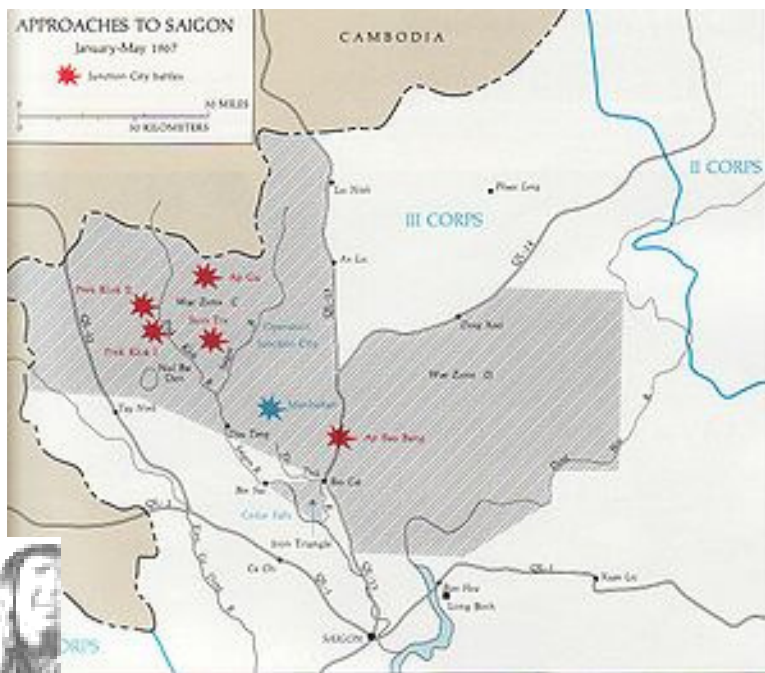


At the time we chose the real DZ, we also chose a second DZ several miles away. As that would become the focus of our security plan -- Stevenson developed detailed plans for a drop on this second DZ, the deception DZ.

Every time higher authorities required briefings, these plans, the plans for the deception DZ, were the basis for the briefing. The briefings included cautions on the importance of security in airborne operations and always included pleas to protect the troopers who would be so vulnerable to ground action if the enemy knew our plans. As in the Japanese airstrip case, this plan also became compromised.

Later reconnaissance revealed the VC or NVA had heavily mined and booby-trapped the second DZ, the deception DZ. This was the DZ where General Westmoreland's chopper circled so he and the Chairman of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff could observe The Jump.

no paratroopers in sight. When our heavy drop began with as many as three of the 100 foot canopy chutes attached to some loads, General Westmoreland's aide spotted the large parachutes and said, "My God, they missed the Drop Zone!" Actually, it was *they* who missed The Jump.

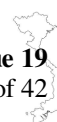


2/503d Bn CO, LTC Bob Sigholtz (C) and SGM Ed Proffitt (R) on DZ after combat jump. Operation Junction City.
(Dave Griffin)

I gather General Westmoreland was upset that his staff had not briefed him properly so that he would fly to the real DZ. Several days after the operation, he visited my Command Post. At the end of the briefing on the operations we had going on, he turned to me and asked, "Did you jump first?" I replied that I had. It is tradition that the commander is the first one out of the lead aircraft. Those were the only words we exchanged on The Jump."



As General Westmoreland and the Chief of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff unwittingly circled the deception DZ, they became impatient when the 9:00 a.m. time of the parachute assault came and went with



Results of Study

[The following report was uncovered by an astute Chargin' Charlie of Dak To fame who prefers to remain anonymous lest his wife see his name printed here. Ed]

A study conducted by the university's Department of Psychiatry has revealed that the kind of face a woman finds attractive on a paratrooper can differ depending on where she is in her menstrual cycle. For example: if she is ovulating, she is attracted to men with rugged and masculine features. However, if she is menstruating or menopausal, she tends to be more attracted to a man with duct tape over his mouth and a spear lodged in his chest with a bat up his ass while he is on fire.

No further studies are expected on this subject.



Rugged and masculine looking C/2/503d trooper of Dak To fame Roger Dick with his lovely but potentially dangerous wife Kathy.

SUMMER GATHERING SAN DIEGO

The San Diego Chapter of the 173d Airborne Association had a very successful Summer Gathering Aug 19-21. The guest speaker was one of our own, Col. Dick Boland. Here are 3 photos taken during 3 days of fun and relaxation. A big AIRBORNE to Chapter 28 for the outstanding celebration, we all had a great time.

Bob Madden
Chapter 25



Gil Reynoso, Bob Madden, Jim Mullen



Nick Aguilar Jr., Nick Aguilar, Gilbert Reynoso



**Rusty Kulp, Dan Sampson, Bob Madden,
Lillin Quintanar, Alex Quintanar**



GLENN D. KERNS KIA ~ DAK TO

Around July 1967 I had just returned from a tour in the Air Force from Clark Field and my nephew Glenn D. Kerns came by my home to visit. I had not seen him in about three years since I spent all my service time overseas. Having seen the casualty list from the 173d in the *Stars and Stripes* while at Clark Field, I asked Glenn why he had joined the Army and the 173d Airborne during this time. He said, *"I wanted to be the best of the best"*. As he left my home he told me that the next time that I saw him he would probably be in a casket. I asked him to take care of himself. He was in B Co. 2nd Battalion 503rd Infantry Regiment, ABN 173d and was killed on November 11, 1967 at the Battle of Dak To. He was 19 years old as were many who gave the ultimate sacrifice during this time.



Glenn, Basic Training



Glenn in Vietnam

I have heard the name Andy Eiland who was a medic and was with Glenn when he died. As his uncle I would like to make contact with anyone who served with Glenn or Andy. I am writing a family history and would like some information on his time in Vietnam. Thank you again for your assistance.

Sam Kerns

79 Robin Road, Lumberton, NC 28358
Home: 910-739-8772 Cell: 910-301-7479
Email: samkerns001@att.net

THE WOMEN VETERANS COUNCIL

The Women Veterans Council will be hosting a number of seminars around the state of Michigan in October for women veterans. Issues covered will be employment, housing, medical care, small business, etc. See notice below.

Please be sure to pass this on to any woman veteran you might know since valuable information will be given out at these seminars.

Tim Wirkus, Secretary
Southfield Veterans' Commission

www.southfieldvets.org

Women Veterans Council of Michigan
Invites

**All women who have served in any branch of the military
to attend a Women Veterans Benefits Seminar**

Benefits information on education, employment, housing, medical care,
small businesses and more will be provided by:

State of Michigan Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
State of Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth
United States Department of Labor
United States Department of Veterans Affairs Health and Benefits Administrations

The Women Veterans Benefits Seminar is FREE!
Five dates and locations are available for your convenience. Pick the date and
place of the seminar you want to attend, then call to register.

Check in begins at 8:30 am
Presentations start at 9:15 am
Lunch Provided
Seminars end by 3:00 pm

Join us for the day to learn about YOUR benefits! They can vary throughout your lifetime.

Seminar Dates

Tuesday - October 12, 2010
DJ Jacobetti Home for Veterans - 425 Fisher St., Marquette, MI

Thursday - October 14, 2010
American Legion Post 416 - 10064 Ford Dr., St. Helen, MI

Monday - October 18, 2010
American Legion Post 439 - 5190 Weiss, Saginaw, MI

Thursday - October 21, 2010
Grand Rapids Home for Veterans - 3000 Monroe N.E., Grand Rapids, MI

Friday - October 22, 2010
American Legion Post 216 - 510 W. Commerce, Milford, MI

REGISTER BY CALLING: 517-373-3130 or 517-335-6523
Registration required to provide accurate lunch count to sponsors

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



BACK TO THE BACK

In an earlier issue of our newsletter I shared a brief story about the VA sending me to a local neurosurgeon they have under contract who specializes in treating lower back problems suffered by G.I.'s. Following all of a 5 minute exam, half of it spent twisting my ankles which rattled his Rolex, he happily explained the solution to my particular ailment (nerve damage in lower back) would be to insert a screw in there which would make everything right -- it didn't sound right, and his eagerness to pickup the knife after such cursory review sent up a red flag.

I sought a second opinion by a non VA contracted neurosurgeon, the same man who earlier this year performed brain surgery on my wife to remove a benign tumor (she's recovering fine, thank you, but they left the 'evil' part in there). His more thorough examination determined such radical, screwed-up surgery was unnecessary. Instead, he referred me to a pain clinic for a less invasive procedure.

The technique they employed to mend the problem and relieve some serious pain is **Facet Blocking**. This entails two separate visits where four numbing injections are followed by four steroid injections into the troubled areas. This initial treatment is intended to 1) isolate the damaged areas, and 2) confirm pain is diminished for even the slightest amount of time. Once done, a week or so later they move on to the coup de grace, **Radio Frequency Ablation** (cauterizing the nerve endings).

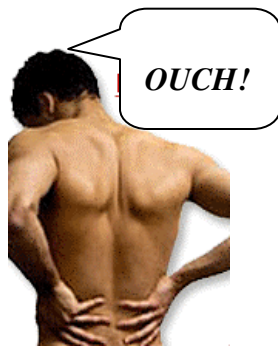
A few days ago I underwent this final treatment and as of this writing my back is doing much better; any pain seems to stem from the procedure itself and not the damaged nerve endings, and they tell me this pain will dissipate within a couple weeks. The former pain, the mean, nasty make you want to cry out "Mommy!" pain which ran down my butt cheeks and legs is nowhere to be seen, or felt -- that's a good sign.

There's no telling if this procedure will produce long-term relief, nor if you are a candidate for this option to radical surgery, yet it might be worth looking into. Should you opt for the screw in the back, however, be sure to at least ask for dinner and a movie. Good luck.

Smitty Out

FACET BLOCK

Facet block (what is it?): A block (or local anesthetic injection) is performed to confirm a facet joint is the source of pain and to decrease pain and inflammation in



a facet joint or joints. This may be the only true way to diagnose facet joint syndrome, as an abnormal looking joint on X-Ray or CT scan may be painless, and vice versa a normal looking joint may be the pain generator.

How is it done? The patient is given the option of light, (or deep in rare cases) IV sedation under monitoring of the EKG pulse oximeter, by a board certified anesthesiologist. A tiny needle (smaller than the size of a paper clip) is then inserted into the area of the facet joint where the nerve reaches it (or directly inside the facet capsule, in some cases) and the physician injects an anesthetic and steroid. This is done under fluoroscopy.

Expected results: Decrease in or relief of back pain. More importantly confirmation of the diagnosis, with the allowance of rational treatment.

How long does it take? Fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on the number of levels performed.

Note: injections may be done in conjunction with massage, myo-fascial release, or "light" physical therapy especially ultrasound and stimulation. Chiropractic will universally aggravate facet joint syndrome and must be avoided at all costs.

Risk/benefit ratio: Probably the easiest of all interventional procedures (provided done by a board certified physician with experience), with the lowest risk and most benefits.

Other therapy:

Once, the diagnosis is made by a prognostic block, the block may be repeated with a longer acting local and depot steroid preparation. Some milder cases

may be treated by improving posture, spine bracing during lifting/exercise and anti-arthritis agents such as motrin or the newer inhibitors. If the pain recurs, pulsed radiofrequency is the definitive treatment.

Facet joint syndrome (definition): A constellation of symptoms which result in diffuse pains that do not fit a clear nerve root pattern (e.g. not sciatica), these pains are worsened with movement of the spine, poor posture, often sleep, sometimes associated with cold burning sensations, usually worsened by cold damp weather and are now known to emanate from the tiny medial branch nerves that supply the facet joint.



Ouch again. One crappy PLF.



AND THE WAR RAGES ON

The 503rd Infantry Regiment, formerly the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) is an airborne unit in the United States military. It is one of the most decorated units of its kind with a distinguished battlefield record notably in World War II and the Vietnam War. It is part of 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

In March 2003, the Turkish government refused to allow American ground forces, which were positioned at their ports, to move through Turkey in order to establish a northern front in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. America needed another option and the Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade provided that option. On the 26th of March at 2000 hours, fifteen C-17 aircraft delivered 20 heavy platforms and 959 paratroopers of the 173d Airborne Brigade onto Bashur Drop Zone in the vicinity of Bashur, Iraq. This combat parachute assault was the beginning of Operation Northern Delay and established the Coalition northern front.



The parachute assault force consisted of HHC, 173d Airborne Brigade; 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry Regiment; 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment; 74th Infantry Detachment (Long Range Surveillance); D Battery (Airborne), 319th Field Artillery Regiment; 173d Support Company (Combat); 501st Support Company (Forward), 250th Forward Surgical Team; ODA, 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 4th Air Support Operations Squadron (USAFE); and the 86th Contingency Response Group (assigned to the 86th Airlift Wing (USAFE). The paratroopers were under the command of Colonel

William C. Mayville Jr., commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade. The chariots from which the Sky Soldiers were delivered into battle were the C-17s of the 62nd and 446th Airlift Wings from McChord AFB, Washington and the 437th Airlift Wing and 315th Airlift Wing (AFRES) from Charleston AFB, South Carolina. The C-17s were under the command of Colonel Robert "Dice" R. Allardice, commander of the 62nd Airlift Wing.

This airborne operation was not only the largest since the 1990 invasion of Panama, but was the first airborne personnel insertion ever conducted with the C-17s.

The successful establishment of a northern front was essential to the Coalition battle plan. Without a northern front six Iraqi divisions arrayed in northern Iraq remained free to move south to reinforce Baghdad. Fast-moving Coalition forces were closing on Baghdad with the expectation of having to capture the Iraqi capital from three defensively arrayed divisions. Six additional Iraqi divisions streaming from the north could dramatically affect the balance of power around

Baghdad

Another critical factor was the oil-rich area of Kirkuk. The oil wealth of the Kirkuk area would be crucial to rebuilding Iraq but the Iraqi army had shown a willingness to destroy their countries' own future simply to spite the Coalition. Securing the oil fields and airbases of Kirkuk was assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade.

The success of the 173d Airborne Brigade in its securing of Bashur and Kirkuk and its subsequent control and rebuilding of Kirkuk Province and later the As Sulaymaniyah Province was unmatched in-theater. The Sky Soldiers integrated forces from fifteen other units, to include five Army divisions, to accomplish every mission.

In the summer of 2004, the 1st of the 503rd deployed to Iraq, where its troopers took part in the battle of Fallujah and conducted combat operations in the violent Al-Anbar province. The battalion suffered above average losses during the deployment. Based in the outskirts of Ramadi, 1/503rd was targeted by daily mortar attacks and received a significant amount of Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices, also known as VBIEDS or car bombs. Despite this, the 1/503rd was very successful in their mission to curb insurgent activity. *(continued....)*



According to an interview with Lieutenant Colonel James Raymer, as of February 2006, insurgent activity is markedly lowered from the year that 1/503rd conducted operations in Ramadi. Additionally, the 503rd played a critical role in the 2005 elections in Iraq in Ramadi.

Upon completion of its year-long deployment to Iraq, 1/503 did not return to Korea, but instead relocated to Fort Carson, Colorado, with the rest of the brigade. It was re-designated on 1 October 2005 as the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, inactivated on 15 November 2005, relieved from assignment to the 2nd Infantry Division, and assigned on 15 June 2006 to the 173d Airborne Brigade when the existing 1/508th Infantry was reflagged. The 1st Battalion began its predeploy- ment training, and re-designated its company names to match with their Korea beginnings: A Company (ATTACK Company), B Company (Legion Company), C Company (March or Die), D Company (Dog), E Company (Eazy), HHC (Hotel).

In May 2007, the 173d ABCT (including both 1st and 2nd 503) deployed to Afghanistan. Both units fell under the NATO ISAF mission. 2/503 remained as part of TF Bayonet and the unit was the subject of several articles detailing their operations during OEF VIII. 1/503 was attached to the 4th BCT, 82nd Airborne and 4th BCT, 101st Airborne as part of TF Fury and TF Currahee respectively.

[Report located and sent in by Sam Schiro, N/75 Rangers]

FLORIDA CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULED

Sky Soldiers: Our next meeting is on 11 September 2010 at Port Charlotte, FL. We will gather with our Brothers - US Paratroopers of the Port Charlotte Chapter www.usparatrooperspcc.com

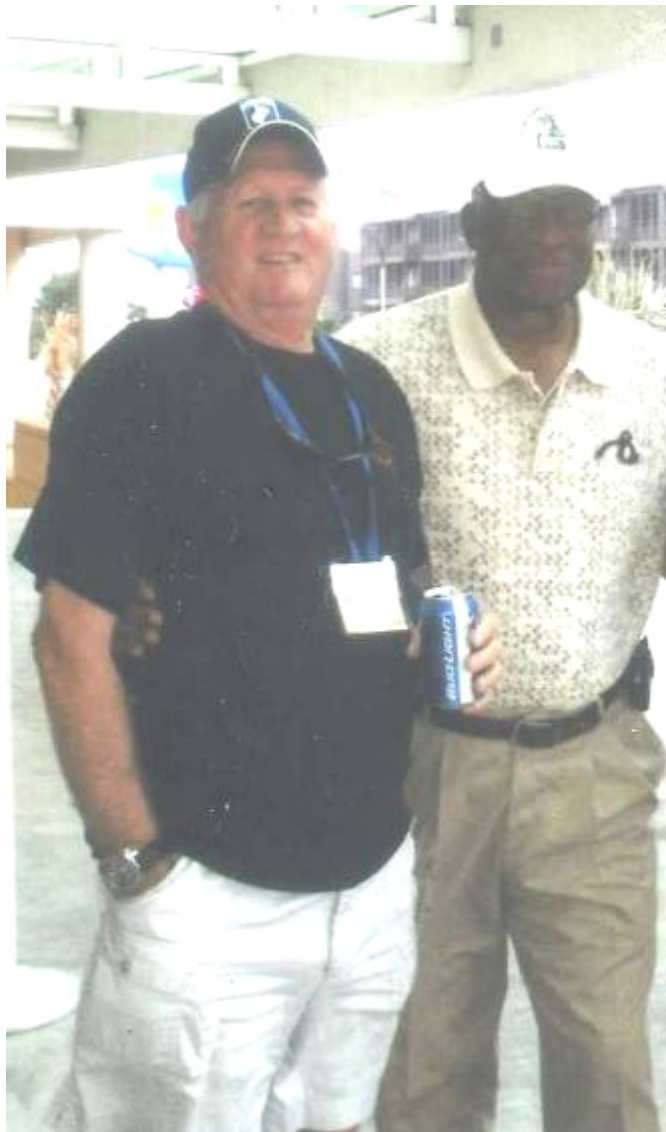
Meeting at 11:00 Hours at:
Cultural Center of Charlotte County, Inc.
2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte, FL 33952
941-625-4175, 941-625-4175
www.theculturalcenter.com

Please RSVP if you plan to attend the meeting as they are sponsoring us for lunch and other things and would like a head count. Please email your RSVP to webmaster@173rdAirborne.com and tell me how many are coming! **Jim Bradley**

MORE INCOMING!

Hey, the Hammer still looks great. Actually, so does everybody, but since he was idolized by most of his guys its something to see him looking so good. Hadn't been for him I probably would have gotten kicked out before we went to Nam. I was a real punk and had some officers thinking I was more trouble than I was worth. Jackson told a Major that I wasn't one of his Goody Two Shoes but when the shooting started I'd be there.....I was. God bless,

Bruce Porter
C/2/503d, '65/'66



Jim Gettel A/2/503d and Desmond "Hammer" Jackson
C/2/503d at 173d reunion in June, N. Myrtle Beach, SC.
(Wayne Bowers)





Bringing in the 2/503d

To A Chopper Jockey

Following is a note I sent recently to Phil Johnson, CW02, Huey and Inferno pilot with the Caspers:

Thanks Phil, and thanks for being there for us. You'll never know how important you and your boys were to us. Short story:

In '66 I was one of the troopers in the last stick coming out of a hot LZ with the bad guys coming up our ass. It was a small, tree lined LZ and there were too many of us for the Huey, but we all jumped on anyway. The bird lumbered forward toward the trees fighting to gain altitude for this one and only chance to get airborne....we all knew we were gonna die by tree. I was sitting immediately behind the young captain, and as we reached the tree line we could hear the skids hitting the tops of the trees. That kid saved our lives. I tapped him on the shoulder and gave him the thumbs up sign...he looked over his right shoulder and simply nodded his head...once. One cool character. I'd like to buy that sonofabitch all the beer he can drink if I could only find him. And that's just one story about you amazing chopper jockeys.

Smitty Out

Guys: Anybody remember that trip? Don't recall where or when it happened other than it was in '66.

MORE ABOUT THAT PRICK

Re: the radio. Contrary to popular opinion, PFC's and Spec 4's were not the only guys lucky enough to wander around the jungle with a 4 foot thingy waving above their heads. I usually sent Corrinea and Sutton off with one of the platoons and I stuck close to the company commander. Especially after Roy Lombardo left. Consequently, I carried my own PRC25; I had 3 of them. I usually had the antenna S folded and tied down with rubber bands. I do not know when the infantry companies got the 25's but they had not reached B



Company by the battle of July 7, 1965. With the 25 I could talk to everyone, especially air, both fixed and rotary wing. During the above mentioned battle, while I was jumping around on various frequencies, my antenna popped up (I was trying to keep it on the ground). It was immediately hit and flopped into the half erect position. I had the only functioning radio as the rest of the company radios crapped out or were shot off the backs of the RTOs. It still worked and I was able to yell and swear at just about everyone for the rest of the battle.

Jim Robinson, FO/B/2/503d, '65/'66





TRIPLE NICKLE TROOPER & TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

From Wambi Cook A/2/503d to Smitty HHC/2/503d:

On a recent trip to Las Vegas, I was recognized by a "bagger" at the Nellis AFB commissary. This elderly, loquaciously engaging gentleman (spotting my Herd cap) made sure I knew he too was airborne. Well, to be precise, a member of the US Army's first/only all Black WWII airborne unit, the 555th (Triple Nickels). Since time was at a premium for both of us, I insisted on having my wife take a photo.



Airborne Troopers Frank Barbee & Wambi Cook

Frank Barbee also shared a story of his wanting to join the 173d on Okinawa, but thought better of it when his wife told him if he did "divorce papers" will quickly follow.

The legacy of this unique, and illustrious unit's history is a must for the newsletter. Their website is [Triplenickel](#). **Wambi**

Note: The 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion was featured in the December 2009, Issue 9 of our newsletter.

From Smitty to Wambi:

Roger that, Wambi. My wife, Reggie, and I have had the good fortune of meeting not one but two Tuskegee Airmen down here in Florida. One at the local Post Office where I helped a frail, elderly woman carry a box to her car and there he was, her husband, whose name I can't recall, and the other at the Warbird's Aviation

Museum in Titusville a couple years ago, Col. Hiram Mann. My wife and I spent a few moments with him, a super neat guy.

I didn't have a camera with me so I asked a stranger to snap a pic and email it to me. A couple months went by and I never got the photo, and began calling the stranger and his mother bad names...soon after the photo came in, and I took back everything I said about him and especially his mom.

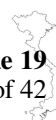


Smitty, Col. Mann & Reggie

As I was ready to leave I came to attention and snapped the Colonel a smart airborne salute, which he returned. Walking out to the car my wife said, "Do you know what he said?" I told her I didn't. She replied, "He said it was nice to be saluted again." What an honor to meet those men. **Smitty Out**



This W.S. Phillips oil painting, *Two Down, One to Go*, portrays Tuskegee Airman C. D. "Lucky" Lester in a P-51 Mustang scoring his second of three victories on July 18, 1944 in the European theatre.



2/503d Sky Soldiers ~ Where Are They Now?

Robert (Bob) Beemer, Sgt. E-5 B/2/503d Recon Squad, 173d Airborne November '67 to November '68. I'm a Construction Manager living outside Middletown, New York, married to Katharine for 30 years with 2 daughters, Tanja and Erin. Not a day goes by that I'm not thankful for having served with the "Herd".



Bob

Robert B. (Bob) Carmichael, LTC (Ret). Bn XO/CO HHC/2/503d, Maj., '65/'66. Married to Exie for nearly 60 years and living in Austin, TX. We have three children, five grandkids and one Great grand kid (the best of the lot). Spend much of my time as the best (only) gardener on the block, and fair at fishing. Any day at 80+ is a good day compared to the alternative.



RBC

Harry T. Cleland, B/2/503d May 66 – May 67. Living in Raleigh, North Carolina just down the road from Ft. Bragg. Retired, playing catch-up with home duties that need attention and trying to keep up with 5 granddaughters ages 12, 8, 5, 3 & 1. Also working with Post 67 American Legion, Cary, NC. Recently elected Judge Adjutant.



Da Judge

George "Scotty" Colson, B/HHC/2/503d, SFC, Dak To survivor. As to what I'm doing now, I'm a State Officer with the Office of Emergency Operations, attached to the Miami Region (Florida Department of Law Enforcement Region 7) as a State Liaison. I live with my beautiful teenage girlfriend Dee, her 12 year old daughter, and my 9 year old son in Broward County.



Dee & George-Scotty

Editor's Note: Now, I've known Scotty for over 45 years when we were hooch buddies in '65/'66, but, shouldn't there be a law against this? Vose??

Wambi Cook, Alpha 2/503d, February 1967-February 1968. Retired post secondary administrator, and public high school principal, Azusa, CA. Home town - Pittsburgh PA.



Alma, Wambi, Helen, Margarette & Mary Helen

Married to Mary Helen - three girls, Margarette, Helen (granddaughter Mia), Alma. Son, Wambi and daughters, Robin (granddaughter Drew) and Kenyetta (grandson Carlos) from previous marriages. One of but a handful from A Company 2/503d who survived both the Battle of the Slopes and Hill 875. Frequently asked question: How? Answer: Wide trees and large ant hills.

wambicook@aol.com

Bruce Demboski, I'm here, C/2/503d 1967 retired living in Arizona with my wife Margie. Hope all is well.

Frank Dukes, A/2/503d in Vietnam from '66 to '67. I served a second tour with B/2/505 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division. When I got out of the Army I was a Sgt. E-5. I am still working as a Customer Service Manager



for a Manufacturing Housing Company in Lewistown, PA. I plan to retire in December of this year. I am married to the best woman in the world and she has stuck with me for the past 41 years. Bless her heart she never knew what she signed up for. We have one son, Michael, and a daughter in-law, Jeri. We have two grandsons, Anthony and Vincent and we love them all to death. I recently attended my first reunion of the Herd in June of this year in Myrtle Beach, SC. It will not be my last. I had the chance to meet up with a lot of my past brothers, Smitty, Woody, Mike, Mike, Pat and James, just to name a few. I can't wait to see the rest of you at other reunions. I don't have a recent picture of my better half and me so this one of Woody and me at the reunion will have to do. Thanks to all of you for allowing me to be a small part of this huge family called the HERD.



Ken Eastman “Doc”, B/2/503d, ‘65/’66 & ‘69/’70. MSG with 22 years active service, retired February 1981. Still working as a licensed Sanitarian designing and installing sewage waste facilities and supporting two grandsons thru college (what a privilege).
keneastman@wildblue.net

James (Jim) D. Green, Jr., B/2/503d ‘62-’66. Military service: 46 years with contractor time. Retired CWO in 1981. Retired Contractor Test Pilot in 2007 with nearly 41 years and 15,000 flight hours in the cockpit for old Uncle Sugar. Retired in South Alabama with my wife of 46 years, 'Holly'.



Two grown and successful children; **Flight ready Jim** daughter 'Cynthia' (graduate chemical engineer from Georgia Tech) and son 'James III' (business owner in our home town). Two wonderful grandsons; 'Jeffrey' 9 years old and 'Jacob' 6 years old. No greater love hath any man that that for his grand children! Two tours in the Land of the Big Rice paddies, five trips over seas and 46 years of service doing that that I loved has left me worn, but not out! I have no recent portraits of myself, I was the one always behind the camera, but I have included in this message a shot of my final flight day. Wishing all of you the very best in the future, good health and lots of good memories. My years as a paratrooper have not faded from my mind. I fought alongside some of the best warriors this nation has ever produced. Always Airborne! Jim

Dave “Griff” Griffin, Sgt. B/HHC/2/503d ‘65/’66. Retired from Duke Energy after 38 years. Married to my 2nd grade sweetheart for 43 years. Two children, son and daughter. Two Grand daughters 10 and 16 years young. We live in Cornelius, NC and live on Lake Norman, 20 miles north of Charlotte, NC off I-77. We are Lake and Beach Bums.



Trudy and her RTO

"Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget."

Don't know who said it, but it makes sense.

Dick B. Holt, SFC (retired) 1996 from NC National Guard as Unit Readiness NCO for Co C 230th Signal Battalion. Married to Beth for 37 years, two daughters Deanna (36), Stephanie (32) and we have three grandkids. I enjoy playing golf, watching the Carolina Tarheels, and drinking cold beer with my twin Rick (also a Nam veteran) who served with the Marines at Chu Lai. I was with C/2/503d Apr-Oct 67. dholtstreet@hotmail.com



Dick with Katie Wright
 I enjoy playing golf, watching the Carolina Tarheels, and drinking cold beer with my twin Rick (also a Nam veteran) who served with the Marines at Chu Lai. I was with C/2/503d Apr-Oct 67. dholtstreet@hotmail.com

Dan Reed, SSG, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, A/2/503d, '69-'70. Cabin-living near Reliance, TN, and doing small log home jobs. Divorced in '80, with one son, Eric, and two grand-daughters, also in East TN. Always have pride and respect for the "Herd" danalog@tds.net

Don Rice, “Vuorhees”, HHC/4.2 Platoon, 2/503d, ‘65/’66. Stillwater, MN. Veterinarian - small animal practice. Wife of 40 years, Aretta (“40 years with the wrong man,” as she is fond of saying!). Daughter Raeana, age 29, Son Robert, age 24. No grandchildren.

James “Jim” W. Starrett, C/2/503d. I am retired. I lost a lung in 2001 due to cancer caused by Agent Orange. I live in Smithville, Tennessee with my wife Bonny, and my 16 year old daughter Chantal.

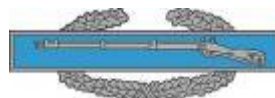


Jim

William E. (Bill) White, Major Spt Bn, Commandant USARPAC Jungle Warfare Training Center, Iriomote, U S Ryukus Island, Oct 63 - Apr 64. XO 2/503d Oct 64 - Apr 65, 173d Abn Bde (Sep), Liaison Officer to I Corps Nov 65 - May 66. LT Col USA (Ret) Aug 68. Retired Small Business Owner, Aug 87. Married to Shirley for 60 years. At 85 can still do a fair PLF when I trip or fall. AIRBORNE!!! swattheshore@juno.com

Note:

Let your buddies know where you are and what you've been doing. Send in your info and a photo for the October issue of our Newsletter.



MESOTHELIOMA AND VETERANS

Veterans of the U.S. military services are particularly at risk for mesothelioma because so much asbestos was used by the military. Throughout the 20th Century the Navy and other branches of the military employed asbestos products in ships, buildings, and other military facilities, and thousands of servicemen and women came into contact with asbestos fibers.



WIDESPREAD ABESTOS EXPOSURE

Members of all uniformed services were exposed to asbestos on duty, as were civilian defense employees, military contractors, and people in the merchant marines. Boilermen, Enginemen, Electricians, Pipefitters, and many other jobs brought servicemen into close contact with asbestos insulation, cements, ceiling tiles, brakes and other materials.

Thousands of Navy and Coast Guard ships were constructed with asbestos, which had physical properties that made it ideal for the vessels of the era. The health problems caused by inhaling asbestos fibers don't show up for decades, but when they do, they can be serious. Literally hundreds of materials used by the Navy and other services included asbestos.

VA ASSISTANCE

The Department of Veterans Affairs serves veterans in many ways, including the world-class medical system at the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). If you are eligible, these facilities can be an invaluable part of your health care.

Like any large organization, the Department of Veterans Affairs can be difficult to find your way around in, and other federal and state programs for veterans are also hard to find and to identify if you qualify. The VA has established a network of Veteran Service Officers at the county level throughout the United States.

GETTING CHECKED OUT AND TREATED FOR ASBESTOS DISEASES

Asbestos cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis can lie dormant for decades before symptoms start to show. Doctors who suspect mesothelioma will ask about your exposure to asbestos, and most people find this difficult to remember, especially if it happened decades ago. If you worked with any of these materials or in any of these locations, be sure to tell your doctor during

examinations. Early detection is the best defense against asbestos diseases.

If you've been diagnosed with mesothelioma contact a doctor or medical center that can handle this form of cancer.

The VHA has designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers throughout the country. These are large hospitals with experienced oncologists and nursing staffs. The VA also has established, at a community level, outpatient clinics that provide medical care for eligible veterans.

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS WITH MESOTHELIOMA

Mesothelioma Web attempts to be the most comprehensive mesothelioma website on the Internet. If you can't find what you are looking for on the site, let us know at 877-367-6376 and we will attempt to answer your questions.

Source: Vietnam and all Veterans Coalition.

Hello Who?

Smitty: He's a professional writer doing research and wants to include our comments and opinions amongst a lot more research.

You don't need to do anything but print his request, or not. I put it up on our 173d Chapter 17 Bulletin Board. He's just asking for folks who saw the show -- gotta get facts from someone. Personally, I like seeing the 173d in print.

Skip Kniley, 3/319th

[Following is the note sent to Skip which he asked to be included in our newsletter. I never saw a Donut Dolly let alone this show. I know nothing about Mr. Hely, his work or his intentions, other than what he states below. Ed]

*Hello sir,
I'm a writer here in Los Angeles. I've written a novel and a travel book, although most of my work has been on TV - I'm a writer and producer for the NBC show The Office. I'm doing some research for an article about the production of "Hello Dolly" at Bien Hoa in 1965. I'd like to talk to anyone from the 173rd who was at the base or off on a mission during that time.*

Could you help me get in touch with any 173rd veterans who might be willing to answer a few questions?

*Thanks very much, and thanks for your service,
Steve Hely helphely@gmail.com*



Farewell Our Sky Soldier Brothers

Today's *Los Angeles Times* had an obit about SFC (Retired) Santo Rodriguez formerly of Los Angeles. He resided in Fayetteville, NC. He jumped on 22 Feb. 1967 with the 173d and he also served in the 101st at Ft. Campbell, KY, and the 82nd at Ft. Bragg, NC. He had a big family and his wife is still residing in NC. The LA Times said he would be buried at Ft. Rosecrans, CA (San Diego) in Oct. of 2010.

Raymond Ramirez

Sky Soldiers and Friends:

It saddens me to inform you of the passing, this morning, August 26th, of our Brother Sky Soldier, Jim Bernardo, and I will pass on the information regarding services when I receive it from the family. However, I have copied Al Gonzalez, SD 82nd Airborne Association Honor Guard Team Leader, to ask that we provide Full Military Honors at the services for our fallen comrade. Airborne all the way!

**Nick Aguilar, President
San Diego 173rd Airborne Association**

Carl Lee Simpson

7/4/1972

Memories at War

**Can you remember
innocent time so sweet,
jumping high
our playful skips
and agile limbs
to land upon,
those wondrous marvels
...called feet.**

**Can you remember
violent times...defeat,
innocent lives
faces to forget
and names
those friends of pain,
whose wondrous hearts
...ceased to beat.**



SHARON RAMIREZ

In a note from her husband, Raymond Ramirez

I'm working on my wife Sharon's funeral services for this weekend. Sharon attended the 1st reunion that we held in 1989, in Santa Rosa, CA. I was the President of the

Western States Chapter 10, and General Westmoreland was the Guest Speaker. We had a great event and the mother and sisters of Van Campen, B/2/503d MIA were there.

Sharon made reunions in Boston, Chicago, Sacramento, CA, Reno, NV, Rochester, MN, and Fayetteville, NC. One of her cousins served as a CWO in the 173d in about 1969-70, on the Courts & Boards Section.

In 2001, we visited the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy, and we took photos, and videos to the CO who met us and took us around the base. We also visited the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, Normandy, and Italy, where Sharon and our daughter Celeste had visited with the Montebello High School orchestra that would perform there in Closing Ceremonies in 1995.

Sharon was also "down under" for the 2005, 173d reunion and she had just retired from teaching for 32 years in the Montebello Unified School District.

Sharon attended the "Day of Honor" benefit concert in Atlanta, GA, on Oct. 7, 2006, and she got to "meet & greet" with Big & Rich and other performers and sat in the 2nd row just behind "Big Kenny's" wife and son. She took a great photo of "Big Kenny" singing the "8th of November" and I hope to use that photo in a story that I will be writing for *Country Weekly* magazine. Sharon had a cousin who lives in Florida who performed in Hee Haw in Nashville, TN, in 1980-81. One of my dreams was to take her to Opryland to see where he performed and then take her up to Ft. Campbell, KY, where I served in the 1/501st and the 4/503d before we took off for RVN. Time to go because I have to make some donations in her memory this morning.

**Raymond Ramirez
4/503d**

Ray: Our thoughts are with Sharon, you and your family.



RIDE THE THUNDER

Book Review by a Sky Soldier

Just got through reading the book *Ride The Thunder* by Richard Botkin, the true story of the U.S. Marines and their Vietnamese allies largely responsible for thwarting the Communist invasion of South Vietnam known as the Easter Offensive of 1972.

Long book, some 598 pages, but does detail the role of Vietnamese Marines and their time after the war in reeducation camps. For too long, the western media has derided the role of the Vietnamese people in defending their country alongside American forces and this book puts a whole new side on that.

One particular aspect as to why we lost, aside from our fear of the Chinese entering the war, and I quote from the book: "Remembering that one million Red Chinese had crossed the Yalu River in November of 1950 when MacArthur's forces had gotten too far into North Korea, American political leadership convinced itself that, to keep the Soviets and Chinese from considering the introduction of their own troops, they would limit ground combat to areas within the borders of South Vietnam."

"Where the Vietnamese Communists saw all of what was formerly French Indo-China as one giant, legitimate battlefield, the U.S. chose to confine its ground efforts to within the borders of the Republic of Vietnam."

"January 1968 saw the U.S. entering its 34th month of major combat operations in Vietnam."

"By the 34th month of American involvement in WWII, in the European Theater of Operations, the Germans had been removed from northern Africa, the Italians had been removed from the war, the Allies had broken out of their D-Day beachheads, liberated Paris and were advancing on Berlin. The Russians were steadily advancing from the east."

"In the Pacific bloody wins at places like Midway, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Guam and the Philippines showed the continual shrinking of the Japanese Empire."

"By the 34th month of American involvement in WWII the folks at home had been thoroughly indoctrinated and made part of the war experience. With 12 million men and women under arms out of a population of 140 million, few families did not have at least a son or husband or nephew or cousin serving. The economic effort required to support total war virtually guaranteed that even if a family did not have a relative or dear friend in uniform, they were somehow involved or significantly impacted through their own civilian employment."

"...by the 34th month of ground combat operations on the Korean peninsula, the armistice was close to being signed."

"The beginnings of 1968 brought with it no bond or scrap metal drives, no Meatless Tuesdays, no gas or sugar rationing. The average American manufacturing worker was not producing bombers or bullets or battleships. There were no admonishments that 'Loose lips sink ships' and Rosie the Riveter had split the scene. While in WWII collective suffering and shared sacrifice had one in twelve Americans wearing a uniform with perhaps half of those folks serving somewhere overseas, by the time of the Vietnam War maybe one in one hundred were serving and only one in four hundred was in Southeast Asia."

The book covers a news media only interested in covering another My Lai and not concerned with anything relating to North Vietnamese or Viet Cong war atrocities. A media convinced we were losing due to Tet. Somewhere, some time, someone made the decision ours was only to be a stalemate war. Was it McNamara alone? Johnson? Who was so scared of a war involving the Chinese and Soviets, they were willing to sacrifice some 58,000 Americans and millions of Vietnamese? Westmoreland operated within the limits imposed on him and bore the brunt of the war's mistakes. A good book, if you have time, read it.

Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503d, '66/'67

FORTY-TWO YEARS LATER AN NVA SOLDIER IS DISCOVERED IN GREYBULL, WYOMING IMPERSONATING A RETIRED PREACHER



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



Use of Agent Orange is Well-Documented

Originally published August 13, 2010

By Megan Eckstein

Long before Fort Detrick hired a contractor to investigate its past use of Agent Orange on post, the fact that the Army did test the herbicide in Frederick was common knowledge.

The *Frederick News-Post* archives, government documents and Fort Detrick's website all chronicle the Army post's Vietnam-era testing of Agent Orange, a defoliant that has since been proven to cause cancers, Parkinson's disease, skin conditions and more.

An April 8, 1967, news article by *The Associated Press* states that *"research headquarters for the U.S. (chemical and biological warfare) program is Ft. Detrick it has a 1967 budget estimated at \$38 million."*

"In one distant corner of the base lies the crop division with its four large greenhouses where research is done on the defoliants and herbicides now used in Vietnam," the article continues.

A Dec. 13, 1972, *News-Post* story elaborates. It said Fort Detrick's Vegetation Control Division was given a January 1973 deadline to demilitarize, in accordance with President Richard Nixon's orders that the United States would no longer research or produce chemical and biological weapons.

"The VCD, by that date, will have disposed of a stockpile of biological anti-crop agents the size of which is still a classified subject," the article stated. *"The demilitarization project is a significant change in direction for the facility that produced three of the major defoliants used by this country in the Vietnam War. Instead of developing more herbicides, like 'agent orange' -- which tends to activate the plant's growth process to the extent that it 'grows to death,' or like 'blue and white' -- which is absorbed by and kills back the growing tips of victimized plants, the VCD is now studying ways to defoliate plants without killing them."*

The 1972 article continues, *"the VCD has screened some 31,000 chemical compounds since the unit was established at Fort Detrick in 1946."*

Fort Detrick spokesman Rob Sperling said the Army post had hired a contractor to investigate the details of its previous Agent Orange testing: *"if it was done, where it was done, how much, under what conditions,"* he said. Sperling said Fort Detrick was not aware of the Agent Orange testing before Randy White and his 'Fighting for Frederick' group revealed it at a July 10 meeting.

"When it came up, we said, 'we don't know anything about this,' so we started looking at it," he said. *"It caught us off guard.. But there's so much here, the things that went on 50, 60 years ago, most of us weren't even alive."*

Sperling said he did not know who the contractor was, how long the contract was for and how much money the Army paid for the investigation.

More on Agent Orange
Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d

VA Health Care and Benefits Provided for Many Vietnam Veterans

WASHINGTON (August 30, 2010) - Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam and other areas will have an easier path to access quality health care and qualify for disability compensation under a final regulation that will be published on August 31, 2010 in the Federal Register by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The new rule expands the list of health problems VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures to add two new conditions and expand one existing category of conditions.

"Last October, based on the requirements of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 and the Institute of Medicine's 2008 Update on Agent Orange, I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to award presumptions of service connection for these three additional diseases," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"It was the right decision, and the President and I are proud to finally provide this group of Veterans the care and benefits they have long deserved."*

The final regulation follows Shinseki's determination to expand the list of conditions for which service connection for Vietnam Veterans is presumed. VA is adding Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease and expanding chronic lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B cell leukemia, such as hairy cell leukemia.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an association between their medical problems and their military service.

(continued....)



By helping Veterans overcome evidentiary requirements that might otherwise present significant challenges, this "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process and ensure that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

The Secretary's decision to add these presumptives is based on the latest evidence provided in a 2008 independent study by the Institute of Medicine concerning health problems caused by herbicides like Agent Orange.

Veterans who served in Vietnam anytime during the period beginning January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides.

More than 150,000 Veterans are expected to submit Agent Orange claims in the next 12 to 18 months, many of whom are potentially eligible for retroactive disability payments based on past claims. Additionally, VA will review approximately 90,000 previously denied claims by Vietnam Veterans for service connection for these conditions. All those awarded service-connection who are not currently eligible for enrollment into the VA healthcare system will become eligible.

This historic regulation is subject to provisions of the Congressional Review Act that require a 60-day Congressional review period before implementation. After the review period, VA can begin paying benefits for new claims and may award benefits retroactively for earlier periods.

For new claims, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the effective date of the regulation or to one year before the date VA receives the application, whichever is later. For pending claims and claims that were previously denied, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the date it received the claim.

VA encourages Vietnam Veterans with these three diseases to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation now so the agency can begin development of their claims.

Individuals can go to a website at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm> <<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm>> to get an understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivors benefits.

Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services for Veterans exposed to the chemical is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.

2/503d Newsletter Banners

With this issue of our newsletter, we've now displayed the three new banners produced by **Ashley Bowers**, graphic artist extraordinaire and daughter of Wayne Bowers, C/2/503d. If there were a contest for the best old soldier newsletter banners, we would be in the running! Anyone needing top-of-the-line graphics work should contact Ashley at the Chargin' Charlies' email at bowway@aol.com

We'll continue to alternately display the three banners in subsequent issues of our newsletter.

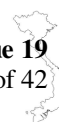


Thanks again Ashley for the great work you did creating our banners. Ed

.....

I Kept a Ticket Tribute to the 1/503d & 173d Airborne

Call-up this web site to see this video tribute:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87AB6-xwoh0>
It has over 3,200 viewers to date.





A Casper Perspective (In an email to Wambi Cook, A/2/503d)

Mr. Cook:

The mail arrived this morning and I found my new copy of *Sky Soldier*. The magazine fell open to your article, "Battle of the Slopes--22 June 1967", which I read while walking back up my driveway. I enjoyed reading your perspective on the events of that day. I salute you for your courage, not only for that day but for serving in the infantry of the finest fighting unit to be found.

I was there that day also. I served with the Casper Aviation platoon with Brigade HHC. The Caspers were the 173d's only helicopters and the only separate aviation platoon in Vietnam. Lots of helicopters supported the brigade but we were the only ones that were part of the unit and entitled to wear the brigade patch on our right shoulder when we returned from overseas.

On that June morning an element of the fourth Bat was also in heavy contact to the northeast of Dak To. I flew our huey along with the other pilot, our crew chief and gunner in to their position to do a medevac of several wounded, while the unit was still in contact. They low-crawled the wounded out to the helicopter and as quickly as we could, got the hell out of there, followed by a stream of tracers from a heavy NVA machine gun.

General Dean was circling above us in his aircraft. This helicopter was able to get back to Dak To but was put out of commission. No one on board was wounded. By this time A/2/503 was in heavy contact, the other pilot and I were assigned a new aircraft, the one we did the medevac in was too shot up to fly. We picked up Colonel Partain, 2nd Battalion commander, and proceeded up over the battle. At one time I counted as many as 13 helicopter gunships in a line firing at the enemy.

I was sorry to read from your accounting of the friendly fire deaths to our own troops. It was a busy place in the air with the gunships, Air Force fighters and artillery. At one point, as the fire from the air and artillery took a break we circled very low over the area. I believe we had an artillery officer, the Colonel and Sergeant Major Rogiers in my aircraft. We came under heavy automatic weapons fire and the aircraft was hit very badly. I looked over my shoulder and saw Rogiers moving about and white as a sheet. Rounds had come up through the floor of the aircraft, bracketing him with at least two hitting him. I didn't know how badly he was hurt because the aircraft was severely damaged and difficult to control and I had to pay attention to that problem first. It was a very short flight back down the mountain where we made a landing. Rogiers was the only one hit, with

the bullets only grazing him, leaving several holes in his jungle fatigues. The aircraft was no longer flyable. I read many years later in the book "*Dak To*", and I paraphrase, that I was able to get back to the airfield, but despite my skill, we landed heavily and Partain was injured forcing his evacuation later on. I do not recall that we landed heavily but hey I am only the pilot. I do know that that helicopter wasn't flying anymore that day.

By this time I had lost two helicopters so General Deane loaned us his command chopper, the same one he was in while watching us be shot down earlier in the morning.

From our helipad back at the airfield, we could see and even hear at times the action on that hill. It was truly horrible. You guys needed ammunition, chain saws and other supplies. There was no LZ and you guys were in no position to make one and I sure as hell didn't want to try and land up there, so we volunteered to drop the stuff to you. One of your officers, either a Lieutenant or Captain volunteered to go and drop the cargo to you. I do not recall his name.

We took off and flew up over your position and each time we came to a hover we came under heavy automatic weapons fire. We could not fire our guns



because we could not pin point your position. We were sitting ducks. After three passes at hovering over you, the aircraft was barely flying. I don't know how I was able to get back. Had it not been all down hill from your position, we would never have made it. So the general gave me his helicopter and I broke that one too. That was three for the day and I was done.

Having said all that I would not have traded my position in the air for your fix there on that hill for any amount of money. I can only imagine how you guys made it through that horror, something you had done before and would continue to do until you were able to go home. I don't know whether the tactics were right or wrong. It seems that with 76 brave men slaughtered and hundreds more scarred for life, that somebody in command screwed up big time. All I can say is welcome home brother...

Respectfully,
Steve Greene



Sky Soldier DAVID 'MAD DOG' DOLBY Farewell Brother



On Friday, August 6, David C. Dolby passed away suddenly in Spirit Lake, Idaho at the age of 64. Childless, Mr. Dolby had lived in virtual seclusion in the town of Barto, PA since the passing of his wife in 1997. Barto is so small and insignificant the Rand McNally Atlas doesn't even list it in its appendix. Mr. Dolby's passing went so unnoticed that even his hometown paper didn't acknowledge it. His passing was announced by an organization to which he belonged. Evidently most felt Mr. Dolby's death didn't merit any notice at all and almost nobody gave it a thought. He apparently hadn't done anything in his life to merit any special attention.

A funeral service will be held at Arlington National Cemetery. There won't be any press there and likely only a handful of mourners who had the privilege to know David Dolby. And there will probably be a few guys there who are fellow members of the organization that announced his passing: the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

David Charles Dolby (May 14, 1946 – August 6, 2010) was a United States Army soldier who received the U.S. military's highest decoration, the Medal of Honor, for his actions in the Vietnam War.

David was born on May 14, 1946, in Norristown, Pennsylvania. His father, Charles L. Dolby, was a personnel manager for B.F. Goodrich Company in Oaks, Pennsylvania. He had a younger brother, Daniel.

Mr. Dolby joined the Army from Philadelphia and by May 21, 1966, was serving in the Republic of Vietnam as a specialist fourth class with Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). On that day, his platoon came under heavy fire which killed six soldiers and wounded a number of others, including the platoon leader. Throughout the ensuing four-hour battle, he led his platoon in its defense, organized the extraction of the wounded, and directed artillery fire despite close-range attacks from enemy snipers and automatic weapons. He single-handedly attacked the hostile positions and silenced three machine guns, allowing a friendly force to execute a flank attack.

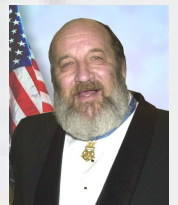
David was subsequently promoted to sergeant and awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the battle. The medal was formally presented to him by President Lyndon B. Johnson on September 28, 1967.

In addition to the 1965–66 tour in which he earned the Medal of Honor, Sergeant Dolby was deployed four more times to Vietnam. In 1967 he served there with the 101st Airborne Division, in 1969, with the 75th Ranger Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, in 1970 as an advisor to the Vietnamese Rangers, and in 1971 as an advisor to the Royal Cambodian Army.

Mr. Dolby married but had no children. After his wife Xuan's death around 1987, he lived quietly in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Over the last 20 years, David attended many veterans events around the U.S. and once opened the New York Stock Exchange on Veterans Day. He most recently worked to bring attention to the neglected Medal of Honor Grove at the Freedoms Foundation in PA.

David Dolby died at age 64 on the morning of August 6, 2010, while visiting Spirit Lake, Idaho, for a veterans' gathering. Funeral arrangements at Arlington National Cemetery are pending.



'Mad Dog'



VA Obligates Last of its Recovery Act Funds to Help Veterans

\$1.8 Billion Investment Improves Care and Services for Veterans

WASHINGTON (August 5, 2010). The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) committed the last of its \$1.8 billion in Recovery Act funds July 31, one of the first federal agencies to achieve that milestone. Projects at more than 1,200 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will increase access to health care and services to Veterans, while creating jobs and stimulating the economy.

"Veterans across the Nation are benefiting from these Recovery Act funds," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Recovery Act projects are improving medical care, speeding claims processing, enhancing our national cemeteries, advancing our energy efficiency, and generating jobs for Americans."

VA rapidly put American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) funding to work to improve its medical facilities, revitalize its national cemeteries, hire claims processors, upgrade technology systems and assist states in acquiring, building or remodeling state nursing homes and domiciliary facilities for Veterans.

The funding received by VA is part of President Obama's economic recovery plan to improve services to America's Veterans. By obligating these funds quickly, VA is revitalizing its infrastructure and moving needed money into the economy.



Using Recovery Act funds, VA entered into 1,521 contracts with 696 contractors. Three-quarters of the contractors are Veteran owned businesses, either service disabled Veteran owned businesses or Veteran owned small businesses.

Health Care Services Enhanced:

VA obligated \$1 billion to improve VA medical care facilities across the country through building renovations, roadway and walkway repairs, high cost equipment replacement, security improvements, new construction, replacement of steam lines and boiler plants, upgrades in emergency power distribution, and purchases of additional emergency generators among others.

To help Veterans access care, Recovery Act projects in VA medical facilities will add or improve more than 26,000 parking spaces and 39 elevator banks are being built or upgraded. VA will upgrade nearly 14,000 inpatient bed spaces, while 16 pharmacy renovation projects will help Veterans get medicines quicker and more efficiently. More than 14,400 clinical improvement projects, some with multiple exam rooms, will be undertaken.

Funds are also helping ensure VA health care facilities function more efficiently (by reducing annual recurring maintenance and upkeep cost) and are equipped to provide world-class care to Veterans.

Specific projects include:

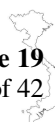
- Bedford, Mass., VA Medical Center (VAMC) mental health unit renovation, \$7.165 million;
- Philadelphia VAMC emergency room renovations, \$4.74 million;
- Cleveland VAMC surgical suite refurbishment, \$8.5 million;
- New Haven, Conn., VAMC private and semi-private inpatient units, \$7.743 million;
- Hines, Ill., VAMC electrical distribution infrastructure upgrade, \$8 million.

VA serves 5.5 million Veterans annually in its hospitals, outpatient clinics and rural health programs.

Energy Conservation:

VA is promoting energy conservation and reducing its environmental footprint by investing \$200 million in Recovery Act funds for renewable energy generation technologies, metering systems, and energy conservation and water-saving measures. In total, the renewable energy systems awarded represent more than 9 megawatts of planned power generating capacity from solar, wind, and cogeneration technologies.

(continued....)



Two national cemeteries, in Bourne, Mass., and San Joaquin, Calif., anticipate producing enough electricity to supply nearly all of their energy needs.

VA is installing solar photovoltaic systems at facilities in Albuquerque, N.M.; Tucson, Ariz.; Dublin, Ga.; Calverton, N.Y.; San Joaquin, Calif., and Riverside, Calif.

VA is erecting a wind turbine in Bourne, Mass., and is constructing a geothermal system at its medical center in St. Cloud, Minn.

In addition, VA is building renewably fueled cogeneration systems at five medical facilities: Togus, Maine; White River Junction, Vt.; Chillicothe, Ohio; Loma Linda, Calif.; and Canandaigua, N.Y.

VA is installing metering systems at all VA-owned facilities to monitor energy utilities, including electricity, water, chilled water, steam, and natural gas consumption.

VA is also investing \$197 million in energy and water infrastructure improvements. VA facilities across the country are upgrading their facilities to reduce energy consumption and water usage and better manage related costs.

Claims Processing Improvements:

VA is working to improve the systems for processing claims to more quickly and efficiently deliver benefits to Veterans. VA has obligated \$150 million to hire, train and equip new employees to improve claims processing and speed the delivery of benefits to Veterans. VA has hired approximately 2,700 temporary and permanent employees to assist with processing Veterans' claims for VA benefits.

National Cemeteries Revitalized:

Throughout VA's system of 131 national cemeteries, 391 improvement projects are underway using \$50 million in Recovery Act funding. VA is restoring and preserving 49 historic monuments and memorials, becoming more energy efficient by investing in renewable energy sources (solar and wind), moving forward on nine energy conservation projects, and improving access and visitor safety with 49 road, paving and grounds improvement projects.

Recovery Act funds are also being used to raise, realign, and clean approximately 200,000 headstones and markers, repair sunken graves, and renovate turf at 22 VA national cemeteries.

One-time Benefit Payments:

The Recovery Act provided one-time \$250 economic recovery payments to eligible Veterans, their survivors, and dependents to help mitigate the effects of the current economy. \$7.1 million were intended for administrative support of the one-time benefit payments. VA was able to successfully administer the program with a savings of approximately \$6.1 million, and may return the remaining funds to the US Treasury.

Source: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm

Veterans More Likely to Avoid Foreclosure with VA-Backed Loan

Shinseki says VA's Home Loan Program Continues to Stay Strong

August 19, 2010

WASHINGTON – Mortgage loans guaranteed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continue to have the lowest rate for serious delinquency and foreclosures in the industry.



"The continued high performance of VA loans is due to the dedication of VA's loan professionals, the support of our partners in the mortgage industry and most notably, the responsibility of our Veterans and their desire to maintain home ownership," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"VA is making good on its promise to help Veterans achieve the American dream of owning a home."*

There are currently about 1.3 million active home loans that have been obtained using VA's Home Loan Guaranty Program. The program makes home ownership more affordable for Veterans, active-duty service members, and eligible surviving spouses by permitting low or no down payment loans and by protecting lenders from loss if the borrower fails to repay the loan.

According to the Mortgage Bankers Association National Delinquency Survey, VA's foreclosure rate for the last eight quarters and serious delinquency rate for the last five consecutive quarters have been the lowest of all measured loan types, even prime loans.

(continued....)



Much of the program's strength stems from the efforts of VA employees and loan servicers nationwide, whose primary mission is to *"ensure all Veterans receive every possible opportunity to remain in their homes, avoid foreclosure, and protect their credit from the consequences of a foreclosure,"* added Shinseki.

Depending on the situation, VA's loan specialists can intervene on a Veteran's behalf to help pursue home-retention options such as repayment plans, forbearances and loan modifications. When home retention is not an option, sometimes VA can help arrange a sale, or a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure, both of which are better options for Veteran borrowers than foreclosure.

Since 1944, when home-loan guaranties were first offered under the original GI Bill, VA has guaranteed more than 18.8 million home loans worth \$1.06 trillion.

To obtain more information about the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program, Veterans can call VA at 1-877-827-3702. Information can also be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov.

WHO DAT?



In last month's issue of our newsletter we asked if anyone could name this trooper taking a bath in his steel pot. He's **Sky Soldier Paul Epley** who served with a line Battalion and later as a photographer with Bde PIO. Paul took the famous *"Agony of War"* photo, often referred to as *"The Death Watch"*, which appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout the world.

GET YOUR FLAG READY!

Please join us in this **"FLY THE FLAG Campaign"** and PLEASE forward this Email immediately to everyone in your address book asking them to also forward it.

If you forward this email to least 11 people and each of those people do the same ... you get the idea.

THE PROGRAM:

On Saturday, September 11th, 2010, an American flag should be displayed outside every home, apartment, office, and store in the United States. Every individual should make it their duty to display an American flag on this ninth anniversary of one of our country's worst tragedies. We do this in honor of those who lost their lives on 9/11, their families, friends and loved ones who continue to endure the pain, and those who today are fighting at home and abroad to preserve our cherished freedoms.

In the days, weeks and months following 9/11, our country was bathed in American flags as citizens mourned the incredible losses and stood shoulder-to-shoulder against terrorism. Sadly, those flags have all but disappeared. Our patriotism pulled us through some tough times and it shouldn't take another attack to galvanize us in solidarity. Our American flag is the fabric of our country and together we can prevail over terrorism of all kinds.

Action Plan:

So, here's what we need you to do ...

- (1) Forward this email to everyone you know (at least 11 people). Please don't be the one to break this chain. Take a moment to think back to how you felt on 9/11 and let those sentiments guide you.
- (2) Fly an American flag of any size on 9/11. Honestly, Americans should fly the flag year-round, but if you don't, then at least make it a priority on this day.

Thank you for your participation.
God Bless You and God Bless America !!!

Sent in by
Russ "Wolfman" Walker
C/2/503d



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JOHN E. GERRARD WWII VETERAN

"Just enough and just in time" 767th

John E. Gerrard was born May 21, 1920, to Adelbert and Lelia Alice Gerrard at Chandler, Oklahoma. He moved to Walsenburg, Colorado, at a young age where the family farmed. In November 1940, he joined the Colorado National Guard and was activated into the US Army on January 6, 1941.

John served with distinction in the Phoenix, Marshall and Solomon Islands in the 767th Tank Battalion as a platoon Sergeant responsible for the maintenance, repair and training of tank personnel and responsible for the control, coordination and tactical employment of five tanks and crew members. He was discharged from the US Army on July 2, 1945, and from the Colorado National Guard on July 31, 1945. He married Mildred E. Thurman in Chama, New Mexico, on June 14, 1945.

There were four children born to this union – John, Iva, Deborah, and Vernel. He worked the oil and gas fields of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, Kansas and Wyoming until the late 50's.



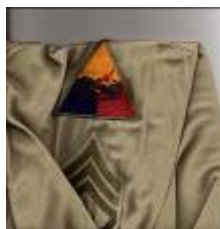
He became an ordained minister with the Assembly of God Churches in 1961 and spent the next 20 years in active ministry – mostly in seeding new churches. He was a plumber and pipe fitter

until just days before his death. His love was unconditional, non judgemental, and for everyone he was in contact with. He passed away with his family at his side on August 22, 2010. He will be greatly missed.

Iva & Wayne Tuttle & Family



The Tuttle family. Wayne and Iva with daughter Lauri, grandkids Josh and Aaron, and Dad.



Dad's uniform

HAND UP TO A SKY SOLDIER

Thank you posting the following in the '2/503d Vietnam Newsletter' so brothers can see it and maybe we can get Moe some help.

Moheo 'Moe' Hukarevic, has cancer and wishes to make one more trip to Kokomo. Mike Tanner is helping with getting Moe a spot to sleep but Moe is unable to drive due to the medications he is on, thus, he needs a ride.

Moe lives in Wallace, MI about 17 miles east of the Wisconsin border (Monominee), on the west side of the U.P. of MI off HWY 41.

If anyone can give Moe some assistance on this, perhaps his last trip to Kokomo, let us pray not, it would be greatly appreciated. Moe's phone number is **906-788-4816**.

Thanks for your help!

**Rocky
Commander**

**Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association MI, Inc.
U.S. Paratrooper Motorcycle Association
Patriot Guard Riders
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
Charlie Co. 75th Airborne Rangers

WHO CAN IDENTIFY THIS 2/503d TROOPER IN THE WIRE STRUGGLING WITH HIS P-38?



First in with the correct name wins a P-38.



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