

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

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ newsletter



Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

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August 2010 ~ Issue 18

~ 2/503d PHOTOS OF THE MONTH ~

Honoring Our Helio Buddies

January 16, 2010

God's Own Lunatics

Filed under Rollcall

Presentation by Mr. Joe Gallaway, a war correspondent with the grunts and a hero. The only civilian to be awarded, from the Army, a Bronze Star for bravery in action.

From the sound track of *The Shadow of the Blade*, [gods-own-lunatics2](#)



2d Battalion on mission. Photo by: Wayne Hoitt, 2/503d



2/503d ready to board Huey's at the "Snakepit",
Bien Hoa airbase.

Photo by: Wayne Hoitt, 2/503d

I don't know if there is anybody here today who doesn't thrill at the sound of those blades. That familiar *whoop whoop whoop* is the sound track of our war. The lullaby of our younger days.

To someone who spent his time in Nam with the grunts, I've got to tell you that noise was always a great comfort.

It meant that someone was going to help, someone was coming to get our wounded, someone was coming to bring us water and ammo, someone was coming to take our dead brothers home.



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And eventually, someone was coming to give us a ride out of hell.

Even today when I hear it, I stop, catch my breath, and think back to those days. I love you guys as only an infantryman can.



And we knew you would always come to take our wounded and dead away. Photo by: Wayne Hoitt, 2/503d

Sometimes you stayed with us on the ground.

Photo by: Tom Goodwin, 2/503d

No matter how bad things were, if we called, you came.

Down through the green tracers and other signs of a real bad day, off to a real bad start.

To us you seem to be beyond brave and fearless.

That you would come to us in the middle of battle, in those flimsy, thin-skinned crates.

And in the storm of fire, you sit up there behind the thin plexiglas, seeming so patient, and so calm, and so vulnerable. Waiting for the off loading and the on loading.

We thought you were God's own lunatics and we loved you, still do.



We are the fortunate ones. We survived when so many better men gave up their precious lives for us.

We owe them a sacred debt, to live each day to it's fullest.

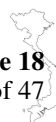
What they are saying when you listen hard enough is this, "We're at peace and so should you be... and so should you be."



No matter the risk, you would come for us.
2/503d at Dak To.



Again and again, we knew you would come.
2/503d Silver City. Photo by: Wayne Hoitt, 2/503d



SKY SOLDIERETTE'S CORNER



I am sitting here watching one of my heroes sleeping – the one who shaped my life, who gave me strength – who made me believe in myself - the one now weak and frail – the Rock of Gibraltar crumbling before my very eyes.

The past few weeks have been hard. In May, we celebrated my

Dad's 90th birthday – a man who could outwork and outlast most 65-year old men. Within weeks, he was diagnosed with lymphoma. He is ready to go and knows that he has made a difference in so many lives, but I'm not ready to let him go.

My solace is that his bravery, his courage, his unconditional love, and his life are my legacy and will always be there to prop me up when I feel I can no longer stand on my own. How long we have, no one knows. I just know that forever won't be long enough. I hope that I can be half the person that he is.

In November 1940, my Dad's oldest brother was drafted and joined the Colorado National Guard. He bet Dad a quarter that Dad couldn't get in. Of course, Dad never backs down and took Uncle Richard up on that bet. In January 1941, the Colorado National Guard was activated into the regular Army. Uncle Richard got to stay in Colorado because of a health issue – Dad went to Georgia for training.

He never talked much about his time in the service – except we knew he served in the Pacific theater. One night, he decided to talk to Wayne and I and what a story we learned. How he went to Hawaii on a luxury liner that had been converted into a troop carrier. His tank platoon of three tanks was positioned on the bow of the ship for protection. Because there were so many soldiers below decks, it was easier to sleep in the tanks.

From Hawaii, he was sent to the Phoenix Islands, then the Marshall and Solomon Islands. He earned a Bronze Star for Valor. Shortly afterwards he returned to the states for OCS training. He got into trouble for talking back to an instructor who he felt wasn't telling the truth about the armaments and supplies the soldiers were getting in the field and was kicked out just before he would have graduated. When he returned to the field, he found that his crew had rotated home and that he had more than enough points to get out. Without the crew that he had been with the entire time, he left the service in June 1945.

Watching the series "The Pacific" is the only way that we really knew what he went through as he was the armor support for the marines who went through those Islands. He downplays everything he did.



The Tuttle family. Wayne and Iva with daughter Lauri, grandkids Josh and Aaron, and Dad.

Once while we were talking, I said to him that at least in his war men knew what they were fighting for. His response was – *"My friends and the man next to me – nothing more and nothing less. Ideals go out the window when you are fighting for survival."*

This week he has told me of the nightmares that have plagued him for years – of fighting – of being trapped – of pushing bodies into a pit. I suspected – just knew that when we were young, you didn't wake Dad out of a sound sleep except by yelling while you were out of range of his thrashing.

PTSD – always was – always will be – something I've suspected for years. May all the ones who fight find peace someday.

**"From the men of the 2/503d,
thank you for your service,
and job well done Dad."**





Leadership That Serves

by Dr. Ronald R. Smith

1LT, B/2/503d

At the close of the European phase of WWII, General George Patton held a conversation with General Omar Bradley. Patton felt that since the battle in Europe was winding down, there would be no further need for his services. Bradley assured Patton that he was mistaken. Battles still had to be fought in the Pacific and General Douglas MacArthur would welcome Patton's services.

Patton replies, *"No. MacArthur won't have me. You see, we fought together in the same Company during WWI; MacArthur was a Captain; I was his Lieutenant. One day I was ordered to capture a hill, but our troops were cut down by enemy fire. When MacArthur received that order, though, he jumped to his feet and charged up that hill calling his men to follow him. I went with him step by step all the way to the top."*

Then Patton added, *"MacArthur never forgave me for that!"*

That story reflects the five-star egos of two great American Generals, but it also makes me nostalgic for a time when the world seemed populated with courageous leaders. Now the supply of leaders seems as bare as 'Mother Hubbard's' cupboard. Indeed, this lack of leadership seems endemic to American society. From government, to business and industry, sadly, the leadership landscape is monotonously flat of great soul leaders. Indeed, in some ways our society seems to work against leaders. Yet, leadership is a noble calling. In fact, if you have come out of your mother's womb wired to be a leader, you cannot not lead. But leadership is hard work.

In John, chapter 13, Jesus gives us one of the world's greatest examples of true leadership. The events of that Passion Week Thursday culminated when Jesus sent his disciples ahead to an upper room to prepare for a Passover meal together. Usually, there was a servant with a bowl, a pitcher of cool water, a towel and a stool for each guest to sit while the servant unlaced their sandals and washed their feet. Animals often left their calling cards on the paths, which people picked up on their feet.

If you've ever seen Leonardo DaVinci's painting of the Last Supper you get the idea that Jesus and his men lined up on one side of a long table as though posing for a team photo. As inaccurate as that portrayal is, it is not any more

inaccurate than some conclusions drawn from that episode.



As Jesus enters the room, He discovers the disciples had been arguing over the question, *"Who of us is the greatest?"* To stifle that "Mohammed Ali complex" Jesus stood up, took off His outer robes, and with a basin of water He knelt and washed His disciples' dirty feet. Then, He dried their feet with a towel. *"I have set you an example,"* He declared. *"I have washed your feet. You must wash one another's."*

Many of us like to take our lead from Superman and it is always, "up, up and away." But with Jesus, it is always "down, down, down." From Godhood to manhood; from manhood to servant-hood; from servant-hood to death on a Roman execution rack. Jesus lived among us as one who served. In the company of Jesus Christ, therefore, service is our most important product. Service—not domination; service—not manipulation; service—not exploitation; service—not climbing to the top; service—not advancing our own agendas; service—not putting our name in lights; service—not because it is good public relations, but because it is good leadership and good Christian relations.

Having washed His disciples' feet, Jesus returned to His seat and declared, *"You call me Lord and Master and you do right. If I, your Lord and Master, wash your feet, you are to wash one another's."* A leader spoke those words and modeled what He spoke. Jesus was a servant, but He spoke with authority. He was in charge of His operation. He knew where He was going. He was not a leaf tossed about by the wind, he was an arrow centered on the target. It is accurate, spiritual grammar to talk about "the servant as a leader."

In the Providence of God those of us who are privileged to serve our country and our fellow soldiers in one of the most elite military units in our nation's history, have also been blessed to lead the way in that service. Our country still needs our service and they need our leadership. And we will be grateful for brothers and sisters who stand and charge any hill with us. May God give us men and women who will serve as leaders and lead by serving.

An object of His grace,

Ron Smith



Soldiers want to see more combat-relevant fitness test

That was the lead-in to a recent report from Gannett news service by Joe Gould, where he stated "*The Army plans to overhaul the 30-year-old Army Physical Fitness Test and soldiers couldn't agree more: 'Army Strong' should be even stronger.*" Well, maybe.

On occasion I have the opportunity to visit Patrick AFB here in Central Florida, and with few exceptions the young fly boys and fly girls I see appear to be in good to excellent shape. There are a few whose physical composition may be suspect and suggests they may have snuck under the wire, or rolled over it, but by and large they are a fit lot.

The Atlantic Ocean is immediately across the street from the base offering surfing and other physical activities; the preferred one we call *Sea Creature Watching* which exercises the eyes yet does little in preparation for charging machine gun nests. Thus, one solution might be to move all the army forts to ocean front property.

"Army fitness has gone to an all-time low, I believe," says Staff Sgt. Jimmy W. Creech, of Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. Hey Jimmy, Alabama has waterfront property, albeit somewhat oily these days.

Many active duty soldiers believe these changes will help alleviate the problem of the army being 'Almost Army Strong':

- Add pull-ups.
- Add crunches.
- Dump sit-ups.
- Add shuttle runs for a road march.
- Work out in combat gear instead of PT clothes.

Combat gear instead of PT clothes?! Oh, the shorts, T-shirts, tennis shoes, saw dusted ground with shaded areas with lots of cool water to drink....how silly of me, I forgot. That might help some.

Yet with little hope for moving all army forts to the surf-boarding sea, and the very scary hot weather likely to keep the stylish PT clothes in vogue, not to mention those mean Sergeants who yell at you to *keep running, keep pushing*, it seems another solution must be devised to help those kids become physically fit combat-ready soldiers. Hmmm, but what could that possibly be?

SEND THOSE YOUNG ASSES TO FORT BENNING AND JUMP SCHOOL IN JUNE.

There's an idea.

Smitty Out

~ Colonel Ken Smith ~

2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year ~ 2010

In the April edition of our newsletter we put out the request for troopers to nominate who they believe should be recognized as our battalion's "Sky Soldier of the Year ~ 2010," Vietnam era trooper. A selection committee was formed, pretty much at random, mixing ranks and years in-country, to include an equal number of officers and enlisted men of the 2/503d; from a private to a LTC.

During the selection process each man was unaware who the other men were on that committee, and a 'blind vote' was cast by each trooper based on the merits of the nominations they were considering. A number of deserving 2/503d Sky Soldiers were nominated for this special recognition, and I can only say I'm pleased I didn't have to participate in the difficult selection process.

These men, acting as the voice for us all, voted unanimously for the one trooper who stood out among his many equally deserving comrades.

On behalf of the men of the 2d Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), Vietnam era, we are pleased to honor Col. Ken Smith as our "2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year ~ 2010." Congratulations Colonel Smith, job well done, Sir.

INCOMING!

I served with Ken Smith after he replaced Dave Milton soon after the *Battle of the Slopes*. His leadership through this spiritually draining transition is a testament to his resolve and acumen as a thoughtful military strategist. He was assigned the unenviable task of reinvigorating a unit made up of 80% FNGs and the remaining disenfranchised Alpha grunts. Somehow he pulled it off, and Alpha's successes through the Fall of that year can be directly attributed to his vision.

Over the past few years Ken and I have had the opportunity to commiserate not only about our Vietnam experiences, but life's challenges as well. His association with the Brigade and especially his piloting of the 173d Memorial speaks for itself. Ken's quiet but effective demeanor is his most outstanding asset. A more uniquely charming human you'll never find. I'm proud to call him friend.

As long as Ken remains an integral part of the Herd, we shall prosper.

Wambi Cook, A/2/503d





2/503d SKY SOLDIER OF THE YEAR 2010

(Vietnam era)

~ Colonel Kenneth V. Smith ~

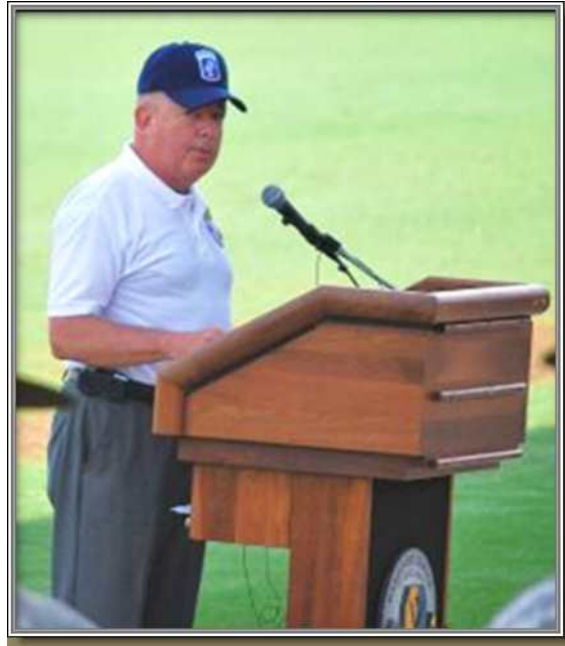
Colonel Smith served in the 2/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) beginning in March of 1967. During his tour with the 2/503d he was Battalion S-3, was company commander of Alpha Company 2/503d, and formed and commanded Delta Company 2/503d.

Throughout the years Ken has served his fellow paratroopers as editor of *Sky Soldier Magazine*, and has faithfully served as treasurer, and as president of the Society from 1995 to 1999. During his time in service to the brigade, Col. Smith's leadership kept the society prospering.

Ken is one of the President's Emeritus of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association, which includes Gen. Ellis Williamson and Col. Robert Sigholtz, who have both since passed on.

Ken's fund-raising efforts made it possible for the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) to have a marker stone placed at the Airborne & Special Operation's Museum in Fayetteville N.C. Thanks to Col. Smith we of the 173d Airborne Brigade were the second unit to purchase one of the many markers outside the museum and ours is the second from the entrance.

During his tour of duty as a company commander with the 2/503d, he made a promise to one of his soldiers as he died in Ken's arms, *"That he would never be forgotten."* Over the many years since, Col. Smith has always fought to keep that promise he made to that dying Sky Soldier.



On 1 June 2010, Ken kept his promise with the dedication of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial at the National Infantry Museum's Patriot Park just outside Fort Benning, GA.

During the past four years and through his leadership and guidance, the 173d Memorial was completed. From concept to dedication, Ken has served as Treasurer, Head of Fundraising, and President of the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation. The Colonel spent countless hours of his time to raise the required and substantial funds needed to

build our memorial. In each of his letters to prospective donors he included a personal message. His unwavering commitment to this project and his never ending leadership was the driving force which made it possible.

Col. Kenneth V. Smith is also the Honorary Colonel of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Ken continues to demonstrate his lifetime commitment to his fellow Sky Soldiers and those who were taken from us so many years ago. His service to our battalion and all those who served and are serving in the 173d Airborne Brigade is unmatched.

It is our honor to recognize Col. Kenneth V. Smith as "2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year - 2010" Vietnam era. And from the men of your battalion, Colonel, we salute you.

Airborne! All The Way Sir!



173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation, Inc.

I have been asked by several fellow Sky Soldiers to discuss the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation, its relationship to the 173d Airborne Association, the 173d Association Foundation, and the Paver Program at the National Infantry Museum. I would like to start with a little background on the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation, how it came to be, its purpose, and future.



Erecting the Memorial at Fort Benning, GA. (Mike Elliott)

In July of 2004, at the Daytona Reunion, the Board of Directors of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association voted in favor of Terry Modglin forming a committee to explore the feasibility of building a 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial. Over the next two years the committee, composed of association members, visited existing 173d Memorials along with other unit memorials to enable them to make a recommendation to the Association. Along with visiting existing memorials, the committee visited possible sites for a 173d Memorial. In January of 2006, at the Association's Mid-Winter Conference, a formal design proposal and site recommendation was submitted to the Association's Board of Directors, and was scheduled for discussion at the 2006 annual reunion.

During the 2006 reunion held in Fayetteville N.C., the Association Executive Board tailored its approval of the proposal by requiring that a 'separate and distinct' organization undertake the project. The Association Board reasoned that the project could jeopardize the Association's financial stability if a funding shortfall were to occur. The Board drafted a motion proposing the Association's commitments to the project and approved sending that proposal to the General Membership. The proposal was brought to a vote at the General Membership Meeting and unanimously approved on June 24, 2006.

In July of 2006, the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation, Inc. was formed. Among its first tasks, the Foundation filed Articles of Incorporation in the State of Georgia, crafted and adopted governing By-Laws, attained a Federal 501(C)3 non-profit tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, and formed a Board of Directors.

The purpose of the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation was to raise the funds to build and maintain a 173d Memorial to be build on the grounds of the National Infantry Museums' Patriot Park Walk of Honor.

The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation was organized and incorporated as a 'separate foundation'.



Our buddies. Always to be remembered. (Jerry Hassler)

(continued....)





We can only hope these panels forever remain blank.
(Jerry Hassler)

The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation is not connected to, governed by, or part of the 173d Association or the Association's Foundation. It has no members. It does have donors to the memorial project who are sent an annual financial and progress report. The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation also provides a semi-annual report to the 173d Association's Board of Directors and an annual report to the Association's General Membership at the Annual Association Reunion.

The 173d Airborne Brigade Foundation is a separate foundation created by the 173d Airborne Association to support the scholarship program and other non-profit purposes of the Association. For further information on the 173d Association Foundation, checkout the 173d Association's web site.

The National Infantry Museum Paver Program is entirely an Infantry Museum project and Fund Raiser. The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation receives no monies from the sale of pavers from the museum. What we did receive is a prime piece of ground for the 173d Memorial from the National Infantry Museum along with two distinct areas for placement of 173d pavers (Sections: 17A and 17B along the 'Walk of Flags'). The 173d Memorial Foundation could not have built the memorial without the generous offer of the site for the 173d Memorial from the National Infantry Museum.

Although the 173d Memorial is built, there is still a lot for the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation to accomplish. The memorial was built to be a perpetual memorial so that data and names could be added over time if needed. The 173d Airborne Combat Team is again deployed to Afghanistan and unfortunately it has taken casualties. Names of our fallen brothers will need to be added along with deployment dates and additions to the unit history. A formal maintenance agreement with the National Infantry Museum remains to be finalized. This is in progress and should be completed in the coming months.

Although the Memorial is completely paid for, the Foundation needs to raise funds in the future for these ongoing items.

I hope this explains some of the questions Sky Soldiers and their families and friends have about the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation and its relationship to the 173d Airborne Brigade Association and its Foundation and the National Infantry Museum Paver Program. If anyone has any further items that they need information on regarding the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation feel free to contact me at my email address below.

Craig D. Ford
Treasurer
173d Airborne Bde. National Memorial Foundation, Inc.
Email: cdford1503@verizon.net
C/1/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) 3/64 to 4/66



Welcome home brothers. (Jerry Hassler)



From Photo Collection of Wes “Johnny” Johnson B/2/503d ’68-’70



Wes Johnson, johnson173rd@yahoo.com



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GAMING THE SYSTEM

In a recent edition of FloridaToday newspaper was a letter to the editor from a retired soldier. He was complaining new VA rules relieve much of the necessity to demonstrate 'stressors' by vets who served in combat zones and who are now and will be filing claims for PTSD. He further stated this will result in many G.I.'s 'gaming the system,' and he may well be right. Nevertheless, countless men and women from our war and all wars go untreated....one only needs to perform minimal research on the subject of suicides among war veterans to confirm this. The unfortunate twist is, and in spite of such new relaxed regulations, too many just, worthy and deserving claims go unapproved by that agency. Ed.

ENTRUSTING THE VA

The real reason civilian assessments are so important.

I evaluated a 41 year old Gulf War veteran today, who returned from the War while his first wife had his marriage dissolved. He was in the front lines and experienced significant trauma as a combat engineer (crawling over dead Iraqi's and as the only portable bridge operator in the midst of the prime offensive, he was a prime target), as well as being exposed to a multitude of toxins to include burning oil, detonations of depleted uranium, toxins in the infra-red chemical in the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU), toxins in the bug repellent and sunburn cream, aspartame and pyridostigmine (untested anti-nerve agent designed to be taken 14 days). He was forced to take pyridostigmine for several months and returned with an intense reaction which included multiple chemical sensitivity and birth defects in his child.

After assaulting his second wife with a shot-gun, she divorced him. He decided to return to active duty after not fitting into the occupational world and trained at Fort Benning, GA in the Infantry. During his training he had adverse reactions to the loud explosions, but while the cannons fired at Graduation, he lost it and was hospitalized at the local VA where the senior psychiatrist (who also treated his WWII grandfather) gave him a service connected PTSD diagnosis and sent him to a local civilian hospital because he was active duty. He was diagnosed with severe and chronic PTSD and released. The Army DID NOT conduct a Medical Board and the veteran was told to file with the VA. He filed a claim with the VA in 2003 for PTSD and it was denied for insufficient stressors.



The veteran later married, has three small girls and later held his third wife at shot-gun. She threatened to leave if he ever did it again and he eventually realized that it was easier to give up his cherished father's shot-gun than it was to keep changing wives.

The veteran struggles with his isolation, extreme anxiety and panic attacks, explosiveness (has chased people down and beat them), and other PTSD symptoms, and currently receives NO disability from the Army or the VA. He amazingly works in an isolated job where he continues to experience symptoms of toxic exposure and PTSD.

He produced documentation of his previous evaluations over the past few days. Welcome Home Vets has initiated the following:

- 1) Veteran has been introduced to a veteran service officer.
- 2) Veteran's 15 page evaluation has been completed.
- 3) Veteran and his wife will participate in PTSD and PTSD support groups.
- 4) Veteran will later join GULF WAR/OIF/OEF Support Group.
- 5) Veteran has been scheduled for a QEEG.
- 6) Veteran will participate in brain retraining to address his panic attacks.
- 7) Veteran has been enrolled in Enhancing Military Couples Relationships Program and completed the initial inventories.
- 8) Veteran will be offered legal assistance to pursue back pay for his claim which was originally denied in 2003 to the fullest extent of the law.
- 9) Therapy will be made available for the veteran's three young daughters.

We are Welcome Home Vets....We make a difference. It's what we do.

Some wounds don't end with the war. The severity and extent to which veterans suffer with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is a direct response to our culture's willingness to Welcome Home and Care for its Warriors.

Veterans Caring for Veterans,

Scott Fairchild, PsyD
Welcome Home Vets, Inc. (WHV)
1370 Bedford Drive, Suite 106, Melbourne, FL 32941
Phn: 321 253-8887, Fax: 321 253-8878

Note: Doc Scott Fairchild is a retired LTC with the 82nd Airborne Div. and has helped numerous Sky Soldiers and their spouses from throughout the country.





173d Sky Soldier Killed in Afghanistan

A Soldier with the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X, was killed in action July 5, 2010.

Sgt. Louis Robert Fastuca, 24, of Boston, Mass., was killed while conducting combat operations in Wardak Province, Afghanistan.

Fastuca reported to Caserma Ederle and was assigned to the 173d's Delta Co., 1/503d Inf. (Airborne), where he served as an infantryman in 2d Platoon.

While deployed to Wardak Province, he completed more than 125 missions as an infantryman in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X.

"Without exception, the men of DOG Company loved Sgt. Fastuca for his genuine care and concern for his brother Soldiers. Just as he cared for all around him in life, he is without a doubt, now in God's caring arms," said Delta Company Commander Capt. Dave Panian. (Fastuca was recently reassigned from Delta to HHC).

He is survived by his brothers and parents, who reside in Pennsylvania. Fastuca was posthumously recommended for the Purple Heart Medal. A remembrance ceremony was held at the post chapel Tuesday at 3 p.m.

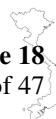


Sgt. Louis Robert Fastuca, a Sky Soldier, evermore.

Source: USAG Vincenza,
Installation Management Commander -
Europe.

**"THERE ARE NO HEROES
IN THIS PLACE,
ALL THE HEROES ARE ALL DEAD."**

(from a poem)



CU CHI TUNNEL SYSTEM AN AUSSIE VISIT BACK IN TIME

In April of 2009 my eldest son, Clay, and I made a trip back to Vietnam to spend a 'Boys Only' couple of weeks. My 'babysan' Alexander, only being 11 at the time, was pretty pissed at not being allowed to go with us as he said, *"I am one of the men in this family, aren't I?"* We explained that we intended to attempt some things that would be too strenuous for him as I had planned to get to some of the locations which we had frequently spent joyful 'strolls in the weeds' in 1965-66.

When we arrived in Saigon (I refuse to call it Ho Chi Minh City) we spent a day or two getting orientated as the city seems to change from month to month with all the construction work going on. On our third night I took Clay with me to do the family thing and visit my brother-in-law and his family on the junction that separates Saigon from Cholon (the Chinese section of the city) where he lives. We visited and had a few beers with my wife's brother and his sons and nephews then enjoyed dinner and a few more beers.



Clay and John Arnold. *"We were surprised to see they had named a restaurant after our family in Saigon! Even though we told them our name was Arnold we still had to pay the bastards for dinner."* John

My brother-in-law really enjoys a beer and he has learned to drink his beer the Aussie way (cold) and no longer has it the Vietnamese way with ice in a glass and hot beer poured over the ice. We fell into a cab sometime late that night and it got us back to our hotel safely, so far as I can recall.

The next morning we were up early, had a swim and then breakfast and decided to do a day trip out to the Cu Chi Tunnels complex. I had been there the year before when I took Alexander, Irene and my brother's wife who had travelled over there with us, and Clay had also visited the tunnels before when he and his wife travelled to Vietnam on an earlier trip.

Now, neither Clay nor I are what you would call small blokes so we each had a seat to ourselves on the bus which was pretty much filled with Aussies, Kiwis, Yanks, Frogs, Pommies and a couple of other Europeans from wherever. Our guide was brilliant, he was the man who trained RAMBO to be a pretty fair soldier but RAMBO would never be as good as this 'master of combat'. He said he had been in the Navy of the South Vietnamese forces and after re-education he got a job as a tour guide. He was a store man in the navy yards in Saigon but as the trip continued his role in our war took on enormous proportions to a point where he described his part in calling down an American helicopter airstrike on a VC unit and wiping them out. I tell you what, I gave him A+ for his ingenuity, courage and battle skills and his sound effects over the bus microphone were stunning.

When I go to Vietnam I never wear anything that might identify me as a veteran of our war; I don't usually say anything that may have a military slant to it and I keep fairly inconspicuous. This is a means of personal safety for me as I don't want to bump into any angry Vietnamese veteran who might take umbrage at my attire and attempt to do me harm, and as we're usually accompanied by members of Jane's family when we go out I don't want them to suffer any recriminations from the public or the authorities. Anyway, this guide must have 'pinged' me as a veteran and I don't know how, unless I unwittingly spoke to him in Vietnamese when getting on the bus. He played his little saga out for what seemed to be me alone as I don't believe any of the other passengers were veterans as they were mostly too young, wrong nation or ignorant of it all. I can only surmise what he was working towards but his saga never earned him a tip from me or, as far as I saw, any of the other passengers.

On the way to the tunnels Clay was a little apprehensive and told me about when he was there before he had to get out of the crowd and let his wife and their friends do the visit on their own while he spent the entire time sitting in the shade near a cool breeze as he became quite violently ill; fever, shakes, nausea (there's an irony; can any of you recall a 'cool breeze' in Vietnam?). He had not eaten anything 'odd' that could have caused this, and had not had any alcohol or drank any local water and it was a mystery as he was as fit as a fiddle the next morning. It was strangely coincidental as I had had a very similar episode when I visited Vietnam in 2008, but I put that down to a psychological reaction to being in the vicinity of that bastard of an operation we called 'The Battle of Ho Bo Woods' in January 1966.

(continued....)



I was pleasantly surprised when we arrived we didn't have to sit through that blatant propaganda film about how a 15 year old farm girl heroine of the Peoples Forces and a 75 year old grandfather fought off two battalions (or was it divisions) of American Aggressors and their Foreign Puppet Mercenaries in 1966.

We were arranged in groups and away we went. To accommodate the larger build of the European tourists the Vietnamese authorities have greatly enlarged the tunnels and the various small rooms which were used as mess halls, hospitals and weapons repair and manufacture, and removed the top covering of soil so you can look into these areas as if looking down into an amphitheatre or such. Mind you, for one who suffers claustrophobia as I do it was still a bit of an effort to even look into them. Maybe that's why I admire Tunnel Rats so much?

**Careful where you step in
Cu Chi Province,
Mr. Charles has been here.**



Our group was going on making the appropriate comments on all the information the guides were telling us about the various things on display when, as can often happen, our group merged into the one in front and they had a different guide with them. This bloke was a full on communist stalwart and he took every opportunity he could to make disparaging remarks about American soldiers and their inability to defeat the poor peasants of the area in their attacks. I took this with a grain of salt as he was probably only saying what he had been trained to say. This same guide by this time was about two people in front of me (I was hurrying as I was hot and wanted to go get a cold beer) when he went past a photo pinned to a wall of one of the huts and it was a GI yelling out to 'someone' and I noticed part of the HERD patch on his left shoulder. The guide made a remark about the "cowardly American Aggressor crying in fear when confronted by the valiant defenders of the tunnels." By this time I had had a gutful of this little prick; I was hot, thirsty, a bit fatigued and becoming somewhat unpleasant to assholes who derided our efforts.

I couldn't help myself and said to this guide; *"What the fuck are you talking about mate? I was here on this day and I know you weren't because if you were you would know that GI is calling out an order or direction to his comrades and the only bastards running, hiding and crying were the fucking gallant Vietnamese defenders! Now shut your mouth or fuck off!"* Well, at this the entire number of the conjoined groups went silent, the guide in question went white, Clay grabbed me saying something to the effect *"C'mon dad, don't let the little prick bring you undone, let's go and sit down."*

I was at this stage trembling with rage and a very dark cloud enveloped me like I haven't had for a few years at that time. From among the group of tourists came an American lady's voice, *"You tell him Aussie, we love you guys,"* and then there was all sorts of chatter among the groups and people coming up and asking me questions and patting me on the back and such. I sort of got the feeling from what was being said that the group we had joined into was predominately American tourists even though they weren't veterans.

By this time that guide had slipped away and Clay said to me, *"Shit dad, I was going to suggest that we go over to the firing range and have a few shots but now you better not go there in case that asshole has a mate on range duty today."* With that we walked into the souvenir shop, Clay went off to the range (actually I have never touched a firearm since I left the government service) and I went and had a couple of cans of Tiger beer -- I never saw that guide again while we were there.

The tourists who went to have a shoot began firing off their rounds and I have to admit that the sounds of the AK47's, M16's and M60's (?) became too much for me and I went up to the end of the building furthest from the range and went around the corner of the wall and remained there with my beer.



**VC fighting the "Big Noses" at
Cu Chi cemetery.**

Now, I have said that there were no other veterans on our bus but there was one other there as while I was leaning against the wall I looked to my right and saw a bloke standing at the other end with his hands over his ears and we just kind of looked at each and shook our heads. I went closer to him and asked him if he was OK and he just put his hand up in a waving motion which I took as 'Leave me alone, I will handle this thing,' so I went back to my position and waited until it was time to join the bus to return to Saigon. It was a fairly quiet trip back with a couple of people asking if I was OK and other mundane murmurings and I eventually fell asleep on the bus.

John Arnold, 1RAR, '65/'66



No PMI with VA Loan

No private mortgage insurance is just one of the many benefits of the VA Home Loan Program. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs sets guidelines so that VA-approved lenders can offer attractive loan features to Qualified VA borrowers.

“...VA borrowers are not required to pay a monthly Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) premium...”

One of the unique features of VA loans is that they don't require private mortgage insurance (PMI). PMI is insurance on a conventional mortgage with more than an 80% loan-to-value (LTV) ratio. (FHA also has a mortgage insurance premium ("MIP") on most of its loans regardless of LTV). The insurance helps cover lender losses in case a borrower defaults on the loan and the property goes into foreclosure. Because 25% of each VA loan mortgage amount is guaranteed by the federal government, VA-approved lenders consider the guaranty in lieu of PMI. Therefore, VA borrowers are not required to pay a monthly PMI premium.

Not having a monthly PMI payment can translate into big savings for the VA borrower. Typical PMI premiums on a conventional loan of \$200,000 can run about \$120 per month or \$1,400 per year. Some borrowers end up paying PMI on non-VA loans even after their principal amounts dip below 80% LTV.

In some cases, an appraisal is necessary before PMI is canceled. Most appraisals cost between \$300 and \$400. Not having to pay for another appraisal is just another savings VA borrowers may experience by not having PMI associated with their loans.

People in the market for a mortgage may find that some conventional loans may be marketed as no-PMI loans. It's important to be aware that some loans advertised as "no PMI required" may be lender-paid PMI loans with higher interest rates. With some such loans, the borrower may end up paying for the PMI indirectly through higher monthly mortgage payments.

Understanding PMI is just one step in realizing the savings for VA borrowers with a no-PMI loan. In addition to no PMI, there are many advantages in using your VA home loan benefits.

Other VA loan advantages include:

- No down payment
- Relaxed qualifying standards
- Competitive interest rates
- No penalties for mortgage pre-payment
- Cash-out and debt consolidation
- Streamline rate reduction

To learn more about no-PMI VA loans and to determine the best loan possible for your individual needs, contact a loan professional with a VA-approved lender.

Source: www.military.com



**Hmm. Wonder if I can get financing on this fixer-upper?
Home sweet home at Camp Zinn, Bien Hoa, Vietnam.**



For them, Woodstock was a side show, college protestors were spoiled brats who would have benefited from having to work a few jobs in order to pay their tuition, and Vietnam represented not an intellectual exercise in draft avoidance, or protest marches but a battlefield that was just as brutal as those their fathers faced in World War II and Korea.

Few who served during Vietnam ever complained of a generation gap. The men who fought World War II were their heroes and role models. They honored their father's service by emulating it, and largely agreed with their father's wisdom in attempting to stop Communism's reach in Southeast Asia.

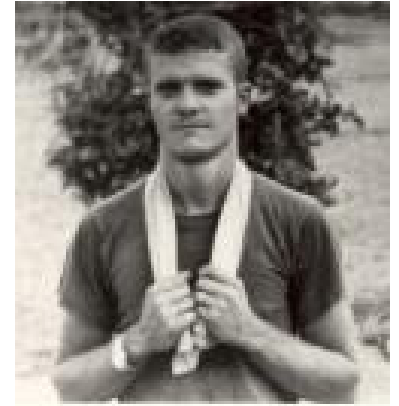
The most accurate poll of their attitudes (Harris, 1980) showed that 91 percent were glad they'd served their country, 74 percent enjoyed their time in the service, and 89 percent agreed with the statement that "our troops were asked to fight in a war which our political leaders in Washington would not let them win." And most importantly, the castigation they received upon returning home was not from the World War II generation, but from the very elites in their age group who supposedly spoke for them.

Nine million men (and women) served in the military during the Vietnam War, three million of whom went to the Vietnam Theater. Contrary to popular mythology, two-thirds of these were volunteers, and 73 percent of those who died were volunteers. While some attention has been paid recently to the plight of our prisoners of war, most of whom were pilots; there has been little recognition of how brutal the war was for those who fought it on the ground.

Dropped onto the enemy's terrain 12,000 miles away from home, America's citizen-soldiers performed with a tenacity and quality that may never be truly understood. Those who believe the war was fought incompletely on a tactical level should consider Hanoi's recent admission that 1.4 million of its soldiers died on the battlefield, compared to 58,000 total U.S. dead.

Those who believe that it was a "dirty little war" where the bombs did all the work might contemplate that it was the most costly war the U.S. Marine Corps has ever fought - five times as many dead as World War I, three times as many dead as in Korea, and more total killed and wounded than in all of World War II.

Significantly, these sacrifices were being made at a time the United States was deeply divided over our effort in Vietnam. The baby-boom generation had



cracked apart along **Jim Webb in Vietnam** class lines as America's young men were making difficult, life-or-death choices about serving. The better academic institutions became focal points for vitriolic protest against the war, with few of their graduates going into the military. Harvard College, which had lost 691 alumni in World War II, lost a total of 12 men in Vietnam from the classes of 1962 through 1972 combined. Those classes at Princeton lost six, at MIT two. The media turned ever more hostile. And frequently the reward for a young man having gone through the trauma of combat was to be greeted by his peers with studied indifference or outright hostility.

What is a hero? My heroes are the young men who faced the issues of war and possible death, and then weighed those concerns against obligations to their country. Citizen-soldiers who interrupted their personal and professional lives at their most formative stage; in the timeless phrase of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, "not for fame or reward, not for place or for rank, but in simple obedience to duty, as they understood it."

(continued....)



Who suffered loneliness, disease, and wounds with an often-contagious élan. And who deserve a far better place in history than that now offered them by the so-called spokesman of our so-called generation.

Mr. Brokaw, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Spielberg, meet my Marines.

1969 was an odd year to be in Vietnam. Second only to 1968 in terms of American casualties, it was the year made famous by Hamburger Hill, as well as the gut-wrenching *Life* cover story showing pictures of 242 Americans who had been killed in one average week of fighting. Back home, it was the year of Woodstock, and of numerous anti-war rallies that culminated in the Moratorium march on Washington. The My Lai massacre hit the papers and was seized upon the anti-war movement as the emblematic moment of the war. Lyndon Johnson left Washington in utter humiliation.

Richard Nixon entered the scene, destined for an even worse fate. In the An Hoa Basin southwest of Danang, the Fifth Marine Regiment was in its third year of continuous combat operations. Combat is an unpredictable and inexact environment, but we were well led. As a rifle platoon and company commander, I served under a succession of three regimental commanders who had cut their teeth in World War II, and four different battalion commanders, three of whom had seen combat in Korea. The company commanders were typically captains on their second combat tour in Vietnam, or young first lieutenants like myself who were given companies after many months of "bush time" as platoon commanders in the Basin's tough and unforgiving environs.

The Basin was one of the most heavily contested areas in Vietnam, its torn, cratered earth offering every sort of wartime possibility. In the mountains just to the west, not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the North Vietnamese Army operated an infantry division from an area called

Base Area 112. In the valleys of the Basin, main-force Viet Cong battalions whose ranks were 80 percent North Vietnamese Army regulars moved against the Americans every day. Local Viet Cong units sniped and harassed. Ridgelines and paddy dikes were laced with sophisticated booby traps of every size, from a hand grenade to a 250-pound bomb. The villages sat in the rice paddies and tree lines like individual fortresses, crisscrossed with the trenches and spider holes, their homes sporting bunkers capable of surviving direct hits from large-caliber artillery shells. The Viet Cong infrastructure was intricate and permeating. Except for the old and the very young, villagers who did not side with the Communists had either been killed or driven out to the government controlled enclaves near Danang.

In the rifle companies, we spent the endless months patrolling ridgelines and villages and mountains, far away from any notion of tents,



Jim Webb in Vietnam

barbed wire, hot food, or electricity. Luxuries were limited to what would fit inside one's pack, which after a few "humps" usually boiled down to letter-writing material, towel, soap, toothbrush, poncho liner, and a small transistor radio.

We moved through the boiling heat with 60 pounds of weapons and gear, causing a typical Marine to drop 20 percent of his body weight while in the bush. When we stopped we dug chest-deep fighting holes and slit trenches for toilets. We slept on the ground under makeshift poncho hooch's, and when it rained we usually took our hooch's down because wet ponchos shined under illumination flares, making great targets.

(continued....)



Sleep itself was fitful, never more than an hour or two at a stretch for months at a time as we mixed daytime patrolling with night-time ambushes, listening posts, foxhole duty, and radio watches. Ringworm, hookworm, malaria, and dysentery were common, as was trench foot when the monsoons came. Respite was rotating back to the mud-filled regimental combat base at An Hoa for four or five days, where rocket and mortar attacks were frequent and our troops manned defensive bunkers at night. Which makes it kind of hard to get excited about tales of Woodstock, or camping at the Vineyard during summer break.

We had been told while training that Marine officers in the rifle companies had an 85 percent probability of being killed or wounded, and the experience of "Dying Delta," as our company was known, bore that out. Of the officers in the bush when I arrived, our company commander was wounded, the weapons platoon commander wounded, the first platoon commander was killed, the second platoon commander was wounded twice, and I, commanding the third platoons fared no better. Two of my original three-squad leaders were killed, and the third shot in the stomach. My platoon sergeant was severely wounded, as was my right guide. By the time I left, my platoon I had gone through six radio operators, five of them casualties.

These figures were hardly unique; in fact, they were typical. Many other units; for instance, those who fought the hill battles around Khe Sanh, or were with the famed Walking Dead of the Ninth Marine Regiment, or were in the battle of Hue City or at Dai Do, had it far worse.

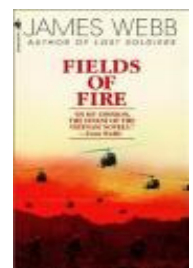
When I remember those days and the very young men who spent them with me, I am continually amazed, for these were mostly recent civilians barley out of high school, called up from the cities and the farms to do their year in hell and then return. Visions haunt me every day, not of the nightmares of war but of

the steady consistency with which my Marines faced their responsibilities, and of how uncomplaining most of them were in the face of constant danger. The salty, battle-hardened 20-year-olds teaching green 19-year-olds the intricate lessons of the hostile battlefield. The unerring skill of the young squad leaders as we moved through unfamiliar villages and weed-choked trails in the black of night. The quick certainty when a fellow Marine was wounded and needed help. Their willingness to risk their lives to save other Marines in peril. To this day it stuns me that their own countrymen have so completely missed the story of their service, lost in the bitter confusion of the war itself.

Like every military unit throughout history we had occasional laggards, cowards, and complainers. But in the aggregate, these Marines were the finest people I have ever been around. It has been my privilege to keep up with many of them over the years since we all came home. One finds in them very little bitterness about the war in which they fought. The most common regret, almost to a man, is that they were not able to do more for each other and for the people they came to help.

It would be redundant to say that I would trust my life to these men. Because I already have, in more ways than I can ever recount. I am alive today because of their quiet, unaffected heroism. Such valor epitomizes the conduct of Americans at war from the first days of our existence. That the boomer elites can canonize this sort of conduct in our fathers' generation while ignoring it in our own is more than simple oversight. It is a conscious, continuing travesty.

Former Secretary of the Navy
James Webb was awarded the
Navy Cross, Silver Star, and
Bronze Star medals for heroism
as a Marine in Vietnam. His novels
include "The Emperor's General"
and "Fields of Fire".



SOUND FINANCIAL ADVICE FROM A SKY SOLDIER

[This came in from A/2/503d good buddy Jack “Jackattack” Ribera and should be considered by everyone interested in building their financial worth]:

The wife of a A/2/503d friend of mine on their wedding night approached my buddy Mike, her new husband, and asked for \$20. for their first time making love. In his highly aroused state, the trooper couldn’t refuse.

For over 40 years this scenario repeated itself. Seems like a cute way for her to afford new clothes and other incidentals she needed

One day she arrived home and found the sad sack in a very drunken state, typical of Mike, as those of you who know him, know. During the next few minutes, and very depressed, he explained his employer was downsizing and had to let him go. At 62, and unlikely to find a job in Spokane paying as well, the old paratrooper feared they were financially ruined.

Calmly, Mike’s wife handed him a bank book which showed more than forty years of steady deposits, including interest paid, which totaled over \$2 million. She explained for more than four decades she had charged him for sex every time and used the money to invest in bonds, and saved every penny!

Mike was so astounded he could barely speak, but he finally found his voice and the trooper blurted out....



That’s when she shot him. I’m gonna miss Mike.

Damn, Jack. After reading that sad report I quickly ran to my bride Reggie of 43 years and found out she had been doing the same thing, but was charging \$25. each time!!!! She then told me we had saved 50 bucks. Ed

A LITTLE COMBAT JUMP DITTY



I find the 173d jump an interesting mystery – there is an old retired Colonel (like me) named Wayne Dill; he ‘planned’ the Junction City jump for the Sep Bde, 101st. The planners were ‘limited’ to a one over-flight recon of the area/DZ and probably the only thing my old ass remembers is I went on that flight with Wayne – two old farts (then young Capt.’s) at an unbelievable altitude (another restriction). The brigade also had to ‘requalify’ its personnel on jump status – and then for some damn reason, the operation was transferred to the 173d.

We all had this sophisticated radio (big damn thing that had all sorts of capability); we had two – one was always down. I remember Ray Largen the Bde Signal Officer begging the General to exempt the radio from these re-qualification jumps, but Gen. Mattheson (a Capt. at Bastogne) cut him no slack. Guess what – ha! I’m full of BS today – another tale/jump story.

During the recertification jumps, done in the vicinity of the Kontum valley with interesting little winds and heat vectors throwing the C-130’s all around/up and down. I ended up sitting next to the Deputy Bde Cdr (Col. Chester B. McCoid), a WWII vet, an old airborne head who looked like John Wayne and was immensely admired by everyone. I had been out drinking the night before and anyway, I was starting to get sick. I told the Colonel this and in a loud voice (to overcome the noise of the C-130 and more importantly, to entertain the troops), he says *“God-damn-it Lawton, I’m not going to have an officer get sick in front of these fuckin’ swine!”* [and he waves his hand in a sweeping motion to indicate to the troops who are watching all this drama] and tells me to standup/hookup and stand in the door to which my sick ass responds – *“Sir, the red light hasn’t even come on,”* and he responds *“Get in the fuckin’ door!”* He put me out (w/full eqpt), just as the red light that had come on, changed to green. I’m chuckling as I write this – great officer.

John P. Lawton, Col. (Ret), 4/503d

LTC Bob Sigholtz addresses his 2/503d troopers prior to Junction City jump.

Photo by
Wayne Tuttle



THE COST OF WAR

Following is a note 2/503d good buddy Butch Clark sent to his friend Jerry who had offered to drive Butch to *The Wall* in Washington, DC. Butch is a friend, a fellow Sky Soldier, and he is dying. Ed

Jerry, you couldn't find me because I was hiding! Think back to the 80's on the 3rd of July at the Oakland VA Hospital. The protesters were on every TV channel in the city -- protesting the PTSD treatment guys were given at that hospital.

I was there for 90 days and never once saw a doctor; just some resident interns. Then one day a doctor walks into my room and says, "*Clark, you look too healthy to be here!*" and walks out.



The only way I knew I was discharged is my dinner didn't come with the evening meal! I closed that Mental Health ward down. What was happening was, they had drug addicts and guys suffering with PTSD on the same ward. They received more \$\$\$\$ for drug patients than they did for PTSD patients -- it was a racket run by civilian doctors who never showed up to treat us.

So, jump to 1985. Still hiding in the hills. I hung myself from a pine tree in the yard one day. My wife had to wait till I stopped kicking then cut me down. She had an ambulance take me to Highland Drive VA Hospital. After 4 days of recovery I walked out of a locked ward and simply went home. They diagnosed me with PTSD then, but never told me. Every claim I filed for PTSD was denied and I never challenged the rulings because I couldn't deal with the outside world. So I stayed back in the woods and built my wife a custom home while I raised our two sons.

One of our sons holds nose tackle records at Slippery Rock U, and he had won a full ride at SRU. He is my stepson, his name is Ian. My other son is 18 and is just finishing his private pilot license instruction, and is still in school. He plans on going into the Coast Guard as a pilot once he completes 4 years at a University which offers aviation credits. He needs 4 years to be a Commercial Medivac Pilot.

So back to me. I never held a job longer than 3 months. So no Social Security or SSI. I worked for myself buying old homes, re-doing them and flipping them. And then, I suffered 4 strokes in one month! A month later I'm diagnosed with pulmonary fibroses. They gave me 5 years to live. That was in 2000.

Five years ago it got real bad; my third wife of 30 years says, "*Give me all you paperwork. I'm going after the VA*". And she did! She got me awarded 100% service connected disability for, guess what? "PTSD." They wouldn't honor any retroactive payment to '85 because I hadn't appealed that decision. But, one night in 2006 when the war was keeping me awake, I went on-line to the VA web site and filed for PTSD. Because the time limit wasn't up yet I was retroactively compensated to 2006.

They tell me I can't sue for the 1985 filing....and here's the bummer. In order for my wife to receive a pension and my son to receive schooling assistance, I have to remain 100% disabled for 10 years. If I die from my lungs my wife and my son lose everything. But if I die from suicide related to PTSD, they receive the schooling assistance and a half pension, as long as she doesn't remarry!

I am now in End Stage Pulmonary Fibrosis. I am wheelchair bound, house bound hooked to 2 large oxygen bottles and an oxygen concentrator. I suffer severally 5/6/7 times a day where I can't breath. My chest muscles cramp and tighten so badly it further causes breathing problems. My wife has to inject liquid morphine under my tongue to relax my muscles. Add to this, I take 120 mg. of morphine pills every day and 10 mg. of Percocet every four hours for breakthrough pain. I can't go anywhere.

So, thank you, Jerry, for the offer to go to the Wall. Maybe when you go you could carve my name in it. Cause I died in Nam and didn't even know it!

Butch Clark, HHC/2/503d, '65

**Our
brother
today.
Keep
fighting the
good fight,
Butch.**



Note: Let's hope someone in Congress or with the Veterans Administration read Butch's story (we're sending it to them), and countless reports just like his, and looks into the regulations which appear to be so unfair. Ed



DRAFTING GUYS OVER 60

Drafting Guys Over 60 is a funny tale and obviously written by a former soldier. We've included a few photos of 2/503d buddies we think would easily qualify for this draft and who would want to be the first to go, along with what they might say about going. Ed



Raring, ready and able? L-R: A/2/503d troopers Bob "Luke" Lucas, Mike (if they have cold beer I'll think about it) Sturges & Terry "Woody" Davis.
"Where do we sign up?"

I am over 60 and the Armed Forces thinks I'm too old to track down terrorists. You can't be older than 42 to join the military. They've got the whole thing ass-backwards. Instead of sending 18-year olds off to fight, they ought to take us old guys. You shouldn't be able to join a military unit until you're at least 35.



RTO Wayne Hoitt & LTC Bob Carmichael, HHC/2/503d
*"Sure Colonel, I'll go with you.
They do have limo service don't they?"*

For starters, researchers say 18-year-olds think about sex every 10 seconds. Old guys only think about sex a couple of times a day, leaving us more than 28,000 additional seconds per day to concentrate on the enemy.



A/2/503d Dale Olson
"Count me in! I can take my staff with me, right?"

Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. *'My back hurts! I can't sleep, I'm tired and hungry!'* We are impatient and maybe letting us kill some asshole that desperately deserves it will make us feel better and shut us up for awhile.



B/2/503d Art Martinez & Herman the Paratrooper
"If he goes, I'll go."

An 18-year-old doesn't even like to get up before 10 a.m. Old guys always get up early to pee, so what the hell. Besides, like I said, I'm tired and can't sleep and since I'm already up, I may as well be up killing some fanatical son-of-a-bitch.

(continued....)



If captured we couldn't spill the beans because we'd forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser.



2/503d Charlie Knecht (L) & 1/503d Craig Ford.
Craig: *"Hell yes! I went back to Vietnam in '01 with 7 of you 2d Bat guys and had to buy all the drinks! I'll go but I ain't buyin' the drinks this time!!"*

Basic Training would be easier for old guys. We're used to getting screamed and yelled at and we're used to soft food. We've also developed an appreciation for guns. We've been using them for years as an excuse to get out of the house, away from the screaming and yelling.



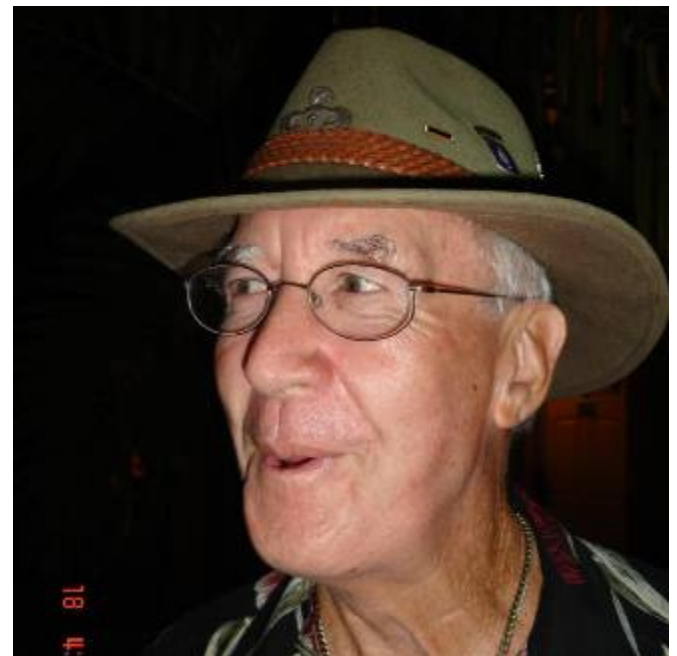
C/2/503d Desmond "Hammer" Jackson
"I'm callin' my Chargin' Charlies right now. We're in! Saddle up boys!!"

They could lighten up on the obstacle course however. I've been in combat and never saw a single 20-foot wall with rope hanging over the side, nor did I ever do any pushups after completing basic training. (Must not have been a paratrooper. Ed)



A/2/503d Don "Rocky" Rockholt
"Afghanistan? O.K. Right after this nap."

Actually, the running part is kind of a waste of energy, too. I've never seen anyone outrun a bullet.



HHC/2/503d Marcus Powell
"Only if I can lead Recon again. Who has the phone numbers for Amyot, Hassler, Hargadon and Kies?"

(continued....)





A/2/503d Freddie Parks

*“On one condition, Vose doesn’t go. The last time he had me take-out a machine gun nest, which I did, but that little bastard shot my ass up before I got him.
No way if Vose goes.”*

An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him. He's still learning to shave, to start a conversation with a pretty girl. He still hasn't figured out that a baseball cap has a brim to shade his eyes, not the back of his head.



WWII 503rd PRCT troopers. L-R: Chet Nycum, Chuck Breit, Charley Hylton, Paul Hinds & John Cleland.
“Come on boys, let’s go help those youngins help those youngins.”

These are all great reasons to keep our kids at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off into harm's way. Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten coward terrorists.

**A/HHC/2/503d
Bill Vose
“Freddie! Freddie!!”**

The last thing an enemy would want to see is a couple million pissed off old farts with attitudes and automatic weapons, who know that their best years are already behind them.

HEY!! How about recruiting Women over 50...in menopause!!! You think MEN have attitudes?

Ohhhhhhhhhhh my God!!! If nothing else, put them on border patrol. They'll have it secured the first night!



“ Can I come too?”

[Thanks to Terry Boggs, 3/503d for sending in the story]



“Sorry fellas, I won’t be making this one with you, but I’ll be thinking of you.”



173d Airborne Soldier Recommended for Medal of Honor

By Michelle Tan - Staff writer
Posted : Tuesday, July 6, 2010

A soldier who served in Afghanistan could be the first living recipient of the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War.

News outlets in and around Cedar Rapids, Iowa, have reported that Staff Sgt. Sal Giunta, who is from that area, is believed to be the soldier being considered for the nation's highest valor award. Giunta is currently stationed in Vicenza, Italy.

The recommendation has been sent from the Defense Department to the White House, according to an Army source, who confirmed that Giunta is likely the nominee. The *Washington Post* was the first to report the nomination, but did not reveal the soldier's name.

A source close to the nomination said the soldier fought through a barrage of fire to repel enemy fighters in a fierce battle in late 2007 in Afghanistan's treacherous Korengal Valley. His actions saved the lives of several other soldiers.

The White House and the Army refused to comment on the nomination. Efforts to reach Giunta and his family were unsuccessful.

The AP reported officials are concerned that early disclosure could be seen as pressuring President Barack Obama to approve the medal, creating a potentially embarrassing situation if the award is not approved.

If approved, the award would be just the seventh Medal of Honor since the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. All six prior awards were posthumous, including four for acts of heroism in Iraq and two in Afghanistan.

The small number awarded and the fact that all were awarded posthumously has raised questions among members of Congress and senior military leaders.

When asked by reporters, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in September the issue has been "a source of real concern to me." He added: The Medal of Honor nomination process is "a very time-intensive, thorough process. But I would say that I've been told there are some living potential recipients that have been put forward," he said during a Sept. 17 news conference.

Military officials have said it's difficult to compare the number of awards from previous conflicts to those for Iraq and Afghanistan because warfare has evolved so much.



"The types of actions that we have in Iraq and Afghanistan, although they can be brutally violent for short periods of time, they are not the long duration, force-on-force type of battles that we fought in the past," Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey said June 7 during a meeting with *ArmyTimes* editors and reporters. *"That said, I think ... you're going to continue to see awards for Medals of Honor and Distinguished Service Crosses continue to process through, and I would expect that some of those, especially for a living soldier, would be favorably approved."*

Giunta's heroic actions are chronicled in a new book titled "War," by Sebastian Junger.

A specialist at the time, Giunta deployed with the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team for its June 2007 to August 2008 tour in Afghanistan.

According to Junger's book, late on Oct. 25, 2007, Giunta and his fellow soldiers from B Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, were on their way back from a major operation when they are ambushed by the enemy.

Giunta was the fourth soldier from the front; Sgt. Josh Brennan was walking point, according to "War." The enemy fired machine-gun and small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades from such close range that the Apache attack helicopters overhead were unable to help the soldiers on the ground.

"First Platoon is essentially inside a shooting gallery," Junger wrote. *"Within seconds, every man in the lead squad takes a bullet. Brennan goes down immediately, wounded in eight places."*

As the battle progressed, Giunta *"sees two enemy fighters dragging Josh Brennan down the hillside. He empties his M4 magazine at them and starts running toward his friend,"* according to the book.

"Giunta jams a new magazine into his gun and yells for a medic. Brennan is lying badly wounded in the open and Giunta grabs him by the vest and drags him behind a little bit of cover."

Brennan doesn't survive surgery, Junger wrote. Giunta later talks to Junger about his actions. *"I did what I did because that's what I was trained to do,"* he told Junger. *"I didn't run through fire to save a buddy - I ran through fire to see what was going on with him and maybe we could hide behind the same rock and shoot together. I didn't run through fire to do anything heroic or brave. I did what I believe anyone would have done."*

[Sent in by Dr. Scott Fairchild, LTC (Ret), 82nd Abn. Div.]

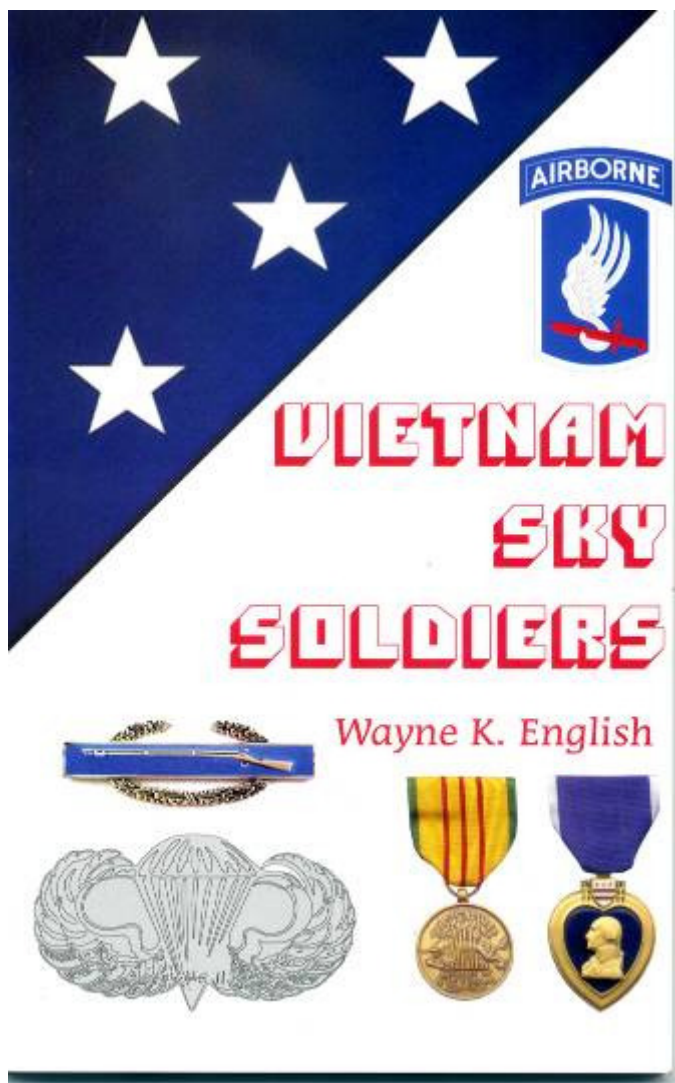


VIETNAM SKY SOLDIERS

Wayne English who served in the 4-Deuce platoon with the 2/503d in '65/'66 has written this book detailing some of his experiences during the Vietnam War.

An Excerpt from Wayne's book:

"The ambush seemed to slow a little. The sounds were steady. The machine gun seemed to be slowing but it was still cutting down brush around us. I looked up and coming down the trail toward me was a guy crawling. When he looked up at me, his face was white and covered with large drops of sweat. It was Fogle. I had gone to jump school with him. I don't now why, but my first question to him was, 'Where have you been hit?' He replied, 'I'm hit in the chest and I'm afraid to look at it.'"



You can order a copy of "Vietnam Sky Soldiers" direct from Wayne by contacting him at:

englishgap@bellsouth.net

2/503d COMBAT SERVICE CITATION - VIETNAM

Some years ago, recognizing too many of our men were never formally honored for their dedicated and heroic service in the 2d Battalion during our war, former battalion commanders Cols. Dexter, Carmichael, Walsh and Sigholtz issued the "2/503d Combat Service Citation" to every man who served in the battalion in Vietnam during any year,

"In recognition of their exemplary performance during combat operations."

While it is not an official army award, the citation, signed by each commander, is particularly special as it is from the men we followed into battle. If you served with the 2/503d at any time during the Vietnam War and have not received your award, please email your name (as you wish it to appear on the citation), your company and years served with the battalion, and physical mail address to rto173d@cfl.r.com. Your citation will be mailed to you. This is what one of our troopers said after receiving his Combat Service Citation:

"Yesterday I received the Combat Service Citation in the mail. It's Beautiful, and something I will Cherish for the remainder of my life. I have already framed it and hung it on the wall. It arrived while my grandchildren were here on a visit. They read it and for the first time, actually started asking questions about the War. We talked for almost 3 hours, and now they finally have some basic knowledge about a time that has been hidden from them by their so-called educators"

That 3 hours with them reminded me of the speech Gen. George Patton gave to his Troops:

'When your grandchildren ask you: What did you do during the Great War, you won't have to say, Well, I shoveled shit in Louisiana.'

Thanks again to our past commanders for making that possible, and May God Bless The Sky Soldiers."

Ted Mobley, HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

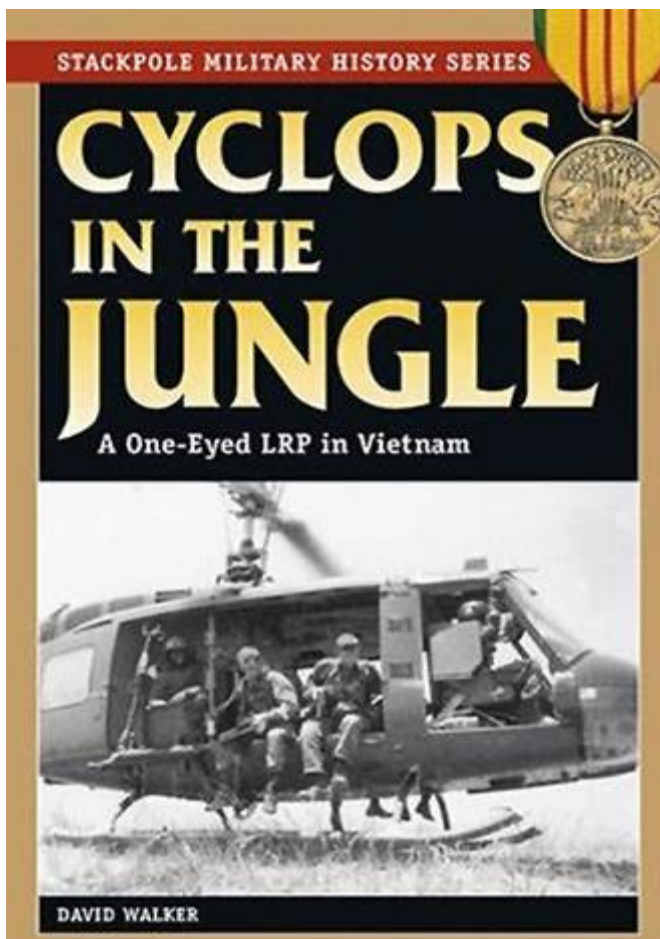


NEW BOOK

By Dave Walker, N75 Ranger

Just spoke to my chief editor at Stackpole Books, and my book, *Cyclops in the Jungle...a One-Eyed LRP in Vietnam*, just went to the printer. It will be available in 4-5 weeks. Please forward this e-mail to our mass unit mailing list and whoever else you know that might need a sleeping pill. Thanks.

Dave Varmint/Hawkeye sends



A 2/503d buddy said he tried this in Vietnam. It didn't work then either.

A GREAT COMPLIMENT FROM AN ALL-AMERICAN



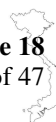
Good buddy, Bob Beemer, B/2/503d, sent in the following note he received from a WWII 82nd Airborne trooper friend of his. What a great compliment about the content of our newsletter by one of those amazing All Americans. It's kinda nice to know some of those paratroopers who forged the way for us enjoy reading about us 'youngins' -- they call us 'youngins', you gotta love 'em! Ed

"Thought you'd like to see what a WWII 82d guy who jumped into Holland had to say about our newsletter."
Bob

"Bob. It takes me a long time to read everything in the newsletter but I do enjoy it immensely. I think it's the best Airborne paper or whatever you want to call it of any Airborne Unit in any Division or Regiment ever formed. The stories of the men, about the even small incidents they experienced, are outstanding. Even some of the funny stuff you know is sometimes deadly but the Humor comes through. And anyone who has ever been in Combat can feel what is going on....I have the usual old geezer aches and pains but I can't kick. When they finally put me in the box I'll have a big smile on my face. I have no complaints. Stay well Bob. Airborne"
Walt

*"No ground gained was ever
relinquished."*

General Gavin's 82nd Airborne proud boast
after Normandy, WWII.



WWII AIRBORNE BRACELET

Hope you can help with passing this on to any of the remaining 503rd who were here in Gordonvale, Australia. Apart from other objects we have here left by men in the 503rd we also came across this bracelet. Maybe some of the men left may be able to help us with its history.



This lady's bracelet recalls the time the United States 503rd Parachute Regiment spent in the Gordonvale district, (between December 1942 and August 1943). It is made up of five silver three-pence coins, joined by four fine silver chains. The embossed emblem on the middle coin is that of the 503rd. All the coins are dated 1942 and, interestingly, they were minted in the American city of Denver (the only time Australian coins were minted outside Australia). This Regiment was the first US parachute regiment raised, and the only one to train in Australia – here in Gordonvale – before parachuting into hostile enemy territory in New Guinea and then Corregidor.

I volunteer at the Mulgrave Settlers Museum in Gordonvale, Queensland. I have only been working there a short time and am fairly new to the area. My main job is to put all the Museums' objects, documents etc. onto a computer data base. I became involved with the 503rd because we have had visitors wanting to know if we had anything written on the 503rd and their time in Gordonvale.

I started to gather all the photographs, photos of the objects we have, letters from ex 503rd people and memories of the 503rd from people here in Gordonvale. It is an ongoing project as I keep finding things scattered around the museum. Originally thought it would only be a few pages. So far I have about 60 pages of a booklet done. Many of the people who gave objects etc. to the museum have passed away. I originally tried to get in touch with *Static Line* for information on some of the objects. Finally Tim Stout answered and was a great help in identifying most of the insignias etc.

There was a back to Gordonvale trip for some of the 503rd in 1979 which was before my time here. We would be most grateful for any of the remaining 503rd for their stories of their time here or copies of any photographs they may have. We are mainly interested in the 503rd and their attachment to Gordonvale.

I've been a bit long winded but appreciate your help and that of any others. Will send a photo of one insignia we have that Tim couldn't identify with. Maybe some of you can.

Many thanks,

Travis Teske

[You can contact Travis at travistt@tpg.com.au]

From a WWII 503rd Trooper

I have a whole table top covered with Aussie coins. I have only seen one bracelet of the type described in the e-mail, and it was made long after the war was over and the Aussies had adopted the dollar standard.

Many of the people in New Zealand and Australia collected them and made trinkets to sell. Small tables covered with coins and then covered with clear plastic is one example, pre-selecting the date for the coins on that bracelet was a spark of genius. Probably increasing its sell price, but all the while remembering it was against the law to destroy Aussie currency during the war period. Most likely the Bracelet was made long after the war.

Chet Nycum, G/503rd PRCT

AND MORE ABOUT THE BRACELET

Couldn't resist putting in my 'two cents' on the photos of the Australian coins.

That is a very nice little piece of Sweetheart Jewelry. I remember the threepenny (generally pronounced thripney) bits from when I was a kid – they were around and common until 1966, when we went to a decimal system. In slang we also called them a "tray" – from the French, I suppose. The wartime ones are silver. In 1966, they exchanged them for two cents.

The 1942 coin is really quite rare – there were only 528,000 minted. Because of this critical shortage in the wartime economy, the following year 24 million were minted in the USA.

The 1943 have a mintmark S for San Francisco, and D for Denver. I can't see the detail on the picture. They were popular as they were generally the coin for a bus, tram or movie theater. Also donuts.

Paul Whitman

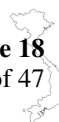
503rd Heritage Battalion Web Site

http://corregidor.org/heritage_battalion/index.htm



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CORREGIDOR CHUTE

The next time you have the opportunity to visit the 173d Memorial at Fort Benning, GA, you'll want to tour the National Infantry Museum nearby. As you enter the WWII exhibit, off to your right encased behind glass for all time you'll see this cammo'd parachute donated to the museum by Chuck Breit of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team. Following his combat jump onto the Island of Corregidor on February 16, 1945, Chuck was able to bury his chute in the ground.



After the island was captured he later recovered his chute and gave it to a friend who returned it to Chuck upon his return stateside. In 1984, he donated it to the Infantry Museum. In a note from the museum to Chuck:

"The National Infantry Museum is honored to add the camouflage parachute you used in the jump on Corregidor on February 16, 1945. This is truly a fine artifact that we are pleased to add to the Airborne collection. We are proud to accept this gift, and I want to thank you on behalf of Fort Benning and the National Infantry Museum for allowing us the privilege of having this unique item for our collection."

E. Frank Hanner, Curator, National Infantry Museum
Department of the Army

"Mr. Hanner, I sincerely thank you for accepting this chute. I am very happy that it will stand in the museum as a memorial to all of the 503 RCT who were there that day on Corregidor." Charles E. Breit

503rd PRCT paratrooper Chuck Breit attended the 173d Airborne Brigade reunion in North Myrtle Beach, SC this past June. Chuck was the first of the WWII 503rd troopers to become an Associate Member of the 173d Airborne Association following the reunion. Airborne Chuck!

LUCKY BULL

Claudia Tobin, sister of Larry Paladino, RTO and tunnel rat extraordinaire with B/2/503d '65/'66, announced recently her brother had a birthday. To honor him on his birthday we're running this historical photo of Larry offering up his very best airborne welcome to *Playboy* 'Playmate of the Year,' Jo Collins at Camp Zinn in 1966. To further recognize him for his service to country and *Playboy* magazine, some of his fellow Bulls sent in their ideas for captions which might best fit the photo. Happy Birthday from your Bulls, Larry!



"Larry Paladino welcomes Playboy Playmate of the Year Jo Collins to Vietnam in 1966."

"I've heard of DEEP THROAT...but someone's tongue is sticking out in your pocket!"

"Is that the best you can do, GI?"

"Does this mean that while I'm here, I have to sleep in the supply tent with Sgt Arnold?"

"Where is Captain Lombardo? Did he get lost again?"

"This is my rifle....this is my gun...."

"Is that an M-16 in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?"

"Wouldn't you prefer the Heimlich maneuver?"

"Someone get the hose!"

"The Company Commander sent the most deserving Bull to represent the company...."

Roy Lombardo, CO/B/2/503d

"I don't think Larry was capable of saying anything (at that time). I did not see her in Vietnam, someone had to be out fighting the damn war. I did get to meet her at one of the reunions in Los Angeles when she dropped by. There, she was a very handsome, well spoken woman; unlike most of the gum chewers we see today in the media."

Jim Robinson, FO/B/2/503d



THE PRICK and that it was

The AN/PRC-25 (fondly or not so fondly referred to as the 'Prick' by the RTO's who carried it) was first introduced into Vietnam in 1965 when BG Ellis Williamson, 173d brigade commander, told Gen. Westmoreland better portable radios were vitally needed.



Its development began as an experiment in FM (frequency modulation) based vehicular-mounted communications at Ft. Monmouth, NJ, in 1948. The previously used AM (amplitude modulation) sets were bulky and susceptible to engine interference. In 1955 the Signal Corps decided to pursue both vehicle and manpack radios utilizing solid-state technology. The original 20 pound developmental model was completed in 1958 with the testing model a year later. In May, 1961, the "Prick-25" officially became part of Army inventory, but the AN/PRC-10 still was the primary radio in combat units.

At Williamson's request, Westmoreland requested 2,000 of the new radios for immediate dispatch to Vietnam. They were originally slated to go to Europe but the U.S. Army Electronics Command released its entire stock of 1,000 radios to Nam. The new radio was first used in a large-scale operation during the 1965 Pleiku campaign in the Ia Drang Valley.

[Report sent in by Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503d, '66/'67]



**Jerry Hassler, a young, good lookin' RTO
with his, well, you know.**

FROM THE ARCHIVES

On 1 June 1970 was published a *Sky Soldier* special edition by the 173d Airborne Brigade with introduction by BG H.S. Cunningham. The following is an excerpt from this army publication:

WALKING TARGET: He comes in all shapes and sizes but his load is the same. Not to mention the risk.

He's one of the most critically needed men of any operation, whether it's a fire team on a night ambush, or a battalion in the field. His is one of the least desirable of jobs.

The radio operator wears an uncomfortable load and poses a beautiful target for snipers. His long, whip antenna tells everyone who he is, and the most basic instruction of any military force is the importance of radio communications. Charlie desperately tries to get the RTO.

But, in spite of his load and the risk he runs, once a trooper becomes accustomed to his radio, he sticks faithfully to it and, in many cases, would not swap jobs with anyone. He knows how important he is.

[Sent in by Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503d, '66/'67]



A 2/503d RTO, aka Walking Target.



DOES IT MATTER?

William T. Calhoun



The sun shone brightly as the great ship passed under the Golden Gate and followed the Navy blimp, November 23, 1943. It carried over 14,000 Army and

Navy passengers headed for points they had never been. My group knew we were bound for the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.

After serving longer than any other officer in with F Company, almost unbelieving, I walked down the gang plank from the old ship to the wharf at Portland, Oregon a week before Christmas 1945. The physical trials had been great: thirst, hunger, bone tiredness, filth, heat, cold (yes, it's cold up on 4,000 feet, wet mountains even in the tropics), and times when a cigarette was our only recreation. But physical discomforts are superficial which can be laughed at....later.

It is the mental trials that are seared in the soul. The memory of those young men with whom you served will never end. We were a close team, brothers following orders in every move. Our association was seven days a week. More than that, we company grade officers were required to censor mail - a hated task. I learned their loved ones, their dreams, their fears, their plans for the future, and often their inner thoughts. To some I became father-confessor. As some made the supreme sacrifice, the living became more precious. *"Oh, God, don't let them die!"* Though that pain began so long ago, it is still here today. The tears still flow and will as long as I draw breath.

Does it matter? Do the thoughts that remain cemented in my mind for over 50 years matter? As long as I live, it matters. My obsession is a holy quest to remind all who will listen of the brave who gave their lives for us. Can I forget my thoughts, as I saw 20 year old Theodore's dying spasms, of his two baby boys, one who he had never seen? Can I forget my thoughts of 19 year old Karl whose last word was "Momma." Of his letters full of assurance to his older parents assuring them that their only son would be safe? Our regimental song has words which express my pride in serving with them: *"...I'm proud I'm allowed..."* My hopes are inscribed in the Pacific War Memorial on Topside:

**SLEEP, MY SONS, YOUR DUTY DONE,
FOR FREEDOM'S LIGHT HAS COME,
SLEEP IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA,
OR IN YOUR BED OF HALLOWED SOD,
UNTIL YOU HEAR AT DAWN
THE LOW, CLEAR REVEILLE OF GOD.**

Bill Calhoun commanded 1st Platoon, "D" Co. (Corregidor) and later became company commander of "D" Co. (Negros). Bill is the president-elect of the 503rd PRCT Association. (From the 503rd Heritage Bn web site).



173d & 503rd



An interesting and remarkable thing happened at the 173d Airborne Brigade Association's annual reunion this past June. Paratroopers of the 173d came together with their fellow paratroopers of the WWII 503rd PRCT in brotherhood. Truly, it was like old friends and buddies getting back together after years of being apart.

Three generations of 503rd paratroopers shared their stories with one another, tipped their glasses to fallen buddies, laughed together and sang old paratrooper songs. It was a great honor to stand with these men of different wars, to be one of them, to be a 503rd paratrooper.

Albeit late for all of us, these two paratrooper units who share a common lineage are finally coming together as one in brotherhood. And many of us learned we have much in common; we are combat veterans of America's wars, we're all moving a little slower these days, we share a unique bond only warriors understand, and we all are 503rd paratroopers. Damn it's good not to be a Leg.

And now, thanks to Chuck Breit's idea along with the support of his boys of the 503rd PRCT, and 173d Association president Roy Scott and our board of directors, not to forget the forward thinking of Chapter 30 of the 173d Association who brought our units together in North Myrtle Beach, efforts are underway to bring these two units of jumping fools ever closer.

Just recently Roy dispatched a formal invitation to Nelson Gatewood, president of the 503rd PRCT Association inviting all their paratroopers to join our Association as Associate Members. Chuck told me, *"I want to be the first to join!"* and after signing-up for a life membership in the 173d Association, he was the first. We hope to see many more 503rd PRCT troopers follow his lead and become active in our Association.

In turn, 503rd PRCT Association president-elect Bill Calhoun has invited all members of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association to attend their reunion in Dallas, TX this coming September. A number of us are making plans to do just that. (See pages 34 & 35 herein).

We all should be *"proud to be allowed."*

Following is the letter of invitation Roy sent to Nelson Gatewood with the 503rd PRCT.

Smitty Out



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Roy F. Scott, Jr.
President
173d Airborne Brigade Association
1409 Wilmore Drive
Columbus, OH 43209
Phone: (614) 235-6055
Cell: (614) 206-2919

28 June 2010

Mr. Nelson Gatewood
President
503rd PRCT Association
2817 Highway 62 - 412
Highland, AR 72542

Dear Mr. Gatewood:

Before addressing the subject of this note, I first want to share with you, your Board members and your membership how pleased we of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association were to serve as hosts to the 503rd PRCT troopers and their companions at our annual reunion held earlier this month in North Myrtle Beach, SC. Without question, their participation directly contributed to this year's reunion being an overwhelming success and like no other before. What we've heard from some of your men indicates they too enjoyed their time with their fellow paratroopers. I hope we've set the stage for the 503rd and 173d to move together into the future in airborne brotherhood.

Consistent with that hope, and following-up on a request and a wonderful idea by Mr. Chuck Breit, whom, as you know, is a member of your Association, and on behalf of the entire 173d Airborne Brigade Association, I am honored to invite you and all interested members of the 503rd PRCT Association to consider becoming Associate Members of our organization. In turn, we will be further honored to extend any similar invitation from you for our members to consider joining the 503rd PRCT Association if you deem this appropriate.

Working within our bi-laws and approved by our Board of Directors, I'm pleased to report we are extending a special dues rate for the first year membership of \$5.03 per each 503rd PRCT trooper wishing to become an Associate Member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association. For any trooper who simply cannot afford the \$5.03 dues, we will waive that request. Should any trooper have interest in a life-time membership, we've reduced those one-time dues from \$173. to \$121.

No doubt like the 503rd PRCT Association, we too are dedicated to keeping alive the bond shared by all paratroopers. Sharing in our combined histories the proud heritage of the 503rd Infantry Regiment is all the more reason for members of our organizations to come together. As Mr. Breit stated in an earlier note on the subject, no paratrooper should ever stand alone, and with our troopers, hopefully one day participating as members in both Associations, this will ensure not one of us will ever stand alone.

- 1 of 2 -



Some of the benefits your troopers can expect as Associate Members of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association, include:

- A complimentary subscription to our quarterly National Magazine, *Sky Soldier*;
- An auto window decal and membership card;
- Invitation to each member and their guests to our annual reunions;
- Complimentary use of our searchable on-line data base to hook-up with buddies;
- Participation in the 173d Airborne Brigade Foundation which offers a Scholarship Program for troopers and their family members;
- And support by our National Service Officers to help advise members on veteran service matters.

But, Mr. Gatewood, I'm sure you'll agree, most importantly, by our troopers coming together we will further bond while keeping the 'Airborne Spirit' and our renowned histories alive well into the future.

Through our local chapters we support our active duty paratroopers now in the war zone. Chapters have sent everything from Christmas trees to microwaves, baseball bats to sun glasses. If the troops want it, our chapters do their utmost to get it to them. Each chapter is in itself uniquely run by the local membership. Chapters conduct their own local programs, from meetings to social activities to visiting our wounded at hospitals and, when necessary, attending funerals of our fallen. We invite all members to stay hooked-up and participate in these programs and events whenever possible.

Accompanying this note is a form which interested members of the 503rd PRCT Association may use to register as Associate Members of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association. We very much look forward to welcoming to our ever expanding family of paratroopers the amazing men of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, and to honor your and their dedicated, unmatched and heroic service to our country.

Nelson, if I may be so personal; I look forward to meeting you one day soon. Please let me know if you have any questions about our invitation and I'll do my best to answer them for you. Until then,

Airborne, All The Way!

Roy Scott

cc by email to:

173d Airborne Brigade Association Board of Directors
Mr. William Calhoun, President-Elect, 503rd PRCT Association
Mr. Chuck Breit, 503rd PRCT Association Member
Ms. Nancy Young, Secretary, 503rd PRCT Association
Mr. Hal Nobles, Chairman, 2010 Reunion Committee Chairman
Mr. Mike Montie, 173d Membership Secretary





2010 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team Reunion

~ September 22nd - September 26th ~



~ Tentative Agenda ~

Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

Wednesday, September 22nd

Registration (room 704):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.
Hospitality Room (room 704):..... 2:00p.m. - 10:00p.m.

Thursday, September 23rd

*Breakfast..... 6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
Registration (room 704):.....10:00a.m. - 4:00p.m.

Friday, September 24th

* Breakfast.....6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
Board of Director's Meeting,
(Hospitality room 704):.....10:00a.m.
Registration (room 704):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.
Hospitality Room (room 704/804):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Hospitality room sponsored by:

FORD ALBRITTON

ALL TROOPERS please come and lift a drink!!!!

Hospitality Room (room 704):..... 2:00p.m. - 5:00p.m.
Dinner (banquet room BOND):..... 6:00p.m.
Hospitality Room: (room 704 & 804),
After dinner:..... 10:00p.m.

Saturday, September 25th

*Breakfast: 6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
SW Chapter Meeting:
(hospitality room 804):.....9:30a.m.
Annual Membership Meeting:
(hospitality room 704): 11:00a.m.
Hospitality Room (Open after annual meeting): 5:00p.m.
Open after banquet:.....10:00p.m.
Banquet: (banquet room LINDBERGH 1):.....6:00p.m.

Sunday, September 26th

*Breakfast:.....6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
Check Out: anytime up to 12:00a.m.

*Breakfast Buffet is for registered hotel guests only.
ALL others must order and pay individually.

***No food or beverage may be taken out of the
Hospitality suites, per hotel request.***



Attention all Sky Soldiers! The 503rd PRCT Association is inviting all members of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association to join their fellow 503rd paratroopers at our reunion in Dallas, TX this September. **We hope to see you here!!!**

~ Hotel Information ~

Wyndham DFW Airport North
4441 West John Carpenter Freeway (HWY 114)
Irving, Texas 75063

Hotel Reservations: (972)-929-8181
for special requests.

Toll free Reservations: (877)-999-3223
specify hotel name.

Be sure to request the 503rd PRCT room block
when making your reservations.

Dates: Wednesday, Sept 22nd - Sunday, Sept 26th
(stay longer if you wish!)

- **Room Rate** is \$79.00 plus tax for up to 2 people (king or 2 full beds), which includes full breakfast buffet (including omelets and the like!), and free shuttle service to and from DFW Airport and local restaurants.

Hotel Reservation deadline is September 1, 2010, after which room rate cannot be guaranteed.

503rd Reunion Registration Fee

\$90.00 per person, please make check payable
and mail to:

Marvin Edwards or;
SW 503rd PRCT

1655 VZCR 2313, Canton, Texas 75103

Phone number for any questions—(903)-848-7023

Fee includes: Catered Dinner on Friday and Saturday,
Banquet Room both nights for Dinner,
Hospitality Room for entire reunion with
snacks and drinks.
Name Tags.
Free Parking at hotel.
And other items.

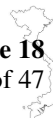
Hospitality Room on Friday is sponsored by **FORD ALBRITTON!!!** All troopers please come and share drinks and conversation from 2:00-5:00 p.m.. Ford was attached to Headquarters and flew many support missions for you and would like to talk with all of his old friends.

AIRBORNE.....ALL THE WAY!



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503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team 2010

~ Reunion Registration Form ~



Wednesday, September 22nd-Sunday, September 26th

Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

****PLEASE PRINT and RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH PAYMENT****

_____ How many will be registered to attend reunion and banquet at \$90.00 per person?

Please print names

Unit

1. _____

2. _____ spouse

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

For information or
questions, please call:

(903)-848-7023

_____ How many other guests will attend
ONLY the catered meals with you at a cost of
\$32.50 per person per meal? Please indicate
meal: _____ Friday _____ Saturday

Date you plan to check in: _____

Date you plan to check out: _____

_____ We will **NOT** be able to attend the reunion
or banquet(s) this year.

(Please print)

(Name): _____

(Phone Number): _____

(Email): _____



Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

Enclosed is my check in the amount of: \$ _____
payable to:

503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Please mail completed form with check to:

Marvin Edwards

1655 VZCR 2313, Canton, TX 75103

Registration deadline is Sunday, August 15, 2010.

Registration refunds will be given until September 10, 2010.



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The Man Who Planned The Offensive

[Time magazine, February 9, 1968]

It is one of those little ironies of fate that General Vo Nguyen Giap's name contains the Vietnamese words for force (Vo) and armor (Giap). The commander of North Viet Nam's armed forces and the overlord of the Viet Cong, he is a dangerous and wily foe who has become something of a legend in both Viet Nams for his stunning defeat of the French at Dienbienphu. He is one of the principal developers -- along with Mao Tse-tung and Cuba's late Che Guevara -- of the art of guerrilla warfare, a tactician of such talents that U.S. military experts have compared him with German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. "You know when he's in charge," said a top Pentagon official last week. "You can feel him there." Yet Giap had no formal training as a soldier. "The only military academy I have been to," he boasted after Dienbienphu, "is that of the bush."

Giap, 56, was not born to the bush. The son of a poor but educated landholder in what is now North Viet Nam, he was sent to an exclusive college in the old imperial capital of Hue, got a law degree from the French-run University of Hanoi and finally emerged as a history teacher at Hanoi's Thang Long School. His idol, even then, was Napoleon. "He could step to the blackboard," one of his former students recalls, "and draw in the most minute detail of every battle plan of Napoleon." But his admiration for the French stopped there. A fervent Vietnamese patriot, he had joined an anti-French clandestine organization when he was only 14, later became a member of Viet Nam's fledgling Communist Party.

In 1939, the French banned the party, and Giap -- together with scores of other Communists -- fled to China. There he met Ho Chi Minh and became a charter member of a group that the French will long remember: the Viet Minh. His assignment, based largely on his blackboard battlegrounds, was to organize Ho's raging guerrillas into a fighting army. That was in 1941, and Giap has been in charge of the army ever since.

Giap is an ascetic man who neither smokes nor drinks, wears baggy, high-collared uniforms, and frequently goes about shod in sandals made from rubber tires. Yet

there are streaks of vanity in him. Because of his short stature (5 ft.), he likes to stand on boxes to deliver his speeches. On visits to his troops, he is liable to shuck his uniform, four-starred helmet and all, and show up dressed conspicuously in civilian clothes. He is a ruthless taskmaster, utterly contemptuous of the value of human life -- even that of his own troops.

"Every minute, thousands of men die all over the world," he tells his officers. "The life and death of human beings means nothing."



Giap's life has not been easy. He married in 1938 and fathered a girl, but his wife was arrested by the French and died in prison while he was in China; he has since remarried. An emotional man whose temper often got the better of his cool -- and earned him the nickname of "The Volcano and the Snow" -- he has, at times, been put down by Ho. An outburst against a French general in 1945 cost him a place on the negotiating team that tried to win independence from France at the end of World War II. A running feud with two powerful politburo members -- whose pro-Peking sentiments were resented in Hanoi's Communist pecking order. Although he is North Viet Nam's Defense Minister, military commander and Vice Premier -- and a popular hero

second only to Ho Chi Minh -- Giap has still not risen above sixth place in his party's official hierarchy.

According to the evidence available, in fact, his total command of the current Communist offensive in South Viet Nam was accorded him quite by accident. One of his Politburo arch foes, Nguyen Chi Thanh, who had shared control of operations in the South, died last summer -- of what Hanoi describes as a heart attack but U.S. officers refer to as "B-52-itis" caught in the South. Thanh's death left Giap unchallenged, and he has spent a large part of the past six months planning the New Year's offensive that began last week.



WHODAT?

In last month's issue of our newsletter we asked if anyone could identify this trooper and his friend. Taken in 1965/66 the Sky Soldier is **PFC John Mudrick**. The photo was taken by his buddy, **Mike Guthrie**, both A/2/503d.

We'll call the dog Deogie.



The Battle at Bau San

Following the 173d Airborne Brigade reunion in Sydney, Australia in 2005, Gus Vendetti and Bill Vose of A/2/503d and I returned to Vietnam. Our mission was to hump into the "D" Zone jungle to find LZ Zulu-Zulu site of the 16 March 1966 battle when the 2/503d was surrounded by bad guys and at serious risk of being overrun.

During the visits to Sydney and our reinvasion of Vietnam, I kept a daily trip journal, originally 39 pages describing our experiences on that journey. But, over the years it has grown a tad, to 245 pages of historical records, photographs and recollections of Sky Soldiers who participated in 'Operation Silver City' and that memorable battle; it is entitled "The Battle at Bau San."

Upwards of 300 printed copies of this work have been mailed over the years to buddies. It is now available free to anyone wishing to receive it by email. It's in compressed format to avoid chewing up too much computer space, and is emailed in installments.

If you'd care to receive the report please drop me a note at rto173d@cfl.rr.com and it will be emailed to you piecemeal over a number of days. Even if you received an earlier hard-copy version you might want this copy as new recollections, photos and historical records continue to be added.

A former battalion executive officer/commanding officer of the 2/503d said this about the segment of the report describing 'Operation Silver City':

"This historical account of soldiers conducting a valorous and determined defense against a well armed and numerically superior enemy force is an outstanding tribute to the Airborne Soldier. This account is particularly remarkable when the action is so accurately described from the viewpoint of the soldier and when the circumstances influencing the battle are known.

The following accounting of the Silver City operation from the Soldier's viewpoint is a remarkable tribute to the soldiers who carry the burden of battle and suffer the outcome."

Robert B. Carmichael, LTC Inf. (Ret.)

A number of my buddies have asked me to have this thing formerly published. But, it's not my story, it's our story. A few sample pages from "The Battle at Bau San," follow.

Smitty Out



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VA EASES MEDICAL MARIJUANA RULES

Now I don't want you guys to get too excited about this, but, it was just reported...."Patients treated at Veterans Affairs hospitals and clinics will be able to use medical marijuana in the 14 states where it's legal, according to new federal guidelines. The directive from the Veterans Affairs Department is intended to clarify current policy that says veterans can be denied pain medication if they use illegal drugs. The directive does not authorize VA doctors to prescribe medical marijuana."

Source: Tim Wendel with staff and wire, *FloridaToday*.



Cartoon by Jerry Hassler, Recon 2/503d, '66/'67

Zulu ~ Zulu THE BATTLE AT BAU SAN

July 9, Saturday



On March 11, 1966, paratroopers of the 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade prepare to load choppers at Bien Hoa Airbase (the “Snakepit”) for assault into War Zone “D” during Operation Silver City.

Photo by: Wayne Hoitt

Recollection:

“They took us in trucks that morning to the Air Base nearby, each of us loaded down with gear, already drenched in sweat from the humidity. A sickly, quiet calm seemed to envelop us; each in his own thoughts, each of us not knowing what to expect; but, we knew whatever it was it wouldn’t be good. We had gone through this routine before as we would many times throughout the year. As the XO’s RTO I was again in one of the first assault slicks, something I never became accustomed to. As always, I looked up and down the long line of choppers cranking up their engines with the sticks of men ready to board and, as always, thought ‘some of you fuckers aren’t coming back alive’. It was never me, I knew I was always coming back alive – or at least I thought I knew.”

Lew “Smitty” Smith, HHC/2/503d

THE BATTLE AT BAU SAN

~ a Vietnam War story of a
different kind ~

Why do we go back?

Because we must go back.

D. LEWIS SMITH, JR.



(continued....)



"I was in the ambush when Sgt. Butler, Marvin Harper and the young E-5, who had only been in the company a few weeks, were killed. I believe that the most difficult aspect of being a combat surviving soldier is to remember the last moments you shared with your friends. Bonds developed in combat are intensely strong and could never be understood by REMF's or civilians. I remember every detail of the last hour of Marvin Harper and Sgt. Butler's lives. We had stopped for lunch and Marvin coerced me into giving him a can of peaches for his fruitcake. I recall eating that dry cake and knowing that I got the worst end of that trade. While we were eating we clearly heard 'rooster crowing'. Sgt. Butler reported this up to Captain Faley. We hadn't finished eating yet when an order came down for Sgt. Butler to send a squad out to recon the area; he chose to come with us. We only moved out a short distance, certainly not more than 200 or 300 meters when all hell broke loose. I was thrown to the ground by a tremendous explosion. When I came to I crawled to a nearby anthill. Off to my side about 5 meters was Marvin. He was moving but obviously seriously wounded. He was in a very exposed position and I yelled for him to come over behind the anthill. He did not respond, so I crawled over to him; it was then I could see he was nearly dead and one of his feet was blown almost completely off. I then began to crawl back to the anthill and that was when I was hit in the shoulder. I lay behind the anthill and looked at Marvin and watched the ants drown in my blood. Occasionally, an incoming round would hit the anthill and that would really stir things up. I am not sure how long I lay there but at some point 1st Sgt. Jackson

appeared. I don't have words to explain and only those who know THE HAMMER could begin to understand the immediate sense of safety, comfort and security that overwhelmed me with him laying there beside me. He was the strongest,



Desmond "Hammer" Jackson most capable man I have ever known. He was indisputably a fearless and valiant warrior, but also a true gentleman and a role model for young PFC's. I remember Steve Haber well."

Larry Cox, C/2/503d

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I stepped into the clearing as Truc and Vose confirmed we had finally reached our destination. Within minutes we determined we were standing within meters of where the "A" Company and HHC lines had joined. I asked Alex to take a snapshot of me standing where I thought my "hole" had been some 39 years before. Over two days of travel, 12 take-offs and landings, two hours of driving, two and a half hours of a killing march to reach this place, to again stand on Zulu-Zulu. We felt how mountaineers must feel reaching the peak of Everest, while the unheard voices in the jungle welcomed us back....

The Ghosts of Zulu-Zulu

"Hello Sky Soldiers, brothers. We've been waiting for your return, we knew you would come back one day. It's been many years since we were last here together, and much has changed since that early morning when we were all boys fighting these other boys. How senseless we all were then. Tell us man is no longer making war. Tell us we gave up our lives for something good. Our fear has been gone for such a long time now, and we've come to call this jungle our home. It's not so bad really, so don't feel sad for us. Our only regret is not having lived full lives; not having returned home to our parents, our brothers, sisters, wives, and for some of us, our children. Can you tell us about our wives and children? Did our children grow to be good people? Are they happy? In some ways we are better off than each of you today. Today we sense your remorse, we feel your sorrow and your pain, we share your heavy hearts while we rejoice in your lives, and your tears are understood. You may or may not remember our names or our faces, you remember us only as brothers, as we remember you. When you leave this place today we hope you leave behind that part of you which has troubled you for so long -- which has returned you to this place. It is time for you to close this period in your life, it is time for you to move on, to revel in living, the living, and not us, the dead."

Bill, Gus. Did you hear that?

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Search & Find Missions

JAG Officers

Looking to find the JAG Officers who served with the 173d at LZ English and the Bde Surgeon, Maj. Trainor (sp?) '69/'70. Bob "Ragman" Getz, CPT, Task Force Commander, 2/503d, '69. rgetz173@yahoo.com.

Help Wanted!

Several of us from A/2/503d 1966, had helped James Miskel apply for a Purple Heart that had not been awarded to him when he was wounded on Sept 26, 1966. This was during Operation Sioux City - o/a 23km north of Bien Hoa. The Dept. of Army, Board for Correction of Military Records has just turned down the request. We are looking for two witnesses who can help substantiate the award: a medic - Sp5 Beaton, and a Brigade Photographer who was wounded at the same time from an enemy claymore mine. If you can help us find them or anyone familiar with this incident - please help! Jack Kelley (910) 488-0165, JackTKelley@aol.com

Bravo Bulls in Ahn Khe

I'm still trying to find some of these Faces; this picture was taken in March or April of '68, in Ahn Khe.



This Bunch of Sky Soldiers thought it would be a great idea to Re-up... 4 - 5 of them survived Hill 875. I can't remember all their names. I'm hoping they will remember me and the day we took this and get in touch. Richard Martinez, B/2/503d '67-'68. Please contact me at: rmartinez26@bak.rr.com

"In war, things get blown up really fast."
(overheard from a US Army Ranger Sgt.)

GIs Honor Burial of Scout

[From Firebase 173 newspaper, September 14, 1970]

LZ NORTH ENGLISH (RVN)

A Kit Carson Scout who was killed pursuing the VC across a rice paddy was buried by his American friends.

The Kit Carson, Do Ba Vu, was an ex-NVA. He finally rebelled against the lies, false promises, and hopeless causes of the North Vietnamese. He was trained as a scout to work with U.S. units.

Vu had been with B Co. 2d Bn., 503d Inf. for just two months when he was killed. The young soldier hadn't been in the area long enough to have any Vietnamese friends. The fact that he was North Vietnamese kept U.S. authorities from sending his body to any friends or relatives he might have had in the north. The GIs made their choice. He was one of their own, they would bury him as such.

Arrangements were made for a proper gravesite. A Buddhist priest, since Vu was Buddhist, was to insure that everything was conducted properly, in accordance with that religion. After the traditional night of mourning and burning incense, the coffin was loaded into a ¾ ton truck, in lieu of a caisson, and the column procession started out.

The column moved out of LZ North English and through the villages at almost a crawl. When the procession finally stopped, the coffin was carried by Kit Carson scouts and GIs across an open rice paddy.

There, on a natural high place, the ceremony was held. About 200 people, both Vietnamese and Americans, listened as "Taps" were played and the volley's from the rifle salute echoed across the valley.

The Americans had buried an "adopted" member of the 173d.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Lessons learned from St. Louis VA Medical Center are applied VA-wide

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) primary mission is to serve our nation's Veterans. President Obama has charged the Department with ensuring the VA medical network is a top-notch health care system.

"The mistakes made at the St. Louis VA Medical Center are unacceptable, and steps have been and continue to be taken to correct this situation and assure the safety of our Veterans. VA will not tolerate risk to our Veterans," said Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. *"VA employees at the St. Louis VA Medical Center, along with all of our employees, have a solemn responsibility to provide safe, quality care for the well being of all our patients."*

Under the Obama Administration, in the past 18 months, VA has implemented more stringent oversight of the safety of all its medical facilities. It is this more rigorous standard that directly led VA to identify and address problems at the St. Louis Medical Center. Additional resources have been allocated and new procedures and stricter enforcements are in place to ensure the safety of all Veterans who seek care at VA facilities. VA mandates transparency and accountability in its handling of mistakes or failures to meet VA's high standards. VA's processes lead the nation in terms of transparency and accountability.

"VA is committed to ensuring that all our health care facilities are safe," said Shinseki. ***"VA will continue to investigate the actions of individuals involved and the proper administrative and disciplinary measures will be taken."***

The St. Louis facility has undergone a thorough examination, and many safeguards are in place that are designed to prevent a similar situation from occurring again. In-depth staff training and management reviews were immediately conducted by the St. Louis leadership,

medical staff, and VA's Supply, Processing and Distribution (SPD) program office teams.

"The Veterans we serve are our friends, our neighbors and a part of our family," said Dr. Robert Petzel, VA's Under Secretary of Health.

"Under the direction of Secretary Shinseki I have determined there is a need for an independent, national Administrative Investigation Board (AIB) to determine the reasons for failure to follow correct procedures. The Chief of Dental Services has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation."



Dr. Robert Petzel

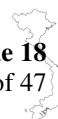
Immediate actions were taken to ensure all personnel were properly re-trained and all equipment is being handled in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. All pre-washing of dental equipment which was performed by dental personnel prior to sterilizations is now being done by qualified SPD staff.

No Veterans are currently ill as a result of this incident. The potential risk to Veterans is extremely low.

"The St. Louis VA Medical Center provides excellent care to more than 50,000 Veterans a year, and the dental clinic equipment issue does not reflect the level of care provided by the more than 2,600 dedicated medical center staff," added Petzel.

***"When in doubt, empty
your magazine."***

Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations



2/503d Sky Soldiers ~ Where Are They Now?

Ronald Amyot, Sp-4, HHC/2/503d, '65-'66 Vietnam. Was in Recon Platoon and then Field Exchange at Bien Hoa. Retired from New York State Police after 36 years. Married to bride Mary and have three children, Kasey, Travis & Garrett, and one grandchild, Eion. Live near Syracuse, NY in Cicero.
raamyot@twcny.rr.com



Ron, gone fishin'



Jimbo
retirement goal is to live on a sailboat and harass the Smith's and the Hoitt's in Florida.
jim_bethea@yahoo.com

Jim Bethea, Rifleman, HHC/2/503d '65/'66. My wife Gayle and I have been together for 39 years and married for 37. We live in Elmer City, Washington; that's about three miles downstream from Grand Coulee Dam. I work at the dam for the Bureau of Reclamation as an Engineering, Draftsman. My

Wayne Bowers, US Army '66-'69 SSG E-6, C&D 2/503d '67-'68. Married 38 years, Brenda, one daughter, Ashley (26). Operations Manager for a restaurant chain, Columbia SC. bowway@aol.com

Jaime N. (Jimmy) Castillo, 2nd Plt/C/2/503d, 7/66-7/67. 82nd B/325 7/67-12/68. 2nd marriage 25 years with Ester, 5 adult children -- Jaime, Johnny, Cindy, Silvia and Mike. 11 Grandchildren and 4 Great-Grandchildren. Retired from ConocoPhillips refinery at Arroyo Grande, CA 26 years.
jncastillo173@msn.com



Ester & Jimmy



Mike
Computer Science. I also have a book of poems written under my pen name Michael Simay (so you guys wouldn't know that I was secretly a poet) entitled

Mike de Gyurky. I retired from the California Institute of Technology's, Jet Propulsion Laboratory in 2004 after 25 years of building computer software for spacecraft telemetry processing, commanding and communications application. I am a writer now, and have a book out entitled *The Cognitive Dynamics of*

Reflections During A Monsoon Evening (many of them were written while I was with the 2/503rd at Bong San in 1969). I just completed a novel entitled *Before The Rains Came*, which I wrote at the instigation of my buddies Jim Grimshaw, Preston Parrott, Bill Hill, and Bernie Griffard. We'll see if it is published, and then if you like it. It is about why we went to fight in Vietnam. Part 1, of the novel is 565 pages. I'm now writing another text book. Aside from that I have a bad case Mikeof rheumatoid-arthritis, but still run every day, and go to the gym. I'm now almost 72 years old; and no, I would not want to be young again. My wife Cheryl is still working at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. She was a MI Lieutenant in Counter Intelligence at Ft. Bragg when I met her in 1973. So we are well, and send all of you our best wishes, in the Airborne tradition.
degurky@sbcglobal.net



Tony out pickin'

Xavier A. (Tony) Esposito, 1LT, C/HHC/2/503d, '65/'66. Retired LTC in 1984. My bride Rosemarie and I just moved from Hampton, VA to Williamsburg, VA. Five Great grandchildren; lovin' every moment of this 55+ golfing community (and I don't golf). Still fishing w/ an Airborne! attitude. xavierespo@cox.net



Les

Les Fuller, Sp-4, Recon squad machine gunner A/2/503d Feb. '67-'68. Retired floor covering installer. Married to Billie. One son who is a SFC in the 101st Abn. Two grand daughters, Devona and Makayla. One great grandson, Zachary. I currently live in Ridge Manor FL.
lesa2503@yahoo.com

Bob Getz, CPT, Task Force Commander, 2/503d, '69. Retired from US Army and Facilities/Construction, University of Illinois at Chicago and Harper College. Currently Elected Trustee at Elgin (IL) Community College. President of a firm Supporting Our Veterans and member of the Congressional Commission for the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary Events of the Vietnam War. Married to Pat, with three married Children and four Grandchildren. AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY!! RAGMAN rgetz173@yahoo.com

(continued....)



Thomas "Tom" Goodwin, Cpt., Commo Officer 2/503d, '64-'66, Major, USA (Ret). Retired Town Administrator, (MA). Living in Greenfield, MA 01301, married to Carol (April 17, 1953). Former college professor and currently a certified Lay Preacher and volunteer at the local VA Outpatient Clinic. Wear that 173d cap every day. thomasgoodwin@comcast.net

Earle L Graham, PhD, SSGT A/2/503d, 12/67-5/68. Volunteered to join 173d when 3rd Bde was formed at Ft Bragg (was with 82nd ABN, 1/504, Devils in Baggy Pants). Remained with Co A, 3/503d until December '67 then went to Co A, 2/503d. Retired teacher of students with disabilities now living in Snellville, GA. Married to Gloria; five children (all grown and gone), and one granddaughter. drgra60@yahoo.com



Proud grandpa

Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503d (RTO, S-3) 1/65 - 4/66. Sp4 in the battalion, final rank Sgt. E-5. Since 1953 living at the Moses Patten Homestead, Patten Hill Road, Candia, NH. 3 daughters, 1 son, 1 adopted daughter, 7 grand kids, 4 great grand kids. Director of Operations, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Manchester, NH campus. Hoping to retire in the next few months to Bradenton, Florida with my main squeeze the artist Raven Skye McDonough. whoitt@hotmail.com Please take time to check out her web site: www.ravenskyemcdonough.com



Wayne & Raven

James "JJ" Jackson, PFC, 3d Squad, 3d Platoon, B/2/503d, '65/'66. Retired mid level manager USPS living in Beaumont, CA, married to Teri, with one granddaughter and one on the way, Olivia and TBA. "Your mind is like a parachute, it doesn't function unless it's open.". rvfriendly@gmail.com



"JJ"

Art Martinez, 1LT, B/HHC/2/503d, '65-'66, Major (Ret). Retired from management with Shell Oil Company, living in Pomona, Southern California. Wife, Bonnie, 2 children. abmmartinez4@yahoo.com



Art

Richard Martinez, Sp-4, 11B1P, B/2/503d, '67/'68. Living in Wasco CA., from where I was drafted in June of '67. Went back to work for and with my dad in a small family-owned Auto Body Shop. Married twice. I have a son, Brian, from the first wife, and daughter, Amberly, from the second wife. I have three grandkids Roman 7, Mike 4 and 'Airborne' Ashley 2. I recently bought a Harley. I ride today in memory of those who Will Never Live Their Dream, SKY SOLDIERS...My BAND OF BROTHERS. Gone BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN. rmartinez@bak.rr.com



Note: I told Richard this photo would scare everyone. He said, "If you think that pic is INTENSE use the one with the Beret." I couldn't do it, it's too scary. Ed



Dave gone fishin' too

David "Dave" Milton, Sr., Cpt., CO, A/2/503d Inf.. 1967. Retired LTC Army and business owner living in Jacksonville, FL. Catching giant redfish and playing golf. d.milton821@yahoo.com

Ted S. Mobley, Sgt.E-5, Commo Platoon Radio Sgt. HHC/2/503 '65/'66. Retired from Montgomery County Police Dept., Montgomery Co. Maryland. Currently living in Mt. Pleasant, S.C. with my wife Susan. We have 4 children, 5 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren. sue81245@att.net

Preston A Parrott, Battalion S-1; Commander, E Company 2/503d '69. Retired Major US Army ('85), and High School JROTC Instructor ('04). Living in Odessa, TX with my wife Linda. We have seven kids and Thirteen Grandkids. prestonaparrott@cableone.net 'Pres'



Tom "Bird" Parrott, Sp-4, light team, RTO, 2nd platoon, D/2/503d, '68-'69. Still working at University of Illinois at Chicago. parrott@uic.edu



Jack Price, Capt.,
B/2/503d, '65/'66. We
live on Buffalo Mountain,
near mile marker 175 on
Virginia's Blue Ridge
Parkway. Just stop in at
Mabry Mill, and ask for
Buffalo Jack. We have
a son, Cam and family



Sam & Jack

(3 grand kids) in Fairhope AL, and daughter Megan and
family (2 grand kids in Austin TX). Between being
beekeepers, grandparents, farmers, not much time left!
A lot of time on the road traveling. Always look
forward to seeing any of you! wp25244@west-point.org



Ken

Kenneth C. Redding, (67
yrs.), Sergeant E-5, "ENTAC
PLATOON" HHC/2/503d,
'65/'66. Retired Sergeant
Baltimore County Police
Department, MD. Also, retired
from AAI Corporation (Defense
Contractor). Live in Hanover,
PA, which is ten miles East of

Gettysburg. Married 43 years to Sherry with three
children and eight grandchildren.
kenthebowler@aol.com

John W. Searcy Sr., Sgt-E5,
4.2's Mortar Platoon,
HHC/2/503d, '65/'66. Retired
US Army 1SG, retired
Correctional Officer (State Of
Alaska). Now living in North
Las Vegas, NV, married to
Leona, 48 years on Aug. 22nd,
with two children, seven
grandkids, and seven great-
grandkids. "Hooah! It's a good
day to be alive." js173abn@embarqmail.com



Top & Mrs. Top

Ken Smith. Captain, Bn S-3, and
A and D Company Commander,
3/67 - 10/67 (I couldn't hold a job),
Colonel (Ret). Semi retired, living
in NC with wife Susan. Visited
periodically by three children and
eight grandchildren. "Every day of
life is a gift."



Ken

kkvsmith173@embarqmail.com

Lew "Smitty" Smith,
Jr. (62). Sp-4, RTO
Commo Section,
HHC/2/503d, '65/'66.
Retired business owner
living in Merritt Island,
FL, married to Reggie
for 43 years (foolish
woman), with two grand



A gaggle of Smitties

kids, Sofia (Lil' Smitty) and Aidan (Smittytoo). "It's a
good day to be a Sky Soldier." rto173d@cfl.rr.com

Leonard Ray Tanner, B/HHC/2/503d '67, living in
Jefferson, SD. I was a cook and worked two days on
and two days off and in a short time I found how much
fun a guy could have after three times the mps. They
brought me back to camp for fighting, they decided I
would be able to better get my frustrations out in the
field. I was put in 2nd platoon 2nd squad so I am the
only cook to make the combat jump in '67.

tanner_ry@yahoo.com

Wayne Tuttle, Sp4,
C/2/503d, 2nd Platoon RTO
then Company RTO '66-'67.
Retired business owner living
near Dawson Creek, British
Columbia, Canada. Married
to Iva - two daughters and a
son (Lauri, Elaina & David),
and four grandkids (Joshua,
Abby, Aaron & Marley). You're
always welcome when you see the Patch.



Iva & Wayne

tuttle@xplornet.com

Steve 'Sgt. Rock' Vargo, C/2/503d, Sp-4; 51st Inf
LRP Sgt. E-5 formed out of 173d. With 173d for 4
months in 1967 (including June 22nd and Battle of
Slopes) before going to LURP. Now retired in
Columbus, Ohio since Oct. from State of Ohio. Semi-
pro bicycle racer for Colavita Ohio Cycling and
competing in Colavita-Zipp Time Trial Series in
Ohio/Indiana. 'kat vicuska' pure life, the gypsy way.
steve.vargo@yahoo.com

James Velky. Where I am now: Colonel, retired U.S
Army Special Forces (2005); currently deployed (as of
Aug. 2010) to Afghanistan as MPRI SOF
mentor/trainer. Where I was: Casper Platoon Door
Gunner Jan '69-Feb '69; D Co., 2nd Bn Fire
Team/Squad Leader Feb '69-Jan '70. Contact email
address while in Afghanistan is: james.velky@cox.net.

**"Friends may come and go, but
enemies accumulate."**

Somebody said it.



Ed Wilby, Sr.,
E-4 Ground
Surveillance Platoon,
HHC/2/503d '65/'66.
Semi-retired, own my
business supplying
furniture to the Hotel
Industry. Photo is of
Helen, my wife of 43
years, and my two sons



Family Wilby

Jason and Jeremy and granddaughter Jada. Residing in
Tampa, Florida. Current age 64. ewilby4111@aol.com

Note: As long as we continue to receive submissions
for this "2/503d Where Are They Now" section, we'll
include them in future issues. Let your buddies know
where you are and what you've been doing. Send
your info to rto173d@cfl.rr.com Ed

MR. CLEAN?

Who is this trooper who thinks he's gonna get clean
from that pot?



Hint: He was attached to the 2/503d from brigade on
numerous operations.

Spc. Joseph Whiting Dimock II, U.S. Army Ranger, killed during explosion at ammunition facility

Afghanistan: Spc. Joseph Whiting Dimock II, 21,
Wildwood was killed during in an explosion at an
ammunition holding facility during a check of the
inventory.

The explosion also injured another Ranger. Dimock
enlisted in the U.S. Army in August 2007, according to a
release from the U.S. Army Special Operations
Command. For nearly three years he served as a
rifleman in 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment.
*"Ranger Dimock represented everything right with
America. He was an incredibly talented young man,
who volunteered to serve his nation in a time of war and
ultimately gave his life in support of her cause,"* said Lt.
Col. Mike Foster, the 1st Ranger Battalion Commander.



*"His loss is felt across the entire battalion and our
thoughts and prayers are with the Dimock family."*
He was on his second deployment to Afghanistan. He'd
Previously served in Iraq.

*"Spc. Dimock was a warrior who chose a higher calling
and deployed three times in support of the Nation.
Joseph remains a hero to our Nation, the Army, and his
family,"* said Col. Michael Kurilla, Commander of the
75th Ranger Regiment. Ranger Dimock is survived by
his parents, Joseph and Ellen Dimock, and two younger
brothers.

~ Sua Sponte ~

Source: <http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local-beat/army-ranger-dimock-98287629.html#ixzz0utLTkOtU>





Ranger Hall of Fame inductees honored at RiverCenter

July 15, 2010

By Lori Egan, The Bayonet

FORT BENNING, Ga. - Each of the 14 men inducted into the 18th annual Ranger Hall of Fame July 9 credited the people they served with as the reason for the honor.

The ceremony was in the RiverCenter's Bill Heard Theatre. COL John King II, commander of the Ranger Training Brigade, said the common thread for those being honored was their willingness to sacrifice, to serve the nation and the Soldiers to their left and right.

"It's the Ranger heritage," King said. "The people who are being honored today are the ones who motivate today's Soldiers."

"It's incredible to be included in the same category as men I think of as giants - Ralph Puckett and Phil Piazza," said SGM(R) John Edmunds. *"It's very humbling."*

General (R) William Kernan, the keynote speaker and president of the selection committee, said Ranger School teaches what right looks like, the training is a crucible and being a Ranger is not for the weak of heart.

"This honor is earned," he said. *"The standards are high. Rangers lead competently and confidently."*

The Rangers inducted into the Hall of Fame were introduced alphabetically. They are: LTG (R) Jared Bates, 1SG (R) William Block, SGM (R) Al Brashier, LTG (R) Carmen Cavezza, former PFC Raymond Noel Dye, CSM (R) John Edmunds, CSM (R) Joseph Gagnon, MG (R) James Jackson, CSM (R) Michael Kelso, CWO (R) Gary O'Neal, GEN (R) Joseph Palastra Jr., 1SG (R) Earl Singletary, the Honorable Eugene Sullivan and CSM (R) James Voyles.

They received Hall of Fame medallions from King and CSM Dennis Smith, RTB's command sergeant major, or COL William Ostlund, deputy commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment, and SGM John Brady, regiment operations sergeant major. According to the program, *"The medallion signifies selfless sacrifice, professional excellence and remarkable accomplishment in the defense of the greatest nation in the world and to the highest ideals of service."*



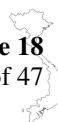
"It is earned by several," said Brashier, whose deployments include operations Provide Comfort and Uphold Democracy, *"but worn by one. It is a privilege to be recognized."*

Bates, who helped GEN Colin Powell and President Jimmy Carter negotiate the surrender of the military junta on Haiti averting combat operations, said he thought the Ranger motto - Rangers Lead the Way - should have a comma, because of its dual meaning. *"Rangers, lead the way is a statement and a directive,"* he said.

"I served with real heroes," said Dye, who participated in three combat invasions - Sicily, Salerno and Anzio, Italy - during World War II. *"I accept this honor for the men I served with."*

"No one receives an honor like this without the past and present Rangers," said Kelso, who was Fort Benning's top NCO from 2002-2005. *"This recognition is about being a member of a Ranger team."*

RL TW



President Ronald Reagan's Address to Sky Soldiers

I count it a great honor to speak this evening to the "Sky Soldiers" -- the veterans of the 173d Airborne Brigade. It is not often units in military history can claim the record of valor and devotion to duty that is yours -- in less than a decade of existence, you received 12 Medals of Honor, 10 of them posthumous, and over 6,000 Purple Hearts. And -- sadly but gallantly -- there are today 1,533 names of your comrades carved in stone on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Those, at least, are the statistics. But you know better than most that the cold statistics cannot tell the real story -- maybe I should say "the legend" -- of the 173d. I think here of those early years in Vietnam; the first Army helicopter assault, the first joint-Allied operation, the only combat parachute assault and of course the battle at Dak To -- the calm and resolve of General Schweiter, the heroism of men like Chaplain Watters. What a record; as the years move back and history provides perspective, I can assure you that the deeds and dedication of "The Herd" -- men like PFC Willie Monroe whom you are honoring tonight -- will be remembered as among the most illustrious in American military history.

I could go on. But you know when I have been asked as President to talk at some occasion about the valor of our country's Armed Forces, I have often thought how right Lincoln was in the example he set at

Gettysburg when brave men have fought and died, there is little any president or person can add to the quiet testimony of their sacrifice.

So tonight, I will do only what I can do as President; tell you that what you did in

Vietnam lives on; that our commitment was a noble cause, that your deeds will always be remembered by free men and women -- that someday, when freedom returns again to Southeast Asia, the people of those nations will honor you as surely as your countrymen honor you tonight.

I wish you well on your reunion; I complement those who have worked so hard on

this project and all of you for helping keep alive the great tradition of the Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade.

And finally, I want to do what the American people would do if they had the chance to know your story and speak to you today. I want to thank each of you -- for your valor, patriotism, and service to the cause of freedom, and for remembering your fallen and missing comrades. God bless you all.

President Ronald Reagan

This video address to Sky Soldiers by President Ronald Reagan first appeared in *Sky Soldier* magazine in August 1985, Vol. 1 Issue 1.



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