



Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

October 2010 ~ Issue 20

~ PHOTO OF THE MONTH ~

2/503d Troopers Capture Bad Guys



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



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / October 2010 - Issue 20

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To The Wives, Mothers and Children of the 2/503d

[Thoughts from the wife of a former 2/503d Battalion Commander]

This note is in honor of the men who served in Vietnam with the 2/503d.

In the many years since that war, children have grown up, daughters have walked down the aisle minus that proud father by their side, sons have achieved either an academic or sports award that would have made a father bust his buttons. Children graduated from high school, college, married, had families of their own, ultimately giving grandchildren to that wife or mother who paid the highest and final price.

In this grandchild may have been seen, by the turn of a head, a familiar laugh, a certain gesture or gait, a family remembrance and resemblance of that one who had departed.

Life, however, must go on, day by day, week by week month by month, year by year. It is to the strength and courage of that wife and mother, as well as the fallen soldier, I wish to recognize and honor. No medals here, and every wife whose husband served knew no matter what she or her family went through at home, it in no way would or could ever exceed the daily challenge, bravery, and danger her husband met every day.

I saw you receive your flag.

I saw your dignified courage and the quiet strength your husband or son would have been proud to see; but then, My Army Sister, came the hard part. For it was left to you to rebuild your and your children's lives without him by your side.

Even yet, after these many decades, I can only say, it is for you I shed my tears, it is for you, I give my salute.

The greatest gift those departed can bestow upon their loved ones left behind, is the gift of the good life; the joy, the love, and the happiness that just being alive can bring.

In the year 2010, the road behind us is longer than the road ahead. And so again My Army Sisters, to those of you I knew personally and to those of you I did not, you have never left my mind or my heart. In the remaining years of your life may the sunlight fall brightly upon your path and may the rain fall softly upon your fields.



In the ensuing years that followed, the wife and mother of the fallen soldier had her own lonely journey of rebuilding. As an Army wife and one whom for those seven years lived closely among you and who spent many hours in the Army Community Service Office, let me say:

I saw you receive your message.
I saw you console and comfort your children.
I saw you make your final arrangements.

173d Memorial, Ft. Benning, Georgia. Some gave all.

It is not important who I am, it is only important that I am an Army Wife who still remembers.

A Sky Soldiers' Wife



RUNNING OF THE HERD

The 173d ABCT cordially invites you to participate in the “4th Annual “Running of the Herd” – a 24-hour relay run to honor the past and present sacrifices of our Sky Soldiers and their families – at Bamberg, Germany on 8 and 9 November 2010.

This year’s race will mark the Return of the Herd once again, from our 3rd Afghanistan deployment. The Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) will close on Bamberg by the 8th of November 2010, and host the relay to honor the sacrifices of our paratroopers and their families over the last year of separation, and remember our fallen. Specifically, this year’s event will be held in remembrance of the nine Sky Soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice during OEF X. Most recently, four Soldiers from the 173d BSB were killed on 31 August 2010 by an improvised explosive device (IED) that exploded under their vehicle. Charlie Company of the BSB, the medical company hosting the run, felt the impact of this loss especially, as one of the IED victims was a medic and member of the LifeLine family.

The race began in 2007. While deployed to Jalalabad, Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom VIII, the medical company’s command team received a package from the 173d Airborne Association that contained commemorative DVDs that included the song *8th of November*, and decided to host the 1st Annual Running of the Herd – a 24 hour relay race circling the airfield there, starting and ending at midnight from 8-9 November 2007. More than 200 Sky Soldiers participated to honor our fallen paratroopers.

The morning after the 22 to 27 mile race, as the medics were stiffly beginning their shifts, casualties started pouring into the C-MED and Forward Surgical Team, after elements of the 2/503 IN (ABN) were ambushed in Aranus, Afghanistan, with six Sky Soldiers paying the ultimate sacrifice and six others wounded. The 2nd Annual Running of the Herd was held in Bamberg in 2008, after the Brigade returned to its bases in Europe in November, to commemorate the men lost in that ambush, as well as the 38 Sky Soldiers that died in the previous 15 month deployment, which the recent movie *Restrepo* and the book *War* memorializes.

We, Charlie Company of the 173d BSB, would be honored to host you for this year’s Running of the Herd. You are welcome to register as part of a team, or simply come to support the runners and be a part of the event. Members of the 173d Association, all Vietnam 173d veterans, sponsor great prizes and sweatshirts for all participants in the event. As fellow members of The Herd and proud Sky Soldiers in the 173d ABCT, we invite you to become a part of this special event this year.

We always open the 24-hour relay with a ceremony at noon on the 8th of November and hold a closing ceremony and awards presentation at noon on the 9th of November. We can assist with the local logistics of housing, transportation and other arrangements as you require. We hope to see you on 8 November, ready to run and to remember what it means to be a member of The Herd. Sky Soldiers!

Sincerely,

2LT Emille Prosko

Running of the Herd

Officer in Charge

SGT Robert Mullins

Running of the Herd

Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge



The Man With the Rifle Knows

(Author Unknown)

This poem was hanging on the wall at the jump school in Ft. Benning. I remember reading it when I was there in the summer of 1963. It says the author is unknown but I'll bet he was a Sky Soldier.

Rick Jerman
HHC/2/503d

**Men may argue forever on what wins their wars
and welter on cons and pros.**

**And seek their answers at history's doors,
but the Man With the Rifle Knows.**

**He must stand on the ground
on his own two feet,
and he's never in doubt when it's won.
If it's won he is there, if he's not it's defeat.
That's his test when the fighting is done.**

**When he carries the fight it's not with a roar
of armoured wings spitting death.
It's creep and crawl on the earthen floor,
butt down and holding his breath.**

**Saving his strength for the last low rush,
grenade throw and bayonet thrust;
And the whispered prayer before he goes in,
of a man who does what he must.**

**And when he's attacked, he can't zoom away,
when the shells fill the world with their sound.
He stays where he is, loosens his spade,
and digs his defense in the ground.**

**That ground isn't ours till he's there in the flesh,
not a gadget, or a bomb, but a man.
He's the answer to theories which start afresh
with each peace since war began.**

**So let the wild circle of argument rage
on what wins as war comes and goes.
Many new theories may hold the stage,
BUT THE MAN WITH THE RIFLE KNOWS.**

“THE 3RD BATT COIN”

In the last issue of the 2nd Batt Newsletter there was an advertisement announcing a 3rd Batt coin. It stated that I designed the coin. Well, that is partially accurate. The 3rd Batt coin has its genesis in the 1st and 2nd Batt “flash coins”. I used those actual coins to develop a prototype 3rd Batt coin.

Mason Branstetter had the great suggestion to perhaps remove the rank insignia and include some association with the 173d Airborne Brigade. So the 173d Patch and

a small Regimental Patch were included in the coin design.



The question may come to mind... Why a 3rd Batt coin? Well, about a year ago I met a young MI Major and his family. He had just come from Italy to teach at the West Point Prep School after serving for over seven years with SETAF and the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team. He showed me his 1st and 2nd Batt flash coins and I immediately began planning for a 3rd Batt flash coin.

It was not to garner any credit for myself, but rather to only honor 173d Airborne soldiers who have served and sacrificed. To honor men who gave it all and to honor men who have passed on. Men like Col Don Soland and Col John Wooschlager to name a couple.

I have been so humbled by the response to the coin and wish to share a few stories.

I received a request for 5 coins from one former paratrooper who said he was going to dedicated three of them, one for his step-son, one for the pilot and one for the co-pilot who were lost in Afghanistan when their helo went down. He sent me a check for \$50 to pay for the coins. I sent him a check back for \$30 telling him that no self-respecting paratrooper could accept money for a coin dedicated to a fallen soldier.

One Paratrooper's wife sent me an email asking me to hold one coin till payday and she would send me a check for her husband's coin. He wanted one to put in his shadow box with his medals. I told her just send me your address.

Then there was the paratrooper who sent an extra \$100 to cover the cost to design and produce the first 100 coins, an overwhelmingly generous gesture.

I NEVER intended to make money on this coin. Any and all of it will go to the poor and to get more coins in order to provide one to those who served and who want a 3rd Batt Flash Coin.

Perhaps someone from the 4th Batt will design a Flash coin and complete the set. To that person, I want to be first in line to reserve one.

Respectfully,

Paul R. Fisher, LTC (Ret)
3rd Bn Commo Officer
1969-1970



**H.R. 4667:
VETERANS' COMPENSATION
COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT
OF 2010**

111th Congress

Sponsored by:

Thomas Perriello [D-VA]
Stephen Buyer [R-IN]
Joe Donnelly [D-IN]
Bob Filner [D-CA]
John Hall [D-NY]
Deborah Halvorson [D-IL]
Ann Kirkpatrick [D-AZ]
Ciro Rodriguez [D-TX]
Harry Teague [D-NM]

To increase, effective as of December 1, 2010, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

Mar 22, 2010: This bill passed in the House of Representatives by roll call vote. The vote was held under a suspension of the rules to cut debate short and pass the bill, needing a two-thirds majority. This usually occurs for non-controversial legislation. The totals were 407 Ayes, 0 Nays, 22 present/not voting.

Sep 22, 2010: This bill passed in the Senate by Unanimous Consent. A record of each senator's position was not kept.

Sep 23, 2010: Presented to President.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that implementing H.R. 4667 would increase spending for those programs by \$50 million in Fiscal Year 2011.

Source: [GOP.gov](http://www.gop.gov), the website of Republicans in Congress.

Please be advised that no legislation has been introduced that would double compensation for 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans or would quadruple compensation for veterans rated 10 percent or significantly increase the other ratings.

H.R. 4667, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010, was introduced to increase, effective as of December 1, 2010, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes. The increase is based on the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), if any, that would be provided to Social Security recipients.

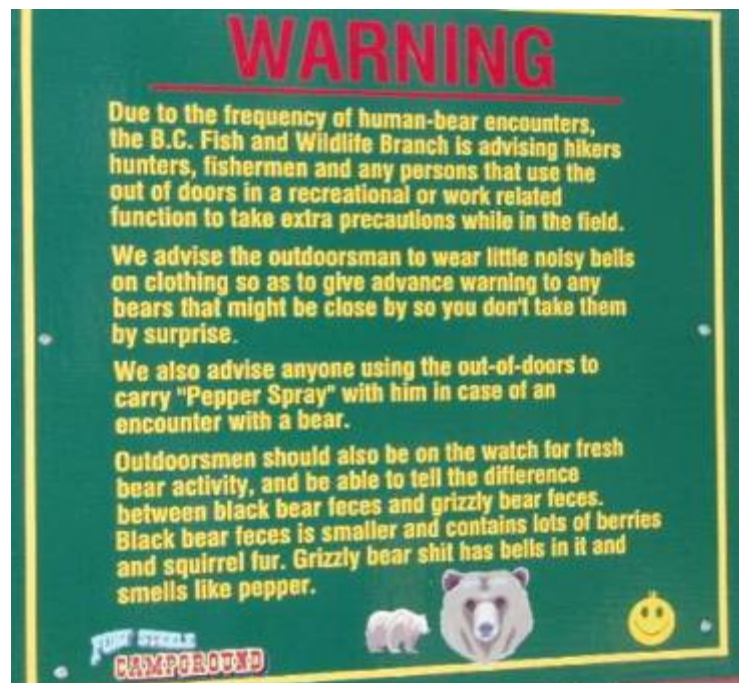
Please advise other DAV members that the rumored increase is a hoax and that the COLA increase, if any, will be announced as soon as it is known. As always, thank you for your hard work and dedication to America's service-connected disabled veterans and their families.

Source: DAV web site:

<http://www.dav.org/news/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=324>

WARNING!!

A number of our guys are campers, hunters and outdoorsmen who are at risk of encountering bears in the wild. This recently posted sign offers some excellent precautionary advice. Thanks to my nephew, Tony Clark, and good buddy Jim Gettel, A/2/503d, for sending this in. You guys probably saved lives. Ed



**Compensation Rate
Increase Hoax**

September 29, 2010

Many DAV members have been contacting National Service Officers across the country regarding rumored legislation that would significantly increase disability compensation.



THEM CHOPPER PILOTS



Your short story on page 28 (*A Chopper Jockey*, September newsletter) got my attention. If you only knew how often all of us pilots came to losing it when we had a full load of troops to extract, you'd be surprised.

What would usually make things very dangerous was that we were loaded to the max, in high density weather conditions which made the load seem heavier than it actually was. In addition, we often had to change directions to get out of the LZ than we took coming in due to enemy fire being more effective in the direction we had planned to leave by.

The other big killer was elephant grass. A helicopter hovers by using the ground effect created by the rotor beating down on the ground and keeping it up in the air in a hovering mode until you can nose the a/c over to get some airspeed. Elephant grass takes away ground effect during hovering.

Elephant grass, which is very long - long enough to hide an elephant some times (thus the name), would take away the effect of ground effect while we hovered and tried to get some traction to get the hell off the ground. In any number of cases we found ourselves losing rotor rpm due to elephant grass, taking off downwind rather than into the wind because of enemy fire. I've come within inches of buying the farm a half dozen times due to these conditions.



2/503d trooper arriving aid station '66. (Jack Ribera, A/2/503d)

If it was not for the exceptional training we got in flight school that was reinforced by on the job work in our little paradise, many of us would be looking up at the daises today.

In addition to flying in Vietnam, I flew in Korea and Thailand. I remember once a colonel getting a little nervous when we made a landing into a dusty area that seemed to make it very difficult to land in Thailand. We knew what we were doing, but it seemed like a difficult landing to the non-rated person. Before we took off again, the colonel asked if we were sure we could take

off in all this dust safely. He said he was in a helicopter that crashed in Vietnam with a pilot who didn't do it right. I told him not to worry - we would do what we call an instrument take-off (ITO) as if we had zero-zero visibility. Within one hundred feet or about 5 to 10 seconds we would be clear of everything and be looking at blue skies again. I did a simple ITO, when the colonel slapped my shoulder and gave me the thumbs-up sign like I was an ace pilot.

In Korea, I was flying a general and his party around. The winds were really strong that day, but I had the a/c under control. We had made several take-offs and landings with this guy, but the winds continued to buffet us around some. He asked me before we were to take off for the last time to go back to the airfield if I thought it was unsafe to fly in this wind. I told him I was the safest pilot in the detachment and he had nothing to worry about. He came back with, "*You'd better be. If you put a scratch on this helicopter I'll have your ass court-martialed.*" I almost rolled the throttle off to idle to tell the general to fuck himself. He could walk back as far as I was concerned. But instead, I did a normal take-off you do in heavy winds and landed back at our field w/o incident.

Most officers I flew saluted the pilot on their way out as a simple "thank you" for the safe trip. I got nothing from this guy.

I was a warrant officer in Vietnam, but as the aircraft commander, I was in charge of the aircraft and the mission when we went anywhere. A major got on the aircraft in Saigon. My crew chief noticed that he had a magazine locked and loaded in his M-16. That was against company policy and was only allowed when we went on combat assaults due to accidents that had happened in country. I told the crew chief to tell the major to take the magazine out of the rifle and take the round out of the chamber. The crew chief relayed to me that the major said he was a major, he outranked me and he was going to keep his rifle loaded -- I was to mind my business and fly the helicopter. I immediately went to flight idle, took off my helmet, turned around and simple said, "*Major, unload your fucking weapon or get the hell off my helicopter.*" Within five seconds the weapon was unloaded and we took-off. Sometimes you just have to talk nice to the passengers for them to do what you want.

These stories could go on forever. Most guys were fine, but every once in a while, you'd find some major assholes. There were some enlisted assholes too, but not as many.



Tony Geishauser
Cowboy Pilot, '65/'66



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE: This fund provides an opportunity for a better tomorrow by financially assisting Sky Soldiers and Qualified Dependents in furthering their education.

POLICY: Provide financial grants to students who are or plan to attend an accredited college, university, or higher technical trade school. Neither applications at the high school or prep school level are accepted.

ELIGIBILITY: **Sky Soldier** as defined as an individual who is at the time of application is a current member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association or was KIA.

Qualified Dependents is defined as a spouse, child, grandchild and/or stepchild of a Sky Soldier.

2011 Application Process

Download Application.

Submit Application to Scholarship Chairman.

Applications copied and mailed to Scholarship Committee.

Scholarship Committee reports ranking of applicants to Scholarship Chairman.

Final Scholarship Awards communicated to Foundation President.

Announcement of Scholarship Awards at General Membership Meeting.

Prospective applicants who consider themselves eligible, must fill out the downloaded application form at: [173d Airborne Brigade Foundation - Scholarship Program](#).

Contact Bill Vose, chairman of the scholarship committee and send transcripts to him at: wcvose@cfl.rr.com

SCOPE: The scholarship program is supported by voluntary donations from Association members and others. Please donate at www.skysoldiers.com/foundation.htm

The 173d Airborne Brigade Foundation - Scholarship Program is a 501 (c) 3 Corporation recognized by the IRS for tax deductible donations.

Thanks to 173d SC Chapter 30

Wayne Bowers, C/2/503d, reunion committee member of this years' reunion in North Myrtle Beach, reports Chapter 30 donated \$1668.72 to the 173d Scholarship Fund on behalf of their Chapter, attendees to the reunion and all donors to the WWII 503rd project.

THE RAZORBACKS



I often see mention of the "Cowboys" in our newsletter, but have not seen any mention of the "Razorbacks".

When we arrived in Vietnam, a lot of the things that became commonplace a couple of years later, were in their development stage. There was a unit, I have no idea what it's size was, company, battalion, whatever, providing gunship duty for us. They had bright red razorback hogs painted on the nose of their choppers.

As I recall, they operated both B and D model Hueys. Their armament varied from chopper to chopper. I recall one had a pair of M-60's attached above the skids on both sides. They were fed via the flexible duct work that ran from the magazine, that took the place of the rear sling seat. The rocket pods were hung on in various positions.

There was a lot of talented shade-tree mechanics attempting to cobble up systems that worked. Often M-60's were hung on the side, in the door opening; some were inside and some were outside, with a bracket system. It seemed that each was different, in an attempt to determine the best setup. These guns had to have the ammo hung on them in cans.

The goofiest system I saw was an M-60 suspended with a bunch of bungee cords. You had to give them credit for doing their damndest to solve a problem. I saw a lot of them on the ground and in the air.

Once, I hitched a ride in one and learned that they were each equipped with the full auto version of the M-14 "just in case." They would provide security flying and strafing in an oval pattern around the LZ that we would be assaulting in the striped hueys.

Whenever we needed some fire support and artillery would be shut down by all the tourists, I would get on the correct frequency and call "Razorback Razorback over." Invariably I would hear from one of them and I could direct their gun runs.

They did a great job. They lacked the ability to bomb that the Sky Raiders had but, because they were slower they were much more accurate.

Jim Robinson, FO, B/2/503d





2/503d Sky Soldiers Where Are They Now?



Jack Kelley, CO A/2/503d in 66, Gen. Deane's Aide in 67, S-3 3/503d in 70. Retired as LTC in '79, then ordained and 25 years in ministry. One wife, two sons and four grandkids. Presently at "parade rest" looking for a job -- Fayetteville, NC. "Blessed day."



"Dramamine 6"

William "Bill" MacKenzie, Lieutenant, B/2/503d '68-'69, 82nd Abn. Div. '69-'70. Photo of myself and my two sons along with a photo of outing to Bong Son in '68 during a 3 day stand down. About to retire from department after 33 years' service to Massachusetts Police. 38 years of marriage and blessed with one grandson. Live in Andover, MA.

Bill & sons



Bill & buddies

Tom Remington, A/2/503d Platoon Leader from May thru Nov. 21, 1967. I was a replacement for the losses at the Battle of the Slopes and was wounded on Hill 875. Spent about six months in Army hospitals. Upon discharge, went to law school and then practiced law in Ft. Walton Beach, FL for over 20 years. Since 1993 I have been a Circuit Judge. Still working and have our 9th grandchild on the way. In early June, my son (age 38) and I went to Ft. Benning for the dedication of the 173d Memorial. It was quite a moving experience and well worth the trip. We also enjoyed the newly built National Infantry Museum. Several years ago, I took part in a T V documentary for the Military Channel on "Hill 875". The interview took place in Atlanta and I got to meet up with several other survivors of 875. I hope to retire in two years and spend more time with grandchildren and do a little fishing. Best regards. Tom Remington

Note:

Let your buddies know where you are and what you've been doing. Send in your info and a photo for the November issue of our Newsletter to rto173d@cfl.rr.com

~ Be All You Can Be ~

There's Army strong, and then there's Army dumb.



Photo sent in by John "Top" Searcy, HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

A Sky Soldier would have shot the bear and eaten the cub while sipping a fine, dry Chianti. This guy must be a Straight Leg.....or was.



~ About Her Dad ~

Hi, my name is Kimberly Kimball Gonzales. My father was PFC Richard Kimball, Jr., he was killed in action in Vietnam in November of 1967. I was only two years old when he died and I have no memory of my dad. Below is the information I have found so far that may be able to put me in touch with anyone who knew him during his time of service. I was hoping to get in touch with anyone who may remember him or even have pictures of him. I appreciate anything you can do to help me. Thank you for your time.

HHC, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN
BDE, USARV

Sincerely,

Kimberly Kimball Gonzales
kmylou@comcast.net

To Kimberly

Richard Nelson Kimball was part of D Company's Hq section. D Company initially was part of HHC 2/503. It did not become a regular company (like A, B & C) officially until the spring of 68. He was our supply guy in the bush with us. Richard made the initial assault on Hill 875 and was killed very early in the days' events. There was a guy standing up shot in front of the first bunker to open up on our point. I can't remember who it was. He was standing there bleeding, the NVA didn't finish him, though they could easily. They were waiting for someone to come and get him.

Well Richard Kimball saw this. He threw down his ruck and ran to the wounded guy to get him, despite being yelled at by numerous people to stop and get down. Kimball apparently thought he could rescue this wounded guy and was shot and killed by an NVA machinegun in that first bunker. I witnessed this and still see it frequently.

I spoke to Rich before we started up the Hill while Father Watters was still having his last Mass near us. I think the family would like to hear what I have to say.

Bob Fleming
HHC/D/2/503d

Hello Kimberly, my name is Paul M. Ramirez and I had the pleasure of serving with him, your father, in Viet Nam. Your dad was known to us that knew him as "The Fugitive" a TV series that ran in the 60's and early 70's. When I saw the email from Smitty I had to reach out to you if nothing more than to say what a great guy your dad was. I did not know much of his personal life because many of us kept things like that to ourselves. I

had no idea that he had a family. Here we are almost 43 years later this November that your dad and I were in a 5 day battle in the Dak To highlands from November 19, 1967 to the 23rd of November. I was the communications sergeant for the newly formed D Company 2nd Battalion 503rd Infantry 173d Airborne. I did not know your dad for a long time, we met in Bien Hoa South Viet Nam when we were both assigned to HHC Company Commo Platoon. If I recall he came from Pennsylvania. I may be wrong, it has been so many years ago. I don't know how old your dad was, I had just turned 21 years old that July. Kimberly, just know that I valued your dad's friendship and was present the day he paid the ultimate price for our country. I will always honor him and his memory in my own mind and heart. God Bless and always be proud of who and what your father gave for his family and country.

Sergeant Paul M. Ramirez 2nd Battalion 503rd
Infantry 173d Airborne and friend of Richard Kimball
"The Fugitive" - God Rest His Soul.

~ The Missing Hearts ~

Dear Mr. Smith,

My name is Jim Pineau and my uncle, Norman R. Pineau, served with the 2nd Bn 503rd 173d Airborne during Vietnam. During his first tour he participated in Operation Silver City and was wounded on Mar 16, 1966. Uncle Norm says he notified the medic he was wounded after the battle and remembers the medic writing it down. At approx 0725, a resupply helo was shot down and Norm went in the helo to retrieve the air crew and ammo and was hit by shrapnel. He has requested help with his Member of Congress to receive the Purple Heart for his wounds, but to date the National Archives has not been able to locate paperwork verifying his wounds. If you or anyone you know may remember Norm or this incident, please respond to this email or call my cell at [207-240-2936](tel:207-240-2936). Thank you for your service and for your time.

Sincerely,

Jim Pineau

Hi Jim:

Thanks for your note. I was there that day with your uncle. And like Norm I too was wounded but never received the Purple Heart. There had to be well over 100 of us in the same situation.

(continued....)



Unless he was dusted off, there was probably no record kept by the medic who treated him during the battle...same in my case. I personally know of at least three other guys wounded that day who never received the Heart.

Thirty odd years later our former Bn commander and a Captain who witnessed me being wounded put me in for the PH, but some Colonel at the Pentagon shot it down. The only thing I can recommend is for him to get as many witness letters as possible and go back thru his Congressman.

In '05, two 2/503d buddies and I returned to Vietnam and humped back in to the "D" Zone jungle to find LZ Zulu-Zulu, site of the battle Norm and I were in. I kept a trip journal which has grown into somewhat of a historical record on Silver City. It's over 200 pages long. Attached is the first part. Please give it to Norm for me and ask him if he wants the rest of the story. If so I'll send it to you in installments.

Is Norman aware of our monthly "2/503d Vietnam Newsletter"? I'll put your note in the next issue, maybe some of his buddies will recall the incident and contact you. Please tell my brother Norm, Smitty said hi.

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

~ They Called Each Other Mister ~

I remember a landing strip on flat ground below a very high mountain with a Special Forces camp on top. The operation was to find a Viet Cong General who was said to have a helicopter in Cambodia that he used to go to his units near the Cambodian border. I was a member of a small unit of about 20 soldiers of the 173d and five guys from the top of the mountain in jungle fatigues. They were not Special Forces and called each other Mister. We flew to near the Cambodian border and crossed it on foot, then we skirted a trail I think was the HO CHI MINH looking for the helicopter. Before we found it our pointman jumped down into a stream, looked to his right at a Viet Cong who he said was unarmed. The gook took off and our pointman didn't shoot because we had orders not to engage unless we had to. Anyway, it was decided that we should back track and go back over the border. We did, got picked up and went back to the mountain. Funny thing about the helicopter we used to get to the border, it had a map with a stylus that moved on the map as the chopper moved. Not sure about the date of all this but anyone that saw that mountain would remember. Anyone remember this operation?

Lonnie Mitchell
B/2/503d, '66/'67
lmitchell2053@embarqmail.com

The P-38 Winner Is.....

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

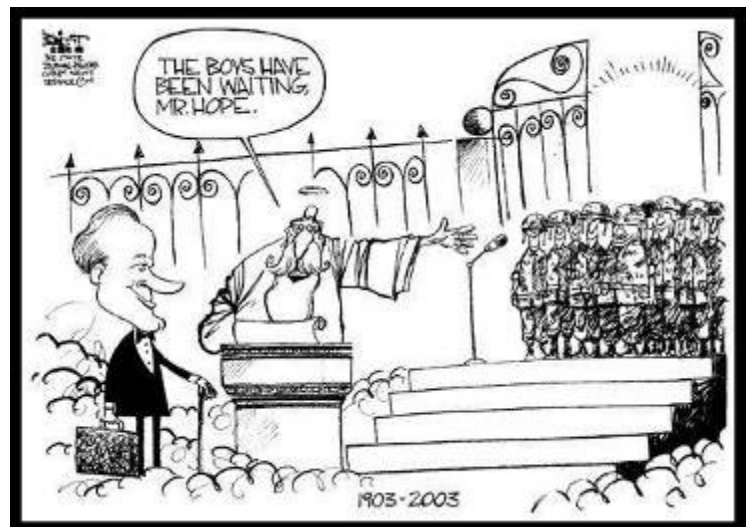
In last month's issue we promised to send a P-38 to who was first to identify the trooper in this photo.



Hal Clem, HHC 2/503d, '65/'66

"Just read the newsletter. That's Hal Clem, HHC 2/503d '65/'66, with the P-38. I carry one on my key chain all the time. One of those little ever-present reminders. Say hi to the boss for me." Jim

Jim correctly identified Hal in the wire struggling with his nifty can opener. Since Jim keeps his close to his heart, we'll send his pretty bride, Gayle, her very own P-38 so she no longer has to borrow his. Ed



LETTERS HOME FROM VIETNAM

We'll periodically include letters from 2/503d troopers written in Vietnam and sent home. The following letter was sent by Wambi Cook (A/2/503d) to his mother, Alma Cook, who passed away this past May 11 at the age of 84. In Wambi's own words, "*Still missing you Mummy.*"

Hello Dear,

Well, I received your last letter yesterday. I'd already written you a couple days before. I didn't have time to answer it and we went (as of today) 4 days without resupply. We're to get resupplied in a few hours and I thought I'd get this off before the last chopper leaves.

We're to go another 5 days without resupply.



Wambi with his mother, Alma

We may return to Tuy Hoa for a few days either the 4th or 5th of Nov. If its just long enough to get a good shower, it would suit me fine. I've had only one shower in 34 days. Well two if you count the one day at the beach. I really feel cruddy. Two days without cleaning up is bad but 4 and 5.....

We haven't run into much since we left the fire support base. My platoon did kill two VC about 4 days ago. We were just about to set up our ambush and they came hopping through the bush. We called for them to stop but they fired at us. About 10 of the 34 of us opened up on them. Ones head was blown to bits and each had at least 30-50 holes in them. From the papers we took from them, we believe they were high officials.

We also uncovered tons of rice which I'm sending you a few grains. You break the shell and white rice will appear. You're probably one of the few mothers in the USA who has her own enemy rice supply (smile). We also should get mail in. The last letter I got from Anita (my first wife) said she bought a \$444.00 bedroom suite. I told her to forget about it. I want to be there when we

furnish our home. I'm waiting for her "cursing out" letter.

I just realized your last name is "Powell." (Mom had just remarried). Do you want to use it or remain Cook? I will stop writing letters to Alma L. Powell. I'll keep with Cook until you tell me different.

I guess that's about all until we return to Tuy Hoa. No, I haven't forgotten your birthday, 11/22. The fellas can't believe you're my mother. (Mom was a beautiful woman).

They look at me and say I must have lived a hard life. (Ha!) I still don't know how old you really are (she had me at 21) and I'm sure you don't want me to start guessing.

Give my best to Taru and Tawana (siblings). On the writing of this letter, I have 104 days to go. On the 8th of November I hit the century mark. I'll really be conscious of the days.

So love, I'll see you. Take good care of yourself. I wish you all the happiness and luck in the world. You deserve it.

Your son always,
Wambi



Recommended reading: 'Faith of my Fathers' by John McCain (POW 1967-73)

Book gives insight into the prosecution of the war and decisions that influenced military actions. Chapter 21 was about McCain's father, Jack, who in 1968 was CINPAC, Commander In Chief Pacific. After Tet I, Jack McCain wanted to launch a major offensive on Hue (the old imperial capital in North Vietnam). Washington rejected the plan due to the fear of the Red Chinese entering the war.

Review by: Steve Vargo, C/2/503d



~ Tribute to the 173d Airborne ~

Check out the link below to see a music/video tribute to the 173d Airborne Brigade. Send to your distribution, if you will. www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh1SPtFlgXE

Thanks Herd Brothers,

Eddie Hair
C/1/503d

~ America's Best ~



FORT BENNING, Ga. -- Sgt. 1st Class Jack White, an Airborne School instructor, received the Army's second-highest military decoration, the Distinguished Service Cross September 7.

In a ceremony on the hallowed ground of the 173d Airborne Memorial at the National Infantry Museum, White was surrounded by his family, Soldiers he served with in the 173d Airborne Brigade and the Fort Benning community.

The award was for his actions June 29, 2008, in Khost Province, Afghanistan, while serving as a squad leader with the Vicenza, Italy-based A Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.

That night, White and 18 other Soldiers on a tiny observation post near the Pakistan border turned back an enemy force of 105 Taliban fighters who attacked from a ridge with small-arms fire, RPK machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

"He brought them all back unscathed," said Command Sgt. Maj. Rick Weik, who was the battalion's command sergeant major and now fills that role at the 198th Infantry Brigade. *"Very easily this could've turned bad. If it wasn't for his leadership, it would've."*

In the past decade, more than 1.5 million troops have deployed in the war on terrorism. The 173d Airborne Brigade accounted for four Distinguished Service Cross awards during OEF VIII.

"Heroic actions can serve as lessons learned," said Maj. Gen. Michael Ferriter, the Maneuver Center of Excellence and Fort Benning commanding general. *"We*

talk an awful lot about inspired leadership here. The Soldier we honor today is the epitome of inspired leadership."

Col. Michael Fenzel, then a lieutenant colonel, led White's battalion in Afghanistan. He's now commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, at Fort Bliss, Texas.

"Heroes are made long before the events that thrust them into a position to have to act," Fenzel told the audience. *"Jack White became a hero to those that served with him long before the evening of June 29 on Observation Point East."*

The observation point was a 90-minute climb from Combat Outpost Spera, which sat 1,000 feet below. It's just 25 meters from Pakistan.

On the morning of June 29, the Taliban fighters began a 10-hour crawl up the side of the mountain toward White's position at the top. As the attack commenced, White was awoken by an RPG that landed less than 20 meters away. He immediately low-crawled out of the sleeping area to lead the observation point's defense.

White spoke of the unity and strength of the small tactical unit and squad, and of the human dimension of combat.

"You don't really think, you just think about what you have to do at the time," said White, 30, who was a staff sergeant when the incident occurred. *"It ain't like the movies; it ain't fun. It's the last place you want to be, honestly. But your training takes over, and you start thinking about the guy to the left and right of you, and make sure everybody gets out of there safe."*

"If it weren't for my guys that were up there ... I wouldn't be speaking to you today."

Maneuvering through heavy enemy fire, White engaged and quickly adjusted his men to repel the attacking force, according to his citation. With no regard for his own safety, he ordered multiple "danger-close" fire missions, called in airstrikes, and directed lethal mortar and artillery launches.

"There was no way to get to them quickly, (and) over 100 Taliban assaulted them with the intent of overrunning them," Command Sgt. Maj. Weik said. *"But when I heard his voice on the radio, I knew everything was going to be OK ... and he brought all those boys off that mountain."*

The fight lasted more than an hour, but the enemy finally broke contact and retreated.

(continued....)



A VISIT TO THE BRIDGES OF MARKET GARDEN

“These Taliban and foreign fighters came in waves and the attacks on the main combat outpost below them emanated from six other directions,” Col. Fenzel said. “The other attacks were designed to isolate OP East so it could be destroyed, but the enemy hadn’t taken into account the expertise, the cool and violent response under the direction of one man ... Jack’s own personal actions, bravery and leadership are the reason why 18 other American Soldiers are alive today.”

White has been on four deployments — three to Afghanistan and one to Iraq. The Distinguished Service Cross wouldn’t be possible without the actions of his comrades, he said.

“All my guys who were up on the OP with me, I wish they were here today,” he said. “It’s mainly for them. That’s how I see this award, not for me, but for everybody.”

His unit also earned seven Army Commendation Medals and a Bronze Star, all with “V” devices for valor.

The Distinguished Service Cross has been awarded to more than 13,000 U.S. service members since its inception in January 1918. Since the global war on terror began, it’s gone to 15 Soldiers in Operation Iraqi Freedom and six from Operation Enduring Freedom.

~ Our Memorial ~

Help spread the word of our 173d Memorial through those that have access to electronic media. Every paratrooper that has worn "The Patch" should be able to see some part of this tremendous accomplishment by our 173d Memorial Committee, all their many hours exhausted on this 1st class project, and all their personal financial contributions. My personal THANKS to each of you that were part of this most successful effort. If some brigade or division that served in Vietnam has organized, planned and executed a project that has been this successful, it should be shared with all.

This should also be shared with the Gold Star families, the spouses, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters, and all who paid the supreme sacrifice.

We were the fortunate ones. We should do everything within our power to never let our fallen comrades be forgotten. The Memorial Committee has done this. Their efforts should be recognized by one and all.

Please view this You Tube link:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh1SPtFlqXE>

Eddie Hair
SC Chapter 30

I thought I should share the following. As many of you know, I have been to Omaha Beach several times. I have always been amazed at how they got across that beach. It is even more frightening when you are on the beach looking up at the bunkers.



The LT

Last week, as we toured the Market Garden country, I was left speechless. As most of you know the 101st had the bridge near Eindhoven. The British 1st ABN division was responsible for Arnhem. Jumping Jim Gavin's 82d Airborne was responsible for the area around Nijmegen, and with taking the bridges as one of two major responsibilities.

Well, it took several days to take the principal bridge. After several failed attempts, they went up stream about 700 yards and made a river crossing in British boats they had never seen, much less trained in. There was a shortage of paddles so many troopers used their M-1s. The river was about 200 yards across, but what left me terrified, as I stood on the dyke rising a good 20 feet in the air, was the view of the flood plain between the dyke and the river. It looked like a billiard table, absolutely no cover or concealment. On top of that, it was determined that there were 30 German machine guns on the bridge!

I did not count the number of men lost (there was a memorial there with all the names), however, it seems to me that only about 40 were killed -- important if you were one of the 40. No one would ever be able to convince me that a company of men could cross an area like that.

Standing there, looking out, imagining what had gone on, I got that metallic taste in the back of my mouth.

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



DEATH

Among a few other notables important to us, to include brotherhood, a shared war experience, hell, we're even paratroopers which further binds us together, you may have noticed a common thread linking all past issues of our battalion's newsletter. And, of course, that theme or common thread is one of death.

This death thread has entailed reporting on the passing of some of us as we fall prey to the clock and ailments of various kinds, and the boys we lost years ago when we were boys, all serving to round out our experience with death. We each live with the memory of those kids, those boymen we served with and relied on and yes, tried to protect from the call of death, sometimes succeeding, often times not. We've erected memorials to them, we talk of them and to them, and lift drinks to the memories of them, and mourn those of us now departing on what seems like a daily basis. "*We're dropping like flares,*" one trooper said.

Death, I think, is a peculiar thing to many of us who served in war and is something we're faced with almost as a daily diet, yet unlike those who were not combatants. Our non-combatant friends and relatives also deal with death experiences, yet I suspect their anguish, if not somewhat different is certainly lived less often. Death seems to follow us daily, always just a thought away, a war away or a memory away.

As of this writing we just lost four young soldiers in Afghanistan, and we know there will be more to come. We think of these new dead kids and they remind us of our guys we lost a lifetime ago...we can't escape these thoughts. But, aside from the family members and close friends of our most recent fallen, who else besides them, and us, think of them, truly care for them? Their passing is little more than a news release in some small town newspaper or an old soldier newsletter. "*How sad,*" the civilians say, before moving to the Sports section.

Yet, most of us, along with those families and friends, die just a little whenever we read those notices, whenever we lose a new or old buddy, like Sky Soldier Butch Clark, and whenever we think of guys from that other lifetime we shared who left us long ago.

When the project began to establish this newsletter, it was premised on the idea of providing an outlet for buddies to hook up, for old paratroopers to tell their stories and to have those recollections recorded for all time; not so much for scholastic or military purview, as few have interest in our stories, but perhaps more for our kids, our grandkids and kids of our grandkids (and ourselves) to read one day about when their dad and

granddad was 'young and a soldier' -- the subject of death was never once considered.

Yet, the final jump manifest of young and old continues to grow, name by name and day by day. Old death once chased us with vigor, never relenting, always one step away, always just around the next bend in some nameless jungle, rice paddy or mountain range....that bastard just won't give up.

Loch Heim brothers,

Smitty Out

Farewell Commo Buddy

Mearl "Butch" H. Clark, age 64, of Sarver died Thursday, September 16, 2010 at his residence. Butch served in Vietnam in the commo section of HHC 2/503d in 1965.



He was born on February 28, 1946 in Natrona Heights, Allegheny Co., PA, the son of Mearl Clark and Betty (Thieman) Clark Cypher.

Sky Soldier Butch

Butch was a high school graduate. A lifetime resident of the area, he was a self-employed carpenter. Butch honorably served his country during the Vietnam War as a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, in addition to owning Buffalo Bids, an eBay store that collected and sold Indian artifacts.

He will be deeply missed by his wife Karen L. (Schoentag) Clark, whom he married October 5, 1983; three sons, Ian Anderson and wife Andrea of New Castle, PA, Knight H. S. Clark of Sarver, and Mearl T. Clark of Saxonburg; one daughter, Jennie Healey of Chandler, AZ; three grandchildren, Addison and Macyn Anderson, and Blade Clark; in addition to two sisters, Joann Brice and husband Paul of Melbourne Beach, FL and Colleen Crytzer of Freeport.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one sister, Sally Erb.

At Butch's request, there will be no visitation. An open house was held on Sunday, September 26, 2010 at Butch and Karen's residence in Sarver.

You put up a good fight trooper. Rest well brother.

AND THE BEAT GOES ON.....



SGT Vinson Bryon Adkinson, III



DOB: 13 December 1983 (26 yrs)

Hometown: Born in Kansas

MOS: 88M (Motor Transport Operator)

UNIT: Alpha Company

DUTY POS: Truck Commander / Squad Leader

FAMILY: Veronica Marie (Stewart) Adkinson (Wife)

Jacob Adkinson (Brother)

*PARENTS: Vinson Bryon Adkinson, Jr. and
Deborah L. Swinford*

Sergeant Vinson Bryon Adkinson, III was born 13 December 1983 in Kansas. He enlisted in the US Army on 27 May 2003 at age 19.

After SGT Adkinson completed Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training, he was assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he served as a Vehicle Driver and deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Following his assignment at Fort Bragg, he was reassigned to Fort Carson, Colorado where he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and served a third combat tour in Iraq. He was assigned to the Transportation Platoon of Alpha Company in the 173d Brigade Support Battalion located in Bamberg, Germany on 11 November 2008. While deployed to Logar Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X, he completed over 200 missions as a Squad Leader and Truck Commander.

SGT Adkinson's awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the Army Achievement Medal (with two Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Good Conduct Medal (second award), the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon (numeral four), the NATO Medal, a Certificate of Achievement, the Combat Action Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Driver and Mechanic Badge with Driver – Wheeled Vehicles, the Basic Marksmanship Qualification Badge, and the Marksmanship Qualification Badge – Marksman with Rifle.

SGT Adkinson was killed in action when insurgents attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device on 31 August 2010 while conducting combat operations in Western Pul-e-Alam, Logar Province. SGT Adkinson is survived by his wife, Veronica; his brother, Jacob; and his parents Vinson and Deborah.



SPC Raymond Chavez Alcaraz, Jr.



DOB: 4 November 1989 (20 yrs)

HOMETOWN: Born in California

MOS: 68W (Health Care Specialist)

UNIT: Charlie Company

DUTY POS: Health Care Sergeant

FAMILY: SFC Lucas Jack Gonzalez (Brother)

*PARENTS: Raymond Chavez Alcaraz Sr. and
Alma Delia Murphy*

Specialist Raymond Chavez Alcaraz Jr., was born 4 November 1989 in California. He enlisted in the US Army on 12 July 2007 at age 17.

After SPC Alcaraz completed Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training, and Airborne School, he was assigned to Charlie Company 173d BSB. He joined the unit during Operation Enduring Freedom VIII and was attached to Able Company 1/503rd P.I.R. serving as a Platoon Medic. SPC Alcaraz again deployed to Afghanistan with Charlie Company 173d BSB in November 2009 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X. While deployed to Logar Province, Afghanistan, he was attached to 1st Platoon (Assassins)

of Alpha Company 173d Brigade Support Battalion (Airborne) as a Platoon Medic where he completed over 49 missions as a Health Care Sergeant in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X.

SPC Alcaraz's awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), the Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Army Good Conduct Medal (first award), the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon (numeral three), the NATO Medal, a Certificate of Achievement, the Combat Medic Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the Basic Marksmanship Qualification Badge.

SPC Alcaraz was killed in action on 31 August 2010 while conducting combat operations in Pul-e-Alam, Logar Province, Afghanistan. SPC Alcaraz is survived by his brother, Lucas and parents, Raymond and Alma, who reside in California.



PFC Matthew Eric George



DOB: 10 February 1988 (22 yrs)
HOMETOWN: Born in Virginia
MOS: 88M (Motor Transport Operator)
UNIT: Alpha Company
173d Brigade Support Battalion
173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team
Bamberg, Germany
DUTY POS: Vehicle Driver
PARENTS: Donnie Carlton George and
Bridget Ann George

PFC George was killed in action when insurgents attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device on 31 August 2010 while conducting combat operations in Western Pul-e-Alam, Logar Province. PFC George is survived by his parents, Donnie and Bridget, who reside in Virginia Beach,

Private First Class Matthew Eric George was born 10 February 1988 in Virginia. He enlisted in the US Army on 4 March 2009 at age 21.

PFC George arrived to the unit on 24 April 2009 after completing his Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training, and Airborne School. Immediately upon arrival he was assigned to the Transportation Platoon in Alpha Company 173d Brigade Support Battalion and began to prepare for the upcoming deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X. While deployed to Logar Province, Afghanistan, he completed over 180 missions with his platoon, serving in the capacity of driver, gunner and dismount.

PFC George's awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, a Certificate of Achievement, the Parachutist Badge, and the Basic Marksmanship Qualification Badge.



PFC James Anthony Page



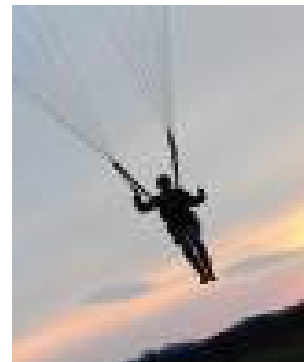
DOB: 23 February 1987 (23 yrs)
Hometown: Born in Florida
MOS: 88M (Motor Transport Operator)
UNIT: Alpha Company
173d Brigade Support Battalion
173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team
Bamberg, Germany
DUTY POS: Gunner
FAMILY: Jarod Russell Weathersby (Son)
Cristi Page (Sister)
PARENTS: James Herbert Page and
Deana Marie Strickland

Private First Class James Anthony Page was born 23 February 1987 in Florida. He enlisted in the US Army on 6 November 2008 at age 21.

After PFC Page completed his Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training, he was assigned to Alpha Company 173d Brigade Support Battalion, where he served as a Driver for the Transportation Platoon. He participated in the Brigade Mission Readiness Exercise in August 2009 before deploying with the unit in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X. While deployed to Logar Province, Afghanistan, he completed over 80 missions serving in the capacity of gunner and dismount.

PFC Page's awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, a Certificate of Achievement, the Combat Action Badge, and the Basic Marksmanship Qualification Badge.

PFC Page was killed in action when insurgents attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device on 31 August 2010 while conducting combat operations in Western Pul-e-Alam, Logar Province. PFC Page is survived by his son, Jarod; his sister, Cristi; and his parents, James and Deana, who reside in Belleview and Titusville, Florida.



2/503d on the Island of Iramote Jungle School 1964



This is the best I can do on the names, as I recall they just sent random groups to get pictures made. This would have been Jungle School on the island of Iramote in 1964. I hope some guys can fill in names for us. Notice the M-14's, we had not been issued M-16's yet. The M-14 was a superior rifle as far as I'm concerned.

Standing from left to right: Robert Snow – James Shoft (spl ?) – Fingston (spl ?) – Sgt Chaffin – UNK – Rick Jerman – Clarence Nakamoto.

Kneeling from left to right: UNK – Rios – UNK – UNK – David Cassier (spl ?) – UNK
Rick Jerman, HHC/2/503d



U.S. ARMY DRAGSTER UNVEILED

The U.S. Army Dragster roars off the starting line, reaching a speed of 324.83 mph and setting a track record at the O'Reilly Raceway Park in Indianapolis, Sept. 3. The dragster, driven by seven-time world champion Tony "The Sarge" Schumacher, marks ten years in an ongoing partnership between the U.S. Army, the National Hot Rod Association and Don Schumacher Racing.

Photo by Spc. John Crosby



THE 11th AIRBORNE DIVISION "The Angels"



World War II

Activated: 25 February 1943.

Overseas: 8 May 1944.

Campaigns: New Guinea, Southern Philippines, Luzon.

Days of combat: 204.

Distinguished Unit Citations: 13.

Awards: MH-2; DSC-9; SS-432; LM-10; SM-56; BSM-1,515; AM-41.

Commanders: Maj. Gen. Joseph M. Swing (25 Feb 1943-Feb 1946), Brig. Gen. Frank Dorn (Feb 1946-Jun 1946), Maj. Gen. Joseph M. Swing (Jun 1946-Jan 1948), Maj. Gen. William M. Miley (24 Jan 1948-).

Combat Chronicle

The 11th Airborne Division arrived in New Guinea, 25 May 1944, and continued training, leaving for the Philippines 11 November 1944. It landed amphibiously, not by jump, on Leyte, 18 November 1944, between Abuyog and Tarragona, 40 miles south of Tacloban, and pushing inland, cleared the Ormoc-Burauen supply trail, an important Japanese combat lifeline. The 11th's general mission was to seize and secure within its zone all exits from the mountains into Leyte Valley and to secure the western exits from the mountains into the west coastal corridor to assist the attack of the 7th Division toward Ormoc. On 6 December 1944 the paratroopers of the 11th found themselves fighting Japanese parachutists who had landed near the San Pablo airstrip. The Japanese were wiped out in a 5-day engagement. In a continuous series of combat actions, Japanese resistance was reduced on Leyte by the end of December 1944. Heavy resistance was met at Rock Hill, which finally fell, 18 December; a sleeping enemy was caught off guard at Hacksaw Hill, 23 December, and suffered heavy losses. During January 1945 the Division rested and staged for a landing on Luzon. While other American troops were driving on Manila from the north, the 11th Airborne made an amphibious landing 60 miles south of Manila, 31 January 1945, at Nasugbu, and began to drive north. The first combat jump by an element of the division in the war, that of the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment on Tagaytay Ridge, 3 February 1945, met no resistance. The 511th crossed the Paranaque River 5 February, and reached Manila, meeting fierce Japanese resistance. Nichols Field was

taken, 12 February, and Fort McKinley was flanked, 12-16 February, and finally taken, 17 February. A combined air and sea assault liberated more than 2,000 American and European interned nationals at Los Banos, 23 February 1945. With Manila declared secure, the Division reduced a strong ring of enemy outposts between Lake Taal and Laguna de Bay, and occupied towns along Highway No. 1, cutting off the Bicol Peninsula. In April the 11th took part in clearing out remaining enemy resistance in Batangas Province, and by 1 May, all resistance in southern Luzon had ended. The final operation of the Division was conducted on 23 June 1945, in conjunction with the advance of the 37th Division in northern Luzon. A Task Force was formed and jumped on Camalaniugan Airfield, south of Aparri. The force attacked and made contact with the 37th Infantry Division, 26 June 1945, between Alcala and the Paret River. In July 1945 the Division trained; in August it was transported by air to Honshu, Japan, via Okinawa, for occupation duty.

General

Nickname: The Angels.

Shoulder patch: A red circle on a royal blue shield containing a white numeral "11"; the circle is bordered in white with white wings raising obliquely from the white periphery; in the top arc, the white letters "Airborne" are aligned with the shape of an arc.

Association: 11th Airborne Division Association.

Publications: *Angels*; by Maj. Edward M. Flanagan, Jr., Unit Historian; *The Infantry Journal*, Washington, D.C.; 1948. *Pictorial Review*; by unit members; Albert Love Enterprises, Atlanta, GA, 1944.

"After the atomic bombs were dropped the 11th Airborne Division was hurriedly flown to Okinawa, then on 28 August 1945 they were landed at Atsugi Airfield. Contrary to claims by the 1st Cavalry Division, the 11th Airborne Division was the FIRST military force to land in Japan. When the 1st Cavalry Division landed from transports at Yokohama, the 11th Airborne Division Band met them on the docks and played 'The Old Gray Mare Ain't What She Used To Be!'"

[The above division information is reproduced from the public domain publication, *The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950. Portions of the information may be out of date. Only minor formatting changes and typographical corrections have been made.]



INCOMING!!

FOUND!!!! 173d Airborne Brigade ring. Trying to find **Tyler Rogers**. Would love to return ring to Tyler Rogers. Found at rest stop in Kansas. Please email elaonrad@aol.com

G. Conrad

Was medic with B Company 2/503, wounded 11/13/67, known as "D-Handle Doc." Just talked with sister of medic in C Company, **Spec 4 Haggerity**, KIA Hill 875. Would appreciate any info to pass on to her. God bless each that made it through.

Wako "Doc Cotney", B/2/503d
domwakoc1@yahoo.com

Hello fellow Sky Soldiers. Hope you are all having a good airborne day. Thanks for the reply for my message on trying to locate Joe Esponisa, E/2/503, 1970-1972. But I need contact info for James Cheico. Also trying to locate medics, Wendell Tyler, and Alvin Greene. Both were with B-Med at LZ Uplift in 1971 when I got hit. Trying to locate them for old time sakes. I can be reached at **303-601-5889**. Thank you.

Joe Lucero, E/2/503d

(Note: We hooked Joe up with Jim Cheico)

Greetings Sky Soldiers. I want to let you know that my new book "**Grunts: Inside the American Infantry Combat Experience, World War II through Iraq**" is out. The book's Dak To chapter includes a great deal of information about the 173d, particularly Task Force Black and Hill 875. I hope it is true to your experiences. My personal thanks to Rocky Stone, Dave Watson, Mike Tanner, Jerry Cecil and many other veterans who provided me with so much great information. Thanks to all of you for your service!

John C. McManus, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, US Military History
Missouri University of Science and Technology
www.johnmcmanus.com

Still looking for 'ol buddies from Co A 2/503 '66-'67; Sgt. Carlton Battle (SC/NC), Sgt. Bracken (OK), James Finn (NY), Jim Haynes (TN), James Mahon (UT?), Lauren Vellozzi (NYC), Victor Newill, Joseph Young, Alonzo Crowder, Terry Isom, Charles Burns, Edmond Cole (GA/TN), Johnnie Cason, Tyrone Moore (PA?), Joseph Begay (AZ/NM), Murphy, Creatta, Borgos, Pedington.

Terry Davis, A/2/503d
davis_terrence@bellsouth.net

Several of us from A/2/503 1966 have been working on getting James Miskel a Purple Heart for wounds on Sept. 26, 1966. It just came back disapproved - we're looking for Sp5 Beaton, Sr. Medic, and a Brigade Photographer who were on the scene when he was treated. I believe the photographer was wounded at the same time as a result of an enemy claymore..Help!

Jack Kelley, A/2/503d
910-488-0165 or jacktkelley@aol.com

Looking for C/2/503d buddies who were with Terry Wilkins (from Las Vegas) when he died on LP on 3 June '66. Have heard three different stories. Thanks.

Lew "Smitty" Smith, HHC/2/503d
rto173d@cfl.rr.com

Hello everyone. Have looked for a long time for these guys I served with in A/2/503 in 65-66. Anyone know of or about -- David J. Walker (from Canada), Raymond P. Mikolajczyk, Frank X. Martin. Found M.D. Blackard, passed away 2 years ago. Will appreciate any help. Thanks.

Stanley Crump, A/2/503d
sccrump@slc.com

I'm looking for Sgt. France and Larry Blair who served with me with C Co 2/503 67-68, or anyone who served with me.

Ray "Zac" Zaccone, C/2/503d
rjzaccone@pinetel.com

173d Airborne Brigade Reunion

22 - 26 June 2011
San Antonio, TX.

Complete details, including
registration form, will appear in
future editions of our newsletter.



White House to present Medal of Honor to family of Green Beret for heroism in Afghanistan

Washington D.C. (USASOC News Service, Sept. 10, 2010) – On October 6th, President Barack Obama will present the Medal of Honor to the family of a fallen Special Forces Soldier for his heroism and valor in combat while serving in Afghanistan in January of 2008.

President Barack Obama will honor the extraordinary courage and selfless sacrifice of Staff Sgt. Robert Miller by presenting his family with our nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor. This will be the third time the Medal of Honor has been presented by President Obama.

Only 24-years old, Miller impressed everyone on his team. Although the youngest member of "A" Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C., he quickly earned a reputation for taking on difficult challenges and leading from the front according to numerous interviews with other Operational Detachment – Alpha (ODA) Team Members.

An avid athlete and a student of human nature, he was often called on because of his expertise in weapons and languages. His teammates recalled how quickly he picked up Pashto (one of Afghanistan's native languages) and how the local villagers loved to spend time with him and teach him their language and culture.

According to one team members recollections, the villagers developed a bond with him over evening meals while drinking the local tea "chai," they respected and trusted him. In all things, "Robbie," as he was called, was a natural to Special Forces, a true embodiment of a Green Beret.

On Jan. 25, 2008, Miller while serving as a Special Forces Weapons Sergeant for his team, Miller volunteered to take lead on a nocturnal patrol in the Konar Province near the Pakistan border. Because of his Pashto language abilities, he led and directed the small local contingent of Afghan National Army Soldiers from the front. As they approached their target area his team was attacked by insurgents.

In the ensuing chaos Miller showed his mettle by directing fire and providing cover for his men. Miller deliberately moved forward making himself vulnerable as he engaged several enemy positions to provide suppressive fire, buying time for his teammates to take



cover. Exposing his position repeatedly, he drew fire from more than 100 enemy fighters, ultimately saving the lives of his fellow Green Berets and 15 local ANA soldiers.

Miller's unwavering courage and selfless actions embodied the highest principles of the Special Forces community, and are a testament to the Army values he lived every day. This was his second combat tour to Afghanistan, the first being

from August 2006 to March 2007.

Born in Harrisburg, Pa., on Oct. 14, 1983, his family moved and he grew up in Wheaton, Ill. He attended Wheaton North High School and was a respected gymnast and all-around athlete.

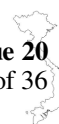
On Aug. 14, 2003, he enlisted in the Army as an 18 X-ray, Special Forces candidate, with the hope of becoming a Green Beret. He graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course on Sept. 26, 2004. After his enlistment Miller's parents moved to and currently reside in Oviedo, Fla.

His previous military decorations include: the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, two Army Commendation Medals for valor, the Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer's Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Special Forces Tab and the Ranger Tab.

Miller will become the seventh service member to receive the Medal of Honor during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The last recipient of the Medal of Honor was Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti, who posthumously received the award on Sept. 17, 2009, in a ceremony at the White House.

For more information on the Medal of Honor please visit www.Army.mil/medalofhonor.

[Sent in by Jim Stanford, B/2/503d & Brett Beyer, D/16 Armor]



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES



The Special Forces' Creed

I am an American Special Forces soldier. A professional!

I will do all that my nation requires of me.

I am a volunteer, knowing well the hazards of my profession.

I serve with the memory of those who have gone before me:

Roger's Rangers, Francis Marion, Mosby's Rangers, the first Special Service Forces and Ranger Battalions of World War II, the Airborne Ranger Companies of Korea.

I pledge to uphold the honor and integrity of all I am – in all I do.

I am a professional soldier.

I will teach and fight wherever my nation requires.

I will strive always, to excel in every art and artifice of war.

I know that I will be called upon to perform tasks in isolation, far from familiar faces and voices, with the help and guidance of my God.

I will keep my mind and body clean, alert and strong, for this is my debt to those who depend upon me.

I will not fail those with whom I serve.

I will not bring shame upon myself or the Forces.

I will maintain myself, my arms, and my equipment in an immaculate state as befits a Special Forces soldier.

I will never surrender though I may be the last.

If I am taken, I pray that I may have the strength to spit upon my enemy.

My goal is to succeed in any mission – and live to succeed again.

I am a member of my nation's chosen soldiery.

God grant that I may not be found wanting, that I will not fail this sacred trust.

“De Oppresso Liber”

Ballad of the Green Beret

by Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler
and Robin Moore
copyright 1966

Fighting soldiers from the sky
Fearless men who jump and die
Men who mean just what they say
The brave men of the Green Beret

Silver wings upon their chest
These are men, America's best
One hundred men will test today
But only three win the Green Beret

Trained to live off nature's land
Trained in combat, hand-to-hand
Men who fight by night and day
Courage peak from the Green Berets

Silver wings upon their chest
These are men, America's best
One hundred men will test today
But only three win the Green Beret

Back at home a young wife waits
Her Green Beret has met his fate
He has died for those oppressed
Leaving her his last request

Put silver wings on my son's chest
Make him one of America's best
He'll be a man they'll test one day
Have him win the Green Beret.

In the U.S. armed forces, the green beret may be worn only by soldiers awarded the Special Forces Tab, signifying they have been qualified as Special Forces (SF) soldiers.



173d Florida Chapter 7 – Update

Dear Fellow Florida Sky Soldiers:

A recent review of our data base shows your membership in the 173d Airborne Brigade Association. I understand that due to many reasons; family, health, travel, school, etc., we can become side tracked. I just wanted to take this time to tell you of some of the things we have done over the last few years to help assist our fellow Sky Soldiers and to show that as Paratroopers we still go *All The Way*.

- We have shipped 10,000+ pounds of supplies, goodies, needed items, etc., to our fellow Sky Soldiers deployed down range in the Global War on Terror.

- We have visited Sky Soldiers in VA hospitals in the states and at Walter Reed.

- We have helped many a Sky Soldier in dealing with the Veterans Administration.

- We have supported the National Wounded Warriors program and supplied many items to the National Wounded Warriors kits.

- We have sponsored the Annual 8th of November Memorial Run each year.

- We have maintained and updated the current Sky Soldier Memorial at Bushnell cemetery here in Florida.

- We have attended funerals of our fallen Brothers.

- We have donated yearly to the 173d Airborne Brigade Foundation - Scholarship fund.

- We have donated yearly to the 173d Memorial project just built at Fort Benning, GA.

- We have donated to Iraq and Afghanistan Memorials at our base in Vicenza, Italy.

- We have sponsored active duty Sky Soldiers and WWII Veterans of the 503rd to attend the Annual 173d Airborne Brigade reunions.

- We donated over 7,000 books (*Down Range - Iraq and Back*) to returning veterans.

- We developed and present classes on PTSD at each of our sponsored reunions.

- We held annual 173d Shoot Out events.

- We have donated to local causes like the Toys for Tots program.

- We have developed a website to keep you updated on our actions and upcoming activities.

- We hold meetings in various parts of the state.

- We have helped Sky Soldiers in processing their claims with the VA.

- We are always looking for new ways to serve.

So like you, we have been busy. I ask that you consider hooking up again by renewing your membership at www.FloridaSkySoldiers.com or donating what you can to help us in our mission of providing continued support to our fellow Sky Soldiers, past and present.

Thank you for your service. – Airborne!

James R. Bradley
CW3, US Army (Retired)
President, Chapter 7
173d Airborne Brigade Assn.

Editor's Note: And, Jim, thank you for your never ending commitment to the men and women of our brigade. You keep the *Airborne Spirit* well and alive.

All The Way Brother!

Come see our beaches in Florida!



**A promise kept to Richard "Airborne" Martinez
B/2/503d. Ed**



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / October 2010 - Issue 20

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ROGER'S RANGERS

One of the pocket reference cards we received before going into the field was a reprint of the standing orders issued by Major Robert Rogers to his Rangers in 1759. More than two hundred years after Major Rogers wrote them down, they were still relevant to Vietnam:

1. Don't forget nothing.
2. Have your musket clean as a whistle, hatchet scoured, sixty rounds powder and ball, and be ready to march at a minute's warning.
3. When you're on the march, act the way you would if you was sneaking up on a deer. See the enemy first.
4. Tell the truth about what you see and what you do. There is an army depending on us for correct information. You can lie all you please when you tell other folks about the Rangers, but don't never lie to a Ranger or officer.
5. Don't never take a chance you don't have to.
6. When we're on the march we march single file, far enough apart so one shot can't go through two men.
7. If we strike swamps, or soft ground, we spread out abreast, so it's hard to track us.
8. When we march, we keep moving till dark, so as to give the enemy the least possible chance at us.
9. When we camp, half the party stays awake while the other half sleeps.
10. If we take prisoners, we keep 'em separate till we have had time to examine them, so they can't cook up a story between 'em.
11. Don't ever march home the same way. Take a different route so you won't be ambushed.
12. No matter whether we travel in big parties or little ones, each party has to keep a scout twenty yards ahead, twenty yards on each flank and twenty yards in the rear, so the main body can't be surprised and wiped out.
13. Every night you'll be told where to meet if surrounded by a superior force.
14. Don't sit down to eat without posting sentries.
15. Don't sleep beyond dawn. Dawn's when the French and indians attack.
16. Don't cross a river by a regular ford.
17. If somebody's trailing you, make a circle, come back onto your own tracks, and ambush the folks that aim to ambush you.
18. Don't stand up when the enemy's coming against you. Kneel down, lie down, hide behind a tree.
19. Let the enemy come till he's almost close enough to touch. Then let him have it and jump out and finish him with your hatchet.

Note: I understand keeping your musket clean as a whistle, and hiding behind trees, but, there was no mention of extra shit paper or Tabasco sauce.

Cpt. Picard and the Venusian Slave Girl

or;

It's amazing what cheap liquor
makes people do.



A/HHC/2/503d Capt. William C. Vose, Esq. with friend at Star Wars convention in Atlanta....no shit (photo sent in by Bill). I can't believe I followed this guy into battle. Ed

~ Tribute to the 173d Airborne ~

Check out the link below to see a music/video tribute to the 173d Airborne Brigade. Send to your distribution, if you will. www.youtube.com/watch?v=hh1SPtFlgXE

Thanks Herd Brothers,

Eddie Hair
C/1/503d



DoD commemorates 60th anniversary of Korean War

By Danny Spatchek



Korean War veterans and their families listen as Joseph W. Westphal, Under Secretary of the Army, gives welcoming remarks at the Korean War 60th Anniversary commemoration in the Pentagon courtyard, June 24, 2010. Photo Credit: Tracy Robillard

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, June 24, 2010) -- The Department of Defense began its commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Korean War in the Pentagon courtyard June 24, honoring veterans in attendance and the more than 37,000 who died in the three-year war.

Under Secretary of the Army, Dr. Joseph Westphal, the ceremony's keynote speaker, commended Korean War veterans, saying their efforts ensured the continued alliance with South Korea, "an honored friend."

"The Korean War thwarted the expansion of communism in Asia, introduced the helicopter to the United States armed forces, advanced the battlefield treatment of the wounded, and saw the desegregation of our Army," Westphal said. *"From that war, the Republic of Korea has emerged as a vibrant democracy, an economic giant in Asia, and a strong, independent and respected voice among nations."*

Han Duk-soo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, said the freedom won for Korea by American veterans allowed Korea to promote freedom as well.



working alongside the United States in such places as

Iraq, Afghanistan and the waters of Somalia to further peace and freedom," Duk-soo said. *"Through your bravery and sacrifice, you veterans made that possible."*

Westphal honored former Sgt. Ronald Rosser, who was awarded the Medal of Honor and the Purple Heart for his heroics in the Korean War, and David Mills, a prisoner of war.

In January 1952, Rosser was a 22-year old Cpl. when his infantry regiment, assaulting fortified enemy hills, was stopped by heavy fire. Rosser, a forward observer, disregarded enemy fire as he killed numerous enemy soldiers while assaulting bunkers and crossing open terrain several times to obtain more ammunition.



Rosser, who attended the ceremony, expressed sorrow for the lack of recognition his fallen comrades received from the American public.

"I think it's appropriate the American government and the Korean government recognize what we did a long time ago. A lot of Americans are still over there that were with us. You wouldn't believe how many. I think there's still about 8,000 MIA," Rosser said.



New York Congressman Charles Rangel, whose service in the Korean War earned him a Purple Heart and Bronze Star, echoed Rosser's sentiments.

(continued....)





Veterans recall smells, cold of Korean War

By C. Todd Lopez

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) -- War stinks. According to one veteran of the Korean War -- which started 60 years ago today -- it stinks specifically like coal and kimchi.

Richard Whittle stood June 23 before an audience at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, D.C., to tell his story based on memories of the Korean War. He called his story "Coal Pile and Smellin' Kimchi."

Whittle said he arrived in Pusan, Korea, Jan. 31, 1953. He was assigned then to a railroad unit in the engineering section.

"My job was to push coal in a pile as it was being unloaded," he said. "But that only lasted for a short time, until I learned to operate the crane. Then they gave me a crew of four and we worked seven days a week, around the clock, keeping the steam engines rolling, carrying supplies and troops to where needed."

At night, he said, North Koreans flew suicide missions overhead. *"If they saw a light from anything below, they would drop a bomb in that area."*

He said it was rumored the bombs were homemade and "no two were alike." And the planes, he said, weren't much better. *"Their flights were a one-way trip, and when they ran out of gas they crashed,"* he said.

The armistice between the north and south was signed in July of that year, and Whittle said work at the rail yard increased after that, due to exchanging of prisoners of war and transporting of the wounded.

"The rail yard was full of steam engines, hissing and smoking and being parked for hours," he said. The smell of the trains, along with the existing smell from the coal piles and the native food, kimchi, *"was something to behold."*

"Those 37,000 people could never be forgotten by us. Every accolade, every honor that we receive, we know that the people of Korea are trying to identify us because they don't know the rest of the people who fought and died for freedom in that country," Rangel said.

Westphal thanked Rosser, Rangel and all veterans of the Korean War for their service.

"Our military has always been defined by their courage and character, and their incredible optimism about our country and its value. You, our Korean War veterans, are examples of that courage and character."

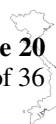
Soldiers stationed in Korea exhibit the same admirable qualities today, Westphal said.

"The 28,500 U.S. servicemen and women who are stationed in the peninsula today under the exceptional leadership of General Walter Sharp, exemplify our continuing commitment to the Republic of Korea," he said.

Veterans, service members and members of the audience attended a reception with refreshments following the ceremony.

The ceremony marked the beginning of a three-year Department of Defense observance of key events of the Korean War that will culminate with the 60th anniversary of the signing of the armistice on July 27, 2013.

(continued....)





Korea. Also aboard the ship at the time was General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and his staff.

Tobin said he remembers gossip passed to him by the radio room aboard the ship.

"It seems that even though the crossing from Japan to Korea ... had been relatively quiet, our illustrious passenger -- five-star General of the Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur -- had been incapacitated by a case of sea sickness," Tobin said. "After hearing this we all felt a little better, by knowing that the omnipotent one, praised as a god by the Japanese who he helped after defeat, was in reality just like the rest of us -- human after all."

Another Korean War veteran, Richard W. Robinson, didn't get a chance to tell his story on stage, though he attended the presentation by his fellow service members. Originally from Union City, N.J., Robinson retired from the Army as a sergeant major in 1971, after having enlisted in 1948.

He said his mother and father both died when he was young, leaving him without parents at just 16 years. As his two older brothers had gone off to serve in World War II, he stayed at home to take care of his younger sisters.

"They had this one item they boiled, fried and stewed -- it was eaten from the cradle to grave," Whittle said. "Once it was cooked, it had a garlic-like smell. I don't like garlic."

The smell was everywhere, he said. *"It really stinked. With all these odors, it's really something you will never forget."*

Whittle's story was one of more than a dozen told on stage at the AFRH as part of a program called "Do You Remember." The program was produced by the Double Nickels Theatre Company. The program featured war-time stories read aloud by the former service members themselves or by stand-ins. Their varied military experiences included stories from World War II, Vietnam and the Korean War.

William Tobin, also a Korean War veteran, was a Sailor aboard the USS Mt. McKinley in September 1950, when that ship sailed from Kobe, Japan to Inchon, South



Korean War Memorial

(continued....)





"When they came back, they took over -- I was sort of reckless, and I left school and went to join the Army," Robinson said. *"My brother was my guardian and he signed the letter so I could get in."*

At only 17 years old, Robinson was stationed at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, N.Y. He'd signed up in 1948 for a total of two years. But by 1950, the war with Korea was on and his enlistment was changed for him.

"With the war going on, they added another year to us," he said, adding that he took the opportunity to extend his enlistment even further -- to six years. He also took a transfer to Camp Stoneman, Calif., where he worked as a clerk processing Soldiers back from the Pacific theater.

In February 1952, he found himself in Korea, first at a "repo depot," or replacement depot, in Tageu. He said at the depot, they fell out every morning and the sergeant there would hand out details.

"One morning we fell out and he said 'can any of you guys type,'" Robinson said. *"Four of us stuck our hands up."*

It turns out, the personnel staff at 8th Army headquarters, rear, was behind on their paperwork and needed help.

"Who wanted to go up on the front?" Robinson said. He eventually secured a permanent position with the 8th Army HQ. One that eventually took him to Seoul. There he worked nights at the Adjutant General's classified message center.

With a general as the commander of their unit, he said, living there was good. *"We had a cot. And with the houseboy, we got local mattresses and sheets and hot water and hot food,"* he said.

(continued....)





"Life in Seoul at the time isn't what it is for Soldiers now, but it wasn't as bad as what Soldiers had at the front line."

A friend of Robinson's served with the 25th Division on the front lines, and paid him a visit once during his stay in Seoul.

"He came down and visited me," Robinson said. "He got a three-day pass. When he came down he looked like -- in WWII they had these cartoons 'Willy and Joe' -- they looked like bums, they were dirty, they needed a shave. Well my friend came off the line. That's the way he was. He'd been wearing the same clothes for six months. Never had a hot shower. They did all their things in the field."

While Robinson admits he had it relatively easy in Seoul, he did say he had one brush with death.

"We used to get these new recruits, and when they came in they were issued live ammunition and M1s. You had these guys that put the clip in and would forget to clear their weapons," he said. Robinson said he and the new guy rode together one day on their way to lunch. "We're riding along in the jeep, and all of the sudden: bang! The bullet went over my head. But if he'd been an inch or two down, I wouldn't be here today."

Raymond Smith chose not to watch the presentation by the other service members, but came down after to greet them and have refreshments. He said he'd heard all the war stories before, though he shared some of his own insights about Korea.

Smith joined the Army in 1950 and served in the 25th Division, 21st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion. He said before he went to Korea, he learned about the country from his buddy, a Marine. But when he got there, he said, he was ill-prepared.

"This isn't real!" he said. "The swamps and the muskrats, and the rats and the cold weather and the freezing my butt off -- I didn't like it."

Smith, from Oneida, N.Y., served first as a halftrack driver and then as a gunner, shooting quad-.50s.

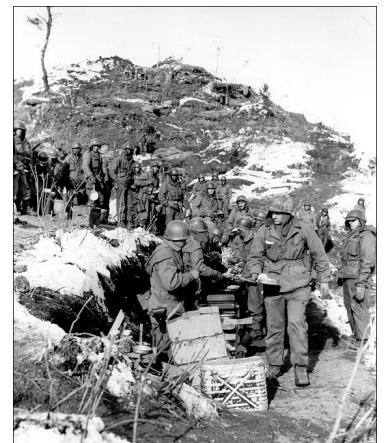
"We would go out on patrol with the 27th Wolfhounds," he said. "We were their support unit and they were our support unit. When the enemy (would) come over the hills, we'd shoot them down."

What he remembers about Korea, he said, is the cold weather.

"There wasn't nothing to see in 1950's Korea; it was all shelled out," he said. "It was demolished. And up on the border, there was nothing but cold and freezing and you were cold all the time. It's too cold when you can't pull the bolt on the .50-cal to fire -- and you stand out there with a one-gallon tin can half full of gas and 10 guys are standing around it trying to keep warm."

They weren't the only ones who were cold, either, Smith said.

"Half mile away is the enemy -- doing the same damn thing," he said. "And nobody's shooting at anybody because it's too damn cold."



**To our Korean War brothers & sisters...
We will never forget.**



From the past: Heat, danger stalked 173d Airborne on Viet mission

By MIKE MEALEY
Stars and Stripes

On May 20, 1965, *Stripes'* Mike Mealey accompanied the 173d on a similar mission in search of the Viet Cong.

BIEN HOA, Republic of Vietnam — The mission was to search and clear an area of about 13 square miles northeast of Bien Hoa, and, to accomplish this, the largest number of American troops ever to participate in a Vietnam operation had been committed.

They totaled about 2,000, members of the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 173d Airborne Brigade, in the country just about a month but already familiar with the frustrations and hardships of this new kind of war.

They had four days to do the job. They had nearly 60 helicopters, thousands of pounds of ammunition and weapons, and countless years of training among them.

One thousand soldiers were airlifted to the operation area the first day: an artillery battery on the outskirts of the target zone and around 750 troops into the heart of the area, which had long been a Viet Cong stronghold.

The landing, except for the number of men and helicopters, was routine — the armed Hueys shooting rockets while door gunners pounded machine gun fire



into the landing zone on the approach. Then the troops were rushing across the rice fields to establish a perimeter.

By the time the fifth wave had brought the last of the soldiers to the area, many others were already deep into the thickly wooded areas heading for the first objective.

Charlie Company was coming down a steep hill, when 60mm mortars began exploding about 35 meters away. There were only a few rounds, and the men, laying flat on the ground under dense brush, escaped unhurt.

A few minutes later came four 81 mm mortars rounds, but again the fire failed to do damage.

Then two rounds of big stuff — possibly artillery — came in.

The men who heard the whistle of the rounds hit the dirt.

Seconds after the shattering explosions, the word came down the line: "*Medic! We need a medic up here.*"

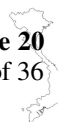
Two men hit by shrapnel.

Within 30 minutes they were headed for a hospital, aboard a helicopter ambulance of the 57th Medical Evacuation Det. Other men were falling victims of the heat, nauseous and dizzy, but the day's objective and permanent shade were close enough so they could keep going.

Being hit hard by the heat is nothing to feel ashamed of — not when every man's fatigues are so wet with perspiration that they could be wrung out.

By nightfall, the objectives had been met. There had been no firm contact with the enemy.

(continued....)



Another 1,000 men were landed the next day — this time 4 miles to the east. For the next two days, the 173d would sweep the area, hoping to find the Viet Cong; accomplishing their mission — to clear the area.



The frustrations of this war were now becoming even more clear — days of marching and sweating under the blistering sun or crawling under the scratching brush of the muddy jungles, nights with little sleep and a thousand insects biting you, and always the dwindling water supply and the cold C-rations.



And a vanishing enemy that could strike any minute, making his presence known with deadly machine gun sounds.



Mike Mealey's photos, of 173d Airborne

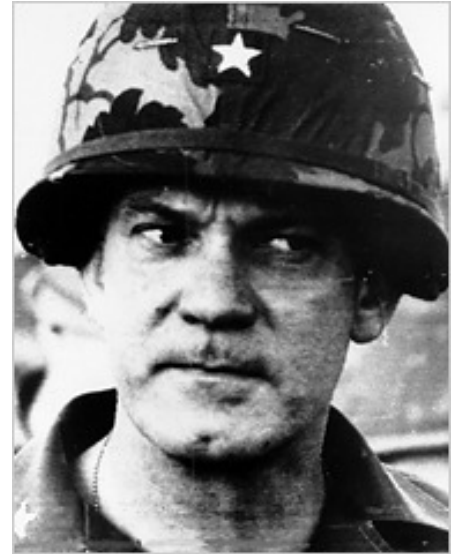
Editor's note: This report is reprinted from *Stripes'* Pacific edition, June 11, 1965. It accompanied a wire-service report on Vietnam in the print edition of the *Stripes* Sunday magazine.

From the Archives of
Sky Soldier Magazine
Spring 1992, Vol. 7, No.2

MEMORIAL DAY SPEECH
They Did Not Give Their Lives

Having had forty years of military service, having gone away to war four times and having been hit by enemy gun fire five different times; this experience provides me with the obligation and the great privilege of participating in Memorial Day services as we honor our war dead.

We often hear and revere the thought, "*They gave their lives for their country.*" Please, let us take a moment to reconsider that thesis. Our war dead gave exactly what millions of our living war veterans gave. All of us GAVE our service. All of us endured hardship and physical danger over extended periods of time.



Maj. General Ellis Williamson
1918 - 2007

By the above remark I ask you, "*Am I trying to take our war dead off their high pedestal?*" Certainly not. Another question, "*Am I trying to put the rest of us on the heights with our dead?*" Again, of course not. I am saying that only a very few of our war dead willingly GAVE their lives. So many, with full measure of patriotism, gladly gave their service and did their duty to the fullest extent of their physical and psychological abilities. The brutality of mankind and the horrors of war TOOK THEIR LIVES. Their lives were lost, not given.

Where does that leave us, the veterans who are still living? Let us always remember the fact that our war dead gave and lost and that their obligations were drawn to conclusion. The rest of us are still on ACTIVE DUTY. We may have pieces of paper that include words such as released, separated, retired, etc., however, our obligations require us to remain on active duty. We must continue to defend, clarify, perfect and pass on to generation yet to come, those values that our government and our culture hold to be so dear in our way of life.

Many lives have been lost in defense of our freedom. Many more must live to carry on. We veterans who still live must stay on active duty until we too are laid to rest beside our fallen whom we honor on Memorial Day and all days to follow.

Ellis W. Williamson
Major General
U.S. Army (Retired)





BISHOP AMAT VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL WALL

By: **Joseph Montoya**

The genesis of the Bishop Amat Memorial High School Vietnam War Memorial Wall began in late spring of 1984. At that time, in advance to planning the upcoming celebration for the Bishop Amat High School 25 year anniversary, the school's staff and alumni association formed a joint committee to oversee the event planning process. The committee included Joseph Montoya, a graduate of the Class of 1970. In addition to being a practicing city planner since 1972, Joseph is also a Vietnam War historian and has published a number of research articles on the soldiers, veterans and civilians who participated in America's efforts in the war in Southeast Asia. In June 1984, Joseph presented a proposal to the committee to host a tribute to the alumni Vietnam War veterans as part of the 25 year anniversary celebration. The proposal was approved by the committee and thereafter Joseph collected data from a multiple of sources including, but not limited to, the alumni and school records.

On the evening of Sunday – 28 April 1985, Bishop Amat's Silver Jubilee was held at the Marriott Hotel in Anaheim, California. Based on research up through 9 April 1985, Joseph had identified a total of sixty (60) alumni who had served in the military forces of the United States during the Vietnam War era, including three (3) alumni who were as of then identified to have been killed in South Vietnam [i.e., Joel Michael Sabel, Class of 1961; Stanley William Tunall, Class of 1963; and David Hugh Lalich, Class of 1964]. Data at the time confirmed the military service [but not the death] of Jose Antonio Ollivier, Class of 1963; and Joseph Alfred Albertini, Class of 1965.

Following the 25 year anniversary celebration, subsequent research confirmed both the death of Albertini and the military service and death of John Roger Thielen, Class of 1965, in South Vietnam.

In 1989, construction of the Bishop Amat computer laboratory began by a construction team lead by William "Bill" Estanislau, a graduate of the Class of 1968. Knowing Joseph's research to date had confirmed five (5) alumni to have been killed in the Vietnam War [i.e., Sabel, Albertini, Tunall, Lalich and Thielen], Bill and his crew proceeded to also construct a replica on campus of the National Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Washington DC [which itself had been dedicated on 13 November 1982]. The Bishop Amat replica Vietnam War Memorial Wall is of black granite, inscribed with the names of those five (5) fallen Lancers

known at that time to have been killed in South Vietnam and includes their respective graduating class and the location and date of their death.

As the years passed, Joseph continued with his research of the Lancer alumni who served during the Vietnam War era. To date, the number has increased to over 160 alumni who served in uniform during those years, not only in Southeast Asia but also in the continental United States and throughout the world.

During the late summer of 2010, as the Alumni Military Memorial Committee proceeded with the final construction and dedication planning of the Alumni Military Memorial Plaza, information was received confirming two (2) additional Lancer alumni had served and died in South Vietnam: Jose Antonio Ollivier, Class of 1963; and Daniel Napierskie, Class of 1969.

In order to properly update the data on the Bishop Amat Vietnam War Memorial Wall, the Alumni Military Memorial Committee determined that following the 9 October 2010 dedication of the new Alumni Military Memorial Plaza, the necessary construction will begin to modify the Bishop Amat Vietnam War Memorial Wall so as to add the names and information pertaining to both Ollivier and Napierskie.

The death of these seven (7) Lancers in South Vietnam has been followed by the deaths while in uniform of Terrence Patrick Carrigan, Class of 1974; Mark Eugene Brennan, Class of 1969; Joseph Librado Lujan, Class of 1964; and Douglas Amuel La Bouff, Class of 1987. The ultimate sacrifice made by these eleven (11) Lancers, plus the service of all other past, present and future Lancer alumni in the military of the United States, will forever be remembered by the Bishop Amat Alumni Military Memorial Plaza.

JOEL MICHAEL SABEL (KIA)

22 September 1943 – 10 July 1967
(DAK TO)

Bishop Amat Memorial High School
Class Of 1961 [via Baldwin Park High School]
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th
Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment,
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate).





VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Press release
September 23, 2010

Contact: Mokie Porter
301-585-4000, Ext. 146

Beware the Senator Who Speaks With Forked Tongue

By John Weiss

Vietnam Veterans of America
Rhode Island State Council

North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, the leading Republican on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, said yesterday, as reported by the *Associated Press*, that he has ***"concerns about a proposal to spend billions of dollars on disability compensation for Vietnam veterans who get heart disease and wants to make sure that science supports the expansion of benefits."***



Senator Burr

The "proposal" Burr is referring to is a decision by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, based on the recent National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine committee report, *"Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2008."*

A little history is in order: From 1962 to 1971, the U.S. military used Agent Orange and other herbicides in Vietnam and elsewhere to defoliate the jungle canopy, to destroy crops, and to clear the perimeters of U.S. bases. These herbicides were sprayed from fixed-wing and rotary aircraft, trucks, and backpack sprayers. The drums that stored these chemicals were often recycled and put to various other uses, sometimes to collect rain water, to serve as barbecue grills, etc. Nearly three million veterans served in Southeast Asia.

Contained in these herbicides was dioxin, 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-paradioxin—one of the most dangerous chemicals known to man.

On August 31, 2010, in the *Federal Register*, the Department of Veterans Affairs published the final rules amending the adjudication regulations concerning presumptive service connection, concluding that there was a positive association between exposure in Vietnam to certain herbicides and the subsequent development of

three diseases: hairy cell leukemia & B-cell leukemias; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease.

And for the first time in history, on September 23, Burr and his colleagues will call into question the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, as outlined in the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

Recognizing that Burr was voted into the House of Representatives in 1994, it is obvious that he was not involved with the passage of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-4), which passed the House and the Senate without a single nay vote. In fact, today, 19 Years later, there are only 36 members of Congress still Serving who voted for passage of this act in 1991.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 acknowledges the culpability of toxic exposures in health conditions that manifested years after a veteran's service. Included in the law is the authority for the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to, on a biannual basis, provide a review of all scientific studies and research on the association between dioxin and specific diseases; and include recommendations for future research.

The act further grants the Secretary of the VA the authority to determine if a presumption of service connection is warranted for any of the health conditions addressed in the report.

If Sen. Burr is uncomfortable with the Secretary's determinations based on the National Academy of Sciences recommendations, perhaps he would be more comfortable with the finding of the U.S. Air Force Ranch Hand Study, conducted by the U.S. Air Force on those who participated in the aerial spraying program, as cited in the 1992 testimony of Dr. Barry L. Johnson, Assistant Surgeon General, before the House Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations.

"A recent study on the health status of Vietnam veterans who participated in Operation Ranch Hand did not find any signs of liver disease, but did report increased levels of triglycerides and cholesterol in the blood (a second report does not support these increases). In addition, an increase in body fat, diabetes, and blood pressure were also noted. These effects were strongly associated with TCDD levels in the serum. Ranch Hand veterans also had changes in blood (increased white blood cells, platelet, IgA, and sedimentation rates) which suggest a chronic inflammatory response, although no immunologic system diseases were identified.

(continued...)



These immune system changes were also strongly associated with serum TCDD levels. These results differ from those reported in previous analyses of the Ranch Hand group in 1982 and 1985. The earlier analyses did not include an assessment of serum TCDD levels. A physical examination of Ranch Hand veterans is underway."

There is no doubt, that Burr, though too young to have faced conscription during the Vietnam Conflict, views himself as a supporter of those who served.

In fact, seven months ago, it was Sen. Burr who introduced a resolution recognizing March 30 as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." Proclaimed Burr, "There's no question that our troops served our country bravely and faithfully during the Vietnam War, and these veterans deserve our recognition and gratitude. Unfortunately, when these service members returned home, they were caught in the crossfire of public debate about our nation's involvement in the war."

Today, Vietnam veterans are again caught in the "crossfire of public debate," as Burr and others balk at the price of providing for the continuing cost of care for those whom he and others recognize "served our country bravely and faithfully during the Vietnam War."

Words of praise and gratitude do not cost anything. Veterans' compensation for service-related health conditions do. **Sen. Burr, which is it?**

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

[Sent in by Bob Madden, B/2/503d]



RP, U.S. SOLDIERS MARK CORREGIDOR LIBERATION

Philippine and US soldiers raised their flags yesterday on Corregidor Island in ceremonies



marking the 60th anniversary of the island's liberation from Japanese forces in World War II.

On March 2, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur, the wartime commander of allied forces in the Pacific, raised the American flag on Corregidor, three years after he was ordered to leave it as the Japanese were invading the Philippines, then a US colony.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, and the envoys of Britain, Australia and New Zealand -- wartime allies of the United States -- offered wreaths at the Pacific War Memorial, where a brief program was held beside ruins of US garrisons.

Beth Day Romulo, president of the Corregidor Foundation, recalled "that glorious day when Corregidor Island was finally retaken" following 14 days of fierce combat between Japanese and US forces, including paratroopers from the **503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team**.

Military historians say that of 6,550 Japanese soldiers on the island, only 50 survived. The paratroopers lost 169 men.

Romulo said Corregidor, also known as "The Rock" and now a tourist destination, should be preserved as a "dramatic reminder of the horrors of war and the courage of those who lived and died here."

(continued...)



Ricciardone said commemorating the sacrifices of US and Filipino soldiers was an opportunity *"to rededicate ourselves to paying that same price they paid to upholding ever and always the cause of freedom and democracy"* by strengthening alliances *"including some of those who were our adversaries in World War II."*



The Americans held a separate ceremony for the paratroopers attended by Major General Elbert N. Perkins, commander of the US Army Japan and 9th Theater Support Command.

The 503rd Veterans Association said in a message read by Ricciardone: *"The sons of America, like their fathers and grandfathers, face a new war, a war against extremist terrorism."*

"Once again, good men -- our best and brightest -- struggle so that others may live in liberty," it said.



WHO IS THIS SKY SOLDIER?



No, he's not an umpire. This trooper did two tours in Vietnam with the 2/503d, 1965-1966 with HHC serving out of Camp Zinn at Bien Hoa, and 1966-1967 with Bravo Company in the highlands. A survivor of the battles at Dak To, he made a career out of the army, and today works as a Regional Emergency Response Advisor in the Office of Emergency Operations with the Domestic Security Task Force in State Government.

~ Editor's Note ~

From what we understand, our newsletter is read by hundreds of troopers, non-troopers and non-military across our country and throughout the world; from Los Angeles to Portland, Maine, and in the battle zones in the Middle East to the serene mountain valleys of Europe -- hell, even the Aussies and Kiwis read the damn thing when they're not drinking schooners of beer. It's important to send in your stories, photos, historical records or, as hooch buddy Jim Bethea likes to say, *"If you don't write it down, it never happened."* Ed

