



June-July 2015, Issue 61
Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

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http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



L-R: 2/503 Chargin' Charlies....Lumkin, gunner, WIA; Sanders, RTO, KIA; Madrid, rifleman, WIA.
They were young and paratroopers.

(Photo by Sam Stewart, C/2/503)



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2/503rd Sky Soldier of the Year 2015 ~ Vietnam Era



Robert B. Carmichael, LTC, Abn Inf (Ret)



LTC Robert B. Carmichael (Bob), was born on 28 October 1929, in Wewoka, Oklahoma. He joined the army as an enlisted man in 1952, later completing officer training. He served as Battalion Executive Officer and Battalion Commander of the 2/503rd in '65/'66.

At the request of General Williamson, he returned to Vietnam for a second tour of duty as Battalion Commander with the 25th Infantry Division. Bob's storied army career spans nearly 22 years, and in addition to his Vietnam service, it includes duty in Korea, Alaska, and the USA Command & General Staff College, among numerous other appointments.

Referred to as "RBC" by family and friends, the Colonel was graduated the University of Texas with a BA in Psychology, and has completed numerous advanced infantry and officer courses while in service to his country.

Bob played a critical role during *Operation Silver City* in March of 1966, when his advice to 173d Brigade Command was followed to tactically and quickly move the 2nd Battalion to LZ Zulu-Zulu in the "D" Zone jungle where the battalion set-up a defensive perimeter before being attacked by a reinforced enemy regiment three-times their size. Years later he was in command of the 25th Infantry Battalion which was victorious in one of the most major battles ever fought in Vietnam, during *Operation Crook*.



(Then) Major Carmichael at Bao Trai airstrip on 2 Jan 66, before heliborne assault into LZ Wine during Operation Marauder. His was one of two choppers which took multiple rounds of enemy fire from the hot LZ.



LTC Carmichael (C) briefing Gen Williamson (R) while in command of 25th Infantry Div. battalion on his second tour of duty in VN.

The Colonel's army service and combat awards are too many to list here, but include the Silver Star, the Army Commendation Medal, the Bronze Star w/V & 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Purple Heart w/1 Oak Leaf Cluster; but Bob's army career was never about collecting medals. Bob was and remains to this day a *Soldier's Soldier*, never once losing sight of the value and importance of the lives of the men he commanded.

One private recalls a softball game at Camp Zinn in 1966, when the Colonel was playing ball with his troops between operations. After he turned in a particularly good play one of the soldiers yelled "Way to go, Major!" The (then) Major Carmichael, battalion executive officer at the time, turned to his young teammate, with his hand holding the ball on one hip and his glove on the other hip, and said, "Call me Bob!" He recognized between the lines on a baseball field there is no rank or seniority, and to this day he continues to conduct his life by that same credo. Coming from the ranks of the enlisted, RBC has never forgotten his early beginnings; just ask any of the G.I.'s who served with the man.

In June 2013, LTC Robert B. Carmichael (Ret), by order of the Secretary of the Army, was named a *Distinguished Member of the 503rd Infantry Regiment* in recognition of his support of fellow 503rd troopers while promoting the legacy of the Regiment, a most unique honor.

Today, the Colonel is retired and lives in Austin, Texas with his beautiful bride, Exie, where he spends much of his time fishing, tending to his vegetable garden, and rooting for his Long Horn's; and with his devoted wife, helping G.I.'s even when those same G.I.'s have no idea from where the help originated.



Bob, with Exie, the love of his life, in Austin, TX.

Colonel Carmichael, from your fellow officers and men of the 2/503d, congratulations! Just give us the word, and we're ready to assault the next hot LZ in a rice paddy or chopper into triple-canopy jungle with you one more time. All the way, Sir!

(tribute continued....)



On May 9, 2015, Bravo Bulls Jim Stanford and Ed Kearney, visited LTC Carmichael, his wife, Exie, and their family in Austin where they presented Bob with an appreciative memento and the written tribute which follows. Ed



After reading citation to LTC Bob Carmichael, Capt. Jim Stanford snaps a sharp salute to his Battalion CO at Bob's home in Austin, as Exie looks on at the two Sky Soldiers.

"On behalf of the officers and men of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), it is our honor on this 9th day of May, in the year 2015, to present to you, LTC Robert B. Carmichael, Inf Abn (Ret), *2/503rd Sky Soldier of the Year 2015*, this small token of our appreciation.

On 4 November 1965, you, as (then) Major Carmichael, reported to duty in the Republic of Vietnam as Battalion Executive Officer and remained in that assignment for four months until you took command of the battalion in the midst of a battle in which Alpha Company had suffered significant casualties. Upon taking command of the battalion on 26 February 1966 during that ferocious battle, you relieved the hard-hit A Company and initiated pursuit of the enemy which continued for over three weeks, showing cool headed leadership and a deep and abiding care for the men under your command throughout the operation and beyond.



Three strac lookin' paratroopers. Bob, Ed & Jim.

During your time as Battalion Executive Officer you supervised the battalion staff and the administrative functions of the battalion both in base camp at Camp Zinn near Bien Hoa, Vietnam and during six combat operations lasting from 5 to 27 days. In base camp you made a particular and significant effort to raise the level of morale and support to the line companies and ensured that the additional administrative load caused by casualties, the processing of awards and decorations, and the overall operation of the battalion was accomplished in a most highly efficient manner.

During combat operations in the field you constantly supervised the provision of administrative and logistical support to the operational elements of the battalion and the proper functioning of the battalion command post. Throughout, you insisted on and obtained high standards of performance from the staff and support agencies, and carried this same determination and leadership qualities forward as you accepted command of the 2nd Battalion in combat, and to subsequently serve with equal distinction as Battalion Commander with the 25th Infantry Division, and particularly during Operation Crook where many American lives were spared due to your wise and specific command decisions.

You are known and remembered by the Sky Soldiers you commanded in combat as '*A Soldier's Soldier*,' one of the highest compliments a combat officer can receive from his troops. You should be especially proud of your service to your men, your units and country.

We salute you, LTC Carmichael, and wish you a hearty *Airborne, Sir, All The Way!*"

The Officers & Men of the 2/503rd



The CO & Jim joined by the Carmichael boys & girls.

(Photos courtesy of our good buddy, Ed Kearney)





U.S Special Operations Forces Doubt Women Can Meet Demands of the Job

That's the title of an article by Lolita C. Baldor with *The Associated Press* which appeared in a local newspaper recently and sent in by Col. John Erskine who served with the 1st, 5th & 6th Special Forces Groups, and who is an avid reader of our newsletter. Perhaps wisely, the only remarks the good Colonel offered in connection with the submission were, *"This was in our local paper a couple of days ago..."* (Maybe) like me, John suspected any stated hint of agreement with the Special Ops people referenced could possibly invite the wrath of one or more armed Sneaky Pete-type ladies lurking in the bushes outside, or even worse, irk our brides with whom we live and rely on to feed and dress us, and take care of all the household paperwork, plus picking up the dog poop during walks which we simply refuse to do. Repercussions could be limitless, including the possibility of turning some of us into Japanese lovers (see Issue 60).

Ms. Baldor's report begins, ***"Surveys find that men in the U.S. special operations forces do not believe women can meet the physical and mental demands of their commando jobs, and they fear the Pentagon will lower standards to integrate women into their elite units..."*** She goes on to state, ***"By 2016, the military must open all combat jobs to women or explain why any exceptions must be made."***

One could possibly and perhaps reasonably advance the argument women, in general I suppose, may or may not possess comparable raw physical strength demanded by the job, but, this cannot be said of *all* women; so one is compelled to ask, 'which women?'

And as to the 'mental wherewithal' the work requires? This brief entrée into the question of ladies serving in Special Ops does neither support nor denounce the concept in the main. But one need merely take a passing look at history to dispel such a rumor. What follows here is one part of that history.

Ed

The Women Who Lived for Danger: The Agents of the Special Operations Executive

"The Special Operations Executive was formed by Winston Churchill in 1940 to 'set Europe ablaze.' In the SOE women were trained to handle guns and explosives, work undercover, endure interrogation by the Gestapo, and use complex codes. In *The Women Who Lived for Danger*, acclaimed historian Marcus Binney recounts the story of ten remarkable women who were dropped in occupied territories to work as secret agents.

Once they were behind enemy lines, theirs was the most dangerous war of all, as they led apparently normal civilian lives while in constant danger of arrest.

They organized dropping grounds for arms and explosives destined for the Resistance, helped operate escape lines for airmen who had been shot down over Europe, and provided Allied Command with vital intelligence. SOE women agents came from all walks of life: from the dazzling Polish Countess Krystyna Skarbek (alias Christine Granville) and **the American Virginia Hall**, who was from a rich Baltimore family, to Marguerite Knight, a secretary in Walthamstow. Petite Lisa de Baissac lived next to Gestapo headquarters in Poitiers playing the part of a quiet widow, while twenty-year-old student Paola Del Din was sent to find a way through the German front line in Florence. Hot-tempered Paddy O'Sullivan deflected a German officer from examining her suitcase by making a date with him, and Alix d'Unienville feigned madness when captured.

The stories of these women agents -- some famous, some virtually unknown -- are told with the help of extensive new archive material. Their exploits form a new chapter of heroism in the history of warfare matched only by their determination, resourcefulness, and ability to stay cool in the face of extreme danger."



Virginia Hall Goillot, MBE, DSC

(6 April 1906 — 8 July 1982)

Virginia Hall was an American spy with the British Special Operations Executive during World War II and later with the American Office of Strategic Services and the Special Activities Division of the Central Intelligence Agency. She was known by many aliases, including "Marie Monin", "Germaine", "Diane", "Marie of Lyon", "Camille", and "Nicolas". The Germans gave her the nickname *Artemis*. The Gestapo reportedly considered her *"the most dangerous of all Allied spies"*.



Hall was born in Baltimore, MD and attended Roland Park Country School and then the prestigious Radcliffe College and Barnard College (Columbia University), where she studied French, Italian and German. She wanted to finish her studies in Europe. With help from her parents, she travelled the Continent and studied in France, Germany, and Austria, finally landing an appointment as a Consular Service clerk at the American Embassy in Warsaw, Poland in 1931. Hall had hoped to join the Foreign Service, but suffered a setback around 1932 when she accidentally shot herself in the left leg while hunting in Turkey. The leg was later amputated from the knee down, and replaced with a wooden appendage which she named "Cuthbert". The injury foreclosed whatever chance she might have had for a diplomatic career, and she resigned from the Department of State in 1939. Thereafter she attended graduate school at American Univ. in Washington, DC.

The coming of war that year found Hall in Paris. She joined the Ambulance Service before the fall of France and ended up in Vichy-controlled territory when the fighting stopped in the summer of 1940.

Hall made her way to London and volunteered for Britain's newly formed Special Operations Executive (SOE), which sent her back to Vichy in August 1941. She spent the next 15 months there, helping to coordinate the activities of the French Underground in Vichy and the occupied zone of France. At the time she had the cover of a correspondent for the New York Post.

When the Germans suddenly seized all of France in November 1942, Hall barely escaped to Spain. Rather whimsically, her artificial foot had its own codename ("Cuthbert"). According to Dr. Dennis Casey of the U.S. Air Force Intelligence Agency, the French nicknamed her "la dame qui boite" and the Germans put "the limping lady" on their most wanted list. Before making her escape, she signaled to SOE that she hoped Cuthbert would not give trouble on the way. The SOE, not understanding the reference, replied, *"If Cuthbert*

troublesome, eliminate him". Journeying back to London (after working for SOE for a time in Madrid), in July 1943 she was quietly made an honorary Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

Virginia Hall joined the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Special Operations Branch in March 1944 and asked to return to occupied France. She hardly needed training in clandestine work behind enemy lines, and OSS promptly granted her request and landed her from a British MTB in Brittany (her artificial leg having kept her from parachuting in) with a forged French identification certificate for Marcelle Montagne. Codenamed "Diane", she eluded the Gestapo and contacted the French Resistance in central France. She mapped drop zones for supplies and commandos from England, found safe houses, and linked up with a Jedburgh team after the Allied Forces landed at Normandy. Hall helped train three battalions of Resistance forces to wage guerrilla warfare against the Germans and kept up a stream of valuable reporting until Allied troops overtook her small band in Sept.

In 1950, Hall married OSS agent Paul Goillot. In 1951, she joined the Central Intelligence Agency working as an intelligence analyst on French parliamentary affairs. She worked alongside her husband as part of the Special Activities Division. Hall retired in 1966 to a farm in Barnesville, MD, dying on 8 July, 1982 at age 76.

For her efforts in France, General William Joseph Donovan in September 1945 personally awarded Hall a Distinguished Service Cross — the only one awarded to a civilian woman in World War II. President Truman wanted a public award of the medal; however Hall demurred and replied ***"Still operational and most anxious to get busy."***



Hall awarded the DSC in 1945 by
OSS chief General Donovan

Her story was told in *"The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America's Greatest Female Spy"* by Judith L. Pearson. A biography exists in French: *"L'Espionne. Virginia Hall, une Américaine dans la guerre"*, by Vincent Nouzille, a book reviewed by British historian M.R.D. Foot in *"Studies in Intelligence"*. She was honored in 2006 again, at the French and British embassies for her courageous work in Special Ops.





US troops in Ukraine to train forces fighting pro-Russia rebels



By Roland Lloyd Parry

Kiev (AFP) - Hundreds of US paratroopers have arrived in Ukraine to train its forces fighting pro-Russian rebels in the east, the US army confirmed Friday, a move Moscow warned could "destabilise" the war-torn ex-Soviet country.

"Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade have been arriving over the last week," Donald Wrenn, a US army spokesman, told AFP.

"We will have about 300 soldiers from the brigade on the ground providing the training that will last over the next six months."



A US paratrooper of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, pictured during an exercise in Rukla, Lithuania.

The move raised heckles in Moscow, which accuses the United States of backing the protests that brought down Ukraine's Kremlin-backed president Viktor Yanukovich last year.

"The participation of instructors and experts from third countries on Ukrainian territory... of course, does not help to resolve the conflict," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, quoted by Russian news agencies.

"On the contrary, it can seriously destabilise the situation," he said.

Following Yanukovich's ouster and Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula, a pro-Russia uprising in east Ukraine sparked a conflict that has killed more than 6,000 people over the past year, according to the United Nations.

The West accuses Russia of arming the separatists who have taken control of much of eastern Ukraine, a charge that Moscow denies. It has also denied US claims that Russia sent troops to fight alongside the separatists.

Fighting between the separatists and Ukrainian troops is rumbling on in the east despite a February ceasefire agreement.

- Training for 'war-fighting' -

The US troops will train the National Guard of Ukraine, a reservist force that was reformed in 2014 to bring volunteers and militia under government control.

(continued....)





Ukrainian soldiers take part in a drill on a firing ground in the Kharkiv region in September 2014.

"We will be conducting classes on war-fighting functions, as well as training to sustain and increase the professionalism and proficiency of military staffs," Major Jose Mendez, operations officer for the brigade, was quoted as saying on the US Army site.

Ukraine had asked the United States to send the training mission, dubbed *Operation Fearless Guardian*, an article published by the US Army on April 11 said.

"This training will help them defend their borders and their sovereignty," it quoted brigade planning officer Captain Ashish Patel as saying.

A ground convoy drove all the way from the brigade's base in northern Italy to the Ukrainian military zone in Yavoriv near the Polish border with vehicles and equipment for the training mission.

The army stressed the equipment was for use by the US brigade in the training and not to be issued to Ukrainian forces.



Ukrainian army recruits hold their hands over their hearts as the national anthem is played.

Fifty paratroopers travelled with that 25-vehicle convoy, which arrived on April 10, while further troops arrived on April 14 and 15, the US Army website said.

Ukraine's defense ministry said in a statement that the training would begin with a ceremony on April 20.

Ukraine's Interior Minister Arsen Avakov had earlier said the US brigade would train about 900 Ukrainian National Guard troops in six months of training followed by joint war games.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade has already trained with Ukrainian forces elsewhere in Europe, as well as within Ukraine in the multi-national Rapid Trident field training exercises in September.

Britain is also deploying some 75 troops to Ukraine to train government forces there, while Canada announced Tuesday that it will also send 200 trainers.

- Obama pressured for arms -

US President Barack Obama has come under pressure from lawmakers and military officials to send weapons to help the Ukrainian forces defend themselves, but has so far held back.

Some of his European allies including Germany have warned that sending arms would escalate the bloodshed. European OSCE monitors in eastern Ukraine have denounced numerous violations of the ceasefire including heavy arms fire between the Ukrainian army and pro-Russian forces.

Among the latest casualties were six soldiers killed and a journalist who was injured by a mine during a flare-up of fighting, the Ukrainian army said on April 14.

Source:

<http://news.yahoo.com/300-us-troops-ukraine-train-ukrainian-forces-us-073153737.html>



Kiev, Ukraine, such a pretty city.



Those Crazy Brave Rats

I recall on more than one occasion we came upon VC tunnels, most likely in Cu Chi province or the "D" Zone jungle; this was in early '66 before the specialty of being a Tunnel Rat became the norm in many combat units. Once an entrance was discovered, we'd invariably stand around it until someone dropped smoke and grenades into the hole. Then one day we learned of a new tactic.

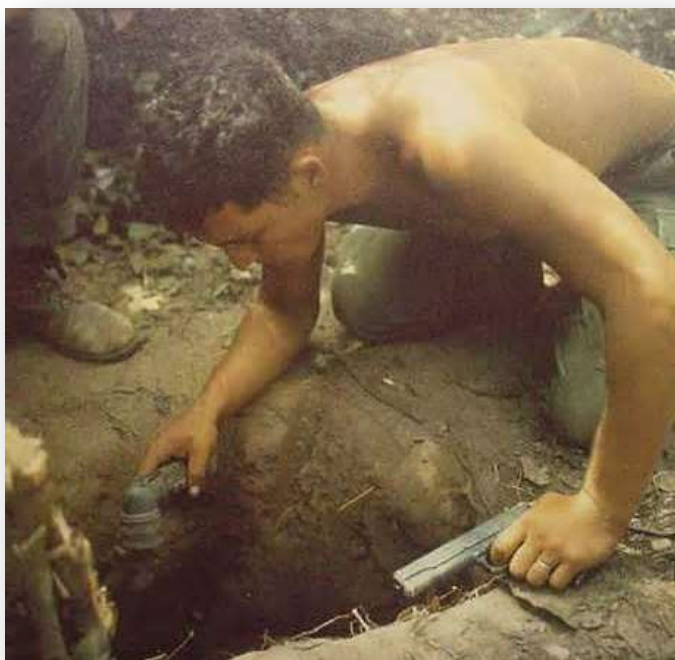
Milling around the entrance to one of these caverns one afternoon were a handful of us, smoking, talking, looking at the hole in the ground, happy to have a respite from the days' hump, when a Captain walked up. He randomly pointed at one of the smaller troopers in the crowd and gave him orders to enter the tunnel. The fellow removed his jungle fatigue shirt and was given a flashlight and a .45 before going underground (just as in the web photo below). It was an amazing sight to see, but the very thought of doing it was more scary than amazing. I don't recall hearing any protest from the selected one that afternoon.

I did learn something that day which was put to good use on future operations where tunnels were involved:

When it came time for the inevitable 'selection', I'd slowly move myself behind the nearest largest guy, hoping the PRC25 on my back would disqualify me from consideration, while making it a point not to make eye contact with the officer doing said selection. It took an unusual breed of man to enter those dark, dank and dangerous places, and I was not one of them.

To our 173d Tunnel Rats out there....you were some brave and crazy sonsabitches! And ATFW!

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



Viet Cong Mines in Chu Chi



The DH-5s and DH-10s were made out of crude steel, shaped like a saucer and containing five or ten pounds of high explosives. The mines stood on bipods or tripods pointing directionally, or they would be buried a few inches underground. They inflicted dreadful injuries. One American medical officer's report explained:

"[They were] packed with hundreds of steel pellets and a few pounds of explosives....the terrific force and the pellets propelled by it made the explosion of a command-detonated mine equivalent to the simultaneous firing of seventy twelve-gauge shotguns loaded with double-O buckshot. Naturally, anyone hit by such a weapon was likely to suffer traumatic amputation of something – an arm, a leg, his head. And many did."

**Our good buddy,
the late Dale
Olson, A/2/503,
in the tunnels
of Cu Chi on
return trip to
Vietnam in 2001.**



The Tunnel Rats

Tunnel rat Lieutenant David Sullivan of the Big Red One (LT tunnel rat? If they say so. Personally never saw such a bird in '65/'66 with our battalion. Anyone else? Ed) recalled a particularly devious Viet Cong booby trap. A tunnel entrance would be exposed to lure the Americans. When a rat team was sent down to investigate, the guerrillas in the tunnel knew that other GIs would gather round the entrance for communication or on guard. A claymore mine hidden in a nearby bush would then be detonated by wire from inside the tunnel. Sullivan lost several men like that. The VC waited until they heard the rats in the tunnel and then blasted the men still on the surface. In the confusion, the rats aborted the search, and the guerrillas escaped into the tunnel system.

One of the most feared variants of the DH-10 was the notorious Bouncing Betty, conical, with three prongs jutting out of the soil. When a foot struck a prong, a small charge was detonated, which shot the mine into the air about three feet, where it then exploded, showering shrapnel at groin level. It was a terrible mine.



The bouncing betty mine

For sheer ingenuity in adapting to local warfare conditions, a guerilla farmer from the Cu Chi village of Nhuan Duc was to win the top award. To Van Duc invented a helicopter booby trap. It was known as the cane-pressure mine and for a while it was a successful (and to the Americans, quite baffling) answer to the problem of how to destroy the helicopters that brought troops and supplies into the jungle. At first, as the American heliborne assault brought more and more troops to fight in the tunnel locations, the VC had tried with no success to lure the choppers into a booby-trapped landing zone. Inside the zone four hand grenades, each cross-linked by a friction fuse wire, would detonate in a daisy-chain sequence once the helicopter landed. But To Van Duc's invention was to that system what the space shuttle was to the Dakota.

Mindful of the simple physical principle that the blades of a helicopter create a considerable downdraft, the farmer suggested placing DH-10 mines at the tops of trees in an area where the helicopter could be expected to fly fairly low, or one to which they could be

lured to fly low for surveillance. A highly-sophisticated friction fuse was connected to the branches of the tree or fairly tall bush, which bent under the helicopter's downdraft, detonating the mine, which then exploded under the machine.

Excerpt from (photo added):
The Tunnels of Chu Chi
By Tom Manfold & John Penycate

A Few of the Other Surprises the Little People Had in Store for the Unsuspecting G.I. Humping the Boonies:



Pungi stake trap



Bucket trap with spikes



Cluster bomblet



Bamboo trap



Chinese hand grenade



Bamboo Pit Viper

It's been reported a substantial number of French, American, and Vietnamese (both north and south) landmines continue to litter the countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to this day.



VA Expands Choice Program Eligibility, Effective Immediately

VA Will Now Determine Eligibility Using Driving Distance

WASHINGTON – In order to expand eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it will determine eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program based on the distance between a Veteran's place of residence and the nearest VA medical facility using driving distance rather than straight-line distance. This change has been published in the *Federal Register* and is effective immediately.

"VA is pleased to announce the distance calculation change from straight-line to driving distance for the Veterans Choice Program," said Secretary Robert McDonald. "This update to the program will allow more Veterans to access care when and where they want it. We look forward to continued dialogue with Veterans and our partners to help us ensure continued improvements for Veterans' to access care."



Secretary McDonald

The change from straight-line to driving distance roughly doubles the number of eligible Veterans. Letters are being sent to the newly eligible Veterans to let them know they are now eligible for the Veterans Choice Program under this expansion. If a Veteran does not remember receiving a Veterans Choice Card or has other questions about the Choice Program, they can call (866) 606-8198.

Effective immediately, VA is also changing the mileage calculation for beneficiary travel. The change will ensure consistency in VA's mileage calculations across the two programs. The beneficiary travel calculation will now be made using the fastest route instead of the shortest route.

For more details about the department's progress and related information, see:

www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/factsheets_and_details.asp

Vietnam Veteran Touched By Anonymous Note Thanking Him For Service

By Emily Smith

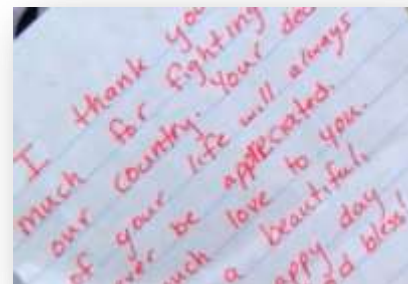


When Florida man Richard Smith returned to his car in a parking lot on Sunday, he noticed a note on his door handle. Smith assumed the note could mean one thing: someone had hit his car and left a note with their information. Already dreading calls to insurance companies and car repairs, Smith was shocked when he realized the note was actually an anonymous thank letter for his service in the Vietnam war.

"I opened it right here and I'm reading it," Smith said. "I said, 'wow.' That's really something. It got me a little emotional."

According to Smith, he's going to make copies of the note and place them around his house.

"I thank you so much for fighting for our country," the note reads. "The dedication of your life will always, forever be appreciated."



Smith's bumper has a Vietnam veteran sticker on it, which is likely what prompted the note. Smith added that while many people have noticed the bumper sticker and thanked him for his service, he's never received such a heartfelt note.

Smith said he hopes when veterans watch the news they'll see the note and feel good about their role in Vietnam.

Sources: *The Blaze*, WTHR / Photo Credit: *The Blaze*



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~ They Were Young & Brave & Paratroopers ~

Most unfortunately, not all our men of the 2/503rd who served during combat operations were formally recognized for their bravery and acts of courage above and beyond the call of duty; far too many troopers went unheralded. But fortunately, some of the valorous acts by our men were recorded.



If you are the recipient of the Bronze Star w/V, the Silver Star, the DSC or other valor award for combat actions in Vietnam with the 2/503rd, send a copy of your original written citation and a photo to rt0173d@cfl.rr.com. In future issues we'll include the text of awards to our men -- something your grandkids can one day read, about when their granddad was young and brave and a paratrooper.

Award of the Silver Star to Freddie Parks, A/2/503



“For gallantry in action: Private First Class Parks distinguished himself on 16 March 1966 while serving as an ammunition bearer for the weapons platoon during a combat mission near Phuoc Vinh, Republic of Vietnam. When two Viet Cong battalions launched an attack on the battalion perimeter, the main body of the

insurgent force concentrated on Private First Class Parks' platoon and forced it to withdraw approximately ten meters to a better position. As his squad received intense hostile fire, Private First Class Parks placed accurate fire on the insurgents and killed five Viet Cong near his former position. After observing a Viet Cong position to his front, Private First Class Parks began hurling grenades until a Viet Cong round tore a hole through his helmet and knocked him to the ground. Although he was almost deafened by the concussion, he ran to the nearest group of wounded soldiers, secured their grenades, ran to the front, and continued to assault the insurgent position. He threw almost 20 grenades before the firing in that area stopped. After a lull in the fighting, Private First Class Parks volunteered for a six man patrol and began to crawl to the dead Viet Cong and retrieve weapons and equipment. On his fifth trip, he was spotted and hit five times by Viet Cong fire. Nevertheless, he single-handedly neutralized the hostile position.

Although he was seriously wounded, he refused to be carried on a litter and walked to the evacuation helicopter shouting encouragement to his comrades. Private First Class Parks' extraordinary heroism in close combat against a numerically superior hostile force was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.”



Our buddy Freddie, at the ready.



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind 2015 ~



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: Screaming eagle.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



Special Forces Detachment A, Asheville Get Together, September 10-13, 2015, Asheville

Contact:

Web: <http://www.detachment-a.org/2015-asheville-get-together/>



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 Pathfinder Reunion, Sponsored by the National Pathfinder Association, Sep 29-Oct 2, 2015, at Fort Benning, GA.

Contact:

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



Combat Infantrymen's Association Reunion, October 1-4, 2015, in San Antonio, TX.

Contact:

Larry Eckard
Phn: 828-256-6008
Eml: combatinfantrysmensassoc@yahoo.com
Web: www.mlrsinc.com/cia



2015 FSB Ripcord Association Reunion October 7-10, 2015, in Springfield, MO.

Contact:

Lee Widjeskog
Phn: 856-451-1108
Web: www.ripcordassociation.com

NOTE

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

AIRBORNE....ALL THE WAY!



Sky Soldiers at San Diego Reunion in May



Letter to the Family of Charlie Morris

September 14, 1966

William C. Vose
Captain, Retired
Orlando, Florida

Family of Charlie Morris
c/o Chaplain Payne
Office of Division Chaplains
Fort Bragg, North Carolina



Photo given by Charlie to his and Bill's buddy,
Jim Healy A/2/503

I had the distinct pleasure of serving with Sgt. Morris from March through June of 1966. In late June of 1966, I was the First Platoon Leader of A/2/503. Before this battle in the stinking swamps of Xuan Loc, it was generally accepted by all of the officers and men of A/2/503 that Sgt. Morris was one of the most professional NCOs in the Company, always prepared for any eventuality, a bright and shining example to the young American paratroopers entrusted to his care, and it was even rumored, if he cut himself, his blood would be OD (olive drab).

On the morning of 29 June my Platoon was dug in on a ridgeline overlooking a valley that contained a village and a stream. We awoke and got ready for standto (a short time before daylight) and some of us began to

pack up as we were to board helicopters later that morning to go on individual platoon search and destroy operations a couple of thousand kilometers from each other's platoon. Within a few minutes of standto we were hit by claymore mines and mortar fire from the nearby "friendly" village and took at least 1 killed and at least 2 wounded. We took the area and village under direct fire from our weapons and I called in indirect fire from our 4.2 mortar support.

During the brief firefight that ensued, I was ordered to leave my positions, my dead and my wounded to be taken care of by other units, and to immediately move my platoon to the helipad to participate in the day's mission. We did so, dragging our unpacked gear, and with full cases of C-rations under our arms, boarded the Huey slicks (trooper transport helicopters). The officers had conducted an aerial surveillance earlier and I was supposed to know where I was going.

As we landed on the LZ (landing zone) I was approached by the commander of a LRRP (Long Range Recon Patrol) that had been in the area for some time. He told me they had made no enemy contact but to the north of our position his team had spotted blue commo wire, but had been unable to find its source. That commo wire later was found to be the communications link between the Heavy Weapons Company which the Third Platoon fought and the main position of enemy troops.

I moved my men off of the landing zone about 100 yards into a concealed area with underbrush but the whole area was a gray wet swamp that looked as if it were liquid clay. I started to determine our exact location and have my troops pack away their supplies into their packs when an immense volume of small arms fire erupted about one to two thousand meters to the north of my position, and the radio became alive with transmissions from the third platoon sergeant that they were pinned down under fire from a superior enemy force and needed assistance. The radio was completely jammed with transmissions between the third platoon and the company commander who was at a 3d location. I was unable to get an acknowledgement to my transmissions that my unit was very close to the action and could assist. After repeated attempts to communicate this information to the company commander I ordered my men to saddle up and to move out at a fast pace in the direction of the 3d platoon.

The movement to contact couldn't have taken more than 30 minutes but it felt like a couple of hours....

(continued....)



....At one point I was able to inform the company commander of my movement and my position, and we then made contact with the enemy perimeter that was surrounding the third platoon. We were fired upon by a 12.7mm Anti-Aircraft machine gun, and for a moment our forward motion was stalled. Remembering that the enemy was used to dealing with American units with certain numbers of men in the lead (usually 2 for a platoon, 4+ for a company, etc., etc.), I decided to bluff and placed all of my 20 some men in a front with the two M60 Machine Guns together in an attempt to fool the enemy into thinking that we were a much larger rescue force. Thank God, it worked.

The enemy resistance gave way before us....all of the way on our somewhat surrealistic 1-2000 meter journey the swamp had become swampier and grayer. I had adjusted artillery fire on the enemy positions and then ordered my men to drop their packs and we searched for the enemy and the third platoon. After moving about 50 yards my point men called to me and I saw a scene that I will never forget as long as I live.....the gray mud was no longer just gray, but now had streaks of red everywhere in it....the forest was almost completely covered with gunsmoke that hung there like a curtain, and there were bodies everywhere....one I saw was alive and looked like he was a man dying of thirst in the middle of the desert and we had brought him water.

I set out a perimeter and started my men giving first aid to the wounded; it seemed that there was a mass of wounded and dead bodies in one place, and with them was Sgt. Charlie Morris. He looked dead to me and I passed him over him and went to aid the Platoon Leader, Sgt. Cooney....He protested and said *"take care of my men first"*...I replied my men were doing that, I was there to help him. He again protested that he was fine but I could see that he was wounded...I finally got him to admit that he was wounded but he made me swear I wouldn't announce his wounds (Sgt. Cooney was a big man, especially his posterior, and the enemy bullet had hit that).

I then turned my attention back to the pile of what I thought was the dead. I was sad to see Sgt. Morris dead and walked over to him and for no particular reason kicked him on the foot to make sure. I almost dropped my rifle when his eyes opened up, focused on me and very slowly his right hand made its way to his forehead in an almost perfect salute, and he said, *"All the way, Sir"*....I was stunned, my god he was alive! I yelled for a medic. I saw that his thumbs were full of hand grenade pins and that he had 'not one but two sucking chest wounds'.

After a medic started working on him I was distracted and became involved in trying to find a place to use for an area to bring in the helicopters to take out the

wounded, this was going to mean cutting down trees as this was triple canopy jungle. After a while it seemed that the best area was where most of the dead and wounded were already gathered, so we had to move them out of the way. I walked back to the area and as my troops were moving the wounded, Sgt. Morris caught my attention, called to me as he was laying there flat on his back with his two bandaged sucking chest wounds, barely alive, called to me and said in a strong but typically polite voice,

"Just tell me where you want me to move, Sir, and I'll crawl there".

That was too much for me at this point, and I started to cry and I had to walk away from him...

Things got more hectic as the battle with the enemy was over, and all of both of the First and Third Platoon troops were exhausted. I sent men back to retrieve our packs and then the company commander and another fresh platoon arrived on the scene. I made sure that we were surrounded by fresh troops, then laid down and fell asleep.

I never talked to Sgt. Morris again until the 173d Airborne Brigade Reunion in Sacramento, California. He told me that he really didn't remember much about the battle that made him the recipient of the Medal of Honor and that most of what he knew was what he had read others said happened. So, we sat down and talked, and talked until I had gotten it all off my soul, 29 years later.

I'm glad I went to that reunion and talked to Charlie. I hope I made him feel like the true hero that he was and still is. He was the finest example of a model soldier and human being, and my life has been greatly enriched knowing him.

**William C. Vose, Capt. (Ret)
A/HHC/2/503, '66'67**

(Bill himself was awarded the Bronze Star w/V for his valorous actions three months earlier during the Battle at Zulu Zulu on Operation Silver City, altho put in for the DSC. Ed



June 29, 1966, Co. A, 2/503d, 173d Abn, Xuan Loc Province, Operation Yorktown. *What's left of 3d Platoon.*

Photo by Bob "Doc" Beaton



Medal of Honor Citation to Charlie Morris



*The President of the United States
in the name of The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor
to*

MORRIS, CHARLES B.

Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant (then Sgt.), U.S. Army, Company A, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate).

Place and Date: Republic of Vietnam, 29 June 1966.

Entered service at: Roanoke, Va.

Born: 29 December 1931, Carroll County, Va.

G.O. No.: 51, 14 December 1967.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Seeing indications of the enemy's presence in the area, S/Sgt. Morris deployed his squad and continued forward alone to make a reconnaissance. He unknowingly crawled within 20 meters of an enemy machinegun, whereupon the gunner fired, wounding him in the chest. S/Sgt. Morris instantly returned the fire and killed the gunner. Continuing to crawl within a few feet of the gun, he hurled a grenade and killed the remainder of the enemy crew. Although in pain and bleeding profusely, S/Sgt. Morris continued his reconnaissance. Returning to the platoon area, he reported the results of his reconnaissance to the platoon leader. As he spoke, the platoon came under heavy fire. Refusing medical attention for himself, he deployed his men in better firing positions confronting the entrenched enemy to his front. Then for 8 hours the platoon engaged the numerically superior enemy force. Withdrawal was impossible without abandoning many wounded and dead. Finding the platoon medic dead, S/Sgt. Morris administered first aid to himself and was returning to treat the wounded members of his squad with the medic's first aid kit when he was again wounded. Knocked down and

stunned, he regained consciousness and continued to treat the wounded, reposition his men, and inspire and encourage their efforts. Wounded again when an enemy grenade shattered his left hand, nonetheless he personally took up the fight and armed and threw several grenades which killed a number of enemy soldiers. Seeing that an enemy machinegun had maneuvered behind his platoon and was delivering the fire upon his men, S/Sgt. Morris and another man crawled toward the gun to knock it out. His comrade was killed and S/Sgt. Morris sustained another wound, but, firing his rifle with 1 hand, he silenced the enemy machinegun. Returning to the platoon, he courageously exposed himself to the devastating enemy fire to drag the wounded to a protected area, and with utter disregard for his personal safety and the pain he suffered, he continued to lead and direct the efforts of his men until relief arrived. Upon termination of the battle, important documents were found among the enemy dead revealing a planned ambush of a Republic of Vietnam battalion. Use of this information prevented the ambush and saved many lives. S/Sgt. Morris' gallantry was instrumental in the successful defeat of the enemy, saved many lives, and was in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army.



Charlie Morris reached the highest enlisted rank, Sergeant Major, before retiring from the Army. He died at the age of 64 on August 22, 1996, and was buried in Morris Cemetery, Fancy Gap, Virginia. An American hero.



President Johnson awards Charlie the Medal of Honor during ceremonies at the White House.



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 get aways.
- 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 173 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 173d 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 the below web address:
www.skysoldierstore.com/FSS/donate-memorial.htm



Also, we will do a dedication for the new Memorial in Sarasota at the national Cemetery on 10 October 2013 at Noon.



Sky Soldiers of Chapter 7 of the 173d Airborne Brigade held their **CSM Ed Proffitt Annual Meeting** in connection with the **Vietnam & All Veterans Reunion** at Wickham Park in Melbourne, FL on April 25. Except for the young Sky Soldier in the red shirt, they are all Vietnam vintage troopers.



L-R: Jeff Mazer, Jim McSorley and Bill Vose represented the 173d in the Veteran's Day Parade in Orlando

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 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.

Remember you can find the latest chapter updates on www.FloridaSkySoldiers.com





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 AHC
Cell: (941) 320-2463, Eml: andyhooker1@aol.com



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INCOMING!



~ Casper Pics ~



"Casper Huey 143 on a support mission for 173d line units somewhere out of Dak To 1967" (Casper web site photo)

By the way, in the newsletter (Feb-Mar 2015, Issue 59, Page 34), the photo of the Casper resupply (above), that's me in the pilot seat. I handed my camera to one of the troopers and he took the photo. The trooper that is in that photo (below) without a shirt is the same guy in the photo holding on to the 12.75. He was with one of the units of 1st of 503rd. I wonder who he was? He was always one of the first to meet the aircraft when we landed.

**Tony Bolivar
Caspers**



1/503 Troopers

(photo from Tony Bolivar)

Note: If anyone can identify the shirtless trooper we can put you in touch with Tony. Ed

~ Remembering a Buddy ~

Our 2/503 VN Newsletter is a source of pride for me and so many others who served; I was saddened by the loss of Mike de Gyurky who commanded B Company, 2/503 while I was the S3; he was bigger than life, always wore a bandana around his neck, usually a bright colored one, and never flinched at a round fired in combat. He spoke his mind, stood his ground and loved his soldiers. He will be missed.



**Maj. Mike de Gyurky
1938 - 2013**

Respectfully,
Dave Cooper, S-3/HHC/2/503

~ The Trooper Caught on the Plane ~ (Issue 60, Page 22)

I was on that jump. I missed the action in the plane, but I did get to talk to Mike McDonald after the jump back in the company area. Mike was in A/2/501. I was in B/2/501. A Company's building was right next to ours at Ft. Campbell. This was of course before Vietnam for me. McDonald said he was banging against the side of the aircraft for what he thought was about twenty+ miles. He said his arms were all tangled up in his lines. He said they eventually gained some altitude. Then he said, *"Contrary to the story in the newspaper, they cut me loose. The static line didn't break, they cut it."* He said he was falling and falling and then when he finally got his arms loose and pulled his reserve and got it out and into the wind where it popped open, he immediately landed in a pine tree. So he was a second away from hitting terra firma. That is as good a remembrance of the story as I have of it. It was a nice day, or at least a decent day weather wise. I used to volunteer for jumps on good weather days. So if I was jumping it probably was. I tried to avoid bad weather jumps. I had enough of those. I have that newspaper clipping about that jump around the house somewhere. That was the closest that I know of anyone almost having a complete failure during any jump that I was on. Even worse than what happened to me. But then things happen to me. As you have already seen.

Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503

(continued....)



INCOMING

(concluded)

"...You could tell an infantryman by the way he wore his mud...."

Another outstanding newsletter. I liked all of those pics of the guys in their jump school photos. For some reason, mine was never delivered home. I also eat up photos of guys in the field and at the Bien Hoa base camp.



Sam

Mike Sturges was lookin' good on pg. 51. And I recognized Steve Welch on page 14. You, on the other hand, look like you're 100% pure crazy (pg. 51), unlike the rest of us. Well, maybe except for Sturge. For some reason, I immediately thought of him when first viewing the pic at the top of pg. 16. Far out, man.

I stared at the faces of the LRRP team saddled up and ready to move out on pg. 38 for at least five minutes. Directly to left of the photo is a typo. The paragraph begins with, "...On November 1-6, 1968, the 2-503rd ABN deployed..." It should read, "...On November 1-6, 1967, the 2-503rd ABN deployed..."

That Silver Star picture on pg. 39 immediately brought to mind the setting for the Ceremony of the Boots held the end of Nov./first of Dec. 1967 at FSB 12, Dak To. The formation of troops and the bare, gently-sloped ground instantly reminded me of that scene. The trooper is wearing a Type-3 pattern jungle fatigue jacket, so the time of the event is not early in the war and fits the 1967 time-frame. During my deployment, troops supplied in the field received unbadged Type-3 patterned poplin fatigues; personnel in the rear wore a mix of Types 2 and 3 uniforms badged with either subdued or full-color patches.

Recounting the different firefights, like the Zulu Zulu update, are always interesting, especially the ones which took place before or after my time with the 3rd Herd. Also, the article by Jim Bethea gave me pause for thought (pgs.31-32).

I bought *"Reflections During a Monsoon Evening"* after reading the article regarding Szabolcs M. de Gyurky (Pg. 23) and received it Saturday. You can tell by the words that he served his time in the jungle. I particularly liked his description of a boonie rat in the preface of the book. He said, *"...You could tell an infantryman by the way he wore his mud...."* For me, that sums it up, as it brought flash-backs of guys slugging along up a steep ridge or standing nonchalantly with weapons in hand and shooting the breeze while it rained on them in their ripped, muddy clothes the middle of nowhere.

And finally, also purchased the *"Battle Jump"* issue of *Life* magazine about six months ago for my records.

Great job on the Newsletter, and thanks again for publishing it.

Sam Stewart
C/2/503

Some pics from Issue 60 of our newsletter...



Mike Sturges (C), with
Jack Ribera (L) & Richard
Ware, Pg. 51

The LRRP team, Pg. 38



Ray Zaccone & Steve Welch (R), Pg. 14

Silver Star, Pg. 39



Jim Bethea, Pgs. 31-32

Mike de Gyurky, Pg. 23



Jump Ready Freddie.
Freddie Parks



The Battle Jump

(continued...)



Back to Vietnam

I have been to Vietnam four times, first being the Government sponsored trip in '67.

Vietnam has returned to the beautiful and peaceful land along with its people after we left with our war machine and killed how many Vietnamese people???? Estimated at 2 million civilians and close to a million soldiers, South Vietnamese, N. Vietnamese and Viet Cong.

The average age is about fifty years old, not too difficult to figure the why of those numbers. So leaving the politics out of the equation, the people of Vietnam have returned to their peaceful existence. I believe living peacefully is desired by most people in the world and this is where they thrive as forward thinking people. They hold no animosity towards their former advisors, even those of them who are 100% combat permanently disabled.

I realized that Vietnam is about the present, about transcending the past and forging the future. After the exploitation of being torn apart from two superpower rivalries, (I often think of it as a sophisticated chess match between Russia and the USA, an escalation of the Cold War) and then unifying under the Marxist-Leninist controlled society and economy, Vietnam now follows its own determined path. As a people they are rediscovering their identity, buried for decades under the dust of war and Communist dogma. We can only observe this transformation but not fully understand their journey.

On my last trip to VN, I contacted Friendship Village, one of about forty Agent Orange treatment centers for children and teenagers afflicted with the ravages of AO. Unfortunately, the next two to three generations will suffer the ill effects of AO. Friendship Village was started by a US Vietnam Veteran who has since died from AO. It is a 501c that is funded internationally. It is located in the suburbs of Hanoi.

I have studied Reiki and am a certified Reiki Master Practitioner (Level III). I have been using pure therapeutic grade essential oils for years to counteract the toxins of AO and brought the oils along with me to enhance the Reiki.

On earlier trips, my wife and I traveled with a small group of other healers; this one was solo and I committed to three weeks. Monday to Friday 9 to 5, with a 2 hour break from 11 to 1. I did not have an interpreter and that was no problem at all because of who these people are; we had no difficulties communicating. I was treating about 25 clients a day which was a pretty heavy schedule. Unbeknownst to me, they rotate 50 former soldiers (VC and NVA) in for a two week stay and I would treat them also, which I had

no problem with. They turned out to be most appreciative and thankful as all that I treated.

Evenings were spent in Hanoi and weekends traveling outside the city. My furthest trip was to Sapa, north of Hanoi along the Chinese border. The country and its people are truly amazing and extremely friendly. Both my wife and I could easily live their six months or more a year. The downside is that it is on average about 20 to 25 hours door to door to travel there.



Bill, with friends, in Vietnam

I would strongly suggest putting it on your "bucket list", go with an open mind, you won't regret you went! There is much peace, joy and love to be found in that country.

The photo shown here is of some of the deaf young adults, another side effect of AO.

Bill Nicholls
A/2/503

~ About The Great Mandela ~

Just finished the 2/503 newsletter (Apr-May, Issue 60). You are seriously in danger of getting good at this. Jim Bethea's essay was excellent (*The Great Mandela*, Pages 31-32, Issue 60). It's not an easy task to stand back from your life and look at the issues that guided your destiny. We own our choices, but we'd be fools to be ignorant of the historical currents in which we swam. Anyhow, the best we can do is getting a glimmering. Thanks.

Mark Carter
173d LRRP, '65-'66



A TRIBUTE TO THOSE OF 1RAR BATTLE GROUP IN VIETNAM 1966/67

As one of the few senior diggers still upright from our magnificent effort in Vietnam, I feel a sense of duty, responsibility and motivation at this time to pay us a special and well-deserved tribute for a job 'bloody well done'. Though many say the Free World lost the war in Vietnam, the late Lee Kuan Yew, the iconic statesman of Asia, said that the overall aim to stop the dominoes had been achieved by the sacrifice made by the Free World in Vietnam. Though it cost much in national treasure, economic and human, it had been achieved.

Lee Kuan Yew's wise words should mean more to us than the mealie-mouthed, whingeing and politically correct pacifist critics of the war. We were Teddy Roosevelt's 'Men in the Arena'. We did ourselves proud, doing it our own way to achieve every objective our US Army commanders demanded of us, doing everything with common sense, tactical balance, and thoroughness.

Mates, as we approach the hundredth anniversary of Australia's nation-identifying date of our valiant but finally disastrous landings in Gallipoli, and the mid-century point of our service in Vietnam, we, all of our battle group of Infantry, Armour, Artillery (Australian and New Zealand) Engineers and Aviation, plus our Australian logistic support team can genuinely start to swell with pride for doing our Nation so proud by cementing our bonds with our closest allies, New Zealand and the United States of America.

We always did our professional best in our sweaty and sometimes bloody efforts to serve with distinction alongside our generous allies of the US Army and Air Force, plus their dust off and medical support, in our efforts, as seen at that time, to prevent the dominoes of Asia falling to Communism.

We all, together, have an irrefutable reason to be mightily proud of our efforts, where every one of us was part of a bonded and loyal team, a 'band of brothers', and we still are as we support those few of us that suffer PTSD and help them by using our powerful mateship, forged in the stress of war and combat!

I'll drink a few 'goffas' and whatever to us all on Anzac Day and remember well that we all did much more than our 'Duty First'.

All you 'bloody' beauties! ... God bless you, your families and your mates!

John Essex-Clark
1RAR



(Photo from John Arnold, 1RAR)

Note: In John's tribute he refers to Teddy Roosevelt's 'Men in the Arena'. For your information I include an excerpt from that speech by Theodore Roosevelt.

Ray Payne
1RAR

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and short-coming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."



Veteranweb Network
raypayne@veteranweb.asn.au





Southeast Asian allies of Vietnam war honored at Fort Snelling

By Will Ashenmacher

washenmacher@pioneerpress.com

04/18/2015

In what was described as the first occasion of its kind in the country, a memorial to the Southeast Asian forces who fought as allies of the U.S. during the Vietnam War era was dedicated at Fort Snelling on Saturday.

The plaque, in the cemetery's Airborne Circle, memorializes the Hmong, Laotian and Khmer special forces units that served in Cambodia and Laos.

"I believe that this is probably the first time that they have been recognized specifically in a place like this,"

Trudell Guerue, president of the Chapter XV 173rd Airborne Brigade Association, said during the dedication ceremony.

For Khoa Ingxiengmay of Brooklyn Park, who served during the Vietnam War, formal recognition felt like it had been a long time coming.

"We felt like things today would not happen. We didn't get much support," Ingxiengmay said. *"We experienced the same thing. We consider ourselves Americans, brothers-in-arms. This is the beginning of our journey."*

Felicia Ouk of St. Paul said her father and her husband served during the Vietnam War. So did her grandparents, now deceased.

"When I talk about it, I get emotional because I miss them, so today is really special," Ouk said. *"This dedication is for the next generation to see what we sacrificed."*

Brad Nichols, president of the Midwest All-Airborne Alliance, said the journey to secure formal recognition had been *"long, and at time frustrating, but rewarding in the long run."*

Xai Vang of Minneapolis would agree. *"I feel very happy"* Vang said. *"It's very important for Hmong, Lao and Cambodian (people). We helped fight, side-by-side. Today, it's a monument for us. The United States, this is our country. This monument here represents us."*

[Sent in by Jack Leide, MG (Ret), CO/C/2/503]



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Corregidor Coordination

E. M. Postlethwait, Lt. Col. (US ARMY)



Lt. Colonel Postlethwait commanded the 34th Infantry Regiment on Corregidor, and received the DSC for his actions there. Shortly thereafter, he wrote of his experiences

THE CORREGIDOR OPERATION WAS AN EXAMPLE OF CO-ORDINATION as it ought to be. The fact that every arm or service has as its final mission, either directly or indirectly, the delivery of John Rifleman to the heart of the enemy's ground with his GI boot resting squarely on the chest of the enemy is at last being recognized.

With that recognition the development of true coordination between the arms is getting somewhere. It isn't perfect yet, but we're getting there fast. The mechanics of close air support and naval gunfire support were first worked out in theory, then tried and improved; and they are still being improved.

Like most of us, I first learned the mechanics at informal staff schools out of the "books," and in pre-operation planning. It all sounded good and everyone apparently had the right idea, but something always seemed to mar the picture in actual operation. The weather turned out to be bad for the planes, communications went haywire, the Japs kept the Navy busy somewhere else. It was always something - until the Corregidor show. There, we Doughfeet got the kind of support we had heard about and dreamed about, but which we were beginning to doubt existed. Everything clicked, just the way it says in the book, only better.

The pre-invasion bombardment plans were worked out by the higher staffs. We had no voice in the plans, except by accident. I'll say more on that later. Briefly,

the Air Forces dropped around two hundred tons of bombs per day for over two weeks before Corregidor D-Day. And the Navy bombarded the island for several days from cruisers and destroyers.

Luckily, Captain "Tommy" Thompson, my naval gunfire liaison officer, was on the ball. The firing ships for the show were anchored near our staging area, and after studying the tactical plan, Thompson went out to talk things over with their officers. On board one of the cruisers, he found Commander H. L. McCoy who had been stationed on Corregidor at the time of its surrender and later escaped. Commander McCoy came ashore with Captain Thompson to our CP on Luzon and answered a thousand and one questions about the island. The talk was worth an extra battalion. Among other things, we worked out one especially important detail.

One of the entrances to the large tunnel in Malinta Hill on Corregidor looked right down on the beach where we could land. A gun in that entrance could have spelled murder for anyone on the beach - might even have stopped the whole show. McCoy knew exactly where the entrance was. I asked him if he could close it for us, or at least neutralize it. His answer was "*Hell, yes. I'll go to the fire control tower and lay some eight-inchers right in there myself.*" What more could we want in cooperation on that important point?

In our landing plan, one rifle platoon, equipped for assault-party operations (flame throwers, demolitions, bazookas, etc.) was earmarked to hit out fast for that tunnel entrance and finish the job. When that platoon reached the spot on D-Day, there was no job to finish. McCoy and his eight-inchers had completely closed it. Support? And how!



The invasion fleet heads towards Corregidor.

(continued....)



Plan for Corregidor

A quick stretch of the terrain and tactical plan before I continue with the close-in air and naval support will clarify the story. Corregidor is a tadpole stretched out from west to east in the entrance of Manila Bay. The head of this polliwog (the west end of the island) is called Topside. It is a 500-foot high plateau that drops into deep ravines and cliffs to the water's edge on all sides, and this part of the island is 2,500 yards in diameter.

The thin waist of the tadpole is called Bottomside. It is about five hundred yards wide and rises about twenty five feet above the water. Overlooking Bottomside and to the east of it is steep, jagged, 400-foot Malinta Hill. This hill is over 800 yards long from north to south and only 300 yards wide. The main corridor of Malinta Tunnel runs through the base of the hill from west to east with a main entrance at each end. North and south wing tunnels join the main tunnel inside and come out at smaller entrances on the north and south sides of the hill. From Malinta Hill to the east, the tail of the tadpole stretches out for 3,000 yards to its tip.

Corregidor's long standing nickname, "the Rock," is a good one for there is only enough soil over the jumble of rock strata to support the life of heavy undergrowth. The tactical plan, which was followed to the letter, called for the 503d Paratroop Regiment to land two battalions on Topside by parachute at 0830. The 3d Battalion, 34th Infantry, was to land near South Dock on the south shore of Bottomside at 1030, secure the Bottomside area and Malinta Hill. From there on, priority one was to open the road from Bottomside to Topside. Priority two, the 503d would clean-up Topside including all its ravines and cliffs while the 34th held tight on Malinta. Priority three, a drive down to the east tip from Malinta Hill.

There are a hundred or more stories to tell of how it all worked out, but I shall stick to air and naval gunfire support.



16 February, 1945. A destroyer comes in close during preparation for the Corregidor landings.

Air Support Operations

The air support set-up was quite orthodox in organization but outstanding in ability. Captain Gire, the air liaison officer, had one lieutenant and four enlisted men. They were equipped with a radio capable of reaching both the air base and the planes in the air. An air strike would begin with a request to the air liaison officer. Sometimes he got his request twelve or more hours in advance, but a fifteen-minute notice didn't faze him in the least. Next, an OP would be established for the strike. At the OP was a ground troop officer thoroughly familiar with the ground, the tactical situation and the target. That was usually the battalion CO or executive officer of the unit being helped by the air strike. The Air Forces lieutenant was there with a telephone line to the liaison officer at the radio. An 81mm mortar observer completed the group.

The procedure usually went like this: Captain Gire called the squadron leader, who was circling overhead with his outfit, and designated the target on their corresponding air support photos. He also gave him the position of the nearest friendly troops and a line of air flight along which overs and shorts would be harmless to us. After the squadron leader had identified the target and instructed his pilots, they made a trial run. For the trial run, we marked our lines with colored smoke and the target with a white phosphorus mortar shell. For the bombing run the target was again marked the same way and in they came. The air officer at the OP watched them like a hawk. Control was so tight that after one pilot had dropped his bomb, the next plane could be given an adjustment for over or short on the first bomb to make his own release accordingly. If necessary, the second plane could be turned off the target. Such an emergency never arose, but that safety measure definitely could have been taken. That is real air support!

Our planes were usually P-47s loaded with either two five-hundred-pounders, or two belly tanks of incendiary fuel. A two-hundred-gallon tank of that stuff bursting in the undergrowth of a ravine, flushes out the rodents in it most efficiently.

The infantryman often finds men of other branches standing in awe of his stories of personal contact with the enemy. Some of the bold and adventurous will occasionally ask to go on a patrol or visit the troops in contact in order to get a personal taste of it. Our Air Forces forward observer had the time of his life one day.

(continued....)



Company L of the 34th Infantry was scheduled for an attack up a large ravine past the north entrance to Malinta Tunnel. In preparation for it we were running an incendiary strike to burn out the heavy undergrowth and silence a Jap 20mm in the area. The battalion executive officer and the air observer had a beautiful OP in a small trench overlooking the target area. When the planes passed over on the trial run, a six-foot Jap jumped out of the bushes, ran like mad up the narrow road about fifty yards and popped back into the bushes. The Air Forces lieutenant's eyes bulged.

"Hey, I could have got that bastard if I'd had an M1!"

The executive officer smiled, got an M1 from the nearby platoon sergeant and laid it over the parapet. *"OK, there you are. Now, when the first bomb drops, keep your eyes open. He'll probably flush again."*

The bomb dropped near the road. Out came the big Jap like a bat out of you know where. The lieutenant dropped him neatly. The other riflemen, having given the Air Forces officer a visitor's courtesy, made sure that the Jap stayed down. The next plane was coming in, the phone rang madly. The excited lieutenant unconsciously answered it. The voice in his ear was angry. *"What the hell are you doing up there? I've been ringing my head off! The pilots want to know if the bombs are going in OK!"*

"Bombs? Oh, bombs! Yeah, they're all right. Say, I just shot a Jap!"

Frequently and fortunately there were more planes available than we could use on close support targets. Normally, there were requests for about two strikes a day. The air base often sent enough planes for four or five strikes if we happened to need them. The liaison officer would say, *"I've got fifteen planes overhead. Any targets?"*

"Nothing right now."

"OK, they've got about two hours of gas. I'll keep them standing by and check again when they have about fifteen minutes left."

If at the end of the two-hour period, no close-in targets moved up, the bombs were used "strategically" on the east end of the island, on likely storage areas and hideouts in ravines where naval gunfire couldn't reach. After the bombs were dropped, the planes would rat race around and strafe for any Japs flushed by the bombing. One day, the liaison officer was sending a squadron on a "strategic" mission. The squadron commander asked, *"Is it OK to strafe in there?"*

"OK to strafe. Go ahead."

"Roger."

Then a strange voice came in. *"This is so-and-so right over you. I'm coming home from reconnaissance. I haven't any bombs, but may I join in the strafing?"*

"Sure, come along?"

"Roger, Wilco, and thank you."

Cooperation and coordination are wonderful things once everybody gets the idea.



Engineer's Ravine is swathed in smoke as men of the 3d Bn., 34th Inf. Rgt. crouch down low and observe for any potential movement across the North Dock area. They are positioned on the slopes of Malinta Hill, near Malinta Point.

Reasons for Air's Successes

Our air support worked exceptionally well because: The Air Forces had the planes and wanted to use them. Every effort was made to fill all requests.

The air liaison officer and his party knew their business and had a desire to produce.

No unreasonable or wasteful requests were made by us.

While I'm on the subject, I believe a few general suggestions for better air support are in order:

Make five bombers available for close tactical support whenever possible. The average close-support target is either a spot target or a small area target requiring great accuracy to get satisfactory results. Accuracy is important for troop safety on close targets. (The closer we Doughboys can get for a quick follow-in, the better we like it). It's a tough job for a glide-bombing fighter pilot to be this accurate.

We'd like more rockets. Nothing like a sizzling howling rocket for spot accuracy and for making Christians out of Shintos.

(continued....)



When there are plenty of pilots and planes available, why not designate some outfits as ground-cooperation squadrons? Give pilots special training on it. Teach them some ground tactics and show them how they fit into the picture. Have a few field exercises with Infantry battalion staffs, air liaison parties and the planes flying dummy missions with flour sacks.

We can tighten teamwork by basing the supporting squadrons close to the ground operational area and bringing the pilots to the area after a mission to see the destruction and the dead Japs they have produced. Nothing fosters pride in a job like seeing the results. *"I just shot a Jap!"* Hell, how about *"I got fifty-two on that mission this morning"*?

With the decrease of Jap air power and the increase of bitter ground fighting (witness Okinawa), close tactical air support becomes more possible from the Air Forces view and more important and necessary from the Ground Forces view.

The Malinta OP

Before mentioning our naval gunfire support, I'll tell you about the Malinta Hill OP. Before the war, a concrete OP on the top of Malinta Hill, known as base end station B-23 was used for artillery direction. It is dug into the rock, has overhead cover, and affords a grand view of the entire island. Every officer ever stationed on Corregidor knows the spot. I met Major Jules Yates after his liberation from Cabanatuan, and found that he had used this OP to defend Corregidor from Japs. He was happy to know that the same OP had been used to drive them off.

Our Company L had an officer on duty there around the clock. After a day or two, they had learned all the most likely places to nail a few Japs. Machine guns were adjusted on road junctions, cave entrances, paths, etc. The 81mm mortar observers did likewise with their guns. From there on, it was a game, mostly at night, observing fire by the light of the moon and Navy star shells. One or two Japs moving down a road was a challenge to the mortar observer to fire his gun at the precise instant which would bring Jap and the shell together. A miss of five yards, even though it got the Jap, brought derisive remarks. When a Jap column appeared, school was out and a field day in order. The best Malinta Hill OP field day story comes later in speaking of naval gunfire.

Our pre-landing bombardment was copious, well placed, and was furnished by cruisers, destroyers, gunboats, rocket firing LCI's and PT boats. On D-day the fire never ceased from the opening of the heavy guns at daylight until our first wave touched shore amid the dust of the final volleys of five-inch shells.

My best story of naval support concerns our floating artillery. The destroyers which stood offshore day after day giving close support with gnat's-eye accuracy were a main factor in the retaking of Corregidor. The set-up was similar to that of field artillery and air support, a liaison party and a forward observer party. These parties come from the Joint Assault Signal Companies made up of individuals from both the Army and Navy. JASCO is a good outfit and deserves a lot of credit. Their men on Corregidor showed plenty guts and skill.

We had two destroyers available at all times, day and night. During the day, one destroyer sat dead in the water off the south shore firing on any likely looking target east of Malinta Hill, while the other worked around the west end, firing mission for the paratroopers in their clean-up of the rugged ravines and cliff sides in that area. At night, one destroyer lay out west of the island firing star-shell illumination until the moon rose, while the other patrolled outside the bay entrances though still available to fire on call.

Targets on Call

Scheduled fires were requested daily through the liaison officer. Concentration lasting from ten minutes to an hour were fired in preparation for attacks on the day's objectives. At night illumination schedule usually called for one or two star shells every few minutes until moonrise.

Targets of opportunity were worked all days. If we picked them up, we asked for the fire and got it. Often the ship picked them up. It was quite common to hear from the radio, *"We see what appears to be a gun position at so-and-so. May we fire?"* The Navy's "may-we-fire" attitude was worth a million to us.

A good example of coordination on a target of opportunity happened one night. The normal night schedule was in progress, one ship firing star shells, the other on patrol. From the light of a star shell, the Malinta OP observer picked up a long column of heavily laden Japs coming out of the east entrance to Malinta Tunnel and moving down toward the eastern tip of the island. The telephone switchboard began to snap with business, SCR-300 radios began to talk and SCR-284 generators began to whirl.

In the first three minutes, four machine guns were set to cover the column from head to tail, four 81mm mortars were likewise shifted, star-shell illumination was increased to continuous lighting. All machine guns and mortars opened fire together....

(continued....)



....The initial bursts caused heavy casualties and pinned the Japs down. Seven minutes later, the destroyer on patrol had reached its firing position and had fired the initial round for adjustment. For the next thirty minutes, five-gun broadsides raked those monkeys from tip to tail. If any of the 150-odd Japs in that party lived through it, I don't know how. Smooth teamwork that night saved the lives of quite a few Doughboys who would have to dig those Japs out of a hole the hard way later on. The Navy got a "well done" from us for that one and we weren't just being polite.

In addition to scheduled fire and targets of opportunity, we had several special targets. The east entrance to the main tunnel was a tricky one. While the 503d was working on their Topside job, my 34th Infantry force held Malinta Hill. But there just weren't enough troops to maintain control of the east tunnel entrance at night. At the same time, both Colonel George Jones, commanding officer of the 503d "Rock Force," and I wanted to stop this nightly business of Japs bringing supplies out of the tunnel down to the east end of the island. We knew exactly where the entrance was, but we were leery about firing on it. It was right below our own men on the hill, but it couldn't be seen from there for adjustment. Firing from our verbal descriptions wouldn't do because it was hidden under heavy bushes and hard to locate. Our patrols visited the area almost daily, so we had several officers who had seen it. But there was no place on the island from which they could adjust fire on the tunnel entrance. The Navy gave us a simple solution by invitation. *"Come out to the ship and show us,"* they said, so we did.

Colonel Jones, Lieutenant John Biene, who had patrolled the area, and I went out one afternoon. Biene laid the fire control cross-hairs right on the entrance. The fire of one gun was adjusted and then the ship poured in a hundred more rounds of APC. Our patrol the next morning reported the entrance closed. Our visit to the destroyer not only accomplished an important mission, but fostered mutual esteem and friendship which made for even better teamwork in the future, if that were possible.

The coordination between the higher planning staffs of the Army and Navy is excellent and produced first-



Malinta Hill bisected Corregidor and prevented any Japanese reinforcements from moving towards Topside.

rate results. I'd like to see more opportunity for the men *doing* the job to get together and work out details. Skippers of destroyers and gunboats should have at least one conference with the staff of a landing team before the show, and several more during the show if possible.

I have probably made the Corregidor operation sound like a picnic. It wasn't. The troopers took their share of casualties in sweating out the extermination of six thousand Japs and there are hundreds of stories to be told about it. It would, however, have cost many times the price in blood if Air, Navy, and Ground Forces coordination had not worked so magnificently. Anything we can do to foster and improve our teamwork will always be of prime value in finishing this war as cheaply as possible.

E. M. Postlethwait



This article was originally published in the *INFANTRY JOURNAL* August, 1945. Reproduced here courtesy of Paul Whitman with the 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion website.



About *Sky Soldier Magazine*

Quick note, folks: Just viewed the latest internet information from the Association. The Spring edition of *Sky Soldier Magazine* is already there and looking good. The Association is encouraging us to drop the mailing and view the magazine on the internet. It saves money and it's apparently more convenient (www.skysoldier.net).

The younger Herd members are more up to date on this electronic stuff and are more into it. That internet page offers a variety of interests you can click into, everything from the Store to the Foundation. Pay your dues and check it out. The Association team has done an impressive job.

William Terry
A/3/319

Memorial Day

THE MUFFLED drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;
No more on Life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.
On Fame's eternal camping-ground 5
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead.

Bivouac Of The Dead, by Theodore O'Hara

Memorial Day, which is observed on the last Monday of May, commemorates the men and women who died while in the military service. In observance of the holiday, many people visit cemeteries and memorials, and volunteers often place American flags on each grave site at national cemeteries. A national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time.



As long as a *Sky Soldier* or a family member of a *Sky Soldier* walks this earth, they will be remembered.



Seeking information about the service of
my father,
JAMES L. DAWSON,
who died in 1991.
He served with the 173rd
Airborne Bde, SEP, Vietnam.
I believe he was a ham operator.
I would like to know his rank
and years of service.

Contact:

Pamela Dawson

pdawson4698@gmail.com

Request appeared in Winter 2015, edition of
Sky Soldier Magazine.



Neat pics sent in by William Terry, A/3/319.
Chapter 17 supports this Little League team.





Colonel Courtney Prisk passed away in his home in Panama City, Panama on 30 April 2015. In a sense he was in the army from birth. For the 173d Airborne he was the Commander of Charlie Battery, 3rd of the 319th Artillery beginning in April of 1966.

Pictured here in 1941, he is wearing his first of many uniforms along with Lieutenant Edward Prisk's boots.



His father, an infantryman, would play a key role in the invasion of Normandy as one of Field Marshal Montgomery's eight Tactical Liaison Officers, landing on Omaha Beach, responsible for collecting information on the status of the 1st Infantry Division and the 29th Infantry Division. Major Edward Prisk's first intell report was delivered in person to Montgomery near Sword Beach on 8 June 1944. The casualty figures were staggering.



Pictured fourth from left in December of 1944 in Belgium just prior to the Battle of the Bulge, Court's father was still alive, although many of the original eight liaison officers had been killed or wounded.

Major Prisk would meet the British King, cross the Rhine with Churchill, and witness the liberation of Bergen Belsen concentration camp.

Court grew up in "The Major's" den, a home filled with pictures of Eisenhower, Montgomery, Bradley, Simpson, and a myriad of other dignitaries...a den filled with personal letters from Montgomery, an officer's efficiency report signed by Montgomery, a cigar wrapper from the Havana cigar Churchill gave him while crossing the Rhine, and a wit only the British can assign to stressful situations. On the subject of women there were many:

"Court, you have to watch out for those girls that like to play 'Squat Tag' in the asparagus patch."

Court was sponsored to attend West Point in 1955 by the late Senator Henry M. Jackson. Pictured as a cadet, he was a varsity gymnast, sang in the glee club and choir, and spent much of his time ensuring he would graduate.



Court shaking hands with his father on the parade ground at West Point after the graduation ceremony. He attained one of his father's own dreams...to be commissioned as a regular army officer.



Commissioned in the field artillery in June of 1959, after airborne and ranger school, Court was posted to Fort Bragg, North Carolina where he was assigned to the 1st Battle Group 504th Infantry, and from there put in charge of the 3rd week of the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Bragg. Many of the army's elite sky diving team were "Black Hats" at that time.

Pictured with his First Sergeant on the airstrip in front of a C-119, he was always in awe of his subordinates.

After tours in Germany he received orders for Vietnam and was assigned to our 173d Airborne.



(tribute continued....)



Court took his work seriously and would become one of the best artillery Battery commanders. Ask Chaplain Jack.

Fired and rehired three times in one day for firing into Cambodia in support of a Vietnamese Ranger Battalion, Westmorland made the final call and Court kept his job with high praise.

Major Court Prisk would serve again in I Corps Vietnam in 1969-70 after a tour of duty in the Military Science Department at Washington State University. After Command and General Staff College, graduate school at the University of Missouri, and another tour in Germany, he was assigned to Fort Lewis as the Chief of the High Technology Test Bed, and retired as a full colonel with his final assignment as the Inspector General for I Corps and Fort Lewis.

Court was my brother. He was my first "Point Man." Court was and is my balance between the sacred and the profane.

His classmate, Colonel Robert "Tex" Turner said it best:

"Court was one of my best friends over the years. He knew my wife of 50 years, Caroline, from our double dating at West Point."

After having sent a beautiful flower wreath when Caroline died and was buried at West Point in 2009, he sent a single red rose to be laid on her grave every year thereafter. His contact with me and his demonstration of concern helped me, more than anyone, overcome a difficult time in my life."

His classmate, Colonel Robert Novogratz added:
"We were neighbors in Leavenworth. Lived in adjacent apartments. Our Bob was 9. He was almost abducted by a kidnapper. When Court heard the problem, he jumped in his convertible and chased down the bad guy. The man got away in his truck, had mud covering his license plate; but Bob got home safely. Court has always been a hero with our family."

Court has set his guns on the high ground and will defend the ramparts of his beloved West Point on a bluff overlooking New York's Hudson River. Court is at peace. I will miss his encouragement and his smile dearly...mostly his voice.

Gary Prisk
CO, C/D/2/503d
RVN, '67/'68



Court with his beautiful bride, Gioco, at West Point reunion.

*Do not stand at my grave and weep;
 I am not there. I do not sleep.
 I am a thousand winds that blow.
 I am the diamond glints on snow.
 I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
 I am the gentle autumn rain....*

*....I am in a quiet room.
 I am in the birds that sing,
 I am in each lovely thing.
 Do not stand at my grave and cry,
 I am not there. I did not die.*

A Word From The Association

As you may or may not know I am part of the Association's membership team. We are trying to update all the member's records with their pertinent info. MANY are missing email addresses. We're asking all members to send us their email address so their National records can be updated. Thanks for your great newsletter, we in New England surely appreciate it.

Peter Klausner

A/4/503, '66/'67

Email to: logpc@comcast.net



E/2/503 Trooper Looking to Hookup With Buddies

Always nice getting our newsletter - maybe you can help me get some info out about myself while I was stationed with E Co. 2nd Bat, August 1970 - September 1971 -- maybe you can find out if any of our guys remember me? I was the guy who was drunk and cussed-out the 1st Sgt or Sgt Major one morning. I don't remember much of the year -- I was on my 4th tour, was a grunt with Recon. Would love to know if any one of our guys can tell me something about me. Thanks for your help.

Dave Gardner

Recon/E/2/503

Eml: sky22074@yahoo.com



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

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 _____



The Rock

Airborne! All The Way!!





One of our own, Ted Roybal, B/2/503, fourth from left, with some of the famous Navajo Code Talkers of WWII

The Navajo Code Talkers

World War II had no shortage of heroes, but the conflict likely would've ended on a completely different note for the United States without the contributions of the Navajo Code Talkers. At the onset of the war, the U.S. found itself vulnerable to Japanese intelligence specialists who used their English-speaking soldiers to intercept the messages issued by the U.S. military. Each time the military devised a code, Japanese intelligence experts deciphered it.

As a result they not only learned which actions U.S. forces would take before they carried them out but gave the troops bogus missions to confuse them. To prevent the Japanese from intercepting subsequent messages, the U.S. military developed highly intricate codes that could take more than two hours to decrypt or encrypt. This was far from an efficient way to communicate. But World War I veteran Philip Johnston would change that by suggesting that the U.S. military develop a code based on the Navajo language.

A Complex Language

World War II did not mark the first time the U.S. military developed a code based on an indigenous language. In World War I, Choctaw speakers served as code talkers. But Philip Johnston, a missionary's son who grew up on the Navajo reservation, knew that a code based on the Navajo language would be especially difficult to break. For one, the Navajo language was largely unwritten at the time and many words in the



language have different meanings depending on context.

Once Johnston demonstrated to the Marine Corps how effective a Navajo-based code would be in thwarting intelligence breaches, the Marines set out to sign up Navajos as radio operators.

The Navajo Code in Use

In 1942, 29 Navajos ranging in age from 15 to 35 collaborated to create the first U.S. military code based on their indigenous language. It started off with a vocabulary of about 200 words but tripled in quantity by the time World War II ended. The Navajo Code Talkers could pass messages in as little as 20 seconds. According to the official Navajo Code Talkers website, indigenous words that sounded like military terms in English made up the code.

(continued....)





"The Navajo word for turtle meant 'tank,' and a dive-bomber was a 'chicken hawk.' To supplement those terms, words could be spelled out using Navajo terms assigned to individual letters of the alphabet—the selection of the Navajo term being based on the first letter of the Navajo word's English meaning. For instance, 'Wo-La-Chee' means 'ant,' and would represent the letter 'A.'"



Navajo Code Talkers' Memorial at Window Rock, AZ

U.S. Triumphs With Code

The code was so complex that not even native Navajo speakers comprehended it. *"When a Navajo listens to us, he wonders what in the world we're talking about,"* Keith Little, the sole surviving code talker in 2011, explained to news station My Fox Phoenix. The code also proved unique because the Navajo soldiers weren't allowed to write it down once they were on frontlines of the war. The soldiers functioned essentially as "living codes." During the first two days of the Battle of Iwo Jima, the code talkers transmitted 800 messages with no mistakes. Their efforts played a key role in the U.S. emerging from the Battle of Iwo Jima as well as the battles of Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, and Okinawa victoriously. *"We saved a lot of lives...I know that we did,"* Little said.

Honoring the Code Talkers

The Navajo Code Talkers may have been World War II heroes, but the public didn't realize it because the code created by the Navajos remained a top military secret for decades following the war. Finally in 1968, the military declassified the code, but many believed that the Navajos didn't receive the honors befitting of war heroes. In April 2000, Sen. Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico sought to change that when he introduced a bill authorizing the U.S. president to award gold and silver congressional medals to the Navajo Code Talkers. In December 2000, the bill went into effect.

"It has taken too long to properly recognize these soldiers, whose achievements have been obscured by twin veils of secrecy and time," Bingaman said. *"...I introduced this legislation – to salute these brave and innovative Native Americans, to acknowledge the great contribution they made to the Nation at a time of war, and to finally give them their rightful place in history."*

Code Talkers Legacy

The Navajo Code Talkers' contributions to the U.S. military during World War II entered popular culture when the film "Windtalkers," starring Nicolas Cage and Adam Beach, debuted in 2002. Although the movie received mixed reviews, it exposed a large swath of the public to World War II's Native American heroes. The Navajo Code Talkers Foundation, an Arizona nonprofit, also functions to raise awareness about these skillful soldiers and celebrate Native American culture, history and heritage.

Source:

<http://racerelements.about.com/od/trailblazers/a/Navajo-Code-Talkers-Biography.htm>

(web photos added)



Washington, D.C. *"It was an emotional afternoon as President George W. Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to four of the five living Navajo (Diné) code-creators on Thursday, July 26, 2001. This is the highest civilian medal that can be given."*



Japanese marine paratroopers of World War II



The Imperial Japanese Navy fielded naval paratroopers during World War II. The troops were officially part of the Special Naval Landing Forces (SNLF or *Rikusentai*). They came from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Yokosuka SNLFs. The 2nd Yokosuka took no part in any airborne operations and became an island defensive base unit. They were under the operational control of the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service (IJNAS or *Dai-Nippon Teikoku Kaigun Koku Hombu*).

Rikusentai paratroopers should not be confused with the Imperial Japanese Army paratroopers, known as *Teishin*.

Rikusentai units were grouped in battalion-level formations, named after the three naval districts, including Yokosuka. Paratroop units were only organized on the very eve of the war, beginning in September 1941. The lightly armed parachute units were intended to assault coastal areas, supporting amphibious landings or disembarkations, or enemy airfields and other strategic objectives. They were not meant to become entangled in heavy, pitched land battles. However, their operational use would prove to be contrary to this doctrine.

SNLF airborne troops wore a badge with an emblem of two crossed, open parachutes and an anchor, topped with a small flower.



~ Corrections ~

Correction to Correction.

On the photo that (Dave) Griffin posted in Issue #13, March 2010, showing LTC Sigholtz and SMG Proffitt after the Jump, was correct. A friend of mine enhanced the photo for me and it does show SMG Proffitt not Sebastian. "I stand corrected," but even so I am the RTO (Spc4 Rocha) in the photo right of Sigholtz. ATW

Richard Rocha
HHC/2/503d



Wrong Year.

On page 38, Issue 60, half-way down first column: "On November 1 - 6, 1968 ..." Should be "1967."

Steve Vorthmann
1st Plt., C Co., 4/503, 173d Abn. Bde. (Sep)
30 Sep 67 — 25 Sep 68

That Was Not Catherine.

It was brought to our attention by a number of troopers who received our April-May newsletter, Issue 60, the caption to the photo of Catherine Leroy on Page 45 which states she was killed in action in Vietnam, is incorrect.

Catherine died of lung cancer in Santa Monica, CA on July 8, 2006. Due to



Dickey

faulty memory, we confused Ms. Leroy with Dickey Chapelle, another photojournalist, whom while on patrol with a Marine platoon was killed in Vietnam. Our apologies to the families of the two ladies. Ed



Catherine

See stories on following pages.

Not Steve in Photo.

I took this picture, but....that wasn't me in the photo with Catherine (Leroy).

Steve Welch
C/2/503



Dickey Chapelle

A War Photojournalist

(March 14, 1919 – November 4, 1965)

"When I die, I want it to be on patrol with the United States Marines." Dickey Chapelle

Dickey Chapelle was born Georgette Louise Meyer. She was an American photojournalist known for her work as a war correspondent from World War II through the Vietnam War.

Chapelle was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and attended Shorewood High School. By the age of sixteen, she was attending aeronautical design classes at MIT. She soon returned home, where she worked at a local airfield, hoping to learn to pilot airplanes instead of designing them. However, when her mother learned that she was also having an affair with one of the pilots, Chapelle was forced to live in Florida with her grandparents.

Eventually, she moved to New York, and met her future husband, Tony Chapelle, and began working as a photographer sponsored by Trans World Airlines. She eventually became a professional, and later, after fifteen years of marriage, divorced Tony, and changed her first name to Dickey.

Despite her mediocre photographic credentials, during World War II Chapelle managed to become a war correspondent photojournalist for *National Geographic*, and with one of her first assignments, was posted with the Marines during the battle of Iwo Jima. She covered the battle of Okinawa as well.

After the war, she traveled all around the world, often going to extraordinary lengths to cover a story in any war zone. During the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Chapelle was captured and jailed for over seven weeks. She later learned to jump with paratroopers, and usually travelled with troops. This led to frequent awards, and earned the respect of both the military and journalistic communities. Chapelle *"was a tiny woman known for her refusal to kowtow to authority and her signature uniform: fatigues, an Australian bush hat, dramatic Harlequin glasses, and pearl earrings."*

Despite early support for Fidel Castro, Dickey was an outspoken anti-Communist, and loudly expressed these views at the beginning of the Vietnam War. Her stories in the early 1960s extolled the American military advisors who were already fighting and dying in South



Vietnam, and the Sea Swallows, the anticommunist militia led by Father Nguyen Lac Hoa. Chapelle was killed in Vietnam on November 4, 1965 while on patrol with a Marine platoon during Operation Black Ferret, a search and destroy operation 16 km south of Chu Lai, Quang Ngai Province, I Corps. The lieutenant in front of her kicked a tripwire booby trap, consisting of a mortar shell with a hand grenade attached to the top of it. Chapelle was hit in the neck by a piece of shrapnel which severed her carotid artery; she died soon after.

Her last moments were captured in a photograph by Henri Huet (below). Her body was repatriated with an honor guard consisting of six Marines, and she was given full Marine burial. She became the first female war correspondent to be killed in Vietnam, as well as the first American female reporter to be killed in action.

But a few of her awards recognizing her photojournalistic skills include the Overseas Press Club's George Polk Award for best reporting in any medium, requiring exceptional courage and enterprise abroad; The National Press Photographers' Association 1963 "Photograph of the Year" award for her photograph of a combat-ready Marine in Vietnam; and the Distinguished Service Award, presented by the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association.



Henri Huet's poignant photograph of Chapelle receiving last rites in Vietnam.

(continued...)



War photos on web credited to Dickey Chapelle....



Dickey Chapelle, honored by her Marines. Semper Fi!



Catherine Leroy

A War Photojournalist

(August 27, 1944 – July 8, 2006)

Catherine Leroy was a French-born photojournalist and war photographer, whose stark images of battle illustrated the story of the Vietnam War in the pages of *Life* magazine and other publications.

Catherine was brought up in a convent in Paris. She was moved by images of war she had seen in *Paris Match*, and decided she wanted to travel to Vietnam to "give war a human face."

At the age of 21 booked a one-way ticket to Laos in 1966, with just one Leica M2 and \$100 in her pocket.

On arrival in Saigon Leroy met the photographer Horst Faas, bureau chief of the Associated Press. A year later she became the first accredited journalist to participate in a combat parachute jump, joining the 173d Airborne Brigade in Operation Junction City. Two weeks after the battle for Hill 881, she was wounded with a Marine unit near the demilitarized zone.

In 1968, during the Tet Offensive, Leroy was captured by the North Vietnamese Army. She managed to talk her way out and emerged as the first newsperson to take photos of North Vietnamese Army Regulars behind their own lines. The story made the cover of *Life Magazine*.



Her most famous photo, *Corpsman In Anguish*, (1967) at the Wayback Machine (archived December 3, 2007) was one of three taken in quick succession portraying U.S. Navy Corpsman Vernon Wike. In the pictures the sailor is crouched in tall grass during the battle for Hill 881 near Khe Sanh. He is cradling his comrade who has been shot while smoke from the battle rises into the air behind them. In the first frame Wike has two hands on his friend's chest, trying to staunch the wound. In the second, he is trying to find a heartbeat. In the third frame, "Corpsman In Anguish", he has just realized the man is dead.



After Vietnam, she covered conflicts in several countries, including Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya and Lebanon. After her experiences in Beirut she swore off war coverage.

Leroy originally sold her work to United Press International and The Associated Press, and later worked for Sipa Press and Gamma. In 1972, Leroy shot and directed *Operation Last Patrol*, a film about Ron Kovic and the anti-war Vietnam veterans. Leroy co-authored the book *God Cried*, about the siege of West Beirut by the Israeli army during the 1982 Lebanon War. She lived in the Hotel Chelsea in the late 1980s. Later in life, she founded and ran a vintage clothing store, *Piece Unique*, with a website.

Catherine Leroy died in Santa Monica, California, following a battle with lung cancer.

Leroy won numerous awards for her work, including in 1967 George Polk award, Picture of the Year, The Sigma Delta Chi and The Art Director's Club of New York. She was the first woman to receive the Robert Capa Gold Medal Award for – "best published photographic reporting from abroad requiring exceptional courage and enterprise" – for her coverage of the civil war in Lebanon, in 1976. In 1997, she was the recipient of an Honor Award for Distinguished Service in Journalism from the University of Missouri.



War photos on web credited to Catherine Leroy.....





U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Makes Gains in Faster Disability Claims Processing

March 30, 2015

Backlog Reduced 67 Percent Under New Automation and Process Improvements

Washington – The federal initiative to provide timely decisions on disability payments to Veterans has crossed a major milestone in its final sprint to eliminate the backlog of Veterans' benefits claims.

The major transformation effort to apply new technology and process solutions has paid off at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). It reduced its inventory of backlogged claims from a high of 611,000 claims in March of 2013 to fewer than 200,000 this week, while at the same time improving decision quality.

"Make no mistake, we're not slowing down short of the finish line," said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey. "Our goal is to eliminate the claims backlog by the end of 2015 – meaning all Veterans will receive timely and accurate decisions on their disability claims."

Hickey credited a combination of factors for the 67-percent drop in backlog: first, the extra hours of work put in by dedicated benefits claims processors across the nation, who have worked evenings, Saturdays and Sundays to drive the backlog down; as well as procedural efficiencies backed by powerful automation tools and paperless claims processing. In addition, she cited the transformation of Veterans Benefits Administration's training and quality assurance programs resulting in steady increases in the accuracy of decisions.

Just a few years ago, claims processors handled 5,000 tons of paper annually, an amount equivalent to 200 Empire State Buildings. In less than two years, VA converted claims processing to a 21st Century digital environment where claims for VA benefits and services can be submitted and processed, and benefits delivered, online.

Veterans increasingly are filing claims electronically from the start at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>. Veterans can submit their applications online, upload their supporting documentation, and check the status of their claim through a multi-channel Web portal boasting nearly 60 self-service features.

Brigadier General Allison Hickey Under Secretary for Benefits



Allison Hickey was appointed Under Secretary for Benefits in the Department of Veterans Affairs on June 6, 2011. In this position, she leads more than 20,000 employees in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) in the delivery of a wide range of integrated programs of non-medical benefits and service to more than 12 million Veterans, Servicemembers, their families and Survivors. Through a nationwide network of 56 regional offices, special processing centers, and VBA headquarters, she directs the administration of seven distinct lines of business: VA's disability compensation, pension and fiduciary, education, home loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation and employment, life insurance programs, and transition assistance programs, and an annual budget of more than \$94 billion.

Under Secretary Hickey currently leads a six-year, multi-billion dollar transformation effort at VBA to improve the quality and timeliness with which Veterans' benefits are processed and delivered. Under her leadership, in less than two years, VBA has converted claims processing from a paper-bound process to a digital operating environment where claims for VA benefits and services can be submitted, processed and delivered online, electronically.

Under Secretary Hickey served 27 years in the United States Air Force on Active Duty, in the Air National Guard, and in the Air Force Reserve, retiring with the rank of Brigadier General as the Director of the Air Force's Future Total Force office at the Pentagon. In this role, she was responsible for shifting billions of dollars toward new capabilities across the Air Force portfolio and directing new organizational models for a worldwide, 500,000-person organization. Under Secretary Hickey is a 1980 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, the first class to include women.



History of the Parachutist Badge



Designed during World War II by Captain William P. Yarborough (later to become Lieutenant General) of the 501st Parachute Battalion. What follows is a memorandum of record written by Captain Yarborough on April 22, 1941, which tells the story of the origin of the parachute badge.

"On March 3, 1941, I was ordered to Washington to report to the Adjutant General for temporary duty in the Office of the Chief of Infantry. My mission was the procurement of a suitable parachutist badge that would meet with the approval both of the War Department and the Commanding Officer of the 501st Parachute Battalion. Major Miley (commander of the 501st), before my departure gave me full authority to approve any design that I considered acceptable, and to do so in his name. The same authority was delegated to me in the name of the Chief of Infantry.



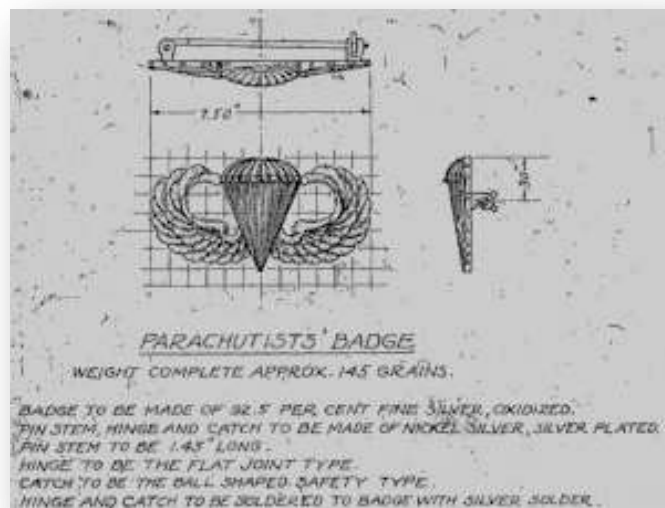
Gen. Yarborough

I drew the original sketch in the office of Lieutenant Colonel Beuchner, G-3; a finished copy of my original sketch was prepared in the office of the Quartermaster General. Through the help of Mr. A.E. Dubois, in the Quartermaster General's office, 350 of the badges were procured from the Bailey, Banks and Biddle Company in Philadelphia and were in the hands of the Commanding Officer of the 501st Parachute Battalion by March 14, 1941. This is believed to have been an all-time speed record for War Department Procurement.

I personally took the correspondence relative to the badge's approval from one office to another until the transaction was complete. This operation took me an entire week, eight hours a day."

Captain Yarborough even applied for a patent to protect the design from unauthorized reproduction. On February 2, 1943, Patent #134963 was granted for "A Parachutist's Badge" for a period of three and one-half years.

The Parachutist's Badge was formally approved on 10 March 1941. The senior and master parachutist's badges were authorized by Headquarters, Department of the Army in 1949 and were announced by Change 4, Army Regulation 600-70 dated 24 January 1950.



Description: An oxidized silver badge 1 13/64 inches in height and 1 1/2 inches in width, consisting of an open parachute on and over a pair of stylized wings displayed and curving inward. A star and wreath are added above the parachute canopy to indicate the degree of Qualification.

Symbolism: The wings suggest flight and, together with the open parachute, symbolize individual proficiency and parachute qualifications.

Basic Parachutist: Awarded to any individual who has satisfactorily completed the prescribed tests while assigned or attached to an airborne unit or the Airborne Department of the Infantry School; or participated in at least one combat parachute jump.

Specifications: Badge, Qualification Parachutist, Reg. Size, 1 each - 8455-01-112-9598-DLA100-85C4077.

Source: <http://www.armyparatrooper.org/history.html>

***Why don't you get to wear these wings and we do?
It's because you're a Leg!***

(Smittyism)



A tribute to our All American brothers.....

82nd Airborne Division

“Devils in baggy pants”



The insignia of the 82nd Airborne Division

The **82nd Airborne** is an airborne infantry division that was deployed by the United States from World War I up to the present day.

Formation

The 82nd originally served as a World War I infantry unit, composed of men from every state that belonged to the Union at the time, resulting in the unit adopting the term 'All American' as a regimental nickname. When the unit was reactivated as an airborne unit, it kept the insignia - adding the word 'Airborne' above it - and the nickname.

At the time of its reactivation in early 1942, command was awarded to Major General Omar Bradley. On 15 August, the division was split in two - one part designated the 101st Airborne Division, under the command of Major General William Lee, with the 82nd now commanded by Major General Matthew B. Ridgway.

Bravery is the capacity to perform properly even when scared half to death.

Gen. Omar N. Bradley



Training

In October, the 82nd was dispatched to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to pursue its new airborne training. On October 14, the 82nd absorbed the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, which had formed on May 1 at Fort Benning, Georgia. By the time that they went overseas, the 82nd would consist of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment and the 504th and 505th Parachute Infantry Regiments.



Men of the 325th GIR

At Fort Bragg, the All Americans trained vigorously. These pioneering paratroopers stood up, hooked up and leaped from C-47 transport planes while the gliderborne troops were at work in the 15-man WACO-CG4A gliders - towed by the transport planes.

In the spring of 1943, the 82nd All Americans became the first airborne division sent overseas. They left via troop ships from New England and landed in Casablanca, North Africa on May 10, 1943. From there, they moved by rail to Oujda and then by truck to Kairouan, Tunisia. That would be their departure point for the Division's first combat drop - the invasion of Sicily.

(continued....)





All Americans heading to Sicily

Service

Sicily - Operation Husky

Colonel James Gavin's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) and the 3rd Battalion of the 504th PIR parachuted to take the high ground near Ponte Olivo airfield northeast of Gela, Sicily on July 9, 1943. Despite the wide scattering of the assault, the objectives were seized and the units linked up with the 1st Infantry Division the next day.



General James Gavin

On July 11, 1943, the remaining Battalions of the 504th PIR were dropped in the vicinity of Gela with heavy losses from both the German and Allied (friendly fire) antiaircraft fire. Despite the heavy losses the division was moved up to the front by motor and reinforced by the 39th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Infantry Division on July 12, 1943. The crossings of Fiume delle Canno were secured on July 18, 1943 and the division pushed along the coastal highway, seizing the Marsala-Trapani area of Sicily's western coast by July 23rd.

Salerno - The Oil Drum Drop

The Division's second combat operation was a night parachute drop onto the Salerno beachhead on September 13, 1943 in support of General Mark Clark's 5th Army which was in danger of being pushed back into the sea. The 504th PIR was parachuted south of the Sele River near Salerno on September 13, 1943. In order to guide the C-47 pilots to the shrinking drop zone, oil drums filled with gasoline soaked sand were ignited every 50 yards when signaled. 1300 troopers landed that night infusing a new sense of confidence to the beleaguered soldiers of the 5th Army. The 505th

PIR was dropped the following night near the same drop zone to reinforce the air assault.

On September 15th the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment (GIR) was brought into the beachhead amphibiously to join the rest of the division. Once the beachhead was secured, the 504th PIR & the 376th PFAB began an attack to recover Altavilla on September 16, 1943 and the division fought towards Naples which it reached on October 1, 1943 and moved in to the next day for security duty.

"Leg Infantry"

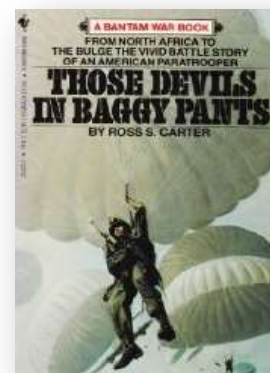
After Naples, the 504th PIR & the 376th PFAB were detached from the 82nd Airborne temporarily and fought as "leg infantry" through the hills of southern Italy as part of the 36th Infantry Division. On October 29th they captured Gallo. They then battled in the Winter Line commencing with attacks up Hill 687 on December 15th, 1943.

On 9 December 1943 Colonel Gavin was promoted to Brigadier General and assumed the duties of the Assistant Division Commander of the 82nd Airborne while Lt Col Herbert Batchellor assumed command of the 505th.

During the early months of 1944, units of the Division were moved to England as the allies were preparing for the assault on Western Europe. The 505th PIR again changed commanders on 22 March 1944 when Lt Col William Ekman assumed command. He would lead the 505th through the remainder of the war.

Anzio - Operation Shingle

On January 22nd & 23rd 1944, the 504th PIR, landed on the beach at Anzio and participated in heavy combat along the Mussolini Canal. It was their fierce fighting during this defensive engagement that earned the 504th PIR the nickname "Devils in Baggy Pants." The nickname was taken from an entry made in a German officer's diary.



D-Day - Operation Neptune

While the 504th was detached, the remainder of the 82nd was pulled out of Italy in December 1943 and moved to the United Kingdom to prepare for the liberation of Europe. With two combat jumps under its belt, the 82nd Airborne Division was now ready for the most ambitious airborne operation of the war.

(continued....)





Raymond D. Levy, and Harold "Homer" Lea. Levy was K.I.A. in Belgium, and his book character name in *Devils in Baggy Pants* is "Finkelstein," Company C, 504 PIR. Lea's book character name is "Carey," Company C, 504 PIR. Photo was taken in Napolie, Italy 1943.

Operation Neptune

The airborne invasion of Normandy.

The operation was part of Operation OVERLORD, the amphibious assault on the northern coast of Nazi-occupied France.



82nd Airborne troopers on D-Day

In preparation for the operation, the division was reorganized. Two new parachute infantry regiments,

the 507th and the 508th, joined the division. However, due to its depleted state following the fighting in Italy, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment did not take part in the invasion.

On June 5-6, 1944, the paratroopers of the 82nd's three parachute infantry regiments and reinforced glider infantry regiment boarded hundreds of transport planes and gliders and, began the largest airborne assault in history. They were among the first soldiers to fight in Normandy, France.



American paratrooper James Flanagan (2nd Platoon, C Co, 1-502nd PIR), among the first to make successful landings on the continent, holds a Nazi flag captured in a village assault. Marmion Farm at Ravenoville, Utah Beach, France, 6 June 1944.

The division dropped behind Utah Beach, Normandy, France between Ste Mere-Eglise and Carentan on June 6th, 1944. They were reinforced by the 325th GIR the next day. The division remained under strong German pressure along the Merderit River. Eventually, the 325th GIR crossed the river to secure a bridgehead at La Fiere on June 9th. It was during this action that Pfc Charles N. DeGlopper single-handedly defended his platoon's position and subsequently was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism. The next day the 505th PIR captured Montebourg Station and on June 12th the 508th PIR crossed the Douve at Beuzeville-la-Bastille and reached Baup. They established a bridgehead at Pont l'Abbe on June 19th. The division then attacked down the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula and captured Hill 131 on July 3rd. The following day the 82nd seized Hill 95 overlooking La Haye-du-Puits.



(continued....)



By the time the All-American Division was pulled back to England on July 13, 1944, General James M Gavin said it had seen 33 days of bloody combat and suffered 5,245 paratroopers killed, wounded or missing. The Division's post battle report read,

"...33 days of action without relief, without replacements. Every mission accomplished. No ground gained was ever relinquished."

Following the Normandy invasion, the 82nd became part of the newly organized XVIII Airborne Corps which consisted of the U.S. 17th, 82nd, and 101st Airborne Divisions. General Ridgway was promoted and assumed command of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Meanwhile, Assistant Division Commander, General James Gavin was also promoted and assumed command of the 82nd Airborne.

Operation Market Garden

In September, the 82nd began planning for Operation Market Garden in Holland. The operation called for three-plus airborne divisions to seize and hold key bridges and roads deep behind German lines. The 504th now back at full strength rejoined the 82nd, while the 507th went to the 17th Airborne Division.

On September 17, the 82nd Airborne Division conducted its fourth combat jump of World War II into Holland. Fighting off ferocious German counterattacks, the 82nd captured the Maas Bridge at Grave, the Maas-Waal Canal Bridge at Heumen and the Nijmegen-Groesbeek Ridge. The next day attempts to take Nijmegen Highway Bridge failed.



A bridge too far.

On 20 September the 504th carried out an heroic assault crossing the Waal. With artillery support the first wave of the 504th assaulted, in twenty-six assault boats, under intense fire, taking 200 casualties in the process. Finally on D+4 the 504th finally secured their hold on the bridge, fighting off another German counterattack just before noon.

It was in this skirmish that Pvt. John Towle earned the Medal of Honor. Its success, however, was short-lived because of the defeat of other Allied units at Arnhem. The gateway to Germany would not open in September 1944, and the 82nd was ordered back to France.



Battle of the Bulge The Ardennes Offensive



Suddenly, on December 16, 1944, the Germans, under the command of General Von Runstedt, launched a surprise offensive through the Ardennes Forest which caught the Allies completely by surprise. The 82nd moved into action on December 17th in response to the German's Ardennes Counteroffensive and blunted General Von Runstedt's northern penetration in the American lines. On December 20th the 82nd attacked in the Vielsalm-St. Vith region and the 504th PIR took Monceau. This fierce attack forced the German units back across the Ambleve River the next day.

However, further German assaults along the Salm hit the 505th PIR in the Trois Pontois area on December 22nd and by December 24th the division lost Manhay. On December 25th, 1944 the division withdrew from the Vielsalm salient then attacked northeast of Bra on December 27th reaching Salm by January 4th, 1945. On January 7th the 508th PIR Red Devil's launched an attack with the 504th in the vicinity of Thier-du-Mont where it suffered heavy casualties. The 508th was then withdrawn from the line and placed in reserve until January 21st when it replaced elements of the 2d Infantry Division.

On January 29, 1945 First Sergeant Leonard Funk, Jr. of Company C, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment earned the Medal of Honor for action at Holzheim, Belgium, after leading his unit and capturing 80 Germans. On February 7th, 1945 the division attacked Bergstein, a town on the Roer River. The 82nd crossed the Roer River on February 17th. During April, 1945 the division performed security duty in Cologne until they attacked in the Bleckede area and pushed toward the Elbe River.



(continued....)



As the 504th PIR drove toward Forst Carrenzien, the German 21st Army surrendered to the division on May 2, 1945.



Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley decorates
Brig. Gen. James M. Gavin

Occupation

Following the surrender of Germany, the 82nd was ordered to Berlin for occupation duty. In Berlin General George Patton was so impressed with the 82nd's honor guard he said,

"In all my years in the Army and all the honor

guards I have ever seen, the 82nd's honor guard is undoubtedly the best."

Hence the "All-Americans" became known as *"America's Guard of Honor."*

The 82nd returned to the United States January 3, 1946. Instead of being demobilized, the 82nd made its permanent home at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and was designated a regular Army division on November 15, 1948.

Source (photos added):

http://world-war-2.wikia.com/wiki/82nd_Airborne_Division?oldid=29457



Sky Soldier Looking for Info on 'Operation Camden'

My name is John Gilman. I am a friend of Gary Prisk (CO, C/2/503) who put me on the list for your newsletter. We both live near Bremerton, WA.

I was in the 173rd '69-'70 in the 319th. I was an FO with 4th Bat and later an FDO at LZ English. I'm trying to find some information about an action that took place in Dec '67 with the 25th ID. Your newsletter has a lot of good detail on actions and I thought you might be able to point me in the right direction.

A friend of mine sent me a link to the virtual wall and I looked up the names of two guys I grew up with. Both died in '67, one from an accident the other killed in a fire fight while serving with D/3 22nd Inf 25th ID. There was a note in his profile with a list of 13 other guys who died on that day in the same action. I was really taken aback by the information and wanted to know more. I mean I knew he was killed but it was one thing to see the name on the wall and the other to learn that he had only been in country 33 days and that was probably his first time in contact.

He was a 2nd LT and among the 13 others there was a 1st LT. So maybe since he was a cherry the other guy was the Co XO and there to help him out, I don't know. Anyway I managed to find a copy of the AAR for the unit (Operation Camden) on line for that period but all it said was that the company had encountered a VC bunker complex, took fire and went on line to clear it. They gave the time and grid coordinates and casualties but nothing else.

So I'd like to get more information if it's available, about the details. My friend got a BS w/V and another guy got a DSC. So I'm thinking that the citations for the awards might give more information.

Do you know how or where I might be able to find that information? I appreciate the help.

**John Gilman
B/3/319**

Anyone with information can contact John at:
john.gilman@wavecable.com



House panel backs major military retirement overhaul

By Leo Shane III, Staff writer
April 21, 2015

House lawmakers will back a dramatic overhaul to the military retirement system as part of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill, including a 401k-style investment plan and an end to the 20-year, all-or-nothing retirement model.



Rep. Mac Thornberry (R), Texas
(Photo: Evy Mages/Getty)

Plans call for the new retirement system to be in place by October 2017. They come despite concerns of some veterans groups that the commission recommendations won't entice enough troops to stay to or past the 20-year mark.

House Armed Services Committee leaders also will mandate better financial literacy training for troops, improved access to child care on military bases and consolidate the current 30 Reserve component duty statuses to six.

Those moves are all aspects of recommendations made earlier this year by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission. But for now, the lawmakers are not backing potential Tricare and commissary system changes, two other controversial measures in the commission report.

Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said he believes the moves as a whole will strengthen the fighting force. ***"This is the sort of change that isn't going to save a lot of money, but it's designed to attract and keep up the quality of talent in the military,"*** he said.

He also indicated there is support for similar moves in the Senate, which will have to sign off on all of the proposed House changes.

The retirement changes would affect only future enlisting troops. Those currently serving would have the choice to opt into the system, but would not be required to do so.

The 20-year retirement plan has served as a major military recruiting tool for decades, offering service members a sizable pension while still in the prime of their working years.

But critics have noted that few troops are able to take advantage of the system. Commission members noted that 83 percent of troops don't stay for 20 years, and leave the service with no real retirement plan.

The new proposal would solve that, offering a 401k-style investment account with government contributions and matches that troops could take with them whenever they leave the military.

Plans call for an automatic federal contribution of 1 percent of troops' basic pay to their Thrift Savings Plan accounts, with matching contributions up to 5 percent of basic pay — offerings that mirror private sector employee benefits.

The new retirement system also would offer lump-sum "continuation pay" for members who stay beyond 12 years of service and the traditional pension plan for those who reach 20 years.

However, payouts at the 20-year mark would be reduced from the current 50 percent of basic pay to 40 percent, which raised concerns among critics. To counter that, Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., chairman of the committee's personnel panel, said lawmakers will allow government matches to TSP accounts to continue past 20 years, a wrinkle not included in the compensation commission's plan.

Lawmakers also will dump complex lump-sum retirement payout options recommended by the commission in favor of a simpler plan. But the remainder of the new retirement outline will stay. The House lawmakers will mandate that Pentagon officials offer a path within six months to implement the new retirement plan. But they set October 2017 as a firm target to have the new system in place.

Heck and Thornberry both said they think that will give all sides enough time to work through any potential problems, and calm outside fears about unexpected downsides.

The Republican leaders also said that will give military officials enough time to put in place new financial literacy training for troops, so they better understand how the investment savings accounts will work and the risks involved.

The White House is scheduled to offer its own analysis of the commission recommendations April 30, after the full armed services committee marks up its version of the authorization bill.

Thornberry said he is confident that the rest of his congressional colleagues will see the benefits of the plan. Heck said members of his panel already have voiced strong support for a change. ***"For too long, if you didn't serve 20 you left with nothing,"*** Heck said. ***"This plan recognizes the service of everyone."***

Source:
MilitaryTimes
A GANNETT COMPANY



Jump School Memories of Men of the 2/503



The things we put ourselves thru for an extra \$55 a month.

My enlistment was Airborne unassigned, so it was jump school out of AIT. In my first week we ran to the line grabbed our helmets and I promptly placed mine on backwards. Before I could fix it the Black Hat was in my face having me do push-ups, backwards.



Week 2 when running a Marine LT was complaining about the heat. When we stopped the Marine Capt. student in charge of our company took the LT behind the shed for an impromptu discussion. When they came back looking a little disheveled, the LT rejoined the formation and completed training with his mouth shut from that point on. This was also the week when we received the GA rains and the Black Hats felt it would be nice to have us fall out and do push-ups when the area was flooded. Loved those guys, (NOT).

Week 3 was jump week and on the 3rd jump I went out the door, checked my chute then saw one of the guys with a malfunction. He pulled his reserve and it dropped between his legs and came up his back. The Black Hats kept calling up to him to prepare to land as he came down. I watched him hit and go into a roll and just lay there for a while before getting up and walking off. Thank God for the plowed field.

The things we put ourselves thru for an extra \$55 a month. Airborne All The Way!

Robert (Bob) Beemer
B/2/503, '67/'68

Note: When Bob became short they took him out of the field and Recon and made him manager of the Officer's Club until he DEROSSED. He says, "It was like putting the fox in charge of the hen house." See photo of the fox above.

From Straight Leg to Paratrooper

In 1959, I was in the Second Infantry Division (The Indian Head) as a leg and wanted to become a better soldier than I was, therefore, I signed up for Jungle Expert Course, Ranger Course and Airborne School at the same time; as I was not going anywhere rank wise.



The Airborne School came open first; I wanted to get through Jungle and/or Ranger training to sharpen my "fear of heights". So, I went to Airborne School so as not to lose that chance.

I loved the school. It was a bit tough, but I was "Gung Ho", if you will. I became the honor Student and led the group out of the C-123. I was then assigned to the school and a Pathfinder Instructor.

In 1965, was called to arms and reassigned to A Company, 2nd Bat, 173d Airborne Brigade on 18 May. While in RVN I did get 2 jumps, as we were told there were extra chutes and a chopper (Hollywood) jump. I had 1 jump at Bein Hoa and 1 in the Iron Triangle.

I terminated my jump status with the 82d Airborne Division in 1966, after having 71 Airborne Jumps.

Jim (Top) Dresser
A/HHC/2/503, '65/'66



(continued....)





Jump School Was a Pisser

Don't have any jump school pictures, but what I remember most is making all five qualifying jumps at Ft. Campbell, KY in the snow. It was the first week of February, 1960. Lord, was it bone chilling cold.

After my first jump I needed to take a leak in the worst way, but my hands were so cold I couldn't get my zipper open. So, you guessed it....I pissed in my pants. The first warm feeling I had all day long.

Now, don't tell all the guys what I said.....you hear.

Ken (Doc) Eastman
B/2/503, '65/'66



The Doc

Doc: I would never do that. **Ed**



He took a liking to me

Arrived Fort Benning in March 1965. A gung ho 18 year old who joined the Army to be a paratrooper.

During ground week a black hat took a liking to me and told me anytime we made eye contact to drop and give him ten. Needless to say every time I looked up, there he was. I must have pushed Georgia down a few inches.



As fate would have it I broke my right foot on my third jump. I looked at the ground during my landing. After a short recovery I made my fourth jump from a C-130 instead of the C-119 for the first three. Needless to say, I was terrified. The jump master knew my history and had a solution for my fear. He made me stand in the door at the front of my stick. It seemed like forever before the green light came on and he tapped me on the rear. I got my hard-earned wings.

No leave was in my near future as my once orders for Rigger School were changed to Okinawa, B Co. 2/503d. Flew commercial airlines to the 'Rock', and arrived only to be deployed to Viet-Nam shortly after my arrival.

James 'JJ' Jackson
B/2/503, '65/'66



The Black Hats. They look friendly enough, but you just can't trust 'em. They've been known to turn boys into men.



(continued....)



M+ I remember it well.

When I came on active duty as a Chaplain at Ft. Dix, one day I walked by the Airborne office and went in to inquire. We talked about ten minutes. The Recruiter said "you did 100 push-ups". I hadn't left my chair and the next think I knew I had orders to Jump School.

March 17th, 1968. I arrived. I was walking across an open field wearing my priestly clericals. A Colonel came up to me and said "If you are not Airborne get the f**k off this field!" I thought, "What did I get myself into?"

During the training they let me go first at everything. "You're closer to God." Same for when we took our jumps.

Whenever this one fat Sgt saw me he ordered "Ten push-up for God." One day I told him "You'll burn you b*****, and I got the power!" Really was a good guy.

Proud to say I was awarded the Leadership trophy in a class of 800. First for a Chaplain. Airborne!

Fr. Charles (Chuck) Davis
The Leapin' Deacon
HHC/2/503

Has it been THAT LONG AGO?

It was summer of 1966 and just after IOBC when I attended jump school. And, I enjoyed every day of it. During that time, I met several of the NCO's with whom I would later meet again in the 173d. Bill Cates, Beverding (sp?), Hooks, and a couple others whose names don't 'jump out' just now.

Ron Leonard
CO C/2/503



Jump you bastard, jump!
But I don't wanna!!
Weeeeeeeee



Hey. This is fun!

Mr. Airborne, where are you?

Going through jump school in July and August was extremely hot. I remember constantly taking salt tablets and walking through the open showers to keep your body heat down.

The most memorable memory was either the first or second day in training one of the cadre spotted a troop with airborne wings tattooed on his arm. From that point on this troop was known as *Mr. Airborne*. Any-time one of the cadre would ask "Mr. Airborne, where are you?" he would have to drop and push them out until he was told to stop. For the three weeks he had to push out 100's if not 1,000's of push-ups.

The photo of me is from jump school.

Ken Redding
HHC/2/503, '63-'66



(continued....)



It was just like the movies

A few days after my 17th birthday and after I got the courts to sign off, I entered the service. I was quite surprised by the accommodations on the train that took the few of us to Ft Jackson. It was my first train ride to last more than a few hours and the private room and food, from what I



remember, was outstanding. Boy, I thought going into the military was going to be a piece of cake.

Was I surprised when we reached our destination, were loaded on buses and off we went to be soldiers. Well, it was just like the movies; the moment we stepped off the bus you knew you were in the Army.

I don't know if it was after basic or AIT that you were allowed I think a weeks' leave? Not me, my girlfriend broke up with me before basic was over and I went right down to AIT. While in training one day, I saw a poster on Base about jump school and after finding out I could almost double my pay, I signed up as quick as they let me.

So, here I go to see if I could be a big bad para-trooper. I have to tell you, I loved jump school and couldn't wait to graduate and join the finest, meanest, baddest part of the Army, being a trooper.

I'm not sure how I ended up with the 173d, I think we put in for stateside or overseas duty and I got what I wanted overseas, and the rest is history; and did the 173d write history and is still at it.

I love telling the story of how there was 20,000 Marines and less than 2500 of us troopers and those of you that spent time on Okinawa know what I mean--but we thought the odds were even. Airborne, All The Way!

Steven Haber
C/2/503, '65/'66



Did I really just do that?

At Ft. Gordon for AIT two buddies and I agreed to go to jump school. Boarding the bus, I kept waiting for my buds but they never showed. Thus, I went and my first time ever in an airplane was my first jump out of a C-119, and my only perfect PLF. Was late in the week due to bad weather and we jumped, got another chute and jumped again.

My third jump was my most scared one as I'd had overnight to think about what I had done. Although my heart was beating loudly, I managed to do all the jumps, even landing on a chute in the air once and instinctively running off it. Not until our two practice jumps did I jump again and my last was the combat jump.

Still scared of heights, not even able to walk next to the curb.

Jerry Hassler
S-2/Recon RTO, HHC/2/503, '66/'67

Fortunately for my hootch buddy Jerry, he lives in Tennessee where, we've heard, they have no curbs. **Ed**



Recon troopers Jerry, on right, with his good buddy Mike Hargadon at ARVN airborne facilities near Saigon getting refresher training before combat jump in '67.

(continued....)



Smile and take it like a man

I was known as "Squeaky" in basic training (Alfa 3-1), and then in AIT I was just Ed. In Vietnam I was called Pancho Villa.

In jump school I remember getting stuck in a draft for over 5 minutes. Suspended in an air pocket watching guys drop past me. Then the next wave of jumpers went by as well. Trucks were coming to pick up the jumpers and there I was suspended in the sky. I remember pulling on the slips trying to maneuver out of the draft, PLFs and riding the nutcracker.

I was in class 101 and was assigned number 201 at Fort Benning.

I have many fond memories. This one came to mind first. Sure do remember the nut-crackers. Better not show any pain in your face or they will pull the risers and drop you. Smile and take it like a man. AATW

Ed Ramirez
2/503



The 'nutcracker'. Not remembered as the fondest part of training.

A Swing Landing Bartender Got Him

I was ROTC and went to Benning's School for Boys for the Infantry Officer Basic Course in February 1965. I believed those chants while double timing about being an Airborne-Ranger (*I want to be an Airborne-Ranger, I want to live a life of Danger*) and signed up for both courses. They assigned me to Airborne School first. Had no problem with the first week but the second was not good.



My barracks assignment was about two buildings from the Lawson Field Officer's Club. So, that's where I went to have my evening meals each night along with a few drinks at the bar. I didn't realize it, but one of the bartenders was an NCO from the Swing Landing Trainer. I don't think he liked my drinking habits and at the end of the week, I was told I had not passed the Swing Landing portion of the training.

They took me to the building adjacent to the demonstration Tower and had me report to the Colonel in Charge of Airborne Training. I forget his name but he was the one John Wayne reported to in the movie when he arrived in Vietnam reporting to the 5th Special Forces (that portion of the film was filmed at Lawson Field).

Anyway, I told the Colonel that if he gave me a second chance, I'd make it through the training, which he did, but I had to start fresh with the first week's training. Unfortunately, there were no new classes for about two weeks and that put me out of Ranger School because the West Point Class of '65 came to Ft Benning and took all the Ranger School openings.

I made it through my second three weeks of Airborne Training with only a little extra training after my forth jump where I landed on my feet with no PLF. The NCO who saw me was furious. I tried to explain that I had let go of the risers as my feet touched the ground and there was no need for a PLF. I ended up with an hour's training in PLFs before my last jump. But, I went out with a Benning girlfriend that night and we had a great time with two bottles of wine.

Needless to say, I had a terrific hangover on the equipment jump but was able to fall out of the C119, hitting the back of the plane on my way down where I received my Jump Wings. *AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY!*

Robert A. Getz (RAGMAN)
2/503d/173d and HHC/173d, '69 - '70

(continued....)



From Country Boy to Trooper

I went to jump school in January 1970. I was a country boy still wet behind the ears.

I jumped out of the first airplane I ever flew in.

Rick "granny" Grantham
E/2/503, Wildcats Recon, '70/'71



He divorced her upon graduating jump school

I was with A/2/503 '67-'68, so here's my jump school memories:

I joined with a buddy of mine (yep, that infamous "buddie" system), but as fate would happen he and I were together in basic and AIT.

I wanted to make an impression on the black hats in jump school, so I shaved my head, but during the final stroke (forward to back) the safety razor decided to jump across my poor ole bald head. Needless to say I was bleeding like a stuck hog. One of the guys went to the PX and bought some bandages to cover my multiple razor slices.

Next morning (first day of week one) we had in-ranks inspections. When the black hat got to me, he asked W.T.F. was I thinking when I damaged government property! So for punishment, he made me wear my steel pot 24/7, and if they caught me without it, they would give me an Article 15.

Oh yes, my helmet and I had a torrid affair until graduation, then I divorced her.

Ed Perkins
A/2/503, '67/'68



Ed, without his steel pot



The Experimental Parachute Platoon
at Fort Benning in summer 1940.

The two things I will always remember from jump school days:

The recruits that went to town to get their airborne "wings" tattoo before jump school was even half over. Needless to say the instructors had fun making examples of these premature jumpers.

Then there were the troops that showed up for morning formation with new Corcoran jump boots long before they received their wings. For some reason the instructors weren't impressed. These troops also had a target on their backs until graduation day.

After a brief break back in Wisconsin it was off to San Francisco then off to VN. When I read my orders they said 173d Airborne. Before that I'd never heard of any airborne unit but 101st and the 82nd.

Welcome to Camp Zinn.

Dave Kies
HHC/2/503
Anti Tank / Recon '66-'67



Now *what* was the name of those caps?

I recall being disappointed in jump school. No problem with the running, I was in great shape, but I felt that the yelling was a waste. I felt those efforts would have been better spent with training.

I had just finished OCS where the emphasis was on harassment with training being secondary. In '64 there was no need for artillery second lieutenants, so the graduation rate was about 15 - 20%.

A lot of guys that would have been very capable as officers, just decided it was not worth the bullshit. Of course by '67 all this turned and if you could fog a mirror, they would pin bars on you.

I know the various "hell weeks" are designed to create stress and weed out the weak but I'm confident that theory won't hold up under scrutiny.

I do not recall "perfectly good airplanes" I do remember C-119's, AKA flying coffins.

I do not recall the "proper" or army name, for our caps. Do you?

Jim Robinson
B/2/503, '65



(continued....)



The Last Time I Saw Tighe

I first met Tighe (pronounced "Tie") in jump school at Ft. Benning, standing to the right of me in the first morning formation of ground week in the training area. It was close to that big dirt track we had to run every morning before practicing to execute a correct PLF.



Sam

During our introductory chatter with one another, I sized him up -- a thin 5' 5", maybe a hundred-twenty-five pounds. I surmised that since this guy showed up and was determined to make it through this tough training, so could I; it was that simple.

We both persevered and were awarded our wings three weeks later, with he being assigned to B/2/503 and I to C/2/503.

The next time I saw Tighe was during a hot morning in the C-Zone or D-Zone. The battalion formation in which we'd been operating was splitting up; B Company moved out first, tripping a booby trap almost right away -- grenade and trip wire across a trail (never walk a trail; why did they do that?).

Two teams of four men each walked back past our column as we waited to move out. They were carrying injured men in ponchos. As the first team passed me, I gazed down at the casualty. There was Tighe, six weeks in-country, lying on his back in that poncho, skin pale, face dirty, eyes dazed. I was told Tighe was either on point or walking slack for the point man, the person in the next poncho.

That morning, 05/17/67, was the last time I saw Tighe. His name, Tighe, John Roy, rests on panel 20-E, Line 19.

Sam Stewart
C/2/503

John Roy Tighe

Private First Class
B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD
ABN BDE, USARV
Army of the United States
Lomita, California
April 22, 1947 to May 17, 1967



Start of an Airborne Career

I was in the first January class in 1964. My first jump was a "night jump" even though it was 1000 hours! Yes, that's correct. I went out the door with my eyes closed.

My fourth Jump was a bit more interesting. I was in the rear half of the stick. The pilot announced that there was a helo on Fryar Field where we were to land and therefore only the front half of the stick would exit on the first pass and the rear half (in the front of the plane) would go on the second pass.

The front half stood up and went through the commands. Suddenly, the jump master called for *everyone* to stand and hook up and we all went out the door! We were Jumping "Flying Coffins", better known as C-119s, and one of the two engines was burning as I exited the door. An interesting way to start an Airborne career!

Ken Smith, Col.
A/D/2/503

Don't Gamble at Jump School!

I remember the last day at Ft. Benny waiting for our orders to ship out, they had already paid us. So, the great soldiers started gambling and one of my New Mexico friends lost all his money. He went to the CO of the company for money to get home. The CO disguised himself and went into our barracks and caught them gambling. We had to stay an extra day.

We were all pissed off at my friend. He is deceased now. He slept at my house on leave before going to Vietnam.

I remember on one of the qualifying jumps the wind dragged me quite a few feet before I hit the release button.

Ted Roybal
B/2/503



No Legs in This House

With two older brothers who were paratroopers, Rick with the 82nd, and Bob with the 101st and SF, it would have been risky walking into our home as a Leg. So, following AIT in the summer of '65, off to Ft. Benning I went to learn how to jump out of perfectly good airplanes.



I recall the towers, of course, the qualifying jumps, naturally, yet that 'ball-buster' thingy is not remembered with fondness (to this day I talk an octave too high); but most of all I recall the running and the yelling....we did most of the running while the instructors did all of the yelling.

Somehow getting thru those weeks of training it was off to the 101st at Campbell, our 173d in Bien Hoa, with a final appearance with the 509th in Mainz, Germany.

Man, did we look sharp in our cunt caps with the airborne patch on display, the bloused jump boots shined to the hilt, and those hard-earned silver wings on our chest. It would be good today to run a lot and be yelled at while looking sharp. ATW!

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



Also known as Garrison Caps



Prized possessions

Jump Commands

Get Ready!

Stand Up!

Hook Up!



Check Static Line!

Check Equipment!

Sound Off For Equipment Check!

Stand In The Door!



Go!



Airborne!



***I want to be an Airborne Ranger
Live my life through hell and danger***

***Got to go, All the way
Airborne, Every day***

***Whiskey, Women, Wine, No God
P.T. D.D. So Good, So Good***

***If I die in a combat zone
Box me up and send me home
Lay my hands across my chest
Tell them all I did my best***

***Got to go, all the way
Airborne, All The Way
Airborne, Every day Every day***



Fryar Field



Fryar Field Marker. Inscription:
***Named in honor of Pvt Elmer E. Fryar, Congressional Medal
of Honor, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment,
United States Army.
(Erected by United States Army)***

Location. 32° 16.343' N, 84° 57.068' W. Marker is in Fort Benning, Alabama, in Russell County. Marker can be reached from 101st Airborne Division Road, on the right when traveling south. Signs along 101st Airborne Division Road provide directions to Fryar Field drop zone. Although Fort Benning is primarily in Muscogee and Talbot Counties, Georgia, Fryar Field is located in Alabama. Marker is in this post office area: Fort Mitchell, AL 36856, United States of America.

(continued....)



Regarding Fryar Field

Private Elmer E. Fryar was born in Denver, Colorado. He served in Company E, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 11th Airborne Division, United States Army. Fryar was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions against the Japanese on Leyte Island in the Philippines on 8 December 1944.

Pvt Fryar exposed himself to the direct fire of an enemy machine gun during an early morning Japanese banzai attack; then, under heavy enemy fire, recovered a wounded Sergeant outside the perimeter; and later in the day purposely stepped in front of his platoon leader and took a fatal burst of automatic fire in his chest from a sniper whom he spotted at the last minute. The posthumous Medal of Honor was the first award to an individual from the 11th Airborne Division. Private Fryar's Medal of Honor Citation is included below.

Private Fryar's body was never recovered after the battle. His name is listed on the Tablets of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery, the Philippines.

The first Medal of Honor awarded by President Harry Truman was presented to Private Fryar's parents during a May 1945 ceremony in Denver, Colorado.



Private Elmer E. Fryar
(Official Army Photo)

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to

FRYAR, ELMER E.

Rank and organization: Private, U .S. Army, Company E, 511th Parachute Infantry, 11th Airborne Division.

Place and date: Leyte, Philippine Islands, 8 December 1944.

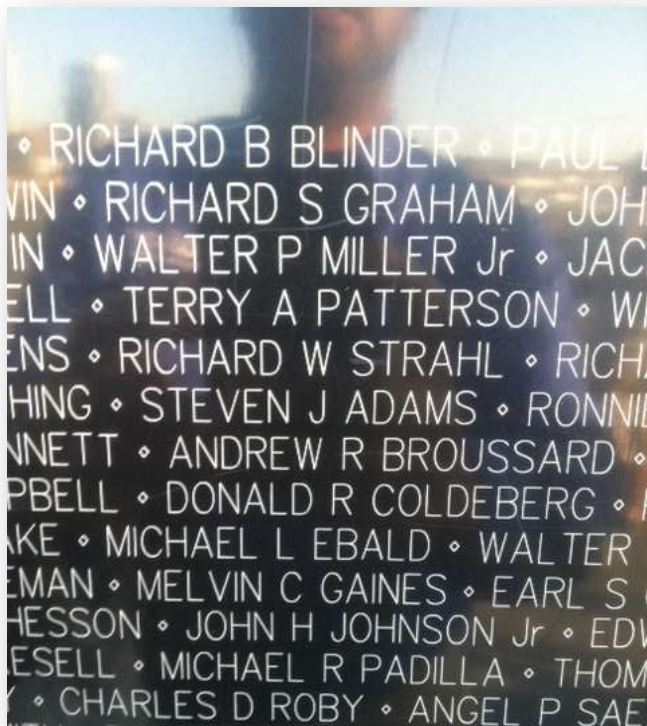
Entered service at: Denver, Colo. *Birth:* Denver, Colo. *G.O. No.:* 35, 9 May 1945.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Pvt. Fryar's battalion encountered the enemy strongly entrenched in a position supported by mortars and automatic weapons. The battalion attacked, but in spite of repeated efforts was unable to take the position. Pvt. Fryar's company was ordered to cover the battalion's withdrawal to a more suitable point from which to attack, but the enemy launched a strong counterattack which threatened to cut off the company. Seeing an enemy platoon moving to outflank his company, he moved to higher ground and opened heavy and accurate fire. He was hit, and wounded, but continuing his attack he drove the enemy back with a loss of 27 killed. While withdrawing to overtake his squad, he found a seriously wounded comrade, helped him to the rear, and soon overtook his platoon leader, who was assisting another wounded. While these 4 were moving to rejoin their platoon, an enemy sniper appeared and aimed his weapon at the platoon leader. Pvt. Fryar instantly sprang forward, received the full burst of automatic fire in his own body and fell mortally wounded. With his remaining strength he threw a hand grenade and killed the sniper. Pvt. Fryar's indomitable fighting spirit and extraordinary gallantry above and beyond the call of duty contributed outstandingly to the success of the battalion's withdrawal and its subsequent attack and defeat of the enemy. His heroic action in unhesitatingly giving his own life for his comrade in arms exemplifies the highest tradition of the U.S. Armed Forces.



Remembering a Buddy of a Buddy



"This is my friend (on Wall), Steve (Adams). I miss him, A/2/503, 3 March 67."

Bill Reynolds
A/2/503



Steven J. Adams
Born: April 22, 1948, Springfield, OH
KIA: March 3, 1967, Tay Ninh, Vietnam
Alpha Company, 2/503d, 173d Abn Bde

Update Your Records With The Association



As you may or may not know I am part of the Association's membership team. We are trying to update all the member's records with their pertinent info. MANY are missing email addresses. We're asking all members to send us their email address so their National records can be updated. Thanks for your great newsletter, we in New England surely appreciate it.

Peter Klausner
A/4/503, '66/'67

THE HOUSE OF MAN

Softly
Amid The green
And yellow
enfolding jungle
Both giving
And receiving
Refuge
The faded ruin stands
The shining tile
Powdered
A monument of the people
Rooted with the trees
In the blood of it's
Million Deaths

Russell Webb 1968 & 2010
HHC/2/503



Jungle surrounds ancient Cham ruins in Central Vietnam.



Amateur Historian Looking to Map Area of The Battle of the Slopes

"My idea would be to set up a historically accurate map of the operation then turn it over to units for them to personalize as they wish."

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your prompt response. Let me first describe my background and motivation, as I realize my request came out of the blue. I am strictly an amateur historian, and have no commercial or political affiliations. Also, no monetary interest in this potential research.

My professional background is that I am a partner with the Ernst & Young accounting firm and hold a Ph.D. in Economics (MIT 89).

I did not serve in the military, and by the timing of my birth (1960) was not subject to any draft. I turned 18 at the time of the Carter response to Afghanistan, so I filled out a registration form at the post office, but that was it. I learned mapping, orienteering and some outdoor skills in the Boy Scouts (was proud to make Eagle), and was raised by a Civil War buff father. Summer vacations were spent tromping around battlefields in PA, MD and VA with a metal detector. While my family has an Army background, only one saw combat (US Civil War) and none saw the type of conflict the 2/503rd experienced.

Recently, I have dived into Vietnam history including written, video and audio accounts on-line. While reading the accounts and interviews of June 22nd, I found myself repeatedly searching for a good map of the area, and did not come up with much. Tactical maps of Vietnam, at least easily found on line, focus on Khe Sanh or Ia Drang Valley operations. And what is there on Dak To focuses on the November battles (such as Hill 875).

I then found myself going on to Google Earth to match the written accounts, and some of the pictures with the terrain. It provides 3-D terrain imagery of the entire world.

A couple of things I found on Dak To may be of interest to men of your unit and their families:



"The Slopes, after the battle."

(Web photo)

1) The jungle has been mostly clear cut for forestry, so now you can clearly see a trail/road network that most likely corresponds to the PAVN trails.

2) There are cleared level spots that seem logical for LZ's or overnight laagers.

3) You can get a great perspective on how the severity of the terrain affected the decisions and action. For example, the ridge line that affected the march and action of Company A.

4) You can clearly map out the Dak To airfield, and match the perspective of certain photos from the time.

On Google Earth you can pin-point the action on the map for others to see, then link in pictures, accounts, and memorials. This has already been done a bit for Ia Drang Valley, Khe Sanh, Hamburger Hill, and Hill 875, though the historical description and guidance to the action is spotty.

I have a working theory of where the action was, but need some more guidance to do it justice. If there are any existing maps, I would work off of that. I would allow those interested to review for accuracy and content beforehand. Personalization would be private, or members could add something public if they wished, or just save it for family.

Thank you for your time and considering this request. Also thank you for your service.

Brian Cromwell

briancromwell@sbcglobal.net

Note: We do not know this gentleman, but have decided to include his request here as it appears to have potential historical value to our unit. Persons with interest in his project may contact him at the above email address. **Ed**



The Slopes in 2011, as viewed from the banks of the Po Ko River.

(Photo by Wambi Cook, A/2/503)

Note: For a detailed report on *The Battle of the Slopes*, see the June 2011, Issue 29 of our newsletter. **Ed**



From Down Under

G'day mates:

After 50 years we have finally been recognised and awarded the CGWP. WOW!

Regards,

Ken Baker aka TAFO

1RAR



THE HON DARREN CHESTER MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation awarded to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment

Australian Defence Force (ADF) members who served with the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) in Vietnam 50 years ago have been recognised with the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation (CGWP).

The Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd) has formally approved the awarding of the Citation in recognition of the military assistance provided to the former Republic of Vietnam while under the operational command of the United States 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Darren Chester welcomed the decision.

"I am delighted to confirm that the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation will be awarded to members of 1 RAR," Mr. Chester said.

"This decision follows a three year review by the Defence Honours and Awards Appeal Tribunal who determined that the awarding of the Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation was intended not only for the 173rd Airborne Brigade, but also the Australian forces who operated under their command."

"This award finally acknowledges those Australian soldiers and recognises the important contribution they made 50 years ago."

In May 1965, the Australian Government agreed to provide military assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. Initially, 1 RAR was restricted to operating in the Bien Hoa tactical area of responsibility (TAOR). When the 173rd Airborne Brigade deployed to operate away from Bien Hoa, 1 RAR was left to conduct operations within

the Bien Hoa TAOR and to provide defence for the air base. However, on 30 September 1965 the Australian Prime Minister agreed to lift the restrictions on the deployment of 1 RAR. For the remainder of their tour of duty in Vietnam, the members of 1 RAR served alongside the other units of 173rd Airborne Brigade on every operation and became the third battalion of the Brigade.

1 RAR participated in seven operations with 173rd Airborne Brigade between 5 May 1965 and 31 May 1966 that were referred to in the citation that awarded the Republic of Vietnam CGWP to 173rd Airborne Brigade.

About the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation

The Citation was awarded by the former Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) to specific military units that distinguished themselves in battle. To be eligible for the CGWP members must have served in Vietnam under the command of 173rd Airborne Brigade from 5 May 1965 to 31 May 1966 in one of the following units;

- 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment
- 1st Armoured Personnel Carrier Troop RAAC
- 105th Field Battery, RAA
- 3rd Field Troop, RAE
- 161st Reconnaissance Flight, AAVN
- 1st Australian Logistic Support Company
- Battery Section, 4th Field Regiment Light Aid Detachment RAEME (and redesignated in country to 105th Field Battery Section, 12th Field Regiment Light Aid Detachment RAEME.



Shortly after the Diggers arrived Bien Hoa in '65.

(Web photo)

**From the Sky Soldiers of the 173d, we send our
congratulations to our brothers of the 1RAR!**



Sigholtz Family Honored Center in Italy dedicated to gold star army family

Emma Harris/The Connection

Wednesday, August 6, 2014



Whitney Knoerlein kissing her grandmother, Roberta 'Cis' Sigholtz, a gold star mother of McLean.

Photo by Emma Harris/The Connection

The Sigholtz Center, a new multipurpose center on the army base in Del Din, Italy, was dedicated to the Sigholtz family Friday, Aug. 1.

The namesake service members of the new center, Col. Robert Sigholtz Sr. and Capt. Robert Sigholtz Jr. of the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade, were the husband and son of Roberta 'Cis' Sigholtz, a McLean resident.

Col. Sigholtz Sr. was a *"legendary battalion commander in the 173d Airborne Brigade during the Vietnam War,"* said Michael Montie, former president of the Sigholtz Capital Chapter of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association. *"During his 1966-67 command tenure, the 2nd Battalion conducted the only combat parachute assault undertaken by the United States during the War."* Sigholtz Sr. returned from war to serve as a professor and athletic director at Georgetown University, manager of RFK Stadium and founder of the Sigholtz Capital Chapter of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Association before his passing in 2005, Montie said.

Capt. Sigholtz Jr. was killed in action in Vietnam on May 26, 1969. *"He was serving in the same battalion of the 173rd that his father had earlier commanded,"*



Col. Bob Sigholtz

Montie said. *"Captain Sigholtz is the namesake of the Sigholtz Capital Chapter."*

Whitney Knoerlein, former DC 101 radio host, represented the Sigholtz family at the dedication of the center as the second granddaughter of Col. Robert and Roberta 'Cis' Sigholtz.

"The building was dedicated to my grandfather and my uncle for their service and sacrifice," Knoerlein said. She toured the Sigholtz Center and met the brigade, then attended the unveiling ceremony, where former Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Pitts was awarded the Medal of Honor, and the formal Brigade Ball.

When the decision of who to dedicate the multipurpose center to came up, *"once someone mentioned it should be named after the Sigholtz family, there was no question,"* Knoerlein said. Her grandfather and uncle were known as the men who wanted to fight on the front lines, she said. *"They never shied away."* Both Sigholtz Sr. and Sigholtz Jr. were called *"multipurpose men,"* Knoerlein added, *"so the meaning of the building really seemed to fit."*

Knoerlein said she was overwhelmed by the respect and honor for history and the men that died. *"There is really a lot of personality, charisma and camaraderie in the brigade,"* Knoerlein said. *"To see that dedication, drive and love that these guys have is pretty outstanding."*

A common string throughout her family is the Sigholtz sense of humor, Knoerlein added. *"My uncle who was killed in Vietnam had a hell of a sense of humor. So does my grandmother."*

Roberta 'Cis' Sigholtz is the official Founding Mother of the Sigholtz Capital Chapter. *"Cis is one of the most positive ladies I've ever met, and she has had a tough life,"* Montie said.

She remained close to the chapter, even though many who lose loved ones shy away from being constantly reminded, Knoerlein said.

"My grandmother lost both of her children," she added. Knoerlein's mother and Ms. Sigholtz's second child passed away in 1980. *"But she carried on and rebuilt her life. She went on to work and smile and live every day."*

"Tell it like it is, honey," Roberta Sigholtz chimed in. *"She always says things like 'Tell it like it is,' and 'Never forget where you came from and you'll never get lost,'"* Knoerlein said. *"She has this incredible spirit."*



Capt. Bob Sigholtz, Jr.



A Few Pics From the 173d Reunion in San Diego, May 2015



(continued....)





Thanks to Wambi Cook, A/2/503, for sharing the photos.



PICTURES: Vietnam Airlines first Boeing 787-9 completes exterior painting

By: Firdaus Hashim
15 May 2015

Vietnam Airlines' first Boeing 787-9 has rolled out of Boeing's paint shop at Paine Field, less than a month after it came off the final assembly line.

The aircraft, which bears the registration VN-A861, will now undergo interior fit-out before conducting ground and flight tests, prior to delivery to the state-owned carrier. This is expected to take place later in mid-year, it says.



Vietnam Airlines

The airline is also on-track to take delivery of its first Airbus A350-900 around the middle of the year. It has indicated that both types will be used on domestic and international services.

Flightglobal's Ascend Fleets database shows that Vietnam Airlines holds orders for 14 A350-900s and 17 787-9s.

Source:

www.flightglobal.com/news/articles/pictures-vietnam-airlines-first-boeing-787-9-completes-exterior-412368/

And so it goes.

He won the Masters!



Congratulations! Are you glad you won the Masters or are you just happy to see me? Oh, to be 21 again.

[Sent in by the sharp-eyed aunt of a HHC/2/503 trooper]

One of the original paratrooper helmets



After their PLF they were ready for some football!

HERE WE GO! ALL THE WAY!



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~ A Few Pics From the Bravo Bulls' Reunion at Benning ~



Jim & Marge Robinson



Jim Stanford



Bob Warfield



Jack Schimpf



Susan & Jerry Nissely



David & Isabelle Glick



Sam & Chaet Grimes



Leon & Carole Cooley



Barry & Dale Herbison



Gary & Marty Davidson



The family of fallen brother Ron Schukar



Sharon & Cave Harris

The Schukar family from Vandalia, IL shown in the photo above are Judy, Randy and Rob who are the brothers and sister, along with brother-in-law Bob Vargas, of fallen Sky Soldier Ronald Schukar. It was so nice to see them in attendance this year. Such a wonderful family, and I would be remiss if I didn't say that we all miss the late Katie Schukar, (mother of Ron). May she rest in eternal peace. **Ed Kearney**

(In addition to Ron, on 10 October 1965, Bravo Company also lost Eugene Rick, Lawrence Franklin, Ernest President, Ronnie Duncan, James Floyd, Harry Himmelreich, Duane Nelson, Wilfred Robillard and Van Williams).

(continued....)



The Bulls



Barbara & Bryan Bowley



Judy & Joe Logan



Jack & Sam Price



Joyce & Ed Kearney



Susie Farrow, Roy & Carol Lombardo, Ed Farrow



Remembering our fallen

"BURY ME WITH SOLDIERS"

Jack Schimpf

I've played a lot of roles in life;
I've met a lot of men,
I've done a lot of things I'd like to think
I wouldn't do again.

And though I'm young, I'm old enough
To know someday I'll die.
And to think about what lies beyond,
Beside whom I would lie.

Perhaps it doesn't matter much;
Still if I had my choice,
I'd want a grave 'mongst
Soldiers when
At last death quells my voice.

I'm sick of the hypocrisy
Of lectures of the wise.
I'll take the man, with all the flaws,
Who goes, though scared, and dies.

The troops I knew were commonplace
They didn't want the war;
They fought because their fathers and
Their fathers had before.

They cursed and killed and wept...
God knows
They're easy to deride...
But bury me with men like these;
They faced the guns and died.

It's funny when you think of it,
The way we got along.
We'd come from different worlds
To live in one where no one belongs,

I didn't even like them all;
I'm sure they'd all agree.
Yet I would give my life for them,
I know some did for me.

So bury me with soldiers, please,
Though much maligned they be.
Yes, bury me with soldiers, for
I miss their company.

We'll not soon see their likes again;
We've had our fill of war.
But bury me with men like them
Till someone else does more.



173d Airborne Association Membership Application Form

PLEASE PRINT AND FILL-OUT THIS APPLICATION

Mail Application and Payments to;

Please **circle** the appropriate boxes below

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

Make checks payable to:
173d Airborne Brigade Assn

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)	

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

Please print current or updated information below:

Service Number (B446349): _____

(Use first Letter of last name and last 6 of service number)

First Name: _____ Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State or AE: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

173d Service Dates (02/2003-02/2005): _____

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

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

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

My Email address: _____

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



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

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

