



July-September 2020, Issue 93
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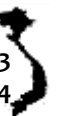
See all issues to date at the 503rd Heritage Battalion website:
http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503 Photo of the Month ~

A young girl in Lo Dieu village, RVN, circa '69/'70, under oppression and representing one of millions like her for whom we Americans fought and died in hopes of giving them a better life.



Photo by Scott Ingmanson, D/E/2/503rd & Casper Platoon, '69-'71.
See more of Scott's Vietnam photos on Pages 43-45.





**We Dedicate this Issue of Our Newsletter in Memory and Honor of the
Young Men of the 173d Airborne Brigade & Attached Units
We Lost 50 Years Ago in The Months of July - September 1970**



“Slip off that pack. Set it down by the crooked trail. Drop your steel pot alongside. Shed those magazine-laden bandoliers away from your sweat-soaked shirt. Lay that silent weapon down and step out of the heat. Feel the soothing cool breeze right down to your soul ... and rest forever in the shade of our love, brother.” From Nam Band-of-Brothers

Eugene Allen Aaron, 19
PFC E/3/503, 9/7/70

(Wall of Faces states E Trp/17th Cav)
9/8/05: *“We Remember. Eugene is buried at Myrtle hill Memorial Park, Tampa, FL.” Robert Sage*



Merritt Adams, 19
SGT, D/2/503, 9/10/70

1/5/15: *“My Uncle. Rest in peace Uncle Billy. Thank you for your service to the country. You gave your life before I was born but your memories are still cherished and remembered. I wish I had the chance to meet you. Your Niece,” MJ*



Johnny Allen, Jr., 23
SP-4, A/3/503, 7/2/70

12/20/01: *“My Big Brother. In loving memory I would like to honor my big brother I really never got to know. I can tell you that he looks just like my dad. I never got to talk to him and I only have a picture to remind me of him. Missing you and see you in heaven. Love, one of your sisters. Unsigned*



Michael Asep, 21
SP4, E/1/503, 9/8/70

9/26/19: *“Michael, my big brave brother. What I know is that you were always glorious. I visit you often and represent your blood family of sisters, brothers and your broken-hearted mother. Lovingly,” Deidre Grayson*



Douglas Paul “Doc” Atkins, 19
PFC, HHC/3/503, 7/27/70

5/17/11: *“Private First Class Douglas Paul Atkins was born on September 14, 1950 in Ann Arbor to Mr. and Mrs. Variell L. Atkins. Douglas is a 1968 graduate of Pioneer High School in Ann Arbor. He also attended Washtenaw Community College prior to his entry into the Army August of 1969. Private First Class Atkins started his tour in Binh Dinh Province, South Vietnam on July 6, 1970 serving as a Medical Corpsman*



with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. Douglas' unit was operating in an area that was full of 'booby-traps'. Private First Class Douglas Paul Atkins was killed by a booby-trap explosion on July 27, 1970, just 23 days into his tour in Vietnam. Douglas earned the National Defense Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Parachutist Badge, the Expert Badge with Automatic Rifle Bar, and the Sharpshooter Badge with Rifle Bar prior to his death. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, and the Combat Medical Badge. Doug is survived by his parents, family and friends. He lived 19 years, 10 months and 13 days. Rest in peace with the warriors.” Unsigned

John Bain
SGT, 1Flid Reg, 7/12/70

“Temp Sergeant John Bain was born in Scotland and died in Brisbane QLD on 12th July 1970. Buried Mt Thompson Crematorium, QLD.”



William E. Barritt, 24
SP-4, 173d AHC, 8/8/70

5/29/17: *“Memorial Day. Thanks for your sacrifice. Sure wish I could talk to you.”*

Christopher Barritt

[See Final Mission of SP4 Sammy P. Rodriguez, Page 11]



 **Melvin Carroll Bates, Jr., 20**
SGT, A/4/503, 8/29/70

1/6/03: *“Hey Buddy I Won't Forget. Buddy, I want you to know that I haven't forgot you. I remember your gentle and kind spirit. Remember your nickname that Linda Bartko gave you - Buddy Petunia Hound Dog Bates. I visit you on the wall sometimes during my morning jog here in DC. I pray for you to have a peaceful rest and sleep with the angels.” Sharon Kirk*



(continued...)



Dennis Wayne Baxley, 22
SGT, E/2/503, 8/9/70

"A daughter you barely knew. If anyone who knew Dennis reads this, write me. I am told by my biological mother that I'm his daughter & want to know about him. Any pics would be a bonus." Pixie Vincent (Visit Wall of Faces website for contact info)



Eric Peter Busch, 25
SP6, HHC/173d Bde, 8/7/70
(Virtual Wall states D/173d Spt)

8/7/13: "I love you, Dad. I was so young when you died. I wonder how life would have been with you around. I'm trying to live the best that life I can, and although I've made a ton of mistakes and missteps, I'm trying to be an honorable person. I have always felt your presence with me, and hope that you continue to watch over my family. I love you, Dad. Shenon" Shenendoah Doran



William Darwin "Doc" Blenkinsop, 19
CPL, A/4/503, 8/29/70
(Virtual Wall states HHC/4/503)

4/8/17: "Remembered. Dear Corporal Blenkinsop, thank you for your service as a Medical corpsman. Thanks for the lives you saved. You are on the same panel as a friend's brother. Say hi to Mike. It has been far too long for all of you to have been gone. We appreciate all you have done, and your sacrifice. Watch over the U.S.A., it still needs your courage. God bless you. May the angels be at your side. Rest in Peace. Many of us have begun our journey to Easter. And you are in our prayers."



Albert Calmese, 20
CPL, D/4/503, 7/27/70

7/27/19: "Thank you, Brave Soldier. Thank you, CPL Albert Calmese, for your service and your sacrifice for our country, on the 49th Anniversary of your tragic death in Vietnam. You answered the call and made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. May you be remembered forever. Rest In Peace, Brave Warrior. Hooahah!" Sharon Singleton, Col. (Ret) USAR



Larry Eugene Brooks, 20
CPL, C/3/503, 9/6/70

5/16/11: "Fellow Sky Soldier. Larry was my ammo bearer in the third platoon, C Co., 3rd Batt., 503rd Inf. 173rd Abn. He was killed 2 days after I left the field on my way home. I had the unpleasant task of identifying his body at LZ English. He was a proud young soldier that was doing his duty." Gregg Corbin



Wilson Campbell, 19
CPL, D/2/503, 9/10/70

9/27/19: "Many Thanks. Wow! Mr. Campbell...I am honored to finally see the man that shared tent space w/my father (Robert Carter) on the day of your casualty. I've heard your name and stories for years along with the night that you all were hit. My father often recalled that night. He told us how fun and persistent you were. I'm sitting here in tears as I type this note because, if my father wouldn't have made it, my sister and I wouldn't be here today. Thank you sir for your service and for being a friend to my father, as the two of you fought a war, that you probably really didn't have many facts about. You will forever be in my heart." Candace Carter



John Harold Bullman, 22
PTE, 1RFT Unit, 7/21/70

"Wellington NSW. Bullman was wounded from a friendly artillery drop short in Phuoc Tuy on 20th July 1970, he died at 1 Field Hospital, Vung Tau the following night. Buried Wellington Cemetery, NSW."



Hilburn M. Burdette, Jr., 19
SGT, 173d LRRP, 7/12/70
(Virtual Wall states/C/75th Rgrs)

6/11/06: "To My Brother. It has been 36 years and I still miss you and still feel the loss/pain in my heart when I think about you. You are my HERO!" Gary L. Burdette, 1SG, USA, Retired



(continued...)



Bruce Charles Candrl, 23

SGT, 173d LRRP, 7/14/70
(Virtual Wall states B/2/503)

4/13/01: "Ranger Bruce. After arriving in RVN, Corporal Bruce served as my Assistant Team Leader (ATL) for Ranger Team 'Echo' when we were assigned to Company N (Ranger) 75th Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) at LZ English in Bong Son. I last saw him in September 1969, when I was reassigned. Bruce was a bright, cheerful, young man with a good head on his shoulders and had a lot of potential for being a good soldier and leader. I was very saddened to hear years later that he was killed. He had a lot of life to live, and was a good friend who you could trust to watch your back and didn't have to worry about when the chips were down. I will miss you." **Robert P. Mohs**



~ A Note from The Virtual Wall ~

"We lost 1LT Smith and SP4 Sammy Rodriguez on that day. SP4 Bill Barritt was taken to a hospital where he died a few days later.

The same day 08 August 1970 we lost SP4 Climer. He was new in country and was assigned I believe to the maintenance platoon. We had a rocket attack and one landed where he was working on a ship and he was hit by a large piece of shrapnel and died from those wounds. I was on guard duty that night and we were all trying to get over what happened earlier that day when this happened. It was a very sad time in Lai Khe that day . . ."

The Virtual Wall thanks
Frank Byrd of the 173rd AHC for these details.

Curvin Clayton, 20

SP4, A/1/503, 9/13/70

5/24/06: "Not Forgotten. I served with you and remember the day the Lord took you my Brother. I still have a picture of you taken a couple days before you were taken away. We will meet again someday in heaven. I love you my brother - until the day we meet again I still will remember you." **Hardy Freydenfelt**



Emory Theron Coates, 20

SSGT, 173d Eng, 9/5/70

9/7/18: "Uncle Emory. I have no memories of you as I was 22 mo. & you were 1 month shy of your 21st birthday. But I'm so extremely proud of you as your oldest nephew for your service & the ultimate sacrifice you made on behalf of our country. All 4 (2 Army) of your siblings served as well as your nephews (2) and Great nephews (2 Army). I'm so extremely grateful for the photos that were posted of you. It's almost like meeting for the 1st time. God Bless you Uncle...RIP!" **Charles Johnson, III**



William Bert "Doc" Cleverley, 19

PFC, HHC/4/503, 7/28/70

10 June 2002: "My Uncle Billy, I was not even 2 years old when you died, but your memory has always lived on through your family and mine. My dad wears your memory like a badge of pride and my mom told me how I used to love to go to you. I can't wait to meet you one day. Love, Kelly, From his niece," **Kelly Cleverley Melvin**



John Nelson Crawford, Jr., 29

SP6, HHC/173d Bde, 8/7/70
(Virtual Wall states 173rd Flt Plt)

9/17/08: "Thanks. I wish I would have had the opportunity to meet you but I do want to tell you how much I Love your son and Thank You for being his hero!!!"
Patty Crawford



David Leroy Climer, 20

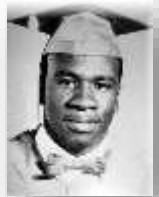
SP4, E/2/503, 8/8/70
(Virtual Wall states 173rd AHC)

10 August 2004: "I just wanted to let people know that I think that for the ones who thought of making this Wall (The Wall of Faces), "THANK YOU" IS NOT ENOUGH! I like others have a way to still be connected to them if only in a Wall. It means so much. To me, like to others, it still seems like it was yesterday that all this happened, and will never be forgotten. My brother will never be forgotten. From his sister," **Bev Craig**



Sherman Pondexter Davis, 19
CPL, A/3/503, 7/2/70

7/8/10: "We Remember. Sherman is buried at Northside Cemetery in Fayetteville, NC." **Robert Sage**



(continued...)



David Gerard Doyle, 19
TPR, 3Cav Regt, 7/31/70

"Dublin Ireland. The driver/signal-man was killed in Phuoc Tuy on 31st July 1970 when the vehicle in which he was riding backed and he was struck by the helicopter blades. Buried Belmont Cemetery NSW."



what many of us could ever have expected. He was a brave man who feared nothing and was proud to be serving his country as a combat paratrooper. He also loved where he came from and often talked about Sugar City Colorado where he grew up among horses and eagles." Carl Davis

 **Glenn Harry English, Jr., 30**
SSG, E/3/503, 9/7/70

1/25/15: He's my brother. We were in Nam at the same time, didn't know it till my CO informed me he was KIA. I was in Da Nang Air Force Base." Larry W. English
[See Larry's Medal of Honor citation on Page 42]



Graham Leslie Foster, 22
PTE, 1RFT Unit, 7/21/70

"Toowomba QLD. He was accidentally killed by a friendly artillery drop short in Phuoc Tuy 21st July 1970. Buried Allambe Garden Cemetery, QLD."



Gary Ralph Friend, 19
SGT, C/3/503, 9/9/70

10/18/18: "Thank you cousin! Thank you Cousin for your service to our country, looking out for people like myself. I never got to meet you but hope I get to meet you in Heaven. You are named after my dad (Ralph Friend) who is Heaven also. He served in the US Army in Germany. You both are considered HEROES to me. Love," Danny Friend



~ A Coincidental Story About Glenn Harry English ~

Years ago I owned a business which produced conferences and expositions for the transportation industry, and we were holding such an event at the Orlando Convention Center in Florida where I happened to be wearing a 173d lapel pin. One of my employees approached with a young lady whom I didn't know; he said, "I'd like you to meet the sister of Glenn English, Medal of Honor recipient with the 173d Airborne." The lady (I do not recall her name but it could have been Anna as referenced in the newspaper clipping on Page 42) was from California, and was a delegate to the conference. After chatting with her and telling her how honored I was to meet her and to have served in the same brigade as her brother, I gave her the lapel pin.

That evening my wife, Reggie, and I were having dinner with Bill Vose (A/2/503) and his bride Roberta at a restaurant in Orlando, and I shared the story with them about meeting Glenn's sister. It was a surprise when Bill said, "I have a poster of Glenn at home."

Following dinner the four of us returned to the Vose home where Bill and Roberta searched for a picture frame for the poster, and found one. The next day back at the conference, and on behalf of Bill and Roberta and all Sky Soldiers, I presented the framed poster to Glenn's sister. **Lew Smith, HHC/2/503**



Photo posted on Wall of Faces in connection with tributes to Gary Ralph Friend.

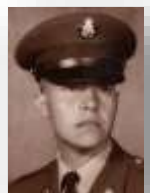
Tony Manuel Florez, 20
SGT, B/4/503, 7/8/70

12/6/14: "Flight of an Eagle. I was there with my Bother Tony the day he died at our base camp L.Z. North English July 8th 1970. We 'humped the bush' together in the Tiger Mountains as riflemen. I still think of Tony today and wished that somehow I could have been more alert but those were crazy times and crazy things often happened beyond



Dennis Wayne Gentry, 20
SGT, A/3/503, 9/13/70

1/31/09: "A Paratrooper. Dennis was a paratrooper with the 1st platoon A Co., 3/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). He served among some of the finest airborne soldiers in Viet Nam. It's sad that the good die young. My prayers are with him and his family." Sgt. K (Tom) Kaulukukui



(continued...)



Frederick David Greene, 21

SGT, A/3/503, 7/21/70

6/19/07: "What I remember best about my cousin, Freddy, is his crooked smile. He smiled a lot. We grew up in a time when life was perfect. We cousins (and there were many of us) were able to see each other often. Family potluck suppers and parties were the norm for our close-knit family. As we hit the teen years we didn't always want to visit the aunts and uncles but the COUSINS! Woo hoo. I never turned down an opportunity to see Freddy and his younger brother, Jim. They played guitar together and had what would be called a garage band now. They were good - even played some parties. I'll never forget the day Freddy's music was stopped forever. I would never see that smile again. Our family was forever changed that day. Oh, we have gotten on with our lives. We have been truly happy and truly blessed all these years. The cousins are still close. Yet even now I still see, in my mind's eye, that empty spot where Freddy's smiling face should be. Wars are bad. They rob us of our loved ones. They scar us as individuals and as a nation. We must strive to NEVER FORGET all the dedicated soldiers who have followed their commander-in-chief's order to go to war. We must pray for our leaders that they do their utmost to keep our country from war. I love you, Freddy. Your cousin, Glo."



Gloria Perry

Harold Owen Harper, 20

SGT, B/2/503, 9/12/70

4/22/16: "Gone but you will never be forgotten Harold. This brief message is in Remembrance of my Best Friend in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, SSgt. Harold Harper. We served together and I was there on the Day that you departed this world and you returned to Heaven. I still remember, just a few days prior to this Search and Destroy Mission, I had just returned from the Hospital and was transferred to my new squad in the same Platoon. Our Platoon was flown out on a Jolly Green Giant helicopter to our Search area. Your Squad went left and up the small mountain. My new squad went Right and started up the other side of the small mountain. Within 10 minutes, we heard two explosions on the other side of the Hill. We heard within a few moments that two men had tripped two booby traps. We later heard you were both KIA. I believe my Good Friend Sgt. Edward Aga (from Honolulu HI) was in your squad on that Day. I just now Remembered, you had a slight speech stutter which made everyone Pay Close Attention to you when you spoke. You were Liked by



every one! Your gone from this world but You will never be Forgotten. I Believe with All My Heart Soul and Spirit, that you are Alive and Well in your Natural Eternal Home in Heaven. I look forward to seeing you again when I arrive in Heaven, in God's Timing. I Thank You Harold, from the bottom of My Heart, for being My Best Friend in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Thank You!"

Unsigned

Harold Utah Hayes, 31

SFC, HHC/1/503, 7/30/70

6/12/12: "A Memory. I was 9 years old. I remember my mother crying when she got the call. And me not understanding. Now I understand."

Unsigned



Mark Alan Hensley, 20

CPL, B/1/503, 9/19/70

7/24/16: "Still Hurts. Not a day goes by that I don't think of you. I remember when you told me to tell Dad that I was sick and I couldn't go to school. You let me use a .22 and took me out to learn how to shoot. Dad never found out! I also remember when the soldiers came to the door and asked for Dad. He wasn't home from work yet. I joked that Guy was probably AOL as he was home on leave. Not even thinking it was about you. I love you Brother Until we meet again..." **Unsigned**



Phillip Jay Hilderbrant, 21

SGT, E/17th Cav, 7/31/70

7/31/07: "Lest We Forget. One of Michigan's fallen sons. Today we Remember Phillip Jay Hilderbrant and his ultimate sacrifice. Rest in peace Phillip."

Fellow Michigander



(continued...)



Danny Lee Hilterbran, 20

SP4, D/2/503, 7/29/70

(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

6/18/06: "Danny carried my radio for months. We were in D Co 1/503 out of LZ Uplift. I remember well talking with him about the 'world' and his two small babies at home ... we were both 20 and looking forward to coming home. He was on the radio the day we got a request for a warm body for 'REMF' job ... out of the field. He asked me if he could take it as his ticket out of the mud ... I gladly gave his name and wished him well in life. Sadly, it was in the rear that a fire broke out while he was assisting a brush clearing operation around a TOC. While fighting the flames one of the men set off an old French landmine, killing Danny and another soldier. In my heart I know I gave him his ticket out of the bush ... but for all these years, I wonder if I had only passed on the 'gift' he would have been there to see his children grow ... He will always be smiling in my memories. From his Platoon Leader," **Mike Rogers**



Steven Frederick Jindrich, 20

SP4, D/4/503, 9/22/70

9/23/14: "Sky Soldier Honored.

Tribute for KIA comrade: On behalf of myself and all our fellow paratroopers who served in Viet Nam with the 173rd "Herd" Brigade, let me offer our sincere respect and regrets for your ultimate sacrifice. May you rest in peace and never be forgotten by family, friends and comrades." **Mike Switzer**



Joseph Frank Keeney, 21

PVT, D/1/503, 9/16/70

9/17/10: "I served with guy, we

sleep in the same bunker, got in trouble together and fought together, to all his family, he gave his life saving another, he pulled a wounded buddy to safety when he was shot, I think about him all the time and miss him."

Edward L. Buck



Furman David Hughes, 20

PVT, C/3/503, 8/20/70

1/30/09: "One of Mine. Furman

was one of mine, in my platoon in the 173d Airborne Brigade. He was KIA in 1970. He served well and gave all in service of his country. My prayers are with him and his family."

SGT. K. (Tom) Kaulukukui



Michael Edward Kiscaden, 19

SSG, E/20th, 7/1/70

(Virtual Wall states C/75 Rgrs)

11/9/11: "Mike was my best

friend growing up in Lancaster, PA. We hunted, fished and dared each other into more and more death-defying feats through many a summer. He always taking the greatest challenge - I would walk on the ties across the elevated railroad trestle, He would go hand-over-hand across the steel structure UNDER the tracks dangling 60 feet above the river!" **Jon Isaacson**



Ben Jackson, Jr., 23

PFC, D/3/319, 8/15/70

6/3/19: "Remembering a Fallen

Paratrooper Brother. You gave your All. May the Good Lord Bless You for your Sacrifice." **Kenny D.**



Gregory Keith Krueger, 21

SGT, E/17th Cav, 7/17/70

2/3/15: "Big Brother. Us kids in

our family just learned of this site (Wall of Faces). It is so amazing to read about Greg and to see his picture. He was the second of 8 children, and my Big Brother. He was such a kind and gentle soul, who was very close to my mother. He was killed on the same day as his nephew who was named after him. Our mother has passed away, but would be so proud to see the posts about him and the kind words that were said. I was very young at the time, but I remember when his 2 buddies came to the farm to see our parents - that meant so much to them. Rest in peace, Big Brother-never forgotten." **Belva Leer**



John Jasso, 19

SP4, B/4/503, 8/25/70

11/23/19: "To John. I know it's

been years since you have passed. You are my mom's uncle and that makes you my great uncle. I wish that I could have met you. We think of you all the time. You're missed. I hope one day I could meet you in heaven. I just wanted to say Thank You for fighting for our country." **Sara**



(continued...)



Ground Casualty

LZ Uplift was a U.S. Army base established in 1966 by the 1st Cavalry Division on Highway QL-1, approximately five miles north of Phu My in Binh Dinh Province, RVN. On July 17, 1970, a six-man reconnaissance team from E Troop, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, posted at Uplift was preparing to head out on a mission. The group was in their hooch around noon organizing equipment when an explosion occurred. SGT Gregory K. Krueger, who was nearest to the locker where the ordinance was stored, received the brunt of the blast. Three others were injured. They were taken to the aid station at Uplift and later carried by medivac helicopter to Qui Nhon. Krueger, who was critically injured, reportedly sat up once on the flight but died shortly after arrival. The men from E Troop were never certain what caused the explosion. They surmised that the 155mm artillery tubes on the base, which shook the ground every time they fired, may have loosened a grenade pin, causing a detonation which set off the Claymore mines, C-4 explosive, ammunition, and other grenades stored in the locker. A few days after his death, a memorial service conducted by the Battalion Chaplain was held at Uplift in Krueger's honor. [Taken from coffeldatabase.org and information provided by Dave Schaening (April 2020)]

Anthony George Kubelus, Jr., 19 **SP4, D/1/503, 8/10/70**

2/21/14: "We Remember. Anthony was with D CO, 1st BN, 503rd Infantry, 173rd ABN when he was mortally wounded by a bobby trap. He was returning to base from a night defensive position. RIP Anthony, your bravery and dedication to your Country will always be remembered." **Jerry Richmond**



John Joseph Lavelle, 19 **SP4, C/173d Spt. Bn, 7/29/70**

11/6/13: "Your Bayonne friends from 16th Street. John, Your friends from 16th street (Gary / Faunty / Roll / Jeff / Johnny Kos / Raymond / Mark / Carl / Richie / Pumpsie) remember you always! We all had so much fun growing up and you left us much to soon. You are always in our prayers!"
Gary Danback



Tory Drake Lawrence, 22 **CPL, A/4/503, 9/19/70**

11/8/11: "From your wife. It has been more than 40 years since you went to that war. Since that time our son has died on the same day you did September 19th. You died in 1970, and our son died in 2003. Were you there to take his hand and show him the way? I would love to believe so. I have missed growing old with you, and think of you every day. I hope when my time comes you will be there to take my hand and show me the way as I believe you did with Jason our son. Your wife." **Unsigned**



Elton William Lewis, 18 **PFC, C/3/503, 9/9/70** (Wall of Faces states C/75th Rgrs)

4/30/99: "Elton and I were acquaintances in grade school ... we were never really close but I remember him as a decent guy who did well in sports ... I knew his sister Virginia well and she took his death pretty hard ... I still find it hard to believe someone I knew died there ... and Virginia, if you read this, I still think about him and the fights we had ... I wish we could have one more ..." **Jonathan Ard**



Robert William MacNaught, 26 **1LT, B/2/503, 8/7/70** (Virtual Wall states A/2/503)

12/18/99: "MAC", you did not die in vain! Mac, Joe Sweetland, Jack Sanford and I grew up together. Jack went to Air Force Academy while Joe, Bob and I became best friends up to and during our Army service, although we went at different times. We all agreed to go airborne and we all wanted to go to Nam. Mac became SO dedicated to the cause when he went in that he serviced with the Special Forces, went RA to become an officer, and even went to Ranger School after OCS. His prime motivator was he believed he and those serving with and under him stop the Communists from taking over that beautiful, impoverished country, Vietnam. I was a civilian when his mother called me to announce his death. Joe, Jack and I tried to help his parents organize his funeral, locating bearers who were truly his friends. I remember the funeral like it was yesterday. He was like a brother to me and I was devastated, even though I know he died doing the job he believed was his duty, putting all his intelligence, physical abilities....



(continued...)



....qualities of leadership, and dedication into this all-out fight against Communism. Bob had a history of going all out in school, on the wrestling mat, and ultimately in the military to be the best he could be. I know GOD recognizes his dedication and I am convinced he has received his just reward. In fact, I sometimes hear him giving me advice! His parents are deceased and he is survived by one brother, Ken, who also served in the Army. I don't know if his old military buddies still think of him but I certainly do. He deserves more than just having his name on The Wall, and hopefully someday I will be able to make some contribution in his honor. God Bless Bob 'MAC' MacNaught and all the others who bravely sacrificed so that the people living in a foreign country some 10,000 miles from our shores may someday experience a life of freedom that we take for granted in the United States. We did not win that war but none of these brave soldiers died in vain and, most important, they all received their just reward from GOD!" **Paul E. Grimes**



~ The Soldier's Medal ~

"The Soldier's Medal is an individual decoration of the United States Army. It was introduced as Section 11 of the Air Corps Act, passed by the Congress of the United States on July 2, 1926. The criteria for the medal are: 'The Soldier's Medal is awarded to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States or of a friendly foreign nation who, while serving in any capacity with the Army of the United States, including Reserve Component soldiers not serving in a duty status at the time of the heroic act, distinguished himself or herself by heroism not involving conflict with an enemy.'"

Dennis Craig Marshall, 19
CPL, D/2/503, 9/13/70

8/3/18: "A man I remember. Dennis C Marshall was my oldest sister's boyfriend, we were from Orrville, Ohio. I remember my sister receiving Dennis' medals from the war and the funeral although I was 11 years old. It had great impact on me and I want to thank Cpl Marshall for his sacrifice for the betterment of me and all of us. God Bless you." **Jeff Helmuth**



Charles Donald Mathews, 20
SP4, B/2/503, 9/12/70

12/20/09: "We Remember. Charles is buried at Lake Forest Cemetery in Grand Haven, MI. BSM ARCOM PH." **R Sage**



Pleasant McCray, Jr., 22
CPL, D/2/503, 7/29/70

7/9/03: "Not forgotten. I was the Aircraft Commander of the C130 that carried you on your final flight from the field back to Saigon. I have never forgotten you and the supreme sacrifice you made. Rest in peace." **Roy J. Spencer, Jr.**



Duncan Glen McNair
LAC, RAAF, 7/20/70

"Canberra ACT. McNair a helicopter crewman he became the first to be killed in Vietnam from 9 Squadron when his helicopter crashed and ignited during operations on 3rd July 1970. He died 17 days later on 20th July 1970, in 3 US Field Hospital, Saigon. Buried Springvale Cemetery Melbourne VIC."



Sydney Thomas Moore, 20
SIG, 110 Sig Sqn, 8/25/70

"Carlton VIC. The signaller became ill on September 18, 1969 and was returned to Australia where he died of neuroblastoma in Repatriation General Hospital, Heidelberg, Victoria on 25th August 1970. Buried Lilydale Cemetery, VIC."



Jesus Moreno, Jr., 20
SP4, B/2/503, 9/6/70

4/23/13: "Remembrance. You covered my back when I walked point, I should have been there when the Co. moved out. You gave it all. My memories bring you back. God Bless." **The Indian**



Robert Dale Osier, Jr., 20
SP4, E/4/503, 7/26/70

6/20/12: "Dear Friend. Bob - Robbi to his family - is our 'sky-pilot'. We were classmates who remained friends. Bob was the first non-relative to hold our newborn daughter in 1967, and in 1971 we named our son Robbi after him. Bob was not drafted - he enlisted saying he wanted 'to get it over with' to pursue a career in drafting and design. He remains a hero in our eyes." **John and Penny**



(continued...)





Roger Dale Overweg, 20
SGT, B/1/503, 9/19/70

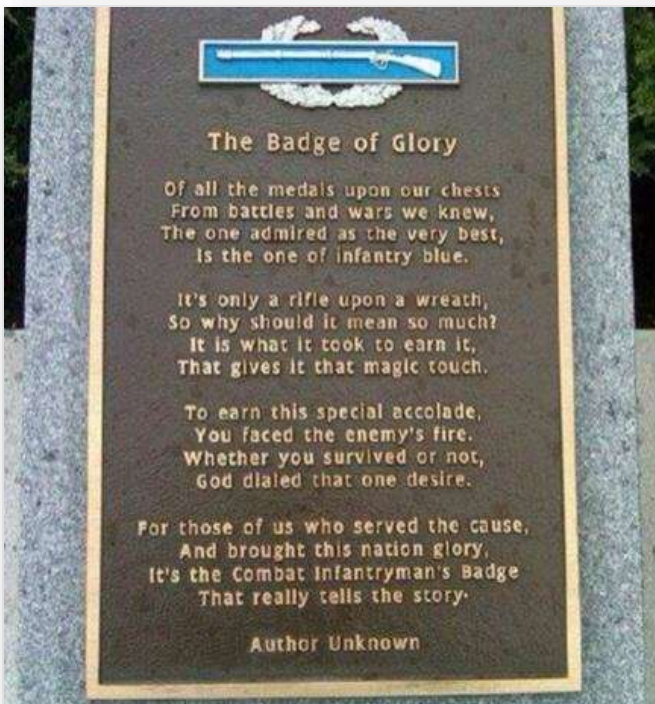
9/28/15: "I am posting this for a good friend of mine. His name is Danny Knopp of Elwood Indiana. Dan served with Roger Dale Overweg in the B CO, 1ST BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV Vietnam. Dan is not computer friendly so I was helping him search for names. He was with the Sgt on Sep 19th 1970." **Unsigned**

[See Roger's DSC citation on Page 49]



Eddie Jack Padilla, 19
CPL, E/17th Cav, 9/7/70

8/27/14: "The Greatest Man I Never Met. Eddie Padilla died before he ever became my father in law. Yet when I slipped that ring on his daughter's left hand nearly 20 years to the day of his death, I accepted him as a part of my family. Eddie gave his life defending democracy and opposing communism, at that time a perceived threat to our way of life. It is those men and women like my father in law that make it possible for Americans and many South East Asians to live free. Eddie, you can rest well. I love your daughter and grandsons. I do my best every day to care for your daughter and grandsons in a way that would hopefully do you proud. Though we have never met, I will never forget your sacrifice, your courage in the face of death and the gift of your daughter Marie, whom I promise to love always...God Bless You Sir." **Anthony Nicastro**



Posted on the Wall of Faces in connection with tributes to Eddie Padilla.

Brenton G. Mowbray, 36
T/MAJ, HQ Aust Army, 9/14/70

"Adelaide. An Army psychiatrist attached to Headquarters Australian Army died in 1 Australian Field Hospital of Heart Failure, 14th September 1970. Buried Perth War Cemetery WA."



Peter Lawrence Penneyston, 22
SPR, 1FId Sqd, 8/2/70

"Queenstown TAS. An enemy mine killed him at noon on 2nd August 1970 in Phuoc Tuy. Buried Mersey Vale Memorial Park Cemetery."



Jose Manuel Perez, 21
SP4, A/4/503, 7/28/70

11/5/02: "Will never forget you. Thank you Manny, for all your e-couragements and memories for the times we spent running and hunting. You gave your life in order that others could enjoy this freedom. God Bless you." **Robert W. Acres**



Francis Lindsay Raffan, 41
T/WO2, AATTV, 8/7/70

"Adelaide SA. The career soldier enlisted 12 months after the end of WWII and remained in the army until he died of a heart attack in the field in Thua Thien Province on 7th August 1970 Buried Centennial Park Crematorium."



Billy Harrison Ratliff, 20
SGT, 173d LRRP, 9/24/70
(Virtual Wall states N/75 Rgr.)

2/14/18: "I still remember. Billy, I was heartbroken when I heard you'd been killed. We had trained together at Ft Gordon and spent a lot of time together and became good friends. When we got to Nam you and Stacy headed for the 173rd and I was off to the 199th. You were such a role model and leader it's a tragic loss that your life was cut short. R.I.P. Brother." **Jack Turner**



Neil Thomas Richardson, 23
L/CPL, 7RAR, 8/27/70

"Sydney NSW. He was killed in action in Phuoc Tuy on 27th August 1970. Buried Northern Suburbs Crematorium, NSW."



(continued...)



Sammy Pina Rodriguez, 19

SP-4, 173d AHC, 8/8/70

12/9/18: *"Memories. Sweet*

Sammy...we will never forget you...so many memories, a wonderful friend who will always be in our hearts..???"

Loretta



**FINAL MISSION OF
SP4 SAMMY P. RODRIGUEZ**



Bell UH-1 Iroquois

"On August 8, 1970, a U.S. Army helicopter UH-1C (tail number 66-00692) from the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company "Robin Hoods" was participating in an eight-ship lift of troops during a combat assault supporting Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops advised by an American Special Forces team. Approximately four miles west of Bu Dop Airfield in Phuoc Long Province, RVN, the aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed in a swampy field with the loss of three crewmen. The aircraft commander survived and was rescued. The lost crew included pilot 1LT Jol N. Smith, crew chief SP4 Sammy P. Rodriguez, and gunner SP4 William E. Barritt. After receiving a Mayday call, one of the lift ships returned and put down near the burning wreckage of 692. Barritt was able to exit the aircraft himself and, although critically injured, was attempting to remove Rodriguez when assisted by the crew of the rescue aircraft. Smith and the other pilot were still pinned in the flaming wreck. The rescue helicopter picked up and hovered close to 692 to keep the flames away from the cockpit. Another helicopter, Robin Hood 3, the Command & Control aircraft for the mission, also landed. A captain, CPT William W. Walker, exited the second rescue helicopter and came over to hold up one of the main blades of the wreck which now began to droop because of the heat, allowing the rescuers to continue the extraction of the pilots. The downed helicopter was raging so hot that the rescue party had to lie down in swampy water to cool off intermittently

while trying to remove the downed crew. A moment later, the rocket pod on the downed aircraft exploded, killing CPT Walker. The blast caused the hovering rescue helicopter to almost lose control. It set down and loaded Barritt and Rodriguez and took them to the Medical landing pad at Quan Loi. The second and a third rescue ship brought out the remaining dead and injured. Rodriguez, with 50% burns over his body, succumbed to his injuries later that day along with Smith who was unable to be extracted before the explosion. Barritt died at a field hospital in Long Binh on August 14, 1970, after suffering burns to 35% of his body. CPT Williams (sic, Walker) was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. [Taken from coffeldatabase.org and vhpa.org]

William Dale Secor, 19

SGT, B/4/503, 7/2/70

"Bill was my squad leader and he is the reason I'm here today, he saved my life many of times. He took me under his wings and showed me the ropes when I was green. I will never forget him, I have a new family now because of him. I also owe him my rank, when he passed on, I had to take his place. I found out what an awesome job he had keeping us in line. He is in a better place now and I believe he's at rest even though he was taken young. I will never forget him and he will have a place in my heart. Airborne All the Way!"

Undated & unsigned



Pablo Isreal Seda, 21

PVT, D/3/503, 9/15/70

9/15/15: *"Thank you. Thank you Pvt. Seda for your courage in dangerous times, in a far and dangerous place."*

A Grateful Vietnam Vet



Calvin Russell Segar, 18

PFC, 173d LRRP, 9/22/70

(Virtual Wall states N/75 Rgrs)

9/22/15: *"Thinking about you today and missing you my brother. 45 years ago today. I still miss you. I think about what if sometimes. Then of course I remember that you no longer hurt, there are no more struggles for you, there are no more fears and no more challenges. There is only peace...."*



(continued...)



.... I remember now only the good times we shared. To this day I look back at our time together and still you make me laugh. I know things weren't ever easy for you. You never let me see your pain. I love my brother, my friend. I cherish the time we had and I hurt because there wasn't more." **Julie**



Thomas Allenbach Shipe, 22
CPL, B/1/503, 9/19/70

5/27/18: "Think of you often...I grew up in Peter's Twp...and Tom was a classmate of my brothers. When he died, I was graduating from HS. Always felt sad when I learned of his death. So much youth wasted with on the war. He has stayed in my thoughts over the years. God bless the family." **Kathleen Fillo**

[See Thomas' Silver Star citation on Page 29]



Kenneth Wesley Slaughter, 21
1LT, D/4/503, 7/22/70
(Virtual Wall states A/4/503)

11/6/15: "My Brother. Lt. Ken Slaughter and I went through basic, AIT, OCS, Airborne and Special Forces training together and were assigned to Vietnam on the same orders and ended up in the same unit (173rd). Owing to an extension of duty our orders to CONUS were set on the same day in November, 1970. We were to leave on the same day. I grabbed a Huey and flew out to his fire base to pick him up, only to find that he had been killed the day before by an artillery shell IED. That July 22 date is wrong. It was a crushing loss for me personally and even worse for any family Ken had. He was honest, brave, honorable, had a good sense of humor and was a great platoon leader."

Donald L. Jordan



Jol Nebane Smith, 25
1LT, 173d AHC, 8/8/70

1/23/15: "Uncle Jol, Just wanted to say hello. Let you know that even though I never had the honor of meeting you I think of you often. I loved your brother like a dad. For grandma, your mother, she will burn within me forever. There will never be another women like her. I can't even imagine what it was like for her to lose you. Your sisters are doing fine. They are both a ball of fire. Anyway, in honor of you I named by son Tayden Jolston. He loves hearing the stories that I have to share about you. I pray that someday we will all be together. Your niece," **Tiffany Collins**

[See Final Mission of SP4 Sammy P. Rodriguez, Page 11]



Randal Gene Sowers, 19
PVT, HHB/3/319, 7/8/70

8/21/13: "We Remember.

Randal is buried at Aetna Cemetery, Winameg, Fulton County, OH."

Robert Sage



John Anthony "Doc", Suniga, Jr., 18
PFC, HHC/2/503, 7/24/70

9/8/04: "We Remember. John is buried at Ft. Logan National Cemetery." **Robert Sage**



Malcolm Lindsay Sutherland, 26
L/CPL, RNZIR, 10/31/70

"Killed in action, 31 October 1970 – gunshot wound to back in contact. Buried Christchurch, NZ."



Brent William Sveen, 18
PFC, E/17th Cav, 9/7/70

2/15/09: "Friends. You have been missed, you will always be missed, but you will always be remembered. Your zest for life, your comic humor and quick wit are immortal to all who were blessed by having known you. I am proud to be among those who call you friend." **E.S. Hongess**



Donald Leslie Thompson, 20
PTE, 2RAR, 8/2/70

"Sydney NSW. He was killed in action when an enemy mine exploded in Phuoc Tuy on 2nd August 1970. Buried Mt Basset Cemetery, QLD."



 **James Taylor Waldron, 20**
A/3/503, 9/13/70

11/12/02: "You live on in my heart. Veterans Day 2002 ... 'you are gone but not forgotten!' The fog of time has hidden you in its mists but I still mourn your passing. Your loving brother and fellow comrade in arms." **Curt Waldron**



(continued...)





William Wayman Walker, 32
CPT, 173d AHC, 8/8/70

10/8/00: "The Father I never knew.

Though I never really knew you not a day goes by that I don't think of you. My sense of loss still lingers even after all this time. There is still a hole in my heart I have not filled. Your son, Chris."

Chris Moureau
[See Page 36 for Cpt. Walker's DSC citation]



**"If you are able,
save them a place
inside of you
and save one backward glance
when you are leaving
for the places they can
no longer go.**

**Be not ashamed to say
you loved them,
though you may
or may not have always.
Take what they have left
and what they have taught you
with their dying
and keep it with your own.**

**And in that time
when men decide and feel safe
to call the war insane,
take one moment to embrace
those gentle heroes
you left behind."**



Tyrone Calvin Watson, 28
SSG, A/1/503, 9/13/70

1/2/02: "Five Combat Tours. Tyrone

C. Watson, Belmar Terrace, Kingsessing. Although his wife wished he wouldn't keep going back she stood by Watson each time he volunteered to return to Vietnam. The 28-year-old staff sergeant already had been wounded four times when he volunteered for his fifth combat tour in 1970. The fire team leader and intelligence specialist, assigned to Co. A of the 1st Bn, 503rd Inf, 173rd Abn Bde, 101st Abn Div, died in combat on Sept. 13, 1970. He was awarded the Silver Star. The 1957 Bartram High School graduate also was survived by a stepdaughter.

... from The Philadelphia Daily News. **Robert Greer**



Roger Orrie Wells, 20

CPL, A/2/503, 9/17/70

12/11/05: "Such A Loss. Roger

was from Pleasantville, a small town in northwestern Pennsylvania. His parents owned and operated a small grocery store on the main street, so likely many knew of Roger and his parents. He is buried in the cemetery in Pleasantville just to the left and front of my father. When I visit my father, I always stop by Roger's grave-site. I have left a small flag on several occasions. There is much sadness when I remember Vietnam and young men like Roger. But I also always honor his supreme sacrifice, and I'm sure the small town of Pleasantville holds Roger in high honor too."

Vernon Arthur Wright, 21

SP4, A/4/503, 9/5/70

4/14/08: "My RTO/My Friend. Art, I

remember when I left for E/Recon. I told you to get out of the field and to make sure you saw your daughter when you went on R&R. It was a very sad day when the 1SG came to visit me to tell me you died. I remember our quiet talks about home and family when we stood guard together in the CP. I'll always remember you and cherish our short friendship. You are always in my thoughts and feel so close to you. Airborne, All the Way, LT."



By Maj. Michael Davis O'Donnell
170th Assault Helicopter Company
KIA March 24, 1970

From The Virtual Wall

Twelve men were aboard UH-1H 68-15262 when it went down:

Aircrew, 170th AHC:

- MAJ Michael D. O'Donnell**, Springfield, IL (02/07/1978)
- CWO John C. Hosken**, Chagrin Falls, OH (08/28/1978)
- SSG Rudy M. Becerra**, Richmond, TX (11/13/1978)
- SSG Berman J. Ganoe**, Belleview, FL (01/16/1974)

RT Pennsylvania:

- CPT Jerry L. Pool**, Freeport, IL (11/13/1978)
- SFC John A. Boronski**, Ware, MA (11/27/1978)
- SFC Gary A. Harned**, Springboro, PA (11/13/1978)
- Five indigenous troops**

(continued...)



The seven Americans were carried as missing in action until the Secretary of the Army approved Presumptive Findings of Death on the dates noted above - and so matters stood for two decades.

The remains of the men lost in this crash were repatriated on 12 Apr 1995. DNA tests confirmed individual identification for four Americans - **MAJ Michael O'Donnell**, **CWO John Hosken**, **SSGT Rudy Becerra**, and **SSGT Berman Ganoë, Jr.** The three other Americans - **CPT Jerry Poole**, **SFC John Boronski**, and **SFC Gary Harned** - could not be individually identified; their presence aboard the helicopter and among the unidentifiable remains was based on circumstantial evidence. The recovery and identification of the remains was made public on 20 June 2001.



Caregiver Partners: Understanding and Healing the Wounds of PTSD



Are you in need of helpful ideas for coping and self-care? Listen to the VA Caregiver Support Line Telephone Education Group of the Month.

Listen to this month's featured group:

<https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support-line/handouts.asp>

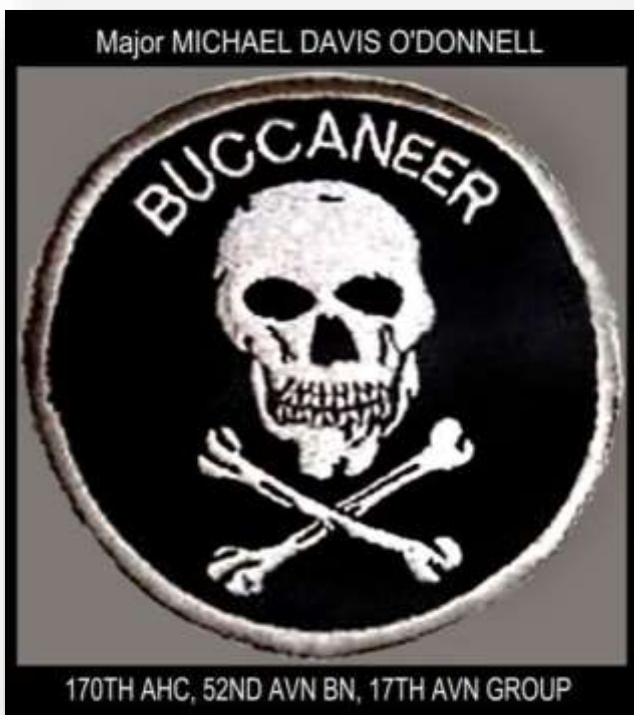
Veterans are not the only people that suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD can occur if you have experienced a trauma. Fifty to ninety percent of people have had a trauma in their lives. Only a small percentage of people will get PTSD. Are you a caregiver with a history of trauma? Are you a caregiver that suffers from PTSD? This discussion takes the mystery out of this disorder. We will help you understand PTSD and talk about how you can get help. Healing can occur no matter how these wounds developed. There is a light at the end of the tunnel for those who do struggle with PTSD.

Would you like to attend the VA caregiver telephone groups each month? If you are a caregiver of a Veteran enrolled in the VA, you can register. Call us at **1-855-260-3274** to register.

Need help?

Visit www.caregiver.va.gov or call us at **1-855-260-3274** to learn more about the support that is available to you and for assistance connecting with the **Caregiver Support Coordinator** at your local VA Medical Center.

Source:  ChooseVA



***“We who have seen war,
will never stop seeing it.
In the silence of the night,
we will always hear the
screams. So this is our
story, for we were soldiers
once, and young.”***

Joseph L. Galloway

*They Were Soldiers: The Sacrifices and Contributions of
Our Vietnam Veterans*





INCOMING!!!



Remembering 'Big Jim'

I learned indirectly yesterday that Jim Quick went to his final assembly area on 12 Feb, while sitting quietly before the TV. Jim had struggled for years with failing health and finding exercise in appropriate treatment from the VA.

Jim joined the Bravo Bulls in early '65 and replaced Jackie Siggers as the PSG in the weapons platoon. Jim had served with the 2d Inf Div in Korea as the Korean Police Action wore down and was a soft-spoken soldier, almost a Gary Cooper-like trooper. He and Jack Schimpf set some new drinking limits in Saigon but generally Jim was a Quiet Man.

He lost a son in New Foundland to an AF crash landing. After retirement he drove a tractor trailer and had an immense 173d Insignia painted on. When Jim would attend a Bravo Bulls assembly, he mostly hooked up with Reuben Dimas.

I spoke with him right before Christmas. Many years before he had given me an album of Airborne Music which I still enjoy.

May Jim find his way into God's Hall of Heroes and hookup with Mo Hostak and Reuben Dimas and all the other paratrooper drinking buddies.

Respectfully, BDQ Roy

LTC Roy Lombardo
CO B/2/503, RVN

Caspers Reunion Postponed

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Las Vegas Tropicana Hotel was closed forcing me to reschedule our Casper Platoon Reunion to: March 29 - April 1, 2021.



<http://www.casperplatoon.com/Reunion2021.htm>

Thank you, Ned.

Ned Costa
Casper Platoon RVN



PSG Jim Quick

An Old Army Story

When I was running the 82d and the 18th Airborne Corps Advanced Marksmanship Units I had a tough old NCOIC running the pistol range. All the powered princes from the headquarters (even the guys wearing stars) showed up to qualify with their 45's. When the gunfire settled down and the smoke cleared, it revealed a couple (not many) holes in the silhouette targets.

Sgt. Flickenger announced for the firing line to "Fix bayonets!"

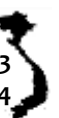
He then walked out to the line and picked up the pistol of a lowly major, loaded it, and cut a 3" hole in the target settling the comments that the guns were inaccurate.

Sgt. Flickenger was well known to the senior staff, including the CG, as he had served with the 82d in WWII and the 187th in Korea. He was not accustomed to a lot of Bull Shit.

Dave Glick
B/2/503



(INCOMING!!! continued....)



Father's Day Gift



Check out this Father's Day gift my son procured on Ebay. Marked C-3/503, but I was D-4/503.

Very cool. Can't find any info on the series. Company was purchased by another who didn't buy anything related to knives.

Jerry Sopko
D/4/503

Final 173d KIA Photo Still Missing

As of yesterday, July 23, the only picture of a fallen Sky Soldier not on the *Virtual Wall* is:

Herbert Wilson, Jr.

(Aug 26, 1947 – Mar 3, 1967) (USA) Private First Class Company C, 2nd Bn, 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, (Single), New York City – mother lived in Harlem, Manhattan at time of KIA. FOIA shows that he took basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey in Company M, 3rd BCT Brigade starting Sep 9, 1965 – AIT at Fort Dix in Company D, 5th CST Brigade starting Nov 19, 1965.

Ken Smith, Col. (Ret)
CO A/D/2/503 RVN
Kvsmith173@gmail.com

Outside the LT's Home in TEXAS



Here in Texas folks display flags on the holidays. I left mine up to remember / commentate 7 July 1965.

Jim Robinson
B/2/503

~ In Memory ~

On July 7, 1965, Bravo Company of the 2/503d suffered nine KIA in battle. The troopers were:

Rudolph Villalpane Hernandez, PVT, 20
David Lafate Howard, SSG, 22
Allen Isaac Johnson, PVT, 18
McArthur Johnson, SGT, 25
Raymond Patrick Meehan, PFC, 23
Durward Frank Ray, SGT, 21
Johnie Edward Rice, PFC, 21
John Dillinger Shaw, PVT, 22
Ronald Lloyd Zinn, CPT, 26*

Note: The original post of our battalion outside of Bien Hoa AFB in '65-'67, was named *Camp Zinn* in honor of Ron. On the next day, July 8, 1965, Bravo lost **Edward Joseph Almeida, PVT, 18**. Ed



Camp Zinn. Bravo Co. perimeter foreground outside of image, Alpha Co. perimeter on left, Charlie Co. perimeter at top of photo, and HQ Co. perimeter on right outside of image. (Photo by LTC George Dexter, 2/503 Bn Cmdr, circa '65/'66)

(INCOMING!!! continued...)





REUNIONS OF THE AIRBORNE KIND



We will continue publishing reunion information in future issues of our newsletter. Ed

Our Sky Soldier Memorial

Received a letter from Kenneth Smith asking all Chapters to financially support the Herd's Memorial Foundation.

The polish, the lights, the upkeep keeps it ever spinning in requests for contributions and donations. Without going into the Chapter's funds I contributed \$173.00 on behalf of the Chapter. And while feeling generous I donated another \$100. to the Association.

David Williams, the Association's treasurer, is asking any of our Herd brothers to donate whatever you can to the Association to get its funds up whereby it can safely get back to publishing *Sky Soldier*. Let's face it, Herd family, this whole organization exists on what we donate and contribute to it. It's not free. Everybody gets tired of donations but it's the bread and butter of our existence. David Williams encourages us to go to www.skysoldier.net Scroll down and click in donation.

Darn virus still has us as a Chapter locked out from getting together for that picnic and a glider ride. It might improve before the summer is out. Still working on it. Airborne, gang!

Memorial Foundation:

Kenneth Smith
124 Tugboat Lane
Summerville, SC 29486
Kvsmith173@gmail.com

Bill Terry
A/3/319th



Parachute Salutes



“Army paratroopers jump from an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III over Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska, July 10, 2020, as part of JBER Salutes, a two-day event to show appreciation to service members, nearly 100 Anchorage-area ‘COVID Heroes’ and their guests.”

(Photo by Alejandro Pena, USAF)



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOD Identifies Army Casualty

JULY 23, 2020

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Inherent Resolve.

Sgt. **Bryan Cooper Mount**, 25, from St. George, Utah, died as the result of a vehicle rollover accident while conducting recon-naissance operations, July 21, 2020, in Eastern Syria. The incident is under investigation.

Mount was assigned to 1st Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.



Rest Easy All American





Medal of Honor Monday: Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Pitts

July 13, 2020 | By Katie Lange

Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Pitts was one of several men responsible for setting up a new post in a volatile region of Afghanistan in 2008. The operation turned into a disaster for U.S. forces, but Pitts' actions in guarding the post from insurgents earned him the Medal of Honor.



Pitts was born on Oct. 1, 1985, and grew up on a farm in Nashua, New Hampshire. By his own admission, he was an uncoordinated child who wasn't good at sports and wasn't sure what he wanted to do after high school. So, instead of burdening his family with the cost of college, he decided to enlist in the Army's delayed entry program in January 2003 when he was just 17.

Pitts spent several years headquartered in Camp Ederle, Italy. He deployed twice to Afghanistan: for a year in 2005 and again for 15 months beginning in 2007 with the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. It was during that second deployment that all hell broke loose in the Waygal Valley region of Kunar Province, where his unit, 2nd Platoon, Chosen Company, was responsible for security.

In mid-July 2008, the company was involved in Operation Rock Move, the final mission of their deployment. Pitts' unit, a few Marine Corps mentors and some Afghan soldiers were supposed to reposition forces from Combat Outpost Bella to a new post nicknamed Vehicle Patrol Base Kahler. It was on the outskirts of tiny Wanat village, which initially welcomed the troops. The goal: disrupt militant trafficking in the valley and set the stage for effective regional economic and security improvements.

Early on July 13, then-Sgt. Pitts and eight other paratroopers were at the new post providing perimeter security at Observation Post Topside, an area of higher ground that could watch over the village and serve as the post's eyes and ears. In the predawn darkness, they noticed potential insurgents not too far away.

As a fire support specialist, Pitts was about to request indirect fire support from VPB Kahler when, suddenly, more than 200 insurgents started firing rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and small arms. They had infiltrated the town and set up firing positions and weapons caches all around the main base. The 48 U.S. service members at the post were outnumbered.

Some of the insurgents, who were hiding in a brush-filled creek bed just to the north of where Pitts and his crew were, began lobbing grenades at them in an effort to isolate Topside from the main base. All of the men on Topside were killed or injured, including Pitts, who suffered serious shrapnel wounds. Another soldier had to help him staunch the bleeding from a leg wound with a tourniquet.

(continued...)



Pitts had lost a lot of blood and couldn't stand, but he knew they couldn't give up Topside to the insurgents. He took control and fired back as the enemy moved closer. Pulling pins in grenades, he would wait until the last second to throw the explosives so they would detonate immediately and couldn't be tossed back. He also continued to fire a machine gun until two soldiers from the main base down the hill came to his aid.

Pitts traded them his machine gun for an M4 with a mounted grenade launcher and continued his counter-assault. But soon, he realized he was all alone on Topside — everyone else had died or been forced to move off the hill.

Pitts crawled to Topside's northern radio position and described what was happening to commanders. The insurgents were just on the other side of a sandbag wall from him — so close that the men on the other end of the line could hear their voices. But Pitts kept firing grenades and whispering information to the command post, which they could use to help him with indirect fire support.

Four more men tried to come to Pitts' rescue, but all were wounded and one died. Soon after that, U.S. forces sent in air strikes, turning the tide of the battle. The close-air support knocked out the insurgents assaulting Topside long enough for more soldiers to get there and secure it.

Eventually, other reinforcements made it to the town and began clearing enemy positions. Pitts and the other wounded men were flown out as the remaining troops continued fighting for several more hours until Topside and VPB Kahler were once again secure.

Pitts' courage and commitment kept the insurgents from overrunning the observation post, which would have given them a vantage point to inflict major damage on the main base and capture any soldiers within it.

Unfortunately, his unit paid a heavy price. Nine soldiers died during the battle: Spc. Sergio Abad, Cpl. Jonathan Ayers, Cpl. Jason Bogar, 1st Lt. Jonathan Brostrom, Sgt. Israel Garcia, Cpl. Jason Hovater, Cpl. Matthew Phillips, Cpl. Pruitt Rainey, and Cpl. Gunnar Zwilling.

After the fight, it was clear to mission leaders that the villagers in Wanat, who had initially welcomed them, had betrayed their trust. Within a few days, Chosen Company moved out.

Pitts left the Army in 2009 and got his bachelor's degree from the University of New Hampshire at Manchester. He moved back to his hometown, where he works in business development and lives with his wife and son.

On July 24, 2014, Pitts received the Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama during a White House ceremony. He is one of 13 living recipients to have fought in Afghanistan.

"Against that onslaught, one American held the line," Obama said during the ceremony, noting that Pitts was *"just 22-years old, nearly surrounded, bloodied but unbowed."*



"Valor was everywhere that day," Pitts told reporters after the ceremony. *"And the real heroes are the nine men who made the ultimate sacrifice so the rest of us could return home. It is their names, not mine, that I want people to know."*

Since earning the Medal of Honor, Pitts has rung the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange, returned to Italy to visit paratroopers in his former unit and he's spoken at length to various groups about his experiences in Afghanistan.

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

DoD Source:

www.defense.gov/Explore/Features/Story/Article/2270231/medal-of-honor-monday-army-staff-sgt-ryan-pitts/source/GovDelivery/



The 2/503 Bravo Bulls in RVN ~ The Early Days ~



"Take two salt tablets and drive on."

7 JULY 1965 A Memorable Day

In Issue 70 of our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter*, p. 19-26, there contains a general discussion of the battalion's operation on 7 July 1965.¹ and shows the layout of Camp Zinn at Bien Hoa AFB; rubber tree history, replaced by amazing fruit of calculating NCOs, who's trade relations at Saigon port remain worthy of international recognition to this day. If you ever wanted to see the difference between the USA and USMC, just picture this encampment with nothing more impressive or substantial than a GP tent, possibly ... just possibly, with a wood floor (pallets beat mud).



Camp Zinn circa '65/'66, home to the Bravo Bulls
(Photo by LTC George Dexter, CO 2/503)

Over the years, and issues, since, various reports have described events of this painful day for the Bravo Bulls, most with too much attention to a couple of guys who, with luck, brought the fracas to conclusion, with little given to consequential chain of command actions and relationships.

ACTION ANALYSIS 7 JULY 1965 When leadership frayed

Acknowledging limited information, the following summary is offered as opinion with the objective of emphasizing the importance of textbook leadership, fire and maneuver v. guts & glory; avoiding, perhaps in future, the worst of a bad day.



**An unusual clearing in the middle of the dense jungle
of War Zone "D"**

Company B, the "Bravo Bulls," 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry (Abn), tight, prepared, trained and ready as any in the US Army, deployed to Vietnam 5 May 1965. Two months "in country," the unit made contact at the perimeter of an established, operational VC training base in "War Zone D," generally north of the Dong Nai River. Bravo was flanked by Alpha and Charlie companies, all three advancing on a southerly axis, along with two additional battalions to the west, and supporting fire from the 319th Artillery Battalion (Abn) to the south. This was the first 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) operation involving all units to include the newly-arrived 1st RAR Battalion from Australia.

(continued...)





Our brothers of the 1RAR arrived Vietnam just a month earlier.

The weather was clear, terrain generally level (lacking notable contour relief), with low jungle vegetation moderated under the reduced light of high canopy old growth. Various encountered trails evidenced area activity with minimal landmarks to confirm navigation.

Sharp action commenced abruptly when Bravo hit contact mid-morning as the brigade line advanced. A marshalled burst of enemy small arms and machine gun fire from a well-concealed VC security perimeter pinned down the Bulls, taking immediate casualties.

WHAT HAPPENED (Big Picture)?

Until GEN Creighton Abrams assumed MACV command, 10 June 1968, operational deployment of US military units in Vietnam typically pursued "search & destroy" (reconnaissance in force) missions on the misguided assumption that we could kill our way to victory. Few objectives were secured for reasons other than posting a unit to further this benighted purpose, as body counts scored success. Then Abrams, together with Ellsworth Bunker (Ambassador) and Bill Colby (CIA), reasoned that expanding economic and communications security (roads and markets) to reestablish national vitality would displace VC avarice and propaganda, exposing NVA forces to friendly engagement, eventually all ARVN, with US support. That worked much better, and the tide appeared to be turning until Congress, conceding to public exhaustion, pulled the plug, leading to SVN's collapse on 30 April 1975, bringing the ill-conceived American chapter of the Indochina Wars to an end.²

WHAT HAPPENED (Small Picture/Lessons)?

Essentially, Bravo walked into a virtual ambush, leaving nine dead, nine wounded. An operational enemy training base³ was briefly secured with evident, but unknown VC casualties. In retrospect, the base was likely cleared the day and night before, as the brigade positioned and staged to advance. That "coordination" cost surprise, and without a flanking trap (intercepting battalion) to the west, the obvious escape was offered, and as now seems apparent, well anticipated and taken. We may further surmise that Bravo's encounter was a relatively small covering force that did its job well.

But the big story, in small print, bears worthy consideration for insightful attention.

Captain Roy Lombardo, Jr. brought Bravo to Vietnam, primed, ready and "tight" as described. Few officers in the 173d could match his training – Jungle Warfare and Ranger Skills, or his leadership experience – thoroughly acquainted with subordinate leaders. Their alert mutual confidence was honed sharp through rigorous training on Okinawa over the preceding year, so that when they arrived at Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, the glove matched the hand with superb dexterity, fit and ready.



Capt. Roy Lombardo, Bravo Bulls' company commander in summer of '65 at Camp Zinn.

(continued...)



But the poppy seeds of trouble were sewn, imperceptible on Okinawa, where wives and bonding friendships lingered with expectation that we'd all be home in a couple weeks, and "in country"; as initially neither the seasoned reality of dislocation to Vietnam's exotic variation nor the sudden shock of combat had merged to temper a steeled professional soldier to constant awareness of his on-again, off-again environment. Death lay between extremes of languid bliss and chaotic violence, strange language, pungent smells, squatting old men, half naked children, a blaring amp, mail from home and splendid French bread.

The unravelling, also imperceptible, occurred over the two months following, and critically just prior to 7 July, the very day CPT Lombardo departed for CONUS, school and reassignment, with command of Bravo having passed to CPT Paul Sutton, transferred from the 2/503d Recon Platoon. CPT Sutton, a "Rakkasan" vet (187th RCT) looked to be the right man for the job, but as new CO his first task was to inventory and sign for all that company equipment back on Okinawa, awaiting the company's return. A flight was arranged and away he went for this routine housekeeping, important though non-essential, expected back in three days and in time for the big op into "D" Zone.



CPT Paul Sutton

"There's many a slip twixt the cup, ..." and CPT Sutton did not return on day three (gone seven). With the War Zone D operation ready to launch, 1LT Jim Bennett, a LNO from HHC, 2/503, newly assigned to Bravo, 2d Platoon, was tapped to lead the company, leaving PSG Alvin Ku to manage 2d Platoon. At the same time, 2LT Bill Olds, formerly a fit with PSG Ku, and TDY from Bravo, was instead re-assigned upon return to 1st Platoon with PSG Eugene Rick, where, barely acquainted with new CO and squad leaders, he was virtually dependent upon Rick for operational direction.



2LT Bill Olds

In 3d Platoon, 1LT Ron Zinn, whose Army career had chiefly tracked his extraordinary athletic ability (Race Walker, Olympics 1960 & 64), was paired with PSG Leon Hostak, followed by PSG Eugene Davis, both competent NCOs with combat experience. Excelling thus, LT Zinn enjoyed a mentoring friendship with Army Ranger SSG David Howard, one of his squad leaders. They teamed up to prevail in a five-mile unit competition during which Zinn, who could have won it

running backwards, notably exercised considerable strategic elbow to advantage Howard.

Some of the Bulls on that memorable day...



PSG Eugene Davis



PSG Alvin Ku



SSG Jack Schimpf



2LT Bill Olds*

LT Zinn, newly married, entered and dominated every running competition available during his pre-deployment service on Okinawa. It's fair to say, given his devotion to Olympic training and theater, he missed proportionate infantry training and leadership experience he might otherwise have had. Further, he was noticeably possessed of those highly charged competitive instincts so important to individual competition, but as became apparent, these had yet to anneal the attentive value that two concerned senior NCOs had to offer, diminishing coherent direction of his platoon. I believe, were Ron still around, he would agree.

(continued...)



assault by PSG Davis and PSG Jack Schimpf, Weapons Platoon, joined by an unattached officer coming forward from 2/503 HQ.



SSG David Howard, B/2/503, KIA 7/7/65

If there are lessons here to amplify, they should not be lost in the price paid to learn them. To that consideration I can only suggest thoughts, humbly and with respect, as following observations or questions:

1. The broad frontal sweep by the brigade lacked imagination and proven strategic purpose, as did many if not most US initiated engagements through much of the Second Indochina "American" War.⁴ In this case, practical development of intelligence could have achieved better result (probing patrols, native insights, area history), leaving the question of durable purpose (sweep completed, depart, then what; with mind-numbing American losses continuing against political and geographic restrictions imposed outside of the operational theater?)⁵
2. Serious contact should have been anticipated, notwithstanding the "beating" nature of advance (movement to contact), as if to flush enemy response.

(continued...)



CPT Ronald Zinn, B/2/503, KIA 7/7/65

And forward we go: LZ, 6 July advance 7 July contact.

The incessant bark of a well-placed machine gun cut into 3d Platoon, and the fight was on. LT Bennett knew what to do, my guess; at least someone did, FAC, RTO, Arty FO? marking position (smoke) calling for support from gunships in the area. But fighting fixed the 3d Platoon, SSG Howard killed in the initial burst. Zinn, immediately sensing loss, desperately tried to reach and cover Howard. Others close by fell in the frontal engagement with numerous wounded. *Proximate* leadership in chaos quickly fell to the PSG Davis, who engaged directly and effectively, taking what cover he could.

The gunship(s) circled low, adding welcome noise to the scene. It was unclear whether any direction followed for either flanking platoon (1st or 3d) to act against the enemy position, as danger (concealed LMG) apparently centered on the 3d Platoon. Several minutes passed before the opposition was breached with a fearless and spontaneous three-man grenade



3. Nothing beats caution when you don't/can't know what's ahead: cover and point, stealth, quiet hand signals, organization/formation where chain of command (small unit) has reasonable opportunity to control/direct.
4. What's the worst thing that can occur? Anticipate as you can: prepare, avoid, options. Develop and practice unit "plays" for flexible response.
5. It matters not your rank or task, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, know who is on your right, left, ahead and behind. Where is back-up, help? Confirm supporting/prep fires; scheduled communications?
6. When a subordinate leader looks to you for command, you had better have something ready to say; a considered direction to point; also, not a bad plan when a senior leader looks to you for advice.
7. Self-discipline among cadre to minimize personal infringement of effective/responsive direction is critical; two-way mutual respect essential. Friendship concerns must not override command boundaries - fraternization.
8. No free-lunch: training, training, training. Train for unit "muscle memory." When it hits, everyone knows their role (point 4, above). All is easily said, the rest is work.
9. Finally: Initiative is celebrated, the icing on the cake. But it is not the cake. The *essential* purpose and function of *Chain of Command* cannot be overly emphasized. In combat or emergency, it can change, literally, in a heartbeat. This scaffold of organization, the "do" in done, unity of unit, remains the timeless, invariably crucial, attribute of success.

Personal notes: Special thanks to LTC "BDQ" Roy S. Lombardo, Jr.,⁶ Jim Robinson, and Jack Schimpf for their recollections and review. While present, I missed the important first portion of this fight, when most casualties occurred. As some views expressed may be controversial, even offensive to persons holding other views or conclusions, I take full responsibility for what I have written here.

Be well,

Bob Warfield
A/B/HHC/2/503
'63-'66



Footnotes

¹ Jim Robinson points out that 319th Artillery Battalion set up guns in a classic "W" spread on the south side of Song Dong Nai, not north, as shown in the article (Issue 70).

² Regional fighting continued: Pol Pot's flaring Khmer Rouge slaughter in Cambodia, finally extinguished by "NVA" (Socialist Republic Vietnam) PAVN, 1979, followed by Chinese "punitive" incursion supporting Khmer Rouge, also soundly checked by SRV/PAVN; then 10 years of insurgent fighting across Laos, ultimately settled by SRV/PAVN, 1989. The Mayaguez "incident," USAF/USMC occurred May, 1975. Historians typically reference three "Indochina Wars," but antecedent to all was Japanese action against French colonial army in Sep, 1940, prompting formation of Viet Minh resistance (NVA).

³ This VC base was fairly sophisticated, with covered class instructional facility to handle up to company-sized units, clearly established to provide instruction to engage USAF (A-1E; model suspended on descending wire) operating from Bien Hoa AFB, just south across the Dong Nai.

⁴ Fire support (like naval crossing the "T") looks problematic, though more likely to present an error of range v. deflection, as was demonstrated later that day.

⁵ A problem for most through summer '68, with Hill 937, Dong Ap Bia "Hamburger Hill" (101st Div, et al, May '69) more of the same.

⁶ Biệt Động Quân. Let's just say, there are Rangers, and there are **RANGERS**.

*Photo of Bill Olds from his acting role in the movie, *The Green Berets*.



LTC Roy Lombardo, Jr., CO B/2/503, with his Bravo Bulls on an earlier Veteran's Day in Las Vegas, NV.

(continued...)



July 7, 1965, The Aftermath

~ And Then The Trap Was Sprung ~



“SITE OF THE AMBUSH. This was the scene just after the Vietcong riflemen and machine gunners had opened fire on B Company from concealed positions near the road. A mine had exploded on the road in the middle of the point platoon. Now, a medical helicopter eases down to pick up the dead and wounded. By then the Vietcong had slipped away.” *Life Magazine*, October 22, 1965



“TAKE TWO SALT TABLETS AND DRIVE ON!”



Sky Soldiers of the Bravo Bulls, 2/503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne (Sep) on Okinawa.



Home is where you dig it. Bulls in the rubber trees, '65.



Bob Warfield & B Co. prepare to linkup, Chin Tam, Nov. '65.



VA launches COVID-19 screening tool

June 29, 2020

Pre-screening expedites Veteran access to facilities for care

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today the launching of a digital **COVID-19 screening tool** to streamline Veteran access to medical care during the coronavirus pandemic.

The tool, designed with Veteran and staff input, enables the screening of more than 10,000 people each day.

Veterans, their caregivers and VA health care employees can use this tool on their mobile phones before entering facilities. It takes less than a minute to complete and helps reduce wait times, lowers exposure risk and eases patient stress. It also helps Veterans gain confidence with increased digital interactions as part of their VA health care experience.

“This screening tool emphasizes the ongoing importance of VA’s investment in digital modernization, as it went from initial concept to national availability in less than two weeks,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. *“In addition to providing a broad range of innovations and improvements that significantly benefit the Veterans we serve; our culture of innovation allows us to respond quickly to urgent and evolving needs.”*

To protect patients and staff, VA screens everyone for coronavirus symptoms and exposure each time they enter a health facility. VA staff uses the information received to direct people to either enter the building or go to a designated area for additional screening. Veterans, caregivers and staff can use the tool by texting the word **“SCREEN”** to 53079 or scan a dedicated QR code with their mobile phone to get a link to the tool. They then answer a series of simple questions and share their results at the VA facility entrance.

For more about VA efforts to meet Veteran and staff needs during the coronavirus pandemic, visit [VA.gov](https://www.va.gov) **coronavirus FAQs** and **VA’s public health response**.



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement by Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs on U.S. Troop Levels in Germany

June 30, 2020

The Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff briefed the President yesterday on plans to redeploy 9,500 troops from Germany. The proposal that was approved not only meets the President’s directive, it will also enhance Russian deterrence, strengthen NATO, reassure Allies, improve U.S. strategic flexibility and U.S. European Command’s operational flexibility, and take care of our service members and their families. Pentagon leaders look forward to briefing this plan to the congressional defense committees in the coming weeks, followed by consultations with NATO allies on the way forward. We will be providing timely updates to potentially affected personnel, their families and communities as planning progresses.

Paratrooper Descent



“Army paratroopers descend after jumping from a C-17 aircraft during training at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, June 30, 2020, as part of Spartan Flex, an operation to exercise joint capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region.”

Photo By: Army Capt. Mark Scott

Note: It was reported Paratroopers from the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, U.S. Army Alaska, parachuted onto Guam. Ed



From the desk of Dave Glick...

Traditionally, several of the original Bravo Bulls, circa 1963-1965, led by LTC Roy Lombardo, would travel to Vicenza, Italy (Caserma Ederle or Del Din), spending several days with Battle Company, 2/503d. They would visit with the young Sky Soldiers, interact with the entire company, handling the new era weaponry, walk through the MOH Recipient PFC Milton Olive room, view the conference room dedicated to MOH Battle Company Recipient, SSG Salvatore Giunta, discuss training schedules, and then lunch with the troops. These trips began in November of 2004, after the battalion was reflagged.

In the past, when the wives of the Bravo Bulls joined them on the trip, the officers and NCO wives invited the "Bullettes" to a dinner. The Battle Company, officers, senior NCOs, and the entire company of enlisted men would meet at a quite remarkable castle-like restaurant, for a formal dinner. The visiting Bulls would sit at their respective former platoon tables – the only change was with their new platoon members.

After dinner, LTC Lombardo would make the annual presentation of knives to the Battle Company NCO and Soldier of the Year. The knives, made by Gerber, are the, "Strongarm Serrated Fixed Blade," and are enclosed in an oak case with either, "Bravo Bull NCO of the Year" or "Bravo Bull Soldier of the Year," engraved on each. After speeches and the presentations, the traditional and solemn, Bravo Bull Punch Bowl ceremony would follow.

Prior to preparing for the ceremony, never used cups with the names of our Fallen engraved on them would be arranged around the punch bowl which is also engraved. The cups are set upright on the table and represent each member of the Bravo Bulls who served, and were killed in SVN, and also for the Fallen from Battle Co. in either Iraq or Afghanistan.



L-R: Joe Logan, Roy Lombardo, Dave Glick, B/2/503 RVN.
The Bulls' punch bowl ceremony, in memory and honor.

Ingredients for the ceremony include: a pinch of soil from South Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. To this, beer (representing the EM), vodka (representing the NCOs), bottles of champagne (representing WWII, Korea and The Cold War, Vietnam, and the GWOT), a bottle of brandy (recognizing our Allies who served with the 173d (Australians - 1RAR, and New Zealand), red wine (to recognize the blood shed by our Fallen), would be poured into the bowl. We would then add a bottle of ginger ale to cut the alcoholic content and finally, stirred.

A Bravo Bull would then then read "Bury Me with Soldiers." Then the names of the Fallen would be read aloud with participants turning over a cup with the name of each Fallen hero.

A series of three toasts would be made with all attendees drinking a sip after each toast . . .

"To Absent Companions"

"Here's to us and them like us; MIGHTY Damn few"

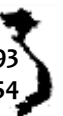
"To the Ladies"

After concluding remarks, the attending Bravo Bulls and members of Battle Co. would converse with each other until the next time they gathered.

Unfortunately, 2019 proved to be different. The Bulls were unable to make the trip to join Battle Co. in Italy. Therefore, CPT Derek Turner, the Battle Co. commanding officer, and LTC Lombardo established the date and time of a video streaming conference in New York City. CPT Turner's charming sister Emma, a resident of Brooklyn, NY, coordinated the telecommunications site for the conference call in lower Manhattan, and even suggested a hotel and a restaurant, where the Bulls and Emma met.

On the 18th of December, Isabelle & David Glick met Carol and Roy Lombardo at Penn Station in Manhattan. They traveled to the Hilton Garden Inn in Tribeca, NY. After settling in, they assembled in the hotel's lounge. They met Emma Turner at the AOA Bar & Grille located in the SOHO and Tribeca section of Lower Manhattan. There, the five dined on food comprised of ingredients from local, sustainable farms, supplementing their cuisine with several bottles of fine wine. Emma is a quite charming, gregarious and intelligent young lady. She had previously connected with a friend affiliated with a video-conferencing business, and booked our conference with Battle Company for the 19th of December.

(continued...)



AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR (POSTHUMOUS)

Thomas Allenbach Shipe
CPL, B/1/503

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
APO San Francisco 96350
4 November 1970

For gallantry in action while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Private First Class Shipe distinguished himself by heroic actions on 19 September 1970, while serving as a rifleman on a combat operation in the Nui Mieu mountains in the Republic of Vietnam.



On that date, while searching for a Viet Cong Political Prisoner of War camp in an area known to contain many enemy soldiers, Private Shipe's element spotted an enemy soldier at the entrance to a cave and took him under fire. Realizing the importance of intelligence that could be obtained from inside the cave, Private Shipe volunteered to be one of two men to enter and search it.

After entering the cave a short distance he came under enemy fire at a very close range and was immediately wounded. He began to return fire in the direction of the enemy muzzle flash in order to enable his comrade to reach the cave entrance and signal for help. He continued to return fire until he was mortally wounded by the enemy fire, sacrificing his own life in an attempt to accomplish the mission.

By his valorous actions he imparted a sense of urgency, purpose, and determination to the men that ultimately played a key role in the success of the mission. His efforts proved to be the force that helped disrupt the enemy's mission and indirectly saved the lives of many other comrades.

Private First Class Shipe's extraordinary heroism was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



The next day, the 19th, LTC (Ret) Lombardo and SGT Glick went to the location housing the video-conference business. There they 'hooked up' with another Bull, MAJ. (Ret) Joseph Logan.

After setting up the tables, cups and liquid ingredients, contact was established with Italy and introductions were made with members of each platoon. Roughly an hour was spent with each platoon.

The troopers asked many questions revolving around service in SVN, weaponry, operations and the like. In kind, the three of us asked questions of Battle Co.

This camaraderie continued throughout the day and finally, the three Bravo Bulls conducted the Punch Bowl ceremony at the NYC site. Battle Co. actively participated. Battle Co. had previously held their dinner and award ceremony, so the knives had already been presented to the worthy recipients. The "Bravo Bull NCO of 2019" is SSG Spann, and the "Bravo Bull Paratrooper of 2019" is SPC Kuhlmann.



SSGT James Spann



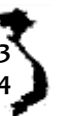
SPC Kuhlmann

Interestingly, the men and women working at the video-conferencing site observed the day's activities and could not stop commenting on the amazing rapport between the young men and women from Italy with the older Bulls. They were amazed at the solemnity of the ceremony that was conducted.

Finally, everyone at both locations said their good-byes with Joe Logan returning home and the Lombardo's and Glick's regrouping for a late evening dinner before they returned home the next day.



Lest we forget



1966

The Counteroffensive

The year 1966 was marked by military, political and diplomatic changes in South Vietnam. For the first time, Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) of America, Australia, Korea and South Vietnam were actively entering Viet Cong strongholds, breaking the enemy's strangle-hold on the people. Charlie was losing his rice, ammunition and weapons caches. The FWMAF were beginning the first phase of the counteroffensive.

Politically the year produced some of the worst setbacks of the new government's history. Armed forces were used on occasion to control riots. The turmoil was resolved by government reform and resulted in improved conditions for the Vietnamese people.

The diplomatic scene was one of harmony with several high-level meetings taking place during the year to smooth out strategy and policy for the ward.

VC SANTUARIES CRACKES

During January the 173rd Airborne Brigade and the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment launched a seven-day sweep into an area near the Cambodian border in search of two VC battalions. The penetration of this one time sanctuary resulted in over 400 enemy deaths.

The 25th Infantry Division teamed up with the 173rd and Australians to uncover an enemy headquarters complex with extensive tunnel systems. In the operation large quantities of weapons and ammunition were captured.



"A patrol winds its way through the fertile fields in the never-ending search for the enemy."

[Sent in by Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503, '66/'67.
Publication source from the era is unknown.]



2/503 Recon troopers getting ready to move-out, circa '66/'67. (Photo from Jerry Hassler)

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, Army Commendation Medal w/V Device** or **Soldier's Medal** 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 the completed 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.

(continued...)





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

They Were Young and Brave and Paratroopers

George S. Colson, II
B/2/503



For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force: Specialist Four Colson distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 13 November 1967 in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day, Company B 2d Battalion (Airborne) 503d Infantry was on a search and destroy mission when attacked by an enemy force. Specialist Four Colson immediately moved to the forward position and began pouring out a heavy volume of 40MM projectiles, keeping the enemy at bay until a defensive perimeter could be established. Specialist Four Colson's outstanding display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and personal bravery was in keeping with the highest traditions of military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



as artillery forward observer attached to a unit engaged in a search and destroy operation in the Republic of Vietnam. When the unit became engaged in a heated battle, with a large Viet Cong force, all communications with their headquarters were broken. Lieutenant Robinson immediately grasped the situation and fearlessly exposing himself to heavy machine gun and small arms fire, moved about the battle area relaying requests for air strikes, medical evacuation, and resupply through artillery radio channels. Robinson maintained this vital communication link throughout the engagement and was personally responsible for the saving of many lives. Lieutenant Robinson's valorous actions in the face of intense hostile fire are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Leslie A. Fuller
A/2/503, '67



For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force. Specialist Four Fuller distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 19 November 1967 in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day, contact was made with a North Vietnamese Army force which later proved to be of battalion size. During the battle Company A was cut off from its sister elements. In an effort to regain contact with friendly forces Specialist Fuller moved to the point of the heaviest contact and began placing effective and accurate fire on the enemy. During the next four days of almost continuous contact Specialist Fuller on many occasions exposed himself to heavy enemy small arms and grenade fire to aid in repulsing enemy probing actions and carrying his wounded comrades to safety and medical attention. Specialist Fuller's display of courage and valor enabled Company A to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy. Specialist Four Fuller's outstanding display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and personal bravery reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.



Robert A. Warfield
B/2/503, '65



For gallantry in action: Captain Warfield distinguished himself by gallantry in action on 7 July 1965 while serving as Battalion S-2, 2nd Battalion (Abn), 503rd Infantry, in an operation in War Zone "D", Republic of Vietnam. Company B, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry was engaged with a Viet Cong force heavily armed with machine guns and automatic weapons and firmly entrenched in a fortified village surrounded by dense secondary jungle. The unit was unable to advance under the withering fire from the village. As the Battalion S-2, Captain Warfield advanced under heavy machine gun and sniper fire to survey the situation. He proceeded to a position from which he could get a good view of the enemy. Then, without hesitation, he called for two volunteers to make an assault against a machine gun position with hand grenades and rifles. Only when all ammunition was expended did they fall back. Captain Warfield remained at a vantage point from which he could observe the enemy, and while exposed to hostile fire, gave directions for a successful air strike on the enemy. Captain Warfield's conspicuous gallantry in action was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



James H. Robinson
B/2/503, '65



For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force: Second Lieutenant Robinson distinguished himself on 7 July 1965 while serving



(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

SM – Soldier's Medal for Heroism

Thomas W. Aikey, A/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Charles A. Bell, B/2/503, SS (photo/citation needed)
James A. Bednarski, C/2/503, BSV
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)
Carmen Cavezza, A/2/503, SS (citation needed)
George S. Colson, II, B/2/503, BSV
Michael J. Cosmo, C/2/503, BSV (citation needed)
Gary Cox, D/2/503, SS (citation needed)
Charles R. Crews, A/2/503, BSV
Eugene R. Davis, B/2/503, DSC
Michael Deeb, HHC/2/503 (citation needed)
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)
Phillip 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)
Jack Kelley, A/2/503, SS (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)
John Leide, C/2/503, BSV
John L. Leppelman, C/2/503, BSV (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)
Donald A. Rice, HHC/2/503, BSV
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
John J. Schimpf, B/2/503, SS
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
Irwin W. Short, B/2/503, BSV (photo needed)
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)
Arthur C. Stang, III, A/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.





The Battle of Gettysburg is remembered as one of the most pivotal encounters of the Civil War, a conflict that led to more than 1,500 men earning the newly created Medal of Honor. One of those recipients, Army 1st Sgt. Frederick Fuger, wasn't even a U.S. citizen when he held the Union position during Confederate Maj. Gen. George Pickett's famous charge.

Fuger was born in Goppingen, Germany, on June 18, 1836. He was a teenager when he immigrated to the United States, boarding a ship in France and arriving in New York City on April 3, 1854. After acclimating to his new home, Fuger enlisted in the Union Army in August 1856. He was assigned to the 4th U.S. Artillery, Battery A, and served all over the country.



LTC Fuger

In 1861, his five years of service were about to end when civil war broke out. So, Fuger reenlisted and was promoted to first sergeant of Battery A, which was under the command of 1st Lt. Alonzo Cushing. Fuger fought in many skirmishes leading up to the Battle of Gettysburg, and it was then that his dedication proved he was worthy of the Medal of Honor.

On July 3, 1863 — the third day of the famous battle — Battery A was positioned near some trees in an area called "The Angle" on Gettysburg's Cemetery Ridge. It was the precise point of the Union line where Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee was determined to break through in what became known as Pickett's Charge.

First, the rebels launched artillery that tore apart Battery A. There were so many casualties that only Cushing, Fuger and a few other soldiers remained standing. Of those few, many of them were injured, including Cushing, who refused to disband the unit. Next, about 15,000 Confederate soldiers charged, hoping to pierce through the Union line right where the 4th Artillery was positioned. Battery A continued to fire on them relentlessly, even as some rebels broke through some of the forward infantry lines. Fuger, literally, propped up an injured Cushing so he could give orders as the rebels got closer. Unfortunately, the young commander was shot and killed just as the rebel's leader fell within feet of their guns.

Fuger took over command of the battery and ordered his cannoneers to fight as infantrymen while he continued to shoot the last of the six cannons that still worked. Finally, the Confederate soldiers began to retreat. Under Fuger's leadership, the battery held its position, and the Union line remained intact.

The outcome at Gettysburg was the straw that broke the camel's back for the South and proved to be the pivotal battle of the Civil War.

Fuger earned his commission as second lieutenant later that year and went on to command the battery for the rest of the war. He stayed in the Army for several more decades and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in February 1888.

In 1897, Fuger was awarded the Medal of Honor, which had been first authorized for soldiers during the war in which he'd earned it. Fuger retired from the Army in 1900 as a lieutenant colonel. He died Oct. 13, 1913.

Nearly 150 years after that fateful day in battle, Cushing, Fuger's fallen commander, was also awarded the Medal of Honor. Both men have been memorialized in a life-sized diorama at the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

This article is part of a weekly series called "Medal of Honor Monday," in which we (the 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.



In A Letter To Our Very Own Wambi Cook, A/2/503



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 19, 2020

NATIONAL PURPLE HEART ORGANIZATION OPENS NOMINATIONS FOR ANNUAL SALUTE IN NEW YORK

Purple Heart Recipients from Every U.S. State and Territory Will be Honored with Special Ceremonies at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, Additional Tributes
Nominations Due by August 31

(NEWBURGH, NY) – The National Purple Heart Honor Mission announced today that it is opening the nomination process for its 2021 Purple Heart Patriot Project. This multi-day salute to service will bring together Purple Heart heroes representing each state and territory in the nation to pay tribute to their courage and sacrifice on behalf of a grateful nation.

One Purple Heart recipient and an escort of their choosing from each state and territory will again be selected for an all-expenses-paid tribute filled with tours and ceremonies honoring their service and that of all those who have earned the Purple Heart. The four-day Patriot Project Mission will feature visits to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, historic Washington's Headquarters where the Badge of Military Merit originated in 1782, and a private tour of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor – the museum dedicated to paying tribute to our nation's combat wounded. Other special tribute events are also being planned.

"Our nation's Purple Heart recipients have made extraordinary sacrifices for our freedom," said National Purple Heart Honor Mission Executive Director, Russell Vernon, Col. USA Ret. *"These brave men and women who bare the physical scars of war, saved the world from the darkness of Nazism, communism, fascism and terrorism. This tribute is a reminder to all of us that their sacrifice will never be forgotten. For some, it is the homecoming they never had. For others, it is an opportunity to connect with their fellow Purple Heart recipients and share stories only they can fully appreciate. For all Americans, The Patriot Project it's a reminder of the cost of freedom."*

It is estimated that more than 1.8 million Americans have been awarded the Purple Heart for being wounded in action or making the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

Good afternoon Mr. Cook –

It was a pleasure speaking with you earlier today. As I mentioned, the Honor Mission is working hard to raise awareness about Patriot Project Mission #2, coming up in April 2021, by asking people everywhere to nominate Purple Heart honorees. To nominate someone for the 2021 Patriot Project, anyone can visit

<https://www.purpleheartmission.org/nominate-a-patriot-project-mission-honoree> and complete the

nomination form. If you could please share this link with others in your network, it would be appreciated. We obviously would welcome any and all of your recommendations for fellow Purple Heart honorees. Of note, if anyone has any questions, please encourage them to call 845-500-8857 or email

Info@PurpleHeartMission.org

Additionally, we discussed, in the run up to National Purple Heart Day, we will be pitching some tv and print media in your area about Mission #2. We appreciate your willingness to do interviews, and I'll be giving you call as we get interest to work out the details. Enclosed is the press release we issued earlier this year, when the nomination process opened. Please feel free to share that with your magazine publishing team.

Thank you again for helping us get the word out so we can honor our Purple Heart heroes.

Bob Driscoll, National Purple Heart Honor Mission
www.PurpleHeartMission.org



RTO Extradordinaire
Wambi Cook



(continued...)



“The honorees we will select symbolize what it means to be humble heroes, who served, sacrificed and continued to serve their communities,” said Vernon.

The Purple Heart recipients who have participated in the Honor Flight-style program have been moved by the outpouring of gratitude from the public and the immediate sense of camaraderie they felt with their fellow honorees.

Anyone can nominate a Purple Heart recipient they know. Nominations must include a short description (up to 250 words) of why their nominee is deserving of this special recognition. Submissions can be sent via email to Info@PurpleHeartMission.org or submitted via the Honor Mission’s website at <https://www.purpleheartmission.org/patriot-project>. Nominations will be accepted until August 31. The Honor Mission will select three finalists from each state and territory and a national panel of Purple Heart recipients and other distinguished Americans will select the final honorees. A complete list of honorees will be announced nationally on November 11 – Veteran’s Day – 2020.

Video footage of the 2019 Patriot Project Mission and interviews with select honorees can be found at: <http://bit.ly/PHHonorMissionVideos>.

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, which was established and expanded through the vision and work of the Honor Mission, today is operated by the New York-New Jersey Palisades Interstate Park Commission. The National Purple Heart Honor Mission is an approved 501(c)3 national charitable organization that provides a range of tribute programing to honor our Purple Heart heroes and preserve their legacy.

Contact: Bob Driscoll, BDriscoll@EmpireStrategy.com; 716-307-7406

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HONOR MISSION

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, Inc., DBA the National Purple Heart Honor Mission is an approved 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which supports a variety of programs to promote the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, pay tribute to our Purple Heart recipients, and educate all Americans about our combat-wounded veterans to ensure those who sacrificed for freedom are never forgotten. Learn more and support their efforts at www.PurpleHeartMission.org.



Distinguished Service Cross Captain William Waymon Walker 5th Special Forces (Airborne) Awarded for actions during the Vietnam War.



The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Captain (Infantry) William Wayman Walker, United States Army (Reserve), for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Detachment B-33, Company A, 5th Special Forces (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, in Southeast Asia. Captain Walker distinguished himself on 8 August 1970, by his actions at the scene of an allied helicopter gunship crash deep in enemy controlled territory. While Captain Walker and his companions approached their area of operations for an impending mission, he observed a nearby gunship crash into a marshy area after being hit by enemy fire. Immediately, Captain Walker's aircraft landed a short distance from the flaming wreckage and the captain ran to aid the injured crew. Soaking himself in the surrounding marsh water so that he could bear the intense heat, he worked feverishly until he freed one injured crewman and carried him to safety. Then, fully aware of the danger from the aircrafts burning ammunition and rockets, he returned in an attempt to free the other casualties. While desperately attempting to remove the pilot, one of the aircraft's rockets exploded and mortally wounded Captain Walker. Captain Walker's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.





Cowboys UNIT HISTORY

1 January 1970 -- 31 December 1970

The 335th Assault Helicopter Company began the year of 1970 assigned to the 214th Combat Aviation Battalion, Headquarters, at Vinh Long, RVN. Until August 31 the unit was stationed at Bear Cat, eight miles Northeast of Saigon. Flying in Support of the 7th and 9th ARVN Divisions the period of January 1 through May 2nd proved uneventful with Combat Assaults and resupply missions becoming a matter of daily routine.

The month of May ushered in unprecedented action for the COWBOYS. With President Nixon's announcement of the Cambodian invasion the COWBOYS were called upon to fly ground elements and needed supplies into this relatively unknown area of Indochina. Enemy contact was light but with long turn-around flights between home base and the area of operations twelve to fourteen-hours days became commonplace. This held true not only for the flight crews but for everyone in the company. Maintenance teams working around the clock made fourteen ship commitments possible. Following the Cambodian Campaign, the unit received a President Citation for their untiring effort to complete the mission. May 30th found the 335th AHC with a new Company Commander, CPT Thomas A. Teasdale. Upon completion of their involvement in Cambodia, the COWBOYS returned to support work for the 7th and 9th ARVN Divisions.

Rumors to the effect that the COWBOYS were in for another move started around the company area, however the summer months passed by and no move materialized.

Tragedy struck the unit in July with the death of WO1 Donald A. Krumeri. Mr. Krumei was killed when his aircraft experienced a tail rotor failure while on short final to a LZ West of Ben Tre. A fine officer and true gentleman, his life was a great loss to the unit, his family, and all his country.



WO1 Donald A. Krumeri, 25
9/22/45 – 7/16/70
Enid, OK

August brought new fire to the transfer rumors and the 31st proved to be the day of truth with the first of many convoys carrying men and equipment South to Dong Tam, the COWBOYS new home. The move was monumental in that aircraft were still flying missions during the four day move.

A new commander, Major Henry J. Raymond was installed and initiated into the COWBOYS on September 1970. October 15 saw history made again with arrival of five (5) Vietnamese Airforce pilots. They were to fly on actual combat missions with COWBOY ACs which, since the move to Dong Tam, carried them to all corners of IV Corps.

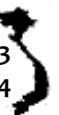
Winter arrived and with it the sun and dust. Dong Tam became a virtual "Dust Bowl." PZs and LZs with IFR dust conditions were met without any incidents or accidents whatsoever. Christmas came with a cease-fire and a day of rest.

December 29 was to become a day the COWBOYS would not soon forget. While making a third and final extraction from a PZ in the U'Minh Forest a flight of five (5) "Slicks" was caught in an ambush staged by NVA Regulars as the aircraft were lifting off. WO1 Peter L. Smith in the lead aircraft was critically injured with five (5) rounds which resulted in five (5) wounds. Seconds later the engine failed and his copilot, WO1 Alex Garcia autorotated the aircraft to a safe and upright position. Without any gunship coverage Chalk 2 dropped down to rescue the stranded and injured crew members while the remaining three "Slicks" suppressed the enemy held tree line. Mr. Smith was taken to Binh Tui and later medivaced to Ft. Lenard Wood, MO. 1970 closed with another cease fire, celebrating hopes for a better 1971.

[Cowboys Awards and Decorations for 1970 appear in source document]

The Vietnam conflict has ushered in the era of the helicopter. Each day history is made. You, the officers and men of the 335th Aviation Company (Aslt Hel) are part of that history. The COWBOYS have traveled the length and breadth of Vietnam. You the soldiers of today inherit a proud tradition.

(continued....)



The COWBOYS were originally Company A, 82nd Aviation Bn, and were stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. With the increase in troop strength in early 1965, Company A, 82nd Aviation Battalion was selected for deployment to Vietnam. In April 1965, the

COWBOYS settled in Bien Hoa and were the direct support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The Ramrods, Mustangs, and Falcons became synonymous with truly outstanding airmobile support as the COWBOYS rode herd on "Charlie" throughout the III Corps Tactical Zone. Bien Hoa was home until May 1967 when the 173rd Airborne Brigade moved to the Pleiku, Kontum, Dak To area. In August, the unit again moved. This time to Phu Hiep just south of Tuy Hoa on the south China Seacoast.

These were rough days as the COWBOYS lived out of duffel bags and Bien Hoa was still considered home. In November, the 335th Avn Co. (Aslt Hel) once again flew to battle in the Dak To area. While supporting the 173rd Airborne Brigade on Operation MacArthur, the COWBOYS were awarded The Presidential Unit Citation. On 31 December 1967, the 335th Avn Co (Aslt Hel) was reassigned to the 17th Combat Aviation Group and to the 268th Combat Aviation Battalion located in Phu Hep.

The unit's mission was still to support the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The mission finally changed in March of 1968, and the unit was in general support of the II Corps Tactical Zone.

In December, the COWBOYS were once again on the move. This trail led to Bear Cat. The unit was attached for all purposes to the 214th Combat Aviation Battalion. The COWBOYS began flying missions in support of ARVN Forces in the IV Corps Tactical Zone supporting the 7th and 9th ARVN Divisions.

In July 1969, the COWBOYS were assigned to the 214th Combat Aviation Battalion, 164th Combat Aviation Group.

The year 1970 brought sweeping changes to the COWBOYS, the most important of which was the move to Dong Tam. On August 31 the transfer commenced, lasting 4 days, while still flying the missions proved by battalion.

A new commander, Major Henry J. Raymond, succeeding Cpt Thomas Teasdale, was installed and initiated into the COWBOYS on Sept. 19.



October 15th saw history made again with the arrival of five (5) Vietnamese Air Force pilots. Vietnamization of the war had become a reality to the 335th AHC and for the COWBOYS it meant a big step had been taken on the long road home.

This book is dedicated to WO1 Donald A. Krumrei, a fellow Cowboy who gave his life for his country.

Source:

335TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY, UNIT HISTORY, courtesy of Dominic "Dom" Fino. Photos added.

FINAL MISSION OF WO1 DONALD A. KRUMREI

At 0725 hours on July 16, 1970, a U.S. Army helicopter UH-1H (tail number 67-17744) from the 335th Assault Helicopter Company, 214th Combat Aviation Battalion departed Camp Bearcat, RVN to join a flight of four other UH-1 helicopters at Ben Tre airfield.



After a short stop at Tan An airfield (to pick up some smoke grenades) and a pilot briefing at Ben Tre, this helicopter was flying in the chalk 3 position on a combat assault mission. It was on the third approach to the pick-up zone that the accident occurred.

Pilot WO1 Donald A. Krumrei was attempting to land near the road where the troops were waiting to load onto the helicopters. The aircraft was in a steep decelerating attitude (flare) as it approached a ditch near the road. While still moving forward at about 5-10 feet above the water in the ditch, the helicopter suddenly started to level, spun rapidly to the right about 180 degrees, and then landed abruptly on its left side in two to three feet of water.



WO1 Donald Krumrei

WO1 Krumrei suffered fatal injuries in the crash. Three of the six other persons aboard were injured.

Sources:

vhpa.org



Sky Soldiers Jumping Into Arizona! Watch the cacti!!



Rendezvous at LZ Scottsdale

*Valley of the Sun
Hosted by Chapter 25
June 23 to June 26, 2021*



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 Activities

_____ \$85.00 Grand Canyon Tour

_____ \$85.00 Golf Outing
Scottsdale trolley to Old Towne Scottsdale
Scottsdale Gun Club
Butterfly Wonderland

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West
There is so much to do and see
The Scottsdale Trolley is free.

The Hotel has a shuttle will take you to many of the local spots.

_____ FREE Gold Star Luncheon
_____ \$15.00 Ladies Luncheon

Vendor Fees

_____ \$125.00 Association member vendor registration (One table, two chairs.)

_____ \$150.00 Non-association 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.azskysoldiers.org Make checks payable to **Arizona Skysoldiers, Chapter 25**

SUBTOTAL DUE:

\$ _____

Mail to: Arizona Skysoldiers, CH25, 3345 E. Cholla, Phoenix, AZ 85028
Hotel reservation: Doubletree Resort by Hilton, Paradise Valley-Scottsdale
5401 N Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85250
(1-480-947-5400) For additional information contact Bill Reynolds at 865-748-4065
E: billreynolds66@yahoo.com

Reserve hotel room early to acquire handicap room as hotel is limited in these rooms.
One must be registered to take part in all listed activities
Registration does not include any mini reunions (such as 2d Battalion etc.)



**His Name Is Terry
And He Was A Chargin' Charlie**
Terrence Kenneth (Terry) Wilkins, PFC, 18
C/2/503, KIA July 3, 1966



What a wild and funny guy he was. Now, nearly 54 years later to the day he left us, I found this picture of Terry on the *Wall of Faces*. He never aged, he looks as I remember him.

While a patient in 3rd Field Hospital in July '66, I picked up *Stars and Stripes* to find Terry's name on the list of KIA -- it became a miserable day. Charlie Company lost three other troopers that day, PFC Julius Collins, PFC James Noss and PFC Eric Ribitsch.

There are different stories about how Terry died while on LP with Charlie Company, but it doesn't really matter much anymore. For these long decades since, Terry has remained a part of me -- those of you who lost close friends to that war know what that means.

This old RTO arrived the 2/503 in December '65, with Terry coming over in January '66, from the 101st where we had served together. Terry said he entered the army at 16 using a falsified birth certificate; just three months before his death he was still 17, and in combat. My granddaughter will be 17 soon.

Terry was from Vegas, and I wrote his mother a long letter back then, but never found her, and regret that to this day.

His name is Terrence, but appears as Terry on the Wall in DC; I suspect his mother would have requested that.

We remember you, Terry. Miss ya kid.

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

Curtis "Junior" McGirt
2/503 RVN
Passes

Curtis "Junior" McGirt, 72, of Buncton, on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 walked into the arms of our Savior at his home with his wife, Debbie at his side.

Services took place Tuesday, June 30 at Memorial Funeral Home and funeral services conducted at Interment with full military honors at Memorial Park Cemetery, Sedalia.

Junior was born on July 22, 1947 in Red Springs, North Carolina, the son of Ann McGirt.

He was raised by his step-parents, John and Sarah Sanderson. He lived the early part of his childhood in North Carolina before moving to Cocoa, Florida.

Junior is survived by his wife, Debbie; one daughter, Ginger Massey of Philadelphia, Mississippi; three step-children: Todd (Mellissa) Irvin of Columbia, Sheila (Gale) Lenger of Wooldridge and Andrea Irvin of St. Louis; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; two sisters: Sarah Lowery of Cocoa and Dorothy Coen of Charleston, South Carolina; and one brother: Jon McNeal of Atlanta, Georgia.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Ann McGirt; two sisters: Wanda Royal and Geraldine Sanderson; his step-parents: Sarah and John Sanderson; his beloved grandmother, Callie McGirt; two brothers: John Edsel McGirt and Winfred (Jim) Sanderson; and two beloved uncles: Junior McGirt and Winford McGirt. He wanted to remember his buddy in war, Melvin, who was killed in action in Vietnam. Junior has never forgotten him and they are now reunited. He in his life honored the men of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.



Rest Easy Sky Soldier



Remember one, remember all...

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

A SOLDIER REMEMBERED

Delmar D. Holbrook

During World War II, I served with HQ. CO., 2nd BN., 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team as a machine gunner on a .30 Cal., air cooled, belt-fed, light machine gun crew, but this story is not about me.

This story takes place on the Island of Mindoro, Philippine Islands in February 1945. My good friend, Robert L. Dunn, and I had just been part of a briefing about our next mission...the airborne assault of the Island Fortress of Corregidor. A few nights before the assault was to take place, Robert and I were sharing thoughts with each other about the upcoming jump. Needless to say, we were both quite nervous. But more importantly, Robert was worried about his mother losing another son.

Robert's brother, Staff Sergeant Archie M. Dunn, Jr. was missing in action and presumed dead after a mission to the Dutch East Indies as a Radar-Radio Operator and Gunner on a B-24 that was part of the 307th Bomb Group, 371st Bomb Squadron. Robert was concerned about the possibility of being killed during the Corregidor Operation and the effect that it would have on his mother; losing another of her sons.

Our conversation then turned to the very possibility of us being killed. Robert then said something very personal and direct,

"I don't want to die, but if I do, my concern is that nobody will remember me after the war is over and that people will forget about this place and what happened here."

After expressing both our fears and concerns, we made a pledge to each other. We pledged that if one of us was killed during the war, upon returning to the states, the other would take every opportunity to honor the memory of his fallen friend. We promised that on each Memorial Day or any other "remembrance day", the survivor would speak of his friend that, even though he did not want to die, was still willing to do his duty for his country.



"Their parachutes billowing in the sun, members of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regimental Combat Team plummet toward the golf course on Corregidor. Planners recognized the hazards of the jump into a narrow area that was bounded by cliffs and the waters of Manila Bay."

PFC Robert L. Dunn was killed in action during the assault of Corregidor on February 18, 1945. Since returning home from the war, I have been true to my pledge to Robert. For the past 59 years, I have used every available bully pulpit to tell the story of my friend.

Long live in our memories one young man, Robert Lee Dunn of El Paso, Texas who died in defense of his homeland, the United States of America. God Bless America!

Rev. Delmar Holbrook has told this story from his pulpit in Anderson, Indiana every Memorial Day and his family carries his story on. They will be attending the dedication of the WWII Memorial on behalf of the 503d PRCT and in memoriam Robert L. Dunn.

Source:

Courtesy of Paul Whitman, 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion website. Photo added.



Glenn Harry English, Jr. Medal of Honor

Biography:

English joined the Army from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1962, and by September 7, 1970 was serving as a Staff Sergeant in Company E, 3d Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade. On that day, in Phu My District, Republic of Vietnam, he attempted to save a man trapped inside a burning armored personnel carrier, despite warnings the vehicle could explode at any moment. The personnel carrier did explode, and both English and the man he was trying to rescue were killed.

English, aged 30 at his death, was buried at Fort Bragg Main Post Cemetery in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.



Medal of Honor citation:

S/Sgt. English was riding in the lead armored personnel carriers in a 4-vehicle column when an enemy mine exploded in front of his vehicle. As the vehicle swerved from the road, a concealed enemy force waiting in ambush opened fire with automatic weapons and anti-tank grenades, striking the vehicle several times and set it on fire. S/Sgt. English escaped from the disabled vehicle and, without pausing to extinguish the flames on his clothing, rallied his stunned unit. He then led it in a vigorous assault, in the face of heavy enemy automatic weapons fire, on the entrenched enemy position. This prompt and courageous action routed the enemy and saved his unit from destruction. Following the assault, S/Sgt. English

heard the cries of 3 men still trapped inside the vehicle. Paying no heed to warnings that the ammunition and fuel in the burning personnel carrier might explode at any moment, S/Sgt. English raced to the vehicle and climbed inside to rescue his wounded comrades. As he was lifting 1 of the men to safety, the vehicle exploded, mortally wounding him and the man he was attempting to save. By his extraordinary devotion to duty, indomitable courage and utter disregard for his own safety, S/Sgt. English saved his unit from destruction and selflessly sacrificed his life in a brave attempt to save 3 comrades. S/Sgt. English's conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the cost of his life were an inspiration to his comrades and are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army.



Glenn's sister, Anna Mae Fike of Easton, MD, received the medal from President Gerald R. Ford.



A Sky Soldiers' Photos of Lo Dieu Village Circa '69-'71

It would be awesome if somebody went back to Lo Dieu Village, which is on the coast about 50 miles north of Quin Nhon. The kids would all be oldsters now and would cherish these pictures of their childhood (Pg. 45).

Scott Ingmanson
D/E/2/503 & Caspers



Scott, circa '70/'71. "Fire Direction in the analog era. This was a test in the rear somewhere."



L-R: "Jim Rosen, Scott Ingmanson SP4, SSG Pruitt (with hat). E/2/503 Lo Dieu, Winter '69/'70."



"Lo Dieu E Company 2/503rd bunker".



"The best 4.2" crew in the Nam, E/2/503."



"Vietnam Fall '69. 4.2" Gun Pit, Lo Dieu, E/2/503."

(Photos from Scott continue....)





"Lo Dieu toilet facilities, E/2/503."



L-R: "Flash from Chicago, and Scott Ingmanson."



"E/2/503 Lo Dieu, our dog, PFC."



"Lennon? Lo Dieu, E/2/503, winter '69/'70."



"Lo Dieu, E Company 2/503, sleeping accommodations gun crew."



"My M60." Scott Ingmanson

(Photos from Scott continue....)



Scott's Photos of the Children and Villagers of Lo Dieu



"E/2/503rd comrade from California the Vill Lo Dieu."



"Mon?"



"Coot and her sister, Lo Dieu."



"Lo Dieu kids, Mon in front?"



"Lo Dieu kids."



"Lo Dieu village kids."

Thanks to Scott for sharing some of his photos with us. Ed



Thanks to *Merritt Island Now* for showcasing our battalion's newsletter in the September edition of their magazine here on the Space Coast of Florida. Ed



Islanders of the Month

BY ERNEST ARICO

MI Couple Connects Vietnam Vets, Families with Newsletter

The Vietnam War is, without a doubt, one of the most significant military events in United States history. More than 50,000 U.S. servicemen lost their lives during the struggle in Southeast Asia.

The tensions the war created and the passions it unleashed threatened to tear the fabric of U.S. society apart. Additionally, the pernicious effect of the war on the U.S. armed forces would leave their reputation tarnished and sap their confidence, damage that would take years to repair.

For Lewis Smith of Merritt Island, it has taken more than 30 years to recognize, understand and come to grips with the horrors of what happened during his military service in the jungles of Vietnam.

To honor those who served with him during his tour in Vietnam, Smith and his wife, Regine, created and began publishing a digital newsletter in 2009 for Vietnam veterans of the 2nd Battalion of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and their families. Today, the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sky Soldiers) is the U.S. Army's Contingency Response Force in Europe.

"The original intent of the newsletter was to capture our men's stories and photos, which might otherwise one day go missing," said the 72-year-old Smith. "Over time, however, it grew well beyond that and has become somewhat of a unit historical record."

Smith said the bi-monthly newsletter has brought vets together with their buddies, many who have not seen each other since the war. More importantly, the publication has allowed surviving families to connect with friends of their fallen service members.

"Reggie and I have been fortunate to lend a hand and our guest bedrooms on many occasions to vets suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and help them find treatment while pursuing their VA claims benefits," Smith said. "None of our efforts involve compensation of any kind – having served with many of these warriors is the greatest reward of all."

Smith said he creates the 50- to 100-page digital Sky Soldier newsletter using a basic Word program, which he later converts to a PDF file for distribution. The newsletter is distributed free to more than 2,000 veterans and their families. There is no advertising on the newsletter, and the couple will not accept donations.

"I'm happy with the reception the newsletter's received," Smith said. "I feel a certain obligation to the men I served with. It was an honor to serve with them. The newsletter gives me a great deal of satisfaction."



Lewis & Regine Smith

Retired U.S. Army Col. Robert Warfield recently sent Smith an email, praising him and his recent newsletter's dedication to retired Col. George E. Dexter, former commander of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment in Vietnam and Okinawa, who died in June.

"I don't know how you do it. I simply cannot get through every commemoration you manage to find, organize and post to remembrance," Warfield wrote. "This is special for Col. Dexter. He would be pleased... Altogether, your

periodic missives over the years must constitute a chronicle virtually unique in the annals of unit remembrance, documentation and historical reflection."

Born in Oneida, New York, Smith wanted to be a paratrooper like two of his friends. He enlisted in the Army in 1965, becoming a member of the 101st Airborne. He was part of the first Army ground combat unit to fight in Vietnam and suffered a minor leg wound in the battle Operation Silver City. He later received the Combat Infantryman Badge and Bronze Star with Valor medals for his actions.

Smith left Vietnam in December 1966 and was later stationed near Bavaria, Germany, where he met his wife. They were married in 1967 and have two sons.

Smith has returned to Vietnam twice – in 2001 and 2005 – to visit former battle sites.

"It was a very emotional experience for me," he said. "It took me over 30 years to recognize myself, but I'm proud of what I did and for my service for my country."

To check out the couple's newsletter, visit the University of Florida's Military Digital Library website at <https://uldc.ufl.edu/dmnl/results/?=2/503d%vietnam%20newsletter&f=ZZ>.



Lewis Smith, 1966



Ernest Arico is an award-winning reporter, editor and producer who has worked for more than 30 years in broadcasting and print media.

Reprinted courtesy of Diana Fasanella, editor, and Ernest Arico, reporter, *Merritt Island Now*.
www.MerrittIslandNow.com





Casper Platoon Story



The Third Pedro Casper 721 Rescue Mission December 11, 1968

By: **Dwight Hageman**, USAF Pedro Pilot

On December 11th, 1968, I had been “in country” about 3 weeks, following the USAF Jungle Survival school in the Philippines.

I was a new USAF Major, with thousands of flight hours in fixed-wing aircraft, but had “been drafted” into rescue helicopters following a professor of Air Science (USAF ROTC) position at the University of Michigan. I went to the USAF helicopter school at Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls Texas in the summer of 1968, training in the H-1 Huey and HH-43 Husky.

In December of 1968 I was getting checked out in Vietnam operations. I had been rather suddenly assigned to Phu Cat AB because another pilot had recently been killed in a rescue attempt (also for a downed Army helicopter crew) just a few days before my arrival. I was his replacement.

On December 11th, myself and Maj Juan Migia, the Detachment commander at Phu Cat Pedro were on local base rescue (firefighting) alert, and our other two crews were on rescue alert.

When the alert sounded for Casper 721, our two rescue alert Pedros launched and began extraction operations, ferrying the rescued personnel to the hospital at Quin Nhon, with fuel stops at Phu Cat operations as required. I was serving as Operations Officer at this time, and was coordinating our rescue operations as well as the medical evacuations.

In the late afternoon, a distress call was received from our two Pedros, stating that they needed more support ASAP due to the number of extractions, and mainly the need to get a fireman with the “Jaws of Life” apparatus to the site to extract the pilot (Walt Henderson) without major surgery on site. The Army personnel on site were very concerned that the impending darkness would enable the NVA/Viet Cong troops to overrun the site.

Maj Migia and I launched immediately with the fireman and the “Jaws of Life”. Maj Migia was in the right seat, and I was in the left seat. We hot refueled enroute. The next few hours are hazy due to the extreme pace of operations. Our three Pedros extracted a total of 9 souls from the site, including crew members Walt Henderson (pilot) with his legs more or less intact, and John Steen (door gunner). I was informed later that Army Hueys picked up Ned Costa, crew chief, and Cliff White, co-pilot.



Photo of USAF HH-43 “Pedro” Huskie used during VN war.

One truly amazing thing happened as darkness fell over the crash site. We were extracting the “last two” souls from the site. I don’t know if they were Casper personnel, passengers, or other people that were trying to help. We were hoisting these two troops up at the same time on the Jungle Penetrator. Just as we got them to the helicopter side door, the cable broke at the hoist motor area.

Thank God that our large crew chief, a Sgt Jessie Franklin, was able to manhandle one of the troops before he fell, dragged him partway into the helicopter and literally sat on him to keep him from falling out. Maj Migia, who was in the right seat, turned the controls over to me, and got the other troop to stand on the “bear paw” left front skid of the HH-43, and kept him from falling over backwards out of the helicopter. This configuration left me with severe flying problems. Since the pilot, two rescues, and the crew chief were all hanging out of the right side of the HH-43, I ran out of left cyclic stick control to keep the Pedro from tipping over to the right. I was able to slowly maneuver the helicopter across a valley with maximum left cyclic banging the stops, descend to a Army mortar site (I think), and hover while the panicked Army troops put their feet on terra firma.

We then returned to Phu Cat and tried to put the events of the day together. Due to this quirk of fate, I ended up receiving the Military Airlift Command Outstanding Safety Award for 1968. It was an amazing sequence of events.

Source: Thanks to Ned Costa, Casper Platoon



Sky Soldier Extraordinaire

Col. John David Bethea
3/503 RVN, BN CMDR



John David Bethea, age, 90 died Wednesday, May 6, 2020 at his home in Hendersonville, NC. He was born to the late Carl B and May Bevill Bethea in Sturgis, MS on November 26, 1929.

Appointed by Senator John Stennis of Mississippi, Dave began his military career in 1948 at USMA, West Point, NY. He graduated with his class in 1952 as an infantry Lieutenant. In July, 1952, he married Janet Elise Calhoun in Indianola, MS. His first assignment was to Salzburg, Austria with the 350th Inf. Regiment. Other assignments followed, ROTC Instructor at Denver University; Denver, Colorado; Ft. Campbell, KY; Command & General Staff School, Ft. Leavenworth, KS; USAREUR, Heidelberg, Germany, the Pentagon; and two tours of duty in Vietnam.

His first combat assignment was as an advisor to the Chinese 'Sea Swallow' Brigade operating under the leadership of the Father Hoa. Calling upon the Advisor experience, Dave participated in the development of a training program for the 101st Airborne Division soon departing for Vietnam. Two years later in November of 1968 he began his second assignment in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Initially he was the Brigade Executive Officer and later commander of the 3/503rd Battalion until November 1969.

Dave completed his career as a Colonel at the Army Training Doctrine & Command, Fort Monroe, 1974.

Settling his family in Hendersonville, NC, Dave joined the staff at Blue Ridge Tech (now Blue Ridge Community College) as Director of Evening Studies. Later he became the director of student services. After 9 years at Blue Ridge, he and Janet later joined the Peace Corps (87-89) where he taught mechanical drawing and woodworking at Madiba SS, Mahalape, Botswana. On returning home, he became an active member of the Kiwanis Club and the Literacy Council. Again in 1997, they signed on with the Peace Corps in St. Lucia, West Indies, where he organized the Junior Achievement Program. They returned to the quiet enjoyment of Hendersonville and family.

Surviving a series of strokes, Dave had to surrender his active lifestyle to one primarily of reading and remembering. We will spend the rest of our lives remembering and missing him.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Janet Calhoun Bethea; a sister, Frances Bethea Dent of Raymond, Mississippi; four sons: Keith and his wife Sonia, Carl, Paul and his wife Lisa, Tim and his wife Carla; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

An online register book is available for family and friends by visiting www.thosshepherd.com

Rest Easy With Your Warriors Commander



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / July – Sept. 2020 – Issue 93

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SERGEANT ROGER DALE OVERWEG

COMPANY B
1st BATTALION
503rd INFANTRY REGIMENT
173rd AIRBORNE BRIGADE

Posthumously awarded the
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

Date of Action: 19 September 1970

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Roger Dale Overweg, Sergeant, 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, 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Sergeant Overweg distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 19 September 1970 while serving as a member of a combat patrol during search operations in the mountainous area of Binh Dinh Province. While advancing through the rugged terrain in search of an enemy camp, the allies observed an enemy soldier run into an underground cave complex. The allies quickly sent a three-man team into the cave to search for the enemy soldier. Almost immediately they were taken under fire and all three men were seriously wounded. Sergeant Overweg, realizing the gravity of the situation, secured a rope and descended into the cave to assist his comrades.



Soon after dragging one of the soldiers to a rescue point, the enemy unleashed a flurry of fire which mortally wounded Sergeant Overweg. Sergeant Overweg's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



HQ US Army, Vietnam
General Orders No. 5248 (10 December 1970)

Reserve Chute Opens In Plane Air Force Paratrooper Dies



SSG Cole Condiff

In a July 15, 2020 report by [Military.com](#), a special tactics airman was pulled out of an aircraft when his T-11R reserve chute inadvertently opened in the wind during a jump exercise this past November 5.

Following a 17-day search over the Gulf of Mexico, the remains of Staff Sgt. Cole Condiff, a Special Tactics combat controller with the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron at Hurlburt Field in Florida, were never recovered, states the report.

According to the report, "*Condiff was the designated jumpmaster, scouting ahead from the right paratroop door of the aircraft for the drop zone below. Three teams had already jumped; Condiff's team was slated to jump next. At around 11:14 a.m. local time, Condiff looked out the door of the MC-130, which was flying at an altitude of 1,012 feet above mean sea level at roughly 150 miles per hour,*" and, "*Witnesses testified that Condiff's top and bottom tuck tab inserts, which help hold the parachute securely in place, were 'not flush with the green pockets on his T-11R parachute ripcord assembly' even before his first jump earlier in the day,*" the report states.

Authorities stated, "*The evidence indicated he likely sustained fatal injuries upon being pulled from the aircraft.*"

Rest Easy Airman



Paratrooper Grass Cutting Interruptus or, WTF America?!

The other day in front of our home here in Florida while cutting the grass, neighbor good buddy, Bob, stopped to chat for a few minutes. Bob, also a trooper, served with the 101st in VN and saw some serious action there. It's always good to see Bob and reminisce about our times in the bush, tho with different units and during different tours. We also kid a lot, it's a paratrooper thang, often using jargon we learned soon after leaving Basic and later the Repo Depot, G.I. slang all newbie ground pounders quickly adopted in the boonies while looking for Indians decades earlier.

Moments later another neighbor, Karen, while walking her little dog stopped near us within hearing range but socially distant -- her dog paid us no attention. I don't know her but my wife, Reggie, says she's active in the HOA and may be in charge of inspecting residents' landscaping - I glanced over at the edging I had just done hoping it might receive the lady's approval lest we get the dreaded 'letter' in the mail.

Bob: *"You 'Herdsman' were one hell of a hardcore unit in the Nam."*

Me: *"Yeah, those para's I fell in with sure were, Bob, but you 'Puking Buzzard' blasters were taking no names either. I was TDY with them for a time at Campbell after AIT and Benning."*

Bob: *"We lost a lot of good jumpers, even some FNG legs attached and many LT's and unwashed at Hamburger Hill."*

Me: *"I know. Us too, especially during the battles at Dak To when those damn NVA wouldn't take Dung Lai for an answer. I had already di di'd the scene and wasn't there with our Batt but know a lot of Grunts who were with Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta, plus the C-Rat eaters with their M-79 thumpers of those 4/503 saviors. Understand they were still having trouble with the 16."*

Bob: *"You humped a Prick, right?"*

Me: *"Yeah, an RTO."*

Bob: *"Lima Charlie. I was on the 60, now that was one ass tearing bitch, especially in the thick shit."*

Me: *"Roger over."*

Karen moved a step closer, seemingly leaning in to not miss a word, while yanking the puppy with the leash, one eyebrow raised, on Karen not the dog.

Bob: *"Did you go out the door of those 130's with the 2/503 in '67? I heard some riggers shuffled with those sticks and got the green light."*

Me: *"No. I could've extended for a rotation but just wasn't in the mood. Think I read something about riggers on that Op — it was always a good sign when they strapped on their own T-10's to blast with us."*

Bob: *"Too bad. That star over your wings with your CIB woulda been sumpin.' 'They poured him from his boots...!'"*

Me: *"Ha Ha! 'And he ain't gonna jump no more!' Damn risers."*

Bob: *"Chairborne!"*

Me: *"The poor cherry bastard."*

Karen stepped closer with both eyebrows raised, the dog raised one eyebrow.

Bob: *"When at Zinn did you ever score a pass to the Ville?"*

Me: *"Bien Hoa, yeah, a few times between Ops with a pocket full of P's and MPC, riding the deuce in then the pedicabs, ready to win hearts and minds at the steam and creams while eating me some of that special Nuoc Cham."*

Bob: *"Ha ha! Fuckin' A. I didn't like the smell of it."*

Me: *"It's an acquired taste. The mamasans charged just a couple hundred P's for it back then."*

Bob: *"It was over 500P when I did my PLF from the big bird at Tan Son Nhut. Ahh, and I still remember the 33."*

Me: *"It was reported it was bought out by some Germans and they added a '3' to the name, I shit you not — it now tastes one-third better."*

Bob: *"Ha ha. Your buckle was Brasso'd and gig line straight when on pass, right?"*

Me: *"Hell yeah, even my Corcoran's were like glass, and my cunt cap pitched just right."*

Karen: *"I heard that!!! What are you two talking about?!! This is America, speak English or go back to where you came from!!!"*

Bob: *"I'm from Cleveland."*

Me: *"I was born in New York."*

Karen: *"Well, it's just not right to speak a foreign language in my country. A lot of people served during war to protect my god-given rights!"*

Bob: *"Yes, they did."*

Karen: *"And you! Straighten that edging! Goddamn communist socialist language speaking foreigners!!!"*

Bob: *"Wow."*

(continued....)



As Karen *harrumphed* and stormed away, again yanking her forlorn little puppy, I couldn't help but think how sad it is our nation of Americans-from-all-nations has devolved to such a state where not understanding someone's language, in this case Bob's and my VN grunt and paratrooper G.I. jargon, would be cause for such discordant outbreaks. We were just speaking a language learned in our youth, like millions of other Americans, like my Spanish-speaking grandkids, my Danish speaking cousin, and my German-speaking wife. I also pondered from which countries Karen's family originally hailed, and if any of them to this day still speak French, Scottish or perhaps Polish with a Silesian dialect? I suspect she never visited those lands. *"Give us your tired, your poor, yearning to breathe free...."* In this case it was fortunate Bob was not an Aussie, mate — Karen would have spit the dummy I can't understand them either.

Bob: *"What do you think caused that?"*

Me: *"I think I know. Oh, Bob, Karen was right about the edging, it is a little crooked. See ya Airborne!"*

Bob: *"All the fucking way bro!"*

Karen: *"I heard that!!!"*

Note: With apologies to all, well most all, Karen's (and Carl's) out there, and you Diggers too. This, of course, is not a true story...or is it?

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



A gift on Father's Day from grandkids.

Wind Blown



"An Army paratrooper lands after jumping out of a C-160 in Alzey, Germany, Dec. 18, 2019, during a multinational training exercise." (DoD photo & caption)

The Transall C-160



The **Transall C-160** is a military transport aircraft, produced as a joint venture between France and Germany. "Transall" is an abbreviation of the manufacturing consortium Transporter Allianz, comprising the companies of MBB, Aerospatiale and VFW-Fokker. It was initially developed to meet the requirements for a modern transport aircraft for the French and German Air Forces; export sales were also made to South Africa and to Turkey, as well as a small number to civilian operators.

The C-160 remains in service more than 50 years after the type's first flight in 1963. It has provided logistical support to overseas operations and has served in specialist roles such as an aerial refueling tanker, electronic intelligence gathering and as a communications platform.

The C-160 is expected to be replaced in French and German service by the Airbus A400M Atlas.



Latest Issue of *Sky Soldier Magazine* now available on-line

Sky Soldiers: At the request of the association executive leadership we are pushing out the digital version of the summer magazine issue to everyone for the first time. Please see the link below. As a reminder, the 2021 Reunion registration is open on both the association site and the Arizona Chapter site.

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/f6f870b7-267e-4474-8830-8ce560625c53>

Respectfully, Association Webmaster



“Chapter 21 president, Kaiser Sterbinsky displaying the one that didn’t get away. This issue highlights how Skysoldiers train and cope with the pandemic.”



Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT and Attached Units Who Made Their Final Jump

Kenneth E. Berquist, 69
Floral City, FL
May 11, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

John David Bethea, 90
Hendersonville, NC
May 6, 2020
Cmdr 3/503, RVN

Harold Ray Boles, 71
Concord, NC
May 30, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Daniel Collins, Cross, 72
Phoenix, AZ
April 6, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Richard L. Gayheart
May 30, 2020
Massillon, OH
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Ronald F. Korth, 73
Rochelle, IL
June 3, 2020
173d Huey Pilot, RVN

Taylor Anthony Lawson, 25
Wichita, KS
May 22, 2010
173d Abn Bde, Afghanistan

Ed Liptrap, 69
July 24, 2020
San Clemente, CA
Casper Platoon, RVN

Kenneth Wayne Minick, 72
Lenexa, KS
June 5, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Curtis "Junior" McGirt,
Cocoa, FL
June 23, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Walter Perron
June 17, 2020
Casper Platoon, RVB

Freddy Don Rolland, Sr. 71
April 4, 2020
Monette, AR
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Stephen Rowley, 80
Medford, OR
May 30, 2020
173d AHC Robinhoods, RVN

Abraham Ruiz,, 78
Raymondville, TX
May 24, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

Jose' (Joe) Luis Sanchez, 77
Atco, NJ
April 20, 2020
Birddogs, Attached to 173d

Steven E. Smith
Casper Platoon, RVN

Patrick William Spears, 73
Biloxi, MS
June 2, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

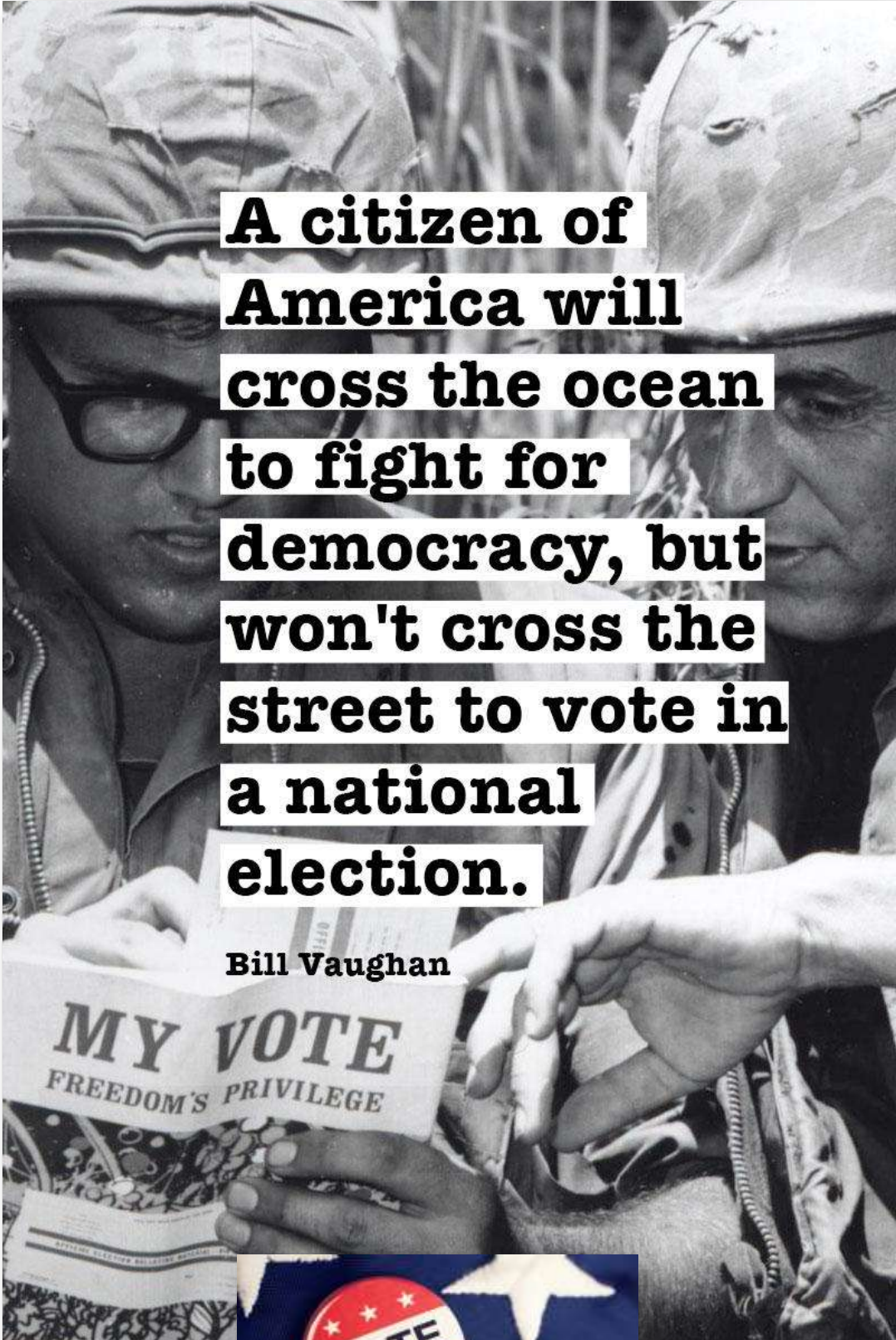
Doyle Gene Tipton, 74
Unicoi, GA
June 26, 2020
173d Abn Bde, RVN

*Rest easy Brothers with
your fellow warriors*



Photo by Pat Bowe
Recon/2/503 RVN





**A citizen of
America will
cross the ocean
to fight for
democracy, but
won't cross the
street to vote in
a national
election.**

Bill Vaughan

MY VOTE
FREEDOM'S PRIVILEGE

