



November-December 2016, Issue 70
Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

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LTC Robert B. (Bob) Carmichael, Abn Inf (Ret) **2/503d Bn XO/CO, 1965/66 RVN, 25th Inf Bn CO, 1969/70 RVN**



LTC Robert B. Carmichael passed away at his home in Austin, TX on August 29, 2016.
Please see tribute to the Commander beginning Page 4.





We Dedicate this Issue of Our Newsletter in Memory of the Men of the
173d Airborne Brigade We Lost 50 Years Ago
in the Months of November & December 1966,
and to LTC Robert B. Carmichael



“Wars are times of tribulations, trials, and victories. Many people fear war and fighting for the United States. I thank you for not being one of these people. You stepped up to the challenge and defended our country. Thank you for protecting the United States. God bless you.” Jeremy Steffen

Joseph Alexander Cross
A/2/503, 11/15/66

PFC Joseph A. Cross, 18, a paratrooper with the 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cross, of 1813 W. Stiles St. Cross went to Vietnam in May, and recently spent almost two months in hospital with malaria. He was killed a week ago while crossing a river with a patrol. He attended Benjamin Franklin High School. Cross' mother, Mrs. Mildred Perry, said she received a dozen birthday roses from him last Wednesday. Besides his parents, he is survived by six brothers, Army Sp/4 Frank Cross Jr; Willie, Horace, Larry, Joel and Samuel, and two sisters, Christine and Dorothy. **Philadelphia Enquirer**



Hi Joe: You wouldn't remember me, we were in different companies and you came over about 5 months after my arrival to the battalion, but I've remembered you for, well, 50 years now – I've confirmed with your buddies it is you I remember. It's good to see your face.

We were humping that day with you and Alpha Company when we came upon a stream with somewhat fast, flowing water from our right to left as we faced it – I guessed the stream was 20 feet across but Jack Owens (A/2/503) says it was about 10', and maybe 6 feet deep and down a muddy embankment of a few feet or so; I seem to recall one man crossed at a time. Some of our guys had strung a guide rope across that stream and when I reached the opposite side I was being helped up the bank by, I think, my buddy Lee Braggs, another RTO from HHC, when I heard screaming behind me. I turned in time to see your helmet and ruck bob in the water once or twice, and then you were taken under and downstream.

For over thirty years I thought you had lost your grip and drowned, but your buddies told me you had been struck by a viper, and that was the reason we lost you that day. I'm sorry we lost you Joe, and regret not knowing you personally, but instead, carry this sad memory of you, I guess, forever. Rest easy, my brother.

Lew “Smitty” Smith, HHC/2/503

Douglas Duane Kern
A/2/503, 11/16/66

My name is Larry Sword and I served with Doug from basic training all the way through jump school. I was also wounded the day he was killed. I remember writing to his parents after that day and I will never forget what his father said in his return letter. If I ever came to Montana depending on my background we would either go to church or if I was so inclined we would go have some drinks. I wish I could have taken them up on that offer. Doug was a fine man and a good friend. We also lost another friend the first few weeks in country, Ken Knudson. God bless these good men/friends and their families. If for any reason someone from these families would like to contact me online my address is l.sword1732@att.net

Larry Sword
A/2/503



James Robert Johnson
A/2/503, 11/16/66

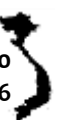
Today and every day we salute you. Rest in peace.

by Your "brother rat" Bob Whaley

1LT James Robert Johnson is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



(continued....)





William Allen Palenske

A/2/503, 11/18/66

William is buried at Oak Hill Memorial Park, San Jose, CA.



Lorenzo Clark, E/17th Cav, 12/16/66

Lorenzo is buried at Memphis National Cemetery.



Coley L. Andrews

335th AHC, 12/19/66

(Virtual Wall states
HHC, 173d Bde)

Coley I never met you but my father said he loved you like a brother. He said you were fearless and brave. I hope you keep me safe and bless me with your courage as I fight the war on terrorism.

Bart Andrews, USN

A Cousin in Arms



SGT Andrews was the crew chief on U.S. Army helicopter UH-1D tail number 65-12849. The helicopter landed to pick up a prisoner when an automatic weapon opened up from a concealed position mortally wounding SGT Andrews. He was evacuated to the 93rd EVAC where he died several hours later.

[Source: vhpa.org]

Richard Edwin Powell

E/17th Cav, 12/19/66

Another year has passed Rich and you and the others are still with me.

Mort Morgan

2/5 Cav, '68/'69



Lest we forget.



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

1929 ~ 2016

Bn Cmdr 1966, Bn XO 1965/66, 2/503rd, 173d Abn Bde (Sep), RVN

Bn Cmdr 1969/70, 25th Inf Div., RVN



“RBC”

LTC Robert Byron Carmichael, or Robert or Bob as his friends call him was born in Wewoka, Oklahoma on October 28, 1929 to Mr. & Mrs. Hurley Francis Carmichael. Bob graduated from Odessa High School, and the University of Texas at Austin in 1952. He was a distinguished military graduate and commissioned in the U.S. Army in July 1952 as a Second Lieutenant. While serving in the Army, Bob's service included two tours during the Vietnam War, and one tour in Korea. He was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Legion of Merit, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and is a Distinguished Member of the 503rd Infantry Regiment by Order of the Secretary of the Army.

Bob retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1972 and moved from Fort Benning, Georgia to Austin, Texas. While living in Austin, Bob pursued his passion of fishing the many Central Texas lakes and watching the Texas Longhorn football team.

Bob was preceded in death by his son, LTC Charles B. Carmichael. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Exie Carmichael and their children Carole Ransom and David Carmichael. Bob is also survived by five grandchildren: Robert Byron Carmichael II, Ashley Morton, Alyssa Tjaden, Drew and Sean Carmichael, and his four great grandchildren, Robert Byron Carmichael III, Ransom, Jarrett and Callan Tjaden.

The family would like to thank Texas Home Health Hospice for their compassionate and professional care.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday, September 7th at Beck Funeral Home, Cedar Park, Texas, with full military honors service at Central Texas Veterans Cemetery, Killeen, Texas.

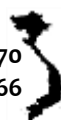
You may sign the guestbook at:

www.beckchapels.com/memsol.cgi?user_id=1846737



Bob and Exie Carmichael

(continued....)



RBC...A Soldier's Soldier

I was deeply sorry to get the news of Bob Carmichael's death. He was a great soldier and a tremendous help to me in Vietnam. These past few years have been hard on him and particularly hard on Exie.

George Dexter, Col. (Ret)
Bn Cmdr, 2/503, '64/'66

He was a good man.

Ron Woodley, A/2/503

He was a wonderful man. He will be missed.

Floyd Reister, 173d Bde

Sad to lose another warrior....



John Erskine, Col., (Ret), 1/5/6 SF

So sorry to hear this sad news. I served with both Bob and (LTC) Charlie Carmichael. I remember Charlie as a teenager on Okinawa and I was later his 1SG at Ft. Lewis, WA. They both will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with Exie and family.

John W. Searcy Sr. (Top), HHC/2/503

Sad news. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

Mary Ann Wandell, Sgt., U.S. Army

Bob's grandson, his namesake Robbie, recently said to his grandmother, Exie, *"He is amazing, Nani. When he is at his weakest, he is stronger than most of us."*

Spoken by:

Robert Byron Carmichael, II
U.S. Army

I served with B/2/503 in '65 and met COL Carmichael once when he chewed my ass for swearing on the radio during a commo check. We were on our way to set up an ambush and I was tangled up in wait-a- minute vines and kept getting the same call on the radio, so finally I became frustrated and told the operator on the other end to *"wait a ----- minute!"* After being chewed out he laughed and said some of his people are more sensitive than others. I never forgot that meeting.

Larry Yeazle, B/D/2/503

Bob will always be significant in the history of our grand unit. I remember him as a strong person who spoke after he thought and not the other way around. He was typical of the dedicated field officers we had the honor of serving under. He could look at you so hard your pants would self-crease....What an honor to have known and served with him. You were lucky to make that friendship.

Paul Epley, 2/503 & Bde PIO

The shell of his existence is gone but his love is eternal. We're all travelers in this life and those we leave behind are the value of our life's worth.

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

We lost another brother today and LTC Bob Carmichael will be missed. I am proud to be a member of the Herd and to have known him. To the family I want to say I am so sorry for your loss and we feel your grief. Rest In Peace.

Frank Dukes, Sgt., A/2/503

As the National Chaplain Emeritus for the 173d Assoc., I stand with all my Herd brothers in extending a wonderful peace to those Col. Carmichael has left behind. I was one of those first 300 troopers to be deployed in May of 1965 from Okinawa...and so proud to have served with such heroes as Col. Carmichael.

Chuck Dean, 173d Abn

Rest well, Col. Carmichael; you were the best Battalion Commander I had in the 2/503, and that was from February 1962 until May 1966.

James Green, B/2/503

What a superb leader! Second battalion was a well-oiled machine under his command. I was proud to be a part of it. I pray his transition be smooth and glorious and he's reunited with his loved ones preceding him...All the Way!

Charles (Andy) Anderson, Major, USAF (Ret)
C/2/503

CSM Weik and I regret the loss of one of our Warriors, a Distinguished Member of the 503d Infantry Regiment. Bob was a superb commander and leader, and held a warm spot in the hearts of his men.

COL (R) Kenneth V. Smith
CO A/D/2/503

(continued....)



I always thought highly of Colonel Carmichael when serving with him in the Second Battalion 503rd Infantry, 1965 & 1966. May God be with you at this time.

Joseph Logan, Major (Ret), B/2/503

My deepest sympathy for your loss. Although I did not have the honor of serving under Colonel Carmichael in 1967/68, many of my 173d Brothers did and continue to share stories of the respect and admiration they had for this fine leader. He was noted to be a friend of "The Grunts" and shared the load of combat along with "his" enlisted men rather than from a chopper 1200 feet in the air. This is the ultimate compliment from a soldier who lived the life of an infantryman in the 173d during the Viet Nam War. May he rest in peace.

Roger Dick, C/2/503

A friend. A hero. A formidable professional soldier.

Jim and Gayle Bethea, HHC/2/503

I only met you a few times, Bob, and have always had the greatest respect for you. RIP my brother. AATW,

Vic Marciano, Recon & D/1/503, '67/'68

As someone who served with the 173d Airborne in Vietnam, I am saddened by the death of Col. Carmichael, but proud to have been in the same unit with him. He was the type of leader who made our adventure in combat something honorable and character building. I didn't know him personally, but as a friend of his RTO, this fellow RTO knows what a fine man he was and one who deserves everyone's admiration. Airborne All the Way!

Larry Paladino, RTO, B/2/503

(A side note: Larry is the fortunate trooper who was 'ordered' by Les Brownlee to 'formally welcome' Playboy Playmate Jo Collins to B/2/503 (with a kiss). Bob Carmichael was one of the fortunate escorts of the young lass. We suspect he did *not* get a kiss. Ed)

Bob Carmichael will always be very special to me. He was my Battalion XO when I was a company commander in 2/503. He was a great leader! He listened as well as spoke. As a young captain, one day we argued about whether I was in the right place. He doubted me until an artillery barrage landed where he thought we should be. So we both had a bond of lasting respect. I will always remember Bob, and hope to march with him once again.

Fred Henschell, Maj. (Ret), B/2/503

I was so saddened to hear about the loss of LTC Bob Carmichael. I had the privilege of serving under him as a 1LT staff officer and later as the C Company commander. He was a wonderful mentor who would give you a task and allow you the freedom to get it done without looking over your shoulder. He had such a pleasant personality and his natural enthusiasm infected all those around him with a "can do" spirit. He and COL Dexter established a superb command climate that was unequalled by most battalions. In doing so they provided young officers a unique opportunity to grow professionally. They were a terrific team that supported each other in whatever decisions were required. I look back at this period as the highlight of my 30 year career.

Tom Faley, Col. (Ret), CO C/2/503

Those are but a few of the posted memories of and comments about Bob by Sky Soldiers of the 173d.



Private Bob Carmichael

**From the Wife & Family of
LTC Robert B. (Bob) Carmichael
2/503rd Bn XO/CO '65/'66, RVN**

On behalf of Bob's and my son David and daughter Carole and our entire Carmichael family, to include grandkids and great-grandkids, we can't thank the *Sky Soldier Family* enough for all your kind notes, calls and words of support and encouragement following Bob's passing. And a special thank you to the troopers who were able to participate in services for Bob this past September in Austin. He would be so honored, and rightly so, and our family feels equally honored because of you.

We wish Sky Soldiers everywhere a soft landing and we send you a hearty *Airborne, All the Way!*

With our deepest respect,

Exie Carmichael & Family

(continued....)



In Loving Memory Of



*Lt. Colonel Robert Byron
Carmichael*

1929 ~ 2016

During the *Celebration of Life* for LTC Robert Carmichael in Austin, TX recently, I was given the honor of sharing a few words about him, thanks to David, Bob and Exie's son, and the Carmichael family. The prepared text came easily but sadly, and in fact, it was trimmed down in sake of time. But, I never had to say anything about Bob – one of our troopers from Charlie Company so poignantly said everything about him in the online guestbook where he described and honored Bob far better and in less words than anything his old RTO could ever say. Ed

He was a very impressive Professional Officer who possessed great Leadership skills. When I was a 17 y/o Airborne Infantry Soldier assigned to C/2/503d, (then) Major Carmichael discussed Moral Courage with me one night while on Perimeter Duty -- the cold hard facts of "Combat"! The relief of fear that previously ruled my thoughts was subsided by that honest, open advice he bestowed to a frightened Private. His frank and direct spoken words calmed me and blessed me with the moral courage and confidence to conquer the future obstacles before me! LTC Carmichael's words that late scary night allowed me to survive and go on to a Military career of my own! I will forever remember him for the inner strength and leadership which he shared with me!

Airborne All the Way!

Dennis Smothers, E9, USA (Ret)
C/2/503

Following are remarks by Bob's RTO along with photos and images with captions which accompanied the remarks as a slide presentation. It seemed only appropriate a former Private and not some General was given this honor of remembering the Colonel:

An old soldier died and went up to St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter said, "Welcome. Job well done, soldier." The soldier replied, "Call me Bob."

(Originally shared by Bob's wife, Exie)

Dear Exie and Family Carmichael, Reggie and I are honored to be here with you all for this celebration of Bob's Life.



Their journey begins, down the yellow brick road.

Bob once told me, *old soldiers are sentimental old fools*, he was right, and it never gets any better. I'm Smitty, an old fool, husband to Reggie, and we're fortunate Bob and Exie and their kids David, Carole and Charlie and their families accepted us as friends many years ago.

Now, I don't throw the word 'fool' around easily, as Bob and I were both paratroopers, a sometimes serious lot, but not all the time, and Bob, a Jumpmaster, the best of the best, a distinction earned by few in our ranks.



**Bob's Jumpmaster Wings. Hard earned,
and proudly worn by just a few.**

(continued....)



In addition to his Jumpmaster training, Bob would be the first to tell you about the difficult and challenging three weeks of jump school he and all paratroopers underwent. He would say about that rigorous training:

“During the first week of jump school they separate the men from the boys; on the second week they separate the men from the fools; and on the third week, the fools jump!”

And the Fools jumped!



Weeeeeeeee!

Bob wasn't much for pomp and circumstance, and he certainly never boasted about his good deeds and achievements in life, of which there were many, that is left to those of us who knew and loved him. Boasting about his *fishing*, well, that's an entirely different matter.



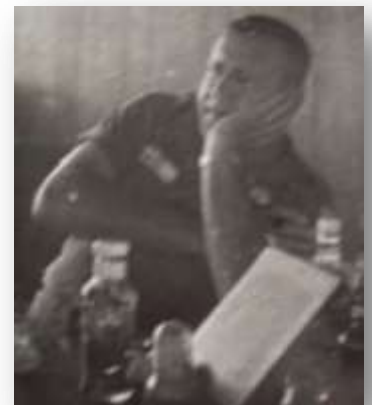
You won't believe how *BIG* that fish was I caught at the lake today!

And his tomatoes! Oh, those *tomatoes*....if I had a dime for every time we talked about his toma....never mind. Bob loved his tomatoes. And, of course, he loved boasting about his wife and kids and grandkids, and great-grandkids, that was par for his course. He was so proud of his family.



Family Carmichael, Bob's pride.

Bob was a leader of men and a planner of things, that was his job. And the men who served under his command during combat, well, that was something many of us learned from him and about him. Thus, these *prepared* remarks, lest I embarrass him and his family too much.



RBC....*planning*, or sleeping?

LTC Carmichael was 'My Major' in 1965/66, an "old" guy in his mid-thirties. To us boys back then, anyone over 21 was considered old, so Bob was really ancient at that time.



Really ancient, RTO? I'd say I'm pretty damn good looking! Drop and give me 20!!

(continued....)



Each of the command staff officers with our 2nd Battalion of the 173d Airborne had their very own radio guys, RTOs, to traipse along behind them carrying their radios in the rice paddies, jungles and mountain ranges of beautiful Southeast Asia. In mid-December of '65, Bob's RTO transferred to another company, opening a slot for the new kid coming to town. At that time I didn't know how fortunate I was to be that new kid and Bob's new radio guy.



RBC, Sky Soldier extraordinaire leading the way with the 173d Airborne in Vietnam.

Bob was physically a big man, and a tad wide just below the belt buckle, and after first meeting him, I thought...this might not be so bad, I'll just hide *behind* him and let *him* catch all the bullets! And Bob caught his share of bullets in that war.



Bob's Purple Heart with one Oak Leaf cluster. The medal itself, is awarded for the *first* time he was wounded in combat. The Oak Leaf for the *second* time.

Are you beginning to understand why it was a good strategy to hide behind his big....belt buckle?

One day Bob's great grandchildren at their later ages will learn about their great-grandfather, and they will be amazed at his achievements as an army commander in combat. To my chagrin, Bob often put himself (and unsuspecting RTOs) in harm's way. They will read their great-grandfather was the recipient of many awards for heroism, including the Silver Star.



Bob's Silver Star, our nation's third highest award for valor in combat.

LTC Robert Carmichael was never an armchair commander -- he cared too much for those young soldiers for whose lives he was responsible. I don't know about commanders in other units at other times, but Bob led from the front. In the vernacular, he was a soldier's soldier. In fact, and consistent with that, Bob gave a prized possession of his to one of his Privates.



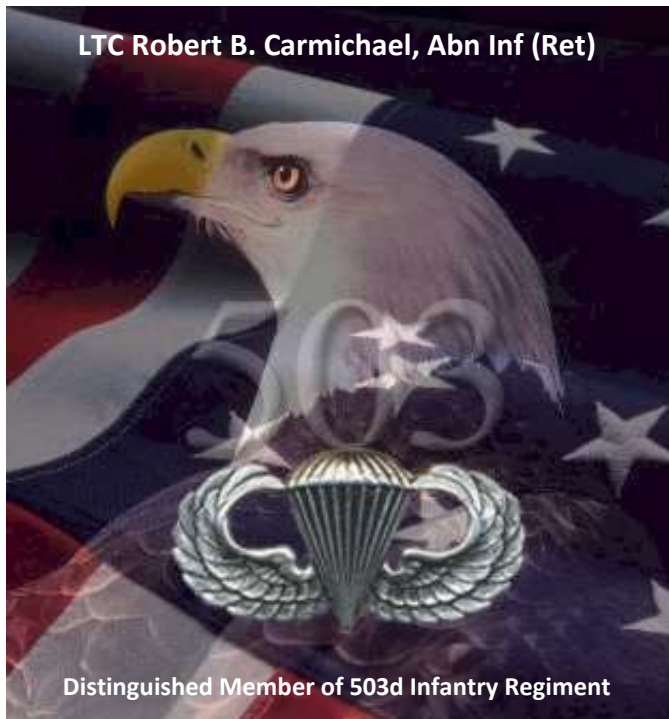
"I'm passing on the good luck. This horseshoe was picked up at LZ Wine on 2 Jan 66. It was carried and provided good luck during two tours. 1965-66 and 1969-70. LTC Robert (Bob) Carmichael."

(continued....)



I recall the time we had camped for the night in some thick jungle, and Bob was awakened by what he thought was rain, just as a troop of monkeys scurried away through the treetops. *"Those bastards peed on me!"* Bob yelled. Years later I would occasionally kid him, and say, *"You thought it was monkeys."*

It should be noted, Bob is a Distinguished Member of the 503rd Infantry Regiment, a unique and singular distinction awarded him by his peers.



Out of thousands-upon-thousands of men who served in the Regiment dating back before WWII, Bob is one of a small handful of soldiers to be so recognized and honored. Upon presentation of the award to him, Les Brownlee, his and Exie's friend and former Secretary of the Army, wrote to Bob, stating:

"I can think of no one who is more deserving than you for this recognition. I observed firsthand in combat the leadership and other invaluable contributions you made many years ago on the fields of battle in Vietnam. Your ability then to think ahead, to anticipate problems and situations and come up with innovative and workable solutions was extraordinary and enabled many of the combat successes of the 2/503d. I know that many of the 2/503d troopers who survived that first year of combat in Vietnam remain grateful to this day for your great leadership then and your friendship today. With warmest personal regards, Les Brownlee."

We old soldiers here today second Les' remarks.



**Les and Bob sharing a laugh together.
Dig those shades.**

Some of you here have heard this Bob story before, and will hear it again now, because Bob and I like to hear it too. Bob was quick to laugh, so we hope this brings him a smile, and to his and Exie's son, Charlie, also.

It was January 2, 1966, when Bob and I and a few other troopers boarded a Huey as one of the initial assault choppers going into the rice paddies southwest of Saigon at Landing Zone Wine in the Mekong Delta.



The 'old man' and the boy, on their first day in combat together.

You can tell who the experienced combat vet is by his washed out steel pot cover and faded fatigues.

(continued....)



This was Bob's and my first combat operation together, with him sitting above, and me on the floor of the chopper no doubt looking terrified. As we were descending and getting close to the LZ Bob must have noticed the concern on the face of his new commo guy, and leaned down to me. Barely able to hear his words over the roar of the chopper blades, *My Major* said, *"Don't worry, Smitty, this LZ is secured!"* His words barely left his mouth when the roof inside the chopper just over our heads was torn apart by incoming fire. We were landing at a 'hot' LZ.

Now, there's a moral to this story. If in some future lifetime you find yourself in combat with a paratrooping Major from Texas, don't believe a damn thing he says!



Bob, conducting civic action duties with the villagers at 2/503 reunion in Cocoa Beach, FL.

**Exie said,
"He looks like a deer caught in the headlights."**

But Bob was not about civic action, his mission was combat, yet I know what his real mission was....it was making the right decisions at the right time, and keeping every man he could, alive.

Bob, on right, with his men after the battle at LZ Wine. Yes, where the good luck horseshoe was found. Still got them shades.



Over the ensuing months there were many more combat operations where I accompanied Bob as Poncho to his Cisco, and somehow we both survived our tours in that war.



**Cisco & Poncho
"Hey Poncho. Give me your pound cake!"**



It really was a delicacy.

Bob, of course, was a career soldier, and another tour awaited him as commander of another combat battalion, this time with the 25th Infantry Division. Exie, of course, was terrified over her husband going back to war.



**Battalion Commander, LTC Robert B. Carmichael,
heading back to the war zone.**

(continued....)



During his second tour with the 25th Infantry, Bob was just as successful keeping young soldiers alive as he was with the 173d Airborne (for you 2/503 Sky Soldiers here, it was Bob's demand to Brigade we move to LZ Zulu Zulu in the "D" Zone jungle where we could set-up a defensive perimeter -- when the next morning we were surrounded and attacked by bad guys three times our size). Bob told me he was nearly court martialed for so vehemently *demanding* we move there. Having survived that battle, and in my own personal judgment, about 350 or more Sky Soldiers were spared that day; for had Bob not consolidated our position, as we were strung out in the jungle, we surely would have been overrun and totally destroyed. And Bob, a few years later was again successful keeping his men alive in combat, this time with the 25th during Operation Crook, one of the nastiest combat actions of the war.



Battalion Commander Carmichael leading from the front, as usual, with the 25th Inf.

Bob took particular pride in having kept many young G.I.'s alive, and we spoke about this on a number of occasions -- I really think he viewed it as one of his greatest achievements in life, after his marriage to Exie and the births of their children. I've often wondered how many young kids and grandkids are walking this earth today thanks to Bob -- the number may be astounding, that number includes Reggie's and my kids.



Photo by Bob of some of his senior NCOs with the 173d. Many of their kids walk this earth.

Bob's time with the 173d ended, and he returned home safely to Exie, the love of his life, and their kids.



Who says Vietnam Vets never got a 'Welcome Home'?

But before he left for home, Bob made it a point to come over to our commo hootch to say goodbye and give me a few army photos taken of us in the boonies. It was such a nice and thoughtful gesture that 'old man' made to that boy. And for nigh on 30 years a framed photo of Bob and his RTO sat on our bedroom dresser.

And during those decades Reggie would often say to me, "*call him*". And one day I did, and Exie answered, and our families have been close friends ever since.



The LTC and his RTO with *their* Commanders.

(continued....)



I miss My Major, my friend, and I miss his voice on the phone always saying, *"Smithy, Smithy, Smithy, what's going on down there??"* Well, Bob, there's a lot of sadness going on down there and up here these days, but a lot of good memories too, just ask your kids and your bride, Exie. But, my friend, that sadness will one day fade, and in its place will be smiles and laughter when we think of you.

And now, Bob and Charlie are sharing their own good memories together.



Father and son, father and son.

And that journey which began over sixty years ago, was never about the destination, we all have the same destination. It was about the *trip* Bob and Exie took together. Around the world, with its ups and downs, but for them, *there was no place like home.*



"There's no place like home."
(One of Exie's favorite quotes).

Recently, Robbie, Bob's grandson and namesake, sent us a photo of a young boy, Robert Byron Carmichael, III, a great grandson.



Robert Byron Carmichael, III

Bob didn't die, he's alive in that little boy.



Rest easy, Sir, and All the Way!

At this point in the celebration, SSgt. Ed Kearney, B/2/503, militarily sounded "Roll Call" as all military personnel present stood and faced the Colonel:

Atten-tion! Pre-sent, arms!

Bob Carmichael!...

Robert Carmichael!...

Lt. Colonel Robert B. Carmichael!....

Or-der, arms!

Everyone then stood and together sang the first stanza of *America the Beautiful* to the Colonel, his wife Exie, and their family.

Farewell our friend. And, All the Way Sir!



~ 2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year 2016 ~

Vietnam Era

Colonel Edwin H.J. Carns, Jr., MD

Edwin H. J. Carns, Jr. MD was born at West Point, New York on December 12, 1939. He lives today in Marlow, Oklahoma with his wife, Cathy. Ed has three daughters: Sherrie, Susan and Sally; three stepchildren: Tim, Kimberly and Katie, and is blessed to have nine wonderful grandchildren.



Col. Carns graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1963, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and from 1963-1970, served his country during multiple infantry assignments. Ed was awarded multiple decorations including the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf Clusters, CIB, Parachutist Badge and Ranger Tab. He completed his Doctor of Medicine at the University of Washington in Seattle in 1975; his residency was completed in Family Practice at Martin Army Hospital, Ft. Benning and he is presently an ER doctor at the Lawton Indian Hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma. Colonel Carns was recalled to active duty during Operation Desert Storm where he served until his discharge.

Dr. Carns attended the London, England School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; served as Medical Director of Lawton Correctional Facility; Director, Emergency Department of both Duncan Regional Hospital in Duncan, Oklahoma and later, Southwestern Medical Center in Lawton; Command Surgeon, U.S. Southern Command in Panama as well as numerous other positions and directorships.

He has also served his community and church as a member of the Board of Directors for United Way of Lawton/Ft. Sill; Medical Director, Hospice of Lawton Area; Medical Director, Emergency Medical Technician Course at Great Plains Vo-Tech in Lawton and on the Board of Directors, Southwestern Medical Center.

Ed and his wife Cathy are ardent supporters and participants of Samaritan's Purse, which is a non-

denominational, evangelical Christian organization that works worldwide to assist people in physical need alongside their Christian missionary work. Ed has served in Cameroon, Kenya, Afghanistan and Iraq with Samaritan's Purse and, together with his wife, in Sudan, Eritrea, and more recently in Haiti during the earthquake and the subsequent cholera outbreak. He also provided care for Dr. Kent Brantley in Liberia just before Dr. Brantley was shipped to the U.S., becoming the first Ebola patient in the United States.

His leadership of the Recon Platoon with the 2/503 and the respect afforded him by soldiers under his command and superiors, inspired men to request transfer to the Recon Platoon. Colonel Carns later assumed command of Alpha Company and led them to the platoon's rescue when Recon was engaged in a firefight with a company of VC in February 1967.

"The World is my country, all mankind is my brethren, and to do good is my religion."

Thomas Paine

Dr. Ed Carns typifies what we all should aim for in our lives, and this special recognition and statement of appreciation by his fellow Sky Soldiers of the 2/503 is justly deserved and long overdue.

Congratulations Colonel, and All the Way, Sir!



Capt. Carns, the Skipper, briefing his troops in Vietnam.



VA provides service dog benefits to Veterans with mental health disorders

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it is piloting a protocol to implement veterinary health benefits for mobility service dogs approved for Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with mental health disorders.

"We take our responsibility for the care and safety of Veterans very seriously," said VA Under Secretary for Health, Dr. David J. Shulkin. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to providing appropriate, safe and effective, compassionate care to all Veterans. Implementing the veterinary health benefit for mobility service dogs approved for Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with mental health disorders may prove to be significantly beneficial for some Veterans. The Service Dog Benefits Pilot will evaluate this premise.

VA has been providing veterinary benefits to Veterans diagnosed as having visual, hearing or substantial mobility impairments and whose rehabilitation and restorative care is clinically determined to be optimized through the assistance of a guide dog or service dog. With this pilot, this benefit is being provided to Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with a mental health disorder for whom the service dog has been identified as the optimal way for the Veteran to manage the mobility impairment and live independently.

Service dogs are distinguished from pets and comfort animals because they are specially trained to perform tasks or work for a specific individual with a disability who cannot perform the task or accomplish the work independently. To be eligible for the veterinary health benefit, the service dog must be trained by an organization accredited by Assistance Dogs International in accordance with VA regulations.



(web photo)

Currently, 652 Veterans with approved guide or service dogs receive the veterinary service benefit. This Pilot is anticipated to provide the veterinary service benefit to up to 100 additional Veterans with a chronic impairment that substantially limits mobility associated with a mental health disorder.

The VA veterinary service benefit includes comprehensive wellness and sick care (annual visits for preventive care, maintenance care, immunizations, dental cleanings, screenings, etc.), urgent/emergent care, prescription medications, and care for illnesses or disorders when treatment enables the dog to perform its duties in service to the Veteran.

Additional information about VA's service dog program can be found at:

www.prosthetics.va.gov/ServiceAndGuideDogs.asp

[Sent in by good buddy Gary Newman, USN, VVA FL Chapter]
(Photo added)





~ Sky Soldier Extraordinaire ~

Leo “Frenchy” Pellerin

A/2/503



Award: Bronze Star Medal with “V” Device

PELLERIN, LEO A.
SPECIALIST FOUR E4 USA
Co A 2nd Bn (Abn) 503d Inf

Date action: 7 October 1966
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Reason: For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force.



Specialist Four Pellerin distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 7 October 1966, in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day while conducting a search and destroy operation in the vicinity of Phouc Vinh Province Republic of Vietnam, Company “A” made contact with a well-entrenched Viet Cong force. Specialist Four Pellerin was serving as a grenadier in the first platoon which was acting as the point platoon for the company. Upon making contact the point platoon became immediately pinned down by heavy fire from two heavy machine guns employed in bunkers. Specialist Four Pellerin sat upright in the midst of the incoming fire, and placed suppressive fire on the enemy positions until he expended all of his ammunition. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, and with complete disregard for his own safety, Specialist Four Pellerin crawled forward to within 15 meters of the enemy positions and set up two claymore mines, aiming them directly at the bunkers. He then returned thru the murderous hail of machine gun fire to his original position where he detonated the mines. Inspired by this act of courage and display of utter disregard for his own personal welfare the platoon pushed forward overrunning the Viet Cong Positions. Specialist Four Pellerin’s outstanding display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and personal bravery were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provision of Executive Order 11046, 24 August 1962 and USARV Message 16695, AVA-S, 1 July 1966.

OFFICIAL: J.R. MAILLER, MAJ, AGC

All the Way, Frenchy!!!

Frenchy, chowing down in the boonies.



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"I have enclosed a story from the period which you may find suitable for the Newsletter."

John E. Dean
From Down Under

The Perfect Squelch

Artillerymen, "gunners" in Australian parlance, have long considered themselves a cut above the common mob. They speak with rounded vowels and perfect modulation, containing the merest hint of condescension to us lesser mortals. In their view they lend tone to that which would otherwise be a very vulgar brawl. We infantrymen of course have a somewhat different view!

I mention this gunners' trait because it recalls a tale of Bien Hoa in '65. It was just after "Butch" had relented and the "great beer drought" was broken. It became the practice in 1RAR to allow a small number of officers and senior NCOs on a roster system to visit the appropriate USAF club on the airbase each evening. Transport returned those so favoured to the battalion lines before curfew.

On the night in question the favoured few include one, a senior gunner officer, and another, one of his junior officers (no names, no pack drill!). So convivial did the two find the surrounds of the officers' club that curfew came and went, the transport came and was gone, before it dawned on these two that they have overstayed their welcome and were, in the vernacular, *"up s—t creek in a barbed wire canoe without a paddle!"*

Those who were there will remember that it was a long, long trudge from the base to the brigade area around the perimeter track, and gunner officers are quite averse to *"using Shanks' pony"* (walking). But gunner officers are also resourceful and before long two unoccupied bicycles were being pressed into service as transport which, whilst somewhat utilitarian, was at least better than using one's *"plates of meat"* (feet). And so our duo trundled merrily along in dignified gunner fashion, until suddenly they were pulled up short, and almost shot, by an American MP at the Brigade checkpoint.

Having only just restrained himself from blowing away these two shadowy figures looming out of the night, the sergeant proceeded to read them the riot act,

ordered them to dismount, threatened all manner of dire punishment and was about to frogmarch them off to the stockade when, through his brain (yes, even MPs, including American ones, have one), a tiny tremor ran.

These two were wearing funny uniforms, and wasn't there a unit from God know what corner of the earth camped on the other side of the creek who wore uniforms like these? These two were also wearing funny hats, and didn't officers from this strange unit wear hats like these?

The dawning realization, awful though it was, that he had firstly almost shot and then roundly abused two officers from the army of a friendly country was not enough, however, to stop an American MP in full flight. In utter frustration and with not a hint of trepidation he threw his helmet to the ground and shouted, *"Godammit sirs, don't you know it's dangerous to ride round here at night?!"*

And back from a certain senior gunner officer came the reply; in the best of gunner voices, with rounded vowels and perfect modulation, containing the merest hint of condescension – *"BUT OF COURSE WE DO, MY GOOD MAN. THAT'S WHY WE WERE PEDALLING SO BLOODY FAST!"*

This amusing story was in Memorial Foundation correspondence sent to us with permission to print. Ken [Col. Ken Smith, CO A/D/2/503]

Now, we came across this pic of what appears to be two Diggers seemingly circa the right timeframe and locale; but in no way are we suggesting they are the same two lads referenced above. But, to our eyes, they *do* look a tad suspicious – note the smirks and the funny hat. Ed



(web photo)



In Vietnam luck Truly counted



C/2/503 CO, Capt. Faley (C), with his RTOs Wilson (L), and Conley.

QUI NHON Viet Nam (UPI) – For most of us, taking a bad hit in the wallet is a something best avoided.

But Tom Faley of South Middleton Township can thank his good fortune, the bullet he took during his first deployment to Vietnam was to his billfold.

"In combat, luck can make all the difference," the retired Army colonel joked. *"This is my only claim to fame."*

In October of 1965, Faley was a first lieutenant assigned as platoon leader of A Troop, 17th Cavalry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. The unit was involved in action against the Viet Cong near Qui Nhon.

"We were attacking a village getting gunfire," Faley recalled. *"The fire was coming from the front, which is where all my attention was. I didn't realize this, but behind us, there were two snipers. They had .30-caliber carbines."*

One minute, Faley was charging across rice paddies. The next, he felt a whack in the tail that sent him forward several inches. *"I turned to my radio operator and said, 'I think I've been hit,'"* Faley said.

The man checked, but saw no blood. Two days later, Faley was drying out his soaked clothing when he noticed a small hole in the hip pocket of his trousers. At first he thought the tear was from a strand of barbed wire local villagers used to corral water buffalo.

"I pulled out my wallet ... just to let it dry, when I saw this hump in it," Faley said. He opened the billfold to find a bullet had lodged itself inside the wallet.



Some time later, Faley was at a debriefing when one of his men suggested he show the wallet to the unit commander. Next thing Faley knew, he was on his way to the press tent to talk to Army public affairs, who contacted United Press International, which picked up the story.

Overnight, Faley was in newspapers across the United States with headlines like *"Red bullet Hits Officer's Wallet"* and *"Pocketbook Hit, But He Likes It."*

Eventually, the story made it into *Stars and Stripes*, *The Army Times* and such popular comics-page features as *"Ripley's Believe It or Not!"* and *"Strange As It May Seem."* Faley even got mail from school children amazed by his story.

As close as Faley could figure, the sniper bullet must have ricocheted off a rock before hitting him. Fired from a long distance, the carbine round probably lost a lot of its energy.

This was not the only near-death experience for Faley. Later, he was commanding officer in a rifle company with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

"In my company, I let you carry whatever weapon you want," Faley said. *"My radio operator should never have been carrying an M79 grenade launcher."*

Fans of the movie *"Terminator 2: Judgment Day"* may remember this as the weapon Arnold Schwarzenegger used to blow up police cars outside the Cyberdyne building.

Flashback to Vietnam: Faley and his radio operator were sharing a ride on top of an armored personnel carrier moving to attack a different village. Unbeknownst to both men, the radio operator had forgotten to engage the safety on the grenade launcher.

One minute, they were riding along. The next, Faley heard a *"pop"* and saw his radioman fall back. Faley also fell back and knew right away the grenade launcher had discharged.

"When he fired that round, I was looking all over the place," Faley recalled. *"I kept waiting for it to come down. If it landed on one of my other carriers, we were going to have a big accident. It never came down."*

Only later would Faley learn that the grenade round had fallen out of his bedroll when he jumped off the APC to assault the enemy trench line. It did not explode because it did not travel the necessary distance to arm the explosive charge.

Ahh. One RTO exonerated, one company CO, not so much! ☺ Ed



2/503 Commander's Report, continues. See Issue 69 of our newsletter for Colonel Dexter's report, *Preparation of 2/503 for Combat in Vietnam*.

The 2/503d in Vietnam May – July 1965, Bien Hoa and Vicinity *Settling in and first Contacts*

By Col. George E. Dexter, Abn Inf (Ret)
2/503 Bn Cmdr, 1964-1966



2/503 Bn Cmdr LTC George Dexter in the "D" Zone jungle in '65.

After learning how to navigate through the Vietnamese jungle, conduct air-mobile operations with helicopters and settling into the rubber grove base camp northeast of Bien Hoa AFB in mid-May 1965, 2/503 began operations trying to make contact with the VC. A little bit about the geography of the area.



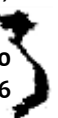
Bobby Tharp, battalion S-3, in the rubber trees.

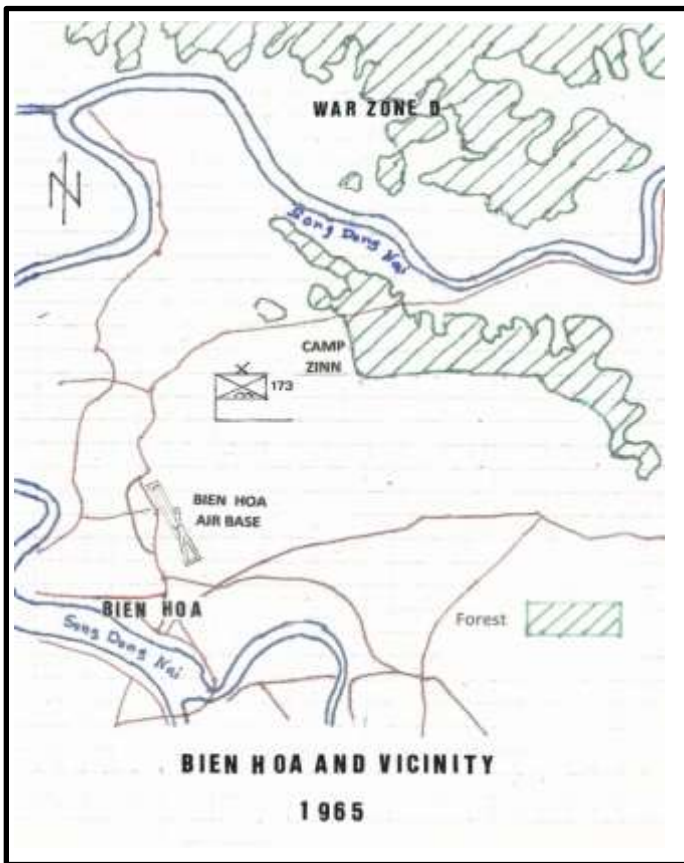
The area immediately north of Saigon for a couple of hundred miles extending from the coast to the Cambodian border was generally flat and covered with jungle or rubber plantations, cut by many streams and rivers. Farming communities sprang up adjacent to the rivers and streams and were further tied together with trails and occasionally roads. The jungle around the towns was cut back enough to allow the planting of fields. The VC roamed the jungle paths freely and established jungle bases and supply caches.



A trooper at the heavy mortar position in the rubber trees.

(continued....)





A sketch map of the Bien Hoa area in 1965

The villagers generally stayed out of the jungle, travelling to other towns along the roads and streams, and ARVN soldiers were reluctant to challenge the VC in their redoubt—the jungle. From this redoubt the VC launched campaigns to gain control of the villages in the area.



Choppers landing at LZ with 2/503 troops near the Trian Village in May '65.

In the Bien Hoa area the major terrain feature was the Dong Nai River (Song Dong Nai) which arose somewhere to the east and flowed westward for several kilometers until it arced to the south in a huge bow, eventually turning back to the southeast and exiting the area. The town of Bien Hoa, a province capital (equivalent to a state capital) was built along the northeast bank of the river below the arc.



A busy street in the City of Bien Hoa, 1965. (web photo)

The Bien Hoa Air Base was built about a kilometer north of the town. It was fenced off and defended by Air Police units. The land between the air base and the west-flowing stretch of the river was sparsely populated. North of the river was jungle controlled by the VC and known as War Zone "D".

The VC lived in fortified camps in the jungle and were accompanied by some civilians who grew rice in clearings along the Dong Nai and streams farther inland. Directed by Brigade Headquarters, our battalion began a series of battalion-sized one-day or two-day operations on the south side of the Dong Nai and to the east of Bien Hoa. In the meantime 1/503 was moved up to Bien Hoa from Vung Tau, and the brigade received a third infantry battalion—the 1st Battalion of the Royal Australia Regiment (1/RAR). The Aussies were far more experienced than we were in counterinsurgency operations, having participated in the successful effort to prevent a Communist takeover of Malaysia. These battalions began settling into their base camps and participating in small operations similar to what we had been doing.

(continued....)





Our Aussie brothers arriving Vietnam.
(web photo)

Private First Class Van Campen of Company B. On June 24th on a battalion search and destroy operation, B Company, under Captain Roy Lombardo, landed on its LZ and pushed into the jungle in search of the VC. Van Campen was the leader of a three man machine gun team, and he apparently lost contact with the elements of his platoon on his right and his left. The team came upon a clearing with a couple of huts. Van Campen went forward to recon the situation and was fired on and hit by the VC. The other two members of the team recovered his body and attempted to carry it back to the company, but he was too heavy, so they tried to hide him under some brush. They got back to the company, and patrols were sent out to find Van Campen, but they were unsuccessful. As evening came the choppers came to evacuate the battalion back to Camp Zinn for the night.



2/503 troops ready to move out from Bien Hoa.

During our operations in May we had few contacts and only minor skirmishes with the enemy. By the end of the month only seven 2/503 soldiers had been wounded and none killed. But we were clearly in a learning process. We thought we were pretty well trained when we arrived in country, but we quickly found some real weaknesses, which we began to fix with experience in the jungle.

During June we began to cross the Dong Nai into area dominated by the VC and into War Zone D. This brought more contacts with the enemy and more casualties, including our first man killed in action,

The next day B Company returned to the site of the previous day's operation and spent the day searching for Van Campen, but with no success. Van Campen was classified as Missing in Action.

PFC Thomas Charles "Tom" Van Campen, MIA; years later reclassified KIA.

See report on Pages 27-28.



(continued....)



Two weeks later on the 6th of July the entire brigade was committed to our largest operation up to that time. About three kilometers north of the Dong Nai was an east-west clearing several kilometers long and averaging 500 meters across or more. The clearing had obviously been a rice producing area in the past. Between the clearing and the river to the south was an east-west jungle covered ridge probably 50 meters high, with the ground gradually sloping up on both sides. The ridge itself was pretty flat.



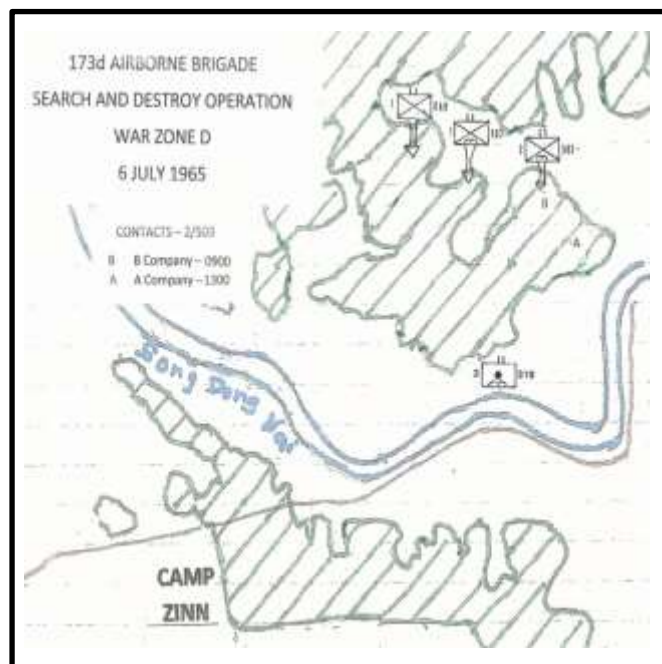
The Dong Nai River near Bien Hoa. (Photo by Smitty)

The plan was for the three infantry battalions of the 173d to be lifted into the clearing on the first day of the operation with the Aussies on the west, 1/503 in the middle, and 2/503 on the east. For the operation the brigade Armored Cavalry troop, E 17th Cav (which actually operated out of jeeps and mostly on roads) was attached to 2/503 to operate as a fourth rifle company on foot, primarily to provide security to the east flank of the battalion. The mission for the infantry battalions for the first day of the operation was to push north of the clearing for a couple of kilometers to insure it was clear of enemy forces. They then returned to the south side of the clearing for the night.



Men of E-Troop 17th Cav on the move. (web photo)

After landing at the LZ and the rifle companies began pushing north, we set up the Battalion CP in the jungle on the south side of the clearing and sent the Reconnaissance Platoon to reconnoiter the nearby jungle. They came upon a VC jungle camp, obviously abandoned that day as we were landing. In the camp were several documents apparently left behind in the haste to get out of there. The Vietnamese interpreter with the platoon set about translating some of these to see if they could be of any immediate intelligence value. One of them was a report on the incident in which Van Campen was killed. The VC found his body, removed anything of value and buried it somewhere else. We never found his remains.



A sketch map of the operational area for the Brigade search and destroy operation on 6 July 65.

The next morning, July 7, the three infantry battalions of the brigade jumped off early, pushing to the south through the jungle, up over the small ridge and eventually to the small cleared strip of land along the Dong Nai. This was what was called a *search and destroy* mission, as were basically all of our missions. We were trying to find the enemy, and when we did we were to bring him to battle, destroy him and destroy all facilities supporting the VC in the area such as jungle camps and supply caches. The brigade artillery battalion (319th) had deployed onto the north shore of the Dong Nai and was firing in support of the three infantry battalions.

(continued...)





Troopers of A Battery, 319th Artillery (web photo)

I should mention that we were passing through what was known as primary jungle. This was old jungle. The trees had been there for decades, probably centuries in many cases. The trees were tall, and their leaves blocked the sun from reaching the floor of the jungle. As a result there was very little underbrush, making it fairly easy to traverse and to see for at least 50 yards. Since our first job was to find the enemy, I deployed the battalion with all the three rifle companies abreast to cover as much area as possible. C Company was on the right (west), B Company in the center and A Company on the left. I put the Cavalry troop on the left flank to provide security, a typical Cavalry mission.

About an hour after we jumped off, B Company came upon a fortified jungle village and an intense firefight began. I instructed A and C Companies to continue moving south for a couple of hundred yards, then extend toward each other in hopes of cutting off any enemy who tried to escape from B Company. The B Company Commander called in artillery fire on the camp, deployed his platoons and assaulted the camp. The enemy slipped away, but that day nine men from B Company were killed and nine wounded. One of those killed was 1st Lt Ronald Zinn, who in the summer of 1964 had competed in the Tokyo Olympics as a walker. He was a platoon leader of B Company and was killed in the initial assault on the village.

2/503 Bravo Bulls KIA, 7/7/65

David Lafate Howard
 Allen Isaac Johnson
 McArthur Johnson
 Raymond Patrick Meehan
 Durward Frank Ray
 Johnie Edward Rice, Jr.
 John Dillinger Shaw
 Rudolph Villalpane Hernandez
 Ronald Lloyd Zinn

The 2/503's base camp in Bien Hoa would later be named 'Camp Zinn' in honor of Ron.

I arrived at the village about half an hour after the firefight. The company had reorganized, redistributed ammunition and had requested from battalion a resupply of ammunition and pickup of the dead and wounded by helicopter evacuation from the Landing Zone where we had arrived the day before. A party was put together to carry the dead and seriously wounded, to escort the less seriously wounded and to provide security for the party as it returned to the LZ. After the choppers arrived and the dead and wounded were loaded, the party returned to the village carrying the ammunition resupply. In the meantime, the remainder of the company set up security around the village and began to search it.

Some documents were found, but one surprise was that the village had a system of tunnels under the camp which were probably the means by which the camp occupants had escaped B Company. This was the first time we had discovered or even heard of the tunnel systems that the VC employed in the general area north of Saigon. One of the NCO's went down into a tunnel with a flashlight and a pistol, but he didn't find anything, and we really did not have the time to explore more.



RTO Larry Paladino, B/2/503, possibly the first 2/503 'Tunnel Rat' in Vietnam.

(continued...)



It was late in the morning before the company was ready to move on, and we still had a lot of territory to cover. We moved out again heading south with the three rifle companies abreast, A on the left, B in the center and C on the right, and the Cavalry covering the left flank. I moved with Headquarters Company which followed B Company.

While on the move, I controlled the battalion through a radio net which tied me in with the company commanders. In addition I was in a net with the brigade commander and the other battalion commanders. The Battalion S-3 was also in a net with the company commanders and a second net with the Brigade S-3 and the other Battalion S-3's. I previously mentioned that we were using Korean War vintage FM radios. This basically meant that the signal was line-of-sight between the sending and receiving sets. For this operation Brigade Headquarters had set up on the north side of the Dong Nai, and there was a ridgeline between us and them.



2/503 Bn CO LTC Dexter (L) with Colonel Duddy, in July '65.

The previous day when we landed on the LZ north of the ridgeline we had trouble communicating with Brigade primarily because we were operating near the limit of range of the sets, but our radio operators used all their skill and knowledge to get most messages through. This day as we climbed toward the ridgeline where the range between sets was reduced, but we were having trouble with the line of sight between us and Brigade. General Williamson got into his command and control helicopter and flew over us where he could talk with me and the other battalion commanders and relay messages to the brigade operations center.

We had been going for about two hours and were at about the highest point of our route when A Company was ambushed. It was a rather poorly set ambush and A Company responded very well, driving off the VC and causing them many casualties while suffering only three casualties themselves. However, one of those casualties was serious enough that he had to be evacuated to a medical facility. We had three alternatives: (1) carry him back to the LZ we had left in the morning, (2) cut down enough trees so that a chopper could land at our location and pick him up, and (3) continue on to the Dong Nai carrying him with us. Number 1 was out. The Dong Nai was closer. As for cutting down the jungle, the choppers could drop chain saws and demolitions to help in cutting a clearing, but I had no idea how long it would take. I suspected it would be a very long time. The medic felt that the casualty could be carried, so it was decided that we should go ahead and carry him to the Dong Nai. We had no further contact that day, closed in on the clearing along the Dong Nai an hour or so before dark, had the casualty picked up by Dust Off and settled into a perimeter defense for the night.

It turned out we were the only infantry battalion to reach the Dong Nai that night. One of the other battalions stumbled on a huge supply dump in the jungle and stayed to secure it while higher headquarters decided what to do about it. The other had the same problem we did—a wounded trooper who was unable to walk. They decided to cut a hole in the canopy for the chopper. It took them 24 hours!

2/503 spent the next day patrolling the fringes of the jungle near the river. We encountered a village with women and children and old men, but no young men. Brigade contacted the South Vietnamese authorities, and choppers were flown in to evacuate the civilians to a refugee camp. The other two battalions closed on the river later that day, and the next day we were flown back to our base camps.

Shortly after this operation we received new backpack radios—new models newly made — which were significantly more effective than the ones we had been using. They really made a difference in our future operations.



AN/PRC-25

(continued...)





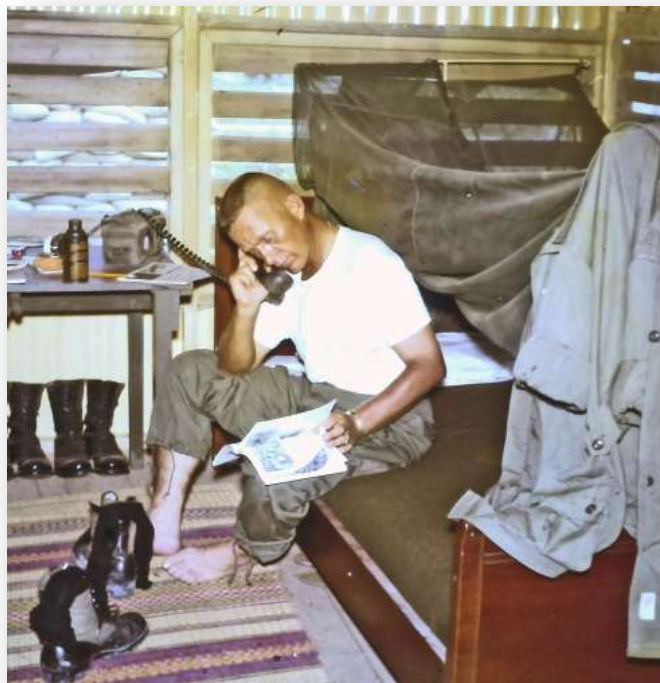
Construction underway of Alpha Company mess hall at Camp Zinn.

By this time work had begun on the construction of a better battalion base camp in a field just west of the rubber plantation. The rainy season had begun, and we had daily afternoon thunderstorms, turning the rubber grove into something of a quagmire. The new site was a low almost flat hill, and drainage would be away from the camp in all directions. The troops were to be housed in framed squad tents with floors, and prefab buildings would house all the mess halls, day rooms, orderly rooms and battalion offices. The camp was surrounded by a defensive berm. All the construction work was done by the troops. We moved in sometime in July with A Company on the North, B Company on the West, C Company on the East, and Headquarters Company on the South. Battalion Headquarters, the Motor Pool, a PX, an outdoor movie theater, an NCO Club, the officer's mess, my quarters and eventually a chapel, filling the center of the camp. There was also an athletic/parade field outside the berm on the east side. We named it Camp Zinn in honor of Lieutenant Ronald Zinn who had been killed in action during the battle on July 7th.



Construction of Camp Zinn underway.

With the new camp we had increased amenities. The Communications Platoon wired the camp and we received a generator, so we had electric lights throughout the camp, which in turn meant we had movies every night we were not out on operations. We had a PX, and through it a system was set up for our laundry to be done by local Vietnamese women. Beer was available for the troops in the company day rooms after the end of the normal duty day and we had a bar in the officers' mess. However, we did not have running water in the camp, which meant that the company Mess Sergeants sent their water trailers daily to the brigade water point operated by the engineer company to get water for the mess hall and for the troops to fill their canteens. The engineers also operated a shower point, and truckloads of troops would be sent there daily. In my case, someone had erected a solar shower behind the tent I shared with my Executive Officer, Major Bill White.



Bn XO Maj. Bill White in commanders' quarters at Camp Zinn.

It was nothing more than a 55-gallon oil barrel painted black and mounted on a small tower. By mid-afternoon the water was warm enough for a comfortable shower. But someone had to climb up and pour the water in the barrel. Other similar devices were spread around the camp, but without running water it was not possible to provide such showers for the entire battalion.

(continued...)





Aerial view of the completed Camp Zinn. Foreground: Bravo Company; Left: Alpha Company; Right: Headquarters Company; Top: Charlie Company. Center hootches: Bn Command Group.

In late July the brigade conducted an operation in Phuoc Tuy Province, southeast of Bien Hoa. There was minimum contact with the enemy, but we did have an injury which required evacuation by chopper from the jungle. In this case a giant tree on the edge of the forest succumbed to old age and fell, leaving a gap in the canopy. New growth was already well started in the newly exposed area, but within a couple of hours of work an adequate area was cleared to allow a chopper to lower itself close to the ground and hover while the injured soldier was loaded.



Dust Off lands in jungle clearing during 2/503 operation in Phuoc Tuy Province in July '65.



L-R: Captains Fred Henschell & Bob Warfield confer during Operation in Phuoc Tuy in July '65.

[Except as noted, all photos are from Col. Dexter's collection]

Note: We look forward to Colonel Dexter's continuing report on activities of the 2/503d in '65/'66.



A Missing Sky Soldier



PFC Thomas C. Van Campen, B/2/503d, MIA

My name is Matt Kristoff and I work with the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. I posted a message on one of the 173d message boards, but believe contacting you at the newsletter would probably have more chance of success.

I'm retired Army (Desert Storm vet), and am assigned to our section working Vietnam losses. One of my cases is PFC Thomas C. Van Campen. He was with B Company 2/503d, and was on a patrol on 24 June 1965. He became separated from the patrol, and was then hit by sniper fire and the unit was unable to recover his body.

Analysts from our office work hand-in-hand with the field teams from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) in Hawaii -- those are the guys who actually get boots-on-the-ground in country. We have several teams in country every year. But to justify going to a specific area to research a case, we need leads. Some of our very best leads come from the veterans.

I would very much like to speak with veterans of B Co, 2/503d who were on that patrol on 24 June 1965. If you have an appropriate section of your newsletter to print this appeal, it would be very appreciated. Please have people contact me at: Matthew.Kristoff@osd.mil, or by phone at: (703) 699-1240.

Thank You, and Welcome Home!

Matt

Note: Immediately upon receiving this note from Matt, we put him in touch with Roy Lombardo, LTC (Ret) CO B/2/503 during that time, and men of the Bravo Bulls from 1965. We asked Matt to inform us on the results of his search so we can share the news with our guys. Roy stated he is making contact with Matt, and the following message was also sent to him by Jerry Nissley of Bravo Co. Ed

Hi Matt,

I'm not sure how much help I can be to you in your search for Van Campen, but I'll tell you what I know... and what I've heard. The "Jungle Telegraph" was typically more false rumor than fact. The guy who can give you the real story is Roy Lombardo. As Smitty mentioned, he was our CO at the time, and lead our mission that day in June, 1965.

I didn't know Van Campen personally. In my short three-month assignment with B/2/503, I was a mortar gunner. At Base Camp my squad staffed a perimeter machine gun position, physically separated from most of the balance of the company.

On that mission in late June, I marched with the column carrying a 60mm mortar. We were choppered into War Zone

"D". I believe it was mid-day when word got out that a three-man M-60 machine gun crew had gotten separated from the company. I was told that they had come upon a couple of huts in a small clearing. Two men set up the machine gun to cover Van Campen while he moved forward to recon the huts. Viet Cong then opened fire, wounding Van Campen.

While one teammate provided cover fire with the M-60, the other moved forward to assist Van Campen back to the gun position....

(continued....)



Tom



....They then grabbed their gear and tried to carry Van Campen from the area, being pursued by the Viet Cong. The VC were gaining fast, and Van Campen apparently talked the other two (I wish I could remember their names) into concealing him in some heavy vegetation while they tried unimpeded (they were carrying him, apparently) to hook up with the company and return for him.

Once the two soldiers regained contact with the company, we remained in position while sending out patrols to find Van Campen. We remained in the area until very late in the day, but finally had to hustle to the LZ for extraction, without Van Campen. Capt. Lombardo got permission from Brigade to return the following day with the company and perform a search mission specifically for Van Campen. That effort, as thorough as it was, also proved fruitless. Huts were found and burned, but no VC contacted.

In August, I was reassigned from B/2/503 to D/16th Armor as a gunner on a mounted 4.2" mortar. It was a few months later when I was told that in July, the web gear and belongings of Van Campen (apparently verified by serial numbers on munitions) was found several kilometers from our original position on 24 June. I had heard later that his mutilated body had been discovered. Well, that apparently is not the case either. I had just discussed this issue with some friends at our Veterans Day Reunion in Las Vegas, and others had heard similar rumors. I am deeply saddened to learn that Van Campen is indeed MIA. I pray for him and his family, and for a successful search to recover his remains.

I wish I could be of more help to you. But as I mentioned, Roy Lombardo could give you specifics as to our location and our situation. I was pretty far down on the food chain, and like so many others, simply followed orders and followed the guy in front of me until the schidt hit the fan. Then it was teamwork...cover yourself and your buddy and destroy the enemy. I'm sure you know the drill.

I sincerely hope your search is successful. I really appreciate the diligent efforts to locate Van Campen and so many other MIAs. It must be rewarding to successfully close the cover on MIA victims. If you need to contact me for any reason, please feel free. I would really like to know the whole story once it's known. Like I say, the "facts" I recall and learned may be far from fact. I know that all of my Bravo Bulls buddies would like to know as well. Please contact us when you know the rest of the story. It would be a big help to us all.

Best of luck to you in your search. Airborne ATW,

Jerry Nissley
B/2/503

Note: Jerry has since learned it is likely Thomas was KIA before his body was hidden in the brush. Ed

Thomas Charles Van Campen

Private First Class

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY,
173D ABN BDE,**

**US ARMY SPT CMD VIETNAM, MACV
Army of the United States**

Oroville, California

December 28, 1945 to June 24, 1965

**THOMAS C. VAN CAMPEN is on the Wall
at Panel 02E Line 017**

Note: This report originally appeared in Issue 36 of our newsletter in January 2012. As of this writing the DPMO reports no new details about the search for remains of Tom Van Campen other than they are ongoing. He has since been classified as Killed In Action. Ed



About DPMO

"Keeping the Promise", "Fulfill their Trust" and "No one left behind" are several of many mottos that refer to the efforts of the Department of Defense to recover those who became missing while serving our nation.

More than 83,000 Americans are missing from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the 1991 Gulf War. Hundreds of Defense Department men and women -- both military and civilian -- work in organizations around the world as part of DoD's personnel recovery and personnel accounting communities. They are all dedicated to the single mission of finding and bringing our missing personnel home. The mission requires expertise in archival research, intelligence collection and analysis, field investigations and recoveries, and scientific analysis.





**golden
corral**

Military Appreciation Night



Thank you for your service.

DAV and Golden Corral are once again partnering for Military Appreciation Night. On Monday, Nov. 14, 2016, between 5 and 9 p.m., Golden Corral will thank America's veterans and active-duty military men and women with a free buffet dinner and drink at restaurants nationwide.

Since the start of the 15-year tradition, Golden Corral has served more than 4.7 million complimentary meals and generated more than \$11.5 million in guest contributions for DAV to support community-based service initiatives for veterans.

Military Appreciation Night is Golden Corral's way of saying "Thank you!" to our nation's veterans and active-duty personnel. Be sure to visit the DAV information table at your local Golden Corral.



Share Your News! Send photos of your Chapter or Department at a Military Appreciation Night event to feedback@dav.org by November 21 for consideration in the January/February issue.





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

LINEAGE AND HONORS

HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE

Organized August 1917 at Camp Pike, Arkansas as Headquarters, 173d Infantry Brigade, an element of the 87th Division

Demobilized January 1919 at Camp Dix, New Jersey

Reconstituted 24 June 1921 in Organized Reserves as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173d Infantry Brigade as an organic element of the 87th Division (later designated 87th Infantry Division)

Organized in December 1921 at Shreveport, Louisiana

Reorganized and redesignated 30 January 1942 as 87th Reconnaissance Troop (less 3d Platoon) (concurrently, 174th Infantry Brigade /organized August 1917/ reorganized and redesignated as 3d Platoon, 87th Reconnaissance Troop)

Troop ordered into active military service and reorganized 15 December 1942 at Camp McCain, Mississippi as the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop

Reorganized and redesignated 2 August 1943 as the 87th Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized

Inactivated 21 September 1945 at Fort Benning, Georgia

Redesignated 28 April 1947 as 87th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop

Activated 12 May 1947 at Birmingham, Alabama

(Organized Reserves redesignated in 1948 as Organized Reserve Corps and in 1952 as Army Reserve)

Reorganized and redesignated 18 May 1949 as the 87th Reconnaissance Company

Inactivated 1 December 1951 at Birmingham, Alabama

Relieved 26 March 1963 from assignment to the 87th Infantry Division, withdrawn from the Army Reserve, allotted to the Regular Army, converted, and Company (less 3d Platoon) redesignated as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173d Airborne Brigade and activated in Okinawa (concurrently 3d Platoon redesignated as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 174th Airborne Brigade, separate lineage)

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

World War I

Without inscription

World War II

Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe

DECORATIONS

None

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

(Signed)

J.C. LAMBERT, Major General, USA

The Adjutant General

(Document stamped "October 14, 1953")



From the Okinawa archives...

Truly, the Army takes care of its own.

“Good morning, 173rd Dependents’ Assistance Office. May I help you?”

Many times in the past twenty-five years combat units have been ordered overseas from the United States of America, leaving their families at home in the states. However, on Okinawa, we believe we have a first. The 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) which was activated on June 25, 1963, was on May 3, 1965, ordered to Viet Nam. Approximately five-hundred-and-fifty families were left behind on Okinawa.

We have often heard it said, *“Don’t worry, the Army takes care of its own”*. We had no idea how true this could be, or to what extent the people on Okinawa, both Ryukyans and Americans would give of themselves to fulfill these words.

Lt. General Albert Watson II, Commanding General USARYIS, IX Corps, at once offered any and all assistance that was needed to help Brigade families.

Prior to his departure, Brig. Gen. Ellis W. Williamson, Commanding General of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) appointed Capt. Joe A. Icenhower, Brigade AG, as the Dependents’ Assistance Officer. His job was to set up an office to aid 173rd dependents. These dependents were to include those already on the island as well as those scheduled to arrive.

Realizing that one man could not possibly accommodate five-hundred-and-fifty families, Mrs. Ellis W. Williamson, wife of the commanding general, asked Mrs. William Ver Hey to help organize and supervise the office to be staffed by the ladies of the Brigade. Mrs. Ver Hey appointed two assistants, Mrs. Jesse Dumas, wife of Capt. Dumas, and Mrs. Frank T. Blanda, wife of Capt. Blanda. A group of ten ladies became the volunteer staff. The wives represented Brigade men of all ranks, Enlisted, NCO and Officer.

The first worker to appear on the job was Mrs. Charles Langmack, wife of PFC Langmack, a Chaplain’s Assistant. Mrs. Langmack’s knowledge and interest in social work was instrumental in planning some of the services that the office could render.

General Watson, accompanied by Stanley R. Riser, Under Secretary of the Army, now Secretary, visited the office in late May.



**A few of the ladies of the Dependents’ Assistance Office.
L-R: Exie Carmichael, Betty Watson & Margaret Williamson**

In the weeks that followed, necessity revealed the many talents and abilities possessed by the staff to support the activities and functions of the office. The day of a volunteer worker started at nine in the morning. Upon her arrival at the office, she first checked to see if there were any pending cases from the previous day. Next, she contacted the hospital to see if any 173rd dependents had been admitted. Should there be, if it was a child, she phoned the mother or a neighbor to see if help was needed. This, of course, would be followed by other calls of whatever nature of assistance was needed. A form was then filled out and sent to the husband so he would be informed of the situation. The large bulletin board labeled “Incoming Dependents” was checked to see if any families were arriving within the next 10 days. The answer was usually yes and a standardized procedure was followed to prepare for the incoming family.

Also among the workers were ladies experienced in typing, filing, and dictation. The area in which all excelled was revealed in the answering of busy telephones by cheerful voices who said, *“Good morning, 173rd Dependents’ Assistance Office. May I help you?”*

The office was a nerve center from which problems were solved and channeled. Assistance in handling technical problems was given by military men in the Adjutant General section of the 173rd Rear Detachment.

(continued....)



Many of the non-technical problems were taken to wives and friends through a channel of communication which included Battalion Commander's wives, and Company Commander's wives, Sgt. Major's wives, and First Sgt.'s wives. These ladies gave many hours to developing and perfecting a locator file which gave information on each family of the Brigade. Quick communication was the aim of this file which included maps to each home, the name of a unit friend, and the telephone number of a neighbor. Communication was also established in the form of a weekly bulletin which announced scheduled activities, gave helpful advice and other pertinent information.

One Brigade lady, the mother of seven and a registered nurse, gave many hours of her time toward helping other families. Unfortunately, she became ill and major surgery was required. One of the families who she had assisted stepped in to care for her children.

Most the Brigade ladies proved to be very self-reliant and wanted to do for themselves. Some of the ladies could have qualified for their chauffeur's license, they spent so many hours chauffeuring newcomers and non-drivers to the post exchange, the commissary, hospital, and post office. A few of the ladies could even be classified as used car dealers. The summer months bring about a large number of families rotating home. It became necessary for the wives to sell the family car, arrange for the shipment of household goods, and clear quarters. To sum it up, one wife said, *"I've learned more about the Army in the last month than in the past seven years. I think I could tackle anything now."*

With the gallantry typical of Army men, the Non-Commissioned Officers and USARYIS assigned a sponsor to each new family arriving on Okinawa. The Dependents' Assistance Office also assigned a "wife assistant" to each incoming family. The NCO men coordinated with the appointed Brigade sponsor to make the arrival of these families on Okinawa as easy and pleasant as possible. By the end of June approximately 70 new families had arrived on the island. High on the priority list was the belief that each new arrival should be greeted by her Brigade sisters as she stepped off the plane or boat. Many Brigade wives met these new families, scrubbed floors and hung curtains for people they had never seen. Additionally, they secured the basic furniture from quartermaster, purchased the necessary food articles from the commissary, and returned the following day to show the newcomer the whereabouts of the post exchange, commissary, schools and hospital.

In late May the Dependents' Assistance Office was put to a second test, the approach of the first typhoon

of the season. Throughout the island, without exception, the other units and organizations stationed on Okinawa had offered their assistance and the services of their personnel. It was now needed, and each family of the Brigade was assigned a "typhoon buddy". In addition to typhoonizing their own families, these men secured trash cans, affixed typhoon shutters and made sure the wives and children of the Brigade were snug and safe. The assistance of the 1st Special Force Group as "buddies" in this program was greatly appreciated and especially so, by the husbands and fathers in Viet Nam.

Whether it's the weather or nature, the course cannot often be changed. Many women gave birth to babies, or went into major surgery without the support of their husbands. However, in each instance there was a close friend or neighbor standing in the wings. It was a wonderful feeling to know that if and when the occasion arose and assistance was needed, there were helping hands.

This office was opened with willing, but inexperienced ladies working together to provide assistance wherever needed – to the best of their ability. Due to the type of mission assigned the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) on Okinawa, it is possible for this situation to occur again. With this thought in mind, records were kept to where and how things were done. A booklet was prepared giving detailed information concerning all functions and activities of the office. Where it has been necessary for our present committee to operate somewhat on a trial and error basis, with the help of the *Dependent's Assistance Booklet*, should it again become necessary, this committee could be operating within a few days.

Most significant of all – because their wives and children provided for – whatever the size of the problem, large or small, the men of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) could give wholeheartedly of themselves to the mission in the Republic of Viet Nam.

Truly, the Army takes care of its own.

Exie Carmichael

**Wife of LTC Robert B. Carmichael, XO/CO 2/503d
21 July 65**

**From the men of the 173d RVN, we send
our Brigade "Sky Soldierettes" from
Okinawa a belated but heartfelt thanks for
a job well done! *All The Way, Ladies!***





INCOMING!



~ Remembering Our Fallen ~

Thanks again for great newsletter. I do appreciate your remembering those who fell in the months you cover. I'd like to add a bit to your most recent listing.

This relates to the loss of two fine young officers, 1LTs James Gardner and George Mikula, who were KIA 10/13/66. They were working together at the time on a civic action visit and were ambushed, by a directional mine, either entering or leaving a village, I don't recall which. I chatted with them at HHC area early that morning. Later that night I was summoned by CPT Jackson, CO, B-Med to make an ID.

AATW,

**Steve "Skol" Skolochenko, LTC
D Maint., 173d Spt. Bn.**



James E. Gardner
HHC 173d Bde.
KIA 10/13/66



George E. Mikula
HHC 173d Bde.
KIA 10/13/66

~ Today I Are One ~

I just got the 2/503 mag. Your usual high standards are in place. I've not yet finished it, but I just wanted to acknowledge the query from the university's history dept about using this mag as a historical touchpoint. They hit gold with that idea. Anecdotal testimony backed by verification. It doesn't get better than that.

Jeez. Last week I didn't know what a history was, and today I are one. Keep up the good work.

Mark Carter, 173d LRRP, '65-'66



173d LRRPs extraordinaire, L-R: Linsner & Carter.
Mark, pointing the way, as any good
LLH Gang member should.

~ Comments on VA Privatization ~

I just finished reading the section about privatizing the VA (Issue 69). I now wish I had explained my position more clearly and in more length like some of the others. I didn't take a head count, but it looked like more are opposed to privatization than for it. I know there are pockets where extremely satisfied care is scarce. VA is transparent and all of its warts show. When private hospitals screw up you seldom find out. The VA still needs more doctors and nurses; I hope Congress will respond with these needed resources.



"JJ"

LTC Dexter's history was an interesting read. Looking forward to his future writing.

Jim "JJ" Jackson, B/2/503

~ Upon Reflection ~

You've done it again - blown my morning with your most exceptional issue to date (which is saying a lot); ***all for the Greater Good of the Gator Library!***

And thank you for the insightful tribute to Col. Boland.

Upon reflection, it is quite remarkable that 173d units have been so consistently fortunate with leadership by truly outstanding battalion and brigade (one exception) commanders. And COL Dexter's recall is astonishing. Be well,

**Bob Warfield, Maj.
CO HHC/A/B, 2/503**



Bob, in Ben Cat

~ 4/503 Reunion Dinner Planned ~

Thanks, another great issue.

Can you add a note in your next issue that the 4/503rd will have a Reunion Dinner on Friday May 19, 2017 at the Renaissance Hotel during the 173d Airborne Reunion in Oklahoma City?

I am the POC pligon3392@aol.com 205-746-5586. Thanks brother.

**Peyton Ligon
B/4/503**

Hi Peyton. I think we can do that. Ed

(continued....)



~ Can't Keep A Good Cav Man Down ~

We bikers were at it again. Taking advantage of a glorious day myself, Ike Mellinger and Mark Mitchell had planned to take a trip out to the home of our own JIM HAYNES and pay him a visit. Jim, as you know, had fought his way through an intense bout with cancer. On the mend, what did Jim do? He went out and purchased himself a Harley motorcycle.

That's Jim in the picture, grinning up a storm. His wife ANNA has herself become a motorcycle nut. They're out on the road every chance they can get. It's a simple fact and JIM HAYNES is proof of it: you can't keep a good trooper down. Need more proof?



Jim Haynes, E-Troop, back in the saddle on his new Hog.

Jim is hoping to join in with us on next year's trip to Washington and the Rolling Thunder event. Considering his past battle with cancer that's amazing.

Airborne, Jim!

**William Terry
A/3/319**



There may be a postponement to the release of the Jan/Feb issue of our newsletter as we embark on a slight sojourn to elsewhere places. We'll keep you informed. ATW...and Thanks! Ed

~ A/2/503 Trooper Fighting Illness and the VA ~

Jack R. Dills, A/2/503d, 1965-66, has some health issues. His son, Colonel Jack E. Dills sent this to me (note below). His father is in TX and as soon as I find out a location, city, address, contact info—I hope to get some of our guys to visit/comfort him.

Thanks,

**Jerry Cecil
1LT, C/1/503d, 173d
Dak To
1967-68**

Jerry,

Jack R. Dills, A/2/503, 173d ABN, (arrived at Bien Hoa airbase in May 1965) is in poor health. He is struggling with pancreatic and prostate cancer as well as some back issues. He meets with VA tomorrow to hopefully get his records corrected to reflect that he was with the guys sprayed with Agent Orange. He has been getting a lot of run around and little of the help he needs.

Appreciate the thoughts and prayers of his Sky Soldier brothers.

Respectfully,

**Jack E. Dills
COL, SF**

Note: Jerry & the Colonel's notes were emailed to our A/2/503 list. Good luck to our brother Jack. Ed

~Back to Hill 875 ~

You probably know BUT....one of our pilots is going along with a few of your guys to the Hill 875 site. I think next year. I did not know you guys still had a couple of troopers not accounted for. This event will be a nice story for your paper.

Also, can you ask your people if they have any knowledge of a DR. PAT SMITH. She operated a civilian hospital near Kontum. The Cowboys helped her at times with medicine, food, etc. -- a very unselfish lady. I am trying to get more info for a story. I bet your guys had some dealings with her. She even gave comfort to the lepers. I remember her nurse (a German) was stolen by the VC.....later they returned her.

**John "Doc" Troogott
Cowboy Medic**

Note: If anyone can hookup Doc with Doctor Smith, please drop me an email and I'll forward it to John. Ed



~ Legends Meet ~

I had an uncle living in Melbourne, Florida at the time of our 2/503 reunion in Cocoa Beach. He was in the invasion of Normandy in WW2 and he came to the Wakulla Suites to visit Gayle and me during the reunion.

I introduced him to Bob Carmichael and they sat and talked about the invasion for some time. I was very proud of both of them and felt privileged to be in their company.

Jim Bethea
HHC/2/503



At 2/503 reunion in Cocoa Beach, FL

~ 82nd & 173d Airborne Troops Team-Up ~



On left is Sky Soldier Ron Thomas, 173d LRRP, next to his buddy, All American Hector Barajas.

DAV Chapter 13 and 173d Airborne Chapter 29 of Las Vegas presented two motorized chairs to be sent to two deported veterans of American wars in Tijuana, Mexico. Hector served 4 years in the 82nd Airborne and now has been fighting this battle for over 10 years. Keep up the fight!

Ray Thomas
173d LRRP

~ Fellow Sky Soldiers, Dear Brothers ~

Thank you for the information regarding the services for my great and honorable leader, COL Richard "Rawhide" Boland. I will share it with the troops, locally.

It is with deep regret that I was never able to see him alive, once more, especially after his move to California or in one of his visits, rejoining the troops at 173d Abn Bde Reunions.

Short stories, of my sincere respect for this "Warrior". After years had passed, in going through my 201 files, which I had requested be sent to me when we went to the computerized version of record maintenance, I discovered, totally unknown to me, a Letter of Commendation, which I received as a PFC on Okinawa. To this day, I treasure it. My feeling was/is that, as hard and demanding a leader as he was, if you received a commendation from the "Old Man", you must have had your "ducks in a row", to put it mildly.

Henry (Galindo), we met years ago, in California, through my beloved brother, may he now rest in peace, Ramiro Lopez. You and I served together on Okinawa, but never met, as unfortunately, I was one of the "city boys", as we were called, due to being assigned to "A" Company, in Sukiran and had very little contact with the rest of our battalion. It is through Ramiro that brings me to the second part of my story.

When you guys were helping Col Rawhide move into one of his residences, Ramiro was able to get a set of leadership tabs, complete with the 503d unit crest, worn at some time by Rawhide, informing him that he wanted them for a friend of his, (me), who had proudly served under his command. Ramiro, who stayed with me during his trips to San Antonio, TX, brought them to me, actually, "locked my heels", in my living room, while presenting them to me. They are now part of my uniform, which I will be buried in.



(continued....)



I was among the first wounded, 02 Jun 65, after our arrival in Vietnam. It was during our stay at the B Med Medical tent that I realized that the Old Man, practiced what he preached, *"Take care of your men"*. On or about the second day, a 1st Bn Captain, came into the tent, asking for the wounded troops from 1st Bn. As he approached us, we noticed he had a covered, inverted steel pot. He told us, he had been sent by Col Boland, who wanted to know how we were doing; if we were being taken care of and sent his apologies for not being present himself, but he was busy at the time; the unit was still out on a mission. He handed the Sgt in the group a hand full of our personal mail, still holding on to the steel pot. Finally, he uncovered it telling us that Col Boland had sent us "this"; displaying, "iced down cold beers". A "B" Med Captain, rushed in telling the 1st Bn Captain that his unit commander did not allow alcohol in the area. The 1st Bn officer asked him if he knew who we were, *"We were Rawhide's men and that he had sent these to us, adding that if he could not deliver them, he would go AWOL before returning and report a failed mission, to Col Boland. It would then be up to him, (the B Med officer) to take the beers back to Col Boland"*. We got our beers.

Sorry for the long winded discussion, but just wanted to share some of my pride of having been and being, *"One of Rawhide's Men"*.

Airborne!

Frank Martinez
A/1st/503d Abn Inf
1964-66



Col. Richard "Rawhide" Boland
1921 – 2016
CO 1/503 RVN

James Conner, SFC **HHC/2/503, '68/'69**

James Conner, 76, of Vernon, CT passed away on Sunday, October 4, 2015 at his home after a prolonged illness.

James was born October 6, 1938 in Wilkes Barre, PA. He was raised in New Britain prior to joining the Air Force, after which he decided to join the Army, where he served with distinction for twenty years. He served several tours in Vietnam as a paratrooper and for several years he was assigned to the Jump School as an instructor, which he took great pride in. James' second career was a police dispatcher for the town of Glastonbury. He enjoyed serving the residents and working with some of the finest people that he had ever had the pleasure of knowing. James also was heavily involved in scouting and athletics, serving as his son's coach and scoutmaster. One of his proudest moments as a father was seeing his son earn Eagle Scout. After his second retirement, he enjoyed fishing, reading, crossword puzzles and most of all, spending time with his family.

James is survived by his wife of 39 years, Kathleen; his son, Shawn and his wife Amy and their daughter Mackenzie. He is also survived by his brother, Robert and his wife Judy, as well as several cousins, nieces, nephews and his friend of many years. He was predeceased by his mother, Margaret; step father, William and his sister, Barbara.

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

John Leach **A/2/503**

John was born on June 29, 1945 and passed away on Wednesday, August 24, 2016.

John was a resident of Summerfield, Florida at the time of his passing.

He served during the Vietnam Conflict with Alpha Company, 2/503d of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

He was married to Diane. Burial took place at Ft Gibson, OK. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the American Cancer Society or Toys for Tots.

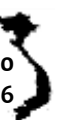


Rest Easy Brothers



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / Nov.-Dec. 2016 – Issue 70

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A bit of Sky Soldier history...

2/503rd soldier lands made for TV movie role

By PHILLIP ROBERTS

When SGT Joe Curila solved the mystery in the Play "Angel Street," he never dreamed he'd soon be seen with Hollywood stars in a movie millions of people on national television would see.

Producer Harry Sherman needed someone to play the role of Special Agent Eugene Seletzki, a Federal Election Observer from Washington D.C., in the NBC two-hour special Movie of the Week, "Lawman Without A Gun," airing later this year.



Period Piece

SGT Joe Curila (right) and actor Jerry DeWilde pose for a picture after finishing their last day of scene-shooting for the NBC two-hour special Movie of the Week, "Lawman Without A Gun," to be aired later this year. Legal NCO for 2nd Bn, 503d Inf, Curila and movie partner DeWilde played the parts of Federal Elections Observers from Washington, D.C. (Photo by DeWilde Studios)

Sherman wanted a man with the Hoover-FBI look of the late 60's. The man had to have the cleancut-short hair look and have an East Coast accent.

The show was shot on location in Elkton, Ky., 25 miles from here.

Sherman contacted post Recreational Services Entertainment Director Lionel Austell for help in filling the role. Curila was recommended to audition.

Curila, HHC, 2nd Bn, 503rd Inf, legal clerk, started out as a child actor in New York City when he was 11 years old. He accidentally appeared on TV for the first time in a Candid Camera episode at 14.

Curila's acting credits include theatrical performances in three post-produced plays at the Soldier's Show Center.

"Critics Choice" and "Subject To Change" were his first plays. His last role as Police Inspector Rough in the Victorian thriller "Angel Street" gave Curila the chance to be a star.

Curila's new role, a two-scene part in the TV special starring Lou Gossett, tells the life story of a Sheriff, James Kilmore, a black man running for sheriff in a predominantly white town in Nov. '68 during the time of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.



Lou Gossett & Mary Alice in scene from
"Lawman Without A Gun"
(web photo)

(continued....)





We could find only four photos from the movie, none which included our trooper. Ed (web photo)

Movie operation headquarters were set up in the Holiday Inn in Hopkinsville. Curila's scenes were shot July 27-28.



The movie also was released as "He Who Walks Alone".

Jerry DeWilde from Hollywood, Calif., portrayed Curila's partner, while local townspeople played extras and local law enforcers played police.

DeWilde's acting credits include the movies "The Last Angry Man" and "The Big Bus."

Tyler County, Ala., is the 1968 scene. The filming day's temperature reached the 90's, just like a normal, hot summer day in the deep south.

In his first scene, Curila and his partner told Gossett he actually won the election, earlier reported lost. Seletzki (Curila) told Kilmore (Gossett) a misunderstanding in ballot counting and disqualification of votes on technical grounds proved him to be the real winner.

In the second and final scene, Curila and his partner dug by a creek searching for the murder weapon used earlier in the movie.

"I enjoy stage acting more because it gets too technical in making a movie," Curila observed. "I like getting an audience reaction which you can't get in front of a camera."

Curila said, "Getting apart in the movie was luck. I just 'looked the part.' On stage you can make up a person to look the way he needs to look for the part, but for the screen you have to actually be the part."

Curila learned the trials of acting, after auditioning against 15 other actors.

"It takes so much time preparing, it can take all the pep out of you," Curila explained. "Scene setting takes two to three times as long to get ready as it does for most actors to get deep into their character."

Curila concluded, "It was a once in a lifetime chance that I'll cherish forever."

Source: Fort Campbell COURIER, August 1977

Note: Clu Gallagher was another notable actor in the flick. [Article provided by the wife of a Sky Soldier]

Such A Deal!

But, Joe isn't the only one associated with the 173d who has appeared on the Tube. Reggie Smith, wife of the editor of this army rag was on *Let's Make A Deal* in 1973. "I kissed Monty Hall!" she said excitedly.

I was conducting a training seminar with Flying Tigers in Chicago when she called and said, "I was on *Let's Make A Deal*, and won!" Being two poor starter outers, I had visions of large amounts of cash with which we could pay bills, only to learn that night she had won gads of t.v.'s, recorders, and other useless electronics....which we had to pay tax on!

Damn you Monty Hall! And you kissed my wife too!!



Next to Monty Hall is Mrs. Smith during her 15 minutes of t.v. fame.

We moved from L.A. to Miami a few months after that and ordered a throw rug from Sears. Reggie answered the door when the Sears delivery guy arrived, and he said, "I know you! You were on *Let's Make A Deal*!" No shit. Ed



Presidential Proclamation -- Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA



As we observe the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, we reflect with solemn reverence upon the valor of a generation that served with honor. We pay tribute to the more than 3 million servicemen and women who left their families to serve bravely, a world away from everything they knew and everyone they loved. From Ia Drang to Khe Sanh, from Hue to Saigon and countless villages in between, they pushed through jungles and rice paddies, heat and monsoon, fighting heroically to protect the ideals we hold dear as Americans. Through more than a decade of combat, over air, land, and sea, these proud Americans upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

As a grateful Nation, we honor more than 58,000 patriots -- their names etched in black granite -- who sacrificed all they had and all they would ever know. We draw inspiration from the heroes who suffered unspeakably as prisoners of war, yet who returned home with their heads held high. We pledge to keep faith with those who were wounded and still carry the scars of war, seen and unseen. With more than 1,600 of our service members still among the missing, we pledge as a Nation to do everything in our power to bring these patriots home. In the reflection of The Wall, we see the military family members and veterans who carry a pain that may never fade. May they find peace in knowing their loved ones endure, not only in medals and memories, but in the hearts of all Americans, who are forever grateful for their service, valor, and sacrifice.

In recognition of a chapter in our Nation's history that must never be forgotten, let us renew our sacred commitment to those who answered our country's call in Vietnam and those who awaited their safe return. Beginning on Memorial Day 2012, the Federal

Government will partner with local governments, private organizations, and communities across America to participate in the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War -- a 13-year program to honor and give thanks to a generation of proud Americans who saw our country through one of the most challenging missions we have ever faced. While no words will ever be fully worthy of their service, nor any honor truly befitting their sacrifice, let us remember that it is never too late to pay tribute to the men and women who answered the call of duty with courage and valor. Let us renew our commitment to the fullest possible accounting for those who have not returned.

Throughout this Commemoration, let us strive to live up to their example by showing our Vietnam veterans, their families, and all who have served the fullest respect and support of a grateful Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 28, 2012, through November 11, 2025, as the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. I call upon Federal, State, and local officials to honor our Vietnam veterans, our fallen, our wounded, those unaccounted for, our former prisoners of war, their families, and all who served with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

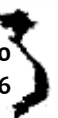
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

[Sent in by Peyton Ligon B/4/503 via Jack Tarr C/4/503]



**The Commander in Chief at The Wall during 50th Year
Commemoration of the Vietnam War.** (web photo)



173rd Airborne paratroopers honor US- Italian WWII sacrifices

VICENZA, ITALY, 05.04.2015

Story by Sgt. A.M. LaVey, 173rd Airborne Brigade

VICENZA, Italy — Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade honored World War II U.S. and Italian sacrifices during three days of ceremonies in the Verona region April 30 through May 2, 2015.

The first event was a 40-mile hike up the western coast of Lake Garda where Col. William O. Darby, founder of the modern U.S. Army rangers, died April 30, 1945, along with men from the U.S. 10th Mountain Division, who fought their way up the lake during World War II.

About 100 U.S. service members and their families, as well as American veterans and members of the local community participated in the 40-mile hike. Following the hike there was a ceremony attended by members of the commune of Nago-Torbole and local veterans groups.

Italian veterans stand side-by-side with American paratroopers from the 173rd Brigade at a ceremony honoring the fallen of World War II in Torbole, Italy, May 2.

(Photo By Spc. A.M. LaVey)



“Col. Darby was a true American hero and a paragon of American courage, honor, commitment and belief in selfless service,” said Col. Robert Menist, commander, U.S. Army Garrison Vicenza, at a remembrance ceremony in Torbole, May 2. *“These same virtues bind our [Italian-American] alliance today.”*

The following day, members of the 173rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion traveled to the village of Ponti sul Mincio, just south of the lake, to attend another day’s worth of ceremonies honoring the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Italy. The medieval town is known as the location of one of the last battles of World War II on Italian soil, the Battle of Monte Casale, and each year the community remember the sacrifices of those who fought and died there.

“Every year [this town] conducts a ceremony to remember the actions and to thank the Americans for their services liberating the village during the second World War,” said Howard Leibovich, with the U.S. Army Mission Support Element - Vicenza, who helped coordinate American attendance at the event.

After a ceremony in the town square, members of the community, along with representatives from the Italian army, Carabinieri and veterans groups processed up the mountain to conduct a memorial service, and then to a shared luncheon.

“We not only honor the service given by our comrades, but also to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of one of the most destructive wars of our two nations,” said 1st Lt. Adam Porritt, a platoon leader with Company D, 173rd BSTB, and the American officer in charge. *“We are proud to do so side-by-side with our Italian allies.”*

The last ceremony, held again at the north shore of Lake Garda, in Torbole, was organized by Larry Pisoni, born Italian and now a naturalized American, of the *Thank You America Foundation*, to honor the work of American and allied Soldiers who liberated Italy from Italian fascists and their Nazi collaborators.

“It is an obligation to honor the Americans who liberated Italy,” said Pisoni. *“While I may be old enough to remember things from the war, there are those who tried to cover up all the good works that the Americans and allied Soldiers did. Well, the truth needs to come out: that if it hadn’t been for the Americans here in Italy, history would’ve been changed forever.”*

The ceremony was attended by local Italian veterans, as well as the region’s political representatives, who recognized the need for Pisoni’s mission of remembrance.

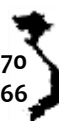
“These remembrances gain value as time passes,” said Luca Civettini, the mayor of Nago-Torbole. *“The danger of the future is that our children may forget, our grandchildren may forget and we might forget what it means to live through a war. Today we are reminded that the sacrifices for our freedom are not in vain.”*

For the young American paratroopers who attended, this message was not lost on them.

“Today we are here to honor the Soldiers who came before us and to honor the alliance between Italy and the USA,” said 1st Lt. Elizabeth Constantino, executive officer, Company D, 173rd BSTB. *“It is important for us to know our shared history and to remember the peace that began here 70 years ago.”*

The 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Vicenza, Italy, is the Army Contingency Response Force in Europe, and is capable of projecting forces to conduct a full range of military operations across the U.S. European, Central and Africa Command’s areas of responsibility.

[Source: 173d Airborne Brigade, Vincenza, Italy]



PLAYMATE FIRST CLASS: JO COLLINS IN VIETNAM



Playboy's GI Jo Delivers a Lifetime Subscription to the Front

Most military strategists agree that, aside from actual firepower, nothing means more to an army than the morale of its men. And since the days of GI Joe, the American fighting man has seldom appeared on the frontiers of freedom without an abundant supply of that most time-honored of spirit-lifting staples: the pinup. From the shores of Iwo Jima to the jungles of Vietnam, the pinup queen has remained a constant companion to our men at arms, but the long-legged likenesses of such World War Two lovelies as Grable and Hayworth have given way to a whole new breed of photogenic females better known as *Playboy Playmates*. It was only a matter of time, therefore, until center folddom's contemporary beauties would be asked to do their bit for our boys in uniform. That time came last November, when Second Lieutenant John Price -- a young airborne officer on duty in Vietnam -- sent Editor-Publisher Hugh M. Hefner the following letter:

"This is written from the depths of the hearts of 180 officers and men of Company, B, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) stationed at Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. We serve in the first American Army troop unit committed to action here in Vietnam, and we have gone many mile--some in

sorrow and some in joy, but mostly in hard, home-weary inches....We are proud to be here and have found the answer to the question, 'Ask *what you can do for your country*.' And yet we cannot stand alone--which brings me to the reason for sending you this request.

The loneliness here is a terrible thing--and we long to see a real, living, breathing American girl. Therefore, we have enclosed with this letter a money order for a Lifetime Subscription to *Playboy* magazine for B Company. It is our understanding that with the purchase of a Lifetime Subscription in the U.S., the first issue is personally delivered by a Playmate. It is our most fervent hope that this policy can be extended to include us. . .Any of the current Playmates of the Month would be welcomed with open arms, but if we have any choice in the matter, we prefer the 1965 Playmate of the Year--Miss Jo Collins.

If we are not important enough . . . to send a Playmate for, please just forget about us and we will quietly fade back into the jungle."

(continued....)



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Jo makes a few last-minute logistic changes of her own prior to deploying in Saigon. *"Any girl would reach for a mirror," she says, "with 400 men outside the door."*

(Photo by Larry Gordon)



Above: Roses are the order of the day as two members of Company B welcome Jo to Vietnam on behalf of their wounded Project Playmate officer, Lieutenant John Price, hospitalized back at battalion headquarters in Bien Hoa.

Below: Joe delivers company's Lifetime Subscription certificate at Lieutenant Price's bedside (below left) and adds bonus buss (right) of her own to go with it.



Playboy's pretty Vietnam volunteer visits Lieutenant Price's wardmates at the Evacuation Hospital. "Most of them had been badly hurt," says Jo, "but no one ever complained."

Deciding that only old soldiers should fade away, and deeply touched by the paratrooper's pleas, Hefner immediately began drawing up plans for the successful completion of *Project Playmate*. *"When we first received the request,"* Hef recalls, *"we weren't at all sure how the Defense Department would feel about Playboy sending a beautiful American girl into Vietnam at a time like this, but Lieutenant Price's letter was too moving to just put aside and forget. The lieutenant had obviously been a Playboy reader for quite a while, since he remembered a special Christmas gift offer the magazine published several years ago, which stated that a lifetime subscriber from any city with a Playboy Club would have his first issue delivered in person by a Playmate. Of course we don't have a Playboy Club in Vietnam at the moment, but we figured we could overlook that little technicality under the circumstances."*

(continued....)



Along with the usual complications and military restrictions any average civilian encounters when attempting to travel to Vietnam these days, many more technicalities had to be ironed out through the proper channels before Jo received the necessary Government clearance for a late-February flight to the front lines. *"The fellow in Company B said it would be a privilege if I could visit them,"* remarked the Playmate of the Year when asked how she felt about her upcoming tour of delivery duty in the war-torn Far East, *"but the way I see it—I'm the one who's privileged."*

Her call to arms came much sooner than expected, however, when word was received that Lieutenant Price had been wounded in action on January 5, and that her morale-boosting mission might have to be canceled unless Jo could reach the injured officer's beside at a Bien Hoa combat-zone hospital before his scheduled evacuation from Vietnam on January 13. All additional red tape still pending prior to Jo's departure was quickly bypassed. On Sunday afternoon (January 9), Playmate First Class Collins and her party—which included Playboy's Playmate and Bunny Promotion Coordinator Joyce Chalecki as acting chaperone and staff photographer Larry Gordon—departed from San Francisco on a Pan Am jetliner bound for Saigon. Commenting on some of her own last-minute logistic problems before take-off, Jo later told us:

"Things were so hectic those last few days before we left that I was sure we'd never make it. For openers, I was away visiting friends in Oregon when the news came in about Lieutenant Price being wounded. The original plans called for my flying to Chicago in mid-February, where I would team up with Larry and Joyce, get my travel shots and clear up all the final details for the trip. Hef phoned me about the sudden switch in Project Playmate, and I spent the next five days flying back and forth—first to Seattle for my passport when I found out Oregon doesn't issue them; then to Los Angeles, where I got my smallpox vaccination, checked out some last-minute details with my agent at American International Studios and raided my apartment for the clothes I figured I'd be needing. As it was, I managed to meet Larry and Joyce at the San Francisco airport and board our jet to Vietnam with all of about fifteen minutes to spare" (In typical above-and-beyond-the-call fashion, trooper Collins—an aspiring actress whose recent film credits include minor roles in *Lord Love a Duck* and *What Did You Do in the War, Daddy*—neglected to mention that, in reporting for duty on such short notice, she'd had to bypass an important audition for a principal part on TV's *Peyton Place*).



Above: Aboard Bien Hoa's newly decorated Bunny bus, Jo takes a guided tour of company B's base-camp area, stopping off to admire the imaginative floor-to-ceiling Playmate motif (right) adorning the PX (It was the closest the fellows could come to a real Playmate).



A bit foot-weary during her first day at the front, Playmate First Class Collins hitches a ride with some armored admirers back to the company mess hall.

(continued....)





Jo seems pleased that an autographing gal can always find a strong back in Bien Hoa when she needs one. Above: Jo lunches with Company B enlisted men who show more interest in signatures than sustenance.

After chow (right) she hoists their Bunny flag.



Some 8000 miles and 18 hours after their stateside rendezvous, Jo and her Playboy staffers landed at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base, where 400 American troops and a regiment of newsmen and photographers had turned out to greet them. After brief review of her assembled admirers, Jo was introduced to Lieutenant Clancy Johnson and Private First Class Marvin Hudson, two of Lieutenant Price's friends in the 173rd Airborne Brigade who ever-so-willingly volunteered to serve as a stand-in reception committee for their wounded buddy back at Bien Hoa. Mindful of his guerrilla training, Private First Class Hudson put on a one-man camouflage display when, after handing Jo her Company B (for Bravo) tribute of red roses, he subsequently blushed a deep crimson and succeeded in concealing the telltale lipstick print she had just planted on each of his cheeks.

Before leaving Bien Hoa, Jo had made a tour of other companies' "Playboy Clubs". (We ran across these 'clubs' at every GI base").



Top: Trooper Collins and her MP escorts prepare to board their "Playboy Special" chopper for the second day's agenda of battle-zone visits in Vietnam. "Take it from me," Jo smiles, "those bulletproof vests they made you wear do nothing for a girl's figure." Center: With her own whirlybird safely flanked by two gunships (left), Jo listens in on conversation between chopper jockeys. Above: She arrives at Special Forces camp atop Black Virgin Mountain.

(continued....)



Following the deplaning festivities, the three *Playboy* recruits were taken to a nearby “chopper” pad and given a whirlwind aerial tour of Saigon and the outlying districts aboard the “Playboy Special”—a Brigade helicopter especially renamed in honor of their visit.

“That first chopper ride really started things off with excitement,” reports GI Jo. “It seemed as though we’d hardly even arrived, and there we were over hostile country being given our first taste of what they call ‘contour flying.’ That’s where you skim the treetops to prevent possible enemy snipers from getting a clear shot at you and then, suddenly, shoot straight up at about 100 miles per hour to 3500 feet so you can check the area for Viet Cong troop movements from outside their firing range. After our stomachs got used to it, we figured we were ready for just about anything.”

Back on terra firma, the *Playboy* troupe was joined by Jack Edwards, who took time out from his regular duties as Special Services Director for the Saigon-based press and military officials to act as the trio’s liaison man during its forthcoming three-day tour of the surrounding combat areas. As Jo later told us, *“Jack was so concerned about our running into a V.C. ambush after we left Saigon that he wound up worrying enough for all of us. He managed to get us rooms at the Embassy Hotel in Saigon after our original reservations at the Caravelle somehow went astray; he kept press conferences down to a minimum to we could spend most of our time with the men at the front, arranged a first-night sight-seeing trip to some of the Saigon night clubs in case our own morale needed bolstering and, in general, watched over us like a mother hen. By the end of the first evening in Vietnam, we were all so pleased we’d come that, when one reporter reminded me I could end up getting shot during the next three days, I told him that the only shot I was still worried about was the one for cholera I was scheduled to get the next morning.”*

The following day (Tuesday, January 11), Jo and her colleagues got a chance to test their calmness under fire. Arriving at Tan Son Nhut at 0830 hours, dressed in combat fatigues, they were issued bulletproof vests before boarding the “Playboy Special” with their MP escorts for an initial front-line foray. *“I realize it was a question of safety before beauty,” says Jo, “but I couldn’t help feeling a little insecure. After seeing some of Saigon’s Vietnamese beauties Lieutenant Price referred to in his letter and catching a glimpse of myself in combat gear, I was afraid the guys wouldn’t be nearly as homesick for an American girl once they had a basis for comparison.”* Flying low over enemy-infiltrated territory and encircled by three fully manned gunships flying escort, the “Playboy Special” made its first stop at

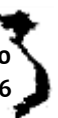
the 173rd Airborne Brigade Headquarters in Bien Hoa. Here, any fears our pretty Playmate might have harbored about her uniform appeal were summarily dispatched by the parade of smiling paratroopers waiting on the airstrip to greet her.

Most of the men of Company B were on jungle patrols during Jo’s first visit to Bien Hoa, but the one man most responsible for her being in Vietnam—Lieutenant John Price—was present and accounted for at his unit’s surgical ward. In spite of a severely wounded arm that will require several additional operations before it can be restored to full use, Lieutenant Price managed to muster up enough energy to give his favorite Playmate a healthy hug or two when she showed up to deliver his company’s Lifetime Subscription certificate and the latest issue of PLAYBOY. The lieutenant’s initial reaction to seeing the Company B sweetheart standing there in the flesh was *“Gosh, you’re even prettier than your pictures.”* Flattered, Jo sealed her *Playboy* delivery with a well-timed kiss, and consequently convinced the company medics that Price was well along the road to recovery by evoking his immediate request for a repeat engagement. In fact, his condition seemed to improve that the doctors waived hospital regulations for the day to allow him to accompany Jo to lunch at Camp Zinn, the Company B base camp on the outskirts of Bien Hoa.

After lunch, Jo put her best bedside manner to use as she paid a brief call on each of the men in Lieutenant Price’s ward. *“A few of the fellows asked me to help them finish a letter home, others wanted a light for their cigarette; but most of them just wanted to talk awhile with a girl from their own native land. A couple of times I was sure I would break down and bawl like a baby, but I managed to control myself until they brought in a badly wounded buddy who asked if he could see me before going into surgery. When I got to his side, he was bleeding heavily from both legs and I didn’t know what to do or say to comfort him. Then he looked up at me with his best tough-guy grin and simply said, ‘Hi, gorgeous.’ After that, I lost all control and the old tears really flowed.”*

Before leaving Bien Hoa, Jo made additional bedside tours at the 93rd Medical Evacuation Hospital and the 3rd Surgical Hospital, where the doctors on duty decided to add some Playmate therapy to their own daily diet by piling into the nearest empty beds during her final rounds.

(continued....)



Not until their day's tour had ended and their chopper was warming up for the flight back to Saigon did Jo and her companions suddenly realize how close to actual combat they'd been for the past several hours. *"We were all ready to go and standing outside the Brigade Officers' Club when I first heard the sound of shots coming from fairly close by,"* explains Jo. *"Then a few mortar shells went off, but it still didn't sink in how near the action we really were. I guess we'd all been too busy meeting wounded soldiers and talking to the men on the base to notice anything before. Then, right before our chopper lifted off, a series of flares went off and lit up everything for miles. I kept thinking how great it would have been if all those boys had been back home watching a Fourth of July celebration instead of out there in the jungle fighting for their very lives."*

Jo's last day in Vietnam wound up being the busiest of all. With a gallant assist from Brigadier General Ellis W. Williamson – American Airborne Commander in Vietnam – she got a second chance to complete her mission as planned when the front-line troops from Company B were called back to Bien Hoa for a 24-hour lifetime subscribers' leave and a long-awaited look at the Playmate of their choice. One by one, the combat-weary paratroopers filed off their choppers and hurried over for a hard-earned hello from Jo – a few even produced crumpled-up copies of her December 1964 Playmate photo they'd been carrying in their helmet liners in hope of someday having them autographed. *"When I saw all those happy faces running toward me from every direction, I knew we'd finally gotten our job done,"* she said.

One more trip to the front was on the agenda before Jo would be ready to head back to Saigon and a Hawaii-bound jet. Landing in War Zone D, Jo was escorted to combat headquarters, where a grateful general was waiting to hand her a farewell memento of her short stay in Vietnam – a plaque upon which had been inscribed the words:

"Know ye all men that, in recognition of the fact that Playmate Jo Collins traveled to the Republic of Vietnam to deliver a Lifetime Subscription to PLAYBOY magazine to Sky Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and demonstrated exceptional courage by volunteering to travel into hostile areas to visit its men and in doing so exhibited the all-the-way spirit typical of true airborne troopers....I, Brigadier General Ellis W. Williamson, do appoint her an honorary Sky Soldier, done this 13th day of January, 1966."

The day after her Saigon departure, Jo received further praise from high places for the job she had done. Between visits in Honolulu to Tripler Army Hospital and Pearl Harbor, she was called on the phone

by Ambassador Averill Harriman, who wished to express his and Secretary of State Dean Rusk's congratulations on all the good reports they'd heard concerning her morale-lifting mission. Needless to say, Jo was highly honored by the tributes of so dignified a brace of statesmen, but as she put it, *"The finest compliments I could ever receive have already been sent in the letters of over 200 fellows I was lucky enough to meet somewhere near Saigon."*

It remained for the men of Company B to pay their Playmate postmistress the highest honor, however, by renaming their outfit "Playboy Company" and thus assuring Jo that her presence south of the 17th Parallel would not be soon forgotten. When asked how she felt about becoming the official mascot for this troop of front-line sky soldiers, a jubilant Jo replied, *"I've never been prouder."* As the company new namesake, PLAYBOY seconds that statement.

Archival Playboy Materials. Copyright © 1966 by Playboy. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

A few pics of Jo taken by our guys:



And no story about G.I. Jo would be complete without this iconic photo of our own Larry Paladino, B/2/503, 'welcoming' Jo to Camp Zinn. Ed



VA Announces Several Caregiver Partnerships

Announcement Made During Caregiver Summit

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced several new and expanded partnerships to support the VA Caregiver Support Program. The VA Caregiver Support Program supports the-often unsung heroes of wounded or ill Veterans – the ones who take care of them. Announcement of the partnerships, made during a summit co-hosted by VA and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. The daylong event, *Empowering Hidden Heroes: Pathways to InnoVation*, attracted 400 leaders from government, the non-profit sector, private industry, academic and stakeholders from the Veteran and caregiver community.

“VA knows that without family caregivers, many Veterans would not be able to remain in their communities,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald, a speaker during the event. *“Caregivers are a force multiplier. They support Veterans in ways that VA cannot they are essential to the health and well-being of Veterans. We can never thank them enough for what they do, and we will continue to find innovative avenues of support and foster strategic partnerships that provide them with the resources they need to keep doing what they do so well.”*

The following partnerships were announced:

Amazon: Together with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Amazon has curated a bookshelf of titles recommended by experts and caregivers. Titles reflect the most current and useful information to support military and Veteran caregivers and their families. Amazon also provided free Kindles to military and Veteran caregivers in attendance. Titles are available for preview here. Caregivers and consumers can download Kindle software to enjoy these books on any mobile device.

Coursera: In 2014, Coursera, an online education platform, teamed up with VA to provide one free education certification to every Veteran and transitioning service member. In 2015, that offer was extended to spouses, and this year, they are expanding the eligibility further to caregivers.

PsychArmor Institute: A longstanding collaborator with VA, PsychArmor Institute works with nationally recognized subject matter experts to create and deliver online courses tailored to issues related to military and Veteran communities. In conjunction with today's event, PsychArmor released a suite of new free training resources for caregivers of Veterans.

www.PsychArmor.org

VetTix: VA has partnered with Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix), a nonprofit organization that provides free tickets to events for current serving military, Veterans and Gold Star families. Vet Tix has provided more than 2.3 million tickets for current serving military, Veterans and Gold Star families to attend nearly 40,000 events valued at over \$87 million since 2008. They currently serve approximately 450,000 Vet Tixers and their families. Through these events, VA and VetTix are exploring ways to encourage service members, families, and friends stay engaged with local communities and reduce stress by attending fun events that everyone can enjoy for a very low delivery fee.

National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH): VA's Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Assistance program has formed a partnership with The Hotline to provide cross-training resources to Veterans. The Hotline provides 24/7/365 support and referrals for people impacted by domestic violence/intimate partner violence. Through this partnership NDVH will also provide the VA with Veteran-specific usage data from the hotline that will be used to inform VA programs and policies.

VA's Caregiver Support Program began in 2007 and expanded in 2010 to offer a variety of local and national programs including, Building Better Caregivers™; Peer Support Mentoring; Caregiver Self-Care Courses; a national Caregiver Support Line; targeted programs for dementia, stroke and spinal.

For more information about VA Caregiver support programs, visit: <http://www.caregiver.va.gov>

California to Require State and Local Governments to Purchase Flags Manufactured in the United States



(Garden Grove, CA) Senator **Janet Nguyen** is proud to announce that Governor **Jerry Brown** signed Senate Bill 1012 (SB 1012) into law requiring State and all local governments to purchase United States and California flags from American manufacturers in the United States. SB 1012 enjoyed widespread support from Veterans organizations throughout California and was co-authored by Senators **Anderson, Bates, Berryhill, Fuller, and Nielsen** as well as Assembly members **Brough and Mathis**.

[Above releases sent in by CCVVA Chapter 982]



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~ From '66/'67 Photo Collection of Col. Robert (Bob) Guy, HHC/A/2/503 ~



Bob Guy, A/2/503 at Camp Zinn, Sept. '66.



1st Platoon Members, A/2/503, August '66.



2d Battalion memorial ceremony for our fallen in front of Milton Olive Memorial Church at Camp Zinn in November '66.

(continued....)



Bob Guy photos concluded.....



Alpha Company troopers on the move, September '66.



No DEROS Alpha troopers doin' the Sky Soldier Shuffle, Sept. '66.



A/2/503 trooper pops smoke in September '66.



Capt. Willoughby, HHC/2/503, March 1966.



A/2/503 looking for 'Charlie' in the "D" Zone, Sept. '66



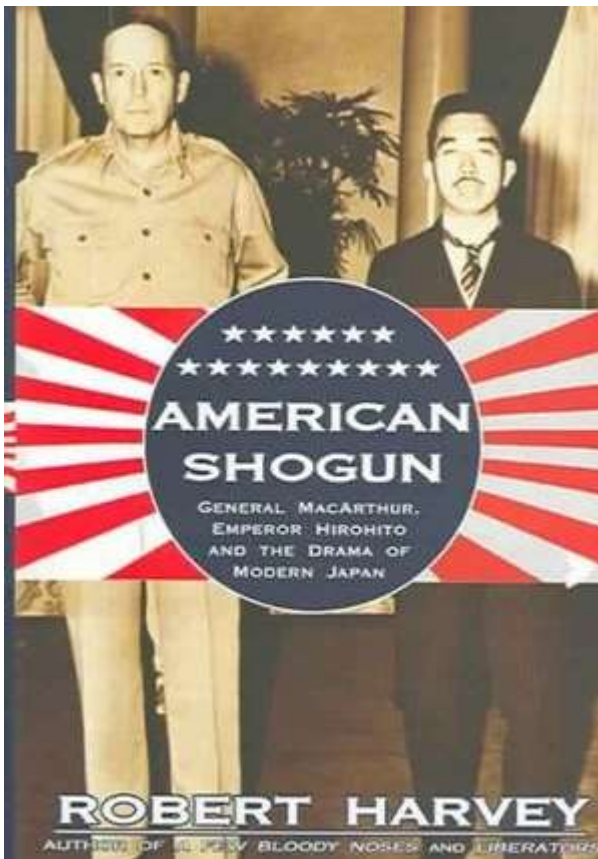
"JAPANESE WHO AWAIT US ON CORREGIDOR "

William T. Calhoun
Paul Whitman

What were the Japanese doing on Corregidor as we prepared for our jump?

Little would Lt. Don Abbott ("E" Co.) and Lt. John Lindgren ("D" Co.) expect, but years after they jumped upon Corregidor sans reservation, they would find themselves seeking an entirely different contact with their former enemies.

The history of our post-war Corregidor contact with the Japanese defenders began when the surviving twenty Japanese surrendered to our forces on 1 January 1946 after Pfc. Kanehiro Ishikawa picked up an American newspaper with a picture of General MacArthur and the Japanese emperor on the front page. Fortunately Ishikawa spoke and read English.



Unknown if this web photo is the same referred to.



Shin-Yo-Tai troops' suicide boats. (web photo)

One Japanese who was not a member of the surrender group, but was stationed in Formosa has been writing a history of the Shin-Yo-Tai troops (suicide boats). He sent Don a paper he had written on Corregidor. He wrote that in "early October of the year of Shawa (1944), an anti-aircraft troop was organized, then late that month the crew of the warship which sank offshore of Leyte joined them to restore American Batteries for the defense of the Corregidor Island. In November, construction units were sent over, and seven Shin-Yo-Tai troops, from the 7th to the 13th, were dispatched also to defend the island." He states the Shin-Yo-Tai men were moved to Corregidor between the period of November and the next January.

He states (*I am selecting statements from his long and circuitous letter*) that: "On December 20th, with the reorganization of the Marines in the Manila region, Captain Itagaki was assigned as the director of the Manila Bay area defense troops, with Commander Oymada as director of Marine Special Attack Troops. Hence, the Corregidor attack force consisting of the 7 troops, or 300 Shin-Yo-Tai boats and 6 torpedo boats was born.

"On the 23rd of December, the message 'the enemy fleet is moving up north from Mindoro area with possibility of attacking Corregidor was sent from Itagaki, and Shin-Yo-Tai was ordered to sortie.'"

An on-board explosion in one of the boats caused 50 boats to explode and "100 men were lost. On January 7th a similar explosion killed many more men.

By the end of January, (the) total number of men stationed on the Corregidor was about 4,500."

(continued....)



"(The) American fleet started shooting from ships on December 10, then added large formation airplane attacks from January 23." "On January 30, American troops landed on Spik (Subic) Bay area. On February 10, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, submarines entered in the Manila Bay, then started attacks of the Corregidor."

A member of the 'New-Year's Day Twenty' who surrendered was Sadashichi Yamagishi. In a letter to Don Abbott, Yamagishi recalled that he entered the Marine Corps on 1 August 1944 and was assigned to a construction party consisting of 650 men. His party, the "333rd Construction Party" was aboard the Tatsuura Maru* as part of a convoy of 10,000 men headed for the Philippines which left Kure on 5 October. Tatsuura Maru was damaged by torpedoes but limped into Manila. The unit was then assigned duties on Corregidor. Along with Army units they set out to build seven gun batteries armed with guns of 14 cm. calibre (about 5.5 inches). These guns were taken "from a Japanese warship which had been sunk in Manila Bay." The 332 Construction Party joined them about the middle of November, and they were combined as the "Yoshida Party" indicating they were under the command of a Colonel Yoshida". The number one, two, and three batteries were built in the area from Rock Point in an easterly direction towards James Ravine. The other four batteries were built from Wheeler Point in a westerly direction.

He recalled that the first air attack occurred the morning of 16 January, when two planes strafed them. "It was a kind of notice that they finally began the battle against us. They started the full-scale attack from the following day."

"A reconnaissance plane came at around 7:00 A.M. and, then five to ten formations of bombers strafed in zigzags. We had almost no place to hide. They came to attack every hour. We could hardly do our work because of these attacks."

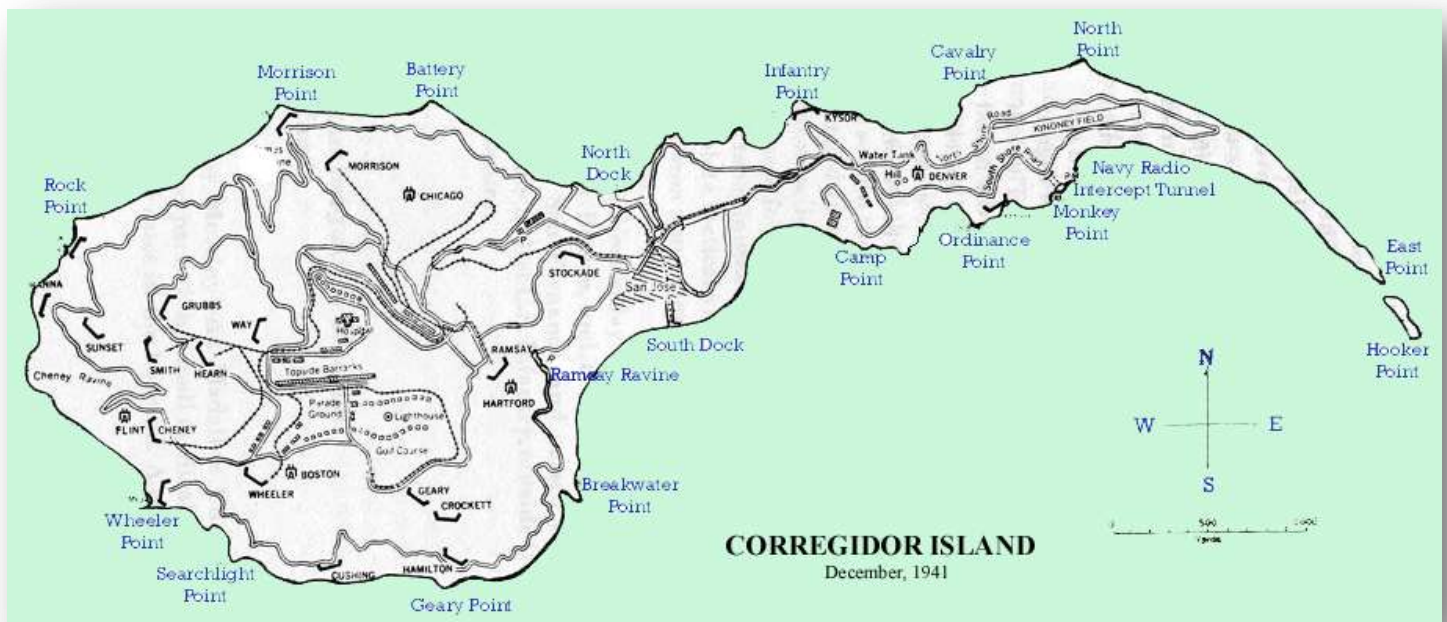
"The attack became more intense day by day. They dropped bombs from bombers from the following day. Especially the attack from the bomber's attack was terrible."

"Bombs exploded about 10 meters above the ground because they had the mechanical device called instant fuse. They broke up trees, grasses and buildings. We had to avoid enemy's attack, hiding in the caves because we could not go outside in the daylight."

"(The) U.S. military continued their attacks from 7:00 in the morning till 5:00 in the evening every day like a scheduled flight."

"Most of the island became like a field, because the trees and grasses disappeared and the surface of the ground was exposed and was turned over."

"A huge explosion occurred during the night of 28 January which caused a landslide that buried 100 men alive."



Web image of Corregidor Island

They successfully test fired the guns on 10 January. "We thought at this time that we would defeat the U.S. military with our underground batteries. We did not suspect that the U.S. military would attack using parachutes."

(continued....)



Then he makes this strange statement: "Someone set this accident on purpose. We had died before we fought the enemy." "I heard many petty officers were regretfully talking with each other that they wished they had not applied to come to the Philippines. Like them, we had thought that the Philippines was the safe place to go. But, since the Japanese military lost in the Leyte Battle, the war situation got worse. We could no longer expect the Japanese military would win. The dream has been killed. **We had to be prepared for death.**"

"Our party consisted of three squads and had 400 soldiers in total. We were living separately in two caves. We got accustomed to air raids when they lasted for almost one month. We went out between bombings and took outside fresh air."

"On February 14, we felt something was wrong. The U.S. warships were offshore and reconnaissance airplanes were flying. Are they preparing for firing from warships? When will they start the attack? We felt weird. We were in great fear. The day ended with nothing happening. The night is the time when we should be active. There was no sign that the warships started moving."

"It was the time when special attack boats, which have been reserved in the caves, took action."

"About 60 special attack boats from the Army and Navy rushed about 30 U.S. warships standing offshore.

It was around 10:00 PM. The huge noise caused by engines of 60 boats made the enemy's warships think that it was an air attack. They started firing toward the sky but immediately they noticed the attack was from the sea. They attacked fiercely against our boats. Instantly we saw big pillars of fire shoot up. It was like seeing fireworks on the water. The pillars of fire shot up in several places. We thought we (had made) outstanding gains. Great shouts of joy were raised by our fellow soldiers."

"The garrison for Corregidor Island consists of: (?) party in the Navy, Kaneda air defense party, special torpedoes in which soldiers ride and operate in special attack parties in the Army, Kurata machine gun party and some crew (survivors) of the battleship Yamato** in addition to the Construction party."

"Total number of soldiers was 5,500."

"(The next-morning they) saw the U.S. battleships were laying offshore in the morning on February despite our attack yesterday. We fired No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 batteries which we constructed. We fired from underground, but the enemy found our position due to the powder smoke made by firing. The U.S. battleships delivered a volley of fire against us. We had a fierce exchange of fire. Our batteries were destroyed

instantly. We could not get any gains like we did yesterday."



One of the Japanese batteries on Corregidor. (Web photo)

"There was no contending against such heavy odds. Most soldiers who were in the battery were killed or seriously injured. They were put in the caves. Some of them had their skin torn by artillery bombardments. They asked for help but we could do nothing for them. They died suffering from pain. It was as if a child were fighting a man."

"The U.S. military, which was superior in numbers and arms, sent some reconnaissance airplanes over the island. When they found something was wrong, they instantly fired from the warships. "

"We could not move except at night".

The next account, and last, is from Pfc K. Ishikawa. He was born in 1915 and drafted by the army on 15 July 1944. He had missed the draft up until this date because he was not qualified. On 18 July, after just a month in training, he was shipped out for Burma. Due to heavy damage the convoy was diverted to Manila, arriving 8 August. He landed on Corregidor 8 November.

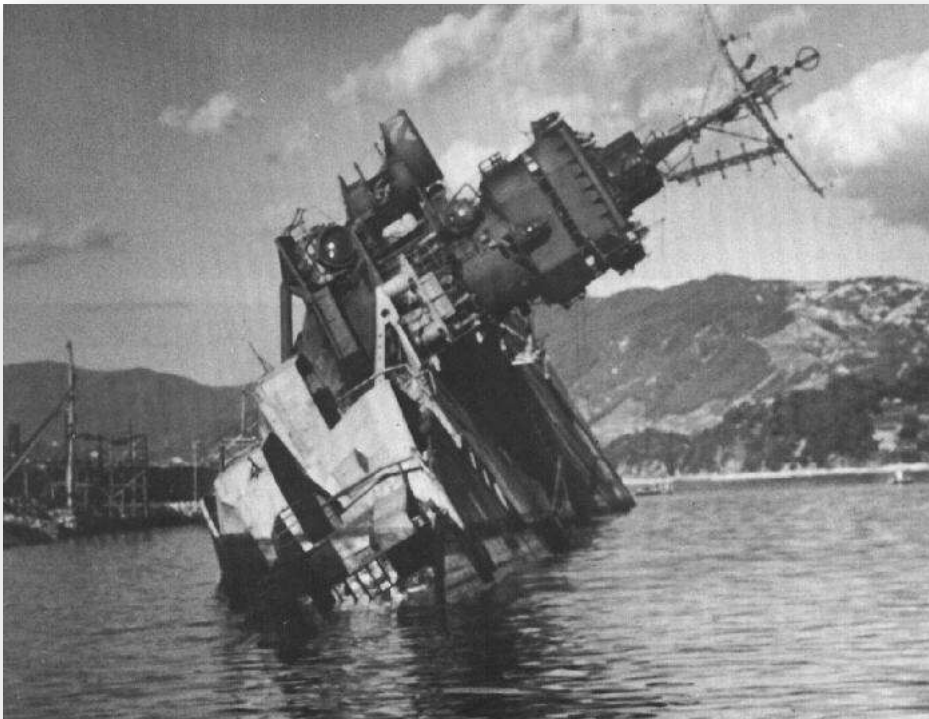
"Heavy air bombing and bombardment from warships started Jan. 1945."

About the intelligence estimates of the numbers of troops on Corregidor, he wrote that "your computed strength of 850 on Corregidor Is. may have been correct up to around Sept. 1. I think reinforcement of strength was made afterward. There were no Filipino working, as I have not seen any of them!"

(continued....)



"There were poorly armed Navy Soldier-group (one rifle for 4-5 men) landed in Dec. 44 and Jan. 45, survivors of warship Musashi which sunk at Leyte war."***



Remains of Musashi Maru in Leyte Gulf WWII. (Web photo)

Ishikawa finishes:

"It is said to be total strength was 6850 when U.S. Army attacked."

"We did not expect Parachute Troop attack on the small island topside but prepared for landing from North & South Dock and other areas of seaport." The Intelligence estimate of the number of Japanese troops which were to be expected on Corregidor, "approx. 850", created an attitude of confidence within the Regimental HQ that, in turn, led to an overconfidence in the deployment of patrols by the rifle companies, and the extent and placement of their night perimeters. This would cost lives.

Footnotes

* At 0600 on 19 October 1944, convoy MOMA-05 departed Moji for Imari Bay consisting of TAIHAKU, KOMEI, TENSHO, TAISHO, TATSUURA, TAIYO, ESAHI, DORYU, PACIFIC, AOKI and SUGIYAMA MARUs and an unidentified ship. The convoy is carrying about 10,000 reinforcements for the Philippines. On 26 October, the convoy is attacked by Lt. Cdr. (later Rear Admiral) Maurice Rindskopf's USS DRUM (SS-228) at 19-30N, 120-44E. Rindskopf fires three torpedoes by radar bearings at TAISHO MARU and gets two hits that sink her. She takes down about 1600 men, most of whom belonged to the 57th Independent Brigade and 10th Maritime Advance Battalion. At 0655, Rindskopf torpedoes and damages TAIHAKU MARU at 19-07N, 120-42E. The forepart sinks, although the aft part

remains afloat. She is successfully beached in Lapoc Bay and later abandoned. DRUM also attacks TATSUURA and TAIYO MARUs with uncertain results. At about 0710, Lt. Cdr. Richard W. Peterson's USS ICEFISH (SS-367) torpedoes TAIYO

MARU. A cargo of gasoline she is carrying for "kaiten" human-torpedoes ignites and sends flames hundreds of feet into the air. At 0730, TAIYO MARU sinks. On 31 October, 1944 at 0950, KOMEI MARU is torpedoed and sunk by Lt. Cdr. Enrique D. Haskin's USS GUITARRO (SS-363) at 15-18N, 119-50E. At 1010, PACIFIC MARU is also torpedoed and sunk by GUITARRO at 15-15N, 119-56E.

Source:

(http://www.combinedfleet.com/CH-28_t.htm accessed 20 June 2009)

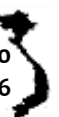
** He evidently is confusing the battleship Yamato, (65,027 tonnes) sunk en route to Okinawa on 7 April 1945, with the battleship Musashi (68,200 tonnes), sunk on 24 October 1944 during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Both were super-battleships, and their *as designed* anti-aircraft complement was staggering – nearly 200 anti-aircraft guns could be brought to bear against any airborne attack.

*** The Musashi, the largest battleship ever built, sank without ever firing her 18.1-inch guns at enemy ships. Over 1000 officers and men were lost. Of the 112 officers 39 were lost and 984 men were lost of the crew of 2287; therefore, some 1,376 officers and men were saved by destroyers. There is no indication of how many of these survivors were carried to Corregidor.

(Reprinted courtesy of the 503rd Heritage Battalion website. Photos added)



"That's me (Lt. William Calhoun) on Noemfoor in 1944. Nuff said."

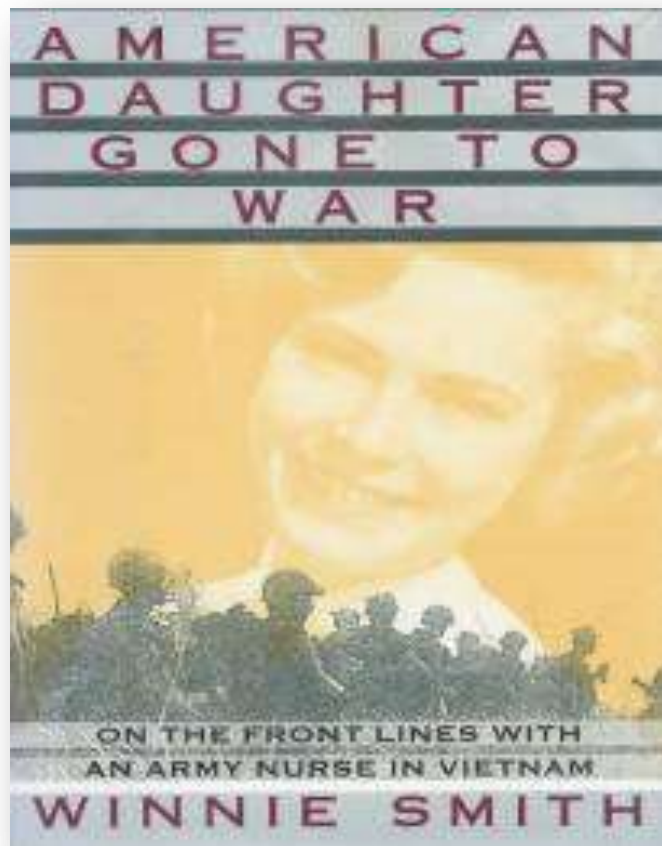


A Special Thanks to a Special Nurse A Few Years Later

It was 50 years ago during the month of November in 1966, when I found myself a patient on the second floor ward at 3rd Field Army Hospital on the outskirts of Saigon among those under the care of nurse Winnie Smith (no relation of course). At this hospital I met, and like many G.I.'s, formed a crush over nurse Smith, a young, 20'ish 2d LT new to the war who cared for us and played her guitar and sang to all the recovering soldiers on her ward. I later learned she would personally treat hundreds of wounded, sick and dying soldiers during her year in Vietnam.

Years later Ms. Smith lobbied for the women's memorial in Washington, DC. During President Reagan's filmed speech at the dedication of the soldier's monument near *The Wall*, hers was one of the voices in the background calling out, "What about the women?! What about the women?!"

In 1991, Winnie would author the book, "American Daughter Gone to War -- On the Front Lines with an Army Nurse in Vietnam," an abundantly candid account of a young combat nurse's nightmarish duties during war.



(Still available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and highly recommended reading, particularly to the war-makers. Newsletter Ed)



Front of 3rd Field Army Hospital today, now an arms museum.

Speaking to her war experience in her book, Ms. Smith captured, perhaps, the very essence of what it is like to be a Vietnam Vet when she wrote:

"For us the subject is not history; it's a condition of our lives. In a country where youth is adored, we lost ours before we were out of our twenties. We met our human frailties, the dark side of ourselves, face-to-face, and learned that brutality, mutilation and hatred are all forgivable. At the same time we learned guilt for all those things. The war destroyed our faith, betrayed our trust, and dropped us outside the mainstream of society. We still don't fully belong. I wonder if we ever will."

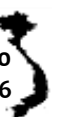
"Winnie Smith grew up in North Carolina and New Jersey. She attended nursing school in New York City and worked as a nurse for many years after returning from the war. Today she lives with her son in California."

(Photo by General Graphics)



Maybe it's not so surprising, after 50 years, this former 19 year-old paratrooper still fondly remembers his nurse, Winnie Smith. But, we can be sure there are virtually thousands-upon-thousands of Vietnam Vets who hold dearly in their hearts the memories of a special nurse who helped them through difficult times. For me, it will always be nurse Smith. Thank you Winnie.

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



VA and Stanford to Pursue the Nation's First Hadron Center



Goal for the center will be to treat Veteran and non-Veteran patients using Hadron therapy

October 17, 2016, va.gov

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Stanford Medicine announced today that they are collaborating to establish the nation's first Hadron Center in Palo Alto, CA, for the benefit of Veteran and non-Veteran cancer patients who could benefit from Hadron therapy.

VA maintains a strong academic and research affiliation with Stanford Medicine. This long-standing partnership has enabled the VA Palo Alto Health Care System (VAPAHCS) to offer an exceptional breadth of medical services to Veterans. Now, VA and Stanford University are looking to expand and enhance this affiliation through new collaborative efforts around the Hadron Center and particle beam therapy for Veteran and non-Veteran patients with cancer.

During his 2016 State of the Union Address, President Obama called on Vice President Biden to lead a new, national Cancer Moonshot, focused on making a decade's worth of progress in preventing, diagnosing, and treating cancer in five years – ultimately striving to end cancer as we know it. After meeting with experts across the country and the world, Vice President Biden identified areas of focus for the Cancer Moonshot – based on barriers to progress and opportunities for improving patient outcomes – and announced a first wave of accomplishments at the Cancer Moonshot Summit on June 29, 2016 at Howard University in Washington, DC.

Today, Vice President Biden is releasing the final report of the Cancer Moonshot Task Force, along with his own Executive Findings, after traveling to many of the major nerve centers in the cancer community. He will also unveil a new set of Federal actions, private sector actions, and collaborative partnerships to further advance the goals of the Cancer Moonshot Task Force, including the Hadron Center.

"We are excited to further expand our current partnership with Stanford Medicine, and explore ways to continue leading Veterans health care into the 21st century. The state-of-the-art Hadron Center would not only improve the lives of those affected by cancer, but further demonstrate VA's ability to partner toward

pioneering innovation and exceptional health care," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald.

In addition to the Hadron Center, other efforts are underway to support the Cancer Moonshot Task Force: the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) made a contribution of \$50 million dollars to VA for precision oncology research over the next 5 years; the IBM Watson Million Veteran Initiative will provide 10,000 diagnostic and cancer treatment analyses over the next 2 years; and VA and PCF will host a national oncology summit, "Launch Pad: Pathways to InnoVAtion," on November 29.

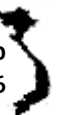
"These efforts underscore VA's dedication and ability to work with private sector leaders and innovative academic institutions, like Stanford University, toward improving Veteran access to leading edge technology," said VA Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Strategic Partnerships, Matthew S. Collier.

The Hadron Center is anticipated to be a clinical facility, designed to deliver particle radiation beam therapy for the treatment of cancer patients. Presently, the most common radiation beams used for cancer treatment are photons and electrons, which are easy to target to a tumor but can result in damage to normal tissue. Particle beam radiotherapy, on the other hand, uses beams of charged particles such as proton, helium, carbon or other ions to allow more precise targeting anywhere inside the patient's body, resulting in less damage to normal tissue. Particle beam therapy can be more effective at killing radiation-resistant tumors that are difficult to treat using conventional radiation therapy. Judicious and innovative application of particle therapy can result in improved cure rates for cancer.

"Through our Precision Health vision, Stanford Medicine is committed to providing more personalized health care that is tailored to each individual," said Lloyd Minor, MD, dean of the Stanford University School of Medicine. *"Planning for the Hadron Center embodies this commitment, as we seek to identify optimal ways to offer targeted treatment that both reduces harm and promotes healing."*

This project would be the first of its kind in the nation and serves as an excellent example of public-private collaboration to further research and clinical care, using cutting-edge cancer therapy.

The Hadron Center would significantly complement VAPAHCS's mission to provide the most advanced care for Veterans, by offering those with cancer access to Hadron therapy treatments and participation in clinical trials.



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind 2017 ~



All The Way!



Snowbird Reunion, 101st Airborne,

February 8-12, 2017, Marriott Westshore, Tampa, FL.

Contact:

George Buck

Web: www.101abnfgcc.org

Phone: 727-823-6970



3rd Brigade LRRP, 101st Airborne Division

Reunion, March 15-18, 2017, Fort Benning, GA.

Contact:

Dr. Rick Shoup

Phn: 978-505-3253 or 978-371-7108

Eml: rfs.concord@gmail.com



1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Association 2017

Reunion, May 2-5, 2017, Hampton Inn and Suites, Phenix City, AL.

Contact:

Web: www.ichiban1.org/html/reunion.htm



Firebase Airborne Reunion, May 12-14, 2017,

Nashville, TN.

Contact:

http://beardedarmenian.wix.com/fsbairborne



173d Airborne Association 2017 Reunion, hosted by Chapter 18, May 17-20, 2017, Oklahoma City, OK.

Contact:

Web: Skysoldier.net



4/503rd, 173d Airborne Brigade will have a

Reunion Dinner on Friday May 19, 2017, Renaissance Hotel during the 173d Airborne Reunion in Oklahoma City.

Contact:

Peyton Ligon

Eml: pligon3392@aol.com

Phn: 205-746-5586



Delta Co., 2nd Bn, 8th Cavalry (Airborne), 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), 2017 D.C. Reunion,

May 17-21, 2017 Crowne Plaza Dulles Airport.

Contact:

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.

Web: www.angryskipperassociation.org



118th Military Police Company (Airborne)

Association, June 2-4, 2017, Fort Bragg, NC.

Contact:

Web: www.118thmpcoabnassn.com/home.html



Casper Aviation Platoon Reunion, June 19-22,

Nashville, TN.

Contact

Web: www.casperplatoon.com/Reunion2017.htm



173d Airborne Reunion in Vicenza, Italy, July 10-

14, 2017, hosted by Capter 173.

Contact:

Web: Skysoldier.net



2017 National Convention, The 100th Anniversary of the formation of the 82nd All American Division,

Orlando Chapter, August 9-13, 2017, Rosen Center, Orlando, FL.

Contact:

Web: www.paratrooperdz.com/2017-convention-registration/2017reg



2/501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Abn

Reunion is being planned to celebrate our departure to South Vietnam 50 years ago. December 13, 2017. Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, NC.



11th Airborne Division Association Reunion, to be held in Boulder, CO. Dates to be named.



B/2/501st Reunion 2017, Great Falls, MT. Dates to be determined.

Contact:

Web: <http://b2501airborne.com/reunion.htm>



509th Parachute Infantry Association Reunion 2017, Shreveport, LA.

Contact Web:

http://509thgeronimo.org/reunions/freunions.html

NOTE:

If you are aware of any upcoming "Airborne" or attached unit reunions, please send complete details to rto173d@cfl.rr.com for inclusion in our newsletter.



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Sculpture left by widow at Vietnam Wall shows the tragic effects of war



Private Samuel Elliott. (Sam Elliott)

By Michael E. Ruane, September 20

The sculpture was packed in bubble wrap inside a taped-up box and was wheeled on a dolly to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial one day last month by three people who looked to be in their 60s. They asked Al Gallant, a volunteer guide, if it was okay to leave a memento. Sure, he said. They pushed the cart down the path to the Wall, took the sculpture from the box, and walked away. One of them paused to snap a picture as they departed.

What they had left was an unusual piece — “macabre,” Gallant called it. And, like many of the 400,000 items left at the Wall since 1982, it had a story. The object was the painted bust of an American soldier, one side of the face depicting a smooth-skinned young serviceman, the other an aged, long-haired veteran with pocked features and a tearful, staring eye.

On one side, the top of the head was protected by an Army helmet. On the other, the helmet and skull were cut away to reveal the gray folds of the brain, etched with the names of battles and slogans from the war.

The bust was left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.



(Bonnie Jo Mount/Washington Post)

The dog tag on the sculpture bore the name, blood type and religion of Army Pvt. Leo C. Buckley Jr., a Vietnam veteran who died of cancer in 2009 at the age of 60 in Walterboro, S.C. But the face was that of Samuel J. Elliott, 73, a church deacon who lives in Hendersonville, N.C. He is the artist who created the sculpture.

Both men served in the war. Both saw combat. Both suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. Neither knew the other during the war.

It was Buckley's widow who, with two friends, left the sculpture at the Wall, which bears the names of more than 58,000 men and women claimed by the war. She snapped the photo as she walked away.

“Clay” Buckley had been a paratrooper with the elite 173rd Airborne Brigade during the war, and was severely injured when he stepped on a land mine, which tore off a chunk of one of his legs. He spent 13 months recuperating in hospitals.

(continued....)



It was created by Samuel Elliott and depicts Private Leo Claiborne "Clay" Buckley, Jr.



(Bonnie Jo Mount/Washington Post)

Elliott served with an Army "survey" team, which helicoptered into the bush and selected sites where artillery could be placed. He was hit by shrapnel, and lost a revered commander who had served as a father figure.

Following the war, Elliott's life fell apart and he was in and out of a veterans hospital in Georgia for counseling, he said. It was after a final stay in the mid-1990s that he started work on the sculpture as part of his healing. He had realized the Vietnam veteran's dilemma: *"We're back, but the memories of the war are embedded in our brain so deeply that we can't seem to escape that part of us,"* he said in a recent telephone interview.

An artist and a writer, he said he did the first version of the sculpture in bronze as personal therapy in 1995. But he produced eleven more versions in high-density plaster of Paris for fellow veterans. *"I would hand engrave their name and serial number and all that on the dog tag, to personalize it for them,"* he said.

He explained the two sides to the sculpture: *"First, you're proud to be an American soldier,"* he said. *"By God, I'm in uniform and I'm here and I'm ready to do what I've got to do."* Afterward, *"you feel scarred,"* he said. *"You feel wounded. You're aged. You've matured way too fast, came back an old man in spirit."*

Elliott, a native of Hendersonville, said he was drafted in 1966, and was in a field artillery unit in the 1st Air Cavalry Division. He was in Vietnam from March 15, 1967, to March 15, 1968, and had a job that was often dangerous. *"We had to go out in small groups out*

in the middle of nowhere all by ourselves," he said. *"Got shot at I don't know how many times. . . . They used us as scouts. . . . It was to position our artillery."*

Helicopters would then airlift artillery pieces to sites selected by the surveyors, he said. His most wrenching experience of the war was the death of a commander, Lt. Col. Robert E. Whitbeck, to whom he had grown close. He said he often served as Whitbeck's jeep driver, and he has an old photo of them shaking hands.

"It really affected me," Elliott said. *"I really loved the guy. He became almost like a father figure. . . . [He had] all the attributes of a great leader. . . . I'd have stuck my neck out any time for him."*

Whitbeck was killed Jan. 30, 1968.

Elliott said his recollection is that the jeep Whitbeck was riding in that day was hit by a mortar during an attack.

After Elliott left Vietnam he stayed in the Army for 15 years, but was medically discharged with migraine headaches. *"That's when my life began to fall apart,"* he said. *"I was lost."*

Buckley was originally from Vienna, Va., his wife, Susan, said in a telephone interview this month. She said he joined the Army in 1968, when he was 19, and was "blown up" in 1969, after being in Vietnam about three months. His combat injuries were severe. *"His leg was badly damaged,"* she said. *"They wanted to take it off, but he wouldn't let them. . . . He didn't wear anything but long pants for the longest period of time. . . . Half his leg was missing in the calf."*

He had also been peppered with shrapnel. *"He used to sit at the kitchen table and dig . . . pieces of shrapnel with a knife out of his arm,"* she said. He was given the Purple Heart and Bronze Star medals, but seldom spoke of the war.

Discharged from the Army in 1970, Buckley, who worked as a truck driver, was reluctant to seek help for his PTSD, his wife said. *"Finally I convinced him, 'You do have problems,'"* she said. *"He never believed that he did. About 2004 or so he finally went . . . and got treatments and medicines."*

(continued....)





It was about that time that Buckley and Elliott crossed paths. Elliott said he was passing through the Washington area en route to an art show, and was introduced to Buckley by a mutual acquaintance. Buckley, a student of the Civil War, took Elliott on a tour of the Manassas Battlefield, near where the Buckleys were then living.

The two men soon shared their Vietnam war experiences. *"I think that's why they got along so well as soon as they met,"* Susan Buckley said.

Elliott told Buckley about his Vietnam sculptures, and Buckley requested one. Susan Buckley said her husband thought it was a perfect rendering of the Vietnam veterans' experience.

Elliott personalized the sculpture, adding the 173rd Airborne Brigade's blue-and-white winged patch. Susan Buckley said the bust was prominently displayed in the living room of their home in Manassas, and later the sun porch of their home in South Carolina.

Some visitors found it "overwhelming," she said. *"But I guess if you've been there, and understand why it looks like that, it's not so hard."*

Recently, in the process of moving, she decided to bring the sculpture to the Wall. *"I was the only one who saw it,"* she said. *"I thought other people should see it. . . . I thought maybe it might help somebody else. . . . It's very self-explanatory if you've been in Vietnam."*

She typed up a summary of her husband's service and taped it to the bottom of the sculpture. *"I need to honor my husband somehow, and I thought this is the way to do it,"* she said.

With the help of friends, she transported the bust from South Carolina.

After she placed the piece at the Wall on Aug. 24, Gallant, the volunteer, left it there for several hours. Later, the National Park Service took custody of it and moved it to the Park Service's Museum Resource Center, in suburban Maryland.

There it joined the thousands of other objects left in tribute to those on the Wall, and to the veterans of the war who carried its legacy.

[Sent in by John "Dutch" Holland, B/1/503]

***"When in doubt....
do right."***

Joseph P. Kennedy

Vietnam Veterans of America and Campaign Endorsements

(Washington, D.C.)—Vietnam Veterans of America National President John Rowan noted today that VVA cannot make any endorsements of political candidates for any elected office. *"VVA's Constitution and our not-for-profit tax status strictly prohibit the national organization, as well as local VVA chapters and state councils, from making any such endorsements. Occasionally, confusion arises when individual VVA members -- who are often very politically active -- are identified as representatives of our organization. To preclude any misunderstandings, as required by our membership, we must get the word out to clarify the record,"* Rowan said.

"The federal tax code is very clear in this regard and any implication of improper activities could cause us to lose our tax exemption and not-for-profit status. As long as no VVA endorsement of a political candidate is given or implied, individual VVA members are encouraged to participate in the political process. As private citizens, we have every right to do so," said Rowan.

Vietnam Veterans of America, founded in 1978, was formed in large part to fight for and affect laws and policies to ensure that Vietnam veterans receive the help they have earned and need. With chapters and state councils nationwide, VVA is the only Congressionally chartered national Vietnam veterans organization exclusively comprised of Vietnam-era veterans. VVA's commitment to all veterans is exemplified in its founding principle, *"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another,"* and continues to maintain advocacy in the veterans affairs arena as its top priority.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

[Sent in by CCVVA Chapter 982]



GRUNTS

It was a job. Most of the work was boring menial labor. GIs were ditchdiggers, pack animals and file clerks, slogging through a swamp of their own cold sweat. What little enthusiasm they brought to the task quickly oozed away, with nothing to replace it but the instinct to survive. The only diversion was the possibility of getting killed. "I'd pray for a fire fight, just so we could stop walking for a little while."

Adrenaline junkies, zombied out on fear, working the assembly line on the nod, they shuffled about the business of the war factory. Anxiety, even death, gets to be routine. They made a life of trying to endure.

"War is not killing. Killing is the easiest part of the whole thing. Sweating twenty-four hours a day, seeing guys drop all around you of heatstroke, not having food, not having water, sleeping only three hours a night for weeks at a time, that's what war is. Survival."

Home was very far away, even further in mind than in miles. The longer they labored for the American Dream, the more they resented the management. Broken ideals, unattended, began to knit together in a hard cynicism.

"I remember July 20, 1969. I sat in my hooch and watched satellite relay after-the-fact footage of the astronauts landing on the moon and Neil Armstrong's first step on the surface. When I heard that fucking-bullshit nonsense phrase, 'One small step for man, a giant leap for mankind,' I was so angry. I thought to myself, 'Come here and step with me for a day, mother-fucker.'" (Pages 79-80)

NAM

***The Vietnam War in the Words
of the Soldiers Who Fought There***
By Mark Baker

See All Issues to Date of Our 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter

In addition to the 173d Airborne Society website and the 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion site, you can now view all issues to date of our newsletter at the University of Florida's Military Digital Library at:

[http://ufdc.ufl.edu/dmnl/results/?t=2/503d vietnam
newsletter&f=ZZ](http://ufdc.ufl.edu/dmnl/results/?t=2/503d%20vietnam%20newsletter&f=ZZ)

Also, on the university's site you can access a wealth of other military-related publications at:

<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/dmnl>

Ed



Sky Soldiers & 503rd Troopers Who Have Left Us

Gene Chambers

June 24, 2016

Peter Gene Drosi, (WWII)

August 17, 2016

Carlos Fonseca

July 10, 2016

Glenn Hampton

July 6, 2016

Erich Harth, (WWII)

June 27, 2016

J.D. Heitman

June 16, 2016

Robert C. "Bob" Mack

June 12, 2016

Thomas "Tom" MacNeil

August 19, 2016

Michael A. Malone

June 27, 2016

Burl Willis Martin, (WWII)

June 26, 2016

Roger L. Olson

October 6, 2016

Rigoberto (Rigo) Ordaz

June 14, 2016

Laurence A. "Larry" Potts

October 1, 2016

Perry Eugene Ramsey

July 24, 2016

E. Dean Shaw

August 26, 2016

Paul R. Scheuerman, (WWII)

September 7, 2016

John Henry Seyle, III

July 15, 2016

Jim Taylor

CO 1/503

Ralph A. Verschoor

July 31, 2016

Johnathon E. Walden

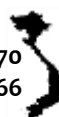
May 15, 2016

Ron West

1RAR



Rest with the Warriors



Tuesday, 4 October 2016

US dog tag mystery solved

By **Julia Bergman** Day staff writer

An Australian woman has solved a mystery involving a US soldier's World War 2 metal dog tag found in a reservoir 18 years ago near the NSW-Victorian border.

Eighteen years ago, Tamara Heinjus was wading in shallow water in Hume Dam, a reservoir in New South Wales...



Tamara Heinjus stands in Hume Dam, a reservoir in New South Wales, Australia, where 18 years ago she found a World War II dog tag belonging to deceased Army veteran Angelo Calla. Heinjus is in the process of returning the dog tag to Calla's family. (Photo courtesy of Tamara Heinjus)

Tamara Heinjus was wading in Hume Dam, near Albury, when she felt something dig into her foot. After brushing off the mud she saw it was the military ID belonging to Angelo Calla, of Pennsylvania, who served in the US Army's 503rd Parachute Infantry during World War 2.

She packed the dog tag away with other sentimental items and forgot about it, but last month re-discovered it while cleaning out boxes.



"The thought crossed my mind that maybe, just maybe, with the internet so accessible now, I might be able to find the Calla family and finally return a piece of history," she told Connecticut's *The Day* newspaper. It took just 90 minutes online to find an obituary for Calla's brother, John, which confirmed the death.

"I instinctively knew the person on the tag wasn't alive. I can't explain it, I just knew," Heinjus, recalling the feeling she felt when she first found it, said. The obituary also listed other relatives and Heinjus, via social media, successfully reached out to Calla's family members in Connecticut.

"What are the chances that after 70-plus years, a piece of my family's history would be found?" Calla's niece, Christine Firman, said.

Calla died in 1969 aged 46, but some mystery remains about how the dog tag found its way into the dam.

While the Albury-Wodonga region housed thousands of troops during World War 2 and the 503rd served in five major combat operations during its three-plus years in the South Pacific including Papua New Guinea, Heinjus found no indication Calla or the 503rd was ever there.

She is arranging to send the dog tag to Calla's family.

[Reprinted with permission of The Day Publishing Co.]



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173d Airborne Photos From The Web

(Identified as having been taken in 1965)



***“Have you heard of the Herd?
The one-seventy-third.
Airborne Brigade!”***

Lyrics & music by Richard Ware, A/2/503



A few of Alpha's best, L-R:
Jack Ribera, Mike Sturges, Richard Ware



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / Nov.-Dec. 2016 – Issue 70

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Last Month's Whodat?

This photo of one of our 2/503 Sky Soldiers, Vietnam vintage, appeared in Issue 69 of our newsletter.



He is of our very own 2/503 Bravo Bull, Lyle Webster.

Good buddy, Lyle, on right, a few years later, still lookin' strac.

All The Way, Brother!!



VA Announces \$3.4 Million in Funding to Help the Homeless

Funds will enhance services for special needs homeless Veterans.

WASHINGTON – Today, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced the award of \$3.4 million in grant funding offered through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program to 16 community agencies that provide enhanced services for homeless Veterans with special needs.

More information about VA's homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless

You Can Count On It...

A group of Nobel Prize winners sent out a public letter of endorsement of one of the candidates for president with a note saying that 70 of them signed on. The letter had 69 signatures. *Oops.*

Nobel chemistry prize winner Martin Chalfie of Columbia University said he had left off the 70th Nobel laureate, neuroscientist Paul Greengard of Rockefeller University, because he was a late addition. When a reporter pointed out the counting mistake, Chalfie sent out a correction with a math joke:

"There are three types of people in the world: those that can count and those that can't. I am clearly in the latter category."



A JOINT MESSAGE FROM

DAV and the DAV Auxiliary

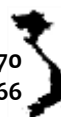
Injured and ill veterans their dependents and survivors in receipt of VA compensation benefits will receive a 0.3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase beginning January 1, 2017.

On July 22, 2016, H.R. 5588, the Veterans' Compensation COLA Act of 2016, was signed into law by the President and became Public Law 114-197. The bill did not contain the contested round-down provision, which would have resulted in compensation rates being rounded down to the nearest whole dollar. Instead, VA compensation beneficiaries will receive their full COLA.

On October 19, 2016, the Social Security Administration announced that Social Security beneficiaries would receive a 0.3% COLA increase. Because veterans COLAs are tied to Social Security adjustments, veterans compensation rates will increase by 0.3% effective December 2016 and will be realized in compensation payments beginning January 1, 2017.

At our August 2016 National Convention, DAV members adopted Resolution No. 013, which calls on Congress to support legislation to provide more realistic COLAs. DAV appreciates the COLA increase for 2017, but we will continue to press Congress for COLA increases that better reflect and keep pace with increased living expenses and are in line with the hardships and unique circumstances of our nation's injured and ill veterans, their dependents and survivors.

[Sent in by Gary Newman, USN] (Photo added)



November 1967..... Đắk Tô



The **Battle of Đắk Tô** was a series of major engagements of the Vietnam War that took place between November 3 to 22, 1967, in Kontum Province, in the Central Highlands of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).

The action at Đắk Tô was one of a series of People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) offensive initiatives that began during the second half of the year. North Vietnamese attacks at Lộc Ninh (in Bình Long Province), Song Be (in Phước Long Province), and at Con Thien and Khe Sanh, (in Quảng Trị Province), were other actions which, combined with Đắk Tô, became known as "the border battles." The objective of the PAVN forces was to distract American and South Vietnamese forces away from cities towards the borders in preparation for the Tet Offensive.

During the summer of 1967, heavy contact with PAVN forces in the area prompted the launching of *Operation Greeley*, a combined search and destroy effort by elements of the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division and 173rd Airborne Brigade, along with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's 42nd Infantry Regiment and Airborne units. The fighting was intense and lasted into the fall, when the North Vietnamese seemingly withdrew.

"During an assault on Hill 875, fifteen miles southwest of Đắk Tô members of the 173d Airborne Brigade guard the perimeter before the final push forward on 22 November 1967." (National Archives)

By late October, however, U.S. intelligence indicated that local communist units had been reinforced and combined into the 1st PAVN Division, which was tasked with the capture of Đắk Tô and the destruction of a brigade-size U.S. unit. Information provided by a PAVN defector provided the allies a good indication of the locations of North Vietnamese forces. This intelligence prompted the launching of *Operation MacArthur*, and brought the units back to the area along with more reinforcements from the ARVN Airborne Division.

**Wounded Sky Soldier at
Đắk Tô**



(continued....)





“On a dusty knoll near Đắc Tô, survivors of Hill 875 stood in salute. Before them, arranged in the Army tradition, were 98 pairs of boots – one pair for each man of the Second Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade, who died on that hill and nearby ridges. In all, the month-long battle of Dak To had taken the lives of 280 Americans – and 1,641 North Vietnamese. As the battalion commander read aloud names of the dead, a sergeant who had lost four buddies collapsed and sat weeping in the red dust.” (web photo)

The battles that erupted on the hill masses south and southeast of Đắc Tô became some of the hardest-fought and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War.

[See November 2012, Issue 47 of our newsletter for a detailed report on “Operation MacArthur, The Battles at Dak To”.]

TRẬN ĐÁNH ĐỐI 875, ĐẮC TÔ

...Chiến tranh đã làm cho người sống và người chết có cùng một màu xanh xao xám xịt trên đồi 875. Cách duy nhất để nói ai còn sống và ai đã chết trong số những con người kiệt sức là quan sát khi những viên đạn cối của đối phương rơi xuống. Những người sống chạy vội một cách không hối thúc vào những căn hầm bê tông được đào sâu vào đất đỏ trên đỉnh đồi; những kẻ bị thương bò vào những chỗ ẩn nấp dưới gốc cây đã bị gãy ngã rạp trên mặt đất. Chỉ có người chết là không di chuyển, nằm ngay trên những căn hầm nơi mà họ đã chết ngay khi viên đạn cối đầu tiên rơi trúng, hoặc úp mặt vào đất nơi họ bị bắn gục.

(Trích từ điện báo của Peter Arnett gửi AP, tháng 11/1967)

THE BATTLE OF HILL 875, ĐẮC TÔ

...War painted the living and the dead the same gray pallor on Hill 875. The only way to tell who was alive and who was dead amongst the exhausted men was to watch when the enemy mortars came crashing in. The living rushed unashamedly to the tiny bunkers dug into red clay of the hill-top; the wounded squirmed toward the shelter of trees that had been blasted to the ground. Only the dead didn't move, propped up in the bunkers where they had died in direct mortar hits, or facedown in the dust where they had fallen to bullets.

(From an Associated Press newswire report by Peter Arnett, November 1967)



(Web photo)



75 Years Ago.....

The attack on Pearl Harbor, also known as the Battle of Pearl Harbor, the Hawaii Operation or Operation Al by the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, and Operation Z during planning, was a surprise military strike by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Territory, on the morning of December 7, 1941. The attack led to the United States' entry into World War II.

Japan intended the attack as a preventive action to keep the U.S. Pacific Fleet from interfering with military actions the Empire of Japan planned in Southeast Asia against overseas territories of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States. Over the next seven hours there were coordinated Japanese attacks on the U.S.-held Philippines, Guam and Wake Island and on the British Empire in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

The attack commenced at 7:48 a.m. Hawaiian Time. The base was attacked by 353 Imperial Japanese fighter planes, bombers, and torpedo planes in two waves, launched from six aircraft carriers. All eight U.S. Navy battleships were damaged, with four sunk. All but the USS Arizona (BB-39) were later raised, and six were returned to service and went on to fight in the war. The Japanese also sank or damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti-aircraft training ship, and one minelayer. 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed; 2,403 Americans were killed and 1,178 others were wounded. Important base installations such as the power station, shipyard, maintenance, and fuel and torpedo storage facilities, as well as the submarine piers and headquarters building (also home of the intelligence section) were not attacked.

Japanese losses were light: 29 aircraft and five midget submarines lost, and 64 servicemen killed. One Japanese sailor, Kazuo Sakamaki, was captured.

The attack came as a profound shock to the American people and led directly to the American entry into World War II in both the Pacific and European theaters. The following day, December 8, the United States declared war on Japan.

Domestic support for non-interventionism, which had been fading since the Fall of France in 1940, disappeared. Clandestine support of the United Kingdom (e.g., the Neutrality Patrol) was replaced by active alliance. Subsequent operations by the U.S. prompted Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy to declare war on the U.S. on December 11, which was reciprocated by the U.S. the same day.

From the 1950s, several writers alleged that parties high in the U.S. and British governments knew of the attack in advance and may have let it happen (or even encouraged it) with the aim of bringing the U.S. into war. However, this advance-knowledge conspiracy theory is rejected by mainstream historians.

There were numerous historical precedents for unannounced military action by Japan. However, the lack of any formal warning, particularly while negotiations were still apparently ongoing, led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to proclaim December 7, 1941, **"a date which will live in infamy"**.

Because the attack happened without a declaration of war and without explicit warning, the attack on Pearl Harbor was judged by the Tokyo Trials to be a war crime.



(web photo)

