

"I think that a guy really has to view this question on a personal basis. If you did something that you're ashamed of then your own conscience will condemn you. If you did what you had to for survival and the survival of your Brothers in battle, then you did what was expected of you. If you took life when you didn't have to then it may be argued that you have something to be ashamed of. I'm not ashamed of anything I did in Vietnam...well, there was that time I accidentally discharged a weapon. I believed I was crusading for the little brown people. I felt ashamed when I heard about and then read about My Lai. I felt ashamed when I read the diary of Dang Thuy Tram (Last Night I Dreamed Of Peace). If one has the courage to dash into a phone booth, take off the Super Patriot suit for a moment and read the accounts written by the Viet Cong and NVA Veterans, one may have a clearer perspective of the results of our collective good intentions. As a good friend of mine once said,"We were all victims in that war." Victims of what? I say victims of misuse. Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, McNamara and Westmorland; they have something to be ashamed of and to answer for, but they never will. I am frustrated and angry that our leaders are free from having to atone for their mistakes. Always, when one is spending someone else's money or life one is less careful in the accounting. What we got out of it is knowing that we showed up when we were called and did our job. Like the grunts at Normandy and Pelelue and all the other bloody places, we have nothing to be ashamed of. We are the "ancient sacrifice" and we stand tall in history."

Jim Bethea, HHC/2/503d

"Happy Tuesday and Thanks. A few days ago, there was picture essay and article about the 35th anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam War on the CNN web page. I had thought that things had changed, but it was the same negative pictures and read outs. All things considered, we are fortunate...not to be crazy. Welcome home. Peace."

Peter Ludlow, N/75 Rangers

"I was never ashamed. Held my head high, challenged those that spoke against our service, and never ever forgot who we were and what we did. Being a army brat didn't hurt either. My favorite expression for the media and those who protested VietNam was (Those Bastards Don't Have a Clue)! The real Life Lesson is our parents always knew our fight was justified because of what they learned from WWII and Korea. For that I can thank my parents. They were the ones who thanked me and never let me forget how proud they were of my brother and I. The article was great, but I never felt the shame that some may have felt."

Dave Griffin, HHC/2/503d

"What I do know is that for many years I have had this feeling in my gut to keep these thoughts to one's self. I have connected with many vets who shared the same feeling. We have had mutual love and respect for each other over the years. After returning from VN, I had one friend who gave me shelter and another who protected me from legal harm, both were in a reserve unit that I attended meetings at (even though I was not part of the unit). It gave me a sense of having a safe haven. I have encountered people who pretended to be VNV's, ya'll know that you can spot a fake a mile away. You can only imagine that I was sick to my stomach knowing that these SOB's existed. How many of my friends, whom I cannot even remember their names, lost life and limb in the bush. I had never revealed what some of these feelings were and still are. Whoever wrote the article has said a lot with a few words, but the truth of being out there will probably follow a number of us to the grave. I would like to display what medals I have but I still feel incomplete. I am proud that I served with these men of distinction, but only feel safe while in their midst."

Harry Cleland, B/2/503d



(continued...)



"I know how he feels. We were the only ones who never received a proper welcome home. Instead we were spit at, cursed at, and called baby killers. We were forgotten so quickly when we came home. I am very proud to be a Vietnam veteran. If not for this country then for the guys I served with. The shame of it all now is that we can't even get a proper burial when one of us dies. We get Taps played from a boom box, or a bugler holding a trumpet with a recorder inside. There is no firing party anymore, and the soldiers folding the flag don't know if they are to start folding from the stars or the stripes. I proudly display my Vietnam medals and hope everyone else will. My 173rd pin stays on my lapel. I hope everyone feels like we are proud of what we did."

Dennis Paul, A/2/503d

"I feel sorry for the person who wrote this piece. Never once have I been ashamed of my service in Vietnam or anything I did while I served there. I volunteered to serve in Vietnam as did my brother (Bob Gore, B/2/503rd) and my father (USAF). I have always been proud to have served with some very special people. I am proud of the unit I served with (E/2/503rd) and the Army as a whole. During the time I was there I fought for the guy next to me and he did the same for me. We were given a job to do and we did the best we could. I do not ever remember anyone giving up on the task at hand. We may not have always agreed with what was asked but we performed to the best of our ability. If asked would I do it all over again knowing what I know now, the answer would be "yes". I have no regrets for my time in the Army or for my time in Vietnam."

Jim "Doc" Gore, E/2/503d

"I never was ashamed to tell people I was in Vietnam or was a paratrooper. I never talked much about it unless it was with another grunt and usually drinking, which I did too much of the first year back. My kids knew who I was with because my daughter got me a book about the 173d at Dak To for Christmas about 10 years ago. I shared that feeling you (Smitty) expressed about news items when they talked about someone killing or robbing and I always hoped it wasn't a VN vet or if it was the news didn't mention it. Always wondered why didn't they say it was a WWII or Korean vet if that was the case, just us."

Terry Boggs, E/HHC/3/503d

"Spot on. I am glad the kids today are welcomed back with open arms. The Air Force, Marine and Naval aviation personnel POWs received a well deserved recognition on their return. U.S. Army guys came back a plane load at a time to diffident country and families. That was damaging."

Tim Cloonan, Co. B (Med) and 2/503d

"He has so elegantly expressed the thoughts of so many of us that I am sure will be demonstrated on June 1, 2010 and the week following. There is hardly a day goes by that someone doesn't express their appreciation to me for having served my country, right or wrong, my country in the Vietnam war. When we were delivering to Saigon the body bags with our buddies and friends, filling them in unbelievable numbers, it was extremely difficult to not shed a tear and say a prayer for not only the fallen, but their kin at home."

Don Bliss, 173d Bde. Aviation

"This (the newspaper clipping) is so true, and should be put on a billboard. Thanks."

Ron "Woody" Woodley, A/2/503d



Vietnam veterans enter a hangar at Fort Campbell, Ky., during a ceremony welcoming them home Sunday, Aug. 16, 2009. Hundreds of veterans finally got the homecoming they never had when they returned from the Vietnam War decades ago. (AP Photo/Mark Humphrey)

"I have never felt shame; neglect yes, and for 35 years. It took six months in Dak To, and losing most of my friends to awaken this 19 year old to the realization that we were being used by corrupt politicians to fight a war they themselves would shed no blood in. The impact of digging into the side of a mountain for the second time in Dak To in almost the exact same spot, but with all new people around me was profound. The complete and total circle of life as a combat soldier became clear and frightening. The survival mode took over and the victory parade but a mere illusion. The 19 year old kid became a very old man in a nanosecond. My mission from that instant on was to protect the few people we had left and to get out in one piece."

Roger Dick, C/2/503d

(continued...)



"I was always proud to be a Vietnam Veteran. If someone tried to shame me I would shove my pride down his throat."

Jesse Salcedo, Recon/D/1/503d

"Shame? Hell no! Anger, disappointment? You bet. When the army kicked me out in 69 I was so mad I could not spit. However, I recognized that I had responsibilities and went to work. I kept track of Vietnam, but rarely said anything, except when someone would say 'He was a good kid but got screwed up in Vietnam.' This was usually someone making excuses for a drunk, junkie, criminal. My response was, 'if he came home from Vietnam screwed up, he went there screwed up. I know too many guys that saw way too much combat and they are good citizens.' Occasionally, people did not appreciate my candor. Remember, this is coming from a guy that kept ending up at Letterman Hospital in San Francisco of all places. I always wore my Class A uniform and no one ever, even puckered up at me. Must have been the spit shined boots.

Craig Ford, 1/503d

I have always been proud of my military service. Coming from a small southern town as a 19 year old I thought it was what a man should do for his country. I still feel that way today but also realize we are a dying breed. God bless those that are serving today because most of the citizens they protect are clueless of the price of freedom, or life without the freedoms we have in this country.

Dave Colbert, HHC/2/503d

*I can only provide the remark attributed to GEN Norman Schwarzkoff after the three day war with Iraq when he came home and said something like, "It's a great time to be a Soldier". Well, I'm an old Infantry Paratrooper and for the 20 years that I served on active duty and in the reserves, I was always proud and always noted that I was a retired Airborne Infantryman. I worked for 33 years at the University of Illinois at Chicago and William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, IL, with faculty who were not always congenial with current or former military. They knew who I was and I knew who they were. They didn't put me down nor did I put them down. We did our jobs and kept our distances. The United States has never been kind to its Soldiers. Our citizens do not realize the importance of having a strong and willing military. The worst mistake we have made is to have eliminated the draft and gone to the Volunteer Army. Today, no one cares. With a draft, there is care. We need to go back, re-establish the draft and see where our country stands today. Without the draft, we'll never know. **AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY!!***

"RAGMAN" Robert A. Getz, 2/503d

"I do not think there is a one of us who were not in those shoes."

Jim Robinson, B/2/503d

"I think we all felt this way. After being called 'baby killers, murderers, drug addicts' and being told even a few years ago by our Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, that 'we didn't send our best and brightest to Vietnam,' how are we supposed to feel? Like returning heroes?"

Ed Privette, HHC/2/503d



WHO YA GONNA CALL?

RTO's. Like lawyers, not loved 'til you need one. Like walking around with a target on your back, carrying a 25 lb. prick and a 5 lb. extra battery? When you need artillery, who you gonna call? Not Ghostbusters, but your friendly, neighborhood RTO. Able to leap deep latrines in a single bound, faster than a speeding lambretta and disguised as a mild-mannered soldier due to no rank worth anything. Who else calls in Sit Reps and Puff the Magic Dragon and coordinates air strikes with proper smoke? Of course, there was that one time I didn't like the officer and told the Phantom 'red smoke' and the officer 'yellow smoke.' At least he got smoked! Can't always be perfect!

Proud to be an American RTO!

**Jerry Hassler
S-2/Recon/2/503d, '66-'67**

RTO's are great people....I stayed as far away from them as I could get!

Rev. Mike "Mac" McMillan, Sniper, 4/503d



The Super Jew



Al Ginsburg and Jim Robinson

The above photo is of Al Ginsburg and myself. I'm the guy with the pipe. The photo was taken very early in '65 at Camp Zinn. I had not yet had a chance to round up a shoulder holster. However, I had my own 45 and still have it! I know it looks strange to have it attached to my belt rather than a "pistol belt" but it worked well.

I made the decision to never be without at least one firearm and my jerry-rigged outfit worked great until I got the shoulder holster.

Al was a classmate at of mine at OCS and somehow I got to Vietnam a few weeks before he did. He referred to himself as Al "The Super Jew" Ginsburg. Six Jewish soldiers started our OCS class and Al was the only one to make it through. That was the normal attrition rate in '64, unlike the later rates. I believe he became the Forward Observer for A company.

Jim Robinson
FO, B/2/503d

Q: *If you're going to make a parachute jump, at least how high should you be?*



A: Charley Weaver: *Three days of steady drinking should do it.*

VINTAGE "SKY SOLDIER"

[Originally appeared in the Fall 1995, Vol. X No. 4 issue of *Sky Soldier* magazine and worth reprinting here].

~ In the Company of Heroes ~

At a recent Society gathering, I heard a Sky Soldier lament that we had so few heroes left. He mentioned **Charlie Morrison**, awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions with the Herd, as one recognized hero. He also mentioned **Dave Dolby**, also a CMH recipient, and then he stopped. I was dumbfounded.

I would submit that we daily walked with heroes in Vietnam. I am not talking just about **Father Watters** or **Carlos Lozada**, both of whom I had the distinct honor of knowing. Nor am I referring to heroes with multiple awards of the purple heart, DSC, Silver Star or Bronze Stars/ACM's with V devices. I am instead talking about every man in my company, and the other companies of the brigade, who daily faced the enemy. Our heroes went on ambush, walked point, manned mortars and artillery in exposed positions under enemy fire, carried supplies, flew helicopters, cleared mines, scouted and did LRRP work. Truly, we walked with heroes.

Every man who did his duty, in the face of the enemy, who daily woke up and accepted new challenges in a difficult situation, is a hero, whether formally recognized or not. In your heart of hearts, each of you know the fears and the doubts with which you were challenged, and the victories you won performing your daily assigned duties. Unlike some who declined or avoided service, you performed the duties you were assigned. Whether you admit it or not, you walked with heroes and are a hero.

Some will say that those who suffer after-effects of the war, whether immediate or delayed, are weak and not worthy of accolades accorded heroes. I believe that these people are wrong and that the City of Rochester's actions to award everyone a medal at the recent convention was appropriate. The fact that an individual succumbs to "survivor's guilt" or repressed memories of trauma and horror is not a character flaw. Those who turn to alcohol or drugs for relief need help, not condemnation. Those who are fortunate to have recovered both physically and mentally from the conflict need to help those who did not.

There are a few heroes left in our nation, and we are among them. By our service with the Herd, we have incurred an obligation to help our fellow Sky Soldiers, our heroes, particularly those in vulnerable conditions. How you fulfill this obligation is up to you. I hope that each of you will do your part -- become part of the solution -- in caring for our comrades in arms who are in need of your support.

Ken Smith, Col. (Ret)
CO, A/2/503d



Coalition of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans (CIAV) Update

by Dr. Scott Fairchild
Welcome Home Vets

I was honored to represent Welcome Home Vets, Inc. and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice (as a BRAIVE Fund recipient) at the annual CIAV Conference in Washington, DC.

<http://coalitionforveterans.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/The-FINAL-Program.pdf>

I followed up today with Bob Woodruff's staff (reporter, TBI, Iraq) after meeting with Lee Woodruff yesterday at the book-signing. When I return, we will work on a proposal to submit to the Woodruff Foundation to help fund our future Welcome Home Vet Florida Provider's (Lossen My Grip) and Military Family retreats. These retreats will restore and empower providers to become force multipliers as well as empower military families to better survive reintegration. Our first retreat for 65 participants will be held at the Canterbury Conference Center in Orlando in November.

What a full day starting off with Brigadier General Loree Sutton briefing us on all of the ongoing activities at the Dept. of Defense Center of Excellence for Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD, followed by some great solution focused work groups. Loree should soon pick up her second star and based on her accomplishments and her dedication, I firmly believe that she is destined to become the first psychiatrist and first female Surgeon General of the Army. We talked about the WHVets QEEG and brain retraining work we are doing and she reports that the national research data to date is very promising. She was very encouraging and pointed me in the direction of some additional grant resources.



BG Sutton

Then, last evening things only got better.....waaaay better.

Sebastian Junger, the New York Times Best Selling Author (*The Perfect Storm*) came out to do a reading and signing of his new book, *WAR*, just released yesterday. He started off the day on *Morning Joe* and

recorded with *NPR*. The book chronicles the lives of a platoon of men serving in the most intense combat area of the world in Afghanistan, where they experienced over 500 fire fights in a year.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126676276> (a 7 min listen).

For five separate intermittent months, Sebastian and his camera man were embedded with **Battle (B) Company of the 173d Airborne Brigade**, in the Korengal Valley, also known as Death Valley. 70% of the munitions expended in Afghanistan to date have been used in the Korengal Valley.

Before the unit 173d Airborne deployed to Afghanistan, I spoke with their very sensitive Commander. The same unit had just finished a tour in Iraq and were training up for their Afghanistan mission. Welcome Home Vets has sent them books in support of their mission.

In addition, we were amazingly blessed with the opportunity to see a sneak preview of *Restrepo* (named after their medic who was one of many who died there), a movie which had just won the 2010 Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Festival. The film is produced by National Geographic and will be released in select theaters beginning June 26th. The entire movie is real life combat footage narrated by the soldiers themselves. The pain, the loss, the intensity. He also interviewed them after they returned to Italy where the unit is based.

Sebastian and I spoke and shared some 173d Airborne stories. I will share his book and information with hundreds of 173d Airborne veterans who will be attending the reunion in Myrtle Beach, where I will be speaking on June 4th on PTSD and its impact on soldiers and their families.

I spoke with Sebastian about coming to Melbourne, sharing his combat reporter experiences, offering a book signing and supporting a FUND RAISER for Welcome Home Vets, Inc. where all the money raised can go back to Central Florida veterans. He was very excited about it and will speak with his publisher, after which we will set a date! Airborne!!



Sebastian and Doc Scott

(continued....)



Likely it will be after *Restrepo's* premier (Jun 26) and we may even get permission to show the movie. If we are allowed to show the movie, we will need to find the largest venue available. Give me some ideas.

Hold on, that's not all.....

I also was blessed with the opportunity to meet and speak with Paul Rieckhoff, President of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the largest organization supporting OEF/OIF Veterans. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/10/29/paul.rieckhoff/index.html>.



Paul Rieckhoff and Doc Scott

He has the personal ear of the President on all matters pertaining to OEF/OIF veterans and drove the train for all of the recent advancements in veteran legislation. What a super trooper! Even got to give him a Welcome Home Vets Combat duck. He gave me an IAVA coin in return.

We discussed some strategies for more effectively utilizing not-for-profit's in the treatment of injured and traumatized veterans. The 90,000 troops returning from Iraq this summer will no doubt break an already stretched system. I'm told our Viera, Florida facility alone is registering over 200 new vets a day and waits for vet initial appointments and follow-ups are long. We are begging them to contract out some of the work. An amazing thing happened two weeks ago. We, at Welcome Home Vets, actually had three referrals from the VA for services. When we tracked down the source, we found that they were quietly told by the receptionists that Welcome Home Vets could help. Bless their hearts.

Also met with a bevy of other folks to include several Congressmen, the liaison to the Speaker of the House and an Attorney from Morrison and Foerster, who initiated the veteran's class action suit against the VA for

delay of claims; now a shameful 1,000,000 claims backlogged. The decision remains in appeal.

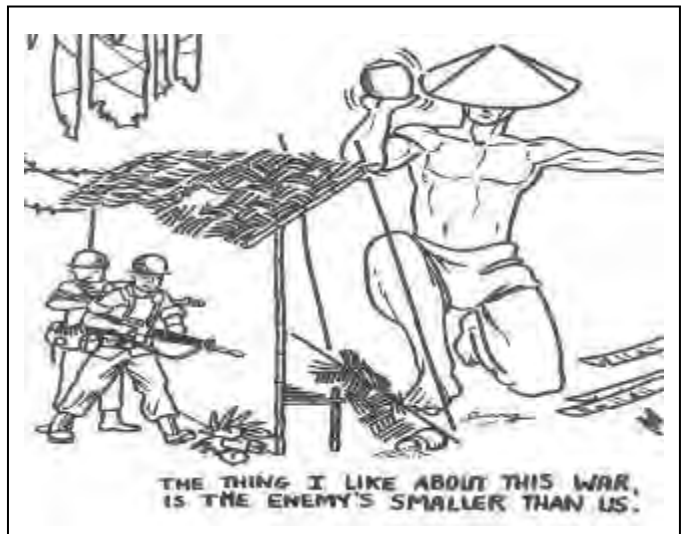
Perhaps most importantly, I met with a young sergeant (on medical hold pending his medical board), after he broke down as a panel member while attempting to share his combat experiences. He will be coming down from Fort Campbell, KY to see us and we will assist him with his medical board for the Army so he is fairly evaluated. A representative of the organization, Air Compassion for Veterans, who was sitting at our dinner table volunteered to fly him down for free. Taking care of soldiers, one at a time. Welcome Home.

***We are Welcome Home Vets,
We make a difference,
Veterans supporting veterans.
Our work has just begun.***

Thanks to each of you for your support.

Scott Fairchild
Doctor of Psychology
Welcome Home Vets, Inc.
1370 Bedford Drive
Melbourne, Florida 32940
321-253-8887

Note: Doc Scott is a retired LTC having served with the 82nd Airborne. If you will be attending the 173d reunion in North Myrtle Beach, SC on June 2 thru 6, you and your spouse/partner will not want to miss his series of PTSD and VA awareness sessions.



by Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503d



HOW HE BECAME A BRAVO BULL, WHAT A GREAT SOLDIER HE WAS, ZULU-ZULU, AND WHY HE WAS A CORPORAL FOR SO LONG

By Jack Schimpf
B/2/503d, '64-'66



Ruben in 2007, affectionately known as “Kenny Rogers”

In May, 1964, I was assigned to B Company 2/503 on Okinawa as the Weapons Platoon Sergeant. Bravo Company was located at Sukiran, apart from the rest of the Battalion, which was at Camp Kui. Shortly after my arrival I had to go to Battalion HQ for a briefing or something. As I walked past C Company's Quonset huts, there was a Buck Sgt. supervising a PFC who was fussing around getting his load-carrying gear together. Just then, a SFC came out of another Hut at the end of the street. He turned toward the Buck Sgt and shouted, *"God damn it Dimas! Can't you get that fucker to move any faster? He's already late!"* To which Sgt Dimas replied. *"What the fuck you want me to do, punch him in the mouth?"* Not exactly PC leadership, even in those days. But I liked the attitude shown.

A few months later Captain Lombardo called me into the orderly room and said that a Buck Sgt in C Company with a Weapons Platoon MOS had been busted to Corporal and transferred to Bravo Company. He asked me if I wanted him in the Weapons Platoon. I said *"What is his name?"* *"Dimas,"* said Lombardo. *"Hell yes! I'll take him."* I said. And that's how Ruben became a BULL!

Ruben soon proved to be very skillful with both the mortar section and recoilless rifle section responsibilities. He never was anything but a positive influence in the platoon. I believe his past problems in C Company were personality related more than anything.

When we deployed to Nam on 5 May 65, we had very little use for the 106MM recoilless rifles. So, the men of that section became like a "Do it all" squad. Dimas just wanted to know, *"What are we doing this time?"* They provided extra security for the Company CP group, carried extra ammo for the mortars, acted as a demolition squad when a clearing had to be made or we just wanted to blow-up something. They carried the rifle platoon's 90MM recoilless rifles when the situation called for that weapon on ops. They functioned as a regular rifle squad as necessary and ran ambush patrols in a regular rotation with the rifle platoon squads. Yes! Ruben could do it all. Probably their most trying responsibility was caring for and carrying that old back breaking 50 caliber machine gun and the ammo for it.

Fortunately, someone was able to convince Captain Lombardo that this was a better weapon for base camp defense than humping it through the jungle.

When the scrambled eggs rained down on ZULU ZULU on 16 Mar 66, and the fight started, Ruben and I were at the edge of the tree line, behind the Company CP, with our mortars. You who were there know how heavy the incoming was that morning. Ruben and I decided to go to the tree line behind us so we could have eye contact with the men on the mortars and still control the fire. Ruben had his entrenching tool with him and was actually scratching the hard dirt out from beneath his prone body to get as low as possible with all that lead going past us. I asked him to lend me the tool so that I could do the same. He looked at me as if to say *"Get your own fuckin' tool!"* But he did finally give it to me after he got about an inch lower.

Then a man from the CP group came running over to where we were and said *"Sgt. Schimpf, the CO wants you to go up to the 3rd Platoon CP and take over. They have several casualties, including the LT and some NCOs."* I thought, *"Oh shit! I don't want to go up there!"* I looked at Ruben and said, *"Come on. Let's go."* He said, *"He didn't say anything about me going up there, goddamn it! He said for you to go."* But he said it with a smile. And off we went, passing the wounded LT on our way to the 3rd Platoon CP.

When we got there, there were 4 or 5 men in the CP area with only one functioning M16 rifle between them and an M79 grenade launcher. Fortunately, I had a cleaning rod for the M16s and gave it to a Sp/4 (I think his name was Shorter) with instructions to try to get the rest of the rifles back in working order.

I had no idea where the rest of the platoon was except that Sp/4 Mitchell was on the left flank with his M60 machine gun. On our right flank was a 1st Platoon machine gun and that squad leader, SSGT Willie Boyd.

(continued....)



The location of the 3rd Platoon CP was in the center/rear of the platoon area, behind tall grass which extended about 40 yards to the tree line on that side of the LZ. There was a VC machine gun which opened fire whenever any of us at the CP had to move around. Luckily, the gunner kept firing high, but he was a pain in the ass! I tried to take him out with the M79, but had no luck.

Sp/4 George Bingham, one of the best athletes in the Company got pissed off, grabbed a hand grenade and said, "I'll get that son of a bitch!" He stood up, exposing himself to the fire and threw the grenade to the bottom of the tree where we thought the MG was. We did not receive anymore fire from that area.

Dimas had positioned himself at the far left of the CP area. There was a ravine or small gully to his left front. He came over to me and said that he heard VC voices in the gully and that he needed grenades to deal with them. We scrounged around and got 2 or 3 for him. Ruben disappeared back to my left and I heard the grenades explode over there. In a few minutes, Ruben came back with a big grin on his face and said, "They ain't talkin' no mo!"

When we got back to Camp Zinn I was getting ready to return to the States. Ruben had a few more months to go in Nam. One of the last things I told him was that he could expect to get his SGT stripes back soon. He said that he planned to re-up soon and that he hoped to get the promotion, also. I left before Ruben reenlisted.

Upon reenlisting, Ruben was given a 3 day pass to Saigon. He was still a Corporal, the promotion had not come through yet. One day while on that pass in Saigon, in a slightly inebriated state, Ruben was walking on Tu Do Street and felt the need to relieve his bladder. There were large potted plants along the curb line and Ruben decided to use one of them, discreetly, I'm sure, as a urinal. Sure enough, along comes a MP jeep with a Leg Lieutenant and his driver. The LT stopped the jeep when he saw Ruben and shouted at him, "Corporal, what are you doing over there?" Ruben's response?

What else? "Takin' a piss, sir. What the fuck does it look like I'm doin'?"

The DR (Disciplinary Report) from the MP LT was on the Company Commander's desk before Ruben returned to Camp Zinn. Ruben had to report to him as soon as he got back. The conversation went something like this:

CO: (Holding up a piece of paper) "Corporal, do you know what this is?"

Dimas: "Yes, sir. It's a DR, sir."

CO: (Holding up another piece of paper) "Corporal, do you know what this is?"

Dimas: "No, sir."



Front row L-R: Ed Kearney, Ruben Dimas, Jim Jackson, Mike Farrell, Phil Moulaison. Back row L-R: Jim Robinson, Jack Schimpf, Bryan Bowley, Joe Logan, Joel Trenkle (partially hidden), Dave Glick, "Ranger Roy" Lombardo, Mike Broderick, Harry Fruge.

CO: "This, Corporal, is a set of orders promoting you to Sgt., which I would gladly present to you with appropriate congratulations if I had not received that first piece of paper!" The CO then proceeded to tear up the promotion orders and dismissed Dimas.

That's why he was a Corporal for so long. And, there NEVER was a better one!

Ruben Dimas passed away on April 29, 2010.
A Sky Soldier died that day.

A Farewell Tribute to Ruben Dimas, Sr. **"Sky Soldier Elite"**

**"Hey" Ruben, Sky Soldier Elite,
 You've made your final jump, and landed on your feet.
 And now you'll walk those "streets of gold" with silver
 wings on your chest,
 a diamond in the rough, among the very best.**

**And as you walk those "streets of gold"
 with death no more to fear,
 you'll see old friends and "Bravo Bulls"
 as softly they draw near,
 With outstretched arms saluting you,
 and a smile on every face,
 guiding you gently to that final resting place.**

**It's adios for now, and rest well dear friend,
 until the great "reunion," never more to part again.**

From Ruben's old bunker buddies: Ken "Doc" Eastman,
 Roger "Tulip" Flowers, Jack Schimpf and
 James "Big Jim" Quick
 (and all Bravo Bulls, past and present)



**OUR MISSION -- FACILITATE THE
TRANSPORTATION OF SKY
SOLDIERS TO THE MEMORIAL
DEDICATION & SUPPORT THE
MOST MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE
POSSIBLE FOR OUR
SKY SOLDIERS!!**

By Terry Modglin, 4/503d

The **Country Inn and Suites**, 1720 Fountain Court, Columbus, GA 31904, will be the Rally Point for those members of the **2/503d** who wish to stay at the same hotel with their battalion buddies for the Dedication of the **173d National Memorial** at 10 a.m. June 1, 2010. The room rates are \$88. for single or double, and \$90. for a suite (of which there are just 5), plus tax. These rates are good for just the 31st of May and 1st of June. There is a big soccer tournament just before our contingent arrives and a smaller one just after so it is highly unlikely rooms will be available on these shoulder nights.

This is definitely a nice hotel, recently renovated. The 3d and 4th Battalions will be staying at hotels within the same zip code. There is no obligation for attendees to book rooms at any particular hotel. The Country Inn will provide free transportation to and back from the Memorial Dedication for guests booking 30 days in advance.



The hotel's phone number is **706-660-1880**. Their email is cx_clbs@countryinns.com If you call in the reservation, just indicate you are part of the **173d Airborne Group**. If you register through the Internet, go to <http://www.countryinns.com/hotels/gacolumb> and after you select your dates to stay, in finding

your rate you will see a link for "More Rates." Go there and put in the Promotional ID **173AIR**.

If this hotel is filled (as I expect it will be), we have other hotels in that area for more 2d Bat Sky Soldiers.

There will likely be a tour of Fort Benning on June 1, after the Dedication. Details will appear in a future issue of this newsletter.

In the interest of transparency, as I have indicated throughout, I am receiving no money whatsoever from



this initiative, but my travel planner colleague, Mark Zeller, is receiving 10% commission on the hotel room nights taken. We have already spent a lot of time on this and Mark will likely spend really significant time on this over the months ahead because it has so many moving parts. Believe me, the money will be hard-earned and will help offset some of his out-of-pocket expenses.

We are not part of the Memorial Foundation or the Association, but we have received the goodwill and cooperation of both. Mistakes made, if any, are ours alone....the *Transportation Memorial Dedication Group*.

If you have any questions, or guys with other battalions needing hotel information, please email me at Terry.Modglin@Gmail.com or call me at **202-270-3083**.

Airborne!

Terry Modglin, 4/503d

This notice appears in our newsletter as a courtesy to those working in support of the 173d National Memorial. Ed.





The 173d Memorial at Ft. Benning, GA.

The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial

The 173d Airborne Brigade National Memorial will be dedicated on June 1, near the new National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia. A Transportation Memorial Dedication Group, not affiliated with the Association or the Memorial Foundation, has established for May 31 and June 1 room blocks at 18 Columbus, Georgia area hotels, and designated seven of those hotels as unit Rally Points so that Sky Soldiers on this singular occasion can see their buddies with whom they served. Additionally, there is a bus the day after the Dedication from Columbus to the Annual Reunion (\$99) in North Myrtle Beach, and a tour of Fort Benning (\$25 -- limited to 100) an hour or so after the Dedication. All this is being done to facilitate attendance at the Dedication and enhance the experience. A microwebsite of the Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau is up and running and will make it easier for Sky Soldiers to make hotel reservations - www.meetincolumbusga.com/173d/ Refer to the Accommodations link in order to find all the hotels with room blocks.

Please share this information with your Members, remembering that April 30 is a cutoff date for a number of the offers involved.

Please ask all Sky Soldiers and friends, when they register at the hotels, to indicate that they are in the "173d Airborne Brigade Transportation Group" so that they receive the correct room rate and we know who will be there from specific units.

Please address any questions to Terry Modglin, Volunteer Liaison to Sky Soldiers for the Transportation Memorial Dedication Group, at terry.modglin@gmail.com, or call 202-270-3083. Thank you.

Terry Modglin,
4/503d

SPECIAL COVERAGE OF THE DEDICATION

In the July issue of our newsletter will be special coverage, including photographs of the dedication of the memorial at Fort Benning. We'll also feature Mr. Mike Elliot, the artist behind the memorial.



It's not too late to make plans to attend the 173d Memorial Dedication
at Fort Benning, Georgia, June 1, 2010



Photos sent in by Craig Ford, 1/503d





OUR WWII 503rd PRCT GUESTS

A final note of thanks to our Sky Soldier brothers and friends of the 173d and 503rd for their contributions which made possible our inviting WWII veterans of the 503rd PRCT to this year's reunion in North Myrtle Beach. An accounting of the disbursement of funds follows this list of good people.

THE "AIRBORNE SPIRIT" IS ALIVE AND WELL!

Kevin Austin (173d)
Tim Austin (3/503)
Jim Bailey (2/503)
Gordon Baker (173d)
Jesse Beachman (4/503)
Dave Beal (2/503)
Bob Beemer (2/503)
Bill Berry (173d Eng.)
Gayle Bethea (2/503 spouse)
Jim Bethea (2/503)
Jerry Bethke (2/503)
Walter Bills (2/503)
Tom Blankenship (2/503)
Don Bliss (Caspers)
Pat Bowe (2/503)
Wayne Bowers (2/503)
Mike Broderick (2/503)
Bob Bruce (1/503)
Dave Canady (2/503)
Abel Candia (2/503)
Bob Carmichael (2/503)
Ed Carns (2/503)
Mike Carver (2/503)
Jimmy Castillo (2/503)
Chapter XXVII
John Chester (E/58 LRP)
Jim Chieco (2/503)
John Civitts (2/503)
Bob Clark (5th SF)
Butch Clark (2/503)
Harry Cleland (2/503)
Tim Cloonan (173d Med)
Bob Cockerill (173d)
Dave Colbert (2/503)
George Colson (2/503)
Wambi Cook (2/503)
Virgil Cooley (2/503)
Gene Counselman (1/503)
Buzz Cox (2/503)
Ken Cox (173d)

Larry Cox (2/503)
Gary Cucinitti (1/503)
Reed Cundiff (173d LRRP)
Gary Davidson (2/503)
Woody Davis (2/503)
George Dexter (2/503)
Matt DeZee (N75 Rangers)
Roger Dick (2/503)
Tom Dooley (2/503)
Jim Dresser (2/503)
Frank Dukes (2/503)
Mark Dunlap (2/503)
Ken Eastman (2/503)
Paul Epley (Bde PIO)
Tony Esposito (2/503)
Scott Fairchild (82nd Abn)
Paul Fisher (3/503)
FL Chapter (173d)
Bob Fleming (2/503)
Craig Ford (1/503)
Rick Fred (2/503)
Les Fuller (2/503)
A.B. Garcia (2/503)
Tony Geishausser (Cowboys)
Jim Gettel (2/503)
Dave Glick (2/503)
Steve Goodman (2/503)
Jim Gore (2/503)
Johnny Graham (2/503)
Gary Granade (E-Troop)
Joe Gray (2/503)
Jim Green (2/503)
B.F. Griffard (2/503)
Dave Griffin (2/503)
Mike Guthrie (2/503)
Steve Haber (2/503)
Eddie Hair (1/503)
Larry Hampton (1/503)
Tom Hanson (3/503)
Mike Hargadon (2/503)
Mike Harris (2/503)
Barry "Bear" Hart (2/503)
Jerry Hassler (2/503)
Jim Healy (2/503)
Robt. 'twin' Henriksen (N/CORangers)
Dennis Hill (1/503 & 3/503)
Wayne Hoitt (2/503)
Jeff Horne (173d)
Ken Kaplan (2/503)
Ed Kearney (2/503)

(continued...)



Bill Knapp (2/503)
Skip Kniley (3/319)
Gary Kozdron (1/503)
Joe Lamb (2/503)
Virgil Lamb (2/503)
John Leppelman (173d)
Dave Linkenhoker (2/503)
Joe Logan (2/503)
Roy Lombardo (2/503)
Bob "Luke" Lucas (2/503)
Art Martinez (2/503)
Frank Martinez (173d)
Mike McMillan (4/503)
Bill Metheny (4/503)
Dave Milton (2/503)
James Montague (2/503)
James Mullaney (503rd)
Rick Navarrete (2/503)
Butch Nery (173d)
Bill Nicholls (2/503)
Jerry Nissley (2/503)
Hal Nobles (3/503)
Dave Norman (2/503)
Ben Oakley (2/503)
Dale Olson (2/503)
Larry Paladino (2/503)
Ed Perkins (173d)
Marcus Powell (2/503)
Anonymous (2/503)
Ed Privette (2/503)
Court Prisk (3/319)
Gary Prisk (2/503)
Jim & Julie Quick (2/503)
Ken Redding (2/503)
Dan Reed (2/503)
Paul Reed (173d)
R.C. Reed (173d)
Bill Reynolds (2/503)
Jack Ribera (2/503)
Don Rice (2/503)
Floyd Riester (Bde HQ)
Jim Robinson (2/503)
Lee Robinson (2/503)
Don Rockholt (2/503)
Walter Rosso (173d)
Andy Russell (2/503)
Nick Sabree (5th SF)
San Diego 173d Abn. Assoc.
Jack Schimpf (2/503)
Roy Scott (3/319)
John Searcy (2/503)
Tom Siopes (2/503)
Mike Sirmeyer (Cav)
Pat Sirmeyer (E-Troop)
Arvil Sirvula (2/503)
Steve Skolochenko (173 Spt)

Ken Smith (2/503)
Lew Smith (2/503)
Ron Smith (2/503)
Ralph Southard (2/503)
Larry Speed (1/503)
Dennis Stanerson (3/503)
Jimmy Stanford (2/503)
George Stapleton (173d)
Jim Stephens (3/319)
Sam Stewart (2/503)
Mike Sturges (2/503)
Ed Swauger (2/503)
Pat "Tad" Tadina (173d)
Gus Thomas (1/503)
Ted Thompson (2/503)
Wes Thompson (173d Eng.)
Thunderbird Chapter (173d)
Joel Trenkle (2/503)
Alton Turner (2/503)
Steve Vargo (2/503)
Terrel Vickery (2/503, 75th)
Bill Vose (2/503)
Dave Walker (Rngr/LRRP)
William Wallace (173d)
Bob Warfield (2/503)
Russ Webb (2/503)
Gene Weeks (173d)
Bill White (2/503)
Jerry Wiles (2/503)
R.R. Will (173d)
Ron Woodley (173d)
Pat Wright (2/503 & 4/503)
Ray "Zac" Zaconne (2/503)
Dwight Zimmerman (173d)
173d LRRP





THE 503rd HERITAGE BATTALION WEB SITE



http://corregidor.org/heritage_battalion/nycum/chx_alt

For its successful capture of Corregidor, the 503rd was awarded a **Presidential Unit Citation (US)** and received its nickname, **“THE ROCK REGIMENT”**

AIRBORNE.....ALL THE WAY!

Accounting of Contributions for 5 Guest Couples

Total committed: \$8826.25

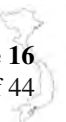
Total received: \$8151.25

Expenditures to date:

Lodging:	\$3677.80
Registration:	1500.00
Jackets & Hats:	1050.00
Reunion Pins:	98.00
Plaques:	400.00
Gift Baskets:	175.00
Week's Meal Money:	1275.00
Corregidor Maps:	240.00
Scholarship Donation:	100.00*
Subtotal:	7465.80
Cash On-Hand:	686.05

* Thanks to Ed Carns A/2/503d, who made a double donation. With his concurrence Chapter 30 sent \$100. in Ed's name to the 173d Scholarship Fund. Should any funds remain after all expenses are paid, Chapter 30 will make a donation to the 173d Scholarship Fund in the names of all donors.

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER TO
ATTEND THE REUNION
IN NORTH MYRTLE BEACH.
SEE YOU THERE!!!**



~ REMEMBERING NUMB3RS ~



**Numbers are driving me nuts!
Yes. It says "Jesus Hates Legs"**

Lately, numbers have been driving me nuts; these days they all seem to be swirling around in my head, smashing into one another as if atoms on drugs. And, there's 62+ years of them accumulated up there, leaving little space for new numbers to take a foothold, which is probably all well and good.

Simply remembering the mish mash of digits stored in there is enough to drive a sink to drink. But, like all of the senses, the congering-up of numbers can easily throw us back to times and places, oft times places we might not enjoy being thrown back to....sometimes.

For instance, 20 often reminds me of the big, mean, nasty sergeant or the too young, pale-faced 2LT rightly proud of his new device, who too often would ask me in rather pointed terms to drop and give that number to them. I could never understand their fixation with that quantity when 3 is an equally good number.

Yet, we can't live without numbers nor can we get thru the day without relying on those atom wanabe's demanding our attention. Plus, without them how would I know morning coffee requires 4 large spoon fulls of sugar lest it taste like shoe wax? Even my elderly German father in-law was not exempt from the influence of numbers when, after seeing a bottle of 7-Up for the first time, wryly noted in English, "*I wish I could get one up!*" Ahh, those funny Germans, *Ja Ja*.

Numbers, I suppose, are necessary after all; they're the way we measure important stuff. Like the way the shoeless, smudged-faced, cute little imp in the ville, after giving him a few cans of C-Rats, rightly pointed out, "*You Numba One G.I.*" Numbers can be fickle, however, as it wasn't much later when after refusing the favors of a not-so-cute lass in that same ville, she declared I was instead a "*Numba 10 G.I.*," then went about speaking discouragingly about my familial lineage

in broken English. Oddly, no one ever mentions hearing of a "Number 5 G.I." I'm sure there were some.

365 and a wake-up...a very large number indeed. M-16, M-79, .50 cal, today just more useless numbers milling around up there, taking-up space and getting in the way of remembering what time she said dinner would be ready. C-130, C-47, B-747. I prefer the B-747, business class please.

So, why do we place so much import on numbers? And why are they so damn difficult to remember? RA19841371, funny, we never forget those numbers.

As a young lad in school I once learned what a peck and a bushel were and how many thingies one might expect to find in each; but alas, I've never owned either and would be hard-pressed to correctly cite such quantities today. I do know morning coffee tastes soooo sweet with three spoon fulls of sugar...or is it four? Damn atoms!

503 is another number worth remembering.

**Smitty Out
HHC/2/503d, '65-'66**

BUTTERFLIES & PARATROOPERS An Airborne Reunion Like No Other

It's 4 a.m. here in Merritt Island, FL according to the wall clock she bought years ago; the one with the colorful butterflies imprinted next to the 2 and 8 hour markers on its face; and where the 6 should be, but isn't, the temperature reads almost 80 degrees with no humidity in sight. It's a gaudy looking silent clock. If allowed, one could become giddy thinking of the winters Sky Soldier buddies Wayne Hoitt in NH and Mike McMillan in WY are continuing to enjoy this early April morn. Another clock is on the patio here somewhere, its ticking and the rustle of the breeze through the palm leaves are the only sounds to be heard.



It's a good, quiet time to address the note received yesterday from one of the driving forces behind this year's 173d reunion, good buddy Wayne Bowers:

"Smitty: I plan on putting together a reunion Program to be given to all who attend. I would like to have a section explaining the connection between the old 503d and the 173d.... Just briefly explain the link and how or why you came up with this idea (of inviting 503rd WWII paratroopers to the reunion). Wayne."

(continued...)

