

# 2/503d

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



We try  
harder.

# VIETNAM

newsletter

August 2013, Issue 56  
Contact: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)

See all issues to date at 503<sup>rd</sup> Heritage Battalion website:  
[http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue\\_index.htm](http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm)

## ~ 173d Photo of the Month ~



*"The Agony of War"*, by Paul Epley. See Page 34 for Paul's story behind the photo.



# General John R. Deane, Jr. 1919 ~ 2013



John R. Deane was born in San Francisco, California on 8 June 1919. In 1937, he enlisted in the 16th Infantry. After one year, he entered the U.S. Military Academy. Upon graduation from the academy in 1942, he joined the 104th Infantry Division as a platoon leader and, by the end of the war, he had become a battalion commander.

He held the position of Intelligence Officer in Europe from 1945 to 1947 and then returned to Washington, D.C. to work in the Joint War Plans Division, HQDA. In 1951, he became Executive Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. From this post, he went to the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, in 1952. Upon graduation, he served as Chief of Plans in the Military Armistice Commission until 1954.

Returning to the U.S. in late 1954, he attended the Armed Forces Staff College. Upon graduation, he

became Chief of Programs and Budget in the Office of the Chief, Research and Development, HQDA.

From 1958-1959, he attended the National War College. He then became Assistant to the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Europe, Heidelberg, Germany. From February 1961 to June 1962, he was Commander of the 2nd Battle Group in Berlin.

In December 1962, he returned to Washington as Assistant to the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, where he served as Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Deputy Director, Defense Research and Engineering). During this time, he attended the Harvard School of Business Administration, participating in the advanced management program.

On 16 August 1965, he became the Assistant Division Commander, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

General Deane received the assignment of Chief of Staff, Field Forces in Vietnam in February 1966. In July 1966, he became Assistant Division Commander, 1st Infantry Division, Vietnam. In December 1966, he was assigned as Commanding General, 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vietnam.

From October 1967 to September 1968, General Deane served as Director of Doctrine in the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, U.S. Army. From October 1968 to July 1970, he was the Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

In July 1972, he was appointed the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, U.S. Army, where he served until August 1972, when he became the Deputy Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

He was promoted to full general and assumed command of the U.S. Army Materiel Development and Readiness Command on 12 February 1975. General Deane retired from active service on 31 January 1977.

General Deane will be interred in the West Point cemetery on Tuesday, 13 August.



# INCOMING!



## ~ WWII 503d's Colonel Kinzler ~

Thanks for that great history on Col. Kinzler (see Issue 55, Pages 51-57). I had only read of his suicide in passing over the years and never caught any details. In about 1983 our chapter of the 82nd Association here in Tucson had a mini convention called the Western States Regional Conference. Our guest of honor was General Jones. He was living in Tucson at the time and came down to our convention to hang out with the troops. The WWII guys that were there from the 503rd idolized him. You could see by the way he acted that he was a no nonsense natural leader. You could tell his guys would follow him anywhere without question. There were about ten guys from our generation of the 503rd there that also got a chance to meet him.

**Gary Kuitert, Recon/2/503d**

## ~ Corregidor – The Road Back ~

In April of next year, there will be a movie about the 503d at Corregidor premiered at the MacArthur Memorial, during a conference there - the theme of the conference will be BACK TO THE PHILIPPINES. The conveners of the conference are Bay Area Civilian Ex-Prisoners of War (refer to <http://bacepow.net>). I know this because I am one of the producers of this movie.

Presently, my co-producer (and Director, Peter Parsons) and I have completed the movie without outside sponsorship. It is called "CORREGIDOR - THE ROAD BACK".

The film features interviews with a number of 503d veterans that you would be familiar with - Chet Nycum, Jim Mullaney, Tony Sierra, Tony Lopez, Bill Calhoun, and others.

Obviously, I would like to make this premiere as something significant in the 503d calendar. It might be the sort of thing that you guys should grasp as being an opportunity. I may or may not be there, depending on whether I can locate a sponsor.

**Paul Whitman, Webmaster  
503<sup>rd</sup> Heritage Battalion Website**



WWII 503<sup>rd</sup> Trooper, Tony Sierra

## ~ Correction on 4/503 KIA ~

Great issue (July 2013, Issue 55) and great idea to include postings of all 173d KIAs. There is a lot of info about the 4<sup>th</sup> Batt I did not know and guys to add to the KIA and contact lists. Slight correction: The chopper crash of July 27, 1966 took the lives of 6 guys from the company I commanded, Charlie. Jerry Schemel was the 6<sup>th</sup> guy. You show him further down the pages (Page 26) but not as one of the dead that day. I am in touch with his widow plus the widow and daughter of Joe Hunt. An incredibly sad day.



**Jerry Schemel, KIA**

**Jack Tarr, CO C/4/503d**

## ~ 1LT Arthur C. (Skip) Retzlaff ~

Based on an entry in the latest 2/503 Newsletter (Issue 55, Page 29), I looked on-line for anything regarding 1LT Arthur C. (Skip) Retzlaff, KIA on 10 Jul 67. I requested a correction to the site I found that stated 1LT Retzlaff was killed in Quang Ngai when it was actually Dak To, and also included a story about him. The site is <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=103114493&PIpi=73303043>. Mr. Jim Reece, sponsor of the entry, responded to my email asking if he could put the story on the site, which is fine. He also asked if I knew where 1LT Retzlaff was buried, but I do not. I believe I have seen references to him in one of the 2/503 newsletters, and hoped you could put out an inquiry.



**Skip Retzlaff, KIA**

Also, based on an email address in the newsletter, I was able to track down the sister of SGT Jesus (Jay) Torres, also killed on that day. She was very happy to hear from someone who was there when he died. All of you please keep up the good work.

**Billy**  
[Billyg173d@comcast.net](mailto:Billyg173d@comcast.net)

[Billyg173d@comcast.net](mailto:Billyg173d@comcast.net)

**Note:** If anyone knows the burial site of 1LT Retzlaff, please contact Billy at the above email address. Billy, please send in your story along with your last name. Ed

(continued....)



# **INCOMING!**

(concluded)

## **~ A Final Farewell ~**

Thanks for the respectful obituary posting for the late Jerry Langston (B/1/503d, Issue 55, Page 13). I was truly surprised and pleased to see a full-page allotted in the newsletter in his memory. Jerry was a very family oriented and religious person whereas I was a hard drinking don't give a damn individual, so once we left Nam, other than phone calls and emails, we seldom visited with each other but I miss him. Serving in the same fire team we got to know, trust and like each other very well so our individual differences were not noticed by either. Even though we took different paths through life after the military we walked the same one in Nam and that's what I will remember until my path also eventually comes to an end. Again thanks.



**Jerry**

**Dutch Holland**  
**B/1/503d**

**Reply:** It was our honor, Dutch. Ed

## **~ About a Fallen Buddy ~**

Aloha: My name is Jim Akuna, I was with N-75 from March '70 to January '71 and again for my 2nd tour from May '71 to August '71 when we were sent to Ft. Campbell. I had just gotten in the company and met Candrl who I believe was on kilo for fox team. I was on bravo team with Sgt Norwood, Sp-4 Flegel and Sp-4 Knaus (Mouse). Candrl was sent to the line company a short time later (I don't know why) and was KIA. That's all I remember about him. Hope this gives ya a little info.

**Jim Akuna**  
**N75 Rangers**

**Reply:** Thanks Jim. RLTW

## **Bruce Charles Candrl**

**Sergeant**  
**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY**  
**173RD ABN BDE, USARV**  
**Army of the United States**  
**St Louis, Missouri**

**October 02, 1946 to July 14, 1970**  
**BRUCE C CANDRL is on the Wall**  
**at Panel W8, Line 16**

## **~ The Jumping Jew ~**

You know it slipped my mind until tonight, that you might be interested to know what type of reaction I have had from many former Russian Paratroopers...yes that's right, over here are quite a few Russian expatriates who have decided to live a new life in Israel...as Jews they are entitled to move to Israel and get Israeli citizenship.

Because of my Paratrooper Tattoo, many of them tell me that they were Paras in the Russian military, and ask me where and when I served. When I tell them when, 1959-1962, and that I served in the American Army they usually shake my hand and smile, as we now live as neighbors, and who were once sworn enemies.

We Paratroopers, former and present, are really a unique breed, we the "few" who chose to exit at 1000ft. AGL, fully equipped, from a perfectly good aircraft, are still very respected by our former sworn enemies.

Thought you all might find this interesting.....still Airborne All The Way.....The Jumping Jew sends.

**Steve Goodman**  
**B/2/503d**



**Russian Paras ready to board at an airstrip in Russia.**  
**"Airborne! полностью!"**



**Soviet paratroopers, WWII**



## Initiative Targets 120,000 Homeless and At-Risk Vets and Families

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of nearly \$300 million in grants that will help approximately 120,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants have been awarded to 319 community agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

*“With these grants, we are strengthening our partnership with community non-profits across the country to provide Veterans and their families with hope, a home, and a future,”* said Shinseki. *“The work of Supportive Services for Veteran Families program grantees has already helped us prevent and end homelessness among tens of thousands of homeless Veterans and their families, but as long as a single Veteran lives on our streets, we have work to do.”*

Under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, VA is awarding grants to private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that provide services to very low-income Veteran families living in -- or transitioning to -- permanent housing. The SSVF program supports VA's efforts to prevent at-risk Veterans from becoming homeless and rapidly re-house those who have recently fallen into homelessness.

Thanks to the SSVF grants, those community organizations will provide a range of services that promote housing stability and play a key role in connecting Veterans and their family members to VA services such as mental health care and other benefits. Community-based groups can offer temporary financial assistance on behalf of Veterans for rent payments, utility payments, security deposits and moving costs.

This is the third year SSVF grants have helped Veterans and their families find or remain in their homes. Last year, VA provided about \$100 million to assist approximately 50,000 Veterans and family members. In 2009, President Obama and Secretary Shinseki announced the federal government's goal to end Veterans' homelessness in 2015. The grants are intended to help accomplish that goal. According to the 2012 Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, homelessness among Veterans has declined 17.2 percent since 2009.

Through the homeless Veterans initiative, VA committed over \$1 billion in fiscal year 2013 to strengthen programs that prevent and end homelessness among Veterans. VA provides a range of services to

homeless Veterans, including health care, job training, and education.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available at [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at [www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp).



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## The 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team

**VICENZA, Italy - U.S. Army at Vicenza, Italy-based paratroopers from the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), Sky Soldier Families and friends participated in the Run to Remember the Fallen, 5K run, hosted by Vicenza Family and MWR here July 26. There were no awards given for the fastest runners because this event was dedicated to our Fallen Heroes.** (United States Army Europe - USAREUR, photo by Maj. Timothy Chavis/173 ABN PAO)



Sky Soldiers' Run to Remember the Fallen



# Build The Center

Fellow Sky Soldiers:

The staff of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are seeking photos of all the KIA inscribed on the Wall of Honor. If you have any photos of those who fell among our ranks please forward them to the memorial staff with information such as name, rank, date of death, operation/place where death occurred and unit assigned to. They also are seeking photos relating to anything of interest within Vietnam during the conflict (hell, I still prefer saying Vietnam War). If you have such please copy them and send the copies to:



**Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund  
"Build The Center"  
2600 Virginia Avenue N.W.  
Suite 104  
Washington DC 20037**

This is the least we can do to assure our fallen brothers are remembered for their sacrifices to our nation.

Please forward this request to all 173d veterans (or any other combat veterans) on your email lists.

Thanks,

**Dutch Holland  
B/1/503d**



# Sky Soldier on T.V.

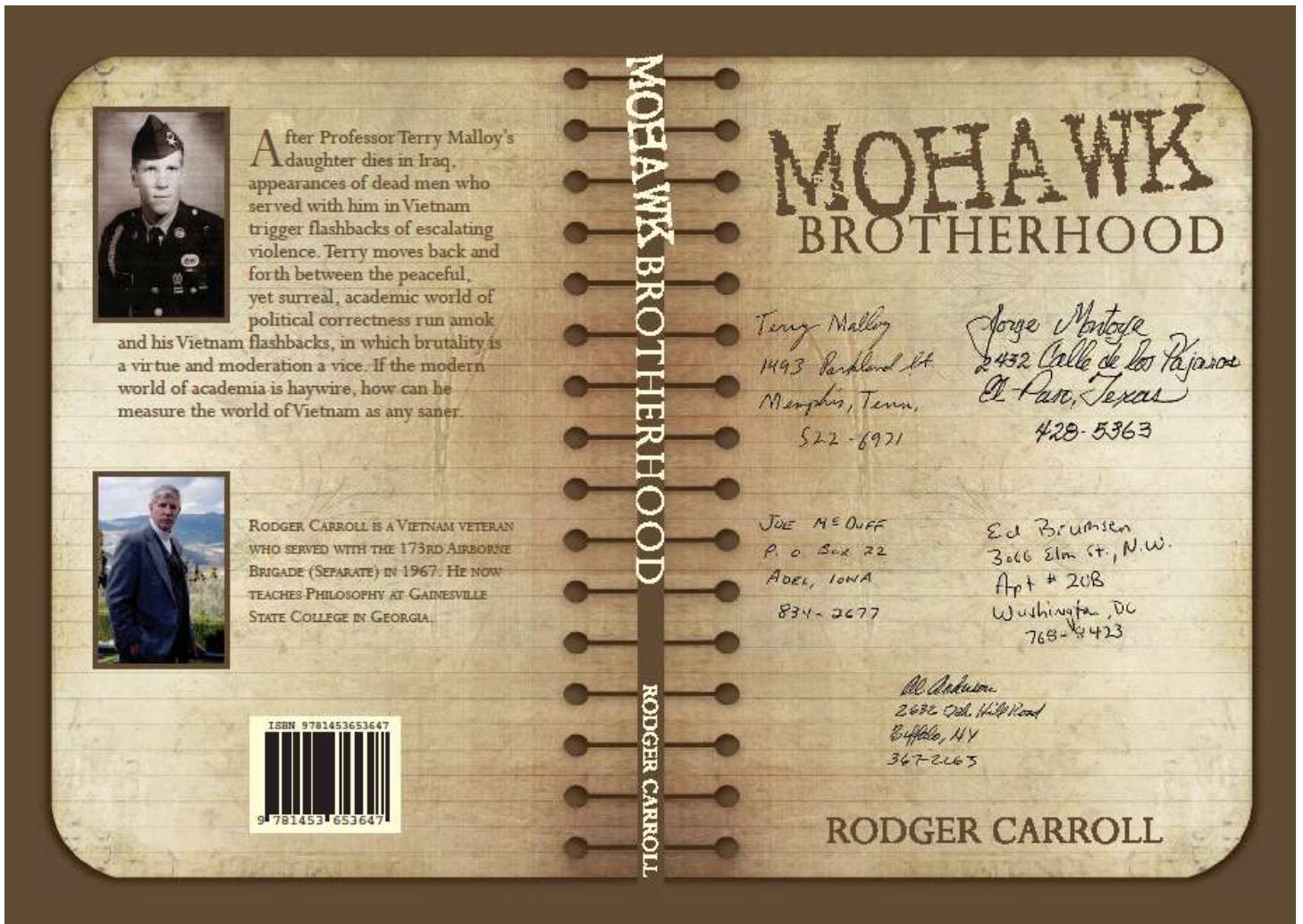


**Bill Vose, Capt., A/HHC/2/503, '66/'67, serving on a daily panel of legal experts providing live commentary during televised coverage of the Zimmerman trial in July. Bill was the Chief Assistant State Attorney in Orlando, Florida until his recent retirement. Today, he is endeavoring to apply his legal expertise to assist veterans with their disability claims before the VA.**



## A SKY SOLDIER'S NEW BOOK....BY RODGER CARROLL, B/2/503, '67

*"The claymores and grenades had cleared a large area. Trees were down. Someone groaned. Terry lifted the branch of a felled tree. A man struggled to stand on bloody legs. The flesh around one of his knees had been shredded. A kneecap dangled from a shard of skin."*



“The author’s narrative rings with authenticity, even in overdrawn caricatures of the politically correct. A second plot-line – Terry’s developing romance with fellow professor Sarah Stableford – is realistically handled. Foremost, the author is to be commended for his ability to make Malloy’s long-dead squad mates an integral part of the narrative. The novels’ epilogue – Terry visiting the Vietnam Memorial with his grandson – will bring tears. There he again meets Duffy, Cochise, Anderson, and Brumsen, all accompanied by his daughter who urges him to, ‘Stay with the living, not the dead. Remember us.’”

“Any reader who lived through the Vietnam era, who remembers someone scarred by that conflict, will appreciate the power of *Mohawk Brotherhood*.”

Gary Presley

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

For more information about Rodger’s book, search [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) for *Mohawk Brothers*



# NO MAN'S LAND

By Col. George W. Krause, (Ret)

2/503d Battalion Commander, 1970

The following entry was made in the 2d Battalion (Airborne) 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry's History. "On 27 June 1970, at grid 930038, Stag I was engaged by 10 VC resulting in three US WIA, two PF KIA and 1 PF WIA."

My recollection of this event is as follows: It was early afternoon on 27 June 1970. A couple members of my tactical operations group and I were heading north in the An Lao Valley in my Command and Control (C&C) helicopter, when we overheard a request for a "Dust Off" (Medical Evacuation Helicopter) from a 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion tactical unit. It was from Stag I, a small battalion advisory unit to the Vietnamese Provisional Forces (PF). All available aircraft, except for my C&C helicopter, had been diverted early that day to the south where a large engagement with the NVA was on-going.

Stag I, reported that all of the US soldiers were wounded, one seriously, and they needed help now. I directed the pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Lewandowski (unsure of last name), the air field commander at LZ English, to head for the engagement site. We soon arrived at the engagement site, and a query to the RTO on the ground indicated that they were not receiving any ground fire at this time. The decision was made to go in for the pickup. Captain Jennings (Bn S-3) and one of the door gunners were assigned to pick up the wounded, while 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Rodriguez (artillery liaison officer, 3/319 Artillery Abn), Sergeant Turner and I would provide cover and protection for the helicopter during the evacuation process. With Lieutenant Rodriguez and Sergeant Turner still providing cover, I turned to assist in the evacuation of the wounded. The RTO, who acted so calm on the radio, was severely wounded in the right arm. I had to cut away his radio backpack harness to ease his lift into the helicopter. Since the helicopter would be overloaded, two dead and four wounded, Lieutenant Rodriguez, Sergeant Turner and I remained at the ambush site until the battalion's ready reaction platoon could be inserted to take over the ground mission. During the evacuation operation, the remaining PF's disappeared, leaving the three of us in "No Man's Land" with a group of civilians we had detained in vicinity of where the ambush was executed. With Lieutenant Rodriguez and I providing security, Sergeant Turner, without regard to his personal safety, was investigating the site where the

explosion took place. There was evidence of a 105mm round and several smaller rounds having been detonated along a well-worn trail by wires leading into the brush line. Sergeant Turner followed the wires into the brush and found two sets of four batteries at the other ends of the wires. The ambush site had been well prepared sometime in the past as the wires were covered by over-grown and dead grass, and there was no sign of fresh activity outside the area where the batteries were found. At that time I recalled that on our airborne approach to the engagement site, Sergeant Turner had pointed out to me, two civilians moving rapidly to the north away from the engagement site. It is conceivable that these two individuals were responsible for detonating the explosives at the ambush site.

We remained at the ambush site until the battalion's ready reaction force had landed and assumed responsibility for further investigation of the ambush.

Both Lieutenant Rodriguez and Sergeant Turner performed in an exemplary manner and were recommended for awards for valor.

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May 19, 1994

Dear General Williamson:

Reference our conversation this date concerning Staff Sergeant Al Turner. I can only assume that the Staff Sergeant Al Turner who we have discussed is Edwin Turner, who we all know as "Al" Turner. I was really shocked upon reading of his death under the block. "In Memorandum" of the winter issue of *Sky Soldier*. This reaction was mild in comparison with my feelings after having read and reread *An Open Letter For The 173<sup>rd</sup> ABN BDE Members*, written by Al's widow, Debbie.



General Ellis Williamson  
Cmdr, 173d Airborne Bde

(continued....)



Staff Sergeant Al Turner was an outstanding soldier, who served me well during our overlapping tours in 1970, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (Airborne) 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, in the Republic of Vietnam. I commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion from January 10, 1970, until October 1, 1970. SSG Turner was assigned to the battalion most, if not all, of the time covered by this period of my command.

Shortly after assuming command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Al Turner was selected by me to be my driver/RTO. When he had free time, he would be in the Tactical Operation Center (TOC), learning about the battalion's intelligence collection effort and operation of the TOC. This eagerness to learn coupled with his training with Special Forces made him an outstanding operations specialist. He soon was promoted to sergeant. After a short period of outstanding performances as both my driver/RTO and part-time operations specialist, he was promoted to staff sergeant, and reassigned as an assistant operations sergeant working in the Battalion TOC. This little scenario lets you know how rapidly he learned and how valuable he was to me and to the battalion.

During tactical operations he was always the true professional, extremely knowledgeable of his job, always prepared for any emergency, and fearless in facing the unknown.

After an engagement on Jun 27, 1970, Sergeant Turner was recommended for the Bronze Star for Valor. I believe, however, the he was awarded the Air Medal with "V" Device for heroism. I don't have any record in my personal file to confirm this award. For my conduct during this engagement I was awarded the Air Medal with "V" Device (fifth Oak Leaf Cluster) by Headquarters 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, General Orders Number 2337, August 30, 1970, TC 439. This latter information may be helpful in locating Staff Sergeant Turner's award.



Air Medal w/V

Sincerely,

Colonel George W. Krause, USA Ret.

**Note:** This report originally appeared in the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade (Sep), Second Edition, by Turner Publishing. Efforts to locate Mrs. Turner's letter proved unsuccessful.

# Eye Therapy Has It Over Antidepressant for PTSD

*Medscape News*  
11 July 2013

**Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) may be a more efficacious treatment for patients with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than antidepressant medication, new research suggests.**



A small, randomized trial of male survivors of the ongoing war in Pakistan with clinically diagnosed PTSD found that after 6 weeks, 90% of those who received weekly EMDR therapy showed treatment response. The EMDR group also had a significantly greater overall drop in symptom severity scores compared with those who received daily 20-mg doses of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) paroxetine.

*"We were very interested in the response rates between these 2 therapies,"* lead author Asad Ullah Jan, from the Armed Forces Institute of Mental Health Rawalpindi, in Pakistan, told *Medscape Medical News*. *"And we found that EMDR, which is a psychological therapy, was far superior to paroxetine. It has just been marvelous for us,"* said Dr. Jan.

[Sent in by Dr. Scott Fairchild, Psy.D, LTC 82<sup>nd</sup> Abn Ret]



## A Farewell to Larey McCorkle A Friend and Brother

Sky Soldiers and Sky Soldier families, it is my sad duty to inform you that Vietnam-era Sky Soldier Larey McCorkle's wife Zeyda reports that Larey passed away this morning (July 18). Funeral plans are not yet known to be final, but interment is likely to be in either Prince William or Culpeper County, VA.



Larey

It is the Chapter Leadership Team's desire to honor the passing of all Chapter-area Sky Soldiers with a Chapter presence at the funeral. If you wish to participate in honoring Larey, please contact Michael Montie ([memontie@aol.com](mailto:memontie@aol.com)) at your earliest convenience.

Many thanks to Zeyda for contacting Chris Deems, the Chapter's outstanding Deceased Veteran Families Leader, in a timely manner. Your Leadership Team asks that all Chapter members be sure to inform us of the passing of our Sky Soldiers. Honoring and remembering the comrades who served with us is one of the obligations that we who survived our service must carry out.

AATW,

Michael Montie  
C/4/503, '68-'69  
Chapter President

## Larey McCorkle with his 'No DEROS Alpha' buddies at 2000 reunion in Rochester, MN



L-R, front row: Chuck Engle & Richard Ware  
Middle row: Mike Sturges, Jack "Jackattack" Ribera,  
Jim Gettel, Larey McCorkle & Dominick "Dom"  
Cacciatore  
Back row: Leo "Frenchy" Pellerin & Mike Thibault

## The Epitome of the Word, *Brother*

Larey was a class act. He was loved by all. He had a special spot in his heart over the years for Woody Davis and Bob Lucas who pulled him wounded from the bush. Cpt. Ed Carns had replaced Cpt. Kelley when Larey was 'hit' and was part of getting Larey medivac'd. Larey is the epitome of the word 'brother'. He could always be seen (but not often heard) at reunions, and had a wicked sense of humor, and some of the all-time great hangovers with my friend Mike Sturges. It was *our* honor and benefit to have known him and to have shared our walk in the jungle together in 1966. My own story is post-dated. When vanity license plate tags came out, I told Larey that I was going to get A-2-503. He said, "Cool, what a good idea." A couple weeks later at an event Larey asked me to come see his new tags. Yup - it was A-2-503. He looked at me and said - "You have to be quick to keep up with a Sky Soldier".

Mike Thibault, A/2/503d



Larey, extreme right in white shirt with some of his 173d buddies. He must now be sharing stories with three other troopers from this photo, Don "Rocky" Rockholt, Jim "Skid" Skidmore and Bob Stokes who were part of the squad which went ahead and saved a place and a beer at the Sky Soldier table for their buddy, Larey.

I don't know where to start, it's like a small part of my life just disappeared when I read that. Larey was truly a friend who was also an annual traveling companion. I first met Larey at the '85 reunion in D.C, as I was preparing to head to Saudi. We became friends and stayed in touch, which led us to share the cost of a room in Chicago '88. That started an annual room sharing situation through 2006 in Bragg that included numerous trips to Cocoa Beach and even a Heritage Days at Ft. Bragg one September (or two). We had some really, I mean really great times and Larey's humor, as dry as it was, with many a one liner was just plain fun. Mike 'T' mentioned the great hangovers, very often caused by the very Wild Turkey and Coors Light, LOL. I can only concur with Mike 'T' that it was *our* honor to have humped the jungle and the reunions with such a good man. His nightmares have ended. God Bless 'Ol friend.

Woody Davis, A/2/503d

(continued....)



**A few more pics of our friend Larey with his Band of Brothers....**



**~ A Good Man Died Today ~  
by Patrick McFarland  
October 3, 2010**

**A good man died today.  
Buildings did not close.  
Flags were not flown at  
half mast.**

**School children  
attended classes  
and life went on  
as it did yesterday  
and will again  
tomorrow.**

**But he was my friend  
and people should know.  
A good man died today.**



# Experts Recover Military Personnel Records 40 Years After Fire

By Donna Miles, *American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2013 - Forty years ago today, an enormous fire erupted at the National Personnel Records Center in suburban St. Louis. Burning uncontrollably for almost 24 hours, it destroyed some 16 million to 18 million military personnel records including official documents veterans need to apply for the benefits they've earned.



**A devastating July 12, 1973, fire at the National Personnel Records Center in suburban St. Louis, shown in this file photo, destroyed some 16 million to 18 million military personnel records. Today, a special team at the center continues working to piece together the remnants, sometimes literally, to ensure veterans and their descendants have the documentation they need to qualify for service-related benefits.** (Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration)

Today, a team of about 30 people continues to put the pieces back together. They use the latest restoration techniques so reference technicians can gleam details from charred and water-damaged documents.

*"It's like a MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] unit,"* Marta O'Neill, who heads the National Personnel Records Center's Preservation Lab, said during a telephone interview. *"There may be 15 different routes that a record could take so we can still preserve the information and get the benefits to the veteran."*

The July 12, 1973, fire destroyed up to 80 percent of the 22 million records of veterans of the Army, Army Air Force and Air Force who served between 1912 and 1963, reported William Seibert, senior archivist and chief of archival operations at the National Archives in St. Louis.

About 85 percent of the records of soldiers discharged between 1912 and 1959, including veterans of World War II and the Korean War, went up in smoke.

In addition, about 75 percent of the records of airman with last names beginning with "H" through "Z" who left service between 1947 and 1963 were lost.

The true extent of the loss remains a mystery, because the center had no central registry of its holdings at the time, explained Seibert. Even if it was physically possible to reconstruct every single missing document, nobody knows for sure which ones they are, he said. Records are being tracked down and, when necessary, restored, by request. And four decades after the fire, requests for documents from the burned holdings or "B-Files" continue to roll in at the rate of 200 to 300 every day, O'Neill said.

Some come from veterans needing a record of their service to receive federal health-care, home loans or other veterans' benefits, she said. A homeless veteran, for example, may need a copy of his or her DD-214 discharge certificate to qualify for Department of Veterans Affairs-sponsored shelters or meals.

Sometimes requests come from veterans' families, needing the records to apply for entitlements on their loved one's behalf, or to have them buried in a national cemetery. In some cases, family members may need the records to qualify for scholarships or other benefits based on their family's military affiliation.

Donning gloves to handle the fragile materials, they use special equipment and techniques to clean documents of debris and mold, separate pages stuck together for the past 40 years and piece together brittle fragments into more complete documents.

State-of-the-art digital technology now helps them reconstruct documents once considered beyond repair, O'Neill said. *"You can't reverse ash,"* she said. *"But you can use scanners and digital software to enhance the document so the text on the burned part can be lifted and revealed. Basically, you look at a piece of ash, and when you digitally enhance it, you can see the writing on it."*

But the biggest reward of the mission, she said, is being able to recover documents that can make a real difference in someone's life.

*"We are helping so many people in so many ways,"* she said.

**Preservation technician Susan Davis is part of a team working to restore military personnel records damaged during a July 12, 1973, fire at the National Personnel Records Center in suburban St. Louis.** (Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration)



[Except sent in by Col. Tim Cloonan, 173d surgeon, Ret]



# Damn All-American Paratroopers Think They Have Balls of Steel..... *They Do*



Dec. 23, 1944 – “Battle of the Bulge” – An entire U.S. armored division was retreating from the Germans in the Ardennes forest when a sergeant in a tank destroyer spotted an American digging a foxhole. The GI, PFC Martin, 325<sup>th</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment, looked up and asked, “Are you looking for a safe place?” “Yeah,” answered the tanker. “Well, buddy,” he drawled, “just pull your vehicle behind me...”

***I’m the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne  
and this is as far as the  
bastards are going.”***

[Sent in by John Erskine, Col (Ret), 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> SF]

## The Battle of the Bulge

The Battle of the Bulge, fought over the winter months of 1944 – 1945, was the last major Nazi offensive against the Allies in World War Two. The battle was a last ditch attempt by Hitler to split the Allies in two in their drive towards Germany and destroy their ability to supply themselves.

The Battle of the Bulge started on December 16th 1944. Hitler had convinced himself that the alliance between Britain, France and America in the western sector of Europe was not strong and that a major attack and defeat would break up the alliance. Therefore, he ordered a massive attack against what were primarily American forces. The attack is strictly known as the Ardennes Offensive but because the initial attack by the Germans created a bulge in the Allied front line, it has become more commonly known as the Battle of the Bulge.

Hitler’s plan was to launch a massive attack using three armies on the Allies which would, in his mind, destabilize their accord and also take the huge port of Antwerp through which a great deal of supplies was reaching the Allies.

The plan was:

- The Sixth Panzer Army, led by Sepp Dietrich, was to lead the attack and to capture Antwerp.
- The Fifth Panzer Army, led by Manteuffel, was to attack the centre of the American forces, capture the strategic road and rail centre of St Vith and then drive on to Brussels.
- The Seventh Army, led by Brandenberger, was to attack in the southern flank, as designated by Hitler, and to create a buffer zone to prevent American reinforcements from attacking the Fifth Panzer Army.
- The Fifteenth Army was to be held in reserve to counter any Allied attack when they took place.

Hitler believed that his forces would be able to surround and cut off Canada’s First Army, America’s First and Ninth Armies and Britain’s Second Army. On paper, it was a seemingly absurd plan – especially as Germany had been in retreat since D-Day, her military was depleted of supplies and was facing the awesome might of the Allies. However, Hitler, as commander-in-chief of the military, decreed that the attack should take place.

*(continued....)*



The battle started with a two-hour bombardment of the Allies lines that was followed by a huge armoured attack with the majority of the German armoured might based at the Schnee Eifel. The Germans experienced great success to start with. Why was this?

- The Allies were surprised by the attack. They had received little intelligence that such an attack would take place.
- Before the attack started, English speaking German soldiers dressed in American uniforms went behind the lines of the Allies and caused havoc by spreading misinformation, changing road signs and cutting telephone lines. Those who were caught were shot after a court martial.



Photographed on Dec. 23, 1944, but not published in *LIFE* until June 1945. Behind a cell block, German prisoners are bound to stakes by MPs. Tried and convicted as spies, they are about to be executed. (*Life Magazine*)

- The weather was also in Hitler's favor. Low cloud and fog meant that the superior air force of the Allies could not be used – especially the tank-busting Typhoons of the RAF or Mustang fighters from the USAAF which would have been used against the German tanks. Though the weather was typical for the Ardennes in winter, the ground was hard enough for military vehicles to cross and this suited the armoured attack Hitler envisaged.

However, the success of the Germans lasted just two days. Despite punching a bulge into the Allies front line, the Germans could not capitalize on this. The Germans had based their attack on a massive armoured onslaught. However, such an attack required fuel to maintain it and the Germans simply did not possess such quantities of fuel.

By December 22nd, the weather started to clear, thus allowing the Allies to bring their air power into force and on the following day, the Americans started a counter-attack against the Germans.

On Christmas Eve, the Allies experienced the first ever attack by jet bombers. Sixteen German ME-262's attacked rail yards in an attempt to upset the ability of the Allies to supply themselves. However, without fuel for their armoured vehicles, any success in the air was meaningless.

The Germans had advanced 60 miles in two days but from December 18th on, they were in a position of stalemate. The fighting was ferocious. The New Year's period was a time of particularly intensive fighting as the Germans attempted to start a second front in Holland. This time in the Ardennes coincided with a period of intense cold and rain and the soldiers on the ground faced very difficult conditions. Trench foot was a common problem for infantrymen, as was exposure.

By mid-January 1945, the effect of lack of fuel was becoming evident as the Germans had to simply abandon their vehicles. The 1st SS Panzer Division, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Joachim Peiper, had to make their way back to Germany on foot. This was the unit that was responsible for the Malmédy Massacre.

The Battle of the Bulge was the largest battle fought by the Americans in World War Two. 600,000 American troops were involved in the battle. The Americans lost 81,000 men while the Germans lost 100,000 killed, wounded and captured.

Could the Germans have won the battle? Almost certainly not, as they had one huge problem – their inability to keep their armoured columns supplied with fuel. Any form of armoured attack needed a constant supply of fuel – and Allied bombing of fuel plants in Germany meant that such supplies did not exist. Field Marshall von Rundstedt believed all along that the plan was too ambitious. When on trial after the war, von Rundstedt said that *"all, absolutely all, conditions for the possible success of such an offensive were lacking."* His views were shared by General von Mellenthin:

***"The Ardennes battle drives home the lesson that a large-scale offensive by massed armour has no hope of success against an enemy who enjoys supreme command of the air. Our precious reserves had been expended, and nothing was available to ward off the impending catastrophe in the east."***

Also, Hitler's plan that a successful attack would split the Allies was also based on false hope. If anything, such an attack helped to engender a greater feeling of kinship with one consolidated aim - to defeat Nazi Germany.

[Source: The History Learning Site]



# More About Maggie

I spent 30 minutes alone with this great Lady and Soldier in a tent in BIEN HOA, RVN in July 1965, when she visited the 2 Bn, 503d Para Inf Regt, of the Famed 173 ABN BDE (Sep).



Her only complaint was *"that the Troopers had to settle for an old over the hill entertainer rather than be entertained by younger ladies closer to their age"*.

She had been an Army Nurse in the Pacific Theater during WWII and held the rank of Lt Col in the Reserves when I met her.

She was truly a great LADY and SOLDIER whom I felt very privileged to have met and spent time with.

MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON HER SOUL.

**WILLIAM E. WHITE**  
LT COL, INF  
XO, 2d Bn, 503d Para Inf Regt  
1964-1965



*Rest easy, Colonel, you did your job.*

# *I Joined the Army To See the World*

Sung to the tune of 'I Joined the Navy To See The World'. Lyrics written during Basic Training at Ft. Polk, LA in 1965. No shit.

*I joined the Army  
To see the world,  
But what do I see?  
I'm on K.P.*

*I read the poster,  
I signed the card,  
But what am I doin'?'  
I'm pullin' guard.*

*Police call, police call,  
Pick-up all the trash.  
Wash the jeep,  
Make your bunk.  
Shove it up your ass!*

*I need some help,  
I need it fast,  
I can-not stop the tears.  
Oh why did I join this Army,  
For 37 years?!*

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



In Basic we had little time, but a lot of potatoes on our hands.



## Sad Memories of a Time at War; All Scars are Not Visible

I have a rather sad story that involved myself and my RTO, PFC Ernie Fulcher, about the 10 July '67 battle involving B Company, 4th Batt.

I was a 2d Lt's Arty Recon Sgt, and Sp4 Ernie Fulcher was my RTO. Well, the morning of the 10th the LT had to go to a meeting about the day's operation so I went and picked up the mail for him and myself. The Lieutenant had a *Playboy* magazine so when I got back to my foxhole at the FB, Ernie and I perused thru it. The LT came up, saw us looking at his magazine and 'demanded' his magazine back, LOL.

I did not know it but a Sgt E5 (a gun bunny for B 3/319th) and a Spec 4, also a gun bunny, had wanted to go out on an arty recon FO team, so the LT told me and Fulcher we would not be going out on the day's operation. I VIGOROUSLY protested as I knew the E-5 and this Spec4 did not know anything about pace counts, calling in arty and how to use proper radio procedures in the event of contact with the enemy.

I had been online since Dec 1966 and had been trained by Cpl 'Pappy' Patchin and I knew what to do in any situation, but the LT just over-ruled my objections about the Sergeant and the other kid going out in my and Fulcher's place.

Less than 3 hours later Fulcher and I were in the arty FDC tent just listening to the radio traffic when I heard the LT's voice over the net and it was very nervous and excited. The background noise of AK's, small arms fire, machine gun fire, yelling of GI's and mortar rounds being lobbed in was unbearable knowing that I should have been out there as an experienced Recon Sgt instead of those 2 rookies. Evidently, one mortar round landed in the headquarters' element AO and killed the Lieutenant, the Sergeant, the Arty RTO, and severely wounded Cpt Severson and his RTO, Tim Owens.

I will NEVER forgive myself for not taking a more vocal and angry stand against what the LT ordered me and Fulcher to do that day. I might also have been killed but I would not have been so close to the headquarters element that ALL of them were killed or wounded in one fell swoop!

I carry this memory to this very day.

**Jim Baskin**  
B/4/503d

## In Memory of Lewis F. Robards III

March 4, 1946 - June 4, 2012

### Obituary

Lewis Franklin Robards III, 66, of Bartlett passed on Monday, June 4, 2012. He is preceded in death by his parents, Lewis and Gertrude Robards. Lewis leaves behind; his wife, Katha (Kimmons) Robards, children, Kimberly (Shaun) Berryhill, Jimmie Baker, and Michelle Brubaker, grandchildren, Lauren Thompson, Daniel Sprague, Alex Morales, Stephen Berryhill, Lexxis Schlemmer, and Landon Brubaker, siblings, Jeff (Marcia) Robards of Knoxville, TN., Rex Robards of Ft. Stockton, TX., Rhonda Arias of Houston, TX., and Aunt, Flora (Paul) Searcy of Leesburg, FL. Lewis was retired from Shelby Co. Government General Sessions Criminal Court, US Army Veteran serving with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vietnam, awarded the Bronze Star, Hill 875 Survivor, member of Unity Masonic Lodge #95, Past Parton Mizpah Chapter# 62, Order of the Eastern Star, Past Chairman of the Board Memphis Assembly #1, and Holder of the Grand Cross of Color. Memphis Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens is entrusted with services.



**Lew**



**LEWIS ROBARDS PASSES IN 2012.** Late notification that **Lew Robards**, C Company, 4/503d (3/67 - 3/68) died of lung cancer June 4, 2012. He was Cpt Connelly's and SGT Schalavin's RTO on Hill 875.

**Jack Tarr**  
CO, C/4/503d



# Army Veterans Jump Into 173rd Airborne Brigade 50th Anniversary Celebration

By: Lindsey Wopschall

Updated: July 22, 2013



**I**t was a big anniversary for dozens of army retirees in Frederick, OK.

Retired Army members came together today at Frederick Army Air Field for a big anniversary. Instructors are giving some final tips before these Sky Soldiers take flight.

Two days of training, all for just 60 seconds of thrill. For a jump honoring the 173rd Airborne Brigade for their 50 years of service.

*"People in the military who have served have that gut instinct, that heart, it's really the only way we can pay homage and tribute to our fellow service men and women,"* said Bill Jordan, from the WWII Airborne Demonstration team.

About 20 former soldiers came from all over the country to take an early morning ride in the sky on the World War II C47 used in the Normandy invasion, only to find their way back down to the ground.

But their exit strategy looked a little different. It's a feeling that's quite familiar to these folks, even though it's been about 30 years since many of them have found themselves in the air like this.

But for 82 year-old Dayton Herrington, a retired Army Sgt. Major, the feeling and technique came rushing back. *"It's when you go out the door it's muscle memory and you just do it the way you are supposed to do it without even thinking about it,"* he said.

*"It's a feeling, it's a yearning, it's almost like being patriotic, it's something that you can really not describe,"* said Jordan.

Mary Iskerka, a retired Army paratrooper, has a different way to describe her morning, now. *"To jump on that plane which was used in the Normandy invasion you'll never have another opportunity to do something like that,"* she said.

An opportunity to remember, honor and serve for many more years to come.

More jumps will be conducted by the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team during their Open Hangar Day on July 27th.

**Go to this website for more information:**

[http://www.wiiadt.org/open\\_hangar\\_day.htm](http://www.wiiadt.org/open_hangar_day.htm)



# The Sorrow of War

An excerpt

By Bao Ninh

Since returning to Hanoi I've had to live with this parade of horrific memories, day after day, long night after long night. For how many years now?

For how many more years?

Often in the middle of a busy street, in broad daylight, I've suddenly become lost in a daydream. On smelling the stink of rotten meat I've suddenly imagined I was back crossing Hamburger Hill in 1972, walking over strewn corpses. The stench of death is often so overpowering I have to stop in the middle of the pavement, holding my nose, while startled, suspicious people step around me, avoiding my mad stare.

In my bedroom, on many nights the helicopters attack overhead. The dreaded whump-whump-whump of their rotor blades bringing horror for us in the field. I curl up in defense against the expected vapour-streak and the howling of their rockets.

But the whump-whump-whump continues without the attack, and the helicopter images dissolve, and I see in its place a ceiling fan. Whump-whump-whump.

I am watching a US war movie with scenes of American soldiers yelling as they launch themselves into combat on the TV screen and once again I'm ready to jump in and mix it in the fiery scene of blood, mad killing and brutality that warps soul and personality. The thirst for killing, the cruelty, the animal psychology, the evil desperation. I sit dizzied, shocked by the barbarous excitement of reliving close combat with bayonets and rifle-butts. My heart beats rapidly as I stare at the dark corners of the room where ghost soldiers emerge, shredded with gaping wounds.

My life seems little different from that of a sampan pushed upstream towards the past. The future lied to us, there long ago in the past. There is no new life, no new era, nor is it hope for a beautiful future that now drives me on, but rather the opposite. The hope is contained in the beautiful pre-war past.

The tragedies of the war years have bequeathed to my soul the spiritual strength that allows me to escape the infinite present. The little trust and will to live that remains stems not from my illusions but from the power of my recall.

Still, even in the midst of my reminiscences I can't avoid admitting there seems little left for me to hope for. From my life before soldiering there remains sadly little. That wonderful period has been heartlessly extinguished. The lucky start of fortune I once had seems also to be gone forever. It once shone brightly, but quickly burnt out. The aura of hope in those early post-war days swiftly faded.

Those who survived continue to live. But that will has gone, that burning will which was once Vietnam's salvation. Where is the reward for enlightenment due to us for attaining our sacred war goals? Our history-making efforts for the great generation have been to no avail. What's so different here and now from the vulgar and cruel life we all experienced during the war?

Even me, I'm nearly forty. I was eighteen at the start of the war in 1965, twenty-eight at the fall of Saigon in 1975. So, how many long years have passed? Ten or eleven? Twelve. No. Thirteen? Another year with the MIA team. Or was it longer? And more time wandering as a Veteran. Closer to fourteen years lost because of the war.

And me already forty. An age I once thought distant, strange, somehow unattainable.

From the horizon of the distant past an immense sad wind, like an endless sorrow, busts and blows through the cities, through the villages, and through my life.



**Bao Ninh was born in Hanoi. During the Vietnam war he served with the 27<sup>th</sup> Youth Brigade. Of the five-hundred who went to war with the brigade in 1969, he is one of ten who survived.**



# ~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



~ 2013 ~



**Vietnam Veterans of America 2013 National Convention**, August 13-17, 2013, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Jacksonville, FL.  
Contact Web: [vva.org](http://vva.org)



**101<sup>st</sup> Airborne 68th Annual Reunion**, August 14-17, 2013 at the Red Lion on the River, 909 N Hayden Island Drive, Portland, Oregon  
Contact:  
Jerry Gomes, Oregon Cascade Chapter  
Phn: 503-668-6127  
National Website: [www.ScreamingEagle.org](http://www.ScreamingEagle.org)



**67<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion, Crossroads of America Indianapolis 2013**, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division Association, August 14-17, 2013, Marriott East Hotel, Indianapolis, IN.

Contact:  
Tillman E. Beikes Indianapolis All Airborne Chapter  
Larry Marcum, Convention Treasurer  
Web: [www.indianaairborne.org/](http://www.indianaairborne.org/)



**173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion**, August 23-29, 2013, Las Vegas, NV. See Page 45 for registration form.  
Contact: Jim Bradley  
Phn: 727-376-2576 (after 4:30 p.m. EST)  
Eml: [webmaster@173rdairborne.com](mailto:webmaster@173rdairborne.com)  
Web: [www.2013Reunion.com](http://www.2013Reunion.com)



**101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Vietnam Veterans 19<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:randhgreen@sio.midco.net)



**2013 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute RCT Reunion, the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion of the 503<sup>rd</sup> Parachute RCT Association, World War II, Inc.**, September 5-8, 2013, Double Tree Suites, Bentonville, AR.

Contact:  
Nelson Gatewood  
Phn: 870-856-2216



**11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division Association Reunion**, September 22-26, 2013, Fayetteville, NC.

Contact:  
Bert Kurland  
President  
Eml: [berwan@embarqmail.com](mailto:berwan@embarqmail.com)



**26<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida All Airborne Days**, October 3-5, 2013, Hilton Ft. Lauderdale-Airport Hotel, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Contact:  
Bob Buffington  
South Florida All Airborne Chapter  
Contact:  
Bob Buffington  
Eml: [abnbuff@gmail.com](mailto:abnbuff@gmail.com)



**All Ohio Days**, hosted by the Akron Chapter of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, honoring all paratroopers and glider trooper who have served or are now serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, October 4-5, 2013, Clarion Inn, Hudson, Ohio.

Contact:  
Robert Winkler  
Chairman/Secretary, 82<sup>nd</sup> Akron Chap.  
Phn: 330-325-7574  
Eml: [akronchapabn82@yahoo.com](mailto:akronchapabn82@yahoo.com)



**42nd Annual Reunion 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Platoon Scout Dog, 101<sup>st</sup> ABN Division**, Vietnam 1966-71, October 4-6, 2013, Branson, Missouri.

Contact:  
Jackie McIntyre  
Phn: (612) 522-9377  
Eml: [42ndmom@comcast.net](mailto:42ndmom@comcast.net)

Note: If you're aware of any upcoming *Airborne* or *attached units'* reunions please send details to: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)

**AIRBORNE...ALL THE WAY!**



**My wife encouraged me to send this to you. It was a short speech I gave to my church congregation for a Memorial Day ceremony. She thought you might like to read it.**

**Rodger Carroll  
B/2/503d, '67**

## **Remembering & Saluting Buddies on Memorial Day**

With Memorial Day we have a mixture of solemnity and celebration. I'm not referring to the picnics and barbeques. We are here to commemorate the lives of servicemen and women who gave up their tomorrows for us and for the communities we share with each other and with our families.



**Rodger**

I want to celebrate the lives of two men who I served with in Vietnam. No one knows anybody's first name in the service. So, I present you with Cassidy and Duckett. I knew these men. They were in my squad. Both were around twenty years old.

Cassidy was a tall, lanky kid from Buffalo, NY. He had a child whom he had never seen. He kept showing us every new picture he received from his wife, talking about the time he could be home and hold his son in his arms.

Duckett grew up in Washington, D.C. He had dreams of using the GI bill to go to college. He planned on staying in the Army after he received his college degree. When we first met, he found out I was from Tennessee. From then on, he called me hillbilly. Anyone from Tennessee had to be a hillbilly.

Both men died in the jungles of Vietnam. But, I remember them. Cassidy and Duckett gave up all their tomorrows and all their dreams for me, and for you. Like Cassidy and Duckett, there are thousands of young men and women, each one an individual with their own dreams and hopes, who risked everything so that you and I could live the blessed lives we have. These are the people we are celebrating and remembering today. These men and women fulfilled all their promises to their country to the last full measure.

Herodotus quotes a king in his history of the Peloponnesian War. The king states that in peace sons bury their fathers. In war, fathers bury their sons. Herodotus is trying to say that war disrupts the ongoing continuity of the nature that God created. It's not natural

for fathers to bury their sons and daughters who would never marry or have kids, who would never share in the community which they fought so hard for and gave their lives. Families are natural. Anything that stops families is, I believe, a disruption of the way God meant us to live.

So, if war is not natural, if it doesn't come from nature, it must be created by man, who is an imperfect being. War is an imperfect art that imperfect man practices. However, let us not delude ourselves, there are wars that are just, that need to be fought. But the need doesn't make it any the less tragic for the thousands of men, and now unfortunately women, who give up all their tomorrows.

In Christianity, we believe that with every death, there is a resurrection. So let us continue to resurrect and celebrate the memory of these kids in some small measure.

Let us also remember these young men and women who willingly put themselves in harm's way for us. As we pray every Sunday, may God look over every one of those who are still putting themselves in harm's way and may He bring all of them home, alive and unharmed, to their families, their spouses, and their children and their communities. ###

## **Raymond Senter Cassidy**

**Specialist Four**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY**

**173RD ABN BDE, USARV**

**Army of the United States**

**Patchogue, New York**

**May 6, 1947 to April 24, 1967**

**RAYMOND S. CASSIDY is on the Wall at**

**Panel 18E, Line 78**

## **Joseph L. Duckett, Jr.**

**Private First Class**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY,**

**173RD ABN BDE, USARV**

**Army of the United States**

**Washington, District of Columbia**

**February 24, 1948 to May 14, 1967**

**JOSEPH L. DUCKETT, JR., is on the Wall at**

**Panel 19E, Line 116**





# 173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)



## Our KIA in August, '65-'70

### **"ONE BACKWARD GLANCE"**

\*173d Airborne Brigade Association and Vietnam Virtual Wall records report service in these units.

***"They grow not old, as we who remain grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn, at the going down of the sun. And in the morning, we shall remember them...we shall remember them."***

~ August 1965 ~



**Thomas Carl Bronson  
E/17<sup>th</sup> Cav**

*"A brother Carl who we call Punkin. I was only 14 years old when you died, but I will always hold the memories of the love that we shared as a brother and sister. I remember your smile, laughter and how you would play with me. You taught me to dance by letting me stand on your feet. I miss you, all of your family misses you. I see your son and it's just like you are standing there. I love you. You will always be my hero. Love you, Jean."*

**Katherine Bronson  
Sister**

**Kyle Henry Hatchett, B/2/503**

*"I never knew you but I love and respect you Uncle Kyle. I never got the chance to meet you because you were taken at such a young age. I spend hours on the computer researching your name to find out how and why you died. It is an honor that I found you here. You fought for my freedom and you never met me. I just wish I had more. Thank you and I love you."*

**Your niece Robbin."  
Robbin Hatchett**

~ August 1966 ~

**Daryl Raymond Corfman, A/4/503**

*"Hello my friend...I just found you this morning and after all these years your memory is as tender as always. I miss you still. Rest in peace Bro."*

**Max Sprague**



An iconic 173d Airborne photo, "The Agony of War", mistakenly referred to as "The Death Watch" by many.

(Photo by Paul Epley, 173d PIO)

[See back story on Page 34]



**Henry Van Demps, B/2/503**

*“Not really a lot of comments. I was 12, years old when I heard of Henry's death. I heard the adults talking about it. He was one of the older kids that used to play football with us in the back yard. I remember him, as always, having a smile and he was, a very handsome guy. When I visited, the Memorial a couple of years ago, I found his name on the wall and photographed it.”*

Mitch Forte, He lived in my neighborhood



**Frank R. Gallagher  
A/2/503**

**Freddie Bee Glover, E/17<sup>th</sup> Cav**



**Thomas William Haney  
E/17<sup>th</sup> Cav**

**Crosby Man Given Son's Purple Heart  
Pioneer Press News Service**

COLLEGEVILLE - The Purple Heart Medal was presented Wednesday to John F. Haney, Crosby, Minnesota posthumously. PFC Haney died of wounds suffered when an enemy mine exploded while he was taking part in a road clearing operation in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade on Aug 14, 1966. Army Lt. Col.

Thom Brundrett presented the medal. PFC Haney earlier had been awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign, the Combat Infantryman Badge, and twice was awarded the Good Conduct Medal.

Thomas William Haney

September 27, 1940 to August 14, 1966

THOMAS W HANEY is on the Minnesota Vietnam Memorial on Panel 10E, Line 5

**Thomas Taro Kasai, A/2/503**

**Michael Lewis, B/2/503**

**Rayfon Lofton, B/4/503**

*“United States Army Private First Class Lofton died in the Vietnam War. Rayfon drowned during a river crossing. The river was swift and deep and Rayfon was halfway across the river when he lost his grip and was*

*swept downstream. Rayfon's body was recovered the next day submerged under a fallen tree. Rayfon served in B Company, 3rd Platoon, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. Rayfon is honored on the Vietnam Memorial Wall 10E 031.*

**Tomas Marroquin, Jr., D/173 Spt Bn**

*“Tomas. Just wanted you to know that you are not forgotten. I'm sure that you have run into Daniel by now, please look out for him.”*

Blas E. Galvan MSG, USA Retired  
School Friend and

Father of SGT Daniel Lee Galvan 10 Aug 1974-  
12 Aug 2004, Salerno, Afghanistan  
Gone but never Forgotten.

**Willie James Tucker, A/2/503**

*“Thank you Daddy. Daddy, I want to say thank you for being a great and outstanding man of honor. I won't dwell on how you were taken away from me and my mother at such a young age. I will instead stand tall with my head high and my heart full of your love knowing that I have your blood running through my veins. I feel your presence daddy and I know that you are with Jesus. When we meet again in Heaven Daddy, I will know you by your smile and your warm embrace. I Love you daddy with all my heart. Spring.”* Spring Brown, Daughter



**~ August 1967 ~**



**Lindsay David Baldoni  
39<sup>th</sup> Scout Dog**

*“Lennie Baldoni and I trained together from February-June 1967 at Ft. Benning, Georgia, to be infantry scout dog handlers. We were all supposed to go over together as replacements for the 39th Inf. Platoon (Scout Dog), 173rd Abn. Bde, but we were split up and I went to 41st Inf. Platoon (Scout dog), 1st Inf. Div. It was a shock to find out when we visited his platoon in Bien Hoa, that Lennie was killed at the very start of our tour. He was a great guy, always upbeat.*

*Miss him a lot.”*

Dave Hill, Friend and fellow dog handler

(continued....)



Charles James Holland, E/17<sup>th</sup> Cav



*"In humble tribute to a fallen hero."*

Garnet Jenkins

[See Charles' DSC citation on Page 33]

*If only I had been there when they really needed me. I would not allowed a mine in their hands or anyone else's. Two very young men whose life was way too short, I always think of them as they should have been today. It is hard to think of them as grown men with kids and perhaps grandpas. I will never forget either of them. I hope to see them in the Here After.*

*Friends forever, Tony."*

Billy (Tony) Vaughn  
Friend

Harry Julius Moser, IV  
E/17<sup>th</sup> Cav



James Blain Carlson, A/E/4/503\*

*"United States Army Staff Sergeant served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He was killed in action from an explosive device while serving in South Vietnam."*

Laura A Maley Carlson-Nelson (1911 - 1994)  
Mother

David Eugene Person  
E/17<sup>th</sup> Cav



*"Jim and I went thru training together at Fort Gordon, Ga. We later served in the same Rifle company, Company B, 4th, Battalion, 503rd, Infantry, 173rd, Airborne Brigade. I recall him as a quiet guy who played the guitar and we spent time together at Fort Gordon. We later were assigned to the same Unit, but in different platoons. I was there the day he died. He was killed while on point and was killed when the enemy ambushed us. He died instantly, as he was hit by shrapnel from an improvised mine of some kind. He was a good man who is not forgotten. Sincerely,"*

John R. New, Sr.

COL., Infantry, USA, Retired

*"KIA while serving as a Major with E TRP, 17TH CAVALRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV. His home of record was Kirbyville, Texas. DAVID E PERSON is on the Wall at Panel 27E Line 001.*

*May his sacrifice not be forgotten."*

Billy M. Brown

Donald Michael Sower, "Doc", HHC/A/2/503\*

~ August 1968 ~

Joseph Ernest Funston, B/1/503

*"Joe, the last time I saw you we were both on leave, Christmas, 1967. We shot pool at Boze's. I put a flag at your panel years ago. God bless, old friend."*

Robert Smith  
Friend

Daniel Owen Abernathy  
A/1/50



Ramon Garcia, A/1/503

*"I always heard great stories about you growing up. Our family will always remember you. We love you."*

Sandra Teran  
Niece

*"Daniel was a graduate of Armor Officer Candidate School class 14-67 at Fort Knox, KY and is remembered by his friends and classmates. Rest in peace Daniel."*  
Your fellow OCS graduates

Waydell Getter, C/1/503

Albert R. Gutierrez, Jr., A/1/50

Charles Robert Bales, 173d Eng

*"Charley was always eager to follow either myself or Leigh. Leigh was eager to get into anything, and Charley was always curious to join in no matter what the outcome. He was dedicated and curious to see whatever Leigh and I got into, he would be there.*

(continued....)



**Edward O'Day Haskett, D/Spt Bn**

*"Eddie was a fun loving kid of 19. He held no malice towards anyone. We grew up together. We played together. We laughed together. I looked up to him, admired him, and loved him like a brother, and I still do. He always has been and always will be a Hero to me."*

**Bob Ward**

**Best Friend (Brothers)**



**Leo Neal Kryske  
B/1/503, C/2/503\***



*"I did not know much about Leo's military service but I know a lot about his character. Leo was a member of the Army's 'Golden Knights' parachute team. I met him through my father who was an official with the USPA and who had frequent contact with the Golden Knights. I was a gangly teenager at the time, who looked with awe upon Leo, Gean-Paul Thacker, Ray Duffy, 'Hawkeye', and all the other soldiers that comprised the Golden Knights. Leo took a special interest in me (or so I'd like to think) and included me in activities and adventures at the many parachuting meets. Leo Kryske was a giant of a man, both in spirit and character, and I came to regard him as a father figure and best friend. Leo was known as the 'Iron Man' to his friends because of his size and strength, but his spirit, character and integrity were the steel in his soul. I was devastated when Leo was killed, and I will remember him always. Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, they all remind me of the 'Iron Man' and his kindness to a skinny kid from Alabama.*

*Thank you Leo, I will never forget you."*

**Rick MacCrone**

**Close friend**

[See Page 35 for more about the Army's Golden Knights]



**Newell Ferrell Leigh, Jr., 173d Eng**

*"Lee was a very good friend of mine, I even talked him and Bales (also lost at once, together forever). Well, he and Bales did surgery on me. Rather than have a trip to the Hospital, where they would give me another shot for a boil, the shot was worse than the boil. So the 2 of them used a razor, and split the boil on the side of my head. Packed it with drawing cream. That did the job. Leigh, Bales and Russel were all killed in a bunker where some asshole brought in a chi-con land mine.... If I had been there instead of on RR, this would have never happened. Not a day goes by I don't think of them. They are the best friends I ever will have. God bless them and take care of them. Your Buddy, Tony."*

**Billy (Tony) Vaughn, Friend**

**Peter Joseph Mears, Jr., D/2/503**

*"Peter was one of ten men from the Town of Stoughton, MA killed in Nam. The citizens of Stoughton are proud of our heroes and a square has been dedicated to this young man who gave his all for his country. He and his comrades in death are honored every Veterans Day at a ceremony which takes place at the Town Hall. As Veterans Grave Officer for the town, I am privileged to emcee this event. His name is also engraved on a bronze memorial in our Veterans Memorial Park to be remembered for all time."*

**Chuck Large**

**He was engaged to my daughter**

**Francis Trainor Mulvey, B/1/503**

*"Francis (who was affectionately called 'Francey' in our family) was someone I met only a few times when I was very young. I recall our family driving to Fennimore, Wis. for weekend trips at the Mulvey home where I picked raspberries with him. I also have a memory of him teaching me how to build a rabbit trap. I have been able to collect some of his military decorations, which include the purple heart, the bronze star with "V", and the combat infantry rifleman's badge. I do not believe there are many, if any, family members left who maintain his memory. However, in our home we prominently display a framed rubbing of his name from the wall. We also display a photo I took of his name on the wall with the reflection of the Washington Memorial behind it."*

**Daniel Sroka**

**First cousin once removed**

*(continued....)*



**Darnell Patrick Murray, D/4/503**

*"Hello family. Although I was only three years old when my father left this life, I know I was loved by this man called daddy. My story is not so different from the many children who lost their fathers to this war.*

*They were all just boys but what Great, Brave Men they became. I, like so many others, missed my daddy over the years and have always had a little void deep inside of me. How PROUD I am of this man called daddy and the many that I never knew along with him who gave the ultimate gift that we might live in freedom. I love you DADDY and thank you."*

**Stephanie Murray-Anderson**

**Daughter**

**Wilbert Hoyt Neal, Jr., A/3/503**

*"Wilbert Hoyt Neal, Jr. was my cousin and nicknamed 'Sparky', he was exactly ten years older than me. His parents divorced when he was young and both remarried again. As I recall his mother did not live in TN so he stayed with his father and his stepmother and three step-sisters. He was a juvenile delinquent and spent time in a place that made him angry and lost. However, my mother adored him and he stayed with us on our farm. Most of my memories of him are filled with terror because he was a real rascal. However, the military gave him focus and when he came home on a visit you could see the difference. Sadly he died in the summer of 1968 at only 19 years of age. He was interred in the National Cemetery with full military honors. Aside from his name on the Vietnam Memorial Wall there are no recollections of him anywhere else. I would like to try and keep his memory alive with words and remembrances. I would enjoy hearing from anyone who knew him during his time in Vietnam."*

**Jonathan Whitney**

**Cousin**

[Jonathan\\_whitney@msn.com](mailto:Jonathan_whitney@msn.com)

[Posted August 2, 2004]

**Anthony Jerome Portis, C/3/503**

**Jimmie Jenkins Richardson, A/1/503**

**Peter Lowell Russell, 172d Eng**

*"Russell was a really good person. He was adventurous, and this was his final adventure. I will always remember Russell, Leigh, and Bales. I lost all 3 of my best friends in Nam at 1 time. They were all too young. I remember them always.*

*May God let them rest in peace. Billy."*

**Billy T. Vaughn**

**Friend in Nam**

**Larry Jerome Tyler, D/2/503**

**Thomas James Walker, B/1/503**

*"Tommy was born a poor boy. He had a sister and brother. They were dirt poor in a wealthy country. He who had nothing in this country, gave his life for the US Army. There is only a memory of him, which i cherish every day. His sister, surely mourns for him every day."*

**Charles Brooks**

**Cousin**

**Freddie Lee Whitley, 39<sup>th</sup> Scout Dog**

**~ August 1969 ~**

**Carl Bracy Ayers, Jr., C/2/503**

*"A short message to let you know I still remember you my friend. Carl, You shall always be my childhood friend. I shall miss you."*

**Isaiah Johnson**

**Childhood Friend**

**Paul V. Barrington, "Doc", HHC/B/C/3/503\***

*"Paul Barrington, was a fairly new medic assigned to infantry, November Platoon, Company, C, of the 3/503rd Airborne Infantry, where I was platoon leader, in the summer of 1969. The platoon had recently been moved from Bao Loc in the Central Highlands to Phan Thiet province, on the coast, and SP4 Barrington was newly assigned as medic for our platoon, to replace, "Doc" Fatush, who had been seriously wounded and returned to the states. Our mission in Phan Thiet was to help a tank unit to secure Highway 1 and interdict/prevent VC/NVA ambushes that were hitting supply convoys. That included small unit (LRRP) reconnaissance patrols into the coastal mountains, and as we prepared for one of those patrols, Barrington stayed behind due to a fever. No more than a day later we got word by radio that he had a severe case of malaria, was immediately evac'd to an Army hospital and was dead within days. We never saw him again. Despite multiple firefights, air assaults, mortar attacks, snipers, ambushes, booby traps and casualties, Barrington was the only member of the platoon to die that Summer and it was a non-combat fatality that probably could have been avoided."*

**Michael Switzer**

**Fellow soldier, platoon leader**

*(continued....)*



Danny Lance Barron, A/1/50

*"Here I sit all alone but I still remember all the good times we had like our first date and last time you held me which was the last time, that was 43 years ago. You are and will always be in my heart. I miss you."*

Sherry Barron  
Wife

*"Dan was as fine a citizen soldier as this nation has ever produced. I can't remember him ever complaining, although it is every infantryman's right to do. Most of the 'guys' in 1st Platoon had cool cars at home, or were planning to when they got back to the World. We all fancied ourselves as 'hot rod' mechanics. When Dan Barron arrived, there was no doubt who the best mechanic in 1st Plt was. He was a 'natural' as 4th squad's driver/mechanic. He knew where to drive, and more importantly, where not to drive his APC; how to act and react in combat; and how to maintain the proper tension on the APC's drive wheels so you didn't throw a track. All in a day's work. All our drivers were volunteers. It was a serious and dangerous job. Dan was the best. In May '69 1st Plt was conducting an amphibious assault up the Song Kim Son River in Bong Son when one of the other squads sank their track. We dragged it out of the river and towed it back to our LZ. Dan was the only guy who knew anything about diesel engines and worked on it all day trying to get the water out of the track's engine and getting it started. Our LT was sweating bullets, and wondering if he was going to be sent to Leavenworth for destroying government property. Late that afternoon the engine started, and there was a roar of cheers as 25 guys hooted and applauded. I can still see Lt. Parsley, covered in smiles, hugging Dan, covered in grease."*

From his Platoon Sergeant,  
Jack Noble

*"Danny was a little older than the rest of us, he was a soft-spoken, humble man with an easy smile. He drove and maintained fourth squad's track when we weren't making heliborne assaults. We all depended on him for a lot of things. When things got tough his quiet resolve instilled confidence in all of us. He also must surely hold the record for the fastest time down the Mang Yang Pass in an M-113. For this amazing feat he affectionately became known as the 'Red Barron'. Danny was a pretty typical draftee soldier, he had a lot of heart and a lot to give. He left a wife and son behind at age twenty four. He was killed in northern Binh Dinh Province along the coast. He will never be forgotten by the men who served with him."*

John Smerdon

William John Bassignani, 173d Flt Plt

*"Billy. You are still thought of and loved every day. It's sad we lost you so young and many never got to know you. Forever in our hearts!*

*Love, Chris & Ashley."*

Ashley Gould  
2<sup>nd</sup> Cousin

*"CAPO, we have spent thirty plus years trying to forget what Vietnam had done to us, but it is very difficult when you return there each night. It is very difficult to forget when the memories are still clear and vivid in one's own mind and try to deal with the pain alone. It has taken thirty years, but the Casper Platoon over the past two years has learned that we need to be together as a family and share the pain with others that understand what we hold inside. The healing, we have learned, comes from being together, remembering together, celebrating together and mourning together. Our brothers who died in combat are missed as any family member would be, and at each reunion those of you that were lost to us are remembered in a ceremony dedicated to the memories we all share. You were our brother, you are our brother, and our family is incomplete without you, but your memory lives on within us forever. You are greatly missed at each reunion, but we do feel your spirit among us. God bless America, God bless the Vietnam Combat Veteran Casper Aviation Platoon Organization."*

Terry Gallagher  
Always in Our Hearts

Thomas Castillo, B/E/4/503\*

*"We served together, in the Recon Platoon, Echo Company, 4/503rd, 173rd, Airborne Brigade. I left the field toward the end of July 1969, and he was felled by sniper fire shortly thereafter. Everyone in the platoon called him 'Tony,' don't know why? He was a good soldier and was friendly and easy going. I was very deeply saddened at his passing. I think of him often. NO END, Will it come again as it has so many times? The same dream playing over in my mind, haunting, but often in an unfamiliar form the memory of that time and place, long gone. Why does it pursue me so long, this unrelenting demon? Dark memories, dogging my existence, day by day the horror of a time gone, but still here...."*

(continued....)



*....Is it the pounding of artillery, or the staccato rhythm of the machine gun? Maybe the screams of the dying, their pain biting at them and my soul. I remember that place so well, the green of the rice field and the jungle, the red and yellow glow of a setting sun, belying that which lay, just beyond. Hiding in the darkness of a moonless night, shadowy forms of death creeping through darkness, wind and mists, seeking an end to myself, my brothers. Surviving a blessing, or a curse? The deep sleep that eluded me, but found so many others of mine, friends, brothers, a family in war. As it revisits me, in later years, is it survival that haunts me, here, in this place where my brothers cannot be, or the place, my brothers found, but without me."*

Charlie Alsip, Served together in Recon Platoon

Herman Thurston Fields, B/3/503

*"Herman was one of the happiest and most fun loving people anyone could ever hope to meet. We shared lots of good times together when we were growing up. I attended Herman's funeral only a few days before I went to Ft. Polk, La. for advanced infantry training. Many times I have wondered why several of my friends I grew up with died in Vietnam and to so many more it is barely a memory. Those who put themselves in Harms' Way for their country don't have to be told what Herman's life and the sacrifices of so many more mean to our way of life. For Americans who found a way to avoid the kind of service that Herman and about 2.5 million other Americans gave, think about 58,000 names on this wall and then look at yourself in the mirror. I hope that the thoughts that you have are not like those that so many that served have had to live with ever since the war."*

Stan Hunter, Friend

Jerry Lee Fordham, B/3/503



Jerry Allen Frakes  
D/2/503

*"I remember a time when I visited Jerry every summer. My grandfather was his mother's sister. He would take me to the swimming pool or just hang out with me. I never thought too much about it until I was grown and realized what a sacrifice he made because he always had a girlfriend, but never seemed to mind me tagging along with them. I'll never forget him and his smile."*

Roberta Jacobs, Cousin

Robert Ernest Gaftunik  
C/4/503



*(also KIA Steven John Gaftunik 3/27/68, 25<sup>th</sup> Inf)  
"Robert and Steven Gaftunik were brothers. They lived a short distance from my family in a then rural area of Sacramento. A third brother was drafted and their mother went to the draft board and begged them not to send her last surviving son to Vietnam. I believe he was sent to Germany for his tour of duty instead. This was a wonderful family, torn apart by this war. God bless them all."*

Anne Lee Grucza

*"Served alongside Sgt. Gaf stateside and in country. We were in the same graduating NCO class at Ft. Benning and assigned to the 173d about the same time. Though I did not know him well I was deeply moved and saddened when news of his death reached me, within hours. My Squad was sent to the scene of the attack and I knew the Medic (Doc King) who did his best with CPR and riding in on the Medivac to B Med with Robert. That same day, just a short time before in a separate action, two other men from C Co 4th Bn 173d where KIA along with several wounded. I was in our Platoon CP and had moved out in a clearing on its edge trying to pick up and monitor the radio net to see what was going on when a machine gun opened up on me. Someone was watching over me that day. I still have a crystal clear memory of Sgt. Robert Gaftunik and he remains forever young. He and so many others made the ultimate sacrifice, and will ever be in my thoughts."*

Dan Kenkins

Served in same unit



(continued...)



**Terrance Neil Gentry, C/4/503**

*"My strong, loving, oldest brother, whom I love and miss every day. Terry was a fantastic athlete, a funny guy, a protector and someone everyone would be proud to call a friend. I miss him greatly and look forward to the day of our reunion in heaven. If you know anything about Terry's service in Viet Nam, please e-mail me. It would mean so much.*

*Thank you."* Scott Gentry, Brother

[scottgentry@cleanweb.net](mailto:scottgentry@cleanweb.net)

[Posted May 24, 2003]

*"You and Strazzanti, bad day. Rest easy."*

From his Platoon Leader, Fred Stephans



**~ A Note From The Virtual Wall ~**

Two men from C Company, 4/503rd Infantry, were killed in action on 25 Aug 1969 - SP4 Terrance N. Gentry, Man, West Virginia, and SP4 Alan P. Strazzanti, Northfield, Ohio. A third member of the company, SP4 Robert E. Gaftunik, Sacramento, California, died on 25 August of wounds previously received - but The Virtual Wall doesn't know when he was wounded. All three men received posthumous promotions to Sergeant.



**Rigoberto Gomez-Diaz**  
173 Flt Plt

*"Over the past five years I have worked to find the families of the Casper KIA's. Even though I never met you, I know so much about you. How quiet and caring you were. One Casper told me, you were all MAN, a really, good guy. Go Go, you are up, there, with the best and above the rest. Someday I hope to see you, when I reach my final destination, I have a big hug, for you. You touched a lot of lives in your 20 years here on earth, and 37 years later you are still touching lives. You touched mine and I thank you. Love & Hugs."*

Barbara Anne

Sister of Gary Irwin, Casper Door Gunner



**Randolph Louis Larson**  
173d Eng

*"You will always be my Hero. I will Never Forget You."*

Scott Larson  
Nephew

**Terrence M. McDermott, D/1/503**



**Glen Allan Millinger**  
D/1/503

*"I never got to meet uncle Glen, but I've heard my Dad talk of him, and I know that he misses him a lot. I am VERY PROUD of him and all those who served. Wish I could tell him that in person. Love-ya Uncle Glen."*

Jason Lickert  
Nephew

*"I was a Sgt in the Marine Corps and was with Fox 2/9 and had already returned home in Jan. 69 when he was heading over to Nam. We spoke at a hometown bar over a couple of beers and he was curious because he was sure he was going to be sent in the near future.*

*I tried to tell him as much as possible but you really don't know till you get there what or where you will be sent in country. Was saddened to hear he was killed a short time later in Aug. We had a good time growing up and going to Carroll School and then on to Oak Harbor to high school. I have your etching from THE WALL and think of you often. I contacted your sister and got a picture of you in your uniform to be put with your name on THE WALL so people can put a face to the name. SEMPER FI my friend."*

Steve Green

Grew up/went to school with Glen



(continued....)



**Robert Stevens Mitchell, B/3/503**

*"American Hero. Another soldier here all alone and seemingly forgotten with no comments to his name. I am honored and so very proud to be the first to give recognition to this fallen Hero in this venue. Thank you PFC Mitchell for your service to country and ultimate sacrifice. Rest well brave soldier and rest assured that you Sir, are not forgotten."*

Grateful American

**Rodney Glenn Oxendine, D/4/503**

*"This is my cousin. I never got to know him, but I have been told I look like him. I am very proud of this. Like most veterans, he was very young. He had just turned 21. I will never forget him or the others. I will see him in heaven! – Tyler says 'Next Home Run is for you, Rodney.'"*

Luanne Antis  
Cousin

**Paul Michael Roberts, D/2/503**

**Alan Peter Strazzanti, C/4/503**

*"M-79 Grenadier. Good man, bad day. Rest easy, buddy."*

From his Platoon Leader,  
Fred Stephens

**Frank Daniel Walthers, C/75, LRRP**

*"Frank died of a chest wound from hostile forces in Binh Dinh, South Vietnam."*

*Details of the events from this hostile engagement are embodied in the book 'Blood on the Risers'. Frank will always live in my heart and the hearts of everyone who knew him.*

*Your friend always."*  
Tom Wojcicki



## Ottawa Monument Cleaning Rekindles Memories

Charles Stanley

[mbureau@mywebtimes.com](mailto:mbureau@mywebtimes.com)

After Mike Sutfin started work in Ottawa's Washington Park cleaning the La Salle County Civil War Soldiers Monument, it summoned memories from nearly four decades ago and half a world away.

The humid high 90s weather, Sutfin said, reminded him of serving as a Marine in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969.

And Tuesday, when he and his crew worked a 12-hour day in blistering hot weather trowelling a thick poultice onto the 1873 monument, he was mindful of another memory: It was the anniversary of the 1969

death in Vietnam of Cpl. Frank Walthers, a Silver Star medal recipient and close high school friend from their home town of Morton Grove.

Walthers, 20, was killed by enemy small arms fire while serving as an Airborne Ranger. And Sutfin has traced his friend's name from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

*"The thought that I had then was that was the only memorial there was going to be to his giving his all to his country. And as I looked at this monument here in Ottawa I realized it was the same thing. The names engraved on it of the 810 men from La Salle County is all the memorial most of those guys will ever have for giving their all to our country during the Civil War."*

It made him deeply realize, he said, the importance of preserving the monument and a sense of pride in being able to do the work.

Through his firm, MJS Technologies, Sutfin is billing Ottawa for the wholesale cost of his materials and the wages for his crew. But his own efforts are pro bono. *"I'm doing this because I believe with all my heart that this particular monument is very important to the citizens of La Salle County. There is a historical significance to it that we can never allow to be lost."*

The monument is to be the centerpiece of a new plaza that will feature six granite slabs inscribed with the names of the 810 La Salle County men who died from wartime wounds or disease. An Oct. 14 dedication is planned.

Sutfin has restored buildings and built monuments, but never before restored a monument as old as the one in Washington Park. Sutfin said the monument itself basically is in remarkably good shape.

The cleaning process began with preparatory work such as removing the old joint caulking. Next a commercially manufactured marble poultice was applied and covered that was designed to draw out dirt and other impurities and lighten the stone.

*(continued...)*



A thunderstorm late Wednesday tore loose some of the poultice and coverings, but may actually have been of benefit, Sutfin said, since the rain moisturized the poultice which was drying too quickly from the extreme heat of the day.

The rest of the cleaning process involves a gentle chemical cleaning and possible poultice reapplications on problem areas that may benefit from more treatment.

*"We think it's going to remove very much of the darkened areas," said Sutfin. "I don't know that we'll get it perfectly white, but it should come out pretty nice. We hope we can make this monument really glisten close to the way it looked when it was dedicated."*

The final step, he said, will be a final chemical application that will help slow and perhaps prevent further degradation of the stone.

*"To me, as a veteran, one of the most important things we can do is to preserve this monument for the generations to come. I think once it's lightened up and brightened up people in La Salle County are going to start noticing they have something here that is quite magnificent. It's a tribute to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, and in many ways a symbol of what we're all about in this county."*

For additional information on the project, visit online at [www.cityofottawa.org](http://www.cityofottawa.org).

*The Times, Ottawa, Illinois*  
Published Aug. 2006



### ~ A Note From The Virtual Wall ~

Charlie Company actually lost two men on 01 August 1969 - Corporal Walthers and Staff Sergeant Harold D. Williams of Los Angeles. SSG Williams was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Army's second senior award for valor in combat.

Harold David Williams, C/75, LRRP

## ~ The Distinguished Service Cross ~



### SSG Harold David Williams

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Harold David Williams (565749235), Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company C (Ranger), 75th Infantry (Airborne), 173d Airborne Brigade. Staff Sergeant Williams distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 1 August 1969 while leading a Ranger Team north of Song Moa. Just after perpetrating an ambush on an enemy element, the team was set upon by the main hostile force. Sergeant Williams immediately called in gunships on the communists who quickly surrounded the small team. He initiated a grenade counter-assault and repositioned his team to withstand the vicious attack. When a team member fell to enemy fire, Sergeant Williams advanced under a fusillade to render assistance to his comrade. Despite wounds received when an antitank round detonated nearby, he elected to remain with his men, directing their defense. When a brief lull developed in the exchange of fire, Sergeant Williams and one of his men moved outside the perimeter to recover a survival radio dropped by a friendly casualty. In the attempt both were wounded by small arms fire, yet Sergeant Williams again refused evacuation. During the subsequent battle, he succumbed to his wounds. Staff Sergeant Williams' 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.



Headquarters, US Army, Vietnam  
General Orders No. 4389 (December 6, 1969)  
Born: October 29, 1947 at Los Angeles, California  
Home Town: Los Angeles, California

*(continued....)*



## ~ August 1970 ~

Melvin Carroll Bates, Jr., A/4/503

*"I was just 10 years old when my cousin 'Buddy' died in Vietnam almost 43 years ago. I remember how amazed I was at the size of his funeral and how sad I was. Such a tragic death for a young man, but I remember him writing a letter to his Aunt that he was ready to die and go be at home in heaven where his mother waited for him. I thank God he knew Jesus as his Savior and I will get to see him someday again..."*

Pamela Keller-Perna, Cousin

*"Melvin Bates' tragic death was made even more so when you realize he died one day before his tour of duty was over and he should have been on a freedom bird returning to the USA the very next day."*

Jim Spencer

Dennis Wayne Baxley, E/2/503

William Darwin Blenkinsop, "Doc", HHC/A/4/503\*

Eric Peter Busch, HHC/D/Spt Bn\*

David Leroy Climer, E/2/503, 11<sup>th</sup> Av Bn\*

***"They went, with songs to the battle, they were young. Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow. They were staunch to the end, against odds uncounted. They fell, with their faces to the foe. Thank you, James Leroy Climer, for giving up all of your tomorrows, for me.***

***Happy Birthday."***

Barbara Johnson  
Forever grateful



John Nelson Crawford, Jr., 173d Flt Plt  
Furman David Hughes, C/3/503

*"I just visited the wall today to pay my respects and to let you know that you are thought of and missed a lot. You are my hero. Growing up in W Va, we rode horses and rode bikes. Then your family moved away, and the next thing I know you are in the Army and then in Vietnam. Then your Dad and Mom move back to W Va. Then the saddest day came when word came that you had been killed. I think of you often and miss you a lot. I know that you are on heaven's patrol and that we will one day meet again. Till then thank you and all your fellow soldiers for their great sacrifice. MJ"*

Mary Jane Carter  
Cousin from W. Va.

Ben Jackson, Jr., D/3/319



John Jasso  
B/4/503

*"John Jasso and I went to Basic and AIT at Fort Polk, Louisiana, in 1969. I would love to talk with anyone that knew him or any of his family. Thanks."*

Keith Watkins

[shirljo@texhoma.net](mailto:shirljo@texhoma.net)

(Posted 19 Aug 1999)

Anthony George Kubelus, Jr., D/1/503

*"To a great friend and brother in arms, you gave it all. Miss you my friend and miss the night you spent at Cam Ranh Bay when you were on the way home for R&R."*

Ed Lippiett  
Friend



Robert William MacNaught, B/2/503



*"About 5-6 yrs. ago on Veterans Day I traveled with a group of VVA Chap. 510 to Washington. Arriving very late 3-4 of us took a cab to the vicinity of the wall. We walked down with the wall to our left and split as each began his search for friends and buddies. I didn't know where to begin, when I looked up shoulder height and Robert W. MacNaught was staring me in the face. He and I were best friends from age 8, growing up in Warwick, RI. Were in Boy Scouts, raced his dad's sailboat, caddied at Warwick CC, and later double-dated. At draft age he strongly urged me to get into college so I wouldn't have to go to VN. 3 months after I got my 'notice to report' in Aug. '65, Mac got his. We, along with a third buddy, agreed to all volunteer for Army Airborne to insure we got with a solid, combat ready unit. Each of us did our tour in Nam but it was Mac who didn't make it home. He truly believed the cause was noble in protecting this third world nation to resist and avoid the plague of Communism.*

*Once I was home he wrote to me, expressing his frustration of frequent patrols with no 'Charlie' contact. After notification of his death, I sent a letter to his commanding officer asking anyone who knew Mac or served with him to contact me. I heard from a couple of great guys who told me how he died and how respected he was by all who served with him. I have no doubt he was the consummate soldier's officer! That Veteran's Day when I made my visit to 'THE Wall', Mac knew I was looking for him, and as the good friend he had always been, he made my search easy by guiding me directly to his name. I truly felt his presence, making my visit easier and completely fulfilling. When I finally left the wall, I immediately called Mac's only family survivor, his brother, Ken (also served in the Army stateside) to tell him my story and let him know Mac is in GOOD HANDS, looking out for those of us still trying to find our way around 'back home'! This is my meager tribute to my best friend, even today! I, along with his family, have suffered all these years from the anger*

*and sadness caused by his sudden, violent death, primarily because of my selfish loss! I must continue to remind myself Mac and the names on this cherished wall sacrificed their own lives so others might gain their GOD-given freedom. GOD has certainly rewarded Mac and all his fallen brothers and sisters with HIS eternal gift of a peaceful, life with HIM, for their lives so well-lived AND SACRIFICED!*

**GOD BLESS YOU MAC!"**

Paul Grimes

Best friend from "home"

**"Poor is the Nation that has no heroes.**

**Shameful is the Nation that has and forgets them."**

(unknown)



# Staff Sergeant Charles James Holland

Troop E, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry  
173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
Republic of Vietnam  
For actions on 18 August 1969

## Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously)



Citation: The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Charles James Holland (12588446), Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Troop E, 17th Cavalry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) in the Republic of Vietnam. Staff Sergeant Holland distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 18 August 1967. On this date, in an area 15 miles northeast of Dak To Special Forces Camp, Dak To Province, in support of Operation GREELEY, the Team's mission was to penetrate an area heavily infested by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army elements, to conduct surveillance of enemy routes and to detect and report all enemy activities. Because heavy enemy activity had been reported in the area, the mission was considered to be very dangerous. Only minutes before the team was to be infiltrated, information was received that six-to-eight Viet Cong had been observed from an aircraft and that they had fired on the aircraft from a location 1,000 meters from the team's primary landing zone. When offered the opportunity to postpone the mission, Sergeant Holland declined, merely changing the location of the infiltration landing zone. During the first few hours after landing, the

team located more than 25 foxholes, only 2 to 3 weeks old. The following morning they established an observation point from which they could watch both nearby Highway 14 and a known enemy trail a short distance away. The observation point, located on the side of a hill, was well concealed by the vegetation, but permitted an unobstructed view. A short time later, 21 Viet Cong were observed moving along the trail. After calling for artillery fire, voices and movement were heard to their rear and they were assaulted by intense enemy automatic weapons fire, hand grenades and M-79 grenade launcher fire. Sergeant Holland immediately returned fire but, realizing the extreme danger to his men, ordered the team to withdraw from the area. He remained behind to provide cover fire for his men, several times overtaking them only long enough to give additional instructions. When all the men had safely reached the bottom of the hill, it was noted that the radio had been left behind. Completely disregarding his own safety, Sergeant Holland charged back up the hill, firing his weapon in order to draw the enemy fire from his men. As a result of his gallant actions, it was possible for the remainder of the team to be safely extracted from their vulnerable position. The following day, Sergeant Holland's lifeless body was found a short distance from the point of initial contact. Because he was wearing part of the equipment which had been left behind, it was determined that he had reached the observation post and was overtaken by the enemy force while attempting to return to his men. From an examination of the area in which his body was found, it was discovered that he had valiantly fought the enemy until he was overcome. Moreover, evidence revealed that he had inflicted serious injury on several enemy soldiers. His courage in the face of a determined enemy force was instrumental in saving the lives of his team members. Sergeant Holland's conspicuous gallantry, his profound courage and his intrepidity at the risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Department of the Army, General Orders No. 15  
(April 8, 1968)

Home Town: Elizabeth, New Jersey

Sep 10, 2008



# The Agony of War

Story behind the photo of our fallen brother, Daryl Raymond Corfman, A/4/503, KIA



In August 1966, PFC Daryl R. Corfman, Company A, 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) was killed by mortar fire during operation "Aurora Two". He was the 4th Battalion's first KIA as a result of direct enemy actions. On left, SP4 Ruediger Richter (Columbus, Georgia), the LZ control, watches the sky for the medical evacuation helicopter, his battle weary eyes to the heavens, as if to ask, why?

Photo taken by (then) PFC Paul Epley in Long Khanh Province, Vietnam.

I created this photograph while serving as a paratrooper with the 173d Airborne Brigade in South Vietnam. I was trained in jungle warfare, but because of my college experience with photography, I was assigned to the brigade Information Office. It was my job to move with various elements of the command and generate stories and pictures for publication.

This image was created while I was with the 4th Battalion of the 503rd Infantry (a part of the 173d). Two companies of the American paratroopers were separated by about 100 yards of thick jungle. I moved across this unprotected area without permission in order to reach the area where the medevac chopper was coming in to pick up the body you see in the photograph.

The trooper looking up into the smoke is Ruediger Richter, the radio operator for Colonel Mike ("Iron Mike) Healy (MG Ret). Richter had been with the French Foreign Legion prior to joining the American Army. The soldier looking down at his dead comrade, Daryl Corfman, is his Squad Leader, Sgt. Daniel Spencer of Bend, OR who would later die while in service with the Special Forces in 1968.

The smoke is from the smoke grenade you see in the left front of the image. I had heard the radio call for the chopper and knew it would be a good opportunity for photographs. When I arrived at the new unit, the company commander was angry I had crossed the unsecured area. Then, as the smoke broke, I could see I was on the wrong side to get the light. I put a yellow filter on my Leica M-2 and dashed across to some rocks on the other side of the small clearing. I knew the image was coming together; the eerie smell of battle hung in the air and I clicked off the film at the decisive moment of greatest impact.

The AP had been helping me get pictures on the wire and with their help, this one became my first internationally published image. It was published in almost every major magazine and newspaper in the world. After that, I was able to get published on a very regular basis.

The thrill of communicating to millions of people has never changed. I love what I do.

**Paul Epley**  
173d Abn Bde, PIO



Paul, in the boonies

**Note:** It was generally highly unusual for any of us in combat to take photos of our own KIA. By including Paul's iconic photo of these two young troopers with their fallen buddy, as his job entailed, we mean no disrespect; on the contrary, the photo depicts the very brutality and realism of war which must be viewed by all in the light of day, for these fallen men are not just names on a wall or in some newsletter. Ed



# Golden Knights History

In 1959, the Strategic Army Command Parachute Team, or STRAC, was formed by nineteen Airborne Soldiers from various military units. Brigadier General Joseph Stilwell, Jr. gathered the Soldiers with the intent of competing in what was then the new and Soviet dominated sport of skydiving. That year, the all U.S. Army team began representing the United States on the international competition circuit, as well as performing their first demonstration in Danville, Virginia.

In 1961, the Department of Defense announced that the STRAC team would become the United States Army Parachute Team.

By 1962, the team earned the nickname the “Golden Knights” on the competition field of battle. Golden, signifying the gold medals the team had won; Knights, proving that they were world champions and alluding to the fact that the Team had “conquered the skies.” The Golden Knights continue to show audiences around the world why they are the world’s best parachute team and are one of only three DoD sanctioned aerial demonstration teams, along with the US Navy Blue Angels and the US Air Force Thunderbirds.

The Team’s mission today as part of the U.S. Army Marketing and Research Group is to support the U.S. Army’s recruiting and public relations efforts. To accomplish this, the Golden Knights conduct parachute demonstrations, tandems and compete nationally and internationally in order to create a greater propensity to serve in the Army by helping connect America’s people with America’s Army. On order, the Team provides direct support to special mission and special operations units with military free fall training.

Over the last 53 years, the United States Army Parachute Team has created hundreds of millions of positive impressions for the Army by conducting over 16,000 shows in 50 states and 48 countries, reaching an average of 60,000 people per show, averaging over 30 million impressions annually. The Team conducts over 850 tandems each year and has jumped with distinguished centers of influence from Former President George H.W. Bush to Bill Murray and Chuck Norris. The Team domination of national and international competitions has already earned the U.S.

Army an impressive 2,148 Gold; 1,117 Silver; and 693 Bronze Medals, as well as having broken 348 world records. In order to support this, our Aviation Detachment flies over 1,870 hours and conducts over 2,900 sorties annually.



The United States Army Parachute Team consists of only 89 Soldiers and civilians divided into several sections: Black & Gold Demonstration Teams; Tandem Team; Competition Team (8-Way, 4-Way and Canopy Piloting); Aviation Detachment and Headquarters Detachment. Golden Knights take pride serving as the face of the Army to the American public while representing over 1.1 million Soldiers in the total Army. Thirty three Golden Knights have died in the line of duty while serving our country; eight of them in combat and one Golden Knight is still missing in action.

In order to ensure we maintain relevance and credibility with both the American public and our fellow Warriors, Golden Knights are always Soldiers first; over 93% of this Team currently has combat experience.

## Army Strong!

See more at:

<http://armygoldenknights.armylive.dodlive.mil/golden-knight-history/#sthash.b1H19K4N.dpuf>



# Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Armistice

July 29, 2013

## Secretary Shinseki's remarks from the July 27 Ceremony at the Korean War Memorial:

Mr. President, distinguished guests, especially our guests from Korea; fellow Veterans; ladies and gentlemen:

Six decades ago, the guns fell silent all along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel in Korea, ending more than three and a half years of bloodshed, destruction, and enormous suffering. Today's ceremony honors the extraordinary courage of those, from all our nations, who fought, bled, died, went missing, suffered brutal captivity, and triumphed there.

More than 1.7 million Americans fought in Korea—on pieces of terrain nicknamed Pork Chop Hill and Heartbreak Ridge; in towns and places like Chipyeong-ni, Pusan, and Chosin Reservoir; and in unnamed locations known only by grid coordinates and hilltop elevations.



Freezing and fighting.

T.R. Fehrenbach's definitive work, *This Kind of War*, chronicles timeless lessons about military readiness that were re-learned in Korea and it provides this oft-cited quotation:

***"... You may fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life—but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman Legions did, by putting your young men into the mud."***



**One of America's finest during the Korean War – we have not forgotten.**

The Veterans we honor today were the young we sent to the mud of Korea with little notice. The lessons are many, as are the arguments about how they should have been better prepared and equipped to fight that expeditionary mission. What is unarguable, however, is the heroism with which these Veterans performed their missions. They rose above all questions of readiness to preserve the freedom of the South Korean people.

Today, we honor all Veterans, who served so courageously in Korea, and we thank their families for their service and sacrifice. *Kapshi Kapshida!* [We Go Together].

God bless our Veterans, and may God continue to bless this wonderful country of ours. Thank you



187<sup>th</sup> ARCT combat jump in Korea



# The 187<sup>th</sup> Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT)

The 187th was selected as an airborne regimental combat team responding to the crisis in Korea. On 1 August 1950 the regiment became the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT) when supporting units were added and deployed to Japan, arriving on 20 September 1950. The advance party of the Third Battalion of the Rakkasans was the first to arrive in Korea, arriving at Kimpo Airfield on 23 September. On 24 September, it was placed under the operational control of the First Marine Division, relieving the 2d Battalion of the 7th Marine Regiment, arriving almost a week after Douglas MacArthur's surprise landing at Inchon on 17 September 1950.

One month later, on 20 October 1950, the regiment made successful combat parachute assaults near the towns of Sukchon and Sunchon, North Korea as part of the Battle of Yongju. The published purpose of that drop was to capture members of the North Korean Government fleeing Pyongyang and also to free American POWs being moved from Pyongyang toward the Manchurian border. Neither objective was realized. Followed by battles at Suan, Wonju, Kaesong, Munsan-ni, and Inje.

The 187th led the second and last parachute assault in Korea on 23 March 1951 (Operation Tomahawk). Under BG Thomas J. H. Trapnell, it redeployed to Japan on 26 June 1951 where it became a strategic reserve but returned to Korea on 24 May 1952 to assist in the suppression of the prisoner rebellion at the Geoje POW Camp (aka Koje Pow Camp during the Korean War) where prisoners had forcibly seized and held Brigadier



General Francis Dodd, camp commandant, hostage for four days from May 7, 1952 (Koje Island Incident).

After this, it once more returned to Japan on 18 October 1952 but made its final return to Korea on 22 June 1953. The unit returned to the United States in July 1955 and, the following year, became part of the newly reactivated 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY.

Many personnel from the 511 PIR in the 11th Airborne Division were transferred to the 187th ARCT to bring it up to full strength for overseas deployment.

During the Korean War, three members of the regiment were awarded the Medal of Honor: Lester Hammond, Jr., Rodolfo P. Hernandez and Richard G. Wilson.

The 1950s and early 1960s were a turbulent time for 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry. It returned to the US in 1955, this time to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. As part of a larger realignment of the Army, under the Pentomic Division concept, the Iron Rakkasans road marched to Fort Campbell in February 1956 to serve as the nucleus of the newly reactivated 101st Airborne Division.



The 2nd Combat Jump by the 187th ARCT during  
"The Forgotten War"

*187th....All The Way!!!*



# The Missing Name

As I stand here in front of the Wall,  
With its thousands of thousands of names,  
I see my mirrored reflection,  
And I feel guilt, and I feel shame.  
Standing here alone, I'm not alone,  
As ghosts from the past surround me,  
Rain is softly coming down  
And like tears on the Wall, it falls.  
My mind flashed back to another time,  
And I'm glad that it is raining,  
So no one sees my tears.  
Brothers, I LOVE YOU,  
And I've never forgot.  
I remember your faces,  
And the look in your eyes.  
I wonder if you know,  
Of the "Suffering and Hurt",  
Of US who came back "Alive".  
For long before this "Wall",  
I'd tried to walk tall,  
And be what you never could,  
I feel guilt,  
And I feel Shame,  
Like the Wall is "Missing a Name".  
I've tried going on for You,  
To be what you never could.  
I've tried and tried,  
I've cried,  
And still I've tried.  
I feel I've let you down...  
I'm Alive,  
BUT, my SOUL, feels DEAD.

By **Crist Nelson Dauberman,**  
2/503 Inf – 173d ABN

Chris' poem originally appeared in the *Sky Soldier*  
*Newsletter*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter 1990



## DO YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW?

Do you really want to know what it's like being a Vietnam  
vet?  
Do you want to know about war?  
Do you want to know about fear?  
Do you want to know about death?  
Do you want to know what it's like seeing someone's head  
explode?  
Do you know fresh brains look slimy, pink and white?  
Are these the things you want to know?  
You ask me how many people I shot and killed.  
You ask me how many dead bodies I've seen.  
Should I count them for you?  
Do you want to smell the smell of death?  
Why do you want to know these things?  
Do you want to know of my friend who intentionally shot  
himself in the foot while on LP to get out of combat,  
then died from shock?  
Is this what you want to know?  
Or, do you want to read the letter I wrote to his mother  
telling her how her son died a hero?  
Perhaps that's what you want to know.  
Do you want to know about wakening in the jungle to tracer  
rounds zinging beneath your nose and above your head and  
hearing the screams of those hit by those rounds?  
You surely must want to know that.  
Do you want to know how still and quiet 20 dead young men  
are laying elbow-to-elbow under ponchos?  
Are these the things you want to know?  
Do you want to hear about the screams "*We're Americans!*  
*We're Americans!*," as we shot our own men coming in from  
night patrol?  
Do you want to know about the one we killed?  
Do you want to know what it is like living with paranoia as  
your daily companion?  
Do you want to know about the dreams and sleepless nights?  
There are many of them you can ask about.  
Do you want to know what the chill feels like in hearing  
"*Fix bayonets!*" when surrounded by bad guys and fearing  
being overrun?  
Would you like to feel that chill?  
Or maybe you want to know how to drive at over 100 mph late  
at night, screaming, with no one to hear your screams.  
Would you care to take that drive?  
Do you want to hump through thick jungle all day staring at  
the eyes of a dead young man carried by two other young men,  
those eyes never leaving yours?  
Of course, that must be what you want to know.  
Are these your questions?  
I can answer these and more, if you really want to know.

**Smitty, 2/503d**

**Note:** This was written some years ago during a rather  
melancholy period while undergoing the 3rd degree by the  
VA, and appears in *The Battle at Bau San* (Op Silver City).



# A Nephew Honors His Uncle, PFC Eric Ribitsch C/2/503, KIA

Good morning. All I can say is wow....I was stunned reading this, your poem, "Do You Really Want To Know?", floored me -- because those are some of the exact questions I would have asked my uncle Eric had he lived, and I believe he would have answered me the same way you did. In fact, in some of his letters he wrote back he described some of those exact situations....he saw much death and loss during his 10 months there, and I often wonder how it changed him.

Something did happen to him from the end of '65 to after January '66. He was much more positive through the end of '65, and then his letters in the Spring of '66 were harbingers of doom – scary almost, as if he was almost predicting his demise. He said more than once to my father (his older brother) that the ambushes were starting to worry him....that he hoped he'd make it and have the same chances of having kids like my dad did, etc. That was around May of '66, after Silver City. By that point, he was having doubts about his return to civilian life alive.

Here are two pics of my uncle. I believe there were two phases of my uncle during his time there....the optimistic, cocky warrior....



PFC Eric Ribitsch, Camp Zinn, Bien Hoa, late 1965. The optimistic and cocky warrior of Charlie Company.

....and then the one who saw too much and accepted reality.



Eric, some months later. His young eyes had seen too much by then.

Best Regards,

Eric Ribitsch

Proud Nephew of Eric Ribitsch

## Eric Ribitsch

Private First Class  
C CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT  
173RD ABN BDE  
Army of the United States  
20 February 1943 - 3 July 1966  
Ridgewood, New York  
Panel 08E Line 124



# HOOK-UP FOR TRAVEL TO VIETNAM

Have you been thinking about a possible return trip to your old stomping (humping) grounds in beautiful Southeast Asia, specifically Vietnam? If not, read no further; but, if *our mistress*, Miss Vietnam, is calling you to return to her, if only for a visit, please read on.

Of recent date I've been trading notes with Mr. Eric Ribitsch, the nephew of one of our troopers from C/2/503 killed in action on 3 July 66, PFC Eric Ribitsch – of course, nephew Eric is the namesake of his uncle and fallen Sky Soldier. Eric is very much interested in visiting Vietnam and, hopefully, some of the sites where his uncle served, and particularly Xuan Loc, where his uncle fell in battle. Ideally, Eric would prefer visiting the country with one or more Sky Soldiers who served with his uncle or during the same time in-country.

Learning of Eric's plans, it became obvious we have the perfect outlet, our newsletter, to help hook-up Sky Soldiers and/or their family members and friends who might be interested in visiting Vietnam as a group. This will be a simple process; just send in your name, unit with which you served and when (if applicable), or family/friend affiliation, preferred dates in Vietnam, and the general locations you plan to visit, along with your email address and (optional) phone number. For example, this is what Eric's posting looks like:

**Eric Ribitsch, Spencerport, NY**  
Nephew of PFC Eric Ribitsch, C/2/503, '65/'66  
KIA 3 Jul 66, Xuan Loc, RVN  
Planning to visit Saigon, Bien Hoa, Cu Chi, Xuan Loc, date TBD. Interested in touring with Sky Soldiers who served with my uncle, or Sky Soldiers from those years, or any Sky Soldiers.  
Email: [eric.ribitsch@exelinc.com](mailto:eric.ribitsch@exelinc.com)  
Cell: 585-576-8385

We'll continue to run these notices until instructed to remove them from our newsletter or until the travel date has passed.

I, personally, have returned to Vietnam on two separate occasions, once in '01 and again in '05. During both visits I joined groups of buddies with whom I served, which made for a nice support network for us all. If you've never been back to VN since the war, I urge you to employ the 'buddy system' once more, and travel with one or more guys, ideally troopers you served with.

**So, send in detail about your plans to return to the country of little people, rice paddies, jungles and mountain ranges, and we'll post it here, hoping you hook-up with one or more traveling partners.**

Email details to: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com) with *Return to Vietnam* on the subject line. Ed

## Earlier Reinvasions

In 2001 there was a reinvasion of Vietnam with the likes of Mike Thibault, Jack Ribera, Mike Sturges and the late Dale Olson, all of A/2/503, along with Steve Haber of C/2/503, A.B. Garcia of HHC/2/503, and Craig Ford of C/1/503, including a couple family members who joined us. Mr. Sturges, who had returned on an earlier visit in 1999, sensed some apprehension in me about going back to a place I never thought I'd return to. Here's something I wrote following our visit to Vietnam in '01. In just 8 words, Mike quelled any unease this old RTO was experiencing about *going back to the scene*.

*"My friend, Mike Sturges, told me some years ago, 'Vietnam is a country, and not a war.' To re-experience that land, particularly with men for whom you care and with whom you share the same early life history, is something very special. For myself, I've tried to find some deep and profound importance or meaning or lesson I've learned from spending a week in this place where I once spent a year at war. One thing I did learn, and that is there are two Vietnams...the Vietnam we all remember from nearly four decades ago, a country and people many of us hated and many still hate; and then there's the Vietnam and people of today. Brothers, they are entirely different places and different people."*

Years later, I stand by that statement.

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



**2001: In lounge at the Caravelle Hotel in downtown Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). Taking a respite from the day's heat and humidity while enjoying a few cold ones (but not drinking non-bottled water there) are Sky Soldiers from left to right: Lew "Smitty" Smith, Craig "Ist Bat Guy" Ford, Mike Sturges, Jack "Jackattack" Ribera, and our good buddy the late Dale Olson. Some would return again in 2005.**



**Why? You ask.**



## **AIRBORNE**

**It's not because I'm elite,  
and it's not because I'm  
crazy. It's because my balls  
are bigger than yours.**

[Sent in by a big-balled Sky Soldier of the 4<sup>th</sup> Batt kind]

When jumping this is where we carry our balls. Face-first PLFs have a tendency to smart. Even our lady paratroopers have big balls. *"Life's too short to live it as a Leg."*



## **AAH Shoot!**

During WWI, a Major General Shute took over the Royal Naval Division and the following poem was written which became quite well known.

General Shute had an intense dislike for the unconventional "nautical" traditions of the Royal Naval Division and made numerous unpopular attempts to stamp them out. *He was particularly critical of the poor management of the latrines which could have led to an outbreak of dysentery.* Following a particularly critical inspection of the trenches by General Shute, an officer of the division, Sub-Lieutenant A. P. Herbert, who later became a famous humorous writer, legal satirist and Member of Parliament, wrote a popular poem that summed up the feelings of the men of the RND.....

The General inspecting the trenches  
Exclaimed with a horrified shout,  
*"I refuse to command a division  
which leaves its excreta about."*  
But nobody took any notice  
No one was prepared to refute,  
That the presence of shit was congenial  
Compared to the presence of Shute.  
And certain responsible critics  
Made haste to reply to his words  
Observing that his staff advisors  
Consisted entirely of turds.  
For shit may be shot at odd corners  
And paper supplied there to suit,  
But a shit would be shot without mourners,  
If somebody shot that shit Shute.

[Thanks to the keen-eyed Mr. Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP]



# Our Most Favorite People in the Whole Wide World!



**Steve Welch with granddaughters Jillian and Brooke Bettencourt, September 9th, 2012.**

“Someday my granddaughters (Jillian left and Brooke right) will remember this photo and feel very honored about being part of the Disneyland Parade where I was given the honor of Veteran of the Day. This was a special day for me representing all veterans and especially the 173d Brigade legacy of serving with pride and honor. I wish every veteran could experience this honor and know their service was and is appreciated. *“We Try Harder”* was more than just a phrase to me, it was the way we did our duty and the way we lived our lives.

You wonder about life and why things happen the way they do or don't. Many of my brothers didn't make it back to the world. So this to me was more than a parade, it was a memorial to all those who didn't make it back and a tribute to all of those who did, but weren't treated fairly for their service in Viet Nam.

I feel blessed to be a small part of the 173rd "Herd" and its enduring history and the phrase, *“We Try Harder”*.

**Steve Welch  
C/2/503d**



**RTO Wayne Hoitt with the newest addition to Family Hoitt.**

“This photo shows our new grandson, Jace, pulling at his grandfather's beard. We've seen him about once a month since he was born in December and he's the apple of everyone's eye and we dote on him shamelessly....Oh well.”

**Wayne Hoitt  
HHC/2/503d**

**2/503 troopers are invited to send in a photo and brief description of you with your kids and/or grandkids for inclusion in your newsletter. Something for them and *their* kids to look at one day in the distant future and say, “Hey, that’s me with dad and grandpa! He was a Sky Soldier.”**

Send to: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)



# A RANGER LEADS THE WAY



**Ranger Bob**

I'm sad to pass on the news that our good friend and fellow Ranger, Bob Stouch, has died in hospital on Tuesday, July 23. Bob served with Co. N Rangers, 173d Airborne in Vietnam. During his service he contracted hepatitis which he struggled with for the rest of his life.

A service will be held on Monday, July 29 at 4 p.m. in St. Paul United Church of Christ, 927 N. Franklin St. Pottstown, PA. There will be an honor guard at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (don't have that location).

Bob's family asks that any donations be made to Ranger related charities like *Gallant Few* or *Wounded Warrior Project*.

Please send this message on to others who may have known or served with Bob.

**Hugh "Hubie" Imhof**  
N/75 Rangers

That is sad news indeed. I will miss Bob's words of friendship and respect to all on this list. Had a bad feeling the other day that Bob may not be doing well. Not hearing from him led me to suspect the worst. Will attempt to get across the state for the service, but I've committed to getting my friend to the VA for surgery early the next morning. Not sure if I'll be able to do both, and my friend has no one to drive and accompany him. **Jerry Sopko, D/4/503d**

I will forever miss his childlike love and desire for a better world and will really miss his signature.... *"Your Friend"*. Another angel in heaven to watch down on us. **Claudia Tobin, Sister of Larry Paladino, B/2/503d**

Exactly, Claudia. Even tho Bob was a hardcore Ranger dude on the outside, he was a lover of all things good and a voice for and protector of the weak and needy on the inside. We all should feel honored to have known him, if only from afar. It's a sad day. Bob, indeed, was a friend. **Lew "Smitty" Smith, HHC/2/503d**

This is a sad day for me! I will make every effort to attend the service for, "Our Friend", Bob. He will be sorely missed. **Ed Kearney, B/2/503d**

Ed, please carry my regards with you to Bob's services. This is a sad day. **Mark Carter, 173d LRRP, E/17th**

In my contacts list I have the notation *"Thinking Person,"* under Bob's name; I think I'll leave it there until this feeling goes away. **Bill Reynolds, A/2/503d**



**1971 -- Teams on Crap-Table. Bob Stouch talking to Harrigger.** (Photo from Ranger Robt 'twin' Henriksen)

**Bob was a proud member of the LLH Gang, an email network of Sky Soldiers, LRRPs, Rangers and their friends, all of some or suspect intellect, and will be dearly missed by all the gang members. Our sincere condolences go to Bob's wife Carroll and their family. Rest easy, Bob. Your Friends,**  
**The LLH Gang**



# We're Hiring America's Veterans!

June 26, 2013



**T**oday we're excited to announce that we're making a corporate commitment to ensure 25 percent of our new hires are veterans by 2015!

*"I'm honored and proud to add more of our country's service men and women to the Amtrak team,"* says Amtrak president and CEO Joe Boardman, who is a Vietnam veteran.

That means that over the next year we expect to hire more than 3,000 employees, 25 percent of which will be vets! In fact, in fiscal year 2012, more than 14 percent of new hires were veterans.

Amtrak's new hiring initiative was announced today at a special ceremony at Washington Union Station, just steps from the nation's capitol. You can see live social media coverage of the event by using the hashtag [#AmtrakVets](#).

The event included Sen. Joe Manchin, Rep. Jeff Denham, Michael L. Rhodes with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Amtrak employees and an extra special guest ... a custom-painted locomotive.

To commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam War and to honor those that have served in all modern conflicts, we unveiled a specially designed *"America's Railroad Salutes Our Veterans"* locomotive, which will travel around the country.

*"Veterans bring a unique skill set to the job and are a great fit for our positions,"* says Amtrak Chief of Human Capital Barry Melnkovic. *"Amtrak, America's Railroad, is in service to American veterans."*

So how do we plan on hitting that goal? We're working with a great group of partners, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Hiring our Heroes, the Wounded Warrior Project, RecruitMilitary and Army Pays. We're also participating in more than 30 job fairs this year!

If you're interested in learning more about careers at Amtrak and how skills from the armed forces transfer to the railroad, go to [Amtrak.com/VeteransCareers!](#) Tagged as: *Amtrak Employees, Behind the Scenes.*

[Sent in by John "Top" Searcy, HHC/2/503d]

####

## Whodat?



**Who is this strac lookin' young paratrooper wannabee who became one, went off to war to fight bravely with Charlie Company of 2/503d, rides a Harley hog and finally retired in Paducah, KY? We're wondering if he can bear the retirement.**





# 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](http://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](http://www.2013Reunion.com)



# VA Grants Will Expand Transportation in Highly Rural Areas

July 10, 2013

*Veterans to Have Easier Access to Health Care*  
WASHINGTON – Veterans will have improved access to health care under a Department of Veterans Affairs initiative that supports new transportation services for those living in highly rural areas.

VA began accepting applications this month for grants to help state Veterans Service Agencies and Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) operate or contract for transportation services to transport Veterans to VA medical centers and other facilities that provide VA care. A new regulation establishes the program that will administer these grants. Transportation will be provided at no cost to Veterans.

***“VA wants to be sure that all Veterans, including those who live in rural and remote areas, can receive the health care they have earned through service to our country,”*** said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *“State Veterans Agencies and VSOs will now be able to employ innovative approaches to transportation services for Veterans in our highly rural areas. The end results will include better service and better health care for Veterans.”*

VSOs and State Veterans Service Agencies may apply for grants up to \$50,000 to fund transportation of Veterans to and from VA medical centers and other facilities that provide VA care. If specified in the application, the services may be provided under agreements with contractors, such as private bus or van companies.

A highly rural area is defined as a county or counties with a population of fewer than seven persons per square mile. Many highly rural areas are found in the western and southwestern United States but at least half of the states have at least one highly rural area.

One of Secretary Shinseki’s top three priorities is increasing access to VA care and services for Veterans wherever they live. VA is expanding access in a three-pronged effort that includes facilities, programs and technology. Veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan are eligible for an extended period of eligibility for health care for 5 years after they have left the service.

For more information, please see the Federal Register.

***I take great pleasure in announcing the Official Preview for our new film...***

## **CORREGIDOR - THE ROAD BACK**

**A SPYRON - A.V. MANILA Presentation  
Peter Parsons | Paul Whitman | Lucky  
Guillermo**

**To view the preview please visit this  
web address:**

**<http://corregidor.proboards.com/thread/1503/corregidor-road-back-official-teaser?page=1>**

**Paul Whitman  
Webmaster, 503<sup>rd</sup> Heritage Battalion Website**  
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**Note:** Just some of the WWII 503<sup>rd</sup> troopers featured in the film are past guests to 173d reunions and include:



**Jim Mullaney**



**Tony Sierra**



**Chet Nycum**





## 503<sup>rd</sup> PIR WWII Journal

See Parts I thru VIII of WWII 503d PIR trooper Jerry B. Riseley's 'official journal' in Issues 46 thru 50, and 52 thru 55 respectively, of our newsletter. Ed

## History of the 2d Battalion, 503d PIR

"Riseley's's Adjutant's Journal was maintained only until October 1943. Thereafter, the history of the 2d Bn must be extracted from a mixture of sources, including the contemporary regimental, company documents, staff journals, periodic reports, personal diaries, and that most necessary and tricky of resources, the personal recollections of those involved. The predominant voice is that of a young Lieutenant in "F" Company, William T. Calhoun."

### FEBRUARY 1944



So we were alerted to move to Hollandia. All this time we had been talking about what a tough nut Wewak was going to be to cracked, and Gen. MacArthur surprised everyone by bypassing this major base and going on directly to the huge Japanese supply base at Hollandia. At least now we were moving up toward the fighting. We had heard rumors that they were preparing to move WACS into the Oro Bay Base Camp, so in order to keep up with the saying at that time one step behind the Japs and one step ahead of the WACS -- it was time to move.



### 1 FEBRUARY 1944

Camp was broken at 1430 hours & the troops went aboard the SS Robert Walker at 1605 hr. Hoisted anchor at 1700 hr & sailed for unknown



destination.

### Insert

At 16.30 hours on 24 Dec., 1944, the unescorted Robert J. Walker (Master Murdock D. MacRae) was hit by one torpedo from U-862 while steaming on a zigzag course at 10.8 knots about 165 miles southeast of Sydney, Australia. The torpedo struck on the starboard side in the stern, blew off the rudder, created a hole three by six feet, bent the shaft and destroyed the steering gear. When the unmaneuverable ship turned southward another torpedo was spotted at 18.20 hours about 1000 yards off the starboard side. One of the armed guards opened fire with a 20mm gun and exploded it about 100 yards from the ship. The crew then threw smoke floats overboard that screened the vessel for about 45 minutes.

At 20.00 hours, a third torpedo was spotted again about 1000 yards off the starboard side, but this time the gunfire was not effective and it struck at the #4 hold, creating a hole of ten by 20 feet on starboard and a hole six by eight feet on the port side. The blast ruptured the #3 deep tank and threw oil and water over the ship. After the second hit the survivors among the ten officers, 32 crewmen, 26 armed guards (the ship was armed with one 5 in, one 3 in and eight 20mm guns) and one passenger abandoned ship in three lifeboats and four rafts. Two crewmen were lost. The survivors were picked up after about 24 hours by the HMAS Quickmatch (G 92) and landed three days later at Sydney.

The Robert J. Walker sank about 17.00 hours on 25 December. U-862 had fired five torpedoes in the attack and became the only German U-boat that sank a ship in the Pacific Ocean. Source: [Uboat.net](http://Uboat.net)



Web photo purports to be survivors of USS Robert Walker.

(continued...)



## 5 FEBRUARY 1944

"Co. left Camp Cable by truck and boarded Army Transport at Brisbane, Qld. Aust. Harbor for new station."

## 11 FEBRUARY 1944

Co. left Port Moresby for new station.



Company left Port Moresby, New Guinea on USS Robert J. Walker for a rest period in Australia.



## 14 FEBRUARY 1944

"Debarked at Dobodura, New Guinea. Pitched bivouac at new station."



Dobodura was inland about eighteen miles from Oro Bay. The airfields were located here.



## 17 FEBRUARY 1944

Arrived in Brisbane, Qld. Aust. Harbor 0500 hr. Moved by truck to new station, Camp Cable.



Company disembarked at Dalgety (Dalgetty's) Dock, Brisbane, Australia and moved to Camp Cable.



The ship docked at Brisbane, Australia on 17th of February, traveling a distance of 1256 miles. On the 28th of February, 1944, First Lt. McRoberts assumed command of the company. The troops arrived at Camp Cable on the 29th of February & there joined First Sergeant Baldwin.

(The date of the "29th" is obviously wrong since the troops arrived at Camp Cable on 17 February 1944.)

"The first batch of replacements of Brisbane arrived two weeks earlier & had the camp ready for the old soldiers."

"The month of March brought more hard training & preparations for a change of stations. Twelve men from

Company (?) underwent stiff training at the Australian Commando School.

(The writer is having trouble with the company designation change. The school is the Queensland Jungle Warfare School described in Lt. Calhoun's diary.)

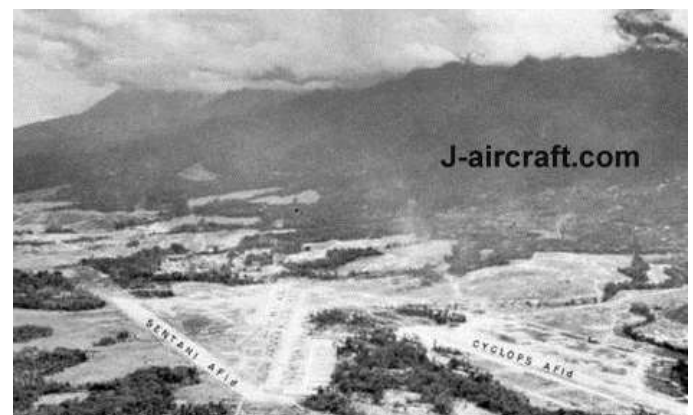
"The men made the best of the short four weeks at Cable by visiting such places as Logan's Village, Savoy's Queens St. & Beaudesert & beer call formations."

"Once again the troops embarked on the U.S.S. Sea-Cat, left Brisbane 5 April, 1944. On April 13 they disembarked at Dobodura (Oro Bay), New Guinea. The regiment was given limited intelligence details on Hollandia and Aitape in preparation for a possible jump there, but the Jap resistance afforded the ground troops cancelled this mission."

"April and May were occupied by training and on May 26th the Regiment moved to Dobodura to the air strips.

(This is incorrect. The Regiment had moved from Cape Sudest, Oro Bay, after about a month to Dobodura to an old cantonment area across from the 31st Infantry Division. It then moved from there on 26 May to a newly cleared area and set up its cantonment area.)

Work on the new camp was begun, but again the unit was alerted, and enplaned at Dobodura from Cyclops Drome, Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea. Camp was established at Ebli's Plantation 15 miles inland from Humbolt Bay. June 15th the Regiment moved to Holakang across Humbolt Bay by truck and LCM, for purpose of patrolling the area. Co. (?) was established as Lt. General's 6th Army Hq. guard, and the other 3 companies moved 4 miles to Cape Kassoe where a camp was established and patrols dispatched.



Hollandia airstrip can be seen in the distance. (Web photo)

(continued....)



## 1 APRIL 1944

"The regiment is again alerted."



DOCUMENT: 440401

Origin: "E" Company  
503d REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

To:

SUBJECT: SHIPPING LIST

Precis: List of 157 persons of "E" Company 503 PIR  
for embarkation at Brisbane for transit of  
the USAT SEA CAT destination Unknown.

Author:

REFER THIS DOCUMENT

## 5 APRIL 1944



Embarked from Breta (Bretts) Wharf, Brisbane on the **USAT Sea Cat.**"

"We were transported to Bretts Wharf in Brisbane where we were embarked upon the USAT SEA CAT. After the 'Walker' this was a luxury liner. With beds and sheets in a ship built to transport troops, good food, showers, mess stewards, man, this was living. It beat the 'West Point.' The 'Sea Cat' served three meals a day. The only distraction was the Merchant Marine crew and their propensity to strike when anything displeased them. For instance the bathing was stopped half a day because the fresh water distillers were shut down. The crew that operated them was displeased over something and struck for three hours. Those who obey orders do not take kindly to such liberties. There was a war going on, and they resented highly paid civilians putting their interest first. We waited in Brisbane until 7 April, when we sailed in a northerly direction, destination unknown."



## 7 APRIL 1944

The unit sailed from Bretts Wharf, Brisbane aboard the USAT Sea Cat, in a northerly direction, destination unknown.



The Sea Cat stopped at Townsville, Cairns, Port Moresby, Milne Bay, and finally dropped anchor at Oro Bay, New Guinea. The battalion debarked and was transported in ducks from the ship's gangway direct to the battalion area at Cape Sudest.

The regiment travelled on two ships. The newly arrived 462nd PA and Co. C, 161st PE had just arrived at Camp Cable and would not join the 503d until after the Noemfoor operation.



Departure from Brisbane on the USAT Sea Cat



Mess Call on the USAT Sea Cat  
(Photos by Emmett Lee Wester, 503d PIR)

(continued....)





### 14 APRIL 1944



Co arrived and disembarked at Oro Bay, New Guinea. The company moved to Cape Sudest area to set up camp. After less than 2 months in Bribane with its good food, beer, and social activities, strenuous training, the battalion was again returned to top physical and mental capabilities.

First echelon arrived Oro Bay, New Guinea at 0730, distanced travelled 2000 miles.

### 11 APRIL 1944



Arrived at Port Moresby Harbor 1600 hr left 1700 hr.

(Second Echelon) arrived Port Moresby and left at 1500 hr.

### 15 APRIL 1944

[First Echelon] Debarked in "Ducks" and proceeded to camp site at Oro Bay.

### 18 APRIL 1944

[Second Echelon] arrived Oro Bay. Strength: Officers 173, Enlisted men 2347

### 12 APRIL 1944



Anchored at Milne Bay 1700 hr and left 1700 hr 13 April, 1944.

### 13 APRIL 1944



Disembarked at Bobodura (Oro Bay), New Guinea

#### Note:

These historical reports appear here courtesy of Paul Whitman of the 503<sup>rd</sup> Heritage Battalion website, and will continue in our September newsletter. Ed



Disembarking at Oro Bay, New Guinea, 17 Apr 44  
(Emmett Lee Wester Collection)



## Looking for buddy of his uncle

Would anyone happen to know the other trooper in this portrait my uncle (on the left, Eric Ribitsch, C/2/503, '65/'66), sent back? It's killing me that I cannot find out who he is. This was taken while in 'Nam.



Eric Ribitsch (KIA) on left w/173d patch visible.

**Eric Ribitsch**  
Nephew of PFC Eric Ribitsch

**Note:** If anyone recognizes the trooper on the right please drop a note to Eric: [eric.ribitsch@exelisinc.com](mailto:eric.ribitsch@exelisinc.com)

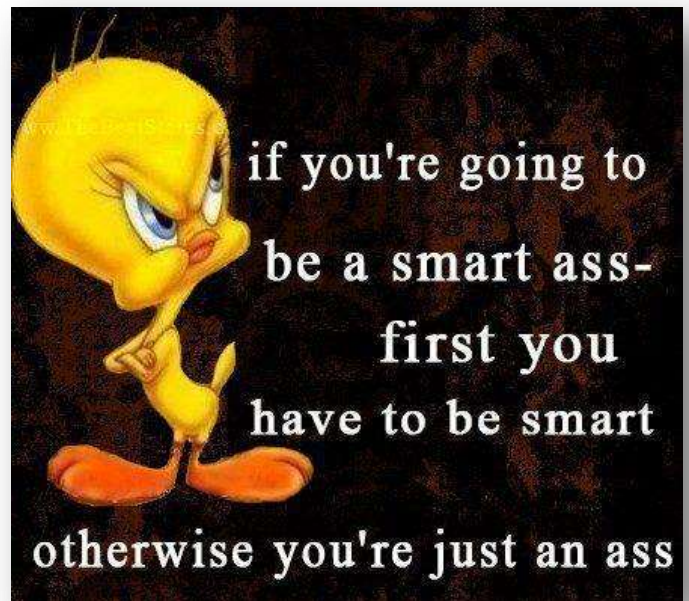


Eric Ribitsch visits gravesite of his uncle, Eric Ribitsch

## ANOTHER ONE OF A FEW



*"Hey Lewie!" "Hey Donnie!"* In dark shirt is Don "Rocky" Rockholt, LRRP/A/2/503d, war hero, friend, gone. I miss that old bastard, I surely do. And yes, Rocky and I were smart asses – but he was the smart one of the two. Ed



Brought to us by the oft times smart Cpt. Bill Vose, A/2/503.



# 173d Airborne Association Membership Application Form

## PLEASE PRINT AND FILL-OUT THIS APPLICATION

Please **circle** the appropriate boxes below

**Mail Application and Payments to;**

Membership Secretary, Dennis Hill  
97 Earle Street  
Norwood, MA 02062-1504

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**Make checks payable to:**  
173d Airborne Brigade Assn

New	Renewal	Change of Address, <i>Change of Chapter</i>	
<b>Annual Membership</b>			
<b>Ends on 31 December of each year - \$ 24.00</b>			
<b>Regular *</b>		<b>Associate</b>	
Sky Soldier	Veteran	Gold Star	Spouse of deceased Sky Soldier
<b>Life Membership \$ 173.00</b>			
<b>Regular *</b>		<b>Gold Star (Parent or Spouse)</b>	

*\*Regular Membership open to those assigned or attached to the 173d Airborne Brigade*

Please print current or updated information below:

**Service Number (B446349):** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Use first Letter of last name and last 6 of service number)*

**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Initial:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State or AE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**173d Service Dates (02/2003-02/2005):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Unit while with the 173d: (A-1-503rd or Co A/Support BN):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter Affiliated to: (4, 18, At Large):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Send Magazine:** [ ]U.S Mail or [ ]Via Email

**Gold Star Relationship (Wife, Mother)(PFC Mike Smith 11-08-67):** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

After we receive your payment (\$ 24.00 or \$ 173.00), please allow two weeks for processing.



Please make check payable to:  
**173d Airborne Brigade Assn.**

Mail Application & Check to:  
**Membership Secretary, Dennis Hill**  
97 Earle Street  
Norwood, MA 02062-1504

