

January-February 2017, Issue 71
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See all issues at the 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion website:
http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



General Ellis Williamson, Commander (L), 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep), issuing orders for Eagle Flights in Pleiku to 2/503 and other unit commanders. See Col. George Dexter's report on Pages 56-66 herein.

(From photo collection of Col. George Dexter, Bn CO, 2/503)





We Dedicate this Issue of Our Newsletter in Memory of the Men of the 173d Airborne Brigade & Attached Units We Lost 50 Years Ago in the Months of January & February 1967



**“Rest in peace in the shade of love from all your fellow countrymen. You are not forgotten.
You honored us by your service and sacrifice and we now honor you each time we stand
and sing the words ‘...the land of the free and the home of the brave.’”**

A fellow veteran



**Charles L. Raiford, Jr., PFC, 22
C/2/503, 1/1/67**

“Charles, You graduated 2 years prior to me from the same high school. I am committed to getting as many photos uploaded as I can for all the heroes in my area. I can now cross you off my list as I am uploading your graduation picture so that you will no longer be faceless.

My deepest gratitude to you for the supreme sacrifice you made for your country and for those of us who still enjoy living in freedom. You are one of many angels in God's heaven and I am pleased to honor your memory.”

Carol (Cipriani) Haberchak



*Stoves was riding inexplicably sank and Stoves was washed away. Extensive search efforts were conducted, and one man was located, but Stoves could not be found. There was no evidence of hostile action, and the reason for the sampan sinking was not determined.
[Taken from pownetwork.org]*

**Eugene Cabbagestalk, PVT, 20
C/4/503, 1/11/67**

“Eugene is buried at Highwood Cemetery in Pittsburg, PA.”



**Joseph R. Reichert, SSGT, 26
E/17th Cav, 1/3/67**

*“SSGT Joseph R. Reichert was an armor reconnaissance specialist assigned to E Troop, 17th Cavalry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. On January 3, 1967, he was the driver of a military vehicle which attempted to pass another vehicle and overturned. SSGT Reichert suffered fatal injuries in the accident.
[Taken from coffeldatabase.org]*

**Willie Donald Jones, SP4, 22
A/1/503, 1/10/67**

“Sky Soldier Honored. On behalf of myself and our brother paratroopers who served in the 173rd ‘Herd’ brigade in RVN, let me offer our respect and regrets for your sacrifice. May you rest in peace and never be forgotten.”

Mike Switzer



**Lonnie Allen Floyd, SP4, 19
D/4/503, 1/14/67**

“Happy 69th Birthday to you Lonnie. You've celebrated the last 50 years in Heaven with the Angels. I miss you so much but I know you're better off in Heaven. So many of your fellow soldiers are suffering from Agent Orange and PTSD and so many effects of the war. I visited the place you were killed in Vietnam and one day soon I'll post the pictures and write of my 10 days there walking where you walked. I met another buddy of yours at the 173rd Reunion. His name is Wendell Satterfield and he told me some stories about you two. I know your friends respected you as you respected them while serving. It seems that every day I receive a sign from you in Heaven. I know you're watching over me. I so look forward to the day we have a family reunion in Heaven. Oh what a day that will be. I miss you and I love you. I've never forgotten you and never will. Rest in peace Lonnie.”



**Merritt Stoves, III, PFC 19
A/1/503, 1/10/67**

“PFC Merritt Stoves, III was a rifleman assigned to Company A, 1st Battery, 503rd Infantry. On his nineteenth birthday, Stoves and his unit were crossing a stream in Binh Duong Province about 10 miles south of the city of Ben Cat in sampans. The sampan on which

**Brenda Floyd Underwood
Gold Star Sister**

(continued,,,)





John R. Prince, SSG, 41
D/4/503, 1/15/67

"My brother, Lonnie Allen Floyd was KIA 1-14-67 just 1 day before you. He was also from Chattanooga and was killed in the same province as you. I hope your paths may have crossed. You are both heroes and deserve a special place in Heaven. Rest in peace John and Lonnie."

Brenda Floyd Underwood
Gold Star Sister

Frank Howard Laskin, PFC, 19
D/4/503, 1/15/67

(Virtual Wall states HHC/4/503)

"I remember the day Frankie left for Vietnam, the day the family was notified of his death and the funeral as if it were yesterday. He would have had a wonderful life if he had returned from his tour of duty."

Cheryl Laskin Hjelt Schjelt
First Cousin



Jerome Vincent Zeffass, PFC, 20
B/4/503, 1/16/67

(Virtual Wall states B/2/503)

"I met Jerry in 1965-1966 when we were both attending college at West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas. He was from Pennsylvania and had come down to play football. I was from the Texas Panhandle."

Jerry wasn't at WTSU very long but we had become friends and continued to write each other after he went back to Pennsylvania and joined the Army. Then in 1967 several letters were returned and I learned he had been killed."

I will always remember Jerry as a sweet, fun loving young man and wonder what might have been...."

P. J. (Page) Fanning



Mario Ramirez, SGT, 23
B/3/503, 1/16/67

(Virtual Wall states D/4/503)

"Mario is buried at Christian Memorial Cemetery, Rochester, MI."



Frank Lee Smith, PFC, 25
B/4/503, 1/16/67

"I was beside you this day. I called for you & rolled you over, but you were gone. I'll never forget."

David McCallister



Arthur Wayne Wilkie, SP4, 23
B/4/503, 1/16/67

"Passion fills me with the words you say...And the thoughts you think... The dreams you dream...The Love that seldom showed...In your quiet smile...In your sparkling eyes...In your life that shows me these things... With passion that fills me..."

Martha Justice McMinn



Note: Martha is Arthur Wilkie's niece. Martha was 6 years old when her uncle Arthur died.

Billy Dean Brigman, PFC, 19
B/1/503, 1/17/67

"The day we found out, I was 9 years old, but I remember the car going past our house on its way to my Uncle's house. There were so many hearts broken. Billy Dean was so much more than a young man who gave his life for his country....he was our HERO! NEVER FOROTTEN!"

Kathleen Jackson



Stephen Michael Dydynski, PFC, 19
A/2/503, 1/21/67

(Virtual Wall states A/1/503)

"Born to be a fighter and he could also have been a comedian."

Steve and I used to play after grade school. I recall one afternoon we went into my basement and we designed wooden swords from 1" X 1" wood on my father's workbench. The swords were similar to those used by Roman Knights. After making the swords we went out into my backyard and we took the aluminum tops off of my family's trash cans and used the tops as shields to catch the sword blows. Steve was born to fight and conquer and he promptly beat the hell out of me to the point that my hands and wrists and head were swollen...."



(continued....)



....He beat me into the ground and then he stuck the end of his sword to my throat and most seriously chastised me. Like an adult, he warned me that I could never give up.

As someone I previously knew to be completely full of fun and laughter, he was definitely (the) most serious I had ever seen him as he told me my life would one day depend on my ability to hold my own against anyone. He taught me an important life lesson. We ended up going to different High Schools. I still remember him well. While his life took a tragic turn before going into the Army, he was always loved by everyone who knew him. He truly loved his sister Bunny. I hope to see him one day so that we can crack jokes and tell funny stories."

Tom Nagle

**Eric Ward Zoller, SP4, 22
HHC/2/503, 1/22/67**

"Thanks for making me laugh. I thought about you the other day and I began to laugh, when we were at Fort Pork LA and all the guys hijacked the bus and you drove it, what a ride. And when we helped each other through jump school. When we got our orders to go the 173rd Airborne. Miss you buddy, rest well."



Gilbert

"Specialist 4 Eric Ward Zoller was the only son of the late actress Mary Jane Croft who many shall remember for her frequent appearances on the various 'I Love Lucy' 1950s TV comedy programs appearing as Betty Ramsey and Mary Jane Lewis.

You are not forgotten, nor shall you ever be."

Clay Marston



Eric's mother, Mary Jane Croft 1916-1999, during scene with Lucille Ball on "I Love Lucy". (web photo)



"A portion of Sepulveda Boulevard/State Highway Route 1 in El Segundo near Los Angeles International Airport has been dedicated to the residents of Los Angeles County who served in Vietnam. This section of highway is now designated the *Los Angeles County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway*. Adopted by the California State Legislature in 2000, the highway honors the more than 350,000 California veterans who served in the Vietnam War, including the 5,822 killed or missing in action. Los Angeles County has the largest number of Vietnam veterans in California and 1,857 of its residents were killed or missing in action during that war. This memorial corridor provides a fitting and proper way for the residents of Los Angeles County to express their gratitude and appreciation for the sacrifices these Vietnam veterans have made for their country."



**Lewis Carl Anderson, SP4, 20
A/1/503, 1/22/67**

"Lewis is buried at Burr Oak Cemetery, Alsip, IL."

(continued....)



**Ronald Lynn Pendergist, CPL, 21
A/4/503, 1/22/67**

"I never knew my cousin Ronny. All I know about him was he was my cousin, killed in a freak accident, but came home as a hero as so many others. When I try (to) look up Ronny in various other websites, I rarely ever find him. So tonight, I am writing this to tell that he served for his country and to protect his family and friends. I really do wish he lived, for he was like me - loved good jokes, watching movies, and hated school.

Ronny was used to check out tunnels dug by the enemy to see if he could find the enemy hiding in there or supplies of theirs. On a routine check, I believe he had gotten stuck and then suffocated. If anybody knows the whole story, please post it. And if anyone, I doubt it, knew Ronny and has a picture of him, could they send it to me. I have never seen a picture of him.

Ronny, bro, thanks for serving and you'll always be on my mind. Your cousin,"

Jake Coleman Pendergist



**Geoffrey Lawrence Tweedie, PTE
6RAR, 1/28/67**

**William D. Schaddelee, SGT, 23
C/2/503, 2/1/67**

"Bill, I remember the times we had at Ft Campbell, KY in the 101st Abn Div, those were younger days for both of us. I can't remember the rest of our friends or your girlfriend's name, but when I go to the Wall every year in May, I always stop and speak. May God take care of you. Your Friend Forever, 'Wild Bill.'"

Bill Mathews

**James D. Henderson, PFC, 22
A/1/503, 2/1/67**

"James, Even though I was only three years old when I last saw you, I remember your smile and laughter that last Christmas we were all together in California at Aunt Willie's. You have never been forgotten! The entire family appreciates your sacrifice for our freedom. Thinking of you often."

**From a cousin,
Penny Youngkin Ozgunduz**



**August Chiasera, Jr., SP4, 20
C/2/503, 2/1/67**

"My brother, Frank Sokolowski was in Viet Nam with Augie and they were best friends there with Frank Martinez, too. Thank you, Augie, for sharing friendship with another brave East Coast kid. My mother is going to see and honor your name on the moving Viet Nam Wall in Lynn, MA this weekend. 8-26-09. RIP"

Diane Sokolowski Gulley



**Ira James Spittler, III, SP4, 21
A/1/503, 2/5/67**

"Remembering you today for your ultimate sacrifice. My brother, Lonnie Floyd also served with the 173rd ABN and was KIA 1-14-67. You served with the best of the best soldiers. May you rest in peace and know that you'll never be forgotten."

Brenda Floyd Underwood



**William Elice Collins, Jr., SP4, 19
173d LRRP, 1/23/67
(Virtual Wall states E 17th Cav)**



"When I was a young child my brother Bill was and still is my hero. He is larger than life to me. He taught me all about being a good soldier. We had a very large box full of toy soldiers, trucks, tanks, artillery guns, mortars, bazookas. We had it all, daddy was a soldier. Bill was eleven years older than me. He joined the army as soon as he could at age seventeen. We lost him just a few years later. He gave all to save his buddies. We memorialize his memory with honor knowing he will never be forgotten. I Love And Miss My Brother Bill."

Bob Collins

(continued....)



**Robert Raymond Ecker, SSG, 21
A/1/503, 2/5/67**

"We never got to meet each other, but I've heard a lot about you and I feel like I know you through the stories I have been told. I am married to your brother Ken. I know you were special because Ken named one of his sons after you. Your flag is displayed in my living room for everyone to see. I took my kids to see your name on the Vietnam Remembrance Wall in Washington D.C. so we could pay our respects to the man we have heard so much about. Thank you for your service and you will never be forgotten. Rest in peace. Love, Your Sister-in-Law,"

Penny

**George J. Carrillo, Jr., SP4, 22
A/1/503, 2/6/67**

(Virtual Wall states E Troop, 17th Cav)

"Yes, there was a failure with the structure of the helicopter but these men were taking an ammunition run to their fellow soldiers. My Uncle Butch had volunteered for what was to be his final mission before heading home. He had completed a tour of duty not having been sent to Vietnam. He came home but told his parents he could not sit here watching his 'brothers' be killed. He volunteered, asking to go to Vietnam."

**Patricia Hernandez
Niece**

**Gilmore Wilson Christy, SP4, 21
173d Eng, 2/6/67**

"Gilmore was great friends with my mother and father. I recall my father telling me that Gilmore was a short timer when he was killed and the news came as a great shock. My father, a Marine, used to tell me stories how they used to give the other a hard time in regards to joining their respective branch of service. My father missed and cherished Gilmore's friendship and I like to think they are now reunited. My oldest brother is named after Gilmore and subsequently so is my son. Thank you Gilmore."

Charles Fouts

**Richard William Cliff, GNR
1 FD Regt, 2/6/67**



**Everett Armstrong, SGT, 26
E/17th Cav, 2/6/67**

"I served with SGT Everett Armstrong in E-Troop 17th Cav, 173rd ABN. I was there the day they went down in the Huey. We lost 4 good men there that day. I am proud to have had SGT Armstrong as a friend along with the other 3 men."

Russell Stenseng, Jr.



**Fred Arthur Johnson, PFC, 20
E/17th Cav, 2/6/67**

"15 Nov 2004. I was a crew chief in the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. On 6 February 1967 my unit was picking up some grunts (infantry) out in the boonies and bringing them to an air strip. My ship was number 3 in a flight of 10 aircraft.

As we neared touchdown I was looking to the rear of my aircraft to watch and see if the stinger touched the ground as we landed. This was done just as a method of ribbing the aircraft commander. As I looked to the rear, to my horror I saw a helicopter at the rear of the flight come all to pieces. I keyed my mike and said, 'My God, we have a mid-air behind us', thinking two ships had collided. I immediately told my pilot we were OK, it was at the back. What had happened was that the number 9 aircraft lost its tail boom as it flared to land. When this occurs the body of the aircraft will immediately start to spin, trying to catch up with the rotor blade spin. Bodies are flung out both doors as a result.

Two aircraft near the crash were detailed to carry the dead and injured back to Long Binh. The rest of the flight made another lift, as the mission had to continue. When we came back in, my ship was ordered to take one more body back to Graves Registration in Long Binh. They brought this body over to my ship and placed it inside. We took off with me up in the cargo area with this body. He was a young, nice looking black guy who just looked like he was asleep. His right arm was broken below the elbow and he appeared to have a pencil sized puncture above his right eye. Other than that I did not see any other injuries. I felt for a pulse, such was my disbelief at having just seen this GI die. I thought how awful that his mother has no idea that he is gone forever. Things like this are burned into your brain forever. May he rest in Peace."

Ron Seabolt. 71st AHC

(continued....)



Note from The Virtual Wall

UH-1D tail number 64-13563 of the 71st AHC broke up due to a structural failure as the pilot flared for landing. Six men died in the crash - two crewmen and four passengers:



71st AHC aircrew:

WO William J. Robbins, Absarokee, MT, pilot
PFC Thomas M. Nowack, Florissant, MO, gunner

E Trp, 17th Cav Rgt, passengers:

SGT Everett Armstrong, Nashville, TN
SP4 George J. Carrillo, San Jose, CA
PFC Fred A. Johnson, Hallandale, FL
PFC Chester P. Simpson, Jamestown, KY

John William Kirby, DCM T/W02
6RAR, 2/6/67

Chester Paul Simpson, PFC, 18
A/1/503, 2/6/67

(Virtual Wall states E/17th Cav)

"My Brother In Arms. Chester was a very good friend of mine in Vietnam. We often talked about home and he often mentioned how much he loved his new wife and family.

We were in the field and had been called to immediately fly to a Special Forces Camp that was under attack. When we arrived at the assault LZ and started on final approach the chopper Chester was in crashed. I found him in the bush about 15 min. later with a smile on his face and a broken neck. He had died instantly. I miss you my friend." Peter F. George



E Troop graphic posted on web in connection with Chester Paul Simpson tribute.

Raymond Maurice Darrigan, SFC, 40
A/1/503, 2/6/67

"From your Grand Daughter. Your life was not long enough. I wish that I could have met you. I am your granddaughter, daughter to Michael Raymond Darrigan. Right now I am doing everything I can to learn about the man that made my family possible.

K.D. Lassiter



Thomas Michael Nowack, PFC
71st AHC, 2/6/67, DFC

"Thomas is buried at Calvary Cemetery in St Louis, MO."



The Distinguished Flying (DFC) Cross is a military decoration awarded to any officer or enlisted member of the United States Armed Forces

who distinguishes himself or herself in support of operations by "heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight, subsequent to November 11, 1918."



William J. Robbins, Absarokee, WO
71st AHC, 2/6/67

"Remembering my hero brother. We miss you every day and remember all the good times growing up. The family is so proud of you and the sacrifice you made. We will all see you again one day."

Judy Robbins Stolzenburg



Crash Information on U.S. Army Helicopter UH-1D Tail Number 64-13563

The lower left longeron failed at the battery shelf, at approximately station 243.8 while on short final. The tail section separated from the fuselage. The main fuselage continued on spinning and throwing men from the aircraft. The main rotor blade cut through the cockpit. The aircraft struck the ground and rolled several times. The crash took the lives of two crewmen, WO1 William J. Robbins and PFC Thomas M. Nowack. Four passengers also perished in the accident, SGT Everett Armstrong, PFC Fred A. Johnson, PFC Chester P. Simpson, and SP4 George J. Carrillo Jr. Analysis revealed the structural failure due to wear caused by the battery shelf. [Taken from vhpa.org]

(continued....)

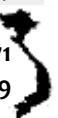




Photo posted on Wall of Faces website.



**Bobby Lee Hayes, SSG, 28
B/1/503, 2/7/67**

"We Remember. Bobby is buried at Davis Hoffman Cemetery, Bowling Green, KY."

Robert Sage



**Douglas Roy Powter, Jr., PTE
6RAR, 2/7/67**

**Rodger Clayborn Snyder, SP4, 20
B/1/503, 2/7/67**

"Killed in War Zone 'D'. He was a trooper in the company I commanded. He, and three others, died in an attack by hard core VC on our position protecting a helicopter Landing Zone. I remember him well as a cheerful, outgoing young man with a high order of intelligence. He had a zest for life."

**John H. Wilson
CO B/1/503**



**Harvey Brewington, Jr., SSG, 29
B/1/503, 2/7/67**

"Mortar Section Leader. He, and three others, died in a VC attack on the position of the company that I commanded. We were on a landing zone in War Zone 'D' on an operation called 'Big Spring'. I remember him as calm, competent and completely professional. He had just showed some family pictures to his platoon leader when a VC claymore cut him down."



**John H. Wilson
CO B/1/503**

**Bradley Timothy Daigle, PFC, 20
B/1/503, 2/7/67**

"I remember receiving your letter you wrote just five days before you went to be with The Lord. It was my birthday. Little did I know that it would be the last time I would ever hear from you. Your funeral was one of the largest Morgan City has ever seen. Your service inspired me to join after graduation and even volunteer for Nam while I was at Langley but they shipped me off to Korea instead. Maybe one day you, Charles and I will meet again and we can go fishin!! You are missed my friend!!"

Felix J. Olivier, Jr.



**Joseph Steven Meisburger, SP4, 19
B/1/503, 2/8/67**

(Virtual Wall states B/2/503)

"SP4 Joseph Meisburger was killed February 8, 1967 with only two months remaining in his year-long tour. Everyone believed he would extend to be near his stepbrother who was stationed nearby. In a letter home shortly before his death, he wrote the following poem."

Peter Meisburger



~ Two Hours Till Dawn ~

*On watch eyelids sag and thoughts of home,
All quiet in the land where the V.C. roam.
Was the noise the wind, or pajama clad men?
Then listening and waiting to hear it again.*

*The night is shattered by a terrible blast
Gone are the dreams and thoughts of the past
Rifles are grabbed to fire at the night
Have the little men fled, or stayed to fight?*

*A dying man's moans and the chill of fear
Are companions till the morning is here
The helos will arrive at dawn's first light
To pick up those wounded during the night.*

*Two hours till dawn, two hours of hell
Two hours of praying the wounded get well
The longest two hours in a young man's life
Then the wounded taken away from the strife*

*Thank God for the sun and the dawn's early light
In a job done to preserve America's might.*

(continued....)



**Millard Franklin Meadows, PFC, 18
B/1/503, 2/8/67**

"A Good Paratrooper. PFC Meadows died as a paratrooper assigned to the company I commanded. In the early morning hours of 8 February 1967 we began a nasty six hour firefight against an entrenched force of hard core Viet Cong. In the course of the fight one of our number suffered serious wounds and lay immediately in front of a VC occupied bunker. PFC Meadows, and several others, attempted to approach that bunker from the side. He was killed by a sniper. I'll never forget his courageous sacrifice."

**John H. Wilson
CO B/1/503**



**Keith Allen "Doc" Campbell, SP4, 20
B/1/503, 2/8/67**

"My son is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. He died saving the lives of others. We never stop missing him."

**Esther B. Campbell Gates
San Antonio, Texas**



AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS



1. TC 320. The Distinguished Service Cross is AWARDED posthumously to:

**KEITH A. CAMPBELL, Specialist Four (E4),
United States Army,
Headquarters and Headquarters Company,
1st Battalion (Airborne),
503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)**

Awarded: Distinguished Service Cross
Date action: 8 February 1967
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Specialist Four Campbell distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 8 February 1967 while serving with elements of the 503d Infantry

assaulting Viet Cong. During the initial engagement, the lead company had suffered numerous casualties, including the medical personnel. Specialist Campbell volunteered to assist in treating the wounded, and dauntlessly moved up to the front line.

Exposing himself to the intense hostile fire, he began to administer aid to the wounded soldiers. Discovering that one casualty lay fifty meters in front of the friendly lines and next to an insurgent bunker, Specialist Campbell called for covering fire as he maneuvered forward. Disregarding the extreme dangers, he fearlessly ran through a hail of bullets and exploding grenades, but was forced to take cover behind a low mound of dirt. From this position, he killed a Viet Cong sniper who was firing on him from a tree. Undeterred from his mission, Specialist Campbell then crawled the last twenty meters to the stricken man. Dragging the soldier to the cover of a nearby tree, he started to administer first aid. As he fearlessly protected the man from further hostile fire, Specialist Campbell was mortally wounded. His unimpeachable valor and selfless sacrifice against insurmountable odds succeeded in saving a fellow soldier's life. Specialist Four Campbell's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



Doc, off on another mission.



"Collage created by Tom Murtha for 'Mom' Campbell, derived from a number of sources."

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918.

(continued....)





~ ARLINGTON'S VIETNAM DEAD ~

I wonder if you walk at night, Among those granite stones. Awakening sleeping souls to flight,
To rattle history's bones.
I wonder if you sit to chat, At Mr. Lincoln's knee.
Discussing all the "this" and "that"
That makes up history.
For history is what stretches wide, Before my
brimming eyes, As the shimmering Potomac's tide
Blends with the lighted skies.
Row on row they sleep, Below me, now and forever
more. I count the stones (like counting sheep)
From each and every war.
"Can there be peace?" I'm sure they ask, At Mr.
Lincoln's knee. "To bleed and die was our task,
And now we're history.
But we did not love--we did not live, There was so little
time.
Is twenty years too much to give, To fill an empty
shrine?"
And as I stare and listen well, I'm sure that I can hear
A quiet splash in the columned cell
That's another Lincoln tear.
Appears on the web, submitted by
Esther B. (Campbell) Gates
Mother of Keith "Doc" Campbell, B/1/503, KIA 2/8/67

M. Manton, CPL
RNZIR V, 2/9/67

William C. Fore, SP4, 20
A/1/503, 2/11/67

"When I think about what you did to support our country and our freedoms, I am overwhelmed. Your courage and commitment are a blessing and encouragement to my family and future generations of Americans." **Matthew Gerig**

Victor Ian Pomroy, TPR
3 Cav Regt, 2/12/67

Donald MacKenzie Bourne, MAJ
5RAR, 2/14/67
Robert Bruce Milligan, Capt.
5RAR, 2/14/67



**Charles Leroy Slack, Jr., PFC, 19
A/1/503, 2/15/67**

"I am enclosing a photo of my brother, Charles L. Slack, Jr. He was KIA in Tay Ninh Province on February 15, 1967. During Operation Big Spring, there were 9 men from my brother's unit and a dog handler and his dog. Eight of those men made it out of the bunker, to a nearby creek. The dog handler that my brother was running point for, was shot in the face. My brother tended to his wounds. The men from his unit said they would begin firing, and when they did, my brother and the handler were to try to make it to them. As soon as they got out of the bunker, my brother yelled "grenade", and he jumped on it, saving the handler and his patrol dog.



We do not have many pictures of my brother, so I hope this one will do. I chose it because he has the Airborne patch on. I love that you are going to do a wall of pictures. I would love to see that. It just seems so fitting to do so, and I thank you for that. My name is Peggy Slack Stull. I was 14 when my brother was killed, but there is not a day that goes by, that he is not in my heart."

**Peggy Slack Stull to the 173rd Airborne Association
to The Virtual Wall, 08/24/2012
(See story about Chuck beginning Page 12)**



**Luis Vigo-Negrin, SSG, 28
E/17th Cav, 2/16/67**

"Luis is buried at Puerto Rico National Cemetery."

**Edward Henry Jackson, SP4, 21
HHC/4/503, 2/16/67**

"Miss you. Thanks for being there when I needed a friend. You are missed." **Suzy Szymczak**

**Peter John Arnold, PTE
6RAR, 2/17/67**

**Michael James Birchell, PTE
6RAR, 2/17/67**

**Adrian William Rich, PTE
RAR, 2/17/67**

**Wayne Maurice Riley, PTE
6RAR, 2/17/67**

(continued....)



Kerry Michael Rooney, L/CPL
6RAR, 2/17/67

Brian David Waters, PTE
6RAR, 2/17/67

David/ Raleigh Webster, PTE
6RAR, 2/17/67

Maxwell Powell Hanley, MM, T/WO2
AATTV, 2/20/67

Donald Murray Clark, PTE
5RAR, 2/21/67

George Bruce Green, L/CPL
5RAR, 2/21/67

Kevin Leslie Mitchinson, L/CPL
3 Cav Regt, 2/21/67

Michael Damien Poole, PTE
5RAR, 2/21/67

Richard Wayne Sandow, PTE
5RAR, 2/21/67

James Clifton Webster, PTE
5RAR, 2/21/67

Robert Peter Wilsen, TPR
3 Cav Regt, 2/21/67

Timothy Michael Kranshan, PFC, 19
HHC/2/503, 2/22/67

"How do you put what's been in your heart for years about the one person (a first cousin) in your life that was the Big brother you never had? We were related by more than blood. We played together as kids, ran around together as teens. He was older, wiser, the most caring cousin I've had. His courage has always been an inspiration to me. His humor and his love for what he believed will be in my heart forever. I still think, cry, remember him. He WAS my Big Brother!!!

All my love."

Jim Kane



John Ronald Mickna, SSG, 28
A/2/503, 2/23/67

"John R. Mickna was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with 'V' Device (Posthumously) 11 March 1967. For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force:



Staff Sergeant Mickna distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 23 February 1967 in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day, Staff Sergeant Mickna's squad was given the mission of disabling a sniper who had been firing on the battalion perimeter. Staff Sergeant Mickna was leading his squad towards the point where the sniper had last been located when they came upon a small hut and a clearing surrounding it. The point man was just moving into the clearing when he spotted a Viet Cong partially hidden in the hut. He opened fire simultaneously with the sniper and received a wound in the shoulder. Staff Sergeant Mickna immediately deployed the squad on line around the injured man and then realizing that the Viet Cong was too well concealed from their present position, he moved to the left flank around the clearing to a more advantageous position. Despite the continuous sniper fire which was landing around him, Staff Sergeant Mickna courageously moved even closer through the incoming fire, even though he saw that his squad was pinned down and unable to effectively return fire. As he moved even closer to the hidden Viet Cong, he began to receive all the enemy's fire thus enabling his squad to move on line and begin placing effective fire on the Viet Cong's position. Staff Sergeant Mickna seeing his men go on line and realizing they would be in the open as they moved toward the hut, got up, with a complete disregard for his own personal safety, and began charging the hut in an attempt to get the Viet Cong's attention so his men would not be subjected to fire. As he moved on the Viet Cong, Staff Sergeant Mickna was mortally wounded in the chest. His courageous actions enabled his squad to wound the Viet Cong and force his retreat. Staff Sergeant Mickna's outstanding display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and personal bravery were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army."

(continued....)





Franklin Roosevelt Watkins, SSG, 32
C/1/503, 2/23/67
"Franklin is buried at Forest Baptist Church Cemetery, Meherrin, VA."



George Eugene Coles, Jr., PFC, 18
C/1/503, 2/23/67
"George is buried at Arlington National Cemetery."

John Carruthers, 1LT
5RAR, 2/24/67



Thomas Frank Phillips, CPL, 21
E/17th Cav, 2/24/67
"Thomas is buried at Westview Community Cemetery, Pompano Beach, FL."

Gary Kenneth Smith, SP4, 21
HHC/1/503, 2/27/67

"In remembrance of this United States Army Scout Dog Handler whose name shall live forever more. Specialist Fourth Class Gary Kenneth Smith served with the 39th Infantry Platoon Scout Dog, 173rd Airborne Brigade. You are not forgotten, nor shall you ever be."

Clay Marston

Sources:

173d Abn Bde Assoc. List of KIA
RAR List of KIA (web)
Virtual Wall (web)
Wall of Faces (web)

NEW CASTLE NEWS

Finding Closure: Mysterious ad writer steps forward to share memories of Charles Slack Jr.

By Kayleen Cubbal
New Castle News
July 21, 2012

(For more than four months, the *New Castle News* has searched for the person who placed a classified advertisement that started the chain of events connecting the family of late New Castle native Charles L. Slack, Jr. with Wayne McLeister, who revealed

recently that, in 1967, Slack fell on a grenade to save his life and that of his dog in Vietnam. The *News* honored the advertiser's request to remain anonymous and, instead, utilized other means in an attempt to find the person and extend an offer to speak. Earlier this week, Valerie Young Kelton of May, Texas, stepped out of the shadows and agreed to tell her story of life, love, loss and, finally, peace).



Valerie Young Kelton today

Valerie Young was desperate.

The 17-year-old high school senior from Houston had, for more than two years, been trying in vain to reach her Vietnam pen pal, Charles L. Slack, Jr. She had written to him numerous times overseas at the Army Post Office address at which they had corresponded previously and received no answer. She knew he was from Pennsylvania and, finally, tracked down what she thought might be his address in New Castle and wrote to him there.

In frustration, she scrawled in large letters on the back of the envelope, *"Somebody please answer."* Finally, Valerie got the news she didn't want to hear. Slack's mother, Emily, wrote to tell her that Charles had been killed in action, the victim of a grenade blast more than two years earlier, on Feb. 15, 1967.

Despite her sorrow, she went on with her life, marrying twice and carving out a happy existence for herself in Texas, opening a successful business with her second husband and becoming a doting grandmother.

Yet Charles Slack remained on her mind.

"I knew he died, but I felt in my heart that there was a story there, and I so wanted to know it," said the woman who for the past 33 years has been Valerie Kelton. *"I needed to find out how it ended. Never, ever, in a million years, did I think I would."*

At the age of 61, more than 46 years after it all began, Valerie Young Kelton now knows how it ended.

FINDING VALERIE

Little did Valerie know that before she finally learned the details of Slack's death in recent days, her actions kicked off an incredible chain of events that led to a similar occurrence for Slack's family and the man he saved.

(continued....)



With the 45th anniversary of Slack's death approaching on Feb. 15, the May, Texas, resident decided to place a classified advertisement in his memory in the *New Castle News*. In that ad, she called him "a true hero" and asked that he always be remembered for his sacrifice.

"When I placed the ad, I asked to remain anonymous because I didn't even know if any of his family was still in the area and if they were, the last thing I wanted to do was upset them," said the soft-spoken Valerie in a pronounced southern drawl. *"I just wanted someone else to remember his sacrifice as much as I knew I would on that day and at the very least, I thought maybe people would read the ad and say a prayer for him."*

As it turned out, all of Slack's family, including 86-year-old Emily, still live in New Castle and the anonymous ad turned their lives upside down since they never knew the exact details of the death of the man they called "Chuckie."

On a site called "Find a Grave Memorial," Slack's sister, Peggy Slack Stull, found a posting that a man named Wayne McLeister from Princeton, Texas, had made just four days earlier. There, McLeister described how Slack had fallen on an enemy grenade that landed near them in a bunker, saving both his life and that of his dog, Ceaser, even though the three had met just that day. Valerie previously had posted information about Slack on that site as well.



Chuck Slack, A/1/503
(Photo added)

A relationship quickly formed between the Slack family and McLeister and, upon hearing the story, an anonymous donor funded a trip for McLeister and his wife to travel to New Castle to meet the Slacks.

During McLeister's June visit, curiosity about the mysterious ad-writer who unknowingly brought them together intensified. McLeister mentioned Valerie's posting and Stull found a Valerie Kelton in Mansfield, Texas, on Facebook and sent her a friend request, which was accepted. But when Stull messaged her to ask if she was Charles Slack's pen pal, she received no reply and the trail seemed to turn cold.

As it turned out, there are three Valerie Keltons in Texas and Stull had uncovered the wrong one. It was then that, with a little help from the Internet, 2+2 finally added up to 4 in the search for the elusive ad-placer.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

Valerie was 14 and attending an all-girls school in Houston in the spring of 1966 when the nearby USO office suggested that students acquire a pen pal to help the soldiers get through tough days at war. She was given the name of Charles Slack and they began a long-distance friendship that both cherished. Although it took weeks for letters to arrive, Valerie said she anxiously checked the mailbox every day, hoping to hear from her new friend.

Then, on the day after Thanksgiving, a knock came at the door of her family's home. *"I was sweeping the living room floor and we heard this knock and I looked up and there was a soldier standing there in a khaki uniform,"* she said. *"He looked right at me and said, 'Hi, Valerie,' and my mouth dropped open. I knew right*

away it was Chuck. My hair was a mess, I didn't wear makeup yet and I was wearing some old shirt and a pair of plaid Bermuda shorts and sandals — I'll bet I made a fine impression. Chuck said he was on his way back to Vietnam after being on leave and had stopped to meet me. He hitchhiked to our house from the airport. He was very mannerly. My mother was from Massachusetts and anybody north of the Mason-Dixon line was like family to her and she immediately invited him in."

Slack was invited to sleep on the couch until he had to begin his return trip to Vietnam on Sunday.

"Friday night, we went to the local neighborhood park and sat on the swings. On Saturday, daddy let us go into town. I'm sure he had 'the talk' with Chuck first," she said

with a laugh.

(continued....)



"Daddy was a big man, 6-4, who worked as an iron worker and he was loud, outspoken and never backed down from speaking his mind. I wasn't allowed to date or see boys yet, but I guess he thought of Chuck as a man of honor, or I never would have been allowed to go.

We rode the city bus and I showed him where I went to school and we just walked around and ate candy and popcorn and talked and talked. He told me that his parents were going through a divorce and that the girl he was going to marry had just broken up with him. I think he just needed someone to talk to. He was very respectful, he never even tried to kiss me and I don't remember us even holding hands," she added. "I was a little dorky and I'm sure he could tell I was still very innocent and he respected me greatly. But I was on top of the world, I couldn't believe this soldier had come all this way to see me. I was starry-eyed."

MUCH ADMIRATION

Valerie's sister and two brothers (a third brother was in the Navy at the time) were equally taken with Slack.

"I was an 11-year-old kid when Chuck came to see Valerie," said her brother, Bill Young. "She was famous because her 'boyfriend' came from the war. My dad really liked him and took him around the neighborhood. Chuck gave me a pen that he got in Saigon, it lit up when you put the cap on it so you could write at night. He came to see Valerie, but by the time he left, we all claimed him. I've been to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., twice and touched his name."

"I'm 56 years old now and a retired police sergeant and during my 31-year police career, whenever I would make a traffic stop on a soldier, I always thought of Chuck and gave them warnings (instead of tickets)," Bill added. "He impacted my life that much."

Valerie said recent conversations with Bill triggered many memories that she had tucked away. *"I never thought of Charles as my boyfriend even though I guess to my family, it seemed that way," she said. "I'm sure the maturity gap between a soldier of 19 and a girl of 15 was probably a bit much. I thought about him as a big brother at that point. But I cared about him greatly and felt a very strong connection with him."*

Just as he swept into their lives, though, Slack was gone.

"On Sunday, we loaded up the Ford Fairlane and took him to Hobby Airport in Houston," Valerie said. "It was so hard saying goodbye to him. We promised that we would write and he said he would come back. There were no pretenses with him, he was as genuine a person as you could meet. For a long time after he left, we talked about him."

Valerie received one final letter, then never heard from Slack again.

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

She continued to write to him at the APO address, but received nothing in return.

"He remained in my heart and in my mind," she said. "I just had to know what happened to him, so I think my mom helped me find an address in New Castle and I wrote there."

The address Valerie and her mom had found actually belonged at one time to Slack's sister, Millie, and the letter was forwarded to Emily's new address on Mercer Road.

"His mom wrote back and sent me a copy of his obituary and a photo of his casket," she said. "I was devastated."

Valerie married in 1970 during her first year of college. She divorced seven years later, and in 1978, wed her current husband, Shane Kelton.

"I told Shane about Charles and he was very supportive and helped me to honor his memory in any way I could. When the Vietnam Memorial came through Texas in the 1990s, we rubbed an image of his name. Every year on Memorial Day weekend, we remember him in some way. This year, the Home Depot here had a board where you could honor a soldier and I wrote his name."

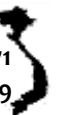
Valerie and Shane own a small machine shop that is located behind their home in May, Texas, 70 miles southeast of Abilene — *"Texas hill country,"* as Valerie refers to it.

The Keltons adopted her late sister's son, and she now is enjoying an 11-year-old granddaughter. She also has a stepdaughter and spends time with three other grandchildren as well.

She said the events of recent days have impacted her greatly and given her the closure for which she has longed for many years.

"God surely works in mysterious ways," she said. "I think every one of us has a few instances that are absolutely pivotal in our lives and this was one of them for me. This has changed me," she said. "I feel at peace now knowing what happened to this man that I cared very much about. Somehow," she added, "I just knew in my heart of hearts that he was a hero."

**[Reprinted courtesy of Kayleen Cubbal
and New Castle News]**



THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 11, 2016

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT ON VETERANS DAY

Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, Virginia



Farewell Commander In Chief (web photo)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you very much.....Please -- thank you. (Applause)

Secretary McDonald, Mr. Hallinan, distinguished guests and, most of all, our extraordinary veterans and your families: The last time I stood on these hallowed grounds, on Memorial Day, our country came together to honor those who have fought and died for our flag. A few days before, our nation observed Armed Forces Day, honoring all who are serving under that flag at this moment.

And today, on Veterans Day, we honor those who honored our country with its highest form of service: You who once wore the uniform of our Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard. We owe you our thanks. We owe you our respect. And we owe you our freedom.

We come together to express our profound gratitude for the sacrifices and contributions you and your family made on the battlefield, at home, and at outposts around the world. But America's gratitude to our veterans is something always grounded in something greater than what you did on duty. It's also an appreciation of the example that you continue to set after your service has ended -- your example as citizens.

Veterans Day often follows a hard-fought political campaign -- an exercise in the free speech and self-government that you fought for. It often lays bare disagreements across our nation. But the American

instinct has never been to find isolation in opposite corners. It is to find strength in our common creed, to forge unity from our great diversity, to sustain that strength and unity even when it is hard. And when the election is over, as we search for ways to come together -- to reconnect with one another and with the principles that are more enduring than transitory politics -- some of our best examples are the men and women we salute on Veterans Day.

It's the example of young Americans -- our 9/11 Generation -- who, as first responders ran into smoldering towers, then ran to a recruiting center and signed up to serve.

It's the example of a military that meets every mission, one united team, all looking out for one another, all getting each other's backs.

It's the example of the single-most diverse institution in our country -- soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and coastguardsmen who represent every corner of our country, every shade of humanity, immigrant and native-born, Christian, Muslim, Jew, and nonbeliever alike, all forged into common service.

It's the example of veterans -- patriots -- who, when they take off their fatigues, put back on the camouflage of everyday life in America and become our business partners and bosses, our teachers and our coaches, our first responders, city council members, community leaders, role models -- all still serving this country we love with the same sense of duty and with valor.

A few years ago, a middle-school student from Missouri entered an essay contest about why veterans are special. This is what he wrote: *"When I think of a veteran, I think of men or women who will be the first to help an elderly lady across the street. I also think of someone who will defend everyone, regardless of their race, age, gender, hair color, or other discriminations."*

After eight years in office, I particularly appreciate that he included hair color. (Laughter.) But that middle-schooler is right. Our veterans are still the first to help; still the first to serve.

(continued....)



They are women like the retired military police-woman from Buffalo who founded an AMVETS post in her community and is now building a safe place for homeless female veterans with children. (Applause)

They are men like the two veterans from Tennessee -- one in his fifties, one in his sixties -- who wrote me to say they would happily suit up and ship out if we needed them. *"We might be just a little old,"* they wrote, *"but we will be proud to go and do what we were taught to do."*

Whenever the world makes you cynical; whenever you seek true humility and true selflessness, look to a veteran.

Look to someone like First Lieutenant Irving Lerner. Irving was born in Chicago to Russian Jewish immigrants during World War I. He served as a bombardier in the Army Air Corps, flying dozens of missions toward the end of World War II.

When he returned home, Irving did what a lot of veterans do -- he put away his medals, he kept humble about his service, started living a quiet life. One fall day, walking down Sheffield Avenue on Chicago's North Side, a stranger stopped him. He said, *"Thank you for your service"* -- and he handed him a ticket to see the Cubs play in the World Series. (Applause) Now, it's a good thing Irving took that ticket -- (laughter) -- because it would be a while until his next chance. (Laughter)

Irving worked hard, managing the warehouse for his brother-in-law's tire company. He got married -- to a sergeant in the Women's Air Corps, no less. He raised four children -- the oldest of whom, Susan, is celebrating her 71st birthday today. And on a June morning many years ago, another one of Irving's daughters, Carole, called to check in. Her mother answered but was in a rush. *"We can't talk,"* she said, *"your father is being honored and we're late."* Carole asked, *"Honored for what?"* And the answer came: for his heroism in the skies above Normandy exactly 50 years earlier.

You see, Irving's children never knew that their father flew over those French beachheads on D-Day. He never mentioned it. Now when they call to check in, his children always say, *"Thank you for saving the world."* And Irving, sharp as ever at 100 years young, always replies, *"Well, I had a little help."* (Laughter)

Whenever the world makes you cynical, whenever you doubt that courage and goodness and selflessness is possible, stop and look to a veteran. They don't always go around telling stories of their heroism, so it's up to us to ask and to listen, to tell those stories for them, and to live in our own lives the values for which they were prepared to give theirs.

It's up to us to make sure they always get the care that they need. As Bob mentioned, when I announced my candidacy for this office almost a decade ago, I recommitted this generation to that work. And we've increased funding for veterans by more than 85 percent. We've cut veteran homelessness almost in half. Today, more veterans have access to health care and fewer are unemployed. (Applause) We helped disabled veterans afford prosthetics. We're delivering more mental health care services to more veterans than ever before because we know that not all wounds of war are visible.

Together, we began this work. Together, we must continue to keep that sacred trust with our veterans and honor their good work with our own, knowing that our mission is never done. It is still a tragedy that 20 veterans a day take their own lives. We have to get them the help they need. We have to keep solving problems like long wait times at the VA. We have to keep cutting the disability claims backlog. We have to resist any effort to outsource and privatize the health care we owe America's veterans. (Applause)

On Veterans Day, we acknowledge, humbly, that we can never serve our veterans in quite the same that they served us. But we can try. We can practice kindness. We can pay it forward. We can volunteer. We can serve. We can respect one another. We can always get each other's backs.

That is what Veterans Day asks all of us to think about. The person you pass as you walk down the street might not be wearing our nation's uniform today. But consider for a moment that a year or a decade or a generation ago, he or she might have been one of our fellow citizens who was willing to lay down their life for strangers like us. And we can show how much we love our country by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

May God bless all who served and still do. And may God bless the United States of America. (Applause)

[Sent in by CCVVA Chapter 982] (Photos added)





National Defense...

DONALD J. TRUMP'S VISION

Work with Congress to fully repeal the defense sequester and submit a new budget to rebuild our depleted military.

Increase the size of the U.S. Army to 540,000 active duty soldiers, which the Army Chief of Staff says he needs to execute current missions.

Rebuild the U.S. Navy toward a goal of 350 ships, as the bipartisan National Defense Panel has recommended.

Provide the U.S. Air Force with the 1,200 fighter aircraft they need.

Grow the U.S. Marine Corps to 36 battalions.

Invest in a serious missile defense system to meet growing threats by modernizing our Navy's cruisers and procuring additional, modern destroyers to counter the ballistic missile threat from Iran and North Korea.

Emphasize cyber warfare and require a comprehensive review from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and all relevant federal agencies to identify our cyber vulnerabilities and to protect all vital infrastructure and to create a state-of-the-art cyber defense and offense.

Pay for this necessary rebuilding of our national defense by conducting a full audit of the Pentagon, eliminating incorrect payments, reducing duplicative bureaucracy, collecting unpaid taxes, and ending unwanted and unauthorized federal programs.

KEY ISSUES

Our Army is the smallest it has been since before World War II. [*ArmyTimes*, May 7, 2016]

Our Navy is among the smallest it has been since before World War I. [*Naval History and Heritage Command*]

Our Air Force is the smallest it has been in history. [*The National Interest*, May 7, 2014]

The average age of our Air Force aircraft is 27 years old. [*Air Force Times*, Jan. 19, 2016]

CONTRAST WITH HILLARY CLINTON

While she was Secretary of State, the Obama Administration cut hundreds of billions of dollars from defense and ignored the warnings of their own Defense Secretary about the minimum defense budget necessary for national security. [*The Weekly Standard*, Feb. 3, 2015]

The Obama-Clinton Administration tried repeatedly to dismantle the Navy's cruisers, the backbone of missile defense, even as the threat of ballistic missiles by Iran and North Korea grew rapidly. [*Navy Times*, April 19, 2016]

Under Obama-Clinton, the U.S. Navy has been depleted to the point where key regions of the world have lacked any American aircraft carrier presence for months at a time. [*Navy Times*, Jan. 7, 2016]

[Source: Trump.org]

- November 03, 2016 -

Trump Joins Military Leaders, Medal Of Honor Recipients, To Outline Plan To Rebuild Military

Remarks As Prepared For Delivery

I have so many great friends here tonight, and I want to begin by thanking General Kellogg, General Flynn, and also the great Congressman Mark Meadows.

In five days, we are going to win the great state of North Carolina and we are going to win back the White House. But you have to get out and vote, and you have to vote early.

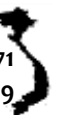
It is an honor to be here in North Carolina, a state that has produced many of the finest and bravest soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines ever to wear a uniform.

I stand here tonight among heroes.

I am also honored to be among so many military families, wives, husbands, parents and children who shoulder the burdens of war.

Let me begin by making you this solemn promise: I will never, ever let you down.

(continued....)



I am very proud to have the support of so many military and law enforcement groups all across this great nation – including the support of more than 200 top Admirals and Generals, and 22 Medal of Honor Recipients.

We are joined tonight by a number of those admirals, and generals, and 7 Medal of Honor Recipients.

The Medal of Honor Recipients with us here tonight are: Colonel Leo Thorsness, Command Sergeant Major Bob Patterson, Navy Seal Mike Thornton, Command Sergeant Major Bennie Adkins, Colonel Joe Marm, and Master Sergeant Leroy Petry.

These men display to the whole world the unyielding strength, courage and grit of the United States of America. They went above and beyond the call of duty, thought nothing of their own safety in order to protect their fellow man, and acted with a bravery that will etch their legacy into the history of this nation.

Not far from here is Fort Bragg, the second largest military base in the world. It is home to the 82nd Airborne Division, the most decorated unit in the U.S. military, and of our Army Special Forces, who even today are serving in harm's way overseas.

Just in the last 24 hours, this country lost two soldiers in combat in Afghanistan, and it is a reminder of what our warriors and their families, like those at Fort Bragg and across North Carolina, sacrifice for our country. We owe them a debt we can never repay.

Our Special Forces here at Fort Bragg have been the tip of the spear in fighting terrorism. The motto of our Army Special Forces is 'to free the oppressed', and that is exactly what they have been doing.

The military families of North Carolina have shed their blood and poured out their hearts for this country. If given the honor of serving as your President, it will be my solemn duty to ensure the following:

--All men and women in uniform will have the supplies, support, equipment, medical care and resources they need to get the job done.

--Full and proper funding for all branches of the American Armed Services.

--A commitment from our allies to pay their fair share of the military burden.

--Support for military families, including jobs, education and housing.

--The best care in the world for our Veterans, both at public VA facilities, as well as the right to see the private doctor of your choice.

--And finally, a commitment to only engage the use of military forces when it is the vital national security interests of the United States.

We will stop trying to build foreign Democracies, topple regimes, and race recklessly to intervene.

Instead, our focus must be on Keeping America Safe and on destroying ISIS and defeating Radical Islamic Terrorism.

Any nation that shares our goal of destroying ISIS and defeating terrorists will be our partner in this mission. Under the failures of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, ISIS has become a clear and present danger to Europe and the United States. After all the sacrifice our soldiers made, Clinton and Obama pulled out the troops on a public timetable, giving rise to ISIS and handing Iraq over to ISIS killers.

Now, ISIS is on a campaign of genocide in the Middle East, torturing, drowning and burning people alive. ISIS has slaughtered men, women and children in France, Germany, Belgium, and there are now 1,000 open ISIS investigations in the United States. We've seen the bloodshed in the attacks in Orlando, San Bernardino, and the recent bomb plot in New York and New Jersey.

Yet, as we send brave men and women overseas to fight terrorists in the Middle East, Hillary Clinton wants to fling our borders wide open, allowing those same terrorists to infiltrate our country at home. She wants a 550% increase in Syrian refugees, and virtually unlimited immigration from some of the most extreme and dangerous places in the world.

A Trump Administration will suspend the Syrian Refugee program and keep Radical Islamic Terrorists out of our country.

We know Hillary can't be trusted with America's security. She's under multiple criminal investigations at this very moment for criminal conduct that put the safety of our entire nation at risk.

CBS news has just minutes ago confirmed that the 650,000 emails discovered by the FBI include brand new emails not previously seen. Hillary therefore committed perjury in addition to all her other crimes, probably also in that batch are classified emails that would now have been hacked by foreign countries.

Service members here in North Carolina have risked their lives to acquire classified intelligence to protect America. Hillary thought nothing of putting classified information on her illegal server which our enemies could easily hack. We know now with almost 100% confidence that at least 5 foreign intelligence agencies breached the Clinton Server.

(continued...)



Then she tried to destroy the evidence by deleting 33,000 emails after receiving a congressional subpoena. Hillary created the server to shield her criminal activity and her corrupt Pay-For-Play Scheme where she sold her office as Secretary of State to donors and special interests.

In other words, she was more interested in keeping her emails a secret than in keeping our classified intelligence a secret – she was more interested in protecting herself than protecting all of you.

Ending this criminal government corruption is one of the most important reasons we must win on November 8th.

We also know Hillary can't be trusted with our security because of her disastrous record on foreign policy. No Secretary of State in history has failed in more places, in more ways, than Hillary Clinton.

In 2009, pre-Hillary, Libya was stable, Syria was under control, Iraq was seeing a reduction in violence, and ISIS wasn't even on the map.

Fast forward to today. Libya is in ruins. Syria is in the middle of a catastrophic civil war. Iraq is in chaos. And ISIS is spreading across the region, into Europe, and into America – and they've launched a campaign of genocide against Christians.

Yet, after all of this, Hillary Clinton can't even say the words: Radical Islamic Terrorism.

Anyone who cannot name the enemy cannot lead this country.

Another reason we know Hillary can't be trusted with our security is Benghazi.

Let me make this very clear: A Trump Administration will honor that sacred pledge to leave no man or woman behind.

On top of everything else, we have the disaster and humiliation in Iran.

Our sailors were forced to their knees. We paid \$1.7 billion in cash ransom, and now Iran is demanding billions more in new ransom payments. Hillary put them on a path to regional dominance and nuclear weapons, as well as another \$150 billion in cash. Because of our failed leaders, including from the campaigner-in-chief, America is not respected around the world anymore.

And, at home, our cities have seen an alarming rise in violence, communities trapped in poverty, and 40,000 homeless Veterans even as we spend trillions of dollars to support illegal immigrants.

Hillary will send American troops to defend the borders of foreign countries, but refuses to protect the borders of her own country.

America needs a turnaround. America needs new leadership.

That begins with restoring respect for America and restoring respect for the American Flag.

It also means rebuilding our depleted military.

A Trump Administration will immediately reverse the Obama-Clinton defense sequester.

The Army is the smallest it has been since before World War II. The Navy is the smallest since World War I. The Air Force is the smallest and oldest it has ever been.

My plan will grow the Army to 540,000 active troops, which the Army Chief of Staff says he needs. That means more Brigade Combat Teams at Fort Bragg. We will build the 1,200 modern fighters our Air Force needs, and that means more planes flying out of locations like Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and Marine Core Air Station Cherry Point.

Our Marine Core (sic) will grow from 27 to 36 battalions, and that's going to mean a lot more Marines at Camp Lejeune.

And new military technologies will be produced at the Research Triangle right here in North Carolina. In summary, my policy can be based on three very important words: Peace Through Strength. Strength also means we need to save America's economy.

That begins with immediately repealing and replacing Obamacare.

It's just been announced that the residents of North Carolina are going to experience a massive double-digit premium hike.

95 of 100 North Carolina counties will only have one insurer in the Obamacare exchange next year.

Yet Hillary Clinton wants to double-down on Obamacare, making it even more expensive.

I am asking for your vote so we can repeal Obamacare and save healthcare for every family in North Carolina.

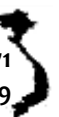
At the core of my contract with the American voter, is my plan to bring back our jobs.

North Carolina has lost nearly half of its manufacturing jobs since NAFTA – a deal signed by Bill Clinton and supported by Hillary Clinton.

America has lost 70,000 factories since China entered the World Trade Organization – another Bill and Hillary-backed deal.

We are living through the greatest jobs theft in the history of the world. A Trump Administration will stop the jobs from leaving America, and we will stop the jobs from leaving North Carolina.

(continued....)



The theft of American prosperity will end. If a company wants to fire their workers, move to another country, and then try to ship their products back into the United States, we will apply a 35% tax on those goods.

A Trump Administration will renegotiate NAFTA – and if we don't get the deal we want, we will terminate NAFTA and get a much better deal for our workers. We will also immediately stop the job-killing Trans-Pacific Partnership.

As part of our plan to bring back jobs, we are going to lower taxes on American business from 35 percent to 15 percent. We will become a rich nation once again. But to be a rich country, we must also be a safe country.

Hillary supports totally "open borders," and strongly supports Sanctuary Cities, like San Francisco, where Kate Steinle was murdered by an illegal immigrant who had been deported 5 times.

A Trump Administration will cancel all federal funding to Sanctuary Cities. We will deport all criminal aliens, stop the drugs from pouring into our communities, and we will protect American workers.

And that's just the beginning.

Just think about what we can accomplish in the first 100 days –

We are going to have the biggest tax cut since Ronald Reagan; eliminate every unnecessary job-killing regulation; cancel every illegal Obama executive order; rebuild our military and take care of our Vets; provide school choice and put an end to common core; support the men and women of law enforcement; save the 2nd amendment; and appoint Justices to the Supreme Court who will uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.

It is time to cut our ties with the failed and bitter politics of the past. Hillary Clinton is the candidate of yesterday. We are the movement of the future.

We are asking for the votes of Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and first-time voters. We are fighting for every citizen who believes that government should serve the people – not the donors and special interests.

We are fighting to unlock the potential of every American community, and every American family, who hope and pray and yearn for a better future.

With your vote, we are just 5 days away from the change you've been waiting for your entire life.

Together, We Will Make America Wealthy Again.

We Will Make America Strong Again. We Will Make America Safe Again. And We Will Make America Great Again.

[Source: Trump.org]

Bull



I recently spent \$6,500. on a young registered Black Angus bull. I put him out with the herd but he just ate grass and wouldn't even look at a cow. I was beginning to think I had paid more for that bull than he was worth.

Anyhow, I had the Vet come and have a look at him. He said the bull was very healthy, but possibly just a little young, so he gave me some pills to feed him once per day.

The bull started to service the cows within two days, *all* my cows! He even broke through the fence and bred with all of my neighbor's cows! He's like a machine!

I don't know what was in the pills the Vet gave him....but they kind of taste like peppermint.

[Sent in by Bob Clark, 101st & 1st/5th SF]



Sweet mystery of life at last I found you!





INCOMING!



~ Dr. Pat Smith & Hill 875 ~

Thanks again for great newsletter. As usual, great newsletter and always an interesting read.

There was a brief article on Dr. Pat Smith and I can add the following:

Dr. Smith returned to the USA with two adopted Montagnard children. She practiced in Olympia, WA until retiring. One son became a US Navy Dentist and her other son was a professional musician last I heard. Dr. Smith has passed. Her story and how the Montagnards saved her from the NVA can be googled. If that does not turn up anything for you I will look for the information.

I did a little research on her a number of years back when I was working with the Montagnards locally. I kept trying to catch up with her son and had a phone number, etc. at one point but never got it completed.

There was mention of a group going to Hill 875.....can you give me any specifics? I am trying to go late February for my last visit probably, age is catching up. Would love to "hook up" with someone going if convenient. I have an interpreter who will be travelling with me.

Again, thank you for your efforts on the newsletter, it is a good work.

All the way!



Steve, in the boonies

Steve Konek, Sr.
HHC 173d Bde

Reply:

Hi Steve:

Hooking you up with John "Doc" Trotogott, Cowboy medic, who said a Cowboy pilot buddy of his is planning to return to VN next year (See Issue 70, *Incoming*, Page 34 of our Newsletter). If any other troopers are interested in returning they can let me know and I'll pass the info on to you. Ed)



~ Keeping Us Young ~

Thx for the newsletter and for keeping we Herd brothers informed of our friends and brothers and for keeping us young. We are all Sky Soldiers forever.

All the Way!

John Hoard
173d Eng.

~ From the 325th Airborne ~

Thank you for your postings enjoy reading these very much.

I am sure I told you when I arrived to B/2/325 on 13 Dec 73 all of my Wpn's Plt NCO's as well as my First Sgt were Nam Veterans.

All The Way AND THEN SOME.

Bobby Wingate
B/2/325th Abn



~ Remarks From A Leg Brother ~

Just finished reading your outstanding Newsletter, a lot of the stories brought them damn tears to my eyes! The one about Hill 875, Dak To where the BC was reading off the names of the Troopers KIA, where the NonCom fell over crying, that really bothered the hell outta me! What a shame to have lost all those lives during that war!!

LTC Carmichael was a highly respected officer by his officers and men.

I've often wished that I would have been assigned to an American unit, and had the "testicular fortitude" to have been one of you all that would jump out of a perfectly good helo or C-130, and belong to an outstanding unit like the 173d!

Were you ever able to find out where Nurse Winnie Smith lived in CA? How long did it take you to type up this long Newsletter?

My Brother from a different Mother, that's it for now, my right index finger is getting sore! Thank you for what you do for your Troopers and Leg Friends! Stay Well,

Jerry "PopPop" Zimmermann
US Army 1SG (Ret)

Riding in Honor of "Warrior" Spencer T. Karol
US ARMY Ranger, KIA Iraq 10/06/03

(continued....)



~ Excellent Choice ~

Good edition. Choice of Colonel Ed Carns as 2/503 *Sky Soldier of the Year 2016* was excellent. He has had an amazing career as an Army Officer and Doctor continuing up to the present day.

Ken Smith, Col. (Ret)
CO A/D/2/503
Bn Colonel Emeritus



Capt. Ed Carns (C) with his men at Camp Zinn, RVN.

~ Lots of Memories ~

A full load, canopy good. THANKS for tributes and reports: Carmichael, Dexter, Carns (Note), Price/*Playboy*, especially Van Campen (for whom our *Missing Man* ceremony has special meaning). I'll need another "sit to" to peruse the rest - wives, Corrigedor.

I'm taken with the photo of the Milton Olive Chapel & ceremony, wondering whether it may be possible to get a best pixel image with attribution (p. 48, COL Bob Guy) that I can frame and forward to custodial folks at his commemorative display, National African American Military Museum, Chicago. At your convenience, please advise.

Meanwhile, I'll try to grab a beer before lights out and get back to our newsletter.

Best, bob w

Bob Warfield
Maj. (Ret)
CO, HHC/A/B/2/503

Note: Ed Carns arrived Bien Hoa, leading a platoon in Charlie, 2/503, as I recall. On May 8, 1965, he and an NCO from Charlie were among four 173d strap-hangers riding in with ARVN 5th Div assault on, of all places, Cu Chi. Other two were (then) SSG (later) CSM Willie J. Boyd (now deceased) and me - "getting acquainted" with in-country possibility of hostile encounter. Ed and his NCO were attached to a different ARVN unit (battalion, regiment?) from our outfit. Following day,

Sunday (Mother's Day) '65, SSG Boyd earned the brigade's first Purple Heart covering my emergence from the fight (which did not go well for ARVN). By then, the ARVN command section and MACV advisors were nowhere to be seen, and sure as hell not covering anybody. Ed and NCO somehow missed this action I believe, never really got their story. The ARVN regimental CO got relieved only to be reinstated months later ... in time to preside over a similar debacle at the Michelin rubber plantation in which the entire command and advisory group were wiped out - possibly by some of the same now-seasoned VC that came close that fateful Sunday.

Vietnam never lacked for irony. Fighting around Cu Chi claimed the Black Lions CO, LTC George Eyster (died of wounds). I believe he was a USMA classmate of our CO, COL George Dexter; also think I may have been the last person to see him alive - a recovery ward, bandaged and propped up in bed, 93d/96th Surg/Evac(?), at Bien Hoa, visiting wounded - around midnight plus, 14 Jan '66. We talked briefly, an effort, but no "tubes" or med elaboration, he seemed "OK." Cu Chi was to become base camp for 24th ID, under none other than MG Ellis "Butch" Warner Williamson - after a series of brawls to evict objectionable tenants. By 2000, it had reverted to an over-grown, neglected tourist/souvenir stop, mandatory side-show for commemorative pins, hats, and a jar of gin with unfortunate snake, if you like that sort of thing. Actually, I preferred mine over ice with a gnarly slice of lime at the Continental Palace. But I digress.

SEND this to Ed, with my best wishes as you wish. Perhaps he can add some clarity, color and amplify.

bob w

~ Remembering 1st Thanksgiving in Vietnam ~

Remembering Thanksgiving 1965. Charlie Company 2/503 was deployed around a small hamlet. We had been out on "The Rice Bowl Operation" for a week or two. Eating "C's" and doing our best to stay alive. Late on Thanksgiving Day, a Huey arrived bearing "OD mermite cans filled with a real turkey dinner. It was SO GOOD!

Later after dinner, I visited a local Viet family. I brought some cans of C-rations. I came in peace.

I will always remember Thanksgiving 1965.

Fred Henschell
Maj. (Ret), B/C/2/503



(continued....)



~ Interested in the Battles at Dak To ~

Hello Sir,

I will start with introducing myself, my name is Sandy and I have had an extreme interest in the Military History of the Vietnam War since I was a young boy. One of my main interests being the Battles of Dak To. May I please ask for some help/advice?

I have been looking for Battlefield relics Veterans bring back, Veteran used equipment, captured items, photos and just about anything to do with the Battles of Dak To and in particular Hills 875, 882 and 724, with absolutely no luck for many years. Even the smallest casing or piece of shrapnel would be absolutely great.

I am just an amateur historian/collector with a passion for military history and one of my main interests being the above mentioned battles. I thought I should ask for help from the Brigade that was there as I am fresh out of ideas, I hope you don't mind.

I am willing to pay for anything I may be fortunate enough to obtain as it would be the highlight of my small but much loved collection.

May I also ask if I can purchase Issue 47 Nov 2012 of your wonderful newsletter?

Thank you for your time. Kindest regards, I hope I have not been too much of a pain.

Looking forward to hearing back from you at your earliest convenience.

Sandy Campbell

Our reply:

Hello: Thank you for your interest in the operations of our battalion and brigade at Dak To during the Vietnam War. Attached are Issues 29 and 47 of our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* detailing the two major operations in which the 173d Airborne participated at Dak To, you needn't purchase them.

Unfortunately, I cannot assist you with obtaining any memorabilia from those battles but, have copied Mr. Wambi Cook of Alpha Company of our battalion who is a survivor of both operations and has returned to the battle sites on a number of occasions – he may or may not be of help.

Best regards,

Editor, 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter

**Our Sky Soldier brother,
Wambi Cook, A/2/503,
a survivor.**



Battle of the Slopes, June 1967
(web photo)








Wounded at Dak To, November 1967
(web photo)



50 years ago....

Operation Junction City

Operation Junction City	
Part of the Vietnam War	
<i>Cedar Falls/Junction City area of operations</i>	
Date	22 February – 14 May 1967
Location	War Zone C, Tây Ninh Province, South Vietnam
Result	U.S. operational & strategic failure
Belligerents	
 United States	 Viet Cong
 South Vietnam	 North Vietnam
Commanders and leaders	
 William Westmoreland	 Lê Đức Anh
 Jonathan Seaman	 Đinh Thị Van
 Bruce Palmer, Jr.	
 Cao Văn Viên	
Strength	
30,000 men 240 helicopters ^[4] 700+ combat vehicles: M48 tank, M113 APC	Unknown
Casualties and losses	
U.S: 282 killed 1,500 wounded 3 tanks, 21 AFVs, 5 howitzers, 11 trucks destroyed 54 tanks, 86 AFVs, 6 howitzers, 17 trucks damaged South Vietnam: unknown	U.S reported 2,728 killed

Operation Junction City was an 82-day military operation conducted by United States and Republic of Vietnam (RVN or South Vietnam) forces begun on 22 February 1967 during the Vietnam War. It was the largest U.S. airborne operation since Operation Varsity in March 1945, the only major airborne operation of the Vietnam War, and one of the largest U.S. operations of the war.

The operation was named after Junction City, Kansas, home of the operation's commanding officer.

The stated aim of the almost three-month engagement involving the equivalent of nearly three U.S. divisions of troops was to locate the elusive 'headquarters' of the Communist uprising in South Vietnam, the COSVN (Central Office of South Vietnam). By some accounts of US analysts at the time, such a headquarters was believed to be almost a "mini-Pentagon," complete with typists, file cabinets, and staff workers possibly guarded by layers of bureaucracy. In truth, after the end of the war, the actual headquarters was revealed by VC archives to be a small and mobile group of people, often sheltering in ad hoc facilities and at one point escaping an errant bombing by some hundreds of meters.



LTC Bob Sigholtz briefs his men of the 2/503d prior to combat jump during Operation Junction City.

(Photo provided by combat blaster Wayne Tuttle, C/2/503)

Hammer and Anvil

Junction City's grand tactical plan was a "hammer and anvil" tactic, whereupon airborne forces would "flush out" the Viet Cong headquarters, sending them to retreat against a prepared "anvil" of pre-positioned forces.

(continued....)



Total forces earmarked for this operation included most of the 1st Infantry Division and the 25th Infantry Division including the 27th Infantry Regiment and the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and the airborne troops of the 173d Airborne Brigade and large armored elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

American forces of II Field Force, Vietnam started the operation on 22 February 1967 (while Operation Cedar Falls was winding down), the initial operation was carried out by two infantry divisions, the 1st (commanded by Major General William E. DePuy) and the 25th (Major General Frederick C. Weyand), who led their forces to the north of the operational area to build the "anvil" on which, according to the American plans, the forces of the Viet Cong 9th Division would be crushed. At the same time the movement of infantry (eight battalions with 249 helicopters), took place on the same day including the combat jump of the 173d Airborne paratroopers (the only major U.S. combat jump carried out during the entire Vietnam War and the largest since the days of Operation Market Garden in World War II)...the 173d Airborne Brigade, which went into action west of the deployment of the 1st and the 25th Infantry Divisions. (emphasis added)

At first the operations appeared to be succeeding: designated positions were reached without encountering great resistance, and then on February 23, the mechanized forces 11th Armored Cavalry and the 2nd Brigade of the 25th Division, the "hammer" of armor struck against the "anvil" of the infantry and airborne positioned north and west, giving the communist forces seemingly no chance to escape. In fact, the Viet Cong forces, highly mobile and elusive as ever, and with information sources deep in the South Vietnamese bureaucracy, had already relocated their headquarters to Cambodia, and launched several attacks to inflict losses and wear down the communists.

On February 28 and March 10 there were two fierce clashes with U.S. forces, the Battle of Prek Klok I and the Battle of Prek Klok II where the US, supported by powerful air strikes and massive artillery support repelled Viet Cong attacks, but the overall strategic outcomes were disappointing.



Best available photograph of the 25th Infantry Division.

A year after Junction City, the 25th ID shows the M113 Armored Personnel Carriers by which the US enjoyed a firepower and armor advantage in Prek Klok I and II.

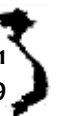


The US infantry enjoyed advantages in mechanization over the Viet Cong forces encountered, including the M113 and in certain locales, full battle tanks.

On 18 March 1967, General Bruce Palmer, Jr., new commander of II Field Force, Vietnam, in replacement of General Seaman, launched then the second phase of Junction City, this time directly to the east and carried out again by the mechanized divisions, the 1st Infantry Division and 11th Cavalry, reinforced this time from the 1st Brigade of the 9th Infantry Division (including the 5th Cavalry Regiment). This maneuver gave rise to the toughest battle of the entire operation, the March 19 Battle of Ap Bau Bang II, wherein the 273rd Viet Cong Regiment put into difficulties the American armored cavalry although eventually forced to retire by a huge amount of firepower.

In the days after the forces of the Viet Cong they launched two more attacks in force, on March 21 and in Ap Gu on April 1, against the 1st and the 25th Infantry Division, both assaults were bloodily repulsed, and the Viet Cong 9th Division came out seriously weakened, though still able to fight and, if necessary, to retreat to safety in areas adjacent to the Cambodian border. On April 16 the U.S. command of II Field Force, in agreement with the MACV, decided to continue operations with a third phase of Operation Junction City, until May 14 certain units of the 25th Division Infantry, undertook long and exhausting searches, advancing in the bush, raking villages and retrieving large amounts of materiel, but with little contact with the Communist units, now cautiously moved to a defensive footing.

(continued....)



Outcome

The province of Tay Ninh was picked over thoroughly and Viet Cong forces suffered significant losses, including large amounts of material captured: 810 tonnes of rice, 600 tonnes of small arms, 500,000 pages of documents. The American losses were not negligible, however, amounting to nearly 300 dead and over 1,500 injured.

According to calculations by the American command the 9th Division VC went seriously weakened by the operations, suffering the loss of 2,728 killed, 34 captured men and 139 deserters. 100 crew-served weapons and 491 individual weapons were captured.

After the operations, the American forces were recalled to other areas of operation, and the country which was supposed to be in the firm control of the South Vietnamese government soon fell prey again to infiltration by the Viet Cong forces as they returned from their sanctuaries in Cambodia.

American troops found in some stores 120 reels of film and logistical equipment for the printing of documents -- the command of MACV believed they had finally found the famous COSVN; however, the reality was very different. The mobile headquarters, commanded by some mysterious and famous personalities such as generals Thanh, Tran Van Tran and Do, had quickly retreated to Cambodia, maintaining its operations and confounding the hopes of the U.S. strategic planners.

With a huge consumption of resources and equipment, including 366,000 rounds of artillery and 3,235 tons of bombs, the American forces had inflicted losses on the communist forces and demonstrated the ability of airborne forces and even mechanized forces (also useful in impervious territory). Despite the tactical results, Junction City on an operational level had missed the most important objectives as well as the failure to yield long term strategic leverage.

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Junction_City

Note:

See Issue 12, February 2010 of our newsletter for special report on Operation Junction City.



The Blast



2/503 troopers ready to load for their combat blast.

Photo by combat blaster Bill Nicholls, A/2/503



2/503 combat jump, Op Junction City, RVN.

Photo by combat blaster Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503



Cherished by *all* paratroopers....earned by *few*.



Paratrooper connects with grandfather in return to 'the Rock'

By Staff Sgt. Opal Vaughn, March 19, 2015



First Lt. Adam Obregon, a paratrooper with Headquarters, 173d Airborne Brigade, stands in front of the 503rd Infantry Regimental colors during the 70th anniversary of the re-taking of Corregidor Island, Philippines, March 1, 2015.



A family photo of Cpl. Maurice Obregon taken in 1944. Obregon participated in the airborne operation to retake the island fortress of Corregidor in the Philippines on Feb. 16, 1945. (U.S. Army Pacific photo)

His grandson, 1st Lt. Adam Obregon, returned to the island March 1, 2015 for the 70th anniversary to represent the 173rd Airborne Brigade at the ceremony.



A set of medals from World War II belonging to Cpl. Maurice Obregon, who jumped into Corregidor in 1945. His grandson Adam, a lieutenant assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, returned to Corregidor 70 years later.

(Photo Credit: Courtesy of Obregon family)



A monument commemorating the bravery and sacrifice of American and Philippine Soldiers stands on the island fortress of Corregidor, lost and retaken by U.S. forces during World War II. (Photo Credit: Courtesy of Obregon family)

(continued....)



It was the last stronghold of the Japanese. A small tadpole shaped island in the Philippines known as Corregidor and it was all the Americans needed in order to secure a victory. The 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, activated in August of 1941, prior to the beginning of World War II, was among the few chosen to combat Japanese defenses there.

Corregidor, an American outpost nicknamed "the Rock" before the war, had withstood a fierce Japanese siege for nearly five months. It is also where Gen. Douglas MacArthur, supreme allied commander, Southwest Pacific Area, was when he uttered his famous words while evacuating the island on March 11, 1942,

"I shall return."

Even after Manila had been captured, thousands of U.S. and Filipino soldiers continued to fight off the advances of Japanese forces from the Bataan Peninsula. On April 9, 1942, the U.S. call to surrender the peninsula on the main Philippine island of Luzon served a devastating blow to U.S. and Filipino soldiers who had held out against the Japanese despite having no naval or air support.

Starved and disease-ridden, approximately 75,000 soldiers on Bataan were forced to walk a 65-mile march to the prison camps. Those who could not make the arduous walk were rounded up like cattle and used as bayonet practice by the Japanese army. Others were simply barricaded into bunkers and burned alive.

Retaking Corregidor would be the most grueling combat action in which the 503rd Combat Team engaged in during the war.

Strategically Corregidor was of major importance though, said U.S. Army paratrooper 1st Lt. Adam Obregon, assigned to 173rd Airborne Brigade, describing the history of Corregidor. Being able to take back the island gave the Allies access to Manila to push additional supplies through the Philippines.

Heavily fortified, over 6,550 Japanese soldiers defended the Island. With a position dominating the bay, an amphibious assault would be anticipated and costly. The paratroopers of the 503rd were called for an audacious mission.

Second Battalion of the 503rd would conduct a daytime airborne assault onto the island on Feb. 16, 1945, with 1st Battalion conducting an amphibious assault. It took the Japanese defenders by surprise.

On March 2, three years after departing, Gen. MacArthur made good on his promise and returned, giving the order to raise the U.S. flag once again over Corregidor.

"I see the old flag pole still stands," said MacArthur.

"Have your troops hoist the colors to its peak and let no enemy ever haul them down."

Only one-third of the men MacArthur left behind on March 11, 1942, survived to see his return. *"I'm a little late,"* he told them. *"But we finally came."*

One of the paratroopers that jumped in that day was U.S. Army Cpl. Maurice Obregon, assigned to the 462nd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team.

His grandson, 1st Lt. Obregon, had the privilege to carry the 503rd's colors from their home in Vicenza, Italy to the Philippines, March 2, 2015, in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the re-taking of Corregidor Island by Allied Forces during WWII.

"I'm third-generation Army," said Obregon. *"My father served twenty years and my grandfather of course [who] served with the 462nd. When I found out I was selected, my dad was just in awe. It's a level of pride that he has not only for me but for his father."*

In its initial history, the 503rd was a separate entity. After the battle at Corregidor, the regiment became known as "the Rock."

When the 173rd Airborne Brigade activated in Okinawa, Japan in 1963, it was built upon the 503rd regiment, with four battalions of the 503rd Infantry Regiment. First and 2nd Battalions of the regiment currently make up the core maneuver force of the brigade. Seventy years later, Corregidor still carries huge significance for paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, especially for Obregon who is well versed in its history.

"It was an absolute honor to be able to visit Corregidor in person," said Obregon. *"[Maj. Gen. Pasquarette] in his speech made a statement that, Cpl. Maurice Obregon, jumped into Corregidor. I doubt that [my grandfather], 70 years ago, would have ever thought that his name would be mentioned in a celebration. So for me to be in Corregidor and to hear that, it's absolutely amazing to see the connections and the legacy that service members carry with them, and it is an honor that we continue to serve."*

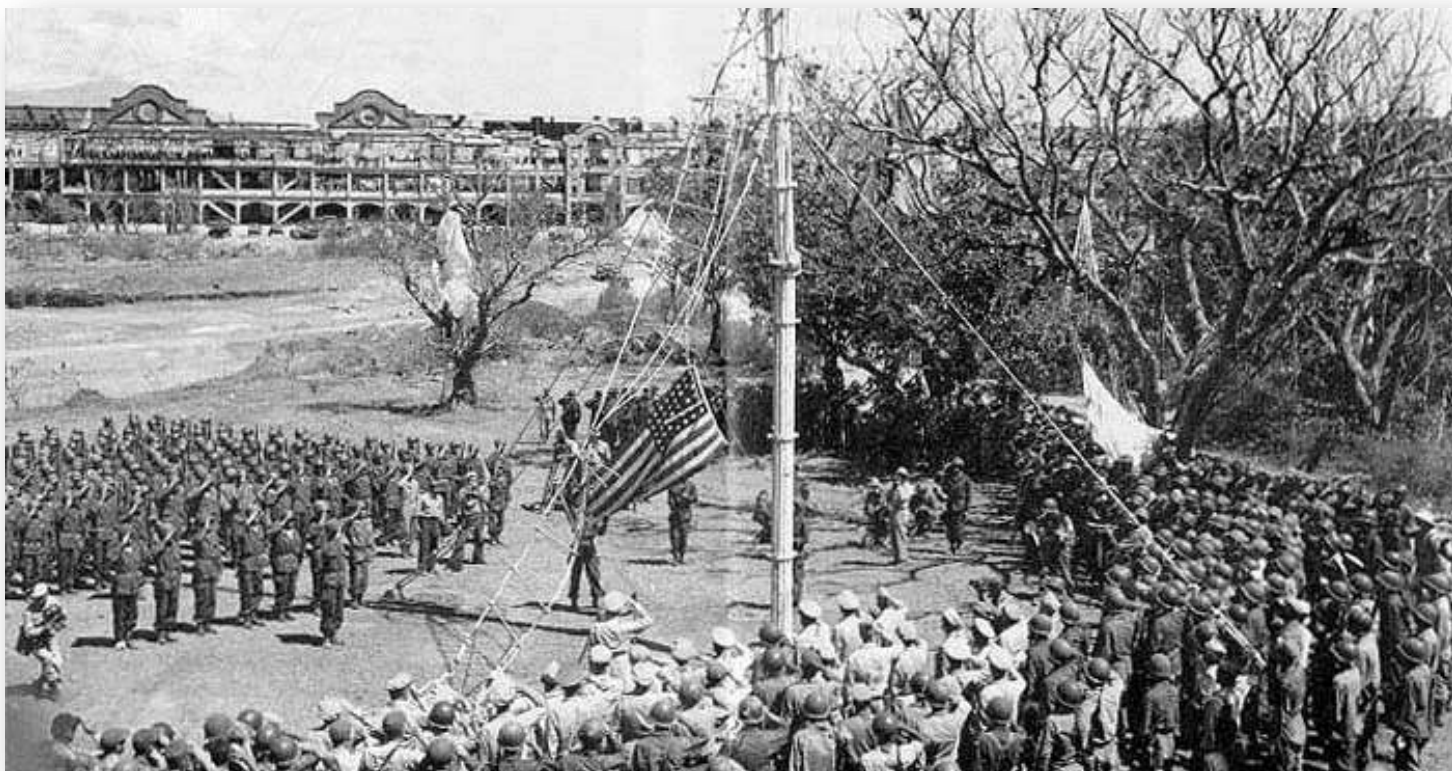
For Obregon, it was also the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of a man he never really knew.



MG Pasquarette
(web photo added)

(continued....)





General MacArthur and his command staff during flag raising ceremonies on Corregidor, accompanied by paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT. (Army photo)

"It's tough because I didn't really get to know my grandfather; he passed away when I was two," said Obregon. "And so, through this, it's actually the only way I knew him. There was an Army colonel at the ceremony that had a cousin [who] served and fought in Manila. It is neat to have those family ties because his cousin was fighting the same exact time that my grandfather was. So this is my way of really getting to know him and some of the great things that he was able to accomplish."

Official U.S. War Department estimated the 503rd killed over 10,000 Japanese troops during its combat operations in the Southwest Pacific. But the 503rd also lost men in order to accomplish the task of retaking Corregidor with 169 dead and 531 wounded. Of the 2,065 paratroopers from both lifts by the 503rd PRCT, about 280 were killed or injured. Of those killed in battle, only 392 names were identified.

As part of the commemoration ceremony, U.S. and Filipino soldiers laid wreaths on the same location that MacArthur gave his famous speech. Some of the old buildings at Corregidor still stand, along with the cannons that were fired at Japanese forces. And in the spirit of remembrance, a flag was raised as the bugle sounded for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

On March 2, 1945, Col. George Jones, commander of the "Rock" stood at the head of his men. After months of battling the Japanese the 503rd were tired, bloodied but unshaken. With his men standing at attention, the

colonel saluted his commanding general and stated,

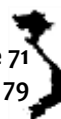
***"Sir, I present to you
the Fortress Corregidor."***

The 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Vicenza, Italy, is the U.S. Army Contingency Response Force in Europe, capable of projecting forces to conduct the full range of military operations across the United States European, Central and Africa Commands areas of responsibility.

[Source: U.S. Army]



503rd troopers blast onto The Rock, WWII



Grace under fire...

James (Pat) Murphy

R.I.P.

Denver, NC



Doc Murphy on left, with his son Tim.

It is an oxidized silver badge 1 inch in height and 1 ½ inches in width, consisting of a stretcher crossed by a caduceus surmounted at top by a Greek cross, all on and over an elliptical oak wreath. It's the Combat Medics Badge and it's tough to earn. You have to be a living example of *"Grace under fire."*

It's been said that anyone with one could walk into any soldier's tavern, place a CMB on the bar and drink all night — for free. Anyone that earned a CMB could — but they wouldn't. They would be like James (Pat) Murphy, a quiet family man, married to the same woman for 33 years, living in a wide spot in the road in Lincoln County along North Carolina Highway 16.

Murphy served in both D Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, and Headquarters Company of the same battalion from January 1970, until February 1971. That's where he earned the CMB, along with a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart and an Air Medal. Murphy served his Nation from 1968 until 1975. He was an Airborne

medic, with the 323th Medical Battalion, 101st Airborne after serving a tour in Vietnam with the 173d Airborne. After leaving the Army in 1975, Murphy continued to serve his small community as an emergency medical technician with a local ambulance service.

This battle-hardened paratrooper loved feeding the ducks at Lake Norman, and had a dog named, "Murphy Dawg."

James (Pat) Murphy died April 12, 2016. Murphy was "James," to some, Patrick or Pat to others, "Doc" to his fellow Sky Soldiers, but the title he liked most was "Dad."

"Grace under fire."

By Bill Reynolds

A/2/503

Skysoldier Magazine



THE MEDIC CREED

My task is to provide to the utmost limits of my capability the best possible care to those in need of my aid and assistance.

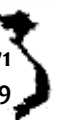
To this end I will aid all those who are needful, paying no heed to my own desires and wants; treating friend, foe and stranger alike, placing their needs above my own.

To no man will I cause or permit harm to befall, nor will I refuse aid to any who seek it.

I will willingly share my knowledge and skills with all those who seek it.

I seek neither reward nor honor for my efforts for the satisfaction of accomplishment is sufficient.

These obligations I willingly and freely take upon myself in the tradition of those that have come before me.



VA launches nationwide study on the health of Vietnam Era Veterans

Researchers to invite 43,000 Vietnam-era Veterans to Participate

November 2, 2016
Health by VAnTage Point



VA researchers are embarking on a new nationwide study to comprehensively evaluate the current health and overall well-being of Vietnam era Veterans as they age. This November, VA will begin recruiting participants for the Vietnam Era Health Retrospective Observational Study (VE-HEROeS).

"Through VE-HEROeS, VA will be able to answer questions about the long-term health consequences of Vietnam War service, provide VA clinicians with evidence to explain health conditions, and anticipate future needs for VA health care and services," said Dr. Victoria Davey, VA Office of Research and Development staff member, senior researcher for Post Deployment Health Services, and principal investigator on this study.

Study Participant Selection

VE-HEROeS researchers will invite approximately 43,000 Vietnam-era Veterans, including Veterans who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War and Veterans who served elsewhere during the war, to participate in this study by completing a questionnaire. Researchers will also invite a comparison group of approximately 11,000 members of the general population to participate and complete a similar questionnaire.

Researchers will begin mailing invitations to selected Veterans on November 2, and to invited members of the general population on November 10.

VA is scientifically selecting a sample of individuals for this study. These individuals will represent others with similar characteristics, so researchers cannot accept volunteers. All individuals who are selected for this study are encouraged to participate.

Survey Topics:

This study includes a questionnaire for everyone and medical records review for a smaller group of participants. The VE-HEROeS questionnaire includes the following topics:

General health, including neurological conditions, cancer, hypertension, and mental health.

Experiences with aging, including memory and reasoning Lifestyle, including tobacco use and health care use. Military service experience, including combat experience, chemical or other exposures, or no military service for participants from the general U.S. population.

Researchers will look closely at neurologic conditions and hepatitis C infection as a part of this study.

Researchers will also describe the health of a population of Vietnam Veterans who served only in the Blue Water Navy and will ask Veterans about health conditions among their descendants that may have been inherited.

Vietnam Veterans have significantly contributed to the study development and planning by serving on the Steering Committee. Learn more about VE-HEROeS at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/epidemiology/studies/heroes/index.asp>.

About the author: Stephanie Green Eber, MPH, is a Health Science Specialist in the Epidemiology Program, for the VA Office of Patient Care Services.



WARRIOR TO WARRIOR

TAKING THE HIGHER GROUND



CHUCK DEAN

"Warrior to Warrior" is specifically for those who have sustained the burden of war—the ones willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. You will find many truths and experiences in this book about war, (and its aftereffects). Some of these experiences may be a mirror image of your own life. It is with great hope that this book will be a tool in making your long journey after war a successful one.

Biography

Chuck Dean is the author of numerous books varying in style and theme. He served as a U.S. Army paratrooper with the 173d Airborne during the Vietnam War, and through that experience was led to write his first several books addressing the transitional issues veterans struggle with when coming home from a war zone. His first book published in 1987, *"Nam Vet: Making Peace with Your Past"*—with over two million in print—continues to help Veterans with readjustment issues. His latest, *"Some Came Home: A Story of Returning"*, is an impacting fictional portrayal of many of those issues.

In 2008 Chuck was the recipient of the prestigious Hirsch Foundation Leadership Award for his writing and work with veterans and active military. Today he writes a regular column for *The Vegas Voice* newspaper entitled "Vet 2 Vet", and continues to contribute to the veteran community through his writing. Today he lives with his wife Renee in both Las Vegas, Nevada and Nanning, China.

Note: Chuck's books are available at:
www.amazon.com/author/chuckdeanbooks

Book & Ad Promotion Policy

Since 2009, when our newsletter first came into being, we adopted the policy of running no pay-for ads. The exceptions to advertising in our newsletter are 1) we will run notices of reunions, and 2) include recaps of "war-related books" written by 173d and 503rd troopers, free of charge. Our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* is maintained on these websites among others:

173d Airborne Brigade Society

<http://skysoldier.net/Newsletters>

503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion

http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

University of Florida Military Digital Library

<http://ufdc.ufl.edu>

(Conduct "Advanced Search" on this site)

"Rock Chalk Jayhawk, KU!"



We had a doctor living across the street who moved recently, and in a heap of goodies he left behind for the 'American Pickers' was included this large Kansas University plaque which my wife, Reggie, while walking the dog just couldn't resist rescuing from Waste Management, even tho we weren't quite sure what the hell it was when she absconded with it. So, if there is a Brigade member out there or someone related to a Brigade member who attended or was graduated KU and would like to have it (it is kinda nice), please email me your name and address and we'll send it to you. We'll mail it to the first respondent with our compliments (and that of our former neighbor I suppose). Go Jayhawks! Ed rto173d@cfl.rr.com



THE DAY HAS ARRIVED

The day that Albert Einstein feared
most has arrived!



Planning their honeymoon.



A day at the beach.



Having dinner out with your friends.



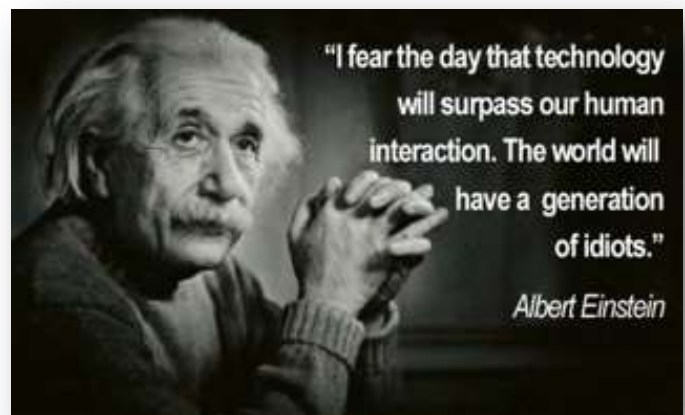
Out on an intimate date.



Having a conversation with your bestie.

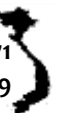


A visit to the museum.



It's Here!! (And they vote too).

[Thanks to the alert eye of the aunt of
one of our 2/503 buddies]



Tuskegee Airman Willie Rogers dies at 101



November 21, 2016

A member of a pioneering Black aviation group, who broke barriers and glass ceilings, has died.



Master Sergeant Willie Rogers died Saturday. He was the oldest living member of the original Tuskegee Airmen, who served when the U.S. military was segregated.

Rogers lived in St. Petersburg with his family since 1949. He was drafted into the army in 1942 and was part of the 100th Air Engineer Squad. Rogers also served with the Red Tail Angels.

In 2007, President George W. Bush awarded him with the Congressional Gold Medal.

St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman acknowledged Rogers' death on social media:

"Rest in peace, our friend - St. Pete's 2015 Honored Veteran and Tuskegee Airman, 101 year-old Willie Rogers." Rick Kriseman



The Veteran's Art Center of Tampa Bay honored Willie Rogers, one of the last surviving members of the famed Tuskegee Airmen with a portrait commemorating his service and his sacrifice.

DAV MEDICATION CO-PAYMENT CHANGES IN 2017

DAV is pleased that there will be a reduction in copayments for many service-connected veterans in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 135.

VA issued final regulations set to take effect February 27, 2017, changing VA's current copayments structure for each 30-day or less supply of medication and how future year copayment amounts and annual caps are calculated.

Veterans who are currently exempt from medication copayments remain exempt, including but not limited to, a veteran with a service-connected disability rated 50 percent or more, medication for a service-connected disability, and a former prisoner of war.

Currently, Priority Group (PG) 2-6 veterans must pay \$8 for each 30-day or less supply of medication and PG 7-8 veterans must pay \$9. Under the new rule, VA will essentially assign three categories for medication and associated copayments:

Tier 1 - preferred generics - \$5 copayment for 30-day supply;

Tier 2 - non-preferred generics - \$8 copayment for 30-day supply; and

Tier 3 - brand name drugs - \$11 for 30-day supply.

In addition, current copayment costs for veterans in PG 2-6 is limited to a \$960 annual copayment cap and PG 7-8 veterans have no protections afforded by a cap. Under the new rule, VA will reduce the annual copayment cap to \$700 for all veterans, including PG 7-8 veterans, who are required to pay medication copayments.

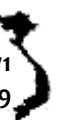
It is estimated that a large majority of veterans will encounter no cost increase, or will realize savings, while a small percentage of veterans-veterans who only fill Tier 3 medications-may experience a small increase in medication copayments. Based on a comparison of the current and proposed copayment amounts, VA anticipates that most veterans would realize between a 10 and 50 percent reduction in their annual pharmacy copayment costs. VA also estimates, 94 percent of copayment eligible veterans will experience no cost increase, and 80 percent will realize a savings of between \$1 and \$4 per 30-day supply of medications.

[Sent in by Gary Newman, USN]



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Col. Harold "Hank" Snow

Nov 14, 2016

Col. Harold "Hank" Snow, 93, of 35 Beechwood Drive, Saranac Lake, died Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2016, following a long illness.



Born in AuSable Forks on Sept. 23, 1923, he was the son of Joel and Shirley (Felio) Snow. Hank married Ann Elizabeth Pandolph on Oct. 13, 1984 at the Plattsburgh Air Force Base.

Hank attended AuSable Forks High School and graduated in 1941. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve on May 15, 1942, and entered the Aviation Cadet Program of the U.S. Army Air Forces on Oct. 28, 1942. He was commissioned a 2nd Lt. in the Army Air Forces and was awarded his pilot wings on Oct. 1, 1943, at Luke Field, Arizona. Lt. Snow completed ground training at Dale Mabry Field, Florida, from October to November 1943, and then P-40 Warhawk transition training at Sarasota, Florida, from November 1943 to January 1944.

His next assignment was as a P-40, A-36 Apache, and P-51 Mustang pilot with the 528th Fighter Squadron in India and then China from February 1944 to August 1945, followed by service as a pilot with the 3028th

Base Unit at Luke Field, Arizona, from November 1945 to February 1946.

Capt. Snow left active duty on March 24, 1946, and was recalled into the U.S. Air Force on November 20, 1950. He attended Aircraft Controller School at Tyndall AFB, Florida, from December 1950 to February 1951, and then served as an F-86 Sabre pilot with the 63rd Fighter Interceptor Squadron and the 56th Air Base Group at Selfridge AFB, Michigan, from February to November 1951. His next assignment was with the 30th Air Division at Selfridge AFB from December 1951 to April 1952, followed by F-51 Mustang training with the 127th Pilot Training Wing at Selfridge from May to August 1952. Capt Snow served as an F-51 and F-86 pilot with the 67th Fighter Bomber Squadron in South Korea from September 1952 to June 1953, and then as an instructor with the 3525th Aircraft Gunnery Squadron at Nellis AFB, Nevada, from July 1953 to May 1954.

His next assignment was as an intercept controller, operations officer, and air operations officer with the 3555th Combat Crew Training Squadron at Perrin AFB, Texas, from May 1954 to May 1956, followed by service as Commander of the 3556th Combat Crew Training Squadron and then the 3556th Flying Training Squadron at Perrin AFB from June 1956 to March 1959. Maj. Snow served as Assistant Director of Operations of the 3555th Flying Training Wing at Perrin AFB from March to September 1959, and then attended Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, from September 1959 to July 1960.

His next assignment was as an operations staff officer, as Chief of the Air Defense Control Center, and then as Director of Combat Operations with the 326th Air Division at Wheeler AFB, Hawaii, from July 1960 to August 1963, followed by service as an F-100 Super Sabre pilot and stand/eval officer for the 354th Tactical Fighter Wing at Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina, from August to November 1963. He served as Operations Officer and then Commander of the 356th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Myrtle Beach AFB from November 1963 to April 1965, and then as an **O-1 Bird Dog pilot and as an Air Force Liaison Officer for the 173rd Airborne Brigade in South Vietnam from August 1965 to August 1966.**

(continued....)



Lt. Col. Snow next served with Headquarters U.S. Air Force in the Pentagon from September 1966 to April 1968, followed by F-105 Thunderchief Combat Crew Training from May 1968 to May 1969. He served as Deputy Commander of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing at Takhli Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, from June 1969 to June 1970, and then as Deputy Commander of the 401st Tactical Fighter Wing at Torrejon AB, Spain, from September 1970 until his retirement from the Air Force on August 1, 1972.

During his combat in three wars, Col. Snow flew 1,332 combat hours on 666 combat missions, **and made 1 combat parachute jump while serving as an Air Liaison Officer with the Army in 1966.** He also accumulated 5,436 flying hours during his military career, as well as 7,679 hours of flying civilian aircraft.

He received numerous citations including six (6) Distinguished Flying Cross Citations, a Bronze Star and 24 Air Commendation Medals.

His 6th distinguished flying cross Citation reads: "Colonel Harold S. Snow distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an F-105 Thunderchief pilot in Southeast Asia on 23 April 1970. On that date Col. Snow led a flight of four F-105 Thunderchiefs in an attack upon a heavily defended interdiction point and petroleum storage area along a hostile infiltration route. Despite intense and accurate antiaircraft artillery fire Col. Snow directed repeated bombing and strafing attacks with 100% of ordnance delivered on target, resulting in the closure of a key road segment and the destruction of a great petroleum storage cache vital to hostile forces. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Col. Snow reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

After retiring from the Air Force, Hank continued his career as a private pilot. He was a certified flight instructor for single and multi-engine land aircraft to include Instruments (1972-1999). He was also an air show stunt Pilot (J-3 Cub & Pitts Special) – low level aerobatics; car-top landings and a fly-through house act (1974-1984). Hank was FAA certified for FAR-135 Operations (Air Taxi) (1972-1992). He also was the President/Chief Pilot – North Country Aviation, Inc. and Aerial Photography operating from Adirondack Airport, Saranac Lake, NY until his retirement in October 1999. Hank was a member of the American Legion, MOAA (Military Officers Association

of America) EAA, Air Force Association and the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

He is survived by his wife Ann E. Snow; five children: Susan Rendsberg, Lorraine St. Denis, Joel Snow, Tamara Pandolph-Peary and Thomas D. Pandolph; five grandchildren: Joshua St. Denis, Ashley Hermesen, Kayleigh Pandolph, Alexander and Christopher Peary, Landon and Gracen Pandolph; four great-grandchildren; and nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by one son, Terry Lee Snow; one grandson, Alexander Turner; and one brother, Joel Hobart "Hobie" Snow.

Friends wishing to remember Col. Harold Sidney Snow may make memorial contributions to Saranac Lake Free Library or Distinguished Flying Cross Society Scholarship Fund in care of the funeral home. Family and friends can also share their memories and sign the online guestbook at fortunekeoughfuneralhome.com



Hank



I DON'T KNOW MUCH, BUT I KNOW HOW TO COUNT

It was 1966, sometime somewhere in Vietnam when we of the 2/503 were humping thru the boonies. It wasn't rice paddies we were in this time, nor was it the jungle of the "D" Zone; instead, this area was sparsely populated with trees of some genus and thick bush, but not like the rubber tree plantations which were more open and provided good lines of sight – for the bad guys too. This area reminded me of the dusty, brushy, slightly undulating flatlands of the foothills of Southern California where as a youth I would often ride our horses, and where many of the old western t.v. shows and movies were filmed. One could almost imagine Roy, Dale and Pat coming up from around the bend just ahead in *Nellybelle* with Bullet running up from behind, ready to capture the cow rustlers in a shoot 'em up. As somewhat of a coincidence, many years later as a patient in 3rd Field Army Hospital in '66, I would meet Roy and Dale who visited the wounded and sick soldiers on our ward – they were good people.



"They're just up ahead! I can count them!" (web photo)

But this was not just short miles to *SurfCity*, this was war where an unlimited number *real* bullets were

From December of '65 readily available – this was yet another killing mission. To near Christmas the following year, I was one of a few who served directly under four of our 2/503 battalion commanders, perhaps a unique distinction for some of us, but not as one of their advisors. Hell, as an RTO I knew as much of what was going on or about the operational objectives of the battalion as did any other private in the unit, but unlike them, I was occasionally privy to listening in to real-time conversations between company commanders and our senior leaders of the 2/503. To this 18 then 19 year old kid, some of it made sense, but not all; such as *body count*.

This was the second of many years in Vietnam for the Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne, and in spite of extensive training and preparation for combat on Okinawa, nearby islands in the Pacific, and in the U.S., it seemed much of what we were involved in was *on-the-job-training*, learning as we go. Back in Washington the Pentagon must have been experiencing their own OJT as they sought to develop a means of measuring success of the war effort; after all, there was no Berlin or Nagasaki to mark ultimate victory. No, there was just mind and body exhausting mission-after-mission of us killing them and them killing us, but with no bridges to capture, no cities to liberate, only the never-ending strength-zapping madness and knee-weakening fear which goes with the job.



Berlin at end of WWII. *"That's one."* (web photo)

I can almost see the whiz kids at that multi-angled building in DC when a light bulb over the head of some junior officer shone brightly before running into his General's office:

Junior: *"Sir! I've got it!! We just need to kill a shitload of them and we'll win!"*

General: *"Well, son, that sounds like a promising idea, but how do we know when we've killed enough to ensure our victory?"*

Junior: *"I thought of that too, Sir. We just need to count the bodies!!"*

General: *"Count the bodies.' Hmmm. You're gonna make a fine 1st Lieutenant, son."*

And in due course word came down from on high, '*count the bodies*'. And that's exactly what we did, one by one. More often than not we would bury the dead young souls in shallow graves -- one time we could only stack them like cordwood there were so many; then call in Dust Off for our own dead and wounded souls--I don't know if the Pentagon had a plan in place to count ours.

(continued....)





2/503 Dust Off of our dead and wounded, LZ Zulu Zulu, 16 Mar 66.
(Photo by RTO Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503)

Then, in that brushy territory thru which we were humping, shots rang out, theirs then ours, then both, as knees on both sides no doubt weakened; the real bullets were flying everywhere, not the t.v. kind. Recognizing it wasn't Roy shooting the pistol out of the hand of a bad hombre, we immediately did what combat experienced G.I.'s do at such a moment, we dropped to the ground! (A hootch buddy and I, both of us "short", would regularly compete to see who could hit the dirt fastest at the sound of the first shot, and when the madness ended we would laugh at who had been the slowest to get there. It was a deadly serious game played by young soldiers who had heard the sounds and had seen the product of those sounds too often over a year's time. My buddy and I both DEROSSED that December, mostly in one piece).

As the dust cleared and we brushed ourselves off, the Bn CO ordered one of us to radio for the Company CO whose unit had been attacked on our left flank just short yards away to report to the Bn Commander. When the young Captain arrived our Bn CO (who by then was familiar with the proclamation out of Washington) asked him, "How many did we kill?" "Gee, Sir, I don't know if we killed anyone, there are some blood trails," said the boy leader of other boys. "Well, if there were blood trails then we must have killed some! You! (pointing to me), Call in 9 enemy KIA." And I called Brigade reporting 9 bad guys had been counted in that brief firefight.

No doubt, early days later, a newly-appointed 1LT rushed into his General's office in that strangely configured building near the Potomac.....

"Sir! It's working!!"

And the war, and the dying, and the counting continued.

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

STRATEGY & TACTICS

Body Count: Simply stated, body count was the American calculation of the number of enemy killed in battle. However, prompted by Secretary of Defense McNamara and General Westmoreland, it became an indicator of whether US strategy was working in Vietnam, that strategy being to kill more of the enemy than could be replaced by infiltration or recruitment, i.e. one of attrition. This bizarre notion resulted in body counts being exaggerated, but the strategy was fatally flawed. As General Creighton Abrams, who assumed command in 1968, stated: *"Body count is really a long way from what's involved in this war."* Indeed, he realized that the security of South Vietnam's population was the crucial factor in the war. In addition, body counts further eroded what little support the war had in the USA.

"The Vietnam War, Day by Day" Leo Daugherty



This also counts as one.



This trooper too. (Above KIA & EKIA photos by Mike Sturges, A/2/503)

Note: We generally refrain from including photos of our men killed in action, but these particular sacrifices speak to the thinking behind the war and how its success was to be measured – the judgment for which is left to you, to judge.
Ed



Why I stand up when the National Anthem plays



There is a time and place for protest. That time is not after you hear, *"Ladies and gentlemen, please stand to honor our nation's heroes."*

Some small ceremonies in America should remain sacred. And here's why...



(continued....)





My grandfather, a WWII Veteran, placing an American flag on the grave of a soldier at the American Cemetery in Normandy, France. *"I brought so many of these boys over to spill their blood on this soil. I made it back alive, so many did not."*



First flag ashore on Utah Beach on D-Day



Maj. Justin Fitch honoring his fallen brother. Photo taken six months before Justin passed away from his long battle with cancer on October 4th, 2015.

(continued....)





(We) brought 16 Pearl Harbor survivors back to Hawaii. On our final day, we took the Greatest Generation to the USS Arizona for a tribute where the men would drop rose petals into the central opening in the Arizona.



Larry Parry was confined to a wheelchair for the majority of the trip. I was standing behind Larry when I heard him whisper quietly to his escort, *"Miss, I may need your assistance for a moment. I'd like to try to stand up."*

(continued....)





Larry, who had lost his wife only weeks before our trip, stood up, dropped the rose petals into the gentle current to honor his fallen shipmates, and was overwhelmed with emotion.

Photograph by Melissa Findley.



“The American Flag does not fly because the wind moves past it. The American Flag flies from the last breath of each military member who has died protecting it.”



Including our own.

[Sent in by Jim Stanford, B/2/503....thanks Cap]

None, if any of us, condone ill treatment of and/or disrespect to our nation's flag. Every one of us fought for our country's Constitution to protect the right of others to treat it poorly and to disrespect it if they so choose. Those same others clearly share a different form of honor and allegiance we as young soldiers so abundantly understood and to which we pledged our very lives. Ed



An E/2/503 Trooper's Photos

Dear Smitty:

Please feel free to call me to discuss or ask questions about these pictures.

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

Look forward to hearing from you. The PDF newsletter is unbelievably good!

Sincerely,

Scott Ingmanson

E/2/503

Hi Scott!

Thanks for the pics. Including some of them here to share with your buddies. We're also looking into how we might get photos of those kids to someone in that village. If anyone is returning to VN, please let me know. ATW! Ed



L-R: Flash from Chicago & Sp4 Scott Ingmanson, Lo Dieu, winter '69/'70. "The best 4.2 crew in the Nam, E/2/503, Lo Dieu, '70."

Lo Dieu Village Kids....Now oldsters



(continued....)



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Lo Dieu Village Kids....Photos from Scott Ingmanson, E/2/503, '69/'70



Scott's chopper when he was a door gunner with Caspers in '70.



Remembering a WWII paratrooper whose career spanned first three decades of Army airborne

By Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot
December 20, 2016



Willie McLaney holds a photo of the Airborne Test Platoon, left; and a photo of her husband, Lester McLaney, during World War II. Behind her is a family portrait taken before her husband's death in 1972. Lester McLaney was a member of the Test Platoon and went on to make four combat jumps during World War II, and participated in several campaigns in Northern Africa and Europe.

(Photo Credit: Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot)

A little more than a year before the U.S. entered World War II, the Army put out a call for volunteers to test a relatively new tactic for inserting troops into enemy territory.

Two hundred men from the 29th Infantry Regiment pushed their mortal fears aside and stepped forward to be part of airborne history. From them, 48 were chosen to train and become the first U.S. Army platoon to jump as a unit from an aircraft. They formed the modestly named, "Airborne Test Platoon".

With the exception of two lieutenants and two sergeants, the test platoon was made up of young privates. Among them was a strapping young man from rural Alabama who would eventually become a decorated World War II paratrooper and a sergeant major in the premiere airborne division -- the 82nd Airborne Division.

Dec. 11 would have been Lester C. McLaney's 100th birthday. According to his widow, Willie McLaney, Lester grew up the son of a sharecropper in Hartford, Alabama, just south of what today is Fort Rucker. She said he joined the Army for adventure and a better life.

"One night he was sitting by lamplight doing his school work and he looked up through the ceiling and saw the sky," Willie said. "He said to himself right then - there had to be a better place for him. And that is when he decided that he was going to join the Army."

McLaney joined the Army in June 1938 and served two years with the 29th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia. In 1940, the regiment was selected by then Maj. William Lee to provide volunteers for the first-of-its-kind airborne training.

The volunteers underwent three days of flight physicals, which skimmed the test platoon down to 48 of the fittest men.

"I was 23 and single, and it promised to be something different, so I volunteered," McLaney wrote in a 1968 biography. *"It was quite strenuous, but we had a lot of fun."*

The training lasted seven weeks at Fort Benning, where, in addition to six weeks of parachute training, the volunteers conducted physical exercise for several hours each day, a regimen that included calisthenics, log raises, swimming and running.

After the training at Fort Benning, the test platoon traveled to Hightstown, near Fort Dix, New Jersey, where they practiced descending and landing in harnesses attached to steel cables from 125-foot towers. After a week of tower-training, the test platoon returned to Fort Benning for parachute packing and live jumps.

After completing six jumps, members of the test platoon were qualified as paratroopers and became the cadre to train the 501st Parachute Battalion, which provided the historic lineage of the storied 501st Parachute Regiment. Their training took three months, after which trainees and trainers alike were ready to make their historic combat jumps into the European Theater and the North African Campaign.

Lester was assigned to the 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment. His combat jumps include: Tebassa, north Africa; Oran, north Africa; Avilino, Italy; and southern France. According to Willie, Lester also jumped into Normandy.

(continued....)



But all of this was before he and Willie met. While Lester was participating in campaigns in places like Algeria, Tunisia, Naples, Rome, and France, Willie was serving in the Red Cross. She still remembers serving at Fort Ord, California, watching film of U.S. paratroopers jumping out of aircraft overseas. Little did she know that one of those brave men would soon be her husband.

After the war, Willie returned home to Alabama, where she met Lester, who was then working at his father's dry-cleaning shop.

"I was the new girl in town and he was the town's Casanova," Willie said with a smile. *"We married two weeks later."*

The role of Army wife was one that Willie said she embraced passionately. Her strength and self-reliance helped her get through rough times when her husband left for training and missions, the details of which he was not allowed to share with her.

"It takes a darn good woman to be an Army wife because you have to put up with so much," Willie said. *"The minute they walk out the door, everything blows."*

At the end of hostilities in Europe, Lester was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division when the 509th PIR was disbanded. After returning from war, Lester was discharged as a first sergeant in 1945.

Following a three-year break in service, Lester reentered the Army in 1948 and returned to the 82nd Airborne Division, where he served for a little more than three years. Remaining at Fort Bragg, he served as a project noncommissioned officer at the Airborne Service Test Division, Army Field Forces Board #1 and supervisor of the Parachute Repair Section, Post Quartermaster.

Following a yearlong tour as first sergeant, Operations Company, Joint Task Force Seven, at Eniwatok Atoll, Marshall Islands, Lester returned to Fort Bragg and the 82nd Airborne Division once again to serve as first sergeant, 82nd Quartermaster Parachute Supply and Maintenance Company. In 1962, he was promoted to sergeant major and assumed the position of sergeant major, Support Group, 82nd Airborne Division.

In 1965, Lester was assigned as sergeant major, 3rd Civil Affairs Group, Fort Clayton, Panama Canal Zone, and was evacuated two months later to Walter Reed General Hospital.

Lester retired in April 1970, as an electronic warfare sergeant major, after battling leukemia, possibly linked to radiation exposure during nuclear testing at Enewetak Atoll in the 1950s. He died just two years later in 1972.

The Fort Bragg community has been home for the McLaneys for more than half a century. It has been where Lester and Willie raised their two sons and the Family immersed itself with the installation's scouting program. Lester was a Boy Scouts scoutmaster while Willie served as a den mother for the Cub Scouts.

"The scouting program did a lot for us," Willie recalled. *"We learned so much and stayed together as a Family."*

Through scouting, serving the community was a major part of the McLaneys' lives. In addition to building the character of young men, the McLaneys led clothing drives for those less fortunate in the community.

There is a street named in Lester McLaney's honor in Fort Bragg's Ardennes housing community.

A drop zone at Fort Lee, Virginia, also bears his name.

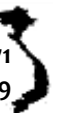
What Willie today remembers most about her husband is his devotion as a Soldier and that of a loving husband. According to Willie, to know Lester McLaney was to love him. He touched many lives through his courageous service and leadership.

"He was loved by all who knew him, especially those with whom he served," she said.



Troopers of the original Test Platoon (web photo)

[Source: U.S. Army]



'Sky Soldiers' break from training to spend the afternoon with Latvian students

By Sgt. Lauren Harrah, 24th Press Camp HQ
December 1, 2016



CAMP ADAZI, Latvia - Paratroopers assigned to Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, take a break from training to meet with students at Rezeknew Novada Dricanu School in Dricani, Latvia and Tiskadu Secondary School in Tiskadu, Latvia, during a partnered outreach program with the Latvian Land Forces, Nov. 29, 2016. The Chosen Company "Sky Soldiers" answered questions and shared a video featuring training they have conducted here in Latvia.

The 'Sky Soldiers' are on a training rotation in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, a U.S. led effort in Eastern Europe that demonstrates U.S. commitment to the collective security of NATO and dedication to enduring peace and stability in the region. The 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Vicenza, Italy, is the Army Contingency Response Force in Europe, and is capable of projecting forces to conduct a full range of military operations across the United States European, Central and Africa Command areas of responsibility within 18 hours.

"It was an opportunity to let them know why we are here," said 1st Lt. Tyler Rauenzahn, platoon leader, C Co., 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt.



Paratroopers assigned to Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, pose for a photo after sharing a presentation with students at Rezeknew Novada Dricanu School in Dricāni, Latvia and Tiskadu Secondary School in Tiskadu, Latvia, during a partnered outreach program with the Latvian Land Forces, Nov. 29, 2016.

Upon arriving at each school, the Latvian soldiers provided a brief presentation to the students. The Chosen Company "Sky Soldiers" then shared a video of their airborne insertion from Exercise Silver Arrow in October, before the students broke into smaller groups.

By breaking into smaller groups, the Paratroopers were able to interact on a personal level with the students and answer the great number of questions they had about both life in the Army as well as their mission here in Latvia.

"The students had a lot of questions," said Sgt. Arturo Garcia, team leader, C Co., 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf. Regt. "It was quiet at first but as soon as we started asking them about Latvia, then they started coming up with questions and opening up a little bit more."

The Paratroopers discussed a wide range of topics with the students including what the mission is here in Latvia, what it is like for them to jump out of aircrafts, the weapon systems they use, why they chose to become Paratroopers, where they've been and what they've enjoyed most about their time here so far.

(continued....)



"It was actually a pretty neat experience getting to know a little bit about their culture too," Garcia said.

During their visit, the Paratroopers also received a number of recommendations from the students who were eager to share what local foods they suggest and fun activities for the 'Sky Soldiers' to do during their down time.

Rauenzahn said he hopes his Paratroopers were able to connect with the students during the outreach and gain a better overall understanding of why they are here.

"It kind of puts a bigger purpose behind spending hours and hours training every day," Rauenzahn said. "It lets them know we are here in support of children who are going to school who are only kilometers away from the border. I think it puts a real strong purpose behind our mission other than making ourselves better and well-trained."

The 173rd Airborne Brigade, based in Vicenza, Italy, is the Army Contingency Response Force in Europe, and is capable of projecting forces to conduct a full range of military operations across the United States European, Central and Africa Command areas of responsibility within 18 hours.

U.S. Army Europe is uniquely positioned in its 51 country area of responsibility to advance American strategic interests in Europe and Eurasia. The relationships we build during more than 1,000 theater security cooperation events in more than 40 countries each year lead directly to support for multinational contingency operations around the world, strengthen regional partnerships and enhance global security.

2/503 in Latvia



CAMP ADAZI, Latvia - Maj. Paul Deleon, battalion executive officer, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, directs Paratrooper movement onto an objective during a company-level Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise at Camp Adazi, Latvia, Dec. 10, 2016.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Lauren Harrah)

Miracle Baby



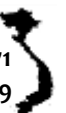
Bryan "Doc" Turner, D/4/503, a distinguished member of the *LLH Gang*, spends time with his best buddy, grandson Oscar. *"He is my miracle baby. Oscar's birth weight was 1lb, 6oz. He's now 2 years old and doing great."*

Geronimo Oscar!!



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Congressman Alan Lowenthal

Member, House Committee on Natural Resources | Foreign Affairs

Representing California's 47th District

lowenthal.house.gov | [RepLowenthal](https://www.facebook.com/RepLowenthal) | [RepLowenthal](https://www.instagram.com/RepLowenthal)

WASHINGTON, D.C.
(December 19, 2016) – President Barack Obama on Friday signed into law legislation introduced by Congressman Alan Lowenthal (CA-47) to rename the Department of Veterans Affairs



Medical Center in Long Beach, California, as the Tibor Rubin VA Medical Center in honor of Holocaust survivor and Medal of Honor recipient Tibor Rubin.

The bill, H.R. 6323, was introduced earlier this month with the support and backing of the entire 53 member California House Delegation. California's two Senators, Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, also supported the renaming effort, along with numerous veterans groups in California including, the American Legion, AMVETS, DAV (Disabled American Veterans), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mr. Rubin was born in Hungary on June 18, 1929. He survived fourteen months in a Nazi concentration camp in Austria during World War II, where his parents and sisters died, and was eventually liberated by the U.S. Army. Inspired by the American soldiers who rescued him, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, eventually being deployed in early 1950 as a member of the U.S. Army's 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during the Korean War.

Despite facing religious discrimination from his sergeant who sent Mr. Rubin on the most dangerous assignments and withheld his commendation, Mr. Rubin fought valiantly in several notable engagements. In one such engagement, Mr. Rubin enabled the complete withdrawal of his fellow soldiers by solely defending a hill under an overwhelming assault by North Korean troops.

On a later assignment, Mr. Rubin was severely wounded and captured. During his interment in a POW camp, he disregarded his own personal safety and immediately began sneaking out of the camp at night in search of food for his comrades. Risking certain torture or death if caught, he provided food to the starving Soldiers and desperately needed medical care for the wounded of the POW camp using improvised medical techniques. His brave, selfless efforts during his captivity were directly attributed to saving the lives of as many as forty of his fellow prisoners.

For his gallantry in close contact with the enemy and his unyielding courage and bravery while a prisoner of war, Mr. Rubin was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2005. Mr. Rubin's wartime heroism, both during combat and later as a prisoner of war, are true examples of the Medal of Honor goal to recognize "... *conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty.*"

"I am honored and humbled to see the President sign into law my legislation to name the VA Medical Center in Long Beach after an American hero," Congressman Lowenthal said. *"Throughout his life, Tibor Rubin was dedicated and devoted to helping others through acts of kindness, courage and bravery. When challenges came his way he remained steadfast and determined to help others around him. I am proud to have met and represented such an honorable man like Mr. Rubin; I know the VA Medical Center in our community will pay tribute to his legacy and it is my hope that it serves as an inspiration to those that come after him."*

Mr. Rubin was also fiercely proud of his adopted American heritage. He once said that America is, ***"the best country in the world and I am part of it now. I do not have to worry about the Gestapo knocking on my door tonight. I have shalom peace; people die for it."***

Mr. Rubin was a long-time resident of Garden Grove, California and received services from the Long Beach VA Medical Center. He passed away almost one year ago on December 5, 2015.

To read the full bill text visit:

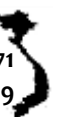
www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/6323/text

[Sent in by CCVVA Chapter 982]



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The Box

by Lascelles Abercrombie

Once upon a time, in the land of Hush-A-Bye,
Around about the wondrous days of yore,
They came across a kind of box
Bound up with chains and locked with locks
And labeled "*Kindly do not touch; it's war.*"
A decree was issued round about, and all with a flourish
and a shout
And a gaily colored mascot tripping lightly on before.
Don't fiddle with this deadly box, Or break the chains, or
pick the locks.
And please don't ever play about with war.
The children understood. Children happen to be good
And they were just as good around the time of yore.
They didn't try to pick the locks Or break into that deadly
box.
They never tried to play about with war.
Mommies didn't either; sisters, aunts, grannies neither
'Cause they were quiet, and sweet, and pretty
In those wondrous days of yore.
Well, very much the same as now,
And not the ones to blame somehow
For opening up that deadly box of war.
But someone did. Someone battered in the lid
And spilled the insides out across the floor.
A kind of bouncy, bumpy ball made up of guns and flags
And all the tears, and horror, and death that comes with
war.
It bounced right out and went bashing all about,
Bumping into everything in store. And what was sad and
most unfair
Was that it didn't really seem to care
Much who it bumped, or why, or what, or for.
It bumped the children mainly. And I'll tell you this quite
plainly,
It bumps them every day and more, and more,
And leaves them dead, and burned, and dying
Thousands of them sick and crying.
'Cause when it bumps, it's really very sore.
Now there's a way to stop the ball. It isn't difficult at all.
All it takes is wisdom, and I'm absolutely sure
That we can get it back into the box, And bind the chains,
and lock the locks.
But no one seems to want to save the children anymore.
Well, that's the way it all appears, 'cause it's been
bouncing round
for years and years
In spite of all the wisdom wizzed since those wondrous
days of yore
And the time they came across the box,
Bound up with chains and locked with locks,
And labeled "*Kindly do not touch; it's war.*"

[The Box, sent in by Jim Bethea, HHC/2/503, '65/'66]

Lascelles Abercrombie

Known as *the Georgian Laureate*, linking him with the "Georgian poets"; (9 January 1881 – 27 October 1938) was a British poet and literary critic, one of the "Dymock poets".



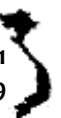
He was born in Ashton upon Mersey, Sale, Cheshire and educated at Malvern College, and at Owens College. Before the First World War, he lived for a time at Dymock in Gloucestershire, part of a community that included Rupert Brooke and Robert Frost. During these early years, he worked as a journalist, and he started his poetry writing. His first book, *Interludes and Poems* (1908), was followed by *Mary and the Bramble* (1910) and the poem *Deborah*, and later by *Emblems of Love* (1912) and *Speculative Dialogues* (1913). His critical works include *An Essay Towards a Theory of Art* (1922), and *Poetry, Its Music and Meaning* (1932). *Collected Poems* (1930) was followed by *The Sale of St. Thomas* (1931), a poetic drama.

During World War I, he served as a munitions examiner, after which, he was appointed to the first lectureship in poetry at the University of Liverpool. In 1922 he was appointed Professor of English at the University of Leeds in preference to J. R. R. Tolkien, with whom he shared, as author of *The Epic* (1914), a professional interest in heroic poetry. In 1929 he moved on to the University of London, and in 1935 to the prestigious Goldsmiths' Readership at Oxford University, where he was elected as a Fellow of Merton College. Lascelles Abercrombie died in London in 1938, aged 57, from undisclosed causes.

With apologies to Lascelles Abercrombie...

The Box, sent in by Jim Bethea, an astute young man one should say, even when said in times of yore.
Endured he did those years before, when he was far away
at war,
a war today he surely craves no more.
And like Jim we each keep our box, bound with its chains
and locked with its locks,
Safely hidden just behind the closet door.
And enter dare we never do, but, yes we do,
of course we do,
For the contents of that box calls us, evermore. Ed

More about *boxes* and *wars* on following pages, originally published March 2011, in Issue 25 of our newsletter for those who don't know they are struggling with PTSD.....



Beware of Unclaimed Boxes in the Distance

There's a former 173d officer buddy of Vietnam vintage who continues to suffer with symptoms of PTSD. No, it's not our good friend Bill Vose, as some of you might assume. Vose has balls of Kryptonite, or so he believes, and wears a cammo'd shirt with a big red "S" on the front. No, this buddy is another equally brave soul who led us into battle in Vietnam. Yet, like many of us, for years he's conveniently stuffed that war deep down inside where it could do no harm, or so he had hoped. We'll call this trooper Major Joe, a different G.I. Joe than the one you read about in our last newsletter. Thought I'd share this note with you, a note sent him recently. Ed

Joe, you may not know how typical your story is, maybe you do. Since getting treatment myself (for PTSD) and trying to help others come in from the bush, I've learned something about it. Not unlike some of your peers, those guys who think they have steel balls, I simply believed *I did my service, nothing was owed me, PTSD is bullshit. See ya.*

My first introduction to the illness was at the Rochester reunion in 2000, my first ever. I walked away disappointed in my vet buddies who seemed fixated on percentage points the VA had or might award them. Just like some of your buddies, I too viewed it as a scam, guys looking for a free ride is all. Hell, I had been a business owner for over 20 years at the time, semi-successful, semi-educated, nothing was wrong with me.

Nothing, of course, except the heavy drinking, womanizing, three marriage separations, walking out on jobs after telling the boss to fuck himself with no job to go to, getting in fights; doing everything to hide from something at the expense of my wife and sons, when in reality, this old RTO was hiding from our war, but didn't know it then. Just like you, I had done such a fine job of burying it for 30 odd years.

Three 2/503d troopers at 2000 Reunion in Rochester, MN. From left, the late Jim "Skid" Skidmore, Smitty, and Don "Rocky" Rockholt. Life was good.

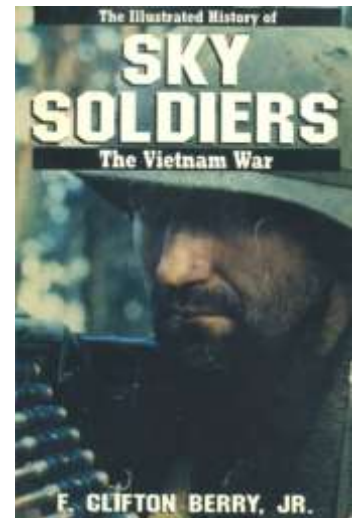


(Note: Since this report first appeared in 2011, Rocky's life ended due to a lifestyle influenced by PTSD).

Until that reunion I couldn't stand to be around vets, wouldn't admit being a vet, my kids hardly knew their dad was a vet. All the while railing at those poor souls on t.v. getting arrested for one thing or another. For a time there whenever the news in L.A. came on with some crime, I consciously hoped it wasn't *another* VN vet, yet often it was. *That's not me goddamit!!* I'd yell at the t.v. I saw what looked to be a familiar box in the distance.

My older brother Bob did three tours with the SF until they blew-out one of his eyes....last year, for the first time ever we sat down together and talked about our war experiences.

Sometime in the 80's my wife, Reggie, and I were in a bookstore in Miami. I happened to pick-up a little paperback book entitled, "*Sky Soldiers*." Hell, I thought, I served with that unit. After purchasing the book and taking it home, while sitting there in an easy chair I began to read about operations and battles I had personally been part of. For no apparent reason I began to weep. Neither my wife nor I could understand it. I had found a box in the distance which had been hidden for so many years.

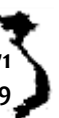


"Hell, I served with that unit."

When the first Iraq war came off, I couldn't eat or sleep, hell I didn't even go to work -- just sat in front of that tube absorbing it all, drawn to it, fearing it....day after day I sat there eating war again. The lid of that box opened a tad.

Having achieved some measure of success with my business, I ran out and bought my dream car, a nifty little European 2-seater in '89, never thought I'd be able to get such a car. I found and put a 173d Airborne sticker on the rear bumper, but it wasn't placed there out of unit pride. No, it was a message to the asshole behind me, "*See! I'm a Vietnam vet and I'm successful! I'm not like those other bastards!!*" I was ashamed then of being a veteran. The lid of that box opened.

(continued....)



We went to NJ sometime after that to make a presentation to some company, I drove there from Miami. This was during winter and on the drive home late at night I stopped to visit *The Wall* for the first time. Near ten o'clock that night I stood there in the freezing cold yet not feeling cold in front of a buddy's



(web photo)

name, cursing at him for dying, telling him how sorry I was he died. On the long, non-stop drive home to Miami our war came back to me, Joe, and I wept for hundreds of miles. I tried to close that box, but it wouldn't let me.

Firing a secretary forced me to learn how to use email. I would spend every night searching for buddies and anything and everything about the VN war and the 173d. After hooking up with a few buddies from the 173d then more, I printed every reply from them, every word, literally thousands of pages -- they're here in a carton somewhere. I became obsessed. Then my first reunion followed by the first trip back to VN, to be followed by another. The box was opening quickly now.



Visiting our mistress, *Miss Vietnam*, at 3rd Field Army Hospital in Tan Son Nhut on our second trip back in '05. From left, Bill Vose, Gus Vendetti, Smitty.

My world was falling apart. I had eventually walked away from my business unable to tend to it, unable to focus, *everything* became VN; then separating again from my wife who didn't deserve it, this time for 6 years, and moved away from Miami by myself.

Drinking heavily again, actually I had never stopped; fighting with people when I had no reason to....lost and searching, but for what? Let's put on a 2/503 reunion in Cocoa Beach, and then another! That'll fix things!! And then, Joe, the depression you mention sets in, big time, a real equalizer as you know. That box was fully opened now and it was sucking me into it and there was nothing I could do about it.



The first of two 2/503d reunions in Cocoa Beach.

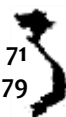
I can't tell you how fortunate I was to meet Dr. Scott Fairchild down here, you've read about him. That Doc helped me make some sense of it all, not completely, but enough to save my marriage and enough to help me become a better husband and father and grandfather, although one son, my namesake, remains distant -- there's no question the Doc saved me some years. He taught me PTSD is *not* being crazy, it's precisely what it says it is, *stress*. And he taught me, for guys like us, if we don't confront that stress but instead bury it inside for years, it will eventually return and return to do damage.

Yessir, as your current activities do and most likely will forever remain *your* therapy, our newsletter, for the time being at least, is mine. That, and along with others, helping the brass and the unwashed find the path to their own peace of mind, or as close to it as possible -- from privates to company commanders to full birds. Even generals are not immune, like Major General Blackledge and the PTSD he carries on his shoulder, they all carry their hidden scars. Yet, for many that All American has helped us find the path home. Too many, as you well know, have taken the easy path and continue to opt for that sad ending to their combat saga.

You do good work for your G.I.'s, Major. Watch out for any unclaimed boxes in your path, they're like punji stakes, they can be a real bitch. Here's a solution?

Scott Fairchild, Psy.D, LTC (Ret), 82nd Abn Div
Phn: 321-253-8887, Eml: BaytreeBehHlth@aol.com

Be well, Joe, dance like no one's lookin'. Smitty Out



THE WHITE HOUSE



Office of the Press Secretary
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 7, 2016

Statement by the Commander in Chief on the 75th Anniversary of the Attack on Pearl Harbor



“US President Barack Obama praised the alliance between the US and Japan on the 75th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, which took place on December 7, 1941,”

(AFP Photo/Mandel Ngan)

Seventy-five years ago today, a sudden and unprovoked attack turned a tranquil harbor into a sea of flames. Over 2,400 American patriots lost their lives in the attack on Pearl Harbor military and civilian, men, women and children. Their sacrifice galvanized millions of GIs and Rosie the Riveters who answered the call to defend liberty at its moment of maximum peril. In the hours after the attack, President Roosevelt promised that *“the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.”* Thanks to the heroism of a generation, we did.

Today, Michelle and I join the American people in remembering those who gave their lives at Pearl Harbor many of them not much older than boys and in honoring their families spouses, siblings, sons and daughters who still carry the memories of their loved ones in their hearts. We give thanks to the veterans and survivors of Pearl Harbor who faced down fear itself, met infamy with intrepidity, freed captive peoples from fascism and whose example inspires us still.

For out of the horrors of war, this Greatest Generation forged an enduring international order, became the backbone of the middle class and powered America’s prosperity. Their courage and resolve remind us of that fundamental American truth that out of many we are one; and that when we stand together, no undertaking is too great.

On this National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, we also reaffirm that the work of securing and strengthening our nation goes on. While we can never repay the profound debt of gratitude we owe to those who served on our behalf, we can embrace our commitment to care for and support veterans of America’s wars from every generation.

As a testament that even the most bitter of adversaries can become the closest of allies, I look forward to visiting the USS Arizona Memorial later this month along with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. This historic visit will stand as a tribute to the power of reconciliation and to the truth that the United States and Japan bound by an alliance unimaginable 75 years ago will continue to work hand-in-hand for a more peaceful and secure world.

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[Sent in by CCVVA Chapter 982]



USS Arizona Memorial





WEST POINT TO VIET NAM – A few short years ago these Army officers were chewing up the gridiron as members of the U.S. Military Academy football team at West Point. Today they are members of the U.S. 173rd Airborne Brigade stationed at Bien Hoa Air Base in South Viet Nam where they are shown this month. From left are Capt. Dick Buckner of New York and Capt. Tom Blanda of Youngwood, Pa., both of the class of 1961, and Lt. Dick Eckert of Carlisle, Pa., class of 1963. –

AP Wirephoto

Ex-West Point Gridders Recall Motto in Viet Nam

“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

By GEORGE ESPER
Associated Press Writer

Bien Hoa, Viet Nam, Aug. 28 (1965), AP – *“When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”*

Quarterback Dick Eckert picked up the football battle cry at West Point during his playing days. Former Coach Dale Hall had it posted all over the locker room.

First Lieutenant Dick Eckert of Carlisle, Pa., who graduated from the Military Academy in 1963, never has forgotten the motto in the tough war against the Viet Cong. Eckert, who received the purple heart after being

slightly wounded by a hand grenade, recalls the motto in discussing the war during an interview.

He and three other former West Point football players are stationed here with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

The others are Capt. Tom Blanda of Youngwood, Pa., class of 1961, and brother veteran professional star George Blanda; Capt. Dick Buckner, of New York, class of 1961; and 2nd Lt. Jim Koster of Lake Benton, Minn., class of 1964.

continued....)



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Same Spirit

All have the same fighting spirit here as they did on the football field. And the grim war, which Buckner calls a “dirty war,” has not dampened their sense of humor. Blanda, 25, also a former quarterback, often joked through the interview.

Once, when asked how he met his wife, he replied, with tongue-in-cheek: *“She happened to be at the right place at the right time.”*

Eckert, Blanda, Bruckner and Koster have been at this air base, located about 12 miles north of Saigon, since May 12 when the 173rd was deployed here from Okinawa. All except Eckert, who is a bachelor had to leave their wives in Okinawa. Koster’s wife is expecting a child next month.

Blanda said that in 1963, just before he left for Okinawa, the St. Louis Cardinals of the National Football League made him an offer.

He turned it down, he said, because *“I enjoyed being with the 173rd and what I was doing.”*

Eckert is in command of a weapons platoon in the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry. Blanda and Buckner are battery artillery commanders and Koster is a fire direction officer.

At least two other former West Point athletes, 1st Lt. Ronald L. Zinn and 1st Lt. Bob Fuellhart have been killed in action in Viet Nam.

Zinn, also a member of the 173rd, was killed in a battle with the Viet Cong in Zone D last July 7. Fuellhart, a football teammate of both Eckert and Blanda, was killed less than two weeks ago while directing a helicopter attack near the village of Phung Heip.

Fuellhart played the “lonely” end position in the football offense directed by Blanda and Eckert. Zinn finished sixth in the 20 kilometer walk in the 1964 Olympic Games, the best an American ever has done in a walking event.

Big Battle

Eckert, 24, who volunteered for duty in Viet Nam last January before it was known the 173rd would be moved here, recalled the big battle when American, Vietnamese and Australian troops ran into a well-fortified Viet Cong village.

“We had four killed and 11 wounded,” said Eckert. *“We estimated that we killed around 20 Viet Cong. We pushed the Viet Cong unit out of the village.”*

The village had a lot of tunnels and trenches and blood trails leading out of all of them. The Viet Cong dragged out their wounded and dead.

“I shot one sniper in a tree. He fell out of the tree but we never found him later. Twice the Viet Cong came out of the trenches and assaulted us. We threw grenades. We saw people drop. Again they pulled them back into the trenches.”

“Zinn was the platoon leader of the lead rifle platoon. We were right behind them. When all the firing opened up, we couldn’t figure what it was. So we went forward and came to within 10 feet of Zinn. He was already dead.”

“He was hit with the initial fire. The Viet Cong kept hitting him with machine gun bullets. Snipers were up in the trees. While we were organizing, there was sniper fire and sporadic machine gun fire from the enemy.

The company commander moved the left platoon around to try to get around to the rear of the village. They ran into a machine gun. They put heavy fire on it and knocked this machine gun out. Armed helicopters put on heavy fire. Then we attacked and swept through the village.”

Eckert and Zinn were personal friends.

“It--Zinn’s death—is one of those things you expect to happen but you never expect it to be the person next to you. I really didn’t think or comprehend it until it was all over and I had a change to relax.

After it was all over I started to think about his family. He had just gotten married. While it-the battle-is going on, you just accept it as part of the battle.”

Eckert received his purple heart for being wounded in the upper part of his leg during an earlier operation, also in Zone D. He was interrogating one of the villagers, when another man came up behind him and flipped a hand grenade. The grenade turned out to be sort of a dud. Eckert hit the ground, and the man escaped into the woods.

Eckert, who succeeded Blanda as first string quarterback in 1961, said that actually there is a lot in common in playing sports and being here in battle.

“There’s the same tension,” he explained, *“the same feeling. All the training is like practicing in sports. You’re got to train. You develop the same type of team work that you do in battle. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”*

[Source: *Reading Eagle*]

Frank Tom Blanda, LTC USA Ret., age 65, passed away on July 21, 2005.

Dr. Richard Everett Eckert, Colonel USA Ret., age 69, passed away on May 12, 2010.

Richard A. Buckner, Colonel USA Ret., Secretary USMA Class of ‘61.

We could not locate any details about Jim Koster.



Following is the continuation in a series of reports by our former battalion commander, Col. George Dexter, (Ret), detailing activities of the 2/503 leading up to and during our time in Vietnam into 1966. Please see Issues 69 and 70 of our newsletter for earlier reports by the commander. Ed

2/503 AIRBORNE INFANTRY IN SOUTH VIETNAM AUGUST TO DECEMBER 1965

By George E. Dexter, Col. (Ret), Abn Inf
2/503 Battalion Commander, '64-'66



(Then) LTC George Dexter, 2/503 Battalion Commander.

On the 10th of August, 1965, the entire 173d Airborne was flown by C-130 to Pleiku in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. Intelligence had identified North Vietnamese Army (NVA) elements operating in Western Pleiku Province near the Cambodian border. An ARVN (Army of South Vietnam) unit had been sent to this area to attempt to locate them, and we were being deployed to back them up.



"On the flight up we flew over mountainous forest areas and landed at Pleiku airport."

Pleiku was the capital of Pleiku Province and the largest city in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. We spent the first night in the Pleiku area and the next day were taken by truck convoy about 20 kilometers southwest to the vicinity of the brand new District Capital of Than Binh which was really just a fortified hexagonal-shaped camp about a hundred meters on a side. The people and terrain were significantly different from what we had experienced around Bien Hoa. The terrain was mostly open rolling grasslands with scattered forested hills.

On the way down from Pleiku we did pass through one large tea plantation, still operated by French owners we were told. The climate was cooler and dryer, a pleasant break from the rainy season still holding sway in Bien Hoa. The people were montagnards, tribal stoneage people, but I do not know what ethnicity. Other than ARVN military personnel, I don't think I saw any Vietnamese in that area.



Montagnards in their village.

(continued....)



We set up a battalion defensive perimeter within a few hundred meters of the District Capital, dug in and began sending out patrols. And there we sat for a few days. One day General Thieu, then the Commander of ARVN (later President of South Vietnam) came to visit the new district capital, and General Williamson briefed him on what the 173d was doing.



Montagnards at the airport to welcome General Thieu.



Briefing by brigade commander General Ellis Williamson to General Thieu and his staff.

I and the other battalion commanders attended the briefing and received souvenir shirts woven by montagnard women of the area.



1/503's Bn CO John Tyler with 2/503 Bn CO George Dexter in their new jungle fatigue shirts.

A couple of days later the ARVN unit we were backing up came rolling back through us on their way back to Pleiku. They had found nothing. The next day we were pulled back to Pleiku and deployed on a grassy hill overlooking a lake north of town. We sat there about two weeks, sending out patrols nearby and "Eagle Flights"—patrols flown by helicopters to an area, dropped off, patrolled to a destination and then picked up and returned to our base camp.



2/503d Eagle Flights land on road in Than Binh, Aug. '65

We also conducted a couple of company sized search and destroy missions around the mountains between Pleiku and Kontum, the capital of Kontum Province north of Pleiku. No contact!



Troops load C-130 for return to Bien Hoa.

One day I actually got a chance to water ski on the lake we overlooked! On September 5 we flew back to Bien Hoa. We suffered no casualties—killed or wounded—during the three weeks of the Pleiku operation.

(continued....)



Upon our return we were almost immediately sent back out on a brigade operation to the area of Ben Cat, a district capital along Hwy 13 in Binh Duong Province northwest of Bien Hoa.



At Camp Zinn 2/503 Sky Soldiers prepare to move out to the airbase for flight to Ben Cat.



2/503 loading choppers at "The Snakepit" for Ben Cat.

The main thing I remember about this operation was that it rained and rained and rained. Over the next couple of months we conducted several operations in this general area northwest of Bien Hoa, one for the general purpose of sweeping the area where the 1st Infantry Division would establish its base camp. On this operation one of our black soldiers, Milton Olive of B Company, dived on an enemy grenade, absorbing the explosion with his body and protecting his comrades, giving up his own life in the process. For this he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

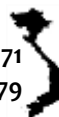


Milton Olive, III, a Bravo Bull, a hero among heroes.



L-R: 2/503d's Bn XO Bill White, Lynn Lancaster and SGM Mish share a brief relaxing moment in Ben Cat.

(continued....)



In October the brigade was sent into the Iron Triangle, a notorious VC stronghold along the Saigon River northwest of Saigon. This was our first encounter with secondary jungle, which occurs when the primary jungle in an area has been cut down, farmed and then left to regrow. New plants spring up in profusion and interlock with each other in competition for sunlight, and the only way to get through is by cutting a pathway with machetes. Visibility is limited to a few feet, and progress is noisy.



Popular Forces soldier and Bob Carmichael with VC suspect near Di An in October.

After about a day and a half we emerged into an abandoned agricultural area, and that afternoon B Company walked into an ambush. I moved the other companies into position to help, but by that time the enemy had slipped away. B Company suffered heavy casualties from this action—12 killed and 30 wounded.

Bravo Company KIA, 10/10/65

Harry Edward Himmelreich, PFC, 19
Eugene Merlyn Rick, SFC, 32
James Grayson Berry, SP4, 20
Lawrence Andre Franklin, SGT, 23
Ernest President, SP4, 24
Wilfred Roland Robillard, PFC, 18
Ronald Keith Schukar, PFC, 21
Van Williams, PFC, 19
Duane Michael Nelson, PFC, 22
James Joseph Reilly, Jr., SFC, 39
James Walter Floyd, PFC, 19
Ronnie Marshall Duncan, PFC, 23

Later in the month during this operation, two more troopers from B Company would be killed in action, including Milton Olive.

Bravo Company KIA, 10/10/65

George Gregorio Luis, SP4, 20
Milton Lee Olive, III, PFC, 18

On the 21st of November the 173d Airborne Brigade began what was to be the longest and most interesting of all the operations while I was with them. Called Operation New Life, it was conducted in the La Nga River valley, some 60 or 70 kilometers east of Bien Hoa, and was designed to prevent the rice harvest in that area from falling into the hands of the VC. This was the area in Long Khanh Province where North Vietnamese Catholic refugees had been resettled and the 10th ARVN Division had been defeated the previous December.

By November of 1965 the district capital of Vo Dat and its airstrip were in government hands, and an ARVN Ranger Battalion was providing security. Many of the district villages were under the control of VC guerrillas, particularly north of the La Nga River. I don't think friendly intelligence had any information on enemy VC Main or Regional Forces nearby, but it was known that there were Main Force elements to the north that could come in.



In Vo Dat LTC Dexter studies operational map and confers with Capt. Les Brownlee, Bravo Company CO.

(continued....)



Operation Map



Map showing the area in which the operation took place.

2/503 was given the original assault mission. We flew by chopper from Bien Hoa to the Vo Dat airstrip, landing around 10:00 o'clock in the morning. We immediately established a perimeter defense around the airstrip and began sweeping the runway for possible booby traps. By the time the choppers returned with their second load -- 1/503 -- the runway was clear. The battalion disembarked, assembled and moved off to the west. For the next load, the choppers brought in the Aussies, who moved off to the north. By this time we were relieved of security for the airstrip and moved off to east of the town.



2/503 off on another combat operation, this one to Vo Dat.

All afternoon C-130's came in and landed on the airstrip, bringing in the artillery, Brigade Headquarters and the other elements of the brigade. By nightfall the entire brigade was in the Vo Dat area except for rear elements left back at Bien Hoa.



C-130 touches down at Vo Dat airstrip.

The next day the 2d Battalion moved south on the road to the abandoned village of Chin Tam #1. For this move we deployed with Headquarters Company and one rifle company on the road, another rifle company about 100 meters off to the right and the other 100 meters to the left. The terrain was fairly open. By early afternoon we had reached the village and set up our base, began sending out patrols and registering defensive artillery concentrations.



2/503 on road to Chin Tam #1.

(continued....)



We stayed there several days, pushing patrols farther and farther out, with no contact. One of the days was Thanksgiving, and a full Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings was flown out to us by our mess back at Vo Dat. A couple of days after Thanksgiving a battalion from the 1st Infantry Division was attached to the 173d and came up by truck convoy through Chin Tam on its way to Vo Dat.



We link-up with the 1st Infantry Division.

The next day the 2d Battalion returned to Vo Dat through the jungle west of the road, encountering no VC along the way. That same day 1/RAR began the next phase of *Operation New Life* by capturing the village of Vo Xu northeast of Vo Dat and the bridge over the La Nga just beyond the village. They encountered some opposition and sustained some casualties in this operation. After nightfall 1/503 crossed the La Nga west of Vo Dat and advanced to the road to Phuoc Lam.



Aussie Engineers repair bridge at Than Duc

As 2/503 closed on the Vo Dat airstrip we were directed to an assembly area north of town and I was directed to report to the Brigade Command Post. There I received orders to cross the La Nga the next morning and capture the village of Than Duc about seven kilometers to the northeast. The main crossing was to be made by two rifle companies mounted in armored personnel carriers (APC's).



Loading APCs for crossing La Nga River.

The APC was designed to replace the halftracks of World War II as an infantry carrier to accompany tanks in an Armored Division. It was a tracked vehicle with one to two inches of armored plating, a ramp in the back for loading and unloading, a turret with a .50 caliber machine gun and rifle firing ports on the sides. It could carry a rifle squad. It could also swim. When driven into water the vehicle floats with the turret and about a foot of the hull above the water. The part of the tracks under water moved backwards, providing forward propulsion, while the track moving forward was above water.

The Aussies, having captured Vo Xu, were in position on the southwest bank of the La Nga. I went over there in my jeep to reconnoiter for possible crossing sites and found that the river was actually about ten feet below the surrounding countryside, with steep banks on both sides, too steep for the APC's. I contacted the Aussies and requested that they find a place in their sector where the APC's could cross, which they agreed to do. Sometime in the afternoon I got a chopper and was able to fly over the area between the river and Than Duc. Later in the evening I received word from the Aussies that they had found a place to cross the river.

(continued....)





Sp4 Macheta next to teakwood Forest Giant.

Early the next morning the two I had a command and control helicopter to companies mounted their APC's and headed to the Aussie sector where they were to be met by a guide. The third company mounted on helicopters, but they were to wait until the APC's were across, then land in a field a few hundred meters south of Than Duc. For the operation observe what was going on. The APC's got to the river to find that there was a way down to the water, but they could not get up the other side there! I told them to go on down the river while I flew down and looked for a place they could get out. So we had a column of about 20 APC's swimming down the river and looking for a way out! I found a place about a mile downstream that looked as though it might work. It was possible for one or two APC's to get out of the water onto a small flat space, but it was not obvious that they could climb the rest of the way up to the field. About that time General Williamson landed nearby with his helicopter. He suggested we unload the troops from a couple of the APC's and have them use their entrenching tools to cut away at the bank above the flat space to make a track up to the field that the APC's could get up. It took time but it got the job done!



Sky Soldier "sailors" crossing Vo Dat River atop APC.

When all the APC's had climbed up to the rice fields, deployed and were ready to go I called the commander of the company in the choppers and told him to Go! They took off and flew to the planned LZ as the APC's approached from the southwest. It turned out that the grass on the LZ was very tall—8 to 10 feet tall. When I flew over the area the afternoon before I could not see that the grass was tall. We had never encountered this before. As the choppers came in the downdraft from their rotors flattened the grass and the troops had no trouble disembarking, but they had a lot of trouble getting off the LZ.

As the troops in the APC's arrived, dismounted and linked up with those from the helicopters, they advanced toward the village against limited opposition. A few shots were fired, and then the opposition fled. We pushed all the way through the village and rounded up all the men of military age, who were sent back by chopper to the District Chief in Vo Dat. Our battalion vehicles, which had been waiting in Vo Xu, joined us, and by nightfall we had set up a perimeter at the south end of the village. We suffered one trooper killed and one wounded in the day's action.

That day the 1st Battalion took Phouc Lam, to the west of our position.

The next day we pushed on to the hamlets of Sung Nhon 1 and 2, again encountering limited opposition. That day our Battalion Surgeon, Doc Carter, set up a medical aid station in one of the few permanent buildings in Than Duc, and the people turned out in droves. They had had no access to the world on the other side of the La Nga for a year, and there was probably not a bar of soap or a spool of thread left in the village. The District Chief also flew in that day to talk to the people. Within a couple of days all the military-aged men who were swept up the first day and had been interrogated found not to be Communists were brought back to the village. That probably did more to gain the support of the people than anything else we did during that period of time.



Doc Carter with young patient in Than Duc

(continued....)



These people were not Communists. They had left North Vietnam in 1954 or '55 to escape Communism, and most of them were Catholics. There was a Catholic church in the village—a permanent building—but there had been no priest for a long time. Fr John McCulloch, the Brigade Catholic Chaplain, visited the battalion every Sunday to say mass on the hood of a jeep.



I suggested that he say mass in the church the following Sunday, while we tried to get word to the people. There was a major problem—Fr McCulloch knew no Vietnamese, and the people knew no English. Further, the people probably knew nothing of the Vatican II changes and expected the mass to be in Latin.



Fr McCulloch & Doc Carter waiting next to jeep in Than Duc

We went ahead with it the following Sunday. Many troops showed up, but only a handful of the villagers, and they were pretty late. Probably no one in the village had a clock, and I learned later that in Vietnam the public signal calling the people to mass was a drum, not a bell, and they had a large one at the church. Father McCulloch said the mass in English, but asked our best Vietnamese interpreter to translate his sermon. I don't know how well that went because it

turned out the interpreter was a Buddhist and probably did not know what Father was talking about.

On the third or fourth day we began sending a company up into the hills to the north of Than Duc for a couple of days of patrolling. When one company returned, another one went up, further each time. They made no contacts, but a guerrilla platoon did come in to Sung Nhon 2 and surrendered.



Mountains north of Than Duc.

After about a week the Vietnamese authorities decided to evacuate all the people from the villages north of the La Nga to a refugee camp on the outskirts of Vo Dat. A convoy of trucks was brought in, and we provided security while the people tore down their houses and loaded them and all their household goods on the trucks. Within a couple of days the area was bare.



Loading up for evacuation of Than Duc.

(continued....)





Evacuation of Than Duc.

The next day the rice harvest began, the real purpose of the whole operation. The people were trucked back out from the refugee camp with all their harvesting tools, unloaded, organized, and set about the task they had been doing every year of their lives. They cut and thrashed and loaded the grain on the trucks, which hauled the grain back to the refugee camp.



2/503 Troopers prepare to protect rice harvest.



Ready to begin harvest.

The following day the harvesters returned to the fields. Then sometime during the day the 173d Airborne Brigade was alerted to prepare to move out the following day for an operation in another area. We began tearing down our camp and moving our vehicles

back to Vo Dat. The people in the area noted this and the word apparently spread to the fields. Soon we noted a growing stream of people walking back down the road toward Vo Dat carrying their harvesting tools. We would not be there providing security for the harvest! By nightfall the harvesters were all gone! A lot of the harvest remained to be cut but wouldn't be. I have always regretted that we did not complete our mission, but I comfort myself that the harvest did not fall to the VC because they did not have the villagers as manpower to cut it.



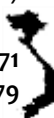
SGM Mish with villager during harvest.

What caused our change of mission was intelligence that enemy forces were massing east of Saigon for a possible offensive during the Christmas holidays. We were picked up by helicopter on December 16 and flown south some 50 or more kilometers into an area known as Courtenay, apparently a former French rubber plantation.



Capt. Carmen Cavezza, Alpha CO, with Maj. Dick Terry, Bn S-3, on Recon to Courtenay.

(continued....)





LTG Heintges, Carmen Cavessa & Fred Henschell at Courtenay.

The area was jungle covered flat land with occasional clearings. The 2d Battalion landed in a large clearing and set up a perimeter defense to the south of the clearing. The next day we began patrolling without making any contact.



Battalion Operations Center at Courtenay, LT Dick Eckert seated on right.

The day after that, December 18, I sent the Reconnaissance Platoon to the east, A Company to the south and B Company West, keeping C Company in camp as a reserve.

At about noon we heard a furious firefight to the east. It took us a while to establish radio contact with the Reconnaissance Platoon. When we did, a private in the platoon reported that the platoon leader, Lieutenant Yatsko, had been killed and the platoon was pinned down. I contacted the C Company Commander and directed him to move to the aid of the Reconnaissance Platoon and engage the enemy force but to be specially watchful for ambushes along the way. I also called the company commanders of A and B Companies and directed them



**Lt. Joseph P. Yatsko, Jr.
KIA 12/18/65**

to return immediately to the battalion perimeter. In the meantime the Artillery Liaison Officer got on the radio with the soldier from the Reconnaissance Platoon and helped him talk in artillery fire support for the platoon. When B Company returned to the perimeter I directed them to follow C Company and, when they got to the site of the firefight, to move up on their right and tie in with them. When A Company got back, I held them in reserve in the battalion perimeter.

When C Company reached the site of the action they found the enemy well-fortified in probably company strength and with many snipers in the trees. They relieved the Reconnaissance Platoon, which pulled back to the battalion perimeter, bringing Lt Yatsko's body with them. C Company dug in and waited for B Company to come up, while trading fire with the enemy. B Company got there late in the afternoon and moved into position on C Company's right. The two companies tried an assault, but it was unsuccessful with many casualties, including the B Company Commander, Captain Bob Warfield. The companies pulled back and tried to reestablish a line, but the enemy had gotten between them. By this time it was dark.

I was following this action from a command and control helicopter. When I learned of the failure of the assault and of the enemy between the two units, I decided to pull the two companies back to the battalion perimeter, bringing their casualties with them. General Williamson was not happy with this decision, but he accepted it.

The artillery kept up fire on the enemy positions throughout the withdrawal. With all the wounded who had to be carried, it took at least three hours to get the troops back to the perimeter, and even then a handful of men got lost in the dark and were not found until the next morning.

In all, the battalion suffered 5 dead and 38 wounded that day, including one officer dead and five wounded. Bob Warfield suffered a wound to his back which cut the muscles but did not penetrate his torso. He had to be carried out but was back to full duty within a month.

2/503 Troopers KIA, 12/18/65

Robert Allen Gray, SGT, 25, C Co.

Sammie Griffin, PFC, 18, C Co.

Daniel J. Gulmet, PFC, 19, C Co.

Joseph Paul Yatsko, Jr., 1LT, 23, HHC/Recon

Richard W. Peterson, PFC, 19, C Co.

(continued....)





General Williamson decorates Bob Warfield and other troopers at Camp Zinn for valor during combat action.

The next day the full battalion returned to the site of the previous day's battle. The enemy had disappeared but left signs of many casualties. The day after that we loaded up on choppers and flew back to Bien Hoa for a Christmas break.



Outdoor theatre at Camp Zinn is completed.

Over the holidays we had an interesting diversion. Actually B Company did. That fall of 1965 *Playboy* Magazine offered a special subscription incentive. If anyone bought a lifetime subscription, a *Playboy* Bunny would personally deliver it. One of the troopers in B Company persuaded several of his buddies to pitch in enough money to buy a lifetime subscription for B Company and asked that it be delivered to the company in Vietnam by a Bunny.

The magazine saw this as a wonderful opportunity for publicity, and MACV saw it as a great morale booster. The young lady, *Playboy* Playmate of the Year, Miss Jo Collins, arrived in country just about the time we got back from Countenay. She was billeted in Saigon and was brought out to B Company the next day and spent several days with the company, talking with the troops, visiting the wounded in a hospital and returning to Saigon at night. She then took off on an extended tour of military units all over Vietnam, promising to return to B Company before she returned to the United States in late January.



G.I. Jo with B/2/503's Lt. Jack Price and troops in January.
(See *Playboy* story about G.I. Jo in Issue 70 of our Newsletter)

The Christmas season was quiet. I guess if the VC had planned an attack over the holidays, we had spoiled it at Courtenay. We were visited by General Johnson, the Army Chief of Staff, and on the day of New Years Eve, the comedian Bob Hope visited Bien Hoa Air Base with a troop of entertainers who put on a great show for us. Hope had been doing this at Christmas since World War II, and the troops really appreciated it. I think most of the troops from the 173d as well as soldiers and airmen from most of the American units in the Bien Hoa area attended the show.



Bob Hope entertaining troops at Bien Hoa AFB, Dec. '65.



Troops enjoying the show.

[Photos from Col. Dexter collection]

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Walnut Creek: Mother of slain soldier suffers loss of cherished ring

By Sam Richards | December 29, 2016

Eml: srichards@bayareanewsgroup.com

Web: www.eastbaytimes.com/2017/01/01/veterans-in-need-theyve-got-friends-indeed/

Army veteran's family ring stolen from mausoleum



WALNUT CREEK – A family gold ring was one of the last things Drew Langevin shared with his son Sean, who was killed fighting in Afghanistan in 2007. On Christmas Day, Sean's mom and Drew's widow, Roxane, was crushed to learn it had been stolen from the mausoleum that houses Sean's remains.

"It was Sean's ring, but even more significant is that it's something his dad did for Sean," said Roxane Langevin, of Walnut Creek. *"My husband would have just been devastated."*

Drew Langevin died in August 2015 after a long illness.



A family crest ring much like this one was stolen from a mausoleum containing the ashes of Army Cpl. Sean Langevin of Walnut Creek.

Contra Costa sheriff's detectives are investigating the theft from the mausoleum at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in unincorporated Lafayette, which Roxane and other family members noticed and reported following a Christmas Day visit. It was taken from a "niche," a small display space within the mausoleum that contains — behind locked glass — the urn containing Sean's ashes, some photos, other mementos and the crest ring.

Corporal Sean Langevin, a member of the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade, was 23 when he and five other American soldiers were killed in November 2007 in an ambush-style attack in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan about 40 miles from the Pakistani border. The 2002 graduate of Concord's Ygnacio Valley High School left behind a new wife, an unborn daughter, a brother and his parents. He was interred, with full military honors, at Queen of Heaven.

The ring is 14-karat gold, and Roxane figures it's worth \$500 to \$700 for whoever would be tempted to sell it, or worse, melt it down. For her, its worth cannot be measured.

"It's more the sentimental value than anything," said Roxane, noting that while several similar rings were made for family members, the one that was stolen has added meaning, given that both Sean and Drew are now gone. *"It's something that was connected to both of them,"* she said.

Roxane Langevin has suffered through not only the deaths of her son and husband but also cancer treatments starting in 2011. The discovery of the missing ring on Sunday was also a huge blow, she said. *"It's the memory behind the ring more than anything,"* she said. *"It's a violation of Sean and what he's done for our country. He died for our country."*

Queen of Heaven Cemetery is a ministry of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Oakland. Helen Osman, a spokeswoman for the diocese, said the mausoleums there lack security cameras, as well as electricity. *"They're always looking at how they can improve and enhance their security measures,"* Osman said Thursday.

There are no suspects in the theft, Contra Costa County sheriff's spokesman Jimmy Lee said. Anyone with information can contact the Sheriff's Office at 925-313-2600. For any tips, call 866-846-3592 to leave an anonymous voice message or email tips@so.cccounty.us

Roxane Langevin, who was the keynote speaker at Walnut Creek's 2014 Memorial Day ceremony, said, *"All I ask is that the ring come back to us."*

[Printed here courtesy of Mr. Sam Richards and Bay Area News Group]



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Sky Soldier, Bravo Bull, RTO, World Series Champ

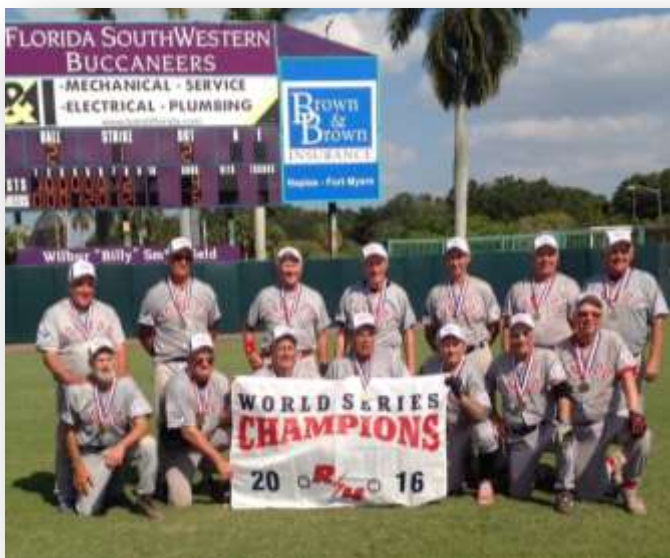
November 20, 2016

All youse guys:

Here's a team picture of our 70+ Roy Hobbs World Series Championship Team in Ft. Myers, Florida last week, and a pic of the wives, at City of Palms Stadium. Marilyn Paladino is 2nd from the left.

Enjoyed the games and the win.

Larry Paladino
B/2/503



5th from left in front row is our own RTO, Larry Paladino.

"They thought if only Larry could get a whack at that. They'd put up even money now, with Larry at the bat!"



Larry's bride, Marilyn, is second from the left.

A Buddy Remembers His Buddy



Ranger Dan Reed, A/2/503, '68-'70, in front of his Sky Soldier "bunker" in the mountains.



On the face of Dan's cabin, he honors the memory of his buddy, Mike Kelly.

Michael Dennis Kelly

Staff Sergeant

C Co., 2nd Bn, 22nd Inf Rgt, 25th Inf Div

Army of the United States

29 March 1949 - 6 August 1969

Big Rapids, MI

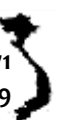


LEST WE FORGET



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Vet Tix: A Navy Veteran's way of honoring those who served



Eight years ago, I was thrilled to attend Super Bowl XLII, which pitted the New York Giants against the New England Patriots in Glendale, Arizona. Before the game, I watched with pride as the military color guard marched on the field, but as soon as they were done, I watched them march off the field and continue right out of the stadium. Though they were an integral part of the pomp and circumstance, those Servicemembers did not get to stay to watch the game.

After making that observation, I became aware of a number of empty seats scattered throughout the stadium. Throughout the game, I continued to think about how much it would have meant to me to be able to sit in one of those seats during my time as a young sailor, and how much every single one of America's Servicemembers and Veterans would probably enjoy sitting in those empty seats, too. So, I decided to do something to fill those seats.



Since making that decision, it's been amazing to see Vet Tix grow into a substantial organization that is a major part of the Veteran and military communities. Today, more than 475,000 verified Veterans and Servicemembers have officially registered as Vet Tixers and are able to enter lotteries for tickets through the Tickets for Troops program, or apply for the experience of a lifetime through Hero's Wish. Vet Tix has provided more than 2.5 million tickets for events across the country ranging from college and professional sports to concerts and theater performances.

Not only are we providing Veterans with exciting experiences, but we're employing Veterans, too. I'm proud to say that two-thirds of our employees are either Veterans or military family members.

I was born into a military family. Both of my grandfathers saw action during World War II and my father served in the Air Force during the Vietnam era. I have seen firsthand the challenges families and Servicemembers face during extended absences, whether they are overseas, here at home, in combat or in training. But I've also seen the joy that reunions bring, the invaluable skills gained through service, and the incredible bonds created through military brother and sisterhood.

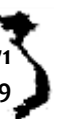
That experience directly inspired me to found the non-profit Veteran Tickets Foundation — Vet Tix — with the goal of giving free tickets to Servicemembers and Veterans to help them relax, strengthen relationships and connect with their communities.



Army Veteran Phillip Taves at a NCAA football game.

I know in my heart that to many Vet Tixers and their families, the Tickets for Troops program is about much more than just getting tickets and enjoying a fun night out; it's a way that they can connect with their families, communities, and even their military brothers and sisters. Vet Tix also has the potential to provide members with opportunities to heal or battle through hidden wounds that may be present. We're doing more than just thanking Veterans on Veterans Day; we're supporting them year round, ensuring that every day is a Veterans day.

(continued....)



One of our Vet Tixers, Army Veteran Phillip Taves, recently attended a NCAA football game between the Washington Huskies and Colorado Buffaloes on Dec. 6. Taves was able to not only enjoy a night out with his family, but also connect back to the military community. He wrote to us that, *"My kids and I really enjoyed the game a lot. There were a number of other Vets sitting nearby and we all had a good chance to talk about various military issues and remember the good old days while watching a game."*

In addition to Tickets for Troops, Vet Tix provides customized opportunities for those who have shouldered the hardest burdens of military service. Severely wounded Veterans, families of men and women killed in action, and recently deployed active duty personnel can apply for the Hero's Wish program, in which we actively fundraise to help send them to an event that is high on their personal bucket list.

One of my most favorite Hero's Wish stories is that of Army First Lt. Moses Woo. Woo recently had his wish filled after returning home from Afghanistan and received coveted tickets to the smash hit musical *Hamilton*.



"Hamilton is a show is about one of our founding fathers, and his successes. He had the ability to leave St. Croix, join the military, become a statesman, and one of our treasury secretaries," Woo wrote us in requesting a Hero's Wish. *"My family has supported me through all the training, deployment, and time away from home. Most recently, I did a tour to Afghanistan and it really took a toll on my parents in terms of worrying and being separated from me. I would just like to treat them to something nice and to show them how the sacrifices can also be rewarding. Alexander Hamilton's sacrifices also allowed him to be successful and to be one of our great founding fathers, and I'd like to show my family this great man's experience,"* he said.

So, you might be thinking, *"What's the catch?"* There isn't one. Vet Tix was created by members of our military and Veteran communities, for our military and Veteran communities, and all Vet Tix events are made possible by donations from sponsors, partner organizations, and regular people just like you and me.

You can learn more about our work and sign up to become a Vet Tixer by visiting www.VetTix.org



Michael A Focareto, III is Vet Tix's chief executive officer, founder, and president of the board. He is a disabled Veteran of the U.S. Navy (1988-1992) serving during the first Gulf War. Michael was a Naval Nuclear Engineer aboard the USS Virginia (CGN-38).

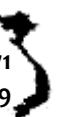
Source:

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs release.
Posted Tuesday, December 20, 2016, 3:24 pm, December 20, 2016, Honoring Vets by Vantage.**

Mike's former ride, the USS Virginia



"The USS Virginia (CGN-38) was a nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser, the lead ship of her class, and the eighth ship of the United States Navy to be named for the Commonwealth of Virginia. It was commissioned in 1976 and decommissioned in 1994. In December 1990, Virginia deployed to the Mediterranean in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Most of the six-month deployment was spent in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. There she commanded a strike group of four vessels including a destroyer (USS Spruance) and 2 SSNs (USS Pittsburgh and USS Philadelphia). In January 1991, she fired two Tomahawk cruise missiles from the Mediterranean to Iraq, which was at the time the longest combat firing of a Tomahawk. She also directed the launching of four other Tomahawks from the two submarines in the task group. She was decommissioned and stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 29 November 1994. Virginia entered the Navy's Nuclear-Powered Surface Ship and Submarine Recycling Program on 31 March 1999."



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind 2017 ~



All The Way!



Snowbird Reunion, 101st Airborne,

February 8-12, 2017, Marriott Westshore, Tampa, FL.

Contact:

George Buck

Web: www.101abnfgcc.org

Phone: 727-823-6970



3rd Brigade LRRP, 101st Airborne Division

Reunion, March 15-18, 2017, Fort Benning, GA.

Contact:

Dr. Rick Shoup

Phn: 978-505-3253 or 978-371-7108

Eml: rfs.concord@gmail.com



1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Association 2017

Reunion, May 2-5, 2017, Hampton Inn and Suites, Phenix City, AL.

Contact:

Web: www.ichiban1.org/html/reunion.htm



Firebase Airborne Reunion, May 12-14, 2017,

Nashville, TN.

Contact:

<http://beardedarmenian.wix.com/fsbairborne>



173d Airborne Association 2017 Reunion, hosted by Chapter 18, May 17-20, 2017, Oklahoma City, OK.

Contact:

Web: Skysoldier.net



4/503rd, 173d Airborne Brigade will have a

Reunion Dinner on Friday May 19, 2017, Renaissance Hotel during the 173d Airborne Reunion in Oklahoma City.

Contact:

Peyton Ligon

Eml: pligon3392@aol.com

Phn: 205-746-5586



Delta Co., 2nd Bn, 8th Cavalry (Airborne), 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), 2017 D.C. Reunion,

May 17-21, 2017 Crowne Plaza Dulles Airport.

Contact:

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.

Web: www.angryskipperassociation.org



118th Military Police Company (Airborne)

Association, June 2-4, 2017, Fort Bragg, NC.

Contact:

Web: www.118thmpcoabnassn.com/home.html



Casper Aviation Platoon Reunion, June 19-22,

Nashville, TN.

Contact

Web: www.casperplatoon.com/Reunion2017.htm



173d Airborne Reunion in Vicenza, Italy, July 4-

10, 2017, hosted by Chapter 173.

Contact:

Web: Skysoldier.net



2017 National Convention, The 100th Anniversary of the formation of the 82nd All American Division,

Orlando Chapter, August 9-13, 2017, Rosen Center, Orlando, FL.

Contact:

Web: www.paratrooperdz.com/2017-convention-registration/2017reg



2/501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Abn

Reunion is being planned to celebrate our departure to South Vietnam 50 years ago. December 13, 2017. Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, NC.



11th Airborne Division Association Reunion, to be held in Boulder, CO. Dates to be named.



B/2/501st Reunion 2017, Great Falls, MT. Dates to be determined.

Contact:

Web: <http://b2501airborne.com/reunion.htm>



509th Parachute Infantry Association Reunion 2017, Shreveport, LA.

Contact Web:

<http://509thgeronimo.org/reunions/freunions.html>

NOTE:

If you are aware of any upcoming "Airborne" or attached unit reunions, please send complete details to rto173d@cfl.rr.com for inclusion in our newsletter.



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173d Airborne Brigade 2017 Italy Reunion Information

Chapter 173 is looking forward to hosting the "Sky Soldier Festa Italiana " in Vicenza, Italy from Tuesday July 4, 2017 thru Saturday July 10, 2017.

The 2017 Italy Reunion will be a little different than others in that the registration fee is only \$99.00 per person instead of the \$173.00 per person. This is restricting several things that have always been done. We will not be having a "goodie" bag when you sign in. The purpose is to lower the registration fee to encourage larger attendance. In the past, a lot of members complained that they didn't want a t-shirt or a challenge coin or a coffee mug or a baseball cap, etc., so we have made those items optional for those that would like to purchase them in addition to the basic \$99.00 reg. fee.

You are all invited to come celebrate the 100th Birthday of the 173rd Infantry Brigade. We will also be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Slopes, Dak To, and Junction City. 2017 also marks the 10th year anniversary of The Herd's deployment into AO N2KL, Afghanistan. The celebration will take place in Vicenza, Italy at the Vergilius Business Resort and Spa and on Caserma Del Din, home to nearly 3500 Sky Soldiers.

Vicenza is a city in northeastern Italy. It is in the Veneto region at the northern base of the Monte Berico, where it straddles the Bacchiglione River. Vicenza is approximately 37 miles west of Venice and 120 miles east of Milan. Vicenza is a thriving and cosmopolitan city, with a rich history and culture, many museums, art galleries, piazzas, villas, churches and elegant Renaissance palazzi. With the Palladian Villas of the Veneto in the surrounding area, and his renowned Teatro Olimpico (Olympic Theatre), the "city of Palladio" has been enlisted as UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1994.

Spaced-Available (Space-A) Travel is a privilege that may offer substantial savings for your leisure travel plans: www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/
REMINDER TO ALL SPACE-A TRAVELERS: Please be aware that travelers must to be prepared to cover commercial travel expenses if Space-A flights are changed or become unavailable. Per DODI 4515.13, Section 4, Paragraph 4.1.a, Reservations; there is no guarantee of transportation, and reservations will not be accepted or made for any space-available traveler. The DoD is not obligated to continue an individual's travel or return the individual to the point of origin or any other point. Travelers should have sufficient personal funds to pay for commercial transportation, lodging, and other expenses if space-available transportation is not available. ALL ASSOCIATED EXPENSES ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TRAVELER.

More information at:

<https://www.skysoldier.net/2017-Italy-Reunion-Information>



Contact:

www.cowboy6.com/cowboy/reunion/2017reuniondetails.pdf

- - - - -

Ben Vandervoort Chapter Mid-Winter Weekend Getaway February 23-26, 2017 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



100 years of the 82nd Division. Come join us to start this years' celebration of 100 years of history of the Division. Join us for this fun mid-winter break, luxury accommodations at fantastic rates - rooms from \$100 (available 3 day pre/post event dates), and great amenities.

You can't beat it for value.

Make your hotel reservations 888-511-5086

<http://cwp.marriott.com/>

or go to:

hhhgr/82ndairborne/

Hosted by Ben Vandervoort Chapter.

Call or email Bill Eberleif to register or if you require transportation from Savannah Airport: 843 682 417, airborneben@hargray.com



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173d Airborne Association Membership Application Form

PLEASE PRINT AND FILL-OUT THIS APPLICATION

Mail Application and Payments to;

Please **circle** the appropriate boxes below

Membership Secretary, Dennis Hill
97 Earle Street
Norwood, MA 02062-1504

Make checks payable to:
173d Airborne Brigade Assn

New	Renewal	Change of Address, <i>Change of Chapter</i>	
Annual Membership			
Ends on 31 December of each year - \$ 24.00			
Regular *		Associate	
Sky Soldier	Veteran	Gold Star	Spouse of deceased Sky Soldier
Life Membership \$ 173.00			
Regular *		Gold Star (Parent or Spouse)	

**Regular Membership open to those assigned or attached to the 173d Airborne Brigade*

Please print current or updated information below:

Service Number (B446349): _____
(Use first Letter of last name and last 6 of service number)

First Name: _____ Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State or AE: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

173d Service Dates (02/2003-02/2005): _____

Unit while with the 173d: (A-1-503rd or Co A/Support BN): _____

Chapter Affiliated to: (4, 18, At Large): _____ Send Magazine: [] U.S Mail or [] Via Email

Gold Star Relationship (Wife, Mother)(PFC Mike Smith 11-08-67): _____

My Email address: _____

After we receive your payment (\$ 24.00 or \$ 173.00), please allow two weeks for processing.



Please make check payable to:
173d Airborne Brigade Assn.

Mail Application & Check to:
Membership Secretary, Dennis Hill
97 Earle Street
Norwood, MA 02062-1504





An Airborne Farewell to Our 173d & 503rd Buddies We Know Of Who Took Their Final Jump in 2016



“Rest Easy With the Warriors, and All the Way Troopers!”

Billy Two Moons Aenoheso
173d Abn Bde

John L. Albrittain, Jr.
173d Abn Bde

Jerome L. Beckrest
503rd PRCT, WWII

Horace Milton (Mel) Bell
173d LRP

John Edward Bernard
173d Abn Bde

Eddy E. Birdwell
173d Abn Bde

Nelson M. Bishop
173d Abn Bde

Robert Nels Blomstrand
1/503

COL Richard H. “Rawhide” Boland
CO 1/503

Colonel Stanley G. Bonta
CO 2/503, Ft. Campbell

Richard Booker
173d Abn Bde

Arthur W. Borr
1/50th

Charles (Chuck) E. Breit
503rd PRCT WWII

Michael Broderick
B/2/503

Lloyd E. Burton, III
173d Abn Bde

LTC Robert B. (Bob) Carmichael
Bn CO/XO 2/503

Lewis “Louie” M. Chappell
C/2/503

John Elbert Cruse
173d Abn Bde

Officer Nicolette Dayan Clara
173d Abn Bde

Bobby Cordova
C/4/503

Don Dali
173d Abn Bde

Wayne Kenneth English
HHC/2/503

Russell Clark Faulkner, III
173d Abn Bde

Paul David Gentry
173d Abn Bde

Eton Gilmore
173d Abn Bde

Robert Edward Grace, Sr.
503rd PRCT, WWII

Bradd Gray
173d Abn Bde

Stuart Wayne Hall, Sr.
173d Abn Bde

Glenn N. Hampton
173d Abn Bde

Barry “Bear” Hart
C/2/503

Dr. Erich Harth
503rd PRCT, WWII

Myron Ken Hayashida
173d Abn Bde

James MacArthur Holland
173d Abn Bde

COL Larry Jackley
4/503 Bn CO

Michael Lynn Jackson
173d Abn Bde

Norman W. Jenkins, Sr.
173d Abn Bde/75th Rangers

Michael R. Johnson
173d Abn Bde

Michael Merle Jordan
173d Abn Bde

Francis Michael Kanicki
173d Abn Bde

P. Donald Kauffman
173d Abn Bde

Nelson Allen Keyes
173d Abn Bde

William (Bill) Kinney
Caspers Aviation Platoon



(sadly continued....)



David W. Klutts
173d Abn Bde

James William Lakatos
4/503

David Tavaréz Lauriano
173d Abn Bde

John Leach, Jr.
A/2/503

Joseph H. Lear, III
A/4/503

Thomas "Tupu" Lloyd Lesemann
173d Abn Bde

Keith Lincoln
173d Abn Bde

Norman "Bud" Robert Louis
173d Abn Bde

Michael A. Malone
173d Abn Bde

Burl Willis Martin
503rd PRCT, WWII

Donald L. McCray
173d Abn Bde

Thomas MacNeil
173d Abn Bde

LTC David A. Milton
Recon, CO A/2/503

John Michael Morgan
E/1/503

James Patrick "Pat" Murphy
173d Abn Bde

Joseph John Oliverio
4/503

COL William T. Palmer
173d LRRP

Felix Aguilar Pascua, Jr.
173d Abn Bde

James Elliot Peterson
503rd PRCT, WWII

Samuel Leonard Pons
503rd PRCT, WWII

Gregory Kent Pullen, Sr.
173d Abn Bde

Robert King Raymond
503rd Inf Reg

John "Jack" J. Reed, Jr.
173d Abn Bde

Raymond Earl Reynolds
173d Abn Bde

Victor J. Rivera, Jr.
173d Abn Bde

Lawrence Steven Scott
C/2/503

Ron Sedlak
A/2/503

John H. Seyle, III
173d Abn Bde

E. Dean Shaw
HHC/E/4/503

Roberta C. (Cis) Sigholtz
Fmr Spouse of Col. Bob Sigholtz

Thomas R. Simmons
173d Abn Bde

Joseph L. Skladzien
173d Abn Bde

Reverend Billy Thomas Smith
503rd PRCT, WWII

Col. Harold "Hank" Snow
173d Abn Bde

Michael Edward Sparks
173d Abn Bde

John C. Swain
173d Abn Bde

Rickie Gene Tabor
173d Abn Bde

James Kevin Tarpein
173d Abn Bde

Ronald C. Theobold
173d Abn Bde

Leroy Thompson
B/4/503

Nelson "Nikk" Thompson
173d Abn Bde

Robert L. Todi
173d Abn Bde

William J. Unzicker
173d Abn Bde

Melvin Joseph Valasek
1/50th

Jonathan E. Walden
173d Abn Bde

John Carl Walsh
173d Abn Bde

Donovan Elsworth Wasson
503rd PRCT, WWII

William R. Whealy
173d Abn Bde

Thomas Irvin Whelan
173d Abn Bde

Raymond E. Wood
173d Abn Bde

Dennis Wai Tien Young
173d Abn Bde



Command-In-Chief's Farewell Address to Military

January 4, 2017

President Obama commended Defense Secretary Ash Carter, General Joseph Dunford, General Paul Selva, Vice President Joe Biden and the members of Congress for their work throughout his presidency.

"I can stand before you today and say that there has been no greater privilege and no greater honor, than serving as commander-in-chief of the greatest military in the history of the world," the President said.



"Thank you so much, thank you. Thank you. Please be seated. Good afternoon. Turns out these were easier when you're talking about somebody else. (Laughter)

In moments like this, I think of all the times that I've stood before our men and women in uniform; commissioning our newest officers, presiding over promotions, presenting the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy to the best football team in the military. I will let you argue over that one. (Laughter) I have never taken sides.

Secretary Carter, I could not be more grateful for your gracious words, but more importantly for your outstanding leadership across, as you noted, more than three decades and nearly all of my presidency. You have always given me, Ash, your best strategic council, you've made sure that we were investing in innovation for the long-term and a strong force for the future. As a physicist, Ash is also one of the few people who actually understands how our defense systems work. And I know that our troops and their families are immensely grateful for the compassion that you and Stephanie have shown them over the years. So to you and your family on behalf of all of us, thank you for your outstanding service. (Applause)

General Dunford, we've relied on you as commandant of the Marine Corps, as our commander in Afghanistan and now as our nation's highest-ranking military officer. I thank you and General Selva and the entire Joint Chiefs for the unvarnished military advice that you've always provided to me, for your dedication, for your professionalism, for your integrity. Because of you, because of this team, our armed forces are more integrated and better prepared across domains, a truly

joint force. Which is why as a White Sox fan, I can overlook the fact that you love the Red Sox. (Laughter)

Moreover, on a personal note, outside of your professional qualities, you are a good man and I'm grateful to have worked with you. And thank Ellen for allowing you to do this. (Applause)

To members of Congress, Vice President Biden, who along with Jill has known the love and the pride and the sacrifice of a military family, to Deputy Secretary Work, service secretaries, distinguished guests, dedicated civilians from across the Defense Department, my national security team, most of all our men and women in uniform. I thank you for this (inaudible) and for the warmth and respect that you've always shown me. The support that you've shown Michelle and our daughters during these past eight years. And so, although, I recognize that the formalities require me listening to praise directed in large part to me, I want to turn the tables. I am still commander-in-chief and so I get to do what I want to do, and I want to thank you.

Of all the privileges of this office, and there are many, I will miss Air Force One, I will miss Marine One. (Laughter) But I can stand before you today and say that there has been no greater privilege and no greater honor, than serving as commander-in-chief of the greatest military in the history of the world. (Applause)

When I took office, I noted that presidents and those of you in uniform, swear a similar oath, to protect and defend this country and the Constitution that we cherish. By stepping forward and volunteering, by raising your right hand and taking that oath, each of you made a solemn pledge. You committed yourself to a life of service and of sacrifice.

And I in turn, made a promise to you, which to the best of my abilities I tried to uphold every single day since. That I would only send you into harm's way when it was absolutely necessary, with a strategy and well defined goals, with the equipment and support that you needed to get the job done. Because that's what you rightfully expect and that is what you rightfully deserve. I made that pledge at a time when less than one percent of Americans wear the uniform. Fewer Americans know someone who serves. And as a result, a lot of Americans don't see the sacrifices you make on our behalf, but as commander-in-chief, I do. I've seen it when I look into the eyes of young cadets knowing that my decisions could very well send them into harm's way.

(continued....)



I've seen it when I visited the field in Bagram and Baghdad, far from your families. Risking your lives so that we can live ours safely and in freedom. And so you've inspired me and I've been humbled by you consistently.

And I want every American to know what I know, through year after year after year of continuous military operations, you have earned your place among the greatest generations. The list of accomplishments that Joe and Ash so generously mentioned, they are because of you. It's what I tell my staff, I'm the front man, but you're the ones doing the work.

Because of you, our alliances are stronger, from Europe to the Asia-Pacific. Because of you we surged in Afghanistan, trained Afghan forces to defend their country, while bringing most of our troops home. Today our forces serve there on a more limited mission because we must never again allow Afghanistan to be used for safe haven in attacks against our nation.

It's because of you, particularly our remarkable Special Forces, that the core al-Qaida leadership that attacked us on 9/11 has been disseminated. Countless terrorist leaders, including Osama bin Laden are gone. From South Asia to Africa, we have forged partnerships to go after terrorists that threaten us.

Because of you we are leading the global coalition against ISIL. These terrorists have lost about half of their territory. They are losing their leaders, towns and cities are being liberated and I have no doubt this barbaric terrorist group will be destroyed because of you. You've shown that when it comes to fighting terrorism we can be strong and we can be smart. Not by letting our forces get dragged into sectarian conflicts and civil wars but with smart, sustainable, principal partnerships. That's how we brought most of our troops home from nearly 180,000 troops in Iraq and Afghanistan down to 15,000 today. That's how, even as we've suffered terrible attacks here at home, from Boston to Orlando, no foreign terrorist organization successfully planned and executed an attack on our homeland these past eight years.

Because of you, the world has seen the awesome reach of American armed forces. And in the first few weeks of my job when Somali pirates took Captain Phillips, later on when they kidnapped Jessica Buchanan, it was you that went in and you that risked everything, and you that brought these Americans home. The world has seen your compassion. The help you delivered in times of crisis from an earthquake in Haiti to the tsunami in Japan.

Think of Ebola and the countless lives this armed forces saved in West Africa. It was you that set up the architecture and set the example for the world's

response. One woman in West Africa said, we thanked God first and then we thanked America second for caring about us. That's the difference you make — you continue to make, in the lives of people around the world.

As you know well with service comes great sacrifice, and after 15 years of war, our wounded warriors bear the scars, both seen and unseen. In my visits to their bed sides and rehab centers, I have been in awe watching a wounded warrior grab his walker and pull himself up and through excruciating pain, take a step and then another.

Or hearing troops describe how they grapple with post traumatic stress but summon the strength to ask for help. As a military and as a nation, we have to keep supporting our resilient and incredibly strong wounded warriors as they learn how to walk and run and heal. As they find new ways to keep serving our nation, they need to know that we still need your incredible talents. You've given so much to America and I know you have more to give. And then you have not seen the depths of true love and true patriotism until you've been to Dover, when our troops receive our fallen heroes on their final journey home. Until you have grieved with our gold star families who have given a piece of their heart to our nation, a son or a daughter, a father or mother, husband or wife, a brother or sister, everyone a patriot. Every single one of these American families deserves the everlasting gratitude and support of our entire nation.

Today after two major ground wars, our armed forces have drawn down. And that is natural and it is necessary. And after reckless budget cuts of sequester we need to improve the readiness and training and modernizing of our forces. So let me take this opportunity while I still have it to appeal to our friends from Congress who are here, we cannot go back to sequestration. Thus there is a responsible way forward, investing in America's strengths, our national security and our economic security. Investing in the reform and the equipment and the support that our troops need, including the pay and the benefits and the quality of life and the education and the jobs that our troops and our veterans and all of your families deserve.

But make no mistake, even with the challenges of recent years, and there have been challenges...our allies and adversaries alike understand America's military remains by far the most capable fighting force on the face of the earth.

(continued....)



Our Army, tested by years of combat, is the best-trained and best-equipped land force on the planet. Our Navy is the largest and most lethal in the world, on track to surpass 300 ships. Our Air Force, with its precision and reach, is unmatched. Our Marine Corps is the world's only truly expeditionary force. Our Coast Guard is the finest in the world.

And we're also the best because this military has come to welcome the talents of more of our fellow Americans. Servicemembers can now serve the country they love without hiding who they are... (Audio Gap) ... open to women. And Joe Biden and I know that women are at least as strong as men. We're stronger for it. It's one of the reasons that our military stands apart as the most respected institution in our nation by a mile. The American people... (Applause)... the American people look up to you and your devotion to duty and your integrity and your sense of honor and your commitment to each other.

One of my proudest achievements is that I have been able to I think communicate through the constant partisan haze along with so many others how special this institution is. And the esteem in which our military is held has held steady and constant and high throughout my presidency. And I'm very grateful for that. Because you remind us that we are united as a one team. At times of division, you've shown what it means to pull together.

So my days as your commander-in-chief are coming to an end, and as I reflect on the challenges we have faced together and on those to come, I believe that one of the greatest tasks before our armed forces is to retain the high confidence that the American people rightly place in you. This is a responsibility not simply for those of you in uniform, but for those who lead you. It's the responsibility of our entire nation.

And so we are called to remember core principles that we must never hesitate to act when necessary to defend our nation, but we must also never rush into war because sending you into harm's way should be a last and not first resort. It should be compelled by the needs of our security and not our politics.

We need to remember that we must not give in to the false illusion of isolationism because in this dangerous time, oceans alone will not protect us and the world still seeks and needs our leadership as the one indispensable nation. We have to remember that our military has to be prepared for the full spectrum of threats, conventional and unconventional, from 20th century-style aggression to 21st century-style cyber threats.

And when we do go to war, we have to hold ourselves to high standards and do everything in our

power to prevent the loss of innocent life because that's what we stand for. That's what we should stand for. We have to remember that as we meet the threats of our times, we cannot sacrifice our values or our way of life — the rule of law and openness and tolerance that defines us as Americans. That is our greatest strength and makes us a beacon to the world. We cannot sacrifice the very freedoms that we're fighting for.

And finally, in our democracy, the continued strength of our all-volunteer force also rests on something else; the strong bond of respect and trust between those in uniform and the citizens that you protect and defend at a time when too few Americans truly understand the realities or sacrifices of military service, at a time when many political leaders have not served. If some in the military begin to feel as though somehow they are apart from the larger society they serve, those bonds can fray. As every generation learns anew, freedom is not free.

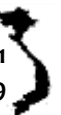
And so while less than one percent of Americans may be fighting our wars, 100 percent of Americans can (inaudible) at the very least to support you and your families. Everybody can do something, every business, every profession, every school, every community, every state to reach out and to give back and to let you know that we care to help make the lives of our troops and your families just a little bit easier. Everybody can do something.

And that's why Michelle and Jill Biden have mobilized more Americans to honor and support you and your families through joining forces and that's why even after we leave the White House, Michelle and I intend to keep on looking for ways to help rally more of our fellow citizens to be there for you, just like you've always been there for us.

So we can't say it enough and we can't show it enough. Thank you for your patriotism. Thank you for your professionalism. Thank you for your character in representing the very best of the American spirit. Our nation endures, we live free under the red, white and blue because of patriots like you. It has been a privilege of a lifetime to serve with you. I have learned much from you. I'm a better man having worked with you. I'm confident that the United States and our armed forces will remain the greatest force for freedom and security that the world has ever known.

God bless you and your families and God bless the United States of America."

Farewell Commander-In-Chief



Long live the Commander-In-Chief....



President Donald John Trump
2017

