

FOR THE MEN, AND THEIR
FAMILIES, OF THE 2ND BATTALION,
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
★ ★ ★ ★ *newsletter*



June 2012, Issue 41

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 ~



335th AHC Cowboys delivering their cargo of 2/503d troopers into the rice paddies of SVN.
(Photo by Door-Gunner John Cavinee, Cowboys, cousin of Ron Cavinee, A/2/503d, KIA)



Chaplain's Corner

"I Got Your 6"

This is my second opportunity to share with you, and I'm glad that you are back! Let me review, just a moment, where we were and where we finished last month. The Scripture I used was from Isaiah 6:8 *"Here am I, send me."*



Cap

You'll recall the theme of my messages is the words from Shakespeare's play...King Henry V. The English are surrounded by the French in France in the year 1415; the odds are 5-to-1 and it doesn't look good. But the King has a vision, and he shares it with his men and...the victory is theirs. Likewise, in the Stephen Ambrose book *"Band of Brothers"* these same words are shared; ***We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers.***

In our daily battles and struggles it will always be easier if the fight is not ours alone. The first priority is that we call on the Lord. Then, who are the brothers in your life that you can reach out to in times of trouble and need? Likewise, can those same brothers reach out to you and me when they are up against the wall? If they can and if we can, then we are truly a band of brothers.

One of the commitments that I have always found comfort in is when a brother offers to lend a hand and shows that he is with me. In the military, at least back in the old days when I served, there was an expression... ***"I Got Your 6."*** The meaning to me was just as applicable to my friends in the Air Force and Marines. If we were organized for the fight, then there would be flank security on the left and right and a recon or advanced element to the front. What always was a concern to me, both in the military and in civilian life, was what was coming up behind me, and to hear a brother say... *"I got your 6 covered"* was a commitment that someone was looking after me, was praying for me. It was also a commitment I find that I need to make to ensure that friends of mine know that I'm concerned about them -- and, am willing and prepared to cover "their 6" when they face difficulties. Make sense? Do you do that?

I remember once speaking to a men's group in a church and sharing with them about *"I got your 6 covered"* and what it meant. I used as an example their pastor and their responsibility to ensure that he was covered and

that the criticism that pastors face was countered and that his needs were being shared, met, and overcome. The next Sunday, the Pastor stood up behind the podium as church started and on the podium were a stack of notes--each saying...*"Pastor, I got your 6 covered."* They were praying for him and guarding him, so to speak, and they were part of his team.

Just maybe the Lord has a call on your life to reach out and help someone else. I believe He has a mission for you and me. Even as you read this message, and regardless where we might be...God has a purpose for us right now, right where you are, and no matter who you and I are. Whatever we might have encountered in our past or what's in our future, He has permitted us to be in this place and time for a specific reason... ***"for such a time as this"*** (Esther 4:14).

Look and search for that duty that He wants you to participate in. Seek those opportunities. He has something specific for you to accomplish in your present situation, and He wants us to look for the opportunities to serve Him in our present sphere of influence. We are part of His plan and He is calling us...and our response should be... ***"Here am I, send me"*** (Isaiah 6:8).

Let me challenge you to seek out this week a brother in need. What might you do to help him? Maybe it's a need that several of you need to join together to accomplish. Look for the opportunity to share with that brother and tell him... ***"I've Got Your 6."***

Look forward to being with you next month--check out Philippians 4:8--and until then remember who we are...

We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers.



2/503d Recon, circa '66/'67. A band of brothers.

(Photo by Pat Bowe, Recon/2/503d)



FALLEN COMRADES' FAMILIES FOUND

By Wambi Cook

Alpha 2/503, 2/67-2/68

Thanks to our newsletter's special *Battle of the Slopes* edition this past June 2011, I was finally able to connect with families with whom I was unsuccessful in contacting years back. Surprisingly, those sources instrumental in my successes were not from the Herd, but are everyday citizens only loosely connected with the deceased.



Stephen Mika

Nannette D. put me in touch with David Heller's family in Colorado. Susanne, a Chicago transplant now living in Seattle, somehow got hold of the same issue, and was the catalyst in my finding Thomas Duffy's six siblings in Illinois and Washington State. Many thanks to a friend, who initiated contact with me in his attempt to ascertain info on the last days of his older brother's dear childhood friend, Russell "Rusty" Engle. Through his efforts, I'm in close contact with Stephen Mika's sister, Pat, who still resides in Northwest, Ohio.

Just a couple weeks back, I found a military video clip which not only contained images of her younger brother, but that of several other A Company members both living and dead.

**Tom Deschenes,
Unk, Tom Duffy,
Charles Kizer**

Last August I received an email inquiry about an A Company KIA, last name Duffy, mentioned in my article, *Buckets of Blood* (see June 2011, Issue 29). Susanne, a classmate and family friend, inquired if the Duffy I referred to in the article had the first name of Thomas, a native of her hometown of Oak Glen, IL. I immediately responded with an affirmative and through several subsequent emails, Susanne provided me with personal details that resulted in a conference call with five of Tom's remaining siblings located in Illinois and Seattle. According to the Duffys, I was the first and only person they'd spoken with who actually knew their



brother personally. (After AIT and Benning, myself and a dozen or so others from 49th class were assigned to Alpha). Our hour plus conversation was cleansing for all of us. Brian Duffy hopes to attend the reunion in Lexington where he'll meet a couple other Slopes survivors who knew his big brother.

I also wrote of KIA medic Joseph Junior Heller who I'm convinced saved several of our asses on 6/22/67, all without firing a shot. Keith Hale contacted me desiring personal insight into his older brother's best friend, Russell "Rusty" Engle another Slopes KIA. I recalled cursory encounters with Engle, but was unable to shed more light on his last days or hours. Keith never served in the military, but recognized early on how close Rusty's death affected his older brother even to this day. After all these years some family members have yet to come to grips with the death of their loved ones. Such is the case of Heller's brother, a Marine, whose vain requests to deploy to Viet Nam so that his older sibling could come home were approved a couple months too late.

Lastly, without Keith's persistence, I would never have been able to speak with John "Mac" Meacham's niece from Ohio. She and several other family members are military vets, and were overwhelmed to hear first-hand about her Uncle John who died when she was five years old.

The outpouring of gracious thanks bestowed upon me was underserved to say the least. I assured them that these exchanges have done as much for my mental well-being beyond my wildest imagination. Often times such encounters elicit terms such as "closure and finality", but I look upon them as "Long overdue beginnings."

After almost giving up on reconnecting with families of my friends, I've been rejuvenated and the impetus to drive on is stronger than ever. Perhaps I've shown to someone else that it's never too late.



Greg and Brian



Army Names Fort Bliss Soldier Family Care Center In Memory of SPC Hugo V. "Doc" Mendoza

By Leta Carruth

On Thursday April 12, 2012 the Army held a Memorial Naming Ceremony at Fort Bliss/Biggs Airfield, TX to rename the Soldier Family Care Center to the "SPC Hugo V. Mendoza Soldier Family Care Center" in memory of SPC Hugo "Doc" Mendoza. SPC Mendoza was killed in action in Afghanistan on October 25, 2007. The 143,000 square foot clinic is the largest free standing clinic in the Army.



SPC Hugo V. Mendoza Soldier Family Care Center

It could not have been a more beautiful day for the ceremony. As you can see from the photo above, the sky was blue. The temperatures were moderate. There was a bit of a breeze from time to time.

SPC Mendoza was killed in action on October 25, 2012 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan while tending to his wounded battle buddies during an ambush during Operation Rock Avalanche.



SPC Hugo Mendoza in Afghanistan during OEF VIII

SPC Mendoza enlisted in the U.S. Army on 31 May 2005. During his time in service, he completed Basic Infantry Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Medical Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. On 6 March 2006, SPC Mendoza reported to his first duty station at Caserma, Ederle, Vicenza, Italy. He was assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry – The ROCK. SPC Mendoza was then assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company with duty as a combat medic in Battle Company. He immediately found his home among the combat warriors of 1st Platoon – The Celts. SPC Mendoza trained, deployed and fought side by side with his band of brothers in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM VIII. SPC Mendoza distinguished himself in The ROCK as a heroic medic, charismatic Paratrooper, and an overall altruistic human being.

On October 25, 2007 as the paratroopers were making their way back to the KOP (Korengal Outpost) when they were ambushed by the enemy. The enemy had set up a classic "L" shaped ambush in anticipation of the paratroopers. SPC Mendoza, was wounded almost immediately but continued to both return fire and treat the wounded until he succumbed to his wounds.

As the Army band and the high school choir played and sang the National Anthem a huge gust of wind came barreling through the venue. The wreath in front of the speaker's podium slammed face first into the ground. Then the tents were lifted off the ground. The poles came loose from the tents in a couple of places. Some Soldiers ran to secure the tents to keep them from slamming down on the crowd. No one (other than the Soldiers securing the tents) seemed to move and the choir never missed a note. I have to confess that the hair on my neck stood up. The ceremony continued with a few much less strong gusts from time to time. After the ceremony was over all of the paratroopers were in agreement that the blast of wind was Hugo checking in to say "all is well". An incredibly poignant moment.

COL (Dr.) Bruce Adams, the outgoing chief of medical staff at William Beaumont Army Medical Center spoke at the ceremony. He said, "Soldiers join the Army to serve the nation. Medics join the Army to serve soldiers. It's a sacred bond." It took a year and a half to get this honor for Mendoza approved by the Army, Adams said. Three criteria had to be met to have the clinic named after him – "display distinguished service, have a local connection and be a doctor, nurse or medic."

(continued....)



COL Adams also said about SPC Mendoza, *"The El Pasoan exemplified what it means to be a combat medic."*

After COL Adams spoke SSG Sal Giunta, who served with SPC Mendoza and was in the ambush that fateful day, spoke about Hugo. In part, Sal said, *"I promise you he was an honest-to-goodness hero,"* said Salvatore Giunta, a former Army staff sergeant and a Medal of Honor recipient who attended the ceremony. *"And he was a great man. Seeing Mendoza have a medical clinic named after him is 'bittersweet,'"* said Giunta.

"He was the type of man who wanted to do good things for other people," said Giunta. *"He's no longer here to do that, and we'll now have to step up and live our lives by helping others out and treating people with respect like he did."*



SSG Sal Giunta - Medal of Honor Recipient for his actions on the same day SPC Mendoza was killed by the enemy

After COL Adams and SSG Giunta finished their remarks they accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Mendoza and SPC Mendoza's two brothers to the beautiful garden in front of the Soldier Family Care Center to unveil the plaque honoring SPC Mendoza.

Then the Soldiers in attendance who had served with SPC Mendoza unveiled the wall in the garden.



SPC Mendoza's family, Sal and Colonel Adams at the unveiling.

It was such an honor and privilege to be present for this. The Mendoza family is one of the most loving and accepting families I have ever met. I am happy for them that some of the Soldiers who were with Hugo that fateful day were able to attend as well as the large number of the Mendoza's family and friends from California, Arizona and Texas. Most of all I am happy that the Army chose to honor SPC Mendoza by naming the Soldier Family Care Center in his memory so that his name will live on forever even to those who didn't know him.

Rest in Peace Hugo. You will certainly never be forgotten.



Welcome to Bien Hoa G.I.

Subject: A movie covering part of the period from 1966 until Operation Junction City, 1967 [produced in 1968]. See film at <http://www.archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30209>

This is a slick propaganda piece for sure, but very interesting nevertheless. All the action here happened before my time in the Nam. I wonder how many of you guys appear in this?

**Hugh "Hubie" Imhof
N75 Rangers**



Hubie

Watch out for bayonet attacks

Yeah, that movie was a scream. I'm glad the guy with the pipe hung around to get the skinny on the brigade, although I don't remember seeing him anywhere. Good job, old sport.

Those guys getting off the boat; I was there somewhere. We got off the USS Breckenridge in the offing of the Saigon River, boarded two LSTs and chugged up the river to Saigon. A Vietnamese band and a bunch of women wearing áo dài were waiting for us on the dock.

The air force had laid on a couple dozen trucks for us. They were lined up across the street from the dock. The pics of troops going through town don't show our leg of the convoy. In our part of the convoy, we all locked and loaded, and stood up facing outboard, on account of how the air force drivers took great pains to warn us about civilians and kids with grenades, and we should especially be wary of second-story windows until we got out of town because of the VC snipers. If you ever went to Saigon, you know that *all* the goddam buildings had second story windows, several of them, and that day, the Vietnamese filled them all so they could cheer our arrival, but they were sort of put off by us sighting in on them as we drove through town. The first miracle of our arrival was that we didn't shoot anybody before we got out of town.

The drivers hauled us to Bien Hoa, down the main highway at 70 miles per hour, honking and yelling, creating a bow wave of civilian traffic diving for the side of the road. At Bien Hoa, we stormed through town, ignoring intersections, apparently on the theory that our trucks were bigger than their bicycles. The drivers took us to the north side of the airfield, then dumped us outside the last perimeter fence, which was heavily mined. They told us that this was where the VC had set up their mortars a couple of weeks before. They pointed

to the tree line north of us and told us the VC were that way, *don't go near the fence, y'all have a nice evening.*

Then they took off back to Saigon.

We dug holes all night. Red dirt packed like concrete, on my knees, my entrenching tool folded to an L, whacking away, like I thought I was getting somewhere.

About 0200 the 319th opened up with all batteries, firing H&I not quite over our heads, but definitely with us far enough in front of the barrels to get the most out of the muzzle blasts. The guns were just over the hill to the northeast. Nobody told us they were there, so you can imagine the surprise. Ha ha. For a little while we tried to figure out what was incoming and what was outgoing, all the while digging like gophers to make the fighting holes deeper. I was down to about four inches by this time, and it seemed a bit too shallow.

Somebody finally came around to give us the hot skinny about all the noise. We were relieved to know that none of that stuff was aimed at us, but we ran on adrenalin the rest of the night. All night long we heard digging to the northwest. We took turns on NDP and digging, waiting for the screamers and trumpets to come pouring over the hill like red ants, figuring it would be a bayonet charge, and all we had were them goddam little plastic rifles and shit-filled boots. By dawn we'd filled about 2 million sandbags and stacked them up along the road, and hunkered down to await the assault.



**Beautiful Downtown
Bien Hoa 1966**

Sometime after first light a major came by in his jeep, and told the parachute officer that 2nd Battalion had dug in just over the hill in front of us, and asked us to please not shoot at their NDPs. We had a minefield in back of us, four batteries of artillery to the northeast, and a thousand boonie rats just over the hill in front of us. We felt a lot better. Right after chow of the first morning one of the jeeps got a little too close to the fence, and a bouncing Betty took off the fender on the driver's side, but nobody was hurt.

Then, a few days later the whole goddam airbase blew up. But that's another story. I know Ron Thomas was there for that show.

**Mark Carter
173d LRRP/E-17th Cav**





Beware – scam emails - that appear to be sent by DFAS employees!

There are emails being sent to individuals, including military members, military retirees, and civilian employees, which appear to be sent by a DFAS employee. Although the email appears to come from a DFAS employee and displays a dot mil address it is actually from a non-government email account. This is an example of what's called "spoofing."

The emails indicate that individuals who are receiving disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may be able to obtain additional funds from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These emails are **not** issued by DFAS and will likely result in a financial loss if you comply with the suggestions in the email. Bottom line – **do not send your personal information or copies of your tax returns and 1099s to the individual listed in the email.**

The email indicates that individuals receiving VA disability compensation can receive additional funds from the IRS. The email states that such funds can be obtained by sending copies of your VA award letter, your income tax returns, your 1099-Rs, your RAS statements, and a copy of your DD 214, to a so-called retired Colonel at an address in Florida. **DO NOT** follow the suggestions in the email because you will be providing a significant amount of your personal information to a complete stranger, which could result in a financial loss to you.

[Sent in by Tony Esposito, C/HHC/2/503d]

*“My memory's not as sharp as it used to be.
Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.”*

Our first casualty in Vietnam

Randolph Truman Hicks

Private

HHC, 173RD ABN BDE, US ARMY SPT CMD
VIETNAM, MACV

Army of the United States

McEwen, Tennessee

December 12, 1946 to May 28, 1965

RANDOLPH T. HICKS

is on the Wall

Panel 01E Line 126full profile



Randolph Hicks. Casualty, Friday, May 28, 1965. Randy was the 1st 173d casualty in Vietnam. We went through basic, AIT, jump school, and a slow boat ride to Okinawa together. We were put in different companies in Okinawa, but were able to see each other on occasion. This was in March 65. I got word of Randy's death sometime in June 65 from a buddy. Randy was killed in a vehicle rollover in Bien Hoa area. He was from McEwen, Tennessee.

Johnnie L. Peoples

"A" Co., 1st Bn., 503rd Infantry
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)



Cowboy 707

"Freedom Bird" on short final

I received your newsletter yesterday and have been through it in some detail. Well done! Please do keep me on your subscription list.

I was Aviation Officer of the Brigade Jan-Jun 1967, then Cowboy 6 June to Nov. In both assignments I worked for Gen. Deane (Call sign: *Uncle Jack*) - a great commander, a great officer, a great person! I'm still in contact with him. Being with the 173d was my favorite assignment of my 25 years in service. I'm already anxious for the next issue!

When we planned the jump in February - I told Gen. Deane if he made the jump - I was going with him! Of course I knew he'd be the first one out the door with Sigholtz out the other door. I hadn't made a jump in 11 years - but no problem except for a backache from doing a bad, bad PLF in a dried up rice paddy but what an adventure! Our chief FAC hadn't made a jump in 14 years - his was a great adventure too! I still have sympathy for the unfortunate GI who got tangled in the top of a very big tree! Stayed there for hours until things settled enough for us to get him down! An accidental hero! No, a genuine "Herd" hero, like all our other Herd grunts!

I was there too when the four Cowboy slicks had the midair enroute to a pickup zone! Catastrophic! A serious morale buster for all of us! Thinking it best, we kept them on the ground for a day then put them back to work. A few days later we gave them more time off. Recovery was not a problem! They, and all of us, had a job to do!

Soon after I became Cowboy 6 and while at Camp Enari (as unwanted guests of the 4th Inf Div!) - we got new "H" models. One of the tail numbers ended in "707" - it immediately became mine! Yep, "Cowboy 707" was



Chuck

welcome anywhere and anytime! Lined up and waiting - maybe it was a "Freedom Bird" on short final!

Your email and newsletter has caused me to go back to those days - and to remember the great honor and privilege it was for me to serve with "the Herd!" My favorite grunts of all times!

I'm also in contact with some Cowboys and Caspers. Some of us are planning a get-together at the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association in New Orleans in August. You know there will be a lot of "grunt" stories going on! And some helicopter crew stories as well! Like the time one of our grunts got tangled on his rappel rope - about halfway down it! We took him back to base camp dangling under the slick - at 1500 feet! General Deane trailing behind on one side, I was on the other. I never did have the opportunity to talk to that young man - and to apologize.

Intended a short note - kinda got carried away -- cause it felt good!

Welcome Home, Brothers! Thanks again.

Chuck Uzman
Cowboy 707



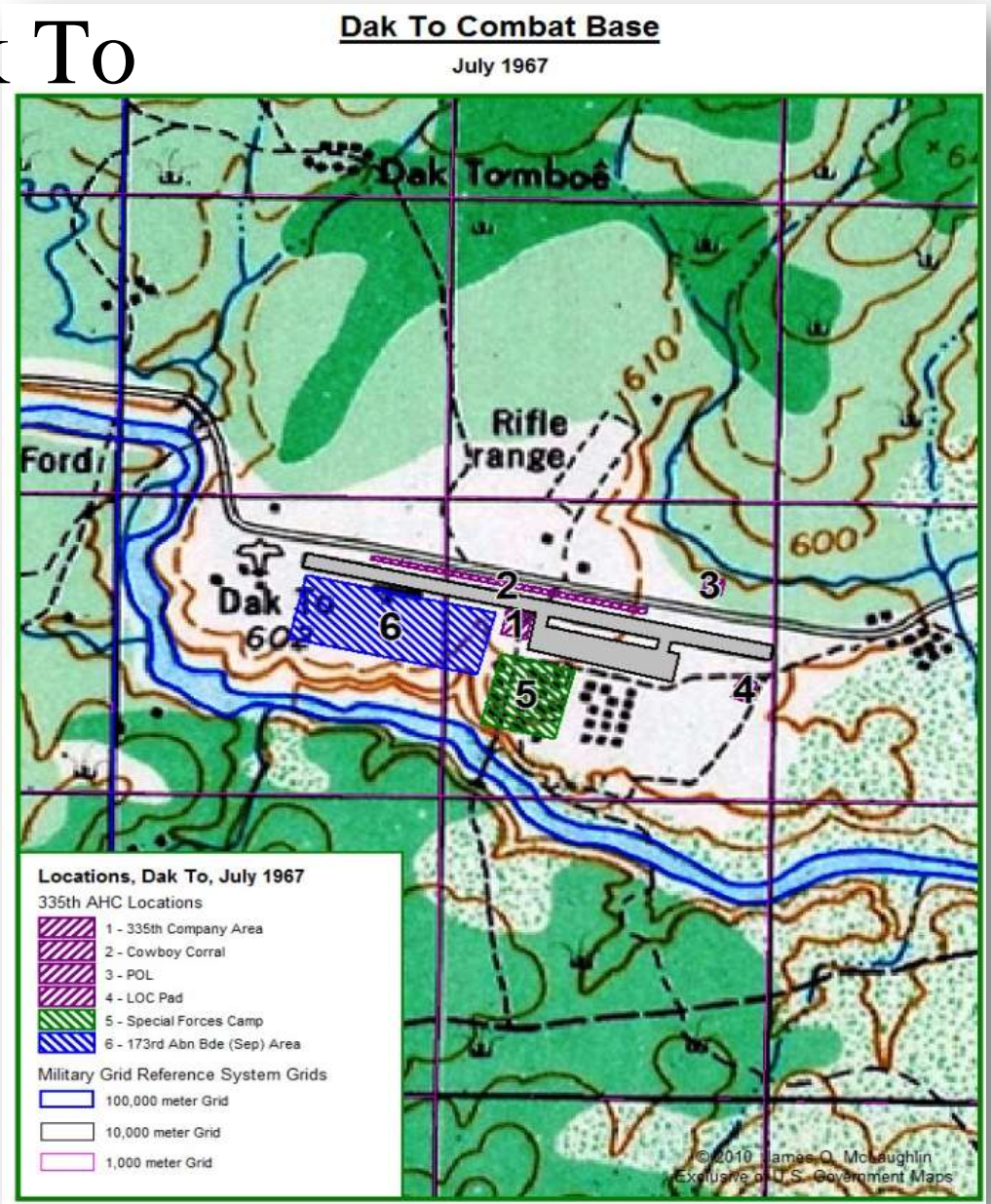
Cowboys on Assault. Photo by Cowboy John Cavinee, cousin of Ron Cavinee, A/2/503d, KIA.



Map of Dak To

This is a map of the Dak To Base Camp area that I'm passing around for input purposes. I would like for those who were there to print this out (8.5x11) and draw in what they remember (they can do it electronically if they have the capability), and return their thoughts to me. There are no wrong answers to this memory test and just because I have something on the map doesn't mean I'm right. In the end we will compile and create and hopefully come up with a relatively accurate map for the time period May – Sept 67. When this is done I will include it in my digital map and I will provide you a copy of a printable file for the newsletter and a file large enough to print up to poster size that can be passed to anyone who wants it. My goal is to capture our history in visual form and in the programs I work with everything I put on the map creates a row in a data base with information about it. I'm also asking the Cowboys to do the same in their next newsletter.

Jim McLaughlin
 335th AHC (Cowboys), July '67-July '68
jomclaughlin@comcast.net



30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALL READING OF THE NAMES

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is hosting the *Reading of the Names* of 58,272 service members inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. as part of the special activities planned this November to commemorate The Wall's 30th Anniversary.

The Reading of the Names will take place at The Wall for 65 hours over a four-day period beginning with an opening ceremony on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Volunteers will read names for approximately eight hours from 4 p.m. on November 7 to 12 a.m. on November 8. Participants will then read the names for 19 hours daily from 5 a.m. until 12 a.m. on November 8, 9, and 10.

The Reading of the Names took place in Washington, D.C. just four other times in The Wall's history. In November 1982, the names were read aloud at Washington National Cathedral as part of a week-long National Salute to Vietnam Veterans. The names were read at The Wall during the 10th Anniversary celebration in November 1992, during the 20th Anniversary celebration in 2002 and during the 25th Anniversary celebration in 2007.

If you are interested in participating in the Reading of the Names, you must fill out the online form at <http://www.vvmf.org/ROTN>

[Sent in by Ken Smith, A/D/2/503d]



NAMES

A key element to the design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is the names of the men and women who died while serving with the U.S. armed forces in the Vietnam War. There are more than 58,000 names inscribed on the black granite Memorial.

The list of names begins at the vertex of the walls below the year of the first casualty and continues to the end of the east wall. It resumes at the tip of the west wall, ending at the vertex, above the year of the last death. With the meeting of the beginning and ending, a major epoch in American history is signified.

Each of the walls is composed of 70 separate inscribed panels. The largest panels have 137 lines of names; the shortest have one line. There is an average of five names per line. Each panel is numbered from "1" to "70" at the base, with West Panel 1 and East Panel 1 meeting at the vertex, leading out to East or West Panel 70.

The names of the first casualties appear on the top of East Panel 1 below the date "1959." The chronological listing by casualty date of the names proceeds left to right, line by line, down each panel, and then to the top line of the panel to its right, as though the panels were pages in a book, until East Panel 70, whereupon the sequence of names begins on West Panel 70, proceeding to West Panel 1 at the vertex. The last casualties are listed on the bottom line of West Panel 1 above the date "1975."

The original 57,939 names and inscriptions were gritblasted in Memphis, Tennessee, by Binswanger Glasscraft using industrial equipment and stencils produced through a photographic process. The names were arranged chronologically by date of casualty and typeset in Atlanta, Georgia, by Datalantic from a computer tape of the Vietnam casualty list provided by the Department of Defense. Typesetting was done using a digitized version of Optima, a typeface designed by Bruno Zapf.

Names added since 1982 were inscribed on The Wall by Great Panes Glassworks in Denver, Colorado, and since 2007 by Engrave Write, also in Denver, using the same photo-generated stencils as before. Portable grit-blasting equipment is used with aluminum oxide grit. The letters are .53 inches high and inscribed to an approximate depth of .015 inches.



~ This Month in History ~

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

June 1965

When the decision was taken in February 1965 to commit 'main force' US units to Vietnam, their task was seen as a purely limited one -- to create 'enclaves' of American military presence on the coast, partly to protect existing airbases, but also to ensure that pockets of organized force would remain if the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) collapsed.



June 1965

(Nam by Tim Page & John Pimlott)

1st - The Commanding Officer, 1 RAR and a party of troops depart Richmond Air Force base in Sydney, bound for Saigon. He is followed by a succession of flights, ferrying the remainder of troops.

4th: Rolling Stones release "Satisfaction".

7th: 173d Airborne Brigade continues Operation Frag Order.



7th: US General Westmoreland reports that North Vietnamese troops are infiltrating South Vietnam (SVN) and ARVN forces are reluctant to assume the offensive and in some cases their steadfastness under fire is coming into doubt. He asks for another 41,000 combat troops now and another 52,000 later. He also states; *"Studies must continue and plans developed to deploy even greater forces, if and when required"*.

8th: US troops ordered to fight offensively in Vietnam.

8th: 5.30 am - HMAS Sydney with B Company, The 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) arrives at Vung Tau. The remainder of 1RAR and supporting arms, establish at Bien Hoa with the US 173d Airborne and operate as its 3rd Infantry Battalion.



10th: At Dong Xoai, a South Vietnamese Army district headquarters and American Special Forces camp is overrun by a full Vietcong regiment. U.S. air attacks eventually drive the Viet Cong away.



Diggers of the 1RAR arrive Vung Tau, Vietnam.

12th: South Vietnam General Nguyen Cao Ky succeeds Phan Huy Quat as premier.

12th: Big Bang theory of creation of universe is supported by announcement of discovery of new celestial bodies known as blue galaxies.



16th: A planned civil disobedience turned into a five-hour teach-in on the steps of - and inside - the Pentagon. In two days, more than 50,000 leaflets were distributed without interference at the entrances and inside the building. A World War II artillery officer, Gordon Christiansen, turned in his honorable discharge certificate.

17th: 1st bombing by B-52 (50 km north of Saigon).

18th: Nguyen Cao Ky takes power in South Vietnam as the new prime minister with Nguyen Van Thieu functioning as official chief of state. They lead the 10th government in 20 months.

(continued...)



22nd: David O Selznick, producer (Gone With the Wind), dies at 63.

25th-26th: 1RAR Operation 1/65. Formations/units: 1RAR, with indirect support 3/319th Arty (US) less one battery, in support E/17th Cav (US). Description: The battalion shake-down operation on joining 173d Abn Bde (Sep) (173d Bde) at Bien Hoa air base, in the form of a battalion search-and-destroy operation in an AO between the convergence of Routes 1 and 15 on Bien Hoa. The AO, of 24 square kms, lay astride a likely VC line of approach to attack the air base. Undulating terrain covered mainly in jungle. The operation was designed to clear a base area for the incoming 2d Bde Ist Inf Div (US). Deployment by helicopter. Location: West central Bien Hoa province, eleven kilometers SE of Bien Hoa air base. Results: Two platoon-size VC camps located, VC documents and books captured. Remarks: The accidental detonation of a grenade on return from the operation killed three Australians and one US soldier, with a further soldier dying of wounds; eleven soldiers were injured including two US soldiers. US strength now at 125,000.



27th: "General William Westmoreland launches the first purely offensive operation by American ground forces in Vietnam, sweeping into NLF territory just northwest of Saigon." (Note: The 173d Abn Bde was already running combat operations before this date. Ed)

27th: The 173d Airborne Brigade participated in the first joint U.S.-ARVN operation of the war. Nine battalions were involved in this mission which penetrated deep into the Western part of the Tan Uyen area of War Zone "D". Over 400 VC casualties resulted from this combined operation. This was the first major engagement between the VC and the 173d. The brigade destroyed a hard-core VC battalion.



30th: NFL grants Atlanta Falcons a franchise.

June 1966

Counteroffensive: Following the U.S. victory in the Ia Drang Valley, American forces for the remainder of 1965 and well into 1966 sought to keep the enemy off balance while building base camps and logistical installations. This involved search and destroy operations to protect the logistical bases under construction along the coast and the base



June 1966

camps for incoming U.S. units in the provinces near Saigon. Also of particular concern to the American military mission was the protection of the government and the people of South Vietnam. To accomplish the tasks outlined U.S. efforts were concentrated in the most vital and heavily populated regions.



For Sky Soldiers like this trooper, wading through the streams, rivers and rice paddies of Vietnam, the leech (inset) was often an unwelcome and painful travelling companion.



(Nam)

June '66: "Beginning 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.

1st: 2,400 people attend White House Conference on Civil Rights.

4th: A three-page anti-war advertisement appears in the *New York Times* signed by 6400 teachers and professors.

6th: NFL & AFL announce their merger.

6th: Stokely Carmichael launches "Black Power" movement.

(continued....)





1st Platoon A/2/503d, 1966. (Photo by Bob Guy, A/HHC/2/503d)

8th: On May 16, the 173d Airborne Brigade launch Operation Hardihood, ending on June 8, in the Phuoc Tuy Province. On 19 May the 1/503d Infantry became engaged with an estimated fifty VC. The firefight that ensued resulted in twenty VC killed with minimal friendly casualties.

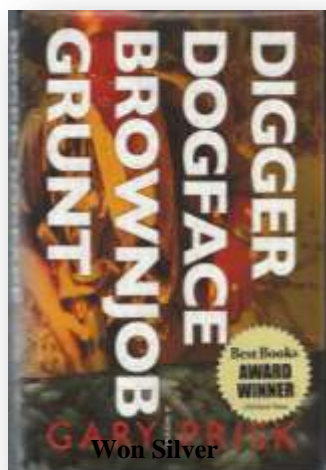


9th-17th: 173d Airborne Brigade immediately opens Operation Hollandia in the Phuoc Tuy Province. The brigade deployed to the Lon Hai Peninsula, east of Vung Tau, to search for elements of the 274th and 275th VC regiments and their controlling headquarters. Two deserted base camps revealed sizeable quantities of rice and miscellaneous equipment.



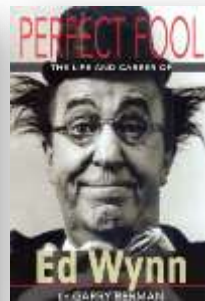
10th: Beatles "Paperback Writer" is released in UK.

10th: Mamas & Papas win Gold record for "Monday, Monday". Years later *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt*, a novel by Capt. Gary Prisk, C/D/2/503d, would win a Silver medal.



13th: Supreme Court's Miranda decision; suspect must be informed of rights.

18th: Sandy Alomar, Salinas Puerto Rico, catcher (Cleveland Indians), born.



19th: Ed Wynn, comedian (Ed Wynn Show), dies at 79.

23rd: Operation Yorktown commences for the 173d Airborne, ending July 8, in the Long Khanh Province approximately 37 miles east of Bien Hoa in Xuan Loc Province. Three platoons of A/2/503d Infantry engaged an enemy force between 75-100 strong employing 50 caliber machine guns and grenade launchers.



24th: Period of relative peace following WWII exceeds that following WWI. (*Huh?*)

25th: Political unrest in South Vietnam abates following the crackdown on Buddhist rebels by Prime Minister Ky, including the arrest of Buddhist leader Tri Quang. Ky now appeals for calm.

29th: Citing increased infiltration of Communist guerrillas from North Vietnam into the South, the U.S. bombs oil depots around Hanoi and Haiphong, ending a self-imposed moratorium. The U.S. is very cautious about targeting the city of Hanoi itself over concerns for the reactions of North Vietnam's military allies, China and the Soviet Union. This concern also prevents any U.S. ground invasion of North Vietnam, despite such recommendations by a few military planners in Washington.



Viet Cong, 1966

30th: Vice Adm William F. Raborn, Jr, USN, ends term as 7th director of CIA.

30th: On Route 13, which links Vietnam to the Cambodian border, American forces are brutally assaulted by the Viet Cong. Only American air and artillery support prevents a complete disaster.

(continued...)



30th - "Iron" Mike Tyson, NY, youngest heavyweight boxing champ (1986-90), born.



June '66: By the end of 1966, American forces in Vietnam reach 385,000 men, plus an additional 60,000 sailors stationed offshore. More than 6,000 Americans have been killed in this year, and 30,000 have been wounded. In comparison, an estimated 61,000 Viet Cong have been killed, however, their troops now numbered over 280,000.

June 1967

During 1967 the Americans pursued two strategic aims in Vietnam. On the one hand, they were determined to disrupt the build-up of NVA/VC main force strength in the South, creating a protective shield of 'Free World' forces astride likely infiltration routes and destroying any enemy formations which tried to break through; on the other, they recognized the need to clear existing communist bases in the South as a preliminary to more effective pacification. (Nam by Tim Page & John Pimlott)



June 1967

June '67: The Mobile Riverine Force becomes operational utilizing U.S. Navy 'Swift' boats combined with Army troop support to halt Viet Cong usage of inland waterways in the Mekong Delta.

June '67: "The CIA initiates **Phoenix Program**. After the Tet Offensive, the U.S. government stepped up its covert operations, the most famous of which was the CIA-led Phoenix Program, which had been initiated in June 1967. Among other objectives, the program was meant to assassinate Viet Cong leadership. Although approximately 20,000 people were assassinated under the Phoenix Program, the program was reported to be plagued by corruption, mismanagement, and faulty intelligence, and many of its victims were likely not Viet Cong at all. In many cases, unscrupulous South Vietnamese officials named their opponents as Viet Cong and requested that the Phoenix Program eliminate them. When the details of the program later surfaced, many protested that its activities amounted to nothing more than war crimes."

Source:

<http://www.sparknotes.com/history/american/vietnamwar/section7.rhtml>

1st: Beatles release "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" in US & goes Gold. Years later *Digger*, *Dogface* would remain at Silver.

1st-18th: 173d Airborne engage in Operation Francis Marion in Pleiku area.



2nd: Race riots in Roxbury section of Boston.

3rd: Aretha Franklin's "Respect" reaches #1.

3rd: Anderson Cooper, American reporter (CNN), born.

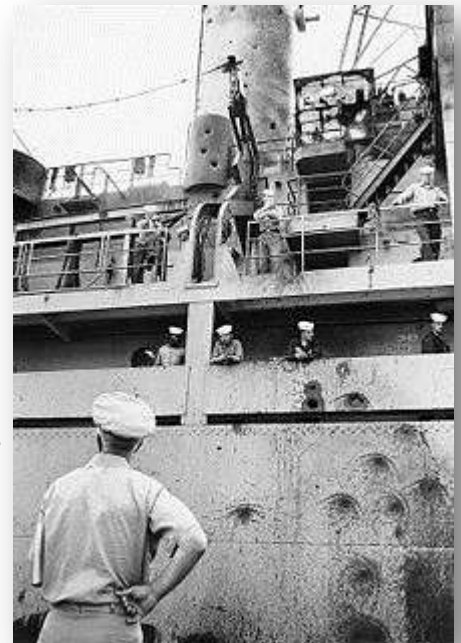
5th: 6 Day War between Israel & Arab neighbors begins. **Note:** Those of you who were stationed with the 509th Airborne in Mainz, Germany at the time will recall we were put on alert when that action broke out. I recall the day we were issued weapons when an old Sergeant gave me mine and said, "You're kinda young to be going to war." My reply to him was, "I'm kinda young to be coming from a war!" Ed

5th: Murderer Richard Speck sentenced to death in electric chair. **Note:** I recall HHC/2/503 '66, hooch buddy, the late Andy "Lum" Lombrazo from Chicago, telling me he was a friend of one of the nurses killed by that maniac. Ed

6th: Israeli troops occupy Gaza.

8th: The **USS Liberty incident** was an attack on a

United States Navy technical research ship, USS *Liberty*, by Israeli Air Force jet fighter aircraft and Israeli Navy torpedo boats, on June 8, 1967, during the Six-Day War. The combined air and sea attack killed 34 crew members (naval officers, seamen, two Marines, and one civilian), wounded 170 crew members, and severely damaged the ship. At the time, the ship was in international waters north of the Sinai



Midships damage to USS Liberty

Peninsula, about 25.5 nmi (29.3 mi; 47.2 km) northwest from the Egyptian city of Arish.

(continued...)



Both the Israeli and U.S. governments conducted inquiries and issued reports that concluded the attack was a mistake due to Israeli confusion about the identity of the USS *Liberty*, though others have rejected these conclusions and maintain that the attack was deliberate. In May 1968, the Israeli government paid US\$3,323,500 (US\$22.2 million in 2012 dollars) as full payment to the families of the 34 men killed in the attack. In March 1969, Israel paid a further \$3,566,457 in compensation to the men who had been wounded. On 18 December 1980, it agreed to pay \$6 million as settlement for the final U.S. bill of \$17,132,709 for material damage to the *Liberty* itself plus 13 years' interest.

8th: Laverne Andrews, vocalist (Andrews Sisters), 1911-1967, dies.



Maxene, Patty & Laverne

“Ms. Laverne Andrews and her sisters, Patty and Maxene, were one of the most successful women's singing groups, with 19 gold records and sales of nearly 100 million copies. The sisters began performing in the early 1930s when the Depression wiped out their father's business. In 1937, the sisters scored their first big hit with 'Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen.' In addition to 'Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy', their best-known songs included 'Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree' and 'Rum and Coca Cola'. The trio officially broke up after the death of Laverne in 1967, and a suitable replacement could not be found.”

10th: USSR drops diplomatic relations with Israel.

10th: Spencer Tracy, US actor (7th Cross, Father of the Bride), dies at 67.

11th: Race riot in Tampa Florida; National Guard mobilizes.

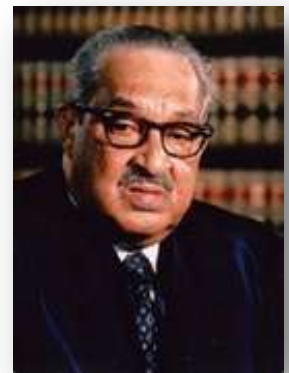
12th: Israel wins 6 Day War. (Thank you Israel. Ed)



Another war

12th: Race riot in Cincinnati, Ohio (300 arrested).

13th: Thurgood Marshall nominated as 1st black Supreme Court justice, and was one of the most successful civil rights proponents in the country.



Thurgood Marshall

14th: “Steve Allen Show,” premieres on CBS-TV.

15th: Governor Reagan signs liberalized California abortion bill.

17th: 1st Chinese hydrogen bomb explodes. China becomes world's 4th thermonuclear (H-bomb) power.

18th-22nd: Operation Greeley in the Dak To /Kontum area is where *The Battle of the Slopes* began as a routine search and destroy mission involving the 2/503rd. Alpha Company began leaving its night laager when its point squad ran into several NVA's. An intense firefight occurred preventing 2nd platoon from linking up with its point squad. Alpha's perimeter came under attack by the NVA cutting off the 2nd and 3rd platoons. The 1st and 2nd platoons were down to fifteen effective men when radio contact was lost. The 2nd platoon withdrew the remaining men to the Company Command Post, which then moved back up the ridge to a more defensible position.



(continued....)



Two more enemy assaults were made on A Company's CP before C Company would hook up with them. The NVA's 24th Regiment was well dug in and prevented C Company from linking up with the lost platoon. That night, while anticipating an all-out attack, the men heard shots punctuated by screams as the NVA executed the wounded. 43 out of 76 slain Sky Soldiers had fatal wounds in the back of their heads. (See Issue 29, June 2011 for a detailed report on *The Battle of the Slopes*).

June 1968

The year 1968 saw major developments in the Vietnam War. The military operations started with an attack on a US base by the Vietnam People's Army (NVA) and the Viet Cong on January 1, ending a truce declared by the Pope and agreed upon by all sides. At the end of January, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong launched the Tet Offensive.



June 1968

Although militarily the operation was a failure for the Vietnamese communists, for them it was a propaganda victory, as on the home front the American public were shocked by the images they were seeing on their televisions. Reflecting this public outrage the media made a number of iconic news stories including Peter Arnett quoting an unnamed US major as saying, "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it." Eddie Adams' iconic image of South Vietnamese General Nguyen Ngoc Loan's live execution of a Viet Cong operative was taken in 1968 as was Walter Cronkite's call to honorably exit Vietnam because he thought the war was lost. This negative impression forced the Americans into the Paris peace talks with North Vietnam. US troop numbers peaked in 1968 with President Johnson approving the raising of the maximum number of Americans in Vietnam to 549,500. The year was the most expensive in the Vietnam War with the American spending US\$77.4 billion (US\$517 billion in 2012 dollars) on the war. The year also became the deadliest of the Vietnam War for America and its allies with 27,915 South Vietnamese (ARVN) soldiers killed and the Americans suffering 16,592 killed compared to around two hundred thousand of the communist forces killed.



The enemy had blown-up the ammo dump and three C-130 aircraft on the airstrip."

(Photo by Earle "Doc" Jackson, B Med)

20th: Muhammad Ali convicted of refusing induction into armed services.

20th: Nicole Kidman, Honolulu, Hawaii, actress (*Dead Calm*, *Far & Away*), born.



25th: Mohammed Ali (Cassius Clay) sentenced to 5 years.

27th: Race riot in Buffalo, NY (200 arrested).

27th: The world's first ATM is installed in Enfield, London.

29th: Jayne Mansfield, actress (*Female Jungle*), dies in a car crash at 34.



June '67: Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara commissioned a top-secret study of US involvement in Southeast Asia. This study was to be written by a team of analysts who had access to classified documents.

The results of that study, which was not completed until January 1969, took 47 volumes and later gained fame, or infamy, as *The Pentagon Papers*.

(continued...)



1st: Helen Keller, blind & deaf/author (Let us Have Faith), dies at 87.

1st: Simon & Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson" hits #1. Years later *Digger, Dog*.....oh, never mind.

1st: The 1/50 (M) Infantry officially constitutes the Scout/ Recon Plt. under HHC June 1, 1968.

3rd: Poor Peoples March on Washington.

5th: Robert F. Kennedy is shot and mortally wounded by Sirhan Sirhan in Los Angeles just after winning the California Democratic presidential primary election. He dies the following day.



Helen Keller

26th: Shannon Sharpe, NFL tight end (Denver Broncos-Super Bowl 32), born.

28th: Daniel Ellsberg indicted for leaking Pentagon Papers.

29th: "Tip-Toe Thru' The Tulips With Me" by Tiny Tim peaks at #17. Years later Capt. Gary Prisk would be ever so proud of his Silver medal for *Digger*.

June '68: With strong, highly mobile American forces now in the area, and the base no longer needed for defense, General Westmoreland approves the abandonment and demolition of Khe Sanh.

June 1969



June: From 15 April 1969 thru 1 January 1971, the 173d

Airborne Brigade conducts Operation Washington Green in the Binh Dinh Province.

2nd: Australian aircraft carrier "Melbourne" slices US destroyer "Frank E. Evans" in half, killing 74 (South Vietnam).

3rd: Last episode of Star Trek airs on NBC (Turnabout Intruder).

5th: Race riot in Hartford Connecticut.

5th - The International communist conference begins in Moscow.

6th: Joe Namath resigns from NFL after Pete Rozelle, football commissioner, said he must sell his stake in a bar.

6th: The Battle of Binh Ba, also known as *Operation Hammer*, was a hard fought, but one-sided, battle. The action occurred on 6–8 June 1969 when Australian Army troops from the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (5RAR) fought a combined communist force of North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong in the village of Binh Ba, 5 kilometers (3.1 mi) north of Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province.



5th: Hanoi to Release 3 Downed Pilots.

7th: Dan Duryea, actor (Pride of the Yankees), dies of cancer at 60.

8th: Don Drysdale pitches a record 58th consecutive scoreless innings for the Dodgers.

8th: James Earl Ray, alleged assassin of Martin Luther King, Jr., captured.

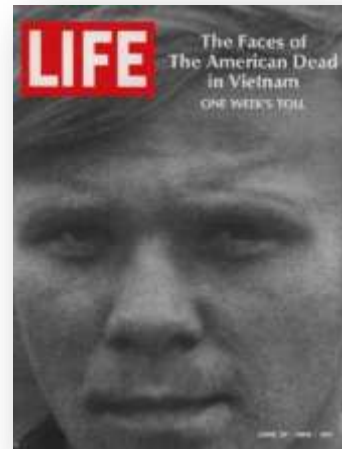
16th: Lee Trevino is 1st to play all 4 rounds of golf's US Open under par.

19th: Night Assault – Last VC holdouts routed from Saigon.

19th: It's reported North Viets may be using Copters.

24th: Joe Frazier TKOs Manuel Ramos in 2 for heavyweight boxing title.

26th: Iwo Jima & Bonin Islands returned to Japan by US.



June 1969

(continued....)



7th: "Johnny Cash Show," debuts on ABC-TV.

7th: Leo Gorcey, actor (Bowery Boys), dies at 53



8th: President Nixon meets South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu at Midway Island and informs him U.S. troop levels are going to be sharply reduced. During a press briefing with Thieu, Nixon announces "Vietnamization" of the war and a U.S. troop withdrawal of 25,000 men by the end of August.

8th: "Smothers Brothers comedy Hour," last airs on CBS-TV.

8th: Mickey Mantle Day, 60,096 saw #7 retired.

15th: "Hee Haw" with Roy Clark & Buck Owens premieres on CBS TV.

19th: State troopers ordered to Cairo, IL, to quell racial disturbances.

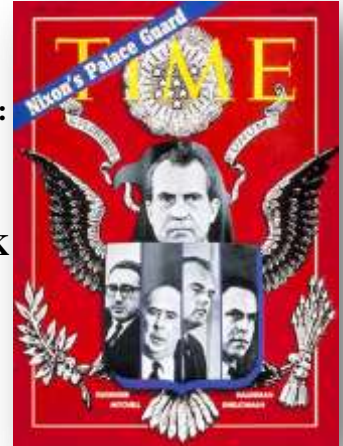
22nd: Judy Garland, actress (Wizard of Oz, Easter Parade), dies at 47 of an overdose.

23rd: Joe Frazier TKOs Jerry Quarry in 8 for heavyweight boxing title.

27th: *Life* magazine displays portrait photos of all 242 Americans killed in Vietnam during the previous week, including the 46 killed at 'Hamburger Hill.' The photos have a stunning impact on Americans nationwide as they view the once smiling young faces of the dead.

June 1970

U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
1st May '70 – 30 June '70:
Sanctuary Counter-offensive:
This campaign was mainly concerned with the Allied incursion into Cambodia, codenamed **Operation ROCK CRUSHER**. As American withdrawal from South Vietnam proceeded, increasing concern arose over the enemy's strength in the sanctuaries inside Cambodia.



With the emergence in Cambodia of an anti-Communist government under Lon Nol, President Nixon relaxed the restrictions on moving against the bases inside Cambodia. Meanwhile, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong began to move on the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. At this juncture Lon Nol appealed to the United States for help. American and allied Vietnamese forces began large-scale offensives in Cambodia on 1 May. Eight major US Army and South Vietnamese operations took place in Cambodia in May and June with the object of cutting enemy communication lines, seizing the sanctuary areas and capturing the shadowy Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) described as the control center for enemy military operations against III CTZ.

1st: "Everything Is Beautiful" by Ray Stevens hits #1. Capt. Prisk is back from the war and thinking about writing a book based on war or turtles.

3rd: NVA begin a new offensive toward Phnom Penh in Cambodia. The U.S. provides air strikes to prevent the defeat of Lon Nol's inexperienced young troops.

7th: Jockey Willie Shoemaker passes Johnny Longden with his 6,033 win.

11th: US leaves Wheelus AFB Libya.

(continued...)



13th: After the events at Kent State and Jackson State, there was a wave of demonstrations on hundreds of college campuses. There was an average of 100 demonstrations or student strikes per day in the United States. More than 500 colleges had to temporarily close their doors. On 13, June, 1970, President Nixon established 'The President's Commission on Campus Unrest'. The Commission held 13 days of public hearings in Jackson, Mississippi; Kent State, Ohio; Washington DC and Los Angeles, California. No convictions or arrests of any military or law enforcement officer resulted from these hearings. The anti-war movement was not without its own advocates of violence. According to the FBI, in 1970 alone, an estimated 3000 bombings and 50,000 bomb threats occurred in the United States. A large percentage of these were carried out by self-styled revolutionaries within the anti-war movement.

16th: Race riots in Miami, Florida.

16th: Brian Piccolo, American football player (b. 1943), dies.

22nd: American usage of jungle defoliants in Vietnam is halted.

22nd: President Nixon signs 26th amendment (voting age lowered to 18).

24th - "Catch 22" opens in movie theaters.

24th: Senate votes overwhelmingly to repeal the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution

Officially, the Asia Resolution (Public Law 88-408) was a joint resolution which the United States Congress passed on August 7, 1964 in response to a sea battle between the North Vietnamese Navy's Torpedo Squadron 10135 and the destroyer USS Maddox on August 2 and an alleged second naval engagement between North Vietnamese boats and the US destroyers USS Maddox and USS Turner Joy on August 4 in the Tonkin Gulf; both naval actions are known collectively as the *Gulf of Tonkin Incident*. The Tonkin Gulf Resolution is of historical significance because it gave U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson authorization, without a formal declaration of war by Congress, for the use of "conventional" military force in Southeast Asia. Specifically, the resolution authorized the President to

do whatever necessary in order to assist "*any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty.*" This included involving armed forces. The unanimous affirmative vote in the House of Representatives was 416-0. However, Congressman Eugene Siler of Kentucky, who was not present but opposed the measure, was "paired" with another member who favored the resolution — i.e., his opposition was not counted, but the vote in favor was one less than it would have been. It was opposed in the Senate only by Senators Wayne Morse (D-OR) and Ernest Gruening (D-AK). Senator Gruening objected to "*sending our American boys into combat in a war in which we have no business, which is not our war, into which we have been misguidedly drawn, which is steadily being escalated.*" The Johnson administration subsequently relied upon the resolution to begin its rapid escalation of U.S. military involvement in South Vietnam and open warfare between North Vietnam and the United States. Of some potential relevance, a few weeks earlier, on July 16, 1964, in his acceptance speech at the Republican convention, the Republican nominee Barry Goldwater had put forth as a theme of his campaign the charge that Johnson was "soft on communism", a charge which became more difficult to sustain after the resolution.



USS Maddox entering Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 15 August 1966

(continued....)



The Pentagon Papers

(excerpt)



TOP SECRET - SENSITIVE

(declassified)

E. Eleventh Hour Change

“One final obstacle to the Marine deployment (to Da Nang) was raised when Assistant Secretary of Defense McNaughton cabled the Ambassador in Saigon on 2 March stating that the 173rd Airborne Brigade, then stationed on Okinawa, would be substituted for the Marines. Other than exchange of cables, there is no documentary evidence in the files to indicate what might have been the rationale behind the belated attempt to deploy the 173rd Airborne to Da Nang in place of the Marines. One can only surmise the reasons behind such a move, but certain characteristics of the two forces may provide a clue. The Marines present prima facie a more formidable appearance upon arrival on the scene. They have organic complement of heavy weapons, including tanks, in contrast to the smaller and lighter airborne. Together with their accompanying armada of ships, the Marines might be seen as a more permanent force than the airborne. This, coupled with the common knowledge that the Marines have a long history of interventions in foreign countries for purposes of peacekeeping and stability, might have influenced someone in the decision apparatus to consider using the airborne in their stead as a positive signal that the Da Nang deployment was to be of short duration. If this was indeed the case, it suggests that there were still high-ranking people in Washington who were hoping to make the deployment of U.S. troops temporary and limited.”

15th: Nixon attempts to stop further publication of the Pentagon Papers through legal action against the *Times* in the U.S. District Court.

16th: Racial disturbance in Jacksonville, Florida.

18th: The *Washington Post* begins its publication of the Pentagon Papers. The *Times* and *Post* now become involved in legal wrangling with the Nixon administration which soon winds up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

(continued....)

29th: US ends 2 month military offensive into Cambodia. In June, President Nixon announced that the action in Cambodia had been successful, and that the withdrawal of American soldiers from South Vietnam would resume. US intelligence operatives were of the opinion that entering Cambodia had helped to unite communists in Indochina and had resulted in closer ties to China. Towards the end of June 1970, the United States Senate adopted a bill to limit Presidential action in Cambodia without Congressional approval.

30th: U.S. troops withdraw from Cambodia. Over 350 Americans died during the incursion.

June 1971

June '71: During a college commencement speech, Senator Mike Mansfield labels the Vietnam war "a tragic mistake."

6th: "Ed Sullivan Show" last broadcast on CBS-TV.

6th: Air West flight 706 collides with Navy Phantom jet over LA, 50 die.

8th: North Vietnam demands US end aid to South Vietnam.

10th: Bobby Jindal, American politician; Louisiana Congressman, Governor, born.

11th: US & Japan sign accord to return Okinawa to Japan.

11th: US ends ban on China trade.

12th: Tricia Nixon & Edward F. Cox marry at White House.

13th: The *New York Times* begins publication of the 'Pentagon Papers,' a secret Defense Department archive of the paperwork involved in decisions made by previous White House administrations concerning Vietnam. Publication of the classified documents infuriates President Nixon.



June 1971



Edward Cox & Tricia Nixon



22nd: A non-binding resolution passed in the U.S. Senate urges the removal of all American troops from Vietnam by year's end.

22nd: Kurt Warner, American football player, Super Bowl MVP, St. Louis Rams, born.

27th: Kenneth Washington, actor (Sgt. Baker-Hogan's Heroes), dies at 53.



Go Rams!



**Kenneth Washington
Hogan's Heroes**

28th: The source of the Pentagon Papers leaks, Daniel Ellsberg surrenders to police.

Summer of '71: While herbicides containing Dioxin were banned for use by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1968, spraying of Agent Orange continues in Vietnam until 1971. Operation Ranchhand has sprayed 11 million gallons of Agent Orange -- containing the lethal chemical Dioxin -- on South Vietnam. More than one seventh of the country's total area has been laid waste.

Agent Orange Sprayed from Huey's



"This photo shows me in our chopper spraying Agent Orange. Hated to do this job, we had to fly slow for some reason. The pipe was right under my ass."

John Cavinee, Cowboys

June 1972

3rd: "Hot Rod Lincoln," by Commander Cody & His Lost Planet Airmen hits #9.

6th: Gold hits record \$60 an ounce in London.

6th: US bombs Haiphong, North Vietnam; 1000s reported killed.

9th: Bruce Springsteen signs a record deal with Columbia.



June 1972

17th: Five burglars are arrested inside the Watergate building in Washington while attempting to plant hidden microphones in the Democratic National Committee HQ offices. Subsequent investigations will reveal they have ties to the Nixon White House.

18th: 72nd US Golf Open: Jack Nicklaus shoots a 290 at Pebble Beach California.

18th: West Germany wins soccer world championship (and no one gives a damn. Ed).

20th: Howard Johnson, US restaurateur, dies at 75.

23rd: Nixon & Haldeman agree to use CIA to cover up Watergate.

23rd: President Nixon signs act barring sex discrimination in college sports.

24th: Wake Island becomes unincorporated territory of US (US Air Force).

28th: South Vietnamese troops begin a counter-offensive to retake Quang Tri Province, aided by U.S. Navy gunfire and B-52 bombardments.

29th: Supreme Court rules (5-4) that Death Penalty is cruel & unusual.

"On Jan. 14, 2000, following the barrage of controversy created by the execution photos posted by Justice Shaw, Florida barred any further executions by electrocution, opting for lethal injection. On Dec. 16, 2006, then Gov. Jeb Bush suspended all executions in Florida after it took two doses and 34 minutes for Angel Diaz to die by lethal injection."



(continued...)



30th: General Frederick C. Weyand replaces Gen. Abrams as MACV commander in Vietnam.

June 1974

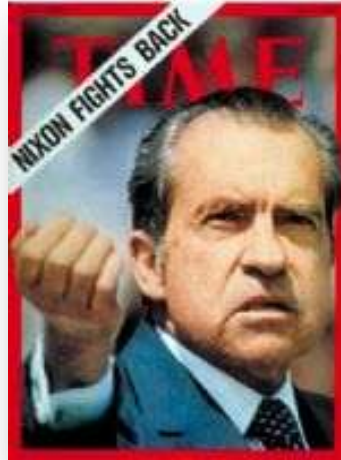
June 1973

1st: Paul McCartney & Wings release "Live & Let Die".

9th: Secretariat becomes 1st Triple Crown winner in 25 years by winning horse racing's Belmont Stakes.

16th: Leonid I Brezhnev visit US.

19th: The U.S. Congress passes the Case-Church Amendment which forbids any further U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia, effective August 15, 1973. The veto-proof vote is 278-124 in the House and 64-26 in the Senate. The Amendment paves the way for North Vietnam to wage yet another invasion of the South, this time without fear of U.S. bombing.



June 1973



The Ho Chi Minh Trail

24th: Graham Martin becomes the new U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.

27th: John W. Dean tells Senate Watergate Committee about Nixon's "enemies list".

1st: The Heimlich Maneuver for rescuing choking victims is published in the *Journal of Emergency Medicine*.

How to Do the Heimlich Maneuver

The Heimlich Maneuver for CHOKING ADULTS:

A choking victim can't speak or breathe and needs your help immediately. Follow these steps to help a choking victim:

From behind, wrap your arms around the victim's waist. Make a fist and place the thumb side of your fist against the victim's upper abdomen, below the ribcage and above the navel. Grasp your fist with your other hand and press into their upper abdomen with a quick upward thrust. Do not squeeze the ribcage; confine the force of the thrust to your hands. Repeat until object is expelled.

UNCONSCIOUS VICTIM, OR WHEN RESCUER CAN'T REACH AROUND VICTIM:

Place the victim on back. Facing the victim, kneel astride the victim's hips. With one of your hands on top of the other, place the heel of your bottom hand on the upper abdomen below the rib cage and above the navel. Use your body weight to press into the victim's upper abdomen with a quick upward thrust. Repeat until object is expelled. If the Victim has not recovered, proceed with CPR. The Victim should see a physician immediately after rescue. Don't slap the victim's back. (This could make matters worse.)



(continued...)



June 1974



The Heimlich Maneuver for CHOKING INFANTS

A choking victim can't speak or breathe and needs your help immediately.

Follow these steps to help a choking infant:

Lay the child down, face up, on a firm surface and kneel or stand at the victim's feet, or hold infant on your lap facing away from you. Place the middle and index fingers of both your hands below his rib cage and above his navel. Press into the victim's upper abdomen with a quick upward thrust; do not squeeze the rib cage. Be very gentle. Repeat until object is expelled. If the Victim has not recovered, proceed with CPR. The Victim should see a physician immediately after rescue. Don't slap the victim's back. (This could make matters worse.)



The Heimlich Maneuver for CHOKING (ONESELF)

When you choke, you can't speak or breathe and you need help immediately. Follow these steps to save yourself from choking:

Make a fist and place the thumb side of your fist against your upper abdomen, below the ribcage and above the navel. Grasp your fist with your other hand and press into your upper abdomen with a quick upward thrust. Repeat until object is expelled. Alternatively, you can lean over a fixed horizontal object (table edge, chair, railing) and press your upper abdomen against the edge to produce a quick upward thrust. Repeat until object is expelled. See a physician immediately after rescue.



Source:

<http://heimlichinstitute.com/page.php?id=34>

8th: US & Saudi Arabia sign military-economic contract.

20th: Jami Ferrell, Muncie, Indiana, *Playboy* Playmate for January, born.

23rd: 1st extraterrestrial message sent from Earth into space.

26th: The Universal Product Code is scanned for the first time to sell a package of Wrigley's chewing gum at the Marsh Supermarket in Troy, Ohio.

26th: Derek Jeter, Pequanock NJ, shortstop (NY Yankees, Rookie of Year 1996), born.

27th: "Flip Wilson Show," last airs on NBC-TV.

27th: US president Nixon visits USSR.

28th: Frank Sutton, actor (Sgt. Vince Carter-Gomer Pyle USMC), dies at 50.



June 1975

3rd: Ozzie Nelson, actor (*Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet*), dies at 69. **Note:** The widow of Col. Bob Sigholtz, 2/503 Bn Cmdr '66/'67, is Sara O'Meara (formerly Buckner), the actress who played the role of girlfriend on that t.v. series. During the reception following the Colonel's funeral service at Arlington Cemetery, men of the 2/503d presented Mrs. O'Meara with a memorial plaque in honor of her husband's service in Vietnam.



June 1975

(continued....)



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**SARA O'MEARA, CO-FOUNDER,
CHAIRMAN AND CEO**

Since 1959, Sara O'Meara has provided leadership in humanitarian service to children throughout the world as Childhelp® Co-Founder. Mrs. O'Meara is actively involved in the development and oversight of the leading national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping victims of child abuse and neglect. Childhelp's approach focuses on prevention, intervention and treatment. The organization has put a national spotlight on the problem of child abuse in America and developed cutting-edge solutions.



Bob's lovely bride

Sara, along with co-founder Yvonne Fedderson, has been nominated for the fifth time for the Nobel Peace Prize. Endorsements for the prestigious nomination include letters from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and former first lady Barbara Bush, along with numerous politicians, educators, and corporate executives.

Mrs. O'Meara lost her beloved husband Colonel Robert (Bob) Sigholtz in 2005. Bob was a highly decorated Colonel who fought in three wars – World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He was also the Athletic Director of Georgetown University.



Col. Bob Sigholtz
"We Try Harder!"

Above excerpt from:

<http://www.childhelp.org/pages/founders/>

Note: Having served as one of the RTOs in the Colonel's battalion command group in 1966, just wanted to mention Bob was responsible for my *best day* at war, and he would often call *just to speak to one of his boys*. I'm sure he did that with many of us. Ed

4th: Angelina Jolie, Los Angeles, California, American actress (*Girl, Interrupted*, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*), born.

6th: Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam established.

7th: "Thank God I'm a Country Boy," by John Denver hits #1.

7th: Sony introduces the Betamax videocassette recorder for sale to the public.

10th: Rockefeller panel reports on 300,000 illegal CIA files on Americans.

10th: New York Yankees sponsor "Army Day" at temporary home, Shea Stadium. During 21-gun salute, part of fence is blown away and another part is set afire.

16th: Bucks trade Kareem Abdul-Jabber & Walt Wesley to LA for 4 players (what were they thinking?!).



21st: "Jaws" by Steven Spielberg opens in theatres.

28th: Rod Serling, writer/host (*Twilight Zone*, *Night Gallery*), dies at 50.

30th: University of California reports galaxy 3C123 at 8 billion light years distance.



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



Southwest Memorial Day Airborne Reunion, June 2-3, 2012, Granbury, TX.

Contacts:

John Taber

Eml: pittsace@windstream.com

Mike Edwards

Phn: 972-567-9593

Eml: moeward@msn.com



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

Contact:

Phn: 931-431-0199



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



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, June 6 - 10, 2012, Lexington, Kentucky hosted by Chapter 17. See details on Pages 26-41.

Contact:

Dave Carmon

Eml: dcarmon@roadrunner.com

Web: www.skysoldier17.com



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

Contact: Jerry Hassler

Eml: hassler173@juno.com



29th Annual Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Reunion, July 30 - August 5, 2012, Hilton Hotel, New Orleans, LA.

Contact:

Phn: 800-505-8472



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 Flesch are taking the lead. Mark your Calendar.

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/>



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



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

Contact:

Web: <http://cibassoc.com>



Sun City "Fiesta VI", 82nd Airborne Division, July 4-July 8, 2012, El Paso, TX.

Contact:

Eml: bp82cmdctr@bpaac.org

Web: www.bpaac.org

Send notices of upcoming Airborne Reunions to:

rto173d@cfl.rr.com



"Parachutes Over Pittsburgh", 82nd Airborne Division Association 68th National Convention, August 8-11-2012, Monroeville/Pittsburgh, PA.

Contact:

Tommy Thompson

Phn: 724-206-0290

Eml: 82paratrooper@comcast.net



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 this month. A registration form is

included on Page 28 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: _____

Please include T-shirt size for each individual, S, M, L, XL, XXL

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 _____) Incl
 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
 Information on overflow hotels at web site:

<http://www.skysoldier17.com/Reunion.htm>



"HISTORY, HORSES & HOOCH"



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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 this 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 attend the reunion and meet these troopers personally and also attend the WWII interactive presentations.

Our thanks to each of you who contributed to this historical event and for keeping alive *The Airborne Spirit!!*

Honoring Our WWII 503rd Troopers

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 24
Chapter 27, Australia Chapter 30, 173d
Bob Clark, 1st, 5th, 7th SF Harry Cleland, 2/503
John Cleland, 3/503, 173d Bde Dave Colbert, 2/503
Jim Cole, 2/503, 3/319 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 Geishauser, 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, SVA Wayne Hoitt, 2/503
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 Dr. Cam McLain, 503rd Friend
Tom McGall, 101st Jackie “Mom” McIntyre, 42d IPSD
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 Charles Rolon, 2/503
Marjorie Royer, 173d Friend Andy Russell, 2/503
Augie Scarino, 2/503 Jack Schimpf, 2/503
Roy Scott, 3/319 Bill Shippey, 2/503, N75
Wayne Short, 2/503 Steve Skolochenko, D Maint
Dave Smith, 2/503 Don Smith, 173d Friend
John Smith, 2/503 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
Jim Starrett, 2/503 Kaiser Sterbinsky, 2/503
Mike Sturges, 2/503 Bob Sweeney, 2/503
John Taylor, 2/503 William Terry, 3/319
Marc Thurston, 2/503 Alt Turner, 2/503
Steve Vargo, 2/503 VFW Kettering Mem. Post 9927
Dave von Reyn, 2/503 Rich Whipple, 2/503
Bill White, 173d Friend Jerry Wiles, 2/503
Bill Wilkinson, 2/503 Robert Will, 3/503
Ron Woodley, 2/503 Pat Wright, 2/503, 4/503
Bill Wyatt, 2/503



A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE 503d PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM, WWII



By: Donald E. Abbott
503rd PIR, July 1997

The 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team, World War II, began with the activation of the 503d Parachute Battalion in Fort Benning, Georgia on 21 August 1941. The Battalion was the third of four Parachute Battalions formed prior to the beginning of World War II. The others were 501, 502 and 504.

On 2 March 1942 the 503rd Parachute Battalion was the nucleus around which the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment was formed. This was the first of a number of such regiments organized over the next few years. The Regiment was transferred to Fort Bragg, North Carolina in March 1942.

On 20 October 1942 the Regiment left the POE San Francisco on the MS Poelau Laut. The first stop was the Panama Canal Zone where the 501st Parachute Battalion was picked up. This battalion was redesignated as the Second Battalion of the 503d PIR, replacing the original 503d's Second Battalion which had been sent to England and, eventually, redesignated as the 509. The Regiment landed in Cairns,



Don Abbott



Australia on 2 December 1942 after a voyage of 43 days and 42 nights. Later the Regiment was expanded into a Combat Team with the assignment of the 462d Parachute Artillery Battalion on 29 March 1944 and the 161st Parachute Engineer Company on 13 September 1944.



503rd troopers mixing with the Aussies

During its more than three years service in the Southwest Pacific Theater, the 503d served in five major combat operations. A number of other missions were planned but called off by higher headquarters.

1. The Regiment jumped in the Markham Valley, New Guinea, on 5 September 1943, in the first successful Airborne Combat Jump. The Regiment forced the Japanese evacuation of a major base at Lae to take a route which proved to be disastrous for them. The third Battalion of the 503d had a major skirmish with the rear guard of this exodus. The successful employment of Parachute troops, in the Markham Valley, has been credited with saving the concept of vertical envelopment from being abandoned following several less than successful engagements in Europe.



Church tent in New Guinea

(continued...)



2. Two rifle Battalions of the 503d Regiment jumped on the Island of Noemfoor off the coast of Dutch, New Guinea early in July 1944, followed by an amphibious landing by the other rifle Battalion a few days later. The Regiment was employed in the elimination of the Japanese garrison on that Island. Airfields constructed on Noemfoor after its capture played a significant role in supporting the advance of Allied troops from New Guinea to the Philippines. Sergeant Ray E. Eubanks was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, posthumously, for his actions on Noemfoor.

3. Following a non-combat landing on the Island of Leyte, in the Philippines, the 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team made a major amphibious landing on the Island of Mindoro, in the central Philippines on 15 December 1944. Originally, it was intended for the 503rd to jump on Mindoro but due to inadequate airstrip facilities on Leyte an airborne landing was not possible. The purpose of this landing was to secure sites for air strips providing forward Air Corp bases to support later landings at Lingyen Gulf, Luzon. The Combat Team was subjected to intense air and naval actions during this operation, at one point being shelled for 25 minutes by a Japanese Naval task force. One Company of the Combat Team engaged in a fierce battle against a Company-size enemy air raid warning station on the North end of Mindoro.



Corregidor jump

4. The Combat Team jumped on Fortress Corregidor on 16 February 1945 to liberate that Island from occupying Japanese forces. This was the most vicious combat action in which the Combat Team engaged during its existence. Corregidor was the bastion which withstood a fierce Japanese siege for nearly five months in 1941 and 1942, thereby interrupting the

Japanese advance toward Australia. The 503rd was proud to have been allowed to have the honor of recapturing the Island. Japanese sources, within recent years, have estimated there were 6550 Japanese on the Island when the 503rd landed. Of those, only 50 survived. The 503rd, however, lost 169 men killed and many wounded or injured. The 503rd was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its actions. Private Lloyd G. McCarter was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery on Corregidor.

5. Almost immediately after returning to Mindoro from Corregidor, the Combat Team was called upon to bolster the 40th Division which was bogged down on the Island of Negros, in the Central Philippines. The Combat team was inserted into Negros by landing craft, although it had been alerted for another combat jump. The objectives of the proposed jump, a strategic bridge and a large lumber mill, were destroyed by Japanese forces, thereby eliminating the first objectives of the 503d.

(continued...)





Colonel Jones, Commander 503rd PIR

Unfortunately, the 503rd lost a lot of good men in accomplishing its missions. The names of 348 of these men have been identified. By early November 1945 the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team ceased to be operational. All men with lengthy service in the Southwest Pacific had been rotated to the United States while those who had served the Combat Team for a shorter time had been reassigned to the 11th Airborne Division and sent as occupation troops to Japan. The Regiment was inactivated on 24 December 1945 at Camp Anza, California. Veterans of the 503rd, who served during World War II, began holding informal get-togethers almost immediately after 1945. An Association was established and National Reunions have been held each year since 1957.

Source:

<http://thedropzone.org/pacific/503hist.html>

(Photos courtesy of the 503rd Heritage Battalion web site)



503rd troopers ready for Nadzab jump.



Japanese surrender at Negros

- The 503rd engaged in fierce battles against frantic Japanese resistance in the mountainous areas of Negros for more than five months. The 40th US Division convinced higher headquarters there were only a few enemy troops remaining on the Island and were moved to Minanao, leaving the 503rd to battle the Japanese alone. At the end of the War with Japan in August 1945, about 7,500 of the surviving Japanese troops surrendered to the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team. Official U.S. War Department sources estimated the 503rd killed over 10,000 Japanese troops during its combat operations in the Southwest Pacific.





~ Operation Corregidor II ~

During our 173d reunion this 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!

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.



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

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 this 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.

Once a Paratrooper....Always a Paratrooper



Tony embarking on a life’s journey like no other



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



**Cowboys' Major (Ret)
Tony Geishauser**

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.



Cowboys...335th Combat Assault (Tillman Jeffrey photo)

See *Scrambled Eggs—Vietnam Style* on following page.





Scrambled Eggs -- Vietnam Style

By Maj. Tony Geishauser (USA-Ret.)
335th AHC, Cowboys

It started as just another routine day at the office. Of course, my office happened to be the cockpit of a U.S. Army UH-1 "Huey" helicopter flying over Vietnam.

Every day started routinely. Some even ended that way. March 16, 1966, wouldn't be one of those days.

Two 173d Airborne Brigade cooks quickly loaded large containers of hot chow into our bird. Fully loaded and carrying a 400-lb. sling-load of ice, we headed for War Zone "D" north of Bien Hoa. Our LZ or Landing Zone, we later learned, was designated "Zulu-Zulu."

The 2/503d, the 2nd Battalion of the 173d, had been living on a diet of C-rations for days and its airborne "Sky Soldiers" were badly in need of hot chow. My outfit--A Company, 82nd Aviation--carried troops to and from fire fights, provided medical evacuation services and kept a steady resupply of ammo, "C" and "A-rats," water, mail and, on rare occasions, ice to our ground-pounding brothers-in-arms. This morning, we were scheduled to deliver a hot breakfast and drink-cooling ice.



Tony on left

A few miles from our destination, we called the unit, asking it to pop a smoke grenade and identify the landing zone. I soon reported spotting red smoke. A radio operator responded, "Roger, red smoke, Cowboy. Wind calm. No Victor-Charlies in the AO." Good; a friendly Area of Operations. The Viet Cong were elsewhere this morning.

We made a slow pass over a hole in the jungle and decided our best approach was straight down into the LZ, some 100 ft. below the treetops. The hole seemed big enough for us to hover through, but the crew chief and gunner stood on each of our helicopter's skids, talking us down to ensure we didn't inadvertently back our tail rotor into a jagged tree line skirting the LZ. Without a tail rotor to compensate for the main rotor's torque, our Huey wouldn't hover; it'd spin and crash. So, keeping our tail out of those trees was a high priority.

We had just started down through the hole when the jungle erupted.

"Mack! Machine-gun tracers, 2 o'clock! Pull pitch, pull pitch!"

I yelled.

Mack, Joe McHenry, the other pilot, saw basketball-size .51-caliber tracer rounds pass several yards in front of our chopper a second after I did. The enemy gunner, obviously trained to lead his target, expected us to fly into his line of fire. But we weren't flying forward. We were hovering straight down.

As Mack started to pull pitch, rotor RPM started to decay. "Punch off the ice, Mack! Punch off the ice!" I yelled into my microphone. Mack didn't hear me, couldn't find the sling load release button on his stick or had a few other things on his mind. I didn't wait for an explanation. I kicked the manual release lever between my pedals and 400 lbs. of ice fell away. With that extra weight gone, rotor PRM slowly edged back into the green.

(continued...)



The 2/503d arrive LZ Zulu Zulu on 15 Mar 66 looking forward to a hot breakfast on the morning of 16 Mar. The bad guys are watching. (Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503d)



As Mack started easing us back up through the opening in the treetops, that enemy gunner swung his aim point, overcorrected and blasted our tail boom and tail rotor. The chopper started to spin, dropping towards the ground. I said what every helicopter pilot says at a time like this: *"Shit!"*



Cowboys: The Zulu Zulu chopper pilots, Tony (L) and Joe "Mack" McHenry during a quieter moment.

The closer we got to the ground, the faster my mind raced, which converted all activity into an illusion of slow motion. All the way down, I said to myself: *I'm not going to get seriously killed.* Heck, I even upped the ante and said I wasn't even going to get hurt. It worked--at least, the not-getting-killed part did. The foliage cushioned our fall somewhat, but the main rotor blades nearly shook the Huey to pieces as they chopped trees into kindling.

Our Huey finally settled to the jungle floor on its left side with a final death heave. *"Anyone hurt?"* I shouted.

Everyone reported he was OK, including the crew chief, whose back was nearly broken. Banged-up and bruised, we all scrambled out the right cargo door as fast as possible, slipping on spilled eggs, orange juice and coffee.

I saw a figure running towards us, rifle in hand. Our gunner held his fire, then recognized a round-eyed airborne soldier, who had come to escort us to safety. As our last crewmember scampered from the dead Huey, all hell broke loose. Hundreds upon hundreds of weapons started firing--all on full-automatic. The noise was deafening. The 700 or so men of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry were surrounded by a reinforced North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regiment of 2,000 regular soldiers, not ragtag Viet Cong rebels.

Once we were clear of the chopper, our 173d paratrooper escort bent low to the ground and shouted that timeless infantry command: *"Follow me!"* We hauled for all we were worth, aiming for the center of the battalion's defensive position, perhaps 100 meters from where we had crashed.

We were directed to locations that might be out of harm's way, but those positions often changed as the battle raged. Two M-60 machine guns taken from our chopper helped shore up the battalion's defensive perimeter. Within minutes, a sergeant appeared, carrying our crew chief's now-broken M-14 rifle. Its wooden stock had snapped off during the crash landing, leaving only a trigger-housing group and hardware forward of it. The burly sergeant motioned for me to come closer. I low-crawled over to him.

Stooped low, the paratrooper held the weapon near his groin area and said, *"When they break through, hold the trigger housing group here in your groin. Grab the barrel and aim it with your left hand. There's not much kick when the M-14 fires. Don't worry about it. Just hit what you're shooting at and keep it on semiautomatic. Here are two more ammo clips. Any questions?"*

Any questions? How did this day go from routine flying to John Wayne-style lessons about shooting bad guys with half a rifle, *when--not if--they break through?* I shook my head, which he took to mean "no questions." Actually, it was my way of saying, *"unbelievable; totally unbelievable."*

The next four hours were a blur. Artillery, theirs and ours, fell inside and outside of our perimeter. Fighter aircraft strafed us, because the enemy was literally right on top of our position. When I saw lead flying through the air, hitting two soldiers a few yards away, I thought Charlie had finally broken through. Surely, I would be the next to get it.

(continued...)





Tony & Joe's Huey's final touchdown at Zulu Zulu.

(Photo by Tom Goodwin, HHC/2/503)

I made sure the ammo clip was firmly seated in the broken M-14 and a round was in the chamber. I waited...but nothing happened. I finally realized the lead I'd seen must have been from a fighter plane strafing our zone. The perimeter hadn't been breached. The 2nd Bat was continuing to hold against overwhelming odds.

Box scores can't measure the strong hearts and brave souls of the men who comprised the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, as they fought and defeated a fierce and determined enemy three times their number. After our sister battalion, the 1st of the 503rd, arrived--fighting through enemy forces to reinforce us--the body count was 11 Americans killed, 109 wounded. Later, we learned that more than 600 NVA bodies were found around the stubbornly held perimeter that day. There's no telling how many wounded crawled away.

It had taken the 2nd Bat's sister battalion nearly four hours to hack its way through thick jungle to get to us. One of the men in that unit, Specialist Fourth Class Alfred Rascon, a medic, exercised "...*extraordinary valor in the face of deadly enemy fire. His heroism in rescuing the wounded went well above and beyond the call of duty to protect and treat his wounded comrades ...*" as they fought their way to us. For his actions that non-routine day, he received the Medal of Honor.

When it came to flying helicopters, I knew what I was doing. But when it came to fierce in-your-face, gut-wrenching, close-quarters combat, there were no better soldiers than the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry and its

sister battalion, the 1st of the 503rd. Thanks, "Sky Soldiers," for saving my helicopter crew and my bacon on a day when we were simply trying to bring you bacon and eggs.

Fast forward some 36 years. The 173rd Airborne Brigade was having a reunion in Fort Worth, TX. Not long before, I had linked-up with one of the 2nd Battalion's radio operators via the Internet. He invited me to come to the reunion and speak to his comrades. Very few of those soldiers had met the Huey pilot who'd crashed in the LZ, dumping their bacon and eggs that fateful day.

I did go to the reunion--but not before stopping by a McDonald's public relations office. Concluding my 5-min. speech to the reunion's ex-soldiers, I said, "*The 'Cowboys' always deliver, even if it takes a second try--30-some years later.*" To a standing ovation, I handed out more than 300 McDonald's *Egg McMuffin* gift certificates.

Tony Geishauser completed a full 20-year Army career, retiring as a major and a Master Army Aviator. In addition to being an infantry officer and helicopter pilot, he served as a public information officer for the Army in Europe and at the world's largest military post, Fort Hood, Texas. He later held positions as a worldwide media relations and advertising manager for Texas Instruments, and media relations positions in other companies for more than 19 years. He previously operated his own consulting firm in Austin. He and his bride, Pam, live in Texas enjoying the retired life.



Soldiers' Circle Memorial dedicated with ceremony

BY ROB WHEARY (STAFF WRITER)

Published: August 13, 2010

A rose placed by Annette Sandri, mother of Matthew Sandri, sits on the memorial plaque of the Soldiers' Circle.

Mark Gilger Jr./Staff Photo



COAL TOWNSHIP - The drops of rain didn't deter those who stood at the top of the hill, honoring local residents who served their country and paid the ultimate price in doing so.

The Soldiers' Circle Association dedicated its new Soldiers' Circle Memorial Monument Thursday morning at the top of a six cemetery complex in the Springfield section of Coal Township.

The monument, located at the top of the Saint Stanislaus Cemetery and at the entrance to the Transfiguration Cemetery, honors the 2,000 veterans buried in that area. Master of ceremonies for the dedication, Garth Hall, told the crowd how the monument came to fruition.

"Construction began in early June and the original plans for the circle's design was more limited than what we see here because of only having \$1,800 in funds available," Hall said.

One of the more poignant moments of the ceremony happened when Robert and Annette Sandri laid a rose on a stone plaque, dedicating the monument. They are the parents of Sgt. Matthew Sandri, who was killed in March 2004 in a rocket attack outside Fallujah, Iraq.

"This is amazing what they have done here," Annette Sandri said. "This just shows the generosity of the community to make this monument possible, to help us keep in mind the struggle that the soldiers and family go through. It really shows how people will come together to help someone else."

The plaque reads: "This 'Soldier's Circle Memorial' is dedicated to all United States of America Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard Veterans buried in St. Edward's, Saint Stanislaus, St. Mary's, Saint Michael's, Transfiguration Ukrainian Catholic and B'Nai Israel Jewish Cemeteries."

Lowered to half-staff, Sgt. Mark Burille, who has served in the Armed Forces through several foreign conflicts, read a prayer written by a soldier who was heading into combat.

"Standing before the enemies of my country, my fellow citizens and my family, I beg you, my Lord, to protect me. You are my creator of all things seen and unseen. I place my life in your hands, my soul in your

loving heart. Forgive me for what I must do, for even my enemies are your creation. I beg your forgiveness both for me, and my enemies," Burille prayed.

Burille said while Thursday's ceremony was important, efforts to remember the contributions soldiers make should always be on everyone's mind.

"There are 2,500 war and peacetime veterans who are buried in these cemeteries," Burille said. "As we stand here today, let us work to make sure that we remember what they have done, not just today, but every day. As we remember, all gave some, but some gave all."

In Memory of Sgt. Matthew "Matt" Sandri

fellow paratrooper and combat medic, C Co., 82nd FSB, 3BCT, 82nd ABN DIV, who was killed in action on 20 March 2004, in Fallujah, Iraq.



Karen Murray calls Matthew J. Sandri the strongest of her friends, a sincere, honest and genuine person willing to go out of his way to help a friend in need. "There's just something special about Matt. When you look into his eyes for the first time he just has a way with people," Murray said. "It's like he's so inviting. He had a love for people, he loved life. I could just look at him and start laughing because I knew he was thinking of something funny." Spc. Sandri, 24, of Shamokin, Pa., died March 20 in a rocket attack outside Fallujah, Iraq. He was stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., and had completed three years of study at Bloomsburg (Pa.) University with a concentration in biology. Murray recalled the time she met him: "He just started talking to me as if he already knew me," she said. "From then on, we were like best friends. I had so many years of fun with him; there's nothing but good memories of Matt." Survivors include his parents.

~ All The Way Brother ~

Assisted by LTC Bryan Sleight, 82nd ABN DIV Surgeon and MG Mike Scaparrotti, 82nd ABN DIV Commanding General, Connor Taylor, son of LTC Mark Taylor cuts a ribbon to officially dedicate the Taylor / Sandri Medical Training Center at Fort Bragg, in presence of the Taylor and Sandri families.



"On May 16, 1965, while waiting to takeoff on a mission, a B-57B exploded on the ground at Bien Hoa, setting off a whole chain of secondary explosions. The resulting conflagration destroyed ten B-57s, eleven VNAF A-1H Skyraiders, and a US Navy F-8 Crusader. The surviving B-57s were transferred to Tan Son Nhut and continued to fly sorties on a reduced scale until the losses could be made good. Some B-57Bs had to be transferred to Vietnam from the Air National Guard, and 12 B-57Es had to be withdrawn from target-towing duties and reconfigured as bombers to make good these losses."

By Mark Carter
173d LRRP, E-17th Cav

The Rigger platoon was bivouacked along the northern perimeter fence, outside the perimeter, of course. The fence itself was actually a double apron minefield. We had been in country for less than two weeks. By this time we had constructed a few bunkers, filled a couple million sandbags, and dug prone shelters next to our pup tents. We had yet to receive the squad tents, which were still *en route* by boat from Okinawa, but our cooks had set up a kitchen tent to supply us with B-rations.

We are prepping for a big operation. The boonie rats are already in the field. The runway is filled with B57 bombers, A-1s, and some other aircraft. They are going to bomb the shit out of Charlie this morning. The rigger platoon is putting together bulk loads of ammo, food, and water for air delivery a few days into the operation.



Martin B57 Canberra

We had two or three bunkers completed—walls four bags thick, a timber roof covered with three layers of sandbags, firing slits pointed north, and interlocked with the adjacent bunkers. We were encamped on a gentle hill a few hundred feet in elevation above the runway, so we had a good view to the south. Beyond the runway itself was the Air Force facility—barracks and EM club. Beyond that, the southern perimeter fences, then the small town of Bien Hoa, barely visible in the distance.

I had just finished my B-rats, had walked across the yard to my tent to hang my mess kit up on the tent pole. I don't remember if we were going to fill more sandbags or work on loads for the boonie rats that day, but none of that happened.

I saw a sudden flash, like lightning, from the direction of the runway. I look up in time to hear a tremendous crack, feel the intense heat. A tall column of flame and smoke, with a dark, billowing mushroom rises out of the parking area at the foot of the runway, where a few dozen aircraft were neatly parked, waiting to take off. Everybody around me crouches, looking at the runway. Another flash, another fireball rises. I can see men running away from the parking area. Then the second huge crack arrives, the concussion swats me hard. Fire shoots out in a horizontal line away from the aircraft. The running men disappear behind a wall of fire and black smoke. Then the fuel blivids begin to explode, one after the other, five of them, each filled with 50,000 gallons of JP-4. Heat flashes, unbelievably hot, then subsides. Then, 750 barrels of JP-4 begin to explode, an event chain of flash, sound, heat, concussion.

Nobody knows what's going on. People look in all directions at once.

(continued....)





Burning Aircraft on ramp at Bien Hoa AFB after explosion

Shrapnel begins to fall around us—arrhythmic steel and aluminum hail, whap, bang, falling around us in no particular pattern. I have my usual standing nightmare—a human wave attack—so I grab up my web gear, rifle, and flak jacket, and slide into the nearest bunker. Dimly lit by sectors of light from the firing slits, dust drifts down from the boarded ceiling with each new concussion. A few men already are there, weapons in hand, sighting out the firing slits. I wait by the door, since nobody seems to be watching it. The 20mm cannon rounds on the burning aircraft begin to cook off. A few more bombs detonate, but they don't seem as loud, now. More steel rain. People who've been crouching behind things sprint to the bunkers.

Across the clearing, near the mess tent, Captain Cartwright stands transfixed, looking at the runway. Sp4 Evans, who was just coming out of the chow line, puts on his helmet and walks casually toward our bunker, carrying his flak jacket on one finger, over his shoulder, now and then looking down the slope at the spectacle on the runway. Captain Cartwright tells him to *run, dammit, run!* Evans ignores him, shaking his head slowly, as if thinking about it. Cartwright screams again, runs up to Evans and screams into his ear to drop and give him 22 good airborne pushups. Evans stops, looks at Cartwright for a moment, then, calmly he puts his flak jacket on the dirt and carefully places his rifle on it, then he drops into the front leaning rest position and begins to count them out. Cartwright stands over him, breathing hard.

I just know the human wave attack is about to begin. I hope our leadership manages to reevaluate its priorities before Charlie starts blowing the bugles. More tremendous explosions. This time the ground actually shakes. These would be the 750 pound bombs. Lumps of steel rain down on the area. I notice our bunker is

now filled. I move to a firing slit and poke my rifle out toward the scrub on the other side of the road, some distance away. I hear Evans shout "*Airborne,*" as he finishes his pushups, and a moment later he slides down into the bunker. I notice that he's carrying his flak jacket, and then I realize that I had put mine on, but couldn't remember doing it.

Detonations from the airbase continue. Bombs, ammo cook off, shrapnel rains down upon us. We take turns at the firing slits. I realize that I've drunk all my water. Our lister bag hangs near the mess tent. I realize we have no C-rations stored in the bunker, then it occurs to me that we don't have a latrine in here, either. I notice that several of the other riggers have fixed bayonets, and wonder what the hell they think they are going do with them.

Sometime later, one of the NCOs comes down into the bunker to tell us that we are not being attacked, that a bomb fell off one of the aircraft and started all this. He says they need a few guys to go down there with the medics from 2nd Battalion to help out. I didn't go that day, but I went the next morning, to sit on the perimeter road near the parking area, to look for dogs and pigs that might wander into the area on account of the aroma from those few bodies that they've not yet been able to recover.



Ariel view of base after explosion

EOD guys are still detonating bombs that were thrown clear of the exploding aircraft. Some cannon rounds are still cooking off. Air Force EOD teams and firemen commonly perform acts of sublime heroism during the next three days. Tuesday is much the same, only now there are no more explosions. By Wednesday afternoon the runway is back in operation. 🇺🇸





PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE
pacificinternationalleague.com

BENEFIT BASEBALL GAME

Friday, June 29, 7:00 pm



Hosted by Local Army Veterans of:

- Chapter XVI National Society of the 173d Airborne
- Chapter 16, US Special Forces Association
- Veterans of the RSVN 81st Airborne Rangers
- Veterans of 82nd Airborne Division
- Veterans of the 101st Airborne Division
- and RSVN Special Forces of WA

Partnered with the **Everett Merchants**

Admission is FREE

with donations being accepted at the gate.

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Everett Merchants

vs. PSSBL All Stars

Help raise funds and awareness for the...

Vietnam Fund for Education, Music, & Infrastructure's

Library Project in 2012



Proceeds will benefit the Fund's fourth library installation in a primary school in Vietnam.

Go to: vietnamemifund.org for more information.

Visit: pssbl.com and everettmerchantsbaseball.com for more about the teams.

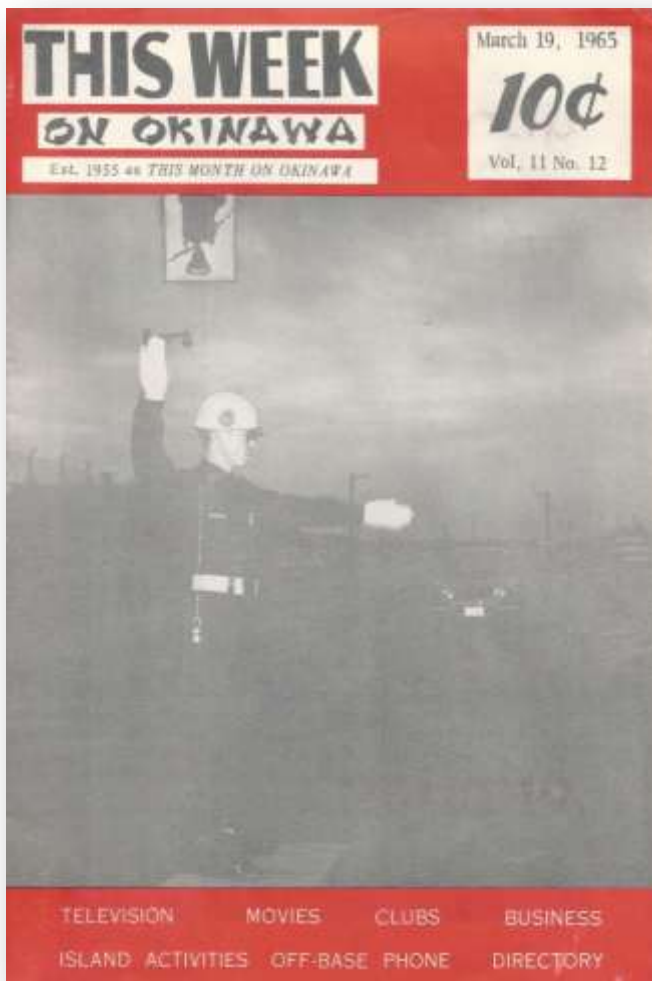
Throughout the game there will be drawings to win fabulous prizes.



Join us for a family fun evening while helping to support this important cause.



~ 173d Nostalgia from Okinawa ~



Mrs. Ellis Williamson, honorary president of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) Officers' Wives Group, right, presents flowers to Mrs. Robert Duddy, program chairman for the production of the Airborne Lassies, in appreciation of her fine work.

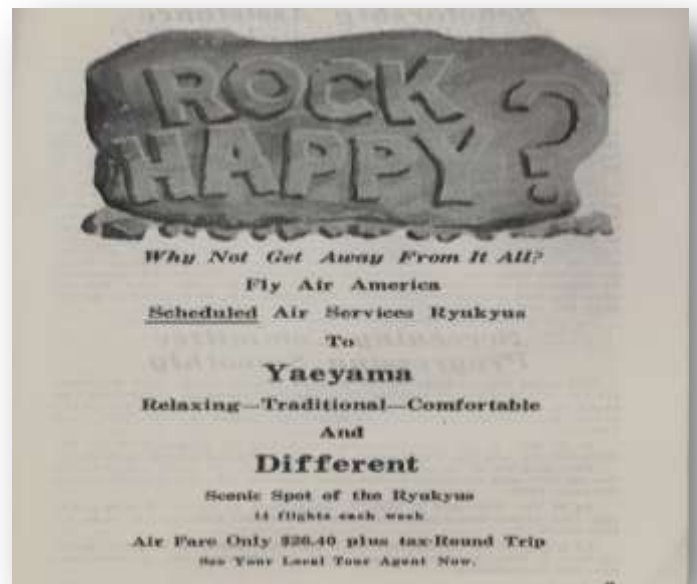


One scene of the skit "A Typical Off-Island Exercise" is presented by left to right, Mrs. William Harper, Mrs. John Manolakis and Mrs. William Mitchell. (TW Photos)



The Chorus Line, left to right, Mrs. John Manolakis; Mrs. Jessie Watson; Mrs. James Berg; Mrs. Robert Gingrass; Mrs. William Mitchell; Mrs. Butler Tucker; Mrs. Donald Bliss; Mrs. Richard Hansen; Mrs. Edward Cartwright; Mrs. Vernon Westmoreland; Mrs. James Bennett; and Mrs. Rodney Beasley

The 173d Officers' Wives' Group were hostesses for the Fort Buckner Women's Club Luncheon on Friday (Mar. 12), where the program "Armed Forces Family" was presented. A repeat performance was given the same evening for the men of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. "Armed Forces Family" is an original musical review, written, directed, and cast by the ladies of the 173rd.



[Sent in by Exie Carmichael, wife of LTC Bob Carmichael]



GI's Widow Presented Medal of Honor

WASHINGTON (UPI) – President Johnson has awarded the second Medal of Honor of the war in Viet Nam to an Army sergeant who threw himself on a grenade to save his men.

Johnson presented the nation's highest honor for bravery Thursday to the widow of Staff Sgt. Larry S. Pierce, 26, of Wasco, Calif.

THE PRESIDENT promised Mrs. Pierce and her three children that "None of us shall falter in our purpose until we have secured the kind of world for which Sgt. Pierce gave his young and gallant life."

Pierce died Sept. 20, 1965, near Ben Cat, South Viet Nam, when a patrol he was leading was ambushed by the Viet Cong. The men of Pierce's platoon put the Communists to flight, but as they gave chase, the sergeant spotted a grenade on the road.

It was too late to throw the grenade aside or to warn the others in his squad. Pierce threw himself on it as it exploded. He was credited with saving the lives of his comrades.

PIERCE BECAME the 2196th serviceman to receive the award, formerly known as the Congressional Medal of Honor. It was established 104 years ago to recognize military men who risk their lives "above and beyond the call of duty."

The first Medal of Honor to be awarded in the Viet Nam conflict went to Army Capt. Roger H.C. Donlen, a member of the army's elite special forces counter-insurgency troops. He received it Dec. 5, 1964.

JOHNSON SAID that while men like Pierce defend the ideals of freedom "we at home must be worthy of their sacrifice. We must be united in our purpose to create a world where terror will not go unchallenged – where aggression and violence will shatter on the rocks of our courage and our conviction," he said.

"DAUGHTER OF A HERO – President Johnson comforts 3-year-old Theresa Pierce after awarding the Medal of Honor posthumously to her father, Army Sgt. Larry S. Pierce at the White House. The sergeant was killed when he threw himself on a mine in Viet Nam and saved his squad men from death and injury. Mrs. Pierce, the widow, holds the citation as she stands next to her 4-year-old son, Kelly. The widow and children were brought from Wasco, Calif. by the President for the ceremony." (AP)



Larry Stanley Pierce
Staff Sergeant
HHC, 1ST BN, 503RD INFANTRY,
173RD ABN BDE, USARV
Army of the United States
Taft, California
July 06, 1941 to September 20, 1965
LARRY S PIERCE is on the Wall
at Panel 02E Line 091

~ Over 30 Years Later ~

It would be over 30 years later when I was at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida putting on a conference and exposition for the airline industry when a staff member walked up to me with a beautiful lady. He said, "I have someone here you would like to meet." He then introduced me to Ms. Theresa Pierce, from the marketing group at Bakersfield Airport, and daughter of Larry. It was an honor to meet the lady and I gave her a 173d lapel pin I was wearing. That night my wife Reggie and I met Bill Vose (A/2/503) and his bride, Roberta, for dinner at a local restaurant where we mentioned meeting Theresa that day. Bill said he had a large poster of Larry Pierce at his home, so following the meal we all returned to Bill and Roberta's house. After Bill collected the poster, Roberta removed a canvas painting from a picture frame of the appropriate size. Bill then inscribed the poster with his greetings. The next day my wife and I presented the framed poster of Theresa's dad to her. Larry would be proud of his daughter. Ed



~ Sky Soldiers Hooking-Up ~



L-R: Joe Gray & Bill Nicholls both A/2/503d trying a new strategy in Dayton, Ohio flying aboard a B-25 celebrating the 70th Anniversary of Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders.



L-R: Master Blaster Bill Reynolds, A/2/503d and his buddy Ed Kearney, B/2/503d, meet for the first time. With no ossifer present, who drops the salute first, or are they still standing there?

The most interesting man in the world



DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL CONVENTION

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<http://www.dav.org/news/UpcomingEvents.aspx>

~ Need Assistance ~

I am trying to find the following information. Any help will be appreciated:

- Looking for reports prepared by the "Operations Officer of the Unit" during 1970-71.
- Looking for the "Chain of Command for 2nd Battalion" during 1970-71.
- Looking for the "Chain of Command for the Brigade" during 1970-71.

Thanks!

Jim "Doc" Gore
 A/B/D/E/2/503d
gorej@charter.net

Leg →



VFW SALUTES NEW GI BILL PROTECTIONS

Executive Order better protects military and veterans' communities from predatory practices

April 27, 2012

WASHINGTON —The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is saluting President Obama for signing an Executive Order today to better protect the military and veterans' communities from the predatory recruiting and financial loan practices of some colleges who fail to deliver on their educational promises.



The VFW-supported Post-9/11 GI Bill became law in June 2008, but since then there have been reports of aggressive and deceptive targeting of service members, veterans, and their families by educational institutions, particularly for-profit career colleges, according to the White House. Some institutions, for example, recruit veterans with serious brain injuries and emotional vulnerabilities without providing academic support and counseling; they encourage service members, veterans and their families to take out costly institutional loans instead of first recommending less expensive federal student aid; and they engage in misleading recruiting practices on military installations, and do not disclose the institution's graduation rate.

"The VFW is big on education, but we are even bigger on the proper administration and oversight of a new GI Bill we fought for 10 years to get enacted," said Richard L. DeNoyer, national commander of the 2 million-member VFW and its Auxiliaries.

"The VFW has worked very hard to get these protections created, and the president's Executive Order will go far to crack down on the predatory recruiting practices and poor performance of all schools who participate in the Post-9/11 GI Bill, but our fight isn't over," he said. *"Our veterans are America's future leaders, and what they expect is a solid education that is marketable and relevant to today's environment. The VFW looks to the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense and Education to quickly implement the requirements of the Executive Order."*

Mental health for vets untimely

By Gregg Zoroya, *USA TODAY*

An internal investigation at the Department of Veterans Affairs released today says tens of thousands of veterans waited far longer last year to receive mental health treatment than what the VA contends.

The inspector general's office found that claims by the VA that 95% of its patients are both evaluated for mental health problems and begin receiving therapy within a 14-day goal set by the department are false.

In fact, only about half of mental patients were evaluated within two weeks. The remainder waited an average of seven weeks, the investigation found.

On the time it takes to begin treatment, the probe corroborated findings by a *USA TODAY* analysis published Nov. 9 which revealed that about a third of VA patients wait longer than 14 days to start treatment. The VA inspector general confirmed that only 64% are treated within 14 days, and the rest wait nearly six weeks on average before starting their treatment.

The VA's *"mental health performance data is not accurate or reliable,"* the inspector general's report concluded, adding that the department *"overstated its success."*

"This report shows that the VA is failing many of those who have been brave enough to seek care," says Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., chairwoman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. *"Once a veteran takes the step to reach out for help, we need to knock down every potential barrier to care."*

With the suicide rate among veterans estimated by the VA at 18 per day, Murray, who called for the investigation, said timely mental health care *"can quite frankly often be the difference between life and death."* The VA issued a statement conceding that the way it estimates timely care is flawed. *"We generally agree that some revision of the metric is required,"* the statement says.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have partly resulted in an increase every three months of 10,000 new patients arriving at the VA suffering post-traumatic stress disorder.

The inspector general's office stated that, according to interviews with VA staff, the *"greatest challenge has been to hire and retain psychiatrists."* Three out of four hospital sites visited by investigators lacked psychiatrists.

See complete report: http://www.usatoday.com/NEWS/usaedition/2012-04-24-VA-Wait-Times_ST_U.htm

[Sent in by Dr. Scott Fairchild, Psy.D, 82nd Abn Div (Ret)]



A Veteran's Death, the Nation's Shame

By **NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF**

Published: April 14, 2012

(Photos by Ashley Gilbertson/VII)



HERE'S a window into a tragedy within the American military: For every soldier killed on the battlefield this year, about 25 veterans are dying by their own hands.



A photograph taken in Iraq of Specialist Ryan Yurchison (left), who died of a drug overdose on May 23, 2010, after returning home to New Middletown, Ohio.

An American soldier dies every day and a half, on average, in Iraq or Afghanistan. Veterans kill themselves at a rate of one every 80 minutes. More than 6,500 veteran suicides are logged every year — more than the total number of soldiers killed in Afghanistan and Iraq combined since those wars began.



These unnoticed killing fields are places like New Middletown, Ohio, where Cheryl DeBow raised two sons, Michael and Ryan Yurchison, and saw them depart for Iraq. Michael, then 22, signed up soon after the 9/11 attacks.

"I can't just sit back and do nothing," he told his mom. Two years later, Ryan followed his beloved older brother to the Army.

When Michael was discharged, DeBow picked him up at the airport — and was staggered. "When he got off the plane and I picked him up, it was like he was an empty shell," she told me. "His body was shaking." Michael began drinking and abusing drugs, his mother says, and he terrified her by buying the same kind of gun he had carried in Iraq. "He said he slept with his gun over there, and he needed it here," she recalls.



Then Ryan returned home in 2007, and he too began to show signs of severe strain. He couldn't sleep, abused drugs and alcohol, and suffered extreme jitters.

"He was so anxious, he couldn't stand to sit next to you and hear you breathe," DeBow remembers. A talented filmmaker, Ryan turned the lens on himself to record heartbreaking video of his own sleeplessness, his own irrational behavior — even his own mock suicide. One reason for veteran suicides (and crimes, which get far more attention) may be post-traumatic stress disorder, along with a related condition, traumatic brain injury. Ryan suffered a concussion in an explosion in Iraq, and Michael finally had traumatic brain injury diagnosed two months ago.

Estimates of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury vary widely, but a ballpark figure is that the problems afflict at least one in five veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq. One study found that by their third or fourth tours in Iraq or Afghanistan, more than one-quarter of soldiers had such mental health problems. Preliminary figures suggest that being a veteran now roughly doubles one's risk of suicide. For young men ages 17 to 24, being a veteran almost quadruples the risk of suicide, according to a study in *The American Journal of Public Health*.

Michael and Ryan, like so many other veterans, sought help from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Eric Shinseki, the secretary of veterans affairs, declined to speak to me, but the most common view among those I interviewed was that the V.A. has improved but still doesn't do nearly enough about the suicide problem.

(continued....)



“It’s an epidemic that is not being addressed fully,” said Bob Filner, a Democratic congressman from San Diego and the senior Democrat on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. *“We could be doing so much more.”*

To its credit, the V.A. has established a suicide hotline and appointed suicide-prevention coordinators. It is also chipping away at a warrior culture in which mental health concerns are considered sissy. Still, veterans routinely slip through the cracks. Last year, the [United States Court of Appeals](#) in San Francisco excoriated the V.A. for “unchecked incompetence” in dealing with veterans’ mental health.

Patrick Bellon, head of *Veterans for Common Sense*, which filed the suit in that case, says the V.A. has genuinely improved but is still struggling. *“There are going to be one million new veterans in the next five years,”* he said. *“They’re already having trouble coping with the population they have now, so I don’t know what they’re going to do.”*

Last month, the V.A.’s own inspector general reported on a 26-year-old veteran who was found wandering naked through traffic in California. The police tried to get care for him, but a V.A. hospital reportedly said it couldn’t accept him until morning. The young man didn’t go in, and after a series of other missed opportunities to get treatment, he stepped in front of a train and killed himself.



Likewise, neither Michael nor Ryan received much help from V.A. hospitals. In early 2010, Ryan began to talk more about suicide, and DeBow rushed him to emergency rooms and pleaded with the V.A. for help. She says she was told that an inpatient treatment program had a six-month waiting list. (The V.A. says it has no record of a request for hospitalization for Ryan).

“Ryan was hurting, saying he was going to end it all, stuff like that,” recalls his best friend, Steve Schaeffer, who served with him in Iraq and says he has likewise struggled with the V.A. to get mental health services. *“Getting an appointment is like pulling teeth,”* he said. *“You get an appointment in six weeks when you need it today.”*

While Ryan was waiting for a spot in the addiction program, in May 2010, he died of a drug overdose. It was listed as an accidental death, but family and friends are convinced it was suicide.

The heartbreak of Ryan’s death added to his brother’s despair, but DeBow says Michael is now making slow progress. *“He is able to get out of bed most mornings,”* she told me. *“That is a huge improvement.”* Michael asked not to be interviewed, he wants to look forward, not back.

As for DeBow, every day is a struggle. She sent two strong, healthy men to serve her country, and now her family has been hollowed in ways that aren’t as tidy, as honored, or as easy to explain as when the battle wounds are physical. I wanted to make sure that her family would be comfortable with the spotlight this article would bring, so I asked her why she was speaking out.

“When Ryan joined the Army, he was willing to sacrifice his life for his country,” she said. *“And he did, just in a different way, without the glory. He would want it this way.”*

“My home has been a nightmare,” DeBow added through tears, recounting how three of Ryan’s friends in the military have killed themselves since their return. *“You hear my story, but it’s happening everywhere.”*

We refurbish tanks after time in combat, but don’t much help men and women exorcise the demons of war. Presidents commit troops to distant battlefields, but don’t commit enough dollars to veterans’ services afterward. We enlist soldiers to protect us, but when they come home we don’t protect them.



“Things need to change,” DeBow said, and her voice broke as she added: *“These are guys who went through so much. If anybody deserves help, it’s them.”*

Different wars.... same shit.



VA EXEMPT FROM SEQUESTRATION

'Disabled veterans can breathe a sigh of relief...'



April 23, 2012

WASHINGTON — A letter sent today from the Office of Management and Budget to the General Accountability Office officially exempts the Department of Veterans Affairs from mandatory budget cuts should sequestration occur.

The letter, signed by OMB Deputy General Counsel Steven D. Aitken to Julia C. Matta, GAO assistant general counsel for Appropriations and Budget, clearly states that *“all programs administered by the VA, including Veterans’ Medical Care, are exempt from sequestration.”*

“Disabled veterans can breathe a sigh of relief today knowing that VA programs are exempt from sequestration,” said Richard L. DeNoyer, national commander of the 2 million-member Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and its Auxiliaries.

“Today’s decision means the healthcare plans and programs the VA currently provides to millions of disabled veterans will continue unabated, as will claims processing and veterans’ burial benefits,” he said.

“Protecting the VA is exactly what President Obama told me he would do during a meeting in the Oval Office in March, and now he has come through for America’s veterans and survivors. It’s a great day to be a veterans’ advocate.”

“The executive order I’m about to sign will make life a whole lot more secure for you and your families and our veterans — and a whole lot tougher for those who try to prey on you,” the president said.

FACES WITH NAMES

In January of 2010, a number of San Antonio-area veterans associations announced a local grassroots effort to locate photos for more than 300 San Antonio and Bexar County soldiers killed during the Vietnam War. The collection is near completion. On May 16, Dr. Ricardo Romo will present the collection to the City of San Antonio and Bexar County.

<http://www.texascultures.com/faceswithnames/>

Faces with Names localizes a national effort to gather images and profiles on soldiers who lost their lives in Vietnam. The images are a collection that will be presented to the City of San Antonio and Bexar County.

<http://www.buildthecenter.org/>

Please reply to: externalaffairs@utsa.edu

UTSA Institute of Texan Cultures
AN ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

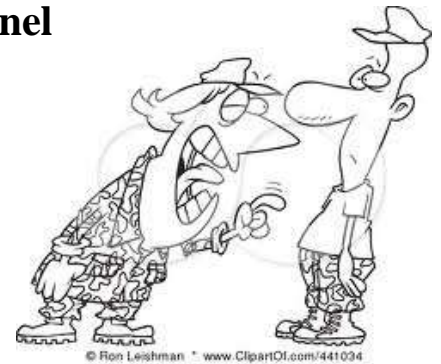
101 E. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd., San Antonio, Texas 78205

THIS IS AN OUTDOOR EVENT

[Sent in by Mike Guthrie, A/2/503d]

Very Important Airborne Colonel

Having just moved into his new office, a pompous, new colonel was sitting at his desk when a PFC knocked on the door.



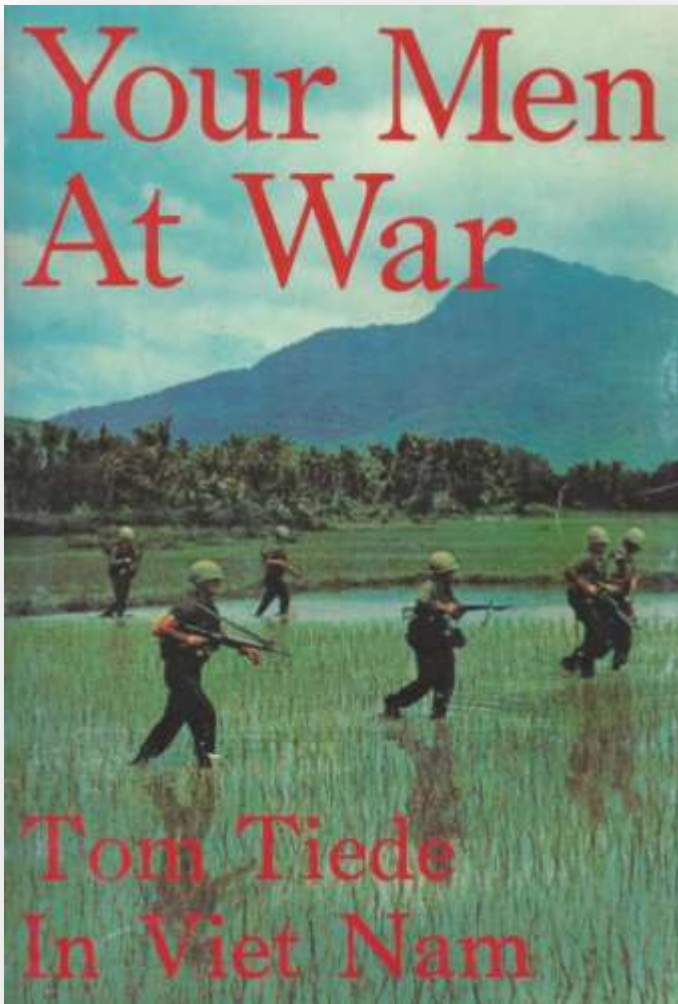
Conscious of his new position, the colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the PFC to enter, then said into the phone, *“Yes, Mr. President, I’ll be seeing him this afternoon and I’ll pass along your message. In the meantime, thank you for your good wishes, sir.”*

Feeling as though he had sufficiently impressed the young enlisted man, the Colonel loudly demanded, *“What do you want Private?!”*

“Nothing important, sir,” the PFC replied, *“I’m just here to hook up your telephone.”*



An excerpt from....



**christ on an ammo box;
dominus vobiscum.**

The jungle out at Ben Cat was drip-drying after a rain shower and overhead clouds gathered anew to plot still another storm.

One by one, and in silence, the GIs joined into a damp group while a priest traced the shape of the cross in the humid steam.

And then a dozen men of war knelt to pray for peace. Church in the combat zone.

This was a congregation heavy-wet and dirty from work. Under their rain ponchos, they looked like mounds of mud piled up on the edge of this rice paddy parish.

"Our Father..." they whispered wearily.

"Forgive us our trespasses..."

"But deliver us from evil. Amen," they said finally, and their fingers tightened on the weapons beside them.

The worshipers were men of the 2/503rd Infantry. Moments earlier, they were in unpius pursuit of the enemy in a nasty nest of Viet Cong called War Zone D. Moments later, they would be again.

But now, for 40 minutes, there was an uneasy pause.

Each man gave thanks with his eyes wide open. They stopped before a statue of Christ propped up on a live ammunition box. There were no pews and each man crouched in mire. A soldier with a gun assisted at the altar. Other men stood sentry on the perimeter and some cattle ate grass nearby during service.

"Dominus vobiscum," said the priest. *"The Lord be with you."*

He was a tall man, dressed in white vestments and muddy combat boots. His head was bare and the short blonde hair was an immaculate exception to the surroundings.

Father Kennedy, Capt. James Matthew Kennedy, 38, of Syracuse, N.Y. Six feet, well-built, compassionate, friendly. The men like this one.

He is always there, it seems to them, in the foxholes, at the chowline, even wringing out his socks under the lister bag. The story is he dislike being an officer because it separates him from the men and thus he works harder to earn their trust.

And work he does. In battle he is everywhere, but safe, dressing wounds, giving comfort, intoning the Last Rites over the frightened face of a dying boy.

He has courage, but possibly too much, and the men are frightened for his life.

He has six months left in Viet Nam but they wish he would leave now in one piece. He takes too many chances, they say quietly. Ambushed four times, under fire 10 times and close to injury too often for even a man of God to discount.

The sky pilot, they call him.

Holy Joe, God's Commando, Capt. Chaplain.

The men like him and he likes them.

It began to rain again during the Mass. The precipitation mixed with the wine and crumbled the hosts of Communion. Drops spattered onto a soldier's face to help him hid the tears which had, without warning, leaked out.

Then the priest spoke, concisely, for there was no time for eloquence. He said no worthless words of solace but advised, instead, that those there remain in a state of grace at all time so that when, in case....

Water streaming from his face, he bowed to the crucifix and said softly his concluding words to God. The he turned and, with a gently gesturing right hand, gave the final blessing.

The men genuflected, crossed themselves and began to leave. The priest folded his vestments, placed his belongings in a bag and followed.

Moments later, the jungle had swallowed them up. Dominus vobiscum.



~ FUN WITH HATS & PATCHES ~

Thanks to LTC Bob Carmichael, 2/503d Bn XO/CO, '65/'66, and his bride, Exie, for sending us a number of new military hats and patches to give away to veterans; 13 hats in all, and 3 patches. Now, when I used to carry a radio for (then) Major Bob Carmichael, he'd never fail to give complete orders such as, "RTO, be quiet, and don't drop that handset again!" or, "Don't worry, Smitty, this LZ is secure." (Liar) And, "No, you cannot have any of my cookies from home." But, this time he just sent hats and patches with no detailed instructions, other than, "Give them to the guys." What Bob didn't tell me is, how do we give 13 hats and 3 patches to nearly 2000 veterans who receive our newsletter? Having given this dilemma serious thought, a plan was devised.

Any veteran with any unit who reads this may email one request, one time, naming two hats or one hat

and one patch they have interest in receiving. Because our newsletter is emailed over the span of two separate days, your emailed request cannot be sent until after 0001 hrs. on 15 May 2012 (New York EST) – thus giving everyone an equal opportunity to respond. In your email request please include the corresponding numbers below to two hats or a hat and patch. The date and time of your email will determine if you receive a hat or patch -- first come, first served. We'll notify the 16 recipients, and the hat or patch they won will be mailed to them. In the July issue we'll name the recipients. The editor of your newsletter is not responsible for anything, particularly mistakes. If all hats and patches are not spoken for by midnight on June 1st, they will be given away to troopers.

Bob asked we not mention they provided these neat hats and patches, but.... *Thanks Bob & Exie!*

SELECT TWO NUMBERS BELOW, AND EMAIL YOUR ONE-TIME SELECTION TO rto173d@cfl.rr.com TO BE EMAILED AFTER 0001 HRS. ON 15 MAY 2012 (NEW YORK EST). WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED ON JUNE 2ND. GOOD LUCK!

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



WHAT IS A VIETNAM VET?

A college student posted a request on an internet newsgroup asking for personal narratives from the likes of us addressing the question: "What is a Vietnam Veteran?" This is what he received back.

Vietnam veterans are men and women. We are dead or alive, whole or maimed, sane or haunted. We grew from our experiences or we were destroyed by them or we struggle to find some place in between. We lived through hell or we had a pleasant, if scary, adventure. We were Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Red Cross, and civilians of all sorts. Some of us enlisted to fight for God and Country, and some were drafted. Some were gung-ho, and some went kicking and screaming.

Like veterans of all wars, we lived a tad bit--or a great bit--closer to death than most people like to think about. If Vietnam vets differ from others, perhaps it is primarily in the fact that many of us never saw the enemy or recognized him or her. We heard gunfire and mortar fire but rarely looked into enemy eyes. Those who did, like folks who encounter close combat anywhere and anytime, are often haunted for life by those eyes, those sounds, those electric fears that ran between ourselves, our enemies, and the likelihood of death for one of us. Or we get hard, calloused, tough. All in a day's work. Life's a bitch, then you die. But most of us remember and get twitchy, worried, sad.

We are crazies dressed in cammo, wide-eyed, wary, homeless, and drunk. We are Brooks Brothers suit



Ed Anthony
172d MID/MACV
a Vietnam vet



Freddie Parks, A/2/503d
a Vietnam vet



Gary Prisk, C/D/2/503d
a Vietnam vet

wearers, doing deals downtown. We are housewives, grandmothers, and church deacons. We are college professors engaged in the rational pursuit of the truth about the history or politics or culture of the Vietnam experience. And we are sleepless. Often sleepless.

We pushed paper; we pushed shovels. We drove jeeps, operated bulldozers, built bridges; we toted machine guns through dense brush, deep paddy, and thorn scrub. We lived on buffalo milk, fish heads and rice. Or C-rations. Or steaks and Budweiser. We did our time in high mountains drenched by endless monsoon rains or on the dry plains or on muddy rivers or at the most beautiful beaches in the world.

We wore berets, bandanas, flop hats, and steel pots. Flak jackets, canvas, rash and rot. We ate Chloroquine and got malaria anyway. We got shots constantly but have diseases nobody can diagnose. We spent our nights on cots or shivering in foxholes filled with waist-high water or lying still on cold wet ground, our eyes imagining Charlie behind every bamboo blade. Or we slept in hotel beds in Saigon or barracks in Thailand or in cramped ships' berths at sea.

We feared we would die or we feared we would kill. We simply feared, and often we still do. We hate the war or believe it was the best thing that ever happened to us. We blame Uncle Sam or Uncle Ho and their minions and secretaries and apologists for every wart or cough or tic of an eye. We wonder if Agent Orange got us.



Jerry Wiles, B/2/503d
a Vietnam vet



Jamie Castillo, C/2/503d
a Vietnam vet



Mike Hargadon &
Jerry Hassler, Recon 2/503d
Vietnam vets

(continued....)



Mostly--and this I believe with all my heart--mostly, we wish we had not been so alone. Some of us went with units; but many, probably most of us, were civilians one day, jerked up out of "the world," shaved, barked at, insulted, humiliated, de-egoized and taught to kill, to fix radios, to drive trucks. We went, put in our time, and were equally ungraciously plucked out of the morass and placed back in the real world. But now we smoked dope, shot skag, or drank heavily. Our wives or husbands seemed distant and strange. Our friends wanted to know if we shot anybody. And life went on, had been going on, as if we hadn't been there, as if Vietnam was a topic of political conversation or college protest or news copy, not a matter of life and death for tens of thousands.



**Jim Dresser, A/HHC/2/503d
a Vietnam vet**



**John Searcy, HHC/2/503d
a Vietnam vet**

Vietnam vets are people just like you. We served our country, proudly or reluctantly or ambivalently. What makes us different--what makes us Vietnam vets--is something we understand, but we are afraid nobody else will. But we appreciate your asking.



**The late Dr. Dick Eckert
B/HHC/2/503d
a Vietnam vet**

Vietnam veterans are white, black, beige and shades of gray; but in comparison with our numbers in the "real world," we were more likely black. Our ancestors came from Africa, from Europe, and China. Or they crossed the Bering Sea Land Bridge in the last Ice Age and formed the nations of American Indians, built pyramids in Mexico, or farmed acres of corn on the banks of Chesapeake Bay. We had names like Rodriguez and Stein and Smith and Kowalski. We were Americans, Australians, Canadians, and Koreans; most Vietnam veterans are Vietnamese.

We were farmers, students, mechanics, steelworkers, nurses, and priests when the call came that changed us all forever. We had dreams and plans, and they all had to change...or wait. We were daughters and sons, lovers and poets, beatniks and philosophers, convicts and lawyers. We were rich and poor but mostly poor. We were educated or not, mostly not. We grew up in slums, in shacks, in duplexes, and bungalows and houseboats and hooches and ranchers. We were cowards and heroes. Sometimes we were cowards one moment and heroes the next.



**Tome Roubideaux, A/2/503d
a Vietnam vet**

Many of us have never seen Vietnam. We waited at home for those we loved. And for some of us, our worst fears were realized. For others, our loved ones came back but never would be the same.



**A.B. Garcia, HHC/2/503d
a Vietnam vet**

We came home and marched in protest marches, sucked in tear gas, and shrieked our anger and horror for all to hear. Or we sat alone in small rooms, in VA hospital wards, in places where only the crazy ever go. We are Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, and Confucians and Buddhists and Atheists--though as usually is the case, even the atheists among us sometimes prayed to get out of there alive.



**Bob Carmichael
HHC/2/503d
a Vietnam vet**

We are hungry, and we are sated, full of life or clinging to death. We're injured, and we are curers, despairing and hopeful, loved or lost. We got too old too quickly, but some of us have never grown up. We want, desperately, to go back, to heal wounds, revisit the sites of our horror. Or we want never to see that place again, to bury it, its memories, its meaning. We want to forget, and we wish we could remember.

(continued....)



Despite our differences, we have so much in common. There are few of us who don't know how to cry, though we often do it alone when nobody will ask "what's wrong?" We're afraid we might have to answer.



**L-R: Mike Sturges & Jack Ribera, A/2/503d
back in-country looking in the direction of where they
both nearly lost their lives to a VC mine.
Vietnam vets**

Adam, if you want to know what a Vietnam veteran is, get in your car next weekend or cage a friend with a car to drive you. Go to Washington. Go to the Wall. It's going to be Veterans Day weekend. There will be hundreds there...no, thousands. Watch them. Listen to them. I'll be there. Come touch the Wall with us. Rejoice a bit. Cry a bit. No, cry a lot. I will.

I'm a Vietnam Veteran; and, after 30 years, I think I am beginning to understand what that means.

Note: This report appeared in Jack Tarr's on-line 4/503d Newsletter, and sent to him by Steve Konek, Sr., 173d Bde Hq, credited to Mike L., a 1/9th Cav Scout vet). Photos added.

Sky Soldier

Frank Joseph Denryter, Jr.

(February 26, 1950 - May 3, 2012)



Frank Joseph Denryter, Jr., age 62, a resident of Clinton Township, Michigan passed away on Thursday, May 3, 2012. He was born on February 26, 1950 in Mount Clemens, MI to the late Frank J. and Donna (nee Duggan) Denryter, Sr. On June 16, 1973 in Mt. Clemens, he was united in marriage to the former Kathleen "Kathy" Ellen Ackerman. Together they celebrated their 38th Wedding Anniversary.



Mr. Denryter was a veteran of the United States Army, serving during the Vietnam War with the 4th Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade. Receiving his bachelor degree from Grand Valley State University, he was employed in technology sales, using contract placement for the State of Michigan and Blue Cross Blue Shield. Serving as a voluntary vice-president for Michigan Babe Ruth Leagues, he was involved with youth baseball. He followed the professional baseball leagues and enjoyed playing baseball and golf himself. Among his other interests, he enjoyed hunting, American History and visiting Gettysburg.

His survivors include his wife Kathy, children; Patrick, Andrew, Kristin, and Jennifer Denryter, grandson Nickalas, siblings; Fred (Jean) Denryter, Debbie (Fred) Stadlebaur, William Denryter, nieces and nephews, and his mother-in-law Barbara Ackerman. Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by his infant daughter Mary Elizabeth, and sister Kathy Gorecki.

~ From a Buddy ~

I just returned from the Detroit area after attending Frank Denryter's funeral and burial. The internment was at the Great Lake's National Cemetery. It is a beautiful site with a large lake in the middle of 541 acres. White marble military stones were aligned with absolute precision. Pavilions and benches were placed in areas for families to visit their loved ones.

The ceremony for Frank, his family, and friends was impressive, with a National Guard E-6 and E-5 folding the flag and presenting it to Mrs. Denryter. The VFW's Honor Guard performed the rifle salute.

I was proud to be there for him and represent the 173d Airborne. Frank would be very pleased to have been remembered in this way.

Jerry Sopko, D/4/503d

Rest easy brother

