

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

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ *newsletter*



Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

December 2010, Issue 22

~ Medal of Honor ~

Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta

Company B, 2d Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade, 503rd Infantry Regiment



President Barack Obama presents the *Medal of Honor* to 173d trooper SSG Sal Giunta during the award ceremony at the White House.

See all issues to date at: www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php or http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm



~ Presentation of the *Medal of Honor* ~

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated. On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. Thank you, Chaplain Carver, for that beautiful invocation.

Of all the privileges that come with serving as President of the United States, I have none greater than serving as Commander-in-Chief of the finest military that the world has ever known. And of all the military decorations that a President and a nation can bestow, there is none higher than the Medal of Honor.

Today is particularly special. Since the end of the Vietnam War, the Medal of Honor has been awarded nine times for conspicuous gallantry in an ongoing or recent conflict. Sadly, our nation has been unable to present this decoration to the recipients themselves, because each gave his life -- his last full measure of devotion -- for our country. Indeed, as President, I have presented the Medal of Honor three times -- and each time to the families of a fallen hero.

Today, therefore, marks the first time in nearly 40 years that the recipient of the Medal of Honor for an ongoing conflict has been able to come to the White House and accept this recognition in person. It is my privilege to present our nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, to a soldier as humble as he is heroic: Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta.

Now, I'm going to go off-script here for a second and just say I really like this guy. I think anybody -- we all just get a sense of people and who they are, and when you meet Sal and you meet his family, you are just absolutely convinced that this is what America is all about. And it just makes you proud. And so this is a joyous occasion for me -- something that I have been looking forward to.

The Medal of Honor reflects the gratitude of an entire nation. So we are also joined here today by several members of Congress, including both senators and several representatives from Staff Sergeant Giunta's home state of Iowa. We are also joined by leaders from across my administration and the Department of Defense, including the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral

Mike Mullen. Where's Mike? There he is, right there. Army Secretary John McHugh; and Chief of Staff of the Army, General George Casey.

We are especially honored to be joined by Staff Sergeant Giunta's fellow soldiers, his teammates and brothers from Battle Company, 2d of the 503d of the 173d Airborne Brigade; and several members of that rarest of fraternities that now welcomes him into its ranks -- the Medal of Honor Society. Please give them a big round of applause.



During invocation.

We also welcome the friends and family who made Staff Sergeant Giunta into the man that he is, including his lovely wife, Jenny; and his parents, Steven and Rosemary; as well as his siblings, who are here. It was his mother, after all, who apparently taught him as a young boy in small-town Iowa how to remove the screen from his bedroom window in case of fire. What she didn't know was that by teaching Sal how to jump from his bedroom and sneaking off in the dead of night, she was unleashing a future paratrooper who would one day fight in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan 7,000 miles away.

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During the first of his two tours of duty in Afghanistan, Staff Sergeant Giunta was forced early on to come to terms with the loss of comrades and friends. His team leader at the time gave him a piece of advice:

“You just try -- you just got to try to do everything you can when it’s your time to do it.” You’ve just got to try to do everything you can when it’s your time to do it.

Salvatore Giunta’s time came on October 25, 2007. He was a Specialist then, just 22 years old.

Sal and his platoon were several days into a mission in the Korengal Valley -- the most dangerous valley in northeast Afghanistan. The moon was full. The light it cast was enough to travel by without using their night-vision goggles.

With heavy gear on their backs, and air support overhead, they made their way single file down a rocky ridge crest, along terrain so steep that sliding was sometimes easier than walking.

They hadn’t traveled a quarter mile before the silence was shattered. It was an ambush, so close that the cracks of the guns and the whizz of the bullets were simultaneous. Tracer fire hammered the ridge at hundreds of rounds per minute -- *“more,”* Sal said later, *“than the stars in the sky.”*

The Apache gunships above saw it all, but couldn’t engage with the enemy so close to our soldiers. The next platoon heard the shooting, but were too far away to join the fight in time.

And the two lead men were hit by enemy fire and knocked down instantly. When the third was struck in the helmet and fell to the ground, Sal charged headlong into the wall of bullets to pull him to safety behind what little cover there was. As he did, Sal was hit twice -- one round slamming into his body armor, the other shattering a weapon across his back.

They were pinned down, and two wounded Americans still lay up ahead. So Sal and his comrades regrouped and counterattacked. They threw grenades, using the explosions as cover to run forward, shooting at the muzzle flashes still erupting from the trees. Then they did it again. And again. Throwing grenades, charging ahead. Finally, they reached one of their men. He’d been shot twice in the leg, but he had kept returning fire until his gun jammed.



Sal’s buddies.

As another soldier tended to his wounds, Sal sprinted ahead, at every step meeting relentless enemy fire with his own. He crested a hill alone, with no cover but the dust kicked up by the storm of bullets still biting into the ground. There, he saw a chilling sight: the silhouettes of two insurgents carrying the other wounded American away -- who happened to be one of Sal’s best friends. Sal never broke stride. He leapt forward. He took aim. He killed one of the insurgents and wounded the other, who ran off.

Sal found his friend alive, but badly wounded. Sal had saved him from the enemy -- now he had to try to save his life. Even as bullets impacted all around him, Sal grabbed his friend by the vest and dragged him to cover. For nearly half an hour, Sal worked to stop the bleeding and help his friend breathe until the MEDEVAC arrived to lift the wounded from the ridge. American gunships worked to clear the enemy from the hills. And with the battle over, First Platoon picked up their gear and resumed their march through the valley. They continued their mission.

It had been as intense and violent a firefight as any soldier will experience. By the time it was finished, every member of First Platoon had shrapnel or a bullet hole in their gear. Five were wounded. And two gave their lives: Sal’s friend, Sergeant Joshua C. Brennan, and the platoon medic, Specialist Hugo V. Mendoza.

Now, the parents of Joshua and Hugo are here today. And I know that there are no words that, even three years later, can ease the ache in your hearts or repay the debt that America owes to you.

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But on behalf of a grateful nation, let me express profound thanks to your sons' service and their sacrifice. And could the parents of Joshua and Hugo please stand briefly?

Now, I already mentioned I like this guy, Sal. And as I found out myself when I first spoke with him on the phone and when we met in the Oval Office today, he is a low-key guy, a humble guy, and he doesn't seek the limelight. And he'll tell you that he didn't do anything special; that he was just doing his job; that any of his brothers in the unit would do the same thing. In fact, he just lived up to what his team leader instructed him to do years before: *"You do everything you can."*

Staff Sergeant Giunta, repeatedly and without hesitation, you charged forward through extreme enemy fire, embodying the warrior ethos that says, *"I will never leave a fallen comrade."*

Your actions disrupted a devastating ambush before it could claim more lives. Your courage prevented the capture of an American soldier and brought that soldier back to his family. You may believe that you don't deserve this honor, but it was your fellow soldiers who recommended you for it. In fact, your commander specifically said in his recommendation that you lived up to the standards of the most decorated American soldier of World War II, Audie Murphy, who famously repelled an overwhelming enemy attack by himself for one simple reason: *"They were killing my friends."*

That's why Salvatore Giunta risked his life for his fellow soldiers -- because they would risk their lives for him. That's what fueled his bravery -- not just the urgent impulse to have their backs, but the absolute confidence that they had his. One of them, Sal has said -- of these young men that he was with, he said, ***"They are just as much of me as I am."***

So I would ask Sal's team, all of Battle Company who were with him that day, to please stand and be recognized as well. Gentlemen, thank you for your service. We're all in your debt. And I'm proud to be your Commander-in-Chief.

These are the soldiers of our Armed Forces. Highly trained. Battle-hardened. Each with specialized roles and responsibilities, but all with one thing in common --

they volunteered. In an era when it's never been more tempting to chase personal ambition or narrow self-interest, they chose the opposite. They felt a tug; they answered a call; they said, *"I'll go."* And for the better part of a decade, they have endured tour after tour in distant and difficult places; they have protected us from danger; they have given others the opportunity to earn a better and more secure life.



"I really like this guy." President Obama

They are the courageous men and women serving in Afghanistan even as we speak. They keep clear focus on their mission: to deny safe haven for terrorists who would attack our country, to break the back of the Taliban insurgency, to build the Afghans' capacity to defend themselves.

They possess the steely resolve to see their mission through. They are made of the same strong stuff as the troops in this room, and I am absolutely confident that they will continue to succeed in the missions that we give them, in Afghanistan and beyond.

After all, our brave servicemen and women and their families have done everything they've been asked to do. They have been everything that we have asked them to be. ***"If I am a hero,"*** Sal has said, ***"then every man who stands around me, every woman in the military, every person who defends this country is."*** And he's right.

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This medal today is a testament to his uncommon valor, but also to the parents and the community that raised him; the military that trained him; and all the men and women who served by his side.

All of them deserve our enduring thanks and gratitude. They represent a small fraction of the American population, but they and the families who await their safe return carry far more than their fair share of our burden. They fight halfway around the globe, but they do it in hopes that our children and our grandchildren won't have to.

They are the very best part of us. They are our friends, our family, our neighbors, our classmates, our coworkers. They are why our banner still waves, our founding principles still shine, and our country -- the United States of America -- still stands as a force for good all over the world. So, please join me in welcoming Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta for the reading of the citation.



Reverend Carver.

MILITARY AIDE: The President of the United States of America, authorized by act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded, in the name of Congress, the Medal of Honor to then Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta, United States Army.

Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity, at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, in action, with an armed enemy in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, on October 25, 2007.

While conducting a patrol as team leader, with Company B, 2d Battalion Airborne, 503d Infantry Regiment, Specialist Giunta and his team were

navigating through harsh terrain when they were ambushed by a well-armed and well-coordinated insurgent force.

While under heavy enemy fire, Specialist Giunta immediately sprinted towards cover and engaged the enemy. Seeing that his squad leader had fallen, and believing that he had been injured, Specialist Giunta exposed himself to withering enemy fire and raced towards his squad leader, helped him to cover and administered medical aid.

While administering first aid, enemy fire struck Specialist Giunta's body armor and his secondary weapon. Without regard to the ongoing fire, Specialist Giunta engaged the enemy before prepping and throwing grenades, using the explosions for cover in order to conceal his position.

Attempting to reach additional wounded fellow soldiers who were separated from the squad, Specialist Giunta and his team encountered a barrage of enemy fire that forced them to the ground. The team continued forward, and upon reaching the wounded soldiers, Specialist Giunta realized that another soldier was still separated from the element. Specialist Giunta then advanced forward on his own initiative.

As he crested the top of a hill, he observed two insurgents carrying away an American soldier. He immediately engaged the enemy, killing one and wounding the other. Upon reaching the wounded soldier, he began to provide medical aid, as his squad caught up and provided security.

Specialist Giunta's unwavering courage, selflessness and decisive leadership while under extreme enemy fire were integral to his platoon's ability to defeat an enemy ambush and recover a fellow American soldier from the enemy.

Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company B, 2d Battalion Airborne, 503d Infantry Regiment and the United States Army.

Photos: J. Scott Applewhite / Associated Press; Win McNamee Getty Images; Department of Defense.



TO SSG SAL GIUNTA FROM VIETNAM & WWII ERA VETS OF THE 173d & 503d ABN

SSG Giunta: On behalf of the President and members of Chapter 27 Southern States AUSTRALIA 173d Abn Bde we congratulate you on your honour and thank you for your service. May your God keep you and yours safe and happy. AIRBORNE.

**John Arnold, Chapter Secretary
1RAR**

SSG Sal Giunta, B/2/503d: Congratulations on receiving your Medal of Honor. Best of luck in the future. Regards,

**John Barr
B Coy, 1RAR, '65-'66**

Dear SSG Giunta: After reading the account of your service, listening to the comments of your brother troopers and watching the way you conducted yourself during your interviews, I can only say what a credit you are to your Family, Country, Unit and brothers in arms. I look forward to the opportunity of meeting with you at a future 173d convention so I may have the honor of shaking your hand. Airborne All The Way:

**Robert Beemer, SGT
B/2/503d, '67-'68**



Reception at White House following MOH presentation

SSG Giunta: Congratulation on your award.

**Bill Bennett and Family
1 Troop PWLH, 1RAR**

Sergeant Giunta: You make us all proud to be Americans and I'm especially proud to have served with "B" Company "Bravo Bulls" 2/503 173d Airborne in the Republic of Vietnam in 1965. "B" company has produced some of the greatest warriors of all time. Thank you,

**Bryan Bowley, SSG
B/2/503d, '65**

SSG Giunta: Wishing you CONGRATULATIONS and a big THANK YOU for your service to your country and especially for your service to your fellow troopers. In times like those, no man thinks about what he is going to do, he just acts. As a decorated Combat Veteran of the Vietnam war, I can appreciate your feelings of *"just doing your job"* as that is all anyone can do. A wise man once said, *"There are no extraordinary men, just extraordinary circumstances that made ordinary men react in extraordinary ways."* Wear the MOH proudly because you were not 'given' it, you EARNED IT by your extraordinary actions!

Sincerely yours,

**Gary 'Buzz' Cox, SGT
C/D/2/503d, '67-'68**

Howdy Sal: Congratulations on your MOH. It was a honor to meet you in Columbia Falls. Hopefully we will meet again someday under happier circumstances. Your humbleness and dignity are a great inspiration for all. If you're ever back in Montana, you and yours are always welcome at our fire. God Bless. All The Way.

**SGT Carl (Mike) Carver, SGT
B/2/503d**

SSG Sal Giunta: I watched and recorded when President Obama awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR to you. I stood tall (5'6" frame) with pride and honor, tears for the families, for what they had to endure and sacrifice their sons. Airborne! Thank You and the "HERD" for meeting the Obstacles head on. The 173d is carrying the tradition.

**Jaime (Jimmy) Castillo, SP4
C/2/503d, '66-'67**

Please accept our congratulations on your award of the Medal of Honor. You are upholding the traditions of the 173d. From all the Aussie Veterans and Members of Chapter XI Downunder in Australia.

**Sal Cheeseman
1RAR**

I would like to thank you for your efforts to save fellow soldiers. I'm extremely proud of you and the fact that you represented our unit in a time of conflict. Your courageous actions are what it takes to receive this MOH award. I'm sure that you feel as though there are others that deserve the same recognition...but the fact is that someone noticed that you preformed your job in an exemplary way. Airborne!!

**Harry Cleland, SP4
B/2/503d, '66-'67**

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Dear Sal: Congratulations on your recent award. You are now a member of an elite group of fighting men that our nation deems worthy to honor as its bravest. I especially want to thank you for your service and the great pride you bring to the 173d Airborne. Sincerely,

Roger Conley, SSG
H&S Battery, 3/319th Arty (ABN), '68-'69

SSG Giunta: Welcome home trooper! We are very proud of you and all of our troops in harm's way. We, the Vietnam era 173d Abn Bde 503d Abn INF veterans, understand and appreciate what you experienced and had to contend with. Well done and thank you very much.

Dr. Tim Cloonan, COL
Co B (Med) Spt Bat, '69

One hell of a job. Thanks for stopping something that could have been worse. Makes me proud to be part of the "HERD".

Roy Doster
November Ranger, November Team '70-'71

Dear SSG Giunta: Congratulations on earning the Medal of Honor! The whole saga of B Company 2/503 in *Restrepo*, their courage, skill and initiative against a dedicated enemy, are in the very best traditions of the 503d Airborne Infantry. Your particular reactions to the Taliban ambush that night in the Korengal have earned the admiration of your squad and platoon mates and are an inspiration to Sky Soldiers everywhere. Airborne All the Way!

George Dexter, COL
Bn Cmdr, 2/503d, '65-'66

SSG Giunta, my name is Mark P. Dickinson, C Co {Sup. Bn} 173d Abn Bde {Sep} 1963-66. I want to thank you for being The man, Trooper and Brother you are and for the extreme sacrifice you put forth for your fellow troopers and dedication to your country and the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team. AIRBORNE!! God Bless You and your family!

Mark Dickinson
C Co. Sup. Bn, 173d Abn Bde, '63-'66

I agree with you when you said you were doing what you were trained to do, that's what being a paratrooper with the best is about. You're the man, run with it for all it's worth. Good luck, God bless, and thank you.

Alton Fisher
A/3/503d, '70-'71

SSG Sal Giunta: My congratulations upon this memorable occasion. Well Done. Airborne !!

Ken Gann
105 Field Bty., Royal Australian Artillery, '65-'66

G'day Sal: From the other side of the world where I live, I am proud of you brother. I served with the Herd with the 2/503d mortar platoon '65-'66. I am very proud to

be a Sky Soldier. We wish you all that life can for your deeds of Heroism. It takes one tough brother to do what you have done. It's admirable Sal. If you ever want to visit Oz, we're 'ere mate!! I live in a little place called Loch Sport in the State of Victoria. You can Google it if you type in 66 Wallaby St in Loch Sport. We have a bed for you brother.

A.B. Garcia
HHC/2/503d, '65-'66



Sal with family and friends.

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations for accepting the MOH for what you did and for all the buddies you served with that day. SP4 Al Rascon of the 1/503d is a name I'm sure you know. He was put in for the MOH for his actions on 16 Mar 66 - the day I got shot down flying re-supply for the 2/503d. Had I run just a little later than I was running, the Bn would have saddled up and moved out and been promptly slaughtered by the 2,000 VC/NVA waiting for them. Al would not have been coming to our aid because there would have been no one to aid. It would have been a massacre, Stuff sometimes works out. We had few KIAs but countless WIAs that day. It could have been a full blown massacre. Al did a wonderful job protecting his troops while he provided medical aid to them. It took nearly 40 years for the paperwork to get through to the right people to allow him to stand where you did the other day to receive your medal for yourself and all those who are always with you. Well done, son. You have the right attitude and you know that every buddy on every patrol has a piece of that hardware. Thanks for receiving it for them as well as for yourself.

Tony Geishauser, MAJ
Pilot, 173d Cowboys, '65-'66

Congratulations fellow Sky Solder and job well done. I am very proud of you and you deserve the medal for what you did. I was the medic for Charlie Company 2/503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam, 1971. God bless you and your family.

Ismael (Doc) Gonzales, SP5
C/2/503d, '71

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Sal with wife, Jenny, at 173d reception.

SSG Giunta: Your selfless actions exemplify the quality and leadership of the U.S. Army's Non-Commissioned Officer Corps and, in particular, those of the Airborne community. Your actions set the example for our young Sky Soldiers who will become tomorrow's small unit leaders. Congratulations and all the best in your future endeavors.

Bernard Griffard, Cdr, COL
B/2/503d & Bn Staff, '67-'69

Congratulations SSG Giunta on a job well done beyond the call of duty. Your bravery and the examples of bravery set by all MOH recipients of the 173d make me humbly proud to have been a member of this prestigious brigade. Thanks for continuing the tradition.

Earle Graham, SSG
A/2/503d, '67-'68

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations on your award of the Medal Of Honor. The last living Medal of Honor recipient I knew personally was SSG Charles Morris A/2/503d, 173d Airborne. To see you receive the MOH made me so proud to be in B/2/503d 1966-67. You have made all of your fellow paratroopers proud and honored. Your Bravery and Courage will set the example for all. Thank you and may God Bless You and Protect you. Respectfully,

David "Griff" Griffin, SGT
B/HHC/2/503d, '66-'67

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations and best wishes on the next phase of your Army career.

Jim Grimshaw, CPT
D/2/503d, '68-'69

Always remember PFC Dolby. Carry on the tradition. Rangers all the way – Airborne!

James Henkels
2/503d

Congratulations! Sal, from a former B Co 2/503 3d platoon 3d squad Sky Soldier. You have made me extremely proud to have served in the 'Herd'. Your selfless display of bravery and non-self-promoting attitude after your award are truly the best our country can offer. B Co veterans do have an annual reunion and I hope that you may attend sometime in the future. I wish you the best always.

James Allen Jackson, SP4
Bravo Bull, '65-'66

Warmest congratulations to a great soldier. You are the second (or perhaps third) Bravo Bull to have been awarded the MOH. All of us are real proud of you. Sincerely,

Ken Kaplan, LTC
B/2/503d, '66-'67

SSG Sal Giunta: You are correct in your assessment that many heroic acts go unrecognized. But it is always great to see that some are. Congratulation on a job well done.

Stu Kumasaka, SP4
HHC/2/503d, Recon, '65-'66

Dear SSG Giunta: First I want to thank you for your service. I appreciate what you did for the others in your unit. I salute you in being singled out as a recipient of the Medal of Honor. Wear it proudly, never dishonor it.

Don MacCuish, LTC
B/3/503d, '69-'70



B/2/503d trooper Ed Kearney & lovely bride, Joyce, at reception. Thanks Ed for all the great photos.

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The President of the United States said "I like him," and so do I. SSG Sal Giunta, MOH you and your wife represent what it's all about. Australia and the United States have fought alongside each other since the First world War. You make us all proud that the tradition continues. God bless you both and America.

Peter Mackie, WO1 rtd
1RAR (Aust Log Sup Coy) '65-'66

Sal, just a note of appreciation for your exemplary conduct under fire which has inspired many of us who at one time were also in the crucible of war. Thank you for your efforts to bring your men back, dead or alive. For me personally, I can identify with the gratitude of the parents of the trooper who you rescued from the hands of the insurgents. My Brother Julian E. Marquez was KIA on the 15th of Feb. 1971 in Vietnam. His body and those of two others who fell in the same action laid in front of an enemy position for three days of attempts before they could be reclaimed by their comrades. Two more were wounded in the final successful effort. But I had the privilege of thanking some of those same men this past May for bringing us back our dead and allowing us the opportunity to bury them. The loss was great, but would have been greater had you not risked your own life to defend your fallen brother in arms from the savagery of the enemy. Though you failed to save his life, you did spare his family from the uncertainty, or worse, the desecration of their loved one. May God grant you peace in that you did your duty and more. And by doing so honored those with whom you served, your nation, and those of us who have been in the position to know the sense of loss mingled with pride that combat casualties inflict. *Our lives are but for a moment, while what we do or leave undone will echo down through eternity.*

Joe Marquez
C/1/503d, '69 N/75th, Juliet, '70 A/2/503d, '70 Chaplain

SSG Giunta "Airborne All The Way."

David Maxey, SGT
B/HHC/2/503d, '67-'69

Stand proud, lead the way, wear your Honor for those who cannot. Reflect well what you can, but you are here where the memories fade with time. Guide those soldiers you may encounter with the leadership you possess. Thank you for being the person you are. Hold your Family close and cherish each and every day.

Eldon Meade
C/3/503d, '70

SSG Giunta: Simple words cannot describe how proud and humble you made me feel when you received the award that you so truly deserve.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.
Always,

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



Dave Glick, Sal Giunta & Mike Broderick

Sal: I saw your interview on "Colbert" Friday 19 June. Didn't hear much. Was too busy yelling things like "Airborne!" and "the Rock!" Congratulations. Proud of "The Herd."

Ken Minehan, Chapter XXIII
1 RAR Group, '65-'66

Sal Giunta: "Congratulations" just doesn't seem to be the correct word. I can't think of a word in the English language that describes my thoughts when I read your MOH citation. God bless you Sal.

Jim Mullaney
Company H, 503rd PRCT, WWII

SSG Giunta: Congratulations on earning the Medal of Honor. You epitomize the true Sky Soldier spirit by accepting this award in honor of your fallen comrades for they too are true heroes. Thank you for representing the 503d Infantry and the 173d Airborne Brigade with distinction and humility. We are all proud of you. Airborne, All the Way.

Gerard "Butch" Nery, Jr., COL
A/4/504d; E/4/503d & N/75th Rangers, '70

Sal: Here's another thank you to add to the countless congratulations you've gotten. I knew your B Company MOH predecessor, Milton Olive. We fought together in Vietnam. There's always been something special about the company, the regiment, the battalion, and, of course, the 173d Airborne Brigade that can't be adequately explained to others.

Larry Paladino, SGT
B/2/503d, '65-'66

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Sal: It was an honor for Me to see you on TV and hear your "definition" of a soldier. You make the title of a soldier honorable. As a Vietnam vet it's an honor for Me to count you in our brotherhood. And, you can stand assured that every Nam Vet has your "6".

Jose Perez Ortiz, SFC
D/16 Armor, '68-'69

I would like to take this opportunity in congratulating SSG Sal Giunta B/2/503d on his well-deserved Medal of Honor. All us boys over here in Aussie Land are so Proud when one of our own receives any sort of praise in the line of duty, so I know I speak for all our boys in sending best wishes. Take care and God Bless you all.

Jack Panossian, Pte
1st Bn, Royal Australian Reg. [1RAR], '65-'66 & '68-'69

SSG Giunta: Thank you for your courage and dedication to a fellow Sky Soldier and personal friend. Brothers like you are the epitome of what it means to be a "Herd" member. Continued success in your future, and forever "*Airborne!*"

Ed Perkins, MSG
Recon/A/2/503d, '67-'68

Sal: You brought great pleasure to me to see another soldier of Company B/2/503 be awarded the Medal of Honor. I was there the day Milton Olive died, and have been to his grave. From this day forward, your life has forever changed. It will be not only an honor, but a burden, as you must carry all of us with you! We are your brothers in combat, and know the depths of this award as no others. God Bless you and yours.. and our soldiers.

Jack Price, CPT
B/2/503d, '65-'66

SSG Sal Giunta: American soldiers are the truest reflection of the patriotic nature of a country that is exceptional in its continuing quest for individual liberty. Unlike any other nation or empire on earth, throughout time, America has delivered on her promise to keep its people free. On a lonely ridge overlooking a remote valley, in a country time has passed by, you risked your life to rescue a wounded paratrooper – a man who was a member of your squad – your dearest friend. As time goes by you will find that this night, and this firefight will echo as if an episode your soul most treasures. Cherish this memory for it is yours alone. Wear your Medal of Honor with gusto, as if representing the valor of paratroopers from Corregidor, Normandy, Korea, Vietnam, and on to Iraq and Afghanistan. Your humble nature bodes well, for you have lost far more than you have gained. Stand tall, SSGT Sal Giunta...we of the 2nd Battalion are proud of you.

Gary Prisk, CPT
C/D/2/503d, '67-'68

Congratulations Sal! You have made all of us very proud to have served in 2/503. Every time I mention having served in the same unit you are in I get the "yeah right". Even though I'm in my 70s and you in your 20s. The uninitiated just don't understand the Brotherhood of the 173d! My best to you and your family!

Ed Privette, MAJ
HHC/2/503d, '67-'68

Dear SSG Sal Giunta: I would like to congratulate you on being awarded the Medal of Honor. Your actions hold up the courage and traditions that the 173d Abn Bde (Sep) has been known for. The courage, honor and the selfless act you showed that day surely shows what kind of Non-Commissioned Officer you are. You are a true American Patriot and Soldier. "*ALL THE WAY!*"

Thomas Quinn, CSM
Casper Aviation Platoon
HHC, 173d ABN BDE, '69-'72

San Diego 173d Airborne Association Chapter 28 sends their congratulations to SSG Sal Giunta.

Gilbert Reynoso, SP4
C/3/503d, '67-'68 & 82nd Abn B/2/505th
President, 173d Chap. 28



COL William Ostlund and SSG Sal Giunta
at 173d reception in Washington, DC.

(continued...)





Medal of Honor recipient SSG Salvatore A. Giunta at White House....we all like this guy.

Sal: Congrats on your award. I read the documentary that's been circulating throughout our Herd emailing, the one from *60 Minutes*. I'm a combat vet from Vietnam, Purple Heart, proud to say and proud to have served with MOH recipient Charlie Morris, and Airborne All the Way. God bless you and yours. Welcome Home,

Jack Ribera, PFC
No Deros Alpha 2/503d, '66

Dear SSG Giunta: I was moved by your CBS *60 Minutes* interview. Courage comes to those willing to receive it when others need it most. You are a man of courage and a member of our brotherhood of combat veterans. I served as a grunt and artillery observer in the 2/503d during Vietnam. You bring honor to us all past, present and future. Welcome home brother. Congratulations on your award and for a job well done. Respectfully,

George Rivera, SGT
E/2/503d

SSG Sal Giunta; There among the 503rd Abn Inf Regiment, 173d Abn Bde (SEP) Vietnam Combat Veterans are those of us who understand your thoughts....your words...and your actions on that ever present night... now in the fading distance in time and

history. You need not hear any more accolades that, although, well-meaning do not comfort the loss of brothers, the shoulda coulda's or the intrusive thoughts...or when you venture to that secret quiet place that only you can go for refuge. I will remind you...in a quiet way...You kept the E'spirit and the silent legacy of uncommon courage that is common among the 173d, and to which we, Paratroopers, hear echoing from famous battles and no name places in distant Pacific jungles, South East Asian triple canopied mountains, Mid-East deserts, and the Hindu Kush valleys. That is what I hear in your words...I see in your eyes...and your bearing. I am honored that you kept that Legacy and E'spirit under a high degree of stress and at a point in time when you were most needed by your cohorts...and then continued the mission. Thank You!... For keeping the E'spirit and the Legacy of the 2nd Battalion 503rd Abn Inf and the 173d ABN Brigade. Again, Thank you! In the simple words of an Airborne Trooper,

Tome Roubideaux, DSW
LRRP/2/503d, 173d LRRP Plt/74th Inf Det., 75th Rgrs.

(continued....)





Sal's buddies, troopers all.

Sal: I watched with great interest and pride during the presentation of your Medal of Honor. Being retired now, I was able to watch it live on CNN. Your personality, humility, and determination comes through just watching you. I can see why the President said that he really liked you. I know that this is all very difficult for you...and even though you "only" did what was expected of you, it was truly amazing and worthy of recognition. Yes, you do wear that medal for all the men who were with you that day. But even more, you wear that medal for all of us who served with the 173d Airborne. You exemplify the spirit of the Airborne and the glorious history of the 173d. We are all with you, and support you. I hope to meet you someday. Until then, *Airborne!*

Jerry Sopko, SGT
D/4/503d, '69-'70

SSG Sal Giunta: I am honored to be able to send this congratulatory note to you on the occasion of your award of the Medal of Honor. Your actions have brought great credit to the 173d, one of the finest units in the history of the US Army. God Bless the USA.

George Stapleton, COL
Commanding Officer, 3/503d, VN

Very proud to have you as a brother of the "Herd."
Welcome Home.

Jim Stephens
B/3/319th, '67-'68

SSG Giunta: We know you are embarrassed by the attention and adulation being heaped on you right now. It will of course fade with time, but as long as it lasts you know that you are serving as point-man/flag bearer who is the delegate of all the Sky Soldiers and

other military who have served over the years with little or no recognition. But seeing you honored, we all stand a bit prouder, quietly sharing in those honors and appreciating your modesty in sharing attention. *Airborne!*.... and may St. Michael, patron saint of paratroopers watch over you and your family.

Mike Switzer, LT/Platoon Leader
C/3/503d, '68-'69

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations on your recent reception of the Medal of Honor. Watching you receive the award made me proud. Proud, not only because I served with Bravo Company, 4th Battalion 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) and Charlie Company 75th Airborne Rangers during the Vietnam War, but proud

of you, and for you. You accepted our nation's highest medal for heroism with honor, dignity, humility and selflessness, all attributes of a true warrior hero. You make us old Sky Soldiers proud. I know you will go forth into the future utilizing this great honor, that you so justly earned, not for self-glory, but as a means to continue to help your brother and sister warriors and our nation as a whole. God's speed young warrior. *Airborne!!*

Jerry 'Rocky' Stone
B/4/503 & C/75th Rangers, '67-'70

SSG Sal Giunta: I would like to congratulate you for having been awarded the Medal of Honor. The Third Herd, forever...

James Thomas, SFC
D/2/503d, '67-'69

I am proud of you Sergeant Giunta. If I can ever help you in your career, please don't hesitate in contacting me. My son is also airborne and currently serving in Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division. I was with the Herd in Vietnam, 1969. *Airborne all the way!*

Dave Tong, PFC
B/4/503d, '69

Congratulations, I know you accept this for your comrades, but please do not let that bother you more than you can deal with, they all still walk with you in peace not anger.

Frank Vans Evers
173d LRRP, '66-'67

(continued....)





Bravo Bulls back row L-R: Bob Warfield, Mike Broderick, 173d Brigade Commander Bill Ostlund, Phil Farrow. Barry Herbison, Battle Company SSG Sal Giunta, Jim Robinson and Roy Lombardo. Front row L-R: Ed Kearney, Jack Price, Dave Glick and Joe Logan.

Dear Sal: I'm sure it's hard to accept that under such terrible circumstances you are the recipient of such an honor. We're all very proud of you, the honor that has been bestowed upon you; and the manner in which you accepted it makes us all proud to have been a part of the 173d. Best wishes for your continued success in whatever you choose to do.

**Dave von Reyn, SP4
C/2/503d, '68-'69**

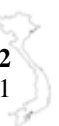
SSG Sal Giunta: I watched your interview today on Fox News. As a fellow Soldier I am amazed. I witnessed the real SSGT Giunta on TV today and I like you as a person and admire you as a Soldier. Keep up the good work. AIRBORNE!

**Jerry Wiles, SGT
B/2/503d, '67**

SSG Giunta: Thanks for your service, and your acts of bravery refusing to be defeated by the Taliban. You've made us all proud, especially a fellow 2nd Battalion / 503d Infantry soldier. With all of the Marine hoopla, it is so encouraging to see the Herd is kicking tail and

taking names!! Your bravery has done wonders for we older generation of "war fighters" from the Herd back in Nam.

**Rich Whipple, SGT
HHC/2/503d, '68-'69**





ROY S. LOMBARDO, JR., COL (Ret)
Commanding Officer, B/2/503d
Republic of Vietnam

Dear Fellow Sky Soldiers & Friends of the 173d Airborne:

I am writing to thank you for your help in financing the BRAVO BULL MEDAL OF HONOR CEREMONY for SSG Sal Giunta on 16 November. Following the presentation at the White House, SSG Giunta, his family and the families of Josh Brennan and Hugh Mendoza (both KIA), Sky Soldiers from BATTLE Company of today and my fellow veterans of yesteryear (Bravo Bulls, 2/503d) assembled to remember the paratroopers that we marched among and to honor SSG Giunta's bravery. We were joined by other current Sky Soldiers and friends of the Giunta's until the total exceeded 400.



Ranger Roy presiding over ceremonies

To celebrate, the Bravo Bulls use our unique silver and gold punchbowl and engraved cups, one for each of our absent companions. Uniquely, the Bravo Bulls of '65 - '66 included Milton Olive, the first MOH recipient from B/2/503, and 4 DSC recipients (Davis, Edwards, Lopez and Gipson). We have been connected with the men of BATTLE Company since 2004 when they returned from the parachute assault into Iraq. Each year we visit them in Vicenza to welcome them home and one year later to send them forward under St. Michael's over-watch back to Afghanistan.



BDQ Roy & Sal Giunta

We can rest easy that another major assault has been successfully dealt with due to your generosity. No active duty soldier paid a penny, which is only how it should be because they have already given so much.

Thanks again. You and yours remain in my daily prayers!

Fondest Airborne regards, Roy.

This reception mission was a tough one because we didn't have any control over the attendance of the families, which were large. Nevertheless, with the help of you, veteran Sky Soldiers, and other patriotic Americans, we are amassing enough to settle the cost for the reception.



Wife Jenny and guests toast 173d Medal of Honor recipient Sal Giunta.



A Gift for All Ages: The Significance of the Seemingly Insignificant

Dr. Ronald Reese Smith
1LT, FO, B/2/503d, 3/319th
ronaldreesesmith@gmail.com



LT Ron

In the early 19th century, a war-weary world was anxiously watching the march of Napoleon as he swept across helpless hamlets like fire across a Kansas wheat field. Nothing else was half as significant on the international scene. The broad brush strokes of the historian's canvas gave singular emphasis to the bloody scenes of tyranny created by that brilliant but diminutive dictator of France.

In 1809, somewhere between the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, babies were being born all over Europe and America.

- William Gladstone was born in Liverpool, England;
- Alfred Lloyd Tennyson was born in Somersby, England;
- Oliver Wendell Holmes drew his first breath in Cambridge, Massachusetts;
- Edgar Allen Poe, a few miles away in Boston, started his brief and tragic life;
- Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg, Germany;
- A physician named Darwin and his wife called their infant son, Charles Robert.
- Robert Charles Winthrop wore his first diapers.

America's 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, was born in Hodgenville, Hardin County, Kentucky to an illiterate, wandering laborer in a rugged log cabin.

All of that (and a lot more) happened in 1809 -- but who cared? The destiny of the world seemed to be shaped on the battlefields in Austria -- or was it? Now, 202 years later, is there the slightest doubt about which made the greatest contribution in history -- those battles or those babies? It is doubtful anyone other than a handful of history buffs could name even one Austrian campaign. But, who can measure the impact of those other lives?

What appeared to be super significant to the world has proven to be no more exciting than a Sunday afternoon yawn. What seemed to be totally insignificant was, in fact, the genesis of a new era.

So it was with the birth of Jesus. Eighteen centuries before, who would have cared about the birth of a baby laid in a cattle trough in a drafty cave when the entire world was watching Rome in all of her splendor? Bound on the west by the Atlantic, on the east by the Euphrates, on the north by the Rhine and Danube and on the south by the Sahara Desert, the Roman Empire was as vast as it was vicious. All eyes were on Augustus Caesar who demanded a census of the entire Roman world in order that he might determine a measurement to enlarge taxes. What could possibly be more important than Caesar's decisions in Rome? Who cared about a baby born to a poor carpenter and his betrothed from the insignificant little village of Nazareth? (Nazareth was so insignificant it was never listed among the cities and towns of Israel.) The Bethlehem crowds had no inkling that the Son of God was asleep in their little town. Indeed, only a few shepherds came to see him, and they left, glorifying God.

Apparently, God did. It is doubtful that Augustus Caesar realized that he was sent from central casting -- an errand boy for the fulfillment of Micah's prediction, a pawn in the hand of God, a piece of lint on the pages of prophecy.

For the first time in history since the Tower of Babel, the entire world spoke the same language -- Koine Greek -- the business language of the world -- thanks to our friend Alexander the Great. When Alexander conquered the then-known world 330 years before the birth of Christ, his methodology for governing his conquest was simple: Hellenize it! He commanded soldiers to settle down, marry the local girls, teach them Greek art, Greek culture, Greek philosophy, and, of course, the Greek language.

Later, the Romans brought their contribution. For the first time in history the entire known world was at peace and enjoyed the *Pax Romana*. Not only did the Apostles have freedom of movement through the entire world to share the good news of God's arrival, but also, thanks to the Romans, they had roads on which to travel. Some of those roads, such as the Appian Way, are still in existence, and in some places in Italy, still in use. It's doubtful that Alexander or any of the Caesars ever realized that they were instruments in the hand of God to prepare the world to learn of the greatest story ever told. While Rome was busy making history, Jesus Christ arrived. He pitched his tent in silence on straw, in a drafty cave, under a star. And the world did not even notice -- did not even notice Mary's little lamb.


(continued....)



Yes, indeed! What appeared to be super significant to the world has proven to be no more exciting than a Sunday afternoon yawn. What seemed to be totally insignificant was, in fact, the genesis of a new era.

While Jesus Christ stood on the threshold of heaven, stepped across the universe and took on humanity, becoming the unique God-man--both fully God and fully man – while born into the world as all of the rest of us; he did not stay a baby. He grew in favor with both man and God. He came into this war-torn world of selfishness and sin for one purpose--to die as a sacrifice for our sin. The forgiveness he offers will satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts. Truly, Jesus is a gift of all ages. No gift is more needed by a dying world than the life-giving Savior, Jesus Christ. He and He alone gives meaning and purpose for living.

As young men, and women, we all suited up and marched off to war -- some to the war that was supposed to end all wars; some to a war that was called "a conflict" on the Korean Peninsula. Many of us went off to southeast Asia and Vietnam, and more recently, the countries of Iraq and Afghanistan. We've all done so in the service of our country and with the hope and intent that our service and sacrifice would bring about a greater peace. While our service might have helped stabilize or bring peace for a season, ultimately, real peace will come when Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, rules in our hearts. You will experience peace, as only God can give, as you yield your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is still a "gift for all the ages."

An object His grace....**Ron** 

~ Editorial ~ Religion, Soldiers and Stuff

Upon undertaking the honor of producing our newsletter, I looked at other old soldier newsletters to get an idea what they were all about. Of the publications I researched, without exception, each had a Chaplain's Corner or some section equally appropriately named where a man or woman of the cloth would share uplifting words of glory and benevolence and the like. After all, god and soldiering and war have been inseparable throughout the history of our country. Hell, nations fight because of and over gods, and I certainly didn't want to produce the first ever old soldier newsletter without Him having a presence.

After the first couple of trial editions, I went on a preacher man search and find mission. It really wasn't much of a mission as a very close friend was a retired minister from Greybull, WY, a sniper who had served with the 4/503d, experienced in the glory stuff, and someone who knew god personally, Mike McMillan. "I'll be happy to," Mac told me when I invited him to fill the role of chaplain in our Chaplain's Corner.

For many months that Geronimo trooper did just that, and as far as I can tell, did a damn good job of it too. We never received a single complaint, and, lightning hit my house only once....no shit.

In spite of the uplifting sermons Mac shared with us, I wanted a 2nd Batt preacher to fill that slot, and we have many within our ranks. After finding Bravo Bull LT Ron living nearby in Orlando, I invited him to take the holy reins, and Mac stepped aside as the gentleman he is. For the past many months Ron too has shared words of glory and grace and the hereafter with nary a complaint from the troops; more importantly, the house here hasn't once been struck by lightning since Mac took his leave. Now, I'm not saying god doesn't like the 4th Batt....

It's reported about 85% of Americans believe in Christianity or some like faith, meaning an equal number of you share such beliefs; but that leaves me and the other 15% as godless heathens, friendly like, but still heathens. We're the agnostics and atheists or, in my case, secular humanists....the non-believer soldiers. I once asked Mac if I should include an "Atheist's Corner" in our newsletter, he said, "You better not." So, I didn't.

While not agreeing with followers of Christ and Buddha and Allah, or Cao Dai for that matter, I certainly respect everyone's right to their beliefs, however amusing they might seem at times. But, what I do question, and it seems too often lately, is the hypocrisy demonstrated by too many of these people of faith, these people of the church, these believers in the teachings of the Bible – sadly, this includes many of my soldier buddies.

Many rail about our black president, because he's black, poor people who are "taking away my hard earned money," while they themselves are on the receiving end of government relief, unwilling to provide medical coverage to *all* Americans as we send billions of dollars overseas to impoverished and war-torn lands (how dare they!), or demonizing other faiths out of misguided fear and ignorance, almost without exception these complaints come from people who proclaim themselves to be Christians. It makes me wonder sometimes, what does it mean to be a Christian?

A Sky Soldier buddy of mine, another Hell destined sinner, ends all his email messages with this note:

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." FDR

And, I'm very disappointed with LT Ron for not once mentioning Santa Claus in his Christmas message. I believe in Santa Claus, he brings me stuff. **Smitty Out**





National Infantry Museum Wins Prestigious Award

Thea Award recognizes excellence in the themed entertainment industry

The National Infantry Foundation is proud to announce the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Patriot Park has been selected for a prestigious national award.

The 2010 Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement "recognizes excellence in the creation of extraordinary visitor experiences, celebrating storytelling around the globe." It honors the creative partnerships formed between attraction owners and designers.



Boston-based Christopher Chadbourne and Associates designed the exhibits for the museum. The signature exhibit, called *The Last 100 Yards*, takes visitors on an emotional journey through the history of the American Infantryman. It is built on a 100-yard ramp that cuts through the center of museum, representing the Infantry's role in taking the last 100 yards of the battle.

Medal of Honor and provides visitors with a place for contemplation.

The Family Gallery, which honors the sacrifices of spouses, parents and siblings of soldiers is believed to be unique among military museums.

Other key members of the project team include architects E. Verner Johnson and Associates, video producer Donna Lawrence Productions, exhibit fabricators Design Craftsmen, Inc., sculptors Studio EIS and project managers Newton Aaron and Associates.

The Thea Award is the Themed Entertainment Association's version of the Oscar. It will be presented to representatives of the National Infantry Museum at an awards gala in Hollywood next spring.



Six era galleries surround the museum's Grand Hall. The Hall of Valor is a striking, glass-walled space that honors those who have earned the



CEREMONY HONORS VETERANS

Monday, November 15, 2010

By Amanda Buck – Bulletin Staff Writer

The nation's veterans do not always receive the recognition and thanks they deserve, but that was not the case Sunday at Bassett High School.



Joseph Ellison Jr. left was named Veteran of the Year and Olaf Hurd, Jr. was given the Outstanding Military Veteran Award on Sunday during a Veterans Day ceremony at Bassett High School. Ellison served in various locations during his time in the Army, including Desert Storm. Hurd is a Vietnam veteran who served with the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Veterans of numerous wars and peacetime missions were honored during the annual community Veterans Day service. Three men — Lee C. Smith, Olaf Hurd, Jr. and Joseph Ellison, Jr. — received special recognition, and many others were remembered by the crowd of about 200.

Veterans Day, held each year on Nov. 11, is a chance to honor veterans who serve their country and make freedom possible, said Lt. Col. David Gilleran, guest speaker at the event. Gilleran, pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Martinsville, has served two deployments in the war on terror and is commanding

chaplain of the 134th Chaplain Support Team in Blackstone. Veterans Day, he said, *“is not a day to celebrate war, but rather a day to celebrate peace. ... You enjoy the peace a veteran provides.”*

In his years with the military, Gilleran said he has seen that being a serviceman or woman *“is a job like no other. It’s difficult, dangerous, underpaid and under-recognized.”* Veterans understand what that job involves in a way civilians can’t, he said. Veterans *“know what it’s like”* to be on patrol in Afghanistan, wondering if an IED (improvised explosive device) is about to go off, Gilleran said. They know what it’s like to crawl through rice paddies or deserts *“with 100 pounds of gear strapped across your back,”* or to crawl across beaches in the South Pacific during World War II or through snow banks in Korea.

Men and women in the military do *“a thankless job that few people wanted,”* and some, such as those who served in Vietnam, *“were condemned for doing it,”* Gilleran said.

“Veterans are the men and women who stepped forward,” he said. *“Service of one’s country indeed is the most honorable profession.”*

Even when one war ends, he said, it doesn’t mean another won’t begin.

“Your grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be called to stand as the first line of defense,” he told the audience. Those who answer — from the Revolutionary War to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — keep Americans safe and make freedom possible,

he said.

David Kipfinger, commander of the Martinsville Henry County Veterans Honor Guard, recognized the veteran of the year, who is chosen annually by members of local veterans organizations. Ellison, this year’s recipient, served in the Army for 22 years, including a period in Desert Storm. Five years ago, he joined American Legion Homer Dillard Post 78, and he is involved in a wide range of community activities, Kipfinger said. Among them, Ellison goes into local schools and mentors students. He works closely with the JROTC at Magna Vista High School and often takes veterans and others to doctor appointments, the grocery store or anywhere else they need to go, Kipfinger said.

(continued...)



Ellison is the fifth member of the Homer Dillard Post to receive the Veteran of the Year award, said Commander Sonny Richardson. The post, which has 214 members, is particularly active and has received membership awards for two years straight, Richardson said. Kipfinger also recognized Smith, who received a certificate of appreciation. Smith, who is retired, worked as a service officer for 40 years, helping veterans receive the benefits they deserve, Kipfinger said.

"He knew the system inside and out," Kipfinger said. "He helped many people."

Debra Buchanan, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, presented the second annual Outstanding Military Veteran Award to Hurd, a Vietnam veteran. The award was established because *"for too long, we have failed to properly recognize and thank the men and women of this community who served us in the various branches of the military,"* Buchanan said.

This year's nomination process showed the board that *"we have many, many people in this community who have dedicated their lives to making our lives better. There is no nobler venture than that,"* she said.

Although all the nominees were "outstanding," Buchanan said Hurd's history of service in the military and the community made him this year's recipient.

A member of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam, Hurd was paralyzed from the chest down after being wounded in the Mekong Delta. *"But that didn't stop him,"* Buchanan said, adding that Hurd went on to compete in numerous wheelchair sports and started the All American Handicapped Association in Martinsville and Henry County, *"where he worked tirelessly to obtain adequate handicapped parking signs and curb cuts throughout the local area."*

Hurd has been involved with numerous volunteer activities and is a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church and the VFW Post 2820 of Bassett. He also *"really, really likes to hunt,"* Buchanan said. ***"Clearly, this year's recipient, while physically challenged, could teach all of us what it means to overcome our obstacles and contribute to the betterment of mankind,"*** she said.

All three men expressed their thanks for the honors and were recognized with applause from the audience. The Bassett High School JROTC presented and retired the colors, and the Bassett High School band performed a selection of military music.

Vietnam veterans reunited at event

Monday, November 15, 2010

By Amanda Buck – Bulletin Staff Writer

Nearly 44 years have passed since the day Olaf Hurd, Jr. was wounded in a surprise attack in Vietnam.



Jerry Hassler, right, takes a look at the plaque recognizing Olaf Hurd, left, as Outstanding Military Veteran. Hassler surprised Hurd with his visit. It was the first time they had seen each other in 43 years.

On Sunday, Hurd was "dumbfounded" when he came face to face for the first time with a friend who was with him that day in 1967.

Jerry Hassler, who lives in Franklin, Tenn., traveled to Bassett to see Hurd receive the Outstanding Military Veteran Award, an honor that recognizes military and community service. Hurd admitted that he "had a sneaking idea" that he might receive the award. But Hassler's visit had been kept completely under wraps.

(continued....)



"Jerry here was a complete surprise," Hurd said. "I'm dumbfounded." During their time in Vietnam, Hassler and Hurd were paratroopers in a reconnaissance platoon, Hassler said. As radio telegraph operators, they carried radios that made communication possible.

On Feb. 10, 1967, the group was on patrol in the Mekong Delta when the soldiers stopped to take a break. "I said, 'Would you like me to monitor your radio?'" and Hurd agreed, Hassler recalled. Hassler, who was listening to both his radio and Hurd's, said he was leaning against a small hill or termite mound when a flare that was part of the group's perimeter defense went off. "We didn't hear anything, so the sergeant said, 'Hurd, go find out what's going on,'" Hassler recalled.

It turned out to be an attack. A bullet pierced Hurd's left shoulder and lodged in his spine, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. Another man was killed, Hassler said. "That was pretty much it," he said. "That's the last time I saw him till today."

Hassler, who was wearing a shirt and hat proclaiming his membership in the 173d Airborne Brigade, said he tried to keep himself out of sight as Sunday's ceremony got under way. It worked. When David Kipfinger, a close friend of Hurd's and commander of the Martinsville-Henry County Veterans Honor Guard, announced the surprise visitor, Hurd was overcome with emotion.

Hassler approached the front of the auditorium, where the two men embraced as the audience got to its feet. "That was a total surprise," Hurd said. "I had no idea, really."

The two men have kept in touch by e-mail in recent years, but seeing each other again was something else. Hassler joked that Hurd, who kept his hair in a short buzz cut during the war, now has more hair than Hassler does. Both men said they were happy to see each other again.

"I'm really glad I came," Hassler said. "We sprung it on him." Despite the hardships of Hurd's time in Vietnam — he served from May 1966 to February 1967 — and his injury, Hurd said he did have some good experiences there. He also had a supportive family full of people who helped him when he returned home, he said. "I was proud to be in the military and proud to serve my country," Hurd said. "I've said many times, if I could go back in time and serve my country again, I'd be glad to do so, even knowing the outcome."

ANOTHER FALLEN SKY SOLDIER IS FOUND!



In early August, 2010, the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation identified a Vietnam era trooper, taken from us, who was not accounted for by our Association on its many lists of fallen warriors generated over the past forty plus years.

Frank Denryter, who served with D/4/503d from 1970 to 1971, kept a log of all Sky Soldiers in the company who died in service during his tour of duty. When reviewing the names of the fallen warriors inscribed on the recently dedicated 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial, he realized one of his comrades was not included. The name of SGT Clinton A. Cook, killed on 28 April 1970 by a bobby trapped 105mm round, was missing!

Frank informed the Foundation of the omission and Sgt. Cook's name will be engraved on the Memorial in 2011, along with the names of the fallen from the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team's most recent deployment.

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial was designed to accommodate the addition of names of the Vietnam era fallen. If some of our brothers were omitted from the list of names inscribed on the panels the Foundation encourages all Sky Soldier veterans and family members to go to the KIA link on the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Website (www.173dairbornememorial.org) and ensure that your comrades/loved ones are listed. Should you find an omission, contact the Memorial Foundation's Director of Heraldry, Bob Wolfgang, at jrw173d@aol.com

Clinton Arthur Cook

Sergeant

D CO, 4TH BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD
ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Hydaburg, Alaska

October 13, 1948 to April 28, 1970

CLINTON A COOK is on the Wall at

Panel 11W Line 063



*I WANNA BE AN AIRBORNE RANGER
I WANNA LIVE A LIFE OF DANGER*



May 2010 Gathering of 173d Rangers and Chopper Crew Members in Las Vegas.



Rangers winning hearts and minds of villagers in Vegas.
Photos sent in by Robt. 'twin' Henriksen, N75 Rangers.

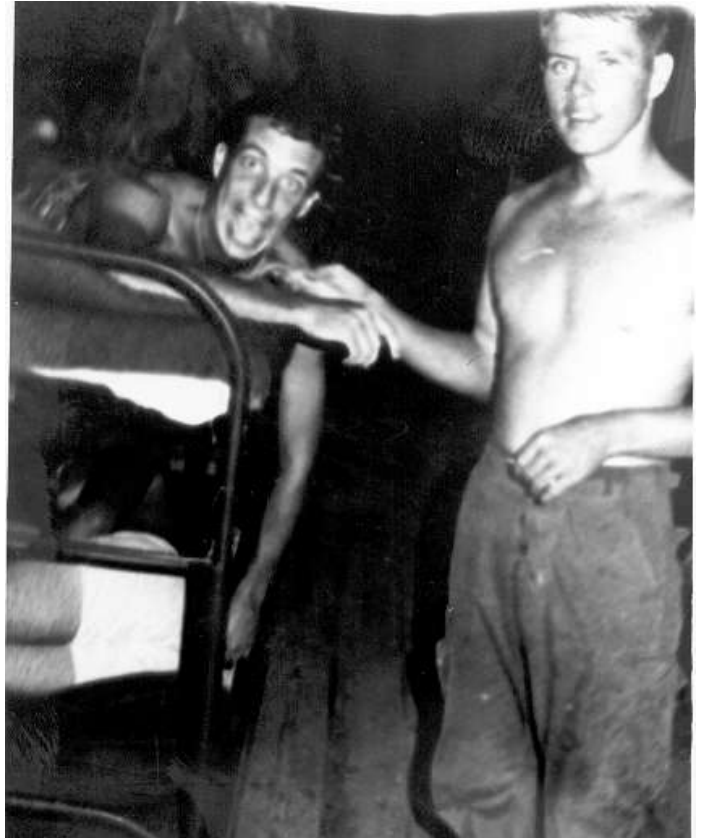
How much time do I have?

In the US Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA, one of the Sergeants was demonstrating all of the possible failures which could happen to the equipment. In particular, he was explaining how many things could happen to keep the main chute from opening. One of the trainees interrupted the Sarge and asked, *"If my parachute fails to open, how long do I have to open my reserve?"*

The Sergeant replied, *"Son. You have the rest of your life."*

~ Corrections ~

On Page 24 of last month's issue of our newsletter, I incorrectly identified Terry Boggs with Doc O'Donnell in this photo. The two men shown are John S. Boggs and Doc O'Donnell. Thanks to Dave "Griff" Griffin, HHC/B/2/503d for pointing out the mistake. Ed



John Boggs with the Doc, 1966.

In last month's issue of our newsletter (Page 28), I incorrectly promoted LTC Paul Fisher of the 3/503d to CO, Commanding Officer. Paul served as Commo Officer with the battalion. Paul, I'm working off the 20 pushups you ordered me to do, but there's no way in hell I'm sending you that bottle of Jack Daniels! Will you settle for my peaches and pound cake? ☺ Ed



Paul Fisher, Commo Officer Extraordinaire





173d REUNION ITINERARY

San Antonio, Texas, 22 June – 26 June 2011



(Tentative itinerary, subject to change)

June 22 -- Wednesday

- 1200 - 2000 Registration
- 1300 - 0100 Hospitality Room
- 1300 - 2200 Vendors
- 1800 - 2000 President's Reception



June 23 -- Thursday

- 0900 - 1200 Board of Director's Meeting
- 1000 - 1700 Registration
- 1000 - 2200 Vendors
- 1300 - 2400 Hospitality Room



June 27 -- Friday

- 0730 - 0900 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast
- 0900 - 1500 Registration
- 1000 - 2400 Hospitality Room
- 1000 - 2200 Vendors
- 1000 - Board buses for trip to Fort Sam Houston
- 1030 - 1500 Tour Fort Sam Houston
- 1700 - 2300 BBQ, Mariachis, Dance at Maverick Plaza

Maverick Plaza

June 25 -- Saturday

- 0900 - 1100 Registration
- 0900 - 1200 General Membership Meeting
- 1000 - 1200 Ladies' Brunch
- 1000 - 2200 Vendors
- 1000 - 1200 Hospitality Room

BANQUET DINNER

- 1815 - 1850 Cocktails
- 1900 - 1910 Post Colors
- 1930 - 2035 Dinner
- 2035 - 2130 Speakers & Awards
- 2130 Retire Colors
- 2135 - ??? Entertainment & Dancing

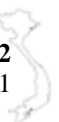


The Alamo

June 26 -- Sunday

- 0830 - 1000 Continental Breakfast
- 1030 - 1130 Memorial Service, Arneson River Theater
- 1130 - Reunion closing. Depart or stay and see more of San Antonio.

Reunion web site: <http://www.skysoldiers.com>





173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION

~ REUNION 2011 ~

22 June – 26 June 2011, San Antonio, TX

Hosted by Texas Chapter 13



Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Unit served with in the Brigade _____ Dates served _____

Circle Shirt Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL Male/Female _____

Exact hat size _____ (Note: A cowboy hat will be given to the 173d member above if Registration Form and hat size are received by March 1, 2011.)

Guests:

Circle Male or Female and Shirt Size for each guest

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Registration/ Event Fees

- ___ \$173.00 per Association Member
- ___ \$125.00 per Guest
- ___ \$125.00 per Gold Star Family Member
- ___ \$ 75.00 per Active Duty Soldier (Not on Orders)
- ___ FREE Active Duty Soldiers on Orders (i.e., Command, Color Guard)
- ___ \$ 75.00 per Vendor Table
- ___ FREE Gold Star Brunch – 173d Gold Star Families
- ___ Brunch Ladies Brunch (Included with registration)
- ___ Please check if planning to attend.
- ___ \$ 15.00 Trip to Fort Sam Houston per person
- ___ \$ 15.00 Sky Soldier Adoption Program "Have a meal on me" for active duty soldiers



Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio, Texas

\$ _____ Total Enclosed

Make Checks Payable to: Texas Reunion 2011 – 173d Airborne Brigade

Mail Checks to: John Rolfe, 100 Oleander Road, Comfort, TX 78013



For Hotel Reservations: Hilton Palacio del Rio, \$119 + tax per night. Call 1-800-HILTONS and request the group rate for The 173d Airborne Brigade Association, Inc., or use the unique group code ABA.

Overflow Hotel: Menger Hotel, \$119 + tax per night, Call:1-800-345-9285 and request the group rate for the 173d Airborne Brigade Association.

To Register Online, visit www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011



After the War, Still Soldiering *All The Way*

By **Dr. Scott Fairchild, LTC (Ret)**
82nd Airborne Div.



Paul Rieckhoff (L) receives one of the Welcome Home Vets ducks and was thanked by Doc Scott (R) for his support of veterans through his role as Executive Director of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). <http://iava.org/about>

Thank you for your service to your country and most of all thank you for your sacrifice. The sacrifice is the part which it is hard for others to understand, especially civilians. Often even friends and family can't understand it. They can't begin to know that you left a part of yourself "over there."

They can't accept that you went over a young boy and came back an old man. They are not with you in the middle of the night when you wake up back in the jungle or the Central Highlands or in some desert and your weapon won't fire, or you are face-to-face with the friend who is no more. They didn't see the things you as a young soldier saw, nor anyone should ever see.

All of the anger, all of the fear, all of the caution, all of the distancing and isolation are natural human coping mechanisms which served you well while in-country, they helped you survive. They aren't necessary anymore, but try and tell your brain and body that!

When a loud noise goes off behind you or you are boxed in in traffic or you are packed into a tight seat on an airplane and there is no way out...you want to lash out with all your strength, and sometimes anyone within grenade radius gets it. It is a normal reaction for you to an abnormal situation. Many of your fellow soldiers with similar experiences are doing the same things....

"I just want my old self back."

It's the mantra of any combat soldier.

Remember, your brain has been changed.

There is a book called, "*Once a Warrior, Wired for Life.*" That used to be true, but we are in development of new tools and techniques, like *brain retraining*. Through this technique our own studies have shown a reduction to PTSD symptoms by 63%. We must work to get back that healthy brain for you.

It is so important you realize there is help and you are not alone. There are so many veterans who experience exactly what you experience, every night, every day.

The Chain of Command doesn't get it, the VA doesn't get it, the government doesn't get it, and the civilians sure as hell don't get it, but **you** get it. When others don't even know what *it* is, **through** your connections with your buddies from combat, you and they get it.

You are to be commended for your courage. Not just for your time in service and during war, but for your strength to confront and battle this latest enemy silently yet purposefully sneaking through the wire; this enemy we call PTSD.

Because, as you know, when it comes down to it, you cannot depend on other folks, but you can depend on your brothers. Remember from the book, *The Things They Carried...* "*They carried their pictures from home, they carried their short-timers calendar, they carried their Tabasco sauce and extra ammo clips, but **above all they carried each other.***" It's veterans taking care of veterans.

Soldier On, fellow warrior. You have another mission at which to excel. We are going to **heal that soldier within**, and empower you to continue to do what you have already begun to do.

(continued....)





Doc Scott conducting PTSD awareness clinic at 173d reunion in N. Myrtle Beach. Photo by : Craig Ford, C/1/503d

We hear you and understand you. It is all part of the journey. You will not be going this alone.

You ain't heavy, man, you're my brother,



Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Making Invisible Wounds Visible. Photo by Craig Ford, C/1/503d

An old airborne warrior shared a little wisdom with me, he calls it THE CONTRACT. See the August '09, Issue 2, Pages 1-3 of your 2/503d newsletter. Check it out. Let me know what you think. Give me a call or email me your phone number, we will setup a meeting for treatment and a PTSD evaluation so we can get started on that healing journey.

Doc Scott

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

Veterans Caring for Veterans,

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



Note: Doc Scott is a former LTC with the 82nd Airborne Div. who conducted much of the early studies and research on PTSD for the U.S. Army at Walter Reed Army Hospital, and he is a renowned authority on combat-related PTSD. From his private practice, Baytree Behavioral Health in Melbourne, Florida, the Doc has helped numerous Sky Soldiers, from privates to colonels and their spouses and partners from throughout the country – this old RTO one of them. Ed



The Comprehensive PTSD Care Institute of Chicago (CPCIC)



Dr. Eugene Lipov and Steven Tomaszewski, Sr. are proud to announce the launch of The Comprehensive PTSD Care Institute of Chicago which will be held December 9th between 7-9 p.m. Everyone is invited to come and meet the staff and see their current clinic and future clinic. They are not asking for any money, just your time and help to let our Veterans know they are there.

Governor's Place
2260 W. Higgins Road
Suite 101
Hoffman Estates, Illinois

Please RSVP by December 3rd to:
Kevin Burkhardt: 224-698-2700
kevin@painmngt.com

The mission of CPCIC is to provide near-term real hope and real solutions for Warfighters and Veterans suffering from PTSD and TBI to improve their quality of life.

Please visit our web site at:
www.stopptsdnow.com

Steven M. Tomaszewski
Director of Veterans Outreach
www.stopptsdnow.com
1450 American Lane
Suite 1400
Schaumburg, IL 60173
224-698-2700

2/503d Crossword Puzzle Winner

We ran a crossword puzzle in last month's issue promising to send a bottle of the editor's favorite rum from St. Croix, VI to the first person to send in correct answers. The winner is **Preston "Pres" Parrott**, Maj., former company commander of E/2/503d. Pres, the bottle of Cruzan rum will arrive your AO in time for Christmas, but, remember what the Islanders say, "If you drink too much Cruzan, you'll get Cruzan Confusion." Congratulations Cap!



Correct answers to puzzle:

- | | | | |
|---------|-------------|-------|-------------|
| Across: | 1. Xin Loi | Down: | 2. Canteen |
| | 3. Aussies | | 3. AWOL |
| | 5. APC | | 4. MOS |
| | 7. Airborne | | 6. Squad |
| | 9. PRC | | 8. Alpha |
| | 10. Puff | | 9. Poncho |
| | 11. C Rats | | 11. Cu Chi |
| | 12. Huey | | 14. Destroy |
| | 13. MPC | | 16. X Ray |
| | 14. Dak To | | |
| | 15. Out | | |

Note: Since Pres was the *only* one to send in answers, we will discontinue crossword puzzles due to lack of popular demand, plus, Pres would win every month and ultimately turn into a very confused man.



Who is this dapper 2/503d Trooper?





173d Airborne Brigade Memorial DVD



The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation DVD of the memorial dedication at Fort Benning, GA held June 1, 2010, is now available for purchase. Order early for Christmas! What a great gift to give a Sky Soldier buddy, the family of a Sky Soldier and those who served with the 173d.

All monies raised from the sale of DVD's will go to the perpetual care of the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial. This is not the power point slide presentation which was circulated, but a video, in DVD format, which is over one-hour long and covers the entire dedication ceremony.

If you need further information please contact Craig Ford, Treasurer, 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation, email: cford1503@frontier.com or call Craig at: [425-422-7976](tel:425-422-7976)

~ DVD Order Form ~

Please send check or money order to the address below and

payable to the:

173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation

(please print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Country: _____



Number of DVD's ordered ____ at \$20.00 per DVD: \$ _____

First Class shipping for one or two DVD's is \$2.00 total:* \$ _____

Priority Mail shipping for three or more DVD's is \$5.00 total:* \$ _____

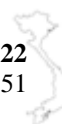
Check or money order enclosed for this total amount: USD \$ _____

(Please email Craig for postage rates to outside North America)

Please mail to:

173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation 17207
76th Avenue, W., Edmonds, WA 98026 U.S.A.

~ Please allow two (2) weeks for delivery ~



INCOMING!



~ I thought my 'boys' had been permanently removed ~

Giddy Mates. Gee, I enjoyed this issue of the newsletter probably a little more than all the previous issues because of the bit of history about the jump into Nadzab, New Guinea (November 2010, Issue 21, Page 45). I can't recall if I ever mentioned this to you before but my daddy was one of the Aussies who were in that jump with the 503 PIR but I didn't know anything about it until one day not long before he died. We were talking about all kinds of stuff over a couple of 'cold ones' and he said to me, "Did you ever think you had castrated yourself when you jumped out of a plane?" I said that most times I was too busy, scared or bitching to really remember, and he added, "You know, we had a couple of days practice before they sent us over to that job and to this day I don't know how to explain how I managed to pump out your 2 brothers and 2 sisters as I thought my 'boys' had been permanently removed by the webbing." My daddy served in New Guinea from when he was 19 until he was 22. He had been returned to Gordonvale (Qld), Australia after being wounded and then rejoined the artillery unit that they took the "volunteers" from. That was the only time he ever really mentioned that association and it was not until the 173d Sydney reunion that I was talking to Ray Ramirez and he started talking about the lineal relationship of Aussies and The Herd and I realized he was talking about my daddy and his mates (without any identification). I would love to send a few "UNWARRY" stories that I found amusing but I feel a bit apprehensive intruding on the memories of all you fellow 2/503 mates as it is THEIR newsletter. Thanks for the read mate, I really enjoy them and often it takes me back to those days when we were all 10 foot tall and bulletproof until God (or something) showed us we were not always right!

John Arnold
1RAR

Hey Cobber. Thanks for the great story about your dad. Yes, John, you and all your mates are invited to send in what you like, we enjoy reading about you wild and crazy Aussie Diggers. By the way, nice hats. Ed

~ Those Salty Dogs ~

I know I sound like a broken record but I hate to see the note "**Remember, our newsletter is filled with adult content and may not be appropriate for too young eyes.**" which I assume you were forced to insert because of all the expletives in the newsletter. I suggest you either edit such text or delete future submissions rather than risk offending the large cross section of followers

you are obtaining through this great work. Profanity is the crutch of the intellectual cripple when used indiscriminately with no real motive. Thanks.

R 2/503d

You're damn right! Nah, that disclaimer wasn't because of anyone's particular use of curse words, and our newsletter really isn't for too young eyes. This ain't no Sunday-go-to-meetin' pamphlet; this is about paratroopers and war and veins in the teeth and stuff. The thing is always splattered with F-bombs and squirrel balls and the like. It's simply an adult publication for adults and written (mostly unedited) by adults, G.I.'s at that, who as you know, can be a tad salty at times...I love it. We will not edit how our guys choose to report our history, that will be left in the domain of the authors. I often correct spelling and basic grammar, otherwise, this shit is what it is. We've all stared death in the eye and watched its workings up close, I think we can handle a few blue words; if not, folks can read their Bibles instead, or, take-over the newsletter. Thanks brother, appreciate your sensitive thoughts, you're a good man and I'm proud to have you as one of my closest friends. Ed

~ Good Wishes ~

Holiday wishes to all Sky Soldiers wherever you are serving. "We sleep safe in our beds because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would do us harm." George Orwell

Steve 'Sgt. Rock' Vargo
C/2/503d, '67

And rough women too. Ed

~ Jim Thorne Farewell ~

On page 43 of 48 (November newsletter) you have the obit of Lt. Jim Thorne. I tried to get to his funeral but got there after it had started. I had a 15 minute appointment at Carlisle with the Commandant that was to have been at 10:30 but did not get in his office until 10:45 and he kept us until 11:45. By the time I got to the Church at Camp Hill the service had already started so I did not go in. I did sign the Memorial book indicating I was 173d ABN BDE. I have also sent a small check to the VA Med Center Hospice. He is not the first friend I have taken care of in their final days by that Hospice. They do a super job. Airborne,

Don Bliss
173d Aviation Bn

(continued....)



~ Memories of Buddies in Vietnam ~

Thank you for being faithful in sending me the newsletter. My name is George Luis Rivera, I was a floater with 2/503d. I was an artillery observer so I was moved around the line companies every month. I arrived there during early February 1968 until December 1968. Sometime after Summer, I was sent to Battalion Recon until December 1968. I was with No DEROS Alpha with CO Captain Ahern, XO LT MacPherson, B Company Captain Fox, C Company with Captain Gellison, and D Company. I returned in late 1969. I went straight to Battalion Recon again. I don't know what else to say. I served well, knew many who died, hardly any who made it. I have been disconnected ever since. I was very moved to have seen the 173d Memorial dedication at Fort Benning. I can make out the name of William Francis Brice. He was Echo Company driver. He and my other friend Patrick Steele were killed just outside the berm at LZ English North one day. Thank you so much for having sent this to me. I was a Sergeant. I was given the name George of The Jungle by Dugan Erslund, No DEROS Alpha Company Battalion RTO one day when I climbed a tree to set up a directional antenna after none of the guys who tried to could make it up the tree. He asked me if I could climb the tree. I said yes and went at it. He said he'd give me five dollars if I could climb the tree. I am still waiting for it. When I climbed down he said, "Damn George, you're a regular George of The Jungle," and the name stuck. I was known by the call signs Alpha Echo, 1 Niner X-Ray, and Vector One Niner. I worked with B 3/319, Capt. Lacey, the 175s from LZ Salem and LZ Lot, LZ Tater. I was stationed at Pleiku, then An Khe, then Bong Song at LZ English, and sometimes at LZ English North. I have chronic CRS syndrome, and PTSD. I don't sleep much, walk around a lot while everyone sleeps. I sleep better armed. I am still there most of the time. Thanks for the mail brother.

There was a Lieutenant named Michael Phalen and George White? Do you know if they survived? He was a fine LT, caring about his men and even though massively wounded himself, the first words out of his mouth when he regained consciousness after the night explosion were, "How are the men? Is everyone okay? Did we lose anyone?" Then he looked down in the dark and saw his severed right leg and began crying for a moment. I did not tell him Frank Herrera had died. I told him, "It's me sir, Rivera, I've got you now sir. I'll take care of you now." Then we took some MG fire and after a long time, the Dust Off came in. It was total darkness as we loaded the 13 wounded into the one Slick. They were screaming as we stacked one on top of another to enable them to get to aid quickly. I am still there. I can still hear them screaming. I cry over it sometimes. I blame it on allergies if someone notices.

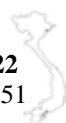
There is more, there are more, to the story. I was cold all night even though the temperature was at least in the eighties. Later that morning at daybreak, I discovered that my fatigues had been drenched in blood from top to bottom. That's why I had been so cold all night. I can't get the incident out of my mind. There were no uniforms to change into, but we were extracted later that day, so I only had to wear them one day. As long as I stayed in the sun I was fine, but as soon as I stepped into the lightest shade I would be covered by flies. I cannot get it out of my mind. I hate flies. Every time I see one I go after it and hunt it down until I kill it. I know its excessive, maybe obsessive. It's a perpetual nightmare. I'm sorry to have burdened you with this account. Welcome home. I'm glad you made it.

Do you know anything of LT COL William B. Hornish? He was 2nd Bat CO when I first arrived. He was one hell of a commander. It was not good practice for him, but anytime there was a unit in contact his chopper, The Tijuana Taxi would show up and he would jump out and jump into the fight. He was crazy to do that, but he was loved for it. We used to call him Uncle Bill or Wild Bill. One night there was a big night firefight with, as I recall B Company, and some indians. Bravo was taking so much fire that one of the chopper pilots on scene refused to approach again because he had taken so much fire already. He said he didn't want to get shot down. I heard Col Hornish scream at him saying, "You get back there and get in the fight and bring my boys out or bring my chopper back here and I'll get a real man to fly it. In fact, get back here and pick me up!" I would have hated to be that pilot. That's why we called him Uncle.

There were some people I failed to mention. The medics that night were Senior Medic Gerry Walsh from Boston and James Tuttle from Allentown I believe, maybe Levittown, PA. I cannot remember another. Among the wounded were George White and at least nine others. Frank Herrera was KIA that night. Steve Perkins with his M-60 crew went out across a wide rice paddy in search of the machine gun. I remember seeing them slither by as silent as a snake in the dark into the rice paddy after the enemy MG opened up. I saw Steve and Jimmy Tuttle again back at Fort Bragg. The CO's name was Captain Joe Gellison. His RTO was named MacGregor. It was my third day out with them, so I am sorry I cannot recall any more names

George Rivera
A/2/503d, '68

Note: Thanks for sharing, George. Any buddies out there who remember George, you can contact him at:
pathfinder5181@msn.com





~ From Down Under ~

~ Tactical Recon Photos ~

Fellows: Do you know in which US archival repository the tactical recon photos from Vietnam would be held?

A group of our veterans is working with the Vietnamese to locate their MIAs, as they were very helpful to our teams searching for our MIAs.

The location of interest now is May-June 1968, north-east from Saigon, where some heavy fighting occurred between our forces and the VC/NVA at two fire support bases during the attacks on Saigon after Tet.

Bomb craters were used as convenient mass graves, but as 42 years have passed, finding the exact spot is difficult and even modern gadgetry like ground-penetrating radar and Google-Earth are not solving the problem.

The idea is to locate imagery from the time and identify the craters used as mass graves.

Our own archives have been searched with little result for this type imagery. Sadly, a lot was destroyed after our involvement in SVN ended. Any suggestion will be appreciated.

Lex McAuley
1RAR

bannerbk@big.net.au



A Coy arrives Vietnam 2 June 1965

Photo: firstbattalionassociation1rar.org.au

Is it a bird, is it a plane, is it...?

On Operation 'New Life', November 1965, 1RAR was clearing the town of Duc Hanh. A water buffalo got loose and did what water buffalo do - attack the strange-smelling foreigners. It charged down the street, hooking left and right with those big horns, scattering Aussies in

all directions. It just missed one guy, who slammed the butt of his M-79 onto its head as it passed, but the 79 was cocked and loaded....and fired. With all of South Vietnam to fly in, that round impacted at battalion headquarters, creating the instant impression that the damn Viet Cong were mortaring and first round accuracy was very good... then surprise when nothing more arrived. The 'unauthorized discharge' was a platoon secret for 25 years. *More....*

...The benefits of a military academy education:

On Operation 'Silver City', March 1966, a stream of Chinooks was flying into the 2/503rd area to extract the rice and stuff found there. One Aussie officer, a graduate from the Academy, wondered where all the helicopters were going, and someone said they were taking Mules to evacuate the caches found in the 2/503rd area, assuming 'mules' would be understood as the mechanical type. Our staff-trained officer considered this, frowned and asked, "Where are they going to get fodder for mules around here?"

Lex McAulay
1RAR

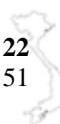


WHODAT?

In last month's issued of our newsletter we asked you to identify this young Master Blaster. In 1966/'67, this trooper was company commander of Charlie Company 2/503d. He is retired Major General John "Jack" Leide.



The Cap



WWII 503rd Buddies

Over the past couple weeks a number of Sky Soldiers sent letters to WWII troopers of the 503rd PRCT, to say hello, ask how they're doing and to thank them for their courageous service to their country. Of over 3,000 503rd paratroopers who fought in the Pacific during WWII, roughly 200 of these men are still with us.

Sky Soldier Frank Dukes, A/2/503d, sent a letter to WWII 503rd paratrooper Carl Dongilli who had made the famous combat jump onto Corregidor. In reply to his letter, Frank received the note below from Carl's son, Dana. Both Dana and Frank gave us permission to share their correspondence. Ed



Carl Dongilli, a 503rd Paratrooper

Frank,

My name is Dana Dongilli. I'm the son of Carl Dongilli. I'm emailing you to inform you that Carl passed away in October. I read your letter to him, since all his mail comes to my house, and was very touched that you wrote to him because he was a brother paratrooper. He was proud to have been one and to do what was needed to be done at that time of his life. He never really talked much about the war, but once in a while, if my brothers and I would ask, he would tell us things. He used to tell us, that even after all these years, he would still wake up at night and swear he was back there fighting again. I guess that never goes away. I know he made quite a few jumps, but I think the one that most stood out in his mind was the one on Corregidor. He actually has a book about that jump and the battle. Well, I'm going to go now. I just wanted to thank you for the letter and to let you know he would have appreciated it also.

Thanks Again,
Dana



**Carl, jump ready.
*Airborne, All The Way brother!***



Dear Dana,

I am so sorry to hear of Carl's passing. Sadly so many of our brave men who paved the way for our freedom are leaving us way too soon.

The members of the "Herd" owe a debt of gratitude to men like your father who paved the way for the rest of us. I did get a chance to meet 5 of the men who were with your father and made the jump on Corregidor. These men and your father gave the rest of us quite a legacy to live up to.

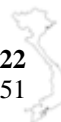
I am passing your letter on to my brothers and I am sure they will all feel the sorrow I feel tonight because we just lost another great TROOPER. Thanks for letting me know about your father.

I hope you know that he is now in a far better place and is not having any more of those bad dreams.

Frank Dukes

A/2/503

173d Abn Bde (Sep)



~ A Wonderful Letter ~

Following is a wonderful letter from 1966 which we can suspect few of us have ever seen or were aware existed. Ed



503rd REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM ASSOCIATION, WORLD WAR II

503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment 462nd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion
Co. A, 161st Parachute Engineer Battalion



BRIG. GEN. GEORGE M. JONES
Honorary President

PRESIDENT
Colonel John N. Davis, USA Ret
P. O. Box 5481
Fayetteville, N. C. 28302
Home: 485-1552 — Off.: 485-1280
(Area Code 919)

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-TREASURER
Mike Matlewich
836 N. 95th Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226
Phone: 774-8221
(Area Code 414)

November 1966

VICE-PRESIDENT
Wilbur K. Eggert
Box 201
Bennett, Iowa 52721

DIRECTOR FOR BUDGET
Paul B. Garbatman
8660 Silver Hill Rd.
Washington, D. C. 20028

DIRECTOR FOR MEMBERSHIPS
AND CHARITIES
Lester D. Wadler
Route 2
Omaha, Ind. 47777

DIRECTOR FOR PROGRAMS
Frederick Pope, Jr.
884 Main Street
Bridgeport, Conn. 06603

REGIONAL DIRECTOR
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Brooklyn, N. Y. 11298

REGIONAL DIRECTOR
FOR SOUTH
Verdery (Johnnie) Grooms
6325 Saccetti Drive
Charlotte, N. C. 28212

REGIONAL DIRECTOR
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Tud Alex
Box 245
Fort Logan, Colo. 80116

DIRECTORS AT LARGE
Richard E. Broadwell
313 Alamo
Sweetwater, Texas 79664

Henry H. Cook, Jr.
4213 Dunsation Drive
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1966 CONVENTION OFFICERS

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1966 CONVENTION
AT
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA
JULY 15 - 16, 1966

Dear Member,

As you know, the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) is now fighting in Vietnam and has been there for some time. Many of you already know that the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 503d Airborne Infantry are in the 173d and as such makes it the successor unit to the 503 RCT. For you civilian type a Brigade is about the size of a RCT.

The Board of Directors of the 503d RCT Association has approved the "adoption" of the 173d by this organization. The purpose is to provide morale building services and assistance to the troopers of the 173d.

I have contacted Brig. Gen. Paul F. Smith, Commanding General, of the 173d and he is extremely pleased with the offer. He suggests the mailing of small gifts such as: pocket novels, small metal mirrors, lighters and flints, stationery with self-sealing envelopes, and other small comfort items. Gifts should be mailed direct to brigade headquarters for re-distribution. Cards and letters should be sent to the lettered companies of the 503d Infantry's battalions.

In a recent article, written by a correspondent now serving in Vietnam, the reporter listed the following items as very desirable gifts. "Most of all food. Send them cookies and cake, or some cheese or summer sausage. Good cheese is hard to come by in Vietnam, and sausage is unknown. Menthol cigarettes are hard to get. Also appreciated are small transistor radios that operate on flashlight batteries."

General Smith has given us a very good guide line. However, it is evident that the General does not have the appetite of a twenty-year old man.

Those of us who served in the WW II 503d know how much a letter and a package from home can mean. This is a good project for a chapter to work on jointly, and wives should be encouraged to participate. These mailings should not be limited to Christmas time, but should be carried out the year 'round.

Let's snow them under with gifts and mail, and don't forget to let them know that it's from a member of the 503d RCT Association, WW II. A good way is to cut out the return address with our insignia on it from an old envelope or letter and include it in the envelope or package.

The address is: HEADQUARTERS,
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Office of the Commanding General,
APO San Francisco 96250

Sincerely,

Henry T. Capiz,
Director of Programs



Go Navy!

A U.S. Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian and French Navies. At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries.

Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks, but a French Admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English. He then asked, "*Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?*"

Without hesitating, the American Admiral replied, "*Maybe it's because the Brit's, Canadians, Aussie's and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German.*"

You could have heard a pin drop.

[Sent in by John Searcy, HHC/2/503d, '65/'66]

~ TIGER BEER ~

Biere 33 is still sold in France, at least as of 14 years ago when I bought the can I still have. I'll bet it has not aged well.

The worst were *Tiger* and *Anchor* (brewed for *Her Majesties Forces*) which there were still a lot left in the brigade area when I arrived with 4th Bn in August 1966.

There was a lot of *Swan Lager* from Perth, Australian left over from the Aussies. It was rather good and was going for 5 cents a can since Americans wanted Falstaff and Bud.

A number of the better American brewers would not send their stuff to RVN since they figured it would spoil in the heat and turn everyone off.

Reed Cundiff
LRRP 173d



POWERFUL WAR DOCUMENTARY SOON ON T.V.

The feature movie documentary, RESTREPO, will air on the National Geographic channel on Monday, Nov. 29 at 9:00 pm EST. Restrepo chronicles the deployment of a platoon of U.S. paratroopers (2/503d, 173d Airborne) in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley. The movie focuses on a remote 15-man outpost, "Restrepo," considered one of the most dangerous postings in the military. This is war, full stop, without editorializing or high-command analysis.

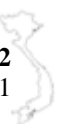
The documentary is now also available on DVD and is a must-see for all Sky Soldiers... and hopefully others. Brutal stuff. Note also this is where SSG Giunta was serving when he conducted the heroics which resulted in him being the first living recipient of the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War. Hope you all saw this modest hero's interview on "60 Minutes" recently...or found it online at the NBC website.



Please pass this along to others who may or should have an interest. Check local cable listings for channels and details.

In December, the Tampa Bay Chapter of the 82nd Airborne/All-American Association with support from the 173d Airborne Association Florida Chapter will be hosting 2 active-duty young enlisted paratroopers from Fort Bragg for a week of "R&R at Clearwater Beach." This year one of the guys will be a former 173d trooper now serving at Ft. Bragg. Airborne!

Michael Switzer, C/3/503d
mswitzer2@verizon.net



Chapter 17

Christmas Party

Date: 12/4/2010

Place: Franklin VFW Post 7596
422 S. Main St, Franklin, Ohio 45005

Phone (937)746-7786

Hotel information: Holiday Inn Express,
851 Commerce Center Drive, Franklin, Ohio 45005.
Phone (937)746-1094. Hotel is off of I-75 & St. Rt. 73.
(Post is approx. 1.5 miles from hotel). Room rate,
\$69.95+tax. Very nice hotel, built about a year ago.
Hotel will reserve a block for the 173d. When calling to
make the reservation, you must state you are with the
173d in order to receive the discounted price.
Rooms should be reserved asap.



Holiday Inn Express, Franklin, OH



SKY SOLDIERETTE CORNER

By Iva Tuttle

First and foremost, I want to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a good New Year. May the sun shine when you need it, the rain only come at night, and may peace finally fill your heart.

I was going to beg off writing a column again this month because I am facing a questioning time in my life and feel a lot of the decisions I must make could overshadow my ability to help you through these musings. But felt that I needed to also tell you in person instead of just leaving another blank hole. I won't be submitting anything until I get myself back together.

This year has been one of many personal trials and losses. Not only did I lose my Dad, but a very good friend. Numerous people in my extended family have experienced losses that have affected our lives too. Our children have dealt with personal issues that have been more than they should have to ever deal with in their lives.

Not only was I facing the loss in my life, I had to face the fact that I had to accept some responsibility for the abuse that has happened in my daughters' lives because of a home life that may not have been what it should have been.

For the first time in my life, I haven't been strong enough to be my own support system. I found that while I was giving support, giving and caring for others, I had never asked for myself. I took for granted that a support system would be there when I needed it.

There are those who have given me care and love and support through this awakening. I want to thank each and every one of you. But right now, I need to find who I am – I can no longer ignore the fact that I need.

So, when the time is right, you will hear from me. Keep your chin up – stand tall and proud. Know you are loved, but remember that love isn't taking, it's giving and accepting.



Congresswoman Linda Sánchez Names Whittier Man First “Veteran of the Month”

For Immediate Release

Contact: Justin Beckley, 202-225-6676

Washington, DC – On Friday, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez kicked off her new veterans’ outreach program by naming retired U.S. Army **Sergeant E-5 Raymond Ramirez** of the City of Whittier as the 39th Congressional District’s first “Veteran of the Month.” Mr. Ramirez is the first recipient of the award and was chosen by the newly created Veterans Advisory Council.

Mr. Ramirez began his military career in 1964 when he enlisted with the U.S. Army and was immediately deployed to Vietnam. He was assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade, the first major ground combat unit of the U.S. Army to serve in Vietnam. Mr. Ramirez exhibited courage and heroism while in combat, earning him awards and medals including the Combat Infantry Badge and the Army Commendation Medal with “V” Device, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster. His unit also received the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) for assisting the U.S. Marines in the fall of 1966, and the U.S. Army Meritorious Unit Citation. Upon his return from Vietnam in June of 1967, he was assigned to the 1st Armored Division at Fort Hood, TX.

"Mr. Ramirez’ dedication to our country is inspiring and I was pleased to honor him today," said Congresswoman Sánchez. "It’s vitally important that we never forget the sacrifices made by our fighting men and women. I look forward to recognizing a new veteran each month."

Later, Mr. Ramirez attended Rio Hondo College and California State University, Los Angeles. He then worked for several years in the defense industry and then the County of Los Angeles and the City of Commerce for over 25 years.

He is currently an active member of the American Veterans Post 113 (Irwindale, CA) and the Association of the 173d Airborne Brigade, where he is the former

President of the Western States, Chapter 10. Notably, he serves on the board of directors for the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation whose “sole mission” is to build a 173d Memorial “on a piece of American soil.” (see July 2010 Issue 17, Pages 12-20 of our newsletter).

To honor Sergeant Ramirez’ hard work and dedication to his country, he was presented with a flag flown over the capitol in his name. The presentation took place at Congresswoman Sánchez’ Cerritos office Friday.



A saddened Ray Ramirez, 4/503d Sky Soldier during recent funeral services for his friend SPC “Doc” Raymond Chavez Alcaraz, Jr., who was killed in action while serving as a medic in Afghanistan with C/1/503d. (See Oct. 2010, Iss. 20, Pg. 16 of our newsletter)

Congresswoman Sánchez’ “Veteran of the Month” program is coordinated by her Veterans Advisory Council, comprised of distinguished veterans from across the district. Each month, a veteran will be recognized for their service overseas and here at home. For more information regarding the “Veteran of the Month” program please contact Jamie Zamora at Jamie.zamora@mail.house.gov or (562) 860-5050.



New Sky Soldier Coin



the time it was the largest funeral he had ever seen except for one for a well-known public figure. Senator Warner (the elder) from Virginia was in attendance as was the Deputy CG of AFSOC. Scott died in a CH-47 crash (flown by 160th Army Special Operations Aviation Regiment out of Fort Campbell) on 18 February 2007 in Afghanistan along with the pilot and co-pilot, several other crew members from the 160th and 2 Rangers from the 75th. Scott was the Team Lead and was near the pilot for communications reasons. The Deputy Commander of AFSOC came to the house to brief Rose and Bill on the crash, although to this date no definitive reason has been given. As are all of their missions this was a classified operation so we will most likely never know all of the facts. Bill goes on to report that Scott

died doing what he loved to do and for what he was so highly trained and skilled in doing.

Below you will see a picture of Bill as he dedicates a coin at the gravesite of his step-son.

I know you all wish the family and friends of these fallen warrior/hero Airborne Airman and Aviators all the best.

[Sent in by Paul Fisher, LTC,3/503d]

Created and produced by LTC Paul Fisher, 3/503d, this new Sky Soldier coin is now available. All profits from the sale of coins will be donated, one-half to the 173d Memorial Foundation and one-half to feed local area poor during this winter. To order a coin contact Paul at fisherppd@att.net

Coins Dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery

CPT Bill Duval, Commanding Officer of HHC/3/503rd in 1970 and his wife Rose, also a retired veteran herself recently dedicated three 173d Airborne Brigade Coins on behalf of fallen warriors who were killed in Afghanistan in February of 2007. It is significant because one of the coins was dedicated to Rose's son and Bill's step-son Tech Sergeant Scott Duffman of the 24th Special Tactics Squadron (Scott was a USAF Para-Rescuer [‘PJ’], Master Parachutist, HALO, SCUBA qualified and a Combat Medic who had completed multiple combat tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan with the Joint Special Operations Command). The other coins were dedicated to the Pilot, CWO-3 Hershel McCants and Co-Pilot, CWO-3 John A. Quinlan both of the 160th Special Operation Aviation Regiment (SOAR) A.



Bill Duval 3/503d, 173d Abn dedicating coin.

Bill reports that when Scott was honored at a Memorial Ceremony at JSOC Headquarters there was standing room only in their large 'shake out' bay. And at his funeral in Arlington the Director of Arlington said that at



Sky Soldier Alvin Ealey Farewell Brother

Sunrise, October 11, 1948
Sunset, November 7, 2010

Al wanted to come to Arlington on November 10, 2010 to be with the Herd in green pastures one final time. However, he slipped away for eternity three days prior to this date. We will miss him and may he always remain in our memories as a fine Sky Soldier and friend.

Ed Kearney, B/2/503d

A quote by Al in the story, *The Battle at Bau San*:

“I want to thank Lewis Wingfield for the day he saved my life, March 14th or 15th, 1966. He crawled over to me, looked me right in my face, stopped me from going where I was going and said, ‘They are killing ‘em up there.’ The next day, March 16th, I’ll never forget that day; it started off with us walking through camp getting ready to go out. Then a helicopter was shot down.



Al at Camp Zinn '66

I killed more people that day than I care to remember. That was the day Jody got the tripod shot on his M-60.”
Alvin Ealey, B/2/503d

Remembering Al

Being friends with Al was influenced, as many things were, by Spencer Alexander. Al had not been very active with the Bravo Bulls before Spencer's unexpected death. He went to Chicago for the funeral. We met again at Ed Johnson's house and went to the funeral together. With that single event, an extremely strong friendship began. He and Lew Wingfield, Al's buddy and neighbor, joined us at a Memorial Service at Arlington. From the funeral and Veteran's Day service, Al slowly became more engaged in Bravo Bull



One of Al's favorite caps.

activities. He joined us at Bragg and at Marilyn Logan's funeral.

He was a very devoted Christian. To know him, you had to be conversant with his on-going religious journey. He faithfully read the Bible and associated religious books, all of which was recorded in his personal journal, which was always within easy reach in his truck.

He and later he and Missy became frequent visitors to Beverly Manor. We'd sit out in the shade of the willow tree with the girls sipping wine, while Al and I had something a bit stronger. He became my advisor on house repairs and, when I didn't move as quickly as he thought appropriate, he jumped in. He teamed with me to paint my house, with him doing more than his fair share. He brought a steel scaffold to use on the upper floors but he refused to let me aid him in moving it. Those who knew Al, knew that there was only Al's way. You could talk but when he decided, it was his way. It was a bit difficult adjusting to that but he put that lop-sided smile on and adjusted his 173d ball cap, and even a hard-headed grump would agree to his plan.

He loved his children but had waited a long while before he decided to demonstrate that love. This complicated his relationships but that was his way....and it worked for him. He also loved his Mom and called her daily. Through him, I got to know her and she became my friend as she neared her end. A gracious, loving lady, who he worshiped and who had impacted his life in a positive fashion.

This next vignette tells completely of our relationship. I have a fireplace in our kitchen, which at some ancient time was the site for cooking. I closed the chimney and installed a gas log heater to which a gas line had to be extended. Al learned of this and brought his tunnel/underhouse suit, with breathing device. The first step was to drill a hole in the kitchen floor to pass the gas line to the log heater. Al said to tap the floor and he would drill up at that point. While I was tapping, he started drilling. The drill blade came through the floor where I was sitting and just barely missed my ass, while ripping my trousers. He had no idea how close I came to disaster and we have an unwanted hole in the middle of the floor. After we stopped laughing, we adjusted and got the job completed.

I'll miss him and all the good times that we shared under the willow, when we remembered and drank to our youth and the soldiers we marched among.

May he enjoy his Heavenly reward in the company of our departed comrades,

**Roy Lombardo, COL (Ret)
CO B/2/503d**



Stories of the R&R Kind

Cleo, What A Gal, or; *It Ain't So Bad To Volunteer*

Rest & Relaxation is a wonderful concept. PTSD among combat soldiers would most likely be much higher without a break from the rigors of war.

I was fortunate enough to have two R&Rs during my year in Vietnam. While serving with Charlie 2/503 in June of 1967 I was given an R&R to Japan. Shortly after being assigned to the newly-formed Delta Company around September or October of that year, a Sergeant with a clipboard came around asking who had not had an R&R. Being the agile and quick thinking paratrooper I once was (noticed I said once) I thought if he's asking, they must not know. If I raised my hand and they found out I was BS-ing what were they going to do, send me to Vietnam? So I raised my hand and a few weeks later I found myself in Australia. What a time that was!



Wayne Bowers
Check equipment!

But back to Japan... While on the flight over I met a "leg" from the 4th Davison. He worked in the rear and had never served on line. I don't remember his name but do remember him being from North Carolina. I also remember him saying he had always heard most paratroopers were half crazy. We seemed to have several things in common and decided to "buddy up" for the week.

After arriving and settling in the hotel we met in the lobby to begin a night of real R&R. Before leaving the hotel we asked one of the bellhops where we should begin our evening. When we arrived at the bar he made a suggestion, but our thoughts were "this is not the type of place we were looking for." It was a very upscale bar filled mostly with Japanese men dressed in suits. We decided to stay for a couple of drinks and shortly thereafter two Japanese businesswomen approached us seeking our advice on a business plan they were developing. These girls did not meet the expectation of

the fast and cheap women we were looking for. They both were very attractive and appeared to be in their mid-twenties. I was nineteen at the time and my buddy was about the same age. They dressed like American girls, smelled like American girls and reeked of money.

The leader of the two was very outgoing and spoke excellent English with little or no accent. She insisted we call her Cleopatra. The other girl was somewhat shy and spoke broken English. We sat there for a while developing the "business plan" over a few drinks. After the plan was fully developed and financial arrangements made, Cleopatra invited us to her apartment for drinks and light entertainment. After all, she had, how should I say, stiffened my attention.

We took a taxi to her apartment during which Cleopatra and the taxi driver had a lively conversation in Japanese with much loud laughter. I remember thinking we were probably being laughed at but I really didn't care as my mind was fully wrapped around the "business plan."

After about a ten-minute drive we arrived at a high-rise apartment building in a well-to-do area of Tokyo.

Cleopatra flashed an ID type card at the doorman and he let us into the building. We took the elevator to one of the upper floors, which opened to a long hallway. I remember the hall was brightly lighted and very clean. We came to her apartment and she opened the door to a small foyer where we took off our shoes. We then entered the living area of her apartment, which was nicely appointed with Egyptian décor. The entire apartment was well organized, very clean. There was a young Japanese male sitting on the sofa watching TV. Cleopatra said something to him in Japanese; he stood up, smiled and then left. I asked her who the male was and she stated he was her houseboy.

Cleopatra made drinks for the four of us after which we went to her bedroom to conduct Phase II of the business plan. Shortly after completing Phase II Cleopatra informed me she had fallen in love with me and wanted me to spend the rest of my time in Tokyo with her, for a small fee of course. I can't remember the amount of the fee but I do remember it was going to be about twice the cost of our hotel room. I told her I would have to discuss it with my buddy.

(continued....)



She gave me a Japanese robe much like the one she had just put on. We then returned to the living area to join my buddy and the other girl. I asked my fully-dressed buddy if he had conducted his phase of the business plan. He just looked at me with a big silly smile on his face.

This Cleopatra girl was a real pro, no pun intended. She again asked if we would stay the rest of our R&R there with them. When we hesitated, can you believe she tried to sway us with sex?! When we informed her we were more interested in sampling other sites of Tokyo she became very argumentative and entered into a total and complete tantrum. She began yelling and asked us to leave. Suddenly there came a knock on the door and the other girl sprang to open it. It was the houseboy and three other guys. One of them looked to be an aspiring Sumo wrestler, this guy must have been around 300 pounds.



Wayne, ready for Phase II

My buddy and I gathered our things and left amidst Cleo's screaming and yelling. We walked down the street to the first bar we came to. We were pretty well pissed at this time but still had our common sense. After a couple of glasses of "liquid courage" I convinced my buddy we had just been conned. After partaking of more "liquid courage" (we were three sheets in the wind by this time) we decided we were not going to be cheated.



Shinjuku, Tokyo. "Cleo! Where are you?!!"

We walked back to the apartment and after several minutes and a fist full of Japanese money we persuaded the doorman to let us in. Somehow we found the right apartment. We knocked and the houseboy opened the door. We pushed our way in and demanded to see the

girls. They informed us the girls were not there and they began to laugh. Now no self-respecting paratrooper was going to be laughed at, so I loudly proclaimed I was going to kick the ass of every SOB in the place if I didn't get my money back. Before I had a chance to tell them I was just kidding I was being punched and bounced off the wall. I noticed the big fellow had my buddy in a headlock as we were being rudely pushed toward the door. Being a well-trained, highly motivated US paratrooper with a keen ability to assess the situation, I decided a full retreat was in order. Besides, my buddy and I were scared shitless.

Someway, somehow, the next afternoon I woke up in the right bed in the right hotel with a few knots a few bruises and a major headache.

Over the years as I have looked back on those times I can't help to realize how incredibly stupid I was and often wonder how I made it this far in life.

Wayne Bowers
D/C/2/503d, '67-'68

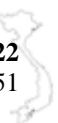
Un-kept Promises



L-R: Two Chargin' Charlies, Roger Dick & Sam Stewart, still at the bar.

The only thing I have to contribute is: After a typical night out on the town on R&R I slithered out of bed and into the bathroom where I attempted to ease the severe hangover with a warm bath. All of a sudden the water started sloshing back and forth over the sides of the tub and everything fell off the bathroom shelves. I immediately swore off drinking and made promises I would never keep. It turned out Taipei was experiencing an earth quake and I was in a room 22 stories up swaying back and forth. I was never so glad to grab a drink in the lobby in my life. So much for promises made during fire fights or earth quakes.

Roger Dick
C/2/503d



A Different Kind of R&R

My R&R was in Viet Nam killing people. Had a lot of fun.

Virgil Lamb
C/2/503d

The Teenage Captain

[That's what some of the other company commanders called him -- Gary Prisk, CO C/2/503d. But not his men, they called him *Cap* -- they would die for him, and some did. Ed]

Unorthodox, perhaps... a bit crazy, perhaps... willing to deal anyone that might kill a GI, absolutely... at odds with the Operations Major, always... did Charlie Company have more enemy KIA and fewer casualties than any other company while this young captain was running gates. Yes we did. But, we were not blessed with social skills.

But when we were blessed with a two-or-three day stand-down my orders to the platoon sergeants were simple... ***“Get re-fit and ready for the next insertion... and then don't fuck with the troops.”*** Seems simple enough until you get rear-area Majors trying to run your company... We ruined more than one career.

On one stand-down the General had put Bong Son on-limits and the singing houses off limits... understanding how ambushes were conducted, my Field-First Sergeant, my RTO and I went to town ahead of the company. ***“A recon was necessary, doo dah.”*** The Brigade MP's arrived well after the company. The silly shits wrote up 74 DR's, processed them through Brigade, then Battalion, and they landed in Charlie Company's orderly room before dark, with a great deal of ceremony and with the excitement of two rear-area Majors... Rear-Area Majors were loathsome bastards...

So I raised my beer can to the heavens and with a great deal of ceremony dedicated each “DR” to the hand shredder... each dedication requiring more beer. When asked by the Battalion CO what I intended to do about the DR's I said, ***“I have directed the First Sergeant to send the ‘DR’ to the trooper's family so they could see first-hand what their soldier has been up to.”***

This was not what he thought would happen. The dumb bastard should not have made a fuss over paratroopers ***“goin'-to-town.”***

This picture which follows is of members of second platoon taken in Bong Son in July 1968. Note the pipes

and the nature of these men... some of America's finest militia.



Standing/sitting... left-to-right. Pvt. Henry Kot... Doc Pratt... PFC Dennis Uhlott... Doc Walsh... Sp 4 Mark Apodaca... Sp 4 Dan Johnston. In Front... left-to-right. Sp 4 Bill Totten... Sp 4 Montgomery “Mr. Monty”

As was the custom when a man left country, those left standing wanted the man to remember that he was leaving his friends in the jungle... we were always glad to see a man leave, Standin' Tall with his goolies in fine trim... we just had to get a bit pissy about his leaving.



The picture above is of SSgt Edmund Burns, 1st Platoon Sergeant, waiting to be placed on his “Freedom Bird” for the first leg of his leaving country. SSgt Burns did not accept his fate with grace, tagging more than one paratrooper before he was subdued, his uniform shredded, tied to a bamboo pole and covered with shaving cream.

(continued....)



Promising all forms of retribution... swearing as if his god might hear... he slanged my mother and anyone else he could think of.

Months later, not thinking this ritual to its end, I was caught half-stepping one fine day when on my way to Hawaii for R&R.



The Teenage Captain, the Company Commander Gary Prisk, sitting after having his uniform torn-up and being hog-tied by his men in preparation for his Liberty Flight for R&R.

For months, in fact since Dak To or December of 1967 the wizards in the intelligence business in Vietnam had declared that a trooper had deserted in the field. There were a good many versions of the desertion, the most popular being that he just threw down his shit and walked off. Many of the versions had him from Delta Company; some versions had him from 1st Batt or 4th Batt. I think each Batt had a deserter that was in fact a ghost. I figured the story was all horse shit and meant to shit-scare the rest of the studs away from such thoughts.

Suffering through those combat briefings at the Tactical Operations Center given by a Major who had never been in the field, we were constantly given the caution to keep an eye out for the deserter. Oh, and you'll love this... he was blond so he should be easy to spot. And, he was average weight and height so he should be bigger than the boys running around in sandals wearing shorts and sunscreen. Personally I don't think there was a deserter.

There is another story as well. The troopers had called the Battalion TOC and told them they had captured the deserter... Doo Dah. Those same MP's with the 74 "DR's" wanted to shackle-drag my ass all the way to Long Bing Junction.



Gary Prisk in his hooch with a handy friend nearby.

I needed that honey in my bunker at LZ English, before and after R&R.

As an aside...I need some help with names of these troopers in the following photos.



2nd Platoon, Charlie, Kontum, February 1968

(continued...)





2nd Platoon Charlie, An Lao Valley, September 1968



2nd Platoon Charlie, Bong Son Area, July 1968



3rd Platoon Charlie, Kontum Area, February 1968

Gary Prisk, Capt.
CO C/2/503d
garyprisk@yahoo.com

Aussies + Beer = Elephant

Sometime after Cpt. Sutton took over Bravo, he came to me and said, "You look like you are getting a little crazy. Tomorrow morning you will report to your battery and go to Saigon."

Somehow I found a khaki uniform that did not look too bad and went to the Battery where the Battery commander was checking out his First Sergeant. The captain asked him, "Well Sarge, what are you going to do in town?" The First Sergeant was a short, husky, tough little guy named Martinez (I think). The First Sergeant replied, "I'm going to drink all their whiskey and fuck all their women, Sir!" The battery commander just rolled his eyes.

This was one of the early trips and we went into town in an armed convoy of several deuce and half trucks and a couple of jeeps. I wandered around and eventually ended up on the roof of the Caravel Hotel. I had a fabulous lunch of lobster (crayfish) with a wonderful old French wine, served in a Crystal decanter. While eating I watched a couple of Sky Raiders strafe and bomb a target several miles south of the city. They must have hit a huge supply depot as there was a ball of fire, then almost a mushroom cloud.

As we assembled for the ride back home, two troopers came around the corner leading a baby elephant. The NCOIC, I think it was one of the Sergeant Majors, told them that the elephant was not going with us. The troopers whined that they had spent all their money on him and could not leave him. Good fortune appeared, as two Aussie troopers stumbled onto the scene. They were soon convinced that they needed an elephant. The last I saw of them they were standing in the street with empty pockets and an elephant between them.

Upon return to the unit, the artillery First Sergeant reported to the battery commander with a snappy salute and a "Mission accomplished Sir!" With that, he kneeled face forward into a mud puddle about 4 inches deep. Everyone was laughing, but after a while I noticed that his face was still under water, so I dragged him out feet first and dropped him on dry land. I understand that he survived and I never was given any recognition for saving a First Sergeant.

When I got back to B Company Sgt. Howe was forming up to take his squad out on a night ambush patrol. I put on my stuff and went with him. As luck would have it we had contact with a small group of VC, killing several of them. Then their buddies decided to mortar us a little. By dawn it had been an interesting 24 hours.

Jim Robinson, FO, B/2/503d

(continued....)



The Non R&R

It was some date in June '66 when I left Bien Hoa en-route to Saigon to catch a flight to Okinawa for R&R. My Vietnam vet Sneaky Pete older brother, Bob, was waiting for me at the airport there and, according to him, he was accompanied by two lovely young ladies of Japanese persuasion who were more than prepared to entertain the traveling RTO -- assuming, of course, the radio operator had saved enough entertainment money. I didn't think it was language classes they had in mind either.

Arriving Tan Son Nhut Airport I was disappointed to learn there was no space available on the stand-by flight to the island, and I would have to spend the evening in Saigon occupying myself with cultural activities until a flight out the following day.

Grabbing a taxi to downtown Saigon I found the cultural center of the city along Tu Do Street. In one of the many bars there I happened to meet a sailor and an air force guy, and we hooked-up for the evening - it was like a scene right out of some 1940's movie with Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra, without the dancing and singing. Unbelievable as it may seem, we all met and fell in love with three lovely young ladies, these of the Vietnamese persuasion, who were kind enough to invite the three of us back to their home which looked not unlike a hotel with one large room and three beds. Somehow, the army, air force and navy survived that night of cultural awakening, but this RTO awoke the next morning with severe chest pains. I was rushed to 3rd Field Hospital nearby where the docs determined I had a bad case of pneumonia -- damn cultural centers!



Saigon cultural center in 1966 along Tu Do Street.



Working girls in Saigon, 1966.
Sign: *Please Pay When Served*

As I recovered on the 2nd floor ward of that hospital for nearly a month before being returned to Camp Zinn, I would often wonder about my SF brother and his airport Geisha girls. Sadly, I never did get R&R during my year in-country (I think Wayne Bowers took mine), and to this day I credit that fact to my having been too critical to the war effort to warrant one. Those island girls must be pushin' 70 today, which means I still have a shot at dating them, if I could just catch a flight to Okinawa.

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

Showers at English!

I was stunned when I heard it. Seven months before when our company trucked into LZ English in Bong Son from An Khe, English was just getting started. Hell, the latrine was just a long trench. Now inside showers. So, minutes after stepping off the Huey that brought me and my company in from the boonies for a week of relaxation and before I was detailed for bunker duty, K.P. or the creme de la creme duty of the fighting infantryman, "burning shit," I headed off for the showers tent. It was better than great this shower and while toweling off in came a guy I knew from A.I.T. in Georgia. He greeted me like a brother and we talked of the others we trained with and what happened to them. He ran off a few names he knew who were KIA, and when he said the name Carter, I screamed "NO!"

Gregory Carter befriended me when I felt so alone on my arrival at Fort Gordon for two months of jungle training. He would read me letters he got from his girlfriend because I didn't have one. He told me often that he was going to make it through Vietnam and get back to her. I couldn't believe it when I heard he was killed. I slowly walked back to the company area and put in for R&R. A week later I was flying into Sydney, Australia.

I checked out places to go as soon as I got to my hotel. First night there I caught a taxi out to a ranch house for an evening of horseback riding. I met a girl there who filled the rest of my days there. We did something different each day and we ended each day with a kiss in my hotel. Though she told me right off she would not sleep with me she did give me a "Forest Gump" moment on my last night there.

And like Forest, I too got dizzy. I left Jennette and Australia the next morning and on the plane I realized that she had taken my mind off Vietnam and Gregory's death. I will never forget him, but for that one week I was happy to not think about him and war. Thank you Jennette!

continued....)



Hey Jude
The minute you let her under your skin
Then you begin to make it better....



Ed in Vietnam

I like this photo because it shows LZ English down below, the Tiger Mountains to the right (which we practically lived in for the year), and behind me is the South China Sea.

It was the death of a friend in Vietnam that finally pushed me to enlist in the Army. I knew I would probably get drafted, but after going to the funeral of my friend from high school, I just decided, well, I should do my part.

After seven months of ground fighting with the infantry of the 173d Airborne, the loss of another friend made me feel like I'd done enough. I needed a vacation.

A yearlong tour came with one week of R&R. The Army offered a trip to Thailand, but more than anything, this Arizona kid wanted to ride horses again. That meant Australia.

They only wanted the officers and the married people to go to Australia and Hawaii, so it was a little bit of a battle for a couple of days before they would let me go. I just told 'em, "*Hey, that's where I'm going, and if not I'm going back to my unit.*"

I flew into Sydney in October 1968 and picked a hotel at random from the list I was provided. The Army also offered an itinerary of activities, and the next day I was at a private ranch for a horse ride and evening dance with eight other GIs, all of them strangers.

At age 20 and a combat veteran, I was still as shy as a school kid and found myself sitting alone while the other soldiers mingled with the local girls who had been invited to keep them company. I was about to call a taxi when a tall blonde in a pretty dress asked me to dance.

I was pretty doggone nervous. I got embarrassed 'cause I don't dance.

The next day, I called back to the ranch to get her phone number. She was surprised that I'd called her back because she didn't think that we really hit it off that well.

Horses were my first love, from the time I was 6, but I did no more riding that week. Instead, Jeanette showed me around the city. I especially loved the Taronga Zoo on Sydney Harbor. And everywhere we went I kept hearing the hit song of the moment: the Beatles' *Hey Jude*.

I was more of a country-Western guy. We never stopped to listen or talk about the song, but it played in the background all week long. I flew back to Nam with the song playing in his head and the memory of a chaste goodbye kiss on the lips. But I had to put that out of my mind.

We were out in the field a lot. We had to be on our toes, and I just couldn't let my mind wander back to home and Australia. Even though Jeanette wrote me and I wrote her, as soon as you read it, you put it in your pocket, your backpack or whatever and just get back to what you were doing. I knew I had to get her out of my mind.

When I returned to Arizona, though, I bought the song, and even today that na-na-na chorus will take me back to my week in Australia. It's the combination of bitter and sweet that stays with you forever.

For a few years after my tour of duty, I wrote and called, but eventually Jeanette pointed out that there was a wide ocean between us. I told her, "*You're right. You'll always be on my mind, but I probably should just let you go.*"

Ed Swauger
B/2/503d

Gregory Carter

Sergeant

**D CO, 1ST BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD
ABN BDE, USARV**

**Army of the United States
Columbus, Ohio**

November 21, 1946 to September 23, 1968
GREGORY CARTER is on the Wall
at Panel 43W Line 068

[Ed is a retired mail handler in Tempe, AZ. He has self-published a book about his wartime experiences, *Earning the CIB: The Making of a Soldier in Vietnam*, Whitehall Publishing, 2005]

(continued....)



Excuse me Sir, but may I pretty please have my seat back?

I had only been in-country three months when our sergeant had us lined up and was calling off allocations for R&R destinations. He called one allocation for Japan and nobody responded, so kiddingly I said I'd go. Several weeks later my sergeant said to grab my gear and get to the LZ, that I was going to Japan. Well I get to Japan and end up in the hospital with malaria, had something to do with all the booze I drank the first night there breaking down my resistance. The only good thing about that was that I missed June 22, 1967.

After Hill 875 there was hardly anyone in the company that had been in-country long enough so I acquired an R&R to Japan. When I got to Cam Ranh Bay I heard that they had just opened Australia for R&R, so when I laid my orders for R&R to Japan down in front of the clerk I asked what are my chances of going to Australia instead, he just pulled out a stamp and stamped my orders for Australia. I and two other E-4s were on standby for a flight to Australia, so when they started calling off names they loaded the plane by rank. They called two Lt. Colonels and then me and the two other E-4s and then other officers, NCO's and enlisted men. I was the third man on the plane so I took the window seat on the left and the two E-4s sat next to me and the Lt. Colonels were in the front seats on the right. We had a nice flight to Darwin, they even showed a movie, Mary Poppins, of all movies to show a plane load of soldiers going on R&R.

When we landed in Darwin to refuel and then on to Sydney we had an hour lay-over. The stewardess said that when we got back on the plane that we were supposed to get in the same seats that we had when we landed. So we all headed for the airport lounge and started pounding down beers as fast as we could get them. Well, being out in the field we didn't get our hands on very much beer and when we did it was 3.2% and Australia beer is like 8 or 9 %. So I staggered back to the plane, stumbled up the steps and made it to my seat only to find someone sitting in my seat. I informed the guy that he was in my seat and that the stewardess said same seats that you had when we landed, he still didn't move. Then the fact that I was a 19 year old paratrooper who has been out in the boonies for months and who was drunk took over. I informed him in so many words that if he didn't get out of my seat I was going to remove him myself, he still didn't move. So I made a move towards him with the intention of bodily removing him from my seat, but before I even got one step towards him he got out of my seat and went back to his own seat. I sat down in my seat and looked at the two guys sitting next to me, who were looking at me wide eyes. I asked them what the hell they were looking

at and one of them asked if I knew who I just removed from my seat. I said I didn't and they informed me that it was an officer. I turned around and looked at the guy; it was a rear echelon butter-bar Lieutenant who just lowered his head. I turned back to the guys sitting next to me and informed them what the stewardess had said about getting into the same seats we had when we landed and that she had more rank than anyone else in the plane. I looked over at the Lt. Colonels and they were laughing their asses off. Hey, I was a drunken 19 year old paratrooper!!

Ray "Zac" Zaccone
C/2/503d

173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Memorabilia

The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation has several Memorial Memorabilia items for sale. Order early for Christmas!

173d Memorial Medallions in Copper Nickel and Antique Brass Finish.

Souvenir 173d Memorial Bricks.

DVD's of the memorial dedication and two signed "Day of Honor" Guitars.

Limited supply of hard hats and entrenching tools used at the groundbreaking ceremony in June of 2008. Any reasonable offer will be considered on these two items.

All monies raised from the sale of these items will go to the perpetual care of the 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial.

If you need further information please contact:

Craig Ford, Treasurer

173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial Foundation.

Email: cdford1503@frontier.com

Cell Phone: 425 422-7976

Address: 17207 76th Avenue West
Edmonds, WA 98026

"After 60, if you don't wake up aching in every joint, you're probably dead."



173d Awarded Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) in 1973

(This article is an edited reproduction of a story prepared by Ray Ramirez of Chapter X and published in the Summer 1998 [Volume XIII, No. 3] edition of *Sky Soldier*.)

The 173d Airborne Brigade earned its share of individual and unit awards in Vietnam, including a Presidential Unit Citation, a Meritorious Unit Commendation, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. One award, however, has largely been overlooked or forgotten with the passage of time. Task Force Healy, created from various elements of the 173d Airborne Brigade, received the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) in 1973.

Task Force Healy was composed of 173d units, with the primary force being the 4th Battalion, 503d Infantry (which was commanded by LTC Michael D. Healy). Joining the 4th Battalion were five helicopter of the 335th Aviation Detachment, Battery B, 3-319th Field Artillery, elements from 1st Platoon, E Troop, 17th Cavalry, a platoon from the 173d Engineer Company, individuals from the 173d Military Intelligence Detachment, elements from the 173d Scout Dog Detachment, and elements from the 505th Forward Air Control Team. (Note: The units are identified from GO 32 and do not accurately reflect the correct title of the Scout Dog Platoon assigned to the Brigade.)

This task force was pulled out of Operation Attleboro, being conducted by the Brigade in the area of Dau Tieng and the Michelin Rubber Plantation in early October, 1966. It deployed north on short notice to reinforce the 3rd Marine Division in the Da Nang area of I Corps, and came under the operational control of the Third Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF), headquartered in Da Nang and commanded by LTG Lewis Walt.

Task Force Healy made history on 7 October 1966 by becoming the first Army ground combat unit to operate in I Corps. Line elements of the task force conducted squad and platoon size patrols and ambushes, and maintained mountain top security for Marine Hawk missile batteries as well as security for the Nambo Bridge on Highway I. During their tour in I Corps, the paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade lived in old French forts, fishing villages, the Hai Van Pass, Flames OP, Burnt Hill, and Marble Mountain (where they protected a Naval Academy Heisman Trophy winner

The sadness from Sky Soldier KIA's was mitigated in part by incidents of bravery. A member of the Military Police squad was awarded the Silver Star for breaking up a roadside ambush. The Headquarters S-2 Clerk/Driver was awarded the Silver Star for saving lives and

large amounts of equipment. He was instrumental in stopping a daylight sapper attack on the Naval Supply Activity (Ammunition Dump) in downtown Da Nang. He killed and wounded several sappers, and helped the Marine and Air Force Military Police capture the surviving sapper squad members.

While Sky Soldiers provided protection to the Da Nang region, no mortar or rocket attacks were launched against either the sprawling Da Nang Air base or the oil tanks in the Hai Van Pass; additionally, the Nambo Bridge remained intact. Shortly after Task Force Healy departed the Da Nang area, the VC blew up the Nambo Bridge, severely inhibiting north-south traffic, and rocket and mortar attacks resumed on Da Nang Air Base.

GENERAL ORDERS NO. 32
HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, DC
24 September 1973

(Extract)

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (NAVY). Award of the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) for periods indicated is confirmed in accordance with paragraph 194,AR 672-5-1.

355th Aviation Detachment
Battery B, 3d Battalion, 319th Artillery
Troop E, 1st Platoon, 17th Cavalry
173d Engineer Platoon
173d Military Intelligence Detachment
173d Military Police Detachment
173d Scout Dog Detachment
505th Forward Air Control Team
4th Battalion, 503d Infantry (For the period 7 October 1966 to 4 December 1966)

“The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION
TO THE THIRD MARINE DIVISION
(REINFORCED)

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces in the Republic of Vietnam from 8 March 1965 to 15 September 1967.

(continued...)



Throughout this period, the Third Marine Division (Reinforced), operating in the five northern most provinces of the Republic of Vietnam, successfully executed its threefold mission of occupying and defending key terrain, seeking out and destroying the enemy, and conducting an intensive pacification program. Operating in an area bordered by over 200 miles of South China Sea coastline, the mountainous Laotian border, and the Demilitarized Zone, the Third Marine Division (Reinforced) successfully executed eighty major combat operations, carrying the battle to the enemy, destroying many of his forces, and capturing thousands of tons of weapons and materiel. In addition to these major operations, more than 125,000 offensive counter guerrilla actions, ranging from squad patrols and ambushes to company-sized search and destroy operations, were conducted in both the costal rice lands and the mountainous jungle inland. These bitterly contested actions routed the enemy from his well-entrenched positions, denied him access to his source of food, restricted his freedom of movement, and removed his influence from the heavily populated areas. In numerous operations, the Third Marine Division (Reinforced) demonstrated the great efficacy of combined operations with units of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. In July 1966, the Third Marine Division (Reinforced) moved to the north to counter major elements of the North Vietnamese Army moving across the Demilitarized Zone into the Province of Quang Tri; its units fought a series of savage battles against the enemy, repeatedly distinguishing themselves and, time and again, forcing the enemy to retreat across the Demilitarized Zone. Imbued with an unrelenting combat spirit and initiative and undeterred by heavy hostile artillery and mortar fire, extremely difficult terrain, incessant heat and monsoon rains, the Third Marine Division (Reinforced), employing courageous ground, heliborne and amphibious assaults, complemented by intense and accurate air, artillery, and naval gunfire support, inflicted great losses on the enemy and denied him the political and military victory he sought to achieve at any cost. The outstanding courage, resourcefulness, and aggressive fighting spirit of the officers and men of the Third Marine Division (Reinforced) in battle after battle against a well-equipped and well-trained enemy, often numerically superior in strength, and the great humanitarianism constantly shown to the people of the Republic of Vietnam, reflect great credit upon the Marine Corps and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

~ A Football Game ~

It was in the fall of 1964 the 2nd Bat HQC was stationed at Camp Kue Okinawa. If we were not in the field training we would have A&R (Athletic Recreation) on Wednesday afternoons. Most generally this meant we were off so it came to be known as Alcohol and Romance. We would head for the EM Club at Kadena AFB, Sukuran EM Club, or up Jagaru Hill to some off limits bars. This is where the romance came in. One Wednesday afternoon two Lieutenant platoon leaders, both football players, one from West Point and the other from the University of Alabama, decided their platoons needed to play a football game. There was beer, lots of beer, bet on this game. Since we were paratroopers and not legs that sissy touch or flag football was out of the question, we played full contact tackle football. Needless to say the only football equipment we had was a football. The two LTs were the quarterbacks and as the afternoon progressed it became the goal to smash the other side's smartass LT into the rocky turf of Kue. This mission was accomplished more than once and the LTs were good sports about it. The two platoon Sgts were referees and pretty much forgot about the rules. There was blood, bruises, a few loose teeth, along with several fist fights that erupted during the game. The West Pointer had to buy the beer which eased some of the pain resulting from the game. There were some pretty good injuries and I don't know if the two LTs got their asses chewed or not but orders came down that there would be no more football games of that nature.

Rick Jerman
HHC/2/503d



Rick and buddies.



New Miramar National Cemetery Opens Providing Burials for Area Veterans and Family Members

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Meredith McFadden 619-422-5963

San Diego, CA – Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego officially opened today by providing its first burials of veterans and family members at the new facility.

“This is an eventful day for the veterans of San Diego and Imperial Counties,” said Congressman Bob Filner, Chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee. *“It is reassuring for thousands of the brave men and women who have served our country to know that they will find a final resting place with dignity and honor close to home.”*

Military honors at the opening ceremony included a rifle salute and the playing of “Taps.” Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Steve Muro gave remarks and was joined by VA and local officials in the interment of cremated remains. Casket burial options will be available in early 2011.

Congressman Filner has worked for years with other members of the San Diego congressional delegation to establish a satellite veterans’ cemetery, an annex to nearby Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery which closed to casket burials in 1966. Although it stays active with casketed interments of family members of those currently interred and inurnments of cremated remains, Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery will soon run out of Crematorium niches.

Property at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar was dedicated as the Miramar National Cemetery on January 30, 2010. When completed, the 313-acre Miramar National Cemetery will offer in-ground gravesites for caskets and cremated remains as well as a columbarium, providing a full range of burial alternatives to approximately 235,000 Veterans in the San Diego County area. Riverside National Cemetery, located approximately 90 miles from San Diego, was until now the nearest national cemetery offering full burial options.

[Sent in by Nick Aguilar, C/HHC/1/503d]



Department of Veterans Affairs begins payment for new Agent Orange Claims

VA Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations
Washington, DC 20420
202-461-7600

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 1, 2010

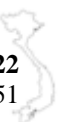
VA Begins Paying Benefits for New Agent Orange Claims – VA encourages Affected Vietnam Veterans to File Claims

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun distributing disability benefits to Vietnam Veterans who qualify for compensation under recently liberalized rules for Agent Orange exposure.

“The joint efforts of Congress and VA demonstrate a commitment to provide Vietnam Veterans with treatment and compensation for the long-term health effects of herbicide exposure,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

Up to 200,000 Vietnam Veterans are potentially eligible to receive VA disability compensation for medical conditions recently associated with Agent Orange. The expansion of coverage involves B-cell (or hairy-cell) leukemia, Parkinson’s disease and ischemic heart disease. Shinseki said VA has launched a variety of initiatives – both technological and involving better business practices – to tackle an anticipated upsurge in Agent Orange-related claims. *“These initiatives show VA’s ongoing resolve to modernize its processes for handling claims through automation and improvements in doing business, providing Veterans with faster and more accurate decisions on their applications for benefits,”* Shinseki said.

(continued...)



Providing initial payments – or increases to existing payments – to the 200,000 Veterans who now qualify for disability compensation for these three conditions is expected to take several months, but VA officials encourage all Vietnam Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and suffer from one of the three diseases to make sure their applications have been submitted.

VA has offered Veterans exposed to Agent Orange special access to health care since 1978, and priority medical care since 1981. VA has been providing disability compensation to Veterans with medical problems related to Agent Orange since 1985. In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a “presumed” illness do not have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service.

This “presumption” simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits. The three new illnesses – B-cell (or hairy-cell) leukemia, Parkinson’s disease and ischemic heart disease – are added to the list of presumed illnesses previously recognized by VA. Other recognized illnesses under VA’s “presumption” rule for Agent Orange are:

- Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy
- Chloracne
- Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia
- Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2)
- Hodgkin’s Disease
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
- Prostate Cancer
- Respiratory Cancers
- Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi’s sarcoma, or Mesothelioma)
- AL Amyloidosis

Veterans interested in applying for disability compensation under one of the three new Agent Orange presumptives should go to www.fasttrack.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.

With the Aussies at Song Be April, 1966

We were running missions in the hills north of Song Be in conjunction with a mob of Aussies. We had come off a series of patrols, and were assigned to pull security for one of 319ths howitzers on some sort of Eagle flight. While we waited for the gun to show up, we sat in the shade near a couple of three-quarters that had been loaded to above the side rails with food and ammo, and covered with a tarp. The driver and his shotgun man sat

in the cab, their feet up on the lowered windshield, and an E4 with an elephant gun sat on top the load. A couple of gun jeeps were parked in a casual perimeter in the clearing, and everyone was either napping or enjoying their versions of military cuisine.



Mark Carter, LRRP extraordinaire.

Our team had sort of spread out along a line of bushes near the truck with our C-rats, and generally were approving of not having to walk anywhere carrying our basic load.

The E4’s name escapes me just now, but he was newly promoted, as I remember. He fussed with his web gear and got it all adjusted, made himself a bully seat on top some of the boxes, and butted the elephant gun on his thigh. I watched him break it open to check the load, then snap it shut with that well-practiced flip used by guys who need to shoot the damned thing at real targets, using the famous flip, thumb off the safety, aim and fire drill. Except of course he wasn’t in a firefight so all he had to do was load the thing and make sure the safety was on.

Now, what happened next was perfectly reasonable, if stupid, and I know we’ve all done it one form or another: he looked at the safety on the elephant gun, and for a moment he didn’t remember if it was supposed to be forward or back, or whether he’d reflexively moved it when he snapped the gun shut. So, naturally, he tested the trigger. Sure enough, his thumb had been doing the thinking that time, and a sharp BLAM! announced to everyone in the clearing that an M-79 shot was out.

(continued....)



~ OOPS! Another Correction ~

G'day from Australia,

I always look forward to reading each issue of the newsletter.

I read with interest your article on the Australian insertion into New Guinea on 5 September 1943, when Australian Gunners and their 25 PDR guns went in support of US troops of the 503rd Infantry at Nadzab, New Guinea in 1943.

One small point that needs correction is; it was not 24 hours after they were inserted before the first round was fired, it was 2 hours. This information is recorded at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia.

Keep up the great work getting information to the troops on health and what has happened to Veterans after their retirement.

Sid Cheeseman, AM PJ
Chapter XI Downunder



33 Artillerymen of the 2/4th Field Regiment, under the command of Lt. Pearson, participated in the paratroop drop over Nadzab, 5 September 1943. AMW 030141/24 Photo courtesy of the 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion web site.

Port Moresby, 1943. A gunner adjusts a parachute before the Australian airborne artillerymen and their guns -- dismantled and attached to parachutes -- join the transport planes which took them over the Markham Valley. AWM 015701.



Everyone in the clearing froze. I looked over at my TL. He looked at me. I glanced around at the rest of my team. We all looked at the E4 on top the three-quarter. By this time, every eyeball in the clearing was trained on the E4 on top the truck. Now, being highly trained professionals, we all took the time to notice that his weapon was still pointed almost straight up, and he was contemplating the tree canopy directly above him, through which his HE round had threaded itself, hitting nary a leaf or branch in its passage. I guess time was standing still, because we had plenty of time to get to our feet and run around in the clearing a bit before we decided to get under the truck. Not easy, because we had our rucksacks on. I was vaguely aware of the truck driver and shotgun man trying to squeeze in among us. Well, first come first served, but all were welcome.

After a while a loud BLAM! outside the clearing informed us that the M-79 round wouldn't be landing among us, so we crawled out from under the truck—this also not easy, on account of the rucksacks and all—and we went back to eating our C-rats.

A few minutes later an Aussie senior NCO and his driver came stomping up to the clearing, and the senior NCO wanted to know who had fired off that round. That's not exactly how he put it, but I couldn't really make out the individual words, on account of the way his vocal chords actually put out sound at two or three different frequencies at the same time, and, too, there's that accent, you know. The NCO did a lot of arm-flapping, which actually got the message across pretty well. Somebody pointed out the E-4 who was still sitting on top the truck, looking at his elephant gun like it was a third hand or something. Before the NCO actually climbed up on the truck one of the officers arrived to see what all the hubbub was about.

Fortunately all that was damaged was one of those funny-looking little jeeps the Aussies drove, which now was missing a front tire, quarter-panel, and part of an axle. After a while the Aussies got calmed down, and the officer was able to get a Chinook laid on to haul the Aussie jeep back to Bien Hoa. I heard the cherry E4 got to be a cherry E3, but that might have been just a rumor.

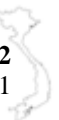
War usually is actually hell, but sometimes it's just heck. Take care,

Mark Carter
173d LRRP, '65-'66

~ Hooking Up ~

Do anyone of you have contact info for my good buddy LT Art Fumerton? I last saw him in California in 1967. He was in A Co. and later in Recon. Thanks!

Jack Owens, A/B/2/503d
j_owens1941@live.com



A Different Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.

My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.

The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then the
sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.
A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Sky Soldier, huddled here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"
For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts...

To the window that danced with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said, "It's really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night.
It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
That separates you from the darkest of times."

"No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.
My Gramps died at 'Pearl' on a day in December,"
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram
always remembers."

My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam',
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

"I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile."

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,
The red, white, and blue... an American flag.
"I can live through the cold and the being alone,
away from my family, my house and my home."

"I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another,
or lay down my life with my sister and brother,
who stand at the front against any and all,
to ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
your family is waiting and I'll be all right."
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?
It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.
To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.
For when we come home, either standing or dead,
to know you remember we fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
that we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

~ Author unknown ~

[Thanks to Paul Fisher 3/503d for sending this in]



~ Merry Christmas Sky Soldiers ~

