



May - June 2019, Issue 86
Contact: rto173@att.net

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

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



RTO Don Horger, A/2/503, his handset always at the ready, off on another mission to somewhere, sometime in Vietnam.
Those of you who were there understand his expression and what he was likely thinking.
Those of you who were not, will never know.

See *Remembering Our RTO's* on Pages 66-85.





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 May & June 1969.



If I should die, and leave you here awhile, be not like others, sore undone, who keep long vigils by the silent dust, and weep...for MY sake, turn again to life, and smile...Nerving thy heart, and trembling hand to do something to comfort other hearts than thine...Complete these dear, unfinished tasks of mine... and I, perchance, may therein comfort you.

A.L. Abrahams, 21

PTE, 9RAR/RAINF, 6/13/69

J.H. Aitken, 23

PTE, D/11/RAINF, 5/26/69

William Lee Alexander, 19

CPL, B/1/503, 5/31/69

6/17/12: "In loving memory of my best friend. William and I fought in this war side by side. We laughed, ate, and talked...side by side. Even though its been over 40 years that I have seen him, William still lives in my heart. We had a special relationship. When he gave his life for his country, I was personally asked to escort him back to Flint, Michigan. If any of his family members read this and would like to contact me, my emails are: charles.miles@va.gov, or jilmiles@sbcglobal.net Charles Miles



Lindsay Ronald Bancks

WO2, 17th Construction Sqd, 6/10/69

"Born Coffs Harbour NSW. Bancks died 10th June 1969 at Moorebank NSW. Buried Rookwood Cemetery NSW."



Stuart John Barnett, 21

PTE, 4RAR, 6/27/69

"Bussleton WA. Private Barnett was killed in action in Bien Hoa Province in the late afternoon of 27th June 1968. Buried Shepparton Cemetery VIC."



Thomas Fredrick Barth, 18

CPL, A/1/50th, 5/20/69

1/21/16: "Rest in Peace. Tom and I were normal brothers. We liked each other we disliked each other. His last letter home expressed his hatred for the war and the politicians that ran it. He enjoyed most of his 18yrs. experiencing most all of the facets of a young man growing up. For many years we felt pride for the service he provided his country. That pride no longer exists. Now the pride felt is only in him and has



nothing to do with the service. Today he rests alongside his Mother in Forest Lawns, Cypress, Ca. I Luv you Bro." Jack Barth



John Peddie Batterson, Jr., 22

SP4, 46th PI Det, 6/19/69

10/18/02: "He was our leader, our friend, our mentor as young boys at Camp Siwanoy, Wingdale, NY. We were there when we heard the news. He had told us he was going to be a photographer. We asked why was he going and he told us it was his duty to serve. I would remember that when I enlisted in the Air Force." Steven L.H. Klein



James Francis Becker, 20

CPL, D/4/503, 5/30/69

4/6/99: "James, was as I, a member of D Co.- 4/503, 173rd Airborne Brigade. I was within arm's length when Jim was killed on a nite ambush (HAWK TEAM), that ended in our becoming the ambushed. I, along with Henry (Aussie) Steigler, carried Jim back to the CP, over 2 kilometers, while it became a running fight with the NVA chasing us in the dark, but with the advantage of knowing where we were headed. WE had an unwritten RULE in the 173rd - NONE was ever left behind. That five man team did as they knew would be done for them, and Jim came back with us. I have tried to find a next/kin for years because I have some photos, etc.. And to you JIM, one day I will get to the WALL, and remember, you will never be forgotten - because Aussie, Caddick and myself talk of you each time we do. Rest in peace-my friend forever young." Richard Bruce, Orlando, Florida



(Tributes continued....)



Arthur Frederick Bell, 23**CPL, N75/173d LRRP, 5/12/69**

5/26/01: "Friend & Classmate. I remember the last time that I saw Arthur on my front porch in Greenville. I was home on leave from Vietnam after being wounded myself and we talked about the long study hours at Mississippi State, the Army, who we were dating and the regular 'Guy Stuff'. Arthur was a good friend and I think of him often. He is missed and like so many others, he gave his all and I would have expected no less from Arthur. In remembrance – your friend in Arms." **John Fisher**



Fort Ben is where they trained him,
Vietnam he was so brave,
now a hero up in heaven,
but his memories they still lay,
in his loved ones as we gather,
his memories linger on,
so we'll pray for our hero in heaven,
for our loved one Jerome.

Written by Phillip LaCoste

You are missed, Uncle Jerome. God Bless.

SGT Phillip LaCoste, Retired

10 years Active Duty, United States Army

16 years active in the Alabama Army National Guard

**Jerry Charles Bock, 18****PFC, C/4/503, 5/13/69**

2/5/16: "To my Lost big brother. I wish I could have known you more in my life and thank you for serving and protecting our country for our freedom and rights. From your little brother,"
Richard R.I.P.

**David John Brennan, 22****CPL, 9RAR, 6/6/69**

"Bathurst NSW. Brennan died from frag wounds during an enemy mortar attack just after midnight on 6th June 1969. Bathurst Cemetery NSW."

**Robert Dennis Clatfelter, 20****PFC, D/4/503, 6/12/69**

8/12/06: "For My Uncle. I never met you, but I'm Richard's son. I have heard stories of you and even though we never got the chance to meet, I cry sometimes when I think of you. I wish you had the chance to see me and our family now. I wish I had the chance to see you now. But we will meet again someday. I love you. Thank you for your sacrifice."

Nathan Clatfelter

**Jerome Liston Collins, 21****CPL, HHC/1/50th, 5/30/69**

20 Jan 2005: "Jerome was my Uncle. One of his greatest passions was playing the guitar which is where I learned to play country music. He was an excellent guitarist. He was also very athletic, mostly water skiing, hunting and fishing as he grew up on the Magnolia Springs River in South Alabama. He was a true champion and hero and has been missed by so many. I have written a song to his tribute:"

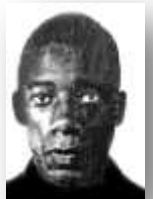


A Note from The Virtual Wall
Headquarters Company, 1/50th Infantry, lost two men to a booby trap on 30 May 1969: SGT Virgil V. Hamilton of Brooksville, Florida, and Cpl Jerome L. Collins.

Calvin Edward Cooke, 19**CPL, HHB/3/319th, 5/22/69**

4/19/04: "We Remember. Calvin is buried at City Point Nat Cem."

Robert Sage

**Keith Ivan Dewar, 21****L/CPL, HQ 1 ATF, 6/24/69**

"Collie WA. Dewar had been attached to B Squadron 3 Cavalry Regiment from October 1968 to January 1969 and had stayed on with that unit without official orders. He was killed when an APC detonated a mine during a land clearing operation in Phuoc Tuy 24th June 1969. Buried Collie Cemetery WA."

**William Clint Dickerson, 23****SSG, B/1/503, 5/13/69**

Sgt. W. C. Dickerson killed in S. Vietnam

"SHOW LOW – S.Sgt. William C.

Dickerson, 23, was killed May 13 when a grenade detonated near his defense position in South Vietnam. Sgt. Dickerson, a native of Muskogee, Okla., attended elementary and high schools in Wilcox, Eastern Arizona College at Thatcher and Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff. He entered the service March 13, 1965. Survivors include his wife, Susan..." **Local newspaper**



(Tributes continued....)



Andrew Drummond, 27**PTE, 5RAR, 5/30/69**

"Carnarvon WA. Drummond was the forward scout operating in Phuoc Tuy on 30th May 1969 when the man who was behind him slipped and discharged two rounds from his M16, both rounds hit Drummond. Buried Carnarvon Cemetery WA."

**James Marion Ellis, 20****SGT, C/3/503, 5/5/69**

11/7/10: "We Remember. James is buried at New Friendship Cemetery in Honea Path, SC. BSM AM PH." Robert Sage

**Jerry Lynn Ervin, 21****PFC, A/3/503, 6/8/69**

10/28/15: "Never forgotten. I was just 7 when you passed away, but since, I learned that I was your pet niece. I can remember seeing you run around that green car coming in the house. I remember the night that our family was told you were gone and I will never forget the funeral. I always put a flag and flowers on your grave when I come to the cemetery cause your mom always did that for you...so now I stepped into her shoes. Wish I could have known you Uncle Jerry as an adult. May you Rest In Peace...we have your watch now." Donna Ervin Dilbeck

**Charlie Will Farmer, Jr., 21****SSG, D/16th Armor, 6/11/69**

4/27/99: "Never forgotten. You now have 2 grandchildren from your daughter Leslie whom you never saw. Your brother," Gary

**Joe Robert Garcia, "Doc", 22****CPL, A/4/503, 6/4/69**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/4/503)

17 Dec 2004: "I knew Joe as a teenager along with his sister Carmen and brother Paul. He was a close friend of my cousin Alfonso and an adopted member of the family, he was always welcomed. As a Vietnam vet and 'lifer grunt' I know the importance of medics in a infantry unit and he represented them well. Love you, Joe. From a friend," Rudy Segura, 1st Sgt (Ret)

**James Robert Gatenby, 31****CPL, RNAIR, 6/5/69**

"Killed in action, 5 June 1969 – rocket propelled grenade fragments to head in combat."

**Michael William T. Gill, 28****T/WO2, AATTV (RA SIGS), 5/6/69**

"Mitchell QLD. He served in Vietnam and was killed in action in Kontum Province on 6th May 1969. Buried Toowoomba Gardens Cemetery QLD."

**Steve Freeman Grubb, 22****CPL, A/1/503, 5/28/69**

(Virtual Wall states A/1/50th)

11/2/10: "We Remember. Steve is buried at a Family Cemetery in Faber, VA. BSM PH." Robert Sage

**Virgil Vern Hamilton, 20****SGT, A/1/50th, 5/30/69**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/1/50th)

7/3/14: "Sky Soldier Honored. On behalf of all your fellow paratroopers who served with the 173rd 'Herd' Airborne Brigade in the Republic of Vietnam, let me offer our respect and regrets for your final sacrifice. May you rest in peace and never be forgotten."

Mike Switzer**Phillip Dean Hardy, 18****CPL, D/16th Armor, 6/11/69**

5/4/07: "We miss you. You left us way to early and you are missed by your family. But I know that my daddy (your big brother) and you are together in heaven having a great time together."

Stephanie Hardy Alphin**James Harrison Hopkins, 20****SP4, A/4/503, 6/4/69***11/20/02: "Beloved Son and Brother."*

James Harrison Hopkins was born on April 28th, 1949 in Marietta, Georgia. He was the son of Pascal and Marion Hopkins of 1171 Powder Springs Street, Smyrna, Georgia. He was the younger brother of Pascal Junior and Victoria as well as the twin brother of Harriett, and the half-brother of James Warren. Harry as his classmates and friends knew him, attended Smyrna Elementary, Pebblebrook Junior High, Campbell High, and Wills High School. He was intelligent, witty, handsome, and an excellent dancer. Many called him a natural born entertainer. After graduating Wills High School in 1967, Harry fulfilled his dream of following in his father's footsteps by enlisting in the United States Army to become a paratrooper....

*(Tributes continued....)*

....He attended basic training at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and then 11B Advanced Infantry Training and the United States Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. He deployed to South Viet Nam on June 26, 1968 and was assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Harry fell on June 4, 1969 in the Central Highlands Province of Binh Dinh. He had only 22 days remaining before his tour of duty would have been completed and he would have returned home. Harry was buried in the Marietta National Cemetery on June 13th with full military honors. He attained the rank of Specialist Four. His awards and decorations include the Purple Heart, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and "V" Device for Valor, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnamese Campaign Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the Parachutist Badge. Harry was a beloved son, brother, playmate, classmate, and friend to many. His heroism and sacrifice are not forgotten. Sleep peacefully, Harry, and comfort your loved ones. We will always remember you."

Steve McDonald

Peter Joseph Jackson, 21
PTE, 5RAR, 6/15/69

"Cowra NSW. Jackson was wounded on April 4 1969 and then killed in a mine explosion in Phuoc Tuy 15th June 1969. Buried Binalong Cemetery NSW."



Barry James, 20
PTE, 6RAR, 6/5/69

"Toowoomba QLD. James was killed in action in Phuoc Tuy 5th June 1969. Buried Toowoomba Garden Cemetery QLD."



Keith Brian Janke, 26
SSG, E/1/503, 5/28/69

(Virtual Wall states A/1/50th)
5/18/11: "We Remember. Keith is buried at Mt Hope Cemetery, Ashland, WI. BSM-OLC PH." **Robert Sage**



Keith, with a few of his buddies. "Left to Right: David Payne, Ron Davison, Clarence Taylor (23W-011)...KIA with Keith Janke on 28 May, 1969."



Paul Jones, 20
SP4, D/4/503, 5/3/69

5/21/11: "We Remember. Paul is buried at Miami City Cemetery, Miami, FL. BSM-OLC." **Robert Sage**



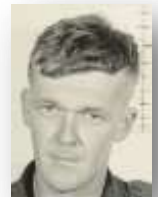
Robert Joseph Kazmierczak, 20
CPL, D/4/503, 6/14/69

(Virtual Wall states C/1/50th)
1 Jun 1999: "I have prayed for him every week since his death and will always wonder why he had to die at the age of 20. We attended Father Baker High School together and graduated in 1966." **Stan**



John Joseph Kennedy, 29
CPL, 5RAR, 6/15/69

"Annadale NSW. He was killed when a mine exploded in Phuoc Tuy on 15th June 1969. Buried Liverpool Cemetery NSW."



James Kelly Kerr, 19
TPR, B Sqd, 1 ARMO REGT, 5/13/69

"Motherwell Scotland. On his first operation, he was killed when the tank he was driving hit a mine in Phuoc Tuy 13th May 1969. Buried Rookwood Cemetery NSW."



8/14/16: "Good friend....I often think of my good friend Jim. We were at Concord Public School (Primary) together & were friends until he joined the Army. He was in Vietnam for only 6 weeks before he died. So sad, a young life wasted." **Gregory Murphy**

Edward Matthew Klaniecki, 20
SP4, B/2/503, 5/9/69

6/18/16: "Loved And Not Forgotten. Dear Eddy, Remembering hanging out with you after School #4 through our graduation at SPFHS in 1966. It was then that you told me of your enlistment. I have remembered you with smiles and tears. My son's middle name is Edward to honor you. The class of 1966 is having its 50th reunion. You are missed by all. Bless you Eddy." **Harry P. Daniels**



(Tributes continued....)



**Johnny Lisbon, 28****SSG, B/4/503, 5/1/69**6/12/11: *"Gone but Not Forgotten.*

Daddy I never knew you but I followed in your footsteps. I am proud of you for what you did and so sorry that you had to pay the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. Love always your son." **Patrick J. Lisbon, 1SG (Ret)**

**Geoffrey Robert Locke, 20****2LT, 9RAR, 5/9/69**

"The platoon commander, a trainee executive in civilian life died of a gunshot wound to the head on 9th May 1969. Buried Carr Villa Cemetery TAS."

**Errol John Lee, 22****LT, 5RAR, 5/11/69**

"Ashfield NSW. Lee died on 11th May 1969. Buried Canberra Cemetery ACT."

**John Arthur Love, 20****SGT, C/1/50th, 5/13/69**

1/6/19: *"My dad died in the Spring before I turned 2 years old. I'm 51 years old now. I would like to know more about the people he served with and anything that they knew about him."*

Facebook: Rebecca McClatchey Junction City, Ks**John, with some of his buddies.****Enrique Martinez, 20****CPL, B/3/503, 5/21/69**

2/17/12: *"Remembrance. In loving memory, from your brother,"*
Alfonso Martinez

**William Travis Matlock, 20****SGT, C/1/503, 6/12/69**

(Virtual Wall states A/1/50th)

3/14/05: *"Girleos. My twin daughters were only 3 when Travis gave his life for our country. He always called them his little 'girleos'. You will always be in our hearts, Travis."* **Maxine Gaddy**

**Buddies L-R on the VTR: William Travis 'Tex' Matlock (22W-034), SGT Joe Rodgers, Bates and Junior Villeuman.****R.C. Myers, 23****SGT, C/1/50th, 5/11/69**

6/17/11: *"We Remember. R C is buried at Jerusalem Cemetery, Pat, Rankin County, MS. BSM PH."* **Robert Sage**

**John Berry O'Neill, 20****PTE, 9RAR, 5/27/69**

(Web also states Det 1 S&T)

"Ivanhoe VIC. For no known medical reason O'Neill fainted and struck his head on the concrete floor. He died on 27th May 1969 in 24 US Evacuation Hospital Long Binh. Buried Box Hill Cemetery VIC."

*(Tributes continued....)*

**Steven Craig Owen, 22****SP5, A/1/50th, 5/31/69**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/1/50th)

5/28/16: "To my brother Steven

Owen. It's been 47 years since your passing. Not a day goes by that I don't think of all those memories of our parents and the home we shared together. The pain is just as fresh as the day it was in losing you. You were my big brother who I adored. I think all the time of who you would have married, the children you would have had. I think about the profession you might have chosen. I think about all the years we could have laughed talking about growing up together and knowing each other as adults. I think about how life was never the same for any of us. Our parents divorced and the void in my life of now being the survivor of our family unit is devastating to me. You would have loved my five children and they would have cherished knowing you. I named my first son after you, your adoring sister,"

Michele Owen Neher

Long's Peak in the Rockies. Once scaled by a future airborne First Lieutenant and war hero. His friend called him Rog.

**Lorenzo Richard Pettis, 19****CPL, A/1/50th, 6/12/69**

3/10/18: "I requested your picture.

My name is Krysteen Wescott and I am the daughter of Sgt 1st Class Robert H. Wescott, Jr. It meant a lot to me to find your picture. I wrote to have your picture posted (on the Wall of Faces) in Feb 2018 and now see your picture is posted. You are remembered."

Krysteen Wescott**Michael James Parmerter, 24****CPT, HHC/173d Bde, 6/22/69**

6/9/06: "Mike and I served together in 82nd Abn Div, and 173d Abn Bde. This photo of Mike Parmerter was taken at Ft. Bragg as he, my wife, and I were attending a New Year's Eve Party given by the 82d Abn Div. Mike was living on post with us, as our CO had confined him to post, for chronic late arrival! Mike was a good guy, and an interesting friend. We think of him often, and wonder how he, and his comrades on the wall would have lived their lives, had they been fortunate enough to come home, like we lucky ones."

Tom Coats**SFC Robert Hyatt Wescott, Jr.****A/1/8th Cav, 1st Cav Div****KIA 4/29/69**

"Dear Daddy, I have continued my journey today and up to 415 pictures collected so far of your comrades. Please know you are in my thoughts and prayers. I love you more than you could know and always will. Happy Easter, Your Loving Daughter," **Krysteen**



Thank you Krysteen, from men of the 173d Abn Bde.

**Roger Alan Parrish, 21****1LT, C/4/503, 6/10/69**

25 Apr 2005: "Roger and I were at Manhattan High School together.

He was one class behind me. Our fathers were both professors at Kansas State University and his family and mine both loved to vacation in the Rockies. One summer (I think after my junior year and his sophomore year), we met at a campground at Lake Granby, Colorado. We decided to climb Long's Peak just outside Estes Park. The plan was to hike up to Joe's Grove just above the timberline and camp the night, then do the serious climbing the next day. We made it, but I got such a horrible case of altitude sickness I'm not sure how I ever hiked back down. Go with God, my friend! From a friend,"

Bill Curnutte**Paul Francis Reidy, 21****PTE, 9RAR, 5/25/69**

"Bendigo VIC. He died in a mine explosion during a four-day I and clearing operation in Dat Do, on 25th May 1969. Buried White Hills cemetery VIC."

5/5/15: "Your sacrifice will never be forgotten. Paul, you are my second cousin and I never got to meet you but my mum Maree talks of the shock of your passing. She was only a week older than you. Rest in peace Paul." **Vanessa Drysdale**



(Tributes continued....)



Timothy Francis Robson, 21**CPL, A/1/50th, 5/20/69**

9/21/17: "Thinking of You. Dear Tim, My heart is very heavy when I think of your death. I was only 5 years old when you were killed in Vietnam. You were engaged to my Aunt Carol and I loved you so much. Your death really impacted my family. We were never the same. I think of you often, especially on Memorial Day. I went to visit your grave and you are very close to my grandparents who thought so highly of you. This gives me comfort. Green Bay also has a Memorial by the Neville Museum with your name on it. I went to the dedication along with my mom and Aunt Carol. Your mom and sister were there too. We were all very sad. The dedication was really moving. I have visited it a couple of times. Seeing your name still brings tears. I saw your mom and sister throughout the years and they remained close to my aunt. You were a wonderful loving person who brought joy to my family. Thank you for your service and you are not forgotten. Xoxo." **Julie Brainard Nelsen (Sharon's daughter)**

**James Everett Sawyer, Jr., 21****CPL, D/4/503, 6/14/69**

23 Jan 2007: "Hello Uncle Jimmy, My father has told me so much about you. I hear you were a ladies' man, had an ear for music, and were a wonderful person. My son Josiah looks like you. You are missed. Love, your niece," **Kendra Sawyer**

**Noel Ervin Shipp, 24****Leading Airman/RAN, 5/31/69**

"Brisbane QLD. Shipp, a door gunner, hung out of a helicopter and kept firing as the aircraft went out of control and hit the ground on 31st May 1969... A training Division at HMAS Cerberus will be named in Shipp's Honour. Buried French's Forest Cemetery NSW."

**Robert H. Sigholtz, Jr., 23****CPT, D/2/503, 5/26/69****(Son of Col. Robert H. Sigholtz, 1919-2005, 2/503 Bn Cmdr, '66/'67)**

11/15/98: "Soldier's Soldier. I originally posted this to another virtual wall on AOL in 1995. I took the liberty of editing it down a bit. In those days I felt I had to get a few things off my chest. That done, I needn't repeat it.

It is nearly four years later...I've been back to the wall, but I haven't been able to part with my drive-on rag. That, a few pictures, my waterproof wallet with the herd patch, and a few memories are all I have left of that time.

I also had the pleasure of talking to Col. Sigholtz, Robert's father. Hope to meet him in person at the herd reunion at Bragg in July of 1999.

19 Aug 95. I've been to the wall twice and saw the replica displayed in Alaska a couple of times. The last was about a month ago. I took a picture of my son in front of the panel which held your name the last time I was in D.C., but with four visits to the wall I couldn't bring myself to look at it. I knew it was there but I couldn't look.

There are many names I did see. Friends from home, ones I served with in other units, and guys from our own unit. There are names of those that, no matter how hard I try, I can't remember. But I remember you....

I remember you because of the person that you were to everyone that you met. The grunts in your platoon thought more of you than a hot meal, cool drink, clean socks, or 3 days R&R in Vung Tau....



Buddies, L-R: Willie McKlary, Dan Kendall and Tim Robson.

**Jerry Eugene Rogers, 20****SGT, A/4/503, 6/21/69**

6/30/18: "If anyone knew my uncle Jerry, please send me a message. I am a paratrooper too, would like to know about him." **Allen Thomas Haynes**
allen.is.haynes@gmail.com

**Donald Robert Sanders, Jr., 23****SSG, B/1/503, 5/10/69**

11/14/08: "Don, I still remember May 10, 1969 as it was yesterday. You were one of the good guys. Life was so full for you, your future was planned. Why it had to end so soon, I'll never know. Please rest in peace, and know you will never be forgotten." **Bob Bennett**



(Tributes continued....)



....I remember you most because you were the last one I saw taking his last ride back to the world and, ultimately, to a place on the wall.

Sometime after being stateside I was assigned as a black hat at Benning. Saw your picture on the wall at jump committee. Almost looked like you. The Sigholtz I remembered was bent over at the waist from the weight of his ruck, steel pot on backwards, and drive-on rag displaying the herd patch draped down to the front. Smiling. Always smiling.

I still have my drive-on rag. One of the few things that has survived the years. I can't remember if you had yours with you when you went home. The next time I'm in D.C. I will look you up. If I remember I'll lend you my drive-on rag in case you didn't take yours with you. If you have yours and don't need it, hang on to it for me till I get there.

I'm sending this message out into the ozone hoping that, if you haven't been reading my thoughts over the last 25 plus years that maybe this letter will fall out with the twigs, leaves, and stones when you shake out your chute. You'll then know that in the middle of that dark area that was once first platoon that there were a group of guys that, for a short time, shared the best and the worst of everything, and who paused for a quiet moment near an empty pair of boots that would be forever hard to fill.

Here's hoping that heaven is an eternal thermal inversion during a Hollywood. I'd be proud to jump with your stick, anytime."

George "Squirrel" Gaguzis, D 2/503d Inf, 173d Airborne Brigade (SEP)

[See tribute to Bob's father, LTC Robert Sigholtz, Pages 46-49]

Gordon Dennis Sorrensen, 24 PTE, 9RAR, 6/30/69

"Gympie QLD. VC troops shot him in a enemy contact with his platoon from 9RAR on 30th June 1969 in Long Khanh province. Buried Gympie QLD."



 **Douglas Gaylord Swanstrom, 21 SSG, B/3/503, 5/21/69**

8/24/13: "Never Forgotten! You have been in my thoughts frequently over the last 40+ years since our high school days at Falconer - the wrestling team. Also our competition with delivering the Jamestown Post Journal. You almost made it out of there but sadly almost doesn't count. I visit your grave every time I'm in Ellington and there are now so many names whom we both knew. I see your brother often when I am back there and also pass by the old home-stead with fond remembrance of the 'swimming hole'



out back - how much time has gone by and so much change has taken place. Gosh, I almost forgot what you looked like and can't believe I finally found a picture. May you rest in peace with the knowledge that you have NOT been forgotten - thank you so much for your service and sacrifice - truly priceless!"

Roger D. Emmick, HM3 Danang, Vietnam 5/67-6/68



Clarence Taylor, 25 CPL, A/1/503, 5/28/69

(Virtual Wall states A/1/50th)

6/30/18: "Tribute to a Sky Soldier."

"On behalf of all the paratroopers who served with you in the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) and all who followed, we offer our respect and remembrance of your ultimate sacrifice. May you never be forgotten and your family and friends take comfort in your valor in serving."

Mike Switzer



Buddies, L-R: David Payne, Ron Davison, Clarence Taylor (23W-011)...KIA with Keith Janke on 28 May 1969.

Wayne Edward Teeling, 21 PTE, 5RAR, 6/6/69

"Clovelly NSW. He was shot during the 2 day Battle of Binh Ba. Teeling a new reinforcement was killed on the first day of the battle on 6th June 1969. Buried Botany Cemetery NSW."



Timothy Charles Turner, 21 PTE, 5RAR, 6/15/69

"Kangaroo Island SA. He died on 15th June 1969 in 24 US Evacuation Hospital, Long Binh, from wounds from a mine. Buried Kingscote, Kangaroo Island Cemetery SA."



(Tributes continued....)



**Amado Acosta Valencia, 24****SP4, E/2/503, 5/15/69**

8/11/11: "We Remember. Amado is buried at Hillcrest Memorial Park, Bakersfield, CA. BSM ARCOM PH."

Robert Sage**Sammie Wayne Waddle, 25****SGT, D/1/503, 5/14/69**

10/17/11: "We Remember. Sammie is buried at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Fulton, Itawamba County, MS. BSM PH."

Robert Sage**Eugene Kenneth Wallace, 31****SSG, HHC/173d Bde, 6/18/69**

6/13/04: "I haven't forgotten you. I was involved in the ambush that took the life of Sgt. Wallace. We did a lot of shooting and used up all our ammo that day. A 4/60 duster came to help and called in gunship support. We carried Sgt. Wallace's body onto the dustoff. He died almost instantly in front of me. I never met him before. But I will never forget him. God bless you buddy." **RJ Conboy**

**Brian Walsh, 29****T/WO2, AATTV (RAINF), 6/27/69**

"Merriwa NSW. 'Bull' Walsh died from enemy fire in an ambush while he was making a security sweep of a perimeter area near Ben Het, Kontum Province on 27th June 1969. Buried Rookwood Crematorium."

**Albert B. Washington, Jr., 23****CPL, B/1/503, 6/1/69**

8/30/18: "A moment in our lives together that will live forever in mine?? June 1st 1969 a day that will live with me for the rest of my life. That morning on a hilltop in the Bong Son Plains our radio operator tripped a booby trap wire, as he walked away just three steps and it blew up. At that moment you were looking down on it. I could not believe my eyes as the brightest ball of fire I have ever seen flashed before my eyes and the soundwave blew my helmet off never to be found again. I thought to myself at that moment this cannot be happening, I am the one that is always behind the radio operator. The sound was deathing. I hear nothing at first other than my cries for a medic. As the shockwave passed though me I looked up and saw you flying ten feet through the air away. I thought you were looking to pick up an old ammo can, but we were



taught to not touch anything suspicious. After I got to my senses I ran up the hilltop to check on how you were doing. My fear was that you were dead from the huge blast. But to my surprise you were still breathing. At that point time seemed to stop and so did your breathing, so I began to perform mouth to mouth resuscitation and you began to breathe again. I looked up to another team member but I could not see his face, it was like a dream, this could not be happening to us. The other team member had called for a Medevac, but as I looked down at you you has stopped breathing again. I again started to mouth to mouth resuscitation. Again you began breathing again. I remember telling you 'hang in there my brother, you're going home soon'. As the medevac landed I could not hear it, but I did hear someone from another hilltop shooting at us, we could not believe that the VC would shoot at us when we were trying to remove our wounded. That's when I realized that WAR has no rules. I again looked down upon your face and again you stopped breathing. As I pressed my lips on to yours for the third time I felt your your spirit leave your body and go through mine and continued to the heavens above. I knew then that you were at peace with God and that you would be returning home to your family. I don't know why after pretty close to 50 years of blocking that day out of my memories, it means so much to me now to go back to Vietnam June 1st of 2019 to place a plaque at the Hilltop where you left this Earth and found peace. I now seek what you have now. Rest in peace my brother until we meet again on the other side????????" **Julio Gonzales**

Norman Gene Welch, 38**PSGT, A/2/503, 6/5/69**

8/30/18: "Not a day goes by...The mass casualty that resulted in 'Papi's' death has kept some of us frozen in the moment ...we shall always remember the extreme sacrifice, a decision none of us were privy to. My prayers for the family at the forefront of my remaining days. Loss came to so many that fateful day..." **Rick "Doc" Navarrete'**

**Michael Alan White, 19****SSG, A/3/319, 6/9/69**

(Virtual Wall states D/2/503)

8/13/11: "We Remember. Michael is buried at Woodlawn Garden of Memories, Houston, TX. SS BSM-OLC AM ARCOM-OLC PH." **Robert Sage**



(Tributes continued....)



John Stewart Williams, 20

PTE, RNZIR, 6/17/69

"Killed in action, 17 June 1969 – gunshot wounds to head and neck in contact. John (Jack) Williams grew up in Waipukurau and joined the Regular Force cadets in 1965. After postings to NSTU Burnham and 1 Battalion Depot, he joined 1RNZIR at Terendak, Malaysia in November 1968. A training accident prevented him from accompanying the main body of V4 Company to Vietnam in May 1969. He rejoined the Company on 17 June 1969 during Operation Laverack. He was killed in action later that day when V4 encountered a large enemy bunker system."



A Navajo Prayer Posted for Dan Yazzie

HAASHCH' EETT'I (TALKING GOD)

In beauty may I walk
All day long may I walk
Through the returning seasons may I walk
Beautifully will I possess again
Beautifully birds,
Beautifully joyful birds
On the trail marked with pollen may I walk
With grasshoppers about my feet may I walk
With dew about my feet may I walk
With beauty may I walk
With beauty before me may I walk
With beauty behind me may I walk
With beauty above me may I walk
With beauty all around me may I walk
In old age, wandering on a trail of beauty, lively,
may I walk
In old age, wandering on a trail of beauty, living again,
may I walk
It is finished in beauty.
It is finished in beauty.

Robert James Yule, 20

PTE, 9RAR, 5/11/69

"Carlton VIC. He was killed in action by an exploding mine on Mother's Day on 11th May 1969 during a reconnaissance patrol in Phuoc Tuy. Buried Rookwood Crematorium NSW."



Robert George Young, 22

TPR, 3 CAV REGT, 6/24/69

"Mareeba QLD. He died in action when his APC exploded after being hit by a enemy mine on 24th June 1969 in Phuoc Tuy. Buried Gatton Cemetery QLD."



Note: Available sources do not indicate if the Bronze Stars shown here were awarded to our men for acts of valor during combat, however, we suspect some, many or all were valor awards. Ed



William John Winters, 23

SSG, C/1/50th, 5/14/69

8/15/11: "We Remember. William is buried at Beechwood Cemetery, Forestport, NY. BSM PH-OLC."

Robert Sage



Gary Wayne Wright, 18

SP4, B/2/503, 5/3/69

8/15/11: "We Remember. Gary is buried at New Prospeck Baptist Church Cemetery, Hurt, VA. BSM PH."

Robert Sage



Dan Yazzie, 20

SP4, A/3/503, 5/15/69

5/15/18: "Remembering. We went through Basic Training at Fort Bliss together, but were in different platoons and I don't think we ever really met or talked. I remember that you were the fastest one of all of us at the mile run at our 'graduation' from Basic, and a full minute ahead of me. I'm very sad to learn that your life was cut short in the war." Alan Batten





INCOMING!!!



~ More About Recon Team Jaguar ~

Thanks Kilo. I took over Charlie Company from Joe Jellison on 23 June 68, about a week after the dated article (*Recon Team Jaguar Point for C Company*, by PFC John White, as published in *Fire Base 173*, 15 June 1968....and Page 33, Issue 85 of our newsletter).

This picture was taken at a retreat outside Fort Benning during the dedication of the 173d Memorial in June 2010 (not at a 173d reunion as we stated. Ed).



From left to right: Jim "Ski" Bednarski... Earnest "Nasty" Asbury... Field First Sergeant Oscar Cruz... Myself... Captain Joe Jellison... and the founder of Jaguar Team... Tommy Thompson ("Drips" in my book, *Digger Dogface Brownjob Grunt*).

Arthur "Blood" Bledsoe was reassigned by me to 1st Platoon. I stopped using a point team, preferring using 1st Platoon as point -- I would never have 5 men, 250 meters away from help (as stated in the article). Cap

Gary Prisk, Col (Ret)
CO C/D/2/503, RVN

Thanks Cap! Paragon 5-Kilo, Out



Gary's novel about men of the 2/503 in RVN, troopers he calls his "Hill People".

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

~ Enjoyed The SGM's Combat Tips ~

Great newsletter! I read all 92 pages! Best I've seen!

I particularly enjoyed Sergeant Major **Ted G. Arthurs'** "Combat Tips" on pp 16-18. Ted was my First Sergeant in A/1-505 ABG in Mainz, GE, back in 1961-64. He saved my ass many times and taught me how best to lead troops in peace and war. He was one hell of a warrior, who got two Silver Stars in Nam while he was the Sergeant Major of 4-503 ABN. I just got a letter from him yesterday, recounting some of the situations we had together over the years. ARLTW,

Robert "Tex" Turner
A/1/505 Abn

~ Always See The Big Picture ~



(web photo)

The Lone Ranger and Tonto went camping in the desert. After they got their tent all set up, both men fell sound asleep. Some hours later, Tonto wakes the Lone Ranger and says, "Kemo Sabe, look toward sky, what you see?"

The Lone Ranger replies, "I see millions of stars." "What that tell you?" asked Tonto.

The Lone Ranger ponders for a minute then says, "Astronomically speaking, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Time wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three in the morning. Theologically, the Lord is all-powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Tonto?"

"You dumber than buffalo shit. It tell me someone stole our tent."

[Sent in by a 2/503 Company CO with a sense of humor]

(INCOMING continued....)



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~ Memories of Pearl Harbor, WWII ~

Many of you with whom I served in B/2/503 know, my dad was aboard the USS Honolulu in Pearl Harbor when the Japs attacked on 7 December 1941. Somehow these two postcards have survived all these years.

After the attack, we can assume that the phone cable was taken over by urgent government communications back and forth. For most Americans, Oahu was a world or two away. Although radio broadcasts told the folks at home of the attack, there was no way for them to know the status of their children.

My dad was handed postcards and told what to write and how to address them. Note the postmark, 9 Dec. -- someone was thinking pretty clearly. I do not know if this was done by the skipper of the ship or a Hawaiian command idea, but considering the options, I feel that it was a great idea. Especially with the sailors own handwriting.

I assembled this in a two-sided frame glass on both sides with the cards to my mother and grandmother both visible with the Pearl Harbor Survivor Medal in the middle. Hope you find this interesting.

Jim Robinson
B/2/503



*"I am well. A letter follows at first opportunity."
Dec. 7, 1941*

~ Jim's Dad's Ship, The USS Honolulu ~



USS Honolulu in camouflage, circa 1944

USS Honolulu (CL-48) of the United States Navy was a Brooklyn-class light cruiser active in the Pacific War (World War II). Honolulu was launched in 1937 and commissioned in 1938. The ship served in the Battle of Tassafaronga, the Battle of Kula Gulf, the Battle of Kolombangara and the Battle of Peleliu. She was taken out of action by serious torpedo damage just before the Battle of Leyte Gulf. She was repaired, but not in time to rejoin the war. She was decommissioned in 1947 and was held in reserve until she was scrapped in 1959.



(web photos)

"The battle-proven cruiser had another opportunity to confront the Japanese fleet on 13 July 1943, in the Battle of Kolombangara. Shortly after midnight, contact was made with an enemy cruiser-destroyer force in 'The Slot'. At 0110, Honolulu opened fire on a Sendai-class light cruiser. After three salvos, the target burst into flames and was soon dead in the water. Honolulu shifted fire to an enemy destroyer, which was immediately hit and disappeared. At 0211, a torpedo struck the starboard side of Honolulu, blowing a hole in her hull. The task force then retired to Tulagi for temporary repairs, and then departed for the large naval base at Pearl Harbor. On 16 August, Honolulu arrived at Pearl Harbor for major repairs. She then proceeded to the shipyard at Mare Island, near San Francisco, for more work."

(INCOMING continued....)



~ Arty Gives Credit to Editor's Wife ~

Hi and thanks to "Reggie" for the newsletter. Always suspected she was the genius behind the scenes.

Skip Kniley
B/D/3/319th

Our reply: Skip: Reggie's just a proofreader and a Leg to boot, / do all the work!!!! Geez. Smitty ☺



**Leg Reggie Smith with the blasters on Cocoa Beach
at 2/503 reunion in '06.**

~ More On The Cocoa Beach Reunion & Jump ~

A funny note, not sure if you remember; Louie Zucco is holding that bottle (pictured top right), I jumped it in for him. The half-full bottle was pulled right out of the personal stock Cabbage Case Bar backstage of the Big & Rich guys during a concert. Maker's Mark was a favorite of those guys that sang our song. They had great taste.

Lou and I still talk about Andy Russel's wife, Ray, with great appreciation. In all that commotion on the beach we both noticed how she and Andy walked up and she asked, "Can we join you for a pull?" (or something like that). That gal has spunk and spirit, so much we recall her whenever we rehash that day. Andy has a great gal.



And here's our good buddy, Skip, third from right after he and his troopers safely landed on the sand during one of two 2/503 reunions in Cocoa Beach, Florida, this one in '06. From L-R: Rusty Trapp, (1st Cav); Mike Johnson, (173d LRRP); Louie Zucco, (2/503); Skip, (319th); and Andy Russel (2/503) with his bride Ray. As we were walking off the beach, two young, bikini-clad local girls were heard to say, "Where are the young paratroopers?" No shit. Ed



A few years later in February 2019, found these two Skysoldierettes Ray Russell (L) & Reggie Smith at Port Canaveral, Florida posing to impress in front of the *Anthem of the Seas*, one of world's largest cruise ships.

BTW, nice page for Roy Scott (Page 15, Issue 85). That was a hard one to see. I was with his wife, Jessica, in the ICU when they did the DNR. Loved that guy, a real tough boy scout all his life. Great cop. Jessica had me speak at the church (surprised the building didn't take lightening). It is a very nice opportunity whenever you lose someone you care about. Of course the 173d Chapter 17 gang was there to join the procession in uniform.

I am getting Roy's family together in June for an unveiling of a brick I bought for him at the Mott's Military Museum.

Skip Kniley
B/D/3/319th

(INCOMING continued....)



~ A Cowboy's Bride ~

Good Day Sir: Thank you for including the memorial to my husband, **Joe McHenry**, in the recent issue (No. 85). I am wondering if this is printed in hard copy and if so, I would like to order several (20) copies for family and friends. Please let me know the cost. It was such a wonderful surprise to find it online today.

I know you have included articles about this battle in previous articles and quoted the other pilot, Tony Geishauser; I am looking for his contact information as well and would appreciate any assistance in finding him please. My trail ends in Tyler/Austin, Texas.

Thank you again for honoring the love of my life! I appreciate all of your time and assistance.

Respectfully,

Michele Neptune McHenry

Our Reply

Dear Michele, thank you for writing. I was truly saddened to learn of the passing of your husband, Joe. I didn't know your husband personally, but wish I had.

As you know, he, Tony Geishauser and I and many others spent a fateful day together in the jungles of Vietnam on March 16, 1966, when their Huey was shot down within our perimeter, a scene I remember to this day. Their being shot down resulted in our keeping our lines in place which allowed us to fight off an enemy three-times our size who had us surrounded, likely saving the lives of hundreds of men of the 2/503d by keeping us from splitting-up into smaller units. The fond memory of Joe will forever remain in the annals of our battalion.

To print and mail 20 copies of the entire newsletter would be cost prohibitive. In fact, it would be substantially less costly if you were to purchase a small color printer and print copies yourself as needed. What I would like to do at no cost is mail you 20 copies of Pages 66-69, which includes the tribute to Joe. Please send me your mail address and I'll get them off to you within a couple days.

Our newsletter often includes information of interest and importance to surviving spouses...please let me know if you'd care to receive future issues by email.

Tony is a close friend, and I know he'll be thrilled to talk with you. He held your husband in the highest regard. Tony's email and phone are: You'll see I've copied Tony to our notes.

Thanks again Michele, and reading about Joe, I understand how he was the love of your life. Best regards,

Lew "Smitty" Smith, Editor

Note: Tony and Michele spoke by phone.

~ Downed Chopper ~

Look at the picture Michele McHenry just sent me. I'm in the middle of this picture and Joe is on the right. Don't know who the other fellow is. You can click on the picture to make it much bigger. That's our downed bird we are next to.

Kind of amazing to still be getting pictures and bits of information 53 years after our little adventure took place at LZ Zulu Zulu.

**Tony Geishauser
Cowboys**



March 16, 1966, LZ Zulu Zulu, Operation Silver City

~ Keeper of the Flag ~

Gang, as you might have seen from the financial report our own **MICHAEL GULLO** of Louisville, Kentucky is hands down this year's *Keeper of the Flag*. His donations to the Chapter exceeded all others. I should have presented the flag to him by now but this Reunion thing has me spinning in every direction.

Michael, thanks again for your generous donations. Take an example from Michael and let's keep it going for all the Chapter members. I'll get with Michael and plan a trip to Louisville.

**Bill Terry
A/3/319**



(INCOMING continued....)



~ Inquiry ~

Hello. I'm trying to help my friend find out which battalion and brigade his father was in. His name was **David Melson** and served in the 173rd Air Cavalry from October 1965-October 1966. Is there any way you could assist me with this information or point me in the direction of whom I would need to contact?

Additional information that I have been able to gather: DOB 4/18/1944. I've attached a photo of Mr. Melson. Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Jennifer A. Swiney

Email: jswiney2@cherrycreekschools.org



Dave with a little friend.

Note: Any troopers who remember Dave, please contact Jennifer at her email address above. Thanks.

~ Remembering Our 2/503 RTO's ~

In addition to the memories presented on Pages 66-85 herein, we also heard from a couple Sky Soldier brothers from sister units, below. Ed

~ Was Better Suited For Point ~

I carried the Prick 25 on my first team. I had the little antenna plus that goddam long whip, and also about 100 feet of commo wire. They told us the commo wire would give us a good ground plane, and increase our range, but they didn't bother to explain how to deploy it.

I remember one night having to shinny up a goddam tree to hang the wire, and it didn't work for shit. Later on I found out that I was just supposed to lay it out on the ground. Well, anyway, I was working my primary MOS (ground-pounder), and had never been to radio school, so shitforbrains was my normal state of mind.

Oh, and one time I had to run for the chopper with that goddam whip still on the radio. I think pieces of it still grace some clearing near the Song Be.

Next team, though, I told the TL that I didn't want the goddam radio, so he put me on point, a job that better suited my lizard brain.

Kudos to the RTOs, and all their networky friends (you know, TAC air, Arty, and the like).

Mark Carter

173d LRRP



LRRPs Lincer on left, Mark on right.
(Maybe someone stole their tent?)

~ What's That? ~

I was an RTO in D/3-503 in '68 and '69. One day while waiting for the birds to come in I was kicked back, listening to the Alpha/Golf net when I heard a call for dust off from one of our sister companies. A slick in the air responded and asked for a location.

It was fairly apparent that the RTO was not too experienced. It became more obvious when the pilot asked for a short count so he could vector in and the RTO said, "What's that?" The pilot patiently explained that the young man should count to five and then back to zero. The RTO said, "Roger".

What followed was a brief period of dead air followed by the RTO coming back on and asking if that helped. The pilot, after a brief period of silence, said, "Son, you've got to key the mike."

Tom Hanson, D/3/503
Chapter 30, Columbia, SC

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



~ 1st Bat Guy Remembered ~

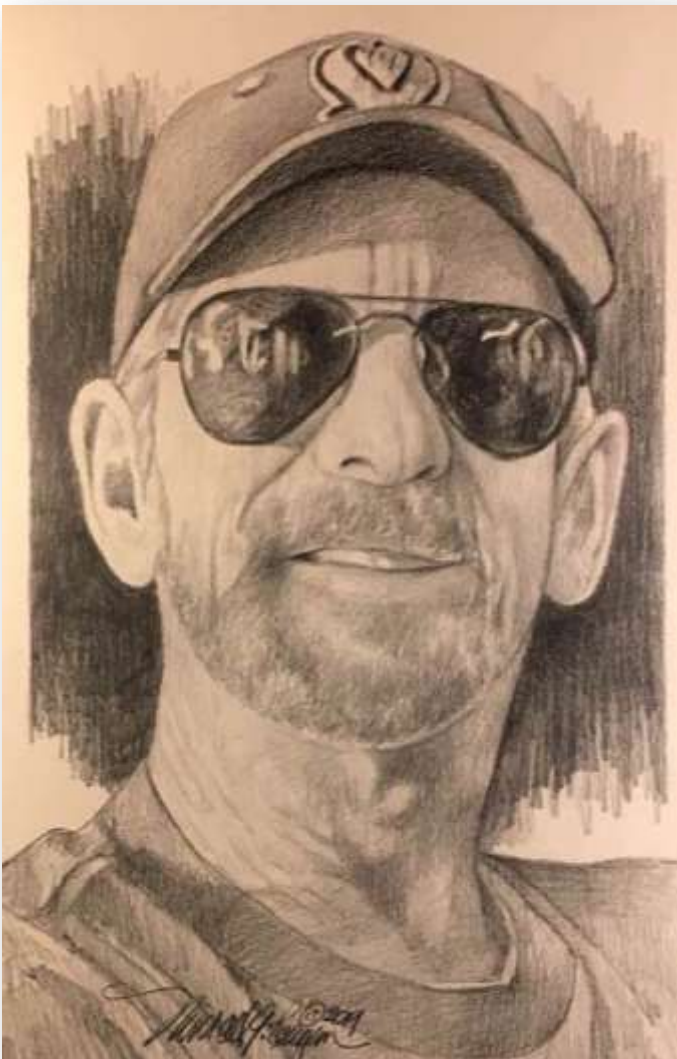
Many of you will recall we recently lost our good buddy and brother **Craig Ford**, C/1/503, and as the only Sky Soldier from 1st Battalion who returned to Vietnam in '01 with a squad of 2/503 troopers we gave him the nickname *1st Bat Guy*, which he liked. His bride Pat sent in the note and image below. *Lest we forget.* Ed

"I wanted to share with you this wonderful artwork which was a beautiful present I received from a local Marine Vietnam Vet artist. I had no clue this was coming. It is such an honor for Mike Reagan, the Artist, and Craig (for this to have been featured on local t.v.) on National Vietnam Veterans Day. Hope you enjoy it.

Oh, and our oldest grandson is at Benning finishing up Basic and AIT. Then on to Airborne school."

Pat Ford

Mrs. 1st Bat Guy



The late Craig Ford, Sky Soldier extraordinaire.

Pat. Let me know when your grandson graduates jump school and we'll try to get some of Craig's 173d buddies there for the ceremony. Ed

~ The Passing of Karen Reister & Buddies ~

Floyd notified me of Karen's passing a few days ago. I sent notice to all on my 173d email list.

The news really hit me hard as I've always thought the world of both Floyd and Karen. Both worked tirelessly over the years in supporting brigade functions which included hosting the 3 Rochester reunions and being part of the 173d Memorial Committee. I truly respected and loved both of them.



Karen, the love of Floyd's life.

It was just a few days ago that Bill Delia (B/1/503d) passed away and Bill was a dear friend who spent hospital time with me in Japan after we were wounded on Hill 65 during Operation Hump. It seems the 1/503d roster is rapidly dwindling as within the last year Ray Marshall, Ross Redding, Bill Delia, Don Dali, Craig Ford and I'm sure others I haven't been notified of have made their last jump. And now Karen who I'll certainly miss as much as any veteran Skysoldier.

Take care friend,

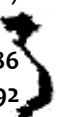
Dutch Holland
B/1/503

(INCOMING continued....)



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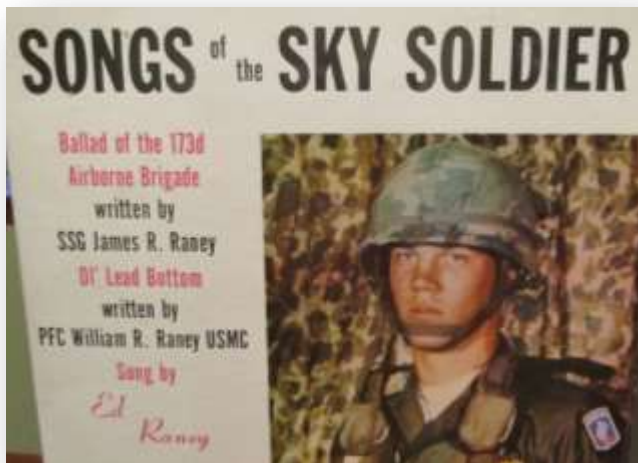
~ Songs by Sky Soldiers ~

I seem to recall a 45 record something like *Legend of the 173d*, but haven't ever seen it since. Didn't buy it in Nam.

This one came about reading a story and I went on Amazon and found this one brand new still sealed in plastic wrap - an album record. Bought it for \$24 + S&H. Might be a nice memory insert in your next newsletter. Only one. Might find another sooner or later on the Internet or in an old record shop since vinyl's are making their way back.

Take care bro.

Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503



Our reply:

Thanks Jerry. No, never saw that one. In addition to the *November 8th* song by the group Big & Rich, the best Sky Soldier song I ever heard was written and sung by **Richard Ware**, A/2/503.

During one of the two 2/503 reunions we held in Cocoa Beach, FL, we procured a copy of Richard's piece for all registered Sky Soldiers. Don't know if Richard is still making the song available, but anyone interested can email me and I'll pass requests on to him.

rto173@att.net Ed



L-R: A/2/503 troopers Jack "Jackattack" Ribera, Mike Sturges & Richard Ware.

~ Letter From A Brother ~

Dear Friends, we don't usually get to face our mortality until the very end. Sadly, I know what is going to kill me, barring a car crash or something else unexpected, cancer has spread into my bones and it is apparently not curable. I'll try to take advantage of the best medicine until the end, but it's coming. I'm sorry for all my misdeeds in life, and there were plenty of them. Hopefully those I've wronged can forgive me. I'll continue to do as much volunteer work to benefit the community as I can. Mostly I'm saddened for my beautiful and wonderful wife **Toni**, who is the absolute love of my life.



Hugh in Vietnam

**Hugh "Hubie" Imhof
N/75 Rangers, RVN**

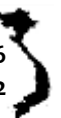


Hugh, with Toni, the absolute love of his life.

Hugh: We old Vietnam combat Vets have been on borrowed bonus time for 50+ years. Always wondering why we were allowed to live when so many of our Brothers did not. I admire the way you have lived your life as well as the dignified way you are approaching the end. Death, is in fact, the final chapter in life. Take advantage of the time you have left with the people you love and do so as pain free as possible. If there is an afterlife, you will stand tall with our Brothers and will be well received.

Roger Dick, C/2/503

Keep up the good fight, Hubie, and thanks Roger, for speaking for us all. **Lew**



Old Men Making War

File/Date/Subj/SubCat: 4/65

#99

Taylor Cable to Washington on Step-Up in Ground Forces

Cablegram April 17, 1965, from Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor in Saigon to Secretary of State Dean Rusk; with a copy to the White House for the attention of McGeorge Bundy.



"Taylor was of crucial importance during the first weeks and months of the Vietnam War. Whereas initially President Kennedy told Taylor that *'the independence of South Vietnam rests with the people and government of that country,'* Taylor soon recommended that 8,000 American combat troops be sent to the region at once. After making his report to the Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff, Taylor reflected on the decision to send troops to South Vietnam: *'I don't recall anyone who was strongly against, except one man, and that was the President. The President just didn't want to be convinced that this was the right thing to do... It was really the President's personal conviction that U.S. ground troops shouldn't go in.'*"



"McGeorge "Mac" Bundy (March 30, 1919 – September 16, 1996) was an American expert in foreign and defense policy, serving as United States National Security Advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson from 1961 through 1966. He was president of the Ford Foundation from 1966 through 1979. Despite his career as a foreign-policy intellectual, educator, and philanthropist, he is best remembered as one of the chief architects of the United States' escalation of the Vietnam War during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations."

This message undertakes to summarize instruction which I have received over the last ten days with regard to the introduction of third-country combat forces and to discuss the preferred way of presenting the subject to GVN.

As the result of the meeting of the President and his advisors on April 1 and the NSC meeting on the following day, I left Washington and returned to Saigon with the understanding that the reinforcement of the Marines already ashore by two additional BLT's and a F-4 squadron and the progressive introduction of IIAWPNNPP support forces were approved but that decision on the several proposals for bringing in more U.S. combat forces and their possible modes of employment was withheld in an offensive counter-insurgency role....

(continued....)



....State was to explore with the Korean, Australian and New Zealand govts the possibility of rapid deployment of significant combat elements in parallel with the Marine reinforcement.



Life Magazine cover image of U.S. Marines coming ashore in Vietnam. "The USS *Henrico*, *Union*, and *Vancouver*, carrying the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brig. Gen. Frederick J. Karch, take up stations 4,000 yards off Red Beach Two, north of Da Nang. First ashore was the Battalion Landing Team 3/9, which arrived on the beach at 8:15 a.m. Wearing full battle gear and carrying M-14s, the Marines were met by sightseers, South Vietnamese officers, Vietnamese girls with leis, and four American soldiers with a large sign stating: 'Welcome, Gallant Marines.' Gen. William Westmoreland, senior U.S. military commander in Saigon, was reportedly 'appalled' at the spectacle because he had hoped that the Marines could land without any fanfare. Within two hours, Battalion Landing Team 1/3 began landing at Da Nang air base."

Since arriving home, I have received the following instructions and have taken the indicated actions with respect to third-country combat forces.

April 6 and 8. Received GVN concurrence to introduction of the Marine reinforcements and to an expanded mission for all Marines in Danang-Phu Bai area.

April 8. Received Deptel 2229 directing approach to GVN, suggesting request to Australian govt for an infantry battalion for use in SVN. While awaiting a propitious moment to raise the matter, I received Deptel 2237 directing approach be delayed until further orders. Nothing further has been received since.

April 14. I learned by JCS 009012 to Cincpac of apparent decision to deploy 173rd airborne brigade immediately to Bien Hoa-Vung Tau. By Embtel 3373, delay in this deployment was urgently recommended but no reply has been received. However, Para 2 of Doc 152337 apparently makes reference to this project in terms which suggest that is something less than as an approved immediate action. In view of the uncertainty of its status, I have not broached the matter with Quat.



Sky Soldiers of the 2/503 arrive Bien Hoa Airport, May 1965.
(Photo by Bn CO LTC George Dexter)

April 15. Received Deptel 2314 directing that embassy Saigon discuss with GVN introduction of Rok regimental combat team and suggest GVN request such a force Asap. Because of Quat's absence from Saigon, I have not been able to raise matter. As matter of fact, it should not be raised until we have a clear concept of employment.

April 16. I have just seen state-defense message Dod 152339 cited above which indicates a favourable attitude toward several possible uses of U.S. combat forces beyond the NSC decisions of April 2. I am told to discuss these and certain other non-military matters urgently with Quat. The substance of this cable will be addressed in a separate message. I cannot raise these matters with Quat without further guidance.

(continued....)



Faced with this rapidly changing picture of Washington desires and intentions with regard to the introduction of third-country (as well as U.S.) combat forces, I badly need a clarification of our purposes and objectives. Before I can present our case to GVN, I have to know what that case is and why. It is not going to be easy to get ready concurrence for the large-scale introduction of foreign troops unless the need is clear and explicit.



1965: “Phan Huy Quát (Hà Tĩnh Province, 12 June 1908 – 27 April 1979) served as acting Prime Minister of the State of Vietnam and also as Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam. “

Let me suggest the kind of instruction to the AMN which it would be most helpful to receive for use in presenting to GVN what I take to be a new policy of third-country participation in ground combat.

“The USG has completed a thorough review of the situation in SVN both in its national and international aspects and has reached certain important conclusions. It feels that in recent weeks there has been a somewhat favourable change in the overall situation as the result of the air attacks on DRV, the relatively small but numerous successes in the field against the VC and the encouraging progress of the Quat govt. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that, in all probability, the primary objective of the GVN and the USG of changing the will of the DRV to support the VC insurgency cannot be attained in an acceptable time-frame by the methods presently

employed. The air campaign in the North must be supplemented by signal successes against the VC on the South before we can hope to create that frame of mind in Hanoi which will lead to the decision we seek.

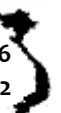
“The JCS have reviewed the military resources which will be available in SVN by the end of 1965 and have concluded that even with an attainment of the highest feasible mobilization goals, ARVN will have insufficient forces to carry out the kind of successful campaign against the VC which is considered essential for the purposes discussed above. If the ground war is not to drag into 1966 and even beyond, they consider it necessary to reinforce GVN ground forces with about 23 battalion equivalents in addition to the forces now being recruited in SVN. Since these reinforcements cannot be raised by the GVN, they must inevitably come from third-country sources.

“The USG accepts the validity of this reasoning of the JCS and offers its assistance to the GVN to raise these additional forces for the purpose of bringing the VC insurgency to an end in the shortest possible time. We are prepared to bring in additional U.S. ground forces provided we can get a reasonable degree of participation from other third countries. If the GVN will make urgent representations to them, we believe it entirely possible to obtain the following contributions; Korea, one regimental combat team; Australia, one infantry battalion; New Zealand, one battery and one company of tanks; PI, one battalion. If forces of the foregoing magnitude are forthcoming the USG is prepared to provide the remainder of the combat reinforcements as well as the necessary logistic personnel to support the third-country contingents. Also it will use its good offices as desired in assisting the GVN approach to these govts.

“You (the Ambassador) will seek the concurrence of the GVN to the foregoing program, recognizing that a large number of questions such as command relationships, concepts of employment and disposition of forces must be worked out subsequently.”

Armed with an instruction such as the foregoing, I would be adequately equipped to initiate what may be a sharp debate with the GVN. I need something like this before taking up the pending troop matters with Quat.

(Web photos & captions added)



Excerpt from 10 April 65 CINPAC message on deployment of the 173d Abn Bde to Vietnam...

Department of the Army
NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
MESSAGE CENTER

TOP SECRET
(Declassified)

FM CINCPAC
TO RUEKDA / JCS
INFO RUMSMA / COMM US MACV

DEPLOYMENT OF THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE

- A. CINCPAG LTR 3010 SER 000131 OF 10 APRIL 65
1. REF A RECOMMENDED DEPLOYMENT OF THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE TO THE BIEN HOA / VUNG TAU AREA WITHOUT DELAY TO CONDUCT SECURITY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS.
2. REF B CONTAINS COMUSMA CV RECOMMENDATION FOR DEPLOYMENT OF AN ARMY BRIGADE TO THE BIEN HOA / VUNG TAU AREA AFTER THE MARINE BRIGADE CLOSES IN THE DANANG / PHU BAI AREA.
3. IN REF C AMBASSADOR TAYLOR RECOMMENDS THAT LOGISTIC PREPARATIONS BE INITIATED AT ONCE TO PERMIT ESTABLISHMENT OF BRIGADE SIZED FORCES IN BOTH THE BIEN HOA / VUNG TAU AND QUI NHON AREAS.
4. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE BE INITIATED AT ONCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN REFS A AND B.
5. CONCURRENT ACTIONS SHOULD BE INITIATED TO PROVIDE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE IN VIETNAM BY A CONUS BASED U.S. ARMY BRIGADE IN ORDER TO RECONSTITUTE THE PACOM RESERVE.



Vietnamese welcome troops to Bien Hoa.
(Photo by 2/503 Bn CO, LTC George Dexter)

On retention of 173d Abn Bde in Vietnam...

Outgoing Telegram
Department of State
(Illegible date of Jun 19 xxx '65)
(Declassified 3/24/78)

Action: Amembassy SAIGON IMMEDIATE

Info: CINPAC, CONUSMACV, DOD, WHITE HOUSE
EXDIS: Joint STATE/DEFENSE

Reftel (b) gives a gross breakdown of the troops included in the public announcement. Further breakdown follows:

FORCES	APPROXIMATE STRENGTH		REMARKS
	Persons	Bns	
This in country on 16 June 1965	54,000	9	2 Bns 173d Bde 7 Bns XXX
Bde from 1st Div	4,000	3	ETA 15 Jul 65
Bde from 101st	4,200	3	ETA 26 Jul 65
Support forces of various types	9,000	-	Balance of those approved that are still enroute.
Miscellaneous units & personnel (including F-100 Sqdn to Clark for further move to SVN)	1,800	-	Units and augmented one recommended by CINPAC that have been under consideration since 15 May but not including new deployment discussed with Amb Taylor 7-12 June 1965.

The 16 June public announcement covered only deployments which already had Washington and GVN approval. These with the retention of the 173d Bde would result in an authorized in-country strength of approximately 74,000.

Maneuver battalions refer to type U.S. battalion, in this case Army airborne and infantry, as described by CONUSMACV in reftel (c).

If there are GVN questions concerning identity, missions, deployment times, and location of additional two brigades which in effect is retention of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, you should explain this retention still under study here. If we conclude this desirable, we will give you results that study to convey to GVN at same time we consult with them on whether they agree retention required. GP-3 End

(Copy Lyndon B. Johnson Library)



173rd Airborne Brigade Arrives

By SFC Tony Bermudez
May 8, 1965

BIEN HOA (IO) -- The first U.S. Army combat troops to be committed to Vietnam -- the 173rd Airborne Brigade arrived here on Wednesday via C-130 Hercules and C-123 Providers from Okinawa.

The men of the brigade will be utilized to provide increased security for the airfields located at Bien Hoa and Vung Tau. Their presence here will free more Vietnamese troops for combat missions.

The brigade is composed of three battalions and support troops, to include an armor and an engineer company. It is commanded by Brig. Gen. Ellis W. Williamson.

The first elements of the brigade were greeted by Gen. W.C. Westmoreland, COMUS MACV, Maj. Gen. Richard G. Stilwell, Chief of Staff, MACV, and Brig. Gen. John Norton, CG, USASCV.

The 173d, formerly the 2d Airborne Battle Group (Reinforced), 503d Infantry Combat Team, was activated with its present designation, in June, 1963.

The 503d Infantry is a veteran of four WWII campaigns; New Guinea, Leyte, Luzon, and Southern Philippines. It has been awarded the following streamers: Distinguished Unit Citation (CORREGIDOR), Philippine Unit Citation (with wreath), New Guinea (with wreath), Leyte (with wreath), Luzon (with wreath), Southern Philippines (with wreath), Combat Infantry Regiment, and STRAC award for being the superior unit of 1959.

Four-time winner of the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action in World War II and the Korean War, General Williamson assumed command of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) in July 1963. Prior to his assignment in Okinawa he served three years with the Office of the Deputy Chief Staff for Personnel, Department of the Army.

General Williamson was born in Raeford, N.C., on June 2, 1918. He graduated from Atlantic College, N.C. in 1940, with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He began his career with the North Carolina National Guard in Sept. 1940 and was commissioned a second lieutenant of Infantry in March 1941.

Rising from private to regimental Commander in World War II, General Williamson was integrated into the Regular Army in 1964. During the Korean War he participated in the amphibious landing at Inchon and served 20 months as Assistant G-3 of X Corps.



BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT -- Fully combat geared paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade lug duffle bags on their shoulders after disembarking from USAF C-123 Providers at Bien Hoa. A similar advance contingent also arrived at Vung Tau early Wednesday morning.

(USASCVIO Photo by Capt. Don Adams)

General Williamson is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kans., Armed Forces Staff College and the National War College. He also earned a Master of Science degree in International Affairs at George Washington University.

Among his numerous awards, General Williamson has been awarded the Bronze Star with 2 OLC; Purple Heart with 2 OLC; Legion of Merit with 1 OLC; Air Medal; Combat Infantryman's Badge, British Distinguished Service Order and the French Croix de Guerre.

General Williamson is married to the former Margaret McNeill of Charlotte, N.C., and has two children, Dan and Nan.

Source:

The Reporter

Volume I, No. 13 – Tan Son Nhut, Viet Nam – May 8, 1965



New UH – 1D Helicopters Co Operational in Vietnam

By Sp5 Bob Boha



IROQUOIS IN VIETNAM – CWO William E. Crothers (Left) and 1st Lt. Edward T. Pledger (Center) piloted the first UH-1D to set down in Vung Tau. The crew chief is SSgt. Richard L. Lusby. All are members of "A" Co., 1st Avn. Bn.

(Photo by USASCV-IO Maj. Ralph E. Ropp)

VUNG TAU/ (IO) – A total of 77 UH-1D's flew off the USS Iwo Jima on May 1st to this airfield. The UH-1D Iroquois arrived here after a 21-day sea voyage and will comprise three Air Mobile Helicopter Companies. The new arrivals were welcomed by Brig. Gen. John Norton, CG, USASCV.

The UH-1D Iroquois is the first of its kind in Viet Nam. It has set 21 world records; it has reached an altitude of 35,150 feet ... about four miles higher than Pikes Peak. Its capability for surprise assault tactics provides a faster mission response and a more adequate evasive action. Its range is 345 statute miles. In addition it seats nine plus a crew of four.

The first aircraft in land in Vung Tau was piloted by CWO William E. Crothers and co-piloted by 1st Lt. Edward T. Pledger. The crew chief was SSgt. Richard L. Lusby. All are assigned to "A" Company, 1st Aviation Battalion.

The new units are "A" Companies of the 1st Avn. Bn., the 82nd Avn. Bn. and the 101st Avn. Bn.

The "A" Co., 1st Avn Bn., commanded by Maj. William W. Deloach, comes from Ft. Riley, Kans., and will be assigned to the 52nd Avn. Bn., stationed at Ban Me Thuot.

"A" Co., 101st, commanded by Maj. Wayne E. Dutton, is assigned to the 13th Avn., Bn., stationed at Soe Trang. The Unit came from Ft. Campbell, Kentucky.



AFTER 21 DAYS AT SEA – The men of the three new UH-1D Air Mobile Companies arrive at Vung Tau via LCU's after a 21 day voyage aboard the aircraft Carrier USS Iwo Jima.

(Photo by USASCV-IO Maj. Ralph E. Ropp)

Source:

The Reporter

Volume I, No. 13 – Tan Son Nhut, Viet Nam – May 8, 1965



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLE GRAM

Dated: 30th April, 1965, 1730. Rec'd: 1st May, 1965, 0435

From: Australian Embassy, SAIGON.

429 SECRET
(Declassified)

Australian Battalion

Westmoreland called 29th April at Taylor's request to raise several points concerning Australian Battalion. I told him that most of these matters were subject of discussion in Washington but that I would report his enquiries.

2. Westmoreland said the Battalion would probably now be deployed at Bien Hoa. They would be working with two battalions of the 173rd Airborne (sic) Brigade.

3. Westmoreland asked first about our attitude to his idea of organizing international mobile security task force. He said that in Bien Hoa – Vung Tau area it would be preferable (at least in the first instance) to include only American, and some Korean troops. He hoped some Vietnamese might be added later but Vietnamese were not willing to accept American command at present. He still favoured idea of international force nevertheless, but had not approached Koreans pending our reaction.

4. Westmoreland then raised question of role of battalion duties which it might and might not undertake. When I outlined position as set out paragraph 7 your 399 he asked.

(a) Whether any inhibitions would be placed on use of Battalion in combat e.g. in Heliborn operations.

(b) Whether some element could undertake any "civic action" tasks in Government controlled villages – not as part of pacification program but on Ad Hoc project basis. As examples he cited bridge repair work by Pioneer Platoon and assistance by medical orderlies, and,

(c) Whether Battalion might be re-deployed elsewhere in country from initial deployment area should situation make this desirable and subject to necessary prior consultation.

5. I said these were all questions on which Government decisions would be needed. As regards 4(b) my own view was that we would need to explore

question very thoroughly and carefully with Vietnamese authorities before any civic action work was undertaken in Government-controlled villages. Military Attache' and I doubt whether Battalion would in any case have sufficient specialist personnel to undertake such tasks. As to 4(c) Battalion could only operate as part of large United States combat force.

6. Westmoreland said he would appreciate early advice of E.T.A. Australian Planning Team. Planning Team for 173rd Brigade had already been quietly brought in.

Anderson,

Source: Australian Archives

Footnote Added Here

"On 29 April 1965, Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced that the government had received a request for further military assistance from South Vietnam. *'We have decided...in close consultation with the Government of the United States—to provide an infantry battalion for service in Vietnam.'* He argued that a communist victory in South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia. *'It must be seen as part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans'* he added.

The issue of whether a formal request was made by the South Vietnamese government at this time has been disputed, however. Although the South Vietnamese Prime Minister, Trần Văn Hương, made a request in December 1964, Hương's replacement, Phan Huy Quát, had to be *'coerced into accepting an Australian battalion'* and stopped short of formally requesting the commitment in writing, simply sending an acceptance of the offer to Canberra the day before Menzies announced it to the Australian parliament. In this regard it has been argued that the decision was made by Australian politicians against advice of the Department of Defence, to coincide with the commitment of US combat troops earlier in the year, and that the decision would have been made regardless of the wishes of the South Vietnamese government,"

Footnote Source: Wikipedia



VA publishes interim final rule on cash-out home loans to further protect Veterans

February 19, 2019

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it has published an interim final rule relating to VA-guaranteed cash-out refinance loans to further protect Veteran home-loan borrowers from predatory lending practices. This rule implements certain provisions of the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, and provides new regulatory safeguards relating to VA-guaranteed cash-out refinance loans. Such loans generally allow borrowers to convert home equity into cash.

In many cases, the principal balance of the new refinance loan is larger than the payoff amount of the loan being refinanced. This means the Veteran will generally receive some amount of cash at closing. The cash can then be used at the Veteran's discretion to pay off debt, fund education, make home improvements and more.

VA's cash-out home-loan program can also be used to refinance a non-VA loan into a VA-guaranteed loan. Certain borrowers can use VA-guaranteed cash-out refinance loans to borrow up to 100 percent of the value of their home.

"VA has taken significant steps to make the home-loan benefit the most competitive loan program available to Veterans," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "We want to ensure the home-loan program remains strong, attractive and accessible to all who are eligible, while creating a framework for lender accountability to Veterans and taxpayers."

The rule will help protect Veterans from predatory refinance practices and minimize risk to taxpayers and the secondary mortgage market. For example, the rule specifically requires that lenders disclose clearly, both at the time of application and again at closing, a plain comparison of the existing loan's cost with that of the new loan. These disclosures will help Veterans understand the impact of the refinance loan. This is in line with VA's current policy on Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loans....

Questions about the VA Home Loan Program should call 877-827-3702. For more information on the VA Home Loan program, visit:

www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/

Copter Crew Saves 5

DAK TO, Vietnam (IO) – A fast-acting team from the 335th Assault Helicopter Co., 173d Airborne Brigade, rescued five paratroopers on a rugged hillside in a suspected enemy area.

Shortly after daybreak, Warrant Officers James E. Burke and Fred R. Ungerer picked up a distress signal from the stricken ship. They immediately set out for the area where the chopper had gone down.

Within minutes, they were circling high above the burning wreckage. They swept down in search of survivors, and sighted the small group huddled in the brush dangerously close to their burning ship.

Burke and Ungerer hovered their helicopter a few hundred feet upwind from the downed aircraft only to be rocked by a secondary explosion as the flaming ship's fuel tanks burst.

They moved further upwind from the hazardous flames and set their helicopter on the ground.

They found the ship's commander had been seriously injured. With their assistance, all were aboard the rescue ship in a matter of minutes.

They lifted out of the dense brush and raced toward the 173d Airborne Brigade medical clearing station at Dak To.

Fifteen minutes after they had heard the distress signal, the rescue mission successfully came to an end.

Source:

Pacific Stars & Stripes

Tuesday, Sept. 26, 1967



Cowboys of the 335th AHC in action with the 2/503d, 1966.

(Photo by Lew Smith)



No Action



"Paratroopers of 2nd Bn, 503rd Inf, 173rd AB Bde, 25 miles north of Qui Nhon." (web photo)



"Military personnel, infantry. Operation Dayton - PFC David H. Hess, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade on Recon Patrol. Location: Long Khan Province, Vietnam." (Photographer: James Hatton)

VA to provide capability for Veterans to access their VA health data on Apple iPhones

February 11, 2019

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will release new capabilities this summer providing Veterans who receive care at VA with the ability to access their personal medical data using the Health Records on iPhone feature from Apple.

Veterans will see an aggregated view of their allergies, conditions, immunizations, lab results, medications, procedures and vitals in the Health app on their iPhone. Health Records on iPhone also brings together hospitals and clinics outside VA with the existing Apple Health app. Veterans can see their available medical data from multiple providers, including VA, whenever they choose.

Read entire report at:

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5199

Statement from Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick M. Shanahan and Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson on the Delivery of the Legislative Proposal to Congress for the U.S. Space Force

03/01/2019

Statement from Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick M. Shanahan and Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson on the Delivery of the Legislative Proposal to Congress for the U.S. Space Force.

The Pentagon announced today the delivery of the legislative proposal to Congress on the establishment of the Space Force.

Attributed to Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick M. Shanahan: *"This is an historic moment for our nation. The Department of Defense's legislative proposal to establish the United States Space Force as the sixth branch of the Armed Forces is a strategic step towards securing America's vital national interests in space. Our approach follows President Trump's bold vision for space and commits resources to deliver more capability faster, ensuring the United States can compete, deter, and, if needed, win in a complex domain."*

Attributed to Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson: *"We will continue to be the best in the world at space and establishing a dedicated space force strengthens our ability to deter, compete and win in space."*

Source: DoD New Release





History of the Cowboys

(Excerpts, Unclassified)

Company A, 82nd Aviation Battalion
335th Assault Helicopter Company
145th Combat Aviation Battalion
173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)
APO San Francisco 96227



To: Commanding Officer

May 1 thru 31, 1966

Prepared by

Captain Donald L. Peters

Approved by

Larry J. Baughman, Major Infantry

6. OPERATIONS

a. Company A, 82nd Aviation Battalion started the month of May by supporting the 1st Infantry Division at Tay Ninh on operation "Birmingham." Eight UH-1D's and one Light Fire Team, after performing six extractions while attached to the 11th Aviation Battalion at Tay Ninh, remained over night at a forward area south of Tay Ninh to prepare for one of the largest heliborne assaults in Vietnam up to that date.



Cowboys combat assault

(Image from the 173rd Airborne Brigade's yearbook from 1966 and 1967 by Tillman Jeffrey)

b. On 3 May 1966, Company "A" was planning for Operation "Dexter", a search and clear operation Northeast of Bien Hoa. The next day Company "A", attached to the 145th Aviation Battalion, air lifted 457 troops from the Snake Pit to the operation area. On this day aircraft number 614 received two hits on the approach into LZ "Diamond" in the heart of the operational area – there were no injuries. Also on this day A/C #918, Falcon 87, was hit while making a firing pass on a target that had been firing at aircraft all that day. The aircraft caught fire on the way down but was landed successfully in a rice paddy (sic) despite (sic) the

intense flames. The aircraft burned and became a total loss – there were no injuries. At 1600 hours on 5 May 1966, an alert was called. The Cowboy's plus attachments were combat ready by 1615 hours. A briefing for all detachments and platoon leaders was given on the physical security plan for the Company. On 6 May 1966, Operation "Dexter" ended with the Cowboys attached to the 145th Aviation Battalion. Seven lifts were made out of LZ "Diamond." Six Cowboy Aircraft were hit by enemy ground fire during the extraction. One man was wounded by shrapnel.



2/503 troops at the 'Snake Pit' at Bien Hoa AFB, '66.

(LTC George Dexter, Bn CO, photo collection)

c. From the period 6 May 66 to 9 May 66, the Cowboys were attached to the 11th Aviation Battalion on Operation "Birmingham" at Tay Ninh. On 9 May, the Cowboys completed their part in Operation "Birmingham" by resupplying elements of the 1st Infantry Division. At 1500 the Cowboys started their logistical task. The last ship came back to the corral at 2030 hours. The Cowboys carried 65 passengers, 32 tons of cargo, and flew 268 sorties in that short span of time.

d. The next day the Cowboys were alerted to be ready to bring a security force from the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) to a point North West of Vung Tau where a CH-47 helicopter had crashed. The security Force never had to go because the Chinook was destroyed by fire. At 2300 hours that evening the CO was notified to be ready to move to the Song Be area in support of the 2/503....

(continued....)



....Intelligence reports stated that elements of the 101st had pushed a badly beaten force of VC to a point between Song Be and an area about 25K's to the north. The 2/503 was called upon to prevent the VC from moving any farther south and to squeeze them in between the 101st and themselves. After preparation was made, the Cowboys moved out early the next morning. A part of the Cowboys was left behind to participate in Operation "Hardihood", a 173rd Airborne Brigade effort to the Northeast of Vung Tau. On the first combat assault at Song Be the Cowboys received automatic weapons fire from a tree line while on short final to LZ in a mountain village. A crew chief, Sp/4 Woodrum, was hit in the chest from enemy ground fire. He was quickly evacuated to the rear area at Bien Hoa. The bullet punctured a small portion (5%) of his lung and went completely through his spleen. His is now recuperating and is expected to be back within a few months. On 12 May 1966, three UH-1D's and one Light Fire Team deployed a long range patrol into a dense jungle area to the Northwest of Song Be, near the Cambodian border. Three separate locations were chosen and at sunset the three UH-1D's completed their mission. The next day the Cowboys returned from Son Be and prepared for Operation "Hardihood".



Operation Hardihood.
(Jack Ribera, A/2/503, photo)

e. On 15 May 1966, Falcon 21 and 22 fire teams were scrambled to a location North of Tan Uyen. VC were reported in a rubber plantation. The Falcons struck the area and three confirmed VC were found dead.

f. 17 May 1966 saw the start of Operation "Hardihood" for the Cowboys. On the initial combat assault one Falcon ship was hit twice in the main rotor blades. On a resupply mission on the 18th of May 1966, Aircraft number 609 was hit four times forcing it down into an LZ. It had been hit in the transmission twice and was barely flyable. WO Harwell elected to fly the aircraft to Vung Tau because the unit in the LZ had to move on thereby leaving an aircraft in an unsecure area. He made the flight without incident. The gunner on the aircraft received minor wounds from shrapnel. On the 19th of May A/C #945 took 5 hits while escorting a "Dust Off" medevac ship into a forward area. There were no injuries.



Cowboys medevac.
(Tillman Jeffrey photo)

g. On 25 May 1966 two UH-1D's conducted Long Range Patrol (LRP) Recovering Techniques in conjunction with E troop 17th Cav. Some of the techniques used were: rappelling from a 50 foot rope, using a rope ladder to climb out of an inaccessible area and using two 125 foot ropes to lift 2 personnel at one time out of a simulated unimproved area where a helicopter could not land and speed would be essential in recovering the personnel to keep them from falling into enemy hands.

h. On 30 May 1966, A/C #421, an CH-13, crashed in the forward Brigade CP area. Investigation is still underway at the time of this writing.

i. On 31 May 1966, an orientation class was given to newly arriving personnel into the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate). Approximately 200 people participated in the Airmobile Class. After the class, a demonstration ride was given to familiarize the new troops with loading and unloading during a combat assault.

(continued....)



June 1 thru 30, 1966

Prepared by

Capt. Donald L. Peters

Approved by

Ernest H. Johnson, Major Infantry, Commanding

1. OPERATIONS

a. Co A, 82nd Aviation Battalion began the month of June by continuing to support the 173d Abn Bde (Sep) in operation "Hardihood". During this period E/17th Cav with its attached Long Range Patrol, performed many reconnaissance type missions. The Long Range Patrol Teams are usually sent out in six (6) man elements. They are infiltrated at dusk by helicopter so that they may not be seen by the enemy. Two teams have been put in previously during this operation and were extracted on the second of June. At 1430 hrs on 2nd of June 66 one patrol was extracted on a PZ under fire. The LRP left three (3) dead V.C. in the PZ. That evening aircraft number 76 with Capt Peters as aircraft commander and 1st Lt Reush as pilot made an emergency extraction of an LRP at night under fire from a hole in the woods, about seventeen (17) kilometers North of the Fire Support Base. This marked the first successful completion of an LRP at night.

b. On 9 June 66 at 0400 hrs eight (8) UH-1D and two (2) Light Fire Teams left the corral at Bien Hoa enroute to a forward area about eight (8) kilometers northeast of Vung Tau. The "Cowboys" lifted one hundred ninety-eight (198) troops in three (3) LZ's. Two of the LZ's were unsecure. Under moon-light the "Cowboys" skillfully placed the troops into these LZ's making another "first" for A Co, 82nd Avn Bn. This was the first night combat assault in the III Corps area in the history of Vietnam. This also initiated operation "Hollandia", a search and destroy mission, in the mountain range East of Vung Tau.



Dust Off of C/2/503 WIA/KIA troopers during Operation Hollandia.

(Jack Leide, CO C/2/503, photo collection)

c. On 15 June 66 a scramble was called about 1545 hrs to have the "Cowboys" report to the forward area. Ten (10) UH01D's and two (2) Light Fire Teams quickly reacted to the situation. The "Cowboys" heli-lifted two hundred twenty-two (222) troops into an LZ to the South of Fire Support Base. This only proved the readiness of the "Cowboys" to react to any situation at any time. Operation "Hollandia" ended on the 18th of June 1966.

d. For the next four (4) days the "Cowboys" supported the 173d Abn Bde (Sep) on operation "Uniontown". This operation took place in Bde TAOR.

e. On the 20th of June 1966 the "Cowboys" supported the 13th Avn Bn at Soc Trang. The United States Navy had run aground a V.C. vessel full of weapons and ammunition. The "Cowboys" heli-lifted 390 ARVN troops to that location so that they could secure the area and keep the V.C. from obtaining the ammo and weapons. It was a very successful day for the United States Army in that they confiscated many tons of ammo and numerous Chinese and Russian weapons.

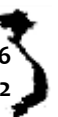
f. 21 June 1966 saw the start of operation "Yorktown", a search and destroy mission approximately seven (7) kilometers South of Xuan Loc. The remaining days of the month were spent in numerous combat assaults in the Yorktown TAOR.



"Evacuating our wounded on Operation Yorktown."

(Photo by Jack "Jackattack" Ribera, A/2/503)

(Photos added)



Purple Heart recipients added to VA priority claim process

March 8, 2019



VA Secretary Robert Wilkie was six-years old when his father came home after being gravely wounded during the invasion of Cambodia. His father spent years recovering from his combat injuries, and when he finally retired, Robert Wilkie, Sr. left service with two bad knees, needing two new hips, and with lead in his body leftover from that conflict in Southeast Asia.

His father's experience during those years greatly influence how Secretary Wilkie views VA's role in providing care and benefits to the men and women injured during their military service. To this day, he holds Purple Heart recipients, like his father, in especially high regard.

This is why he was so pleased to announce an amendment to the Veterans Benefit Administration's (VBA) priority processing categories earlier this week. ***"Those who hold the Purple Heart, the recognition of wounds taken in battle, will now receive priority consideration when it comes to claims before the Department of Veterans Affairs,"*** said Wilkie during recent testimony before the House Subcommittee of Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. With this amendment, Purple Heart recipients who submit **initial disability compensation claims** on or after April 1, 2019, will be added to nine categories of emergent claims requiring priority processing from VBA. These include claimants who are:

- in the Fully Developed Claim (FDC) Program
- homeless or experiencing extreme financial hardship
- terminally ill
- more than 85 years old, or
- survivors of a former Prisoner of War (FPOW).

Also, any current or former member of the Armed Forces, or survivor who was very seriously injured/ seriously injured (VSI/SI) in service and is not already receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability benefits

- is diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's Disease
- is an FPOW, or
- received the Medal of Honor

Purple Heart recipients are already treated on a priority basis at VA medical centers across the country, and are exempt from co-payments for their medical care. Including their initial disability claims in VBA's priority claims processing will further improve their overall experience with VA, and shows the department's commitment to improving the claims process.

Source:

www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/57062/purple-heart-recipients-added-vba-priority-claims/



4/503 GERONIMO LUNCH IN CHARLESTON

The 2019 Geronimo get-together will be Friday, June 7th, in North Charleston, SC. That time was selected during what seemed like a "window" in 173d Brigade Association activities. The only venue I found that could seat an estimated 30 or more people was a pizza place 10 minutes from the convention center. We have asked for a table for 30 people from 12:00 – 2:00. Go to the website and check directions.

The menu looks pretty good and it is a well-rated eatery. We will order from the menu.

Community Pizza

2400 Gap Rd, (there are other Community Pizza places, so make sure you go to Gap Road) North Charleston, SC 29418 (843) 566-7777

Menu: communitypizzahouse.com

<http://www.communitypizzahouse.com/#menu>

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- Let me know ASAP if you will be attending and number of guests.
- If you would come if you could get a ride from the Convention Center.
- If you could give someone a ride from the Convention Center.

Contact: Jack Tarr, Jtarr5@verizon.net



Excerpt...

How to help those suffering from PTSD

By Camalot Todd

Feb. 9, 2019



During a traumatic event, it's normal to feel stress and fear. It's often what saves our lives and is the body's natural fight-or-flight mechanism, helping us defend against or avoid danger. But if elements of that fight-or-flight reaction continue after the traumatic event, or if you're replaying it on a loop after months have passed, it could signal the presence of post-traumatic stress disorder and a need for treatment. About 8 million adults deal with PTSD annually, according to the National Center for PTSD. *"People start experiencing post-traumatic stress symptoms because they struggle to rationalize things and say, 'what I'm experiencing now is not the same thing. I'm not [currently] going through the experience,'"* said Dr. Jacob Manjooran, a psychiatrist and behavioral health medical director at Southern Hills. *"They're experiencing nightmares and flashbacks. They start avoiding things that remind them of the trauma and are hyper vigilant."*

Symptoms in adults

Symptoms of PTSD typically begin within three months of the event but can also surface years later. A psychiatrist or psychologist diagnoses the disorder via several steps. Here are a few of the criteria, according to the National Institute for Mental Health.

- **1 or more "re-experiencing" symptoms:** When words, objects or situations remind the individual of the event; flashbacks; bad dreams; frightened thoughts
- **1 or more "avoidance" symptoms:** Avoiding words, objects or situations that remind a person of the event through a change in routine; avoiding thoughts and feelings related to the traumatic event
- **2 or more "arousal and reactivity" symptoms:** Feelings of anger and stress that make it difficult to do daily tasks such as sleeping, eating or concentrating; being easily startled; feeling tense; angry outbursts
- **2 or more "cognition and mood" symptoms:** Feelings of alienation from support groups; anxiety; depression; mood swings; memory loss of the traumatic event; negative thoughts about oneself or the world; guilt or loss of interest in things once enjoyable

Who is at risk?

PTSD can happen to anyone, and 10 percent of women and 4 percent of men are likely to develop it, according to the National Center for PTSD. About 12 to 20 percent of veterans develop PTSD in their lifetime.

Can you prevent PTSD?

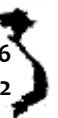
There is a correlation between PTSD and avoidance behaviors, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. If you have experienced trauma, seek help immediately and lean on your social support system. In addition, the ADAA notes that *"identifying as a survivor, finding positive meaning in the trauma, and disclosing the trauma to loved ones"* are responses that can help ease the long-term effects of PTSD.

Treatment

Psychotherapy/counseling and medication are common treatment methods used to help individuals understand their trauma and learn coping skills that will allow them to lead a better quality of life.

- **Seven Hills Hospital** in Henderson has a dedicated PTSD Treatment Center.
- If you are a veteran dealing with PTSD and want to learn more about the VA of Southern Nevada Healthcare System's PTSD Program.
- To learn more about PTSD, visit the National Institute of Mental Health or the National Center for PTSD.

Source: VA's National Center for PTSD - Executive Division
Email: ncptsd@va.gov | **Website:** www.ptsd.va.gov



From the archives....

BRIEF HISTORY AUSTRALIAN FORCE IN VIETNAM

Further information:
Major Murray F. Taylor
Force Public Relations Officer
Australian Force
VIETNAM
8th November, 1971

Original Contribution

Australia's first military contribution to the Vietnam conflict was a small team of Army officer and warrant officer advisors who arrived in July, 1962.

These advisors, of whom there were originally 30, joined with American advisory teams training Vietnamese military forces in training centres of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, mainly in northern provinces.

Over the years, the Australian team of advisors (Australian Army training Team Vietnam – AATTV) grew to 222 members who were employed with operational units of the ARVN and Special Forces, and in mobile advisory training teams. These advisors not only helped train South Vietnamese soldiers but also led them in battle. Many have won bravery awards including four Victoria Crosses – the highest gallantry award for members of the British Commonwealth armies.



"Personnel and aircraft of RAAF Transport Flight Vietnam arrive in South Vietnam in August 1964,"

The Royal Australian Air Force made its first contribution to the allied effort in Vietnam in August, 1964, when RAAF transport flight was established at

Vung Tau with six Caribou aircraft. Now known as No. 35 Squadron, members of the unit have carried out regular services between Saigon, Nui Dat and Vung Tau, and many times flown into remoted airstrips to move Vietnamese civilians and military units out of dangerous situations.

Introduction of Battalion Group

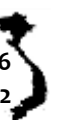
Following a decision of the Australian Government to increase its assistance to the Republic of Vietnam, the 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, together with a logistic support company, arrived in Vietnam in May-June 1965. Supporting artillery, armoured personnel carriers, engineers and Army light aircraft arrived in September, 1965.



"Troops of 1 RAR landed in South Vietnam in June 1965, with military police from the American 173rd Airborne Brigade keeping watch. The battalion was comprised entirely of regular troops during its first deployment and was maintained and supplied by the Americans. The battalion saw some hard fighting and lost 23 men killed before returning to Australia in June 1966. [AWM DNE/65/0002/VN]"

The operational element comprised about 1300 men and was located at Bien Hoa as part of the United States 173rd Airborne Brigade. Many of their operations were conducted in War Zone "D". Headquarters of the Australian Army Force in Vietnam (HQ AAFV) was located in Saigon and the AATTV remained deployed with U.S. Advisory Teams.

(continued....)





"Australian soldiers shortly after arriving at Tan Son Nhut Airport."

Army Task Force Introduction

The 1st Battalion completed its tour of duty and returned to Australia in June, 1966. At that time there was a substantial increase in Australia's commitment and the Battalion Group was replaced by a Task Force with its own logistic support. At the same time, HQ AFV was re-organized to include Royal Australian Navy and RAAF representation.

The two major ground elements were called the 1st Australian Task Force and the 1st Australian Logistic Support Group. The principal infantry units of the Task Force were the 5th and 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, and the 3rd Special Air Service Squadron. The artillery regiment contained two Australian batteries and one New Zealand battery.

The Task Force was given its own tactical area of responsibility in Phuoc Tuy Province, south-east of Saigon, and the Task Force headquarters was established in a rubber plantation at Nui Dat just north of the province capital, Baria.

RAAF Contribution

No. 9 Squadron, RAAF, an Iroquois helicopter squadron, was deployed in June, 1966, primarily to support the activities of the Australian Task Force. Its tasks included troop positioning, resupply and medical evacuation. No. 9 Squadron had a class affiliation with the Task Force, having supported the ground troops in most major battles in which Australians were involved.

In 1969, it introduced its own heavily-armed helicopter gunships to give close fire support to Australian troops and to protect their utility helicopters operating on troop movement and medical evacuation from forward areas.

Two Squadrons of RAAF Hercules air transports based in Australia also supported Australian operation in Vietnam. The aircraft have been used since 1965 to carry personnel and cargo, and for medical evacuation to Australia.

The twin-jet Canberra bombers of No. 2 Squadron were deployed to Vietnam in April, 1967. They were relocated at Phan Rang Air Base and were used to bomb enemy concentrations and other targets from the southern tip of Ca Mau to the demilitarised zone.



"A No. 2 Squadron Canberra bomber operating over South Vietnam in 1970,"

A number of their bombing tasks were conducted in the Australian area of responsibility in Phuoc Tuy Province.

The Squadron returned to Australia in June this year.

Forward Air Controllers (FAC's) of the RAAF have also taken a prominent part in operations since 1967, flying precarious missions over ground troops, calling in fire and bombing support.

Navy Contribution

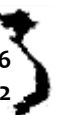
The royal Australian Navy's guide missile destroyer, HMAS Hobart, was assigned in March, 1967, to duties with the U.S. 7th Fleet in the South China Sea and in the Gulf of Tonkin.

HMAS Hobart was engaged in bombardment tasks off the coast, destroying Vietcong supply routes and installations. She also spent periods employed in the destruction of enemy waterborne logistics craft off the coast of North Vietnam, and on numerous occasions was engaged in battle with enemy coastal batteries.



HMAS Hobart refueling from a United States Navy tanker while operating off Vietnam in 1967."

(continued....)



In September, 1967, Hobart was relieved by her sister ship HMAS Perth, and the two ships alternated in six-monthly tours of duty until 1969 when HMAS Brisbane and then HMAS Vendetta carried out tours. HMAS Hobart returned to Vietnam in March, 1970, for her third tour. HMAS Brisbane, the last Australian destroyer to be assigned to the 7th Fleet, was taken off the gunline in September this year and has now returned to Australia.



HMAS Perth

RAN clearance divers were attached to U.S. Naval forces operating in South Vietnam on ordnance disposal and diving tasks from February, 1967. The last such team returned to Australia earlier this year.

The RAN commitment was increased in October, 1967, by eight naval helicopter pilots, four observers, four aircrewman and 30 groundstaff who were deployed with the U.S. 135th Aviation Company, first at Bear Cat and before their return to Australia four months ago, at Dong Tam in Military Region 4.

The RAN troop carrier HMAS Sydney, has made numerous trips to Vietnam each year with men and equipment to relieve the Australian Force, and is now being used to assist with the withdrawal.



"Mar. 7, 1962. HMAS Sydney, fast troop transport."

Strength Increase

The strength of the Force in 1967 was approximately 6300. The Army element was approximately 5000, with 3000 in the Task Force area. Principal Army units at that time were the 2nd and 7th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment; 1st Special Air Service Squadron; 'A' Squadron 3rd Cavalry Regiment; 4th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery and the 1st Field Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers.



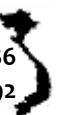
"Australian soldiers from 7 RAR waiting to be picked up by US Army helicopters following a cordon and search operation near Phước Hải on 26 August 1967. This image is etched on the Vietnam Forces National Memorial, Canberra."

In October, 1967, the Government announced that Australia's commitment would be increased to more than 8000 including Navy, Army and Air Force components in the November-December period.

The 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, together with combat and logistic support, and a squadron of 54-ton Centurion tanks were the main Army units which made up this increase.

The 2nd and 7th Battalion, and later the 3rd Battalion, were replaced in 1968 by the 1st, 4th and 9th Battalions, and in 1969 these were replaced by the 5th 6th and 8th Battalions. Thus, by the end of 1969, all nine battalions of the Regiment had served in Vietnam.

(continued....)



Commanders, Australian Force Vietnam



BG Oliver David Jackson

The first commander in Vietnam was Brigadier O.D. Jackson, and in April 1966, when the command of the Force was raised to major-general the appointment was taken up by Major-General K. Mackay. Brigadier Jackson took command of the Task Force. Major-General Mackay was succeeded by Major-General D. Vincent in January, 1967, and he was succeeded by Major-General A.L. MacDonald in 1968. Major-General R.A Hay was the commander in 1969 and Major-General C.A.E. Fraser in 1970.

The present commander is Major-General D.B. Dunstan.



"New Zealand troops in Vietnam."

New Zealanders

Integrated with Australian Task Force units are elements of New Zealand infantry and until earlier this year, artillery. At any one time, one of the Australian battalions had one or two companies of New Zealanders and had the title Royal Australian Regiment/New Zealand (ANZAC) after its battalion numeral.

Battle Highlights

All battalions have had their share of fighting. D Company of the 6th Battalion on its first tour in 1966-67, earned the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation, for its part in the Battle of Long Tan. On August 18, 1966, the Company was in a rubber plantation on an operation when it was attacked by a regiment of North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops.

Outnumbered by more than ten to one, the Company held its position for more than three hours until a relief force arrived and the enemy fled leaving behind 245 dead.

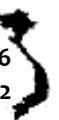
D Company lost 17 killed in action and 21 wounded.



"Long Tan cross ceremonies with D Company, 6th Battalion."

In anticipation of the 1968 Tet Offensive the major part of the Task Force was deployed into Bien Hoa Province in late January of that year to cover the approaches to Long Binh, Bien Hoa and Saigon. Some of the heaviest fighting by the Task Force took place during the following five weeks, resulting in more than 220 enemy being killed. In Phuoc Tuy Province during the same period, rapid reaction and the relief of Baria by a company of the 3rd Battalion supported by armoured personnel carriers, after the capture of the town by Vietcong, did much to cement the relationship of the Australians with the people of the Province.

(continued....)





"Phuoc Tuy Province, 10-8-66."

Other battle highlights were during the May, 1968, enemy offensive. The 1st and 3rd Battalions were probing out from two fire support bases – Coral and Balmoral in Bien Hoa Province with elements of 12 Field Regiment and 'A' Squadron 3 Cavalry Regiment in support.

In the early hours of May 13, Coral was attacked by rocket, mortar and small arms fire, followed by a ground attack by elements of two North Vietnamese Regiments. They were aiming for the gun and mortar positions in the base. One howitzer and two mortars were damaged, but rapid reaction by the Australians resulted in 58 enemy being killed.

Again, in the early hours of May 16, Coral was attacked with a heavy rocket and mortar barrage, followed by an estimated battalion sized attack. The enemy was stopped on the wire defences and 34 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed.

Patrols by both battalions during the next four days resulted in a further 18 enemy being killed.

Tanks of 'C' Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment, moved up to the fire support bases and became dominant factors in both the battles at Coral and Balmoral.



"Australian soldiers defending FSB Coral, May 1968."

At Balmoral, the 3rd Battalion came under heavy rocket and mortar attack early on May 26 followed by a North Vietnamese ground attack. Six enemy were killed and large quantities of arms, ammunition, rockets and launchers were recovered by clearing patrols. At the time, Coral received its fourth rocket and mortar attack.

On May 28, both bases were again the targets for heavy mortar and rocket attacks. At Balmoral the attack was supported by a ground assault. With artillery and helicopter gunships a further 46 enemy were killed.



"3 RAR machine-gun position at FSB Balmoral."

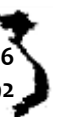
Two days later, a 1st Battalion company on patrol became pinned down by an estimated North Vietnamese company in a well prepared and defended bunker system. Tanks and armoured personnel carriers were called in and attacked the system despite heavy rocket fire. Twenty-nine enemy were killed and 16 claimed as possibly killed.

Tank Force element returned to their base at Nui Dat on June 5-6. Total Australian battle casualties during the period were 26 killed and 100 wounded.

Special Air Service Squadrons

Special Air Service Squadrons were most successful in their reconnaissance missions in support of the Task Force. RAAF helicopter crews of No. 9 Squadron, in turn, gave close support to the SAS operations.

(continued....)



In December, 1969, the 3rd SAS Squadron conducted an operational parachute descent in east Phuoc Tuy Province – the first operational parachute descent by Australian soldiers since 1943.

The 2nd Squadron, the last to serve in Vietnam returned to Australia last month.

Army Aviation

The Vietnam war is the first in which Army aviation units have been deployed overseas in an operational area. Since 1965, 161 (Independent) Reconnaissance Flight in Vietnam has increased its aircraft strength from two fixed-wing aircraft and two helicopters to four fixed-wing aircraft and six helicopters.

Civil Affairs

Aid to the South Vietnamese people in Phuoc Tuy Province was a vital aspect of the work of the 1st Australian Task Force since it took over its operational role in the province in 1966.



“Members of an Australian civic action team confer with Vietnamese village officials on plans for local improvements.”

In mid-1967 the 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit was formed and sent to Vietnam as part of the Task Force with the primary aim of assisting the people of the province. In the early months which followed, planning and supervision of the projects were the main-tasks of the unit. By the end of 1969, projects were larger and big steps had been taken to improve living conditions for the people.

Village development works normally involved villagers in their own projects by providing them with technical advice, labour assistance and materials that were in short supply. Great care was taken not to lead or dominate the villagers who selected and planned their own projects.

Self-help and assistance to local economy was a feature of civic action work and many of the projects in the province were carried out by local contract with

supervision provided by the Civil Affairs Unit. Other Task Force units, particularly the engineer units, were involved in many of the projects.

Major projects in which the Army was involved were the construction of 600 houses for Vietnamese soldiers and their families at 13 different sites throughout the province, the rebuilding and resurfacing of Route 2, the main highway which runs north-south through the province, and the construction of a 120-foot steel and concrete bridge over the Song Rai river on Route 23 between the provincial towns of Dat Do and Xuyen Moc.

The Civil Affairs Unit was active with agricultural improvements and results showed an upward trend in rice quality, chicken breeding, artificial insemination (pigs) and sorghum production.

On the medical side, Australian doctors and dentists performed medcaps and dentcaps for several years. These were phased out as local doctors became more capable of taking over the responsibility.

Small dispensaries were constructed in several villages and constant repairs and improvements were made to Phuoc Tuy's main hospital in Baria. In June this year, major renovations and building were completed. These included a new toilet block and septic system for the medical ward and the addition of an annex to the maternity ward.

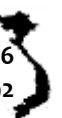
Since mid-1968, more than 60 classrooms were built and in June this year stage one of the Dat Do high school was completed. It provided Dat Do with a new school consisting of three classrooms, a science block and library.

Maintenance of school equipment and furniture and the provision of toilet blocks was carried out on a continuous basis.

In May, 1969, the first Australian windmill and reticulation system was completed at Xuyen Moc. Since then more than a dozen windmills have been erected throughout the province. In addition, several village water supply systems have been modified, and pumps and wells provided for others.

Australian assistance to the province took many forms apart from the projects already mentioned. Market buildings, community centres, sporting facilities, village offices and the provision of electricity were some of the other forms of assistance provided by the various units.

(continued....)



Training Assistance

Although assistance in the training of Vietnamese units has been a prime task for members of the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam, troops of the Australian Task Force expended considerable effort in training ARVN units in Phuoc Tuy Province.

Units from the 18th ARVN Division were returned in six-week periods, and a training scheme called the Bushman's Scouts programme was introduced. On the Bushman's Scout programme former Vietcong worked with forward elements of Australian infantry units during operations after they had received basic training.



"ARVN with Australian training advisor."

In mid-1970, Mobile Advisory Training Teams were introduced to help prepare Vietnamese provincial soldiers for increased responsibility on the withdrawal of allied forces. The teams lived and worked with Vietnamese companies in compounds scattered all over Phuoc Tuy Province.

A Jungle Warfare Training Centre was established on the site occupied by the 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, after that unit returned to Australia in November, 1970.

Run by 23 Australian advisors, the Centre gave particular attention to instruction in methods of jungle warfare which had been developed by Australian forces. The Centre has students from all over Vietnam, with each military region providing a set number of students for each six-week course designed to train company and platoon commanders.

The centre is part of the Vietnamese Central Training Command. The Australian contribution has been to train the Vietnamese instructors in the first instance and to continue to guide and advise them in training techniques.

The Centre moved from Nui Dat to the National Training Centre at Van Kiep, on the outskirts of Baria, in mid-October.

Withdrawal

United States' forces began to withdraw in 1969, with the South Vietnamese forces assuming more responsibility for national defence. Following an announcement of further U.S. withdrawals in April, 1970, the then Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton, announced that Australian forces would be reduced by one battalion and some support troops. This was the 8th Battalion which, when it returned to Australia was not replaced.

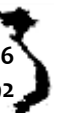
Subsequently, on August 18, 1971 the Prime Minister, Mr. William McMahon, announced that the Australian Force in Vietnam would be withdrawn. He said most of the combat elements would be home by Christmas and shipment to Australia of stores and equipment would be completed in the early months of 1972.

With the handover of Nui Dat to Vietnamese authorities, Australian Force activities are now centered at Vung Tau, which has become the main base for the marshalling of units for embarkation and the closing down of unit stores ready for shipment to Australia.

Both sea and air transport have been committed to the return of personnel and equipment. HMAS Sydney, HMAS Jeperit and the Army vessel John Monash, along with the chartered vessel Harima Maru are being used for the move. Air transport has been provided by Boeing 707 civil charter and C130 transport aircraft of the RAA.



"The soldiers seen in this photograph were members of the first unit of Australian troops to be withdrawn from the Vietnam War (1962-1975) and not replaced. Their return to Brisbane signifies the beginning of Australia's disengagement from the war."



"THE JAPANESE WHO AWAIT US ON CORREGIDOR "

*William T. Calhoun
Paul Whitman*



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

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



Don Abbott



John "Jungle Fox" Lindgren

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

One Japanese who was not a member of the surrender group, but was stationed in Formosa has been writing a history of the Shin-Yo-Tai troops (suicide boats). He sent Don a paper he had written on Corregidor. He wrote that in "early October of the year

of Shawa 19 (1944), an anti-aircraft troop was organized, then late that month crew of the warship which sank offshore Leyte joined them to restore American Batteries for the defense of the Corregidor Island. In November, construction units were sent over, and seven Shin-Yo-Tai troops, from the 7th to the 13th, were dispatched also to defend the island." He states the Shin-Yo-Tai men were moved to Corregidor between the period of November and the next January.

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



"Japanese Shin'yo-class suicide motorboats and caves.
(web photo)

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

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

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

"(The) American fleet started shooting from ships on December 10, then added large formation airplane attacks from January 23."

(continued....)





CORREGIDOR OPERATION AS SEEN FROM THE USS PHOENIX (CL-46)

Column of five light cruisers leaving Subic Bay en route to bombard Corregidor, 13 February 1945. *Phoenix* is followed by (from left to right): *USS Boise* (CL-47); *USS Denver* (CL-58); *USS Cleveland* (CL-55); and *USS Montpelier* (CL-57).

(Official U.S. Navy Photograph)

"On January 30, American troops landed on Spik (Subic) Bay area. On February 10, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, submarines entered in the Manila Bay, then started attacks of the Corregidor."

A member of the 'New-Year's Day Twenty' who surrendered was Sadashichi Yamagishi. In a letter to Don Abbott, Yamagishi recalled that he entered the Marine Corps on 1 August 1944 and was assigned to a construction party consisting of 650 men. His party, the "333rd Construction Party" was aboard the *Tatsuura Maru** as part of a convoy of 10,000 men headed for the Philippines which left Kure on 5 October. *Tatsuura Maru* was damaged by torpedoes but limped into Manila. The unit was then assigned duties on Corregidor. Along with Army units they set out to build seven gun batteries armed with guns of 14 cm. calibre (about 5.5 inches). These guns were taken *"from a Japanese warship which had been sunk in Manila Bay."*

The 332 Construction Party joined them about the middle of November, and they were combined as the "Yoshida Party" indicating they were under the command of a Colonel Yoshida. The number one, two, and three batteries were built in the area from Rock Point in an easterly direction towards James Ravine. The other four batteries were built from Wheeler Point in a westerly direction. They successfully test fired the guns on 10 January. ***"We thought at this time that we would defeat the U.S. military with our underground batteries. We did not suspect that the U.S. military would attack using parachutes."***

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

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

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

"Bombs exploded about 10 meters above the ground because they had the mechanical device called instant fuse. They broke up trees, grasses and buildings. We had to avoid enemy's attack, hiding in the caves because we could not go outside in the daylight." "(The) U.S. military continued their attacks from 7:00 in the morning till 5:00 in the evening every day like a scheduled flight.."

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



Softening Corregidor.

(web photo)

"A huge explosion occurred during the night of 28 January which caused a landslide that buried 100 men alive." Then he makes this strange statement: "Someone set this accident on purpose. We had dead before we fought the enemy. I heard many petty officers were regretfully talking with each other that they wished they had not applied to come to the Philippines...."

(continued....)



....Like them, we had thought that the Philippines was the safe place to go. But, since the Japanese military lost in the Leyte Battle, the war situation got worse. We could no longer expect the Japanese military would win. The dream has been killed. We had to be prepared for death."

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

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

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

"About 60 special attack boats from the Army and Navy rushed about 30 U.S. warships standing offshore. It was around 10:00 PM. The huge noise caused by engines of 60 boats made the enemy's warships think that it was an air attack. They started firing toward the sky but immediately they noticed the attack was from the sea. They attacked fiercely against our boats. Instantly we saw big pillars of fire shoot up. It was like seeing fireworks on the water. The pillars of fire shot up in several places. We thought we (had made) outstanding gains. Great shouts of joy were raised by our fellow soldiers."

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

"Total number of soldiers was 5,500."

"(The next-morning they) saw the U.S. battleships were laying offshore in the morning on February despite our attack yesterday. We fired No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 batteries which we constructed. We fired from underground, but the enemy found our position due to the powder smoke made by firing. The U.S. battleships delivered a volley of fire against us. We had a fierce exchange of fire. Our batteries were destroyed instantly. We could not get any gains like we did yesterday."

"There was no contending against such heavy odds. Most soldiers who were in the battery were killed or seriously injured. They were put in the caves. Some of

them had their skin torn by artillery bombardments. They asked for help but we could do nothing for them. They died suffering from pain. It was as if a child were fighting a man." "The U.S. military, which was superior in numbers and arms, sent some reconnaissance air-planes over the island. When they found something was wrong, they instantly fired from the warships."

"We could not move except at night". The next account, and last, is from Pfc K. Ishikawa. He was born in 1915 and drafted by the army on 15 July 1944. He had missed the draft up until this date because he was not qualified. On 18 July, after just a month in training, he was shipped out for Burma. Due to heavy damage the convoy was diverted to Manila, arriving 8 August. He landed on Corregidor 8 November. "Heavy air bombing and bombardment from warships started Jan. 1945."

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

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

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



"Colonel George Jones, commanding officer of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, briefs staff officers and other personnel prior to the airborne assault on Corregidor. The troops faced stiff Japanese resistance after they landed."

(continued....)



"We did not expect Parachute Troop attack on the small island topside but prepared for landing from North & South Dock and others area of seaport."



Blast onto the Rock. *"The green light is on, and for a few eternal seconds, we are not moving. Then, almost as one, we quickly move forward, my right hand never leaving the back of Number 2 in front of me. In but the time it takes to blink, I let go of him as he falls away into the blast of the airstream, and I am falling behind him."*

Caption and photo from Chet Nycum's 503rd PIR photo collection)



503rd PIR troopers land on Fortress Corregidor.

The Intelligence estimate of the number of Japanese troops which were to be expected on Corregidor, "approx. 850", created an attitude of confidence within the Regimental HQ that, in turn, led to an over-confidence in the deployment of patrols by the rifle companies, and the extent and placement of their night perimeters. This would cost lives.

From a document captured on 24 February which gives a roster of the Japanese units on Corregidor: By then, the casualty numbers of actual dead indicated that the intelligence estimates had been wrong - yet an attitude continued that there *"couldn't possibly be many more Japanese"* to deal with.

Note: Captain Itagaki of the Japanese Navy was the commanding officer of CORREGIDOR. He is listed in other documents captured as CO 31st Special Naval Base CORREGIDOR. POWs all state he was killed by a parachutist 16 Feb. and buried.

Footnotes

* At 0600 on 19 October 1944, convoy MOMA-05 departed Moji for Imari Bay consisting of TAIHAKU, KOMEI, TENSHO, TAISHO, TATSUURA, TAIYO, ESAHI, DORYU, PACIFIC, AOKI and SUGIYAMA MARUs and an unidentified ship. The convoy is carrying about 10,000 reinforcements for the Philippines. On 26 October, the convoy is attacked by Lt. Cdr. (later Rear Admiral) Maurice Rindskopf's USS DRUM (SS-228) at 19-30N, 120-44E. Rindskopf fires three torpedoes by radar bearings at TAISHO MARU and gets two hits that sink her. She takes down about 1600 men, most of whom belonged to the 57th Independent Brigade and 10th Maritime Advance Battalion. At 0655, Rindskopf torpedoes and damages TAIHAKU MARU at 19-07N, 120-42E. The forepart sinks, although the aft part remains afloat. She is successfully beached in Lapoc Bay and later abandoned. DRUM also attacks TATSUURA and TAIYO MARUs with uncertain results. At about 0710, Lt. Cdr. Richard W. Peterson's USS ICEFISH (SS-367) torpedoes TAIYO MARU. A cargo of gasoline she is carrying for "kaiten" human-torpedoes ignites and sends flames hundreds of feet into the air. At 0730, TAIYO MARU sinks. On 31 October, 1944 at 0950, KOMEI MARU is torpedoed and sunk by Lt. Cdr. Enrique D. Haskin's USS GUITARRO (SS-363) at 15-18N, 119-50E. At 1010, PACIFIC MARU is also torpedoed and sunk by GUITARRO at 15-15N, 119-56E. (Source:

http://www.combinedfleet.com/CH-28_t.htm

accessed 20 June 2009.

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

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

(Above report and photos courtesy of Paul Whitman and his 503rd Heritage Battalion website)

BLESS 'EM ALL



With our newsletter these past nigh on 10 years, we've done our utmost best to shy away from all things political and religious; sometimes we fail. Case in point; the following email which was sent by a Chargin' Charlie of the 2/503 to a preacher buddy of ours of A/4/503, to include a copy to this newsletter. Like Teresa, below, we hope you enjoy it too. Ed

C/2/503 Trooper to our Sky Soldier preacher buddy:

"Here you go Mike, a subject and hypothesis for your next visit to the pulpit. What day you on this subject?"



"The following is an actual question given on a University of Arizona physics mid-term, and an actual answer turned in by a student.

The answer by one student was so 'profound' that the professor shared it with colleagues, via the internet, which is, of course, why we now have the pleasure of enjoying it as well." Unknown

Bonus Question: Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)?

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law (*gas cools when it expands and heats when it is compressed*) or some variant.

One student, however, wrote the following:

First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is changing in time. So we need to know the rate at which souls are moving into Hell and the rate at which they are leaving, which is unlikely. I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave. Therefore, no souls are leaving. As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different religions that exist in the world today.

Most of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there is more than one of these religions and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all souls go to Hell. With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially. Now, we look at the rate of change of the volume in Hell because Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand proportionately as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

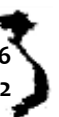
1. If Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.
2. If Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls in Hell, so then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over. So which is it?

If we accept the postulate given to me by Teresa during my Freshman year that, *"It will be a cold day in Hell before I sleep with you,"* and take into account the fact that I slept with her last night, then number two must be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic and has already frozen over. The corollary of this theory is that since Hell has frozen over, it follows that it is not accepting any more souls and is, therefore, extinct.....leaving only Heaven, thereby proving the existence of a divine being which explains why, last night, Teresa kept shouting, *"Oh my God!"*

THIS STUDENT RECEIVED AN A+.



It froze over.



We don't run pay-for ads in our newsletter, but for those of you who were fortunate enough to win a 2-day pass to Saigon, this advert from *Life in Vietnam*, *The Weekly News Magazine* dated February 12, 1966 might stir some memories....plus, the joint had air conditioning and a dynamic atmosphere! Many of us enjoyed those dynamic atmospheres, usually while getting 'jeeps washed' in downtown Bien Hoa. Ed

Night Club
AIR CONDITIONED
The only Night Club
in Saigon
With a dynamic
atmosphere

JO MARCEL
with his Popular French Songs
and
Miss NHU AN

AU BACCARA
165 TRẦN QUÝ CÁP
Saigon





~ 2/503d Sky Soldier Extraordinaire ~ Col. Robert H. Sigholtz



Col. Robert H. "Bob" Sigholtz, Bn Cmdr 2/503 '66/'67,
at 173d Abn Bde reunion.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to write this statement about some of my experiences I remember when I served with the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Before I departed for Vietnam I was on Dept. of Army orders to command a battalion of the 101st Airborne Division. However, upon my arrival in Saigon I was told at the Repl Depl someone else within the 101st was assigned to the slot intended for me. Upon learning of this news I was most disappointed since I had a strong desire to command a battalion. I was aware that General Paul F. Smith at the time commanded the 173d Airborne Brigade. Since we had previously served together I took the chance to call him to determine if he had a job for me. He said it was not a battalion, but he had another position for me now in the interim, it would be the Brigade Executive Officer.



BG Paul F. Smith
1915 - 2014

After arriving in Bien Hoa and being there a short time I learned that General Smith was most anxious to have another battalion-sized maneuver element in his command. To provide this size force he organized Task Force Sigholtz. The Task Force included Company D, 16th Armor, Troop E, 17th Cavalry Platoon, 173d Engineers, Military Police Platoon, a detachment from the Support Battalion, Signal Company C of the 319th Field Artillery, some of the Caspers, and on occasion for missions, a rifle company. The Task Force was assigned Infantry battalion type missions for approximately three months until I was given the assignment to command the 2nd Battalion. I will always be indebted to General Smith for accepting my assignment to the 173d Abn Bde and later permitting me to command an Airborne battalion.



Bob in the boonies with General Westmoreland,
believed to be 1966.

When I commanded the second battalion we were so fortunate to already have assigned a truly outstanding group of non-commissioned officers with an average length of service of fourteen years. The officers were also extremely well qualified in their positions. The proof of this is that several became part of the fifty General Officers that had previously been assigned to the 173d Brigade. It was my privilege to have served with so many outstanding officers and NCO's....

(continued....)



....However, one of these outstanding NCO's always made me feel so uncomfortable; his name was (the late) Charlie Morris from Galax, Virginia, who had been awarded the Medal of Honor. Each time I ever addressed him in the field, in base camp or at a social event after we both retired, he would come to attention. Charlie became so erect it appeared as if a steel rod had replaced his backbone. At more than one occasion after we retired, I suggested when we were at social events he call me "Bob" because we didn't have rank anymore. This was to no avail because, until the last time I had the pleasure of his company, he always came to attention when we met.



**SSG Charlie Morris, A/2/503, Medal of Honor recipient
1931 - 1996**

Another occurrence I recall near the end of 1966, is when the second battalion was in the field when a large enemy force aggressively attacked our position one night. Fortunately for us we didn't receive any casualties primarily because we were well dug in. In the morning I checked the positions that were hit. When I came upon one position I saw this rather slightly built, small trooper who was visually shaken by his experience of the previous night. In an effort to comfort and console him I said, *"We Try Harder, and attacks like last night do not worry us in the second battalion."* This did not sway him but I learned during our conversation that he only joined the battalion the day before and arrived

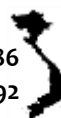
in the field on the late afternoon supply chopper. This was Ebald's first night he had been in combat. During our exchange I further learned that he came from Philadelphia, PA, which was where I entered the army.

Early in 1967, after the battalion returned to our base camp in Bien Hoa from an operation to reconstitute and rest, I was visiting "C" Company's area and I saw Ebald again. They were enjoying a steak dinner. I sat down next to Ebald at the table where he was sitting and chatted with him about things in general and happenings in our hometown. When I was about to leave the table he stood up and followed me. He said to me, *"Colonel, I believe I am going to be KIA"*. I attempted to once again placate his fears by saying, *"You are a rough and tough paratrooper and you are now an experienced combat grunt."* Ebald made a successful parachute jump as part of operation Junction City on February 22, 1967. Unfortunately, in February 1967, he was KIA with fifteen others including the platoon leader and a couple extremely fine NCO's of "C" Company when they ran into an "L" shaped ambush. I often wondered if Ebald had a premonition he would be KIA.



PFC Mike "Mickey" Ebald, C/2/503, KIA 3/3/67

(continued....)



The most moving and personal memorable experience I had while I served with the 2nd Battalion was when I joined a lead platoon of a company when their mission was to search and destroy an enemy base camp. I observed members of the platoon were a little apprehensive to enter the base camp. In an effort to attempt to stiffen their backs I decided to join them to enter the base camp. When we were moving into the base camp a PFC evidently was concerned about my well-being, since I assumed I was a father image to him. He said, "Sir, get down and get back, you should not be here with us." That was a sincere expression of pure love, which I will always remember. However, tactically, he was right because normally a battalion commander should not try to become 11B. However, in some circumstances the commander must lead by example in some situations where, in his judgment, it is necessary to accomplish the mission.

It was my greatest honor during my Army Service to command the 2nd Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade, and I continue to "Try Harder".

Colonel Robert Sigholtz (Ret)
Commander, 2/503d, '66-'67

Robert H. Sigholtz Dies at 84

Robert H. Sigholtz died at the age of 84 on September 2, 2005, in Scottsdale, AZ. He was general manager of Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium and the D.C. Armory complex as well as athletic director at Georgetown University. He had been injured in a fall at his home in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

Dr. Sigholtz, who had a distinguished record as a combat infantryman in three wars, came to Georgetown in 1968 as a professor of military science and as director of the university's ROTC program. His strong personality, shaped as an Army airborne troop commander, proved both a strength and a liability during his stormy three-year tenure as athletic director.

When he was nominated for the position in 1969, he was opposed by several student groups, including the captains of seven of Georgetown's 12 athletic teams. Once in the job, he had a long-running feud with men's basketball coach Jack Magee that, *The Washington Post* reported, "has dominated that athletic department for almost three years, poisoned the atmosphere and generally taken all the fun out of basketball."

In February 1972, Dr. Sigholtz was fired as athletic director, but in one of his final acts he helped recruit John Thompson as a candidate for head basketball coach. Thompson, now a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, was named coach in March 1972.



Col. Robert H. Sigholtz, Georgetown Athletic Director.
At Georgetown his nickname was "Flash".
(Web photo from *The Hoya*)

From 1973 to 1984, Dr. Sigholtz managed RFK Stadium and the D.C. Armory and became a leading authority on crowd control and the management of civic arenas. He represented the D.C. government in negotiations with sports teams and entertainers and was responsible for everything from the condition of the playing field to the comfort of the spectators.

In 1984, his contract was not renewed, even though the stadium earned a profit every year under his leadership. One reason reported at the time was a dispute with Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke, who sought to gain more control of the stadium.

Dr. Sigholtz also waged an ill-fated campaign to bring major league baseball back to Washington. In 1979, he said RFK Stadium could easily be altered to accommodate a baseball team. "I think it's just a matter of time," he said. "I'm surprised we don't have one this year."

Robert Harris Sigholtz was born in Philadelphia, where he starred in four high school sports. He enlisted in the Army in 1942 and rose from a Platoon Sergeant to an infantry Lieutenant in the China-Burma theater during World War II.

From 1946 to 1948, he played professional basketball with the Baltimore Bullets before being recalled to the Army. He was a reconnaissance officer during the Korean War and later served in special forces units and the 82nd Airborne Division.

(continued....)



On February 22, 1967, as a Colonel commanding the 2nd Battalion of the 503rd Infantry Regiment in Vietnam, he led the only (mass) parachute assault by U.S. forces in the war.



Here Bob speaks to his men of the 2/503d during Operation Junction City.

"He was an outstanding battalion commander," said retired Army General John R. Deane Jr., Dr. Sigholtz's commanding general in Vietnam. "He was very courageous and self-effacing. His soldiers worshiped him."

In 1969, Dr. Sigholtz's only son, Army Captain Robert H. Sigholtz Jr., was killed in Vietnam while serving in the same unit his father had commanded.

For his own service, Dr. Sigholtz was awarded three Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, four Bronze Stars and 13 Air Medals.

He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland in 1962; a master's degree from American University in 1966; and a doctorate in education from George Washington University in 1971.

He was president of the Touchdown Club in Washington and was chosen by the State Department in 1980 to advise the Kenyan government on staging an international boxing competition. From the 1950s to the 1970s, he refereed high school and college football and basketball games.

After leaving Washington, Dr. Sigholtz managed car dealerships in Santa Monica, Calif., and was a consultant on stadium issues to the National Football League and professional sports teams. He moved to Arizona in 1994.

At the time of his death, he served on an advisory commission to the Arizona Department of Veterans Services and on the advisory board of Childhelp USA, a national organization to benefit abused children founded by his second wife.

His first marriage, to Roberta Wynne Sigholtz, ended in divorce. After the death of his daughter, Catherine McMaster, in 1980, Dr. Sigholtz adopted her daughters, Taryn Gosch of Phoenix and Whitney Knoerlein of Baltimore. Other survivors include his wife of 20 years, Sara O'Meara Sigholtz of Paradise Valley; a stepson, John Hopkins of Scottsdale; and four grandchildren.

SIGHOLTZ, ROBERT H

COL US ARMY

DATE OF BIRTH: 11/04/1919

DATE OF DEATH: 09/02/2005

**BURIED AT: SECTION 13 SITE 291-A
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**



The Commander with a few of his 2/503 Recon troopers, L-R: Bob, (the late) Jim "Skid" Skidmore, Dave Kies, and Marcus Powell at 173d reunion.



Bob addresses his Sky Soldiers at 2/503 reception.

Lest We Forget



VA continues to pioneer new approaches for treating Veteran mental health conditions

New study demonstrates effectiveness of implementing collaborative team method

WASHINGTON — A recent study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published in the Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open on March 1, showed positive outcomes for Veterans struggling with multiple mental health conditions.

The randomized implementation trial, which included 5,596 Veterans receiving care in a VA outpatient mental health clinic, showed that effective teamwork and a patient's active involvement in their care can reduce hospitalization rates for Veterans with mental health conditions.

"VA is committed to ensuring Veterans receive the best mental health care available," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said. "Combining best practices, such as those identified in the study allows VA to continually refine our mental health services."

The study outlines effective steps for Veterans, their clinicians and the larger VA health care system to all work together to positively impact the mental health of Veterans. The new collaborative, interdisciplinary team approach to outpatient mental health, demonstrated:

- Reduced rate of mental health hospitalizations among Veterans treated by the teams.
- Improved mental health status for Veterans with multiple mental health conditions.
- Improved clinician team function in terms of clarity of team member roles and prioritization of team over individual goals.

During the study, researchers worked with existing VA Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP) teams in mental health outpatient clinics. BHIP teams generally comprise psychiatrists, psychologists, RN care managers, advanced practice nurses, peer support specialists, social workers and licensed therapists.

Researchers helped these teams to align their care processes with the scientifically proven (i.e., evidence-based) Collaborative Chronic Care Model (CCM), which is an approach for integrating behavioral health care and engaging Veterans to be active participants in their care. This study extended the CCM, which had been scientifically proven to improve outcomes in formal clinical research trials, to VA outpatient clinics.

As a result of the findings collected during the trial and based off Veteran health status and satisfaction data gathered during telephone interviews at baseline and at six and 12 months of support, VA plans to nationally implement the unique team-based model of care over the next two years to benefit more Veterans and those who care for them.

To learn more, read the full report at:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2726717>



Sky Soldier Found Dead In Vicenza, Italy



In the 3/18/19 issue of *ArmyTimes*, the publication reports Pvt. Peter Cimino, 19, was found dead on March 3 in on-post housing in Vicenza, Italy, according to an Army release. The trooper was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, where he had served since August.

The *ArmyTimes* report states, *"His cause of death is under investigation by the Army and Italian civilian authorities."*

"The entire U.S. Military in Vicenza is deeply saddened by the loss of one of our own," Maj. Christopher Bradley said in a statement.



JUNE 6, 1944....D-DAY



U.S. soldiers march through Weymouth, Dorset, en route to board landing ships for the invasion of France.

The Western Allies of World War II launched the largest amphibious invasion in history when they assaulted Normandy, located on the northern coast of France, on 6 June 1944. The invaders were able to establish a beachhead as part of Operation Overlord after a successful "D-Day," the first day of the invasion.

Allied land forces came from the United States, Britain, Canada, and Free French forces. In the weeks following the invasion, Polish forces and contingents from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece and the Netherlands participated in the ground campaign; most also provided air and naval support alongside elements of the Royal Australian Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and the Royal Norwegian Navy.

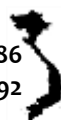


Eisenhower with Screaming Eagles who will blast on D-Day.



The invasion begins by young, brave souls.

(continued....)





D-Day glider and fallen troopers.

The Normandy invasion began with overnight parachute and glider landings, massive air attacks and naval bombardments. In the early morning, amphibious landings commenced on five beaches codenamed Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha and Utah, with troops from the United States landing on Omaha and Utah, Great Britain landing on Gold and Sword and Canada landing on Juno. During the evening the remaining elements of the airborne divisions landed. Land forces used on D-Day sailed from bases along the south coast of England, the most important of these being Portsmouth.

Planning

Allied forces rehearsed their D-Day roles for months before the invasion. On 28 April 1944, in south Devon on the English coast, 749 U.S. soldiers and sailors were killed when German torpedo boats surprised one of these landing exercises, Exercise Tiger.

In the months leading up to the invasion, the Allied forces conducted a deception operation, Operation Fortitude, aimed at misleading the Germans with respect to the date and place of the invasion.

There were several leaks prior to or on D-Day. Through the Cicero affair, the Germans obtained documents containing references to Overlord, but these documents lacked all detail. Double Cross agents, such as the Spaniard Juan Pujol (code-named Garbo), played an important role in convincing the German High Command that Normandy was at best a diversionary attack. U.S. Major General Henry Miller, chief supply officer of the US 9th Air Force, during a party at Claridge's Hotel in London complained to guests of the supply problems he was having but that after the invasion, which he told them would be before 15 June, supply would be easier. After being told, Eisenhower reduced Miller to lieutenant colonel [Associated Press, June 10, 1944] and sent him back to the U.S. where he retired.

Another such leak was General Charles de Gaulle's radio message after D-Day. He, unlike all the other leaders, stated that this invasion was the real invasion. This had the potential to ruin the Allied deceptions Fortitude North and Fortitude South. In contrast, Gen. Eisenhower referred to the landings as the initial invasion.

Only ten days each month were suitable for launching the operation: a day near the full moon was needed both for illumination during the hours of darkness and for the spring tide, the former to illuminate navigational landmarks for the crews of aircraft, gliders and landing craft, and the latter to expose defensive obstacles placed by the German forces in the surf on the seaward approaches to the beaches. A full moon occurred on 6 June.

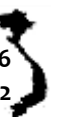
Allied Expeditionary Force Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower had tentatively selected 5 June as the date for the assault. The weather was fine during most of May, but deteriorated in early June. On 4 June, conditions were clearly unsuitable for a landing; wind and high seas would make it impossible to launch landing craft from larger ships at sea, low clouds would prevent aircraft finding their targets. The Allied troop convoys already at sea were forced to take shelter in bays and inlets on the south coast of Britain for the night.

It seemed possible that everything would have to be cancelled and the troops returned to their embarkation camps (which would be almost impossible, as the enormous movement of follow-up formations into them was already proceeding). The next full moon period would be nearly a month away.

At a vital meeting on 5 June, Eisenhower's chief meteorologist (Group Captain J.M. Stagg) forecast a brief improvement for 6 June. Commander of all land forces for the invasion, General Bernard Montgomery and Eisenhower's Chief of Staff General Walter Bedell Smith, wished to proceed with the invasion.

Commander of the Allied Air Forces Air Chief Marshal Leigh Mallory was doubtful, but Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief Admiral Bertram Ramsay believed that conditions would be marginally favorable. On the strength of Stagg's forecast, Eisenhower ordered the invasion to proceed. As a result, prevailing overcast skies limited Allied air support, and no serious damage would be done to the beach defenses on Omaha and Juno.

(continued....)



The Germans meanwhile took comfort from the existing poor conditions, which were worse over Northern France than over the English Channel itself, and believed no invasion would be possible for several days. Some troops stood down and many senior officers were away for the weekend. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel took a few days' leave to celebrate his wife's birthday, while dozens of division, regimental and battalion commanders were away from their posts conducting war games just prior to the invasion.



June 5, 1944, Rommel goes home.

Codenames

The Allies assigned codenames to the various operations involved in the invasion. Overlord was the name assigned to the establishment of a large-scale lodgment on the northern portion of the Continent. The first phase, the establishment of a secure foothold, was codenamed Neptune. According to the D-Day Museum:

The armed forces use codenames to refer to the planning and execution of specific military operations. Operation Overlord was the codename for the Allied invasion of northwest Europe. The assault phase of Operation Overlord was known as Operation Neptune. (...) Operation Neptune began on D-Day (6 June 1944) and ended on 30 June 1944. By this time, the Allies had established a firm foothold in Normandy. Operation Overlord also began on D-Day, and continued until Allied forces crossed the River Seine on 19 August 1944.



Crossing the River Seine.

Officers with knowledge of D-Day were not to be sent where there was the slightest danger of being captured. These officers were given the codename of "Bigot", derived from the words "To Gib" (To Gibraltar) that was stamped on the papers of officers who took part in the North African invasion in 1942.

On the night of 27 April, during Exercise Tiger, a pre-invasion exercise off the coast of Slapton Sands beach, several American LSTs were attacked by German E boats and among the 638 Americans killed in the attack and a further 308 killed by friendly fire, ten "Bigots" were listed as missing. As the invasion would be cancelled if any were captured or unaccounted for, their fate was given the highest priority and eventually all ten bodies were recovered.

The Normandy landings were the first successful opposed landings across the English Channel in over eight centuries. They were costly in terms of men, but the defeat inflicted on the Germans was one of the largest of the war. Strategically, the campaign led to the loss of the German position in most of France and the secure establishment of a new major front.

(continued....)



In larger context the Normandy landings helped the Soviets on the Eastern Front, who were facing the bulk of the German forces and, to a certain extent, contributed to the shortening of the conflict there. Although there was a shortage of artillery ammunition, at no time were the Allies critically short of any necessity. This was a remarkable achievement considering they did not hold a port until Cherbourg fell.

By the time of the breakout the Allies also enjoyed a considerable superiority in numbers of troops (approximately 7:2) and armoured vehicles (approximately 4:1) which helped overcome the natural advantages the terrain gave to the German defenders. Allied intelligence and counterintelligence efforts were successful beyond expectations.

The Operation Fortitude deception before the invasion kept German attention focused on the Pas de Calais, and indeed high-quality German forces were kept in this area, away from Normandy, until July. Prior to the invasion, few German reconnaissance flights took place over Britain, and those that did saw only the dummy staging areas. Ultra decrypts of German communications had been helpful as well, exposing German dispositions and revealing their plans such as the Mortain counterattack.



General Bernard Montgomery with British troops in Normandy, July 1944

Allied air operations also contributed significantly to the invasion, via close tactical support, interdiction of German lines of communication (preventing timely movement of supplies and reinforcements—particularly the critical Panzer units), and rendering the Luftwaffe

ineffective in Normandy. Although the impact upon armoured vehicles was less than expected, air activity intimidated these units and cut their supplies.

Despite initial heavy losses in the assault phase, Allied morale remained high. Casualty rates among all the armies were tremendous, and the Commonwealth forces had to use a recently created category—Double Intense—to be able to describe them.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Normandy
(Web photos added)

WWII D-Day Paratrooper Returns to Normandy



BLESS 'EM ALL

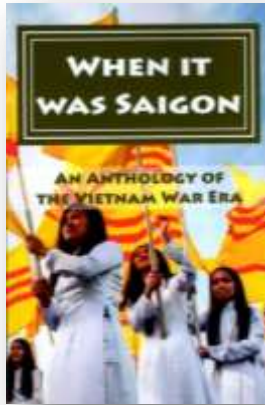


Bait and Switch on Tu Do Street

Chuck Dean SSG/US Army

82nd Airborne Div – 173rd Airborne Bde
D.L. – 3rd Basic Combat Training Bde (BCT)
Vietnam 1965 - 1966

Only rich people who want to show how rich they are buying elephants. However, that's not the reason Marsowski, Klepper, McCoy, and yours truly bought one on Tu Du Street in '65. We bought it because we were drunk G.I.s and easy marks for a raft of raggedy-ass ten-year olds eking out an existence on the grungy streets of Saigon.



The whole thing started when the company 1st Sergeant made an error in judgment and gave the likes of us the assignment of picking up ammo and supplies from Tan Son Nhut Airbase. For field soldiers that had been sleeping for months on end in makeshift tents and holes covered with ponchos going on a detail to Saigon was like getting a paid vacation to a Vegas whorehouse.

After picking up a deuce-and-a-half from the motor pool, and taking a slight detour just outside the perimeter wire to grab a dozen Ba Moui Ba beers from a grass-roofed shack, we jumped onto Highway 1 and headed to the big city. We were set: cold beer, pockets full of unspent combat pay (we were still using greenbacks then), and a beautiful exotic day in Vietnam. What more could a G.I. ask for?

As we neared the city the wind blew Saigon into our noses miles before hitting the city limits – it had a smell of civilization. When we pulled into town the tree-lined neighborhoods, paved streets, and people going about their business as if the war did not exist, made us all realize how foreign real life had become. Our muddy worn-at-the-ankle jungle boots, faded fatigues, and bush stink, made us even more aware of how wide the gap had become.

After a day of slogging down rum and cokes and buying Saigon Tea for hookers all up and down Tu Du Street, a crowd of little crooks cornered us outside the San Francisco Bar down near the riverfront.

"Hey, you numba one G.I., wanna buy elephant?"

"An elephant! Hell yeah. Let's buy an elephant!"

McCoy yelled in true drunk-Irish fashion, and then staggered and fell into a bush beside the bar. He was always the first one to step up but when the drink hit him he always became a stumbling casualty of his own kind of war. At any rate, since he out-ranked the rest of

us, we usually had to endure the consequences of most of his decision-making. We were brothers in spite of it all, and always found it fun anyway.

"Don't listen to 'em, Mac. De ginna take ya, and ya ain't ginna like it." Klepper, our token German, warned as he cackled through a bunch of missing teeth. He was the oldest guy in the entire Brigade...even older than Williamson, the C.G. He knew something about Asian swindlers though. Having served in the German Army in WWII he evaded the aftermath by joining the French Foreign Legion and eventually ended up fighting the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu. Now he was back, but was no good for anything – a drunken sot, and perpetually a Corporal because of his own weakness for alcohol.

"How much ya want?" McCoy asked, ignoring Klepper's counsel, as he dug into his pocket for some "P" while trying to stand up.

"600 P!" The urchin shot up six fingers.

"600?" I jumped in. *"No way? 100 P!"* I had been in-country long enough to think I knew the ropes when it came to dickering with the locals.

However, the -- little soon-to-be VC -- kid flipped his cigarette at me and gave me the finger. *"You numba fuggin ten G.I. You cheap Charlie! 400 P, or no elephant."* It was then I realized I was up against a city kid and not some country farmer out in D Zone.

"Hey, we ain't even seen no elephant!" McCoy waved a drunken arm in a wide arc and weaved back and forth. *"Whas 'e look like?"*

Three of the kids ran down a nearby alley and came out leading an elephant. It was not a big, full grown, elephant...only a baby one. But even babies like this one weighed a good ton.

"Aw, ain't that a cute lil' sumbitch 'n elephant?"

McCoy's tender moment was a sure sign that we would soon be the owners. *"We'll take it!"* He yelled as he stroked the coarse sprouts of hair on the elephant's head.

Whooping and hollering victoriously we all threw in a hundred piaster and sealed the deal. We were totally convinced that we were the only Americans in-country who owned an elephant. The few, the proud, the drunk, and it called for another round of Ba Moui Ba that had gotten as warm as tiger piss sitting in the back of the truck. The formaldehyde reeked and brought tears to our eyes as we swilled it down.

(continued....)



Thinking back on it now I guess purchasing an elephant can have lots of benefits in a place like SE Asia, but at the time we weren't thinking of any traditional gains, like good resale value, good investment, clean fuel and useful exhaust, or even companionship. Heck, we didn't even know that people in Asia could make a lot of money from elephants. They could rent them out to temples for festivals, or use them for hauling timber. We were just drunk soldiers falling in love with a new pet and being taken to the laundry by a swarm of half-naked bandits.

Nope, we had no plan. We just wanted to own an elephant and had no idea of the ramifications involved. How were we to know that caring for a pet elephant is a big job? Full-grown elephants consume about six to eight percent of their own body weight in vegetation each day. To accomplish this, they spend as many as 18 hours a day feeding. They eat all types of vegetation, from grass and fruit to leaves and bark. In fact they typically eat about 220 to 440 pounds per day! Besides that, they drink about 30 gallons of water each day. There were questions, questions...and more questions that we did not think to ask. Drunk grunts on ammo runs to the big city never think things all the way through anyway...they only live for the moment.

After finalizing the deal Marsowski, who was the best at holding his liquor, backed the deuce-and-a-half into the alley so we could load the elephant. After scrunching and shoving the ammo from the supply depot around in the bed of the truck we finally made enough room for our latest acquisition, and that's when reality hit – How the hell do you load an elephant into the bed of an army truck without a forklift? There we stood with the tailgate down scratching our heads. An hour went by, and so did many more Ba Moui Ba's, and we still had no answer.

Then the same pack of scoundrels showed up again – ready to make a new deal. Out of the immense kindness of their greedy hearts they proposed to take the elephant off our hands. They would buy it back for a whopping 100 piasters! So, after much pissing and moaning, and for the sake of our drunken hides, we conceded and took their money. Through bleary, bloodshot eyes we sadly watched as the little crooks marched once again down Tu Do to once again “sell” their elephant.

The late afternoon sun lay low through the eucalyptus trees as we climbed aboard the deuce-and-a-half to head back to base camp before nightfall. Getting caught on Highway 1 after dark surely meant we would get our asses shot off by all three sides, Americans, Viet Cong, and ARVNs. It was open season out there.

As the truck weaved its way through the exhaust of Renault taxis, pedicabs, bicycles, and dozens of pretty girls in white Ao Dai tunics, we peered through the hot yellow haze to see some excited G.I.s coming down Tu Do Street ready to buy themselves an elephant; a pet they would never take home.



G.I.'s on Tu Du street surrounded by urchins, looking to sell an elephant?



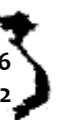
More G.I.'s on the street negotiating outside a bar, but not for a pachyderm.

(web photos added)

Chuck Dean was one of the first 300 regular Army troops to be deployed to Vietnam in 1965. After returning he served as a Drill Instructor at Ft. Ord, California – preparing new recruits for their war. In 2008 Chuck Dean was awarded the prestigious Hirsch Foundation Leadership Award in Los Angeles for his writing and work with veterans and their families over the years. He is a regular columnist for *The Vegas Voice Magazine* and lives in both Las Vegas, Nevada and Nanning, China with his wife Renee. His many books written for veterans regarding transitional challenges can be found at his author page:



www.amazon.com/author/chuckdeanbooks



From the archives....

Operational Report Lessons Learned (1 November 1966 – 31 January 1967).

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310
16 May 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report – Lessons Learned,
Headquarters 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)

AVEE-SE

25 February 1967

SMALL UNIT ACTIONS – 2/503D INFANTRY

CONFIDENTIAL
(Declassified)



“C” COMPANY, 2D BATTALION, 503D INFANTRY

On 8 January 1967, the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry was deployed from Camp Zinn at the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) base camp at BIEN HOA to a staging area at PHU LOI. From this point, the Battalion was lifted to the forward assembly area at Point BLUE (IR 828824) employing 10 helicopters. They remained there until 0930 hours on 9 January 1967. The troops were given a general orientation as to their mission prior to their departing BIEN HOA.

On 9 January, the Battalion landed at two LZ's (IT 6737 & IT 6736) and the separate companies were arranged as shown in Annex 3. The companies were given the mission of patrolling, forming blocking positions and setting up night ambushes.

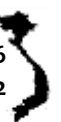
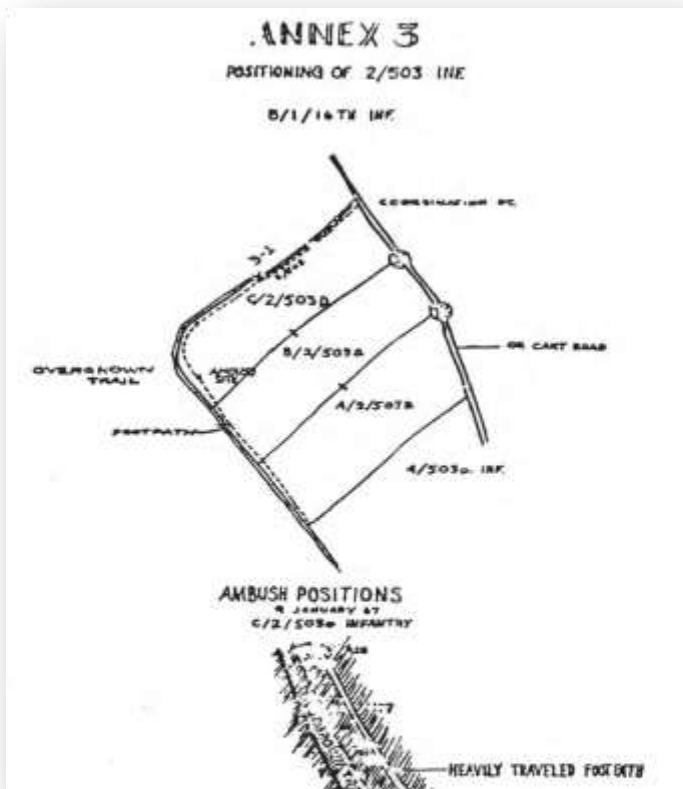
Logistically, Company “C” was armed as follows: each rifleman was armed with an M-16 rifle with 400 rounds of ammunition as a basic load, 2 smoke grenades and 2 fragmentary grenades. There were two M-60 machineguns per platoon, each gunner carrying a total of 1,500 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition. In addition, each squad had 2 M-79's with 45 rounds per grenadier and generally 2 claymore mines, depending upon the mission. The company as a whole was equipped with three (3) 81mm mortars with 30 rounds per mortar. Each individual carried three C-Ration meals while on operations.



Charlie Company troopers waiting to move out on their next mission. That's C/2/503 trooper career PFC Steve Haber on right.

At 1115 hours, 9 January, Company C landed at the LZ and immediately established a blocking position. Captain Thomas P. Carney, Company Commander, moved to the right flank to make coordination with the CO of B/1/16th Infantry which was operating to the north....

(continued....)



....After this was completed, the 3 platoons established defense positions along an ox cart road west of the SONG THI TIEN. The AO was primarily jungle with the exception of an area which had been defoliated within the last year.

B/1/16th Infantry, located 200 meters to the north of the coordination point, had established a defense perimeter, whereas C/2/503d Infantry was on a line defense. CPT Carney and CPT Wilson (B/1/16th Infantry CO) decided that ambush patrols would be placed on the overgrown trail in the western portion of the 2d Battalion AO. See Annex 3.

Shortly after the 3 platoon had established a defense perimeter, patrols were sent out to search the immediate area for signs of the VC and likely ambush sites. The 3d Platoon soon discovered a hut with a small tunnel/bomb shelter attached. The hootch had been inhabited very recently, for freshly cooked rice was found. Further search of the area revealed a hole containing 12 bicycles and a concrete platform with 200 pounds of polished rice. Everything was destroyed, with the exception of the bicycles which now provide transportation to the men of "Charlie" Company while in base camp.



"Brigadier General John R. Deane, Jr., 'Uncle Jack', Commanding General of the 173d Airborne Brigade checks the location of a patrol."

(Source: Report on Operations Junction City-Cedar Falls)

The weapons platoon, consisting of 33 men, searched the rear of the Company CP finding nothing save one small hootch. After it was destroyed, the platoon moved further east towards the THI TIEN River, running into an unfordable stream. They then returned to the company base area.

In addition, each of the 3 platoons sent out squad sized patrols to reconnoiter the front of the perimeter since there was a 100 meter gap between platoons. The Companies also employed three man observation posts during the hours of darkness.

SGT Nathaniel King, of Hartford, Connecticut, was in charge of the patrol from the 1st Platoon. When they returned to the CP, SGT King reported finding 2 foxholes showing no signs of recent use. He also reported finding a footpath running parallel to the overgrown trail in the western portion of the AO. Although the trail displayed no signs of recent use, the small foot path to the right was heavily traveled, probably because it could not be observed from the air. SGT King's patrol followed the path back to the CP where he relayed this information.

All patrols returned to the CP by 1630 hours. A-Rations and a .50 caliber machinegun were brought in at this time and the company settled down to warm chow. At 1500 hours, 1LT Phillip Hayden was told to conduct a night ambush 100 meters south of the Company's position. SGT Julius Brown was to be in charge of the patrol.

At approximately 1940 hours, an outpost located between the 2d and 3d platoon positions made enemy contact. SGT Frank Bothwell, SP4 Walter Johnson and PFC Joseph Russo were the three men at the post. They moved into position shortly after nightfall, situating themselves 3 meters from one another in a triangular position, thereby facilitating easy communication in addition to 360 degrees observation. The terrain was flat, consisting of elephant grass and bamboo.

The men lay quietly in the prone position, until they detected movement 50 meters to their front right flank, seemingly approach the OP. Their vision was obstructed by the elephant grass and being in the prone position, they could not move without being detected. SGT Bothwell could not get to his M-16 since he was in a position that any movement whatsoever could be fatal. He therefore prepared to throw a fragmentary grenade in the direction of the approaching VC.

SP4 Johnson was in such position to observe the VC, however, he knew that he must come to a sitting position to fire, thereby exposing himself. The SOP for the outpost was not to fire unless absolutely necessary. As the enemy came closer, Johnson realized that there could be no time more necessary than now.

(continued....)



He darted up into a sitting position and fired approximately 5 rounds before his weapon jammed. As he applied immediate action, a grenade exploded and Johnson took a fragment in the neck. At this time, SGT Bothwell let loose with his grenade, which he had been holding with the pin out for 3 second, hoping the grenade would explode upon impact. Unfortunately, the grenade went off while in flight, raining fragments back to the OP. PFC Russo caught a fragment in the hand and was unable to fire his M-79. Bothwell radioed back to the CP informing them of the casualties, then sprayed the area with M-16 fire and made a rapid retreat aiding Johnson and Russo.

Upon returning to the CP, the two wounded men were evacuated at the advice of the Company Medic. The wound in Johnson's neck, although not serious, was very close to the jugular vein. The Dustoff ship arrived and picked up the men 25 minutes later.

By this time, the ambush patrol was in position. CPT Carney had received reports from A/2/503d Infantry and B/1/16th Infantry that movement was detected near their Company's CP's. With this in mind, he warned SGT Brown's ambush to keep on the alert for infiltrating Viet Cong.

The ambush patrol had left the CP at 1900 hours and moved south along the foot path. They passed their ambush site and backtracked to it, thereby confusing any enemy elements that might be following their trail. The site was chosen because of the cover available and the indications that the path was frequently traveled at this point. There were nine men on the patrol, 6 armed with M-16's, 2 armed with M-79's and one (1) M-60 machinegun (see Annex 3). The patrol maintained radio silence, however, a predesignated break squelch system was employed as follows: 1 break – negative contact, 2 breaks – involved in action, 3 breaks – enemy casualties, 4 breaks – friendly casualties, 5 breaks – numerous VC in the area.

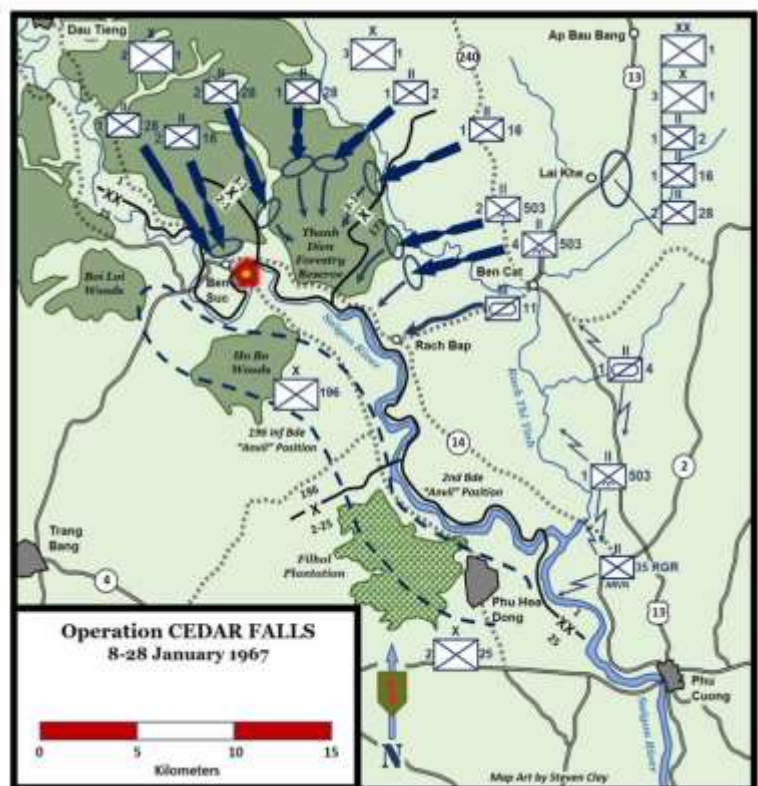
A 1945 hours, the patrol heard fire issuing from SGT Bothwell's OP previously mentioned. Another warning was issued shortly thereafter. The patrol, on full alert, lay in anticipation of enemy movement.

At 2045 hours, several sounds of movement were heard to the northeast of the ambush site. PFC Gary Gaura became anxious when hearing the movement and crawled to SGT Brown's position a few meters away to ask him what should be done. SGT Brown told him to do nothing and be still. When Gaura crawled back to his position, he coughed, and the enemy movement, which was now only 15 meters away, halted sharply. The VC remained motionless for approximately 10 minutes, and then moved on around the patrol's killing zone. PFC Gaura counted 15 silhouettes. They crossed the trail,

avoiding the ambush, yet they still remained in the immediate area.

At 2230 hours, the column of men moved further to the west, out of range and sight. 15 minutes later, machinegun fire was heard; apparently B/1/16th Infantry elements had encountered the VC. At 2300 hours, a straggler wandered directly into the ambush site. Again someone coughed, alerting the VC. This time however, there was no chance for escape. PFC Michael Farmer, an M-16 man on the southeast portion of the ambush observed the silhouette and cut loose with 5 rounds, wounding the VC. He lay on the ground moaning and shrieking in pain.

At this time, another Viet Cong straggler wandered into the ambush. He took one look at his wounded comrade and decided he wanted no part of him. As he turned to leave, the wounded man cried out once again. The other VC decided to be a good Samaritan and turned about (almost tripping over an M-60 machinegun) returning to the wounded man. He then sprayed the area with AK-47 fire, having a negative effect on the patrol.



(web image)

(continued....)



The VC then leaned over his wounded comrade and lit a candle which brilliantly illuminated both men. Immediately after this was done, PFC Michael Hill cut loose with his M-60, however, the machinegun malfunctioned. Simultaneously, PFC Martin C. Norman bore down on the two VC with his M-16. The candle went out and all was quiet.

Silence was maintained until the morning when the two KIA were confirmed. Two AK-47 weapons were found with the bodies, and among their personal items was found a document containing the crypto for the Military Region 4 Headquarters. This document proved to be extremely important and directly led to the capture of a high official in the MR-4. The second VC was obviously a courier whose job was to transport important documents.

At 0630 hours, the ambush patrol moved out of the area and proceeded by foot to the Company CP. The documents captured from the Viet Cong courier turned out to be one of the most significant finds of the Operation.

"B" COMPANY, 2D BATTALION, 503D INFANTRY **NIGHT AMBUSH – 1ST PLATOON – 15 JANUARY 1967**

1LT Donald (?) Feedham, the 1st Platoon Leader received a mission from the Company Commander, CPT Ken Kaplan, to establish 2 ambush sites along HIGHWAY 14 on the night of 15 January 1967. After due consideration was made to likely ambush sites, Lieutenant Feedham decided to place the two ambushes at IT 706251 and IT 712248. He then divided his 31 man platoon into two groups of 16 and 15 men. The ambushes will be covered separately and will be denoted as SITE I and SITE II.



Reading map is Bravo Company CO Capt. Ken Kaplan with his RTO Harry Cleland during Operation Junction City.

SITE I

Staff Sergeant J. Marlow was the NCO in charge of the first ambush which went into position 500-600 meters from the Battalion CP along HIGHWAY 14. There were four fighting positions in the patrol (See Annex 4).

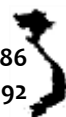
The first position was located furthest north and was equipped with an M-60 machinegun. SGT Mark Peterson was in charge of this team which consisted of himself, PFC Melvin Tomlia (Machinegunner) and PFC Raymond S. Cassidy. There was also a radio at this point.

The second position was located 30-40 meters southeast of the first position and consisted of 4 men, 6 of them being armed with M-16's and 1 man armed with an M-79. SP4 Bly was in charge of this position.

(continued....)



"Members of Co B, 2nd Bn, 503rd Abn Inf, 173rd Abn Bde move through Thanh Dien Forest on patrol in the southern section of the 'Iron Triangle' during Operation 'Cedar Falls.'"



Between 2115 and 2130 hours, Sp4 Leamon Perry and Sp4 Joseph Carusso at Position 1 observed 2 VC heading in their direction. When inside the killing zone, Specialist Perry gave the word to open fire. Three minutes after the fire had ceased, a party of three volunteers, consisting of SGT Thompson, SP4 Carusso and PVT Williams advanced to check out the results.

They found no bodies on the Highway where they expected, so they elected to search the clearing on the other side of the road. The three men had covered approximately 50 meters when from out of the brush, one of the VC jumped out to assault. All three troopers opened fire at almost point blank range, killing the enemy instantly.

The VC's body was dragged onto the road where it could serve as a decoy for any others who might happen by. The three men then continued the search of the area where the VC were originally fired upon, discovering 8 bundles of personal items and several documents. They also found a .45 caliber pistol and an M3 type sub-machinegun.

There were no further contacts during the night, however, on one occasion, 3 or 4 hand grenades were received. The fire was returned with apparent negative results and no friendly casualties.

In the morning, the ambush patrols from both SITE I and SITE II linked up and conducted a search of the area. They discovered numerous bundles of personal items indicative that a great number of either Viet Cong or Refugees were moving through this area before the introduction of the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry.

Chieu Hoi (Below) Aids Paratroopers

A "Chieu Hoi" Returnee who volunteered to help the paratroopers encourage VC to take advantage of the amnesty broadcast his appeal during Operation CEDAR FALLS. He and his brother, both former VC, reunited under the amnesty program, voluntarily aided the Americans and were directly or indirectly responsible for the return of 35 Viet Cong to the Government cause during the Operations in the IRON TRIANGLE.



Those Insecure Males

(Must be Legs)

"I'm not sure but a body of work exists that postulates that insecure males fear women almost as much as they fear Paratroopers."

Bill Reynolds

A/2/503, RVN

"Especially paratroopers of the 173d!" Ed, RVN



RLTW



(web photos)



***All The Way
Sky Soldiers!***



VA's proposed rules for Veteran community care now open for public comment

February 21, 2019

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the publication beginning tomorrow of a proposed regulation in the Federal Register for the new Veterans community care program, including access standards.

The proposed regulation would establish new rules for the Veterans community care program required by section 101 of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION Act) of 2018.

Last month, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie announced its proposed **access standards for community care** and **urgent care** provisions that will take effect in June and guide when Veterans can seek care to meet their needs under the MISSION Act – be it with VA or with community providers.

Under the MISSION Act, signed by President Trump in June 2018, there are six different eligibility criteria for community care:

- **Services unavailable**
- **Residence in a State without a full-service VA medical facility**
- **40-mile legacy/grandfathered from the Choice program**
- **Access standards**
- **Best medical interest**
- **Needing care from a VA medical service line that VA determines is not providing care that complies with VA's standards for quality**

ACCESS STANDARDS

VA is proposing new access standards, effective when the final regulations publish (expected in June 2019), to ensure Veterans have greater choice in receiving care.

Eligibility criteria and final standards as follows were based on VA's analysis of all of the best practices both in government and in the private sector and tailored to the needs of our Veteran patients:

Access standards will be based on **average drive time** and **appointment wait times**.

For primary care, mental health, and non-institutional extended care services, VA is proposing a **30-minute average drive time standard**.

For specialty care, VA is proposing a **60-minute average drive time standard**.

VA is proposing appointment wait-time standards of **20 days for primary care, mental health care, and non-institutional extended care services**, and **28 days for specialty care from the date of request with certain exceptions**.

Eligible Veterans who cannot access care within those standards would be able to choose between eligible community providers and care at a VA medical facility.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said, *"Our medical services must meet our Veterans' needs and reinforce the trust that forms the basis for every interaction with VA. Our new access standards are a vital part of this effort. Most Americans can already choose the health care providers that they trust, and President Trump promised that Veterans would be able to do the same. With VA's new access standards, the future of the VA health care system will lie in the hands of Veterans – exactly where it should be."*

Secretary Wilkie's full statement from Jan. 28 is available here:

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5186

The proposed regulation (RIN 2900-AQ46) is currently available online at

<https://federalregister.gov/d/2019-03030>.

The proposed regulation is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register tomorrow, Feb. 22, and VA encourages the public to provide input on the proposed regulation by March 25, 2019, during the public comment period. For instructions on how to submit a comment, visit the Federal Register website at:

www.regulations.gov and search for RIN 2900-AQ46.



Sniper Rifle Given to LBJ from 173d



This "artifact is a Russian sniper rifle (1970.46.7) captured in War Zone D, Republic of Vietnam, by Troopers for the 173rd Airborne Brigade" and presented to President Lyndon B. Johnson. (Source: National Archives)



Message to the President, declassified 6/3/93....

From: White House Situation Room (McCafferty)
To: The President
Info: Christian
Cite: CAP 67964

S E C R E T

**SITUATION REPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1967**

SOUTH VIETNAM

Fighting continued in the Central Highlands as troops of the 173rd Airborne pushed the battle for Hill 875, some 19 miles southwest of Dak To. The battalion of the 173rd which made the initial contact in this area on Sunday has now been reinforced by a second battalion. Heavy enemy ground fire damaged several helicopters attempting to evacuate US wounded, but most of the seriously wounded have been brought out.

Press reports indicate that the paratroopers have taken the crest of the hill. Official reports state that they are pressing the attack, after saturating the area with artillery and napalm (official reports are undoubtedly running behind, however, since they are concentrating on the main objective of taking the hill).

US losses on the hill thus far are 79 killed, 123 wounded, and 39 missing; enemy losses are believed to have been much higher than the 26 bodies counted. It will be awhile, however, before this can be verified.

###

Where Does It Stop?



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOD Identifies Army Casualties

March 7, 2019

The Department of Defense announced today the death of two soldiers who were supporting Operation Inherent Resolve.

Both soldiers died March 5, 2019, as a result of a non-combat related incident. The incident is under investigation. The soldiers are:

Sgt. Holli R. Bolinski, 37, of Pinckneyville, Illinois.
Spc. Jackson D. Johnson, 20, of Hillsboro, Missouri.



Sgt. Bolinski



Spc. Johnson

Both soldiers were assigned to 657th Transportation Company, 419th Transportation Battalion, 103d Sustainment Command, Mount Vernon, Illinois.

For more information regarding Sgt. Holli Bolinski and Spc. Jackson Johnson, media may contact Maj. Andy Thaggard, 184th Sustainment Command, Kuwait; cell: 011-965-9899-6508, andy.thaggard.mil@mail.mil, or Facebook Messenger.

Further reporting states, the "two U.S. Army soldiers were killed in a vehicle collision" while "traveling in North Kuwait when their vehicle collided with a civilian commercial truck, the DoD said in a press release on Thursday." "A third soldier, who has not been publicly identified, was injured in the crash."

Source: DoD



REMEMBERING OUR 2/503D RTO'S

No doubt without exception we each have a brief story about a 2/503 RTO buddy, or if you were an RTO a story about you, which stands out above all others. Following are brief memories about our RTOs. What prompted the request for these stories was this video tribute to RTOs sent in by Sky Soldier good buddy Pete George:

<https://youtu.be/zzli0sUnbsc>

Drinks on the Secretary of the Army!

I will consider it a privilege and an honor to buy drinks for anyone whoever humped a radio for me in Co. C (when I was XO), in HHC (when I was S3 Air), or in B Co. (when I was CO). I was a 1st Lt when I was in Co. C and a Captain when I was in HHC and B Co. I returned to VN for a second tour.

Les Brownlee, Col (Ret)

CO B/2/503

Former Acting Secretary of the Army



Dust Off of Les in "D" Zone jungle in March '66 after he was wounded in a firefight during Operation Silver City while commanding Bravo Company. A number of the HHC RTO's and commo guys helped Bravo troopers open a clearing for the penetrator to lift him out of the triple canopy.

The PRC & Heat Done Him In

The only time I remember was when being a new RTO to Bravo Co. We were on a search and destroy mission, Cowboys dropped us into the elephant grass. Must have been 110 degrees same for humidity. It wasn't long before I was overcome with heat exhaustion. All I remember was telling my LT to leave me that I'd catch up -- he was pulling gear off of me when all of a sudden a torrential rain came. Drops as big as quarters and cold as hell. Brought me back in a flash -- never had the problem again.

We lost that LT a few weeks later to the VC.

Here's a pic of Bravo CO Capt. Ken Kaplan and me on patrol in Junction City.

RTO Harry Cleland

B/2/503



Bravo CO Ken Kaplan holding map as his RTO and good buddy Harry Cleland looks on.

Antman...Dee the RTO

Bravo Company 2/503 between 1968 & 1969 we were tasked to check out a possible NVA basecamp on top of this mountain. Our recon tried to find a way that provided us with cover -- they found this approach that gave us cover but it proved to be a physical challenge.

There was thick brush and heavy foliage; we found a dried-up stream bed that went straight to the top of the mountain, but we had to crawl on our hands and knees most of the way. Our RTO had to fold his antenna down into his rucksack in order to clear the underbrush.

(continued....)



We had traveled some distance towards the mountain top under strict noise discipline when the RTO's antenna popped out of his rucksack puncturing a large nest of hungry & angry ants. Hundreds of ants dropped down on our RTO and began to bite him relentlessly; within seconds he had dozens of welts all over his body. Due to the fact that we were told that the possibility of an active NVA base camp was highly likely; we all were concerned that the RTO would give our position away and that we would be engaged with an unknown sized enemy unit. Needless to say our pucker factor was really high.

To the RTO's credit he maintained his noise discipline. As his medic I treated him with what I had available and when we reached the basecamp and found that the NVA chose not to engage but rather left in a hurry, our RTO was evacuated to LZ English.

Our RTO was always referred to as the *ANTMAN* after his encounter with dozens if not hundreds of hungry & angry ants. All I can recall was that our RTO was called Dee and he was in the second platoon.

Rick "Doc" Fassett, Senior Medic
B/2/503, April '68 - April '69

RTO Jesse Sanchez, A Terrific Guy

Here is a story from the time 2/503 was near Tuy Hoa between the two trips to Dak To. Delta was a new company at the time, it had been formed on 1 September 1967 with drafts from the other companies.

Delta 2/503 had been moving through a valley near Tuy Hoa looking for VC -- the company had just found it's laager site and stopped for the night. One of the rifle platoons was immediately sent out to set-up an ambush, the rest of the company started to dig-in and set-up its defense. After a while movement was spotted on a hill in the distance. When the movement was checked out with high-powered binoculars it confirmed what appeared to be persons wearing civilian clothes carrying rifles.

Company Commander Ken Smith, and First



RTO Bob Fleming

Sergeant Michael Deeb of Macon, GA, had Delta Company's attached 319th Artillery Forward Observer, Sergeant E5 Randall Tenney of Wetherfield, CT, with his RTO SP4 Jesse Sanchez of Anaheim, CA, take a look. They got together in the middle of the perimeter and started to fire 105 rounds at the position on the hillside. Because it was an active fire mission involving Delta Company I put on my battalion net (call sign Three Yankee) radio and was standing behind SP4 Sanchez just in case I was needed to relay something to Battalion. SP4 John Berry, of Renton, WA, was also there with his company net radio.

Sanchez was standing immediately in front of me with his PRC25 -- if I put my right hand straight out I could grab his antenna. I wanted to be close so I could hear everything that was going on. I had my handset up to my left ear and was listening to the battalion net. There was really nothing going on at the time.

Then we heard a couple cracks from rifle shots as SP4 Sanchez's antenna was hit with something and broke off a couple of inches above the spot where it connects to the radio. About the same time everyone who had been standing up in the center of the perimeter hit the dirt.

The company net radio came alive. It said, "*We hear shots! What's happening back there?*" It was the ambush Platoon that had left earlier. I wish I could tell you what platoon it was, but it was long ago. They were told we were being sniped at. The ambush platoon said, "*We can hear them, do you want us to go get them?*" They were given a, "*Hell yeah!*" and they went and found two VC. After firing them up they had two dead VC; one man, one woman. Both had been carrying WWII Japanese rifles. A fine job done by all.

RTO SP4 Jesse Sanchez was killed on 19 November 1967, when a US Marine jet dropped a large bomb on our CP on Hill 875. I tried to help him but his wounds were far beyond what I could do. He was a terrific guy. Those who knew him will attest to that.

Bob Fleming
A/D/2/503



RTO Jesse Sanchez
KIA 11/19/67

(continued....)



That's Good Enough Information

We pulled some radio relay from a bunker at Kontum for MACV. We had incoming from 122mm rockets and the guy from MACV asked me to see where they were landing. I went to the door of the bunker and this piece hit the wall. I told the guy where the piece hit and he said that's good enough information.

Dan "Doc" Fritzman

A/2/503



Doc Dan, holding shrapnel from the rocket attack.

Another pic from Dan:



This is James Hamilton, Richard Daigle and myself just after arriving at Kontum about March of '71. The 2nd Plt of A/2/503d, 173rd Airborne. We were sent from An Khe to pull security around an ARVN compound because the ARVN were stealing all the sheet metal from buildings. We were there 15 minutes when one of them stole the LT's .45.

Pointman-Gunner-RTO

I used to explain carrying the PRC25 this way: When I first got to Nam, the sergeant looked me over and told me I had leadership quality as all the officers did, so he

was going to let me lead the platoon by being the pointman. After a while, I found out it was only in the movies that the Indians let the point man through in order to ambush the main element. In real life, Charlie took whomever he could and first was best for him.

After being shot at often on point, I went to the sergeant and asked off point. He looked me over and said he was going to let me carry the M-60 instead of the point, so I would have more protection. After carrying the M-60, I did find it was more protection, but in every firefight, the machinegunner had to bear the brunt of the fight.

After a while, I went back to the sergeant, although I was beginning to be suspicious of his veracity, and asked off the M-60 and not point again either. He looked me up and down again, and said he had the perfect job, carrying a radio, which put me in the middle of the platoon with all their protection surrounding me. So, I wound up carrying the Prick 25 and solidifying my distrust of all NCOs forever.



Mr. Hassler. This RTO even looked strac in the boonies!

I did note my experience translated well to my civilian life after my draft obligation was fulfilled. All three positions were there: leading, bearing responsibility and communicating, only in civilian life no one ever had my back like in Nam.

(continued....)



As for my RTO story, in February '67 Recon, having survived a firefight with a company of VC and a few days later another encounter with the same VC, we set up an ambush along a trail for the night. I was only supposed to take a two-hour watch but took bennies to stay up handling the watch the whole night by myself. Not sure just how many I took, but more than two I'm sure.

Looking up in the sky at all the stars, I soon saw some of the lights moving rapidly across the sky. Sometime, in early a.m., I radioed into battalion a report I was seeing UFOs streaking across the night sky. Fortunately, the grunt on watch was a buddy of mine in S-3 and he talked me down some from my high and squelched the report. The next day, we rejoined the battalion and I tried to sleep but it was like toothpicks were holding my eyelids open. First and only time I took drugs in Nam.

**RTO Jerry Hassler
Recon/2/503**

RTO's Were Endangered Species

Very interesting video with a lot of truth.

In early July '67 we made contact going up a hill that had stairs cut with handrails by the NVA around Dak To. I called Capt. Willoughby to see where he wanted our Platoon to attack. He said get your ass up here. I handed the handset back to Carl Pender our RTO and it blew-up in his hand -- It was his first contact so he was a bit startled. I told him to replace the handset which he did.

I noticed grey smoke and a brownish tan figure in some bamboo above us. Took the M-60 mg from the gunner and fired several short bursts which ended his sniping for all time.

We charged up the hill with all platoons on-line and killed the rest of them that could not run or crawl away.

RTO's were indeed an endangered species.

**Nick Hun, (Col. Ret)
B/2/503**

All-American RTO

I was an RTO in the early sixties with the 82d. The radio was the PRC10, the 25 & 77 were great improvements.

I am still in contact with my RTO from the tour in 1969. You get close to the man who is just an arms-length away.

**Joe Logan
B 2/503, '65-'66
A 1/27, '69**



Joe & Judy Logan

Standouts in Strength and Courage

I had a brief stint as an RTO in Ranger 3-60, where the students were selected for a range of duties. Milton Cook was my RTO in C/2-504 and we did Swift Strikes, Devils Arrow, and a bunch of others from '60 to '63.

SGT Gary Wright was the Commo Chief in B/2-503 and carried the Bn Net from '63 to '66. He drove me crazy with his "long counts" with the PRC10, until we got the PRC 25. Ron Macey was my Ranger Bn RTO and we are still in contact.

All of these Abn soldiers were standouts in strength and courage. I have bought the drinks and still owe about a case of booze to all that survive. BDQ Roy

**Roy Lombardo, LTC (Ret)
CO B/2/503**



Ranger Roy at Camp Zinn

(continued....)



The Battle of Balad - Iraq 2003



PV2 Jeremiah Minor, Battle Company, 2/503d

2/503rd Battle Company was tasked to secure the city of Balad in a joint operation with 4th ID. The previous week I was caught in a grenade blast with two of my battle buddies, one of which was the platoon RTO. Since I was released back to my platoon, I "inherited" my buddy's tasks as the platoon RTO for 3rd Platoon (RATTLAHS). Let me tell you about how a young Private kept his platoon from getting shot to shit.

"BATTLE 35, MUSTANG 34, we are RTB, good luck out there and happy hunting."

"MUSTANG 34, BATTLE 35R roger, safe flight back."

My platoon had touched down and I was already getting multiple reports of different units in the AO getting into small fire fights. I was excited at first and ready to get into the shit as we began our movement to our link-up point with our 4th ID counterparts. I kept noticing comms traffic that 4th ID was tracking a bunch of armed insurgents in our AO. I notified my PSG and kept him informed of the situation as we proceeded to target. I relayed to my PSG that 4th ID was prepping to light up the group of insurgents with their 60s and two of their platoons about to catch them in a crossfire. 4th ID passed on a grid to Fire for effect when I noticed chatter between the two 4th ID platoons describing the insurgents as moving in a wedge formation -- I stopped dead in my tracks when I heard the grid they called over comms.

"DELTA 9, DELTA 26 these guys might be friendly stand by."

"DELTA 26, DELTA 6 there are no friendlies in this AO fire when ready."

"DELTA 6, DELTA 26 they are moving in a wedge formation, tactically they might be friendly."

"DELTA 26, DELTA 6 I SAY AGAIN NO FRIENDLIES, LIGHT THEM UP!"

Realizing we were seconds from being vaporized by 4th ID I stood straight up holding my fist in the air yelling

in my comms *"All squads HALT!"* My PSG, 10 meters behind me, came running toward me. I quickly handed my PSG my mic telling him 4th ID was targeting us and they are about to light us up. My PSG looked at me like I had lost my mind and perhaps I still had a concussion from that last fire fight. He took my mic and listened for about 10 seconds and the look on his face was a look I will never forget -- it was a look of *"OH SHIT PRIVATE, you just saved our asses!"* which quickly turned into *"Let me set this dumb ass officer straight!"*

"BATTLE 35 - BREAK BREAK BREAK!!! HEY DUMB ASS HOLD YOUR FIRE!"

"DELTA 6 - THIS IS DELTA 6 identify yourself."

"BATTLE 35 - We the mutha fuckas moving in a wedge formation you about to shoot at. I SAY AGAIN HOLD YOUR FIRE!"

"DELTA 6 - THIS IS DELTA 6, confirm your phase line."

"BATTLE 35 - We at phase line, how many hadjis you know that move in a wedge formation mutha fuckas?! BATTLE 35 OUT!"

My PSG handed me my mic and told me to relay to the Legs our grid and to let him know that 4th ID wasn't going to shoot us. After several minutes of verifying our identity and our location, I made sure I comms checked every 4th ID platoon and their mortars to verify they were not going to shoot at us as well. I then told my PSG the Legs weren't going to shoot at us anymore and we could move out. He looked at me with an odd impatient look and said, *"You halted us Airborne, you move us out!"* All the squad leaders looked at me smiling as I gave the all clear and we moved out.



L-R: CSM Lamonte Caldwell and Jeremiah at BATTLE 35 CW2 Reunion

**Jeremiah Minor
Battle Company, 2/503d**

(continued....)



Luckiest RTO During The Entire War

I don't really have much of an RTO story, though I almost always carried a PRC25 for the CO.

One time I remember having to man a foxhole alone in the middle of an open field surrounded by woods. It looked like a good LZ and maybe they figured the V.C. would start lining the woods in anticipation of a landing. The rest of our B 2/503 guys were in a strawberry field in the woods about 50 meters behind me. I don't remember if my antenna was tucked or whether I was on squelch much of the time.

The next day I remember everyone carrying out large empty metal water cans so as not to leave them for the enemy. And, as I've said before, I figured that fat radio was good protection in case a bullet came flying from the wrong direction.



RTO Paladino in the boonies.

My favorite call signs that I recall are "Earthy Sox" and "Waist Riser". At Camp Zinn we were "Paragon Bravo" and guys called me "Paragon Paladino" 'cuz it rhymed. (In high school when "Have Gun Will Travel" was popular on TV, they called me "Paladin" after Richard Boone's character).

**RTO Larry Paladino
B/2/503**

Editor's Note:

Larry failed to mention he was the luckiest RTO during the entire war, when Bravo CO Capt. Les Brownlee "ordered" him to *officially welcome to the company and battalion Playboy Playmate of the Year Jo Collins.*

Is that a PRC25 in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?

RTO's are multifaceted. Ed



Squeak and His Bird Spider Fang

Squeak carried his equipment as if he were about to break into a run. Set in a forward lean, he would push his helmet to the back of his head and nod, then smile as if in balance. After taping the radio handset to the left shoulder strap of his rucksack, Squeak held his head to the left so he could monitor radio traffic without breaking stride. This forced him to wear his helmet on the right side of his head.

Within a week, Squeak's head lay to the left whether he was carrying the radio or not.

Squeak carried a small leather pouch of dew in his rucksack. He opened it at night. Not to roll a fat-one, but to use the fang he had cut from a bird spider to pick his teeth. Squeak showed the fang to the new men, boasting that the spider died trying to walk across his face.

Squeak liked to puncture the skin of a new man's hand with the spider fang, then tell the Cherry that a bird spider killed a GI in Alpha Company. Then he would say, "No one goes home from No-DEROS-Alpha."

Gary Prisk, Col. (Ret), CO, C/D/2/503

(Excerpts from Gary's novel, *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt*)



"Pvt. Glen 'Squeak' Harmon is near the foliage back over the shoulder of NVA chippy we captured...talking on the radio."

(continued....)



More Chargin' Charlie RTOs....



"Deep in the An Lao River valley...Pvt Bobby "Amps" Watts (left) Charlie Company RTO from Kentucky...Steve "Tennessee" Senseny...2nd Battalion RTO." Gary Prisk is pictured between his two RTOs.

Slinky Layout Zero

Well...I never rose to the rank of RTO, but remembering the encouragement from my basic (in '63) drill sergeant, *"Spread out, one round will get you all."*

I usually, when on operations, sent my RTO, his PRC25 and recon sergeant with one of the platoon leaders that were in the rear. I with a PRC25 on my back, would be with the command group, generally up with the point platoon.

I figured the company would not end up, with zero artillery support by being spread out. Additionally, we taught Corrinio, my RTO, to call and adjust artillery fire.



LT Robinson



Corrinio, Jim's RTO in a ville.

5 seconds might be right (survival rate of RTOs stated in video), as most casualties occurred in the initial engagement. Of course that was not the case in the drawn-out battles later in the highlands.

Even I figured out tuck, but while trying to squirm into the ground and get some fire going, my antenna flipped up only to be shot off. So there it was, dangling, but still sort of worked.

Although I understood that call signs were to be changed to confuse the enemy. It never happened to anyone that I knew of. Bravo 6 was and still is Bravo 6. My SLINKY LAYOUT ZERO was supposedly unpronounceable to the Vietnamese. Out

Jim Robinson
B/2/503 FAC

Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah

There are two brief RTO-related stories which stand out more than others.

Following a major battle most of us had survived, an RTO buddy had been killed. After dustoff of our dead and wounded what remained was his half-blown-away helmet on the ground next to his PRC25, the top of which was covered in blood and brains. I noted fresh brains are pink, white and slimy. It's a memory I'd just as soon forget, but cannot.

On a lighter note, Sp4 RTO George (Scotty) Colson (HHC/2/503, second tour B/2/503, SFC Ret) was manning the radio bunker at Camp Zinn late at night, the one just across the way from the Milton Olive, Jr., chapel, while I was in the battalion's PBX tent down the way. Scotty and I, both California boys, became somewhat bored with our late-night duties and decided to sing to one another over the wire:

Scotty: Hello muddah Smitty: Hello faddah
Scotty: Here I am at Smitty: Camp Grenada

About then, (the late) Capt. Tom Goodwin (Maj. Ret), the battalion's commo boss, burst into the tent and reamed me a new one. Apparently, he didn't like our rendition of Allan Sherman's song.



Camp Zinn

(continued....)



Then there was the time RTO Sp4 Lee Braggs (2-tour, SFC Ret) and I each dropped our handsets in the "D" Zone jungle, *twice* (it was thick shit I tells ya), when, after humping all day 1SGT Sullivan invited us to dig a 6-by; but that's another story.

Those performances may well have contributed to this RTO becoming a career-long Sp4.

Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503, '65/'66
Paragon 5-Kilo



With M-16 over his shoulder, career-long Sp4 RTO Smith crosses stream with water up to his PRC during Operation Marauder, January '66, with his antenna on display, (dumb ass!).

A Good Reminder

Thanks for the video. A good reminder of just how much you RTO's had to put up with in Nam.

Bob Sweeney, LTC (Ret)
C/HHC/2/503



LT Bob Sweeney, Co. C Wpns Platoon Ldr with friend in 1965.

A Spoon Saved The RTO

I already related my RTO story in my novel, *Land of a Thousand Dances*, but I'll repeat it here:

It was day seven in a search and destroy mission in an area near An Khe in November, 1965. Over the past week B/2/327 1st Brigade 101st Airborne Division had been hit with an ambush and numerous sniper incidents that resulted in several casualties.

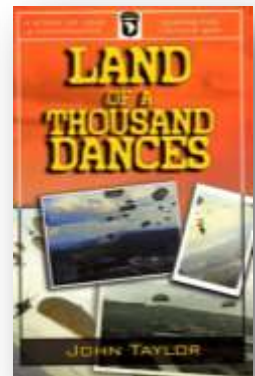
On this particular day, we were taking a break while the platoon leader checked his map to chart our direction. The RTO--unable to recall his name--and I were kneeling side-by-side until the lieutenant ordered the platoon up and directed our point man to proceed.

Just as we stood to move out, a sniper's round hit the RTO in his left forearm and he hit the dirt. While I was treating his wound--I was the platoon medic--the RTO kept complaining of pain to his chest, but there was no blood or any other sign of a wound other than that to the forearm.

After dressing the RTO's wound, I opened up his fatigue shirt and gazed in amazement at what I saw. The round that wounded him exited his arm, struck him in the chest, deflected off a metal spoon he had in his left shirt pocket, and burrowed into the first few layers of skin above the RTO's heart. Had the round not deflected off the spoon, it would have likely entered his heart and he would have been KIA.

The RTO was shipped out to the battalion aid station and then on to some unknown rear area hospital. He later had his photo taken for *Stars & Stripes*, with General Westmoreland holding the spoon and smiling. The RTO never returned to our unit.

John "Doc" Taylor
B/2/503



Following the war Doc Taylor would play professional baseball in the Yankees' & Phillies' systems, and would become a prolific author following a career in law enforcement.

(continued....)



More Suited For Weapons Platoon?

When I first joined B Company 2/503 in May of '65 we were the first replacements to join the company. Having spent 21 days on a boat and a couple days in Okinawa, standing there was a bit of a shock. Someone, probably the First Sergeant, asked, *"Who knows how to drive a Jeep?"* I asked if it was a stick shift and said I could. So, wallah, I am now the company commanders' jeep driver.

First I had to have someone show me how to start it. Captain Lombardo was the company commander. For the first week or so I just drove officers back and forth to Bien Hoa. One day with a Jeep full of people I was driving a bit fast and hit a bump in the road. As I kept driving one of the officers said, *"Hey, you missed one."* I said, *"Don't worry, I will get it on the way back,"* they did not laugh.

A few days later I was informed that I was also going to be Lombardo's RTO. Go to supply and get your gear. Well I must have been asleep in basic and AIT because I had no clue what I was doing.

We then went on a mission and I was a mess. Grenades would fall off my belt and I trudged through making noise and being possibly the worst combat soldier invented. I could tell Roy was not very happy with me. The final straw came when I was walking behind him and I got a call requesting to talk to him. I said loud enough for him to hear, *"I will see if Capt. Lombardo is available."* Roy lost it, and gave me the worst look then sent me down to the weapons squad 3rd platoon.

Over the next year three or four of our company commanders and their RTO's were wounded. Guess being a ditz saved my life...who knows?

Robert Toporek
B/2/503



Bob in Jump School

THE PRC (and yes it was)



The most commonly used communications device in Vietnam was the PRC-25 radio. It had a range with the flexible antenna of about 3-4 miles in the flat land of the delta. With different antennas that could be extended to about 20 miles, maybe even more on a good day. All the controls were mounted to the top and the battery was contained in a compartment on the bottom. There were two places to attach handsets and two knobs to set the frequency and a knob each for volume and squelch. The antenna attached to the top too. There were handles at each side.

It was water proof but the handset wasn't. It had to be held up when crossing waterways or arm pit deep mud. Normally it would hang on a ring high on the shoulder strap. With the volume turned up the sound would carry far enough for someone a few feet away to hear. The coiled cord was long enough so that a man walking behind you could use it.

It was an FM signal that overlapped with some of the civilian radio and TV channels. We would on occasion find some civilians with a radio tuned into our frequency. They would be "detained" for that. (Web description)

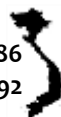
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RTO's of the 2/503d Inf Reg, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) ~ Vietnam



(continued....)



2/503 RTO'S



(continued....)



2/503 RTO'S



(continued....)



2/503 RTO'S



(continued....)



2/503 RTO'S



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2/503 RTO'S



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2/503 RTO'S



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2/503 RTO'S



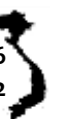
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2/503 RTO'S



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RTO Photos From 2/503 Troopers' Collections

Jim Bethea	Pat Bowe
Les Brownlee	Dominic Cacciatore
Tom Conley	Les Daniels
Woody Davis	George Dexter
Jim Dresser	Fitz Enz (Photojournalist)
Tom Faley	Les Fuller
Mike Guthrie	Bob Guy
Jerry Hassler	Don Horger
Wayne Hoitt	Jack Leide
Freddie Parks	Jerry Patterson
Jim Robinson	Lew Smith

RTO'S TALK

After viewing the video tribute to RTOs (<https://youtu.be/zzli0sUnbsc>), these radio operators traded a few amusing notes:

"Yikes! Is that why they kept shooting at me? I thought it was because I was a famous movie star. RTONH."

RTO Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503, '65/'66



RTO Hoitt working on his tan in the boonies.

"Nah. It's because you never learned to tuck the damn antenna! Your blonde hair might have had something to do with it too."

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

"I didn't tuck the antenna much, either."

RTO Larry Paladino, B/2/503, '65/'66

"See, you guys were probably OJT RTOs, not school trained like me, where they taught us to tuck & duck! I swear, I think *everybody* carried the PRC at one time or another.

This photo (next page) is of Bravo Bull RTO Larry Paladino on the patio at our home in Florida years ago while talking into my PRC25....I didn't have the heart to tell him there was no battery in it and even if there was there was no one on the other end to talk to. He kept speaking into the handset, '*Bravo 6 Kilo, over; Bravo 6 Kilo, over*'. Sad, very sad.

It's quite easy to be a good RTO. All one needs to know is, '*Sir. It's for you.*'"

Smitty

(continued....)





So Sad

RTO Paladino: "Bravo 6 Kilo, over. Bravo 6 Kilo, over."

"OJT, yeah. Sort of like that. I never even put the damned antenna on until we stopped somewhere, hid in a thick patch of wait-a-minute vines, and called in a sitrep. Also, we carried those damned Vietnamese frameless packs, and I kept the radio inside and out of sight. One of the other LRRPS who came over from the batts clued me in about chuck's target practice tendencies."

Reluctant RTO Mark Carter, 173d LRRP

THE RTO IN VIETNAM

The RTO (Radio/Telephone Operator) was usually carefully chosen. He had to be someone with experience, who wouldn't get rattled under fire. He had to be able to read maps, too. If something happened to the officer, the RTO would effectively command the unit, calling in fires, getting in medevacs, etc. It was also a dangerous job, since the radio antenna said to the enemy "Shoot ME first!"

But an experienced RTO became like a "private secretary" to the officer, anticipating what might be wanted and preparing it in advance. At night, he and the officer, the platoon sergeant, and platoon medic slept close together, alternating radio watch, the "Twenty-Five" within reach of all.

RTOs within a unit got to know each other too, and formed a kind of bond, since they did all the communications. There was a "status" to being the RTO. All the RTOs administratively reported back to the communications section back at battalion. The commo section also maintained your radio for you, out of the field.

From the original Geocities Tour of Duty Advisor's website.



~ A 2/503 Recon Birthday ~



Dave & Marcus

Hi All: Anne & I had the pleasure of celebrating Col. Marcus Powell's 87th birthday. He had many family and friends surrounding him to celebrate the day (4-11-19). We were so happy to be there.
Best, ATW

**Dave Kies
Recon/2/503**



~ Editor's Military-Related Questions ~

(Views of this newsletter editor are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of veterans of the 2/503d)

Commander-In-Chief Evokes Possible Military Action Against His Opponents

*"I Have The Police, The Military, and
The Trump Bikers"*



Bikers for Trump
(web image)

During his oval office remarks in March to the news group Breitbart, the Commander-In-Chief stated things will get *"very bad, very bad"* if his supporters in the military, police, and bikers were to rise up against his opponents, in other words, American citizens. This onlooker interprets the meaning behind his comments as nothing less than threatening and promoting a possibility of violence on Americans by Americans. Our questions to you; does such a statement by the supreme leader of our armed forces give you pause and cause you to consider the real and potential harm which could be the product of his divisive claims? Do his remarks remind you of railings by other, historical, government leaders? And if not....why not?

Following the Senate's rejection of tax-payer funding for his border wall, a wall he repeatedly promised his followers would be paid for by Mexico (billions of dollars he is now diverting from the military budget), the Commander-In-Chief stated,

"You know, the left plays a tougher game, it's very funny. I actually think that the people on the right are tougher, but they don't play it tougher. I can tell you I have the support of the police, the support of the military, the support of the Bikers for Trump – I have the tough people, but they don't play it tough – until they go to a certain point, and then it would be very bad, very bad."

Have you asked yourself, what is that "certain point" in the Commander's warning? What message is he sending to our military, to citizens of our country, our families, our children, our neighbors, our friends, and, to people of the world? Do you believe the Commander's proclamations are unbecoming of the leader of the free world? Do his remarks want you to question his very fitness to serve as supreme leader of the men and women of our armed forces and as a model for nations everywhere?

One can only imagine, while asking you these questions, what would have been the reaction of the masses had CIC Obama said, *"I have the military"* on call and available to release against his opponents, fellow Americans, at will? Of course, the sky would have fallen.

Lew Smith

Editor, 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter

Note: We welcome [vet comments](#) for inclusion in a future issue [specifically addressing](#) CIC Trump's statement: ["until they \(the military\) go to a certain point, and then it would be very bad, very bad."](#) The U.S. military is the military of the American people, and particularly as vets, we have a right and an obligation to speak out to how and when it is employed and against whom. To remain silent, is to not uphold the oath we all took to support and defend....America.

ITMFA
It's The Military's
Finest Airborne!



U.S. Seeks Stronger Defense Relationship With Vietnam

April 3, 2019

WASHINGTON -- *"Our defense relationship [with Vietnam] is strong and represents one of the strongest pillars in our multifaceted bilateral relationship,"* the assistant defense secretary for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs said today.

Randall G. Schriver told an audience at the Center for Strategic and International Studies that the defense relationship with Vietnam has been strengthened even more over the last two years, and plans are to strengthen it even more based on a foundation of common and shared interests.

Strong Military Ties

The U.S. seeks enhanced military ties with Vietnam, he said. For instance, the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson visited Da Nang last year, the first such visit since the Vietnam War, with discussions about having another visit this year.



The USS Carl Vinson arrives Vietnam. (web photo added)

In 2017, the U.S. transferred a major piece of defense equipment to Vietnam — the Coast Guard's Hamilton-class cutter USCGC Morgenthau. That ship is now very active in maritime security missions for Vietnam, Schriver said. *"We're hoping there will be a second such cutter available."*

He said the U.S. will continue to help enhance Vietnam's military capabilities and pursue opportunities for military training and cooperation, concentrating on:

- Vietnam's security and regional stability
- Maritime security and maritime domain awareness

- Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- Professional military education, including English language training
- Military medicine
- Search and rescue
- Peacekeeping operations

Regarding peacekeeping, Schriver noted that a Vietnamese peacekeeping unit deployed to South Sudan, with some supporting assistance from the U.S. and other partners.

In addition to all of that, he said, *"we've upgraded the level of our annual defense talks and we've had an unprecedented level of senior engagement, not only the president's two visits to Vietnam since he's been president, but last year alone two visits from [former] Secretary of Defense [James] Mattis."*

On a different type of cooperation, Schriver said he's appreciative of Vietnam's willingness to allow access by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Research and Investigation team for recovery operations of persons missing during the Vietnam War.

Reasons for Strong Relationship

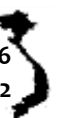
Schriver said the U.S. and Vietnam share a common interest *"in promoting a rules-based order, protection of sovereignty, individual rights of countries, no matter their size and our shared concern that there's a potential erosion of a rules-based order, that has allowed all nations in the Indo-Pacific to rise and prosper."*

"We share a view that for the Indo-Pacific to continue to flourish, each nation in the region must be free to determine its own course within a system of values that ensure opportunities for even the smallest countries to thrive and be free from the predations of strong countries," he continued. *"In short, for Vietnam, what we want is a strong, prosperous, independent Vietnam, nothing else."*

The predation to which Schriver referred is by China. *"The region is increasingly confronted with a more assertive, confident China that is willing to accept friction in the pursuit of its interests,"* he said, citing China's militarization of islands in the South China Sea as an example.

Source: DoD

"Nothing is more precious than Independence and Liberty," Ho Chi Minh. In reading the above report, it seems Uncle Ho finally got his wish.





Reunions of the Airborne Kind 2019



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



75th D-Day Anniversary

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



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>

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. Thanks.



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).

Airborne... All The Way!



DOD Identifies Army Casualties

March 23, 2019

The Department of Defense announced today the death of two soldiers who were supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Both soldiers died March 22, 2019, in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan, as a result of wounds sustained while engaged in combat operations. The incident is under investigation.

The deceased are:

Spc. Joseph P. Collette, 29, of Lancaster, Ohio.

Collette was assigned to the 242nd Ordnance Battalion, 71st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group, Fort Carson, Colorado.

Sgt. 1st Class Will D. Lindsay, 33, of Cortez, Colorado.

Lindsay was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Carson, Colorado.



Will Lindsay

Joseph Collette

For more information regarding Spc. Joseph P. Collette media may contact the Fort Carson Public Affairs Office at 719-526-7525. After hours, contact the 24-hour Fort Carson Operations Center at 719-526-5500 and ask for the on-call public affairs officer.

For more information regarding Sgt. 1st Class Will D. Lindsay media may contact Lt. Col. Loren Bymer, public affairs chief, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, at 910-432-3383 or loren.bymer@socom.mil



The Kunduz Valley

The \$1 Billion Great Wall of Mexico aka "Pedestrian Fencing"

DOD Authorizes Support to Counter Drug Border Security

March 25, 2019

Today, Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick M. Shanahan authorized the commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to begin planning and executing up to \$1 billion in support to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Customs and Border Patrol. These funds will be used to support DHS's request to build 57 miles of 18-foot-high **pedestrian fencing**, constructing and improving roads, and installing lighting within the Yuma and El Paso Sectors of the border in support of the February 15 national emergency declaration on the southern border of the United States.

10 U.S.C. § 284(b)(7) gives the Department of Defense the authority to construct roads and fences and to install lighting to block drug-smuggling corridors across international boundaries of the United States in support of counter-narcotic activities of Federal law enforcement agencies.

DoD

Another Wall

"Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"



Commander-in-Chief Ronald Reagan at Berlin Wall



Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT and Attached Units Who Made Their Final Jump

Thomas R. Crego, Sr. "Doc", 70

Rio Rancho, NM

January 13, 2019

173d Abn Bde, RVN

William "Bill" Delia, 74

Stanardsville, VA

January 14, 2018

B/1/503d, RVN

Stuart Wolfe Griffith, 89

Hermitage, TN

January 2, 2019

173d Abn Bde

Paul Luna, early 70's

New York, NY

February 13, 2019

B/3/503 RVN

Richard Anthony Rodriguez, MSG, 45

Fort Bragg, NC

January 4, 2019

173d Abn Bde/75th Rgr Reg, Italy

Michael Milton Switzer

Tampa, FL

November 12, 2018

173d Abn Bde, RVN

Clark Webb, 102

Raleigh, NC

October 9, 2018

503rd PIR, WWII

George Maxwell "Mike" Ward, 67

Daphne, AL

March 16, 2019

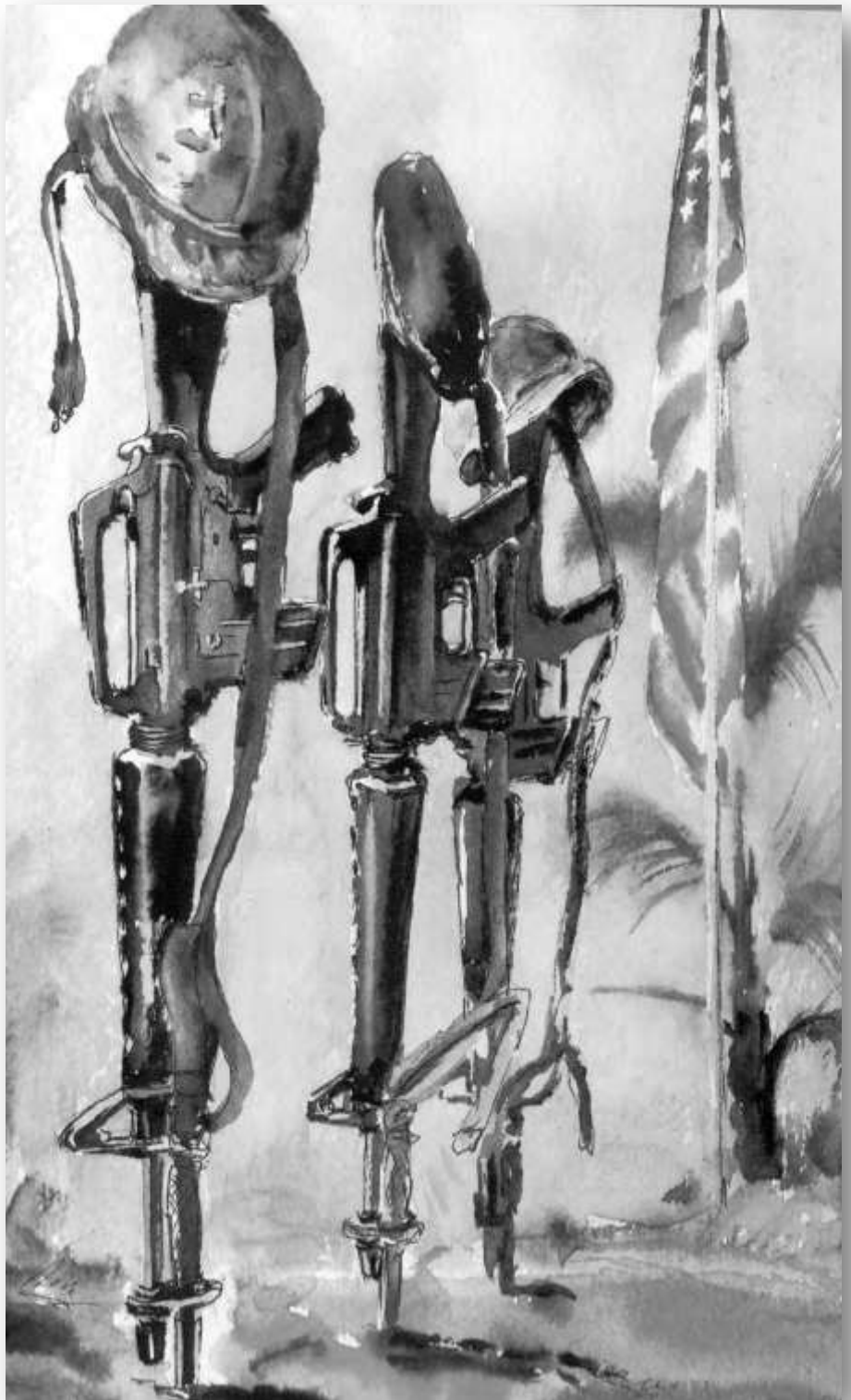
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Thomas "Tom" Turner, 68

Prescott, AZ

February 21, 2019

173d Abn Bde, RVN

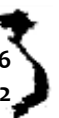


Rest Easy Warriors



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The Battle of the Slopes



Fifty-two years ago in June 1967, Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade fought in the Battles of the Slopes in the Dak To region of the Central Highlands of Vietnam. In the above photo, courtesy of Earle "Doc" Graham of B-Med, men of the 2/503d prepare to board choppers and join the battle. In June 2019, we will recirculate Issue 29 of our newsletter, a tribute to the men of the 173d who died and survived on those slopes in Vietnam.

