

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

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
*****newsletter



September 2013, Issue 57
Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

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

~ Sky Soldiers Jump Into History....Again ~



They're not as good as they once were, but they're once as good as they ever were. *Airborne!* See story on Pages 2-4.





Drop Zone/manifest & cover photo, kneeling L-R: Donald W. Terrell (B/3/503, '70), Mark P. Dickinson & Son (B/2/503, '63-'65), Marcos Ortiz (3/503, '67-'68; 1/503, '70-'71), Floyd "Bud" Sourjohn (A/2/503, '70), Charles Lewie (B/3/503, '67-'68), Rich Boyer (ADT), Mary Iskerka (ADT), Howard Hayes (ADT), Mark W. Vosburg (D/2/503 & E/17, '70-'71), Paul Graff (A/2/503, '67-'68), Michel-Paul Maurais (ADT), standing L-R: Arvid T. Sivula (B/2/503, '68-'69), Ben O. Musquez (B/3/503, '68), Ruben M. Aguirre (BDE HHC, '67-'70), Ron Snyder (C/173 SPT & BDE HHC, '67-'68), Thomas A. DeLuca (D/3/503 & 4/503, '69-'70), Leon R. Stankus (B&C/1/503 & BDE HHC, '71), Mack Brooks (A/4/503 & BDE HHC, '69-'70), Jose M. Palacios (E/17, '69), Thomas C. Ayers (A/2/503 & HHC/2/503, '70-'71), Dennis W. Hayes (A/1/503, '64-'66), Sean Wead (BDE HHC, '09-'11), Dayton W. Herrington (C/4/503, '66-'67).

Stand In The Door . . . once more!

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

Despite the pulsing roar of the aircraft engines through the open paratroop door, the Jumpmaster's commands were crystal clear: "Stand Up . . . Hook Up . . . Check Your Equipment . . . Sound-off For Equipment Check . . . Stand In The Door . . . Go!" . . . then the thunderous prop blast . . . "one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand" . . . a beautiful canopy . . . the stillness, the peace . . . then the rushing ground . . . and a perfect parachute landing fall . . . *Airborne!*

During 17-19 July 2013, seventeen veterans of the 173d Airborne Brigade gathered in Frederick, Oklahoma, to stand in the door and jump from a perfectly-good aircraft . . . once more!

This event was sponsored by the 173d Airborne Brigade Association, and was hosted by the World War II Airborne Demonstration Team (WWII ADT). We had two primary purposes: to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the 173d Airborne Brigade, as well as to honor the service and sacrifice of all Sky Soldiers – past, present, and future. A third (if

informal) purpose was to renew old friendships and make new ones.



Afghan vet Sean Wead executes a good PLF as A/2/503 vets Graff, Ayers and Sourjohn stand ready.

The event was conducted at the WWII ADT's facilities at the former Frederick Army Air Field (elevation 1,255 feet). Our Jump Refresher Training lasted two days, beginning at 0545 hrs. and lasting until 1830 hrs. It consisted of both classroom instruction (e.g., safety first/last/always, history of parachutes, the five points of performance, etc.) and practical exercises (viz., many, many parachute landing falls and mock door exits).

(continued....)





Door exit training.

The aircraft was a C-47 christened “Boogie Baby.” It had been built in 1942 at the Douglas plant at Tinker Army Air Field, and had participated in the D-Day parachute drops over Normandy in 1944. We used MC1-1C parachutes, locally modified with pilot chutes. The Jump proper took place at sunrise on the 19th: two lifts of Sky Soldiers leaped into the cloudless blue at an altitude of 1,500 feet. The spacious Drop Zone was dedicated to Jake McNiece, the most famous member of the 506th Airborne’s “Filthy Thirteen” of WWII fame.



Mark Vosburg, D/2/503 & E/17, ‘70/’71, in the “Nut Cracker”.

Six veterans of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry participated in the event: Mark P. Dickinson (B Co, ‘63-’65), Paul Graff (A Co & Hill 875 survivor, ‘67-’68), Arvid T. Sivula (B Co, ‘68-’69), Mark W. Vosburg (D Co, ‘70-’71), Floyd “Bud” Sourjohn (A Co, ‘70), and Thomas C. Ayers (A Co & HHC, ‘70-’71). As for the other Sky Soldiers, most were Vietnam-era Grunts and most wore CIBs. One exception was an Afghanistan-era chaplain, but even he wore a Combat Action Badge. Every 173d vet who showed up jumped!



DZ orientation with ADT 1SG Richard Wolf



C-47 orientation with ADT Jumpmasters Henry Viswat and Bill Jordan.

Two members of the WWII ADT’s staff were former Sky Soldiers and both made the jump: Dennis W. Hayes (A/1/503, ‘64-’66) and Dayton W. Herrington (C/4/503, ‘66-’67). Both of these troopers were instrumental in arranging the event and deserve many thanks. Thanks are also due to Marilyn Snyder, snyder1776@hotmail.com who was kind enough to share the photos used in this article.

(continued....)



Zero Hour....Jump Day



Pre-dawn 'Jump 1' in hangar. To the left Eric Hitchcock, HHC/2/503d and Chairman of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association Foundation snaps pic as Jumpmaster checks Sky Soldiers' equipment.

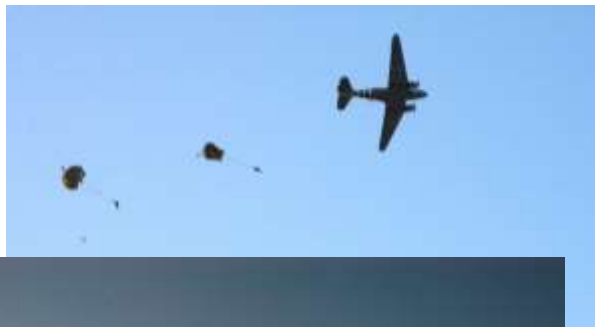


C-47 taxis out and is greeted by a beautiful sunrise.



Sky Soldier's flying high aboard WWII veteran, *Boogie Baby*.

Go!



ADT Col. Raymond Steeley awards "Blood Wings" to Mark Dickinson, B/2/503, '63-'65, as Mark's son assists.

The WWII Airborne Demonstration Team was founded in 1996 to remember, honor, and serve the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces who fought for freedom during the Second World War. The Team conducts an intensive nine-day jump school twice a year at their facilities in Frederick, and has made jumps in Normandy, Holland, Belgium, and Italy wearing WWII uniforms and equipment. Visit their website at www.WWIIADT.org for jump opportunities. ###



The Filthy Thirteen

The Filthy Thirteen was the name given to the Demolition Section of the Headquarters Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, of the United States Army, which fought in the European campaign in World War II.

The Demolition Section was assigned and trained to demolish enemy targets behind the lines. They were ordered to destroy a bridge over the Douve River during the Normandy Invasion of Europe in June 1944, a mission that cost the lives of most of these men. The group was airdropped for the mission by aircraft of the 440th Troop Carrier Group of the U.S. Army Air Forces.

This unit was best known for the famous photo which appeared in *Stars and Stripes*, showing two members wearing Indian-style "mohawks" and applying war paint to one another (photo shown here). The inspiration for this came from Jake McNiece, who was part Native-American.

After a disciplinary incident while on leave, McNiece joined the Pathfinders. These were paratroopers sent in ahead of the main force to guide them in. Expected casualties were 80–90%. The pathfinders were dropped into the encircled town of Bastogne at the height of the Battle of the Bulge. Their equipment enabled them to guide in subsequent airdrops of supplies crucial to the continued resistance of the trapped 101st Airborne Division.

McNiece considered that any activities not directly concerned with killing the enemy were irrelevant, an attitude that led him to be in constant trouble with the military authorities. Nevertheless, McNiece finished the war with four combat jumps, a very rare feat for an American paratrooper. His jumps were made in Normandy, the Netherlands as part of Market Garden, the Pathfinder jump in to Bastogne, Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge, then his last jump as an observer with the 17th Airborne Division during Operation Varsity.

Of the activities of the Filthy Thirteen, Jack Agnew once said, *"We weren't murderers or anything, we just didn't do everything we were supposed to do in some ways and did a whole lot more than they wanted us to do in other ways. We were always in trouble."*



The name "Filthy 13" referred to the fact that, while training in England, they washed and shaved once a week and never cleaned their uniforms.

Some of the group included Jake McNiece, Jack Womer, Jack Agnew, Brincely Stroup, Lieutenant Charles Mellen, Joseph Oleskiewicz, John Hale, James F. Green, George Radeka, Clarence Ware, Robert S. Cone, Roland R. Baribeau, James E. Leech, Herb Pierce, and Andrew Rasmussen. Others in the group included Frank Palys and Charles Plaudo. An interview with Jake McNiece and Jack Agnew can be found on the two disc version of the *Dirty Dozen* DVD.

Jack Agnew died at the age of eighty-eight on April 8, 2010. Jake McNiece died at the age of ninety-three on January 21, 2013.



Jake McNiece. *All The Way, Sir!*





Mission: The objectives of the Association shall be to preserve in patriotic reverence the memory of the fame and glory of the Pathfinder; to maintain and strengthen the bonds of comradeship which distinguished the members of the Pathfinders. We shall also provide for the gathering and dissemination of information concerning those members and for their periodic assembly in local and national reunions. We pledge to enhance the Pathfinder's prestige in all military and civilian circles; and to assist active duty, retired, family members of deceased and disabled Pathfinders in achieving a better quality of life for them and their families.



Pathfinders, WWII

A group of veteran warriors within our NPA's 101st ABN Chapter celebrates the eleventh hour of the third Sunday of January each year to remember six fallen Pathfinders who were killed in action in the Republic of Vietnam. These celebrated soldiers are Patric J. Bohan, Donald Ragsdale, Ronald Reynolds, David Winkle, Guy Fern and Thomas Kukowski. While this tradition of remembrance started in Maryland, there were celebrations of a formal Roman Catholic Mass in Maryland and Colorado and a Presbyterian Service in Pennsylvania during 2010. The NPA posts this notice to further expand the remembrance of these fine soldiers and close brothers who died alone atop unnamed ridgelines in a far off battle zone that many of us remember as clearly as if it were yesterday. There are some who say forget the war! Get past it! It was a long time ago! For those of us who knew and fought beside these fine young men, we say,

"We'll Never Forget Them!"

<http://nationalpathfinderassociation.com/>





RANGERS LEAD THE WAY



This photo is of the 173d LRRP/Rangers at the ranger reunion this past July.
"We had the largest turnout of the units in Vietnam."

A 'No Shit' Story

I have to share this no shit story with you.

The LRRP's had a stand down for rest. Slicks were coming and going. Tom Zaruba asked this chopper dude where he was going. He said, *"Bien Hoa and back."*

Tom told AP Valkie to jump on and bring back beer.

Upon arriving Bien Hoa the chopper landed right in front of Carl Vencill. Carl said, *"What in the hell are you doing here?"* Valkie didn't know what to say, he just stood there. Carl said, *"You are getting short, want to go home?"* And Carl sent him home.

Fast forward 47 years; last month Tom is sitting and drinking beer with the boys. Tom looks up and there stands Valkie with 2 beers in his hands. Hold on to your seat.... Valkie said, *"I'M BACK!"*

Can't make this shit up!

Ron Thomas
173d LRRP, '65/'66

Jakes' Team, 1966



Photo from Ron Thomas



2013 MOAA/NDIA Warrior-Family Symposium



The 2013 Warrior-Family Symposium (WFS), will be held on Thursday, Sept. 12, 2012 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. This year's WFS will focus on the theme

“Mental Health: Linking Warriors and their Families, Government, and Society,”

and is co-hosted by the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA).

Register today!

Admission is free for active duty, Reserve and Guard members of the military and their spouses. We wish to thank USAA, the Executive Sponsor for the Symposium.

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Registration/Continental Breakfast

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Welcome & Opening Remarks
Presentation of Colors and National Anthem
Invocation

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Keynote Speaker
Robert L. Jesse, M.D., Ph.D.,
Principal Deputy Under Secretary
for Health, Department of Veterans
Affairs (*Confirmed*)

9:05 a.m. – 10:05 a.m. Fireside
Chat: “Six Degrees of Separation
for Warriors & Families: The
Impact of Mental Health Across
Generations” Warriors and families
from different conflicts discuss their
psychological-cognitive traumas
and physical injuries and the impact
of these injuries on them and their families, sharing their
stories of hope, struggles and ways individuals and
communities can help.

Bonnie Carroll, President and Founder of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) (*Confirmed*)



Jesse

MAJ Kevin Polosky, USA, Executive Officer for the Vice Director for Logistics, Joint Chiefs of Staff, J4, Washington, DC; Spouse/Caregiver of Army Veteran wife and father of five (*Confirmed*)

Debbie Sprague Author, Speaker, Coach - Specializing in Wellness & Life Solutions for Military Caregivers & CPO Randall Sprague, USN (Ret), Vietnam Veteran and Veteran Advocate (*Confirmed*)

Lt Gen Bernard “Mick” Trainor, USMC (Ret), Veteran of combat in Korea and Vietnam; former military correspondent, *New York Times*, and co-author of several books on the military, including *Endgame* (*Confirmed*)



Trainor

10:05 a.m. – 10:20 a.m. Break
Hip Hop Artist, Songwriter, Veteran,
Special Video Message

10:20 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.

Discussion Panel: “*The Significance: The Impact of Mental Health on Government and Society*” Military, government and private sector medical and non-medical professionals discuss the impact of mental health on our government and civilian communities, to include, the extent and consequences of psychological-cognitive injuries in the military and veteran populations.

Moderator: Alex Quade, Freelance War Reporter, former CNN correspondent (*Invited*)

Debbie Paxton, MSN, RN, Mental Health Advisor, USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment, Quantico, VA; spouse, General Jay Paxton, USMC, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps (*Confirmed*)
Kathryn Power M. Ed., Regional Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (*Confirmed*)

CAPT Richard Stoltz, USN, Director, Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) (*Confirmed*)

Terri Tanielian, Senior Social Research Analyst, RAND Corporation (*Confirmed*)

11:35 a.m. – 11:50 a.m. Lunch
Keynote Speakers General John F. Campbell, USA, Vice Chief of Staff, Army (*Confirmed*)

11:50 a.m. – 11:53 a.m. Thank You Remarks

11:53 a.m. – 12:25 p.m. Lunch



Campbell

(continued...)



(MOAA/NDIA continued)

12:25 p.m. – 1:10 p.m. Interactive Open Lunch Forum: *“Innovative Mental Health Solutions—Today and Tomorrow”* Leaders and mental health experts offer some practical and promising medical advances and alternative solutions taking place in the field, engaging attendees to offer their individual ideas and ways to affect change in the lives of warriors and families in their own communities.

Moderator: Dr. David Brown, Chief, Behavioral Health, Clinical Operations, Pacific Regional Medical Command, Honolulu, HI (*Confirmed*)

Lily Casura, Freelance writer and editor, social media expert, and Founder, award-winning Healing Combat Trauma, Chapter Author, *“Healing War Trauma: A Handbook of Creative Approaches”* (*Confirmed*)

James Kelly, M.D., FAAN, Director, National Intrepid Center of Excellence

(NICoE), Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (*Confirmed*)

Greg Montgomery, Jr., Founder/CEO, ZenPunt 5.0, former NFL All-Pro veteran punter, played for the Houston Oilers, Detroit Lions, and Baltimore Ravens, National Suicide Prevention and Mental Illness Research Spokesperson (*Confirmed*) Audience ‘Call To’ Action Input

1:10 p.m. – 1:25 p.m. Closing Celebrity Keynote Speaker Brian Delate, Vietnam Veteran; Actor, *Shawshank Redemption* and *The Truman Show*; playwright, *Memorial Day*, and Filmmaker, *Soldiers Heart* (*Confirmed*)

1:25 p.m. – 1:27 p.m. Salutation Remarks

1:27 p.m. – 1:42 p.m. Closing Keynote Speaker Chairman Bernie Sanders, (I-VT) Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs (*Confirmed*)

1:42 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Closing Remarks

1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Networking/Exhibits in the Atrium



Montgomery



Delate



Sanders

See more at:

<http://www.moaa.org/wfs2013/#sthash.Lvglm5Z9.dpuf>

[Meeting notice provided by Ray Robinson 2/503d, ‘63/’64]

Military surviving spouses ask for fair treatment on Capitol Hill SBP/DIC offset must be eliminated!

Alexandria, Va. (July 18, 2013) — On July 17, nearly 100 surviving spouses, including members of Military Officers Association of America’s (MOAA) Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC), MOAA staff, joined by members of the Gold Star Wives, American Legion, Society of Military Widows, and various surviving spouse support groups attended a Storming the Hill event, sponsored by MOAA. The purpose was to educate the 113th Congress and their legislative and military assistants on the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset issue.

The day began at the Rayburn Building at a congressional breakfast with Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) addressing the group. Two surviving spouses, Mrs. Traci Voelke and Mrs. Suzanne Gerstner, each spoke about their husband’s deaths and gave very different but compelling testimonials of the struggles each of their families face as a result of the offset. MOAA’s government relations team presented a quick brief to the congressional assistants in the group focusing on the SBP/DIC offset issue.

“In order to fully understand the importance of complete elimination of the SBP/DIC offset, it is vital they understand the issue and its impact on surviving spouses and families,” said Vice Adm. Norbert R. Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret), president of MOAA. *“The ultimate goal is complete elimination of the SBP/DIC offset, and I am proud of this group of surviving spouses for their advocacy and determination,”* Ryan stated.

Under current law, the surviving spouse of an active-duty or retired member, who dies of a service-connected cause, must forfeit \$1 of military SBP annuity for each \$1 received in DIC. DIC is presently set at \$1,215 monthly and is paid only to survivors of veterans whose death is determined to have been caused by service. This dollar for dollar offset wipes out most of the SBP payment for the vast majority of survivors.

Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Rep. Wilson have introduced S. 734 and H.R. 32, respectively, which would repeal the offset of DIC payments from SBP annuities, in the belief that when military service causes the death, the VA indemnity payment should be added to the normal SBP annuity, not subtracted from it.

After a congressional breakfast, the “stormers” met with their legislators and staffs to discuss the issues, provide fact sheets and brochures, and ask them to end the SBP/DIC offset. [Source: MOAA news release]



In an email to Eric Ribitsch, nephew of PFC Eric Ribitsch, C/2/503, KIA 3 July '66, Charles M. "Andy" Anderson, Major, USAF (Ret), and former trooper with C/2/503, wrote:

Preface to "Death Takes a Prisoner"

I wrote this chronicle to Operation Silver City almost twenty years after leaving Vietnam. I had to get my experience written down so I and others could better understand the trials and toils of a fierce battle. I consider this experience one of the great turning points in my life. Through catastrophe our souls we see; through bravery our hearts we free. I was fortunate to have clear view of the experience; for not once did I breathe a breath of fear.

Six months before this battle I had come to realize that I'd make it through this Vietnam ordeal. At that point fear left me. It was then I started treating it as an adventure. Like Second Gunner Curtis Harrington said: *"It's the best hunting in the world; the only game that shoot back at you."*

I recently found out that this operation haunted Curtis, severely, as it did others. It is difficult to see conspicuously with a mind clouded by fear. Without fear a vivid world opens and one is able to see things unnoticed before and sometimes see far beyond the mundane. As the tale goes:

The seeker and the mathematician journeyed to the Ocean of Oneness. Upon seeing the Great Sea the seeker immediately jumped in and freely dove into the waves. The mathematician stopped at the shore in puzzlement by the words on the waves. The seeker yelled to the mathematician, "Forget what you read in your books and learned in your treatises and jump in." Whereas the Mathematician replied, "I must go back and review what I studied before I continue, least I err and perish."

So the lesson – he who hesitates is lost – is realized. And – fear only God and all things will fear you; fear not God and be afraid of all things – is understood.

CMA

PS: Eric was my first ammo bearer.



PFC Eric Ribitsch

Death Takes a Prisoner

By Charles M. "Andy" Anderson
Major, USAF (Ret.)

(Photos and inscriptions added)



On March 11, 1966, Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d prepare to board choppers at Bien Hoa Airbase (the "Snakepit") for assault into War Zone "D" during Operation Silver City.

(Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503d)

The chopper blades slapped the moist morning air lulling us to sleep, so sorely needed, since our early rise hours past and our future of physical trial. I eyed the emerald terrain beneath, knowing we'd go from bird to bug at the end of our joy ride into the bosom of this dark damsel named Vietnam. It was the second week of March 1966.



2/503d enroute to War Zone "D", 11 March 1966.

(Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503)

This search and sweep operation was a serious effort to clean War Zone D of the vicious cockroaches (VC) infesting and infecting it and the surrounding areas. The concerns of us pawns were more to escape this ordeal with our hearts still beating and our body members mostly intact....

(continued....)



....Our hope was to move straight ahead on a hearty hike through the woods – avoiding all diagonal encounters with that persistent antagonist. Just the sound of the two words “War Zone” seized some with a solid fear of a steel-hard, death-defying, war-fighting foe – willing to sacrifice all for his devious designs. The operation was called “Silver City,” which made me imagine an old western movie rather than fighting in Vietnam. But, basically, to me it was just another painful affront with exhaustion. Death or dismemberment was now a distant reality from my view. Somehow I knew I’d see return, despite the desperate odds given a machine gunner for survival. I had been a machine gunner for going on two years and knew my job well. Despite my experience, few, I believe, shared my positive perspective.

The chopper came down with a thud. After assembly, we begin the long leg to our area of operation. Our first two days saw no encounters and we settled for a while in a thickly evergreened forest.



2/503 trooper crossing stream during Silver City.
(Photo by Jerry Bethke, HHC/2/503d)

Upon departing the area we moved past an area where the trees had been cut to allow choppers to camp. I wondered how, exactly, they landed on the log-covered clearing. Late morning we came to an opened area with numerous berry-like bushes beneath the canopy of trees. We stopped and formed a defensive line. A faint sweet whiff of dead bodies filled my nostrils. All my senses perked-up!

“We’ve found a village,” the third squad leader whispered open-eyed to me.

I glanced to my rear and noticed that silly-looking, chinless Lieutenant setting up the left side of his platoon directly behind my machine gun position. I signaled, waving my arms frantically and mouthing harsh adjectives, to him to shift his people to his right to avoid my demise if they opened-up. Apparently he

didn’t see my position tucked away in the bush. But, nonetheless, I was somewhat weary of rookie lieutenants.

Every creature including my assistant gunner, Hernandez, and ammo bearers froze in muteness. Even the leaves on the trees were speechless. Something sinister lay in wait. Minutes disguised as hours passed. Suddenly a loud *BOOM*, like an overgrown grenade, concussed the forest!

“Medic!” someone from my right shouted. I could hear Doc scrambling through the underbrush. *“Quick, get up here!”*

Safety off, I was anxious. But I felt nothing. Even the telltale dead-body-like odor of the VC faded – with the help of gunpowder. Nothing else lingered.

The word came down. SSgt. Butler and three or four others were dead. I looked at Hernandez in total confusion – blood surging through my temples. *‘No!’* I yelled inside to the depths of my solar plexus... *‘Not SSgt. Butler! He was the ideal of goodness, with wife*

and children. Nothing but kind encouragement came from his soul. His death leaves little hope for the likes of us.’

My mind was racing. Here was a man, assured and positive, vanquished in a single blast by some cruel trickster. I could never forget him. They carried him away in a poncho liner, sagging to its limits, glistening as it passed through the filtered, yet intense sunlight. I thought about his wife and what her reaction would be when she learned of his sudden end.

‘How could she take it? I barely could.’ I imagined his body being put in a chopper in that sorry poncho liner stacked with the others, departing.

Curtis, the other machine gunner, came down drenched with sweat, grenades dangling, pale as a painted mime. *“Whata you doing here, Curtis?”* Wondering why he left his position.

“It’s over, the VC are gone. Andy, you wouldn’t believe what happened. It was a claymore. We were standing right in front of it, just a few feet away; my whole machine gun team. Then it blew! The blast knocked us down, killing everyone behind us. I thought we were all dead, but none of us were even scratched. I can’t believe it, I just can’t believe it!”

(continued....)



I'd never seen Curtis this petrified. *'Why was he saved and SSgt. Butler killed? What was going on?'* I couldn't comprehend his incredible good luck. *"You're lucky, damn lucky!"*

"Did you see Sgt. Butler; they took him away in a poncho liner?" I asked, being more concerned about SSgt. Butler's death than Curtis's second life.

"Yeah, he was a mess, completely wiped out. He looked like hamburger."

'How could Curtis talk like this about such an excellent person? Had he lost sight of whom he was referring to? This was SSgt. Butler, one of the best NCOs we knew. It would have to be a closed coffin ceremony.' I projected: *'His wife wouldn't be able to see his body at all. This would be dreadful, worse than I'd envisioned. I'm glad I didn't see his body.'*

I talked awhile with Curtis about the situation until his color returned.



L-R: Charlie Company CO Capt. Tom Faley, Bn XO Maj. Willard Christensen, and Bn CO LTC John Walsh stop hump thru the jungle to confer during Operation Silver City.

(Photo provided by Tom Faley, C/2/503d)

We moved into the VC village, examining it closely. It was standard VC-fare, with all the scattered signs of recent abandonment. I took my team and searched through a portion of it finding nothing but the typical straw-hut trappings. Then someone found an underground passage.

"Shigamoto!" The platoon sergeant hollered for our tunnel rat. Shig came up to the hole. The plan was to drop some tear gas in to smoke 'em out, and then send Shig down the hole to check it out. I felt kind of bad for Shig. It seemed like he was being picked-on just because of his small stature. I tried to picture going down that hole and cringed. I hated small-enclosed

areas beneath the ground; they seemed primitive, sub-standard, and sub-human. Fortunately, I was too large and a machine gunner. I'd have taken disciplinary action before going in that murky hole.

Donning our masks, we popped the tear gas grenade and stuffed it in the hole. No response. I was slightly disappointed – wanting to experience the enemy's presence again to see if his desperation had increased since our last confrontation. Coming out of that gloomy hole, he'd have to look despicable, loathsome and hopefully mean. Shig searched the tunnels and found a few things of intelligence value and other nominal items.

We formed a perimeter around the encampment to stay overnight, anxious for a VC return. I set up my machine gun, talked to the guys awhile, and then walked out beyond the perimeter to urinate. As I finished up, while gazing out into the jungle, a Viet Cong

scout popped up from behind a bush about twenty feet away. We stared intensely at one another for about three seconds. He seemed older, in his mid-twenties, a round, brown face with an alarmed expression like he didn't know I was there. Unarmed, I turned and ran; glancing over my shoulder I saw him running, swift and quiet, in the other direction. One was scared and the other glad of it.

"Hey, I just saw a VC!" I called to the troops. *"Where?"* one answered getting ready for a battle.

"He took-off out of here, he was spying on us."

Questioning my own statement I thought, *'Why did he pop-up and why was he surprised? Maybe he had fallen asleep*

and was awakened by my approach?'

SSgt. Franklin, our platoon sergeant, came up to our position to question me about the encounter. I told him what I'd observed.

"What was he wearing, did he have a weapon?" he asked.

"A greenish outfit with a jungle hat, I didn't see any weapon."

"Anything else?"

"He seemed surprised, like he didn't know I was there."

"Surprised?" SSgt. Franklin had the same confused look I had.

(continued....)



"Yes, sergeant." I paused. "Maybe he was asleep or looking the other way or somethin'." 'Maybe he was shocked by my appearance, that I didn't look as evil as he imagined me to be.' I thought.

He cautioned us about keeping a close vigil that night in case Charlie returned. We all looked at each other wide-eyed.

That night, while on watch, I kept thinking about SSgt. Butler and his family, 'Where did he depart to or was he just gone forever? He had to go somewhere. He couldn't just vanish into nothingness. It was too remote, too unreal. Death had to be an illusion, a trick to the senses. He must be there, but where? What about his children?' I knew they were young. 'Would they know where he was? Did they truly understand what DEAD meant?' What anguish I thought it would be to have someone so close to you die. I tried desperately not to dwell on it, but I kept seeing that sagging poncho liner sparkling from the spots of sunlight hitting it, like from a far-away realm. Somewhere far, far away; yet, for a moment shockingly close, like I had been there before...

The next morning we packed and continued our trek through the Thauh Dien Forest. It was good getting away from that VC village. I felt uneasy around where the enemy had been.

A few miles into our march, while going up a hill, we stopped for a break. I sat down, my machine gun across my lap, leaning against a tree with my pack placed comfortably at my lower back, on the south side of the trail feeling the warm morning sun on my right shoulder. I wasn't too terribly tired, but was happy to take advantage of the respite. Casually looking across the trail, through what seemed to be a cathedral of trees, I gazed at the third squad. Moving my eyes to the right passed each face, I focused on Smitty – the tall black troop in the third squad.

"He's going to die." A mystical, almost wordless, Voice spoke to me from within, yet also just over my right shoulder.

I ask my assistant gunner Hernandez if he heard anything. He looked at me dumb and puzzled.

Quickly, I looked back to Smitty. It said it again! 'NO, I don't know that!' I said to myself glancing around rapidly;

I looked to see if anyone else had heard anything. All was calm, religiously calm. Again I looked at Smitty to see if he knew what I knew and was shocked to my soles by his appearance.



Unnamed C/2/503 trooper humping the bush during Operation Silver City.

(Photo by Jerry Bethke)

Surrounding him was a light grayish haze with infinitesimal sparkles. I knew beyond an earthly doubt, he was going to die. The mark of Death was heavily on him. In desperation, I repeatedly tried to shake it; but nonetheless, Death wouldn't relinquish its heavy hold. 'Maybe if I started to walk the death-haze would vanish,' I thought. On that thought we arose to continue our excursion, as if my thoughts controlled our movement. As I picked myself up I looked down, not to see Smitty, and continued our walk.

This was something I couldn't accept. Something I refused to face. But, even as we walked, Death was there – hovering around Smitty; shimmering as we walked like a Christmas tree glistening with reflected light – like billions of blinking stars on the twilight horizon, mesmerizing me. 'Undoubtedly this is a cruel joke.' I reflected. Just two days ago Death had harshly taken SSgt. Butler, now I was staring it in the face. I was elated at the thrill of this ethereal experience, yet totally despondent by my mental despair – a lack of ability to reason through this, not to mention the possible demise of Pvt. Smith.

The battalion reached an open field by late afternoon and settled in the woods around it. Prior to setting up a perimeter, our token photographer thought I was an appropriate subject for his journals and snapped a picture. I put on my toughest look as Hernandez caught the photographer in his camera clicking me. It was all quite silly, but I pictured myself in some glossy mag for all America to see. I think it ended in the circular file.



Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d arrive LZ Zulu Zulu in the late afternoon of 15 March 1966. The bad guys are watching.

(Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503d)

(continued....)



I positioned my machine gun and crew to the right of the platoon next to a large log separating us from first platoon. My second ammo bearer with an M-16 was to my right and my assistant gunner, also with M-16 was to my left. To the left of Hernandez was my first ammo bearer with an M-79 grenade launcher with the right flank of third squad, to which we were attached, on his left beginning with Smitty. Our position was well equipped. The third squad leader was behind us behind a small mound, a smart place to be. The third squad and the remainder of the platoon bowed out on a slight twenty-foot bump from what would have been a smooth perimeter line. On the left side of this bump was Curtis with his machine gun crew. With my squad leader not present, I was the weapons squad leader, making me about fourth in line for the platoon. This meant little to me since my job was to protect the guys with machine gun expertise.

That evening we ate C-rats and were ready for another night in the jet jungle under the infinite stars. I had almost forgotten about my experience with Smitty and my acquaintance with Death. I purposely avoided any interaction with Smitty.

I looked at my watch; it was a little after six o'clock on the ides of March. The historical significance of this date and the warning given by the soothsayer to Caesar quickly went through my mind. I pictured him on the side of the senate steps, looking up at the Roman leader with knotty, pointed finger and knitted brow, old and decrepit, but wise. Caesar standing on an upper stair, hand on hips, listening, but not hearing. *'Ah, this had nothing to do with me.'* I thought, even as had the marked monarch...

That night went quickly and early morning, during late twilight, I decided to clean my machine gun. All the parts were laid out and I went through a thorough cleaning. Getting ready to reassemble, I heard a chopper coming in. Suddenly, it was fired upon by enemy rounds and came crashing into the forest. Right after that we were hit with a hail of bullets.



Cowboys' Huey shot down at LZ Zulu Zulu marked the opening of the battle which raged for over five hours.
(Photo by Tom Goodwin, HHC/2/503)



L-R: 173d Airborne Cowboys pilots Tony Geishauer and Joe McHenry somehow survived the crash of their chopper.

Machine gun assembly took about a minute, and then Hernandez pulled out a belt of ammo and slapped it into the gun. I began systematically covering the area with three to five round bursts of fire wherever I saw muzzle flashes or heard enemy fire.

All around me people were yelling; a strong scent of fear wafted over them, like a soupy haze. Looking straight at Hernandez, I told him to pass the word down to relax, remain calm and quiet, stay low and return fire where they see or hear muzzle flash. To the ammo bearers, I said to keep a steady stream of ammo coming to my position. I knew the UH-1 helicopters would keep us in high supply. I told them to trade off retrieving ammunition for my gun. The third squad leader also helped resupply us with machine gun ammo.

The fighting was fierce. Bullets and shrapnel whizzed by me hitting trees and tree limbs above and behind me stripping the vegetation bare. I learned to keep my fire low and work my way up into the target. The VCs were not that well trained; most of their fire was wasted, too high. I masked my bullets behind their own firing; whereas the distinctive machine gun resonance was drowned in the higher frequency of lighter weaponry. Intense concentration and quick reaction was required, on my part, to make my task effective.

The enemy stopped firing. We listened. I turned to my first ammo bearer on the left and quietly said, *"Watch where I'm firing and drop a couple of M-79 rounds on top. Leave the M-79 here when you have to get ammo."*

(continued....)



I looked at Hernandez. *"Use that M-79 when he's gone."* With concentrated, accurate fire we'll get Charlie position-by-position, I felt. Then I reached back, grabbed my entrenching tool off my webbed gear and started digging in. I passed the word along to the rest of the platoon to do the same.

We cleared an area and dug down packing loose soil in front of us about a foot before the VC opened with round two. Again the fighting was heavy. I applied my standard method of defense. Ammo was in plenty thanks to the constant resupply by our choppers. Grenades were exploding ahead of us but not yet close to our position. The guys were yelling, *"grenade!"* when they saw them swish through the air and land or heard them plop. Suddenly I was looking at this black cylindrical object about soup-can-size with a brownish wooden handle.

"Grenade!" I yelled and jumped back behind the small mound behind us along with my left ammo bearer and assistant gunner. About midway through the air I felt the blast knock me the rest of the way behind the mound. Enemy rounds continued to zip over us as we wormed our way back to our position. My right ammo bearer hadn't even moved! He hugged the ground and the blast went over him.

The Viet Cong must have outnumbered us two or three to one, based upon the number of targets of opportunity we had. Having only one machine gun barrel with me, I paced my firing not to overheat it nor give away my position. Then I heard an awesome and frightening sound. A VC fifty caliber machine gun opened up on my left. The battle raged on for about another ten to 15 minutes then stopped. I was anxious for that .50 cal to open up again to pinpoint its position. We continued our digging, quietly.

One of the rifle squad team leaders, a sergeant with a European accent, came over to my position holding his arm. He was obviously wounded. Pulling off his shirt I could see a solid flesh wound on the back of his right arm. Three sides of about a one inch square piece of flesh were cut, leaving the fourth side to flap open whereas I could see his muscle.

"Hey sarge, this is Purple Heart material. Go see the medic." I patched his arm and he headed back to the rear to see the Doc. We dug in about another foot before the next round with Charlie.

The fifty cal was elusive, hiding his fire effectively. I passed the word to have M-79 guys see if they could take him out. They made an effort but the echo of the .50 caliber was so loud and the position so deep in foliage, they couldn't pinpoint him either. He was keeping our heads down and we couldn't find him.

Then a tactic hit me just about the time Charlie quit firing. I leaned over to Hernandez. *"Here's what I'm gonna do to get that fifty cal. First I'm going to open up, increasing my rate of fire to give away my position, then draw in their fire and shut down to make them think they wiped us out. Then the .50 cal gunner will think it's safe to open up more eventually destroying his own natural cover. When we catch his muzzle flash, we'll blow him away, hitting him with all we've got, O.K.?"*

Hernandez had a puzzled brow. He wasn't very thrilled with my plan. I guess he didn't like the part about *'drawing in their fire.'*

"O.K., if that's what you want to do then let's dig-in some more."

This break was long enough to allow for a finished foxhole in the typical inverted-L shape used by machine gun teams.

It was mid-morning as the fighting continued in intense bursts then silence, intense bursts then silence. Then it hit me,

'Charlie is trying to psych us out, get us excited and fearful so we'll do something stupid.'

I whipped my head around starring at Hernandez. He looked apprehensive; as if to say, *'not another death defying plan, I hope.'* I said nothing; I knew my plan would work.

Thump, I turned to my right; it was that chinless Lt. from 1st platoon.

"I want you to move your machine gun position to the right in my platoon," he commanded.

"No way sir, I've got to protect my platoon."

"My left machine gun is out and I need someone to cover my two squads on the left with good firepower." He tried to be authoritative with a frantic frown on his face.

"I'll shift my fire to cover your platoon, but I can't move, do you understand?"

He nodded, and then added, *"But if I lose some more firepower you're going to have to move."* He wanted the last word. He knew we didn't have an officer leading our platoon, so he behaved as if he had authority over us.

(continued....)



"O.K., sir, I'll take care of you." I responded. I couldn't tell him the real reason I couldn't move; but, I realized afterwards – it was because I needed to give my platoon the support and guidance required to make it through this ordeal. As it turned out, covering his platoon was the reason I received the Bronze Star with "V" device. Never mind what really happened.

The LT disappeared over the log.

The on-and-off fighting continued into the late morning. Periodically we'd shift fire to 1st platoon's area picking out opportune targets. The .50 cal still hadn't been destroyed. So with plenty of ammo including M-79 rounds, I started to employ my plan. *"O.K., I'm going to open up seriously."* I told my assistant gunner. I blasted off a couple of thousand rounds in less than ten minutes and received a hail of bullets.

We sat in the bottom of our foxhole and began to listen to the .50 cal. After a while I could sense my plan was working. The VC had thought my position was wiped out and they were becoming brazen with their heavy machine gun. We popped up now and then to catch a muzzle flash. After about a half an hour we had his position pinpointed.

"Pass the word down to Harrington to open up on the .50 cal when I do to catch him in crossfire." I told my left ammo bearer.

Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta, the slow heartbeat of the heavy gun sounded through our defensive line. As it began to sweep away from us, I sent a round of bullets crawling up into his position as my first ammo bearer quickly dropped about a half-dozen M-79 rounds on his head. Curtis sent a current of machine gun fire toward the big gun also. Then our whole line began firing on that one position. Destroyed at last!

Fighting continued in intervals – less and less as the late morning dragged on. It seemed like the company to our right was getting into it hard for a while. Then an attack chopper came in, sweeping the area in front of us a little bit at a time. I looked to my right and saw this same chopper, about a half-mile away start to roll in on the bad guys our company was fighting. Then it hit me! *'That chopper is going to wipe out my platoon, because it's bowing out about 15-20 yards toward the enemy away from the rest of the line!'*

"Pullback!" I yelled to the guys, pointing at the chopper and the 20 mike-mike rounds heading in our direction. It seemed as if time slowed down to a crawl as I watched the rounds come out of the gun barrel. I could see them stepping, steadily, toward us. In an instant the troops headed back to safety. I watched to assure everyone made it. Then I glanced

and saw Smitty lying, face down. I grabbed him by the collar yelling,

"Smitty, we got to get outta here!"

Looking straight into his face, I saw a black hole directly between his eyes about a half an inch above his eyebrows. He was seriously dead. Without thinking, I dragged his 210-pound body along with my machine gun and ammo about 20-30 yards to the rear just missing the 20MM rounds exploding behind me. I laid his body down in front of my gun for protection. All this happened in a few seconds.

Then it hit me – like a light anti-tank round hitting a water buffalo – the warning of his death yesterday was real, intensely real, and devastatingly accurate. The missile entered his skull precisely between his eyes, equal distant from both brows and the upper portion of the bridge of his nose. He was doomed all along, with his name deeply etched on the bullet. And I had known that sad fact since yesterday! God be with him. God be with me!

My mind raced, as Death slapped me out of this reality, reflecting on the omnipotent experience. I laid behind my gun speechless, losing control of the situation – not knowing whether to move back into our old positions or stay put.

"Smitty dead, huh?" Hernandez asked.

"Bullet between his eyes."

"What are we gonna do?" Swanson came to me for advice.

"I don't know, Dave. Charlie may have moved to our positions, I don't know."

"Smitty shouldn't be lying in front of your gun, he's dead." one of the guys said.

"It's just a body," not knowing if my words rang true.

Someone made the decision to return to our positions, probably after sending a scout to check them out. I left Smitty's body lying in that log-like position, knowing that would be the last time I'd see him, and moved forward back to my foxhole.



**Charlie Company Troopers
in their "hole" at Zulu Zulu**
(Wayne Hoitt photo)

(continued....)



The fighting was sporadic and increasingly low during the afternoon and into the evening. That night we only threw grenades – not wanting to give away our positions with muzzle-flash. A large tree at my eleven o'clock position proved to almost be the death of me and my crew, as I bounced a grenade off it back to the front of my gun. I felt foolish yelling 'grenade!' as the result of my own incompetence. Fortunately, no one was injured nor did anyone notice I threw it.



Wounded troopers at Zulu Zulu, the *strategic reserve*. At one point during the battle word came down to 'fix bayonets', including the walking wounded.

(Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503)

Sunrise came with the pungent, sweet smell of death, which wafted over us. The enemy was sorely defeated leaving his withered leftovers scattered about. The word came down, 'Charlie is gone!' I felt a surge of rejoice relief and utter exhaustion realizing our task was successful and, more importantly, complete. We relaxed and talked to relieve the pressure.

The remainder of the day was cleanup and relaxation. Some of the guys were on body stacking detail. I wandered down into first platoon area and B Company, talking to the guys about the fighting. One guy in B Company had a .50 cal bullet lodged in his steel pot. It missed striking his head by a quarter of an inch.

"I can't believe it!" I told him. "You're the luckiest guy in the world."

"Hey man, you've got a dent in your helmet too." I looked at my helmet and sure enough it was dented by something to a point where the helmet liner didn't fit right in the steel pot.

"And you've got a cut in your chin." I started to check myself out and found I was nicked in one arm, a calf and my side by my waist as well. "Heck, I didn't even notice."

After a few bandages, I was patched up. He found a few nicks on himself also. "We lost a little blood but not enough for a Purple Heart," he commented.

"Even worse, we didn't get that perfect wound that would send us back to the world," I said, remembering how we always talked about the ideal wound that would put us out of the war, but not disable us too badly.

I went back to first platoon and talked with the number one machine gunner, Jim Bright. He told me the other machine gun was damaged but the team was O.K. That satisfied my concern for their well-being. He thanked me for helping out. Jim was one of the troops I came with on the boat to Okinawa in Feb. of '64 after finishing jump school. I could never figure out why this guy was always smiling. He told me before he was from Lodi, California. I wondered what it was like being raised in the valley. (It was unknown to me at that time that in about nine months I'd see that smiling

face again, when I walked into Spanish class on my first day of college back in Hayward, CA).

When I returned to my position, Curtis came down to tell me about the .50 cal machine gun we destroyed. "You should've seen it; those guys were cuffed and chained to their gun!" He told me. "And their bodies were mangled. We really wiped them out. The body count is supposed to be more than 300."

I couldn't imagine we found that many bodies. I tried to visualize what the stacks looked like. "That many!" I said in surprise.

"Heck, I could see where some bodies were dragged off. A Company's got the most, they really got hit hard." Curtis said.

(continued....)





A couple survivors. Chargin' Charlies after the battle at Zulu Zulu. (Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503, who fought the battle along the Charlie Company line where he was wounded in action)

Some of the other guys chimed in with their tales and we talked for a couple of hours about the battle. It was hard to realize that, with so few casualties we had, that we'd beaten Charlie so soundly.

My mind wondered to my experience with Death. I wanted to talk about it, but didn't dare. It was too foreign, too strange and uncanny. *'What would I say to them? How would they understand?'* I could hardly form the words in my own mind to relay to them. It was hopeless, I could never tell anyone. *'Why did this happen anyway? What did it mean or have to do with me?'*

I was off to myself most of the evening and retired early. Exhaustion was sneaking in on me, sapping my strength.

The next morning, I awoke with a high fever. I was dizzy. I could hardly walk. I went to see the medic. *"What's the matter, Andy?"* Doc asked.

"I'm sick, really sick."

He felt my head. *"You're burning up. Let me check your temperature and pulse."* Both were high. *"I'll talk to the First Sergeant; we gotta get you outta here. Go back and get your stuff and report back to me."*

"O.K."

I policed up my gear, gave my machine gun and .45 automatic to Hernandez, and took his M-16 rifle. The First Sergeant caught me before I got out of the platoon area.

"I hear you're sick."

"Yes First Sergeant." I kept my head down; it felt like I'd lose consciousness if I looked up.

"We got a chopper coming-in in a few minutes; I want you on it."

"Yes First Sergeant."

"Go down to the company area, Doc's waiting for you."

"Yes First Sergeant."

"By the way, the platoon sergeant says you did good." I was silent. *"Now get out of here, you look like hell!"*

I turned and scurried down to the company area where Doc was waiting to direct me to the helicopter landing pad.

The chopper came down and its noise silenced everything. The door-gunner opened the door, like a door-opening to another world, and signaled me on. Once on it, I felt safe and relieved.

As the aircraft departed, I just wanted to forget everything and merge with the pulse and vibration of the air-machine. I kept seeing the remains of SSgt. Butler sacked in the sagging poncho, shiny spots of sunlight reflecting off it; the hole so neatly piercing Smitty's skull; but mostly the ethereal encounter with the eternal Visitor. Though my mind was clouded with fever, I felt a surging feeling of joy and happiness – that I lived to see and experience Death and gaze upon it with awe. What a strange, eerie attraction I felt toward Death and oh, how it removed me from the world, as I knew it, into a reality of 'silence, serenity and seriousness' like I've never noticed before. It was glorious but totally frightening. Yet still, I wanted to fall in to it and forget the haunting pain of this world; but I knew somehow it wouldn't have me.

Weakened, I started to quietly cry as I realized my separation from it and the difficulty I had been through. Could I or would I ever see it again? How could or why should I ever live without it? It had captured me, strangely forever; a prisoner in its elusive hold.



A young Andy Anderson at LZ Zulu Zulu, survivor.

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Some Bad News

Some bad news. Dave Block, former 173d trooper who had a job as a finance clerk with brigade headquarters, lost his battle with pancreatic cancer a couple of weeks ago. Dave and I played baseball on the brigade team on Okinawa. After a short tour in Nam and then discharge in 1966, he signed a minor league contract with the Cleveland Indians organization as a pitcher and played four years, rising to Double AA ball before he had a contract dispute and quit.

We continued our friendship for 49 years, and he visited me twice at my home in California. Ironically, we were both diagnosed with cancer the same month last year, but of course his disease was much more serious than mine. My wife and I planned on visiting him at his home in Pennsylvania this September, but he suffered a seizure related to the cancer and died a few hours later.

Here's a photo of Dave taken in 1964 when we were on the brigade team. Dave is on the right leaning on crutches (he was rehabing some type of leg injury); the man in uniform was a 1LT who managed the team; the guy with a cast on his arm is Jerry, who was our other starting pitcher.



I don't know if it would be feasible, but I wondered if you thought it worthy to include the photo and a couple of paragraphs about Dave in the next newsletter issue, and I'll forward the newsletter to Dave's widow.

I go for my evaluation exam in two weeks. Wish me luck. Take care,

John Taylor
B/2/503d

David L. Block

1943 ~ 2013

A Sky Soldier

David L. Block, 69, of 58 S. Main St., Eldred, passed away Thursday (July 11, 2013) at Olean (N.Y.) General Hospital following a lengthy illness.

Born July 17, 1943, in Bath, N.Y., he was a son of the late Harold and Frances Cross Block. On April 6, 1990, in Allegany, N.Y., he married Marsha Gleason Block, who survives.

Mr. Block was a graduate of Hammondsport (N.Y.) Central School and SUNY at Cortland, N.Y. He served in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Brigade in Okinawa and Vietnam.

He played professional baseball with the Cleveland Indians baseball organization. He was a long-time teacher and coach for the City of Olean School District.

Mr. Block was a member of St. Bernard Church in Bradford. He was also a member of the Smethport Country Club and Eldred Conservation Club.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two daughters, Jodie Block of Lake Helen, Fla., and Jamie Block of Farmington, N.Y.; two stepdaughters, Christine Calbi of Olean and Theresa Crosby of Batavia, N.Y.; several grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Harold G. Block.

There will be no public visitation. Friends are invited to attend a Mass of Christian Burial at 1 p.m. Tuesday in St. Bernard Church with the Rev. Raymond Gramata, pastor, as celebrant. Military honors will be accorded outside of church following Mass. Burial will follow in St. Bernard Cemetery.

Rest easy ball playing paratrooper.



More about "The Agony of War"

I was a SGT with HHC 4/503rd in August of 1966, and we had a photographer by the name of Henri Huet doing some stories then on SP4 Ruediger Richter of HHC 4/503rd. I remember that Henri Huet was a French-Vietnamese and he was with PFC Paul Epley on 14 August 1966, when that famous photo was taken by Paul.



The Agony of War, by Paul Epley, 173d PIO

Henri Huet also took a famous photo where SP4 Richter is looking up to the sky and the smoke is raising up and the "light" is coming down towards the big rock where the body of PFC Corfman was laying. Henri Huet won a Far East Press group award for his photo of 14 August 1966. SP4 Richter who had served in the French Foreign Legion in Algeria and had already been in battle.

SGT Ruediger "Rudy" Richter and I were serving with D/4/503rd, and Rudy was seriously wounded in action on 25 March 1967, and was shot after his M-16 jammed and he tried to pull out his hand pistol to shoot the VC enemy. Rudy survived and any other person who had been shot in the face and lost an eye would have died!

When the helicopter came to pick him up, the cable broke when they were lifting him up, and he survived that incident and he had to be dragged out to a local dirt road where the Huey could pick him up.

In 1971, Henri Huet and Larry Burrows of *Life Magazine* went into Laos with the South Vietnamese Army into a major battle and a few days later when they were trying to leave that bad area, their Huey was hit by an RPG and they were killed. A few years ago, their remains were located and brought to a news museum in Washington, D.C., and laid to rest.

Years ago, at USC, here in Los Angeles, CA, there was a major conference by the media about Viet Nam, and I did not want to go and see any of those reporters who were there in RVN, but I did go to USC one weekend day to see the display of photos of RVN. The famous photo by Henri Huet was there and it was now about 8 foot tall. I asked the USC students if their Professor from their Journalism program was there and they said NO. I told them that there was NO name of the famous photographer who took this photo and they should give him credit by adding his name next to the photo. Years later I tried to locate that famous photo and USC did not know what happened to that large photo copy.

A few years ago and right after the ground breaking ceremony of the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial, I got to meet with Rudy Richter at a local hotel in Columbus, GA. Rudy had moved back to the USA. His first son had served in the US Army at Ft. Ord, CA, and my late wife and I met him up by San Luis Obispo, CA, where he was going to college. One of his other sons from the 2nd wife had served in the 4th Infantry and I think was in Afghanistan. A real military family.

Three years ago when we were dedicating the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial, someone called me by my name at the NIF, and it was Paul Epley! I had written to him, and called him on the phone many years ago, and was now able to see him in person and thank him for his famous work and help.



Ray, in California

Ray Rameriz
Recon/HHC/D/4/503d



Some of Henri Huet's photos from the Vietnam War



Henri Huet



173d Airborne Brigade on the move, 1965



A Young Sky Soldier



Operation Marauder, Mekong Delta, January '66.
Note Sky Soldiers in canal in background.

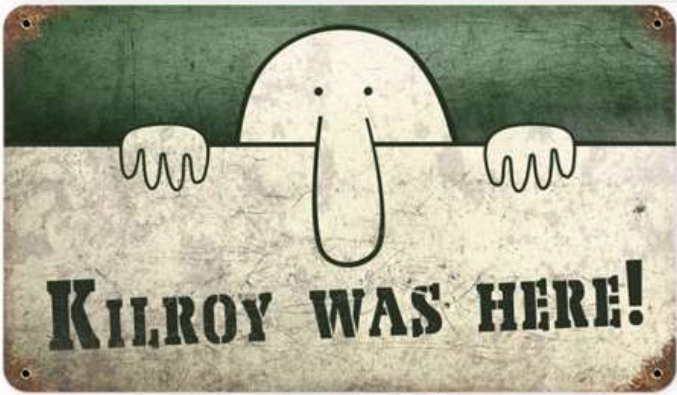


Doc Levy on left. KIA 2 January 66





Who Was Kilroy?



He is engraved in stone in the National War Memorial in Washington, DC - back in a small alcove where very few people have seen it. For the WWII generation, this will bring back memories. For you younger folks, it's a bit of trivia that is a part of our American history. Anyone born in 1913 to about 1950, is familiar with Kilroy. No one knew why he was so well known - but everybody seemed to get into it. So who was Kilroy?



In 1946 the American Transit Association, through its radio program, "Speak to America," sponsored a nationwide contest to find the real Kilroy, offering a prize of a real trolley car to the person who could prove himself to be the genuine article. Almost 40 men stepped forward to make that claim, but only James Kilroy from Halifax, Massachusetts, had evidence of his identity.

'Kilroy' was a 46-year old shipyard worker during the war who worked as a checker at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy. His job was to go around and check on the number of rivets completed. Riveters were on

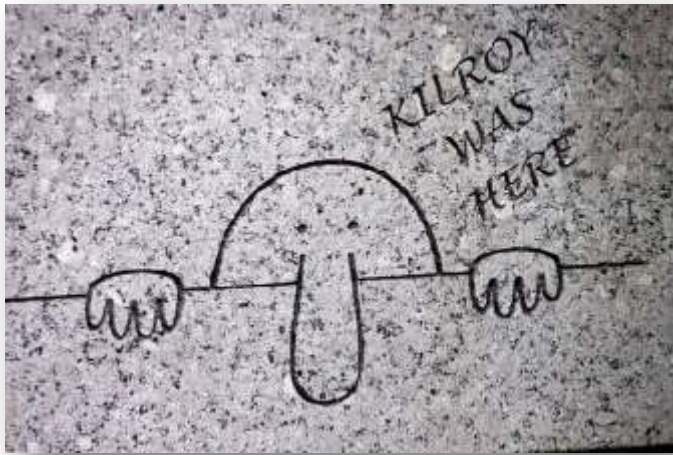
piecework and got paid by the rivet. He would count a block of rivets and put a check mark in semi-waxed lumber chalk, so the rivets wouldn't be counted twice. When Kilroy went off duty, the riveters would erase the mark. Later on, an off-shift inspector would come through and count the rivets a second time, resulting in double pay for the riveters.



One day Kilroy's boss called him into his office. The foreman was upset about all the wages being paid to riveters, and asked him to investigate. It was then he realized what had been going on. The tight spaces he had to crawl in to check the rivets didn't lend themselves to lugging around a paint can and brush, so Kilroy decided to stick with the waxy chalk. He continued to put his check mark on each job he inspected, but added 'KILROY WAS HERE' in king-sized letters next to the check, and eventually added the sketch of the chap with the long nose peering over the fence and that became part of the Kilroy message.

(continued...)





Once he did that, the riveters stopped trying to wipe away his marks. Ordinarily the rivets and chalk marks would have been covered up with paint. With the war on, however, ships were leaving the Quincy Yard so fast that there wasn't time to paint them. As a result, Kilroy's inspection "trademark" was seen by thousands of servicemen who boarded the troopships the yard produced.



His message apparently rang a bell with the servicemen, because they picked it up and spread it all over Europe and the South Pacific.



Before war's end, "Kilroy" had been here, there, and everywhere on the long hauls to Berlin and Tokyo. To the troops outbound in those ships, however, he was a complete mystery; all they knew for sure was that someone named Kilroy had "been there first." As a joke, U.S. servicemen began placing the graffiti wherever they landed, claiming it was already there when they arrived.



Kilroy became the U.S. super-GI who had always "already been" wherever GIs went. It became a challenge to place the logo in the most unlikely places imaginable (it is said to be atop Mt. Everest, the Statue of Liberty, the underside of the Arc de Triomphe, and even scrawled in the dust on the moon).



As the war went on, the legend grew. Underwater demolition teams routinely sneaked ashore on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to map the terrain for coming invasions by U.S. troops (and thus, presumably, were the first GIs there). On one occasion, however, they reported seeing enemy troops painting over the Kilroy logo!

(continued...)



...even at Osama Bin Laden's house.



Note: This account was reported to be one of Paul Harvey's "REST OF THE STORY".

[Sent in by Mary Ann Wandell, Sgt., Army & DoD]



Warner Bros. release, 1947



In 1945, an outhouse was built for the exclusive use of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill at the Potsdam conference. Its first occupant was Stalin, who emerged and asked his aide (in Russian), "Who is Kilroy?"



To help prove his authenticity in 1946, James Kilroy brought along officials from the shipyard and some of the riveters. He won the trolley car, which he gave to his nine children as a Christmas gift and set it up as a play-house in the Kilroy yard in Halifax, Massachusetts.



And the tradition continues...



DoD, VA establish 2 consortia to research PTSD, TBI

August 10, 2013



In response to President Obama's Executive Order, the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs highlighted today the establishment of two joint research consortia, at a combined investment of \$107 million to research the diagnosis and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) over a five-year period.

The Consortium to Alleviate PTSD (CAP), a collaborative effort between the University of Texas Health Science Center-San Antonio, San Antonio Military Medical Center and the Boston VA Medical Center will attempt to develop the most effective diagnostic, prognostic, novel treatment, and rehabilitative strategies to treat acute PTSD and prevent chronic PTSD.

The Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (CENC), a collaborative effort between Virginia Commonwealth University, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and the Richmond VA Medical Center will examine the factors which influence the chronic effects of mTBI and common comorbidities in order to improve diagnostic and treatment options. A key point will be to further the understanding of the relationship between mTBI and neurodegenerative disease.

Since Sep. 11, 2001, more than 2.5 million American servicemembers have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Military service exposes servicemembers to a variety of stressors, including risk to life, exposure to death, injury, sustained threat of injury, and the day-to-day family stress inherent in all phases of the military life cycle.

To improve prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health conditions, the president released an Executive Order directing the federal agencies to develop a coordinated National Research Action Plan. DoD, VA, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Education came forward with a wide-reaching plan to improve scientific understanding, effective treatment, and reduce occurrences of PTSD, TBI, co-occurring conditions and suicide.

Go to www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/nrap_fact_sheet_082013.pdf to see the administration's new fact sheet on the National Research Action Plan for Improving Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families.

[Source: americanlegion.org]

[Sent in by Ron "Ropes" Rice, C/1/503d, LRRP]

SD 173rd Sky Soldiers and Friends

I'm sending this message to remind you of the Saturday, September 7, 2013 meeting of the SD 173rd Abn. Assoc. at VFW Post 4630, on 1401 Highland Avenue in National City. Also, I'm sorry that I will not be able to attend this meeting as I will hopefully be recovering from surgery scheduled for the previous Friday, September 6th. However, Brother John Hutchens has volunteered to take up the slack for me.

Remember Free raffle of Airborne patches and badges after the 50/50 raffle and enjoy social time with food and drinks which will be available at the Post for purchase!

I look forward to seeing at the meeting.

Nick Aguilar, Secretary
SD 173rd Airborne Association
Airborne all the way!

Nick. We wish you the very best outcome from your surgery and a fast and full recovery.



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



~ 2013 ~



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

Contact:

Rodney Green

Reunion Coordinator

Eml: randhgreen@sio.midco.net



The National Pathfinder Association is holding their "Pathfinder Legacy" reunion in Williamsburg, VA, October 4-6, 2013. All Pathfinders are invited.

Contact

Dean Nelson

Phn: 970-353-0146

Eml: nelent@aol.com



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

Contact:

Nelson Gatewood

Phn: 870-856-2216



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

Contact:

Jackie McIntyre

Phn: (612) 522-9377

Eml: 42ndmom@comcast.net



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

Contact:

Bert Kurland

President

Eml: berwan@embarqmail.com



26th 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



All Ohio Days, hosted by the Akron Chapter of the 82nd 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, 82nd Akron Chap.

Phn: 330-325-7574

Eml: akronchapabn82@yahoo.com

[See Page 55 for Registration Form]

CORREGIDOR – THE ROAD BACK

Our video documentary CORREGIDOR - THE ROAD BACK will be premiered at the US Embassy in Manila on December 7, 2013. This event commemorates the start of WWII in Pearl Harbor 73 years ago.

Below are links to "teasers", should anyone find themselves inclined to be present in Manila at that time.

As the premiere is inside the US Embassy, it is the Embassy itself which will issue the formal invitations. Each invitation will contain a form which must be completed by the persons desiring to attend. I am one of the persons who is compiling the list to be given to the Embassy Security for those invitations to be issued. Because of this, anyone interested is urged to communicate with me soonest.

Meantime, please enjoy our teasers...go to these links!

Trailers # 1&2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1eLfVafpsQ>

Trailer # 3

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tyy1Vjsb0Y>

Paul Whitman

503rd Heritage Battalion Website Manager

paul@whitman.com.au

[See Page 27 for more details]





GALA PREMIERE

The Chick Parsons Ballroom
U.S. Embassy in Manila
December 7, 2013 Saturday at 4 pm

CORREGIDOR

THE ROAD BACK

*Retaking The Rock
was a defining moment
in the saga of World War II*

A SPYRON-AV MANILA PRESENTATION

Written & Direction **PETER PARSONS** Artistic Direction **LUCKY GUILLERMO**

Executive Producers **PAUL F. WHITMAN ANTONIA MORALES**

Photography **NORBERT MARCHADESCH PETER PARSONS MICHAEL R. WILLIAMS MORGAN CAVETT**

Production Design **JEMIMA CHRISTINE GUILLERMO** Graphic Design **JOJO S. LIMPO**

Script Supervision **MYLEEN ABRIGO** Technical Supervision **ERNEST MACALINO**

Senior Editor & Motion Graphics **REX VINCENT VILLADARES** Original Music Composition **NICHOLAS WING**

Running Time: 52:38 Mins

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173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)



Our KIA in September, '65-'70

"ONE BACKWARD GLANCE"

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

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MOVING WALL

I am a monument to a black period in this country's history. I am the Vietnam Wall, composed of two angled granite walls, inscribed with the names of fifty-eight-thousand-one-hundred-thirty-four American men and women who died in hell (that was Vietnam). Many people come to see me. Strangely, they come mostly in silence - old people, young people, children, mothers, fathers, widows, and veterans, all for reasons of their own. They bring gifts, pictures, letters, flowers, poems and cigarettes. The letters speak of grief and loneliness and regret. They ask forgiveness. They are an outpouring of pain. The people softly touch names on my face. They water my grass with tears. Then they leave in silence and I hope in peace. For I am more than two stone walls, I am a thank you from a nation that forgot. I am a long past-due apology. I am healing for wounds too long left untended. I am a tribute paid to fallen warriors. I AM THE VIETNAM WALL. America has forgotten the wars. Will she remember her warriors? You may be gone, BUT YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

Manuel Pino, Jr.
Fellow Vietnam Vet
Sunday, September 26, 2004



Note: Photo of the Wall in D.C. Not intended to distract from this veteran's poignant writing, it is believed the latest reported total of killed in action is 58,286, and includes non-American nationalities who served in the U.S. military. Ed

~ September 1965 ~

Lee E. Anderson, A/B/2/503*

"Always Loved & Missed.

Lee was a great Family Man and Friend. He is Cherished for his Sacrifice to keep His Country, Family, Wife, Son and Friend's FREE. Sadly Missed, Deeply Loved, Always on Our Minds."

Dale R. Osburn, Sr.
Friend/Neighbor



Eduardo Camarena-Salazar, B/1/503

"Lalo, you are not forgotten! You were the first from our hometown of Calexico, CA and the Imperial Valley to die in Vietnam. You were a great football and basketball player, and in fact were on the Calexico HS Basketball Championship Team for two years (61/62 & 62/63)! You were our hero long before you went to Vietnam, and you're still our hero.

Rest in peace brave soldier!"

Fernando Escalante
A former classmate, and Vietnam grunt

Grady Keith Embrey, A/2/503

Paul Joseph Marquez, B/1/503

(continued...)



Larry Stanley Pierce, HHC/1/503



SSgt. Larry Pierce
Medal of Honor Recipient

"I'll Never Forget. Just wanted to say what a great honor it was to have served with a great soldier like Larry. We served together at A Trp 1st Recon Sqd (Resig), B Trp 5th Sqd 9th Cav, Fort Ord, CA 1961-64. Larry, Earl Parker and I were the only E5's in the Unit at that time. We were out to prove we were the best E5's in the Army. It's my honor to have served with you. You will NOT BE FORGOTTEN."

Dave Darmody
1SG Retired, US Army

[See Larry's MOH Citation on Page 43]

September 1966 ~

Alexander Lorenzo Barney, 173d Bde
Lanham Odell Broyles, HHC/2/503

Elmer Eugene Cotney, E/17th Cav, D/16th Armor*

"My cousin Elmer Eugene Cotney lived a short life. It ended in South Vietnam in 1966. Lest we forget, I wanted to put up a page for the memory of Eugene. I can remember the last time I saw him at Coleman Baptist Church on Route Two, Lineville, Alabama. The church was only a couple of hundred yards from Eugene's home. Eugene was the son of Elmer Cotney and Louise Lamberth Cotney. I remember Eugene entering the Army and having served in Germany, I think he came home on leave before going to a place called South Vietnam. At that time we didn't know much about the place, but we were to learn more in the years to come. As I write this on April 28, 2000, the 25th anniversary of the fall of Vietnam approaches. We must always remember those who served and the sacrifices made."

Walter D. Denney

"You, are not forgotten. Gene, you gave your best and was always proud to serve our country. On this and every Veteran's Day, you are remembered and make me feel honored to have served with you."

Grant Faber

Served with Gene in Co. D, 16th Armor

~ A Note From The Virtual Wall ~

The 173rd Airborne Brigade lost two men killed in action on 30 Sep 1966: SGT Thomas L. Westpoint, Charleston, SC, B Co, 2nd Bn, 503rd Infantry, and SP4 Elmer E. Cotney, Lineville, AL, D Co, 16th Armor. While The Virtual Wall cannot say with assurance that they were killed in the same action, the circumstances of their deaths suggests they were.

Joseph Lloyd Miller, B/C/4/503*

"To my Grandfather the hero.

I never met you. I lost you before I was born. But what I know of you will be always be in my heart. That you were a great Husband to Ursula Miller. A great Father to Judith Miller and Joseph Miller, Jr. And if you were alive today a great grandfather to Andrew Miller and Michael Miller. And let us not forget a great Hero to this nation. On this day Monday 26 MAY 2008 Memorial Day I salute you SGT Joseph Lloyd Miller for your heroism. We will never forget you.

Love, Hospital Corpsman HN Michael Lloyd Miller USN.

I miss you grandpa."

Michael Miller
Grandson

Louis R. Randall, C/3/319

"Hey Randall, I guess by now you think you have been forgotten – well, here I sit on New Years day 2010 and for whatever reason I thought of you. The pop of that M-16 still rings in my head. God bless you and be with you my friend, your memory lives on. AIRBORNE."

Jack Fields

Friend and fellow soldier

Edward Garry Rankin, A/4/503

"Still not forgotten.

Just happened to be going through some of my old photos and was thinking of Ed again....we went through AIT and Jump School together, and went to Vietnam together in July 66. We were in the same outfit with the 173rd (Third Herd...Devils from the Sky) and I remember the 'boot' ceremony we had for Ed when we came back in from the bush....

(continued....)



....I still have the boot picture with your medal placed on it.....Still think of you often.....along with some of the other brothers we lost.....our time in country together was short.....I ended up serving 3 tours with our unit but feel I never did get even....Miss you Buddy.....'Through the deep Blue night came the White Wing of a dove carrying the Sword of death'.....AIRBORNE ALL THE WAY!"

Dennis St. John
Good friend/Combat buddy

Tommy Traxler, Jr., A/1/503

"It's been 40 years, you are not forgotten."

William Allen
Buddy

Thomas Lee Westpoint, B/2/503, E/17th Cav*

"I never knew this man, I don't know much about him.

Really, the only thing is that he is my great uncle. I wonder if I could have known him if he hadn't died. If my life would have been different if he were here to help guide me. My mom never knew him either. He died just 3 years before she was born. Why? That is my only question. Why do people have to die to make others see it is not worth it. And even now, people cannot, do not, open their eyes to what is happening around the world, every day, maybe in your own neighborhood. Why do people have to die, because of others' ignorance? My life could have been different, happy, full of wondrous tales of suspense, worry, and relief. Relief he wasn't dead. Well, now I can't say that, because he is. Please, open your eyes people. I am only 11, yet I know this better than you. Papa, I'm sorry I can't and will never live up to you, but I'm happy knowing you're in heaven, protecting me now.

I'm sorry."

Shelby Morrison
Niece

~ September 1967 ~

Eduard Adolph Auer, E/17th Cav

John Robert Bamvakais, Jr., HHC/4/503

David Eugene Person, E/17th Cav

~ September 1968 ~

Robert Joseph Benz, E/4/503

"Boyhood, to Nam: Best Friend and Brother, Forever. Bobby and I grew up together in Syracuse, NY, from the time we were toddlers thru young adulthood, we were hardly ever apart. We



experienced almost everything for the first time, together! We were adventurous and usually in trouble for something or another, at times we proudly got punished for something we had nothing to do with.

Bobby was older than me, which made him very protective of his younger brother. We were hell-raisers, but thoughtful. We were Boy Scouts, Eagles and Scoutmasters. We enlisted in 1967 after HS. We often skipped school. Bobby never liked school much, he'd rather be fishing, hunting, swimming, with girls, anything but school. Bobby's father died when we were teens. His Mother always referred to me as her third son. Bobby never got along with his older brother, but was proud of what he accomplished, with brotherly love. Bobby's brother was a member of the Air Guard and a Jet Pilot. He also designed taillights for Detroit. He lived for a long time after Bobby, but passed away from cancer. Bobby's mother died years later. Bobby, planned on marrying after Vietnam, to a girl named "Cookie," sadly, I lost contact with her. We had an early morning paper route. One day I was too sick to help. Bobby discovered a fire that morning, risked his life, ran into the burning building, knocked on doors and made sure everyone got out safely, finished the route, never making a big thing out what he had done. Years later at the news coverage of his full military funeral, the headlines remembered the fire, as they said, 'A local Hero, is buried Today.' I think and still talk to my brother today and often, wonder why I am here and he is not? Bobby won the Bronze Star, with Cluster and the Silver Star. I want to live as long as I can, but I take comfort knowing that someday I'll see Bobby again, standing there, smiling, arms wide open, saying, 'Welcome Home Brother.'"

John Hayden
Best Friends

Thomas Dean Brock, "Doc", HHC/A/1/503*

"I was with you that day, on that hill. I helped carry your broken body down that hill. You were one of the bravest men I had the honor of serving with. For anyone's information, Thomas was a medic. We were under heavy machine gun fire and Doc Brock risked his own life to go to the aid of men that had fallen in front of us. He died trying to save the lives of others. Doc, I think of you all the time, although it has been over 40 years. If there is a hereafter, I hope to see you there.

I love you, John."

John McAfee
Served with him

(continued....)



David Carlton Brown, A/4/503

"Fire, Support Base, Lance.

Captain Brown was my CO. We were providing perimeter security for a small mobile fire support base. Fire Support Base Lance was just a half dozen clicks from the Cambodian border and about three or four clicks south of the Special Forces camp at Duc Lap. Around 2 or 3 in the morning, September 7, 1968, we were hit and overrun by a North Vietnamese Sapper Battalion. Sappers were the most elite troops the NVA had. Captain Brown was in the thick of the fight to hold them back, when he was hit in the chest by rifle fire. The sappers had overrun half of the perimeter by the time we managed to push them back and drive them out of the fire support base. We suffered heavy casualties in that brief but fierce battle: 10 KIA, and 27 WIA. I think of that night and my comrades who were killed often, as the battle plays over and over in my mind. God keep you, Captain Brown."

Charles Alsip

He was my Company Commander



"Thank you, my Capt., for showing us the way home. You saved my life that morning, 9/7/68, by fending off the zapper squad."

David Frazier

MY CO, 4/503, 173d Airborne

Gregory Carter, D/1/503

Robert Thomas Elliott, III, B/2/503

"Tom, it is now Memorial Day 2010. I wish you could see the parade we have in Gettysburg. It's a good one. I try to attend every year as I feel it is my duty to you and all the others that made the supreme sacrifice from all wars. I am now 65 years old, the same age you would be if you had made it home. I have a great wife, two wonderful sons and now five grandchildren. I have to admit that at times I feel guilty that I have so many blessings while you and so many like you that died will never have them. You gave all of that up for our country. My thanks to you and to all of them. Saying thank you seems so inadequate but that is all I can do. My 22 years of service and loss of some of my hearing seems so trivial compared to your sacrifice. I know you had a strong faith in God and I know that you are with HIM. I also know that He will give you peace."

William Arrington

OCS Classmate, Class OC-93

Cecil Vaughn Evans, A/4/503

"We were friends for a year. I left a month before you were KIA. Rest in Peace."

James Jacobs, Squad Leader

Alfred Andrew Filippelli, A/D/1/503, 1/50*

"I was Al's squad leader in the Support Platoon of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry (Mechanized), 173rd Airborne Brigade. We were in the An Khe area of the Central Highlands, guarding the roads and bridges between Pleiku and the An Khe Pass. Pleiku was an entry point area of the Ho Chi Minh Trail on the Vietnamese-Laotian-Cambodian border. Al was a new member of the squad, of less than a month. He had a quick wit, a quick laugh, with a strong New York accent. On the morning of Sept. 26, 1968 Al, with another soldier from the squad left An Khe and went to a small outpost, LZ Schueller, toward Pleiku. Shortly after they arrived there were incoming mortar rounds and a B-40 rocket attack. When the attack occurred they both raced for cover inside nearby armored personnel carriers. Al didn't make it, a mortar round hit near him, and killed him that day. I found out about the incident that afternoon, from my platoon leader. Since then few days go by without my thoughts of Al, and of his smile, wit, and laughter.

Thinking of ya' buddy."

Clarence West, Squad Leader

Kenneth Charles Frazer, "Doc", HHC/D/4/503*

"Ken, I was the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, Delta Company, 4th Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade and you were our platoon medic in the summer of 1968. I really admired you, enjoyed our conversations and appreciated your dedicated service to our unit. Later on, you were promoted to be the company medic and I heard that you were killed during a sapper attack in September 1968. Today, I finally located your name on the Wall - I had been misspelling your name in the past. Airborne Trooper!"

Jerry Cooper, I was Ken's platoon leader in Vietnam



This photo appeared in connection with Jerry's posting, but included no inscription. Ed

(continued...)



Robert Bruce Gilray, Jr., A/4/503

Edgar Joseph Grismer, A/4/503

"Uncle Eddie, as Memorial Day just passed you were on my mind all day as you should. I just want to say that you will always be my hero and the Grismer Clan misses you terribly. Your ultimate sacrifice will never go unnoticed in my heart and eyes. You are a shining example of what this country is built on. The courage of the men and women to fight for our own rights and the Allies that need our help. God Bless."

Mike Moore, MSgt USAF (Ret)

Nephew

James David Hacek, HHC/A/1/50*

Karl Richard Haring, B/1/503

David Keith Huffman, D/3/503

"David is missed very much by his classmates from Speedway High School, class of 64. We appreciate his life being given for all our freedom. David, we say thank you and we miss you."

Classmates of the class of 1964, Speedway High School, Speedway, Indiana.

Rebecca Hunter-Morris

Friend and classmate

Ross Thomas "Tom" Hulslander, A/2/503

"I am Frances Olivia Gross. ROSS THOMAS HULSLANDER was my brother. Today I stop to remember his life, his time with us, and his courageous and honorable death in VietNam. He was a wonderful human being, a brave, daring Paratrooper, a loving son, brother, and friend. No combat challenge was too great for him. He honored God by saving other men through his own death. My parents were very proud of him and we have missed him so much. Thank you to all those who visit his memory here (Virtual Wall). His last words to my father on leaving to fight in VietNam were 'DRIVE ON', he never looked back ... Tommy, we miss you ... Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty..."

With all my love."

Your Sister Fran

"Corporal Ross Thomas Hulslander posthumously was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device for Heroism."

From his brother,

Victor Lawson Hulslander



[See Page 49 for Tom's Bronze Star citation]



Terence Michael Husted
C/4/503

"I was wounded minutes after A Spartan you got hit. I will always remember that day. What I remember most about you was your leadership skills and your great desire to get on the 'seven 0 quick' and to get back to California and resume your life. Thanks Sgt. Husted, you changed my life forever!"

John Cryer

Served with Terry

~ A Note From The Virtual Wall ~

On 13 Sep 1968 infantrymen from 4th Bn, 503rd Infantry were digging out enemy troops in a bunkered area 9 kilometers northwest of Duc Lap. The effort cost the lives of seven Americans, two from a supporting helo unit and five from 4/503.

Lawrence Frank Jaworowicz, C/D/1/503*



"This photo was taken at the Vietnam Wall over Memorial Day weekend, 2004."

Malcolm Kirby, Friend of Larry

"As members of Charlie Company 1/503rd, 173rd Abn Bgd, we were operating in a heavily booby-trapped area of Darlac Prov. on Sept 5th, 1968. As we passed thru a village, Larry inadvertently tripped one and was killed. He was a fine soldier and well-liked by all. My deepest sympathy goes out to his family and friends."

Craig Miller, In the same Company with Larry

(continued...)



David Ray Karr, A/4/503

"You gave the last full measure of devotion in this life for the beliefs and people that you loved. Some small part of your blood lives in me from your sister, my mother. Know that you are loved even by those that never met you in the circles of this world. Those that have loved, loved you and that is all I can give you in return for all that you have given to me. With Love and Deepest Respect, your nephew, Gainey."

Gainey Johnson

He is my Uncle through my Mother

Edward Lester Lawton, 173d/LRRP

"The Combat Trackers and Scout Dogs have not forgotten your Sacrifice!"

Bob Baker

Brother in Arms



Nicholas Peter Lesando, Jr., A/C/1/503*

"Nicky, we never met but our families are linked, Aunt Ann married your Uncle Phil (a great man, who loved Yale Football) and Larry is a first cousin of ours. It's ironic your outfit, the 173rd, is now based where I was, in Italy, during the late 60's. I was real proud they named the American Legion in Warwick after you. A real honor and tribute to a hero. When I went to D.C., several years ago - I wanted to go to the Wall and look up your name - as I approached the Wall I walked half-way down and put my camcorder to my eye, and as the lens focused - your name appeared - of all 58,000, plus names - yours came into view first. I've thought of you a lot since then and sure would have liked to have met you. With all my thoughts and prayers on your birthday."

Steve Sisco

Cousin In-law

Gary Lee Lewis, C/4/503

*"I was 8 years old when Gary was killed. I never knew what type of person he was, so I am here today to find those who knew him, and to keep his memory alive. I have found a few who remembered him from the war and from in AIT Training. I guess he was a great guy to be around and others could always count on him. Hoping to find some people who may have pictures of him. To all of you out there-
THANK YOU!"*

Cousin Tia

owlru2@hotmail.com

[Posted 11 Mar 2004]

Charles Joseph L. Mason, C/1/503

Lonzo Joseph Moran, Jr., C/4/503

"Lonnie, my dearest husband, this is to honor you. You gave the ultimate sacrifice for your country. When duty called you were there. You didn't complain. You are a true American hero. You have never been forgotten nor ever will ever be. I wish you could have known your daughter Kimberly Jo. I wish I could have seen you hold her in your arms. War robbed us of a lot of things. You died in your hometown buddy's arms - Randy Maples. It brings me comfort to know he was there for you, another American hero who made it home, thank God. Thanks to all the American heroes who fought and died for our country and for those who made it home - you all are true American heroes."

From his wife,

Janie Moran Hennessee



Charles Edward Owens
A/2/503



Herman Parker, Jr., D/3/319

Elias Johnson Paulk, A/2/503

I did not know you. I lost my godfather, James Chester Schultz, on the same day and in the same place that you so bravely lost your life. For that I praise you. You lost your life so that I can live in freedom.

God Rest Your Soul..."

Joy A. Dillard-Davis

"You trained me at Ft. Gordon, Georgia for my infantry occupation. You were the Platoon Leader, and already pre-assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, so were all your squad leaders, SGT. Thomas, SGT. Sablan. We almost all followed you over there to the 173rd after we went to jump school. You didn't make it home. I'll always remember you and the way you led us. Soft-spoken, firm, human. After all, you were about 6 foot 5 inches! I will miss you."

Dan Pomeroy
Shake and Bake



(continued...)



~ A Note From The Virtual Wall ~

"A" Company, 2/503rd Infantry, lost three men on 19 Sep 1968:

SSG Elias J. Paulk, Ocala, FL;
CPL Ross T. Hulslander, Gainesville, FL; and
CPL James C. Schultz, Chicago, IL

Philip Dallam Reeder
C/1/503



[See Page 44 for text of Phil's DSC citation]

Note: "Reflection From the Moving Wall" by Manuel Pino, Jr., which appears on Page 26, was posted in connection with Phil's name.



James Chester Schultz
A/2/503

"You were gone before I really got to know you. From what I know, we would be a great team. I like to think I have guides in my life and I believe you are mine. Thank You for helping me through the trying times in my life. I know you were very unselfish. Your memory will never die. You go with me from day to day. Someday we will be joined again and I will see who has had a major part in my life. Your classmates called you 'Batman'. I call you 'GodFather.' You also have the title of 'Son', 'Brother', and 'Uncle.' As you watch down on all of us may you share your grace and peace with all that those who keep you dear to their hearts. 'I LOVE YOU, JIMMY'. Please, if anyone knew Jimmy, contact me. Would mean a lot!!!"

From his Goddaughter,
Joy A. Dillard - Davis
joysmind@aol.com
[Posted 30 May 2002]



James Chester Schultz

On October 23, 1968, Cpl Jimmy Schultz received a posthumous award of the Bronze Star Medal for heroism.

The Citation states that on 19 September 1968 he:



"... was serving as a grenadier with the second platoon. The platoon was on an independent search and clear mission near the village of Hoi An. At approximately 1400 hours as the platoon moved across open rice paddies toward the village the platoon began to receive intense small arms and automatic weapons fire from three sides. Private Schultz was caught in the middle of a rice paddy. There were wounded comrades to his front. Someone passed the word back for the medic to come forward to aid the wounded. Private Schultz saw that the medics could not aid the wounded without possible danger to themselves. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Private Schultz moved forward. From Private Schultz's exposed position and accurate fire on the enemy positions, the medic came forward to the wounded. As the fire fight continued Private Schultz was fatally wounded. Because of his devoted and unselfish act he gave his life to the cause that his wounded comrades might live. Private Schultz's personal bravery and devotion to 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."



Jim Schultz at Jump School.
A paratrooper and hero in the making.

(continued....)



Michael James Tobey, C/1/503

"Uncle Michael, I didn't have the privilege of knowing you, daddy spoke well of you, if not often. It made him sad to think of the brother he lost. Thank you for your sacrifice. I know Grammy is up there with you and as proud of you as ever."

Cindy Tobey-Hunter
Niece

Harry William Underwood, B/4/503

Virgil Junior Webb, C/1/503

"We grew up in the same hometown and he was a good friend and all-around nice guy. He had a great personality and was fun to be around. He spent a lot of time in the 'Isaly's' store where I worked. We would just hang out together when my shift ended. He was very well liked by all and I loved him like a brother. He was just the kind of guy you'd want by your side when things went bad. I'm sure his Viet Nam brothers would say the same kind of things. Like too many he died too young and will be forever remembered by many. He is our hometown hero."

Joy Herd

Richard William Welch, B/4/503



"Just another photo of my friend. Always smiling, always laughing, always finding fun in the worst of situations."
Posted by Rick Jakus



Steven Andrew Winters. "Doc", HHC/A/4/503*



Richard Glen Wolff
B/D/1/503*

"I will remember Rich, for being a friend of my cousin. Who was a fun loving individual who was afraid of spiders. He always was around my aunt & uncle's house. It was like having another cousin, who looked after me (Mark). He had accompanied me to the dentist on numerous occasions, just to meet airline hostesses. They lived in the entire building. This is an individual who did not have to go into service, but he did. Served his country well. God bless Rich. I will never forget you."

Mark Gamba
Older Friend

~ September 1969 ~



Randy Graham Cagle
A/1/503, A/1/50*

"I would like to remember my cousin RANDY GRAHAM CAGLE. He was from Menlo, GA. He was 18 years old. He was killed in Vietnam on Sept. 11, 1969. He was only there a couple of months. He only lacked a few days being 19 years old. He died in Binh Thuan, South Vietnam. If you are family, friend or knew him in Vietnam, please email me. Any info you have would be welcomed. I don't have much to go on just that he had a sister and a father. My mother and I visited the traveling wall today. We left flowers and cards there in Randy's name. We would value anything you could tell us about Randy. We have no living family that would have any info. My email is blazze@nehp.net. Thank you. We are thinking of you RANDY."

Blazze Bigdawg
[Posted October 27, 2000]

(continued....)





Martin Barry Dyer, Jr.
C/1/503

"Although I have never met you, I married your brother, Osmund C. Dyer, and know that he misses you greatly, and cherishes the memories the both of you shared. You will forever be in the dearest part of his heart. Thank you, and all who gave, for your service."

Cherry Cooper
Your Brother Misses You



Robert Lee Hager, Jr.
A/1/503

Robert Lee Henneghan, C/4/503
Robert William Labrecque, C/4/503

"We remember Robert W. Labrecque as a great soldier. With his fighting, it allowed us to enjoy what we have today. After his brother, Paul, died due to the Vietnam War, he did not have to go into the service but he decided to enlist anyways. This proved how much character and bravery he had. Thank you, Robert W. Labrecque. If there is any information about Robert, please contact me because I am doing a research project on Rhode Island fallen heroes in the Vietnam War. Thank you."

Alexander D'Eletto
alexdel1@cox.net
[Posted October 10, 2010]



Walter Bedford Lowe, Jr.
D/1/503

"Walter was a respected member of our platoon and was willing to answer to any challenge. Walter had no fear but he did respect the cunning and evasive manner in which our enemy opposed us. Walter had a sense of humor that he passed on to others, he was quiet and introspective and he showed much concern

for the well-being of all members of our platoon. Walter did not get excited but had a reserved passion and could be depended upon to perform his duties and could be counted on to complete any mission assigned. As the platoon leader, I had much respect for Walter and although our time together was short, knowing Walter was something that I have remembered all of my life. Why some like Walter gave the ultimate sacrifice and others were spared is the eternal question. Walter's bravery and desire to protect his fellow soldiers made him a pillar of strength and his loss was severely missed. I will always remember Walter and Larry who gave the ultimate sacrifice in service to our Country....."

From his Platoon Leader, 3d Plt, D Co, 1/503/173 Abn Bde 1969-1970 RVN,
Gary Jugenheimer

Cameron Trent McAllister, 173d/LRRP, N75*
Johnny Newsome, C/4/503



Larry Pypniowski
D/1/503

"Larry was a respected member of the Platoon and could be depended upon to carry out his duties without question. He carried an M-79 Grenade Launcher and was a valuable asset when his skills were required to put the ordnance on target. I remember Larry as an eager and willing soldier who did what he was expected to do and did it with enthusiasm. Larry performed the duties of point man on many occasions and did not seem to fear this assignment which was one of the toughest in Viet Nam. I remember that Larry was meticulous about his appearance and proud to be a soldier. He was an example to others in the Platoon of what soldiering was all about. Larry willingly carried his pack and additional M-60 ammunition and sometimes radio batteries, the weight of which taxed his small frame. Losing Larry and Sgt. Lowe on the same day in an unfortunate way was the most devastating part of my tour in RVN."

Gary Jugenheimer
Platoon Leader
3d Plt, D Co, 1/503 Inf, 173 Abn Bde

(continued....)



Encarnasion Rodriguez, "Doc", HHC/C/1/503*

"Was a friend of your sister Yolanda, met you once while over at your house...Remembering you."

Sara Page



Jerry Van Ryan
B/1/503

"I knew Jerry Ryan to be a great person.

As my squad leader in military school, Jerry taught me the ropes and made me understand not to take life or myself too seriously. Jerry loved to clown around and although he was an upperclassman he treated us underlings better than most. He graduated two years before I did and I can still vividly recall his proudly showing up at an Alumni Day event wearing his Army Class 'A' uniform and telling some of us he was on his way to Vietnam. That was the last time I saw him. Although he may not wish to be remembered for this feat, Jerry was the only person I have ever known who could place his entire fist in his mouth. Now that was something for an impressionable 16-year-old to see!"

Unsigned



Joseph Anthony Servantez
C/1/503

"We who survived remember. The pain of your death is still so very real. We live to prove that your sacrifice and that of so many of our brothers will NOT have been in vain."

From a comrade in arms,
Joseph W. Marquez

~ A Note From The Virtual Wall ~

On 17 Sep 1969, the 4th Platoon, C/1/503rd, was conducting a reconnaissance-in-force in the An Lao Mountains, an area very heavily populated by the NVA, when they engaged an enemy force. Sergeant Joseph Servantez and medic Encarnasion Rodriguez were killed in action and nine others were wounded. Joseph Marquez, a squad leader in the platoon, had taken the photo above of Sergeant Servantez before the platoon began the recon, just hours before his death.

Thomas Leroy Smith, D/4/503



William Russell Squier, Jr.
173d/LRRP, C/75th Inf.*

"Bill Squier was my older brother, brother to our other siblings, son of our parents, uncle to my children, friend to many and a Company C Ranger forever."

Lee Squier, Brother

James Ervin Tompkins, B/3/319

"The Father that never had the chance to know me... Black is the nickname that you were called. I'm your son but I can only remember your presence this one particular time. You had come home on leave and gave my mother (Betty J. Dowtin) and I a ride in your new red Pontiac Bonneville Convertible. It's sad to have lost a father at an early age and not having a father figure in my life as I grew into a man myself. Although I made it I still wonder how it would have been to have a father! I know you were a man of character and courage, a person with heart because Soldiers that volunteered for three tours in Viet Nam are not trained to do it. This type of courage is in your blood, its inherited. Everybody can't be Airborne and I know you were. I have completed my Military Service and I was Airborne as well. Your same courage runs through my veins, I just wish you could have had the chance to know your son...Rest In Peace!"

Your Son,
Daryl Dowtin

John Wayne Tracy, C/4/503

"Sgt. Tracy was a member of the Army ROTC cadre at the University of Tennessee in 1968-69 when I was a senior in college. He had already served two tours of duty in Vietnam when I met him. We became friends during the summer of 1969 while I was participating in advanced ROTC summer camp at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and he was on staff. In September, he returned for his third tour in Vietnam and was killed about two weeks into his tour. I learned a lot from this guy!"

From a friend, Alex Hawkins

(continued...)



~ September 1970 ~



Eugene Allen Aaron
E/3/503

"Eugene, you were a friend then and you're still considered a friend now. You will not be forgotten. I hope on occasion you and the others smile down on us who remain."

From a fellow soldier and friend
Hal Kretz

~ A Note From The Virtual Wall ~

E Troop, 17th Cavalry, was the 173rd Airborne Brigade's ground reconnaissance unit. On 07 Sep 1970, E Troop lost three men.

when we had the chance and it was always interesting. One night Michael and I were talking and he said 'You know T (my nickname), I really believe that I have attained total peace of mind'. We went our separate ways the next day on our missions, two days later I heard the news about Michael.

Michael was my friend and is dearly missed, but he will always be remembered."

Larry Trevaskis
E Co 1/503 173rd ABN BDE 69/70

Larry Eugene Brooks, C/3/503

"Larry was my ammo bearer in the third platoon, C Co., 3rd Batt., 503rd Inf. 173rd Abn. He was killed 2 days after I left the field on my way home. I had the unpleasant task of identifying his body at LZ English. He was a proud young soldier that was doing his duty."

Gregg Corbin
C Co. 3rd Batt, 503rd Inf. 173rd Abn 69-70
Fellow Sky Soldier



Merritt Adams
D/2/503



Michael Asep
E/1/503



"Larry is on the left in this photo."



Michael with his E/1/503 Buddies



(continued....)

"I was stationed with Michael in Viet Nam, we were in the same recon platoon. Michael and I used to talk





Wilson Campbell
D/2/503

"We were in the same platoon. I remember Wilson carried a full rucksack, loved to talk, and was a good trooper. It was very sad to lose him at such an early age."

Wayne Johnson



Curvin Clayton
A/1/503

"I served with you and remember the day the Lord took you my Brother. I still have a picture of you taken a couple days before you were taken away. We will meet again someday in heaven. I love you my brother - until the day we meet again I still will remember you."

Hardy Freydenfelt
Not Forgotten

Emory Theron Coates, 173d Eng

"Emory, we were friends when we were kids and even now I remember the times we shared when you were in Alabama during the summers."

Lula C. Bell Woodard-Lulabell
Still a friend



Glenn Harry English, Jr.
E/3/503

"I was there that long ago September afternoon. I watched you jump inside that track when you tried to save my friends. Thank you. Just like the others, I will not forget your name."

Hal Kretz
Thank You Glenn



"Glenn. Starting from the great cook-outs we used to have at your nice home in Foxfire in Fayetteville, NC. And later for me to be privileged to serve with you in

E Co. 3/503d. I miss our good times together and miss you very much. Thanks for your friendship and our country richly thanks you for your courageous and gallant service you so freely gave. 'We Love You Glenn' :) Ernie, Rut, Tim Wintenberg and the rest!"

Ernie Krist

Love you as a friend and fellow Sky Soldier

[See Glenn's MOH citation on Page 46]

Gary Ralph Friend, C/3/503



"Sgt Friend is standing in the middle of this picture eating a LRRP ration." (Photo posted by Gregg Corbin)

Dennis Wayne Gentry, A/3/503

"A Paratrooper. Dennis was a paratrooper with the 1st Platoon, A Co., 3/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). He served among some of the finest airborne soldiers in Viet Nam. It's sad that the good die young. My prayers are with him and his family."

Sgt. K (Tom Kaulukukui)



Harold Owen Harper
B/2/503

"In remembrance to my uncle. I live with a memory of a great man I've never met and your family and I miss you so much and I want people to know Harold was a wonderful man not just for what he did but also who he was...."

(continued....)



....Harold was a fun loving man with love in him that flowed like the oceans, he was a brave man and enlisted twice to serve his country and was very fond of the child he got to help and his fellow troops. Harold left behind one brother and two sisters which one is my mother. The love and memories passed on to me and others so that Harold will never be forgotten. We love you Harold and we are so proud."

Unsigned



**Mark Alan Hensley
B/1/503**



"Dear Brother. This is the letter I never wrote you while you were in Vietnam. How are things going for you now? Are your days now filled with laughter again, like when we were young? As a 12 year old I was busy with my own world - just starting Junior High and all of my older brothers leaving all at once. Was a lot for someone so young and tender. I remember the day as if it was yesterday. Home from school already. My friends and I were hanging out. There was a knock at the door. There stood two soldiers, wanting to talk to Dad. Because Guy was home on leave I joked that he was A.W.O.L. They said they'd be back. I continued with my friends, not thinking any more about the soldiers. We went horseback riding. You know it was one of my favorite past-times. It was a warm September afternoon. I was coming home when here comes Julie running as fast as she can to tell me the most horrifying news I have ever had to deal with. Mark, I miss you every day. The only regret I have in life is I never wrote you while you were alive.

I Love You."

Your Littlest Sister,
Sheila

Steven Frederick Jindrich, D/4/503



**Joseph Frank Keeney
D/1/503**

"Photo Credit, Tom Brady. Rest in peace with the warriors."

"I served with him, we sleep in the same bunker, got in trouble together and fought together. To all his

family, he gave his life saving another, he pulled a wounded buddy to safety when he was shot. I think about him all the time and miss him."

Edward L. Buck
To a Good Friend

"Joe rebuilt his life and gained a new family at Boys Town. He was helped through Father Flanagan's dream. He attended high school and with his brothers there prepared to make positive contributions in our society. He served his nation with honor, brought credit upon his brothers and gave his life to free the oppressed. Joe is loved and will not be forgotten."



**Steven R. Wolf '80
Boys Town Alumni Serves Nation & Pays
Ultimate Price**



**Tory Drake Lawrence
A/4/503**

"From your wife. It has been more than 40 years since you went to that war. Since that time our son has died on the same day you did, September 19th. You died in 1970, and our son died in 2003. Were you there to take his hand and show him the way? I would love to believe so. I have missed growing old with you, and think of you every day. I hope when my time comes you will be there to take my hand and show me the way as I believe you did with Jason our son."

Your wife

Elton Lewis, C/3/503, C/75 Inf*

"Elton and I were acquaintances in grade school ... we were never really close but I remember him as a decent guy who did well in sports ... I knew his sister Virginia well and she took his death pretty hard ... I still find it hard to believe someone I knew died there ... and, Virginia, if you read this, I still think about him and the fights we had ... I wish we could have one more ..."

Jonathan Ard

(continued....)



Dennis Craig Marshall, D/2/503
Charles Donald Mathews, B/2/503
“*heart*”
Debbye



Jesus Moreno, Jr.
B/2/503

“You covered my back when I walked point, I should have been there when the Co. moved out. You gave it all. My memories bring you back. God Bless.”

The Indian

Roger Dale Overweg, B/1/503



[See Page 52 for Roger’s DSC citation]

Note: George Allen Overweg, SP4, 1st Inf. Div., was killed in action on 12/4/65). Both he and Roger were from Zeeland, MI. Research failed to determine possible relationship. Ed



Eddie Jack Padilla, E/17th Cav



Billy Harrison Ratliff
173d/LRRP, 75th Inf

Pablo Isreal Seda, D/3/503



Calvin Russell Segar, “Doc”
173d/LRRP, 75th Inf*

“Love you Cat.”

Julie
My brother

“My parents spread us kids out over twenty years. Calvin's father, Bob, is my oldest brother and I, Cliff, am the youngest of 5 kids. That makes me Calvin's

uncle even though I was less than a year older. We were more like cousins and, like most cousins, got in trouble together - nothing too serious but 'normal' stuff from the late sixties. Mostly we worked on the go-cart and tried to keep the B&S lawn mower engine running. That is unless ‘Crimson and Clover’ came on the radio. Everything stopped until that was over and we always hoped for the long version.”

Cliff Segar
Uncle

Following is the obit from the ‘Port Huron’ paper:

~ Local Soldier Killed in Vietnam ~

“Pfc. Calvin R. Segar, 18, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Segar, 611 Beers Street, was killed in action Wednesday in An Khe, Vietnam. Details were not available. Private Segar was born July 25, 1952, in St. Clair, and lived most of his life here. He attended Port Huron High School and was graduated by Bisbee High School, Bisbee, Ariz. Private Segar entered the U.S. Army in August, 1969, and arrived in Vietnam Aug. 1. He is survived by his parents; two sisters, Mrs. K. Dawn Seeger, Madison Heights, Mich., and Miss Julie Lynn Segar, Port Huron; two brothers, Max R. and Walter D. Segar, both of Port Huron; grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter W. Currey, Imlay City, and Mr. and Mrs. Max L. Segar, Bisbee, a niece and several aunts, uncles and cousins. The remains will be sent to Hubert V. Lucas Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held in the funeral home with Rev. Richard A. Kuhn, pastor of Sparlingville Baptist Church, officiating. Burial will be in Allied Veterans cemetery. Other funeral arrangements are incomplete.”



Thomas Allebach Shipe
B/1/503



“Tom was a great friend. I miss him always.”

John Nagel

[See Tom’s Silver Star Citation on Page 56]



(continued....)





Brent William Sveen
E/17th Cav

"You have been missed, you will always be missed, but you will always be remembered. Your zest for life, your comic humor and quick wit are immortal to all who were blessed by having known you. I am proud to be among those who call you friend."

E.S. Hongess
Friends

James Taylor Waldron, A/3/503

"You Live On In My Heart. Veterans Day 2002 ... 'You are gone but not forgotten!' The fog of time has hidden you in its mists but I still mourn your passing. Your loving brother and fellow comrade in arms."

Curt Waldron
Brother

"A sweet, honest just-past teens cousin of ours. In love with his fellow-beings in the human race. A loss to the human race."

Colin and Priscilla Higgins
Cousins

FIVE-TOUR TROOPER **Tyrone Watson**



Tyrone Calvin Watson
A/1/503



"Although his wife wished he wouldn't keep going back she stood by Watson each time he volunteered to return to Vietnam. The 28-year-old staff sergeant already had been wounded four times when he volunteered for his fifth combat tour in 1970. The fire team leader and intelligence specialist, assigned to Company A of the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Infantry Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, died in combat on September 13, 1970. He was awarded the Silver Star. The 1957 Bartram High School graduate also was survived by a stepdaughter."

The Philadelphia Daily News

Roger Orrie Wells, A/2/503

"Sky Soldier Roger Orrie Wells' name is listed on Panel 7W, Row 71.

His fellow Sky Soldier, Bud Sourjohn, who was with him the day Roger gave his life, has requested we locate his parents to be certain they are in receipt of a Gold Star Flag and still have their Gold Star Pins. Please help us locate this family to let them know the sacrifice of their dear son has never nor will ever be forgotten.

Thank you."

Respectfully submitted by a Gold Star Sister
Judy Campbell
[Posted 8 Nov 2002]

"Such a loss. Roger was from Pleasantville, a small town in northwestern Pennsylvania. His parents owned and operated a small grocery store on the main street, so likely many knew of Roger and his parents. He is buried in the cemetery in Pleasantville just to the left and front of my father. When I visit my father, I always stop by Roger's gravesite. I have left a small flag on several occasions. There is much sadness when I remember Vietnam and young men like Roger. But I also always honor his supreme sacrifice, and I'm sure the small town of Pleasantville holds Roger in high honor too." R. Sines, Vietnam '67-'68



Vernon Arthur Wright
A/4/503

My RTO/My Friend. Art, I remember when I left for E/Recon. I told you to get out of the field and to make sure you saw your daughter when you went on R&R. It was a very sad day when the 1SG came to visit me to tell me you died.



I remember our quiet talks about home and family when we stood guard together in the CP. I'll always remember you and cherish our short friendship.

You are always in my thoughts and I feel so close to you. Airborne, All the Way, LT."

Butch Nery
Raider 6



~ Medal of Honor Citation ~



LARRY STANLEY PIERCE

Sergeant, U.S. Army

Headquarters and Headquarters Company

1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry

173d Airborne Brigade

Place: Near Ben Cat, RVN

Date: 20 September 1965

Entered Service at: Fresno, California

Born : 6 July 1941, Wewoka, Okla.

G.O. No: 7, 24 February 1966

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. Sgt. Pierce was serving as squad leader in a reconnaissance platoon when his patrol was ambushed by hostile forces. Through his inspiring leadership and personal courage, the squad succeeded in eliminating an enemy machinegun and routing the opposing force. While pursuing the fleeing enemy, the squad came upon a dirt road and, as the main body of his men entered the road, Sgt. Pierce discovered an anti-personnel mine emplaced in the roadbed. Realizing that the mine could destroy the majority of his squad, Sgt. Pierce saved the lives of his men at the sacrifice of his life by throwing himself directly onto the mine as it exploded. Through his indomitable courage, complete disregard for his safety, and profound concern for his fellow soldiers, he averted loss of life and injury to the members of his squad. Sgt. Pierce's extraordinary heroism, at the cost of his life, are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.



Chapter XVI News & Photos From July Meeting

Photos from Phan Thai.



Phan Thai & Harper Buck



Steve Konek, Sr. & Harper Buck



L-R: Chuyen Nguyen (VN SF), Steve Konek, Sr. (Bde S-5), Chris Clewell (Fwd Obs 4/503d), Harper Buck (Bde Sgn), Rod McDonald (4/503d), Craig Ford (1/503d), Phan Thai (172nd MI, Bde S-5, 2/503d, 175th Rngs, VN SF, VN Navy)

Members of Chapter XVI met on July 25th for the monthly meeting, gathering of brothers, and dinner. The chapter will be supporting efforts to build a joint American-Vietnamese Veterans War Memorial at the Veterans Park in Auburn, WA. We continue to support the Vietnam Fund in efforts to provide libraries in rural schools in Kontum Province, Vietnam.

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Note:

All Chapters of the 173d Abn Bde are invited to send in monthly reports on your planned activities, news, photos and other information of interest to the Sky Soldier community. Please send such information by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the following month's newsletter to rto173d@cfl.rr.com with the subject line on your email: "Chapter News"



PHILIP DALLAM REEDER

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

who served with COMPANY C, 1st BATTALION
(AIRBORNE), 503rd INFANTRY REGIMENT,
173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE,
was posthumously awarded the
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

Date of Action: 26 September 1968



Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Philip Dallam Reeder, Private First Class, 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, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Private Reeder distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 26 September 1968 while serving as an automatic rifleman with the 173d Airborne Brigade. His unit made contact and began receiving a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire from an estimated reinforced North Vietnamese Army company occupying well-fortified bunkers. As Private Reeder's squad deployed against the hostile positions, an enemy hand grenade landed among four of his comrades. With complete disregard for his safety, Private Reeder rushed through the withering hail of enemy fire toward it. As he dashed across the exposed area, he was wounded. Despite the injury he grasped the grenade and ran toward the hostile bunker in an attempt to hurl it back at the communist soldiers. As the grenade left his hand, it detonated, killing him instantly. His body shielded the men from the blast and shrapnel, saving them from injury or possible death. Private Reeder's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

HQ US Army, Vietnam General Orders No. 5750.

He was also a posthumous recipient of the Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and was entitled to wear the Combat Infantryman Badge and Army Parachute Wings.

The Inscrutable General Patton



In *A General's Life*, an autobiography by General of the Army, Omar N. Bradley, the general speaks of Simpson McLain, commander of XIX Army Corps during WWII. Bradley states:

Simpson had a wonderful earthy sense of humor. He loved to tell this story:

One night Patton came in with a bottle of brandy and said, "Let's have a nightcap." We drank and talked. Patton said, "Well, here we all are under Eisenhower and Bradley, both six years our junior. Hodges flunked out of West Point Class of ought-eight and had to enlist and now he commands First Army. I was turned back from ought-eight and it took me five years to graduate – with ought-nine – but I command Third Army. You came out second from the bottom in our class in ought-nine and you command Ninth Army. Isn't it peculiar that three old farts like us should be carrying the ball for those two sons-of-bitches?"



Newsletter Reports Strike A Chord in 2/503d Sky Soldiers

The piece on Sergeant Bruce Candrl hit home (Aug. newsletter). He was my team leader, and at various times squad leader during the first half of my tour in 1st Plt., B Co., 2/503. I was assigned to the battalion Stag 2 Team when he was killed in July, and only found out he had died many years later when I went to the Wall in D.C. Big shock, and great sadness. I didn't know he had come to us from N-Company Rangers there at LZ English, but he sure showed a quality personality. Very solid, easy going, good leadership qualities.

I am also in contact with another squad member, Steve Hill of Oregon, who knew Bruce, and liked him very much. We bring up his name often in our discussions. Not sure if Jim Akuna, N-75th, in the newsletter wanted more information, or if he was responding to someone else's enquiry. Anyway, if you think it might be helpful to someone asking about Bruce, feel free to pass along this note, or give my email address for further communication.

Great newsletter as usual. Take Care!

**Jonathan Dave "Link" Linkenhoker
1st Plt., B Co., 2nd Batt., / Stag Team 2**

Wow. This newsletter is knocking my socks off. The piece from Colonel Krause on the Stag 1 ambush this time. Myself, and Steve Hill who I mentioned earlier regarding Bruce Candrl, were on Stag 2, on the coast later in the year, less than a kilometer from the Stag 1 compound where that action occurred.

Looking more closely at the article in the last issue on the Stag Team ambush, our event was later in '70, not in April. The event involving Colonel Krause may have been what caused us to volunteer for Stag Team 2 in the first place.

When we volunteered for the Team we were told during an Intelligence briefing the team in Cacong ville, our ville, had been wiped out, along with a number of PF/RF's, and a lot of weapons grabbed by Charlie, including a 60 and thumper. That team having been too static in setting up their location at night, giving Charlie a chance to plan an attack – that was the reason we later, as Stag 2, never set up in the same place day to day. It is "possible" in our minds, Hill and me, that the attack on Stag Team 1 across from our ville as Stag Team 2, was a later event, say...September, October 1970. We've never found any stat reports, and neither of us have functioning memories any more.

Some months after the Colonel's April event, it remained evident the VC were still very active and aggressive in the area. Two events, months apart, involving the Stag Teams. The second event occurring with us, who had replaced those killed and wounded in the first event as related by the Colonel.

Word from our MACV contact indicated they found out it was a VC Captain marrying one of the village girls when Stag 1 stumbled in during an evening patrol. The bride to be showed up at the MACV compound the next day for gunshot wounds we were told. Anyway, it was a dark night, with lots of tracer fire and flares, so maybe we didn't get the gist of all that went on. I just know that to this day me and Steve still bitch about having to get permission from a hamlet chief, who was likely alive only because he was aligned with the VC, to open fire on a VC platoon trashing our fellow Stag Team.

Yeah, still has me cursing like I have a case of Turret's syndrome. Oh well, in the eye of the beholder.

Link



Link, outside LZ English



GLENN HARRY ENGLISH, JR.

Staff Sergeant

served as a Squad Leader with Company E, 3rd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, and was a posthumous recipient of the

MEDAL OF HONOR

who rests in honored glory in Section 1-288-A in the Fort Bragg Post Cemetery, Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

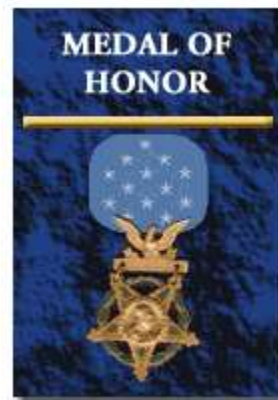


**CITATION FOR AWARD OF THE
MEDAL OF HONOR
TO
STAFF SERGEANT
GLENN HARRY ENGLISH, JR.
PHU MY DISTRICT, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

7 September 1970

Staff Sergeant English was riding in the lead armored personnel carrier in a four vehicle column when an enemy mine exploded in front of his vehicle. As the vehicle swerved from the road, a concealed enemy force waiting in ambush opened fire with automatic weapons and anti-tank grenades, striking the vehicle several times and setting it on fire. Staff Sergeant English escaped from the disabled vehicle and, without

pausing to extinguish the flames on his clothing, rallied his stunned unit. He then led it in a vigorous assault, in the face of heavy enemy automatic weapons fire, on the entrenched enemy position. This prompt and courageous action routed the enemy and saved his unit from destruction. Following the assault, Staff Sergeant English heard cries of three men still trapped inside the vehicle. Paying no heed to warnings that the ammunition and fuel in the burning personnel carrier might explode at any moment, Staff Sergeant English raced to the vehicle and climbed inside to rescue his wounded comrades. As he was lifting one of the men to safety, the vehicle exploded, mortally wounding him and the man he was attempting to save. By his extraordinary devotion to duty, indomitable courage, and utter disregard for his own safety, Staff Sergeant English saved his unit from destruction and selflessly sacrificed his life in a brave attempt to save three comrades. Staff Sergeant English's conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the cost of his life were an inspiration to his comrades and are in the highest traditions of the United States Army.



Glenn's sister, Ana Mae Fike, receives Medal of Honor Award from President Gerald Ford.

Airborne....All The Way



Hook-Up For Travel To Vietnam

If you are planning a return trip to Vietnam and would like to hook-up with some buddies or family members to join on the trip, 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.

As of this date, we have one family member hoping to join others on a trip to Vietnam:

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@exelisinc.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.

So, send in details 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 with *Return to Vietnam* on the subject line. Ed

Whodat?

This photo was taken in March '66, prior to or after Operation Silver City. That's A.B. Garcia on far left. Ed



“Does anybody know this brother on the far right (as you face photo)? I think his last name was Orme?”

A.B. Garcia
 4.2 Platoon, 2/503d, '65/'66

Last Month's Whodat?



Last month we asked who is this strac lookin' young paratrooper wannabe 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? Then we wondered if he could bear the retirement? He's our very own good buddy Barry "Bear" Hart, still truckin'.

Bear in Cocoa Beach, FL a few years later

A Good Day On The Diamond For Delta Trooper #5

D/2/503 trooper, Jerry Sopko, baseball player extraordinaire, is seen here taking throw at first base. Our own Larry Paladino, B/2/503d, is another Sky Soldier still mixing it up between the lines.



“This is from two weeks ago. We played them today in the last scheduled game of the season and beat them, 7-6. We will play them again next Saturday in a make-up game. After that, one more make-up and the season is done. Not sure if I like the early start this year. Still had weather issues and we'll still be working after the season to get all the games in.”

Jerry Sopko
 D/2/503



Operation Crossroads

Operation Crossroads was a series of nuclear weapon tests conducted by the United States at Bikini Atoll in mid-1946. It was the first test of a nuclear weapon since the Trinity nuclear test in July 1945, and the first detonation of a nuclear device since the atomic bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. Its purpose was to investigate the effect of nuclear weapons on naval ships.

Crossroads consisted of two detonations, each with a yield of 23 kilotons of TNT (96 terajoules): *Able* was detonated at an altitude of 520 feet (160 m) on July 1, 1946; *Baker* was detonated 90 feet (27 m) underwater on July 25, 1946. A third burst, *Charlie*, planned for 1947, was canceled primarily because of the United States Navy's inability to decontaminate the target ships after the *Baker* test. *Charlie* was rescheduled as Operation Wigwam, a deep water shot conducted in 1955 off the California coast.

The Crossroads tests were the fourth and fifth nuclear explosions conducted by the United States (following the Trinity test and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki). They were the first of many nuclear tests held in the Marshall Islands and the first to be publicly announced beforehand and observed by an invited audience, including a large press corps.

Bikini's native residents agreed to evacuate the island, with most moving to the Rongerik Atoll. Later, in the 1950s, a series of large thermonuclear tests rendered Bikini unfit for subsistence farming and fishing. Because of radioactive contamination, Bikini remains uninhabited as of 2013, though it is occasionally visited by sport divers.

Although there are claims that participants in the Operation Crossroads tests were well protected against radiation sickness, one study showed that the life expectancy of participants was reduced by an average of three months. The *Baker* test contaminated all the target ships. It was the first case of immediate, concentrated local radioactive fallout from a nuclear explosion.

Chemist Glenn Seaborg, the longest-serving chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, called *Baker*...

"The world's first nuclear disaster."



Project Crossroads was a series of two nuclear tests, *Able* and *Baker*, the first tests conducted at the Pacific Proving Ground, near the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands.



Mushroom-shaped cloud and water column from the underwater *Baker* nuclear explosion of July 25, 1946. Photo taken from a tower on Bikini Island, 3.5 miles (5.6 km) away.

"In our new age of terrifying, lethal gadgets, which supplanted so swiftly the old one, the first great aggressive war, if it should come, will be launched by suicidal little madmen pressing an electronic button. Such a war will not last long and none will ever follow it. There will be no conquerors and no conquests, but only the charred bones of the dead on an uninhabited planet."

William L. Shirer, Author
The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich ~ 1960



**Headquarters
173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE
APO San Francisco 96375**

23 October 1968

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 2692

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR



1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced posthumously.
Ross Thomas Hulslander 12889757 Corporal
U S Army, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment
Awarded: Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device
Date Action: 19 September 1968
Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force. (Then) Private Hulslander distinguished himself on 19 September 1968 in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day Private Hulslander was serving with the first platoon, operating independently from the company to search and clear a built up area near the village of Hoi An. Private Hulslander was point man of the point squad. As the platoon moved along a trail Private Hulslander triggered a booby trap. Calmly he halted on the booby trap and yelled for others behind him to seek cover.

After seeing that everyone near was safe, Private Hulslander tried to free himself from the booby trap. His attempt to leap from the danger of the booby trap failed and he was critically wounded by fragments from the booby trap. Private Hulslander's calmness and devotion in a critical situation saved the lives of at least two other men in the platoon. Private Hulslander's personal bravery and complete devotion to 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.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress.

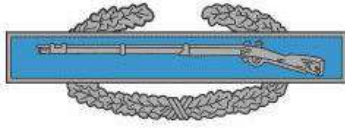
FOR THE COMMANDER:

/s/

Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:
J.E. Crouch
Major, AGC
Adjutant General





The Infantryman

His emotions are impenetrable, yet his shoulders are soft for someone to lean on. His hands are firm yet know exactly where to be. If he has his arms wrapped around you, you're either in the last moments of your life or the safest place you could ever be. He's stubborn but will let you have your way just to see you smile. He's deadly with a rifle and gentle with a child. He plays poker with the devil, but guards the gates of heaven. He curses like no other, but is the perfect gentleman. He has a thousand yard stare, but when you look into his eyes, it's the most comforting thing you've ever felt. The U.S. government trained him as a weapon but raised him as a lover. He knows every part of his rifle, and every curve of his woman. There is no other man like him. Whether you love or hate him, both is a privilege. He could be your worst nightmare or your best friend.



**[Sent in by Claudia Tobin, sister of
B/2/503d RTO Extraordinaire
Larry Paladino]**

~ The Navy is on the Horizon ~

We connected some time ago with Navy Viet Vet Gary Newman. Gary receives our newsletter and passes it on to his buddies. In thanking him for doing that, Gary replied:



"No problem. We enjoy your newsletter. I just can't believe how well it's put together. If anyone on your E-mailing list is planning on attending the VVA Convention have them look me up. If they're interested in joining a VVA Chapter I can arrange it."

Gary Newman
Navy Chief (Ret)
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)

VVA Chapter 227 Invites Sky Soldiers To Speak

Our VVA Chapter is always looking for speakers for our monthly membership meetings. Are there any Sky Soldiers who would be interested in sharing their Tour of Duty as an airborne trooper in Vietnam?

The Chapter meets in Vienna, Virginia which is just outside of Washington, D.C.

I don't remember if I had asked you before; I have a fading memory that one of your members offered to speak who had a daughter living near Vienna.

Great newsletter or should I say, newspaper.

Len Ignatowski

RVN: 1970-71, 169th Engineer Bn (CS). Army ROTC commissioned me as an infantry officer despite receiving a civil engineering degree.

Email: grunt69@gmail.com

Phone: 703-255-0353

Visit our Chapter website at vva227.org



VVA Chapter 227 received its charter on October 11, 1985 and incorporated as a non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia in January, 1986. We welcome all Vietnam-era veterans to join us. Others, such as Red Cross workers or civilians who served in Vietnam, as well as friends and relatives are eligible to join the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA).

"2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 Chapter of the Year in Virginia"

2011 National Vietnam Veterans of America Member of the Year: Leonard Ignatowski

VVA'S Founding Principle:

"Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another."



2/503d Chargin' Charlies



Jerry Taylor C 2 503rd

I took this pic of the M60 team from C/2/503. I think it was around late July early August '65. I know for sure it was after our little PX opened and I had to wait until pay day to buy my camera. Of the 10 guys that the faces are shown not too badly the guy on the left is David Canady #1. All the way to the right #9 and #10 looks like Wayne Stevens and Glenn Hood. I got that info from 173rdAirborne.com Photo Album 2nd.Bn.503rd.Airborne. Canady is on page 3, Stevens and Hood are on page 4. I have the pic of the M60 teams on page 6, you should be able to get a good copy of it there. The picture was taken at Bien Hoa Camp Zinn. Teams were put together after the weapons arrived from Germany. Before this C Company didn't have M60s, not sure if this was true for the rest of 2nd Bn. **Jerry Taylor, C/2/503d**

2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year ~ 2013 (Vietnam Era)

It's that time of year when we invite all troopers of our battalion to submit your nomination for *2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year ~ 2013 (Vietnam Era)*. Past honored recipients of this award include Ken Smith A/D/2/503d, Roy Lombardo B/2/503d, and Olaf Hurd HHC/Recon/2/503d.

A selection committee of three officers and three enlisted men, representing different companies and years in combat with our battalion, will name the 2013 awardee on behalf of all men of the 2/503d. There is no specific criteria to make a nomination. The honored Sky Soldier will be named in the January 2014 issue of our newsletter.

Send your one-page, typed-written nomination to rto173d@cfl.rr.com by no later than October 15th. All previous nominees will be considered by the selection committee. Please enter "*Sky Soldier of the Year*" on the subject line of your email.



On left, representing our battalion, Roger Dick, C/2/503d, presents Olaf with trophy and award certificate honoring him as the 2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2012.





ROGER DALE OVERWEG



Sergeant, U.S. Army
Company B, 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment
173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Date of Action: September 19, 1970

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Roger Dale Overweg, 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 B, 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Sergeant Overweg distinguished



himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 19 September 1970 while serving as a member of a combat patrol during search operations in the mountainous area of Binh Dinh Province. While advancing through the rugged terrain in search of an enemy camp, the allies observed an enemy soldier run into an underground cave complex. The allies quickly sent a three-man team into the cave to search for the enemy soldier. Almost immediately they were taken under fire and all three men were seriously wounded. Sergeant Overweg, realizing the gravity of the situation, secured a rope and descended into the cave to assist his comrades. Soon after dragging one of the soldiers to a rescue point, the enemy unleashed a flurry of fire which mortally wounded Sergeant Overweg. Sergeant Overweg's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

HQ US Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 5248 (December 10, 1970)

Home Town: Zeeland, Michigan





"MYSTERIOUS WAYS"



Seeing that I couldn't make it to the (503rd) reunion, let me tell you a few interesting stories. Pretend you have a beer in your hand when you

read this.

A whole bunch of us troopers arrived in or near Lae, New Guinea probably late Oct. or early Nov. of '44. We were replacements, yet to be assigned to units in the South Pacific theater. We spent most of our time drilling, exercising, and helping out at the various supply depots around there.

The Army works in mysterious ways. One was that they made the mistake of putting a bunch of us in a warehouse that had canned foods in it. We would move cases of these from one location to another. At the end of the day they (the supply guys) would put us back on the 6 X 6 trucks to return to the replacement depot. Some smart NCO decided he'd better shake us down and had us off-loaded before the trucks took off. They found a whole lot of canned food stashed on the truck so they gave us a cursory body check and got us back on the trucks.

"Wait a minute," some one said, "you didn't check very closely. Get them off again!"

Well sure enough they found some more cans of food on the trucks. Another shake down and then off we went back to our area -- where we all enjoyed canned fruit for another day or so.

Just before Thanksgiving a few of the guys were called out to help distribute Turkeys to the company kitchens. Mistake. Our platoon got a turkey, of course, which we roasted over a fire in back of the tent area. Hardest part was to get the butter to melt for basting. But it was a good turkey spitted and roasted just right.

We were issued on a somewhat regular basis, stateside beer. Top Hat I think was the brand. Naturally, it was warm; what else could you expect in the summer tropic heat. So we would get a few bottles together and use the fire extinguisher foam and cold to "freeze" them up a little. Had some difficulty in finding full extinguishers after a while.

Finally, we were issued arms and ammunition. A difficulty came up when someone realized it was also beer night. Unfortunately someone took a tommy gun to the camp commanders tent. He shot it up in a Z shape. Good thing the commander wasn't in there at the time.

About 11:00 P.M. we all had to fall out into the street (?) in whatever. There was some rain so a couple of guys had on rain ponchos but most of us were in our skivvies. Some had boots on but a lot were barefooted. The C.O. made a stern speech asking for the guilty guy to step up or for someone to say who did it. Naturally, that went over about like he expected.

The company was divided into two groups. One group was told to march around a planned course in one direction and the other in the opposite one. When they came together they could turn around and march back. We started out like nice soldiers but we had trooper officers so after a hundred or so yards we all began to run, in the rain, dressed in whatever. It turned out to be about a 5 miler, but we didn't care, the straight legged commandant wasn't a trooper and we sure knew that the punishment was no big deal to us.

Anyway, that's pretty much the story of the replacement depot in late '44.

Freshen that beer?

Verne White
WWII 503rd Trooper

(Story compliments of Paul Whitman with the 503rd
Heritage Battalion Website]



Our Most Favorite People in the Whole Wide World!

~ The RTO and his Wonderful Family ~



My wife, Linda, and 3 sons, Brian, Michael & Alan, & 5 grandchildren Harrison & Emi Kate, Anson & his two brothers Conlan & Bresden. Father's Day 2013.

Jerry Hassler, HHC/Commo/Recon/2/503d, '66/'67

~ Grandpa Jim and his Main Man, Alex ~



My grandson, Alex Carlisle, and Future Sky Soldier with his "Hands on the Risers", July 4th, 2012. Age 1 ½.

Jim Wilson, C/2/503d, '67



INCOMING!



~ Bravo Bull Engineer ~

Having just joined the Herd Assoc. I would like to join this newsletter too. Was in the 173rd Engr Co, but was attached to B/2nd/503rd for my whole duration in '70-'71. You had a great article on SFC Leo Kryske, and the "Golden Knights". I was on that team prior to 'Nam. The other articles were outstanding too, and I enjoyed reading them. Let me know how to get on the mailing list please. Much appreciated.

Eliot "Rick" Young
173d Eng. Co. & B/2/503d

Note: Rick was added to our newsletter list and was also sent his 2/503d Combat Service Citation from Bn CO's Cols. Dexter, Carmichael, Walsh & Sigholtz. Ed

~ All Were Sky Soldiers ~

Thanks for putting the 173rd 50th anniversary commemorative parachute drop in the newsletter (August issue). However, the article failed to mention that all the jumpers were Sky Soldiers who have served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep). FYI all made the jump safely and without any injuries. Regards,

Dennis Hayes
A/1/503d

Roger that, Dennis. We stole that article off the web. Good to hear everyone had a safe landing. ATW!

“The soldier above all others prays for peace, for it is the soldier who must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war.”

Douglas MacArthur



The Akron Chapter will host:

2013 ALL OHIO DAYS October 4-5, 2013

At the Clarion Inn, Hudson, Ohio



Located ¼ mile south of the Ohio Turnpike at 6625 Dean Memorial Parkway adjacent to & West side S.R.8

Registration: \$45.00 per person. Includes Hospitality Room Friday and Saturday, Saturday Banquet and Complimentary Breakfast Sunday morning.



Area Attractions:

- Harry London Candy Factory
- 356 Fighter Squadron Restaurant
- President McKinley Memorial
- "Maps" Military Aircraft Preservation Society (This a must see)
- Pro Football Hall of Fame
- Beldon Village Mall
- Nearby Shopping in Downtown, Hudson

Chairman: Robert Winkler Ph 330-325-7574 email akronchapabn82@yahoo.com

ALL OHIO REGISTRATION		HOTEL REGISTRATION	
Send To:	Robert Winkler 3029 Old Forge Road Kent, Ohio 44242	Mail to:	Clarion Inn 6625 Dean Memorial Parkway Hudson, Ohio 44236
Name:		Or Call:	(330) 653-9191 or (888) 403-0031
Chapter:		Fax:	(330) 656-0048
# of Guests/Spouse:		Reservations must be made by September 14, 2013 to guarantee rate	
Address:		Cancellations must be made 48 hours prior to arrival date	
City, State, Zip			
Phone:		Rate:	\$69.00 + tax per day
Make checks payable to: Akron Chapter 82nd Abn Div Assn. Amount enclosed: _____ Registration for _____ person(s) Will you require transportation from the Airport? Yes _____ No _____ Akron/Canton _____ Cleveland _____ Will you be attending Saturday night banquet? Yes _____ No _____ Number Attending _____ Final banquet guarantee must be received by September 27 th 2013 Are you a combat veteran? Yes _____ No _____ Year _____ Unit _____ Location _____		Check In:	4:00 PM Check Out: 11:00 AM
		Name:	
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		Circle choice	Non-smoking Two double beds
Credit Card #			
Expiration:			
Signature:			
Special Needs:			



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters I Field Force Vietnam
APO San Francisco, 96350

4 November 1970

(POSTHUMOUS) AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR
to

Thomas Allebach Shipe
Private First Class
Bravo Company, 1/503d Inf.



Citation:

For gallantry in action while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Private First Class Shipe distinguished himself by heroic actions on 19 September 1970, while serving as a rifleman on a combat operation in the Nui Mieu mountains in the Republic of Vietnam. On that date, while searching for a Viet Cong Political Prisoner of War camp in an area known to contain many enemy soldiers, Private Shipe's element spotted an enemy soldier at the entrance to a cave and took him under fire. Realizing the importance of intelligence that could be obtained from inside the cave, Private Shipe volunteered to be one of two men to enter and search it. After entering the cave a short distance he came under enemy fire at a very close range and was immediately wounded. He began to return fire in the direction of the enemy muzzle flash in order to enable his comrade to reach the cave entrance and signal for help. He continued to return fire until he was mortally wounded by the enemy fire, sacrificing his own life in an attempt to accomplish the mission. By his valorous actions he imparted a sense of urgency, purpose, and determination to the men that ultimately played a key role in the success of the mission. His efforts proved to be the force that helped disrupt the enemy's mission and indirectly saved the lives of many other comrades. Private First Class Shipe's extraordinary heroism was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Vietnam vet Mick Kramer fought for Australia, but he's been denied a passport

By: IAN MCPHEDRAN, National Defence Writer
News Limited Network

August 26, 2013

Altered date of birth to join the Australian Army ... Mick Kramer has been denied a passport and threatened with jail. Picture: Brad Newman



A VIETNAM Veteran - who altered the date on his naturalisation certificate so he could fight for Australia - has been denied a passport more than 45 years later. The change of date scrawled in pen didn't stop the Australian Army from sending German-born Mick Kramer to war in 1967, but decades later officials not only refused him a passport they even threatened him with jail for "falsifying a document".

"I did falsify the document because I wanted to serve my country," the 66-year-old said.

Mr. Kramer completed a 366-day tour of South Vietnam between September 1968 and September 1969 with Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment.

(continued...)





Fought for Australia ...Mick Kramer in Vietnam in 1968 has been denied a passport.

The then 20-year-old lost several mates during that year and he returned home with a serious case of Post Traumatic Stress that led to a medical discharge from the army.

He and his wife Carol have lived in the Albury district in New South Wales for 30 years, raised four children and Mr. Kramer founded a successful fencing business, but he struggled with his condition and is now on a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) pension.

Mr. Kramer was born in Cologne Germany on March 1, 1947 and arrived in Australia with his migrant parents in 1953.

In 1967 he was living in the Northern Territory when he and a group of mates decided to join up to go to Vietnam.

"Twelve of us arrived at the recruiting office and the recruiter thought all his Christmases had come at once," he said.

"Because you had to be 21 to join without parental permission I changed the seven (1947) on my naturalisation certificate to a six (1946) and I was in."

**Mick Kramer's naturalization
citizen certificate.**

Fast forward to the Albury Post Office in 2010 when Mr. and Mrs. Kramer applied for new passports. He had an Australian passport back in the late 1960s but it had long since expired.



"Carol's came through no problem but mine was denied," he said. "I had signed a stat dec to explain what had happened with the date on the naturalisation certificate and I presented my Vietnam certificate of service, but that wasn't good enough."

The postal clerk contacted Canberra and that was the start of Mr. Kramer's three-year battle.

"An Immigration official called me and confirmed what I had already told them that I had indeed falsified the document and he threatened me with two years in jail," he said. "Naturally I wasn't happy so I said, 'bring it on'."

A Department spokesman said Foreign Affairs was the agency responsible for passport applications and it referred Mr. Kramer to the Immigration citizenship help line.

The government didn't prosecute in 2010, but they did send him a letter demanding his original German birth certificate before he could be issued with a new travel document. Unfortunately the bureaucrats also cancelled his naturalisation certificate so he is unable to renew any official government documents, including his driver's licence, without a certified birth date.

That is not easy because all family documents in Germany are filed together in a single folder. He has produced a certified true copy that he had translated into English, but again that was not good enough for the bureaucrats.

The bottom line is that Mrs. Kramer has been away in Europe for the past month and Mr. Kramer has been at home in Culcairn near Albury - unable to travel.

"I can't do anything and yet it could be resolved so easily," he said.

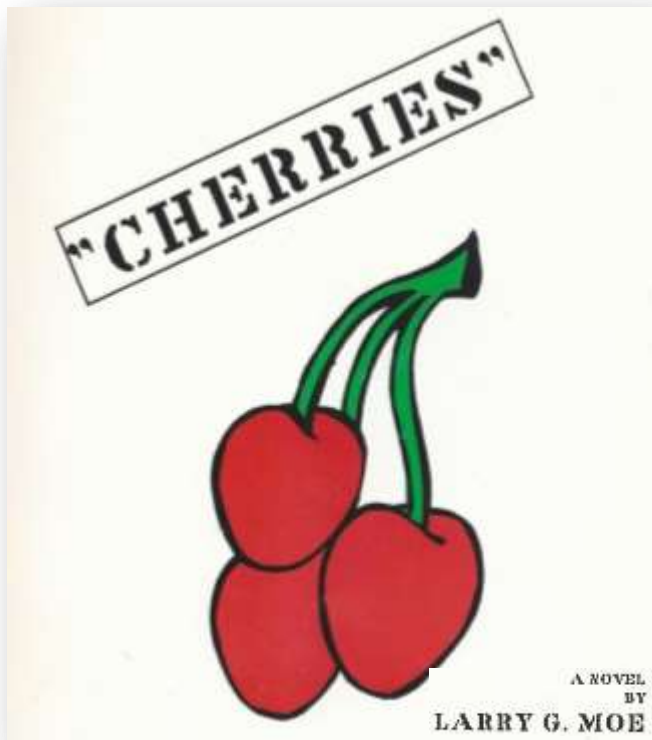
[Sent in by MG Jack Leide, former CO C/2/503d]

Note: After receiving this report from Cap, we asked some of our Aussie buddies if they have anything planned to help their fellow vet. One RAR trooper replied with:

***"Yes, some arse kicking is underway.
Cheers"***

Pitty the poor souls who will have to endure that frontal attack! Ed





(An excerpt, photos added)

We left for jump school the third of February, 1968. With a different group of soldiers I rode a bus from Fort Gordon to Fort Benning, the journey took most of the day.

Fort Benning was a big, open base. You could come and go without checking with gate guards. Airborne training, though, turned out to be harder than my previous training. We ran everywhere we went, at least ten miles a day. If you could not keep up the pace you flunked out.

I enjoyed the running, but some of the guys could not endure it. More than a quarter of our company dropped out. Our favorite running song was --

***“I want to be an Airborne
Ranger,
I want to live a life
of danger;
I want to go to Vietnam,
I want to kill the Vietcong.”***

When we weren't running we were learning the finer points of jumping out of perfectly good airplanes. The first week was about conditioning our bodies, then we moved on to learning to do PLFs (parachute landing falls). It was repetitious, boring.

After we mastered our PLF's we started harness-jumping from platform. From that, we got the feeling of the chute opening and jerking our ball us to our throats. The actual jumping never did squeeze my balls the way the harness training did.



The 34 foot tower at Benning...fun stuff.

After we all had our balls squashed many times, we moved on to tower training. We would be harnessed into a regular chute, lifted to the top of a 250-foot tower then released. The journey back to the ground, the floating sensation we experienced, was as close as we could get to the sensation we would experience when we actually jumped from a plane.



**The 250 foot tower at Benning...funner stuff.
This is a photo taken from the web bearing the inscription:
“The day I quit airborne school.” Now that's funny!**

(continued....)



The training was constant and vigorous. The food was better – and there was more of it – than the food the other non-airborne units were served. After the first two weeks we began to feel a part of an elite force. We were in good shape physically, and we had a new confidence in ourselves.

Sundays were free, and I used mine to visit my friend from AIT. They were two weeks ahead of me in their training, they had already made their first jumps.

“Piece of cake,” they told me.

They also told me they figured we would all wind up in Nam. I assumed that myself. Volunteering for Nam looked good on a G.I.’s record, but not too many chose that route.

There were many soldiers at Fort Benning who had already been in Nam, and were now stationed stateside. They told war stories; we did not really believe their tales...until much later.

The day of my first jump finally arrived. Our training had been thorough and efficient, but we were all scared shitless anyway. The planes used were old C-119s which we called flying boxcars.

Before we boarded the aircraft we checked each other out, making certain our parachutes were hooked up properly.

As it circled the DZ (drop zone) the plane was making a racket, and we were beginning to look forward to escaping the noise, even if it meant jumping out of the aircraft. We were seated in long rows against the sides of the plane, waiting nervously for the green light, the go ahead, to appear. When the light came on, it would be time to jump.

“There it is.”

We all stood up and hooked our static lines to a cable which ran the length of the aircraft. We stood in line, waiting for the final jump signal.

“Go!”



C-119. The ‘Flying Boxcar’

The first guys began disappearing through the doors on each side of the plane. The line moved ahead as we shuffled along toward the doors and outer space. When I finally got to the door and looked out into the wild blue yonder, I thought my heart would jump out of my chest.

“Fuck it,” I told myself – and I jumped.

Those who didn’t jump on their own got a gentle, but firm shove from behind.

Floating down to Mother Earth from twelve-hundred feet up does not take long, but it seems as if it’s an eternity of bliss; it was the best thing I’d ever experienced, that first jump. Suddenly the ground was rushing up at me, and I began to think about my landing. I hit the ground, doing a pretty fair PLF, but I slapped my hands into the ground real hard. I was not tucked tight enough.

I quickly felt my body all over to make sure I was all there, then I hopped up and collapsed my chute, as we had been trained to do to avoid being dragged. I had survived my first jump out of a perfectly good aircraft. ###

Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar



Role: Military transport aircraft

Manufacturer: Fairchild Aircraft

First flight: 17 November 1947

Introduction: December 1949

Retired: 1995, Republic of China Air Force

Primary use: United States Air Force

United States Navy

United States Marine Corps

Produced: 1949-1955



French Union paratroops dropping from a C-119 over Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

#####



Two Golf Tournaments Supporting Vets Planned in Florida



EVENT SCHEDULE

7:30 A.M.
Registration Opens
Player's Package

7:45 - 8:15 A.M.
Putting and Chipping Contests

7:45 A.M.
Driving Range

8:30 A.M.
Shotgun Start
Scramble Format

Awards Luncheon Following Golf

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Saturday, 2 November 2013

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Hope4Heroes

"They defended us, now its our turn"

4th Annual Celebrity golf outing
Presented by Yuengling

TO BENEFIT HOPE4HEROES

A portion of proceeds will support Patrick AFB Holiday Meals and Children's gift and holiday party plus therapy rides for wounded heroes via Sanctuary Island.

SATURDAY, Nov 9th, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.
Manatee Cove Golf Course
Patrick Air Force Base

All golfers must register with us in advance to get a base access pass for the event.

Visit www.salutemilitary.com for more information.

Note: *Rocky's Team Sky Soldiers* from Cocoa Beach will be participating in the competition looking to defend their tournament championship title for the third consecutive time! **AAFW!!**



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

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

Make checks payable to:
173d Airborne Brigade Assn

**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



**A/2/503 trooper filing up canteen
while on search & destroy operation,
most likely in the "D" Zone jungle
sometime in '66-'67.**

Photo by Don Horger, A/2/503d

