

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

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ *newsletter*



April-May 2015, Issue 60
Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

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

Featuring Pics of Some of our *Jump-Ready* Troopers

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



Between ops Charlie Company troopers muster at Camp Zinn circa '66/'67, under the blue Vietnamese sky and the command of Capt. Jack Leide, foreground. Strac lookin' paratroopers even in the war zone.

See more of the Caps' photos of his Chargin' Charlies on Pages 19 & 20.

(Photo from MG Jack Leide)



‘I’d Preached Hell But Never Saw It Before’

“If you want to talk about men,” the chaplain said, “there was a real hero.”

Source: *Orlando Sentinel*, Friday, Nov. 24, 1967

HILL 875, VIETNAM (UPI) The chaplain stood on Hill 875 Thursday and said, “You ask me what there is to be thankful for on this day. I am thankful that these men here are alive and that we have accomplished our mission.”

The chaplain is Maj. Roy Peters of Sacramento, Calif.

A Roman Catholic, he is the chaplain for the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He came to Hill 875, southwest of Dak To, after the chaplain of the brigade’s 2nd Battalion, Charles J. Watters, had been killed in action on the hill.

Chaplain Peters was at the front when the paratroopers made four attacks on the hill. He was there when they took it Thanksgiving Day.

“I have always preached a lot about hell,” he said, “but I had never seen it until these last three days.”

Spec. 5 Lynn Morse, a medic, from Middletown, N.Y., told him, “You’re lucky to be alive after what you have done.”

Then turning to a newsman, Morse said, “You can’t say enough about that man. He is an inspiration to all of us, Catholic, Protestant or whatever.”

The chaplain, a tall, slender, graying man, said, “Part of the hell here has been getting out the wounded and dead, trying to do what you can for them.”

He sang Mass on the slope of Hill 875 immediately before the final attack. Three soldiers were taking Communion when North Vietnamese mortars opened up. The three men hit the ground on their bellies, but the chaplain moved forward and gave them Communion anyway.

Chaplain Peters said he had given the last rites to more men than he could remember.

This was part of Thanksgiving Day on Hill 875. But Chaplain Peters looked back to the man whose post he had taken there. During the day, the paratroopers found equipment that had belonged to Father Watters. One of them found his chalice and brought it to Chaplain Peters.



G.I. RECEIVES HOLY COMMUNION (UPI)
... Never slackening grip on weapon

Note:

For detailed reports, photos, recollections and stories covering the Sky Soldiers’ battles for Hill 875 and adjoining hills in the mountain ranges of Dak To, Vietnam in November of 1967, see November 2012 Issue 47 of this newsletter, “Operation MacArthur, The Battles at Dak To”, at the 503rd Heritage Battalion website: http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm



In Memory of a Good Man

What follows is a short eulogy given in memory of Father Watters at a ceremony in New Jersey naming a bridge in his honor. In recognition of the 46th year anniversary of his sacrifice, I'd like to share those thoughts with everyone.

"Welcome everyone. Thank you for sharing your time to honor Father Watters. My name is Augie Scarino. In November 1967, in the Dak To area of South Vietnam, I was a 21 year-old member of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry, the day Father Watters lost his life on Hill 875, while performing extraordinary deeds in the middle of a chaotic battle.

The MOH citation details those extraordinary deeds. What the citation does not mention was the humanity and love for the young troopers under his care. Father Watters endured all the hardships, the fears, the stress, the danger when he accompanied our unit on our missions. He always exhibited a positive attitude. To him, his ministry was a calling. He had no doubts about his chosen vocation.

He extended his tour in order to be among his young troopers. His presence and smile gave the confidence to endure. His courage gave the courage needed in a battle. His loss was heart-felt by all.

I will have the memory of his person in my thoughts always. Thank you."

Augie Scarino

Recon/C Co. 2/503, Jan. '67 - Jan. '68

"WE TRY HARDER" "SECOND TO NONE"



Fr Charles Watters with his boys before battle.

**"Only the dead have seen
the end of war."**

~Plato

Sky Soldier Rick J. Essex

July 21, 1948 – September 26, 2013

Rick J. Essex, 65, of National City, MI, formerly of Essexville, MI, passed away Sept. 26, 2013 after a short, difficult battle with cancer. He was born on July 21, 1948 to Carl Essex and the late Shirley Rank, in Essexville, MI. Rick graduated Essexville Garber High School in 1967 and enlisted in the U.S. Army soon after in 1968. While serving two tours of duty in Vietnam with the Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade, Rick received several accolades, including a Purple Heart. It was during this time that Rick married his devoted wife Linda Windt. Upon his Honorable Discharge from the Army, Rick worked for General Motors and studied at Delta College, receiving his Associate's Degree in 1976. After further study at SVSC, Rick worked as a drug and alcohol rehabilitation counselor for four years before enlisting in the Michigan Army National Guard Active Duty, where he served as a Recruiting and Retention NCO for the Bay Region. In 1987, Rick moved his family to Lansing where he served as an NCO in recruiting at 1st Battalion, 119th Field Artillery where he won the G-50 award, being recognized as one of the top 50 recruiting NCO's in the Country. Rick then transferred to Lansing MEPS, becoming the Recruiting and Retention NCOIC. It was after 29 years of dedicated service to his Country, and at the rank of Master Sergeant, that Rick retired from his final post in West Branch, MI, in 2000. Rick's children all followed him into careers of service. Rick is survived by his loving wife of 44 years, Linda, and their three proud children Kris (Michael) Waterman, Beth Essex and Patrick (Neely) Essex and five grandchildren, and numerous other family members. It was Rick's desire that his remains be cremated. On October 11, 2013 at Gephart Funeral Home, Military honors were conferred by the U.S. Army and the Bay County Veterans Council. A Memorial Service took place.



Rick



Rest Easy Sarge



ed bable, a hell of a fella . . .



AP Journalist Tom Tiede in Vietnam. (web photo)

The United States has never been defeated in any war during its explosive 190-year history.

There are many reasons, such as resources, technology, solidarity of purpose.

But another reason is Ed Bable or guys like him.

Ed Bable is a Pfc. in the 503rd Infantry, just 19. Until a year or so ago he lived in Beaver Falls, Pa. Nothing special about him really; he's tallish, skinny and blond. He smokes a cigar awkwardly, plays a middling hand of poker, swears a bit much for a boy.

But Ed Bable's a hell of a fella. All the Ed Bables here are.

The Bable of Beaver Falls spoke for each, recently, when for the dozenth time he loaded his weapon, sucked in his gut and pushed into the jungle home of the Viet Cong.

It was as usual tedious toil and Ed hacked through for hours before the burst of gunfire and thump of detonation told him his unit had walked into a trap.

Hundreds of the enemy had waited until the Yanks entered the bottom of a fat valley and then cut loose from behind every bamboo branch.

GIs dropped everywhere. Some dead, some not. The VC were cutting paths in Ed's company with automatic fire. But after the initial confusion, the units regrouped and, slipping and shooting, battled toward the safety of a nearby hill.

Most reached the mustering spot. Some were left behind.

But not for long. No order was given, no command decision made but once battle control had been regained the Ed Bables of the 503rd turned around and walked back into the valley for their buddies.

Ed stumbled across four almost immediately. Two of them were dead, two alive, one barely.

"Hey buddy," Bable yelled.

One man stared, speechless and in a state of shock. A bullet had entered his neck and left through his mouth.

The second, wounded in the arm and leg but coherent, began a half-crawl.



No American soldier is ever knowingly left behind....

(Photo by Cpt. Jack Leide, CO C/2/503, MG Ret.)

"Are you alive?" Ed said in the direction of the dead.

There was no answer.

"Then," he stammered, "let's get the hell out of here."

Bable grappled the wounded men to their feet, supported one under each arm and began to stumble up the hill. The man with the head wound sagged. The other was limping badly.

Suddenly the sound of bugles to the rear – the VC attack signal.

Bable turned to see a half-dozen rifles open up on his tottering trio. Quickly he dropped his human load, slapped a full magazine into his rifle and emptied it with a spraying motion toward the screaming enemy.

When the weapon quit, he picked up his people and pushed on.

Moments later they all collapsed in the U.S. zone.

Back in the valley others continued to pick up the fallen. No American soldier is ever knowingly left behind, wounded or dead. Every GI here knows this. There is always an Ed Bable to get them out.

Ed Bable, a hell of a fella. One of the reasons we've never been defeated.

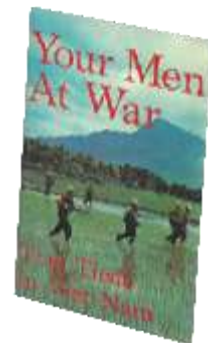
Source:

Your Men At War

Tom Tiede In Viet Nam 1966

(Photos added)

(Tom's book may be available at Amazon.com)



AT THE FUNERAL

DO NOT criticize the person in whose honor the entertainment is given.
Make no remarks about his equipment. If the handles are plated, it is best to seem to not observe it.

If the color of the flowers is too oppressive for your comfort, remember that they were not brought there for you, and that the person for whom they were brought suffers no inconvenience from their presence.

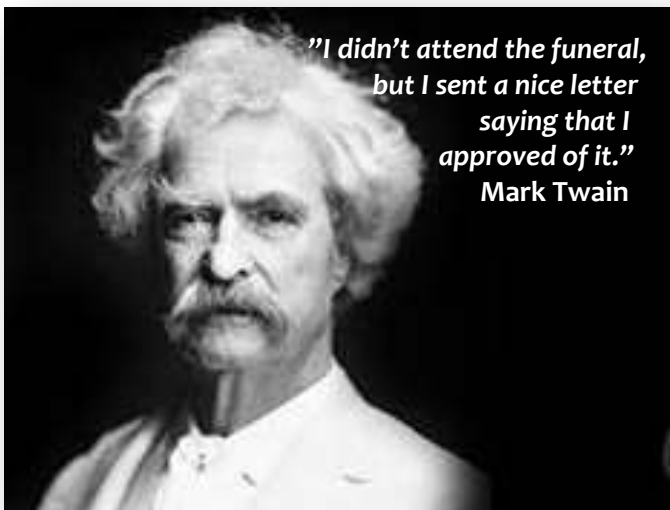
Listen, with as intense an expression of attention as you can command, to the official statement of the character and history of the person in whose honor the entertainment is given; and if these statistics should seem to fail to tally with the facts, in places, do not nudge your neighbor, or press your foot upon his toes, or manifest, by any other sign, your awareness that taffy is being distributed.

If the official hopes expressed concerning the person in whose honor the entertainment is given are known by you to be over-sized, let it pass – do not interrupt.

At the moving passage, be moved – but only according to the degree of your intimacy with the parties giving the entertainment, or with the party in whose honor the entertainment is given. Where a blood relation sobs, an intimate friend should choke up, a distant acquaintance should sigh, a stranger should merely fumble sympathetically with his handkerchief. Where the occasion is military, the emotions should be graded according to military rank, the highest officer present taking precedence in emotional violence, and the rest modifying their feelings according to their position in the service.

Do not bring your dog.

Letters from the Earth
Uncensored writings by
Mark Twain



The Worst of It All

Thinking back on those unforgettable days
is not easy
All the different terrain we traversed,
how extremely spent we were
All the different types of vipers, leeches, spiders, red
and black ants
A year dodging death, stressed out to the max
We all are damaged in some way or form
All the firefights, battles, and the extreme mental
fatigue
Monsoons, boiling heat, and the bitter cold of the
mountains
Weeks upon weeks in the field without a break
Jungle rot on your arms filling with puss,
fatigues rotting off you
Mosquitoes by the millions
The "C" rations left over from another war
The rucksacks that weighed too much
Miserable conditions most of the time
All the guard duty, ambushes and trying to get some
kind of rest
Knowing it will repeat itself time and time again
Most of us were nineteen or twenty
This poem won't rhyme because in War there is no
rhyme or reason
But there is one smell I will never forget
That pungent scent of death you will remember for the
rest of your life
That was the worst of it all

Stephen Welch
C/2/503

*Happy Birthday
to a Lady Who
Has Helped
Many
Sky Soldiers
Over The Years*

Regine (Reggie) Smith
"The CO"



LYL



Veterans, active military at risk for serious sleep disorders

Denise A. Valenti

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Courtesy of MULTIBRIEFS: The source for targeted, industry specific news briefs. Web: multibriefs.com

There is a high rate of sleep-related disorders among veterans and active-duty military. Returning military personnel experience sleep dysfunction secondary to physical injury as well as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is not out of the ordinary for abnormal sleep patterns to persist long after deployment has ended.



Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), caused by obstructed breathing during sleep, has increased substantially in recent years and is considered the most prevalent of sleep dysfunctions among veterans. Of concern is that sleep dysfunction for any reason may increase the symptoms and risk for PTSD.

Military deployment in itself may be a risk factor for a sleep disorder. The rate of disability related to OSA has increased, and the cause remains unclear. Dr. Mohammad Al-Ajam, a physician specializing in sleep medicine at Brooklyn Veterans Hospital in New York, said of sleep apnea among veterans, ***"The connection to veterans is that OSA afflicts men more frequently than women, especially those who are in middle age and moving from an active to a sedentary life...exposure to chemical and dust could be factors...We don't have cause and effect linkage yet."***

Associations for OSA have been found with increased risk for mood and anxiety disorders, and there were very strong associations with PTSD and major depressive disorder. These associations were found even after accounting for increased weight and obesity. Obesity is a primary factor among civilians having OSA, but this does not always seem to be the case with military and veterans.

A comorbid diagnosis of PTSD impacts compliance with treatments for OSA. A study found that having PTSD was more likely to result in decreased compliance with using breathing systems designed to treat OSA at night.

Previously deployed veterans have sleep dysfunctions that do not fit into diagnostic criteria for

sleep dysfunctions that are applied to civilian populations.

"For any disease, if you can't characterize it, then it doesn't lend itself to appropriate diagnosis, treatment and research to improve it," were the concerns expressed by Army Col. Vincent Mysliwec, a doctor specializing in sleep medicine at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington.

Col. Mysliwec and his medical team found that sleep dysfunction rates are high among enlisted personnel and the dysfunctions can persist long after deployment. He characterizes a set of symptoms that are unique to those exposed to major trauma, such as deployed military. The symptoms include sleep dreams or nightmares that include vocalizations, somnambulism, combative behaviors, such that bed partners are at risk for injuries, and other sleep functions. The cluster of symptoms are called disruptive nocturnal behaviors (DNB).

Col. Mysliwec and his research team propose a new diagnostic category, Trauma Sleep Disorder (TSD), to better diagnose and treat the unique sleep dysfunctions that are presenting among veterans and active-duty military personnel. Col. Mysliwec described TSD for the Stars and Stripes military news organization as, *"an overdrive phenomenon...sparking powerful surges from the sympathetic nervous system, the same mechanisms that govern fight-or-flight reflex."*

Disrupted sleep secondary to traumatic brain injury impacts quality of life. Even in the absence of injury; sleep problems impact functioning during the day. The risk of disordered breathing and trauma-related sleep disorders warrants further research in order to assure optimum care for those having served our country.

About the Author:

Dr. Denise A. Valenti is a residency-trained, low-vision/blind-rehabilitation optometrist with additional education and expertise in the field of age-related neurodegenerative diseases with the emphasis on Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. Her research has included the study of imaging of retinal neural tissue using Optical Coherence Tomography and functional assessment of neural processing in the visual system using Frequency Doubling Technology. Dr. Valenti provided direct clinical care for more than 25 years and currently is active in research and consultation related to vision, aging, neuroprocessing and cognitive functions.



'The Battle of Nui Cung Chap' 173rd Airborne Wins Bitter Fight

By Sp5 STEPHAN KROFT

HILL NUI CUNG CHAP, Vietnam — At the top of this dusty ridge 40 miles north of Qui Nhon in Binh Dinh Province Monday stood a small unobtrusive marker, scrawled in blue ink on the back of a cardboard C-Ration box. It read:

"The Battle of Nui Cung Chap, April 2-3, 1971. US Forces of the 173rd Airborne Brigade engaged in a decisive battle (with) an unknown size force of North Vietnamese soldiers. After five gallant assaults on the hill the enemy withdrew with heavy casualties. This monument was erected to celebrate the brave deeds and selfless devotion to duty displayed by both combatants." The hill was quiet now as men from the 2nd Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade sat amid the wreckage of heavily reinforced NVA bunkers waiting to abandon the ridge they fought so bitterly for two days earlier. One of the men had placed the transient marker on the hill.

The Battle of Nui Cung Chap will not go down as one of the great battles of the Vietnam war, but for most members of the Company that took the hill it marked the first taste of bloody conventional warfare.

One GI was killed and 11 wounded Friday and Saturday as the 1st Platoon inched its way up the steep slope only to be driven off by heavy enemy small arms and machinegun fire. When the last assault made good Saturday there were 11 North Vietnamese bodies on the hill. *"There must be a lot more enemy dead down there in the Valley,"* Cpt John Meehan, Company Commander said, *"But you can't count them unless you've got them. They were either killed up here and dragged off by their buddies or died in the heavy napalm strikes after we took the hill."*

The fighting began early Friday morning when elements of the Battalion ran into unexpected heavy enemy resistance while conducting a routine patrol on the south-eastern edge of a large enemy base camp. Reinforcements were flown into the area while the Company received orders to take the high ground.

The 1st Platoon sent a four man Recon Team up the slope of the mountainside to check for North Vietnamese troops. *"We thought there were probably three or four of them up there,"* Meehan said, *"but we were sure wrong."*

The Recon Team made it within 25 meters of the crest of the hill when the North Vietnamese opened fire. The Point Man was killed immediately, he said.

Attempting to recover the body of the Point Man, the Platoon twice assaulted the ridge Friday, but were driven off by heavy enemy fire. With first light Saturday, they tried again for the ridge top while the 3rd Platoon circled around and scaled another peak to the south. Creeping up the slopes a foot at a time, the Airborne Troops drew heavy small arms and machinegun fire. There was no tactical air or gunship support. As they approached the ridge, the North Vietnamese soldiers began lobbing hand grenades toward the GIs. *"It was like playing dodge ball with live grenades,"* Sgt Jim Myers, a Squad Leader with the 1st Platoon said.

The 3rd Platoon, meeting only light resistance to the south, came over a ridge 200 meters away and opened up on the enemy bunkers with M60 machinegun fire. Some NVA soldiers escaped the fire and made their way down the eastern side of the slope, disappearing into the heavy underbrush. Sp4 Dennis A. Terschak crawled through the elephant grass to within six feet of an enemy machinegun emplacement, waited for the right moment, and charged the position. After firing several shots he dove into the enemy bunker, took the machinegun away from the dead NVA soldier inside and tossed the weapon down the hill to a GI who opened fire on the enemy. On the other side of the hill one of the men lobbed a grenade into another bunker and the Company went over the top of the hill.

The Battle of Hill Nui Cung Chap was over.

[Sent in by Peter Klausner, A/4/503]



Nui Cung Chap today
(web photo)



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~

~ 2015 ~



50th Reunion of "Operation Power Pack"
Dominican Republic, May 2015, Ft. Bragg, NC.

Contacts:
John Urbach

Phn: 410-282-0844, Eml: baltoscouter@comcast.net
Jim Drainger
Phn: 904-940-9150, Eml: james32092@yahoo.com



2nd Annual Reunion, D16th Armor, 173d Abn Bde., May 1-2, 2015, San Diego, CA.

Contact:

Dave Curtain, Eml: decurtin@myfairpoint.net
Warren Williams, Eml: wwwilliams@etc.net



118th MP CO (Abn) Reunion 2015, May 1-3, 2015,
The Plaza Hotel, Las Vegas, NV.

Contact:

Web: 118thmpcoabnassn.com



173d Airborne Brigade 2015 Reunion, May 2-6,
2015, Town & Country Resort, San Diego, CA

Contact:

Web: 173rd2015reunion.com



Annual Reunion of the 2/503 "Bravo Bulls" will be held at Ft. Benning, GA on 5 May to mark the 50th anniversary of our deployment to Vietnam. We expect to see 20 - 30 Bulls in attendance.

Contact:

Jim Robinson
Eml: mrijmr@aol.com



Firebase Abn 101st, May 12-17, 2015, Mesa, AZ.

Contact:

Larry Laughlin
Phn: 480-644-1322
Eml: lllock@q.com



335th Assault Helicopter Company, June 11-14,
2015, Las Vegas, NV.

Contact:

Andy Hooker, Special Projects Coordinator
Cell: (941) 320-2463, Eml: andyhooker1@aol.com



B-2/501st 101st Airborne, June 24-28, 2015,
Siena Casino Spat Hotel, Reno, NV.

Contact:

Don & Judith Otto
Phn: 775-475-0777
Eml: spartsnv@me.com



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team National Reunion, June 25-28, 2015, New Orleans, LA.

Contact:

Phn: 757-625-6401
Web: www.afr-reg.com/517th2015



2015 Sun City "All Airborne" Fiesta VII, July 1-5,
2015, El Paso, TX.

Contact:

Eml: bp82cmdctr@bpaac.org
Web: www.bpaac.org



70th Annual Reunion, 101st Airborne Division Association, July 29-Aug 2, 2015, Airport Marriott,
Nashville, TN.

Contact:

Web: Screamingeagle.org/70th-annual-reunion/



82nd Airborne 2015 National Convention, August
12-15, 2015, Orlando, FL.

Contact:

Web: 82ndairborneassociation.org



75th Anniversary United States Army Airborne and Special Operation, August 12-15, 2015, Orlando, FL,
hosted by 82nd Abn Div Assoc. Wounded Warrior Project.

Contact:

Carl Bludau, Phn: 361-575-8492
Eml: chbludau82505vn@yahoo.com



11th Airborne Division, 72nd Reunion, September 14-
18, 2015, Lodge of the Ozarks, Branson, MO.

Contact:

Phn: 877-327-9894, Local: 417-334-7535
Web: 11airbornedivision.com/reunion_form.html



2015 Pathfinders' Reunion, Sponsored by the
National Pathfinder Association, Sep 29-Oct 3, 2015,
at Fort Benning, GA.

Contact:

Dr. Dean Nelson
Maj., U.S. Army (Ret), National Adjutant
Phn: 970-353-0146, Eml: nelent@aol.com

NOTE

If you are aware of any upcoming 'Airborne' or attached unit reunions, please send complete details to:
rto173d@cfl.rr.com



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AIRBORNE....ALL THE WAY!

75th ANNIVERSARY OF ARMY AIRBORNE & SPECIAL OPS



ASOC Cmd

Troopers:

The 75th Anniversary Celebration of the United States Army Airborne and Special Operations will be held during National Airborne Week on Wednesday, 12 August 2015 in Orlando, Florida at The Rosen Center. We have a splendid cross-section of Airborne and Special Operations Veterans on our Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

We are working to secure the same hotel rate for all Airborne Units for this event as the 82nd Airborne Division Association has for its National Convention that begins on Thursday, 13 August 2015, following the 75th Anniversary of the United States Army Airborne and Special Operations. There will be a fee to use the 82nd Association's hospitality services if you do not register for the convention. There will be more information forthcoming concerning fees.

We are also raffling off a very nice rifle, Ruger SR 762, 308 caliber along with a caliber matching Trijicon ACOG scope and a separate item being a Leupold 3x9x40 rifle scope. For tickets to these items contact Allen Schoppe, our treasurer at 281-814-2377, CSM (retired) Ron Rath at 919-803-4554 or me at 361-575-8492. Allen's address is: Allen Schoppe, 5427 Weston Drive, Fulshear, Texas, 77441-4127.

On the evening of 12 August 2015, we will have heavy hors d'oeuvres, as well as a complimentary bar with adult beverages and soft drinks. We will also have live music if donations allow, and the US Flag and the POW Banner will be jumped in.

We are seeking donations to fund the evening of 12 August 2015 so that all Airborne and Special Operations personnel, active or veterans, of these elite organizations may attend. To make your tax deductible contribution please make checks payable to the 82nd Airborne Division Association Wounded Warrior Project. In the left bottom memo space put "75" so that we may segregate the funds. This nonprofit project is under the umbrella of the 82nd Airborne Division Association Wounded Warrior Project's 501(c)3. We bring in 82nd wounded and we hope that your organization does also.

The treasurer, Allen Schoppe, will send you a written receipt reflecting your donation to this non-profit. We want all of your elite warriors to attend.

Carl H. Bludau
Executive Chairman
chbludau82505vn@yahoo.com



**AIRBORNE & SPECIAL OPERATIONS
MUSEUM FOUNDATION**

A Very Special Donation

Last month (January 2015) the Airborne and Special Operations Museum received a very special donation. A painting of a design that would become the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team badge done by PFC Thomas M. McNeill. It is a very special artifact that tells the history of the Airborne in the Pacific Theater of Operations during WWII.

After unit training at Fort Bragg in 1942, the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment conducted several combat jumps in New Guinea during Operation Alamo. This operation was the first example of vertical envelopment in the Pacific Theater. Later after a non-combat landing in the Philippines, the unit, now named the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, would go on to conduct the famous combat jump into Corregidor Island, a.k.a "the Rock".

This painting was done on PFC McNeill's personal duffel bag while Recovering from Malaria on the island of Mindoro after the action on Corregidor. McNeill served with Company "G" and while the logo never became an official design, it was used and well-liked by the units of Commanding Officer LTC Lawrie. Along with this painting Thomas McNeill also donated two photographs detailing his post-war honors and a signed book about the 503rd operations in the Pacific.



The Airborne & Special Operations Museum Foundation supports the museum with marketing, advertising and financial support for its programs and exhibits. Opening the doors on August 16th, 2000, the 60th anniversary of the original United States Army's Test Platoon's first parachute jump, the museum offers free admission, a main exhibit gallery, temporary gallery, four-story tall theater, video theater and a motion simulator ride. It is located in Historic Downtown Fayetteville on the corner of Bragg Boulevard and Hay Street, adjacent to the city's Freedom Memorial Park and the recently built North Carolina Veteran's Park. The main gallery is designed as a self-guiding tour, in chronological order, through the history of the airborne and special operations soldiers, from 1940 to the present.

The temporary gallery changes throughout the year and displays a myriad of exhibits pertaining to the United States Army, airborne and special operation units through their history and conflicts from World War II to the present. For a nominal fee visitors can ride the 24 seat motion simulator.

Museum Hours

Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-5pm, Sunday, 12pm-5pm

Closed Mondays and Federal Holidays

Open Memorial Day, 4th of July and Veteran's Day

Visit the Museum's web site at: www.asomf.org





335TH AHC REUNION



129 E. Fremont Street, Las Vegas, NV 89101
800-777-4658 702-385-8124



~ REUNION DATES ~

June 11, 2015 to June 14, 2015

GROUP RATES: All rates quoted are for single or double occupancy unless otherwise specified.

2015	Mon 06/08	Tue 06/09	Wed 06/10	Thu 06/11	Fri 06/12	Sat 06/13	Sun 06/14
Carson Tower	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$99.00	\$99.00	\$45.00

All rates quoted do not include current applicable tax of 13%, (subject to change as dictated by the City of Las Vegas.)

DOWNTOWN DESTINATION FEE: Downtown Destination Fee of \$5.00 per night (plus 13% tax) will be added to the Group room rate upon check-in.

Note From Golden Nugget:

We do have a new Resort Fee in place, however any contracts that were signed prior to this will still have the option at check in to remain at the \$5.00 DDF with no inclusions as was contracted or pay the \$20.00 Resort Fee and receive all the inclusions. We do not have multiple reservation confirmation emails it's just one template that matches our current policies. **Carmen Truesdale / Sales Manager / Golden Nugget Las Vegas / Ph: 702.386.8385 / Fax: 702.386.8248**

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE: Check-In time is after 3:00 p.m. Check-Out time is 11:00 a.m. The Hotel will make the best effort to accommodate the requests for check-in prior to check-in time or late departures, based upon availability. The bell desk can store luggage for early arrivals and/or for late departures. For late check-out, a fee may apply depending on availability and length of extension. Requests should be directed to the front desk on day of departure for availability.

RESERVATION METHOD: It is understood all requests for reservations will be made on an individual basis. All guests may make their reservations by calling our Reservations Department directly 800-634-3454 (toll free). In order to obtain your special group rate, the guests need to identify themselves as being with **335th Assault Helicopter Company Association, CODE GSHELIC**. The Golden Nugget requires a first night's deposit of room and tax, per room, to guarantee individual reservations. The Hotel accepts all major credit cards for the deposit and the credit card will be charged for the stipulated room and tax at time of reservation. Guests may cancel individual reservations up to 48-hours prior to arrival without penalty. Cancellations received inside of 48-hours of arrival will forfeit first night room and tax deposit. All guests will be required to provide either a credit card imprint or cash deposit upon check-in.

RESERVATION CUT-OFF DATE: The "cut-off date" for accepting reservations into this group block is May 15, 2015. Reservation requests and/or name/date change requests received after 5:00 p.m. local time at Hotel on the cut-off date will be accepted based on rate and/or category availability.

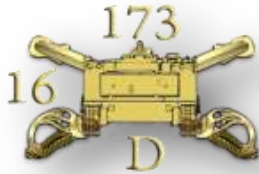
EARLY DEPARTURE FEE: The Hotel understands that guests may need to depart prior to the scheduled departure date. The guest will have up to the time of check-in to amend their departure date without penalty. After this time, should the guest depart earlier than indicated there will be a \$50.00 early departure fee. This charge will be posted to the individual's account as an incidental charge unless otherwise specified on billing instructions. The Hotel will inform guests upon check-in of this fee.

BILLING: Guests shall be responsible for their own guest room, taxes, Downtown Destination Fee and incidental charges upon checkout and Group will be responsible for all scheduled food and beverage and service charges.

Andy Hooker, Special Projects Coordinator, 335th ACH
Cell: (941) 320-2463, Eml: andyhooker1@aol.com



D Company, 16th Armor



In 1963, the 16th Cavalry was redesignated as the 16th Armor. D Company, 16th Armor was the only active duty unit of the 16th Armor. The company served as one of the subordinate units of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) during hostilities in Vietnam.

D/16th Armor provided the anti-tank protection for the 173d Airborne. This was the only airborne tank unit at the time as well as the only separate Tank Company in the history of the army.

The company was equipped with "Scorpions" which were air droppable Armored Personnel Carriers that were equipped with high velocity 90mm guns. During the 1960s D/16th Armor served in every campaign which the 173d Airborne Bde fought in. During its service in Vietnam D/16th Armor is credited with 16 Vietnam Campaign streamers as well as earning the Meritorious Commendation Medal for its valorous service.

In 1969, 16th Armor reverted to the designation of 16th Cavalry and was inactivated. On 25 March 1987, the 16th Cavalry was withdrawn from the Combat Arms Regimental System, reorganized under the U.S. Army Regimental System and transferred to the U.S. Army Training And Doctrine command as a parent regiment for training units at Ft. Knox.



D/16 troopers gather around another wounded veteran of D/16, D-66

Source: www.d16armor173rd.org

The Saga of Josephine and Charlie.....



Charlie and Josephine were lovers, even though she was much larger than he. Many claimed to own Charlie or Josephine, but they only belonged to each other. They spent their days climbing on any trooper that would give them food or allow them to groom their hair. They loved to hang around the entrance to a tent so they could pounce on anyone entering or leaving. We are sure that when we left garrison, they took care of each other, and waited patiently for the Sky Soldiers to return. They were D/16th through and through and we are certain that generations of the Josephine and Charlie relationship have survived to produce many Airborne simian troopers.

Source:

<http://www.d16armor173rd.org/and-we-had-pets.html#josephineandcharlie>



Charlie Farmer, KIA June 11, 1969, and monkey friend....

17 Nov 1999

"I would like to have my father's name posted on the Virtual Wall. His name was Staff Sergeant Charlie W. Farmer, Jr. He was from LaGrange, Georgia. I was born in May, '69. My Dad was killed in June, '69. I would be interested to know if there is someone who might remember serving with him. He was with the 173rd Airborne Brigade."

Leslie Battle

lesb92@bellsouth.net

[Daughter's note above is posted on the Virtual Wall web site where Charlie's name is included]



A Poem

I'm just another you see on the street. But I am the reason you walk and breathe free. I am the reason for your liberty, I am a veteran.

I work in the local factory all day, I own the restaurant just down the way, I sell your insurance... I start your IV, I've got the best looking grandkids you'll ever see. I'm your grocer, your banker, your child's schoolteacher. I'm your plumber, your barber, your family's preacher. But there's part of me you don't know very well. Just listen a moment, I've a story to tell. I am a veteran.

I joined the service while still in my teens, I traded my prom dress for camouflage greens. I'm the first in my family to do something like this. I followed my father like he followed his. Defying my fears and hiding my doubt, I married my sweetheart before I shipped out. I missed Christmas, then Easter, the birth of my son. But I knew I was doing what had to be done. You may not know me the first time we meet,

I served on the battle front, I served on the base. I bound up the wounded and begged for God's grace, I gave orders to fire, I followed commands, I marched into conflict in far distant lands. In the jungle, the desert, on mountains and shores. In bunkers, in tents, on dank earthen floors.

While I fought on the ground, in the air, on the sea, my family and friends were home praying for me. For the land of the free and the home of the brave, I faced my demons in foxholes and caves. Then one dreaded day, without drummer or fife, I lost an arm, my buddy lost his life. I came home and moved on, but forever was changed. The perils of war in my memory remain. I don't really say much, I don't feel like I can, but I left home a child, and came home a man. There are thousands like me, thousands more who are gone, but their legacy lives as time marches on.

White crosses in rows, and names carved in queue, remind us of what these brave souls had to do. I'm part of a fellowship, a strong mighty band, of each man and each woman, who has served this great land.

And when old glory waves, I stand proud, I stand tall, I helped keep her flying over you, over all, I am a veteran.



Author unknown

THE BATTLE AT BAU SAN

(Operation Silver City, March 1966)

Note: After receiving and reading a copy of this report which detailed Operation Silver City, with emphasis on the battle at LZ Zulu Zulu (Bau San) when our battalion was at risk of being overrun, former 2/503 Bn Commander Col. George E. Dexter shared his thoughts. Ed



Sorry to be so late in thanking you for this updated version of the Zulu Zulu battle. You really got an awful lot of interesting stories from those who were there, as well as a lot of really interesting data about the fight. I see several lessons from the battle.

First from the enemy. He probably had a pretty good plan but lost the advantage of surprise because of the downing of the breakfast helicopter. Second, his attacks were uncoordinated. He hit one company, got repulsed and an hour or so later hit another. Those were probably battalion sized attacks, each against a company of ours, and we could call in all our artillery, air strikes, etc. against each of those attacks. Also, only that company needed a complete resupply of ammo when the attack was over. If he had attacked with two battalions against two companies our fire support would have been more spread out and more ammo resupply would be needed. As for our side, the battle was fought by the individual soldiers, their fire team and squad leaders. They hung in there for hours and they adapted to the enemy and used initiative. Many were wounded but stayed put or got patched up and returned to the fight. In the big picture I will have to give credit to the logisticians for winning the battle, and especially the chopper pilots who kept coming bringing in the ammo we desperately needed, and to the people like you who went out there under fire, got the ammo and brought it to the troops. Also, choppers were constantly ferrying ammunition to the artillery that was supporting us. On the enemy's side they had to depend on back packers to bring in their ammunition. Judging from your list of captured weapons, it must have been a logistical nightmare to obtain ammunition for the great variety of weapons they were fighting with.



Col. George Dexter

Thanks again. I really enjoyed the story. George



INCOMING!



~ Stories Hit Home For One Top ~

I received our newsletter (October 2013 issue) and have looked through it and enjoyed it, as I always do. The articles about Milton Olive really touched me, as I was one of the cadre who put him through airborne training in 1965. I didn't know him personally but it did hit home, that's for sure. I also see my friend Mike Sturges hit the news again. I really like Mike!

Jim "Top" Dresser
A/2/503d

~ The Joys of Helicopters ~

I was especially taken by Keith Nightingale's essay about the joys of helicopters (October 2013 issue, Pages 41-44). Whew. It had me picking the grit out from between my teeth. Okay, no teeth, but I'm just saying.

Mark Carter
173d LRRP, E/17th Cav

Reply: I hear ya, Mark. And can still hear those blades too... *whomp, whomp, whomp*, etc. Years ago when I moved to Cocoa Beach from Miami and aboard my houseboat where I lived for 6 years or so until the Frau moved up, I found it and me directly under the flight path between Patrick AFB and Kennedy Space Center, the same path used almost daily by current day Huey's. It took some time to reacquaint myself with the sound, particularly at 2 in the morning, and, we get them over the house hear semi-regularly. Nightingale nailed it, bigtime. Be well G.I., and ATW! Ed

Looking for Buddy

I was in the Herd from the start on Okinawa 62-63, then in the Nam, 66-68 was in 335th assault Helicopter Company, "Cowboys". I crewed a UH-1 with the name *Sloopy Gal* painted on the side. May or may not have given you any rides as my bird had the strongest engine in the Company at that time. So I did a lot of LRRP jungle prenatator, and the MAD bomber thing where we dropped 4.2 mortars from chutes in the Aircraft. In any regard, "WELCOME HOME BROTHER".

Question, I had a buddy in I believe "C" Company 2/Bat on Okinawa in 62-63. Joseph L. Holiday III, he got out after he left the rock and went back to school in Kansas City, Mo. He was from Springfield or near there. The last time I had contact with him was 1982. I was just wondering if there was a way for you to check to see if he was registered or if anyone knows him. Would really like to get up with him again. Thanks.

AIRBORNE ALL THE WAY, AND DRIVE ON!!!!

John Poole
jroccasan1@comcast.net

~ Top Remembers Marauder ~

I received our 2/503 Newsletter today (Feb.-Mar. edition) and it was a tough one for me, as I am now retired 100%. I sat here and went through the whole Newsletter, page by page, and it was a rough one for me in different chapters. I

really enjoyed the Newsletter, as I always have. Been a while and I hope you're doing well, my Brother. Tell Reggie hello for me, please.

When I read the article on Operation Marauder.....

WOW, did the hair raise on my neck again. I was in "A" Company and on the front line, along with "B" Company, while "C"

Company was recovering the body of that Bird Dog Pilot that had been shot down. I can't remember the platoon that was in front of me, but I remember the Platoon Leader (I'm thinking LT Coleman), had been wounded, as was his Platoon Sergeant (SFC Newman), they would not go to the medical chopper (Dust off). They kept saying "*I've got to take care of my men*". I told them they were no good to their men in their present condition. So they finally decided to go get on the Dust Off. I took over that platoon for a short period of time until I met one of the platoon members (name unknown), a Specialist Four. I told him I was the Platoon Leader of the Weapons Platoon and I directed his Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant to the Dust Off, as both had been wounded. I asked if there were any Sergeants with the Platoon, he said he wasn't sure; I didn't have time to look, so I told him he was the Platoon Leader, unless there was a sergeant within the platoon. I then returned to my weapons platoon, just behind that platoon a short distance. It seems like yesterday. You know what I mean.... "*It don't mean a thang*". It was really great to receive our Newsletter again, I truly have been missing it. I hope you are honestly in good health, and doing well. Barb's doing well. Take good care of yourself. Much Love my Brother,

Jim "Top" Dresser
A/2/503



Top...young & a paratrooper



(continued...)



~ Lost Films of Dak To ~

Check listings on American Heroes Channel for "Raw War, the Lost Films of Dak To". They air on the show from time to time.

Search:

American Heroes Channel

<http://www.ahctv.com/search.htm?terms=RAW+WAR>
www.ahctv.com

Roger "Rog" Daniel
USAF Vet

Whodat's?



Who can identify these two good buddies, and they still are; both Chargin' Charlies from 2nd Bat outside Tuy Hoa. See names on Page 51 herein.



I never jumped a C-17A, but apparently whoever said that never flew in a C-130 for 5 hours in full combat jump gear with the guy next to you throwing-up in his hands. AFB! Ed

I just made my own self laugh! Ed

[Photo sent in by Larry Cox, C/2/503]



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) states that the nation's homeless veterans are predominantly male, with roughly 8% being female. The majority are single; live in urban areas; and suffer from mental illness, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. About 12% of the adult homeless population are veterans.

Roughly 40% of all homeless veterans are African American or Hispanic, despite only accounting for 10.4% and 3.4% of the U.S. veteran population, respectively. Homeless veterans are younger on average than the total veteran population. Approx. 9% are between the ages of 18 and 30, and 41% are between the ages of 31 and 50. Conversely, only 5% of all veterans are between the ages of 18 and 30, and less than 23% are between 31 and 50.

America's homeless veterans have served in World War II, the Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Persian Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq (OEF/OIF), and the military's anti-drug cultivation efforts in South America. **Nearly half of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era.** Two-thirds served our country for at least three years, and one-third were stationed in a war zone.

About 1.4 million other veterans, meanwhile, are considered at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.

Although flawless counts are impossible to come by – the transient nature of homeless populations presents a major difficulty – the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that 49,933 veterans are homeless on any given night.

Approximately 12,700 veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation New Dawn (OND) were homeless in 2010. The number of young homeless veterans is increasing, but only constitutes 8.8% of the overall homeless vet population.

In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all homelessness – extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care – a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks. Additionally, military occupations and training are not always transferable to the civilian workforce, placing some veterans at a disadvantage when competing for employment.

A top priority for homeless veterans is secure, safe, clean housing that offers a supportive environment free of drugs and alcohol.

(more....)



VA Announces \$300 Million in Grants to Community Partners Working to End Veteran Homelessness

WASHINGTON – Building on President Obama’s commitment to end veteran homelessness, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is announcing the availability of \$300 million in grants to nonprofit organizations and other groups that serve veterans through VA’s Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. The SSVF program assists very low-income veteran families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The \$300 million grants are available to current grantees seeking renewals. Announcement of the grants comes on the heels of the January agreement that dedicates the West Los Angeles VA campus to serving veterans in need, and commits the Department to design a plan to help end homelessness among veterans in Los Angeles County. Additionally, a nationwide homeless 2015 Point in Time (PIT) Count took place last month, in which VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald and other VA officials spread out around the country to identify homeless veterans. Last year’s PIT Count revealed that 49,993 veterans were homeless on a single night representing a 33-percent decline in homelessness among veterans since 2010. VA relies on strong, targeted collaborations in key areas at Federal and local levels and engages community partners to develop innovative and forward-thinking solutions that can lead to scalable and replicable models of service. In FY 2014 alone, through VA’s various homeless programs, nearly 70,000 veterans and their family members were placed in permanent housing or prevented from becoming homeless under the SSVF program. VA’s goal is to end Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015.

“One of the things you learn in the Army is you never leave a soldier behind,” said Secretary McDonald. *“Unfortunately, we’ve left some people behind, and they’re our homeless veterans. VA is committed to achieving the goal of ending veteran homelessness, and we won’t rest until every homeless veteran has a place to call home.”*

VA most recently announced awards totaling \$507 million in SSVF grants. Those funds included targeted support for 56 high-priority communities. VA is currently preparing to award an additional \$93 million in SSVF funds for high-priority communities.

For more information about VA’s homeless programs, visit www.va.gov/homeless. The Federal Register notice of funding availability may be found at www.va.gov/HOMELESS/ssvf/docs/SSVF_NOFA_Feb3.pdf.

Source: nchv.org

Obama signs veterans' aid bill

By David Jackson, USA TODAY



President Obama, by Saul Loeb, AFP/Getty Images

President Obama signed a bill today designed to improve veterans' health care, help homeless veterans and prevent political protests near military funerals. ***"I think all Americans feel we have a moral, sacred duty towards our men and women in uniform,"*** Obama said during a brief Oval Office ceremony. ***"They protect our freedom, and it's our obligation to do right by them. This bill takes another important step in fulfilling that commitment."***

Obama also noted that the new law ends *"a decade-long struggle"* at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. *"Some of the veterans and their families who were based in Camp Lejeune in the years when the water was contaminated will now have access to extended medical care,"* Obama said. *"And, sadly, this act alone will not bring back those we've lost, including Jane Ensminger, but it will honor their memory by making a real difference for those who are still suffering."*

"The second part of this bill that I want to highlight -- prohibits protesting within 300 feet of military funerals during the two hours before and two hours after a service. I supported this step as a senator. I am very pleased to be signing this bill into law. The graves of our veterans are hallowed ground. And obviously we all defend our Constitution and the First Amendment and free speech, but we also believe that when men and women die in the service of their country and are laid to rest, it should be done with the utmost honor and respect."



Care and Benefits for Veterans Strengthened by \$169 Billion VA Budget



The President has proposed a \$168.8 billion budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in fiscal year 2016. The proposed budget will support VA goals to expand access to timely, high quality health care and benefits, continue the transformation of VA into a Veteran-centric department and end homelessness among Veterans.

Source: www.va.org

Tactical Freefall Team

I enjoy reading these articles. I served with the 2/503rd Combat Team, Support Company on Okinawa during 1960-61. We wore the 25th patch with black and gold airborne tab. Attached (below) is a picture of our tactical freefall team in 1961.



Dick Boreman



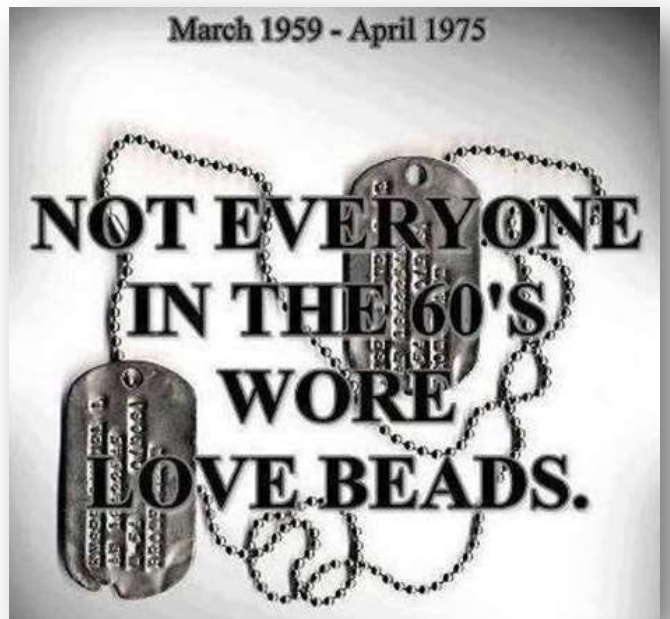
"With a handful of silk, and God, that's all"

2015 VVA National Convention

Springfield, Illinois
July 21 - 25, 2015
Headquarters Hotel
President Abraham Lincoln Hotel
(A Double Tree Hotel by Hilton)
701 East Adams Street
Springfield, IL 62701
Contact: www.vva.org



"It was the best of times..."



"It was the worst of times..."



Farewell to a Fellow Sky Soldier.... *"He Had a Heart of Gold"*



Charlie Hicks, left in photo, proud under his beret and above his permanent combat patch.
Rest Easy Trooper

Ron & others here's a photo I took at the Anaheim reunion some 17 years ago which shows Charlie Hicks, Bill Acebes, one of the best shots I've ever taken of Ray Marshall, and I believe Hector Membreno's wife. This was the first time I ever met Charlie and soon found out his outward appearance didn't display his good hearted nature. You that were there may recall the colors weren't posted during the general membership meeting so Charlie went up to his room and brought his miniature American flag down and posted it on the podium as then president Ken Smith spoke. Heaven best get used to loud pipes as I'm sure he'll be taking his old Harley with him...Dutch.

Hi Dutch. Thanks for letting us know about Charlie. I guess we are all getting a bit long in the tooth. I also couldn't recall him. Will have a look through a few photos I have and see if any people are named and if I find him, will send you a photo. We went to the Anaheim reunion as well.

I also go out to the hospital on a Tuesday and catch up with some in there. They are getting a few with PTSD as well but they seem to be getting good medical attention out there. Regards Ron (and Di).

I know many got notification from Henry Galindo that Charlie Hicks had died but can't recall him. Charlie came into our company shortly after we all rotated and was always talking of our legacy instead of the one set during their time in country.

I first met Charlie during the Anaheim reunion years ago and have photos of him sitting at a table with Acebes, Ray, Harold and a few others. Charlie was the biker from New York who rode an old Harley, had a full beard, always wore muscle shirts and his red Airborne

beret. He looked like a real biker bad ass as he was big and full of tattoos but had a heart of gold.

The last time I saw him was during the last Bragg reunion and he had lost so much weight when he sat down at our table I didn't recognize him. I recall an incident during a Rochester reunion when I heard a lot of kids squealing and laughing and right in the middle of them having as much fun as they were was Charlie Hicks. Our world has lost another great and caring individual...Dutch.

***"Do not stand by my grave and cry.
 I am not there. I did not die."***



Vietnam 1965. Mitchel, Grimes, Short, & Shave taken in front of last tent, Weapons Sqd, 3rd platoon, B/2/503d. Picture was taken by PFC Milton Olive (KIA/MOH).

(Sent in by Sam Grimes)





173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE FOUNDATION

a 501(c) 3 corporation recognized by the IRS as a tax deductible donation



THE FOUNDATION'S ROOTS

It started in the 1970's with simple donations for college as we developed a scholarship fund. Over the years our Scholarship fund grew and we were able to give out more money, but we had become a dead man society and had no active unit and our age and resources began to decline. Then in 2000, the 173d Airborne Brigade was reactivated again and a bright new future stood before us. Visionaries started looking forward and asking how we can prepare to meet the challenges that would come.

Then the world changed and 9-11 was upon us. The War on Terror was in full swing. The Brigade jumped into Iraq and we found ourselves playing catch up football when it came to support. But we learned from each experience, each deployment. As the Brigade transitioned into the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, we transitioned into the 173d Airborne Brigade Association. Over time our old scholarships fund of the 1970's, transformed into the 173d Airborne Brigade Association Foundation of today, a 501 C3 Tax-Free corporation that now has a bigger mission and broader support.

SCHOLARSHIP

Each year we award scholarship grants to students that are family members of the Association or 173d Airborne Gold Stars and their families.



The scholarship fund is a living memorial to our comrades who died in Combat. Unlike us, they were denied the chance to advance their education. These awards are given in their honor. The scholarship committee seeks to award scholarships to applicants displaying the potential for a degree in higher education, whether it is technical, university, or professional. A scholarship committee rates each applicant sent to them without knowing the names of applicants. Each committee member passes their decision to the nation Scholarship Director. The National Scholarship Director working with the Chairman decides the number of Scholarships and the amounts. This varies from year to year by the amounts donated previously by members.

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROGRAM

Once a Sky Soldier is wounded and evacuated out of the Combat Theater, the Unit notifies the Association. We in turn contact the local Chapter Hospital Representative. They go to the hospital and visit the wounded (Walter Reed, The Burn Center, etc.) We have had the Chapters put on baby showers for families while their soldiers were in the hospital. We just developed a "Hospital Kit" to be given to each soldier. It contains goodies donated by various Chapters for the wounded. We also developed a 173d Purple Heart Coin.



We have taken Wounded Sky Soldiers and Families on fishing, boating, sailing trips, and amusement parks to take their minds off current circumstances.

SUPPORT



On every deployment Chapters select Units to support downrange. At Christmas we send Santa suits and things to remind our Sky Soldiers about the season. We have sent children to soccer camp and we have supported Sky Soldiers wives for an Army run. We support the 8th of November Annual Run, and we stand ready to support the Troops and Families in any way we can!

BEREAVEMENT

With the coming of the War on Terror, came the price of our Liberty. Our Sky Soldiers on the front lines in this war are paying the ultimate sacrifice for our safety and freedom. We have long promised to be there for them and we are. Once notified of a soldier killed in action, our Brigade Liaison notifies local Chapter Presidents. We send flowers to the Families and attend every funeral of a Fallen Sky Soldier.



GOLD STAR

First we appointed a National Gold Star Representative 173d Gold Star Mother herself. Our Gold Star Rep reaches out to the family in their hour of need and lets them know we are here and will be there for them. We attend the funeral and our Gold Star rep stays in close contact with the families long after. Many Chapters open their arms and invite the families into their activities, if and when they are ready. Later in the year our national Gold Star Rep sends cards and letters reminding Gold Star families they are not forgotten. We also have developed and give a special 173d Gold Star pin. We have started a National Gold Star Luncheon at Reunions. We send gifts to the younger children at holidays.



Contact:

www.theherdfoundation.com





2/503 Chargin' Charlies circa '66/'67

From photo collection of Capt. Jack Leide, MG (Ret), CO C/2/503, 173d Abn Bde (Sep)



(continued...)



~ From Jack Leide Photo Collection of C/2/503 ~





173d Airborne Reunion 2015

San Diego, CA

“First in Vietnam”

May 2 – 6, 2015

~ Saturday, May 2 ~

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Reunion Registration
Stratford Room

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Tour Desk open
Devonshire Room

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Vendor Sales
Towne/Esquire Room

12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite open
Sunset/Sunrise Room

6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open
Sunset/Sunrise Suite

~ Sunday, May 3 ~

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Reunion Registration
Stratford Room

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Tour Desk open
Devonshire Room

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Vendor Sales
Towne/Esquire Room

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite open
Sunset/Sunrise Room

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Gold Star
Tiki Pavilion Room

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Ladies’ Luncheon
Windsor Room

6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open
Sunset/Sunrise room

~ Monday, May 4 ~

8:00 a.m. Golf Tournament
Meet in Lobby

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Reunion Registration
Stratford Room

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Tour Desk open
Devonshire Room

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Vendor Sales
Towne/Esquire Room

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite open
Sunset/Sunrise Room

6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite Open
Sunset/Sunrise room

6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Fun Festival Night

~ Tuesday, May 5 ~

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Reunion Registration
Stratford Room

9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Vendor Sales
Towne/Esquire Room

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. National Officers’ Meeting
Dover Room

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting
Pacific Ballroom 1

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Hospitality Suite open
Sunset/Sunrise Room

9:00 p.m. – Midnight Hospitality Suite open
Sunset/Sunrise Room

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Banquet Reception (No host bar)
Golden Ballroom

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Formal Banquet
Golden Ballroom

~ Wednesday, May 6 ~

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Vendor Sales
Towne/Esquire Room

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Memorial Service
Tiki Courtyard

Non-denomination services to remember those lost in
action and other troopers we lost since then.

Contact and Information

<https://www.skysoldier.net/Annual-Reunions/>



Florida Chapter 7 News

2014 has been a busy year for Chapter 7 (Florida) in spite of the fact we are not getting younger. The chapter is active in supporting our communities and veteran issues such as:

- **My Warriors Place** – an organization run by a Gold Star mother that offers veterans fishing getaways.
- **Our Coffee and Donut Program** at local VA outpatient clinics in New Port Richey and The Villages.
- **The Christmas Retreat Program** for two airborne Troopers from Fort Bragg to visit Florida for the Holiday Season.
- **The local Wounded Warrior Program and Toys for Tots.**
- Members of Chapter 7 Marched in the **Orlando Veterans Day Parade.**

2015 will be no different as we have supported a 173d Handicap Challenge team and made a small donation to the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team.

We will continue to support our coffee and donut programs at the local VA clinic and other projects. But our Big event for 2015 is funding a **173rd Airborne Memorial stone** on the new **Monument Walk** at the National Cemetery in Sarasota, Florida. **The Stone** will be the same as the one we have at the National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida. We ask for your Donations to make this happen.

Please donate at this web address:

www.skysoldierstore.com/FSS/donate-memorial.htm

We will gather again at Wickham Park, 2500 Parkway Drive, Melbourne, FL 32935 on **25 April at Noon** in Pavilion #1. Please come hungry and thirsty and bring friends and family. See our Map and Directions at this web address.

www.skysoldierstore.com/FSS/wickhampark.htm

Food and drinks start right after our meeting. Please get there no later than Noon. *Airborne!*



JAMES R. BRADLEY
CW3, USA, MC (Retired)

Chutist Dragged 7 Minutes

FORT CAMPBELL, KY (AP)

-- After flying like a kite behind a plane traveling 135 mph, a young paratrooper freed himself and landed safely.

"It was like getting a second chance," said PFC Michael A. McDonald, 17, of Missoula, Mont.

McDonald, a member of the 101st Airborne Div. here, landed in a pine tree after freeing himself from tangled parachute lines during a training exercise Tuesday. He was apparently unhurt, the Army said.

The static line connecting his parachute to a C-119 transport failed to disconnect during the practice assault, the Army said, and McDonald was dragged through the air for about seven minutes.

Crewman on the plane were unable to haul in McDonald. He finally cleared his arms, the static line snapped and his reserve parachute opened as he fell free.



[Source: *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, April 1, 1966]

Son of a Screaming Eagle Looks to Write About The Slopes & Hill 875

Dear Sir,

I am a historian and school teacher who has been researching the Vietnam War. I am currently working on writing a historical piece surrounding the Battle of the Slopes in June of 1967, and the later battles around Dak To in October and November of 1967. I want the piece to be as historically accurate as possible and for this reason I have contacted you. I am interested in any information concerning patrols run by the Recon Platoon of your battalion during these operations. If possible would you be able to pass this email on to any members of the Recon Platoon serving during that time. I have found the reason for this is the veterans always seem to have more to the story than the daily and after action reports.

I would like to thank you for your time and most of all your service!

Thanks

Clint Neff

Phn: 317-408-1066

Eml: jneff_21@hotmail.com



Szabolcs M. de Gyurky, 75

B/HHC/2/503d, Vietnam



Major Mike de Gyurky

Szabolcs “Mike” M. de Gyurky of Hartford, was born to eternal life on Sunday, Nov. 3, 2013, at the age of 75 years, with his wife by his side. Mike was born on Aug. 23, 1938, in Miskolc, Hungary, the son of Dezso and Agnes (nee Szent-Imrey) de Gyurky.

In September 1944, when the Soviet armies invaded Hungary, his mother decided to flee the Communists and took him and his 3-year-old sister Agnes and fled west. Szabolcs, or Michael as his friends called him, was separated from his mother in 1947. He spent two years in a German orphanage and contracted tuberculosis. Michael then spent a year and a half in hospitals getting cured and reunited with his parents and sister. They immigrated to the United States in 1951 and settled in Parkersburg, W.Va., where Michael’s love of America flourished. All his dreams of childhood were fulfilled.

He graduated from Parkersburg Catholic High School in 1956. Michael served 20 years in the U.S. Army, where he met the love of his life, Cheryl A. Bollerey in 1973, while she was also serving in the U.S. Army. The couple was married on May 3, 1976.

His combat service in Vietnam included assignments with the 5th Special Forces Group (Green Berets), the 101st Airborne Division, M.A.T. I-5, and the 173rd Airborne Brigade. His final assignment in the U.S. Army

was as staff officer for Command, Control, Communications and Information Systems at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Belgium from 1976-1979. After retiring from the U.S. Army in 1979, he was offered the position of team chief of the Voyager General Science Data Team by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, Calif. At JPL he worked 25 years as a technical manager, building telemetry, command and communications systems for such spacecraft as Ocean Topographic Explorer, Jason 1. He also designed and built The Global Decision Support System, a large air traffic management system, for the U.S. Air Force’s Military Airlift Command; and large military war gaming and exercise support models, as well as interactive event-driven combat simulations. He retired from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in 2004 to devote his time to writing.

In 2006, his book “*The Cognitive Dynamics of Computer Science*” was published by John Wiley & Sons. Michael published his first novel, “*Before the Rains Came,*” on Amazon Kindle. Another technical book for John Wiley & Sons titled “*The Autonomous System*” was published just prior to his passing.

In Vietnam, as a young infantry officer, Michael started to write poems and essays. This collection of poems, “*Reflections During a Monsoon Evening,*” was published by Scythe Publications Inc., under his pen name Michael Simay.

Michael is preceded in death by his parents, his sister Agnes de Gyurky and his stepfather Dr. Stephen Simay. He is survived by his cherished wife, Cheryl and his beloved canine companion “Monty.” He is further survived by other relatives and friends.

Family greeted relatives and friends Friday, Nov. 8 at St. Kilian Catholic Church. Mass of Resurrection followed at the church. The Rev. David LaPlante officiated. Memorials to St. Kilian Parish would be appreciated. The Berndt-Ledesma Funeral Home served the family; www.berndt-ledesma.com

Regrettably, we just now learned of the passing of our friend and brother Sky Soldier, Mike. Ed

Rest Easy Trooper





Seventh Fleet began bombarding supply lines, led by the cruiser *Canberra*, which itself was hit by fire from shore. And U.S. planes began dropping mines into North Vietnam's navigable rivers and canals in an attempt to restrict the water-borne flow of supplies south.

Meanwhile the Communists were stepping up the war with new weapons of their own, 140-mm rockets capable of much greater range and destructive power than any mortars they had previously used. In one predawn attack, the Vietcong fired these 90-pound rockets, bearing Russia and Chinese markings, from a distance of six miles into the Danang Air Base. Twelve American and 35 South Vietnamese civilians were killed in the barrage; more than 100 others were wounded.

The U.S. parachute jump kicked off "Operation Junction City," the largest major action of the war. The paratroopers were one element of a multi-divisional force totaling 30,000 men. Their mission was to throw a horseshoe-shaped net around the northwest part of War Zone C, the 1000-square mile Vietcong jungle stronghold near the Cambodian border, 75 miles northwest of Saigon. They were to find and destroy any Vietcong trapped inside, and search out what was believed to be the headquarters of the entire V.C. political and military high command. The 800 paratroopers belonged to a unit that in World War II had jumped to help re-take Corregidor. Now it was making the first U.S. combat jump since Korea.

Loaded, the men were so encumbered they moved in slow motion. When they lay on the ground to smoke, they were as helpless as beached whales and had to be helped back to their feet. They talked a little and joked some, but after they jammed themselves into the cylindrical bellies of the C-130s, they didn't talk anymore. The huge planes shuddered and throbbed and leaped off into the morning.



U.S. paratroopers in a stepped-up war

BATTLE JUMP

Text by **DON MOSER**
Photographed by **CO RENTMEESTER**

The men had assembled by their planes in the darkness as the tropic dawn came rushing up, the sky changing in minutes from deep red to flowing white, each had strapped himself into almost a hundred pounds of gear—main chutes and reserves, ammo and weapons, radios and grenades and Claymore mines and antitank rockets. These were men of the Second Battalion, 503rd Airborne Brigade and they were about to make the first U.S. combat jump of the Vietnam war.

The paratrooper operation was one of several new tactics the U.S. employed last week. To put additional pressure on North Vietnam, and to help airpower interdict supply routes used by Hanoi to nourish their troops and the Vietcong in the South.

U.S. artillery lobbed shells from 175-mm guns 30 miles across the demilitarized zone into North Vietnam. In the Gulf of Tonkin ships of the

Excerpt from *Life Magazine* 1967. The entire report can be seen at www.173rdairborne.com/life67.htm



Broken for you

By CH (CPT) Tom Latham
Battalion Chaplain, US Army

The views expressed in this article are mine and do not represent the US Army.

Afghanistan, Wardak province, COP Sultan Kiehl OEF XII, I had only been at Combat Outpost Sultan Kiehl for an hour. I was visiting Battle and Fusion companies of the 2-503rd, 173d Airborne conducting Battle Field Circulation.

A big operation was in the works. Men from every section and company of the battalion were mobilizing to enter our biggest battle of the deployment, the closing and retrograde of COP Chalk.

I was in the HHC Command Post when we got news that a casualty was coming in. A patrol from Chosen Company had just left the wire and we were all caught off guard with the news.

After leaving the wire, they had gone only a few miles and encountered an enemy machinegun team. The word was a GSW to the head was the injury and we knew it was someone from the patrol.

I hurried over to the Aid Station. The PA and his team were preparing to receive our wounded soldier. The back door was propped open and I saw the MRAP tear into the gravel as it pulled up, tons of steel skidding to a halt. They brought SPC Justice in.

His head was bandaged and he was unconscious. The Doc and his team worked at an incredible pace, stabilizing him, and talking life saving measures. I stood at the head of the stretcher closest to SPC Justice's head. Blood and brain matter were splattered on the stretcher. Blood dripped onto the floor by my feet. The docs were working all around me, the 1SGs for Battle and HHC were present with somber looks of pain across their faces.

I prayed aloud, "Lord save his soul and spare his life." I read from Psalm 23 and then I leaned forward and uttered words of comfort in SPC Justice's ear.

It was time to go, the docs packaged him up and the bumpy ride was made from the Aid Station to the Helicopter Landing Zone on a John Deer Gator. SPC Justice began a long trip following the trail of blood and brokenness that took him to FOB Shank, Bagram Airfield, and on to Landstuhl.

His wife and children were rushed from Vicenza, Italy to Landstuhl near Frankfurt, Germany. It was there at the hospital that SPC Justice went to be with God.

He was a Christian and a good soldier. During our pre-mission training he won an award for his outstanding performance during the training exercise and was recognized by all the officers, sergeants, and

observer controllers with the "Hero of Hohenfels" award.

Calvary Baptist Church, San Francisco 2014

My dad committed his life to Christ 50 years ago through the ministry of Calvary Baptist Church and so he had asked me to visit it while I was in San Francisco. It was communion Sunday.

As the pastor led us through the elements, my thoughts ran me back through the images of broken bodies, blood, and the excruciating pain people experienced going through during my deployment.

Luke 22:19 "This is my body which is given for you..." I thought of SPC Justice's broken body.

Luke 22:20 "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood..." I thought of the blood shed in that conflict. Communion for me will never be the same.

I have a reference; I have seen some human suffering. Maybe it gives me a taste, a hint of what Jesus felt. Of what Christ went through to give me eternal life. He shed his blood to forgive me of my sin, He took my place.

The Army is big on ceremonies, we held SPC Justice's Memorial Ceremony at COP Sultan Kiehl with many of his brothers in attendance. His platoon had driven all Night, the twelve hours one way from COP Dosh Towpe and cleared the road passing by the same spot where they had engaged the Taliban machinegun team on their way to the ceremony. It was a beautiful ceremony filled with emotion, sadness, and celebration of SPC Justice's life.



An Army carry team moves a transfer case containing the remains of Spc. James A. Justice Sunday, Aug. 19, 2012 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. According to the Department of Defense, Justice, 21, of Grover, N.C., died Aug. 17, 2012 at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany from injuries sustained from enemy small-arms fire Aug. 14, 2012 in Wardak province, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)

Jesus told us how we were to remember him. He established and rehearsed his own memorial ceremony; He even called it that, a memorial. He wanted us to physically eat bread and drink wine so that we would never forget the freedom He bought for us at great cost.



VA Eliminates Net Worth as Health Care Eligibility Factor

Elimination of Net Worth Makes More Veterans Eligible for Health Care

Washington – The Department of Veterans Affairs is updating the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that will result in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective 2015, VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and copayment responsibilities. This change makes VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans and brings VA policies in line with Secretary Robert A. McDonald's MyVA initiative which reorients VA around Veterans' needs.

"Everything that we do and every decision we make has to be focused on the Veterans we serve,"

said VA Secretary Robert A.

McDonald. ***"We are working every day to earn their trust. Changing the way we determine eligibility to make the process easier for Veterans is part of our promise to our Veterans."***



Instead of combining the sum of Veterans' income with their assets to determine eligibility for medical care and copayment obligations, VA will now only consider a Veteran's gross household income and deductible expenses from the previous year.

Elimination of the consideration of net worth for VA health care enrollment means that certain lower-income, non-service-connected Veterans will have less out-of-pocket costs. Over a 5-year period, it is estimated that 190,000 Veterans will become eligible for reduced costs of their health care services.

In March 2014, VA eliminated the annual requirement for updated financial information. VA now uses information from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration to automatically match individual Veterans' income information which reduces the burden on Veterans to keep their healthcare eligibility up to date. That change better aligned VA's health care financial assessment program with other federal health care organizations.

Veterans may submit updated income information at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, or by visiting their nearby VA health care facility. For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

Also: **VA Announces \$300 Million in Grants to Community Partners Working to End Veteran Homelessness**

"...Everybody can do something. Every American. Every business. Every profession. Every school. Every community. Every state. All of us, as one American team. That's how we will truly honor our veterans. That's how we will truly say thank you. That's how we will uphold the sacred trust with all who've served in our name."

President Obama, August 26, 2014

The Spartan Club

The address for the *173d Airborne Brigade Spartan Club* has changed! All correspondence and donations should be sent to the Foundation at 124 TUGBOAT LANE, SUMMERVILLE, SC 29483.

Sorry for any inconvenience. Now for some news.

We have discontinued our semi-annual reports because the cost of printing and mailing was not a prudent use of the funds that we collected. However, there are updates on our website.



Those of you who have completed your pledges do not get regular mailings from the Foundation as opposed to those who are providing support over a ten year period. To keep all informed, I have provided an update below. With your support, The Memorial Foundation has been able to complete its initial construction mission and the goal of a viable sustainment fund is in reach. Thank you all for your support.

On 14 June 2014 at an Honors Ceremony we added the names of thirteen warriors who fell during Operation Enduring Freedom XIII to the granite panels than contain the names of those who were taken from us. In June 2015 we will add the names of two Medal of Honor recipients to our Medal of Honor panel. As of 1 February 2015 the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation had 204 Spartan Club members, 42 who have fully paid their pledges. Together, these 204 Spartans pledged \$386,505.00 and already have contributed \$200,000.00. Unfortunately, Spartans continue to fall as we advance in age and we have lost more than a dozen from our ranks since the Club was formed. Your continued support of our Memorial ensures that our endowment fund will be adequate to maintain it in a manner befitting the heritage and traditions of the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Ken Smith

Memorial Foundation President

Web: http://www.173dairbornememorial.org/spartan_club.php





173d Airborne Brigade
National Memorial Foundation



***The Board of Directors
Of the 173d Airborne Brigade
National Foundation
Invites you to Attend
The “Unveiling of the Names”
Of Medal of Honor Living Recipients
Kyle White and Ryan Pitts
On the 173d Airborne Brigade
National Memorial
1000 Hours, 13 June 2015
On the National Infantry
Museum Campus
1775 Legacy Way
Columbus, Georgia***



Kyle White



Ryan Pitts



Ryan Pitts on the Medal of Honor: *The ‘real heroes’ are the nine men who died*



By: Thomas Gibbons-Neff
Washington Post
July 21, 2014

The ceremony was over and former Staff Sgt. Ryan M. Pitts, the nation’s newest Medal of Honor recipient, walked toward the microphones set up in front of the West Wing, his pants bloused over his black boots and the nation’s highest award for combat valor draped over his chest.

“The real heroes are the nine men who made the ultimate sacrifice so the rest of us could return home,” Pitts said quietly, a reference to the nine soldiers who died defending Observation Post Topside beside him in the summer of 2008 in Wanat, Afghanistan. *“It is their names, not mine that I want people to know. Spc. Sergio Abad, Cpl. Jonathan Ayers, Cpl. Jason Bogar, 1st Lt. Jonathan Brostrom, Sgt. Israel Garcia, Cpl. Jason Hovater, Cpl. Matthew Phillips, Cpl. Pruitt Rainey, and Cpl. Gunnar Zwilling,”* he read, and in a homage to Chosen Company of the 503rd parachute infantry regiment, added: *“Thank you. The Chosen few.”*

Pitts did not take any questions Monday, and as he walked away, a reporter inquired, *“Is that it?”* For Pitts, 28, of Nashua, N.H., it was.



President Obama awarded Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Pitts with the Medal of Honor at the White House on Monday. Pitts held off an ambush on his platoon’s post during one of the bloodiest battles of the Afghanistan war despite his own injuries. He is the 16th service member to receive the award for service in Iraq or Afghanistan. (Associated Press)

A half-hour earlier Pitts was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Obama for his actions on July 13, 2008, when he single-handedly defended his observation post from an attack by more than 200 Taliban militants. The citation recounts his courage under withering enemy fire, during which he threw grenade after grenade as he slowly bled from shrapnel

wounds he sustained from the explosion of rocket-propelled grenades.

On one side of the room were the families of those who died during the battle, and on the other were Pitts’s comrades-in-arms who fought beside him at Wanat, a smattering of suits and Army dress blues laden with Bronze Stars and Purple Hearts.

The battle, which started in earnest at 4 a.m. with a combined attack from mortars, heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, was focused on a nearby vehicle patrol base but Pitts’s outpost to the east bore the brunt of the attack.

Outposts such as Topside, exist for that reason: to provide access to key terrain for friendly forces as well as to act as a buffer between larger bases and attacking enemy forces.

In the first half-hour of the battle, most of the soldiers defending Topside were incapacitated, yet Pitts fought on, alternating between manning a machine gun and “cooking off” grenades, or holding them long enough so when thrown, the enemy couldn’t throw them back before they detonated.

“That little post was on the verge of falling, giving the enemy a perch to devastate the base below,” Obama said. *“Against that onslaught, one American held the line.”*

As Obama read the names of those who died in the fight, he recounted anecdotes about each of the nine soldiers who gave their lives during the *Battle of Wanat*. *“The boy who dominated the soccer fields and fell in love with motorcycles,”* he said of one. *“The father who loved surfing with his son,”* he said of another.

As the men of Chosen Company’s eyes swelled, Pitts stared ahead, his hands at parade rest, his face unflinching.

“This is the story that Ryan wants us to remember,” Obama said. *“Soldiers who loved each other like brothers and fought for each other, families that made a sacrifice that our nation must never forget.”*

“I think we owe it to them to live lives worthy of their sacrifice,” Obama recounted Pitts as saying.

Pitts is the ninth living service member to receive the award for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Thomas Gibbons-Neff is a Washington Post contributor and a former U.S. infantry Marine.



President Obama Awards the Medal of Honor to Sgt. Kyle J. White

By David Hudson, May 13, 2014

This afternoon, President Obama awarded Sgt. Kyle J. White, a former active-duty Army Sergeant, the Medal of Honor during a ceremony at the White House. Sgt. White received the medal for his courageous actions during combat operations in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

On the afternoon of November 9, 2007, Sgt. White and the 13 members of his team left a meeting in an Afghan village and headed back up a steep hill, into an area that was known as "ambush alley." *"That's when a single shot rang out,"* President Obama said. *"Then another. And then the entire canyon erupted, with bullets coming from what seemed like every direction."*

Sgt. White emptied a full magazine as his platoon returned fire against the ambush. But while reloading, an explosion from an enemy grenade knocked him unconscious. When he came to, his face was pressed against a rock -- and soon after, enemy fire hit another rock close to his head, sending shrapnel and rock shards across Sgt. White's face.

Yet in the middle of this danger, Sgt. White's heroism and selflessness were made evident, as the President detailed in the rest of his remarks.

Most of the unit had been forced to slide down the cliff to the valley below. But Kyle saw a teammate -- Specialist Kain Schilling -- trying to treat his own shattered arm, using a tree as cover -- what Kain later called *"the smallest tree on Earth."* I'm sure that's how it felt. Kyle sprinted through enemy fire to Kain's side and began applying a tourniquet -- shielding Kain with his own body as gunfire shredded that tree.

Then Kyle saw another man down -- Marine Sergeant Phillip Bocks -- in the open, 30 feet behind them, but too injured to reach cover. Kyle remembers thinking, *"It's just a matter of time before I'm dead. If that's going to happen, I might as well help someone while I can."*

With bullets impacting all around him, Kyle ran to Bocks and began to pull the injured Marine to cover. But worried that he'd expose Bocks to more gunfire, Kyle retreated. The enemy rounds followed him. He ran out again, pulling Bocks a little farther. And once more he retreated to distract the enemy fire. Once more he went out -- over and over thinking to himself, *"I'm not going to make it."* Kyle could feel the pressure of the rounds going by him. But somehow, miraculously, they never hit him. Not once. One of his teammates said it was as if Kyle was moving *"faster than a speeding bullet"*.

And finally, Kyle succeeded in pulling his comrade to cover. Tragically, there on that cliff, Sergeant Bocks succumbed to his wounds. But in his final moments, this American Marine surely found some solace in Kyle White

-- the American soldier who, until the very end, was there by his side.

President Barack Obama applauds Sergeant Kyle J. White after awarding him the Medal of Honor during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House, May 13, 2014.



(Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy)

Now, that other injured soldier, Kain Shilling, was still out there. And he had sustained another injury, this time to his knee. Kyle ran out once more to Kain's side. Kyle ripped off his own belt for a tourniquet, and soon got his hands on a working radio. The voice of Charlie One Six Romeo came into base. Crouching behind that lone tree, Kyle began calling in airstrikes to take out enemy positions.

Kyle stayed with Specialist Schilling as night fell. And Kain was too badly injured to move. Kyle was starting to feel the fog of his own concussions set in, but he knew that he was Kain's best chance to get out alive, so Kyle took charge and ordered the Afghan soldiers to form a security perimeter. He called in a MEDEVAC and made sure Kain and the other injured were safely on board. And only then did Kyle finally allow himself to be lifted out.

As the helicopter pulled away, Kyle looked out the window, watching the darkness as they pulled away from that single tree on the cliff. *"When you're deployed,"* he later said, *"those people become your family. What you really care about is: I want to get this guy to the left and to the right home."*

But Sgt. White's story didn't end there. The President remarked on Sgt. White's reintegration into society after completing his service, explaining how he went to college with the help of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, received his degree, and now works for a bank in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Kyle, members of Chosen Company, you did your duty, and now it's time for America to do ours: after more than a decade of war, to welcome you home with the support and the benefits and opportunities that you've earned. You make us proud, and you motivate all of us to be the best we can be as Americans, as a nation; to uphold our sacred obligations to your generation and all who have faced that "measure of danger" and "the willingness to incur it."

May God bless you, and may your courage inspire and sustain us always. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.





Raymond Morris Basham

Raymond Morris Basham, 91, of Bowling Green, passed away Sept. 26, 2014. Mr. Basham was born in Bowling Green on Jan. 25, 1923, a son of the late William and Beatrice Basham.

He was preceded in death by two sisters, Martha Marty and Jane Nickols.

Mr. Basham was educated in the Bowling Green school system and enlisted in the U.S. Army at age 17. During World War II, he volunteered and served with the elite 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team in the Pacific Theater. During his 5 1/2 years of service he earned the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, American Campaign Medal, WWII Army of Occupation Medal, Asiatic Pacific Medal with two Bronze Stars and one Arrowhead, American Defense Service Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal with one Bronze Star, Philippine Military Civic Action Medal, U.S. Presidential Unit Citation, Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, U.S. Army Combat Medical Badge, U.S. Parachutist Badge with one Bronze Star. Raymond's proudest war memory was being present when his unit returned to the island of Corregidor to see General Douglas MacArthur, and the U.S. flag raised in March 1945.

When he returned from the war, he married Mary K. Witt and enjoyed 68 years of marriage with her. Raymond spent many years working in construction and built many businesses, homes and numerous buildings on the campus of Western Kentucky University. He retired from the FMC Co. and was a member of American Legion Post 0023.

Raymond was a loving and devoted husband, father and friend. He has been, and will always remain, our hero, our knight in shining armor.

Sadly, Mr. Basham's wife, Mary Witt (Carrie) Basham of Rockfield passed, also at the age of 91, on January 10, 2014. They are survived by two sons, Morris Brett Basham (Jaunita) of Rockfield and Gary Raymond Basham of Bowling Green; two daughters, Joan L. Peay (Kenny) of Bowling Green



Ray



Mary

and Linda Katherine Basham (Rebecca) of Titusville, Fla.; two brothers, Larry Basham and Harry Basham; two sisters, Jaunita Hammond and Charlotte Hudson, all of Bowling Green; five grandchildren, Heather Griffith-Hughes (Jamie), Derek Peay (Elisabeth), Joshua Basham, all of Bowling Green, Christopher Basham of Rockfield, Jennifer Lovelady (Gordon) of Hopkinsville; six great-grandchildren, Peyton Griffith, Victoria Griffith, Jacalyn Hughes, Zachery Peay, all of Bowling Green, Gracie Beth Lovelady and Eli Lovelady of Hopkinsville; and numerous nieces and nephews.



Ray and Mary at 173d reunion at Lexington, KY in June 2012, where Ray and fellow troopers of the 503rd PRCT of WWII were honored by Sky Soldiers of the 173d Abn Bde, 503rd Inf.

In a note to the Brigade from Ray and Mary's daughter following the reunion:

I want to personally thank all the 173d Brigade and All Sky Soldiers for inviting my father Raymond Basham, my Mom Mary and our family and friends to your reunion in Lexington. I find it difficult to find the words to express how much we all appreciated it and enjoyed every moment of the visit.

My Dad was so moved by all the recognition and honor that you showed for the 503rd PRCT. The Brotherhood that all you paratroopers share is a treasure.

I am still trying to steal Mom's 503rd jacket but she has it under lock and key!

I hope we all can meet again someday. It was all great thanks to the 173d.

Airborne...All The Way!

Sincerely,
Lin Basham
SFC (Ret)



The Great Mandela

On the subject of epiphanies or rather, obtaining a satisfactory point of view regarding life events I've come to one that has given me some peace.

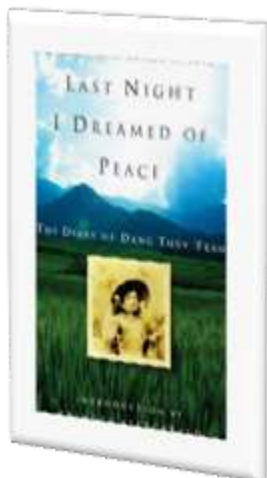
Through the long years since our war in Indochina ended, the question that has troubled me most is "why?" If we were the good guys then why did we lose? Why did those people - our enemies - fight so hard for what I viewed as a despicable system?

So I thought and I thought, and I read and I read and I finally came across two little books written by communist Vietnamese. One was written by a man who, as a young man, had been a contract worker from the Hanoi area in a Michelin rubber tree plantation near Bien Hoa in the 1920s. Without going into detail, the experiences of this man and his co-workers amounted to government sanctioned slavery verging on genocide. The name of the book is *THE RED EARTH: A VIETNAMESE MEMOIR OF LIFE ON A COLONIAL RUBBER PLANTATION*. The author is Tran Tu Binh, published by the Ohio University Center for International Studies.



When I finished the book I realized that had I lived and worked beside this fellow, I too would have been looking for a way to fight the French. I would have gravitated to the organization that was the most effective in hitting back at my oppressors. I would have been a communist. I would have asked by what right the French assumed dominion over me and my people.

The other book was written by a young woman, a 25 year old physician and card carrying communist. The name of the book, which is a translation of her personal war diary, is *LAST NIGHT I DREAMED OF PEACE*. Her name was Dang Thuy Tram. Her diary offers a unique perspective on the results of American efforts against the communists.



As an American kid in the Army, in my quest to fight communism for my country, I sympathized with the French though I didn't respect them because they had lost to the Viet Minh. After all I had been told in an Army publication that our enemy consisted of bandits and

prostitutes. The thought never occurred to me to ask: "...by what right did the French assume dominion over the Vietnamese"?

The Vietnamese had fought the Chinese for centuries, they fought the Japanese with us and as a reward, the western nations denied their sovereignty and gave them back to the French. So they fought the French and defeated them. Why shouldn't they have been suspicious of, and resisted the idea of western nations dictating their affairs?

So, what does all that say about *American* experiences in *our* Indochina War? We and our enemies each lived our own individual microcosms of misery, sacrifice and brutality, but why?

I did it because I was an American and I believed that America offered a unique and positive blueprint of how things should be in the world. I believed that the oppressed people of the developing countries of the world should have the opportunity to choose our blueprint for happiness. What I did, in joining the fight, was the right thing to do – *as an American*.



Jim Bethea, a young 2/503 trooper doing what his country asked of him in Vietnam, '65/'66

The French, in their time, believed in their own unique national sense of how things should be. After all, up until that time colonialism was an accepted, legal, national pursuit. So fighting to reclaim their national property was the right thing to do - *as a French subject*.

In Indochina the French were in the wrong by the measure of our own rejection of colonialism through revolution. The Vietnamese were right to fight them using whatever means possible. With the exception of those who benefited personally from the French colonial occupation, fighting for national sovereignty and self-determination was the right thing to do - *as a Vietnamese communist*.

Social collections such as nationalities, religions, etc. remind me of populations in Petri dishes. There may be communication and even civility between them but for one to know the other's mind completely would require a walk in their moccasins.

(continued...)



During the 1960s there was a hippie song titled *The Great Mandela*.

"...take your place on the great Mandela as it moves through your brief moment in time..."

The peace that I have found is this:

My place on the great Mandela was as a young, gullible American soldier during the Vietnam War. There were others who occupied that same time and place. For me, there is no one to blame or crucify with accusations. Being there was my choice on many levels and I have taken ownership of it. The experience is mine, it belongs to me.

There are winners and losers and right and wrong on all sides of any endeavor but that's irrelevant on the great Mandela. There, it's about personal growth and learning. Communism, Capitalism, Manifest Destiny, Shia, Sunni, Christianity or Judaism; they are the blind giants that trample humanity. Each war between the *isms* is just the same game with a different name ... each in its own brief moment of time.

That's my take on it. There's a hint of Asian spirituality in there for which I apologize (*oops! I forgot, Americans never apologize - there's that damned Petri dish again!*) but I have no real religion. I just listen and pick up those things that sound right to me.

These realizations have brought peace to me regarding Vietnam and life in general. I'm happy with my life now and my perspective. Peace is a great gift.



Jim Bethea
HHC/2/503, '65/'66

Peace brothers,

"War is fear cloaked in courage."

~ General William C. Westmoreland



Westmoreland meets with LTC Bob Sigholtz (Col. Ret.), CO 2/503, in the boonies, 1966.

Donald Kamandulis

LTC (Ret)

173d Abn Bde, HQ/S-2



Donald Kamandulis, 85, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, March 10th, 2015 in his home in Melbourne, Florida.

He is survived by his wife, Bo, their son, Donn and his wife, Linet and their granddaughter, Sophia, as well as his daughter, Lois. He proudly served in the United States Army for 32 years and retired honorably as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Upon his military retirement, he worked in real estate both independently and with Jim Morris and Sons, Inc.

A funeral mass was held at St. John the Evangelist Church in Viera, Florida on Saturday, March 21st, 2015. Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery.

Sign Don's guestbook at:

guestbook@beckmanwilliamsonviera.com

All The Way, Colonel! Rest Easy Trooper.

"May God welcome Don into His Hall of Heroes and ease the loss felt by friends and family."

LTC Roy Lombardo
Former Cmdr B/2-503 ('64 -'65)



503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team

~ 2015 Reunion Registration ~

Wednesday, July 29th – Sunday, August 2nd

Crowne Plaza

33 East 5th Street. Dayton, Ohio 43042

Phone: 937-224-0800, 800-689-5586, Email: www.cpd Dayton.com

When making room reservations identify yourself as a 503rd Parachute Regimental Team attendee for group rate and make room payment to hotel.



****PLEASE RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH REUNION PAYMENT****

_____ How many will be registered to attend reunion and banquets at \$90.00 per person?

_____ How many children under the age of 16 will attend the reunion and banquets at \$25.00 per person?

Please print names

Unit

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | Spouse |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |

_____ How many other guests will attend ONLY the catered meals with you at a cost of \$33.50 per person per meal?

Please indicate guest name(s) and meal(s):

- | | | |
|----------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. _____ | _____ Friday | _____ Saturday |
| 2. _____ | _____ Friday | _____ Saturday |



The Rock

Date you plan to check in _____ Date you plan to check out _____

Enclosed is my check payable in the amount of _____ Payable to 503rd Reunion

Registration deadline is Wednesday, July 8, 2015.

Please mail to:

Todd Mayer

111 N. Liberty Street. Delaware, OH 43015

Any questions, call (740)363-8644 (home), (614)-256-0581 (work cell) Email: tmayer@columbus.rr.com

Your Name _____ Telephone Number _____

Airborne! All The Way!!



Rock History



(Web photo)

The 503rd Infantry was one of the original Parachute Infantry units created as a result of successful efforts by the US Army Airborne Test Platoon at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1940. It was the third of four Parachute Battalions formed prior to the beginning of World War II. From a company-sized unit (Company B, 503d Parachute Battalion) constituted on March 14, 1941 and officially activated on August 22, 1941, the 503rd was expanded into a full-sized Regiment on March 2, 1942.

The first commanding officer of the Regiment was Major General William M. Miley, then a Lieutenant Colonel. Lieutenant Colonel Edson D. Raff, then the Regiment's executive officer, became the first battalion commander of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd, which was formed from the 504th PIR in March 1942. After its activation, 2-503 moved to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where it trained until June of 1942 when it was sent to the United Kingdom in preparation for the airborne operation in North Africa.



MG Miley

On November 8, 1942 the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry conducted the first combat jump in US history when 39 C47 aircraft, enroute from Lands End, England, dropped the battalion onto a drop zone near Lourmel, Algeria.

This action initiated the North Africa campaign against the French. Five days later, November 15, 1942, three hundred paratroopers jumped onto an open area near Youks les Bains on the Tunisia-Algeria border. The ensuing thrust east to cut off the Germans lines of communications



Young trooper in full combat gear ready for jump into North Africa (web photo)

in Gafsa, Tunisia included a third airborne drop of 30 paratroopers and heavy equipment onto El Djem on December 23, 1942 with a mission to destroy an enemy railroad bridge. Of the 32 paratroopers to descend on the objective that fateful day in December 1942 only six returned to friendly lines.

There were numerous recorded heroic actions by the paratroopers of the 2-503 PIR in North Africa, most notably was one of the first fallen paratroopers of World War II, Private John Thomas MacKall for whom Camp MacKall, North Carolina is named. Unbeknownst to the Rock Battalion, the 2-503 PIR was re-designated the 509th Parachute Infantry during the North African Campaign but was not informed of such until after the war. All the while, the remaining elements of the 503rd Regimental Headquarters and other subordinate elements left the states for the Pacific Theater on October 20, 1942.



"Tommy" MacKall
KIA 11/14/42

After conducting a cross-country rail movement, the Regiment left the port of San Francisco on the MS Poelau Laut. During the movement west the 501st Parachute Battalion, which embarked in the Panama Canal Zone, was re-designated as the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment. This re-designation occurred about the same time its twin sister the 2-503 PIR was conducting a combat jump in North Africa against the Vichy French.



503rd paratroopers off to war aboard the MS Poelau Laut in 1942. (Photo by the late Chet Nycum, 3d Bn G Co. Source: 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion Web Site)

(continued....)



The newly formed 2-503 remained at sea for forty-two days and landing at Cairns, Australia where it trained for combat in a training camp 18 miles inland as part of the Regiment. Later, the Regiment was expanded into Combat Teams with assignment of the 462d Parachute Artillery Battalion, and the 161st Parachute Engineer Company on 13 September 1944.



503rd troopers in Australia (Photo from Chet Nycum. Source: 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion web site)

During its more than three years' service in the Southwest Pacific Theater, the 503d served in five major combat operations.

1. In July of 1943, the 503rd moved to Port Moresby, New Guinea, where it made final preparations for its first combat operation in the Pacific Theater. On September 5, 1943 the Regiment jumped into the Markham River Valley, New Guinea for Operation ALAMO; the first airborne operation conducted by US forces in the Pacific Theater.

During this operation, the Regiment forced the Japanese evacuation of a major base at Lae, in which the Third Battalion of the 503d battled the rear guard of this exodus. This successful employment of airborne forces in the Markham Valley has been credited with saving the concept of vertical envelopment from being

abandoned following several less than successful engagements in Europe.

After two weeks of fighting, the Japanese were defeated and the 503rd reassembled at Port Moresby for the return to Australia.



503rd combat jump into the Markham River Valley.
(Web photo)

2. For Operation CYCLONE, 2-503 along with 1-503 conducted an airborne assault on the island of Noemfoor off the coast of Dutch New Guinea early in July 1944. In support of the 1st and 2nd Battalions airborne operation, 3-503 conducted an amphibious landing a few days later. Fighting as part of the Regiment on Noemfoor, 2-503 was responsible for destroying the Japanese garrison and enabling the construction of airfields, which played a significant role in supporting the advance of Allied troops from New Guinea to the Philippines. Sergeant Ray E. Eubanks earned the Medal of Honor, posthumously, for his actions on Noemfoor.



Ray Eubanks
KIA 7/23/44

3. Following an unopposed landing on the Island of Leyte, in the Philippines, the 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team made a major amphibious landing on the Island of Mindoro, in the central Philippines on December 15, 1944. Originally, it was intended for the 503d to jump onto Mindoro but because of inadequate airstrip facilities on Leyte, an airborne assault was not possible. The purpose of the eventual landing was to secure sites for an airhead, thus providing forward Army Air Corps bases to support later actions. The Regiment was subject to intense enemy air attack and naval bombardment throughout this action.

(continued....)



4. The mid-December 1944 operation on Leyte provided the Regiment a staging area for its assault on the Philippine fortress island of Corregidor, nicknamed "The Rock," from which the Regiment would later take both its nickname and motto. At 0830 on February 16, 1945, after weeks of naval and aerial bombardment, the 503rd hit Corregidor conducting the most vicious combat action in which the Regiment was engaged during its existence to date. The mission commenced with the combat jump on Fortress Corregidor codenamed Operation TOPSIDE. Corregidor Island was the bastion that withstood a fierce Japanese siege for nearly five months in 1941 and 1942, thereby interrupting the Japanese advance toward Australia. The 503d was proud to have been bestowed the honor of repatriating the "The Rock".



General Douglas MacArthur returns to Corregidor on March 2, 1945. (Web photo)



503rd make combat jump onto Fortress Corregidor
(Web photo)

The first jump, made in thirty-five mile per hour winds at an altitude of 550 feet, was made by the 3-503 with the 2nd Battalion following at 1240 that afternoon. Due to the high number of injuries during the first two jumps, the 1st Battalion jump was cancelled and the battalion made an amphibious assault the following day. The surprise created by the airborne assault into the island interior and the inability of the Japanese to react to both an airborne and amphibious assault enabled the US Forces to defeat the numerically superior Japanese forces.

After two weeks of vicious fighting the island was subdued, and on March 2, 1945, the third anniversary of the 503rd Infantry Regiment's activation, the island of Corregidor was formally turned over to General Douglas MacArthur. An estimated 6,550 Japanese soldiers were on the island when the 503rd jumped, and of those only 50 survived. In turn, the 503d lost 169 paratroopers killed in action. For its actions during this operation, the 503d was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and Private Lloyd G. McCarter was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery on Corregidor.



Lloyd McCarter
1917 - 1956

5. Almost immediately after returning to Mindoro from Corregidor, the Regiment was called upon to reinforce the 40th Infantry Division, which was bogged down on the Island of Negros, in the central Philippines. The Regiment was inserted by landing craft, although it had been alerted for another combat jump. The objectives of the proposed airborne operation were a strategic bridge and a large lumber mill, but retreating Japanese forces subsequently destroyed them both.

The 503d engaged in fierce battles against frantic Japanese resistance in the mountainous areas of Negros for more than five months. The 40th Infantry Division was re-directed to other operations on Mindanao, leaving the 503d to battle the Japanese alone.



(web photo)

At the end of the war in August of 1945, over 7,500 of the surviving Japanese troops on the island surrendered to the 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team. Official U.S. War Department sources estimated that the 503d killed over 10,000 Japanese troops during its combat operations in the Southwest Pacific.

(continued...)



By early November 1945, the 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team ceased to be operational. The Regiment was inactivated on December 24, 1945 at Camp Anza, California. Because of the Korean Conflict, 503rd Airborne Infantry was reactivated on March 2, 1951 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and assigned to the 11th Airborne Division. The 503rd did not see combat during the Korean War, but conducted extensive exercises in all parts of the United States, including Alaska.

In 1956, the 503rd moved with the 11th Airborne Division to Germany. On March 1, 1957 it was inactivated in Germany and relieved of its assignment to the 11th Airborne Division. Redesignated on September 1, 1957 as HHC, 2nd Airborne Battle Group, 503rd Infantry it was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Relieved on June 24, 1960 from assignment to the 82nd Airborne Division, 2-503 was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division until July 1, 1961.

The 2nd Airborne Battle Group, 503d Infantry was assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade when it was activated on the island of Okinawa on March 26, 1963. On June 25, 1963, the battalion was redesignated the 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry. From its beginning, it proved to be an aggressive and unique unit led by (then) Brigadier General Ellis W. Williamson who established realistic training throughout the Pacific Region.



General Williamson

The "SKY SOLDIERS," as the Nationalist Chinese paratroopers called the 173rd, made thousands of parachute jumps in a dozen different Pacific area countries. On May 5, 1965, the 173d Airborne Brigade became the first US Army combat unit committed to the Vietnam War. As the Pacific Command's quick-reaction strike force the 173d was to provide security for the Bien Hoa Air Base Complex until elements of the 101st could be deployed. In the end it stayed for 6 years.

The major portion of the brigade landed at Bien Hoa Airfield and found an area that had been battered frequently by enemy raids and shelling attacks. The 1st and 2nd Battalion of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment were the first major combat army units sent to the Republic of South Vietnam along with the 3rd Battalion of the 319th Artillery. They were well supported by their own Support Battalion and Troop E, 17th Cavalry, D Company, 16th Armor and in late

August 1966, the 173d received another Infantry Battalion, the 4th of the 503rd which arrived from Fort Campbell, Kentucky. A 3rd Battalion was formed in early 1967 at Fort Bragg, N.C. and was deployed to Vietnam on October 2, 1967.

In the combat operations to follow their arrival, the paratroopers made their superb training payoff. They were the first to go into War Zone D to destroy enemy base camps where they were the first to introduce the use of small, long-range patrols. They fought the battles of the Iron Triangle, conducted the only major combat parachute jump in the Tay Ninh area, and blocked NVA incursions during some of the bloodiest fighting of the war at Dak To during the summer and fall of 1967, culminating in the capture of Hill 875. On February 22, 1967, paratroopers of the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, parachuted into a wide clearing in the jungle of War Zone C as part of Operation JUNCTION CITY.

2-503 conducted the only major US Airborne operation of the war while attached to the 1st Infantry Division carrying out the first major US Airborne assault since the Korean War. Their mission was to form a blocking force near the crossroads hamlet of Kontum, South Vietnam, to support a large-scale cordon and search by U.S. forces. The 780-man airborne task force was delivered in two sorties of aircraft from Bien Hoa Airbase. The personnel drop of sixteen C-130 Hercules aircraft arrived over Drop Zone Charlie at 0900. General Jack Deane, Commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Sigholtz, Commander of the 2-503d Task Force, and Command Sergeant Major Harold Proffitt led the jump from the first aircraft. A total of 780 troopers hit the silk in two passes over the small drop zone, settled to the earth, and began assembling without major enemy opposition....



"Members of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry fight from old Viet Cong trenches during an NVA attack near Kontum."

(Vietnam, a Visual Encyclopedia)

(continued....)



....Thirty minutes later, ten heavy drop C-130s arrived and dropped six 105mm howitzers, four 4.2 inch mortars, six 81mm mortars, four 3/4-ton trucks, five jeeps, six M274 "Mule" vehicles, one trailer, and 3900 rounds of artillery and mortar ammunition. By 1000 hrs. all men and equipment were deployed into blocking positions and the command post and artillery firebase were established.

As units from the U.S. 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and the 2-503 ABN of the 173d Airborne Brigade began closing the horseshoe around suspected Vietcong and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) positions, Operation JUNCTION CITY became a series of small unit firefights for the paratroopers. On February 28th, the "Sky Soldiers" of the 173d overran the Vietcong Central Information Office, an enemy propaganda facility.

As the multi-divisional attack continued through mid-May, major battles raged around the horseshoe with three Vietcong Regiments and one Regiment of NVA regulars. Operation JUNCTION CITY succeeded in driving major enemy forces from War Zone C across the border into sanctuaries in Cambodia. The operation was terminated on May 14, 1967.

On November 1-6, 1968, the 2-503rd ABN deployed to DAK TO in the central highlands with the mission of conducting search-and-destroy operations in conjunction with other US forces in Operation MACARTHUR that included the infamous Battle for DAK TO. The final major and most decisive action of the Battle for DAK TO was initiated on November 19th when the 2nd Battalion engaged elements of the 174th North Vietnamese Infantry Regiment on Hill 875. Joined by the 4th Battalion during the engagement, the 173d fought for 96 grueling hours resulting in 298 enemy killed rendering the 174th North Vietnamese Infantry Regiment combat ineffective. The 2-503rd was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its valorous actions during the Battle of DAK TO.

The Brigade and the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry was relieved of assignment to the 173d Airborne

Brigade on January 14, 1972 and assigned to the 101st Airborne Division at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. On October 1, 1983 it was relieved of assignment to the 101st Airborne and assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea on December 16, 1986 where it remained until its deactivation on September 29, 1990. On December 16, 2001 the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry was assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade and reactivated on January 25, 2002 in Vicenza Italy, from where the 173d has seen multiple tours of combat duty in the Middle East.

Today the ROCK stands ready to accomplish any mission with the esprit it has demonstrated in the past.

Web source:

www.military.com/HomePage/UnitPageHistory/1,13506,101255%7C775275,00.html

(Photos added)



“American soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry, 173rd Airborne Division gear up for a long range patrol during Operation Junction City, a massive 1967 search and destroy operation in Vietnam conducted in hopes of clearing People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) and National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam units from the area northeast of the capital of Saigon.”

(Co Rentmeester, Time Magazine)



Sky Soldier Awarded Silver Star



We came across this photo on the web. Can anyone identify the troopers, unit, time, location, etc? Ed

Applications Accepted for 2015 National Veterans Golden Age Games

Event Takes Place in Omaha, Nebraska, Aug. 8-12

Washington – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is currently accepting applications from Veterans interested in competing in the 2015 National Veterans Golden Age Games. Applications can be completed online at www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov, and will be accepted through May 15. Veterans ages 55 and older who are enrolled for VA care are eligible to participate.



The 2015 National Veterans Golden Age Games takes place in Omaha, Nebraska, Aug. 8-12. Nearly 800 athletes are expected to compete in the national multi-event sports and recreational competition for senior Veterans. The event encourages participants to make physical activity a central part of their lives, and supports VA's comprehensive recreation and rehabilitation therapy programs. Competitive events include air rifle, badminton, bowling, cycling, dominoes, field, golf, horseshoes, nine ball, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis and track.

VA research and clinical experience verify that physical activity is important to maintaining good health, speeding recovery and improving overall quality of life. The games also serve as a way for participants to continue in local senior events in their home communities.

VA Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System will host this year's games. The health care system provides care for more than 55,000 Veterans from 101 counties in Nebraska, western Iowa and portions of Missouri and Kansas.

For more information visit:

www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov and follow VA Adaptive Sports on Twitter at @VAAdaptiveSport or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vaadaptivesports

Media Inquiries:

Michael Molina, Nat. Veys Sports Prog. & Special Events (202) 560-7305 Michael.molina1@va.gov

San Diego Chapter 28 Challenge Coin

Greetings Sky Soldiers:

We wish to inform you and your Chapter members of a new Challenge Coin that San Diego Chapter 28 is offering to our fellow Sky Soldier brothers.

Since many of our brothers will not be able to attend this year's 173d Airborne National Association annual reunion in San Diego, CA, we would like to offer you and your Chapter members the opportunity to purchase some of our challenge coins. Please advise your Chapter members of this offer.

For more information, please feel free to contact Carlos Hernandez at 619-252-1990 from 10 am until 7 pm (PST). Thank you for your support.

**Pascual Dinong
San Diego Chapter 28 VP**



'Easy Eddie'



'Easy Eddie' with Capone

Many years ago, Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the windy city in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder.

Capone had a lawyer nicknamed 'Easy Eddie.' He was Capone's lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time.

To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, but Eddie got special dividends, as well. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago City block.

Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him.

Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object.

And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was.

Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; he couldn't pass on a good name or a good example.

One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Easy Eddie wanted to rectify wrongs he had done.

He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al 'Scarface' Capone, clean up his

tarnished name, and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. So, he testified.

Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street. But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer, at the greatest price he could ever pay. Police removed from his pockets a rosary, a crucifix, a religious medallion, and a poem clipped from a magazine. The poem read:

*'The clock of life is wound but once,
and no man has the power
to tell just when the hands will stop,
at late or early hour.
Now is the only time you own.
Live, love, toil with a will.
Place no faith in time.
For the clock may soon be still.'*

Butch O'Hare



Navy Ace & MOH Recipient, Butch O'Hare

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific.

One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship.

His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet.

As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold; a squadron of Japanese aircraft was speeding its way toward the American fleet.

(continued....)



The American fighters were gone on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet.

Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 caliber's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch wove in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until all his ammunition was finally spent.

Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible, rendering them unfit to fly. Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction.

Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier.

Upon arrival, he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun-camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had, in fact, destroyed five enemy aircraft.

This took place on February 20, 1942, and for that action Butch became the Navy's first Ace of WWII, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Medal of Honor.

A year later Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His hometown would not allow the memory of this WWII hero to fade, and today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man.

So, the next time you find yourself at O'Hare International, give some thought to visiting Butch's memorial displaying his statue and his Medal of Honor. It's located between Terminals 1 and 2.

So what do these two stores have in common? Butch O'Hare was 'Easy Eddie's' son.



Medal of Honor presentation on April 21, 1942: President Roosevelt, Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy (behind FDR), Admiral Ernest King, Edward O'Hare and his wife Rita.



In 1963 President Kennedy lays a wreath on a monument dedicated to Lt. Comdr. Edward "Butch" O'Hare. The wreath was handed to him by O'Hare's nephews, Philip Tovrea III and Edward Palmer, right.

(Steve Lasker, Chicago American)

[Sent in by Joe Llewellyn, LT, 25th Inf./VNV]

Note:

Now Joe Llewellyn, good friend and golf buddy notwithstanding, is still a Leg, AND an officer to boot, so our editorial board of pairs of troopers most certainly didn't know whether to trust the veracity of anything he said, let alone these stories of 'Easy Eddie' and Butch O'Hare. But, damn, the Leg LT was right! Another interesting tidbit about our Purple Heart platoon leader friend from the 25th....When 2/503 Bn XO/CO Bob Carmichael was asked by Gen. Williamson to return to VN for a second tour as Bn CO with the 25th Infantry, guess who was one of his young officers? Yup, LT Joe. Ed



LT Joe



Airborne School



Jumpmaster inspecting equipment of 2/503 troopers at Kadina. (Photo by LTC George Dexter, Bn CO, 2/503)

The United States Army Airborne School focuses on paratrooper training for the United States armed forces. Paratroopers are soldiers and Marines that use parachutes in operations and campaigns as part of an airborne drop force.

The school itself is operated by the 1st Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment based out of Fort Benning Georgia. The school, also called "Jump School" provides the armed services with a Basic Airborne Course.

Jumpmasters also provide training to other select groups within the Department of Defense as well as United States allies, though the latter is in rare circumstances and often involves training for jumping with cargo for aid related missions.

Jump School certifies its students in the use of parachutes for combat situations. It is reported to be one of the toughest specialized training schools used by the Army and has bred a culture of aggression in training.

The school is completely voluntary and most soldiers who attend have it added to their contract with the armed forces, though it typically adds one year to their deployment because of the specialized nature of the training.

Students may quit at any time during the three-week course, whether they are still working on the ground or are in a plane about to make a jump.



2/15/65. Young paratroopers of the 2/503d ready for practice jump at Yomitan DZ, soon to become hardened combat vets. (Photo by George Dexter)

Students and Teachers

Most students in the Airborne School at any given time will be from the Army. The Army operates four large airborne divisions and its special operations and Special Forces are also required to partake in parachute training.



The very first of the best of the best.

(continued....)



Marines also attend Jump School alongside Navy Special Forces. The Air Force sends some of its para-rescue trainees, weather technicians, and tactical air control members through the training. The Coast Guard does not send recruits to Jump School.

Regardless of their branch of service, all graduates receive the United States Army Parachutist Badge, which is often called the "Jump Wings."

Instructors are known as "Black Hats" because of the black baseball caps that are part of their training uniforms. The caps are emblazoned with their rank and the parachutist badge.

Black Hats hold the rank of Sergeant and are referred to as "Sergeant Airborne." However, if the instructor is from the Navy they are a Petty Officer in rank because the Navy uses a different officer classification system. Instructors can come from any of the four military branches that attend the school, but are typically from the Army.



George Dexter
Col. (Ret)
2/503 Bn Cmdr

through them as well as the upper body – always land with your knees together! The technique compensates for the rate of falling that the T-10D parachute creates, roughly equivalent to fall from a height of 1.5 stories.

Training involves running and performing maneuvers with the parachute and other equipment at first. Once soldiers are used to the feel of the gear, they begin jumping off of objects with it. Soldiers jump into pits of sand and other semi-hard cushions.

Black Hat instructors are on-hand to correct technique, especially a soldier's posture, and show soldiers how to apply this falling to movement as they fall.

In order to pass Ground Week and move on to Tower Week, soldiers must pass all of the jumps as well as standard Army Physical Fitness Test requirements.

If a soldier does not leave the program

but does not pass, they may have an option of receiving a second round of training in order to attempt to pass the tests again. This often happens for soldiers who are injured during the training.

The Army keeps these greenhorns extra green by calling the practice recycling. If you pass, it's on to jumping and falling from much greater heights.

Tower Week

Tower Week involves jumping, falling and being pushed from various towers that range between 36 feet tall and 250 feet tall.

Soldiers use the smaller towers to learn how to properly land and are required to maintain proper technique throughout the entire fall. For smaller towers, soldiers are attached to a zip line that includes a brief dead drop.

Soldiers jump from the tower with a slackened line that does not catch until after a free-fall of about 8 feet.

The line will jerk and then the soldier slides properly.



Bill McKenzie
B/2/503



Milton Olive, III
B/2/503
MOH/KIA



Connie Walker
Chap/HHC/2/503
The Leapin Deacon



Pat Bowe
HHC/Recon/2/503



Refresher training in Vietnam for Charlie Co. troopers.

(Photo by Capt. Jack Leide, CO, C/2/503)

Ground Week

The first week of Jump School is all on the ground. Soldiers and Marines learn how to safely land when they hit the ground by absorbing the impact with their entire body instead of landing solidly on the legs, which can break ankles and knees.

The proper landing technique for paratroopers is called the Parachute Landing Fall (PLF) and involves landing on the sides of the lower legs and knees while rotating to send energy



Rick Patterson
A/2/503

(continued....)



Again, technique must be kept perfect through the process because this teaches soldiers how to handle the whiplash and catch associated with first opening a parachute.

You can't close your eyes during these falls or you'll have to do it again. This often means that soldiers who report enjoying the whole process only have to do these falls once or twice while those scared or uncomfortable with the process repeated it many times.

Small and medium-sized towers are used to teach soldiers how to properly exit an aircraft, from jump positions and lines to techniques for avoiding aircraft parts and forces.

Tower Week culminates with the 250-foot tower. Soldiers are strapped into a harness and lifted into the air at the top of tower. Their parachutes are opened and they are left to drift down from the tower. Soldiers will perform these drops with the standard T-10D parachute and may also learn to use the T-10C, which allows for some steering. Soldiers are trained to aim for specific points of impact and the final tests involve hitting the center of a drop target.

Tower Week also teaches soldiers how to use different parachute equipment including emergency and reserve chutes. This includes required classroom lessons. Sleeping at any point during such a class calls for an immediate expulsion from the program.

Soldiers that successfully hit jump targets and demonstrate the ability to operate emergency equipment under pressure are passed on to Jump Week.

Jump Week

Soldiers get thrown out of a perfectly good airplane during Jump Week.

Paratroopers are usually put in a C-130 or C-17 and flown from Lawson Army Airfield to Fryar Field where all of their training jumps are made. This has earned the area the nickname "Fryar Drop Zone." Fryar is named for a World War II soldier who was part of the parachute corps and earned a Medal of Honor.



173d MP ready for practice jump



Les Fuller A/2/503



Bob Toporek B/2/503



"Moe" Elmore HHC/C/D/2/503

Drops are typically made from 1200 feet by a plane circling the drop zone. Soldiers are made to check their equipment, connect to a line inside the plane, and jump out of the airplane when told to by their Black Hat. The plane uses green lights to indicate that it is in the drop zone. If there are still soldiers onboard when the light turns red, the plane circles back around to the drop zone and then they jump.

Airborne School graduates need to have at least 5 successful jumps, including one night jump. Soldiers jump with a variety of different equipment levels, from virtually nothing to a full combat load. After a jump, soldiers collect their gear and return to Lawson to await their next jump.

Thursday is the final day for jumps during a typical Jump Week and the graduation ceremony is held on Friday morning. In the case of bad weather or large groups, however, the graduation ceremony can be held at the Fryar jump site immediately after the last jump is finished.

While family and guests are able to watch jumps and see their soldiers at graduation day, interaction is limited. For most, Jump School is part of a continuous training program so there is no leave or celebration built in to the school.

A Long History

Jump School was first instituted in 1940 when the War Department developed a paratrooper platoon. It was made up of Fort Benning's 29th Infantry Regiment. The first trainees went to New Jersey to use existing towers and gear left over from the New York World's Fair. This allowed them to perform jumps in situations close to an airplane jump but with more safety options. The towers initially used served as models for the towers currently in use.



Tom Ayers A/2/503



French Journalist Catherine Leroy ready for combat jump with 2/503d



Sgt. Remmel 2/503



Chet Nycum G/2/503 PRCT

One of the original few who led the way

(continued....)



In 45 days after formation, students made their first jumps from a B-18. They landed in Lawson Field on August 16, 1940. This platoon holds the honor of being the first to have a mass jump in the United States. First Lieutenant William Ryder and Private William King became the first officer and enlisted man to officially jump as paratroopers in United States Army history.



Carlos Lozada
MOH/KIA

Guest Jumping

The school currently allows some units and individuals to serve as guest jumpers. These guests are not allowed to jump during the students' first jump. The school has limited space but allows members on pay loss or hurt status to jump in order to regain some pay or improve their station within ranks.

Typically, soldiers need hazardous duty orders to be guest jumpers. Soldiers with jump experience that are assigned to Ft. Benning can also get jump status permission but this is limited. The operation has a strict "no walk on" policy.

[Source: <http://airborneschool.com/>]
(Photos added)



Steve Welsh getting ready to jump in VN, while Catherine snaps a photo. She would make the combat jump with the 2/503 but later be killed during the war.

~ The Three Weeks of Jump School ~

Week 1:

They separate the men from the boys;

Week 2:

They separate the men from the fools;

Week 3:

The fools jump!

More of those jump ready Sky Soldiers of ours...



Freddie Parks
A/2/503



Charles Durden
HQ/2/503 PRCT



Butch Clark
HHC/2/503



Wayne Bowers
C/D/2/503



J.L. Frazier
A/2/503



Wambi Cook
A/2/503



Chuck Breit
HQ/2/503 PRCT



John Smith
A/2/503



Jimmy Castillo
C/2/503



John Stepsnik
A/2/503



Dave Griffin
B/HHC/2/503



Carl Dognilli
503rd PRCT



Matt Roberts
B/2/503



Adrian Cavazos
C/2/503



Corky Corcoran
HHC/2/503

(continued...)





Jim Wilson
C/2/503



Ken Redding
HHC/2/503



Jim Dresser
A/HHC/2/503



Chris Klix
A/HHC/2/503



Johnny Graham
C/2/503



Art Frey
A/2/503



Joe Lacari
C/2/503



Jack Moore
C/2/503



Marvin Smith
HHC/2/503



Jim Parffit
B/2/503



Ed Wilby
HHC/2/503



Jim Green
B/2/503



Mike de Gyurky
B/HHC/2/503



Kris Russell
B/2/503



Wayne Tuttle
C/2/503



Rick Reynolds
E/2/503



Jim Mullaney
503rd PRCT



Harry Cleland
HHC/B/2/503



Richard Moorehouse
B/2/503



Wayne Bowers
C/2/503



Bob Guy
HHC/2/503



Lee Robinson
B/2/503



Jack Leide
C/2/503



Herbert Murhammer
B/2/503



Barry "Bear" Hart
C/2/503



Jack Ribera
A/2/503



Jim Stanford
B/2/503



Louie Zucco
D/2/503



Ray Basham
2/503 PRCT



Barry "slo" Salant
D/2/503



Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503



(Background photo by Pat Bowe, HHC/Recon/2/503)



~ Just A Few Of Many Of Our Blast-Ready Buddies
Who Made Their Final Jump For Their Fellow Sky Soldiers ~



Ken Knudson
A/2/503, KIA



Charles Kier
C/2/503, KIA



William Tarbell
A/2/503, KIA



Amado Valencia
E/2/503, KIA



Ward Mills
C/2/503, KIA



Darrell Butts
A/2/503, KIA



Ken Lima
A/2/503, KIA



Trine Romero
A/2/503, KIA



Lloyd Smith
A/2/503, KIA



Dan Valdez
A/2/503, KIA



Henry Wooley
D/2/503, KIA



Ray Meehan
B/2/503, KIA



Theodore Williams
C/2/503, KIA



Mike de Marisco
A/2/503, KIA



Timothy Murphy
A/2/503, KIA



Paul Surette
A/2/503, KIA



Jesus Moreno
B/2/503, KIA



Jim Shultz
A/2/503, KIA

All The Way Troopers!

Of the 1647* Sky Soldiers who gave their lives in Vietnam, these are the only photographs we have of our 2/503 KIA in jump-ready gear. Ed

*Source: 173d Airborne Brigade Foundation web site



Don't eyeball me soldier!



Black Hat (standing) Court Prisk, former CO C/Bty/3/319th, eyeballs his younger brother Gary Prisk, former CO C/D/2/503, during training.

What kind of can?



A Can-O Whoopass!

“When the rich wage war, it's the poor who die.”

~Jean-Paul Sartre

The 173d Association Store



Ike Mellinger and myself paid a visit to the Association's Store in Ashland, Kentucky.

Met up with the proprietor and Chapter member DANIEL DAY, at center in the picture. A great time with a great host.

Daniel showed us throughout the building and its busy activities. Was surprised at the checks and the number of orders collecting on Daniel's desk. These are the orders for merchandise that people are sending in.

Thank goodness for Danny volunteering to keep up with all of this.

**William Terry
A/3/319th**



Association Store Web Site:

www.skysoldier.net/173d-Airborne-Brigade-Association-Store



LTC Anthony B. Herbert

CO 2/503rd

7 April 1930 – 7 June, 2014

Anthony B. Herbert was a United States Army officer, who served in both the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He is best known for his claims that he witnessed war crimes in Vietnam, which his commanding officer refused to investigate. He reached the rank of lieutenant colonel and was the author of several books about his experiences, including *Soldier* and *Making of A Soldier*.



LTC Anthony Herbert

(web photo)

Herbert enlisted in the United States Army in May 1947 to be a paratrooper. He completed Basic Combat Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and Basic Airborne School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. After a few months of service in the peacetime Army at Ft. Lewis, Washington, he accepted a discharge in 1948, returned home and graduated from high school. He then re-enlisted in the Army in February 1950 and became a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division.

Korean War

Herbert deployed for Korea in October on the troopship *Walker*. It was here, in the Korean War, that he first built his reputation as a fighter, and was rapidly promoted to become one of the youngest Master Sergeants in the Army, and one of the most decorated. Herbert was selected by General Matthew Ridgway in 1951 to represent the American Soldier in Korea and returned to the U.S., going to the White House to meet President Harry Truman, and traveling the country to promote the war.

It was during this time that Herbert met former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and was persuaded by her to go to college and gain an education, for whatever he would do with the rest of his life. Herbert left the U.S. Army once again in 1952 to enter the University of Pittsburgh in order to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree, graduating in 1956 and re-entering the Army as a Second Lieutenant in the Pennsylvania National Guard. At the same time, Herbert accessioned for active duty and began the Infantry Officer's Basic Course (then called Basic Infantry Officer's Course, or BIOC) at Fort Benning, Georgia. After graduating that course with high marks, he was assigned as an Instructor to the Mountain Ranger Training Camp at Dhlonega, Georgia.

He followed this with assignments of increasing responsibility and was promoted quickly.

Personal Appearance

Anthony Herbert and his wife, Mary Grace, appeared on the 6 October 1955 episode of the TV quiz program *"You Bet Your Life"*, hosted by Groucho Marx. He was studying creative writing and psychology at the University of Pittsburgh. His book *Conquest to Nowhere*, about the Korean War, was mentioned.

Vietnam War

He first deployed to the Vietnam War in 1968 with the Inspector General's Office assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade, a unit with whom he would later make a dramatic mark, and one in which he would encounter many controversial roles later on. He commanded the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry.

In the wake of the controversy surrounding the My Lai Massacre, LTC Herbert claimed to have witnessed a number of war crimes in Vietnam, which he reported to his superiors but which they allegedly refused to curb or discipline. Herbert pressed charges against his commanding officers for their intransigence.

Herbert had reported eight separate war crimes, including incidents of looting, execution and murder. In one episode involving some Vietnamese girls Herbert stated, *"The area was brilliantly lit by floodlights ...Each of them [the girls] was seated with their hands on a table, palms down."* Herbert described the instruments used as a *"long springy rod of bamboo split into dozens of tight, thin flails on one end. It was a murderous weapon,"* he said. *"I'd seen it take the hide off a buffalo. When it was struck down hard, the flails splayed out like a fan, but an instant after impact they returned to their order, pinching whatever was beneath."*

According to Herbert, *"War crimes are infinitely easier to overlook than to explain to an investigating committee. Nor do they do much for promotion among the 'West Point Protection Society' of the Army's upper-echelon career men. So when I kept bringing up the matter, I kept on making enemies and getting answers such as, 'what the hell did you expect, Herbert? Candy and flowers?' I reported these things and nothing happened."*



(continued...)



Some commentators have opined that Herbert's allegations were exaggerated or unsubstantiated. Herbert was accused of exaggeration and outright lying in his filed reports. In April 1969 he was relieved of his command of the Second Battalion, despite its outstanding record under his leadership.

"I know now it wasn't just the Army," Herbert says. "It was General Westmoreland in particular. He did everything he possibly could to keep my case covered up because of the heat being placed on the Army from the My Lai case."

The U.S. Army's Criminal Investigation Division (CID) produced several reports on Herbert's claims. A report dated Aug. 23, 1971 reviewing Herbert's allegations stated: "... technique employed included the transmission of electrical shock by means of a field telephone [used on a Vietnamese girl] a water rag treatment which impaired breathing, hitting with sticks and boards, and beating of detainees with fists."



A CID report marked FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY: "Herbert's S-3 [non-commissioned officer] witnessed a field telephone in use during interrogation, but no objection was raised."

Dozens of official CID documents substantiated Herbert's statements, despite this, the Army claimed that Herbert had "a propensity to lie or exaggerate."

On March 15, 1971, Herbert reported 14 separate charges to his superior J. Ross Franklin, including corpse mutilation and the electrical torture of a Vietnamese girl by Army intelligence.

Herbert gave interviews to *Life Magazine*, the *New York Times* and on the Dick Cavett Show. He took voluntary polygraph tests and passed. "Army harassment increased until at last, my family began to show signs of stress from the ordeal," Herbert said.

Retirement

Feeling pressured by the army, on November 7, 1971, Herbert set his own retirement in motion, retiring from the Army in February 1972.

A year later Herbert and *New York Times* correspondent James Wooten wrote the best-selling book *Soldier*, an autobiographical book documenting his

efforts to expose both the incompetence and the atrocities he'd seen in Vietnam.

Some years after his retirement from the Army, he was asked in an interview how he felt about leaving the Army after all that had come to pass. He remarked, "***If you stick by your guns, if you stand by the truth, you win. I feel good about my time in Vietnam and my time in the Army. As my friend Sgt. Maj. John Bittorie once said, 'There are two kinds of military reputations. One is official and on paper in Washington DC. The other is the one that goes from bar to bar from the mouths of those who served with you there.' That is the only reputation I ever really cared about.***"



Mike Wallace of "60 Minutes," left, and Anthony B. Herbert in 1973. Colonel Herbert would later sue the show for libel. (CBS photo)

"The Selling of Colonel Herbert"

On Feb. 4, 1973, CBS's 60 Minutes aired a segment titled "The Selling of Colonel Herbert." CBS correspondent Mike Wallace and producer Barry Lando challenged his credibility, implying that *Soldier* was fictitious and that Herbert himself was guilty of war crimes.

Supporting the CBS allegations against Herbert on the show was Herbert's old nemesis, Colonel J. Ross Franklin who had been relieved of his command. Franklin had been relieved from his command for throwing a Vietnamese body out of a helicopter. (In 1991 Franklin was convicted and sent to prison to serve a five-year sentence for his role in a securities scam.)

(continued,...)



Herbert suspected that the Nixon administration put pressure on CBS, which led to the story. CBS president Frank Stanton was under subpoena for an earlier broadcast called *The Selling of the Pentagon*. About that time Stanton paid a visit to Nixon White House counsel Charles Colson, who later said in the *New York Times* that Stanton volunteered to help Nixon and was unusually accommodating.



LTC Herbert with 173d

Herbert v. Lando

Herbert sued CBS over the *60 Minutes* segment that painted him as a liar. The charge stemmed from an appearance he made on the show, when host Mike Wallace surprised him by bringing one of his Army colleagues into the interview, who proceeded to deny the veracity of much of Herbert's story.

The case reached the United States Supreme Court (*Herbert v. Lando*, 441 U.S. 153 (1979)). The Court ruled that defendants have no privilege under the First Amendment which would bar a plaintiff from inquiring into the editorial process or states of mind of those involved in the alleged libel, if the inquiry was tailored to the production of evidence considered material to plaintiff's necessary burden of proof.

This ruling allowed Herbert to seek proof of the alleged libel.

In 2005 the U.S. Court of Appeals in New York dismissed the libel suit. Judge Irving R. Kaufman, a member of the three-judge panel, ruled that Herbert had no grounds to take his case to trial in a 43-page opinion. The opinion stated the CBS story was essentially accurate. To go to trial over some minor unresolved issues would be a "*classic case of the tail wagging the dog.*"

Herbert was reported considering again appealing his case to the U.S. Supreme Court. It was Judge Kaufman who the Supreme Court reversed in the 1979 decision.

Jonathan Lubell, Herbert's attorney, claimed that Kaufman has long been sympathetic to the press.

Post-military life

During Herbert's military career, he earned a doctorate in psychology, and later become a police and clinical psychologist. Herbert died of cancer on 7 June 2014 at the age of 84. His death was not made public until after his burial at Arlington National Cemetery, in February 2015.

Anyone interested in researching the subjects cited above may refer to the web source below which details numerous records and additional reference sources. Ed

Source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Herbert_\(lieutenant_colonel\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Herbert_(lieutenant_colonel))

The *WHODAT'S* from Page 14

It was when we were in Tuy Hoa...I'm not sure of the month.....but I think it was either end of Sept or early Oct sometime.....we were removed from Dak To for a while before returning to get resupplied and a short break. I'm sure there should be something somewhere that would tell you the dates we were there because we went out on missions around the area for a while.



Ray Zaccone and I at the beach in Tuy Hoa..... dang were we young.

Talked with Ray...seems we were there doing search and destroy for a few weeks in Oct....and we spent a few days at the beach because I got to use the Mars station and Ray had his birthday on the 25th. A couple of days later we went back to Dak To.....and you know the rest of the story....smiles.

Ray said he would contact you and he might have some more pictures to share.

Steve Welch
C/2/503d

(Photo from Steve)



From the 173d Airborne Association Webmaster

Greeting Sky Soldiers!

I just added 11 new events to our Sky Soldier website on our "Scheduled Events" webpage. They relate to various events that many of you may be interested in. In most cases, website links are listed to provide greater detail.

To view these new events, please go to this web address:

<https://www.skysoldier.net/Scheduled-Events>

Once you are on the "Scheduled Events" webpage, you may view a list of the new Scheduled Events. Or, you can click on the "Switch to Calendar View" in the upper right hand corner, and choose to view the events by Week or by Month or by Year.

View and enjoy!

Remember that our website is a "Work-In-Progress" and will be undergoing additions and improvements over time.

Jerry L. Cooper, CPA
Treasurer and Webmaster
173d Airborne Brigade Association



~ Correction ~

I noticed the 173rd Airborne 2nd 503d newsletter online and a photo caught my attention in issue #13 March 2010, posted by (Dave) Griffin on page 18 showing LTC Sigholtz and "Moose" Sebastine (RTO) and supposedly SMG Ed Proffitt after the combat jump. Well, SGM Proffitt is not in the photo that is *Me* with my radio (RTO) right side of photo. I was HHC/2nd 503d year of 66-67.



That's Richard on right

Richard Rocha



More recent pic of our buddy, Richard.

Statistics released from the United Nations reveal that....

....Australian, Canadian, UK and US men between 50 and 75 years of age, will, on average, have sex two to three times per week, whereas Japanese men, in the same age group, will have sex only once or twice per year.



Pretty Ninja Girl

This is very upsetting news to most of my friends, as they had no idea they were Japanese.

[Sent in by a keenly-observant Sky Soldier of the A/2/503 kind]

A few of our buddies we never suspected of being Japanese:



L-R from A/2/503: Jack "Jackattack" Ribera (a little Japanese); Mike Sturges (somewhat Japanese); Richard Ware (moderately Japanese).



Newsletter editor, 100% Japanese!
 A face only a mother could love, but maybe not.



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:** _____

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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

