

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

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
*****newsletter



March-April 2019, Issue 85
Contact: rto173@att.net

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

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~
Aftermath of The Battle at Zulu Zulu, 16 March '66



"It was fifty-three years ago on the afternoon of 16 March 66, when Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d loaded our wounded and dead onto Dust Offs at LZ Zulu Zulu in the "D" Zone jungle after being surrounded by and fending off enemy forces reported to be three-times our size. Our 2/503d and many of our attached units would be awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for acts of valor during that hellacious battle. SP4 Alfred Rascon (Capt.)*, HHC/1/503, would later be awarded the Medal of Honor for his acts of valor as he and his battalion rushed through the jungle to reinforce the 2/503d under attack."

* See Page 51 for Al's MOH Citation



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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 March & April 1969



*"So bury me with soldiers, please, though much maligned they be.
Yes bury me with soldiers, for I miss their company.
We'll not soon see their likes again; We've had our fill of war.
But bury me with men like them, till someone else does more."*

Rev. Charles R. Fink



Jack Blaine Beers, 34
SFC, B/3/503, 4/7/69

1/9/03: "Daddy's body was accompanied home by his brother, Army Sgt William C. Beers, Sr. assigned to the 42nd Artillery in Vietnam. William still lives with his wife in Georgia and had one son (& two daughters) who joined the Army.



SFC Beers was serving with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, when his unit came under a night attack. He completely disregarded his own safety and though seriously wounded, he continued to deploy his men and firepower against the insurgents. This is quoted from a newspaper clipping - probably the Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle.

Daddy is buried in Fort Donelson National Cemetery, Dover, TN - it's located on the Tennessee side of the Land-Between-the-Lakes. It's a beautiful spot on a hill, not far from the Cherry Blossom trees - it's at a spot from which you can see forever."

Catherine Irene (Beers) Boudro

(See Jack's DSC citation on Page 36)



Kenneth Robert Bird, 19
SGT, B/3/503, 4/7/69

5/3/17: "Remembering my friends (Bobby Bird's) big Brother Kenneth. I met Kenneth when I was 8 years old. He was so full of life. Me and Bobby were playing on the porch. He had his uniform on. He stopped and talked a while with us. He smiled and said 'Hope to see you guys soon, I'm off to Vietnam. You guys be praying for me.' I learned he was killed in action a few months later. I finally saw him on the wall. I wept cause his smile is still in my heart. I joined the Army in 1976 -- he had a lot to do with my decision. I salute all our fallen and thank the families who have paid the ultimate price. God bless you All." **Unsigned**



Trevor Ralph Black, 21
PTE, 9RAR, 4/8/69

"From Bowen QLD. Black was engaged to be married. He was shot during a contact in Long Khan Province on 8th April 1969. Buried Bowen Cemetery QLD."



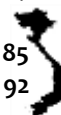
John Albert Bond, 39
WO2, AATTV (RAAC), 4/25/69

"Manly NSW. Bond an Armoured Corps Advisor attached to the 7th South Vietnamese Cavalry was killed in action at 5.30 am during an enemy mortar and ground attack in Quang Tri Province, 150kms north of Da Nang on Anzac day 25th April 1969. Buried Northern Suburbs Crematorium NSW."



John Bond

(Tributes continued....)



Harold Gene Bottoms, 20**SGT, D/4/503, 4/19/69**

11/13/18: "Basic Training 1968. I was in basic training with Harold in El Paso, TX in Company Bravo 3-3. I just wanted thank you for you service and sacrifice to your country. I often wondered where Harold had gotten off to and then I found this on the wall. It saddens me to hear of his death in Vietnam." **Donnie Fitzgerald, Sr.**

**~ Final Mission of SP4 Harold G. Bottoms ~**

Operation Washington Green was a joint operation of 173d Airborne Brigade and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) pacification campaign conducted in the An Lao Valley of Binh Dinh Province, RVN. On April 19, 1969, Sky Soldiers from D Company, 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, with their Vietnamese counterparts were moving into a night Command Post position a mile southeast of Tam Quan city when a land mine consisting of one, possibly two, booby-trapped 105mm artillery rounds were detonated. Five U.S. troopers were killed in the blast. Another three Vietnamese National Policemen and a ARVN interpreter accompanying the Americans were also killed. An additional eight Sky Soldiers were wounded. A Dustoff (medical evacuation by helicopter) was requested at 7:52 PM and arrived on scene at 8:14 PM, and the wounded were flown to Qui Nhon. The five lost Sky Soldiers were SP4 Harold G. Bottoms, PVT Robert R. Bradley, SSG Larry H. Cooke, PFC Richard L. Hannon, and SP4 Joe G. Longoria. Bottoms and Longoria were posthumously promoted to Sergeant, and Hannon was posthumously promoted to Corporal. [Taken from coffeltatabase.org]

**Robert Richard Bradley, 20****PVT, D/4/503, 4/19/69**

11/23/10: "We Remember. Robert is buried at Archer Woods Memorial Park, Willow Springs, IL. BSM PH" **Robert Sage**

**Walter Corbin Carter, 23****SP4, 173d/D Spt., 4/27/69**

11/14/10: "We Remember. Walter is buried at St Luke Methodist Cemetery in Reisterstown, MD. BSM ARCOM" **Robert Sage**

**Robert McLain Cochran, Jr., 19****SP4, B/3/503, 4/7/69**

5/19/12: "Many Ties. I do not know if I ever met you, but we have several ties that cause me to remember and honor you. We both were from Sarasota, Florida and you returned there to be buried in the same cemetery as my parents and many friends and relatives. In the Army we both served as Infantry paratroopers with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and in the same 3rd battalion at the same time. And I was there on 4/7/1969 to help recover the bodies and equipment of the 11 killed when Bravo Lima platoon was overrun by an NVA Battalion. And now I am looking up all our fallen Sky Soldiers from Florida to keep your memory and offer our respect. May you rest in peace now that the battle is over for all of us Viet vets." **Mike Switzer**

**Larry Houston Cooke, 21****SSG, D/4/503, 4/19/69**

1/6/00: "Standing Tall. Sergeant Cooke was a wiry E-5 when I got to the 'herd.' He would be the first one up and returning fire, always! I wasn't there when he gave all he had, I left for R&R at the end of 69'. I saw him a few times after that, then got malaria and never saw him again. I think they were up in Bong Son when I got the news that he was killed. I'll bet anything that he wasn't ducking in a foxhole or behind something when the time came.....anything at all. 'Airborne, Sergeant Cooke.'" **Dan Pomeroy**

**William Thomas Craig, Jr., 22****SSG, B/1/503, 3/8/69**

2/27/16: "I remember when you saw me, you asked if my name was Todd. I said yes. You wanted to help the ARVNS. I was watching the tracers, because of the light show, I said no. That was the first time we met and even today I think of you and think of you a lot. You were a good friend for a FNG. I cried for you today when I went to the Wall of Healing, which was in Willows, CA today. Rest in Peace friend you deserved so much more than words will ever say. Your friend," **Gary Dave Todd, Corporal, 173rd Airborne (1968-1970)**



(Tributes continued....)



Peter Dawson, 24**CPL, 4RAR, 3/7/69**

"South Melbourne VIC. Dawson was killed in action in Phuoc Tuy Province on the night of 7th March 1969. He was attending wounded soldiers. Buried Fawkner Cemetery VIC."



~ A Note from The Virtual Wall ~

On the night of 06/07 April 1969 "B" Company, 3/503rd Infantry lost eleven men when their night defensive position near Bao Loc, Lam Dong Province, was attacked by a reinforced VC company: SFC Jack B. Beers, Clarksville, TN (Dist Svc Cross) SGT Kenneth R. Bird, Monrovia, CA SGT Floyd A. Deal, Globe, AZ, medic HQ Co w/B/3/503 (Silver Star) SGT Larry M. Kelley, Blytheville, AR SGT Thomas V. Mitchell, Pittsburgh, PA SP4 Robert M. Cochran, Sarasota, FL SP4 Timothy E. Dye, Marion, OH SP4 John T. Gray, Ellisville, MS SP4 Michael D. Griffis, Philadelphia, PA CPL Larry G. Pyle, Fort Worth, TX PFC Peter Godoy, Los Angeles, CA

**Floyd Andrew Deal, "Doc", 18****SGT, B/3/503, 4/7/69**

11/22/14: *"Brother in Arms. I was there that day. I lost many brothers.*

We knew we were going to be hit in the morning. I had walked point the past few days. What we didn't know was that there were more than we saw. Everyone fought hard till we started to run out of ammo. Thanks Deal for being there for all of us. I have never forgotten you. God Bless you Brother."

Paul Dalton

Ceremony of the Boots, posted in connection with the tribute to Floyd on The Wall of Faces.

**Richard Allen Doseck, 18****PFC, 173d Eng, 3/10/69**

12/3/10: *"We Remember. Richard is buried at Resthaven Memory Gardens, St Marys, OH. BSM"*
Robert Sage

**Timothy Elden Dye, 20****SP4, B/3/503, 4/7/69**

(Virtual Wall states E/3/503)

11/20/14: *"Brother In Arms. I was there, April 7th, 1969, the day I lost so many brothers. Tim was a friend and brother. He fought like hell that day. We all were hit hard, no one made it out clean. Had we not ran out of ammo we would have continued to fight. God Bless you Tim."* **Paul Dalton**

**Barry Randolph George, 21****PTE, 9RAR, 4/7/69**

"Rylstone NSW. George was killed in action in Long Khan Province on the morning of 7th April 1969 when he was shot. Buried Rylstone Cemetery NSW."

**George Geoffrey Gilbert, 29****CPL, 5RAR, 3/9/69**

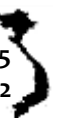
"Newcastle NSW. He did two tours of Vietnam with 5RAR, in 1966 and 1969. He was killed when his platoon accidentally walked into a mine field at 2am on 9th March 1969 in Phuoc Tuy. Buried Liverpool New Cemetery NSW."

**Peter Godoy, Jr., 20****PFC, B/3/503, 4/7/69**

12/5/05: *"Family's Past. Peter did not know me, I am his 2nd cousin born 14 years 6 months four days after his passing. All I have heard are stories of who he was and finding this (Wall of Faces) online is something incredible. I have been to both the California and National Vietnam Memorials and this is just as touching as those two locations. He was a good man that died too young, which is often the rule of war, young men are going to die. It is even more tragic to see that the US is following the same path today as it had in Vietnam. My family and I, more specifically my mother, his cousin, and I thank you for making this resource available and those who have posted remembrances on Peter's behalf."* **Nicholas Cincotta**



(Tributes continued....)



**John Terry Gray, 20****SP4, B/3/503, 4/7/69**

8/23/05: "Brother, I have not forgotten you. Your life was short, not yet lived, but hasn't been forgotten either. I look at the picture on this site (Wall of Faces) and I cannot believe that it has been so long ago that you left us. You have and will always be remembered. Our Father and our youngest brother has passed away to be with you. I hope that each of you are looking down on us as we only can hold you in our hearts. Your loving sister, Sandra." **Sandra K. Burnet**

**Willie Frank Green, 21****CPL, D/16th Armor, 3/26/69**

7/9/15: "Miss you Frank! I miss seeing you at East Bay High, rolling around the Whataburger, Dog N Suds or just hanging out around different places in Brandon. I'm sure you and Charley, my brother, have gotten together since his arrival in 1999. Sometimes it seems like only yesterday, then at times it seems a hundred years ago. We were young having fun and hanging out with all the guys with our cars around the drive ins, parts houses and gas stations where we would line up the evenings drag races. I finally got a trophy at Tampa Dragway with my old turquoise '64 Ford, the weekend before I traded it. Now I'm old and grey, something you never experienced. In a way I'm glad you are not here today to see what the country you died for has become. Anyway, thank you for your service Frank. I got there a few years after you and thanks to you and so many like you I made it home. Martha and I are still married, just celebrated our 47th wedding anniversary in June of 2016. Where has the time gone. I look forward to seeing you again Frank....I go to your grave site and freshen it up when I can." **Jim Pierce**

**~ Final Mission of PFC Willie F. Green ~**

On March 26, 1969, elements of D Company, 16th Armor, 173rd Airborne Brigade, were conducting combat operations eight miles west of Tuy Hoa in Phu Yen Province, RVN, when stretcher bearers moving a patient on a litter detonated a hostile mine. The three stretcher bearers, PFC Willie F. Green, PFC Bobby P. Lindley, and SP5 Clyde A. Lucas, and the wounded soldier, SP4 Robert O. Wells, suffered fatal blast and fragmentation wounds. Wells was posthumously promoted to Sergeant and Green was posthumously promoted to Corporal. [Taken from coffeldatabase.org and "Our Gallant Men" by Dennis W. Miner]

**Michael Daniel Griffis, 20****SP4, B/3/503, 4/7/69**

9/22/02: "May there be Peace in our heart. Michael D. Griffis, Woolston Avenue, West Oak Lane. Griffis was thinking of making a career of the Army. He loved his country and felt strongly about defending it. He enlisted in December 1967. He sent home a card at Christmas 1968, writing 'May there be Peace in our heart. Peace in our homes. Peace in the nation. Peace in the family of nations.' He dreamed of raising a family, but not until there was peace. The 20-year-old specialist four, an automatic rifleman, was on his second tour in Vietnam and was assigned to Company B of the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, when he died on April 7, 1969. He had attended Cardinal Dougherty High School for two years. Griffis was survived by his parents, five brothers and two sisters."

**The Philadelphia Daily News****Richard Lamar Hannon, 22****CPL, D/4/503, 4/19/69**

5/26/00: "One Hannon to Another. I see your name upon the Wall and tears flow, for Hannon's have always showed up for our country, dating back to the Civil War. So rest among some of the best men this world has ever seen. I sign this with great respect for all to see." **Carl Hannon**

**Terry Teruo Kawamura, 19****CPL, 173d Eng, 3/20/69**

12/19/14: "My brother, my hero: Terry, it's been 45 years since you left us. I was 10 years old, but remember your R&Rs and your friends sleeping in the living room! We all miss you and know that you are in a wonderful place. We are so proud of you Brother and will always be in our hearts! Love you, your sis," **Bridget**

**[See Terry's MOH citation on Page 6]***(Tributes continued....)*



(Posthumously Awarded)

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Cpl. Kawamura distinguished himself by heroic action while serving as a member of the 173d Engineer Company. An enemy demolition team infiltrated the unit quarters area and opened fire with automatic weapons. Disregarding the intense fire, Cpl. Kawamura ran for his weapon. At that moment, a violent explosion tore a hole in the roof and stunned the occupants of the room. Cpl. Kawamura jumped to his feet, secured his weapon and, as he ran toward the door to return the enemy fire, he observed that another explosive charge had been thrown through the hole in the roof to the floor. He immediately realized that 2 stunned fellow soldiers were in great peril and shouted a warning. Although in a position to escape, Cpl. Kawamura unhesitatingly wheeled around and threw himself on the charge. In completely disregarding his safety, Cpl. Kawamura prevented serious injury or death to several members of his unit. The extraordinary courage and selflessness displayed by Cpl. Kawamura are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.



President Richard M. Nixon presenting the Medal of Honor to the Kawamura Family



Larry Milton Kelley, 20

SGT, B/3/503, 4/7/69

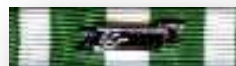
4/10/05: "My Uncle that I never got to meet. I wished I could have met you ... My Dad loves you, and misses you very much. As do all his brothers and Sisters throughout their lives. They carry on with thoughts and memories of Love with their spirits forever and always, as do I." **Sandy Kelley**



Eugene John George Kock, 20

SGT, C/4/503, 3/22/69

6/22/99: "Last Goodbye. 'Bluegenes' was my friend and neighbor. My wife Mary and I saw Eugene for the last time in June of 1968 at the Oakland Army Base just before he left for Viet Nam. I was also in the Army stationed at the Presidio. We had a great time talking about old times. When we shook hands for the last time we agreed to meet in Iowa when he got back and have a 'cool one'. We never got to do that. Eugene was one of the 'good guys'. He is missed by lots of people and I'm one of them. Bluegenes Friend," **Paul Aylward**



Rodger Magnus Koefod, 20

CPL, B/2/503, 4/27/69

11/05/03: "A Hero from Moscow, Idaho. The last time I saw Rodger was at a dance at WSU's (Go Cougs!) Stud Union Bldg summer of '66. He sang lead in a band and he was great. He did a mean G-L-O-R-I-A and Mustang Sally – the 'Gator' dance was on! He was a cool and nice guy. I am so very proud to have known him. I visited the moving wall 11-3-03 in W. Richland, WA and got his name rubbing off the wall. Rodger, you have not been forgotten. Your family must be very proud...God bless you." **Becky Cash Savage**



Bobby Pat Lindley, 21

PFC, D/16th Armor, 3/26/69

6/3/11: "We Remember. Bobby is buried at Rose Lawn Memorial Gardens, Mineola, TX. BSM PH" **Robert Sage**



(Tributes continued....)



Joe Gilbert Longoria, 19

SGT, D/4/503, 4/19/69

6/9/09: "Baby brother. As the years go I miss you more and more. I cry more tears then I ever did before. I pray day by day so that way I know where I will meet soon one day." **Alice Longoria**



Roland John Panarese, 22

SP4, D/4/503, 4/19/69

(Virtual Wall states D/3/503)

1/15/05: "We Remember. Roland is buried at New Bern Nat Cem."

Robert Sage



Roland with a few of his buddies.



Herbert Lee Malone, 19

SGT, D/4/503, 4/28/69

6/13/11: "We Remember. Herbert is buried at Pine Grove Cemetery, Edinberg, MA. BSM-OLC PH" **Robert Sage**



Joseph G. Manicola, 22

TEMP CPL. 1 AUST RFT UNIT, 3/12/69

"Yallorn VIC. On 17th January 1969 Army Medics admitted him to 1 Australian Field Hospital with a cranial tumour, then transferred him to Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital in Melbourne, where he died on 12th March 1969. Buried Garden of Remembrance VIC."



Lyall Hugh McPherson, 20

PTE, 9RAR, 4/12/69

"Northam WA. McPherson died of gunshot wounds on patrol in Bien Hoa on 12th April 1969. Buried Karrakatta Cemetery WA."



Gregorio L. Pangelinan, 26

CPL, HHC/1/50th, 3/9/69

7/5/01: "Just me DAD. Just want to let you know that I have been following your lead as I am also in the Army. You have been with me since the day in Mar of 69 when you left this earth. I was 5 years old and your only child (son), Mom has done all she could do without you being at her side in raising me, but I think I turned out okay. I am currently married to a wonderful woman who also is in the Army and I also have a beautiful daughter, Abi. You are always on my mind and soul. Please watch over my family the only way you can and remember that I Love You. Missing you always. Your Son," **Martin Pangelinan, MAJ, USA**



Richard Mark Pearsall, 20

SGT, D/2/503, 3/16/69

5/29/17: "We Still Remember You Mark! From a fellow Vietnam veteran and ex High School classmate, I will never forget you Mark. It was an honor to have known you! God bless you my friend!"

Roger Thornton C Co. 2/8 Air Cav Div, 2/68 - 2/69



Thomas Victor Mitchell, 21

SGT, B/3/503, 4/7/69

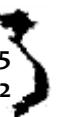
14 Nov 2006: "You are still missed to this day. From his brother,"

Chris Mitchell

7/26/14: "My Grandfather's Friend. In 1969, my grandpa served in the Vietnam war. His platoon was staying the night near an abandoned camp...The other side ambushed. My grandpa had to leave everyone except for 2 men. One of them they had to carry. My Grandpa carried out a man with a bullet hole in his neck. He had to leave his best friend. We went to the traveling memorial and my grandpa keeps avoiding going. We found him. Thomas Victor Mitchell." **Unsigned**



(Tributes continued....)



Richard William Pelletier, 19

SSG, 173d LRRP, 3/24/69

(Virtual Wall states N/75th Rangers)

3/21/06: "To my 2nd Cousin. I'm Linda's daughter, so I'm your 2nd cousin. I never met you, in fact I just learned that you were my cousin. I'm going to DC and one of my stops is the monument where your name will permanently stay. I never met you, but I'm sure I'll see you in heaven...someday. Love you lots. **Miranda**



Geoffrey Anthony Pike, 26

PTE, 5RAR, 4/4/69

"Sydney NSW. Shot by the VC he died from wounds at Long Khanh on 4th April 1969. Buried Northern Suburbs Cemetery NSW."



Larry Gene Pyle, 20

CPL, B/3/503, 4/7/69

3/5/04: "Sky Soldier. I was part of the mop up on Easter Sunday morning that year. You guys fought hard and died with honor and bravery. We remember you each year at the reunion of the 173rd Airborne. You were not alone and are remembered. The ceremony of the 'Boots' was a moving one." **David "Doc"**



Alexander Remeljej

PTE, 5RAR, 4/11/69

"Detmold West Germany. He was killed by an exploding mine 11th April 1969. Buried Centennial park Cemetery SA."



Grantley James Scales, 22

PTE, 9RAR, 3/5/69

"Adelaide SA. Scales was in B Coy when he was accidentally killed by a gunshot wound from his own unit, after he walked outside its perimeter in Bien Hoa on 5th March 1969. Buried Centennial Park Cemetery SA."



Govt. to blame, says father

"We would feel better about my son's death if he had gone to fight in Vietnam of his own free will," said Mr. J.P. Scales today. The son, Pte Grantley Scales, 22 single of Maud Street, Glandore was killed in Vietnam on Wednesday, 5th March 1969. "They came and told us the other morning that he was dead - an Army Officer and a padre", his father Mr Scales said today. "They said he had been killed accidentally during operations in Bien Hoa province. They did not (give) any other details. I feel very strongly about this. I blame both the Liberal Government and the DLP for the death of my son. What other country in the world pulls boys' names out of a barrel and sends them to fight in a war in a foreign country. Hated Army, Grantley was a good boy. The lad didn't want to go when he was called up, but he wouldn't shirk what he had to do. He hated it in the Army. He was a home loving boy. We are a very close family. When he was training and stationed in Australia he would come home at every possible occasion." He said In his last letter home from Vietnam Pte Scales wrote, "I have seen things I will never forget as long as I live." "We would feel a lot better about his death if he had gone of his own free will." Mr. Scales said. "I want to appeal to all Mothers to try to put an end to this vile war."



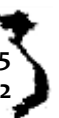
Bernard Lyle Smith, 29

PTE, 5RAR, 3/12/69

"Snowtown SA. Smith was killed after walking into a mine-field at Phuoc Hoa Long, near Nui Dat on 9th March 1969. Buried Wallaroo Cemetery SA."



(Tributes continued....)



**Larry Dean Smith, 30****SSG, E/17th Cav, 3/20/69**

(Virtual Wall states 173d Flt Plt)

6/18/04: "Never forgotten. It has been more than 35 years since that night and yet I still visit there each night.

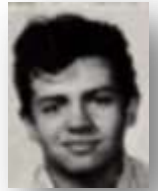
Physical scars heal but emotional scars never heal.

Coping with scars of this nature sometimes is more difficult than at other times, but nonetheless, we cope.

Out of all that were in the hooch that night, you and Terry Kawamura were the only ones who gave 'all'. You were trying to put out the lights and warn every one of the 'incoming' and Terry intentionally threw himself on one of the explosive devices to protect others. The rest of us inside the hooch survived physically and are still learning how to cope. You will never be forgotten by any of the Casper Platoon and I think of you daily. I still can't say goodbye to you." **Terry Gallagher**

**Daniel Welsh, 20****SGT, D/4/503, 4/28/69**

4/30/00: "To my Dad, I just want to tell you I love you and wish I could have known you, just to spend one day together. We love you." **Lisa Muller**

**James Mungo T. White, 21****PTE, 5RAR, 4/4/69**

"Collie WA. He died in an enemy contact on 4th April 1969, at Long Khanh. Buried Collie Cemetery WA."

**William Curtis Williamson, 21****CPL, B/2/503, 3/30/69**

4/18/05: "We Remember. William is buried at Long Island Nat Cem."

Robert Sage**Charles Ellis Thomas, 20****SP4, C/1/50th, 4/19/69**

8/9/11: "We Remember. Charles is buried at Shady Grove Cemetery,

Tampa, FL. BSM PH" **Robert Sage**

**Brien Geoffrey Walker, 21****2LT, 5RAR, 3/9/69**

"Cottesloe WA. Walker was leading his platoon through a mine field on 9th March 1969 in Phuoc Tuy when the platoon sergeant Bernard Smith stepped on a mine which exploded. Brian Walker was killed with Smith and Gilbert. Buried Karrakatta Cemetery WA."

**Rudolph Wilson, 23****PVT, B/1/503, 3/9/69**

3/10/14: "Dear PVT Rudolph Wilson, sir. As an American, I would like to thank you for your service and for your sacrifice made on behalf of our wonderful country. The youth of today could gain much by learning of heroes such as yourself, men and women whose courage and heart can never be questioned. With respect, Sir." **Curt Carter**

And to the age-old question we ask ourselves,

"Why them and not me?"

Perhaps the late Jim Healy, A/2/503,

came close to the answer when he said:

"Just pure luck. Neither bullets nor shrapnel swerve to avoid hitting the 'good' nor do they change direction to seek out the 'bad.' They just simply fly in their trajectory and hit whatever may be in their path. While being good at your job may give you the slight edge, the determining factor is luck. That's what makes combat death seem so arbitrary, random and unfair."

(Vietnam magazine)

**John Edmond Walters, 19****CPL, C/2/503, 3/2/69**

6/2/02: "Johnny was a good kid and he enjoyed life."

Mike R. Stapleton**Robert Oliver Wells, 19****SGT, D/16th Armor, 3/26/69**

11/14/98: "Will always remember our good time in Killeen. Bobby wells was a very good friend of mine in Killeen, Texas. We were in scouts together and used to share a lot of dreams and hopes for the future. It's with deep regret that I had to learn of his death after I returned from the Navy in February of '70. Bobby was a very kind and loyal friend. I wish I could contact his parents. I went to the wall and saw his name. I wish all his family the best as I know their loss. God bless."

Morris Rudick



INCOMING!!!



~ Troopers Named, Sister Remembered ~

As usual, nice newsletter and obviously lots of work. On page 36 (Issue 84) there's a picture of two Sky Soldiers in a rice paddy. They are, from left, **Alan DiMaggio** and **Mike Farrell**, from B/2/503, I think in '65. Thanks again for the nice words on Claudia.

Larry Paladino
B/2/503



Bravo Bulls DiMaggio and Farrell

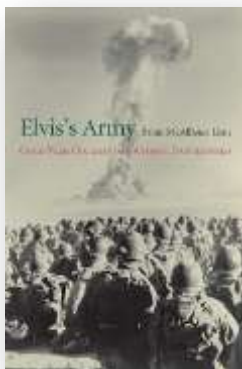
Larry's younger sister **Claudia Paladino-Tobin** whom we lost on December 8, 2018. See remembrance to our friend Claudia on Page 24 of Issue 84.



~ Book Recommendation ~

There is a good book titled "**Elvis's Army**" it covers the Army from the end of the Korean War to the start of Vietnam. If you served in the late fifties or early sixties this is for you.

Joe Logan
B/2/503



~ 2 Buddies, Only 1 Survived ~

Hope all is well with you and yours and a very Merry Christmas to you! Note Page 6 of our recent Newsletter (Issue 84), **Jim Kelly** (KIA 1/12/69) was with me in Charlie Company 2nd Bat. Appears it got put in the wrong place on the Wall as well. Here is a pic of him and I in '68, Jim's on the left. Best

Dave von Reyn
C/2/503



Jim and Dave, when they were young and brave and paratroopers.

~ 2/503 Chargin' Charlie CO In The War Zone...Again ~

I just found this picture of me when I was a company commander in the 101st Airborne in 1970. We were just hit by a pretty strong NVA/VC attack on our company position. It took a while but we beat them off pretty good. It never stopped in those days. I think, in the background you can see the mountain Dong Ap Bia or "Hamburger Hill". We hated that term. I would not see my son until he was 10 months old. Stay well brother. Cap



Jack Leide, MG
CO C/2/503

Thanks Cap!

(INCOMING!!! continued....)



~ Photo Credit Correction ~

Thanks for doing the latest issue of our 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter (Issue 84 - Jan-Feb 2019).

There is one photo that I did not personally take. It is actually an AP photo that I scanned. I had labeled the photo file, "Operation Silver City, March 66, AP photo". It appears on Page 46 at the bottom left and is a color photo of a casualty on a litter being hoisted up to a helicopter.

This issue is great! I particularly enjoyed reading the article about the 503rd on Corregidor (Pages 64-70), and the one about that Casper Huey crew being saved (Pages 75-80).

See you in Charleston.

Jerry Patterson

C/2/503, May '65 - Jun '66

Our reply: Thanks Jerry. Here's the pic (below) with the correct credit. I do recall reading the newscaster Ted Koppel and other journalists came into our LZ after the battle at Zulu Zulu on March 16, 1966 (Operation Silver City). Seems many from the media were anxious to visit us once the bombs and bullets stopped flying. This photo, however, would have been taken a couple days earlier and, I believe, could very well be the med-evac of Capt. **Les Brownlee**, CO B/2/503 after he was wounded in a firefight, or one of our KIA who was extracted from the jungle in this same manner. **Ed**



AP Photo, Operation Silver City, March 1966.

~ Texas Chapter XIII Sky Soldiers Doing Good For Kids At Christmas ~



My family & I had the privilege to once again serve alongside the 173rd Airborne Brigade veterans at their *13th Annual Christmas Luncheon* for the children at the Roy Maas Youth Center this past weekend. These honorable Sky Soldiers never stop serving. :-) It was time well spent serving lunch, eating together and visiting with the children.



Christina

Kudos to the 173rd Texas Chapter XIII for their donations as well as those provided by HEB and Bill Miller BBQ! Thanks to their sponsorship, the children's Christmas season was made a bit brighter.

#christmas #veterans #texas #volunteering #army
<https://lnkd.in/eyU53NP>

Christina McCumber

Mother of 173d ABCT Sky Soldier Nick McCumber

~ Good Memories ~

Doc John Borquez, B/2/503, passed a couple years back. I keep his picture open for good memories.

Bob "Doc" Evalt

B/2/503



L-R: Docs John & Bob

(**INCOMING!!!** continued....)



~ More Corrections ~

On Page 66 of 89, Issue 84, you have a picture of LTC Hal Moore entitled *503d's LTC Harold G. Moore, Jr. inspects enemy dead*. I didn't know he served with the 503d! I was on the movie set with Hal Moore during the filming of his movie *"We Were Soldiers Once"*. He never mentioned he served with the 503d. Your picture has nothing to do with the Corregidor stuff. Hal was still at West Point during that battle. Also, Hal's wearing the 7th ID patch. He didn't serve with the 7th ID until Korea (June 1952) when he was a Captain. The equipment in the picture, especially the M-16 Rifle was not in use during WW2 and Korea. Finally, Hal didn't make LTC until 1964. Somebody boo-booed or did I misunderstand the article??

On page 23 of 89, same issue, your picture of the M61 Frag - is actually the M26 Frag except the M61 has an additional safety on the "spoon" or "handle" of the grenade known as "Jungle Clip". The M26 did not. The M61 frag mimickers the M26. If you were around long enough, they introduced the M67 Frag; better known as the "baseball" Frag. The M26 & the M61 were replaced with the M67.

Yours in Patriotism,
Ken Lapore
173d Abn

Our reply: Hi Ken. In searching for a pic of 503d's WWII LTC Jones, I captured a wrong photo, yes, that would have been Hal Moore from *We Were Soldiers Once*... look for a correction in the next issue. I wasn't paying attention....again. Likewise with the grenade (see Page 40 this issue). Thanks for sharing that bit of history of C/4/503. Be well brother, and ATW! Smitty

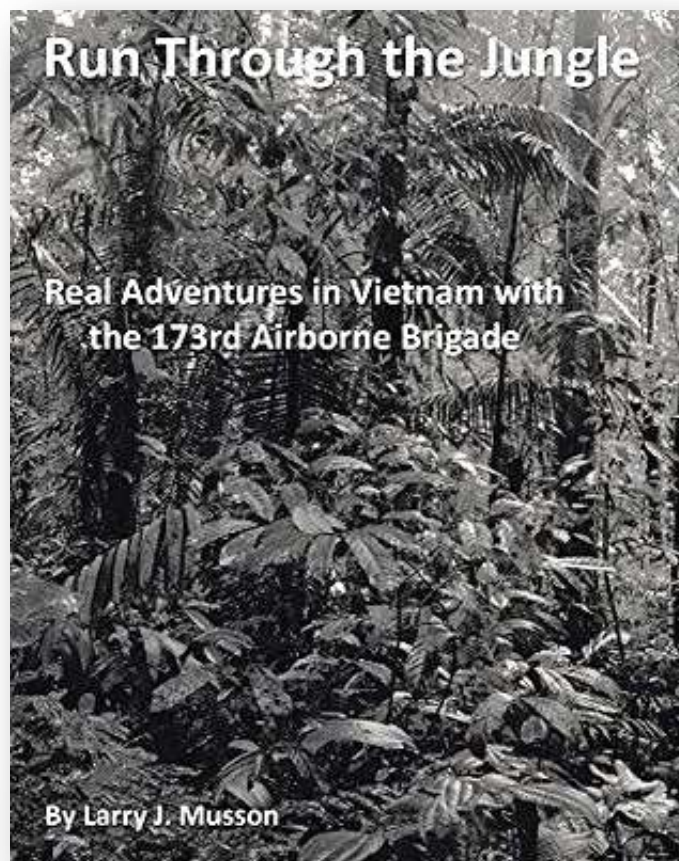


This Vietnam web photo is of Hal Moore and not WWII 503d CO LTC Jones as we intended in Issue 84.

~ Book By A Sky Soldier ~

Read an interesting book, *"Run Through The Jungle"*, by **Larry Musson**, who was in the 4th Battalion in '69-'70. Very interesting read, once started hard to put down. He carried the Radio for the CP. He had a new CO who treated the CP as a unit separate from others. It just added another element to go on Patrols, etc., not very well received by members of the CP, as you can imagine. The book can be found on Amazon and I do recommend it for reading. Its accuracy will have to be determined by you.

Bob Lohr
E/2/503, '68-'69



Web Review:

"From Larry J. Musson comes an authentic account of combat with an airborne company in the water-logged rice paddies and demanding jungles of South Vietnam. Share the experiences of fighting men under punishing conditions, extreme temperatures, and intense monsoon rains as they search for the enemy in the rugged mountains and teeming lowlands. Relive all the terror, humor, and sadness of one man's tour of duty with real-life action in spectacular, stunning detail."

(INCOMING!!! continued....)



~ From A 4/503 Brother ~

2nd/ 503PIR/173rd: Though I was in C/4th/ 503PIR/173rd Abn. Bde. I am grateful to receive the 2/503 newsletter. It reminds me so much of the 13 months I spent there including Hill 875, Tet, and battles too numerous to remember.

God Bless 2nd Battalion.

Antoine E. Roy
2nd Plt., C Co.
4th Bat., 503rd PIR
173rd Abn. Bde.
4/1967 to 5/1968

~ Gold Star Mother Honored ~

On April 29, 2018, a final tribute was held in San Antonio, Texas honoring **173d Gold Star (GS) Mother, Esther Gates**, mother of our fellow, fallen Sky Soldier brother, **SP4 Keith Campbell**, a medic who gave his life while saving another brother during Operation Big Spring on 08 February 1967, while attached to A Co, 1st Bn, 503d Airborne Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. He would later be awarded the *Distinguished Service Cross*, Posthumously, for his actions. Years later, Keith would also be honored by having the post library at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where he had received medical training, named in his honor and it still remains.

Frank Martinez
A/1/503



Mrs. Gates

By Direction of the President of the United States
The Distinguished Service Cross
Is Awarded To
Keith A. Campbell
(Posthumously)



Rank and Unit: Specialist Four,
Headquarters and Headquarters
Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne)
503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne
Brigade.

Date and Place: 8 February 1967,
Republic of Vietnam.

Reason: For extraordinary heroism
in connection with military opera-
tions involving conflict with an
armed hostile force in the Republic
of Vietnam: Special Four Campbell
distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 8
February 1967 while serving with elements of the 503rd
Infantry assaulting a Viet Cong bunker complex.



During the initial engagement, the lead company had
suffered numerous casualties, including the medical
personnel. Specialist Campbell volunteered to assist in
treating the wounded, and dauntlessly moved up to the
front line. Exposing himself to the intense hostile fire, he
began to administer aid to the wounded soldiers. Discover-
ing that one casualty lay fifty meters in front of the friendly
lines and next to an insurgent bunker, Specialist Campbell
called for covering fire as he maneuvered forward.

Disregarding the extreme dangers, he fearlessly ran
through a hail of bullets and exploding grenades, but was
forced to take cover behind a low mound of dirt. From this
position, he killed a Viet Cong sniper who was firing on him
from a tree.

Undeterred from his mission, Specialist Campbell then
crawled the last twenty meters to the stricken man. Drag-
ging the soldier to the cover of a nearby tree, he started to
administer first aid. As he fearlessly protected the man
from further hostile fire, Special Campbell was mortally
wounded.

His unimpeachable valor and selfless sacrifice against
insurmountable odds succeeded in saving a fellow soldier's
life. Special Four Campbell's extraordinary heroism and
devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with
the highest traditions of the military service and reflect
great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States
Army.

*"Never have the people of this country had more
justification for pride, nor more reason to be grateful,
than they have today because of men like this."*

President Lyndon Johnson



First Casualty of the Corregidor Drop?

Leonard R. PORTER

Pfc, "H" Company 503rd PRCT
KIA Landing Zone A, Corregidor
Friday, 16 Feb 1945



Leonard Porter was killed on the jump February 16, 1945. "H" jumped the first wave at 8:25 a.m. As we left the assembly point about 9 a.m. and approached the "Mile Long Barracks" Leonard's body was discovered. His chute was deployed but could possibly have been a streamer or he might have hit the barracks' roof - the chute collapses and he rolls off and crashes to the ground. He was just a few feet from the barracks' concrete wall. Porter was probably the first casualty of the Corregidor drop.

Capt. Jim Mullaney
"H" Company, Commanding, WWII



The "Mile Long Barracks" on Corregidor before the war.



And after the war.

Little Rock, Arkansas effectively ends Veteran homelessness



(web image added)

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the recent effective end of Veteran homelessness in the municipality of Little Rock, Arkansas, bringing the U.S. another step closer to ending Veteran homelessness nationwide. Little Rock joins 65 other communities and three states — Connecticut, Delaware and Virginia — that have effectively ended homelessness among Veterans.

"No American Veteran should be without a safe and stable place to call home," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. *"We will continue this important work until we achieve a day when homelessness among Veterans is rare and brief in every community across our country."*

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), VA and their federal, state and local partners have worked jointly to help Veterans secure stable housing through **Home Together**, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness.

Since 2010, the combined efforts of HUD, VA and their partners have helped cut Veteran homelessness nearly in half. This includes a decrease of more than 5 percent in homelessness among Veterans between 2017 and 2018. Since 2010, 698,620 Veterans and their family members have been permanently housed, rapidly rehoused or prevented from falling into homelessness through HUD's targeted housing vouchers and VA's homelessness programs.

For more information about how to support VA's efforts to prevent and end Veteran homelessness, visit www.va.gov/homeless

Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless can call

877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838)

Read entire report at:

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5172>



[KIA report of Leonard Porter courtesy of Paul Whitman and his 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion website]
(Web photos added)



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Roy Scott, 3/319th RVN Former 173d Airborne Brigade Association President and Good Buddy Passes



Roy F Scott Jr., 68, transitioned from his life on Thursday, December 6, 2018, after a courageous battle with cancer. Born on April 21, 1950 in Columbus, Ohio, he was the 2nd child born to the union of Roy F. Scott, Sr. and Reida E. Frey. A lifelong resident of Columbus, Roy was raised in the tightly knit community, known as "American Addition". He was educated within the Columbus Public School system, graduating from North High School. Roy entered the U.S. Armed forces and served in Army's "173rd" Airborne (Sky Soldier), fighting during the Vietnam Conflict and Desert Storm, earning and becoming a recipient of the "Bronze Star". Roy furthered his desire to serve when he applied for and received an appointment to the Columbus Division of Police in 1979, graduating as President of his academy class. During his career, he held various positions, including assignments in Patrol, Vice, Public Records

and Homicide, as well as serving as a Grievance Rep. for the Fraternal Order of Police. Roy's personality was that of a social butterfly, reflected in the pride he held of his Native American heritage; The Army 173rd and Columbus Division of Police. He was a recognized member of several organizations, including the Indian Nation of "Saponi-Catawba", The Ohio Police & Retirees Inc., National Fraternal Order of Police, past President of Chapter 17, past National President of the 173rd, presiding over 5,000 members, Honorary Kentucky Colonel, Council Member of the Saponi-Catawba Nation. Roy is preceded in death by his parents Roy F. Scott and Reida E. Scott-Fields, sister Janice Nahlovsky and brother Thomas Scott. Roy leaves behind to cherish his memory and carry on his legacy, his wife, Jessica Scott; children, J. Dawn (Sam) Miller, Ashanti Lowe, Cyrena Nichols, Rayford Nichols and Kenneth Scott; grandchildren, RaShawn Jones, Ashanya Jones, Manuel Monger, Tanner Miller, Luke Miller and Terry'iona Scott; special brother and "sister-in-love", Earl and Karen Fields; sisters, Irena (James) Scott-Rand, Carol Scott-Hairston; and brother, Alan Fields; special nephew, Dwayne Robinson; special friend, Merv Shelton; and a host of family and friends.

*Rest Easy With Your Fellow Warriors Brother,
Job Well Done, Roy*

The Saponi-Catawba Nation

We are the Saponi-Catawba Nation and our purpose is to continue our tribal entity with government to government relationships. As a people, we strive to enrich our cultural and educational base in order to cultivate our language, culture, crafts, and music in keeping up with our Saponi-Catawba Nation heritage.

We are a tribal Nation composed of descendants and heirs of the historic Saponi-Catawba Nation. Our people were first found in the original Ohio Valley. Many moved to the Virginia-Carolina Piedmont region upon European encroachment. We are part of the Great Sioux Nation both in the plains and south-east whose origins were of the Ohio River Valley.

[Saponi-Catawba Nation website]



For many of us who arrived in-country in 1965, these Sergeant Major's tips from 1969 would have been most welcome. It's often been said, from the OJT of the early guys, those troopers who followed benefitted. We hope so. Ed



NUMBER 3

HEADQUARTERS U.S. ARMY VIETNAM

Combat Lessons Bulletin



10 May 1969

A SERGEANT MAJOR'S COMBAT TIPS

GENERAL

Combat Lessons Bulletins are published to insure that subordinate commanders derive maximum benefit from the lessons learned by other units during combat operations in Vietnam. Timely exchange of new techniques and ideas may assist commanders in overcoming obstacles within their own areas of responsibility.

COMBAT TIPS

Sergeant Major Ted G. Arthurs, having served as a Rifle Company First Sergeant in the Korean War, was the Sergeant Major of the 4th Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam. He compiled and wrote the following Combat Tips in the hopes of helping senior NCO's and junior combat leaders.

Sergeant Major Arthurs states, *"At times in Vietnam I was completely bewildered and had to ask a myriad of questions in order to understand what people were talking about and the reasons for certain actions. I am convinced from talking with other NCO's from other outfits that most of the tips I am conveying are valid. Each reader can judge for himself whether or not these Combat Tips have helped him. I sincerely hope so."*

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

No alcoholic beverages, including beer, will be introduced into the battalion area without the express permission of the Battalion Commander.

BITES CAUSING HYDROPHOBIA

Many troopers are bitten by rodents, monkeys, dogs and other warm blooded animals, causing hydrophobia (rabies). Rabies is quite prevalent in Vietnam and once contracted is fatal, usually within 30 to 50 days. If bitten, you should report this to the medic immediately. Although the antidote is painful, and consists of fourteen shots under the skin of the stomach, I have personally taken them and recommend them instead of an undertaker.

BUNKERS

Depending upon the area you are operating in, the enemy has been known to kill many troopers who make the mistake of sitting up on top of a bunker or sand-bagged hole. This is not only with bullets, but often by command detonated enemy claymores (40 pounds or more) which are quite accurate and very devastating. Don't invite this by sitting on top. While we are on the subject, it is the careless, untidy trooper who is bitten by rats. Littering the area with trash and particles of food is what draws the rat which bites you in your sleep.

DISPERSION

We have been always trained to keep well dispersed. This applies doubly to LZs and chow lines. Ask Bravo Company troopers what happened on 8 November 1967 at Dak To because of a lack of dispersion. It only takes once to let your guard down.

FIRE SUPPORT BASE

Your steel helmet will be worn at all times and your weapon and ammunition will be carried with you when you leave your area, without exception. The first lieutenant of the rifle unit securing the fire support base will supply one NCO to the chow line daily. As a minimum he will:

a. Pick up a "Magic Marker" from the first cook and insure that each man coming through the line has his name and Army service number printed on the outside of both jungle boots one inch down from the top. This is for easy future inspection. It stays just as long as if it were printed on the inside, believe it or not. This decreases the odds of your buddy getting planted in your home town and you in his, should you get burned or blown loose from the dogtags....

(continued....)



....You don't care if that happens? Think about being carried MIA for lack of identification and long periods of unnecessary anxiety being caused your loved ones. This is serious business.

- b. Check each man for the challenge and password.
- c. Turn back anyone needing a shave.
- d. Introduce anyone needing a haircut to the battalion barber.
- e. Inspect each man's weapon. If it's not clean, the man doesn't eat.
- f. Insure proper dispersion.
- g. Other orders as necessary. (I have done all the above many times and know this NCO can accomplish the above and still keep the chow line moving.)

KIT CARSON SCOUTS

These fellows are ex-VC or NVA soldiers who work for the US . . . Listen to them and learn. A few of the things they taught us:

- a. Two enemy are detailed to follow each American company size unit. They report intelligence and dig up all sumps and salvage everything which you throw away. You could be getting shot with your own ammo which you stupidly discarded yesterday or a week ago. Punch holes in all "C" ration cans you don't use. Destroy everything not used. The enemy gleefully pounces on the aluminum foil lined packets from your "C" rations and uses them to carry rice, dried fish, etc.
- b. When the enemy breaks contact with you, instead of retreating, he usually goes out around and ends up behind you.
- c. A set number of enemy soldiers in each company are previously designated as gravediggers, and prior to their assault will dig graves for their own comrades and/or themselves and camouflage same. During and after the action their dead are dragged to those holes. That's why you sometimes find few if any bodies.
- d. Get close to these guys and learn. They know their business, and well.

MALARIA

Falciparum malaria can kill you or make you forget permanent!y whether or not a full house beats a straight. Vivax malaria can make you very sick for a long time (can be recurrent for up to 15 years). Listen to your leaders. Take your pills religiously. Sleeves down and collar buttoned up at 1800 daily because most mosquitoes in RVN are night biters. Use your ointment nightly and your net when you can. Do not listen to the low life who would tell you to intentionally disregard the above precautions and get a nice hospital R&R. Think for yourself. Lastly, if you are hospitalized for wounds or for any reason, make sure you insist the medics provide you with the daily white pill (if you are in an area where your unit has been required to take it)

and the weekly red pill (mandatory everywhere in Vietnam) because, believe it or not, we had case after case of soldiers being wounded and evacuated and the hospitals not keeping them on the pills. In a couple of weeks, BINGO, you come down with malaria. If you think the precautions are a bunch of malarkey, Bravo Company went for six months without a single case while the rest of the battalion tallied six dozen cases.

MARIHUANA

(Sergeant Major Arthurs had some pertinent remarks concerning the dangers of marihuana. He pointed out that personnel who use it can cause violent actions within a unit, loss of sense of direction, and a loss of the individual's sense of responsibility towards himself and the other men in his unit.) He went on to say:

The enemy laces some of the marihuana you buy with opium. Try that on for size when these block hippies tell you there ain't no sweat in smoking a little pot. Also the block hippie isn't carrying an M-16, a few hundred rounds and some hand grenades to play with when he gets gooned up. Think about that a bit.

OVERHEAD COVER

Each man carries 15 empty sandbags on his rucksack daily. At night he digs a hole with his buddy, they fill the bags, put overhead cover on the hole and let Clyde turn loose his mortars. The one night you don't do this is the night you will definitely get mortared. Is your life worth some PT? Dig!

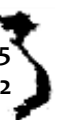
SALT TABLETS

In order to prevent heat exhaustion, and depending upon weather conditions, sometimes it is necessary for each man to take 6 to 8 (or more!!) salt tablets. The importance of this is the fact that the entire mission of the unit may be compromised because a dustoff helicopter will give your position away when it comes in for the victim. This is not to mention the fact that in some areas the trees are large and thick and have to be cut to make a landing zone. You can see how just one man failing to take his salt tablets, (or failing to do a lot of other things), can bring his entire unit grief.

SUMPS

(Sergeant Major Arthurs emphasized that sumps can be very dangerous places to loiter. The enemy sometimes places booby traps in or near sumps. Even friendly' troops may place serviceable or unserviceable ammunition such as small arms ammunition, grenades, claymores, or mortar rounds in the sump. Since sumps are burned off at a later date, live ammunition can cause casualties....

(continued....)



....He pointed out the need for sump discipline.) Sergeant Major Arthurs went on to state: In the fire support base, there is just one sump. It is isolated and no one goes near it while it is being burned off.

STANDTO

Each unit has their own SOP as to times. Generally, standto is practiced twice daily for an hour. This is at dawn and at dusk. It's 100% alert, steel pot and weapons. Don't skyline yourself. Experience has proven that Charlie promotes a lot of surprise attacks at these times.

WEAPONS SAFETY

(Weapons are the tools of war, and, as Sergeant Major Arthurs pointed out, they are inherently dangerous. Unless junior leaders insist upon weapons safety, unnecessary friendly casualties are an inevitable result.) Below are some of his recommendations:

a. M-79: One of the best weapons ever devised, but in the hands of a novice it equals friendly deaths.

(1) No brand new replacement is ever armed with an M-79. Wait a month.

(2) No one armed with an M-79 will be permitted to close it at any time unless in actual contact. (I know the complaints by heart, the choppers blow dirt into it, etc.) If you are lenient on this, watch your troops get blown away.

(3) Remember, the new flechette round for the M-79 contains a couple of dozen steel darts which will penetrate both sides of a flak jacket at 50 feet, and wipe out a whole friendly squad.

b. M-16: Once hourly while on the move, a good Rifle Company Commander requires an inspection down the line to insure all safeties are on.

c. Caliber .45 pistol: No rounds permitted in the chamber at any time. Only those required by TO&E may carry one. (Everyone tries to scrounge one otherwise.)

d. 81mm mortar: Never fire mortars over a friendly perimeter unless in actual contact. You can usually set it up on the outer edge and still accomplish your H&I, etc.

e. Claymore mines: Do not put trip flares under your mines to keep Charlie from turning them around. Some stumble foot kicks it over, the trip flare cooks off the claymore and more friendly casualties. Insure claymores are so erected so that if Charlie turns one around on you, you can immediately detect it. Keep the wire tight: or stick a piece of luminous tape on the rear, attach "C" ration cans with stones, etc. If you don't, Charles will turn the mine around toward you, then crawl back and shake the bushes. When you fire it and

get yourself, he laughs to himself and silently slips away into the jungle.

(1) Disconnect the mine before bringing it in. Imagine if a man didn't, and dragged the wire behind him. If it caught, it could pull the generating device off the bunker, and activate the claymore. Picture that and remember it.

{2} Claymores can be activated by lightning and static electricity (when they are hooked up) from helicopters landing nearby.

(3) Brush fires on the outer perimeter can cause claymores to cook off. Be careful when putting out these fires.

f. Grenades: Think about this one. You go too if you are in the vicinity of a foulup. Here are some:

(1) Do not straighten pins on grenades at night for easier activation. Here is what happens. Eventually the bending and straightening breaks the pin and it falls out when you least suspect it. Joe forgets to bend his straight pins some morning, and they jostle out as he is moving along wearing them.

(2) Do not run the web strap on your ammo pouch through the grenade pin. It gets pushed from under the belt, and there it is dangling by its pin. You know what that gets you. Run the little web strap entirely around the grenade but not through the pin.

(3) Do not fool with Chicom or other enemy grenades. One man did in another battalion. He lived, but with no arms and a gutful of frags. Many of these grenades are rigged with an instantaneous fuse (booby traps). Keep away.

OBEY YOUR LEADERS

This poop sheet does not cover all that can happen to you if you do not use your head. Open your eyes. Learn and comply. Chances are very good that one year from now you will fly out of that jungle, one or two grades higher in rank with both your arms and both your legs intact. Remember what I have told you and correct others who are not complying. That guy could preempt your DEROS

CONCLUSION

Sergeant Major Arthurs' comments contain some very fundamental guidance in The Art of Soldiering. Of primary interest, are those comments concerning weapons safety and personal hygiene. The Combat Tips can be of significant value if disseminated to the squad leader and fire team leader level.

FOR THE COMMANDER: L. MABRY, JR.
Major General, US Army
Chief of Staff



2/503 KIA Missing Photos

Fellow Sky Soldiers:

Below, I have noted the names and info I have on those from the 2/503rd PIR who were KIA in Vietnam who do not have a photo on the Wall's website. If you're successful in locating a photo, please email it to me and we'll get it on the Wall's website. Thanks for your assistance in this effort.

AIRBORNE ALL THE WAY!!

RAGMAN

Robert A. Getz

President, Elite Forces, Chap. VI, 173d Abn Bde Assoc.

Email: rgetz173@yahoo.com

2/503d Infantry Battalion

GRAY, Warren, 4/5/47 - 5/10/68

Inglewood, CA, B/2/503

GREEN, Moses, Nov 11/29/45 - 3/3/67

Jamaica, NY, HHC/2/503

HATCHETT, Kyle Henry, 8/3/45 - 8/23/65

New York, NY, B/2/503

HUDNALL, William Leon, 9/15/49 - 6/29/70

Richmond, VA, C/2/503

LESZCZYNSKI, Witold John, 3/16/48 - 11/19/67

New York, NY, A/2/503

McCOY, Elec, 12/1/46 - 10/25/67

Oswego, SC, B/2/503

OROSZ, Andrew John, 8/19/46 - 11/19/67

New York, NY, A/2/503

PATTON, George, 6/4/48 - 6/22/67

New York, NY, HHC/2/503

PEGGS, Albert Lee, 9/10/45 - 12/4/68

Chicago, IL, A/2/503

QUINONES-RODRIQUEZ, Luis A., 5/7/48 - 2/25/71

New York, NY, C/2/503

RIVERA-GARCIA, William, 5/13/46 - 2/15/69

New York, NY, C/2/503

ROMAN, Jeremias, 4/29/48 - 3/4/68

New York, NY, B/2/503

SAEZ-RAMIREZ, Angel Perfir, 5/4/34 - 3/3/67

Orocovis, PR, C/2/503

SIMMONS, Willie James, 7/8/48 - 11/13/67

Detroit, MI, B/2/503

STONE, Gregory Martin, 9/1/49 - 3/24/71

Torrance, CA, HHC/2-503

TIGHE, John Roy, 4/22/47 - 5/17/68

Lomita, CA, B/2/503

TYLER, Lester, 12/6/43 - 11/20/67

New York, NY, C/2/503

WARD, Rudolph Nathinal, 11/1/45 - 11/19/67

Portsmouth, VA, HHC/2/503

WILLIAMS, Van, 8/3/46 - 10/10/65

New York, NY, B/2/503

WILSON, Herbert Jr., 8/26/47 - 3/3/67

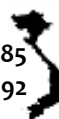
New York, NY, C/2/503

There's Budgets And Then There's Budgets ~ VA May Be Impacted

According to a report on Page 10 of the January 2019 issue of *VFW Magazine*, Commander in Chief Donald Trump's "administration has instructed the Defense Department to cut funds from its fiscal year 2020 budget." The report further states Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan (now Acting Secretary of Defense, ed) said "the administration wants the Pentagon's topline budget set at \$700 billion;" this will require a cut of \$33 billion from the 2020 budget of \$733 billion the Commander had boasted about. The report also states, "President Trump asked his cabinet members to cut their agency budgets by 5 percent, including the Department of Veterans Affairs."

If VFW's reporting is accurate, we find this surprising, as just this past November the Commander stated,

"I don't think anybody's been more with the military than I have, as a president," he told Fox News' Chris Wallace. "In terms of funding, in terms of all of the things I've been able to get them, including the vets. I don't think anybody's done more than me."



A Brother Remembers His Brother Floyd Andrew "Doc" Deal

07 Aug 2008

I will never forget that morning. I had my baseball uniform on walking out the front door going to play a double header. Up the walk came the General and the Chaplain. They asked me to go back inside, I refused. I knew then that the one person who loved me unconditionally was no longer in my life. Floyd was KIA. You see, I had to play ball that day, that's where Floyd would want me.

When we were small and my dad would call and say he was coming to see us, I would wait all day but he would never show. I would cry and say dad doesn't love us. Floyd would take me by the hand and say, *I love you. Let's go throw the ball around.*

Then there I was, in center field playing ball the way he taught me. The loneliest center fielder in the world, with tears in my eyes.

When Margie Kaizawa and I went to Drake Hospital to talk to some of his platoon that were wounded, they told us a story, how they got caught in an ambush, some of Floyd's fellow soldiers were wounded. Floyd, being the corpsman, couldn't leave them there so he went back in. He didn't make it out.

Floyd was selfless that way. There are many stories where I would get into trouble and Floyd was always there, always taking care of his little brother. He taught me so much about life. About defending myself. Most of all he taught me about courage and strength.

For 30 years I carried with me a lot of anger, and resentment. I ended up in places where few would even read about. In those places I ran across many Viet Nam vets. They too had a void in them, an anger and fear they couldn't control. It was the dark side of life where we existed. The under belly. Those vets, like myself, had their innocence taken from them. Something we couldn't get back. The pain was very great. We shared that pain. Me talking about Floyd, them talking about their loved ones.

Then something amazing happened on this journey. I was traveling down the East coast and I called my medicine woman and explained I had to go to the Wall. She said *"Yes, it's time"*. She came, picked me up, along with her husband who was a vet himself. You see, I had put off going to the Wall for a long time. I used Floyd's



Floyd "Doc" Deal
Sgt., B/3/503
KIA 11/22/14

death to act out in very selfish ways. It was time for me to ask for forgiveness.

I will never forget that day. It was much like that day in center field. When I saw Floyd's name, the tears came, the pain came, and the healing came. While asking for forgiveness a calm came over me, like Floyd was smiling at me, like he touched me and said, *"I love you, little brother"*. It's been a long hard journey. It's time to let it go.

On the walk away from the Wall, I turned and looked back. I could see the whole Wall. All the names. In my selfishness I could now see that those names, too, had brothers, sisters, children, mothers and fathers. I wasn't alone anymore.

Floyd was a true warrior. He received the Silver Star. While thinking back on all those years of darkness, I couldn't get myself to admit that I love Floyd, and I miss him. Yet there is another part of this journey. Today Floyd has a nephew named after him. He is my son. Another warrior. A peace warrior. I will raise him the same way Floyd taught me. To stand for something or fall for everything.

When you see those vets out there, who are homeless, or addicted to drugs, remember that they are human too, need love also. Don't be too quick to turn away, for you see, one of them might have been Floyd.

So because of Floyd, I am a better person today, this doesn't come from anger or hate, this tribute comes from sadness, and a place in my heart, called love.

I love you Floyd, I miss you Floyd, thanks for being my big brother. Doug Deal '69.

From his brother,
Douglass Paige Deal

Source: The Virtual Wall

VA and the American Physical Therapy Association Form Partnership

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it recently established a partnership with the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) to promote and support Veterans by providing new physical therapy resources.

The partnership coordinates strengths of both organizations to benefit all Veterans and their families, physical therapists (PT) and physical therapist assistants by helping to raise awareness of physical therapy and create new employment and practice opportunities.

For more information visit: www.va.gov or <http://www.apta.org/>



In Issue 84, Pages 75-80, there appears the story of *Casper 721 Down*. The following historical report details the rescue crews' perspective about that fateful day. Ed

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION

Headquarters Seventh Air Force
TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE, Republic Of Vietnam
APO San Francisco 96307

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AIR FORCE AND ARMY HELICOPTER CREWS SAVE NINE SOLDIERS IN DRAMATIC AIR RESCUE OPERATION



By Airman 1st Class T.P. Sullivan

721 Down

PHU CAT (7AF) -- Air Force and Army helicopter crews teamed up to rescue eleven U.S. Army soldiers, all helicopter crash victims, from a 60 degree slope in a nine-and-one-half hour air rescue operation Wednesday.

The soldiers were aboard an U.S. Army U.H. 1 "Iroquois" helicopter from the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which crashed due to enemy ground fire in hostile territory about 29 km (18 miles) northeast of An Khe in South Vietnam's II Corps Tactical Zone.

Three Air Force crews were credited with saving nine of the soldiers, while an Army crew in the vicinity picked up two of the injured.

The first two Air Force HH-43 "Pedro" rescue helicopter crews in the area received heavy battle damage. While Army helicopter gunships arrived on the scene to suppress enemy ground fire, a third Air Force crew joined in the rescue operation.

One of the 11 rescued was pinned beneath the helicopter. He was freed by Air Force pararescuemen and a fireman, who used chain saws and bolt cutters to extract him.

The injured crash victims rescued by Air Force personnel were rushed to either Phu Cat Base or the Qui Nhon Army Airfield hospital for medical treatment. Their identities are being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

In addition, a 16-man ground party and an Army doctor were evacuated from the scene by Air Force "Pedro" helicopters. Two of the local base rescue aircraft were from Phu Cat AB. The third was from Pleiku Air Base.

"The scene was a beehive of activity," said one of the Pedro pilots. There were many aircraft in the area. Besides our helicopters, there were several Army

gunships and a forward air controller and the HC-130 "Crown", which was directing the rescue operation.

Majors Juan H. Migia, 34, Pearl City, Hawaii, commander of Det 13 and Dwight C. Hageman, 35, San Antonio, Tex., directed the operation from the ground. After it was all over, they summed up the operation. "This has been the largest rescue operation Det 13 has ever been involved in. The coordination between the Joint Search and Rescue Center, the Crown HC-130 controlling the mission, the 'Pedro,' and the gunships was outstanding."

"The smooth teamwork among all units involved was instrumental in accomplishing the mission exactly by the book", continued Migia. "In addition, the mission would not have been accomplished without the instant response and service provided by units of the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing."

A man who figured prominently into the rescue of the last man to be removed from the hill was Staff Sergeant Robert E. Rager, 33, Biloxi, Miss., of the 37th Civil Engineering Squadrons' Fire Department. Rager conducted the delicate operation of removing that man from his pinned position under the chopper.

While everyone was busy either flying the helicopters or keeping them flying, one man was busy keeping the people going. Sergeant David L. VanderSloot, 22, Jenison, Mich., assigned to Detachment 13 as a cook, was busy keeping the coffee pot full, making Kool-Aid and filling empty stomachs.

Night had fallen before the pararescuemen could be picked up and brought back to the base. Since the area in which the helicopter had been downed is quite hostile, special security crews had to be sent to the scene to help protect the three rescue men and Rager who had spent a long, hard day saving the lives of others. The operation began at about 11 a.m. and the last life savers weren't returned to Phu Cat until nine and one-half hours later.

Ironically, as the rescue men pulled one of the injured passengers into the plane, they heard him comment; **"I'm sure glad to see you guys. This is my last day in Vietnam and I'd hate to spend any more time down there. Please get me fixed up fast, I'm due to go home tomorrow."**

Air Force units taking part in the rescue operations were, Detachment 9, Pleiku Air Base; Detachment 13, and medical personnel assigned to Phu Cat. The air rescue detachments are assigned to 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recover Squadron (MAC).

NOTE: This item has been cleared for release by MACV.



On The Beach at Corregidor

Weldon Hester

It was our second day on "The Rock" and things had quieted down on Black Beach. Threatening Jap machine guns from nearby Topside and Malinta Hill were being held in check by our machine gun crews (who) are up and down the beach. I had hot coffee and cigarettes a viable for the asking period the only real problem was the cord of flies which flew into our Allies, LE as an EL mounts as we talked or ate.

Suddenly there was yelling, and, looking toward the bay we saw an assault wave of "M" boats. Two paratrooper battalions had chuted onto Topside the day before and their 1st Battalion [in reserve] was now coming in amphibiously. We lined up to greet them as they grounded and the ramps slammed down. They came charging out, evidently expecting a Jap held beach. Sensing this situation, we set up a barrage of cat calls such as *"It's a rough beach, boys!"* *"No prisoners, boys!"*, and *"No quarter, kill 'em all!"* They quickly caught on, pulled up and looked sheepish.



1st Battalion aboard LCIs approaching Black Beach on Day 2.
(Photo credit A.J. Basso, son of Dominic Basso)

Then some officer called, *"Fall In!"* and they began to form lines. A danger signal sounded in my head and I started for my yard-deep foxhole some 30 feet away. For Jap gunners in nearby caves, the temptation was too much and they zeroed in and started firing.

Three or four more steps, a belly slide and I plunked into my foxhole, inches ahead of other guys seeking cover. Three guys, all profane, plunked in on top of me within a second or two and I lay underneath, happy for the protection.

Quickly our gunners got active, enemy fire slackened and my cover moved off. I waited, and sure enough, Jap firing resumed again.

Right then my funniest experience of the war occurred. In the midst of this second round of firing another chap thudded in on me. The air was blue with the classiest string of profanity I've ever heard. I felt a trickle of moisture, turned my head and saw my foxhole partner was bare naked and wet. I laughed and he quit cursing, was quiet for three or four seconds, then said *"And to think, I could have joined the navy."*

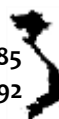


"Two hours after landings, food and equipment are unloaded from LCMs on the San Jose beachhead in Corregidor. Mines, buried in the beach, caused much damage to the first group of vehicles and materiel to hit the beach, but at the time of this picture was made, most of the mines had been removed by 24th Division Engineers. 2/16/45."
(U.S. Army photo and caption from Paul Whitman)

As things eased up he told me that he had been taking a bath in shallow water, in the open, when the firing started. As the firing eased, still naked, he started looking for nearby shelter. The second round of firing had caught him up and moving and he unceremoniously joined me.

**Weldon Hester, Red Cross Field Director
34th Reg – 3rd Bn, ON CORREGIDOR**

[Reprinted courtesy of Paul Whitman, 503rd PRCT
Heritage Battalion website, photos added]



An unfinished interview...

The following interview with MG John Cleland will forever remain unfinished due to his passing on October 25, 2017, at the age of 92, however, this brief visit with the man further speaks to his character, his love of and devotion to the army, the paratroops and his country. Many enlisted war vets will tell you, intending no slight to others, of the best combat officers with whom they served, they were often those men who once owned the distinguished title of *Private*. Private John Cleland, MG John R.D. Cleland, was one of those men. Ed



WWII.....



KOREAN WAR.....



VIETNAM WAR.....

Interview With The Commander

~ MAJOR GENERAL JOHN R.D. CLELAND (RET) ~

Deputy Commander 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), 1968

Major General John Cleland's service to his country as first an enlisted man then an officer in the U.S. Army spanned over 37 years, and included assignments in the Pacific Theatre during WWII, the Korea War, and during the Vietnam War where, in 1967, he activated the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry (3/503d). As then Lt. Colonel he remained battalion commander of the 3/503d until he was posted to the position of Deputy Commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade in March 1968. As a career-long paratrooper, the General is a Master Parachutist and earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge in three wars. Awards earned by the General include the Distinguished Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star Medal, and the Purple Heart Medal with oak leaf cluster, among others. Today, the General is retired in Florida where he resides with his wife Clara, whom he first met when in Korea while she was serving as a 1LT Army Nurse in a Mash unit prior to his medical evacuation to Walter Reed Army Hospital. They have three sons who have served as officers in the U.S. Army. We interviewed the General to discuss his illustrious military career and 173d Airborne Brigade activities during the Vietnam War. Ed

2/503d Newsletter (2/503d NL): General, we look forward to getting into specifics with you about the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam and that war in general, but first please tell us a little about yourself, perhaps beginning when you were an enlisted man.

General Cleland: I enlisted in the United States Army in 1943 when I was seventeen years old and America had been fighting WWII for a year and a half. I should note that the whole country was at war; the two boys who lived next door to me were already in the Navy, my best friend was drafted into the Army, the boy across the street enlisted in the Army Air Corps and most all of the boys in my high school class were drafted or enlisted. Gasoline was rationed as were meat, coffee and a whole lot of other commodities. All factories, including automobile plants were geared to war production.

For example, Ford made B-24 bombers and jeeps, GM made 2 1/2 ton trucks, White Motors made halftrack armored infantry carriers and tank destroyers, and Studebaker made 2 1/2 ton trucks for Russia.



**Private Cleland
Camp Hood 1943**

Women replaced men in factories, one of my sisters worked as a clerk in the government, my mother took a job for the first time in her life. Hollywood went to war producing great patriotic movies and military training films; movie stars enlisted as did sports stars. Every American knew why we were fighting and what we were fighting for. America was at war and there was no doubt in any American's mind that we were going to win that war! And less than four years after Pearl Harbor the Axis Powers had surrendered unconditionally.

I enlisted in the Army to be a paratrooper and was shipped off to North Camp Hood, TX for Infantry basic training. After completion of basic training, myself and another soldier who had enlisted for the ski troops were retained at North Camp Hood as detail soldiers until our orders came through. That was one of the sorriest months in my 37 years of Army service.

When my orders to jump school finally came through I flunked the eye test. I was assigned to my old basic training company as a squad leader.

(continued....)



Soon after the Infantry basic training battalion at Camp Hood was shipped on wooden troop trains to Camp Blanding, FL. At Camp Blanding, I received a short lived promotion to Corporal and decided to try again for the paratroops. This time I passed the eye test and went to Fort Benning for jump training graduating in May of 1944. After jump school I went to the Parachute Demolition School which was by far the best school I had ever attended. Then I volunteered for Infantry OCS and ninety days later became a 2LT in the Army of the United States.

2/503d NL: Following OCS you went on to command all levels of infantry units, from Rifle Squad to Infantry Division, including service as a parachute infantry unit commander in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

Interestingly, during WWII you were a 2LT with the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, predecessor to the 173d Airborne Brigade, with whom you served as a Platoon Leader on Negros Island in the Philippines. Tell us a little about some of your more memorable experiences with the 503rd in the Pacific Theatre. And, what possessed you to want to become a paratrooper? You otherwise appear to be a sane man.

Cleland: You ask, what possessed me to join the paratroops? Well, I was seventeen when I signed up and thought paratroopers with their silver wings and jump boots were the sharpest Soldiers in the Army. I was right, they were the best then and paratroopers are still the Army's best! I have been most fortunate to have served so often with Airborne units and look back with pride and pleasure on those days and the great troopers with whom I served.

You asked about my experiences while a 2LT with the 503rd PRCT on Negros Island. I was one of thirteen 2nd LTs who reported for duty with the 503rd in early June 1945. The regiment was "mopping up" Negros Island after clearing the Japs from populated areas and pushing them into the hills. Mopping up involved going after the Jap units in the hills and destroying them. I was assigned to the Demolitions Platoon having graduated from the Parachute Demolition School at Fort Benning. We supported the three rifle battalions with our flamethrowers and various explosive munitions such as pole charges and bangalore torpedoes.

When the war ended in August I was told that I would be in charge of the Regiment's POW Compound and to get ready to receive, house, and feed an estimated 2500 Japs who were in the hills. As it turned out, over 9,000 Japs came down from the hills. I won't bore you with the details but my job was made much easier for two reasons - First, the tremendous support

given to a 2LT and a Staff Sergeant by our regiment and second, the Japanese chain of command. The Japanese had surrendered unconditionally. Emperor Hirohito told his leaders to do what the Americans told them to do and they obeyed the Emperor's order without question.

My Japanese counterpart was a Major Ngao who had worked in the San Miguel brewery before the war and spoke fluent English and Filipino. He did what I told him to do and by mid-September we had shipped all Japanese POW's to Leyte with no major problems. We did it right with our prisoners 65 years ago but our political leaders can't get it right with our prisoners today!

When the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment's Colors were furled on Negros, the high point men went home and us low point men joined the 11th Airborne Division in Japan. As a rifle platoon leader in the 188th Parachute Infantry Regiment my platoon, along with most rifle platoons in the division, was given the mission of collecting weapons from a half dozen towns and villages. When we arrived at the villages the mayors and chiefs of police met us and gave us the weapons; hunting rifles, shotguns, pistols, samurai swords and knives. They were already gathered together and tagged. We then went to the school houses and gathered up wooden rifles, grenades and mines together with instruction books similar to comic books showing children emplacing mines, firing rifles and throwing grenades at US soldiers in the village.

Let no one tell you that dropping the Atomic bomb was unnecessary and an American atrocity. The Japanese were prepared to defend Japan to the death and would have done so had we not dropped the Atom bombs.

John passed away before the interview could be completed. Ed



MG John R. D. Cleland
July 5, 1925 ~ October 25, 2017



Love Them Caspers



A Casper Platoon UH-1 Huey, its door gunner firing at a well-concealed enemy, prepares to extract troops of the 173d Airborne Brigade pinned down near the An Loa River in the Binh Dinh Province on March 29, 1970.



The Casper Platoon Huey crew preparing to extract a team of 173d Airborne Brigade Sky Soldiers from an extremely Hot LZ. (National Archives photo)

With circling gunships providing support from above, Sky Soldiers return VC sniper fire and Casper completes the extraction. Such rescue missions were frequent, necessary and fraught with danger.

Troop-carrying Huey "Slicks" often had to descend into determined VC & NVA fire to pluck the stranded soldiers from their predicament. Often these missions succeeded, with largely inconsequential damage to the helicopters. At other times, the toll on the choppers was a heavy one.

[Source: Sky Soldiers, Time Life Books]
Sent in by Ned Costa, Casper Platoon

A poem written for the President of the United States of America, Lyndon B. Johnson...

A Soldier's Cry

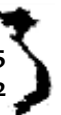
By PFC Ronald W. Arnott
173rd Airborne Bde.
Viet Nam

1. A shot rang out
A sudden cry
Onto the sand he fell
A soldier died.
2. What thoughts of life alone
Were lost forever now
When this man who fell
Died that day on Viet Nam's sand.
3. No one but him
Will ever know
To us his dying thoughts unknown
Our imagination may fail us though.
4. Perhaps he thought of families
Whom he was fighting battle for
Or, maybe of his children
That he would see no more.
5. A million thoughts of life alone
Were lost that day in Viet Nam
When that brave soldier died
And I thought of this as I cried.
6. For you see, although a year ago
This man, my enemy died
I think of him dying on the sand
My God, 'twas I that shot that man.

By PFC Ron Arnott

Source: LBJ Library

Note: Ron's poem was transcribed from a copy with near illegible printing. We did our best to present his words as accurately as possible. Ed



The Legend of the Drummer Boy of Chickamauga

In May of 1861, 9 year-old John Lincoln "Johnny" Clem ran away from his home in Newark, Ohio, to join the Union Army, but found the Army was not interested in signing on a 9 year-old boy when the commander of the 3rd Ohio Regiment told him he "*wasn't enlisting infants,*" and turned him down. Clem tried the 22nd Michigan Regiment next, and its commander told him the same.



Determined, Clem tagged after the regiment, acted out the role of a drummer boy, and was allowed to remain. Though still not regularly enrolled, he performed camp duties and received a soldier's pay of \$13 a month, a sum collected and donated by the regiment's officers.

The next April, at Shiloh, Clem's drum was smashed by an artillery round and he became a minor news item as "*Johnny Shiloh, The Smallest Drummer*". A year later, at the Battle Of Chickamauga, he rode an artillery caisson to the front and wielded a musket trimmed to his size. In one of the Union retreats a Confederate officer ran after the cannon Clem rode with, and yelled, "*Surrender you damned little Yankee!*" Johnny shot him dead. This pluck won for Clem national attention and the name "*Drummer Boy of Chickamauga*."

Clem stayed with the Army through the war, served as a courier, and was wounded twice. Between Shiloh and Chickamauga he was regularly enrolled in the service, began receiving his own pay, and was soon after promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He was only 12 years old. After the Civil War he tried to enter West Point but was turned down because of his slim education. A personal appeal to President Ulysses S. Grant, his commanding general at Shiloh, won him a 2nd Lieutenant's appointment in the Regular Army on 18 December 1871, and in 1903 he attained the rank of Colonel and served as Assistant Quartermaster General. He retired from the Army as a Major General in 1916, at age 64, having served an astounding 55 years!

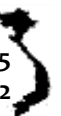
General Clem died in San Antonio, Texas on 13 May 1937, exactly 3 months shy of his 86th birthday, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

BURY ME WITH SOLDIERS

I've played a lot of roles in life;
I've met a lot of men.
I've done some things I'd like to think
I wouldn't do again.
And though I'm young, I'm old enough
To know someday I'll die
And think about what lies beyond, And
Besides whom I would lie.
Perhaps it doesn't matter much;
Still if I had my choice,
I'd want a grave amongst soldiers when
At last death quells my voice.
I'm sick of the hypocrisy
Of lectures by the wise
I'll take the man with all his flaws
Who goes, though scared, and dies.
The troops I know were commonplace;
They didn't want the war
They fought because their fathers and
Their father's fathers had before.
They cursed and killed and wept –
God knows they're easy to deride –
But bury me with men like these;
They faced the guns and died.
It's funny when you think of it,
The way we got along.
We'd come from different worlds
To live in one, where no one belongs.
I didn't even like them all and,
I'm sure they'd all agree.
Yet, I would give my life for them,
I hope. Some would for me.
So bury me with soldiers, please
Though much maligned they be.
Yes, bury me with soldiers,
For I miss their company.
We will not soon see their like again
We've had our fill of war.
But, bury me with men like them,
Till someone else does more!

Web credit:

Father Charles R. Fink, a Roman Catholic Priest of St. Philip Neri's Church in Northport NY, served in Vietnam from March 1969 to March 1970 as a Sergeant in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade.





~ 2/503d Sky Soldier Extraordinaire ~ SGM Vladimir “Jake” Jakovenko



In June of 1966, SGM Jakovenko received orders to leave Charlie Company 2/503; the 173d Airborne Brigade was forming a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) Unit and they wanted all Team Leaders to be Ranger Qualified. Jake had to go see Captain Palmer, LRRP Commander, for an interview.

“I told him, ‘I like what I’m doing and I have a good squad of 11 men, it’s a good chance I’ll make it home, because 11 men in a firefight trumps 6 men.’ The Captain got pissed and said, ‘Write me a 500-word or less explanation of why a Sergeant E-5 wearing a Ranger Tab balks at doing what he is trained to do?’ I said, ‘With all due respect, Captain, I’m an Infantry Squad Leader, doing what they taught us to do for 9 weeks in Ranger School -- LEAD, STAY ALIVE, TAKE CARE OF YOUR TROOPS SO THEY CAN COME BACK TO THEIR LOVED ONES!’ Capt. Palmer (RIP) did not like the answer and said, ‘I’ll see you in a week or so.’”

Sandy, Jake’s wife, at the time had served 5 years with the 82nd Airborne Division and earned her senior jump wings, making Sergeant E-5.



Jake with his bride, Sandy.

“I left drag marks and all my fingernails between 2nd Battalion and E Troop 17th Cav,” says Jake. He was given a 6-Man Team when he left in December 1966, and was promoted to E-6 when he arrived back to Ft. Bragg and the 82nd Airborne Division.

In 1986, Jake volunteered for the Special Operations Detachment, WESCOM at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, where he worked in support of all the high-speed, low-drag units like Navy Seals, Rangers and Delta Force who came to the Pacific Rim for training or missions.

The slot opened for Detachment Sergeant Major (SGM), which required candidates be current HALO and SCUBA qualified (not many E-9’s were), and Jake was awarded the position. *“On my first jump in Hawaii, Sandy, my future wife of now over 28 years, was my Jump Master. My last jump was in 1989, prior to my retirement, and Sandy was once again my Jump Master...making it SPECIAL and UNFORGETTABLE.”*

Jake’s final jump in the military was with full equipment and an 80-pound rucksack, and he said of out of 3 Combat Patches he could wear, *“I chose to wear the 173d Airborne Brigade (SEP) Patch on my left shoulder... I was proud to be UMBRELLA MAN for 28 years out of 30 – that’s what the Japanese called PARATROOPERS.”*

Jake wishes everyone a prosperous 2019 New Year to all!!!



“Combat Ready”

Sgt. Maj. Vladimir Jakovenko
U.S. Army Western Command,
prepares for his last career jump.”
(Photo by Spec. Jeffrey A. Hackley)

All The Way Sergeant Major!



This history is not our style....

Americans Urged to Defect

There is growing circumstantial evidence of organized effort to induce defection of US military personnel. Whether the effort is Communist sponsored or developed by Anti-Vietnam War proponents is not clear.

The defection of four US Navy personnel in Japan and another incident have led to speculation that an organized scheme is being applied to subvert US military personnel in Vietnam.

The defection of the four seamen is believed to have been at least motivated by recent propaganda activities of the leftist Japan Peach for Vietnam Committee (Beheiren), and Japanese Communist Party front organizations which seek to subvert military personnel in Japan and Okinawa. A recent report from a reliable source reveals that the Beheiren intends to promote future defections of US personnel with the establishment of a permanent, well-organized "underground railway" system.

The Beheiren reportedly will recruit and rely on trusted "intellectual" sympathizers to support future deserters by providing the physical security and personal advice and assistance. The source also revealed the Beheiren's intention to renew contacts with sympathetic European anti-Vietnam war organizations, particularly in France, to improve coordination and effectiveness of future activities. The "underground network" may already be operating in Europe, according to a recent AP dispatch. Lending credence to this assumption is evidence of a number of deserters from US Armed Forces already living in Western Europe. Many are being ostensibly aided by groups that oppose the Vietnam war. The 17 August 1967 edition of LONDON TIMES carried an article describing the existence of the underground network.

The techniques used in the extraction or evacuation of the four US sailors are of interest since there is reason to believe that a structure exists in Asia for encouraging and assisting US servicemen receptive to defection.

Anti-American or Communist organizations who would exploit US military personnel must be thwarted in their effort by the use of effective countermeasures – before, not after, the fact.

A recent USARV letter stresses the need to have the entire command aware of and apply existing military regulations on "Subversion and Espionage Directed Against US Personnel." The judicious application of these policies is presently the most effective approach to countering this challenge to military order and discipline.

Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review
19 December 1967



These colors don't run.

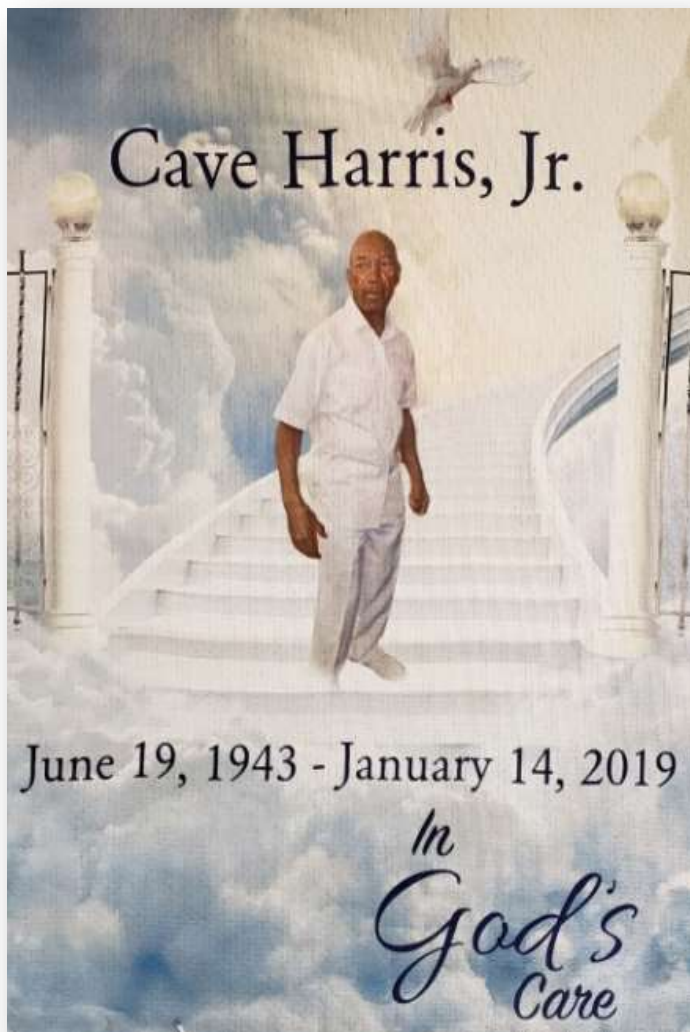
2/503 Troopers On The Move



"Infantry personnel. Search and destroy mission by the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Location: Rach Kien, Vietnam." (Photographer: H.C. Breedlove)



2/503 Bravo Bull SFC Cave Harris, Jr. Passes



Cave Harris, Jr. of Detroit, Texas passed away January 14, 2019. Funeral services were held on Saturday, January 19, 2019 at 2 p.m. at the New Hope Baptist Church with Pastor D. Bernard Perry serving as Eulogist. Interment followed in New Hope Cemetery under the direction of Brownrigg Funeral Home.

The family visitation was held from 6-8 pm on Friday, January 18, 2019 at New Hope Baptist Church, Detroit, Texas.

Cave Harris, Jr., was born June 19, 1943, to the late Vera and Cave Harris. He attended public schools in Clarksville TX. Cave graduated from Cheatham High School in 1962.

Cave joined the U.S. Army in 1963 and retired in 1987 as E7 after 24 years of service. Cave married Victoria, and to that union, four children were born. After retirement, he met Sharon Wheeler and was married on May 25, 1992 in Detroit, TX where he lived until his passing.

Those who remain: Wife: Sharon Harris of Detroit, Texas. Sons: Cave Harris III, Christopher Harris, Branson Harris, Junction City, Kansas and Jay Harris of Detroit, Texas, Carlos Wheeler and Jermond Wheeler of Dallas, TX; Daughter: Vanessa Roach of Ewa, Hawaii. Sisters: Lanetta Rosser, Miyoshi Gray, from Paris, TX, Sonya (Ricky) McCulloch of Clarksville, Texas. Jo Ann (Joseph) Watson, Ruby (Roy) Lee, Deborah (Michael) Martin, and Teresa Scott. Brothers: Anthony Harris and Terrance (Tamesha) Harris. Aunt: Bobbie Jean Edwards of Paris, Texas. Special friend: Travis Bronner, Detroit, Texas. Also a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his sisters, Helen, Deloris, Joni, Charlotte, Rochelle, and Brenda.

Rest Easy Brother and ATW



Cave's Honor Guard



L-R: B/2/503's Jim Robinson thanks Honor Guard



Sharon Harris with Bravo Bulls Jim Robinson & Ed Kearney



Garrison Command Sergeant Major Mason L. Bryant, CSM

Command Sergeant Major Mason L. Bryant was born in Evansville, Indiana, and graduated from Mt Vernon High School in 1990.

A career Infantryman, he entered the U.S. Army in June of 1990 at Ft Benning, Georgia, where he completed Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training and Airborne School. He is married to Mrs.



Simona Bryant and they have three children, Mason, Benjamin, and Elisabetta. They have lived and served in the Vicenza Military Community for 12 years.

During his 26 years of service, CSM Bryant has held numerous leadership positions such as Team Leader, Squad Leader, Drill Sergeant, Platoon Sergeant, First Sergeant, Battalion Operations Sergeant Major and Battalion Command Sergeant Major.

CSM Bryant has served in many different types of Infantry units, both in the United States and in Italy. His assignments include: 4-15 Infantry, Fort Knox, Kentucky; 3-325th Airborne Battalion Combat Team, Vicenza, Italy; 1-509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Polk, Louisiana; 2-54th Infantry, Fort Benning, Georgia; HHC, 173d Airborne Infantry Brigade, Vicenza, Italy; 1st Battalion, Airborne, 508th Infantry, Vicenza, Italy; 1st Battalion, Airborne, 503rd Infantry, Vicenza, Italy; Headquarters Support Company, Southern European Task Force, Vicenza, Italy; 1-6th Infantry Regiment, Fort Bliss, Texas; 2nd Battalion 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; 2-58th Infantry Regiment, Fort Benning, Georgia and the United States Army Africa/Southern European Task Force in Vicenza, Italy. He has deployed in support of Operation Support Hope, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

His military education includes: Primary Leadership Development Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course, Airborne School, Jumpmaster School, Pathfinder School, Battle Staff, First Sergeants Course, Drill Sergeant School and he is a graduate of class 60 of the United States Army Sergeant Majors Academy.

His awards and decorations include: the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device, Bronze Star Medal (2nd award), the Meritorious Service Medal (7th award), the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device (2nd award), the Army commendation Medal (3rd award), the Army Achievement Medal (7th award), the Good Conduct Medal (8th award), National Defense Service Medal (with Bronze Star), GWOTEM with Arrowhead, GWOSTM, Afghan Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (with numeral 4), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (6th award), the Kosovo NATO Medal, the Afghan NATO Medal, the Humanitarian award, the Joint Meritorious Unit award, the Valorous Unit Award, the Meritorious Unit Citation, the Army Superior Unit Award, the Master Parachutist badge with Bronze Star, Pathfinder Badge, Drill Sergeant Badge, Combat Infantryman Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Italian Parachutist Badge, Hungarian Parachutist Badge, Canadian Parachutist Badge, and the Belgian Parachutist Badge.

He has a Bachelor's Degree of Science in History and is a member of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club. He also is a recipient of the Order of St Maurice.

~ U.S. Army Garrison Italy ~

The US Army Garrison Italy is located on Caserma Carlo Ederle, an Italian Army base in Vicenza, Italy. The garrison manages the day-to-day operations for the installations in the Vicenza Military Community in coordination with our Italian partners, supporting the service members, family members and American and Italian civilian employees who live and work in the USAG Vicenza's area of responsibility.

USAG Italy supports several units, including the U.S. Army Africa Headquarters (also known as the Southern European Task Force), elements of the 173d Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), the 21st Theater Sustainment Command-Italy, the 509th Signal Battalion, the U.S. Army Health Clinic Vicenza, the Vicenza Dental Clinic, AFN Radio and Television and other units and organizations. USAG Italy also supports U.S. military units located in Livorno, Italy as part of the Darby Military Community.

Mission: USAG Italy integrates and delivers base support to enable readiness and force projection for USAREUR and USARAF.

Vision: USAG Italy is a platform for readiness and power projection that provides support to our Soldiers, Army, professionals and family.



Excerpt....

Soldier Center tests new Army combat boot prototypes

By RDECOM Soldier Center Public Affairs

January 9, 2019



NATICK, Mass. -- The U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command Soldier Center at Natick is testing new Army Combat Boot (ACB) prototypes at three different basic training and active duty installations over the next four months. The effort will gather Soldier feedback toward development of improved footwear.

The Army's current inventory of boots includes seven different styles designed for different environments and climates. The boots issued initially to recruits are the Hot Weather and Temperate Weather Army Combat Boots. Requirements for these are managed by the Army Uniform Board as part of the recruit "Clothing Bag". The Program Executive Office Soldier's Project Manager Soldier Protection and Individual Equipment maintains and updates the specifications for both boots.

The current generation of Army Combat Boots has not undergone substantial technical or material changes since 2010. New material and technologies now exist that may improve physical performance and increase Soldier comfort.

Read entire report at:

www.army.mil/article/215893/soldier_center_tests_new_army_combat_boot_prototypes



Then again, these were kinda nice.
(Previously owned by a Leg no doubt)

Letter from the Commander, 1971



16 JUN 1971

To the Officers and Men of the 173d Airborne Brigade

On behalf of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, I extend my best wishes to the 173d Airborne Brigade on the eighth anniversary of your activation on 25 June 1963.

During the past year you added to your considerable reputation as a combat unit through your performance in actions such as that in Nui Cung Chap, where you dealt the enemy a decisive defeat. In addition, you are to be commended for your role in the areas of Vietnamization and Regional Defense and Local Development. The training you provided to the Regional Forces and Popular Forces have helped them become a more effective fighting force. Your coordination with the Republic of Vietnam National Police served to deny the enemy many tons of the rice he has needed to keep him fighting. Actions such as these have helped bring about a better life for the people of the Republic of Vietnam and have won you their admiration and respect.

Please accept my congratulations for your accomplishments over the past eight years. I am confident that you will continue to add new laurels to the tradition of the airborne soldier.


CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS
General, United States Army
Commanding



*"When eating an elephant,
take one bite at a time."*

Creighton Abrams, 1914 - 1974



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Close Call



"PFC **Paul H. Cotozzi** (Brooklyn, New York), holds a bamboo through the holes in the front and rear of his helmet made by a round from a Viet Cong 50 caliber machine gun as Cotozzi and squadmates of Co. "C" 2nd Battalion 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, attacked a Viet Cong bunker. Although the round entered and exited the helmet just an inch above the lower rim, PFC Cotozzi survived without a scratch. The helmet was hit in mid-air when it bounced off his head as he dived over a log. Private First Class Cotozzi said he is *"Quite happy"* he wasn't in the helmet at the time.

(Photo from Bob "Doc" Beaton collection)



Warning sign in the boonies.

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

Believed to be a Cree Indian Prophecy:

"Only when the last tree has been cut down, the last fish been caught, and the last stream poisoned, will we realize we cannot eat money."

Sent in by a concerned trooper of A/2/503 RVN.

Ohio River Reported to be Most Polluted River in the Country

"It shows the Ohio topped the nation's waterways for pollution discharges from industry at 24,180,821 pounds in 2013, the most current year available. The amount is more than double what industries pour into the Mississippi River, which ranked second. The report also found that the Ohio has led American waterways in industrial pollution since 2001."

The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal



Fish dead from pollution, purported to be the Ohio River.

(web photo)



Recon Team Jaguar Point for C Company

By PFC John White, *Fire Base 173*, 15 June 1968

BON SON – A pre-dawn mist, still and damp enshrouds five shadows moving with cat-like stealth through the lush banana groves and rice paddies toward a sleeping Vietnamese village. “Jaguar” is on the prowl.

The call name for a recon team with Charlie Company, 2d Battalion, 503rd Infantry, “Jaguar” has been building a reputation in the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Consisting of five men, the team was personally selected by the company commander, Captain **Joseph Jellison**. They have been together for approximately four months with primary mission as a point reconnaissance team working sometimes as far as 250 meters ahead of the main element.

“Jaguar is the best security we’ve ever had,” asserts Jellison. *“These men are good at their job, in fact the best. That’s why they were chosen.”*

The recon team has its own radio operator and medic in their forward and semi-isolated position.

With radio contact at close hand, Jaguar keeps Capt. Jellison informed immediately of any enemy activity in their area of operation.

While the main element of the company sets up for the night, the recon squad is still at work. They must once again move out by themselves to scout the terrain over which the unit will move the following morning.

“Maybe we don’t have it as easy as some,” commented Jaguar’s team leader, Sergeant **Arther Bledsoe**, from Columbus, Ga., *“but we’ve got pride in the knowledge that what we’re doing is vital to the success of the company’s mission.”*

Jaguar team-member Specialist Four **Robert Norton**, of Columbus, Ohio, summed up the unanimous team feeling. *“When contact is made, we’re first to make it; When a kill on the enemy is made, we’re first to inflict it. We’re up front where it’s happening and wouldn’t have it any other way.”*



BG Joseph Jellison, AKA Captain Joe, third from left with men of Charlie Company at 173d reunion.

For Your Grandkids

My daughter in-law, Sandra the beautiful and caring, sent in this little ditty she plans to post in her son’s bedroom as a subtle reminder to our grandson Aidan Lewis Smith. Thought many of you might want to pass it on to your own important little ones. Ed

The Tale Of Two Wolves

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

He said, *“My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ inside us all.*

One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, doubt, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.



The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, forgiveness, truth, compassion and faith.”



The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, *“Which wolf wins?”*

The old Cherokee simply replied, *“The one you feed.”*



An earlier photo of Sandra the beautiful and caring with our important little wolf, Aidan (Smittytoo).



*The fleeing Australians showed their true rats' tails, and we
laughed derisively,
Let's tell the story from beginning to end,
In Long Đất District 4 everyone knew,
It was just the Australians that had to take the bitter pill,
In this time of death they fled seeking rescue,
This time the Australians met with the "VC",
They felt heavy as if their limbs weighed a thousand kilos,
The "Royal" troops even took off their trousers,
Threw down their guns, cast away their ammunition, and fled
afar,
Their deafening screams gave us headaches,
We ask whether the Australians have any capability
remaining,
Is it true that they've eaten too much candy,
The ghosts of the Australian soldiers fear the mountains and
rivers of our land,
The 19th Company (the 33's Sapper Company) fought very
skillfully,
The 5th Company (the 1st Company of VC D440) also joined
hands with us very well,
The people of Long Đất are very appreciative,
Blossoms flower on a happy summer afternoon.*

Thổ Giang (poet's name)

The soldiers of 33rd Regiment would have been aware of their heavy losses – and such morale-boosting hyperbole as included in the Bulletin was routinely disseminated by their political officers. During the Vietnam War, over 3,000 of the 33rd Regiment's soldiers were recorded by the Regiment as killed or missing – with the Regiment's average strength being only about 1,300.

Following the 'fall of the South' in 1975, the Regiment also fought the Khmer Rouge in the 'South-West Border War' and later within Cambodia from 1978. The Regiment was deployed back to 'North Vietnam' in December 1979 – i.e., following the early 1979 Chinese 'incursion' into Vietnam (however the Regiment was not involved in any combat operations against the Chinese forces).

Notes

According to a 1968 article in the *Australian Army Journal*, 'the term 'Red Rats' was affectionately bestowed on the 1st Australian Task Force in Phuoc Tuy Province by the South Vietnamese peasants. Its derivation stems from the red kangaroo which was initially painted on all the Task Force vehicles. As the Vietnamese had never seen a kangaroo, and as there was therefore no comparable word for it in their language, they inevitably called it 'the red rat'.'

The red kangaroo symbol was painted on many Australian military vehicles in Vietnam – and also on road signs and unit signs. The red kangaroo – in the style as depicted on the Australian penny, had also appeared on RAAF aircraft roundels from 1956.



Source:

<https://vietnam.unsw.adfa.edu.au/33-pavn-regiment-morale-and-the-red-rats-of-phuoc-tuy/>

So Young, So Wise

A friend saw this conversation that occurred between two old soldiers and sent it me. I thought you might appreciate it as well since most of us shared the experience.

Lets you know the character of some of the under-appreciated, sometimes scorned and sometimes considered expendable young men of that era so long ago.

"When I was at the Kansas City VAMC, I sat and talked with a retired Army Colonel while I was waiting to see my cardiologist. He was in Vietnam in '67 - '69 and during our conversation he had this to say:

'As an officer, I had the opportunity, the heavy burden and privilege to look young men in the eye and ask them to go do something, and they knew that in all likelihood what I was asking them to do meant they may not be coming back. And these American soldiers would look me in the eye and they would wink, and say 'Got it, sir,' and they would grab their weapon and off they would go. And that is such a privilege, to wear that uniform and to be the Old Man, at the ripe old age of 23 or 24, and there is nothing in life that compares to and is more sobering than that responsibility.'

When I told him that he obviously understood that Command is the ultimate privilege and responsibility, he said that he always considered himself to be just a visitor among heroes."

Ronald R. Smith, D. Min.

B/2/503 & 3/319



An apropos photo. On far right of photo a young LT Ron Smith with fellow Sky Soldiers.



Commander in Chief Braves Darkened Windows to Visit Troops in War Zone



Commander in Chief Donald Trump and First Lady make surprise visit to US troops in Iraq.

The Commander addressed U.S. troops in Iraq on the day after Christmas. *"We're no longer the suckers, folks,"* he said. He also stated he was committed to withdrawing troops from foreign wars even when his administration's experts advise otherwise.

"If we see something happening with ISIS that we don't like, we can hit them so fast and so hard . . . they really won't know what the hell happened," he said. *"But it's time to get our soldiers out."*

Regarding ISIS the Commander said, *"They said again, recently, 'Can we have more time?'"* Trump said of U.S. generals. *"I said: 'Nope. You can't have any more time. You've had enough time.' We've knocked them out. We've knocked them silly."*

The Commander also expressed his concerns with safety risks in making his first trip to a war zone:

"I had concerns for the institution of the presidency," he told reporters. ***"Not for myself, personally. I had concerns for the first lady, I will tell you. But if you would have seen what we had to go through, with the darkened plane, with all windows closed, with no lights on whatsoever, anywhere — pitch black. I've never seen it. I've been in many airplanes — all types and shapes and sizes. I've never seen anything like it. So did I have a concern?"*** he added, ***"Yeah, I had a concern."***

Those of us who've fought in combat know all too well how the 'unknown' can be chilling at times. The Commander in Chief should be commended for visiting the troops in a war zone and for demonstrating his superior bravery in flying in a darkened airplane with all windows closed, with no light on whatsoever, anywhere — pitch black. ATW Sir!

Distinguished Service Cross



Jack Blaine Beers, SFC

3d Bn, 503d Inf Reg, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

May 14, 1969

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Sergeant First Class Jack Blaine Beers (ASN: RA-2387xxxx), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 3d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Platoon Sergeant Beers distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on the evening of 7 April 1969 during an attack by an estimated reinforced Viet Cong company on his platoon's night location near the town of Bao Loc, Lam Dong Province. Sergeant Beers moved through the initial barrage of rocket, automatic weapons and small arms fire to reach a section of the perimeter under heavy ground attack, and was painfully wounded by shrapnel from an incoming rocket when he arrived at a machine gun bunker. Despite his injury, he directed that position's fire against the aggressors and momentarily halted their assault. After hearing a rocket hit in the platoon's command post and a cry for help from his radio telephone operator, he started toward the stricken post, but was seriously wounded in the legs and stomach by shrapnel from enemy grenades and rockets as the communists began attacking from all sides. Disregarding his safety, he encouraged his men to hold their positions and crawled to a radio to call for artillery support. Although he was in an exposed location, he continued to adjust artillery strikes until he was mortally wounded by hostile small arms fire. Platoon Sergeant Beers' extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Honor and Remember SFC Jack B. Beers ~ 07 Apr 1969 ~ Vietnam





Reunions of the Airborne Kind 2019



Firebase Airborne 50th Anniversary Reunion, Riverview Inn, Clarksville, TN, May 12-14, 2019. **Contact web:** <http://beardedarmenian.wixsite.com/fsbairborne/reunion-2019>



1st Battalion 50th Infantry Reunion, May 14-17, 2019, Hampton Inn and Suites, Phenix City, AL. **Contact web:** www.ichiban1.org/html/reunion.htm



Casper Platoon Reunion, Tropicana Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, NV, April 23-25, 2019. **Contact:** Ned Costa, Phn: 562-682-3100, Eml: NCHuey721@aol.com, Web: <http://www.casperplatoon.com/2019.htm>



2019 All American Week, Fort Bragg, NC, May 20-23, 2019, **Contact:** Eml: www.504thpirassociation.org/phone/events.html



Charlie Airborne Arctic Paratroopers FWA Reunion, Las Vegas NV at the Luxor Hotel, May 31, 2019 to June 2, 2019. **Contact:** Dave Leiva, Phn/Fax: 623-512-5481, Eml: biffleiva@gmail.com



173d Airborne Brigade Annual Reunion, Charleston, SC, June 5-9, 2019. **Contact:** Wayne Bowers, Phn: 803-237-3169, Eml: bowway@aol.com



2019 SFA International Convention, Charleston, WV, August 13-18, 2019, Charleston Convention Center and Colosseum. **Contact:** Eml: SFAChapter68@gmail.com



101st Airborne Division Association Reunion, Hotel Elegante, Colorado Springs, CO, August 21-25, 2019. **Contact web:** www.rmeagles.org/reunion/



73rd Joint Reunion 11ABN & 187 ARCT, Clarion Hotel Conference Center, Lexington, KY, September 24-29, 2019. **Contact Phn:** 856-233-0515



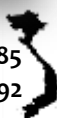
The International Paratrooper and Skydiving Reunion, Hotel El Tropicano, San Antonio, TX, October 13-15, 2019. **Contact:** Joe Rodriguez, Phn: 210-995-7727. Phillip Gonzales, Phn: 210-685-9904, Eml: phillgonz49@aswaa.org



B/2/501st, 101st Airborne Reunion, Evansville Double Tree by Hilton, Evansville, IN, October 16-19, 2019. **Contact web:** <http://b2501airborne.com/reunion.htm>

75th D-Day Anniversary

Web info: <http://dday-anniversary.com/>



173d Reunion ~ 2019 Registration Form



SKY SOLDIERS DESCEND ON

Charleston, SC

JUNE 5-9, 2019 | HOSTED BY SC CHAPTER 30

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Unit served within the Brigade _____ Dates served _____

Guest 1 Name _____ Male/Female

Guest 2 Name _____ Male/Female

Guest 3 Name _____ Male/Female

Registration Fees

_____ \$173/Association member* (includes hospitality room, drink tickets, banquet, welcome meal, gift)

_____ \$173 per guest* (includes hospitality room, drink tickets, banquet, welcome meal, gift)

_____ \$55 per Gold Star Family member

_____ \$100 per Active Duty Soldier (NOT on orders)

_____ FREE - Active Duty Soldiers on orders (i.e. Command, Color Guard)

Optional Activity Fees

_____ \$30/person - Patriots Point trip (includes transportation and admission)

_____ \$20/person - Harbor boat tour add on (must also be registered for Patriots Point trip)

_____ \$20/person - Downtown Charleston Historic Market trip (includes transportation)

_____ \$40/person - Golf Outing (includes transportation, cart rental, and lunch)

_____ \$25/person - Welcome meal only (CAUTION: included with full registration)

_____ \$55/person - Banquet only (CAUTION: included with full registration)

_____ FREE - Ladies Event (must register to attend)

_____ FREE - Gold Star Luncheon - 173d Gold Star Families only (must register to attend)

_____ \$10 - Raffle ticket (winner will receive \$1,000)

_____ Donation to offset reunion costs (choose any amount)

Vendor Fees

_____ \$125 - Association member vendor registration fee (includes 1 table, 2 chairs)

_____ \$150 - Non-association member vendor registration fee (includes 1 table, 2 chairs)

_____ \$75 per additional table

_____ \$50 - electricity at vendor table

_____ **TOTAL COST**

To register and pay online, visit www.173dreunion2019.com

Make checks payable to: 173d Airborne Brigade Association
Mail to: Wendell Satterfield, PO Box 525, Gray Court, SC 29645
For hotel reservations: Embassy Suites by Hilton Charleston Airport - 843-747-1882
For additional information: Wayne Bowers, 803-237-3169, bowway@aol.com

* Registration available online and by mail until 19 May 2019. Walk-ins welcome at \$199.
* You must be registered to participate in the 173d Airborne Brigade activities listed above.
Registration fee does not include any mini reunions (such as 4th Battalion).

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!



It was March & April with the 2/503d in RVN

~ The First 10 Days In-Country ~



Bob Lohr, E/2/503

When I think of March, I go back to March 14, 1968, when I stepped off the plane and was hit with the humidity and smells of not being at home.

Went through jungle school with a small amount of uneasiness setting in. It did not help that some soldiers going home with souvenirs they proudly showed to whomever they could get to look. Looking at what they were showing did not alleviate any anxiety I was feeling, especially when you really focus and understand that what they had were good ears on a string. We are not home Toto.

Then for graduation we were taken on a jungle trek to get a feel for what it would be like. Of course, not sure if planned or not, we discover the wreckage of a small helicopter. If it was staged, they did a great job in making it all so real.

I was then assigned to 2/503 Echo Company who had just moved into the 1st Cav post in An Khe. Very impressive, movies, showers, good food, a feeling of, *Hey I can do this*, things are looking up. We were given to an E5 Sergeant Ross. A 6'2" 300lb mountain man who being black really did not want to be baby-sitting two white very cherry babies and you could tell his friends were giving it to him for his recent responsibilities.

Danny Zimmerman and I were the cherries and did a great job looking the part. We were advised we would be helicoptered to a mountain top location to join our company on the line. We landed in a dense fog, almost not being able to land. Could not see much due to fog and late in the day.

When we were woken up for our turn at guard duty, it was an absolutely clear nite and you could look down from the mountaintop and see a huge city of lights below -- only to find out they were fishing boats out on the water.

At 5 or 5:30 a.m. we heard all hell break out outside of our tent, scared the crap out of us and we ran to our friend, Sgt Ross, who was behind sand bags with his head down. I was thinking first night out and I was going to die. To our surprise, it was a planned free fire where everyone got on line and fired all their weapons down range. We are not home Toto.

So you see, how can anyone not think about that first 10 days in country with that reception. Look back fondly now, but then....

**Bob Lohr, Sgt.
E/2/503, 173d Airborne
Viet Nam '68-'69**

~ Rockets & RTOs in Kontum ~



Dan Fritzman, A/2/503, holding a piece of 122mm rocket that hit them in Kontum in March 1971.



A/2/503 2nd Platoon RTOs, L-R Jim Hamilton, Richard Deigle and Dan Fritzman in Kontum in 1971.

(continued....)



~ No MOH for the LT ~



SGM Vladimir "Jake" Jakovenko, C/2/503

I want to say it was April 1966, between Bien Hoa and Saigon, the rock quarry RM-K I think....A squad of VC came around noon and took some American civilian contractors. They made the Vietnamese workers listen to the propaganda, then executed the Americans. They put several 30-round magazines in them.

C Company 2/503 had Eagle Flight standby, I was in 1st Platoon. Squad Leader 2nd Platoon, Hammer Jackson was still 1st Sergeant of C Company... can't remember his name, a Lieutenant (LT), just took over 1st Platoon. We were walking back to the perimeter from out of the rubber trees and were spread out in platoon column. The Lieutenant was walking in the middle of the column abreast of 2nd Squad. All of a sudden he hollers, "Grenade!" and hits the ground. The Platoon beat him to the ground!



**"The Hammer"
Desmond Jackson**

I was closest to him, then after no explosion, I yelled, "LT, where is the grenade?!" He says, "I'm laying on it!" I thought maybe it came out of a spider hole – it had happened before in War Zone "D". I yelled back at him to not get up but to start rolling away from it. If you stand up and it goes off it will get you. He rolled away

and it did not explode, but he was still on the ground. I walked over and saw the M-26 grenade with no fuse in it – we had a big problem with M-26 grenade body's unscrewing from the fuse and release handle then falling at your feet or rolling away.

When I walked over to him he was shaking, laying on the ground, his jungle fatigues soaked, especially his pants. I said, "You're missing a grenade," and gave it to him, adding, "Tape works or carry them in a canteen cover." He said he thought it was an enemy grenade when it rolled in front of him, and he dove on it to protect his troops.

Sometime later, squad leaders were drinking beer at the NCO Club and I was still thinking and mumbling to myself about the LT. I raised the question, is it the dying that makes you a hero to earn the Medal of Honor? He had said he thought it was an enemy grenade, and he took what he believed to be life-saving action. If we brought this up to Battalion, they would rule no enemy action was involved and most likely bend his dog tags for the poor example he set for the troops.

**Jake Jakovenko
C/2/503**



ZULU ZULU Nuff said!!!

**Jack Schimpf
B/2/503**



**Jack, in front of his hooch
at Camp Zinn.**

(continued....)



~ A March Morning in the "D" Zone ~

Here's what I remember about 16 Mar 66 --and let me tell you, you guys have a lot better memories than I do!

As I recall it was after first light which makes 0715 hrs about right. The 'food' chopper was coming in and the Bn CO told me to go bring it in. The LZ was right behind my hole in the ground. I remember popping a smoke grenade and the chopper appeared over the trees, descending and making that terrible racket (like machine gun fire) as it began to nose in towards the LZ. THEN ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE!!!



Capt. Dan Buttolph
CO HHC/2/503

Firing broke out all over the place, mortars, rockets, whatever. About that time the chopper was hit and just kind of floated off to the side of the DZ into the trees and landed on its side. I dashed over to it and jumped up on the strut which was up in the air and grabbed the door gunner who was shocked but alright. Got him out of the chopper and moved towards the pilot seat when I slipped in all the scrambled eggs that spilled open from the damaged mermite cans--it was like pig wrestling in a deep mud hole!!

Anyway, one pilot had bailed out, the other I remember helping a little, he was injured, but not badly. This all happened in about a 10 to 15 minute period.

I then ran back to my prone shelter in time to get hit in my left arm and left butt! I knew I was hit in the shoulder, but didn't realize I was in the rear end until I reached to get something out of my back pocket and it was all wet. At first I thought my canteen had been hit, but then realized my canteen was sitting on the ground in front of me.

Anyway, back to the LZ. I'm sure that the noise of those chopper blades in that crisp morning air sounded just like gun fire--the opening signal for the VC to begin the attack--which they did! And to think, all those scrambled eggs went to waste!!

That's how I remember the beginning of the battle. I remember looking over at one point to the FAC who was calling in air strikes and his RTO had his back to me. Then *whomp!* A large shard (like a 8 inch dagger) hit him right between the shoulders. Didn't kill him but made him sore for a while I'm sure!

Dan Buttolph
CO HHC/2/503

~ A Hot Day in Cambodia ~

I believe it was March 1, 1967 when we humped into Cambodia to set up a platoon ambush. We found a trail and with our M-60 (machine gun) set up to the left of the path -- the rest of the squad to our right, with the platoon covering to the side and back -- never knowing which route the enemy will take.



Jimmy Castillo, C/2/503, in the boonies.

George was right by the M-60 lying down and resting on his elbow while looking at us, John sitting down facing George, and I was sitting on my helmet occasionally looking down the trail. Lepper was to my right, and he was starting to say something, and I was looking at him.

All of a sudden, as I turned back to the trail, I quickly notice 3 men in brown uniforms and they are looking at me. It felt like an eternity as we stared at each other. The first person, wearing a round helmet, had his weapon pointed down, the second enemy soldier was not wearing head cover and appeared to be nervous had his weapon slung over his shoulder. The third man was alert and holding his rifle across his chest pointing away from us. As we continued to look at each other, I slowly reached for my M-16, as did everyone else as they turned to see what I was looking at -- this all seemed to happen in slow motion. We were ready, and as the enemy continued to stroll down the trail I was hoping the rest of the squad was ready too.

(continued....)



All three men saw George aiming his M-60 at them, and the enemy knew they were in "DEEP SHIT!" The second man started to take his weapon off his shoulder, and that is when we opened up on Automatic -- the other fire team also fired. The three enemy soldiers went down.

It then became quiet and soon very dark. We were on alert, wondering if the three dead men were the point team. We heard moaning, and someone threw a grenade and said: "*Get down!*" The moaning stopped.

We stayed on alert and whispered who wants to sleep, and we agreed to a 1hr shift as we remained alert.

When my shift came on, I started questioning myself. Why did the enemy not fire at me? Did the enemy think I was Cambodia or one of them? Up to this day when someone says I look Asian, I say *thank you!*

After all these years I still have nightmares about this incident and often wake up sweating.

***"For He Who Today Sheds His Blood
With Me Will Be My Brother.
We Few, We Happy Few,
We Band of Brothers."***

Many people wonder why veterans gravitate to one another...even if they're strangers. It has everything to do with having faced the teeth of the tiger and realizing how much we depended on each another to not get eaten. It is a special bond of trust that we veterans recognize and hold dear until the end because we have seen firsthand how much we really do rely on one another—even now and until the show is over.

"Don't forget your buddy. "

Says Sky Soldier Chuck Dean



Jimmy on left with Diane Welch, widow of the late Steve Welch, and Ray Zaccone, all men of C/2/503.

Jaime "Jimmy" Castillo
C/2/503

~ Three Sky Soldiers Return To Vietnam ~
In '05, near Sydney, Australia, at the 173d Airborne Brigade reunion banquet, before Gus Vendetti & Bill Vose, A/2/503, and Lew Smith, HHC/2/503, returned to Vietnam to find LZ Zulu Zulu in the "D" Zone jungle, site of the 16 Mar 66 battle during Operation Silver City.

While sitting at the dinner table last night 2/503 buddy, Rick Fred (HHC/2/503), put his arms around me and in a most serious way, said, "*Smitty. I need you to do me an important favor. "If I can I will Rick,"* I told him. "*Smitty,*" he said, "*bring me back some dirt from Zulu-Zulu.*" Rick is suffering from his own ghosts from that goddamn war, and at the freezing winery the other night he rattled off a litany of emotional and physical problems he continues to experience. "*Damn, the sonofabitch is describing ME!*," I thought to myself. "*Rick, it's guaranteed brother,*" I replied.



Rick Fred. He would lose an eye during the Battle at Zulu Zulu.

Later that evening another buddy of ours, A.B. Garcia (HHC/2/503), the reinvading Aussino* from 2001, grabbed me in a bear hug (A.B. is about the size of a bear too, a Kodiak I think). "*Smitty,*" the Kodiak said, "*will you bring me some dirt from Zulu-Zulu?*" "*No question, A.B., you know I will,*" I told him. Then my friend said, "*Thank you, thank you Smitty. You don't know how important it is to me.*" But, A.B., yes, I do.

* **Aussino:** The nickname I gave A.B. on our first trip to Vietnam in '01 as an Aussie-American-Chicano.

1st Bat Guy, (the late) Craig Ford C/1/503, ordered me from the table to stand against a nearby wall with other reinvaders from our 2001 trip, including Craig, Joan and Steve Haber (C/2/503), and A.B., where Craig's wife Pat took a couple of photos. It was good to be with my reinvading friends again.



L-R: Smitty, Craig, Joan, Steve & A.B.

(continued....)



**Dirt? Go figure. Dirt ain't important.....is it?
I mean, it's just fucking dirt.**

But, the dirt of Zulu-Zulu, the dirt of the rice paddies of Marauder, the dirt of Crimp and Phoenix, the dirt of the June 29 and August 20 battles, and the dirt of countless other locations and dates is important...to some of us. It's worth more than gold, to some of us. For you see, we slept on that dirt, cried on it, prayed on it, pissed on it, shit on it, killed on it, bled on it, and all too many of us died on it.

Following our trip back in 2001, I sent a supply of rice paddy dirt from Operation Marauder to my buddy Bob Carmichael (2/503 Bn XO/CO); his wife, Exie, sent me a note, *"When Bob dies he will be buried with this dirt."* Dirt? Go figure. Dirt ain't important....is it? *"Bob, hang on! More dirt is coming!!"*

While sitting on Bill's terrace this morning, with the LT chomping his cigar in traditional John Wayne fashion, me sipping coffee, we shared some personal memories of our time at war....certain, private memories, some hurtful memories, memories only brothers of the war share with one another, memories only they understand. These two grown men, one a powerful state attorney, the other a former professional businessman, also shared tears.

Bill and I spent the day driving around the countryside lost, doing a little shopping and ending-up in an Aussie pub where we both ate, Wiener Schnitzel. A whole day cooped up in a car with that guy is a challenge with his constant bitching about my smoking and my bitching about his bitching. Noticing the way Bill and I go at each other sometimes, one of the troopers said, *"You guys act like you're married!"* in a way, I guess we are.

Bill just told me he checked with the airline to see if he could leave for Vietnam a day early, he couldn't. *Can't wait to see your mistress, Miss Vietnam, Mr. Vose? You know, she's calling you.*

Still fighting the onset of a cold -- took a knockout pill Bill gave me and for the first time on this trip slept through the night.



**38 years later Bill (L) &
Lew again stand together
on the dirt of LZ Zulu Zulu.**

**Source: *The Battle at Bau San*
Lew "Smitty" Smith**

HHC/2/503

Editor, 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter

Good news for Vets with disabilities....

January 17, 2019

VA to implement appeals modernization in February

Act will simplify process for how Veterans make appeals

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) announced that the Federal Register will publish on Jan. 18 regulations accompanying the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (AMA)*, which will help Veterans experience a more transparent claims decision-review process.

After publication of the regulations, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie will certify the department's readiness to implement appeals modernization, which will transform a complex appeals process into one that is simple, timely and provides greater choice to Veterans who disagree with a VA decision.

Implementation will occur 30 days after the Secretary certifies, as required by law. Accordingly, the *AMA will become effective Feb 19.*

"VA has been preparing for full implementation of the Appeals Modernization Act over the past 18 months," Wilkie said. *"Our staff has worked diligently, particularly in the last few weeks, to ensure the new, streamlined process is available to Veterans in February."*

The AMA was signed into law Aug. 23, 2017. Under the act, Veterans will now have three options for claims and appeals: (1) **supplemental claim**; (2) **higher-level review**; or (3) **direct appeals** to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. All decision reviews submitted after February 2019 will fall under the new system.

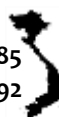
Once the Appeals Modernization Act is fully implemented, VA's goal is to complete supplemental claims and higher-level reviews averaging 125 days. Decisions appealed to the Board under its direct docket will average 365 days. Under the legacy process, appeal resolutions averaged three to seven years.

For more information about VA appeals modernization, visit
<https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/appeals.asp> and
<https://www.bva.va.gov/>.



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Binh Hoa Massacre

The **Bình Hòa Massacre** was a massacre purportedly conducted by South Korean forces between December 3 and December 6, 1966, of 430 unarmed citizens in Bình Hòa village, Quảng Ngãi Province in South Vietnam. In 2000, however, it was reported that a monument within the village, gave the dates of the massacre as October 22, 24, and 26, 1966 and said that 403 people were killed by the South Koreans.

The district was in the operational area of the Blue Dragon Brigade. Most of the victims were children, elderly and women. More than half the victims were women (including seven who were pregnant) and 166 children.

The South Korean soldiers burnt down all of the houses and killed hundreds of cows and buffalo after the atrocities. A number of the survivors of the massacre joined the Viet Cong and fought against the United States and its Allies, one of which was South Korea. South Korean forces were also accused of conducting a similar massacre in Binh Tai village within the same year.

The Binh Hoa massacre was featured in a Korean documentary *The Last Lullaby* on the subject of Korean war crimes in South Vietnam.

The massacre was discussed when British journalist Justin Wintle visited Vietnam in the late 1980s, where the report on the massacre was disclosed to Western media.

Koreans come to Vietnam to apologize

19/12/2016

50 years after the massacre of civilians in Quang Ngai carried out by South Korean soldiers, a lot of Koreans have come back to Central Vietnam, kneeling before the memorial board to apologize to Vietnam.



In Vietnam 50 years after the massacre by South Korean soldiers 29 Koreans laid wreaths and prayed in silence in front of the memorial board in a heavy rain.

Field Flag



Service members walk a U.S. flag onto the field at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, Jan. 6, 2018, before a Baltimore Ravens game against the L.A. Chargers. (DoD photo)

2/503 Early Civic Action

"CONTINUING BATTALION CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS:

2d Battalion, 503d Airborne Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, Period 2 January – 5 February 1966. Within the reporting period, this battalion completed construction of one school, started construction of another, and refurbished other schools in the TAOR. The battalion provided milk to all schools in the area and battalion medical personnel serviced the schools twice during this period. Discarded lumber was collected on a continuing basis and delivered to village chiefs and refugee camps for local construction projects. The battalion also repaired the road from Bien Hoa Air Base to the village at Ben Ca and constructed a well in Binh Hoa Village."

Evaluation of US Army Combat Operations In Vietnam
25 April 1966, (Declassified)



Photo of Sky Soldiers performing civic action in Vietnam. Troopers, date, location and 173d unit unknown.





PHAN RANG, VIETNAM (IO) – Staff Sergeant Louis Bautista aimed his M-16 rifle three feet in front of the four men and fired a burst. They froze.

"What's wrong with you stupid people," he yelled at them. *"You're under fire."* They recovered and dove for the nearest cover.

The four young soldiers were replacements for the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. They were undergoing what every 101st replacement goes through – a one week misery course on how best to stay alive in Vietnam.

Sergeant Bautista of Hilo, Hawaii, is a cadre at the 101st Replacement Training School. He and four others make life miserable for the new men before they are assigned to one of the 101st line units.

The average 101st replacement in Vietnam starts out hating Bautista and the others. But when the week is over, they love him. They learned from him and they know they have a better chance of getting home alive.

Bautista and his fellow instructors are combat veterans of the war in Vietnam. They know what it's like to be shot at by a Viet Cong hidden in the bush. They respect the enemy. Their job is to teach the new arrivals to kill first.

The replacements are taught means of detecting Viet Cong booby traps. They learn to ambush, to counter ambush and, most important, they learn to react quickly.

The most grueling part of the school is the live fire assault course. Through the 200-yard, thorn covered course, the men look for targets. They fire, dive into the thorns, fire again and run—always forward and always in line. Halfway through the course their clothes are soaking wet with sweat. No one quits. If a man passes out, a medic will care for him.

A machine gun and an M-79 grenade launcher fire to their front for cover. *"This is the sound of battle. Get used to it,"* Bautista hollers. *"This isn't Fort Campbell, it's Vietnam."*

After running the course and cooling off a little, the men get a drink of water. Then they start talking.

"Man, I couldn't go through that again," says one. Another young paratrooper cuts in, *"If we weren't men this morning, we are now."* They all laugh a little.

Bautista and the other cadre stand nearby pretending not to listen to the comments. But they are.

They take a great deal of pride in turning out the final fighting product. When they hear the new 101st paratroopers boast about the tough course, they know they are doing a good job.

The week before, Bautista was slightly wounded by a nervous trooper on the course. *"I don't mind,"* he says, *"Better for me to get hurt here than for one of them to get killed out there."*

[No date of this report was included, however, "1966?" was hand-written on the page. Ed]



National Pathfinder Association Monument Dedication



EVERYONE IS INVITED TO ATTEND!

When: Saturday, April 13, 2019 at 1:00 PM

Where: ASOM Museum, Fayetteville, NC, 100 Bragg Boulevard, Fayetteville, North Carolina

What hotel are we primarily using: Comfort Inn, near Fort Bragg, 1922 Skibo Road, Fayetteville, North Carolina 28314-1514. 1 (910) 867-1777, the group is XR43K4, National Pathfinders Association

Booking Link:

www.choicehotels.com/reservations/group/XR43K4

Dress: Casual or up. Wives/guests, families are more than invited.

We are not planning on a dinner/banquet, etc., but rather just gathering in an atmosphere of camaraderie and friendship!

To contact the Adjutant, National Pathfinder Assoc:

Dean Nelson
(970) 443-3658
nelent@aol.com



Firebase Roy



Aussie Pilot Honoring Fallen Sky Soldier Russell Holland

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Richard Brougham and I am from Newcastle, which is about 75 miles north of Sydney, Australia where I am based as a pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force (here is a photo of me with my wife and the Hawk in which I teach on our Lead In Fighter course). I did start my military flying in Huey's and still fly them on occasion during the fire season over here so hopefully one redeeming feature regards me being an Air Force puke.

As part of our ongoing military education I was doing some research into the Vietnam War when I stumbled across the photo and brief memorial to a Russell J. Holland who was from Clayton, New Mexico at the web location below;

<http://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/23729/RUSSELL-J-HOLLAND?page=2#remembrances>

Russell was one of 7 members of A Coy/4/503 who died in an ambush 17 kilometres WNW of Tuy Hoa on 25 Feb 1969 whilst conducting Operation Darby March II. The reason Russell's photo caught my eye was the resemblance of him to my own son, Cody who is now the same age as Russell was when he died.

As I looked at the photo of Russell it did make me think of Cody in the same situation and as I look at Cody enjoying his life and doing things a 20 year old should be doing it did make me think of Russell and what could have been if he had lived. So it did strike a bit of a chord deep down and it felt a bit sad that there was not more information on the site about Russell as a person rather than just his photo.



For that reason I decided to see if I could find out some more about the person who Russell was and so started searching through the web for more information and possible contacts for family and friends which is how I found the *2/503 Vietnam Newsletter*. To that end I am keen to see if there may be a means via the newsletter or any other suggested avenues to try and get in contact with members who may have served with Russell and are happy to communicate about him.

Additionally also seeing if there may be more detailed information available somewhere regarding the action involving A Coy on 25 Feb 1969. I did find a copy of the Operational Records - Lessons Learnt, HQ 173 AB BDE, period ending 30 April 1969 which contained the following brief summary:

9. 251430 BQ996519 A Co loc 17 km WNW of Tuy Hoa was engaged by an unknown size enemy force using SA and AW. The enemy loc in well fortified pens 20m from the friendly site when contact was initiated. SA and AW fire was exchanged and at 1700 hrs, A Co withdrew from the area in order to direct arty onto the enemy pen. B Co moved in to the contact area to act as a blocking force for A Co. Gunships also provided supporting fires. Enemy cas are unknown and A Co sustained 7 men KIA and 10 men WIA in the contact.

So as I said I am primarily interested in trying to learn a little more about Russell and having lost quite a number of friends during my time in the Air Force I do appreciate that it needs to be done with sensitivity regards bringing up emotions associated with those memories of him and I certainly don't want to be the cause of any upset. Having said that if there is an opportunity to learn more about Russell I do hope that it might actually bring some small comfort in the knowledge that despite the years and distance that there are other people in the world apart from his family and friends who would like to respect and remember Russell, not only for his service and sacrifice but also for the person who he was.

Apart from this work e-mail address (richard.brougham1@defence.gov.au) I also use richard.brougham65@gmail.com and richard.brougham@me.com.

Thanking you for your time, consideration and hopefully an opportunity to learn a little more about Russell.

Yours Sincerely,

Richard

Richard Brougham
SQNLDR, A FLTCDR, 76SQN
RAAF Williamtown
W: (02) 4034 6406, Mob: 0432 017 617



2/503 Chargin' Charlie Hopes To Identify Buddies

Here are a few photos of C/2/503d troopers taken from Jan - May 1967, when I was the 2nd platoon leader. I have what I think is a really good 120-picture slide show that I have shown to numerous schools and groups over the past 52 years. Unfortunately, I did not write down the names of everyone, and now I recall only a few. Maybe you can help?

You could publish them in our newsletter and ask who, where, if alive, etc. Readers could send the information to me at my email address below.

Thanks.

Joe Day
2nd Platoon
C/2/503

Email: joeday@atmc.net



Glaucoma – Why Veterans need regular eye exams

Glaucoma Awareness Month



January 8, 2019
Inside Veterans Health
By Hans Petersen

What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a disease that damages your eye's optic nerve. It usually happens when fluid builds up in the front part of your eye. That extra fluid increases the pressure in your eye, damaging the optic nerve. However, some forms of glaucoma can damage the optic nerve, even when the eye pressure is in the normal range during the eye exam. This can happen when the eye pressure becomes high at other times of the day and the patient does not feel the pressure elevation. It can also happen when blood flow to the optic nerve becomes reduced below a critical level, which can happen during periods of very low blood pressure, even during sleep.

For example, in some patients who take their hypertension medications right before bedtime, it can cause the blood pressure to drop too low during hours of sleep. Another risk factor that can adversely affect glaucoma is obstructive sleep apnea, which may also reduce the delivery of oxygen to the optic nerve. Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness for Veterans over 60 years old. But blindness from glaucoma can often be prevented with early treatment.

Look at this example (top right image) of what your vision would be like with glaucoma.

Here is a very helpful video by VA's Dr. Dan Bettis which answers some of the common patient questions about glaucoma. Please take five minutes and watch it with your family.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SlcOTqrwTw&t=15s>

Click here for a very detailed patient's guide to information about the disease (go to www.iowaglaucoma.org/patient-Resources) Veterans enrolled in VA health care can schedule appointments directly with Ophthalmology or Optometry without a referral from primary care. Schedule an eye exam at your VA health care facility.



Long Description

In the photos above, the left figure shows a retinal digital photograph of the retina and optic nerve from the left eye of a glaucoma patient. It shows the excavation (cupping) of the optic nerve caused by glaucoma. The right figure (not shown) is the report from the visual field test from the same eye showing extensive areas of damage in the visual field due to severe glaucoma that was diagnosed late in its course.

VA research provides valuable tools for vision treatment. VA is at the forefront of vision research and glaucoma is one of our top priorities. A current study by Dr. Markus Kuehn is a Bioassay to Predict the Development and Progression of Glaucoma, sponsored by the VA Rehabilitation, Research, and Development Division.

The project makes use of our recent discovery that glaucoma is associated with the development of a cellular autoimmune response that can further reduce vision. The investigators are testing if the strength of the reaction is predictive of future loss of vision and quality of life of the patient.

Early identification of patients at high risk to develop vision loss allows more aggressive treatment before the damage occurs. The development of a predictive assay would provide ophthalmologists with a valuable tool and preserve the quality of life for Veterans.

Dr. Kuehn is a professor in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at the Iowa City VA Center for Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss. Here is an earlier study that suggests stem cells could ward off glaucoma.

Risk higher for African Americans

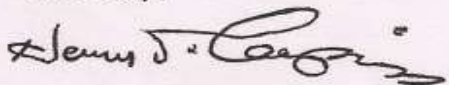
Approximately 2.2 million Americans have been diagnosed with glaucoma and the prevalence of the disease will rise to a projected 3 million by 2020. The prevalence of glaucoma is three times higher in African Americans than in non-Hispanic whites. Additionally, the risk of visual impairment is higher and the age of onset is earlier than in whites.

Source:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/55402/glaucoma-veterans-need-regular-eye-exams/>



November 1966 letter from the office of Director of Programs, 503rd Regimental Combat Team Association, World War II, to 503rd PRCT Association Members...

	503RD REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM ASSOCIATION, WORLD WAR II 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment 462nd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion Co. A, 161st Parachute Engineer Battalion	
BRIG. GEN. GEORGE M. JONES Honorary President	PRESIDENT Colonel John N. Davis, USA Ret P. O. Box 5481 Fayetteville, N. C. 28303 Home: 485-1550 — Off.: 485-1980 (Area Code 919)	EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREAS Mike Matievich 630 N. 99th Street Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226 Phone: 774-5321 (Area Code 414)
November 1966		
VICE-PRESIDENT Wilbur E. Eggert Box 201 Bennett, Iowa 52721	Dear Member,	
DIRECTOR FOR BUDGET Paul B. Garbelman 5560 Silver Hill Rd. Washington, D. C. 20028	As you know, the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) is now fighting in Vietnam and has been there for some time. Many of you already know that the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 503d Airborne Infantry are in the 173d and as such makes it the successor unit to the 503 RCT. For you civilian type a Brigade is about the size of a RCT.	
DIRECTOR FOR MEMBERSHIPS AND CHARTERS Lester D. Wedler Route 2 Ossian, Ind. 46777	The Board of Directors of the 503d RCT Association has approved the "adoption" of the 173d by this organization. The purpose is to provide morale building services and assistance to the troopers of the 173d.	
DIRECTOR FOR PROGRAMS Frederick Pope, Jr. 886 Main Street Bridgeport, Conn. 06603	I have contacted Brig. Gen. Paul F. Smith, Commanding General, of the 173d and he is extremely pleased with the offer. He suggests the mailing of small gifts such as: pocket novels, small metal mirrors, lighters and flints, stationery with self-sealing envelopes, and other small comfort items. Gifts should be mailed direct to brigade headquarters for re-distribution. Cards and letters should be sent to the lettered companies of the 503d Infantry's battalions.	
REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR NORTH Andrew J. Amaty 447 Ridgewood Ave. Brooklyn, N. Y. 11208	In a recent article, written by a correspondent now serving in Vietnam the reporter listed the following items as very desirable gifts. "Most of all food. Send them cookies and cake, or some cheese or summer sausage. Good cheese is hard to come by in Vietnam, and sausage is unknown. Menthol cigarettes are hard to get. Also appreciated are small transistor radios that operate on flashlight batteries."	
REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH Verdery (Johnnie) Grooms 6328 Barclift Drive Charlotte, N. C. 28212	General Smith has given us a very good guide line. However, it is evident that the General does not have the appetite of a twenty-year old man.	
REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR WEST Ted Alex Box 245 Fort Logan, Colo. 80115	Those of us who served in the WW II 503d know how much a letter and a package from home can mean. This is a good project for a chapter to work on jointly, and wives should be encouraged to participate. These mailings should not be limited to Christmas time, but should be carried out the year 'round.	
DIRECTORS AT LARGE Richard E. Broadwell 813 Alamo Sweetwater, Texas 79556	Let's snow them under with gifts and mail, and don't forget to let them know that it's from a member of the 503d RCT Association, WW II. A good way is to cut out the return address with our insignia on it from an old envelope or letter and include it in the envelope or package.	
Henry H. Cook, Jr. 6813 Dominion Drive Oxon Hill, Md. 20021	The address is: HEADQUARTERS, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) Office of the Commanding General, APO San Francisco 96250	
Clement H. Jacomini 5571 Corso Di Napoli Long Beach, Calif. 90803		
1966 CONVENTION OFFICERS		
Wilbur E. Eggert, Chairman Box 201 Bennett, Iowa 52721		
Joe Shannahan, Vice-Chairman 306 Long St. Williamsburg, Iowa 52361		
Lloyd Havner, Secretary 1481 Hickson Dubuque, Iowa 52002		
Charles R. Leabhart, Treasurer Tipton, Iowa 52772		
Sincerely,  Henry T. Capiz,		
1966 CONVENTION AT CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA JULY 15 - 16, 1966		

Provided by the late Chuck Breit, 503rd PRCT, WWII trooper.

(continued...)



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
Office of the Commanding General
APO San Francisco 96250

AVBE-CG

16 October 1966

Mr. Henry T. Capiz
106 West Congress Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55107

Dear Mr. Capiz:

On behalf of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate), I thank you and the 503d Regimental Combat Team Association for your kind letter offering morale building services to the troopers of the Brigade. Your interest and backing is both heart warming and appreciated.

We feel the Association can best reach all levels of the Brigade by sending the gifts you select directly to this Headquarters for further distribution to subordinate elements. A few suggestions include pocket novels, small metal mirrors, lighter flints and stationery with self sealing envelopes. These items are always appreciated and extremely difficult to obtain by the man "On the Line."

In regard to mail, recommend personal letters directly to units within the Brigade. There are many potential future association members in the command and this could be the start of generating sincere interest.

We feel we are upholding the Airborne traditions and assure you that every association member can be proud of the manner in which the 503d traditions of World War II are being upheld. Our three Airborne Infantry Maneuver Battalions, 1st, 2nd and 4th, carry the designation 503d with pride.

"ALL THE WAY"

Sincerely,

PAUL F. SMITH
Brig Gen, U.S. Army
Commanding

from Gen. Smith

Page 2



Photos / I.D.'s / Patches & Stripes

Sometime ago I received from a fellow in Victorville, CA, a package he found next to a dumpster containing 84 photos apparently owned and/or taken by **DAVID A. PEREZ** who served with C/1/503 and A/2/503, dates unknown; a couple of the photos appear below. A number of the pictures may have been taken at Ft. Campbell with the 101st, while others include Vietnam images, including a significant number of EKIA photos. The package also contains weapons receipts in David's name, 503rd and 101st airborne shoulder patches, PFC stripes, and a couple 5 cent military script notes. One might assume the package was either lost or intentionally discarded.

WEAPONS RECEIPT	
UNIT AND LOCATION CO.A . 2/503d	RECEIPT NO. 52
NAME PEREZ, DAVID	GRADE PV-2
WEAPON	
DESCRIPTION M16A1 RIFLE 5.56mm	SERIAL NUMBER 830959
I hereby acknowledge receipt of the above weapon from the Arms Room of:	
SIGNATURE <i>David Perez</i>	
DA FORM 3749, 1 Aug 71 (AR 190-11)	

The back of this receipt bears the signature of Edwin P. Smith, the issuing officer. David's SSN is blacked out.



It's unknown if these photos are of David.

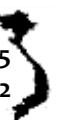
If anyone knows David or a family member of his, please email us at rto173@att.net so we can return the package to them. Ed

Medal of Honor Citation – Alfred Rascon

Specialist Four Alfred Rascon, distinguished himself by a series of extraordinarily courageous acts on 16 March 1966, while assigned as a medic to the Reconnaissance Platoon, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). While moving to reinforce its sister battalion under intense enemy attack, the Reconnaissance Platoon came under heavy fire from a numerically superior enemy force. The intense enemy fire from crew-served weapons and grenades severely wounded several point squad soldiers. Specialist Rascon, ignoring directions to stay behind shelter until covering fire could be provided, made his way forward. He repeatedly tried to reach the severely wounded point machine-gunner laying on an open enemy trail, but was driven back each time by the withering fire. Disregarding his personal safety, he jumped to his feet, ignoring flying bullets and exploding grenades to reach his comrade. To protect him from further wounds, he intentionally placed his body between the soldier and enemy machine guns, sustaining numerous shrapnel injuries and a serious wound to the hip. Disregarding his serious wounds he dragged the larger soldier from the fire-raked trail. Hearing the second machine-gunner yell that he was running out of ammunition, Specialist Rascon, under heavy enemy fire crawled back to the wounded machine-gunner stripping him of his bandoleers of ammunition, giving them to the machine-gunner who continued his suppressive fire. Specialist Rascon fearing the abandoned machine gun, its ammunition and spare barrel could fall into enemy hands made his way to retrieve them. On the way, he was wounded in the face and torso by grenade fragments, but disregarded these wounds to recover the abandoned machine gun, ammunition and spare barrel items, enabling another soldier to provide added suppressive fire to the pinned-down squad. In searching for the wounded, he saw the point grenadier being wounded by small arms fire and grenades being thrown at him. Disregarding his own life and his numerous wounds, Specialist Rascon reached and covered him with his body absorbing the blasts from the exploding grenades, and saving the soldier's life, but sustaining additional wounds to his body. While making his way to the wounded point squad leader, grenades were hurled at the sergeant. Again, in complete disregard for his own life, he reached and covered the sergeant with his body, absorbing the full force of the grenade explosions. Once more Specialist Rascon was critically wounded by shrapnel, but disregarded his own wounds to continue to search and aid the wounded. Severely wounded, he re-mained on the battlefield, inspiring his fellow soldiers to continue the battle. After the enemy broke contact, he disregarded aid for himself, instead treating the wounded and directing their evacuation. Only after being placed on the evacuation helicopter did he allow aid to be given to him. Specialist Rascon's extraordinary valor in the face of deadly enemy fire, his heroism in rescuing the wounded, and his gallantry by repeatedly risking his own life for his fellow soldiers are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Al center photo



Graham Rollings

C/2/503 Trooper Passes

ROLLINGS, Graham D. Sr., (Retired) Master Sergeant USA Paratrooper, 83, died September 21, 2018. A native of Southampton County, he was one of 10 children of Samuel Herman and Ethel Claire Rollings. He was the widower of Freda H. Rollings, his wife of 30 years and Billie C. Rollings.



Graham served in the United States Army for 21 years with duties in the Special Forces, 82nd Airborne Division and 173d Airborne Brigade, with two tours in Vietnam and duties in Korea, Okinawa and Germany. He was Chapter Chairman for five years and a life member of the 82nd and 173d Airborne Associations.

Graham was awarded the Good Conduct Medal with Silver Clasp, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Dominican Republic), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea), National Defense Service Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Presidential Unit Citation, Army Service Ribbon, Army Commendation Medal, Parachute Badge, 30/5 Bar, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (3), Overseas Ribbon, Meritorious Service Medal and was retained in service (8) days for the Convenience of the Government.

He was a life member of the VFW, DAV and a member of the American Legion. The funeral service and interment were private. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Airborne and Special Operations Museum, P.O. Box 89, Fayetteville, N.C. 28302.

Commander in Chief to tap military construction budget to pay for southern border wall....



Commander in Chief in White House rose garden.

DOD Statement on the President's Declaration of a National Emergency on the Southern Border

IMMEDIATE RELEASE NO. NR-033-49

Feb. 15, 2019

The president has declared a national emergency on the southern border. The president invoked sections 12302, 284(b)(7), and 2808 of Title 10, U.S. Code, and requires the use of the armed forces to respond to this emergency through support to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in its efforts to secure the southern border.

10 U.S.C., Section 12302 (Activation of the Ready Reserve) authorizes involuntary activation of the Ready Reserve, which includes members who, when mobilized, perform a federal mission at the direction of the secretary of defense.

10 U.S.C., Section 284(b)(7) (Counterdrug Support) authorizes DOD to support the counterdrug activities of other federal agencies, including DHS, with the construction of roads, fences, and lighting to block drug smuggling corridors across international boundaries. DOD will review and respond appropriately to any request for assistance received from DHS.

Per 10 U.S.C., Section 2808 (Military Construction (MILCON)), this declaration of a national emergency at the southern border requiring the use of the armed forces authorizes the secretary of defense to determine whether border barriers are necessary to support the use of the armed forces and to re-direct unobligated DOD MILCON funding to construct border barriers if required.



NCPC Approves Preliminary Plans for National World War I Memorial in DC



"The United States honors the American veterans of every major war of the 20th century with a national memorial in Washington, D.C., except the veterans of World War I. As we commemorate the centennial of the U.S. involvement in the Great War, now is the time to honor the heroism and sacrifice of the Americans who served with the creation of a National World War I Memorial in Washington."

At its February 7 meeting the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) approved preliminary site development plans for the National World War I Memorial submitted by the National Park Service in collaboration with the World War I Centennial Commission. The memorial, proposed for downtown Washington's Pershing Park, will honor the service of members of the United States Armed Forces in World War I. The primary memorial components are a freestanding memorial wall with a sculptural element on one side and an inscription on the other, and a pool with a central plaza. The Commission found that the design of the memorial wall's inscription side is improved and noted that it is reminiscent to the park's original fountain. ###

Happy April Birthday to Our Newsletter Proofreader

And here we find Skysoldierette Mrs. Regine "Reggie" Smith, official proofreader of our newsletter on the Space Coast beach in Florida with her milkshake in February. Happy Birthday Frau Smith! Ed



Congressional Delegation Visits 173rd Airborne Brigade at Aviano Air Base



"From right, U. S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Delfin J. Romani, assigned to the 54th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade, briefs parachute functions to U.S. Rep. John Garamendi during a U.S. congressional staff delegation visit to the Personnel Alert Holding Area (PAHA) at Aviano Air Base, Italy, Aug. 23, 2018. 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 photo by Antonio Bedin)

Final Jump



"Army Command Sgt. Maj. Delfin J. Romani, the outgoing commander of the 54th Brigade Engineer Battalion, receives his last 'All OK, Jumpmaster!' during an airborne operation in northern Italy, Jan. 31, 2019." (DoD photo)



The Pleasant Moments

MUCH more so than his counterparts in any other war, the American soldier who served in Vietnam was the beneficiary of a myriad of programs designed to maintain his morale at a high level and improve his general welfare. By far the most popular and important of these programs was the Rest and Recuperation (R & R) leave, which gave every soldier the opportunity to spend five full days in one of ten exciting "fun capitals" of Asia and the Pacific.

The more than 20,000 servicemen who chose Australia will always remember with a smile the bikini-clad "birds" along Manly Beach, and the memory of the warmth with which the Aussies welcomed all "Yanks" will never fade.

In stately Bangkok, one was impressed by the pomp and grandeur of the ancient Court of Siam, and how about those delicate bargaining sessions with enchanting Thai salesgirls who had *"a special deal"* just for you?

The majority of the Hawaii-bound travelers were joined there by their wives. But a vacation reunion with loved ones was by no means the only attraction. Gleaming beaches and luau delicacies enhanced their Hawaiian stay.



"Watch he hands," was the keyword for those on Rest and Recuperation in Hawaii. Regardless of where it was taken R& R was welcomed.

Variety was the watchword for those who chose Hong Kong for R & R. The prices in the world's most famous bargain basement made gift-buying a delight, and the night life ranged from cozy cabarets to colossal stage productions.

Kuala Lumpur had a magnetic appeal all its own. The soaring spires of the National Mosque, and spectacular religious celebrations were sights not to be forgotten. At mealtime, budding gourmets received their introduction to savory Eastern cuisine, including Indian curries and juicy Malaysian "satay".

Manila was sheer joy for the shutterbugs. The harbor hydrofoil ride provided many opportunities for the camera enthusiast in search of the shot, while in the mountains, picturesque Baguio was captured on film for future reminiscing.

Exotic Penang was a tropical paradise. You could have spent your whole leave just basking in the sun on one of many beaches. But there were hills and temples, magnificent waterfalls and lush gardens to explore, too.

People-watchers spent many a pleasant hour at open-air cafes on Singapore's Bugis Street. When they tired of the bustle of this melting pot of the Orient, the "must see" list suggested the Tiger Balm Gardens and the House of Jade.

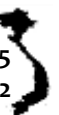
Taipei's provincial hospitality demonstrated the ancient tradition of service and efficiency. Visitors were thoroughly satisfied, whether it was a pot of tea or a major purchase. Both shopping and sight-seeing offered equal attraction, and whatever the day's choice you came out a winner.

The fast-paced life in the world's largest city stands out in the minds of those who headed for Tokyo. The bright lights and multitude of shops of the Ginza were an irresistible attraction. Electronics dealers offered outstanding buys on cameras, radios, stereos, and more. And in contrast, the cherry blossoms and ancient beauty of old Japan tempered the hectic pace.

Once again, there was plenty of first-rate entertainment for Americans in Vietnam. Working with the USO's Hollywood Overseas Committee and the Department of Defense, Special Services continued to bring top names in show business and sports throughout the country,

The perennial favorite, Bob Hope, made his fifth consecutive Christmas visit -- his 18th consecutive overseas tour. Having, as he said, *"some idea of what the troops wanted to see."*....

(continued....)



....Hope brought along 19 beautiful girls to brighten the Christmas season. Ann-Margret wowed them with her singing and dancing, among other things. Two all-girl singing groups, Honey Ltd, and the Goldiggers, provided good medicine for sore eyes and ears. As a chaperone, Hope brought huge Rosey Grier, former New York Giant football star and now a rock 'n roll singer. In addition to his vocal performance, Rosey played straight man for Hope, while Dick Albers showed that physical fitness can be fun with his antics on the trampoline.

Also not to be forgotten were the military tours sponsored by Special Services, Outstanding military musicians from each Corps were selected to give concerts throughout Vietnam. Since they were military men, these musicians could and did visit more remote locations than could other entertainers.



Photo by Major David Blake

Other big hits were Ohio State football coach Woody Hayes and his films of the OSU-USC Rose Bowl game, and comedian Joey Bishop.

Of course, radio personality Johnny Grant visited Vietnam again, accompanied by several gorgeous young ladies. And there were many others who did their part to make a year in Vietnam go a little faster.

The chaplain provided guidance (above right), and Bob Hope and girls – in this case the Goldiggers – provided entertainment (above).

For the men who wished to expand their educational horizons, Vietnam had plenty to offer. Servicemen could take courses for credit from the United States Armed Forces Institute, or resident credit from the University of Maryland. Those planning an Army career

had the opportunity to take extension courses from several service schools.

Exchanges offered everything from razor blades and soap to radios, stereos and cameras. Most stores stocked snack items to offer a change (from standard Army fare). A special program was launched to get radios, watches and cameras out to the smaller PXs to give the combat soldier an equal chance to purchase these luxury items.



Photo by Major David I. Stanley

Many men were able to take advantage of the in-country R & R program, and spent three days on the beaches of Vung Tau, enjoying the sun, sand and surf in a picturesque setting.

The snack bars operated by the exchange system were a welcome addition. Situated at division and brigade basecamps, they were always popular with the men. The snack bars at the aerial ports always seemed to have a line of hungry customers in front of them.

The many EM, NCO and officers' clubs supplied a place to relax after a hard day. Many featured live entertainment in addition to snack items and cold beverages. Some of the larger clubs also operated concessions such as the always-popular massage parlor.

(continued....)



In make-shift theaters wherever a projector could be set up, movies were shown. The schedule of productions and the quality of the films varied greatly from week to week, but they were always enjoyed, although many a man cursed a little as the alert siren stopped the show right in the middle of "Dr. Zhivago," or "Madigan."

The chaplain is sometimes regarded as detached from the mainstream of military life, concerned more with the spiritual than the real. But the men who serve in the Chaplain Corps frequently do more than conduct Sunday services. Chaplains have two principal duties. The first is to provide religious services and the second is to counsel the men. Often they accompany combat soldiers on assaults to know what the men experience, check on morale and help the wounded.

From Valley Forge to Dak To, American soldiers have endured the hardships of a thousand battles. In Vietnam, however, unprecedented morale and welfare opportunities help make the burdens of war at least a little more bearable.

R&R? I Didn't Get No R&R!

By June '66, my time for R&R came around and I chose to go to Okinawa where my older brother Bob was between two of his three tours with the SF. He had assured me of a good time if I visited him there....particularly his promise to introduce me to a lovely lady of Japanese heritage he knew.

Packed-up and with shiny boots on the bottom and airborne-patched cunt cap on top, I learned my flight out of Tan Son Nhut had been postponed until the following day, and it would be necessary to spend the first night of R&R in the Paris of the Orient.

Just like in some 1940s Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly movie, I hooked up with a sailor and an AF guy, and the three of us spent the evening and night spreading around Piaster's and U.S. goodwill to any young ladies seeking entertainment, but without our singing and dancing in the rain. All the while, brother Bob and his two beautiful (he says) oriental young paramours continued waiting at the Okinawa airport for this goodwill-spreading Sky Soldier to arrive.

The next morning, following a near sleepless night with my military and non-military new friends, I woke up nearly unable to breathe. This RTO R&R hopeful was taken to nearby 3rd Field Army Hospital where it was learned I had a nasty case of pneumonia. Following a few weeks in hospital they sent this sad sack back to the 2/503 in Bien Hoa, never to see R&R again. But, the story doesn't end there.

About 40 odd years later, a C/2/503 good buddy told me his R&R story. Seems he had had his R&R, but some months later a senior sergeant asked who of his men would like to go on R&R? My buddy raised his hand, and yup, he got a *second* R&R....the bastard got my *unused* R&R!!

Lew "Smitty" Smith, HHC/2/503



Brother Bob visiting me at Camp Zinn in December '65. Later, on his third tour with the 5th SF, he'd lose an eye during a firefight in the Dak To region ending his military career.

Send In Your 2/503 R&R Story

We know there's a slight risk sharing your 2/503 R&R story could result in divorce or a reduction in spousal benefits, but send it in anyway, and we'll publish it in a future issue of our newsletter. Relative photos are always welcome. Ed

Email your 2/503 R&R story to: rto173@att.net

**♪ I love you,
You love me,
You buy me
Saigon tea?
50 P**



Sgt Lays Low To Evade NVA



By Sp4 Adrian Acevedo



Monsoon



When you hear the word “monsoon”, most folks think that’s just another name for winter-time in the Pacific region. Personally, I first heard that word when I was a teen in high school. But, to a grunt that has been in the jungles of Vietnam, the word “monsoon” has a whole new definition. To him, that’s probably one of the most depressing times during his tour. It not only rains....it rains, and THEN...it REALLY rains. The raindrops are much bigger, they are much closer together, and they come down for an awfully long time.

The sound is never-ending and it simply drowns out everything else, no birds, no aircraft, not animal sounds, nothing. Only the roar of a million raindrops hitting the thick fauna that makes up the triple canopy jungle. For anything, and everyone out in it, everything is totally drenched for long periods, days even, and there is simply no place to hide or get away from it. The pads of your fingers are so wrinkled, that they become very sensitive to anything that touches them. Little pink prunes that get more wrinkled by the day.

When you FINALLY get a chance to take your boots off to get some dry socks on, you look at your feet and wonder where all the holes came from. Then you realize, they are from little grains of sand that have embedded themselves deep into your tender skin. Did I mention the smell?? Your feet actually smell like decaying flesh, or close to it, from the skin cells that have died, and have nowhere to go but stay inside your boots and ferment in the moisture because you can’t take your boots off. Everything about you, is totally wet, from the inside out. Your MIND...is even wet.

This is only a smidgen of the description of a monsoon a grunt probably will never tell you. He simply wants to forget he was ever that miserable. This is one reason, and you can prove this yourself by observing someone that has lived through these types of things, that grunts never take even the smallest pleasures in life for granted. They are thrilled to be alive, they are happy they have warm food, they are happy no one is shooting at them, and they are most happy, when they can go to their own bedroom, and sleep where it’s warm and dry, and never have to worry about cold water running down their butt crack while trying to sleep. Try that sometime. It IS survivable, and probably won’t cause you long term damage, except maybe the occasional bout with trench foot and jungle rot that will befall you.

In the jungle, it’s normally very hot and humid. And what I mean by hot, most times it was 100 degrees or better. The heat, your body can adjust to if given some time, so it’s at least tolerable. And the humidity at constantly 85 to 90 percent, you can ALMOST get adjusted to that also. But when the monsoon season comes, the temperature drops to a bone chilling 80 or so degrees, but your body still thinks it’s 100. This is something that’s hard to resolve in your mind, because you know for a fact that it’s 80 degrees, but you’re still freezing your ass off, and you have absolutely no idea why.

[Excerpt from a Facebook post by Don Cordle,
sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503. Photo added]

“Men of Alpha Co., 1st Bn (Mech), 50th Inf.” (web photo)

BON SON – While more than a hundred NVA passed by with fixed bayonets, a 173d Airborne Brigade sergeant from Thomson, Ga., silently hugged the ground and prayed.

Sergeant Phil Davis, a squad leader with Company A, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry, had been separated from the rest of his unit during a recent heavy B-40 rocket and small arms attack in the flat coastal area 30 miles north of Qui Nhon.

Five armored personnel carriers (APC’s), including Davis’, were disabled almost immediately by the withering fire from two NVA battalions.

The 21-year-old sergeant was pinned down while trying to pull the wounded to safety. The remaining APC’s were forced to withdraw.

“I lay there for what seemed like a couple of hours,” recalled Davis. “There was nothing else I could do. Heavy fire was coming from two different directions.”

“The NVA finally swept through the perimeter,” he continued, “but were too intent on destroying the damaged tracks to notice me. They were going after the remaining vehicles when our own air strikes and artillery started coming in all around the perimeter and almost on top of me.”

“After about two more hours, I decided to get up and find a way out,” he said. “There were enemy in front and behind me, but I figured my best chance was to the front, where the heaviest air strikes had already landed.”

“I ran about 500 meters to a wooded area without drawing fire. There I picked up an AK-47 from a dead NVA and found my way another mile or so to Highway 1 without seeing anyone.”

“I finally got picked up by APC’s from our own battalion and rode back to our base camp.”

Source: **Fire Base 173, 15 June 1968** (photo added)



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~ Appreciates Security ~

Plainview GI Returns After Year Of Viet War

By Wendell Holloman

What's it like to be home?

For one thing, it's freedom from the tension of always being on guard, from glancing back over your shoulder time and time again, feeling eyes always watching you. It's a feeling of security.

Pvt. John Peoples, 18-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. I.L. Peoples, 821½ Cedar, returned to Plainview Sunday, a one-year veteran of the war in Viet Nam.

A paratrooper assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, Pvt. Peoples reported living in Viet Nam as "rough." Explaining the statement, Peoples said the weather was hot, food was mostly C-rations and their only shelters were tents.

His comments on the war in Viet Nam were weighed carefully before they were spoken. *"The Vietnamese people are good people. They know why we're there and are happy to see us. Most of them don't like communism. . . I don't know the motivation of the V-C's and why they want to be communists."*

Machine-Gunner

His mission in Viet Nam was as a machine-gunner in a line company operating search and destroy missions in jungles identified on army maps as D Zone.

It was on one of these operations that Pvt. Peoples came face-to-face with an exploding land mine. *"It was one of those homemade bombs. A V-C concealed in the jungle foliage watched until I got near the mine then pressed the button and...."*

This was January 12, 1966. Peoples reported his patrol killed four Congs that day, others escaped. He was taken by helicopter to the 93rd evacuation hospital in Ben Hoa (sic) where he was treated for shrapnel wounds in his right leg and arm and concussion. Peoples said he was in the hospital about two weeks.

Purple Heart Medal

On March 28, he received the Purple Heart for these injuries.

"Sure it scares me to be shot at," the young tight-lipped soldier explained. "But at the time I didn't think too much about it. I reacted as I had been trained and did what I am told to do. I guess just about all the guys do."

Peoples said the routine patrol covered about two and a half miles a day through the thick jungle growth in their zone.

The U.S. Patrols cut their way through the jungles rather than use trails maintained by the Viet Congs. *"The Cong's trails are usually booby-trapped,"* the soldier said.

Patrol operations vary in length and trips – out. Peoples said. *"Some months we go three times."*

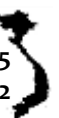
Shops For G.I.'s

He was stationed at Ben Hoa (sp), about 40 miles southwest (northeast) of Saigon. The city is about half the size of Plainview with their downtown stores much like ours, Peoples said. However these shops cater to the G.I.'s and Vietnamese with money. Peoples said he hadn't been into the markets where the common people of Viet Nam trade. *"It's not safe to mess around with these people. You can't tell who are the victor charleys."*

Reflecting on his experiences during the past year, Peoples said he wouldn't volunteer to go back to the war. *"But if I am sent there I'll fight because that's my job."*



MEDAL MEMORIES – Pvt. Johnnie Peoples, 18-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. I.L. Peoples, 821 ½ Cedar, is shown with two medals received during the year he spent in Viet Nam. Peoples is holding a Vietnamese Commundation (sic) Medal awarded to American soldiers who participate with the South Vietnamese armed forces in Viet Cong battles. The other medal is the Purple Heart which Peoples received for injuries suffered in a land mine explosion.



RODGER CARROL, BRAVO BULL PASSES



Rodger Taylor Carroll of Athens, Ga passed away Wednesday, November 14, 2018. He was preceded in death by his wife, Susette Talarico and parents, Victor and Alouise Carroll. He is survived by his wife, Liliana Carroll; son and daughter-in-law, Robert and Alexis Carroll of Atlanta, Ga; son, Pablo Davila of Atlanta, Ga; son, Gabriel Davila of Washington D.C.; and an extended family.

Rodger grew up in a loving household in Memphis, Tennessee. He was a golden gloves boxer, winning the Mid-South Championship as a youth. He volunteered for the army upon graduating high school, and became a paratrooper in the 173rd Airborne Brigade with B/2/503. He deployed to Vietnam in service to America, a great source of pride throughout his life. After a short time in Vietnam, Rodger was wounded in combat and lost both of his legs. For his sacrifice and bravery, he was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star Medal.

Not to let his disability define his life, Rodger pursued a study of the classics after recovering from his wounds.

He discovered a lifelong love of philosophy, greek, and latin, obtaining a Masters degree in Philosophy from the University of Georgia, and taught all of the aforementioned subjects at various levels. Moreover, his sense of humor always served him well.

For recreation, he enjoyed traveling, reading, playing golf, Georgia football, Atlanta Braves' baseball, and spending countless hours with friends and family. Rodger's relationships with other people are the greatest measure of his character. As one friend said, *"He was a true patriot, a great American, and a loving father and husband."*

Rest Easy Brother

Paratrooper Jump



"Army paratroopers jump from an Air Force C-17 Globemaster over Normandy drop zone during a training exercise at Fort Bragg, N.C., Feb. 1, 2019.

(DoD photo)

A Top Secret War Message

(Declassified 2/24/77)

FM MMCC

TO WHITE HOUSE

REFERENCE CONUSMACV MESSAGE

The following message has been sent to Gen Westmoreland by ADM Sharp

Quote

You are the man on the ground and will have to weigh the pros and cons of committing the two battalions of the 173rd. Concur that you have the authority to commit them.

I'm sure you realize that there would be grave political implications involved if sizable U.S. forces are committed for the first time and suffer a defeat.

Notify Ambassador Johnson and notify CINCPAC and JCS prior to commitment of any U.S. ground combat force.

Unquote

**(Item created 13 June 1965,
Copy to Lyndon Johnson Library)**



DOD Identifies Army Casualty

Jan. 23, 2019

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

Staff Sgt. **Joshua Z. Beale**, 32, of Carrollton, Virginia, died Jan. 22, 2019, as a result of injuries sustained from enemy small arms fire during combat operations in Tarin Kowt, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.



Beale was assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Commander in Chief pays tribute to Americans killed in Syrian suicide bombing as their bodies arrive back in US



DOD Identifies Casualties

Jan. 18, 2019

The Department of Defense announced today the deaths of one soldier, one sailor and one DOD civilian who were supporting Operation Inherent Resolve.

The deceased are:

Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 **Jonathan R. Farmer**, 37, of Boynton Beach, Florida. Farmer was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Campbell, Kentucky.



Navy Chief Cryptologic Technician (Interpretive) **Shannon M. Kent**, 35, of upstate New York. Kent was assigned to Cryptologic Warfare Activity 66, based at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland.



DOD civilian **Scott A. Wirtz** of St. Louis, Missouri. Wirtz was assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency as an operations support specialist.



Farmer, Kent and Wirtz died Jan. 16, 2019, in Manbij, Syria, as a result of wounds sustained from a suicide improvised explosive device. The incident is under investigation.

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

Sgt. **Cameron A. Meddock**, 26, of Spearman, Texas, died Jan. 17, 2019, in Landstuhl, Germany, as a result of injuries sustained from small arms fire during combat operations on Jan. 13, 2019, in Jawand District, Badghis Province, Afghanistan. Meddock was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.



Rest Easy Young People



Where Is It Now?

(Original EDITOR'S NOTE) -- Where does the Vietnam war stand as 1969 ends? The following appraisal comes from two Pulitzer Prize Associated Press correspondents who have covered the war continually for seven years. They revisited all four corps areas and talked with hundreds of Americans and Vietnamese. This is the first of three stories giving their findings.

By **PETER ARNETT** and **HORST FAAS**



Arnett



Faas

SAIGON (AP) - This year, allied forces have accomplished the first major breakthrough since 1962 in wresting the Vietnamese countryside from Viet Cong control, and people are flowing back into long-abandoned farmlands and hamlets. Yet all the while North Vietnam has been building up its armed forces along South Vietnam's borders. What these forces will do, as the United States continues to withdraw combat forces, is the big question for 1970 and later.

The momentum of the nationwide breakthrough against the Viet Cong in the countryside is visible, measurable and continuing. But there is also general agreement that if this momentum falters, as it has in the past because of ineptness or political division, there will be little chance for any pro-Western government and society to survive in South Vietnam. There will be no time to try again.

Planners of the American withdrawal are proceeding with caution. They say that if American troops are pulled out too quickly the psychological shock on the Saigon army, combined with a military vacuum on the battlefield, could bring collapse.

Intent on creating a country that can survive politically and militarily in its present form, the American proponents of Vietnamization seek not only to replace American troops but also to revolutionize and reorganize Saigon's million-man military structure. Hanoi has plans, too.

North Vietnamese forces on the borders *"are right now capable of waging war on a grander scale than ever before,"* says a top-level U.S. intelligence assessment.



"The South Vietnamese people seem to think the worst days of the war are over.

The Hanoi forces have two alternatives. The first is to push hard with a winter-spring offensive, pressuring the population, reviving the Viet Cong, and forcing American casualties. If it took all American troops still in Vietnam to contain a serious assault this could delay 1970 withdrawals.

The classic alternative available to the North Vietnamese is to wait, gambling all on a conventional thrust across the borders when they feel that manageable numbers of Americans remain.

The main catalysts for Saigon's breakthrough in the countryside are the Americans, men like Brig. Gen., commander of the battle-scarred 173rd Airborne Brigade, who from his helicopter over coastal Binh Dinh Province proudly points out the ribbons of shiny aluminum roofed houses that edge the streams and dot the sand dunes.

(continued....)



He enthusiastically recounts how the bomb-cratered paddy fields that lay dark green and fallow for years in abandoned valleys now mirror the skies from flooded surfaces as farmers work them again. Or he describes the intense hunger for the land that has peasant farmers attempting to return to their old fields in remote valleys still torn with war. Cunningham says, *"I have made a promise to these people to the hamlet and district chiefs, to stay to help until the job is done. We can leave only when they can protect themselves."*

Veteran troopers of the battle of Hamburger Hill, men of the 101st Airborne Division who had seen only fighting and destruction in Vietnam, are now deployed in old churches and farmhouses alongside Saigon's Popular Force soldiers, long the most ill-regarded in the Vietnam war. The paratroopers' mission is to coax the timid militiamen to fight, to give them confidence to move at night and lie in ambushes. American soldiers in groups as small as five men have settled in with Vietnamese population in this grassroots basic training role.

Then there are the American provincial advisers, enthusiastically driving their utility vans along yellow delta roads reaching deep into provincial areas long controlled by the Viet Cong.

They describe how the newly designed Y-shaped outposts dotting the roadsides have withstood all attacks. They invite you to shop at a market place rebuilt in some remote, once broken and abandoned village now full of life.

Vietnamese officialdom in the countryside followed the Americans cautiously at first and many are cautious still. But some province chiefs try to outdo their American counterparts in bravado, sailing remote delta canals and driving lonely roads.

Unlocking the countryside from the Viet Cong's grip is not being achieved by miracles. U.S. planners admit that standards sought in past pacification programs have been drastically lowered.

"Today the hearts and minds are only an incidental aspect, not an overriding one," according to one of the planners.

He refers to an old slogan about the primary need to win over the hearts and minds of the people.

The new catchword is security, enough armed men to stand guard and overwhelm the Viet Cong.

"We decided we need security first, and hoped that the population would cooperate once we guaranteed safety," commented an experienced Vietnam official. *"Security may be 10 percent or 90 percent of solving the whole problem, depending on the point of view, but we know now it is always the first 10 percent or the first 90 percent."*

The precondition of all the rural breakthroughs was the same: regular enemy battalions had to be destroyed or pushed away before the process got underway. And the enemy has to be kept at arm's length forever after.

The process is simple, parceling the peasantry in political units of 1,000 persons each, recruiting from amongst them a 43-man Popular Force platoon with its only responsibility to watch over the people and the fields.



"Young Vietnamese army recruits get first taste of military life at a training center."

"When we can maintain security the countryside opens up overnight," commented a U.S. general officer who has witnessed the development. *"We can't hold the farmer back in the refugee camps once this happens. He moves out. The schools, the markets and the roads soon follow."*

Some new factors have emerged. One, the mood and attitude of the population cannot be statistically measured but it can be felt. The people seem to think the worst days are over that the terrible slaughter and destruction of past years will never be repeated.

Feelings of hopelessness and defeat once pervaded the millions vegetating in refugee camps and in slums at the edges of the cities and army bases. These feelings are lifting.

The big war has receded for most people, back to the jungles and swamps whence it emerged in 1962. There is less shooting, less noise.....The guerrilla who mines a road, the terrorist assassin, the Viet Cong tax collector still concern people but the threat is minimal compared to the total War of other years.

(continued....)



The rural people are aware that American troops are beginning to go home. They know that the North Vietnamese trooper who dug into their backyards last year to fight it out with American tanks has also gone.

Politics and war beyond the palm-fringed horizon do not concern the peasant as he toils to refill bomb craters and rebuild paddy dikes.

For that reason the remark of an American aid official in the countryside may typify the situation: *"The people are indifferent as to who is in the central government in Saigon. They don't care who sits on top. They want to be left alone to farm."*

The farmer is unaware that the North Vietnamese seem to be assembling greater numbers of forces than ever before with better weapons.

The size of Hanoi's effort is at present shown only in intelligence reports, or becomes apparent to reconnaissance patrols that probe across the borders. The reports indicate that the North Vietnamese are perfecting their military supply bases.

"They have learned a lot from us," observed a U.S. intelligence officer.

While the Americans conduct war from supply bases all along the Vietnamese coast the North Vietnamese are now set up in underground mountain caverns in Laos down to openly occupied bases in Cambodia.

A functioning enemy supply and storage system worries American strategists more than the appearance of some new infantry units in the northern border zone. It indicates a permanent enemy presence.

It is primarily this threat that makes U.S. military men reluctant to withdraw from Vietnam more swiftly.

The Americans are not concerned if the Vietnamese lose a few battles along the remote borders. What worries them is that Hanoi might break through the defensive shield and spill over populated lowlands as they did in the Tet offensive of 1968.

The rural people are aware, *"If you have to fight in the populated areas the battle is already half lost,"* a senior American in the northern 1st Corps Area observes. Such fighting could repeat the cycle of destruction and the uprooting of millions. It could lead to a resurgence of the Viet Cong, who in most areas have taken to the hills or lie dormant in villages.

"If the security at the distant border and in the hamlets is not continued after we are gone, and the people are not protected then the whole thing would have been another noble failure," commented Capt. Ismael Noriega, of New York City, who commands a U.S. infantry company working in a village.

The high casualty battles of 1969 were fought along the defensive shield at the border. Because of the impact of American casualties, the tendency has been to put Vietnamese infantrymen up front to bear the brunt of the bloodletting in several areas. More American units intend to step back in 1970. Weekly Vietnamese casualties have risen since this practice began; American casualties have dropped.

The best authorities say Vietnamese divisions still lack the basics for long campaigns in remote areas and they will be unable in the foreseeable future to stop all North Vietnamese thrusts into the security shield. Large American units may have to stand behind the Vietnamese.

An American battalion commander, working shoulder to shoulder with the Vietnamese 18th Infantry Division, declared, *"The Vietnamese go first into the attack, but we follow to help them if they need us."* The pattern along the whole defensive shield is for American and Vietnamese units to alternate and back each other up.

The U.S. presence holds the border shield together, but Americans are involved in much more than this aspect of the war.

While some battalions of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division conduct elaborate mobile operations with helicopters at night, working with electronic sensors that feed information of enemy activity into computers guiding artillery positions, other paratroopers teach unpaid civilians how to load shotguns.

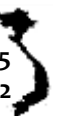
Soldiers and generals understand now that Vietnamization means much more than substituting Vietnamese for American soldiers, recruiting new battalions, and passing out guns.

"What we are doing is changing them from a sort of peacetime structure to a wartime structure, and they are having growing pains," commented Lt. Gen. Julian Ewell, commander of the Field Forces 2nd Corps region around Saigon.

A longtime observer commented, *"The Vietnamese military for years acted like an occupying force in their own country, as alien to the needs of the population as foreigners."*

This was one of the reasons the population stood aloof and even hostile to the Saigon government and its army. The advent of American ground troops often sharpened this antagonism.

(continued....)



Hundreds of thousands of local militiamen, recruited over the years, were treated as second-rate soldiers, underpaid, inadequately armed, often abandoned or even ignored when wounded.

Today the Americans are giving the same attention and support to all Vietnamese men in uniform. The U.S. high command will commit first-rate American infantry battalions to help village defenders. The hope is to raise standards so all are able and ready to do the job required.

There have never before been so many South Vietnamese under arms. Besides the million men in uniform, twice as many again have been recruited as unpaid civilian homeguards, almost one-fifth of them already armed. They can be seen around coffee shops at rural market places, or strolling Saigon's back streets.

The American posture as 1969 ends presents a much more coherent picture than in other years. Once much effort was wasted and many lives lost because of uncertain direction.

Most Americans in Vietnam seem to understand the immediate purpose of what they are doing, whether the infantrymen in the jungles of War Zone C, or the company medic giving aspirins to peasants.

The desire of the senior Americans running the current programs is to leave Vietnam as soon as possible, but without being defeated. The Vietnamese are being swept along with the momentum.

Some questions governing Vietnam's future cannot be answered now. Among them: Will the Vietnamese run out of breath? Will the Americans run out of time? Will the North Vietnamese run out of patience?

Source:

**Indochina Archive, University of California,
file date 1/70.**

(Authors photos added)

Hero's Honors

01/11/2019

Army Gen. John Murray, commander of Army Futures Command, presents an American flag to Volma Overton Jr., during a funeral service for his cousin, Richard A. Overton, at the Texas



State Cemetery in Austin, Jan. 12, 2019. Richard Overton, who died Dec. 27 at age 112, was the oldest living veteran of World War II, and was buried with full military honors.

Honoring service & sacrifice



Col. Tom Faley (Photo by Michael Bupp, *The Sentinel*)

And here we find our good buddy, Tom Faley, Col. (Ret), and former CO of C/2/503, '66, offering remarks during the Mechanicsburg Area Veteran Council Memorial Day program, in Pennsylvania.

"On this Memorial Day, we honor ... the 1 million plus individuals from all wars who made the sacrifice at the request of our nation," said Tom, guest speaker and the South Middleton Township Supervisor. *"We must never forget their service and sacrifice, the enduring legacy of these brave souls who gave the full measure for us."* He added, his uncle, whom he is named after, was killed 100 years ago during World War I.

"The freedoms we enjoy are not secured without great costs," Tom said. *"We pay with the lives of the men and woman of our armed forces. To pay that price was a heavy burden, no matter how many or how few Americans fell, no matter how large or small their units were."*



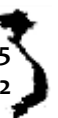
And here is Tom, kneeling, a few years ago, with a few of his Chargin' Charlie troopers, sometime somewhere in Vietnam.

ATW Cap!



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Sec. Wilkie to Govt. Union: Stop Exploiting Veteran Suicide

January 14, 2019

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the following **letter from Secretary Robert Wilkie** to American Federation of Government Employees President J. David Cox:



Sec. Robert Wilkie

**Mr. J. David Cox, National President
American Federation of Government Employees
80 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001**

Dear President Cox:

One of the most insulting and misleading stereotypes about Veterans today is that of the “Veteran as victim.” While VA is dedicated to helping all Veterans, particularly those who are truly at risk, the notion that most Veterans are so fragile from their service that the slightest hint of hardship can push them to the brink of mental breakdown or even self-harm is preposterous, which is why Veterans and Veteran advocates are continuously fighting this shopworn canard.

As leader of the largest union representing VA employees, many of whom are Veterans, you should know how harmful this stereotype is to Veterans, especially those attempting to enter the civilian workforce following their service. That is why I was surprised and disappointed to see one of the American Federation of Government Employees’ (AFGE) presidents pushing the “Veteran as victim” myth, and going so far as to exploit the real tragedy of Veteran suicide to make political arguments about the partial government shutdown.

“If this shutdown does not stop, we are going to have fatalities. We’re going to have suicides,” AFGE Local President Edward M. Canales said earlier this week, according to ABC News.

While it is apparent some AFGE leaders consider Veterans as victims, allow me to inform you of the true character traits of those who have worn the uniform: Veterans are models of civic engagement, holding stronger ties to their communities and volunteering and voting at higher rates than their non-Veteran counterparts.

The Veterans’ unemployment rate is lower than the national average, in part because companies often look to hire Veterans for complex and demanding jobs, citing their leadership and work ethic.

In short, America’s Veterans are model citizens and leaders, and almost every American recognizes that. AFGE Local President Canales’ attempt to use Veterans as pawns in a political debate while exploiting the serious issue of Veteran suicide is nothing short of disgraceful.

I ask you to apologize publicly for your AFGE colleague’s reckless comments and to outline the steps you plan to take to ensure AFGE leaders demonstrate proper respect for our nation’s heroes.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Robert L. Wilkie

Source:

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5178

The AFGE

“The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is the largest federal employee union representing 700,000 federal and D.C. government workers nationwide and overseas. Workers in virtually all functions of government at every federal agency depend upon AFGE for legal representation, legislative advocacy, technical expertise and informational services.



AFGE believes that all unions should belong to the house of labor and has been nationally affiliated with the AFL-CIO since AFGE was founded in 1932. At AFGE’s national convention in 1997, the delegates took the importance of affiliation one step further, voting for each of its 1,100 Locals to affiliate with their AFL-CIO state federations. This makes AFGE one of the few nationally affiliated unions to have all of its Locals affiliated at the state level. National President J. David Cox is an active participant in the AFL-CIO, working to enhance and energize the labor movement.

AFGE takes seriously its responsibility to help provide good government services while ensuring that government workers are treated fairly and with dignity. The union supports a meaningful transformation of the federal workplace to improve the way services and benefits are delivered to the American public.”

(Photo & images added)



Remembering a Cowboy pilot special to men of the 2/503d...

Joseph McHenry Passes



Joseph H. McHenry departed this life surrounded by love on Wednesday, January 2, 2019 in Arizona. Joseph was born in Phoenix, Arizona in 1943 to Pearl Nolen and Lawrence McHenry, Sr. Joseph was the first African American student to attend and graduate from the Jesuit high school of Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix, AZ. While a student at Brophy, Joseph received many accolades and honors including the Arizona Boys Club - Young Man of the Year award, All-State Honorable Mention for football, and All-State in basketball. He was also on the Brophy Debate team. Joseph earned his Bachelors of Science degree from Portland State University. Joseph was initiated through Alpha Theta Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. at Arizona State University.

His pursuit of continuous learning led him to take classes towards the Wine Making degree at Chemeketa Community College.

Joe volunteered for service in the U.S. Army in 1962, attended U.S. Army Primary Helicopter School at Fort Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas and completed advanced training at the U.S. Army Aviation Center in Ft. Rucker, Alabama. He achieved one of his dreams by becoming a pilot. Upon graduating in the top of his class in 1965, he was assigned to support a number of operations in the Vietnam Conflict with Company A, 82nd Aviation Brigade, 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Amongst many of his recognitions, Joseph was awarded the Purple Heart and *the Air Medal with 17th Oak Leaf Cluster*.

This Chief Warrant Officer's service to our country is chronicled in the Veterans History Project in the Library of Congress. Joseph completed his career with the Oregon Army National Guard.

Joseph lived in Portland, Oregon for many years and was a founding member of the Portland Chapter of The National Assoc. for Black Veterans, Inc. (NABVETS).

He taught at POIC Rosemary Anderson School, owned his own spice and coffee shop, taught computer and culinary classes. He worked in the pharmaceutical industry and for Polaroid. He believed in education, supported various scholarship programs and encouraged all youth he encountered to aspire to be lifelong learners.

Joseph met his devoted wife Michele while in Oregon and together they traveled the world. Above all, he lived his life devoted to civic duty with the responsibility to improve his community and was an activist for positive change.

Joseph was preceded in death by daughter Jendayi and son Jelani. He leaves behind his wife Michele, daughters Colette, Celise (husband Sean Granberry), Denise (husband Antoine Ratliff), Donna (wife Sharicka McHenry), and son David all of Arizona, brothers Lawrence (wife Valerie) of Texas and Michael of Arizona, a host of grandkids, cousins, family and many wonderful friends.

Source: *The Skanner News*

Thanks to Joe McHenry and Tony Geishauser the 2/503 Was Not Overrun

It was the early morning of 16 March 66 when men of the 2/503d awoke in the "D" Zone jungle at LZ Zulu Zulu (see cover photo). Comprised of Companies A, B & C with a small HHC contingent under the command of LTC John Walsh, the unit was preparing to send out Companies A and C on different search and destroy missions, leaving behind Companies B and HHC to protect the LZ. Unbeknownst to Walsh and his Sky Soldiers, a regiment of Viet Cong and NVA soldiers had moved in during the night surrounding the 2/503 – the enemy's plan was to attack and destroy the companies remaining at Zulu Zulu then rundown Companies A and C and separately overwhelm and eliminate them on their missions.

(continued....)



“On March 16, 1966, during Operation Silver City at landing zone Zulu-Zulu in the heart of War Zone ‘D’, one U.S. paratroop battalion suddenly found itself surrounded by a reinforced enemy regiment. At the end of the fiercely fought five - hour battle, although outnumbered 3-to-1, the paratroopers could claim one of the most significant victories in the war. As the March 25, 1966, issue of Time magazine noted, ‘The Airborne won with fewer casualties and more enemy dead than any major engagement of the war to date’.”

Vietnam magazine

Before the battalion was split-up into three smaller units, it was reported a Huey was enroute to Zulu Zulu bringing hot A's for breakfast consisting of mermite cans filled with scrambled eggs. Walsh ordered all companies to remain in position, delaying the search and destroy operations until after breakfast.



Cowboy pilots Tony & Joe

It was later learned the commencement of the attack on the LZ was to have been signalled by an enemy machinegun opening up on the soldiers left behind at the Landing Zone.

As Joe and Tony's Huey arrived they were preparing to land inside the perimeter of the 2/503 when an enemy .50 cal machinegun opened fire on their chopper, hitting it multiple times and causing it to crash in the tree line near Bravo Company positions (see chopper photo Page 69). This premature firing and downing of their chopper alerted the enemy surrounding the battalion, at which time they opened up their attack around the entire perimeter.

Following the five-hour battle at LZ Zulu Zulu, the 2/503 suffered 11 KIA and over 120 WIA, while the enemy left between 300-400 KIA on the battlefield and, it is assumed, countless wounded.

It is believed by many, had Joe and Tony's chopper not been shot down causing the premature opening of the attack, the 2/503 while broken-up into smaller units would have most likely been overrun and totally destroyed.

Rest easy, Joe, and thanks to you and Tony for being there that fateful morning. Ed

A Few Memories of Zulu Zulu

“On a bright, sunny morning of the 16th of March, I awoke and was greeting the beautiful morning in the jungle while watching a helicopter hovering above the LZ and attempting to land. As this was occurring, gunfire from one side of the landing zone was directed at the chopper. Then gunfire came from another side, then all around us. The chopper was hit and began swaying in mid-air from side-to-side. Suddenly, the blades were ripping into the trees, raining branches all over the area. The chopper crashed and the gunfire intensified with our brothers returning fire. We had no idea of the size of the unit that we were engaging, but it was big.” A.B. Garcia, HHC/4.2/2/503d

“The situation had the makings of a massacre. It was so immense. Once they opened up and hit the helicopter, all hell broke loose all around our perimeter. Quite frankly, I was stunned. I thought ‘What the devil is going on?’ In the end it was a massacre, but not of the Americans. Luckily, the Vietnamese attack was premature. Had it started an hour later, we would have been out of the shelter of our foxholes, strung out on patrols and quickly overwhelmed.” Tom Faley, CO C/2/503d

“Coolly and methodically, these well dug in paratroopers cut them down. Artillery laid a lethal ring of steel around Zulu-Zulu; bombers plastered the attackers on an average of every six minutes for five hours running. ‘Mad Bomber’ Huey helicopters rigged with plywood tubes pointing downward dropped 81mm mortar shells right on the Reds....Soon there were considerable numbers of troopers (ammo bearers) crawling to and from the LZ, and most of the battalion casualties occurred among those courageous individuals.” Vietnam Magazine



A Lugnut For A Cowboy



2/503 arrive LZ Zulu Zulu on the late afternoon of 15 Mar 66, fifty-three years ago.

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

In 2005, three Sky Soldiers, Maj. Gus Vendetti and Capt. Bill Vose of A/2/503, along with Sp4 Lew Smith of HHC/2/503, returned to Vietnam with the intent of humping into the "D" Zone jungle to find LZ Zulu Zulu, site of the 16 Mar 66 battle during Operation Silver City when their battalion was surrounded by bad guys three times their size and putting the 2/503 at serious risk of being overrun.



L-R: Bill, Gus & Smitty at 3rd Field Army Hospital near Saigon, now a war arms museum, before their trek into the "D" Zone jungle.



Gus, Bill & Smitty with park ranger humping the "D" Zone in stifling heat. *Moses never looked like this!*

These three survivors of the 16 March battle on the trip found the LZ, and while there a few mementos also were found, including a spent cartridge, a grenade pin, a Viet Cong medical vial bearing Chinese inscription, some shrapnel and a lug nut; plus a package of soil also was collected.



Upon return to the U.S., portions of the dirt where shared with a number of troopers who had survived that hellacious fight. Some of the soil was inserted into the jacket pocket of LTC Bob Carmichael, former 2/503 Bn XO/CO, by his bride Exie before his burial in 2016. The cartridge was given to the late Jim Healy of A/2/503, the medicine vial went to Bob "Doc" Beaton, HHC/2/503, while the lug nut was sent to Maj. Tony Geishauser with the Cowboys, another survivor, whose chopper was shot down within their perimeter marking the beginning of the battle.

(continued....)



During his breakfast run of scrambled eggs, the enemy shot down Tony and Joe McHenry's chopper prematurely, thankfully, before the enemy attack which was planned to commence once the battalion was split up into smaller units, allowing the Bn CO, LTC Walsh, to keep his perimeter in place while troopers fended off repeated attacks around the lines. Many believe the 2/503 would have been totally destroyed had it not been for the Cowboy's unscheduled and abrupt landing into the tree line.

Tony's dad was one of the Marines who died during the assaults on Iwo Jima during WWII, and on his desk at home in Texas he keeps a jar with sand from that island. Not knowing if Hueys have lug nuts, the piece of metal was sent to Tony along with some Zulu Zulu soil.

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



Tony's note upon receiving the mementos:

I finally got a chance to read all the dirt you wrote about your mistress (Miss Vietnam) in *The Battle at Bau San*. What a well told story of going back in time with a body nearly 40 years older. You, your brothers and their sons were there for us all.

I had been shot at and hit many times before and after that fateful day, but 16 March 1966, was unlike any day any of us ever experienced.

Many have said God sent my helicopter to you that day because it wasn't your time to die.



Tony and Joe's downed breakfast bird at LZ Zulu Zulu kept the 2/503 from breaking up into smaller units.

Thanks for the memories, the dirt and lugnut – they are resting in the jar with the sand from Iwo Jima.

Be well, live long and prosper. Your friend and helicopter driver,

Tony Geishauser, aka Cowboy 173



And today in a jar on a desk somewhere in Texas, the sand from one war mixes with the soil of another, and both are joined by a piece of metal from a memorable day in a jungle far away, together telling stories of a father and son.



1966 map of *Silver City* tactical area of operation showing vicinity of *Objective George* and the LZ at position *Zulu-Zulu*. The inset of dirt was captured from the landing zone on this trip and sent to Col. Tom Faley, CO C/2/503.

Dirt? Dirt ain't important.

(Image provided by: Tom Faley)





General Subjects Section
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT, THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE, 1948 – 1949

**THE OPERATION OF THE 2D PLATOON D COMPANY,
506 PARACHUTE INFANTRY (101ST AIRBORNE
DIVISION) IN THE VICINITY OF CARENTAN, FRANCE, 11-
13 JUNE 1944 (NORMANDY CAMPAIGN)**
(Personal Experience of a Rifle Platoon Leader)

Type of Operation described:
**AIRBORNE INFANTRY PLATOON ATTACKING IN
HEDGEROW COUNTRY**

Captain Ronald C. Speirs, Infantry
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO. II



"Fox Company troopers, 506th PIR, Operation Overlord."



**"General Dwight D. Eisenhower speaking with 1LT Wallace
C. Strobel and men of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 502nd
Parachute Infantry Regiment on June 5, 1944."**

Introduction

This monograph covers the operations of the 2d Platoon, D Company, 506 Parachute Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, in the battle for Carentan, 11-13 June 1944, during the invasion of Normandy.

The Allied invasion of Northern Europe took place on 6 June 1944. The initial landings were made by 21st Army Group, commanded by General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery. VII Corps, commanded by Major General J. Lawton Collins, landed at Utah Beach and V Corps landed at Omaha Beach, both under the First US Army commanded by Lt General Omar N. Bradley. To the east of the Americans, the Second British Army landed, commanded by Lt General Miles C. Dempsey.

Three hours before dawn on 6 June 1944, the 101st Airborne Division landed by parachute on the Continent peninsula. 432 C-47 type airplanes were used for the division, carrying 6600 paratroopers. Three hours later, 51 trooper-carrier gliders came in and at dusk on D-day an additional 32 gliders landed. The Glider Regiment of the division came in with the seaborne forces and joined after the airborne-beachhead linkup. As was to be expected in an airborne assault of a heavily defended area, losses in men and equipment were heavy. When the German resistance on the exits to the beaches were broken, the division turned and drove toward the city of Carentan. All along the beachheads the Americans, British and Canadians attacked on a 60-mile front.

The General Situation

On 11 June the 101st Airborne Division, after six days of bitter fighting against a determined enemy, had accomplished all its assigned objectives and was in a defensive position on the high ground north of the city of Carentan. The defensive line followed the Douve river and extended from Chef-du-Pont on the west to the east where the Douve river joins the Atlantic.

(continued....)



The 4th Division, 12 miles to the north on the right flank of the beachhead, was engaged in heavy fighting in their attempts to reach the high ground northeast of Montebourg.

The 82nd Airborne Division to the northwest was in defensive positions along the line of the Merderet river, with a bridgehead established in the area of Le Fierre. The 90th Infantry Division, coming up from the beach, attacked through the 82nd Airborne on the 10th and 11th, and on the evening of the 11th had cleared Amfreville, but was meeting violent resistance in its efforts to capture Pont L'Abbe.



All Americans in the village of Ravenoville, Normandy.

To the east, Omaha Beach extended for a depth of 12 miles. The 1st Infantry Division was preparing to attack toward Caumont, and the 2d Infantry and 29th Infantry Division were moving to the south of Cerisy Forest and Elle river. The 2d Armored Division was in the process of landing on the beachhead, and those units of the division which had landed were in Corps reserve. The 29th captured Isigny on the 9th, and on the 10th the 327 Glider Infantry made contact with Company K, 175th Infantry, 29th Division near Catz. The main attacks of the 29th were to the south, keeping each of the Vire river, and the link-up between VII Corps and V Corps was not strong and solid as should be the case.

At this time the Corps boundary ran just to the east of Carentan along the line of the Douve river, but on the next day it was moved east to the Vire river. This change was to affect the 101st Airborne, as it was directed by General Bradley to seize this (indefinite) area. The original missions of the division had been accomplished with the capture of the three bridges north of Carentan.

In the British sector to the east of Omaha Beach, the 6th Airborne Division was defending its bridgehead across the Orne river, secured in their initial airborne drop by glider and parachute. The Commandos were attacking toward Cabourg, but with no success. There was savage fighting in the Caen area, where the British infantry division were attempting to capture the city against strong enemy resistance. The Canadians and British armor and infantry were attacking in the Tilly-sur-Seulles area, with the British 7th Armored Division preparing to attack the next day in conjunction with the US 1st Division on its right.



British 6th Airborne troopers on the move.

The Plan of Attack

The plan of Corps and Army on the 11th of June was to effect a solid junction of the Omaha and Utah beachheads by capturing the city of Carentan. These orders had come directly from General Eisenhower. The mission was given to the 101st Airborne Division. At the same time, V Corps was to attack from Isigny toward Carentan.

101st Airborne Division activated these plans on the 10th of June by sending the 3d Battalion, 502 Parachute Infantry across the bridges on the road from St Come-du-Mont, passing through the outposts of the 506 Parachute Infantry on the bridges. The battalion had a murderous fight to move 500 yards past the last bridge, and the 1st Battalion of the 502 Regiment was brought to assist. Neither battalion was able to advance, taking very heavy casualties because of the strong enemy resistance and good defensive positions. The flooded fields to either flank made it impossible to flank the defenders. Simultaneously the 327 Glider Infantry crossed the Douve river three miles to the east and, after heavy fighting on the 10th and 11th, was in possession of the bridges to the (indefinite) south.

(continued....)



The glider troops were unable to advance into the city because of the canals which barred their way and the heavy fire being encountered.

The division plan on the evening of the 11th was a move to encircle the city with the 506 Parachute Infantry closing around from the west through the battered 502 Regiment while the 501 Parachute Infantry Regiment was to swing south, then west of the 327th. Both regiments were to join on the high ground south of the city. Concurrently, the 327 Glider Infantry was to attack from their present position directly into the city. The importance of the attack can be measured by the presence of Lt General Courtney H. Hodges while the division order was issued. Brigadier General McAuliffe was in command of the attacking force.



Men of the 506th on their way to Carentan.

Colonel R.F. Sink, commander of the 506 Infantry issued his order to the assembled company commanders and staff at 2200 hours. The 1st and 2d Battalions were to move out immediately in that order, while the 3d Battalion remained in position in division reserve.

The Enemy Situation

The German High Command was well aware of the importance of Carentan to them, preventing as it did a junction between the American Omaha and Utah beachheads. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, Army Group Commander, personally stated that Carentan must be held. The troops charged with this mission were the 6th Parachute Regiment, which had arrived in Normandy in June from the fighting in Russia.

The platoon leader and his men were well aware of the German paratroopers fighting capabilities because the Germans had defended St Come-du-Mont and Vierville in the earlier fighting to the north. They attacked strongly when ordered, and were armed with a high percentage of automatic weapons. They wore special camouflage suits and paratroop helmets. Their morale seemed good. This was possibly because

fighting the Americans was preferable to fighting both Russians and cold weather. The German High Command did not share the American opinion of the 6th Parachute. Their War Diary for this period states, *"The 6th Parachute Regiment has been fighting far better than expected."*



German paratroopers in Normandy.

The 17 SS Panzer Grenadier Division was being rushed up from the south of France. Elements of this division, along with the 6th Parachute Regiment, were the forces that struck Carentan on 12-13 June. The platoon leader and his men were also aware that there was armor in the vicinity of Carentan. While outposting a bridge on the St Come-du-Mont--Carentan road a few days previously, the platoon was fired upon by a German armored car coming from the direction of Carentan. One man of the platoon was killed, the car then withdrew to the city.



Prisoners of the 17 SS Panzer Grenadier Division

(continued....)



The 17 SS Panzer Grenadier Division had been delayed and its tanks unloaded far behind the front lines because of the overwhelming Allied air attacks on the railroads and communications system. These delays had caused German Seventh Army to push an engineer battalion to Carentan, presumably to bolster the defenses by fighting as infantry. The 17 SS Panzer Grenadiers were said to consist of good, tough troops, and had in addition to its organic artillery regiment, another battalion of artillery, a heavy howitzer battery, and another artillery group.

The Terrain

Carentan, a city with a population of 4000 people, is located 10 miles along the Douve river from where it enters the Atlantic. The city is connected with the Douve by a short stretch of canal. The buildings in the town are all very old and strongly built of stone. There is an excellent road and railroad net in the area, running directly through the city. Several paved highways intersect the city, including the main road to Cherbourg in the north. The entire area, with the exception of the city, and to the southwest, was swampy and intersected with drainage ditches, streams, and canals. Nowhere does the terrain rise above 30 meters.

The drainage areas around the city, feeding into the rivers and canals, had been flooded, restricting movement to the roads, except to the southwest, where the terrain was dry and intersected with high Normandy hedgerows and deeply cut farm roads and paths. The highest point in this area is Hill 30, just outside the town to the south.



506 PIR troopers in the hedgerows.

The Platoon Prior To The Attack

The 2d Platoon of D Company, on the evening of 11 June, had been through six days of violent fighting, after a parachute drop which scattered the platoon over a large area. The platoon was very low in strength because of the many casualties suffered and the men's mission from the parachute drop.

The strength of the platoon at this time was one officer and 14 men. Each parachute infantry platoon was authorized two officers due to the expected casualty rate. My assistant platoon leader, Lt Watkins, was wounded by mortar fire a few days previously, and evacuated. He returned to the division later, and was killed in the fighting in Holland.

The remainder of D Company was in bad shape also. The executive officer was killed on the parachute jump, and the company commander was killed by artillery fire a few days later. One entire planeload of men of the 1st Platoon was ditched in the English Channel, with the assistant platoon leader aboard. Lt McMillen, 1st Platoon Leader, took over the company, leaving no officers in his platoon. Both 2d Platoon officers were evacuated. The strength of the company was approximately 75 men.

During the long night airplane flight into Normandy and the six days fighting which followed, the platoon had only one full night of sleep, and the men were physically and mentally affected. Our food consisted of K rations with which we had jumped, and a resupply of the same after contact with the beachhead was made.

The Tables of Organization for an airborne unit at that time were different from the infantry. Some basic differences are the following:

- (a) Three identical rifle companies and a Battalion Headquarters Company in the battalion. In place of a Heavy Weapons Company were the 81mm Mortar Platoon and Light machine Gun Platoon in Battalion Headquarters Company.
- (b) D Company was a rifle company in the 2d Battalion, the others being E and F, and Battalion Headquarters Company. This point is emphasized because of the fact that D Company in the regular Infantry T/) is a heavy weapons company, while in the parachute troops it was a rifle company.
- (c) The rifle companies had three identical rifle platoons and a Company Headquarters, but no weapons platoon. Instead, each rifle platoon had only two rifle squads and a 60mm mortar squad. Each 12-man rifle squad had a light machine gun team organic to it.

The 2d Platoon 60mm mortar had been lost on the parachute jump, but no loss resulted because our depleted strength would not have allowed this platoon to operate it....

(continued....)



Contact was regained and our slow uncertain progress resumed. Some firing was heard up ahead when the 1st Battalion struck a German outpost, but was able to push on. The slow movement caused the tired men to doze off to sleep when the column stopped, and the officers in the companies had to wake men up and urge them forward. At 0100 hours the 1st Battalion reached Hill 30, the assigned objective, and the 2d Battalion stopped astride the Baupre road. D Company sent out security to the right and left along the road.

At 0230 hours the company commanders were called to the command post to receive the order for the attack for the next day. There was no sign of enemy activity, and the men slept where they dropped. There was much discussion at the battalion command post and the order was finally issued. The battalion S3, Capt Hester, gave out the order under a raincoat to the company commanders and staff. The 2d Battalion was to attack Carentan, while the 1st Battalion stayed at Hill 30. E Company was (to be) on the right and F Company on the left. The plan was to drive into town and join the glider troops attacking from the other side of town. D Company was to follow in the road to the right. The nights were very short in Normandy at this time of year, but just before dawn F Company shot a 1st Battalion man who had strayed into their area. Dawn broke at 0400 hours.

At 0530 hours the company commanders were called back to the command post and given the time of attack, which was 0600 hours. As Lt Winters moved to the command post he was shot at twice by a sniper, without success.

The Move Into Carentan

The regimental command post group, during the night movement, had strayed too close to town, and at the time of the dawn attack was actually closer to town than either of the battalions. Their situation was not realized until daylight, when they were fired upon from the town. The 1st Battalion was ordered by radio to send one company toward the firing and extricate the command post from its predicament. This was very quickly done.

The desirability of getting into town quickly caused the (2nd) battalion to move straight down the main road in a column of companies. F Company was leading, E, Headquarters, and D following in that order. The battalion light machine gun platoon was given the mission of covering the open fields to the north of the roads to protect the flank of the battalion. F Company crossed the LD about 20 minutes late, but was able to move into town without too much trouble. E Company following however, was caught at the main intersection

just outside of town, and had 10 serious casualties from mortar and rifle grenade fire. There was quite a bit of long-range machine gun fire coming down the road also, and the E Company commander, Lt Winters, was struck in the leg. He was not evacuated, however, and in spite of a stiff and painful leg, stayed until the end of the campaign.



E Company troopers during Carentan campaign.

The battalion was now being fired on from the houses east of the road to Carentan. Major Horton, battalion executive officer, ordered E Company to clear this area. This was done by moving into a house on the west side of the road and firing rifle grenades and a light machine gun from the upper floor. The rifle grenadier put a direct hit on the German machine gun and soon the enemy withdrew. The machine gun was fired at the retreating enemy from the same position.

By 0830 hours the battalion sector was quiet, although firing could still be heard towards the center of Carentan. Shortly before, F Company had met the glidermen attacking through town from the opposite direction. D Company was ordered to move into the city and did so, stopping just across the railroad at the intersection of the two main roads from the northwest and southwest. Carentan had suffered heavily from the pre-attack shelling; whole blocks were ablaze, while many buildings were in ruins.

The 501 Parachute Infantry had difficulty with the flooded area to the east, but was able to swing around the town. Their final assault up the hill was aided by 4.2" mortars and artillery, enabling the two regiments to join forces at Hill 30.

(continued....)



Attack West From Carentan

Orders were issued from 101st Airborne Division Headquarters that afternoon for the 501 and 506 Parachute Infantry to attack south and west from the town. The objective of the 506th was Baupré, and of the 501st was Sainteny. When Lt McMillan, D Company commander returned from a battalion meeting with this order, he was heard with amazement by the platoon leaders. He agreed that the plan, to say the least, was an ambitious one. Four phase lines had been designated, but the platoon leaders, Lt Speirs, S/Sgt Long, and Sgt Rice, felt the company would be fortunate to reach the first. But the attack was necessary. Otherwise, a German counterattack (could) would pin the Division in the city with the enemy in control of the high ground to the southwest.



Troopers moving through Carentan.

The 506 Parachute Infantry moved out with the 2d Battalion on the right of the Baupré road and the 1st Battalion on the left. The 2d Battalion was responsible for the road. The strength of the 1st Battalion at this time was 150 enlisted men. In the 2d Battalion the formation was D on the right from the flooded area to include the Le Hay du Puits railroad which ran due west along our advance. F Company was on the left and E Company in reserve.

Within D Company the 2d Platoon was on the right, 3d on the left, and the 1st Platoon followed the 3d in support. The initial mission assigned the 2d Platoon was to clear the village of Pommenauque of enemy, while the 3d Platoon was to move astride the railroad embankment, keeping contact with F Company.

As the company commander moved out with the left platoon, he met a lone French civilian coming from the direction of the enemy. Sgt Westphal, who had a smattering of French, interrogated the man, who said there were 1000 Germans back up the railroad. This was unhappy news to battered D Company but the company pressed on.

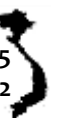
The 2d Platoon found no enemy in the village; only a few frightened civilians. One Frenchman had been badly wounded by shellfire and the platoon leader advised him to go to the aid station in Carentan.



"At the end of this street was the aid station."

As the platoon moved out of the village to rejoin the company, it was brought under fire by long-range machine guns from the west. By infiltrating the men in rushes across the open field, the platoon reached the shelter of the railroad embankment with no casualties. In the meantime, the 3d Platoon, about 500 yards down the railroad, had struck the enemy. A German machine gun, cleverly dug in between the rail road ties, opened up, killing the lead scout of the platoon. The 3d Platoon moved ahead by rushes until the volume of machine gun and rifle fired pinned them down. The terrain in the immediate area was extremely flat, with only small ditches and low hedgerows. To the left of the railroad were open fields to the woods, where the bursts of fire indicated F Company had met the enemy. The machine gun on the railroad continued to fire and was joined by other weapons. The 2d Platoon came up behind the 3d Platoon and extended the flank along the hedgerow to the flooded ground, but no progress was made. Lt McMillan was in touch with battalion by SCR 300 radio, and informed them of the situation. Battalion requested that he adjust fire for the airborne artillery pack howitzers with which they had contact. Lt McMillan could see this fire and he adjusted it on the woods and railroad to our front. Battalion called on the SCR 300 and ordered that the company was to hold in position and not attempt to advance.

(continued....)



F Company, now at the village of Douville, was heavily engaged with the enemy. E Company stopped and dug in to strengthen the line to the rear. German rifle and machine gun fire was intense all along the line and the battalion was unable to advance in any part of the zone. The 1st Battalion, 506 Parachute Infantry, and the 501 Parachute Infantry, had struck the same enemy positions to the south and were unable to advance. 88mm cannon fire was heard, and mortar fire began to strike our positions all along the line. Lt Winters saw that the gun crews of two attached 57mm anti-tank guns were down in the ditches and making no attempt to set up. He ordered them to take the machine guns off their gun-towing ½ ton trucks and start firing. This was done, but the firing was not accurate.

The 81mm mortar platoon of the Battalion moved into position at this time and began firing. The platoon was equipped with four mortars and was at about 75% strength. The platoon leader's order from the Headquarters Company commander was: *"Set up anywhere and start firing!"* Lt Heyliger set up on the forward slope of the hill behind the battalion command post. His guns were protected by the high hedgerow to the front, and were dug in. He commenced firing in 10 minutes and improved his positions later. The mortar platoon leader had his ammunition supply in horse-drawn carts, and these were sent to the road along the road. The carts were 100 yards to the rear of the guns and also were protected by the hedgerows along the road.

The machine gun platoon of the battalion was attached to the three rifle companies, one section per company. The platoon had suffered numerous casualties during the previous fighting and was able to man only six light machine guns.

Just as it was growing dark, D Company had a call on the SCR 300 radio from battalion. The order was to pull back along the railroad and rejoin the battalion which had decided to consolidate for the night. This move brought D Company through E Company, and up on the right of F Company. The boundary between the companies was a deeply dug dirt road running back to the battalion command post. This area had very thick hedgerows with ditches on both sides and visibility was limited to the small fields between hedgerows. E Company was in reserve at this time, 250 yards to the rear of D Company. The firing had died down, F Company having withdrawn from Douville about 200 yards. Their positions were in an orchard to our left across the road. Captain McMillan and the platoon leader made a reconnaissance of the D Company area.



German Fallschirmjaegers (paratroopers) using hedgerow for cover while an American soldier lies dead nearby.

It was decided to put outposts at the junction of the hedgerows in the area as security for the night and allow the rest of the men to sleep. As the company commander and platoon leader checked the right flank of the night position, a squad of soldiers were seen running along the road at the other side of the orchard, toward the battalion. Night was creeping in and at first the platoon leader thought it was a friendly patrol, and waved at them from 100 yards distance. The last two soldiers stopped and looked toward the platoon leader, and he realized they were Germans passing our flank and headed for the battalion reserve line. The company commander ran to warn battalion, but before he could reach them the patrol struck near the battalion command post, which was in a stone house about 600 yards to the rear. The patrol was driven off by men of E Company and Headquarters.

Lt. McMillan arrived at the battalion command post and found that six light tanks were there to aid the battalion. The tank platoon leader had argued with Lt Col Strayer, the battalion commander, saying that it was getting too dark to move forward to D Company's positions, which the Colonel desired them to do. Lt McMillan was able to persuade the tank platoon leader that they could do some good out in the direction where the German patrol was seen....

(continued....)



....Lt McMillan took the seat of the bow gunner and the tank buttoned up and moved out. The other tanks stayed back and later did some firing which endangered E Company, forcing Lt Winters to run back and make them cease firing. The platoon leader's tank, guided by Lt McMillan, moved along the route of the German patrol, firing its 37mm gun and spraying the hedgerows with machine gun fire. The tank returned without seeing any enemy.



13 June 1944

The company commanders received their orders for the attack at 2300 hours. The attack towards Baupré was to be resumed at dawn on the next day, 13 June. D Company was to be on the right, F on the left, E in reserve. During the night contact patrols were to be sent out between companies. Lt McMillan decided that the first thing to be accomplished by the company at dawn was to capture the house on our right flank where the German patrol had been seen. This mission was given to the 2d Platoon. When it was accomplished, the 2d Platoon was to face the left and place its right flank on the railroad. The 1st Platoon would then move out on the left of the 2d Platoon, keeping contact, followed by the 3d Platoon. Food and water were being issued at this time as Lt McMillan issued his order. The men filled the pockets of their combat suits with ammunition and grenades, and those who were not on outpost duty or contact patrol tried to get some sleep. All through the night machine-pistol firing could be heard, but very little artillery. The platoon leader briefed his men and tried to get some sleep without too much success, even though he was extremely tired.

German Counterattack On Carentan

Just before dawn the 81mm mortar platoon commenced firing at the house which the platoon was to attack. They fired a heavy concentration, causing the roof of the house to be set ablaze. The platoon leader lined his men along the hedgerow facing down a gentle slope. At the bottom of the slope, seen through the orchard, was the house. The platoon was the size of a large squad but had four automatic weapons both an automatic rifle and a light machine gun. The platoon looked anxiously toward the house as dawn began to break, but no enemy could be seen.

The platoon crossed the hedgerow "as skirmishers" and moved down through the regularly spaced trees. At that moment a heavy mortar and artillery concentration landed in the area. One of the platoon riflemen was struck by this fire and lay moaning on the ground. Back at the road where the company commander was calling battalion and notifying them that the platoon had moved out, the same barrage killed the radio operator and wounded another man.

The platoon reached the stone wall surrounding the house at the bottom of the hill, vaulted the wall, and found the courtyard empty. As the platoon leader crossed the waist-high wall, he looked back up the hill and saw German soldiers running along the hedgerow he had just left.

The machine gun was quickly mounted, firing through a gate in the stone wall. The automatic rifle was placed on the wall and heavy fire was rained on this threat. Screams of pain were heard, and many casualties inflicted on this unit of the enemy. The enemy returned fire but the stone wall protected this platoon.

The platoon leader sent four riflemen to the other portion of the wall which faced directly toward the enemy-held west. They faced an open field except at the left where the orchard joined a hedgerow. At this moment a shower of grenades was received from the west where the hedgerow blocked our observation. The automatic rifleman was killed and the platoon leader struck by small fragments. A machine gun began firing from the hill at the machine gunner as he lay exposed behind the gate. The platoon machine gunner was killed and the machine gun rendered useless.

Back up the road, Lt McMillan had called battalion and notified them that the 2d Platoon was cut off, and the other platoon was being fiercely pressed from the front. Major Horton, battalion executive officer, told the company commander to fall back....

(continued....)



....Lt McMillan could see a field piece being dragged up behind the next hedgerow by the enemy. D Company slowly fell back, leaving the 2d Platoon isolated.

On the left of the battalion, F Company was thrown back by a savage infantry attack, which drove them back to the battalion reserve line. Here E Company had deployed along the road which crossed the battalion area. The F Company line joined E Company at the battalion command post house, which was now on the front lines. It was converted to an aid station by the battalion surgeon, Captain Neville, who was doing a marvelous job with the casualties that were pouring in. The battalion command post moved back down the road about 40 yards into the ditch and stayed there throughout the action.

The attack of the 506 Parachute Infantry at dawn exactly coincided with the attack of the 17 SS Panzer Grenadiers and the 6th Parachute Regiment. The attack stopped the American regiment in its tracks. The German intention was to recapture Carentan. The Berlin radio boasted that evening to all of Europe that the attack was successful and Carentan was again in German hands.



"Soldiers of 17 SS Panzer-Grenadier Division with paratroopers of 6th Fallschirmjaeger-Regiment near Carentan on 10 June 1944."

The 1st Battalion was being attacked heavily to our left, and the 3d Battalion of the Regiment which had been in Division reserve was moved up to strengthen the 1st Battalion line. The 501 Parachute Infantry to the south was heavily engaged, but losing no ground.

To the front of the 2d Battalion, the 2d Platoon of D Company was running low on ammunition. It was not possible to replenish the supply because E Company was firing on the courtyard from the rear. There was good cover behind the stone walls from flat trajectory fire, but a few hand grenades began to strike inside the

courtyard, coming from the Germans to our front. Most of these were the small egg type grenades which can be thrown for long distances. The burst of a grenade caught another rifleman squarely, stretching him kicking and screaming on the stones of the courtyard. The platoon leader was able to do nothing for him because at that moment a squad of enemy soldiers burst out of the trees to our direct front. They were paratroopers, recognized by their distinctive helmets and uniforms. They were about 25 yards away and firing as they came. The platoon from behind the wall cut them down with aimed rifle fire and killed them all before any reached the wall. Despite this successful defense, the platoon leader now decided to withdraw. There was no protection against grenades in the courtyard and the burning house was throwing out a suffocating heat and smoke. By moving down a ditch single file the platoon regained the battalion line, 400 yards to the rear. The wounded man was left for dead, but managed to crawl back later.

In the battalion area, the situation had not changed. F Company had fallen back again to the high ground 100 yards in their rear. This was done without authority from the battalion commander. It was a serious move, exposing, as it did, the entire left flank of the battalion. D Company was now filling in the gap between E and F.

Our main difficulty at this point was getting the men out of the ditches and up into position on the hedgerow where they could fire at the enemy. Most of the men were frightened, but not panic-stricken. They just did not realize that in order to stop the enemy a continual wall of rifle and machine gun fire must be built up and maintained. There was plenty of ammunition in the line and no danger of running out. The Battalion S4, Lt Peacock, was running jeeploads of ammunition right up to the hedgerows by using the sunken roads. The 81mm mortar platoon continued to pour heavy concentrations on the hedgerows to the front of the battalion. German 88mm guns were firing directly on the position at long ranges, but very accurately. Several enemy tanks had been knocked out by the 57mm antitank gunners and the rocket launchers of the battalion.

The regimental commander, Colonel E.F. Sink, was aware of the precarious situation of the battalion, and had asked Division for aid. The 2d Battalion of the 502 Parachute Infantry was rushed up to the area and was in position to the right of the 2d Battalion, 506 Parachute Infantry, by 1000 hours.

(continued....)



Relief By 2d Armored Division

Unknown to the battalion, help was on the way. Combat Command A, of the 2d Armored Division, had been rushed to the area east of Carentan to meet an expected enemy thrust which did not materialize. They had driven from the Omaha Beach area where they were under the control of V Corps. General Taylor, Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division, hearing that they were close by, requested their help from Corps. This was granted and the armored units began to arrive at 1030 hours.



General Maxwell Taylor, commanding, in France.

The situation had eased in the battalion area and no more infantry small arms fire was heard. German tanks, however, continued to fire and small amounts of artillery still fell in the field to the front and rear.

At 1400 hours the Sherman tanks of the 2d Armored Division rumbled through the battalion lines, accompanied by armored infantrymen. This was a beautiful sight to the battered 2d Battalion. The tanks were firing as they advanced and doing a wonderful job. The tank-infantry team was able to move forward all the way to Baupre, the original objective of the 506 Parachute Infantry. The 2 Battalion, along with the rest of the regiment, was relieved and moved into division reserve in Carentan.

During the day's actions, the 81mm mortar platoon had fired 1000 rounds of ammunition. Lt Heyliger reported that all the paint was burned off the barrels of his mortars. His platoon was down to 50% strength, about ten of his mortarmen being rushed into the line as riflemen to fill the gaps. The average range at which he had fired was from 300 to 500 yards. Most of his casualties were caused by rifle fire, but some from the direct fire of 88's. He commented that if four of these

88 rounds had not been duds, he would have lost at least a section of men.

D Company was down to a strength of 50 men, while E Company reduced to 69 soldiers. The men and officers who remained were physically and mentally exhausted. The amazing thing was that there were not more cases of combat exhaustion. Only a few of these were reported. The majority of the men fought bravely, even though the companies were forced to yield ground. The battalion had done its part in defending Carentan, and the men and officers were proud of their work.

The strategic importance of the action of the 101st Airborne Division in holding Carentan can best be summed up by quoting from the report of the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

"On the 12th Carentan fell. The Germans made desperate but fruitless efforts to recover the town and reestablish the wedge between our forces. Our initial lodgement area was not consolidated, and we held an unbroken stretch of the French coast from Quineville to the east bank of the Orne."

Analysis And Criticism

Airborne troops are a strategic weapon. The present doctrine of their use visualized employment in mass, and for short violent combat operations, using surprise as a vital factor. The 101st Airborne Division was in Normandy for one month, during which time many trained and expert parachutists were killed or evacuated because of sustained ground combat. The point in issue is not that the lives of parachutists are more valuable than the lives of infantry soldiers. That is not true. The point is that the mere presence of airborne troops in a theater of operations forces the enemy to constantly fear a sudden onslaught from the sky where and when he least desires it. The enemy commander must deploy more troops to guard his lines of communications and vital areas in the rear. The "vertical envelopment" which airborne forces have brought to the art of war has compelled caution by even the most aggressive enemy. But when the airborne forces are employed for long periods as infantry, the enemy can make his plans without fear of the airborne threat.

Sufficient artillery and armor support was lacking throughout the operation. This lack of sufficient organic supporting arms was a factor in the initial success of the German counter-attack on 13 June.

(continued....)



On 11 June, when the Carentan battle began, the 2d Platoon had eleven men less than each of the other two platoons of D Company. The company commander should have reassigned men from the other platoon to bring up the strength of the 2d Platoon. This problem does not arise in the infantry because of the arrival of replacements, but airborne units do not receive replacements in combat. When platoons are assigned identical missions in combat, the members of the understrength platoon are forced to fight more fiercely and are in greater danger of sudden death.

There were no decorations awarded to any member of the platoon for bravery in this action. The platoon leader is to be criticized for not submitting recommendations for awards for his men. However, seven of the men of the platoon were promoted to the rank of noncommissioned officer upon the arrival of replacements in base camp.

The T/O&E of airborne units during World War II was totally lacking in motor transport from the company level on down. The rifle platoon was weak in having only two rifle squads. The light machine gun was equipped with a tripod but no bipod. The separate tripod was almost useless when units were attacking in hedgerow country. The above inadequacies in the airborne T/O&E have since been corrected. They are mentioned to illustrate the difficulties under which the platoon fought.

During the night march to Hill 30 the platoon moved in single file and had no flank security out. The reasons for such a formation were the tired condition of the men and the blackness of the night. The fatal result of such carelessness are obvious. One enemy rifleman could have cut the entire battalion column.

All companies of the battalion at one time or another on the night march lost contact with the unit ahead or to the rear. A double file formation within the companies would have cut the length of the column in half and tightened control of it. Dispersion should have been maintained by connecting files between units down to platoon. These connecting files would be briefed in details as to their duties, thus minimizing the possibility of loss of contact.

The security elements of D Company on the night of 12 June were far too weak. The night defensive positions of the 2d Platoon consisted of the men digging in along one hedgerow. A normal perimeter defense should have been set up around the four sides of the field. If a German night attack had been launched in strength, the battalion would undoubtedly have been overrun. The failure to set up a night defense was due to the fact that the platoon leader and his men were

exhausted and did not realize the gravity of their situation.

The dawn attack of the platoon, coinciding as it did with the German tank-infantry assault, was doomed to failure. It seems certain that if the regiment had not moved from its positions, but had been in defense at dawn, that our casualties would have been much lighter and greater damage inflicted on the attackers. The battalion 81mm mortar platoon had left their positions and were standing in the road ready to follow closely behind the assault companies when the Germans struck. Thus they could not immediately support with mortar fire. Division G2 either was not aware of the coming German attack, or his knowledge was not acted upon.

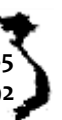


German POWs "After the village battle in Carentan."

The platoon leader is to be severely criticized for failing to carry the wounded man back as the platoon withdrew from the house on the 13th. His assumption that the man was dead does not excuse him. His expectation of another enemy assault and his fear that this would find the platoon with no ammunition were the factors causing this grave mistake.

The platoon did not make use of their hand grenades to full advantage. During the fight at the house, grenades should have been thrown into the wooded area to the left front. The casualties that would have resulted in the enemy grenade throwers would have aided the defense....

(continued....)



....The American hand grenade is a powerful weapon, but the writer feels that a light round grenade would be more valuable. It could be thrown for great distances. More grenades could be carried by the individual. This was the principle of the German egg grenade, which was a successful type.

The crucial point of the German attack on 13 June was just after the entire 2d Battalion had been thrown back to the battalion reserve line. The men of the battalion did not realize that to prevent the Germans from assaulting a second time, a large volume of fire had to be built up on the enemy positions, even though no point targets appeared. The average soldier dislikes exposing himself to fire his weapons without a definite target in sight; however, area fire, and the self-confidence gained by firing his own rifle are vital to the defense and the attack. This is the principle behind "marching fire".

The F Company commander was relieved of his command because of his unauthorized withdrawal to positions behind the battalion reserve line. The writer is not personally aware of the enemy situation in the F Company area, but the dangerous situation which this withdrawal created could easily have smashed the entire battalion position. The failure of the F Company commander to inform battalion of the situation in his area and request permission to withdraw was a serious violation of tactical doctrine.

Lessons

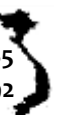
The following lessons were brought out by the operation:

1. Strategic use of airborne troops is essential. The attribution of trained parachutists in extended ground combat operations as infantry is wasteful and should be avoided.
2. When assigning missions to lower units, the commander must consider the comparative strength of his units as reduced by previous casualties.
3. Bravery in combat must be recognized by decorations and awards. Morale is raised and incentive provided to perform well in future combat.
4. Tables of Organization and Equipment must be constantly revised to increase the fighting strength and capabilities of the unit.
5. Flank security during night movement is essential, regardless of the effect on speed and the physical condition of the men.

6. In night movement all men must be alert to keep contact both to the front and the rear.
7. When in contact with the enemy at night, one-half of the unit must be alert and in position to repel attacks.
8. Intelligence agencies must keep commanders informed of the enemy indications. Commanders can then adjust their plans in accordance, avoiding the possibility of surprise by the enemy.
9. Wounded men must (should) be carried along when a unit is forced to withdraw.
10. The hand grenade should be used to full advantage in close combat. The present hand grenade is too heavy for long throws, and, too, it cannot easily be carried in sufficient number for a sustained fight.
11. Soldiers must learn that an enemy assault is repelled by fire power alone. When individual targets cannot be located, continuous area fire must be used.
12. Units are forbidden to withdraw without orders however desperate the situation. Unit commanders must keep higher headquarters informed of the amount of enemy pressure, and request authority to withdraw prior to movement.



"101st Airborne medal ceremony in Carentan, France."



~ Remembering Op Marauder, January '66 ~

As is often the case with many combat vets, certain dates stand out more than others from their time in war; January 2, 1966, fifty-three years ago, is one such date for some of us. It was in the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta, just days after Bob Hope and his troupe had entertained us with his USO Christmas show at Bien Hoa AFB near our base at Camp Zinn.

After spending the night at Bao Trai airstrip on New Year's day, in the early a.m. on the following day we formed up in sticks to board Huey's for a short trip to LZs Whiskey & Wine in those rice paddies to launch our part of Operation Marauder. A few of us were told our assault would be into a secured LZ – it was not secured.

Some vets prefer to keep such recollections to themselves, remembering in their own way, while

others try to forget and often struggle with their forgetting; others instead choose to call attention to that time....psychologists can tell us why.

A brief note to fellow survivors of the January 2, 1966 battles was circulated stating simply, *"I know where you were 53 years ago today."*

It was a note which said much more than that...it was a note of thanks to the men who kept the sender alive that day, it was a note to acknowledge their bravery, it was a few transmitted words which spoke to the valor and honor and great sacrifice of the men who survived and of the men we lost that day, 53 years ago.

A few of the exchanges between these brothers of the war who survived the day-long battles in those rice paddies appear below. *Lest we forget.* Ed

"I know where you were 53 years ago today."

~ We'll Meet Again ~

Amen. What a way to kick off the new year. God bless those who didn't make it back. We'll meet again one day on Fiddler's Green. Be well, Brothers!

**Jerry Nissley
B/2/503**

~ The RTO Said It All With One Word ~ SALUD!

**Tom Conley
RTO, HHC/2/503**

~ We Should Have Been Goners ~

Operation Marauder, remember it well. Remember especially homey Walter McIntire of Ann Arbor, Mich., being carried lifeless out of the rice paddy and whoever was next to me getting shot in the leg by a sniper. Then later crawling through the grass with Mike Farrell and, I think, Orville Wilfong, when a mortar round landed right behind us -- a short-round dud -- and we scrambled to get on the other side of a berm where sniper fire was coming from. Engineers detonated the round in a foxhole, but the three of us should have been goners to friendly fire.



Larry

**Larry Paladino
RTO, B/2/503**



Tom

(continued....)



~ Celebrating Being Alive ~

Remember it well. Got my Purple Heart there.
Celebrating my being alive with my wife Annie here in
Freiburg (Germany), visiting my sister.

Cheers!

Herbert Murhammer

B/2/503



Herbert

~ I Will Not Let You Down ~

Thank you. Yes sir! Out in the middle of a "HOT LZ"
Operation Marauder. Hotter than Hell. Remember we
had to do a fly-over as we were taking on small arms
shells and then we flew back in
low and it was really a Hot LZ for
sure. It was a bit of a touchy
day, wasn't it?

I was the weapons platoon
leader of A Company. During
the initial start of the ground
fight, LT Coleman and SFC



Top

Newman got hit and refused
to get on a copter and I had to insist they get on the
medical chopper and turn their platoon over to me. *"As
a platoon leader I will not let you down, I'll take care of
your men and turn it over to the first NCO that I find in
your platoon and then I'll return to my weapons platoon
and keep on firing my mortars as need,"* I told them.

It really did work out fine, as I found a SPC-4 and
turned their platoon over to him. That Napalm surely
did get hot when they dropped it just in front of our
company.

Later Brothers,

Jim "Top" Dresser

A/HHC/2/503

~ Proud to Have Commanded Bravo ~



Bravo CO Les Brownlee

Thanks to you and others who remembered this day
and included me on your email. For some of us, 2
January will always be a day when we remember those
fellow troopers we lost that day: SSG "Bobby" Baker,
Sp4 Gary Lewis, PVT Larry Nadeau and PVT Walter
McIntyre. And the battle we fought that day as well,
which lasted all day, beginning early that morning as
our UH-1 helicopters touched down until late evening.

We were in the "Plain of Reeds", rice paddies as far
as we could see — not the dense jungles where we
usually fought. As it grew dark, we broke contact,
pulled back and dug in for the night — we had literally
been engaged in contact all day.

I was the Company Commander of Bravo Company
from October 1965 to March 1966 when I was wounded
and briefly sidelined. My wounds were not serious but
while I was briefly hospitalized, I was replaced as
Company Commander.

I was very proud to have commanded Bravo
Company and I was not the only company commander
who was wounded while in command of the company
— there were several of us during that time period.

I stayed in the Army for 22 years, retiring as a COL
(06). I then worked on the staff of the Senate Armed
Services Committee for several years, returning to the
Army as the Under Secretary and later as Acting
Secretary of the Army (2001-2004). I am now retired.

Les Brownlee

CO B/2/503

(continued....)



~ Allied Offensive in the Mekong Delta ~

"The rounds were passing over the heads of members of C Company, and (Jerry) Morton, apparently sensing trouble, yelled into his radio handset, "Cease fire, cease fire!" Morton, medic Jerry Levy, Pfc George Geoghagen and Sergeant Johnny Graham were crouched near each

other behind a paddy dike.

Levy, Geoghagen and Graham were making small talk, and Graham had just tossed Geoghagen a pack of cigarettes.

Suddenly, Graham heard a loud 'Woomp!' and was thrown into the rice paddy.

Two short artillery rounds had landed in the midst of C Company. When

Graham looked up, he saw Morton apparently dead from the concussion, and Geoghagen dead from head wounds. Geoghagen

had just joined the unit the day before as a new replacement. Graham remembered that Geoghagen had said that he was married and was from Georgia. Levy was bleeding profusely in the groin area and had part of one leg blown off. Seven other troopers in the company were also wounded, including the company commander, Captain Fred Henschell, Graham himself and Specialist Reid. Vester Reid recalled that the impact of the rounds sent him flying through the air, and he landed 20 feet away with stomach wounds.

Tom Tiede, a special correspondent, reported in a subsequent press release: 'After the initial explosion Levy crawled to the aid of a wounded soldier. Even though ripped open by the blast, Levy continued to administer to the soldier. Then Jerry looked down at his own body and fell over mortally wounded.'"



Tom

Col. Thomas E. Faley

U.S. Army (Ret.)

2/503, 173d Airborne Brigade

"Operation Marauder:

Allied Offensive in the Mekong Delta"

Vietnam Magazine, Feb. 1999

~ Welcome To The War Kid ~

Arriving the 2/503 in mid-December '65, Operation Marauder was this FNG's first mission. As the Bn XO's RTO, Maj. Bob Carmichael, and surrounded by battle-hardened Sky Soldiers, this cherry felt somewhat safe embarking on this heliborne assault on 2 January – I was unaware at the time our Huey would be about 7th in the stick of initial assault choppers that morning.

As we began to descend into the rice paddies any feelings of safety quickly vanished, and Carmichael, noticing his RTO looking terrified on the floor of the chopper, leaned down. Bob yelled to me, "Don't worry, Smitty, this LZ is secured!" His words barely left his mouth when the roof inside our chopper was peppered with incoming rounds.



Smitty

Decades later after Bob and I became close friends, I'd occasionally chide him by saying, "I saved your life that day! Had you not leaned down to me you would have been shot!"

Bob and I and other troopers scrambled from the chopper and fought our way through the sludge to a paddy dike where a bad guy machine gunner kept our heads down as one of our own machine gunners was taking fire on either side of him while raised up on the dike and answering with his own deadly doom.

Later that morning a Sky Raider, I believe it was, dropped a bomb close yards from us which plugged into the muddy rice paddy but didn't explode. It could have been a very short war for the XO and his RTO on that January morning.

Lew "Smitty" Smith

HHC/2/503



2001 photo of LZ Wine, today peaceful, beautiful, and quiet. The tree line is where the FAC was shot down by our own arty over enemy positions.



**Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Public Affairs)
Washington, D.C. 20301**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 1965

**ARMY TO CONDUCT SPECIAL
TRAINING FOR VIETNAM**

The Army is beginning advanced individual training (AIT) today at Fort Gordon, Ga., and Fort Polk, La., with instruction oriented toward infantry assignments in the Republic of Vietnam.

The modified training program for infantry and airborne infantry personnel will be a nine-week course instead of the normal eight weeks. The extra week will allow time for a continuous five-day field problem conducted in a simulated Vietnamese combat environment.

One new class of approximately 220 trainees will begin training each week at each of the two posts.

Selection of individuals to receive the training will be made at Department of the Army level, based on the individual's aptitude for a particular job and the needs of the service. Men will be selected for this modified training program from basic combat training installations throughout the United States. Although the training is oriented toward duty in Vietnam, the needs of the Army will determine actual assignments, and it is not expected that all who take the new training will be assigned to Vietnam.

This training with special emphasis on lessons learned in Vietnam is one aspect of the continuing Army-wide program designed to give every soldier the best possible training and equip him with knowledge and skills that will give him the best assurance of success and survival on the battlefield. All Army personnel being assigned to Vietnam receive special training for service in that country, including 16 hours of required orientation. In addition, lessons learned in Vietnam are incorporated in basic combat training, advanced individual training and unit training at posts throughout the United States. Many personnel receive additional training at jungle warfare schools in Panama and Hawaii before being sent to Vietnam.

Existing facilities at Forts Gordon and Polk will accommodate most of the training. Simulated Vietnamese villages will be used for part of the training, but very little new construction will be required.



**'Fused' technologies give 3D
view of prostate during
biopsy**



FORT GORDON, Ga. — A high-tech procedure that makes prostate biopsy more accurate and thorough is being rolled out at Eisenhower Army Medical Center. The procedure merges ultrasound with MRI images to give urologists a real-time, three-dimensional view of the prostate. Because the MRI images are analyzed by a radiologist prior to the biopsy, the urologist has a targeted approach to collecting tissue samples. *"Eisenhower is one of a few hospitals doing this procedure in the state of Georgia,"* said Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Jennifer Pugliese, chief of Urology at Eisenhower Army Medical Center.

Other than skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men, according to the American Cancer Society. For 2018, the Society estimates *"about 164,690 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed and there will be about 29,430 deaths from prostate cancer."*

"About 1 man in 9 will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime," according to ACS statistics. *"Prostate cancer develops mainly in older men and in African-American men. About 6 cases in 10 are diagnosed in men aged 65 or older, and it is rare before age 40. The average age at the time of diagnosis is about 66."*

Read entire report at:

<https://health.mil/News/Articles/2019/01/09/Fused-technologies-give-3D-view-of-prostate-during-biopsy>



OFFICIAL PROGRAM

ARMY RANGERS VS (GROUP) CAVALIER

B-S-E-S-E-S-E-S-E-S-E-S-SPARKLE!

Have a Coke!

SUNDAY
20 SEPTEMBER 1964
1400 HOURS - SUKIRAN STADIUM

1400 Hours – Sukiran Stadium

NO.	NAME	POS	WT	HOMETOWN — EXP
10	Richard E. Eckert	QB	185	Carlisle Pa — West Point
15	Preston Andres	QB	189	Houston Tex — Tex Southern Univ
18	Frank T. Blanda	QB	180	Youngwood Pa — West Point
21	Ezell Perkins	HB	168	Jackson Tenn — Lane College
22	James E. Greenlee	LHB	170	Williamsburg Ky — H/S
23	Thomas McKinney	HB	180	Milwaukee Wis — H/S
24	Lloyd Asbury	HB	180	Utica Mich — West Point
25	William P. Taylor	HB	205	Pittsburg Pa — H/S & Service Ball
26	Melvin D. Franklin	LHB	190	Roanoke Va — H/S & Service Ball
30	Paul L. Walker	FB	180	Birmingham Ala — College
35	Roosevelt Jackson	LB	170	Montgomery Ala — H/S
36	Edward L. Pearson	FB	198	Baltimore Mar — Morgan State College
41	Alvin D. Williams	HB	175	L. A. Calif — H/S
43	Arthur P. Brown	HB	170	Roanoke Va — Ky State College
44	Frank W. Marsh	HB	200	Grass Valley Calif — Oregon State
51	Richard A. Buckner	C	200	New York N. Y. — West Point
53	Larry D. Dieckman	C	225	Aurora Neb — Kearney Neb State
58	Robert L. Gilbert	C	180	Hayward Calif — H/S
60	Jack R. Dills	G	160	San Bruno Calif — H/S
61	Hector J. Membreno	G	204	S. F. Calif — San Jose State
62	James W. Waller	CG	215	Vienna Mar — H/S & Service Ball
66	Thomas D. Clark	G	185	Juliette Ga — Service Ball
67	James E. Elmwood	LB	175	Baldwin Park Calif — H/S
68	Harry A. Jenkins	G	200	Grand Rapid Mich — Grand Rapids J. C.
69	Benjamin Hall	G	185	El Paso Tex — High School
70	Richard E. Sorge	T	200	Cornwall N. Y. — High School
73	Charles L. Walker	G	205	Fairmont W Va — Fairmont State
74	Samuel Fields	T	225	Columbia S. C. — Benedict College
75	Andrew Wilmott	T	220	Chattanooga Tenn — High School
76	Norman G. Sutton	T	209	Salisbury Mar — H/S & Svc Ball
77	James A. White	T	222	Monroe La — High School
78	John P. Stewart	T	215	Akron Ohio — Miami Ohio Univ
80	Johnny C. Rowlett	E	230	Corbin Ky — High School
81	Keith E. Baumert	E	195	Morgan Hill Calif — San Jose J. C.
82	Francis M. Wallace	E	190	North Platte Neb — Univ of Neb
83	David R. Brock	E	205	Petaluma Calif State Tech
84	Richard D. Kolling	E	185	Pleasane Unity Pa — H/S
85	Richard F. Wiggins	E	200	Brooklyn N. Y. — Service Ball
86	Ray P. White	E	185	Louisville Ky — High School
87	Clifford Mosely	E	227	Atlanta Ga — Fort Valley College
88	Charles Craig	E	183	Cleveland Ohio — Pineywood J. C.
91	John W. Potts	FB	195	Columbus Ohio — H/S & Service Ball

Head Coach	Gene McDowell	Fla State Univ (HHC 1 MP Gp)
Defensive Line Coach	Thomas Goforth	East Tenn State (62 MP Co)
Defensive Back Coach	Art Brown	Ky State College (Btry A 2/81 Arty)
Offensive Coach	Jerry Summerville	Murray State (Btry B 8/1 Arty)
Trainer	Willie Brown	Tuskegee Institute (HHC 173)
Manager	Dennis Thomas	Arbyrd, Miss (Sig Gp)

**JERSEY COLORS
AND NUMBER**

YEL.	BLK	NAME	POS	WGT	HOMETOWN
10	14	Alfred Dutch	Q	190	Washington, D. C.
11	11	Craig Stewart	Q	195	Wayne, Penn.
13	13	Henry	Q	190	Berkley, Calif.
31	31	James Wider	FB	205	Pasadena, Calif.
33	34	Ronald Burgess	FB	205	Cleveland, Ohio
35	35	Ralph Grooms	FB	215	Union Town, Pa.
14	42	Fred Williams	HB	190	Akron, Ohio
22	22	William Oliver	HB	175	Jackson, Miss.
24	24	Clark Negland	HB	195	Detroit, Mich.
26	26	Johnathan McGowen	HB	160	Ypsilant, Mich.
42	42	Fred Crittenden	HB	180	Andalusia, Ala.
44	44	Henry Morgan	HB	205	Roselle, N. J.
46	46	Jerry Jackson	HB	175	Hamden, Conn.
48	48	Willie Collins	HB	165	Tuscaloosa, Ala.
52	52	Walter Shaw	C	220	Toledo, Ohio
54	54	Richard Wallace	C	220	Mamee, Ohio
56	88	Dee Davis	C	245	China Lake, Calif.
62	62	Richard Dundee	G	235	Marcus Hook, Penn.
63	63	Autry Green	G	210	Corsican, Tex.
64	64	Joe Outlaw	G	200	Clarksville, Tenn.
65	65	James Stadick	G	195	Minot, N Dakota
66	66	Albert Vanderbush	G	230	Midlang Park, N. J.
67	67	Douglas Harwell	G	195	Lakeland, Fla.
60	68	Henry Rone	G	195	Montgomery Ala.
39	60	Rogers Melton	G	215	Ft Pierce, Fla.
70	70	Lonell Bond	T	230	Jackson, Tenn.
71	71	Jerry Pringle	T	220	Sumter, N. C.
72	72	Teddy Wilson	T	225	Headland, Ala.
73	73	Gilbert Jones	T	240	Chicago, Ill.
74	74	Joseph Cox	T	230	San Diego, Calif.
75	75	Gene Hodge	T	250	Flint, Mich.
76	76	Lawrence Kirksey	T	265	Lufkin, Tex.
77	77	Melvin Kahele	T	230	Hono, Hawaii
80	80	O. C. Emerson	E	215	Richmond, Calif.
83	83	John Hood	E	200	Donora, Penn.
82	82	James Smith	E	215	W. Pittstow, Penn.
84	84	Timothy Witcher	E	200	Trenton, J. J.
85	85	Philip Lee	E	205	Winchester, Ky.
86	86	Daniel Patterson	E	205	Chandler, Arz.
87	87	Parker Middleton	E	190	Charleston, S. C.

Super Bowl News

A good friend of mine has two tickets for the 2019 Super Bowl, 50 yard line box seats.

He paid \$2,500 each but he didn't realize last year when he bought them, it was going to be on the same day as his wedding.

If you are interested, he is looking for someone to take his place...It's at St. Michaels Church, at 3pm. The bride's name is Nicole, she's 5'4", about 115 lbs., good cook too. She'll be the one in the white dress.

[Sent in by good buddy Dave Glick, B/2/503]



Go Rams!....(Oops)

Veterans' eye care services – almost 2 million in 2018



January 22, 2019
By Hans Petersen

All Veterans enrolled in VA health care are eligible for diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic eye care services and other health care services that include:
Vision Rehabilitation for visually impaired Veterans in

all enrollment Priority Groups may be eligible to receive eyeglasses and/or medically necessary contact lenses.

The need for an updated eyeglass prescription at VA expense will be determined by the VA eye care provider (optometrist or ophthalmologist) for eligible Veterans.

VA eye care is the third busiest service in VHA, behind primary care and mental health.

Ophthalmology is the second busiest surgical service, behind general surgery, with over 76,000 cases in FY18. The most common surgical procedure performed in VHA is cataract surgery.

Over 30,000 laser surgery procedures were performed in our clinics in FY18.

VA's Ophthalmology workforce consists of over 1200 physicians located at 115 clinics.



Eye care services for over 1.81 million Veterans

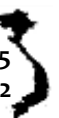
In fiscal year 2018, VHA's Office of Specialty Care Services provided Eye Care (Optometry and Ophthalmology) Services for a record number of over 1.81 million Veterans at about 381 VA medical facility sites located in urban, suburban, rural, and highly rural areas.

VA eye care providers (optometrists and ophthalmologists) prescribed nearly 1.7 million pairs of eyeglasses that were provided to Veterans by VA Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Services.

Cataract surgery is the most common operation in VA

Every VA Eye (Optometry and/or Ophthalmology) Clinic provides basic low vision rehabilitation care. More intensive vision rehabilitation services are available within the VA Blind Rehabilitation Services program.

VA eye care providers perform essential eye and vision examinations within the VA Polytrauma / Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) System of Care.



Vietnam veteran dog handlers visit Fort Benning, 904th Military Working Dog Detachment

By Mr. Bryan Gatchell (Benning)



FORT BENNING, Ga. (Oct. 18, 2018) - Jegs, a military working dog, meets former members of the 60th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) and their Family members.

(U.S. Army photo by Bryan Gatchell, Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning Public Affairs)

FORT BENNING, GA (Oct. 28, 2018) -- Six Vietnam War veterans, who were former members of the 60th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) and who were accompanied by their Family members, visited Fort Benning Oct. 17 after almost 50 years to see how military working dogs were employed today.

The group visited the 904th Military Police Detachment at the Military Working Dog Kennels at the Fort Benning Main Post and then visited the 75th Ranger Regiment dog handlers.

The platoon in 1969 had 28 Soldiers and 28 dogs. Fourteen of the dogs were trained to detect mines, booby traps and trip wires. The other 14 dogs were trained to find trip wires and camouflaged openings to tunnels, "spider holes" and cache pits. The dogs were trained to work off leash within 100 meters of their handlers. As the pilot program, the off-leash working animals were evaluated in the field, and they became the fore-runners to the Army's current military working dog program.

The platoon trained at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and deployed to the Củ Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where they were attached to the 25th Infantry Division. According to a 1970 report by the Army

Concept Team in Vietnam, the exercise of the concept was a success. The report recommended *"a mine/tunnel dog platoon be assigned to each division in the RVN."*

"What you did set the foundation of what it is we're able to do on a daily basis," said Sgt. 1st Class Timothy K. Roye, kennel master for the 904th MWD Det., who showed the group around the kennel. *"It is one of the best jobs - if not the best job - that the Army has, that the military has. It's a pleasure for us to be able to show you guys what it is that we're doing."*

Members of the 904th MWD Det. demonstrated for the group the teamwork between themselves and their dogs. Staff Sgt. Brandon Spears had his dog Jegs retrieve objects. Spc. Cassandra Trulock and her dog Kicsi simulated a traffic stop with Spc. Tristan Bivens portraying a driver, whom Kicsi sicced when he fled.

Ronald Boyett, 60th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) platoon leader, helped develop the program.

"It makes all of us proud to be part of the start of it," said Boyett. *"The Army or any of the services didn't work a dog off leash until we did. We were the first unit to do that. ... Most dogs were either guard dogs or scout dogs."*

John Hjerpe was a member of the 60th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) who visited with the group.

"They saw how important the dogs were, how smart the dogs were, and how capable they were to work 100 yards away from us," said Hjerpe. *"We're honored and we're humbled. It's just a blessing to see that they're carrying on with it."*



The six Vietnam vets visiting the kennels.
(U.S. Army photo by Bryan Gatchell)



Tour 365

UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
Office of the Commander
APO San Francisco 96222

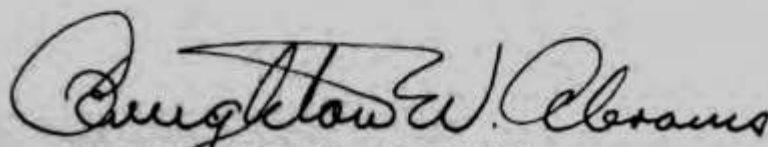


Now that your tour of duty with the United States Army, Vietnam has ended, you can look back with perspective on your experiences. You now know the difficult tasks inherent in fighting to help protect the freedom of peace-loving people against Communist invaders. As a veteran, you understand better than many of our countrymen the meaning of North Vietnam's aggression against the Republic of Vietnam.

You have seen the horror and destruction created by North Vietnamese soldiers and the local Viet Cong terrorists who kill and maim their own neighbors. You have fought beside soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam and other Free World nations in a common struggle of defense. Many of you have worked in hamlet improvement and pacification programs as teachers and builders as well as fighters.

People at home will want to hear your story of the war. Tell it. Regardless of the role you played, part of your story is reflected in the pages of this magazine. I hope this publication will assist you in relating your experiences.

I extend my sincere appreciation for your help in accomplishing our task in Vietnam and my thanks for a job well done. May your trip home and reunion with your family and friends be the pleasant, happy occasion you anticipate.


CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS
General, United States Army
Commanding

(Undated archival document from MACV publication)



Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT and Attached Units Who Made Their Final Jump



Hank Andreoli, 69
Salem, NH
December 20, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Stanley Blunt, 75
Aberdeen, WA
January 2, 2019
1/503d, RVN, RLTW

Rodger Taylor Carroll, 71
Athens, GA
November 14, 2018
B/2/503, RVN

Larry L. Dow, 77
Arlington Heights, IL
January 20, 2019
173d Abn Bde, OKI

John Patrick Eaves, 68
Madison, WI
November 18, 2018
B/4/503, 75th Rgrs RVN

Stephen Jon Gonzalez, 69
Prescott Valley, AZ
January 8, 2019
173d D Ranger, RVN

Lamar Ferrell Hale, 78
Woodstock, GA
January 10, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

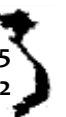
Cave Harris, Jr., SFC, 75
Detroit, TX
January 14, 2019
B/2/503, OKI

Steven M. Harvey, 69
Lake Charles, LA
January 20, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

James Ellis "Cebe" Hoover, 73
Biddeford, ME
October 23, 2018
173d Abn Bde RVN

Stanely J. Larson, 93
Little Falls, MN
September 10, 2018
503rd PIR, WWII

(sadly continued....)



Wayne Lissman, 94
LaFollette, OR
January 12, 2019
503rd PIR, WWII

Joseph H. McHenry, 75
Portland, OR
January 2, 2019
82nd Avn Bn, 173d Abn Bde

Glenn V. McDaniel, 74
Chatom, AL
January 24, 2019
C/4/503, RVN

Daniel Morrison, SFC, 33
Durham, NC
January 11, 2019
1/173d ABCT, OEF

Gregory Tibbetts Munning, 71
Durham, NC
January 7, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Terry Musser, 71
La Crosse, WI
November 1, 2018
173d Abn Bde RVN

Eugene O. "Gene" Neville, Jr., LTC, 79
Statesboro, GA
January 17, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Rev. Dennis T. Ridders, 71
Plains, MT
January 13, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Graham D. Rollings, Sr, 83
Richmond, VA
September 21, 2018
C/2/503, RVN

Lilurn "L.D." Shockley, 77
Hamilton, TX
December 2, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Clark Webb, 102
Raleigh, NC
October 9, 2018
503rd PIR, WWII

Charles C. Whitaker, II, 98
Tampa, FL
October 10, 2018
503rd PIR, WWII

James Barker Woodard, 94
West Columbia, TX
December 30, 2018
503rd PIR, WWII

Rest Easy With The Warriors

Excerpt....

~ JUST A SIMPLE SOLDIER ~ **By A. Lawrence Vaincourt**

He was getting old and paunchy and
his hair was falling fast,
and he sat around the Legion, telling
stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and
the deeds that he had done.
In his exploits with his buddies; they
were heroes, everyone.
And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors,
his tales became a joke,
all his buddies listened, for they knew
whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer, for
ol' Bob has passed away,
and the world's a little poorer, for a
soldier died today.

