

2/503d

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



We try
harder.

VIETNAM

newsletter

Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

September 2010 ~ Issue 19

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Prayer: Does it Matter?

by Dr. Ronald R. Smith
1LT, B/2/503d



The God of the Bible is the God who answers prayer. If you have followed Christ very long, then you have your own witness to share about answered prayer. Prayer is not just something we learn about, rather it is something that we roll up our sleeves and actually practice; it is actually grows in our ability as we practice. Again, if you have been following Christ very long, you know that two major means of Grace that have been given to us for our daily Spiritual growth and edification are the Bible and prayer. Prayer is a core skill for anyone who follows Jesus Christ. It is a skill that must be practiced and we need to return to it because it is very basic.

Oswald Chambers in his classic devotional book, "My Utmost for His Highest", gives us a head start for correct thinking about prayer:

We often think of the Cross of Christ as something we have to get through, yet we get *through* for the purpose of getting *into* it. The Cross represents only one thing for us—complete, entire, absolute identification with the Lord Jesus Christ—and there is nothing in which this identification is more real to us than in prayer.

Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8). Then why should we ask? The point of prayer is not to get answers from God, but to have perfect and complete oneness with Him. If we pray only because we want answers, we will become irritated and angry with God. We receive an answer every time we pray, but it does not always come in the way we expect, and our spiritual irritation shows our refusal to identify ourselves truly with our Lord in prayer. We are not here to prove that God answer prayer, but to be living trophies of God's grace.

"... I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you ..." (John 16:26-27). Have you reached such a level of intimacy with God that the only thing that can account for your prayer life is that it has become one with the prayer life of Jesus Christ? Has our Lord exchanged your life with His vital life? If so, then "in that day" you will be so closely identified with Jesus that there will be no distinction.

When prayer seems to be unanswered, beware of trying to place the blame on someone else. That is always a trap of Satan. When you seem to have no answer, there is always a reason—God uses these times to give you deep personal instruction, and it is not for anyone else but you.

If any one of us is to know Christ intimately and grow in Christ intentionally, then our ability and practice of prayer is absolutely essential. Frankly, there will be no intimacy and no maturity without the practice of prayer. After all, we all want to grow up and mature. God is crazy about his children and he loves it when we want to spend some time with him in prayer.

An object of His grace,

Ron Smith

INCOMING!

Hope all is well. I am sorry that I could not make the Herd convention but I was already committed to the VFW State Convention, only because I was a District Commander last year.

I was going to send Woody (Davis) a coin to take to the convention to find out more about it, however I misplaced it. I just rediscovered it so I am sending you this picture of it in hopes that somebody knows something about it, especially the 1st Bat. Both sides are the same.

Dominick "Dom" Cacciatore
A/2/503d
dcacciatore@comcast.net



***"I feel sorry for people who don't drink.
When they wake up in the morning, that's
as good as they're going to feel all day."***

Frank Sinatra



UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH STRESS FOR WIVES OF SKY SOLDIERS

by Joan Haber



We all know that stress is harmful to our well-being. Stress negatively impacts our immune system, our mental sharpness, our ability to experience joy and our physical stamina. Most of us are able to handle stress on a periodic basis and come through it OK; in fact, research has shown that a certain amount of stress is good for you because it

challenges you and boosts your sense of self-esteem when you have handled a problem situation successfully. But then there is the type of stress that is severe and of a chronic nature. Chronic stress causes physical, emotional, mental and spiritual pain, robbing one of the ability to experience happiness and peace of mind. It is insidious by nature – often a person is unaware just how stressed out they are until something happens – a “wake-up call” – so to speak. The body may signal you that it has absorbed all the stress it can handle, your emotions may surface and you realize how angry or depressed you have become, or you may injure yourself simply because you are too preoccupied and inattentive. The Universe is telling you to pay attention to your health and well-being. If you don’t do it, who will?

Many of us are wives or a significant other to a Sky Soldier who has suffered enormous stressors of their own. Their physical and emotional health may be in jeopardy and chronic stress may have been present since their service in the military – for some that would be over 40 years of stress! They may have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). However, we (spouses) are under stress as well, trying to be positive and helpful to our mates while sometimes encountering hostility, indifference or verbal abuse for our efforts.

What can we do to take care of ourselves while remaining supportive and loving? I can list 8 key actions that are part of how I de-stress and remain cognizant of how important my health and well-being are so that I can be truly helpful to my husband.

- Daily Exercise clears my head of negative thoughts and helps my strength, stamina and flexibility

- Eating nutritious food, three times a day, in moderate amounts keeps me mentally sharp
- Setting aside time for prayer, meditation or reflection about my spiritual needs
- Setting my daily intentions for how I want my life to go – visualizing positive outcomes
- Tending to my work, be it paid or volunteer work, and nurturing my need for creativity and a personal sense of accomplishment
- Taking time for fun, either by myself or with my husband. Laughter really is the best medicine!
- Staying connected with friends and family members. Intimacy and someone to confide in is very important to one’s emotional stability
- Be empathetic to my husband’s problems without being overwhelmed or consumed by them

If chronic stress becomes too much to handle, please don’t try to bear it alone. There is no shame in seeking help. Counseling is readily available and there are low-cost options out there. There are mental health counselors as well as spiritual counselors. There are coaches, energy-workers, physical trainers, exercise classes and social support groups for every conceivable need and interest these days.

Take care of yourself as if your life depends on it – because it does!

Joan Haber resides in Sarasota, FL and is married to Steven Haber, C/2/503d (‘64-‘66). She is a disability advocate and an Ordained Ministerial Counselor. She can be reached at joan1@comcast.net

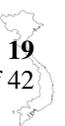
HOMELESS VETERANS

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced that nearly 8,000 homeless veterans will get permanent housing assistance through a HUD rental assistance program. If you know of a homeless veteran who needs help have them call this hotline for assistance:

1-877-424-3838

These phones will be manned by Veterans Affairs Medical Centers and will provide rental assistance vouchers by local public housing agencies.

(Sent in by Ralph Southard, A/2/503d, from “Military Masons of the Rogue Valley, August 2010 Newsletter”).





Sky Soldiers of the Generation

I am overwhelmed by the honor that I have been accorded -- selection as "2/503d Sky Soldier of the Year - 2010." It is more meaningful to me than any of the Army's awards.

Col. Kenneth V. Smith (Ret)

My "Sky Soldiers of the Generation" -- my heroes -- are the men I had the privilege of commanding in both Alpha and Delta Companies. While they might have bitched about things, these warriors daily put their lives on the line as they walked point, secured our flanks as we advanced, conducted ambushes, stood watch in the foxholes at night, and fought the seen and unseen enemy. No matter how bad the weather -- from monsoon to intense heat -- or how high the hills or how heavy the load, they did everything they were called upon to do even at the cost of their lives.

Their performance of duty -- reflected daily in heroic acts most of which were never recognized by the army -- were and continue to be my inspiration. Given the opportunity, I would go back and do it again but only if I knew that I would be in the company of the same quality of warriors with whom I have the privilege of serving in the 2nd Battalion.

Warm regards,

Ken



Dak To



A Dak To Twist of Fate

Here's the story I promised a couple of days ago. I was wounded on the 13th. They were able to get us out on the 14th or 15th. As I was being carried down the hill on a litter the 4th Battalion was going up the hill into the line. They looked scared as hell as we passed. Flash forward several years. I had just made E-7. I ran into an E-6 commo sergeant who was wearing a 173d patch on his right sleeve. Naturally, I asked him which Batt. and what year. He said 4th and 1967-68. I asked if he was at Dak To. He said yes, that was his baptism of fire. He kept staring at me like he was trying to figure something out. As we were eating lunch he suddenly asked me if I remembered, as I was being carried off the hill, reaching out and grabbing a kid by the hand who was going up the hill, and telling him he would be alright. I thought for a moment, and said yes I did remember that. He said "I was that kid," and then he said thank you. We both had to excuse ourselves for a few moments while we recovered. His name was Bobby Rhodes, a Pima Indian from Arizona for any of you 4th Batt. guys who might remember him.

George "Scotty" Colson
HHC/2/503d '65/'66
B/2/503d '67

Great story George. I'm sure he needed that. When I arrived at Dak To, assigned to NO DEROS ALPHA, I felt like I had a death sentence and the governor did not know the phone number. Pima....the Tribe of Ira Hayes.

Bob Fleming
A/2/503d, '67

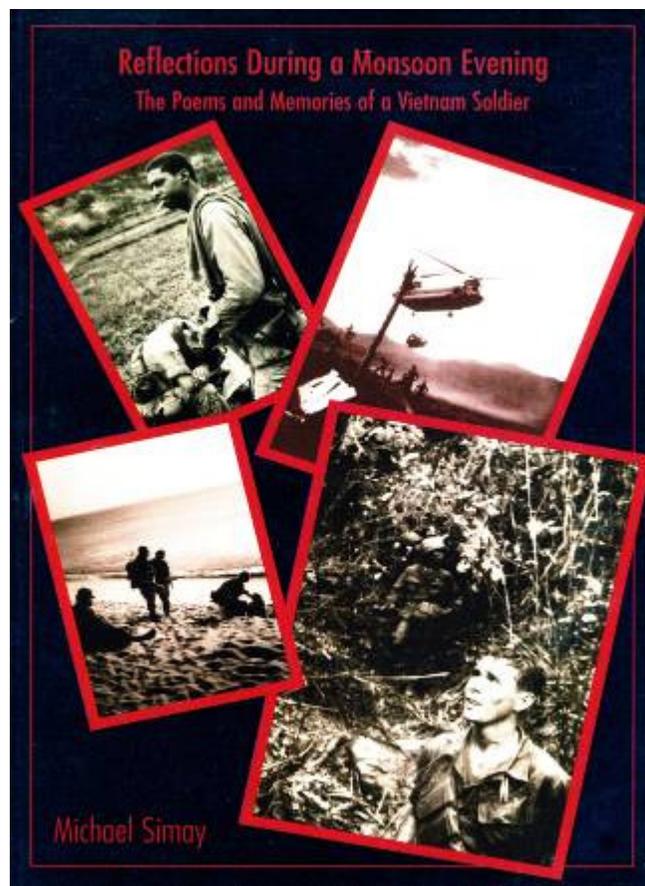
Carl Lee Simpson

E/2/503d

When next the need arises
and comes the Call To Arm
where shall America look
but to ghetto and farm,
to fight wars
sanctioned by leaders
themselves...safe from harm.

What strength has a Nation
when those she would use
are not the academic
readers of prose and good news,
but poor working Americans
that really
...have nothing to lose.

A Book by a 2/503d Trooper



This book of poems, photographs and essays, *Reflections During A Monsoon Evening*, were published under my pen name Michael Simay. I did this because I had never intended to get them published, and was embarrassed -- I mean, a veteran infantry captain a poet?

In 1994, retired US Marine MGS Larry Deloshmutt, who runs the Bat Masterson (F4 Pilot, Major Bat Masterson USAF, MIA) Halfway House for Disabled Veterans was trying to raise money for his operations. We were trying to figure out what to do. He does not accept help from the VA because he takes care of the young men who got discharged for a variety of reasons, like drugs, under less than honorable conditions. These are the guys we all knew, and tried to have them change their ways. They are old now, sick and have no support from anyone but men like Larry. So, I agreed to have the poems published in a small collection. It made some money for the Halfway House. Bat Masterson's wife helps Larry run the operations. I had to buy a copy for myself, used. Although out of print, there are some available on "amazon.com" under the name Michael Simay. Originally they sold for \$7.60. Now some of the copies are quite expensive. I don't get royalty checks on these copies any longer.

Mike de Gyrky, Maj.
B/HHC/2/503d



SIGN OF THE TIMES

You guys know about this sign in Texas between Kerrville and Bandera (photo)? There's also one in Wisconsin, WIS 173 between Monroe County and Nekossa, the 173d Airborne Brigade Highway.

Ed Kearney, B/2/503d



THOSE FUNNY FLY BOYS

Don't leave your F-16 overnight in an F-15 hangar.



Thanks to Paul Whitman, 503rd PRCT
Heritage Battalion web site.

What is the Highest Jump WITHOUT a Parachute?

"Lieutenant I. M. Chisov of the former Soviet Union was flying his Ilyushin 4 on a bitter cold day in January 1942, when it was attacked by 12 German Messerschmitts. Convinced that he had no chance of surviving if he stayed with his badly battered plane, Chisov bailed out at 21,980 feet. With the fighters still buzzing around, Chisov cleverly decided to fall freely out of the arena. It was his plan not to open his chute until he was down to only 1000 ft above the ground. Unfortunately, he lost consciousness en route. As luck would have it, he crashed at the edge of a steep ravine covered with 3 ft of snow. Hitting at about 120 mi/h, he plowed along its slope until he came to rest at the bottom. Chisov awoke 20 minutes later, bruised and sore, but miraculously he had suffered only a concussion of the spine and a fractured pelvis. Three and one-half months later he was back at work as a flight instructor." Hecht, Eugene. Physics: Calculus. 2nd ed. United States: Brooks/Cole, 2000. p 85

"Flight Sergeant Nicholas Steven Alkemade was on a bombing mission over Germany on 23 March 1944 when his Lancaster bomber flying at 18,000 feet was blazed apart and in flames when he was forced to jump, **without a parachute** or be burned to death. He dove out of his destroyed aircraft hoping on a quick death. His speed accelerated to over 120 miles per hour and he impacted on a snow covered sloping forest. He was completely uninjured and later captured by the Germans who refused to believe his story."

(www.urbanlegends.com/death)

"The longest survivable fall, 26 January 1972, was Vesna Vulovic a stewardess in a DC-9 which blew up at 33,330 feet. She was in the tail section of the aircraft and though injured survived the fall."

When was the First Parachute and was it ever Jumped?

DaVinci sketched this design for the first parachute in 1485. On June 26, 2000 – over 500 years later, Adrian Nicholas jumped an exact replica of it...and it worked!

The chute was built under the watchful eye of Dr. Martin Kemp, a Oxford University DaVinci expert. It was made of wood, canvas and rope. Its weight was 187 pounds. It was jumped from a balloon at 10,000 feet. Nicholas road it to 7,000 feet when he cut away from it and used a traditional parachute for landing. (*SkyXtreme* magazine of the skydive world, vol #10, July 2000).



DaVinci's



Those Darn Kids

I thought this might be interesting for our newsletter. I walked into my daughter's room the other day and hanging on her wall was a narrative poem that relates to all of us as brothers in arms. That night at dinner I asked her where she got it and I found out that she had written it herself. I was blown away that at 16 years old my daughter could come up with something so amazing. This goes to show you that you never really know how your children feel and understand things. Airborne All the Way,

Jim Starrett
C/2/503d

SOLDIER TALK

By Chantal Starrett

We grew up with it, it was normal for us, even something we smiled at every once in a while. You know what I mean, Soldier Talk. It happens often when walking out of a gas station or grocery store. One man is putting away his items and shifts the Ranger hat on his head. My father sees this and walks up. "When did you serve?" And so the talk begins. I sit in the car and watch them. Each one spinning tales of where they went, what they saw, what they learned. I watch them laugh at things that most men would shake remembering. I watch them stand a little bit taller, raise their head a slight bit higher. They feel whole again, as if they aren't alone in their own pasts. They feel a part of something bigger than themselves, something to be proud of. They bare the right to identify themselves with a band of heroes that distinguishes them among many. It isn't only talking though. They honk their horns when they see each other's bumper stickers, the dog tags hanging from the mirror, the badge covered cap, they nod at one another in the VA. It is all Soldier Talk. But what do I have? I have no band of legends to be associated with, no badge of honor to adorn my wall, no dog tags from a mirror, no badge covered cap, no memberships to the VA, no one honks their horn when I drive past for I have no service sticker.

*Who do I nod to when I walk past? What strong service of courageous beings am I a part of?
What makes me stand taller and hold my head higher? What makes me proud of whom I have been?
I sigh and sit back in the seat as I wait for him to finish.
"Well, thank you for serving."
And then it ends.
The other soldier smiles and nods to me before getting in his car.
And all I can do is nod back, for I have no Soldier Talk.*

"Soldier Talk" Copyright © Chantal Starrett 2010

Wow! Ed

3/503d Challenge Coin

LTC Paul Fisher (3 Rock One Zero) has designed and has on hand less than 100 limited edition 3rd Battalion Challenge Coins. Just the item we need to have in our pockets at the next Reunion.



Send your order, limit 5 per Vet, at \$10 per coin (includes return postage) to:

Paul Fisher, LTC (Ret)
81 Oak Lane, Eatontown, NJ 07724
(H) 732-542-1598, (C) 908-489-0366
fisherppd@att.net

Note that all profits will be donated to a local charity of Paul's choice in the name of the 3rd Battalion.

Mason Branstetter
3/503d

BATTLEPLAN: Junction City Jump

On the Military Channel recently, they featured the 1967 Junction City operation and also an action from WWII featuring several airborne units.

Steve Vargo
C/2/503d





DUANE LARSON – THE PRESENCE OF HIS ABSENCE

“Now you’re really in trouble!”

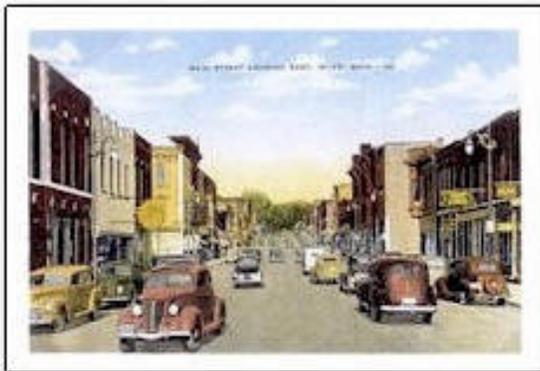


When my nine year old father, Duane Larson, appeared in the middle of the morning with the news that Sister had sent him home - and not because he was ill - his little brother Keith gleefully anticipated mother and son fireworks. Even though the baby of my father’s family is now eighty years old, he retains the look of a (albeit large) cherub; his pale blonde hair is mostly gray but his blue eyes can still fill up with mischief when he remembers that long ago day. Keith had, however, seriously underestimated his mother’s maternal instincts. Anna Larson quickly wiped her hands on her apron and, with her son Duane in tow, headed straight for St. Mary’s School. When she came back an hour later after a confrontation that spread from Sister to Superior to parish priest, both mother and son had been “expelled” from St. Mary’s. Although they were later readmitted to the parish (when St. Mary’s received a new pastor), my father finished his education in public school.



Duane

Duane Larson was born on May 17, 1917, in Niles, a small southwestern Michigan town founded in 1829. Called the *City of Four Flags* because the flags of Spain, France, England and the United States had flown over Fort St. Joseph, Niles was, even during the Depression, an idyllic place to grow up.



Niles 1936



Duane Larson
(1917-1945)

Perhaps my father and his siblings did not know that the St. Joseph River was one of only two rivers in the world to flow north; what they did know was that it provided free food and fun year round. What boy could be bored when he could be swimming, fishing, boating, ice skating, or just messing around in the woods like Huck Finn?



“I dare you!”

“I double dare you!”

Clambering up the ladder of a boxcar stopped on a high stone bridge and then diving off from its roof into the swiftly moving currents of the St. Joe River took a certain amount of nerve. Maybe my father chose to be a paratrooper because when he was a boy he grew to like the wind in his face as he jumped from the boxcars into the dark waters of the current furrowed river.

*He grew up
to like the
wind in
his face*

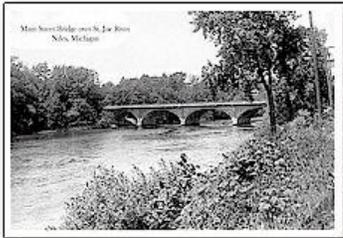
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My father worked for a time at the Niles News Agency, but like so many small town boys he was restless and rode his Harley Davidson to California to see what was on the other side of the mountains. By October of 1941 he had joined the 19th Coast Artillery. His early swimming feats stood him in good stead and he was able to save a man's life by pulling him from the riptide off the California coast. Then came Pearl Harbor and the Army. Jump school for paratroopers was a four week course at Ft. Benning, GA.



The old St Joe River, Niles, Michigan



Main St. Bridge over St. Joe River Niles, Mich.

On February 11, 1943, he married Dolores Van Skiver in Fayetteville, NC. By the time Battery A of the 462nd Parachute Field Artillery Battalion was activated on June 16, 1943, my father had been married for five months. He had trained at Camp McCall, NC, made jumps with howitzers, fired on the range at Fort Bragg, NC, and finally received his moving orders. On February 28, 1944, the battalion left Camp MacKall, NC, for the overseas staging area at Camp Stoneman, California. The paratroopers boarded the "Sea Cat" headed for Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.



Fayetteville Mo. Nuptials '43

On March 29, 1944, the 462nd debarked at Brett's wharf, Brisbane, and joined the 503 PIR at Camp Cable, a tent army encampment within walking distance of a small town named Beaudesert (which the

Aussies pronounced Bydesert, though there was no desert nearby). Sometime after that, word reached my father that he had a baby girl, born one day after he had arrived in Australia and named Dolane, a combination of Dolores and Duane. He sent his new daughter a lovely white lace dress and matching bonnet. Pictures arrived back showing a placid infant wearing "the outfit Daddy sent from Australia."



Those who gave the most - his family

Training continued with marches and jumps and although the men did not consider it overly strenuous they did feel they were gaining valuable experience. By September of 1944, the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 462nd Parachute Artillery Battalion and the 161st Parachute Engineer Company had formed the Regimental Combat Team. On September 16, 1944, the 462nd landed at Noemfoor Island, Netherlands East Indies. Airfields constructed on Noemfoor after its capture played an important role in the Allied advance from New Guinea to the Philippines. On October 23, Major Arlis Kline assumed command of the battalion.



The 462nd's "Devil" Patch

On November 9th the battery left on the U.S.S. Custer and arrived on Leyte Island on November 18th. Two Regimental Combat Teams, the 19th and the 503rd, were given the mission of seizing and holding the southwestern part of Mindoro Island near the town of San Jose so that three airstrips could be constructed. The Combat Team endured intense air and naval fire and at one point was shelled for 25 minutes by a Japanese Naval task force.

(continued....)



In January my father had written that the Japanese had “*one good fight left in them*”; soon the war would be over and he would be coming home.

And then came Corregidor.

Tokyo had warned the Japanese commander, Itagaki, to be prepared for an airborne landing, but Itagaki had studied the terrain and judged an airborne landing “not doable.” On February 16, 1945, he was looking out to sea at the 34th Infantry’s 3rd Battalion landing barges and never noticed the white blossoming C-47’s until some 25 to 30 paratroopers, blown off course, landed practically on top of him. The troopers formed up and fired, killing Itagaki and eight others around him. The Japanese lost their commander before the fighting had really begun.

“The men who floated down over Corregidor on that sparkling morning of February 16, 1945, represented not only a new way of warfare, but also a new breed of American soldier, the paratrooper. This was the sort of soldier who had brought a new dimension to attack.”

[Belote, 225] The “tough and aggressive” paratroopers knew that the Corregidor jump was not going to be a picnic. They were to jump onto “the worst jump field ever used for an airborne operation” from the dangerously low altitude of 400 feet. The calculations made beforehand did not lie - “*it was impossible to place all of the paratroopers in the area and yet it had to be attempted. ...*” [Flanagan, 165] The Brass had decided that a vertical attack was the only way to retake Corregidor and that a 10% to 50% casualty rate was acceptable. The drop could only succeed if the air and airborne units were completely coordinated so the C-47’s would fly over one after the other and deliver a stick of 8 men at each pass onto either a small golf course (nine holes) or a postage stamp sized parade ground, each torn up after heavy bombing and covered with big chunks of concrete and splintered tree trunks. Although the casualty rate was “only” 13%, troopers were fired upon as they descended and some were severely injured or killed.

Over on Jump Zone A, Arlis Kline, the commander of Duane’s element within the Rock Force, was seriously hit by an unidentified piece of flying steel whilst still in the air, rendering him unable to control his chute as he plummeted towards the houses along officer’s row. Barely missing becoming impaled on a jagged tree trunk, and with serious leg injuries, he hung in the tree, but with his feet touching the ground, unable to release himself from his parachute harness as he was unable to put any weight upon his feet. For some indefinable time, he lapsed in and out of consciousness. PFC Joe Vela, Kline’s orderly, who had followed Kline out of the aircraft, cut him down. After the second drop, his deputy commander, Maj. Melvin Knudson, together with

Vela, helped him to the 462nd command post, where he spent the next few days “*talking on the field phones, in between coughing up blood.*”



*Once it was a
golf course*

My father landed safely but he had only ten more days to live. James Wilcox described for me what the landing was like for his gun section in Battery A:

“Your father, whom I called Larson, and Brayton, his best friend, were the finest paratroopers and the backbone of our section. A section is one 75 MM Pack Howitzer and a crew of about ten men. The Pack Howitzer was designed to be the artillery piece of the mountain soldiers who used mules to carry the gun pieces. The advantage of this weapon was that it could be broken down into several pieces, nine in all, each weighing around 200 lbs. When the Airborne arrived on the ground at the drop zone, there were no jeeps or trucks or mules to handle the movement, so we paratroopers furnished the motive power. It was very hard physical labor, but we were young and were in competition with the other sections of our Battery to see who was best.”

“...We were most fortunate in our jump. Our equipment landed in the exact center of our drop zone... The net result was that our section had its gun assembled and at our rendezvous point HOURS before the next section arrived. The other two sections had been jumped off the top of the island, some even into the sea, and didn’t get there at all. I’m telling you this so that you will know what kind of soldier your dad was.”

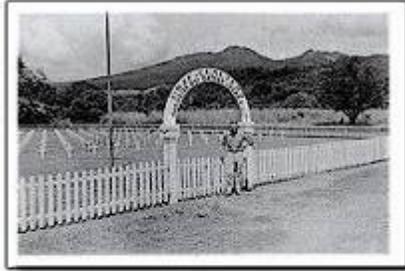
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"Larson was about six feet, fair complexion, light hair and medium weight...a nice looking man. He was courteous, well-mannered and mature. Brayton was also like that, which was perhaps why they were buddies. He was always a pleasure to be around because of his decency, maturity and reliability."

By February 26, the men had reached the tail of the tadpole at Monkey Point and were "mopping up." Already General MacArthur was making plans for his return to Corregidor. Just northeast was a little ridge and under it was an underground network of tunnels which had housed the Navy's Radio Intercept Station. Unknown to the men on Monkey Point, the Japanese had packed the caves under the ridge with explosives. Battery A of the 462nd had moved along the shore road just past the tunnel entrances; two tanks were helping the soldiers close these entrances off. At 11:05 one of the tanks fired into the sloping entrance of the Monkey Point tunnel. Simultaneously, a violent explosion lifted the top off the ridge over the Radio Intercept Station. Both 35 ton tanks flew into the air and tumbled end over end down the ridge. Bodies were lifted high and rained down again in pieces. A chunk of debris landed on a destroyer over a mile away. The little ridge was now only a hole in the ground. Sergeant Eugene Bert found himself down in the valley and couldn't remember how he got there. When he scrambled back up to the top of Monkey Point, the first sight that met his eyes was my father crushed under a huge boulder. Sergeant Bert feels that my father must have died instantly and did not suffer as many did before they died.

My father, his best friend Lawrence Brayton and the rest of the dead were wrapped in ponchos; the line of bodies along the road extended over 100 feet.



Mariveles-Bataan Cemetery No. 1



We brought him home

On Jan. 14, 1945, my father had written to relatives, "I hope to see Don in the near future. He should be coming to the Philippines soon and maybe we can get together." By the time Don arrived, my father was dead, and all that Don could do was take a picture of the cemetery and of his brother's grave. My father's body remained in the Philippines until after the war.



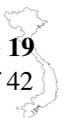
On February 21, 1949, when a military escort accompanied him back to Niles, his life had come full circle. In St. Mary's he had been baptized and from St. Mary's he was taken to Calvary Cemetery to be buried. My Grandfather walked to Duane's grave every day for the rest of his life.

My Grandfather walked to Duane's grave every day for the rest of his life

Although "the presence of his absence" has been with me all my life, it is thanks to *American War Orphan's Network* that I was able to get in touch with those who knew him. Recently Arlis Kline returned to Corregidor. He attempted to take a picture of Monkey Point for me, but "the jungle is so thick that it is impossible to even be sure where the hole is located, 'a huge oblong crater 130 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 30 feet deep,' [Belote, 253] that resulted from the explosion is located." The jungle has healed itself with time and so have the wounds in our hearts. They can be made to bleed again, though, when we see that our fathers' sacrifices are taken for granted, when we see our flag treated with disrespect, when we see our national anthem mocked. Even though our fathers never saw us nor were even on the same continent as we were, "for one brief shining moment" in time, our fathers and mothers and we children were a family. Now it is up to us, the AWON children, to see that the legacy of the greatest generation is not forgotten.

Dolane Larson

 This report appears with compliments of the *503d P.R.C.T. Heritage Battalion Online*, and with our thanks to Ms. Larson, her family and her father. *We will not forget.*





2010 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team Reunion

~ September 22nd - September 26th ~



~ Tentative Agenda ~

Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

Wednesday, September 22nd

Registration (room 704):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.
Hospitality Room (room 704):..... 2:00p.m. - 10:00p.m.

Thursday, September 23rd

*Breakfast..... 6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
Registration (room 704):.....10:00a.m. - 4:00p.m.

Friday, September 24th

* Breakfast.....6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
Board of Director's Meeting,
(Hospitality room 704):.....10:00a.m.
Registration (room 704):.....12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.
Hospitality Room (room 704/804):.12:00a.m. - 5:00p.m.

Hospitality room sponsored by:

FORD ALBRITTON

ALL TROOPERS please come and lift a drink!!!!

Hospitality Room (room 704):..... 2:00p.m. - 5:00p.m.
Dinner (banquet room BOND):..... 6:00p.m.
Hospitality Room: (room 704 & 804),
After dinner:..... 10:00p.m.

Saturday, September 25th

*Breakfast: 6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
SW Chapter Meeting:
(hospitality room 804):.....9:30a.m.
Annual Membership Meeting:
(hospitality room 704):11:00a.m.
Hospitality Room (Open after annual meeting): 5:00p.m.
Open after banquet:.....10:00p.m.
Banquet: (banquet room LINDBERGH 1):.....6:00p.m.

Sunday, September 26th

*Breakfast:.....6:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.
Check Out: anytime up to 12:00a.m.

*Breakfast Buffet is for registered hotel guests only.
ALL others must order and pay individually.

***No food or beverage may be taken out of the
Hospitality suites, per hotel request.***

~ Hotel Information ~

Wyndham DFW Airport North
4441 West John Carpenter Freeway (HWY 114)
Irving, Texas 75063

Hotel Reservations: (972)-929-8181
for special requests.

Toll free Reservations: (877)-999-3223
specify hotel name.

Be sure to request the 503rd PRCT room block
when making your reservations.

Dates: Wednesday, Sept 22nd - Sunday, Sept 26th
(stay longer if you wish!)

- **Room Rate** is \$79.00 plus tax for up to 2 people (king or 2 full beds), which includes full breakfast buffet (including omelets and the like!), and free shuttle service to and from DFW Airport and local restaurants.

Hotel Reservation deadline is September 1, 2010, after which room rate cannot be guaranteed.

503rd Reunion Registration Fee

\$90.00 per person, please make check payable
and mail to:

Marvin Edwards or;
SW 503rd PRCT

1655 VZCR 2313, Canton, Texas 75103

Phone number for any questions—(903)-848-7023

Fee includes: Catered Dinner on Friday and Saturday,
Banquet Room both nights for Dinner,
Hospitality Room for entire reunion with
snacks and drinks.
Name Tags.
Free Parking at hotel.
And other items.

Hospitality Room on Friday is sponsored by **FORD ALBRITTON!!!** All troopers please come and share drinks and conversation from 2:00-5:00 p.m.. Ford was attached to Headquarters and flew many support missions for you and would like to talk with all of his old friends.

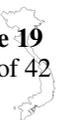


Attention all Sky Soldiers! The 503rd PRCT Association is inviting all members of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association to join their fellow 503rd paratroopers at our reunion in Dallas, TX this September. We hope to see you here!!!



AIRBORNE.....ALL THE WAY!

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503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team 2010

~ Reunion Registration Form ~



Wednesday, September 22nd-Sunday, September 26th

Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

****PLEASE PRINT and RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH PAYMENT****

_____ How many will be registered to attend reunion and banquet at \$90.00 per person?

Please print names

Unit

1. _____

2. _____ spouse

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

For information or questions, please call:

(903)-848-7023

_____ How many other guests will attend **ONLY** the catered meals with you at a cost of \$32.50 per person per meal? Please indicate meal: _____ Friday _____ Saturday

Date you plan to check in: _____

Date you plan to check out: _____

_____ We will **NOT** be able to attend the reunion or banquet(s) this year.

(Please print)

(Name): _____

(Phone Number): _____

(Email): _____



Wyndham DFW Airport North, Irving Texas

Enclosed is my check in the amount of: \$ _____ payable to:

503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team

Please mail completed form with check to:
Marvin Edwards
1655 VZCR 2313, Canton, TX 75103

Registration deadline is Sunday, August 15, 2010.
Registration refunds will be given until September 10, 2010





To Sky Soldiers in Afghanistan



First, let me say I honor your service to our country, ideals and of course the "Herd". I want to ditto the comments made about recording your experiences and when you can with photos. As was mentioned these will become treasures for you in later years. I threw away just about everything military when I returned from combat and this has caused me untold grief for many years. I did however keep the pictures and letters I'd sent to family and friends which have helped me recall some of the most poignant times of my younger years. You are probably sick to death of the daily grind of war and the losses you endure but these will fade in time and you will be left with the satisfaction of knowing you did something in your life "few" will ever experience. God Bless you and Keep you safe, stay the course.

Cy Bassett "Sgt Cy"
Recon /3/503d '68-'69

The years will pass before you'll realize how truly good you were and how much you have to be proud of. Just know in our eyes you are already there. Airborne All The Way.

Robert (Bob) Beemer
Recon Squad, B/2/503d, '67/'68

In every generation there are those who step up to the plate and do their duty to their country. Being who you are and what you are, you have made us proud. You have honored us by joining us. You are worthy of the sacrifices we made. You're making history. Feel how it feels. Nothing that you will ever do in civilian life will compare to what you are doing now. Be ready for that.

Jim Bethea
Rifleman, HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

I'll second and third the comments made about taking notes. I'm not too sure if paper and pen would have endured the weather and the conditions of Vietnam, but I wish I had the forethought to jot some things down for me to remember. It has mostly disappeared from my memory only leaving marks that wake me in the night. My only wish is that all of my brothers return in whole. I know this is not a reality but I still PRAY that each of you return to us.

Harry T Cleland
B/2/503d, '66/'67

I love you guys and support you 100%.

George "Scotty" Colson
B/HHC/2/503d, '65/'67

We are damn proud of your performance, pride and integrity in battle.

Dave Norman
Former Sgt. A/2/503d 11F4P Vietnam

The more I read about your experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan the more I think about our war in Viet Nam. It is clear that you are now fighting for each other and any hope of a military or political victory may be left for historians to ponder, as was the case with the war in Viet Nam. As soldiers you are the best, and have proven to be among the finest troops this country has ever sent into battle. You have every right to be proud of your unit, proud of the Sky Soldiers you have served with and proud of the legacy you leave. Our experience in Viet Nam is similar but our legacy took 40 years to resurrect and it is this experience I hope you will learn from.

You have accomplished every assignment given you with great dignity and honor. Please remember this and always maintain contact with the people you shared these experiences with. Do not assume you will always remember the faces and the names because you will not. Record your history and your legacy. Write down the names, addresses and even the experiences you share together so that when age takes it's toll, and it will, you will have this fallback information available. In time, you will realize that you will never again be as close to people as you are with the people you trusted your life with in combat. We are very proud to have served with the 173d and thank you for preserving our legacy.

Roger Dick
C/2/503d, '67/'68

**And you ask
why I have
back
problems
today?**



Photo by
Jack Leide

(continued....)



AIRBORNE! As usual you guys rise above. I got some reports back today from the front telling me the 173d stands above all other units in Afghanistan. I am told that other units are learning from you and that you are genuinely capturing the hearts and minds of the locals. Congratulations on a job well done! Be sure and take care of each other over there and if you can find a copy of *Down Range* or *Once a Warrior, Wired for Life*, there, read it. It will help you to keep your head on straight.

Doc Fairchild, LTC, USA, (ret)
82nd Airborne Division

Note: Dr. Scott Fairchild is a practicing psychologist working out of Melbourne, FL who has helped countless Sky Soldiers, and their spouses/partners, from Vietnam the Middle East, Korea and WWII with PTSD treatment and evaluations in support of their VA claims. His phone number is [321-253-8887](tel:321-253-8887).

I just want to tell you all how much we appreciate your commitment and dedication. As always the Airborne Soldier Leads the way and we keep you in our hearts and minds every day. So on those days you think NO ONE appreciates and you wonder "WHY" be assured that we old Paratroopers and others like us think about you and your families every day and keep you in our prayers. We love you. Grace and Peace

Paul Fisher, LTC (Ret)
CO, HHC 3/503rd

Wishing you all a safe return. In the meantime take notes and take photos. This new digital age tech will allow you to document your experiences as never before. Use a small easily carried camera and take thousands of pictures. Get the faces of the people, and the faces of your friends....even the ones you're not friendly with. And keep in touch with the brigade association; even if you want nothing to do with the Army or the war when you get out, that feeling will likely change after 30-40 years when one of your grandkids finds your bronze star or CIB and starts asking questions. Keep your ass and your head down and come home...and help us rebuild this country.

Wayne Hoitt
HHC 2/503d, 1/65 - 4/66

I wish each and every one of you well while serving in Afghanistan and a safe return to your families. We old vets from the Vietnam era certainly can relate to what you are experiencing in a combat zone in Afghanistan no matter what your MOS is. Support each other and always have the other person's back. We certainly appreciate your service to your country and this country will welcome you back home with open arms. We didn't quite get that when we came home from Vietnam with

the exception of our own families. I encourage each of you to stay in contact with each other over the coming years as it was about 40 to 42 years before I finally made contact with my units. You will probably hear many of us say the same thing but you will understand as the years roll by. Be safe and well.

Ed Kearney
B/2/503d (Okinawa) and 595th Engineer Co. (Vietnam)

TO ALL SKYSOLDIERS, BUT PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM BATTLE COMPANY AND OTHERS from 2/503: I pray for you each, daily. If you practice a religion, I urge you to be in close contact with your Supreme Being. In hindsight, the only thing that kept me safe and sane in Vietnam and S. Korea were my religious convictions and dependence on my God. Try to understand more fully the Afghan people that America is there to help. Knowing and respecting their customs will go a long way to understanding their motivations and the steps necessary to obtain their cooperation. Study of their language can be helpful, working with an interpreter in your/their spare time. May St. Michael, the Patron of Paratroopers continue to watch over you and keep you safe!

BDQ Roy
Roy Lombardo, LTC (Ret)
CO, B/2/503d, '64/'65

War is a brutal reality leaving a permanent imprint on our bodies, soul and spirit -- a reality that follows us for the rest of our existence. Awakening when we sleep...in vivid dreams of what we saw, felt, smelled and did. We learn, after a while, to walk toward the dreams, to embrace the fear of what we have seen, and hope never to see again. We learn to be hopeful, to find meaning in what is left of life. There is a purpose for our existence.

While I write these words of encouragement to you, I looked out my window to see a tourist from the nearby KOA stopping to take a picture of the Purple Heart license plate on my pick-up, and the 173d ABN Patch next to the plate. A reminder to me of who I was, and the brotherhood of which we will always be a part. We are proud of you beyond words. The 173d is a family -- we will be here for you when you return home.

Rev. Michael "Mac" McMillan
Sniper, 4/503d, Greybull, Wyoming



(continued....)



Would suggest if you've got grid maps of where you've been, with notes on it showing clicks per day, routes you took, occurrences along the way, etc., hide them in your stuff, or the remf's will get them when you deros. That's a record you can't replace.

Tom "Bird" Parrott
D/2/503d

"If it's not written down it did not happen". For those of you who stay in the Army, your life and memories will travel a different route than the guys who get out. Be prepared for your family and friends to not understand your service. Hell, you won't be able to understand it, so there is no way they can. You might park your service, put it behind you, not talk about it, but most likely, someday, somewhere, some thing will cause you to look at it. A traffic jam in Manhattan got me started looking for my guys who I had not seen or heard from in 30 years. Most likely when you are an old fat fart you'll begin to wonder, what ever happened to Pvt. what's his name?

Jim Robinson
B/2/503d, '65

Standing a Post. Fighting the Huns for the freedom of the Afghans will be a long and ugly slog. My time with Charlie Company & Delta Company, 2nd Battalion was 12 months I would not wish on any man. Deeply personal in a way only infantry veterans would understand; when you gather again down the road you will remember the little things, the black humor, the gestures of friendship. Thanks for taking my place... and the place of those that fell on the floor of a dark and dank jungle. You're fighting for them as well. Their voices shout from our new memorial near the Infantry Museum at Fort Benning. Porfirio "Sam" Solano is there...his smile is etched in time... I can see him any time I want. Watch your friends... study their faces... in time you will cherish your recall. In time you can set the bad times aside. Not completely, for some not at all. Here's to the best for you and your families. You are America's treasure and my family and I are grateful for your service... for the safety you provide for us. Send us your e-mail and we'll send you some brownies and other good stuff.

Gary Prisk, Capt., CO
Charlie and Delta Company
diggerdogface@yahoo.com

Rules of Engagement: There is only one. Kick ass, take names and come home safe. Rules of engagement are usually dictated by some %&@* sitting on his ass in the rear or Washington. I know this is a totally different type war and the combat arena is far removed from the Jungles of Viet Nam. The only thing that has not changed, is who is doing the fighting, "Americans".

There is no "I" in team, cover each other, don't hesitate and don't apologize for winning each and every time you come home.

Lee Simpson
(Recon) E/2/503d, '69/'70

I wish you all a safe return home from the war zone. Thinking back to my time in Vietnam, there are a couple things I would have done differently during my one year tour there. I would have kept a diary whenever possible. You may find in the decades ahead your recollection of persons, places and things may fade -- this may not sound important to you today, but 20, 30 or 40 years from now you may wish you had recorded such details -- your personal history. And, keep all your military and medical records in a safe place...never discard them. Take photos of your buddies when you can, and write their names on the back of the pictures. So many of us today have photos but the names have been lost to time, and this disturbs us to this day. And get addresses of those you later hope to hook-up with, and ask your family and friends to save all letters you have sent them. Oh, I wish I would have kept my steel pot and other personal items from my time at war, but didn't. Be well and be safe, Sky Soldiers, we're proud of you all.

Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

When I was in Nam I didn't want to get close to anyone or tell them how much I loved my friends. I didn't want the day to come when they weren't there to protect my back. When you get back go to counseling, don't wait 30 years to even talk about it, and don't hold in your feelings and let them haunt you. Take care and come home safe. And may God walk with you as he did for us.

L.R.Tanner
2/503d,
'66/'67



(L to R) SSgt Allen 3rd Squad, SSgt Boyd, Weapons Squad, 1st Lt. Price Platoon Leader, SSgt Baker 2nd Squad, B Co.

Photo by Jim Quick, B/2/503d

(continued....)



FROM THE 4th BATTALION OF 1966 - 1967

Brothers: I was one of the troopers who took off the Screaming Eagle patch and replaced it with the 173d one when the 1/501st became the 4/503d and deployed to 'Nam on June 6, 1966. We joined the 1st and 2d battalions of the 503d which had deployed from Okinawa almost a year earlier. Some of you in today's 173d are sons and grandsons of those of us who served in Vietnam. We're incredibly proud of you, but we now understand the fear about our safety that our families had during the Vietnam years.

Today, the 4th Battalion from 'Nam is reassembling as a unit, by squad, platoon and company. I hope that you will stay in touch better than we did. When we left the Army, we learned careers and started families and thought the memories would go away if we didn't talk about them. They didn't. Over half of our original battalion is drawing VA comp for PTSD or Agent Orange effects. Those who have reached out to each other have started the long healing process.

Many of our comrades survived the battles of Vietnam, but did not survive the living afterward.

Your impressive CSM attended our 4th Battalion reunion in Columbus, GA, two days before the 173d Memorial was dedicated on June 1st, 2010. He spoke to us with pride about the outstanding troopers of today's 'Herd'. His visit was an unplanned treat for all of us -- it tied our combat service to yours.

The youngest of us from those days is 60 years old and the company commanders and platoon sergeants are 70 to 80. We have experienced one war in a far-away land and are experiencing your war from our own shores.

I know you hear stories about your country not being behind you, but that is incorrect. We all know many people who strongly oppose the war, but who more strongly respect and appreciate the soldiers who are there.

For many of us, those days in combat were the most meaningful things we ever did. Stay in touch with those who share this difficult journey.

We have gathered almost 130 stories from our days in combat to today. A few are below.

"Some have died, some have lived, some can't tell the difference." (Mike Adams, C Co)

"You have never lived until you have almost died.... Life has a special meaning that the protected will never know." (Lynn (Doc) Morse, Medic, C Co (2d year))

"Maybe more people should share a foxhole; it might be a better world." (Thom Cook, Sr. Medic, C Co)

"So many years ago, so many stories. To be honest, at times it feels like I never was there, and other times I feel that I have never come home. Not sure if that makes any sense." (Joe Armstrong, B Co)

My deepest respect and affection for you,

Jack K. Tarr
CO, C/4/503d jtarr5@verizon.net

Greetings. Be well and give 'em Hell! If you are wounded make sure you file for your Veteran's Disability as soon after discharge as possible. I get 10% from my Nam 'Heart' and that is \$123.00 a month for life. Your local Amvet rep or service officer at your local VA hospital can help you with your claim.

Don't ignore your VA Hospital for treatment for anything when you get back. I know some of the VA Hospitals get some bad press (and some of them deserve it). But, they are not all bad. Here in Columbus, Ohio, I could not not be treated any better if my name was John McCain, former POW. Also, if you have a Purple Heart, that moves you up the priority list of preferred patients. Even though I have a medical plan from my retirement with the State of Ohio, I still use the VA a lot and my primary 'doc' is great. Also, the VA environment is welcoming and will make you feel at home. Airborne!

Steve 'Sgt. Rock' Vargo
C/2/503d '67, 51st LRRP '68



75th Ranger Regiment Association

All LRRP / LRP / RANGERS / LRS
Main Reunion (every-2 years)
Scheduled for July 25th - July 29th, 2011
Activities will be held at Fort Benning
with headquarters at Holiday Inn Hotel
Manchester Hwy, Columbus, GA

Details will appear in this newsletter.
For information please contact:

Robt 'twin' Henriksen
Unit Director
(360) 393-7790



FIREBASE CORREGIDOR

By Capt. Gary Prisk, CO
C/D/2/503d

On a ridge south and west of Landing Zone English... south and west of the elbow in the An Lao River where the river turned from south to east running out of the An Lao Valley... in a galaxy far, far, away... a 105MM firebase affectionately called 'Corregidor' was in full foal....actually it was less than thirty days old with Delta Company sleeping in water-filled rock holes.

Charlie Company closed into this lovely out-cropping of solid rock and I could not believe my eyes. Four to six foot tinder-dry wheat colored grass ran right up to the perimeter wire in the west and north sectors and eight to ten foot dark green grass fell away from the perimeter in the east and south sectors. There were no foxholes and the fields-of-fire were great if you worked for Chuck.

As was our tradition, Zippo and the Flames set the dry grass on fire and true to Charlie Company's Point-of Origin..." From the Smoke in the Sky"... the fire raced north and then east attacking the helipad.

There was just one problem....in a panic the Artillery Battery Commander demanded the Grunts rescue his ammunition....it seems the dumb shit had it set outside the wire and our grass fire was on-the-way....so I gave him a few seconds to find his balls, then told him it was his ammo and we....Charlie Company....didn't give a shit whether it blew up or not.

After three days of blowing foxholes out of the rock with 40-pound cratering charges and filling sand bags with the debris, we finally had a perimeter. We then moved a platoon into a wooded area 100 meters northeast of the wire along with an engineer team and blew all of the large trees rendering that area the largest pile of pick-up-sticks you could imagine.

Patrolling led 1st Platoon to the next ridge west....these two pictures are of that laager....note the foxhole... Charlie Company always had two aiming sandbags for night work.

With all platoons inside the wire we got a Class 1 intell that either Corregidor or LZ English North was going to



get whacked....so we laid 10 60-foot fingers of bangalore torpedoes in a ring-main with every other finger booby trapped with frags, extending into the northern approach and tied the ring-main to a claymore firing device held by the Field First Sergeant, Oscar B. Cruz.

LZ English got hit and SFC Cruz, with his morning smoke going full blast, woke the Red-Leg boys up at the crack of dawn by lighting up the entire northern approach....those bangalores are nasty.

The next day, with a Special Forces SFC as a liaison inside the wire telling us that he had a Mike Force *coming into the firebase from the Southeast*, we set a reinforced outpost in the northern approach and spread the guns away from the Mike Force's route of march on the south end.

Well, you know the rest of the story. The Mike Force was moving southeast, *coming into Corregidor from the Northwest*. Yep...we took out their point man. Holy shit....they pissed themselves right into a four-inch hover.

It was rough country out by Corregidor.

(continued....)

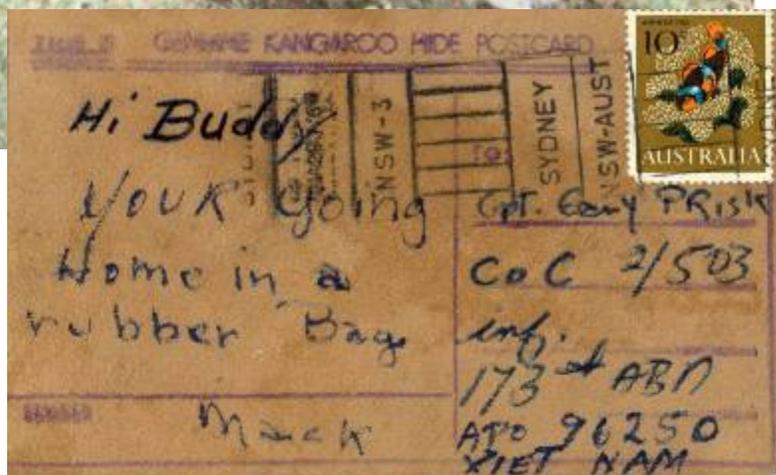




As an aside, this picture is the command element for 3rd Platoon. From left to right we have Spec Four Bill Totten (RTO), Spec Five Dopart (Medic), Lt Braddock, and SFC Leo Kryski.

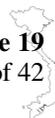
SFC Kryski came to Charlie Company from the Golden Knights Sky Diving Team. Leo was the team's captain, logging 4,856 jumps and holding the record at the time for the most jumps in a twenty-four hour period....one every 8.2 minutes....three planes minimum height and four riggers. Ranger qualified, SFC Leo Kryski was an American treasure....he was also a proud man and refused to take off his colorful stateside patches.

SFC Leo Kryski was killed by a sniper while eating chow on the southern-most bunker at Firebase Corregidor....a perfect shot....right between the runnin' lights.



I received this kangaroo skin postcard from Australia while at Firebase Corregidor from Lt. Mackinsie, the Recon Platoon Leader....the message was funny then and I smile when I read it today.

Cap



Uncle Jack on Capt. Jack

From General John "Uncle Jack" Deane

You asked for some material for your periodic 2/503d Newsletter. Following is a copy of a speech I gave at one of the Washington Reunions of The Herd. The thought occurred to me that many of the men of the 2/503 who made The Jump on Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1967, may not have heard this story.

You might be interested to know, aside from the story, as presented here, handsome, daring Jack Kelley, as you suggest I refer to him, a Jameson drinking Irishman of unbounded compassion, as he fancies himself, was my aide at that time. As you can see from the story, we did all we could to maintain the secrecy of the jump.



Uncle Jack

That caused a dilemma; handsome Jack's mother was reported to be terminally ill at the moment and Jack was needed at her side. If I told him of the jump, all kinds of ramifications would arise.

First, I would make the unpardonable mistake of breaching security and thus putting many lives in jeopardy.

Second, it would create a terrible situation for Jack. Daring fellow that he was, I knew he would be torn between realizing the dream of all paratroopers, making a combat jump, and being with his mother who needed his consoling compassion.

Third, maybe even you do not know this, Jack, the handsome, daring warrior, is prone to air sickness. He demonstrated this in my helicopter and thenceforth was required to take Dramamine. That is how he acquired the sobriquet of "Dramamine 6", something not many know.

You, of course as a Radio-Telephone-Operator, a key man in any military operation, know the designation "6" is reserved for the supreme being in any military unit. This posed an additional problem for me. If he made the jump, how could I ensure that he, my aide and right hand man, would not be near me in the aircraft without destroying his self-esteem.

Fourth, I, a man of impeccable cleanliness, not daring, not handsome, not compassionate, but clean, did not want anyone, to be blunt, puking on my parachute and especially not on my uniform.

The list is endless.

Uncle Jack

Man of the Cloth Responds & Threatens Poor, Meek RTO

The speech by "the old man" is great and I'm sure will be of interest to your readers! His comments as to my ability-passion-air capabilities and such are just one person's (although he be a General) thoughts. I have no problem with anything that he said, and I hope you read them with joy and humor. No problem as far as I am concerned -- but, if you use them in either the written word or spoken word...*I'll kill you!* -- then say a prayer for you. Amen. Blessed day,



"Dramamine 6"

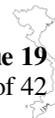
Rev. Jack Kelley, CO A/2/503d

Editor's Note: The Alpha Company commander's not so subtle threat of bodily harm, or even worse, did, I must admit, cause me pause. But, Uncle Jack's penmanship and description of our No Deros Alpha hero is just too good to be kept hostage by a mere few -- and I don't think "Dramamine 6" was serious.... well, not too serious. But, him being a preacher man and me a heathen, he might just have added incentive. *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death....."* I guess that third stripe is out of the question, huh Cap?



Walking target

NOTE: Following is from a speech General Deane made at a reunion of the International Society of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Washington, D.C. after he had retired from the Army. It was a speech on the planning which went into the mass parachute assault the Brigade made on George Washington's birthday, February 22, 1967, during Operation Junction City.





MASS PARACHUTE ASSAULT...THE JUMP



By General John Deane

“Not many people know about the planning that prepared us for The Jump, as I like to call the only mass parachute assault made during the war in Vietnam. There were only six people who knew the details at the time - three Army and three Air Force. The three Army Troopers were I, the Brigade Commander, Bob Sigholtz, Commander of the 2/503; and Major Steverson, the Brigade S-3. The reason was simple - security, the need for which was apparent from earlier experience.



General Deane

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



Junction City Combat Jump

(Jerry Hassler)

The price of seizing the airstrip could have been great in loss of lives and equipment. The strip ran north to south for two or three thousand feet along the spine of a very narrow ridge. The cleared area was less than 100 meters wide and, to the east and west, dropped off precipitously into double and triple canopy jungle. I will discuss the threat to the troopers' lives in a moment. The threat to equipment lay in the topography, terrain and vegetation.

Any heavy drop equipment - artillery pieces, ammunition, vehicles and most heavy equipment bundles - falling outside of the cleared area would have been irretrievably lost in the heavy jungle canopy, hung up there for all time.

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

Higher authority required me, despite my strenuous protests, to brief various staff members and other strap hangers on the planned airborne assault. Shortly after the first briefing or two, an engineer unit commander in Song Be confirmed my fears of leaks, my fear that there is always someone who has to show he is a big wheel by talking when he should be silent. The engineer called and said, *'I hear you are going to be jumping in our area.'* Asked where he had heard this, he replied, *'All the bar girls in Song Be know about it and are looking forward to increased business.'*



General Westmoreland agreed immediately to cancel the operation!

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

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