

SKY SOLDIER

Newsletter of
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF
THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE



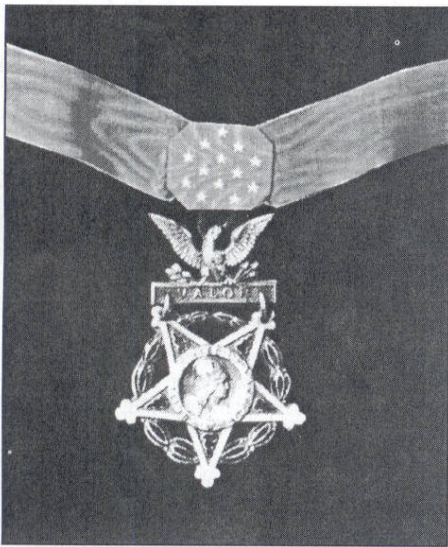
Winter 1999

President — Timothy R. Stout
Vice-President — Russ Roever

Secretary — Jim Healy
Treasurer — Dave Miller

Editor — Charles R. Shay

Vol. XV, No. 1



In the presence of his wife Carol and his two children, at a ceremony attended by Cabinet members, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, miscellaneous military and civilian brass, men of his platoon, and numerous Sky Soldiers, the President of the United States placed the coveted Medal of Honor around Alfred Rascon's neck for the heroic actions he performed 34 years ago.



**Alfred Rascon receiving The Medal Of Honor from President Clinton
February 8, 2000.**

Award Citation and story on pages 9-12.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On February 8, 2000, Al Rascon was presented with the Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony and before over 180 guests, members of Congress, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Shelton.

Also present were members of Al's original recon platoon who were with him on that day when Al performed his heroic deeds. Al, in his quiet and modest manner emphasized to the people assembled before him, and to the Nation that he was no hero. Al we respectfully have to disagree with you. Al Rascon's citation appears in this issue. Congratulations and Thank You.

The Society continues to move forward into an era where there will be more electronic communications (computer E-mail) between National and the members. I have initiated a test questionnaire on the Society web site. There are three hypothetical questions that allow the reader to answer with a yes and no answer. In the near future there will be an opportunity for the respondent to send in suggestions and recommendations as well. If you are on line, check the web page and send in your answers. The results will be released at the reunion.

A provisional chapter (26) was formed in New Orleans and Calvin Hickerson was elected chapter president. A Welcome to the Chapter and the Chapter News column appearing in this issue contain further information about the new Chapter. Members are already talking about a reunion in the "Big Easy" and not during Mardi Gras. Welcome to the society.

Chapter IV (Philadelphia) is being reformed and will be up and running in the near future. Airborne!

Tim Stout
Society President

Society Toll Free Number

All members should make an effort to ensure that the society toll-free telephone number is posted at all VA Medical Centers, Veterans Centers, American Legion, VFW and AMVETS Halls. The line is an answering machine and is operational 24 hours a day for new members to call.

The toll-free telephone number is:
1-888-ABN-1733 or 1-888-226-1733.

Scholarship Awards

The Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the results of the 1998-1999 competition. Mitchell Rider of Mincola, Texas, is the recipient of a \$1,500.00 scholarship. Mitchell will be entering his freshman year of college and is planning a career in medicine. Mitchell's father, Gary, served with the Brigade 10/68-10/69.

Joshua Barocas of Aurora, Colorado, is the recipient of a \$1,200.00 scholarship. He is in his first year of studies as a biology major. Ralph Barocas, Joshua's father, served with the Brigade 04/69-04/70.

Errol Schumann is the recipient of a \$1,000.00 scholarship. Errol graduated this spring as the Valedictorian of Fort Collins (Colorado) high school. He will pursue a career in Landscape Architecture. Errol's father, Rickford Schumann, served with E/17 Cavalry 04/68-04/69.

Sara Polzine, a second year nursing student in California, is the recipient of a \$600.00 scholarship. Sara's father is John Willis, who served with the Brigade from 1964 - 1967.

Pamela Canuel is the recipient of \$500.00 scholarship. Pamela graduated this year from Terry Sanford High School in Fayetteville North Carolina and will begin training in physical therapy in the fall. Pamela attended the Society Banquet at Fort Bragg with her father, Robert Canuel, who served with the B/4 06/66-06/67.

The Society makes these scholarship awards as a direct result of the generosity of Society members who contribute to the Scholarship fund. No dues payments are utilized in this program. Scholarships awarded include the annual MG and Mrs. Hugh Cunningham Memorial Scholarship, and the MG and Mrs. Ellis Williamson Scholarship.

In order to keep this program viable, and enable the Society to extend it to grandchildren and step children (changes approved by the Society at the 1999 convention) your help is needed. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund and sent it to the Society Headquarters (PO Box 44173; Washington, D.C. 20024-4173).

Applications for the 1999-2000 scholarship competition will be available September 1, 1999. Please direct your requests for applications and any questions about the program to the Scholarship Committee, Society Headquarters, PO Box 44173, Washington, D.C. 20024-4173.

/s/ Robert Armstrong
Committee Chair

crossfire

**The
 Chaplains
 Corner**



Producing the Good Wine

In the years since Vietnam, most of us have already taken a number of steps away from that first day back in the world when we got off the airplane, and got ourselves home one way or another. When we unpacked our duffel bags we discovered we had a place to put most everything except a year of our lives that didn't fit anywhere.

Where do you put perimeter duty and walking point, incoming and med-evicts. What do you do with the anxiety of never knowing what would happen next, the pain of losing close friends, the emotions of anger, fear, hatred, love, terror, and boredom that made up the Vietnam experience? And better yet...who do you talk to about something they would not understand?

We've taken a lot of steps away from those years, and there have been rough times for us all, but I believe many of us are taking the right steps to resolving many of the issues of Vietnam. I have to keep thinking the best and positive for all of us. One of those lingering issues is what do we do about God and the spiritual dimensions of our lives. Lately I have been very encouraged to hear that a number Sky Soldiers have made peace with God and are finding a new freedom in Christ.

In the Bordeaux region of France some of the best wine is made. The grapevines are planted on arid, rocky ground. The roots have to struggle and fight to get down to the water level to give them life. The French call this the "suffering of the vine." Because the roots have had to struggle so much, they are the hardiest in the world, thereby producing the most delicious wines. Our spiritual lives are very similar. If we never had conflicts, or we never suffered in our lives, perhaps if we had never had the Vietnam experience, then the depth of our spiritual lives would be shallow. The "wine", or fruit, given off by our lives would not be good.

It does not feel good to suffer, and suffering is a thing that we shy away from naturally, but when we do (and we all do) just bear in mind that it is all there for the producing of good "wine", not the bad. It is our choice to either choose the good or the bad. God made us that way.

**All the way,
 CHUCK DEAN, NATIONAL CHAPLAIN
 173d Airborne Society
 New E-mail address: cdean10@hotmail.com**

In Memoriam

In Loving Memory of a Fallen Sky Soldier

HERBERT C. STEPHENS

Born
 February 13, 1947
 At Rest
 January 30, 2000

"Death ends a life, not a relationship."

I met Herb when we were 18 years old and assigned to the same combat unit in Vietnam — Charlie Co., 1/503, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep.). Herb and I spent many days and nights in the same foxhole. We would share letters from home and the goody packages our families would send us. We grew to love each other with a bond no other could understand or break. We were always looking out for each other, each prepared to give his life to save the other.

The men of Charlie Co. extend their sympathies to Herb's family. He is at peace now and in the hands of the Lord, but his memory will remain in our hearts and minds.

I salute him and will deeply miss him.
 Sgt. Opie

MARK R. AUSTIN

DOB/1-9-46
 DOD/2-6-00

Mark served with the 173d Airborne Brigade May 1966 to June 1967, and participated in the Junction City parachute jump. He is survived by his wife Lynda and one son, and one daughter, Kelly Ann. Mark was a trooper with a great sense of humor and was a familiar face at Skysoldier gatherings.

Submitted by Mr. John O'Dea

ROBERT P. KAPCZYNSKI

Bob served in the 173d. He was extremely proud to be a member of the "herd", and I was very proud of the contributions he gave to his country. He passed away on Sunday, February 27, 2000 with his family and St. Michael by his side. I would just like to say that I am grateful to my brother and all of his fellow veterans for the sacrifice the gave to their families and their country. He will be missed by everyone. God Bless!

Mark Kapczynski

May they enjoy the peace deserved by those who served their country honorably and well.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Herd Brothers,

Just a short note to say hi & hook up again along with my dues. Hard to believe how fast time has gone since I last attended a reunion. It was at Fort Benning in the '80s. Since then, I am happy to say, that I've proudly worn my 173d patch on my right sleeve as a guardsman and later a reservist on jump status with New York & New Jersey Long Range Surveillance detachments. Also in far flung places such as Kuwait during the later part of Desert Storm and as recently as '97 in Bosnia with a civil affairs Unit. While in both places and over the years, it has be good to see the "Herd" patch on many (though fewer now as we get older) a fellow reservist. I was elected to serve on Bell Atlantic's Veterans Advisory Board. I hope to do good things for all our fellow veterans.

Sincerely in Brotherhood,
Harry Adams
Recon/3/503

I still wear my "Herd" patch everyday and proud of it. Maybe someday you could run a page of all the 173d license plates throughout the United States. It would



really be interesting to see. This ones mine.

I served with B/2/503 from 69-70.

Airborne,
Ray Dwyer
11 Nicole Lane
Chico, CA 95926

Chapter 23 member, Dave Hamill's license plate. Dave says he is regularly pulled over by former 1st RAR members.



This license plate belongs to the Chapter 23 Padre,



Ray Chapman. It was photographed by Phil Dickson in the car park after a chapter meeting.

The 173d Airborne Brigade And Rochester, Minnesota

In 1965 the Viet Nam war had been going on for quite some time. Support for our sons and daughters in that far away land was eroding rapidly. Demonstrations at home and abroad were continuing at an alarming rate. Our heroes that answered their countries call were treated shamelessly when they arrived back in the United States. It was a very sad time in the history of our great country. The policy of the United States had put us in a position where we could not win.

In 1965 the Rochester Jaycees spearheaded the adoption of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Viet Nam. This was a project designed to show our support for our sons and daughters who were serving our country so far away from home. This quickly became a city wide project. Jaycees, nurses, girl scouts, boy scouts and the entire city became involved. Items that could be used for health and cleanliness were collected and to the best of memory one to three train boxcars were filled for shipment to Viet Nam and the 173d Airborne.

It was not until the 173d Airborne Brigade came to Rochester for their annual reunion in 1995 that Rochester found out how important the adoption was some 30 years earlier. Rochester gave the returning 173d Airborne the heroes welcome that they had earned and so richly deserved. The 173d participated in the Rochesterfest parade and all along the parade route the entire city stood and honored those returning heroes.

It was at this 173d Airborne reunion in 1995 that the idea for a veterans memorial was born. The Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial that you will see is a result of a seed planted in 1965 and started to grow in 1995. It is again fitting that we honor the 173d some 35 years later. We pray that the time will never come that Rochester will again be in the position to adopt a fighting unit in a far away land, but if it happens, we know that Rochester again will step forward.

Welcome Home Sky Soldiers!

/s/ Wayne A. Stillman

Original Member of Rochester Jaycees, 1965
Co-Chairman - Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial

Editors Note: Mr. Wayne Stillman was recently inducted into the Honorary membership of Chapter 24, and you will meet him at the Reunion. Thank You Wayne for all you, and the City of Rochester, Minnesota has done for the 173d Airborne Brigade.

See You in June of 2000.

NEWS ABOUT SKY SOLDIERS

- Col. Mark Lowry II** (H/C/2, B/1 and H/Bde 63-65) is currently spending his retirement as a writer and lives in Loma Linda, CA.
- Daniel R. Smith** (E/4/503, March to Sept, 1970) 100% disabled and lives in Jackson, MI.
- Ray Bull** C/4/503 works for the USPS and lives in Yuba City, CA.
- Larry Olsen** B/3/319 is a store manager and lives in Plymouth, CA.
- Richard Ramm** N/75 is an attorney and lives in San Jose, CA.
- Patrick Hall** lives and works in Tracy, CA.
- Butler League** lives in Pollack Pines, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Dan Collins** 172MI/173MP/Plt is an active duty Sergeant with Det#1 128th QM Co (Light Air Drop) in Sunnyvale, CA.
- Andrew Nicasio** live and works in Albuquerque, NM.
- Robert T. Taylor** (D/16/17thCav) is retired and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- Carlos O. Vasquez** CSM (RET) is retired and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- Ernest Grayson** SGM (Ret)(D/16) lives and works in Fayetteville, NC.
- George A. Tyree** SFC (Ret) D/Maint/173d Eng is retired and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- Christian R. Clewell** (A1/503&A3/319) is a police officer at the U of Wash-Seattle.
- Daniel R. Smith** (E/4/503) is 100% disabled and is living in Jackson, MI.
- Dan M. McMillan** (E/3/503-69-70) lives and works in Fond Du Lac, WI.
- James L. Steele** is living in Lawrenceville, GA.
- Hood, Bobby L.** (A/2/503/66-67) is a retired E7 and resides in Fayetteville, NC.
- Dunlap, Robert C.** (A/4/503/66-67) is a letter carrier for USPS and resides in Fort Washington, MD.
- Bowman, Walter R.** resides in Saginaw, Michigan.
- Johnson, Richard P.** resides in Rio Linda, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Brunken, Dan J.** resides in North Hollywood, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Ryan, John** resides in Clear Lake, CA.
- Clark, Robert L.** is living in Bellows Falls, Vermont.
- Potter, James W.** is residing in Sturgis, SD is a new Life Member.
- Osterli, Philip P.** (335AHC 67-67) is a County Director for U of CA Coop Ext.
- Grencik, Ronald** resides in Tinley Park, IL and is a new Life Member.
- Johnson, Arlen R.** (B/3/319 70-71) is a regional sales manager and resides in MN.
- Shay, Charles R.** (E/17 67-68) is a retired US Marshal, resides in MN, and Editor of the 'Sky Soldier' Newsletter.
- Pfeifer, Edward W. K.** (A/4/503 69-70) is a fire commo Supervisor in WI.
- Hodder, Allen S.** (A/3/503 67-68) is retired and lives in Star Prairie, WI.
- Gorfine, Lawrence** resides in San Diego, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Knapp, Harvey** resides in Santa Barbara, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Labarge, John P** resides in San Jose, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Wisdom, Thomas E.** is living in Clarksville, TN.
- Jonish, Joseph** resides in Plainfield, IL and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Best, Ron** is residing in West Des Moines, IA and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Howell, Stephen** resides in Chicago, IL and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Overhouse, Roger** lives in Belvidere, IL and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Smith, Laurence** resides in Calumet City, IL and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Marion, Joe** resides in Streamwood, IL, and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Coleman, Charles** lives in Benton Harbor, MI and is a new member of Chapter VI.
- Carlton, John E.** (E/4/504 68-69) resides in San Ramon, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Melvin Howard** is retired and lives in Concord, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Kellogg, William R.** (Casper Plt 67-68) resides in Paradise, CA and is a member of Chapter X.
- Elliot, Bobby G.** resides in Owensboro, KY and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Hayes, Roland** lives in Gary, IN and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Yauger, Michael** resides in Spring Grove, IL and is a member of Chapter VI.
- Kaoetanakos, Glenn J.** (A/2/503 67-68) is a Detective Sgt for Aventura Police, FL.
- Elder, I. J. Sr.** CSM (Ret) resides in Fayetteville, NC.
- Conlee, Donald E.** (HQ/2/503 67-68) is retired and lives in Wilsons, VA.
- Beard, Larry W.** (A/1/503 67-68) is a pipe fitter in Louisville, KY.
- Dibbell, Danny L.** (C/4/503/65-68) is retired and lives in Leesburg, GA.
- Martinez, R. (Roy)** (HHC/MP/PLT 67-68) is retired and lives in Goliad, TX.
- Iglio, Charles** (C/2/503 66-67) lives in Ozark, MO.
- Hayashida, Myron K.** (A/Spt/Bn 66-67) resides in Arlington, VA.
- Holbrook, Wayne C.** (1/50 1968) is living in Wyoming, MI.

(Continued on page 6)

News About Sky Soldiers

(Continued from page 5)

- Carrier, Steven G.** is a machinist in Woonsocket, RI.
- Cullen, William J.** (B/Med 66-67) is a site development contractor in Eliot, ME.
- Dillenback, Carl R.** is a retired police detective and lives in E. Hartford, CT.
- Jacobs, Henry L.** (B/2/50368-70) is a retired MSG and lives in Clinton, MD.
- Flowers, J.E.** (C/2/503 68-69) is residing in Kokomo, IN.
- Fred, Richard C.** (H/2/503 65-66) is a commercial fisherman in Palm Beach Gardens, FL.
- Campbell, Judy** is the sister of Keith Campbell KIA 8 Feb 1967.
- Heness, Lowell K.** (H/3/503 70-71) is disabled and lives in Plant City, FL.
- Bee, Kenneth R.** (HHC 46 PIO 71-71) is a Lt. inspector with the Rochester MN fire department.
- Eckhoff, Thomas R.** (N/75/69-70) is a medical transport driver in Richfield, MN.
- Johnson, John C.** lives in Atlantic Beach, NC.
- Badger, Lawrence C.** works for the USPS a lives in Utica, NY.
- Sampson, Dan A.** (B/319 69-70) is a retired truck driver and lives in San Marcos, CA.
- Clutter, Charles F.** is residing in Garland, TX.
- Reierstad, Kaare H.** (C/2/503 67-68) is retired and lives in Henderson, NV.
- Vasquez, Angel M.** (A/2/503 68-69) is disabled and lives in Port St. Lucie, FL.
- Barnes, Robert K.** is living in Wilson, NC.
- Carkhuff, Walter J.** is disabled and lives in Barrington, NH.
- Foster, Ronald J.** resides in Carver, MA.
- Fromm, Rudolph W.** is director of public works in W. Harrington, CN.
- Jarvis, Gregory A.** is medically retired from the US Army and lives in Dresden, OH.
- Ripa, Michael P.** is retired and lives in Westfield, MA.
- Bingham, George III** is a consultant and lives in Mashpee, MA.
- Pellerin, Leo A.** is medically retired and lives in Pinellas Park, FL.
- Trexler, James L.** live and works in Gold Hill, NC.
- Gainnie, Edward M.** (C/S&S 70-71) is a driver for Oakley Trans. And lives in Port St. Joe, FL.
- Dougherty, James,** resides in Phoenix, AZ.
- de Flesco, Robert H. Jr.** is living in Stockton, NJ.
- Griffin, Larry E.** is residing in Gold Hill, OR.
- Fruchtenicht, Edward P.** (D/2/503-68-69) is a repair tech for Sear and lives in Portola, CA.
- Klobe, Gaylon L.** (B/3/503&HHC BDE 68-72) is retired from the Army and lives in Jersey Shore, PA.
- Hood, William A.** is a retired MSG and lives in Spring Lake, NC.
- Dixon, William R.** resides in Matthews, NC.
- Weddel, Greg K.** (1/503 69-70) is disabled and lives in Redding, CA.
- Morehead, Charles P.** (HHC-MP Plt 67-68) is a school teacher and lives in Albemarle, NC.
- Yatsko-Sanders, Mary** (LTC) widow of Lt J.P. Yatsko, Jr. (A/H/2/503 1965)
- Salyer, Donald** is now living in Daytona Beach, FL.
- Arthurs, Ted** CSM (Ret)(4/503) is residing in Destin, FL.
- Ray, Ronald D.** lives and works in Anaheim, CA.
- Jones, Thomas B.** is now living in Enfield, IL.
- Gile, William Jr.** (C/3/503/C/SPTBN/ 68-69) works for the USPS in Soquel, CA.
- Livenick, James E.** (A/Admin/68-70) is self employed and lives in Las Vegas, NV.
- Boyd, Samuel L.** is an attorney and lives in Dallas, TX.
- Barthelemy, John M.** is residing in Texas.
- Hayden, Alton, J.** works and resides in the state of Texas.
- Mabry, David L.** works and resides in the state of Texas.
- Perry, Bob** (E/4/50369-70) owns an insurance agency in Garrison Iowa.
- Grimm, Danny** resides in Austin Texas.
- Hall, Donald,** live and works in Banks, OR.
- Cline, Darrell E.** (A/1/503 66-67) lives in Picayune, MS.
- Timbrook, Terry** is a member of Chapter II in New York.
- Arrow, Charles V.** is also a member of Chapter II in New York.
- Evans Darwin J.** (C/4/503 70-71) is a steel worker and lives in Granite City, IL.
- Soza, Billy T.** resides in Phoenix, AZ where is a member of Chapter XXV.
- Clark, Norman J.** is a school psychologist and resides in Fort Defiance, AZ
- Velky, James L Jr.** (COL) is still on active duty and resides in Honolulu, HI.
- Peralta, Jesus E.** lives in Chandler, AZ and is a member of Chapter XXV.
- Stanley, Bob** lives and works in Phoenix, AZ and is a member of Chapter XXV.
- Dale, Douglas A.** (C/3/503 69-70) is a landscaper at the NCO club at Ft. Jackson, SC.
- Babb, Jerry M.** (CSM) (Ret) is retired and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- Thielemann, Charles J.** lives in Lakewood, CA.
- Hill, Carl W.** resides in Mt. Enterprise, Texas.
- Miller, James L.** (B/2/503) is a police officer in Phoenix, AZ.
- Dean, Paul H.** lives and works in Camarillo, CA.
- Alexander, Spencer** resides in Chicago, IL and is a member of the Elite Chapter VI.
- Schillaci, David** lives in Bartlett, IL and is also a member of Chapter VI.
- Gonzales, Louis L.** (C/Spt/Bn 65-66) works for St. Vincent De Paul School in Phoenix, AZ.

3rd Annual 'COW PIE BINGO'

The Society will be hosting its 3rd ANNUAL "COW PIE BINGO" on or about September 4, 2000 (weather permitting) in a place to be announced at a later date. The purpose of this new and fun filled event is to help raise money for the general fund and to have fun while doing it. This is an event that can move around the country and world to where ever there are cows and pastures. Here's how it works.

The Society will be selling raffle tickets to whomever wants to buy them; your friends, (and enemies) family and in laws. *Everyone and anyone is eligible to play.* There has been a change.



Tickets are NOW \$1.00 each or books of 6 are \$5.00 and they will be made available from National Headquarters. Tickets will also be available for purchase at the Reunion.

Now to explain "cow pasture bingo" to those who may not know what it is. A one square acre of pasture will be divided up into a number of boxes which would be about the same size of a square yard. A lucky cow will be selected and will have the privilege of grazing in the field to allow mother nature to take its course and have the cow make a vertical insertion of a "cow pie" onto a square. To ensure that the cow is diligent in its duties, a designated "cow pie observer" will be with the cow when the momentous event occurs, and he or she will be responsible for calling out the winning number. If you are the lucky winner, you will win the main prize of \$1730.

YOU NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.

Now here's the rest of the news. If your number is located around the winning square and there can up to 8 second place winners, with the minimum being three; each of you will win \$173.00. The person selling the winning ticket will also receive \$173.00. Nice number isn't it?

Send your checks and money orders to:

Society of the 173^d Airborne Brigade (SEP)

Cow Pie Raffle

P.O. Box 44173

Washington, DC 20026-4173

From The Joseph E. Funston Family

Just a note to say thank you so much for your help in listing the Joseph E. Funston family in your Newsletter. It's been a miracle. Richard Funston, a surviving brother, heard from a Mr. Ken Murray of New Haven who was with Joe when he died. They received a call from a Mr. Louis Stoneking in Minnesota who was Joe's best friend and had sent flowers to the grave site for years after Joe was killed in August of 1968. You have no idea of the healing you have brought to this family. God Bless All and be assured of our prayers.

Gratefully,
Sue Thome

DEADLINE NOTICE

**Deadline for submitting articles
for the Spring edition is April 1, 2000.**

**Deadline for the Summer edition is
July 1, 2000.**

Letter to 173d

Dear Colonel (Ken) Smith,

5 March 00

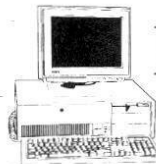
In catching up on my U.S. News and World Report issues, I read last night in the 7 Feb issue about yet another medic of the 173d finally receiving his Medal of Honor. Even as a soldier of a later generation and very different Army, it is always so moving to see a soldier finally honored for his sacrifice and once again at the behest — or so it appeared from the article — of the 173d Airborne Brigade Society.

As you no doubt know, today's soldiers by and large — I think — do not appreciate the sacrifice those before us made and continue to make in the aftermath of Vietnam. From what I have seen, the 173d Airborne Brigade Society continues to remind us all — and that is a great thing.

/s/ Major Mary M. Foreman

Note: Major Foreman is currently serving as a JAG officer in Germany. She is a combat veteran having served in Iraq as a Chemical Platoon leader during Desert Storm.

We Have a Home Page Address!



For you computer hacks who want to find something on the Internet, try the Society's new home page. Set up by Sky Soldier Paul Dinardo, the home page address is:

<http://Metalab.unc.edu/173abn>

If you have a computer service provider; AOL, CompuServe, MSN or any other service to the Internet, you can "hook up" with our home page. We encourage your input for the programming of the home page. Contact Paul at:

pdinardo@pica.army.mil

with your comments.

THANK YOU

Information on Family Members of Army Reserve Colonel Dean Levay

Dean's oldest son Jason a SSG has joined the 19th Special Forces in Washington State National Guard. He was formerly in the 1st Special Forces Group located at Fort Lewis, WA. He will attend college in Washington State. He had nine years of active duty. As an 11B Infantryman he served in A Co 1/505/82d ABN Div, and the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning GA before going to Special Forces. He will deploy with one of the 19th SFG Teams to Thailand this summer for a month. He may also take an active tour of duty in Macedonia later this year.

Dean's youngest son Joshua is a full time student at Arizona State University. Joshua served as a 91B Medic in Germany at Hohenfels for two years. He then served with the 1/23d Infantry, 3d Bde 2nd Id at Fort Lewis Washington. He left the Active Army in 1998 and has been in the Arizona National Guard. He earned his Expert Field Medical Badge last year. He is talking of going back on active duty this summer and wants to go to the Ranger Regiment as a Medic.

Dean served with 5th Special Forces in Vietnam (year unknown) before going to OCS. Dean served with 2/503 Recon circa 1970-71. Running 5 man "Wildcat" Recon teams. Dean is currently serving in the Army Reserve as a Colonel. Dean graduated from Law School here in Arizona and has been appointed to a Federal INS Judges position.

*Article submitted by
Eldon Meade, Chapter XXV*

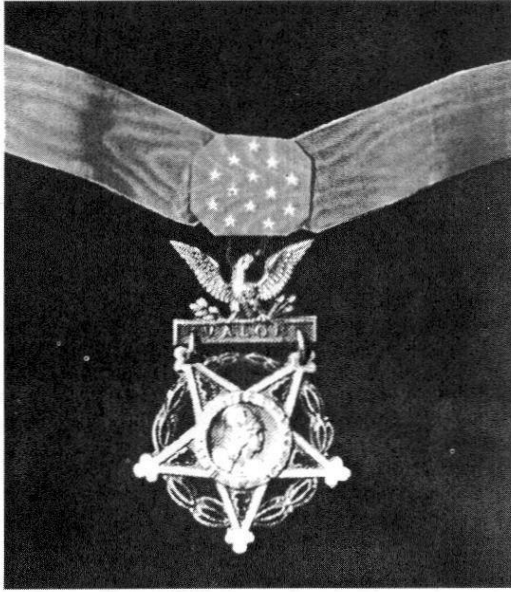
Hook Up

Trying to locate Michael Anthony who was with the Engineers and lives in southern California.

Don Hall
(425) 867-7117

I served with A/2/503 from May 5, 1965 to April 30, 1966. I am interested in contacting any and all members of A/2/503 65-66. Thank You.

Dennis Begley,
313 Erlander Blvd.
North Babylon, NY 11703



CITATION

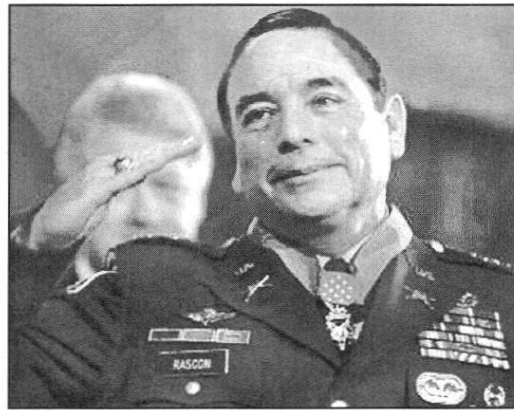
The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded in the name of Congress the Medal of Honor to:

**SPECIALIST FOUR ALFRED RASCON
UNITED STATES ARMY**

*for conspicuous and intrepidity at the risk of his life
above and beyond the call of duty:*

Specialist Four Alfred Rascon, distinguished himself by a series of Extraordinarily courageous acts on 16 March 1966, while assigned as a medic to the Reconnaissance Platoon, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). While moving to reinforce its sister battalion under intense enemy attack, the Reconnaissance Platoon came under heavy fire from a numerically superior enemy force. The intense enemy fire from crew-served weapons and grenades severely wounded several point squad soldiers. Specialist Rascon, ignoring directions to stay behind shelter until covering fire could be provided, made his way forward. He repeatedly tried to reach the severely wounded point machine-gunner laying on an open enemy trail, but was driven back each time by the withering fire. Disregarding his personal safety, he jumped to his feet, ignoring flying bullets and exploding grenades to reach his comrade. To protect him from further wounds, he intentionally placed

his body between the soldier and enemy machine guns, sustaining numerous shrapnel injuries and a serious wound to the hip. Disregarding his serious wounds he dragged the larger soldier from the fire-raked trail. Hearing the second machine-gunner yell that he was running out of ammunition, Specialist Rascon, under heavy enemy fire crawled back to the wounded machine-gunner stripping him of his bandoleers of ammunition, giving them to the machine-gunner who continued his suppressive fire. Specialist Rascon fearing the abandoned machine gun, its ammunition and spare barrel could fall into enemy hands made his way to retrieve them. On the way, he was wounded in the face and torso by grenade fragments, but disregarded these wounds to recover the abandoned machine gun, ammunition and spare barrel items, enabling another soldier to provide added suppressive fire to the pinned-down squad. In searching for the wounded, he saw the point grenadier being wounded by small arms fire and grenades being thrown at him. Disregarding his own life and his numerous wounds, Specialist Rascon reached and covered him with his body absorbing the blasts from the exploding grenades, and saving the soldier's life, but sustaining additional wounds to his body. While making his way to the wounded point squad leader, grenades were hurled at the sergeant. Again, in complete disregard for his own life, he reached and covered the sergeant with his body, absorbing the full force of the grenade explosions. Once more Specialist Rascon was critically wounded by shrapnel, but disregarded his own wounds to continue to search and aid the wounded. Severely wounded, he remained on the battlefield, inspiring his fellow soldiers to continue the battle. After the enemy broke contact, he disregarded aid for himself, instead treating the wounded and directing their evacuation. Only after being placed on the evacuation helicopter did he allow aid to be given to him. Specialist Rascon's extraordinary valor in the face of deadly enemy fire, his heroism in rescuing the wounded, and his gallantry by repeatedly risking his own life for his fellow soldiers are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.





General Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff congratulates Capt. Al Rascon.



Secretary of Army Louis Caldera presents Al with a ceremonial flag and medals he earned.

CRITERIA FOR AWARD

The Medal of Honor, established by Joint Resolution of Congress 12 July 1862 (amended by Act of 9 July 1918 and Act of 25 July 1963) is awarded in the name of Congress to a person who, while a member of the Armed Forces, distinguishes himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against any enemy of the United States, while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party. The deed performed must have been one of personal bravery or self-sacrifice so conspicuous as to clearly distinguish the individual above his comrades and must have involved risk of life. Incontestable proof of the performance of service is exacted and each recommendation for award of this decoration is considered on the standard of extraordinary merit. Eligibility is limited to members of the Armed Forces of the United States in active Federal military service.



As interested observers and the members of his platoon watched, the President affixed the coveted Medal of Honor around the neck of Rascon for the heroic action he had performed 34 years earlier.

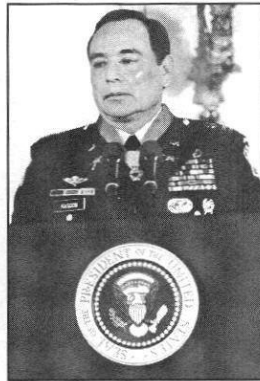


Capt. Rascon and President Clinton Al's standing tall, dress uniform, spit shined boots, just being the proud paratrooper that he is.



WHITE HOUSE PRESENTATION PHOTO — Left to right: Dan Ojeda, S-2, 1-503d; Don Dali, Medic, 1-503d; Bob Berutti, Recon Plt., 1-503d; Frank Vavrin, Bn Chaplain; Tom Marinan, Medic, 1-503d; Sonny Barto, C Co; Jacob Cook, Plt. Sgt., Recon; Neil Haffey, Recon; Bob McCarty, Recon; Al Rascon, Medic; Walt Penzin, Recon; President Clinton; Willie Williams, Recon; Larry Gibson, Recon; John Middlecamp, Recon; John Kirk, Recon; Ray Compton, Recon; and Francis Diehl, 1-503d Armor.

On February 8th, 2000, at 1430 hours, a historical injustice was corrected. In the presence of his wife Carol and his two children, at a ceremony attended by Cabinet members, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, miscellaneous military and civilian brass, and numerous Sky Soldiers, the President of the United States placed the Medal of Honor around Alfred Rascon's neck. The fact of his bravery is unquestioned and the extent of his heroism is reflected in the extraordinary efforts of his friends in finally seeing that justice was done.



Said Al Rascon: "The honor is not really mine. It's for those who were with me that day and those who served in combat in Vietnam."

The citation accompanying the award of the Medal of Honor is printed elsewhere in this newsletter. In that hectic period of combat in April 1966, the "fog of war" factor came into play. Although Al was recommended for the Medal of Honor by a group of NCO's from the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 1st Battalion, the paperwork was lost. Al was medically evacuated from Nam and subsequently received a Silver Star for his actions, but the citation which accompanied that award bore no resemblance to what had actually happened. And life continued.

At Society conventions in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the story of Al's heroism came to light. Those who had been involved in and/or witnessed the acts of bravery performed that day resolved that Al's gallantry should not remain unrecognized. Starting in 1992, Sky Soldiers launched many initiatives to have the record corrected, but were met with opposition at every turn. The Army and the nation must protect the integrity of the Medal of Honor and guard against its unwarranted proliferation. However, some of the opposition seemed unreasonable. In February 1992, the Army officially rebuffed both a Society initiative and a Congressional attempt to have DOD consider Rascon's case. Bruised but not beaten, the Sky

Soldier's fell back and regrouped for another attack.

Building on the work already done, and in close coordination with the Honorable Lane Evans (Congressman from Illinois and an Honorary Sky Soldier), the Society's leadership put together a battle plan that ultimately proved successful. For two years,



Al Rascon, 1966

material was gathered, statements were obtained, records in archives were researched, regulations were scrutinized, and every lead possible was run down. Finally, in April 1998, Society President Ken Smith forwarded to D.A. the paperwork that would result in the February 8th ceremony.

The award of the Medal of Honor is a significant milestone and a cause for great pride. However, the time between when the award was forwarded to D.A. and the White House ceremony was filled with numerous battles and behind the scene actions. Sometimes the enemy was the Army, sometimes the enemy was us. But the teamwork that made it happen is a reflection of the bond which ties Sky Soldiers, and other servicemen, together.

With deep appreciation, we acknowledge the significant contributions of Congressman Lane Evans and his Chief of Staff, Tom O'Donnell (also an Honorary Sky Soldier), without whose persistent and sustained efforts that Award never would have been granted. Numerous others external to the Society also assisted significantly including Barney Barnum, Medal of Honor Society President; Harry Summers, 82nd Abn Association; BG Mike Aguilar, USMC, and the super people at the Army Awards Branch. To these and the many other who participated in this noble cause, our sincere thanks.

Al's comrades-in-arms believed in him and what he did. We salute then Specialist Four Alfred Rascon for his heroism on March 16, 1966, as we salute all the unrecognized heroes who fought under the Brigade's flag. Once more, justice has been done.

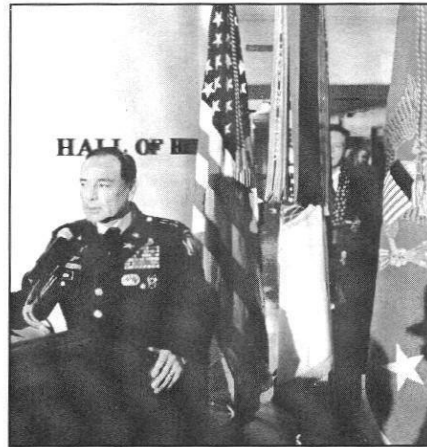


Photo by Tim Stout

Al at the podium in the Pentagon Hall of Heroes



Capt. Al Rascon and wife Carol.

Scenes from the Ceremony

(Photos by: The Department of the Army)



Survivors of 16 March, 1966 Battle: M/Sgt. Larry M. Gibson (Machine Gunner, PFC); Al Rascon (Medic, Spec. 4), Neil Haffey (Grenadier, PFC); and Ray Compton (Point Squad Leader of Recon Platoon, Sgt.).



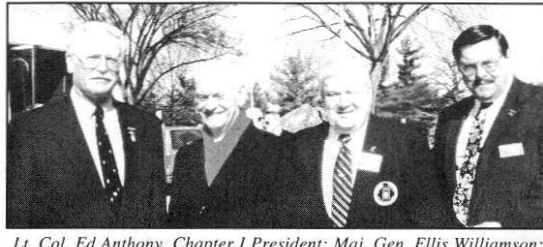
Gen. Henry H. Shelton, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and Al Rascon with the 173d Patch.



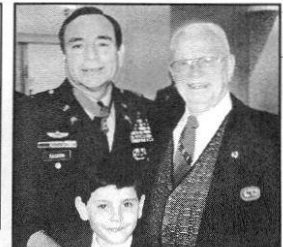
Group Photo at Ft. Myer Reception for Al Rascon and 173d members in attendance.



Secretary of Army Louis Caldera and Al Rascon.



Lt. Col. Ed Anthony, Chapter 1 President; Maj. Gen. Ellis Williamson; Dave Foy, President of 82nd Airborne Association; and Tim Stout, President of International Society of 173d.



Al Rascon, son Alan and Don Lassen, editor of Static Line.



Maj. Gen. Paul F. Smith; Col. Ken Smith and Lt. Col. Peter Currie, Regimental Cmdr., 1st 503d Air Mobil, 2nd Infantry Div., DMZ, Korea.



Maj. Gen. Ellis Williamson; Capt. Al Rascon and Maj. Gen. Paul F. Smith.

Monument Fund Update

The Society acknowledges the generous gifts of the following to the monument fund.

Richard A. Schmidt
John R. Anderson
John T. Hardy, Jr.
Arlen R. Johnson
James R. Mailler
James E. Flowers
John E. Carlton
Charles R. Shay

Joel-MOH Recipient Award

Edwin H. J. Carns, M.D.

Scholarship Fund Update

The Society acknowledges the generous gifts of the following to the Scholarship fund.

Russell Olliso, Jr.

NOTE: WE DO OUR BEST TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL GIFTS. IF WE MISSED YOU, PLEASE DROP US A LINE SO WE CAN ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT. WE COULDN'T MAKE OUR PROGRAMS RUN WITHOUT YOU.

MOH Unveiling at Fort Campbell

Fort Campbell will hold a ceremony May 19, 2000, to honor CPT Alfred V. Rascon as a Medal of Honor recipient. This honor came 34 years after CPT Rascon's action in Vietnam on March 16, 1966.

The ceremony will begin at 1000 hours at Memorial Park. The park is located across the street from the Don F. Pratt Museum, Building 5702. This ceremony will be the unveiling of CPT Rascon's name to our monument as a Medal of Honor recipient. A reception following the ceremony will be held at the Don F. Pratt Museum.

At present the afternoon schedule includes the following:

1. CPT Rascon will have lunch with the troops.
2. A tour of Fort Campbell, to include the 5 facilities memorialized in honor of other 173d Medal of Honor recipients.
3. The evening is presently open.
4. Saturday is the day CPT Rascon will spend with the members of the 173d. He will depart Sunday.

The new Fort Campbell Guest House room rates are \$33 a night for a room with 1 double bed and \$35 a night for a room with 2 double beds. (I think all rooms have coffee pots and refrigerators.) Reservations may be made calling 270-439-2229. Please let me know if you will be attending the ceremony.

Hugh C. Robinson
203 Cozy Acres Dr.
Elizabethtown, KY 42701
PH: 270-737-8631 FAX: 270-737-0981
E-mail: Hcrl73@aol.com



----- ✂ ----- *Clip Here* ----- ✂ -----

Monument Contribution Form

NAME _____
(Last) (First) (MI)

ADDRESS _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

Here's my \$ _____ Tax deductible contribution for the monument!

Please mail to: Monument Fund, c/o Kenneth Smith
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade, PO Box 44173, Washington, DC 20026-4173

Chapter News

Chapter I: Sigholtz Capitol Chapter, P.O. Box 15183, Arlington, VA 22215-0833. Chapter President: Ed Anthony. Chapter Internet Address: ed.anthony@hqda.army.mil

Chapter II: Lozada-Thurston-Watters Chapter, 450 West 148th Street, New York, NY 10031. Chapter President: Anthony Albarello. Chapter Internet address: None

Chapter III: Columbus/Ft. Benning Chapter, PO Box 51977, Ft. Benning, GA 31905-0577. Chapter President: Enrique Salas. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter V: Ft. Bragg Chapter, PO Box 71313, Ft. Bragg, NC 28307. Chapter President: Joe Adkinson. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter VI: Elite Forces Chapter, c/o DiNardo, 4694 N. Sapphire Drive, Hoffman Estates, IL 60195. Chapter President: Arlen Bertrand. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter VII: Florida Chapter, Route 1, Box 69-C, Hilliard, FL 32046. Chapter President: Stephen A. Turpen. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter IX: New England Chapter, P.O. Box 66173, Auburndale, MA 02166. Chapter President: John O'Day. Chapter Internet address: Dhill173@aol.com

Chapter X: Western States Chapter, 538 Pheian Avenue, San Jose, CA 95112-2506. Chapter President: Frank Mantua. Chapter Internet address: frankm@witrefining.com

Chapter XI: Australian (Down Under) Chapter, Post Office Box 5-173A, Croydon Park, NSW 2133, Australia. Chapter President: Sid Cheeseman. Chapter Internet address: downunder173@bigpond.com

Chapter XIII: Texas Chapter, 1709 White Avenue, Killeen, TX 76541. Chapter President: Marty Martinez. Chapter Internet address: marty@vvm.com

Host of the 2001 Reunion Proposed for July 3 -7

Chapter XIV: Southern California Chapter, PO Box 5482, El Monte, CA 91734. Chapter President: Raymond Ramirez. Chapter Internet address: None

Chapter XV: SSG John K. Weber Chapter, PO Box 583131, Minneapolis, MN 55458-3131. Chapter President: Thomas Eckhoff. Chapter Internet address: Bob-Jan Bev@msn.com

Chapter XVI: Pacific Northwest Chapter, 1512 116th Street, South, Tacoma, WA 98444-2522. Chapter President: John Berry. Chapter Internet address: Berryherd@aol.com

Chapter XVII: Western Pennsylvania Chapter, 5081 Plain Road, Murreysville, PA 15668. Chapter President: Dennis Dunegan. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter XVIII: Larry Pierce Chapter, 3017 NW 16th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73107. Chapter President: Bill Sunday. Chapter Internet address: HerdMP@aol.com

Chapter XIX: New Zealand Chapter, 8 Hull Road, Waiuku, Franklin, New Zealand. Chapter President: John Deazley. Chapter Internet address: russell,fred.fj@bhp.com.au

Chapter XX: United Desert Chapter, PO Box 12271, Tucson, AZ 85732-2271. Chapter President: Russ Faulkner. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter XXI: Mountain States Chapter, 1199 Norwalk, UT 84123. Chapter President: Paul Salazar. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter XXII: San Diego Chapter, 320 Cadillac Circle, Oceanside, CA 92054-3442. Chapter President: Kenneth LePore. Chapter Internet address: None.

Chapter XXIII: Queensland Chapter, (New Address) 3 Westray Avenue, Banora Point, NSW 2486, Australia. Chapter President: Vic Lagettie. Chapter Internet address: rpayne@alpher.net.au

Our Chapter 23 AGM was held at the Pine Rivers RSL and was very well attended with seventy two (72) members attending. Our new committee remained much the same as last year. Merv Williams our Quartermaster retired after two years of total dedication. Ashley Spann has stepped into his shoes.

1999 was a rewarding year for this Chapter. Our membership grew to 145 and we again maintained our 100% financial membership for the third year in a row. We continued our practice of holding our meetings a different venue each month; we also maintained a high level of social activities. Over the year we averaged 57 members attending each of our monthly meetings.

We continued our support of the disabled children at the Logan Special School. We donated \$500.00 towards shirts for the Disabled Olympic Basketball team. They now wear the 'Herd' patch on their shirts. We also sponsored special Medi Aids for the elderly in Logan. Our major project was in support of our peacekeeping troops in East Timor. We donated \$100.00 to a comfort fund and the Society matched that donation. Our troops requested teaching aids and clothes for the orphanages of Dili. It is estimated that from our efforts \$60,000 worth of goods has been distributed to the orphanages. We are now raising money to purchase a new cold room for one of the larger orphanages. Our support will continue as long as it is needed.

Our social calendar for 2000 is very full, with a wide variety of activities. We will again host the Joint Chapter Meeting at Grafton in March. We have invited the local members of the Clarence Valley Vietnam Veterans Association to join with us over this weekend. In April we are planning our first Annual Chapter Family Picnic. The goal

(Continued on page 15)

is to eventually make this a major event on the annual veteran calendar.

Chapter XXIV: Rochester, Minnesota Chapter, 656 Maple Pond Court, Shoreview, MN 55126-2025. Chapter President: Charles R. Shay. Chapter Internet (VP Floyd Riester) address: Ries173abn@aol.com

HOME OF THE 2000 REUNION, JUNE 21-25, 2000.

**THE CITY OF ROCHESTER WANTS THE 173D AIRBORNE
BACK HOME - AGAIN !**

We and the City of Rochester, Minnesota are Ready! Are You Ready? The Air Force C-130 named 'The City of Rochester' will be there. Retired Mayor Chuck Hazama will be there. Numerous Black hawk helicopters will be there. The 82nd Airborne HALO TEAM will be there. The question is, "Will You be There?"

You will note from the City activities of Rochesterfest there are many things to do that involve the family's interests.

The City of Rochester, Minnesota event of Sunday, June 25th, the dedication of the Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial is expected to be the Highlight of the Rochesterfest. There are more than 10,000 to 15,000 people are expected to be there for this ceremony. This is the Memorial that the City envisioned to create after the '95 Reunion. Back then, it was a 'Plaque In The Park' idea, but that escalated and developed into a multimillion dollar monument.

The Reunion 2000 is a well planned and expected to be a most enjoyable event. The City of Rochester, Minnesota is awaiting the return of it's adopted 173d Airborne Brigade.

**IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE CITY OF ROCHESTER'S
DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS FIELD VETERANS
MEMORIAL, SCHEDULE YOUR DEPARTURE FOR
MID-AFTERNOON !**

**SEE YOU IN ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA - JUNE 2000 !
AIRBORNE - ALL THE WAY**

Chapter XXV: Thunderbird Chapter, P.O. Box 85080, Phoenix, AZ 85380. New Chapter President: Billy Soza. New Chapter Internet address: b.soza@worldnet.att.net.

We had our elections and named Billy Soza as President, Rick Van Hook as Vice-President (hook5@uswest.net), Jim Dougherty as Secretary, and Eldon Meade as Treasurer (abn173@earthlink.net).

We showed our colors at the rededication of the Ira H. Hayes memorial in Sacaton, AZ 2/19/00. Billy Soza, Jim Dougherty, Eldon Meade, Jesus (Chuy) Peralta, and Bob Stanley. There were other members of The United Desert Chapter XX that are part of the Navajo Indian Nation I didn't get all there names.

The Chapter will commemorate the Junction City Jump with Bob Sigholtz at the Holiday Inn Tuesday night February 22, 2000.

We are working on other programs to support Operation Challenge. It is a Youth program to support troubled youths and dropouts to get back into school and get a GED or High School Diploma.

The Chapter is working with the Arizona Airborne Assoc to conduct National Airborne Day in August.

New Chapter: (Provisional) Chapter XXVII: Louisiana/Mississippi Chapter, P.O. Box 50644, New Orleans, Louisiana. Chapter President: Calvin Hickerson. Chapter Internet address: po50644@bellsouth.net

Vice President Col. Timothy Cloonan, Secretary Chirstopher Hall, Treasurer Ret. BG John Grubbs, Judge Advocate Marvin Deselles hold current Chapter positions. Other members of the provisional Chapter are Chaplain Marcus Tardiff, Jack Hardwick, Gerald Newman, Flecker Coker, Patrick Marvin, Sidell Louis, Arthur Abercombie, Robert Flugence, Charles Brown, Frank McCray, Josh Hughes, Arron Handy, Tannor Dupard, Francis Boudloche, Tony Nolan, Timothy Odom, Geant Warber, Steve Scott, and Elwood Coleman. And the list is growing daily.

*A Society Welcome To A
New Provisional Chapter*

The Louisiana/Mississippi Chapter (XXV)

The Society President has announced the formation of a provisional chapter. You will note that the Chapter and it's chain of command is currently listed in this issues 'Chapter News'. The Chapter address & Internet is that of the Chapter President, Calvin Hickerson. Other Chapter officers are Timothy Cloonan, Christopher Hall, and John Grubbs. Please join me in welcoming the Louisiana/Mississippi Chapter by e-mailing or sending a card of encouragement, support, and good luck in their future endeavors.

The Chapter Charter is currently pending. If the Louisiana/Mississippi Chapter has complied with the Constitution and by-laws of the 173d Airborne Brigade, and is actively engaged in carrying on the pertinent Society business at a Chapter level, their Charter will be voted upon at the Rochester, Minnesota 2000 Reunion.

Good Luck to the Louisiana/Mississippi Chapter.



Organizing members of the New Chapter outside of the Veterans Affairs Medical Building in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Sky Soldiers Assist Poor Students in Vietnam Obtain an Education

In America, if there is no education for our children, then there is usually no opportunity for their subsequent entry and advancement in their chosen profession. In Vietnam, it is exactly the same situation. A worker in a rice paddy is paid about 2000 Dong a day to work from about 0700 (with about a one hour break at lunch) until 1700. In our currency that's about fifteen cents a day, or less than two cents an hour. Does anyone ever wonder why the life expectancy in Third World Countries is 50 years, or over 20 years less than in America or Europe. And they work at least six days a week for these "big bucks" with seven days a week during the busy season (typically there are three harvests a year).

Foreign company labor practices in Third World Countries is another "hot button" in the media these days. There have been all sorts of "confidential" documentaries about 18 year old women having to work in foreign company factories in countries like Vietnam for about \$60 a month. Since they also work a six-day, 60-hour workweek — to the untrained observer this also seems like a "no-brainer". There must be something wrong.

I am not defending these foreign companies (call them Nike or Reebok or Pepsi Cola or just about any labor intensive, pollution sensitive industry.) But, I do believe you have to think about the issue in context with the options available. If you are that 18 year old dirt poor woman (figuratively and literally since if you have recently been to the Vietnam all floors in the villages are still dirt), what would your choice be — six days a week up to your knees in water in a rice field (under a really hot sun) at almost \$5 dollars a month; or six days a week in a hot stuffy factory at \$60 a month. Neither is good, but one is actually cleaner and it pays over twelve times as much.

So what is the way out of this situation? The answer is to figure out a way these children can get a decent education; and later on a decent job; and then break the chain of poverty while also helping their sense of self worth. Maybe it is that old American adage — you have to first have a full belly; then get a decent education; and then get a decent opportunity. Gee, this sounds like a walk through rural America in the late 1800's.

One last bit of background is useful. In Vietnam there are now primary schools (1st through 5th grades) everywhere. Even the smallest village has a three or four room school (kind of like Little House on the Prairie). Competition for Middle and Secondary

Schools is merit based. All children take national examinations and it doesn't cost a thing to go to high school. This sure sounds like the perfect opportunity for poor children. There is only one problem, high schools are not (like the grade schools) near the little villages in the poorest areas. They are located in the larger cities where the teachers live and the largest numbers of students reside. Things we take for granted in America (e.g. school busses and roads that are open all year around), are sometimes not even an option in Vietnam. So what happens? The parents of the poor children who make \$5 dollars a month and have to feed and house three or four children, cannot afford to send their children to high school (room and board costs about \$150 a year in a private residence). Rather, these children head for the rice fields and a life of knee-deep rice farming at fifteen cents a day. What a lost opportunity - the smartest children end up working in the least stimulating, lowest paying job.

Now after this rather long introduction what is the answer? Well, one small answer (a step at a time) in a city most Sky Soldiers knew a lot about (Phu Loi), is being provided by paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Beginning in 1999, the Hung Vuong High School Dormitory Project was begun in Phu Loi. (Hung Vuong was one of Vietnam's first Kings who lived about 200 years before the time of Christ). These kings started Vietnam's tradition of seeking national independence. Shortly thereafter began a thousand years of war with China to secure (and then re-secure) their independence against outside rulers. As we all know, this effort continued off and on until the last invasion of Vietnam by China in 1979. Twenty-one years without a major war on their land (a generation of peace) is unknown in Vietnam for almost 250 years.

The short version of what a few 173rd Airborne Brigade alumni are doing is setting up a fund to build a dormitory for poor rural school children that meet the entrance qualification requirements, but otherwise could not afford to go to school. These students commute from as far away as Ben Cat, Ben Suc, Ly Khe (1st Cavalry was there), and other rural communities over 100 kilometers in distance. Since Hung Vuong is designated a school for gifted students, the difference in attending and not attending is that 98 percent of Hung Vuong's graduates also qualify to attend Vietnam's universities, a similar "free" education to those who pass the examination, and can then afford a place to stay while they are in college. Wow — the differ-

(Continued on page 17)

Sky Soldiers Assist Poor Students in Vietnam

(Continued from page 7)

ence comes down to a life in the rice fields for a really bright child, or the ultimate objective of a college education and a chance to help themselves and their family.

The dormitory we're building will be able to house about 50 students with separate living space for male and female students. There will be outside showers and bathrooms, and a study area. Presently, through donations ranging from \$20 - \$500, we have banked (into a modest interest bearing account) over \$5000. Our commitment is that 100 percent of these donations will go towards the dormitory. None will go for any administrative costs such as stamps, telephone calls, trips to the school, etc. Jack Kelley, Company Commander A/2/503rd and myself are points of contact. The project is titled - Project Next Generation, and our bank account is set up under the same name. Initially an optimistic and very supportive school principle estimated that the dormitory would cost about \$6700. Later that estimate has grown to about \$20 thousand. (different walls, ceilings, and foundation). The principle is still very supportive, and I am convinced the children's education is his number one priority. However, we have told the School we would not fund any of this project until the plans were complete and we would not be charged for any miscellaneous fees or taxes (we explained that 100 percent of our funds will go to construction and none of it to Government officials or for "special taxes").

In addition to SkySoldiers, there have been donations by relatives of SkySoldiers and friends of SkySoldiers. There is a dedication scheduled for 20 November 2000, and we will have details available at this summer's 173rd Reunion in Rochester. All donors will be sent an invitation for the dedication. Some of us who have been to the school before also spend our time wandering prior battlefields; hanging out at the beach; and doing other cultural/tourist activities (we have even climbed a couple mountains). We're not tour guides, but we'll take paratroopers anywhere we go, if they want to go with us. We have been to the site where Charlie Morris earned the Medal of Honor (Bao Binh/Xuan Loc) on 29 June 1966; have sat where A/2/503rd fought on 26 February 1966 (about 10 miles from Phu Loi); and have even visited the area along Highway One where 3rd Platoon A/2/503rd was ambushed on 18 August 1966 (we have renamed this area the Dust Off Café in honor of a little restaurant that marks the exact site of the fight (there was only jungle before). We use the same Army maps from 1966, and guides to find our way around. We are always looking for new areas to scout out. Unfortunately, 16 March 1966 (Silver City) is still in a restricted zone and is not accessible.

So here is the bottom line — if you are one of those SkySoldiers or friends of SkySoldiers or relatives of SkySoldiers who want to help these children and sign up for our project, the process is simple. Make out a check to Project Next Generation and mail it to Mike Thibault, 12517 Chasbarb Terrace, Oak Hill, Virginia 20171. My home phone is 703-476-6624. My e-mail is baobinh@dellnet.com.



The 173d Airborne Reactivated



If you haven't heard, the Brigade is being Reactivated, June 6th in Italy. There will be a story to bring you up to date in the next issue of Sky Soldier. The next issue is planned to be out before the Reunion.

In the meantime, Please do not flood the e-mails and telephone lines with questions we do not have the answers to yet. Hopefully, the next issue will answer many questions. The Society President has issued a directive to the Society Officers to deal with in their respective responsibilities regarding the reactivation. When WE know, YOU will know. There has been a package letter sent to each Chapter President regarding the reactivation. Dissemination of this information in that package should be reaching you through your Chapter Newsletter.

We do know that the Brigade Commander and the Command Sergeant Major, along with personnel for a Color Guard, will be at the Rochester, Minnesota Reunion.

Again, please do not flood the e-mails and telephone lines with questions we do not have the answers to yet.

173d Reunion 2000

Rochester Chapter 24

Rochester, Minnesota

TENTATIVE TIME SCHEDULE

Wednesday - June 21, 2000:

Registration - 0900 to 1800
Golf Tournament
Memorial Appreciation Hog Roast - 1800
Rochesterfest activities, street dance & food vendors
Hospitality Room til 1 AM

Thursday - June 22, 2000:

Registration - 0900 to 1600
On-going Golf tourney
Rochesterfest activities, street dance & food vendors
City of Rochester Welcome Festivities - 1800
Hospitality Room - 2000 to 1 AM

Friday - June 23, 2000:

Registration - 0900 to 1700
On-going Golf tourney
Executive meeting - 0900 to 1100
Women's Brunch - 1000
Rochesterfest activities, street dance & food vendors
Rochesterfest City Parade - 1830 Hrs SHARP!
1700 to 1800 - Brigade assembly at the Civic Center
Arena Park for the parade.
Hospitality Room - 2100 to 1 AM

Saturday - June 24, 2000:

Breakfast on the farm - 0600 to 1100 - \$5.00 pp
Registration - 0900 til noon
On-going Golf tourney ends at noon
General membership meeting - 1230 to 1430
Social Hour 1700 to 1800
Banquet - 1800 Hrs
Hospitality Room - 2200 to 1 AM

Sunday - June 25, 2000:

0700 - 0830 - Society's 173d prayer & Cont. brunch
1000 - 1145 - The City of Rochester's "**Soldiers Field Veterans Memorial**" dedication.
National Anthem and Colors Posted
Introduction by Master of ceremonies
Invocation
City Welcome by Mayor Chuck Canfield
Story of the 173d Airborne Brigade
Adoption of the 173d Airborne Brigade by the City of Rochester, MN in 1966 by Floyd Riester
1030 - Fly-over - Retire the Colors
Good-byes and farewells til next year!

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE CITY OF ROCHESTER'S DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS FIELD VETERANS MEMORIAL, SCHEDULE YOUR DEPARTURE FOR MID-AFTERNOON!

City Activities of Rochesterfest

June 21 - June 25, 2000

Rochester, Minnesota

Wednesday, June 21

Food Vendors
Noontime Entertainment
Million \$ Golf Shoot-out
Family Fun Night

Thursday, June 22

Food Vendors
Noontime Entertainment
Million \$ Golf Shoot-out
Country Night Dance

Friday, June 23

Food Vendors
Noontime Entertainment
Million \$ Golf Shoot-out
Grand Parade
Rock & Roll Dance

Saturday, June 24

Food Vendors
Hot Air Balloon Race
Breakfast on the Farm

Saturday, June 24 (continued)

Million \$ Golf Shoot-out
Duck Derby
Water Ski Show
Giant Street Dance 7:30 - 1:00 a.m.
3 stages, 6 bands

Sunday, June 25

Hot Air Balloon Race
Veterans Memorial Dedication
1860's Baseball

Visit Rochester, Minnesota's Home Page at: RochesterUSA.com

For Your Information: These are activities for Rochester, Minnesota as planned by the Rochesterfest Committee.

Further information should be addressed to: Rochesterfest

P.O. Box 007

Rochester, Minnesota 55903

REGISTRATION FORM
Reunion 2000 — Coming Home
International Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Chapter XXIV — Rochester, Minnesota
Wednesday, June 21 to Sunday, June 25, 2000

Name: _____ Phone: (_____) _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Unit with the Brigade _____ When Served: _____

Shirt size: _____ Hat size: _____

Number of Accompanying Guests: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Shirt size: _____ Hat size: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Shirt size: _____ Hat size: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Shirt size: _____ Hat size: _____

<p>Registration Fee: \$100.00 per Society Member \$ 90.00 per Guest \$ 75.00 per Vendor Area Total Enclosed: \$ _____</p>	<p><i>Make checks payable to:</i> 173d Reunion 2000 <i>Mail to:</i> 173d Airborne Reunion 2000 575 Morningside Place Vadnais Heights, MN 55127</p> <p>Telephone Contact: Arlen Johnson (651) 653-7273</p>
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The main banquet room will only accommodate 1,200, and seating will be based on YOUR timely return of YOUR registration form. Additional seating is available in adjacent rooms for smaller groups (up to 150). Get your Co or Btry together for the banquet and have a secured AO to yourselves. The main banquet room will accommodate all for the program following the banquet.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS - ASK FOR THE 173^D ABN BD REUNION RATES

Holiday Inn (*Headquarters*) 800-241-1597, 800-465-4329 (800 holiday) <http://www.holiday-inn.com>

Hilton — 800-HILTONS (across from the Holiday)

Marriott — 800-MARRIOT (2 blocks from the Holiday)

Kahler Grand — 800-533-1655 danderson@sunstonehotels.com (2 blocks from the Holiday)

Grand Inn & Suites — 800-533-1655 (3 blocks from the Holiday)

Ramada Inn — 800-305-8470 (van service available)

Hotel Prices range from \$60.00 to \$120.00. Check with respective hotel.

From Australia - 800 533 888
From New Zealand - 0800 442 888

<p>The annual Rochesterfest celebration will be in progress during the entire reunion. The new Veterans Memorial inspired by the 173d Reunion in 1995 will be dedicated on Sunday morning. Additional events will be announced within the next few months.</p>

For additional information please write to the above address.



INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
SOCIETY OF THE
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE
P.O. BOX 44173
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20026-4173

APPLICATION FORM

Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade
Annual Dues: \$20.00
Life Membership: \$173.00

Checks Payable to:
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Date
Street Address	City	State	Zip
Area Code/Home Telephone	Area Code/Office Telephone	Social Security Number	

CURRENT JOB TITLE OR MILITARY POSITION

Job Description/Occupation & Company		
Current/Highest Rank	Years Active Service	Chapter Affiliation

SERVICE WITH THE BRIGADE

FROM (Date)	TO (Date)	UNIT (Company & Bn)	RANK HELD
FROM (Date)	TO (Date)	UNIT (Company & Bn)	RANK HELD
FROM (Date)	TO (Date)	UNIT (Company & Bn)	RANK HELD



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SOCIETY OF THE
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20026-4173
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