

2/503d

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



We try
harder.

VIETNAM

newsletter

Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

September 2010 ~ Issue 19

See all past issues at these web sites: www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php or http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm



Prayer: Does it Matter?

by Dr. Ronald R. Smith
1LT, B/2/503d



The God of the Bible is the God who answers prayer. If you have followed Christ very long, then you have your own witness to share about answered prayer. Prayer is not just something we learn about, rather it is something that we roll up our sleeves and actually practice; it is actually grows in our ability as we practice. Again, if you have been following Christ very long, you know that two major means of Grace that have been given to us for our daily Spiritual growth and edification are the Bible and prayer. Prayer is a core skill for anyone who follows Jesus Christ. It is a skill that must be practiced and we need to return to it because it is very basic.

Oswald Chambers in his classic devotional book, "My Utmost for His Highest", gives us a head start for correct thinking about prayer:

We often think of the Cross of Christ as something we have to get through, yet we get *through* for the purpose of getting *into* it. The Cross represents only one thing for us—complete, entire, absolute identification with the Lord Jesus Christ—and there is nothing in which this identification is more real to us than in prayer.

Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8). Then why should we ask? The point of prayer is not to get answers from God, but to have perfect and complete oneness with Him. If we pray only because we want answers, we will become irritated and angry with God. We receive an answer every time we pray, but it does not always come in the way we expect, and our spiritual irritation shows our refusal to identify ourselves truly with our Lord in prayer. We are not here to prove that God answer prayer, but to be living trophies of God's grace.

"... I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you ..." (John 16:26-27). Have you reached such a level of intimacy with God that the only thing that can account for your prayer life is that it has become one with the prayer life of Jesus Christ? Has our Lord exchanged your life with His vital life? If so, then "in that day" you will be so closely identified with Jesus that there will be no distinction.

When prayer seems to be unanswered, beware of trying to place the blame on someone else. That is always a trap of Satan. When you seem to have no answer, there is always a reason—God uses these times to give you deep personal instruction, and it is not for anyone else but you.

If any one of us is to know Christ intimately and grow in Christ intentionally, then our ability and practice of prayer is absolutely essential. Frankly, there will be no intimacy and no maturity without the practice of prayer. After all, we all want to grow up and mature. God is crazy about his children and he loves it when we want to spend some time with him in prayer.

An object of His grace,

Ron Smith

INCOMING!

Hope all is well. I am sorry that I could not make the Herd convention but I was already committed to the VFW State Convention, only because I was a District Commander last year.

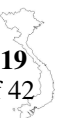
I was going to send Woody (Davis) a coin to take to the convention to find out more about it, however I misplaced it. I just rediscovered it so I am sending you this picture of it in hopes that somebody knows something about it, especially the 1st Bat. Both sides are the same.

Dominick "Dom" Cacciatore
A/2/503d
dcacciatore@comcast.net



*"I feel sorry for people who don't drink.
When they wake up in the morning, that's
as good as they're going to feel all day."*

Frank Sinatra



UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH STRESS FOR WIVES OF SKY SOLDIERS

by Joan Haber



We all know that stress is harmful to our well-being. Stress negatively impacts our immune system, our mental sharpness, our ability to experience joy and our physical stamina. Most of us are able to handle stress on a periodic basis and come through it OK; in fact, research has shown that a certain amount of stress is good for you because it

challenges you and boosts your sense of self-esteem when you have handled a problem situation successfully. But then there is the type of stress that is severe and of a chronic nature. Chronic stress causes physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain, robbing one of the ability to experience happiness and peace of mind. It is insidious by nature – often a person is unaware just how stressed out they are until something happens – a “wake-up call” – so to speak. The body may signal you that it has absorbed all the stress it can handle, your emotions may surface and you realize how angry or depressed you have become, or you may injure yourself simply because you are too preoccupied and inattentive. The Universe is telling you to pay attention to your health and well-being. If you don’t do it, who will?

Many of us are wives or a significant other to a Sky Soldier who has suffered enormous stressors of their own. Their physical and emotional health may be in jeopardy and chronic stress may have been present since their service in the military – for some that would be over 40 years of stress! They may have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). However, we (spouses) are under stress as well, trying to be positive and helpful to our mates while sometimes encountering hostility, indifference or verbal abuse for our efforts.

What can we do to take care of ourselves while remaining supportive and loving? I can list 8 key actions that are part of how I de-stress and remain cognizant of how important my health and well-being are so that I can be truly helpful to my husband.

- Daily Exercise clears my head of negative thoughts and helps my strength, stamina and flexibility

- Eating nutritious food, three times a day, in moderate amounts keeps me mentally sharp
- Setting aside time for prayer, meditation or reflection about my spiritual needs
- Setting my daily intentions for how I want my life to go – visualizing positive outcomes
- Tending to my work, be it paid or volunteer work, and nurturing my need for creativity and a personal sense of accomplishment
- Taking time for fun, either by myself or with my husband. Laughter really is the best medicine!
- Staying connected with friends and family members. Intimacy and someone to confide in is very important to one’s emotional stability
- Be empathetic to my husband’s problems without being overwhelmed or consumed by them

If chronic stress becomes too much to handle, please don’t try to bear it alone. There is no shame in seeking help. Counseling is readily available and there are low-cost options out there. There are mental health counselors as well as spiritual counselors. There are coaches, energy-workers, physical trainers, exercise classes and social support groups for every conceivable need and interest these days.

Take care of yourself as if your life depends on it – because it does!

Joan Haber resides in Sarasota, FL and is married to Steven Haber, C/2/503d (‘64-‘66). She is a disability advocate and an Ordained Ministerial Counselor. She can be reached at joan1@comcast.net

HOMELESS VETERANS

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced that nearly 8,000 homeless veterans will get permanent housing assistance through a HUD rental assistance program. If you know of a homeless veteran who needs help have them call this hotline for assistance:

1-877-424-3838

These phones will be manned by Veterans Affairs Medical Centers and will provide rental assistance vouchers by local public housing agencies.

(Sent in by Ralph Southard, A/2/503d, from “Military Masons of the Rogue Valley, August 2010 Newsletter”).





Sky Soldiers of the Generation

I am overwhelmed by the honor that I have been accorded -- selection as "2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year - 2010." It is more meaningful to me than any of the Army's awards.

Col. Kenneth V. Smith (Ret)

My "Sky Soldiers of the Generation" -- my heroes -- are the men I had the privilege of commanding in both Alpha and Delta Companies. While they might have bitched about things, these warriors daily put their lives on the line as they walked point, secured our flanks as we advanced, conducted ambushes, stood watch in the foxholes at night, and fought the seen and unseen enemy. No matter how bad the weather -- from monsoon to intense heat -- or how high the hills or how heavy the load, they did everything they were called upon to do even at the cost of their lives.

Their performance of duty -- reflected daily in heroic acts most of which were never recognized by the army -- were and continue to be my inspiration. Given the opportunity, I would go back and do it again but only if I knew that I would be in the company of the same quality of warriors with whom I have the privilege of serving in the 2nd Battalion.

Warm regards,

Ken



Dak To



A Dak To Twist of Fate

Here's the story I promised a couple of days ago. I was wounded on the 13th. They were able to get us out on the 14th or 15th. As I was being carried down the hill on a litter the 4th Battalion was going up the hill into the line. They looked scared as hell as we passed. Flash forward several years. I had just made E-7. I ran into an E-6 commo sergeant who was wearing a 173d patch on his right sleeve. Naturally, I asked him which Batt. and what year. He said 4th and 1967-68. I asked if he was at Dak To. He said yes, that was his baptism of fire. He kept staring at me like he was trying to figure something out. As we were eating lunch he suddenly asked me if I remembered, as I was being carried off the hill, reaching out and grabbing a kid by the hand who was going up the hill, and telling him he would be alright. I thought for a moment, and said yes I did remember that. He said "I was that kid," and then he said thank you. We both had to excuse ourselves for a few moments while we recovered. His name was Bobby Rhodes, a Pima Indian from Arizona for any of you 4th Batt. guys who might remember him.

George "Scotty" Colson
HHC/2/503d '65/'66
B/2/503d '67

Great story George. I'm sure he needed that. When I arrived at Dak To, assigned to NO DEROS ALPHA, I felt like I had a death sentence and the governor did not know the phone number. Pima....the Tribe of Ira Hayes.

Bob Fleming
A/2/503d, '67

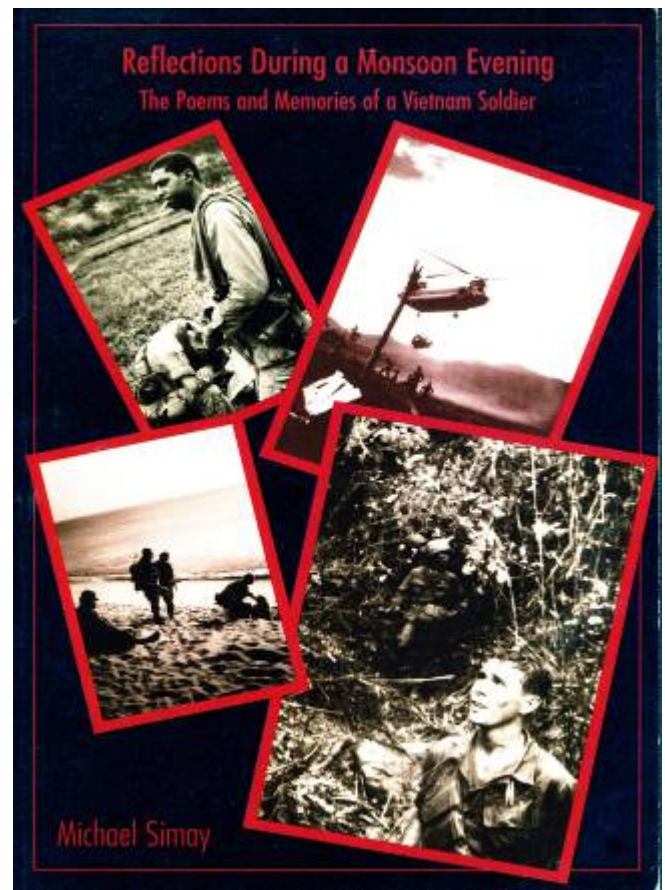
Carl Lee Simpson

E/2/503d

When next the need arises
and comes the Call To Arm
where shall America look
but to ghetto and farm,
to fight wars
sanctioned by leaders
themselves...safe from harm.

What strength has a Nation
when those she would use
are not the academic
readers of prose and good news,
but poor working Americans
that really
...have nothing to lose.

A Book by a 2/503d Trooper



This book of poems, photographs and essays, *Reflections During A Monsoon Evening*, were published under my pen name Michael Simay. I did this because I had never intended to get them published, and was embarrassed -- I mean, a veteran infantry captain a poet?

In 1994, retired US Marine MGS Larry Deloshmutt, who runs the Bat Masterson (F4 Pilot, Major Bat Masterson USAF, MIA) Halfway House for Disabled Veterans was trying to raise money for his operations. We were trying to figure out what to do. He does not accept help from the VA because he takes care of the young men who got discharged for a variety of reasons, like drugs, under less than honorable conditions. These are the guys we all knew, and tried to have them change their ways. They are old now, sick and have no support from anyone but men like Larry. So, I agreed to have the poems published in a small collection. It made some money for the Halfway House. Bat Masterson's wife helps Larry run the operations. I had to buy a copy for myself, used. Although out of print, there are some available on "amazon.com" under the name Michael Simay. Originally they sold for \$7.60. Now some of the copies are quite expensive. I don't get royalty checks on these copies any longer.

Mike de Gyrky, Maj.
B/HHC/2/503d



SIGN OF THE TIMES

You guys know about this sign in Texas between Kerrville and Bandera (photo)? There's also one in Wisconsin, WIS 173 between Monroe County and Nekossa, the 173d Airborne Brigade Highway.

Ed Kearney, B/2/503d



THOSE FUNNY FLY BOYS

Don't leave your F-16 overnight in an F-15 hangar.



Thanks to Paul Whitman, 503rd PRCT
Heritage Battalion web site.

What is the Highest Jump WITHOUT a Parachute?

"Lieutenant I. M. Chisov of the former Soviet Union was flying his Ilyushin 4 on a bitter cold day in January 1942, when it was attacked by 12 German Messerschmitts. Convinced that he had no chance of surviving if he stayed with his badly battered plane, Chisov bailed out at 21,980 feet. With the fighters still buzzing around, Chisov cleverly decided to fall freely out of the arena. It was his plan not to open his chute until he was down to only 1000 ft above the ground. Unfortunately, he lost consciousness en route. As luck would have it, he crashed at the edge of a steep ravine covered with 3 ft of snow. Hitting at about 120 mi/h, he plowed along its slope until he came to rest at the bottom. Chisov awoke 20 minutes later, bruised and sore, but miraculously he had suffered only a concussion of the spine and a fractured pelvis. Three and one-half months later he was back at work as a flight instructor." Hecht, Eugene. Physics: Calculus. 2nd ed. United States: Brooks/Cole, 2000. p 85

"Flight Sergeant Nicholas Steven Alkemade was on a bombing mission over Germany on 23 March 1944 when his Lancaster bomber flying at 18,000 feet was blazed apart and in flames when he was forced to jump, **without a parachute** or be burned to death. He dove out of his destroyed aircraft hoping on a quick death. His speed accelerated to over 120 miles per hour and he impacted on a snow covered sloping forest. He was completely uninjured and later captured by the Germans who refused to believe his story."

(www.urbanlegends.com/death)

"The longest survivable fall, 26 January 1972, was Vesna Vulovic a stewardess in a DC-9 which blew up at 33,330 feet. She was in the tail section of the aircraft and though injured survived the fall."

When was the First Parachute and was it ever Jumped?

DaVinci sketched this design for the first parachute in 1485. On June 26, 2000 – over 500 years later, Adrian Nicholas jumped an exact replica of it...and it worked!

The chute was built under the watchful eye of Dr. Martin Kemp, a Oxford University DaVinci expert. It was made of wood, canvas and rope. Its weight was 187 pounds. It was jumped from a balloon at 10,000 feet. Nicholas road it to 7,000 feet when he cut away from it and used a traditional parachute for landing. (*SkyXtreme* magazine of the skydive world, vol #10, July 2000).



DaVinci's



Those Darn Kids

I thought this might be interesting for our newsletter. I walked into my daughter's room the other day and hanging on her wall was a narrative poem that relates to all of us as brothers in arms. That night at dinner I asked her where she got it and I found out that she had written it herself. I was blown away that at 16 years old my daughter could come up with something so amazing. This goes to show you that you never really know how your children feel and understand things. Airborne All the Way,

Jim Starrett
C/2/503d

SOLDIER TALK

By Chantal Starrett

We grew up with it, it was normal for us, even something we smiled at every once in a while. You know what I mean, Soldier Talk. It happens often when walking out of a gas station or grocery store. One man is putting away his items and shifts the Ranger hat on his head. My father sees this and walks up. "When did you serve?" And so the talk begins. I sit in the car and watch them. Each one spinning tales of where they went, what they saw, what they learned. I watch them laugh at things that most men would shake remembering. I watch them stand a little bit taller, raise their head a slight bit higher. They feel whole again, as if they aren't alone in their own pasts. They feel a part of something bigger than themselves, something to be proud of. They bare the right to identify themselves with a band of heroes that distinguishes them among many. It isn't only talking though. They honk their horns when they see each other's bumper stickers, the dog tags hanging from the mirror, the badge covered cap, they nod at one another in the VA. It is all Soldier Talk. But what do I have? I have no band of legends to be associated with, no badge of honor to adorn my wall, no dog tags from a mirror, no badge covered cap, no memberships to the VA, no one honks their horn when I drive past for I have no service sticker.

*Who do I nod to when I walk past? What strong service of courageous beings am I a part of?
What makes me stand taller and hold my head higher? What makes me proud of whom I have been?
I sigh and sit back in the seat as I wait for him to finish.
"Well, thank you for serving."
And then it ends.
The other soldier smiles and nods to me before getting in his car.
And all I can do is nod back, for I have no Soldier Talk.*

"Soldier Talk" Copyright © Chantal Starrett 2010

Wow! Ed

3/503d Challenge Coin

LTC Paul Fisher (3 Rock One Zero) has designed and has on hand less than 100 limited edition 3rd Battalion Challenge Coins. Just the item we need to have in our pockets at the next Reunion.



Send your order, limit 5 per Vet, at \$10 per coin (includes return postage) to:

Paul Fisher, LTC (Ret)
81 Oak Lane, Eatontown, NJ 07724
(H) 732-542-1598, (C) 908-489-0366
fisherppd@att.net

Note that all profits will be donated to a local charity of Paul's choice in the name of the 3rd Battalion.

Mason Branstetter
3/503d

BATTLEPLAN: Junction City Jump

On the Military Channel recently, they featured the 1967 Junction City operation and also an action from WWII featuring several airborne units.

Steve Vargo
C/2/503d





DUANE LARSON – THE PRESENCE OF HIS ABSENCE

“Now you’re really in trouble!”



When my nine year old father, Duane Larson, appeared in the middle of the morning with the news that Sister had sent him home - and not because he was ill - his little brother Keith gleefully anticipated mother and son fireworks. Even though the baby of my father’s family is now eighty years old, he retains the look of a (albeit large) cherub; his pale blonde hair is mostly gray but his blue eyes can still fill up with mischief when he remembers that long ago day. Keith had, however, seriously underestimated his mother’s maternal instincts. Anna Larson quickly wiped her hands on her apron and, with her son Duane in tow, headed straight for St. Mary’s School. When she came back an hour later after a confrontation that spread from Sister to Superior to parish priest, both mother and son had been “expelled” from St. Mary’s. Although they were later readmitted to the parish (when St. Mary’s received a new pastor), my father finished his education in public school.



Duane

Duane Larson was born on May 17, 1917, in Niles, a small southwestern Michigan town founded in 1829. Called the *City of Four Flags* because the flags of Spain, France, England and the United States had flown over Fort St. Joseph, Niles was, even during the Depression, an idyllic place to grow up.



Niles 1936



Duane Larson
(1917-1945)

Perhaps my father and his siblings did not know that the St. Joseph River was one of only two rivers in the world to flow north; what they did know was that it provided free food and fun year round. What boy could be bored when he could be swimming, fishing, boating, ice skating, or just messing around in the woods like Huck Finn?



He grew up to like the wind in his face

“I dare you!”

“I double dare you!”

Clambering up the ladder of a boxcar stopped on a high stone bridge and then diving off from its roof into the swiftly moving currents of the St. Joe River took a certain amount of nerve. Maybe my father chose to be a paratrooper because when he was a boy he grew to like the wind in his face as he jumped from the boxcars into the dark waters of the current furrowed river.

(continued....)



My father worked for a time at the Niles News Agency, but like so many small town boys he was restless and rode his Harley Davidson to California to see what was on the other side of the mountains. By October of 1941 he had joined the 19th Coast Artillery. His early swimming feats stood him in good stead and he was able to save a man's life by pulling him from the riptide off the California coast. Then came Pearl Harbor and the Army. Jump school for paratroopers was a four week course at Ft. Benning, GA.



The old St Joe River, Niles, Michigan



Main St. Bridge over St. Joe River Niles, Mich.

On February 11, 1943, he married Dolores Van Skiver in Fayetteville, NC. By the time Battery A of the 462nd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion was activated on June 16, 1943, my father had been married for five months. He had trained at Camp McCall, NC, made jumps with howitzers, fired on the range at Fort Bragg, NC, and finally received his moving orders. On February 28, 1944, the battalion left Camp MacKall, NC, for the overseas staging area at Camp Stoneman, California. The paratroopers boarded the "Sea Cat" headed for Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.



Fayetteville Mo. Nuptials '43

On March 29, 1944, the 462nd debarked at Brett's wharf, Brisbane, and joined the 503 PIR at Camp Cable, a tent army encampment within walking distance of a small town named Beaudesert (which the

Aussies pronounced Bydesert, though there was no desert nearby). Sometime after that, word reached my father that he had a baby girl, born one day after he had arrived in Australia and named Dolane, a combination of Dolores and Duane. He sent his new daughter a lovely white lace dress and matching bonnet. Pictures arrived back showing a placid infant wearing "the outfit Daddy sent from Australia."



Those who gave the most - his family

Training continued with marches and jumps and although the men did not consider it overly strenuous they did feel they were gaining valuable experience. By September of 1944, the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 462nd Parachute Artillery Battalion and the 161st Parachute Engineer Company had formed the Regimental Combat Team. On September 16, 1944, the 462nd landed at Noemfoor Island, Netherlands East Indies. Airfields constructed on Noemfoor after its capture played an important role in the Allied advance from New Guinea to the Philippines. On October 23, Major Arlis Kline assumed command of the battalion.



The 462nd's "Devil" Patch

On November 9th the battery left on the U.S.S. Custer and arrived on Leyte Island on November 18th. Two Regimental Combat Teams, the 19th and the 503rd, were given the mission of seizing and holding the southwestern part of Mindoro Island near the town of San Jose so that three airstrips could be constructed. The Combat Team endured intense air and naval fire and at one point was shelled for 25 minutes by a Japanese Naval task force.

(continued....)



In January my father had written that the Japanese had “one good fight left in them”; soon the war would be over and he would be coming home.

And then came Corregidor.

Tokyo had warned the Japanese commander, Itagaki, to be prepared for an airborne landing, but Itagaki had studied the terrain and judged an airborne landing “not doable.” On February 16, 1945, he was looking out to sea at the 34th Infantry’s 3rd Battalion landing barges and never noticed the white blossoming C-47’s until some 25 to 30 paratroopers, blown off course, landed practically on top of him. The troopers formed up and fired, killing Itagaki and eight others around him. The Japanese lost their commander before the fighting had really begun.

“The men who floated down over Corregidor on that sparkling morning of February 16, 1945, represented not only a new way of warfare, but also a new breed of American soldier, the paratrooper. This was the sort of soldier who had brought a new dimension to attack.”

[Belote, 225] The “tough and aggressive” paratroopers knew that the Corregidor jump was not going to be a picnic. They were to jump onto “the worst jump field ever used for an airborne operation” from the dangerously low altitude of 400 feet. The calculations made beforehand did not lie - *“it was impossible to place all of the paratroopers in the area and yet it had to be attempted. ...”* [Flanagan, 165] The Brass had decided that a vertical attack was the only way to retake Corregidor and that a 10% to 50% casualty rate was acceptable. The drop could only succeed if the air and airborne units were completely coordinated so the C-47’s would fly over one after the other and deliver a stick of 8 men at each pass onto either a small golf course (nine holes) or a postage stamp sized parade ground, each torn up after heavy bombing and covered with big chunks of concrete and splintered tree trunks. Although the casualty rate was “only” 13%, troopers were fired upon as they descended and some were severely injured or killed.

Over on Jump Zone A, Arlis Kline, the commander of Duane’s element within the Rock Force, was seriously hit by an unidentified piece of flying steel whilst still in the air, rendering him unable to control his chute as he plummeted towards the houses along officer’s row. Barely missing becoming impaled on a jagged tree trunk, and with serious leg injuries, he hung in the tree, but with his feet touching the ground, unable to release himself from his parachute harness as he was unable to put any weight upon his feet. For some indefinable time, he lapsed in and out of consciousness. PFC Joe Vela, Kline’s orderly, who had followed Kline out of the aircraft, cut him down. After the second drop, his deputy commander, Maj. Melvin Knudson, together with

Vela, helped him to the 462nd command post, where he spent the next few days “talking on the field phones, in between coughing up blood.”



*Once it was a
golf course*

My father landed safely but he had only ten more days to live. James Wilcox described for me what the landing was like for his gun section in Battery A:

“Your father, whom I called Larson, and Brayton, his best friend, were the finest paratroopers and the backbone of our section. A section is one 75 MM Pack Howitzer and a crew of about ten men. The Pack Howitzer was designed to be the artillery piece of the mountain soldiers who used mules to carry the gun pieces. The advantage of this weapon was that it could be broken down into several pieces, nine in all, each weighing around 200 lbs. When the Airborne arrived on the ground at the drop zone, there were no jeeps or trucks or mules to handle the movement, so we paratroopers furnished the motive power. It was very hard physical labor, but we were young and were in competition with the other sections of our Battery to see who was best.”

“...We were most fortunate in our jump. Our equipment landed in the exact center of our drop zone... The net result was that our section had its gun assembled and at our rendezvous point HOURS before the next section arrived. The other two sections had been jumped off the top of the island, some even into the sea, and didn’t get there at all. I’m telling you this so that you will know what kind of soldier your dad was.”

(continued....)



"Larson was about six feet, fair complexion, light hair and medium weight...a nice looking man. He was courteous, well-mannered and mature. Brayton was also like that, which was perhaps why they were buddies. He was always a pleasure to be around because of his decency, maturity and reliability."

By February 26, the men had reached the tail of the tadpole at Monkey Point and were "mopping up." Already General MacArthur was making plans for his return to Corregidor.

Just northeast was a little ridge and under it was an underground network of tunnels which had housed the Navy's Radio Intercept Station. Unknown to the men on Monkey Point, the Japanese had packed the caves under the ridge with explosives. Battery A of the 462nd had moved along the shore road just past the tunnel entrances; two tanks were helping the soldiers close these entrances off. At 11:05 one of the tanks fired into the sloping entrance of the Monkey Point tunnel. Simultaneously, a violent explosion lifted the top off the ridge over the Radio Intercept Station. Both 35 ton tanks flew into the air and tumbled end over end down the ridge. Bodies were lifted high and rained down again in pieces. A chunk of debris landed on a destroyer over a mile away. The little ridge was now only a hole in the ground.

Sergeant Eugene Bert found himself down in the valley and couldn't remember how he got there. When he scrambled back up to the top of Monkey Point, the first sight that met his eyes was my father crushed under a huge boulder. Sergeant Bert feels that my father must have died instantly and did not suffer as many did before they died.

My father, his best friend Lawrence Brayton and the rest of the dead were wrapped in ponchos; the line of bodies along the road extended over 100 feet.



*Marivales-Bataan
Cemetery No. 1*



*We brought
him home*

On Jan. 14, 1945, my father had written to relatives, "I hope to see Don in the near future. He should be coming to the Philippines soon and maybe we can get together." By the time Don arrived, my father was dead, and all that Don could do was take a picture of the cemetery and of his brother's grave. My father's body remained in the Philippines until after the war.



On February 21, 1949, when a military escort accompanied him back to Niles, his life had come full circle. In St. Mary's he had been baptized and from St. Mary's he was taken to Calvary Cemetery to be buried. My Grandfather walked to Duane's grave every day for the rest of his life.

*My Grandfather
walked to
Duane's grave
every day for
the rest of his
life*

Although "the presence of his absence" has been with me all my life, it is thanks to *American War Orphan's Network* that I was able to get in touch with those who knew him. Recently Arlis Kline returned to Corregidor. He attempted to take a picture of Monkey Point for me, but "the jungle is so thick that it is impossible to even be sure where the hole is located, 'a huge oblong crater 130 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 30 feet deep,' [Belote, 253] that resulted from the explosion is located." The jungle has healed itself with time and so have the wounds in our hearts. They can be made to bleed again, though, when we see that our fathers' sacrifices are taken for granted, when we see our flag treated with disrespect, when we see our national anthem mocked. Even though our fathers never saw us nor were even on the same continent as we were, "for one brief shining moment" in time, our fathers and mothers and we children were a family. Now it is up to us, the AWON children, to see that the legacy of the greatest generation is not forgotten.

Dolane Larson

This report appears with compliments of the *503d P.R.C.T. Heritage Battalion Online*, and with our thanks to Ms. Larson, her family and her father. *We will not forget.*





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.***

~ 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.

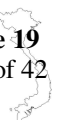
AIRBORNE.....ALL THE WAY!



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!!!



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / September 2010 - Issue 19
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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





To Sky Soldiers in Afghanistan



First, let me say I honor your service to our country, ideals and of course the "Herd". I want to ditto the comments made about recording your experiences and when you can with photos. As was mentioned these will become treasures for you in later years. I threw away just about everything military when I returned from combat and this has caused me untold grief for many years. I did however keep the pictures and letters I'd sent to family and friends which have helped me recall some of the most poignant times of my younger years. You are probably sick to death of the daily grind of war and the losses you endure but these will fade in time and you will be left with the satisfaction of knowing you did something in your life "few" will ever experience. God Bless you and Keep you safe, stay the course.

Cy Bassett "Sgt Cy"
Recon /3/503d '68-'69

The years will pass before you'll realize how truly good you were and how much you have to be proud of. Just know in our eyes you are already there. Airborne All The Way.

Robert (Bob) Beemer
Recon Squad, B/2/503d, '67/'68

In every generation there are those who step up to the plate and do their duty to their country. Being who you are and what you are, you have made us proud. You have honored us by joining us. You are worthy of the sacrifices we made. You're making history. Feel how it feels. Nothing that you will ever do in civilian life will compare to what you are doing now. Be ready for that.

Jim Bethea
Rifleman, HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

I'll second and third the comments made about taking notes. I'm not too sure if paper and pen would have endured the weather and the conditions of Vietnam, but I wish I had the forethought to jot some things down for me to remember. It has mostly disappeared from my memory only leaving marks that wake me in the night. My only wish is that all of my brothers return in whole. I know this is not a reality but I still PRAY that each of you return to us.

Harry T Cleland
B/2/503d, '66/'67

I love you guys and support you 100%.

George "Scotty" Colson
B/HHC/2/503d, '65/'67

We are damn proud of your performance, pride and integrity in battle.

Dave Norman
Former Sgt. A/2/503d 11F4P Vietnam

The more I read about your experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan the more I think about our war in Viet Nam. It is clear that you are now fighting for each other and any hope of a military or political victory may be left for historians to ponder, as was the case with the war in Viet Nam. As soldiers you are the best, and have proven to be among the finest troops this country has ever sent into battle. You have every right to be proud of your unit, proud of the Sky Soldiers you have served with and proud of the legacy you leave. Our experience in Viet Nam is similar but our legacy took 40 years to resurrect and it is this experience I hope you will learn from.

You have accomplished every assignment given you with great dignity and honor. Please remember this and always maintain contact with the people you shared these experiences with. Do not assume you will always remember the faces and the names because you will not. Record your history and your legacy. Write down the names, addresses and even the experiences you share together so that when age takes it's toll, and it will, you will have this fallback information available. In time, you will realize that you will never again be as close to people as you are with the people you trusted your life with in combat. We are very proud to have served with the 173d and thank you for preserving our legacy.

Roger Dick
C/2/503d, '67/'68

**And you ask
why I have
back
problems
today?**



Photo by
Jack Leide

(continued...)



AIRBORNE! As usual you guys rise above. I got some reports back today from the front telling me the 173d stands above all other units in Afghanistan. I am told that other units are learning from you and that you are genuinely capturing the hearts and minds of the locals. Congratulations on a job well done! Be sure and take care of each other over there and if you can find a copy of *Down Range* or *Once a Warrior, Wired for Life*, there, read it. It will help you to keep your head on straight.

Doc Fairchild, LTC, USA, (ret)
82nd Airborne Division

Note: Dr. Scott Fairchild is a practicing psychologist working out of Melbourne, FL who has helped countless Sky Soldiers, and their spouses/partners, from Vietnam the Middle East, Korea and WWII with PTSD treatment and evaluations in support of their VA claims. His phone number is [321-253-8887](tel:321-253-8887).

I just want to tell you all how much we appreciate your commitment and dedication. As always the Airborne Soldier Leads the way and we keep you in our hearts and minds every day. So on those days you think NO ONE appreciates and you wonder "WHY" be assured that we old Paratroopers and others like us think about you and your families every day and keep you in our prayers. We love you. Grace and Peace

Paul Fisher, LTC (Ret)
CO, HHC 3/503rd

Wishing you all a safe return. In the meantime take notes and take photos. This new digital age tech will allow you to document your experiences as never before. Use a small easily carried camera and take thousands of pictures. Get the faces of the people, and the faces of your friends....even the ones you're not friendly with. And keep in touch with the brigade association; even if you want nothing to do with the Army or the war when you get out, that feeling will likely change after 30-40 years when one of your grandkids finds your bronze star or CIB and starts asking questions. Keep your ass and your head down and come home...and help us rebuild this country.

Wayne Hoitt
HHC 2/503d, 1/65 - 4/66

I wish each and every one of you well while serving in Afghanistan and a safe return to your families. We old vets from the Vietnam era certainly can relate to what you are experiencing in a combat zone in Afghanistan no matter what your MOS is. Support each other and always have the other person's back. We certainly appreciate your service to your country and this country will welcome you back home with open arms. We didn't quite get that when we came home from Vietnam with

the exception of our own families. I encourage each of you to stay in contact with each other over the coming years as it was about 40 to 42 years before I finally made contact with my units. You will probably hear many of us say the same thing but you will understand as the years roll by. Be safe and well.

Ed Kearney
B/2/503d (Okinawa) and 595th Engineer Co. (Vietnam)

TO ALL SKYSOLDIERS, BUT PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM BATTLE COMPANY AND OTHERS from 2/503: I pray for you each, daily. If you practice a religion, I urge you to be in close contact with your Supreme Being. In hindsight, the only thing that kept me safe and sane in Vietnam and S. Korea were my religious convictions and dependence on my God. Try to understand more fully the Afghan people that America is there to help. Knowing and respecting their customs will go a long way to understanding their motivations and the steps necessary to obtain their cooperation. Study of their language can be helpful, working with an interpreter in your/their spare time. May St. Michael, the Patron of Paratroopers continue to watch over you and keep you safe!

BDQ Roy
Roy Lombardo, LTC (Ret)
CO, B/2/503d, '64/'65

War is a brutal reality leaving a permanent imprint on our bodies, soul and spirit -- a reality that follows us for the rest of our existence. Awakening when we sleep...in vivid dreams of what we saw, felt, smelled and did. We learn, after a while, to walk toward the dreams, to embrace the fear of what we have seen, and hope never to see again. We learn to be hopeful, to find meaning in what is left of life. There is a purpose for our existence.

While I write these words of encouragement to you, I looked out my window to see a tourist from the nearby KOA stopping to take a picture of the Purple Heart license plate on my pick-up, and the 173d ABN Patch next to the plate. A reminder to me of who I was, and the brotherhood of which we will always be a part. We are proud of you beyond words. The 173d is a family -- we will be here for you when you return home.

Rev. Michael "Mac" McMillan
Sniper, 4/503d, Greybull, Wyoming



(continued....)



Would suggest if you've got grid maps of where you've been, with notes on it showing clicks per day, routes you took, occurrences along the way, etc., hide them in your stuff, or the remf's will get them when you deros. That's a record you can't replace.

Tom "Bird" Parrott
D/2/503d

"If it's not written down it did not happen". For those of you who stay in the Army, your life and memories will travel a different route than the guys who get out. Be prepared for your family and friends to not understand your service. Hell, you won't be able to understand it, so there is no way they can. You might park your service, put it behind you, not talk about it, but most likely, someday, somewhere, some thing will cause you to look at it. A traffic jam in Manhattan got me started looking for my guys who I had not seen or heard from in 30 years. Most likely when you are an old fat fart you'll begin to wonder, what ever happened to Pvt. what's his name?

Jim Robinson
B/2/503d, '65

Standing a Post. Fighting the Huns for the freedom of the Afghans will be a long and ugly slog. My time with Charlie Company & Delta Company, 2nd Battalion was 12 months I would not wish on any man. Deeply personal in a way only infantry veterans would understand; when you gather again down the road you will remember the little things, the black humor, the gestures of friendship. Thanks for taking my place... and the place of those that fell on the floor of a dark and dank jungle. You're fighting for them as well. Their voices shout from our new memorial near the Infantry Museum at Fort Benning. Porfirio "Sam" Solano is there...his smile is etched in time... I can see him any time I want. Watch your friends... study their faces... in time you will cherish your recall. In time you can set the bad times aside. Not completely, for some not at all. Here's to the best for you and your families. You are America's treasure and my family and I are grateful for your service... for the safety you provide for us. Send us your e-mail and we'll send you some brownies and other good stuff.

Gary Prisk, Capt., CO
Charlie and Delta Company
diggerdogface@yahoo.com

Rules of Engagement: There is only one. Kick ass, take names and come home safe. Rules of engagement are usually dictated by some %&@* sitting on his ass in the rear or Washington. I know this is a totally different type war and the combat arena is far removed from the Jungles of Viet Nam. The only thing that has not changed, is who is doing the fighting, "Americans".

There is no "I" in team, cover each other, don't hesitate and don't apologize for winning each and every time you come home.

Lee Simpson
(Recon) E/2/503d, '69/'70

I wish you all a safe return home from the war zone. Thinking back to my time in Vietnam, there are a couple things I would have done differently during my one year tour there. I would have kept a diary whenever possible. You may find in the decades ahead your recollection of persons, places and things may fade -- this may not sound important to you today, but 20, 30 or 40 years from now you may wish you had recorded such details -- your personal history. And, keep all your military and medical records in a safe place...never discard them. Take photos of your buddies when you can, and write their names on the back of the pictures. So many of us today have photos but the names have been lost to time, and this disturbs us to this day. And get addresses of those you later hope to hook-up with, and ask your family and friends to save all letters you have sent them. Oh, I wish I would have kept my steel pot and other personal items from my time at war, but didn't. Be well and be safe, Sky Soldiers, we're proud of you all.

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

When I was in Nam I didn't want to get close to anyone or tell them how much I loved my friends. I didn't want the day to come when they weren't there to protect my back. When you get back go to counseling, don't wait 30 years to even talk about it, and don't hold in your feelings and let them haunt you. Take care and come home safe. And may God walk with you as he did for us.

L.R.Tanner
2/503d,
'66/'67



(L to R) SSgt Allen 3rd Squad, SSgt Boyd, Weapons Squad, 1st Lt. Price Platoon Leader, SSgt Baker 2nd Squad, B Co.

Photo by Jim Quick, B/2/503d

(continued....)



FROM THE 4th BATTALION OF 1966 - 1967

Brothers: I was one of the troopers who took off the Screaming Eagle patch and replaced it with the 173d one when the 1/501st became the 4/503d and deployed to 'Nam on June 6, 1966. We joined the 1st and 2d battalions of the 503d which had deployed from Okinawa almost a year earlier. Some of you in today's 173d are sons and grandsons of those of us who served in Vietnam. We're incredibly proud of you, but we now understand the fear about our safety that our families had during the Vietnam years.

Today, the 4th Battalion from 'Nam is reassembling as a unit, by squad, platoon and company. I hope that you will stay in touch better than we did. When we left the Army, we learned careers and started families and thought the memories would go away if we didn't talk about them. They didn't. Over half of our original battalion is drawing VA comp for PTSD or Agent Orange effects. Those who have reached out to each other have started the long healing process.

Many of our comrades survived the battles of Vietnam, but did not survive the living afterward.

Your impressive CSM attended our 4th Battalion reunion in Columbus, GA, two days before the 173d Memorial was dedicated on June 1st, 2010. He spoke to us with pride about the outstanding troopers of today's 'Herd'. His visit was an unplanned treat for all of us -- it tied our combat service to yours.

The youngest of us from those days is 60 years old and the company commanders and platoon sergeants are 70 to 80. We have experienced one war in a far-away land and are experiencing your war from our own shores.

I know you hear stories about your country not being behind you, but that is incorrect. We all know many people who strongly oppose the war, but who more strongly respect and appreciate the soldiers who are there.

For many of us, those days in combat were the most meaningful things we ever did. Stay in touch with those who share this difficult journey.

We have gathered almost 130 stories from our days in combat to today. A few are below.

"Some have died, some have lived, some can't tell the difference." (Mike Adams, C Co)

"You have never lived until you have almost died.... Life has a special meaning that the protected will never know." (Lynn (Doc) Morse, Medic, C Co (2d year))

"Maybe more people should share a foxhole; it might be a better world." (Thom Cook, Sr. Medic, C Co)

"So many years ago, so many stories. To be honest, at times it feels like I never was there, and other times I feel that I have never come home. Not sure if that makes any sense." (Joe Armstrong, B Co)

My deepest respect and affection for you,

Jack K. Tarr
CO, C/4/503d jtarr5@verizon.net

Greetings. Be well and give 'em Hell! If you are wounded make sure you file for your Veteran's Disability as soon after discharge as possible. I get 10% from my Nam 'Heart' and that is \$123.00 a month for life. Your local Amvet rep or service officer at your local VA hospital can help you with your claim.

Don't ignore your VA Hospital for treatment for anything when you get back. I know some of the VA Hospitals get some bad press (and some of them deserve it). But, they are not all bad. Here in Columbus, Ohio, I could not not be treated any better if my name was John McCain, former POW. Also, if you have a Purple Heart, that moves you up the priority list of preferred patients. Even though I have a medical plan from my retirement with the State of Ohio, I still use the VA a lot and my primary 'doc' is great. Also, the VA environment is welcoming and will make you feel at home. Airborne!

Steve 'Sgt. Rock' Vargo
C/2/503d '67, 51st LRRP '68



75th Ranger Regiment Association

All LRRP / LRP / RANGERS / LRS
Main Reunion (every-2 years)
Scheduled for July 25th - July 29th, 2011
Activities will be held at Fort Benning
with headquarters at Holiday Inn Hotel
Manchester Hwy, Columbus, GA

Details will appear in this newsletter.
For information please contact:

Robt 'twin' Henriksen
Unit Director
(360) 393-7790



FIREBASE CORREGIDOR

By Capt. Gary Prisk, CO
C/D/2/503d

On a ridge south and west of Landing Zone English... south and west of the elbow in the An Lao River where the river turned from south to east running out of the An Lao Valley... in a galaxy far, far, away... a 105MM firebase affectionately called 'Corregidor' was in full foal....actually it was less than thirty days old with Delta Company sleeping in water-filled rock holes.

Charlie Company closed into this lovely out-cropping of solid rock and I could not believe my eyes. Four to six foot tinder-dry wheat colored grass ran right up to the perimeter wire in the west and north sectors and eight to ten foot dark green grass fell away from the perimeter in the east and south sectors. There were no foxholes and the fields-of-fire were great if you worked for Chuck.

As was our tradition, Zippo and the Flames set the dry grass on fire and true to Charlie Company's Point-of Origin..." From the Smoke in the Sky"... the fire raced north and then east attacking the helipad.

There was just one problem....in a panic the Artillery Battery Commander demanded the Grunts rescue his ammunition....it seems the dumb shit had it set outside the wire and our grass fire was on-the-way....so I gave him a few seconds to find his balls, then told him it was his ammo and we....Charlie Company....didn't give a shit whether it blew up or not.

After three days of blowing foxholes out of the rock with 40-pound cratering charges and filling sand bags with the debris, we finally had a perimeter. We then moved a platoon into a wooded area 100 meters northeast of the wire along with an engineer team and blew all of the large trees rendering that area the largest pile of pick-up-sticks you could imagine.

Patrolling led 1st Platoon to the next ridge west....these two pictures are of that laager....note the foxhole... Charlie Company always had two aiming sandbags for night work.

With all platoons inside the wire we got a Class 1 intell that either Corregidor or LZ English North was going to



get whacked....so we laid 10 60-foot fingers of bangalore torpedoes in a ring-main with every other finger booby trapped with frags, extending into the northern approach and tied the ring-main to a claymore firing device held by the Field First Sergeant, Oscar B. Cruz.

LZ English got hit and SFC Cruz, with his morning smoke going full blast, woke the Red-Leg boys up at the crack of dawn by lighting up the entire northern approach....those bangalores are nasty.

The next day, with a Special Forces SFC as a liaison inside the wire telling us that he had a Mike Force coming into the firebase from the Southeast, we set a reinforced outpost in the northern approach and spread the guns away from the Mike Force's route of march on the south end.

Well, you know the rest of the story. The Mike Force was moving southeast, coming into Corregidor from the Northwest. Yep...we took out their point man. Holy shit....they pissed themselves right into a four-inch hover.

It was rough country out by Corregidor.

(continued....)

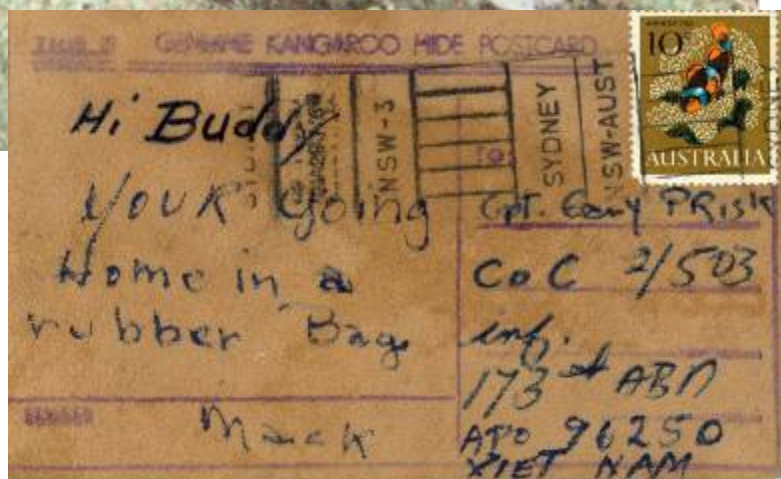




As an aside, this picture is the command element for 3rd Platoon. From left to right we have Spec Four Bill Totten (RTO), Spec Five Dopart (Medic), Lt Braddock, and SFC Leo Kryski.

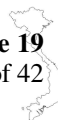
SFC Kryski came to Charlie Company from the Golden Knights Sky Diving Team. Leo was the team's captain, logging 4,856 jumps and holding the record at the time for the most jumps in a twenty-four hour period....one every 8.2 minutes....three planes minimum height and four riggers. Ranger qualified, SFC Leo Kryski was an American treasure....he was also a proud man and refused to take off his colorful stateside patches.

SFC Leo Kryski was killed by a sniper while eating chow on the southern-most bunker at Firebase Corregidor....a perfect shot....right between the runnin' lights.



I received this kangaroo skin postcard from Australia while at Firebase Corregidor from Lt. Mackinsie, the Recon Platoon Leader....the message was funny then and I smile when I read it today.

Cap



Uncle Jack on Capt. Jack

From General John "Uncle Jack" Deane

You asked for some material for your periodic 2/503d Newsletter. Following is a copy of a speech I gave at one of the Washington Reunions of The Herd. The thought occurred to me that many of the men of the 2/503 who made The Jump on Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1967, may not have heard this story.

You might be interested to know, aside from the story, as presented here, handsome, daring Jack Kelley, as you suggest I refer to him, a Jameson drinking Irishman of unbounded compassion, as he fancies himself, was my aide at that time. As you can see from the story, we did all we could to maintain the secrecy of the jump.



Uncle Jack

That caused a dilemma; handsome Jack's mother was reported to be terminally ill at the moment and Jack was needed at her side. If I told him of the jump, all kinds of ramifications would arise.

First, I would make the unpardonable mistake of breaching security and thus putting many lives in jeopardy.

Second, it would create a terrible situation for Jack. Daring fellow that he was, I knew he would be torn between realizing the dream of all paratroopers, making a combat jump, and being with his mother who needed his consoling compassion.

Third, maybe even you do not know this, Jack, the handsome, daring warrior, is prone to air sickness. He demonstrated this in my helicopter and thenceforth was required to take Dramamine. That is how he acquired the sobriquet of "Dramamine 6", something not many know.

You, of course as a Radio-Telephone-Operator, a key man in any military operation, know the designation "6" is reserved for the supreme being in any military unit. This posed an additional problem for me. If he made the jump, how could I ensure that he, my aide and right hand man, would not be near me in the aircraft without destroying his self-esteem.

Fourth, I, a man of impeccable cleanliness, not daring, not handsome, not compassionate, but clean, did not want anyone, to be blunt, puking on my parachute and especially not on my uniform.

The list is endless.

Uncle Jack

Man of the Cloth Responds & Threatens Poor, Meek RTO

The speech by "the old man" is great and I'm sure will be of interest to your readers! His comments as to my ability-passion-air capabilities and such are just one person's (although he be a General) thoughts. I have no problem with anything that he said, and I hope you read them with joy and humor. No problem as far as I am concerned -- but, if you use them in either the written word or spoken word...*I'll kill you!* -- then say a prayer for you. Amen. Blessed day,



"Dramamine 6"

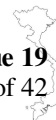
Rev. Jack Kelley, CO A/2/503d

Editor's Note: The Alpha Company commander's not so subtle threat of bodily harm, or even worse, did, I must admit, cause me pause. But, Uncle Jack's penmanship and description of our No Deros Alpha hero is just too good to be kept hostage by a mere few -- and I don't think "Dramamine 6" was serious.... well, not too serious. But, him being a preacher man and me a heathen, he might just have added incentive. *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death....."* I guess that third stripe is out of the question, huh Cap?



Walking target

NOTE: Following is from a speech General Deane made at a reunion of the International Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Washington, D.C. after he had retired from the Army. It was a speech on the planning which went into the mass parachute assault the Brigade made on George Washington's birthday, February 22, 1967, during Operation Junction City.





MASS PARACHUTE ASSAULT...THE JUMP



By General John Deane

“Not many people know about the planning that prepared us for The Jump, as I like to call the only mass parachute assault made during the war in Vietnam. There were only six people who knew the details at the time - three Army and three Air Force. The three Army Troopers were I, the Brigade Commander, Bob Sigholtz, Commander of the 2/503; and Major Steverson, the Brigade S-3. The reason was simple - security, the need for which was apparent from earlier experience.



General Deane

Originally our orders were to jump on and secure an abandoned Japanese airstrip constructed during WWII and later used by the French before the Vietnamese drove them from the country. Situated a few miles north of Song Be, the airstrip lay astride an active Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnam Army (NVA) troop infiltration route. Seizing it and constructing a Special Forces camp there would have disrupted enemy activity in the area.



Junction City Combat Jump

(Jerry Hassler)

The price of seizing the airstrip could have been great in loss of lives and equipment. The strip ran north to south for two or three thousand feet along the spine of a very narrow ridge. The cleared area was less than 100 meters wide and, to the east and west, dropped off precipitously into double and triple canopy jungle. I will discuss the threat to the troopers' lives in a moment. The threat to equipment lay in the topography, terrain and vegetation.

Any heavy drop equipment - artillery pieces, ammunition, vehicles and most heavy equipment bundles - falling outside of the cleared area would have been irretrievably lost in the heavy jungle canopy, hung up there for all time.

It was the threat to the troopers that caused far greater concern. The threat of landing in the trees was bad, but acceptable. We could get them down. It was the threat caused by a breakdown in security that was unacceptable and led to aborting the mission. Surprise is essential to a successful airborne operation.

Higher authority required me, despite my strenuous protests, to brief various staff members and other strap hangers on the planned airborne assault. Shortly after the first briefing or two, an engineer unit commander in Song Be confirmed my fears of leaks, my fear that there is always someone who has to show he is a big wheel by talking when he should be silent. The engineer called and said, *'I hear you are going to be jumping in our area.'* Asked where he had heard this, he replied, *'All the bar girls in Song Be know about it and are looking forward to increased business.'*



General Westmoreland agreed immediately to cancel the operation!

We then received orders for The Jump. Our mission was general and did not specify a Drop Zone (DZ). The choice was ours. Bob Sigholtz and I selected the DZ based on recommendations of Steverson. Following guidance from Sigholtz, Steverson developed plans for The Jump. No one knew of the existence of these plans until the Air Force commander and I revealed them at Bien Hoa Air Force Base at the final weather briefing and flight plans meeting. This was at about 0300 hours on February 22, 1967. A copy of these plans was simultaneously delivered to General Westmoreland's Headquarters where a sleepy duty officer tossed them in the 'In Basket'. The General's staff never briefed him on the real DZ.

(continued...)

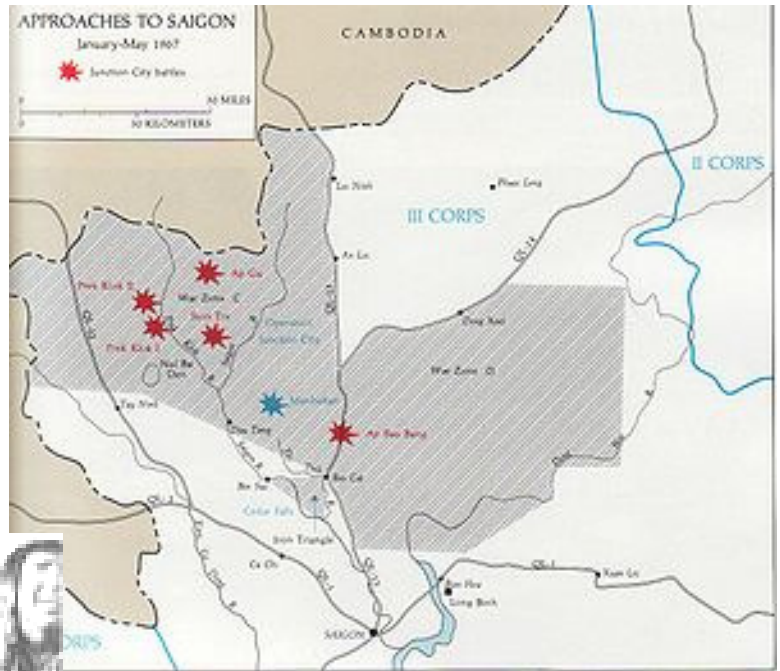


At the time we chose the real DZ, we also chose a second DZ several miles away. As that would become the focus of our security plan -- Stevenson developed detailed plans for a drop on this second DZ, the deception DZ.

Every time higher authorities required briefings, these plans, the plans for the deception DZ, were the basis for the briefing. The briefings included cautions on the importance of security in airborne operations and always included pleas to protect the troopers who would be so vulnerable to ground action if the enemy knew our plans. As in the Japanese airstrip case, this plan also became compromised.

Later reconnaissance revealed the VC or NVA had heavily mined and booby-trapped the second DZ, the deception DZ. This was the DZ where General Westmoreland's chopper circled so he and the Chairman of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff could observe The Jump.

no paratroopers in sight. When our heavy drop began with as many as three of the 100 foot canopy chutes attached to some loads, General Westmoreland's aide spotted the large parachutes and said, "My God, they missed the Drop Zone!" Actually, it was they who missed The Jump.



2/503d Bn CO, LTC Bob Sigholtz (C) and SGM Ed Proffitt (R) on DZ after combat jump. Operation Junction City. (Dave Griffin)

I gather General Westmoreland was upset that his staff had not briefed him properly so that he would fly to the real DZ. Several days after the operation, he visited my Command Post. At the end of the briefing on the operations we had going on, he turned to me and asked, 'Did you jump first?' I replied that I had. It is tradition that the commander is the first one out of the lead aircraft. Those were the only words we exchanged on The Jump."



As General Westmoreland and the Chief of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff unwittingly circled the deception DZ, they became impatient when the 9:00 a.m. time of the parachute assault came and went with



Results of Study

[The following report was uncovered by an astute Chargin' Charlie of Dak To fame who prefers to remain anonymous lest his wife see his name printed here. Ed]

A study conducted by the university's Department of Psychiatry has revealed that the kind of face a woman finds attractive on a paratrooper can differ depending on where she is in her menstrual cycle. For example: if she is ovulating, she is attracted to men with rugged and masculine features. However, if she is menstruating or menopausal, she tends to be more attracted to a man with duct tape over his mouth and a spear lodged in his chest with a bat up his ass while he is on fire.

No further studies are expected on this subject.



Rugged and masculine looking C/2/503d trooper of Dak To fame Roger Dick with his lovely but potentially dangerous wife Kathy.

SUMMER GATHERING SAN DIEGO

The San Diego Chapter of the 173d Airborne Association had a very successful Summer Gathering Aug 19-21. The guest speaker was one of our own, Col. Dick Boland. Here are 3 photos taken during 3 days of fun and relaxation. A big AIRBORNE to Chapter 28 for the outstanding celebration, we all had a great time.

**Bob Madden
Chapter 25**



Gil Reynoso, Bob Madden, Jim Mullen



Nick Aguilar Jr., Nick Aguilar, Gilbert Reynoso



**Rusty Kulp, Dan Sampson, Bob Madden,
Lillin Quintanar, Alex Quintanar**



GLENN D. KERNS KIA ~ DAK TO

Around July 1967 I had just returned from a tour in the Air Force from Clark Field and my nephew Glenn D. Kerns came by my home to visit. I had not seen him in about three years since I spent all my service time overseas. Having seen the casualty list from the 173d in the *Stars and Stripes* while at Clark Field, I asked Glenn why he had joined the Army and the 173d Airborne during this time. He said, "I wanted to be the best of the best". As he left my home he told me that the next time that I saw him he would probably be in a casket. I asked him to take care of himself. He was in B Co. 2nd Battalion 503rd Infantry Regiment, ABN 173d and was killed on November 11, 1967 at the Battle of Dak To. He was 19 years old as were many who gave the ultimate sacrifice during this time.



Glenn, Basic Training



Glenn in Vietnam

I have heard the name Andy Eiland who was a medic and was with Glenn when he died. As his uncle I would like to make contact with anyone who served with Glenn or Andy. I am writing a family history and would like some information on his time in Vietnam. Thank you again for your assistance.

Sam Kerns

79 Robin Road, Lumberton, NC 28358
Home: 910-739-8772 Cell: 910-301-7479
Email: samkerns001@att.net

THE WOMEN VETERANS COUNCIL

The Women Veterans Council will be hosting a number of seminars around the state of Michigan in October for women veterans. Issues covered will be employment, housing, medical care, small business, etc. See notice below.

Please be sure to pass this on to any woman veteran you might know since valuable information will be given out at these seminars.

Tim Wirkus, Secretary
Southfield Veterans' Commission
www.southfieldvets.org

**Women Veterans Council of Michigan
Invites**

**All women who have served in any branch of the military
to attend a Women Veterans Benefits Seminar**

Benefits information on education, employment, housing, medical care,
small businesses and more will be provided by:

State of Michigan Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
State of Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
United States Department of Labor
United States Department of Veterans Affairs Health and Benefits Administrations

The Women Veterans Benefits Seminar is **FREE!**
Five dates and locations are available for your convenience. Pick the date and
place of the seminar you want to attend, then call to register.

Check in begins at 8:30 am
Presentations start at 9:15 am
Lunch Provided
Seminars end by 3:00 pm

Join us for the day to learn about YOUR benefits! They can vary throughout your lifetime.

Seminar Dates

Tuesday - October 12, 2010
DJ Jacobetti Home for Veterans - 425 Fisher St., Marquette, MI

Thursday - October 14, 2010
American Legion Post 416 - 10064 Ford Dr., St. Helen, MI

Monday - October 18, 2010
American Legion Post 439 - 5190 Weiss, Saginaw, MI

Thursday - October 21, 2010
Grand Rapids Home for Veterans - 3000 Monroe N.E., Grand Rapids, MI

Friday - October 22, 2010
American Legion Post 216 - 510 W. Commerce, Milford, MI

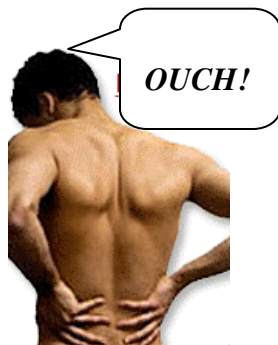
REGISTER BY CALLING: 517-373-3130 or 517-335-6523
Registration required to provide accurate lunch count to sponsors

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



BACK TO THE BACK

In an earlier issue of our newsletter I shared a brief story about the VA sending me to a local neurosurgeon they have under contract who specializes in treating lower back problems suffered by G.I.'s. Following all of a 5 minute exam, half of it spent twisting my ankles which rattled his Rolex, he happily explained the solution to my particular ailment (nerve damage in lower back) would be to insert a screw in there which would make everything right -- it didn't sound right, and his eagerness to pickup the knife after such cursory review sent up a red flag.



I sought a second opinion by a non VA contracted neurosurgeon, the same man who earlier this year performed brain surgery on my wife to remove a benign tumor (she's recovering fine, thank you, but they left the 'evil' part in there). His more thorough examination determined such radical, screwed-up surgery was unnecessary. Instead, he referred me to a pain clinic for a less invasive procedure.

The technique they employed to mend the problem and relieve some serious pain is **Facet Blocking**. This entails two separate visits where four numbing injections are followed by four steroid injections into the troubled areas. This initial treatment is intended to 1) isolate the damaged areas, and 2) confirm pain is diminished for even the slightest amount of time. Once done, a week or so later they move on to the coup de grace, **Radio Frequency Ablation** (cauterizing the nerve endings).

A few days ago I underwent this final treatment and as of this writing my back is doing much better; any pain seems to stem from the procedure itself and not the damaged nerve endings, and they tell me this pain will dissipate within a couple weeks. The former pain, the mean, nasty make you want to cry out "Mommy!" pain which ran down my butt cheeks and legs is nowhere to be seen, or felt -- that's a good sign.

There's no telling if this procedure will produce long-term relief, nor if you are a candidate for this option to radical surgery, yet it might be worth looking into. Should you opt for the screw in the back, however, be sure to at least ask for dinner and a movie. Good luck.

Smitty Out

FACET BLOCK

Facet block (what is it?): A block (or local anesthetic injection) is performed to confirm a facet joint is the source of pain and to decrease pain and inflammation in

a facet joint or joints. This may be the only true way to diagnose facet joint syndrome, as an abnormal looking joint on X-Ray or CT scan may be painless, and vice versa a normal looking joint may be the pain generator.

How is it done? The patient is given the option of light, (or deep in rare cases) IV sedation under monitoring of the EKG pulse oximeter, by a board certified anesthesiologist. A tiny needle (smaller than the size of a paper clip) is then inserted into the area of the facet joint where the nerve reaches it (or directly inside the facet capsule, in some cases) and the physician injects an anesthetic and steroid. This is done under fluoroscopy.

Expected results: Decrease in or relief of back pain. More importantly confirmation of the diagnosis, with the allowance of rational treatment.

How long does it take? Fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on the number of levels performed.

Note: injections may be done in conjunction with massage, myo-fascial release, or "light" physical therapy especially ultrasound and stimulation. Chiropractic will universally aggravate facet joint syndrome and must be avoided at all costs.

Risk/benefit ratio: Probably the easiest of all interventional procedures (provided done by a board certified physician with experience), with the lowest risk and most benefits.

Other therapy:

Once, the diagnosis is made by a prognostic block, the block may be repeated with a longer acting local and depot steroid preparation. Some milder cases

may be treated by improving posture, spine bracing during lifting/exercise and anti-arthritis agents such as motrin or the newer inhibitors. If the pain recurs, pulsed radiofrequency is the definitive treatment.

Facet joint syndrome (definition): A constellation of symptoms which result in diffuse pains that do not fit a clear nerve root pattern (e.g. not sciatica), these pains are worsened with movement of the spine, poor posture, often sleep, sometimes associated with cold burning sensations, usually worsened by cold damp weather and are now known to emanate from the tiny medial branch nerves that supply the facet joint.



Ouch again. One crappy PLF.



AND THE WAR RAGES ON

The 503rd Infantry Regiment, formerly the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) is an airborne unit in the United States military. It is one of the most decorated units of its kind with a distinguished battlefield record notably in World War II and the Vietnam War. It is part of 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

In March 2003, the Turkish government refused to allow American ground forces, which were positioned at their ports, to move through Turkey in order to establish a northern front in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. America needed another option and the Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade provided that option. On the 26th of March at 2000 hours, fifteen C-17 aircraft delivered 20 heavy platforms and 959 paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade onto Bashur Drop Zone in the vicinity of Bashur, Iraq. This combat parachute assault was the beginning of Operation Northern Delay and established the Coalition northern front.



The parachute assault force consisted of HHC, 173d Airborne Brigade; 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry Regiment; 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment; 74th Infantry Detachment (Long Range Surveillance); D Battery (Airborne), 319th Field Artillery Regiment; 173d Support Company (Combat); 501st Support Company (Forward), 250th Forward Surgical Team; ODA, 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 4th Air Support Operations Squadron (USAFE); and the 86th Contingency Response Group (assigned to the 86th Airlift Wing (USAFE)). The paratroopers were under the command of Colonel

William C. Mayville Jr., commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade. The chariots from which the Sky Soldiers were delivered into battle were the C-17s of the 62nd and 446th Airlift Wings from McChord AFB, Washington and the 437th Airlift Wing and 315th Airlift Wing (AFRES) from Charleston AFB, South Carolina. The C-17s were under the command of Colonel Robert "Dice" R. Allardice, commander of the 62nd Airlift Wing.

This airborne operation was not only the largest since the 1990 invasion of Panama, but was the first airborne personnel insertion ever conducted with the C-17s.

The successful establishment of a northern front was essential to the Coalition battle plan. Without a northern front six Iraqi divisions arrayed in northern Iraq remained free to move south to reinforce Baghdad. Fast-moving Coalition forces were closing on Baghdad with the expectation of having to capture the Iraqi capital from three defensively arrayed divisions. Six additional Iraqi divisions streaming from the north could dramatically affect the balance of power around

Baghdad

Another critical factor was the oil-rich area of Kirkuk. The oil wealth of the Kirkuk area would be crucial to rebuilding Iraq but the Iraqi army had shown a willingness to destroy their countries' own future simply to spite the Coalition. Securing the oil fields and airbases of Kirkuk was assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade.

The success of the 173d Airborne Brigade in its securing of Bashur and Kirkuk and its subsequent control and rebuilding of Kirkuk Province and later the As Sulaymaniyah Province was unmatched in-theater. The Sky Soldiers integrated forces from fifteen other units, to include five Army divisions, to accomplish every mission.

In the summer of 2004, the 1st of the 503rd deployed to Iraq, where its troopers took part in the battle of Fallujah and conducted combat operations in the violent Al-Anbar province. The battalion suffered above average losses during the deployment. Based in the outskirts of Ramadi, 1/503rd was targeted by daily mortar attacks and received a significant amount of Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices, also known as VBIEDS or car bombs. Despite this, the 1/503rd was very successful in their mission to curb insurgent activity. *(continued....)*



According to an interview with Lieutenant Colonel James Raymer, as of February 2006, insurgent activity is markedly lowered from the year that 1/503rd conducted operations in Ramadi. Additionally, the 503rd played a critical role in the 2005 elections in Iraq in Ramadi.

Upon completion of its year-long deployment to Iraq, 1/503 did not return to Korea, but instead relocated to Fort Carson, Colorado, with the rest of the brigade. It was re-designated on 1 October 2005 as the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, inactivated on 15 November 2005, relieved from assignment to the 2nd Infantry Division, and assigned on 15 June 2006 to the 173d Airborne Brigade when the existing 1/508th Infantry was reflagged. The 1st Battalion began its predeployment training, and re-designated its company names to match with their Korea beginnings: A Company (ATTACK Company), B Company (Legion Company), C Company (March or Die), D Company (Dog), E Company (Eazy), HHC (Hotel).

In May 2007, the 173d ABCT (including both 1st and 2nd 503) deployed to Afghanistan. Both units fell under the NATO ISAF mission. 2/503 remained as part of TF Bayonet and the unit was the subject of several articles detailing their operations during OEF VIII. 1/503 was attached to the 4th BCT, 82nd Airborne and 4th BCT, 101st Airborne as part of TF Fury and TF Currahee respectively.

[Report located and sent in by Sam Schiro, N/75 Rangers]

FLORIDA CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULED

Sky Soldiers: Our next meeting is on 11 September 2010 at Port Charlotte, FL. We will gather with our Brothers - US Paratroopers of the Port Charlotte Chapter www.usparatrooperspcc.com

Meeting at 11:00 Hours at:

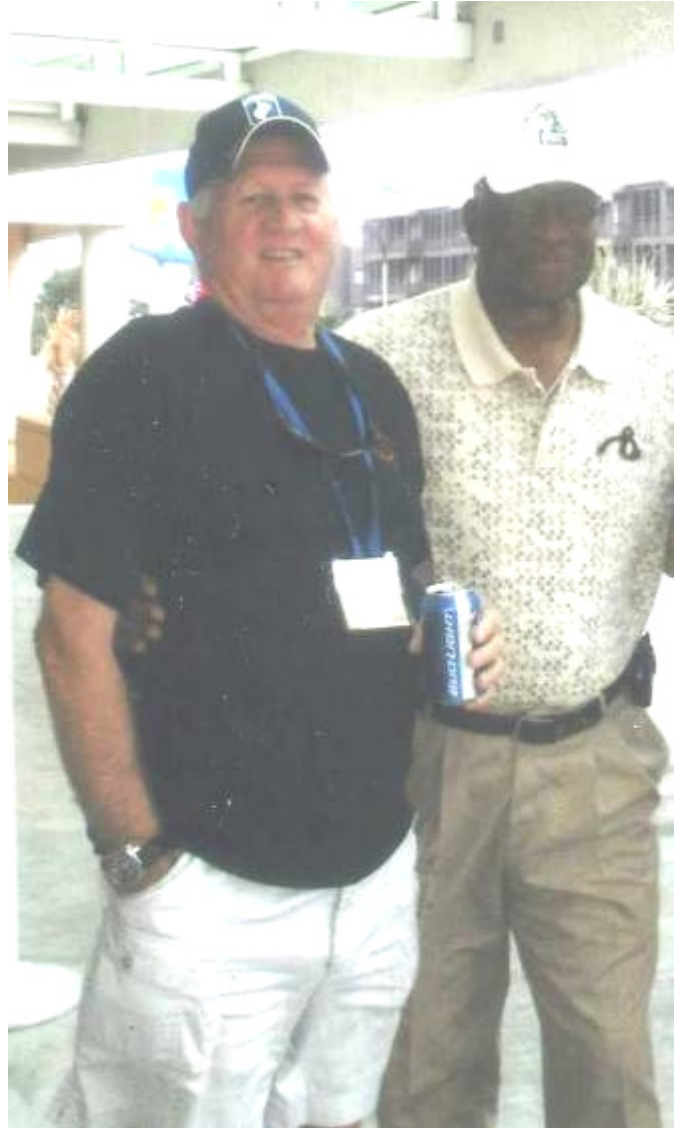
Cultural Center of Charlotte County, Inc.
2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte, FL 33952
941-625-4175, 941-625-4175
www.theculturalcenter.com

Please RSVP if you plan to attend the meeting as they are sponsoring us for lunch and other things and would like a head count. Please email your RSVP to webmaster@173rdAirborne.com and tell me how many are coming! **Jim Bradley**

MORE INCOMING!

Hey, the Hammer still looks great. Actually, so does everybody, but since he was idolized by most of his guys its something to see him looking so good. Hadn't been for him I probably would have gotten kicked out before we went to Nam. I was a real punk and had some officers thinking I was more trouble than I was worth. Jackson told a Major that I wasn't one of his Goody Two Shoes but when the shooting started I'd be there.....I was. God bless,

Bruce Porter
C/2/503d, '65/'66



Jim Gettel A/2/503d and Desmond "Hammer" Jackson
C/2/503d at 173d reunion in June, N. Myrtle Beach, SC.
(Wayne Bowers)





Bringing in the 2/503d

MORE ABOUT THAT PRICK

To A Chopper Jockey

Following is a note I sent recently to Phil Johnson, CW02, Huey and Inferno pilot with the Caspers:

Thanks Phil, and thanks for being there for us. You'll never know how important you and your boys were to us. Short story:

In '66 I was one of the troopers in the last stick coming out of a hot LZ with the bad guys coming up our ass. It was a small, tree lined LZ and there were too many of us for the Huey, but we all jumped on anyway. The bird lumbered forward toward the trees fighting to gain altitude for this one and only chance to get airborne....we all knew we were gonna die by tree. I was sitting immediately behind the young captain, and as we reached the tree line we could hear the skids hitting the tops of the trees. That kid saved our lives. I tapped him on the shoulder and gave him the thumbs up sign...he looked over his right shoulder and simply nodded his head...once. One cool character. I'd like to buy that sonofabitch all the beer he can drink if I could only find him. And that's just one story about you amazing chopper jockeys.

Smitty Out

Guys: Anybody remember that trip? Don't recall where or when it happened other than it was in '66.

Re: the radio. Contrary to popular opinion, PFC's and Spec 4's were not the only guys lucky enough to wander around the jungle with a 4 foot thingy waving above their heads. I usually sent Corrineo and Sutton off with one of the platoons and I stuck close to the company commander. Especially after Roy Lombardo left. Consequently, I carried my own PRC25; I had 3 of them. I usually had the antenna S folded



and tied down with rubber bands. I do not know when the infantry companies got the 25's but they had not reached B Company by the battle of July 7, 1965. With the 25 I could talk to everyone, especially air, both fixed and rotary wing. During the above mentioned battle, while I was jumping around on various frequencies, my antenna popped up (I was trying to keep it on the ground). It was immediately hit and flopped into the half erect position. I had the only functioning radio as the rest of the company radios crapped out or were shot off the backs of the RTOs. It still worked and I was able to yell and swear at just about everyone for the rest of the battle.

Jim Robinson, FO/B/2/503d, '65/'66





TRIPLE NICKLE TROOPER & TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

From Wambi Cook A/2/503d to Smitty HHC/2/503d:

On a recent trip to Las Vegas, I was recognized by a "bagger" at the Nellis AFB commissary. This elderly, loquaciously engaging gentleman (spotting my Herd cap) made sure I knew he too was airborne. Well, to be precise, a member of the US Army's first/only all Black WWII airborne unit, the 555th (Triple Nickels). Since time was at a premium for both of us, I insisted on having my wife take a photo.



Airborne Troopers Frank Barbee & Wambi Cook

Frank Barbee also shared a story of his wanting to join the 173d on Okinawa, but thought better of it when his wife told him if he did "divorce papers" will quickly follow.

The legacy of this unique, and illustrious unit's history is a must for the newsletter. Their website is [Triplenickel](#). **Wambi**

Note: The 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion was featured in the December 2009, Issue 9 of our newsletter.

From Smitty to Wambi:

Roger that, Wambi. My wife, Reggie, and I have had the good fortune of meeting not one but two Tuskegee Airmen down here in Florida. One at the local Post Office where I helped a frail, elderly woman carry a box to her car and there he was, her husband, whose name I can't recall, and the other at the Warbird's Aviation

Museum in Titusville a couple years ago, Col. Hiram Mann. My wife and I spent a few moments with him, a super neat guy.

I didn't have a camera with me so I asked a stranger to snap a pic and email it to me. A couple months went by and I never got the photo, and began calling the stranger and his mother bad names...soon after the photo came in, and I took back everything I said about him and especially his mom.



Smitty, Col. Mann & Reggie

As I was ready to leave I came to attention and snapped the Colonel a smart airborne salute, which he returned. Walking out to the car my wife said, "Do you know what he said?" I told her I didn't. She replied, "He said it was nice to be saluted again." What an honor to meet those men. **Smitty Out**



This W.S. Phillips oil painting, *Two Down, One to Go*, portrays Tuskegee Airman C. D. "Lucky" Lester in a P-51 Mustang scoring his second of three victories on July 18, 1944 in the European theatre.



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

Robert (Bob) Beemer, Sgt. E-5 B/2/503d Recon Squad, 173d Airborne November '67 to November '68. I'm a Construction Manager living outside Middletown, New York, married to Katharine for 30 years with 2 daughters, Tanja and Erin. Not a day goes by that I'm not thankful for having served with the "Herd".



Bob

Robert B. (Bob) Carmichael, LTC (Ret). Bn XO/CO HHC/2/503d, Maj., '65/'66. Married to Exie for nearly 60 years and living in Austin, TX. We have three children, five grandkids and one Great grand kid (the best of the lot). Spend much of my time as the best (only) gardener on the block, and fair at fishing. Any day at 80+ is a good day compared to the alternative.



RBC

Harry T. Cleland, B/2/503d May 66 – May 67. Living in Raleigh, North Carolina just down the road from Ft. Bragg. Retired, playing catch-up with home duties that need attention and trying to keep up with 5 granddaughters ages 12, 8, 5, 3 & 1. Also working with Post 67 American Legion, Cary, NC. Recently elected Judge Adjutant.



Da Judge

George "Scotty" Colson, B/HHC/2/503d, SFC, Dak To survivor. As to what I'm doing now, I'm a State Officer with the Office of Emergency Operations, attached to the Miami Region (Florida Department of Law Enforcement Region 7) as a State Liaison. I live with my beautiful teenage girlfriend Dee, her 12 year old daughter, and my 9 year old son in Broward County.



Dee & George-Scotty

Editor's Note: Now, I've known Scotty for over 45 years when we were hooch buddies in '65/'66, but, shouldn't there be a law against this? Vose??

Wambi Cook, Alpha 2/503d, February 1967-February 1968. Retired post secondary administrator, and public high school principal, Azusa, CA. Home town - Pittsburgh PA.



Alma, Wambi, Helen, Margarette & Mary Helen

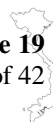
Married to Mary Helen - three girls, Margarette, Helen (granddaughter Mia), Alma. Son, Wambi and daughters, Robin (granddaughter Drew) and Kenyetta (grandson Carlos) from previous marriages. One of but a handful from A Company 2/503d who survived both the Battle of the Slopes and Hill 875. Frequently asked question: How? Answer: Wide trees and large ant hills. wambicook@aol.com

Bruce Demboski, I'm here, C/2/503d 1967 retired living in Arizona with my wife Margie. Hope all is well.

Frank Dukes, A/2/503d in Vietnam from '66 to '67. I served a second tour with B/2/505 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division. When I got out of the Army I was a Sgt. E-5. I am still working as a Customer Service Manager



for a Manufacturing Housing Company in Lewistown, PA. I plan to retire in December of this year. I am married to the best woman in the world and she has stuck with me for the past 41 years. Bless her heart she never knew what she signed up for. We have one son, Michael, and a daughter in-law, Jeri. We have two grandsons, Anthony and Vincent and we love them all to death. I recently attended my first reunion of the Herd in June of this year in Myrtle Beach, SC. It will not be my last. I had the chance to meet up with a lot of my past brothers, Smitty, Woody, Mike, Mike, Pat and James, just to name a few. I can't wait to see the rest of you at other reunions. I don't have a recent picture of my better half and me so this one of Woody and me at the reunion will have to do. Thanks to all of you for allowing me to be a small part of this huge family called the HERD.



Ken Eastman “Doc”, B/2/503d, ‘65/’66 & ‘69/’70. MSG with 22 years active service, retired February 1981. Still working as a licensed Sanitarian designing and installing sewage waste facilities and supporting two grandsons thru college (what a privilege). keneastman@wildblue.net

James (Jim) D. Green, Jr., B/2/503d ‘62-’66. Military service: 46 years with contractor time. Retired CWO in 1981. Retired Contractor Test Pilot in 2007 with nearly 41 years and 15,000 flight hours in the cockpit for old Uncle Sugar. Retired in South Alabama with my wife of 46 years, 'Holly'.



Two grown and successful children; **Flight ready Jim** daughter 'Cynthia' (graduate chemical engineer from Georgia Tech) and son 'James III' (business owner in our home town). Two wonderful grandsons; 'Jeffrey' 9 years old and 'Jacob' 6 years old. No greater love hath any man that that for his grand children! Two tours in the Land of the Big Rice paddies, five trips over seas and 46 years of service doing that that I loved has left me worn, but not out! I have no recent portraits of myself, I was the one always behind the camera, but I have included in this message a shot of my final flight day. Wishing all of you the very best in the future, good health and lots of good memories. My years as a paratrooper have not faded from my mind. I fought alongside some of the best warriors this nation has ever produced. Always Airborne! Jim

Dave “Griff” Griffin, Sgt. B/HHC/2/503d ‘65/’66. Retired from Duke Energy after 38 years. Married to my 2nd grade sweetheart for 43 years. Two children, son and daughter. Two Grand daughters 10 and 16 years young. We live in Cornelius, NC and live on Lake Norman, 20 miles north of Charlotte, NC off I-77. We are Lake and Beach Bums.



Trudy and her RTO

"Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget."

Don't know who said it, but it makes sense.

Dick B. Holt, SFC (retired) 1996 from NC National Guard as Unit Readiness NCO for Co C 230th Signal Battalion. Married to Beth for 37 years, two daughters Deanna (36), Stephanie (32) and we have three grandkids. I enjoy playing **Dick with Katie Wright** golf, watching the Carolina Tarheels, and drinking cold beer with my twin Rick (also a Nam veteran) who served with the Marines at Chu Lai. I was with C/2/503d Apr-Oct 67. dholtstreet@hotmail.com



Dan Reed, SSG, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, A/2/503d, '69-'70. Cabin-living near Reliance, TN, and doing small log home jobs. Divorced in '80, with one son, Eric, and two grand-daughters, also in East TN. Always have pride and respect for the "Herd" danalog@tds.net

Don Rice, “Vuorhees”, HHC/4.2 Platoon, 2/503d, ‘65/’66. Stillwater, MN. Veterinarian - small animal practice. Wife of 40 years, Aretta (“40 years with the wrong man,” as she is fond of saying!). Daughter Raeana, age 29, Son Robert, age 24. No grandchildren.

James “Jim” W. Starrett, C/2/503d. I am retired. I lost a lung in 2001 due to cancer caused by Agent Orange. I live in Smithville, Tennessee with my wife Bonny, and my 16 year old daughter Chantal.

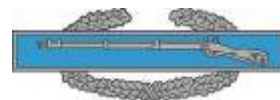


Jim

William E. (Bill) White, Major Spt Bn, Commandant USARPAC Jungle Warfare Training Center, Iriomote, U S Ryukus Island, Oct 63 - Apr 64. XO 2/503d Oct 64 - Apr 65, 173d Abn Bde (Sep), Liaison Officer to I Corps Nov 65 - May 66. LT Col USA (Ret) Aug 68. Retired Small Business Owner, Aug 87. Married to Shirley for 60 years. At 85 can still do a fair PLF when I trip or fall. AIRBORNE!!! swattheshore@juno.com

Note:

Let your buddies know where you are and what you've been doing. Send in your info and a photo for the October issue of our Newsletter.



MESOTHELIOMA AND VETERANS

Veterans of the U.S. military services are particularly at risk for mesothelioma because so much asbestos was used by the military. Throughout the 20th Century the Navy and other branches of the military employed asbestos products in ships, buildings, and other military facilities, and thousands of servicemen and women came into contact with asbestos fibers.



WIDESPREAD ABESTOS EXPOSURE

Members of all uniformed services were exposed to asbestos on duty, as were civilian defense employees, military contractors, and people in the merchant marines. Boilermen, Enginemen, Electricians, Pipefitters, and many other jobs brought servicemen into close contact with asbestos insulation, cements, ceiling tiles, brakes and other materials.

Thousands of Navy and Cost Guard ships were constructed with asbestos, which had physical properties that made it ideal for the vessels of the era. The health problems caused by inhaling asbestos fibers don't show up for decades, but when they do, they can be serious. Literally hundreds of materials used by the Navy and other services included asbestos.

VA ASSISTANCE

The Department of Veterans Affairs serves veterans in many ways, including the world-class medical system at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). If you are eligible, these facilities can be an invaluable part of your health care.

Like any large organization, the Department of Veterans Affairs can be difficult to find your way around in, and other federal and state programs for veterans are also hard to find and to identify if you qualify. The VA has established a network of Veteran Service Officers at the county level throughout the United States.

GETTING CHECKED OUT AND TREATED FOR ASBESTOS DISEASES

Asbestos cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis can lie dormant for decades before symptoms start to show. Doctors who suspect mesothelioma will ask about your exposure to asbestos, and most people find this difficult to remember, especially if it happened decades ago. If you worked with any of these materials or in any of these locations, be sure to tell your doctor during

examinations. Early detection is the best defense against asbestos diseases.

If you've been diagnosed with mesothelioma contact a doctor or medical center that can handle this form of cancer.

The VHA has designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers throughout the country. These are large hospitals with experienced oncologists and nursing staffs. The VA also has established, at a community level, outpatient clinics that provide medical care for eligible veterans.

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS WITH MESOTHELIOMA

Mesothelioma Web attempts to be the most comprehensive mesothelioma website on the Internet. If you can't find what you are looking for on the site, let us know at 877-367-6376 and we will attempt to answer your questions.

Source: Vietnam and all Veterans Coalition.

Hello Who?

Smitty: He's a professional writer doing research and wants to include our comments and opinions amongst a lot more research.

You don't need to do anything but print his request, or not. I put it up on our 173d Chapter 17 Bulletin Board. He's just asking for folks who saw the show -- gotta get facts from someone. Personally, I like seeing the 173d in print.

Skip Kniley, 3/319th

[Following is the note sent to Skip which he asked to be included in our newsletter. I never saw a Donut Dolly let alone this show. I know nothing about Mr. Hely, his work or his intentions, other than what he states below. Ed]

*Hello sir,
I'm a writer here in Los Angeles. I've written a novel and a travel book, although most of my work has been on TV - I'm a writer and producer for the NBC show The Office. I'm doing some research for an article about the production of "Hello Dolly" at Bien Hoa in 1965. I'd like to talk to anyone from the 173rd who was at the base or off on a mission during that time.*

Could you help me get in touch with any 173rd veterans who might be willing to answer a few questions?

*Thanks very much, and thanks for your service,
Steve Hely helphely@gmail.com*



Farewell Our Sky Soldier Brothers

Today's *Los Angeles Times* had an obit about SFC (Retired) Santo Rodriguez formerly of Los Angeles. He resided in Fayetteville, NC. He jumped on 22 Feb. 1967 with the 173d and he also served in the 101st at Ft. Campbell, KY, and the 82nd at Ft. Bragg, NC. He had a big family and his wife is still residing in NC. The LA Times said he would be buried at Ft. Rosecrans, CA (San Diego) in Oct. of 2010.

Raymond Ramirez



Sky Soldiers and Friends:

It saddens me to inform you of the passing, this morning, August 26th, of our Brother Sky Soldier, Jim Bernardo, and I will pass on the information regarding services when I receive it from the family. However, I have copied Al Gonzalez, SD 82nd Airborne Association Honor Guard Team Leader, to ask that we provide Full Military Honors at the services for our fallen comrade. Airborne all the way!

Nick Aguilar, President

San Diego 173rd Airborne Association



Carl Lee Simpson

7/4/1972

Memories at War

**Can you remember
innocent time so sweet,
jumping high
our playful skips
and agile limbs
to land upon,
those wondrous marvels
...called feet.**

**Can you remember
violent times...defeat,
innocent lives
faces to forget
and names
those friends of pain,
whose wondrous hearts
...ceased to beat.**

SHARON RAMIREZ

In a note from her husband,
Raymond Ramirez

I'm working on my wife Sharon's funeral services for this weekend. Sharon attended the 1st reunion that we held in 1989, in Santa Rosa, CA. I was the President of the



Western States Chapter 10, and General Westmoreland was the Guest Speaker. We had a great event and the mother and sisters of Van Campen, B/2/503d MIA were there.

Sharon made reunions in Boston, Chicago, Sacramento, CA, Reno, NV, Rochester, MN, and Fayetteville, NC. One of her cousins served as a CWO in the 173d in about 1969-70, on the Courts & Boards Section.

In 2001, we visited the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy, and we took photos, and videos to the CO who met us and took us around the base. We also visited the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, Normandy, and Italy, where Sharon and our daughter Celeste had visited with the Montebello High School orchestra that would perform there in Closing Ceremonies in 1995.

Sharon was also "down under" for the 2005, 173d reunion and she had just retired from teaching for 32 years in the Montebello Unified School District.

Sharon attended the "Day of Honor" benefit concert in Atlanta, GA, on Oct. 7, 2006, and she got to "meet & greet" with Big & Rich and other performers and sat in the 2nd row just behind "Big Kenny's" wife and son. She took a great photo of "Big Kenny" singing the "8th of November" and I hope to use that photo in a story that I will be writing for *Country Weekly* magazine. Sharon had a cousin who lives in Florida who performed in Hee Haw in Nashville, TN, in 1980-81. One of my dreams was to take her to Opryland to see where he performed and then take her up to Ft. Campbell, KY, where I served in the 1/501st and the 4/503d before we took off for RVN. Time to go because I have to make some donations in her memory this morning.

Raymond Ramirez

4/503d

Ray: Our thoughts are with Sharon, you and your family.



RIDE THE THUNDER

Book Review by a Sky Soldier

Just got through reading the book *Ride The Thunder* by Richard Botkin, the true story of the U.S. Marines and their Vietnamese allies largely responsible for thwarting the Communist invasion of South Vietnam known as the Easter Offensive of 1972.

Long book, some 598 pages, but does detail the role of Vietnamese Marines and their time after the war in reeducation camps. For too long, the western media has derided the role of the Vietnamese people in defending their country alongside American forces and this book puts a whole new side on that.

One particular aspect as to why we lost, aside from our fear of the Chinese entering the war, and I quote from the book: "Remembering that one million Red Chinese had crossed the Yalu River in November of 1950 when MacArthur's forces had gotten too far into North Korea, American political leadership convinced itself that, to keep the Soviets and Chinese from considering the introduction of their own troops, they would limit ground combat to areas within the borders of South Vietnam."

"Where the Vietnamese Communists saw all of what was formerly French Indo-China as one giant, legitimate battlefield, the U.S. chose to confine its ground efforts to within the borders of the Republic of Vietnam."

"January 1968 saw the U.S. entering its 34th month of major combat operations in Vietnam."

"By the 34th month of American involvement in WWII, in the European Theater of Operations, the Germans had been removed from northern Africa, the Italians had been removed from the war, the Allies had broken out of their D-Day beachheads, liberated Paris and were advancing on Berlin. The Russians were steadily advancing from the east."

"In the Pacific bloody wins at places like Midway, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Guam and the Philippines showed the continual shrinking of the Japanese Empire."

"By the 34th month of American involvement in WWII the folks at home had been thoroughly indoctrinated and made part of the war experience. With 12 million men and women under arms out of a population of 140 million, few families did not have at least a son or husband or nephew or cousin serving. The economic effort required to support total war virtually guaranteed that even if a family did not have a relative or dear friend in uniform, they were somehow involved or significantly impacted through their own civilian employment."

"...by the 34th month of ground combat operations on the Korean peninsula, the armistice was close to being signed."

"The beginnings of 1968 brought with it no bond or scrap metal drives, no Meatless Tuesdays, no gas or sugar rationing. The average American manufacturing worker was not producing bombers or bullets or battleships. There were no admonishments that 'Loose lips sink ships' and Rosie the Riveter had split the scene. While in WWII collective suffering and shared sacrifice had one in twelve Americans wearing a uniform with perhaps half of those folks serving somewhere overseas, by the time of the Vietnam War maybe one in one hundred were serving and only one in four hundred was in Southeast Asia."

The book covers a news media only interested in covering another My Lai and not concerned with anything relating to North Vietnamese or Viet Cong war atrocities. A media convinced we were losing due to Tet. Somewhere, some time, someone made the decision ours was only to be a stalemate war. Was it McNamara alone? Johnson? Who was so scared of a war involving the Chinese and Soviets, they were willing to sacrifice some 58,000 Americans and millions of Vietnamese? Westmoreland operated within the limits imposed on him and bore the brunt of the war's mistakes. A good book, if you have time, read it.

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

FORTY-TWO YEARS LATER AN NVA SOLDIER IS DISCOVERED IN GREYBULL, WYOMING IMPERSONATING A RETIRED PREACHER



Rev. Mike "Mac" McMillan, Sniper, 4/503d



Use of Agent Orange is Well-Documented

Originally published August 13, 2010

By Megan Eckstein

Long before Fort Detrick hired a contractor to investigate its past use of Agent Orange on post, the fact that the Army did test the herbicide in Frederick was common knowledge.

The *Frederick News-Post* archives, government documents and Fort Detrick's website all chronicle the Army post's Vietnam-era testing of Agent Orange, a defoliant that has since been proven to cause cancers, Parkinson's disease, skin conditions and more.

An April 8, 1967, news article by *The Associated Press* states that "*research headquarters for the U.S. (chemical and biological warfare) program is Ft. Detrick it has a 1967 budget estimated at \$38 million.*"

"In one distant corner of the base lies the crop division with its four large greenhouses where research is done on the defoliant and herbicides now used in Vietnam," the article continues.

A Dec. 13, 1972, *News-Post* story elaborates. It said Fort Detrick's Vegetation Control Division was given a January 1973 deadline to demilitarize, in accordance with President Richard Nixon's orders that the United States would no longer research or produce chemical and biological weapons.

"The VCD, by that date, will have disposed of a stockpile of biological anti-crop agents the size of which is still a classified subject," the article stated. *"The demilitarization project is a significant change in direction for the facility that produced three of the major defoliant used by this country in the Vietnam War. Instead of developing more herbicides, like 'agent orange' -- which tends to activate the plant's growth process to the extent that it 'grows to death,' or like 'blue and white' -- which is absorbed by and kills back the growing tips of victimized plants, the VCD is now studying ways to defoliate plants without killing them."*

The 1972 article continues, *"the VCD has screened some 31,000 chemical compounds since the unit was established at Fort Detrick in 1946."*

Fort Detrick spokesman Rob Sperling said the Army post had hired a contractor to investigate the details of its previous Agent Orange testing: *"if it was done, where it was done, how much, under what conditions,"* he said. Sperling said Fort Detrick was not aware of the Agent Orange testing before Randy White and his 'Fighting for Frederick' group revealed it at a July 10 meeting.

"When it came up, we said, 'we don't know anything about this,' so we started looking at it," he said. *"It caught us off guard.. But there's so much here, the things that went on 50, 60 years ago, most of us weren't even alive."*

Sperling said he did not know who the contractor was, how long the contract was for and how much money the Army paid for the investigation.

More on Agent Orange
Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d

VA Health Care and Benefits Provided for Many Vietnam Veterans

WASHINGTON (August 30, 2010) - Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam and other areas will have an easier path to access quality health care and qualify for disability compensation under a final regulation that will be published on August 31, 2010 in the Federal Register by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The new rule expands the list of health problems VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures to add two new conditions and expand one existing category of conditions.

"Last October, based on the requirements of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 and the Institute of Medicine's 2008 Update on Agent Orange, I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to award presumptions of service connection for these three additional diseases," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"It was the right decision, and the President and I are proud to finally provide this group of Veterans the care and benefits they have long deserved."*

The final regulation follows Shinseki's determination to expand the list of conditions for which service connection for Vietnam Veterans is presumed. VA is adding Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease and expanding chronic lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B cell leukemia, such as hairy cell leukemia.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an association between their medical problems and their military service.

(continued....)



2/503d Newsletter Banners

By helping Veterans overcome evidentiary requirements that might otherwise present significant challenges, this "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process and ensure that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

The Secretary's decision to add these presumptives is based on the latest evidence provided in a 2008 independent study by the Institute of Medicine concerning health problems caused by herbicides like Agent Orange.

Veterans who served in Vietnam anytime during the period beginning January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides.

More than 150,000 Veterans are expected to submit Agent Orange claims in the next 12 to 18 months, many of whom are potentially eligible for retroactive disability payments based on past claims. Additionally, VA will review approximately 90,000 previously denied claims by Vietnam Veterans for service connection for these conditions. All those awarded service-connection who are not currently eligible for enrollment into the VA healthcare system will become eligible.

This historic regulation is subject to provisions of the Congressional Review Act that require a 60-day Congressional review period before implementation. After the review period, VA can begin paying benefits for new claims and may award benefits retroactively for earlier periods.

For new claims, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the effective date of the regulation or to one year before the date VA receives the application, whichever is later. For pending claims and claims that were previously denied, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the date it received the claim.

VA encourages Vietnam Veterans with these three diseases to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation now so the agency can begin development of their claims.

Individuals can go to a website at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm> <<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm>> to get an understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivors benefits.

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services for Veterans exposed to the chemical is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.

With this issue of our newsletter, we've now displayed the three new banners produced by **Ashley Bowers**, graphic artist extraordinaire and daughter of Wayne Bowers, C/2/503d. If there were a contest for the best old soldier newsletter banners, we would be in the running! Anyone needing top-of-the-line graphics work should contact Ashley at the Chargin' Charlies' email at bowway@aol.com

We'll continue to alternately display the three banners in subsequent issues of our newsletter.



Thanks again Ashley for the great work you did creating our banners. Ed



I Kept a Ticket Tribute to the 1/503d & 173d Airborne

Call-up this web site to see this video tribute:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87AB6-xwoh0>
It has over 3,200 viewers to date.





A Casper Perspective (In an email to Wambi Cook, A/2/503d)

Mr. Cook:

The mail arrived this morning and I found my new copy of *Sky Soldier*. The magazine fell open to your article, "Battle of the Slopes--22 June 1967", which I read while walking back up my driveway. I enjoyed reading your perspective on the events of that day. I salute you for your courage, not only for that day but for serving in the infantry of the finest fighting unit to be found.

I was there that day also. I served with the Casper Aviation platoon with Brigade HHC. The Caspers were the 173d's only helicopters and the only separate aviation platoon in Vietnam. Lots of helicopters supported the brigade but we were the only ones that were part of the unit and entitled to wear the brigade patch on our right shoulder when we returned from overseas.

On that June morning an element of the fourth Bat was also in heavy contact to the northeast of Dak To. I flew our huey along with the other pilot, our crew chief and gunner in to their position to do a medevac of several wounded, while the unit was still in contact. They low-crawled the wounded out to the helicopter and as quickly as we could, got the hell out of there, followed by a stream of tracers from a heavy NVA machine gun.

General Dean was circling above us in his aircraft. This helicopter was able to get back to Dak To but was put out of commission. No one on board was wounded. By this time A/2/503 was in heavy contact, the other pilot and I were assigned a new aircraft, the one we did the medevac in was too shot up to fly. We picked up Colonel Partain, 2nd Battalion commander, and proceeded up over the battle. At one time I counted as many as 13 helicopter gunships in a line firing at the enemy.

I was sorry to read from your accounting of the friendly fire deaths to our own troops. It was a busy place in the air with the gunships, Air Force fighters and artillery. At one point, as the fire from the air and artillery took a break we circled very low over the area. I believe we had an artillery officer, the Colonel and Sergeant Major Rogiers in my aircraft. We came under heavy automatic weapons fire and the aircraft was hit very badly. I looked over my shoulder and saw Rogiers moving about and white as a sheet. Rounds had come up through the floor of the aircraft, bracketing him with at least two hitting him. I didn't know how badly he was hurt because the aircraft was severely damaged and difficult to control and I had to pay attention to that problem first. It was a very short flight back down the mountain where we made a landing. Rogiers was the only one hit, with

the bullets only grazing him, leaving several holes in his jungle fatigues. The aircraft was no longer flyable. I read many years later in the book "*Dak To*", and I paraphrase, that I was able to get back to the airfield, but despite my skill, we landed heavily and Partain was injured forcing his evacuation later on. I do not recall that we landed heavily but hey I am only the pilot. I do know that that helicopter wasn't flying anymore that day.

By this time I had lost two helicopters so General Deane loaned us his command chopper, the same one he was in while watching us be shot down earlier in the morning.

From our helipad back at the airfield, we could see and even hear at times the action on that hill. It was truly horrible. You guys needed ammunition, chain saws and other supplies. There was no LZ and you guys were in no position to make one and I sure as hell didn't want to try and land up there, so we volunteered to drop the stuff to you. One of your officers, either a Lieutenant or Captain volunteered to go and drop the cargo to you. I do not recall his name.

We took off and flew up over your position and each time we came to a hover we came under heavy automatic weapons fire. We could not fire our guns



because we could not pin point your position. We were sitting ducks. After three passes at hovering over you, the aircraft was barely flying. I don't know how I was able to get back. Had it not been all down hill from your position, we would never have made it. So the general gave me his helicopter and I broke that one too. That was three for the day and I was done.

Having said all that I would not have traded my position in the air for your fix there on that hill for any amount of money. I can only imagine how you guys made it through that horror, something you had done before and would continue to do until you were able to go home. I don't know whether the tactics were right or wrong. It seems that with 76 brave men slaughtered and hundreds more scarred for life, that somebody in command screwed up big time. All I can say is welcome home brother...

Respectfully,
Steve Greene



Sky Soldier DAVID 'MAD DOG' DOLBY Farewell Brother



David Charles Dolby (May 14, 1946 – August 6, 2010) was a United States Army soldier who received the U.S. military's highest decoration, the Medal of Honor, for his actions in the Vietnam War.

David was born on May 14, 1946, in Norristown, Pennsylvania. His father, Charles L. Dolby, was a personnel manager for B.F. Goodrich Company in Oaks, Pennsylvania. He had a younger brother, Daniel.

Mr. Dolby joined the Army from Philadelphia and by May 21, 1966, was serving in the Republic of Vietnam as a specialist fourth class with Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). On that day, his platoon came under heavy fire which killed six soldiers and wounded a number of others, including the platoon leader. Throughout the ensuing four-hour battle, he led his platoon in its defense, organized the extraction of the wounded, and directed artillery fire despite close-range attacks from enemy snipers and automatic weapons. He single-handedly attacked the hostile positions and silenced three machine guns, allowing a friendly force to execute a flank attack.

David was subsequently promoted to sergeant and awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the battle. The medal was formally presented to him by President Lyndon B. Johnson on September 28, 1967.

In addition to the 1965–66 tour in which he earned the Medal of Honor, Sergeant Dolby was deployed four more times to Vietnam. In 1967 he served there with the 101st Airborne Division, in 1969, with the 75th Ranger Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, in 1970 as an advisor to the Vietnamese Rangers, and in 1971 as an advisor to the Royal Cambodian Army.

Mr. Dolby married but had no children. After his wife Xuan's death around 1987, he lived quietly in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Over the last 20 years, David attended many veterans events around the U.S. and once opened the New York Stock Exchange on Veterans Day. He most recently worked to bring attention to the neglected Medal of Honor Grove at the Freedoms Foundation in PA.

David Dolby died at age 64 on the morning of August 6, 2010, while visiting Spirit Lake, Idaho, for a veterans' gathering. Funeral arrangements at Arlington National Cemetery are pending.



'Mad Dog'

On Friday, August 6, David C. Dolby passed away suddenly in Spirit Lake, Idaho at the age of 64. Childless, Mr. Dolby had lived in virtual seclusion in the town of Barto, PA since the passing of his wife in 1997. Barto is so small and insignificant the Rand McNally Atlas doesn't even list it in its appendix. Mr. Dolby's passing went so unnoticed that even his hometown paper didn't acknowledge it. His passing was announced by an organization to which he belonged. Evidently most felt Mr. Dolby's death didn't merit any notice at all and almost nobody gave it a thought. He apparently hadn't done anything in his life to merit any special attention.

A funeral service will be held at Arlington National Cemetery. There won't be any press there and likely only a handful of mourners who had the privilege to know David Dolby. And there will probably be a few guys there who are fellow members of the organization that announced his passing: the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.



VA Obligates Last of its Recovery Act Funds to Help Veterans

\$1.8 Billion Investment Improves Care and Services for Veterans

WASHINGTON (August 5, 2010). The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) committed the last of its \$1.8 billion in Recovery Act funds July 31, one of the first federal agencies to achieve that milestone. Projects at more than 1,200 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will increase access to health care and services to Veterans, while creating jobs and stimulating the economy.

"Veterans across the Nation are benefiting from these Recovery Act funds," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"Recovery Act projects are improving medical care, speeding claims processing, enhancing our national cemeteries, advancing our energy efficiency, and generating jobs for Americans."*

VA rapidly put American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) funding to work to improve its medical facilities, revitalize its national cemeteries, hire claims processors, upgrade technology systems and assist states in acquiring, building or remodeling state nursing homes and domiciliary facilities for Veterans.

The funding received by VA is part of President Obama's economic recovery plan to improve services to America's Veterans. By obligating these funds quickly, VA is revitalizing its infrastructure and moving needed money into the economy.



Using Recovery Act funds, VA entered into 1,521 contracts with 696 contractors. Three-quarters of the contractors are Veteran owned businesses, either service disabled Veteran owned businesses or Veteran owned small businesses.

Health Care Services Enhanced:

VA obligated \$1 billion to improve VA medical care facilities across the country through building renovations, roadway and walkway repairs, high cost equipment replacement, security improvements, new construction, replacement of steam lines and boiler plants, upgrades in emergency power distribution, and purchases of additional emergency generators among others.

To help Veterans access care, Recovery Act projects in VA medical facilities will add or improve more than 26,000 parking spaces and 39 elevator banks are being built or upgraded. VA will upgrade nearly 14,000 inpatient bed spaces, while 16 pharmacy renovation projects will help Veterans get medicines quicker and more efficiently. More than 14,400 clinical improvement projects, some with multiple exam rooms, will be undertaken.

Funds are also helping ensure VA health care facilities function more efficiently (by reducing annual recurring maintenance and upkeep cost) and are equipped to provide world-class care to Veterans.

Specific projects include:

- Bedford, Mass., VA Medical Center (VAMC) mental health unit renovation, \$7.165 million;
- Philadelphia VAMC emergency room renovations, \$4.74 million;
- Cleveland VAMC surgical suite refurbishment, \$8.5 million;
- New Haven, Conn., VAMC private and semi-private inpatient units, \$7.743 million;
- Hines, Ill., VAMC electrical distribution infrastructure upgrade, \$8 million.

VA serves 5.5 million Veterans annually in its hospitals, outpatient clinics and rural health programs.

Energy Conservation:

VA is promoting energy conservation and reducing its environmental footprint by investing \$200 million in Recovery Act funds for renewable energy generation technologies, metering systems, and energy conservation and water-saving measures. In total, the renewable energy systems awarded represent more than 9 megawatts of planned power generating capacity from solar, wind, and cogeneration technologies.

(continued....)



Two national cemeteries, in Bourne, Mass., and San Joaquin, Calif., anticipate producing enough electricity to supply nearly all of their energy needs.

VA is installing solar photovoltaic systems at facilities in Albuquerque, N.M.; Tucson, Ariz.; Dublin, Ga.; Calverton, N.Y.; San Joaquin, Calif., and Riverside, Calif.

VA is erecting a wind turbine in Bourne, Mass., and is constructing a geothermal system at its medical center in St. Cloud, Minn.

In addition, VA is building renewably fueled cogeneration systems at five medical facilities: Togus, Maine; White River Junction, Vt.; Chillicothe, Ohio; Loma Linda, Calif.; and Canandaigua, N.Y.

VA is installing metering systems at all VA-owned facilities to monitor energy utilities, including electricity, water, chilled water, steam, and natural gas consumption.

VA is also investing \$197 million in energy and water infrastructure improvements. VA facilities across the country are upgrading their facilities to reduce energy consumption and water usage and better manage related costs.

Claims Processing Improvements:

VA is working to improve the systems for processing claims to more quickly and efficiently deliver benefits to Veterans. VA has obligated \$150 million to hire, train and equip new employees to improve claims processing and speed the delivery of benefits to Veterans. VA has hired approximately 2,700 temporary and permanent employees to assist with processing Veterans' claims for VA benefits.

National Cemeteries Revitalized:

Throughout VA's system of 131 national cemeteries, 391 improvement projects are underway using \$50 million in Recovery Act funding. VA is restoring and preserving 49 historic monuments and memorials, becoming more energy efficient by investing in renewable energy sources (solar and wind), moving forward on nine energy conservation projects, and improving access and visitor safety with 49 road, paving and grounds improvement projects.

Recovery Act funds are also being used to raise, realign, and clean approximately 200,000 headstones and markers, repair sunken graves, and renovate turf at 22 VA national cemeteries.

One-time Benefit Payments:

The Recovery Act provided one-time \$250 economic recovery payments to eligible Veterans, their survivors, and dependents to help mitigate the effects of the current economy. \$7.1 million were intended for administrative support of the one-time benefit payments. VA was able to successfully administer the program with a savings of approximately \$6.1 million, and may return the remaining funds to the US Treasury.

Source: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm

Veterans More Likely to Avoid Foreclosure with VA-Backed Loan

Shinseki says VA's Home Loan Program Continues to Stay Strong

August 19, 2010

WASHINGTON – Mortgage loans guaranteed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continue to have the lowest rate for serious delinquency and foreclosures in the industry.



"The continued high performance of VA loans is due to the dedication of VA's loan professionals, the support of our partners in the mortgage industry and most notably, the responsibility of our Veterans and their desire to maintain home ownership," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"VA is making good on its promise to help Veterans achieve the American dream of owning a home."*

There are currently about 1.3 million active home loans that have been obtained using VA's Home Loan Guaranty Program. The program makes home ownership more affordable for Veterans, active-duty service members, and eligible surviving spouses by permitting low or no down payment loans and by protecting lenders from loss if the borrower fails to repay the loan.

According to the Mortgage Bankers Association National Delinquency Survey, VA's foreclosure rate for the last eight quarters and serious delinquency rate for the last five consecutive quarters have been the lowest of all measured loan types, even prime loans.

(continued....)



Much of the program's strength stems from the efforts of VA employees and loan servicers nationwide, whose primary mission is to "ensure all Veterans receive every possible opportunity to remain in their homes, avoid foreclosure, and protect their credit from the consequences of a foreclosure," added Shinseki.

Depending on the situation, VA's loan specialists can intervene on a Veteran's behalf to help pursue home-retention options such as repayment plans, forbearances and loan modifications. When home retention is not an option, sometimes VA can help arrange a sale, or a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure, both of which are better options for Veteran borrowers than foreclosure.

Since 1944, when home-loan guaranties were first offered under the original GI Bill, VA has guaranteed more than 18.8 million home loans worth \$1.06 trillion.

To obtain more information about the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program, Veterans can call VA at 1-877-827-3702. Information can also be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov.

WHO DAT?



In last month's issue of our newsletter we asked if anyone could name this trooper taking a bath in his steel pot. He's **Sky Soldier Paul Epley** who served with a line Battalion and later as a photographer with Bde PIO. Paul took the famous "Agony of War" photo, often referred to as "The Death Watch", which appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout the world.

GET YOUR FLAG READY!

Please join us in this "**FLY THE FLAG Campaign**" and PLEASE forward this Email immediately to everyone in your address book asking them to also forward it. If you forward this email to at least 11 people and each of those people do the same ... you get the idea.

THE PROGRAM:

On Saturday, September 11th, 2010, an American flag should be displayed outside every home, apartment, office, and store in the United States. Every individual should make it their duty to display an American flag on this ninth anniversary of one of our country's worst tragedies. We do this in honor of those who lost their lives on 9/11, their families, friends and loved ones who continue to endure the pain, and those who today are fighting at home and abroad to preserve our cherished freedoms.

In the days, weeks and months following 9/11, our country was bathed in American flags as citizens mourned the incredible losses and stood shoulder-to-shoulder against terrorism. Sadly, those flags have all but disappeared. Our patriotism pulled us through some tough times and it shouldn't take another attack to galvanize us in solidarity. Our American flag is the fabric of our country and together we can prevail over terrorism of all kinds.

Action Plan:

So, here's what we need you to do ...

- (1) Forward this email to everyone you know (at least 11 people). Please don't be the one to break this chain. Take a moment to think back to how you felt on 9/11 and let those sentiments guide you.
- (2) Fly an American flag of any size on 9/11. Honestly, Americans should fly the flag year-round, but if you don't, then at least make it a priority on this day.

Thank you for your participation.
God Bless You and God Bless America !!!

Sent in by
Russ "Wolfman" Walker
C/2/503d



JOHN E. GERRARD WWII VETERAN

“Just enough and just in time” 767th

John E. Gerrard was born May 21, 1920, to Adelbert and Lelia Alice Gerrard at Chandler, Oklahoma. He moved to Walsenburg, Colorado, at a young age where the family farmed. In November 1940, he joined the Colorado National Guard and was activated into the US Army on January 6, 1941.



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

John served with distinction in the Phoenix, Marshall and Solomon Islands in the 767th Tank Battalion as a platoon Sergeant responsible for the maintenance, repair and training of tank personnel and responsible for the control, coordination and tactical employment of five tanks and crew members. He was discharged from the US Army on July 2, 1945, and from the Colorado National Guard on July 31, 1945. He married Mildred E. Thurman in Chama, New Mexico, on June 14, 1945.



Dad's uniform

There were four children born to this union – John, Iva, Deborah, and Vernel. He worked the oil and gas fields of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Kansas and Wyoming until the late 50's.



He became an ordained minister with the Assembly of God Churches in 1961 and spent the next 20 years in active ministry – mostly in seeding new churches. He was a plumber and pipe fitter

until just days before his death. His love was unconditional, non judgemental, and for everyone he was in contact with. He passed away with his family at his side on August 22, 2010. He will be greatly missed.

Iva & Wayne Tuttle & Family

HAND UP TO A SKY SOLDIER

Thank you posting the following in the '2/503d Vietnam Newsletter' so brothers can see it and maybe we can get Moe some help.

Moheo 'Moe' Hukarevic, has cancer and wishes to make one more trip to Kokomo. Mike Tanner is helping with getting Moe a spot to sleep but Moe is unable to drive due to the medications he is on, thus, he needs a ride.

Moe lives in Wallace, MI about 17 miles east of the Wisconsin border (Monominee), on the west side of the U.P. of MI off HWY 41.

If anyone can give Moe some assistance on this, perhaps his last trip to Kokomo, let us pray not, it would be greatly appreciated. Moe's phone number is **906-788-4816**.

Thanks for your help!

**Rocky
Commander**

**Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association MI, Inc.
U.S. Paratrooper Motorcycle Association
Patriot Guard Riders
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Charlie Co. 75th Airborne Rangers

WHO CAN IDENTIFY THIS 2/503d TROOPER IN THE WIRE STRUGGLING WITH HIS P-38?



First in with the correct name wins a P-38.

