



THE 503rd P.R.C.T. HERITAGE BATTALION



~ HONORING OUR WWII 503rd TROOPERS ~

Moderator

Tony Geishauser



Moderating the meeting with men of the 503rd PRCT, will be Tony Geishauser.

After three and a half years in the US Marine Corps Reserve and attending college in Maine, Tony was bored with college and wanted adventure flying helicopters in Vietnam in 1966. It didn't matter that he had never seen a helicopter up close and personal before that time. The Army radio ads were doing their job and enticed him to sign up and be all he could be.

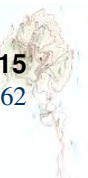
Tony was lucky enough to be assigned to Company A, 82nd Aviation Battalion - known as the "Cowboys." Based out of Bien Hoa, Vietnam, their primary mission was to fly combat and support missions for the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

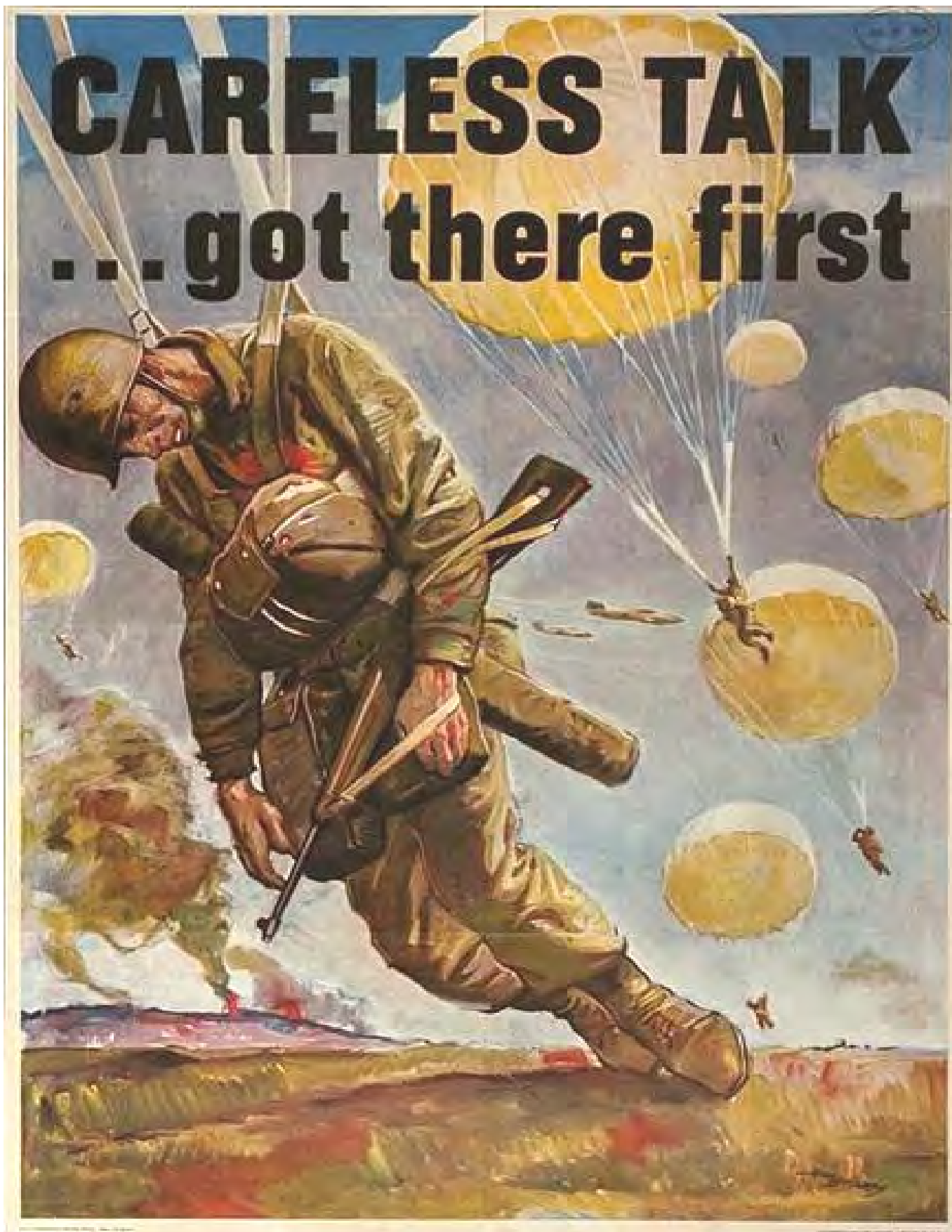
On Tony's first combat flight in Vietnam, he was flying in a flight of four helicopters with his best friend from flight school in the helicopter behind him. Just before landing at a "secured" LZ, Tony's flight was taken under fire by a lone VC firing an AK-47. The helicopter in front of him was hit and the one with his friend, Jim, in it was hit. Tony soon found out his friend was shot in the head and killed instantly on his first flight.

Tony went on to support his beloved "Sky Soldiers" after that tragic first flight. The largest battle he was a part of was on Operation Silver City in War Zone D. His helicopter was loaded with hot A rations for the 2/503d that was located in an LZ area called Zulu Zulu. Unknown by anyone at the time, the battalion was surrounded by nearly 2,000 VC and NVA regulars. Tony's helicopter was shot down almost as soon as it arrived which began an epic battle where upwards of 500 NVA and VC were killed to the 2/503rd's 11 KIA and over 200 WIA.

Tony retired as a major and a Master Army Aviator and has had a successful Public Relations and Media relations career in Texas.

Tony, a young chopper pilot in Vietman, 1966.





Sent in by Jack (Jackattack) Ribera, A/2/503d



THE PASSING CAPTAINS

By Tony Sierra
D Company, 503rd PRCT



Tony



Fifty Decembers have passed... many of them memorable and as in every one's life many things transpired in those periods. Keepsakes of those cold months have faded like a newly dipped paintbrush rubbed backwards to the first month. However, it is that first December standing out as the dominant period when my life's emotions crested.

Tock, tick, tock, tick, tock, tick...this was the merest sound daring to penetrate the solid wall of silence dominating the neighborhood where I was raised. Nothing tainted the sky; not a speck of light, not the tiniest reflection from the ocean of neon bulbs over the city only blocks away.

Despair and nostalgia slowed me from pressing the doorbell, as I walked onto the mat astride my Mama's front step. Standing before the closed door I conceded it was fitting the grandfather clock my brother sent years ago from Germany seemed to run in reverse. After an eternity away, I returned home this December seeking to resurrect my youth. Four years had past since last I was here.

"Dios mio, you are here! Hold me before I drop, no lo creo, I cannot believe it is you." Mama squeezed me with all the strength her heart possessed and shed tears depressed within her for several years. *"Hijo, you*

look so marvelous, like a dream...you make a wonderful Captain with all your ribbons and medals."

For moments I could say nothing but in the end I said, *"Mama, I am only a Sergeant but whatever I am does not count. Only that I am here is important."*

The hearts of men come, perhaps rather more often than those of women, to steep places down which the least touch will cause them to hurl themselves.

I flopped on a chair, held Mama as close as I could and sensed her sobbing against my ribbons and in her chest was a vigorous pounding. At the moment all the war things were forgotten and I whimpered like a baby. I had returned home and only the clock's weird ticking and our wailing disturbed our reverie

As fate decreed, life levelled off a few months after some of us returned from our wars and others from their own pursuits. As time went on the euphoria passed with the appropriate celebrations and the predictable hangovers. Shortly the days once again aligned themselves into old routines and in many cases newer forms of them. We were entering an era where new Captains were coming forth. Not the Captains familiar to me, with the medals, ribbons and the silver bars as Mama had misjudged on the night of my return, but rather a new breed I thought as Captains of a new forward movement.

In my telling of events of that long past December and other forty nine ones following, I use the title "Captain" generically, I classify my comrades of that era strong hearted, visionary and courageous, whether they carried the rifle as I did or not. In my perception we were all Captains, even if some wore metallic rankings, others wore cloth stripes while most wore only their common uniform and what their soul and heart brought from their naive adolescent years. Additionally, some in time rose to such high rankings it is difficult to believe all this really occurred when viewed from my perspective after the passage of so many decades.

Once the national war time adrenaline, which had shot so high, returned to normal the race was on to do things we never dreamed possible. The country sped in all directions with such intensity that hardly anyone was left behind. And the drivers of these movements were the same Captains who had driven the war to a tremendous victory; it was incredible that many had risen from such humble beginnings.

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Photo taken at Port Moresby airstrip after Nadzab jump. October or November 1943. This is one of the regiment's original squads. It shows a typical, ragtag group of outstanding troopers. By mid 1945 the entire squad, with one exception, Tony Sierra, was gone.

And now my Captains became engrossed mainly in one thing, to get back step by step, the parts of their life lost or destroyed, by friend or foe, and pay themselves for everything they had dared and endured. As there was a Captain in every town and home, they became a portent.

Politicians feared or wondered at them, planners and new businessmen served them and themselves through them.

For they were the new country, the relentless spirit built in those horrible days when so many battles were on, never really knowing who was winning, one side or the other; they were that spirit that forgets nothing, but maintains itself amid all disasters, and necessities. For they were perhaps the most concrete expression of our country's instinctive survival in spite of its own perversity and ignorance.

Never in my wildest dream, especially during the "foxhole" days, did I envision amounting to anything more than what my forefathers had been. There was honor in their labor, but that is what it was "labor" and I together with millions of others anticipated we would return to only that. What else could we expect? Many as in my case had never completed high school. And the entire country was swamped with guys like me with the military stars still in our eyes never thinking all this

would end one day and the day approached faster than any of us imagined.

But subtly, while each of us had been about our "war business," this enterprise itself planted a seed within us which was to render a greater service to the country and in a special way to our families far exceeding the just-past melodrama of the troubled world.

As each of us strived to once again return to normal affairs we slowly realized whatever we tried, even whatever aspirations entered our heads appeared too mundane, too far beneath the tremendousness of what we had been through.

This is not to say every one was of the same sentiment. A great number were able to return to the exact position and place they had left, almost as if they had merely taken off for a long weekend and whatever tools they used in their labors had barely cooled from the heat of their hands. Looking back over this more than fifty years, I would estimate about half the men returning, came to the spot they had left. Thousands of them married the girls they kissed goodbye when they boarded the gangplanks and in some cases lived out their lives in the house where they were raised and was possibly next door to where the girl kissed at the gangplank lived.

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These contented returnees were Captains, in their own quiet way. Over the years when we ruminated together we conceded life was such that the “quiet little man” frequently carried not only his own load but often the load of some one above him. We deemed successful a mortar barrage, not only for the gunner’s accuracy, but due in great part to the guy who trudged beside him for miles overloaded almost to exhaustion with the ammunition. This was as true in civilian life as it was in the military.

In life there rarely is a momentous gain without some corresponding return payment. Often at moments it seems the payment exceeds the gain. But this is an untruth; a crutch for the failure of those unwilling to exert their all in search of some gain. These were not genuine Captains; not the Captains I speak of...those who refused to make this payment. However, in the main most of the men remained Captains.

I remained as close to my own buddies as if we had never left the foxholes. I was amazed at how well they did. In most cases they succeeded mightily in whatever they had attempted. Many were entrepreneurs; others advanced up in the professions, medicine, education, finance and other endeavors. A few wrote books, others managed corporations and some even became endeared politicians. Not all materially enriched themselves or moved in prominent circles but once again in their own quiet way like the ammunition carrier, they achieved some measure of accomplishment.

In time the country fleetingly called us “the greatest generation” and for a while a certain celebrity status was rendered. Books were written, movies were filmed, and television embraced the entire enterprise as if they had been asleep while all this was happening. Nearly every community went on a monument building binge, wanting to be first to grand stand with showy monuments and soon nearly every park in the country had its own WWII veterans’ homage.

A natural phenomena; likes attract and the Captains met from time to time in their own groups, separate, but intrinsically joined as cells are in the totality of a body. Each told and retold his story. The details differed, but the profundity of the experience was all the same. That is why they were Captains.

One infantryman would recount, “*hell, I was a scout deep in the jungle in the Pacific. We were there already for ten days and it had never quit raining.*”

Everything was soaked and all I saw was my second scout. You and I are the only two humans in this whole world, we could just disappear and no one would ever know what happened to us. What the hell are we doing here? Where is the Army and where are the Generals?”



D Company troopers, 503rd PRCT

There was no end to the incredible events, “*I was a paratrooper and my buddy was impaled on a tree stump on a night jump. The trunk ran through his entire body, from his nuts to his neck. The medics had to cut him in half to remove him.*”

Another said, “*I was a submariner when we went into Tokyo bay, we sank a big ship. Our other sub was lost, my kid brother was a torpedo man on it.*”

Another sobbed when he related, “*I was first sergeant of the company that scaled the cliffs on Utah Beach. We had ninety men in the outfit. Only twenty made it. One who did not make it was my brother, he was a squad leader.*”

“The plane was on fire, half the fuselage gone, I leaped, never jumped a chute before. I was a prisoner for the rest of the war. I lasted on potatoes and whatever leaves we could scavenge. I cannot tell you how cold it was, even today I have not warmed.”

The telling went on and on every year at the reunions, over his drinks individual Captains’ eyes would moisten when stories like these were murmured:

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'The overloaded lead men dropped off the ramp on D-Day and never came up. The first man clearing land mines blew up and I was next, the Indian imprisoned for three years working the coal mines of Mongolia and hungering for the greasy meat of the rats abiding there. 'The ultimate exterminators'' he joshed, "we cleaned those tunnels of all its rats'; the tank driver who lost two arms when the tank burned out." Over the decades of telling they built an encyclopedia not believed by most who were not Captains.

But the interests of Americans are fleeting. The moment the super bowl ends next year's teams are already in debate. And so as the shadows of age crept toward the Captains their status and positions were also already in question.

A man's pilgrimage through this world is never a smooth trip, no matter the road he chooses. It is a roller coaster ride, a joining of ups, downs, jerks and sudden starts. One can never foretell if the car will stop while the ride is on the high or tumble down derailed, uncontrolled. The years and their affairs subtly ebb so slyly; we are often asleep hardly ever waking up to them.

The years passed and the generation matured. The world rotated in its slow ordinary way and we counted on gravity and fate to maintain our own balance, but even so I still saw my comrades flourishing, for in my heart they remained invincible.

But just as mighty oaks one day must fall and the cliffs of Gibraltar must in the end crumble into the sea, so did the Captains' destinies abate. They were ageing and night was creeping upon them.

It is money that moves people's sentiments and consciousness. Even if there had been sadness with the absence of the Captains, the very nature of the war and its requirements had set for those at home a tone of living never before seen. However, even amid all this splendor, some Captains never became involved in all this mishmash. Their hearts were left somewhere amongst the explosions.

But the money, like the adrenaline, could not persist forever as a consequence of the war. Nevertheless, within several decades affluency had stabilized and most people, except the Captains, forgot the war and its characters. The monuments so enthusiastically built stood rusting and fading, collecting dust. Not too harshly, imperceptibly, but steadily the Captains lost their gloss.

Great rivers like the Amazon, the Nile, the Rhine and others have for centuries hidden their places of birth, even today experts are unable to agree where each begin. Did they start in some obscure spring, in some

underground flow from a mountain lake or from a collection of insignificant rivulets joined in some hidden dale? No one can say for sure.

Under like circumstances the erosion of the reverence to the aging Captains began. No significant politician or other personage openly took contrary positions concerning them but a doubtful aura, a questionable attitude was sensed permeating our society; invading the country. Again no one could say for sure where all these begin, like the mysterious sources of the rivers.

The Captains had years ago shown their courage, their staying power and their resolve. But nothing can ever stop or even slow the spinning of time's hourly hands. So it was taking its toll on the Captains. Those who attained higher status were first to realize their down turning. They had further to fall. The rest, who in their own way had also succeeded but might not have reached notoriety, likewise faded but since they suffered only a short fall somehow they acquiesced in a milder manner.

Day by day they abandoned their civilian duties, their businesses, their government positions, their jobs with the inevitable skimpy golden parachutes and whatever else had occupied them since the days of their youthful Captaincies. Many of the most hardy hung on longer than they should and even if *"the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak"*. But in the end the coming of each new moon clearly signaled their time was nearing its low point on that uncertain roller coaster that they had mounted so many decades ago.

Once they were looked up to. Folks sought them out, to talk of how things were then and to seek advice. Children yearned to hear of the Great War. To their families they were champions. Their sons and daughters embraced them with great gusto not just courteous hugs. The grandchildren always rushed to find "grandpa". Aside from all this, there were their buddies and the reunions and other gatherings. They came in the early years by the hundreds, anxious to meet at the "hospitality rooms" and to tell of their grown families and other personal things. They came to talk of little Jimmy and how he was now a cardiac surgeon. They elated to talk of the successes of the offsprings, as if that was an armor against the attack of age confronting them.

However, when one or two drinks were consumed there was a fading in their delivery. Behind the bravado of how well things were going was a dimness. Hardly a word was said about them. The Captains. Each year the talks appeared darker.

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The hint of future ventures and plans and projected visits appeared but only as cover-ups for the way life was treating them now.

At the homes they had bought with so much sacrifice, when functions were held more often than not they were politely seated at far ends or even in corners, so as not to embarrass affluent guests with their farts and their belches; or not to brag too much of their climb of Mount Suribachi to visitors unknown to the Captain. It was a mere step from the attic where the “crazy aunt” had been hidden in the old days. What a blow to the Captain who had stormed the beach at Normandy. In whispers, it was even talked of confiscating his driver’s license. His grandson, newly licensed, would come every three or four days, maybe.

And what of the remaining Captains? What do they say?

Recently I stood curbside during an emotional patriotic parade. The Marine band, splendid in their uniforms played the Marine Hymn as the unfurled Flag gloriously waved in a gentle breeze. I asked another aged Captain, older than I, what he felt about all this and about his service in the Corps, which I knew had been a horrendous experience for him. He wiped a tear from his eye and responded, *“in spite of the hypocrisy in our current society, I’ve had a marvellous life. But my one shinning moment in all this, one that no one can ever take away, were my years in the service. I am so proud of having served and even knowing how terrifying it all was, I would do it again if I could.”*

And now regularly one of the old paratroopers passes on. In the beginning his burial was a patriotic revelation, all who heard of him came. Some travelled even across the country to hear the nostalgically familiar sounding of taps. Every one shed tears. Often there was not enough room in the churches. One could hear the rattling of the Catholic rosary beads. It brought tears to the Captains who memorialized these rattlings from their times on the C47 planes and the landing barges, decades ago.

But now, at these demises we are hard pressed to beg someone to come to these burials and blow some bugle and to ceremonially fold our flag and to render some words about one of the disappearing Captains. This task should be getting easier, for it won’t be long before it will not have to be done. Fifteen hundred every day. The Captains.

~ A SOLDIER REMEMBERED ~



Here are some photos sent to me by Betty Slowe Olen, sister of one of the Pfc rifleman killed on Negros. I unexpectedly convened with her in San

Diego and a connection was set.

She was a younger sister when Slowe was with the the 503rd. **Benny Slowe** and I trained in the same jump class and ended up in the same platoon with the regiment. Only the joining in the same squad was unachieved.

Slowe was an incredibly boyish looking trooper, fresh out of high school. Of course so were many others. I have conjectured he was killed due to his desire to excel as a soldier and hence dared beyond most of us. He was a wonderful young man and is typical of the unexhorted troopers of that era.



PFC Benjamin Slowe

Pfc. Slowe was machined gunned on an obscure ridge in the rain on May 2nd, 1945 on the Island of Negros. I cite him because he was additionally a great soldier on Corregidor, particularly on the 19th of February during Lt. Endo's Banzai charge.

He is interred in the military cemetery, International Falls, Minnesota. It gives me the impulse to some day visit him and recall his service with the regiment.

Tony Sierra
D Co., 503d PRCT

MORE ON THE CORREGIDOR JUMP

Of the 2065 men of both lifts, about 280, or approximately 13.5 percent, were killed or severely injured. Of these, 2 [ex A Co., 504th PIR] were injured on landing, and another 50 wounded either in the air or on grounding. Some 180 had to be evacuated and hospitalized. Three men who suffered malfunctions and two who swung into the sides of buildings, were killed, and an unfortunate eight – mostly men who blew over the cliffs and landed in front of Japanese caves – were slain in the air or before they could get out of their chutes. Six remained missing after the final count was taken.

James H. & William M. Belote - Corregidor,
“The Stirring Saga of a Mighty Fortress,” *Playboy Press*



CORREGIDOR

Silver moon softens shattered walls,
Only the ghosts remain,
And the winds howl down the lonely halls
The tales of blood and pain.

And chutes sigh, like long lost souls,
Stranded in lifeless trees,
Death lurks in the cave-like holes
That gape at the lonely seas.

O Lord, consecrate and bless
The loved ones who must rest,
Who bore your cross and gave their all
In this their final test.

Gertus H. Jones, Sgt.
Battery "B"
462nd Parachute Artillery Battalion



Landing on Corregidor...The Rock



CORREGIDOR STORY CONCLUDES

Following is the conclusion to Chet Nycum's story about Corregidor. The first part of his story, "*Day 1 - The Jump*," appears in Issue 14 of our newsletter.

~ CORREGIDOR DAY 2 ~

Each soldier sees and remembers his own war. I am proud to have served with the men of the 503 PRCT. Being fresh from the farm, and one of lowest in rank, no one had any reason to inform me of where I was going or what I could expect when I got there, even though our purpose was quite clear. It's now 58 years later and my memories remain vivid. This is my war as I remember it, the one that still invades my dreams.

Fate Intervenes



Focus is a relative thing.

Memory is always playing some tricks, and though I am in the process of auditing mine, I am still hazy on some of the sequences myself. The overall sequences across the entire island, across several days, which I need to memorize as if I was some omnipotent witness from the clouds, omnipresent at every action, still give me trouble.

The passage of time on Corregidor is so difficult to remember -- there were two sorts of men on Corregidor - the ones who lived (and died) assiduously by time, recording its passage by the minute, writing it down in their diaries, on the backs of little pieces of paper, on the backs of maps etc. - and the rest of us, who let it flow over us like a tide, unrecorded, in which we were immersed by its passage around us, inundated by the fact that it continued for us, yet ceased to run for so many

men on both sides. Time was a current in which we were swirled around by happenings in which the days and the minutes, the seconds and the hours seemed to have no meaning anymore, and no relationship to each other. We marvelled at how for some it came to an end all too briefly, bushido spirit be damned! Corregidor was even then a place where my own measurements of time were registered in now's, next's and suddenly's, rather than days, hours and minutes. After it was all over, the experiences were melded simply into a single measurement of passage called "*my time on Corregidor*."

As daylight of the second day unfolds, I scan the area for any sign of our enemy, and see none.

We arise from our cover and prepare for the day, and the prospect that this day we will not be '*in reserve*'. There are some sore heads still from the night before.

As I walk out onto the road I hear someone next to the truck calling me over. "*Hey Nyk! Look at this!*"

I walk over to the truck and see a Nip lying crumpled on the road. It is the first Jap body I have seen here.

"*Who's trophy is this?*"

"*He took him with his knife*," someone says, and points to our medic.

The medic, clearly not as shocked now as he must have been earlier, replies to no one in particular, "*I don't understand why he came to me to help him commit suicide*."

We all laugh the laugh of the nervous, and move on.

Our day is spent patrolling topside and cleaning out pockets of Japs wherever we find them.

In the afternoon, towards 4:00 p.m., we are ordered to a position directly above Black Beach, and told we are there to give cover for a landing. There have already been landings the prior morning, so I am not expecting too much of a show.

As I am laying there looking at the destroyer, now just off the East end of Bottomside, I see a small landing craft making for the beach. A Nip heavy machine gun opens up about 200 feet below my position. I see splashes up in front of the landing craft and sparks flying off the metal hull as the rounds strike on steel. The destroyer reacts to this threat and starts churning white water as her skipper puts her into reverse.

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The large craft backs gently until she is laying in line with the machine gun, and it then dawns upon me that I too am along that same line, and that I am not in a good place to be for what shall likely happen next.

I roll back from my dress-circle view on the rim of the crater, and wait. It does not take long, for the Rock beneath me shudders. I hear the machine gun return defiance, and a further naval volley shakes the ground underneath me. There is no further noise from the Jap MG in the orchestra stalls, though "to make sure," the blasts continue.

The landing craft reaching the beach, now drops the ramp and I see a man run down on the beach, where he squats down and appears to be waiting, guiding the men who are there and too anxious to go ashore.

I don't know who he is, but he is one of the bravest men I have ever seen. As dangerous as being a scout might be, he can have that job, I'll not trade.

Men engulf him from the LCI and together with the others on the beach, they move towards Malinta Hill, like soldier ants with a solitary purpose. I see them scale the giant hill opposite me, quickly at first and then slower, and in several minutes I see men atop Malinta. It's still better to jump from a plane, I think to myself.

We then move down to the cave housing the machine gun. To ensure it is knocked out, we blast the cave shut. Our 2nd Battalion is now on the Rock and is being moved into position. "G" Co. is moved back to its earlier position on the road sloping down toward North Beach. We patrol from this station throughout the next day.

On the night of the 19th we hear signs of a possible Banzai off to our right front, towards Wheeler battery. Someone's dying over there, that's the case with those Banzais. I hope it's just Japs.

I later learn that a scout called McCarter is being nominated for a CMH. (See CMH award in Issue 14. Page 40. Ed)

Time starts to blur on me. At some time between the 18th and the 21st I witness a major explosion of Malinta Hill. I forget what I am doing, because suddenly there is a large explosion and as I turn to look towards Malinta Hill, I see fire flaming out of the air vents on the sides and top of the hill. Smoke from the blast moves towards top side, and I wonder how many men who had been atop the hill are now dead, and how many Japs died in the Hospital that was inside the hill.

The tank followed by men of the 34th moves around the north side of Malinta hill, and we are directed to follow and patrol their left flank. As I move down the road

sloping down to North Beach I pass Trooper B standing over two dead Japs and laughing at the position they had fallen, almost as though they were in love. I paused long enough to take a series of three snapshots of the incident. then on to the job ahead.

As we pass Malinta hill we came upon a number of dead Japs lying along the road, I don't know if the tank's machine gun killed them or they were killed by the troops following the tank. It was not hard to determine that the Japs had charged the tank.

We move towards the left after coming around Malinta Hill, the Bataan side, and start searching for caves or dug-in troops. The constant danger is wearing me thin. I pretty much lose all recollection of time, as if my memory is playing tricks on me, refusing to work for me.

For the next seven days we search for the hidden Japs, finding them only after they had fired at or killed one of our men. Our patrols are scattered like ants across our area of concern. As time passes on we stop trying to determine if there were any Japs in a cave, that's just too dangerous. It is safer to close a cave than to care what is in there. That's if we can get there to close it and not get ourselves killed in the process.

At one time I come upon my closest friend "Maxie." He's standing just above a cave tossing WP (White Phosphorus) grenades and firing into the cave. He truly looks as though he is enjoying the fight.

On 26 February, as we are working the Bataan side of the island clearing the area north of the air strip, we feel the air press in upon us, and then hear a tremendous explosion. I turn towards where the noise came at me, and find a huge ball of dirt and smoke in the air above where the 1st Battalion are today. Debris is flying high in the sky, and boulders are coming crashing down around us. Logs are flying through the air, and huge rocks too. It looks like a mountain is broken up and flying through the air over us. We look out towards the north channel, and we could see huge logs and rocks falling towards a destroyer patrolling the waters between Corregidor and Bataan.

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It doesn't seem long before we are ordered to take over the lead, and I hear the words "Monkey Point". As I am running forward I chance to look down. In among some broken slabs of concrete there below me is our commander, Col. Jones. He's hunched down passing orders to his radio man. This surprises me because Officers of his status never put themselves in danger, don't they? Kinsler didn't, that's for sure. The Colonel must have brass ones.

We're now in an area that has man-made gullies. I expect they're to carry the heavy rainfall towards the ocean, without scouring the landscape too bad. A road runs through the area and passes over a culvert.

As I start to pass in front of the culvert I am fired upon from someone in the culvert. I am glad to know this, because I have seen guys who never even had a chance to know they were shot.

I hit the ground and look for a way to get in a position to lay fire into the culvert.

The culvert is under the road and the gully runs parallel to the road. The gully drain then makes a left as it heads toward the sea. I drop back and call for a bazooka gunner. Earl Shelton comes forward to me and I place him in a position at the left turn where he has good cover.

"See if you can hit the corner of the culvert without exposing yourself," I tell him.

He takes one quick look around the corner and gives me the nod. Second looks around corners on this island are often fatal, and you don't even get to know you're shot they're so quick on you.

"Wait 'til I'm in position to jump into the gully," I say. He knows by now that I'm going in to kill anything that survives his shot.

I move to a point directly above and in front of the culvert, but where I'm protected by the bank of the gully. I give him the signal. As soon as the round explodes I leap into the gully and spray 45 slugs into three Japs I see. They are still moving, not in a effort to fight, rather, their bodies are falling forward as life leaves them. One, an older man, has half the top of his head blown away. The bazooka gunner has proved his expertise. I see a pistol hanging from the closest Jap's

neck. I take my jump knife and cut it loose. I carry it back towards the bazooka gunner.

"Nice shot, here's a souvenir," I say as I give Earl the pistol.

As I climb out of the gully I see a piece of sheet metal laying against the hill, slightly west of us. I shouted to the trooper closest to it *"Look out, it may be a sniper!"* I watch him intently as he cautiously moves up to a position directly in front of the sheet metal. He reaches down, grabbed the sheet metal and slides it to the side exposing a small cave occupied by a Jap. The Jap comes out swinging a bolo or bayonet. I look on as the trooper falls back trying to shoot his assailant, but his rifle misfires. He rolls down the hill with the Jap after him until one of the other men shoots and kills the Jap.

My next object of concern is a group of 55 gal drums stacked two high forming a half moon barricade against the face of the hill. In a crouch, I move up to the drums and place my helmet on the barrel of my Tommy gun and raise it above the drums, hoping that if there are any Japs hiding in there I could draw fire. After several seconds with nothing happening, I extend my left arm holding the gun and helmet, intending that if any Japs are in the enclosure, they will be watching the helmet and allow me time to take a quck look inside.

I popped my head up, am looking directly into a large cave. I see slight movement from the corner of my left eye, and duck down safe, where I can ready a phosphorus grenade. It's my last WP grenade, so I'd better get it right first time. I pull the pin, wait very briefly and toss it toward the area where I saw movement. The grenade goes off and before long, a lone Jap comes over the drums, his clothes smoking, running towards the tail of the island. The patrol are nearby and will cut him down.

As I move back toward the rest of the patrol, something hits my right shoulder. I look down and see a small something falling to the ground. I have no trouble reaching down for it, and see it is an anonymous chip of shrapnel. As I attempt to draw my arm back to me, I get a severe pain in my shoulder. I suspect I am wounded, and try to move my arm to find out why it is just hanging off me. The pain becomes unbearable as I tried to move my arm. Trooper E, who is standing not far away, and who has seen something that I have not, shouts *"Medic!"*

(continued....)



The medics arrive and without as much as a "Howdy!" he sticks me with a needle. We've been on this island long enough for me to know that he knows what he's doing, and is too damn good at it. I am sitting behind cover, whilst he hovers around me. He quickly strips me to the waist and binds me in adhesive from my neck to my lower stomach.

"Do you think you can walk?" he shouts at me, as if I am hard of hearing, simple, or worse - in shock. They help me to my feet and point me towards the west. Trooper E comes over and calls at me.

"Nyk, how many Japs in the enclosure?" I think for a moment, just long enough to realize that I have no idea anymore, other than it is still a place of danger, a place that can still kill him as it almost did me.

"Forty."

He'll be careful now.

(I met Trooper E at a association gathering, pleased to know he was still alive. He chided me that there were no more Japs in the compound, but I couldn't help but feel he was still alive because, dazed as I was, I loved him enough to refuse to allow him to drop his guard even for a moment).

I stumble myself out of the gully and proceed west. I no longer recall how far I walked. Time ceases to run, and distances contract too. I pass the area where I saw Colonel Jones with his radio man some time ago. How long ago, I can no longer recall. Ahead I see white objects, incongruous, laying around the path that I am walking. I get closer and see they are shaped like cocoons.

"Body bags," I think, "but why? We don't bag Japs."

It hits me worse than shrapnel. We don't bag Japs! These are our guys.

As I pass through this honor guard of dozens and dozens of our dead, our squalid, battered and glorious dead, a tightness develops in my throat, and tears smear my vision. It starts hitting me, hurting me, and I sob "Oh God!" as my ears hear nothing but a ringing sensation. I crumple to the ground between the rows of bodies as my vision fades and darkness comes.

I don't know if it was the effect of the shot the medic gave me or my emotional state or a combination of both that caused me to pass out, nor do I know how long I lay there until someone found me, but my next recollection was awaking in a huge chamber with many wounded men on cots.

A man comes by and pauses long enough to say in an offhanded way, "Oh, you're awake."

"Where am I?" No prize for being novel.

He laughs, as if he's never heard that question before, and replies "On your way home, soldier."

I soon learn we are in the belly of an LCT (landing craft tank) and are being moved out to sea to be put on board a hospital ship, USS Comfort. I drift in and out of sleep.



Time still has no meaning for me, only pain.

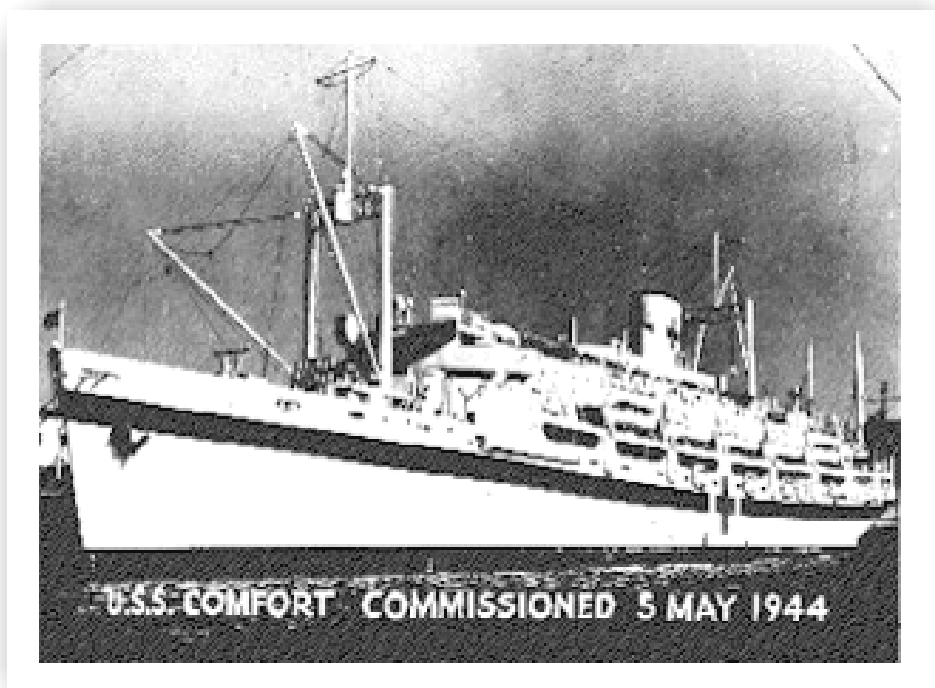
Arriving at the Comfort we are lifted on stretchers by crane to the deck of the ship. My time on the "Comfort" is spent laying on a bunk and being treated like I am the King of Siam. All I have to do is to ask for something and it is delivered to me. They named it right.

To my surprise they even wheel me up on deck after dark, to watch a movie. I do not enjoy the show, for my eyes are on the sky. I am riding on the biggest bull's eye target that has ever been presented to the enemy - whoever heard of sailing through enemy waters with lights burning all over the ship?

(continued....)



What sort of an operation is this? Don't they know there's a war on?



"How did it happen, son?"

I can't answer him how, just why. *"I thought I was sunburned."* He laughs and continues taking off the tape.

When I am unwound, he exclaims, *"Someone is praying damned hard for you to come home!"* His comment comes as he looks at my back and at the debris sticking to the unwound tape. He shows me tiny pieces of rock, sand, small pieces of what appears to be glass - a thing he calls "Mica." (The material that had lodged in my back will still be working its way to the surface ten years after I return home).

He has me sit with my back to him while he numbs the area around the wound in my shoulder, and proceeds to probe for the shrapnel that has imbedded itself in my shoulder joint. Finding it he gently removes it, holding it with a pair of tweezers.

"It looks like a bullet," but on closer examination he determines it is a fragment of steel. He dresses the wound.

It doesn't pass my mind until later that I'm still thinking like a scout in a war zone, and that now neither of these roles apply to me.

The trip is uneventful and we land at Hollandia. This is not the Hollandia I left not too long ago, and though they keep telling me where we are, I doubt it is the Hollandia I knew once. Now there are roads, buildings, traffic and people who go about their business, unconcerned. We are moved to a hospital and are assigned beds. Real beds! How long has it been? This is as close to heaven as I can get. I am like a kid with a big red balloon, and we're sure to run into a prick pretty soon.

The very first nurse I see comes to my bed and asks if I can roll over on my left side. She stands there at attention, with a needle held at port arms. As I achieve my position she advances like a soldier charging with a bayonet and stabs me in my buttock. This procedure, I find out, is repeated twice a day for the next twenty days. The only variation is a change of buttock.

On my second day the doctor calls for me to come to his office, where, with the aid of a nurse, he proceeds to unwind the adhesive from my body. As he pulls the tape from my right shoulder it feels as though he's sticking a hot poker into my shoulder.

I stand facing him. He is holding my arm and gently working it back and forth, I figure, to see how much movement I have without pain. We heard planes flying overhead and he asks me, *"Are they ours?"*

Chump Number 1, I fall for it. I lean to my left to better see out the window and OUCH! He jerks and twists my arm, I hear my shoulder pop. The pain has me gritting my teeth and clenching my fists. I look down sheepishly to see if I've just wet my pants. No. Good.

The pain subsiding, I put on a macho act, just can't let these folk know that a paratrooper isn't tough. There is no doubt in my mind that doctor knew exactly what he was doing, even though his tactics were crude. Horses for courses, they say.

While recovering I am allowed to move about at will, and I spent my time talking to other men in our ward, learning all I can about how the war is going. It is during one of these discussions that I chance to meet one of the sailors that had been on a destroyer patrolling Corregidor when we jumped.

(continued....)



"I timed your fall from the plane to the ground and it averaged six seconds."

I think about this and decide that he is pretty close, since we left the plane at 400 ft.

As days pass, and boredom sets in, one of the nurses brings me a book titled *"The Great McGinty"* about a guy who thinks it's tough to be out of work until he becomes Mayor. I read it twice over, going back and re-reading the funny parts over and over again. It was a great book.

Another event that happens each day, the nurses that were captured on Corregidor and had been prisoners of the Japanese, are brought out to exercise. We must be a fearsome bunch, for we are not allowed outside at the same time they are. Apparently the sight of men frightens them.

I am now at the hospital well over one month and I feel as fit as I ever was. There's more news of how the war is going on at a hospital than at a HQ and so I keep track of where the 503d is. I am looking forward to getting back with the Regiment, who have returned to Mindoro. After nearly three years with the men of the 503d, they are my brothers and where they are is my home. I keep wondering when I will be discharged. I soon get my answer. As I get up one morning a ward attendant brings my clothes to me, complete with shoes and leggings.

"Am I being discharged?"

"No," he shakes his head, *"you're being sent home."* He shakes my hand and wishes me luck.

I sit on my bunk for a spell, almost in shock. What am I to do? Stateside? No way! That's sure and certain. I pack my things and without delay I head for the air strip. I walk among the planes that are parked, talking to the crews until I find one that is headed for Mindoro. It's carrying a load of tires. I pin one of the crew and ask if I can hitch a ride? He talked to the pilot I got a nod. Takeoff time to be 0700 hrs tomorrow. I tell them I won't be late.

I return to the hospital, where I don't sleep all night, for fear of missing my ride. I quietly slip out before dawn and hike to the strip. I locate the C-47 again in the flightline, and crawl in the back, and cat nap. This plane was the same as our jump planes, static line cable running the length of the cabin, and no door. Tires are stacked in vertical rows with rope and cable running from top to bottom through each stack. The pilot and co-pilot arrive about 0630 and made ready to take off.

I can hardly believe my excitement at being able to get away with it! The plane takes off and as it banks right and left the stacks fall against the support ropes holding them, making a thump noise and just the slightest shift of the aircraft. I figure that if this did not bother the pilot there's no point in me worrying about it, so I spend most of my time during the flight looking out the door and just soaking up the beauty of the ocean.

As we approach Mindoro I can see the town of San Jose and I lean out the door and snap pictures of the town as we fly across it heading for the air strip. After landing I hitch a ride on a truck back to our old bivouac area where the company is camped. After the greetings and welcome backs I am told we were are headed for another mission. Seems there is some division in trouble on Negros Island, who need help.

During this short stay, McNeill shows me a pencil sketch of his idea for a regimental patch. Though it lacks color it should become the identity of our Regiment, unofficial until it becomes official.

"I am proud, and I am home."

In the June issue of our newsletter we will continue Chet's report on the War in the Pacific.

- June 2010 Issue -

"Having just enough time to get my gear together and my barracks bag put away, and the tents dropped, we're moved to the air strip where we don chutes and make ready for the jump on Negros."

There are some new faces around me, and they make me feel like an old pro."

I make the time about 7 a.m. There's the usual undercurrent of tension as we load on to the planes and taxi, which the take-off doesn't do anything to relieve. All is normal, and I am praying once again that my personal angel is at my side protecting me, as before. But there is something occurring on the aircraft though which is not usual. After about a half hour in flight the jumpmaster announces that the jump is off. The tension recedes but not for long, for his next words are, 'Remove your chutes! Leave them on the plane, we are landing at Iloilo on the island of Panay and we will move to Negros by boat.'"





THE 503^d P.R.C.T. HERITAGE BATTALION **Online**

THE 503d HERITAGE BATTALION is an informal unincorporated social association formed around and by the WWII Veterans of the 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team who have internet access.

The 503d Parachute Regimental Combat Team Association, World War II, Inc. ("the Association") had, some years back, voted democratically that it was to be a "*last man standing*" organization. This means that its membership register is finite, and that the Association is to be dissolved upon the death of its last member.

For that reason, THE 503d PRCT HERITAGE BATTALION was formed with the intention of creating a body which could survive the loss of the last 503d WWII paratrooper. Its purpose is to



support, preserve and propagate all aspects of the heritage of 503d PRCT. In the internet context, it gathers together materials which might otherwise disappear in the "mists of time," and makes them

available for readers and researchers alike through its website. Its logo (above) depicts a 503d trooper, with a canopy in the background appearing like *Angel wings, floating down towards Corregidor.*

Donald E. Abbott ("A", "D" & "E" Co.) (now dec'd)

Bob Flynn (161st Parachute Eng. Co.) (now dec'd)

Chet Nycum ("G" Co.)

Stephen R. Foster

Its roll is to make that information available to the fresh generations such that there will never be an American generation which cannot readily access and share in the history of the 503d PRCT of WWII and to take pride in the 503d Lineage.

At its reunion in Phoenix, 2009, the Regiment officially recognized the Heritage Battalion for that purpose.

We also hope it can continue the patriotic, familial and social relationships which were formed with the parent Association. To those, we hope it can add the members of the 503d of other generations.

The Battalion's Roll is open to all who wish to maintain and preserve the spirit of the 503d PRCT beyond the passing of its members. To date, the Heritage Bn has been purely an internet based arrangement, and we hope that it can progress to become an active social association which can reflect all those who hold dear those men who served and sacrificed during the course of WWII.

Bless 'em All!

Francis X. O'Neill ("I" Co.) (now dec'd)

Tony Sierra ("D" Co.)

William T. Calhoun ("F" Co.)

Paul F. Whitman (Hons.)





BILL MAULDIN *STARS & STRIPES* WWII CARTOONIST



By Bob Greene, CNN Contributor

CNN Web Site: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/03/07/greene.mauldin.stamp/index.html>



The post office gets a lot of criticism. Always has, always will. And with the renewed push to get rid of Saturday mail delivery, expect complaints to intensify.

But the United States Postal Service deserves a standing ovation for something that's going to happen this month: Bill Mauldin is getting his own postage stamp.

Mauldin died at age 81 in the early days of 2003. The end of his life had been rugged. He had been scalded in a bathtub, which led to terrible injuries and infections; Alzheimer's disease was inflicting its cruelties. Unable to care for himself after the scalding, he became a resident of a California nursing home, his health and spirits in rapid decline.

He was not forgotten, though. Mauldin, and his work, meant so much to the millions of Americans who fought in World War II, and to those who had waited for them to come home. He was a kid cartoonist for *Stars and Stripes*, the military newspaper; Mauldin's drawings of his muddy, exhausted, whisker-stubbed infantrymen Willie and Joe were the voice of truth about what it was like on the front lines.

Mauldin stamp, shown above, honors grunts' hero.

Mauldin was an enlisted man just like the soldiers he drew for; his gripes were their gripes, his laughs were their laughs, his heartaches were their heartaches. He was one of them. They loved him.

He never held back. Sometimes, when his cartoons cut too close for comfort, his superior officers tried to tone him down. In one memorable incident, he enraged Gen. George S. Patton, and Patton informed Mauldin he wanted the pointed cartoons -- celebrating the fighting men, lampooning the high-ranking officers -- to stop. Now.

The news passed from soldier to soldier. How was Sgt. Bill Mauldin going to stand up to Gen. Patton? It seemed impossible.

Not quite. Mauldin, it turned out, had an ardent fan: Five-star Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe. Ike put out the word: Mauldin draws what Mauldin wants. Mauldin won. Patton lost.

(continued....)



If, in your line of work, you've ever considered yourself a young hotshot, or if you've ever known anyone who has felt that way about himself or herself, the story of Mauldin's young manhood will humble you. Here is what, by the time he was 23 years old, Mauldin had accomplished:

He won the Pulitzer Prize. He was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. His book *"Up Front"* was the No. 1 best-seller in the United States

All of that at 23. Yet when he returned to civilian life and he grew older, he never lost that boyish Mauldin grin, he never outgrew his excitement about doing his job, he never big-shotted or high-hatted the people with whom he worked every day.

I was lucky enough to be one of them; Mauldin roamed the hallways of the *Chicago Sun-Times* in the late 1960s and early 1970s with no more officiousness or air of haughtiness than if he was a copyboy. That impish look on his face remained.

He had achieved so much. He had won a second Pulitzer Prize, and he should have won a third, for what may be the single greatest editorial cartoon in the history of the craft: his deadline rendering, on the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, of the statue at the Lincoln Memorial slumped in grief, its head cradled in its hands. But he never acted as if he was better than the people he met. He was still Mauldin the enlisted man.



Weeping Lincoln

During the late summer of 2002, as Mauldin lay in that California nursing home, some of the old World War II infantry guys caught wind of it. They didn't want Mauldin to go out that way. They thought he should know that he was still their hero.

Gordon Dillow, a columnist for the *Orange County Register*, put out the call in Southern California for people in the area to send their best wishes to Mauldin; I joined Dillow in the effort, helping to spread the appeal nationally so that Bill would not feel so alone. Soon more than 10,000 letters and cards had arrived at Mauldin's bedside.

Even better than that, the old soldiers began to show up just to sit with Mauldin, to let him know that they were there for him, as he, long ago, had been there for them. So many volunteered to visit Bill that there was a waiting list. Here is how Todd DePastino, in the first paragraph of his wonderful biography of Mauldin, described it:

"Almost every day in the summer and fall of 2002 they came to Park Superior nursing home in Newport Beach, California, to honor Army Sergeant, Technician Third Grade, Bill Mauldin. They came bearing relics of their youth: medals, insignias, photographs, and carefully folded newspaper clippings. Some wore old garrison caps. Others arrived resplendent in uniforms over a half century old. Almost all of them wept as they filed down the corridor like pilgrims fulfilling some long-neglected obligation."

One of the veterans explained to me why it was so important:

"You would have to be part of a combat infantry unit to appreciate what moments of relief Bill gave us. You had to be reading a soaking wet Stars and Stripes in a water-filled foxhole and then see one of his cartoons."

Mauldin is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. This month, the kid cartoonist makes it onto a first-class postage stamp. It's an honor that most generals and admirals never receive.

What Mauldin would have loved most, I believe, is the sight of the two guys who are keeping him company on that stamp.

Take a look at it. There's Willie. There's Joe.

And there, to the side, drawing them and smiling that shy, quietly observant smile, is Mauldin himself. With his buddies, right where he belongs. Forever.



It's an Honor

(sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d)

When a Military Veteran leaves the 'job' and retires to a better life, many are jealous, some are pleased, and others, who may have already retired, wonder if the new "Retiree" knows what he is leaving behind, because we already know.

We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times.

We know in the Military life there is a fellowship which lasts long after the uniforms are hung up in the back of the closet.

We know even if the new "Retiree" throws the uniforms away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know that the very bearing of a military retiree speaks of what he was, and what in his heart, he still is.

These are the burdens of a career in the Military - you will still look at people suspiciously, still see what others do not see, or choose to ignore, and you will always look at the rest of the Military world with a respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing.

Never think for one moment you are escaping from that past "Military" life. You are only escaping the 'job' and merely being allowed to leave 'active' duty.

When you leave the Military service you will have had the responsibility for more dollars worth of valuable property, equipment and the lives and welfare of more people during your career than 99% of civilians will have during their entire life!

When you "retire" from a Military Career, in your Heart you will never forget for one moment that you are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known!

NOW, Here are a few "Civilian Friends vs. Veteran Friends" comparisons:

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Get upset if you're too busy to talk to them for a week.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Are glad to see you after years, and will happily carry on the same conversation you were having the last time you met.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Keep your stuff so long they forget it's yours.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Borrow your stuff for a few days then give it back.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will leave you behind if that's what 'the crowd' is doing.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Will kick the crowd's ass that left you behind.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Are for a while.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Are for life.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Have shared a few experiences...

VETERAN FRIENDS: Have shared a lifetime of experiences no citizen could ever dream of...

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will take your drink away when they think you've had enough.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Will look at you stumbling all over the place and say, 'You'd better drink the rest of that before you spill it!'

Then carry you home safely and put you to bed...

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will ignore this.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Will share this.

Hello Veteran Friends!

AF VIETNAM VET BUDDY

This note was recently sent to me from Teresa, the wife of my buddy Bob Samansky, after learning her husband had beaten the cancer which was threatening his life. Welcome home Bob! Ed

The strangest thing is that I have been driving my car for months. Remember when I heard the song "We are Family?" I went to the reunion. Jay got Bob's car fixed and Bob listens to old fogey music.



For the last 3 times I have driven his car, the song "For the Good Time" has come on the radio. That was the song of my Mom and Dad just before my Dad left for Viet Nam. He Came Back! I cried every time I heard it. I am still crying, but for the good!

Teresa Samansky



**N CO Rangers
& Chopper
Crews get
together in Las
Vegas, NV
May 23-28 at the
Golden Nugget
Hotel**

**Need your \$80 deposit soon -
end of March deadline !!**

**(N COMPANY RANGERS FOR
CHOPPER INFILTRATION)**

***RANGERS AND CHOPPER CREWS MISSION
"LZ" FOR MAY***

***TRAINING TOGETHER AND KEEPING
CHOPPER READY FOR ACTION***

**TO ALL RANGERS AND THOSE
WHO GAVE US CHOPPER
SUPPORT TO
173rd LRRP + 74th LRP Det. +
75th N/CO RANGERS + 74th LRS
with 173RD Herd**

**Casper Platoon
61st Assault Helicopter Company -
Cowboys, Lucky Stars, Star Blazer,
other support companies like
616th Transportation Det, 922nd
Signal Det. (Avionics), 193th Medical
Det. and others like USAF "Tonto" &
"Shadow"**



**If you are in contact with anyone
that I listed or missed,
contact them.**

**Members who served along
side with N Company (173rd
LRRP + 74th LRP Det. +
75th N/CO RGR + 74th LRD
Det). are invited to a mini
reunion in Las Vegas on May
23 (Sunday arrival) to May
28 (Friday checkout).**

**This invitation is for all who served
in-country from 1965 to 1971 and
also supported the 74th LRS Det.
after 'Nam.**

**The hotel "Golden Nugget" will be
the LZ for this event and room rates
will be \$49.00 + tax per night.
Schedule of events will be forwarded as
it is developed.**

**Website for hotel:
www.goldennugget.com**

Reunion attendance cost: \$80.

Note: Any funds left over after
expenses, will be donated to the
173rd Herd Memorial

**Bring your spouses / family
members / military friends
and friends.**

**If you are interested in attending:
Please send Reunion funds OF \$80 to
Ron Thomas as soon as possible !!!!!**

**Ron Thomas
Reunion Coordinator
184 Greenbriar Townhouses
Las Vegas, NV 89121
(702) 303-0011
18bz@gmail.com**

Hope to see you there !!!

**Robt 'twin' Henriksen
70-71 Team Golf/Delta
Unit Director
cell 360 393-7790**



New to eBenefits!

(Sent in by Karen Riester, wife of Floyd Reister, Bde/HQ)

- To access most of these features, register for a Premium Account (Level 2) and Login to eBenefits.
- **Compensation and Pension Claims Status**
View the status online of your claims information for selected benefits.
- **Payment History**
Monitor information about benefits payments made to you by the VA.
- **VA Home Loan Benefit Eligibility and Entitlement**
Want to find out if you are eligible for the VA home loan benefit? The eBenefits website can assist you in finding out. Simply register for an account, log in, and then go to the My eBenefits dashboard to find out. If for some reason the site cannot determine your eligibility, submit an application.
- **Health Eligibility Check**
Your enrollment in VA health care benefits may be based on financial considerations. This calculator tool helps you assess whether you may qualify.
- **Move!23 Health Questionnaire**
Generate and print out practical weight management recommendations based on your eating habits, activity levels, and medical history.
- **Health Insurance Information**
Sponsors and eligible family members can view medical, dental, and pharmacy eligibility information, plus any non-TRICARE health insurance received through an employer or other insurance program.

Coming Soon...

- **Messaging Center**
This feature will provide registered users with access to notices, news, secure messages, and email notifications.
- **Personal Information Update**
Sponsors will be able to make updates to their addresses and selected other information directly from the portal.
- **Specially Adapted Housing Claims Status**
This portal will let users view their Specially Adapted Housing grant information and claims status.

SAILORS NEEDED FOR DEEP SEA FISHING IN NORTH MYRTLE BEACH

I was checking into Deep Sea Fishing in the North Myrtle Beach area and I'd love to go fishing on Thursday, June 3, if I can get 2 or 3 more guys or gals to go out too. It's only \$420.00 all day with everything included. What do you think? Would you like to do that with me? I was signed up for the Charleston trip, but would forget that if I could get a few more to go fishing with me. We could break the cost down so it will not be too hard on any of us. Any fisherpeople out there please contact me: fsgt173d@aol.com

Jim "Top" Dresser
A/HHC/2/503d, '65/'66



"My goodness Top. Let him have the fish!"

173d CHAPTER 17 BULLETIN BOARD

As many of you know, 173d Chapter 17 started a **Bulletin Board** on the web site over a month ago. There has been a lot of interest shown and a lot of info which is of interest to any Sky Soldier, any Chapter.

At Chapter 17 we have also instituted a Transparency Policy for all info received including our own finances.

Our Bulletin Board address is:

<http://www.skysoldier17.com/Bulletin%20Board.htm>

Thanks for letting your buddies know everyone is welcome to our web site and anyone is welcome to contribute interesting articles, writings, etc.

Skip Kniley
B/D/3/319th



Secretary of Defense Commemorative Commission Meeting

Your review and reply at your earliest opportunity would be appreciated,

AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY!!

"RAGMAN"

Robert A. Getz

2/503d

rgetz173@yahoo.com

173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

Folks:

I need your help. On May 11, 2010, I'll be representing the Herd at a Secretary of Defense Commemorative Commission Meeting in Washington DC. One of the items we will be reviewing is a time line of events suitable for Commemorative Events from 2011 through 2024. With your help, I've been able to develop the listing below of events of significance to the 173rd Airborne Brigade during the time frame 1961 to 1973. Please review those events below and let me know if there are any other events you would consider significant.

Since I have developed the list, there have been two challenges. Raymond Ramirez provided the following:

8 November 1965 (2015) - Operation Hump, the 1st major battle involving a US Army ground combat unit, which has been challenged by United States Army Historical Record which noted:

1 November 1965 - Ia Drang Battle -

From 1-20 November the first major clash between American and North Vietnamese troops took place when elements of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) battled the 33rd People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) Regiment in the Ia Drang Valley of the Central Highlands. Although American casualties proved to be high, amounting to some 234 dead, the 1st Cavalry Division reckoned that enemy losses were perhaps ten times as great. In the eyes of General William C. Westmoreland, the MACV commander, the OPERATION vindicated the concept of airmobile Operations.

Do any of you have anything to refute that entry concerning the 1st Cav?

I do not have a date for the last day the Herd spent in Vietnam. The United States Army Historical Record shows:

8/11/1972 - last US USA Unit departs -

The 2nd Battalion, 196th Infantry Brigade, stationed in Da Nang, and during the Easter Offensive in Phu Bai, folded its colors and became the last ground combat unit to leave South Vietnam.

Do any of you have a date that would show the 173rd Airborne Brigade (SEP) was in Vietnam beyond that date showing us to be the First In, Last Out?

26 March 1963 (2013)	The 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) was activated on the island of Okinawa
3 May 1965 (2015)	The Brigade was the first Army unit sent to the Republic of South Vietnam
8 November 1965 (2015)	Operation Hump, the 1st major battle involving a US Army ground combat unit
22 February 1967 (2017)	The Brigade conducted the only combat parachute jump in the Vietnam conflict
17-23 June 1967 (2017)	The Brigade was presented the Presidential Unit Citation for Battle of Dak To
Date Unknown	The Brigade was the last Army unit to depart from the Republic of Viet Nam
14 January 1972 (2022)	The Brigade was deactivated at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Annually
Recipients

Commemorate Medal of Honor

