

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

**WE TRY  
HARDER!**

**2/503d**  
**VIETNAM**  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ *newsletter*



March-April 2018, Issue 79  
Contact: [rto173@att.net](mailto:rto173@att.net)

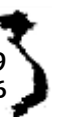
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[http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue\\_index.htm](http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm)

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~

Zulu Zulu



March 15, 1966: Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d arrive LZ Zulu Zulu in the "D" Zone jungle during Operation Silver City. In the early morning of 16 Mar 66, our battalion was surrounded and attacked by what was reported to be an enemy force three times our size. The enemy was fanatically committed to overrunning the entire unit, yet our battalion would stake claim to what was deemed to be a major victory during the Vietnam War and one which earned the 2/503d and attached and supporting units the Presidential Unit Citation for their valorous defeat of the attacking enemy force that day. See PUC text on Page 43. (Photo by RTO Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503, '65/'66, and one of over 160 Sky Soldiers reported wounded or killed during Operation Silver City).







# We Dedicate this Issue of Our Newsletter in Memory and Honor of the Young Men of the 173d Airborne Brigade & Attached Units We Lost 50 Years Ago in the Months of March & April 1968



*"Stranger, go tell the Spartans we died here obedient to their commands".*

Inscription at Thermopylae

**Robert William Abernathy, 20**  
SP4, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68

He was Abby to us,  
When he left this land,  
Off to a place he didn't understand,  
Off with a life he would risk for this man,  
He didn't know, He didn't know.



*"The beginning of the poem I wrote for one of my best friends growing up...Abby. Was a pall bearer at his Arlington National Cemetery burial. I then served in Vietnam 8 months later. One of the pure kindest people I ever knew. Rest in peace my brother!" J. Nicholson*

**Terrence William Achor, 20**  
PFC, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68

*"We remember. Terrence is buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park, Whittier, CA."*  
**Robert Sage**



**Franklin Delano Audilet, 31**  
WO, HHC/173 Bde, 4/1/68

(Virtual Wall states MI Det 173d)

*"Our family hero. Growing up on a farm in Texas, Franklin is #6 and I am #7 in a family of eight children. Hard times-lots of chores on the farm and in the fields. Good times – lots of food and community dances and feasts. In school my brother was my protector. His decision to join the Armed Services seemed natural as both of his brothers had already made that decision in years earlier. Losing him in the war was unimaginable. His wife had the responsibility of raising three children alone - so unfair! It is sad that Franklin could not be there to see his children grow up. And then not to know his grand-children! Franklin would have been a wonderful grand-father! Our family misses our true hero. I will never forget you, Franklin. Eternal Memory!" Loretta Iris Buchko*



*"I will never forget that day. It started out to be just another day in Nam. But by 9AM we lost two fine soldiers. One was Frank Audilet. I think of Frank often now and my heart weighs heavy. He will never be forgotten by me or anyone else that knew him. I did a lot of growing up on that day." Danny Mays*

**William Reginald Awatere, 23**  
PTE, RNZIR, 4/12/68

*"Died of wounds, 12 May 1968 – shrapnel to face and chest."*



**James David Barr, 19**  
CPL, B/1/503, 3/18/68

(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

*"I came from England on holiday with my son and we spent time talking about the fallen in wars including Vietnam. I picked your name at random and wondered who you were and what your hopes and dreams were before you fell...."*



*(tributes continued....)*



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





....You were 19. Only 2 years older than my son who stood next to me. I hope that I never have to experience what your family and loved ones had to go through when they received the news of your loss. Rest in Peace." **CSR**

**Charles Richard Beall, 20**  
**SP4, E/17th Cav, 3/6/68**

"Welcome to a Sanford Listing, Richard. Lynn Covington Cullum recalls you and your family attending church in Sanford, just across Lake Monroe from DeBary, and that is enough for us to remember you by including your name on our facebook pages - my personal one at J Kirk Richards and the two Sanford group FB sites (I Grew Up In Sanford And Am Not Ashamed To Admit It and We Grew Up In Sanford). I am sure you will not lack for company, Richard. Aside from Lynn there was one other request to me to find a 'Richard' whose name belonged on our city and Seminole County memorial to those lost in Vietnam. From this old Sergeant of Marines who was wounded December 10, 1970, in Quang Nam just outside Que Son City, welcome home Soldier!" **J. Richards**



**Carl Hans Bernhart, 20**  
**CPL, B/1/503, 3/16/68**

"Memories. I went from first grade through 12 grade to school with Carl. He was a quiet boy and young man - never mean to anyone. I remember when he was lifeguarding one day and he chased my friend and me with a black snake - we screamed and ran - all in a lot of fun!!! When we were in grade school his dad would bring his parachute from WWII to the school and release it out into the playground and then show us how to fold and repack it - that impressed this little girl very much. When my husband and I visited The Wall, we took a picture of Carl's name and took it to this mother and father. It was a very moving day. Thank you, Carl, for your service to this country. You are and will be a hero to me." **Debbie Dye Campana**



[See Page 36 for story about Richmond highway named in honor of Carl]

**David Joe Berry, "Doc", 21**  
**SP4, HHC/3/503, 4/28/68**

"David Berry was born on March 28, 1947 in Mason City, Iowa. His parents were Paul Richard and Wilma Berry. The family moved to Winona, MN, where David attended St Stanislaus Grade School for 7 years. At the time of David's death in Vietnam on April 28, 1968; he left behind his parents, a brother and two sisters." **Unsigned**



**James Richard Biernacki, 20**  
**SGT, A/4/503, 3/14/68**

"Never forgotten. Jim - You've been gone for a long time but I just wanted to tell you that you always had a friend who always wondered about your family and all the things you left behind. Do you remember Richard Reese? I was married to him and he's never forgotten you. We spent years trying to find your family so Richard could tell them how much you meant but we were never able to find them. As sad as it is to know you are on the Wall, we hope that we can offer your family our prayers, love and remembrances." **Richard, Toni, Erin Reese**



Jim Biernacki with a buddy, from a war long ago.



**James Guy Blackshear, 19**  
**SP4, A/1/503, 3/17/68**

"My loyal friend. In memory of my best friend, Jimmy, who died too young while protecting our country. I still miss you buddy and cherish all the wonderful growing up memories of you." **Lucy Spec. James Blackshear Awarded Silver Star in Vietnam Action**



"Mr. and Mrs. James W. Blackshear and son, Tommy, receive the Silver Star Medal awarded posthumously to Specialist James G. Blackshear for gallantry in action in Vietnam. Presenting the medal and the citation in a ceremony at the University of Florida Army ROTC unit was Col. Arlo Mitchell, left."

(tributes continued....)





## ~ Silver Star ~

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Specialist Fourth Class James Guy Blackshear (ASN: 5370XXXX), United States Army, for exceptional gallantry in connection with military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 17 March 1968, while serving as squad leader with Company A, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). On the above date, Company A was conducting a movement to contact mission. Specialist Blackshear took the lead himself, because of his experience and ability to spot the enemy. After observing an occupied enemy bunker, Specialist Blackshear deployed his squad and then personally led the maneuver element to destroy the enemy bunker with hand grenades while the other fire team laid down a base of fire. Two more occupied enemy bunkers were observed, maneuvered against and destroyed by Specialist Blackshear and his squad. At this time, the squad received intense automatic fire from two directions and Specialist Blackshear ordered the men to move to the rear and set up a perimeter. Realizing that he was in the best location to give covering fire, Specialist Blackshear remained behind and placed effective fire on the enemy. While doing so, Specialist Blackshear was seriously wounded but continued to give covering fire for his squad until he was killed by the enemy. Specialist Blackshear's supreme sacrifice and extraordinary heroism were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

General Orders: Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam,  
General Orders No. 471 (May 28, 1968)

## ~ A Note from The Virtual Wall ~

Alpha Company, 1/503rd Infantry, lost three men on 17 March 1968:

SGT Daniel L. Burr, Milwaukee, WI;  
SP4 James G. Blackshear, Starke, FL; and  
PFC Patrick J. Tremblay, Conesus, NY.

Between 13 and 18 March 1968 the 1st Bn, 503rd Infantry, was operating in the hills around Dak To, Kontum Province. "Rocket Ridge" was the nickname given to a ridgeline which more or less paralleled Highway QL-14 between Tan Canh and Kontum City. The Battalion lost 22 men over the course of the five day operation.

## John Clair Bonney, 19

CPL, D/4/503, 4/3/68

*"In Remembrance. My mother went to school with John. There is a memorial in her high school yearbook dedicated to him. I had told her about the virtual wall and she told me about him and what a shame it was that he died so young. He was popular and well-liked in high school. I am 25 years old. I obviously wasn't around during the Vietnam War but the stories of men who lost their lives touches me deeply. I have much respect for the servicemen who gave their lives for our country and those who are continuing to serve. God bless all of you."* Michele



## Prentis Barney Boykin, Jr., 20

PFC, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68

*"I grew up with Prentis Barney Boykin, Jr. I first met Prentis at the try out field of the Columbia (Vancouver, WA) Little League in 1962. He was the catcher and I was the pitcher. He had played for the Yankees and was about to be picked for the majors for OK Rubber Tires. I was younger than Prentis, so I had to stay with the minors, going from pitching for the Dodgers to pitching for the Yankees. PRENTIS had another good friend, Dale Anderson, who also played catcher. I also attended McLoughlin Junior High School (1962-63) and Hudson's Bay High School (1964-65) with Prentis.*

*The loss of Prentis Barney Boykin, Jr, was felt all over Vancouver, Washington. Now may he rest in Peace in the golden light of eternal Love, from now and forever more! Your good friend,"* Greg Payne



## A Note from The Virtual Wall

D Company, 16th Armor Regiment, provided an airborne anti-tank capability to the 173rd Airborne Brigade with its M-56 self-propelled 90mm "Scorpion" guns. On 04 March 1968 the company lost eight men:

SP5 Gary D. Hall, Vernal, UT  
SP5 Robert H. Walker, Spur, TX  
SP4 Robert W. Abernathy, Rockville, MD  
PFC Terrence W. Achor, Whittier, CA  
PFC Prentis B. Boykin, Vancouver, WA  
PFC Willie F. Foster, Anderson, SC  
PFC William P. Mason, Horsham, PA (Medic from HHC, 173rd Abn Bde)  
PVT Roberto P. Rios, San Angelo, TX

(tributes continued....)





**Frank Lester Brown, 21****PVT, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

*"My buddy. Frank was in my platoon with the 173rd Airborne, he died in my arms Sunday 3/3/1968. He was a quiet good guy, carried a small turntable and played a few 45s for us when we were dug in. I went to his side as he was hit bad, nothing I could do but I took him back from the front hot spot from that battle which we lost many. I think of him often. His family should be proud of him. Kenny Buys' name came up also with Frank, he was also killed that day -- fellow bud from So Calif."*

**John Rodriguez****Warren Gene Brown, 20****PFC, E/17th Cav, 3/6/68**

*"Thank you. American support for the war in Vietnam has always been controversial. However, never once has any American citizen doubted the devout earnestness possessed by American Soldiers. My name is T.J. Kaupp and I am with the Gridley High School Posting Project. Your actions instill a sense of profound respect in me. Thank you, America will never forget your sacrifice."*

**Daniel Lee Burr, 19****SGT, A/1/503, 3/17/68**

*"The Final Bridge. Daniel is buried at Highland Memorial Park in New Berlin, Section 30, 4th row in from the west (maintenance bldg.), 11th column in from the north (has a WWII marker) by mistake."*

**Steve Conto****[See article about Dan on Pages 39-40]****Kenneth Allen Buys, 21****SGT, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

*"Kenneth A. Buys Memorial Plaque. I was in the 9th grade and you and Billy Wagner would walk around the neighborhood in your uniforms and I was impressed by your bravery and your smile. After you passed, there was a memorial plaque*



*placed on the basketball gym wall and I never forgot your presence. I followed your footsteps to Viet Nam in 1971 after graduating from Rancho Alamitos HS and returned after serving with the 129th AHC, just south of Kontum, at An Son. Your memorial plaque is safe and secure to this day. 30% of RAHS students are now Vietnamese-Americans and it is because of the sacrifice you and many more made to the freedoms we enjoy today."*

**GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 753  
AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL  
FOR HEROISM**

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced posthumously.

**BUYS, KENNETH A. RA1985xxxx SERGEANT E5  
UNITED STATES ARMY**

**Company D (Provisional) 1st Battalion (Airborne)  
503d Infantry**

**~ Bronze Star Medal ~  
with "V" Device**

**For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force. Sergeant Buys distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 3 March 1968 in the Republic of Vietnam. On this day, the 1st platoon was the lead platoon for Company D and Sergeant Buys' squad was the lead squad. Sergeant Buys was the lead man when he discovered three enemy bunkers well concealed a few meters to his front and flanks. Knowing his entire element was in the line of fire of the bunkers, he knew the only action to take was to surprise the enemy and give his men the few precious seconds needed to seek cover. With this in mind, he initiated contact with a savage one man attack, catching the enemy totally off guard and allowing his men to get out of the line of fire. With no cover for him to hide behind, he held his ground putting out a devastating volume of aggressive fire until an enemy machinegun burst mortally wounded him. Sergeant Buys' outstanding display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and personal bravery were in keeping with the highest military traditions and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army**

*"Our medic, PFC Don Lattman, was killed when he tried to go to Kenny's aid."*

**Larry "Doc" Speed  
D/1/503**

*(tributes continued....)*





Note: What civilians reading this should know, is for every one of our men, like Kenny, who were formerly recognized for their ultimate heroic sacrifice during combat actions on behalf of their country, there are 10 or hundreds or tens of hundreds of other heroes who gave their lives for their buddies, but were never formally recognized for their actions. So, while civilians should know this, it is more important the families of our fallen know....*when we honor one, we honor all.* Ed

## A Note from The Virtual Wall

On 03 March 1968 the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, lost eight men in a bitter fight in Kontum Province:

### C Company:

PFC Harold Holmes, Jersey City, NJ  
PFC Lawrence E. Jones, Denver, CO  
PFC Domingo Ortiz, New York, NY

### D Company:

SSG Ronald D. Ducker, Spartanburg, SC  
SGT Kenneth A. Buys, Anaheim, CA  
PFC Donald W. Lattman, St Paul, MN (medic, HHC with D/1/503)  
PFC Donald A. Nahodil, Shamokin, PA  
PVT Frank L. Brown, Youngstown, OH  
Henry J. Chester, Jr., 19  
PFC, D/1/503, 3/14/68

### William Earl Cofran, 20

SGT, B/1/503, 3/18/68

(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

*"I wish I knew you. Thank you for your Service. My dad has told me many stories about you and him growing up together in Homewood. You truly are a hero in my eyes and I wish I got to meet my uncle."*

Cory Cofran



### Kevin George Coles, 21

PTE, 3RAR, 3/22/68

*"Perth WA. Coles was killed by an enemy mine the day before his second wedding anniversary. 22nd March 1968. Buried Kalgoorlie Cemetery WA."*



### Geoffrey John Coombs, 22

SPR, 1 Fld Sqd, RAE, 3/22/68

*"Smithton TAS. Coombs was killed by a land mine in the Long Hai hills, Phuoc Tuy 22nd March 1968. Buried Smithtown Cemetery TAS."*



### John R. D'Agostino, Jr., 21

SGT, B/1/50th Inf, 4/30/68

(Virtual Wall states D/1/50th Inf)

*"The 50th Infantry Remembers."*

*John D'Agostino is fondly remembered by the soldiers with whom he served from 1st Platoon of Company D, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry."* Jim Sheppard



*"John D'Agostino was killed at LZ Uplift when a shotgun was accidentally discharged and the blast caught him in the head as he walked by. He died instantly."*

[www.ichiban1.org/pdf/Memorial/DAGostino.pdf](http://www.ichiban1.org/pdf/Memorial/DAGostino.pdf)

## ~ The Bronze Star Medal ~ For Meritorious Service

General Orders Number 1471, 27 May 1968

Sergeant John D'Agostino distinguished himself by outstanding meritorious service in connection with ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam during the period from September, 1967, to April, 1968. Through his untiring efforts and professional ability, he consistently obtained outstanding results. He was quick to grasp the implications of new problems with which he was faced as a result of the ever-changing situations inherent in the counterinsurgency operation and to find ways and means to solve those problems. The energetic application of this extensive knowledge has materially contributed to the efforts of the United States mission to the Republic of Vietnam to assist that country in ridding itself of the communist threat to its freedom. Sergeant D'Agostino's initiative, zeal, sound judgment and devotion to duty were in the highest tradition of the United States Army and reflected great credit on him and on the military service.

### Anatoly Danilenko, 24

CAPT, AATTV, 4/25/68

*"Germany. Danilenko was killed in action in Quang Tri Province on Anzac Day 25th April 1968. He was mentioned in dispatches (posthumously). Buried Parkes Cemetery NSW."*



(tributes continued....)



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**Adrian Leroy Del Camp, 34****MAJ, HHB/3/319, 3/4/68**

*"Final Mission of MAJ Adrian L. Del Camp. On March 4, 1968, CW2 Donny R. Kidd was piloting U.S. Army helicopter OH-13S tail number 64-15423 from the 173rd Airborne Brigade. While in flight the aircraft came under small arms fire, causing the helicopter to crash, resulting in fatal injuries to CW2 Kidd and his passenger MAJ Adrian L. Del Camp."*

**W. Killian**

**Mark Lane Dickson, 19****SP4, D/3/503, 3/16/68**

*"Born April 23, 1948, in Mt. Clemens, the son of Clyde and Mildred Hodgins Dickson, he was a graduate of Lake Shore High School and a member of the Vanguard of Bruce Post 1146 VFW Drum and Bugle Corps. In February, 1966, he enlisted in the Army and took paratrooper training with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky. He had been stationed in Vietnam since Jan. 4, as a member of the 503rd Infantry. He is survived by his parents, Clyde and Mildred Dickson; two sisters living at home, Terry and Tamera, and his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Mildred Little, of Mount Clemens."*

**Lisa Clark**



*"Mark's grave marker states Charlie Company 503 Inf."*

**Ronald Dwight Ducker, 23****SSG, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

*"We Remember. Ronald is buried at Woodlawn Memorial Park in Greenville, SC."*

**Robert Sage**

**Harry Joseph Ellis, III, 21****SGT, C/1/503, 3/14/68**

(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

*"Harry's sister wants to contact. I am Harry's sister Peggy and am trying to reach out to David Brocklebank and Abraham (Hoppy) Holster. I would love to speak to both of you. Thank you."*

**Peggy Ellis**  
(Posted 12/21/11)

**John Anthony Fera, 23****1LT, B/1/503, 3/18/68**

(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

*"Hi Hon. Has been a very long 43 yrs and hardly a day goes by that I don't feel your love and presence. Miss your smile, jokes, and you most of all. Will be with you when I'm called. Love,"*

**Maggi**



*"JOHN ANTHONY FERA REMEMBERED by a fellow USMA grad,"*

**Ramon M. Ong.,**  
**Brigadier General (Ret) Armed Forces of the Philippines, USMA Class of 1963**

**~ Silver Star ~**

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to First Lieutenant (Infantry) John Anthony Fera (ASN: OF-107xxx), United States Army, for gallantry in action. First Lieutenant Fera distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions in connection with military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 18 March 1968, while serving with Company D, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). At 1400 hours on the above date, the point platoon of Company D came under intense enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire, which inflicted heavy casualties upon the platoon. Seeing that the point platoon was pinned down, Lieutenant Fera led his men in a desperate assault on the enemy positions. He put his men on line, personally assumed the forward most position in the center and started the assault. Despite heavy enemy automatic weapons fire, Lieutenant Fera moved forward, throwing hand grenades and encouraging his men to do the same. The assault was successful and the enemy were driven from their positions. Lieutenant Fera then consolidated his lines and held on, despite heavy fire and attempted probes by the enemy. His assault was so effective that it allowed the lead platoon to collect its wounded and withdraw. The enemy then launched an extremely heavy 82 millimeter mortar attack on the forward area which Lieutenant Fera's men were holding. Because most of the men were new to combat, they began to pull back under the hail of enemy fire....

(tributes continued....)





....With utter disregard for his own safety and under direct sniper fire, Lieutenant Fera moved up and down the line, encouraging his men to hold their ground. Enemy sniper fire tore the trees and ground around him and the enemy mortar rounds twice knocked him to the ground, but Lieutenant Fera continued to rally his men. While he was returning to his command post, Lieutenant Fera was hit and mortally wounded by enemy fire. Lieutenant Fera's dauntless courage, outstanding leadership and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

General Orders: Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam,  
General Orders No. 498 (June 7, 1968)

### A Note from The Virtual Wall

On 18 March 1968 D Company, 1/503rd Infantry, lost seven men in an engagement northwest of Kontum City:

1LT John A. Fera, Danvers, MA

SGT William E. Cofran, Homewood, IL

SGT William R. Goudelock, Meridian, CA

SGT Tommy D. Mabe, Winston-Salem, NC

SGT Carl L. Merchant, Corinth, NY

CPL James D. Barr, Carthage, NC

CPL Clinton C. Wusterbarth, Manitowoc, WI

First Lieutenant John Fera was graduated from the United States Military Academy with the Class of 1966. One unconfirmed report states He served with the 501st Infantry in 1966-1967. It is noted that 1LT Fera began his Vietnam tour on 07 June 1967 while the 501st's three Battalions arrived in Vietnam six months later.

He is buried in the US Military Academy Cemetery at West Point, New York.

**Michael Don Ferguson, 21**  
SP4, D/4/503, 3/14/68

"Neighborhood kid. Mike was one of the kids that lived on the north end of Riverside. His dad had a church there at the corner of Main and Columbia. For years I would drive by that church and think of Mike. I lived right up the street. There was a strange silence. Mike was good guy." **Doug Heron**



**Roger Leon Fisher, 23**  
LCPL, 3RAR, 4/26/68

"Broken Hill NSW. Fisher was killed by a 'drop short' 105mm round fired by 106 RAA Battery just before sunset 26th April 1968. Mintaro Cemetery SA."



**Willie Frank Foster, 19**  
PFC, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68

"We Remember. Willie is buried at Westview Cem, Anderson, SC. BSM PH."  
**Robert Sage**



**John Fraser, 23**  
2LT, 3RAR, 3/24/68

"Surfers Paradise, QLD. After completing National Service he re-enlisted when he knew 3RAR were going to Vietnam. He died when he stood on a Mine in Long Hai's on 24th March 1968. Buried Allambe Gardens QLD."



**Jackie Wayne Garner, 19**  
PVT, D/1/503, 3/3/68

(Virtual Wall states D/3/503)

"Lost to the Ages but Never Forgotten! Garner---We spent a lot of time together in 1st squad, 2nd Platoon, 3/503 INF., (173d Airborne Brigade). You were killed while I was away on R&R on 3 March 1968. When I returned to the company, I learned of your death and that of our other brothers on that terrible day. I missed you very much but now I have grown old but have never forgot you for a single day. Airborne Brother."  
**Snyder (Rifleman)**



**Wilbur Cornell Gaskins, 20**  
PFC, E/17th Cav, 4/18/68

"Thank you Wilbur. I wish that you were alive today so that I could shake your hand and tell you thank you. Your efforts during the Vietnam War have put a tremendous impact on my life. You left your home, traveled to a different place, not knowing what would happen, fought for people whom you didn't know, and sacrificed your life for their freedom. You have my gratitude, valiant soldier, and your memory will live on. I remember you today. Rest in Peace."  
**Whitney Lyons**



(tributes continued....)





**Donald Lee Gearhart, 28****SSG, C/3/503, 3/24/68**

*"We forever hold you and keep you alive in our hearts. Although I did not know you, I see you in your son, Donald. You must have been a wonderful man because of the man my Donald has become. At the mention of you, a light and smile brightens your wife my mother in law's face...her love of you has edured all these years and still sustains her. Thank you for the sacrifice you have made...you would be proud of all your children Donald, Linda, and Keith and a wonderful grandson, Grant. May God continue to hold you in the palm of his hand. Love Amelia."*

**Amelia Gearhart****John Jacob Gunther, 20****SGT, C/1/503, 3/14/68**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/1/503)

*"Last sight from a young boy's eyes. I was a 12 year old boy standing in my front yard one bright sunny Saturday morning, when I heard the roar of a motor cycle rounding the corner of Oak street in West Melbourne, Fl. The young man riding it, was the older brother of a neighborhood friend. As he passed me, he smiled, knowing that I was fascinated by that bright blue and chrome bike he was riding. I was hoping he would stop, but he kept on. I knew it was John. His hair was dark, buzzed on the sides, and he was wearing a white T-shirt with the sleeves rolled up. To this day, I can still see him. Little did I know, it would be the last time. That's always bothered me, and i always think of him whenever someone mentions the Vietnam War. When I go to heaven, I hope to see him again and say thank you."*

**Billy Miles****Robert Wayne Glidden, 19****PFC, D/1/503, 4/20/68**

*"Bob enlisted in the Paratroopers in the fall of 1966. He was in the 82nd Airborne prior to going to Vietnam in March of 1968. He was killed in action in the Republic of South Vietnam while on duty with the 173rd Airborne...Before leaving home for the last time, he said, 'Mom, I hope the next time I come home it will be in the spring.' He came home in the spring!!!"* **Excerpt from on-line article**

**Donald Maurice Gutrick, 20****CPL, D/1/503, 4/24/68**

*"We Remember. Donald is buried at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Ironside, MD."*

**Rogert Sage****Peter James Gollagher, 32****SSGT, 1 Fld Sqd, 4/5/68**

*"Brisbane QLD. On his first operation in the Long Hai Hills on a search and destroy mission, Gollagher was shot while clearing a tunnel on 5th April 1968. Buried Mount Gravatt Cemetery QLD."*

**Richard James Grooms, 24****SP4, A/4/503, 3/17/68**

*"My Big Brother. Richard was my older brother that I never knew. I was born while he was still in Vietnam. My mother had a letter where he talked about being excited about seeing his little sister. But that never happened."*

**Adrienne D. Grooms****Gary Dodds Hall, 21****SP5, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68**

*"I met Gary Hall in in 1966 when we became cubemates at the Transportation Officer Candidate school, Ft. Eustis, VA. We shared a space of 9 feet by 12 feet for about 6 months. Both Gary and I were farm (ranch) boys. I called Gary 'Cowboy' as he was from the West, I was from Wisconsin. Gary did not graduate from OCS and left the school in November 1966 as a SPC5. I graduated as a 2nd LT in December."*

*It was on March 2, 1968, two days before his death that I saw Gary again in Vietnam. I was a company commander of a Supply & Service outfit in Phu Heip and just by luck, I saw Gary walking down a road back to his unit. Both of us were elated to see each other again but had little time to visit then. We made arrangements to see each other after he came back from the field on Mar 5th....*



(tributes continued....)





....When I arrived at his unit, I was directed to the supply tent where I met the 1st SGT of the unit and he explained how Gary had died the evening before while his platoon was engaged in rooting out a group of VC who had dug in at the old Tuy Hoa airfield. The supply folks were packing Gary's equipment to send home. It indeed was a sad day for me as I learned my friend Gary had died." **Captain Ron Heuer, U.S. Army**

**Jimmie Ray Harrison, 32**  
**MSG, C/1/503, 3/14/68**

(Virtual Wall states D/3/503)

"My uncle and reason I served. My whole childhood I thought he was the greatest man on the planet. He died when I was 10. I pulled over 5 years with the Army's motorcycle scouts in an attempt to be like him. Thanks to God's Grace, I now know he is still a great man and now watches over me. I wish I could tell him how much he is missed, but I would not wish that he did not serve. He served over 10 years with the paratroopers proving death is better than dishonor. I am ashamed to say that most who enjoy the freedom he gave them, do not even know what honor is. I do now." **Roger**



**Harold Holmes, 21**  
**PFC, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/1/503)

"God Bless!! I am so glad that there are people like you, because without people like you, we would not have good American soldiers. I thank you for what you did." **Luis Delgado**



**Dennis Fox Hughes, 20**  
**PFC, D/1/503, 4/10/68**

"My Best Friend, The One I Admired Most. Denny was the one we all wanted to be like. The most responsible, the smoothest, the most mature.....43 years ago....Corn Cob Six's son and my best friend.....Still miss you both....you helped me be 'all I could be.' Thanks." **Jim Lancaster, LTC USA**



**Robert Eugene Jackson, 20**  
**SP4, B/2/503, 3/4/68**

"I will never forget you. Bob: Its been 42 years since I saw your smiling face at our South High graduation. We both went our separate ways into the WORLD, but we both chose the same path leading to Vietnam. My heart sank when I heard you had been killed in action. I will always say a prayer for you my brother but don't fret! I feel you were granted peace while I must live through the ordeal of being a Vietnam Vet, never understood, always looked down on. I will live as long as I can as I'm still looking for that 'Welcome Home Bro' whenever I'm not in my home. I miss you Brother and I will never forget you Robert E. Jackson." **Butch**



**Gary Lee Jatich, 19**  
**SP4, D/4/503, 3/6/68**

"I still suffer the loss. Your sacrifice will never be forgotten as long as I live. You were more like a son than a nephew." **Uncle Frank**



**David Arthur Johnson, 19**  
**SGT, D/3/503, 3/16/68**

"Forever in My Heart. Johnson---The last I saw you alive, you and Wheeler (who died with you) were setting up your position for the night on that stinking enemy fortified camp. As my platoon passed by you two, I yelled at you guys not having to dig in tonight because you both chose an old bomb crater. You were both in good spirits and that was that until the mortar and machinegun attack took your lives. I was deeply saddened by your deaths but was awaiting my own. We all thought we were goners in Kon-Tum. Always remember you brother and always in my heart. Airborne all the way!....Snyder." **Ken Synder**



**Henry L. Johnson, 28**  
**CPL, D/3/503, 3/16/68**

(Virtual Wall states B/3/503)

"Although I was a very young girl...I remember Henry as being one of my favorite cousins. I remember his wonderful smile. I remember his awesome brilliance...I have always been so proud of Henry...I remember." **Diana**



(tributes continued....)







**Richard Wade Joles, 21**  
SP5, HHC/173d Flt Plt, 4/12/68



*"Crash information on U.S. Army helicopter OH-6A tail number 66-14386. On April 12, 1968, this helicopter from the 173rd Airborne Brigade was on a low level reconnaissance mission when the aircraft lost directional control. The helicopter made numerous spins, causing crew chief SP5 Richard W. Joles to be thrown from the aircraft. After impacting with the ground, the helicopter caught fire and burned. SP5 Joles suffered fatal injuries from the fall. The pilot survived his injuries. At the time of the crash, the two-month old aircraft had only 14 hours of total flight time."* [Taken from vhp.org]

#### Parents Accept Bronze Star Medal for Son



**"MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM LYNN accept the Bronze Star Medal and other medals awarded posthumously to their son, Army Spec. 5 Richard W. Joles, 21-year-old helicopter crew chief who was killed in Vietnam. Lt. Col. Albert Johnson presents the awards at a ceremony Tuesday at Jackson Barracks."**

#### CAPO

**"We have spent thirty plus years trying to forget what Vietnam had done to us, but it is very difficult when you return there each night. It is very difficult to forget when the memories are still clear and vivid in one's own mind and try to deal**



with the pain alone. It has taken thirty years, but the Casper Platoon over the past two years has learned that we need to be together as a family and share the pain with others who understand what we hold inside. The healing, we have learned, comes from being together, remembering together, celebrating together and mourning together. Our brothers who died in combat are missed as any family member would be, and at each reunion those of you that were lost to us are remembered in a ceremony dedicated to the memories we all share. You were our brother, you are our brother, and our family is incomplete without you, but your memory lives on within us forever. You are greatly missed at each reunion, but we do feel your spirit among us. God bless America, God bless the Vietnam Combat Veteran."

Casper Aviation Platoon Organization

[www.casperplatoon.com](http://www.casperplatoon.com)



OH-6A Cayuse "Inferno Scout." Bong Son, 1968  
(From Casper website, not believed to be the chopper which crashed)

(tributes continued....)







**Larry William Jones, 25**

**CPT, A/3/503, 3/21/68**

*"Boney' Jones. He was my dad's student at Curry High School in*

*Greensboro, NC. He introduced me to the Inkspots and other soul groups. Dad is in Arlington himself now. My brother was a SF himself, now dead. I was a SP5 in ASA. 'Boney' was the first casualty I knew of in Viet Nam. I hope those that knew him will remember what a fine wood worker he was, and a great man for kids."*

**David "Andy" Rigsby, Jr.**



### ~ Silver Star ~

The President of the United States of America, takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Captain (Infantry) Larry William Jones, United States Army, for gallantry in action. Captain Jones distinguished himself by exceptional gallantry in connection with military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 21 March 1968, while serving as Company Commander of Company A, 3d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). On the above date Company A was ordered to seize and hold Hill 600 near Kontum. As the lead platoon of the company entered the woodline of the Hill, it came under automatic weapons fire. Captain Jones moved forward with his artillery forward observer in order to direct air strikes and indirect fire support. While moving forward he encountered such heavy enemy fire that his forward observer was seriously wounded. After pausing to ensure that his fallen comrade received medical attention, Captain Jones retrieved the observer's radio and moved to the forward-most portion of his own company positions. He quickly recognized the extreme gravity of the situation. His lead platoon had suffered several critical casualties and the enemy had the advantage of well-prepared positions. He rallied his men, initiated covering fire and extracted the wounded. While the remainder of his men began to withdraw, Captain Jones called in artillery and air strikes. Because of the density of the vegetation, he was unable to effectively observe the enemy positions and direct the fire support. He had begun moving to a more favorable location, when he was mortally wounded by sniper fire. Because of Captain Jones' courage, his company rallied and inflicted severe damage upon the enemy. Captain Jones' extraordinary heroism was in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

**Lawrence Edward Jones, 22**

**PFC, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

(Virtual Wall states C/1/503)

*"Although he is listed on the Wall as being from Denver, Lawrence lived in McKinney, Texas, with his grandmother, Mrs. Mamie Pearson. He was a good kid, loved to play football and basketball. He was a good soldier, a paratrooper with the 173rd Airborne 'Skysoldiers', and was killed in action on March 3, '68, near Kontum. All who knew him miss him."*

**Ronnie D. Foster**



**Victor A. Justiniano, Jr., "Doc", 20**

**PFC, B/3/319, 3/3/68**

*"I Understand. The first time I ever visited the Wall was when I was only 9 years old. Then I thought it was the greatest thing to see my name on the wall, however, I didn't understand 'why' it was so important. Now, nearly 10 years later and after enlistment, I realize what an honor it is to have a family member give his life for our country in her darkest hours. Now, I understand. Sir, I salute you."*

**A1C Carrissa J. Justiniano**



### ~ Distinguished Service Cross ~

The President of the United States of America, takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Private First Class Victor A. Justiniano, Jr., United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 3d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Private First Class Justiniano distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 3 March 1968 as the medic of an infantry platoon conducting a search and destroy mission in the central highlands near Kontum. The patrol was following the trail of a wounded North Vietnamese soldier when it came under a heavy automatic weapons and rocket attack. The enemy was only ten meters to the front, entrenched in a reinforced bunker complex. Two men of the point element were wounded in the initial volley of fire. With complete disregard for his safety, Private Justiniano moved forward to aid them. As he advanced, he was wounded several times by automatic weapons fire and shrapnel from an exploding rocket....

*(tributes continued....)*






....Ignoring his wounds, he crawled forward and finally reached the position where his two comrades lay exposed to enemy fire. He moved one man to safety and treated him. He then returned for the other soldier who was almost directly in front of an enemy position. As he attempted to rescue the casualty, Private Justiniano was mortally wounded. PFC Justiniano's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

**Donny Ramon Kidd, 33**  
CWO, 173d Flt Plt, 3/4/68

*"Final Mission of CW2 Donny R. Kidd. On March 4, 1968, CW2 Donny R. Kidd was piloting U.S. Army helicopter OH-13S tail number 64-15423 from the 173rd Airborne Brigade. While in flight the aircraft came under small arms fire, causing the helicopter to crash, and resulting in fatal injuries to CW2 Kidd and his passenger, MAJ Adrian L. Del Camp. [Taken from vhpa.org]"*



 **Robert W. Koivupalo, Jr., 19**  
PFC, C/1/503, 3/4/68  
*"We Remember. Robert is buried at Evergreen Cemetery, Detroit, MI. BSM-OLC PH." Robert Sage*



**Donald Wayne Lattman, "Doc", 20**  
PFC, B/3/319, 3/3/68  
(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

*"Donnie, I miss you...Is Jerry with you? Please take care of him, his was a tortured soul...I hope he has peace. Love you both, your little sister, Joy." Joy Lattman Hart*



*"On 3 March 1968, the 1st Plt, D Co., was point on a sweep operation. 1st squad was lead, and the squad leader, Sgt. Kenny Buys, was at the head of the squad. Kenny saw three bunkers a few feet ahead and to one side and realized that his men were all in the bunkers' line of fire. He immediately made a one-man attack on the bunkers, giving his men the chance to take cover before they could be cut down. Kenny took no cover and was badly hit. Our medic tried to save Kenny and lost his life doing so. Several members of our 1st platoon have gotten together over the past few years and I just found out that this medic never got recognized for his valor. His name is Don Lattman ... He went the extra mile for those who were wounded on point, but his courage went unnoticed as far as I know."*  
**Larry "Doc" Speed**

**Patrick Arnold Lucero, 19**  
SP4, D/1/503, 3/14/68

*"To my Friend. I owe a great deal to Patrick. As kids growing up in Pueblo we did a lot of things together; however, it was in the Army that Patrick's encouragement and friendship really came out. I'll never forget the times that Pat, Sam Spinuzzi, myself and Chuck Meeks shared together at Fort Bliss, while we were all in basic training. We had loads of fun together but the thing that I'll always cherish most about Pat was his 'friendship'. He encouraged me to challenge my fears and to be a better man. I'll always be thankful to him for this. I will remember Pat as long as I live. My only regret is that I wish I could have been there for him when he was killed. His memory and words of encouragement will always be with me. I miss you my friend. 'Airborne'". Jim Ashmore*



**Robert Luna, 21**  
SGT, C/3/503, 3/22/68

*"We Remember. Robert is buried at Golden Gate Nat Cem." Robert Sage*



**Peter James Lyons, 23**  
PTE, 2RAR, 3/2/68

*"Gosford NSW. Lyons died after being struck by a enemy mine on 2nd March 1968, in Phuoc Tuy Province. Buried Junee Old Cemetery NSW."*



**Tommy Darrell Mabe, 18**  
SGT, B/1/503, 3/18/68

*"Tommy is buried at Gardens of Memory in Walkertown, NC. PH." Robert Sage*



**Ralph Warren Maney, "Doc", 19**  
SGT, C/3/503, 3/22/68

(Virtual Wall states HHC/3/503)  
*"Will never forget you. From your high school sweetheart, you will always be in my heart." Kathy Connolly*



(tributes continued....)





**William Paul Mason, 20****PFC, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/173d Bde)

*"Doc Mason: I am so sorry. Your name has been in my mind for 47 years now. When I arrived at LZ English in Bong Son, I was told that I was taking your position with the platoon because you had been killed inside an APC that took a rocket. I have always felt so bad. I did my best to fill your jungle boots with HHC of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Within the brigade I served with Troop E, 17th Cavalry, 173rd Engineers, and with Co. D, 16th Armor. I hope God will allow us to meet someday. I may have to clean up my act a bit for that to happen however. I survived my year with the 173rd Airborne, physically. Mentally, we were all killed in Vietnam. I did go on to become an Airline Captain with Continental Airlines. I raised three daughters and have five grandchildren. Obviously I never knew you personally but there is brotherhood between us. Because of YOU, I never rode inside an APC, I always sat on top."* **Mike Bronner**

**Steven Alfred Middleton, 19****SGT, C/1/503, 3/15/68**

*"We Remember. Steve is buried at Bethel Methodist Church Cemetery between St. Stephen and Bonneau, SC. PH."* **Robert Sage**

**Michael Keith Moore, 20****SSG, C/1/503, 3/13/68**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/1/503)

*"Army Airborne team leaders. Michael K. Moore, W. Ontario Street, Tioga. Moore enlisted in the Army three months after graduating from Simon Gratz High School in June 1967. He was an ammunition bearer, gunner and team leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Moore died on March 13, 1968, with only 12 days left to his tour of duty in Vietnam. The 20-year-old staff sergeant was survived by his parents and two sisters."* **The Philadelphia Daily News**

**Family of PFC William Paul Mason****Harold Bradley Muller, 21****SGT, C/1/503, 3/13/68****Born 3/4/1947**

*"My Herd Brother. For years I never knew Harold's real name. He was introduced to me as 'Chief'. I mean no disrespect by calling him Chief, it was who he was to us men in Charlie Company. Chief was one of the first men I met when I went to the field. Sgt. O'Brien placed me at Chief's position. He didn't have to but he took me under his leadership and showed me the ropes. Chief and I always made our foxhole together. We became close friends. Chief was the company's best point man and I learned from him and pulled a lot of point also after learning from the best. I was on R&R when Chief was killed. When I got back from R&R and was told of his death it struck me hard. It was like someone punched me in the gut. Of all the guys we lost, I can still see his face. He will forever be 22 years old to me. I miss him to this day."* **Unsigned**

**Carl Lee Merchant, 24****SGT, B/1/503, 3/18/68**

(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

*"Carl is buried at Corinth Rural Cemetery in Corinth, NY. PH."*

**Robert Sage****Weldon Bernard Merrill, 26****SFC, B/1/503, 3/16/68**

*"Sgt Merrill, my son and I stopped by the Wall last night to see you and our other KIA from 3/16/68, Carl Bernhart. You were a great soldier, and I regret that I did not have more time to learn from you. You will always be remembered."* **Emmett**



(tributes continued....)





**Thomas Jefferson Murray, 22**  
**SP4, C/3/503, 3/22/68**

*"Hey Tommy, we had some fun growing up in the Bronx, didn't we. Well, thanks for serving our country. I visited the Wall about a year or so ago and looked you up. Man, I couldn't believe how sad it made me feel and how proud I am of you. Webster Ave lost a good one, buddy. Thanks again for giving your all."* **Frank Cain**



**Donald A. Nahodil, Jr., 19**  
**PFC, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

*"Donald, you have not been forgotten, I think of you often, as I'm sure your family and many friends do. Though I did not serve at your side, I too did serve my country, and I feel that we have accomplished our mission, as your family and friends are still free, as are mine. It is with much sorrow and heartbreak that I send these words to you, as I am in debt to you, as should be all Americans, for you have given your life for us. May God forever hold you near...From a school friend and friend of the family."*  
**Sp5 Robert D. Senoski**



**Kenneth Roy Nicholson, 23**  
**SPR, 1 Fld Sqd, 4/12/68**

*"Harris Park NSW. The 'Tunnel Rat' Nicholson was killed in action during a mine sweeping operation in Phuoc Tuy, at the height of the Tet Offensive on 12th April 1968. Buried Rookwood Military Cemetery NSW."*



**Ricky Lee Null, 19**  
**PFC, HHC/2/503, 4/20/68**

(Virtual Wall states B/1/50th Inf)

*"We Remember. Ricky is buried at Gettysburg National Cemetery. PH."*  
**Robert Sage**



**David Robert Ogle, 20**  
**SP4, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

(Virtual Wall states B/3/503)

*"Brother lost before we could really know each other. We had so little time together as I was so young. But I know you made many people proud. As I grow older this only becomes more clear. You are always remembered well and remembered often."*

**Fred Smidt**



*"Comrade in Arms. Ogle - You were lost as I was on R&R. Before we parted in Kontum airfield you asked me to buy a small camera so we could take flicks of us on positions in the field and the whole week of R&R I was worried that I still hadn't bought the camera and my money was running out. When I returned to Cam Rahn Bay airfield I ran into Sgt. Steward from our platoon who advised me of your death along with Justiano, Garner and others who perished with you that day. I was stunned to tears and very frightened. I couldn't sleep that night knowing I had to return to the company the next day and pick up where you guys left off. The company was never the same after you were gone and we all suffered so much in Kontum province that March of 1968 with so much post TET contacts. Sleep well my brother and maybe we will meet again and I'll apologize for not getting the camera that you wanted."*

**Ken Synder**

**Domingo Ortiz, 21**  
**PFC, D/1/503, 3/3/68**

(Virtual Wall states C/1/503)

*"We Remember. Domingo is buried at Municipal Cemetery in Humacao, PR. PH."*  
**Robert Sage**



**Kim Randle Parliament, 19**  
**CPL, HHC/1/503, 4/15/68**

(Gravestone states C/503)

*"My Uncle I Never Met. Uncle Randy I never met you because you died before I was born. My mother, your sister, has carried your memory on. My brother carries your name, Randle. You have not been forgotten. Thank you for your sacrifice and I love you."*  
**Jason Ebarb**



**Lawrence Edward Philyaw, 25**  
**SSG, HHC/4/503, 4/2/68**

*"Daddy's Girl. I miss my Daddy so much. There are so many times that I wish you were here to comfort, encourage me and just to give me a listening ear. Although it has been many years, the pain is still so great. I'm so lost without you Daddy! I just want to give you hugs and kisses and tell you so many things. As you may well know, Mom is now with you and that has been very hard to adjust without her. If I could only see your face, I would smother you with kisses. Always thinking and loving you, 'My Daddy'".* **Ricci Cassina Philyaw-Coleman**



(tributes continued....)





**Douglas Brian Plain, 22****PTE, HQ 1 Task Force, 3/1/68**

*"Carlton VIC. Accidentally killed in Bien Hoa province when an APC he was riding on was involved in a motor vehicle accident with a large lorry. Was DOA at 24th Evacuation Hospital (American), Long Binh on 1st March 1968. Buried Springvale Crematorium VIC."*



**Doug and his buddy found a little snake.**

**Garry Robert Polglase, 20****PTE, 3RAR 4/13/68**

*Northcoote VIC. A dog handler and tracker he was killed accidentally on 13th April 1968 at Nui Dat. Buried Springvale Cemetery VIC."*



**Garry and his pal.**

**Thomas Robert Pope, 20****PFC, D/1/503, 3/14/68**

*(Virtual Wall states HHC/1/503)*

*We Remember. Thomas is buried at Memory Garden Memorial Park, Brea, CA. PH."* **Robert Sage**

**John Rapp, 22****PTE, 3RAR, 3/20/68**

*"Sydney NSW. Rapp was shot dead in an enemy contact in Phuoc Tuy on 20th March 1968. Buried Rookwood Crematorium NSW."*

**Roberto Pena Rios, 18****PVT, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68**

*"Robert was born and raised in San Angelo, Texas. He graduated from San Angelo Central High School in May 1967 (the photos are from their 1966 and 1967 annuals). He completed basic training at Fort Polk and Armor School. He completed parachute training at Fort Benning. He was assigned as an armored crewman to D Company, 16th Armored Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep). The 16th Armored Regiment provided an airborne anti-tank capability to the 173rd Airborne Brigade with its M-56 self-propelled 90mm 'Scorpion' guns. On March 4, 1968 D Company lost eight men in a fire fight with an NVA division. Pvt Rios was on a 90mm gun that took a direct hit from a rocket-propelled grenade and exploded. Pvt Rios was burned in the explosion and from the intense heat. He died before he could be medevaced. He was buried in San Angelo, Texas with full military honors. He is remembered by San Angelo Central High School, Class of the 60's, the Concho Valley Vietnam Memorial in San Angelo and by the Permian Basin Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Midland, Texas. 'Lest we Forget'. From a PBVVM representative," **Billy M. Brown***

**A Note from The Virtual Wall**

**M-56 Scorpion antitank gun**

**The eight men killed in the engagement described above were**

**SP5 Gary D. Hall, Vernal, UT**  
**SP5 Robert H. Walker, Spur, TX**  
**SP4 Robert W. Abernathy, Rockville, MD**  
**PFC Terrence W. Achor, Whittier, CA**  
**PFC Prentis B. Boykin, Vancouver, WA**  
**PFC Willie F. Foster, Anderson, SC**  
**PFC William P. Mason, Horsham, PA (Medic from HHC, 173rd Abn Bde)**  
**PVT Roberto P. Rios, San Angelo, TX**

*(tributes continued....)*





**Claude Roberts, 20****PFC, C/1/503, 4/11/68**

*"On behalf of myself and all the paratroopers who served in the 173rd 'Herd' Brigade in Viet Nam, we offer our respect and regrets for your sacrifice. May you rest in peace, never be forgotten and may your family be consoled with pride."* **Mike Switzer**

**James Paul Rogan, 28****MAJ, B/2/503, 3/8/68**

*"A true hero. A great man. A great leader. A great soldier."*

*Captain Rogan was my company commander, B/2/503, 173rd. We called ourselves 'Rogan's Raiders'. On the day he died, defending a convoy that had been ambushed near the An Khe Pass, he was to have attended a surprise ceremony that afternoon where he was to receive the Distinguished Service Cross for his valor in the Battle of Hill 875 the previous November. He was then going to be flown to Japan to join his wife for a brief R&R. What a cruel tragedy. His men respected him with reverence. We loved him. We would and did follow him anywhere. He was the best."* **James Keller**

**~ Distinguished Service Cross ~**

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to **James Paul Rogan, Captain (Infantry), U.S. Army**, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with **Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)**. Captain Rogan distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 13 November 1967 while serving as commanding officer of an airborne infantry company during combat operations near Dak To. His company was pinned down by withering rocket and automatic weapons fire from a large enemy force, and Captain Rogan immediately called for reinforcements and moved through a murderous hail of bullets to direct their deployment in support of his troops. When his two radio operators were killed, he personally took over communications and coordinated the actions of his platoon while maintaining contact with his higher headquarters. Completely disregarding his personal welfare, Captain Rogan repeatedly exposed himself to the enemy weapons and moved among his men to encourage them and treat the wounded. He called for medical evacuation helicopters and personally supervised the clearing of a landing zone despite

continuous sniper fire which was being directed at his movements. When the helicopters arrived, he moved into the center of the open landing zone to guide them in. Savage fire forced the aircraft to discontinue their rescue mission, and Captain Rogan deployed his men in a defensive perimeter for the night. Throughout the night, he continued to expose himself to the ravaging enemy barrage to command his men in repelling repeated assaults within twenty meters of his positions. His fearless leadership inspired his troops to fight furiously and inflict a decisive defeat upon the determined enemy. Captain Rogan's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

HQ US Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 1079  
(March 11, 1968)

**Jeremias Roman, 19****PFC, B/2/503, 3/4/68**

*"We Remember. Jeremias is buried at Long Island Nat Cem."* **Robert Sage**

**Charles Gregory Ross, 18****CPL, D/3/503, 3/3/68**

(Virtual Wall states B/3/503)

*"Remembering a Great Soldier. Ross---You were also a member of Co. B 3/503 Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade and in 1st Platoon however met your end in a heroic action on 3 March 1968. So many of you gave your lives on that day and that date has become a day of mourning for us who survived. Perhaps we will meet again but if not you are always in my mind as one of the best B Company had to offer. Rest now Airborne Brother as you are honored forever....Snyder 2nd Platoon."* **Ken Snyder**

**David Michael Schuh, 20****SGT, E/17th Cav, 3/6/68**

*"Childhood. The thoughts and times spent playing together while growing up at a young age will always be well remembered."* **Meade McClatchey**

**Howard Bruce Smith, 18****PFC, B/1/503, 3/16/68**

(Virtual Wall states C/1/503)

*"We Remember. Howard is buried at Lakeview Cemetery, New Canaan, Fairfield, Conn. PH."* **Robert Sage**



(tributes continued....)







**Franklin Elliott Speight, 23**  
2LT, C/3/503, 3/20/68

*"We Remember. Franklin is buried at Powells Point Christian Church Cemetery in Harbinger, NC. SS PH."* **Robert Sage**



**Thomas Grady Stricklin, 18**

PFC, A/3/503, 4/28/68

*"To my closest cousin...I will never forget you. Hey Tommy! 39 years and you are still remembered with fond memories. You are a grandfather of a beautiful baby girl. Love you so very much..."* **Cousin Carrie**



**John Joseph Sullivan, "Doc", 19**

PFC, HHC/2/503, 3/8/68

*"Sully, we have not forgotten. I was with you then, I am with you now in my thoughts. You were a good Medic and I am proud to have known you."*

**William Gaines**



**Vincent Tobin, 24**

SPR, 1 Fld Sqd, 3/22/68

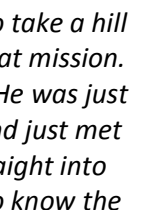
*"Pemberton PERTH. He died from multiple wounds from an enemy mine in Phuoc Tuy on 22nd March 1968. Buried Karrakatta Cemetery WA."*



**Patrick Joseph Tremblay, 18**

PFC, A/1/503, 3/17/68

*"Patrick is my brother. He died trying to take a hill called 'Rocket Ridge'. It was his first combat mission. There were at least 6 fire fights that day. He was just introduced to his company commander, and just met several men from his squad ... He went straight into combat. He didn't get much of a chance to know the men he was fighting with. He was hit by a mortar ... after talking to the men he was with, I know his death was instantaneous. I know they all wanted to make it home ... Some were not as lucky as others. I HOPE WE NEVER FORGET THEM. I will see you in Heaven, Brother. From his brother,"* **Henry Tremblay**



**Edward Delbert Ulman, 19**

CPL, HHC/2/503, 4/20/68

*"I was there when you left...I will never forget. We made our jumps together in Fort Benning, Georgia, then got orders to*



*Nam. We were assigned the same unit, D/2/503. We were still new in country, doing a search and destroy mission in the Central Highlands through the jungles near Dak To. All of a sudden we were hit in a hit and run ambush. You went down, we surrounded your body to protect you, but you didn't make it. You were the first one among many I saw who paid the ultimate sacrifice. I still struggle with the survivors guilt. I have placed my life in the hands to God and trust him for things I can't comprehend, Prov. 3:4,5. I remember always....Your Friend,"* **Sgt. Pete Untalon, D/2-503**

**Garrity Vogel, 26**

PFC, E/17th Cav, 3/6/68



*"Remembering my Uncle Garrity. I wish I had known you. I never got to meet you. You gave your life for our country."* **Gayle Stoddard**



**Robert Harvey Walker, 23**

SP5, D/16th Armor, 3/4/68

*"Mrs. Ethel L. Walker, Spur, has been advised by the Commanding General of the Fourth Army that her son, S5 Robert H. Walker, has been posthumously awarded the Military Merit Medal by the Republic of Vietnam. The following citation accompanies the award. Servicemen of courage and rare self-sacrifice, they displayed at all times the most tactful cooperation while aiding the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam to repel the Red wave undermining South Vietnam and Southeast Asia. With a ready zeal and commendable response, they fought on to the end in every mission and set a brilliant example for their fellow soldiers. They died in the performance of duty. Behind them they leave the abiding grief of their former comrades-in-arms, Vietnamese as well as American.*

*Sp5 Walker was killed in Vietnam, March 4, 1968."*

**The Texas Spur, Thursday, January 30, 1969**



**Johnny Wayne Wanamaker, 19**

CPL, A/1/503, 3/26/68

*"Remembering A Friend. I remember Johnny when we would go swimming when we were young teenagers in Humphreys County, where we spent many days on the creek bank. He was a great swimmer and could catch fish with his hands too. My wife and I looked for his name on the Wall that is in Nashville, TN years ago, and found it...."*



*(tributes continued....)*





....We have been searching online today (Memorial Day) for it on The Wall in D.C. didn't have some info, but did a web search and found this page (Wall of Faces). It is good to see his picture, and I never have forgotten him, and will always feel gratitude for his service to our country. God bless Johnny's memory and God bless his family." **Paul and Sandy Mosley**

**Terry Emerson Webb, 20**

**CPL, 173d Eng, 3/13/68**

"Still missed after all these years. All the brothers and sister." **John Webb**



**Philip Bruce Wenrick, 20**

**PFC, B/3/503, 3/29/68**

"We Remember. Philip is buried at Forest Hill Cemetery in Pigna, OH. PH." **Robert Sage**



**Michel T. Wheeler, 19**

**CPL, D/3/503, 3/16/68**

"Always Remember My Comrade in Arms. Wheeler--I've come here to honor you, my old friend. We served together since Infantry school, jump school, Ft. Bragg and Viet-Nam. The last day of your life was on the old enemy position on that hill top in Kon-Tum province Viet-Nam. As my platoon passed by you and Johnson setting up position in an old bomb crater, I laughed and yelled that you won't have to dig in tonight. Later that evening our companies received a terrible mortar and machinegun attack which took your lives together. We all felt doomed in Kon-Tum but your deaths hit me hard after just having talked with you guys an hour before. You are always on my mind and in my heart, until death...Airborne All the Way, Brother... Snyder." **Ken Snyder**



**Arnold Sylvanus White, "Doc", 18**

**CPL, HHC/1/503, 4/15/68**

(Virtual Wall states HHC/2/503)

"White left Germantown High School in September 1966 to enlist in the Army. He trained to be a medical corpsman and in November 1967 was sent to Vietnam, where he was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. White died on April 15, 1968, at the age of 18. He was survived by his parents, a brother and sister." **The Philadelphia Daily News**



**Sylvester Wright, Jr., 19**

**PFC, D/4/503, 3/26/68**

"A young man of Valor. Sylvester Wright was a good friend to me, and we fought in Tet offensive Jan. 30, 1968. He was wounded on that day, grazed just above his shoulder which cut off his dog tags. He told me that because his dogs tags dropping to the ground in front of him caused him to lean down to pick them up, it saved his life, the enemy began to fire automatic fire over his head. He is a hero to America and to all who served with him. I will never forget his bravery in combat and friendship." **Unsigned**

**Clinton Carl Wusterbarth, 20**

**CPL, B/1/503, 3/18/68**

(Virtual Wall states D/1/503)

"Growing Up Together. Dear Clint: I remember growing up with you and your brother Dayton in Kiel, WI. I have touched your name on The Wall while in Washington, D.C. I will always remember your name with great respect and admiration for giving up all of your tomorrows to preserve mine. My life has been a good and free one thanks to you and other veterans. God bless you." **Bob Lawrence**



**Ernest Harold Young, III, 20**

**PFC, HHC/1/503, 3/14/68**

"We Remember. Ernest is buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Cypress, CA. BSM/OLC PH." **Robert Sage**



**Terry Zimmerman, 19**

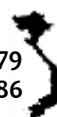
**SGT, D/3/503, 3/16/68**

"Although you were young, God had a special plan for you. He knew you would be fighting for our country when you were born. Each of us has a mission on this earth and although yours was completed at the age of 19 you will always be remembered."

**Kristin Zimmerman**

**Sources:**

173d Airborne Brigade List of KIA  
Wall of Faces  
Australian Vietnam Veterans Honour Roll  
Australian Vietnam Casualty List  
Australian Wall of Faces  
Memorial of New Zealand and the Vietnam War





# INCOMING!



## ~ Wrong Company Listed For KIA ~

Guys, this is Antoine Roy again. I was just going thru the listing of guys KIA with 173 Bde.

Under the listing for Jesse Smith (buried in Southview Cemetery, Augusta, Ga.) was my best friend at the time of Hill 875, he is listed as in C/2nd/503rd. Actually in 2nd Plt./C Co/4th/503rd PIR. Could you please rectify this error. I thought the world of him. Tried to contact his family, but no luck.

Thanks,

**Andy Roy**

**2nd Plt., C Co./4th Bat./503rd PIR**

**Reply:** Hi Andy. In the tributes to our fallen, we do our utmost best to reflect accurate details about our buddies we lost, yet we error on occasion (i.e. incorrectly reporting your passing in Issue 77...see Correction below). We rely on multiple sources as we gather such information.

In Issue 76, Nov./Dec. 2017, of our *2/503 Vietnam Newsletter*, on Page 36, in connection with your buddy **Jesse Smith**, KIA, we reflected his unit as B/4/503, which is the unit listed for him on the 173d Airborne Brigade's list of KIA, but we also included "Virtual Wall states C/4/503". There are often unit contradictions between the 173d list and the on-line Virtual Wall listings, more often than not with HHC medics assigned to line companies at the time of their demise.

We'll bring this correction to Jesse's unit to the attention of the Association.

Unfortunately, the photo you sent of Jesse is in such poor condition it could not be reproduced.

Thanks, and ATW! Ed

## ~ Correction ~

In Issue 77, on Page 86 of our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter*, we incorrectly reported the passing of Sky Soldier **Antoine (Andy) Roy of D/4/503**. Andy was kind enough, along with other troopers of Delta Company, to let us know of our error. We're pleased to report the Geronimo Trooper is alive and well, and the editor of this military rag has promised Andy a couple drinks of his choice....plus 20 pushups...*but not all at once!*  
Thanks Andy!! Ed

## ~ Goddam Sailors, Goddamit! ~

As you paratroopers all know, you make five jumps to get the wings. I made two more at Rigger school. Then I jumped maybe 10 or 12 more times on Okinawa. That made maybe 20-something times I'd been up in an aircraft without ever landing. I went to Okinawa on a boat, the USS Sultan. I have to say that landing is more harrowing than jumping. Okay, I admit that the goddam 80-pound deployment bag is a hassle, but the Hollywood jumps are sweet.



**Yomitan DZ**

The boat ride was pretty neat--the Sultan was about 550 feet long, they told us, about half the length of the Queen Mary. I was impressed until we hit the edge of that goddam storm. We had to stay below decks because the whole goddam ship would plow through huge goddam waves that completely covered the goddam ship as it passed through them. You could hear the screw smacking the water--*whap whap whap*--when it submerged after the ship dove over one of those huge waves.

Goddam sailors are nuts to be out in the middle of the goddam ocean like that!

**Mark Carter, 173d LRRP**



**The USS Daniel L. Sultan, formerly the Admiral W.S. Benson.**  
(web photo)



*I don't think so. Ed*

*(INCOMING continued....)*





### ~ Farewell to RAR Buddy ~

"BENNETT William Russell (Bill) Private  
Australian Army 317xx 3rd Batt RAR, Korea  
1951/52 Sergeant Australian Army 12003xx  
1 Tp A Sqn 4/19 PWLH, Vietnam 1965/  
1966 Retired 1975 rank Warrant Officer  
Class 2 Aged 88 years."



"Not sure if you have been advised that William Russell Bennett (Bill) passed away on the 28th of November....Korean/Vietnam Veteran.

Yes he mentioned RAR – he went to Vietnam in the first lot in 1965 and returned home in 1966.

I am happy that you will include the Notice, he was a very proud soldier and I think those days in the Army were his happiest. He missed Army life and when dementia set in, most of his memories and chats were about his 'Army days'.

Kind regards,"

**Trish Ernst (Bill's partner)**

### ~ Photo of a Friend ~

"I found this picture from Hill 875 of someone I was with in HHC/2/503 in Vietnam, but for the life of me I can't remember his name. Is there any way you could help me find his name? That would be great. Thanks,"

**Mike Harris  
HHC/2/503**



Photo of Mike's buddy. If you know him, please send an email to Mike at [mfh503@outlook.com](mailto:mfh503@outlook.com)

### ~ The Goodness of Sky Soldiers ~

"Gang, I have presented our annual \$1000. check to the Ronald McDonald House Charities. It is the best organization and 173d is proud to stamp its name there. The Chapter name remains on one of the doors.

The girls are, left to right: ALEXIS DONAHUE and ABIGAIL BRUMME. *Airborne, guys, just Airborne!"*

**Bill Terry  
A/3/319**



(**INCOMING** continued...)

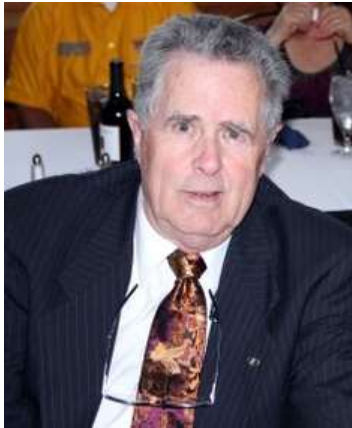




## ~ A Bull Remembers War & Buddies ~

"Current newsletter (Issue 77) finally gotten through. Your *'For the Fallen'* is always tough. Usually takes a break or two to finish. Additionally, a reminder of how many Aussie friends were lost.

I'm sure most everyone remembers the Cowboys, Page 17, as they took us in and most importantly took us out. Some might not recall the Razorbacks. That was the gunship company that provided covering fire on insertions, withdrawals and when things got shitty. I probably spent as much time hollering *'Razorback, Razorback'* into the radio as I did *'Slinky Layout Zero, fire mission'*. It seemed that whenever we needed them, they were there.



**Jim Robinson, Bravo Bull**



2/503 Bravo Bulls...aftermath of a fight.

On page 36 you placed one of the most compelling photos of war (above), at least for me. The photo was taken after the return from Pleiku. I had been medevac'd or I would have been in the middle of it. The photo appeared in *LIFE magazine* with a page and a half. It depicts, for me, the shock, disbelief and the 'why did I make it?' that so many of us have experienced.

I understand my RTO, Corrinio, was seriously wounded, but have never confirmed that or located him. Over the years I've heard, but cannot confirm, that it was a tragic mistake.

Someone in a helicopter telling Cpt. Sutton to move down the road. Cpt. Sutton, now a retired LTC, has never participated with the BULL's, which is sad.

Thanks again for all your work."

**Jim Robinson**

**B/2/503**



Corrinio in the boonies, Jim's RTO in Bravo Company, circa '65/'66.

###

(**INCOMING** continued...)





## ~ Divided America? Divided Soldiers? ~

Some may have missed the intended point in the issue featuring Senator Flake's speech and Senator McCain's op-ed (Issue 78) where they addressed the real harm which can come when politicians lie to us, any politician from any party, particularly by those who hold sway over our armed forces, while maligning most all media outlets. Such is the grave harm and danger it might cause, not only to our own democracy to which we all took an oath, but to foreign lands as well, mainly to countries under oppressive rule or threatened with oppressive rule, but specifically potential harm and danger to our military, lest *they* become divided.

As combat vets we each know well the critical importance of believing in and trusting the word and words of our commanders, superior officers and NCOs....it's really that simple – we entrust our very lives to the truths they tell us....this also applies, of course, to Congress and the Commander in Chief, whether his name is Washington, Bush, Obama or Trump.

When we as a people and nation are afraid or become overly upset to read words on paper because they present opposing views, then, I believe, something is terribly wrong with our culture. When we can no longer discuss civilly those opposing views, while considering all sides of issues, particularly when they impact our military, we, as a nation, may be headed down a path from which we may not be able to return.

That newsletter presenting remarks by the two Senators was no more and no less about free speech, freedom of the press, and upholding tenets of our Constitution, the values for which we each offered up our lives to be taken if necessary, for which countless lives throughout our country's history were taken.

To quote myself, I had asked you to “study their remarks”; not to accept them, nor to agree with them, but, to *study* them. Calling me a “a one-sided piece of shit” accomplishes little as over 70 years I've been called much worse, but by sharing your views with others, while considering other views, well, that might accomplish something good for you and our country.

The pages of this newsletter will continue to report our history, as well as current issues which have the potential of impacting our vets and military, some with which you'll agree, and some you won't.

Following are two unabridged comments we received out of many, representing favorable and unfavorable takes on our having published the remarks of the two Senators – you know, as in *free speech* and *freedom of the press*. ATW!

Lew “Smitty” Smith

HHC/2/503, '65/'66

Editor, 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter

*“If the press reported that whole truth, there would be no reason to deride them. REMOVE ME FROM YOUR DISTRIBUTION LIST! Those two Senators are too me, the last people I would go to as an example of anything. Both of them right now are doing anything other than hindering the objectives the President was elected to do. I have a friend who was a co-resident with McCain in the Hanoi Hilton. In the camp he was referred to as the ‘Great Northern Songbird.’ His wife stuck by him while he was a POW, but saw fit to divorce her and find a new one with great big\$\$\$ to finance his egotistical dreams. Flake knows he cannot win a reelection and so on his way out, in his bitterness, is screwing things up anyway he can. Delete me!” 2/503 Trooper*

*“Well said!!! Great research and applying the facts even though for me, you're preaching to the choir. You perhaps / hopefully have made some of us take a second look as to the untruths coming out of the WH.” 2/503 Trooper*

## A Few Quotes About Freedom of the Press

*“Freedom of conscience, of education, of speech, of assembly are among the very fundamentals of democracy and all of them would be nullified should freedom of the press ever be successfully challenged.”*

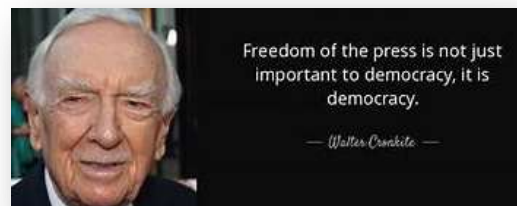
~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

*“No experiment can be more interesting than that we are now trying, and which we trust will end in establishing the fact, that man may be governed by reason and truth. Our first object should therefore be, to leave open to him all the avenues to truth. The most effectual hitherto found, is the freedom of the press. It is, therefore, the first shut up by those who fear the investigation of their actions.”....“Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe.”*

~ Thomas Jefferson

*“I love the First Amendment. Nobody loves it better than me. Nobody — who uses it more than I do? But the First Amendment gives all of us — it gives it to me it gives it to you, it gives it to all Americans — the right to speak our minds freely. It gives you the right and me the right to criticize fake news and criticize it strongly.”*

~ Donald J. Trump





# We Come In Chuting in Big Viet Drive

By JOSEPH FRIED

Staff Correspondent of *The News*

**Saigon, Feb. 23** – American troops, spearheaded by their first combat parachute assault of the war, tossed their strongest punch of the Vietnam war today at the Communist War Zone C stronghold near the Cambodian border.

At least 20,000 U.S. soldiers—and perhaps as many as 45,000—formed a giant horseshoe-shaped cordon around the jungled area. One of their prime objectives was the headquarters of the National Liberation Front, political arm of the Viet Cong, believed to be in the area.

The attack began two days ago, but news of it was withheld for security reasons. It was preceded by five days of softening up raids by B-52 bombers.

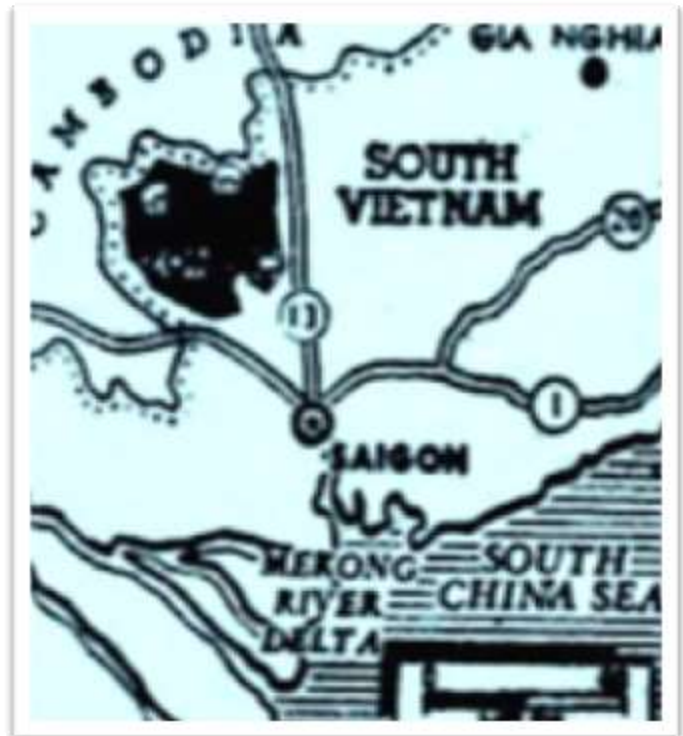
First into action was a battalion of the 173d Airborne Brigade, led by Brig. Gen. John R. Deane Jr.



**Brig. Gen. John R. Deane, Jr.**  
Leads paratroop assault  
(1967 press photo)

## Land in Marshy Plain

Its men chuted into a marshy plain where waist-high grass helped to cushion their landing. Only sporadic sniper fire was encountered in the early planes of what was called Operation Junction City. Casualties were light.



**U.S. paratrooper attack high-lighted Zone C battle.**  
(NEWS Map by Staff Artist)

Following other sections of the trap were the U.S. 1st and 25th Divisions, the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 11th Regiment.

In number of men, the operation eclipsed previous drives at the Iron Triangle near Saigon earlier this year and the strike last November into War Zone C.







# DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

## HEADQUARTERS 173D AIRBORNE BRIGDE (SEPARATE)

### APO San Francisco 96250

AVBE-SA 1

8 March 1967

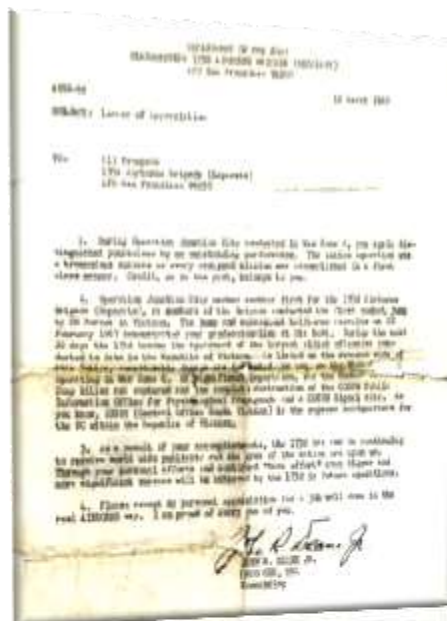
SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

TO: All Troopers  
173d Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO San Francisco 96250

1. During Operation Junction City conducted in War Zone C, you again distinguished yourselves by an outstanding performance. The entire operation was a tremendous success as every assigned mission was accomplished in a first class manner. Credit, as in the past, belongs to you.
2. Operation Junction City marked another first for the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate), as members of the Brigade conducted the first combat jump by US Forces in Vietnam. The jump and subsequent heliborne assaults on 22 February 1967 demonstrated your professionalism at its best. During the next 22 days the 173d became the spearhead of the largest allied offensive conducted to date in the Republic of Vietnam. As listed on the reverse side of this letter, considerable damage was inflicted by you on the Viet Cong operating in War Zone C. Of significant importance, was the number of Viet Cong killed and captured and the complete destruction of the COSVN Public Information Office for Psychological Propaganda and a COSVN Signal site. As you know, COSVN (Central Office South Vietnam) is the supreme headquarters for the VC within the Republic of Vietnam.
3. As a result of your accomplishments, the 173d has and is continuing to receive world wide publicity and the eyes of the nation are upon us. Through your personal efforts and continued "team effort" even bigger and more significant success will be achieved by the 173d in future operations.
4. Please accept my personal appreciation for a job well done in the real AIRBORNE way. I am proud of every one of you.



JOHN R. DEAN JR.  
BRIG GEN, USA  
Commanding



(Photo, images and copy of letter added)





# The Wall of Faces



Wambi Cook (A/2/503) suggested I contact you in our nationwide search for photos of each of the 58,300 who died in Vietnam. Several of the soldiers of the 173rd who died at the Battle of the Slopes do not have photos and Wambi thought you might put their names in your newsletter to ask for fellow vets who might have a photo.

The names are **Frank McCray Jr., George Patton, Charlie L. Walker, and Stephen A. Kelly.**

They need only to take a photo of the photo with their cell phone and send to my cell at 352-502-5070 or they can upload directly to [www.vvmf.org/wall-of-faces](http://www.vvmf.org/wall-of-faces)

Thank you for helping putting a face to these heroes. After twelve years and hundreds of volunteer searchers, we have less than 5,000 photos left to find. We will continue until every soldier has his photo so future generations will remember them.

**Beth Braun**  
Florida and U.S. searcher/genealogist

# Our Deepest Sympathies to a 2/503 Brother

We send our deepest sympathies to RTO Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503, '65/'66, and his family in the loss of his daughter, Melanie, 38, to an automobile accident in Riverview, Florida on February 23, 2018. Words are always inadequate at such sad times, but we want Wayne to know his Sky Soldier brothers hurt for him.  
Ed

**On Children**  
by Kahlil Gibran

Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.  
For they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,  
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.  
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.  
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.  
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,  
and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.  
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;  
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,  
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

*In Memory of  
Melanie Hoitt*





# President Donald J. Trump signs Executive Order to Improve Mental Health Resources for Veterans Transitioning from Active Duty to Civilian Life

*The Secretaries of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security will develop a plan to ensure Veterans' mental health care for the year after separating from service*

**WASHINGTON** – Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order titled, “Supporting Our Veterans During Their Transition From Uniformed Service to Civilian Life.” This Executive Order directs the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security to develop a plan to ensure that all new Veterans receive mental health care for at least one year following their separation from service.



**Presidential signing ceremony; not necessarily the executive order referenced here.** (web photo)

The three departments will work together and develop a Joint Action Plan to ensure that the 60 percent of new Veterans who currently do not qualify for enrollment in healthcare — primarily due to lack of verified service connection related to the medical issue at hand — will receive treatment and access to services for mental health care for one year following their separation from service.

*“As service members transition to Veteran status, they face higher risk of suicide and mental health difficulties,”* said Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin. *“During this critical phase, many transitioning service members may not qualify for enrollment in health care. The focus of this Executive Order is to coordinate Federal assets to close that gap.”*

The Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security will work to expand mental health programs and other resources to new Veterans to the year following departure from uniformed service, including eliminating prior time limits and:

Expanding peer community outreach and group sessions in the VA Whole Health initiative from 18 Whole Health Flagship facilities to all facilities. Whole Health includes wellness and establishing individual health goals.

Extending the Department of Defense’s “Be There Peer Support Call and Outreach Center” services to provide peer support for Veterans in the year following separation from the uniformed service.

Expanding the Department of Defense’s Military One Source (MOS), which offers resources to active duty members, to include services to separating service members to one year beyond service separation.

*“We look forward to continuing our partnership with the VA to ensure veterans who have served our country continue to receive the important mental health care and services they need and deserve,”* said Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis.

*“The Department of Homeland Security is where many Veterans find a second opportunity to serve their country—nearly 28 percent of our workforce has served in the armed forces, in addition to the 49,000 active duty members of the United States Coast Guard,”* said Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen.

*“This critically important executive order will provide our service members with the support they need as they transition to civilian life. These dedicated men and women have put their lives on the line to protect our nation and our American way of life, and we owe them a debt we can never repay. We look forward to working with the VA and DOD to implement the President’s EO,”* said Secretary Nielsen.

*“In signing this Executive Order, President Trump has provided clear guidance to further ensure our Veterans and their families know that we are focusing on ways to improve their ability to move forward and achieve their goals in life after service,”* said Secretary Shulkin.





## Face of Defense:

# Soldier Dies Rescuing 4 People in Burning Building

By Terrance Bell, U.S. Army Garrison Fort Lee



New York Army National Guard Pfc. Emmanuel Mensah died during a fire in an apartment building in the Bronx, New York City on Dec. 28, 2017. Mensah died while seeking to save other residents of his apartment building. Mensah is believed to have saved four people before he died in the fire, which killed 12 people. (New York Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion courtesy photo)

**FORT LEE, Va., Jan. 16, 2018** — Army Pfc. Emmanuel Mensah sacrificed his life to save others in a burning building in New York City.

The 27-year-old New York National Guardsman, a wheeled vehicle mechanic who graduated Dec. 14 from the Ordnance School at the Sustainment Center of Excellence here, caught the attention of senior officials as well as the national media after entering a burning apartment building in the Bronx at least three times on the night of Dec. 28, saving four people.

Mensah's remains were found in a location that indicated his intention to rescue more people if he could.

A resident of the building himself, Mensah, who hailed from Ghana, is one of 12 people who died in the blaze described as the most destructive residential fire in decades, according to media reports. It was started by a youngster playing with a gas stove, authorities reported.

## Former Commander's Praise

At Fort Lee, people who'd trained Mensah expressed shock at his demise but pride in how he conducted himself in the face of danger. Army Lt. Col. Eric L. Booker, commander, 16th Ordnance Battalion, was one of them. *"The values, morals and honor he displayed -- I am really proud knowing he came from our organization,"* Booker said of Mensah, who'd been assigned to Delta Company.

*"You do sometimes wonder after they depart what type of experiences they're going to have as they go into the operational Army,"* said Command Sgt. Maj. Patricio Cardona Vega, command sergeant major of the 16th Ordnance Battalion. *"For me, it is important, at least in this circumstance, the paradigm we hope every soldier gathers from being a part of our organization -- that of being prideful -- is one this soldier obviously lived up to, based on the actions he took in this tragic event that led to the loss of his life."*

A posthumous award of the Soldier's Medal was approved by Army Secretary Mark T. Esper on Jan. 1. Of all the recognition and laudatory comments Mensah received, perhaps the comments provided by his recruiter, Army Staff Sgt. Ruben Martinez-Ortiz of the New York National Guard, rings the loudest.

***"I knew from the moment we met his heart was as big as our National Guard family,"*** Martinez-Ortiz said. ***"He was ready to serve our nation and community. Pfc. Mensah was the embodiment of what our Army values stand for."***

See complete report at:

[www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1415743/face-of-defense-soldier-dies-rescuing-4-people-in-burning-building/source/GovDelivery/](http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1415743/face-of-defense-soldier-dies-rescuing-4-people-in-burning-building/source/GovDelivery/)

**Note:** Given the times, it is worth repeating, PFC Mensah chose not to return to Ghana, his home country on the West Coast of Africa, but instead, chose to join the American Army where, while as a soldier in service to America and Americans, he gave his life to save his fellow man. We send Emmanuel and his family a heartfelt Airborne salute! **ATW brother!** Ed





# The Ghosts Of Casper - Daring And Dedicated

Story & Photos by SP5 RAFAEL SANTOS



**LZ English** - Casper haunts the area at Landing Zone English where a sign proudly proclaims "Welcome to Ghost Town."

But Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade know that Casper is the brigade's aviation platoon - not the friendly ghost of the famous comic strip.

Having arrived in Vietnam with the 173d in 1965, the platoon is commanded by Captain Stanley H. Streicher of Cincinnati, Ohio, a winner of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The Casper Platoon's jobs include re supplying troops, medevac, visual reconnaissance of different areas of operation, close fire support of troops in heavy contact with the enemy, the flying and maintenance of the brigade commander's chopper, and the transporting of V.I.P.s - including occasional entertainers.



**"COOLING IT** - CW2 George Clouse of West Carrollton, Ohio, 'ghost' during a break in a flight mission near the fishing village of Tam Quan."



**"PFC Douglas Walton of Woodlands, California, a Casper Door Gunner, keeps his chopper clean during a break at LZ English."**

Of the men from Ghost Town, Sergeant Leon J. Strigotto of Company B, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry said,

***"As an infantryman, I have all the faith in the world in the guys in Casper. We depend on them. They get us where we have to go, and just as easily and rapidly they pull us out. It's really a comfort to know that no matter what the time of day or night, those 'good guys' are just a minute or so away."*** The sergeant concluded.

A pretty Red Cross girl had this to say about the pilots and crewmen of Casper: *"They're angels. Just think, when the men need food in the field, who takes it to them? Letters from the "world" are real morale boosters. How do you think mail gets to the guys in the field? And whenever we make plans to visit camp sites, in hopes of bringing a little cheer to the men on the line, we can always depend on Casper to provide transportation,"* she emphasized.

(continued....)





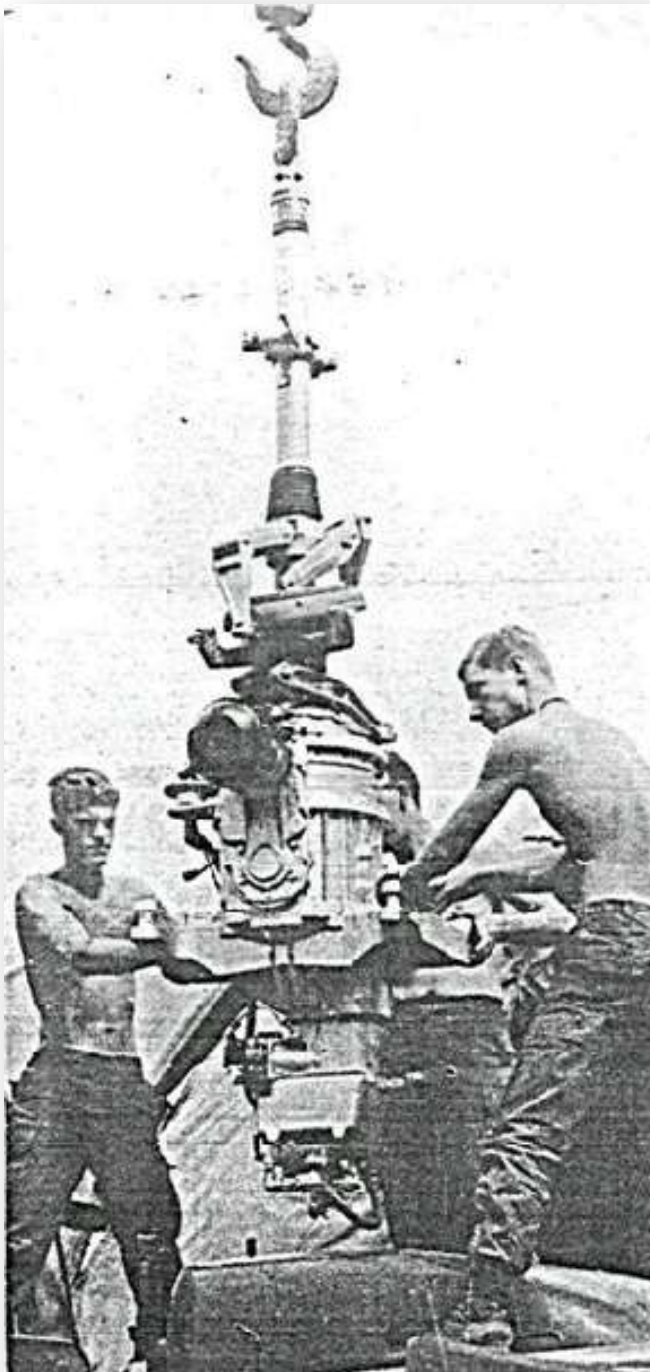
*"Not only are my men highly skilled, they are also very dedicated to their jobs," commented CPT Streicher. "These men are dedicated and motivated because they enjoy what they are doing and they realize just how important Casper's functions are to the individual Sky Soldier."*

Whether they are good guys, angels or ghosts, the residents of Ghost Town, 173d Airborne Brigade, are indeed friendly, professional aviators.

# A Few More Casper Pics



(web photos)



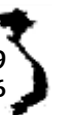
**"Members of the Casper maintenance crew, SP4 Jack Marshall and SP5 John Mangold install a new transmission into a huey."**

Reprinted from: *Fire Base 173* - September 29, 1969



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / Mar.-Apr. 2018 – Issue 79

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# Sky Soldier arrested for punching Policeman in Vincenza, Italy



*"Italian police photo of a strip club where Italian police arrested a U.S. soldier from the Vincenza-based 173rd Brigade who assaulted two Italian police officers, breaking one officer's teeth on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2018."*

*(Reported by Stars & Stripes)*

*Stars & Stripes reports, "According to local media, Ross was at a local strip club early Thursday morning when he 'totally flipped out,' according to Il Giornale di Vincenza."*

*"As soon as Ross saw one of the policemen exiting the vehicle, he assaulted him and punched him in the face, breaking one of his teeth....The soldier seemed possessed," the newspaper continued.*

It's reported he was sentenced to a year in jail by Italian authorities, but the judge suspended the sentence on condition he commit no further crimes.

***"The incident does not reflect the values of the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, its leadership, or its soldiers,"*** Lt. Col. John Hall, a brigade spokesman said in an email. ***"The 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team strives to be an organization whose members are respectful of the Vincenza community."***

Source:

<https://www.stripes.com/news/europe/173rd-brigade-soldier-punches-police-pleads-guilty-sentenced-all-in-the-same-morning-1.509852>



***Awarded for actions  
during the Global War  
on Terror  
The Silver Star  
to***

**RINGGENBERG, DIRK DALE**

**Service:** Army

**Rank:** Captain

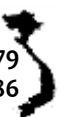
**Action Date:** June 21, 2005

**Unit:** Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503rd PIR,  
173d Airborne Brigade

**Home Town:** Madrid, Iowa

## ***Citation:***

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Captain (Infantry) Dirk D. Ringgenberg, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 21 June 2005, against an armed enemy in the Mieneshin District of Afghanistan, during combat operations in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Captain Ringgenberg distinguished himself as the Company Commander, Chosen Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade, while engaging anti-coalition forces near Chalbar Village. When one of his platoons first received contact, he repositioned his command element directly in the middle of the firefight in order to better control his kinetic effects. Under constant direct fire throughout the rest of the engagement, Captain Ringgenberg distinguished himself throughout the seven-hour battle by attacking the enemy and refusing to allow them to break contact, in spite of friendly casualties and an enemy that significantly outnumbered his forces. His adept decision-making and tactical flexibility under heavy rocket-propelled grenade and automatic weapons fire resulted in 76 enemies dead and only six friendly wounded, destroying the Taliban leadership that had terrorized the local populace for months. His leadership was the decisive point to his company's overwhelming success that day. Captain Ringgenberg's heroic actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, and the United States Army.





From the archives....

# Brigade Enters Sixth Year In Vietnam

This month the brigade celebrates the fifth anniversary of its dramatic introduction to Vietnam. During that time it has established the name of the 173rd Airborne Brigade as the oldest and proudest in the history of the Vietnam War.

In May 1965, the not quite two-year-old unit winged its way from Okinawa to the Republic of Vietnam, becoming the first U.S. Army combat unit to deploy to the Southeast Asian hotbed. On the heels of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 503rd Infantry, Troop E, 17th Cavalry, and Company D, 16th Armor of the 173rd, units of the 1st Infantry Division and the 101st Airborne Division began arriving in July of 1965.



**Sky Soldiers of the 2/503d arrive Bien Hoa AFB, May '65.**

(Photo by LTC George Dexter, (Col. Ret.), CO 2/503)

Although the brigade's initial mission was to secure and defend Bien Hoa Air Base, it immediately began to prove its worth in combat by patrolling into the northern Mekong Delta and War Zone D, an infamous VC stronghold.

The paratroopers saw their first big action in July when they trapped a main force VC regiment against the Dong Nai River and killed 400. For the next two years, the 173rd continued to conduct operations throughout III Corps, steadily building a reputation as the reaction force that deployed to wherever the fighting was the heaviest.

Both the 1st and 2nd Battalions earned Presidential Unit Citations (PUC) for their efforts during that period in two hard-fought battles. The first occurred in November 1965 when paratroopers of the 1st Bn, 503rd

Inf caught and virtually destroyed a VC regiment by killing 403 enemy in a six-hour period.

The 2nd Bn, 503rd Inf earned its PUC in March 1966, when it killed 343 Viet Cong near their headquarters in War Zone D. The Sky Soldiers also captured 38 crew served weapons, 188 small arms and 11,500 documents.



**Strategic reserve. Wounded 2/503d troopers after the battle at LZ Zulu-Zulu on 16 Mar 66, during Operation Silver City. As the fight raged on for hour after hour, they were ordered to "fix bayonets" as ammunition in all companies was nearly expended, and the enemy was threatening to overrun the battalion.**

(Photo by RTO Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503, who fought the battle with troopers of Charlie Company)

The first and only American (mass) combat jump of the war occurred in February, 1967. The 2nd Bn, 503rd Inf, made their spectacular jump deep into War Zone C to spearhead Operation Junction City.



**173d Airborne paratroopers make historical combat jump in Vietnam during Operation Junction City in February '67.**

(continued....)







**Heavy drop during Operation Junction City, Feb. '67.**

In July 1967, the 4th Battalion, which has joined the brigade a year earlier, moved to II Corps to assist the 4th Infantry Division. The battalion was soon followed by the rest of the 173d in a move to counter a Communist build-up in the Central Highlands.

A summer and fall of heavy activity culminated in what is perhaps the most celebrated battle of the war; Hill 875 at Dak To. The brigade captured the hill on Thanksgiving Day after 20 days of continuous fighting—leaving 800 enemy dead in their wake.



**The battle for Hill 875 carries on among and in spite of our dead and wounded. It was simply victory, or death.**  
(Web photo)

Brigade headquarters moved to Bon Son on the coastal plain in March, 1968. In July of the same year the 3/503rd which had arrived in country nine months earlier, moved to Bao Loc, remaining there until September of 1968 when it rejoined the unit in Binh Dinh Province.

Operation Washington Green, the pacification program the brigade is currently engaged in, began in April 1969 and has passed through several successful phases.

President Nixon recently presented the nations' highest award for bravery to the family of a 173d Airborne Brigade trooper.

Staff Sgt. Laszlo Rabel received the Medal of Honor for actions on Nov. 13, 1968 when he and a six man team from the 74th Infantry (Long Range Patrol) made contact with an enemy element in the Tiger Mountains east of Bong Son. The team was in extremely close contact when an enemy soldier snuck up and lobbed a hand grenade in on them. Rabel shouted a warning to his fellow "Lurps" and with complete disregard for his own safety threw himself on the hand grenade absorbing the whole blast, thus saving his team.



**Laszlo Rabel**  
**1937 ~ 1968**

Rabel, 29, a native of Hungary, who called Hollywood, Calif. his home had been with the brigade 14 months. He joined the 74th Infantry, because he felt he could contribute more to the war.

Rabel is the seventh recipient of the medal from the 173d Airborne Brigade.

In spring 1969, President Nixon announced redeployment from the Republic of Vietnam would begin, thus reversing the trend of five years. First to go were elements of the 9th Infantry Division, and the third brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 4th Infantry Division. But the 173d remains, and as the Southeast Asian reaction force, speculation is that the airborne unit will bear the distinction of being *"the first in and the last out."*

**Source:**

**Fire Base 173, Vol. III No. 9, April 27, 1970**  
(Photos added)







# The Overseas Ambush

By Chuck Dean / Vet 2 Vet

**I**n 2006, I happened to be in mainland China when my first heart attack occurred. Had it happened in the United States, the VA would have paid for everything – regardless of disability ratings, etc.

However, since I was in a foreign country, and my service-connection disability rating (at the time) did not include heart disease, I was obligated to pay for the life-saving procedure and hospitalization myself. Luckily the cost was much less in China than here, but it still presented an unexpected hardship.

To this day, I remain convinced that it is a silly ruling from Veterans Affairs that is more than FUBAR. (If you don't know what that means, ask a WWII vet.) The bottom line, it was my fault for being clueless about certain aspects of what the VA covered.

I found out the hard way and should have done my homework before traveling abroad, and check with the VA Foreign Medical Program.

It is critical to know that there are certain rules that apply in the States as well. I encourage those who have conditions or illnesses that may result in the need for emergency treatment – research ahead and plan accordingly.

As many of you know, when using VA healthcare, there are specific rules that must be followed to be sure you are not stuck paying ER costs. You do not need to call the VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an emergency room.

However, you, your family, friends or hospital staff **MUST** contact the nearest VA medical facility within 72 hours of your emergency or your care may not be covered. When you call, provide the VA with information about your emergency and what services are being provided to you. Do this as soon as possible to avoid unwanted costs.

If you are admitted to a hospital you must still notify the VA within 72 hours. If the admission is not an emergency, you must obtain advance approval from the VA.

If you are admitted to the hospital because of an emergency what the VA pays will depend upon your VA eligibility. They may pay all, some or none of the charges. If a VA bed is available, you can be safely transferred to the VA hospital, you must do so if you want the VA to pay for the care.

So, will the VA pay for emergency care received outside the United States? Yes... IF and only IF, the emergency is directly related to a previously rated service-connected condition. Also, you must register with the Foreign Medical Program in advance.

For more information:

[https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/pubfiles/brochures/FMP\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/pubfiles/brochures/FMP_brochure.pdf)

Chuck Dean served as an Army paratrooper with the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam and through that experience was led to address the many transitional issues veterans struggle with. He is the author of several important books for veterans. All can be found on Amazon at: <http://www.amazon.com/author/chuckdeanbooks>

[Reprinted courtesy of Chuck]



## DoD Identifies Army Casualty

Jan. 3, 2018

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier who was supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Sgt. 1st Class Mihail Golin, 34, of Fort Lee, New Jersey, died Jan. 1 in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, after being engaged by enemy small arms fire while on a dismounted patrol. Golin was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Carson, Colorado. The incident is under investigation.

*"We are deeply saddened by the loss of one of our own,"* U.S. Forces-Afghanistan commander Gen. John Nicholson said in a Tuesday statement. *"At this very difficult time our heartfelt sympathies go out to the families and friends of our fallen and wounded brothers."*

Golin, who emigrated from Latvia in 2004, enlisted in the Army in early 2005. He served as an infantryman with the 25th Infantry Division in Alaska before graduating from the Special Forces Qualification Course in 2014.

He had previously deployed to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan, according to a release from U.S. Army Special Operations Command.







# DoD Honors Life, Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

By Lisa Ferdinando  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

**WASHINGTON, Jan. 25, 2018** — The words and actions of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. changed a nation and resonate to this day with inclusiveness, equality and acts of service, speakers at the Pentagon's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance noted today.



**Retired Army Maj. Gen. Marcia M. Anderson speaks at the Defense Department's 34th annual Martin Luther King Jr. observance at the Pentagon, Jan. 25, 2018.**

(DoD photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Kathryn E. Holm)

*"Fifty years ago, Dr. King shared some very powerful words up at the National Cathedral,"* Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick M. Shanahan told the gathering at the Pentagon auditorium.

Those words, Shanahan said, are: *"We are all tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality."*

Shanahan said those were very powerful words for the time and powerful words for today. He lauded King's work and legacy and said he is grateful to work at the Pentagon, where inclusiveness and cohesion are standard.

## 'Obligation to Service'

Retired Army Maj. Gen. Marcia M. Anderson, the first African-American female major general in the Army Reserve, delivered the keynote speech.

The federal holiday honoring King, which falls on the third Monday in January, should be a national day of service, she said. The day can also be a springboard for a commitment to serve others every day of the year, she added.

Service members and civil servants already are committed to service, she said, and can challenge others to serve their communities.

*"We need to leverage our existing talents, because that is part of our obligation to observe and commemorate Dr. King's legacy and his service,"* she said, noting that she was able to succeed because of the

work of King and others who paved the way.

King, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, was born in Atlanta on Jan. 15, 1929. He was assassinated April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

## 'Tremendous and Powerful Impact'

*"This is our 34th MLK event,"* Michael L. Rhodes, the Defense Department's director of administration and management, said. The first Defense Department event was in 1985, he noted, a year before the federal holiday was observed.

Today's event commemorates and reflects upon King, Rhodes said, a man *"taken from us just shortly after his 39th birthday, but in those 39 years, what a tremendous and powerful impact he did have."*

Rhodes added: *"He truly helped lead a change in this nation -- a change that is still working and taking place today." ###*

***"Our lives begin to end the day we  
become silent about things that  
matter."***

**MLK**





Excerpt....

# Route 43 section dedicated to local Vietnam War vet

July 30, 2017

**Janice Kiaski**  
Community editor

**MARKER UNVEILED** — A dedication ceremony was held Saturday at the Lighthouse Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Richmond for the unveiling of a state Route 43 sign for the “Army Corporal Carl H. Bernhart Memorial Highway,” a 2-mile stretch beginning at mile marker 12. Killed in action at age 20 during the Vietnam War, Bernhart was remembered by family, friends and dignitaries.



With the sign are, from left, siblings Marc Bernhart and Priscilla Braun; John E. Barnhart of Weirton, who initiated the effort for the highway marker designation; Emmett Lauer of Silver Springs, Md., who served with Bernhart and was present on the battlefield the day Bernhart died; siblings John Bernhart, Jeff Bernhart, Mike Bernhart and Charlotte Sampson; and Stephanie Ivany, Carl’s daughter.

**RICHMOND**—Army Cpl. Carl Hans Bernhart died nearly 50 years ago while serving with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, B Co., 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry during the Vietnam War, but Saturday his memory was very much alive.

Family, friends, dignitaries and community members turned out for a memorial highway dedication ceremony to honor the fallen hero and Richmond man who was 20 when he was killed under hostile ground fire on March 16, 1968, in Kontum, South Vietnam. The end of the service brought the outdoor unveiling of a yet-to-be erected state Route 43 sign for the “Army Corporal Carl H. Bernhart Memorial Highway,” a 2-mile stretch beginning at mile marker 12 and continuing to the Fairfield area.

But indoors, the more than three-hour service was laced with laughter and tears through many testimonials, including from Emmett Lauer of Silver Springs, Md., who was present on the battlefield the day Bernhart died. Lauer knew Bernhart for a year, meeting him in March 1967.

*“I liked Carl right away. He was not a loud mouth or a braggart and was pretty quiet,” he said. “He didn’t drink, and he didn’t smoke.”*

The two served in the same unit as military police and would volunteer to go to the infantry. Carl was on the machine gun crew; Lauer, a radio telephone operator.

In recalling the events of the night before their mission to “take this Hill 1000,” Lauer said, “they brought hot chow in, some sodas and some beer — hot, no ice — and a chaplain came in, so I found out later when they send hot chow in and a chaplain before your operation starts, you can bet you’re going to run into something, and it’s going to be bad. We didn’t know it at the time.”

Lauer, who said the chaplain set up an altar on ammunition boxes, told Bernhart he was “going to go to Mass” before eating, and Carl joined him.

The last time he saw Carl alive was the next day as they made their way up the hill in 90-to-100-degree heat. After Bernhart was killed, he wrote a letter to Bernharts’ parents, the late Stephen and Jeanne Pauls Bernhart, offering as much information as he knew.

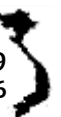


Carl

Source:  
**Herald-Star**

Read entire report at:

<http://www.heraldstaronline.com/news/local-news/2017/07/route-43-section-dedicated-to-local-vietnam-war-vet/>





# A Few Random Pics of the Young Studs & Studettes



**CONTINUING TO SERVE:** U.S. Army Sgt. Sean Fitzgibbons, right, re-enlists before a joint airborne jump at a drop zone in Nurmsi, Estonia, July 23, 2015. Fitzgibbons is an intelligence analyst assigned to Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd ABCT.



**MORTAR ROUND:** Army Pfc. James West, right, prepares to fire the M252A1 81mm mortar system at a range in Grafenwoehr, Germany, Oct. 20, 2017. West is a mortarman assigned to Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade.



**SKY FULL OF CHUTES:** U.S. and Italian soldiers conduct an airborne operation from an Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft at Rivilto Air Base in Udine, Italy, Sept. 26, 2017, during Exercise September Heat 2017. The U.S. soldiers are assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade.



**INSPECTING A CHUTE:** Army Sgt. Hailey Devens, left, performs a jumpmaster personnel equipment inspection on a paratrooper before participating in the Peacemaster Unity airborne operation at Aviano Airbase in Italy, Oct. 17, 2016. Devens is a jumpmaster assigned to the 173rd Airborne Bde.



**GAS MASKS:** U.S. Army 1LT Erica Banda checks the protective mask of a soldier participating in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training. Banda is a battalion chemical officer assigned to the 4th Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 173rd ABN BDE.





# Trump Signs Fiscal Year 2018 Defense Authorization

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity



President Donald J. Trump, joined by Vice President Mike Pence and senior military leaders, signs H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2018, in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, Dec. 12, 2017. .

(White House photo by Stephanie Chaszcz)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12, 2017 — President Donald J. Trump signed the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act into law during a White House ceremony today.

The act calls for \$626 billion for the department's base budget and another \$66 billion for operations. The act includes a 2.4 percent pay raise for military personnel. The act authorizes the department to spend money, but the appropriations bill -- which actually provides the funds -- is still in Congress.

## U.S. Military: 'Greatest Fighting Force'

*"This historic legislation demonstrates our unwavering commitment to our men and women in uniform -- the greatest fighting force in the history of the world -- and we're making it a lot better than even that,"* Trump said before signing the bill.

The president said the legislation *"represents a momentous step toward rebuilding our military and securing the future for our children."*

Trump added, *"In recent years, our military has undergone a series of deep budget cuts that have severely impacted our readiness, shrunk our capabilities and placed substantial burdens on our warfighters. History teaches us that when you weaken your defenses, you invite aggression."*

The president recalled George Washington's belief, that to be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.

*"With the signing of this defense bill, we accelerate the process of fully restoring America's military might,"* Trump said. *"This legislation will enhance our readiness ... and modernize our forces and help provide our service members with the tools that they need to fight and to win."*

See entire report at:

[www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1394990/trump-signs-fiscal-year-2018-defense-authorization/](http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1394990/trump-signs-fiscal-year-2018-defense-authorization/)



## A Pic From Operation Marauder Mekong Delta ~ January 1966



*"In this Jan. 1, 1966 file photo, a Paratrooper of the 173rd U.S. Airborne brigade crouches with women and children in a muddy canal as intense Viet Cong sniper fire temporarily pins down his unit during the Vietnamese War near Bao Trai in Vietnam."* (Horst Faas/AP)

Note: Accepting the date of 1 Jan 66 as correct, in this Horst Faas photo it is highly likely the trooper shown was with 1/503, as 2/503 was held at the Bao Trai airstrip until the morning of 2 Jan 66, when they assaulted a hot LZ in the nearby rice paddies. Anyone know the troopers' name in this photo? Of course, and with some luck, the shivering young child would now be in his or her mid 50's. Ed





# Daniel Burr: Close as Brothers

May 25, 2015 by Mike Holloway

Growing up as a Native American on the Stockbridge-Munsee reservation in the 1950's wasn't easy. There weren't many jobs available to the residents, and many families consisted of a single mother and many children who did what they could to help out. Wayne Malone is no stranger to these hardships. Malone grew up in a family of eight children without a father. He attended a Mission school where grades first through eighth were all taught in the same classroom, at the same time, by the same teacher. But Malone also holds these memories dearly, as they were a time when he was with his now deceased childhood friend Daniel Burr.



Daniel Burr picture obtained by Michael Holloway.

Malone and Burr were as close as brothers. They met when Burr would visit his grandfather, who lived across the street from Malone's house. Burr would spend more time at Malone's house than he would with his own family. They loved talking about Baseball stats despite never having the money to actually attend a game. They would often play a variety of sports together. Burr excelled in them all, and maybe someday would try and go professional.

Burr and Malone would eventually leave the reservation. Both of their mothers ended up finding jobs in Milwaukee, and so they moved to the city (his sister has served as a tribal judge). Moving to Milwaukee was a culture shock for the two. Malone recalls how intrigued they were the first time they ever saw an African-American person. Although they attended different schools, they would often meet up afterwards and play sports and hang out.

Burr loved Elvis. He used to imitate him and perfected all of The King's famous poses. He would shake his leg and dance like him while Malone and their other friends would watch and laugh. A lot of girls were interested in Burr, but he wasn't really a ladies man. He preferred playing sports and hanging out with his friends.

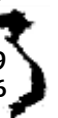
Burr, Malone, and another friend of theirs were hanging out in Malone's basement one night listening to music. Suddenly, they heard a woman screaming. The three of them ran outside and saw a man pulling an older woman into an alley, with one hand on her purse. Burr shouted at the man, causing him to let go of the lady and retreat. They chased after the man, and Burr caught up to him and tackled him. He held him in place until the police arrived.

This was the kind of person that Burr was. He was always sticking up for the weaker person. If someone was bullying another person smaller than them, Burr would step in. He was known as a good guy, but people also knew not to mess with him.



Daniel Burr is on the left in this photo obtained from his family by Michael Holloway.

(continued....)





*"He was quite the fighter. I've seen him take down a few boys," Malone says. "I don't think he was afraid of anything."*

Burr would eventually join the airborne division of the military. Despite the draft, Burr volunteered himself because he *"felt it was the right thing to do."* Malone knew Burr was going to rise to the top because he could achieve anything. Burr ended up becoming a Sergeant and squad leader.

*"Whenever he got an inkling to do something, he would do it,"* Malone says.

The last time Malone saw Burr was when he came home on leave before heading to Vietnam.

*"He looked sharp and showed off his uniform,"* Malone says.

On March 17, 1968, Burr was killed while securing a foxhole in Vietnam. Burr was the squad leader, and had ordered a member of his squad to take point. However, the soldier had a sprained ankle, and Burr instead volunteered to take point and was killed. Burr proved his fearlessness and honor one last time and sacrificed himself for the safety of his squad members.

*"I shed a tear. I felt bad. I had a hard time accepting it,"* Malone says. *"I knew the world was missing a good person that a lot of people respected. He had so much to live for."*

It's obvious that Burr had an impact on Malone's and many others' lives. He stood up for what was right up until the end of his life. Memories of their time on the reservation together picking strawberries and fishing in the river stick with Malone and remind him of the time he got to spend with a person whose life was so short, but was still able to accomplish so much.



Michael Holloway

Source:

<http://mediamilwaukee.com/special-projects/daniel-burr-close-brothers>

Media Milwaukee

Student Powered News / University of Milwaukee



Excerpt...

## ***"If I lost Cronkite, I've lost Middle America."***

Lyndon Johnson, February 27, 1968



Walter Cronkite

1916 – 2009

(Web photo)

Cronkite was an influential television news reporter who reflected middle America's views about the US involvement in Vietnam. He joined CBS in 1950 and later became its chief anchorman. He favorably interviewed President Kennedy about the war in Southeast Asia in 1963, but as the conflict dragged on Cronkite reflected network weariness about coverage of the war. The coverage was largely critical of the Johnson Administration, more so after Cronkite's visit to Vietnam in 1968 during the Tet Offensive, when he reported on television that he believed that US policy would not lead to victory. Combined with anti-war protests and coming immediately after Tet, this seemed to confirm that middle America wanted withdrawal from Vietnam. The broadcast made Johnson realize that he was losing the public's support.

April 1, 1968 ~ USA, **POLITICS**

President Lyndon Johnson announces a partial halt in the bombing of North Vietnam, and also that he will send an additional 13,500 troops to Vietnam, far short of the numbers which General Westmoreland has requested.

In a surprise move, President Johnson announces to the American Public, *"That I will not seek, nor will I accept, another term as your President."* Dropping out of the presidential election in this way, Johnson stresses that he will now work towards achieving peace as an end to the war in Vietnam.

Source: *The Vietnam War, Day by Day*  
By Leo Daugherty



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## Screaming Eagle Sworn in as Secretary of the Army



**“Pentagon Ceremony: Defense Secretary James N. Mattis officially swears in Mark T. Esper as the new Secretary of the Army during a ceremony at the Pentagon...”**

(DoD photo by Jim Garamone)

Dr. Mark T. Esper was confirmed by the United States Senate on Nov. 15, 2017. He was sworn in as the 23rd Secretary of the United States Army on Nov. 17, 2017.

As Secretary, he has statutory responsibility for all matters relating to the United States Army, to include the recruitment, organization, training, equipping, and care of 1.4 million active duty, National Guard, and Reserve Soldiers, Department of the Army Civilians, and their families.

For the past seven years, Esper was a senior executive at the Raytheon Company as Vice President for Government Relations. From 2008-2010, Esper served concurrently as Executive Vice President for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Global Intellectual Property Center and as Vice President for Europe and Eurasian Affairs. From 2006-2007 he served as COO and Executive Vice President of Defense and International Affairs at the Aerospace Industries Association.

Esper also has extensive experience working on Capitol Hill. He served as National Security Advisor for Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist; Policy Director for the House Armed Services Committee; and as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Foreign Relations and Government Affairs Committees where he was responsible for national security issues. Esper also served as the Legislative Director and Senior Policy Advisor to Senator Chuck Hagel.



**RLTW**

His Pentagon experience includes serving as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Negotiations Policy) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and earlier on the Army staff as a war planner. Esper was also a Chief of Staff of the Heritage Foundation, and taught at Missouri State University’s Department of Defense and Strategic Studies program in Fairfax, Virginia.

Esper is a 1986 graduate of the United States Military Academy and received his commission in the Infantry. Upon completion of Ranger and Pathfinder training, he served on active duty for over a decade, including service in the 1990-1991 Gulf War with the 101st Airborne Division. He later commanded an airborne rifle company in Europe. Following active duty, he served in both the Virginia and District of Columbia National Guard, and Army Reserve before retiring in 2007.

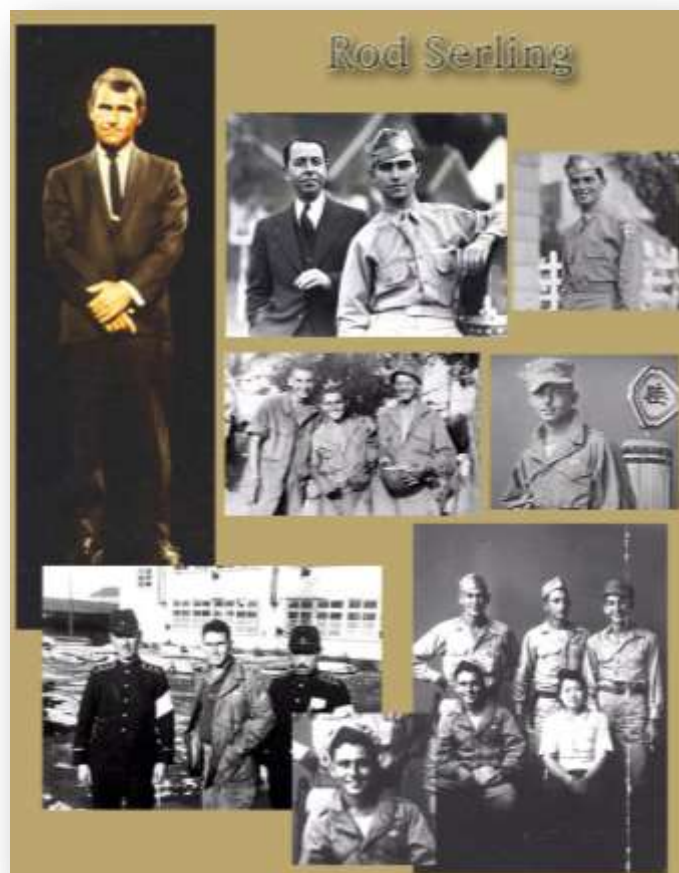
Esper holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and a Ph.D. in Public Policy from The George Washington University.

He is a recipient of the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service. Among his military awards and decorations are the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star Medal, the Kuwait Liberation Medal and Kuwait Liberation Medal – Saudi Arabia, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

Esper and his wife Leah have been married for 28 years and have three adult children.







1924 ~ 1975

**Intro:** *"The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout. There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices – to be found only in the minds of men. For the record, prejudices can kill – and suspicion can destroy – and a thoughtless frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all of its own – for the children – and the children yet unborn. And the pity of it is – that these things cannot be confined – to the Twilight Zone."*

Rod Serling



Rod Serling served as a paratrooper and demolition specialist with the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 11th Airborne Division in the Pacific Theater in World War II from January 1943 to January 1945. He was seriously wounded in the wrist and knee during combat and was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Serling's military service deeply affected the rest of his life and informed much of his writing. Due to his wartime experiences, Serling suffered from nightmares and flashbacks. During his service in World War II, he watched as his best friend was crushed to death by a heavy supply crate dropped by parachute onto the field. Serling was rather short (5'4") and slight. He was a noted boxer during his military days.

[From the web]





# **PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY)**



By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States I have today awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for extraordinary heroism to:

## **THE 2D BATTALION (AIRBORNE), 503D INFANTRY, 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP) AND ATTACHED UNITS:**

2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company  
Company A, Company B, Company C  
2nd Team, 3rd Radio Relay Unit  
2nd Platoon, 173rd Engineer Company  
Scout Dog Teams, 3rd Scout Dog Company, III Corps  
Vietnamese Interpreters, Forward Air Controllers  
Artillery Liaison Officers and Forward Observers from  
Battery A, 3rd Battalion (Airborne) 319th Artillery.

**T**he 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) with attachments, is cited for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force near Phuoc Vinh, Republic of Vietnam, on 16 March 1966. The battalion was participating as part of a large force on a search and destroy mission sweeping a portion of war zone "D" during operation "Silver City", and had been in contact with small groups of Viet Cong during four days of operations in the dense jungle area. On the morning of 16 March the battalion was deployed in a defensive perimeter in preparation for resuming operations. At approximately 0700 hours a patrol from Company "B" had begun to move from its positions to initiate action against the enemy. At the same time, a resupply helicopter was descending into the landing zone located within the battalion perimeter. Suddenly the helicopter came under heavy automatic weapons fire from the enemy and was destroyed, and the jungle erupted in gunfire all around the defensive perimeter. The leading elements of the patrol were caught in this initial concentration of murderous fire. The Viet Cong forces, supported by a tremendous volume of automatic weapons, mortar and artillery fire, attacked all around the perimeter. The enemy exerted considerable force at a point between Company "A" and Company "C" in an effort to effect a breakthrough at this location. Personnel of the two companies, including the wounded, steadfastly remained in their positions,

responded at close quarters with fire that was both deadly and accurate, and succeeded in breaking up the determined enemy attack. Maintaining continuous contact around the perimeter, the Viet Cong launched another strong attack to breach the defense. This effort was focused on the center and left flank of Company "B". Time and time again the Viet Cong charged the positions, but the indefatigable and determined paratroopers of Company "B" exacted heavy casualties and beat back the enemy attackers. Regrouping and concentrating their forces, the Viet Cong made a final assault on the flank of Company "C". This time the desperate Viet Cong ran forward in waves under the protective umbrella of a heavy volume of their supporting fires. Again, however, the gallant and resolute paratroopers repulsed the enemy, inflicting severe losses, completely disrupting his efforts to destroy the battalion, and forcing the Viet Cong to withdraw. Documentary evidence indicates that the attacking force consisted of the entire Viet Cong 271st Main Force Regiment, reinforced by two artillery battalions. A total of 303 Viet Cong dead were confirmed by body count. An estimated additional 150 were killed and numerous Viet Cong were wounded during the battle. The courageous and exemplary actions of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, in decisively defeating a determined, numerically superior, and well trained and equipped enemy force reflect great credit on the members of the unit and are in keeping with the finest traditions of the United States Army.

**President Lyndon B. Johnson  
4 August 1967**



**After the battle a wounded trooper looks on as our dead and wounded are evacuated from Zulu Zulu.**

(Photo by RTO Wayne Hoitt, HHC/2/503, also wounded in the battle)





# No 3rd Stripe for You RTO

By Lew "Smitty" Smith, Sp4, HHC/2/503, '65/'66  
Editor, 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter

"So, where do you wanna go, kid?" said the old Staff Sergeant behind the desk at Camp Zinn in December '66, my final mission having safely ended days earlier.

I had given this some thought upon learning once your DEROS date came around and you had enough time left in this man's army, perhaps a year or more as had I, one could select just about any army posting in the world. Having had more than my fill of Southeast Asia, or any location beginning with "Asia", "ese" or "ine", and as a SoCal boy preferring warmer climates to cold, Alaska was never once considered. "Germany!" I thought -- sure the winters are cold but the summers are fair, plus I'd be there only one winter, and as a poor kid of too many kids in the family coming out of a small chicken ranch in Chino, California, I suspected trips to Europe might never be in the offing for this new and financially challenged veteran of the great war; not to mention those *German girls* I had heard about.

"Germany, Sarge! I wanna go to Germany...but, to a Leg unit!"

Having spent time with the Screaming Eagles at Campbell and jump school at Benning, before orders to Uncle Ho's future country, the thought of a year and four months of spit-and-shine and pushups-on-demand before completing my 3 year commitment, just didn't seem appealing. Also, a couple Leg buddies who were former troopers had written how well they were treated in those non-jumping units. Yeah, I wanna be a Leg!

"Okay, you can go to Germany as a Leg, but to an Airborne unit," said the sonofabitch.

Having nothing to bargain with, I said, "Alright, I'll stay airborne," (dammit!) He said, "Your orders will be sent to you in the mail at your home," and home I went.

After well over a month back in the world and having not received any orders I became somewhat concerned. When the second month came and went I thought it might be wise to call and inquire about those missing orders. Some Army guy on the other end of the phone said, "You've been AWOL for over a month, get your ass to McGuire, ASAP!"

I got my ass to McGuire, ASAP!



**In Germany.**  
**Another reason to become a Leg**

Upon checking in at some military office at the airbase, I was given belated orders to join the 509th Airborne in Germany. The military guy said, "You know you're AWOL, right?" I sheepishly mumbled acknowledgement. While studying my orders, he said, "Vietnam," then to me, "I'll take care of it." Which he did somehow. No stockade, no reduction in rank to PFC or worse, no 1000 pushups, nada, nothing. Wish that guy would have been at the desk at Zinn when I was DEROSing with great plans of becoming a Leg.

So off to the 509th I went, ready to jump out of more aeroplanes, which they seemed to do with great regularity and zeal. We were even put on alert for the 7 Day War, and while being issued M-16s before the alert was called off, another old Sergeant said, "You're kinda young to be going to war." I replied, "I'm kinda young to be coming from a war."

While on TDY to Bavaria to learn secret radio stuff, I met and fell in love with a Fraulein, Regine, whose Americanized name became Reggie. I thought she only wanted a Green Card, but I haven't been able to get rid of her for over 50 years. She tricked me! But, I do love my German-American Frau.



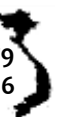
**Reggie with those bedroom eyes. You would have married her too.**

With just a couple months left in service, and learning the army would pickup plane fare back to the states for dependents of E5 and above, I bravely walked into the Major's office.

"Sir. I've been a SP4 for the longest time, maybe longer than anyone in the army, and would really like to become an E5." Sitting behind his desk and looking very busy and very important, the man said, "Well, son. The only opening I have is to be my driver." Not wanting to be the Major's lackey; washing his jeep, waiting outside the steam and creams for him, jeeping for donuts, etc., I replied, "Gee, Sir, I flunked my California driver's license test twice" (true statement to him, but a lie). This SP4 ended up paying for Reggie and our baby son's plane fares to the U.S. following a year living as a civvie in Germany.

To this day when the doorbell rings, I often wonder if it's a couple MP's looking to arrest this old E4, or even worse, dock me the pay I illegally collected while AWOL, with interest. Please don't tell the army. Airborne!

**Note:** Send in your 173d Airborne story to [rto173@att.net](mailto:rto173@att.net)  
*"If you don't write it down, it never happened,"*  
Jim Bethea, HHC/2/503, '65/'66







## BRONZE STAR AT BANZAI POINT

Arthur Sanchez  
John Lindgren



FROM: Msgt. Arthur Sanchez USAFR (Retired)  
Richmond, VA

Hello,

I recently joined the Corregidor Heritage Bn. My father "Arthur R. Sanchez" was part of the 503d PRCT. Throughout my life I remember him mentioning names of some his fellow troopers – names mentioned in "The Rock" web site. I think my father was in Company "D". I recall him telling me about the massive explosion that took place when the Japanese blew themselves up.

The following text by John Lindgren rang a bell and I am sure about the names mentioned. I guess my father was in the first platoon of "D" company.

***"I have come up to look at Battery Wheeler and Wheeler Point. I walk slowly over the length of Battery Wheeler's berm. I think of the first platoon and Gifford and Mara racing down its steep bank on to the stairs leading into the battery. Pucci is lying on the ground near the stairs leading up to the gun port. 'He's dead!' shouts Hughart, Sanchez' assistant BAR man, to no one in particular as he races by the prostrate body. But SSG Pucci would live to fight another day."***

My father was wounded in Corregidor and evacuated back to the states. From what I recall, they had been in combat and had not slept in a while. They were supposed to be put in a rear area to get some rest. From what I understand, that night a Japanese column came by and began setting up to attack them while they were asleep.

Anyway my father and another trooper who were on duty opened fire on their column while they were in the process getting ready to coordinate the attack. The attack lasted until the next morning, by then most of the company was wiped out and my father was wounded by a grenade.

Does anybody know any more about this incident? Was this "Wheeler Point?" For me, a lot of what I've heard are fragments about this and other incidents. I'd like to find out more about the 503d and keep the history straight. I know my father carried a BAR and I think is mentioned by John Lindgren in his account the "Night at Wheeler Point". Does anyone know if this is where my father was wounded?

### JOHN LINDGREN Replies:



You are correct, Art was a BAR man in the 2nd [or possibly the 3rd squad], 1st platoon, "D" Company. His assistant gunner was Paul A.

Hughart. Both men were wounded February 19, 1945 during the company's bloody night battle at Wheeler Point, Corregidor.

Sanchez sustained a gunshot wound in the leg and Hughart a gunshot wound in the "rump [sic]." Both men were returned to the United States for further treatment of their wounds.

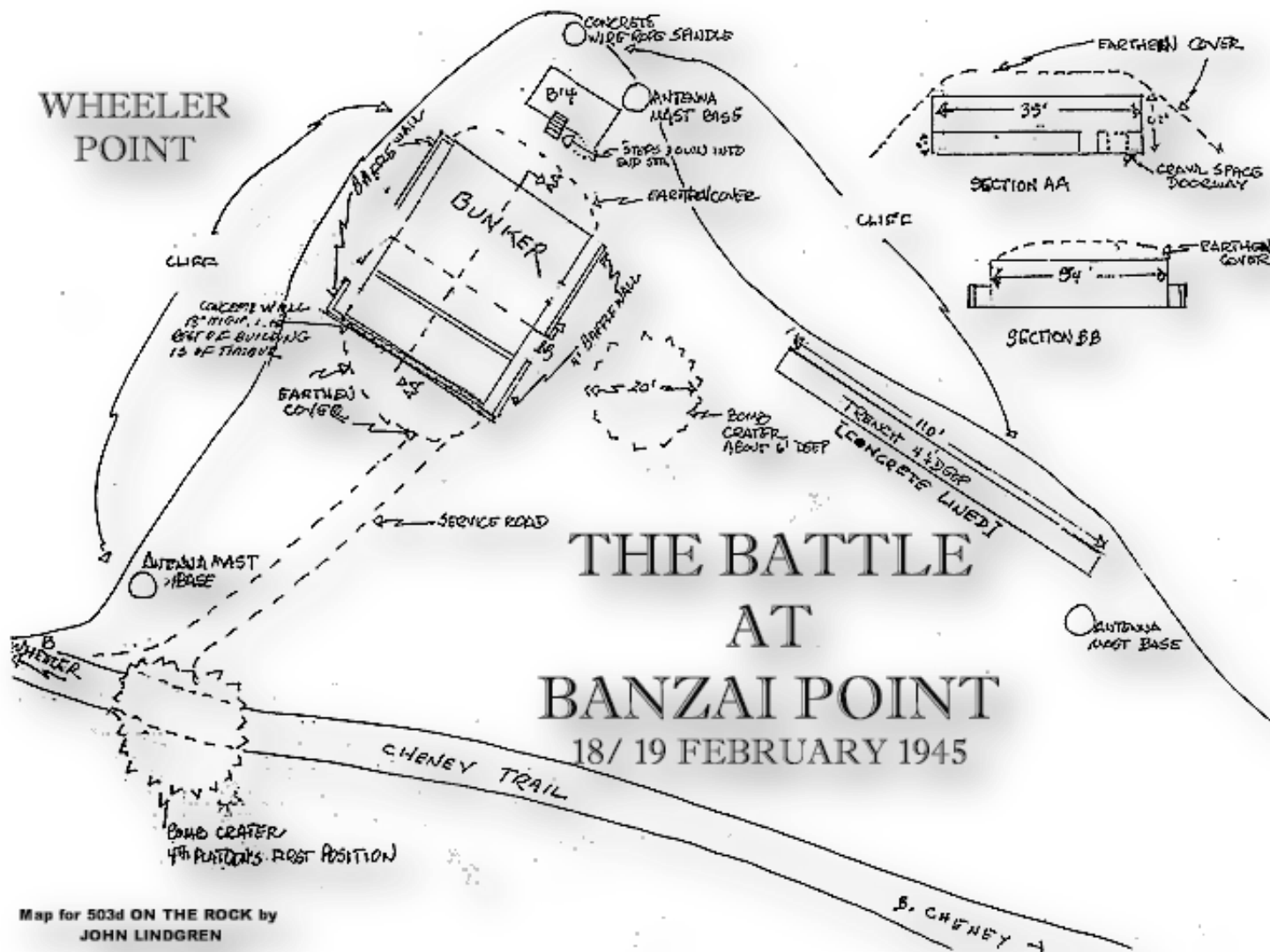
Your recollection of your father mentioning a "rest area" is puzzling, but we can be sure he didn't mean Wheeler Point.

During the night battle my platoon dropped back from their position astride Cheney Trail to the left and rear of the 2nd and 3rd squads of the 1st platoon in position on an abandoned rail line running east of Wheeler Point. I was the last to leave the Cheney Trail position and somehow in the pitch black night got separated from my platoon that was in position in the area north of a building we called "the bunker" while I was in the area south of it. It was hardly a bunker and probably the only people inside it were the wounded, the medics and the company radio operator. There were four of us on the south side after I reached the position but not for long; the company commander was killed and the mail orderly wounded and taken to the aid station by the company exec. I never saw either of them again.

(continued....)







(Above schematic from web added to this report. Ed)

After what seemed hours by myself I heard someone calling out in the darkness. *"It's Gifford! I'm coming in!"* I couldn't see anyone in the black night until I saw Gifford, the 1st platoon leader, but only after he was a few feet from me. I could see then he was dragging someone. *"I'm taking him to the medics, John,"* he said. The man, obviously badly wounded, said nothing, but in spite of his wounds he was still holding on to his BAR. I took it from him and they left for the aid station in a room that could only be entered from the north side of the 30 by 40 foot building covered with thick layer of earth. The aid station was hardly a safe haven as the enemy was able to toss grenades and fire through ventilation slits on the north side of the building. Several wounded "D" Company paratroopers were killed there. Foley, the mail orderly was killed there.

I had no idea who the man Gifford was dragging was. I was glad to get the BAR to replace my carbine but when I fired it, it would fire one round and stop.

Nearly thirty years later a Southern California 503 alumni chapter was formed and I think Art Sanchez was our first president but he was also a D Company veteran so we talked a lot at the meetings about our company. One day at a chapter meeting at Pico Rivera we recalled the bloody night battle when we were backed up to the edge of 500 foot sheer cliffs at Wheeler Point called by those who were there, Banzai Point. I told Art, *"The BAR I got would only fire one round and I would have to clear the stoppage."* To my astonishment he said, *"I was the man with Gifford. My BAR would only fire one round. I remember I gave it to one of the new guys."* I had been in the company for six months having transferred from "E" Company to replace casualties suffered at Noemfoor Island, Dutch East Indies. I didn't think of myself as a *"new man"* and over time I guess I got over it.

(continued....)





**FROM: Msgt. Arthur Sanchez USAFR (Retired)**  
**Richmond, VA to John**



**ARTHUR R. SANCHEZ**  
**'D' Co., 503D PRCT**

Unfortunately, my father only talked about bits and pieces of his time with the military and at that time I was also pretty young. Now that I'm older, realize historical significance and the sacrifices that went on during those times. I'd like you to know that I was very impressed with the detail and effort you put into your writings in the 503d web site. I think you did a great job in preserving history for generations and relatives of 503d members.

I do remember my father mentioning Paul Hughart. As I recall, Paul Hughart and my father were manning a position overlooking the fork of a trail the night they were both wounded. From my understanding, they were overrun by the Japanese once the attack started. The BAR in question, actually jammed during the Japanese attack; from what I've heard, Hughart tried to hold the Japanese while my father tried to unjam the weapon. I recall my father mentioning that Hughart was actually killed that night as the Japanese overran them. He mentioned that Hughart fell on top of him and as the Japanese overran them and bayoneted the fallen troopers. I understand that he did get the weapon unjammed; however it seems it still wasn't really functional.

I seem to also recall my father mentioning that 30 years later, at one 503d reunions, to his surprise met up with Paul Hughart again.

I know my father spent around a year in the hospital. He did have wounds on his shoulder, legs, and scar on the face. He also only had partial sight in one of his eyes although he would never let on that there was anything out of the norm. He actually received a disability pension from the government until he passed away, February 1, 1985. He did leave some writings about some of the things that occurred; from what I can tell, he first was wounded in back of the thigh by a grenade just after the initial attack and then by a second grenade while he was holding up in a bunker at lookout point, he describes that bunker as an 8x8 bunker with a 14" slit that went all the around. It seems that's where he was wounded in the face and shoulder.

---

*The Army Record and Award Branch had this on Arthur R. Sanchez' Military Record, recording the award of a Bronze Star and Purple Heart:*

**"For heroic achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy at Corregidor on February 19, 1945. While holding a defensive perimeter around an observation post, elements of Private First Class Sanchez's company were attacked by a numerically superior force of Japanese. Private First Class Sanchez was wounded on the initial attack but with utter disregard for his own wound, continued to man his Browning Automatic Rifle and cover his squads reorganization. Due to weapon stoppages and shortages of ammunition, it became necessary to withdraw, but Private First Class Sanchez refused assistance and crawled to the aid station alone.**

**Displaying great courage, he stopped enroute to aid in a fire fight.**

**Private First Class Sanchez's gallantry, aggressiveness and coolness under fire was exceptionally outstanding and a source of inspiration to his fellow soldiers."**

*[Reprinted courtesy of Paul Whitman with the 503rd PRCT Heritage Battalion website]*





## Suspended Harness Training vs. Jump Tower at Jump School

A heated debate over the commo lines was ongoing recently between a number of VN-era Sky Soldiers while in the presence of non-jumper vets and civilians. One former trooper stated the 250 ft. tower was the most difficult part of training, and in fact gives him nightmares to this day. I, on the other hand, stressed the difficulty associated with the Suspended Harness training thingy, and found these photos on-line to prove the point.

**Below are trainees on the Suspended Harness.**



**Next is a trainee exiting a jump tower following hours on the Suspended Harness thingy. The large cushioned bag between his knees contains his balls.**



I rest my case. Ed

## Priceless

In that same group of vets and non-vets (we call ourselves the LLH Gang), the discussion about jumping out of aeroplanes continued when a Navy buddy of ours asked the group;

***"So, how high are you guys when you typically jump?..."***

And, of course, we knew we could rely on any one of our Sky Soldiers to pointintly answer the Sailor's query. Jerry Sopko, D/4/503, jumped in and did the honors when he wrote back....

***"I was always sober."***



Above, Jerry Sopko, D/4/503, '69-'70, with his little friend, somewhere sometime in Vietnam. Left, sober Jerry today.... we think.



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# Aircrew Flight Equipment Team Provides Essential Safety for Flyers

By Air Force Tech. Sgt. Vicky Spesard 123rd Airlift Wing  
Source: DoD

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Jan. 2, 2018 — From the bottom of the pack to the top of the canopy, line by line, inch by inch, touching every seam, stitch and grommet, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Christopher Brawner painstakingly examines a parachute for anything that might make the lifesaving equipment not function properly.



Air Force Tech. Sgt. Christopher Brawner, an aircrew flight equipment journeyman with the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123rd Operations Support Squadron in Louisville, Ky., repacks a parachute after performing routine maintenance, June 9, 2017. The parachute is just one of the many lifesaving devices that are put aboard aircraft by members of the aircrew flight equipment shop after careful inspection. (KY Air Nat. Guard photo by TS Vicky Spesard)

*"Our job in this shop is to maintain the integrity of every piece of safety and survival equipment that goes on the aircraft here," explained Brawner, who has worked on parachutes and other related survival gear for many years. **"All of us here understand that if an aircrew member has to use our equipment, they are already having a bad day; we don't want to add to that by giving them equipment that doesn't deploy properly."** ###*

And to that we say, ***no shit!***

# Sky Soldier-Ranger Appointed Interim U.S. Attorney for Hawaii



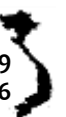
Kenji Price....RLTW

Kenji Price -- currently a director at the Honolulu law firm of Alston Hunt Floyd & Ing -- has been appointed Interim U.S. Attorney for Hawaii by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the Justice Department announced Wednesday (January 10th). His appointment took effect on January 12 2018, and is subject to Senate confirmation.

Price, was graduated from Gonzaga University in Washington and earned his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

He served as an army officer was an officer with the 75th Ranger Regiment and the 173d Airborne Brigade. *"Kenji Price is a former Army Ranger with two Bronze stars, and a former federal prosecutor who worked organized crime, public corruption, and international drug trafficking cases -- including against the Sinaloa Cartel," Sessions said. "He will bring this outstanding background to the job of Interim U.S. Attorney for Hawaii. I am confident he will excel in this role as he has in every other."*

[Sent in by Ron Thomas, 173d LRRP, RVN]







# Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~ 2018



**101st Airborne Division 50 Year Anniversary for First Adopted Unit A (ABU) 1st Battalion, 327th Regiment, 1st Brigade**, San Mateo, CA, March 22-25, 2018. Contact Linda Patterson [artavia101@earthlink.net](mailto:artavia101@earthlink.net)



**A Company 2/327 Vietnam Veterans 2018 Gathering**, Williamsburg, VA, April 26-28, 2018. Contact Dennis Sheridan, 817-504-1750



**2018 Currahee Reunion at Fort Benning, GA**, and the **2018 506th Association Reunion**, Columbus, GA, May 16-19, 2018. Contact: 706-660-1000



**82nd Airborne All American Week 2018**, Fort Bragg, NC, May 21-24, 2018. Contact [www.82ndairborneassociation.org/phone/events.html](http://www.82ndairborneassociation.org/phone/events.html)



**173d Airborne Brigade 2018 Reunion**, Alexandria, Virginia, May 23-27, 2018, contact [www.skysoldier.net/2018-Reunion-Registration](http://www.skysoldier.net/2018-Reunion-Registration)



**4/503 Reunion in 2018, Alexandria, VA**, in connection with the **173d Airborne Brigade Reunion**. Peyton Ligon is again organizing a dinner Friday, May 25th for anyone who served with the 4th Batt in 'Nam. [PLigon3392@aol.com](mailto:PLigon3392@aol.com)



**20th Annual Currahee Reunion**, Tunica, MS, June 4-7, 2018, contact Jerry Berry at 406-291-7678 or [jerryberry@currahee.org](mailto:jerryberry@currahee.org)



**101st and 2nd 502 Reunion**, Chicago, IL, August 15-19, 2018. Contact [www.2nd502.org/index.php?page=reunioninfo](http://www.2nd502.org/index.php?page=reunioninfo)



**101st Abn Div 2nd/501st E Co, Recon, Mortars & HQ (Vietnam)**, Wilmington, NC, September 20-23, 2018. Contact James Hill 704-310-1800, [tomnbonnie@bellsouth.net](mailto:tomnbonnie@bellsouth.net)

**NOTE:** If you are aware of any upcoming "Airborne" or attached unit reunions, please email complete details to [rto173@att.net](mailto:rto173@att.net) for inclusion in our newsletter.

## Airborne...All The Way!



## Just Some of the Planned Sites to be Visited During This Year's 173d Airborne Brigade Association Reunion in Arlington/DC



Arlington National Cemetery Wreath Laying



Night tour of DC Monuments



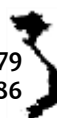
Army Heritage and Education Center



Bull Run Battlefield



Vietnam Wall & Wreath Laying





# Catherine Leroy War Photographer/ Combat Paratrooper

Some pics and letters which show how Catherine got to make the combat jump in February '67. She was 21 when she arrived and was all the time determined to become a good photographer. One photojournalist in Saigon who was on a monthly salary even tried to get her expelled as her pictures were better than his. She didn't spend a lot of time with those in Saigon but was in the field all the time. Absolutely amazing no one has made a movie on her life. RIP Catherine - pancreatic cancer in 2006.

Jerry Hassler, Sgt.  
Recon/HHC/2/503, '66/'67  
Combat Jump Trooper, RVN



22 Feb 67

Catherine's letter to her father  
– From Saigon, 23 February 1967 ~

Dear Daddy,

I jumped (in a parachute) yesterday 22 February with the 173d Airborne. I am the first woman to jump in Vietnam during this first operational jump by American parachutists since the war began.

I was supposed to be the only member of the press corps (over 400) to jump, but the last minute 2 other guys jumped too.

My good friend, General Deane, had personally intervened with Westmoreland. In short, it was a success.

700 men were dropped in less than ten minutes, 3 miles from the Cambodia border. I was in the 4th plane (C130, 60 men), the 7th to jump on its first flight.

Associated Press bought my story, plus the photos in black and white. *Life*, I hope will buy several color pictures. As for *Match*, they were sent a portfolio of color pictures of Cathy with a parachute before we took off.

I'm very proud to have jumped with the Americans here, it's a big professional success in every way.

I now know that I will be able to work in the United States one day without too much problem. I just have to carry on the way I'm doing now. At the end of the year I will submit my best photos to the jury for Pulitzer and other major prizes, via AP. Maybe I stand a chance of winning a prize.

I've always thought I should succeed because I never gave in. I will be made an honorary member of this brigade after the end of the operation. There will be a big ceremony to hand out the certificates for parachute jumping in combat. After that I will have to go through an initiation rite to become an honorary member. I'm a bit afraid, because they won't do me any favors....

I include a wire photo.

Warm kisses, and to Mommy too.

C Leroy



August 27, 1977 – July 8, 2006

*All the Way, Cath!*





# The Vietnam Service Medal VSM

The **Vietnam Service Medal** is a military award of the United States Armed Forces established on 8 July 1965 by order of President Lyndon B. Johnson. The medal is awarded to recognize service during the Vietnam War by all members of the United States Armed Forces provided they meet the award requirements.

The distinctive design has been attributed to both sculptor Thomas Hudson Jones, a former employee of the Army Institute of Heraldry and Mercedes Lee who created the design. The Vietnam Service Medal (VSM) was awarded to all members of the United States Armed Forces serving in Vietnam and its contiguous waters or airspace thereover, after 3 July 1965 through 28 March 1973. Members of the United States Armed Forces in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, or airspace thereover, during the same period and serving in direct support of operations in Vietnam are also eligible for the award.

## Requirements

Individuals must meet one of the following requirements:

Be attached to or regularly serve for 1 or more days with an organization participating in or directly supporting military operations.

Be attached to or regularly serve for 1 or more days aboard a U.S. naval vessel directly supporting military operations.

Actually participating as a crewmember in one or more aerial flights into airspace above Vietnam and contiguous waters directly supporting military operations.

Serve on temporary duty for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days in Vietnam or contiguous waters, except that time limit may be waived for personnel participating in actual combat operations.

No person will be entitled to more than one award of the VSM. The VSM may be awarded posthumously.

The Vietnam Service Medal is retroactive to 1 July 1958 and supersedes and replaces the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) which was issued for initial operations in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from that date through 3 July 1965.



News Release  
1/12/2018

## VA Facilities Now Offer Same-day Care for Urgent Primary and Mental Health-care Needs

**WASHINGTON** — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a major milestone, that 100 percent of its more than 1,000 medical facilities across the country now offer same-day services for urgent primary and mental health-care needs. Same-day services means a Veteran with an urgent need for primary care and mental health-care receives services that may include: a face-to-face visit with a clinician; advice provided during a call with a nurse; a telehealth or video care visit; an appointment made with a specialist; or a prescription filled the same day, depending upon what best meets the needs of the Veteran.

*"We made a commitment to our nation's Veterans that we would work to reduce wait times and improve access, and we are doing it,"* said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. *"We were able to meet this goal, in large part, because of the concerted focus of our staff who care for our Veterans in facilities across the country."*



Since 2014, VA has concentrated its efforts on improving access and meeting the urgent health-care needs of Veterans. In 2016, all of VA's medical centers offered same-day services for primary and mental health services.

In addition to offering same-day services, VA has reduced patient wait times. VA also implemented a new process to ensure timely follow-up appointments for time-sensitive medical needs. More than 100,000 such appointments have been completed.

In 2017, Veterans completed over 57.5 million appointments and VA clinicians saw almost 6 million patients.

To view access information about each facility nationwide, visit [www.accesstocare.va.gov/](http://www.accesstocare.va.gov/). The information provided at this link is not offered by any major national hospital organization in the country.





# A real miracle - from WWII

In 1943 a mid-air collision on February 1, 1943, between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of WW II.

An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot, then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a Flying Fortress named "All American", piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron.

When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged. The fuselage had been cut almost completely through connected only at two small parts of the frame, and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged.

There was also a hole in the top that was over 16-feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest; the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.

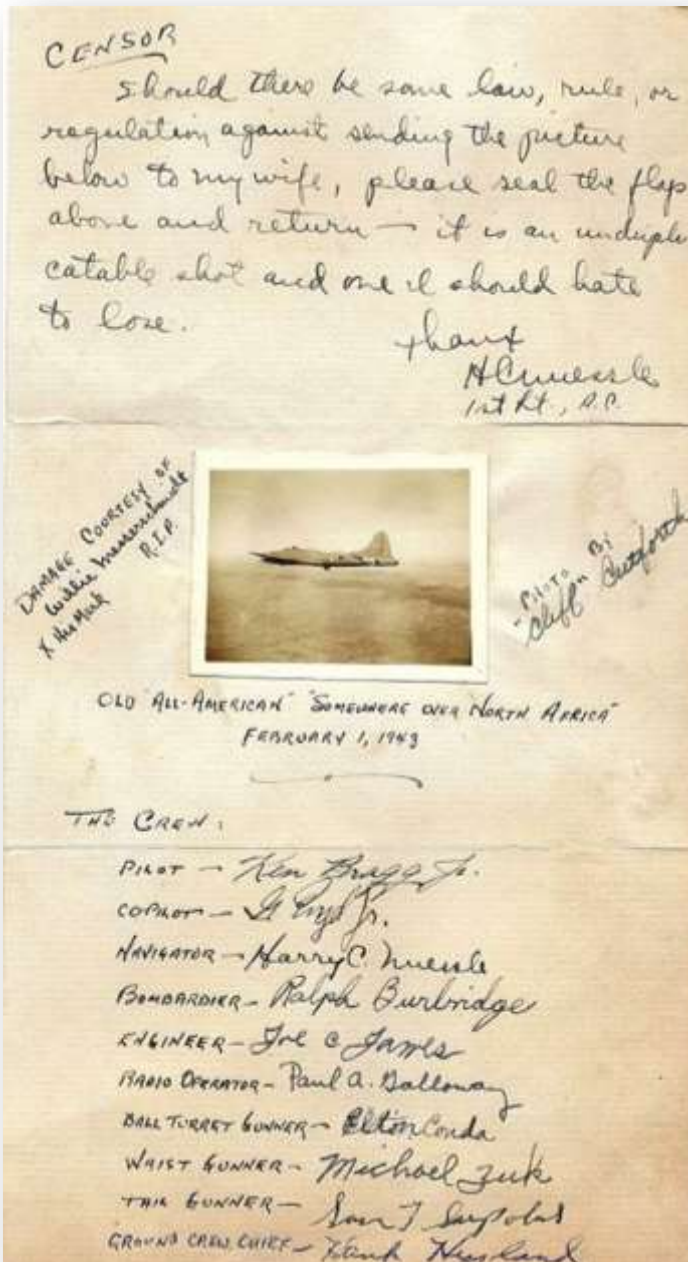


Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned and all the control cables were severed, except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft miraculously still flew!

The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart.

While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.

(continued....)



## B-17 "All American" (414th Squadron, 97BG) Crew

Pilot- Ken Bragg Jr.

Co-pilot- G. Boyd Jr.

Navigator- Harry C. Nuessle

Bombardier- Ralph Burbridge

Engineer- Joe C. James

Radio Operator- Paul A. Galloway

Ball Turret Gunner- Elton Conda

Waist Gunner- Michael Zuk

Tail Gunner- Sam T. Sarpolus

Ground Crew Chief- Hank Hyland





When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the *All American*.

Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.



Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the *All American* as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the appendage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out.

The fighters stayed with the Fortress, taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signaled that 5 parachutes and the spare had been "used" so five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane to land it.



Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.



When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed.



This old bird had done its job and brought the entire crew home uninjured.

[Sent in by Gary Prisk, CO C/D/2/593, RVN]





## Face of Defense:

# Paratrooper Makes First Jump in More Than 30 Years

By Army Pfc. Josselyn Fuentes  
173rd Airborne Brigade

VICENZA, Italy, Feb. 6, 2018 — It is uncertain what the record is for the time between Army parachute jumps, but Lt. Col. John Hall may hold it at 30 years and six months.



Army Lt. Col. John Hall, a paratrooper and public affairs officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade, poses for a photo in Vicenza, Italy, Jan. 31, 2018. Hall is a Michigan National Guard soldier currently on active-duty orders with the 173rd. (Army photo by Staff Sgt. Alexander C Henninger)

When Hall parachuted from a military aircraft last month, it was the first time he had done so in over thirty years. Hall, a 53-year-old school teacher at Kearsley High School in Flint, Michigan, is serving a one-

year tour of duty in Vicenza, Italy, as the public affairs officer for the storied 173rd Airborne Brigade, the contingency response force for U.S. Army Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

*"I first worked with the 173rd Airborne when I was put on active duty with the Michigan National Guard in 2014 and sent to the Baltic Countries of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve and in support of Latvia, our State Partnership Nation," Hall said. "The 173rd Airborne Public Affairs leaders and I developed a close working relationship, so last summer when they needed an experienced public affairs officer to lead their team, I was selected and put on orders."* The 173rd Brigade commander sent word to Hall that he would be expected to jump from aircraft as a part of his duties.

*"I was really excited and completely terrified at the same time. I graduated from 'Jump School' when I was 19 years old and last jumped when I was 22, so I knew what to do," Hall said with a laugh.*

The 173rd put Hall through a one-day airborne refresher course, he said. This training included parachute landing, actions in the aircraft and emergency procedures, followed by multiple jumps from a 34-foot tower in which his technique was assessed.

The next day, Hall reported to Aviano Air Base in northern Italy, donned his parachute with a couple of hundred other soldiers from the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, climbed aboard an Air Force C-17 aircraft and, when 1,200 feet over the Juliet Drop Zone, exited the door and tested his training.

### Perfect Landing

*"The jet blast spun me in the air so when my 'chute deployed it was pretty twisted and did not have a full canopy," Hall said. "I was surprised that I automatically reached up, pulled the 'risers' apart and worked the parachute fully open. Good training takes over and we automatically do the right thing. I then checked my position in the sky and prepared to land. It was all over in less than a minute. I took up a good parachute landing fall position and the landing was perfect."*

Hall has served in the Army since graduating from Lakeville H.S. in the Flint area where he was an All-State wrestler, president of the school's student council and where he began dating his eventual wife, Laura.

(continued...)







**Hundreds of 173rd Airborne Brigade paratroopers conduct a tactical airborne insertion exercise onto Juliet Drop Zone in northern Italy, Jan. 24, 2018.**

(Army photo by Lt. Col. John Hall)

*"I enlisted as a combat medic when I was 19 years old and served in the 82nd Airborne Division in the mid-1980s, where we conducted frequent parachute operations as a part of our combat training," Hall said. "After leaving the 82nd, I didn't think I would ever jump from a military aircraft ever again."*

Since leaving active duty with the 82nd, Hall has served in the Army Reserve, the Florida and Michigan National Guard, and has been called back to active duty -- to include combat duty in Iraq -- on multiple occasions, but he has not been assigned to a unit with an airborne mission until now.

He was initially commissioned as a cavalry officer following officer candidate school and served as a Scout Platoon Leader in E Troop, 153rd Cavalry Regiment in Ocala, Florida. His later assignments include company commander in the 1-125 Infantry in Flint, Michigan, as well as executive officer and commander of the 126th Press Camp Headquarters at Fort Custer, Michigan. It was in the 126th PCH that Hall served a combat tour in Baghdad.

### Service in Iraq

Oddly enough, while serving as a press officer for Multinational Forces Iraq, Hall was serving in a combat zone at the same time as his daughter, Savannah, who had recently been commissioned as an officer through the University of Michigan ROTC program.

*"My daughter, Savannah, grew up around the Army and has seen me in uniform since I was in the 82nd Airborne," Hall said. "She decided when she went to college that she wanted to enroll in ROTC, serve in the army and be a paratrooper. It was indeed a proud moment when I pinned her 'Jump Wings' on her at Fort Benning, Georgia. And now my youngest daughter, Samantha, is shipping off to Army basic training later this spring. It remains to be seen if she, too, will become a paratrooper."*

Hall has been working in Vicenza, Italy, on the senior staff of the 173rd Airborne Brigade since August 2017. In this short time, he has supported airborne combat training in Latvia, Germany, Slovenia, a historic mission to Serbia, mountaineering training with the Italian Alpini Brigade, and next week will travel to Toulouse, France, to support 173rd Airborne combined engineering operations with French paratroopers.

### High Operational Tempo

*"The operational tempo here at the 173rd Airborne is intense. We continually have combat training going on with our NATO allies throughout Europe," Hall said. "Our command philosophy is that we are always 'preparing our soldiers for the unforgiving crucible of ground combat.'"*

A significant part of this, in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, is conducting airborne operations, so Hall will complete several more jumps from military aircraft in the coming months.

As far as teaching is concerned, Hall intends to return to the classroom teaching English, history and theater for the fall 2018 semester. It is certain that the dynamic training and real-world experiences contribute to his classes and his students' enthusiasm.

Until then, Hall is an Army paratrooper and he said he's proud of the soldiers he works with. Hall added, *"It is truly an honor to be able to serve with the 'Sky Soldiers' of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. To be able to begin my military career with the 82nd Airborne Division and end it with the 173rd Airborne Brigade is remarkable. I am humbled every day by the discipline, determination and dedication of these young Americans forward stationed and always prepared to defend their country."*





*Lest we forget....*

# African-American Troops Fought to Fight in World War I

By Army Col. Richard Goldenberg  
New York National Guard  
Feb. 1, 2018

**SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y.** — During World War I, when African-American National Guard soldiers of New York's 15th Infantry Regiment arrived in France in December 1917, they expected to conduct combat training and enter the trenches of the western front right away to fight the enemy.



A military poster promoting the work of stevedores at the St. Nazaire port of debarkation for American Expeditionary Forces during World War I in France in 1918. The African-American 369th Infantry Regiment arrived at St. Nazaire in December 1917 and performed labor duties before their onward integration and training for combat under French command in March 1918.

(Photo courtesy of National World War I Museum and Memorial )

However, at first, the African-American troops were ordered to unload supply ships at the docks for their first months in France, joining the mass of supply troops known as stevedores, working long hours in the port at St. Nazaire.

More than 380,000 African-Americans served in the Army during World War I, according to the National Archives. About 200,000 were sent to Europe. But more than half of those who deployed were assigned to labor and stevedore battalions. These troops performed essential duties for the American Expeditionary Force, building roads, bridges and trenches in support of the front-line battles.

## Preparing Docks, Railway Lines

In St. Nazaire, the New York National Guard soldiers learned they would work to prepare the docks and railway lines to be a major port of entry for the hundreds of thousands of forces yet to arrive in France. The African-American regiment was a quick and easy source of labor, according to author Stephen Harris in his 2003 book *"Harlem's Hell Fighters."*

*"First, [Army Gen. John J.] Pershing would have a source of cheap labor," Harris wrote. "Second, he wouldn't have to worry about what to do with black soldiers, particularly when he might have to mix them in with white troops."*

But the 15th Regiment's soldiers had not signed up for labor. They were committed to fighting the Germans and winning the war.

*"They had no place to put the regiment," said infantry Capt. Hamilton Fish, according to the Harris book. "They weren't going to put us in a white division, not in 1917, anyway; so our troops were sent in to the supply and services as laborers to lay railroad tracks. This naturally upset our men tremendously."*

## Regimental Commander Fights for Troops

The regiment's best advocate to get into the fight was their commander, Col. William Hayward. *"It*

*was time for us to try to do something towards extricating ourselves from the dirty mess of pick-swinging and wheel barrel trundling that we were in,"* Hayward had said to Capt. Arthur Little, commander of the regimental band, according to Jeffrey Sammons in his 2014 book *"Harlem's Rattlers and the Great War."*

*(continued....)*





*"We had come to France as combat troops, and, apparently, we were in danger of becoming labor troops," Hayward said.*

Hayward argued his case in a letter to Pershing, outlining the regiment's mobilization and training, and followed up immediately with a personal visit to Pershing's headquarters.

### **Band Helps Sway Opinion**

He would bring with him the regiment's most formidable weapon in swaying opinion: the regimental band, lauded as one of the finest in the entire Expeditionary Force.

While the regiment literally laid the tracks for the arrival of the 2 million troops deploying to France, the regimental band toured the region, performing for French and American audiences at rest centers and hospitals. The 369th Band was unlike any other performance audiences had seen or heard before, Harris noted. The regimental band is credited with introducing jazz music to France during the war. The military band would frequently perform a French march, followed by traditional band scores such as John Philip Sousa's *"Stars and Stripes Forever."*

*"And then came the fireworks,"* said Sgt. Noble Sissle, band vocalist and organizer, in the Harris account, as the 369th Band would play as if they were in a jazz club back in Harlem.

After some three months of labor constructing nearby railways to move supplies forward, the regiment's soldiers learned that they had orders to join the French 16th Division for three weeks of combat training.

### **Heading for the Front**

They also learned they had a new regimental number as the now-renamed 369th Infantry Regiment. Not that it mattered much to the soldiers; they still carried their nickname from New York, the Black Rattlers, and carried their regimental flag of the 15th New York Infantry everywhere they went in France.

While the 369th Infantry would become part of the U.S. Army's 92nd Infantry Division, it would be assigned to fight with French forces. This solved the dilemma for Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces of what to do with the African-American troops. The black troops would see combat, but alongside French forces, who were already accustomed to the many races and ethnicities already serving in the ranks of their colonial troops.

*"The French army instructors literally welcomed their African-American trainees as comrades in arms,"* Sammons wrote. *"To the pragmatic French army instructors, the soldiers were Americans, black*

*Americans, to be trained for combat within their ranks. The trainees clearly excelled at their tasks."*

After learning valuable lessons in trench warfare from their French partners, the soldiers of the 369th finally had their chance to prove their worth as combat troops when they entered the front lines, holding their line against the last German spring offensive near Chateau-Thierry.

### **Acclaimed Fighters**

Their value was not lost on the French, and the regiment continued to fight alongside French forces, participating in the Aisne-Marne counteroffensive in the summer of 1918 alongside the French 162nd Infantry Division.

The Hell Fighters from Harlem had come into their own, in spite of their difficult start. The regiment would go on to prove itself in combat operations throughout the rest of the war, receiving France's highest military honor, the Croix de Guerre, for its unit actions alongside some 171 individual decorations for heroism.



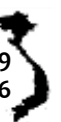
**Some of "The Harlem Hellfighters"**

(web photo)

During the World War I centennial observance, the New York National Guard and New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs will issue press releases noting key dates that affected New Yorkers, based on information and artifacts provided by the New York State Military Museum here.

More than 400,000 New Yorkers served in the military during World War I, more than any other state.

Source: [www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1429624/african-american-troops-fought-to-fight-in-world-war-i/source/GovDelivery/](http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1429624/african-american-troops-fought-to-fight-in-world-war-i/source/GovDelivery/)





# Long-delayed Medal of Honor awarded to Harlem Hellfighters' Sgt. Henry Johnson displayed in New York Capitol

By Eric Durr | New York National Guard |  
November 10, 2015



**Sgt. Henry Johnson, 1897 ~ 1929**

This photograph of Army Sgt. Henry Johnson, a member of the 369th Infantry - originally composed of New York National Guard Soldiers - was taken as the troop ship carrying the regiment returned to New York City in 1919.

(Photo by New York National Guard)

**ALBANY, N.Y.** - The Medal of Honor awarded to a New York National Guard Soldier 97 years after his acts of heroism is now on display in the New York State Capitol.

The display honoring Sgt. Henry Johnson, a member of New York's 369th Infantry Regiment — known as the Harlem Hellfighters — was opened Monday, Nov. 9, by Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the adjutant general of New York. Murphy also awarded Johnson New York State's

highest military honor, the Medal for Valor, to commemorate his heroism. Command Sgt. Major Anthony McLean, the top enlisted Soldier in the New York Army National Guard's 369th Sustainment Brigade, accepted the Medal.



New York Army National Guard Command Sgt. Major Anthony McLean accepts the New York State Medal of Valor on behalf of Sgt. Henry Johnson during a ceremony marking the display of a Medal of Honor posthumously awarded to Johnson for his World War I actions, on Nov. 9, 2015, at the New York State Capitol in Albany. Also pictured are Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, right, the adjutant general of New York, and Col. Dave Martinez, the commander of the 369th Sustainment Brigade.

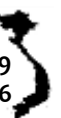
(Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Corine Lombardo/Released)

The 369th Sustainment Brigade carries the lineage and honors of the World War I unit. Johnson's Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously by President Barack Obama on June, 2. Because Johnson has no living relatives, the medal was accepted by New York National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Wilson.

*"Sgt. Henry Johnson was a hero and a patriot who for far too long was denied the recognition and honor he deserved," said Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo. "I'm proud to host his long overdue Medal of Honor at the Capitol and I thank Sen. (Charles) Schumer and Sgt. Johnson's many supporters for their efforts to right this historic wrong."*

New York Sen. Charles Schumer had pushed hard for Johnson to be recognized with the Medal of Honor. *"As we approach Veterans Day, I encourage New Yorkers to visit this display and learn more about Sgt. Johnson's incredible life, as well as take a moment to acknowledge the many brave men and women who have served in defense of our nation and its ideals,"* the governor said.

*(continued....)*





*"It is more than fitting that we recall the service of Sgt. Henry Johnson and display his Medal of Honor to the greater Albany community that Johnson called home," Murphy said. "It is also right that we present the State of New York's highest military decoration for bravery to recognize Albany's Sgt. Henry Johnson as one of our state's finest heroes."*

Because Johnson was from Albany and because so many Albany residents worked hard to bring his story to light, *"this is where the medal belongs,"* said Barbara Smith, a former member of the Albany Common Council. *"It was just incredibly emotional, it brings tears to my eyes."*

Johnson, who was originally from North Carolina, was living in Albany and working as a porter at the city's train station when he journeyed south to New York City in June 1917, just after the United States entered World War I, to enlist in the 15th New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment, an all-African-American regiment of the New York National Guard.

The regiment was federalized, renamed the 369th Infantry Regiment and shipped overseas to France. But the segregated United States Army didn't think the black Soldiers could fight. They were used as a support troops.

The French Army, though, which counted on black troops from its African colonies to fight and fight well, was happy to use the 369th's Soldiers as infantrymen. On the night of May 14 and 15, 1918, Johnson and Pvt. Needham Roberts were on outpost duty when a German raiding party which numbered more than a dozen men attacked their position out in front of the trenches. The two Americans fought back with grenades and rifle fire, and when Roberts was knocked unconscious and the Germans tried to carry him away, Johnson attacked them with his bolo knife.

Johnson was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for his valor but received no American medal. When his unit returned home he was sent on a speaking tour and lauded for his courage, but when he spoke out about the unfair treatment of black American Soldiers he was shunted aside.

He died in 1929 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan praised Johnson for his heroism on the battlefield, and off, when he spoke up about the unfair treatment of African-American veterans. The people of Albany have a special affection for Henry Johnson, but it is especially fitting that his Medal of Honor will be in the state Capitol where all New Yorkers come, Sheehan said.

*"So, as proud as we are of this story, and what it says about the city of Albany, it is a story that must be told much more largely," Sheehan said.*

U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko praised all the members of the Albany Chapter of the 369th Veterans Association who worked with him and other politicians to make sure Johnson's story was heard.

Along with the Medal of Honor, the display features a World War I French helmet like those Johnson and the other members of the 369th Infantry wore into battle, an Army-issue bolo knife like the one used by Johnson, a 369th patch, and the flag of the 15th New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment.

Source: [www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article-View/article/628440/long-delayed-medal-of-honor-awarded-to-harlem-hellfighters-sgt-henry-johnson-di/](http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article-View/article/628440/long-delayed-medal-of-honor-awarded-to-harlem-hellfighters-sgt-henry-johnson-di/)



*Job well done, Sarge. We fellow soldiers remember you.  
Rest with the other warriors, Sir.*





## To Us, He Will Always be “Doc”, To Us, He Will Always be Our Friend



Michael J. Cosmo, “Doc”  
1949 ~ 2017

Does it matter where they came from? Medics, I mean. They were an odd lot, seemingly detached from the realities of infantry combat in Vietnam. In 1968, in the Central Highlands, and coastal rice paddies. Some professed to be non-combatants, claiming the weapon they carried was just a prop, foisted upon them by the Headquarters Company First Sergeant...*“The bastard even made me carry ammunition!”*

Once on the ground, these Medics would grudgingly agree to help us stalk our prey, so they could patch the ones we didn’t quite kill, all the while guarding their medical bags to keep us from stealing their drugs. These graduates of Fort Sam Houston were some of the bravest men I ever knew, kneeling in an open rice paddy, holding up a drip bag, ignoring the grazing fire that snapped past their heads.

Doc Michael Cosmo was one of the two dozen medics that I worked with in Charlie Company and Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry, the 173d Airborne Brigade, a light infantry parachute regiment that was never stationed on American soil.

Doc Cosmo died at his home in New Jersey this past year. Linus, Zulu, Water Buffalo, Wolfman, Ski and I traveled to his home to help his family and friends wish him God Speed. Actually, we went to Doc’s home because we had to – he was one of us – a medic who helped us cope with the brutality...helped us cope with the deeply personal nature of combat. Our bonds cannot be severed.

Doc carried a .45; it was loaded. With the manliness of sentiment, he vowed to return fire, to help any Grunt he was next to when the AK’s started their music. He saved Linus from an early grave, using his weapon and then Linus’ M-16 during a fire-fight on the flank of the An Lao Valley, west of Bong Son and Landing Zone English.

Doc Cosmo was my friend. Specialist Bobby Waddell sang it best. In fact, Bobby wouldn’t stop singing. Somewhere around the bend after surviving the Battle for Dak To’s Hill 875, Bobby’s voice played a raspy rendition – *“The Shadow of Your Smile.”* And that is what I miss most. Doc Cosmo...his smile was spontaneous, as was the humorous larceny he found in any minor misfortune a Grunt might encounter. His laugh had a New Jersey twang, and was always followed by a smart-assed remark, further drawing the target-Grunt into a mental tangle.

If a Grunt asked Doc for non-combat medical help, that Grunt was in for one comical dig after another. No straight answers. Doc’s caustic remarks focused on the man’s upbringing, followed by any fearful malady that Doc could forecast for the man’s near-term prognosis. And yet, every Grunt in Charlie Company was his friend. Doc could be trusted with any confidence.

The few who knew Michael Cosmo have lost a part of themselves with his passing. We were and are devoted to keeping each other safe, alive, humping a rucksack. As time pushes us to keep steppin’, we will lose one another, and the heroism of our souls.

God Speed, Doc. If there is a heaven, I hope they don’t make you sing all day. With luck they’ll greet you with a shot of “Jack.”

Gary Prisk, Col. (Ret)  
CO C&D/2/503, RVN

(His buddies call him “Cap”. Ed)



Cap with his “Hill People” during the celebration of life for “Doc” Cosmo. L-R: Russell “Wolfman” Walters, Art “Linus” Marquess, Jim “Ski” Bednarski, Andy “Zulu” Zarazua, Bud “Water Buffalo” Mattingly, Gary “Cap” Prisk....brothers all.





# National Museum of the United States Army taking shape in Virginia

Vantage Point, Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



On a crisp morning just before Thanksgiving, a crowd of soldiers, Army Veterans and Army supporters joined more than 200 steel workers gathered on a construction site at Fort Belvoir to watch as the final steel beam of the National Museum of the United States Army was lifted into place. The historic moment capped a year of tremendous progress building a place that will honor and preserve the service of the 30 million men and women who have served in the United States Army. The Army is our nation's oldest and largest military service, yet it will be the last to see a national museum built to tell its entire history.

The museum will hold some of the Army's most treasured artifacts and compelling works of combat art. In fact, the first four artifacts are already in place, and they are incredible pieces of our nation's history. These artifacts, which are so large that crews had to build the museum's walls

around them, include the only known surviving Renault FT-17 Tank used by U.S. personnel during



World War I, a Higgins Boat that brought troops to shore on D-Day, the M4A3E2 Sherman "Jumbo" Tank that first broke through enemy lines during the Battle of the Bulge, and the M3 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicle that led the charge from Kuwait to Baghdad in 2003.

When the museum opens, it will be a national landmark that serves an important role in strengthening the fabric of the Army Veteran community.

The museum will provide a place to reflect on your time in uniform and connect with fellow soldiers across generations. As you visit with loved ones and friends,

the exhibits and galleries will help you explain your experience serving your country in a way that is not currently possible. The museum will also have special exhibits and features dedicated to Army families in recognition of their service, and to the network of civilians who have served in support roles.

For the rest of America, the National Army Museum will be an educational institution that teaches how the Army was first established to win our nation's independence, and how it has gone on to shape nearly every major event in our country's history. The more than 700,000 visitors who are expected to walk through the exhibits and galleries every year will gain a better understanding and appreciation of the Army's invaluable role in our society and world. Additionally, they will learn of the Army's contributions outside of conflicts, including peacekeeping and humanitarian relief missions, and in the fields of geography, science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Standing up a national museum for the Army is long overdue. Fortunately, the support offered to the project is growing every day. The Army Historical Foundation which was designated by the Secretary of the Army to lead the campaign to build the museum has received more than 699,000 individual donations from more than 161,000 donors. Corporations, foundations, allied nations and grateful Americans have all stepped forward to do their part.

Foundation has also collected more than 116,000 stories of soldiers, Army Veterans, Army families, Army civilians and support animals in our electronic registries. These registries are currently hosted online and will one-day be accessible from within the museum. They are a **free** and **easy** way to see your story, or the story of a Battle Buddy or loved one, told in the museum. I encourage all those who served to go to [armyhistory.org/the-registry/](http://armyhistory.org/the-registry/) and enter your story.

The National Museum of the United States Army will serve as our nation's tribute to the U.S. Army. Please share this project with those who served. Encourage them to send us their stories. And let them know that their nation is building a place that will ensure their service is always remembered.

***Retired Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, was the 32nd Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. He is now chairman of the Board of the Army Historical Foundation, which is leading the campaign to build the National Museum of the U.S. Army.***





# The Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument Dedication Ceremony

The dedication is scheduled for 4:00 p.m., April 18, 2018 at the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Amphitheater (located directly behind the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier). No tickets are required, and there are no fees. All are warmly invited to attend.



At 4:50 p.m. following the retiring of the colors, a wreath-laying ceremony will commence with flowers carried from the amphitheater to the nearby monument located on Memorial Drive in Section 35, a short 75-yard walk. Those wishing to honor their lost loved one or military unit with flowers are welcome to join the procession with their wreath or bouquet.

Following the dedication ceremony, a reception will be held at 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at The Women In Military Service For America Memorial (WMSAM) located near the cemetery Welcome Center at the west end of Memorial Avenue. All VHPA members and their families, Vietnam Veterans, Gold Star Families and distinguished visitors are invited to attend the post-dedication event.

The VHPA North Carolina Chapter will provide a combat UH-1 for display in front of the WMSAM for the April 18th ceremonies. The helicopter is the perfect symbol to complement the event and will remind all visiting ANC of the courage and sacrifice of those who operated rotary-wing aircraft in the Vietnam War. Our thanks in advance to the North Carolina Chapter for this worthy contribution.

Funding for the April 18th activities must be paid for with private donations and contributions. Although the VHPA has paid for the construction and installation of the monument, the day's events still need funding. We

ask for your financial support. Please consider donating to cover the expenses of complementary souvenir programs, transportation, and reception expenses. All donations are tax-deductible, and any funds remaining after expenses are met will go to the VHPA scholarship fund.

Accommodations in the immediate area of Arlington National Cemetery are likely to be expensive due to cherry blossom season and Congress being in session on April 18th. For those on a tight budget, we suggest considering hotels away from the downtown district having access to the great Washington Metro system (ANC has its own station stop). The closer to the Washington Mall, the more expensive hotels become, most near ANC are all well over \$200 a night. The best locations found under \$200 are:

1. Marriott Courtyard Springfield 6710 Commerce Street Springfield, Virginia 22150
2. Falls Church Marriott Fairview Park 3111 Fairview Park Drive Falls Church, Virginia 22042
3. Fairfield Inn & Suites Alexandria 6421 Richmond Highway Alexandria, Virginia 22306
4. Residence Inn Alexandria Old Town/Duke Street 1456 Duke Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314
5. Courtyard Arlington Crystal City/Reagan National Airport 2899 Jefferson Davis Highway Arlington, Virginia 22202
6. Holiday Inn Express Springfield 6401 Brandon Ave, Springfield, VA, 22150 United States, 866-925-4143
7. Courtyard Potomac Mills Woodbridge 14300 Crossing Pl. Woodbridge, VA 22192 USA
8. Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Woodbridge 14030 Telegraph Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192

It will be an honor to have you join with us on April 18, 2018, as we conclude the four-year effort to build and place the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and Crewmember Monument within the nation's most hallowed ground: Arlington National Cemetery. All are welcome to join us as we honor the young men who gave "*...the full measure of devotion*" operating rotary-wing aircraft in the Vietnam War.

My thanks in advance, Bob

**Bob Hesselbein, Chairman  
Legacy Committee**

**Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association  
2100 N HWY 360, Suite 907, Grand Prairie, TX 75050  
608.628.9024 [bobhesselbein@vhpa.org](mailto:bobhesselbein@vhpa.org)**

**Note: Thanks to Chargin' Charlie Roger Dick, C/2/503, for bringing this to everyone's attention. My wife and I will send a donation to help with their expenses. If you have a few extra P's hanging around, maybe you can help too, and as a way of sending our deepest thanks to those chopper dudes on whom we so depended. Ed**





# Everyone loves a parade!!!



## Expert Badge



Soldiers run during Objective Bull, the final event of the Expert Infantryman Badge, in Vincenza, Italy, Feb. 16, 2018. The test determines a warrior's drive and culminates with a 12-mile ruck march. The soldiers are paratroopers assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

(Army photo by Lt. Col. John Hall)

Source: DoD

## TASK FOR BLACK AMBUSHED

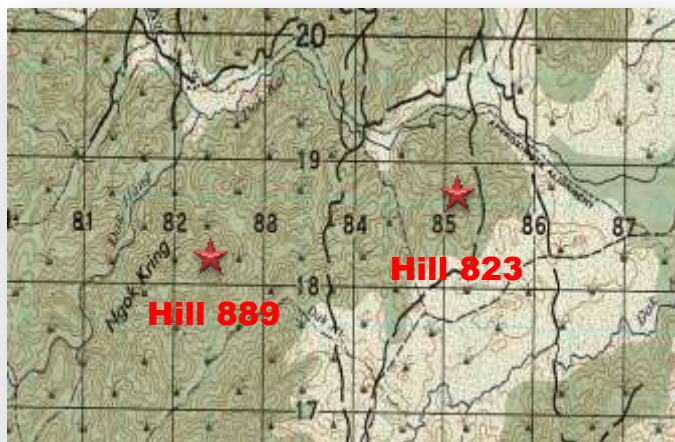
Dr. James Cloninger, who spoke to the Board of Directors at the 2018 Mid-Winter Conference, has asked us to help find 173d Airborne Brigade Association members who were in Task Force Black on 10-11 November 1967. His message is inserted below:

"On 10 Nov 67, Task Force Black began movement from Hill 823 toward Hill 889. TF Black stopped at a Night Defensive Position and moved out the next morning. Within 100 or so meters of the NDP, TF Black was ambushed. In the ensuing fight four members of TF Black became Missing in Action.

Please see the attached (below) to view map.

1. Where was the ND?
2. What route did TF Black take?
3. Where was the ambush?

Please contact me at [james.m.cloninger.civ@mailmil](mailto:james.m.cloninger.civ@mailmil) I will be leaving for Vietnam in the next few weeks and really need timely help with the operation above.



Many thanks! Jim

Dr. James M. Cloninger, Jr."

Sent in by:  
Jerry L. Cooper CPA  
Webmaster  
173d Airborne Brigade Association





# Sky Soldier arrested for punching Policeman in Vincenza, Italy



*"Italian police photo of a strip club where Italian police arrested a U.S. soldier from the Vincenza-based 173rd Brigade who assaulted two Italian police officers, breaking one officer's teeth on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2018."*

*(Reported by Stars & Stripes)*

*Stars & Stripes reports, "According to local media, (he) was at a local strip club early Thursday morning when he 'totally flipped out,' according to Il Giornale di Vincenza."*

*"As soon as (he) saw one of the policemen exiting the vehicle, he assaulted him and punched him in the face, breaking one of his teeth....The soldier seemed possessed," the newspaper continued.*

It's reported he was sentenced to a year in jail by Italian authorities, but the judge suspended the sentence on condition he commit no further crimes.

***"The incident does not reflect the values of the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, its leadership, or its soldiers,"*** Lt. Col. John Hall, a brigade spokesman said in an email. ***"The 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team strives to be an organization whose members are respectful of the Vincenza community."***

Source:

<https://www.stripes.com/news/europe/173rd-brigade-soldier-punches-police-pleads-guilty-sentenced-all-in-the-same-morning-1.509852>



***Awarded for actions  
during the Global War  
on Terror***  
**The Silver Star  
to**

**RINGGENBERG, DIRK DALE**

**Service:** Army

**Rank:** Captain

**Action Date:** June 21, 2005

**Unit:** Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503rd PIR,  
173d Airborne Brigade

**Home Town:** Madrid, Iowa

## ***Citation:***

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918 (amended by an act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Captain (Infantry) Dirk D. Ringgenberg, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 21 June 2005, against an armed enemy in the Mieneshin District of Afghanistan, during combat operations in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Captain Ringgenberg distinguished himself as the Company Commander, Chosen Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade, while engaging anti-coalition forces near Chalbar Village. When one of his platoons first received contact, he repositioned his command element directly in the middle of the firefight in order to better control his kinetic effects. Under constant direct fire throughout the rest of the engagement, Captain Ringgenberg distinguished himself throughout the seven-hour battle by attacking the enemy and refusing to allow them to break contact, in spite of friendly casualties and an enemy that significantly outnumbered his forces. His adept decision-making and tactical flexibility under heavy rocket-propelled grenade and automatic weapons fire resulted in 76 enemies dead and only six friendly wounded, destroying the Taliban leadership that had terrorized the local populace for months. His leadership was the decisive point to his company's overwhelming success that day. Captain Ringgenberg's heroic actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, and the United States Army. ###





# 2/503 Trooper's Photo Found

In an earlier newsletter, Issue 77, on Page 54, we reported the sad news of the passing of Arlen A. "Bert" Bertrand, 71, of Clifton, IL. We have since found this photo of Bert.



1946 - 2017

Arlen proudly served in the 173rd Airborne 2-503 during Vietnam. He was a lifelong farmer on the family homestead. He was a member and past president of 173rd Airborne Chicago Chapter, belonged to Aroma Park American Legion and was a drill instructor for F-Troop. He loved his family, antique cars, motorcycles, boats, horses and his dogs. He was the owner of Bert's Tap in Bourbonnais and Herd House Emporium in Clifton.

*From Your Fellow Troopers of the  
2/503d & 173d Airborne,  
Rest Easy With The Warriors, Bert*

## I've Been Shot!

By Chuck Dean, Vet 2 Vet

Every veteran remembers standing in the long lines to get clothing issued, dog tags punched, scalp-peeling haircuts, and the most memorable of all—shots! Boot camp training routines came to a halt and off we marched in the direction of the dispensary with all those medics placing bets on how many would pass out from being stabbed...over and over again. Well, it seems there's more to the story, and the painful injections weren't the end of it.



Somewhere along in the late 1950's someone came up with a new invention to speed up that process. It was a new device that delivered lightning-fast inoculations: the jet injector, or air gun was introduced to get all those military people in and out faster. Looking somewhat like an electric drill, it transformed the process into a factory assembly line. However, there was a problem: A sore arm is not all some service members received.

Veterans have long been warned that they are *more at risk for Hepatitis C (HCV) than any other group*, but were not always certain why. One reason comes from a report from the Centers for Disease Control. It says: *"Jet injectors that use the same nozzle for consecutive injections without intervening sterilization were used in mass vaccination campaigns from the 1950s through the 1990s. However, these were found to be unsafe because of the possibility of blood-borne pathogen transmission and should not be used."* Apparently, the recoil caused the air gun to retain blood from the previous patient in line, and bingo...the next person got some of the other's guy's blood! If that person was ill, the next recruit may have been exposed.

In recent years, there has been speculation about the relationship between Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and immunization with jet injectors. Although there has never been a documented case of Hepatitis C transmitted by a jet injector, it is biologically plausible. Of course here are other factors, such as overseas duty and person-to-person exposure that may apply as well.

Here's a recommendation for you if you served during these times and got inoculated in this fashion. *Get the Test!* Many of the symptoms of HCV are mild or non-existent so don't get ambushed. The list of risk factors for Hepatitis C is lengthy. Check it out...the VA will test any eligible enrolled veteran who believes he or she may have been exposed to hepatitis C. They will also provide treatment for those who test positive. ###





# 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment

## 3RAR



"Members of 3RAR move forward during the Korean War in 1951."

Active: 12 October 1945 – Present  
Country: Australia  
Branch: Australian Army  
Role: Light Infantry  
Part of: 3rd Brigade  
Garrison HQ: Lavarack Barracks  
Nicknames(s): Old Faithful  
Motto(s): Duty First

### Insignia:



Unit Color Patch

### Decorations:

### Presidential Unit Citation (United States) Presidential Unit Citation (South Korea)

The 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) is an infantry battalion of the Australian Army, based in Townsville as part of the 3rd Brigade. 3RAR was initially formed in 1945 as the 67th Battalion and has seen active service in Japan, Korea, Malaya, South Vietnam, East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and Iraq.

### Engagements:

#### Korean War

- Battle of Yongju
- Battle of Kujin
- Battle of Chongju
- Battle of Uijeongbu
- Operation Killer
- Operation Ripper
- Battle of Kapyong
- Battle of Maryang San

### Malayan Emergency, Indonesia-Malaysia

#### Confrontation

- Battle of Sungei
- Battle of Kindau
- Battle of Babang

#### Vietnam War

- Operation Coburg
- Battle of Coral-Balmoral
- Battle of Long Khanh

#### East Timor

#### Iraq War

#### War in Afghanistan

#### Operation Astute

### History

**Formation:** 3RAR was initially formed on 20 October 1945 as the 67th Battalion. The battalion was intended for occupation duties as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan and was formed from volunteers from the 3rd, 6th, 7th and 11th Australian Divisions. The battalion was redesignated the 3rd Battalion of the Australian Regiment upon the regiment's formation in November 1948. The 'Royal' prefix was appended in March 1949.

(continued....)





The 67th Battalion arrived in Japan as part of the Australian 34th Brigade in February 1946. As with the rest of the occupation force, the battalion did not encounter any significant resistance or civil unrest. The Australian force in Japan was gradually downsized, with 3RAR being the only Australian battalion left in the country at the outbreak of the Korean War.



**"Troops from the 34th Brigade march through Saijo in 1946"**

## **Korea, 1950–53**



**"Pusan, Korea, 1920-09-28. Troops of 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), line the rails of the United States Navy troopship Aiken Victory before they disembark. An American Army Band were there to welcome their arrival."**

(Australian War Memorial, photo by  
Claude Rudolph Holzheimer)



**"A group of 4 Platoon, B Company, 3RAR, 1951, with  
Lt. Len Montgomerie (centre, front row)."**

(web photo)

3RAR was rapidly committed as Australia's main land force contribution to the United Nations forces in the Korean War. After a period of intensive training and reinforcement in Japan, the battalion arrived in South Korea in late September 1950. The battalion formed part of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade and took part in the United Nations offensive into North Korea and the subsequent retreat into South Korea following the Chinese offensive in the winter of 1950–51. In October 1950, the battalion distinguished itself at Chongju during the UN northward advance to the Yalu River. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Green, it attacked and captured a large North Korean defensive line in a combined arms operation with tanks and artillery. Green was later killed in action. It was one of three units to receive the US Presidential Unit Citation after the Battle of Kapyong, that was fought between 22 and 25 April 1951.



**"Lt. Col. Charlie Green assumes  
command of 3RAR, 1950."**

(web photo)

In July 1951, Major Archer Denness briefly commanded 3RAR between the departure of Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Ferguson and the arrival of the new commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Hassett.

(continued....)

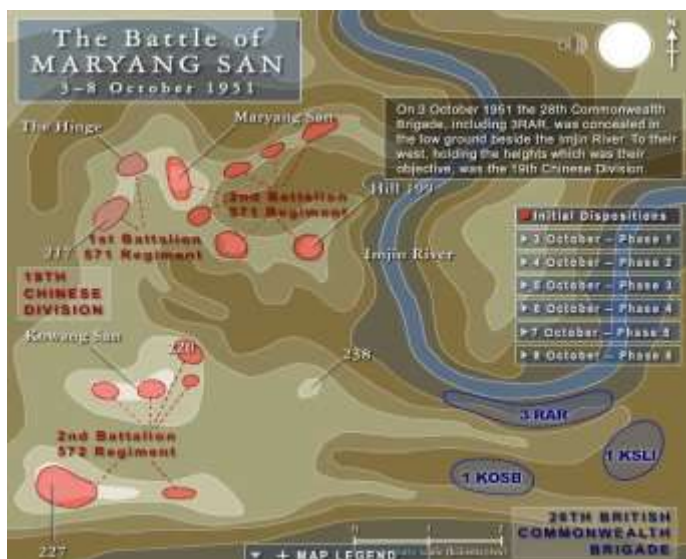






**"2 Platoon 'A' Coy 3RAR, 23-3-1951. Chipyong-ni."**  
(web photo)

Over the period 3–8 October 1951, 3RAR fought the Battle of Maryang San, which is widely regarded as one of the Australian Army's greatest accomplishments of the Korean War.



(web image)

3RAR remained in Korea until the war ended in 1953, sustaining total casualties of 231 men killed. Upon return to Australia in 1954, 3RAR was based in at Ingleburn and Holsworthy Barracks, in New South Wales.



**U.S. General James Van Fleet inspects members of 3 RAR after awarding a Presidential Unit Citation to the Battalion in December 1952.** (gov.au photo)

## Malaya, 1957–59

The next major conflict that 3RAR was involved in was the Malayan Emergency. The Australian Government first committed a battalion in 1955 to assist Malayan Government counter incursion of Communist Terrorists (CTs). However, it was not until October 1957 that 3RAR arrived in theatre; it then commenced a period of acclimatisation at the FARELF Training Centre Kota Tingi (later to become the Jungle Warfare School). 3RAR then moved to company base camps at Kuala Kangsar (BHQ), Lasah, Sungei, Siput, Penang and Lintang.

The unit was engaged in anti-communist terrorist operations in northern Malaya. Operations began in November 1957 and as a result many terrorist camps and food dumps were located and destroyed. 3RAR was credited with killing 14 terrorists and was responsible for the capture of 32 others. 3RAR casualties over the two years were two wounded and four non-battle casualties.

Upon return to Australia, 3RAR established itself at Enoggera Barracks, Brisbane. It remained there for four years during which time it carried out routine training and barracks duties and was organised on the Pentropic establishment, with five rifle companies and an enlarged headquarters.

## Malaya and Borneo, 1963–65



**"3RAR troops patrolling in Borneo in 1965."** (web photo)

(continued....)





3RAR also served in Malaysia and Borneo during the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation and was involved in a series of highly successful cross-border missions under Operation Claret. During these operations the battalion had four major contacts with Indonesian forces on the Sungei Koemba river, at Kindau and again at Babang between May and July 1965. During these operations the battalion lost three men dead and five wounded.

3RAR moved into Woodside Barracks, South Australia, officially occupying Kapyong Lines at Woodside, on 14 October 1965.



**“Private Ian Ronald Ramsay, of Perth, WA, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), crossing over a log bridge in the jungle of Sarawak, where the battalion is engaged in security operations and regular patrols along the Indonesian border. Pte Ramsay later served in South Vietnam with 2nd Squadron, Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) between 1968 and 1969 and with the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) between 1971 and 1972. He was awarded the South Vietnamese Staff Service Medal, 2nd Class, the Cambodian National Defence Medal with Bronze Star and the South Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm Unit Citation. Pte Ramsay is armed with a 7.62mm L1A1 self-loading rifle (SLR) which has been fitted with an L4, 30 round magazine. ”**

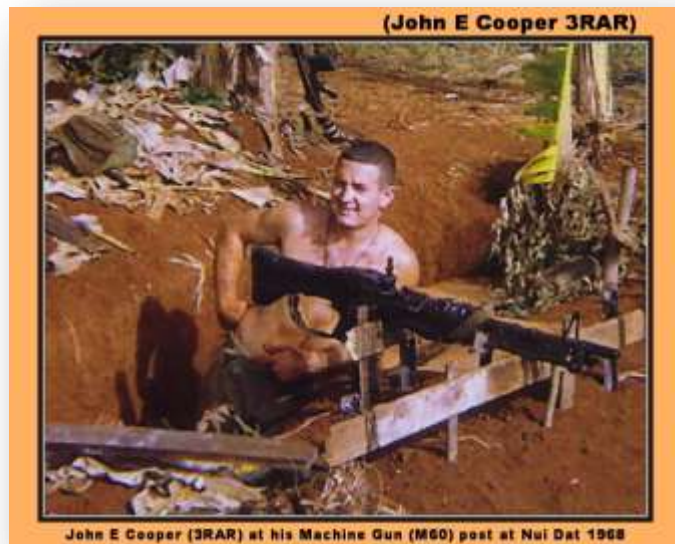
(Australian War Memorial, photo by William James Cunneen)

### **South Vietnam, 1967–71**

3RAR served two tours in South Vietnam, the first during 1967 and 1968 saw the battalion stationed in Phuoc Tuy Province. The battalion took part in several operations and was involved in mine clearing, counter mortar and rocket tasks and reconnaissance in force operations. As the ready reaction force at the 1ATF base 'A' Company 3RAR was responsible for clearing

and securing the nearby provincial capital of Ba Ria (Phuoc Le) during the Tet Offensive of February 1968.

The battalion was then committed to Operation Coburg in February and March. During 26–28 May 1968, 3RAR, while stationed at FSB Balmoral in a battalion defensive position, withstood two determined assaults by regimental sized units of the North Vietnamese Army during the Battle of Coral–Balmoral.



(web photo)

During its first tour of Vietnam the battalion lost 24 killed and 93 wounded. In 1971 the battalion returned to Phuoc Tuy Province. During the second tour the battalion took part in several actions before returning to Australia by the end of 1971 after an eight-month tour. During these operations 3 AR lost four killed and 27 wounded.

**Second Lieutenant PETER LUFFMAN, of Bourke, N.S.W. (left) talks with the Commander of the Australian Task Force in Vietnam, Brigadier R. HUGHES, of Brisbane. Second Lieutenant LUFFMAN was commanding 7 Platoon, C Company of 3 RAR during a cordon and search of Wao Long village. The search revealed one VC Intelligence Agent and a tunnel system.”** (Public Relations Unite Vietnam)



(continued....)





## Australian flag over enemy base Hill 323 Under Aust. Control



**“LONG HAI, Friday – Task Force troops moved to the top of the Long Hai hills today and wedged the Australian flag in a clump of rocks on Hill 323 in the middle of an abandoned Vietcong supply base.”**

(Newspaper clipping)

### Parachute Role and Holsworthy Barracks, 1980s

A move to Holsworthy Barracks, Sydney, contemplated since returning from operations in South Vietnam, was conducted at the end of 1981. In December 1983, the battalion assumed responsibility for the Australian Army's conventional Airborne forces capability (previously, D Company 6 RAR had maintained an airborne company).

In 1985, the battalion was granted permission to wear the dull Cherry beret, common to all parachute units worldwide, and to wear parachute wings identical to those worn by the 1st Australian Parachute Battalion during the Second World War. From 1989, 3RAR formed the main combat elements of the Parachute Battalion Group, which also included an engineer troop, signals detachment, artillery battery, and medical support, including a parachute surgical team. Attached

in direct support, A Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery was equipped with 105-mm L118 Hamel guns.



### East Timor, 1999–2008

3RAR played a key role in the Australian-led International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) in 1999. The battalion arrived in Dili by sea on 21 September and was initially responsible for the city, before later securing the enclave of Oecussi. 3RAR returned to Australia in February 2000. It served a second six-month tour of East Timor in 2002.

In May 2006, the 3RAR Battalion Group was deployed to restore order to East Timor as part of Operation Astute. An online company group was deployed at short notice in February 2007 for four months and replaced by a second company group in June 2007 for seven weeks. 3RAR deployed again to East Timor in 2008 as the Timor Leste Battle Group (TLBG), undertaking operations to apprehend the rebels that attempted to assassinate President José Ramos-Horta.

### Solomon Islands, 2005–06

3RAR deployed to the Solomon Islands on Monday 24 January 2005 to reinforce the military component of Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The 3RAR company of soldiers consisted of approximately 100 personnel to provide added support to the local and Australian Federal Police in enforcing the rule of law and restoring order in the Solomon Islands.

(continued....)





The soldiers tent lines at RAMSI base were named the "Private Jamie Clark Lines" in March 2007 after the accidental death of Clark in March 2005.

Renewed violence in March 2006 again saw a company group deploy to the capital Honiara, returning to Australia in May 2006.

### **Iraq, 2003–07**

In late 2003, 3RAR was warned to provide a Company Headquarters and a four rifle section platoon for security duties in Iraq on Operation Catalyst. A Company was subsequently deployed to Baghdad from December 2003 to May 2004. It provided specific local protection to the Australian Diplomatic Mission in Baghdad as part of the Security Detachment (SECDET).

On 13 April 2004 SECDET elements were involved in a very successful contact when an ASLAV engaged a mortar base plate that was firing on the Green Zone. From February 2006 until March 2007 the battalion returned companies to Baghdad as SECDET IX and SECDET X. Both tours were eventful with several contacts, a rocket attack that injured four soldiers, and the accidental death of Private Jacob Kovco in April 2006—Australia's first casualty in Iraq and the subject of intense media attention.

### **Afghanistan, 2003–12**



**"Infantry from 3 RAR patrol Tarin Kowt in August 2008 as part of Reconstruction Task Force 4."**

2008 saw the battalion deploy a company group to Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan as the Security Task Group (Combat Team Dagger) component of the Reconstruction Task Force 4 (RTF-4) during Operation Slipper. Highlights of the deployment include the establishment of a Patrol Base in the Baluchi Valley, and the short-notice, high-priority deployment beyond the RTF Area of Operations to construct key bridges over the Andar and Moqur Rivers in Zabul and Ghazni Provinces, along the highway connecting Kandahar and Kabul. 3RAR formed the basis of a battle group that

was deployed to the country again in 2012 tasked with mentoring the Afghan National Army 4th Brigade, 205th Corps, before handing over to 7RAR in November.

### **Current Composition**

On 31 August 2011, 3RAR relinquished the parachute role becoming a light infantry battalion. In early 2012 it relocated to Lavarack Barracks, Townsville, under 3rd Brigade. The battalion currently consists of:

- Battalion Headquarters
- 3 Rifle Companies – 'Alpha', 'Bravo' and 'Charlie'
- Support Company
- Administration Company

**Source:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3rd\\_Battalion,\\_Royal\\_Australian\\_Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3rd_Battalion,_Royal_Australian_Regiment)  
(Most Photos added)



**They marched in the rain.**



**"The Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial"**





# 3rd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment In Vietnam



Coat of Arms

Active	1917 - present
Country	United States
Branch	Army
Type	Airborne field artillery
Garrison/HQ	Fort Bragg
Equipment	M119A3 Howitzer M777A2 Howitzer



**T**he 3rd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment ("3-319th AFAR") is the field artillery battalion that directly supports the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. Known as the "Gun Devils", 3-319th AFAR has participated in battles from World War I to the current day, and is one of the most highly decorated field artillery units in the United States Army. The battalion's mission is:

**"3-319th AFAR stands ready to deploy worldwide within 18 hours of notification, execute a parachute assault and conduct full-spectrum operations. Specifically, the battalion will provide responsive lethal and nonlethal fires in support of forcible entry and airfield seizure, and integrate and synchronize the effects of fires to achieve the 1BCT commander's intent."**

## Combat Engagements

World War I  
World War II  
Vietnam  
Panama  
Iraq  
Afghanistan  
War on Terror



Unit insignia



Unit flash

## Vietnam

The 3-319 AFAR, commanded by LTC (later MG) Lee E. Surut (see Page 80), deployed to Vietnam in support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in May 1965. The unit fired the first American artillery in the Vietnam War, when the base piece of Battery C conducted its first registration. Less than 30 days after deploying, TF Surut (3-319 AFAR reinforced with cavalry, engineers and others) conducted the artillery's first combat air assault when they secured a landing zone, emplaced their howitzers and provided support to infantry TF Dexter. The 3-319th AFAR was the first U.S. Army unit to participate in offensive operations by providing fires support to South Vietnamese Army forces relieving the town of Dong Xoai in June 1965. It was joined by the 161st Bty, Royal New Zealand Artillery in June 1965 which was attached as the fourth firing battery.

**OPORD 17-65, RVN:** From 27 June 1965 to 1 July 1965, 3-319 AFAR fired nearly 5,000 rounds of 105mm in support of five infantry battalions from three nations (1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment from the U.S. 173rd Airborne Brigade, 3rd and 4th Battalions of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) 2nd Airborne Brigade and the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment), in addition to coordinating New Zealand and Vietnamese artillery fires, close air support and armed helicopter fires through the brigade fire support coordination center.



Kiwi Arty

(continued....)





To support what was known simply as OPORD 17-65, 3-319 AFAR provided 10 forward observers, 3 liaison officers and 2 aerial observers above the normally provided fire support coordination personnel. Initially organized with three 6-gun 105mm firing batteries, the battalion was later authorized a fourth firing battery.



(web photo)

**OPERATION DEXTER, RVN:** On 8 April 1966, the 173rd Airborne Brigade's Operation Austin I was cancelled, and the brigade was notified to conduct Operation Denver in the Sông Bé area. The brigade published its base operation order, focused on movement from Bien Hoa to Sông Bé, on 9 April 1966. On 10 April 1966, Battery C, 3/319 accompanied 1/503rd Infantry to Sông Bé Airfield. The remainder of 3/319 closed via C-130 by 14:40 on 11 April. On 13 April, Battery B was attached to 1/503rd and occupied a fire base at Position Blue to the northwest of Sông Bé to support search and attack operations. Battery B was in position at 09:13, fired prep fires on Landing Zone Red in support of Company A, 1/503rd and departed the fire base at 18:32. On 14 April, the battalion fires landing zone preparations on LZs Jade, Opal and Diamond, in support of two battalion-sized airmobile operations by 1/503 and 1RAR. On 15 April, Battery C moved by ground to establish a fire support base at grid location YU 183105, fired a 10 minute artillery preparation on LZ Lilly in support of 1/503, and remained in position until 17 April. On 18 April, Battery A was inserted via CH-47 onto LZ Harvard and established a fire support base to support 2/503 Infantry's operations in AO Ireland, south of Sông Bé. On 19 April, Battery A displaced to LZ Colgate, remaining there in support of 2/503 until 22 April. The battalion returned to Bien Hoa on 23 April, with one battery remaining with 2/503rd at Sông Bé until 25 April. Over the course of Operation Denver, the

battalion (including the four guns of 161st Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery in support of 1 RAR) fired 5,103 rounds in 614 missions. The battalion also controlled the fires of two four-gun 4.2in mortar platoons (one from 2/503rd and one from D/16 Armor) which fired 1,466 rounds in 192 missions. From 1 May to 31 July 1966, 3/319th AFAR, under the command of LTC William Nordin, supported the brigade's Operations Dexter, Hardihood, Hollandia, Uniontown, Yorktown, Aurora I and Aurora II, in addition to routine security operations. The battalion fired 28,565 rounds during 3,108 missions. The brigade report for this period noted that all tactical plans, including reaction forces, should include the detailed planning of safe air corridors to allow for simultaneous employment of artillery preparations and air strikes during airmobile operations.



**Col. William Nordin**  
**Deceased 2/21/14**

**OPERATION TOLEDO, RVN:** From 10 August 1966 – 7 September 1966, 3/319th AFAR supported 173rd's Operation Toledo in the Map Tao Secret Zone and Cẩm Mỹ areas of Phước Tuy Province. In addition to the battalion's three organic firing batteries (A, B, & C) with 18 105mm towed howitzers, the battalion was reinforced with C/2/35 Arty (six 155mm self-propelled howitzers), A/2/32 Arty (four 175mm/8" self-propelled howitzers), and two 105mm towed firing batteries (A/2/13 Arty and A/1/7 Arty). The 3/319th AFAR fired 31,503 rounds in 1,421 fire missions, while the reinforcing units contributed an additional 17,417 rounds. Most of the missions were against suspected enemy locations or in support of elements during contact, but the battalion also fired preparations of landing zones, harassing and interdiction fire, and suppressive fire on landing zones after extraction. Although safety checks and air clearance delayed some missions when units were not in contact, the brigade reported that *"Fires for units in contact was timely and no firing delays were experienced."*

(continued....)







**Troopers of 3/319th in action.**  
(web photo)

**OPERATION SIOUX CITY, RVN:** From 26 September 1966 to 9 October 1966, the battalion supported the brigade Operation Sioux City with 2 organic 105mm batteries and a 155mm reinforcing battery from 2/25 Field Artillery. On 26 September, 3/319 departed Bien Hoa and moved by road on Route Blue to Position Fox, with Battery C firing landing zone preparations in support of 1/503's air assault on Position Mohawk and then on to Position Mohawk. While in Position Fox, a ¼-ton truck from the battalion hit a mine. Two vehicles (the other from E/17th Cavalry) were destroyed by mines in Position Fox, resulting in three US wounded. On 1 October, Battery C reported 2 incoming hand grenades and returned fire with M79 grenade launchers. There were no US casualties and unknown results of the M79 fire. On 6 October, the battalion returned to Position Fox, reporting laid and ready to fire at 12:58. On 9 October, the brigade terminated Operation Sioux City and the battalion returned to Bien Hoa by road convoy. Over the course of the operation, the battalion fired 8,611 rounds on 1,280 missions. Unobserved fires prevented a good assessment of the artillery's effectiveness, although the brigade After Action Report noted that enemy fire stopped "in all cases" when artillery was employed during contacts.

**OPERATION WINCHESTER, RVN:** From 8 October - 3 December 1966, Battery B, 3/319th AFAR deployed 82 personnel and six M102 105mm howitzers with Task Force 4/503rd to the Da Nang and Tinh Qang area to conduct Operation Winchester. The battery occupied a

single position, and supported the operation from that position, although it selected alternate positions that were not occupied. The 4-503rd PIR commander stated that Battery B's support was *"absolutely essential to the conduct of the operation."*

## Paul Dinardo FDC A/3/319 Artillery



**Paul, former president of the 173d Airborne  
Brigade Association.**

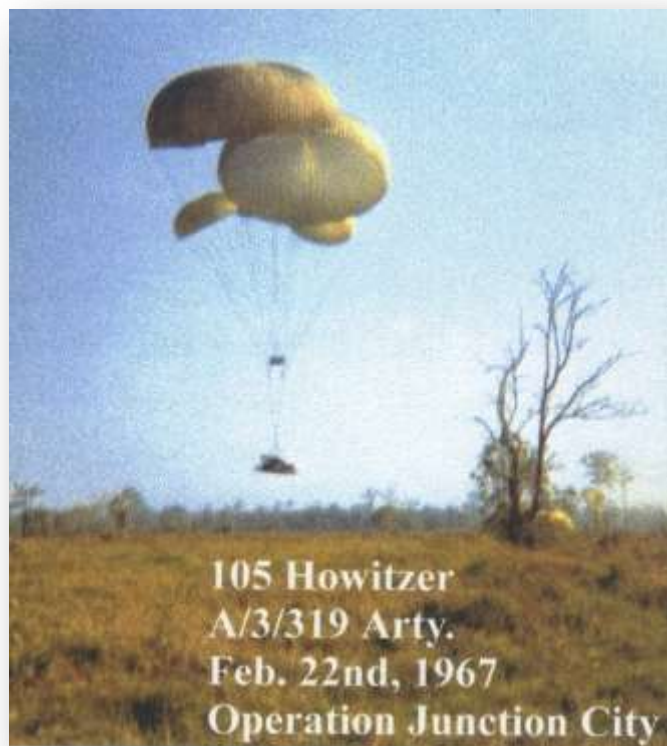
**OPERATION JUNCTION CITY, RVN:** From 22 February to 15 March 1967, 3/319 participated in Operation Junction City, including the only conventional parachute assault conducted by the US Army in Vietnam. For the operation, Battery A was attached to Task Force 2/503rd to conduct the airborne assault, while the battalion received to the operational control of 4.2in mortar platoons from 1/503rd and 4/503rd to provide centralized control of the remaining 4 firing units for the operation. Operation Junction City was aimed at the destruction of the Central Office of South Vietnam (the Viet Cong political headquarters) and the PAVN 9th Division in the "War Zone C" area of Tây Ninh Province...

(continued....)





...The brigade formed the north-east shoulder of a multi-brigade cordon. The brigade conducted the parachute assault to ease the requirements for helicopter support and *"place the maximum number of troops on the ground in the shortest period of time"*, although the bulk of the brigade conducted helicopter insertions before their search and destroy operations. On 19 February, the battalion (- Battery A, which remained at Bien Hoa to prepare for the parachute assault) moved to Quần Lợi and conducted final preparations for the operation. At 09:00 on 22 February, Battery A landed with 2/503 PIR on Drop Zone "C" at grid coordinates XT 339929. The battalion then established the brigade Fire Support Base in Position Liz with the brigade command post to support search and destroy operations by the three infantry battalions. On 5 March, the battalion moved by road from FSB Liz to FSB III.



(web photo)

On 10 March, the battalion was credited with 127 enemy KIA while firing in support of 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (Mechanized) from the 1st Infantry Division. On 14 March, the battalion moved to Suoi Da and returned to Bien Hoa by ground convoy on 15 March. Over the 20 days of the operation, the battalion fired 45,282 rounds in 1,423 missions. Although the 173rd was not originally planned to participate in Operation Junction City Phase II, the 1st Infantry Division required another brigade and the 173rd returned to the operational control of the 1st Infantry Division on 20 March. That morning, the bulk of 3/319's vehicles

departed Bien Hoa at 06:55 and conducted a road movement to FSB "D" at Min Thanh Airfield, closing at 15:00. The 18 howitzers with crews moved by air at 09:21 and were in position at Minh Thanh at 09:55. On 22 March, the battalion conducted air movement to FSB Parry with 41 CH-47 sorties for personnel and equipment, followed by 31 ammunition sorties. On 23 March, the battalion fired preparation fires on LZ "A" in support of air assaults by 1/503 and 4/503. On 28 March, the battalion conducted direct artillery fire, which effectively decreased the sniper fire against the FSB. On 8 April, Battery A conducted air movement to FSB Rock, joined by Batteries C and B on 9 April. On 13 April, the battalion returned to Bien Hoa, and the brigade terminated its participation in Operation Junction City and was released from the OPCON of the 1st Infantry Division. Over the course of Operation Junction City Phase II, the battalion fired 48,575 rounds in 1,729 missions. From 1 May to 31 July 1967, 3/319th AFAR, supported seven battalion-size or larger operations: Operations Fort Wayne, Dayton, Cincinnati, Winchester, Francis Marion, Greeley and 4/503rd Infantry's Operation Stillwell. The battalion fired 52,652 rounds during 416 fire missions. The brigade twice noted that units must be prepared to accept casualties from friendly artillery in order to bring effective fires onto enemy positions. (To mitigate any possible tendency to call artillery onto friendly units, the 4th Infantry Division, in their endorsement to the report, noted that artillery can be employed as close as 50 meters *"without inflicting more than occasional injuries to friendly troops."*) The importance of artillery to the brigade's operations was emphasized by the note in Combat Operations After Action Report for 4-503rd Infantry's contact on 8–18 July 1967 that all individuals should be prepared to quickly and accurately adjust artillery fires. From 1 August – 31 October 1967, 3/319th AFAR supported Operations Greeley, Boling, and Darby. The battalion fired 46,765 rounds in 6,425 missions. The brigade Operations Report of Lessons Learned for the period noted the requirement for aerial observers for artillery in dense jungle, and suggested that new forward observers should have practical training in aerial observation. Both I Field Force Vietnam and US Army Vietnam endorsed this observation. The brigade also noted the effectiveness of artillery fires in close support of units in contact, despite "time consuming" safety requirements.

(continued....)





**BATTLE OF DAK TO, RVN:** From August through early October, 1967, the 4th Infantry Division, conducting Operation MacArthur, noticed a change in PAVN tactics in Pleiku Province, followed by large and unusual movements in the tri-border (Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam) area and increased activity in Kontum Province in late October. On 1 November, 4/503 Infantry moved to Dak To, followed by Battery B, 3/319 AFAR on 1 November. Battery B emplaced at FSB 12. On 6 November, Batteries A and C followed, emplacing at a bridge site at map coordinates YB 957242 and FSB 13 respectively. Over the next month, the battalion conducted five battery moves, occupying FSBs 12, 15, 16, and 13 to support the brigade's search and attack operations south and west of Dak To. Before the battle of Dak To was ended on 1 December, Battery A fired 12,907 rounds in 488 missions, Battery B fired 14,598 rounds in 590 missions, and Battery C fired 18,112 rounds in 368 missions. The battle for Dak To cost the battalion four killed in action, four wounded in action and one missing in action. **(Note: 173d KIA list shows 5 or 6 troopers of the 319th fell during the battles at Dak To in November '67. See Pages 81-84. Ed)**



**Fusing ammo outside of Dak To.**  
(Photo by Skip Kniley, B/D/3/319)

From February to April 1969, the 173rd Airborne Brigade conducted 9 battalion operations in Bình Định, Phú Yên and Phu Bon Provinces. On 15 April 1969, the brigade closed all battalion operations and began **Operation Washington Green**. 3/319 AFAR remained in direct support of the brigade, with headquarters at LZ English and Battery C detached to TF South in direct support to 3/503rd. February began with Battery A at LZ English, Battery B at FSB Shenondoah and Battery D at FSB Barbara. On 4 February, Battery D killed one VC/PAVN, who was found with 4 satchel charges near

the FSB perimeter the next morning. On 9 February, Battery A displaced to FSB Lowboy to support 2/40th ARVN, and Battery D moved to LZ English in 15 CH-47 helicopter loads. From 12–16 February, the battalion fired an “intensive H&I program” ahead of the Tet Holiday. On 21 and 28 February, the battalion emplaced “Red Raider” observation posts to identify anti-aircraft firing positions around LZ English. On 25 February, the battalion fired counterfire against mortars detected by the battalion radar on LZ English, initiating counter-mortar fire in less than 90 seconds. In March, Battery A moved from FSB Lowboy to FSB Two Bits to support 1/503rd. On 4 March, Battery D moved by CH-47 from FSB Barbara to Tuy Hòa Base Camp, and then, on 7 March, moved by C-130 to An Khe. On 9 March, Battery D roadmarched from An Khe to LZ Action to support **Operation Stingray II**, which began 11 March. On 14 March, Battery D moved to FSB Ellen by CH-47. On 19 March, a platoon from Battery B conducted a 5-hour raid, firing 662 rounds into the An Lao Valley, attacking hooch complexes and possible base camps, resulting in one secondary explosion. On 21 March, the battalion's countermortar radar identified mortar rounds fired at LZ English, as well as a rocket attack on LZ Tom and a mortar attack on Tam Quan District Headquarters. On 23 March, Battery B conducted another platoon raid to FSB Lisa, firing 1,113 rounds supporting observation aircraft and brigade Ranger teams. On 24 March, Battery D moved from FSB Ellen to An Khe by CH-47, and roadmarched to Qui Nhon the following day. On 26 March, Battery A roadmarched from FSB Two Bits to FSB Crystal. From 1 to 7 April, a platoon from Battery B supported 6 Ranger teams from FSB Projo, secured by 3/C/2/503 PIR, firing 1,460 rounds. On 5 April, Battery D was extracted from FSB Rimerez by CH-47, and then roadmarched to FSB Lowboy on 6 April. On 14 April, a platoon from Battery A, with security elements from HSB and Batteries B and D, combat assaulted FSB Robertson and remained until 18 April, firing 1,427 rounds in support of 17 Ranger teams. On 17 April, the countermortar radar detected 14 rounds fired at LZ English. On 22 April, elements of Battery A road-marched from LZ Crystal to LZ English, and then combat assaulted to FSB Frost on 25 April. Meanwhile, Battery B roadmarched from LZ English to LZ Two Bits to provide mutual support to Battery A, as both batteries secured their own FSBs.

*(continued....)*





On 29 April, the battalion initiated another combined artillery and Ranger raid to FSB Projo. Three slight WIAs were sustained from punji stakes when the elements combat assaulted the FSB, which had been abandoned since 7 April. From 1 May 1969 to 31 July 1969, 3/319th AFAR continued direct support to 173rd Airborne Brigade conducting **Operation Washington Green** (pacification in northern Binh Định Province) and **Operation Darby Maul I**, a series of search and clear operations in the An Lao Valley by 4th Mobile Strike Force Battalion under the operational control of the 173rd. HSB located at LZ English. Battery A located at FSB Frost until 6 July, then FSB Stinger until 12 July, then FSB Lisa until 27 July, then LZ English until 28 July, then LZ Lowboy, in addition to sending a platoon to **Operation Red Thrust VIII**, firing 508 rounds. Battery B located at LZ Two Bits, and sent a platoon to fire 543 rounds on Operation Red Thrust VII and another platoon to LZ Challenge from 3–5 July. Battery C located at FSB Rock near Bac Loc and conducted two 1-day raids on 11 & 13 June. Battery D located at LZ Lowboy, with 2 howitzers sent on **Operation Red Thrust V** in 5 days ending 2 May. On 12 July, Battery D displaced to support Battery A from FSB Hawkeye but returned to LZ Lowboy until 28 July, then occupied FSB Hunky. The battalion received three 105mm howitzers in May. In July, LTC John R. Martin replaced LTC Joseph J Leszczynski. Overall, the battalion fired 55,735 rounds of 105mm during the period. The battalion noted that the use of two collimators was an effective replacement for the use of aiming posts when occupying constricted platoon sized positions, that low-level illumination was an effective incendiary against enemy crops, and that aerial photos or overflights assisted in the defense of fire support bases, especially when no infantry security forces were provided. Additionally, close liaison in support of Ranger operations assisted in timely and accurate fire support.

#### Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3rd\\_Battalion,\\_319th\\_Field\\_Artillery\\_Regiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/3rd_Battalion,_319th_Field_Artillery_Regiment)

<https://history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/fa/0319fa03bn.htm>

#### Lineage and Honors Information as of 13 May 2016

### DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY LINEAGE AND HONORS 3D BATTALION, 319TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT

Constituted 5 August 1917 in the National Army as Battery C, 319th Field Artillery, an element of the 82d Division

Organized 2 September 1917 at Camp Gordon, Georgia

Demobilized 18 May 1919 at Camp Dix, New Jersey

Reconstituted 24 June 1921 in the Organized Reserves as Battery C, 319th Field Artillery, an element of the 82d Division (later redesignated as the 82d Airborne Division)

Organized in January 1922 at Decatur, Georgia

Reorganized and redesignated 13 February 1942 as Battery C, 319th Field Artillery Battalion

Ordered into active military service 25 March 1942 and reorganized at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana

Reorganized and redesignated 15 August 1942 as Battery C, 319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion

Disbanded 4 September 1942 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Reconstituted 15 December 1947 in the Regular Army as Battery C, 319th Field Artillery Battalion, and activated at Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Reorganized and redesignated 15 December 1948 as Battery C, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Battalion

Reorganized and redesignated 1 September 1957 as Battery C, 319th Artillery, an element of the 82d Airborne Division

Relieved 24 June 1960 from assignment to the 82d Airborne Division and assigned to the 25th Infantry Division

Relieved 1 July 1961 from assignment to the 25th Infantry Division

Reorganized and redesignated 25 June 1963 as Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 3d Battalion, 319th Artillery, and assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade (organic elements constituted 26 March 1963 and activated 25 June 1963)

Battalion redesignated 1 September 1971 as the 3d Battalion, 319th Field Artillery

Relieved 14 January 1972 from assignment to the 173d Airborne Brigade and assigned to the 101st Airborne Division

Relieved 2 October 1986 from assignment to the 101st Airborne Division and assigned to the 82d Airborne Division

Redesignated 1 October 2005 as 3d Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment

Relieved 16 June 2006 from assignment to the 82d Airborne Division and assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division

Campaign Participation Credit  
World War I

St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, Lorraine 1918

(continued....)





World War II  
 Sicily. Naples-Foggia, Normandy (with arrowhead)  
 Rhineland (with arrowhead), Ardennes-Alsace  
 Central Europe  
 Vietnam  
 Defense  
 Counteroffensive  
 Counteroffensive, Phase II, III  
 Tet Counteroffensive  
 Counteroffensive, Phase IV. V, VI  
 Tet 69/Counteroffensive  
 Summer-Fall 1969, Winter-Spring 1970  
 Sanctuary Counteroffensive  
 Counteroffensive, Phase VII  
 Consolidation I  
 Armed Forces Expeditions  
 Panama (with arrowhead)  
 Southwest Asia  
 Defense of Saudi Arabia  
 Liberation and Defense of Kuwait  
 Cease-Fire  
 War on Terrorism  
*Afghanistan:*  
 Consolidation I  
*Iraq:*  
 Iraqi Sovereignty  
 (Additional campaigns to be determined)

#### **Decorations**

Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered  
 CHIUNZI PASS

Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered  
 STE. MERE EGLISE

Presidential Unit Citation (Army), Streamer embroidered  
 DAK TO

Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered  
 AFGHANISTAN 2003

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer  
 embroidered VIETNAM 1965-1967

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer  
 embroidered SOUTHWEST ASIA 1990-1991

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer  
 embroidered IRAQ 2010

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer  
 embroidered AFGHANISTAN 2012

Army Superior Unit Award, Streamer embroidered 1983  
 Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm,  
 Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1965-1970

Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal, First Class,  
 Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1970-1971  
 Battery B additionally entitled to:

Presidential Unit Citation (Navy), Streamer embroidered  
 VIETNAM 1966

Battery C additionally entitled to:

Valorous Unit Award, Streamer embroidered TUY HOA

## And the famed legacy of the 319th continues...



### ***“King of the Herd”***

**T**he 4th Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment (4-319 FAR) is the field artillery battalion assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. Nicknamed "The King of the Herd", 4-319th AFAR has participated in battles from World War I to current operations around the globe. The battalion's mission is to provide direct supporting fires to the brigade. The unit is skilled in both the art of integrating and synchronizing all available fire support assets and in the science of delivering accurate and timely lethal and non-lethal fires. "King of the Herd" Paratroopers in the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) are able to accomplish both of these tasks and other assigned missions after rapidly deploying via parachute assault.

#### **History**

The 4th Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment (4-319th FAR), "King of the Herd," was activated on June 8, 2006 from elements of Battery D, 319th Field Artillery and 1st Battalion, 33d Field Artillery at Warner Barracks in Bamberg, Germany and assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

*(continued....)*

**By Order of the Secretary of the Army:**  
**CHARLES R. BOWERY, JR**  
 Chief of Military History



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / Mar.-Apr. 2018 – Issue 79

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# MG Lee E. Surut

## USA Ret.

June 1943 - enlisted in U.S. Army as a Private. Basic Infantry training, Camp Fannin, Tyler Texas.

September 1943 – February 1945, Army Specialized Training Program, Princeton University, New Jersey

February 1945 – Infantry refresher training, Camp Barkeley, Abilene, Texas

March 1945 - June 1945, West Point Preparatory School, Amherst College, Massachusetts

June 1945 - August 1945, Infantry Officer Training (Pre-West Point), Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia

August 1945 - June 1949, Cadet, US Military Academy, West Point, New York

August 1949 - May 1950, Army School, Ft. Riley, Kansas, Fort Bliss, El Paso Texas, Fort Sill, Lawton, Oklahoma

June 1950 - June 1953, 519th Field Artillery Battalion, Sonthofen and Babenhausen, Germany

July 1953 - June 1954 Columbia University, New York City, Master's degree

August 1954 - June 1957, US Military Academy, West Point NY, English instructor

June 1957 - Airborne School, Ft. Benning, Georgia

August 1957 - June 1958, Advanced Artillery School, Ft. Sill, Oklahoma

July 1958 - June 1959, 1st Cavalry Division, Korea

July 1959- June 1961, 101st Airborne Division, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky

August 1961- April 1965, Student and faculty, Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas

April 1965 - May 1966, Commander, 3rd Battalion, 319th Artillery, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Okinawa and Vietnam

June 1966 - June 1967, National Military Command Center, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pentagon

June 1967- June 1968, National War College, Ft. McNair, Washington, D.C

June 1968 - June 1970, Chairman's Special Study Group, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pentagon



1925 ~ 2014

June 1970 - June 1971, Commander, Division Artillery, 101st Airborne Division, Vietnam

June 1971 - February 1972, Military Assistant To Supreme Allied Commander Europe, SHAPE, Belgium

February 1972 - June 1972, Advanced Management Program, Harvard Business School, Cambridge, Mass.

June 1972 - June 1974, Assistant Division Commander, 3rd Armored Division, Hanau, Germany

June 1974 - June 1975, Chief, Studies, Analysis and Gaming Agency, OJCS, Pentagon

June 1975- June 1977, JCS Representative, Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, Vienna, Austria

June 1977- June 1980, Director, Strategy, Plans and Policy, Office of the Deputy, Chief of Staff for Operations, Army, Pentagon

June 1980 - June 1983, Commandant, The National War College, Ft. McNair, Washington D.C.

### Military Honors and Decorations Received

Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit w/oak leaf cluster, Defense Superior Service Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal w/oak leaf cluster, Master Parachutist Badge

Date of Retirement: 1 August 1983

Rank: Major General



Final respects for MG Lee E. Surut

*(tributes continued....)*







## 2/503 Salutes Our Fallen Brothers of 3/319th During the Vietnam War, 1965 ~ 1971

(Sources: 173d Abn Bde List of KIA, Virtual Wall & Wall of Faces)



***"The harder the fighting and the longer the war, the more the infantry,  
and in fact all the arms, lean on the gunners."***

– Field Marshal Montgomery

**Dennis Leroy Pierson, 21**  
PFC, B/3/319, 6/26/65



**Louis R. Randall, 18**  
PFC, C/3/319, 9/25/66



**Lloyd Vincent Greene, 29**  
SGT, C/3/319, 11/8/65



**Terry Eugene Hemmitt, 19**  
PFC, A/3/319, 10/2/66



**Steve Orris, III, 19**  
PFC, C/3/319, 11/8/65



**Robert Smith, Sr., 34**  
SGT, A/3/319, 10/21/66



**Charles Calder Anderson, Jr., 27**  
CPT, A/3/319, 3/22/67



**James Larry Evans, 25**  
1LT, A/3/319, 3/22/67



**Robert L. Matthews, 23**  
SP4, A/3/319, 3/22/67



**Randall Lawrence Perry, 20**  
SP4, A/3/319, 3/23/67  
(Virtual Wall states B/3/319)



**Edward Hamilton, 24**  
SGT, HHB/3/319, 5/17/66

**For heroism in connection with  
military operations against a hostile force:**

**Sgt. Hamilton distinguished himself  
by exceptionally valorous actions on 17  
May 1966 while serving as the Artillery Recon-  
naissance Sergeant accompanying the reconnaissance  
elements of Company B, 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry  
when contact was made with a Viet Cong sniper  
consisting of small arms and mortar fire. The company  
proceeded to sweep up Hill 72. Half way up the hill  
the company came under intense automatic weapons  
fire from three sides. The Artillery Forward Observer  
attached to the company immediately initiated a fire  
mission and Sergeant Hamilton remained with the  
observer under intense enemy fire to adjust artillery  
fire on the enemy machine gun emplacements and  
while in this exposed position Sergeant Hamilton was  
fatally wounded. Sergeant Hamilton's outstanding  
display of aggressiveness, devotion to duty, and  
personal bravery were in keeping with the highest  
traditions of the military service and reflect great  
credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States  
Army.**



(tributes continued....)





**Robert Ray Boyd, 26**  
CPT, A/3/319, 5/17/67



**Michael Sidney Mitchell, 20**  
PFC, B/3/319, 7/10/67



the ridge and killed at least six of the assaulting North Vietnamese with fierce rifle fire as other members of his unit rescued the remaining wounded. He was instantly killed while gallantly covering their withdrawal. Private First Class Shaw's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

**Douglas Graham Magruder, 24**  
1LT, A/3/319, 11/18/67  
(Virtual Wall states B/3/319)



**Jerome Charles Shomaker, 25**  
1LT, A/3/319, 11/20/67



**Jesse Sanchez, 24**  
SP4, A/3/319, 11/20/67



**Troy Alexander Galyan, 20**  
SP4, A/3/319, 11/20/67



**Richard Thomas Busenlehner, 21**  
1LT, A/3/319, 11/20/67



**Carl Ray Barnhart, 18**  
PFC, A/3/319, 11/25/67



**Gary Francis Shaw, 19**  
PFC, A/3/319, 11/11/67



**Citation:**

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Gary Francis Shaw, Private First Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company C, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate). Private First Class Shaw distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 11 November 1967 as radio operator of an airborne infantry company conducting a search and destroy mission near Dak To. The unit was moving down a ridgeline covered with thick bamboo when it was savagely attacked by a North Vietnamese battalion firing mortars, rockets and automatic weapons. Heavy casualties were suffered by the lead platoon, and Private Shaw immediately volunteered to go to the aid of his wounded comrades. Braving withering enemy fire, he raced from one clump of bamboo to another as he advanced seventy-five meters down the hill to where the stricken paratroopers lay. With bullets striking all around him, he began to pull the wounded from the killing zone and carry them up the hill to safety. He saw one casualty fall in an exposed area while attempting to crawl from the ambush site unassisted. Ignoring exploding mortars and grenades, Private Shaw moved to the man and dragged him to the company's defensive perimeter. He then returned to the base of

*(tributes continued....)*







**Donald Ray Burgess, 20**  
PFC, B/3/319, 12/13/67



**Michael Rayne McCord, 18**  
SP4, B/3/319, 12/13/67



**Paul George Hamilton, Jr., 21**  
PFC, B/3/319, 12/13/67  
(Virtual Wall states C/3/319)



**Robert Earl Whitbeck, 38**  
LTC, HHB/3/319, 1/30/68



**Victor A. Justiniano, Jr., "Doc", 20**  
PFC, B/3/319, 3/3/68  
(Virtual Wall states HHC/3/503)



### **Distinguished Service Cross**

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Private First Class Victor A. Justiniano, Jr., United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 3d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. Private First Class Justiniano distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 3 March 1968 as the medic of an infantry platoon conducting a search and destroy mission in the central highlands near Kontum. The patrol was following the trail of a wounded North Vietnamese soldier when it came under a heavy automatic weapons and rocket attack. The enemy was only ten meters to the front, entrenched in a reinforced bunker complex. Two men of the point element were wounded in the initial volley of fire. With complete disregard for his safety, Private Justiniano moved forward to aid them. As he advanced, he was wounded several times by automatic weapons fire and shrapnel from an exploding rocket. Ignoring his wounds, he crawled forward and finally reached the position where his two comrades lay exposed to enemy fire. He moved one man to safety and treated him. He then returned for the other soldier who

was almost directly in front of an enemy position. As he attempted to rescue the casualty, Private Justiniano was mortally wounded. Private First Class Justiniano's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

**Donald Wayne Lattman, "Doc", 20**  
PFC, B/3/319, 3/3/68

"On 8 March 1968, the 1st Platoon, D Company, was point on a sweep operation. 1st squad was lead, and the squad leader, Sergeant Kenny Buys, was at the head of the squad. Kenny saw three bunkers a few feet ahead and to one side and realized that his men were all in the bunkers' line of fire. He immediately made a one-man attack on the bunkers, giving his men the chance to take cover before they could be cut down. Kenny took no cover and was badly hit. Our medic tried to save Kenny and lost his life doing so. Several members of our 1st platoon have gotten together over the past few years and I just found out that this medic never got recognized for his valor. His name is Don Lattman, He went the extra mile for those who were wounded on point, but his courage went unnoticed as far as I know." Larry "Doc" Speed



**Adrian Leroy Del Camp, 34**  
MAJ, HHC/3/319, 3/4/68



**Charles Arthur Bedsole, 20**  
1LT, HHB/3/319, 6/17/68  
(Virtual Wall states D/3/319)



**Herman Parker, Jr., 18**  
PFC, D/3/319, 9/5/68



**William Leroy Brown, 19**  
PFC, A/3/319, 12/29/68  
(Virtual Wall states C/3/319)



(tributes continued....)







**Glen Everett Rountree, 27**

SSG, A/3/319, 1/13/69

**Award of the Silver Star Posthumous**

**Gallantry in action:** Staff Sergeant Rountree distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 29 December 1968, when he was returning in a ¼ ton vehicle from Qui Nhon with Private Netter and Private Brown. On Highway #1, south of fire support base Ollie, their vehicle was ambushed by an enemy force. Private Brown was killed and Sergeant Rountree seriously wounded with the first volley of fire received from enemy automatic weapons and small arms positioned on both sides of the road. Private Netter could not start the vehicle after the engine died. Sergeant Rountree refused help and told Private Netter to run for help to a nearby Army Vietnamese outpost while he stayed with the vehicle and engaged the enemy. Without regard to his own personal safety and even though wounded in both legs and his pelvis, Sergeant Rountree fired the M-60 machine gun mounted on the jeep until there was no more ammunition. Still receiving enemy fire, he then fired his M-16 while attempting to contact his element, Battery A, 3d Battalion, 319th Artillery, for help on the radio present in the jeep. He continued to valorously fire until a rescue force arrived and he was evacuated. Sergeant Rountree's extraordinary heroism was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.



**Hildefonso M. Ramirez, 26**

CPL, D/3/319, 1/31/69



**James Robert Smith, 20**

CPL, D/3/319, 2/7/69

**Michael Alan White, 19**

SSG, A/3/319, 6/9/69

(Virtual Wall states D/3/319)



**James Ervin Tompkins, 28**

SSG, B/3/319, 9/25/69

**Michael William Steffe, 20**

SP4, A/3/319, 11/3/69



**David Richard Cook, 19**

CPL, B/3/319, 11/7/69



**Everett Ralph Jorens, Jr., 21**

SGT, B/3/319, 11/15/69



**Danny Gilbert Ruybal, 19**

CPL, B/3/319, 4/11/70



**Rosendo Flores Silbas, 21**

PVT, B/3/319, 4/11/70



**Randall Gene Sowers, 18**

PVT, HHB/3/319, 7/8/70



**Ben Jackson, Jr., 23**

PFC, D/3/319, 8/15/70

**Harold Clifton Marsh, 21**

SSG, HHB/3/319, 10/19/70



**Charles F. Thomas, IV, 24**

CPT, HHB/3/319, 4/8/71



**Steven Larry Martin, 22**

SP4, HHB/3/319, 5/11/71







## A Farewell to Troopers of the 173d Abn Bde & 503rd PRCT Who Made Their Final Jump



**Joseph J. Ardito 73**

Vineland, NJ  
January 15, 2018  
173d Abn Bde, RVN, RLTW

**Ralph A. Camorati, 68**

Bridgeport, NY  
December 18, 2017  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**John Castellano, 80**

Victoria, TX  
January 7, 2018  
173d Abn Bde, RVN, 3 tours

**Charles Edward Conklin, 92**

Poughkeepsie, NY  
January 30, 2018  
503rd PIR, WWII

**James T. Devlin, 69**

West Farmington, OH  
January 27, 2018  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Jack Curtis Hammett, Jr., 79**

Paeonian Springs, VA  
January 1, 2018  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Kenneth Earl Leidner**

Deering, NH  
December 19, 2017  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Frank G. Machado, 69**

Garland, ME  
December 20, 2017  
335th AHC, RVN

**Jack J. Menendez, Jr., 82**

Charlestown, IN  
November 3, 2017  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Lloyd Michaels, 74**

Bridgeport, PA  
November 11, 2017  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**David Millhorn**

Chattanooga, TN  
December 2017  
B/4/503, RVN

**Robert Lee Moseley, 68**

Hattiesburg, MS  
January 11, 2018  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Dominic J. Pungitore, 70**

Holbrook and Sangerville, ME  
August 16, 2017  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Thomas D. "Tom" Stauffer, 70**

Salina, KS  
December 30, 2017  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Gregory K. Stewart, 70**

Thayne, WY  
October 5, 2017  
173 Abn Bde, RVN

**Michael L. "Buddy" Strange, 71**

Benton, AR  
February 3, 2018  
4/503, RVN

**Daniel Joseph Tomczak, 69**

Raleigh, NC  
January 14, 2018  
4/503 RVN



Our good buddy Harry Cleland, HHC/B/2/503 visits his good buddy Dan Tomczak in hospital, with Dan's wife Denise.

*(Sadly continued....)*





**Charles Tyler, III, 68**

Union Grove, WI  
December 26, 2017  
335th AHC, RVN

**Daniel Verlarde, 66**

Albuquerque, NM  
January 16, 2018  
173d Abn Bde, RVN

**Charlie Wright, Jr., 80**

Lumberton, NC  
November 22, 2017  
173d Abn Bde, RVN



**MSGT. Charlie Wright and his buddy.**



## VA continues commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War

by David Shulkin

In 2017, President Trump signed the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act designating March 29 of each year as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Our nation's Vietnam War Commemoration is an opportunity for all



Americans to recognize, honor, and thank our Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice during one of the longest wars in our country's history.

As a commemorative partner, VA joins nearly 10,000 organizations across the nation supporting the Department of Defense in this mission to honor and thank our Vietnam Veterans. I encourage all VA leaders to either host ceremonies or participate in community events during the period March 25 – 29, 2018, to express our tremendous gratitude to this generation of warriors and their families.

The commemoration recognizes all men and women who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the United States' involvement in Vietnam — November 1, 1955 – May 7, 1975. Nine million Americans, approximately 7.2 million living today, served during that period. The commemoration makes no distinction between Veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years. All answered the call to duty.

Please visit [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com) to learn how your organization or facility can become a commemorative partner and participate in this commemoration. VA currently sustains more than 400 commemorative partnerships, and I am so proud of their contributions to honor and thank our Vietnam Veterans.

