assignment and his broken sword. Best I can remember his body was placed in the mouth of the cave and this became his burial place.

If Capt. Wirt Cates, (KIA on Banana Hill - Negros Island late April or early May 1945), and Lt. Raymond Barnowsky, deceased, were here with us today, I feel certain they would both join in a hearty laugh about the Three Flashlights on Corregidor, February 1945.

Actually I talked with Barnowsky via telephone several years prior to his death and we both had a good laugh about this particular incident.

May "The Good Lord" let them both rest in peace.

**Louis G Aiken, Sr.
Co. "B" 503 PIR RCT
June 42-Oct 45**



Taking the Gloves Off – Our Warriors Deserve Better

Recognizing the increasing needs of American Veterans following two exhausting wars, this administration has worked diligently to provide our veterans with the services and support they both deserve and need.

In 2010, this administration proposed to increase the VA Budget from \$98 billion to \$113 billion, a massive 14% increase in VA funding. This was the largest budget increase that the VA had EVER received.

With the largest increase in history, the VA vowed that there would be NO new programs for returning veterans and no expansion of current programs, instead indicating that the increases would go to refurbishing old facilities, building new facilities and providing incentive bonuses to mid-level managers.

Subsequently, veterans who wait long periods for access to existing programs and veterans seeking to get into resident PTSD programs would not see improvements in their wait times. Veterans seeking medications like Lexapro, which have through valid research, demonstrated increased efficacy over standard anti-depressants will not be available to our veterans due to cost.

The administration's generously allocated resources in a time when other organization budgets are being cut, has done nothing to decrease the over 1,000,000 disability claims which are now in arrears and yet to be settled. ...yes, that's one million veterans and family members waiting for support. Claimants who, on appeal wait over three years for any resolution, have coined a new motto for the VA, ***“Apply, Deny and Wait Until you Die”***.

This administration's proposed budget for 2011 again increased VA funding by massive amounts, from \$113 billion (another 10%) to \$125 billion, with a focus on impacting homelessness and improving claims processing, while female veterans are becoming homeless at a rate faster than their male counterparts. The administration's proposed budget for 2013, **another 10% increase**, is dedicated to reducing access times to care, decreasing claims waiting times, improving technology and ending homelessness.

We currently have a completed homeless female veteran's facility which was scheduled for completion in the Summer of 2011 sitting vacant in Cocoa, FL, while homeless female veterans remain on the street.

The number of claims in arrears have continued to climb beyond 1,000,000 and the DAV now projects that by the year 2015, the backlog will exceed 2,000,000. This administration's 2012 budget provides yet another large increase, from \$125 billion to \$132 billion (9.5% increase), aimed at suicide prevention research and constructing new facilities. (Perhaps seeing mental health patients in a timely manner and regularly and addressing their claim's issues would help with the reduction of suicides).

The administration's proposed budget for 2013 is dedicated to reduce access times to care, decrease claims waiting times, improve technology and end homelessness. Sounds like a broken record doesn't it?

Sum it up. That's over a 43.5% increase in four years.

How much more money will Congress have to throw at the VA before we see some measurable results? Patients are waiting months for initial mental health appointments and then seen every several months. Recently, I met a two-star Admiral who was denied care at the VA because *"he didn't have a disability"*. His response was, *"That is why I was here....to find out if I had a disability."* Now if *he* is having difficulty, imagine the trouble our young enlisted soldiers are experiencing.

And what about all of that money going to Construction? Try this one on for size.

Orlando's Lake Nona VA Medical Center Debacle

In April of 2010 I first wrote about the Lake Nona VA project being built that would service veterans in Central Florida. Our concerns then as now, have been that contractors were cheating workers out of the Davis-Bacon wages that they were entitled to by federal law.



New Orlando area VA hospital under construction

(continued....)



In short, contractors were breaking the law and any construction workers worth their salt would not allow themselves to be cheated thereby leaving the hospital to be built by unskilled and untrained workers. In fact the general contractor was found to be hiring and protecting undocumented workers as evidenced by an ICE raid where a company's supervisors were hiding those undocumented workers on the jobsite.

Since very few skilled workers were hired for this project in the first place, this led to a shoddy and poorly built facility which in turn will degrade the level of care that our veterans will receive when the hospital is finally opened. It was scheduled to open this year but VA officials have tentatively rescheduled for summer 2013 "at the earliest". We in the Building Trades had and continue to try and inform VA officials on the jobsite about what is happening under their very noses. VA project managers are tasked with all compliance matters on the job, but from the very start, did not seem interested in acting on the information we had provided them.

Now, over two years into the project, the hospital is way behind schedule with reports of shoddy workmanship that has resulted in massive flooding inside the building. Sitting water has created mold throughout the building, including inside ventilation systems. Once the hospital becomes operational, any patients housed there may be exposed to the mold spores flowing through the ventilation system. Is this how the contractors and the VA project managers show their respect and gratitude towards veterans who sacrificed so much for America?

Building a large quality facility on time and on budget is not impossible. We did it beautifully with the \$200 million renovation project at Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii in 1983, delivered ahead of time and below budget. The VA's solution to the Lake Nona debacle and cost overruns is to cut one third of the hospital's beds at the expense of our veterans care and delay the project. VA Project managers and oversight managers need to be held accountable for their inability to effectively manage our valuable tax resources and may need to be dismissed now.

OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER!

The VA is broken and refuses to effectively manage the resources with which it is entrusted as it meanders along a bureaucratic course, which robs our dedicated veterans of the care they deserve. Throwing massive amounts of the federal budget dollars at the VA has NOT produced measurable results.

It is long past the time for ALL GOOD SOLIDERS to call upon our legislators to begin to disassemble this behemoth juggernaut and provide veterans with the

vouchers they need to get the quality of care they deserve in the civilian community. Pilot programs need to be established aimed at contracting and outsourcing services, establishing measurable competition and transitioning care to the agencies which can best serve our veterans with up-to-date treatments at the most efficient cost. Not-for-profit programs (501 c (3)) programs have demonstrated remarkable treatment efficacy and cost effectiveness in this regard. Congress should carve out resources for the many organizations who have demonstrated the efficacy.

What other kind of an organization are you aware of that can get a 43.5% budget increase over four years and continue to ignore it's identified goals? If this were a private business, it would be bankrupt. The only ones bankrupted in this case are the veterans who fail to get the benefits and care they deserve.

Congressmen and Representatives need your feedback. Write them now!

Although there are many dedicated employees and providers within the VA System, specifically the high quality of medical care which is provided locally, the problems at the bureaucratic and administrative levels appear insurmountable.

Scott Fairchild, Psy.D
LTC USA (Ret)
82ND ABN DIV

Dr. Fairchild is a licensed psychologist who operates Baytree Behavioral Health in Melbourne, FL and was the Founder and Co-Director of the Stress, Trauma and Acute Response (STAR) Team for Kennedy Space Center. Additionally, he was a Co-Founder of Welcome Home Vets, Inc., a not-for-profit organization to support returning Florida veterans with their transition and reintegration into the community. Doc Scott has treated numerous Sky Soldiers from throughout the country which, in turn, has helped to support their PTSD claims with the VA. The Doc did much of the early research on PTSD for the Army at Walter Reed.



References:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fy2010_department_veterans
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1848>
<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2054>
<http://www.miamiflimmigrationattorney.com/2011/02/ice-raids-lake-nona-va-medical-center-nine-may-face-deportation.shtml>
http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-02-16/news/os-va-hospital-site-shut-down-20110216_1_va-hospital-site-skilled-workers-illegal-immigrants
<http://www.usmedicine.com/psychiatry/long-wait-times-for-mental-health-care-continue-to-plague-va.html>
<http://www.legalhelpforveterans.com/2012/01/wait-times-remain-too-long-for-veterans-seeking-mental-health-care/>





INCOMING!



~ The Hammer ~

In the April newsletter (Page 43), was included was a picture and short report about 1st Sgt Jackson, "The Hammer". Thank you. He was my 1st Sgt when I was assigned to C/2nd/503d Inf., 173d Abn Bde (Sep) on Okinawa. I remember being told that 1st Sgt Jackson was the military heavyweight boxing champ when he was stationed in Germany. Thank you again for including someone in our newsletter who I previously knew.



Dwight Schalles
C/2/503d

Dwight: I didn't know that about The Hammer, but I'd sure believe it. Every one of us who served with 1st Sgt. Jackson know he was a hellofa leader of men. Who out there knows about his *knockout* abilities?

B Company Photo?

It might just be me, but I don't remember those tables in the rubber trees (cover photo, Issue 39 below). If I'm right, it might belong to A or C Company. Ol' Ranger Roy (Lombardo) was anxious to be the first company out of the trees, and into what would become Camp Zinn. B Company was on the side closest to Brigade HQ (the east side as I recall). The tent for LTs Eckert, Olds, Zinn and myself (I don't remember where LT Bennett was bunked) was the first tent up. It was next to the road (on the north side). Roy's tent was opposite our tent. The U2 mess tent was across the road. Great newsletter as usual.

Jim Robinson
B/2/503d

Roger that, Jim. The inscription shown was printed on the back of the Bde PIO photo and says it was B/2/503. I'll put your note in next month's *Incoming* and see if we can get more input. Thanks bro. Ed



~ 3/503 Luncheon Scheduled ~

Make a note on your calendars: The 3rd Batt in coordination with the National Reunion activities will be holding a Luncheon on 7 Jun 2012 at 11:30 in the Blue Fire Grill in the Hyatt, our reunion hotel in Lexington, KY. The reservation has been made with Emily Dowd, Senior Convention Services Manager, for 30-50 possible attendees with arrangement made for us to order off the existing menu. The prices are really fair.

I will be bringing an Echo Co Guidon. Paul Fisher tells me he will have one for HHC. Don't know at this point whether Mike Switzer will be present with Charlie Co's Guidon and or if Eldon Meade will there with his Charlie Co. We just might have two for Co C.



Now - is there anyone out there in A, B or D with some Airborne Esprit De Corps who might be interested in obtaining and bringing your Guidon? If so, I purchased mine at Benning Awards. It is the real deal. I keep mine on my "I love Me Wall" at home except for when it is at the Reunions.

Mason Branstetter
Nov Plt, D/3/503 Apr-Jun 70
TOC Dty O, Jun-Oct 70
E Co, 3/503 Oct 70 - Apr 71
503.873.3545
mason@silvertonrealty.com

*"If you don't write it down,
it never happened."*

That's according to Jim Bethea, HHC/2/503d, '65/'66. And Jim makes a good point. We hope you'll send in your stories and photos for inclusion in future issues of our newsletter. Let's capture some of our experiences for historical purposes and before we forget them. It doesn't have to be blood and guts stuff, but that's o.k. too. You can honor a buddy or tell an amusing story. Don't worry about spelling and grammar, we'll run it thru the washer to repair such things. ATW! Ed



THE WARRIOR'S CODE OF HONOR

By a combat veteran

As a combat veteran wounded in one of America's wars, I offer to speak for those who cannot. Were the mouths of my fallen front-line friends not stopped with dust, they would testify that life revolves around honor. In war, it is understood that you give your word of honor to do your duty -- that is -- stand and fight instead of running away and deserting your friends.

When you keep your word despite desperately desiring to flee the screaming hell all around, you earn honor. Earning honor under fire changes who you are.

The blast furnace of battle burns away impurities encrusting your soul.

The white-hot forge of combat hammers you into a hardened, purified warrior willing to die rather than break your word to friends -- your honor.

Combat is scary but exciting.

You never feel so alive as when being shot at without result.

You never feel so triumphant as when shooting back -- *with* result.

You never feel love so pure as that burned into your heart by friends willing to die to keep their word to you.

And they do.

The biggest sadness of your life is to see friends falling.

The biggest surprise of your life is to survive the war. Although still alive on the outside, you are dead inside - shot thru the heart with nonsensical guilt for living while friends died.

The biggest lie of your life torments you that you could have done something more, different, to save them. Their faces are the tombstones in your weeping eyes, their souls shine the true camaraderie you search for the rest of your life but never find.

You live a different world now. You always will. Your world is about waking up night after night silently screaming, back in battle.

Your world is about your best friend bleeding to death in your arms, howling in pain for you to kill him.

Your world is about shooting so many enemies the gun turns red and jams, letting the enemy grab you.

Your world is about struggling hand-to-hand for one more breath of life.

You never speak of your world.

Those who have seen combat do not talk about it. Those who talk about it have not seen combat.

You come home but a grim ghost of he who so lightheartedly went off to war. But home no longer exists. That world shattered like a mirror the first time you were shot at.

The splintering glass of everything you knew fell at your feet, revealing what was standing behind it - grinning death -- *and you are face to face, nose to nose with it!*

The shock was so great that the boy you were died of fright. He was replaced by a stranger who slipped into your body, a MAN from the Warrior's World.

In that savage place, you give your word of honor to dance with death instead of run away from it. This suicidal waltz is known as: "doing your duty." You did your duty, survived the dance, and returned home. But not all of you came back to the civilian world.

Your heart and mind are still in the Warrior's World, far beyond the Sun.

They will *always* be in the Warrior's World. They will never leave, they are buried there.

In that hallowed home of honor, life is about keeping your word.

People in the civilian world, however, have no idea that life is about keeping your word. They think life is about ballgames, backyards, barbecues, babies and business.

The distance between the two worlds is as far as Mars from earth.

This is why, when you come home, you feel like an outsider, a visitor from another planet. You are.

Friends try to bridge the gaping gap. It is useless. They may as well look up at the sky and try to talk to a Martian as talk to you. Words fall like bricks between you.

Serving with Warriors who died proving their word has made prewar friends seem too un-tested to be trusted - thus they are now mere acquaintances.

The hard truth is that earning honor under fire makes you a stranger in your own home town, an alien visitor from a different world, alone in a crowd.

The only time you are not alone is when with another combat veteran. Only *he* understands that keeping your word, your honor, whilst standing face to face with death gives meaning and purpose to life.

Only *he* understands that your terrifying - but *thrilling* - dance with death has made your old world of backyards, barbecues and ballgames seem deadly dull.

Only *he* understands that your way of being, due to combat damaged emotions, is not the un-usual, but the usual, and you are OK.

A common consequence of combat is adrenaline addiction.

Many combat veterans -- including this writer -- feel that war was the high point of our lives, and emotionally, life has been downhill ever since.

This is because we came home adrenaline junkies. We got that way doing our duty in combat situations such as: crouching in a foxhole waiting for attacking enemy soldiers to get close enough for you to start shooting; hugging the ground, waiting for the signal to leap up and attack the enemy; sneaking along on a combat patrol out in no man's land, seeking a gunfight; suddenly realizing that you are walking in the middle of a mine field.

(continued....)



Circumstances like these skyrocket your feeling of aliveness far, far above and beyond anything you experienced in civilian life: never have you felt so terrified - yet so *thrilled*; never have you seen sky so blue, grass so green, breathed air so sweet, etc.; because dancing with death makes you feel stratospheric - nay -- intergalactic *aliveness*.

Then you come home, where the addictive, euphoric rush of aliveness/adrenaline hardly ever happens -- naturally, that is.

Then what often occurs? "*Quick, pass me the motorcycle*" (and/or fast car, drag race, speedboat, airplane, parachute, big game hunt, extreme sport, fist fight, gun fight, etc.).

Another reason Warriors may find the rush of adrenaline attractive is because it lets them feel *something* rather than *nothing*. The dirty little secret no one talks about is that many combat veterans come home unable to feel their feelings. It works like this.

In battle, it is understood that you give your word of honor to not let your fear stop you from doing your duty. To keep your word, you must numb up/shut down your fear.

But the numb-up/shut-down mechanism does not work like a tight, narrow rifle shot; it works like a broad, spreading shotgun blast. Thus when you numb up your fear, you numb up virtually all your other feelings as well.

The more combat, the more fear you must "not feel." You may become so numbed up/shut down inside that you cannot feel much of anything. You become what is known as "battle-hardened," meaning that you can feel hard feelings like hate and anger, but not soft, tender feelings (which is bad news for loved ones).

The reason that the rush of adrenaline, alcohol, drugs, dangerous life style, etc. is so attractive is because you get to feel *something*, which is a step up from the awful deadness of feeling *nothing*.

Although you walk thru life alone, you are not lonely. You have a constant companion from combat -- Death. It stands close behind, a little to the left.

Death whispers in your ear: "*Nothing matters outside my touch, and I have not touched you...YET!*"

Death never leaves you -- it is your best friend, your most trusted advisor, your wisest teacher.

Death teaches you that every day above ground is a fine day.

Death teaches you to feel fortunate on good days, and bad days...well, they do not exist.

Death teaches you that merely seeing one more sunrise is enough to fill your cup of life to the brim -- pressed down and running over!

Death teaches you that you can postpone its touch by earning serenity.

Serenity is earned by a lot of prayer and acceptance.

Acceptance is taking one step out of denial and accepting/allowing your repressed, painful combat memories to be re-lived/suffered thru/shared with other combat vets -- and thus de-fused.

Each time you accomplish this act of courage/

desperation, the pain gets less; more tormenting combat demons hiding in the darkness of your gut are thrown out into the healing sunlight of awareness, thereby disappearing them; the less bedeviling combat demons, the more serenity earned.

Serenity is, regretfully, rather an indistinct quality, but it manifests as an immense feeling of fulfillment/satisfaction: from having proven your honor under fire; from having demonstrated to be a fact that you did your duty no matter what; and from being grateful to Higher Power/your Creator for sparing you.

It is an iron law of nature that such serenity lengthens life span to the max.

Down thru the dusty centuries it has always been thus. It always will be, for what is seared into a man's soul who stands face to face with death never changes.

WRITER'S NOTE

This work attempts to describe the world as seen thru the eyes of a combat veteran. It is a world virtually unknown to the public because few veterans can talk about it.

This is unfortunate since people who are trying to understand, and make meaningful contact with combat veterans, are kept in the dark.

How do you establish a rapport with a combat veteran? It is very simple. Demonstrate to him out in the open in front of God and everybody that you too have a Code of Honor -- that is, you also keep your word -- *no matter what!*

Do it and you will forge a bond between you.

Do it not and you will not.

End of story. Case closed.

I offer these poor, inadequate words - bought not taught - in the hope that they may shed some small light on why combat veterans are like they are, and how they can fix it.

It is my life desire that this tortured work, despite its many defects, may yet still provide some tiny sliver of understanding which may blossom into tolerance - nay, acceptance - of a Warrior's perhaps unconventional way of being due to combat-damaged emotions from doing his duty under fire.

Signed,

A Purple Heart Medal recipient who wishes to remain anonymous.

Dedicated to absent friends in unmarked graves.

[Sent in by Richard "Airborne" Martinez, B/2/503d]



~ Sky Soldier Extraordinaire ~



Sgt. Jim Bednarski C/2/503d, '68

Sgt. Jim Bednarski, known to his buddies as "Ski"... the machine gunner featured as one of "The Hill People" in the book *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt*.



Ski

According to the late Sgt. Nasty Asbury, a story related to me and Capt. Joe Jellison at the June 2010 dedication of the 173d Memorial at Fort Benning, Georgia:

"Ski should have been awarded the Medal of Honor. With his assistant gunner down, and me (Nasty) hauling and feeding ammo, Ski ran to a small, isolated outcrop and began laying rounds into an NVA platoon that was trying to separate Charlie Company platoons. For hours, under heavy incoming fire, Ski kept the NVA from advancing, firing his gun in short bursts to keep the barrel from melting down."

A large, quiet man, Ski carried his gun with a towel wrapped over the belt-feed housing. He carried the weapon for his entire tour. No one touched Ski's gun. Not even his many assistant gunners. A quiet man, Ski might grin if the occasion suited him. At twilight, every night, his gun-set was tailored for a massive assault. He picked up one VC riding to work on his bicycle and threw the man, his weapon, and his two-wheeler into the rice paddy. He walked tracers right down the dike. Just another encounter for a man that survived Hill 875, where he kept Charlie Company's flank secure for 30-plus hours.

Ski lives in New York with his family and has finally come to grips with his war, putting the mess behind him.

He will tell you he was just another Grunt. Most would believe him.

Gary Prisk
Captain
C/2/503d

Posted in the Cockpit



**This was known to also apply
to certain RTOs & all 2LTs**

~ A Few Facts About Vietnam ~

50,000 American servicemen served in Vietnam between 1960-1964.

9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the official Vietnam era (Aug. 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975. 3,403,100 (including 514,300 offshore) personnel served in the Southeast Asia theatre (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, flight crews based in Thailand, and sailors in adjacent South China Sea waters).

7,484 American women served in Vietnam; 6,250 were nurses. 8 nurses died, 1 KIA.

Vietnam Vets represented 9.7% of their generation.

Most successful businessman who was a Vietnam Vet, Frederick Smith, Federal Express, U.S. Marine Corps.

Nearly 100% of all Vietnam Vets were honorably discharged.

Source:

"Myth vs. Realty", by B.G. Burkett & Glenna Whitley



If it *Looks* like the Flag, and *Waves* like the Flag....

Thanks for the newsletter.

I wonder if you would do something for me if you think it's worth your time and not inappropriate. There is no question that our government is selling us to China. There is nothing I can do about the cheap T-Shirts etc. that are sold. Our manufacturing base has all moved to China or Mexico. There is one item that I believe should only be made in America, **The American Flag**. I have been making some progress in having local stores sell *only* US made flags.



**From Home Depot web.
Sure looks like our flag.**

Yesterday, when I was shopping at Home Depot in their garden department, I discovered several different sized American Flag's **MADE IN CHINA**. Last June I spoke with the store management about this very thing and he removed all China-made American Flags.

Again I asked to speak with the manager. He was very cordial and told me that a few men (Vets) have stated the same opinion. He told me that senior management was of the opinion that any flags made for outdoor display were considered **REPLICAS** and not really a flag. All the *official* flags were sold inside the store. I held up one of these *replicas* and asked the manager to answer a couple of questions. First, what was in the upper left corner? He replied a blue rectangle with 50 white stars; you know where this is going. I asked a customer what she thought it was and she said, "*American Flag*."



My request to you, because you have hundreds of Sky Soldier's emails, is to ask everyone to ensure any US Flag they see for sale in *any* store, Home Depot for sure, be **made in the United States**. Thanks,

SSG Bryan Bowley
B/2/503d, '63-'65

173d.....Fall in!

Bryan, let's take it a step further. Here's the email address we found on the web for Mr. Frank Blake, CEO of Home Depot. Maybe a couple thousand *friendly and cordial* Sky Soldier notes might persuade the company to sell *only* American-made American flags? Thanks for the work you're doing on this brother. Ed

frank_blake@homedepot.com

Email message sent to Home Depot CEO:

Mr. Blake, hello:

My wife and I have been faithful customers of Home Depot for many years. We often kid we should buy stock in your company given the sums we spend annually to purchase products at your stores.

It has come to my attention Home Depot sells American flags which are **Made in China**. As an honorably discharged, combat-decorated Vietnam veteran who fought for what our flag represents, and having buddies who died fighting for what our flag represents, this note is to ask your company to consider replacing all foreign-made American flags with **American-made** flags once existing stocks have been exhausted or when your current purchasing contract has expired.

The two American-made flags on display at our home are purchased on-line, and not at Home Depot. You see, as veterans our flag has particular import to us, and in the view of many if not all, it should not be imported.

I produce the *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* for thousands of active duty and retired paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade and other veterans of war. We look forward to sharing your reply to this request in our upcoming May issue.

Thanks for giving this your most serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Smith, Jr.
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). 1965-1966



~ Made in America ~

See Home Depot reply on following page....



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / May 2012 – Issue 40
Page 49 of 70

From: KAREN_SISK@homedepot.com
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2012
To: rto173d@cfl.rr.com
Subject: Home Depot Executive Escalations



Good Morning Mr. Smith,

The Home Depot is dedicated to supporting and honoring our men and women in uniform through our business practices, recruitment efforts, and corporate contributions. We recognize your contributions during such a tumultuous time, and we applaud your bravery. We are proud to sell products from U.S. companies and companies that manufacture products here.

While a small percentage of the products we import are from China, it is relevant to note that we operate 12 retail stores in six cities in China and employ approximately 3,000 associates there. We also have stores in Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. We operate in a global economy, and work to provide the products our customers want while creating returns for our shareholders.

As an American-built company, holders of our stock include our more than 300,000 associates, most of who live and work in the U.S.A.

Mr. Smith, The Home Depot thanks you for your comments, and we value your opinion. Your feedback is appreciated by The Home Depot; and requests are taken into consideration whenever our product selections are made. If you would like to speak with me directly, you may contact me at the phone number or email listed.

Thank you,

Karen Sisk
Executive Escalations Team
The Home Depot
Customers First!
Karen_Sisk@homedepot.com

Hello Karen, thanks for your note which will be shared with our vets in our May newsletter. And thanks to Home Depot for considering the request to only sell U.S.-made American flags in your stores. Perhaps you can sell Chinese-made American flags at the 12 stores in China, and American-made American flags in our country? Best regards,

Lew
173d Airborne

Military Commitment by the Numbers

The Home Depot has developed partnerships and made numerous investments in support of our nation's military community. Our commitment to the military includes the following.

- We have hired more than 60,000 veterans since 2004.
- We have been honored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Association with its 2003 Homefront Award for our commitment to more than 1,800 associates called to active duty in association with Operation Iraqi Freedom through extended and enhanced leave of absence benefits.
- We received the ESGR's highest award, The Freedom Award, in 2004.
- We launched Project Homefront, a national program to help military families with home repair while a family member served in the war with Iraq, in 2003.
- We have invested \$1 million and 1 million hours of volunteer service in support of the families of those serving our country on active duty.
- We contributed \$1 million worth of construction materials, tools and supplies to assist with the rebuilding efforts in Iraq in 2004.
- We have Welcome Home celebrations for our associates returning from active duty.
- We are one of only seven employers to be ranked in *G.I. Jobs* magazine's list of "Top 25 Military-Friendly Employers" for seven consecutive years, including #1 in 2004.
- We were named one of the "Top 10 Military-Friendly Employers" in 2007, 2008 and 2009, by *Military Spouse* magazine.
- We are a corporate member of the Army Spouse Employment Partnership.

Note: We pulled this excerpt off Home Depot's web site. Ed



The 82nd Airborne during World War II



Early 82nd Infantry Division patches

America's Guard of Honor

The double "A" on the shoulder patch refers to the nickname "*All American Division*" adopted by the organization in France during World War I.

On 25 March 1942, the 82nd Infantry Division was reactivated at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana under the command of Major General Omar N. Bradley. On August 15, 1942, the Division took wings as The 82nd Airborne – becoming the U.S. Army's first airborne division - now commanded by Major General Matthew B. Ridgway.



General Omar Bradley

At the same time, 82nd personnel also were used in the formation of a second airborne unit - the "*Screaming Eagles*" of the 101st Airborne Division.

In October, the 82nd was dispatched to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to pursue its new airborne training. On October 14, the 82nd absorbed the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, which had formed on May 1 at Fort Benning, Georgia. By the time that they went overseas, the 82nd would consist of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment and the 504th and 505th Parachute Infantry Regiments.

At Fort Bragg, the All Americans trained vigorously. These pioneering paratroopers stood up, hooked up and leaped from C-47 transport planes while the gliderborne troops were at work in the 15-man WACO-CG4A gliders - towed by the transport planes.

In the spring of 1943, the 82nd All Americans became the first airborne division sent overseas. They left via troop ships from New England and landed in Casablanca, North Africa on May 10, 1943. From there, they moved by rail to Oujda and then by truck to Kairouan, Tunisia. That would be their departure point for the Division's first combat drop - the invasion of Sicily.

Sicily - Operation Husky

Colonel James Gavin's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) and the 3rd Battalion of the 504th PIR parachuted to take the high ground near Ponte Olivo airfield northeast of Gela, Sicily on July 9, 1943.

Despite the wide scattering of the assault, the objectives were seized and the units linked up with the 1st Infantry Division the next day.

On July 11, 1943, the remaining Battalions of the 504th PIR were dropped in the vicinity of Gela with heavy losses from both the German and Allied (*friendly fire*) antiaircraft fire. Despite the heavy losses the division was moved up to the front by motor and reinforced by the 39th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Infantry Division on July 12, 1943. The crossings of Fiume delle Canno were secured on July 18, 1943 and the division pushed along the coastal highway, seizing the Marsala-Trapani area of Sicily's western coast by July 23rd.

Salerno - The Oil Drum Drop

The Division's second combat operation was a night parachute drop onto the Salerno beachhead on September 13, 1943 in support of General Mark Clark's 5th Army which was in danger of being pushed back into the sea.

The 504th PIR was parachuted south of the Sele River near Salerno on September 13, 1943. In order to guide the C-47 pilots to the shrinking drop zone, oil drums filled with gasoline soaked sand were ignited every 50 yards when signaled. 1300 troopers landed that night infusing a new sense of confidence to the beleaguered soldiers of the 5th Army. The 505th PIR was dropped the following night near the same drop zone to reinforce the air assault. On September 15th the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment (GIR) was brought into the beachhead amphibiously to join the rest of the division.



504th PIR in Sicily 1943

(continued....)



Once the beachhead was secured, the 504th PIR and the 376th PFAB began an attack to recover Altavilla on September 16, 1943 and the division fought towards Naples which it reached on October 1, 1943 and moved in to the next day for security duty.

"Leg Infantry"

After Naples, the 504th PIR & the 376th PFAB were detached from the 82nd Airborne temporarily and fought as "leg infantry" through the hills of southern Italy as part of the 36th Infantry Division. On October 29th they captured Gallo. They then battled in the Winter Line commencing with attacks up Hill 687 on December 15th, 1943.

On 9 December 1943 Colonel Gavin was promoted to Brigadier General and assumed the duties of the Assistant Division Commander of the 82nd Airborne while Lt Col Herbert Batchellor assumed command of the 505th. During the early months of 1944, units of the Division were moved to England as the allies were preparing for the assault on Western Europe. The 505th PIR again changed commanders on 22 March 1944 when Lt Col William Ekman assumed command. He would lead the 505th through the remainder of the war.

Anzio - Operation Shingle

On January 22nd & 23rd 1944, the 504th PIR, landed on the beach at Anzio and participated in heavy combat along the Mussolini Canal. It was their fierce fighting during this defensive engagement that earned the 504th PIR the nickname "*Devils in Baggy Pants.*" The nickname was taken from an entry made in a German officer's diary.



All Americans in Normandy

D-Day - Operation Neptune

While the 504th was detached, the remainder of the 82nd was pulled out of Italy in December 1943 and moved to the United Kingdom to prepare for the liberation of Europe. With two combat jumps under its belt, the 82nd Airborne Division was now ready for the most ambitious airborne operation of the war, Operation Neptune - the airborne invasion of Normandy. The operation was part of Operation OVERLORD, the amphibious assault on the northern coast of Nazi-occupied France.

In preparation for the operation, the division was reorganized. Two new parachute infantry regiments, the 507th and the 508th, joined the division. However, due to its depleted state following the fighting in Italy, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment did not take part in the invasion.

On June 5-6, 1944, the paratroopers of the 82nd's three parachute infantry regiments and reinforced glider infantry regiment boarded hundreds of transport planes and gliders and, began the largest airborne assault in history. They were among the first soldiers to fight in Normandy, France.

The division dropped behind Utah Beach, Normandy, France between Ste Mere-Eglise and Carentan on June 6th, 1944. They were reinforced by the 325th GIR the next day. The division remained under strong German pressure along the Merderit River. Eventually,



Charles DeGlopper

the 325th GIR crossed the river to secure a bridgehead at La Fiere on June 9th. It was during this action that Pfc Charles N. DeGlopper single-handedly defended his platoon's position and subsequently was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism.

The next day the 505th PIR captured Montebourg Station and on June 12th the 508th PIR crossed the Douve at Beuzeville-la-Bastille and reached Baup. They established a bridgehead at Pont l'Abbe on June 19th. The division then attacked down the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula and captured Hill 131 on July 3rd. The following day the 82nd seized Hill 95 overlooking La Haye-du-Puits.

(continued...)



By the time the All-American Division was pulled back to England on July 13, 1944, it had seen 33 days of bloody combat and suffered 5,245 paratroopers killed, wounded or missing. The Division's post battle report read,

"...33 days of action without relief, without replacements. Every mission accomplished. No ground gained was ever relinquished."

Following the Normandy invasion, the 82nd became part of the newly organized XVIII Airborne Corps which consisted of the U.S. 17th, 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. General Ridgway was promoted and assumed command of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Meanwhile, Assistant Division Commander, General James Gavin was also promoted and assumed command of the 82nd Airborne.

~ An All American ~

Robert (Bob) M. Murphy
Colonel (retired)
Company A, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment,
82nd Airborne Division
Pathfinder

Bob Murphy (ASN 11090385), born on 7-7-1925, son of Joseph and Anna Murphy. He joined the army on October 1st, 1942 at the age of 17 from Massachusetts. He volunteered for the paratroopers in 1943. He was assigned to company A of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Still at the age of 17 he landed at May 10, 1943 in Casablanca, Africa with the 82nd Airborne Division. He missed the Sicily jump because of a severe case of malaria. He jumped at October 1, 1943 with the 505th PIR at Paestum, Salerno.

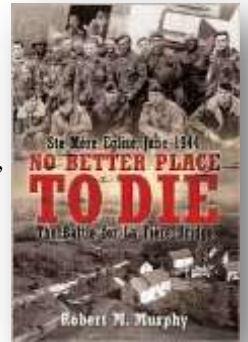


After the Salerno jump Bob volunteered for Pathfinder School. He was part of the first official school of Pathfinders at Conise, Sicily in November 1943. After completing Pathfinder School he left Italy and went to Ireland and then England.

On June 6, 1944 Bob jumped as a Pathfinder/radio-operator in Normandy, France. After his Pathfinder duties he rejoined A-505 PIR and was involved in the battle at La Fiere bridge. On September 17, 1944 Bob jumped at Groesbeek, the Netherlands for Operation Market Garden. He was involved in the fight of Mook and Plasmolen and the Nijmegen Bridge. During the Battle of the Bulge he suffered a relapse of malaria. Among the medals Bob earned are 3 Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star. After the war he finished High School and attended Law School.

Unfortunately Bob passed away October 3rd, 2008.

Bob wrote a book about the actions of the 82nd Airborne Division in the Sainte-Mère-Église - Chef-du-pont perimeter. In the book, he recounts the actions around the La Fiere bridge, where the Airborne Division saw its toughest battle in the Normandy campaign. Many first-person testimonies and eye witness accounts are featured in the book.



Operation Market Garden

In September, the 82nd began planning for Operation Market Garden in Holland. The operation called for three-plus airborne divisions to seize and hold key bridges and roads deep behind German lines. The 504th now back at full strength rejoined the 82nd, while the 507th went to the 17th Airborne Division.

On September 17, the 82nd Airborne Division conducted its fourth combat jump of World War II into Holland. Fighting off ferocious German counterattacks, the 82nd captured the Maas Bridge at Grave, the Maas-Waal Canal Bridge at Heumen and the Nijmegen-Groesbeek Ridge. The next day attempts to take Nijmegen Highway Bridge failed.

On 20 September the 504th carried out a heroic assault crossing the Waal. With artillery support the first wave of the 504th assaulted, in twenty-six assault boats, under intense fire, taking 200 casualties in the process. Finally on D+4 the 504th finally secured their hold on the bridge, fighting off another German counterattack just before noon.

(continued....)



Battle of the Bulge - The Ardennes Offensive

Suddenly, on December 16, 1944, the Germans launched a surprise offensive through the Ardennes Forest which caught the Allies completely by surprise. The 82nd moved into action on December 17th in response to the German's Ardennes Counteroffensive and blunted General Von Runstedt's northern penetration in the American lines. On December 20th the 82nd attacked in the Vielsalm-St. Vith region and the 504th PIR took Monceau. This fierce attack forced the German units back across the Ambleve River the next day.



His first name was *Gerd*

However, further German assaults along the Salm hit the 505th PIR in the Trois Ponts area on December 22nd and by December 24th the division lost Manhay. On December 25th, 1944 the division withdrew from the Vielsalm salient then attacked northeast of Bra on December 27th reaching Salm by January 4th, 1945.

On January 7th the 508th PIR *Red Devil's* launched an attack with the 504th in the vicinity of Thier-du-Mont where it suffered heavy casualties. The 508th was then withdrawn from the line and placed in reserve until January 21st when it replaced elements of the 2d Infantry Division.

On January 29, 1945 First Sergeant Leonard Funk, Jr. of Company C, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment earned the Medal of Honor for action at Holzheim, Belgium, after leading his unit and capturing 80 Germans.



On February 7th, 1945 the division attacked Bergstein, a town on the Roer River.

President Truman presenting MOH to 1Sgt. Funk

The 82nd crossed the Roer River on February 17th. During April, 1945 the division performed security duty in Cologne until they attacked in the Bleckede area and pushed toward the Elbe River. As the 504th PIR drove toward Forst Carrenzien, the German 21st Army surrendered to the division on May 2, 1945.

(continued....)



82nd Airborne paratroopers and trophy, a Panzer IV. In Holland, Operation Market Garden, September 1944. (rudeerude)

It was in this skirmish that Pvt. John Towle earned the Medal of Honor. Its success, however, was short-lived because of the defeat of other Allied units at Arnhem. The gateway to Germany would not open in September 1944, and the 82nd was ordered back to France.

~ John Roderick Towle ~

Born: October 19, 1924 at Cleveland, OH
Entered service in the US Army from Cleveland, OH
Earned the Medal of Honor during World War II for heroism September 21, 1944 at Oosterhout, Holland
Died: September 21, 1944 at the age of 19

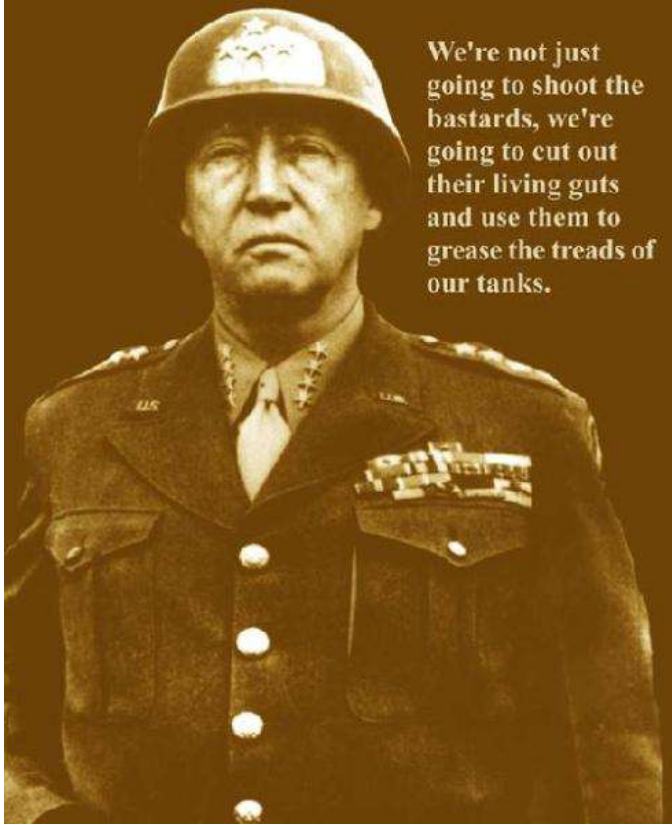


The rifle company in which Private Towle served as rocket launcher gunner was occupying a defensive position in the west sector of the recently established Nijmegen bridgehead when a strong enemy force of approximately 100 infantry supported by two tanks and a half-track formed for a counterattack. Private Towle immediately and without orders left his foxhole and moved 200 yards in the face of intense small-arms fire to a position on an exposed dike roadbed. From this position he fired his rocket launcher and hit both tanks to his immediate front. Armored skirting on them prevented penetration by the projectiles, but both vehicles withdrew slightly damaged. Still under intense fire and exposed to the enemy, Private Towle engaged a nearby house which nine Germans had entered and were using as a strongpoint and with one round killed all nine. Replenishing his ammunition, he then rushed approximately 125 yards through grazing enemy fire to an exposed position from which he could engage the enemy half-track with his rocket launcher. While in a kneeling position preparatory to firing on the enemy vehicle, Private Towle was mortally wounded by a mortar shell.



Occupation

Following the surrender of Germany, the 82nd was ordered to Berlin for occupation duty. In Berlin General George Patton was so impressed with the 82nd's honor guard he said, *"In all my years in the Army and all the honor guards I have ever seen, the 82nd's honor guard is undoubtedly the best."* Hence the "All-Americans" became known as *"America's Guard of Honor."*



The 82nd returned to the United States January 3, 1946. Instead of being demobilized, the 82nd made its permanent home at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and was designated a regular Army division on November 15, 1948.

Source:

http://www.wv2-airborne.us/division/82_overview.html

(Photos added)

A Few Other Quotes Credited to 'Blood & Guts' General Patton

A good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week.

A piece of spaghetti or a military unit can only be led from the front end.

A pint of sweat, saves a gallon of blood.

Accept the challenges so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory.

All very successful commanders are prima donnas and must be so treated.

Always do everything you ask of those you command.

Americans love to fight. All real Americans love the sting of battle.

Americans play to win at all times. I wouldn't give a hoot and hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost nor ever lose a war.

Battle is an orgy of disorder.

Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge. It brings out all that is best; it removes all that is base. All men are afraid in battle. The coward is the one who lets his fear overcome his sense of duty. Duty is the essence of manhood.

Better to fight for something than live for nothing.

Courage is fear holding on a minute longer.

Do your damndest in an ostentatious manner all the time.

Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.

I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs but how high he bounces when he hits bottom.

If a man does his best, what else is there?

If a man has done his best, what else is there?

If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking.

If we take the generally accepted definition of bravery as a quality which knows no fear, I have never seen a brave man. All men are frightened. The more intelligent they are, the more they are frightened.

If you tell people where to go, but not how to get there, you'll be amazed at the results.

Thirty years from now, when you're sitting around your fireside with your grandson on your knee and he asks you, *"What did you do in the great World War II,"* you won't have to say, *"Well... I shoveled shit in Louisiana."*

Not to be outdone by his counter-part, the German General, Erwin Rommel, the *Desert Fox*, had one of his own:

"In the absence of orders, go find something and kill it."



(continued...)



James Maurice Gavin

"Jumpin' Jim"

James M. Gavin was a prominent Lieutenant General in the United States Army during World War II. He was also referred to as "*The Jumping General*", because of his practice of taking part in combat drops with the paratroopers whom he commanded.

In his mid-30s at the time, Gavin was the youngest U.S. Major General commanding a division during World War II. During combat, he was known for his habit of carrying an M1 Garand rifle typically carried by enlisted U.S. soldiers, as opposed to the M1 carbine rifles and Colt Model M1911 .45 caliber pistols traditionally carried by officers.

His men respected him a great deal, affectionately referring to him as "Slim Jim" due to his athletic figure. Gavin fought against segregation in the U.S. Army, which gained him some notoriety.



Jumpin' Jim Gavin

Among his decorations, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. He was also awarded the British Distinguished Service Order.

James M. Gavin was born in Brooklyn, New York on 22 March 1907. The birth certificate lists his name as James Nally Ryan, although Nally was crossed out. When he was about two years old, he was placed in the Convent of Mercy orphanage in Brooklyn, where he remained until he was adopted in 1909.

In school, he learned about the Civil War. From that point on, he decided to study everything he could about the subject. He was amazed at what he discovered and decided if he wanted to learn this "magic" of controlling thousands of troops, from miles away, he would have to continue his education at West Point.

His adoptive father was a hard-working miner, but the family still had trouble making ends meet. Gavin quit school after eighth grade and became a full time clerk at a shoe store for \$12.50 a week.

At the end of March, 1924, Gavin spoke with a US Army recruiting officer. Since he was under 18, he needed parental consent to enlist in the Army. The recruiting officer took him and a couple of other underage boys who were orphans as well, to a lawyer who declared himself their guardian and signed the parental consent paperwork.

On April 1, 1924, Gavin was sworn in to the US Army, and was stationed in Panama. His basic training was performed on the job in his unit, the US Coast Artillery in Fort Sherman.

Gavin spent his spare time reading books from the library, notably *Great Captains* and a biography of Hannibal.

Gavin arrived at West Point in the summer of 1925.

Gavin attended the United States Army Infantry School in Fort Benning, Georgia. This school was managed by Colonel George C. Marshall, who had brought Joseph Stillwell with him to lead the Tactics department of the school. Here Gavin found the army he was looking for: an army actively seeking new innovations and possibilities.

Gavin was very concerned about the fact that US Army vehicles, weapons and ammunition were at best a copy of the German equipment. "*It would not be sufficient to copy the Germans*", he declared. For the first time, Gavin talked about using Airborne forces: "*From what we had seen so far, it was clear the most promising area of all was airborne warfare, bringing the parachute troops and the glider troops to the battlefield in masses, especially trained, armed and equipped for that kind of warfare.*"

He took an interest in the German airborne assault on the Fort Eben-Emael in Belgium in May 1940, which was assaulted and conquered at night from the sky by well-equipped German paratroopers. This event, and his extensive study on Stonewall Jackson's movement tactics led him to volunteer for a posting in the new Airborne unit in April 1941.

Gavin was Commander of the 82nd Airborne and began training at the Airborne School in Fort Benning in July 1941, and graduated in August 1941. After graduating he served in an experimental unit. His first command was as Commanding Officer of C Company of the newly established 503rd Parachute Infantry Battalion.

One of his first priorities was determining how Airborne troops could be used most effectively. His first action was writing *FM 31-30: Tactics and Technique of Air-Borne Troops*. Later, when Gavin was asked what made his career take off so fast, he would answer: "*I wrote the book*".

In the spring of 1942 Gavin and went to the Army Headquarters in Washington D.C. to discuss the order of battle for the first US Airborne Division.

(continued...)





C-47 of the 303d TCS/442d TCG in invasion markings. The 442nd TCG carried the 1st Battalion 507th PIR on D-Day.

The US 82nd Infantry division (stationed in Camp Claiborne, Louisiana) was selected as the first division to be converted into an Airborne division. Lesley McNair's influence led to the 82nd Airborne division's initial composition of two Glider Infantry Regiments and one Parachute Infantry Regiment, with organic parachute and glider artillery and other support units.

Gavin became the commanding officer of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment in August 1942. He was promoted to Colonel shortly thereafter. Gavin built this regiment from the ground up, seeing this as the best way to reach their vision and goals. Gavin led his troops on long marches and realistic training sessions, creating the training missions himself and leading the marches personally. He also placed great value on having his officers *"the first out of the airplane door and the last in the chow line"*. This practice has continued to the present day in US Airborne units.

In February 1943, the US 82nd Airborne Division — consisting of the 325th and 326th Glider Infantry Regiments and the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment — was selected for the Allied invasion of Sicily. This selection came as a surprise for the division; most members thought that the US 101st Airborne Division would be selected, as that division was led by the "Father" of the Airborne idea, William C. Lee. Not enough gliders were available to have both glider regiments take part in the landings, so the 326th Glider Infantry Regiment was relieved from assignment to the 82nd on February 4, 1943 and replaced by Gavin's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment effective February 10, 1943.

On April 10, 1943 Matthew B. Ridgway explained what their next mission would be: Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. Gavin's regiment would be the first ever in the US to make a regimental sized Airborne landing. Gavin declared: ***"It is exciting and stimulating that the first regimental parachute operation in the history of our army is to be taken by the 505th."***

Ridgway selected Gavin's regiment for the operation. General Patton suggested performing the invasion at night, but Ridgway and Gavin disagreed because they had not practiced night jumps. After mounting casualties during practice jumps, Gavin canceled all practice jumps until the invasion.

Gavin was part of Mission Boston on D-Day. This was a parachute combat assault conducted at night by the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division on

June 6, 1944, and part of the American airborne landings in Normandy.

For the first time General Gavin would lead the 82nd Airborne into combat. On Sunday, 17 September, Operation Market Garden took off. Market Garden, devised by the British General Bernard Montgomery consisted of an Airborne attack of three Airborne Divisions. The 82nd was to take the bridge across the Maas river in Grave, seize at least one of four bridges across the Maas-Waal canal and the bridge across the Waal river in Nijmegen. Also the 82nd was to take control of the high grounds in the vicinity of Groesbeek, a small Dutch town near the German border.



Gavin receiving the DSO from British Field Marshal Montgomery in Mönchengladbach, 21 March 1945

The 82nd Airborne consisted of the 504th, the 505th, and 508th Regiments. On September the 23rd, the 325th Glider Regiment would land to reinforce the 82nd. In the drop into Holland, Gavin landed on hard pavement instead of grass, injuring his back. He had it checked out by a doctor a few days later who told him that his back was fine, so he continued normally throughout the entirety of the war.

(continued....)



The battle of the 82nd Airborne culminated on September the 20th, with the famous Waal crossing of the 3rd Battalion of the 504th Regiment, under the command of Major Julian Cook. The 82nd would stay in Holland until November 13, when it was transferred to their new billets in Sisonne et Suippes, France.

Gavin also played a central role in integrating the U.S. military, beginning with his incorporation of the all-black 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion into the 82nd Airborne Division.

The 555th's commander, Colonel Bradley Biggs, referred to Gavin as perhaps the most "color-blind" Army officer in the entire service. Biggs' unit distinguished itself as "smokejumpers" in 1945, combating forest fires and disarming Japanese balloon bombs.

After the war, Gavin went on to high postwar command. He was a key player in stimulating the discussions which led to the Pentomic Division. As Army Chief of Research and Development and public author, he called for the use of mechanized troops transported by air to become a modern form of cavalry. He proposed deploying troops and light weight armored fighting vehicles by glider (or specially designed air dropped pod), aircraft, or helicopter to perform reconnaissance, raids, and screening operations. This led to the Howze Board, which had a great influence on the Army's use of helicopters — first seen during the Vietnam War.

While he was the US Army's Chief of Research & Development, he established a requirement for an armored, tracked, air-droppable Universal Carrier. This requirement crystallized in 1956 as the AAM/PVF (Airborne Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle).

Gavin retired in March 1958 as a Lieutenant General. He wrote a book, *"War and Peace in the Space Age"*, published in mid-1958, which, among other things, detailed his reasons for leaving the army at that time.

Upon retiring from the U.S. Army, Gavin was recruited by an industrial research and consulting firm, Arthur D. Little, Inc.



General Gavin speaking to President Kennedy

In 1961 President Kennedy asked Gavin to take a leave of absence from ADL and answer his country's call once again, to serve as US Ambassador to France. Kennedy hoped Gavin would be able to improve deteriorating diplomatic relations with France, due to his experiences with the French during World War II, and his wartime relationship with France's President, General Charles De Gaulle. This proved to be a successful strategy and Gavin served as the U.S. Ambassador to France in 1961 and 1962.

President Jimmy Carter, in 1977, considered the 70-year-old Gavin for CIA Director, before settling on Adm. Stansfield Turner.

He married Jean Emert Duncan of Knoxville, Tennessee, in July 1948 and remained married to her for 42 years, until his death in 1990.

Lieut. Gen. James Gavin, 82, Dies; Champion and Critic of Military

By Glenn Fowler

Published: February 25, 1990

Lieut. Gen. James M. Gavin, a World War II commander who went on to become a top Army administrator, a diplomat and a leading management consultant, died of complications from Parkinson's disease on Friday at the Keswick Nursing Home in Baltimore.

He was 82 years old and had homes in Wianno, Mass., and Winter Park, Fla.



When he retired abruptly from the service in 1958 after a dispute with the Pentagon over what he considered a diminished role for the Army in missile development, General Gavin was, at 51, the military's youngest general officer of three-star rank.

James Maurice Gavin was a native of Brooklyn who was orphaned in childhood and reared by adoptive parents in the coal country of Pennsylvania. He left school after the eighth grade and worked at odd jobs until he joined the Army at 17.

Setting his sights on West Point, the young private took after-hours courses to gain a high-school education and passed a competitive examination to win appointment to the United States Military Academy.



“It Don’t Mean Nothin’”

An excerpt from *Nam Vet, Making Peace with Your Past*
by Chuck Dean, 1/503d & Support Battalion
173d Association National Chaplain Emeritus

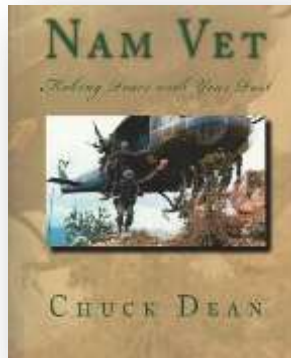
John sat down in an exhausted heap. The red dust puffed up as he leaned back on his heavy rucksack and pulled a cigarette from a small plastic container he kept in the camouflage band around his helmet.

The long hours of the battle for Hue City had lulled into a sudden stillness, leaving the soldiers of the 101st Airborne wondering if the 1968 Tet Offensive was over. They hoped it was, because the low cloud-cover had prevented them any access to air support from Navy jets. And “Charlie” had been pounding them unmercifully with everything he had.

Looking around through tired, eighteen-year-old eyes, John witnessed the carnage of a once-beautiful Asian city. Not one building had escaped the millions of pockmarks from bullets and shrapnel. The city was a complete shambles. Across the open square in front of him lay dead, mangled people and cattle. Cries of pain and wails of grief came from every direction.

The 120-degree sun already was boiling the putrid odors of decaying flesh and excrement into his nostrils, and he felt a helplessness engulf him. It was as if he had fallen into a dream, with no control to stop it. There was nothing he could do about where he was or what was going on around him. He must have already died and gone to hell, he reasoned, and this was what it was like there. It was the only logical answer for what he was experiencing, but what had he done to deserve being there?

All seemed lost in that moment. His life would never be the same again.



That was one young trooper’s experience after a hard-fought battle in Vietnam. It is also a classic example of how many veterans were inflicted with the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder of Depression. Depression is accompanied by a crippling sense of helplessness. It’s tough for a veteran to climb out of that hole, especially when he feels no one would ever understand the sorrow, guilt, anger, and pain he has witnessed or is currently feeling.

In the case of John, the ravages of the battle in Hue City brought on his depressed state. He is still haunted by the effects of those terrible hours in 1968. A few years ago he was working as a welder at a Seattle shipyard and happened to be in conversation with a couple of the younger men who had not been in ‘Nam. He was telling them about the cloud-cover over Hue which had kept air support from taking part in the battle. It was a cloudy day in Seattle, which is not unusual, and while relating the story to his friends, John felt a sudden rush of panic. He fell immobilized on the deck of the ship they were working on and had to leave work to recuperate from the shock of his “flashback.”

Depression is difficult to define, even more difficult to treat, yet is one of the most common afflictions known to humans. In order for you and others to understand your depression, we need to consider the traumatic wartime and postwar circumstances which brought it on. One major focal point is that we felt helpless as a result of our continuing to live in an apathetic environment.

For many a war never ends...

Although the Vietnam War officially ended in 1975, it still rages in the lives of thousands of veterans and their families. This book not only tells why so many Vietnam veterans suffer from flashbacks, depression, fits of rage, nightmares, emotional numbing, and broken relationships, but it offers solid answers and gives hope. It reveals the way to peace on the subject of post-traumatic stress disorder for those who have survived the ravages of combat.



Chuck

“*Nam Vet*’ is an intensely personal book in which Dean bares his life and soul. Because of that, it is one of the more practical, helpful and timely books to hit the shelves in the past few years.’”

Charles Edgren, *El Paso Herald-Post*



2/503d Newsletter Editor’s Choice

Available on Amazon.com



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / May 2012 – Issue 40
Page 59 of 70



On War, Guilt and ‘Thank You for Your Service’

By Elizabeth Samet

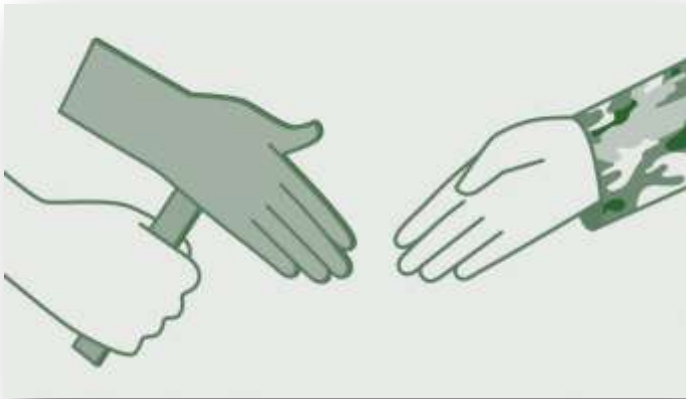


Illustration by Ethan Buller

Watch a 1940s or 1950s movie set in New York City -- noir, comedy or melodrama -- and you are sure to spot him: straphanging on a crowded subway car, buying a newspaper at a kiosk or sitting in a coffee shop. The anonymous man in uniform is a stock extra in these films, as elemental to the urban landscape as the beat cop, the woman with the baby carriage or the couple in love.

But today, a woman or man in military uniform dining in a restaurant, sitting on a bench in Central Park or walking up Broadway constitutes a spectacle. I have witnessed this firsthand whenever one of my military colleagues and I have taken West Point cadets to the city to attend a performance or to visit a library or museum. My civilian clothes provide camouflage as I watch my uniformed friends bombarded by gratitude.

These meetings between soldier and civilian turn quickly into street theater. The soldier is recognized with a handshake. There's often a request for a photograph or the tracing of a six-degrees-of-separation genealogy: "My wife's second cousin is married to a guy in the 82nd Airborne." Each encounter concludes with a ritual utterance: "Thank you for your service."

Obligatory Thanks

One former captain I know proposed that "thank you for your service" has become "an obligatory salutation." Dutifully offered by strangers, "somewhere between an afterthought and heartfelt appreciation," it is gratifying but also embarrassing to a soldier with a strong sense of modesty and professionalism. "People thank me for my service," another officer noted, "but they don't really know what I've done."

Sometimes, the drama between soldier and civilian turns plain weird. One officer reported that while shopping in uniform at the grocery store one evening, she was startled by a man across the aisle who gave her an earnest, Hollywood-style, chest-thumping Roman salute. My friend is unfailingly gracious, but she was entirely at a loss for a proper response.

These transactions resemble celebrity sightings -- with the same awkwardness, enthusiasm and suspension of normal expectations about privacy and personal space. Yet while the celebrity is an individual recognized for a unique, highly publicized performance, the soldier is anonymous, a symbol of an aggregate. His or her performance is unseen.

Spitting on Soldiers

The successful reincorporation of veterans into civil society entails a complex, evolving process. Today, the soldier's homecoming has been further complicated by the absence of a draft, which removes soldiers from the cultural mainstream, and by the fact that the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have little perceptible impact on the rhythms of daily life at home.

Whether anyone ever spat on an American soldier returning from Vietnam is a matter of debate. The sociologist and veteran Jerry Lembcke disputed such tales in "*The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam.*" Apocryphal or not, this image has become emblematic of an era's shame, and of the failure of civilians to respond appropriately to the people they had sent to fight a bankrupt war.

The specter of this guilt -- this perdurable archetype of the hostile homecoming -- animates today's encounters, which seem to have swung to the other unthinking extreme. "Thank you for your service" has become a mantra of atonement. But, as is all too often the case with gestures of atonement, substance has been eclipsed by mechanical ritual. After the engagement, both parties retreat to separate camps, without a significant exchange of ideas or perspectives having passed between them.

Collective Responsibility

When I broached the subject with a major with whom I had experienced the phenomenon, he wrote a nuanced response. Although he's convinced that "*the sentiments most people express appear to be genuinely FELT,*" he nonetheless distrusts such spectacles. "*Does the act of thanking a soldier unconsciously hold some degree of absolution from the collective responsibility?*" he asked.

(continued...)



No reasonable person would argue that thanking soldiers for their service isn't preferable to spitting on them. Yet at least in the perfunctory, formulaic way many such meetings take place, it is an equally unnatural exchange. The ease with which "thank you for your service" has circumvented a more enduring human connection doesn't bode well for mutual understanding between soldiers and civilians. The inner lives of soldiers remain opaque to most of us.

A Seductive Transaction

"Deep down," the major, who served in Iraq, acknowledged, "my ego wants to embrace the ritualized adoration, the sense of purpose, and the attendant mythology." The giving and receiving of thanks is a seductive transaction, and no one knows that better than this officer: "I eagerly shake hands, engage in small talk, and pose for pictures with total strangers." Juxtaposed in his mind with scenes from Fallujah or Arlington National Cemetery, however, his sanitized encounters with civilians make him feel like Mickey Mouse, he confessed. "Welcome to Disneyland."

Thanking soldiers on their way to or from a war isn't the same as imaginatively following them there.

Conscience-easing expressions of gratitude by politicians and citizens cloak with courtesy the often bloody, wounding nature of a soldier's service. Today's dominant narrative, one that favors sentimentality over scrutiny, embodies a fantasy that everything will be okay if only we display enough flag-waving enthusiasm. More than 100,000 homeless veterans, and more than 40,000 troops wounded in action in Iraq and Afghanistan, may have a different view.

Lincoln's Consolation

If our theater of gratitude provoked introspection or led to a substantive dialogue between giver and recipient, I would celebrate it. But having witnessed these bizarre, fleeting scenes, I have come to believe that they are a poor substitute for something more difficult and painful - a conversation about what war does to the people who serve and to the people who don't. There are contradictions inherent in being, as many Americans claim to be, for the troops but against the war. Most fail to consider the social responsibilities such a stance commits them to fulfilling in the coming decades.



We've been there, and done that.

Few Americans have understood more clearly the seductions and inadequacies of professing gratitude than Abraham Lincoln. Offering to a mother who had lost two sons in the Civil War "the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic," Lincoln nevertheless acknowledged "how weak and fruitless must be any words ... which should attempt to beguile" her from her grief. Expressions of thanks constitute the beginning, not the end, of obligation.

(Elizabeth Samet is a professor of English at the U.S. Military Academy and the author of "Soldier's Heart: Reading Literature Through Peace and War at West Point." The opinions expressed are her own.)

Source:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-08-02/war-guilt-and-thank-you-for-your-service-commentary-by-elizabeth-samet.html>



"Thank you for your service."

Ge. What took ya?



This appeared in the local paper here in Florida:

Just say thank you for service compliment

Dear Abby: My husband served in Vietnam and proudly wears a Vietnam veteran insignia on his jacket or cap everywhere he goes. People approach him all the time and thank him for his service, which is wonderful. The big question is, how should he respond? He isn't quite sure what to say back to them – "You're welcome"? "It was my honor to serve"? "Thank you for caring"?

I told my husband I'd ask you. What's the proper thing to say when someone is kind enough to take a minute to say thanks?

--Vet's Wife in Phoenix

Dear Vet's Wife: I'm sure being thanked for his service in Vietnam is music to your husband's ears. When members of the military returned home from Vietnam, many of them were treated with hostility. A proper response when someone thanks him for his service would be any of those you offered, or a simple, "Thanks for saying that. I appreciate it."

--Abby

Being thanked for our service in Vietnam is a new phenomenon for us. We posed the same question to some of our guys, and here's what they said:

"I wear a 173d hat and get that a lot from young adults and even teens. It makes me feel proud to have served my country. Whenever someone 'Thanks me for my service', I always tell them they are welcome, and I feel great about it. I wish it could have happened years ago when we returned home from Viet Nam. Airborne, All The Way."

Ron Amyot
Recon/HHC/2/503d



"I really feel great when someone thanks me for my service. Many times it's a vet from a different conflict and I put my hand on their shoulder and thank them back. Tears sometimes flow."

Bryan Bowley
B/2/503d



"I kind of get this by saying 'thank you for your service' to our recent generation of warriors; somehow it gives me comfort. I will often pick up their tab at a fast food restaurant or bar; again it is kind of like me somehow getting the thank you myself."

Wayne Cleveland
A/2/503d

"Because of the way they treated my troops when they came home, I'll never forgive that generation, especially the ones in San Francisco to which I was a witness. One of my great young sergeants who went home after his tour of duty, suddenly returned four weeks later. I was astonished when I saw him. He was a tall lanky, good looking kid. I quickened my steps and caught up with him on my way to the Fire Fly Chopper Pad at Bong Son. I had been signing paperwork at the Orderly Room, when the S-3 called me and told me that my company had made contact with an NVA unit and the CO's Chopper was coming in to pick me up. So I'm heading for the chopper pad and see this kid walking, head bowed down. I recognized him immediately. Funny how one knows ones troops even from a distance.

(continued....)



I caught up with him and as I pulled up beside him I asked him, 'You, here? What in the hell are you doing here; I thought you hated the Army'. He stopped, looked at me with tears streaming from his eyes. Shit, I still start to cry as I think back. He looked at me through his tears and said, 'Sir, this is the only home I have. This is my family.' My father called me a baby killer -- his father had fought in WWII. My First Sergeant was Henrique Salas, and we are still in touch. You have to remember, that I was not affected by much except the deep personal pain of others. I saw my first mass executions at the age of 6 and a half in January 1945, and spent two years in a German orphanage after the war, with a year and a half in hospitals before I came to this wonderful country. The first American soldiers I met were from the 101st Airborne Division, they bought me my first milkshake. I fell literally head over heels in love with America and there was nothing I wanted to be more than an American. It really didn't matter to me what names people called me. As a little boy in Germany in the orphanage, I was used to being called a Hungarian Swine. But my troops, I took care of and anyone who hurt their feelings I hated as much as I hated the Communists. This is why I always smile and say 'Thank you ma'am, the ammo was free, and I hate commies, so it was a pleasure'. Here's my last 'official' photograph taken 6 years ago at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Notice the 173d lapel pin on my jacket."



Mike de Gyrky
B/HHC/2/503d



Mo at the ready

"I am both embarrassed and at this time in history, a bit irritated when people thank me. If I ever deserved it, it was a long time ago when I still wore the smell of the war on me. Instead I met revulsion, hate and curses. On the other hand, I was a total volunteer on my fourth year when I was in the Herd, and I never felt I really needed a thank you. I wanted to serve the nation, and that is what I did. When

anyone says *thank you for your service*, I normally say that *you are welcome* and keep the rest inside."

Darrell "Moe" Elmore
C/D/HHC/2/503d & SF

"I usually say, 'Well, Thank You, I appreciate that. You are thoughtful and kind.' I then introduce myself and offer to shake the person's hand. This photo was taken in January on one of my Striped Bass fishing trips. The photo is with my son, retired 1SG Joe Esposito (with the winter facial hair) and some of our catch." ☺

Tony Esposito
C/HHC/2/503d



Joe & Tony

"I often wear my 'Vietnam Veteran's' cap and sense appreciative and respectful glances. When someone says 'Thanks for your service', I always reply with, 'You're welcome, and thank you'. I have had Vietnam-era veterans say thanks and apologize for not having served in RVN. To that I tell them they did their part by serving. The photo includes me, second from left and between two original Tuskegee Airmen. The man on the right is an honorary member. I don't know their names.

Earle Graham
A/2/503d



(continued....)



“I just say thank you. Sometimes I remember not saying anything, or I just nod or I’ll shake hands if a friend, or I’ll shake hands and hug if a Vet or wife of a Vet, or then I’ll just give a big, warm Texas hug for family members. I am a 22 year Army retiree, and I just got it pounded into me and taught from older servicemen; *it’s my job*, or, most of the time while in the Army, really all the time while in the Army or at home. I just say plainly and softly, *I was just doing my job*; that is what I was doing, it was my business to do the Army’s job, with no or little thank you expected. I was getting paid and I loved my job. I guess it’s how you look at things, or maybe how you were brought up. After a while you just come up with your own mental attitude towards praise and thanks and pats on the back. I know in my job, unless I told the cook that he or she did a good job, that they would never get thanked. Whenever we would win a trophy for cooking in the field or being the best on a Post, I always, always picked a cook to receive the trophy or praise or honor. It’s very few times a cook can get recognition for just his or her everyday job. You see, a dining facility is the hub of the wheel, the center gathering place 3 times a day or even maybe 4 times a day. And, it’s the place to unload if the food is not better than just good. We see our co-workers, including the officers and civilians, if any on base, each day. I was always proud of my cooks. We always were one of the best wherever we were. We prided ourselves in doing more than just what was required. I was the trainer, the teacher, and the helper. My cooks did the work, and they deserve the thanks, always. Just my own simple opinion. Even when I was in the infantry and an Airborne Ranger, I still acted the same. I was taught the old way, of what a soldier and NCO does or doesn’t do. I have nothing but the utmost respect for any and all who served their country. Me, I was drafted. I put food on the table and took care of my family, and we went around the world twice. I retired as an E-8. I miss the Army. I miss the challenge. I miss the knowledge of knowing that I did a great job, *The Army Way*, not my way. I miss old friends and longtime friends far-away. I miss all the fun and travel. Just so many good memories. Take care, and God bless.”

Chris Henhofer
B/2/503d

“I generally respond (if I know the individuals background) to soldiers: *Thanks for your service, as well.* To non-soldiers, *Thanks for being a great American.*”



Carol & Ranger Roy

Roy Lombardo
B/2/503d

“I usually just say, *Thank you. That means more than you will ever know.*”

Olaf Hurd
Recon/2/503d



Olaf, on left, being presented with an award by his Recon buddy Jerry Hassler.

“Hey You Old Fart... That Little Boy was Big enough to Make you Cry .. Huh .. !? Yeah, that shit happens to all of us now and then. Kinda like my Dad Finally Giving Me a Pat on the back and telling me *“Great Job Mowing the Lawn, and you didn’t run over any of your Mother’s Roses this time.”* I was finally GOOD Enough. Just a TINY Bit Of Recognition is all I (WE) ever wanted. I know it’s not what you’re talking about BUT Finally a Thank You we’ve been wanting for So Long. I’ll see if I can find a Recent pic. I know there was one good one in the Post Office some time back, it even had a side view -- they might have taken it down by now. All The Fuckin’ Way...DOWN.....Airborne!



Post Office Photo?

Richard “Airborne” Martinez
B/2/503d

“I’ve had that happen several times. I’m always taken with it, almost speechless (imagine that), and do my mumbled thank you. I’ve been thanks by a civilian, a SGM and a Colonel, so I guess I’ve caught the spread. **It is not the destination but the journey.**”

David Maxey
B/HHC/2/503d

(continued....)



“I recently started using the services of a local cleaners and when I met the proprietor I walked in as a young female Marine soldier was making her way out the door. I stopped her for a moment and 'thanked her for her service to our country' to which she replied, *'It is my privilege, Sir, to serve this great nation of people like you!'* The owner, Glenn, told me he was still a bit uncomfortable doing that. I was in a hurry yet I promised to let him know the next time I picked up my clothes 'why it was important to me...' A week later, I did. I explained that I had been asked to be a pallbearer at a funeral to a 'great aunt' in my former wife's family. She was a great lady and I felt compelled to carry out the family's request. When I arrived at the church I met a young Marine in full dress uniform who was related by marriage, as well. We spoke briefly and I was very impressed with the quality of his character. After the funeral, I left to return home. A few short weeks later I received news that the young Marine had been killed in Iraq shortly after he had returned to duty...it seems that morning he was killed he had gone to the dispensary where one of the soldiers had gone berserk and had killed a bunch of our troops at the medical clinic, indiscriminately...the young Marine never knew what 'hit' him. I cried like a baby. I told Glenn that one never knows when war will claim its next victim, and that when I spoke to his mom she informed me of the pride the young Marine had in serving his country...our country. I think of all the times that 'no one ever came and shook my hand for having served in Southeast Asia as a young Combat Medic'...and it made me feel 'privileged' to have been around long enough to acknowledge the service of others. I have always gone the extra distance to greet all soldiers, whether they are in line at the grocery store or at the local gas station, and I have found a few WWII survivors as well...they tell me that the Vietnam era vets are dying at the rate of almost (400) a day and that there are some 850 thousand of us left. I would like to thank all of them collectively and individually for their 'time in Hell'...on behalf of a grateful Nation...and the rest of us. It is the proper and well-deserved honor we should bestow on them. I do not care to be recognized in that fashion so much for me as it would be a tribute to all those who didn't come home....like we did. There should never be any concern over walking up to a soldier and giving them the few moments it takes to 'thank them'...the more 'we' do it, the more others will see that it's the right thing to do. This Nation was built by warriors who sacrificed everything to give others a chance to live in freedom. This country has been at war some 209 years out of the total years we have been 'a country', always helping others around the



globe and taking only the earth it takes to bury someone in as a form of land grant. I served in the 'Nam for a year...365 days, yet, our unit fought its way through 230 days of some form of engagement in battle, as I know the rest of you guys did, as well. These days, the only 'peace' I get is when I approach our fine soldiers and 'thank them', accordingly. You never know whether you will ever see them again or whether what you say gives them that sense of peace that they are doing the right thing. Regardless of whether you get that from others, it is our obligation to those who serve us today to tell them 'we care'. Sincerely, a Combat Medic in the 'Nam.”

Rick 'Doc' Navarrete'
The 'Herd'
A/2/503d
Central Highlands, '68'69

“It is indeed refreshing, after all these years, to be thanked for service to our country. Like so many of us, I was really caught off guard by my first “Thank you!” experience just a few years ago. And like so many of us, I've learned to accept it with great pride. My response is a friendly, humble smile, a warm handshake, and a thank you in return. And after nearly 50 years, it feels GREAT!”

Jerry Nissley
B/2/503d

“I ALWAYS thank anyone that I can identify as a veteran. I will walk 20 feet out of my way to do so. I do not wear a veteran's cap or shirt very often. That way the veteran is receiving my praise not knowing that I am also a veteran. To me, this has a much more effective result. On the few occasions that I do wear, no one has ever thanked me. That's o.k. by me. I receive a lot of different responses, many such as *“That was a long time ago”*. Many say, *“I'd do it all over again”*. I see a big smile from the veteran as well as their wives. Some hug their husband, pull him close holding on to their arms. I used to get a little teary eyed when I first started. My wife also enjoys the responses as everyone is smiling. That is my welcome home, and I enjoy every minute of it. As all of our veterans are aware, few have ever been thanked for their service. If it were I receiving the recognition, I would respond with a thank you and a smile!”



Dave Norman
A/2/503, 68-69

(continued...)



"If you knew what I did for you, you probably wouldn't thank me."

Gary Prisk
C/D/2/503d



Company CO, the "Teenage Captain" Gary Prisk (C), taking a coffee break with his *Hill People* somewhere in Southeast Asia. "We were young once, and soldiers."

"I was standing in line at a Stop & Shop grocery store. I was wearing a 173d shirt, muscles bulging, and the couple in front of me turned, noticed my shirt (and muscles) then asked if I was in Vietnam. *Uh, yeah*, I said. They smiled and said, "Thank you". The old guy shook my hand. I thought of that all the way home, with a few tears. When I got home, I told my wife, Peg. She held me, and I cried. The last time, I was coming out of the VA. I was again wearing a Herd shirt, lettering front and back, when a young vet from Iraq, I think, walked past, stopped and turned. He held out his hand and said, 'Welcome home, brother'."

Jack "Jackattack" Ribera
A/2/503d

Editor's note: Now, Mr. Ribera is a close friend. In fact, he and I and other troopers from the 2/503d & 1/503d reinvaded VN in 2001. And, I must admit his brief story here did cause some fog to happen. But, I'll be damned if I know what the hell those 'bulging muscles' are he keeps talking about! Ed



A/2/503 troopers Mike Sturges on left with the multi-bulging muscled Jack "Jackattack" Ribera at war museum in Saigon 2001, introducing an old friend they met in '66. *Welcome home brothers, and yes, thanks for your service.*

"Recently you asked us for our re-sponses when folks thanked us for our service. I am seldom asked, as my hat rarely causes folks to ask about Vietnam. However, I always wear a miniature set of jump wings on my lapel whenever I am wearing a sport coat or suit. Occasionally, some asshole will bellow (mostly for his audience) 'I can't understand why anyone would jump out of a perfectly good plane Ha Ha.' I usually smile and say, 'Well sir, it has been my experience that the guys who ask me that question usually lack the intelligence to grasp the concept or the balls to execute it.' Obviously, I don't make many new friends at cocktail parties. I just say 'thank you' then try to change the subject."

Jim Robinson
B/2/503d



"It is something very new and I am often surprised at this recognition, albeit unexpected. It too at times stirs the emotions. My response is often a simple nod, a smile and thank you...followed at times and circumstance with a handshake! I try to acknowledge their intent and to return their recognition of our service with a quiet smile and a nod. Regards."

"Tome Dancing"

Tome Roubideaux

A/2/503d, 173d LRRP, 74th LRP and N Co 75th RGR



"Last July Fourth, I found myself hobbled after stepping into a two-foot hole. When it was time for me to attend the parade, I was wearing my 173d cap and using a walking stick. A tall, young man came climbing out of the crowd, extended his right hand, and 'thanked me for my service'. This was new to me, as well. I believe this happened because of my hobbling, since it hadn't occurred before. I was a bit taken aback...but I did manage an 'Uh...uh... It was my pleasure; any time.' Man, but I didn't feel all that great about it; as though I'd used a prop for sympathy. Upon reflection, however, I realized that the young man was doing his best to recognize *us all*; good for him!"

'tooslo'
D/2/503d



(continued...)



“My wife and I were at a Denny’s enjoying our senior-discount breakfast, with me wearing my 173d cap to cover the ever-widening bald spot which had invaded my scalp, when a young lad maybe 9 or 10 years old approached our table.



Smitty & Smittytoo

He stopped in front of me and said, “*Thank you for your service.*” Frankly, I was dumb founded, and I did my utmost to mumble a *thank you* while at the same time trying my best to hide the tears welling up in this old soldier’s eyes. It was good to be thanked, finally.”

Lew “Smitty” Smith
HHC/2/503d

“Like you, I was dumb founded the first time I was thanked for my service a few years ago. I coughed out, ‘*It was my honor.*’ On the occasions I’m thanked for my service, that’s my response. *ATFW*”

Marc Thurston
D/2/503d

“The first time I was thanked was in '90 or '91 when I finally made myself visit the Wall. I'd gone down to DC with a friend who was researching a play so, while he was working in the Library of Congress I walked down the Mall. It took all morning and when I finally got there only a few people were around. I walked up and down from one end to



**Russ. A good lookin’
young trooper**

the other. There were all sorts of mementos at various places along the Wall. I kept walking along searching for names, found a few, and scanning the gifts, when I saw a small piece of paper in a plastic sheet protector. I looked closer, and on it in the handwriting of what looked like a 10 or 12 year old was a simple message saying ‘...*thank you for protecting us...*’ Up until then I hadn’t felt much from my visit, but reading that note kicked my knees out from under me and I cried like a baby. It’s been hard over the years to judge the sincerity of thanks for service. It seems to have become a response similar to ‘*Bless you*’ when you sneeze. But that simple note helps with perspective -- at least a little. Thanks.”

Russell Webb
HHC/2/503d

~ 503rd Paratrooper Extraordinaire ~

It is with the deepest remorse that I write to inform you of the passing of my Father, Prior A. McCallum. He fought in the Pacific during WWII and helped defeat the Japanese at Corregidor and take back The Rock. His health has been declining for the last year. He passed away quietly on March 23rd at 93 years young. His heart was always with all of you even though he could not be there. I would just like to say thank you all for your service and for keeping an old man going with things such as the *Static Line*. He has been almost completely blind for the last three years. I would read every edition to him. At no other time would you see him pay more attention than at these times. My Dad loved God, his Flag and his fellow Paratroopers. God Bless you all.

Thomas McCallum
Son of a Paratrooper

Prior A. McCallum
1918-2012

A native of Baton Rouge and resident of Ventress, born August 13, 1918, in Plaquemine, he passed away peacefully on Friday, March 23, 2012, at 5 p.m. He was 93. Interment was held in Greenoaks Memorial Park Cemetery, Baton Rouge.



He is survived by his brother, Edmund McCallum, of Baton Rouge, and daughters, Pam and Elma Sue; a daughter, Noy Spann, of Pensacola, Fla., and her family; a son, Thomas McCallum and family, of St. Francisville; nephew, Ronnie McCallum and family, of Port Hudson; was related to the Gascon's from Plaquemine area; and many grand, great and great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Belle E. McCallum; daughter, Joan L. Fleegle; two sons, Robert "Bobby" P. and Steven W. McCallum. He served our country proudly in the Pacific during World War II. He was a member of the 503rd parachute regimental combat team that recaptured Corregidor, also known as "The Rock" in 1945. Thanks for your service, dad, and may you rest in peace.

To sign the online guest register, visit
www.nilandfuneralservice.com.



3/319th Sky Diver Skip Kniley & Friends

This photo was taken after his free-fall onto the shoreline of Cocoa Beach, FL during one of the 2/503 reunions. Damn Arty get all the good Red Cross packages! Hooters girls were on-hand serving wings to the guys with wings.



Skip with Hooters

True story: As Skip and his Vietnam vet buddies were plummeting to earth (sand?), two, young, local bikini-clad sea creatures ran by hoping to meet Skip and his fellow daredevils. After they all hit the DZ safely, save one trooper who landed a couple hotels south of the drop zone, the young ladies slowly and dejectedly walked away. One was heard to say, "Where are the young paratroopers?" No shit. Just standing there listening to them was like a knife to the heart. Ed



It's A Small World After All

In the biography of Dick Adams (see Page 35) on his WWII 503 PRCT experience and his return to Corregidor, I spied a familiar name. He mentioned Peter Parsons, son of CDR Chick Parsons, who helped guide him and his wife around the island. In 1927 to 1930, I was 3 to 6 years old and was living with my parents at Petit Barracks, a one battalion US Army post just outside of the Province Capital of Zamboanga on the Philippine Island of Mindanao. My father was company commander of D



Col. Dexter on Okinawa circa '64/'65 ready to blast

Company, 45th Infantry, Philippine Scouts (colonial troops under command of US Army officers) at Petit Barracks. There were a handful of civilian Americans who lived with their families in Zamboanga or nearby, businessmen or administrators in the colonial administration, and they mingled socially with the American officers and their families at Petit Barracks. Chick Parsons was one of these friends of my parents whose name I remember. During World War II word somehow got back and circulated among the old Petit Barracks crowd that Chick Parsons was involved with the guerrilla movement in Luzon, the northern island of the Philippines. In 1946 or 1947 I was stationed in Manila and somehow learned that Chick Parsons owned a shipping business in the Manila port area. I looked him up and managed to spend an hour with him in his office where he reminisced about my folks and the prewar days in Zamboanga.

George Dexter, Col. (Ret)
2/503d Bn CO, RVN '65/'66

~ 2/503d Photo History ~ All Years in Vietnam

Don't forget to email all your photos from Vietnam for our *Photo History*. Please send as JPEGs with brief descriptive information to rto173d@cfl.rr.com

See following sample page....

Them Yummy C-Rats

Remember the fine cuisine we ate in Vietnam???

John "Top" Searcy
HHC/2/503d)



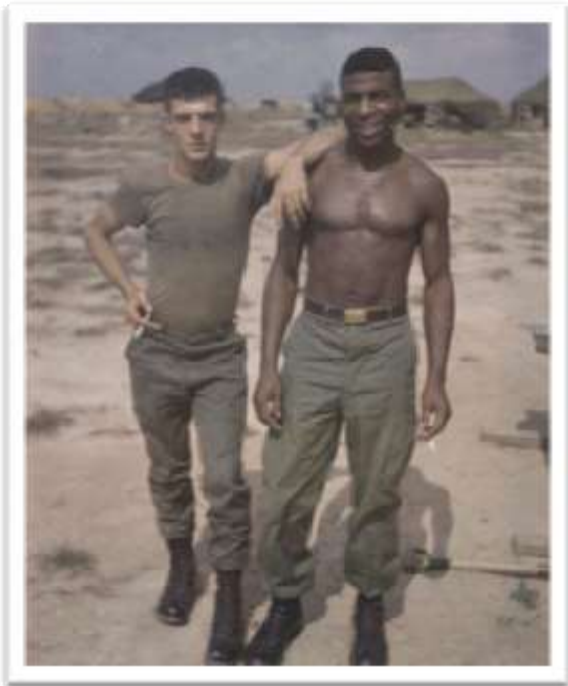
Never enough
of this

Sturges: I'll trade you my Salem's for your pound cake.
Gettel: Hell no!



2/503 Photo History ~ Vietnam 1965-66

Les Daniels, A/2/503d, Collection



L-R: SP Alimeda & PFC Robert Wright at Zinn Playing softball outside camp – *who's on first? Hell, who's on guard?!*



Les with Montagnard kids



Jack Lynx from Cleveland





Thank you for your service.

