



January 2013, Issue 49
Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

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

~ 2/503 Photo of the Month ~



5 January 1966, Chargin' Charlies. On far right Captain Tom Faley (Colonel Ret.) with his C/2/503 troopers during Operation Marauder in the Mekong Delta displaying captured enemy flag. They were young once, and paratroopers.



Chaplain's Corner

Dress Right...Dress!

That command should bring back memories from your time on activity duty. It leads me to share with you a similar term, "battle formation." As you look in the Bible and see the story of King David's "mighty men", there is one quality that stands out concerning them -- they had it right when it came to unity. Check this out: *"All these, being men of war, who could draw up in battle formation, came to Hebron with a perfect heart, to make David king over all Israel."* I Chronicles 12:38 (NASB). Let me say that I'm getting this thought from that buddy of mine, Duke. Recall he's the Marine classmate of mine, and for that reason I'd ask you to pray for him.



Cap

Now, "battle formation", that's the key here; it's used to align the formation and insure that the unit is together and in the correct formation.*

Now here is an item that you might not have heard...when the Roman soldiers went into battle, their shields, which protected them from chin to toes, were linked to one another forming a wall of defense. What a picture! The Bible instructs us to pray for one another, defend one another, strengthen one another, sharpen one another, and yes, bear one another's burdens. In the book of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT) there is a statement of encouragement about not trying to do it alone. *"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."*

Men in our society, I feel, have felt the pressure to achieve, to earn, to conquer and to win...and to do all things—on our own. On the other hand...in James Chap 5:16 we are to encourage each of us to develop deep and caring relationships with other men, and to pray for each other. Just maybe, a man who doesn't have at least one other man to whom he can be accountable or share with regarding his hurts, failures, temptations as well as joy and victory is a prime candidate for anger and bitterness?

Heard the following some months back and thought I'd share it with you in that it does have something to do with unity and teamwork. It goes like this..."*For the past 25 years the European Ryder Cup side in golf has been proving the adage that a good team will trump a team of stars. Since 1985 the United States has won only four times in 13 attempts, despite having the clearly superior players.*" So it seems to me that teamwork is something that we, your group, and our 173d Chapters have got to be a team. And, in our chapter or group of brothers if one of us should suffer, we all suffer; or if one of us is honored, all of us are honored. If we allow ourselves to become separated or disconnected from other brothers or sisters we will become incapable of getting anywhere or accomplishing anything worthwhile.

From the Gladiator...Maximus says –

"Whatever comes out of those gates, we've got a better chance of survival if we work together. Do you understand? We stay together – we survive."

The same holds true I believe for those English forces at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415 under King Henry V.



So there are two thoughts that I take out of this; first is "Battle Formation" and the second is "Unit/Teamwork". It surely applies to all of us, and that includes you, me and....

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

Rev. Jack Kelley, LTC (Ret)
Former CO, A/2/503, RVN
JackTKelley@aol.com

*The Word for You Today - Serrettania Rd, Erie, Pa 16415 (a great devotional).





~ 2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2012 ~



Olaf G. Hurd, Jr.

HHC/Recon 2/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), '66/'67

Olaf G. Hurd, Jr. (Ollie) was born 15 September 1965 in Martinsville, Virginia, and lives there today with his wife of 29 years, Jackie. They have two children and seven grandchildren.

Ollie was drafted shortly after graduating from Drewry Mason High School in Ridgeway, Virginia. He arrived in Vietnam May 1966 and was an RTO with Recon, HHC, 2/503 until 10 February 1967 when he was shot by VC in his left shoulder resulting in immediate paralysis from his neck down. Following medical attention and rehabilitation, he regained the use of his shoulders and arms. The bullet remains in his right shoulder, having traversed there and continuing to slowly travel towards his neck and spine. He remains paralyzed from his upper chest down despite numerous elective and non-elective surgeries since 1967.

With each war, medical advances have changed the type of injuries that wounded warriors can sustain and still survive. In Vietnam, only 2.6% of those who made it to a surgical field hospital died. The medical goal of saving the lives of those fighting has not changed, but the abilities of those who survived have changed over the decades. The goal has been not just surviving the disability, but the return to happy, productive and active lives.

Ollie, from 1975 to 1985, participated in wheelchair sports: archery, basketball, precision javelin, table tennis and weight lifting, winning numerous awards before retiring due to medical reasons limiting his activity and mobility. Today, he remains an avid hunter of white tail deer, turkey and squirrel – all found abundantly in the Henry County, Virginia area. Sometime ago, he reeled in two State of Virginia citation Largemouth Bass.

In 1978 he started the All American Handicapped Association in Martinsville – Henry County, Virginia. During its insurgent beginning, the Association was instrumental in obtaining Handicapped Parking signs and curb cuts in the area. 1980-1984 Active Volunteer of the Martinsville – Henry County Rescue Squad. Life Member of the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans Associations. Current member of VFW Post 2820 in Bassett, Virginia. He served two terms on the West Piedmont Disability Services Board. Member of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Ridgeway, Virginia, serving on

various church committees and as usher. He currently serves on the children's Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed – 2 Timothy 2:15 (AWANA). Ollie is the recipient of the Outstanding Military Veteran 2010 Award presented annually by the Henry County Board of Supervisors.

"If I regarded my life from the point of view of the pessimist, I should be undone. I should seek in vain for the light that does not visit my eyes and the music that does not ring in my ears. I should beg night and day and never be satisfied. I should sit apart in awful solitude, a prey to fear and despair. But since I consider it a duty to myself and to others to be happy, I escape a misery worse than any physical deprivation." Helen Keller

Inspiration and perseverance are a motivating force for us all. Ollie could have let life pass him by but chose to live it to his fullest, typical of a WE TRY HARDER paratrooper. We, the officers and men of the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), are honored to present Sky Soldier Olaf G. Hurd, Jr. with this award and long overdue special recognition for his life-long service.

Congratulations Ollie! Job well done brother.



January 3, 2013, C/2/503 trooper Roger Dick, '67/'68 (L), presents 2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year award to Olaf Hurd, HHC/Recon 2/503, '66/'67, of Henry County, Virginia.

"I would not hesitate to share a foxhole with Olaf today knowing the character of the man and his deep commitment to our Brotherhood." Roger Dick



VA Seeks to Expand TBI Benefits

December 7, 2012



Proposes Adding 5 Diagnosable Illnesses Secondary to Service-Connected TBI

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs is publishing a proposed regulation in the Federal Register that would change its rules to add five diagnosable illnesses which are secondary to service-connected Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

“We must always decide Veterans’ disability claims based on the best science available, and we will,”

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said.

“Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence that ensure they receive benefits earned through their service to the country.”

VA proposes to add a new subsection to its adjudication regulation by revising 38 CFR 3.310 to state that if a Veteran who has a service-connected TBI also has one of the five illnesses, then the illness will be considered service connected as secondary to the TBI.

Service connection under the proposed rule depends in part upon the severity of the TBI (mild, moderate, or severe) and the period of time between the injury and onset of the secondary illness. However, the proposed rule also clarifies that it does not preclude a Veteran from establishing direct service connection even if those time and severity standards are not met. It also defines the terms mild, moderate, and severe, consistent with Department of Defense (DoD) guidelines.

Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

VA’s decision is based on a report by the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (IOM), “Gulf War and Health, Volume 7: Long-Term Consequences of TBI.” In its report, the IOM’s Committee on Gulf War and Health concluded that “sufficient evidence of a causal relationship” - the IOM’s highest evidentiary standard - existed between moderate or severe levels of TBI and diagnosed unprovoked seizures. The IOM found “sufficient evidence of an association” between moderate or severe levels of TBI and Parkinsonism; dementias (which VA understands to include presenile dementia of the Alzheimer type and post-traumatic dementia); depression (which also was associated with mild TBI); and diseases of hormone deficiency that may result from hypothalamo-pituitary changes.

Specific information about the Defense and Veteran Brain Injury Center is available at

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

Information about Gulf War and VA’s services and programs are available at:

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/hazardous_exposures.asp.

Arizona Airborne Association Disbanding

The Arizona Airborne Association is disbanding and they are closing out their funds with a contribution to our 173d Chapter of \$250.00. This is because of all the hard work that Doc (Dougherty) and Lorraine did over the past ten years.

**Bob Madden
(B/2/503)
President**

Thunderbird Chapter XXV

In his letter to Bob on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, John Nye, Col. SF (Ret), president of the Arizona Association stated:

“Due to the failure of an investment by AAA, combined with a decided lack of participation by some of the Airborne Association Chapters in Arizona, for the past several years we were unable to conduct the annual banquet or to assist those Airborne qualified ROTC Cadets who were in need of monetary aid.....In light of the participation by Thunderbird Chapter member James “Doc” Dougherty, the AAA is hereby contributing Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) of our remaining funds to Chapter XXV.”



Lifelong Buds



L-R: Terry Fugate and Tannor Dupard, Chargin' Charlies, doing their thang in 1967, somewhere in VN.

I thought this would be very interesting to all. The local TV station did a story about us on their news several years ago.

I am Tannor, on the right in the above photo, and Terry on the left digging. Terry Fugate is from and lives in Vanceburg, KY, I live in Baton Rouge, LA. We met in 1966, at Fort Gordon (AIT), went to jump school together and were assigned to 46th Company...received orders together for 'Nam and were assigned together to the same platoon and squad with Charlie Company 2/503. When you saw one of us, you saw the other.

We both were blessed to come back, and until this day we are family. I visit him and he visits me. We are family and vacation together.

The more current picture was taken in New Orleans. Ironically, we are positioned exactly the same in both pics, and this wasn't planned. Destiny called for our bond; this was done when it wasn't too acceptable for a white guy from a little small Kentucky town to befriend a black guy.

Airborne!

Tannor Dupard
C/2/503d



Terry & Tannor, Sky Soldier brothers then, now and forever.

More on Les Brownlee, Secretary of the Army....

Trust, Respect, Leadership

Captain Les Brownlee was the commanding officer for B Company 2nd Bn 503rd Infantry while I was there. I need to give you some background so you can understand my unique position so you can better appreciate my remarks.

First, it is rare for a buck Sgt to be in a position to make judgments and how that came about. Captain Brownlee decided he needed an operations NCO and I happened to have a strong background for the job.

Before RVN I was Ranger, and Pathfinder qualified and had graduated from the Instructor training school at Ft Benning. I worked at the Basic Airborne, Advance Airborne and the Pathfinder schools as an instructor.

Captain Brownlee was the best Company commander that anyone would want. He made sound tactical decisions that accomplished the missions without taking unnecessary casualties.

All of the men of B Company admired and respected him. But most of all we all trusted him and had great faith in his technical and tactical as well as leadership abilities.

John J. Strunks
Master Sergeant (Ret)
B/2/503d



Future Secretary of the Army, Les, center, being Dusted Off from "D" Zone jungle after being wounded in firefight in March '66 during Operation Silver City. (Web photo)



Note: We ran this photo in Issue 48, Page 8, in connection with the March 1968, *Army Digest* story about the battle on Hill 882 at Dak To. The medic shown on the right is Doc Joe Mescan of 1/503. Thanks to Doc for sharing this background information with us. Ed



Hill 882, Dak To, November 1967 (Photo from *Army Digest*)

A Fallen Brother

Sorry to say when he was hit it was a head wound and he was an instant vegetable. He died about 2 months later in a hospital in Okinawa.

I was a reactionary Medic and traveled with all our Companies at one time or another. All I know about this wounded paratrooper is that he had a 3 month old daughter that he had never met, and had a picture in his wallet. Sad, War is Hell.

This wounded trooper is the one I'm carrying up the hill on 882 in the YouTube video below. It was not but a few minutes later a rocket hit next to us and across the trail it blew both legs off SGT. Dan Sandstrom, I was knocked to the ground and possibly out for a bit. When I gained my composure it felt like the side of my face was blown off. I felt it and it was covered with blood but still there. I only had shrapnel in the head and leg. Dan took 99% of the blast.

I crawled across the trail and one of my medics and I began applying tourniquets. Dan was to try-out for the Minnesota Vikings when he returned home and the only

thing he was worried about is if he would ever walk again. I told him he would be up and around before he knew it.

I heard from Dan about 10 years ago and he was working with VA PTSD patients. He would call me every November to thank me. I lost touch with him so if

anyone out there knows of his whereabouts I would like to hook up. Last I knew he lived in Minnetonka, Minnesota but I contacted every Sandstrom in Minnesota with no clues.

The whole story is in the book *Dak To*. I know the caption says Hill 875, but this is 882.

Joe (Doc) Mescan
1/503d

Email:
jmescan@windstream.net

YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhfvUd1sSQ>



Wounded troopers of 1/503 being moved to aid station during battle on Hill 882. "Standing with ace bandage around chest is LT Kennemer. After we applied a plastic air tight bag on the wound he was able to breathe better."

Doc Mescan (Web photo)



~ A Salute to the Screaming Eagles ~



“January 26 - 23 March 1967, Operation Farragut. The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and the 8th ARVN Cavalry Squadron launch a 71-day search & destroy operation named FARRAGUT south of Phan Ranh in Ninh Thuan Province, II CTZ. Friendly losses are 14 killed and 128 wounded. Enemy losses are 115 killed, 4 POWs, 155 detained and 80 individual weapons.” (Web photo)



173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation

Spartan Club



To Our Spartans!

This is the second Spartan Club newsletter – a periodic report to keep you abreast of our progress, our success, and coming events! It is being distributed by email to those who provided email addresses with their pledge, and by snail mail to other Spartans. If you would like to receive future Spartan Club communications by email, please let me know at kvsmit173@gmail.com.

Save the Date!

Friday, March 22, 2013 -- Spartan Club Appreciation Social

You have answered the call and pledged to help maintain the dignity and memory of our Fallen for future generations to come. You are a Spartan!

As a token of our appreciation for your support, The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation Board of Directors will host a Spartan Club Appreciation Social at the National Infantry Museum (2nd Floor Mezzanine) on Friday evening, March 22nd, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM.

Invitations will be mailed in early January 2013 to all Spartan Club members. This is a private, adults only event for Spartan Club members (plus one) and requires your RSVP for admittance.

We hope that many Spartan Club members will join us!

Your Memorial Continues to Evolve

The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial was dedicated in June, 2010, but the Memorial Foundation's work continues and the information on the granite panels continues to evolve.

Currently, Board members are finalizing the historical information from the Brigade Combat Team's (BCT) most recent deployments and tracking the names of Sky Soldiers who have fallen in service during the Brigade's current mission downrange, OEF XIII. This is the BCT's fourth deployment to Afghanistan and as of this writing twelve warriors have



**Ken at Memorial dedication
Fort Benning, GA**

been taken from us during this deployment. While these fallen warriors will be remembered during the March 2013 "Reading of the Names" Ceremony, their names will not be added to the granite panels listing the fallen until the Brigade completes its deployment and all Sky Soldiers have safely returned to their home base.

Changes to the data displayed on the Memorial's granite panels from the Vietnam era continue to be made. Since the Honors Ceremony was held in June 2011, during which the names of fallen Vietnam era Sky Soldiers were added to the Memorial along with the name of Medal of Honor Recipient Sal Guinta, four more fallen Vietnam era Sky Soldiers whose names are missing from the granite panels have been identified.

Ray Ramirez, a Memorial Foundation Board member, found that Quinten E. Mulleavy was unaccounted for while reviewing MIA records. Through information provided by two comrades, Franklin A. Sappingfield and Larry W. La Pointe were verified as fallen Sky Soldiers and their names will be added to the panels of the fallen. In November 2012, Don Austin informed the Foundation that Gary Leon Hanlin's name, a Sky Soldier with whom he served and who fell in 1968, was missing from the granite panels.

The updated historical data and the names of the four Vietnam era fallen troopers will be engraved on the Memorial just prior to the 50th Anniversary weekend.

The Board of Directors of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation encourages all Vietnam era Sky Soldier veterans to visit the Foundation website to search for the name of any brother who fell in combat and whose name may be missing from the Memorial.

(continued....)



Go to www.173dairbornememorial.org and click on the "Fallen Sky Soldiers" link (alphabetical) to begin your search. You may also click on the "50th Anniversary" link and check the lists for the "Reading of the Names" Ceremony. The names of fallen warriors are presented on this list in the order they were taken from us.

Spartan Club Fund Status

The Spartan Club is more than one year old, but we are still accepting membership applications to provide a stable endowment fund that will ensure our Memorial remains a world class tribute to Sky Soldiers of all generations.

Only 188 members have joined the club – less than two-thirds of our 300 warrior goal. The Club will continue to accept new members until our total membership goal is reached and to replace members who fall from our ranks.

To date, the Club has received more than \$350,000 in pledges, exceeding the initial \$300,000 goal. Realistically, the Club anticipates that some members will be unable to complete their pledges, and have already had members fall from its ranks. It remains important that participation in the Club remains vital to ensure that our Endowment fund is sufficient to support the addition of data to the granite panels as well as the recurring maintenance costs associated with maintaining this world class memorial.

Statements have been sent to those who 2012 pledges are payable, as well as those whose second pledge payments are scheduled for January and February 2013. By submitting your payment to the address below, you will save us time and effort that would otherwise be expended to contact you. If you have questions about your pledge, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone (252-478-9359) or email at kvsmith173@gmail.com. Some Spartan warriors have paid their ten-year pledges in full – an option available to all.

Please see the following page inviting you to become a Spartan member.



Our Memorial

Ken Smith
Foundation President

Please make Checks payable to the 173d Abn Memorial Foundation and mail them to the Foundation at

1160 Lake Royale
Louisburg, NC 27549



173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation

The 173d Spartan Club

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ken Smith, Chairman
173d Memorial Foundation**



The 173d Spartan Club

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



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

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

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

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

(Please print)

Full Name: _____

Primary Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

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

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

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

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

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



Sky Soldier Larry Gorfine 173d Abn Bde

Larry Gorfine, a 173d Airborne Brigade trooper and Vietnam Veteran died peacefully in his sleep on Sunday, November 25, 2012, while watching professional football. Larry was a terrific person with tireless energy with a knack for humor that I had the privilege of knowing since the Fall of 1987. Thank you.



Brother Larry

Kent Hill

Sadly, I forward this message regarding the passing of our Brother Larry Gorfine. As many of you know Larry was a founder and loyal supporter of the San Diego Chapter 28 of the 173d Airborne Association. I have copied my email list of San Diego Sky Soldiers and Friends to inform all of this sad news. Airborne all the way!

Nick Aguilar
C/HHC/1/503d

Larry passed away on Sunday November 25th watching the NFL Channel. I'm sure he was adding up his points for his Fantasy Football league. He called it "GorfBall"!

His 3 passions in life were politics (SD Democratic Party activist), the 173d for which he started 2 local associations, and most importantly his family.

He is survived by me, his brother Barry, his stepsister Mary, and his pride and joy nephews Joshua and Daniel.

One of his best friends, David Ward, will be holding a memorial for him in San Diego on Saturday the 22nd.

Thanks for caring.

Barry Gorfine



National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago

"Above and Beyond"

When visitors first enter the museum, they will hear a sound like wind chimes coming from above them and their attention will be drawn upward 24 feet to the ceiling of the two-story high atrium.

Dog tags of the more than 58,000 service men and women who died in the Vietnam War hang from the ceiling of the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago on Veterans Day, November 11, 2010. The 10-by-40-foot sculpture, entitled *Above & Beyond*, was designed by Ned Broderick and Richard Steinbock. The tens of thousands of metal dog tags are suspended 24 feet in the air, 1 inch apart, from fine lines that allow them to move and chime with shifting air currents.

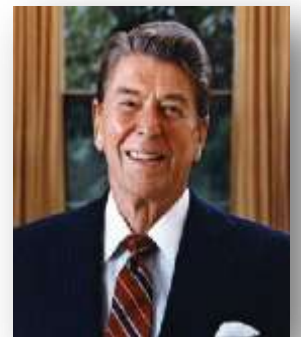
Museum employees using a kiosk and laser pointer help visitors locate the exact dog tag with the imprinted name of their lost friend or relative.



[Sent in by both Ken Redding, HHC/ENTAC, 2/503d, and
Damon Wainscoat, E-Troop/LRRP]

*"There are some
who've forgotten
why we have a
military. It's not to
promote war, it's
to be prepared for
peace."*

President Ronald Reagan



Story Background:

This story (with photographs) concerns a security detail conducted by members of the 3rd Platoon, A Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry in support of a road/mine-clearing operation conducted by the 173d Engineer Company along Highway 173. (See a related story in Issue 45, Page 56, September 2012 of our Newsletter, *"Herd Road Builders Carve Highway 173"* which provides relevant background information).

I did not take part in this operation, so the narrative is an imaginative construction – one based upon my own experiences, the "Road Builders" story, and the photos shown.

The photos were taken by someone who DEROSed, but who left his Instamatic camera behind. After the camera came into my hands, I discovered that there was a roll of film inside. I had the roll developed and printed. What you see are some of the photos on that roll.

Because he appears in several of the photos, maybe the camera belonged originally to a certain sun-tanned, red-haired paratrooper? Perhaps readers can identify him from the photos here?

I regret to report I cannot identify most of the Sky Soldiers in the photos – some of whom were members of the 3rd Platoon and some of whom were Engineer personnel.

One person whom I can identify is SGT Zeno V. Dupree. That is how I know the photos were from the 3rd Platoon, and that is how I know the incident occurred around July or August of 1970. SGT Dupree was a squad leader with the 3rd Platoon around that time.

Thomas Ayers



Nice Tan! Anyone recognize this trooper?



Bông Sơn Sunrise ~ Summer, 1970

SECURITY DETAIL ~ HIGHWAY 173

by Thomas C. Ayers, Col. (Ret)
Platoon Leader/XO, A/2/503d

THE sunrise was magnificent. The rice in the nearby paddies and the trees on the distant mountains were tinged with gold. But for the men of 3rd Platoon, A Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, it was just another day in "The Nam."



At LZ English. "This Tang's for you!"

(continued....)



The afternoon before, we had returned to LZ English after beating the bush for three weeks ~ which meant we did lots of sweating, grunting, heliborne insertions, and humping 75-pounds worth of rucksacks, C-rations, machineguns, ammunition, and claymores up and down and around northern Binh Dinh Province in a mostly unsuccessful search for Viet Công (VC). We'd been looking forward to a week of rest, guarding the southeastern berm of LZ English. But we were hardly off the slicks when the Old Man, Captain William Ryan, informed us that the 3rd Platoon would be pulling a 3-day security detail for an Engineer mine-clearing operation along Highway 173 ~ the newly-constructed road that ran from Bông Son, past VC Valley, then up and over the northern ridges of the Tiger Mountains and down to the 173d's little R&R facility at Lô Diêu Beach on the South China Sea.

Guarding the berm was almost worse than being in the field: half the platoon had to be awake and at their weapons at any one time, which meant that none of us got more than half a night's rest. Nonetheless, the NCOIC of the security detail, Sergeant Zeno Dupree, had all of us up bright and early!

Shortly after a C-rats breakfast and a quick inspection by Sergeant Dupree, the Engineers picked us up in their 3/4-ton trucks. We rumbled out the gate, turned right/south down Highway 1, passed through beautiful downtown Bông Son, crossed the long Lai Giang River bridge, and then turned left onto Highway 173.



That's LZ English in the mid-distance, between the rice paddies and the mountains.

During the drive, the Engineers told us that it had taken months and months to build the Highway. In addition to the usual engineering challenges, there had been resistance not only from the local populace (who didn't want any road running straight through their homes, gardens, and rice paddies), but also from the VC (who waged their guerrilla war using ambushes, snipers, booby traps, and mines). Even

after the Highway was finished, the VC continued to mine the road. And guess who got stuck with mine-clearing? The 173d Engineers! You try to do something nice for people and what do you get?

It felt nice and cool during the ride through Bông Son and across the bridge, but it got a lot hotter once we turned off of Highway 1. Just after we crossed the old railroad tracks, some of the Engineers dismounted and began the step-by-step work of mine clearing. Some of us got down and accompanied them; some of us stayed on or near the trucks, smokin' but not jokin'.

We could even see LZ English as we passed by VC Valley, the site of numerous VC firefights ~ not only with the 173d, but also with 1/50th Mech Infantry and the 1st Cav.



Smokin' but not jokin'
Is that Larry Lanzarin on left? (KIA 11/4/70)

By midday, it was sweltering. Other than shade from occasional roadside trees, there was no place to hide from the sun that summer's day in 1970. Sergeant Dupree ~ and the threat of booby traps ~ made sure that none of us strayed off the road. It didn't feel so dangerous where there were hooches, women, and children. After the road curved right past Dinh Tri hamlet, however, there were no hooches and no locals ~ so you know what happened next.

(continued....)



There was a deafening *KAABLAM* as the lead vehicle lurched into the air!

In an instant, all weapon safeties clicked off, those of us toward the rear of the convoy took defensive positions, while those toward the front moved to assist the driver of the lead 3/4-ton truck. After shouts for "*Medic!*" rang out, the Engineer OIC called in a Dust Off mission; meantime, we found a suitable landing spot and posted security around it. Since LZ English was just across the river, it was a matter of minutes before the Dust Off was inbound. We popped purple smoke, the bird touched down, one severely-injured Sky Soldier was carried aboard, and then it sped away to the Evac Hospital in Qui Nhon.



Pop smoke for Dust Off!



A beautiful sight!



He ain't heavy, he's our brother.

Before the Engineers towed the lead 3/4-ton away, we got a good look at it. The explosion had lifted the rear of the truck up in such a way that its trailer became wedged underneath it. Must have been a big one! We also noticed two other things: there was not one flat tire in evidence and the explosion had ripped a big hole in the truck's bed, just behind the driver's seat. There were two possible explanations for this: either the mine had had a time-delay fuse or it had been command detonated. We never did find out for sure. Either way, the driver was lucky the mine hadn't exploded directly under his seat. He'd been KIA.



Note the Kit Carson Scout at the right.

Sergeant Dupree then ordered "*Let's go!*" So we picked up where we left off, minus one Sky Soldier and one 3/4-ton. We cleared some more of Highway 173 before we were obliged (by time and light) to turn around and return to LZ English. On the way, we passed the same men, women, and children we'd seen earlier ~ the locals who'd been living there and doing the same things, seemingly forever. Like them, we'd be back again tomorrow to continue the mission. Like them, it would be just another day in "*The Nam.*"



Just another day in 'The Nam'



ABOUT OUR 2/503d CALENDAR 2013

Last month we emailed to everyone our *2/503d Calendar for 2013*. The photo selected for the month of December happened to include an image of a Huey nose cover from one of the Cowboys' birds we pulled off the web, which extended *Seasons Greetings* to good guys and unfortunate bad guys.

Interestingly, we received this note from John Lawler, captain of that very ship. Ed

Thanks for the calendar. The month of December photo is my helicopter. I had the nose cover painted in December 1969 to wish all the ground troops we supported a Merry Christmas. The artist is Dale Dilts, my roommate and pilot. The unit is the 335th Assault Helicopter Company based out of Bear Cat. I have attached a picture (below) taken just after Dale finished painting the nose cover and mounted by our crew chief.

John



Cowboy John Lawler and his bird.



More about our Calendar

We mistakenly included a photo in the calendar of the Aussies coming ashore in Vietnam, and labeled it as the 173d arriving in May '65. In sending out a corrected page I mentioned *'we all looked alike'* and that was the excuse for the mistake. Andy Hooker with the Cowboys sent in a note and a photo of the RAN. Ed

Andy's note:

Your right about the Aussie's looking alike, however did they sound alike? I say this because our sister company when we moved to Bear Cat was the 135th AHC EMU's.

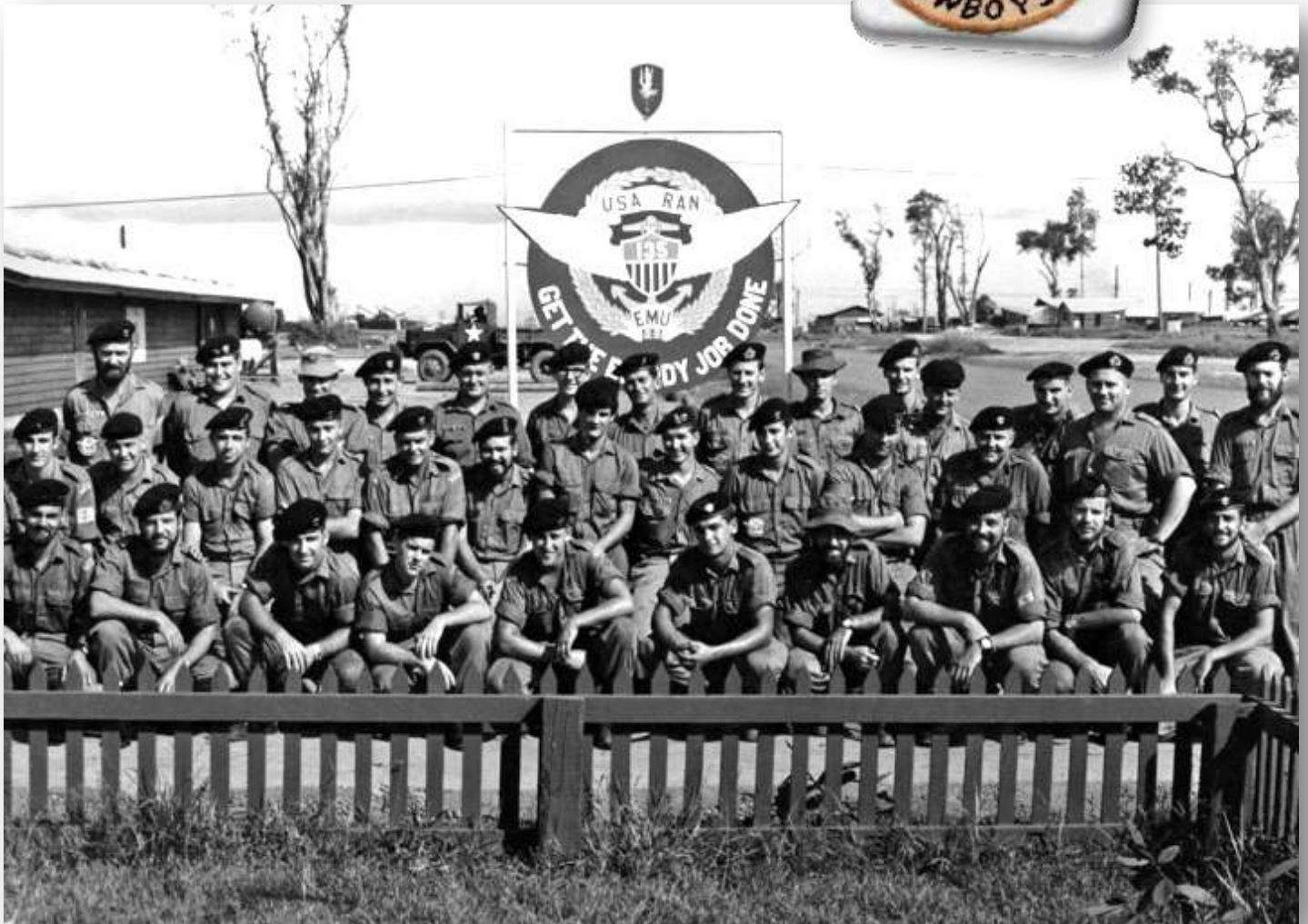
You can imagine some of the nights we had at their club after a long ass day of flying CA's drinking Fosters...

"Hey mate, pass another one over this way".

The 135th Assault Helicopter Company (Experimental Military Unit) was a unique helicopter company in Vietnam because it integrated US pilots with a flight of the Royal Australian Navy from 1967 to 1971. It operated around Vung Tau and Bear Cat then later in the Mekong Delta.

Web site: <http://www.135ahc.net/>

**Andy Hooker
Cowboys**



"Get the bloody job done!"



"Remember Me"

For our Vietnam War Dead
This long Black Wall is somber, True
Name after name of those who Died for You
And as I sit and Weep beneath a tree
I hear them Scream, 'REMEMBER ME'

I touch the Granite Stone, It's Cold
Their average age was twenty years old
They hardly left their Mother's Knee!
'Remember Me, PLEASE, Remember Me'

Vietnam was so very far away
Their call was Duty, not for Play
Our country had a pledge to keep.
They answered it, We stayed to Weep

I reach to Touch each Name I can
Some left a Boy, returned a Man
The Others are Upon this Wall I See
I hear them Whisper, 'Remember Me'

Esther B. (Campbell) Gates
173d Gold Star Mother
SP/4 Keith Allen Campbell
KIA 8 Feb '67
Medic, 173d Airborne Brigade



Source:

<http://www.lzuplift.com/gkozdrn/index.htm>

My son is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. He died saving the lives of others. We never stop missing him.

Esther B. Campbell Gates

Keith Allen Campbell
Specialist Four
HHC, 1ST BN, 503RD INF RGT
173 ABN BDE
Army of the United States
3 March 1946 - 8 February 1967
Arlington, Virginia
Panel 15E Line 008

Distinguished Service Cross Keith Allen Campbell



Date action: 8 February 1967
Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Specialist Four Campbell distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 8 February 1967 while serving with elements of the 503d Infantry assaulting a Viet Cong bunker complex. During the initial engagement, the lead company had suffered numerous casualties, including the medical personnel. Specialist Campbell volunteered to assist in treating the wounded, and dauntlessly moved up to the front line. Exposing himself to the intense hostile fire, he began to administer aid to the wounded soldiers. Discovering that one casualty lay fifty meters in front of the friendly lines and next to an insurgent bunker, Specialist Campbell called for covering fire as he maneuvered forward. Disregarding the extreme dangers, he fearlessly ran through a hail of bullets and exploding grenades, but was forced to take cover behind a low mound of dirt. From this position, he killed a Viet Cong sniper who was firing on him from a tree. Undeterred from his mission, Specialist Campbell then crawled the last twenty meters to the stricken man. Dragging the soldier to the cover of a nearby tree, he started to administer first aid. As he fearlessly protected the man from further hostile fire, Specialist Campbell was mortally wounded. His unimpeachable valor and selfless sacrifice against insurmountable odds succeeded in saving a fellow soldier's life. Specialist Four Campbell's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Doc Campbell

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918.





SKY SOLDIERS KIA / VIETNAM

~ JANUARY ~



"Remember Me"

~ 1966 ~

Timothy Wayne Aikey, A/2/503, B/2/503*
Ruben Cleveland Alston, HHC/2/503
Raynald Jimenz Amador, D/16 Armor
Richard C. Amato, A/1/503
Wallace Edwin Baker, B/2/503
Noel Michael Bartolf, HHC/2/503, B/2/503*
Jose Gotera Birco, A/1/503, A/2/503*
Jack Denton Bixby, A/2/503, B/2/503*
Raymond Lewis Bowen, Jr., HHC/2/503, A/Spt. Bn*
Arthur Cavanagh, A/1/503, C/1/503*
Gerald Lee Dailey, HHC/2/503, A/1/503*

George Eddie Geoghagan, C/2/503

"The rounds were passing over the heads of the members of C Company, and Morton, apparently sensing trouble, yelled into his radio handset, 'Cease fire, cease fire!' Morton, medic Jerry Levy, Pfc George Geoghagan and Sergeant Johnny Graham were crouched near each other behind a paddy dike. Levy, Geoghagan and Graham were making small talk, and Graham had just tossed Geoghagan a pack of cigarettes. Suddenly, Graham heard a loud 'Woomp' and was thrown into the rice paddy. Two short artillery rounds had landed in the midst of C Company. When Graham looked up, he saw Morton apparently dead from the concussion and Geoghagan dead from head wounds. Geoghagan had just joined the unit the day before as a new replacement. Graham remembered that Geoghagan had said that he was married and was from Georgia. Levy was bleeding profusely in the groin area and had part of one leg blown off. Seven other troopers in the company were also wounded, including the company commander, Captain Fred Henschell, Graham himself and Specialist Reid." (Col. Tom Faley (Ret), CO C/2/503d, excerpt from OPERATION MARAUDER: ALLIED OFFENSIVE IN THE MEKONG DELTA.

Richard Earl Harper, B/2/503
Joseph Earnest Hipp, A/1/503, C/1/503*
Jerry Nelson Hughes, E-Troop
William E. Jordan, III, A/1/503
Anderson Harold Key, B/1/503

Johnny Halbert Leake, A/2/503, B/2/503*

Gerald Levy, HHC/2/503, B/2/503, C/2/503*



Doc Levy

Gary Franklin Lewis, HHC/2/503, B/2/503*

Jack Elsworth Locke, A/2/503



Noble Douglas McGehee, A/1/503

Walter Edwin McIntire, Jr., B/2/503

Elliott Lynn Merkle, A/2/503, B/2/503*

Jerry Wayne Morton, B/2/503, C/2/503, A/3/319*

Larry Joseph Nadeau, HHC/2/503, B/2/503*

Willie James Robinson, A/1/503



Marvin Bonney Smith, Jr., A/1/503

Robert George Smith, A/2/503, C/2/503*

Laurence Nelson Sousa, D/16 Armor

John William Thomas, C/1/503

Juvencio Torres-Acevedo, A/2/503, B/2/503*

*Records indicate service with these units.

(continued....)



~ 1967 ~

Lewis Carl Anderson, A/1/503



Billy Dean Brigman, B/1/503

Eugene Cabbagestalk, C/4/503

William Elice Collins, Jr., LRRP, E-Troop*

Stephen Michael Dydynski, A/1/503, A/2/503*

Lonnie Allen Floyd, C/4/503

"Hi Lonnie, You are always with me day and night. I will never forget that day, that moment when all went bad. You were a true friend and a true airborne fighter. I'll see you when I get there." Anthony P. Albarello C/4/503 173d Airborne Brigade



"Lonnie went where many were afraid to go and did what many could not do and he gave his all in doing it. May God bless and Keep him. From a veteran," Daniel K. Cedusky "Colonel Dan"

Willie Donald Jones, A/1/503

Frank Howard Laskin, HHC/4/503, D/4/503*

Ronald Lynn Pendergist, A/4/503

"I never knew my cousin Ronny. All I know about him was he was my cousin, killed in a freak accident, but came home as a hero as so many others. When I try to look up Ronny in various other websites, I rarely ever find him. So tonight, I am writing this to tell that he served for his country and to protect his family and friends. I really do wish he lived, for he was like me – loved good jokes, watching movies, and hated school. Ronny was used to check out tunnels dug by the enemy to see if he could find the enemy hiding in there or supplies of theirs. On a routine check, I believe he had gotten stuck and then suffocated. If anybody knows the whole story, please post it. And if anyone, I doubt it, knew Ronny and has a picture of him, could they send it to me. I have never seen a picture of him. Ronny, bro, thanks for serving and you'll always be on my mind. Your cousin," Jake Coleman Pendergist

John R. Prince, D/4/503

Charles Leroy Raiford, Jr., C/2/503

Mario Ramirez, B/4/503, D/4/503*

Joseph R. Reichert, E-Troop

Frank Lee Smith, B/4/503

Merritt Stoves, III, A/1/503

Arthur Wayne Wilkie, B/4/503

Passion fills me with the words you say...

And the thoughts you think...

The dreams you dream...

The Love that seldom showed...

In your quiet smile...

In your sparkling eyes...

In your life that shows me these things...

With passion that fills me.

by Martha Justice McMinn

Arthur Wilkie's niece.

Martha was 6 years old when her uncle Arthur died.

Jerome Vincent Zeffass, B/2/503, B/4/503*

Eric Ward Zoller, HHC/2/503



Father Charles Joseph Watters conducting a service for Eric Ward Zoller, KIA 22 Jan 67, with members of Recon HHC 2/503. Father Watters was later killed 19 Nov 67 at Dak To, Hill 875, while attending to the needs of the wounded. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously.

(From Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503)

*Records indicate service with these units.

(continued....)



~ 1968 ~

Joe Leslie Biffle, Jr., C/Spt. Bn
Lawrence Clifford Bloom, A/Spt. Bn
James Calvin Bodison, D/4/503
Donald Wayne Borman, B/3/503

Edward Eddy Cervantez, HHC/4/503, D/4/503*

"Cpl Edward (Eddy) Cervantez, US Army. Saint Francis de Sales High School. Bat boy with the Chicago White Sox, 1962. Headquarters Company, 4th Bn, 503rd Infantry 173rd Airborne Brigade 12/67 – 1/30/68. Bronze Star Medal. Rest in Peace."



John Henry Curtin, C/4/503
David Wayne De Priest, D/4/503, 3/319*
Arthur Floyd Elliott, D/4/503
Terry Dean Finch, Flt Plt/HHC/173d Bde
James Williams Foley, C/Spt. Bn
Peter Foote, C/4/503
Norbert Louis Froehlich, C/4/503
Lawrence Douglass Greene, D/1/503, D/4/503*
Darrel Wayne Heeren, A/3/503
Larry Edwin Hill, C/4/503
Jimmy Leroy Johnson, Jr., C/Spt. Bn
James Michael La Rouche, D/4/503
Robert Eric Lochridge, D/3/319, D/4/503*



Ernest Madrid, D/1/503

Miloslav Jose Martinovsky, D/4/503
Jack Roger McKee, C/4/503
Robert Charles Peters, D/4/503



Billy G. Riggins, HHC/1/503

Gene Autry Ross, D/4/503
Steven Warren Schmidt, B/1/503

Mark MacDonald Serrem, B/1/503, D/1/503*
Dennis Ralph Stanely, B/1/503
Thomas Henry Swinnea, D/4/503
Brad John Szutz, HHC/2/503, D/4/503*
John Henry Tigner, D/4/503
Jimmie Paul Wall, C/4/503
Alvin John Wesolowski, Jr., D/4/503
Robert Earl Whitbeck, HHC/3/319

~ 1969 ~

Johnnie Marvin Ayers, A/1/503, 173d Eng.*

*You will always be remembered in my heart and mind.
With love, your brother. Charley*

Scott Jay Bailey, A/1/503

"Scott like many of us had left a young wife behind and he was soon to be a father. He didn't know much about the politics of war, but he knew his role as a soldier and he did it well. He was a good leader and a good friend. Everyone approaches war a little differently, Scott approached it head-on and in the lead. He died fighting when 1st Platoon was ambushed west of An Khe. The world is a better place because he was here." John Smerdon



A Note from The Virtual Wall

The ambush described above took place on Route QL19 west of An Khe and cost the lives of two men: SGT Scott J. Bailey and CPL Austin R. Chenoweth of Dove Creek, CO.

Sherman Duane Bradford, C/2/503
Larry Brown, D/3/503
Austin Ray Chenoweth, A/1/503
Jimmy Lee Culwell, A/2/503
Charlie Anthony Davis, C/1/503, C/4/503*
Bruce Edward Deerinwater, A/1/503, C/2/503*
Willard James Evans, C/2/503
Eric Stuart Gold, E Co. (Incident date December 28, 1968)

Frank Edward Hicks, C/1/503
Paul Robert Jordan, E Co. (LRP)
James Michael Kelly, D/1/503

*Records indicate service with these units.

(continued....)



Edward Alan Lamb, C/4/503

"EDWARD ALAN LAMB, 'Doc Lamb' C/4/503. You were a great friend, buddy and comrade. We did our medical training together at Fort Sam Houston, and we served together in Nam. I had always wanted to send these couple of pictures I had of you to your family. I hope they will get to see them. I will never forget you Doc Lamb, you were an honorable young man. The world is lacking because of your absence. My world is richer for having known you. "
Albert Martel "Doc" Martel



Shirl Brad Nance, C/1/503

"You are still with us and will never be forgotten. From your brothers of the Headhunter Platoon, C/1/503, 68-69. Until we meet again ... AIRBORNE! A memorial from a fellow Squad/Team member in Vietnam, who wishes to be anonymous."

Jerry Lee O'Neal, C/2/503

REMEMBERED

Your Birthday is just around the corner again. Our Mom's is this Sunday and wish you could be here with to celebrate. But we know that you will always be in our hearts and keep you in our memory. We all miss you and someday we will all be together. Love you always, your loving sister Joyce.

My Brother, My Friend

*On a hill long forgotten
In a war never won
The Army lost a hero
My parents lost a son
The world lost his laughter
His courage and his grin
I lost my brother
I also lost my friend
A life cut too short
By a loss way too strong
Tho Jerry grows no older
In our hearts he still lives on
Silver stars, awards, and medals
Can't bring my brother back to me
But in my mind's eye I still see him
There Weasel laughs eternally.*

*From his sister,
Joyce Gipson*

Wilbert Owens, D/1/503

Robert Van Pack, C/4/503

Hildefonso M. Ramirez, D/3/319

"To the family of Hildefonso, Paula Assuncion, and Christina Leippe, Edward Haskin, and Esther Haskin. Hildefonso has touched many lives and will not be forgotten."

Glen Everett Rountree, A/3/319

"This picture was given to me by the Mayor of Glencoe, Alabama where Glen is buried. Glen's brother brought the picture to the Mayor who scanned and emailed to me at my request. I served with Glen in the 319th Artillery/173rd Ariborne. I am the Treasurer of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association and recently wrote an article about Glen in our quarterly Sky Soldier Magazine. Our organization has a project underway to find a picture of all the 173rd's KIAs from Vietnam."

-- Roger D. Conley, 173rd Airborne Brigade Association
(rdconley@earthlink.net)



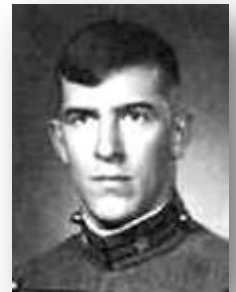
Joseph Bradley Rush, D/16 Armor

Gregory Charles Tucker, B/2/503

~ 1970 ~

Herman Halemanu Ban, E/2/503

Donald Robert Colglazier, E-Troop



*Records indicate service with these units.

(continued....)



Lee Alexander Conners, B/1/503

"Dear Lee, We joined together and fought together but you left me that misty January afternoon. You had everything (or so I thought), I had nothing. I would've traded places with you. I have few pictures, but many memories. I have poured many a beer on your grave, and drank one to your memory. So long, valiant warrior, so long, my friend." JWH



Felix Solis, A/1/503

William Charles Stefko, HHC/4/503

Lawrence O. Washington, B/3/503, E/3/503*

~ 1971 ~

Stephen Eldon Boots, E/1/503

Rick Samuel Brown, E/1/503

Jerry Woodrow Cutting, A/4/503



Gerald William Hill, E/1/503

Martin Jim, Jr., A/3/503

Bennie Frank Jones, C/4/503

Carlton Joseph Mendall, A/3/503

Steven Mike, E-Troop

Earl Nelson, A/3/503

Russel Courtney Nelson, E/1/503

Clinton Curtis Robinson, A/3/503

Richard Leonard Rushlow, A/4/503, C/4/503*

Bruce Charles Shover, A/3/503

Richard Eugene Tabor, E/1/503

David Alexander Trester, A/1/503

Steven Frank Edwards, 173d Eng. Co.



Robert John Gasko, Jr., B/1/503

Jose F. Guerrero, Jr., A/2/503

Richard Wayne Hibbler, HHC/4/503

Patrick Hop Sung Hu, E-Troop

Gerald Arthur Jackson, HHC/4/503

Tedd McClune Lewis, HHC/4/503

Robert Joseph Mullens, Jr., Bde/HHC

William Leroy Phillips, A/1/503

"William L. Phillips was the son of Leroy and Beatrice Phillips, husband of Peggy Sosebee Phillips, father of William Todd Phillips, and a son of Stephens County. Captain Phillips, Commanding Officer of Alpha Company, 1/503rd Infantry, died on 20 January 1970 of wounds received during an mortar barrage in Binh Dinh Province, South Vietnam. He returned home to Stephens County for burial with full military honors. Captain Phillips is remembered and honored by his community and by his comrades in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Leon Williams Post 4346, Toccoa, Stephens County, Georgia. A memorial from the Veterans Of Foreign Wars Post 4346, Toccoa, Georgia."

Jonathan Traxler Wilson, A/1/503



Rest Easy Sky Soldiers, We Remember You

*Records indicate service with these units.



George Dewey Quick, Jr., HHC/1/503, A/1/503*

Richard Carl Schmidt, B/1/503





Part III

See Parts I and II of WWII 503d PIR trooper Jerry B. Riseley's 'official journal' in Issues 46 and 48 respectively, of our newsletter. Ed

2 September 1943



The 503d Prcht Inf fell out on parade with full battle equipment, jump suits, jump boots, helmets, covered with camouflage nets, special ammunition pouches made especially for this outfit. We are inspected by Major General Blamey. Gen. Blamey is tall, lean, lined face, and speaks more like an Englishman than an Australian. He said he was proud to have us with him. He paused and appeared to be reading. The 503d will jump, take an airfield, clear the field and hold it for the airborne landing of the 7th Australian Div. Then the general waxes bitter against the Jap.

I have never seen a man in so high a position so bitter. **"Kill them all,"** he said. Received a warning order that Gen McArthur might possibly inspect tomorrow.

3 September 1943

At 1017 telephone call was received saying that General McArthur was in the regimental area and that all men would put on coveralls. At 1019 General McArthur and party ambled alongside the CO S-3 tent wherein is the famous sand table. And within were the Bn Cmdr, the Ex, S-3 and 4 Co cmdrs. They smell him coming and came out as fast as possible for people pretending to accidentally come out. Lt Richmond, the combination actg S-4, asst S-3, and general duties officer had to edge all the way from the CP tent, about 30 yds, but he made an admirable edge and arrived in time to have his picture taken along with the aforementioned. General McArthur is very publicity minded and always is accompanied by a corps of photographers.

The regimental commander made it possible for each officer to have a bottle of liquor. This caused much singing and heart to heart conversations. Shoe polish was issued but none used. The jungle equipment

was issued late today: 1 water proof clothes bag, 1 water proof match box, with compass, 1 jungle flashlight extra bulb and battery, 1 tube of dermouflage (OD), 1 jungle medical kit and two safety pins, water proof adhesive plaster 1" (5 yds), 1 iodine applicator, 5-1 inch adhes absorb compress (.7 yds), 8 tablets Sulfadiazine, 5 gram sterile sulfanilamide powder, 1 can footpowder, 1 small plastic bottle of halazone tablets, 1 of atabrine, 2 of salt. Ration K, D, are at Bn Hq awaiting distribution.

The Officers of the Bn were taken to the sand table a company at a time. Co Cmdrs gave parts of the field order. The Regtl order has not yet been issued. Point of interests after LaVanchure had seen the table and heard the plan he said, this is the identical plan I heard three weeks ago from Lt. B-G-P*. Lt. C-U-T* 3rd Bn also knew and told a lot about it. Someone trusted junior officers too far. Regtl moved in on B-G-P* and the Regtl Surgeon layed the charge of insanity against him and Lt. D-S-A* who were sent for observation last week only to be returned marked "no disease". The Regtl Surgeon Major Gall, known as the Iron Claw** is known for rather questionable methods.

**Name Omitted*

***He proudly had that title painted on his ambulance at Gordonvale, Qld.*



4 September 1943

Copy of notes taken at Bn Cmdrs meeting of all officers 0900-1100.

Regtl formation and Col. Kinsler announced that Cpl. Co D won the lottery first jump after himself and about six hundred pounds Australian. Capt. Mitchell won lottery, officers, and eighty pounds.

(continued....)



All day long a platoon at a time was on the sand table and each soldier shown just what was expected from him. About 1700 hr the Aust trucks began to roll up and everybody said it must be trucks for the move down in the mule area except that lot of soldiers turned up for chow in their jump suits and later in the evening a jump master meeting in which the whole business was rehashed and the newspapermen introduced all the way around and told we were American Parachutist instead of allied parachutist like we were afraid the papers would write us up.

Jumping with the 503d would be a Section of 2/4th Artillery Battery under command of Lt Pearson, members of the Australian 7th Division A.I.F. They would provide artillery support with two "25 Pounders." The 33 men in the Section had two days hasty Parachute Training prior to the big day, at which time 2 of the originals were injured and ruled out. They were replaced on the day by two that had not jumped at all. After hitting the Landing Zone, they had one of their guns up and firing within 2 hours of the jump, a creditable performance in the long kunai grass. Those gunners of the 7th Australian Division, A.I.F., didn't know then that they were setting the pace for another Australian unit to join with the 503d, some 22 years later on another foreign airstrip when 1st R.A.R., whose lineal history goes back to the 7th Australian Division, A.I.F., were to join with the Sons of the 503d P.I.R. at Bien Hoa, Vietnam.

**MISSION BRIEFING NOTES
BN COMMANDERS MEETING
0900-1100 4 SEPT 1943 A.P.O.704**



**Headquarters, 2nd Bn
503d Parachute Infantry
4 September 1943**

BRIEFING NOTES

Prelim: All officers and men restricted no localities mentioned by name.

Mission: Take and secure by air an airport.

Info: Very little activity a few enemy known to be in area. Patrol by 100-200 Japs daily to town (bn CP). 29 Aug 43 6 Japs seen at town S of Bn CP town. Armed 30 cal LMG's and rifles, large number of enemy troops can be brought in from big town is miles up coast. Est str Nip gar there: 6000 w/ aircraft,

Approaches: Half on road only passable except jeep. 3½ hrs to NE of Bn CP village.

River: one mile wide 20 ft. deep mire of trees, grass 4 to 6 ft. Now is dry season wind SE to noon. Reverses then velocity 6 to 8 miles time of sunrise 0612, sunset 1812, except village uninhabited take natives and sent to regt, shoot hostile ones, one Co of native troop friends to NE of Bn CP, make every effort to take prisoners, dead, require both hands fingers laced behind head shoot at any move, destroy carbons of all messages, captured documents and material to regtl S-2, no looting of dead or souveniring, passwords give slowly and distinctly.

No.	Challenge	Reply
1.	Loger	Label
2.	Lively	Filly
3.	Railway	Trolley
4.	Lazy	Lullaby
5.	Lambs	Wool

(This in effect until new one ordered bu no.)

Bn rept hourly plus thirty to regt, no rept during dark unless chg situation other extensive operations will be taking place at same time, our aerial base is 15 minutes up this river, support by 5th AF, end of info.

Mission: 503rd Prcht Inf jump 2 day H hour capture airdrome and village establish regtl line of res on road to big town. Prepare airstrip at once, 2nd Australian Pioneer Bn 5 miles down-river and will move in when this regt jumps.

Troops engaged: This regt 2/4 Aust FA jump 2/2 Aust Co and attachments Aust Div w/ 600 natives 2/4 ambulance, mission 1st Bn and Demo less rifle platoon jump as shown commence preparation of landing strip till held by 2/2 Eng, one Co protect native workers also unload planes, 1st Bn CP near Regtl CP, 2nd Bn plus demo jump as shown and capture CP village and defend area N and NW. 3rd Bn less platoon, capture village on shore of big river deny infiltration from big town, drop 22 dummies 10 miles down road, one platoon will jump to cover hump of remainder of Bn, specific duties of certain officers, Capt. Caskey mark out drone, Lt. Horner combat S-4, Lt. Buchanan captured transportation, RHQ and Service will jump w/1st Bn, upon landing Aust ambulance aid station to be brought to regt, Aust field artillery will jump w/1st Bn. Prepare to fire mission on call, road to big town and RJ's all around, Bn will call for by No....

(continued....)



....Air support 54 TR CR wing will T this regt and attached 3500. B-25 straff CP town 3 flights A-20 smoke as shown (around edges of jump field) B-17 will bomb T 4 & 5, B-17 will be available for 4 1/2 hrs, Kelly, Rambo, Cates will be liaison officers w/aircraft (will not jump). One sq P-39's available on call, 3 B-17's for resupply 3 to 10 gliders loaded 2 supplies may be used if necessary. C-47's will be loaded at forward serial base. Aerial diversion: 22 dummies 10 or 20 miles big town, camouflage discipline to be strictly maintained, land mines and concertinas on call, report location to regt after planting units will cause false front to be established.

To Co E your no. one plane man Col. Kinsler, 2 lottery winner, 3 radio operator, 4 Col's orderly, No. two plane Lt. Col. Jones w/ bundle, nothing larger than location of platoon will be shown on any map, recommendations for Honors will be made till called for. Will be issued 24 trucks and 24 planes T spotted in front of Bn area, 7th Div will convoy T to Wards Drome each truck to individual plane, issue maps to EM then, not before. Planes take off approx flying time 1 1/2 - 2 1/2 hrs.

Stand up on big river, jump master ask pilot to give red stand up light at big river peel off and approach from SSW, trail beyond woods Go! Entire Bn assemble in woods to SW E Co east F HQ D. Jump field is high Kunai grass, maybe two to four feet, compass 225 degrees to assembly area, not under fire: Roll up chutes bring to assembly area, also resupply bundles initial drop, 2 Co's will have orange, two yellow take off on leaving assembly area. Reason for helmet markers assist in assembly, avoid straffing by own aircraft prep ops: H minus one minute jump areas and surrounding villages will be bombed, straffed and smoked H plus five to H plus twenty bomb shore and CP village 4 B-25's will fly around for one and one half hours to bomb on call CO's: Check personnel and rept on CP that you are moving out, Co E w/1st section LMG's Hq Co move out 1st take south trail to CP village contact 1st Bn at shore, village, move to designated area, Co F w/ 2nd sec LMg move E on coconut road take CP village and move to designated defense area, Hq Com Mortars follow along coconut road, mortars move to area (clearing) 1500 yds down coconut and to right E Bn Demo will accompany mortars (81's). Co D responsible for security of rear and tracks to north of coconut road and then move to D area to NW of CP village in wood, aid station, close to CP, resupply dropped in grass NW of CP village. Ex staff follow Co F, Co F move out fast as possibly Lt. Col. Jones w/Co F Col. Kinsler w/Co E; caution: Possibility of own troops shooting each other, use orange flags for identification of patrols, in defense at night, booby trap

trails, 81 mm's move to area NE of Bn CP for defence movement of forces in the dark a point of doubt.

Priority of fortifications, road blocks at obs and mines, fox holes, auto, weapons, fields of fire, op's camouflage, medical annex, Bn surgeon rept location med. bundle Bn RSP casu's evacuation by covered route w/each litter cases one medic casu repts each 6 hr period until H plus 48 Bn casu repts each hr, no rept, no casu, jump casu evac assembly area, name, rank, and ASN's Co's. Mosquito repellent before derm, 1 atabrine per day, chlorine all water, cemetery will be established, more air support 4 1/2 hrs. of 4 B-25 over Bn area request to regt thereafter four hours time required for aerial aid Bn furn plan for air support, call by radio green blinking B-25, 450 rds 50 cal per gun, 12 fragmentation bombs per 8 straffing mission 3, bombing friendly troops 300 yds no nearer indicate front lines with orange and white panels. Plane 6 will carry Courtney-London Times, plane 7 Mr Driver did which is dept of info (Aust). Mr. Marian Aust B'casting Co none will jump.

Signal annex Co radio calls Hq is H at; D, Hello; E, Henry; F, Hall; platoons add one two or three LMG Hat one and two Mortars Hat. Dist of radios; 511-1 each rifle Co, 2 Bn CP, 536-5 each rifle Co. Details on net. Certain signals three blasts, shot, and call out air, mechanized, or Prcht attack. Mass sections will be ready to move forward on call leave 2 behind. Each Bn prepare bundles, 12 blankets, 12 shelter halves w/ropes and pins. 2nd Bn prepare 39 reserves will be worn, new morning report will be taken w/o unit designation, minus one day.

S-1 periodic daily rept due 0700 and 1700

S-2 " " " " hourly

S-3 " " " " 0700

s-4 " " " " 1700

Journal will be maintained to and include Co misc. Ball and Chain chutes



(continued....)





(Images are courtesy of the Dan MacRaild Collection)

5 September 1943



The 503rd Prcht Inf (and the 501st Prcht Bn and what was left of the test platoon, little Kelly out of Co F, Cpl Collee and Voils all out of Co F and

this Bn) went to war and jumped on Japanese soil Breakfast in the dark. Troops entruck as planned. 22 men or bundles on each truck, one plane load. 43 Truck convoy moves out for Jackson Drome. Weather misty, troops packed in tightly.

Convoy arrives at Jackson Drome. Chutes are put on. There are photographers all over the place. On the

ground are more transports than most people have ever seen at one time. On adjoining strips the fighters are warming up, across the way bombers are taxing from their revetments, creeping along like gigantic cats slinking behind a fence toward the kill.

The Adj. and Sgt. Major were with a plane of Co F, the left assault Co.* The jump master transmits his coolness and confidence to the men, inspects their equipment rigidly producing strong cord for a man who might lose his helmet, tape for another who was sweating some equipment catching on the door, rearranges the attachment of weapons so that they won't get lost or bang their weapons on the chin. He lines them up and designates again the order in which they shall jump, warns them that on this jump they may have to stand up a little longer, but by his manner lets them understand that he knows exactly what he is doing and exactly what he is going to do.

**Lt. Bradbury*

During a jump the Thompson Sub Machine Gun was Normally carried in a cloth case made by our parachute maintenance people. When one went out the door, it was tucked between the legs. After the parachute had opened, one would shift it over so that it was on the left hip. If one forgot to shift it over, and descended gently backwards, one got a strike to the testicles not soon forgotten. The jump master considered the Australians not trained sufficiently well to be familiar with jumping with all side arms. Their side arms/small arms shall go out the door in a pannier.

Troops enplane and wait. The coordination of a hundred odd transports with fighter escort and bomber support, the biggest air armada yet assembled in the South West Pacific Theatre, takes patience. Because of all the estimated timing in the planning a few small errors will multiply one upon the other. Yet the finished product must be perfection and whatever time H hour is, at H minus one minute the jump fields will be bombed and strafed. H hour itself must see eighty nine transports disgorge eighteen hundred men into the air over four jump areas. H hour must see a waiting engineer Bn cross a river with rubber boats and eight hundred natives. And at H plus five minutes the Bn objective must be strafed. H plus one hour must see six transports drop a battery of Australian Artillery and their guns on the ground.

(continued....)



The jumpmaster* issues a map to each man, tells them to memorize the azimuth from the jump field to the assembly area and the azimuth to the mountain. He has each man hold up his compass to ascertain that each has it where he can get to it when he gets on the ground. He cautions them that the grass may be over their heads.

*Lt. Bradbury

Images (below) are courtesy of the Emmett Lee Wester Collection



The planes' motors start and vibrate as they warm up for the take off, then the first of them swing out like a row of prehistoric monsters and start down the strip past where General McArthur is standing with his traditional corps of photographers, and newspapermen-press agents for the great. Now around the horseshoe, they pause and gun motors before starting that long roaring run that ends with the plane in the air. One after another they circle over Port Moresby waiting for the armada to be formed.



Over the Owen Stanley Range, the men are cold and quiet and this attitude is natural enough and yet strangely too, that of an ordinary jump with full equipment. The jumpmaster and the crew chief are comparing notes on crew chiefs, planes and finally, places in Sydney.

The pilot sends back word that we ought to get there about eleven 'o clock. The jumpmaster nods as though the information has no importance to him, as though to say "I'll know about it when the time is right, whether it is ten, eleven, or twelve." There is the question of how long it will take the hundreds of planes in the armada to rendezvous for H hour.



Into formation enroute to Nadzab

The jumpmaster has discarded his indifference toward the terrain and is now looking out the door showing a calm aloof interest. He indicates by signs to his plane-load to buckle helmets, check leg straps and equipment containers.

Passing over big river now

***"Stand up and hook up.
Sound off for
equipment check."***

A bustle and every man is hooked up. The nose of the bundle is sticking out the door. The jumpmaster is standing with the bundle on his left, watching the ground and the plane ahead for the moment when the first parachute shall blossom. The planes are low. Very low. They pitch and buck. It is the low approach we have been told about, theoretically they will gain a higher altitude just before the men jump. Out the door can be seen other planes. "44", a plane of Co "F" is evidently out of line because it is flying right alongside when it should be to the left and the second plane ahead of this plane which is "46" following and even lower, maybe two hundred or two fifty are the planes of Headquarters Company 2nd Battalion.

(continued....)





"Okay, here we go." The jumpmaster and the #2 man (the adjutant)* give the bundle a push. The jumpmaster is right behind it followed by twenty-one

others as fast as they can get out the door. In the air the chute openings can be heard, the rattle of machine guns straffing; the aerial laid screen can be seen on the ground. The jumper gives a hasty glance at the canopy after the shock, grabs his risers to slip toward where the planes are coming from, sees mountains, realizes he hasn't seen the much advertised orientation peak. Scans the ground for a trail he doesn't see. Then the grass comes up rapidly, and the jumper prepares to land and swings into the high grass covering the ground with no more than a training jump bang. Thinks "Not hurt this time" and struggles on the ground to remove his parachute. He rolls and tosses and it seems as though the thing will never come off.

*Jerry Riseley



The drop on Nadzab

After he gets the chute off he remembers the orders to ball and chain the chute and carry it to the assembly area. He listens hopefully but everything is quiet as moonlight on a lake.

The chute now in the kit bag, he realizes that all that can be seen is Kunai grass and he can barely see the top of that. After taking the compass bearing he shoulders the chute and starts to fight his way through the grass. After about 10 feet - this is foolishness. After another ten feet - the basic problem is survival of the fittest. He sits down, panting, wet with sweat. A smart man would leave this goddamn parachute here. He gets up and realizes that he is so exhausted he's looking cross eyed. To hell with that parachute, I'll pay for it on statement

of charges. He beats his way through the grass. It begins to get a little shorter. Over on his right a couple orange helmets are bobbing - then a pair of shoulders. They don't have a parachute on them either. Then he sees a group of five men all going toward what he imagines is the assembly area. Reaching the edge of the woods he finds a couple officers and 10 or 11 men. The woods is light jungle, navigable only with a machete. He sits down, watches a soldier reach up and cut a lawyer vine and lo and behold water. He tries it himself but the vine is apparently out of water. So are the others around. It's all in knowing how. *"To hell with it"*, he thinks. *"To hell with the war and the entire Jap Army"*. He gets out his map and figures where he is. Lt. Fishburn, one of the officers, sends out a two man patrol in each direction to try to find the assembly area. Shots are heard but not very close. This trail (on the map) should be the trail we are on. It shows a native village over here about 400 yds. If you go down the trail and come to the village you'll know exactly where you are. Chances are there are other people around who have soldiered in the same type of terrain who will do

the same thing. (The jungle is very similar to that near the beach and around Rio Chico, Republic of Panama.)

The radio operator is trying with the radio without success. The other officers decide to depend on their patrols so he and four or five other soldiers decide the war isn't getting any younger and start down the rack. Toward the village?

Lt. Sidi Parks, CO Co F, is coming up the track. *"This is just like Panama, Sidi — where's the company?"* *"Don't know."* I show him the map and tell him what I've decided about the village. One thing about Sidi Parks, he's open to suggestions. So we continue on down the track out of the jungle across a bit of Kunai grass and enter a

banana grove. On the other side of the banana grove are three or four native huts....

(continued....)



....We fan out and approach it. This is the village of course. Determining that it is unoccupied, Sidi Parks and Rascob Riley "capture" the village. The entire clearing looks like it had just been swept with a new broom. There are new cut coconuts under the eve of one hut, a chicken on a nest under the eve of another. A trail leads out on the other side of the village toward the coconut road (point D) and after rummaging around for a bit we start down the track. Only to meet one of the other people around who has soldiered in the same type of terrain. Capt. Greco and he has most of the battalion with him. By now it is around 1230.

Capt. Greco brings the battalion into the village, decides to alter the original plan which called for Co F, Bn Hqs, Hq Co, and Co D to approach Gabsonkek via the north trail (Coconut Road). Co E was to take the south trail through Point D (the village). Now Capt. Greco decides to send Co E on that trail and follow it with the remainder of the battalion such as it is. Capt. Falcon leads out with Co E, Co F follows next, a good piece of Co D under Lt. Meade, one mortar squad with gun, most of Lt. Howard's LMG platoon. Co E starts to move out. Colonel Jones arrives at pt D. He is exhausted having been with Col Kinsler.

All the while the battalion is assembling I have been pestering hell out of everybody, asking if they have seen this officer or that officer, and how many men and machine guns and mortars they got. This because I know that as soon as Lt. Col. Jones gets his breath he'll expect me to know just what we have and where it is and what we don't have and where that is.

The battalion passed through the village, what there is left of it. Some platoon leaders have 10 men and some have 50. Lt. Col. Jones sends me to follow the trail. Before we have gone a quarter of a mile there are men sitting exhausted along the side of the trail, drinking milk out of coconuts. These are probably the people who lost their energy carrying their parachutes and wandering aimlessly instead of sitting down and studying their maps.

The track is a well-used one. It is just a winding channel through the jungle. It's a good jungle, there are coconuts and paw paws (papaya) in abundance. The men are beginning to throw away some ammunition and at least one mortar plate. A frugal machine gun squad of Co F found and carried to the objective 5000 rounds of ammunition. One mortar Sergeant threw away his mortar sight and base plate. When we met the rest of his squad they were disappointed in him. What they said will never find its

way into a courts martial, but the corporal commanded that squad from there on.

A few more skeletal squads and platoons are coming up from the rear. W/O Joe Bitala arrives with most of the communication section, tell me most of the heavier radios and the bundles containing the wire and phones are lost. Asked Lt. Jacomini how many 81's (mortars) he now had. (I knew it probably wasn't many because I'd only seen one). *"Hell, I don't know, I haven't been worth a damn since the jump."*

Moved out of the jungle and into a clearing—the trail across the clearing is a tribute to the air force. Every ten yards or so there is a new bomb crater.

Arrived at Gabsonkek. It is a native village, parts of it have not been lived in for some time. The natives had evidently moved to CD (Charlie Dog). John Cole set his CP in an abandoned 1936 GMC truck. The Japs evidently tried to drive it to Gabsonkek in the rainy season, bogged it down and left it. Lt. Jones is consulting his maps. The Bn CP is set up in a hut. This isn't the tactical thing to do, but when it rains it's mighty convenient.



2nd bn dropped NE of CD at approx. 1030 hr. assemble sched woods at JD was very slow. Parachute salvage impossible. Aerial support, bombing and strafing by friendly AC. Assembly of complete Bn was finally effected in the vicinity of (Pt) D, Bn then pro-eastward, order Co E, F, 2nd and 3rd Plat Co D, one 81 mortar, staff, LMG plat, to G to H to J, to AL last element apr 1700 hr. CO Co D to CO 2nd Bn "CO 1st plat and Co HQ at point "P" 1336.

Capt. Bates and one platoon and Co D Hq were the only units to proceed down coconut road. 1st Sgt. Hostisky and about 10 men (Co F) also found the right road. CO Co D 2nd 1300 hr "2nd and 3rd plat moving to pt F" from CO Co D. The platoon leaders of 2nd and 3rd platoons may have thought they were going toward pt F but a few minutes later they arrived at pt D.

Lt Bossard w/10 men jd Bn at AL approx 1400 hr. (Out of Co B). Garbled to CO Co E MG sect now moving up to yr CP, signed CO 2nd Bn-Mr Bitala. This garbled message, and those to come later were the results of radio troubles at times.

(continued....)





(Web photo)

Again they had been perfectly received, but the radio operator, excitedly had forgotten all he had learned about message writing, had omitted the date, time, and to whom it was addressed and the senders name. They also scribbled in an illegible hand instead of printing. Co E to proceed from AL to AM to AX Co F AL-BX-AK-CD. No resistance by 1800 hr all units in position. RADIO: No communication with 3rd Bn, 1st Bn or Regt. Lt. Cole reported that one man's chute did not open. Cpl. Westberry wounded two shots in leg while on trail 500 yards south Gabsonkek. Capt. Lamar (Bn Surg) was astonished at the size of the wounds.

The Bn Hqs and Hq Co has just began to dig in at Gabsonkek when this happened. Pvt. A-B-C* comes shouting about three hundred Japs just down the trail. I questioned him and he told me that two of them had seen him coming up to the CP with smg, had chased him and tried to intercept him. A-B-C* was highly. Doesn't seem to remember any details about what the Japs looked like or on what he based his estimate of strength. Col. Jones and Capt. Padgett got their heads together over the map. Capt. Greco quietly put on his equipment and went out to take a look.



* Name omitted

Night of 5-6 September, 1943



During the night the Bn went wild w/trigger happiness and shot their weapons and threw grenades.

Gabsonkek is on the edge of a coconut grove and every time a coconut would fall, someone would imagine it to be a personal attack on his foxhole and let go with a tommy gun, machine gun or anything he had. This was true throughout the Bn, except for the positions of Co E (Capt. Falcon) exhibited a high state of discipline by not firing a shot. Co F Co D engaged in a grenade fight (according to Capt Greco). Lt. McRoberts Co F was very nearly bayoneted in the throat by one of his own men when he got out of his fox hole to crawl down to one of his machine guns. The man told me he was just getting ready to jab when Lt. McRoberts spoke.

(Courtesy of Paul Whitman, 503rd Heritage Bn Website)

**Jerry Riseley's Journal Will Be
Continued in the February Issue
of Our Newsletter**



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / January 2013 – Issue 49
Page 30 of 62

Les, Off to see the Wizard?

Thanks for adding that picture of President Johnson and General Westmoreland to my story (Issue 48, Page 45). It confirms my memories of that day. I guess we were at Cam Ranh airstrip. I was so mixed up I didn't know where I was. I don't even know where I got all of my gear, whether it was Camp Zinn or An Khe or where A Company was when I got back. I think I might have gotten kidnapped on my way back north from Bien Hoa. All I know is, I just kept telling people that I needed to get to A/2/503 whenever I got off a plane or chopper. Then someone would send me in the right direction and I would get on a chopper and I eventually made it back. You got to love the Army for believing we could find our way whether it was in the jungle or not. Airborne all the way!

Les Fuller
A/2/503d

Reply: Damn. You were just like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz! *Just get my ass home, please!* Thanks bro, a great report, Les. Airborne! Ed



Les, like his friends, just trying to get home.

***“To care for him who shall have
borne the battle and for his
widow and orphan,”***

President Abraham Lincoln
March 4, 1865

**President Lincoln affirmed the
government's obligation to care for those
injured during the war and to provide for
the families of those who perished on the
battlefield...**

Army 2LTs and 1st SGTs

A group of 1st SGTs and a group of 2LTs from the army airborne take a train to a paratrooper conference at Ft. Benning. Each 2LT had purchased a train ticket, but the entire group of 1st SGT's had bought only one ticket for a single passenger. The 2LTs just shake their heads and are secretly pleased that the arrogant 1st SGT's will finally get what they deserve.

Suddenly, one of the 1st SGT's calls out, *"The conductor is coming!"* At once, all the 1st SGT's jump up and squeeze into one of the toilets. The conductor checks the tickets of the 2LTs when he notices the toilet is occupied. He knocks on the door and says, *"Ticket, please!"* One of the 1st SGT's slides the single ticket under the door and the conductor continues merrily on his rounds.

On the return trip the 2LTs decide to use the same trick. They buy only one ticket for the entire group but they are baffled as they notice the 1st SGT's didn't buy any tickets at all. After a while one of the 1st SGT's announces again, *"The conductor is coming!"* Immediately all the 2LTs race to a toilet and lock themselves in. All the 1st SGT's leisurely walk to the other toilet. Before the last 1st SGT enters the toilet, he knocks on the toilet occupied by the 2LTs and says, *"Ticket, please!"*

Moral of the story – 2LTs like to use the methods of the 1st SGT's, but they don't really understand them.

[Sent in by Hubie Imhof, N75, and slightly modified here]





Donald D. Lassen Atlanta All Airborne Chapter

82nd Airborne Division Association, Inc.



36th Annual AIRBORNE AWARDS FESTIVAL Atlanta, Georgia April 3-6, 2013

Registrations are now being accepted for this year's Airborne Awards Festival.

The Atlanta Airport Marriott Hotel has been a tremendous supporter of the Airborne Awards Festival for many years. They have arranged for discounted rooms for the weekend, but you need to download a separate form at <http://82nd-atl.com/Docs/AwardsReg-2013.pdf> and make your reservations directly with the Hotel. Room reservations cannot be accepted using the Airborne Awards Festival Registration Form. So please download the form referenced above and follow the instructions included.

Atlanta Airport Marriott Hotel

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS 2013 AIRBORNE AWARDS SCHEDULE:

Wednesday 03 April:

12 Noon - Registration Opens (all day)
12 Noon - Hospitality Room Opens (all day)

Thursday 04 April:

9 AM - Registration (all day, except during events)
11 AM - Cocktail Hour
12 PM - Memorial Luncheon
3 PM - 82nd Airborne Update Briefing
Hospitality Room Opens following Briefing ** Rest of Day & Evening Open for Unit Gatherings **
10 PM - QUICK DRAW
Drawing held in the Hospitality Room
You do not have to be present to win.

Friday 05 April:

7 AM - 8 AM - Early Registration
8 AM - Board Buses for Ft. Benning
10 AM - Hospitality Room (all day)
6 PM - Return from Ft. Benning
6 PM - Registration Opens

Saturday 06 April:

10 AM - 101st Airborne (AA) Update Briefing
Hospitality Room Opens following
10 AM - Ladies Brunch
12 PM - Registration
6 PM - Cocktail Hour & Mixer
7 PM - AWARDS BANQUET
10 PM - AIRBORNE HOP
10 PM - QUICK DRAW
Drawing held in the Hospitality Room
You do not have to be present to win.

The legends, the heroes, the organizers and the planners of the Airborne World turn out for this festival, from WWII to present day and the leaders of most National Airborne organizations.

The entire festival is staged for the benefit of every person who has ever served in the Airborne. This is a real opportunity for you to feel proud of yourself and your Airborne Comrades, and to join with them openly in Airborne camaraderie. And if you still have a uniform around that you can get into, it will be entirely fitting to wear it to this get-together.

The famed 82nd Airborne Division Chorus is scheduled to perform for us at our banquets on Thursday and Saturday and at the Ladies Brunch Saturday morning.

We are looking forward to the 2013 program being the best ever, featuring internationally famed leaders and heroes, and will be attended by men and women from every Airborne Organization, drawn from every State and every Airborne unit to make this 36th Annual Airborne Awards Festival into Airborne's greatest spectacle of the year.

** Men should wear coat and tie for banquets, ladies appropriate dress. **

** Active Duty - Class A's or better. **

For complete details contact:

Tommy Tillman

Phn: 404-255-1674

Web: www.82nd-atl.com

AIRBORNE - ALL THE WAY!



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



~ 2013 ~



3rd Annual Airborne Reunion, Kentucky Airborne Chapter, 82nd Abn Div., February 10, 2013, Lexington, KY.

Contact:

Joe Steen

Phn: 502-937-8234

Eml: kyairbornechapter@yahoo.com



50th Anniversary Celebration of the 173d Airborne Activation, March 21-24, 2013, National Infantry Museum Campus, Columbus / Fort Benning, Georgia. See Page 35 for additional information.

Contact:

Web: www.173dairbornememorial.org



4/503d 2nd Year '67/'68 Reunion Dinner, March 22, 2013, Ft. Benning, GA. For details and to register....

Contact:

Peyton Ligon

B/4/503d, '67- '68

Phn: 205-746-5586

Eml: pligon3392@aol.com



The Edmonton Airborne Social Club next Airborne Regiment Re-Union at the Edmonton Aviation Museum June 7-9, 2013. The Theme Chosen by the Re-Union Committee is "REMEMBER THE FALLEN".

Contact:

Bill Tremain

Committee Chairperson

Eml: tremain.bill@gmail.com



335th Assault Helicopter Company, 11th Reunion, June 20-23, 2013, at the Golden Nugget Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV.

Contact:

Andy Hooker

Special Projects Coordinator

Cell (941) 320-2463

Eml: Andyhooker1@aol.com



Special Forces Association National Convention 2013, June 26-30, 2013, Hyatt Regency Hotel, hosted by Chapter XV.

Contact:

Fred Solis, 201-491-2783

Pat Connolly, 210-826-8023



B-2/501st, 101st Airborne Div., Reunion 2013, July 10-14, 2013, Ramada Plaza Suites, Fargo, ND.

Contact:

Chuck & Sue German

Phn: 701-783-4386

Eml: chucks@drtel.net



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, August 23-29, 2013, Las Vegas, NV. See Page 34 for details.

Contact:

Jim Bradley

Phn: 727-376-2576 (after 4:30 p.m. EST)

Eml: webmaster@173rdairborne.com

Web: www.2013Reunion.com



101st Airborne Division Vietnam Veterans 19th Annual Reunion, September 5-8, 2013. Reunion HQ Best Western Ramokta Hotel, Rapid City, SD.

Contact:

Rodney Green

Reunion Coordinator

Eml: randhgreen@sio.midco.net



11th Airborne Division Association Reunion, September 22-26, 2013, Fayetteville, NC.

Contact:

Bert Kurland

President

Eml: berwan@embarqmail.com

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



No Deros Alpha at 2012 173d Reunion in Lexington, KY





OPERATION SIN CITY



26 - 29 August 2013

The 173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion

Hosted by:

Chicago and Florida Chapters

~ REGISTRATION FORM ~

Please print & copy form for additional names.

(Indicate shirt size for each individual. S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL)

Name: _____

Shirt Size: ____ Phn: _____ Eml: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Country: _____

Unit served with in the Brigade: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

Guest Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Shirt Size: _____

~ Registration Fees ~

____ \$150. Per Member or Guest before 25 July 2013,

\$165. Per Member or Guest after 25 July 2013.

____ \$150. Gold Star Family Member

____ \$100. Per Vendor Table (173d Vendors only)*

____ \$75. Per Active Duty Soldier (Not on Orders)

Free Active Duty Soldier (On Orders, i.e. Command, Color Guard)

Free Gold Star Luncheon (173d Gold Star Family Members)

____ \$25. Sky Soldier Adoption Program* "Have your meals on me".

____ Total of check enclosed in USD.

**Sky Soldier Adoption Program: We have active duty Sky Soldiers fly in from Italy who must pay airfare, hotel, meals and reunion fees costing them thousands of dollars. We try and offset their cost by giving them a break on the registration cost. You can help out by purchasing a meal voucher so our active duty Sky Soldiers traveling in from Europe will have reduced cost. Please contribute to our Sky Soldier Adoption Program and let him/her have their meals donated and sponsored by you!*

Please Make Checks Payable to:

173d ABA 2013 Reunion

and mail to:

2013 Reunion

5640 Wellfield Road

New Port Richey, FL 34655

Host Hotel

The Orleans

4500 W. Tropicana Ave.

Las Vegas, Nevada 89103

Phone: 702-365-7111 Toll Free: 800-675-3267

ID Code A3SSC08

Room Rate: \$29. per night + Tax and fees.

Rate good for 25 to 29 August 2013. Or register on-line at www.orleanscasino.com/groups

Refunds if notified by 25 July 2013, no refunds after 25 July 2013.

Only authorized 173d vendors may hold a raffle, one per table in the vendors' area only.

173d Gold Star Family Members of our KIA's: Spouse, Parent, Sibling, Children)

Reunion Contact:

Jim Bradley

727-376-2576 after 4:30 pm EST (Please)

www.2013Reunion.com



50th Anniversary Celebration of the 173d Airborne Brigade Activation

21 – 24 March 2013

**National Infantry Museum Campus
Columbus / Fort Benning, Georgia**

21 March Golf Tournament

**Bull Creek Golf Course, Midland, GA -- 0830
Tee Off -- Sponsored by the 173d Airborne
Brigade Association's Columbus/Fort Benning
Chapter.**

**Participate in Mini "Unit" Reunions with
Brothers in Arms.**

22 March Tours and Visits

**Tour the "New" Fort Benning. Return to the
Jump Towers. Experience the "Last 100 Yards"
and other exciting displays, activities and
exhibits in the National Infantry Museum.
Visit the Walk of Honor Adjacent to the Parade
Field on the National Infantry Museum Campus
and view numerous unit Memorials. The Walk
of Honor is anchored by the 173d Airborne
Brigade National Memorial.**

23 March Ceremonies

**Participate in the Memorial Cleaning (0930-
1100). View the Silver Wings Jump and
Participate in the "Reading of the Names"
Tribute to our Fallen Vietnam Warriors starting
at 1330 in the Parade Field Grandstands.
Return to the Memorial at 1930 for a Candle-
Light Service and Honors. The Names of
warriors who fell in Iraq and Afghanistan will be
read.**

24 March Ceremonies

Prayer service at 0900 at the Memorial.

Information on How to Participate

**For information regarding how to sign up for the
Golf Tournament and to Participate in the
Reading of the Names of Vietnam Fallen (30-40
more readers are needed), and for information
updates for tours and events, visit the 173d
Airborne Brigade National Memorial
Foundation website at**

www.173dairbornememorial.org



From Our Navy Buddy, Windy



Don't know if you know but the VVA National Convention in 2007 which was held in Springfield, Illinois had a truck with all the KIA from the 173d, which I believe was called "The Third Herd." See pictures.

Big and Rich opened the convention singing "The 8th of November" song. The guy it was about received something from our President.

Here is a link to the song and video. This is the best video of the ones on YouTube.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfElHIt7n0s&playnext=1&list=PL799A1B71239AAE45&feature=results_main

Alexander 'Windy' Winkowski
United States Navy



8th of November

Said goodbye to his momma as he left South Dakota
To fight for the red, white and blue
He was 19 and green with a new M-16
Just doing what he had to do
He was dropped in the jungle where the choppers would
rumble
With the smell of napalm in the air
And the sergeant said...look up ahead
Like a dark evil cloud, 1,200 came down on him and 29
more
They fought for their lives but most of them died in the
173rd Airborne

[Chorus:]

On the 8th of November the angels were crying
As they carried his brothers away
With the fire raining down and the hell all around
There were few men left standing that day
Saw the eagle fly through a clear blue sky
1965, the 8th of November
Now he's 58 and his pony tail's gray
But the battle still plays in his head
He limps when he walks but he's strong when he talks
About the Shrapnel they left in his leg
He puts on a gray suit over his Airborne tattoo
And he ties it on one time a year
And remembers the fallen as he orders a tall one
And swallows it down with his tears

[Chorus]

Saw the eagle fly through a clear blue sky
1965...
On the 8th of November the angels were crying
As they carried his brothers away
With the fire raining down and the hell all around
There were few men left standing that day

[Chorus]

Said goodbye to his momma as he left South Dakota
To fight for the red, white and blue
He was nineteen and green with a new M-16
Just doing what he had to do



The Herd Foundation Goes to Walter Reed

By Roger D. Conley
3/319th



On December 15, 2012 I delivered 10 Wounded Warrior Back Packs to John Smith, Jr. in Bethesda, Maryland. John is a member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association's Chapter 1 and oversees the Foundation's Wounded Warrior support efforts at Walter Reed.

The Herd Foundation recently purchased 24 back packs with funds generated from our Challenge Coin fund raiser and filled each pack with various 173rd Airborne items worth about \$200. The Herd Foundation has also shipped 10 Wounded Warrior Back Packs to the US Army's medical facility located in Landstuhl, Germany.

My visit to Walter Reed with John Smith, Jr. also included a meeting with 2 of the 173rd ABCT's wounded paratroopers; 1LT Samuel Van Kopp, 1/91st Cav and Specialist Eric Eriquez, 173rd BSB. Both of these young heroes seem to be well on their way to recovery and it's encouraging to see the progress they've made given the severity of their injuries.



L-R: 1LT Samuel Van Kopp and Specialist Eric Eriquez appear with John .

The new Walter Reed medical facility is under the jurisdiction of the US Navy and words can't begin to describe the richness of the facility and our appreciation of the devotion of Walter Reed's medical staff to the healing process undertaken for each of our wounded warriors.

The Herd Foundation is very fortunate to have John Smith, Jr. devote so much of his time to 173rd ABCT's wounded paratroopers. John lives close by in Silver Springs, Maryland where he's lived for over 32 years. John like so many Sky Soldiers was wounded in Vietnam while serving with A/2/503rd.



The Herd Foundation Treasurer Roger D. Conley (L) and the two young heroes share the limelight in this photograph.



SGM GEORGE GATEWOOD

SGM George Gatewood served in WWII in the 503rd, served in the Korean "conflict" with the 187th, and he was stationed in Okinawa, Japan with the 1st Special Forces Group. He also helped the French Foreign Legion in the early 1950's when they were involved in a war against the Viet Minh. When the 173d Airborne Brigade was going to be deployed to the Republic of South Viet Nam for 90 Days of Temporary Duty, SGM Gatewood was an Intelligence SGM and he volunteered to join the 173d in Okinawa and deploy to RVN as the Brigade G-2 SGM.

His wife was from Iran and he met her many years ago when he was stationed there and she was in Okinawa when the 173d deployed and when the PCS was assigned to the 173d. SGM Gatewood had to go back to Okinawa to get his family to move back to the USA.

SGM George Gatewood was a President of Chapter 14, the Southern California chapter of the Society of the 173d for a few years, and he was also involved with the SF Chapters in So. California.

SGM Gatewood received a Ph.D., and he taught the ROTC at Lincoln High School, in L.A., and he helped us host the 1996 reunion of the 173d in Anaheim, CA.

SGM Gatewood passed away on Wednesday, December 5, 2012, and his funeral services were held on Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2012, at the Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, CA. His late wife has her resting place there already.

Please let other former members of the 173d and SF know about the passing of SGM Gatewood. Thank you.

Raymond Ramirez
Recon/4/503d

Note From A Trooper

I much appreciate receiving the newsletter. I am going on 73 and still weep at times reading some of these excerpts and seeing the pics. My mind journeys back. I used to try and shut it from my mind, but it helps to talk to 173d vets and read the newsletter.

A Sky Soldier Buddy

Reply: Ya know, if we didn't cry about it sometimes that just wouldn't be right. Came to the conclusion a long time ago, our mistress, *Miss Vietnam*, will be our traveling companion for the duration. Be well my brother, and Happy Holidays to you and yours, and ATW!! Ed

SERGEANT KYLE B. OSBORN

Sgt. Kyle B. Osborn, age 26, formerly of Stockwell, died September 13, 2012, as the result of injuries in Muqer, Afghanistan, while serving with the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment. Kyle was born August 5, 1986, in Lafayette, the son of Creigh D. Osborn and Miriam H. Shively Osborn. He was a 2005 graduate of McCutcheon High School where he was a member of the football and wrestling teams, and, as a senior, was team captain and a state qualifier in wrestling. Following high school, Kyle attended Minnesota State University in Mankato, Minn.



Kyle served in the United States Army for the past 5 years. His most recent assignment was with the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment of the 173d HHC as a Senior Sniper Team Leader. Kyle was united in marriage on October 16, 2010, in Delano, Minn., to Maggie Klason.

Kyle is survived by his wife Maggie; his mother, Miriam, of Blackduck, Minn., his father, Creigh and his wife, Christa, of Stockwell, and their children, Katlyn and Kade; and his maternal grandmother, Esther Shively, of Lafayette. Kyle is also survived by many aunts, uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his maternal grandfather, Clarence Shively and his paternal grandparents, Bruce and Betty Osborn.

Private family services were conducted with burial next to his grandfather at the Yorktown Cemetery in Stockwell, with full military honors. A public memorial service was held at McCutcheon High School.

In lieu of flowers, to honor Sgt, Kyle Osborn's wishes, his wife Maggie has established the Kyle Osborn Donation Trust at Wells Fargo Bank. The trust will go towards support of the Wounded Warriors Program, and a scholarship fund that will be established to assist Army wives who wish to further their education. Contributions may be made to any Wells Fargo Bank. Please help us honor Kyle by considering a contribution to the Trust.



SOUTH CAROLINA WAR DOG MONUMENT

I'm sending you a few pics related to the SC War Dog Monument I'm taking the point on to build.

The park architect, Allen Marshall, and a commission member approached me March 2011 asking if I would head up the project...and here we are. All quotes and plans finalized late last year...the artist, Renee Bemis, started sculpting the miniature handler and German Shepherd in February and the bronze casting of that arrived 3 weeks ago. The miniature statue is 14" helmet to granite and the final version will be 10% larger than life...and will rest on the granite base as seen in the flyers. The backdrop for the war dog monument will be the SC Vietnam Memorial, also designed by Allen Marshall.

The price for phase 1 is \$140,000.00 (granite, handler, GS) Phase 2 will be the addition of three additional breeds of military working dog breeds also 10% larger than life: Doberman, Lab, Belgian Malinois. This will represent the four primary breed of War Dogs service to America since WWII...Honoring the MWD Past, Present, and Future. And I've chosen the human face of the Vietnam War Dog Team representing the dog teams who sacrificed more.

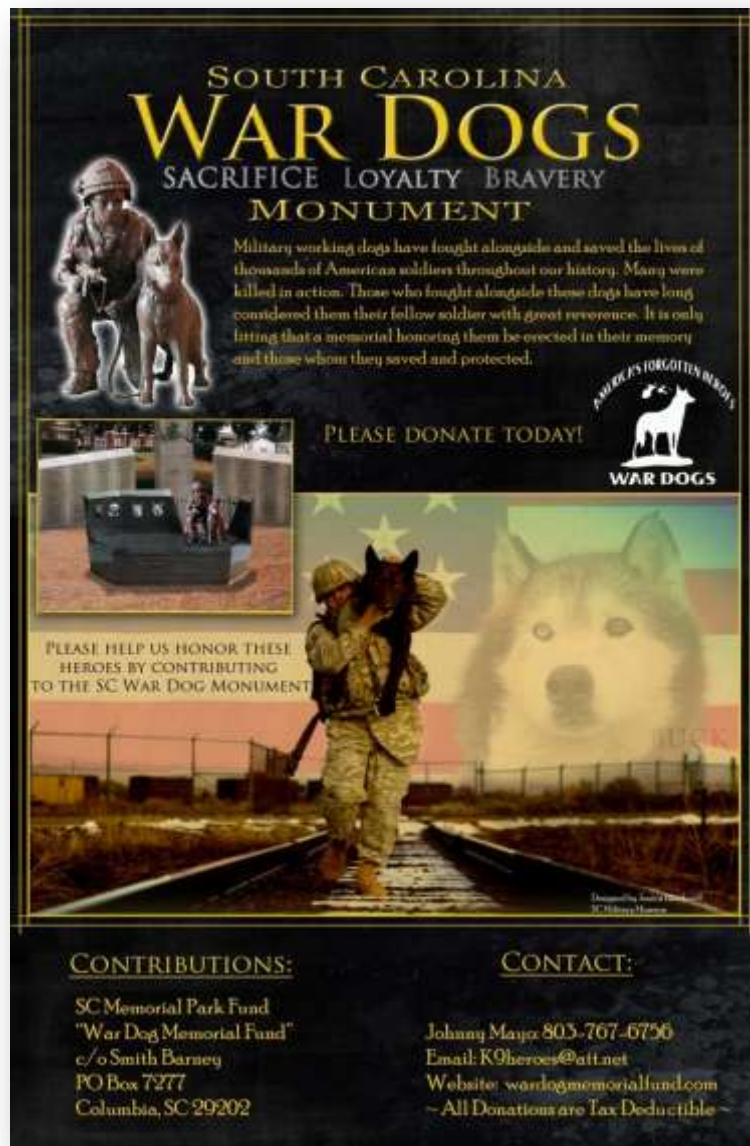
Far more handlers and K9s were KIA in Vietnam than any other war including WWII.

The monument's proposed dedication date in Nov. 2014 in Veterans Memorial Park in Columbia, SC.

Johnny Mayo
39th IPSD

Website: wardogmemorialsfund.com
My Email: k9heroes@att.net

~ Donations needed and welcome ~



Task Force Rock Soldier and civilian remembered

Kevin O'Rourke grew up the son of a New York City policeman and detective, and followed in his father's footsteps, serving with the NYPD's elite Emergency Services Unit, said Capt. Chris Gasperini, 2/503d rear detachment commander. He was on duty Sept. 11, 2001 and worked tirelessly at the site of the World Trade Center to rescue survivors, an experience that motivated him for the rest of his life. *"His desire to serve only deepened,"* said Gasperini.

After retiring in 2003, O'Rourke was a member of the H.E.A.R.T. 911 team that deployed to provide disaster response in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. He also led search and rescue teams in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, after the massive 2010 earthquake there. *"His knowledge and expertise in search and rescue were critical as they navigated very dangerous terrain in the midst of the devastated population,"* Gasperini said.

When a call went out from NATO in 2011 for law enforcement veterans to serve as investigators and trainers in Iraq, O'Rourke answered the call. In a similar role, he deployed with Task Force Rock in July as 2nd Battalion's law enforcement professional for a tour in Wardak Province.

"Kevin knew that he had a particular skill set and he truly believed it was his duty to help," Gasperini said. *"Kevin befriended so many people in the short time he was here. . . . He loved training and working side by side with Soldiers. He believed in the mission."*

O'Rourke insisted on getting outside the wire as often as possible and was on patrol with Destined Company when they came under attack, side by side with Sgt. 1st Class Metcalfe. *"It is our utmost honor to forever call him a part of the Rock,"* said Gasperini.



Photo Credit: Barbara Romano, USAG Vicenza Photo Lab
Sgt. Zachary Johanns, 2nd Regiment, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, shares anecdotes of serving with Sgt. 1st Class Daniel T. Metcalfe at a Vicenza Military Community memorial ceremony for Metcalfe and civilian law enforcement adjunct Kevin O'Rourke Nov. 1, 2012, at the Caserma Ederle post chapel.

LOOKING FOR BUDDIES

Greetings: SPC William (Billy - Bill) Thomas Hagerty. Specialist Four, HHC, 2nd BN.

WILLIAM T HAGERTY is on the Wall at Panel 30E, Line 43. He is my wife Karin's Godfather. She was born two months before he was killed on Hill 875 at Dak To on 20 November 1967.

Edward F. Murphy mentions Billy in his superb book entitled *Doc To* on page 241. It states that *"About this time Quinn was hit. Harmon inched forward and pulled him back out of the line of fire. One of Charles' medics, SP4 William T. Hagerty snaked forward to treat Quinn. . ."* and he was killed in the process. The same incident involving Billy was mentioned on page 285 of the superb book by John C. McMannus entitled *Grunts*. It states that Billy was ordered by SGT Welch to help a wounded man and he crawled a few feet forward but was killed before he could get to the soldier. From my readings he may have known:

Lynn Morse (Charlie Company Senior Medic)
LT Peter J. Lantz (Platoon Leader above Welch - KIA)
SGT Steven Welch
SP4 Raymond Zaccone
SP4 Steer
MAJ Steverson (BN Commander)
PFC Quinn
PFC Neal Best
SGT Frederick Shipman
PFC Harmon
CPT Harold J Kaufman (Charlie Company Co. CO)
LT O'Leary
LT Sheridan's (3rd Platoon Leader)
Doc Charles Miller

As a medic, HHC assigned him to Charlie Company. Not sure which platoon.

The bottom-line -- Billy's sister Jean and daughter Karin would like to know as much about what happened as possible. I am trying to figure out who he worked with and so forth and find people who knew him. Any help that you may be in position to provide would be most appreciated. Do you have the battle roster for that unit from which I may be able to make contacts? Thanks much!

Sean

COL Sean Cassidy, Brigade Commander
55TH Sustainment Brigade
(703) 692-3981 (Pentagon) BB: (703) 724-1787
sean.l.cassidy@usar.army.mil
sean.cassidy@osd.smil.mil

Note: We here at your newsletter put Sean in touch with Steve Welch, Ray Zaccone, John Steer and Fred Shipman, plus sent him the November issue on Dak To.



COME JOIN THE

WORLD WAR II AIRBORNE DEMONSTRATION TEAM

173rd Airborne Brigade

50th Anniversary Commemorative JUMP

The WWII Airborne Demonstration Team and the 173rd Airborne Brigade are working together to plan a 173rd 50th Anniversary Commemorative JUMP at the WWIIADT headquarters in Frederick, Oklahoma, August 2013, just prior to the 173rd's 50th anniversary reunion in Las Vegas. Those prior airborne qualified jumpers wishing to jump from our C-47 must re-qualify by attending a 4 day refresher jump school at Frederick. The cost will be \$450, which covers room, training, aircraft time and two jumps. To learn more about the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team please visit www.wwiadt.org, and download an Application Form for this exciting opportunity.



For more information please contact recruiters www.wwiadt.org
Dan Cutting at 248-755-5766 or SGM Herrington at 931-801-3251.

The WWII Airborne Demonstration Team Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization



Football Battle Cry in Viet Nam



“Capts. Buckner, Blanda and 1st LT. Dick Eckert (left to right), former West Point footballers, relax at Bien Hoa Air Base.”

By George Esper, AF Staff Writer

“WHEN the going gets tough the tough get doing.”

Quarterback Dick Eckert picked up the football battle cry at West Point during his playing days. Former Coach Dale Hall had it posted all over the locker room.

First Lt. Dick Eckert of Carlisle, Pa., who graduated from the Military Academy in 1963, never has forgotten the motto in the tough war against the Viet Cong. Eckert, who received the Purple Heart after being slightly wounded by a hand grenade, recalled the motto in an interview.

He and three other former West Point football players are assigned to the 173rd Abn Brig.

The others are Capt. Tom Blanda of Youngwood, Pa., class of 1961, and brother of veteran professional star George Blanda; Capt. Dick Buckner, of New York, class of 1961; and 2nd Lt. Jim Koster of Lake Benton, Minn., class of 1964.

All have the same fighting spirit here as they did on the football field. And the grim war has not dampened their sense of humor.

Blanda, 25, also a former quarterback, joked through an interview.

Asked how he met his wife, he replied, “She happened to be in the right place at the right time.”

Eckert, Blanda, Buckner and Koster have been at Bien Hoa Air Base about 12 miles north of Saigon, since May 12 when the 173rd was deployed from Okinawa. All except Eckert, who is a bachelor had to leave their wives in Okinawa. Koster’s wife is expecting a child next month.

(continued....)



Blanda said that in 1963, just before he left for Okinawa, the St. Louis Cardinals of the National Football League made him an offer.

He turned it down, he said, because, "I enjoyed being with the 173rd and what I was doing."

Eckert is in command of a weapons platoon in the 2nd Bn, 503rd Inf. Blanda and Buckner are battery artillery commanders and Koster is a fire direction officer.

At least two other former West Point athletes, 1st Lt. Ronald L. Zinn and 1st Lt. Bob Fuellart have been killed in action in Viet Nam.

Zinn, also a member of the 173rd, was killed July 7 in a battle with the Viet Cong in Zone D. Fuellhart, a football teammate of both Eckert and Blanda, was killed several weeks ago while directing a helicopter attack near the village of Phung Heip.

Fuellhart played the "lonely" end position in the football offense directed by Blanda and Eckert. Zinn finished sixth in the 20 kilometer walk in the 1964 Olympic Games, the best an American ever has done in a walking event.

Eckert, 24, who volunteered for duty in Viet Nam last January before it was known the 173rd would be moved there, recalled the big battle when Americans, Vietnamese and Australian troops ran into a well-fortified Viet Cong village.

"We had four killed and 11 wounded," said Eckert. "We estimated that we killed around 20 Viet Cong. We pushed the Viet Cong unit out of the village."

"The village had a lot of tunnels and trenches and blood trails leading out of all of them. The Viet Cong dragged out their wounded and dead."

"I shot one sniper in a tree. He fell out of the tree but we never found him later. Twice the Viet Cong came out of the trenches and assaulted us. We threw grenades. We saw people drop. Again they pulled them back into the trenches."

"Zinn was the platoon leader of the lead rifle platoon."

"We were right behind them. When all the firing opened up, we couldn't figure what it was. So we went forward and came to within 10 feet of Zinn. He was already dead."

"He was hit with the initial fire. The Viet Cong kept hitting him with machine gun bullets. Snipers were up in the trees. While we were organizing, there was sniper fire and sporadic machine gun fire from the enemy."

"The company commander moved the left platoon around to try to get around to the rear of the village. They ran into a machine gun. They put heavy fire on it and knocked this machine gun out. Armed helicopters put on heavy fire. Then we attacked and swept through the village."

Eckert and Zinn were personal friends.

"IT (Zinn's death) is one of those things you expect to happen but you never expect it to be the person next to

you. I really didn't think or comprehend it until it was all over and I had a chance to relax."

"After it was all over I started to think about his family. He had just gotten married."

Eckert received his Purple Heart for being wounded in the upper part of his leg during an earlier operation, also in Zone D. He was interrogating one of the villagers, when another man came up behind him and flipped a hand grenade.

Eckert, who succeeded Blanda as first string quarterback in 1961, said that actually there is a lot in common in playing sports and being in battle

"There's the same tension," he explained, "the same feeling. All the training is like practicing in sports. You've got to train. You develop the same type of team work that you do in battle. When the going get's tough, the tough get going."

Source: *The Stars and Stripes*

Dr. Dick Eckert, Colonel (Ret) 1941 - 2010

Upon graduating West Point, he began his 22 years as an officer in the Army and serving his country proudly. He was an Airborne Ranger with two tours in Vietnam in 1965-1966 and 1968-1969, serving with the 173d Airborne Brigade, his first tour, and the 25th Infantry Division during his second. He received two purple hearts, 3 bronze stars, and 2 silver stars. Dick switched gears in 1972 and became a physician, graduating in 1976 from Emory University School of Medicine. He would retire from the army in 1985 at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia with the rank of Colonel. Upon his retirement from the military he specialized in pediatrics and emergency medicine.

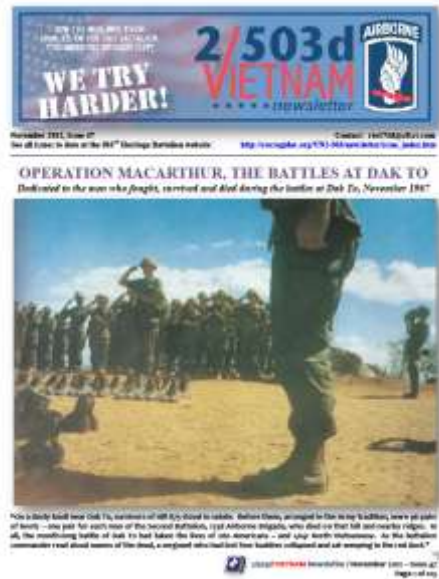


Colonel, U.S. Army, Dr. Richard Everett Eckert, age 69, a prominent physician and a resident of Evans, Georgia, died May 12, 2010, at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida after a long illness.

Rest Easy Doc



About the November Dak To Issue of Our Newsletter



Hello Sky Soldier: I was in Company A during the taking of Hill 875. I captured/escorted a Chui Hoi to the command tent at the Fire Support Base. Later I saw half the sky turn black from the B-52s in the valley. I was told that two retreating regiments were going back into Cambodia and were spotted. I saw the photo of one bomb's black cloud in this article. I assure you that half the sky from as far as I could see to the right and to the left turned black. That happened after the friendly bomb on C Company. I don't remember much after that about that action. You may recall that I wrote about my being in the Battle of the Slopes back in June of that year. Best regards, "We Try Harder"

Sidney Clouston

1st Platoon, Company A

2nd Bat, 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

Just FYI, during that period a Mike Force Company lost the US company commander (SFC Martinez), a 4th ID FO and his RTO. I was moving between the 4th ID headquarters heading back to FOB-2 at Kontum when the SGM grabbed me and shanghaied me to be his replacement. So I left recon and joined the Mike Force!

Moe Elmore

Mike Force

Your coverage on the Dak To stuff is great. My memories (recollections of things) is so bad I did not submit anything but a lot of it sure helped me with some of those many voids. One of the pictures (page 39) hit me like a brick. As I recall the guy pointing was an artillery spotter and was pointing where to (not for sure) put smoke. I was right on the other side of the photographer when that was taken. There are many others that I recall but that one is so burned into my head it was like it has been on my wall all along. Thanks again for your efforts on this for us. God Bless,

'AZ Bill' Berry
173d Engineers

Proud of Steve Welch's poems and comments. My friend did an exceptional job. Looking forward to your next newsletter. If I can contribute to your theme, I'd be happy to comply. On a sad note, reading the names of so many friends KIA was sad and depressing. Overall it was a sobering moment. Be Well, Airborne Always

Augie Scarino

Recon/C/2/503d

I noted the comment by Ed (Editor) on the dates for KIA Paratroopers (Issue 48). Again, my mind is slow to bring up details of Hill 875. When A Company was hit in the rear many of C Company's wounded were with them. Many did not have their weapons with them. John Manuel Ortiz, C/2/503, KIA 11/20/67, fought them with a machete. They were sent to the LZ too soon for extraction. They fought with anything they could reach. You included a picture of my best friend Jack Lee Croxdale, II, C/2/503, KIA 11/19/67, I appreciate it. Both KIA dates are incorrect. John died on the first day and Jack was killed by the bomb. ATW

Roger Whittenbrook

Sky Soldier

This is great work. I sat down and read it cover to cover with tears running down my face. Included was a photo of the man I asked to carry my radio, Jack Croxdale, on that operation, and also one of my squad members, Jimmy Smith on our point team, both of whom died there. This issue of our newsletter is the most accurate and comprehensive work I have seen on this horrifically unfortunate event. It was good to see much deserved time was spent detailing the heroics of the average grunt who seldom receives credit for his daily sacrifices. The stories included weave an honest and consistent tale of the events of these battles as only those on the ground can tell. This report does a great job of historically profiling these tragic events, and I only hope that future leaders will read and learn from this work while those who lost so much will honor and remember those who gave everything in Dak To. Respectfully,

Roger Dick

C/2/503d

Survivor of The Slopes

Two plus hours of reading. A few tears and lots of memories. Drinks tonight to our fallen and forget the rest.

Ken Smith

A/D/2/503d

I'm just glad the sonofabitch is done. Let's hope some politicians and Generals read the thing. *Lest we forget.*

Lew "Smitty" Smith, Newsletter Editor

HHC/2/503d



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / January 2013 - Issue 49

Page 44 of 62

~ Correction ~

Peter. I double checked. The Bde KIA list I have shows Moses Hegler as A/3/503, and the Virtual Wall website has him as C/3/503. Thanks for bringing this to my attention – will include a correction notice in January. Be well bro. Ed

To Editor: I wouldn't call it a screw up...I came over w/the Advance Party of 3/503 as the XO of HHC...when the rest of the BN arrived and got up to An Khe, D Company (Provisional) was formed...it consisted of the Recon Platoon, the non-existent AT Platoon and a complete Rifle Squad from A, B, & C, plus in-country individual replacements...I was now Lima 6, Platoon Leader, D Company (Provisional) 3/503...two weeks prior to Moses getting killed I became the 4 Deuce Platoon Leader.

In the Newsletter you have Moses Hegler, Jr. A/3/503, C/3/503* listed as a KIA...he died December 27, 1967 during the battle at the Dong Tre SF Camp...he was in my former 1st Platoon in D Company (Provisional)...he was an outstanding soldier...in fact, I chose him to get our Platoon's first "In-Country R&R" down to Vung Tau...he bled out internally while leaning-up against a tree in the makeshift aid-station...Medevac couldn't come in to get the wounded out...I could see how the admin could have him assigned to C Company...or any place else for that fact...but he died while in D Company.

Peter Kacerguis
HHC/D/3/503d

Moses Hegler, Jr.

Private First Class

D CO, 3RD BN, 503RD INFANTRY

173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Magazine Point, Alabama

August 18, 1948 to December 27, 1967

**MOSES HEGLER, Jr. is on the Wall
at Panel 32E, Line 72**



VA, SSA and IRS Cut Red Tape for Veterans and Survivors

New Policy Eliminates Paperwork, Allows More VA Staff to Focus on Eliminating Claims Backlog

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today it is cutting red tape for Veterans by eliminating the need for them to complete an annual Eligibility Verification Report (EVR). VA will implement a new process for confirming eligibility for benefits, and staff that had been responsible for processing the old form will instead focus on eliminating the compensation claims backlog.

Historically, beneficiaries have been required to complete an EVR each year to ensure their pension benefits continued. Under the new initiative, VA will work with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to verify continued eligibility for pension benefits.

"By working together, we have cut red tape for Veterans and will help ensure these brave men and women get the benefits they have earned and deserve," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

VA estimates it would have sent nearly 150,000 EVRs to beneficiaries in January 2013. Eliminating these annual reports reduces the burden on Veterans, their families, and survivors because they will not have to return these routine reports to VA each year in order to avoid suspension of benefits. It also allows VA to redirect more than 100 employees that usually process EVRs to work on eliminating the claims backlog.

"Having already instituted an expedited process that enables wounded warriors to quickly access Social Security disability benefits, we are proud to work with our federal partners on an automated process that will make it much easier for qualified Veterans to maintain their VA benefits from year to year," said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security.

"The IRS is taking new steps to provide critical data to help speed the benefits process for the nation's Veterans and Veterans Affairs," said Beth Tucker, IRS Deputy Commissioner for Operations Support. *"The IRS is pleased to be part of a partnership with VA and SSA that will provide needed data quickly and effectively to move this effort forward."*

All beneficiaries currently receiving VA pension benefits will receive a letter from VA explaining these changes and providing instructions on how to continue to submit their unreimbursed medical expenses. More information about VA pension benefits is available at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/pension> and www.ebenefits.va.gov



An Airborne Brother From An Airborne Family



Sky Soldier Ray Ramirez

On 22 December 1966, I turned 21 years in Viet Nam, and we were at Bear Cat that morning and were lifted to LZ Stump and it was a hot LZ and the snipers missed me and CPT Lorenzo "Larry" Sanchez who graduated from Montebello High School about seven years before I did from MHS.

VC mortars gave us some fireworks for my birthday celebration and they missed the whole 4/503d that night. A few days later, I left the S-3 Air Section of the HHC 4/503d and on Christmas Eve, I lead a Squad of C/4/503d on an ambush patrol. Came out the next day and we had a Mass with Father Watters, and we came out in the old *LA Herald-Examiner*.

This week my two children put on my birthday party here at my home in Whittier, CA, and we had a lot of Veteran friends come to the party. Three of my brothers served in the Airborne, and my brother Pete served in Okinawa in the 2/503d in '61-'62. My brother Philip and I attended Jump School together in Sept. of '65, and I had been recruited by the 101st and Philip went to the 18th Abn Corps.

Well in April of '66, my 1/501st was re-designated as the 4/503d and getting ready for RVN and Philip got orders for RVN and he joined A/1/327th a month before we arrived. Another brother had served in the 82nd in 60 & 61 and another brother was "leg" at Ft. Sill, OK. I started serving with HHC 4/503d and I then went to D/4/503d on 24 December '66. Most of the guys from D/4/503d came from the HHC of the 4/503d when we deployed.

I remember that a few 1st SGT's who served with us at the 1/501st at Ft. Campbell, KY, were being deployed to the 173d in 1965, and I remember seeing 2 of them when the 4/503d arrived in RVN. I knew that one of the 1SGT's had served in WWII with the 82nd and he was a very nice guy and the other SGT had retired into Utah and he attended some reunions years ago.

In the Spring of 1967, when we came back from an operation, a new SGM came to the 4/503d from the 2/503d where he had been a 1SGT and he was a Puerto Rican. I don't remember his name, but I think I just saw his name of former members of the 4/503d who have passed away.

Our former SGM had served as an Officer in the 187th in Korea, and had been Reduced in Force after the Korean War, and when we were in the 1/501st he was our SGM. When the 4/503d was going to be deployed in June of 1966, he tried to get re-activated as a CPT, and they turned down his request. Well, when we came back from an operation in RVN, who did we see as a new CPT, former SGM Robert O'Brian Cruz and when he returned to Fort Campbell, KY, he was still a CPT!

Hope to see you in Columbus, GA, in March of 2013.

Ray Ramirez
Recon/4/503d

Visiting His Brother



David Zsigo, of Lennon, stands by the name of his older brother, Alexander C. Zsigo, Jr., A/2/503, while visiting the Moving Wall near the Birch Run Expo Center in Birch Run. Alexander Zsigo was killed in Vietnam during The Battle of the Slopes in June, 1967, when David was 16. The Moving Wall is a small-scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC.



Some Okinawa Pics

Thanks to John Taylor, B/2/503d



John Taylor being treated for an injury he sustained jumping on Okinawa's Yon Tan Drop Zone, which was an abandoned air field with concrete runways crisscrossing through the DZ.



Jerry Levy, KIA in January '66, 2nd from left after the same jump in which John was injured. John says, "Jerry was a great guy who everyone liked. It was my letter to him that was returned to me stamped in red ink, **"RETURN TO SENDER: VERIFIED DECEASED"** that served as the inspiration for the epilogue in my novel Land of a Thousand Dances." John



"That's Roy Lombardo seated wearing dark glasses. He was tough to work for, but he never asked his men to do something that he would not do himself." John



Jack Schimpf. He was the first 173d trooper to be awarded the Silver Star in July, 1965.



C Company 2/503 First SGT Desmond Jackson, "The Hammer," humping the Taiwan boonies in 1964.



"A portion of the 2/503d medical platoon in Taiwan 1964. Frank Zambranna is standing on the rear bumper of the truck. He served as the inspiration for Frank Zapata in Dances. He was returning from Japan after being wounded and told me about all the medics who had been KIA & WIA. Ernest President is standing next to the trooper wearing the helmet. He was KIA in the same firefight Zambranna was wounded."

John





MICHAEL CREAMER, A CASUALTY OF 2 WARS

By: Tom Brokaw
18 February 1991

All of us, in one way or another, have been living first with the prospect of war and then with the reality of it since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. For many veterans of Vietnam, this has been an especially anxious time. Many of their worst memories have been reawakened. The Persian Gulf has become their second war as it plays out graphically and continuously on television, radio and in the press.



Ranger Mike

Michael Creamer was one of those veterans. He grew up in a South Boston working-class family and served as a medic with the Rangers in Vietnam, winning two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star for his valor during long, dangerous patrols.

When he returned he had trouble leaving his terrible experiences behind. He dropped out of nursing school when an assignment to emergency-room surgeons provoked a nightmare of broken bodies and horrible wounds from his combat days. He returned to his mother's home and the life of despair common to victims of post-traumatic stress disorder – depression, bouts of violence, and thoughts of suicide.

Friends, other veterans, suggested that he confront his past by attending the dedication of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, and that trip was the beginning of a halting recovery. He met his future wife at the ceremony. She persuaded him to join a veteran's outreach program.

As his confidence returned, he decided to reenlist in the Army. An injury during parachute training short-circuited his career plans, so he returned to New England and began to work with other troubled

veterans, counseling them on their problems, helping them find work.

By all accounts he was extremely effective. One veteran, Tom Sullivan, was deeply distressed and out of work until Mr. Creamer eased him back onto a path of hope and confidence. Mr. Sullivan, now working in public transportation in Connecticut, says simply, *"The man saved my life."*

Yet the day-by-day counseling took its toll. Dealing constantly with the flashbacks of other veterans, Mr. Creamer could not escape his past. So he quit and took a job on a dredge, restoring a lake in northwestern Connecticut where he had settled on a wooded hillside.

Life wasn't perfect. He and his wife, Martha, were often separated. They lost their only child to birth defects. He occasionally sought help in group therapy at a Hartford veteran's center. Still, to his friends and neighbors, he seemed on the mend.

Richard Bramley, a soft-spoken country wine merchant, remembers going to the film "Henry V" with Mr. Creamer and coming away deeply impressed with his friend's knowledge of contemporary and ancient military history. *"Here was a guy,"* Mr. Bramley said, *"whose life was so altered by the military and yet he was fascinated by it."*

Then Iraq invaded Kuwait. Desert Shield turned to Desert Storm. Mr. Creamer and an untold number of other troubled Vietnam veterans again began to suffer flashbacks of the horror of their war. Counseling centers reports a sharp increase in veterans seeking help.

Television coverage of his war is much more vivid than it was during Vietnam, the first so-called living-room war. This time, in their living rooms, Vietnam veterans were seeing bombs, missiles and antiaircraft fire as if they were back on the field of battle. One man at a Texas counseling center, said, weeping, *"It brought back memories – and it kept sticking in my mind – of the people I buried in B-52 bomb holes."*

In Connecticut, Mr. Creamer, extremely conservative in his politics, was obsessed by the war. On the Friday night before the Congressional vote authorizing force, he stayed up until 3 A.M. dialing members of the Connecticut delegation, leaving messages on their answering machines, urging them to vote "no."

(continued....)



He removed from his fireplace mantel a picture of himself in uniform with George Bush. He attended a prayer vigil with his friend Tom Sullivan on the common in Litchfield. Mr. Sullivan said: *"He looked so sad, this tough little guy. I just hugged him."*

Mr. Creamer talked to anyone who would listen about his fears of a ground war, yet he tried to join the Army a third time, thinking his experience as a medic would be needed. Counselors around the country have encountered similar reactions from other veterans: fear, anxiety and a compulsion to re-enlist.

Martha Creamer, who had been living apart from her husband, decided to visit a week after the bombing of Baghdad began. She recalled that before dinner Mr. Creamer was listening to the radio and then, in her words: *"He just blew...kicking furniture, throwing a beer can. For the first time I was frightened of Michael. Always before I had been frightened for him."* She urged him to return to the therapy group and called his counselor before she left on a business trip. He saw the counselor the next day; although he seemed confused, he promised to return soon.

Instead, he drove back to his home in the woods just east of the Housatonic River. He wrote letters to friends, pinned on his Ranger black beret and arranged his driver's license and Ranger identification card at his side. When this was all in order, he picked up his shotgun and killed himself.

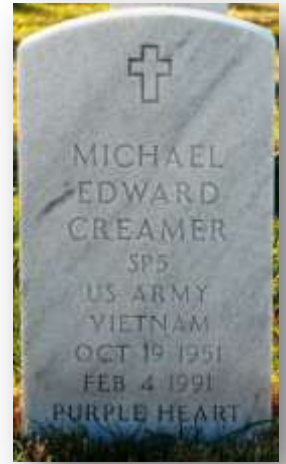
He left a note that said: *"I'm sorry. I know many people will be hurt. This new war has brought up too many nightmares of the last war. I don't think I could again endure the pain of mass casualties produced by a ground war – and this is the only way out. When the survivors of this war come home, please treat them with admiration and respect we Vietnam veterans never received until it was too late."*

He signed it:
Michael R. Creamer, Combat Medic
N-75th Rangers, Co. B (Med), 5 May 70 – 23 Jan 91

The following week, friends placed a testimonial in the local paper: *"We salute Michael – a complex, compassionate and beautiful soul...a casualty of our wars."*

Four days later. Michael R. Creamer, combat medic, was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Michael Creamer served two tours of duty in Vietnam as an Army combat medic assigned to the N/75 Rangers and Company B (Medical). He served in the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). He served a second enlistment with the 101st Airborne Division/Air Assault, out of Fort Campbell, Ky., attached to the 187th Infantry Brigade. He was named Soldier of the Year for that division in 1985. He received numerous military citations including two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, various campaign ribbons and the Combat Medic's Badge. He was a candidate for a Silver Star.



It's Not So Unusual

It seems not so unusual Ranger Mike became so entranced with that first war with Iraq. I too, as did many of you (all of you?), became spellbound as events unfolded -- having locked-away Vietnam for nearly 30 years at the time, it all came back in a rush. Watching and fearing for those menboys in the Sand, I was thrown back into the boonies, back in Vietnam. I couldn't work, nor could I sleep, but I could watch that t.v., and I could feel fear once again; fear for them, and facing my own long-hidden fears. Fortunately, and thanks to intervention by a couple Sky Soldier buddies, treatment was found and undertaken; sadly, similar treatment didn't work for Ranger Mike.

Today, there are veterans of the wars in the Middle East who have long left the military and are going about their daily business; pursuing education and careers while raising families. Unfortunately, for many of these young warriors, they are unaware of what awaits them 10, 20, 30 years hence. We can only hope they find and receive the assistance and treatment they will need and which they deserve.

We may leave war behind, yet invariably it seems to always wait for us, just up ahead. I suppose it's not so unusual.

Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

Source:

<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/mecreamer.htm>



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / January 2013 – Issue 49

Page 49 of 62

ALL VETS SHOULD COPY THIS

“Comment: Someone has gone to a lot of trouble. If this helps one person, then it was worthwhile. Please pass this on to all Veterans on your e-mail list.

Below are websites providing information on Veterans benefits and how to file/ask for them. Accordingly, there are many sites which explain how to obtain books, military/medical records, information and how to appeal a denied claim with the VA. Please pass this information on to every Veteran you know. Nearly 100% of this information is free and available for all veterans, the only catch is: you have to ask for it because they won't tell you about a specific benefit unless you ask. You need to know what questions to ask so the right doors open for you and then be ready to have an advocate who is willing to work with and for you, stay in the process, and press for your rights and your best interests. “

Appeals

http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch05.doc
Board of Veteran's Appeals <http://www.va.gov/vbs/bva/>
CARES Commission <http://www.va.gov/vbs/bva/>
CARES Draft National Plan
<http://www1.va.gov/cares/page.cfm?pg=105>
Center for Minority Veterans
<http://www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>
Center for Veterans Enterprise <http://www.vetbiz.gov/default2.htm>
Center for Women Veterans <http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/>
Clarification on the changes in VA healthcare for Gulf War Veterans
<http://www.gulfwarvets.com/ubb/Forum1/HTML/000016.html>
Classified Records - American Gulf War Veterans Assoc
<http://www.gulfwarvets.com/ubb/Forum18/HTML/000011.html>
Compensation for Disabilities Associated with the Gulf War Service
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/part6%20/ch07.doc
Compensation Rate Tables, 12-1-03
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Rates/comp01.htm>
Department of Veterans Affairs Home Page <http://www.va.gov/>
Directory of Veterans Service Organizations
<http://www1.va.gov/vso/index.cfm?template=view>
Disability Examination Worksheets Index, Comp
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/exams/index.htm>
Due Process
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch02.doc
Duty to Assist
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch01.doc
Electronic Code of Federal Regulations <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecfr/>
Emergency, Non-emergency, and Fee Basis Care
<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf>
Environmental Agents <http://www1.va.gov/enviroagents/>
Environmental Agents M10
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1002
Establishing Combat Veteran Eligibility
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=315
EVALUATION PROTOCOL FOR GULF WAR AND IRAQI FREEDOM VETERANS WITH POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO DEPLETED URANIUM (DU)
<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/DUHandbook1303122304.DOC> a
nd http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID

=1158

See also, Depleted Uranium Fact Sheet

<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/DepletedUraniumFAQSheet.doc>
EVALUATION PROTOCOL FOR NON-GULF WAR VETERANS WITH POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO DEPLETED URANIUM (DU)
<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/DUHANDBOOKNONGW130340304.DOC>
Fee Basis, PRIORITY FOR OUTPATIENT MEDICAL SERVICES AND INPATIENT HOSPITAL CAR
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=206 Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents
2005 <http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf> or,
http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/current_benefits.htm
Forms and Records Request <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>
General Compensation Provisions
http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter11_subchapteri.html
Geriatrics and Extended Care <http://www1.va.gov/geriatricsshg/>
Guideline for Chronic Pain and Fatigue MUS-CPG
http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/cpgn/mus/mus_base.htm
Guide to Gulf War Veteran's Health
<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/VHlgulfwar.pdf>
Gulf War Subject Index
<http://www1.va.gov/GulfWar/page.cfm?pg=7&template=main&letter=A>
Gulf War Veteran's Illnesses Q&As
<http://www1.va.gov/gulfwar/docs/GWIllnessesQandAsIB1041.pdf>
Hearings
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch04.doc
Homeless Veterans <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>
HSR&D Home <http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/>
Index to Disability Examination Worksheets C&P exams
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/exams/index.htm>
Ionizing Radiation <http://www1.va.gov/irad/>
Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom Veterans VBA
<http://www.vba.va.gov/EFIF/>
M 10 for spouses and children
< http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1007
M10 Part III Change 1
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1008
M21-1 Table of Contents
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/M21_1.html
Mental Disorders, Schedule of Ratings
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/regs/38CFR/BOOKC/PART4/S4_130.DOC
Mental Health Program Guidelines
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1094
Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers
<http://www.mirecc.med.va.gov/>
MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Centers of Excellence
<http://www.va.gov/ms/about.asp>
My Health e Vet <http://www.myhealth.va.gov/>
NASDVA.COM <http://nasdva.com/>
National Association of State Directors <http://www.nasdva.com/>
National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
<http://www.nchdpd.med.va.gov/postdeploymentlinks.asp>

(continued....)



Neurological Conditions and Convulsive Disorders, Schedule of Ratings
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/regs/38cfr/bookc/part4/s4_124a.doc
 OMI (Office of Medical Inspector) http://www.omi.cio.med.va.gov/Online_VA_Form_10-10EZ
<https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>
 Parkinson's Disease and Related Neurodegenerative Disorders <http://www1.va.gov/resdev/funding/solicitations/docs/parkinsons.pdf>
 and, <http://www1.va.gov/padrecc/>
 Peacetime Disability Compensation
http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+38USC1131
 Pension for Non-Service-Connected Disability or Death
http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter15_subchapteri.html and
http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter15_subchapterii.html
 and http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partii_chapter15_subchapteriii.html
 Persian Gulf Registry
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1003
 This program is now referred to as Gulf War Registry Program (to include Operation Iraqi Freedom) as of March 7, 2005:
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1232
 Persian Gulf Registry Referral Centers
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1006
 Persian Gulf Veterans' Illnesses Research 1999, Annual Report To Congress http://www1.va.gov/resdev/1999_Gulf_War_Veterans%27_Illnesses_Appendices.doc
 Persian Gulf Veterans' Illnesses Research 2002, Annual Report To Congress http://www1.va.gov/resdev/prt/gulf_war_2002/GulfWarRpt02.pdf
 Phase I PGR
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1004
 Phase II PGR
http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=1005
 Policy Manual Index <http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/eds/edsmps.htm>
 Power of Attorney
http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/admin21/m21_1/mr/part1/ch03.doc
 Project 112 (Including Project SHAD) <http://www1.va.gov/shad/>
 Prosthetics Eligibility http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=337
 Public Health and Environmental Hazards Home Page
<http://www.vethealth.cio.med.va.gov/>
 Public Health/SARS <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/SARS/PublicationsManuals>
<http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/publications.cfm?Pub=4>
 Publications and Reports
http://www1.va.gov/resdev/prt/pubs_individual.cfm?webpage=gulfwar.htm
 Records Center and Vault Homepage
<http://www.aac.va.gov/vault/default.html>
 Records Center and Vault Site Map
<http://www.aac.va.gov/vault/sitemap.html>
 REQUEST FOR AND CONSENT TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION FROM CLAIMANT'S RECORDS
<http://www.forms.va.gov/va/Internet/VARF/getformharness.asp?formName=3288-form.xft>
 Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses April 11, 2002 http://www1.va.gov/rac-gwvi/docs/Minutes_April112002.doc

Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
http://www1.va.gov/racgwvi/docs/ReportandRecommendations_2004.pdf
 Research and Development
http://www.appc1.va.gov/resdev/programs/all_programs.cfm
 Survivor's and Dependents' Educational Assistance
http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title38/partiii_chapter35.html
 Title 38 Index Parts 0-17
http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title38/38cfrv1_02.tpl
 Part 18
http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title38/38cfrv2_02.tpl
 Title 38 Part 3 Adjudication Subpart A "Pension, Compensation, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title38/38cfr3_main_02.tpl
 Title 38 Pensions, Bonuses & Veterans Relief (also Â§ 3.317 Compensation for certain disabilities due to undiagnosed illnesses found here) http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title38/38cfr3_main_02.tpl
 Title 38 PART 4--SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES Subpart B--DISABILITY RATINGS
<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=ab7641afd195c84a49a2067dbbcf95c0&rgn=div6&view=text&node=38:1.0.1.1.5.2&idno=38>
 Title 38Â§ 4.16 Total disability ratings for compensation based on unemployability of the individual. PART A "SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES Subpart Â "General Policy in Rating
<http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=1b0c269b510d3157fbf8f8801bc9b3dc&rgn=div8&view=text&node=38:1.0.1.1.5.1..96.11&idno=38>
 U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims <http://www.vetapp.gov/>
 VA Best Practice Manual for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) <http://www.avapl.org/pub/PTSD%20Manual%20final%206.pdf>
 VA Fact Sheet <http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/gwfs.html>
 VA Health Care Eligibility
<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/home/hecmain.asp>
 VA INSTITUTING GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF FUNCTION (GAF) <http://www.avapl.org/gaf/gaf.html>
 VA Life Insurance Handbook A-" Chapter 3
<http://www.insurance.va.gov/inForceGliSite/GLIhandbook/glibookletch3.htm#310>
 VA Loan Lending Limits and Jumbo Loans http://valoans.com/va_facts_limits.cfm
 VA MS Research <http://www.va.gov/ms/about.asp>
 VA National Hepatitis C Program <http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/>
 VA Office of Research and Development
<http://www1.va.gov/resdev/>
 VA Trainee Pocket Card on Gulf War
<http://www.va.gov/OAA/pocketcard/gulfwar.asp>
 VA WMD EMSG <http://www1.va.gov/emshg/>
 VA WRIISC-DC <http://www.va.gov/WRIISC-DC/>
 VAOIG Hotline Telephone Number and Address
<http://www.va.gov/oig/hotline/hotline3.htm>
 Vet Center Eligibility - Readjustment Counseling Service
<http://www.va.gov/rcs/Eligibility.htm>
 Veterans Benefits Administration Main Web Page
<http://www.vba.va.gov/>
 Veterans Legal and Benefits Information <http://valaw.org/>

(continued....)



VHA Forms, Publications, Manuals
<http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/>
 VHA Programs - Clinical Programs & Initiatives
http://www1.va.gov/health_benefits/page.cfm?pg=13 <http://webmaila.juno.com/webmail/new/UrlBlockedError.aspx>>
 VHA Public Health Strategic Health Care Group Home Page
<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/>
 VHI Guide to Gulf War Veterans Health
http://www1.va.gov/vhi_ind_study/gulfwar/istudy/index.asp
 Vocational Rehabilitation <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/>
 Vocational Rehabilitation Subsistence
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/InterSubsistencefy04.doc>
 VONAPP online <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>
 WARMS - 38 CFR Book
 C <http://www.warms.vba.va.gov/bookc.html>
 Wartime Disability Compensation
http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+38USC1110
 War-Related Illness and Injury Study Center - New Jersey
<http://www.wri.med.va.gov/>
 Welcome to the GI Bill Web Site
<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>
 What VA Social Workers Do
<http://www1.va.gov/socialwork/page.cfm?pg=3>
 WRIISC Patient Eligibility <http://www.illegion.org/va1.html>

Print this out and save it in your VA files. There may be a time for use in the future.

[Thanks to Roger Dick, C/2/503d]

Whodat?



Who can identify this super, duper, 2/503 trooper?

Soldier KIA During Vietnam War Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a serviceman, killed in action during the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.



L-R: James Johnstone, Tony Brown, John Pfeiffer

Army Capt. James M. Johnstone, of Baton Rouge, La., will be buried Dec. 12, in Arlington National Cemetery. On Nov. 19, 1966, Johnstone was the pilot of an OV-1A Mohawk aircraft that crashed while conducting a daytime reconnaissance mission over Attapu Province, Laos. Nearby U.S. aircrews reported seeing the wing of Johnstone's aircraft hit a tree during a climb to avoid a nearby ridgeline. No parachutes were seen exiting the aircraft. Heavy enemy presence in the area prevented recovery efforts.

From 1993 to 2009, joint U.S.-Lao People's Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), interviewed multiple witnesses, and conducted several investigations and excavations of the crash site in Attapu Province. The teams located human remains, military equipment, an identification card bearing Johnstone's name, and aircraft wreckage of an OV-1A, which correlated with the last known location of Johnstone's aircraft.

To identify the remains, scientists from JPAC analyzed circumstantial evidence and used forensic identification tools, such as dental comparisons.

Today, the U.S. government continues to work closely with the governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to recover Americans lost during the Vietnam War.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO website at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call 703-699-1169.



~A Few Famous People Who Served in the Military~

Harry Chapin was born December 7, 1942, in New York City. He had a brief career as a documentary filmmaker before becoming one of the most popular folk singers and songwriters of the 1970s. A



graduate of Brooklyn Technical High School, Chapin briefly attended the United States Air Force Academy and Cornell University before setting out to become a documentary filmmaker. His film *Legendary Champions* was nominated for a documentary Academy Award in 1968. In 1971, Chapin decided to switch gears and pursue a music career. His first album, 1972's *Heads and Tales*, was a universal success. His following grew with such popular records as *Short Stories* and *Verities and Balderdash*, released in 1973 and 1974, respectively. Chapin's most famous singles include "Taxi," "Circle" and "Cat's in the Cradle," the latter of which topped the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart, and catapulted him to wealth and stardom. "Cat's in the Cradle" was Chapin's only No. 1 song. Outside of his musical career, Chapin was deeply committed to philanthropy, particularly fighting hunger in the United States and around the world. In 1975, he co-founded World Hunger Year (renamed to WhyHunger). After forming the organization, which is aimed at addressing the causes of hunger and poverty, Chapin frequently visited Washington, D.C. to lobby for hunger causes. In 1981, Chapin died in an automobile accident.

Dr. Roscoe C. Brown, Jr.

(born 1922) is one of the Tuskegee Airmen and former squadron commander of the 100th Fighter Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group. He graduated from the Tuskegee Flight School on March 12, 1944 as a member of class 44-C-SE and served in the U.S.



Army Air Corps in Europe during World War II. During this period, Captain Brown shot down an advanced German ME-262 jet fighter and a FW-190 fighter. Prior to his wartime service, he graduated from Springfield College, Springfield, Mass., where he was valedictorian of the Class of 1943. After the war, Captain Brown resumed his education. His

doctoral dissertation was on exercise physiology and he became a professor at New York University and President of Bronx Community College. In 1992, Dr. Brown received an honorary doctor degree from his alma mater, Springfield College. On March 29, 2007, he attended a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol rotunda, where he and the other Tuskegee Airmen collectively, not individually, were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of their service. He lives in Riverdale, New York in the U.S.A. He is also a member, and past president, of the 100 Black Men of America New York Chapter. He is currently a professor of Urban Education at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Mickey Rooney served 22 months in the U.S. Army, five of them with the Third Army of Gen. George S. Patton. Rooney attained the rank of Sergeant, and was awarded a Bronze Star, among other decorations, for insisting that his pilot fly him into a combat zone to give the troops a few laughs. Celebrity draftees like Mickey Rooney entertained troops in stateside training camps, staging areas and overseas units. Soldier Jeep Shows and Special Service Company Shows took live entertainment to combat areas. Rooney served with the Army's 6817th Special Services Battalion, entertaining troops in France on the front lines. He served from June 1944 to March 1946.



"PFC Mickey Rooney imitates some Hollywood actors for an audience of Infantrymen of the 44th Division, U.S. Seventh Army. Rooney is a member of a three-man unit making a jeep tour to entertain troops in Germany. 4/15/45"



A Sky Soldier and his Beautiful Bride at Christmas 2012



Ken & Sherry Redding
ENTAC/HHC 2/503rd
173d Airborne Brigade
Okinawa 1963-1965, Viet Vet 1965-1966

Terry

"Get the hell out!" were the last words I spoke to you as you came into the commo bunker drunk that late night at Zinn. Little did I know my friend, I'd never see your face again.

Nigh on 50 years its' been, and those words still pierce my soul. You didn't tell me you were leaving us, but of course, you didn't know.

For decades since on a little band I talk to you and take you everywhere; "Hey, Terry, we're going to play some golf today" I say, as if you are standing there.

I'm so sorry for those final words to you, I would much have rather said, "Hi brother, come on in, I'm glad you're here..."

To Sky Soldier Buddy
Terry Wilkins, C/2/503d
Killed in Action, July 3, 1966

Looking for a Buddy

Hoping to hook-up again with **SSG Johnnie Riley**. We would love to locate him again and people can contact me if they know anything about him. Thanks.

Raymond Ramirez
Recon/4/503d
sgtray173@hotmail.com

Pat Sirmeyer Family & 173d Lose a Good Friend

PATRICIA ANN (PATTI) SIRMEYER, 60, passed away Tuesday, December 25, 2012 following a long illness. Patti, wife of Pat Sirmeyer, E-Troop, was born in Pontiac, Illinois, she was the daughter of the late Frank Soule and Phyllis (Lauth) Soule. She was a graduate of Northeast High School and Broward College, Florida. She worked for the Broward School System for over twenty years.



Miss Patti

Patti is survived by her loving husband of 41 years, Patrick, and her daughter Michelle (Sirmeyer) Handley, Sisters Janice Robinson and Susan Rivera. Family received friends on December 29, 2012 at the Kraeek Funeral Home and Cremation Center in Coral Springs, Florida, where services were held. Interment was conducted on New Year's Eve at the South Florida V.A. National Cemetery, Lake Worth, Florida.

For those of us who knew Patti, we send our sincere condolences to Pat, their daughter Michelle and their families. Pat and Patti have been regular fixtures at 173d reunions over the years, and we will never forget how Patti's smile and laughter would light up the room.



Paratroopers remember the jump into Iraq

Release Date: 3/23/2004

By Spc Adrian Schulte, SETAF Public Affairs



VICENZA, Italy – It has almost been a year since about one thousand paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade parachuted into war, opening up the northern front in the effort to liberate Iraq. The March 26, 2003 jump was recently classified as a combat jump and the paratroopers who participated in it will now be able to stick their chests out with pride showing off the gold star, or "mustard stain," that crowns their parachutist wings.

So what is it like to jump into war? Those troops, young and old, went through an extraordinary experience, one that many paratroopers can only dream of. Many of the Soldiers had been jumping for years, but for others, this would be their first jump after airborne school.

"I knew it was real when they gave us live ammo at the airfield. I knew then that there was no turning back," recalled Pfc. Jerry Allen, Chosen Co. 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne). *"I've never seen so many planes in my life,"* he said referring to the Air Force C-17 Globemasters waiting to take them to war.



Photo often referred to as "a can 'O Whoopass".

Before loading up on the C-17's, the paratroopers were briefed on the conditions of the drop zone. The Kurdish controlled area was expected to be friendly and little resistance was anticipated. The weather called for a pitch-black night, with no moon or stars

and there was going to be fresh mud on the drop zone from the heavy storms in the prior weeks. Once the troopers were rigged with their chutes and rucksacks, which weighed nearly as much as many of the Soldiers, they loaded up onto the lumbering jets lining the Aviano Air Base runway. The Air Force gave each Soldier a boxed lunch for the five-hour flight. *"Nobody really ate them,"* remembered Spc. Christopher Holbrook, Chosen Co., 2-503rd Inf (Abn), *"but we were stuffing snacks into our DCU's to take with us."*



Let's get the hell out of here! And hey, nobody throw-up!

After the aircraft took off, the paratroopers had ample time to prepare for what lay ahead. *"The mood in the plane was really serious. It looked like everybody had their head in the game,"* Allen said. *"I was concentrating on what I was supposed to do once I got on the ground."*

"I was more worried about how long it would take to get there and how long I was going to be sitting there in anticipation," recalled Pfc. David Deaconson, Chosen Co., 2-503rd Inf (Abn). *"Regardless of how long you are on the plane, it gives you a lot of time to think about what your commander has told you, about what conditions to expect. It sounded like a pretty friendly drop zone, but there was speculation that there was going to be resistance. And that little quip alone got people thinking they were going to be dropped into Normandy with tracers flying."*

(continued...)



The time for the paratroopers to make their leap into war came quickly. About 30 minutes from the drop zone, the white lights that had been illuminating the cabin were cut off and replaced by red ones, signaling "show time" was close at hand.



"I wasn't nervous until they started going through the jump commands about 20 minutes before the jump," Allen said. "When they turned the white lights off and put those red ones on, it was a rush."

"Each little event after the red lights came on made your heart beat a little bit faster, regardless of what you do or don't know," Deaconson said. "By the time we stood up to wait for the green light, my stomach was doing somersaults. I thought for a second I might throw up and had to put my head on the parachute of the guy in front of me to get my bearings."

"We stood up and our rucksacks were heavy as hell, so we were leaning on everything and trying not to stand up straight because it was horrendous," Holbrook said.

The Air Force loadmasters then opened the doors of the aircraft. Wind, dust and anticipation tore through the cabin. The paratroopers hooked up their static lines and did their final checks. Because they were in hostile air and because the drop zone was nestled in a valley, the giant C-17's had to go into an intense, steep dive from 30,000 feet to 600 feet.

"We were already standing and hooked up when they went into this crazy dive," Allen said. "When they started to pull out of it, I couldn't stand up with all the weight I had on. All I wanted to do was get out of the bird."

The Air Force had a narrow window of time to get the paratroopers into the air, so after pulling out of the dive, the red light by the open door was quickly replaced by a green one and paratroopers started pouring out into the night sky.

"Finally the green light goes on and everybody is screaming to get out the door because nobody wants to get left behind," explained Holbrook. "So it was a horrible exit. I pretty much fell out of the door."

"That is when all fear left me and I just wanted to get out of the plane," Deaconson said. "You get a one-track mind once you see that green light. It's like being at a basketball game with everybody screaming, except everybody is cheering for you to get out of the door."

Sixty seconds later, the Globemasters, empty of their cargo, were climbing out of the valley and the Iraqi army had a thousand more American Soldiers to deal with.

It didn't take the troopers long to fall the few hundred feet to the ground below.



GO!

"When I first hit, it wasn't a normal landing at all because it was so muddy," recalled Deaconson. "We expected mud but we didn't expect it to be as deep as it was. A lot of people got stuck waist deep when they hit and didn't get to do a proper parachute landing fall." The landing zone was dark and quiet as the Soldiers maintained noise discipline and collected their wits. "It was almost dead quiet once you hit the ground, you couldn't hear a thing," Deaconson said. "It was good, but eerie in a way. It gave you time to get your bearings. I felt drained just from stressing out so much on the plane."

The Soldiers donned their night vision goggles and looked for their Phoenix beacon, a flashing beacon used for guidance visible through the night vision goggles. They then started trudging through the mud trying to locate their units and assembly areas.

(continued....)



The mud. They all talk about the mud. "It was the type of mud where you keep getting taller as you walk," joked Holbrook.

"They had us digging with our entrenching tools and you couldn't do it because every time you took a scoop, it would stick to your shovel so you would have to scrape it off. It was a horribly laborious process." "It took us all night to move maybe eight kilometers," Allen said.



***Cherished by many...
earned by few.***

"We were scattered everywhere. They told us the flight strip was going to be this big dark thing through your night vision goggles. We jumped into plowed farm country and there were dark strips of land everywhere! We would walk to one dark strip and step on it, say 'dang that's not it', and walk to another dark strip. The mud was so bad, my team leader and I were pulling each other in and out of it. He lost a boot in it and ended up walking half of the way barefoot.

"It was cold and wet. My weapon was a big chunk of mud. The barrel was clogged and I couldn't get to the trigger. It was all over my uniform, my skin and my hair. Everything was mud. I spent the rest of the night pulling people out of it. It was crazy."

Muslim prayers echoed through the valley as the day broke and the Soldiers of the 173rd got their first look at the surroundings. "When light came and I saw the country, it was nothing like I thought Iraq was going to be; it was beautiful," Allen said.

"All you see on T.V. is the dry desolate forsaken places with traffic everywhere," Deaconson said. "When day broke, everything was green, it was cold, and there were mountains everywhere. I remember feeling like this wasn't a war zone that we were jumping into." As light poured across the land, men wielding AK-47's greeted many of the brigade Soldiers.

"Morning comes and the Peshmerga (Kurdish) guys were not 300 meters away," Holbrook said. "They were there the whole time and we didn't even know it." The Kurdish soldiers would prove themselves to be friendly allies.

"The Peshmerga guys brought us firewood, rice in an old oil pan, bread and cheese, and some mystery meat," Holbrook said. "We didn't care what it was; we were hungry."

"I was impressed by their generosity," Deaconson added. "They had nothing to give, but what little they

did have, they would always share. I mean, here they are bringing us bags of bread and tea when we started running low on water and MRE's."

The paratroopers of the 173rd made history that day and for the better part of the next year, they would work hard to help secure, stabilize and rebuild their area of responsibility.

"Every time I see pictures of it or hear someone talking about it, I just keep thinking, 'what a day!'" exclaimed Allen.



Philippines



Vietnam



Iraq



Statement by Secretary Shinseki on the Passing of Senator Daniel Inouye

December 18, 2012

"Senator Daniel K. Inouye stood among the 'greatest' of our 'Greatest Generation.' Recipient of the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest award for valor; distinguished service as a long-serving member of the U.S. Senate; and role model to generations of Americans of Asian-Pacific Islander heritage, especially those growing up in his beloved Hawaii, Senator Inouye made public service a noble and honorable calling. Dan Inouye's courage on the battlefield and in Congress, his passion for making a difference in the lives of average Americans, and his intense modesty spoke volumes about a remarkable American, who embodied the bedrock values and quiet virtues of our Nation. On behalf of America's 22 million Veterans, I salute the memory of a brave man, a great patriot, a devoted public servant, an unwavering benefactor to Servicemembers and Veterans of every generation, and my friend and mentor. I extend my deepest personal condolences to the entire Inouye family."



LT Inouye



Senator Daniel K. Inouye
1924 ~ 2012

*The President of the United States
in the name of The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor
to
Inouye, Daniel K.*



Rank and organization: Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army, Company E, 442nd Infantry.

Place and date: San Terenzo, Italy, 21 April 1945.

Birth: 7 September 1924, Honolulu, Hawaii. *Entered service at:* Honolulu, Hawaii.

Citation: Second Lieutenant Daniel K. Inouye distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 21 April 1945, in the vicinity of San Terenzo, Italy. While attacking a defended ridge guarding an important road junction, Second Lieutenant Inouye skillfully directed his platoon through a hail of automatic weapon and small arms fire, in a swift enveloping movement that resulted in the capture of an artillery and mortar post and brought his men to within 40 yards of the hostile force. Emplaced in bunkers and rock formations, the enemy halted the advance with crossfire from three machine guns. With complete disregard for his personal safety, Second Lieutenant Inouye crawled up the treacherous slope to within five yards of the nearest machine gun and hurled two grenades, destroying the emplacement. Before the enemy could retaliate, he stood up and neutralized a second machine gun nest. Although wounded by a sniper's bullet, he continued to engage other hostile positions at close range until an exploding grenade shattered his right arm. Despite the intense pain, he refused evacuation and continued to direct his platoon until enemy resistance was broken and his men were again deployed in defensive positions. In the attack, 25 enemy soldiers were killed and eight others captured. By his gallant, aggressive tactics and by his indomitable leadership, Second Lieutenant Inouye enabled his platoon to advance through formidable resistance, and was instrumental in the capture of the ridge. Second Lieutenant Inouye's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.



Special Forces Trooper On The Move in Vietnam



By **Dave Adkins**
5th SFG (Abn)

August 3, 1967 was day five of a search and destroy operation aimed at finding elements of the 174th NVA Regiment. We were operating out of Dak Seang even though we were from the A-Camp at Plateau Gi. We were one of two companies brought in to reinforce the Dak Seang team whose Montagnard tribesmen were demoralized by their experiences with the 174th.



Dave in An Loc

We had just turned back toward camp when we ran into a company sized ambush which was part of a battalion sized area ambush. Two team members from Dak Seang whose names I have omitted here for the privacy of their families, were killed. My partner SSG Domingo Lozano and I were both wounded. Lozano's back had been broken by a piece of shrapnel from a mortar but he could still walk.

One of my hits was a piece of shrapnel from an RPG that grazed my skull in the edge of my hairline above the left eye. I had tried to slow the bleeding by pulling my boonie hat down tight but all it did was fill up with blood so that when the Montagnard medic sneaked up on me with a battle dressing in his left hand and snatched my hat off with his right blood covered my entire head 360 degrees and filled my eyes so that I couldn't see. I was wiping my eyes in a panic trying to get my vision back.

A medivac chopper came in to pick us up. The chopper had to hover at tree top level and lower a basket. At first the enemy thought it was a gunship and suddenly all the shooting stopped. The crew chief got Lozano into the bird and sent the basket down for me. When I was about halfway up they realized it wasn't a gunship and all hell broke loose. The pilot held steady and even sent the

basket down to pick up two elderly Montagnards who didn't seem to be wounded but their companions must have thought they were too old to E&E for very long.

We were taken to the 2d Bn 173d Airborne aid station at Dak To. Lozano and I were lying side by side on a couple of stretchers laid across what I remember as saw horses. I heard a gruff South Philly voice say *I'm gonna work on dis one over here*. I immediately recognized the sound of my roommate from Jump School, Cpt Joe Grosso, MD.

I sat up on the stretcher and said, *Doc, Doc it's me don't you recognize me?* He said, *Who the fuck are you?* I said, *It's me, Adkins, your old roommate from Jump School.* Doc said, *How the fuck am I supposed to recognize you with all that shit on your face?* Then he said, *Where are you hit?* I said, *Head, shoulder, upper arm, elbow.* He said, *Anything broken?* I said, *No.* He said, *Let me see.* He grabbed my elbow and my wrist and moved them all around then he said, *Get off the table and go shave you're a goddamn disgrace.*

We went outside to a wash stand and he got me a razor but it was no use. Too much blood clogging the razor. Then he said, *You hungry?* I said, *Yes I haven't eaten all day.* He took me down to a GP tent on the far left side of the boardwalk where he lived with his medics and asked if they had any food. They gave me a can of sardines in mustard sauce and an orange soda. So I sat and chatted with the medics for a while until a chopper came in to take us to the 18th Surg in Pleiku. Doc came to get me and right after we passed the aid station tent he said, *Wait a minute.* He ran inside and grabbed a triangular bandage and came out walking and tying a knot in the end. He slipped it over my head and stuck my arm in it and said, *Wouldn't want them to think I didn't do anything for you.* Just as I sat down on the edge of the chopper floor he yelled, *See you on the table next time.* He was right but neither of us knew at the time that it would be him that was on the table.

I don't want anyone to get the impression that Doc didn't care about his patients, it's just that there was nothing to be done at that point. The bleeding had stopped and he didn't have an operating room available to remove the shrapnel. Even the sling was unnecessary. In jump school Doc and an Air Force major who was also an MD held secret sick calls every night for guys who had injuries – mostly knees - but wanted to graduate no matter how much it hurt. It cut into our drinking time including mine since I had to wait around but no problem. Some of those guys probably ended up in the 173d.

(continued....)



After we got to the 18th Surg I was still hungry so I asked a nurse about getting some food. She said, *You can't have anything to eat until after surgery.* I asked why not and she told me that people under anesthetic sometimes throw up and lying on your back you could choke. I told her she might as well give me some food because I had just had sardines in mustard sauce and an orange soda. She said, *Damn who gave you that?* I told her and she just stomped off looking mad.

Our LTC came to the 18th Surg a day or two later and told us that we had been up against a Bn of the 174th. He said the 174th had been sent to the area to take Dak Seang with one battalion and two battalions were supposed to take the SF camp at Dak To. In the end even four regiments of NVA couldn't do the job thanks to you guys in the Herd.

After a few days at the 18th Surg Lozano was sent to Fort Sam Houston and I was sent to the 67th Evac in Qui Nhon. It was a pretty sweet deal, fresh milk, salad, ice cream and most important of all, round-eyed nurses.



Air Med Evac Choppers at Qui Nhon

Several months later 1LT Bryan MacDonough, one of the survivors of Hill 875, and I were both assigned as liaison officers to 4th Infantry Division commanded by MG William R. Peers. In WWII MG Peers had been the commander of OSS Det 101, considered by Army Special Forces guys to this



MG Peers

day to have been the most successful special operations detachment in US history. When Merrill's Marauders went into Burma the native troops raised by Det 101 screened their front and flanks and built bridges of rope and bamboo ahead of them to speed up movement. Half of the answers to the SFOC final exam are covered and explained in his book *Behind the Burma Road* co-written with Dean Brellis one of his detachment members.

As our tours at Dragon Mountain were ending I mentioned to Mac that I had a jeep and I could get him a date with a round-eyed nurse in Qui Nhon. So we got a sandbag full of hand grenades, extra ammo, a case of RC

Cola and a grocery bag full of chips and cookies and a tube of Sea and Ski and headed out for Qui Nhon. Once we got past Pleiku we took off our shirts and lathered up with Sea and Ski. When we got to the Mang Yang pass we were stopped by a road block. They said there had been ambushes in the pass both of the previous two days. No one could go through except with a convoy but not to worry a convoy was due in a couple of hours. When the convoy commander got there he told us to put our shirts on. We stayed with the convoy until An Khe and then proceeded through the An Khe pass to Qui Nhon shirtless once again.



Dragon Mountain

At the 67th Evac I could not live up to my promise of dates with round-eyed nurses but the next day I met my wife thanks to MacDonough. Later in Australia he would be our best man.



From left to right Bryan MacDonough, Evelyn Adkins, Dave Adkins

In the photo above it is 12 months later. That is Mac's jeep this time. Evelyn and I are already married at this point and getting ready to go home. Mac drove that same highway by himself this time just to say goodbye.





~ FINAL SALUTE AND FAREWELL ~
TO OUR *SKY SOLDIER, RANGER & VETERAN BROTHERS*
WHO LEFT US ON THEIR FINAL JUMP THIS PAST YEAR



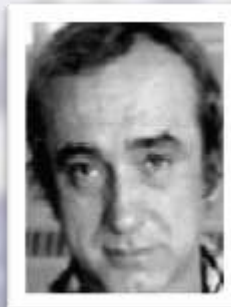
~ ALL THE WAY, BROTHERS ~



Steven Baevich
173d Abn Bde



Shane Cantu
173d ABCT



Bill Clouart
C/2/503



Horst Faas
Combat Photog



Joseph Ross Franklin
173d Abn Bde



Jimmy Furlow
173d Abn Bde



George Gatewood
173d Abn Bde



Nathan Gollnitz
173d ABCT



Larry Gorfine
HHC/173d Bde



Chris Hall, Sr.
173d Abn Bde



Paul Hinds
503rd PIR, WWII



Justin Horsley
173d ABCT



Prior McCallum
503rd PIR, WWII



Daniel Metcalfe
173d ABCT



Paul Murphy
503rd PIR, WWII



Kevin O'Rourke
D Co. Attached

(Sadly, continued on next page....)





~ FINAL SALUTE AND FAREWELL ~
TO OUR SKY SOLDIER, RANGER & VETERAN BROTHERS
WHO LEFT US ON THEIR FINAL JUMP THIS PAST YEAR



~ ALL THE WAY, BROTHERS ~



Kyle Osborn
HHC/1/503d



Velmon Phillips
173d LRRP



Chase Prasnicki
173d ABCT



Adam Ross
173d ABCT



Brenden Salazar
173d ABCT



Martin Scanlon
173d Abn Bde



Orion Sparks
173d ABCT



Bob Stammersky
Recon/2/503d



Rex Stickler
HHC/2/503d



Mike Taylor
173d Ranger



Astor Terry
173d Abn Bde



Jim Wilcox
503rd PIR, WWII

They were young once, and paratroopers.

