

SKY SOLDIER

Newsletter of
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF
THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE



Winter 1996

President — COL (Ret) Kenneth Smith
Secretary — COL (Ret) Walter Daniel
Vice-President — CSM (Ret) Stanley Kuzminski
Treasurer — CSM (Ret) Loren L. Storjohann
Editor — SFC (Ret) Timothy R. Stout

Vol. XII, No. 1

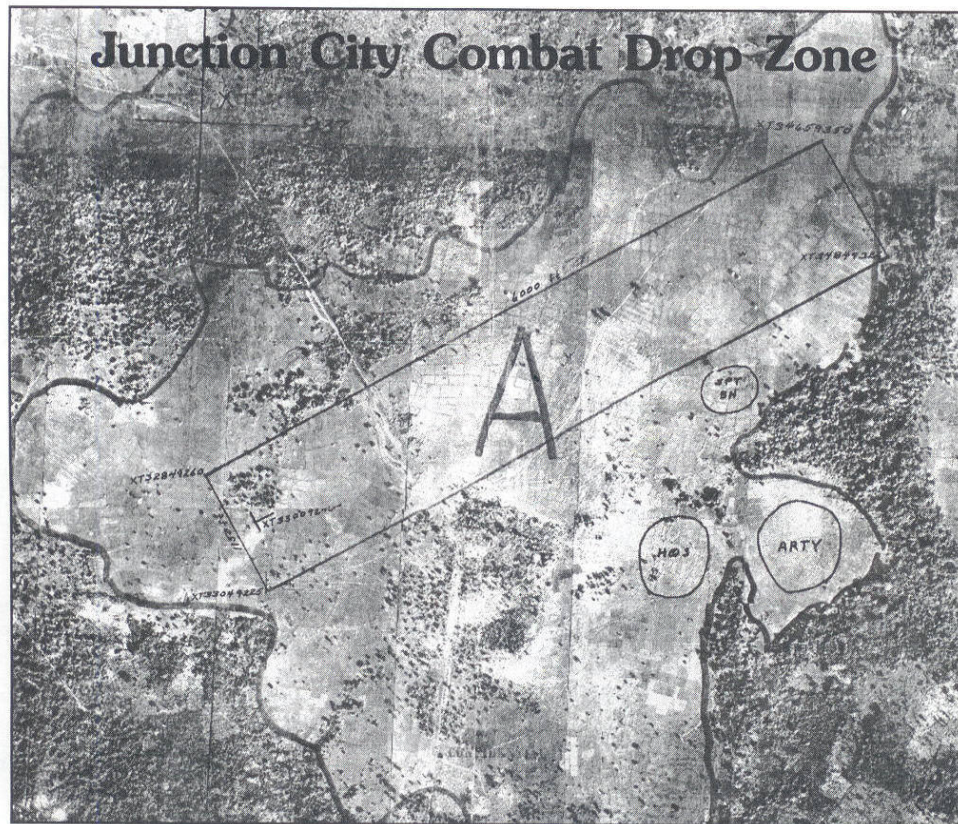


PHOTO SUBMITTED BY: GARY KROLIKOWSKI (HHC-BDE)

This is an aerial photograph of the drop zone where a task force made up of the 2d Bn 503d Infantry made their historic combat jump that launched Operation Junction City on 22 February 1967. While troopers were on the aircraft in route to the drop zone, this map was passed around to each of the jumpers so they would know where to assemble.

From the President

Over the Christmas Holidays I reviewed our membership lists, and was struck by the careers which our Sky Soldiers have pursued. As one might expect, many Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers pursued military careers, and did extremely well. Two Sky Soldiers currently serving exemplify our successes — General Hugh Shelton commands the US Special Operations Command, and Gene McKinney is the current Sergeant Major of the Army.

Of the nearly 3,000 Sky Soldiers who have sent in membership forms listing their careers, we have bank presidents and politicians, farmers and lawyers, truck drivers and mailmen, veterans assistance workers and union members, two Congressmen and many members in state and local governments. More than 100 of our members are in law enforcement and many are teachers. As a unit we can be justifiably proud of our members who not only served in the Brigade with distinction, but continue to contribute to the strength of the Nation in their civilian careers.

We did not achieve our successes on our own. Most of us owe to our wives who supported us unquestioningly, and our children who put up with our stresses. Absences and frequent moves, a debt that we can never repay. Unlike the debt which we owe to our comrades-in-arms, whose lives were taken from them and who cannot hear our thanks, we can let our families know how much we valued their support. They were, truly, "the wind beneath our wings."

Ken Smith, President

We Have A Home Page!

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://sunsite.unc.edu.173abn.html>.

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.

NOTICE

Deadline for submitting articles for the Spring edition is: **15 April 1997.**

For the Summer edition it is 1 August 1997.

Editor



The Chaplain's Corner

"Why did I live when other people died?"

"I should have died, and they should have lived."

"It should have been me instead."

These are expressions of survivor guilt. As survivors many of us tend to want to trade places with the person who died. Time and again, I've heard veterans say that the guys who died were the lucky ones, because they don't have to be around to suffer the painful memories, the agony of shame, unemployment, effects of Agent Orange poisoning, flashbacks, depression, nightmares, and many of the other problematic symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress.

Guilt from surviving when others did not is one of the heaviest loads a veteran can carry. I believe this one aspect of PTSD is responsible for most of the problems with alcohol and drugs that many of us have had over the years. I, for one, spent many years in silent confusion, wondering why "he got it and I didn't." I also spent many years trying to drown my unexplained feelings with booze and drugs. There were a couple of things I did when I really felt that I couldn't go on alone. They helped me through the "kill zone," and perhaps they will help you too.

First of all, don't be a lone ranger — find another 'Nam vet . . . someone you can trust . . . and share some of your memories with him. It is important to tell as many of the details as you can about the incident(s). Remembering environmental conditions, smells, noises, conversations, etc. You will be amazed how much better you will feel by talking about it. (Silence, or "stuffing it" has been a major factor in creating post-stress syndrome).

The next thing that helped me was when I made peace with God. Most of us went to Vietnam with some degree of faith. Many of us lost that faith because we felt we had been "had" by God, our leaders and our country. We felt that perhaps God was somewhere else while we had to witness horrible things. So we blamed Him. Well, when I realized that I wasn't going to make it on down the trail without a "Point Man", and finally stopped blaming God and took some responsibility of my own . . . I surrendered to God and re-established my faith in Him. From the moment I confessed His Son, Jesus Christ as my Savior, things began to get better for me. (Not the ideal yet — but better.) I've since seen it happen to literally hundreds of vets beside myself . . . and it can happen to you.

Welcome home!

Chuck Dean, 173d Chaplain



The Editor's Corner



It is hard for me to believe that it will be thirty years since the day I made the jump with the 2/503. I was supposed to go home that day and there was a seat waiting for me on a freedom bird at Bien Hoa air base. Luckily, however, I had a better seat on a C-130 that was leaving earlier and I did not have to land with it.

After months in the field with the 2/503 and 4/503, my boss (Major Friend) wanted the two best squads on the jump and mine was one of them. The other squad belonged to Sgt Jim "the rock" Steward. For two MP squads to be making a combat jump it was at that time and still is unprecedented.

I can still remember the color of the smoke grenades as I descended down into the rice paddy; there was purple, yellow, red and other colors that made the scene so surreal. Even the parachutes from the heavy drop were of different colors and to see them all come together in such a colorful display was beautiful against the green of the jungles. Green the color of life, would soon prove to be an oxymoron in the coming days of the operation.

I would like to thank all the members who contributed articles and for sharing their thoughts about the only U.S. combat jump made in Vietnam, I would like to single out Russ Roever, who, as a combat medic with the 2/503 had the foresight to have a camera with him on the drop zone and made available to me some of the pictures you will see in this edition of Sky Soldier.

Tim Stout, Editor

Annual Dues Contributions

Our face is a little red. Last Newsletter, we asked you to look at your mailing label and told you that if the number that appeared after your name was less than 98, you were in arrears in your dues. (The year shown in the year for which you owe — i.e., "96" means your annual dues contributions for 96 is overdue and your dues contribution for 97 is currently payable.) Unfortunately, due to a computer glitch, the dues data did not appear on most labels. This is an Army veterans group and this was a typical Army glitch. Our thanks to those who did respond, either guessing at what they owed or responding to the label data.

By way of background, 253 Sky Soldiers and 834 Life members are current in their dues, as are all our Gold Star relatives and 52 Sky Soldiers whose dues are waived for a variety of reasons. 768 have not made their 97 contributions, 670 have yet to make their 96 & 97 contributions, and another 302 are in arrears for 95, 96 and 97.

We need your support to keep our operations going. We ask for an annual dues contribution of \$20.00. Checks should be made payable to the "173d Airborne Brigade." Why not update your records, using the form on this newsletter, while you pay your dues. Together, we can keep our programs going.



In Memoriam

It is my sad duty to announce the death of:

Leonard E. Small (Major-D/SPT 1963-65)

Frederick "Bagpipes" Hanbury (PSG N Co 75th LRP 1968-70)

John W. Blake (N Co 75th LRP)

1SG Robert N. Duarte, (E, 4/503). *Bob Duarte was a dedicated society member and a very active participant in the airborne community. His passing will be sadly missed — especially by me. Timothy R. Stout, editor.*

Colonel (R) Stacy McMarlin. Stacy served with B/Med as a surgeon from May 67-May 68. He combined a high degree of professionalism with a unique and endearing personal commitment to his patients and friends. He will be greatly missed.

Kenneth V. Smith
President

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



Nineteen Members of Chapters XIV and X, attended the burial of 1SGT Robert M. Duarte (E, 4/503).

Skysoldier Scholarship Winners

The Society's Scholarship Committee awarded a record \$5500 to children of former Skysoldiers in 1996. A brief look at the winners:

Nicole Syzdek is the daughter of Mike Syzdek (B/4, 70-71). Nicole is a senior at San Diego State University, majoring in microbiology. Nicole was awarded \$1500.

Jodi Sullivan is the daughter of Dennis Sullivan (H/3/319, 68-69). At the time of her application, Jodi was a high school senior and planning on attending college in her home state of Illinois. Jodi was awarded \$1200 towards her freshman year expenses.

Kevin Sourjohn is "Bud" Sourjohn's (A/2, 70) son. Kevin finished high school in '96 and indicated his plans were to study aviation technology and become a commercial pilot. The Scholarship Committee awarded Kevin \$1000.

Justin Opiola is the son of Ted Opiola (Caspers and 335th AHC, 67-68). Justin received \$650 from the Committee to further his studies. He's a college freshman this year and hopes to become a professional sports broadcaster.

Helen Dale carries on the Dale tradition of excellence. Her father is SGM Harold Dale (B/1, 65-66 and 67-68; H/B, 71). Helen finished high school in Ohio and in her application stated that she wanted to become a physical therapist. Helen received \$650 from the Committee.

Michelle Bull has the distinction of being the first winner of the MG Cunningham Award. Michelle is the daughter of Ray Bull (C/4, 67-68). Michelle is studying exercise and nutritional science at San Diego State University. The winner of the MG Cunningham Award receives \$500.

Awards are based on a variety of factors. The Committee considers an applicant's extracurricular activities in addition to scholastic achievements. In addition, there are three short essays required. One focuses on the applicant's career goals, while the other two related to topics in the news.

Since 1987, the Society has awarded more than \$36,000 in scholarship money.

Applications are now available for those interested in the 1997 competition. Previous winners may apply four years after their first award. For applications, write:

National Headquarters
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade
Attn: Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 44173
Washington, DC 20026-4173

We Have a New Address!

We have a new P.O. Box number that will be easy to remember. While we can still be reached at our old box, our new address is:

**Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade
P.O. Box 44173
Washington, DC 20026-4173**

Scholarship Fund Update

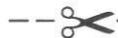
The Society acknowledges the generous gifts of the following to the scholarship fund.

SFC (R) Larry Stafford
Robert J. Giraud
Ronald D. Blanton
COL George Stapleton
Robert deFlesco
John C. Wilkofsky
William E. Davis
Robert P. Kapczynski

Monument Fund Update

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

John Holland



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.

“HOOK-UP”

Andrew Connelly, P.O. 987, Spring, TX 77383-0987 is trying to locate: **1SG Paul Holliday**; **PSG Michael Durket**; **SSG Roscoe Killet** and **SSG Franklin Williams**. If anyone knows where these troopers can be found please contact Andrew.

Mark S. Lavetti, 13005 Bryantown Ct., Bryantown, MD 20617. E-mail: mseki@radix.net. Home: 301-932-8066; Fax: 301-274-9751 is trying to locate anyone who may have served with and knew his high school friend **David R. Reynolds**, Co B 4/503, KIA 21 Nov 1967 at Dak To. Please contact Mark if you can provide any information about his friend.

I am looking for anyone who knew or remembers **Capt.** (first name unknown) **Castro** (he was Cuban) or **Sgt. Phillip Quitaquit** (he was Phillipino) who served with the 173d Delta or Echo companies of 1/503 69-70. I think often about both of them and would like to know where they are, what ever happened to them, or anyone else remembers them. Call me or write: Carl Dodd (D/E/1-503 69-70), 217 E. Frances Ave., Peoria, IL 61614. (309) 693-1197.

I would like to hear from anyone who sailed on the U.S.S. Breakenrich to Okinawa 2/503, in April 1960. Gil Handy, 2723 Toland Drive, Fairfield, CA 94533. (707) 429-1597.



Thanks and Honors

Years ago, the Army created the Regimental System to foster unit pride, improve unit esprit, perpetuate regimental history and . . . provide the common thread linking our illustrious past with the present . . .” Among other features, the program calls for appointment of an Honorary Colonel and Sergeant Major of the Regiment, and Distinguished Members of the Regiment. The primary linkage for the Society is the 503d Infantry Regiment (the 3-319th Field Artillery Regiment is still active has available a parallel system.)

Over the past years, two Society members have served, unheralded as Honorary Colonel and Sergeant Major the 503d Infantry Regiment. The Society and the Army owe a big Airborne thanks to Colonel Bob Sigholtz, who has expended considerable effort and resources in support of the program including visits to the 1-503d Infantry battalion in Korea, and to Larry Okendo. Both Sky Soldiers have supported this important program, and both are stepping down this February as the Honorary positions rotate.

I have been in contact with Don Abbott, President of the 503d Infantry Regimental Combat Team Association. We have determined that the positions of Honorary Colonel and Sergeant Major will rotate between the two units. The 503d RCT has nominated a distinguished World War II Combat Soldier, Robert M. Atkins, to be the Honorary Colonel, and I am pleased to announce the appointment of CSM Bobby Teague as Honorary Sergeant Major of the Regiment. These appointments are effective immediately for a two year term.

In recognition of distinguished service to the Army, the Society, and the Community, it is my privilege to announce the appointment of the following soldiers as Distinguished Members of the Regiment:

General John Deane, Jr.
SFC Larry Okendo
MG Ellis Williamson
CSM Edward Proffit
MG John R.D. Cleland
CSM Vincent Rogiers
COL Robert Sigholtz
Frank Miceli

These appointments are effective immediately and are indefinite. This recognition, made on behalf of the members of the Society, is our way of marking our respect and thanks for a lifetime of service and giving to our Society, the Army, and our nation.

Ken Smith, President

Family Tradition Lives On



Chuck Dean, National Chaplain is happy to report that his son Ailen R. Dean is serving with Co. A, 82d Signal Battalion, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC. Pfc. Dean is an R.T.O. just like his dad was and is assigned to the assault platoon. AIRBORNE!

Letters to the Editor

**WOMEN IN
MILITARY SERVICE FOR AMERICA
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION
Dept. 560
Washington, DC 20042-0560**

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your generous donation of \$500 to the Women in Military Service Memorial. It is appreciated very much.

This memorial is the first major, national recognition of the contributions and achievements of women. It is a long-overdue tribute to the many thousands of women who have served this country so well.

I hope you will help us spread the word about it to your friends and colleagues because every woman who has ever served or is serving today deserves the tribute this project is going to pay them. If you know of any women who are eligible to register but haven't, up to 20 of them may be registered with your donation. I've enclosed a form, which may be copied, for this purpose.

Thanks again. We are pleased to count you as one of the memorial's supporting organizations.

Sincerely,
Wilma L. Vaught,
Brigadier General, USAF, Retired,
President.

Dear Editor:

I had no idea we sat opposite each other on the Junction City Jump. I had trouble making the jump as my BN C.O. thought at age 53, I was too old. My response was that I was responsible for all the rigging, I was going to be on the DZ to observe any problems, it was not going to be someone else.

There was not much for me to worry about. It was a daylight jump with no enemy air and we felt our DZ was uncompromised. We had worked out with the Air Force a safe 800 FT drop altitude flown without a pop-up and each plane was to make two passes over the DZ to make sure there was no scattering of troops.

After our successful jump, a resupply of food, water, medical, light weapons and clothing was due. It was rigged by the 109th QM (Aerial Supply) at Cam Rahn Bay. Our DZ was clear. We stood on the edge. Three planes approached at 200 ft and popped up to 300, let their loads go with everything smashing in! Fortunately no one was in the area and no fuel or ammo was in the bundles, there was no fire, but it proved my anti pop-up stand.

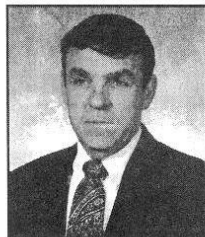
After retiring in '73 I have kept active in Rigging reunions, making speeches, war stories and the like! Made the Rigger Hall of Fame in '82; the QM Hall of Fame in '94 and had the 549th QM Co. Aerial Supply made a Distinguished unit of the Corps in '95!

Airborne! All the Way!

Chief Melvin

(Continued on page 12)

173d Member Elected to Kentucky House of Representatives



Mike Weaver who served with the Brigade in Vietnam from May 1969 to May 1970 was elected on November 5th 1996 to represent the 26th district in the Kentucky House of Representatives. While with the Brigade, Captain Weaver commanded D Co 16th Armor and E Trp 17th Cav. He commanded each of the units for 6 months.

After 34 years of service, Colonel Weaver retired from active duty and now resides in Radcliff, KY with his wife of 35 years, Lois. The Weavers have 4 daughters: Rebecca, Cynthia, Teresa and Kathleen. All four of their daughters are either in the military or married to someone who is in the military. That's what I would call an all military family.

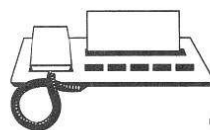
After retirement Mike went into the construction business and is now the owner and operator of J.W. Construction in Radcliffe, KY.

Mike, we wish you the best of luck in your new position as our Representative in the Kentucky State House.
Hugh C. Robinson, (AKA Heavy Drop),
Master-At-Arms

PS: Mike is my Representative here in Kentucky.

Doctor has "eye" on hit

Loren E. Little, M.D., F.A.C.S., who specializes in ophthalmology and ophthalmic surgery, and former 173d Brigade Surgeon, has produced a new CD album called "Out of the Blue" which features jazz trumpeter Carl Saunders. The album which reached number 16 in late December was produced by Dr. Little because no label would pick it up. In keeping with the airborne tradition, Dr. Little formed his own label, did the graphics, line notes and now the CD has been submitted for Grammy Awards in four categories. The CD has received critical national acclaim from jazz radio stations, is on SNL records and distributed nationally by MS: telephone number 1-800-688-3383.

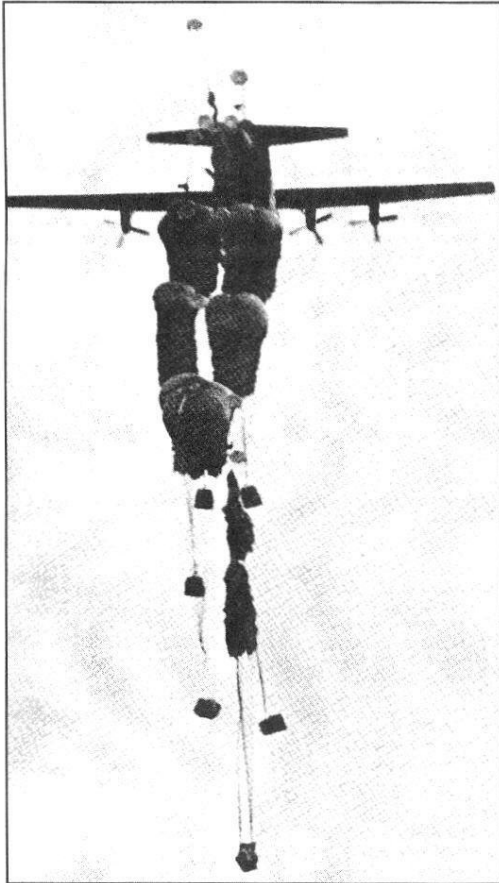


**FAX
the FACTS**

**KEEP THE SOCIETY READERS UPDATED BY
SENDING YOUR NEWS ARTICLES BY FAX TO:**

(715) 425-7738

24 HOURS A DAY



"Heavy Drop" of supplies to support 2/503 INF during Operation Junction City.

News About Sky Soldiers

John Hozer, (Lt Cpt Pilot with Co. A 82nd Aviation and 173d Aviation Platoon 1966) is Retired, and lives at P.O. Box 146, Earlyville, VA 22938. Tel: 804-973-8409.

Thomas A. Houf (B/2 & A/Spt 71-72) is a Teacher at the Boonville Correctional Center, and lives in Boonville, MO.

Michael R. Barnes (D/4) is an Attorney at the Law Offices of Michael R. Barnes, and lives in Key West, FL.

Donald Richard (B/1 70-71) is Vice President/Landscape Architect with John G. Crowe Associates, Inc., and lives in Marlboro, MA.

Charles A. Bowles, Sr. (D/1 67-68) is Owner of Bowles Construction, and lives in Warrenton, MO.

Robert P. Kapczynski (D/16 67) is a Pipefitter for Peco Energy, and lives in Philadelphia, PA.

Charles Knecht (A/2 65-66) is a Correctional Officer for the State of Florida, and lives in Ocala, FL.

Charles L. Schwarz (A/2 66-67) is a Senior Parole Officer with the New York State Division of Parole, and lives in Middletown, NY.

Daniel G. Brothers (A/4 69) is a Sales Representative for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, and lives in Tampa, FL.

Col. James F. Willie (C/H/2 71) has been appointed Inspector General of the Europe Command, and is now living in Stuttgart, Germany.

SGM Lawrence E. Colling (A/Spt 67-68) is Retired, and lives on "Forest by the Sea Street" in Carolina Beach, NC.

Gregory B. Barton (A/1 64-65) is an Industrial Mechanic for Shuller International, and lives in Napoleon, OH.

COL George E. Dexter (H/2 64-66) is Retired, and lives in Albuquerque, NM.

Cleo R. Williams, Jr. (A/2 68-69) is a Student at the Test Technology Institute, and lives in Temple Hills, MD.

Robert J. Fleming, Jr. (A/D/M 67-68) is a Police Officer for the U.S. Postal Service, and lives in Munhall, PA.

George A. Brown (C/3 67-68) is Retired, and lives in Indiana, MS.

Roger D. Holman (H/3-319 66-67) is a Meat Department Manager for Gilbert IGA, and lives in Chisholm, MN.

Thomas R. Eckhoff (N/75th Inf) is a Medical Transport Driver for Better Care Lines, and lives in Richfield, MN.

Russell "Mike" Burkhardt (H/2 & H/Bde 63-65) is Retired, and lives in Woodbury, MN.

David W. Nordan (A/Spt 66-67) is an Investigator for the Brooklyn, MN Police Department, and lives in Brooklyn Park, MN.

Thomas G. Arneson (H/3-319 68-69) is a Land Surveyor, and lives in Brooklyn Center, MN.

Gary D. Luoma (C/1 and Bde MP Platoon 67-68) is a Plant Repairman for Empire Mine Company, and lives in Neaynoe, MN.

Donald S. Bulford (D/3 67-68) is a Senior Program Analyst, and lives in Norcross, GA.

Albert J. Conely (C/1 70-71) is a Correctional Sergeant at the Raleigh, NC Central Prison, and lives in Lillington, NC.

John C. Wilkofsky (B/3-319 & Caspers) works in Real Estate and as an S&B Investor and lives in Mt. Bethel, PA.

Jack T. Kelley (A/2, H/Bde 66-67 and H/3 70) is General Director, Mens Ministries, Pentacostal Holiness Church, and lives in Fayetteville, NC.

Klaus "Pete" Peterson (C/1 & 75th Inf 68-69) is an Injection Molder, Musician, and Songwriter, and lives in Belen, NM.

Leonard S. Podgorski (H/3-319 67-68) is Access Inventory Control Officer at the Cantonville Community College, and lives in Abingdon, MD.

Aaron Handy (C/3 69-70) works at USPS, and lives in New Orleans, LA.

James E. Glaze (H/2 66-67) is Lead Baggage Agent for Continental Airlines (Houston office), and lives in Conroe, TX.

COL. J. Michael Weaver (Commander D/16 and E/17 69-70) is President of J.M. Weaver Construction

(Continued on page 8)

News About Sky Soldiers — From page 7

- Company and Kentucky State Representative from the 26th District, and lives in Radcliff, KY.
- Ken M. Hankinson** (C/1 69) is Self Employed (Pharmart-Mail Order Catalogue) and lives in Tolland, CT.
- Charles R. Brune** (C/1 70-71) is a Texas Ranger (State Police Investigator) and lives in Pflugersville, TX.
- MG Richard D. Cegar** (H/Bde & C/A/1 63-66) is First Vice President — Investments for Prudential Securities, Inc., and lives in Carmel, IN.
- Thomas V. Racho** (E/17 67-68) is a Millwright for Ford Motor Company, and lives in Eastpointe, MI.
- John C. Johnson** (A/4 69-70) is in Sales, Security and Construction for Sportsman's Pier, Inc., and lives in Atlantic Beach, NC.
- COL Richard E. Cooley** (B/2 69-70) is a Self-Employed Certified Public Accountant, and lives in Sarasota, FL.
- CSM Arno C. Land** (A/1 66-67 & H/1 69-70) is a Farmer, and lives in Tipton, IN.
- MSG Joe Steed** (C/2 65-66) is a Police Officer in Columbus, GA.
- Kenneth R. Husted** (C/1 66-67) is a Carpenter/Cabinet Maker, and lives in Velarde, NM.
- John Stormzand** (B/1 & C/4 70-71) is a Photojournalist, and lives in Auburn Hill, MI.
- Patrick X. Garvin** (C/2 66-67) is an Investment Broker for A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc., and lives in Slidell, LA.
- Rois Black** (A/3 67-68) is Retired, and lives in Belmont, NC.
- Peter F. Sessler** (H/4 68-70) is Disabled, and lives in Syracuse, NY.
- Douglas P. Kinsman** (B/H/4 68-69) is an Automotive Engineer for General Motors, and lives in Fenton, MI.
- Dennis A. Wink** (A/3 68-69) runs Wink International Drilling Contractors, and lives in Juneau, AK.
- Willie G. Adams, "Adam I,"** (H/2 65-66 & E/17 70-71) is Region Manager, Eastern North Carolina, for Orkin Exterminating Co., and lives in Raleigh, NC.
- Teddy L. Arnold** (B/3 67-68) is a Hospital Services Driver at the Irwin Memorial Blood Center, and lives in Fairfield, CA.
- Walter L. Thompson** (A/4 67-68) is a Management Engineer for the NC Dept. Transportation, and lives in Cory, NC.
- William M. Williams** (A/4 66-67) is a Deputy Sheriff (Sergeant), and lives in Big Pine, CA.
- Robert P. Blumenthal Bruce** (B/Spt 67) is President of Arthroscopic Assistants, Inc., and lives in San Jose, CA.
- Mark W. Vossburg** (E/D/2 and E/17 69-71) is Battalion Chief, City of Hibbing (MN) Fire Department, and lives in Hibbing, MN.
- Robert L. Burns** (A/Spt & D/3 68-70) is Retired, and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- William R. Dixon** (B/H/4 67-68) is Vice President for Operations, Pic-N-Pay Stores, Inc., and lives in Matthews, NC.
- Ted Nowicki** (C/3-319 68-70) works for Bethlehem Steel and lives in Valparaiso, IN.
- Joe F. Atkinson** (C/1 66-67) is President of Chapter V (Fort Bragg/Fayetteville Chapter) and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- Joseph H. Lundberg** (H/Spt 70-71) is a salesman and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- John C. Griffith** (E/17 69-70) is an Ammunition Handler at the Fort Bragg Ammunition Supply Point and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- Michael Constantino, Jr.** (C/3 66-67) is a Self-Employed Home Repairman and Painter and lives in Fort Lauderdale, FL.
- Joseph Fratangelo** (A/1 68-69) is a Supervisor/Unit Manager for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and lives in Wilmington, DE.
- Gene N. Cartier** (H/1 63-65 & C/3-319 67-68) is Director, Network and Systems Engineering, Systems Research and Applications Corporation, and lives in Springfield, VA.
- Leo A. Quinn** (A/2 70-71) is a U.S. Government Warehouse Man (U.S. Coast Guard) and lives in Fishing Creek, NJ.
- Richard Rainville** (B/1 68-69) is a retired NYC Bus Driver, and lives in Brooklyn, NY.
- Timothy A. Howell** (C/H/4 67-70) is the Owner of "The Flea Specialist, Inc." and lives in Sanford, NC.
- Robert H. Sudbrink** (D/1 69-70) works for the U.S.P.S., and lives in Alden, NY.
- Paul Hall** (E/3 70-71) is a Bus Operator for the New Jersey Transit Corp., and lives in Jersey City, NJ.
- Marcelino H. Carrillo** (D/1 69-70) is Owner/Operator of The Old Chaparral Lounge and lives in Laredo, TX.
- Harold Mash** (HQ/BDE 67) is a Federal Investigator, and lives in Conroe, TX.
- Patrick Sirmeyer** (E/17 66-67) is a Letter Carrier for USPS, and lives in Coral Springs, FL.
- Earl Westmark** (E/17 66-67) is a Long Distance Truck Driver, and lives in Springfield, MO.
- Michael P. Kelly** (A/2 68) is Owner of Synder and Kelly Realty, and lives in Charlotte, NC.
- Richard M. Scott** (H/4 & H/Bde 67-68) is a Financial Consultant for Merrill Lynch, and lives in Lexena, KS.
- John Golz** (1/50 Inf 69-70) is Branch Manager, Berkshire Mortgage Corporation, and lives in Chicago, IL.
- Tom J. Burns** (B/1 70) is Co-Owner of Thai-Asian World-Wide Ladies Introduction Services, and lives in Kailua-Kona, HI.
- George A. Sutherland** (E1 & C/2 70-71) is CEO, Enviro-Homes of Arizona, Corporation, and lives in Scottsdale, AZ.
- William R. Dixon** (B/H/4 67-68) is Vice President for Operations, Pick-n-Pay Stores, Inc., and lives in Matthews, NC.
- Ronald D. Regan** (E/17 68-70) is New Car Department Manager for Patrick Ford, Inc., and lives in Fayetteville, NC.
- Thomas A. Kelley** (C/H/1 67-68 and 39th Inf 70-71) is retired from both the Army and the Postal Service, and lives in Lakeland, FL.
- Gregory J. Stuart** (D/2 68-69) is District Manager, Capital Newspapers, and lives in Schenectady, NY.
- Robert L. Stokes** (E/17 63-64 and 65-66, & H/Bde 66-67) works for the Postal Service and lives in Paducah, KY.
- John J. Walsh** (H/Bde and H/2 66) is Retired and lives in Savannah, GA.

(Continued on page 10)

Chapter News

Chapter I: Sigholtz Capital Chapter, 611 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., Box #1115, Washington, DC 20003

New chapter officers elected: President LTC (R) Ed Anthony; Vice President Michael J. Thibault; Secretary Scott C. Brewer; Treasurer John B. Foley; Special Assistant Russ Ward. Chapter I and its members are hosting a 30th anniversary dinner at the Fort Belvoir Officers Club on 22 Feb. 1997. The function is to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the jump that started Operation Junction City in 1967.

Chapter II: Lozada-Thurston-Watters Chapter, 450 West 148th Street, New York, NY 10031

Chapter members Victor Tejera, Lucian Vicchio, Leroy Simpson, and Tony Albarello cooked over sixty meals for Thanksgiving. The meals were then given out to homeless veterans in New York City, bringing some hope and happiness to some hungry people who might have not eaten that day.

Chapter III: Columbus/Ft. Benning Chapter, PO Box 1977, Ft. Benning, GA 31905-0577

Chapter IV: 530 W. Ruscomb Street, Philadelphia, PA 19120-3754

Gerald Ney represented Chapter IV as a delegate and as the assistant chaplain for the Philadelphia United Veterans Council and gave the benediction at the Veteran Day services held in Philadelphia. Gerald has also attended many other military functions, including heading a guard detail to protect the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans memorial.

Chapter V: Ft. Bragg Chapter, PO Box 71313, Ft. Bragg, NC 28307

Chapter VI: Elite Forces Chapter, c/o Dawn DiNardo, 4694 N. Sapphire Drive, Hoffman Estates, IL 60195

The chapter held their election for officers and came up with co-presidents Arlen Bertrand and Frank Miceli and Andy Brown was reelected as the vice president. Word has it that Andy likes his title, especially the "vice" part is still waiting. Hang in there Andy. The chapter is also happy to report that the membership rolls have increased during 1996.

Chapter VII: Florida Chapter, Stephen A. Turpen, 5580 Teakwood Road, Lakewood, FL 33467 — (561) 966-1323

Chapter IX: New England Chapter, P.O. Box 632, Bellingham, MA 02019.

Chapter secretary Dennis Hill recently broke his leg while at work; this was a fortunate "break" for the chapter in that it freed Dennis up for a few weeks to work on the 1998 reunion that will be held in Boston.

Chapter X: 2469 Louis Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303

Chapter XI: Australian (Down Under) Chapter, "Duty First", PO Box 5-173A, Croydon Park, NSW 2133, Australia

Chapter XIII: Southwest Chapter, 830 Oakbluff Drive., Lancaster, TX 75146

Election of officers was held and by acclimation everybody is still in place except our newsletter editor, Paul Richards is the new newsletter editor and he can be reached at 9503 Marble Mount, Houston, TX 77064. Phone number is 713-894-5969.

All information on the rest of us is still current with the exception of my area code which is now 972. I can also be reached by pager. That number is 214-835-5717.

Our sec/treas Harold Brent is working on chapter report and should be to you shortly along with the rest of our pathfinder pledge.

Looking forward in joining you to serve the Society again this year.—Dusty Jarnagin 972-227-4766.

Chapter XIV: Southern California Chapter, PO Box 5482, El Monte, CA 91734

Chapter XV: SSG John K. Weber Chapter, PO Box 583131, Minneapolis, MN 55458-3131

The chapter donated an American flag, POW/MIA flag and a 173d Brigade flag to the New Zealanders that attended the 1995 reunion. The flags were recently officially presented to the New Zealand 161 Battery veterans who served with the brigade in Vietnam. The parent unit of the 61st is the 16th New Zealand Field Artillery.

Chapter XVI: Pacific Northwest Chapter, 1512 116th Street, South, Tacoma, WA 98444-2522. Chapter Internet Address: Redleg@prostar.com

The chapter will be holding its February meeting at the Sun Ya Seafood restaurant located in the international district of Seattle on 22 February, which also coincides with the dinner being held by Chapter II to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the jump made on Operation Junction City. Call Chapter President Lou Banks, at 206-535-0513 or Frank Pearce at 206-824-8083 for more details. The chapter has taken up the proposal to hold meetings in various local areas. Bruce Tilford volunteered to have a meeting in Bend Oregon and Don Palmer has taken charge in the northern Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom and Island Counties.

Chapter XVII: Western Pennsylvania Chapter, c/o Jerry Sopko, 101 Center Street Ext., Jeannette, PA 15644

Chapter XVIII: Oklahoma Chapter, Chapter Officers: President: Mr. Richard Triplett, RR #1, Box 365, Mutual, OK 73853, 405-989-3270

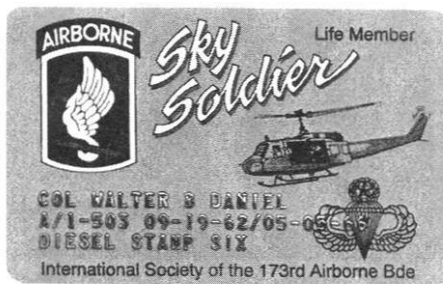
The chapter has been very active in finding new members. Current members recently attended a ceremony at the "moving wall" at Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Chapter XIX: *Please note new address.* New Zealand Chapter, P.O. Box 260, Papakura, South Auckland, New Zealand

Chapter XX: United Desert Chapter, PO Box 12271, Tucson, AZ 85732-2271. (602) 586-9180.

Chapter XXI: The Mountain States Chapter, 3021 Whitehall Drive, West Valley City, UT 84119, (801) 967-2137. Dave Epstein, President.

New Life Membership Cards Available Now



The Society has redesigned the Life Membership Card to accommodate those that were dissatisfied with the hospital-like appearance of the older white card. **The new plastic card is metallic gold, the patch is red, white, and blue, the words Sky Soldier are red and white, the jump wings and huey are black, and the balance of the printing is blue.**

As in the past, the cost of the card is included in the life membership fee paid by new members. Current life members may purchase a replacement for \$10.00. (Payable by check or money order.)

When ordering a replacement Life Membership Card, please indicate your preferred embossing (three lines maximum, 21 letters/numbers/characters/spaces per line, include periods and commas). The first two lines are standard. The third line is optional. Enter your preferred embossing below and return with your check or money order to:

International Headquarters
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade
P.O. Box 44173
Washington, DC 20026-4173.

Be sure to include your return address.

Line One: Rank/Grade/Title; First Name, Middle Initial, Last name, and suffix:

Example: COL WALTER B. DANIEL

Military Rank/Grade

OR

Mr., Mrs., Ms; First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name; Jr., Esq., III, IV

Line Two: Unit and Dates of Tour.

Example: A/1-5-3 09-62/05-66 (note that the illustrated Month, Day, Year will run into the Jump wings.)

Unit Dates of Tour

HHC/4-503 04-67/03-68

Line Three: Optional (See Below for acceptable entries — deviations are subject to Society Approval/Acceptance).

Example: DIESEL STAMP SIX

Second and Subsequent Units, Dates of Tour(s) OR Chapter Affiliation

OR Nickname OR Call Sign (Do Not Exceed 21 Spaces)

Veterans' Day November 11, 1996

THE WILD BUNCH

(A.K.A. Chapter II)

On Veteran's Day a small patrol from Chapter II attended a posh fund-raiser for the benefit of the Veterans' Leadership Program.

While most members avoid multi-unit activities, preferring instead the company of their airborne brothers, several members nevertheless attended this function because, wholly without the chapter's knowledge, the 173d Airborne Brigade was providing the thematic centerpiece for the evening.

The VLP had seized upon the 30th anniversary of the visit of Playmate of the Year Jo Collins to the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam as the theme for its event at the Motown Cafe. Playboy Magazine was brought into it, and Playboy participated by inviting Jo Collins and other playmates, past and present, to attend. The VLP had also invited Captain Price, who had accepted the life time subscription from Ms. Collins on behalf of his company in 'Nam.

In conversation with Playboy, our chapter president agreed to ask as many members as he could reach to attend, as a courtesy to Playboy. So, Anthony Albarello, Jim Chieco, Charles Eaddy, Jeff Failing, Vic Tejera and Lucian Vecchio attended from Chapter II. Suffice to say, the impact of these Sky Soldiers on the VLP will never be forgotten.

Chapter II Sky Soldiers were everywhere: from the exclusive VIP lounge, (it was their reasoning that all Sky Soldiers are by definition VIPs) to photo opportunities, to favorable press coverage the next day.

Bringing the airborne view of what it means to be proud combat paratrooper, they espoused their views to politicians, to newsmen, and to the captains of Wall Street and business. They brought a high level of positive attitude, good cheer, and pride-in-service that was found to be refreshing, and was generally favorably received, certainly by the non-military persons present.

It was such a good night, in fact, that these members of Chapter II are not likely to be invited to the next VLP function. Airborne . . . All the Way!!

Our annual picnic will be held on

Saturday, August 2, 1997

This is an open invitation to all Herd members and their families and to the entire airborne community. We have plenty of space to accommodate RV's and camping. Hotels and motels within ten minutes of event. All those interested please call Tony at 908-873-0319 so that we may reserve your site or advise on hotel accommodations.

News About Sky Soldiers — From page 8

Howard J. White (H/A/1 & C/Spt 63-65) is Director of Personnel and Labor Relations, Long Island University, and lives in Corona, NY.

Harry K. Schmidt (A/2 67) recently retired after 24 years as a Technical Writer/Editor with the Department of the Navy. He lives in Holland, PA (and provided the text for this note — "Once an editor . . .")

Resolution to be Introduced

The following Resolution will be introduced at Reunion 97 in Tucson, Arizona. If it is adopted by vote of the General Membership of the Society, we will join other Airborne Associations and Societies in asking that the Department of the Army and the United States Congress proclaim the 16th August as National Airborne Day.

Walt Daniels, National Secretary

RESOLUTION 97-1

WHEREAS: The United States of America War Department, on June the 25th of nineteen hundred and forty five, established The Original Parachute Test Platoon and authorized them to experiment with the use of airborne troops; and

WHEREAS: The Original Parachute Test Platoon, composed of forty eight volunteers, began training in July of nineteen hundred and forty years; and

WHEREAS: The Original Parachute Test Platoon achieved the first official United States Army parachute jump on August the 16th of nineteen hundred and forty years; and

WHEREAS: The success of The Original Parachute Test Platoon led to the activation and employment of highly effective United States Army Airborne formations for World War II and all armed conflicts that have followed; and

WHEREAS: The 173d Airborne Brigade is the first United States Army Separate Airborne Brigade organized out of the success of the Original Parachute Test Platoon; and

WHEREAS: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) fought longer in combat than any United States Army unit since, and including, the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS: The International Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) was established to perpetuate the memory of Sky Soldiers who gave all in the service of the United States of America and thus foster esprit de corps among fellow paratroopers; now, therefore, The Society

DOES RESOLVE AND DECLARE, in this the 30th anniversary year of our jump into history, in honor of those who made the first jump into history, that **HENCEFORTH,** the 16th day of August be known and observed as **NATIONAL AIRBORNE DAY** and calls on all of its chapters and members to join in this observation, and seek to have **NATIONAL AIRBORNE DAY** recognized by proclamation of the United States Army and the United States Government.

By Approval of the General Membership in meeting assembled, this 3d day of July, 1997:

Walt Daniel
Colonel, USA Retired
Secretary

Kenneth V. Smith
Colonel, USA Retired
President

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1317

LANE EVANS
11th District, Illinois

Jan 28, 1997

Colonel Ken Smith, US Army (Retired)
President
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade
P.O. Box 44173
Washington DC 20026-4173

Dear Colonel Smith:

I am writing regarding the case of Alfred Rascon, a valiant heroic Vietnam veteran whose actions during the war should be honored with the Congressional Medal of Honor. I request that your organization join me in urging the Department of Defense to award him our nation's highest military honor.

There is no question that on the merits of Mr. Rascon's case he deserves the Medal of Honor. His heroic acts speak for themselves. On March 16, 1966, while his platoon was under intense fire from a North Vietnamese unit in South Vietnam, SP4 Rascon risked his own life repeatedly to save the lives of wounded comrades and to prevent his unit from being overrun. While seriously wounded three times, he managed to perform his duties as a medic and save the lives of two of his fellow soldiers. On two separate incidents, he used his body as a shield to protect the wounded from the full force of enemy grenades. Ignoring his own serious wounds from the grenades, again under direct enemy fire and grenades, he reached a wounded soldier laying on an open enemy trail. Without hesitation, he turned his back to the enemy



A cargo parachute drapes a tree with its nylon green splendor.

machine gun firing at them, to aid and cover the soldier with his own body from direct hostile fire. While performing his valiant act, he was seriously wounded in the hip, but still managed to carry the much larger soldier to safety.

Mr. Rascon also risked his own life to help save his unit. Witnesses testify that although already seriously wounded in the hip, he retrieved an M-60 machine gun and its ammunition, under fire in an open enemy trail, that was abandoned by an evacuated soldier. This act alone helped save the platoon which was in danger of being overrun by the enemy. In addition to this and despite the fact that he was severely wounded, SP4 Rascon continued to search out and aid the wounded. When the enemy was routed, he then supervised the evacuation of the wounded, refusing medical help to himself until he collapsed.

Immediately after the firefight, eyewitnesses recommended Mr. Rascon for the Medal of Honor. However, their written recommendations never went beyond the Platoon leader, who did not witness Mr. Rascon's acts of bravery. He was instead awarded the Silver Star. Considering his heroic efforts at the risk of his own life, and that the citation for the Silver Star omitted numerous acts of valor, the award is inappropriate. His wounds were so extensive that he had to be discharged from the Army.

Unfortunately, the Defense Department's bureaucracy is preventing Mr. Rascon from obtaining this belated and deserved honor. Despite repeated attempts to urge the Pentagon to recognize his heroic actions, they have failed to substantively review his case. This is unexcusable considering the actions he took that were well above and beyond the call of duty. I hope that you can help us address this issue.

As has often been the case, the deeds and sacrifices of our servicemen who served in Vietnam have gone unrecognized. I believe that we cannot put the legacy of the Vietnam War behind us until we fully honor the commitment and sacrifices of the veterans who served selflessly in that war. Your organization's work on behalf of Mr. Rascon would do much to ensure that we honor all Vietnam veterans.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
LANE EVANS, Member of Congress

Letters to the Editor — From page 6

Dear Editor:

Just wanted to let the Society know that I have booked Britt Small and his band Festival to play in Hillsboro, Ohio on 11 May 1997, which is about 50 miles north of Cincinnati. For more information members can call me Russ "Doc" Roever (B-Med 65/67) at 513-393-5574.

Dear Editor:

My name is A.B. Garcia from Australia (Downunder) and my wife Ursula will be attending the reunion in Arizona this coming July. I am looking for Alvin Albecker, (HHC 2/503 1965-66). I have also caught up with three other Herd members from that era.

A.B. this is your confirmation on the fax, Editor.

(Continued on page 18)

Planning the Jump

By John R. (Uncle Jack) Deane, Jr., General, US Army, Retired

Not many people know about the planning that prepared us for The Jump. There were only six people who knew the details at the time — three Army and three Air Force. The three Army Troopers were Uncle Jack, the Brigade Commander, Bob Sigholtz, Commander of the 2/503, and Major Steverson, the Brigade S-3. The reason was simple — security, the need for which was apparent from earlier experience.

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

The price of seizing the airstrip could have been great in loss of lives and equipment. The strip ran north to south for two or three thousand feet along the spine of a very narrow ridge. The cleared area was less than 100 meters wide and, to the east and west, dropped off precipitously into double and triple canopy jungle. The threat to the troopers' lives comes in a moment. The threat to equipment lay in topography, terrain and vegetation. Any heavy drop equipment — artillery pieces, ammunition, vehicles and most heavy equipment bundles — falling outside of the cleared area would have been irretrievably lost in the heavy jungle canopy, hung up there for all time.

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

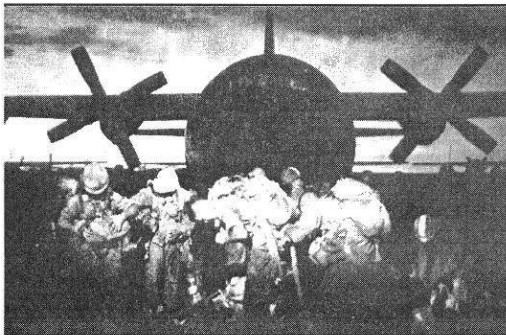
Higher authority required Uncle Jack, despite his strenuous protests, to brief various staff members and other strap hangers on the planned airborne assault. Shortly after the first briefing or two, an engineer unit commander in Song Be confirmed his fears of leaks, his fears that there is always someone who has to show he is a big wheel by talking when he should be silent. The engineer

called and said, "I hear you are going to be jumping in our area." Asked where he had heard this, he replied, "All the bar girls in Song Be know about it and are looking forward to increased business."

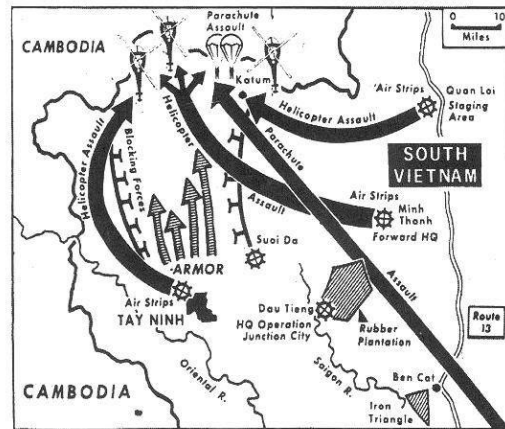
General Westmoreland agreed immediately to cancel the operation!

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

At the time they chose the real DZ, they also chose a second DZ several miles away. It would become the focus of our security plan. Steverson developed detailed plans for a drop on this second DZ. Every time higher authorities required briefings, these plans were the basis for the briefing. The briefing included cautions on the importance of security in airborne operations and always included pleas to protect the troopers who would be so vulnerable to ground action if the enemy knew our plans. As in the Japanese airstrip case, this plan also became compromised. Later reconnaissance revealed the VC or NVA had heavily mined and booby-trapped the second DZ. This was the DZ where General Westmoreland's chopper circled so he and the Chairman of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff could observe The Jump. Security was good.



Troopers check their equipment before boarding aircraft.



Map details locations of massive parachute-helicopter assaults launched against Viet Cong forces to block their escape across Cambodian border.

Carrying the Momentum

JUMP INTO WAR ZONE C

by Colonel Robert H. Sigholtz

In the mid-morning hours of February 11, 1967, a task force from the 173d Airborne Brigade jumped into history by making the first United States combat parachute assault in the war against the enemy in South Vietnam — and the first such assault since the Korean War. I commanded the task force which put nearly 780 Sky Soldiers under silk over War Zone C near the Cambodian border, long a Viet Cong redoubt. Below them lay drop zone "Charlie" — 1,000 by 6,000 feet of dried rice paddies deep in enemy-controlled territory.

Within an hour after the start of the parachute assault, an Infantry battalion — with artillery, heavy equipment, control teams, and support elements — was on the ground, deployed to secure the drop zone and ready for combat as Operation Junction City got underway. To both men and planners, the combat jump was a success.

Formed on Okinawa in 1963, the 173d had undergone extensive airborne, guerilla and jungle warfare training on Taiwan, Korea and Thailand before moving to South Vietnam in May 1965 — the first US ground combat unit committed to the war. Steeled in combat since then, the men of the 173d were eager for the chance to prove that a combat jump could be successful in Vietnam.

In October 1966, the 173d was directed to prepare a battalion-size task force for a possible parachute assault operation. The 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry, was selected as the key element of the task force, and moved to the South Vietnamese Infantry School at Thu Duc to begin training. Joining the battalion was Battery A, 3d Battalion, 319th Artillery with six 105mm howitzers; an engineer squad; a military police squad; a radio research team; an interrogation team; elements of the 173d headquarters as a brigade tactical command post; and combat support elements from the brigade's support battalion.

The training was intense, and emphasized the mental as well as physical conditioning required for airborne operations. Refresher airborne training was a major ingredient. While the men had completed the basic airborne course at Fort Benning, a majority had never participated in an airborne exercise. A routine training jump was made, and then, on November 6, 1966, the task force made a mass tactical jump with full combat loads. A portion of the heavy equipment organic to the task force was also dropped. This full dress rehearsal was the climax to the training phase, and after it was over the task force moved back into the field to conduct normal search and destroy operations against the Viet Cong. In January 1967, after one more week of airborne training, the task force was ready.

On February 11th, the official word came down: the task force would make a combat jump. Stressing surprise and speed, the operation called for the task force to conduct a combat parachute assault into War Zone C some five kilometers south of the Cambodian border to secure the brigade headquarters, a heavy equipment drop

zone, the fire support base, and to block the enemy's escape routes into Cambodia. Once set, the other two battalions of the brigade would make a heliborne assault into an adjacent area to join the task force in blocking the enemy escape routes.

Because of security, only the battalion S3 and myself did the initial planning. Later, the principal staff officers and company commanders were briefed on the operation, but were not told when or where the operation would take place. Both groups were instructed not to reveal any information concerning the operation to their staffs or units.

On February 20th, final coordination was effected and that night the order was published. The next morning, the men and equipment of the task force were marshalled at and restricted to Camp Zinn, the 2d Battalion's base camp. There, for the first time, the official word was put to the troops — to a man, the word was received with great jubilation. Even now, though, the exact location of the drop zone was not revealed. Aerial photographs of the drop zone were distributed, but without coordinates.

Out on the field, the heavy equipment and supplies needed to support the task force were being rigged for heavy drop. This included the 105mm howitzers and 2,400 rounds of 105mm ammunition, four 3/4-ton trucks, five 1/4-ton trucks, one 1/4-ton trailer, six M274 Mule vehicles, four 4.2-inch mortars and 746 mortar rounds, six 81mm mortars and 1,500 mortar rounds, 416 five-gallon water cans, 18,000 sandbags, 746 cases of C-rations, 115,700 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 1,440 grenades for the 40mm M79 launchers, 1,000 fragmentation hand grenades, and 500 smoke grenades.

For the operation, 23 C130 aircraft were available — 13 for personnel and 10 for heavy equipment. The size of the drop zone and operational plan dictated how the aircraft were to be loaded; the drop zone was 26 seconds long and would require two passes to put all personnel into the drop zone. Each C130 would carry 60 men and would be crossloaded to put the men of each company on the drop zone in the approximate area of their assigned sectors.

On the morning of February 21st, the task force S4 drew all of the air items needed for the operation; these were issued from a central location and fitted that afternoon. For the remainder of the day, refresher training was given with troops wearing their equipment. Mock door exits and parachute landing falls were the order of the day. That night, the air items were secured in the company mess halls.

The problem of manifesting was simplified by using the "shoe tag" rather than the manifest sheet. The shoe tag consisted of four equal sections and each section contained the man's name, rank, serial number, and chalk number. The jumpmasters received the first part of the

(Continued on page 15)

Carrying the Momentum — From page 14

tag, the loadmasters part two, the battalion S1 part three, while the men retained part four. Last minute changes in chalk assignments were made quickly and easily by removing the individual's part from one chalk and transferring it to his newly assigned chalk; no erasures or additions were required.

The entire task force spent the night in the marshalling area; and on the morning of February 22d, at 0530 hours, they were transported directly to the waiting aircraft. Once again, each man was fitted with his parachute and combat load; once again, each man was checked thoroughly by the jumpmasters.

Prior to station time, all jumpmasters were given their final briefing. At this time, they were issued aerial photographs of the drop zone with coordinates and the latest weather data, the first time that the exact location of the drop zone had been announced.

All was ready. Each man was trained and equipped, ready both mentally and physically. All equipment had been prepared and rigged. At 0825 hours, the aircraft began their takeoff.

At 0900, the green light flashed on in the lead plane and the sky above Drop Zone Charlie began to fill with parachutes. By 0910, the last of the 778 Sky Soldiers in the task force was on the drop zone. During this 10 minutes, as each man hit the ground, he grabbed his weapon and combat gear, and moved to his designated assembly area. Colored smoke, colored helium balloons, and colored tape on each man's helmet assisted the task force in rapidly assembling on the ground and identified each man with his unit and sector. It was imperative that all units react rapidly in clearing and securing the drop zone, for the airdrop of supplies and heavy equipment was scheduled to commence 30 minutes after the first man exited the aircraft.

Right on time and target, the loaded C130s began their heavy drops. Drag chutes pulled jeeps, trucks, mortars, and howitzers from the tail of each plane, and giant canopies lowered this vital equipment to the ground without mishap. Immediately thereafter, more planes appeared over the treetops at low altitude, leaving in their wakes brilliant clusters of colored parachutes over the drop zone. For the first time in combat, the cargo was being dropped by the container delivery system, which uses colored parachutes to denote the contents of the container swaying beneath it. It was a perfect drop. Everything landed in a drop zone the size of a baseball field without mishap.

Before and during the equipment drop, the rifle companies of the task force moved to their assigned sectors along the perimeter of the drop zone to prevent the enemy from placing observed fires on the area. The fire support base and brigade tactical command post were rapidly secured. Little resistance was encountered, and this was primarily sniper fire. Mortar and artillery crews raced to their weapons and readied them for firing.

By 1000, the first part of the task force's mission had been completed — all men and equipment of the battalion were on the ground and deployed, the brigade command post was set up, and the fire support base was established. But the job had just begun. Now the task force began to patrol the area, conducting search and

destroy operations, soon to be joined by the other battalions of the 173d Airborne Brigade. Together, they would block the Viet Cong from reaching the refuge on the other side of the Cambodian border as Operation Junction City swept through War Zone C.

The success of this parachute assault shows that the airborne concept still has a place in modern warfare. It shows that large numbers of troops and heavy equipment can be delivered quickly and accurately with a minimum number of aircraft.

The spirit and professional enthusiasm demonstrated by the men of the task force during the training for and conduct of the jump into War Zone C made this combat parachute assault a success.

My View of the Jump

February 22, 1967. I'm sitting in the aircraft just after dawn, rolling down the runway at Bien Hoa, about to make history for the 173d. There is complete silence as we lift off into the unknown. This jump was anticipated because of the two training jumps earlier, but we didn't know where and we didn't know when. The time is now. As I look around the aircraft, I observe my fellow squad members and my best buddy, James (Mule) Mulherin, next to me. He and I have been together in the same squad through AIT, jump school and our entire tour of Vietnam, which was somewhat unusual. Everyone is caught up in their own thoughts, and you could hear a pin drop over the roar of the engines. It was so quiet. I looked down the line to see my squad leader, James, the Rock, Stewart, the best squad leader any trooper could serve under, in the same mode as the rest of us and thinking to myself, how did we get here? All of us were military policemen, Captain Friend, the PM, and Lieutenant Colonel Sigholtz, the battalion commander, had faith in us that we could do the job. Without those two, we would probably not be sitting here today. Thoughts of home were running through my mind, as I did not know what the outcome would be. We were in the plane for about two hours, and the time was drawing near. The anticipation got greater and greater, and my feelings and emotions are difficult to put into words as we approached our drop zone. As time was getting near, being passed around in our aircraft was a large, confidential aerial photograph of the drop zone. As it got to me, I studied it to try to figure out where we would be landing and hoped we would be landing in that drop zone, not way off course which has happened in the past to other paratroopers, going all the way back to World War II. I thought to myself that this would make a great souvenir so I folded the map into fours and slipped it into my shirt. I probably became the only PFC with a confidential photo of the drop zone prior to our jumping. When Tim Stout, the editor, came to Milwaukee for a visit last fall, I shared my scrapbook of Vietnam photos and memorabilia. He immediately noticed the map and indicated that he would like to put it into the anniversary issue of the Newsletter for the jump. That map photo is on the cover of this newsletter. The rest is history.

PFC Gary "Ski" Krolikowski, HHC Bde

Rigging for Junction City

By CW4 (Ret) Howard P. Melvin

Upon my arrival in Oct 1966 there was concern about an airborne combat jump. The 82d and 101st could not drop as their chutes were in a tropical weather mess. Our equipment was in excellent condition. Each chute having been placed in a tropical pack and put in Conex containers, when shipped from Okinawa to Bien Hoa in May 1965 by head rigger CW4 Thomas. For a year the equipment sat idle.

We had no buildings or towers for parachute rigging so we devised a system.

We used metal airfield mats for a floor, a tunnel of 2-high Conexs, with openings to the inside and 100 ft. long, gave us an area for packing tables. This was roofed with air drop platforms covered by canvas.

Since the 173d had not made any jumps in over a year, we planned one of Battalion size in late November 1966. Watching this jump from the DZ was a nightmare. Exits were poor; too much interval; poor chute manipulation; terrible landings resulting in injuries. Interviewing troopers on the DZ we found that for most of them this was their 6th jump, as they only had the jump school 5 qualifiers and that was months ago. A vigorous review and mock door training made a late December jump better!

From my previous combat jumps I had learned the problems of the Air Force Troop Carriers. With the one year turn around, many crews had not made heavy drops and some never dropped parachutists.

We enjoyed an exceptional Warrant Officer team. CW3 Spencer-parachute packing; CW2 Rollins-heavy drop; and CW2 Croteau-supply. Their expertise and leadership made the heavy workload in the heat, dust and monsoon rains possible and instilled in all our Riggers the "CAN DO" spirit. Many received awards!

On D-Day, 22 Feb 1967: We rigged our 845 paratroopers at Bien Hoa then loaded into 16 C-130's. Earlier, we checked all the platform loads that had been placed in the C-130's for dropping. CW2 Rollins found three planes rigged wrong by the Air Force crews. We had to go to the Squadron C.O. to get permission to make extraction corrections. The crew chiefs in these planes had never made a heavy drop and had relied on what they had remembered from classroom instructions. The combat team was composed of 2/503 INF BN; A Btry 319th ARTY; and elements of HQs led by General Deane and Colonel Sigholtz.

I became a Rigger Warrant in Dec 1953 after service as a 1st SGT for Co. I, 505th Parachute Infantry, 82d Airborne Division. I had 4 Combat Jumps: Sicily, Italy, Normandy and Holland. I then became REGT SGT MAJOR for the Battle of the Bulge.

Near the end of my induction course in Feb 1954 a group of 30 West Pointers came to observe the air drop of a Jeep at Camp Picket, VA. Several of us had parts in the demonstration, my speech was to be last. We wanted to get young blood into the new Air Delivery mission of the QM Corps. My theme was 'Go Quartermaster —

Airborne! The drop plane approached. One of our group, reading from a script, was explaining the extraction chute procedure, the main chute functions . . . then 'CRASH!' The vehicle had not paid attention to the script and 'Clobbered In!' My recruiting spiel was one sentence, "Now, you see why we need you!" From that start I was always trying to rig the perfect personnel and cargo drop. It finally came when we rigged and jumped with the 173d on 22 Feb 1967! All jumpers and tons of heavy drop all landed without a single malfunction. GEN Deane awarded me the Bronze Star on the DZ. What a great feeling! It primed me for 5 more years of aerial delivery in the war zone.

AIRBORNE! ALL THE WAY!

Chief Melvin, CW4, USA (Ret.)



Colorful cargo parachutes with their heavy loads of vehicles and ammunition fall to earth.

The Weather

Partly cloudy, windy and cold tonight, low in the low 20s. Mostly cloudy and cold tomorrow high in the low to mid-30s. Outlook: Fair and cold Friday.

(Weather Map on P. 40)

World Journal Tribune

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VOL. 1, NO. 162 ***

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1967

10 CENTS

**SPORTS
FINAL**

CLOSING PRICES

Plus Bklyn, Queens, L.I.

45,000 GIs ATTACK CONG

Launch Biggest Drive



Associated Press Radiophoto

In this breath-taking operation, U.S. paratroopers fill the air as they are dropped from planes during a vast encirclement of Viet Cong headquarters. Other photos on Page 2 and First Page, Second Section.

Letters to the Editor — From page 18

Dear Editor:

What an honor it was to have been a part of the 173d Airborne Brigade "Sky Soldiers" Reunion '96.

It was more than special to me because never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I would be among the dear ones who were with my beloved son Alexander, during his duty in Vietnam, even up to his final moments on earth.

I now realize that even though God called my son to Him, He gave me a family of wonderful, caring men, The "Sky Soldiers", who I proudly call "My Sons".

The reunion was as if Heaven had opened up, allowing me to meet the Chain of Command of the 173d Airborne Brigade, all its members expressing love and affection and to have been honored "Gold Star Mother" is unforgettable.

My heart goes out with gratitude, to all who put forth every effort through many years, to locate Alexander's family. God Bless each and every one of you.

Thank You for your calls and letters.

Again, God Bless You, My "Sky Soldiers" Sons, till we meet again, God willing, at the next reunion in Tucson, Arizona.

Sincere Love and affection, Your Loving "MOM",

Esther M. Rodarte

Thank you — "MOM". ED.



JUNCTION CITY

22 February 1967-

On 22 February 1967 the 2503d Infantry Task Force spearheaded Operation JUNCTION CITY by jumping into combat deep in War Zone "C" near the Cambodian border. It was the first American combat jump in Vietnam, and the first since Korea.

The 1st and 4th Battalions came into adjacent landing zones by airmobile assault. Once again the 173d was chosen to lead the way—this time on the biggest Allied offensive to date in Vietnam.

Operation JUNCTION CITY's objective was to locate and destroy the Central Office South Vietnam (COSVN), the supreme headquarters of the Viet Cong in the Republic of Vietnam.

The accomplishments of Phase I of Operation JUNCTION CITY were significant: 266 VC killed by body count, 32 possible kills, and 4 captured. The complete destruction of the COSVN Public Information Office for Psychological Propaganda and a COSVN Signal site dealt a heavy blow to the enemy propaganda effort.

HITTING THE SILK . . . A U.S. paratrooper, along with 750 others, is preparing to drop behind Viet Cong lines in a vast blocking and encircling operation a few miles from the Cambodian border. Continued air strikes paved the way for the massive ground-air assault of 45,000 troops.



First Jump Is Tremendous

War Zone C, Vietnam, Feb. 23 (AP)— The lumbering Hercules transport swept over the drop zone at 1,000 feet as Pfc Robert Hill plunged out the hatch for the first combat parachute jump of his 19-year-old life.

It took him seven hours to cover that 1,000 feet to the earth. He should get credit for two combat jumps in one day. He made the second from a tree.

The paratrooper, from Kansas City, Mo., was slip-streaming down un-

eventfully with 750 comrades when a vagrant wind carried him to the edge of the drop zone.

He slipped into a wooded area and was snagged by a tree about 120 feet from the ground.

"I was scared for the first four hours. After that I was scarer," he admitted after he finally made it to safety by using a technique hardly recommended in jump school.

After four hours, Hill had been spotted by his sergeant, who yelled: "What the hell you doing up there? We've been looking all over for you."

A helicopter tried to reach him, but the wind from the rotor blades almost dislodged Hill.

Finally, he pulled the ripcord, wind caught the reserve chute and it filled, billowing out along side the tree and tugging at Hill.

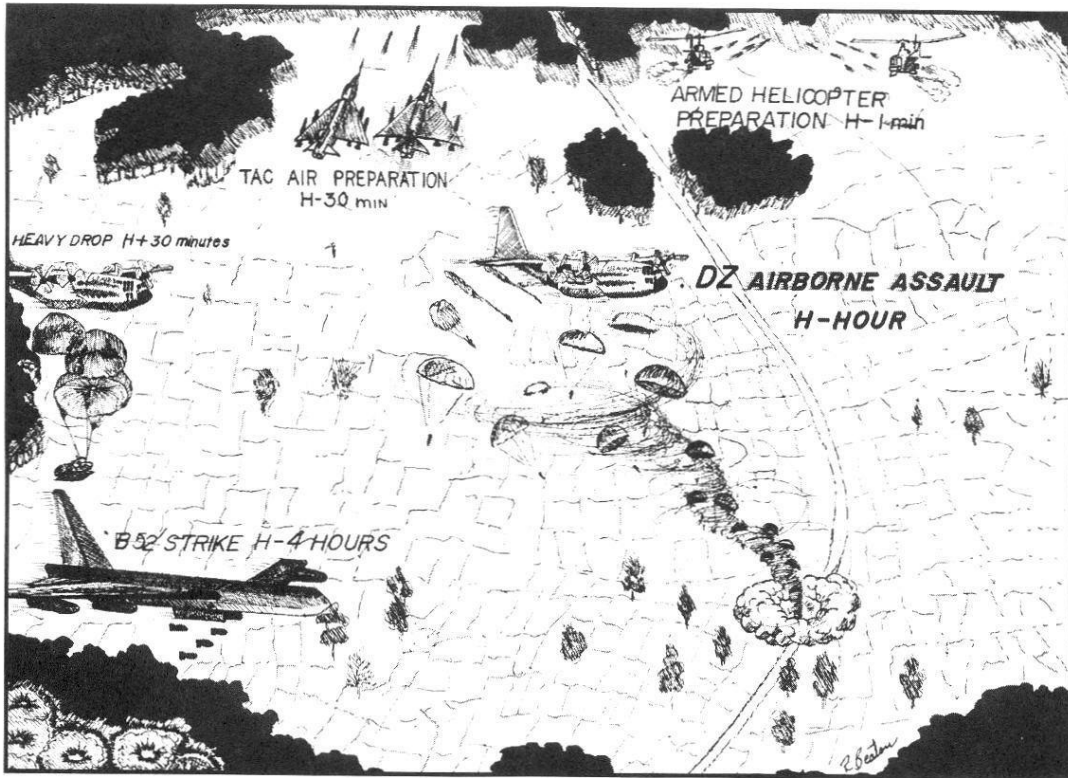
He released his regular chute and jumped. Hill hit the ground with a bone-rattling jar, but was unhurt.

"I sure got tired of being up there," he said.



RUSS ROEVER PHOTO

Whatever it is (or was) "it ain't gonna jump no more!"



RUSS ROEVER PHOTO

Troopers securing heavy drop material for distribution to the battalion. Where did that trooper get a white T-shirt?



RUSS ROEVER PHOTO

Like a good heavyweight boxer, this ammunition took a pounding and within a few hours it was ready to give a pounding to the NVA.



Combat Jump

This poem is dedicated to the memory of Sgt. Charles Brown, who while severely wounded, still mustered the strength to give encouraging words, and to all the troopers of the 173d who had the misfortune to be part of the price. The star in the middle of your wings is the doorknob to heaven.

In the morning hours of February 22, 1967
The Sky Trooper lived up to his name
For out of the cloudless sky
With multi-colored parachutes we all came

Joyous we all were
Because it was history we had made
How did any of us know
There was a terrible debt to be paid

Search and Destroy
We had been told
How could we ever
Have been so bold

Combat we sought
To kill or to maim
To make a combat jump
We had to justify our claim

Hootches and tunnels
Were there to be found
But to our dismay
No Cong were around

We were told when we jumped
There's a division out there
But as hard as we searched
We still knew not where

Through rice paddies and jungle
We fearlessly searched
For who in their right mind
Would mess with the "Herd"

Then darkness came
And we camped overnight
We would resume our patrols
At dawn's first ray of light

Laughing and joking
We showed no fear
Thirty days from now
We'd be in base camp enjoying a beer

Search and destroy
We had been told
How could we ever
Have been so bold

Tangle with the 173d
They most surely did
They didn't abandon the area
They had merely hid

By midday the first platoon
Was the first to see red
By the time we came to their aid
They were almost all dead

We removed our dead and wounded
With the utmost of care
Charlie wouldn't attack again
He just wouldn't dare

No sooner than we finished
We were put to the test
We fought like crazed men
With a raging in their breast

When we thought
We were in the middle of hell
We were then bombarded
With our own mortar shells

A few of us survived
This horrendous battle
We felt we'd been slaughtered
Like a herd of cattle

Retreat was the order
We soon would receive
But three of our brothers
We still needed to retrieve

Leave them there
We were told
Their rescue would
Just have to hold

We bombarded the area
All through the night
When retrieved in the morning
Their bodies were one hell of a sight

One enormous price
Had been paid
Because it was history
We had made

The combat jump wings
Are one beautiful sight
But somehow with the enormous price
They didn't seem to fit just right

Ronald A. Tucker (A/2/503 66-67),
106 Chalfont Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15210.
(412) 481-5188

© 1997 — Ronald A. Tucker

173d Airborne Brigade Commemorative Combat Jump

A commemorative combat jump is to be conducted at Marana Skydive Center, Marana, Arizona. The mailing address is P.O. Box 595, Marana, AZ 85653. The phone numbers are 1-800-647-5867 or 520-682-4441.

Personnel wishing to jump can contact the Marana Skydive Center and make reservations for groups of 3 or more to receive the discount rate of \$85.00 dollars per individual jumper.

Personnel wishing to walk on and jump the price is \$105.00 dollars per individual.

For those with their own parachutes, jumps not including parachute rental are:

At or below 4500 feet are \$6.00

At or below 9500 feet are \$10.00

At or below 13,000 feet are \$15.00

For those who are licensed and do not bring their parachutes, the equipment rental prices are:

\$50.00 dollars per day (you pack)

\$100.00 dollars per day (if Marana packs)

Altimeter/Jump Suit/Helmet \$25.00 per day

This jump is not sponsored by the National Society of the 173d or Chapter XX. Coordination has been conducted by Eldon Meade, John Schmelzkopf, and Zack Blair. You can contact Eldon at 602-878-4099 or Fax 602-487-4000. John at 520-797-1782 or Matty @ Pipeline.Com. Zack at 520-744-1322. Zack Blair is an instructor at the Marana Skydive Center.



RUSS ROEVER PHOTO

Cargo and parachutes litter the drop zone minutes after the troops landed.



Parachutes with their passengers safely delivered fall to the ground.



RUSS ROEVER PHOTO

Unfortunately the "B" rations survived. This was also a precursor to the meaning of "MRE"-meals ready to eat!

International Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Registration Form

Reunion '97 — Tucson, Arizona

United Desert Chapter XX

July 2-6, 1997

Name: _____ Telephone: (_____) _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Unit(s) assigned to with the Brigade _____ (NEED)

Shirt Size: 1) _____ 2) _____ Hat size: 1) _____ 2) _____ Accompanied by: number of persons _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____

**Tours are being handled by: Convention & Group Services U.S.A.; P.O.C. is Arlene Laguna
Please call (520) 529-3900, or Fax (520) 529-3103 to reserve your tour, or sign up at registration.
Early reservations will help confirm your seat.**

- | |
|--|
| 1. Old Tucson/Bisbee _____ \$32.50 per person _____ |
| 2. Desert Museum/Old Tucson _____ \$52.50 per person/includes admissions |
| 3. San Xavier Mission/Nogales, Mexico _____ \$32.50 per person _____ |
| 4. Pima Air Museum _____ \$25.00 per person _____ |

Indicate your interest in one or both of the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Golf Tournament _____ | 2. Parachute Jump _____ \$105.00 w/ lesson __ or __ \$85.00 w/50%
2 week advanced deposit |
|--------------------------|--|

Registration Fees: \$100.00 For Society Member \$50.00 For Wife or Guest, \$73.00 with packet \$80.00 each additional guest OR \$20.00 each event/\$40.00 Banquet only	Make Checks Payable To: '97 173d Airborne Reunion. P.O. Box 12271 Tucson, Arizona 85732-2271
---	--

TOTAL AMOUNT PAID \$ _____

Make Reservations at:

DoubleTree Hotel, Tucson, AZ, 1-(800) 222-8733 or (520) 881-4200 ext. 5369

Identify yourself as "Society of the 173d ABN"

or write to:

**DoubleTree Hotel
445 South Alvernon Way
Tucson, Arizona 85711**

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE 173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE (Sep)

United Desert Chapter XX
P.O. Box 12271
Tucson, Arizona 85732-2271

1997 REUNION UPDATE

REUNION DATES: Wednesday, 2 July through Sunday, 6 July
REUNION HEADQUARTERS: DoubleTree Hotel, Tucson, Arizona
ROOM INFORMATION: \$61.00 per room (plux tax).*
Room Rate guaranteed until 4 June 97 - ONLY
NO EXCEPTIONS

Reservations: 1-800-222-8733 or 520-881-4200 ext 5369
Identify Yourself as: 'Society of the 173d ABN'

****UPDATED****

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY

0900 hrs Registration, Vendors table,
???? hrs Hospitality suite
1700 hrs Dinner VFW (\$6.00, if possible)

THURSDAY, 3 JULY

0900 hrs Registration, Vendors tables
???? hrs Cash tours available
???? hrs Hospitality suite
1800 hrs Food (buffet style)

FRIDAY, 4 JULY

0530 hrs Golf tournament
0900 hrs Registration, Vendors tables
???? hrs Cash tours available, Hospitality suite
1300 hrs Board of Directors Meeting
1800 hrs BBQ/Band/cash bar
2100 hrs Fireworks/Independence Day

SATURDAY, 5 JULY

0900 hrs Registration until 1100 hrs only,
ladies function, E-board meeting
???? hrs Hospitality suite (varied hours)
1300 hrs General membership meeting
* Hospitality Suite CLOSED
1800 hrs Cash bar
1900 hrs Banquet, band, cash bar
2100 hrs Hospitality suite

SUNDAY, 6 JULY

0700 hrs Breakfast
0830 hrs Memorial Service/Ceremony

END OF 1997 REUNION

TOURS Conducted by Convention & Group Services U.S.A.

Tours will be offered to Old Tucson/Desert Museum;
Tombstone/Bisbee; San Xavier Mission/Old Mexico and
Pima Air Museum. Call / Fax, or sign up at registration
w/ **Arlene Laguna**. Early reservations are recommended.
See registration form.

PARACHUTE JUMP

The JUMP is still in preparation. Progress is being
made. Jump is being done by **The Marana SkyDive
Center, P.O. Box 595, Marana, AZ 85653, Ph. 1-
800-647-5867 or (520) 683-4441, 2nd POC, Zack
Blair, instructor, (173d), ph. (520) 744-1322.**

LATE REGISTRATION

There will be a late registration charge after 1 July
1997, so be sure to register early. Walk-ins \$125.00 for
members, \$75.00 for wife / guest (no packet).

VENDOR TABLES

Tables available for \$75.00 per table.

REGISTRATION FEES

\$100.00 for Society members
\$50.00 for wife / guest, \$73.00 with packet
\$80.00 for each additional guest or
\$20.00 each event / \$40.00 Banquet only

ROOM RATES

PRICE increases after two people
3 people in a room = \$76.00
4 people in a room = \$91.00
Suites are \$125.00



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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