

# SKY SOLDIER

Newsletter of  
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF  
THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE



Winter 1988

President — John W. Nicholson, Brig. Gen. (Ret)  
Vice-President — Michael Yauger

Secretary and Editor — Gene Weeks  
Treasurer — Michael Schwartz

Vol. 3, No. 2

## Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

**Editor's Note:** One of the purposes of our Society is to keep alive the spirit which sustained and supported Sky Soldiers in the performance of duty. An inspirational force for us all was the example of those men who performed above and beyond the call of duty, frequently making the supreme sacrifice. This is the ninth in a series of reminders of those brave men with whom we were privileged to be associated.

### STAFF SERGEANT LASZLO RABEL AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR

General Order No. 6, Department of the Army, Wash. D.C.,  
23 April 1970

By direction of the President, under the Joint Resolution of Congress approved 12 July 1862 (amended by act of 3 March 1863, act of 9 July 1918 and act of 25 July 1963), the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty is awarded posthumously by the Department of the Army in the name of the Congress to:

*Staff Sergeant Laszlo Rabel, 137-32-9416, United States Army, who distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while serving as leader of Team Delta, 74th Infantry Detachment (Long Range Patrol), 173d Airborne Brigade, in Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam on 13 November 1968. At 1000 hours on this date, Team Delta was in a defensive perimeter conducting reconnaissance of enemy trail networks when a member of the team detected enemy movement to the front. As Sergeant Rabel and a comrade prepared to clear the area, he heard an incoming grenade as it landed in the midst of the team's perimeter. With complete disregard for his own life, Sergeant Rabel threw himself on the grenade and, covering it with his body, received the complete impact of the immediate explosion. Through his indomitable courage, complete disregard for his own safety and profound concern for his fellow soldiers, Sergeant Rabel averted the loss of life and injury to the other members of Team Delta. By his conspicuous gallantry at the cost of his own life in*

*the highest traditions of the military service, Staff Sergeant Rabel has reflected great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.*



*Staff Sgt. Laszlo Rabel— was on long-range patrol in the hills of Binh Dinh when his surveillance team detected enemy movement. Suddenly a grenade landed in their midst. Sgt. Rabel threw himself on it, sacrificing his own life to save his men. He was awarded the Medal of Honor.*

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## Messages from the President's Corner

Americans across the land reflect a growing appreciation for Vietnam Veterans. We can be proud of the 173d Airborne Brigades contributions and record of arriving early, staying late and fighting in the toughest battles, facts which shape the 173d Legend. Because of deactivation following the war, there is no influx of new soldiers to enlarge the rolls and carry on the traditions. We who are proud members of that homogenous group consisting only of combat-era veterans have the obligation to sustain the Spirit of the 173d Airborne Brigade. We can do this by supporting and participating in the 173d Society activities, locally and nationally. One such activity is the 1988 173d Airborne Brigade Reunion scheduled for Independence Day weekend in Chicago where the Elite Forces Chapter is doing a super job of planning and preparation. Looking forward to being with those of you who can attend.

The efforts to organize the membership roster, update the mailing list and collect dues are progressing. VA Deputy Administrator and 173d Veteran, Tom Harvey, is planning 173d Scholarship Fund Raising efforts. Wendall Vega, Mitchel Schwartz and others saw to the very meaningful and memorable dedications in New York and New Jersey honoring 173d Medal of Honor recipients PFC Lozada and Chaplain Watters on November 21st.

Recent activities commemorating our fallen 173d comrades have been touching, fitting, and well organized. As the mood of awakening awareness and appreciation for Vietnam veterans' contributions becomes more common across America, there may be more commemorative type dedications of schools, parks, libraries, or public buildings to honor Vietnam veterans. Examples of this awareness occurred in New York and New Jersey in November when dedications of a playground and a library were made in memory of 173d (posthumous) Congressional Medal of Honor winners, PFC Lozada and Chaplain Watters. Although this appreciation is about two decades overdue, it is still a fitting tribute to those who served in the Vietnam war.

I would add a word of caution to those 173d organizations contemplating involvement in commemorative dedi-



*Chaplain Charles J. Watters—a legendary figure who went into the field with leading units. The Catholic priest was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor for his heroism on Hill 875. Unarmed and exposed, he ran through enemy fire to rescue fallen men who had been left outside the perimeter. Troopers tried to hold him back but the pastor shook them off. Three times he left the safety of the perimeter to rescue men until he himself was mortally wounded.*



*PFC Carlos Lozada—awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for providing covering fire for his squad as they retreated from an NVA advance.*

cations. Remember the reasons for which the 173d Society exists: To honor our fallen Sky Soldiers and to promote camaraderie among our 173d Airborne Brigade veterans. With these reasons in mind, let us beware that we do not inadvertently surrender our LZ, launchpad, platform, or occasion, if you will, to individuals or to organizations which have their own different agenda and may be pushing for their own personal gain. Several members have advised us of attempts by special interest groups to take advantage of our Society's unity to further their own goals. All of us must be mindful of such attempts to ensure they do not abuse or tarnish the unity, purpose and goals of our organization. Let us keep our sights on 173d Society goals and remain hooked up with our own outfit.

John W. Nicholson  
B.G. (Ret.)

### STOP!

#### Look at the Label on Your Newsletter

The numbers in the right hand corner will tell you what year(s) you owe dues, i.e. 87-88 means you owe \$10 for '87 and \$10 for '88. Please send in your check TODAY! Send check thru your chapter and include chapter dues. If you do not belong to a chapter, send \$10 to National for 1988, and \$10 for unpaid year(s) prior to 1988.

National Secretary  
Gene Weeks

If you can not bring your dues up to date due to a financial hardship — please advise us and we will work with you. Otherwise we must drop you from the mailing list.

### Correction!

In a previous newsletter it was incorrectly stated that the Sky Divers that performed for us at the Orlando Reunion were the "Golden Knights". The Sky Divers were members of the 82nd Airborne Division's Sport Parachute Club. Many thanks to you All Americans for your outstanding support!



## A Sky Soldier — Then and Now

Walter "Batman" Bantum, D 3/503, Sept 67-Sept 68. I made my decision to become a paratrooper at the age of twelve. I was living at Fort Hood, Texas. My father was a lifer and I was an Army Brat. My father was a leg, but he was the best E-8 the legs ever produced, saw combat in WWII and Korea. He never pushed me to go Army, never mentioned it. It was that one day when I was watching a softball game, between Hood and Cambell, that I decided I was going Army, Airborne Army all the way. There was a play going down on the field. After it was over, I glanced to my left and saw two strike soldiers that stood ten feet tall. Beetle Bailey caps, dipped in the middle with a glider patch, brown kaiki's in bloused boots, looking life "get down to business." That was it, that's all it took.

I joined the Army in May of 66 and volunteered for Airborne. Like most of you, I went through Jackson, Gordon and Benning then on to either Bragg or Cambell. When I joined I said airborne infantry all the way, basic and AIT. It went that way until reaching replacement at the 82nd. At that time there was a shortage of R.T.O.'s in Nam (wonder why?), so the 82nd crossed trained M.O.S. for some of us. We ended up in a signal company after all that infantry training and the desires to be airborne infantry. We stayed in signal for six months until one morning in formation the C.O. asked for volunteers to form the 3rd battalion of the 173rd. All of us that were recruited raised our hands to join. No offense signal people, but it wasn't our cup of tea.

We trained for six months under the 82nd. Most of the guys were from jump school and AIT or other airborne units around Bragg. In Sept. we loaded upon the William Wiggle, a merchant marine ship, and sailed through the Golden Gates headed for Nam. It took 30 days. Aboard ship was a battalion of the 101st. Most of the guys were from jump school and AIT, so there was one hell of a reunion the first week. The second week was us against the 101st, the third week was us against us, the fourth week was different. We were bored with sea life and fighting each other, between being seasick. Besides, we were getting close. We were passing all these Nam look-alike islands as we pictured Nam to look like. It was nearly time to do what we knew. There was no fear, just anticipation. No big talking, we were ready to become a part of the Herd. At this point we were still attached to the 82nd until we reached Nam. We were strike, as strike as the two troopers at Hood. The battalion was strike under the leadership of Lt. Col. Cleland now Maj. Gen. retired. We would die for him and we did and died proud as men of the Herd and under his leadership. We knew there was no picnic where the Herd was in Nam. We knew this before we volunteered. Those toward the end who were recruited in order to fill the ranks of the battalion knew it also, for they too were airborne volunteers. We had heard all about the 173rd while at Bragg from guys who had returned from Nam. All about the battles and fire fights and the big jump. I made it home and in one piece. The good Lord was with me.

That good airborne training and spirit is still in me today. I get up airborne and I go to bed airborne. The Herd gave me the opportunity to apply that training in Nam. Today I



Easter Sunday — Bong Son '68  
Walter "Batman" Bantum — D/3/503 Inf Sept 67-Sept 68.



Reunion 1985 — Washington, D.C.  
Left: ISGT Robert Teague — D/3/503 CSM (Ret). Center: Batman — D/3/503. Right: LTC John Cleland — C.O. OF 3/503 MG (Ret).

do things all the way with that same spirit in my civilian life and on the job. It's not an attitude that my peers understand at time, but they leave it alone. Only we know what it means. Today I'm a steel worker. Union all the way. I give the company a good working eight hours and I fight for workers right for eight. When I relax I spend time on weekends with the 342nd MI USAR at Fort Meade. I did five years with the S.F. but had to give it up when I injured my back at work. I have a very supportive wife Gina and two children age 9 Loni and age 19 Royce. They know of my personal exploits in Nam and the legend of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and are proud to be a part.



## 21st Anniversary Of Junction City Jump, 22 Feb '67

COL ROBERT SIGHOLTZ HIGHLIGHTS THE ONLY  
COMBAT JUMP IN VIETNAM.

We are approaching the twenty-first anniversary of the 173rd Airborne Brigade parachute assault made in the Republic of Vietnam. For the occasion I was asked to write a brief article about the jump. Please understand that this account of the jump is from memory only. I do not intend any embellishment which normally happens when considerable time passes.

As the Commander of the 2nd Battalion 503rd Infantry, I felt an airborne (parachute) operation would be executed in RVN if this type tactical employment would be advantageous in helping to defeat our enemy.

Since most of the senior commanders in RVN had airborne experience I thought there would be the possibility for an airborne operation. Based on this feeling, when the 2nd Battalion 503rd Infantry returned from the field to base camp to reconstitute, we scheduled parachute landing falls training. My fellow colleagues chastised me for harassing the troops with this type of training. Essentially the 2/503rd Combat Team made at least one and maybe two practice jumps north of Seoul. To the best of my knowledge the 2/503rd was the only airborne battalion that made a practice jump at that time in RVN. When the time came for an airborne operation it was the only airborne battalion that had any recent training.

However, it was our highly respected Brigade commander, General John R. Deane, who really pushed with his superiors for the jump. So the 2/503rd was the obvious choice.

The 2/503rd Combat Team was marshalled at Camp Zinn for the jump. All the company commanders were given their mission for the airborne operation, but they were given a fictitious drop zone. The reason being that when a heliborne assault was to be made in RVN, too frequently, too many reconnaissances were made of the landing zone which assisted in compromised operations. Also, information seemed to get to the enemy through various channels.

The combat team moved to Ben Hoa airfield after midnight on February 21. At approximately 0300 hours the Airforce was briefed on the actual drop zone where the CBT was to be dropped. It was approximately twenty kilometers west of the fictitious one. The only one of the Airforce who previously knew the correct drop zone was their Commanding General. After this briefing the company commanders and pilots were briefed and issued orders and maps. All missions were identical except there was a different drop zone than provided originally. The highlights of this operation as I recall from memory are:

1. The drop zone was prepared by B-52 aircraft.
2. There were 30 sorties of high performance aircraft kept high to conserve fuel in the event they were needed.
3. Helicopter gun ships arrived almost simultaneously with the jump to provide suppression fire. (This was a



*Lt. Col. Robert Sigholtz—task force commander for the jump. A "We Try Harder" button is pinned to his shirt collar. When the Avis car rental company heard that the battalion had adopted their slogan they sent the troops hundreds of buttons.*



*Brig. Gen. John R. Deane, Jr.—took over command of the 173d in December 1966 a month after being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry during Operation Attleboro. Later a task force would be named after him.*

first for that type employment of helicopters.)

4. The jump was made at 0900 hours with thirteen C-130 aircraft in trail at 700 feet. The drop zone was long and narrow. The second pass was made at the same elevation at 0910 hours and the heavy drop arrived at 0920 hours. Immediately afterward the LAPES load came in with a mule with mounted communicative equipment and a 1/4 ton.

Major Don Phillips, Sergeant Major Ed Proffitt and I landed within twenty yards from each other and the operation center was operational almost immediately.

Over the years many of my fellow troopers who made the jump were not aware we had a female make the jump with us. Her name was Cathy Le Roi, a French correspondent who weighed less than one hundred pounds. Cathy previously had jumped with the French Paratroopers and produced all the necessary documentation to accompany us. Unfortunately she was later killed in the war which was also the fate of another favorite of the 2/503rd, Horst Faas, who always carried his sack, food, etc. but had not accompanied us on the jump.

Col Robert Sigholtz (USA Ret)  
Commander 2nd Battalion 503d Inf ('67)





GO! The moment of truth for paratroopers. Lt. Col. Sigholtz has just leapt from the lefthand door of this C-130 transport. Next to make the 1,000-ft. jump is Sgt. Maj. Harold Proffitt followed by the command group's radio telephone operator, Cpl. Shadlee. For a minute the task force was effectively leaderless as the three jumped. The jump was successful. The 778-man force suffered no chute failures and only 11 minor injuries.

## CSM Edward Proffitt (Ret) To Be Guest Of Aussies

AUSTRALIA — 25 April '88 — ANZAC Day Celebration. CSM Ed Proffitt (Retired), former SGM of 2/503 in 1967, has been selected to be the guest of the "Vietnam Veterans Exchange Trust" of Australia during a two week visit from 16 thru 30 April. This will surely prove to be an exciting experience, with the dual purpose of spreading good will among our Australian "comrades in arms", and being an Ambassador representing the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Ed was one of those instrumental in organizing the Society and has continued his support throughout the years, as Chapter President of Fla, Vice President of The National Society and his work with the '87 Orlando Reunion Committee.

*Ed is "in the door" in the above photo of the Junction City Jump.*

## NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

Dear Fellow Sky Soldiers,

I am writing to say I really enjoy our newsletter and urge you to continue the good work.

With every newsletter I hope to find someone I knew in the "News About Sky Soldiers" column. With that thought in mind I guess maybe if I put my name there, someone who knew me might contact me.

I served with B/4/503 as a SP/4 grunt from 12/70 to 7/71, when the 4th Bat. went home. From there, I served with the American Division, then the 101st before returning to the States. Currently I am a Border Patrol Agent in Campo, California, since 5/76. I also am still involved with the military as a platoon sergeant (E7) with B/3/185 Armor in San Diego.

Sincerely,  
Michael Syzdek

## 173d BRIGADE RING

A little late perhaps, but with justifiable pride the 173d Brigade Ring is now available...

The design was earlier approved as the official brigade ring, however the project was not completed at that time because of the inability of the American supplier to provide anything other than alloyed metal and glass stones. Many Sky Soldiers desired better materials before making an investment in a ring that is destined to become a piece of heirloom jewelry. This ring has been designed for the discriminating Sky Soldier who wishes to display his Brigade affiliation by wearing a custom-designed piece of quality jewelry. The major design elements have either been approved or created by the U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry.

As can be seen in the illustration the ring has the 173d Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (universally referred to as a "patch") on the right side of the ring. On the left side is the Brigade Distinctive Unit Insignia (or "unit crest"). This heraldic device was chosen because it represents the entire Brigade and not one of its subordinate units. The top of the ring is a bezel formed by an oval chord containing the inscription: "173d Airborne Brigade" surrounding the gemstone of your choice. For each ring purchased \$10.00 will be donated to the Brigade Scholarship Fund under the administration of the Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade.



The ring is available in sterling silver (.925% pure) with the following stones and corresponding pieces:

Black Star Sapphire .....	\$130.00
Lapis Lazuli (Blue) .....	\$ 90.00
Taiwan Jade (Green) .....	\$ 80.00

Other gemstones are available (e.g. blue star sapphires, ruby stars, traditional jades, and other gems, however the prices for these are available by individual quotation only\*).

A word about sizing. You should know the ring size of the finger you wish to wear the ring on. If you are uncertain you may obtain your ring size from any jeweler. Just a word of caution, a signet or class ring because of its bulk may require a slightly larger size. If you are in doubt try on a similar ring at your local jewelers before placing your order. While the rings can be sized once you receive them it will result in additional expense to you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ring Size _____	Black Star Sapphire	\$130
	Lapis Lazuli (Blue)	\$ 90
	Taiwan Jade (Green)	\$ 80

\*Special Quote (\$130 deposit) on \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Any customs duty that may be levied on the ring is the entire responsibility of the individual receiving the shipment. Payment accepted by cashiers checks or U.S. Postal Money Orders only, made payable to: George P. Farris.

Send order and payment to: George P. Farris  
American Embassy — USIS  
APO San Francisco 96346



## A Sky Soldier Rates Movie "Platoon"

by Ted G. Arthurs

"Platoon" was realistic and factual in many respects, but in some of the scenes, which reflected isolated atrocities reminiscent of the infamous "My Lai" massacre, you have my personal guarantee that the Hollywood writers struck again. I would estimate that less than 1 percent of the fighting troops in Vietnam ever personally witnessed a "war crime," such as the ones in "Platoon" perpetrated by Sgt. Barnes, or the beating death in the hut of the suspected VC, or the sex scenes. The removal of ears of the enemy dead, as depicted in one scene, happened one time in my own battalion and court-martial charges were pressed against the private who did it.

Of necessity, Gen William Westmoreland enacted strict policies concerning every facet of the conduct of warfare, to include dealing with prisoners, villagers, detainees, etc. Violators were prosecuted in my outfit. Our people were not equipped to interrogate prisoners; rather, this had to be performed by American military intelligence personnel, with competent interpreters.

I have witnessed such sessions. The strongest body contact I ever saw was for the interrogator to keep the prisoner's head erect by firmly holding the blunt end of a ballpoint pen under the prisoner's chin to maintain his attention and keep him awake and upright throughout the session.

This is tame stuff compared to what happened to a few of my troops who were wounded or overrun. We would find their mutilated remains after the battle, prompting some of the young Americans to retaliate and want to cut off ears, for example.

Where were the rabid anti-war activists in the U.S. when our troops were victims? Why didn't some of the prominent "bleeding hearts" bleed for our side? Why for the enemy only?

It didn't take long for a drafted hippy with radical viewpoints to become a vehement anticommunist once he was transplanted into a rifle platoon in the jungle and eventually witnessed some of the war crimes perpetrated by the VC and the uniformed NVA against our wounded troops, and against innocent villagers.

One day we came upon a small village composed solely of men of fighting age. No women or children. At their urging, we helped them unearth a mass grave containing 38 women, children and old men, each of whom had been brained by some blunt object.

Our interpreter told us that several days previously the young men had fled into the jungle at the approach of a column of North Vietnamese Infantry seeking conscripts as replacements for their unit. The NVA incarcerated all the women and children and told them to send a messenger into the jungle to persuade the men to "volunteer" for the Army or the village would face the consequences.

The following day, having received no volunteers, they retaliated and bludgeoned everyone so that nearby U.S.

## 'Platoon': Only a Vet Can Know the Feeling



*"The viewer of 'Platoon' must sift out what common sense tells you a typical American soldier will be a part of and what he won't."*

CSM Ted G. Arthurs (Ret)  
HHC 4/503 Inf  
Mar 67-68

forces would not hear weapons firing and be attracted to the scene.

I have always been proud of how our troops pursued an elusive enemy and fought a difficult war in Vietnam. We rifle troops, who bore the brunt of the preponderance of the casualties, certainly did not "lose" the war in Vietnam.

"Platoon" is a composite, Hollywood version of a group of troops, agitated by the frustrations of fighting the unknown while not being supported entirely on the home front, where John Q. Public to this day has yet to understand the clandestine methods the communists employ in "winning" conscripts and "gaining" the hearts and minds of their "converts."

The viewer of "Platoon" must sift out what common sense tells you a typical American soldier will be a part of and what he won't. Discounting the atrocities, the long hair, jewelry and rampant drug use, "Platoon" reflects a fairly good image of what actually happened to a platoon in the jungle.

To the Vietnam vet, I say: Hold your head up high. The only one who may accurately judge you is one who walked in your boots and served beside you — and he knows you did well. I salute You!

*The author is a two-time recipient of the Silver Star Medal for Valor in the face of the enemy.*

*A thanks to Mike Waldron of the Chicago Chapter for sending in the above article.*

Reprinted from: *The Iowa Militiaman* Nov 87.

## Airborne Cookbook

82nd Airborne Association is compiling a cookbook representative of all Airborne units. Profit of book sales will go to Medal of Honor Hall of Valor and Military History Museum Foundation. Interested? Send your favorite recipes to Secty, Sgt York Chapter, 82nd Abn Assoc, 822 Linday Ave, Chattanooga, TN 37421. Include your unit and dates of Airborne service along with permission to use your name and recipe in the cookbook.



## '88 REUNION

### 173rd's Elite Forces Chicago Area Chapter 4th of July Weekend

Reunion Committee Chairman Benito Garcia says the Reunion Committee and the Chapter have put forth a herculean effort to insure that the '88 Reunion will be the most memorable to date.

The theme is "Relax and Enjoy." The schedule allows time with the family, your buddy, in quiet remembrance, and the celebration of our brotherhood. Additional time has been scheduled for recognizing the Ladies of the Society.

Many free activities are available from the City for the 4th of July weekend. Here are a few:

- Million dollar fireworks
- "A Taste of Chicago" — ethnic diversity
- Lake Front Air Show
- within walking distances — museums, Shedd Aquarium, Soldier Field, Lake Michigan, shops, stores, restaurants, and nite spots.

The Reunion Headquarters will be the Blackstone Hotel. Room rates are \$60 a night for single, double, triple, or quadruple. Two hundred and fifty (250) rooms have been booked for the Society, so please stay at the Blackstone. Registration fee of \$65 is for the reunion activities.

Point of Contact: Bob Erickson, Chapter VI  
224 Bernice Dr., Northlake, IL 60164.

## New Member Cites His PLT Leader KIA — Lt Robert Sigholtz as "The Best"

Dear Mr. Secretary, 1/4/'88

It is with great pride that I submit the enclosed applications to you. The applications are for myself and John Metzler. John and I served with the Brigade (D/2-503) in '68 and '69.

I was given some "Sky Soldier" newsletters by Roberta Sigholtz, mother of Lt. Robert Sigholtz, for whom the Sigholtz-Capitol Chapter is named. John and I not only had the distinction of serving with the 173d, but we also had "Bob" Sigholtz as a Platoon Leader. He was the best!

Reading through the newsletters, I was happy to see that guys are searching out to contact men they had served with. John and I were able to get together after 18 years. The bond we had formed in Vietnam was still as strong as the day we last say each other. If possible, could you list our names and unit in the "Personal Notes" section. We have been trying to locate anyone that was in our company with us.

All the Way,  
Bill Pavone  
256 Orington Ave.  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209

## An Airborne Thanks To . . .

- The following three "Herd" members who have pitched in to help the National Society with its admin. work:  
— **Russ Ward** C/3/319 Arty, Apr 68-Mar 69  
— **Col Jim Crouch** AG, A/173 Spt Bn, Mar 68-May 69  
— **John Foley** A/E 2/503d, Jun 69-Aug 71
- **Our New Chapter XI Australia Members** for taking care of our visiting "Herd" members during the "Welcome Home Parade" in Sydney Oct 87. A special thanks to LTC Bob Breen for hosting our own CSM and Mrs. Larry Okendo.
- **Henry Stiegler** (Sgt) D/4/503, 68-69 (now a resident of Australia). Thanks for being our liaison in setting up the logistics for CSM Ed Proffitt (Retired) who will travel to Australia as a guest of the Vietnam Veterans Exchange Trust.
- **Richard L. Whaley** HHC-2/503, 7/63-1/66. As an employee of KGO-TV, Rich has been working hard to give media exposure to our California Chapter, thereby telling the story of the 173d Airborne and the Sky Soldiers who made it a legend in Vietnam.
- **Robert R. Rodriguez** B/3/503, 6/67-3/68; B/2/03, 3/68-7/68; E Trp 17th Cav, 7/68-11/68. Bob and the Calif. chapter have crushed a rumor that the 173d members were not welcomed by the WWII and Korean 503rd Vets. Don Abbot (one of the original paratroopers that jumped into Corregidor) called Bob and asked that he and the 173d Calif. chapter join them again this year for their Annual Corregidor Dinner.
- **Jeff Mazer** '87 Reunion Chairman. We thank Jeff and the Committee for a great reunion in Orlando. We'd also like to thank Jeff for pulling together the necessary elements to get the "Herd" on Video for the "Good Morning America Show" on Vets Day 17-11-87.
- **Michael Schwartz, Wendell Vega and other New York Chapter Members.** We thank these Sky Soldiers for their excellent planning and coordination of the two dedication ceremonies honoring 173d CMH recipients Chaplain Watters and PFC Carlos Lozada in N.J. and NYC respectively.

## We Welcome the New Chapter Officers for '88

**Chapter I Sigholtz Capitol** — President Larry DeMeo, Vice Presidents Tom Abraham and John Foley, Secretary Terry Modglin, Treasurer Bob Finan.

**Chapter IV Philadelphia/English** — President George Bembischew, Vice President Jack Schimpf, Secretary/Treasurer Joe Logan.

**Chapter X The Western States** — President, Ray Ramirez, Vice President Ionacio Zarate, Secretary/Treasurer Harry Allen, Liaison Officer Robert Rodriguez.

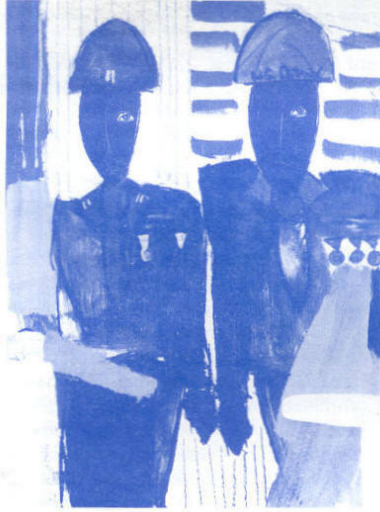
**Chapter XI Australian (Down Under) Chapter** — President Carey Howard McQuillan, Secretary Raymond Bruce Payne, Treasurer Terry Bruce Loftus.



## Two "Herd" Members Honored as Artists

Ulysses Marshall (with the "Herd" in '65) and Michael Rumery (A/4/503 Inf '67-'69, are both members of the Vietnam Veterans Arts Group. Both had their work displayed recently in the Vietnam Veterans Art Show in Columbia, SC. Their work is truly "Art History" as they drew from their Vietnam experiences.

We are pleased to see two Sky Soldiers using their VN experience in such a powerful, constructive, and creative manner.



ULYSSES MARSHALL *Heroes, 1983*  
Powerful, provocative art by our veterans of Vietnam, remembering the tragedy, reaffirming their humanity...



MICHAEL RUMERY *The Wall, 1984*  
A moving exhibition drawn from the historic collection of the Vietnam Veterans Arts Group...

## Progress On The Brigade Yearbook

Ken Gaudet volunteered to undertake publication of this project at the '87 reunion in Orlando.

Dear Gene

Dec '87

I am writing you to inform you and the Brigade Association of the progress on the book about the Brigade. All is going well and I have received many inquiries and offers to provide information for the book. I received a letter from General Williamson (which I have enclosed) that I am sure will open many doors in my research efforts.

I have written some requests for funding on this project and I have enclosed a copy of the letter format.

My ideas for the book so far are:

- A history of the Brigade from the day of activation to inactivation
- The deeds of the Medal Of Honor recipients
- The names of all K.I.A.'s
- Every military unit involved with the Brigade to include Allied forces
- Pictures from my collection and any that I am given the permission to use

These are some of the things I am working on. Any suggestions or subjects you think need covering please feel free to call or let me know.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the Way,

Ken is attempting to contact anyone involved with the following: 1) Deployment of Brigade to VN; 2) Operation Junction City; 3) Dak To; and 4) De-Activation of the Brigade. Contact Ken at: 3377 Solano Ave., Suite 437, Napa, CA 94558. Phone: (707) 252-6732.

## TV Exposure for "The Herd" Brings New Members

Dear Sir:

Early this Veterans Day morning I was watching "Good Morning America". I saw our patch and a bunch of guys yelling and I thought there must be a convention of 173rd guys! Unaware that there was such an organization, I called ABC in New York and a kind fellow helped me track down the "Society". Please!! Send me information so that I can join up with my Airborne Brothers and Fellow Combat Veterans! Also please forward any 173rd printed information that you may have. I will anxiously wait to hear from you. You can also call me collect.

Thanks,  
Orlando F. Anderson  
"C" 1/503, 173rd ABN (Sep.)  
5 May 65-5 June 66



## After Action Report

From SGM (Ret) Larry Okendo and Wife Clara

### AUSTRALIA:

The Welcome home Vietnam Veterans Parade, down under. In one of the most emotional "welcome home" to thousands of Vietnam veterans, more than 25,000 Australian, American, Korean, Vietnamese, and New Zealanders marched through the streets of Sydney on Saturday, October 3, 1987.

The march attracted a cheering, flag-waving crowd of 150,000. The atmosphere could hardly have been better nor warmer for the veterans who left at an early age of 18-19 and returned home to a hostile environment almost twenty years ago.

I was the guest of the Australian Armed Forces, representing the 173d Airborne Brigade. Colonel Robert Sigholtz, at the last minute, had to cancel his trip because his father got sick.

Colonel Bob Breen (Australian Army) was my host, I was billeted at Headquarters, Training Command Center, near Sidney. The camp was as old as Australian emigration to that continent, down under. The Fort was built by Convict labor in the mid 1800's. Every gun emplacement was carved out of rock, each rock was hand chiseled by the convicts. The gun emplacements protected the Sidney Harbor from three areas. It was as beautiful as it was historical.

After the parade, each unit had a rallying point. The Sky Soldiers met in the first bar across the street where the parade ended. The booze was pouring. Cheers and tears were foaming on the bar floor. Some were saying "We didn't want flowers or the key to the city. A simple thank you would have been enough." Normie Rowe, veteran of Vietnam and pop stage singer said, "I heard of a bloke who went home last night for the first time in 20 years. He just turned up on his daughter's doorsteps". I am taking too much space, so see you all in Chicago 4th July 1988.

Airborne — "Okie"

## Scholarship Program

MG Ellis W. Williamson 4 Sept 1987  
Pres., Society of 173rd Airborne Brigade  
To the Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade:

Thank you very much for the scholarship grant of three hundred dollars. I am honored to have received the check from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Society. Please accept my sincere appreciation and thanks.

Thank you again for your generosity. I will use the money to buy books for my freshman year at Virginia Tech.

Sincerely,  
Paricia M. Ekman

## Concerning Veterans

VA Information: Ombudsman Office for VA problems is:  
Washington, D.C. (202) 233-2398/2447  
Ask for Nat Brown or Lynn Howell.

## Leadership of C.O. Remembered & Praised After 20 Years

Dear Editor,

12/17/87

Can you please help me contact the author of "Call Sign-A-Source of Unit Pride" an article from Oct 1987 Sky Soldier?

I haven't seen Capt Daniel since we both left Vietnam but always wanted to tell him thanks for being such a leader and roll model for all the young men in his charge!

I don't know if "Capt Daniel" ever really knew what we thought of him, I have always wanted to tell him. God works in mysterious ways, you sent me my first ever "Sky Soldier" and the words "Diesel Stamp" caught my eye, a phrase that has been running through my mind for 20 yrs. I really need to contact this great man.

Orlando Anderson  
HqHq Company (4.2 Mortar)  
1/503, 173rd ABN (Sep)  
(5 May 65 - 11 May 66)

## Peruvian Paratrooper Admires 173d Patch

### Sends Christmas Greetings to Brigade

Dear Sirs — I'm a Captain and a Paratrooper too. In my country we have a special school—Jump and Antiguerilla—founded by the U.S. Green Beret in 1965. I attended in 1979 and then had three tours against the "Shinning Path" (a Maoist Guerrilla Organization).

I saw a beautiful design of the 173d ABN BDE at the "Mini-Wall" in Los Angeles, CA. I would like to buy one of your Tee shirts with the design. Leonardo Donaire, PO Box 794, Cusco, Peru.





## HELP . . .

Us to get a 50th Anniversary Airborne Stamp

PLEASE FILL OUT AND MAIL ASAP!

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City, State & Zip Code)

Mr. Belmont Faries, Chairman  
Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee  
US Postal Service Headquarters —  
Stamp Development Branch  
Washington, DC 20260-6352

Dear Mr. Faries,

An all-out effort is being made by all past and present-day Airborne people to elicit a favorable consideration by the Stamp Advisory Committee for issue of an American Airborne Commemorative Stamp to mark the 50th Anniversary of Army Airborne.

Unified in this effort are the 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, the 187th, 508th, 550th, 551st, 75th Rangers, 503d and 517th Regiments, along with the **173d Airborne Brigade**, First Special Service Force, Special Forces, Korean War Rangers, WWII Glider Pilots, and O.S.S. Our Airborne family numbers more than one million.

More than a half-dozen foreign governments have issued stamps honoring the American Airborne forces; forty-three other nations have issued stamps honoring their own Airborne troops.

American Airborne forces have an unsurpassed combat record in three wars that makes them deserving of this type recognition; 1990 is the perfect time. Please coincide the issue of this stamp with the staging of the Airborne 50th Anniversary activities, to be celebrated in Washington, DC, 5-8 July 1990. We expect 100,000 attendees there.

Your assistance and cooperation in gaining an Airborne stamp for 1990 is earnestly solicited.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed Name)

## BOTTOM LINE SUPPORT

We couldn't pass up printing the following note. How's this for enthusiasm and support for the Society —

"Enclosed is 40.00 I didn't pay any dues for 1987. However I did pay 20.00 in 1986 and went to the reunion at Ft. Benning that year. I think that Chapter IX Ohio would suit me best. Please send info on that chapter if you can. I would like to pay 1987-88-89 & 90 dues."

Airborne,  
Mark D. Mitchell

## Lets Sharpen Our Images As VN Vets

The following note is from the Philadelphia/English Chapter Newsletter, written by the Chapter Secretary **Joe Logan** prior to the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial Dedication Parade in Oct 87. We thank Joe for bringing out a very good point concerning our image as Vietnam Vets.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The eyes of the national news media will once again be focused on us during the deciation. The news media will be looking for their stereotype of the Vietnam Veteran. This is our opportunity to *WRECK THAT STEREOTYPE!* Sky Soldiers were successful in combat. We are successful after service, as such it behooves all of us to try our hardest to set an example which shows the best combat unit is also a contributing member of society. Once again, as we did in combat, we want to show that paratroopers are the BEST this country has.

There is no set uniform for the parade. I recommend the 173rd patch on a hat or jacket. Camo's or old jungle fatigues, with christmas tree awards will be in bad taste. A tuxedo is too far out at the other end. All I am saying is to dress in such a manner that reflects credit upon the men we have come to honor.

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## Society of the 173D Airborne Brigade Memorial Scholarship Achievement and Encouragement Award

This scholarship is open to all children or grandchildren of those who served in combat with the 173d Airborne Brigade. Awards may also be made to widows of those who died in combat while serving with the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Applicants must be high school graduates and must be planning to attend an institution of higher learning in the fall of the year during which the award is made.

Applicants must be sponsored by a member of the Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade.

All applications must be accompanied by a high-school transcript. Applications must be received by the National Headquarters by 15 March of the year in which the award is to be made.

Completed applications should be mailed to:

National Headquarters  
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade  
Attn: Scholarship Fund  
P.O. Box 1810  
Silver Spring, MD 20902



## "Hook-Up"

- **Joseph J. Ryan** (A/3/503 Inf Sgt, Apr 70-Jan 71) anxiously wants to contact anyone who was in A Co. in 70. Joe can be contacted at 10002 Tenbrook Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20901. Joe is currently working at the National Institutes of Health in MD.
- **R.N. Reynolds** (Sgt E/2/503, Feb 70-Mar 71) wishes to contact anyone he served with. P.O. Box 14949, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87191.
- **Russell D. Ragland** (Sp 4 HHC 4/503 Inf, 12/70-8/71) Russ is trying to contact Edward H. Sullivan, last known address: Florida. Can you help him? Contact Rus at 12936 Michie, Court, Woodbridge, VA 22192.
- **"Donut Dollie"**, known as **"Sam"** (67-68) and a friend Joe Simon (E Trp 17th CAV 67-68) are looking for **SSgt Patrick J. Tadena** serving his third tour with 173d 67-68, with 10th SF Group SF E Trp 17th CAV known as "TAD" — Medevaced Nov or Dec 68. Please contact Jeanne Christie, 101 Clark Hill Rd, Milford, Conn 06460, Tel 203-877-6614.
- **Elton G. Vicent** wishes to notify his buddies that he can be contacted at his new address, 1203 Heidi La North, Lakeland, FL 33813.
- **James Clay** (C/3/503d, Mar-Jun 70) is trying to locate Cpt. Leo Mercer, C/3/503d Co. Commander, Cpt. Ron Walters, 3/503d S/2 Asst S/3 and PFC Lacey, C/3/503d 2nd PLT 3d Sqd. PFC Lacey is supposedly from CA. Jim would appreciate any help. Contact him at: Rt 7 Box 605, Sand Springs, OK 74063.
- **Dean L. Contover**, 25 Clark St., Boston, MA 02109, is trying to contact Demo Brandetsas. Both were at LZ English.
- **"Okie" Okendo** wishes to notify his friends that his new address is P.O. Box 3544, Idyllwild, CA 92349.

### Dear Fellow Sky Soldiers,

I am writing to say I really enjoy our newsletter and urge you to continue the good work.

With every newsletter I hope to find someone I knew in the "News About Sky Soldiers" column. With that thought in mind I guess maybe if I put my name there, someone who knew me might contact me.

I served with B/4/503 as a SP/4 grunt from 12/70 to 7/71, when the 4th Bat. went home. From there, I served with the Americal Division, then the 101st before returning to the States. Currently I am a Border Patrol Agent in Campo, California, since 5/76. I also am still involved with the military as a platoon sergeant (E7) with B/3/185 Armor in San Diego.

Sincerely,

Michael Syzdek, P.O. Box 377, Campo, CA 92006

Sir,

I am requesting any and all names of the men of the 173rd who were killed and or missing in action from the early sixties thru the entire war. I was a member of the **1st ABN. BG. 503rd INF. from 1959 thru 1961**, we were then attached to the 25th Inf. Div. We were stationed on Okinawa. Since my discharge in 1961 I understand that the 503rd was changed to the 503rd 173rd ABN Brigade.

I am and have been trying to locate my buddies with no success.

I recently paid a visit to the Museum at Fort Bragg, N.C. to try and find out anything and was given the address of 173rd and told this may help to locate my buddies.

It was a surprise to find out that we were not with the 82nd Div. anymore due to the attachment of the 25th Inf.

To shorten this up a bit, from what I read about the 173rd they were very active in Vietnam.

I would appreciate any information.

I Remain,

Pete J. Anzalone, PO Box 53, Oldsmar, FL 34677

## Veteran Activities

Illinois — 28 May 88 — Weekend "SPIRIT OF HONOR TO ALL WHO SERVED" — *Celebration honoring all Armed Forces Veterans*. Parade, dancing, unit reunions, food and fellowship. For info or to volunteer your help, contact Mike Miller, 135 Stahl, Washington, IL 61571 or Vet Center, 605 NE Monroe, Peoria, IL 61603.

New Zealand — 1st Week of May — "Welcome Home VN Vets" celebration.

Fresno, Calif. — 18-20 Mar 88 — "The Angels" — of the *11th Airborne Division* wish to announce their reunion at the Hacienda Hotel. All Airborne Troops are most welcome! Contact: 11th ABN Div Assoc, 9425 Lumarst, Spring Valley, CA 92077.

Buffalo, NY — On June 4th and 5th, the Allied Airborne Association will host its 2nd Annual Airborne Memorial Day Jump. The purpose of this day is to remember our friends and to further the Airborne Alliance established many years ago. At our next meet, we hope to see every airborne unit represented. Total cost of \$150.00 per jumper. Guests \$20.00 (kids free).

June 4th, 6 to 8 hours ground training, (tandem jumps available). June 5th, static line jump from 3,000 ft., with the new ram-air (square) type parachute for a gentle opening and a soft landing. All jumpers will be awarded a jump certificate. After the jump, a dinner will be held at which time trophies and awards will be presented to participants. All of the safety and training officers, jump masters and jump pilots are fully licensed and accredited under the rules and regulations of the United States Parachute Association. For further information and/or reservation, please contact Bob Egan at 38-A Jasper Parrish Drive, Buffalo, NY 14207.

Gettysburg, PA — 11-13 Mar 88 — Reunion of **Rakkasans** 187th ABN Regimental Combat Team Assn. The Mason Dixon "All The Way" Chapter will host a mini-reunion 1988 at the Sheraton Inn Gettysburg and invites all who may be interested to attend. We have reserved 100 sleeping rooms on the above date and the Sheraton has worked out a very attractive package deal for us. For those who have never had the opportunity to visit Gettysburg, the site of the most famous battle of the Civil War, this is your chance to walk the grounds that General Lee walked. You can walk the grounds where Pickett led the charge of his Confederate soldiers against the Union forces, visit the Cyclorama, the National Tower, Lee's Headquarters and Museum and much more. Contact: SgM Don Boore (Ret), 108 Marydell Drive, Westminster, MD 21157.



## News About Sky Soldiers

**MG "Butch" Williamson** (Ret) recently combined work and pleasure when he represented the United States in a case before the world court in The Hague, Netherlands. The General and Margaret then spent three weeks relaxing in England.

**Lex McAulay** one of our Australian members recently visited "stateside". While here Lex hooked up with members of Chapter I—Gene Weeks and John Foley and presented them with copies of his latest book about the "Aussies" in Vietnam, called "When the Buffalo Fight". After visiting the National Archives, Smithsonian Institute, "The Wall", etc., Lex met with other Herd members while working his way across the U.S. between his meetings with publishers and interviews for his writing activities.

**MSG John M. Spencer** B/4/503 Inf '67 now stationed at Ft. Riley, KS.

"Well I've been out of the net since my departure from Fort Benning. Came to Kansas as an Advisor to the State National Guard and Reserve in a two State area. What a job, its great working with our citizen soldiers and I have even ran across several SKY SOLDIERS still doing their part. Please pass my regards to all you see (George Ferris, Col Smith, Gen Williamson), I really miss being active in the Society. I missed the reunion this year in Florida but hope to make Chicago '88."

**James J. Gavin** just retired with twenty years and one day. He as left Ft. Meade, MD and is headed for Nebraska.

**Ken Smith** (COL) HHC A&D 2/503, Mar 67-Nov 67, HHC BDE, Nov 67-Mar 68. Ken (our previous National Secretary) is now with the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA and recently returned from a whirlwind two week work detail. Visiting France, England, Norway and Germany. Quite a trip and still recovering from seven hotels and twenty-one interviews in ten cities—all in fourteen days!

**Billy R. Childs** Co A 82d AVN BN, 335th AVN BN-Dec 65-Dec 66. Billy is now employed with the U.S. Postal Service and resides in Winter Haven, FL.

**Randy C. Day** 173d Eng Co. June 67-Nov 67. Now a property manager in Nevada.

**David Dorfmeier** AES Platoon, Co C Spt Bn, Jan 67-Sep 67. Dave is a counselor with the Army Drug and Alcohol Program in Frankfurt, Germany (97th Gen Hosp). Dave is now a MSgt in the USAR and previously worked with VN Vets and Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) Disorders in Denver, CO.

**Thomas F. Dooley** 2/503 Inf 1Lt, Jan 66-Jan 67. Now Vice President, Sikorsky Products Division, Saudi Arabia—A short rainy season and no three canopy jungle — right Tom?

**Lloyd John Gill** D Co 4/503 Inf, Jun 69-July 69. Lloyd is becoming a life member — welcome aboard!

**James J. Healy** C/3/503 Inf, May 69-Jun 70. Jim is currently a Police Lt in IL.

**John D. Hoskmsn** (CPT) 3rd Bn 503 Inf, Apr-Sep 69. John is now Vice President with Gruber Systems in CA.

**Mark Mitchell** B/2/503 Inf, Feb 64. Mark is a farm worker in Ohio and knows his priorities — he has paid his dues

thru 1990! Airborne! Thanks for the support Mark.

**David C. Smith** 172 MID Nov 68-Apr 69 (1LT), 2/503 Inf S-2 Recon FLT LDR (1LT and CPT). Dave is a new member and resides in NY.

**Demetrius Brown** SGM E-9 Co. B, 2nd BN 503, Sept 63-Mar 65. Active duty NC.

**Carl P. Davis** B 4/503, Sept 69-July 70. Carl is now a Baker with Hawnaford Bro. in Maine.

**Anthony Brongaites** Dog Co. 4/503, June 67-Feb 68. "Ben" is now living in Glen Oaks NY.

**Charles E. Chilcott** A Co. 1/503, May 67-May 68. He now resides in Logansport, IN

**Glen H. Pyle** Co. A Adm Spt Bn, Nov 63-Nov 65. Glen is now Supt. of Constr. for Walgreen Drugs in Addison, IL.

**Robert Vajda** Hq Hq Co 173d, May 67-June 68. Robert is now a tool inspector for the Cleveland Pneumatic Co. in Ohio.

**John W. Coffild** A 2/503, 68-69, A 2/503 TDY-HHQ, 69-70. He now resides in PA.

**Thomas F. Dorf** A Co. 4th Bat, June 68-June 69. Thomas is now Mgr. of used Car Dept. of Potamkin Auto in Philadelphia, PA.

**David M. Kaiser** D Co 2nd Bat 503d, August 69-July 70. David is now a "trouble shooter" for Philadelphia Electric Co. in PA.

**Thomas J. Levins** 173d C 4th Bat, July 67-July 68. He now resides in Philadelphia, PA.

**Bill J. Marucci** D/4 503rd, Oct 69-Oct 70. Bill is now Sales Rep. with Meissen Chev. in PA.

**Leo P. McHugh** E troop 17th Cav, Apr 66-June 66, 173d flight detachment, Cd SPG Platoon, June 66-April 67. Leo is now a real estate appraiser in Huntingden Valley, PA.

**Larry A. Stafford** (SFC) B Med, Spt Bn, Jul 65-Aug 66. Casper Plt Spt Bn, May 68-May 69.

**Geoff T. Tierney** Queensland, Australia. In a note from Aust. Geof says "Just noted my dues card ends in Dec. enclosed are my dues for '88. I'm off tomorrow (28 Sept) to Sydney for the big Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade and Reunion on Sat. 3 Oct. Quite a bunch of Americans (2000) are coming down to be in it, I hear. Maybe I'll meet some of the guys I served with in Nam!"

**Joseph W. Zuggi**. Joe recently retired from the Philadelphia Police Dept. and is now with the Phila School District as a security officer. In addition he is a SSgt in the Pa. Air National Guard.

### A Letter from Craig McLaren

President VVA Chapt 190, Atmore, AL mentions that three other Herd members are doing a great job helping Vets through their VVA activities:

**Lt Larry Hawkins** (USA Ret) Nat Director of Region #4.

**Stewart Steinberg** — VVA Officer.

**Julio Gonzales** — Very active in many areas that give support to all Vets.

The best to Craig in his surgery recovery — Thanks for above info.

**Russell Ward** C/3/319 Aty, Apr 68-Mar 69. Russ is very pleased that his son William is now the third generation to wear the Airborne Wings—having recently completed Airborne School at Ft. Benning.



## Charlie Co 1st Bat

### Vietnam's Vets Recall Horror, and Texas Gift

by Jay B. Lewis

It was 20 years ago that the city of Fort Worth answered a plea from a hometown boy and adopted a company of doomed paratroopers fighting in Vietnam.

The mayor who sponsored the resolution and the City Council that passed it couldn't have known at the time, but the 100 or so young soldiers they'd adopted were to become one of the single most illustrious companies in the war.

And the resolution declaring them citizens of Fort Worth was to become, for the living and the dead, the single bright spot in a year of carnage.

"I've been calling people all over the country," said Bob Erickson, 40, a Chicago graphics firm executive who is helping to organize a Fourth of July reunion of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, to which the company belonged.

"Most of them say, 'Yes, I've still got my honorary citizen's certificate hanging on the wall.' It's like the only confirmation we got that 'what you guys are doing is OK and we're behind you.'"

The city adopted Charlie Company, 1st Battalion/503rd Airborne by unanimous resolution Aug. 7, 1967. It all started as the brainchild of James D. Hass, a 1966 Paschal High School graduate who was filling in a rare moment of boredom and loneliness in Vietnam.

"I don't have to tell you how isolated that place can be," said Hass, 39, who is owner of AY Associates, a Dallas investigations firm.

"What happened was, we were on an operation and I just sat down one day — for lack of things to do — and I wrote a letter to Mayor DeWitt McKinley and put forth a proposition that we were there for the people at home, and maybe they could adopt the company."

McKinley liked the idea, and so did the six other members of the council.

"There was not any debate," McKinley recalled this week. "As I remember, there was not anyone who spoke in protest. (Councilman) Harris Hoover and I got many things accomplished, and that was one of the things we had a solid seven (votes) on."

The resolution adopted, names of the company members were printed in the newspapers. Hass said the reaction was felt in Vietnam.

"We started getting thousands of letters and packages," Hass said. "Gov. (John) Connally sent a Texas flag. Whenever we lagered (formed a defensive perimeter for the night) we ran out that Texas flag because we were the Fort Worth company."

Erickson recalled that certificates of Fort Worth citizenship were mailed to the soldiers' homes, but the news was lost on the soldiers, who were exhausted from being flown from one hot spot to another.

"We did a lot of humping," said Joe Mescan, 42, a medic with Charlie Company who is now an auctioneer living in Columbia Junction, Ohio.

*Star-Telegram* reporter Bill Hendricks was dispatched to carry the proclamation to the troops in the field. Before he arrived, there was Dak To.

On the map, Dak To was a nondescript village in Vietnam's Central Highlands, surrounded by a cluster of hills with no names, just numbers giving their altitude in meters.

On the ground, Charlie Company — reinforced to a total of 200 men — was patrolling west of Dak To, toward the Cambodian border, on Armistice Day 1967, when it walked into a U-shaped ambush by a battalion of North Vietnamese regulars, their uniforms unfaded, their guns still shiny and new.

In a single day of fighting, the 200-man unit suffered 20 dead, 154 wounded, two missing.

"In that one week, men of the 173rd won a . . . Medal of Honor and five Distinguished Service Crosses," Hass said. "Everybody there that day got the Purple Heart."

Hass was badly wounded in the fighting and shipped back to the states to recover. He stayed 12 years in the Army, most of it in the elite Special Forces.

Erickson and the handful of Charlie Company's soldiers still on their feet kept up the patrols. Hendricks, who had been working his way over, finally arrived on Christmas Eve with another reporter.

"They were somewhere up in the hills outside Dak To," said Hendricks, now a reporter with the *San Antonio Express-News*. "We flew up in a helicopter, and its gyroscope — or whatever it was — went out. So we were flying through this valley, real low, in the dark and fog. Completely blind."

Erickson recalled: "We were on a hilltop overlooking the Cambodian border during a Christmas cease-fire — tee-hee, tee-hee — and the Army had sent us some cold beer and eggnog. This helicopter came in with two reporters . . . which freaked us out. They stayed and had a beer, and flew out. Thirty minutes later we were hit. If they'd stuck around, they could have had a real story."

Ahead of Charlie Company, the 1968 Tet offensive was looming over the horizon.

After that came the real horror: going home.

Erickson went home escorting the body of a childhood friend, a medic killed with Charlie Company.

"I went from a bad firefight, and two days later I'm coming into (Chicago's) O'Hare Airport home with the body of one of my best friends," he said. "I didn't want to get off the plane because I knew my mother and father would be out there, and I knew I was a different person from the one they remembered."

Mescan said he came home to a long silence.

"You just came home to nothing," he said. "You didn't dare talk about it, because then someone would call you a baby-killer. You more or less just swallowed it and lived with it."

*A thanks to Don Erickson of the Chicago Chapter for the above article.*

Published in Ft. Worth Texas Star-Telegram Newspaper, Dec. 25, 1987.



## Underage Soldier Denied VA Benefits

The Veterans Administration was set up, in President Lincoln's phrase, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle." But don't try convincing Walter Lee Martin of that.

At age 13, Martin wound up in Vietnam, where he "bore the battle" for nearly two years in the infantry. Yet the VA's officious paper shufflers have refused to pay for his medicine for a chronic lung disorder he contracted in the Army.

The bureaucrats say Martin isn't a qualified veteran, and by their nit-picking rules, they're right. He was as old as many drummer boys who fought in Mr. Lincoln's Army, and he served well and honorably in Vietnam. But he was never properly mustered in.

So at age 15, the boy-soldier was unceremoniously booted out of the Army, without a proper discharge. Lacking the official documentation so dear to the bureaucratic heart, Martin, now 31, has been steadfastly rejected by the VA in his claim for veteran's benefits.

Here's what our associate Stewart Harris learned by poring over Army and VA files:

Army investigators went to Martin's home town of Arcadia, Fla., where they learned that as a boy of 12 he was more than 6 feet tall and weighed 160 pounds. The secretary of the local draft board told investigators that in 1968, at age 13, Martin tried unsuccessfully to join every branch of service. The secretary said he spiked Martin's application when he saw the boy's birth date: Aug. 9, 1955.

What happened next is in dispute. Martin asserts he was standing in a bus terminal in Atlanta in January 1969 when the police picked him up as an AWOL soldier. The Army claims Martin stole a GI's duffel bag and assumed the soldier's identity.

There's no dispute about what happened next: The 13-year-old was shipped to Vietnam and put in a replacement battalion at Long Binh. Martin said he was awarded a Bronze Star for valor, but there is no record of the award in military files.

Eventually, the soldier who lost the duffel bag reported that someone was drawing his pay, and the Army tracked down Martin in Vietnam. After three investigations, the Army learned it had a 15-year-old on its hands and Martin was kicked out.

An Orwellian VA memorandum in 1976 explained:

"Although Martin did perform duty in Vietnam and was wounded in Vietnam, he has no valid service, was never legally enlisted in the armed forces, was never honorably discharged from the armed forces and is not entitled to any Veterans Administration benefits of any shape or form."

In January, the Board for Correction of Military Records refused to review his case. Without a board decision, the VA won't reopen Martin's case.

Rep. C.W. Bill Young (R-Fla.) plans to submit a private bill to give Martin's military service official recognition. But an aide said Congress will be reluctant to set a precedent.

Meanwhile, Martin is back in uniform: the denims of a federal penitentiary, where he is serving a three-year term

for impersonating a member of the military and passing a bad check. Martin told us he put on his old fatigues and entered an Army base in Florida, where a doctor wrote him a prescription for his expensive lung medicine.

## Concerning Veterans

### Veteran-Owned Small Firms Can Do Business With the VA

Vietnam era and disabled veterans who own and operate small businesses should look to the Veterans Administration as a possible customer, says VA Administrator Thomas K. Turnage.

While the VA is not authorized to set aside noncompetitive contract awards for veteran-owned businesses, it can and does actively seek out and assist these firms in competing for VA acquisition opportunities.

Since a special VA outreach program began in 1984, about \$92 million worth of contracts have gone to Vietnam era and disabled veteran entrepreneurs.

VA procurement officers are constantly looking for contractors in such areas as building construction, maintenance, supply, equipment repair and other activities.

Each VA purchasing office maintains active bidders' lists and commodity index files, indicating the various items offered by prospective bidders. The VA has developed a veteran-owned business resource list that is periodically updated and mailed to procurement officials for use.

Vietnam era and disabled veterans who own their own small business are urged to contact the Chief of Supply at any of VA's 172 medical centers nationwide for additional information or write to: Deputy Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (005C), Veterans Administration, Washington, DC 20420.

### An International Korean War Memorial

Entertainment stars Ed McMahon and Robert Stack have joined an Advisory Council of distinguished Americans spearheading establishment of a \$6 million international Korean War Memorial. It will honor the 54,246 U.S. dead of the so-called forgotten war in Korea, the 8,177 missing in action—compared to 2,486 Vietnam MIAs—and the 389 still officially listed as prisoners.

Their campaign team, headquartered in Valley Forge, PA, has commissioned famed sculptor Felix de Weldon, designer of the classic Iwo Jima monument in Washington, to create the memorial. As massive as his Iwo Jima sculpture and the first U.S. battle monument to include Asians, his tribute to the victors of the Korean War will be located in Los Angeles overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

### NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

Really liked the enlarged copy of the Society's Newsletter. It's attractive, informative, and ably reflects the dynamic growth of the Society.

Saul Sorkin (Ret) SgM 173d Eng 3/66-12/66  
Fayetteville, NC



## “Okie” Okendo Reports on Progress of His Book

Dear Sky Soldiers:

Dec 87

First of all, the book “Battles of Dak-To”. After the reunion in Florida, Clara and myself made it to Washington D.C. getting a great deal more information on the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). I have amassed hundreds of new documents, after action reports and film slides containing more information than I bargained for. I could have made my dead-line on the book, however I felt that the members, especially those who were involved in the battles of Dak-To would have been cheated.

The main contents of the book consist of: The Presidents of the United States Of America, a brief abridgment of each President who served during the Vietnam War. 173d's movement from Bien Hoa to Pleiku. 173d Operations in Pleku. Battle of the slopes, 22 June 1967. The Central high-lands. Battle for hill 830. Battle for Ngok Kom Leat. Battle for hill 823. Fire Base #16. Battle for hill 882. Battle for hill 875 and history of Parachute troop training from 1940 to Vietnam, and last but not least, the 503d Airborne Infantry, coat of arms, motto, WW II and many personal accounts and experiences of some of our members.

These battles are the real thing, names, data and action are abridgments of the actual after action reports and reports that were made from the members themselves, no names were omitted, no action deleted. I should have notified the membership, however, I have been on the road

since Florida. Hang in there just a little longer, you will get more than a bargain.

“Okie” Okendo  
Lawrence Okendo

## Publications

### SKY SOLDIER

#### First-Rate History

*“The 173d Airborne was the first major American ground combat unit to launch offensive operations in a parachute attack. The all-volunteer elite force pioneered the tactics for airborne attacks in Vietnam. Deployed by the generals in Saigon as the ‘fire brigade’ unit, the Sky Soldiers were sent to where the fighting was the hottest...”*

from the jacket of Sky Soldier

Bantam Books has honored the 173d Airborne by bringing out *Sky Soldier* as the second volume in its series *Illustrated History of the Vietnam War*. This 158-page paperback by F. Clifton Berry traces the 173d's pivotal roles in battles from its arrival in-country to the end of the conflict, including operations in the Iron Triangle, Operation Junction City, Dak To and Hill 875, and pacification and control assignments.

Everything from battles to hootch searches to the famous Death Watch photo is recorded. Day-to-day life in the field is well-documented also in nearly 100 photos and maps.

Clif Berry, the author, served in Vietnam with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. He also served with the 82d Airborne. Following the end of his active service in 1975, he began a distinguished career in writing and editing on military and aerospace subjects.

(Continued on page 16)

## ‘THE FIRST TO FIGHT’

By LTC Bob Breen

Australian Diggers and Kiwis with United States Paratroopers in Vietnam 1965/66

- **Would you have liked to have been the first to take on the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese in 1965— outnumbered in the jungle by killers who were massacring a battalion of their countrymen a week, and who had bled the French Army dry only a decade before?**

In 1965 a battalion of Australian Diggers (First Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment) and a Kiwi gun battery (161 Field Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery) were assigned to a brigade of United States Paratroopers [173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)] — ANZAC and ANZUS combined to spearhead the escalation of the Vietnam War.

This ANZUS force was the first Allied combat formation to fight in War Zone D, the Central Highlands, the Iron Triangle, the Ho Bo Woods, the Michelin and Courtenay plantations, and the Mekong Delta. They were Westmoreland's ‘fire brigade’, fighting and dying in seven provinces learning the lessons of the Vietnam War for those who would follow.

The Diggers said to the Viet Cong, ‘You will never know where we are, but we will hunt you down and kill you.’ The Paratroopers said to the Viet Cong, ‘You know where we are — take us on and pay the price!’

\*\*\*\*Allan and Unwin is about to publish **Lieutenant Colonel Bob Breen's** story of the Diggers, Paratroopers and Kiwis of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) in 1965/66.

‘It is about time someone cut the bullshit and told the story of how we fought in Vietnam.’

Peter Rothwell

Australian veteran of Korea, Malaya and two tours of Vietnam.

I am interested in buying a (✓)

SEND NO MONEY AT THIS TIME

NO OBLIGATION

when the fully illustrated book, ‘The First To Fight — Australian Diggers and Kiwis with United States Paratroopers in Vietnam 1965/66,’ is published in 1988 (Mid Year).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

POST TO: Allan and Unwin Australia Pty Ltd PO Box 764 NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060 AUSTRALIA.



## PUBLICATIONS

(Continued from page 15)

### Gen Williamson Receives Book From WWII Hero

MG "Butch" Williamson, on behalf of the 173d Brigade, accepted a book from one of Australia's most famous W.W. II heroes Sir "Weary" Dunlop. This is a published diary of his experiences in Java and Burma-Thailand during '42-'45. The General has just received the book and expects it to be quite interesting.

### Jim Clay Writes About Vietnam

We have recently discovered that another Sky Soldier is attempting to put his VN experience into book form. Jim Clay C/3/503 Mar-Jun 70 says in a letter to the Society:

"For the last year and a half I have been writing a book about our old unit, the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The book has been endorsed by Senator Don Nickles, Congressman James R. Jones, Tulsa Mayor Richard Crawford, and the Vietnam Veterans of America. Half of the proceeds from the book are pledged toward building a memorial to the Vietnam Veteran in Tulsa Oklahoma. American Airlines is allowing me to fly on their airlines at their expense to interview various members of the Brigade for the book.

I have found a great many of the men whom I served with but am having problems in finding several key individuals for several of the chapters. At the present time I am seeking three individuals who served with Charlie Company of the 3rd Battalion March-June, 1970. Their names are as follows: CPT Leo Marcier, CPT Ron Walters and PFC Lacey."

## Boonie Buddies Reach Out

A Letter From Bob Kruckmeyer

I've been to Washington, D.C. to dedicate the monument and cried like a baby for our honored dead. I've been to N.Y.C. to dedicate our monument and see the Pyrotechnic Display. I've been to a dozen shrinks to try to reorganize my life. I've even been told my name is going on a monument in my old home town this year. I'm a real procrastinator and must have a half a dozen filled out applications for our Society. Finally, I've gotten the spark I've needed in your last Newsletter. The names of two men of my Company were on the Membership List. I would like their address and phone #s if possible, for the last time I saw them they were being medevaced out of the bush never to see them again. Please accept my application and my plea for help. Just talking to these men would greatly help my mental well being. Their names are:

Robert V. Baker, A/2/503, '69-'70

Richard T. Riehle, A/2/503, '69-'70

I know if anyone can help me and my request, A SKY SOLDIER WILL.

Please find enclosed my membership fee and a huge "AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY"!!!

Thanks and God Bless America  
Bob Kruckmeyer (A/2/503 '69-'70)  
Ridgewood, N.J.

NOTE: The New York Chapter does not give out addresses of its members. But we will give your address to the person you wish to contact. It will be up to them to get in touch with you. This policy is to protect the privacy of our members.

**Editor's Note:** Upon reading Bob's letter, we called Robert Baker and Richard Riehle and gave them Bob's Phone # and Address. Bob reports, he was very glad to hear from his war buddies.

We wish to thank the NY Chapter for sending us the above article from their Newsletter and for demonstrating the spirit of the Airborne family.

Editor

## Items For Sale

### Decals — Patches — Etc.

Vietnam Veteran  
PO Box 613, Dover, OH 44622  
Telephone: (216) 339-6708.

### VN Vets Statue — Plaque Replica

Sky Soldier Gerald Cassel, Sr. has a plaque replica of Frederic Harts VN Veterans Statue, located in Washington, D.C. It has taken a little over two years to develop and obtain permission to sell.

The background is beautifully finished wood, with bronzed handfinished figures. There is a metal inscription plate below the figures for you to inscribe with your own personal message. This one-of-a-kind 8" x 10" plaque would be an excellent gift.

For information contact: VET PLAK, Gerald A. Cassel, Sr., 16214-14th Avenue E., Tacoma, Washington 98445. Phone: (206) 537-0193

### Viet Nam Trivia Game — \$26.99

The game was created by Bill Shemeler (a combat medic who served with the 2 Bn/28th Inf First Inf Div, 69 and 70) and his wife Kathy out of concern for the servicemen whose fates are still unknown listed as POW's/MIA's.

For information contact: Vietnam War Trivia, PO Box 321, New Milford, CT 06776

### Insignia, Pins, Medals, Charms and Patches

Cornell Military Products  
Box 308  
St. James, NY 11780

### Decals, Etc.

Angelus Pacific Co.  
PO Box-Drawer #111  
700 E. Walnut  
Fullerton, CA 92632  
800-368-1092



## Chapter Activities

**CHAPTER I Washington, D.C. Sigholtz** — Sigholtz Capitol Chapter, PO Box 27478, Washington, D.C. 20038-0478. Larry DeMeo, President.

— **Gold Star 173d Mom Helps Lead Observance at Arlington Cemetery.** As the nation marked American Gold Star Mothers' Day on September 27, 1987 at Arlington Cemetery, Mrs. Beda G. Shafer (mother of Sgt. James D. Shafer, KIA) as National Historian of the organization carried its National Banner at the official wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

The Gold star Mothers proceeded as a group to the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial where they also placed a wreath. This second ceremony was unofficial since formal observances are permitted only on Veterans' Day.

Representing the Sigholtz-Capitol Chapter and escorting Mrs. Shafer to view her son's name at the Wall were Chapter Treasurer Bob Finan and his wife Nancy.

Many Chapter members will recall Sgt. Shafer's father, Paul, who accepted his son's CIB from General Westmoreland at the 20th Reunion Banquet. Mr. Shafer is at home in Lima, Ohio, recovering from a heart attack, but send his warmest regards to members of the 173d and hopes to see all of you in Chicago in 1988.

— **Sky Soldiers Honored at "The Wall" on Veterans' Day, Wednesday, Nov. 11.** As has been the practice for several years, Brigade veterans gathered at the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial on Veterans' Day, November 11, to place a wreath in honor of the 1,534 lost in Vietnam as well as all the other Brigade members who served there.

— **Christmas Fest Stars Dinner, Dancing and Story of Brigade.** Sky soldiers and their guests celebrated the Christmas season with dinner and dancing at one of Washington's favorite nightspots on Saturday, December 12. A superb prime rib dinner at Blackie's House of Beef, followed by dancing to oldies-but-goodies next door at Deja Vu.

A special attraction — the author of *Sky Soldier*, F. Clifton Berry, shared his reflections on writing this remarkable photo-and-essay history of the Herd in Vietnam.

**CHAPTER II New York** — PO Box 610, Bronx, NY 10462. Michael Schwartz, President.

— On November 21, 1987, the New York Chapter, in coordination with some local Veterans groups, sponsored two dedication ceremonies honoring 173d heroes, Major (Chaplain) Charles Watters (2/503) and PFC Carlos Lozada (A/2/503 '67). Both men were posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for action at the Battle of Dak To in November 1967.

In Jersey City, New Jersey, the main public library as well as a public elementary school, have been named in honor of Chaplain Watters. Over 300 people were present at the ceremony.

Earlier that same day, over 500 people attended a moving ceremony in honor of the naming of a public park for PFC Carlos Lozada, in the South Bronx, New York City. The ceremony was attended by New York's

Mayor Koch, as well as other local political dignitaries.

Both families of the heroes attended the ceremonies, as well as many former members of the 173d. Representing the National Society were President, General Nicholson; Secretary, Gene Weeks; and Treasurer, Michael Schwartz.

The programs were coordinated by Wendell Vega and Michael Schwartz of the New York Chapter.

**CHAPTER III Ft. Benning/Columbus, GA** — PO Box 1977, Ft. Benning, GA 31905-0577. ISG (Ret) Cary Rutland, President.

— **Roger D. Ingram** has become a LIFE MEMBER of the Society.

**CHAPTER IV Philadelphia/English** — PO Box 345, Ft. Dix, N.J. 08640. Steve Reilly, President.

— **26 Oct 87** — **Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial Parade.**

**Parade After Action Report.** If you weren't there you missed a very moving event. We assembled at about eight thirty in the morning, starting with just a handful. By ten fifteen when we moved out our ranks were up to sixty four people. This included some wives and children, and a brother who was also an Air Force Vet. It took a few blocks to get back in step and to remind Ken Rocks that you don't start until the command "forward march" is given. By the time we finished some two hours later our ranks had grown to over eighty people and we had the old "*Airborne Shuffle*" back. Special thanks to **Wendell Vega** from the New York Chapter who brought the Brigade Colors and played Drill Sergeant to get us back in step.

The mini reunion was also a time to remember. We were joined by some other Vets who were turned away by the other groups because they looked like Hell's Angels, the women had some nifty tattoos. It's not the first time we had to come to the aid of another unit.

— Jack Schempf addresses us that 87 Herd members marched in the parade.

**CHAPTER V Ft. Bragg/Fayetteville** — 540 Cimmaron Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28303

— Joe F. Atkinson advises us that the Chapter is regrouping as several members have caught up on dues and have pledged support.

**CHAPTER VI Chicago/Elite Forces** — 224 Bemice Dr., Northlake, IL 60164. Frank Miceli, President.

— **Our Color Guard Goes to Pittsburgh, PA.** A contingent of the Midwest Chapter went to Pittsburgh to participate in their Veterans Day Parade which was to be the largest parade there since the end of WWII. By waving the HERD flag eleven other 173rd Vets joined us. "I haven't seen this many guys from the HERD in one place since I left Vietnam" said Bruce Willy, B/1/503 68-69 from Pittsburgh. Registration forms for the 88 Reunion were given out with promises to hook up in '88.

— **Annual Dance.** This years dance might have been a little expensive at \$35.00 per person but no expense was spared to do it right! The hall was well decorated, from balloons and ribbons to Herd patches on the walls



and centerpieces on the tables. The band started out kind of slow until our man Otis took over the microphone and started to wail and immediately was joined by Mickey Yauger and Billy King. Our man Otis (alias Andy Brown) and his fadora got around the dance that night. I am sorry I mistook Danner Bierhaus, who was in his dress blues, as a parking lot boy. So I'd like my \$1.00 tip back. All kidding aside, every person that did show up did have a good time. We had door prizes from a weekend for 2 at the O'Hara Sheraton, dinner for 6 at the elegant Cafe El Tapatio, a leather bomber jacket, a gift certificate for \$50.00 at Mandakas Jewelers, a Weber barbeque grill, gift certificate for shocks, 6 pounds of delicious Fannie May Candies, cases of liquor and many other door prizes. I'd like to thank all the members for making this dance a big success. This year we made over \$200.00 on the dance.

**CHAPTER VII Florida** — 5119 Murray Hill Rd., Tampa, FL 33615. CSM (Ret) Ed Proffitt, President.

**CHAPTER VIII Hawaii** — 1860 Ala Moana #2202, Honolulu, HI 96815. Paul Scheftel, President.

**CHAPTER IX Ohio** — 466 Windsor Street, Marion, OH 43302. Marshall Boswell, President.

**CHAPTER X Western States** — 900 West Railroad Ave., Cotati, CA 94928. Robert Rodriguez, President.

— In the past years 1986-87 we have seen much growth as a chapter and quite a bit of community involvement. This past year the chapter has been involved in 3 KGO-TV Broadcasts involving Vietnam Veterans. In the most recent program, Michael Smith and Robert Rodriguez were 2 of 3 guests that were spotlighted as successful veterans. The show took a look at what the Veterans are doing today and how they are involved with other vets and the community on a personal and business level. Michael Smith owns a Real Estate Business in San Ramon and is a chapter member. He also previously worked for the Sheriffs Department and is now also involved in getting a production company together to produce shows of interest to veterans about veterans.

Robert Rodriguez

— Last year, the 503d Hosted their Annual Corregidor Dinner in the City of Cowney, California and invited the 173d Chapter X as their guests. The occasion was a real success and enjoyable to us all . . . such that President Don Abbot (one of the original troopers that jumped into Corregidor) called the Chapter President to "personally" invite the Chapter back again this year for their annual dinner. "This was a suit and tie sit down affair at the Embassy Suites. We were overwhelmed at the hospitality and warmth shown us from the 503rd group from the very moment we walked in the door until we departed. It was touching to sit and dine with men that are such a colorful part of our history." Through the grapevine, Lt. John Morris from Bravo, 2nd Bn, 1967, (DakTo) heard of the dinner and attended. He was able at that time to join our chapter and get together with other fellow 173d troopers after all these years!

— **Ray Ramirez** — The new chapter President enlisted in 1964 and was assigned to the 173d in 1966 and went to Viet Nam on the General John Pope under Battalion Commander Michael Healy. He and his lovely wife Sharon have a son Raymond, 14 and a daughter Celeste, 10, and reside in Whittier. He worked for 9 yrs with the LA Sheriffs Dept and currently works for the City of Commerce and is the assistant director of Community Development and Economic Development. He became involved with the chapter after attending his first Reunion in 1986 at Fort Benning and has been an active member of the chapter ever since. His plans for the chapter this year include visiting several VA Hospitals and participation in the groundbreaking of the Cal Vet Memorial in Sacramento.

**CHAPTER XI** — Australian (Down Under) Chapter, PO Box Fairfield, N.S.W. 2165, Australia. Tele 723982.

— Letter From Chapter Chairman 9 Nov 87  
My first duty as Chairman of The Australian (Down Under) Chapter of the Society, is to report to The President that the Australian (Down Under) Chapter of The Society was instituted on Saturday, 3rd October, 1987.

The Chapter has a current financial membership of 66 members, and we are expecting that figure to increase now that the excitement of the Welcome Home Parade and Reunions has passed. Of our 66 members, two, are Life Members. They are: **Fr. Gerald Anthony CUDMORE**, Chaplain (Capt), Present Brigadier; and **Mr. Robert Morton**, Pvt C Coy, Ret Warrant Officer Class II.

**CHAPTER OFFICERS: CHAIRMAN (PRESIDENT)**— **Carey Howard McQuillan**, Pvt Sig Ptn, Spt Coy Sig Ptn-BHQ 6-65 to 6-66. **SECRETARY**— **Raymond Bruce Payne**, Pvt Rifleman/Machine Gunner 9 Ptn C Coy. **TREASURER**— **Terry Bruce Coftus**, Cpl 5-65 to 10-65 WIA Oct 65. Iron Triangle mentioned in Despatches Coy Actions on 12 Oct 65. 2nd Tour 68-69, SSgt 6 PLN B Coy ('65), CHQ B Coy (68-69).

The institution of the Australian (Down Under) Chapter took place at the venue of our Reunion held in conjunction with the Australian Vietnam Forces Welcome Home Parade, '87, the Chapter received a most favourable response from our former members at the reunion, many voicing their approval that the ties forged between our two units in Vietnam, will now be able to be continued, through our chapter of the Society.

### ADDENDUM

Re: Australian Vietnam Forces Welcome Home Parade.  
Sydney, Saturday, 3rd October, 1987.

There was a very good representation of The 173rd Airborne Brigade, taking part in the parade, and in reunions. Notably: — The first U.S. Serviceman and his wife to arrive in Australia to participate in the Parade and have a look around — down under —

**Larry and Cathy Connell.** Seattle, Washington.  
173rd Airborne Brigade.

(FIRST IN . . . . . AGAIN.) Well Done Larry & Cathy.

(Continued on page 20)



# Application Form



# Sky Soldiers

## Membership Application NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade

Mail to:  
National Secretary  
P.O. Box 1810  
Silver Spring, MD 20902  
Annual Dues:  
\$10.00  
Checks Payable to:  
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade

Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Date
Street Address	City	State	ZIP
Area Code/Home Phone	Area Code/Office Phone	SSN	

**OLD ADDRESS**

Street Address	City	State	ZIP
Area Code/Home Phone	Area Code/Office Phone	SSN	

**CURRENT MILITARY ASSIGNMENT OR CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT (JOB TITLE)**

Unit/Office Address	City	State	ZIP
Job Description/Occupation			
Military Status (Check One) Active <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/> Discharge <input type="checkbox"/> USAR <input type="checkbox"/> ANG <input type="checkbox"/>			
Current/Highest Rank	Years Active Service	Chapter Affiliation	
Membership Status New <input type="checkbox"/> Life <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/>	Regular <input type="checkbox"/> Associate <input type="checkbox"/>	Honorary <input type="checkbox"/>	

**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

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Dues for Year	Amount for Year	Date	Amount	Date	Amount
Date	Amount	Date	Amount	Date	Amount

REMARKS:



## DUES

**National Member** ..... \$10.00  
(Regular, Associate and Affiliate Members)

**Life Member** ..... \$173.00  
No further dues to National Society, however a \$5 fee is due your Chapter.

**Honorary Members** pay no dues to National or the Chapter.

If you are a chapter member please pay thru the chapter.

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade

Mail to:  
National Secretary  
P.O. Box 1810  
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Annual Dues:  
\$10.00

Checks Payable to:  
Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade

Published quarterly by the National Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade, PO Box 1810, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Sky Soldier Editor: Gene Weeks.

### Don't Be A Drop Out!

*This is a Sky Soldier who did not bring his dues up to date and was "dropped" . . . he now stands 2'8". Don't be a dropout . . . It's not good for your image or the Society!*



## MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

(Continued from page 18)

**CSM and Mrs. Larry Okendo**, honoured us with their presence and involvement. We hope they enjoyed their stay, under the watchful eye of Lt. Col. Bob Breen, RA INF., (Author of the soon to be published History of 1RAR/173rd 1965-1966 Tour.)

We even had our own Resident members of "The Herd" **Henry Stiegler**, from Gisborne Victoria, **A.B. Garcia**, also from Melbourne and **Bob Dixon**, (A Scotsman) resident in Campbelltown NSW.

Having spoken to Henry, whom I have a sound friendship and met for the first time at the parade, I am aware that they, with their American brothers in arms enjoyed themselves immensely, as did every one that attended.

As a member of the organizing Committee of the Parade, I can report that our parade was an absolute and total success. The parade, and the weekend was made that much more successful and enjoyable by the presence of some 500 or so visiting Americans, and the presence of 'Old Glory' in the parade, attended by some very proud U.S. Veterans brought lumps to the throats and tears to thousands of eyes that had the good fortune to witness the closeness and bond between our forces, that is still evident today, as it was then.

Please make a mention of the parade in Sky Soldier, and pass to our Brothers of 'The Herd', from me and all of my mates, Down Under,

"Thanks, Fella's and Ladies, for coming, and sharing with us, we acknowledge the compliment you have paid us, and hope to meet again, you are always welcome." To you that came, we send our Love, and admiration we were truly, together then, together again.

All the Way — Carey H. McQuillan



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