

2/503d

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



We try
harder.

VIETNAM

newsletter

November-December 2019, Issue 89
Contact: rto173@att.net

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

~ 173d Photo of the Month ~



52 Years Ago, The Taking of Hill 875

"Denuded of vegetation by the constant bombardment by U.S. planes and artillery, the top of Hill 875 shows the scars of the 21 day battle. 287 Americans lost their lives in the fierce struggle for the hill."

See *The Taking of Hill 875*, Pages 15-24.





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 November and December 1969



“He was in Vietnam because he chose to serve his country, putting the interests of his nation before interests of his own.”

Tribute by George W. Jessop III, USMC, RVN 1966-1967, to his fallen buddy Sky Soldier Ricky Buccille, and can be said about all these men.

Jerry Tauri Barrett, 27
(Birth name Herehere)
SPR, V4 Co. RNZE, 11/24/69

“Killed in action, 24 November 1969 – claymore mine explosion. Herehere (Jerry) was brought up in the Waitomo Caves area and was a member of the military cadets at school, attending camps at Waiouru and Papakura. He joined the Army at aged 17 and completed a plumbing apprenticeship with the Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers. Posted to Malaysia, he joined V4 Company in Vietnam on 8 May 1969. On 24 November 1969 he and three other members of V4 were on patrol with an ARVN platoon when they were ambushed. In the ensuing contact, Jerry was killed and Peter Rauhihi mortally wounded. Two other New Zealanders – Ray Davidson and Patrick Smith – were wounded.”



Arthur Vicary Bermingham, 21
PTE, RNZIR, 11/20/69

“Wounded in action, 12 August 1969 – mine. Shrapnel wounds to groin and body. Died of wounds in Australia, 20 November 1969, as a result of wounds suffered 12 August 1969.”



James Clark Beaver, 22
CPL, E/17th Cav, 11/4/69

9/9/16: “BRO. Big Brother, 46 years have passed and I still remember your smile so vividly! And your yelling ‘quit being a baby’, you should know I have tried. Know that my karma has not changed, if I do something wrong I still get caught - not as much fun without you. Keep watching over me, I find it comforting. I still miss you terribly. Love,” **Darlene**



Marten Bink, 25
L/CPL, 9RAR, 5/11/69

“From Weidum Holland. Bink was killed by a Claymore mine in Phuoc Tuy on 5th November 1969. Eight days before he was due to come home. Buried Canberra Cemetery ACT.”



John Austin “Doc” Bossom, 20
CPL, E/2/503, 11/30/69

*5/16/15: “A BROTHER REMEMBERED. John was so devoted to his Army ‘buddies’ that he had signed up for a longer time there. When he was home for our father’s death in March of 69 he spoke with great feeling and sadness about his time in Vietnam. He struggled with his hatred of war and his care for his fellow soldiers. He had nightmares when he was home but worried the whole time about how the rest of the guys were doing. I still see him in the vets that I talk with in the course of a day. We all need to do whatever we can for John’s ‘buddies’”. **Joyce Bossom Parmeter***



Allen Roy Brown, 21
PTE, 6RAR, 12/18/69

“Bendigo VIC. Brown was killed in Action at Nui May Tao on 18th December 1969. Buried Springvale Crematorium Melbourne VIC.”

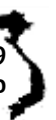


Richard Gary Buccille, 22
SP4, E/20th LRP, 12/20/69
(Virtual Wall states C/75th Rgr)

“My friend Ricky was killed in action in Vietnam. He was in Vietnam because he chose to serve his country, putting the interests of his nation before interests of his own. You see, Ricky didn’t have to be in Vietnam. Ricky didn’t have to be in the Army. Ricky was a smart kid with a scholarship to play football in college. And Ricky was very good at football. And Ricky went to college and Ricky played football. He could have said it wasn’t his war. He could have said he had a future and hid behind that. He could have done a lot of things. But he didn’t. He quit school and enlisted in the Army and went to Vietnam. Because it was the right thing to do....”



(Tributes continued....)



....I wish I could see Ricky playing for the Steelers this weekend and cheer like an idiot and watch the little locomotive plow his way through the defense and say 'I knew him when...' I wish I could run into him in the Giant Eagle or at the VFW. But I can't. All I can say is Ricky Buccille was my friend and I miss him and I'm very proud to have known a man of his stature."

SEMPER FIDELIS
George W. Jessop III,
USMC, RVN 1966-1967

Robert Buchan, 22
PTE, 5RAR, 12/11/69

"Dundee Scotland. Buchan was shot during enemy contact with the enemy just before midday on 11th December 1969 in Phuoc Tuy. His ashes were returned to Scotland."



Walter Guy Burkhart, 21
CPL, E/20th LRP, 11/11/69

(Virtual Wall states C/75th Rgr)
 5/25/15: "HEY, BUTCH .. I still remember .. how can I not?!!! I'm all grown up from that teenage girl .. hell, I'm an old woman now (can you believe that?) .. BUT .. I still remember!! **Dena Taylor**



Nicola "Nick" John Cassano, 22
PTE, 5RAR, 12/7/69

"Italy. Cassano was killed in action in Bien Hoa Province 7th December 1969. Buried Karrakatta Cemetery WA."



Robert Tom Convery, 22
LT, 9RAR, 11/23/69

"England. Convery was murdered by a grenade being placed next to him in his tent at Nui Dat around midnight, five days before he was due to return home on 23rd November 1969. The grenade was placed so that another soldier in the tent was not hurt by the explosion. A soldier was imprisoned for life for his murder. Buried Fawkner Cemetery VIC."



David Richard Cook, 19
CPL, B/3/319, 11/7/69

12/16/14: "TO MY WAR BUDDY CPL COOK. Rest in peace my brother airborne all the way." **Otis Mocan**



Anthony William Dean, 20
SGT, C/4/503, 12/9/69

11/11/10: "WE REMEMBER. Anthony is buried at Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville, IN. BSM ARCOM PH."

Robert Page



Barry Creig Donald, 29
CPT, 161 I.R. Flt, 12/3/69

"Sydney NSW. Donald was killed when he was shot down by the enemy during a training flight in Phuoc Tuy, 10:30pm 3rd December 1969. Buried Ipswich Cemetery QLD."



Roy Allen Epperson, 19
CPL, A/2/503, 11/29/69

8/13/03: "THANK YOU ROY. Dear Roy, I just wanted to thank you for serving our country and for making such a big sacrifice. You helped defend our country's freedom and for that I am truly thankful. Your help has helped make a difference for our country. Thank you again and may God bless you and your family. Sincerely", **Kelsey Zehr**

[See newspaper report about Roy on Page 76]



Thomas Arthur Evans, 21
PTE, HQ 1 ATF (RAINF), 12/25/69

"St Albans VIC. Accidentally killed in Phuoc Tuy province when a Land Rover he was driving on Christmas Day, 1969 was involved in a single vehicle accident. Buried Woronora Crematorium NSW."



Bryan Francis Fitzpatrick, 36
CPL, 2nd Sqd RAAF, 12/3/69

"He was killed in an motor vehicle accident on 3rd December 1969. Near Phan Rang Air Base. Buried Fawkner cemetery NSW."



Vivian Albert French, 19
TPR, 3 Cav Regt, 12/8/69

"Brisbane QLD. French was killed in Phuoc Tuy 8th December 1969 when his APC hit a mine. Buried Mt Gravett Cemetery QLD."



(Tributes continued....)



James Fitzroy Ghee, 20

CPL, A/4/503, 12/10/69

10/5/01: "I MISS YOU. Skeet, I miss you. Love always, your brother,"

Pee Wee



Eric George Gould, 22

PTE, 8RAR, 12/21/69

"Stratford-on-Avon England. Gould was killed in action in Long Khan Province on 21st December 1969. The Battalion's first casualty. Buried Ashes sent to U.K."



John G. Greene, 21

SPR, 1 Fld Sqn, 12/18/69

"Paddington NSW. Greene was killed when an APC hit a mine in Phuoc Tuy on 8th December 1969. Buried Canberra Cemetery ACT."



John Robert Hagood, 24

1LT, C/1/503, 11/1/69

12/1/99: "A FRIEND. I was the Company Clerk in Lt. Hagood's company at Fort McClellan, AL in 1969. Lt. Hagood was on his first assignment out of OCS. We became friends. Shortly before he was levied to RVN he and his wife had a child. He told me then that he did not expect to see his son grow up. He did not. I would like to find that young man to tell him what he was like and how much he loved him. If anyone knows how I can contact him or his Mother, please let me know." **John F. Susi** jfsusi@email.msn.com



Thomas Eugene Holmes, 18

CPL, A/2/503, 11/6/69

1/15/15: "A FRIEND FROM CHILDHOOD. Scotty, I remember us up at the Walhalla Swimming Pool back in the day. Wow did we have fun. God Bless Everybody!!!"

Unsigned



Alan Douglas Jellie, 22

2LT, 161 I.R. Flt, 12/3/69

"Brisbane QLD. Jellie's plane was shot down during a training flight in Phuoc Tuy at 10:30pm 3rd December 1969. Buried Terendak Cemetery Malaysia."



Thomas Howard Jones, 21

SGT, E/2/503, 11/30/69

5/21/11: "WE REMEMBER. Thomas is buried at Zeta Cemetery, Tennile, GA. BSM PH." **Robert Sage**



Everett Ralph Jorens, Jr., 21

SGT, B/3/319, 11/15/69

11/20/07: "MY BROTHER. i still miss you and if i could have one more day I'd jump for the chance -- you have a lot of nieces and nephews and they have all been told of you -- you have never been forgotten -- love as always," **Janet**



John Henry Kalma, 22

L/CPL, 1RAR, 12/19/69

"Qeanbeyan ACT. Kalma did two tours of Vietnam with 1RAR, in 65-66 and as a Lance Corporal rifleman in 1968 when he was killed by an enemy Claymore mine in Bien Hoa on 19th December 1968. Buried Canberra Cemetery ACT."



Casimir Kulik, 21

SGT, B/4/503, 12/12/69

13 Nov 2006: "Sergeant Kulik was killed in action while serving on a three man killer team in the village of Tuy Ahn in the An Lo valley north of Bong Son. This was an all-volunteer mission which included Staff Sergeant Tommy Stidham of Fresno, CA, and Sergeant Richard Wells of Sandy Hook, KY, as well as Sergeant Kulik. The cause of death and injuries was due to a command detonated booby trap. Both SSgt Stidham and Sgt Wells were severely injured requiring medevac. SSgt Stidham was returned to the US and discharged. Sgt. Wells completed his tour of duty and extended for another tour. From a comrade," **Richard S. Wells**



Ernesto Luis Laracuenta, 21

PFC, E/17th Cav, 11/4/69

(Virtual Wall states C/75th Rgr)

5/31/11: "WE REMEMBER. Ernesto is buried at St. Raymonds Cemetery New, Bronx, Bronx County, NY."

Robert Sage

Joel Thomas Lau, 20

SSG, C/1/503, 11/1/69

(Virtual Wall states B/1/503)

5/14/18: "SGT LAU. We became friends over there. He was my friend and a great guy. Rest in Peace."

Herman "Doc" Hardge



(Tributes continued....)





Buddies Joel Lau and Doc Harge,
Some time, somewhere in Vietnam.

Dennis Paul Lindsey, 23

SSG, B-Med Spt, 11/11/69

12/11/09: "WE REMEMBER. Dennis is buried at Cadillac Memorial Gardens-East in Clinton TWP, MI." **Robert Sage**



Matthew Philip Linton, 22

PTE, 5RAR, 11/4/69

"Sydney NSW. Linton died during operation Kings Cross, on 4th November 1969 in Bien Hoa. Buried Mt Thompson Crematorium QLD."



Anthony Lisle, 22

SPR, 1 Fld Sqn, 11/12/69

"Rockhampton QLD. The bush tough 'Tunnel Rat' suffered wounds in the field during support operations for 5RAR in Operation Kings Cross on October 22 1969. He died from his injuries on 12th November 1969 in 1 Australian field Hospital, Vung Tau. Buried Rockhampton Cemetery QLD."



 **Gordon Wesley Logan, Jr., 20**

CPL, E/3/503, 11/12/69

7/22/04: "REMEMBERING YOU BROTHER. You were a good friend my brother. You will always be remembered. God speed." **Don Cobrea**



James William Lunsford, Jr., 19

SGT, A/2/503, 11/29/69

2/22/01: "JAMES WILLIAM LUNSFORD. To my high school classmate, you will always be remembered for the great summer days we had together on our baseball team and the great time during our school years. You're a great man for giving to this great country; a sacrifice that all should be so lucky to have given. God Bless You Bill!" **Kenneth L. Crider**



Mitchell "Doc" Magee, Jr., 21

CPL, HHC/1/503, 12/26/69

7/1/18: "TRIBUTE TO SKY SOLDIER. On behalf of all the paratroopers who served with you in the 173rd 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**



Sam Henry Mangum, 19

SGT, C/1/503, 11/1/69

4/26/07: "WE REMEMBER. Sam is buried at Houston Nat Cem, Houston, TX." **Robert Sage**



Peter Robert Marks-Chapman, 25

1LT, 6RAR, 12/19/69

"Melbourne VIC. Wounded during an enemy contact in Binh Tuy, in 18th December 1969, he died a day later. Buried Saint Peters Cemetery Eastern Hills VIC."



Ronald Dean McMillen, 19

SP4, HHC/1/503, 12/16/69

6/13/11: "WE REMEMBER. Ronald is buried at Oakwood Cemetery, Hamilton, IL. BSM ARCOM." **Robert Sage**



(Tributes continued....)



Willie Davis McNeil, 19

CPL, A/4/503, 11/17/69

4/6/18: "VETERAN COUSIN TO HERO.

Thank you for paying the ultimate sacrifice. I was only a little girl when you left us but I can remember your funeral like it was yesterday. We lost Lillie last year on April 6, 2017 so it is only fitting for me to find your name today on the wall. I'll be sure to show Mom too. ??"

Velvet McNeil Graham, USAF Veteran



John William Meadows, 22

SSG, E/3/503, 11/11/69

(Virtual Wall states B/173d Spt)

6/18/15: "MISSIN YOU. Hi Brother

John, Not a day goes by that I don't think of You. To say Thank You may never be enough for what You gave! I know that Our Other Brothers Live Every Day Loving You and Missin You.....I say this because only half of them each came home!!! Those damn invisible wounds never really heal. I so try to stand tall for All of You! Sometimes ~ sometimes I just don't know how many I can help....but I never stop trying. I wear Our Last Name as You All Did, as a Reminder every day that the cost of Freedom is a high cost! I Love You Always, Your lil sister Maggi." **Maggi Meadows Blackburn**



Robert Kenneth Parker, 21

SGT, E/2/503, 11/30/69

4/21/05: "My name is also Robert, better known as 'Wink'. Bobby

and I were best friends at LZ Uplift in Binh Dinh Province in 1969. We shared many times and stories together. I'll never forget when I was approached by another friend next to the Bong Song River and told that 'Bub' (as we knew him) had passed away. It took me many years to get the courage and go to the Wall. Bobby's name inscription is the first place I go. Thirty some years later and still miss him. From a friend," **Robert L. Winkler**



Daniel Allen Peters, 21

SGT, D/4/503, 12/5/69

7/2/18: "I REMEMBER YOU

ALWAYS. If I remember correctly my parents or at least one of them were your Godparents. I have the Christmas Stocking you made for me when I was a baby which was probably close in time to your enlistment. I remember seeing you in your uniform at your wake when I was 5 yrs old and hearing the adults whisper that you were 'too young'. I remember standing by you while you were in the casket. My parents always loved



you and said you were a hero. You protected others when you lost your life. I have been to DC and have a scratching of your name." **Mary Ellen**

Paul Wandling Plambeck, Jr., 22

CPL, 39th Scout Dog Plt, 11/13/69

6/1/99: "YOU'RE A TRUE AMERICAN

HERO! Paul, I remember the fun times we had, both in and out of school, when both of us were seniors at Spring Woods Senior High. You were one of the most terrific guys I've ever known, and one of the funniest! I know your wife must miss you terribly, even after all these years, and your son never had the pleasure of knowing what a terrific father he had. I'm sure he's very proud of you, and you're probably proud of him, too. You made the ultimate sacrifice, Paul, and for that I will never, ever forget you! May you always rest in peace! Love,"

Peggy Hicks (nee Moon)



Peter "Tunku" Rauhihi, 20

PTE, V4 Co. RNZIR, 11/24/69

"Died of wounds, 24 November 1969 – shrapnel from claymore mine explosion.

One of 10 children, Pete grew up in Shannon and became a prefect at his local primary school. After completing his infantry training at Burnham, he was posted to 1RNZIR at Terendak, Malaysia in November 1968, and then to Vietnam with V4 Company in May 1969. On 24 November 1969 he and three other members of V4 were on patrol with an ARVN platoon when they were ambushed. In the ensuing contact, Pete (who was the M60 machine gunner) was mortally wounded and Jerry Barrett killed. Two other New Zealanders – Ray Davidson and Patrick Smith – were wounded."



Edward Thomas Reyes, 20

CPL, D/1/503, 11/8/69

7/25/15: "MY COUSIN. Eddie was my cousin. He was funny and from what I remember a very nice guy. Sadly, there

was a falling out of family before he went into the service and we didn't know about his death until years later. During a trip to Washington, D.C. I found his name on the wall and broke down. It still breaks my heart to see his face in this tribute (Wall of Faces)." **Marilyn (Rude) Neumann**



(Tributes continued....)



Michael Robert Robertson, 20

PTE, HQ 1 ALSG, 12/24/69

"Melbourne VIC. A guard at the gate of 1 Australian Logistical Support Group accidentally shot Robertson on Christmas Eve 1969. Buried Lilydale Cemetery VIC."



James Arthur Ross, 26

SFC, C/1/503, 11/1/69

1/10/18: "YOU ARE NOT

FORGOTTEN. The war may be forgotten but the warrior will always be remembered!!!! All gave Some - Some gave All. Rest in peace James. :-(

Jerry Sandwisch, 173d Abn Bde, '69/'70



Steven Thomas Schooler, 19

SP4, 173d LRRP, 11/13/69

(Virtual Wall states N/75 Rgr)

11/14/14: "BIG BROTHER. Steve, you were the big brother I never had. Just writing a note to let you know I haven't forgotten about you, or ever will. All the times you took me hunting, and the time you showed me those Indian drawings up on the mountain behind Rock Island. Every time I hear the Chuckers talking up on the hillside in the fall, it brings back fond memories. I always looked up to you. I even got a tattoo on my shoulder that bares your name. I think you would like it. And when people ask me about it, I speak of you proudly, and with great admiration. I love you man, and miss you dearly. Rest easy." **Loye Taylor**



Thomas Anthony Scibelli, 26

SSG, B/3/503, 12/27/69

10/23/13: "THE HERD. I had the honor to have served in Vietnam with Scibelli. He was like a father to me. Shoot, he was 22 yrs old and I was 19." **Curt Carter**



Daniel Leonard Seekford, 20

SSG, E/3/503, 11/11/69

(Virtual Wall states B/3/503)

3/14/03: "MY MOTHER ALWAYS SPOKE OF YOU WITH LOVE...Although I never knew you, you were and are very special to my mom. I remember hearing stories about you showing up at my grandparents' house with only a pair of shorts on and a pizza in your hands....running past my grandfather saying, 'I know she's studying and can't go out, but she's gotta eat, right?'. She talked mostly of your smile, charm, and free spirited ways. She always regretted not being able to go to your funeral. I am 25 years old now (2003) and am a counselor for



Vietnam Veterans. For Christmas my mom gave me a picture you took while parachuting at Ft. Bragg. It sits in my office, and other veterans look upon it with a smile on their face and a tear in their eye. To you I dedicate my work, Danny, as I remember the look on my mother's face when she told me how much I reminded her of you.....Thank you for all that you gave for our country and for the love that you gave to my mother."



Ernest Serna, 22

SGT, E/3/503, 11/11/69

9/19/04: "TO MY UNCLE ERNEST.

I miss you and I wish you could have seen me grow up. But, I know you had a job to do and that job took you from us. I still remember you playing with us and bringing us teddy bears. Now, I am a grown woman and I will never forget your wonderful sense of humor and your kind heart. I will see you again in heaven one day. Love, your niece," **Susan M Chapman**



Rex Marcel Sherman, 18

CPL, 173d LRRP, 11/19/69

(Virtual Wall states C/75th Rgr)

4/10/07: "Rex, you had a heart of gold, and were so loved by many more than you realized. I kept your letters, picture, etc. and they mean so much to me. I am so blessed we were friends, I think of you so often and told my kids and tell my grandkids about you. You will be remembered always if I can help. You would be happy to know how often your name comes up when a bunch of us get together. Your sacrifice touched so many and the ripple felt through HHS when we heard started something. I was in touch with Dana, but haven't heard for a while and I was so proud of your mom being Gold Star Mother National President. She got to go to Nam. I hope you stood near her. If it is true that you are never really gone as long as someone speaks your name, you will be around forever. From a friend," **Connie Barbee**




Rex Sherman's Silver Star

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918, takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Corporal [then Private First Class] Rex Marcel Sherman, United States Army, for gallantry in action....

(Tributes continued....)



....Private First Class Sherman distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions while engaged in military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 19 November 1969, while serving as a senior observer for a Ranger patrol with Company C (Ranger), 75th Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate). On that date; Private Sherman's team effected an ambush of approximately thirty enemy soldiers, killing eight of them out right. The remaining enemy began delivering a hail of small arms and automatic fire on the team, threatening to overrun the friendly position. At one point during the contact, the enemy attempted to overrun the patrol from the rear by utilizing a human wave attack. Private Sherman, with complete disregard for his own safety, exposed himself to the assault, enabling the team to thwart the charge. He then maneuvered his team into a position where they could lay down an effective base of fire on enemy positions while Private Sherman unhesitatingly left the relative security of his team to recover enemy weapons and documents from the dead enemy soldiers in the area, withstanding withering hostile fire as he proceeded. As supporting elements began arriving, Private Sherman dashed across a nearby clearing attempting to deliver the captured documents and weapons to a waiting helicopter, but was mortally wounded by enemy fire. Private First Class Sherman's heroic devotion to duty unswerving determination in the face of a numerically superior enemy force were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and United States Army.

 **Thomas Frederick Shipley, 21**
SGT, D/1/503, 11/8/69
 12/6/17: "MY FRIEND. When I think of my time in Vietnam, I always think of the guys I served with. I can't do that without thinking of Tom Shipley. I was on R&R when Tom was killed, I learned about it as I passed through Phu Cat airbase on my way back to Uplift. This was to be the most devastating news I received in the year I was there. I hope to find his gravesite one day." **Steven P. Norbeck**



Richard Shirmang, 35
1SG, D/1/503, 11/7/69
 11/7/15: "THANK YOU. Thank you First Sergeant Shirmang for your devotion, leadership and courage."
A grateful Vietnam Vet



Raleigh John Snell, Jr., 20
SGT, HHC/1/503, 12/16/69

2/1/15: "FOREVER IN MY HEART. Dear Bobby, It has been so many years since the doorbell rang and a young soldier saw the horror on my face as I answered the door on that bitter cold evening! I can still hear you say 'don't worry boots - I'll be safe and be home soon.' I thank God for the years I knew and shared with you as my brother. We will meet again and I look forward to a ride on your shoulders. Love always,"
Beth Ann aka "boots" to you



Gregory Ian Stanford, 22
L/CPL, 6RAR, 12/18/69

"Goulburn NSW. He died in a enemy contact in Nui Tao Mountains in Phuoc Tuy on 18th December 1969. Buried Garden of Remembrance NSW."



Michael William Steffe, 20
SP4, A/3/319, 11/3/69

12/6/01: "MY BEST FRIEND'S BROTHER. Mike was the younger Brother of Craig, one of my best friends at Catonsville High. I served in the M.P.'s (716th) in 1968 during the Tet Offensive. Mike was a great guy, I'll always remember him." **Ken Ford**



Henry Edward Suttor, 26
T/CPL, 5RAR, 11/16/69

"Mudgee NSW. An enemy mortar is believed to have killed him in Phuoc Tuy on 16th November 1969. Buried Canobolas Orange Crematorium NSW."



A photo, likely of Henry and his mates, posted in connection with his tribute on Australian Wall of Faces.

(Tributes continued....)



Kevin John Troy, 45

WO2, AATTV (RAINF), 11/23/69

"Ballina NSW. He died of an illness in 3 Surgical Hospital Binh Thuy on 23rd November 1969, 18 hours after being diagnosed with pneumonia in Can Tho, Binh Thuy. Buried Lismore Cemetery QLD."



Francisco M. Trujillo, 21

CPL, C/1/50th, 12/2/69

8/10/11: "WE REMEMBER. Francisco is buried at Winton Cemetery, Winton, CA. PH." Robert Sage



Douglas James Voyzey, 22

TPR, B Sqn 3 Cav Regt, 12/14/69

"West Tamworth. On 14th December 1969 his APC struck an enemy mine and killed him. Buried Tamworth NSW."



Michael Paul White, 20

L/CPL, 5RAR, 11/25/69

"Cronulla NSW. Wounded in action on 1st November 1969 at Bien Hoa. He died of his wounds 24 days later on 25th November 1969, in 1 Australian Field Hospital, Vung Tau. Buried Dawson River (Taree) NSW."



William Carl Whitlatch, Jr., 25

SGT, B/4/503, 12/12/69

1/27/08: "Even though he was only a little older than me I remember Bill as the older brother to all of the younger kids in our neighborhood. From a friend and fellow Vietnam vet,"

Joseph Frey



Ivan Alfred Woolley, 21

Aircraftman, RAAF, 12/11/69

"Murwillumbah NSW. He was injured and died from a motor vehicle accident on 11th December 1969 in 12 US Hospital. Buried Mount Gravatt Cemetery QLD."



Sources:

- 173d Bde KIA List
- Virtual Wall Website
- Wall of Faces Websites
- Australian KIA List
- New Zealand KIA List

*Remembering a Sky Soldier
Extraordinaire*

*Frank J. "Tom" Blanda
LTC (Ret)
Second to None*

It was on February 4, 1940, when Tom was born in Youngwood, PA to Michael and Mary Blanda.

An exceptional student and athlete, Tom was graduated in 1961, from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point where he lettered in football and played quarterback during his junior and senior years, winning 2nd Team All American honors. His older brother, George, would later become an NFL Hall of Famer.



Although the St. Louis Cardinals were interested in signing him to a pro contract, Tom instead chose to make the army his career, his wife, Brenda, stating, *"After taking a week to think about it, he said he felt an obligation to stay in the Army because it had paid for his education. He never regretted his choice. I did because a year and a half later, he was in Vietnam."*

Tom served two tours in Vietnam, including service with the 173d Airborne Brigade, and as an advisor to a Vietnamese army unit.

Some of Tom's army postings included the 101st Airborne at Fort Campbell, CINCPAC in Hawaii, and the Command and General Staff at the Pentagon. He was with the Fifth Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas when he retired in 1985 as Lieutenant Colonel.

During his military service, he earned numerous awards including the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. Following his retirement Tom continued his love of teaching mathematics at Palo Alto College, San Antonio College, the University of Incarnate Word, and the Texas Military Institute (TMI).

Foregoing fame and fortune as a quarterback in the National Football League, Tom instead remained in the military while serving his country which speaks so highly of this extraordinary Sky Soldier.

LTC Tom Blanda passed away on the evening of July 21, 2005 at the age of 65, one week after suffering a heart attack while at a golf driving range.

All The Way, Sir!





INCOMING!!!



~ Remembering A Bravo Bull ~

It's too bad that Russ is gone, he would have loved this issue of Sky Soldiers (Issue 88, 2/503d VN Newsletter).

John H. Howe
USN



Russ Howe with his daughter, Kimberly.
Russ passed on 21 February 2013.
Bravo Bull, 2/503d, '65/'66
See Issue 51, Page 12 for tributes to Russ
by his fellow Bulls.

~ Future Screaming Eagle Falls In ~

Congratulations to 101st Trooper and avid reader of our newsletter, **Bruce Judkins**, who shared the prideful news of the arrival of his first grandchild, **Joshua James Judkins, II**, born to his son, also a Screaming Eagle. We mentioned he might want to get the new youngin' an outfit with a 101st patch. Bruce replied:

"I'm ready for him!"



ATW Joshua!

~ A Special Relationship ~

I have a request. **Tony Esposito** wrote an article for the August Newsletter (Page 10). Tony and I were in Charlie Company at the same time and were in the same OCS class. I would like to get in touch with him if you have a phone number or e-mail address.

I saw that you remembered **Sgt. Marion Brown** as dying in combat on Mar. 15, 1966 (Page 46). Sgt. Brown and I had a special relationship. I supplied the material for him to almost singlehandedly construct the Charlie Company basketball court. I have some pictures that I would like to send to you for use in the newsletter if appropriate.

FYI, I received the Bronze Star with V device for action during the battle at LZ Zulu Zulu and will mail the citation* to you with a picture or two. Just need your address. Thanks, ATW.

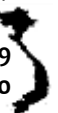
Bob Sweeney, LTC (Ret)
C/2/503

Note: We hooked-up Bob and Tony. *Bob is responding to our request for 2/503 RVN valor awards. See Pages 77-80. Ed



L-R: Marion Brown & Bob Sweeney on Charlie Company's basketball court at Camp Zinn.

(INCOMING!!! continued....)



~ Sharing Pics of a Buddy ~

I was reading the newsletter and came across a thing about a friend of **Ronnie Clark** from a guy named **Terry L. Mize** (Issue 88, Page 52). I would like to send him some pictures that I took of Ronnie. Ron was my assistant gunner for a while. If I could get the e-mail so I can contact Terry I would appreciate it. Les

Les Fuller
A/2/503



Ronnie Clark
A/2/503
KIA 6/22/67

Note: We hooked up Les with Terry. Ed

~ Correction ~



In this famous photo by Horst Faas of men of our battalion, taken June 24, 1965, of **Doc Gerry Levy** on the left (KIA 1/2/66), and **Doc Andrew Brown** on right, the correct spelling of the last name of **Tony**, the wounded Trooper, is **Legnon**, and not *Legmon* as we reported. Thanks to Tony's wife, Sharon, for pointing this out to us. **Ed**

~ 173d Film Festival ~

Please see the notice below from Shawn Kelley, son of Jack Kelley, CO A/2/503, about a **173d Film Festival** coming up in November in **Alexandria, Virginia** which will feature the documentary, ***My Father's Brothers***, about the A/2/503 June 29, 1966, battle in the "D" Zone; this is the same battle for which Charlie Morris was later awarded the MOH.

Please pass this on to your Sky Soldier buddies, particularly in and around VA, and Chapters are invited to forward to your list of members. Contact info for Shawn is below if you have any questions. Thanks! *ATW*



From: Shawn Kelley, Email: shawn@myfathersbrothers.com

My Father's Brothers documentary has been accepted into a few film festivals. Here's info about the upcoming November festival:

Alexandria, VA Film Festival
Saturday, November 9, 2019, 1:00 pm
AMC Hoffman Center 22
206 Swamp Fox Rd., Alexandria, VA 22314
Advance admission tickets (includes a double feature)
may be purchased at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aff2019-salute-to-servicemembers-1-saturday-1pm-hoffman-3-tickets-76589466155?aff=ebapi>

Festival website: <https://alexfilmfest.com/>

I have entered it in other festivals as well. I'll be hearing back from them over the next several months. Best,

Shawn Kelley, Director/Producer
My Father's Brothers, LLC, 980-875-0012

"We were really close because the gray mud turned red." Capt. Bill Vose, A/2/503

Film trailer: https://youtube/Pd8-uS328_k
Film website: <https://www.myfathersbrothers.com/>

(INCOMING!!! continued....)



~ Families and Loved Ones ~

On Page 76, is a short piece which speaks to the torment our families and loved ones experienced during the time we all served in Vietnam. Good buddy, **Roger Dick**, C/2/503 and Dak To survivor, is often asked to review certain written works before they appear in our newsletter. After reading the short piece about our families and loved ones, Roger offered these thoughts. Ed

"I always said it was more difficult for our loved ones back home. We knew when to be terrified but they were always afraid.

Kathy and I still have the C ration box tops I would scribble a one line note on following a major battle and send out with someone boarding a medivac chopper. It would hit the TV long before we could let anyone know we were still alive.

As time went on the odds were heavily against us."



Roger and Kathy Dick at The Wall in DC with their grandson Tanner.

Roger Dick
C/2/503

~ SoCal Chapter 14 Has New Website ~

Hello... Our all new Chapter 14 Website just took-off and is now AIRBORNE in cyber-space!



Our new URL Address is:

<http://www.173rdairbornesocalchapter14.org>

Ned Costa
Casper Platoon

~ Faces On The Wall ~

Two 2nd Bn Pictures Found.

HUDNALL, William Leon, C/2-503
Sep 15, 1949 - Jun 29, 1970
Richmond, VA

FOX, Thomas Amiss, B/2/503
Sep 2, 1949 – May 6, 1968
Richmond, VA

Now missing only 13 Herd Pictures – 4 from 2-503.

Ken Smith, Col (Ret)
CO A/D/2/503



Sky Soldier Bill Hudnall



Sky Soldier Tom Fox

Still missing photos for these 173d troopers KIA:

1/503d

Robert E. Mino, New York, NY, B/1/503, KIA 2/27/68
Leonard A. Thomas, New York, NY, D/1/503, KIA 12/12/67
Franklin R. Watkins, Meherrin, VA, C/1/503, KIA 2/23/67

2/503d

Claude Crawford, Los Angeles, CA, HHC/2/503, KIA 11/20/67
Jeremias Roman, New York, NY, B/2/503, KIA 3/4/67
Lester Tyler, New York, NY, C/2/503, KIA 11/20/67
Herbert Wilson, Jr., New York, NY, C/2/503, KIA 3/3/67

3/503d

Tommy M. Clayton, Los Angeles, CA, A/3/503, KIA 5/25/70
Terry Zimmerman, New York, NY, D/3/503, KIA 3/16/68

4/503d

Louis G.W. Arnold, Detroit, MI, A/4/503, KIA 11/20/67
Angel R. Flores-Jimenez, New York, NY, B/4/503, KIA 11/20/67
Samuel Proctor, St. Simons Island, CA, B/4/503, KIA 5/22/67

C/75th, N/75, 534 Sig

Ernesto L. Laracuente, New York, NY C/75, KIA 11/4/69

Note: If you have one or more photos of these Sky Soldiers, please email them to rto173@att.net and we'll see they are sent to Ken for inclusion on *The Wall of Faces* website. Thanks! Ed

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

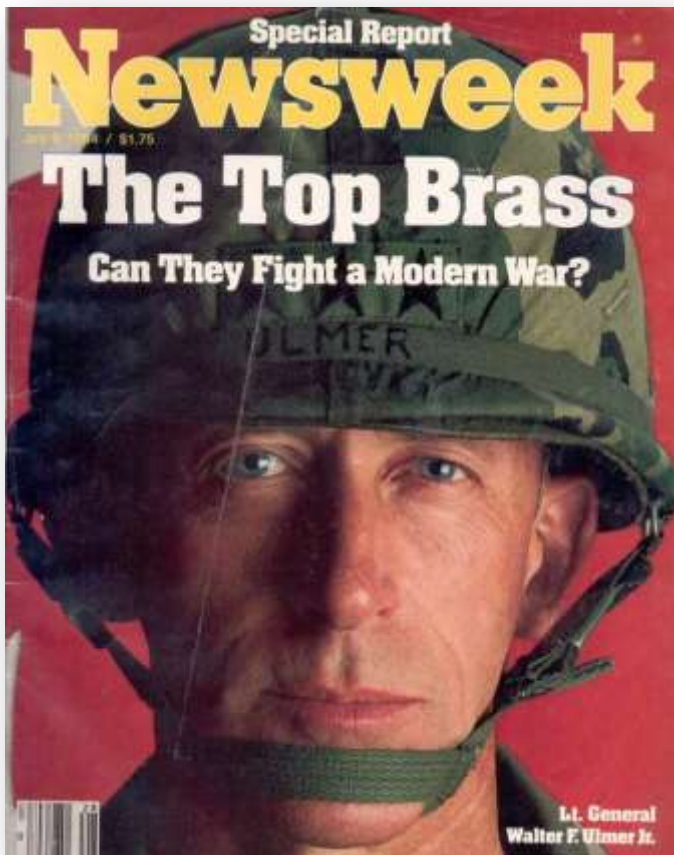


~ Wow - another comprehensive issue ~

Nice picture of my dad, veteran of Iwo Jima (Issue 88, Page 12). What a hell hole that was.

Also liked the story on Ted Williams (Page 23). He was my favorite ball player when he was active. I was a major Red Sox fan being from Maine. He was my idea of the no nonsense man. He didn't take to fools well and didn't tip his cap to the fans because of the way he was treated early on. No telling what stats he would have had if he didn't heed the call of his country to be a fighter pilot in WWII and Korea. I was watching TV live during his last at bat - a homer. That's my guy.

This is another guy I've followed for years - LTG Walt Ulmer.



As a one star he was commandant of cadets at West Point when some 150+ cadets were caught cheating on a test. Without hesitation and contacting DA beforehand, he expelled all of them. The ethics code was not ambiguous to him. The Army wasn't really happy with him for this, but he survived this bold move.

He went on to become the Asst. Div Cdr of the 2nd AD. I ran into him when he took command of the 3AD in Germany. I was the public affairs officer for him there. When he got his third star and took over the III Corps and Fort Hood Command I went there and became the PAO there as well. That was his and my last assignment.

I was able to get him on the cover of *Newsweek* before he retired.

Like me the guy is from Maine. I've been friends with him I guess off and on for 40 years - that's when he took over as the 3AD Cdr. In a recent back and forth email with him he sent me this picture of him turning 90. They both look great! He and I had a hard time grasping the fact that it had been 40 years since he took command of the 3AD.



The passing of years is something else. I have grandsons who are graduating from college. It's sometimes hard to come to grasp how much time and water has passed under the bridge. I feel older, but not old. Being sick like I was and having lost more than 100 pounds when I didn't want to come as a preview of what it's going to be like when it's time. You got a little bit of a preview too.

In the meantime I guess we just need to enjoy every day as if it's not the last, but it might be the last healthy day. Pam and I are heading out to Italy and Greece on Saturday for a two week land/cruise to those fine countries.

Stay well my friend and keep doing what you're doing until you can't do it anymore.

Tony Geishauser
Cowboy 173

(INCOMING!!! continued....)



~ American Soldier ~

Have you heard the song "American Soldier" by Toby Keith? It will make you swell with pride for having been one! Google American Soldier by Toby Keith and you can hear it on the computer:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hLBUkcFJoY



"To honor those whom serve in the United States Army, Marines, Navy, Airforce and all other branches of law enforcement."

We are still in the Caribbean, Trinidad, but have our boat up for sale.

**Larry Cox
C/2/503**

~ Remembering His RTOs ~

The special on our RTOs was so well done (May-June Issue 86, Pages 66-85). RTOs were the unsung heroes of the war. The short antenna made them constant targets.

On Page 82 you had pictures of RTOs Specialist 4th Class Tom Conley and Wilson; they were simply wonderful soldiers. I miss them.

Best wishes,

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



Here's Cap Tom, center, with his RTOs Wilson to his right, and Conley on his left during Operation Phoenix on Feb. 28, 1966.



Amtrak offers Veteran, military member discounts

Save 10% off lowest fare options

October 8, 2019

by Beth Lamb



Use the Fare Finder at the beginning of your search on www.amtrak.com and select 'Military Veteran' for each passenger as appropriate to receive the discount.

Military Personnel Save 10% and Get Ahead of the Ticket Line

With valid active-duty United States Armed Forces identification cards, active-duty U.S. military members, their spouses and their dependents are eligible to receive a 10% discount on the lowest available rail fare on most trains, including for travel on the Auto Train.

Additionally, Amtrak supports and thanks troops by welcoming uniformed military personnel to the head of the ticket line.

Discount Limitations

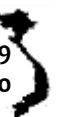
- The Veteran/military discount is not valid with Saver Fares or weekday Acela trains.
- The Veteran/military discount does not apply to non-Acela Business class, First class or sleeping accommodation. Veterans can upgrade upon payment of the full accommodation charges.
- The Veteran/military discount is not valid for travel on certain Amtrak Thruway connecting services or the Canadian portion of services operated jointly by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada.
- The Veteran/military discount may not be combined with other discount offers; refer to the terms and conditions for each offer.

Additional restrictions may apply.

Visit www.amtrak.com for more information.

Source: Veteran's Administration

The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products and services on part of the VA.



The Taking of Hill 875

Marking the 52 year anniversary of the November 1967, battles at Dak To...

Verbatim Excerpts from Department of the Army Combat After Action Interview

Inclusive Dates of Operation: 19 - 23 November 1967

Interviewing Officer: Captain Frank C. Foster Jr., Commanding Officer, 24th Military Historical Detachment (Airborne), 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)

Background Information: On the morning of 12 Nov, A Co. 2-503d under the command of CPT Michael J.

Kiley, landed on FSB 16 and passed thru the perimeter of B-2-503 westward heading along the ridge running from FSB 16 (YB 815151). At 1000 hours A Co made heavy contact with an estimated NVA Company at YB 813154. The NVA had let the point squad get well into the bunker system before opening fire and pinning them down. The 2d platoon had to move up and support the point squads withdrawal.

Coordinated with air and artillery strikes LT Mathew Harrison led two more assaults on the NVA position and CPT Kiley led a two platoon flanking attack to the right side as a final effort before the company withdrew to link up with Bravo Company to laager for the night and evacuate their WHA. The next morning at 0405 A & B 2-503 received 12 rounds of mortar fire outside their perimeter (YB 810146).

The morning of the 13th A & D had withdrawn from their laager site eastward back into FSB 16. From FSB 16 A & B Company moved northward, two companies in a column with B in the lead. (See B-2-503 Combat Interviews for 11-15 Nov).* The companies turned westward on the next ridge line and moved to attack



Mike Kiley
KIA 11/19/67

the hill from a different direction than that Co A had been repulsed before. At 131601 (YB 808149) B-2-503 made heavy contact with estimated 2 companies of NVA. A Company had linked up with B-2-503 and the two companies had engaged in a heavy fire fight until dark. Throughout the night the NVA and Americans had continued to swap grenades and SA fire. The contact broke about 0630 on the 14th. During the 14th and morning of the 15th A & B Companies screened the surrounding area of YB 808149, capturing one POW. At 1120 14 Nov A-2-503 began moving until 1337 when they linked up with B-2-503 and began moving again. At 1352 A-2-503 killed 1 NVA and wounded 2 vic YB 809151. A-2-503 moved to YB 827183 by 1150 and YB 800138 by 1425. A & D 2-503 laagered together at 161503 vicinity YB 797147.

170738 A-2-503 moved out and arrived YB 802143 by 0910. That afternoon A Co put out patrols and a platoon size ambush then joined in a laager site with C & D Company vicinity YB 92147.

On the 18th A, C & D Company moved into blocking positions in conjunction with a Mike Force's (OPCON to 2-503) contact. A Co located YB 795140, C Co YB 796143, D Co YB 796130. The 3 companies laagered vic YB 798138 at 181830.

Intelligence: A Special Forces Mike Force (about 80 men) OPCON to the 2-503d Infantry had been working south of Hill 875 for the pass (sp) few days. At 1045 hours on the 18th the Mike Force Company made contact with the NVA on the southern slope of Hill 875 and received heavy automatic weapons fire wounding one man. The Special Forces led Vietnamese withdrew and then attacked again under heavy fire suffering nine more wounded. At 1225 hours the Mike Force called and requested air strikes. The US Air Force and US Marines flew eight air strikes against the Hill using F100s and F4C aircraft. They hit the hill with 38-750 lb bombs, 24-750 lb napalm bombs, LAU rockets and 20mm cannon fire. A, C and D Company assumed blocking positions north of Hill 875. That morning (the 19th) 10 to 12 rounds of mortar fire fell outside the 2d Battalions perimeter. An estimated enemy company was determined to be on Hill 875.

* Record not available

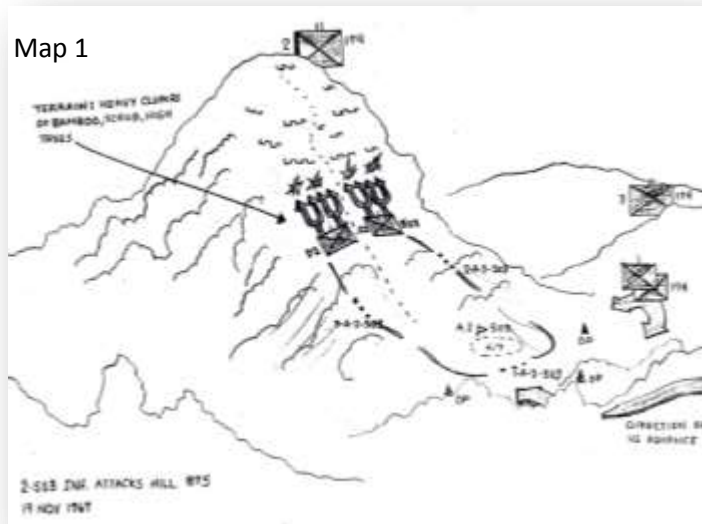
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Mission: The 2d Battalion continued its search and destroy mission. They were to move up and secure Hill 875. Companies D and C would attack abreast, D on the left, B on the right. A Company would secure the flanks, rear and construct an LZ at the northern base of Hill 875. The Mike Force would move to a blocking position vicinity YB 797126.

Concept of the Operation and Execution: After artillery and an air strike (Consisting of 2 F100's dropping 4 500 lb bombs and 4 750 lb napalm bombs), on tops of Hill 875 the three companies began moving out at 0953. At 1036 the 3 companies were still moving south toward Hill 875 and the Mike Force OPCON 2-503 had reported it was in it's (sp) blocking force position (YB 804128).

The attack was to be made with 2 companies abreast D Co on the left and C Co the right with the trail running up the mountain acting as the boundary between the attacking companies. The companies attacked with 2 platoons forward and one in reserve. As the platoon advanced higher up the hill the platoons split into two columns thus the two company advance was being made in eight columns. A Company was to be in reserve and secure the rear while their weapons platoon cut an LZ at the northern base of Hill 875. (See map 1 for attack plan).



The weather was clear and warm; the ridge was gradual, approximately 100 meters wide, dropping off sharply to the east and more gradual to the west; the vegetation was fairly thick with bamboo, scrub brush and tall trees growing up the hill.

The two companies were now advancing in four columns (sp) each up the finger towards the top of the hill. The sides of the finger fell off steeply to either side.

Both companies had experienced scouts to the front whom the men had great faith in, claiming these scouts

could smell in the NVA. (The scouts never denied this boast but their success usually came from the fact that they were non-smokers and when the wind was right pick up the smell of different narcotics the NVA smoke). As the companies came to a slightly open area covered in fallen logs, one scout whispered to the other "I smell Charlies."

They advanced up the hill slowly through the tangled and knarled (sp) vegetation meshed by the bomb strikes. In the center most file of the two companies was the 2d squad, 2d platoon of D Co. SP4 Kenneth Jacobson was the point, SP4 Charlie Hinton about 5 meters behind him and Sgt Frederick Shipman, then Hinton. As they approached the military crest of the hill, Jacobson received 3 SA rds and was killed instantly. Time was 1030H. SP4 Hinton and Sgt Shipman moved up closer to Jacobson and called for a medic. As the medic, PFC James C Farley, came up, he was hit by SA fire and shortly died. SP4 Hinton and Sgt Shipman still did not know where the fire was coming from. It wasn't until the NVA started throwing grenades that Sgt Shipman and his men could identify where the initial fire had come from. After the initial bursts of fire, rucksacks were dropped and the platoons began closing-up and deploying on line. As they approached Sgt Shipman's squad whom had been slightly forward, fire increased rapidly with RR, AW and rifle grenades coming from the NVA positions. Over on the right flank as C Co's 2d platoon closed up and moved forward, one of their point men – SP4 Peter Quinn – was hit by SA fire.



Ken Jacobson
KIA 11/20/67



Jim Farley
KIA 11/20/67

(continued...)



As the medic, SP4 William T Haggerty (Hagerty), moved up to assist he was killed by SA fire. The enemy fire lulled; they moved forward 5-6 meters on line, then the enemy fire exploded again. After returning fire and pausing for indirect fires, the 2d platoon moved forward approximately 20 –30 meters using fire and movement.

During the next 2 hours they took most of their casualties from frag wounds of the RR and grenades.

Meantime 3d platoon, C Co near the trail dropped their rucksacks and moved forward alongside of D Co receiving mostly sniper fire on the way. As they reached Delta's location, they too came under the heavy RR and rocket (B-40) fire. At this time C and C (D?) Cos marked their positions with smoke as FAC's adjusted in artillery and air and the paratroopers returned fire on the enemy positions. After approximately 30 minutes, the companies began advancing again using fire and movement.

Just five meters in front of Sgt Shipman's location was a bunker from which the contact was initiated. 1SGT Michael Deeb, SSG Page and others from D Co took the first bunker, throwing 4-5 grenades through the port. SSG Walter Johnson's 1st squad, 2d platoon, D Co next came across a V-trench with one dead NVA in it to the left of the bunker. 2d platoon advanced past the bunker and trench only to have an NVA throw several grenades from the bunker they had just passed. The NVA was killed as he prepared to throw another. The bunker apparently had a tunnel leading into it from higher on the hill; for the 2d platoon reported killing several NVA in the position (sp) and still they continued to receive resistance from the bunker. The platoon advanced slowly for 15-30 meters not knowing exactly where to fire since the enemy and his positions were extremely hard to locate among the twisted bamboo and scrub brush. Heavy RR fire, grenades and enemy SA fire brought the advance to a stand-still in some places.



Bill Hagerty
KIA 11/20/67



Mike Deeb

Over at the left side, D Co reported advancing to within 5-20 meters of what appeared to be the main bunker system.

Over on the right hand side they were only able to close within 15-20 meters. During this assault, 1LT Donald E. Smith, 3d platoon leader from C Co was cut down by AW fire and later died. Also a couple of artillery short rounds hit D Co on the left injuring PSG James Beam (SSG), SP4 Frank Carmody and one or two others. It was about this time that A Co got hit in the rear.

CPT Harold J. Kaufman, C company CO, seeing that the assault was bogging down and realizing that the rear was being attacked, ordered his men to pull back and form a perimeter. They did so about 30 meters over the ground they had just grasped, drawing their wounded back with them. SP4 Witold Leezyczynski was WHA as he covered LT Peter Lantz who brought LT Smith back into the perimeter before he died. Over on the left hand side, 3d platoon, D Co also got the word to withdraw and did so. The 2d platoon however, didn't get the word and continued fighting. Shortly they realized that there was no one on their flanks. D Co's 3d platoon had pulled back approximately 25 meters when they received word that 2d platoon was pinned down. They moved back up the hill to help. With 1st platoon helping to cover, D Co started a rapid and broken withdrawal; many of the men were not quite aware of the situation. CPT Kaufman drew and fired his pistol several times in the air to regain control. CPT Kaufman only had the men pull back into a perimeter rather than withdraw so that he could hold onto the high ground that they had gained. The front edge of the perimeter was only 20 meters from the NVA bunker and trench where the battle started.

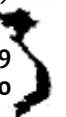


Don Smith
KIA 11/19/67



Harold Kaufman
KIA 11/20/67

(continued...)



The men began to dig in with knives, steel pots – anything they could work with. During this time Chaplain (Major) Charles Watters, the battalion Roman Catholic Chaplain (sp), distinguished himself by giving aid and encouragement to the wounded and exposing himself many times during the withdrawal to carry wounded back to safety. Chaplain Watters continued to administer aid until killed.



Chaplain Watters, MOH Recipient

A Co had left the morning laager site right on the heels of C and D Co's in the march order of 2d, 3d, weapons and 1st platoon. They moved 500 meters in approximately 45 minutes. As they moved up the hill, 2d platoon broke off to the right keeping in sight of C Co and the 3d platoon went to the left keeping D Co in view. The CP, weapons platoon and 1st platoon went up the middle. When contact occurred, A Co halted. As the action developed, CPT Kiley ordered the weapons platoon to start constructing an LZ. They did so at a point approximately 100 meters from where C and D Co's were engaged. The 1st platoon secured the LZ from the rear by putting OP's out 30 - 50 meters to the flanks and to the rear and by positioning the remainder of the men on line 15 meters back. The 2d and 3d platoon secured the flanks of C and D Co's advance, stretching out as best they could.

The weapons platoon began cutting the LZ with axes, machettes (sp) and the attached engineer team prepared charges to blow the big trees. Three OP's of three or four men had been put out 30 to 40 meters to the rear and both flanks for early security.

The weather remained clear and warm. There had been no rain in the Dak To area for several weeks but the jungle floor under the high tree canopy was still moist. The terrain was mountains with thick bamboo, scrubs and tall trees growing up the hill.

The preparation of the LZ was going slow and at 1430 hours, the S4 dropped in an LZ kit consisting of chain saw, cross saws, axes and other cutting equipment to speed up the work.

Just after the LZ Kit hit the ground the NVA launched a 2 company attack on the rear and right flank of A Co (see map 2). The NVA had moved in on the right side and the rear of A Co via a series of well constructed trails – some which consisted of steps cut out of the mountainside with bannisters attached.

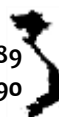


A Co's rear most observation post was manned by SP4 James Kelly, squad leader (M-16); SP4 John Steer, rifleman; PFC Carlos Lozada, machinegunner and PFC Anthony Romano, assistant MG. A little after 2 o'clock SP4 Kelly was sitting on the right side of the trail behind a tree with SP4 Steers and PFC Romano, smoking, and PFC Lozada was behind a log on the left side of the trail. SP4 Kelly began to hear twigs breaking in front of him so he leaned behind the tree and aimed up hill (down hill).

Suddenly as firing broke out to the left, PFC Lozada yelled, "here they come Kelly," and began to fire in long sweeping bursts down the trail into a group of about 15 advancing NVA Infantry. Lozada's initial long burst caught the NVA by complete surprise and at such close range the M-60 tore the column of NVA to pieces. The NVA were evidently completely surprised and caught unaware by the presence of the rear observation post.

As soon as the firing broke out, members of the 1st platoon, SGT Jeffrey Hilleshiem, PFC James Howard (RTO), PFC James Speller and SP4 Eugene Bookman dashed forward to help the OP's which were rapidly becoming pinned down by the advancing NVA. PFC Lozada knelt behind a log and kept firing long bursts into the advancing NVA while SP4 Kelly and SP4 Steer fired their M-16's from the right side of the trail.

(continued...)



The sudden heavy fire from the rear outpost had momentarily slowed the NVA attack and alerted the rest of the company. SP4 Kelly called for PFC Lozada to fall back. Lozada responded by running across the trail firing and getting behind a log on the right continuing to spray the on-rushing NVA with a steady stream of M-60 fire. Kelly continued to yell fall back and just after he shot a well camouflaged NVA at about 10 meters range, his M-16 jammed. While Kelly worked on his rifle Lozada jumped into the trail and began firing from the hip at the oncoming NVA while he began to slowly walk backwards.

SP4 Steer started dropping back and Kelly finally cleared his M-16 and started firing again. Lozada's machinegun jammed and the NVA fire hit him in the head. Lozada fell over onto Steer's legs. Kelly ran down and turned Lozada over so the NVA would see he was dead and wouldn't mutilate him. SP4 Kelly said the NVA didn't believe a Sky Soldier was dead until he was shot in the head. Kelly pushed Steer back down the hill (should read "up the hill") past Howard and Bookman. Kelly then began running up the hill towards C & D Co's throwing M-26 frag grenades behind him at the advancing NVA.



Carlos Lozada
KIA 11/20/67
MOH Recipient

When SP4 Kelly's outpost had opened fire and alerted A Co, the 3d and 2d platoon began to pull down the hill to reinforce the 1st platoon on order from CPT Kiley. However, the NVA opened up with mortar, automatic weapons and small arms fire in the attack against the right flank smashing into the 2d platoon as it came down the hill. (see map 2.)

CPT Kiley instructed his 2d and 3d platoon who had been carrying wounded down to the LZ to move down and reinforce the 1st platoon. This was his last transmission. Thomas Remington immediately started moving his 2d platoon back down from the right hand (west) side of the ridge. They never made it.



Tom Remington

The NVA approaching on a large well traveled trail smashed into the west flank of the 2d platoon near the front cutting them off from the rest of their company around the LZ. SGT Aron Hervas (sp, Aaron) was leading 2d platoon when the NVA opened up with a heavy volume of fire. He spun firing, hitting several before he was felled with a bullet through the head. SP4 Franks Stokes and PVT Ernesto Villereal were killed. SP4 Bruce M. Benzing and PFC Sexton were pinned down. SP4 Orendorf and others moved down and got Sexton out. However, SP4 Benzing, after killing 5 – 10 NVA from behind a tree, was himself killed.

LT Remington was hit in both arms and both legs. PSG (SSG) Clarence D. Smith and several others were wounded in the fire fight. The 2d platoon consolidated the best they could and pulled back with their wounded to C and D Co's. The third platoon on the eastern edge of the ridge met lesser resistance and was able to link up with the LZ. They did receive effective fire from the west and had several casualties, as the NVA had smashed through to the main trail.



Bruce Benzing
KIA 11/20/67



Aaron Hervas
KIA 11/20/67



Frank Stokes
KIA 11/20/67



Ernesto Villereal
KIA 11/20/67

The NVA were evidently well prepared for the battle. The rear attack, attack from the left flank and mortar attack all came within minutes of each other. Both of the attacking forces were estimated to be company sized. Many of the NVA were camouflaged. It was noticed that several of the NVA had strange grins on their faces. One trooper reported seeing an NVA charge into a tree, bounce off and keep charging. When the hill was finally taken, many of the enemy casualties and equipment had been policed from the battlefield, indicating that they had avenues of withdrawal if they so chose.

(continued...)



A Co's CP group was hit by one of the initial rounds, wounding CPT Kiley, LT Busenlehner, SGT Lyons, SGT Stacey and others. The CP group was then caught in the midst of the NVA attack from the west. C Co's medic who had been one of the wounded on the LZ said that the NVA came swarming up the side of the ridge. The CP group killed several of the NVA before succumbing. He said that there were 6 of the CP group there, all who went down fighting. CPT Kiley, SP5 Ernest R. Taylor (the senior medic who had been treating CPT Kiley and the others), SP4 Ronald W. Young (RTO) and three others. One of the group was shot in the legs. The C Co medic could not carry him and had to abandon him to scramble back up to the perimeter. LT Busenlehner, SGT Jimmy D. Stacy and SGT Robert W. Lyons had moved down to the weapons platoon near the LZ and instructed them to withdraw since the CP had been knocked out. The weapons platoon took their one good radio and as many of the wounded as possible and moved back up towards C and D Co's.

The 2d and 3d platoon tried to set up but the incoming mortars, B-40 and AK-47 fire was too heavy. The well camouflaged NVA charged through their own mortar fire pressing the attack, some of them yelling and laughing – displaying a lack of fear which stunned the Americans. LT Remington, the 2d platoon leader, was wounded as he attacked NVA snipers.



Ron Young
KIA 11/20/67

Richard Busenlehner
KIA 11/20/67

Ernest Taylor
KIA 11/20/67

Many of the 2d platoons paratroopers were killed or wounded and their clash with the side hitting NVA company left them badly split up. In less than 20 minutes the NVA pushed A Company up the hill toward C and D Co's perimeter. PSG Jack Siggers posted men on the trail and held it open for the withdrawing A Co paratroopers. As fast as the Sky Soldiers fired the NVA kept coming. Survivors of A Co described themselves as being literally swamped by large numbers of charging NVA.

Initially, the retreating members of A Company were fired on by rear elements of C and D Co's perimeter. After crying "Friendly Friendly", A Company was pulled into the perimeter. PSG Donald Bennett of D Company weapons platoon immediately begin (sp) placing A Company men to reinforce the rear of the perimeter and also started firing his 60 mm mortars.

A Company arrived in the perimeter with only their web-gear, helmets and rifles. Rucksacks and other miscellaneous equipment had been dropped in the dash up the hill. The 60mm mortar was broken down and carried up.



The battle for Hill 875.
(web photo)

At 1500 hours, C Co reported to Battalion Headquarters that an estimated 200 - 300 NVA were all around them. The entire perimeter had come under mortar fire and now recoilless rifle, small arms and B-40 rocket fire as the NVA followed A Co right up to the perimeter.



Medics on Hill 875.
(web photo)

(continued...)



Where the perimeter was established the slope was rather gradual, pitching off on either side. C Co had from 12 o'clock on the perimeter, D Co from 7 to 12 o'clock and A Co intermingled from 4 to 7 o'clock. The Co CP's were located together near where the wounded were consolidated. The paratroopers beat off the NVA attack, but continued to receive sporadic but effective sniper and mortar fire. At 1550 hours, C Co reported receiving B-40 rocket fire. At 1617 hours, an LOC ship dropped in an ammunition resupply but it landed approximately 15 meters outside of the perimeter on the forward slope between the NVA and American positions. 1LT Peter Lantz and 1LT Bryan McDonough organized recovery teams and moved out to secure it. The operation was going fairly smooth with most of the ammo recovered when a sniper round hit LT Lantz, killing him instantly. The recovery party withdrew.



Pete Lantz
KIA 11/23/67

The 335th Assault Helicopter Company continued to attempt to resupply the Co's. However, heavy hostile fire drove them away – 6 ships were grounded from automatic weapons and small arms fire.

At 1750 hours, two pallets of ammo were successfully dropped in. Throughout this period a heavy barrage of TAC air and artillery were adjusted in on the enemy. Sky-raiders, F-100's and gunships delivered their payloads, making their passes on a southeast to northeast direction tangent to the perimeter.

At 1858 hours, just after dark, a jet fighter approached Hill 875 from a northeast to southwest direction passing directly over the heads of the "Sky-Soldiers". One of two of its bombs fell short landing in the middle of the C Co CP where the leaders and wounded had been congregated. There were at least 42 killed and 45 wounded (either initially or after suffering serious wounds previously) by the bomb.

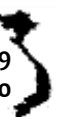
LT Bartholomew O'Leary, D Co CO, though suffering from serious wounds stayed on the battalion net throughout the night, maintaining communications. At first there was mass confusion and some panic. Most of the leaders and medics had been either hit or killed including the chaplain, Father Watters, and the entire C Co CP including leaders from each of its platoons. The paratroopers quickly recovered however, with leaders immersing. The wounded were gotten off their feet

and quieted down. PSG Peter Krawtzow took charge of C Co and reorganized their sector of the perimeter. LT McDonough from D Co and 1LT Joseph E. Sheridan from A Co had only minor wounds and were instrumental in reestablishing control. A Co's artillery RTO was the only one with initial contact with the Battalion fire direction net. He adjusted the first artillery defensive concentration walking it in toward the perimeter. As he was adjusting, his second concentration in front of a different sector of the perimeter, he gave an adjustment that would have brought the round too close to the perimeter. During this period PSG Prawtzow had gotten hold of a radio and began turning the frequencies until he could get any friendly station. He happened to land on the Battalion fire direction net and was monitoring when he heard the errant adjustment. At this point he intervened and he and SSG Moultrie called in and adjusted the defensive fires for the rest of the night.

Shortly after the bomb hit, at 1930 hours, one round of artillery hit in D Co's sector of the perimeter, killing one and injuring 3 – 4 others. Two PRC-25's were also knocked out. Someone from D Co came up on the net and told them to add 100. The NVA continued to probe during the night. SGT Williams from C Co and others in the foxhole heard movement to the front so they threw a couple of frag grenades. They heard hollering then the NVA started crying "Chieu Hoi". The "Sky Soldiers" responded by throwing more grenades. They didn't fire their weapons for fear of revealing their position. The next morning they found numerous NVA bodies to the front of their position (they estimated 25 – 50; Note: Some felt that this was the result of a second bomb that landed just outside of the perimeter). One of the bodies was within 10 meters of their position with a sack of grenades beside him. The three companies laager site for the night was at YB 797136, three-quarters the way up Hill 875.

The 335th Assault Helicopter Company (Cowboys) brought in resupply. Helicopters number 717, 498 and 635 were knocked out of action by heavy NVA fire from the ground and trees. The NVA climbed into the tall trees and poured a murderous fire on the brave helicopter pilots as they kept pressing the resupply regardless of the heavy and accurate enemy fire. (12 helicopters were damaged by enemy fire during the 4 day battle).

(continued...)



All the water and food in A Company was collected for the WHA as was all the blankets and clothing collected to keep the WHA warm. Many men in A Company went without food or water for 57 hours. At night the paratroopers huddled between each others legs in their holes to ward off the cold mountain nights.

On the early morning of the 20th at 0540 hours, C Co heard movement then shortly after received several rifle grenades. Fifteen minutes later D Co heard heavy movement higher up on the hill and called in artillery fire. The first priority for the companies and battalion was to establish and to secure an LZ to evacuate the wounded. At 0818 hours an LOC ship was hit trying to kick off an LZ kit and one man was injured. Bomb strikes were conducted on the hill while the men on the ground attempted to hack out an LZ.

The Battalion began cutting an LZ on the right side of the perimeter but progress was slow. The NVA pressed up close to the LZ and filled the trees around the LZ with men. One paratrooper described it as, *"We secured half the LZ and the NVA the other half."* Helicopters could not land to evacuate the wounded because of enemy fire. NVA rocket and mortar fire fell on the perimeter through out (sp) the morning.

The Bn TAC CP organized a command group consisting of the Bn XO, MAJ William Kelly and the XO's of A and C Co's whose mission was to go in, reorganize their elements, expedite the evacuation of the wounded and if possible, exploit the tactical situation. Their attempts to get in were frustrated by hostile ground fire in spite of the heavy TAC air and artillery preparations and the suppressive fires of gunships and the infantrymen. At approximately 1400 hours, D Co sent out a clearing patrol up Hill 875 in an attempt to located some of the tree snipers who were driving the helicopters away. The first 4 men in the patrol had barely left the perimeter when a captured M-60 machinegun cut them down, killing one and wounding three. The fire came from the vicinity of the bunker which had caused so much trouble before. At 1800 hours, a dustoff helicopter made it in and out extracting 5 of the critical WHA's. It was the only ship able to get in before dark.

About 1630 hours that afternoon, CPT Ronald R. Lenord (sp, Leonard) (a former Air Force 1LT who transferred into the Infantry) led B Co of the 4-503d Infantry along the trails that the 2d Battalion had followed to Hill 875 to link up with the 2/503d and later that evening A and C-4-503d Inf closed into the perimeter.



"23 Nov 1967, Dak To, South Vietnam – Soldiers of the American 173rd Airborne Brigade pass the bodies of their comrades killed during the fighting at Dak To, Vietnam. Allied forces captured a North Vietnamese fortress at Hill 875 during the fighting." (web photo)

During the time the 4th Battalion was linking up with the 2d Battalion, Major William Kelly jumped from a helicopter into the perimeter to take control (at 1800 hours on incoming Dustoff ship). The NVA continued to drop occasional 60mm mortar rounds into the perimeter, from an NVA mortar the paratroopers never located until they finally stormed the hill and captured it on the reserve southern slope of Hill 875.

The night of the 20th was quite (sp) with the companies on 50% alert. A Co occupying the rear of the perimeter facing northward down the slope of Hill 875. The paratroopers dug in, fashioned overhead cover out of anything available and huddled together for warmth during the night.

The next morning the 4th Battalion was to attack Hill 875 at 1000 hours with B and A Co's abreast and C Co plus the 2d Battalion in reserve. The attack finally started at 1500 hours. The 4th Bn using LAWS, grenades and small arms pushed up the hill until they ran into two bunkers they couldn't penetrate and after 2 hours of bitter fighting and over 50 casualties they withdrew using some of A-2-503d Inf as litter bearers.

Meanwhile, a new LZ was constructed on the lower left side and although the helicopters were constantly harassed by mortars and rocket fire and the WHA were evacuated.

(continued...)





“21 Nov 1967, Dak To, South Vietnam – Wounded men of the 173rd Airborne Brigade sit together in densely wooded area as they await evacuation from Hill 875 as the fighting continues.” (web photo)

Company A-2-503d Inf was extracted to FSB 12 on the 23rd with 1 officer and 27 men present for duty.

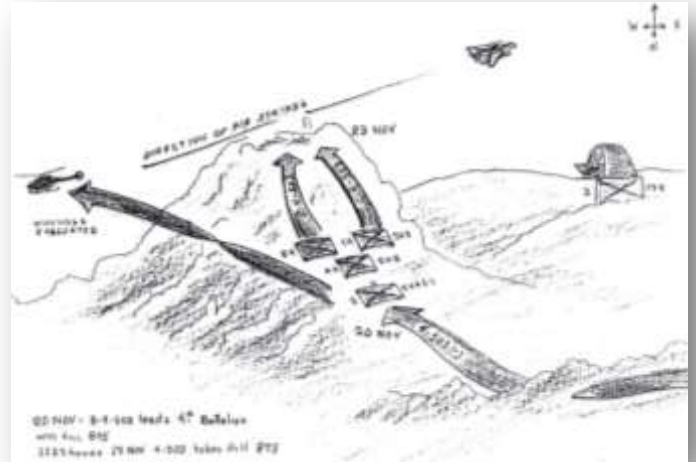
Total casualties for the 19 -23 November were: A Co; 28 KIA, 45 WHA. C Co; 7 KHA, 9 WHA. B Co who had furnished 3 guides lost 1 KHA and 1 WHA. The 2-503d Inf was credited with 255 NVA KIA (BC)

Men of the 2/503d are Relieved by Sky Soldiers of the 4/503d on Hill 875

(Note: Rather than being evacuated with their dead and wounded, a number of men of the 2/503d volunteered and joined their fellow Sky Soldiers of the 4/503d in further battles and during the final assault on Hill 875. Ed)

The morning of the 23d the attack was launched with B Co (4/503) on the left and C Co (4/503) on the right. A Co (4/503) was to follow in reserve and be prepared to reinforce on order. CPT Muldoon (CO A/4/503) decided that if anyone would need help it would be B Co so as the advance started he drifted his company to the left. By 0930 hours, MAJ Richard M. Scott, the Battalion XO and ground commander, ordered A Co to reinforce B Co

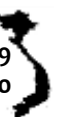
on the left side. The men moved up on B Co’s right flank and then drifted left. The paratroopers just walked up the hill killing men whom B Co had by passed. As the advance continued the companies started receiving 60mm mortar fire from the southwest. CPT Muldoon spotted the mortar flashes and had LT Atkins call in artillery fire. LTC Johnson had an airstrike with CBU directed against the enemy position and achieved a secondary explosion.



The company pushed on to the top of the hill over a series of complex fortification which were badly battered by airstrikes. Although the terrain was pretty smashed up they could see connecting trenches running from bunker to bunker. Most of the men were surprised there weren’t more enemy bodies. Only fifty or so dead NVA were found. Several small arms, rocket and mortar rounds were found. SFC Fraizer captured a 60mm hand held mortar by killing the gunner during the assault.

As the men came to the top of Hill 875 they captured 3 60mm mortars with triggers and base plates manufactured to the tube. These were passed back to A Co. The Bunkers were dug into the back of the trench so that dead and wounded could be pushed out of the way. Some bunkers had 6 feet of overhead cover. One man found the date 3/7/67 carved in a bunker wall. The hilltop was blown bald by the constant air and artillery. The paratroopers found prone shelters and also a new type fortification described as a doughnut. Many bombs had exploded in the trees above the ground but only one dud was found. There were only a few NVA bodies around but the troops could smell more.

(continued...)





The hill was taken only to be abandoned soon thereafter, but what the cost?

The paratroopers over-ran the hilltop at 1122 hours amidst cheers of "Airborne" and "Geronimo". Some men pulled out cans of C-rations (turkey loaf) and proceeded to whip up a quick Thanksgiving meal. Others were crying with happiness and pride. Some were disappointed there were not more NVA bodies, others were glad they had what was left. These were the men the 1/12th Cav met on top of Hill 875 a half hour later.

Later that day the tired, hungry paratroopers sat in the dust and debris of Hill 875 and ate their traditional Thanksgiving meal which was brought in hot by helicopter. As one Sky Soldier SGT said, *"It was the best meal I ever ate."*

The next day, 1LT Moore, with his heart in his mouth as he described it, led a clearing patrol out from Hill 875 and found a rucksack containing starched blue and tan uniforms, a bolt action rifle and a rocket launcher leaning against a tree. Negative enemy resistance was encountered.

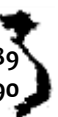
Results: The combined 2d and 4th Battalions lost 121 KHA, 264 WHA and 15 MHA between 19 and 23 November. Equipment losses were also heavy especially among PRC-25's. No exact figures are available for the specific dates. The NVA suffered 298 KIA (BC) and lost several hundred items; grenades,

mortars and rocket ammunition which was destroyed. The number of small arms captured was not large mainly due to the fact that most were destroyed.

NOTE: (The Brigade S2 believes that elements of the 2d Battalion, 174th NVA Regiment held Hill 875 and the 3d Battalion, 174th NVA Regiment on the hill to the west of Hill 875 placed most of the direct and indirect fire on the paratroopers during the attack on 23 November).



27 Nov 1967, Near Dak To, South Vietnam --- Paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade honor dead." There were not enough boots.



173d Missing In Action Hill 875 ~ Dak To



Body Not Recovered

CRONDALE, JACK LEE II
29 NOV 1967

Hometown: Lake Charles, La.



Body Not Recovered

DE FERRERA, BENJAMIN DAVID
29 NOV 1967

Hometown: Colorado Springs, Co.



Body Not Recovered

HINDOUL, DONALD
29 NOV 1967

Hometown: Paterson, NJ.

In March of 2017, I and two helicopter pilots (Stephen Greene and James McLaughlin) were part of a Department of Defense MIA recovery team charged with finding the remains of three 173d members from Hill 875. They are among the 1600 Vietnam era veterans who are still officially MIA.

Steve and his son, Skyler, produced a thirty-minute documentary of our unsuccessful journey. I also wrote a first-hand narrative and have access to other related videos. If anyone is interested in viewing these videos and articles, you can email or call me:

wambicook@aol.com or 626-664-0219

Wambi Cook
A/2/503



Wambi

Enemy propaganda regarding the battles at Dak To...

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
OFFICE OF THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER,
APO U.S. FORCES 96250

AVBE-SB

27 November 1967

SPOOK SHEET #3

Here's a little literary gem "Charlie" is passing out around Dak Pek Special Forces Camp. It goes like this:

VICTORY IN DAK TO

From 4 Nov 67 the enemy, the 173d US Abn Bde, landed southwest of Dak To and was beaten severely by the Liberation Troops and Kontum guerrilla forces.

Information obtained says that in only eight (8) days there were 1300 men killed and of that number, there were 1200 American people and 100 Puppet CIDG soldiers.

To the dear soldiers in this fort:

Each time, this fort is surrounded and harassed by the Liberation Troops, your American and Puppet Troops in Saigon and Kontum usually brag and flatter you by telling you: "calm down because you have the 173d US Abn Bde to fight along with you." This so-called Allied Force fighting beside you (173d US An Bde) was beaten to death in Dak To recently. Do not dream and wish for the aid and the reinforcement of the so-called "combined Allied Forces" anymore. You, friends, hurriedly turn your weapons and shoot at the heads of the Americans and Lackies, and burn the fort, destroy the hamlets, throw down your weapons, raise the flag and surrender yourselves to the Liberation Troops. The National Liberation Front for SVN will welcome you and give you clemency.

PS: Let's tone the recounts of a "happening" down just a little. Word has filtered back that FNG's are sleeping with their pots on.

KIRBY F. SMITH
MAJ INF
S2



The Secret History of a Vietnam War Airstrike Gone Terribly Wrong

By John Ismay
Jan. 31, 2019



A wounded soldier on Hill 875 during the Battle of Dak To.
(Photo by Al Chang/Associated Press)

After making three dry runs over the battlefield, the Marine Corps A-4 attack jet descended to 1,000 feet above the jungle and released two bombs. It was just past dusk on Nov. 19, 1967. For the American troops below, a vicious weeks long fight that would eventually become known as the Battle of Dak To was about to take a horrible turn.

Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade were dug in on the steep southern slope of Hill 875, fighting beside napalm fires and exposed to the guns of North Vietnamese Army shooting from tunnels nearby. Among them was Specialist Jon Wambi Cook — one of his infantry company’s few surviving radio operators. Barreling in on a shallow 10-degree angle at hundreds of miles per hour, the two bombs from the A-4 hit the ground near Cook. One was a dud. The other exploded in a huge orange fireball. Cook had seen many airstrikes

before, but not like this. Instead of hitting his battalion’s North Vietnamese foes, the bomb struck the branches of a lone tree along the Americans’ perimeter, under which the battalion’s remaining officers and noncommissioned officers on the ground had set up a command post with their radio operators. It was also a casualty-collection point where the most badly wounded soldiers were being treated by medics while awaiting medevac helicopters to take them off the hill. The bomb killed at least 20 men and wounded 10 more, including most of the remaining senior leaders and medics.

Alongside the medics was Maj. Charles Watters, a 40-year-old Catholic priest who served as the battalion’s chaplain. Earlier in the battle, Watters had ventured out past the perimeter several times to rescue wounded soldiers, carrying or dragging them to safety, providing first aid and administering last rites to the dying — actions for which he was later awarded the Medal of Honor. The bomb blast killed him too.

Protected by a pile of broken tree trunks that absorbed deadly fragments, Cook emerged unscathed. His radio crackled with voices. At first he thought North Vietnamese soldiers had broken through the lines and planted a bomb at the command post. *“I thought it could have been our guys,”* he said in a

recent interview, *“until I heard someone on the radio say: ‘Stop. You’re killing us.’”*

The tactics for close air support in the Vietnam War had jet pilots flying several hundred miles an hour trying to put unguided “dumb bombs” beside maneuver units in the jungle. Fratricidal mishaps were a tragic feature of this manner of waging war. The errant strike at Hill 875 was one of the deadliest mistakes of its type.

The New York Times recently obtained an unredacted copy of the Air Force’s investigation into the incident. Written in January 1968, it offers finely detailed insights into an agonizing error from which the remains of three American soldiers have never been found, even after a mission almost half a century later to retrieve them.

(continued....)



The report demonstrates the dangerous gamble of supporting troops in intensive ground combat before the era of so-called smart bombs, when the United States moved to almost exclusively using laser and GPS-guided bombs that made airstrikes much more accurate.

The bombs that killed Americans on Hill 875 were 250-pound Mk-81s fitted with Snakeye fins, according to the report. Designed three years earlier by the Navy's weapons center in China Lake, Calif., these fins popped out as the bomb fell away, decelerating the unguided bombs so that the low-flying aircraft that released them could pull far enough ahead to escape shrapnel and blast damage when the ordnance hit the ground.

At the Battle of Dak To, the sky was crowded overhead. In addition to the Marine A-4s, a pair of Air Force A-1 Skyraiders was dropping napalm — intending both to kill North Vietnamese troops and to create fires on the ground that the pilots in faster A-4s could use as reference points for follow-on bombing runs. B-52s were approaching with plans to carpet-bomb. An AC-47 gunship was circling. The job of coordinating all these varied options and attacks fell to Capt. James E. Wrenn of the Air Force, who was flying a small Cessna propeller plane.

Lt. Col. Richard Taber, the pilot who the report indicated dropped the bombs, had flown 90 hours in combat since arriving in Vietnam roughly three months before. Taber flew with the call sign Hellborne 526-1 and commanded a Marine Corps A-4 squadron in Chu Lai. He was supposed to drop his bombs directly onto one of the napalm fires, but his bombs fell about 650 feet short and to the right, a miss the investigator labeled "a short round." It landed on Charlie Company, Cook's sister unit, which he had fallen in with amid the chaos of the fighting.

How this mistake occurred remains unclear. The report said the A-4 may have approached the target area from a direction slightly off axis from what Wrenn directed, resulting in the bombs landing downslope from the intended target. But the investigation was ultimately inconclusive, declaring that "there is insufficient evidence to determine the exact cause of the short round" before blaming "improper release conditions." The investigator recommended that pilots undergo remedial training and that the investigation be closed, as it had revealed "no gross personnel errors nor evidence of equipment malfunction."

Today, Cook, who is now 72, lives in Azusa, Calif., and spends his days tending to his grandchildren nearby. Dak To, he said, is never far from his thoughts.

"Not a day goes by that I don't think about it," Cook said. "I've always thought about it, but to actually share it with others, that took 35 or 37 years."

In March 2017, Cook returned to Hill 875 to help look for the remains of the three American soldiers who had never been recovered: Sgt.

Donald Landoli, Specialist **RTO Wambi Cook at Dak To** Jack L. Croxdale II and Pfc. Benjamin David De Herrera. The mission did not find the missing men, and Cook surmises that their bodies were vaporized in the blast.



Don Landoli



Jack Croxdale

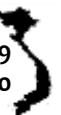


Ben De Herrera

But Cook's participation in the search connected him with a military investigator who was also on the trip. "I mentioned that I wondered what the pilot felt, knowing that he was responsible," Cook said. "It must have been hard for him to carry on." The investigator's answer surprised him. "If you read the report," Cook recalled being told, "you might have a different opinion."

Cook subsequently obtained a copy of the report in 2017, which, as far as he knew, had never been publicly released. A scholar who wrote about the fight for Hill 875 in the 1980s and an author who wrote a book about it in the 1990s both told *The New York Times* that they had never seen the report before, even after searching through files related to the battle in the National Archives. Upon reading it, Cook found that instead of taking responsibility, the Marine pilot's statement to investigators criticized almost everyone but himself and his wingman....

(continued...)



....Taber blamed other pilots for being unprofessional over the radio, spoke of one pilot's "imperious manner" and called out others for being sarcastic and impatient. He did, though, praise his own skills. "I have been dropping Snakeyes exclusively in my last 15 or 20 launches from the alert," his statement reads. "I can recall no reported miss distance as great as 50 meters in range, and nothing approaching that in azimuth."

"Ordnance on target," Taber added, "has almost always been reported as 100 percent."

What the report did not show was the chaos on the ground, the horror the bomb had created for the very soldiers it was supposed to relieve. Cook can recall it all. As the initial shock of the explosion passed, he crawled in the dark to the smoking crater where the bomb hit. "That's when you heard the moaning and the crying," he said. "I got to the edge of the crater this bomb had made and realized it was where a lot of guys had congregated. This was where our C.P. — our command post — and all of our wounded from earlier in the day had been positioned."

Overhead, Capt. Dick Goetze of the Air Force flew his AC-47 "Spooky" gunship in a slow circle 3,000 feet above the dead and wounded troops, while one of his crew members tossed parachute flares out the back of the plane to help survivors on the ground see in the darkness. Goetze, his co-pilot and his navigator had all watched the bomb hit. "It was obvious when the explosion went off that it was in the wrong place," he said in a recent interview. "We all said, 'Oops, we just got the friendlies.'"

Earlier in the same flight, before the A-4's Snakeyes struck, Goetze was ordered to leave the area by a different officer than Wrenn who was controlling the airspace above Hill 875 as night fell. Goetze was told that a number of "Buffs" — giant B-52 Stratofortress bombers — were on their way to carpet-bomb the area and that he needed to clear out. Goetze, who later retired as a two-star general, disobeyed his orders. He had seen B-52 carpet-bombing missions before, and he knew they were the wrong planes for the circumstances at Hill 875. "They'd just wipe everybody out," he said. "So we refused to get off the target for that reason. Their target area was right on top of those guys. I got my hand slapped for that."

As a flare from Goetze's gunship floated close to the ground, it threw enough light sideways for Cook to peer into the crater. "All you saw was parts and pieces," he said. He found a soldier he knew. "He said, 'Hey, can you come get me?'" Cook said. "And as the flare got closer, I could see that he had been cut off from below the thighs. There was nothing there." As his friend bled to death, Cook came upon a medic. "He said something

about his arm," he said. "It was stuck under him. I felt for it, and his arm was shattered from his shoulder to his elbow. There was just sinew and connective tissue connecting them." Cook crawled from soldier to soldier.

The survivors had more than wounds to worry about. They assumed their Vietnamese adversaries would launch an attack to finish them off, so they stayed vigilant. "We expected an all-out assault," Cook said. "We had our rear covered, but it was just a matter of when they were going to start coming over the berm." But the North Vietnamese soldiers never came.

Today the investigative report has circulated among witnesses and survivors, including Stephen Greene, a former warrant officer who flew UH-1D Iroquois helicopters in the 173rd's aviation platoon at the time of the Battle of Dak To. "The report could not show the desperation and extreme courage displayed in abundance," he said in an interview. "And it certainly did not explain what each of the survivors must live with forever."

Taber is now 89 and living in an assisted-care facility in North Carolina. In a telephone interview, he at first denied knowing anything about Dak To but eventually acknowledged that he flew over Hill 875 as Hellborne 526-1. Taber said that his air group commander, who was a friend of his from before that tour, grounded him after the attack. But two or three days later, he said, his commander ordered him back into the cockpit. "When I was restored to full flight duty, I took it as being absolved," he said. Half a century after the battle, he says he does not take responsibility for what happened. "I have no way of knowing," Taber said. "There were other aircraft on nearby targets."

"I had prayed," he said, "that it was someone else."

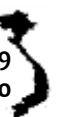
Correction: Feb. 4, 2019

An earlier version of this article misspelled the surname of one of the American soldiers who was never recovered. He was Pfc. Benjamin David De Herrera, not Hererra.

John Ismay is a staff writer who covers armed conflict for The New York Times Magazine. He is based in Washington.

[Reprinted courtesy of Mr. John Ismay and The New York Times Magazine]

Note: Photos of Wambi, Don, Jack and Ben added to report.



THE UNSUNG HERO OF HILL 875

Major General Richard Goetze, (Retired)

By Wambi Cook
A/2/503, Dak To Survivor



For all of the second battalion troopers who survived the night of November 19, 1967, we each owe a great debt of gratitude and thanks to the AC-47 "Snoopy" pilot whose sense of humanity likely saved incalculable lives that vile autumn evening.

After re-reading John Ismay's comprehensive account, *The Secret History of a Vietnam War Airstrike Gone Terribly Wrong* (see Pages 26-28), I pondered if this individual has ever been properly recognized for his actions that went against all military protocol? Does he realize the magnitude of his deed?

A superior gives you a direct order, you follow it as commanded. Captain Goetze, I suspected, lived by a much higher moral code. Anyone experiencing the aftermath of a B-52 bombardment can visualize what the outcome might have been on Hill 875 had the Snoopy commander and his crew not vigorously disobeyed that direct order. Knowing the difficulties of day bombings, how accurate could a night run be where friendly and enemy positions were indistinguishable?

Literal chills continue to resonate today when I think of what might have been. The *What ifs*, boggle the mind.

How could I confirm this supposition? I asked and John Ismay reached out to General Goetze. Would the general object to talking to one of the grunts who wanted to personally thank him for his probably saving his life? Not surprisingly, I got an immediate text containing the general's home phone number. Before dialing, I made a perfunctory Google search that I might have a keener insight as to why the general did what he did 52 years previous, or chose *not* to do.

After my formal introduction, I was put at ease when he asked that I call him Dick. Cool. I got straight to the purpose of the call. I stated, "*On behalf of myself and the couple hundred other members of the 173d's 2nd Battalions A, C and D companies, I want to thank you for your 'inaction' that fateful November night*" -- I didn't record or take notes so I'm paraphrasing as best I recall. And from what I'd researched on the man, I wasn't the least bit taken aback by his response.

"Under the circumstances, I only did what I knew was the right thing, and I'm certain any of my peers, given the same scenario, would have reacted likewise." Now this is one cool fella, I thought.

Most of the subsequent few minutes entailed his brief retelling of his account used in the article. I felt comfortable enough to ask about his life pre and post military. He seemed genuinely pleased that I veered toward the more human aspect of his 85 years. So for the next 15 minutes or so we exchanged pleasantries that new friends are want to do.

I asked if he'd mind talking with our local Chapter 1 in D.C. His dwellings overlook Arlington Cemetery and all the chapter had to do was ask.

Seconds after hanging up, my phone rang where I noticed it was the general's number. He asked if he could have my personal cell to put in his permanent files. *Of course, Dick.* Damn one hell of a human being, I mused.

General Goetze is a command pilot with more than 7,800 flying hours. His military decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with 13 oak leaf clusters, and Air Force Commendation Medal.



Sky Soldier Still Playing Pitch & Catch

And here we find good buddy **Larry Paladino, B/2/503**, (second from right) then on the mound and at bat, still playing between the lines. Ed

Here are a few pics one of my friends took with his cellphone. The group shot is of five of us from our Zug Island Lugnuts 55+ team although we were on different teams at this event, mostly with young guys 18+.



"You Numba 1 baseball playing G.!!"

I got to play five games over the weekend at Comerica Park. (Tigers with 114 losses somehow didn't need the facility in October).

I got a few hits and a few RBI and pitched two innings with no hits allowed. My grandson Anthony Rizzo, 20, was able to play also. That was always one of my goals, to be able to one day to play on the same team with a grandson.

Larry Paladino



Reunion Website Up And Running

Okay Herd family, finally, finally the web is up for the **173d 2020 Dayton Reunion** registrations. Just got word that it has been tested and tested again. Finally, the darn thing is working!

Now you can go ahead and get on to the Association home page www.skysoldier.net and click in **2020 Reunion** and fill out your registration.

From there it should take you to Credit Card. Fill it out and click send. The Credit Card section is what was giving us problems. It was either freezing or dropping off and sending nothing but the registration form. It's a no-go without payment from the credit card. Now it's good to go.

If you are apprehensive about web registrations then please wait for the Fall Issue of *Sky Soldier*. The registration form should be there whereby you can mail it in.

Airborne, gang!

**Bill Terry
A/3/319**

"If you are an aviation enthusiast then Dayton, Ohio should top your list of places to visit. Crowned as the birthplace of aviation, you will find many attractions and things to do that pay homage to flight pioneers Orville and Wilbur Wright. From the Wright brother's bicycle shop to the National Museum of the United States Air Force, where you can see a NASA Space Shuttle, you will find the aviation theme throughout the city."



National Museum U.S. Air Force



Dayton Aviation Heritage Park



Boonshoft Museum of Discovery



Dayton Dragons Baseball

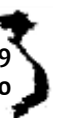


Riverscape Metro Park



America's Packard Museum

See Reunion Registration Form on Page 32.





REUNIONS OF THE AIRBORNE KIND



~ 2020 ~



101st Airborne Division, 2020 Snowbird Reunion, Tampa, FL, February 5-8, 2020. **Web:** <https://screamingeagle.org/snowbird-in-tampa-2020/>



82nd Airborne Division, 8th Annual Kentucky Airborne Reunion, Lexington, KY, February 27-29, 2020. **Web:** www.82ndairborneassociation.org/events.html



506th Airborne, 2020 Currahee Reunion, Fort Campbell, KY, May 20-23, 2020. **Web:** <http://506infantry.org/event/currahee-reunion/>



Casper Aviation Platoon Reunion 2020, Las Vegas Tropicana Hotel & Resort, Las Vegas, NV, March 30 – April 2, 2020. **Contact:** Ned Costa, Phn: 562-682-3100, Eml: NCHuey721@aol.com **Web:** <http://www.casperplatoon.com/Reunion2020.htm>



173d Airborne OEF X Reunion 2020, Denver, CO. As details become available we'll include them here in future issues. Ed



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion, Crowne Plaza, Dayton, OH, June 3-6, 2020. **Contact:** Bill Terry, Eml: weterry2@gmail.com

See Reunion Registration Form on Following Page.

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.



173d DAYTON REUNION SCHEDULE

June 3 - Wednesday

1200-1800 Registration
1300-1900 Vendors Area Open
1300-2200 Hospitality Area Open

June 4 - Thursday

1000-1800 Registration
0900-2000 Vendors Area Open
1300-2200 Hospitality Area Open
0830-0900 Load bus to Golf Outing
0900-0930 Load bus to Wright Patterson Museum
1730-2000 Barbecue/Band Concert

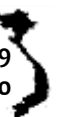
June 5 - Friday

0800-0830 Load bus to Nat. War/Mem. Museum
0930-1000 Load bus to Carillon Historic Site (Brewery, restaurant)
0900-2000 Vendors Area Open
1300-2200 Hospitality Area Open
0900-1400 Registration

June 6 - Saturday

0800-0930 Board of Directors Meeting
0930-1130 General Meeting
0900-1200 Registration
1030-1200 Ladies Lunch
1200-1330 Gold Star Lunch
0900-1700 Vendors Area Open
1300-1700 Hospitality Area Open
1730-2100 173d ABN BDE ASSN BANQUET
2100-2300 Hospitality Area Open

Airborne....All The Way!





SKY SOLDIERS DESCEND ON DAYTON, OHIO

Land of the Wright Brothers - Hosted by Chapter 17
June 3 to June 7, 2020



Name: _____ Phone (_____) _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____
 Email: _____
 Unit Served: _____ Dates Served: _____
 Guest Name 1: _____ Male/Female _____
 Guest Name 2: _____ Male/Female _____
 Guest Name 3: _____ Male/Female _____

Registration Fees
 _____ \$173.00 Association members (includes hospitality room, banquet meal, gift bag)
 _____ \$173.00 per guest members (include banquet meal, hospitality room)
 _____ \$55 per Gold Star Family applicant
 _____ \$100 per Active Duty Member not on orders
 _____ FREE, Active Duty Member on orders

Optional Activity Fees
 _____ \$25.00 Bus Tour – Wright Patterson Air Force Museum
 _____ \$25.00 Bus Tour – Carillon Historic Park (Lunch on own-Culps Café/Carillon Brewing Co)
 _____ \$40.00 Bus Tour – National Veterans Museum in Columbus OH
 _____ \$30.00 Golf Outing (includes: Cart rental, transportation and lunch)
 _____ \$25.00 BBQ – Levite Pavilion Concert grounds (next to main hotel)
 _____ \$20.00 Herd Challenge Coin
 _____ \$50.00 non-registered banquet only ticket
 _____ \$10.00/daily Hospitality Room nonregistered
 _____ \$10.00/each Raffle Ticket – Win \$1000
 _____ Donations – Always appreciated

Must Register to attend the following:
 _____ FREE Gold Star Luncheon
 _____ \$15.00 Ladies Luncheon

Vendor Fees
 _____ \$125.00 Association member vendor registration (One table, two chairs.)
 _____ \$150.00 Nonassociation Member vendor registration (One table, two chairs.)

Vendor Extras:
 _____ \$100.00 per additional table
 _____ \$50.00 Electricity at vendor table



To register and pay on line, visit www.173dreunion2020.com

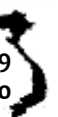
Make checks payable to 173d Airborne Brigade Association
SUBTOTAL DUE: \$ _____

Mail to: Chapter 17 P.O. Box 24852 Columbus, OH 43224-4521

Hotel reservation: Crowne Plaza 33 East 5th Street Dayton, OH (1-937-224-0800)
Reserve hotel room early to acquire handicap room as hotel is limited in these rooms.

For additional information contact Bill Terry at 614-476-3060 E: weterry2@gmail.com

One must be registered to take part in all listed activities.
Registration does not include any mini reunions (such as 2d Battalion etc.)



THE 503rd P.R.C.T. HERITAGE BATTALION **Online**

WRITING ABOUT THE BATTLE AT BANZAI PT.

John Lloyd Lindgren, II
LTC (Ret)



John Lindgren
"Jungle Fox"
1921 - 2005

EXTRACT LETTER FROM JOHN LINDGREN TO BILL CALHOUN (UNDATED)



"John Lindgren's mortar platoon was defending this junction of the trail down into Cheney Ravine with the Battery Cheney Road. When the Japanese inundated their position, John and his men fell back into the Wheeler B prime."

John Lindgren

Bill Calhoun
Commanche, TX

Dear Bill,

I have been working mainly on the 503d Corregidor action and have read all the current historical work of any note and other published material, as well as studying the documents, maps, photographs, etc., held by the National Archives and elsewhere only to find that I have very little from the participants themselves.

A long time ago I was on a troopship, the USS Eltinge bound for Bremerhaven: anticipating a dull trip I had a copy of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* which in most ways is a very dull book. What wasn't dull was his theory of the battle where he describes the action at Borodino not as some great strategic clash that will decide the fate of Europe but thousands of small struggles among confused and bewildered soldiers who only know what

is happening to them and a few of their comrades that are nearby. They are so confused that they never know whether they were brave or cowardly soldiers or whether they have properly done their duty because no one tells them except in a general way perhaps. Not only are they uncertain about the battle and even themselves, there is really no one to talk to about it unless they had experienced the same thing.

This leads me to another theory which has to do with why there are so many veterans' organizations and why when the old soldiers get together the pervasive "hospitality room" flourishes. Enough of this, we have more serious matters on hand. **The closer you get to the individual soldier doing the dirty work the closer you are to the truth in the war.**

I have corresponded with many people as I tried to get some personal accounts of this particular night. This Christmas I decided to bite the bullet as opposed to biting the marshmallow as I had been doing before and sent a letter to every one of my former comrades in arms in D Company, who were listed in the 503d association directory. I decided to get as much as I know about (Japanese LT) Endo's attack in the letter and to make the outline as clear as possible. I did all of this to impress my comrades in D Company that I had done some work on this battle and that I was hoping to get some serious responses.

I didn't get an avalanche of replies but the replies I did get were of astonishingly excellent quality. Not some rambling mindless "war story" but cold, hard detailed facts. I have in two months learned more than in all the years I have spent studying the battle at "Banzai Point" as D Company calls Wheeler Point.

I selected the "banzai" from among the many D Company engagements on the island for several reasons, not the least of which was that it was the bloodiest fight that the company would ever fight, where 13 of our men lost their lives in a battle that raged for no more than 3 hours and probably for considerably less time. What is even more amazing is that two entire rifle platoons and one rifle squad were for all intents and purposes, out of the fight.

Endo's attack by a force of at least 600 men, mainly Marines, was the only planned attack in any strength against the 503rd during the entire operation on the Rock. There is hardly a mention of it in the official documents.

(continued....)



Here is what the 503d Historical Report dated 6 March 1945 had to say about it:

"Later that day (i.e. 19 February) at 0530 hour, an organized attack in force was made against our perimeter. The battle that followed lasted until 0800 hour at which time the enemy withdrew. A few enemy penetrated as far as two Battalion CPs before being killed. We sustained numerous casualties although few in comparison to those inflicted. No other organized attack was made during the period on the western end of the Island."

(Or anywhere else for that matter I might add).

I don't fault the regimental S3 because that was how the reports were traditionally written but I believed that there was a bit more to it than that. I was there for the whole terrifying night and it made a deep impression on me and I never really ever forgot it. I also never forgot those young men who died there far from their homes.

Probably more than anything else I wanted to talk to someone about it, to someone who understood it and perhaps even cared about it. I wanted others who knew nothing of it to listen to the story too, because I think that what these men did there that night was eminently heroic and well worth a moment of someone's time to listen to. *"...Desperately they fought like men expert in arms. And knowing that no safety could be found. Save from their own hands."* (Robert Southey 1744-1843)

I really got started on the whole research project when I first read *"Corregidor, the Saga of a Fortress"* by the brothers Belote and took issue with their description of the battle at Wheeler Point. I knew that Al Turinsky had died from a bullet wound because he fell on my feet in a narrow aisle way behind a wall where we were firing at the attackers coming up *Cheney Trail*. The Belote's had the time wrong when they said the attack began at 0530 since it began nearly two hours earlier. The regimental S3 was wrong about it too and that is probably where Belote got his time. There were a few other things that were wrong as well. They also had an excellent chapter on their sources and I began there and then to do my own research.

I first wrote to the National Archives and got some 503rd documents, among them the S3 Journal and the Daily Operation Reports. These were helpful but of course I wanted more. I wrote several letters trying to get one thing and another from Washington but got nowhere. I wrote to Belote (James) because he said he welcomed inquiries from serious scholars and complained about my treatment at the Archives and also set him straight on Turinsky. If I were to write him today very little of what he wrote about D Company would pass inspection. I knew that that time was wrong

too but I had no actual documentation for my feeling so I passed on that. To my surprise Belote promptly answered and told me that if I were serious about the research that I would have to go there myself and dig out what I wanted. That is exactly what I did and it was very good advice. In spite of my criticism the Belotes' book is one of the very best and if you haven't read it, you should.

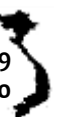
I have accumulated quite a hoard of documents and correspond with a number of people both within and without the 503rd. I have spent a total of nearly a month and a half during the past two summers at the Archives in Washington. I have been concentrating on Corregidor for the most part but I also have some material on Negros and Mindoro that one day I hope to expand on.

Early in the game I found that when you visit the modern military branch of the Archives, you had better have a very good idea of exactly what you are looking for because if you don't you are swamped with the huge amount of material and trying to do it all means you end up doing nothing. I have a collection of xeroxed periodicals, photographs, company diaries, and fortification plans, nearly all of them pertaining to the Rock. I have begun to assemble, at least in a preliminary way, material that I have written at one time or another that is stored in disks and I can't really see what I have until I get this task completed. I work very slowly (and I like to think carefully) so it may be some time before I get to daylight.

It's a very satisfying hobby and while I enjoy gardening and working on cars, I am thinking of the future when that will be too much for me (and I might add I find little joy in this prospect). I am very happy that I was lucky enough to have found this type of research suited me. I find that lately I have been spending a great deal of time on it, probably more than I should. One thing that has inspired this increased activity was after I heard Henry Buchanan had died. I realized I was the last of five people that held off Endo's Marines on the north side of the promontory at Wheeler Point. Foley and Turinsky were killed that night. Gifford died of meningitis on Negros. Buchanan, as I said, died of natural causes a year or so ago.

**TTFN,
Jungle Fox**

(continued....)



“An Outline Of Events At Wheeler Point On The Night Of 18/19 February 1945”

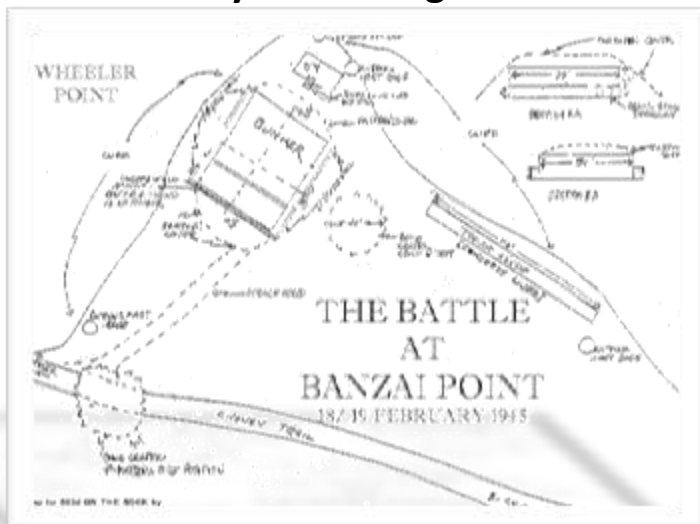
John Lindgren

Very late on Sunday afternoon, 18 February 1945, Major Lawson B. Caskey, the 2d Battalion 503d Parachute Infantry commander sent his S3 Lieutenant Lawrence Browne, the plans and training officer, to D Company to issue the defense orders for the night. The 2d Battalion staff officer did not arrive in the company area until very late that afternoon. Browne had just come from F Company's position on Way Hill, 600 yards east of Wheeler point where he had given F Company its orders. The decision to enlarge the perimeter must have been made late in the day at the 503d regimental headquarters in Topside Barracks.

To save time the company commander, Lieutenant Al Turinsky, had assembled his platoon leaders at Wheeler Point before the 2d Battalion S3 got to the company command post in the reinforced concrete bunker at the promontory. The platoon leaders would be given the defense orders at the same time the company commander got them. The four platoon leaders, Lieutenants Gifford, Preston and Lindgren, and Technical Sergeant Schriefels were all close to the command post and gathered quickly. Schriefels had taken over the 3d platoon from Lieutenant Paul Cote who was injured on the jump. John Lindgren

The Battle At Banzai Point

By John Lindgren



The young men had nothing to eat for three days except for what was in four paraffin-sealed olive drab boxes of K rations they had stuffed in the large room pockets in the legs of their baggy fatigue trousers before they jumped. These combat rations usually contained a tin of cheese or eggs and ham, a tasteless biscuit, a piece of chocolate that was covered with an unappetizing white crust thought to be caused by the hot damp climate. If there had been any water on the island, you could mix the package of lemon powder or some bouillon with it, but water was too precious to be used for that just now. The soldiers, even though they were constantly hungry, ate the K rations with little enthusiasm. There were no set meal times and the men broke into the sealed packages at the odd moment when they could. The concentrated, tasteless food only made them thirstier.



The 503d's jump onto Fortress Corregidor

A large area surrounding Wheeler Point had been very nearly stripped of vegetation after the massive bombing before the 503d's daring assault. As Browne and the assembled platoon leaders looked out from the promontory, the entire company defense area could be easily seen....

(continued...)



....Browne showed them the ground that D Company was to defend on the western side of Cheney Ravine, tying in with F Company that was defending the eastern side of the ravine. He pointed out the entire company defense sector that continued southwest through Wheeler Point ending just north of Battery Wheeler where the company tied in with C Company defending atop the 12" gun battery.

Short as the S3's order was, it was very nearly sunset by the time he had completed it. There clearly would not be enough time for Lieutenant Turinsky or his platoon leaders to fully comply with the orders because it obviously would be dark long before the platoons could move into the defensive positions Browne had outlined. Because time was short, the defense was hastily organized and incomplete. The 503d had a long-standing policy that, in effect, prohibited night movement. Once it was dark the platoon and squads would not move except in very minor adjustments or at your own risk in a serious emergency; to do otherwise was to risk being shot by your own comrades. All of the troops were trained to treat any movement at night as hostile and to fire without warning. Because of this rule the company never got completely into the positions they were ordered to occupy on the regiment's perimeter line.

On the second night on Corregidor the company had defended the south edge of the golf course extending west to Battery Wheeler that the 1st platoon had seized late in the afternoon of February 17. The first platoon occupying the battery that night had withdrawn a short distance to the east after the battery's magazine exploded and caused several casualties in the platoon.

The company had captured Battery Cheney without opposition late in the afternoon of February 18 and the 2d and 3d platoons took positions at the battery. D Company's command post was in the reinforced concrete end station, B'4, called "the bunker" by the men in the company. The 4th platoon was 30 yards east of the bunker with their mortars placed in a large deep crater.

This was how the company was deployed when the battalion order for the night defense was given. This, essentially, is how the company would be deployed that night after the order was given, with the exception of two squads positioned east of Cheney trail in front of Wheeler Point.

In spite of the fact that the 2d Battalion commander had directed that D Company's right flank was to anchor at the bottom of Cheney Ravine, D Company's right flank actually began on the hill, where Battery Cheney stood, 500 yards west of the correct position. This meant there was a 500 yard gap in the regimental perimeter but in effect the gap was much larger than that. F Company was to defend the eastern side of Cheney Ravine with their left flank resting at the bottom on Cheney Ravine tying in with D Company's right flank. F Company's position actually began at Battery Hearn 500 yards to the east of where their left flank should have been.



Battery Hearn

There was no provision made by either company to block Cheney Ravine, the most obvious route of attack in the 2d Battalion defense zone. This left a 1000 yard undefended gap across Cheney Ravine on the night of 18 February and neither the regimental nor battalion commander was aware of it.

Had the Japanese chosen to take Black Trail, instead of Beltline Road and Cheney Trail, as they did, Lieutenant Endo could have marched his force of more than 1500 Marines on to Topside parade ground wholly intact. There was little other than local defense at the Topside Barracks that housed headquarters and service units. The troops there certainly were in no position to resist a battalion sized attack at the Topside athletic field, had Endo's Marines reached there unchallenged by going through the gap.

(continued....)





The parade ground near mile long Topside Barracks.

As it turned out F Company's failure to defend Cheney Ravine would be of little consequence, but D Company's omission was more serious as the main attack came up the west side of the ravine on Cheney trail which was D Company's responsibility. Granted, the 2nd platoon was blocking Cheney Trail but it was much too far south and allowed easy access to the high ground at Topside rather than blocking the trail further north, forcing Endo into an uphill battle to reach the high ground at Topside. There was no artillery, mortar or machine gun fire planned in the ravine to deny this obvious attack corridor to the Japanese, who could freely move around unmolested in the ravine and its trails until they reached the company position where Cheney Trail entered Topside. Even had there been artillery or mortar fire on request, D Company could not have communicated with 2d Battalion Headquarters to request fire (or anyone else for that matter) because there was no telephone line installed and, inexplicably, someone had ordered radio silence for the night.

The 3d platoon was deployed along north side of the flat-topped hill where Battery Cheney stood and then extended east along the north wall of the battery's gun port. The entire platoon was positioned above the steep, nearly vertical walls that dropped sharply into the deep ravine or on to the beaches below the western cliffs. The position could have been held by a corporal's guard against a field army, since the attacking force would have had to scale a very steep cliff to reach the 3d platoon, which would have been looking down their enemies' throats all the way. Instead an entire rifle platoon was used in this virtually unassailable position, probably for no other reason than they had ended up there when they assaulted Battery Cheney earlier in the

afternoon and there was no time to move them. The 3d platoon would be out of the fight that night.



The cliffs at Corregidor

The real danger was the Cheney Ravine corridor, but that critical attack route got little attention and, as a result, was lightly defended, as we shall see.



Clearing the ravines was as much a job as clearing the caves which lined them.

The 2d platoon had two squads deployed to the rear of Battery Cheney, roughly parallel to and above Cheney Trail. Their third squad was deployed on a line that was roughly parallel to and east of Cheney Trail running south until it met the left flank squad of the 1st platoon, which had also deployed 30 or 40 yards east of and roughly parallel to Cheney trail where it crossed in front of company headquarters at Wheeler Point. The two rifle squads from the 1st and 2d platoons along the trail fought the entire night suffering heavy casualties but the four remaining squads were out of the fight.

(continued....)



The 19-man mortar platoon had two 60mm mortars, with about 30 rounds of ammunition, sited in a large bomb crater that once had been a 40 foot stretch of Cheney Trail.

The 4th platoon position was 40 or 50 yards behind the 1st and 2d platoon's two rifle squads and 30 yards in front of the company headquarters' bunker. They had not, however, registered their weapons on any targets to support the company defenses. The mortar men were positioned astride Cheney Trail and the entire platoon fought in the battle throughout that long pitch black night.

The force blocking Cheney Ravine was too far to the south and not deployed in sufficient strength to defend the most logical attack route that must have been apparent at the time. Why hadn't they planned artillery and mortar concentrations to be delivered on request? It wasn't done because there wasn't time to do it. It takes time to arrange for observers to plan their fires and to register mortars and artillery. Whatever the reason, no artillery, mortar or machine gun fires were available to D Company in Cheney Ravine in the early morning of the 19th of February, when they were so desperately needed. While it is true that the company hadn't been given enough time to do the job, there was another reason.

When the company settled in their positions for the night, there was no great concern about the apparent weakness in the position. It wasn't that the company leaders didn't recognize there were flaws in the defense, because nearly all of them had considerable experience establishing a defense in a combat situation. It was the fact that no one seemed unduly worried about it. What could account for the dangerous attitude?

Part of the answer for this lack of concern was the state of mind of the men of D Company. The Japanese garrison defending Corregidor was small, according to the intelligence estimate. Since everyone believed the enemy strength figures they had been given, certain risks were taken early in the fight for the Rock that were justified on the basis of what they knew, or thought they knew.

The easy successes on the Corregidor battlefield thus far bore out this reasoning. Did this wrongheaded thinking effect D Company on that Sunday afternoon, as they hurriedly tried to set up their defenses near Wheeler Point? The answer is yes; the decision to enlarge the perimeter, and the faulty series of miscalculations arose directly from this short-sighted view of the enemy numbers. There is no doubt that the reason for this dangerous attitude was the incredibly faulty intelligence given the regiment by USAFFE and

the 6th Army. In the big scheme of things, this was perhaps a minor aberration, but for the soldiers of D Company it turned out to be a serious matter of life and death. James and William Belote, in their book *"Corregidor: The Saga of a Fortress"* commented on the grossly inadequate enemy strength estimates used by USAFFE for the 1945 Corregidor operation, concluding that *"MacArthur's planners had been grievously misled."* They indeed could have added that everyone had been misled.

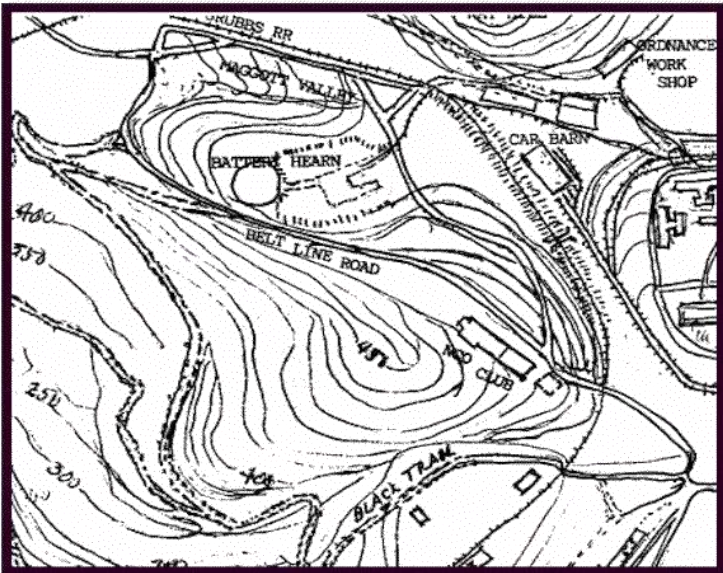
The official estimate of 850 Japanese defenders as shown in 503d's Field Order 4 #9 (the written orders for the Corregidor operation) was far wide of the mark. Hr. K. Ishikawa, a former private first class in the Ichinosawa battalion, one of only 40 Japanese known to have survived the 503d's 1945 assault, puts the strength at 6800 Japanese troops on the island during February 1945. All of the thinking was conditioned by the fact that the regiment was facing a mere 850 troop garrison. There simply was not that sense of urgency that should have been foremost in the company plans and the execution of orders. They were misled. This was part of the reason why regiment expanded the perimeter by moving D Company to the western edge of Topside.



The area above Wheeler Point at the far left is where the night battle occurred. The men literally had their backs to the cliff. The image is a recon on the morning of the jump.

(continued....)





After the American amphibious forces stalled, the well trained and well equipped Marines waiting on the western side of the island out of harm's way would swoop down from Topside and finish off the American landing forces or push them into the sea. The defense plan was unusable after the 503d seized Topside because the Japanese reserves could not be moved or at least not until the Japanese cleared Topside. D and F Companies faced these elite SNLF troops on the 18th and 19th of February in the largest (and only) planned attack of any size during the 503d's battle to regain the island.

The first shots in Endo's battle to seize Topside were fired by F Company 1000 yards east of Wheeler Point at 10:30 PM the night of the 18th when a 500 man force of shouting, cheering Japanese in the eastern attack force came out of the Battery Smith magazine charging four abreast down Belt Line Road toward Battery Hearn. In a fierce protracted night battle, F Company's riflemen at Battery Hearn stopped the Marines dead in their tracks. Private Lloyd McCarter would win the Medal of Honor that night for his part in the battle.

The first phase of Endo's plan for his eastern column to storm Topside Barracks by attacking down Beltline Road ended in dismal failure. The Marines suffered heavy casualties at the hands of F Company riflemen and only a mere handful of the Marines would ever reach the parade ground and they would be dispatched quickly by the headquarters troops quartered there. The second part of the attack would begin a few hours later after Endo's western column had marched noiselessly up Cheney Ravine to battle the intrepid rifleman of D Company in the early morning darkness.

It was sometime after one o'clock in the morning when nearly 900 Japanese Marines under Lieutenant Endo assembled near the western end of Cheney Trail.

The column quickly and quietly climbed up the winding trail, cut out of the steep western wall of Cheney Ravine and finally reached Topside 500 feet above the rocky western beaches, they had left more than an hour ago. Lieutenant Endo must have been greatly pleased by his good fortune when he reached the high ground at Topside without being discovered.

His attack column walked to within 50 yards of the two 2d platoon squads, looking down from their perches high above Cheney Trail in the rear of Battery Cheney, but the men neither heard nor saw the Japanese attackers in the black moonless night.

At 2:30 AM the Japanese suddenly stumbled onto the squad deployed across Cheney Trail south of Battery Cheney. So sudden was the onslaught, the startled riflemen had neither heard nor seen the Marines until the head of the Japanese column quickly went through the position before a shot could be fired. The surprise was so complete that no alarm was sounded immediately, and the lead Japanese Marines, moving swiftly, ran into the 4th platoon position in the crater in the middle of Cheney trail. By that time the men defending along Cheney Trail were alerted.



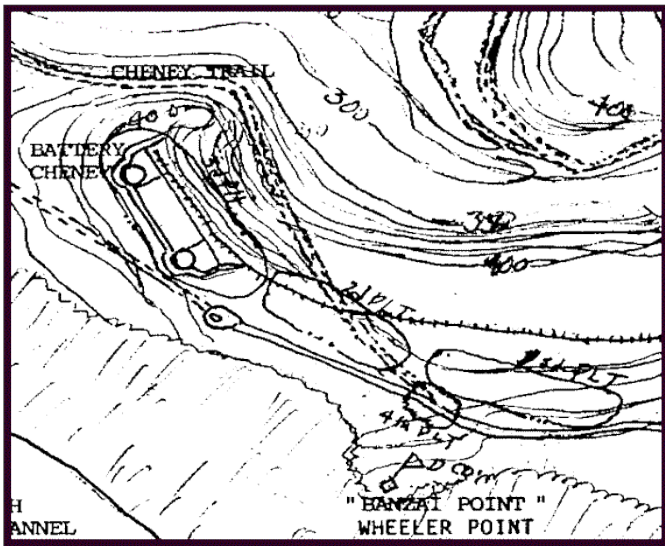
4th platoon took the brunt. 2d and 3d platoon weren't involved as the Japanese had come up the Cheney Trail and had bypassed them.

There were some subdued voices giving commands and a few rifle shots sounded in the deep darkness, but other than that it was strangely quiet. In moments the enemy was now well within the positions along the trail. It was as if the Japanese had blundered into the squad's positions, so black was the night, and for want of something better to do they merely went ahead on Cheney Trail....

(continued....)



....The Japanese were fired on shortly after they were discovered and as the attackers and defenders mingled in the darkness the D Company men couldn't tell friend from foe.



It takes time in the telling but it happened very quickly. The Japanese struck the 2d, 4th and 1st platoons in that order. In the chaos the survivors fell back to the bunker. The mortar men managed to get off a few 60mm rounds, a gesture more than anything else during a confusing fight where nothing could be seen. The men who had been overwhelmed at their defensive positions along Cheney trail were drifting slowly back toward the north side of the bunker at Wheeler Point. They fired their rifles at the vague shapes which were shouting and milling about in confusion in the utter black darkness in front of them. The Japanese were talking loudly now, as if their leaders were urging their men to move forward on the trail. The surviving men from the two squads of the 1st and 2d platoons and the 4th platoon, who were driven back to Wheeler Point joined with Company Headquarters' men. From their position north of the bunker, this brave band fought the attackers through the seemingly endless night. Most of the casualties the Company suffered that night occurred at the bunker as the defenders poured heavy fire into Endo's column now stalled on Cheney Trail where it crossed the promontory at Wheeler Point.

It is difficult to imagine why Endo did not maneuver around the company but he did not; instead they chose to attack the riflemen head on in the coal black darkness. There were about 40 men now in place around the bunker pouring fire into the column stalled on Cheney trail. The Japanese had attacked on the narrow trail, a tactic that gave them considerable control of their column while attacking at night. However, once the head of the column stops the whole

column stops, and confusion becomes inevitable. If the attack is to continue you must either destroy the obstacle and move through it or maneuver around the blocking force. The head of the column must keep the attack route clear at all costs. Only a small part of the greatly superior force could be brought to bear on the defenders, who were now backed around the concrete bunker. Immediately behind the bunker were the cliffs, so there was no retreat for the defenders.

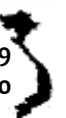
A simple decision can often pre-ordain the result of an entire battle, and such was the case here. Had Endo chosen to advance by way of Black Trail, there would have been nothing to stop him, nor even to give warning of the column's approach until it reached the parade field and its objective, Topside Barracks. Once committed to the Cheney Trail route there was no choice except to mount attack after attack in the restricted area of the Wheeler Point headland to destroy the roadblock.

Except for flares fired throughout the night by warships laying off shore, there was no artillery support; D Company's men did the job themselves with their rifles, BAR's and carbines and stopped the charging Marines. The light machine gun platoon from Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion was at Battery Cheney and could not support the beleaguered defenders at Wheeler Point, only a few yards away.



The fighting there was done by roughly the equivalent of two rifle squads, one from the 1st platoon and one from the 2d platoon totaling probably less than 20 men, 19 men from the 4th platoon and 8 men from company headquarters. The rest of the company for one reason or another was not involved in the fighting that night....

(continued....)



....This small band fought at Wheeler Point, stopped frenzied attack after attack in wave after wave by Japanese Marines trying to break through to the south. The defenders suffered terribly; 14 of them died that night and 15 were wounded. A bitter loss when you consider probably less than 50 men had held the cream of the Japanese Special Naval Landing Forces at bay.

This would be the last attack of any significance by the Japanese on Corregidor. The terrible losses suffered by the Japanese forces in this violent clash of arms, in part, surely weakened their ability to launch another major attack and in fact they never did.

During the savage encounter, which probably lasted less than three hours that black night at Wheeler Point, more than 250 corpses of Japanese Marines were strewn along a bloody 200 yard stretch of Cheney Trail where it passes through the promontory at Wheeler Point and around the bunker where the combatants were locked in close combat in the dark. For the men of D Company who were there, Wheeler Point will always be called Banzai Point.



Both sides suffered dearly in the defense and re-taking of Fortress Corregidor, but mostly the Japanese.

At about 9:30 on Monday morning the litter party from the 161st Engineers left Topside and finally got through to Wheeler Point. They left with seven litter cases and fourteen walking wounded. As the column moved slowly up Cheney Trail it passed by twelve of the company's riflemen covered with green ponchos. The long terrible fight was finally over.

*Manfully they stood and everywhere with
gallant front,
Opposed in fair array the shock of war,
Desperately they fought like men expert in arms,
And knowing no safety could be found,
Save from their own hands.**

* Robert Southey 1744-1843

[Report and photos reprinted courtesy of Paul Whitman and his 503rd P.R.C.T. Heritage Battalion website]

PRIVATE LLOYD G. McCARTER

**Awarded
The Medal of Honor**



Citation:

He was a scout with the regiment which seized the fortress of Corregidor, Philippine Islands. Shortly after the initial parachute assault on 16 February 1945, he crossed 30 yards of open ground under intense enemy fire, and at pointblank range silenced a machinegun with hand grenades. On the afternoon of 18 February he killed 6 snipers. That evening, when a large force attempted to bypass his company, he voluntarily moved to an exposed area and opened fire. The enemy attacked his position repeatedly throughout the night and was each time repulsed. By 2 o'clock in the morning, all the men about him had been wounded; but shouting encouragement to his comrades and defiance at the enemy, he continued to bear the brunt of the attack, fearlessly exposing himself to locate enemy soldiers and then pouring heavy fire on them. He repeatedly crawled back to the American line to secure more ammunition. When his submachine gun would no longer operate, he seized an automatic rifle and continued to inflict heavy casualties. This weapon, in turn, became too hot to use and, discarding it, he continued with an M-1 rifle. At dawn the enemy attacked with renewed intensity. Completely exposing himself to hostile fire, he stood erect to locate the most dangerous enemy positions. He was seriously wounded; but, though he had already killed more than 30 of the enemy, he refused to evacuate until he had pointed out immediate objectives for attack. Through his sustained and outstanding heroism in the face of grave and obvious danger, Pvt. McCarter made outstanding contributions to the success of his company and to the recapture of Corregidor.





On Sept. 2, 1945, Army Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright, a Medal of Honor recipient, was among the few U.S. military leaders aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay when Japan signed the surrender documents ending World War II.



Army Brig. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright

Wainwright is lauded for defending the Philippines when they were overtaken by the Japanese and earned the nickname "Hero of Bataan."

Born in 1883 in Walla Walla, Washington, Wainwright was from a long line of military officers. He followed in his father's footsteps by joining the Army and graduated from West Point in 1906.

More than 30 years later, Wainwright was the 4th Army's commander in the Philippines when the U.S. entered World War II. After the Pearl Harbor attack, Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur — who was in charge of Pacific forces — was forced to flee the Philippine capital of Manila ahead of a Japanese invasion. So, in 1942, Wainwright became senior field commander of U.S. and Philippine forces and was tasked with defending the islands.

Surrender Message

The battle for the Philippines was hard-fought and spanned several months. U.S. troops faced starvation, disease and rough jungle conditions after being cut off from supplies. Despite being advised to leave, Wainwright was authorized to continue the fight from the Bataan Peninsula. He fought alongside his men and often visited the front lines of battle.

The Philippines fell to the Japanese on April 9, 1942, but Wainwright and thousands of others survived and escaped to Corregidor, the last Allied stronghold in the island chain. There, they hid and dodged air bombardments for another month.

Wainwright finally surrendered the island to the Japanese on May 6, 1942. He and the remaining Allied troops were forced to join the Bataan Death March to prison camps in the Philippines and on other Japanese-held islands.



Three years and three months later, in August 1945, Wainwright was released from a liberated prisoner-of-war camp. Two weeks later, he stood behind MacArthur on the USS Missouri when the general signed the Japanese surrender documents.



(continued....)



After that, Wainwright returned to the Philippines to witness the surrender of the local Japanese commander.

Wainwright considered himself a failure because he had surrendered, but in September 1945, he was promoted to four-star general and awarded the Medal of Honor. He received a hero's welcome when he returned to the United States.



After the war, Wainwright commanded the 4th Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, before retiring from active duty in August 1947. He died in 1953 and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He was 70 years old. In 1961, Alaska's Ladd Air Force Base, which had been an Army base during World War II, was returned to the Army and renamed Fort Wainwright.



The 'Yamashita Standard' is Born

Tomoyuki Yamashita (山下 奉文 *Yamashita Tomoyuki*, November 8, 1885 – February 23, 1946; also called **Tomobumi Yamashita** was a Japanese general of the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II. Yamashita led Japanese forces during the invasion of Malaya and Battle of Singapore, with his accomplishment of conquering Malaya and Singapore in 70 days earning him the sobriquet *The Tiger of Malaya* and led to the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, calling the ignominious fall of Singapore to Japan the "worst disaster" and "largest capitulation" in British military history.

Yamashita was assigned to defend the Philippines from the advancing Allied forces later in the war, and while unable to stop the Allied advance, he was able to hold on to part of Luzon until after the formal surrender of Japan in August 1945.

After the war, Yamashita was tried for war crimes committed by troops under his command during the Japanese defense of the occupied Philippines in 1944. In a controversial trial, Yamashita was found guilty of his troops' atrocities even though there was no evidence that he approved or even knew of them, and indeed many of the atrocities were committed by troops not actually under his command. Yamashita was sentenced to death and executed by hanging in 1946. The ruling against Yamashita – holding the commander responsible for subordinates' war crimes as long as the commander did not attempt to discover and stop them from occurring – came to be known as the Yamashita standard.

"Jap War Criminal Dies Ingloriously"

MANILA, Feb – (AP) – Lieut. Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita, one-time bemedalled conqueror of Singapore was hanged before dawn today as a Japanese war criminal, clad in patched and slouchy American khaki fatigues.

His last words a prayer "for the Emperor's long life," the despoiler of Manila died in disgrace at 3:02 a.m in a cane field along with two subordinates. His body was sewed up in canvas and he was carted away to a nameless grave among soldiers whose misdeeds sealed his dome.



Yamashita is removed from courtroom by military police immediately after hearing verdict of death by hanging.



Darwin William Kenney, Jr. HHC/2/503, Passes



Darwin William Kenney, Jr. (71) of Myrtle Beach, SC, formerly of Northport, NY, died suddenly but peacefully on August 14, 2019. He was an army veteran in the 173rd Airborne, serving two tours in the Vietnam War as a paratrooper. When he returned, he was very involved in the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), serving as the county commander for Suffolk County from 1995-1996. He was an avid Harley Davidson rider and owned several bikes of which he was very proud. Most of all, though, he was proud of his family and friends, of whom he talked often.

He leaves behind his wife Patty (nee Darcy), children Shaun Kenney (Joann) and Nicole Joseph (Robert), step-daughters Darcie Monroe (Ian Christensen) and Shana Monroe (Tim Zlinsky), grandsons Bill and Braiden Kenney, Andrew Joseph, Liam and Jaden Christensen, and Mason Zlinsky, sisters Darlene Edwards (Neal) and Dale Cohen (Marty), stepmother Marianna Kenney, ex-wife Francine Kenney (nee Graff), the mother of his three children, as well as 7 nieces and 3 nephews. He is preceded in death by his mother Lillian Kenney, father Darwin Kenney, Sr., brother Dwight Kenney, wife Carol Kenney (nee Aubert Barker) and son William Kenney.

He will be remembered for his vibrant spirit, strong will and sense of humor. Those who knew him loved him, and he will be dearly missed by all.

Rest Easy, "We Try Harder" Trooper

Daniel F. Mclsaac E/2/503, Passes



Daniel F. Mclsaac, of Franklin, passed away at home on May 15th, 2019 at 75 years old.

Daniel was born on July 25, 1943 in Boston to the late Rosamond (Furlong) and John Mclsaac. He lived and grew up in the Savin Hill area of Dorchester with his twin sister, Cecelia (Mclsaac) MacCalmon and younger brother, the late John "Duffy" Mclsaac.

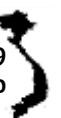
Daniel joined the Army at a young age where he went to Fort Benning in Georgia. He was a non-commissioned officer and then later attended OCS (Officer Candidate School) where he graduated and was commissioned as an officer in the United States Army. He then served multiple tours in Vietnam where he commanded a Special Operations unit Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol 1st Brigade 101st Airborne Division and the Reconnaissance Platoon for 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Daniel completed his military career as a 1st Lieutenant and earned several prestigious medals. He earned the Vietnam Service Medal (VSM), Combat Infantry Badge (CIB), Armed Forces Medal (AM), Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVN- CM w/ dev), Good Conduct Medal, Two Bronze Star Medals with V device (Valor) awarded for Heroism in Combat, a Purple Heart, and his Master Parachutist Badge.

After Daniel came home from the Army, he went back to school to pursue a career in teaching. Daniel taught at Mansfield Public Schools, where he met his late wife, Mary Jane (Flumere) Mclsaac.

Daniel loved traveling to Idaho to go white water rafting. He was passionate about riding motorcycles and cherished his Purple Heart inspired Harley. Most of all he treasured spending time with his grandchildren, Amelia and Hunter. He always lit up with a smile when he would see them. He also enjoyed spending time with his little dog, Champ. Daniel was the beloved husband to the late Mary Jane (Flumere) Mclsaac, of Wrentham. He was a loving father to his only child, MaryFrances (Mclsaac) Randall and her husband Robert Randall, of Wrentham. He was a devoted grandfather, brother and uncle.

Rest Easy, LT



When were you in the war...

By Kerry 'Doc' Pardue

A couple of years ago someone asked me if I still thought about Vietnam. I nearly laughed in their face. How do you stop thinking about it? Every day for the last thirty-eight years, I wake up with it, and go to bed with it. But this is what I said. *"Yeah, I think about it. I can't quit thinking about it. I never will. But, I've also learned to live with it. I'm comfortable with the memories. I've learned to stop trying to forget and learned instead to embrace it. It just doesn't scare me anymore."*

A psychologist once told me that not being affected by the experience over there would be abnormal. When she told me that, it was like she'd just given me a pardon. It was as if she said, *"Go ahead and feel something about the place. It ain't going nowhere. You're gonna wear it for the rest of your life. Might as well get to know it."*

A lot of my "brothers" haven't been so lucky. For them the memories are too painful, their sense of loss too great. My sister told me of a friend she has whose husband was in the "Nam". She asked this guy when he was there.

Here's what he said, *"Just last night."* It took my sister a while to figure out what he was talking about. Just last night. Yeah, I was in the Nam. When? Just last night. During sex with my wife. And on my way to work this morning. Over my lunch hour. Yeah, I was there. My sister says I'm not the same brother that went to Vietnam. My wife says I won't let people get close to me, not even her. They are probably both right.

Ask a vet about making friends in Nam. It was risky. Why? Because we were in the business of death, and death was with us all the time. It wasn't the death of, *"If I die before I wake."* This was the real thing. The kind where boys scream for their mothers. The kind that lingers in your mind and becomes more real each time you cheat it. You don't want to make a lot of friends when the possibility of dying is that real, that close. When you do, friends become a liability.

A guy named Wayne was my friend. Wayne is dead. What was left of him was placed in a body bag one sunny day, February, 1969. We'd been talking, only a few minutes before we got hit, about what we were going to do when we got back to the world. Now, this was a guy who had come in country the same time as

myself. A guy who was loveable and generous. He had blue eyes and sandy blond hair. When he talked, it was with a soft drawl. Wayne was a fun guy and he knew it. That was part of his charm. He didn't care. Man, I loved this guy like a brother. But, I screwed up. I got too close to him.

Maybe I didn't know any better. But I broke one of the unwritten rules of war. *"Don't Get Close to People Who Are Going to Die"*.

Sometimes you can't help it. You hear vets use the term "buddy" when they refer to a guy they spent the war with. *"Me and this buddy of mine . . ." "Friend"* sounds too intimate, doesn't it? *"Friend"* calls up images of being close. If he's a friend, then you are going to be hurt if he dies, and war hurts enough without adding to the pain. Get close; get hurt. It's as simple as that.

In war you learn to keep people at that distance my wife talks about. You become so good at it, that thirty years after the war, you still do it without thinking. You won't allow yourself to be vulnerable again.

My wife knows two people who can get into the soft spots inside me. My daughters, I know it probably bothers her that they can do this. It's not that I don't love my wife, I do. She's put up with a lot from me. She'll tell you that when she signed on for better or worse she had no idea there was going to be so much of the latter. But with my daughters it's different.

My girls are mine. They'll always be my kids. Not marriage, not distance, not even death can change that. They are something on this earth that can never be taken away from me. I belong to them. Nothing can change that.

I can have an ex-wife; but my girls can never have an ex-father. There's the difference.

I can still see the faces, though they all seem to have the same eyes. When I think of us I always see a line of "dirty grunts" sitting on a paddy dike. We're caught in the first gray silver between darkness and light. That first moment when we know we've survived another night, and the business of staying alive for one more day is about to begin. There was so much hope in that brief space of time. It's what we used to pray for. *"One more day, God. One more day."*

And I can hear our conversations as if they'd only just been spoken. I still hear the way we sounded, the hard cynical jokes, our morbid senses of humor. We were scared to death of dying, and trying our best not to show it.

(continued....)



I recall the smells, too. Like the way cordite hangs on the air after a fire-fight. Or the pungent odor of rice paddy mud. So different from the black dirt of New Jersey. The mud of Nam smells ancient, somehow. Like it's always been there. And I'll never forget the way blood smells, stuck and drying on my hands. I spent a long night that way once. That memory isn't going anywhere.

I remember how the night jungle appears almost dream-like as the pilot of a Cessna buzzes overhead, dropping parachute flares until morning. That artificial sun would flicker and make shadows run through the jungle. It was worse than not being able to see what was out there sometimes. I remember once looking at the man next to me as a flare floated overhead. The shadows around his eyes were so deep that it looked like his eyes were gone. I reached over and touched him on the arm; without looking at me he touched my hand. *"I know man. I know."* That's what he said. It was a human moment. Two guys a long way from home and scared shitless. *"I know man"*. And at that moment he did. God I loved those guys. I hurt every time one of them died. We all did.

Despite our posturing. Despite our desire to stay disconnected, we couldn't help ourselves. I know why Tim O'Brien writes his stories. I know what gives Kerry Pardue the words to create poems so honest I cry at their horrible beauty. It's love. Love for those guys we shared the experience with.

We did our jobs like good soldiers, and we tried our best not to become as hard as our surroundings. We touched each other and said, *"I know."* Like a mother holding a child in the middle of a nightmare, *"It's going to be all right."* We tried not to lose touch with our humanity. We tried to walk that line. To be the good boys our parents had raised and not to give into that unnamed thing we knew was inside us all.

You want to know what frightening is? It's a nineteen-year-old-boy who's had a sip of that power over life and death that war gives you. It's a boy who, despite all the things he's been taught, knows that he likes it. It's a nineteen-year-old whose just lost a friend, and is angry and scared and, determined that, *"Some Fuckers gonna pay"*. To this day, the thought of that boy can wake me from a sound sleep and leave me staring at the ceiling.

As I write this, I have a picture in front of me. It's of two young men. On their laps are tablets. One is smoking a cigarette. Both stare without expression at the camera. They're writing letters. Staying in touch with places they would rather be. Places and people they hope to see again.

The picture shares space in a frame with one of my wife. She doesn't mind. She knows she's been included in special company. She knows I'll always love those guys who shared that part of my life, a part she never can.

And she understands how I feel about the ones I know are out there yet. The ones who still answer the question, *"When were you in Vietnam?"*

"Hey, man. I was there just last night."

Web Source:

https://www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org/sites/default/files/When_were_you_in_the_war.pdf

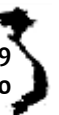
[Thanks to Kerry for writing this, because it is *our* story as well. Thank you Doc. Ed]



Three 2/503 Charlie Company troopers after the battle at LZ Zulu-Zulu on 16 March 66.

"I know man. I know."

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



Casper aviation platoon Casper Platoon Story

Night Hawk Cancels The Darkness



Reprinted from: Fire Base 173
May 17, 1969
Courtesy of Ned Costa, Caspers

As darkness falls over northern Binh Dinh Province, the enemy moves out from the daytime cover to roam about the valleys and the mountains with a little freedom. The ever-present eyes in the sky, helicopters and observation planes, can't see them as they make their way to a new village to terrorize--or to a familiar village hamlet to extort food and money. The biggest worry at night is the ambush patrols set out by paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade, and they are sometimes avoided.

Swooping down from the sky above the lush valleys is a "Huey Slick" (a UH-1D helicopter) with a few innovations mounted. Namely, a large starlight scope, a xenon searchlight, and a .50 caliber machine gun. The sudden surprise of the terrified enemy on the ground can be seen plainly on the faces illuminated by the light, as the .50 caliber pumps lead downward. This weapon is "Night Hawk."

Night Hawk is a new innovation in airborne search technique. By scanning the ground with the starlight scope, the crewmen can spot activity without letting the enemy know he has been seen. He soon does know, however, because spotlight snaps on and finds "Charlie" with his pants down. With the target spotted by the light, the .50 caliber opens up.

Night Hawk for the 173d Airborne Brigade is the brainchild of CWO Dale J. Morrison. Morrison works with the 173d Aviation Platoon, Casper.

The Salinas, California, native took his idea of Night Hawk to the head shed where it was greeted with enthusiasm. Several men from the brigade went scrounging throughout Vietnam, and they came up with the needed equipment for the Night Hawk - the scope and the light.

Morrison then took the materials and put them together on a Huey. He worked out the way to mount the scope on the spotlight so that the light, even when not on, would follow the track of the scope--in other words, he mounted them coaxially.

It was a lot of hard work, but it was worth it, as Night Hawk is another thing that Charlie must worry about, and for good reason; Night Hawk is interdicting the enemy during his best hours of clandestine operation.



2nd Battalion Gets One

Reprinted from: Fire Base 173 Newspaper, 1970
By: Sgt. Joe Neal
Courtesy of Ned Costa, Caspers

LZ English - While flying a sensing device in the An Loa Valley, Nighthawk was able to pull in the slack by killing a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldier that has escaped the gun patterns of two other ships.

The helicopters were flying in the standard "Snoopy" (sensing) formation. Nighthawk, from Casper Aviation Platoon, 173d Airborne Brigade, was flying "low bird" with the personnel detection equipment. There was also a "high bird" following the route on the map. Two gunships were following along behind...just in case anything was spotted.

Four NVA were seen in a streambed. Word was radioed back and the "gunnies" were on them before they had a chance to make it out of the stream. Firing 2.75-inch aerial rockets, the gunships made their pass. Their mini-guns were splattering machine gun bullets off the rocky streambed at a staggering tempo.



LT. GEN. THOMAS P. CARNEY, C/2/503 of Naples, Florida 1941 - 2019 Passes



June 19, 1941 - July 20, 2019



Lieutenant General Thomas P. Carney, 78, passed away on Saturday, July 20, 2019. General Carney had a distinguished 35 year career in the United States Army, retiring in 1994.

He was a graduate of the United States Military Academy and earned his master's degree in operations research and systems analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Just before his retirement, he served as the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. In that position he was responsible for developing all plans, policies and programs for the management of the Army's military and civilian personnel. He also commanded the Army's Recruiting Command.

General Carney held a number of combat commands, including serving as Commander of the 5th Infantry Division and assistant division commander operations of the 82nd Airborne Division. An airborne-qualified Ranger, he served two tours of duty in Vietnam, was awarded two distinguished service medals, three legions of merit, three bronze stars, the combat infantryman's badge for coming under fire in combat, and a combat jump star for making a parachute jump into Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Since his retirement, General Carney served as an independent management consultant to the Shell Oil Company, the Delaware Port Authority, Deloitte & Touche, and the National Academy of Public Administration. He served as Deputy Librarian of Congress, where he acted as Chief Executive Officer of the world's largest library. General Carney also served on the Board of Directors for the Army Emergency Relief, USAA and as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for Calibre Systems.

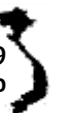
His strong ethical background highlighted in many Congressional testimonies, was a consistent characteristic of all his professional and personal involvements. General Carney was a beloved and active member in many community, religious and charitable organizations.

He was a born leader, cherished mentor with a gracious, patient manner, and sharp wit. He is survived by his loving wife of 47 years, Margaret, three children Kristine (Michael) Saltarelli, Eric (Polly) Bentson, and Jodie (Robert) Shelnut. General Carney leaves behind six adored granddaughters, Rachel, Danielle, Anne Frances, Mary Margaret, Alexandra, and Elizabeth.

A Funeral Mass was held at St. Agnes Catholic Church in Naples, FL on July 29, 2019 with burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

A Memorial Mass was celebrated on Saturday, September 14, 2019, in the St. Mary Chapel on the campus of St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland, OH.

*Rest Easy Chargin' Charlie...
All The Way, General*





You never know how service members will react in war. Will they freeze up, or push through the chaos? For World War II Army Pvt. **John Towle**, it was the latter. The 19-year-old soldier single-handedly took out nine Germans and two armored tanks, saving the lives of his fellow soldiers but losing his own.

Towle was born in Cleveland on Oct. 19, 1924. One of five siblings, he apparently quit high school early to help his family pay the bills.



Towle joined the Army in March 1943, a few months after he turned 18. He volunteered to become a paratrooper and was assigned to the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in the famed 82nd Airborne Division. He served in North Africa and Italy before being sent to Europe where the Allies had just gotten a foothold on the continent.

According to a 2015 article in Cleveland's *The Plain Dealer* newspaper, Towle wrote about training as a paratrooper in one of his letters home: *"Well, the first jump is over, and I landed like a feather. You have no sensation of falling at all. I've seen some beautiful things in this world, but, oh brother, nothing can compare with that big, white, silk, beautiful chute,"* Towle said.



Towle was only 19 when he made his one and only combat jump. On Sept. 17, 1944, he successfully landed in Holland with about 20,000 other Allied paratroopers as part of Operation Market Garden, the largest airborne operation in history. The goal — to take strategic positions from the Nazis in preparation for the invasion of Germany.



Towle and the rest of the 82nd Airborne spent the next several days battling their way through Holland. Eventually, they reached the town of Nijmegen, where they were able to secure the Nijmegen Bridge over the Waal River.



On Sept. 21, 1944, Towle's rifle company was in a defensive position on the western side of the bridge when about 100 enemy soldiers, two tanks and a half-track vehicle with wheels in the front and tank-like tracks in the back began to attack.

(continued....)



Towle, who was a rocket launcher gunner, knew it would be a disaster for his company and the entire bridgehead if the Germans broke through. So, without orders, he got out of his foxhole and moved 200 yards through intense fire to an exposed dike roadbed. From there, Towle was able to fire his bazooka and hit both tanks. They weren't heavily damaged, but the strikes did make them withdraw. Towle then turned his attention to nine German soldiers who had fled into a nearby house for cover. He shot his rocket launcher, killing all nine.

Towle quickly reloaded his weapon and ran 125 yards through enemy fire to another exposed position where he could get the half-track in his sites. He took a knee and was prepared to fire, but he was hit by a mortar shell and killed.

Towle's devotion to destroying the enemy saved the lives of several of his fellow soldiers and was instrumental in stopping the enemy attack. For his dedication, Towle was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on March 15, 1945. He was buried in Calvary Cemetery in his hometown.

In the decades since his passing, Towle's sacrifice hasn't been forgotten. The supply ship USNS John Towle and Fort Bragg's Towle Stadium were named in his honor. His name is also inscribed on a memorial beside a bridge built over the Waal River, where the 504th was said to have crossed during their trek toward Germany.



Towle Stadium at Fort Bragg
(Army photo added)

This article is part of a weekly series called "Medal of Honor Monday," in which we (DoD) highlight one of the more than 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients who have earned the U.S. military's highest medal for valor.

The drums of war....



DOD Statement on Deployment of U.S. Forces and Equipment to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Sept. 26, 2019

Attributed to Chief Pentagon Spokesperson Jonathan Hoffman:

"In light of recent attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and at their invitation, Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper announced today that the U.S. would deploy the following equipment to the kingdom:

One Patriot Battery

Four Sentinel RADARs

Approximately 200 support personnel

This deployment will augment the kingdom's air and missile defense of critical military and civilian infrastructure. This deployment augments an already significant presence of U.S. forces in the region.

The Secretary has also approved putting additional forces on Prepare To Deploy Orders (PTDO). While no decision has been made to deploy these additional forces, they will maintain a heightened state of readiness.

These forces include:

Two Patriot Batteries

One Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD)

It is important to note these steps are a demonstration of our commitment to regional partners, and the security and stability in the Middle East. This follows the Secretary and Chairman's extensive out-reach to partners in the region, and around the globe.

Other countries have called out Iranian misadventures in the region, and we look for them to contribute assets in an international effort to reinforce Saudi Arabia's defense."

Source: DoD
(Web image added)



PFC Thomas C. Van Campen Remembrance

1 October 2019

Dear Family, Fellow Soldiers and Friends:

The "Bravo Bulls," now "Battle Hard," - Company B, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry (Airborne), 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), now 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), annually hosts a reunion for all persons interested and able (generally a CONUS location or Vicenza, Italy). It is an informal gathering, typically held over the first weekend of May, with one "dress" occasion for dinner and an appropriate remembrance ceremony honoring our fallen comrades.



Consideration is presently given to the possibility of holding forth next year vicinity Jaffrey, New Hampshire, 7-10 May, 2020, chiefly to present honors to the service, sacrifice, and memory of PFC Thomas C. Van Campen (age 19, KIA-MIA, Viet Nam, 24 June 1965), where a memorial will be dedicated in a Town of Jaffrey Cemetery. If you have a good Van Campen photo, story or recollection to share, NOW is a good time to do it. All concerned will be grateful for your contribution.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your interest, help and support by way of response to realize the occasion with all due tradition, honors, and outreach to family, esteemed veterans, and friends possibly able to participate in recognition thereof. That outreach may include, veterans, civic service and safety organizations - and you are hereby invited, authorized and encouraged to copy, forward and otherwise extend the outreach purpose, welcome and response circle of this notice.

Please advise (comment and suggest appropriately) as you are able. With appreciation, best wishes and warm regards from all of us associated with this endeavor, respectfully,

Bob Warfield, Sky Soldier B/2/503, retired
253-588-5880, foxclair@aol.com

Note: Please *SUBJECT* all Email response:

"VAN CAMPEN REMEMBRANCE"

INVITATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO FOLLOW UPON
CONFIRMATION OF EVENT, HONORS, ACTIVITIES, AND
ACCOMMODATIONS.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION:

(Email to former Co B, 2/503, and record)
Joan Van Campen, Fresno, CA
James K. Van Campen, Jaffrey, NH
Rick Lambert, Jaffrey, NH
Commander, VFW Post 5613, Jaffrey, NH

Paratrooper Sprint



"Army paratroopers (173d) participate in training at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, Aug. 12, 2019, during Rock Shock Two, a battalion-level combined arms live-fire exercise." (Photo by Army Spec. Ryan Lucas)

DOD Identifies Army Casualty

Sept. 17, 2019

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

Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy W. Griffin, 40, from Greenbrier, Tennessee, was killed in action Sept. 16, 2019, by small arms fire when his unit was engaged in combat operations in Wardak Province, Afghanistan. The incident is under investigation.

Griffin was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.



DOD to Divert \$3.6 Billion to Fund 11 Barrier Projects at Southern Border

Sept. 4, 2019
By C. Todd Lopez

Defense Department officials say 127 military construction projects in both the United States and overseas will be deferred to free \$3.6 billion for construction or augmentation of barriers along 175 miles of the southern U.S. border.

The Department of Homeland Security sent a list of prioritized border construction projects for DOD review in February, Jonathan Hoffman, assistant to the secretary of defense for public affairs, told reporters yesterday. DOD determined which projects were necessary to support the use of the armed forces in conjunction with the national emergency at the southern border, he said, and also determined which military construction projects could be deferred. Hoffman said Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper *"has determined that such construction projects are necessary to support the use of the armed forces, and, therefore, DOD will undertake 11 border barrier military construction projects on the southern border pursuant to section 2808 of Title X, U.S. Code."*



Family housing, barracks or dormitory projects were not considered for deferment, nor were projects that had already been awarded or those that were expected to be awarded during fiscal year 2019.

The \$3.6 billion will be delivered to the Army in two allotments, Hoffman said. The first \$1.8 billion is associated with deferred overseas projects, he said, and the second half of the money, associated with deferred projects in the United States and its territories, will be made available to the Army only if needed.

Kenneth P. Rapuano, the assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and global security, said the 11 projects at the southern border involve strengthening or augmenting existing, less effective barriers, as well as installing barriers where none currently exist. The projects will enhance about 175 miles of the border, he added.

Hoffman said Homeland Security data shows that the number of resources needed to patrol an area *"drops dramatically"* where a border barrier has been completed.

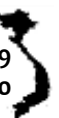


He said construction of the border barrier will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of DOD forces supporting DHS's border security mission. Over time, Hoffman said, border barrier construction may reduce the demand for DOD personnel and capabilities in particular areas. As additional barriers are built, and the current humanitarian and security crises changes, he said, DOD and DHS will continue to evaluate capabilities needed to support the DHS border security mission.

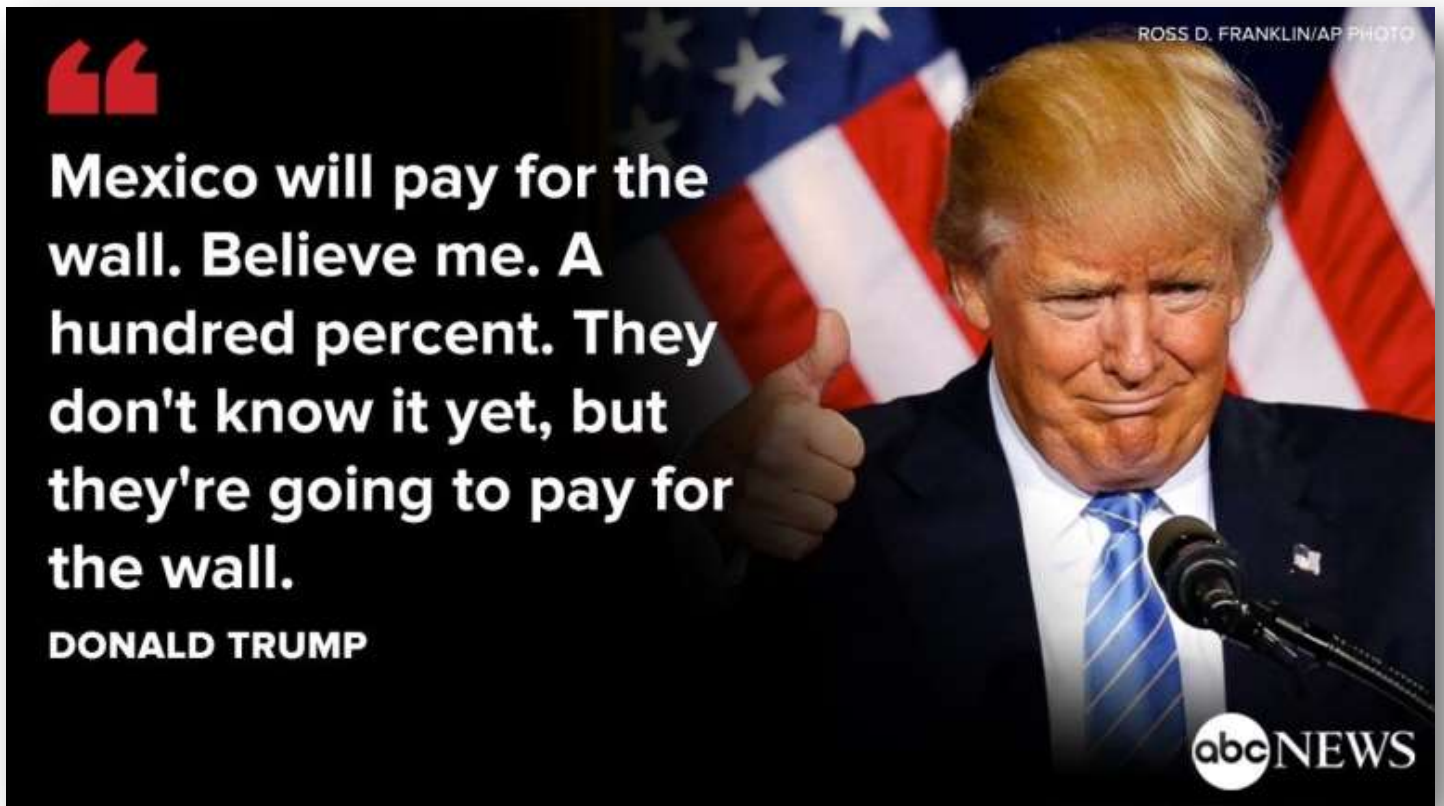
The construction and augmentation projects will happen on property owned by DOD or another federal agency, said Elaine McCusker, the Pentagon's deputy comptroller.

Construction could begin on DOD-owned land within 130 to 145 days. The start of construction on other property will have different timelines, she said. Hoffman said that DHS, DOD and the Army Corps of Engineers are moving as expeditiously as possible. *"They have been going through the planning, the permitting process, and the [engineering] process to begin the projects,"* Hoffman said. *"So, the goal is to move out as quickly as possible."*

Source: DoD



The Commander in Chief repeatedly promised....



We believe you 100%, Commander!! You would never lie to us!!!!

Veterans For The Wall



Airborne!

Vets at Commander in Chief's rally.



Who are we?

Statement by Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper Regarding Turkey, Syria Border Actions

Oct. 14, 2019

"Despite the opposition and repeated warnings from the United States and the international community, Turkish President Erdogan ordered a unilateral invasion of northern Syria that has resulted in widespread casualties, refugees, destruction, insecurity, and a growing threat to U.S. military forces.

This unacceptable incursion has also undermined the successful multinational "Defeat ISIS" mission in Syria, and resulted in the release of many dangerous ISIS detainees.

Due to Turkey's irresponsible actions, the risk to U.S. forces in northeast Syria has reached an unacceptable level. We are also at risk of being engulfed in a broader conflict. Therefore, at the President's direction, the Department of Defense is executing a deliberate withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from northeast Syria.

Turkey's unilateral action was unnecessary and impulsive. President Erdogan bears full responsibility for its consequences, to include a potential ISIS resurgence, possible war crimes, and a growing humanitarian crisis. The bilateral relationship between our two countries has also been damaged.

I will be visiting NATO next week in Brussels, where I plan to press our other NATO allies to take collective and individual diplomatic and economic measures in response to these egregious Turkish actions."



10/12/19: Tens of thousands of Kurdish civilians flee their homes in northeastern Syria in face of invasion by Turkey.

Gearing up for a more just war?

DOD Statement on Deployment of Additional U.S. Forces and Equipment to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Oct. 11, 2019

Attributed to Chief Pentagon Spokesperson Jonathan Hoffman:

At the request of U.S. Central Command, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper authorized the deployment of additional U.S. forces and the following equipment to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

Two Fighter Squadrons

One Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW)

Two Patriot Batteries

One Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD)

Secretary Esper informed Saudi Crown Prince and Minister of Defense Muhammad bin Salman this morning of the additional troop deployment to assure and enhance the defense of Saudi Arabia.

Taken together with other deployments this constitutes an additional 3,000 forces that have been extended or authorized within the last month.

Since May, the Department of Defense has increased the number of forces by approximately 14,000 to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility as an investment into regional security.

As we have stated, the United States does not seek conflict with the Iranian regime, but we will retain a robust military capability in the region that is ready to respond to any crisis and will defend U.S. forces and interest in the region.



Deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia.



All Things Military...

~ POINT ~

Following a military ceremony at Ft. Bragg *“where he reflected upon the thousands of US service members who marched on the parade field before him....”*

Admiral William McRaven, the top Navy SEAL who oversaw the Osama Bin Laden Raid, wrote:



Admiral McRaven
(Photo by SSG Sean Harp, DoD)

“For everyone who ever served in uniform, or in the intelligence community, for those diplomats who voice the nation’s principles, for the first responders, for the tellers of truth and the millions of American citizens who were raised believing in American values – you would have seen your reflection in the faces of those we honored last week,” (on the parade ground at Bragg) McRaven wrote, *“(but) beneath the outward sense of hope and duty, there was an underlying current of frustration, humiliation, anger and fear.”*

He further wrote, *“They have seen our leaders stand beside despots and strongmen, preferring their government narrative to our own. They have seen us abandon our allies and have heard the shouts of betrayal from the battlefield. As I stood on the parade field at Fort Bragg, one retired four star general, grabbed my arm shook me and shouted, ‘I don’t like the Democrats, but Trump is destroying the Republic!’”*

McRaven continued, *“If our promises are meaningless, how will our allies ever trust us? If we can’t have faith in our nation’s principles, why would the men and women of this nation join the military? And if they don’t join, who will protect us? If we are not the champions of the good and the right, then who will follow us? And if no one follows us – where will the world end up?”*

Source:

<https://news.yahoo.com/former-top-navy-seal-oversaw-212504674.html>

~ COUNTERPOINT ~

We performed web searches on [Yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com) and [Google.com](https://www.google.com) with the search request, *“Remarks by Admirals and Generals who support Trump”*. No statements of support were found; there was no counterpoint by senior military leaders we could find to what Admiral McRaven wrote. Ed

Commander In Chief Stated: General Mattis “Is The World’s Most Over-rated General”, and “I Captured ISIS.”



Former Secretary of Defense, General Mattis responded: “I Earned My Spurs On The Battlefield... Donald Trump Earned His In A Letter From A Doctor.”



Adolescent remarks by these most senior military leaders of our country? Unbecoming of the offices in which they hold and held? Yes, we would agree with that. But also yes, only one is true, and it’s up to you to decide which. Ed



ITMFA
It’s The Military’s
Finest Airborne!



Important Message from VA, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, and Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

A disturbing number of Veterans take their own lives in the U.S. On average, approximately 7,300 Veterans die from suicide each year. Despite significant efforts and billions of dollars invested by the state and federal governments across the nation, suicide rates among Veterans rose 26 percent from 2005 to 2016. In Florida alone, nearly 600 Veterans die from suicide each year at a rate slightly higher than the national average.

Finding a solution to this public health crisis requires an aspirational, innovative, all-hands-on-deck approach – not government as usual. The VA alone cannot achieve effective or lasting reductions in the Veteran suicide rate. To make a real impact, Federal, state, and local providers of resources must partner together, pool resources, and coordinate care and delivery of services efficiently.

In Florida, we recognize these challenges and are taking proactive steps to break down bureaucratic barriers; working together to form a wide-ranging coalition of government and non-profit organizations who offer resources to Veterans in need of our help the most – before they reach a crisis point.

We are proud to say that we are making progress on multiple fronts. This is best demonstrated through the development and growth of the **Florida Veterans Support Line, 1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838)**. Supported by the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8), Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Florida Department of Children and Families, and operated by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, the line provides confidential emotional support and connection to community resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The line is available to all Veterans in Florida.

Our work does not stop there. As we continue to move forward together, we are meeting and learning from communities and local organizations about how best to partner with them and leverage the resources they can provide. Likewise, we are proactively working on expanded public health initiatives to align with Presidential Executive Order 13861 "National Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End Suicide" and opportunities that may become available from the national task force.

We continue to support and promote the abundance of VA resources available to Veterans to include the **Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255, press 1)**.

Like the Florida Veterans Support Line, Veterans can call to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care.

So, what can you do to help? First, add the Veterans Crisis Line and Florida Veterans Support Line to your mobile phone contacts. Second, share the numbers with others and ask them to do the same. Third, visit www.visn8.va.gov/savealife.asp to download and share outreach materials. Be there for Veterans and active duty service members who may be in crisis. Listen to what they say, ask the hard questions, and assist them with connecting with VA and other important community resources. Be the difference and be there for a Veteran in crisis.

Sincerely,

Miguel H. LaPuz MD, MBA Network Director VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8)	Danny Burgess Executive Director Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs	Clara Reynolds LCSW, MBA President & CEO Crisis Center of Tampa Bay
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American Arrival



"A member of the U.S. Army parachute team, the Golden Knights, delivers an American flag during the Atlantic City Airshow in Atlantic City, N.J., Aug. 21, 2019."

(Photo by: March C. Olsen, National Guard)



THE POINT MAN



2/503 Recon troopers following the Pointman

By Pat Bowe
Recon 2/503

The boy was nineteen, never strayed far from home.
He enlisted in the Army and into a combat zone.
Though he was young, and very much alive,
The one thought that drove him was his will to survive.

This war was unpopular in some people's eyes,
But this young soldier refused to deny.
The solemn promise that he had made
To his family and country the price would be paid.

The heat was unbearable in this humid land,
In this nightmarish country they called the Nam.
Malaria and Typhoid was a dreaded disease,
With conditions like this you were never at ease.

The squad saddled up to go on patrol,
The young soldier was frightened hoping it wouldn't show.

Fear and anxiety filled every joint,
When the sergeant had told him he would be Point.

The dawn was gray with low lying fog,
The platoon moved through the jungle and into a bog.
A shot rang out, the trap had been sprung,
Like a spring that was coiled the fight had begun.

Charlie was sneaky; he knew the terrain,
He would fight to the death to defend his domain.
The ambush he set was very well planned,
With booby traps and claymores, his positions were manned.

The sergeant yelled "ambush!" and everyone fell down,
Grenades were exploding as they hit the ground.
The Viet Cong started to close on the flank,
And before one knew it, they were firing point blank.

The battle raged on for an eternity it seemed,
And with cries from the wounded it felt like a dream.
The medic then tried to save the men dying,
Even though he was wounded he kept on trying.

It was the young point man who maintained the lead,
He was the first to be hit and the first one to bleed.
He started to pray as he gazed toward the sky,
And laid on this back not wanting to die.

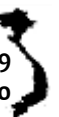
His life began flashing before his young eyes,
Not knowing if this day would be his demise.
He prayed to his Lord who created this land,
"Please don't let me die in this place called the Nam."

His prayer was answered though it took a long time,
The Viet Cong fought hard but could not hold the line.
It may never be known why this life was freed,
But you see this young point man, it was me.

This poem is based on an actual event when I was wounded in October of 1967. I wrote this poem for a writing class while attending college in 1995. Pat



Our good buddy, Pat, is visited in hospital by Martha Raye during his convalescence.





Bravo Bulls Visit Normandy

"Take Two Salt Tablets And Drive On!"

Three Bravo Bulls and our FO visited France and the beaches of Normandy. The trip was set up and organized by Jim and Marjie Robinson. Jim was the Forward Observer from the 319th Artillery attached to B 2/503. What started out as a "Guys" trip to Normandy quickly expanded to include the wives and visits to other sights.



Bulls and their Brides on this memorable journey at Pointe Du Hoc. From L-R: Marjie & Jim Robinson; Herbert & Annie Murhammer, Joe & Judith Logan; and Isabelle & Dave Glick.

On September 12th, 2019, we assembled at the Sheraton Inn at Charles de Gaulle Airport. Jim and Marjie had come in the day before to pick up the van and be ready when Dave Glick, his wife Isabelle (Isie), and my wife Judith and I arrived. From the airport we drove to our hotel in Bayeux, France.

On September 13th we visited Pegasus Bridge which was captured just after midnight on D-Day. At the bridge we ran into a group of former British paratroopers.



The three British paratroopers in the center, surrounded by Bravo Bulls Sky Soldiers at Pegasus Bridge.

From Pegasus Bridge we moved on to the beaches at Normandy. At Omaha beach I collected two small bottles of sand. One for the Bravo Bulls and the other for Team 173, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Then a visit to the cemetery.

September 14th found us on our way to Point Du Hoc and walking the grounds taken by the Rangers on D-Day. Looking at the cliffs it is hard to vision what they had accomplished.



The cliffs at Point Du Hoc scaled by Army Rangers on D-Day.

From there we moved on to Saint-Mere-Eglise. This is a must stop for anyone who served in the 82d Airborne Division. The paratrooper from the 505th PIR, John Steele, is still displayed hanging from the church where his parachute got caught.

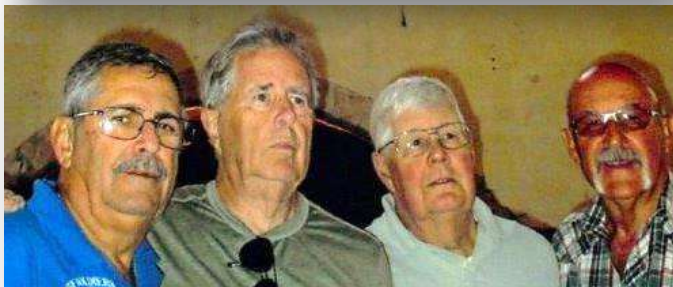
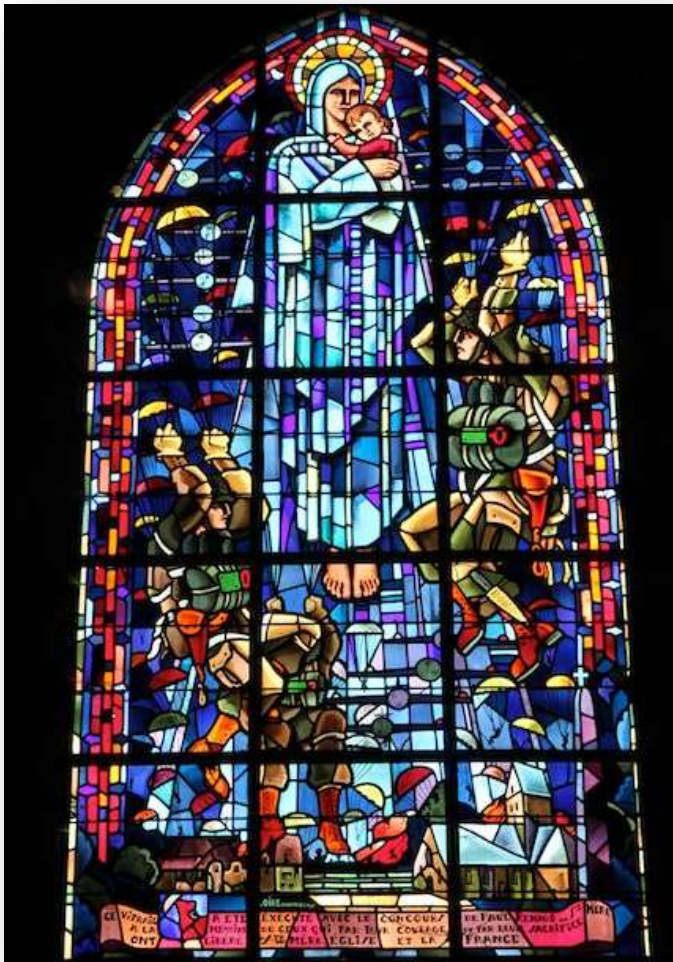
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Tribute to John Steele, and the American paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division from D-Day.



The museum in Saint-Mere-Eglise is devoted to the airborne soldiers, parachute and glider units. As I looked over the displays I went around saying, "Got it", "Got it", "Got it": I guess I collected a lot of stuff over the years.



Bulls L-R Dave, Jim, Joe & Herbert at the church.

From Saint-Mere-Eglise we went to Anne's Farm, a bed and breakfast located in the French countryside. We had an interesting talk with Anne's father who was a young boy during the German occupation.

As a side note, Herbert and Annie Murhammer joined us at Bayuex. They had traveled from Geneva, Switzerland where they live. Herbert was an M-60 gunner in Bravo Company.

On September 15th, we headed to Mont-St-Michael to do the tourist thing. It seemed the entire location which was built on an island was all uphill and packed with other tourists. But in France this location is a must.

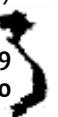


Le Mont-Saint-Michel (Saint Michael's Mount) is an island and mainland commune in Normandy, France. The island is located about 0.6 miles off the country's northwestern coast, at the mouth of the Couesnon River near Avranches and is 17 acres in area. The island has held strategic fortifications since ancient times and since the 8th century AD has been the seat of the monastery from which it draws its name.

September 16th we departed Anne's Farm and headed to Paris. Once in Paris there was always some sort of strike going on (the French like to strike a lot). Traffic was at a standstill killing any plans we had for walking around the city.

The following day, September 17th, we did walk around and took in the sights, including the Eiffel Tower and a luncheon river cruise -- another must if you visit Paris.

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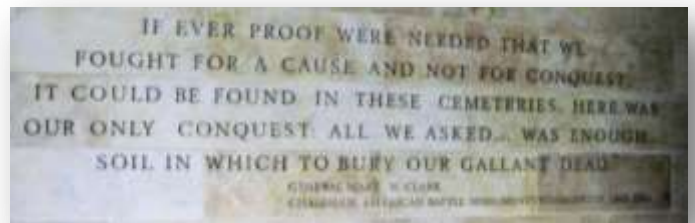


Greetings Sky Soldiers

Our visit to Normandy was a wonderful and meaningful experience. I only wish we could have spent more time at the beaches, the American Cemetery at the Normandy Beaches, and Pegasus Bridge. The cemetery is beautiful, yet solemn and reverent.



The American cemetery and memorial at Normandy with Omaha Beach below.



Access to Pointe Du Hoc was limited to the peak and not the actual beach section below. We spent so much time at the 1st section of the Airborne Museum at Ste. Mere Eglise that I was unable to complete all of the exhibits. Must either read more quickly or walk a wee bit more rapidly.

A visit to Normandy is a must for all, whether military history buffs or not. The initial portion of our visit was followed up by a few days in Paris, but the time spent visiting the WWII sites will be forever etched in our minds.

We all were very glad Jim Robinson included a few days stay at Annie's Farm, which is (I believe) just south-east of the Normandy beaches, which is a 'B&B'. Annie is a truly wonderful person as well as a terrific host and cook. We spent time with her dad (also her mother) who recalled his time living on the farm as a young child while the Germans occupied/controlled that area. Kudos to Jim and Marjie for putting this visit together.

Additionally, you should also include at least one daily beer accompanied by French fries w/ketchup, while people-gazing at a corner café in Paris!!!

Dave and Isie Glick
ABN, ATW!!!



Paris....*The City of Light*

On September 18, Marjie, Jim, Judy and I headed for the airport. Dave and Isabelle remained a few more days in Paris to visit a cousin. Herbert and Annie left us when we departed Anne's Farm. They were traveling by camper and headed off on another of their many adventures.

What started out at the Bulls reunion in San Diego in 2018, turned from a few guys into a trip of a life time. Jim and Marjie had business experience in France and knew where to stay and where the good restaurants were located. With one exception, when we rolled into a truck stop off the highway with only locals. Not one of them spoke English, and our command of the French language was pretty much limited to asking for the location of the bathroom. It was fun. Any negative things you may have heard about French people's attitude toward Americans was never once apparent to us. They assisted us by looking up words so we could order lunch.

On this trip we had Jim and Marjie Robinson from Heath, Texas, David and Isie Glick, the guy who started all this, from Lido Beach, New York, and Herbert and Annie Murhammer from Geneva, Switzerland. My wife Judith and I live in Browns Mills, New Jersey. We all served in Bravo Company in 1965 & 1966.

Joe Logan
B/2/503

PS: Jim, where are we going next?



More on the Bravo Bulls' assault on Normandy...

82nd Airborne: Operation Neptune Stats

By Jim Robinson
FO B/2/503 RVN



8/30/19: I am taking B/2/503 Troopers **Dave Glick**, **Joe Logan** and ladies to Omaha Beach in 10 days (see after action reports on Pages 60-61), where **Herbert Murhammer** and his bride will meet us.

While prepping I went through my 'original' copy of the 82d Airborne After Action Report of Operation Neptune, of which 460 were distributed. I assume they printed 500 just to keep the numbers even and also "just in case".

They kept track or at least tried to, of all kinds of info including jeeps, trailers and other major equipment. I'll distribute the attached stats (below), when we get to Ste. Mere - Eglise for discussion.

I'll start at the beginning. Amongst my "stuff" I have an original After Action Report of the 82d jump into Normandy, as mentioned. I have also the Sicily, Battle of the Bulge and Holland reports. All kinda treasures.

At any rate, there is a complete, *who went where and what happened*, including losses of lives and equipment.

I summarized the casualty info and distributed a copy to each member of our tour group in the churchyard at Ste- Mere- Eglise. I used it as an outline to discuss the cost in lives, of where we were standing - under Red Button's (aka John Steele's) parachute hung-up on the church.

Most folks do not know that the 82d approached from the east. Their drop zones were on the east side of Ste- Mere- Eglise. Some division members actually landed on them. However, so did some members of the 101st, even though their drop zones were to the west of the town, intended to protect Utah beach.

I'm not a historian but I think the 101st air armada must have taken a greater beating as the German air defense batteries probably looked toward England to the west. I assume the 82d gliders came in from west to east.

Facts from the Eighty Second Airborne Division Operation Neptune After Action Report

RESTRICTED
(Declassified)

Parachute Drops

6386 dropped 36 injured captured
173 injured evacuated
3003 lost 661 missing 2373 WIA 1554 RTD*
704 injured 502 RTD
1192 KIA 179 captured

Gliders

424 82 intact 167 damaged 170 destroyed
5 missing
3353 personal 61 KIA 322 evacuated 2 missing

German Casualties

1500 KIA est. 2159 captured

82d Officer Casualties

06 33% 05 25% 04 6.3% 03 33% 02 20% 0 20%

Overall % Casualties

46.4% Officers 46.1 % EM

Glider

65.3 % officers 58.0 % EM

Parachute

59.5 % officer 56.3 % EM

*RTD means patched up and returned to duty.



JOHN STEELE...PARATROOPER

Private John Marvin Steele (November 29, 1912 in Metropolis, Illinois – May 16, 1969 in Fayetteville, NC) was the American paratrooper who landed on the pinnacle of the church tower in Sainte-Mère-Église, the first village in Normandy liberated by the United States Army on D-Day, June 6, 1944.



City's tribute to John Steele and the paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division.

The Operation

On the night before D-Day (June 5–6, 1944), American soldiers of the 82nd Airborne parachuted into the area west of Sainte-Mère-Église in successive waves. The town had been the target of an aerial attack and a stray incendiary bomb had set fire to a house east of the town square. The church bell was rung to alert the town of the emergency and townspeople turned out in large numbers to form a bucket brigade supervised by members of the German garrison.

By 1:00 am, the town square was well lit and filled with German soldiers and villagers when two sticks (planeloads of paratroopers) from the 1st and 2nd battalions were dropped in error directly over the village.

The paratroopers were easy targets, and Steele was one of the few not killed or wounded by enemy fire. His parachute caught in one of the pinnacles of the church tower, leaving him hanging on the side of the church. The wounded paratrooper hung there limply for two hours, pretending to be dead, before the Germans took him prisoner.

He escaped four days later from the Germans and rejoined his division when US troops of the 3rd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment attacked the village, capturing thirty Germans and killing another eleven. He was awarded the Bronze Star for valor and the Purple Heart for being wounded in combat.

Later life

Though injured, Steele survived his ordeal. He continued to visit the town throughout his life and was an honorary citizen of Ste. Mère Église. The tavern, *Auberge John Steele*, stands adjacent to the square and maintains his memory through photos, letters and articles hung on its walls.

Steele died of throat cancer on May 16, 1969, in Fayetteville, NC.



Honored All Americans From D-Day



Memorial in a courtyard in Sainte-Mère-Église



U.S., Allies Remember Operation Market Garden

Sept. 17, 2019 | BY C. Todd Lopez

Shortly after the invasion of Normandy and the liberation of Paris during World War II, Allied forces in Europe wanted to create an invasion route into northern Germany from the Netherlands. Operation Market Garden, meant to achieve that objective, kicked off 75 years ago, on Sept. 17, 1944.

At the National World War II Memorial in Washington today, representatives of the Allied nations that participated in Operation Market Garden — including Canada, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom — participated in a commemoration of Operation Market Garden. Maj. Gen. Mark C. Schwartz, a special assistant in the Office of the Director of the Army Staff, discussed the Allied operation.



Maj. Gen. Mark C. Schwartz, a special assistant in the Office of the Director of the Army Staff, and World War II veteran James Washburn salute a commemorative wreath during the Operation Market Garden and Battle of Angaur 75th Anniversary Commemoration at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, Sept. 17, 2019.

All Photos By: Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class James K. Lee

"They deployed airborne and armored forces with the sole objective to capture key bridges in the Netherlands that would open the routes across the Rhine River and into the Third Reich's industrial complex at the time the Ruhr Valley," Schwartz said.

As many as 20,000 Allied airborne soldiers participated in the operation, as did more than 3,600 Allied bombers, fighters and transport aircraft. Schwartz said Operation Market Garden was actually two operations: Operation Market, and Operation Garden.

Operation Market was led by the British 1st Airborne Division, under the ultimate leadership of Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, he said. Junior officers from the Canadian armed forces augmented the 1st British Airborne Division because of the many junior-officer casualties the British had suffered in the war up to that time, the general said.

Several thousand paratroopers and soldiers in gliders from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division and 82nd Airborne Division, along with Poland's 1st Independent Parachute Brigade, participated in the operation.



Army Chaplain (Capt.) Russell Woody; World War II veteran Bob Lucas of Middle, Tenn.; and Jeanne Wood, an Honor Flight guardian, pose with a commemorative wreath they placed during the Operation Market Garden and Battle of Angaur 75th Anniversary Commemoration at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, Sept. 17, 2019.



David Lowhorn, a World War II veteran from Middle, Tenn., Dutch Air Commodore Paul Herber, and Fred Kasper, an Honor Flight

(continued...)



"They conducted their airborne infiltration more than 60 miles behind enemy lines without any support," Schwartz said, enabled by the Dutch resistance, who played a key role in the intelligence preparation and the actual execution of Operation Market Garden.

The paratroopers captured several key points in the Netherlands, including those in Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Arnhem, to allow for the eventual advance of the 30th British Corps during the follow-on operation, code-named "Operation Garden."

"We can't ever forget the sacrifices and the leadership that was demonstrated by those that have served before us."

Maj. Gen. Mark C. Schwartz, special assistant in the Office of the Director of the Army Staff

Schwartz said British armor and mechanized forces were to link up with the paratroopers and push through across the Rhine River.

"Despite early successes, there was a lack of understanding and appreciation for the two Panzer Divisions that were actually garrisoned and arrayed around these key bridge crossings," Schwartz said. *"With the combination of bad weather that slowed reinforcements to include the deployment of the Polish Airborne Brigade, the hold on the corridor and the key bridge crossings weakened."*

Ultimately, Schwartz said, Allied forces had to withdraw. They suffered as many as 13,000 casualties. *"This was a very bold operation, but it ultimately did fail, leaving the Allies to find another way through Germany's western defenses — the Siegfried Line, as it is well known,"* Schwartz said.

Schwartz said that even after 75 years, it's still important to remember the sacrifices of past service members and their battles.



Multiple World War II veterans, along with military representatives from the Allied nations that participated in Operation Market Garden, placed commemorative wreaths during the Operation Market Garden and Battle of Angaur 75th Anniversary Commemoration at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, Sept. 17, 2019.

"We can't ever forget the sacrifices and the leadership that was demonstrated by those that have served before us," Schwartz said, adding that Americans and service members of today must *"take time to reflect on the sacrifices, the leadership and the service of those that have come before us."*

"They are a great example of what Americans should strive to be with every generation that has come forward from the greatest generation of World War II," he said.

Source:



They Were Young....



And Brave....



And Paratroopers.



And All The Way!



"To solidify space as a warfighting domain...."

Spacecom Built for Today's Strategic Environment

Sept. 27, 2019 | By C. Todd Lopez | Source: DoD

The U.S. Space Command that activated last month is quite different from the U.S. Space Command that stood up when Ronald Reagan was president, Spacecom's commander said. Spacecom's earlier incarnation started in 1985, when the United States was still involved in the Cold War. In 2002, it was shuttered and folded into U.S. Strategic Command.

During a presentation in Washington today sponsored by the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, Air Force Gen. John W. Raymond, the Spacecom commander, explained some of the ways the new command will be different from the old. One difference is scope, Raymond said, noting that today's Spacecom is a geographic combatant command.



"The last combatant command was a functional combatant command," he said. "This combatant command has an area of responsibility that's 100 km above mean sea level, globally, and higher. We did that to solidify space as a warfighting domain and to allow us to have a clear, tighter partnership with the other geographic combatant commands and other combatant commands that we have to operate with."

The new Spacecom will work much closer with partners — not just with American partners, but with other nations as well. One of Spacecom's operational components is the Combined Force Space Component Command, Raymond said. "Combined" applies to an organization involving partnerships with foreign allies, as compared to a "joint" command, for which the partnerships that are limited to U.S. military services.

"Based on the Five Eyes order being releasable, we now have partners that have signed up to it," the general said. "We now have a combined command that is going to provide great advantage for our nation and for our partners."

The United States, along with the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, make up an intelligence partnership called "Five Eyes." The U.K. was the first of those U.S. partners to sign on to be part of the U.S.-led Operation Olympic Defender, which started in 2013 as an effort to deter hostile actions in space.

"If you look at the mission statement of the command, we are to protect U.S. and as directed, partner satellites," the general said. "A couple months ago, we came to an agreement with the intelligence community. Today we operate on what we call a unity-of-effort basis."

Under that agreement, he said, during times of a heightened state of readiness in which decisions must be made quickly, Spacecom will make those decisions. "The intelligence community will take direction from the U.S. Space Command commander to protect and defend our nation's critical capabilities," he said. "In higher states of conflict, we'll work tighter and they will take direction, so we can make sure we can ... defend the capabilities that we rely so importantly on."

While a U.S. Space Force has not been established, Raymond said, he remains confident that Congress will do so.

"We are very hopeful that ... we will get a sixth branch of the armed forces that will be a Space Force," he said. "It's a national imperative that we do this. U.S. Space Command will only be as good as the capabilities that a Space Force will provide."



Commander in Chief announces plans for a "space force".



"I'm one of the smartest people anywhere in the world — it's true!"

Early On The Commander in Chief, Then Candidate, Gave Us Reason To Feel Confident In And Safe With His Future Handling Of All Things Nuclear



Commander in Chief speaks about nuclear power, Sun City, SC

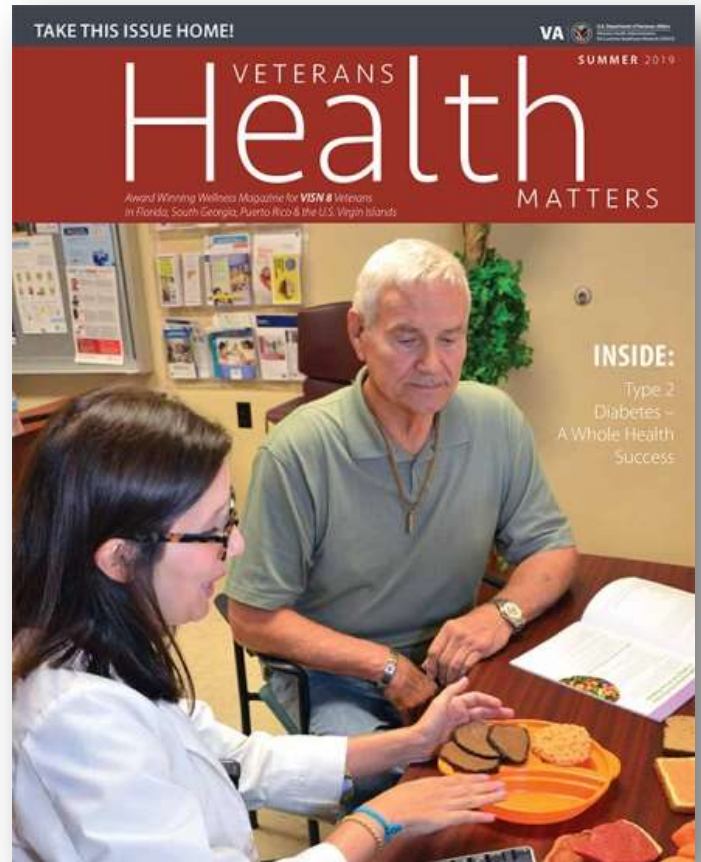
"Look, having nuclear — my uncle was a great professor and scientist and engineer, Dr. John Trump at MIT; good genes, very good genes, OK, very smart, the Wharton School of Finance, very good, very smart — you know, if you're a conservative Republican, if I were a liberal, if, like, OK, if I ran as a liberal Democrat, they would say I'm one of the smartest people anywhere in the world — it's true! — but when you're a conservative Republican they try — oh, do they do a number — that's why I always start off: Went to Wharton, was a good student, went there, went there, did this, built a fortune — you know I have to give my like credentials all the time, because we're a little disadvantaged — but you look at the nuclear deal, the thing that really bothers me — it would have been so easy, and it's not as important as these lives are — nuclear is so powerful; my uncle explained that to me many, many years ago, the power and that was 35 years ago; he would explain the power of what's going to happen and he was right, who would have thought? — but when you look at what's going on with the four prisoners — now it used to be three, now it's four — but when it was three and even now, I would have said it's all in the messenger; fellas, and it is fellas because, you know, they don't, they haven't figured that the women are smarter right now than the men, so, you know, it's gonna take them about another 150 years — but the Persians are great negotiators, the Iranians are great negotiators, so, and they, they just killed, they just killed us, this is horrible."

Watch video of the Commander's remarks from when as presidential candidate he appeared at Sun City's Magnolia Hall in South Carolina to deliver this noontime speech.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Elhyo-_fROE

[Sent in by a retired LTC, 82nd Airborne Division]

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04/12/2019 Members of the Army Golden Knights parachute team prepare to jump into downtown Louisville, Ky., 4/13/19, during the Thunder Over Louisville air show.



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / Nov. – Dec. 2019 – Issue 89

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XUAN LOC

Republic of South Vietnam

June 29, 1966

My personal "Day of Infamy" or just "Coming of Age"?
(Does it really matter in any case?)

By Gregg Lyell

A/2/503, 1966-1967

Introduction to this scholarly short tome on a piece of history most in the world do not know about and if they did know about would not care about.

This is just one of many such small skirmishes or small battles that went on in Viet Nam with the various military groups but all need to be remembered and the people sitting back here on their asses and talking shit about the military need to realize it is because we fought those small battles so they could sit there and bad mouth us and all military in general.

This small article is dedicated to the men and women of that Armed Forces that have fought for our country, both living, dead and in the future to come.



Gregg

It will show what I remember of one small battle where we were out gunned and outnumbered but we held the ground and took the day, although I cannot say what it accomplished for us.

As the famous person said, "It is not ours to reason why, it is ours to do or die". Maybe I got it right but you get the point.

As I said I will tell you what I remember from the time we jumped off the choppers until the next few days after the battle. Now I have to admit that I do not know if 20+ men against over 800 enemy counts as a "battle" but I have to say to me it seemed like it. Keep in mind this was strictly "close quarter combat" with no hand to hand fighting as we did keep them off us. But as the saying goes, we could of "reach out and touched someone" and not someone we loved, unless you had a strange sense of love.

I would like to say here as well that I have no hate or anger towards the Vietnamese then or the ones now that are not old enough to have a clue to what the war was about. I was doing a job assigned to me to kill the fuckers and he was doing a job to do the same for me and most likely I was wrong to be there but that was not my call.

I have met several Vietnamese over the years and no one ever treated me bad or called me "baby killer" or worse. Many of them thanked me for trying to help them stay a free country. And finally here since I am sure I am pissing people off let me top it off with this sure to piss you off really good.

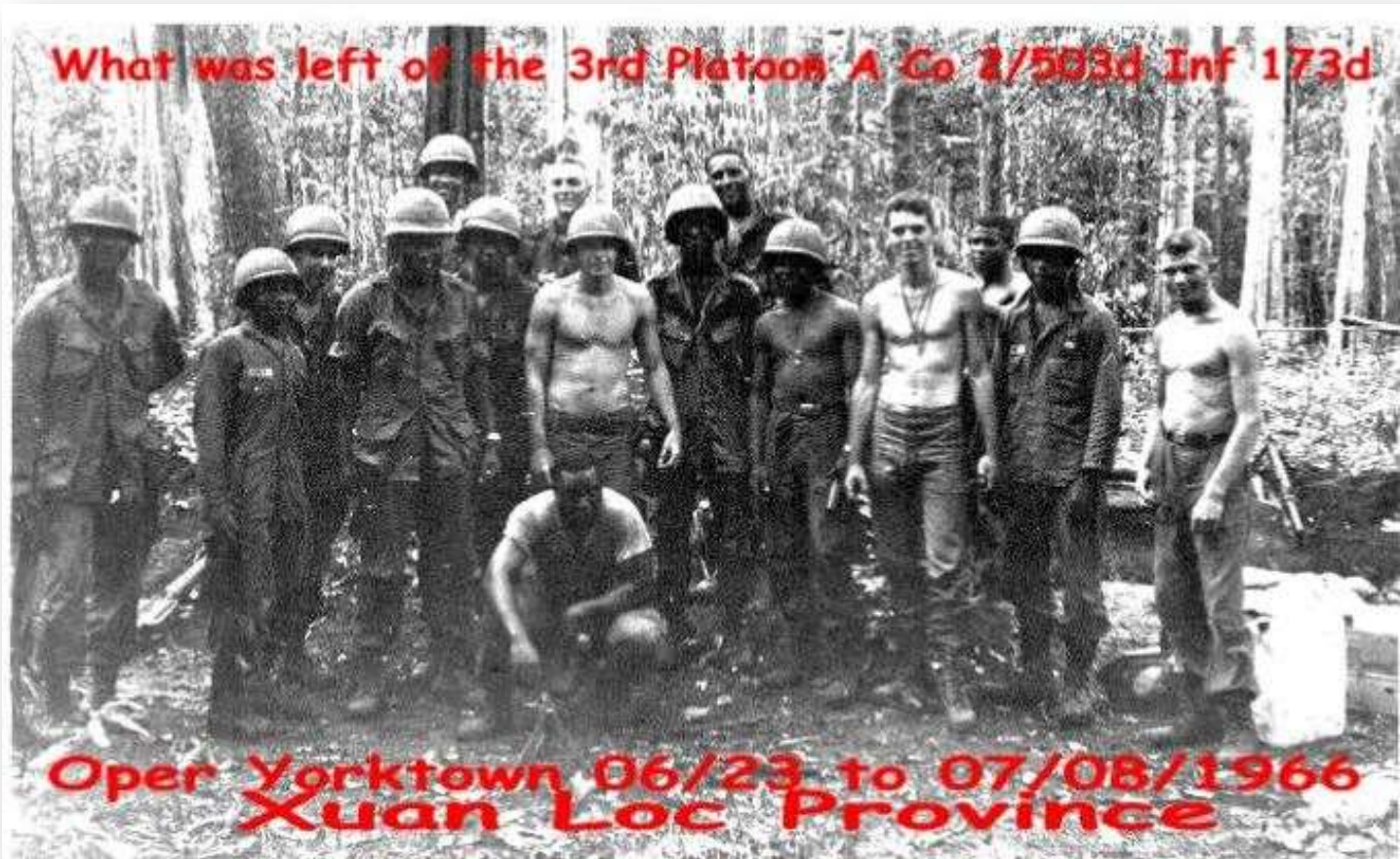
Remember good old Jane Fonda? All of you hate her but I think you are wrong in the respect that what we were fighting for was her right to say and do what she did, even if you disagree with me. I may not have liked it but that is life and that is one thing we fought and fight for when in the Army, Navy, Marines, Airforce or any of the Armed Services.

I have heard it said that "what does not kill you makes you stronger". Does anyone really believe that drivel? We soldiers that were there and all soldiers in combat should go for Mr. Universe and win if that was/is the case.

Ok on with my version of June 29, 1966 in that glorious sun drenched country of South Vietnam.

(continued....)





(Photo from Doc Bob Beaton collection)

We got up that morning and ate whatever it was we had for breakfast that day and eventually got on the choppers to head who knew where. We never really knew where we were going but every fucking barber at the barber shop always knew. Just go get a haircut and have them massage your shoulders as they did and ask them. That kind of surprised me a bit. So much for security I guess.



The "Snakepit" at Bien Hoa AFB where many missions first began for men of the 2/503d.

(Photo by Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503)

If I remember correctly we were already somewhere in the bush and this was an extension of the major operation going on. We had lost people for the previous few days and we were down on the number of men we for that little tea party that day.

I remember the ride and cannot honestly say how long it was as I really did not think about the time on the choppers. I was more concerned with getting my balls blown off from someone taking a lucky shot at the helicopter. I never sat on my helmet as I figured that if I did then some asshole down there would wing a .50 cal up my way and rip more than my balls off!

I remember that we started to land at one LZ but was about knee deep to a giraffe in water so we lifted off and went somewhere else. Maybe the pilot was lost, who knows? I do know that about a half hour later I would not have cared if he landed me on the far side of the moon as that would have been much safer for my/our health!

Ok, we are on the ground now and everyone is getting lined up ready to take off to wherever we were going....

(continued....)



....As far as I knew it was to be another rather boring hump in the boonies and then back home to a shower and a world class dinner! However, I remember several things that happened in the space of a few minutes that let me know we were no *"longer in Kansas, Dorothy."*

The first strange thing that I saw off to my left side, was a pile of shit with steam still coming off it. So I guess some villager had just "pinched off a loaf" and took off when he heard us land. Hell, I am sure anyone within a mile heard us as well. We were never the quietist people in the bush.

The second strange thing was I heard Vietnamese voices off to my left and I thought the following: (Now keep in mind I was in country for 2 months at the time, and still dumb as a rock, I thought, *"well hell, the South Vietnamese army is here with us on this walk in the park"*. Not very smart to say the least but that is what my first thought was. After all we never knew the whole "skinny" most of the time one didn't what we were doing or doing it with. I do know that if there was a way we could screw it up we would or someone would screw it up for us.

Guys, do you remember when we would hump to a location to go back to Bien Hoa and who do we meet at the LZ? The frigging "Good Humor" man with his ice cream in place of a ride home!! Diddled again by someone in Military Intelligence that I am sure did not have as much intelligence as my 6-year-old love of my life, Hassan, my grandson.

The only time I knew that for sure or at least 99% sure what was going on, was when I was with a honey in a "short time house" helping to build good Vietnamese/American relationships ☺. And then she could have been VC, NVA or who knows what as I am/was an "equal opportunity ambassador for good American relationships!" But she/they never tried to kill me so I can't whine about that. Maybe they overcharged me a bit but what the hell, it was not all that much in any case and worth the cost!

My third thought was, when the first round went over my head, *"that stupid fucking Vietnamese soldier is shooting at us and he must think we were the bad guys"*. Now it really pissed me off that someone could not tell an American soldier from a Vietnamese person. However, the fact was they did know the difference and therefore the welcoming rounds sent our way. And they were not saying *"GOOOOOD Morning, Vietnam!"* More like, *"Gooooood morning Vietnam and here is your one-way ticket back to wherever you came from, you invading pricks!"*

So now we are all scrambling to make some kind of defensive perimeter. Talk about a circle jerk will you? Most of us that were new had no clue and it seems

many of the ones that had been there were lost and clueless as well.

We were in an area with trees so I found the largest one I could find and it looked like a giant Redwood from California. I just knew I was safe from anything but a tank round behind it but that is what I get for thinking. (After the battle I looked at the remains of my Redwood tree and it was actually the size of a sapling! Maybe 3" in diameter and shot to shit after the party we had).

So we get a perimeter set up and it seems it is the Marquis shape rather than a round shape. I found out when looking around, when I had the time and balls to do so, that had it been a round perimeter we would have been bunking with the NVA. The perimeter was maybe 20' wide where I was and know I could see the heels of the trooper behind me facing me and we were not far apart at all.

As you can imagine there was a lot of yelling and screaming now and the shit really hit the fan. The NVA figured out we were there and we figured out they were there and the party was on. I could hear several NCO's yelling and telling us what to do but I had no intention of leaving my Redwood to do anything and most everyone else I could see was of the same mind.

I knew Sgt Morris was taking his radio operator with him to check out what was going on. I found later when I went to hospital to see him that he had over 37 various types of holes in him and 7 rounds through his upper chest from a single burst. He told me his radio man was hit in the throat by what looked like a solid stream of lead. I credit him with keeping



all of us alive and getting out of that place and will forever be grateful to him and his memory.

Ok, now there is some asshole that wants to pick on me personally about 40 or so feet in front me. Why he wanted to pick on me I do not know but he was serious about making me about a pound heavier with lead....

(continued....)



....He was behind what looked like a small palm plant/tree with big leaves. He would push them aside and blast away at me and I would cower behind my Redwood and wait until he was done and then I would poke my head around my tree and blast at him. This went on for about 30 minutes or more.

By now I was almost past the scared part of the day and was getting to the pissed off part of the day. Did I tell you there was a lot of water there as well and we had to hold our heads up so we did not drown? My neck was starting to hurt so I knew I had to do something to get some relief. So after another blast from him I just waited to see what he would do if I did not reply with my fire. It must have confused him that I did not answer so he pushed the palm leaf out of the way and I could see him from the waist up now. I let him have the whole magazine in the chest.

Now people can believe this or not but I swear the hole in his chest was about the size of a soccer ball for just an instant and I could see clear through him. (The M16 was a great weapon as far I could tell.) So now that duel was over and I could look for bigger fish to fry, so to speak, and try not to get fried myself!

It seems one of the machine gunners on the opposing team had an area he was firing using firing stakes, more or less like we would. I would get the .50cal rounds going just in front of me and throwing dirt and sticks on me and he would go over my head and up the right hand side of me and the on the left side of me. His fire dug a small trench on both sides of me and somehow behind me between me and the trooper directly behind me. (I had the funny thought or not so funny if you were the trooper behind me and that was if he got hit it would most likely be right up the ass and that would have been the original "pain in the ass".) I might add here that the top to my Redwood did not withstand much of the .50cal and any little shade I had was long gone by the end of the 8-hour battle, give or take an hour I guess.

As I said the .50cal seemed my next logical choice to go after as he was doing his best to dust my ass. So I put all the fire I can to where I thought he was. There were a couple troopers near me and I think we all had the same idea. So we hosed the area where the fire was coming from.

All of sudden there was what looked like a solid blinding wall of fire across the front of us. You could almost see a sheet of steel going from our right to our left. I have no idea who they were shooting at but it was not us in the end of the perimeter so I was happy. Then a few minutes after that burst of fire we see several NVA pick up the .50cal and head in the direction

they had just fired! It amazed me so much I did not fire at them but I hope someone did.

Another problem was the firing was so hot and heavy we had the rounds cooking off and jamming in the barrel if the M16's. Of course, most of us had no cleaning rod to clear the blocked round (you know only wussies carry the cleaning rod. The rest of us Macho guys never have jams! How did that work out for us? Not too fucking well, to say the least) and we had to wait while one was handed around or thrown to us that needed it. And not being able to fire back in the middle of a firefight is a sobering moment and all you can do is try to remember some of the Bible verses you learned as a kid and promise God again for the ten thousandth time there that if you let me survive I promise to go to church, be a preacher, become a Missionary or just anything you can for Him.

I can just imagine how many times God has heard that in the middle of a firefight and Him knowing we were full of shit and just scared shitless. (Now that does not make a lot of sense does it? How can you be full of shit and scared shitless at the same time? Oh well, shit happens I guess but you get the point!).

I can tell you I was a real John Wayne. I did not spare any rounds when it came to doing my best to kill the asshole trying to kill me. Why use a couple of rounds when you can use 20? Of course I came very close to regretting that over the course of the battle as ammo was very low and the end of the party could have turned out differently had the bad guys just kept after us.

Now the .50 caliber machine gun had moved and it was more person to person with us rather than person to .50cal. I was looking down to my left to see how Richard Hido was doing. He was one of the friends I had made there and we had great plans to build a submarine with honey-comb type material when we got home free and in one piece. Well that never happened.



Richard Hido, KIA 6/29/66

(continued....)



I am trying to yell at Richard to see how he is doing and I hear a “whoosh” and I wonder what the fuck that was. The next instant Richard was lifted about three feet off the ground and torn in half by a RPG. NOW I knew we were in deep shit and if I hadn’t taken the situation seriously enough to that point in time, I now did so.

I saw several other RPG rounds come our way and tear up the trees, ground and people.

They then started with the mortars and I when I saw the fucking “kitchen sink” come flying our way, I knew we were in very deep “do do” and that the situation was like trying to drain the swamp full of alligators otherwise known as the family Alligatoridae. No wonder alligators are so nasty with a family name like that? (In case you are wondering I am not that smart to know the family by name of anything but mine, but ain’t Google a great tool?)

Our man with the M79 could not do much good as they were so close the round may well have dropped on us. They enemy was not more than 40 feet or so in front of me and maybe to the ones behind me about 75 feet or less. We were the proverbial “fish in the barrel” there. We were the targets in a shooting gallery to be sure. I am a bit surprised that “Mr. Victor Charles” was trying to use mortars as he would have had the same problem we did with the M79. *But “nothing ventured, nothing gained”* as they say.

Now someone decided to call in an airstrike which was a really good idea! Actually it would have been a good idea about three hours earlier, truth be told. So the radio operator called in the airstrike and let me tell you I was rooting for them.

After sometime we hear the jets coming and I wanted to jump up and do a jig or something to celebrate the ass kicking the NVA was fixing to get now. Of course jumping more than 2” off the ground was not a good idea at that part of the day and the notion was a fleeting one. A better idea was to get about 2” below the ground but you would have needed a snorkel to do that.

I was one “Happy Camper” so to speak. So here come the jets, wait for it, here they come, wait, wait, roaring in and there go the jets off to Bumfuck, Egypt or the far side of the moon or who knows where. But they sure as shit did not come to say hi to us. They did not drop a bomb as we were too close to the enemy and they would have annihilated us as well. Well, all I can say is I am glad I did not get up and do the jig I wanted to do!

The least they could have done was to give Charley the finger or something. It would have made me feel a bit better. They used to fly over us and we could wave

to the pilots so I know they could give the VC the finger at least.

It would not have helped us win the battle one bit but it would have made me feel better and I could have used a little cheering up about then. I never said I was all there upstairs did I? Maybe I should see the VA about compensation for being an idiot as well. Maybe I can say the war caused that?

The next time I wanted to get up was about half way through the battle I had to take a leak. Now being scared shitless I had nothing to dump but I did have to piss. I wondered for about a Nano second if I could just jump up and ask the other side if we could act like gentleman and stop for a minute, so I could piss. But that idea faded in about one hundredth of a second and I just pissed my pants. I am not ashamed of telling that and I am just glad I did not have to take a dump as lying in shitty drawers would have what they call a “shitty deal” and very uncomfortable not to mention smelly for 8 to 10 hours.

So now the NVA must realize we are not going to take our ass kicking lightly or without a fight. So after a short lull in the fighting and what do we hear? Fucking bugles with the NVA screaming “*today you die, GI*” and all they can hear is “*Fuck you, Charlie*” from us. I am sure they made at least three attempts to overrun our position but we beat them back.

They never did try to come at us from my front but the rear which we found later where they had their basecamp and defensive trenches dug. (Yeah, we walked into a Company size or larger base camp. Someone in intelligence was really bad that day and I guess that is why they say Military Intelligence is anything but that). The worse thing about the charges coming behind me is expecting to take a round up the ass and I was not looking forward to that at all.



Bob “Doc” Beaton and his fellow medics tend to wounded on 6/29/66.

(continued....)



Sometime during the day, the radio operator had his radio shot off his back which was no good for him or us in general. One Sgt that was due to retire was hit four times with the .50cal-one in both legs and once in each arm. I heard he retired from the military hospital back home after spending a couple of years there.

During the battle when the bugles were blowing, they would get very quiet on their side and were listening for sounds from us and then they would concentrate their fire there. It seems one of the Sgts was shot in the ass, through the cheeks and he could not shut up. I believe it was Sgt X. He kept yelling *"they're coming after me, help me"*.

When you would look to see what the fuck he was talking about there was no one there. Every time he screams this, the NVA would open up on his voice. Someone told him if the NVA did not get him they would shoot him if he did not shut his fucking mouth. He was near me as well and I was all for shooting him if he did not shut up.

Come to find out what was after him was not the NVA, Boogiemans or an alien or whoever we were fighting, but crabs that were in the water. Remember, I told you the water was there? Well apparently the crabs were as well and they were chasing the blood in the water. It is kind of funny now but then it was not too funny.

I really don't believe any of us were cowards as we had the balls to go there and fight but some of us could have acted a bit more professional.

One soldier came crawling by me and he had been shot in both shoulders and had no weapon. I asked him where it was and he said he left it and was not fighting anymore. He sat by a big tree for the rest of the battle. Another soldier I knew was shot in the shoulder and then a bullet came down the side of his rifle and split his fingers and he could not do anything more.

I also heard about one soldier that dug a small hole to try and get out of sight of the enemy, which was a very good idea I would say and he did something and someone jumped into his hole and would not get out. Another soldier had an ongoing battle with a sniper in a tree as well.

I am sure there was many small incidents that day that would qualify as heroic and/or cowardly but we were just doing a job and the main job was to stay alive and then tell people we were fighting for the good old U S of A. As I said at the beginning of this short story I don't know really what we fighting for besides to keep each other alive but that was our job and we did it to the best of our ability.

Eventually after about all day the NVA just left. I suppose they had no idea how close they came to

wiping us out that day. Maybe they knew reinforcements were coming in and it was best to take their losses and live to fight another day, and I was all for that.



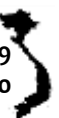
Dustoff of Alpha's dead and wounded on June 29, 1966, after the battle at Xuan Loc. (Photo by Jack Ribera, A/2/503)

I guess they don't have Motivational speakers on the Power of Positive Thinking over there! I was down to two magazines left and that would have been it for me. Everyone was very low on ammo and I don't know what others were thinking but I felt that if I could have kicked my ass that day for even considering enlisting and going to Nam, I would have.



Wounded troopers of A/2/503 arrive field aid station after battle at Xuan Loc. (Photo by Jack Ribera, A/2/503)

(continued....)



In all honesty and jokes aside it was a day I was proud of and I would do it all over again. To be able to go to war and to come out ahead of the game was something I wanted to see if I could do from the time I used to talk to my dad about his experiences.

As Siddhartha told the Buddha after listening to him describe Enlightenment, He was wrong. No one can tell you what the taste of ice cream is, no one can tell what a food tastes like. How can someone tell you how the experience of your first woman will be or how you will experience your first child or anything you have to experience in this life? It has to be done by yourself and then you will know. How one person attains Enlightenment or learns about life is different for each person and others can only try to tell you what they know and learned but we all learn on our own. We can be shown a way but cannot be told about life.

We all have to experience it for ourselves and that is the same with war. My war experiences are different than the other person and all I can do is tell another person what I experienced and that will not be how it will be for them.

What I found out is that I can kill the other man but when it comes to true heroism I am not cut out for it or was never really pressed to be a hero. I can remember one operation in May '66 when a soldier from our outfit was shot and laid in an opening and died as no one could or would try to go get him. He was a buddy, and I remember he was always telling me about his being a Matador and showed me photos of his Suit of Lights and that San Miguel De Allende (sic) in Mexico was the best place to go in Mexico and live. I will never get there most likely our buddy died for a reason or no reason, you decide.

Maybe he died instantly when shot, I don't know and I don't think so, and I will never know, but I do know that I was not a hero and maybe even a coward that day. Someone should have run to get him but no one did. We took his body back and booby trapped a dead VC and moved on.

I like to think I have done things to make up for that day but I really don't know if I have or not. But I have made peace with myself over that incident and moved on with life. Walter seemed like a good man but a lot of good men died in that war and that is way war goes. As I always felt it was my duty as an American to protect America and I wanted to go to Vietnam and I wanted to see if I could take the stress and problems associated with it.

I have to admit I was a bit surprised that we did not stay until the war was over as my dad and mom did. I was glad to get home again of course but in a way that

no one that has not been there can understand, I missed it as well.

Maybe I have a weird system but unlike many others that were there, I had no problems coming home or adjusting to being back home. No flashbacks to talk about, no PTSD, no serious problems with people and so on. I have always thought was a crutch for many soldiers for whatever reason they have for being like that.

What I did have was the attitude that no one could kill me after going through Nam and it ended me in prison for a total of 10.5 years in two separate instances. But that was my doing and I can blame that on no one but myself and stupidity or it was a lesson I needed to learn. We all learn in different ways and methods I guess about life, and prison was one for me, drugs for others and so on.

I never felt the Army or the government owed me anything but I am glad that what apparently they did cause me, they are paying for. I am 60% disabled with Type2 diabetes, ED and Neuropathy on both legs and feet and moderate to severe back damage, from going down a hill in Song Be, and Tinnitus that will not go away. But they are paying something on it so I cannot whine too much about it. Just glad I came home in one piece with most parts of me working.

That is about the end of my story of what I remember of Xuan Loc. It was ok to start with and went from bad to total shit before it was over. That is what we do or did then as *"it is what it is"*

I do not know how many NVA we killed that day but they say we found a well with 25 dead men in it and that they had been executed rather than to carry the wounded with them. They also said that when we would see a small tiny back flag in the ground that was a burial site of someone or some of the enemy. Don't know if it is true or not.



General Westmoreland with Sky Soldiers in the field in 1966, troopers, date and location unknown. (Bob Beaton photo)

(continued....)



Sgt Morris told me that he heard General Westmoreland greeted us coming back from the op but I do not really remember that. It is possible as I remember him meeting us as we came off one operation but I cannot say it was just after Xuan Loc. I do not know if we went back to Bien Hoa or went on other actions after that.

I used to have a photo of the area after the battle and it looked just like some of the photos you see of the Civil War where the trees were stripped bare of leaves.

So there is not much more I can say about that day. We went onto other battles both large and small and then there was Dak To, which was going on just as I was ready to come back home. When it got really bad there some of us wanted to go out and help but they would not let us as we were within 30 days of going home.

It is funny to me that a small battle that we had in Xuan Loc rates right up there with Hill 875, Hamburger Hill, the A Shau Valley and others that seemed larger. But to me and most likely everyone that has been in combat, Xuan Loc was just as deadly and it will always be one we remember as the other soldiers in other battles remember theirs.

Was Xuan Loc as big a deal as Hill 875? Yes, to me it was. Was it as bad as the Marines at Khe San, Iwo Jima, D Day? You bet your ass it was.

I wish to thank Colonel Jack Kelly for the chance to tell my story of that day in a slightly different way than maybe he wants for the documentary but like I mentioned above we all experience things differently and tell them differently.



I want to thank all the men alive and dead that were there that day as we all did what we could to get out of that place in one piece. The song "We gotta get out of

this place" is a good reminder of the war and the song "Lightning Strikes" which was a good one at the time and was played at the canteen we had at Bien Hoa.

I wish to again say that Sgt Morris was a man among men and did what he had to do to help us get out of the battle. When I saw him the year before he died he told me that I would not have wanted to serve under him after he became a SGM because he became a real hard ass. I guess it goes with the territory. But the man was a friend and was willing to give his life for us so what else can you ask of someone? I just wish I had gone to see him a few more times but that is life.

To all the "Clem Green's" left out there I say "Welcome Home", a bit late but better late than never, and keep on humping. May we meet again in the "great by and by" as the song goes and chat and then move onto whatever it is we move onto at that point in our history.

Gregg Lyell
Sierra Leone, West Africa
March 2016

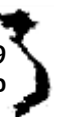
Clem Green was "A" Company 2/503d Company Commander Capt. Jack Kelley's term used to describe the average, every day, mythical, hardworking and downtrodden paratrooper infantryman who bore the brunt of every battle and the mistakes of leadership, and served as an example of what to do and what not to do by all. A sign posted near the entrance to "A" Company at the 2/503d's Camp Zinn, Clem proudly announced to all visitors: "Welcome to Alpha Company -- Home of Clem Green".
 Capt. Bill Vose, A/2/503



The Troopers We Lost on June 29, 1966 During The Battle at Xuan Loc

Malcolm Crayton Berry
 Robert Michael Bowman
 Frederic William Fritts
 Richard Lee Hido
 Albert Raymond Potter
 Leslie R. Smith

John Joseph Berthel
 Jesse Clarence Felder
 Frank Graves
 Tommy Roy Jones
 Francis George Stevens
 Paul Joseph Surette



Hometown newspaper report, November 1969.
When we remember one, we remember all.

Fiancé, sister recall youth killed in action in Vietnam

By MARK MONDAY

"Vietnam can go on forever now," Janet D. Kinnamon, 17, of 4212 N. 49th Drive, cried yesterday. "They can shoot and kill and kill. I've lost my interest."

Miss Kinnamon's fiancé, Army Pfc. Roy Allen Epperson, 19, was reported killed in action in Vietnam.

Miss Kinnamon and Roy Epperson's sister, Mrs. H.W. Sharp, sat consoling each other at Mrs. Sharp's home, 4121 N. 48th Drive, where Pfc. Epperson resided. *"He was a little nervous about going,"* said Mrs. Sharp, *"but it was duty."* Pfc. Epperson had been in Vietnam almost two months. *"He didn't feel he was coming back, he told me so,"* said Miss Kinnamon of her fiancé, who enlisted in the Army last year after attending Alhambra High.



"He died Saturday," Martha Sharp said calmly, recounting what the Army had told her of her brother's death. *"He was with the 173rd Airborne Division (A/2/503) at Bon Son. He and another boy were out in the field scouting. One of them stepped on a mine. They both died. We were told Monday."*

"He'll be buried at Tecumseh, Okla., where my mother is."

Miss Kinnamon spoke of how proud her fiancé had been of his country and his uniform, of how he wrote after arriving in Vietnam Oct. 12 and how *"he loved jumping (parachuting). He didn't like orders. But he liked the Army."*

She told of how she and her fiancé would have been married next November.

"He was willing to fight and die to make this a peaceful country, free of Communists. The hippies, they can smoke their pot, lie around on their filthy mattresses, burn their draft cards and call it freedom. But if and when the Communists take over this country, they'll have to get out and work just as much as anyone else."

"I'm not against this war," Mrs. Sharp said. *"I would send my own boys if they were old enough."*

"If Roy could have known what was ahead of him, he'd still have gone to war."

Our Families and Loved Ones

"They can shoot and kill and kill. I've lost my interest," said Miss Kinnamon, Roy Epperson's young fiancé upon learning of his death in Vietnam. After reading her anguished and unabashed comments I thought, *yes, I understand you.*

For some of us, as old survivors of that debacle, it can sometimes be easy to focus on our own anguish given us by that war, hurtful feelings which evidently last a lifetime, for some of us. But, when hearing about the torment and suffering experienced by our families and loved ones, perhaps particularly by our fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters, spouses and children, and yes, fiancé's, we can question who was tormented most and suffered the greatest during our time at war?

Our suffering, and those of you who experienced combat first hand as an almost daily diet know this, was mostly a physical form of suffering, altho we were often challenged with the mental stress war produces – quite often, however, that stress might not have shown itself until many years *after* the war, or never for the fortunate few in our ranks.

Each day in our one, two, three or more tours in Vietnam, we generally knew what to expect, what we were facing, and had some minor say in the outcome of challenges and threats confronting us. Yet, for our families and loved ones, they awoke each day to the unknown, to the worry and fear of seeing soldiers walking up to their front door, and knowing what that meant. Every day during our tours they awoke to this.

As the first born to my father and bearing his name, I know, or at least I think I know, our war tormented him. He feared for the safety of his son, as a father might, as countless fathers and mothers of our men were equally tormented. He dealt with his fear by increasing the intake and regularity of his liquor. And it was just a few years after his son survived that war, his heart did not, giving out on him at the young age of 62. The man was but another victim of our war, I believe that.

Our sons have grown beyond the time they would be useful in anyone's army, and I'm good with that – I'm okay without having to live with the daily torment of a parent with a son or daughter in combat.

We have friends here in Florida whose three sons and daughter we watched growing up across the street. One of their sons is now an Army Ranger serving in Afghanistan. We think of him often, almost as much as we think of his parents.

**Lew "Smitty" Smith, son of Don
HHC/2/503, '65/'66**



DOD Identifies Army Casualty

Aug. 31, 2019

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

Sgt. 1st Class **Dustin B. Ard**, 31, from Hyde Park, Utah, died Aug. 29, 2019, as a result of wounds sustained while engaged in combat operations in Zabul Province, Afghanistan. The incident is under investigation.



Ard was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

For more information regarding Sgt. 1st Class Ard, 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

Anthony D. "Tony" Lopez F Co., 503rd PRCT, Passes

September 2019

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of **Anthony Duane Lopez** (Denver, Colorado), who passed away on September 5, 2019, at the age of 94, leaving to mourn family and friends.

He was loved and cherished by many people including : his children, Leroy, Thomas, Steve, Flora and Yolonda; his daughters-in-law, Cathie Lopez and Sharon Dominguez-Lopez. He was also cherished by numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

It was reported Tony was the last surviving member of F Company, 503rd PRCT from WWII in the Pacific Theater.



Valor Awards of Men of the 2/503d RVN



Gentlemen & Surviving Family Members, hello:

We've begun the process of producing a publication honoring as many of our men as possible who served with our battalion in Vietnam and who are recipients of the **Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star w/V Device or Army Commendation Medal w/V Device** in recognition of their heroic acts during combat with the 2/503d RVN.

We will publish the highest valor award citation of each trooper, or the valor award specified by recipients, who were on the roster of the 2/503d or received a valor award while attached to our battalion for their acts while in combat with our battalion. If citations cannot be obtained, where possible, we will list the names of 2/503 troopers and the valor award they earned.

If you are the recipient of one of these valor awards while on the roster of or attached to the 2/503d in Vietnam, please email a copy of the official Army citation, and a VN era or current photo of yourself, to rto173@att.net Also, if you are in possession of a valor citation of a 2/503 buddy, please send that in too.

Once we believe we've compiled all the valor award citations and photos possible, we will email this document to you and all Sky Soldiers on our list for your keeping. Also, it will be provided to the 173d Association, the University of Florida's Military Digital Library, and the 503rd PRCT Historical Battalion websites for their permanent posting.

The next two pages include a sample of how this publication may appear, and it is produced for the purpose of creating a consolidated historical record for our men, their families and descendants, as well as researchers and educators. Kindly forward this to your 2/503 buddies.

We understand countless men of our battalion, particularly many of those who lost their lives, were never formally recognized for their heroic acts during combat. But, what we can do is create this lasting document in their honor and in honor of those Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d who were so recognized.

Honor one, honor all.

[Sent in by his friend Mike Marsh, C/2/503]



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Valor Award Recipients Of The 2/503d RVN



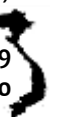
Photo of the hands of SFC Charles B. Morris, A/2/503, holding his Medal of Honor.

This publication will present citations of valor earned by numerous but not necessarily all of the men of the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) who are recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star w/V Device or Army Commendation Medal w/V Device in recognition of their acts of heroism during combat in Vietnam. This will also be published in honor of the countless men who served in the 2/503d in Vietnam, particularly those men who lost their lives, yet were never formally recognized for their heroic acts during combat.

It is because of men like these, men like us are alive today.

Produced by Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d RVN

(continued....)



Valor Award Recipients of the 2/503d RVN

Their extraordinary heroism during the Vietnam War was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon themselves, their units, and the United States Army



Gerald N. Floyd
A/2/503, '69



For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force. Specialist Floyd distinguished himself on 25 March 1969 in the vicinity of Bong Son, Republic of Vietnam. On this day, the second platoon of Company A was pinned down while crossing a rice paddy. Upon hearing the call for a medic, Specialist Floyd rushed approximately 300 meters under intense enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire to the wounded man. Upon reaching the wounded man, who was the team leader for the point element, he was told to check all other members of the point for wounded personnel. Completely disregarding his own personal safety, Specialist Floyd went from man to man checking for wounded and when this was completed, he returned to the wounded team leader and administered first aid. Specialist Floyd removed the wounded to a safe place, then, picked up the team leader's weapon and returned to his position and began to lay down an accurate base of fire causing the enemy to break contact. Specialist Floyd's complete devotion to duty and personal bravery were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

additional ammunition, and again braved the intense hostile fire as he returned to the front lines with it. During the course of action, Specialist Four Gipson maneuvered to the battalion landing zone which was under constant .30 and .50 caliber machine gun fire. With complete disregard for his safety, he dauntlessly moved into the open while securing ammunition for the front lines, and then took up a firing position there. In the closing hour of the five-hour battle, he was mortally wounded by a burst of Viet Cong machine gun fire. Specialist Four Gipson's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Kenneth Max Knudson
A/2/503, '66
(KIA 3/16/66)



Private First Class Knudson distinguished himself on 16 March 1966 while serving as a member of A Company during an attack by a large Viet Cong Force near Phuoc Vinh, Republic of Vietnam. During the ensuing fire fight, the company sustained several casualties from the assaulting waves of Viet Cong. After thirty minutes, word was received that the company's right flank was in grave danger of being overrun due to the numerous casualties received by a hostile .50 caliber machine gun which was positioned at 40 meters to the front. When the order was given to reinforce the right flank platoon, Private First Class Knudson, upon arrival in the threatened area, placed accurate fire on the Viet Cong's positions and killed four insurgents. Because of heavy machine gun fire on the right flank, his fire team was pinned down and sustained casualties. Realizing the existing danger, Private First Class Knudson, with complete disregard for his safety, engaged the hostile emplacement in an attempt to silence it. While performing this heroic act, he was mortally wounded by a burst of machine gun fire. His courageous efforts inspired the remaining comrades to hold their positions and eventually defeated the insurgents. Private First Class Knudson's possession of unimpeachable valor in close combat against a numerically superior Viet Cong Force was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself and his unit, and the United States Army.



Robert Paul Gipson
B/2/503, '66
(KIA 3/16/66)



The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Robert Paul Gipson, Specialist Fourth Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). Specialist Four Gipson distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 16 March 1966 while serving as a member in a company conducting a search and destroy operation in the Republic of Vietnam. During the morning hours, Specialist Four Gipson's company was attacked by a large Viet Cong force employing numerous automatic weapons, small arms, mortars and recoilless rifles. Because of the intensity of the battle, available ammunition supplies were rapidly expended. At this time, Specialist Four Gipson unhesitatingly carried ammunition to the front line platoons. Moving up and down the heavily engaged front lines, he repeatedly exposed himself to intense hostile machine gun fire while resupplying the platoons with vitally needed ammunition. He then made a second trip through the bullet swept area to obtain

(continued...)



2/503 Valor Award Recipients Identified To Date

Thus far, we've compiled official army citations of valor and/or photos for the troopers named below, except as noted:

MOH – Medal of Honor
DSC – Distinguished Service Cross
SS – Silver Star
BSV – Bronze Star w/V Device
ACMV – Army Commendation Medal w/V Device

Thomas W. Aikey, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles A. Bell, B/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
Jan Bobowski, A/2/503, BSV
Patrick Bowe, HHC/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Nathaniel Brown, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
R.L. Les Brownlee, B/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Karl L. Bullard, B/2/503, DSC
Robert B. Carmichael, HHC/2/503, SS (citation needed)
George S. Colson, II, B/2/503, BSV
Michael J. Cosmo, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles R. Crews, A/2/503, BSV
Eugene R. Davis, B/2/503, DSC
Richard Eckert, B/2/503, BSV
Samuel A. Eidson, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Mile Le Roy Ellis, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Frederick W. Fassett, HHC/B/2/503, SS
Gerald N. Floyd, A/2/503, BSV
J.L. Frazier, Sr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Leslie A. Fuller, A/2/503, BSV
Amador B. Garcia, Jr., HHC/2/503, BSV
Pedro L. Garcia, HHC/2/503, SS
Robert P. Gipson, B/2/503, DSC
Michael J. Gladden, B/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert A. Gray, C/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
Steven Haber, C/2/503, BSV
William T. Hagerty, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Philip P. Hayden, C/2/503, DSC (photo needed)
Rudolph Hernandez, B/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Richard E. Hood, Jr., A/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
Ross T. Hulslander, A/2/503, BSV (photo needed)
Vladimir Jakovenko, C/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Donald R. Judd, A/2/503, SS
Harold J. Kaufman, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Michael J. Kiley, A/2/503, SS
Richard N. Kimball, Jr., D/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles Knecht, A/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Kenneth M. Knudson, A/2/503, SS
Rodger M. Koefod, B/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Gregory S. Kowaleski, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Johnny H. Leake, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Robert R. Litwin, A/2/503, DSC
Richard Lock, B/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Carlos J. Lozada, A/2/503, MOH
Gregg P. Lyell, A/2/503, ACMV
William H. Marshall, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)

Martin T. McDonald, HHC/2/503, DSC
Daniel F. McIssac, E/2/503, BSV
Stephen Adam Mika, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
David A. Milton, A/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Willie C. Monroe, A/2/503, BSV
Charles B. Morris, A/2/503, MOH
Timothy J. Murphy, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Daniel L. Negro, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Michael D. O'Connor, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Milton L. Olive, III, B/2/503, MOH
Jerry L. O'Neal, C/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
Charles E. Owens, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
William Palenske, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
Freddie Parks, A/2/503, SS
Alfred J. Paul, III, C/2/503, BSV
Leo A. Pellerin, A/2/503, BSV
Elbert D. Poff, D/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Billy W. Ponder, Sr., C/2/503, DSC (photo needed)
George A. Poor, Jr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles L. Raiford, Jr., C/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Jerry R. Rebits, B/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Eric Ribitsch, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Edward L. Richardson, A/2/503, ACMV (citation needed)
James H. Robinson, B/2/503, ACMV
James P. Rogan, B/2/503, DSC
William A. Ross, D/2/503, BSV
Jack Schimpf, B/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Dale A. Schram, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
James C. Schultz, A/2/503, BSV
Peter J. Schutz, A/2/503, SS, (photo/citation needed)
John W. Searcy, HHC/2/503, BSV
Frederick L. Shipman, D/Recon/2/503, SS
Donald L. Smith, Jr., HHC/2/503, BSV
Lewis B. Smith, D/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles H. Snow, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
John R. Stalter, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Johnson A. Steidler, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert L. Steven, Jr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert Sweeney, C/2/503, BSV
Truman R. Thomas, HHC/2/503, BSV
John R. Tighe, B/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Robert Toporek, B/2/503, BSV
William J. Tucker, A/2/503, BSV (photo/citation needed)
William C. Vose, BSV, A/HHC/2/503
Conrad N. Walker, 2/503 (Attached), SS
Robert A. Warfield, B/2/503, SS
Charles J. Watters, 2/503 (Attached), MOH
Frank W. Webb, B/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Alexander C. Zsigo, Jr., A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)

This project will likely take a number of months to complete.



Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Remembered at Pentagon Ceremony

Sept. 21, 2019



“As part of the recognition event, ceremonial units from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, and the U.S. Army Band entertained attendees. Additionally, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command's Black Daggers and the United Kingdom's Red Devils parachute teams dropped five parachuters onto the parade fielding.” (DoD photo)

Bragg Chat

04/16/2019



NASCAR driver Ryan Newman speaks with infantry soldiers while visiting Fort Bragg, N.C. (DoD photo)

America's Commander in Chief Warns Of Possible Civil War Like Fracture

On September 29, 2019, the Commander in Chief tweeted: *“If the Democrats are successful in removing the President from office (which they will never be), it will cause a Civil War like fracture in this Nation from which our Country will never heal.”*

The invocation of a civil war was met with outrage from Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., an Air Force veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“I have visited nations ravaged by civil war,” Kinzinger tweeted, tagging the president’s Twitter handle. *“I have never imagined such a quote to be repeated by a President. This is beyond repugnant.”*



Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-III

Source:

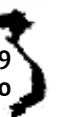
<https://news.yahoo.com/kinzinger-beyond-repugnant-trump-civil-war-tweet-135719975.html?hl=1&noRedirect=1>



We Have Found The Enemy...

“From whence shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall some trans-Atlantic military giant step the earth and crush us at a blow? Never. All the armies of Europe and Asia...could not by force take a drink from the Ohio River or make a track on the Blue Ridge in the trial of a thousand years. No, if destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of free men we will live forever or die by suicide.”

— Abraham Lincoln



DOD Identifies Army Casualties

Aug. 22, 2019

The Department of Defense announced today the deaths of two soldiers who were supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Both soldiers died August 21, 2019 in Faryab Province, Afghanistan, as a result of wounds sustained from small arms fire while engaged in combat operations. The incident is under investigation.

The deceased are:



Master Sgt.*
Luis F. DeLeon-Figueroa, 31
Chicopee, Massachusetts



Master Sgt.*
Jose J. Gonzalez, 35
La Puente, California

Both soldiers were assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

* indicates posthumous promotion



Back to Corregidor

If any 2/503rd and/or 173d Airborne troopers would like to make it to Corregidor on 14-15 February 2020, you will be met with open arms and a bear hug. Bring your medals for wearing on the 16th with returning WWII veterans of The Rock.

I will do all I can for them.

Paul Whitman

503rd P.R.C.T. Heritage Battalion Website Host

Email:



Arty's Home Movies From The Central Highlands

I attempted to send out a link to a home movie of us in the Central Highlands '67-'68. But the info to connect was messed up. Getting old is ugly. Well now I have it with easy access:

<http://www.skysoldier17.com/RVN%201967-68.avi>

So if you want to watch use the link above and it will take 2-3 mins to start to play. Doubt if it works on smartphones.

Best,

Skip Kniley

B&D Btry, 3/319th, 173d

Condolences

Our condolences to Dennis and Cindy Fontecchio and their family on the recent loss of their grandson, Zack, just 21, due to cancer.



Here is Vietnam Marine Vet Dennis in red hat, his bride Cindy in pink shirt on the right, with family and friends during the ceremony to rename our Post here in Cocoa Beach, FL in honor of their son, Elia who lost his life on August 4, 2004 in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. Ed



Elia



7 March 1968... An Khe Base Camp... 0500 Hours

Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) had been on "Palace Guard" for nearly two weeks, during which time they had been in daily skirmishes with VC and suffered one casualty in 3rd Platoon. Retaking the hilltop that governed Route #19, where the asphalt road turned north into the Mang Yang Pass, the company had waded into trench lines with 155mm artillery support and three F-100's firing their 20mm cannons the length of the hilltop.

After retaking the hill, the company found a brass plaque at the base of the hill next to the road commemorating the 1st French Force. The French had lost over 1,600 men at that location in one day.

One day later, 8 March 1968, Charlie Company was tasked to ride in a convoy along Route #19 headed for the Kontum Special Forces Camp. Charlie Company CO, Captain Joe Jellison, was tapped as the convoy commander. 1st Platoon would lead out.

There was a delay in crossing the Green Line because the Bravo Company CO had pulled rank and assumed command of the convoy.

As 1st Platoon began mounting our first truck a new man confronted me claiming he was my new medic. I asked him what happened to my old medic and he didn't know. Specialist Fourth Class John Joseph Sullivan was somewhat under six foot, with bright eyes, a quick smile, curly dark red hair, and a quiet confidence. I put him in our first truck and told SFC Oscar Cruz, 1st Platoon Sergeant, to make sure the man knew who his friends should be.

The lead vehicle in the convoy was a 5-quarter with two machine guns. The second vehicle was the command jeep with a driver, the Bravo Company CO and two radio operators. I was in the front seat of a duce-and-half following the command jeep, with my rucksack lowered into the door well, my door held open and my M-16 held in my left hand with the barrel across my right thigh. My driver didn't have a weapon. I guess he was on holiday.



A soldier stands before the Mang Yang Pass French Memorial along Route 19. (web photo)

Charlie Company was riding in a truck for the first time, and I had a bad feeling about this brand of Battle Bullshit. About one mile outside the wire, heading west toward the An Khe Pass, I was watching the command jeep ease through a slight turn to the right when a VC sniper on our right flank put a round right between the convoy commander's eyes blowing most of his brains over his radio operators.

1st Platoon unassed our trucks, waded into the jungle several meters, and began laying down suppressive fires on the right flank, into a jungled hillside. The duce-and-half behind 1st Platoon had a Quad-50 firing on our right flank and over our heads tearing upper-reaches of the jungle to pieces. Minutes later the Viet Cong were gone and John Joseph Sullivan, my new medic, the young man with the bright eyes and quick smile was dead. He had been hit in the neck.

I have a rubbing of his name on my bookcase. I wish I knew him better... at least long enough to share a C-ration meal... at least long enough to give him a nickname... at least long enough to see a picture of his girl back home... and hear about his high school times... the little things.

May you rest easy, John Joseph Sullivan... Godspeed, Doc.

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



Doc Sullivan
1949 - 1968
His buddies called him "Sully"

John Joseph Sullivan



Home of record: Watertown, MA
Army rank: PFC
MOS: 91A1P, Medical Corpsman (Airborne)
Born: February 16, 1949
KIA: March 8, 1968
Casualty type: Hostile, died outright
Location: Binh Dinh Province, Vietnam
Unit: C/2/503d, 173d Abn Bde (Sep)



Commander in Chief's 911 Commemoration Speech at the Pentagon

September 11, 2029



COMMANDER IN CHIEF (CIC): Well, thank you very much, Secretary Esper. Today, our nation honors and mourns the nearly 3,000 lives that were stolen from us on September 11th, 2001. On these grounds, 184 people were murdered when al Qaeda terrorists overtook American Airlines Flight 77 and crashed it into the Pentagon.

For every American who lived through that day, the September 11th attack is seared into our soul. It was a day filled with shock, horror, sorrow, and righteous fury. I vividly remember when I first heard the news. I was sitting at home watching a major business television show early that morning. Jack Welch, the legendary head of General Electric, was about to be interviewed when all of a sudden they cut away. At first, there were different reports: It was a boiler fire, but I knew that boilers aren't at the top of a building. It was a kitchen explosion in Windows on the World. Nobody really knew what happened. There was great confusion. I was looking out of a window from a building in Midtown Manhattan, directly at the World Trade Center, when I saw a second plane, at a tremendous speed, go into the second tower. It was then that I realized the world was going to change. I was no longer going to be — and it could never, ever be — that innocent place that I thought it was.

Soon after, I went down to Ground Zero with men who worked for me to try to help in any little way that we could. We were not alone. So many others were scattered around trying to do the same. They were all trying to help.

But for the families who join us, this is your anniversary of personal and permanent loss. It's the day that has replayed in your memory a thousand times over. The last kiss. The last phone call. The last time hearing those precious words, "I love you." Then the attack. The anguish of knowing your family member had boarded one of these flights or was working in the World Trade Center or serving right here at the Pentagon.

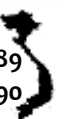
You waited, you prayed, you answered that most dreaded call, and your life changed forever. To each of you: The First Lady and I are united with you in grief, we come here in the knowledge that we cannot erase the pain or reverse the evil of that dark and wretched day, but we offer you all that we have: our unwavering loyalty, our undying devotion, and our eternal pledge that your loved ones will never, ever be forgotten.

Eighteen years ago, the terrorists struck this citadel of power and American strength. But the enemy soon learned that they could not weaken the spirit of our people. In times of distress, the heart of the American patriot only grows stronger and more determined. Even in the midst of the attack, the world witnessed the awesome power of American defiance. Forty passengers and crew on Flight 93 rose up, fought back, and thwarted the enemy's wicked plans. In their final moments, these American heroes thunderously declared that we alone decide our fate.

We saw American perseverance in the valiant New York firefighters, police officers, first responders, military, and everyday citizens who raced into the crashing towers to rescue innocent people.

One such American was retired Army Colonel Rick Rescorla who gave his life on 9/11 (see Pages 86-87). Rick earned the Silver Star and the Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam. He later became the Vice President for Security at Morgan Stanley in the World Trade Center. On the day of the attack, Rick died while leading countless others to safety. His selfless actions saved approximately 2,700 lives.

(continued...)



Today, I am honored to announce that I will soon be awarding the late Rick Rescorla the Presidential Citizens Medal for his extraordinary sacrifice. Though Rick has left this Earth, we will ensure that the memory of his deeds will never, ever be forgotten. His memory will forever endure. Thank you. Thank you, Rick. Thank you, Rick. Thank you, Rick.

Here on the western side of the Pentagon, we saw brave men and women rush into the fire and race into the scorching flames to rescue their colleagues. When evil seeks to do us harm, the incredible men and women of the United States military answer with unyielding valor and unstoppable resolve.

Navy Admiral David Thomas crawled through live wires and helped lift a wall of debris to save the life of a colleague. As Admiral Thomas remembers, *"It was the worst day of my life, but the heroism and selfless disregard I saw that [horrible] morning is forever burned in my heart."* Admiral Thomas, America salutes you and every patriot who defied evil that day. Thank you very much, Admiral. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Army Ranger Chris Braman repeatedly went back inside the burning building, rescuing one injured person after another. Before he entered, he said a prayer and asked God to give him strength, and then he dove into the suffocating smoke and fumes and flames. At the same time, Sheila Moody had just prayed that someone would find her. Then, she heard Chris's voice. As Sheila says, God sent Chris as her guardian angel.

To Sheila and Chris, America is strengthened by your goodness and your grace and your bravery. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

To fulfill our unbreakable promise to every survivor and family of 9/11, earlier this year, we fully reauthorized the Victims Compensation Fund to the tune of billions and billions of dollars.

Since September 11th, nearly 6 million young men and women have joined the United States Armed Forces. They have crossed seas, climbed mountains, trekked through deserts, and rushed into enemy compounds to face down the threat of radical Islamic terrorism.

Nearly 7,000 service members have laid down their lives to protect our home, our flag, and our American way of life. American freedom survives only because there are patriots willing to sacrifice everything in its defense. No tribute is sufficient to convey the infinite depth of our nation's gratitude.

On this solemn day of remembrance, our thoughts also turn to the 200,000 valiant soldiers, sailors, airmen, Coast Guardsmen, and Marines who are now, at this very moment, stationed overseas.

We do not seek conflict, but if anyone dares to strike our land, we will respond with the full measure of American power and the iron will of the American spirit. And that spirit is unbreakable.

We had peace talks scheduled a few days ago. I called them off when I learned that they had killed a great American soldier from Puerto Rico and 11 other innocent people. They thought they would use this attack to show strength. But actually, what they showed is unrelenting weakness. The last four days, we have hit our enemy harder than they have ever been hit before, and that will continue.

And if, for any reason, they come back to our country, we will go wherever they are and use power the likes of which the United States has never used before. And I'm not even talking about nuclear power. They will have never seen anything like what will happen to them.

No enemy on Earth can match the overwhelming strength, skill, and might of the American Armed Forces. And we have rebuilt and strengthened the last two and a half years, spending \$700 billion, \$716 billion, and now, just approved, \$738 billion — more money, by far, than ever spent on our armed forces. You are the fearless sentinels who stand watch over all that we cherish and everything we hold sacred, priceless, and dear.

This morning, we also give thanks to the dedicated men and women at the Department of Homeland Security. Their Department was created after 9/11 to help secure our immigration system and ensure that those who threaten our people are denied entry to our shores. We're indebted to every law enforcement official — state, local, and federal — who devotes their life to keeping America safe.

As we gather at this moment, and at this incredible memorial, we are reminded that there is no greater testament to our fallen heroes than the presence of their families who knew and loved them so much. Among the family members here today is Stephanie Dunn. Her husband, Navy Commander Patrick Dunn, was one of the patriots who gave his life, right here, 18 years ago. Before he left that morning, Patrick gave Stephanie a big, beautiful kiss. Then, for the first time, he leaned down and kissed her pregnant stomach. Stephanie was just two months along with their first child. Earlier this year, their daughter Allie celebrated her 17th birthday.

(continued....)



Allie grew up into a strong, truly remarkable young woman. She mentors the children of our nation's wounded warriors, and recently, I was honored to give Allie the President's Volunteer Service Award for her hundreds of hours of community service. We are blessed to have Allie here with us at today's ceremony. Thank you, Allie. Thank you. Thank you.

And, Allie, I know your dad is watching over you. He's right up there. He's watching from Heaven, looking down right now with love and pride. He is so proud of you. Thank you very much. Incredible.

Also joining us is the Vigiano family. For generations, the Vigiano family has served in our military and in the New York City Fire and Police Departments. These are two great departments. I grew up with them. I know. On September 11th, NYPD Detective Joseph Vigiano rushed into the World Trade Center, and died rescuing his fellow citizens. His brother, John, was a New York firefighter. He also gave his life that day at Ground Zero.

At the time, Joseph's three sons were just young boys, ages eight, six, and three months old. This morning, they are with us. The youngest, John, just started his freshman year of college at SUNY Maritime College, and he plans to join the military. Joseph, Jr. is a Marine reservist and, just like his father, he is a proud member of the NYPD. And James is a corporal in the Marines. On his last deployment, James was stationed on the USS New York, a ship made using 24 tons of steel from the World Trade Center. Every time he left the mess hall on his way to his bunk, he passed a picture of his dad.

To John, Joseph, and James, and to the Vigiano family, you have sacrificed beyond measure, and you will never, ever stop giving back to this country. And thank you very much for being here. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Very proud of you. Thank you. Thank you very much.

The heroes present today remind us of an immortal truth. The future of our nation is secured through the vigilance of our people: The brave men and women who tore through the gates of hell to save the hurt and the wounded. The service members who honor the friends who perished by continuing their exceptional life of service. The moms and dads who endure the loss of their soulmates, and fill their children's lives with all of the adoration in the world. The sons and daughters who suffered grave loss, and yet through it all, persevere to care for our neighbors, defend our homeland, and safeguard our nation. Each of your lives tells the story of courage and character, virtue and valor, resilience and resolve, loyalty and love.

This morning, we make a sacred vow to carry on this noble legacy. Today and every day, we pledge to honor our history, to treasure our liberty, to uplift our communities, to live up to our values, to prove worthy of our heroes, and above all, stronger than ever, to never, ever forget.

We are now, and will forever be, one American family united by patriotism, bound by destiny, and sustained by the faith of Almighty God.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless our military. And God bless the United States of America. Thank you all. Thank you very much.



Remember one, remember all...

Cyril Richard "Rick" Rescorla, Col. **(May 27, 1939 – September 11, 2001)**

At 8:46 a.m. on the morning of September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 11 struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center (Tower 1). Rescorla heard the explosion and saw the tower burning from his office window in the 44th floor of the South Tower (Tower 2). When a Port Authority announcement came over the P.A. system urging people to stay at their desks, Rescorla ignored the announcement, grabbed his bullhorn, walkie-talkie, and cell phone, and began systematically ordering Morgan Stanley employees to evacuate, including the 1,000 employees in WTC 5. He directed people down a stairwell from the 44th floor, continuing to calm employees after the building lurched violently following the crash of United Airlines Flight 175 38 floors above into Tower 2 at 9:03 A.M. Morgan Stanley executive Bill McMahon stated that even a group of 250 people visiting the offices for a stockbroker training class knew what to do because they had been shown the nearest stairway.

Rescorla had boosted morale among his men in Vietnam by singing Cornish songs from his youth, and now he did the same in the stairwell, singing songs like one based on the Welsh song "Men of Harlech":

(continued....)



*"Men of Cornwall stop your dreaming,
Can't you see their spearpoints gleaming?
See their warriors' pennants streaming,
To this battlefield.*

*Men of Cornwall stand ye steady,
It cannot be ever said ye
For the battle were not ready.
Stand and never yield!"*

Between songs, Rescorla called his wife, telling her, "Stop crying. I have to get these people out safely. If something should happen to me, I want you to know I've never been happier. You made my life."



Colonel Rick Rescorla

After successfully evacuating most of Morgan Stanley's 2,687 employees, he went back into the building. When one of his colleagues told him he too had to evacuate the World Trade Center, Rescorla replied, "As soon as I make sure everyone else is out."

He was last seen on the 10th floor, heading upward, shortly before the South Tower collapsed at 9:59 A.M. His remains were never found. Rescorla was declared dead three weeks after the attacks.



2/503d Documentary "My Father's Brothers" Wins Top Two Awards At Charlotte Film Festival

Produced by Shawn Kelley, son of LTC Jack Kelley, CO A/2/503 Republic of Vietnam in 1966, the film was named *Best Documentary Feature* at the 2019 Indigo Moon Film Festival in Charlotte, NC this past October.

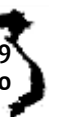


L-R: In attendance and representing their battalion and company were Bill Vose and Mike Thibault of A/2/503, producer Shawn Kelley, and his father Jack Kelley, former Commanding Officer of A/2/503.

"This is a great thrill for me," Shawn told the *Fayetteville Observer*. "Fayetteville is my hometown so this (award) is very special to me." About his father and two of his men from Alpha Company in attendance, Shawn added, "It means the world to me that they were here."

The documentary tells the story of the June 29, 1966, battle near Xuan Loc in South Vietnam when the 3rd Platoon of Alpha Company of the 2/503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), was surrounded by a superior force of enemy soldiers and were at grave risk of being overrun. It was for this same battle the late Charlie Morris was awarded the Medal of Honor for his valorous actions during the fight.

The documentary was shown earlier at a film festival in Mt. Dora, FL, and will again be presented at another festival in this coming November 9, 2019, in Alexandria, VA (see Page 11 for details).



From the archives....

For the President, from Ambassador Taylor

Cable from Embassy Saigon -
July 13, 1965

SECRET
(Declassified)

General Thieu and Ky spent most of the third full week of their Government on the road making a tour of Phong Dinh and Dinh Tuong Provinces in an effort to rally support to the new administration. Ky also made a radio broadcast to the armed forces on July 7. Such actions are showing considerably more sensitivity on their part to the need for appealing to public opinion and for carrying the Government to the people than has characterized the political leadership of the past.

The big news of the week was made in Washington by the announcement of the change of American Ambassadors in Saigon. The reaction to the reappointment of Ambassador Lodge is just beginning to come in and it is following rather predictable lines. The Buddhists seem unanimously pleased with the choice whereas some of the Catholics are displaying an attitude of reserve. Overall, the reaction has been of general approval arising from the high regard in which Lodge was held during his previous service in Saigon.



Ambassador Taylor at Bien Hoa with 2/503 Sky Soldiers upon their arrival in Vietnam in May '65. Third from right is 2/503 Battalion Commander, LTC George Dexter (Col. Ret.).

There was little in the military situation to call to your attention. I was pleased by an operation launched in War Zone D by the **173rd Airborne Brigade** which included the **Australian battalion**. The Brigade went into a very tough area, engaged in three days of rather sharp fighting and performed extremely well in this, their first engagement. Some 50 Viet Cong were killed and 28 captured, while the Brigade lost 10 killed and 46 wounded.

Their action clearly established the fact that none of the former Viet Cong safehavens (sp) are off limits to American troops. The impression is getting around that there will be no sanctuary for the enemy either in North or South Vietnam.

Lights are burning late in government offices and the U.S. Mission in preparation for the MacNamara visit. Generals Thieu and Ky understand the importance of the event and intend to present the government's case in their own words. This is the first time which I recall that the government has shown a desire to participate actively in the presentations of a visiting mission from Washington.

July 1965 Action

It's evident Ambassador Taylor's *pleased* reference is to the July 7/8, 1965, operation where B/2/503 suffered ten KIA. With one exception, each of these Sky Soldiers from Bravo Company were lost in battle on 7 July 1965:

Edward Joseph Almeida, 18, PVT*
Rudolph Villalpane Hernandez, 20, PVT
David Lafate Howard, 22, SSG
Allen Isaac Johnson, 18, PVT
McArthur Johnson, 25, SGT
Raymond Patrick Meehan, 23, PFC
Durwood Frank Ray, 21, SGT
Johnie Edward Rice, Jr., 21, PFC
John Dillinger Shaw, 22, PVT
Ronald Lloyd Zinn, 26, CPT**

* KIA 7/8/65

** The 2/503d's new base near Bien Hoa AFB would be named Camp Zinn in honor and memory of Ron Zinn, the first officer of the battalion lost in combat.



Two 2/503 KIA Photos Found

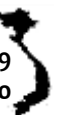


George "Doc" Patton
A/2/503
6/4/48 – 6/22/67
New York, NY



Rudolph Nathaniel "Doc" Ward
HHC/2/503
11/1/45 – 11/19/67
Portsmouth, VA

Sent in by Col. Ken Smith
CO A/D/2/503 RVN



Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT and Attached Units Who Made Their Final Jump

Bernie Eugene Bales, 74

Creve Coeur, MO
September 3, 2018
173d Abn Bde, RV N

Jackie Allen Booth, Sr., 70

Cumberland, MD
October 2, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Thomas P. Carney, LTG, 78

Naples, FL,
July 20, 2019
C/2/503, RVN

Donald R. Desrochers, 69

Auburn, ME
October 8, 2019
534th Sig, 173d Abn Bde, RVN

Gregory Vaughn Earnest, 71

Pleasant Hills, PA
October 7, 2019
3/503, RVN

Douglas (Doug) B. Gourley, 74

Jonesborough, TN
September 4, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

William H. "Bill" Herring, 75

Tallahassee, FL
August 6, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Charles Thomas Horton, 98

Spring, TX
June 6, 2019
503rd PIR, WWII

Walter E. Hutchins, 72

Lottie, LA
September 11, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Darwin William Kenney, Jr., 71

Myrtle Beach, SC
August 14, 2019
HHC/2/503, RVN

Bruce Alan Knerr, 69

Toledo, OH
June 29, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

John Barry Lawler, Jr., 73

Enola, PA
September 20, 2019
335th AHC, RVN

Peter Godwin Loftus, Sr., 79

Wilkes-Barre, PA
June 8, 2019
1/503d RVN

Tony Lopez, 94

Denver, CO
September 5, 2019
F Co., 503rd PRCT, WWII

Willie Mack, 83

East Dublin, GA
August 3, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

James Robert Maki, 70

Ely/Burnside Lake, MN
July 6, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Daniel F. McIsaac, 75

Wrentham MA
May 15, 2019
E/2/503, RVN

Richard Myles Meredith, Jr., 69

Middletown, PA
August 21, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Donald "Don" L. Moyer, 75

Orangeburg, SC
March 1, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Ronald "Ronnie" Morton, 73

White Lake, NC
June 2, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Kirk Michael Mowry, 74

Olathe, KS
March 21, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Joseph Daniel Pace, Sr. 95

Roanoke VA
August 12, 2019
HHC/503rd PIR, WWII

George Edward Shiltz, 76

Centerville, IA
July 28, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Jerry Thomas, 75

Muscle Shoals, AL
October 14, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Tom Town, 72

Santa Maria, CA
September 9/2/19
Casper Platoon, RVN

Richard "Rick" Vogel, 70

Winona, MN
September 21, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Otha Washington, 74

N. Minneapolis, MN
September 22, 2019
A/4/503, RVN

William "Bill/Woody"

Whitcraft, 76
West Chester, PA
July 15, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Barton Allen Williams, Sr., 75

Henryetta, OK
October 11, 2019
173d Abn Bde, RVN

*Rest Easy Paratroopers
With Your Fellow Warriors...
You Will Always Be
The Best*



Peace To You And Yours

