



July-August 2018, Issue 81
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http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



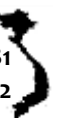
"Vung Tau, South Vietnam: A paratrooper of the 173rd Airborne helps a weeping Vietnamese woman carry her children near Vung Tau. The family was being evacuated because of the threat of a possible Viet Cong attack on a nearby U.S artillery position." (Web photo from 1966. See story on Page 75)



Lady Liberty Weeps



“MY LADY AMERICA: It is the laughter of a child; The tears of a new born; The courage of a runner; The strength of a soldier; The leadership of a father; The compassion of a mother.” (Image, and excerpt of poem from web, author unknown)





We Dedicate this Issue of Our Newsletter in Memory and Honor of the Young Men of the 173d Airborne Brigade & Attached Units We Lost 50 Years Ago In the Months of July & August 1968, as Lady Liberty Weeps for our Fallen



Why Do Soldiers Fight?

"In war, soldiers fight to stay alive. They fight to keep their friends, their fellow soldiers, alive. When they sacrifice their life, it is to save the life of a friend. And when they are heroes, it is because heroics were what was necessary to save their friends." Author unknown

Daniel Owen Abernathy, 21 **1LT, A/1/50th, 8/24/68**

"To my Brother. You were my closest friend. I live knowing all that you missed, never forgetting your sacrifice. I know what a great loss we all suffered when you fell and I suspect the loss is as profound regarding the majority of our fallen war heroes. It is the burden of the survivors to know the tragic cost of war."

David P. Abernathy



Final Mission of 1LT Daniel O. Abernathy

"1LT Daniel O. Abernathy was killed in action when the bridge his platoon was guarding was attacked by a North Vietnamese Army unit estimated to be a reinforced platoon. His command position was compromised by a direct hit from a B-40 rocket in the initial volley of enemy fire and he was killed instantly, along with PFC Albert R. Gutierrez Jr. and SGT Thomas F. Herkins. Also involved in the fighting were elements of the 50th Infantry's Scout Platoon. A portion of the bridge was overrun and the fighting included hand to hand combat at times. The Scouts were able to withdrawal carrying six men who were wounded. Reinforcements arrived and the bridge was retaken."
[Taken from ichiban1.org]

Charles Robert Bales, 20 **SP4, 173d Eng., 8/22/68**

"Teaching Vietnam: Sitting here after teaching the Vietnam War to high school students and showing the movie, 'Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam', I couldn't help but remember Charles Robert Bales. We grew up in the same church and I remember how devastating it was to his parents (friends of my parents), our church, and our small town. My prayers are with his family, as I know they still miss him."

Jackie Garrett Swafford



Douglas Graham Borlace, 24 **CFN, A Sqd 3 Cav, 7/15/68**

"Adelaide SA. Borlace was killed in Phuoc Tuy, 15th July 1968, when an APC he was travelling on ran over a mine during a recon mission. Buried Stirling Cem, SA."



John Alexander Campbell, 21 **PTE, 3RAR, 8/3/68**

"Leeton NSW. Campbell was killed in action in Bien Hoa Province on 3rd August 1968. Buried Rookwood Military Cemetery, NSW."



James Blain Carlson, 20 **SSG, E/4/503, 8/22/68** (Virtual Wall states A/4/503)

"My remembrance of you, Jim, is of you being the brother to Linda and Vickie and the son of your sweet mother. Your sisters and mother were always so quiet, polite and very pretty; while you were very tall, a big tease and quite good looking. You were in the Class of '66 with my brother Paul; and I was in the Class of '68 with your sister, Linda."

Life seemed so good to all of us during our years in school. To look back now, I realize how naive we were. We took advantage of so much. I know many of us wish we could take some of those days back...life goes on, though."

So I write this note to you today, Jim, to let you know you are remembered. Today is, also, your birthday, so I celebrate your day with this remembrance. You would have been 53. You and brother, Paul, were born 17 days apart. Ironical that we lost both of you in Vietnam."

They say there is a reason for everything. Sometimes, I am not sure if I understand or if I should understand. But I do know that I have never been able to forget the ultimate sacrifice you gave for my friends, my family and me. I can only return your favor with my 'Thank You'. You will be forever remembered and loved. Your friend and classmate," **Karen Sheer**



Ronald Thomas Carroll, 31 **SGT, 3RAR, 8/4/68**

"Moree NSW. Carroll was killed in action in Bien Hoa Province 4th August 1968. He is buried at Terendak, Malaysia."
(Note: A different KIA website states first name is Robert)



(Tributes continued....)



Anthony Austin Casadio, 22**Petty Officer, RAN, 8/21/68**

"Port Lincoln SA. Casadio and Petty Officer Phillips were killed when their EMU light fire team were flying at tree top level to avoid VC snipers. The helicopter was hit by an RPG and crashed into the trees and exploded on 21st August 1968 near Blackhorse. Buried Mt. Gambier Carinya Gardens, SA."

**Jerry Lee Graves, 21****CPL, A/2/503, 7/28/68**

(Virtual Wall states C/1/50th)

"Never Forgotten. Jerry Is My Brother. I Think Of Him Every Day. He Will Always Be Loved And Missed, By All His Family." **Edward Graves**

**Robert Maxwell Grist, 19****PTE, 1RAR, 8/2/68**

"Taralgon VIC. Grist died at 1 Field Hospital of wounds received when an APC ran over a mine in Bien Hoa Province on 2nd August 1968. Buried Taralgon Cemetery, VIC."

**Albert R. Gutierrez, Jr., 21****PFC, A/1/50th, 8/24/68**

"We thank you for your great sacrifice Albert...you gave All you had. He died a Soldier's Death...weapon in hand...out to kill or be killed. We still remember you Al. We still talk about you. God Bless You. K [See tribute to Daniel Abernathy on Page 3 for details about Albert's final mission.]"

**Edward O'Day Haskett, 19****PVT, D Spt., 8/30/68**

"Sky Soldier Honored: On behalf of myself and all your fellow paratroopers who served with the 173rd 'herd' Brigade in Vietnam, we offer our respect and regrets for your sacrifice. May you rest in peace and never be forgotten." **Mike Switzer**

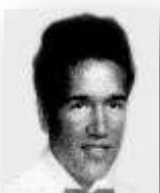
**Joseph Ernest Funston, 19****CPL, B/1/503, 8/24/68**

(Virtual Wall states KIA 8/25/68)

"Even though you were my first cousin, you were like a brother to me. You were my mentor and I idolized you. We created a lot of lasting memories during your short time with us. I'm proud to be an American and proud of your service to and ultimate sacrifice that you gave to our country with your life. You were and always will be my 'HERO'!"

David R. Butzlaff**Ramon Garcia, 21****SSG, A/1/503, 8/23/68**

"We remember. Ramon is buried at San Jose de Armijo Cemetery, Albuquerque, NM." **Robert Sage**

**Waydell Getter, 22****SSG, C/1/503, 8/22/68**

"Thank you Staff Sergeant Getter for your devotion, leadership and courage."

A Grateful Vietnam Vet.**Robert James Gillard, 22****TPR, A Sqd. 3 Cav, 8/2/68**

"Melbourne VIC. He was killed when his APC stuck a mine in Bien Hoa on 2nd August 1968. Buried The Memorial Park Altona Northern, VIC."

**Ground Casualty – Long Binh Jail Riot**

"On the night of August 29, 1968, the U.S. Army Vietnam Installation Stockade (USARVIS) at Long Binh erupted in a prisoner revolt. Blacks represented nearly 90 percent of LBJ's inmate population and racial tensions, combined with allegations of rampant drug use, were the primary causes of the uprising. Accusations of abuse and neglect, combined with overcrowding, frustration and drugs, served as the catalysts, The uprising caught guards and many of the inmates by surprise. When they realized what was happening, many other prisoners joined in the riot. A group of 200 began systematically destroying the camp, while beating white inmates and guards with any impromptu weapon they could get their hands on, including wood planks and bars from dismantled beds."

(Tributes continued....)



....The only fatality was PVT Edward O. Haskett, a white soldier who was beaten to death with a shovel. The uprising had left 63 MPs and 52 inmates injured. Following the incident, 129 courts-martial were levied against the insurrectionists for charges including murder, assault on a superior officer, aggravated assault, mutiny, aggravated arson, larceny and willful destruction of government property."

[Taken from historynet.com] Note: See LBJ story Pg 56.

Thomas Franklin Herkins

SGT, A/1/50th Inf, 8/24/68

"I was Tom's platoon medic for his time with us. He was a replacement after the battle of An Bao and I was a replacement also from 1/50th Delta company. I was pulled out of the field for an assignment in the rear about a week after his death. I recall him well and that he was a very good man. A great loss for us at the time and for everyone that knew him, I am sure. We spent time around LZ Uplift, the 506 valley and the Bong Son Plains area before the battalion was reassigned to An Khe in early August, 1968. Our company drew bridge guard and our platoon got the last 3 bridges, 24, 25 and 26. I was on the middle bridge (25) and Tom was on 26. We were not far from the Mang Yang pass and sometimes could see gunships and artillery fire in support of ambushed convoys. Bridge 26 was not a very good position and after visiting them right after we went out I was happier to be assigned to 25 although it was overrun not long after I was pulled out of the field. The night they were hit we could hear the shooting but could not go to help as that would have left our bridge unguarded. There were only a handful of guys on each bridge. A reaction force from, I think, LZ Schuller came to their aid but it happened so fast every-thing was all over before they could arrive. We lost 3 good men that night and were fortunate it was not more. " (excerpt)

Russ Roth

Leo Neal Kryske, 36

SFC, B/1/503, 8/25/68

(Virtual Wall states C/2/503)

"I didn't know Leo, but he served with my father, Sgt. in the army and a Golden Knight, whom I also didn't know due to his career and passing. My dad's name was Benjamin Moseley. My dad named his youngest son after Leo, who is my younger brother. Leo must have been a very special person, and my father must have been too. I really wish there was someone to talk to about my dad. Just wanted to say thank you to Leo, my dad, all Golden Knights, and anyone who has ever served for God And Country and provided us with our freedom. Thank You Leo. You are forever in my heart." **Douglas Moseley**



My First Death

"I was about 100 yards from Leo when he was shot through the head. The cry came out, 'Doc', 'Doc'.....I got to him about the same time as a 2nd Battalion medic on the top of Hill 504. The other medic held his hand over the exit wound as I prepared and started an IV. The sniper was still firing at us so it was difficult to work on Leo. I knew instantly it was futile. Leo was shot between his left eye and ear, the exit wound out the back was massive. I sit here and I cry as I write this but it needs to be said, finally. Leo was my first death as a Combat Medic with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He did NOT die the next day. He was for all practical purposes, killed instantly. I write this because this has haunted me since that day. I am now 67 years old. I was 18 at that time. Leo was not my last death by any stretch of the imagination but he was my first and that hurts to this very day. It always will. I did not know Leo personally but I hope to someday. I hope he knows that myself and the other Doc did all we could possibly do to save his life but even a brain surgeon could have done nothing for him, even if he were in an operating room. If it matters, we did kill the sniper that killed Leo. I think about Leo every day of my life, it never ends, I am tired and ready to go see those guys I could never save. What a tragedy, all of it. I will attach a photo of the top of Hill 504. My little shelter on the hill shows in front. Leo was killed in about the center of this photo from a sniper off to the right side out of view in this photo. Rest in peace Leo, I am so sorry. Doc." Michael B Bronner*
(*No photo posted. Ed)

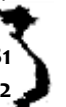
Michael Conrad Larsen, 19

CPL, B/1/503, 7/19/68

"Hi Mike, been a while since I visited you. Used to make it to the Wall twice a year, and to Cedar River at least once every couple of years. Miss you Bud...I think of the good times and the not so good times often. My folks are gone now, but I already told you that a couple of years ago.....cancer is back and I'll be visiting with you soon my friend. Dumb bastards at the Menominee paper had you KIA in Ben Hoa (sic)...tried to tell em, you were in An Khe in Binh Dinh province..... they can't even spell Bien Hoa correctly..... We were a crazy bunch of kids back in the day.....we still talk of our exploits when we all get together. See ya later Alligator....." Wally Anderson



(Tributes continued....)



Newell Ferrell Leigh, Jr., 19**SP4, 173d Eng., 8/22/68**

"When you died my world was torn apart. I will never forget the day the Sergeant pulled into our driveway. It was the saddest day of my life. I was only 13 and it was so hard to understand, how could it be? I beg the Lord to please let you find your way back home. But day after day as years went by I had to face reality, you were not coming home. In fact you were home in Heaven with our Heavenly Father. One day I will see you again and be able to sit down and share so much with you. I love you and I finally understand why you volunteered to serve for our country. But I will never understand the reason you died over stupidity."

Janice White

I have always thought of Pete, especially around Memorial Day. I have always wanted to be able to contact his family and fiancé' through the years but was never able to make contact with them. I hope that this will be read by one of them so that we could get acquainted. Pete always spoke fondly of them when we talked about home. My e-mail address is baileyb@flash.net and my business phone is 817-277-4525. I live in Texas. In the meantime I am going to continue to try to make contact. Pete and I went through a lot together. I'll always remember him."

Hank Bailey**IN MEMORY OF PETER****Died August 22, 1968 in Vietnam**

"He wasn't on the football team. He wasn't a star on the Varsity Basketball Team. He never went out for Hockey. He didn't make Honor Society or join the Dramatic Club. He was just one of the hundreds of good boys who graduated in that Class of 1967 from Stoughton High School. The police don't know him. He didn't race noisy cars through the Square or pick fights on the corner. He didn't get in trouble. The Fire Department doesn't know him. He never set fires or pulled false alarms. His teachers may remember him as a boy who minded his own business and did his assignments but they won't clearly recall him because he did what was expected of him. His friends though, knew him very well. They knew him as 'a great guy,' 'a good kid,' 'a real pal,' 'a sport.' His family knew him as the son they had prayed to have and the boy they had loved and watched grow up and much too soon, saw don an Army uniform. His superiors in the Army knew him as 'a guy who did his job and did it well.' His girl knew him and loved him and had hoped to marry him next year. He was nineteen years old a good soldier as he was a good boy - as he would have been a fine man. He is dead in Vietnam and his town, the people who loved him, his family and his friends, have lost a vital link. EcL." Evelyn C. Large

Thomas Burton Lukes, 20**SGT, A/1/50th, 7/13/68**

"Tommy was an older first cousin - he had recently been promoted to seargent, died taking on a mine, leading a patrol, - as a canuck, just across the border, I remember coming to the states for his funeral. The 3 gun salute, so loud, the men folding the flag and rendering it to my most gentle aunt - it was surreal. I had mixed feelings about the legitimacy of the war... more confused than ever." Tim Mullins

**William McGoldrick, 24****PTE, 1 Aust Rft Unit, 8/5/68**

"Johnstone Scotland. McGoldrick died accidentally when an Australian soldier mistook him for the enemy just before 4am on 5th August 1968 in Phuoc Tuy. Buried Rookwood Military Cemetery, NSW."

**Peter Joseph Mears, Jr., 19****CPL, D/2/503, 8/22/68**

"My name is Hank Bailey. I was Pete's Squad Leader in Viet Nam. I have just discovered the virtual wall over this Memorial Day weekend. Pete was one of my best friends in Viet Nam as well as one of the best Soldiers in my squad. I was wounded by the same booby trap that killed Pete."



It would be hard to write down all of the nice things I could say about him. He and I became friends almost immediately when we met. Pete always had a good attitude no matter what circumstances we faced. I knew that I could always count on Pete and that was one of the best qualities a man could have over there. Pete was not only in my Squad but he carried the Squad radio, so we were together all of the time on patrol."

**David Mitchell, 28****PTE, 1 Aust Rft Unit, 7/23/68**

"Ayrshire Scotland. He accidentally died from gunshot wounds 23rd July 1968 at Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy. Buried London, U.K."

*(Tributes continued....)*

Graeme John Moss, 19**PTE, 1RAR, 8/5/68**

"Muswellbrook NSW. Moss died of wounds in 1 Australian Field Hospital on 5th August 1968. Buried Goonellaba Cemetery Lismore, NSW."

**Jose Alberto Ortiz-Burgos, 19****CPL, E/17th Cav, 7/23/68**

"Our friendship grew from our childhood in Hoboken New Jersey in the 1950's. We met in the city park and played marbles. You became a member of our family. We went to school together. Our family moved to Jersey City and we lost contact with each other for a while. Until one day you showed up and said hello. We were young and innocent during this time, the Viet Nam war was taking our youth. You enlisted in the Army I remember this. I saw you in uniform you were so proud. I saw you a couple of times when you came home on leave. Then I received the news that you (were) killed in action. Farewell my friend, thank you for your service. You gave more than you had to give. I will always remember you and will honor your name. You were my friend and brother." **Louis A. Santiago**

**Francis Trainor Mulvey, 23****CPL, B/1/503, 8/25/68***(Virtual Wall states B/1/50th)*

"We remember. Francis is buried at St Lawrence O'Toole Cemetery in Mt. Hope, WI. BSM PH." **Robert Sage**

**Darnell Patrick Murray, 23****SSG, D/4/503, 8/4/68**

"We remember. Darnell is buried at Edgemont Cemetery, Anniston, AL. PH." **Robert Sage**

**Peter Eris Murray, 21****PTE, 1 Aust Rft Unit, 7/9/68**

"North Sydney, NSW. Murray died of his wounds in 24 US Evacuation Hospital, Long Binh, on 9th July 1968. Buried Northern Suburbs Cemetery, NSW."

**Wilbert Hoyt Neal, Jr., 19****SGT, A/3/503, 8/17/68**

"With absolute respect. Sgt. Neal was my squad leader when I first came to Vietnam in April of 1968. I owe a deep debt of gratitude for the many things I learned from his experience. He prepared me and others for survival in a chaotic, frightening and surreal existence. It was an incredibly sad day when he was lost, deepened by how close to home he was. I wish his family well, and want them to know he is remembered."

Andy Matimore**Patrick Shane O'Connor, 19****PTE, 4RAR, 7/7/68**

"Sydney, NSW. O'Connor was hit whilst manning the checkpoint at the base of the Horseshoe, [Check Point Charlie] on 7th July 1968. Buried Northern Suburbs Crematorium, NSW."

**O'Brien Cedric Ignatius Phillips, 32****Petty Off., RAN, 8/21/68**

"Bassendean, WA. In October 1967 the Petty Officer was sent with 41 RAN officers and ratings to join the US Army's 135th Assault Battalion in Vietnam, where he died after an RPG hit his helicopter and caused it to ditch and explode on 21st August 1968. Buried Karrakatta Cemetery, WA."

**Ronald Edward Pillow, 20****CPL, A/1/50th, 7/13/68**

"My Brother. I remember you well. Mostly the stories you would tell and how they made me laugh. You were so handsome and charming. I was 14 when you died. I also remember that day well. Mostly how sad everybody was especially Mama. She loved you so much. I remember her saying 'My baby is gone'. I miss you. The tragedies in my life have brought me closer to God and I am thankful for that."

Debi Pillow**Anthony Jerome Portis, 19****CPL, C/3/503, 8/15/68**

"We remember. Anthony is buried at Nora Davis Cemetery in Laural, MS. PH." **Robert Sage**

*(Tributes continued...)*

Jimmie Jenkins Richardson, 18

CPL, A/1/503, 8/27/68

"Tough man. I went through jump school with Jimmie, he completed it even with a badly sprained ankle. He hobbled his way through the morning runs even getting help from other trainees. He always was giving me trouble about being a yankee (I was from NY) and giving that sly grin of his. Anyone that was close to him knows what I'm talking about. We had many kia but Jimmie was the only I really knew. It was a sad day."

Dennis Butler

The following was excerpted from an article in **ARMY TIMES** published in late 1968 (posted on the Wall of Faces).

Is There a Doctor in the Tunnel?

"Doctors in Vietnam may not be any more anxious about making house calls than their counterparts in the U.S. - but one Yankee soldier recently made a house call that caught a doctor and a whole hospital as well.

PFC Jimmie Richardson of Florence, South Carolina, a trooper with the 173d Airborne Brigade, had been lowered into a spider hole in search of entrances to a Viet Cong cave complex. A few seconds later he yelled back, 'Quick, pull me out of here - I've got hold of his leg!' When he was pulled out, he brought with him a bare ankle and foot clad in a Ho Chi Minh sandal, all attached to a surprised North Vietnam Army doctor. Beside the doctor, the troopers uncovered the cave entrance to a NVA hospital and captured two nurses. Richardson got a three-day pass and was promoted to SP-4."

Footnote:

The day before he was to take the three-day pass he was killed.

Scott H. Smith

**A Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry
173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep.)**

Peter Lowell Russell, 24

SGT, 173d Eng., 8/22/68

"We remember. Peter is buried at Greenlawn Memorial Park in Port Arthur, TX." **Robert Sage**

Gerald Duane Sack, 19

CPL, A/3/503, 7/30/68

"We remember. Gerald is buried at Glenwood Cemetery in Mankato, MN. PH." **Robert Sage**



James Arthur Stell, 20

CPL, B/1/50th, 7/20/68

"Notification of Kin. I was the Army officer who was assigned to go to Point Marion and tell his next of kin of his death on 20Jul68. The streets were not well marked and I drove around in a military vehicle for some time trying to find the address. Finally, I had to stop and ask. Then I moved as quickly as possible because I knew phone calls would be made. The two elderly people in the house appeared to be Stell's grandparents. They seemed not to know why I was there. I told them as gently as I knew how and almost immediately a younger woman knocked on the door crying, 'Is it true?' I left them dissolved in tears. Seeing things like that in the Pittsburgh area caused me to realize the war was not possible to win for a price we could afford to pay. I'm still tearful thinking of that day." **Harry McMackin**



Gary Lee Strouse, 21

SGT, B/1/50th, 7/10/68

"We remember. Gary is buried at Vestal Hills Memorial Park in Vestal, NY. BSM PH." **Robert Sage**



Richard Berry Taylor, 19

PFC, D/2/503, 7/14/68

"L.Z. English. Just that you are one of my memories Richard and you are thought about often." **T. Thomas**



Robert Virtus Tillotson, 19

PFC, A/2/503, 7/10/68

"I wish we could have met, my dad told me a lot about you...golden gloves winner and all. Rest in peace Uncle Bob." **Thomas B. Tillotson (USMC)**



(Tributes continued...)



Alain Joseph Tremblay, 31**SFC, 173d LRRP, 7/7/68**

"SSgt Rock, a true American hero. I served with Alain in 1967-68. We were members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade's Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol Platoon. This unit was comprised of extremely proficient and heroic paratroopers and Alain was among the best. He was a little older than most of us and had experienced more of life, including studying to become a Trappist Monk prior to entering the service. On missions he was an absolute warrior, yet during any down time he would always look for things to do to help the South Vietnam people. His huge heart, combined with his absolute courage, was truly unique. His loss today is as tragic as it was when it happened. In any war, we always lose our very best. He and the others we lost will always be in my thoughts." **Irvin (Bugs) Moran, 173rd Airborne Brigade LRRP 1967-68**

**Alain with a buddy****Larry George Trevarton, 20****PFC, C/2/503, 7/10/68**

"We remember. Larry is buried at Foothills Garden of Memories in Longmont, CO. PH." **Robert Sage**

**The 173rd Airborne Brigade Remembers**

"We have determined that Larry Trevarton was not a member of the 1st Battalion (M), 50th Infantry during our tour in Vietnam. Initially, he was listed as a casualty within our battalion but subsequent document gathering proved otherwise. His name was inscribed in error on our 50th Infantry Vietnam Memorial in front of Battalion Headquarters, Fort Benning, Georgia. A unanimous vote of our association ruled that his name will remain on our memorial and we will give corrected information here on our web site.

Visit: <http://www.ichiban1.orgpdfMemorialTrevarton.pdf>

The photo was obtained from family friend
Charley McCauley."

Paul Zigmund Trzencinski, 21**PTE, 7RAR, 7/21/68**

"Strabing, West Germany. He was mistaken for an enemy soldier and accidentally shot on 27th January 1968. Buried Rookwood Military Cemetery, NSW."

(Note: A different KIA website states Paul died 1/27/68)

**Larry Jerome Tyler, 20****SGT, D/2/503, 8/8/68**

"My Great Friend. I was their when Larry got hit. The sister or Family please e-mail me johnairborne173rd@yahoo.com God Bless you Larry. An awesome friend, we give our lives for each other anytime in the Jungles of Vietnam." **John Jurado**

**Thomas James Walker, 20****CPL, B/1/503, 8/25/68**

"We remember. Thomas is buried at Hollywood Cemetery, Gastonia, Gaston County, NC. PH." **Robert Sage**

**Freddie Lee Whitley, 19****CPL, 39th Inf Scout Dog Pltn., 8/23/68**

"We remember. Freddie is buried at Jefferson Barracks Nat Cem."

Robert Sage**Robert Charles Witzel, 21****CPL, E/17th Cav, 7/23/68**

"We remember. Robert is buried at Veteran's Cemetery in Viloa, NY. BSM PH." **Robert Sage**





INCOMING!



~ Awards Not Awarded ~

What has been done about the citation for the Gunners of 105th Fld Bty RAA for the Silver City Operation or have you Yanks pulled another swiftie? Never did the Job in the First Place. What would you call that? Down here we think you guys are full of it. Cheers,

Jason Nevill
1RAR/RAA

Reply: Hi Jason. Not sure of the intent behind your note, but, you might consider contacting the Association with any grievance about awards not awarded. Ed

~ Rawhide! ~

Saw this note about the 173rd and thought it might be of interest:

"The Bn CO when we deployed was LTC Boland. 'Rawhide' was LTC Boland's nickname and was our running password when I was there. He got it because he held a Bn formation on Okie before we deployed. At the end instead of saying *"commanders pass your companies in review"* Boland said *"commanders, head em up and move em out"* then they played the theme song "Rawhide" from the tv series of the same name while we passed in review.....1st Bn then became known as "the herd" and soon "the Herd" stuck to the whole 173rd Brigade and is still used today." Airborne!

John Erskine, Col. (Ret)
1/503, SF

~ The Combat Blast ~

Dear Sir,

I'd like to correct the record.

Issue 80 of the *2/503d Newsletter* includes a Jump Manifest for Junction City. It erroneously includes my name (Phillips, Alan B., CPT). I was CO of the 173rd LRRP at the time. Neither I nor any other members of the 173d LRRP participated in the parachute operation; we were airlifted by helicopter later in the day.

As there was another officer named Phillips in the Brigade at the time who I believe was assigned to the MI det; I can only assume that an administration error was made.

Thanks for your work as our historian,
Respectfully,

Alan Phillips
173d LRRP, A/4/503, Asst BDE S3
NOV 66 - NOV 67

[This message & newsletter sent to 173d Historian]

~ Trooper Looking for Buddies ~

Looking for current contact info on **William** or **Robert Ramsay**, 1st Lt C Co 2nd Btn 503rd Infantry in 1971-72 working out of LZ Uplift. West Pt grad and my platoon leader. Any help in locating him is appreciated.

Also my Platoon Sgt: S/Sgt **John Harris** same time period. Likely deceased by now.

Feel free to put these names in our newsletter and my name/contact info as well. Also, how about checking on **Paul Horne**, and two snipers named **Long** and **MacMillan**.

Please check this KIA: **Ferenc Ivan Ramm**...KIA about Dec 1970...in ambush near Phu My village...he was running point...5-10 meters ahead of me. He had 3 tours. Thanks,

Michael E. Armstrong, Sgt (arrived as PFC)
Arrived Cam Rahn Bay SVN direct from 5th SF Trng Grp
Ft Bragg NC 8/1970. Departed 2/72.

Email Mike at: gomike04@hotmail.com

Our Reply: Will do. **Ramm** is on our KIA list as C/1/503, KIA 12/17/70, from Danville, IL, Sgt. 32 years old. Have nothing on the other men listed. Ed

~ Sister Remembers Her Brother ~

Here is Max's Silver Star Citation and picture as promised. Sorry it had taken me so long to send. Hope this can get in the newsletter. I am so grateful for the stories and information sent about Max. Every little thing we gain, helps to heal. Even though he has been gone 52 years, it is all so clear as if it happened yesterday. Thanks again.

Connie (Knudson) Schultz
Sister of Kenneth "Max" Knudson
(See tribute to Max on Page 22)

~ Recirculated Battle of the Slopes ~

Thanks, guy. I was with C/4th/503rd and arrived at Dak To one or two days later from the Ia Drang. Saw all the bodies lined up next to the runway. We were outraged. Fought at Hill 830 later in July, I believe. I just turned 70 with Glenn MacDaniels (C/4th) and Jim Baskins (3rd/319) last week. We all remembered those days. I also later served as a door gunner with C/227th AHB and back as a grunt again with D/1/327th PIR. Greatly appreciate this newsletter.

Antoine (Andy) Roy
C/4/503



NEWS OF THE VET KIND

DOD Identifies Army Casualty

May 1, 2018

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Spc. Gabriel D. Conde, 22, of Loveland, Colorado, was killed in action April 30 as a result of enemy small arms fire in Tagab District, Afghanistan. The incident is under investigation.

Conde was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, U.S. Army Alaska, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

For more information, media may contact Lt. Col. Martyn Crighton at martyn.y.crighton.mil@mail.mil or 907-384-1542 or Mr. John Pennell at john.m.pennell2.civ@mail.mil or 907-384-2072, U.S. Army Alaska Public Affairs.



Statement by Acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie Introduction of H.R. 5674, the VA MISSION Act

May 3, 2018

"I commend Chairman Roe and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for introducing legislation that, as Chairman Roe so aptly states, *'will ensure veterans have timely access to the care they have earned.'*

As I said last week, there is simply no denying how vital community providers are to VA's mission, as the Choice program accounts for an average of more than 30,000 appointments per day.

The House bill is based on a bipartisan agreement that Roe proposed including in last month's omnibus spending package. It would streamline and merge VA's multiple community care efforts into a single program, require a non-partisan review of VA assets, and open up VA's caregiver program to pre-9/11 Veterans.

President Trump underscored today the importance of Congress passing this bill by Memorial Day so that Veterans *'can get the care they deserve.'*" He also pledged to sign it immediately.

Our Veterans deserve no less, and I will work with House and Senate leaders to get this done on President Trump's timetable."

Source:

[www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4048]



VA Health Care Rated Same or Better than Private Hospitals

RAND Study Finds VA Provides High-Quality Health Care

May 4, 2018

WASHINGTON — Veterans receive the same or better care at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities as patients at non-VA hospitals according to a recent RAND Corp. study.

"The RAND study adds to a growing list of research confirming what many Veterans and VA employees believe – VA provides high-quality care," said VA Acting Secretary Robert Wilkie. *"We are constantly striving to improve our care at VA, but this should encourage Veterans and the public that VA care is in many instances as good as or better than the private sector."*

For more information, see the quality data available on VA's Access to Care website at www.accesstocare.va.gov

Source:

[www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4049]



VA Expands Telehealth by Allowing Health Care Providers to Treat Patients Across State Lines May 11, 2018

May 11, 2018 (Excerpt)

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a new federal rule that will allow VA doctors, nurses and other health-care providers to administer care to Veterans using telehealth, or virtual technology, regardless of where in the United States the provider or Veteran is located, including when care will occur across state lines or outside a VA facility.

Previously, it was unclear whether VA providers could furnish care to Veterans in other states through telehealth because of licensing restrictions or state-specific telehealth laws....*"This new rule is critical to VA's 'Anywhere to Anywhere' initiative,"* said VA Acting Secretary Robert Wilkie. *"Now that the rule has been finalized, VA providers and patients can start enjoying the full benefits of VA's telehealth services."*

By enabling Veterans nationwide to receive care at home, the rule will especially benefit Veterans living in rural areas who would otherwise need to travel a considerable distance or across state lines to receive care. To learn more about VA's telehealth "Anywhere to Anywhere" initiative, visit VA's Office of Connected Care at connectedcare.va.gov



(News of the Vet Kind continued....)



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FOR BUFFALO MOUNTAIN JACK PRICE

(25 Feb 1942 - 4 Apr 2018)



Buffalo Mountain, Willis, VA ~ 28 April 2018

REMEMBERING BUFFALO MOUNTAIN JACK

CPT Jack Stalker Price, USA Ret, died 4 April from insurmountable complications following a serious heart problem that occurred 10 March.

Last Saturday, 28 April, forty family and friends joined in a sunrise celebration of remembrance for Jack, hiking to the top of his beloved Buffalo Mountain, frequent pylon for raucous Air National Guard jets and ever Jack's unreserved complimentary welcome to the Willis, VA home that he and wife "Sam" (Shirley) designed and built together.

By mid-day, with the mountain in view, they, and another two hundred gathered at the "Rock Chapel," to pay heartfelt respects for a life lived with intentional purpose, exemplary courage and unqualified kindness. Jack was a truly remarkable guy as beautifully eulogized by son Cameron and daughter Megan, and witnessed by his class, USMA '64, and the seasoned army of all USMA alum, whom Jack brought together through West-Point.org.

With wife Sam at his side, Jack Price touched a thousand lives with surpassing grace and humor, forbearance and encouragement, inspiring a longer stride and higher reach than many had imagined possible.

Jack's Army escapades are legendary, from bringing Playboy to Vietnam and his troops through peril to safety. Forced into medical retirement, Jack refused to let his combat wounds slow him down. Career adventures traversed an astonishing range of successful enterprise taking Jack from creative jewelry crafts on the west coast to beekeeping in the east, where he found fifty acres of Appalachian woods calling for a man with imagination and "can do." There together, Jack and family could do and did, winning hearts, inspiring community and gathering the abundance of his touring pollinators. Jack will always be deeply missed and dearly remembered.

To the honored muster of Bravo Bulls and Battle Company rolls, and the haunting eulogy of Taps, Jack's cup will now be joined, en memoria, never to be forgotten among our distinguished brothers and wide association of friends and family. Godspeed Jack.

Bob Warfield

B/2/503



Jack Price at B/2/503 reunion remembering his fallen buddies during Punch Bowl Ceremony, now himself remembered by his buddies. *All The Way, Jack!*



A Range Vietnam Vet that will be remembered

By Linda Tyssen
March 24, 2018

Larry Bronczyk was a year behind me in the Biwabik School. He was quiet, as I remember, and he had red hair. He lived in Lakeland south of Biwabik with his parents, Stanley and Rosella Bronczyk, and his brother Stanley and his sisters, Rosanna, Jeanette and Marilee. Young men — boys not yet out of their teens — were being sent half a world away to fight the communist North Vietnamese, in a war that would take the lives of more than 58,000 Americans. One of them would be Larry Bronczyk.

It will be 50 years — half a century — this year of 2018 since he was alive. In 1982 his name was engraved on the Vietnam Wall in Washington D.C., placed there with the names of others who gave their lives in a war we didn't win.

Lawrence Joseph Bronczyk was a sergeant in the U.S. Army — D Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Army of the United States. The motto of the 173rd Airborne Brigade was "Good, better, best. A portal to another place and time. Some will learn what it is like to live through Vietnam."

The name Larry Bronczyk lives in memory on the Vietnam Wall in Washington D.C., carved in the black granite, Panel 58E, Line 31. On a website called The Virtual Wall it reads Lawrence J. Bronczyk June 25, 1948, to May 12, 1968 — 19 years old. He would have turned 20 the following month. His address is listed as Gilbert, Minnesota, his grade at the time of his death E4, his ID number 16977433. And his MOS — military occupational specialty — 11B2P: Infantryman (Airborne).

He began his tour of duty in November 1967 and six months later he would die in Binh Dinh Province, South Vietnam. His body would be recovered and he would come home, to be buried in the Lakeside Cemetery outside of Biwabik.

Most every Memorial Day many years ago, I would see his father and mother visiting his grave and placing flowers there. His grave is across the road from where my family members are buried. One year I took a

picture of Larry Bronczyk's boyhood friends, Phillip "Wally" Haenke and Chipper Kovatovich, as they would place flowers on his grave. I remember Chipper telling me he learned of Larry's death when he had come home from his own tour in Vietnam.



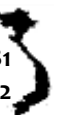
Larry

It all seems so long ago. But when I looked at the website called "The Virtual Wall," I thought it can't possibly have been a half century ago. And I thought it fitting to remember the red-haired boy from Lakeland this last weekend in March — the 29th of March is National Vietnam War Veterans Day, *"to give proper recognition to the men and women who returned home from that war and didn't receive a proper welcome home."* It is an observance that has been held either March 29 or 30 for many years.

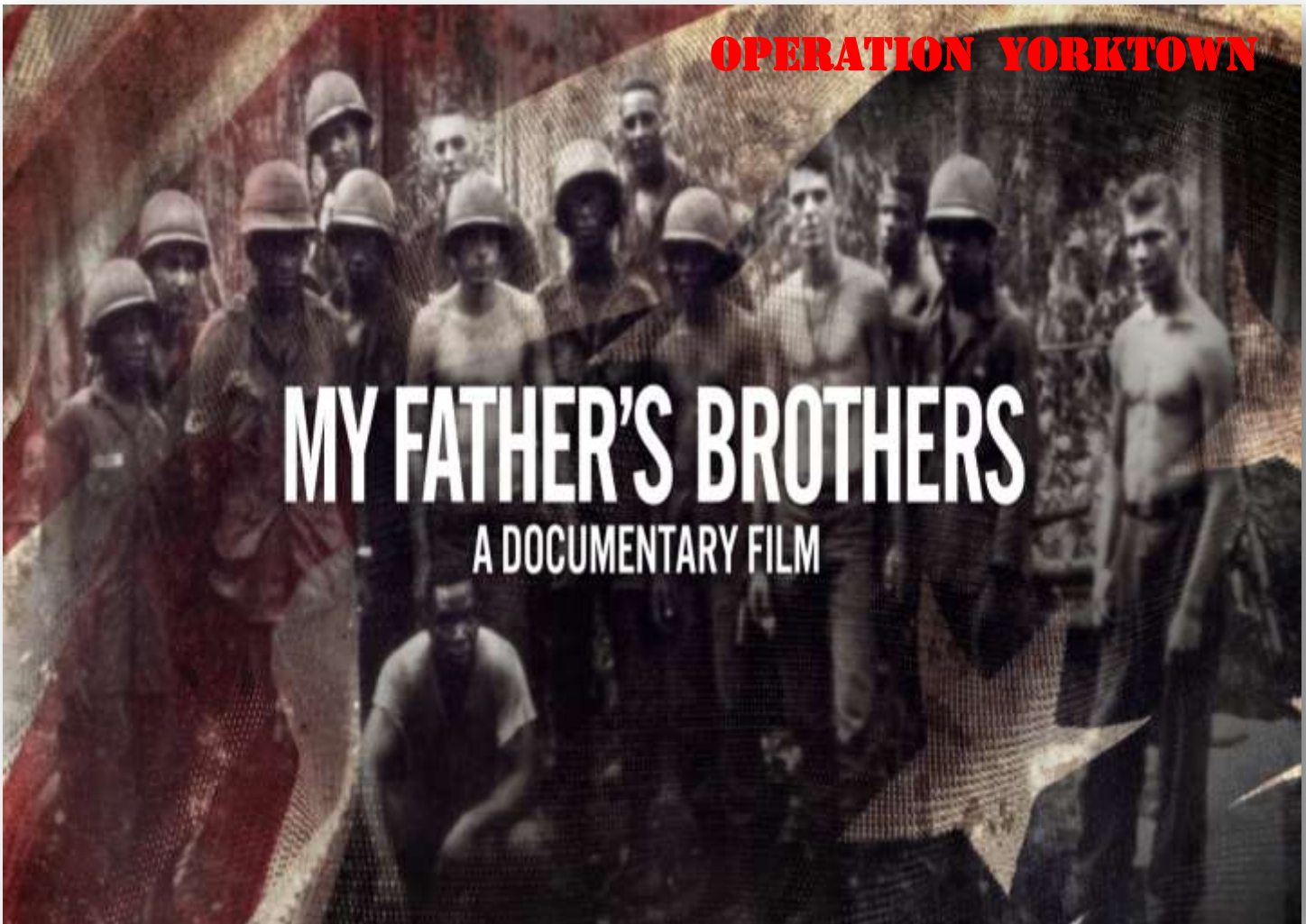
So on this 25th day of March 2018, I remember Larry Bronczyk, who rode the bus with me...who went off to die for his country in the jungles of Vietnam...and who will be forever remembered on the black granite of the Vietnam Wall.

[Reprinted courtesy of Ms. Linda Tyssen
& Mesabi Daily News. Photo of Larry added.]

Note: "A Range Vietnam Vet refers to Larry Bronczyk being from the Mesabi Iron Range, a region of Northeastern Minnesota that has iron ore mines. The residents of the Range are sometimes referred to as *Rangers*, not to be confused with Army Rangers." Linda Tyssen



Documentary Film about the 173d Airborne in Production



What's left of 3rd Platoon, A/2/503 after June 29, 1966 battle.
(Bob "Doc" Beaton photo)

Sky soldiers:

I'm working on a documentary film about my father, LTC Jack Kelley and the men of A Co, 2nd Bn, 503 Inf, and the battle they were in on June 29, 1966 as part of Operation Yorktown; and I'd like to ask for your help.

I'm looking for photos and film footage of soldiers in Vietnam during this time that I could use in the documentary film to help tell the story of this incredible battle. They could be images of base camp, being on patrol, the countryside, etc.

If you have Vietnam photos or film footage during the mid to late '60s that you would consider letting me use to tell this important story of American and 173d Airborne history, I'd love to talk to you about it. Please contact me here:

Shawn Kelley
980-875-0012
shawn@myfathersbrothers.com

Please see the movie trailer here:

https://youtu.be/Pd8-uS328_k

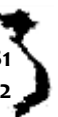
The movie website:

<https://www.myfathersbrothers.com/>

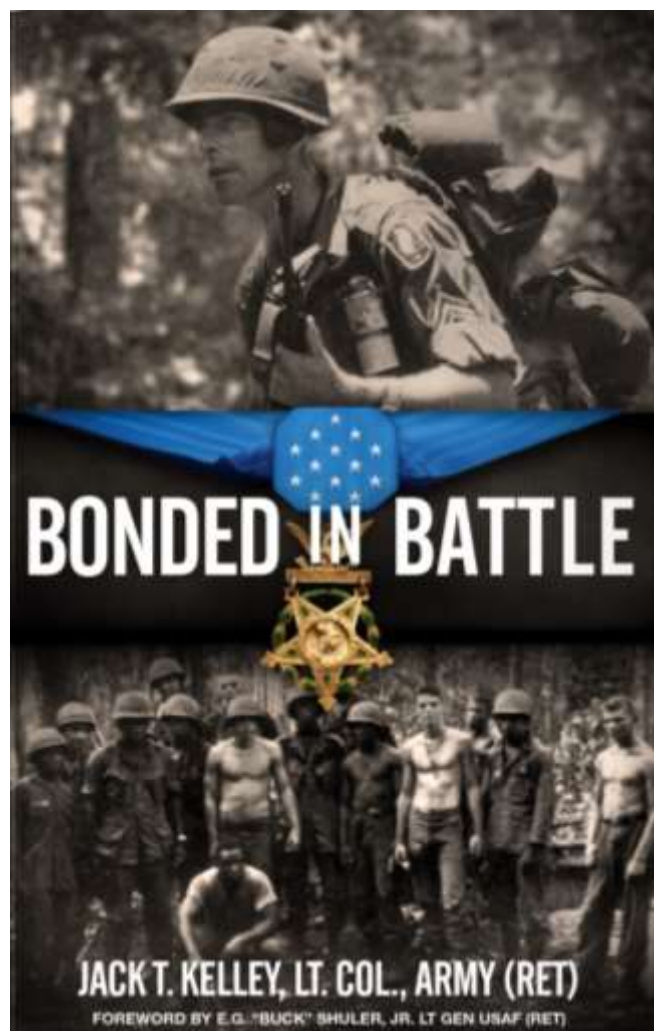


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A Sky Soldier's Book



FOREWORD

I am honored to have been asked to pen the foreword for *"Bonded in Battle"*. It's a riveting narrative written by my good friend, and Citadel classmate, Jack Kelley who courageously led the men of Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry of the 173d Airborne Brigade during the battle of Xuan Loc, Vietnam in June, 1966.

Before I introduce this book to the reader, I want you to know that I am but a humble US Air Force pilot, who was privileged to fly close air support missions as an F-4C aircraft commander and flight leader during my combat tour with the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, Vietnam from March of 1968 to March of 1969. I flew in support of our Army ground units as well as Marine units in all four corps areas as well as interdiction missions in Laos and North Vietnam. I did so without knowing a lot about the choreography of ground maneuver. It wasn't until I read this book, did I realize how little I did know.

I understood, "two up, one back, hot meals and dry socks", but that was about it. I could always hit the forward air controller's smoke with pretty good accuracy, which I hoped helped the "good guys".

The most rewarding missions I flew were when our troops were in direct combat with the enemy. What this narrative accurately portrays are the horrid conditions of jungle warfare, while facing a determined enemy and the agony of seeing comrades being wounded and die on the battle field and the super human strength and superb leadership, which maintained unit cohesiveness, which ultimately prevailed over that determined enemy. The sheer courage of these airborne soldiers that Jack led in this prolonged gun fight Xuan Loc was absolutely astonishing—but not surprising. They were simply the best airborne soldiers following in a great long line going back to WWII.

The format of this book is most helpful, in that Jack has woven in what was happening two command echelons above his Alpha Company and below, down to the squad level. The personal accounts and statements of the battle's survivors really pull the narrative together to give the reader a clear picture of the entire event. Believe me, Alpha Company earned every award and decoration presented to them, especially the Medal of Honor awarded to Sgt. Charles Morris! What a hell of a soldier!!

The privilege of penning this foreword has made me feel a lot better about the role I played some two years after this battle. To Jack and his men, I thank you for your service and sacrifice. To those who pick up this book, enjoy the read and be proud of your fellow Americans who served in Vietnam!



E.G. "Buck" Shuler, Jr.
Lt. General, USAF, Retired
Former Commander of Eighth Air Force
March 1988 to May 1991



Note: *Bonded in Battle* is expected to be available thru Amazon sometime in July.

Note: As active duty or former members of the 173d/503d or attached units, if you wrote a "war" book we'll gladly include details in a future newsletter with our compliments.
Ed



VA Issues New Policy to Protect Veteran Homeowners from Predatory Lending

June 15, 2018

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has issued a new policy implementing the May 2018 Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act to protect Veteran homeowners from predatory lending practices when obtaining a VA-guaranteed refinance loan.

The act helps protect Veterans and service members from the dangers associated with repeatedly refinancing their home loans, requiring, among other things, the seasoning of the original loan and a recoupment period for fees, closing costs, and expenses related to the refinance.

"We want to ensure Veterans have the informed ability to take advantage of economic opportunities and make sound decisions that enable them to prosper when using their benefits," said Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke. *"This is yet another tool that will help Veterans meet their personal goals."*

The act also provides for a specified interest rate decrease and for protections of loan-to-value ratios. A refinancing loan must meet the requirements specified in the act or VA will not guarantee the loan.

VA recently implemented a policy where lenders provide Veteran borrowers a comparison of their existing VA-backed home loan to the proposed one when refinancing to ensure borrowers are set up for success. This is also referred to as a recoupment or break-even analysis, which helps Veteran borrowers clearly understand the costs of refinancing, the monthly payment savings, and the overall impact on their finances.

VA-backed home loans generally do not require a down payment, have low closing costs, and are the lowest rates among all loan products in the marketplace. Notably, VA-backed home loans also continue to outperform other products in the market. In fiscal year (FY) 2017, VA guaranteed more than 740,000 loans for a total of \$189 billion, an all-time record for the VA Home Loan Program....

See complete report at:

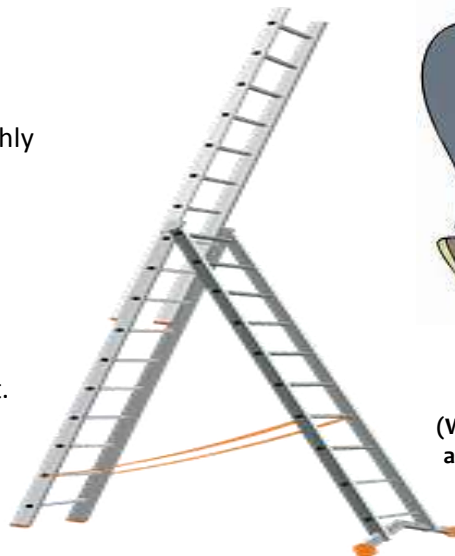
www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4073

Shout Out to 2/503 Chargin' Charlie Roger Dick



Roger at the Wall in DC

We're sending our best wishes to good buddy and close friend Roger Dick for his speedy recovery. (Roger serves as the one and only "editorial staff member" for our newsletter). Seems the old G.I. got into a fight with a tall ladder....and the ladder won. Makes one wonder if the paratrooper was really practicing PLFs...but at *his* age? Bruised and battered, he and his body cast are home resting and enjoying lots of daytime soap operas. It could have been much worse, so we're pleased to know over the weeks ahead he'll return to normal. In the meantime, *"Roger, stay off the damn ladders!"* Ed



(We were going to make a joke here about a "Dick" jumping off a ladder but decided against it. Poor guy, nearly 70 years old and he's still getting dick jokes. Ed)



Soldier Communication Gets a Boost

May 7, 2018

**By Army Maj. Chris Bradley
173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team**

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany -- It appears that the days of simple radio communication are over for the soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. In its place comes a sophisticated yet intuitive communication system that allows leaders at the squad level and higher to rapidly share information across the military network.



Army 1st. Lt. Michael Austin, a platoon leader for Attack Co., 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, uses an end user device to report information to his company commander through the Integrated Tactical Network during a live-fire exercise in Grafenwoehr, Germany, May 2, 2018.

(Army photo by Spc. Joshua Cofield)

This new platform, called the *Integrated Tactical Network*, revolutionizes the way tactical leaders are able to communicate, improving the lethality of small units, while at the same time increasing safety and situational awareness for soldiers.

"Besides each of us having access to the mission graphics, we will be able to battle track each other," said Army 1st. Lieutenant Michael Austin, a platoon leader in Attack Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment. *"If we're in a movement to contact and we take chance contact, we can use this to very accurately shift fires, and have more fires on the enemy while being very safe because we know our exact front-line trace."* The benefits for soldiers in the field are extensive. With the platform, leaders are able to track the positions of the units all around the battlefield, as well as share text messages, voice communication and even pictures.

Crystal-Clear Communications

The equipment was fielded to the battalion two days prior to executing company-level combined arms live-fire exercises here May 1-5. After a one-day class, the

radio telephone operators and the platoon leaders understood the process for using the devices and were able to use them for the actual exercise.

"We had crystal-clear communications the entire time and that's the first time we've had that," Austin said.

"Our scouts were able to take photos directly from their hide site, so we had eyes on the objective in real-time. The new system uses equipment that soldiers are already very familiar with, including the multi band inter/intra team radio to project data, and a modern smartphone for the actual interface. This system is simple to field and use," said Army Capt. Michael Belina, the signals officer for 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment. *"We were able to learn it at the*

[operator] level in one day. The software is really intuitive since most soldiers know how to use smart phones as a second nature, [so] there's no issue with them picking up the features and figuring it out." Platoon leaders, fire support officers and company commanders have the devices now, but squad leaders will have the same devices soon.

(continued....)



Informing Soldiers, Empowering Junior Leaders

"When the platform is fully implemented, paratroopers will have an additional quality radio and access to the same common operating picture as their leadership," Belina said. "The common soldier will have a better idea of what's going on around him, and it will basically cut out some of the talk that is required to build that picture. It will be more immediate."

Another benefit of the new equipment is that it simplifies the communications package for the soldier on the ground.

"It makes it so you don't have to have a truck with a [Joint Capabilities Release] on it, with a vehicle and power to it. It takes away all that equipment and simplifies it," said Army Sgt. Alex Jones, a retransmission team noncommissioned officer with the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment's communications section. On a less tangible level, this system empowers junior leaders to know their mission and react quickly as the situation on the ground changes.

"As an airborne unit, we already do a good job of going down to the lowest level to ensure everyone knows the plan," Austin said. *"But it's typically just the platoon leaders and platoon sergeants and up that have the finer details. This ensures even lower levels know the plan."*

By improving communication across the formation, empowering junior leaders and ensuring soldier lethality on the battlefield, this new system shows just how the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team soldiers continue to lead the force not just as fighters but also as modern, adaptable communicators on today's battlefield.

Source:

www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1513736/soldier-communication-gets-a-boost/source/GovDelivery/

Now, should that thingamabob ever fail, we hear a number of these are available at your neighborhood Army/Navy store, (batteries not included): Ed



And what a PRC it was.

Memorial Day Tweet by Commander in Chief



President Donald Trump participates in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day, May 28, 2018 in Arlington, Virginia. (web photo)

Donald J. Trump

✓ @realDonaldTrump

"Happy Memorial Day! Those who died for our great country would be very happy and proud at how well our country is doing today. Best economy in decades, lowest unemployment numbers for Blacks and Hispanics EVER (& women in 18 years), rebuilding our Military and so much more. Nice!"

8:58 AM - May 28, 2018

~ Editorial ~

Tone-deaf.....using the day in honor and memory of our fallen for self-aggrandizement. Frankly, Commander, "those who died for our great country" most likely would have preferred to have not died – and they died for their buddies, not your economy and not your unemployment numbers. And, Sir, Memorial Day is never a "Happy" day for vets and families and friends of vets. It is a most serious and solemn day, often sad and often filled with tears. Had you served, or had any sensitivity to those who did, you may have known this. Now *that* would have been nice.

Lew Smith, Newsletter Editor



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Lest we forget...

Black Soldiers in the U.S. Military During the Civil War

"Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship."

Frederick Douglass



Opened in 1998 in Washington, D.C., the national African American Civil War Memorial commemorates the more than 200,000 African Americans who served in the Union Army and Navy during the Civil War. Shown here is the front view of the life-sized bronze sculpture that is the centerpiece of the memorial site.

The issues of emancipation and military service were intertwined from the onset of the Civil War. News from Fort Sumter set off a rush by free black men to enlist in U.S. military units. They were turned away, however, because a Federal law dating from 1792 barred Negroes from bearing arms for the U.S. army (although they had served in the American Revolution and in the War of 1812).

In Boston disappointed would-be volunteers met and passed a resolution requesting that the Government modify its laws to permit their enlistment.

The Lincoln administration wrestled with the idea of authorizing the recruitment of black troops, concerned that such a move would prompt the border states to secede. When General John C. Frémont Missouri and General David Hunter in South Carolina issued proclamations that emancipated slaves in their military regions and permitted them to enlist, their superiors sternly revoked their orders. By mid-1862, however, the escalating number of former slaves (contrabands), the declining number of white volunteers, and the increasingly pressing personnel needs of the Union Army pushed the Government into reconsidering the ban.

As a result, on July 17, 1862, Congress passed the Second Confiscation and Militia Act, freeing slaves who had masters in the Confederate Army. Two days later, slavery was abolished in the territories of the United States, and on July 22 President Lincoln presented the preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his Cabinet. After the Union Army turned back Lee's first invasion of the North at Antietam, MD, and the Emancipation Proclamation was subsequently announced, black recruitment was pursued in earnest.

Volunteers from South Carolina, Tennessee, and Massachusetts filled the first authorized black regiments. Recruitment was slow until black leaders such as Frederick Douglass encouraged black men to become soldiers to ensure eventual full citizenship....

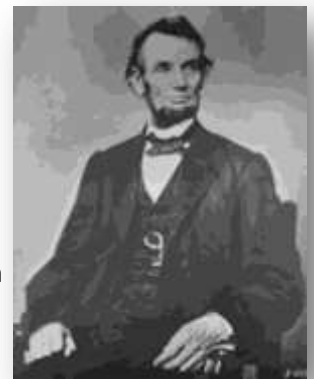
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General Frémont

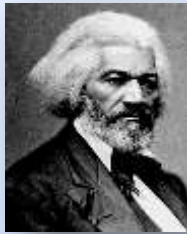


General Hunter



...Two of Douglass's own sons contributed to the war effort. Volunteers began to respond, and in May 1863 the Government established the Bureau of Colored Troops to manage the burgeoning numbers of black soldiers.

Frederick Douglass (born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey; c. February 1818 – February 20, 1895 was an African-American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York, gaining note for his oratory and incisive anti-slavery writings. In his time, he was described by abolitionists as a living counter-example to slaveholders' arguments that slaves lacked the intellectual capacity to function as independent American citizens. Northerners at the time found it hard to believe that such a great orator had once been a slave....The most influential African American of the nineteenth century, Douglass made a career of agitating the American conscience. He spoke and wrote on behalf of a variety of reform causes: women's rights, temperance, peace, land reform, free public education, and the abolition of capital punishment. But he devoted the bulk of his time, immense talent, and boundless energy to ending slavery and gaining equal rights for African Americans. These were the central concerns of his long reform career. Douglass understood that the struggle for emancipation and equality demanded forceful, persistent, and unyielding agitation. And he recognized that African Americans must play a conspicuous role in that struggle. Less than a month before his death, when a young black man solicited his advice to an African American just starting out in the world, Douglass replied without hesitation: 'Agitate! Agitate! Agitate!'"



By the end of the Civil War, roughly 179,000 black men (10% of the Union Army) served as soldiers in the U.S. Army and another 19,000 served in the Navy. Nearly 40,000 black soldiers died over the course of the war—30,000 of infection or disease. Black soldiers served in artillery and infantry and performed all noncombat support functions that sustain an army, as well. Black carpenters, chaplains, cooks, guards, laborers, nurses, scouts, spies, steamboat pilots, surgeons, and teamsters also contributed to the war cause.

There were nearly 80 black commissioned officers. Black women, who could not formally join the Army, nonetheless served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman who scouted for the 2d South Carolina Volunteers.



Harriet Tubman is one of the best-known figures from 19th century American history. She famously escaped enslavement herself, and then returned to free others. She also served with the Union Army during the American Civil War, and advocated for women's rights as well as equal rights for African Americans.

Because of prejudice against them, black units were not used in combat as extensively as they might have been. Nevertheless, the soldiers served with distinction in a number of battles. Black infantrymen fought gallantly at Milliken's Bend, LA; Port Hudson, LA; Petersburg, VA; and Nashville, TN. The July 1863 assault on Fort Wagner, SC, in which the 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers lost two-thirds of their officers and half of their troops, was memorably dramatized in the film *Glory*. By war's end, 16 black soldiers had been awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor.

Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant William Carney of New Bedford, MA, became the first African American awarded the Medal of Honor for "most distinguished gallantry in action" during the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, on July 18, 1863. After being shot in the thigh, Carney crawled uphill on his knees, bearing the Union flag and urging his troops to follow.



(continued....)



In addition to the perils of war faced by all Civil War soldiers, black soldiers faced additional problems stemming from racial prejudice. Racial discrimination was prevalent even in the North, and discriminatory practices permeated the U.S. military. Segregated units were formed with black enlisted men and typically commanded by white officers and black non-commissioned officers. The 54th Massachusetts was commanded by Robert Shaw and the 1st South Carolina by Thomas Wentworth Higginson—both white. Black soldiers were initially paid \$10 per month from which \$3 was automatically deducted for clothing, resulting in a net pay of \$7. In contrast, white soldiers received \$13 per month from which no clothing allowance was drawn.

In June 1864 Congress granted equal pay to the U.S. Colored Troops and made the action retroactive. Black soldiers received the same rations and supplies. In addition, they received comparable medical care.

The black troops, however, faced greater peril than white troops when captured by the Confederate Army. In 1863 the Confederate Congress threatened to punish severely officers of black troops and to enslave black soldiers. As a result, President Lincoln issued General Order 233, threatening reprisal on Confederate prisoners of war (POWs) for any mistreatment of black troops. Although the threat generally restrained the Confederates, black captives were typically treated more harshly than white captives. In perhaps the most heinous known example of abuse, Confederate soldiers shot to death black Union soldiers captured at the Fort Pillow, TN, engagement of 1864. Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest witnessed the massacre and did nothing to stop it.

The document featured with this article is a recruiting poster (not included here) directed at black men during the Civil War. It refers to efforts by the Lincoln administration to provide equal pay for black soldiers and equal protection for black POWs. The original poster is located in the Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's–1917, Record Group 94.

Article Citation

Freeman, Elsie, Wynell Burroughs Schamel, and Jean West. "The Fight for Equal Rights: A Recruiting Poster for Black Soldiers in the Civil War." *Social Education* 56, 2 (February 1992): 118-120. [Revised and updated in 1999 by Budge Weidman.]

Source: National Archives

www.archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war
(web photos & captions added)

Afghanistan, Vietnam Wars Bring Survivors Together Through Tragedy Assistance

May 27, 2018

By Shannon Collins, DoD News

WASHINGTON -- On the National Mall here, young hands traced the letters of the names in granite as visitors walked by to pay their respects, glancing curiously at the group of teens.

Patti Rowley, a first-time mentor with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivor's 24th annual National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp, shared with the group that her father's name was on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall. They all had lost a military member loved one.

A group of 13 to 15 year olds attending the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivor's 24th annual National Military Survivor Seminar and Good



Grief Camp, along with their mentors, point to the name of Air Force Col. Charles Stoddard Rowley, father of mentor Patti Rowley, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington, May 26, 2018. (Courtesy photo by Aaron Burciaga)

Gunship Shot Down

Air Force Col. Charles Stoddard Rowley, a navigator on an AC-130 Spectre gunship, was part of an 11-man crew. On the night of April 22, 1970, his aircraft, call sign "Ad Lib," departed Ubon, Thailand, for a "truck-busting" mission on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos. It was hit by 37mm anti-aircraft artillery fire, caught fire and fell into the jungle.

According to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial website, at dawn, search and rescue forces found and rescued one crewman but couldn't find the others. Enemy activity prevented a search and so the rest of the crew were classified missing in action.

In 1993, a joint U.S.-Laos team found the wreckage of the aircraft and many fragments of bone and teeth, as well as crew equipment. On Sept. 1, 1995, the U.S. government announced that the remains were of the missing men, and they were buried in Arlington National Cemetery Nov. 8, 1995.

Read entire story at

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1533091/afghanistan-vietnam-wars-bring-survivors-together-through-tragedy-assistance/source/GovDelivery/>





Kenneth M. “Max” Knudson

A/2/503

KIA 3/16/66 RVN

Operation: Silver City

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
APO San Francisco, California 96307



GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBERS 4

17 July 1966

AWARD OF SILVER STAR POSTHOUMOUSLY

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

KNUDSON, KENNETH M. US5737XXXX
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS E3 US ARMY,
Company A, 2d Battalion (Airborne),
503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade
(SEP), APO San Francisco, California
96250

Awarded: Silver Star (Posthumously)
Date of Action: 16 March 1966
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Reason: For gallantry in action.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS KNUDSON distinguished himself on 16 March 1966 while serving as a member of A Company during an attack by a large Viet Cong Force near Phuoc Vinh, Republic of Vietnam. During the ensuing fire fight, the company sustained several casualties from the assaulting waves of Viet Cong. After thirty minutes, word was received that the company's right flank was in grave danger of being overrun due to the numerous casualties received by a hostile .50 calibre machine gun which was positioned at 40 meters to the front. When the order was given to reinforce the right flank platoon, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS KNUDSON, upon arrival in the threatened area, placed accurate fire on the Viet Cong's positions and killed four insurgents. Because of heavy machine gun fire on the right flank, his fire team was pinned down and sustained casualties. Realizing the existing danger, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

KNUDSON with complete disregard for his safety, engaged the hostile emplacement in an attempt to silence it. While performing this heroic act, he was mortally wounded by a burst of machine gun fire. His courageous efforts inspired the remaining comrades to hold their positions and eventually defeated the insurgents. PRIVATE FIRST CLASS KNUDSON's possession of unimpeachable valor in close combat against a numerically superior Viet Cong Force was in keeping with the high traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself and his unit, and the United States Army.

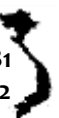
Authority: By direction of the President under the provision of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

RICHARD J. SEITZ
Brigadier General, US Army
Chief of Staff

Source:

Sent in by Max's sister Connie K. Schultz



Aircraft Carrier USS Carl Vinson Makes Vietnam Port Call

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, March 5, 2018 — The USS Carl Vinson arrived in Danang, Vietnam, today, becoming the first aircraft carrier to dock in the country since the Vietnam War ended in 1975.



The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson arrives in Danang, Vietnam, for a scheduled port visit, March 5, 2018. The Carl Vinson Strike Group is in the western Pacific as part of a regularly scheduled deployment.

(Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Devin M. Monroe)

The guided missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain and destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer are also making the port call. The Vietnamese port was also the site of the first arrival of U.S. combat troops, when Marines landed there in 1965.

Positive U.S.-Vietnam Relationship

The three American ships with about 6,500 sailors and Marines aboard are conducting a port visit that demonstrates how far U.S.-Vietnamese relations have progressed. Vietnamese leaders agreed to the four-day port call during President Donald J. Trump's visit to the country last year.

"This visit marks a significant milestone in our bilateral relations and demonstrates the U.S. support for a strong, prosperous and independent Vietnam," Defense Department spokesman Army Col. Robert Manning III told Pentagon reporters this morning.

"The visit also builds on the positive momentum of the comprehensive partnership between the U.S. and Vietnam, and will not only serve to strengthen the bilateral defense relationship, but will also help enhance cultural and professional ties."

The sailors and Marines will participate in cultural exchanges with their Vietnamese counterparts, and some personnel will visit a center for victims of Agent Orange -- a defoliant that American planes sprayed on the jungle to remove cover.

"Our nations' relationship has reached new heights in the past few years, and USS Carl Vinson's port visit to Vietnam is a reflection of that," said Navy Adm. Scott Swift, the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. *"I am*

confident that engagements like this will further expand the comprehensive partnership between the United States and Vietnam."

Commitment to Regional Prosperity, Security

The port call and U.S. operations in the South China Sea are routine, Manning said. *"They demonstrate our commitment to regional prosperity and stability,"* he said. The United States and Vietnam normalized relations in 1995. The first port visit to Vietnam following the war was by the cruiser USS Vandergrift in November 2003, which docked at Ho Chi Minh City on

the Saigon River. In June 2012, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta visited the USNS Richard C. Byrd in Cam Ranh Bay -- the logistics hub of U.S. forces during the Vietnam War.

In October 2016, two U.S. ships -- the submarine tender USS Frank Cable and destroyer USS John S. McCain -- also visited Cam Ranh Bay.

The South China Sea is off the coast of Vietnam, and that body of water sees \$5 trillion in cargo pass through each year. A number of nations have competing territorial claims in the South China Sea region. Vietnam, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Thailand and Singapore have disputes in the area. China has been aggressive in asserting claims in the South China Sea area, and has built islands on reefs and militarized those facilities.

The United States takes no sides in the disputes, but insists that freedom of navigation for all is maintained.

(Follow Jim Garamone on Twitter: [@GaramoneDoDNews](https://twitter.com/GaramoneDoDNews))



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From the archives....

EXERCISE SKY SOLDIER/ TIEN BING VI

In early October 1964, the Republic of China (R.O.C.) forces noted increased reconnaissance activities by aggressor aircraft and also an increase in enemy ship sightings in the Taiwan Bay area. On 20 October an estimated 100 aggressor troops were observed landing in small boats on the coast near the mouth of the Ta Tit River. After coming ashore they deployed in a south-westerly direction toward Chaung Hau.

The steadily improving economy and standard of living in Taiwan and the existence of the antiaggressor government are believed to have caused the "aggressorland" to become more hostile toward the Republic of China.

In the final days of October, an aggressor force, having made other successful landings on the coast, directed its forces north and south, to turn the friendly positions. The R.O.C. field armies contained the aggressor forces and prepared to execute a counter-attack plan to drive the enemy back into the sea. At the same time, the R.O.C. requested immediate assistance from the United States under existing treaties and security arrangements, in order to eliminate the international security threat. As a result of this request, planning was initiated for the employment of U.S. and R.O.C. airborne forces.

THIS was the hypothetical military/political situation on the island of Taiwan and the setting for joint United States-Republic of China Exercise Sky Soldier/Tien Bing VI from 27 October to 5 November 1964.

Sky Soldier VI Troop Carrier Command Post was activated at 1600 hours 25 October on Naha Air Base, Okinawa, by Brigadier General Richard H. Ellis, Commander, 315th Air Division, and Troop Carrier commander for the exercise. Over seventy United States Air Force transport aircraft, under the operational control of the USAF 315th Air Division, had been assembled on Okinawa, along with more than 3800 personnel and over 3,800,000 pounds of cargo to be airlifted into the exercise area to join their allied R.O.C. forces in repelling the simulated aggressor.

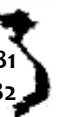
Three Command Airlift Support Units (CALSU's) were established to execute the orders issued by the Troop Carrier Command Post. The CALSU at Naha Air Base controlled 315th Air Division flying units of the 6315th Operations Group, which is equipped with three C-130 troop carrier squadrons. At Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, the CALSU supported the aircraft from the 22d Troop Carrier Squadron, 1502d Air Transport Wing (MATS), and crews from the Naval Air Transport Wing, Pacific, flying Air Force C-130's. The third CALSU was located in west central Taiwan to monitor and control Sky Soldier airlift operations.

Organizations directly involved in airlift operations were the 315th Air Division and its subordinate units: the 5th Communications Squadron, 7th Aerial Port Squadron, 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, and 815th Troop Carrier Squadron; also the 6315th Operations Group and its assigned troop carrier squadrons, the 21st, 35th, and 817th.



An informal conference is held during the joint United States-Republic of China Exercise Sky Soldier/Tien Ring VI. Conferees are Brig. Gen. Richard H. Ellis, Troup Carrier and 315th Air Division commander; Col. L. M. Tannenbaum, 315th deputy chief of staff for operations; and Brig. Gen. Ellis W. Williamson, 173d Airborne Brigade commander.

(continued....)



Military Air Transport Service (MATs) units under the operational control of the 315th Air Division were the 1503d Air Transport Group and its assigned 22d Troop Carrier Squadron, the 1502d Air Transport Wing augmentation aircraft and crews, and U.S. Navy crews from VR 7 Naval Air Transport Wing, Pacific, flying Air Force C-130's.

Exercise Sky Soldier/Tien Bing VI brought together a total of over 40 units and supporting elements of the U.S. and Chinese Army, Navy, and Air Force. In addition to the 315th Air Division and subordinate units mentioned above, other U.S. Air Force units included Fifth Air Force, Thirteenth Air Force, and 313th Air Division, all part of the Pacific Air Forces. The U.S. Army units participating were the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), Headquarters IX Corps, 999th Signal Company, and elements of the 97th Civil Affairs Group, 549th Quartermaster Company, and U.S. Army Broadcasting and Visual Activity, Pacific.

Sky Soldier/Tien Bing VI had several objectives, the more important of which were to improve the combat readiness of participating units; exercise the airborne capabilities of the U.S. airborne brigades; evaluate the effectiveness of marshaling plans, procedures, and techniques; and provide training in all phases of combat airlift and tactical air operations.

Initial activity began early Monday morning, 26 October, with briefings on the exercise for all personnel involved in the operations.

Loading of the aircraft started at 0800 with members of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), Camp Sukiran, Okinawa, rolling their trucks of cargo up to the aircraft. Thirty-six 315th Air Division and ten Naval Air Transport Wing C-130 Hercules were loaded with 600,000 pounds of cargo for airdrop on D-day, Tuesday, 27 October.

For the paratroopers of the U.S. Army's 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), Tuesday began at 0500 when 2000 of them were loaded on 24 C-124 Globemasters of the 1502d Air Transport Wing and the 1503d Air Transport Group (MATs), for the flight of some 500 miles along the Ryukyu island chain to the airdrop site in the west central Taiwan area.

The Republic of China forces were the first into the assault area, completing their airdrop of Chinese paratroopers at 1000 hours. Next in C-130's came a 14-man combat control team from the 7th Aerial Port Squadron and a 50-man Army assault team from the 173d Airborne Brigade. The C-124's followed at 1100 hours, dropping 1000 paratroopers before high surface winds prevented further drops for the day.

On Wednesday winds in the drop zone had diminished, and the paratroop and cargo drops were

completed. Airlanding of assault cargo started Wednesday afternoon, and C-124's and C-130's delivered over a million pounds of cargo daily on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

The C-130 aircraft were equipped with the 463L roller rail conveyer system, here used for the first time in any exercise of this magnitude. With this system, aircraft needed less than 10 minutes to offload airdropped cargo at their destination, while combat assault rolling stock was offloaded in a matter of seconds during the airland assault phase. Airdropped cargo utilizing the same system exited the aircraft in less than 10 seconds.

Aircraft-movement and weather information, vital in all exercises of this type, was under the control of the 5th Communications Squadron. A 12-man team at a fixed site at Naha Air Base and a 12-man mobile communications team set up in Taiwan handled up to 150 weather, aircraft-movement, and administrative messages each day during the assault phase, 27-31 October.

Starting on D-day, 27 October, and during all aircraft movements, squadron weather reports were broadcast over the objective area every 15 minutes. The mobile communications team can be air-moved to any site and be fully operational two hours after landing. It can then tie into existing networks or operate alone and communicate over long distances.

The Work on the Ground



The hub of airlift operations during the joint United States-Republic of China Exercise Sky Soldier/Tien Bing VI was the Troop Carrier Command Post at Naha Air Base, Okinawa. Staff officers worked around the clock to see that operations went according to plan.

(continued....)



Division-size airborne exercises such as this have constantly improved the defense posture and the combat and operational readiness of the armed forces of the United States and its allies in the Pacific in recent years. **Office of Information, Hq 315th Air Division**



Planning cargo and trooper landing schedules.



Navigators of the 35th Troop Carrier Squadron do their preflight work. Navigators were responsible for getting their aircraft over the drop zone at the exact second called for in the operation plan.



A 51st Organizational Maintenance Squadron crew refuels a 315th Air Division C-130. The 51st was kept busy throughout the exercise maintaining the divisions four squadrons of C-130's at Naha Air Base.



Aircraft movement information was transmitted by the 315th Air Division's 5th Communications Squadron. Communicating between this fixed station and a mobile station in Taiwan, the squadron handled up to 150 messages each day on aircraft moves.



Proper loading of cargo by the 315th Air Division load-masters pays off as the crew quickly offloads this huge C-124 Globemaster in Taiwan. In just five days of the joint exercise, over 3,800,000 pounds of combat cargo was airlifted from Okinawa to Taiwan.

(continued....)



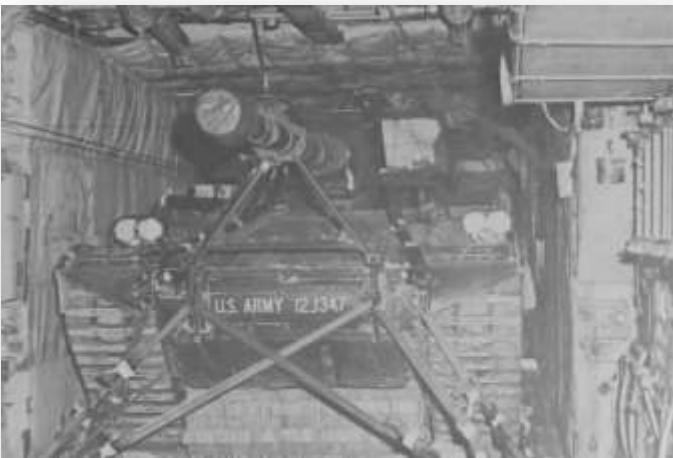
The Loading Phase



Combat cargo loading at Naha Air Base. USAF C-130 aircraft airdropped more than 600,000 pounds of assault cargo during the exercise.



Army members of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) and Air Force loadmasters of the 315th Air Division push a double pallet of Army 'mules' into a C-130 Hercules during the assault phase. Using the 463L roller conveyer system for the first time in a Pacific area exercise, crews were able to onload palletized cargo in minutes, offload in 10 minutes, and airdrop cargo in less than 10 seconds.



An Army self-propelled antitank (SPAT) is loaded into a C-130 for aerial delivery. This weapon, along with thousands of pounds of other combat cargo, was airdropped in west central Taiwan.



'Airborne All The Way'—Troops of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) march aboard a 1503d Air Transport Group (MATS) C-124 Globemaster of the 22d Troop Carrier Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. These airborne troopers were dropped in west central Taiwan during the exercise.

The Aircraft Begin To Roll



The C-130's. An 815th Troop Carrier Squadron crew is briefed prior to flight by the aircraft commander. Other crew members are the (xxxxx), flight mechanic and two loadmasters.

(continued....)





The C-124's. Globemasters of the 1502d Air Transport Wing and 1503d Air Transport Group (MATS) are readied for early morning take-off at Kadena Air Base. These aircraft flew over 2000 paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) in support of Sky Soldier VI. The MATS airlift augmentation units were under the operational control of 315th Air Division.

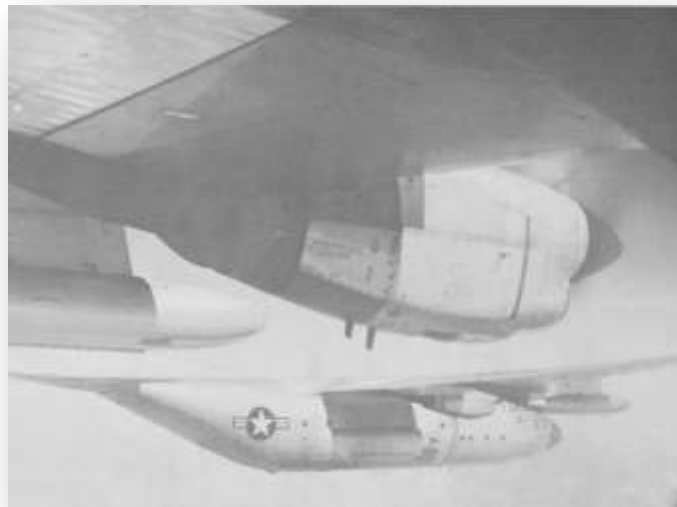


Sixty-six C-130 Hercules of the 315th Air Division move out for the runway at Naha Air for a formation take-off. The 315th Air Division's flying units include the 21st, 35th (xxx), and 817th Troop Carrier Squadrons.



This formation helped deliver over 3,800,000 pounds of combat cargo to west central Taiwan in support of Sky Soldier/Tien Bing VI.

Airborne—and Down



C-130 Hercules of the 315th Air Division move into a close tactical formation on the way to the drop zone during Sky Soldier VI. C-130's from the 21st, 35th, 815th, and 817th Troop Carrier Squadrons air-delivered over 600,000 pounds of combat cargo to the drop zone.



315th Air Division's combat control team and the 173d Army assault team caught a few winks prior to jumping, after which they set up a drop zone for over 2000 173d Airborne Brigade troopers who jumped thirty minutes later.

(continued....)





Thousands of tons of combat cargo pour from the C-130's during the D-day assault phase. All cargo hit the ground within the objective area.



(xxxxx) parachutes of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) were seen almost (xxxxx) during the joint United States-Republic of China Exercise Sky Soldier VI. The regular paratroopers were preceded into the drop zone by the 115th Air Division combat control team and a 50-member Army assault team.

Source:

United States Air Force Air University
REVIEW

January-February 1965

www.airuniversity.af.mil/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/1965_Vol16_No1-6/1965_Vol16_No2.pdf

[Sent in by David Eckert, son of the late
Dr. Dick Eckert, B/2/503, RVN]



A little paratrooper ditty stolen from the 82nd Airborne Division Association Hajdak/Mokan Philadelphia Chapter NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 18.2, when they weren't lookin....



Once upon a time...

A little boy was standing in front of a mirror in the restroom at Boston's Logan Int'l Airport, when in walked a Marine dressed in his dress blues. The little boy turned to the Marine and said, "Wow! Are you a Marine?"

The Marine replied, "Why, yes I am, young man. Would you like to wear my hat?" "Boy, would I!" said the little boy. He took the hat and placed it on his head and turned to admire himself in the mirror. As he was looking in the mirror, he heard the door open and through a ray of bright light, a man entered the room. But, this was not just a man – he was more than a man. He was a United States Paratrooper.

The little boy turned and went over to the Paratrooper. As he approached him, he could see the reflection in his boots. His eyes widened as he stared up at the soldier's chest full of medals and combat ribbons. He tried to speak, but he couldn't. Finally, he took a deep breath, and managed to say, "Excuse me Sir. Are you a Paratrooper?" The Paratrooper replied with a thunderous voice, "Why yes, I am son! Would you like to shine my boots?" The little boy smiled and said, "Oh no sir! I'm not a Marine, I'm just wearing his hat!"

All The Way, H-Minus Big Will

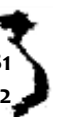


Semper Fi brothers!



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Fire Blast



Army Maj. Gen. James B. Jarrard, commander of Special Operations Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve, provides assistant gunner support to a member of 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) 5310 Operation Detachment Bravo during counter Islamic State of Syria and Iraq operations in southern Syria, Nov. 22, 2017. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jacob Connor)

"Ahh, General, Sir. Could you move two feet to your right please?"

###

~Inscription for a War~

***Linger not, stranger;
shed no tear;
Go back to those
who sent us here.
We are the young
they drafted out;
To wars their folly
brought about.
Go tell those old men,
safe in bed;
We took their orders
and are dead.***

By A.D. Hope

Remembering war....

"First Squad, First Platoon"

Excerpt from a dedication to an unpublished short story, from Serling to his as yet unborn children.

"To My Children,

I'm dedicating my little story to you; doubtless you will be among the very few who will ever read it. It seems war stories aren't very well received at this point. I'm told they're out-dated, untimely and as might be expected - make some unpleasant reading. And, as you have no doubt already perceived, human beings don't like to remember unpleasant things. They gird themselves with the armor of wishful thinking, protect themselves with a shield of impenetrable optimism, and, with a few exceptions, seem to accomplish their 'forgetting' quite admirably.

But you, my children, I don't want you to be among those who choose to forget. I want you to read my stories and a lot of others like them. I want you to fill your heads with Remarque and Tolstoy and Ernie Pyle. I want you to know what shrapnel, and '88's' and mortar shells and mustard gas mean. I want you to feel, no matter how vicariously, a semblance of the feeling of a torn limb, a burnt patch of flesh, the crippling, numbing sensation of fear, the hopeless emptiness of fatigue. All these things are complimentary to the province of War and they should be taught and demonstrated in classrooms along with the more heroic aspects of uniforms, and flags, and honor and patriotism.

I have no idea what your generation will be like. In mine we were to enjoy 'Peace in our time'. A very well meaning gentleman waved his umbrella and shouted those very words...less than a year before the whole world went to war. But this gentleman was suffering the worldly disease of insufferable optimism. He and his fellow humans kept polishing the rose colored glasses when actually they should have taken them off. They were sacrificing reason and reality for a brief and temporal peace of mind, the same peace of mind that many of my contemporaries derive by steadfastly refraining from remembering the War that came before." — Rod Serling



WWII Abn Trooper

Rod Serling



The more things change....

Wading Warriors



"Paratroopers cross a river at Fort Bragg, N.C., May 1, 2018 during the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division's May Best Squad Competition."
(Army photo by Maj. Thomas Cieslak)

The more they stay the same.....

More Wading Warriors



"Paratroopers of the U.S. 2nd Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade hold their automatic weapons above water as they cross a river in the rain during a search for Viet Cong positions in the jungle area of Ben Cat, South Vietnam, on Sept. 25, 1965. The paratroopers had been searching the area for 12 days with no enemy contact."
(Henri Huet photo)



Another Henri Huet photo. "Women and children crouch in a muddy canal as they take cover from intense Viet Cong fire on 1 January 1966. Paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (background) escorted the civilians through a series of firefights during the US assault on a Viet Cong stronghold at Bao Tri, about 20 miles west of Saigon." Accepting the date as correct, it's likely the troopers under fire with the civilians were 1/503d as the 2/503d didn't enter the battle of Operation Marauder until the following morning. **Ed**

On February 10, 1971, during South Vietnam's invasion of southern Laos, known as Operation Lam Son 719, Henri Huet and three other photojournalists, joined the operation commander, Lt Gen Hoàng Xuân Lãm, on a helicopter inspection tour of the battlefield. The pilots of the Republic of Vietnam Air Force (RVNAF) UH-1 Huey carrying the photojournalists lost their way and flew into the most heavily defended area of the Ho Chi Minh trail, where it and a second chopper were shot down by hidden North Vietnamese 37mm anti-aircraft guns, killing all 11 on the photographers' aircraft and four on the other.



Henri Huet

Huet's fellow photographers were Larry Burrows, British, of *LIFE* magazine, Kent Potter, American, of UPI and Keizaburo Shimamoto, a Japanese freelance photographer working for *Newsweek*. The crash site was rediscovered in 1996 and in March, 1998, a second search team from the US Joint Task Force Full Accounting (JTFFA), the Pentagon unit responsible for recovering MIA remains in Indochina and elsewhere, excavated the mountainside, finding aircraft parts, camera pieces, 35mm film, along with traces of human remains, which proved too scant for laboratory identification.



Face of Defense: *'Quiet Call' Led Army Chaplain to Serve*

May 21, 2018

By Army Maj. Thomas Cieslak, 3rd Brigade Combat Team,
82nd Airborne Division

FORT BRAGG, N.C. -- For one chaplain serving in the 82nd Airborne Division, his calling did not come in the form of a thunderous voice or dramatic event. It came when he opened a local newspaper.



Army Capt. Jacques Albertyn, chaplain for the 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, poses for a photo at Fort Bragg, N.C., May 7, 2018. Albertyn found his calling for the military chaplaincy in the form of an ad in his local newspaper. (Army photo by Maj. Thomas Cieslak)

Army Capt. Jacques Albertyn, who serves as the battalion chaplain for the 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division here, heard a soft voice while sitting in a church pew, third row from the front. He didn't think about it much until getting home and reaching for the newspaper.

"My calling happened March 10, 2002. Some people might have that big moment where God speaks to them in a thunderous voice or something dramatic happened in their lives that calls them to ministry," Albertyn said. "For me, it was a quiet voice."

Albertyn was born in Pinelands, a suburb of Cape Town, South Africa, in a hospital that was once a Catholic monastery. A Southern Baptist and endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, he attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Orlando campus before joining the Army.

Selfless Service

"Military chaplaincy is about selfless service; it is about giving yourself to others with no expectation of receiving anything else in return," Albertyn said. "Army chaplaincy provided me with an opportunity to walk next to the young men and women that serve this country, to share God's presence with them and support them in the midst of anxiety and fear."

Albertyn had just started a new career at a local company in Florida after immigrating to the United States when he heard that voice in church. The voice, he said, called him by name and said he should serve the people.

After getting home from church, Albertyn recalled praying to God to reveal which ministry to serve in. *"As I opened the newspaper, on the left page there was a quarter-page advertisement about the need for U.S. Army chaplains to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan,"* he said. *"I looked at the ad, read it and went onto the next page, thinking to myself, 'That is not church.'"* Albertyn continued, *"Each time I served in a church since that day, my wife would say, 'You do know this is not where God wants you to serve.' It might have taken me 14 years to get into the Army, but every day I serve as a chaplain is a blessing as I fulfill my true and direct calling from God."*

Courage, Empathy

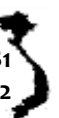
Being a faith leader in an airborne infantry brigade combat team, he said, requires not only steadfast courage to conduct static-line airborne operations, but also empathy to understand the reservations some paratroopers have before jumping.

A military chaplain serves alongside those he ministers to, Albertyn said.

"Being airborne is not just a job; it is a way of life," he said. *"Airborne is not for everyone, but those who are here deserve a chaplain who will look after them."*

Airborne operations can challenge the toughest soldier, Albertyn said.

"Being next to paratroopers through their challenges and hearing their opinions, fears and joys about jumping is what military chaplaincy is all about," he said.



Commander in Chief's Commencement Address to 1,042 Naval Academy Graduates on May 25, 2018



(Photo credit Evan Vucci / AP)

Thank you. Thank you. Hello, midshipmen, hello. Let me say to the entire brigade—please be at ease—enjoy yourselves, because we are all here to celebrate the amazing class of 2018. Amazing job. Thank you. Really something. Admiral Carter, thank you for that wonderful introduction and for your leadership, an incredible job you have done at this storied academy. And thank you, Captain Chadwick, for your dedication and service. Thank you to Undersecretary Modly, Admiral Richardson, General Walters, for joining us today. Thanks also to Senator Wicker, Congressman Wittman, Congressman Valadao.

I want to recognize the entire brigade for a tremendous year. This has been a spectacular year for you. I have heard all about your achievements. And a very special recognition for the midshipmen fourth class, you are plebs no more. To all of the distinguished faculty and staff, to the local sponsor families, and most importantly, to the parents and grandparents and family members who have helped our graduates **reached** this joyous hour, today is your incredible achievement also. They would have never made it without you, know this. I want to thank the midshipmen and your families, and thank you. America

thanks you more than anybody. You have done a spectacular job. Thank you very much.

Finally, to the men and women about to be commissioned as ensigns in the Navy and second lieutenants in the Marine Corps, let me say on behalf of the entire nation, we could not be more proud of the United States Naval Academy Class of 2018. Thank you. Great job.

Congratulations to you all. Four years ago, each of you made the most important decision of your lives. You chose the path of hard work, sweat, and sacrifice. You chose the life of honor, courage, and commitment. You chose to serve the nation and defend our great American flag. You chose the Navy, blue and gold, from the first moments of induction day. Through a grueling six weeks of pleb summer, you endured and you persevered.

And then the rest of the brigade returned, and the real test began. You developed morally, mentally, and physically. You poured yourselves into military tactics, seamanship, navigation, ethics, and engineering....

(continued....)



....And when hard work was not enough, like generations before you, you gathered your pennies and sought favor from the all-powerful Tecumseh. All-powerful. A little bit different. Others worked hard for their demerits at McGarvey's and the Fleet Reserve Club. And so today in keeping with tradition, I declare that all midshipmen on restriction for minor offenses, you are hereby absolved.

That sounds like a lot of people. The Admiral will define exactly what that means, so Admiral, please go easy. This is a great group of people here, Admiral. I am told this class led Navy athletics to the highest win percentage in your 172-year history. Think about that. That includes taking the Army-Navy Star Series for the fourth straight year, a remarkable achievement in sport and athletics. And because you care about every contest against Army, for the record, this year, Navy beat Army 19 times. And I will not mention, I promised, who won the football game. I will not mention it. I refuse to say it. But that is a great achievement.

And let me take a guess, you are still not tired of winning. Winning is such a great feeling, isn't it? Winning is such a great feeling. Nothing like winning, you got to win. In every endeavor, the class of 2018 has shown its mettle and it's proved its might. You have earned your place in the ancient league of sailors and shipmates, captains and commanders, warriors and mariners, and Marines. You crave adventure. Hello, folks, back there. You chase discovery, and you never flinch in the eye of a raging storm. America is in your heart. The ocean is in your soul. The saltwater runs through your veins. You live your life according to the final law of the Navy. The word impossible does not exist, because Navy never quits.

You don't give up. You don't give in. You don't back down. And you never surrender. Wherever you go, wherever you serve, wherever your mission takes you, you only have one word in mind, and that's victory. That is why you are here. Victory. A very important word. You are now leaders in the most powerful and righteous force on the face of the planet. The United States military. And we are respected again, I can tell you that. We are respected again.

A lot of things have happened. We are respected again. For the last four years, you have walked the same paths as Navy's greatest legends, the giants of Midway and Coral Sea and Manila Bay. Here in Annapolis, the glorious past is all around you, and so are the stories of your great heroes.

One such hero who appears in the pages of your old yearbooks is Bruce Voorhees. Well-known all over.

Bruce hailed from Nevada and was a member of the Naval Academy class of 1929. Beneath his picture in the

1929 Lucky Bag, Bruce's classmates wrote that he spent most of his time teaching the city slickers from the east the correct pronunciation of Nevada. And I had to learn that, too, to win the state. Great place.

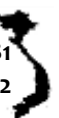
He saw studying as an unnecessary evil, and they remembered in three cruises and four years in blue-serge brass buttons, he left a trail of broken hearts extending the full length of both coasts and radiating for miles around. Crabtown. In other words, he was just like you in many ways. Just like you. Not a lot of difference. Just over a decade after his graduation, Lieutenant Commander Voorhees found himself at war. Seventy-five years ago this summer, he was in the South Pacific commanding Bombing Squadron 102 during the battle of the Solomon Islands. That was a rough battle. His only brother had been killed at the Bataan Death March. On July 6, Bruce volunteered for a mission to destroy a crucial enemy base. It was a rough time. It was a rough, tough situation. He knew full-well that he would likely never return. He knew he was going to die. But he also knew his daring action could prevent a surprise attack on large-scale American forces.

So, his plane took off alone on a 700-mile flight. Bruce flew through the darkness to his target, a tiny speck on the vast open sea. He braved unrelenting anti-aircraft fire, like nobody had ever seen at that time, and a trail of enemy planes to single-handedly destroy this large enemy base, including multiple fortifications, and a critical communications link. And in this final act of valor, Bruce was caught in the blast of one of his own bombs and perished in a remote lagoon very far from here. His life was lost, but his legacy will live forever.

Many of you have seen his old room at Bancroft Hall, commemorating his Congressional Medal of Honor, our highest honor. Some here today will trace his path to Pensacola to earn your wings. You may even make it all the way out to the legendary combat-training school known as Top Gun in Bruce's beloved hometown in Nevada. There, you will have the honor to take flight from the Voorhees Field, and remember a hero who fought for his country, and died for his homeland, and saved so many lives with his bravery.

Each of you inherits the legacy of the heroes who came before you. It's a living history passed down from officer to officer and generation to generation. Each of you will make your own mark on the Navy, the Marine Corps, the military, and the history of our great nation. Seize today and you will shape tomorrow.

(continued....)



In a few moments, you will be commissioned into the mightiest fighting forces of the air, the land, and the sea. Together, you will blast off carriers of which we are just now finishing, the largest aircraft carrier in the world, and launch off submarines of which we have many under construction, and ward off evil.

You will bring comfort to our friends and strike fear into the hearts of our enemies. Among our graduates today will be 283 naval aviators, 134 submariners, 256 surface-warfare officers, 70 restricted-line officers, and 15 explosive-ordnance-disposal officers. Two-hundred-and-thirty-six United States Marines, and 35 very tough, very well-conditioned Navy SEALs.

Together, you are the tip of the spear, the edge of the blade, and the front of the shield defending and protecting our great country. You know, there is no mission our pilots can't handle. There is no hill our Marines can't take, and there is no stronghold the SEALs can't reach. There is no sea the Navy can't brave, and there is no storm the American sailor can't conquer. Because you know that together, there is nothing Americans can't do. Absolutely nothing.

In recent years and even decades, too many people have forgotten that truth. They have forgotten that our ancestors trounced an empire, tamed a continent, and triumphed over the worst evils in history. In every generation, there have been cynics and critics that try to tear down America. But in recent years, the problem grew worse. A growing number used their platforms to denigrate America's incredible heritage, challenge America's sovereignty, and weaken America's pride.

We know the truth, will speak the truth, and defend that truth. America is the greatest fighting force for peace, justice, and freedom in the history of the world. And in case you have not noticed, we have become a lot stronger lately. A lot. We are not going to apologize for America. We are going to stand up for America. No more apologies. We are going to stand up for our citizens. We are going to stand up for our values. And we are going to stand up for our men and women in uniform.

Because we know that a nation must have pride in its history to have confidence in its future. We are the nation that built the highways, the railroads, the Empire State Building in one year, the Golden Gate Bridge, and we are the nation that built the Panama Canal.

We trekked the mountains, explored the oceans, and settled the vast frontier. We won two world wars, defeated communism and fascism, and put a man on the face of the moon. We cured disease, pioneered science, and produced timeless works of art that inspire the human soul. And on distant islands, far-away battlefields, above the skies and beneath the sea, the

entire world has borne witness to the unstoppable strength, skill, and courage of the United States Navy and the American Marines.

Each of you enters service at a truly exciting time for our country. For we are witnessing the great reawakening of the American spirit and of American might. We have rediscovered our identity, regained our stride, and we are proud again. Prosperity is booming at home. Our economy is the strongest it has ever been. And our country has regained the respect that we used to have long ago abroad. Yes, they are respecting us again. Yes, America is back.

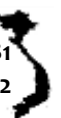
We have begun the great rebuilding of the United States military. We have ended the disastrous defense sequester. No money for the military? Those days are over. And we have just secured, you have read all about it, a \$700 billion, largest-ever amount of money to support our great war fighters. And I might add that next year—the \$700 billion, not million. They're liking the sound of million, but billion is better—the \$700 billion goes to \$716 billion, and we are going to be stronger than ever before. We will have the strongest military that we have ever had, and it won't even be close. And when did we need it more than now?

That means new ships. You like that. We have now the lowest number of ships we have had since World War I. And very soon, we are going to get to 355 beautiful ships. That is almost a couple of hundred more ships. So you will be around for a long time. We are not running out of equipment. We're not running out of ships. And that has been approved. And we are honored by it.

You are going to have new equipment, and well-deserved pay raises. We just got to a big pay raise for the first time in 10 years. We got to a big pay increase, first time in over 10 years. I fought for you. That was the hardest one to get. But you never had a chance of losing. I represented you well. I represented you well.

And this week, we passed new landmark legislation to give more choice and better care to our great veterans. We are going to take care of our veterans. We are doing a great job with it. We are taking care, finally, after decades, we are taking care of our veterans. We passed VA accountability. Everybody said it could not be done. If you didn't do a good job, you could not get fired. Now, you don't do a good job and take care of our veterans, they will look you in the eye and they say, "Jim, you're fired! You're out! Out!" Get him out of here....

(continued....)



....They all said you could not get it. They tried to get it for 35 years. We will say, *"Get him out of here, he doesn't take care of our vets."*

Next year, we are committing even more to our defenses, and we are committing even more to our veterans. Because we know that the best way to prevent war is to be fully prepared for war. And hopefully, we never have to use all of this beautiful, new, powerful equipment. But you know, you are less likely to have to use it if you have it and know how to work it. And nobody knows how to work it like you. And if a fight must come, there is no other alternative. Victory, winning, beautiful words, but that is what it is all about.

We are reestablishing the second fleet in the Atlantic: bigger, better, stronger than it has ever been before. We are rebuilding our defense industrial base to forge American iron, aluminum, and steel, which, by the way, we just put tariffs on when it comes in from other countries. Okay? We are taking in a lot of money now, our country. They pay that big, beautiful tariff and it goes right into building new ships.

We have been taken advantage of by the world. That is not going to be happening anymore. You see what is going on. So, we are building a modern fleet manned by the greatest sailors. We're sharpening the fighting edge from Marines infantry squads to combat ships to deliver maximum, lethal force. The enemy has to know we have that. We are recommitting to this fundamental truth: We are a maritime nation.

Being a maritime nation, we are surrounded by sea. We must always dominate that sea. We will always dominate the oceans. We are showing what we can achieve when natural American confidence is backed by unrivaled American power and unquestioned American resolve.

Also, there is another word that's never used, and I will use it today. It's called talent. We have talent and a lot of other people don't, and a lot of other countries don't. We have great talent and I have seen it. In other words, we are showing what is possible when America starts acting like its sailors and Marines. Our nation cannot be strong without the heroes whose hearts stir the words: *Don't give up the ship*. Famous phrase. We even use it in business. Things are going bad, you say, *"Don't give up the ship."* Keep fighting. Don't give up the ship. But it's really—you guys started it.

Our country cannot prevail without those who rally to the famous cry, to Admiral Farragut's cry, you know it well, *"Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead."* Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead. You hail from every background and you come from every walk of life. But each of you is formed by the same defining choice, to

answer the call. You all share the same heart, the same blood, and swear by the same motto: *Not for self but country*. It's a great motto.

With us today are living symbols of that long and unbroken chain of American patriots, members of the Naval Academy class of 1968. That's great. Stand up, please. Exactly 50 years ago, they were in your shoes. They embarked into service and they made America very proud. To everyone in the class of 1968, we thank you and we salute you.

Like those who came before them, today's graduates will serve America through times of triumph and some hours of peril. There will be hours of peril. You will face new challenges, even challenges that you can't envision, but you'll find new solutions that nobody can even imagine. Among your ranks is the next Chester Nimitz, the next Grace Hopper, the next John Lejeune. Future generations will talk about you. They will tell your stories, speak of your courage, and someone many years from now will be standing right here, in my position, paying tribute to your great service. It will happen. Because you already know the keys to success. You know that as long as we are proud of who we are, and what we are fighting for, we will not fail. We will not fail. We cannot fail. We will always succeed, always.

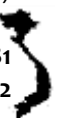
As long as we are united with the same mission, the same purpose, the same patriotic heart, we will win, because we are one people, one family, and one glorious nation under God.

Together we struggle. Together we strive. Together we pray. And together we triumph as citizens, as patriots, as Americans. We stand on the shoulders of heroes who gave their sweat, their blood, their tears, and their very lives for this great country of ours. This is our heritage. This is our home. And this is our pledge. We are all in for America, like never before. We are all in for our great country.

So to the Naval Academy of the class of 2018, I say a number of things. Number one, I say that I was given an option. I could make this commencement address, which is a great honor for me, and immediately leave and wave goodbye, or I could stay and shake hands with just the top 100, or I could stay for hours and shake hands with 1,100 and something. What should I do? What should I do? I'll stay. I'll stay. I will stay.

But to the class of 2018, I do say strive for excellence. Live for adventure. Think big. Dream bigger. Push further. Sail faster. Fly higher. And never, ever stop reaching for greatness....

(continued....)



....Never stop reaching for the stars. You know you're up to the task. You're among the finest people anywhere in the world, the smartest, the strongest. You know you will make us proud. We know that glory will be yours because you are winners. You are warriors. You are fighters. You are champions, and you will lead us only to victory.

Good luck. May God be with you. God bless America, and anchors away.



It's The Military's Finest Airborne!



What does the "D" in D-Day mean?

The most frequently asked question by visitors to The National WWII Museum. Many people think they know the answer: *designated day, decision day, doomsday, or even death day.*

Our answer, like many answers in the field of history, is not so simple. Disagreements between military historians and etymologists about the meaning of D-Day abound. Here are just two explanations:

In Stephen Ambrose's *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, he writes, *Time* magazine reported on June 12 [1944] that "as far as the U.S. Army can determine, the first use of D for Day, H for Hour was in Field Order No. 8, of the First Army, A.E.F., issued on Sept. 20, 1918, which read, 'The First Army will attack at H-Hour on D-Day with the object of forcing the evacuation of the St. Mihiel salient.'" p. 491

In other words, the D in D-Day merely stands for *Day*. This coded designation was used for the day of any important invasion or military operation. For military planners (and later historians), the days before and after a D-Day were indicated using plus and minus signs: D-4 meant four days before a D-Day, while D+7 meant seven days after a D-Day.

In Paul Dickson's *War Slang*, he quotes Robert Hendrickson's *Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins*;

Many explanations have been given for the meaning of D-Day, June 6, 1944, the day the Allies invaded Normandy from England during World War II. The Army has said that it is "*simply an alliteration, as in H-Hour.*" Others say the first D in the word also stands for "day,"

the term a code designation. The French maintain the D means "disembarkation," still others say "debarkation," and the more poetic insist D-Day is short for "day of decision." When someone wrote to General Eisenhower in 1964 asking for an explanation, his executive assistant Brigadier General Robert Schultz answered: "*General Eisenhower asked me to respond to your letter. Be advised that any amphibious operation has a 'departed date'; therefore the shortened term 'D-Day' is used.*" p.146

Brigadier General Schultz reminds us that the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944 was not the only D-Day of World War II. Every amphibious assault—including those in the Pacific, in North Africa, and in Sicily and Italy—had its own D-Day.

The National WWII Museum's exhibitions explore the history of the D-Day invasion of Normandy and the D-Day invasions in the Pacific. Expansion plans are currently underway to triple the size of the Museum in the coming years.

Source:

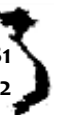
The National WWII Museum
945 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
www.nationalww2museum.org

Eisenhower's D-Day Message



"Soldiers, sailors and airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force! You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you."

Army Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Allied Supreme Commander in Europe, Order of the Day, June 6, 1944



Paratrooper's Return



Family and friends walk with World War II veteran Raymond Wallace along the path between the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial and Omaha Beach in France, June 1, 2018. Wallace returned to Normandy for the first time since he parachuted in with the 82nd Airborne Division 74 years ago.

(Army photo by Lt. Col. John Hall)



"D-Day. June 6, 1944." (Web photo)



In the October 2004, issue of *SOLDIERS*, our former B/2/503 company commander RVN, (then) Capt. Les Brownlee (Colonel retired), and former Acting Secretary of the Army (Ret), was interviewed by Beth Reece.

Brownlee: Where We Stand

Interview by Beth Reece



Acting Secretary of the Army R.L. Brownlee talks with senior officers during a visit to Fort Polk, La.

(Photo by SGT Carmen L. Burgess)

A RETIRED Army colonel, acting Secretary of the Army R.L. Brownlee knows what it's like to be a Soldier. Since assuming his Pentagon position last June, he has visited Soldiers in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Korea, Bosnia and other locations around

the world. The American Soldier, he's known to say, is the single most important factor in winning America's war on terror. Here, he addresses issues currently affecting Soldiers and how the Army is coping with, and will continue to cope with, the demands of war.

"I've always worked around Soldiers. They're wonderful folks to be with. They're good, honest, hardworking people trying to do the right thing."

Acting Secretary of the Army, R.L. Brownlee

Q What would you say is the Army's biggest challenge right now?

Brownlee: Our main mission right now is to win the war on terror, and we're doing that. But we also want to ensure that we're taking care of Soldiers and their families. The Soldiers we have today volunteered to wear the uniform of their country. That many of them volunteered during a war is an incredible circumstance, so I feel a huge obligation to be sure we're taking care of them. When I go out and talk to Soldiers the one thing most of them ask me to do is ensure their families are being well cared for.

Q How is the Army responding to the current operations tempo? How will we meet our present and future commitments without stretching ourselves too thin?

Brownlee: Right now we have a very high level of commitment. We have a much larger number of brigades deployed than we thought we would at this time. We're asking a lot of our Soldiers in terms of deployments, how frequently they're deployed and the amount of time they have before going back. But at the same time, we're laying the groundwork to relieve the stress on them. One of the things that we're doing is increasing the size of the active force. Our plan is to "grow" the Army by 30,000 over the next three years, using supplemental dollars and building the right kinds of units in the right components and in the right numbers with the capabilities we need. Ultimately, it means more cohesive and combat-ready formations, more stability, and a more predictable lifestyle for our Soldiers and their families.

(continued....)



We're also working very hard to restructure the Guard and Reserve so they're used more effectively and efficiently. For example, we've converted a lot of artillery batteries into military police units because they're in high demand right now. We're going to do more and more of that, but it's not going to be easy or happen overnight. The chief of staff of the Army has likened it to repairing an engine while it's still running.

Q Will Reserve and Guard mobilizations continue as they are, or will there be changes?

Brownlee: Right now there are some units and job specialties that are in higher demand than others. Because we have to rely on those Soldiers so much, they get deployed more. We're currently restructuring the Guard to increase the number of units in such specialties as military police and civil affairs. To do that, we're converting units we don't need as much anymore — like air defense and artillery. Again, it's like repairing an engine while the motor is running. It's hard to do.

If you're converting an artillery unit to military police, for example, you don't just dub them military police. You've got to send them to school, organize them as a unit and train them as a unit. Our long-term goal is to increase the size of the active component so that Soldiers only have to deploy once for every three times they don't have to deploy. If they go for six months, they would only have to deploy every couple of years. Right now some of them are going one for one.

In the reserve components, we hope to get them to one deployment for six. But for at least the next three years we're going to be under some stress.

We will also be able to bring down the commitment level as the Iraqis become more capable of helping themselves.



During a March visit to Afghanistan, Brownlee is escorted by CJTF-180 commander MG Lloyd Austin.

Q Is the Army meeting its retention goals? What are the challenges and how are we responding to them?

Brownlee: We're meeting our retention goals in the active Army, the Guard and the Reserve. We're also meeting our recruiting goals, except the Guard is a little bit down right now. Part of that, of course, is because more of our Soldiers are staying in the active force, which is one of the pools from which the Guard recruits prior-service members.



During a July 18 ceremony at Camp Mabry, Texas, Brownlee addresses Soldiers of the newly formed 36th Infantry Div.

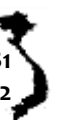
(Photo by SGT Carmen)

Q Why do you think Soldiers are staying in?

Brownlee: It's amazing, and a lot of people don't understand it. Our Soldiers are brave and patriotic Americans who love their country, who understand how this country is threatened. They haven't forgotten 9/11. And believe me, these people who attacked us on 9/11 -- and there are still plenty of them out there -- if they could kill 10 times the people they killed on 9/11, they would.

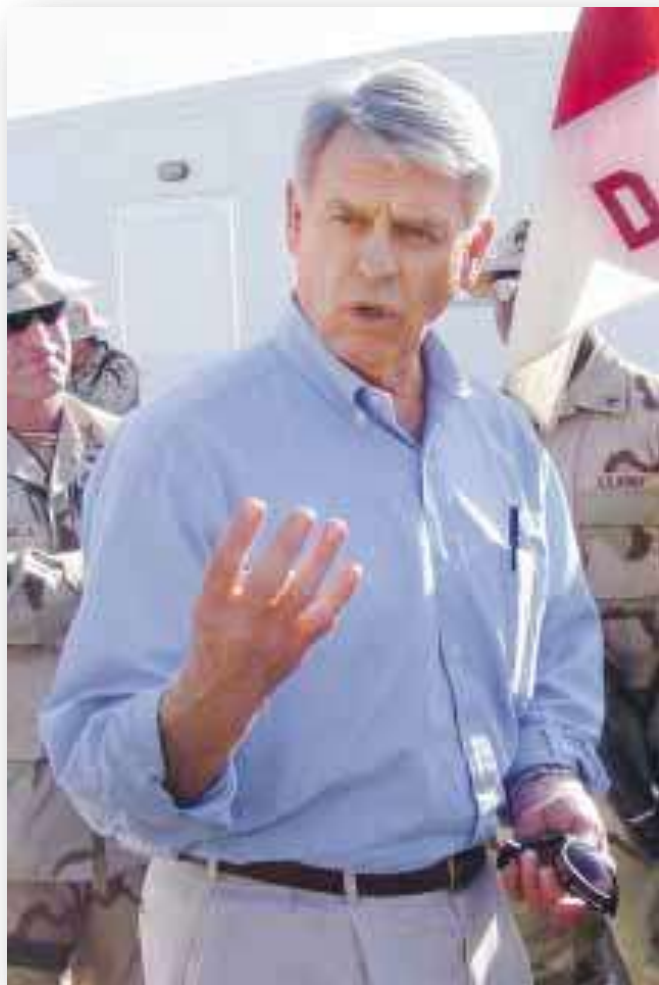
I believe the strategy we have for fighting them is a good one. Not only have our Soldiers provided an opportunity for freedom and democracy for all the people in Afghanistan and Iraq, they are simultaneously protecting the American people. I believe Soldiers understand the gravity of that, maybe more than many other Americans do.

(continued....)



It's so inspiring to talk to some of these young kids who really get it, who understand the meaning of service to country. For example, I read a story this morning about three Soldiers in the Texas National Guard who wanted to go to Iraq. Because the Texas National Guard wasn't scheduled to go, they joined the Arkansas National Guard.

I have found that when Soldiers are wounded and in the hospital, they want to get back to their units as soon as possible. I think the American people are fortunate that we have young Americans who are willing to do that.



Brownlee talks with Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Div., during a visit to Iraq.

Q What do you think the Army's force-stabilization program means to individual Soldiers?

Brownlee: We believe that in time — not in the near future, but in time — we're going to stabilize the Army. We're going to stop moving people so often, we're going to stabilize posts so instead of Soldiers staying put one to three years, they stay five to seven years. This will enable Soldiers to become part of their communities, spouses to get jobs, children to stay in

schools longer. Soldiers will be happier and so will their families. As a result, our units will be stronger. I'm so delighted, because the chief of staff and I agree on that completely, and have from day one.

Q How can Soldiers themselves help affect the future of the Army?

Brownlee: It's a political season. Soldiers have a duty to fight. They also have a right to vote. I want to urge all of them to exercise that right. Our voting campaign theme this year is most relevant: *"It's your future, vote for it!"*

Q You've made many visits to Walter Reed Army Medical Center to talk with wounded Soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. That must have an impact on how you see your own responsibilities to Soldiers.

Brownlee: I love seeing and talking to Soldiers. I want to tell them how much the Army appreciates their service and their sacrifice, and that the Army is committed to taking care of them and their families. I want to tell their spouses, mothers, fathers and children how important the Soldiers are and how important their duty is.

I want to ensure that our Soldiers are receiving the best medical care available, and I commend our medical professionals in the field and at our hospitals for the outstanding care they provide to our Soldiers each and every day.

Q Why have you chosen to stay with the Army all these years?

Brownlee: I've always worked around Soldiers. They're wonderful folks to be with. They're good, honest, hard-working people trying to do the right thing. They have a quality of dedication and service that I admire. And for as long as I've been around the military, I do think I understand things in a way that I can help them and be an effective advocate for issues that have a positive impact on Soldiers and their families.

Q What is your impression of the Soldiers serving today?

Brownlee: People who are senior NCOs and officers have spent years learning, gaining experience, becoming proficient at what they do so that when an emergency came they'd be ready. And boy, did they demonstrate how ready they were.

(continued....)



The American people should be so proud of these people in uniform who make up our military services, because they perform so well. At one point they might be engaged in a firefight with enemies doing all they can to kill them, and that afternoon those same Soldiers will be doing humanitarian tasks to care for noncombatants.

Those who fought World War II have been dubbed "America's greatest generation." They laid down a tough standard for dedication and devotion to country. But these young folks today are going to be called "America's next greatest generation." They already are.

Source: *Soldiers*, October 2004,
www.soldiersmagazine.com
The Official U.S. Army Magazine



And here is "Cap" Brownlee being evacuated from the "D" Zone jungle by "forest penetrator" with help from his Bravo Bulls after being severely wounded in combat during Operation Silver City in March '66.



Frenchy's Whore

FROM THE AUTHOR

My name is Vernon Brewer II. In Vietnam I was called *Dewey*. As a member of the 173rd Airborne infantry I received three purple hearts and memories, good and bad, that remain exceptionally vivid to this day. The raw manuscript of this book won a scholarship from The State University of New York at Brockport. In 1994 I completed work on my novel, *FRENCHY'S WHORE*, which was published by Heart of the Lakes Publishing Company in Interlaken, NY.

Although the title suggests a story of sex, nothing could be further from the truth. *FRENCHY'S WHORE* is a true story written in the third person about teenage paratroopers and how they existed day to day in a strange and violent land. I have been told I have talent in my writings, that even readers who were not there feel as if they had traveled back in time to a place where young men died, loved, dreamed and cried.

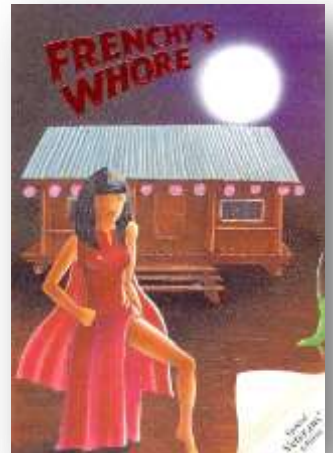
I have never received a rejection slip nor a bad review, but no one could be more surprised than I as to how well this book has been received. To be accepted for publication on your first submission is a writers' dream. To be embraced by thousands of readers is humbling beyond words. To have readers not only understand what I was trying to accomplish with the book, but respond so enthusiastically makes the years of writing and wondering more than worth the effort...

Below are some excerpts (not included here) from the many letters, reviews and comments I have received from around the world. These are more than flattering to me. Their words show I succeeded in touching other minds with the memories I will carry to my grave, and that in some way those who read the book become the protagonist. They feel what he feels, see what he sees, and, more importantly to me, they understand.

That was all I wanted...I got more. I have succeeded in bringing the memories of friends long dead back to life in the minds of all who read about their sacrifice in that nasty little war. (available at Amazon.com)

VERNON E. BREWER II

Note: Our newsletter contains no advertisements, however, we do run reviews of war books with our compliments when written by Sky Soldiers and troopers from attached units. Ed



**HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
APO US Forces 96222
(Declassified)**

MACJ214

11 March 1967

SUBJECT: TRANSLATION REPORT

Log No. 09-1746-46

1. Attached is a full English translation of a captured enemy document.
2. Capture data:
 - a. Date: 26-27 August 66
 - b. Location: YS 540860-538803-570860
 - c. Unit: 173rd Abn Bde
3. Date document received at Combined Document Exploitation Center (CDEC): 3 September 1966.

**HENRY AJIMA
LTC, AIS
Dir, US Elm, CDEC**

KIN*

**LIVERATION ARMY SVN
CONG TRUONG 5
POLITICAL STAFF**

**GUIDANCE FOR HANDLING OF THE ENEMY
SURRENDERS AND PRISONERS OF WAR**

Our military victories have been becoming greater day by day. On the battlefield, enemy battalions and groups have been completely destroyed one by one. These facts have caused the enemy ranks to disintegrate more and more. The morale of the enemy troops is very low.

Defection is widespread among the enemy ranks. Our past activity phase, has shown that more of the enemy have been captured than killed. For instance in the Binh-Son battle there were only 4 enemy killed but 21 were captured.

In order to help cadre fully understand the practical points of the policy concerning prisoners of war and surrenders. To strictly execute it, the following practical points have been outlined by the political staff.



Viet Cong unit on the move thru what may have been canals in the Mekong Delta. (web photo)

Realization of the policy:

The sense of the policy concerns attacking the enemy moral.

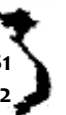
Efficient execution of the policy is to energetically participate in destroying the enemy resistance, in creating defection among them. Inefficient execution of the policy is to reduce oneself and distort the prestige of the policy.

The policy consists of two sides; element and stern. In general, on the element side the enemy surrenders and prisoners of war should not be shot, beaten or insulted. They should be indoctrinated, propagandized and given food, to prevent them from working as servants, fighting for the US troops and Thieu-Ky's henchmen.

Our clemency does not mean that we have to pity, caress, or threat them treat them fairly. That should only cause them to defy our populace and soldiers.

***KIN: The equivalent of "Confidential"**

(continued...)



Enemy prisoners who have repented, revealed and declared the truth, may be released sooner and helped by us for their means of livelihood. On the contrary, enemy obstinate prisoners who have purposely made false statements, protested orders, or attempted to organize the escape etc., would be punished by putting them in an underground cell or starving by reducing their food to a ration; furthermore they could be executed by shooting.

While taking punishment measures towards prisoners we have to show reasonable punishments to make other prisoners agree with our judgments.

1. Classification of prisoners of war:

It is need to classify enemy captured in order to know who are prisoners of war, surrenders, officers, intelligence and security agents, paywar cadre etc.

Towards commanding Staff, intelligence, paywar, security officers, all of them must be tightly tied up separately, and properly changed over.

2. Tightly tie up, carefully blind fold:

All soldiers must always carry cord with them to tie up prisoners of war, this is also a way to show our permanent will to destroy the enemy. Our decision is that whenever we engage the enemy troops we will always destroy them completely.

So, whenever we attack the enemy that means we must take prisoners thus we must have cord (5 meters of cord for one comrade) to tie them up. Each prisoner has to be tied tightly, each of our soldiers must know how to tie, and use the model number 8. Tie them by hanging the handle over the neck. Do not pity them, tie them tightly although they complain; blindfold their eyes using their own scarfs or shirts. Do not let them see our withdrawal formation particularly our KIA, WIA, weapons and equipments. Always beware of them listening to our conversation, and our Unit activities.



“Viet Cong grenade ‘factory’ 1966. (web photo)

Cadre should be assigned to take charge of keeping and controlling enemy officers and stubborn soldiers. For example on the Bau-Ban battle, we did not pay attention to control, an enemy lieutenant colonel named Tu escaped from us by hiding under a heap of KIA, furthermore on the Phuoc-Binh battle, two enemy captains also escaped from us while they were escorted to the local area.

3. On the spot investigation of the enemy prisoners of war in order to swiftly support the battle:

When enemy soldiers are captured during a battle they should be taken to the Political officer for immediate interrogation under this circumstance we can gain useful information on the enemy situation. Thus, we can act accordingly.

For instance during a battle on route number 2 in Ba-Dia on 3 February 1966, if we would have interrogated the enemy prisoners of war on the spot we could have learned of the enemy situation and quickly made an attack on them. At a rubber plantation, the enemy positioned 4 mortars guarded by a company consisting of 60 members. Instead of investigating them on the spot we escorted to the staging area then investigated them thus we had missed an opportunity to attack and seize their mortars. Furthermore, on the Phuoc-Long battle if we had swiftly interrogated the enemy prisoners of war, we could have seized 4 equipment depots, and a great deal of tools and instruments.

4. Escorting of prisoners of war:

Unit commandos must indoctrinate their members to realize that they are the victors, and the enemy prisoners of war are vanquished, they must obey us, not be proposed. All of their previous actions must be allowed by us.

Before escorting prisoners of war, they must be properly searched, tied and blindfolded. Insure thou that they will be secure while moving to our camps that they must obey our commanders’ orders, while encountering air and artillery they must not run away, but obey orders. In the event prisoners see our friendly troops moving, they must be led by another way, or they must wait for the friendly troops to be completely out of sight, do not let them see our troops.

When reach rest stations, whether night or day, all of them must lie down, if they want to sit up, they have to be given permission, allow only one at a time to sit up. When they have a bowel movement, they must be led one at a time 2 or 3 prisoners are not allowed to have a bowel movement at the same time.

(continued...)



Under the circumstance we could not yet change prisoners over to other friendly groups, we have to keep them far from the bivouac areas, beware of them listening to our conversations, others comrades who have no function are not allowed to visit the prisoners place.

- Forbid prisoners talking together.
- Before escorting prisoners to other places, it is needed to beat down the prestige of officers, do not let them control their soldiers. Tell them that all of them are our prisoners, not officers. The higher an officers grade the more crimes he has committed, they must be made aware of this.
- None of them have the right to wear shoes.
- While prisoners are moving, we must suspect their purposed escapes, and warn them on the spot.

5. Operating procedures to seize temporarily keep and change over enemy documents.

Before prisoners are escorted, we must search them one by one, record their belongings in a notebook then let know that. All important documents concerning military field must be seized, all their belongings such as wrist watches, fountain pens, golden finger rings, money...will be temporarily kept by us, when they are released, they will be given back.

Properly search for sharp tools such as knives and lighters hidden on them. Their documents belongings must be escorted with themselves to be used in investigating and indoctrinating them later on.

All valuable documents concerning the enemy situation must be submitted to the Political Staff to support battles. Documents of US troopers written in English must also be sent to the Political Staff for study and translation.

Take good care of enemy film and send it to the Political Staff, do not open movie cameras without asking for permission, because the film could be ruined.

6. Handling of enemy KIA and WIA:

Enemy wounded soldiers are also considered as prisoners of war, they must be concentrated in one place. If convenient, dress their wounds; there after explain to them the clemency policy of the Front and give them our leaflets, give back their belongings, but seize their weapons and equipment then release them.

Wounded intelligence, Staff, paywar security officers must be concentrated in a place and escorted to our base area.

- Enemy killed, if possible, we should arrange them so the enemy can come and police up their dead.
- Put leaflets into the pockets of dead ones.

- Put all belongings documents of dead into our bootles.
- Absolutely do not stab their faces shoot their bodies or seize their Uniforms.



Viet Cong propaganda leaflet circa 1966. (web image)

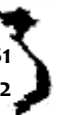
7. Handling of American and their country prisoners:

Do not allow American and third country prisoners to broadcast on radio stations or have press interview.

- American and third country prisoners are war criminals and should not be treated as prisoners of war, their Government has caused the war and did not declare war.

But, the more we capture them the more we have a great effect on the political field.

(continued....)



- So, we must overcome all hardships to escort them to the fixed place.
- They are afraid of dying, and try to flee. Therefore we have to absolutely heighten our vigilance, tie them up tightly, use the model number 8 to tie them, by handing the hands on the neck, under their shoes, do not care if their feet hurt, blindfold their eyes.
- While resting do not allow them to put on shoes.
- While moving do not permit them to talk to each other; string them to each other. While resting tie each of them at each of a foot tree, do not carry weapons while tying them up.

They may be untied to permit them to have a bowel movement, it is required one untie them and one guard them. Guards must be absolutely attentive with a firing position. Let us show an example for vigilance 4 comrades of the Unit.

While escorting American prisoners, heard one of the American say that "The Americans are very bad, the Vietnamese are very good."

Our comrade heard that, they thought that this American had a conscience so they paid attention to him and allowed him to wear shoes. They did not tie him up tightly, nor blindfold his eyes. Because of that, he grabbed a weapon of one comrade and ran away. As a result we failed in carrying out stipulated operating procedures.

On the contrary, some of our comrades have purposely allowed the enemy to escape, then shot at them. Therefore they did not have to escort the enemy. This happened because comrades were afraid of hardships. Comrades must overcome their fear of hardships. Prisoners must be escorted to fixed places to gain effects in the political field. Their rations were not favored.

They should be treated as RVN prisoners, give them cooked rice, even if they do not want to eat, when starving they will eat it. Do not give them any milk or bread; when they get sick, given them medical treatment, and rice gruel. Some Units gave them milk and bread, that is wrong.

Stubborn prisoners should be punished by standing in the sun be tied under the foot of a tree, kept in a cell underground or starving.

The following are a number of experiences in calling and capturing the enemy prisoners.

-While appealing to the enemy, our positions were exposed, causing the enemy to shoot at us. Next time, when fighting do not call the enemy defeated this is also wrong. We only appeal to the enemy when we can dominate the situation, or encircle them. We have to

shout as follows to oppress the enemy morale: "Do not resist any longer, it is hopeless because you are besieged". "Surrender or you will be killed"; "Shoot at your officers and leave your ranks, you all will be kindly trusted" or "Already surrender, you will be sooner released".

When calling the enemy you should have a secure position.

When assaulting you have to remind each other do not be afraid of being revealed but directly attack to press the enemy. When the enemy surrenders it is needed to properly prepare, assign comrades in charge of capturing, supporting. Do not rush at the same time to capture them.

Beware of enemy grenade throwing when capturing, we must order them to put down their arms, move to our indicated place.

- Classify enemy officers, and tie them up carefully control and guard them.

Suppose we captured hundreds of prisoners and have no operating procedure. In this case nor should meet many difficulties. So we need to anticipate and know the procedures in capturing prisoners.

Based on this document, the political section will guide all Units carrying out.

POLITICAL SECTION GROUP 94



VC women.

VC arms making at Tunnel system.



(Photos and images added to this report. Ed)



Washington State Veterans and Allied Forces of the Vietnam War Memorial



Good day and hoping that life is treating you well,

Although not complete in the final form, the Memorial remembering Washington State Veterans and Allied Forces of the Vietnam War was dedicated in a ceremony on Saturday, 16 June. Below is a link to article published in the *Auburn Reporter*.

The basic monument is as you see it. We yet have 700 spaces for honor tiles available. The tiles are available for a donation, and you can honor veterans of the Vietnam War, living or passed. If you would like reserve a tile to honor those veterans in general, or a specific unit, or a specific veteran - we welcome you. Tile Order forms are available at the web site listed below.

We are currently working with the city of Auburn Parks Department to insure that we meet all of their requirements and to make sure that our effort is complete. We will be conducting final clean-up of tile faces, flag lighting, electrical completion, and site improvement in the near future. For the moment, we are taking a deep breath!

We have raised sufficient funds to pay for construction as viewed. Our completion "loan" is paid off and we have funds to make a few changes and complete City of Auburn requirements. Future tiles and maintenance funds will be generated both through sale of tiles and future fund raising efforts.

Plans are underway for a ceremony of remembrance at the memorial site in conjunction with the City of Auburn's Veterans Day Parade.

Reminder: We have 700 spots left so join us in remembering these proud Veterans' Service.

You may follow events and progress at
www.honorvietnamvets.org

Thank you for your time and may you have the best of weeks,

Steve Konek, Sr.
Treasurer
(173d HQ Bde, RVN)

Note: My efforts towards this memorial are dedicated to my good friend Phan Thai who could not see it completed, to Nguyen Phuc, KIA, to Kien Hien, and Kien Can, KIA.

A few of the tiles on the Memorial Wall in Auburn

SGT NGUYEN PHUC 1967
ARMY RSVN 173RD AIRBORNE
KIA BATTLE OF THE SLOPES
REST IN PEACE BROTHER
0005

173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE
1965-1971 KIA 1,647
"SKY SOLDIERS"
UNITED STATES ARMY
0036

THAI PHAN
173RD ABN-75TH RANGER-SF
RSVN ARMY-NAVY 1964-1975
02/27/1941-06/20/2014
0014

STEPHEN E.A. KONEK SR.
173RD ABN BDE - 4TH PSYOP
1966-1968 RSVN
ALL THE WAY! AIRBORNE
0013

Auburn dedicates hub for healing the wounds of war
<http://www.auburn-reporter.com/news/auburn-dedicates-hub-for-healing-the-wounds-of-war/>



Vietnam Memorial ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Lydia the Tattooed Lady

Sung by Groucho Marx in *At the Circus* (1939)

Lydia, oh Lydia. Say have you met Lydia?

Oh, Lydia, the tattooed Lady.

She has eyes that folks adore so,
and a torso even more so.

Lydia, oh Lydia, that "Encyclopedia."

Oh Lydia, the queen of tattoo.

On her back is the Battle of Waterloo.

Beside it the Wreck of the Hesperus too.

And proudly above waves the Red, White and Blue.

You can learn a lot from Lydia.



She can give you a view of the world in tattoo
If you step up and tell her where.

For a dime you can see Kankakee or Par-ee
Or Washington crossing the Delaware.

Oh, Lydia oh Lydia. Say have you met Lydia?

Oh, Lydia, the tattooed Lady.

When her muscles start relaxin'
Up the hill comes Andrew Jackson.

Lydia, oh Lydia, that "Encyclo-pedia."

Oh Lydia, the champ of them all.

For two bits she will do a Mazurka in jazz,
With a view of Niag'ra that no artist has.

And on a clear day you can see Alcatraz.

You can learn a lot from Lydia.

La-la-la. La-la-la. La-la-la. La-la-la.

Come along and see Buff'lo Bill with his lasso.

Just a little classic by Mendel Picasso.

Here is Captain Spaulding exploring the Amazon.

And Godiva, but with her pajamas on.

La-la-la. La-la-la. La-la-la. La-la-la.

Here is Grover Whalen unveilin' the Trylon.

Over on the west coast we have Treasure Islan'.

Here's Nijinsky a doin' the Rhumba.

Here's her Social Security numba.

La-la-la. La-la-la. La-la-la. La-la-la.

Lydia, oh Lydia. Say have you met Lydia?

Oh, Lydia, the champ of them all.

She once swept an Admiral clear off his feet.
The ships on her hips made his heart skip a beat.
And now the old boy's in command of the fleet.
For he went and married Lydia.



Groucho sings *Lydia the Tattooed Lady* in *At the Circus* in 1939.

"**Lydia, the Tattooed Lady**" is a 1939 song written by Yip Harburg and Harold Arlen. It first appeared in the Marx Brothers movie *At the Circus* (1939) and became one of Groucho Marx's signature tunes.

The complex lyrics by Harburg – with clever rhymes such as "Lydia/encyclopedia" and "Amazon/pajamas on" – were inspired by W. S. Gilbert. Harburg made many contemporary references to topical personalities such as Grover Whalen, who opened the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Among the items, persons, and scenes tattooed on Lydia's body are the Battle of Waterloo (on her back), *The Wreck of the Hesperus* (beside it), the red, white and blue (above them); the cities of Kankakee and "Paree", *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, President Andrew Jackson, Niagara, Alcatraz, Buffalo Bill, Captain Spaulding (Groucho's character in *Animal Crackers*) exploring the Amazon, Lady Godiva (with her pajamas on), Grover Whalen, the Trylon, Treasure Island, Nijinsky, Social Security Number and a fleet of ships (on her hips). Alternate lyrics imply that Lydia's buttocks have tattoos of a globe (or a map of the world) and a caricature of Hitler (that she sits on).

In 1950, Groucho famously 'stopped' trading at the New York Stock Exchange by commandeering a microphone and singing the song before telling jokes for 15 minutes, during which time traders suspended their work to watch him perform.

(From Wikipedia, the free encyclo-pedia)

"He may look like an idiot and talk like an idiot but don't let that fool you. He really is an idiot."

— Groucho Marx



Francis George Stevens

PFC

A/2/503

KIA 29 Jun 66

Operation Yorktown



Francis George Stevens

Col Smith,

For your records, please accept these photos of PFC Francis George Stevens. They were recently posted to the VVMF.org website, where I obtained them.

PFC Stevens was a first cousin of mine, but I was only a year old when he was killed on 29 June 1966, so I never had a chance to know him. He was the youngest son of my father's older sister.

I'm sure you'll find with minimal research that PFC Stevens died during a particularly brutal battle during Operation YORKTOWN that cost the lives of 12 men of the 173d, A/2/503. SSgt Charlie Morris was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions there that day.

Ronald L. Sedlak wrote a very powerful eyewitness account titled "A Day For Heroes" in your 2/503 *Vietnam Newsletter*, Issue 67. It was from that narrative that my side of the family finally learned the details of PFC Stevens' death.

I'm hoping you might be able to edit issue 67 and add at least one of PFC Stevens' photos to it.

Thank you for keeping his memory alive.

Respectfully,

Bruce R. Harper



Francis George Stevens

Panel 8E, Line 110 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Born: 6/18/1945

KIA: 6/29/1966

Home of Record: Ellsworth, Hancock County, ME

Rank: PFC

Note:

The note above and photos were emailed to Col. Ken Smith, who in turn sent them in. While we cannot revise Issue 67 as requested, we are honored to include this special recognition here of our 2/503 brother, Francis George Stevens. Ed



Lest we forget...

Veterans Legacy Program: Major Pauline Cushman, actress turned Union Spy

March 16, 2018 Posted in Memorial Affairs, Veterans Legacy Program by Kenneth Holliday



"Photograph of Pauline Cushman, who served as a Union Spy during the Civil War."

Major Pauline Cushman lived a life full of adventure and travel. She spent the majority of her life pursuing a career as an actress. In 1863, during the Civil War, she was presented with the greatest acting role of her life. She became a spy for the Union.

She was born as Harriett Wood in New Orleans on June 10, 1833. Her family moved to Michigan when she was a young girl. Cushman never enjoyed living in the mid-West and desired to live in the big city. When she was just 17 years old, she left her family and moved to New York City to pursue a career in theater.

She quickly found acting jobs in the city and took the stage name Pauline Cushman. After a few years there, she met a musician named Charles Dickinson. The two married in February 1853 and later moved to Cleveland, Ohio. They had two children, Charles and Ida, before Charles Dickinson enlisted in the 41st Ohio Infantry in 1861.

Charles Dickinson only spent about 9 months in the Army before being discharged. He returned home

extremely sick, suffering from dysentery. Cushman struggled to care for both him and their two young children and moved in with Dickinson's father.

Dickinson's health continued to rapidly decline. He died 6 months later in December 1862.

To the protest of her late husband's family, Cushman returned to acting following her husband's death. She left her children in the care of the family in Cleveland and traveled to Louisville, Kentucky. Kentucky was a hotbed of dissent during the war. Internal division within the state between Unionists and Confederate supporters was tense and often broke out in violence. Within that tension, Cushman stumbled upon the opportunity of a lifetime.

One evening, after a stage performance, a group of Confederate supporters approached Cushman. They offered her \$350 to make a toast to Confederate President Jefferson Davis in lieu of President Lincoln during her next performance. She accepted the proposal and took the money, but reported the bribe to Union authorities. To her surprise, the Union authorities told her to oblige the group and make the toast. They believed that doing so would allow Cushman to get closer to the inner circles of the Confederate dissenters.

The following evening, Cushman made the toast during her performance. Though the action cost her job at the theater, it earned the trust of the Confederate group. Impressed by her apparent loyalty to the Confederate President, the group quickly introduced Cushman to the inner circles. Her career as a Union spy had officially begun.



(continued....)





"Photograph of Major Pauline Cushman Fryer in her officer's uniform."

Cushman traveled to Tennessee acting as a supporter for the Confederacy. Overtime, she began to fraternize with Confederate military leaders. When she did, she would steal information and secrets about the Confederate Army and pass them to the Union. Her contacts in the Union Army warned her of the risks and tried to convince her not to physically steal any documents. Instead, she was encouraged to only study information and pass it on based on memory alone. Cushman ignored these precautions.

In the spring of 1863, Cushman stole a map that contained the whereabouts of the Army of Tennessee and stuffed it into her boot. While attempting to cross into Union lines, some Confederate soldiers grew suspicious of her travels and stopped her. They discovered the map in her boot, arrested her, and took her to Confederate General Braxton Bragg's headquarters where Bragg had her tried as a spy. The trial found Cushman guilty and sentenced her to death by hanging.

However, Cushman experienced a string of luck in the days following the verdict. While awaiting execution she fell ill. Though falling ill may not normally be considered lucky, this illness saved Cushman's life.

Her sudden illness forced the Confederates to delay the execution. As they waited for her to recover, the Union Army began to advance towards Confederate positions where they held Cushman. The Confederate Army decided to withdraw from the area, leaving Cushman behind with a local doctor. When the Union lines reached Cushman, they rescued her just days before her scheduled execution.

Cushman made a full recovery from her illness and returned North. Her bravery and service to the Union was widely recognized. She received public attention and recognition from General Garfield (future U.S. President) and President Lincoln, who awarded her the honorary rank of Brevet Major.

It was the adventure of a lifetime, and Cushman spent many years telling her story. She traveled throughout the East, entertaining the fascinated public with her tales.

Unfortunately, as time went by so did the people's interest in the stories of the Civil War. The Reconstruction era proved hard for Cushman to find willing listeners, as the public grew weary of hearing about the war that had ravaged the country.

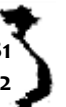
Cushman decided to move to the West, hoping that her stories would resonate better there. But there too, she struggled to hold the public's interest. She moved to San Francisco for a short time where she married August Fichtner in December 1872. Fichtner died within the year, and Cushman became a widow once more.

In 1879, Cushman married Jeremiah Fryer in Arizona. The couple ran a hotel for about ten years, but Cushman struggled with the lifestyle. The two separated in 1890 after the death of their adopted daughter. Cushman then moved back to San Francisco to try acting again. She found little success there and finally accepted that her days of acting were over.

Cushman's health began to rapidly decline in the following years. She suffered from severe arthritis and developed an addiction to doctor-prescribed morphine. She died on December 1, 1893 at the age of 60. Though she was alone at the time, she was not forgotten. The Grand Army Republic learned of her death and held a large funeral with military honors for her. She now lies in the Officer's Circle at the Presidio in the San Francisco National Cemetery. Her grave marker simply reads *"Pauline C. Fryer—Union Spy."*

Last year, the Veterans Legacy Program partnered with San Francisco State University to conduct research on Veterans buried at local national cemeteries....

(continued....)



....The students and faculty there created a series of short films about the stories that they discovered at Golden Gate and San Francisco national Cemeteries. Pauline Cushman's remarkable story is one of them.



This partnership is one of the ongoing efforts to modernize the way that we memorialize Veterans. In May 2016, the NCA launched the Veterans Legacy Program in order to engage students, teachers, and the public with stories about the lives of Veterans. To find out more about the Veterans Legacy Program, please visit the website located here:

<https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/>

You can watch SFSU's short film about Cushman here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8l4OtenN34Y>

In recognition of Women's History Month, please join us in honoring the service and legacy of Major Pauline Cushman-Fryer.

Author:

Ken Holliday is part of the Veterans Legacy Program at the National Cemetery Administration. He is also a proud Army Veteran, having served in the Infantry with deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan.



Source:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/46477/veterans-legacy-program-major-pauline-cushman-actress-turned-union-spy/>



Defensive Duo



A machine gunner sights in on targets while working with Army Col. Jay Bartholomees, the commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, during a base defense live-fire training exercise in Slovenia, March 13, 2018.

(Army photo by Lt. Col. John Hall)

THE COMMANDER



Col. James B. Bartholomees, III, was part of the 3rd Ranger Battalion's 2003 Iraq assault. As a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment, he deployed nine times to Afghanistan. He served with the regiment in positions ranging from company commander to task force commander. The Colonel assumed command of the 173d Airborne Brigade on July 7, 2017, in Vicenza, Italy.





"In Issue 80 you posted an article about General Allen, and I have this picture of a group of us with him in mid '68. I am the last guy on the right in the back row. I recall Paul Rocheleau and Lt Price but not the others. I started out with B/2/503rd in Mid Nov of '67 and in early '68 transferred to the Brigade Signal Company and these men were all in the Signal Company as well. I thought this picture might be of interest to others." John Bowers, B/2/503

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Readout of Secretary Mattis' Meeting with Vietnam Minister of National Defense Ngo Xuan Lich

June 1, 2018

Secretary of Defense Spokesperson CAPT Jeff Davis provided the following readout:

Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis met with Vietnam Minister of National Defense Ngo Xuan Lich on the sidelines of the International Institute for Strategic Studies' 17th Asia Security Summit, also known as the Shangri-La Dialogue, in Singapore on June 1. This was the fourth meeting between the two leaders since August 2017.

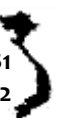
Secretary Mattis and Minister Lich discussed the regional security environment and highlighted historic progress in the defense relationship since their last meeting, including the first post-war visit by a U.S. aircraft carrier to Vietnam in March 2018.

They also reviewed progress on efforts to enhance the defense partnership, with a focus on increasing cooperation on maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping operations, while continuing to address legacy of war issues.

Secretary Mattis affirmed his support for a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam and its leadership role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The two leaders agreed that a strong U.S.-Vietnam defense relationship promotes regional and global security, including in the South China Sea.

This relationship is based on mutual respect and common interests, including freedom of navigation, upholding for international law, and respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.





Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~ 2018



82nd Airborne Division 72nd Annual Convention 2018, August 8-11, 2018, Orlando, FL. Contact: 910-223-1182.



101st and 2nd 502 Reunion, Chicago, IL, August 15-19, 2018. Contact: www.2nd502.org/index.php?page=reunioninfo



101st Abn Div 2nd/501st E Co, Recon, Mortars & HQ (Vietnam), Wilmington, NC, September 20-23, 2018. Contact: James Hill 704-310-1800, tomnbonnie@bellsouth.net



1st Annual Florida Airborne Jamboree 2018, Sebring, FL, September 21-22, 2018. Contact: Jose Perez, skysoldier1305@aol.com 305-205-1948.

NOTE: If you are aware of any upcoming "Airborne" or attached unit reunions, please email complete details to rto173@att.net for inclusion in our newsletter.



Airborne...All The Way!



2/503 practice jump, RVN 1966
(Photo by Pat Bowe, Recon/2/503)

Aurora Exchange



U.S. and Japanese soldiers exchange jump wings after conducting an airborne proficiency operation at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, June 13, 2018, during Exercise Arctic Aurora.

(Air Force photo by Justin Connaher)

***"If you don't write it down,
it never happened."***

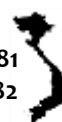
Jim Bethea

HHC/2/503, '65/'66



"Jim on radio watch in the S-3 tent at Camp Zinn near Bien Hoa, circa '65/'66. "

(Photo by RTO Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503 '65/'66)

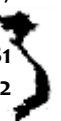


Training Support Activity Europe



“U.S. Army Paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, conduct an airborne operation from a U.S. Air Force 86th Air Wing C-130 Hercules aircraft at Juliet Drop Zone in Pordenone, Italy Dec. 12, 2017. The 173rd Airborne Brigade is the U.S. Army Contingency Response Force in Europe, capable of projecting ready forces anywhere in the U.S. European, Africa or Central Commands' areas of responsibility. ”

(U.S. Army Photos by Paolo Bovo)





Long Binh Jail (also called LBJ or the "LBJ Ranch" or Long Binh Stockade) was a U.S. military stockade located at Long Binh Post, in Đồng Nai Province, South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It was generally referred to as "Long Binh Jail", or more commonly just "LBJ".

History and Operation

Long Binh Jail was established in 1966 by the US Army as a temporary stockade designed to hold about four hundred prisoners and was located on Long Binh Post approximately 20 kilometers northeast of Saigon. It replaced a stockade that held about 200 prisoners located at Pershing Field, Tan Son Nhut Air Base at Saigon.

Prisoners were separated by the seriousness of the charges or convictions against them and housed in tents with wooden floors. There were minimum, medium and maximum security areas for the prisoners as well as a mess hall, work areas and an administrative building. Maximum security prisoners were housed individually in five foot by 7 foot sheet metal and wood boxes or in CONEX containers measuring 6 foot by nine foot.

When the stockade opened in 1966, the tents used in the minimum and medium security areas were designed to hold about eight men. However, by August 1968 each contained fourteen men. It was estimated it would take about 280 officers and men to adequately control the stockade, but by August 1968 there were only ninety assigned.

Men committing felonies requiring sentences of less than one year were assigned to LBJ for confinement, with the sentence considered "bad time" not applied towards their assigned 365-day tour in Vietnam, as well as their enlistment contract. LBJ also served as a holding facility for more serious crimes requiring confinement in the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Others confined at LBJ included those awaiting trial as well as those who had served their sentence and awaiting being returned to their assigned unit. Often these were not wanted by their old unit, which would not issue orders for their transfer out of the stockade. The facility was turned over to the South Vietnamese government in 1973.

1968 Riot

On the night of August 29, 1968, a group of African American inmates approached the administration building at 11:45 p.m. and attacked the guards. Chaos erupted as other inmates joined the riot. These began to set fire to buildings, burning the mess hall, the barber shop, latrine, administration, and finance buildings. About 200 inmates took part in destroying the camp.

The rioters beat white inmates as well as attacked guards. Despite the violence, only four inmates escaped and one prisoner was killed. The next day, members of the 720th Military Police Battalion arrived. The MPs surrounded the camp and set up a perimeter at the gate.

The riot ended on September 7, leaving 52 inmates and 63 MPs injured. The prisoners were moved to an area outside LBJ surrounded by barbed wire. Members of the 720th Military Police Battalion communication detachment were sent to rewire the prison.

The sole fatality was Private Edward Haskett of St. Petersburg, Florida, who was beaten to death by the rioters with a shovel.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_B%C3%ACnh_Jail

On the night of August 29, 1968, the U.S. Army Vietnam Installation Stockade (USARVIS) at Long Binh erupted in a prisoner revolt. Blacks represented nearly 90 percent of LBJ's inmate population and racial tensions, combined with allegations of rampant drug use, were the primary causes of the uprising. Accusations of abuse and neglect, combined with overcrowding, frustration and drugs, served as the catalysts. The uprising caught guards and many of the inmates by surprise. When they realized what was happening, many other prisoners joined in the riot. A group of 200 began systematically destroying the camp, while beating white inmates and guards with any impromptu weapon they could get their hands on, including wood planks and bars from dismantled beds. The only fatality was PVT Edward O. Haskett, a white soldier who was beaten to death with a shovel. The uprising had left 63 MPs and 52 inmates injured. Following the incident, 129 courts-martial were levied against the insurrectionists for charges including murder, assault on a superior officer, aggravated assault, mutiny, aggravated arson, larceny and willful destruction of government property.

[Taken from historynet.com]

(continued....)



Edward O. Day Haskett

Private

173d Airborne Brigade

July 7, 1949 ~ August 30, 1968

St. Petersburg, FL



"Sky Soldier Honored"

"On behalf of myself and all your fellow paratroopers who served with the 173rd 'Herd' Brigade in Vietnam, we offer our respect and regrets for your sacrifice. May you rest in peace and never be forgotten."

Mike Switzer



Color Guard Honors



The 75th Ranger Regiment Color Guard posts the colors during a Pointe du Hoc Ranger Monument commemoration ceremony in Cricqueville-en-Bessin, France, June 5, 2018.

(DoD photo by Navy Chief Petty Officer Michael McNabb)

DOD Identifies Army Casualty

June 9, 2018

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Octave Shield.

Staff Sgt. **Alexander W. Conrad**, 26, of Chandler, Arizona, died June 8, in Somalia of injuries sustained from enemy indirect fire. The incident is under investigation.



Conrad was assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

For more information regarding Conrad, media may contact U.S. Army Special Operations Command Public Affairs Office, Lt. Col. Robert Bockholt at 910-494-1589, or via email at matthew.bockholt@socom.mil

Additional queries may also be directed to U.S. Africa Command (Stuttgart, Germany) Public Affairs Office at +49-(0)151-4217-6009 or +49-(0)9641-70-591-0229 or via email to africom-pao-media@mail.mil

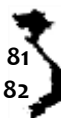
Admin note: date of incident/death given is local time for Somalia.

Rest easy, Trooper.



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For You Sky Soldier Hackers....



#USOpen



June 11 - 17, 2018

This great photo taken at this year's U.S. Open, was sent to bride Reggie by our friend Missi DeMorat, and is shared here with Missi's consent – that's Missi, second from right in the photo. You paratrooping golfers within our ranks will get a kick out of the backstory to the pic you see here.

Standing to Missi's left is Mike, a top cop here in Florida and Missi's husband whom, along with their kids were our good neighbors for nigh on 15 years. And to Missi's right is their son Michael "Mickey" DeMorat who spent his 23rd birthday enjoying his pro golf debut at this year's U.S. Open, making the cut and finishing with a most respectable 72, 72, 80 & 73.....numbers hackers like us only dream about but on a muni course!

For those of us who know these good people, it was a genuine thrill to watch Mickey's progress, not only during this year's Open, where he honored his dad by asking him to caddy for him, but over the years at Eastern Florida University then Liberty University where he was a national standout in golf.

You jumping golf addicts out there will want to put Mickey DeMorat on your watch list. We think he's going to do quite well on the Tour, thank you very much.

When we first moved to our home in this neighborhood in '03, Reggie kept finding golf balls in the street and on our lawn. *"I didn't know where they were coming from,"* she told me. Then we spotted him, often in his own front lawn practicing chipping was a 9 or 10 year-old Mickey, and seen there often, and the source of the wayward golf balls (his chipping has dramatically improved since then). *"When you realized it was the neighbor kid did you give him the balls back?"* I asked her. *"No,"* she said, *"I gave them to you!"*

Also seen in this photo, and to Mickey's right, is his sister Brooke, a nurse and her friend Vinny Smith, then Mickey's youngest brother Tim, who'll be playing football this year for Fordham University as a QB. Not shown is Mike and Missi's other son, Peter, who leads in a different way as an active duty Army Ranger...RLTW!!
Go Mickey!

Lew "Smitty" Smith, Editor

HHC/2/503, '65/'66

2/503d Vietnam Newsletter



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / Jul.-Aug. 2018 – Issue 81

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While we're on the subject of golf....

PGA Hope puts Veterans in the swing of things

June 21, 2018 10:00



Carissa DiPietro just wants to improve at a sport that is helping her get better.

The three are among almost four dozen Veterans who spend Monday afternoons at Oakwood Park Golf Course in suburban Milwaukee as part of PGA Hope, a six-week program that provides Veterans with instruction, course access and adaptive equipment, if needed.

PGA HOPE — Helping Our Patriots Everywhere — is the flagship military program of **PGA REACH**, the charitable foundation of the **PGA** (Professional Golfers' Association) of America. The program helps Veterans with disabilities enhance their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being through golf.

The Milwaukee program is in its third year. This year, about 50 Veterans are participating, up from 30 last year, said Chet Hendrickson, golf services manager for Milwaukee County Parks.

PGA volunteer instructors undergo training on how to specifically work with Veterans, Hendrickson said.

"There's kind of a sample prosthetic, so we learned how to swing as if we were wearing a prosthetic," Hendrickson said. *"Also, what to say around Veterans and maybe what not to say."*

At each session, half the group begins with putting instruction, while the other half heads to the driving range. Afterward, the Veterans can play the course.



Pete Mittelstaedt lines up his wheels to line up his putt. Pete golfs with the aid of a Paramobile, a specially designed cart maintained by the Stand Up and Play Foundation.



Ray Martinez is hoping his softball-like swing magically corrects itself.

(continued)



Pete Mittelstaedt, who served in the Marine Corps from 1963 to 1968, has been in a wheelchair for 12 years. He golfs with the aid of a Paramobile, a specially designed cart maintained by the Stand Up and Play Foundation. The cart raises a golfer from a sitting to a standing position, enabling him or her to take a natural golf swing. It also can be used on the green.

"I love it," Mittelstaedt said. "Before all this happened, well, I wouldn't call it golfing, but I was out there hitting the ball...The biggest problem is I can't get enough on the ball," Mittelstaedt said. "You always want to kill it and drive it a million miles."

Mittelstaedt, 75, who also hunts, competes in a variety of golf tournaments, such as the week-long National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament in Iowa City, Iowa.

"At the TEE tournament last year, you play best ball and a number of them were my drives," said Mittelstaedt, who has traded distance for accuracy. "The other guys were killing it and winding up in the woods or the creek. Mine's on the fairway. It's not going a million miles, but you've got to use my ball because it's playable."

Martinez jokes about his multi-sport swing, but is serious about the impact of the PGA Hope program. Under the watchful eye of an instructor, Martinez addresses the driving-range golf ball, slowly draws his club back like a pro in a how-to video — and then unleashes a wicked full-throttle swing better suited for his next softball game.

The Army National Guard Veteran punctuates the slice-producing effort with a laugh and then gratefully accepts the next round of coaching.

"I loved it last year," said Martinez, in his second year with the program. "One of my favorite lessons was the sand trap lesson ... because, like in baseball, you choke up on your bat, you choke up on that club and you open it and you push the sand and it's the sand that lofts the ball up in the air and out of the bunker. After I tried that a few times, I was like, 'Look at me!'" he said. "I'm making it happen."

DiPietro, an Army Veteran, is the lone female in the program this year. She talks openly about her struggles since the death of her 5-year-old daughter in 2001.

"Four years ago, I wasn't getting out of bed," DiPietro said. "My depression hit an all-time high. And I never thought I'd live to 40 and I turned 40 last year. This month is my 41st birthday. Whatever gets me out of bed and keeps me alive."

Golf provides a therapeutic outlet, DiPietro said and she was extremely excited about immediate improvement, which she credited to Erika Pirkel, player

development coordinator for the Wisconsin PGA and a volunteer instructor.

"Just the swing alone," DiPietro said. "That's what was keeping me so inconsistent. Just her teaching me the swing and the movement and that it's similar to the sports I used to play — softball and volleyball."

"I love golf. It's against myself. I'm only trying to do better," she said. "This is really relaxing for me because my husband's a lot better than I am and I'm very inconsistent. That's why I want to do this."

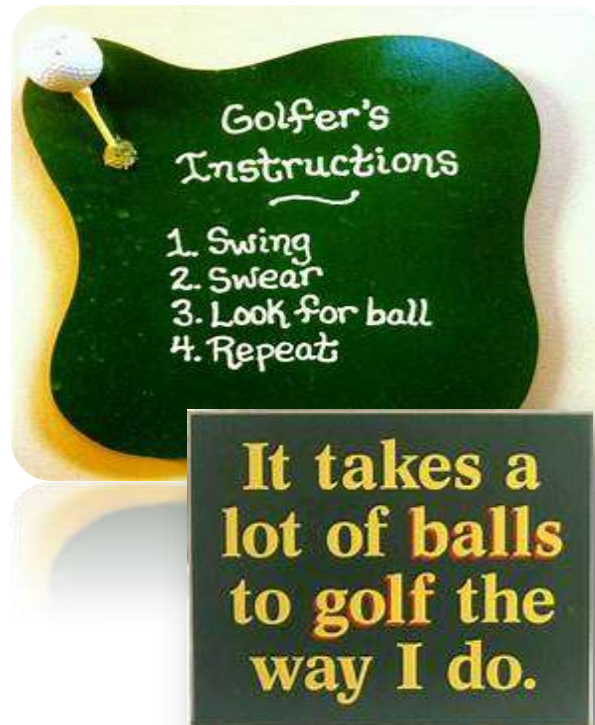
Mittelstaedt missed the first week of this year's sessions because of a volunteer commitment. He often helps college students learn what it's like to use a wheelchair and also volunteers at the Milwaukee VA. "There have been people who have done so much for me," he said. "I can go out and play anytime. It's better to give once in a while."



Jim Hoehn is a public affairs specialist at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center.



And since we're talking about golf...



Japs Quit Corregidor Cave To Surrender, Praise U.S.



SURRENDER on 6 May 1942 in Corregidor that ended conventional military operations against the Japanese.
(Generic web photo and caption)

MANILA (AP) – Twenty Japanese soldiers and sailors who came out Thursday and surrendered to the American soldiers working on the island.

Waving surrender flags and carrying surrender documents, the Japanese marched into the American company area and made the startled Yanks think that they were having New Year's heebie jeebies.

The Japanese said that they were forced underground last February by the American bombardment. They did not know of the surrender until a couple of weeks ago, when they saw an old newspaper describing Japan's defeat.

The Japanese surrender document said that they had read surrender leaflets dropped by the Americans months ago *"but for the first time, we could not believe it because we were taught that our country never surrendered before."* It continued, *"Although our father country surrendered to the United States or America, our feelings and minds are very happy because we have done our best during wartime and now the United States of America is the victor of the war and the hero of the world. We are glad to see peace again between the United States of America and Japan."*

"By the surrender of our country the war ended and we are not your enemy anymore. We promise you our sincerity and express our highest respects of good friendship hereafter."

Fourteen soldiers and six sailors were freshly shaven and had pressed uniforms. Doctors said that they were in excellent health. Americans who examined the cave said that the group had a snug nest hundreds of feet in the rock.

Source:

Stars and Stripes, 4 January 1946, courtesy MacArthur Memorial Archives, as posted on 503rd Heritage Battalion website.



Equipment Drop



A C-17 aircraft drops equipment for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team during an airborne insertion exercise at Miroslawiec Air Base, Poland, June 8, 2018, as part of Swift Response 18, a joint Army-Air Force exercise.
(Michigan National Guard photo by Pvt. Chris Estrada)

Paratrooper Quote

"Was there any meaning to life or to war, that two men should sit together and jump within seconds of each other and yet never meet on the ground below?"

— David Kenyon Webster, *Parachute Infantry: An American Paratrooper's Memoir of D-Day and The Fall of the Third Reich*



"NEGROS – ONE OF THE TOUGHEST"



By Dr. Ralph E. Llewellyn

**THE BATTLE FOR NEGROS ISLAND TURNED
OUT TO BE ONE OF THE TOUGHEST.
WE SUSTAINED MANY CASUALTIES.**



"Once again, we were delivered by boat rather than aircraft. Some of us embarked upon a drop, only to have the aircraft land at Iloilo, where we were told to leave our parachutes on the plane. We then trucked to the port, from where we were ferried over to Negros." (Photo courtesy Steve Foster)

I was asked by Harold (Dick) Templeman to write on the Negros Island Operation in the Philippines for the new edition of the *Return to Corregidor*. I told him there should be many more knowledgeable than I, but would give it a try.

After several attempts to put something on paper, I realized I could only remember a few places where action or events tend not to let one forget. Many periods I could not remember at all until I remembered my Mother had said that she had saved all my letters. If you are able to find letters you wrote over 34 years ago, you are in for an experience!

I can only say after reading my own letters, it seems as if they were written by someone else. Many events, places, and people I wrote about cannot be recalled after this much time. In addition to these letters and what I remembered, my sources of information include discussions at past reunions and help from John Habecker, Johnnie Grooms, George Kojima, and Joe Shanahan, all of whom were in my platoon. Also, you must realize this will be the viewpoint of a nineteen-year-old Pfc who at the age of eighteen was told by the draft board if he did not graduate by January, he would

be drafted without a high school diploma. I have often wondered if I had not gone to summer school would they have drafted me before I graduated from high school?

At one of our 503rd Reunions, a Regimental Headquarters man stated that even though the Negros Operation was our last, we sustained our highest casualties over any of the previous ones. How true this is I do not know, but I do know after 67 days in combat, our machine gun platoon was down to one gun and four or five men. So far as I know, there were only six men in our platoon who started from Mindoro and were present when the Japs surrendered.

Again, let me stress, the following will be a very narrow view of the Negros Operation; it will only be what was seen by one 30 cal. machine gun platoon attached to E Company.

(continued....)



The 2nd and 3rd Bn. of the 503rd RCT left Mindoro Island around the last of March, 1945, with the 1st Bn.

to follow. We were told we would be jumping from C-46's rather than C-47's which we were used to. I can remember worrying that I might draw the door that was opposite to the ones we were used to jumping from in the C-47's. This was "no sweat", since we didn't jump but landed on Panay Island and took LCI's to Negros Island. We were transported in 40th Division ducks through the town of Bacolod, past bombed-out Japanese air fields where we were to start the longest action of the war for our outfit.



"Troops unload from LCMs [Landing Craft Mechanized]. File Number: 310128. Released: April 9, 1945. Panay 'incident' avenged as U.S. forces advance in Philippines. Seizing another strategic objective in the Philippines campaign--and in a sense 'avenging' the Jap [Japanese] sinking of the Navy gunboat USS Panay in China on December 10, 1937, U.S. Forces invade the island of Panay on March 18, 1945. The defenders were crushed within 60 hours. Pouring down the ramp of a landing craft, soldiers hit the beach on Panay. 18 March 1945." (Official U.S. Navy Photograph, Gift of Mary Noble, from the collection of the National WWII Museum)

Note: We are unsure if soldiers shown landing are 503rd, but date and mode of transportation coincide with this report. Ed)

The first thing I can remember was E company leaving the area of 2nd Bn. and crossing a wide deep river with some Philippine guerrillas and capturing a couple of Jap trucks. After a few days, by interchanging parts, we got one truck to run and off we went to the nearest village. Since we were the first troops into the village, we were showered with chickens, fresh meat, eggs, fruit, etc., before we made a fast retreat back to

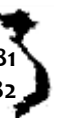
our perimeter when a native came running down the street yelling, *"Japs are coming!"* The fresh meat was supposed to have been monkey meat, but whatever it was, it was a relief from the K-rations that were being dropped to us by piper cub airplanes. Somehow, two Philippine women got on that truck (we will call them "laundry girls"); we named them "Caribou Sally and Dirty Gertie". We were told later the dirt road we used going to the village was mined with 100 lb. bombs and how we missed them I will never know because we ran into several roads later on that were mined with these bombs.

We left this area, re-crossed the river where a man was lost by drowning, and after an all-day march reached either (by) D or F Company. We then tried to set up a perimeter to their left flank but were unable to hold the hill. The thing I remember about this position, the Japs had dug a long deep trench or tank trap, I don't know which, and several E Co. men were wounded. Finley, from our machine gun squad, got a "homer". The thing I remember about this action was Finley's saying,

"Those dirty blankety-blanks shot me through the gut. Get the hell out of here. I will hold them off because I am going to die anyway."

At several reunions this was brought up, and we wondered if he had died. At the Minnesota reunion, who should show up but Finley. He had read about the Reunion in the paper and came to see if it could be his old outfit. Up until this time we all thought he was dead.

(continued....)



We set up within the perimeter of the Company we had just come through before being run off the hill. It was just about dark, and after the all-day march and the action we had been through, I can never remember being as tired as I was then. That night I can remember George Kojima saying to Johnnie Grooms, *"There are Japs out there!"* Johnnie said, *"George, you're seeing things, go to sleep."* George responded, *"You watch when the moon goes behind the clouds, they will move."* When the moon went behind the clouds, our machine gun opened up, and I knew they had to be close, because everyone knows it's a No-No to fire an automatic weapon at night unless absolutely necessary.

The next morning the dead Japs were within a few feet of our gun position. One of the Japanese must have been one heck of a gambler or a pay master, because he was loaded with money. We must have been tired, because Kojima and I both found we had been peppered with fine shrapnel during the night as we had not dug our foxholes deep enough. George was hit in the rear end and I was hit in the back of my right knee.

Another thing that stands out in my mind after a few days was the stench from the dead Japs that were so close to our positions the remaining Japs were unable to drag them away. One morning we received a few replacements, and they were no more than inside our perimeter when we received direct hits from the Japs. Several men were killed and even some of the replacements. No wonder the replacements were sent back to the rear after the first few minutes of combat. I think the smell would have been enough, much less the casualties, to make a new man "flip his lid" in the first few minutes of action.

A day or so later, we recaptured the hill we had been run off and advanced several hundred yards, with several losses to E Company, including a couple of the scouts. This I remember because we were so short on wrist watches to keep our time, while on night watch we would check each of our dead to see if they had watches. We were able to get a couple which we needed badly. The first morning in this position we received an attack at daybreak under a heavy blanket of fog, which we repulsed. As the fog lifted, we were hit by heavy mortar fire. Our machine gun squad was lucky. We got some very close rounds and a couple of direct hits but the rounds were duds. Our other machine gun squad got some direct hits in which Hollingsworth was wounded. A medic, Johnnie Grooms,

and George Kojima all got homers. After the action was over, I helped carry the wounded back to the aid tent, and I remember George Kojima asking me if I thought he had a homer and my replying, *"I think so, George."* There was no doubt about it!



Filipino Porters carry supplies up the trail to Hill 3155

(Photo courtesy of 503rd Heritage Battalion website)

This position overlooked a large valley, and it seems to me we were here for a week or more. I believe this is where the tank was brought up on the ridge, and received a direct hit by a Jap anti-tank gun and someone crawled back into the tank, while it was under fire and knocked out the Jap gun. Also, a 40mm anti-aircraft gun was brought up overlooking the valley for support. One morning a Jap was spotted across the valley with his pants down, doing his morning constitutional. Can you imagine a 40mm pom-pom gun, 2 machine guns, BARs, M-1s, carbines of an entire Company shooting at a lone Jap trying to run up a hill holding up his pants, and with all this fire power, not getting hit! I wonder how we won the war!

Our machine gun squad was on the left flank of this hill, and after several days either D or E Company went through our position and set up to our left. Our own artillery did not know they had moved into the area and laid in multiple rounds, causing numerous losses....

(continued....)



....I remember as they came back through our positions they were hit so hard there was not enough left of some, so they had to be carried out in ponchos. I believe we had been in combat 30 days at this time because in a letter dated April 30, 1945, (the first one I had written since being on the Island), I wrote — *"I am still in combat, but I think this mission will be over soon."* How wrong I was! In the same letter, I said we had not run across much water, and I had taken a helmet bath and felt much better, since it was my first bath in several weeks.

The next place that comes to mind is where we lost Goldberg of our platoon, as well as 2 bazooka men, a flame thrower man, an artillery spotter, and a bulldozer operator, and several E Company men by a sniper. He must have zeroed in on our machine gun position because all these men, except the bulldozer operator were hit while in our position. The irony of Goldberg's death was - it was the only time I ever saw him wear a helmet. If he had worn his fatigue cap like he always did he probably would not have been killed since the bullet ricocheted inside his helmet.

It was on this hill that a bulldozer cut the side of the hill down to make a road and cut the side out of my foxhole. Due to the sniper, I did not dig another one. That night I awoke with a Jap leaning against the open side of my foxhole since the road was about 4 feet lower than my foxhole. He was so close I could have touched him. To this day, I don't know why he didn't see me, or why whoever was on watch let him get that close. It seemed like he stood there forever, but it probably was only seconds before he walked down the road that the bulldozer had made. It was right after this, I wrote my Dad to send me a pistol to use in my foxhole. My Dad sent the pistol to me; however, it was stolen before I received it.

From this position, many patrols went through our position, and this is where a boy who slept across from me on our ship coming over was killed on a patrol. They could not get him out and the next day about 100 yards from our position we found him. The Japs had stripped him of his boots and everything else. I think this bothered me more than anything else in the war.

We then left the foothills and moved high into the mountains, where the foliage was so heavy, you were lucky to see 10 feet in front of you. It seemed as if it never stopped raining and the ground was so rocky you could not dig a foxhole, but only level off the ground and pile the dirt and rocks in front for protection. It was here the Japs obtained high ground above us and pinned us down. A boy we called Jack Armstrong, the

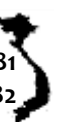
All-American boy (not his real name) lost his fingers reaching for his carbine, that was holding up his poncho over his foxhole. He was a darned good artist. Joe Shanahan still has some of his sketches. I also had my poncho split over my head by a Jap bullet while trying to get a shot off, and I said to Rummy (Tom Keating), *"Damn, that was close!"* I didn't realize how close until later, when I discovered a hole in my fatigue cap. It was here in a letter written May 19, 1945, I stated, ***"We are now so far up in the mountains, I wonder if I am a Paratrooper or belong to the mountain troops."***

My Mother had written that my brother had been trying to join the Navy. I wrote if he didn't get in, to join the Merchant Marines, because he would, at least, have a bed and hot food every day which means a lot. *"I know, because it has been 44 days since I have slept in a bed or had a hot meal, not complaining, but just trying to make a point, why he should not get drafted by the Army."* Also, I asked for a pair of Indian moccasins if they did not have to use a shoe stamp to get them. It was so cold at night, there was no way you could keep warm with one blanket. When someone was hit or killed, it was a fight over who got his blanket.



**Roberts, Fishman, St. Germain, Hall and unknown,
3rd Squad, 1st Platoon "D" Co. on patrol,
Negros, Philippine Islands in May 1945.**
(Photo from John Reynolds' "D" Co. collection)

(continued....)



We were in this place for over three weeks, and during this time several E Company men were killed. I got so I could not eat due to yellow jaundice, and would not leave because we were down to such a few men. I became so weak I had to be carried out by the pack train that brought up supplies every 3 or 4 days. At the hospital, when weighed, I had gone from 155 lbs. down to 97 lbs. A few days later E Company was pulled back for rest after 67 days of combat, after reaching the top of the mountain and a Jap hospital that the Japs had left. While in the hospital, I wrote,

"It's not the Japs that get you down in the mountains, but the conditions. You never seem to dry out. You smell so bad but so does everyone else, and your clothes could stand by themselves due to the sweat and dirt (if you would ever get the chance to take them off.)"

We had a beer ration issued to us while in the hospital, but everyone with jaundice was told to save theirs. I still was unable to eat and while watching the movie, *"For Whom the Bell Tolls"* (which I had seen 4 times) I thought 'The hell with it' and drank several beers. The next morning, it flushed me out and I began to eat. I recommend this treatment for jaundice!



U.S. artillery on Negros Island.
(web photo)



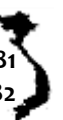
One of the 503rd troopers KIA on Negros. (web image)

On June 20, 1945, I wrote I was back with my platoon which was now set up in a Spanish mansion so large you could drive a truck through the middle of it. It had a swimming pool (no water), rock gardens, and was surrounded by a 10-foot wall with broken bottles cemented on the top of it to keep people from climbing over. Whoever owned this before the war must have had plenty of money. It was at this time Carl Ballard and John Habecker went AWOL in a beauty shop. Later they were joined by Joe Shanahan, after he got out of the hospital. This was brought to mind with the last 503rd Newsletter, when it said that Carl and John were AWOL on Negros on this last trip. They found the girl who ran the beauty shop 34 years ago.

My mother had informed me that there was a Jim Morris from Terre Haute in the 503rd. I told her I had tried to look him up, but he was wounded early in the mission. I had heard from him, and he was in a hospital on Leyte and would look me up when he got back. In this same letter, I informed them I had not received my Christmas package.

The last letter written from here was July 2, 1945. I had finally received my Christmas box, 7 months late, and it was a mess! It was smashed, the cinnamon balls had all stuck together, but were not bad as far as taste. The homemade taffy was no good because it had gone to sugar. I also told about dances at the University Club built out over the ocean. I can remember the building, but cannot remember the dances. If it had not been my handwriting, I would swear it was written by someone else.

(continued....)



Our next place was the town of Fabrica. We stayed 2 nights over a lumber company office (had forgotten about this stop until I read my letter of July 14, 1945). We left on a patrol that was to last 5 days, but at the time the letter was written, we had been out 13 days. We had gone five more miles along the railroad; and they had brought out squad tents (which I stated were sure better than sleeping under ponchos as we had the last 12 days); however, this would probably mean we would be out much longer. I believe it was in this area where our own B-24's bombed us, while we were on the lumber train. This is where we went on patrol to get 2 men who had drowned while crossing a river.



"A logging train in Negros Island. From the National Geographic Magazine, 1944."

My folks were still trying to figure out what island we were on. She said Jim Morris's mother had called, and she thought he was coming home, because he had been wounded in the first jump of the mission. I informed her we had not made any jumps on this island, but wish we had, and maybe this operation would not have lasted so long.

In a letter dated July 26, 1945, I told of our life in our squad tents along the railroad, about getting 10-in-1 rations, and I was designated to do the cooking for our squad. I had built a fireplace under a shelter made with ponchos to make cooking easier. I told about trading rations (that we would not eat) for bananas, red peppers, bread, fruit, pineapples, and papayas. I explained that papayas were the fruit we had received one time from Florida, which we thought was spoiled, and had said the seeds looked like a rabbit had sat in the middle of a cantaloupe. I also explained by the time the rations got to the front lines, they had gone through Reg., Bn., and many other hands, and all we got were what they did not want. However, a couple of cans of bacon had gotten through, and I had fried all the grease out, had sliced the roots of a camote tree very thin, and made potato chips – I should say camote chips. They

sure smelled bad, but tasted OK. After so long you can eat anything, regardless of smell.

In a letter dated July 29, 1945, we had moved and were in an old lumber camp next to a deep mountain stream deep enough to swim and bathe in. On August 5, 1945, I told my folks we were not the airborne troops going into Japan, but were still out in the mountain lumber camp of Malapasok on Negros Island. The censors blanked out the name of the island, so they still did not know for sure where I was.

I often wondered if I had been killed, if they would ever know what island I was killed on. I also told about the natives catching small tropical catfish with a worm threaded on a piece of grass, and dropping them in a banana leaf, and how we used them in a stew, which we made in our helmets, and stated that if anyone had told me I would have eaten fish heads, guts, and all, I would have said they were Nuts. This was not as bad as it sounds, however, since the fish were not much longer than an inch, and Tony Lopez (our tent boy) knew how to cook them!

On August 7, 1945, I wrote that the whole 2nd Bn. was now together in the lumber camp and we had left E Company and gone back to Hdq. Co. and were clearing grass and brush with the mosquitoes worse that I had ever seen. Even through the day they would not leave you alone. We now had 3 companies since our Bn. was together and we would take turns on patrols and guard duty which gave us a little more free time. I wrote I received 14 letters, and the package with the jar of olives, and fishing hooks and line. We ate all the olives and drank all the juice. It was sure good! I wrote I would not be able to use the fishing equipment, because there seemed to be no fish in the stream, except the little tropical catfish because we had tried to get some with hand grenades. I informed them we were going on a 6-day patrol and not to worry, if they did not hear from me for a week or more.

August 15, 1945 — I wrote our patrol lasted 7 days; and when we got back, we found out the war was over. We were all a happy bunch of boys, but too tired to do much celebrating. I was writing by candlelight and would write the next day when I would not be so tired. I never received the 32-automatic, so I suppose someone in the mail service took it. A boy in the next tent got one off a Jap who surrendered. We heard today that 7000 Japs have surrendered so far on the island. That was twice as many as was estimated when we landed.

(continued....)





"503rd Commanding officer accepting the Japanese surrender on Negros Island 1945." (web photo)

Tommy Hunt, our platoon sergeant, got a letter from George Kojima, who was wounded about one month after landing on this island, and was in the hospital at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis. I said I would write him and tell him my folks would be contacting him, and maybe if they had enough gas ration stamps, would go over and pick him up.

I was sweating out the army of occupation because I did not want to stay over here any longer than I had to. If they went on combat time, I would not have to, but if they went on over-all army time, I might have to stay. I now had enough stationery and Air mail stamps that you sent that I would not have to write v-mail anymore. It should not take the mail so long to get there.

I received the moccasins, and hoped that I had not caused them to use up too many shoe stamps. Also, with them were the stuffed green peppers. We ate the green peppers and drank all the vinegar juice that was in the jar. We were supposed to have a picture show, but the generator did not arrive, and we were also supposed to have our 1st USO show, but they never came. This we did not expect, since they never get this far out in the "boon-docks", but usually play for the air corps, marines, and rear bases. A picture show would be nice, since it had been over 3 months since we had seen one even though it would probably be a repeat.

I was glad to hear Bill (my brother) got in the Navy — at least he will have good conditions while in the service.

September 1, 1945 -- I wrote to my Mother that she had mentioned having sweet corn, and I said she had nothing on me, since I had been having it ever since April when we arrived at this island.

Every time we came across a corn field on patrol, we put some ears in our pockets until we stopped for the night. If it was tender enough, and we couldn't build a fire, we ate it raw. If we could have a fire, we boiled it in our helmets, and if it was too mature, we roasted it in the hot coals of the fire. Of course, we had no seasonings to go on it.

On our last patrol at a waterhole, I caught some crawdads and picked some corn and roasted them both in the fire after it burned down. They were really good — tasted as good as any shrimp I had ever eaten. It sure beat K-rations! My candle was about gone — it was one I made with old wax and string since it had been over a week since we got any.

Mother asked me when I thought I would be home. The latest rumor was General MacArthur said men with combat time would not be held over. If this were true, it would not be too long since we had over 100 days of combat time on this island alone.

September 9, 1945 — I wrote they had lifted the censorship, and I could now tell my folks we were on the island of Negros in the Philippines. We were in a mountain lumber camp named Malapasok at the end of a railroad from the town of Fabrica. We finally got candles, and this made our days seem longer. We now had B rations and a mess tent, and got our first fresh meat in over three months. It was tough as shoe leather, but did it taste good! We got a generator and 3 pictures "*Leave it to Blondie*", "*Tonight and Every Night*", and "*Christmas in Connecticut*". I had seen them all but so long ago, they seemed like first runs!



Some of the boys had a still where they made booze, and it had blown up — I thought the Japs had started another war!

(continued....)



September 15, 1945 — My mother had asked if we were under the 11th Airborne. No, they were our greatest rivals. I didn't think there was an island big enough to hold us both. We were a Reg. combat team of paratroopers attached to whomever needed us. On Corregidor we were under the 6th Army, and here, we were under the 8th Army. We were to move Monday from Malapasok to Fabrica to Bacolod and were to be in Dumaguete by the 1st of the month. My Mother had asked what I wanted for my birthday, and the only thing I could think of was more pictures, since atropine tablets melted all over my others in combat and turned them all yellow. The latest rumor was when we arrived at Dumaguete we would be going to China or Japan so I guessed I would make the best of it and see as much of the world as I could.

September 21, 1945 — We were now in Fabrica, a lumber town, not doing much but guarding Japs.



"FABRICA, SEPT 1945: Japanese POW's provided their own entertainment within the confines of the Fabrica Lumber Mill. We had not seen Sumo before. There were approximately 800 prisoners and generally they were in good physical condition."

(Photo from John Reynolds' "D" Co. collection)

I had 15 negatives and asked my folks to have 18 prints made of each, since all the boys wanted some. These were the first pictures returned to me. All my combat pictures were either censored and kept, or stolen. I wrote that chow had not been too hot that night — we had had bully beef patties, canned turnip tops, burned cake without icing and water. Several of us went to a Chinese restaurant in Fabrica and had a cup of coffee. It grew here in the mountains. One of our last firefights with the Japs on one of our patrols was in a coffee grove. With the coffee, we had a roll and two eggs which cost 2 pesos (\$1). We were so tired of bully beef and dehydrated potatoes we didn't eat too much of it, and were still hungry. I'm not complaining because it sure beat K-rations. I didn't think I could ever eat another one.

"John D. Reynolds, age 22. 1 September 1945 saw 2d Battalion guarding 800 plus prisoners in the compound of the Lumber Mill at Fabrica, Negros Island. The veterans amongst us hadn't slept under a proper roof in over two years. All the houses behind me were built of solid mahogany."



September 23, 1945 — We were still in Fabrica and set up on the 2nd floor of a planing mill which is about 2/3 the size of a city block, and there were over 1700 Japs underneath us. The Japs weren't in too bad a shape, even though there seemed to be a few die each day from the long stay in the mountains.

I wrote my father that about three weeks after we were on the island, we found 3 Jap carbines which had attached folding bayonets, and these were different from any we had ever seen. I tagged mine and took it back to the Bn. Hdq. tent. While in Fabrica (3 mos. later) I took it apart, cut the stock in two and placed it in a square box, hoping it would stand a better chance in getting through.

While getting this rifle, I saw there was still one like it left, as well as a sword, which had an officer's name tied to each. Men in our other machine gun squad thought these were Johnnie Groom's and George Kojima's. I told my parents I was going to try to latch onto them and mail them home. If I did, to give George the sword, and I would try and get the gun to Johnnie if I could find him after I got home. Later I stated not to look for them because we moved out before I could get to them. I explained that I did not feel bad in trying to get them, because I knew they belonged to Johnnie and George and that the officer had just put his name on them when he saw there were no names attached.

On September 30, 1945, we were on the beach at Pulupandan, and I was sleeping in a broken-down ambulance. We were to pull out at 4AM the next morning by boats. I cannot remember this place or the boats, but this must have been how we got to Dumaguete.

On October 6, 1945, we were set up in a coconut plantation 3 kilometres outside Dumaguete where our outfit all came together, after being spread all over the island during the war. The area was nice, but the water situation was bad. The only water was a small creek over a mile away; therefore, we only got one bath a day unless it rained hard. It was sure nice to have the Jap prisoners to carry the water to camp.

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On October 10th, G Co. moved in, and I finally met Jim Morris from my hometown. He had 79 points, and the men with 80 points or more were leaving the next day so he must have left right after that. I cannot remember him, and I have not seen him since the war. During this time, I wrote home about fishing in an outrigger canoe in the ocean. The town was the nicest we had been in, because the people in the area had collaborated with the Japs, and they did not destroy this town as they had the others when they pulled out. We could get about anything you would want from town - for example: I stated, *"We went to town last night in a pony cart and had a caribou steak, (tough but good), a cup of ice cream for only 3½ pesos (\$1.75 U.S.). The people in this area are not as nice to GIs as they have been in other areas on this island since they liked the Japs. They do quite a bit of plowing with a caribou and a single plow that goes about 6" deep. They do very little cultivating, and I believe this is why their produce is so much smaller than ours. There is a large sugar cane industry on this island - too bad they aren't in production now - you would not have to worry about sugar-ration stamps. You would have enough for your canning."*

It was interesting to note at this time, I wrote I felt we should never give the Philippines their complete independence because, if we did, I felt they would turn against us. Now, 34 years later, it seems as if the trouble we have been having with them over our bases there, proves my predictions were not too far wrong.

During this period there were a lot of strikes going on by the unions, and I wrote that any of us would be glad to trade places and pay with them and all felt they should be shot. George Kojima had visited my parents on a three-day pass from the hospital.

Around this time, I was placed in Co. Supply with Joe Shanahan, and I stated one of us had to be there all the time or they would steal us blind. I told about hitting one guy over the head with a ball bat when I caught him crawling under the tent! We had not received any mail for over three weeks. I went to church in town, and upon returning I had 13 letters and birthday cards. It was then taking Air Mail three weeks to get there. It took regular mail about two months to arrive.

I told about a party held over at the Red Cross building with girls brought in from two colleges; and, for once, there were enough to go around. Most of the girls in this area were of Spanish origin and were very beautiful - but they could have left their chaperones at home! We had artificial lemonade, egg, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cake, and doughnuts - so you can see we were living high on the hog! For decorations,

they had a white parachute on the ceiling and ½ camouflaged chutes on the walls.

My last letter from Negros said I had been playing basketball in town on my birthday, and was I out of condition! I did not know if I was still weak from the jaundice, but I stated I felt fine and my yellow color had almost disappeared. In fact, they had quit calling me "Chink". My weight was up to 120 lbs. In this letter I stated it looked as if I were going to Japan rather than going home with the 503rd because I was 3 points short. I said I wished I had turned in for a Purple Heart when George Kojima and I got our superficial wounds; then I would have had enough points to have come home. At the time, however, I would have been ashamed to have claimed a Purple Heart for such a small wound, but now I was wishing I had, so I could go home. I also was wondering how we would be accepted in the 11th Airborne, and stated the first thing they would probably do would be to give us GI haircuts since all our hair was normal length - THEY DID!

In closing, the first 30 days of this mission was written entirely from memory and from conversations at past reunions - the rest was taken from letters written home. I just hope it will help the reader to remember how it was in 1945 both at home and overseas.

Ralph E. Llewellyn

[This article was originally published in the 1977 reprint of *"The Return To Corregidor"* by Harold Templeman, and is reprinted here courtesy of Paul Whitman and his 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion website. With the exception of the three movie images, all photos shown have been added with credits where available. Ed]



Remarks by former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to Graduating Cadets at Virginia Military Institute (VMI)



(Photo by David Seidel/Radio IQ)

Thank you, well thank you so much Mr. Brown for that very kind introduction, I also want to thank General P and everyone from VMI for the kind invitation to be part of this very important day for all of you. I know it is important to you, I know it's important to your family, friends and so many others who have played a part in supporting you in your journey to this transitional moment in your lives.

I know many of you also received your commissions to serve as our newest leaders in all branches of our military only yesterday, I want to thank you for that. Not only for your willingness to serve, but the commitment and sacrifice of yourselves and family members that comes with your service.

VMI prides itself on its development of citizen soldiers and the act of your committing to this service due to no obligation to serve demonstrates why America's all volunteer armed forces are unmatched by any other fighting force in the world. Your willingness to put all on the line for the American idea, our form of democracy and our freedoms and for no other reason inspire those of us not in uniform to be good citizens. Working for the prosperity and security of our families, our communities and our country, in this way we honor your service.

Others of you are on the threshold of entering the private sector, some will pursue public service, others will continue your education as graduate studies elsewhere. Regardless of your next stop, the discipline, values and beginning of your development as a leader that you take with you from your time here at VMI positions you very well in the starting blocks of the next phase of your life.

In the midst of these celebrations today I also know that as you close out this phase of your life and

prepare for the future that you'll take time to thank the people who taught you along the way. Of course, your teachers and professors, important as they are, but also your parents, your grandparents, coaches, mentors and others who helped you learn and succeed.

Like no generation before you, more of you, most likely all of you will be required to consider the entire world clearly, and understand how your life and abilities can help address many of the shared global challenges confronting us.

In 1975, more than 40 years ago graduates such as myself and my classmates could afford to pretty much focus on our own nation and our own markets for opportunity and growth, indisputably, that is no longer the case. I took my two all-day professional engineering exams with a post slide rule, I was given my first hand-held calculator, a TI-110 one year after I went to work for Exxon. It could add, it could subtract, it could multiply, it could divide, and amazingly it had a square root key. I received one of the first desktop computers, a Mackintosh, with a very blurry green screen in 1983, eight years into my career. Fast forward to the devices available to almost anyone the world over; I'll leave it to you to contemplate the changes you will live through over the next 40 years.

The most profound change that challenges our economic competitiveness and our national security is the proliferation of digital communications and transactions. Whether we like it or not, for better or for worse, our own inventions and innovations have connected our world in ways unimagined and created economic and security interdependencies that we had not contemplated nor prepared ourselves to manage.

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The world has more or less been drug along by the technology rather than our political and business leaders shaping the role of these technologies. Digital highways and backroads are great enablers of good, and advance progress of humanity, but they are also ungoverned connections for the spread of evil ideologies and the know how to organize and spread the tools of terrorism all too easily.

The great challenge confronting the global community of responsible nations is how to protect and preserve the freedoms of our society while enforcing the responsible and legitimate exercise of free speech – this is a challenge your generation will continue to confront.

We must now see the present and the future in a global context, we must recognize the value of friends and allies, allies borne of shared values and shared sacrifices. One of America's great advantages is we have many allies; our adversaries China, Russia, Iran and the terrorist organizations have few. We must never take these long-held allies for granted. We must motivate and strengthen them, not just in our areas of complete agreement but particularly in bridging our differences both in trading relations and national in security matters. Seeing the future in a global context requires recognizing the rapid economic development taking place the world over. The dynamic populations that are growing in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the challenges that will come from meeting the needs in realizing the aspirations of billions of people on this planet. These global realities have created a new economic and national security set of pressures. Here at home these changes have led to anxiety and fear about growth in foreign markets and about the global movement of jobs.

We must acknowledge, however, that every nation has a right to aspire to a better quality of life, and that free trade and economic growth are the means by which opportunity is created for all people. Even today in this year 2018, 1.4 billion people live without access to electricity to heat and provide light in their homes, cook their meals, clean their drinking water or power hospitals and schools. For these men and women and children the innovation and technology that comes with economic growth means the difference between health and safety, sickness and death. Citizens in developed economies are coming to this realization, but many here at home still have a way to go to fully embrace the global economy and to recognize that with these changes come both challenges and opportunities. This is the world you enter, it is a world in dramatic transition and change.

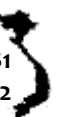
As you look forward your role in building a brighter future will depend on more than simply your education and your skills. Your contributions to society depend on a firm ethical foundation of personal and professional integrity.

As I reflect upon the state of our American democracy I observe a growing crisis in ethics and integrity. Above the entrance to the main building on the campus of my alma mater, Austin, Texas, are inscribed the words, *"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,"* comes from the Book of John, Chapter 8, Verse 32. *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

The founders of our American democracy were, I believe many agree, were crafting the structure and foundational documents guided by divine inspiration if not divine intervention. The central tenant of a free society, a free people, is access to the truth. A government structure and a societal understanding that freedom to seek the truth is the very essence of freedom itself, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* It is only by fierce a defense of the truth on a common set of facts that we create the conditions for a democratic free society comprised of richly diverse peoples, that those free people can explore and find solutions to the very challenges confronting a complex society of free people. If our leaders seek to conceal the truth or we as people become accepting of alternative realities that are no longer grounded in facts, then we as American citizens are on a pathway to relinquishing our freedom.

This is the life of non-democratic societies comprised of people who are not free to seek the truth; we know them well, societies in Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, you can complete the list. A responsibility of every American citizen to each other is to preserve and protect our freedom by recognizing what truth is and is not, what a fact is and is not. And begin by holding ourselves accountable through truthfulness and demand our pursuit of America's future be fact based; not based on wishful thinking, not hoped for outcomes made in shallow promises, but with a clear-eyed view of the facts as they are and guided by the truth that will set us free to seek solutions to our most daunting challenges.

(continued....)



It is also that foundational commitment to truth and facts that binds us to other like-minded democratic nations, that we Americans will always deal with them from the same set of truths and facts, and it is truth that says to our adversaries, we say what we mean, and we mean what we say.

When we as people, a free people, go wobbly on the truth, even on what may seem the most trivial of matters, we go wobbly on America. If we do not as Americans confront the crisis of ethics and integrity in our society and among our leaders in both public and private sector and regrettable at times even the non-profit sector, then American democracy as we know it is entering its twilight years.

As to the matter of integrity, I am familiar with VMI's honor code. It was one of the reasons I looked so much forward to addressing you today. I know it is one of the first and most important elements every RAT is taught, as the basis upon which not just how to conduct one's self while at VMI, but it is the foundation upon which a VMI cadet stands apart from others. And at some point during your time here at VMI, you realized that you adhered to the honor code not because it is a requirement to be a part of this place, rather, you do it because you want to. When you've come to realize that without personal honor there is no leadership.

But a warning to you as you leave this place, a place where the person sitting on either side of you shares that same understanding. You will now enter a world where, sadly, that is not always the case, and your commitment to this high standard of ethical behavior and integrity will be tested. Well, I'm fairly certain all of you have a common definition of the word integrity, it's always good to have a common understanding. One of Miriam Webster's definitions of integrity is: *the state of being complete and whole*.

Now as a civil engineer I've always liked that definition, because I can relate to it through structural integrity, the state of being complete and whole. The structural integrity of this building; we know it has a complete and whole integrity, so we feel comfortable sitting beneath these beams and this roof that it's not gonna end up down around our feet as we sit here. Integrity is a critical building block of trust and cooperation, it makes possible for different people of different organizations to work together to solve the world's most complex problems. Regardless of industry, project or task, integrity frees us to innovate, collaborate and share over the long term. As the world becomes more interconnected and global challenges require sophisticated integrated solutions, the value of integrity only grows in importance. In every sector, integrity will be the key to unlocking high impact

technologies, new ways to conduct business, and new approaches to solve our most vexing geopolitical challenges that will make the world brighter for the generation to come.

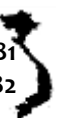
We do not have to look far to find examples of the cost to individuals and to society when integrity is sacrificed for immediate gain or personal achievement. Such damage strikes at the very heart of a free society, it undermines the public trust in institutions and the overwhelming number of individuals, organizations who do live and compete by the rules every day.

It is a fact of life that most individuals want to make a positive difference in the world in which we live, after all, you've worked very hard and you've sacrificed much to get where you are; you want your efforts to mean something beyond just a job, the next advancement in rank or promotion. It is true that your education will certainly play a part in your future success, but if you truly want to build a brighter future for the world you must make the decision to live a life of integrity. Your knowledge and abilities will not flourish without ethical behavior and strong moral fiber. Choosing a life of integrity provides a wealth of blessings and benefits. It gives us a true pathway to do the right things, the right way every time, whether or not anyone's looking. Such discipline is the true source of progress in a modern civilization because it is a commitment to see our actions as part of a broader social fabric of cooperation and mutual advancement.

In your career you will have occasions where it may appear easier to take a shortcut. The pressure you feel may come from within, that you need to impress others or that you need to have all the answers. Unfortunate, it may also come from your organization or directly from a supervisor or a coworker. These pressures can be particularly keen in the early stages of your career, pushing you toward decisions before the consequences are apparent.

Committing yourselves to a life of integrity and reminding yourselves of that commitment often, can give you the strength you need to resist the easy path that leads to poor results or even ruin. It is important to remember that leadership is not a position or title. Becoming a leader is what happens to those who embrace a life of integrity....

(continued....)



....As you grow in your career your personal integrity will draw people to you, your coworkers will come to rely on your humbled, well-informed insights, your supervisors will trust you because of your self-discipline. As you take on more responsibility and gain experience, your personal integrity will naturally evolve into managerial integrity. You'll exemplify what the best leaders demand from their people until you yourself become a leader.

I never aspired to become chairman and CEO of Exxon Mobil Corporation. My wife will tell you I achieved my objectives in about 1992, I was 40 years old, I had become a division manager with responsibilities over a large part of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado, all I ever wanted to do. It was the best job I ever had....it's all been downhill since. But, at some point you begin to recognize that you have the capacity to do more and contribute more, not just for your own personal benefit but for your organization. When senior managers begin working on behalf of their people, that's when I would see them really knock it out of the park.

You are going to have a great life. Some of those days are gonna to be good days, some of them are gonna be bad days. But I always reminded myself is, not get overly euphoric on the good days, and don't get overly despondent on the bad days.

I was recently going through some of my father's papers, he passed away a couple months ago. I ran across a page it said it was Buck's B Attitudes, it was 10 items. J.F. Buck Bushier (sp) was a scout master of a troop of Indian boys in Colorado back in the 50s and 60s. I picked three of his B Attitudes out because I think they're good to carry with you when I talk about the good days and bad days. So I got three that I cite from Buck's B Attitudes:

- ***Blessed is the man who can see you make a fool of yourself and doesn't think you've done a permanent job;***
- ***Blessed is the man who does not try to blame all his failures on someone else; and***
- ***Blessed is the man that can say that the boy he was would be proud of the man he is.***

So you maintain and protect who you are, and remember that being a person with integrity is the most valuable asset you have, don't ever let anyone take it from you. Carefully consider the values and the culture of the organizations in which you seek to work. Look for employers who set high standards for personal conduct and who reward ethical leadership. Identify mentors who exemplify integrity and leadership excellence.

Developing as a leader largely comes from also practicing good followership. See how the leaders you are following carry themselves, how they manage their responsibilities, study how they communicate and make decisions, observe how they learn from mistakes or missteps, their own and those of others. Importantly, recognize that integrity is not unique to any one culture.

No matter where you are in the world integrity and good character are prized by every great faith and every great tradition. Integrity means managing our lives in a way that focuses on ideals that unite us as a people.

In summary, I've lived a happy life, I want want you to have a happy life too. So I return to the definition of integrity, the state of being complete and whole. Absent a life of integrity no human being can live a life that's complete and whole. Living a life of integrity, perhaps we have a chance.

God bless all of you and your loved ones in the days ahead, and God bless the United States of America.

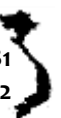
Watch complete commencement address at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRtsnJhHEfk&app=desktop

Rex Wayne Tillerson (born March 23, 1952) is an American former government official and former energy executive, who served as the 69th United States Secretary of State from February 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, under President Donald Trump.



Originally a civil engineer, Tillerson joined Exxon in 1975. He rose to become chairman and chief executive officer of Exxon Mobil, holding that position from 2006 until Tillerson began his career as a civil engineer and holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. By 1989 he had become general manager of the Exxon USA central production division. In 1995 he became president of Exxon Yemen Inc. and Esso Exploration and Production Khorat Inc. In 2006 Tillerson was elected chair and chief executive of Exxon, the world's sixth largest company by revenue.

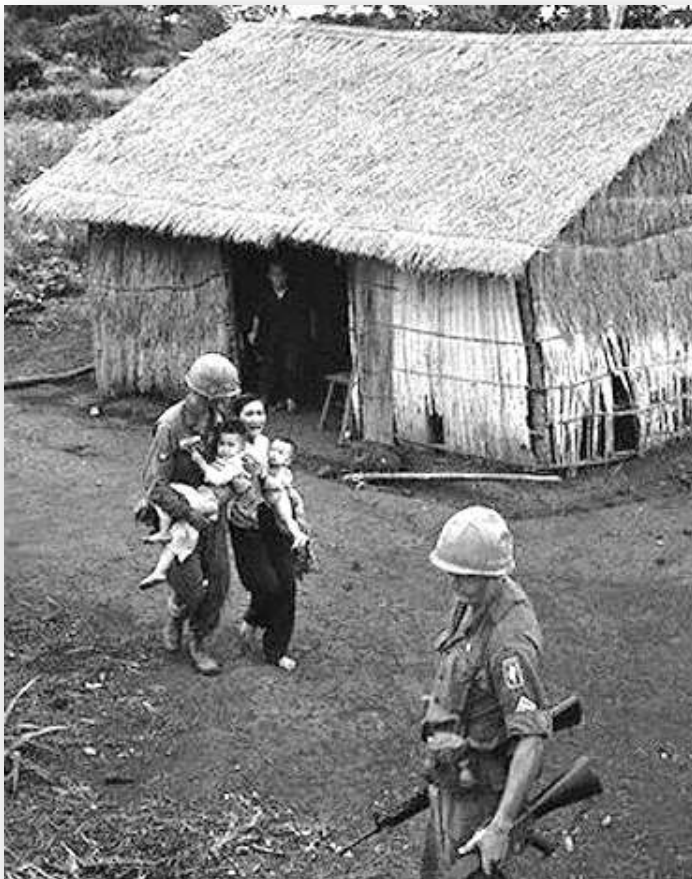
Tillerson's tenure has been characterized by a lack of visibility in comparison to his predecessors in the traditionally high-profile position of Secretary of State. According to the American Foreign Service Association, during Tillerson's tenure, new applications to work for the Foreign Service fell by 50%, and 60% of high-ranking career diplomats in the State Department resigned.



A Village & Mother ever on my mind

We, of the 2/503d had entered a village near what is reported to have been the Vung Tau Province in 1966, most likely half-way thru or during the latter part of that year; I know this because of the worn steel pot cover, faded fatigues and used jungle boots donned by the Sp4 in the photo below, and because I was that Sp4.

The mission was simple enough; evacuate everyone in that village; old men, women, children and any young men unlikely to be residing there – this was Viet Cong territory and healthy young men would have been conscripted into the ranks of our enemy by then, willingly or otherwise, or dead. The remaining residents of the village would be flown by waiting choppers to some relocation camp somewhere in South Vietnam. *Relocation camp...* the very words remind us of another war and time, and now even a period in our own country when those same words have become topical....again. It seems people often like to relocate other people.



RTO Lew "Smitty" Smith of the 2/503d carries a child and escorts a terrified mother and her baby to waiting choppers, as a buddy carries his weapon and turns away, while an old man in the hut helplessly looks on, no doubt in anguish. (Web photo)

In connection with this recently discovered photo, the inscription reads: *"Vung Tau, South Vietnam: A paratrooper of the 173rd Airborne helps a weeping Vietnamese woman carry her children near Vung Tau. The family was being evacuated because of the threat of a possible Viet Cong attack on a nearby U.S artillery position."*

While, I suppose, that may have been the 'official' excuse behind removing these people from their homes, one can suspect it was more to deprive the local VC of assets which willing or unwilling villagers could provide them. Fifty-two years later my memory has become clouded on this, but, I believe we burned this village to the ground. I've asked buddies about this.

The choppers were parked nearby, off to the right in the photo, their engines running, their rotor blades roaring making their loud *whoop whoop* sound while cutting the humid air, and shaking those machines. The chopper crews looked on behind their alien space masks further frightening the peasants we were leading to those mechanical birds, to what these people must surely have felt might be their demise -- the children, simply wondering. Their lifelong belongings, their homes, their land, their family heirlooms for the most part, all left behind – forever.

I vividly recall the mother shaking as I led her and her kids to what to her was an unknown destiny -- her arm and hand firmly gripping my arm, her fingernails painfully digging into my forearm. I remember this. And yes, she was weeping. Over and over I told her, *"It's o.k., you'll be fine. It's o.k.,"* but, of course, she understood not a word.

As we slowly moved to the waiting choppers, a photog in a soft cap and fatigues ran over to us, knelt on the ground and snapped a photo of this young G.I. and his charges. For decades I've searched for that moment of personal history captured on film but with no success. Then now, 52 years later I came across the photo you see here, a picture I didn't know existed...a picture so very meaningful to me.

It speaks of many things; things such as war, things such as youth, theirs and ours; things such as hopelessness and fear, theirs and ours. But mostly, for me, it speaks of a personal guilt carried over a lifetime.

There's no way to know if the mother or her children survived that war, I so hope they did. The two kids would be slightly older than my own children if they were fortunate to have survived.

I gently patted the mother's hand before the Huey lifted them off to somewhere.

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



Congratulations to one of our lads Down Under...



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL AWARDED

Dear Colleagues:

I am delighted to have just been advised of the award of the *Distinguished Service Medal* to **Lieutenant Colonel Greg Gilbert** RAA (Retd) who lives in retirement at Pullenvale, Brisbane. The DSM is awarded for distinguished leadership in battle and is the second highest distinguished service decoration in the Australian Honours System.

Greg was 12th Field Regiment's captain forward observer with D Company, 4 RAR at the Battle of Nui Le near the Courtney Plantation north of Nui Dat in South Vietnam in September 1971. During the 14-hour engagement with a motivated and aggressive enemy, five Australians were killed and 24 wounded including three platoon commanders. This was the last battle in which Australian combat soldiers were killed in action in the Vietnam War.

The battle began when D Company ran into a heavily defended enemy bunker position. Greg maintained direct support throughout the engagement bringing fire to within 100 metres of our own troops in order to allow the forward platoons to be extricated and the consolidated company to hold a secure position until relieved. His summary citation reads:

"For distinguished leadership in warlike operations as Forward Observer, 12th Field Regiment attached to Delta Company, 4th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment, in Vietnam, on 21 September 1971."

The full citation is:

"During operations conducted in the north of Phuoc Tuy province, South Vietnam, Captain Gilbert skilfully directed artillery fire enabling Delta Company to successful extricate itself from a strongly defended enemy bunker system. During the withdrawal the Company was continually attacked by a motivated and aggressive enemy who were unable to gain any advantage due to the accurate artillery fire brought down by Captain Gilbert. For almost fourteen hours Captain Gilbert brought accurate and concentrated fire on the enemy, enabling the Company to withdraw to and hold a secure position until relieved."

Attached (not attached) is an extract of the battle from the official history as reproduced in *The Fighting Fourth*, the magazine of the 4th Battalion Association.

Greg was invested earlier this month in Canberra by his RMC classmate, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC.

I am sure that all present and past members of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery will join with me in heartily congratulating Greg on his award.

Ubique.

Arthur

ARTHUR BURKE OAM arthurburke@bigpond.com
Colonel (Retired)
Queensland Member Regimental History Committee
Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery

####



Fighters visiting fighters.....



Heavyweight Boxing Champ Buster Douglas at gym with Sky Soldier Bill Terry.
“He’s a great guy!” said Bill.
Our reply: *“If anything happens, Buster’s on my side!”*



Light Heavyweight
Boxing Champ
Archie Moore
visits the
2/503d at
Camp Zinn,
RVN.

(Photo from Bob Sweeney,
C/2/503)



50th Anniversary of the Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral

May 11, 2018



The Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral was a series of actions fought by the 1st Australian Task Force between May and June 1968 against the North Vietnamese 7th Division and the Viet Cong Main Force units, 40 kilometres north-east of Saigon as part of Operation TOAN THANG (Complete Victory). It was the largest and most prolonged operation for the Australian Task Force throughout the war.

Fire Support Bases were designed to provide defended firing points for artillery and mortars to support infantry, armoured and cavalry units. Typically, indirect fire units (artillery and mortars) were inserted into an area that enabled the development of firing platforms to support patrolling activities throughout an area of operations. Predominantly circular in design, fire support bases provided commanders greater flexibility and reach knowing they would have fire support that was not restricted to any single direction – guns and mortars were able to engage targets through a

complete circle surrounding the base. Normally sited in areas of cleared jungle or on obvious high points, no attempt was made to conceal the location and occupation of fire support bases – there was no camouflage, no attempt at quiet occupation. The enemy knew where the fire support bases were and, though heavily defended, they were an obvious target.

During the Second General Offensive launched by North Vietnamese forces in 1968, the 1st Australian Task Force deployed two infantry battalions – 1 RAR and 3 RAR -- two artillery batteries -- 102 Field Battery and 161 NZ Field Battery -- mortars and support units, 45 kilometres north of Saigon and 60 kilometres north-west of the Australian Task Force base at Nui Dat to establish fire support bases astride enemy infiltration routes to Saigon. The Australians codenamed the area *Surfers* and further divided it into *Bondi*, *Newport* and *Manly* areas of operation each with a fire support base at their centre if required.

Deployment to Fire Support Base Coral on 12 May 1968 was beset by challenges from the beginning. Apart from the difficulties posed by the terrain, the area was thick with Viet Cong soldiers causing a visiting US General, whose troops had operated in the area previously, to remark *"Tell your commanding officer that you won't need to go looking for them. They'll come looking for you."* Additionally the two artillery batteries were placed more than 1.5 kilometers apart providing a huge area to defend.



A CH47 Chinook delivers a 102 Bty M2A2 105mm Howitzer and ammunition to the Landing Zone (LZ) at FSB Coral 12 May 1968.

(continued...)



Throughout the day Australian troops continued to arrive by helicopter and, by the time darkness fell, three companies of the 1st Battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Bennett, were deployed 1,000 meters north and south of Coral in ambush positions. However, due to the delays earlier in the day, Coral was only partially completed leaving the troops dangerously exposed to attack. Some soldiers felt uneasy and would later recall a sense of foreboding.



General Sir Phillip Bennett
AC, KBE, DSO
23rd Governor of Tasmania
27 December 1928 (age 89)

Meanwhile hundreds of enemy soldiers had formed up to the north-east of the base under cover of darkness, preparing to launch a series of battalion sized assaults around 4.00am on 13 May. The battle was fierce with genuine close quarter fighting and guns firing splintex rounds over open sights.

The North Vietnamese were able to penetrate the Australian perimeter, temporarily capturing a forward gun position and overrunning the mortar position. With the aid of extensive air support, by 6:30am the Australians managed to hold their position causing Captain John Bullen, a duty officer in the Nui Dat Command Post, to note in his diary *"13/5/68 was the day that Australia nearly suffered its greatest catastrophe of the whole war. Although realized by very*

few at the time, the Task Force HQ ... came within an ace of being wiped out by North Vietnamese Army. The political consequences of this would have been disastrous ..."



"No. 6 Gun the day after the first attack on FSB Coral, 13 May 1968." (Web photo & caption added to this report)

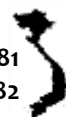


"North Vietnamese dead outside FSB Coral, 13 May 1968."
(Web photo & caption added to this report)

At 2:30am on 16 May, Coral was again under attack from a North Vietnamese Army force. The base was by then defended by armoured personnel carriers of A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment and 1RAR's rifle companies, all of which were heavily engaged during the battle. The attack lasted for four hours before it was driven back and resulted in five Australians being killed and 19 wounded.

Further attacks followed on 22, 26 and 28 May but were able to be dispersed and Coral was not seriously threatened again.

(continued...)



In the early hours of 26 May 1968, FSB Balmoral, occupied by 3RAR and reinforced with Centurion tanks, was attacked by the North Vietnamese. The unrelenting fire from D Company managed to halt the enemy at the wire perimeter of the base. A further attack on 28 May was the last attempt by the enemy to destroy the Australian bases and as in the previous assault, was again stopped on the wire perimeter.



Aerial view of FSB Coral 13 May 1968.

The North Vietnamese attack on Fire Support Base Coral had been the most continuous ground attack on an Australian position since the Second World War. Operations continued in the area for almost four weeks as the Australians fought some of the most persistent battles of the Vietnam War, resulting in 300 enemy soldiers killed and the subsequent postponement of a further attack on Saigon. The battle was the first time the Australians had clashed with regular North Vietnamese Army units operating in regimental strength in conventional warfare.



"A US Army CH-47 Chinook at FSB Coral, 12 May 1968"
(A web photo & caption added to this report)

A total of 26 Australian soldiers died and 100 were wounded. This was the most casualties suffered by Australia in any one engagement in the Vietnam War and the units involved were later awarded one of the five battle honours approved for the Vietnam War. The honour title 'Coral' was also awarded to 102 Field Battery and 34 decorations were awarded to individual soldiers for their actions.

Three of those killed were South Australians – Sergeant Peter Lewis from Poochera, Private Alan Cooper from Rose Park and Private William Thomas, a National Serviceman from Adelaide.

Australian forces at Coral were commanded by then Colonel Don Dunstan, later Governor of South Australia. Following the battle at Coral, Dunstan ordered 3 RAR to deploy to a position about 4.5 kilometers north, designating it Fire Support Base Balmoral. The purpose? To provoke another Viet Cong attack.



In a departure from the normal helicopter insertion, the Commanding Officer of 3 RAR, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Shelton, sent his advance troops to the area on foot on 24 May with Armoured Personnel Carriers in support. Four Centurion tanks would join the battalion group the following day, the first real occasion armour and infantry forces would operate together since World War II.

In the early hours of 26 May the Viet Cong attacked Balmoral across open ground that amazed the Australians. Supported by US gunships, the attack was defeated by 5am. Later that morning, soldiers from 1 RAR, who had accompanied the tanks during their move from Coral to Balmoral, conducted the first infantry/armoured assault since World War II on a bunker system between the two fire support bases....

(continued....)



....The tanks' main armaments were used in a bunker busting role destroying at least 14 before they were ordered to return to Coral.



"Captured NVA soldiers at Balmoral"
(web photo & caption added to this report)

On the morning of 28 May the Viet Cong again attacked Balmoral to be met by canister fire from within the fire support base, and withering fire from US gunships. In what was described as *"a withering mad minute"* fire from the gunships, tanks, armoured personnel carriers, machine guns and rifles, halted the Viet Cong attack.

Despite the near run thing that was the Battle of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral, Australian troops proved themselves worthy of their forefathers in previous conflicts. Defined by resilience, courage, tenacity and a flat refusal to yield in the face of overwhelming odds, they defeated an enemy hell bent on defeating them.

And yet, the Australia sense of humour was ever present.

The same Captain Bullen who dutifully recorded how close the Task Force was to defeat on 13 May had previously recorded a radio conversation he had while on duty in Nui Dat with a helicopter pilot who had requested permission to shoot 'six cattle north of Nui Thi Vai'.

Bullen asked: **"Did you say CATTLE, i.e. cows?"**
"That is affirmative."

"Why do you want to shoot them?" Bullen asked.
"Because they're Viet Cong cattle, that's why."

"How can you define the political beliefs of a cow when you're in an aircraft and the cow's on the ground?"

"If we don't kill the cattle, the Viet Cong will eat them, so let's get in first."

"What, and kill the poor beasts in case someone else does? Fair go mate."

"May I engage with machine-gun fire?"

"No. Leave them alone."

"What! Are you Viet Cong or bloody RSPCA?"

The pilot was eventually given permission to shoot the cattle by a more senior officer, but to Bullen's great pleasure the pilot reported only two were slain, the remaining four escaped!

Source:

<http://anzaccentenary.sa.gov.au/>



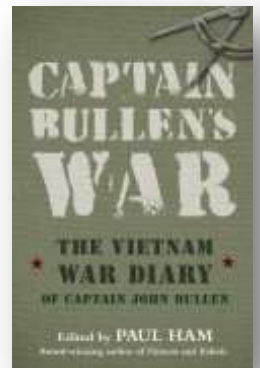
Review of a Book Penned by a Digger Down Under

The hilarity of M*A*S*H meets the satire of Catch 22 in one distinctive Australian voice.

'We need to send our survey party there!' (pointing to map) 'But Colonel, we can't do it, that's the most insecure area in the whole country!' 'Insecure? Goddamn it! The greatest concentration of American troops in the country is there!' 'Yes Colonel, and have you considered why the greatest concentration of American troops is right there?'

CAPTAIN BULLEN'S WAR combines the irreverent humour of M*A*S*H with the sharp satire of Catch 22 in portraying one man's extraordinary experiences of the war in Vietnam in 1968, the bloodiest year of the conflict. The difference is that neither Captain John Bullen nor his experiences are fictional. Nor was he a reluctant soldier. A graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and a career soldier in the Australian Army, Bullen commanded the vital map-producing section of the Australian task Force at Nui Dat. Alert to the possibility of humour in the bleakest circumstances, he decided to chronicle the events around him. What emerges is one of the most darkly funny and lacerating accounts of the Vietnam War ever written. Strewed with wonderful character sketches and hilarious anecdotes, **CAPTAIN BULLEN'S WAR** is more than just one man's insightful account of the absurdity of war. He perceives with unsparing clarity the nature and enormity of the conflict around him. A thoughtful, decent man, Bullen's is a voice of sanity in a world gone mad."

[Available at Amazon books online]





Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT And Attached Units Who Made Their Final Jump



Michael Baker, 71

Herndon, VA
Marcy 19, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

General Massey, 73

Live Oak, FL
January 15, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Thomas J. Thelen, 70

Stevensville, MD
May 3, 2018
173d RVN

Jeremy Walter Cowham, 41

Suisun City, CA
April 13, 2018
173d ABCT EUR

Joseph "Doc" Moreau, 69

Ladysmith, MN
June 1, 2018
173d, RVN

Winston F. Turner, 73

Timberville, VA
March 170, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Larry Martin Dombrowsky, 74

Michigan City, IN
June 13, 2018
173d RVN

Gabriel V. "Ben" Moreno, 73

Joliet, IL
May 31, 2018
173d RVN

Gerald L. "Gary" Thompson, 70

Watertown, VA
March 25, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Bruce David Field, 70

Fenton area, MI
2018
173d RVN

Larry Neal "Buzz" Morgan, 70

N. Myrtle Beach, SC
May 19, 2018
173d RVN

Larry Steven Wallace, 66

Leaveworth, KS
January 22, 2008
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Cory Adam Frank, 31

Fall Creek, WI
June 6, 2018
173d ABCT Eng.

Roberto T. Perez, 95

Brownsville, TX
March 23, 2018
503rd PRCT, WWII

Jack Curtis Hammett, Jr., 79

Paeonian Springs, AR
January 1, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Martin "Marty" Rappe, 68

Sullivan, IL
May 12, 2018
173d RVN

Lewis Coe Humphries, 70

Morristown, NC
April 14, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Ralph Drayton Reams, 68

Perry, FL
May 10, 2018
173d RVN

Krasean Clayborn, 36

Milwaukee, WI
June 1, 2018
173d ABCT

Andrew Joseph Schott, 71

Dunmore, PA
June 6, 2018
173d RVN

Louis J. Loftus, 30

Cuyahoga Falls, OH
March 27, 2018
173d ABCT

Kenneth James Schumacher, 71

Bremerton, WA
March 24, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

James Edward Mackie, 70

Seaboard, NC
June 3, 2018
173d RVN

James (Jim) Talbot, 68

Nowata, OK
June 7, 2018
173d RVN

***Soldier, rest, thy
warfare o'er;
Sleep the sleep that
knows no breaking;
Dream of battlefields
no more;
Days of danger, nights
of waking.***

***Tranquil you lie;
Your nightly virtue
proved;
Your memory
hallowed;
In the land you loved.***

~ Unknown author

