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February 2011, Issue 24

You can see all issues to date of our newsletter at either of these web sites:
www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php or http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/HD_Version.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~

Stand in the door! Go! Go! Go!!!



C/2/503d troopers practicing door exits in preparation for February 1967 combat jump during Operation Junction City.
(Photo by MG Jack Leide, CO C/2/503d)



THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

By Rev. Dr. Ronald R. Smith
1LT/FO/B/2/503d



What comes to your mind when the month of February is mentioned?

Probably Valentine's Day! Though not an official business or bank holiday, it keeps the candy companies, Hallmark, and florists afloat for a good portion of the year. Every year we celebrate this romantic holiday by giving small tokens of affection to those we love. All of us can recall school days when we sent valentines to our classmates and received a handful in return.

Many of us might not realize that St. Valentine gave the ultimate gift, his life, for the love of Jesus Christ.

Valentine was a Roman priest. In about 270 A.D. he was caught helping other Christians escape the persecution of Emperor Claudius II. Claudius had ordered his Roman subjects to worship twelve gods. Because Christians would not acknowledge his gods, the emperor made it illegal to be a Christian, or even to associate with them. Offenders were given the death penalty. Valentine was caught and brought before the emperor.

He had almost succeeded in converting Claudius to Christianity when the chief magistrate of Rome began to complain, *"The Emperor is being led astray! How should we give up what we have believed from infancy?"*

Claudius was embarrassed and demanded that Valentine be placed in the magistrate's custody until he decided what to do with this troublesome priest. Valentine prayed aloud, asking God to enlighten the magistrate's whole family. The magistrate responded with a challenge, *"If your God can bring light to my blind daughter, I will do whatever you tell me to do!"*

Valentine prayed over the daughter. Suddenly she could see! When they realized only the one true God could perform such a miracle, the entire family became Christians. However, the emperor had decided by this time to have Valentine beheaded. Nothing the magistrate could say or do would change Claudius' mind.

It is said that on the eve of his execution, Valentine wrote a letter to the magistrate's daughter. In it, he encouraged her to remain close to God. He signed the letter *"from your Valentine."*

Valentine became a martyr just outside of Rome on February 14, 270 A.D. He was beheaded near a gate that was later named *Porta Valentini* in his honor. Pope Julius I built a church over Valentine's tomb in A.D.

350. February 15th marked the annual Roman festival of Lupercalia -- a day for lovers. It was celebrated by the young who drew names from a box for partners. The partners exchanged gifts then often continued to see each other and marry.

In 496 A.D., Pope Gelasius changed the pagan Lupercalia feast day to St. Valentine's Day, February 14.

In the 17th century Edmond Rostand's drama *Cyrano de Bergerac* was based on the life of Savien Cyrano de Bergerac, a French soldier, satirist, and dramatist. During the play Rostand writes, *"Cyrano desperately loves the beautiful Roxane, but agrees to help his rival, Christian, win her heart"* by writing tender love letters for him to give Roxane--risky since Cyrano was also smitten with the lady.

God sent the ultimate valentine in Jesus Christ.

God demonstrates his own love toward us.

In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
(Romans 5:8)

Near the end of the New Testament in the book of I John, the apostle reminds us:

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins. (I John 4:10)

The Scripture is replete with heaven-sent valentines communicated by the One who loves us to the very end. This message comes to us regularly and often--not just in the month of February.

It is not enough, however, that God loves us and we love Him. It is also important that we love one another.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (I John 4:11)

In a month that we think about love, hear again the Good News:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only unique Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Know that you are loved by God. There is absolutely nothing that you can do that will make God love you more than He does right now. At the same time, there is absolutely nothing you can do that will make God love you any less than He loves you right now. Once we come to be embraced and are grasped by that love, we cannot help but love Him and love others in return. May the love of Christ draw you to God.

An object of His grace,

Ron



~ Honoring a Buddy ~

My friend Ernest Asbury died a few weeks ago in his bunker in Joshua Tree, California... his bride Marjorie was at the store. Sergeant Asbury died of a broken heart... a heart minced by years and years of recall... of years and years of wondering why the hell he ever walked up Hill 875... of years and years of asking himself how he could have gotten so far from his family... so far from his home.

An intelligent man, a man steeped in the patriotic nature of America, this veteran became ensconced in a desert outback to find peace with his Marjorie and his horses. Both seemed to know when torment was afoot. He wore his boots constantly... the boots with the extended rear heel to accept his spurs with the large rowels.

Sergeant Asbury was a squad leader in Charlie Company, a 2nd Battalion paratrooper until one day in the mountains... actually the episode lasted several days... until one day he contracted a screaming case of the galloping hab-dabs. Bent over a low branch, with his ass rigged for volleying fire, this once-fine soldier could, with the proper hip rotation, write his name on a screen door at ten paces. Disgusted with this display of lunacy, his squad and his platoon stripped him of his Christian name.

Bednarski, Thompson, Fish, Harmon, Riggs, France, Zaccone, Schreiber, Waddell, Diggs, Baez, Derose, Marsh and a host of other notables declared, and then toasted Sergeant Asbury's new handle... "**Nasty**".

I did get to see Nasty this past June when seven of us got together in the woods of Georgia. Our Company Commander was there... Captain Joe Jellison... Joe made General after being shot to pieces on his second tour. I must say, I did not think the army was smart enough to promote such a good man.



Nasty

Nasty and Joe talked for hours on end... day and night. They skipped the memorial dedication in order to continue their reunion.

I'm thankful I got to see Nasty one last time and say hello and goodbye.

This past week Tommy Thompson sent me a copy of some lingerings Nasty was struggling with and below I have typed them word for word.

Notes on Narrowness

"I walked tonight on an endless cold silver road, with my head cocked to the side and back watching the clear white-etched stars. It was cold with the air giving a remembrance of the afternoon sun.

I drifted with that road hoping the feeling would never stop."
Ernest Asbury, 2010

875

"The air was clear and cold that early morning somewhere between midnight and dawn.

I dreaded dawn with a fascination. That night they had dropped bombs on us and I for some reason was chosen to live. About half the battalion was gone. The other three in the knee-deep hole behind the tree were alive also. A funny kind of touchable feeling is in the air. A prayer that you can feel, 'Thank you God for sparing me and taking someone else, and if the choice comes again please take my buddy next to me and spare me again.'

The numbness begins to set in at dawn. The first shock of seeing the blood, guts and disgust. Then happily identifying those still alive. Boredom and looking to see how once were men died. A leg here boot on the foot, knife gone but scabbard still tied onto the thigh. A foot-and-a-half of back bone protruding from the back where the head was pulled off... no sign of the head and the shoulders not touched.

The guys you tried to help that night but you knew would die before first light... had lifeless staring eyes. What had they seen before the man behind them left?

The pall of death is over everything. Is pall a color, feeling or odor? Whichever, it is floating in the air clutching at you with dripping sweet fingers calling you because among the dead you are the minority.

There is still fighting but that is an anti-climax. Go away I want to go home. In this stock-pen, slaughter-house, restaurant (yes some of the choice cuts toward the top of the hill are already cooked) you are starting to go numb. I'm envious of you. Lucky, lucky dead, the waiting is over. I am still waiting for someone to kill me. They will, I'll never get off this hill alive. Yes war is a very personal thing when you are concerned. We made it together. People live with one another, but they are dead alone. So personal, so final."

Ernest Asbury, 2010

For Sergeant Ernest Asbury... also known as Nasty... may he rest easy.

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



Medalists' wives continue Soldiers Support on national tour

By Susan R. Anderson



Staff Sgt. Salvatore A. Giunta, waving, and wife Jen, along with Staff Sgt. Erick Gallardo and wife Jackie, visit Disneyland, Jan. 12, and take part in a parade prior to an evening ceremony lowering the U.S. flag.

Photo: Disneyland

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Jan. 20, 2011) -- While Medal of Honor recipient Staff Sgt. Salvatore A. Giunta visits Army units and Americans around the nation, telling his story from Afghanistan, his closest companion, wife Jen, works nearby to draw attention to issues important to Soldiers and families.

Salvatore Giunta and his wife, along with Silver Star recipient Staff Sgt. Erick Gallardo and his wife, Jackie, visited Southern California as part of an ongoing effort to share the Army story. Both Salvatore Giunta and Erik Gallardo are Soldiers from the 173d Airborne Brigade.

Jen Giunta and Jacqueline Gallardo broke off from the group Jan. 11, to meet with Evan Housley, co-founder of the non-profit group HeroBox. The group provides to Soldiers custom-made care packages designed to truly meet an individual Soldier's needs while in theater.

Jen Giunta initiated the meeting after researching non-profit organizations that help support servicemembers and their families.

"Their work seemed very targeted, and that made me want to learn more," said Jen Giunta of the group. "I know Sal and his buddies would get care packages sometimes, but not often enough. And when they did get them, they didn't always have what they needed. I just wanted to see how they (HeroBox) were making sure that the right people were getting the right things, and if there was any way I could help."

Over lunch, Housley explained how Soldiers can go on the HeroBox.org website and sign up for support by providing their info and indicating their specific needs.

Housley, an Army Reserve Soldier, was deployed to Taji, Iraq in 2007, when his brother first conceived of the idea for HeroBox. Intimately familiar with the need for this kind of support, the Housley brothers take seriously their efforts to ensure every Soldier in need gets the help they deserve.

"If there are any Soldiers left without sponsors, then we plan a 'HeroDay' to make sure they get what they need," said Housley.

HeroDays are events where groups of people spend a day working together to assemble care packages for a unit of deployed Soldiers, he said.

Jackie Gallardo, a Family Readiness Group leader at her home base of Vincenza, Italy, said she knew so many people that wanted to help, but didn't know where to go or what to do.

HeroBox takes the guesswork out of it, and provides the kind of help the Soldiers can really use, she said.

Jen Giunta continues to research other non-profit organizations that support servicemembers and their families, as she plans to choose several to support in the coming years.

"A lot of Sal's buddies had a hard time finding work after they got out of the Army, so sites like HireaHero.org that help connect former service-members with employers really interest me, too," she said.

The Giuntas and Gallardos spent the rest of the week meeting with centers of influence from various companies and organizations, to include a speaking engagement and luncheon with members of the NBC community, and meeting with the Lifetime Television writers and producers of for the television show "Army Wives."

At each meeting, Salvatore Giunta reinforced how grateful he is for the love and support of his wife.

"People will sometimes walk right past Jen and come up to me and want to shake my hand and thank me," said Salvatore Giunta. *"But I couldn't do this without her. She's more important than I am, if you ask me. She's my rock."*

For more information on other homefront nonprofits that support servicemembers and their families, visit www.ourmilitary.mil/help.shtml



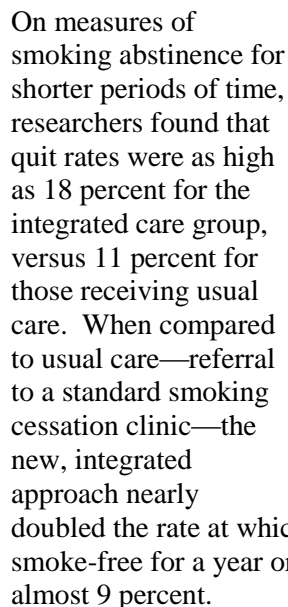


Like recipients of Social Security and other federal benefits, Veterans, their families and survivors will also not see a cost-of-living adjustment in 2011 to their compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

VA provides compensation and pension benefits to about four million Veterans and beneficiaries. For more information about VA benefits, go to www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000

New Approach to Smoking Cessation Boosts Quit Rates for Veterans with PTSD

"The smoking cessation techniques used in this new approach will give Veterans an important step towards a better quality of life," said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. "Veterans will be at a lower risk for cardiovascular or lung disease if they do not smoke."



Importantly, Veterans in the study who quit smoking showed no worsening of symptoms of PTSD or depression. In fact, study participants averaged a 10-percent reduction in PTSD symptoms, regardless of which treatment they received or whether they quit smoking or not. The findings help dispel concerns that combining care for PTSD and smoking cessation detracts from PTSD treatment or makes it less effective.

Study leaders Miles McFall, Ph.D., and Andrew Saxon, M.D., say the results validate a promising new VA model of care that can make safe, effective smoking cessation treatment accessible to far more Veterans with PTSD. The new approach may also be effective for smokers receiving mental health care for other psychiatric

Says McFall, *“One of the most important things mental health providers can do to improve the quality and length of their patients’ lives is to help them stop smoking by using proven, evidence-based practices.”*

McFall is director of PTSD Programs and Saxon is director of the Addictions Treatment Center at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System. Both are professors in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Washington.



(continued....)





VA smoking cessation care generally involves a mix of group and individual counseling, typically in combination with nicotine replacement therapy or other medication prescribed by a VA health care provider. In VA's study, Veterans in the integrated-care group worked with the same therapist on PTSD and smoking issues. Medication for smoking cessation, if used, was prescribed on an individual basis by the same medical provider managing pharmacologic treatment of the Veteran's PTSD symptoms.

The study followed 943 Veterans at 10 VA medical centers nationwide. Prolonged abstinence from tobacco, as reported by participants, was confirmed using breath and urine tests to detect evidence of smoking. Using such "bio-verification" measures in combination with self-reports is considered the "gold standard" in smoking cessation research, says McFall.

Of some 400,000 Veterans being treated for PTSD in the VA health care system, roughly 30 to 50 percent are smokers, compared to a smoking rate of about 20 percent among VA enrollees and U.S. adults in general. Research shows, also, that those with PTSD smoke more heavily than smokers without PTSD and have an especially hard time quitting.



"We've come a long way in understanding that nicotine dependence for many Veterans with PTSD is a chronic, relapsing condition that responds best to intensive treatment extended over time," McFall says. "These study findings will help us empower more Veterans with the resources they need to quit smoking."

Single-shot, brief episodic care for nicotine addiction is no match for what is a chronic, relapsing disorder for many of our Veterans."

Based on the findings and evidence from prior research, VA has begun piloting the integrated smoking cessation approach as a standard of practice at six VA medical centers. The researchers say they hope to see the new approach further expanded over time.


McFall notes that while most of the participants in the study were Vietnam-era Veterans, integrated smoking cessation care may be especially beneficial for younger Veterans with PTSD, such as many of those returning from Iraq or Afghanistan, who stand to benefit greatly from quitting smoking relatively early in life.

Says McFall, *"Ideally, we can help Veterans quit smoking before it becomes a chronic or intractable condition and causes irreversible health problems such as cardiovascular or lung disease."*

The study was conducted by VA's Cooperative Studies Program. For more information on CSP, visit www.csp.research.va.gov



SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS INSURANCE

Apply for S-DVI Online using our new  application. Follow this link for more information about applying online.

What is S-DVI?

The Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) program was established in 1951 to meet the insurance needs of certain veterans with service connected disabilities. S-DVI is available in a variety of permanent plans as well as term insurance. Policies are issued for a minimum face amount of \$10,000.


Who Can Apply for S-DVI?

You can apply for S-DVI if you meet the following 4 criteria:

1. You were released from active duty under other than dishonorable conditions on or after April 25, 1951.
2. You were rated for a service-connected disability (even if only 0%).
3. You are in good health except for any service-connected conditions.
4. You apply within 2 years from the date VA grants your new service-connected disability.

Note: An increase in an existing service-connected disability or the granting of individual unemployability of a previous rated condition does not entitle a veteran to this insurance.

How Can I Apply for S-DVI?

You can apply for basic S-DVI online using our new  application! Follow this link for more information about applying for S-DVI online.

You can also download VA form 29-4364, Application for Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance, from our forms page. Be sure to also download VA Pamphlet 29-9 from this site for premium rates and a description of the plans available.

Waiver of Premiums for Totally Disabled Veterans

Under certain conditions, the basic S-DVI policy provides for a waiver of premiums in case of total disability. Policyholders who carry the basic S-DVI coverage and who become eligible for a waiver of premiums due to total disability can apply for and be granted additional Supplemental S-DVI of up to \$20,000.

Supplemental S-DVI

The Veterans' Benefits Act of 1992, provided for \$20,000 of supplemental coverage to S-DVI policyholders. Premiums may not be waived on this supplemental coverage. S-DVI policyholders are eligible for this supplemental coverage if:

- They are eligible for a waiver of premiums.
- They apply for the coverage within one year from notice of the grant of waiver.
- Are under age 65.

To apply for Supplemental S-DVI, you must file VA Form 29-0188, Application for Supplemental Service-Disabled Veterans (RH) Life Insurance or send a letter requesting this insurance over your signature. You must apply for the coverage within one year from notice of the grant of waiver of premiums. Visit:
<http://www.insurance.va.gov/gli/buying/SDVI.htm>

Sharp Lookin' Bulls



In last month's issue of our Newsletter we asked you to identify these B/2/503d troopers in this photo taken in Bong Son in 1968. L-R are Bob Beemer, John Crocker, and Harris. We still need a first name for trooper Harris.
(Photo from Bob Beemer)

LOOKING FOR BUDDIES

The son of **Edrick Kenneth Stevens**, 4/503d, KIA on 6 November 1967, is looking for buddies who knew his father. Please contact the son, **Jonathan (Chad) Stevens** at: jonathan.stevens@dhs.gov





173d REUNION ITINERARY

(Tentative, subject to change)



June 22 -- Wednesday

1200 - 2000 Registration
1300 - 0100 Hospitality Room
1300 - 2200 Vendors
1800 - 2000 President's Reception



June 23 -- Thursday

0900 - 1200 Board of Director's Meeting
1000 - 1700 Registration
1000 - 2200 Vendors
1300 - 2400 Hospitality Room



June 27 -- Friday

0730 - 0900 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast
0900 - 1500 Registration
1000 - 2400 Hospitality Room
1000 - 2200 Vendors
1000 - Board buses for trip to Fort Sam Houston
1030 - 1500 Tour Fort Sam Houston
1700 - 2300 BBQ, Mariachis, Dance at Maverick Plaza

June 25 -- Saturday

0900 - 1100 Registration
0900 - 1200 General Membership Meeting
1000 - 1200 Ladies' Brunch
1000 - 2200 Vendors
1000 - 1200 Hospitality Room

BANQUET DINNER

1815 - 1850 Cocktails
1900 - 1910 Post Colors
1930 - 2035 Dinner
2035 - 2130 Speakers & Awards
2130 - Retire Colors
2135 - ??? Entertainment & Dancing

Maverick Plaza

June 26 -- Sunday

0830 - 1000 Continental Breakfast
1030 - 1130 Memorial Service, Arneson River Theater
1130 - Reunion closing. Depart or stay and see more of San Antonio.



The Alamo

Reunion web site: <http://www.skysoldiers.com>





173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION ~ REUNION 2011 ~



22 June – 26 June 2011, San Antonio, TX

Hosted by Texas Chapter 13

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Unit served with in the Brigade _____ Dates served _____

Circle Shirt Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL Male/Female _____

Exact hat size _____ (Note: A cowboy hat will be given to the 173d member above if Registration Form and hat size are received by March 1, 2011.

Guests:

Circle Male or Female and Shirt Size for each guest

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name _____ Relationship: _____ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Registration/ Event Fees

- ___ \$173.00 per Association Member
- ___ \$125.00 per Guest
- ___ \$125.00 per Gold Star Family Member
- ___ \$ 75.00 per Active Duty Soldier (Not on Orders)
- ___ FREE Active Duty Soldiers on Orders (i.e., Command, Color Guard)
- ___ \$ 75.00 per Vendor Table
- ___ FREE Gold Star Brunch – 173d Gold Star Families
- ___ Brunch Ladies Brunch (Included with registration)
- ___ Please check if planning to attend.
- ___ \$ 15.00 Trip to Fort Sam Houston per person
- ___ \$ 15.00 Sky Soldier Adoption Program “Have a meal on me” for active duty soldiers



Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio, Texas

\$ _____ Total Enclosed

Make Checks Payable to: [Texas Reunion 2011 – 173d Airborne Brigade](#)

Mail Checks to: John Rolfe, 100 Oleander Road, Comfort, TX 78013



For Hotel Reservations: Hilton Palacio del Rio, \$119 + tax per night. Call 1-800-HILTONS and request the group rate for The 173d Airborne Brigade Association, Inc., or use the unique group code ABA.

Overflow Hotel: Menger Hotel, \$119 + tax per night, Call:1-800-345-9285 and request the group rate for the 173d Airborne Brigade Association.

To Register Online, visit www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011



~ CORRECTION ~

THE 503RD P.R.C.T. HERITAGE BATTALION **Online**

OUR NEWSLETTER IS NOW ON-LINE!

There's an enhancement to the Online versions of our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* -- a "flipping book" presentation. For those unfamiliar with the "flipping book," it's an online book with an animation effect which allows you to turn the page just as you would were it a magazine. It makes reading an Adobe *.pdf file just like reading a magazine -- click on any page corner or edge and draw your mouse across the book and the page will turn in a way which reflects the speed of your movement.

The program also enables you to zoom in on any photograph or portion of the text just by a double mouse-click.

Another display page has been added for those who use Apple Mac, iPods

or iPads (which do not utilize the mouse-over and flash animation effects available to the standard Windows operation systems).

Our thanks to Paul Whitman who created the display as part of his continuing support for the *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* on the **503d PRCT Heritage Bn** Website. The effect has been created for ALL of our newsletters issued to date. The direct page link to try the "flipping book" presentation is:

http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/HD_Version.htm

It can also be found through the <http://503prct.org> website. And click on the Rock Regiment patch. Now there's a web address you shouldn't have any problem remembering!

It turns our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* into an online publication with true magazine style and access.

Thanks Paul!! Ed

See Web Page Layout on Next Page....



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / February 2011 – Issue 24

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L-R: Don Phillips, Ed Carns, Ken Kaplan in Bn formation

Dave Griffin sent me an email telling me to look at page 8 of the last newsletter (January). The picture of Dr. Ed Carns and the write-ups are super. Well done!! The guy standing to the right of Ed is me. The Major to Ed's left is Don Phillips who was the S-3 of the battalion.

One slight correction. Since both Don and I are in the picture, it had to have been a battalion formation and not a company formation as the caption below the picture indicates.

Ken Kaplan, LTC
CO, B/2/503d

24TH ANNUAL FLORIDA VIETNAM AND ALL VETERANS REUNION

May 5-8, 2011

Wickham Park

Melbourne, Florida

<http://floridaveteransreunion.com/>



http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/HD_Version.htm

Dick Winters, of 'Band of Brothers' fame, dies

January 9, 2011

PN

By Monica Von Dobeneck
The Patriot-News

Dick Winters, the former World War II commander whose war story was told in the book and miniseries "Band of Brothers," has died.

Dick Winters led a quiet life on his Fredericksburg farm and in his Hershey home until the book and miniseries "Band of Brothers" threw him into the international spotlight.

Since then, the former World War II commander of Easy Company had received hundreds of requests for interviews and appearances all over the world.

He stood at the podium with President George W. Bush in Hershey during the presidential campaign in 2004. He accepted the "Four Freedoms" award from Tom Brokaw on behalf of the

Army. He was on familiar terms with Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, producers of the HBO mini-series, the most expensive television series ever produced.

Winters was always gracious about his new-found celebrity, but never really comfortable with it. He never claimed to be a hero and said that he had nothing to do with the national effort to get him the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military honor.

When people asked him if he was a hero, he liked to answer the way his World War II buddy, Mike Ranney, did:

"No," Ranney said. "But I served in a company of heroes." That became the tag line for the miniseries.

[Sent in by Jerry Sopko, D/4/503d
and Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503d]



Oldest 'Brother' dead at 94

Ed Mauser, 94, died on Friday, January 21. He was the oldest living member of Easy Company, which is often better known now as the "Band of Brothers" during World War II.

His role came to light only after his brother-in-law got him a copy of the HBO miniseries *Band of Brothers*, said Terry Zahn, who met Mauser during a 2009 Honor Flight trip to Washington, DC, to see the World War II memorial.



Rest easy Screaming Eagles. You did well.



WHODAT?



Who is this grungy lookin' grunt guarding those sandbags? Hint: goes by the name "Airborne".



~ The Combat Jump ~



The Combat Jump

(Photo by Bill Nicholls)

I do not recall Frenchy Pellerin (hanging up in a tree) but I definitely remember Robert Hill. He was in weapons platoon C Co. and got stuck in the top of the biggest tree on the DZ. He was up there about 30 minutes or so. Col Sigholtz's chopper flew right over his chute to try to suck him up out of the tree since we couldn't get him to cut his risers (at first). He was up there yelling and we were down on the ground yelling. After 30 minutes or so he finally cut the chute and fell to the ground -- no worse for wear and nothing hurt but pride. I am really surprised there is very little said about Hill's bad luck in the stories about the jump. With all your contacts see if you can find him or anymore versions of this.

Barry "Bear" Hart
C/2/503d

Believe Frenchy hung-up in a tree on one of the practice jumps, Bear. We always like to remind him of that. ☺ Ed

Well, we were going to have a combat jump long before Junction City, but that got scrapped, probably because they were selling combat jump wings in Bien Hoa to commemorate the jump, long before any of us even knew.

Larry Paladino
B/2/503d

Roger that, Larry. My understanding is the bad guys knew where the DZ was planned. Coulda been another bad day. Ed

I was with C Company 2nd Bn 173d Abn. I made the jump on Feb. 22, 1967. I'm on the jump roster. Now retired and living in AZ.

Bruce Demboski
C/2/503d



The first practice jump was cancelled as Charlie had put punji stacks on the DZ. As I remember someone saying, we made the second one and Cunningham got his arm caught in the risers of the guy in front of him. His arm looked bad for a while but wasn't broken. When we made the jump all passes to town were cancelled. We got on the trucks at about 3:00 a.m., then loaded on the plane for the trip north. It was really quiet on the C-130; then came stand-up, hook-up and green light...and airborne we were. After landing we went to the trees. I was standing between two trees -- people started hollering at me to move, and as I was moving I heard a noise from up above, a 3/4 ton truck came down between the two trees I had been standing under. They were doing the heavy drops later that day. They tried to drop pallets of water in five gallon cans; when they hit the DZ it looked like a geyser. We went out and saved as much water as we could.

Leonard (Ray) Tanner
2nd Platoon, 2nd Squad, B/2/503d

Early in the morning of 22 February 1967, I was down at the Personnel Unit for the 4/503d in Bien Hoa getting some orders to go and visit my brother Philip in a hospital in Okinawa, Japan. Philip and I both attended Jump School together in September of 1965, and he had been serving with A/1/327th, 1st Bde., 101st Abn. Div. While getting my orders, I saw a little French



lady with pigtails and big jump boots getting put on the Manifest for the Combat Jump. Her name was Catherine Leroy, a French photographer and a Sky Diver who had gotten permission for the jump.

In 1996, we had a 173d reunion in Anaheim, CA, and we invited her and her French male friend, who was also a photographer in Viet Nam, to come to the formal banquet. We had a jump planned at the Skydiving Center at Lake Elsinore, CA, as part of the reunion, but we did not have a driver available to go to West LA and pick her up for the Jump Class and the Jump. Catherine lost her driver's license to the court and LA PD for having a little bit of wine one night.

(continued....)



A few years later, we invited Catherine to a dinner meeting of Chapter 14 that we held in a nice Mexican restaurant in Uptown Whittier, CA. Nacho Zarate, of HHC 3/319th, who jumped on 22 Feb. 1967, had some photos taken with her at this function and a independent reporter showed up and ran a news story in the Pacific Edition of the *Stars & Stripes*.

Years later, Catherine Leroy passed away in Santa Monica, CA, from lung cancer and her remains were returned to Paris, France. She had a Viet Nam photo collection for sale on the internet and some persons never received their copies because of her death.

Ray Ramirez
Recon/4/503d

It is hard to believe it has been 44 years, but I remember it like it was yesterday -- the pucker factor was running high that day. I was pretty busy on the day of the actual jump and did not have a chance to take photos.

Pat Bowe
HHC/Recon/2/503d

We went on jump status in October 66. We made our first practice jump 30 Oct 66 on a Sunday at 8 a.m. out of a Hercules C-130 at Tuc Duc, a little ways from Bien Hoa and off Highway One which connects Bien Hoa with Saigon. I was the 5th man out the left door in the first chalk of the first lift. Some 802 troopers made the first practice jump. Were scheduled to jump again 7 Nov 66 but not sure if we did on that date, although we did make two total practice jumps. Believe the second took place in December. Operations Attleboro, Waco and Canary Duck all took place during that time period after the first practice jump.



Briefing at DZ Charlie

(Jerry Hassler)

Believe it was the first practice jump, maybe the second, but after I landed and was pulling in my chute, I watched a paratrooper land and go straight into the ground with his chute flattening out against the ground -- turned out he had landed in a dry well. Ran over and shouted down into the darkness (it was that deep) if he was okay. He

shouted back that he was but wanted out quickly as those damn spiders were all over the inside of the well. Myself and another trooper pulled on the risers of his chute and he made it out. It was quite a sight to watch him hit and go straight into the ground.

The "briefing picture" was taken on DZ Charlie after the jump. I'm on the extreme right puffing on a weed.

Jerry Hassler
HHC/Commo/Recon/2/503d

I was in jump school when it took place. The DI's made out like it was a hotel jump, but after I got to the 2nd Batt and met some of the guys who made it, I realized they were just jealous.

Bill Wyatt
HHC/2/503d

Hell, Bill, I'm jealous!! Missed both the practice jumps too, was in 3rd Field Hospital. Sadly, have come across more than a couple guys who claim the jump but didn't make it. Guess they never heard of a jump manifest. Then again, army paperwork... Ed

I was in C/2/503 -- July 1966-July 1967. When we went to the corner of the C Company area and all 2nd Bat was there. There was a stirring excitement in the air. We were blocked from going into town. When the Col. said we were going to make a combat jump, most of all the EM troopers starting hollering, the Sergeants did not jump up. They realized what we were heading into. They did not let us know where the jump was going to be. Some of us started thinking about Hanoi, and this was going to be all the rest of the Airborne units. I know I did not sleep, mostly getting our chutes and cleaning our weapons, and equipment. I did not write any letters home, others did.

It was hard getting all our gear on, and taking little steps. We needed help in getting up, and getting on to the C-130s, we were packed in. When we were Airborne, they started giving us the information on the jump area, a place I never heard of. I didn't care, all I was doing was saying a prayer that I would be down there helping out and doing what we can to secure the area.

Just to let you know I did not 'jump', I fell forward out of the plane. It was quick and we were down fast and securing the area, receiving sniper fire and firing into the wood lines. We saw one of our troopers hanging on the tree, about 200-250 feet up. His last name is Hill, from weapons platoon I believe. The Jump Manifest is located at: www.173airborne.com/manifest.htm

Jaime (Jimmy) Castillo
C/2/503d

(continued....)



I was gone before the jump. However, I think most paratroopers all wish to make a combat jump. After all, that's what we volunteered for, trained for and practiced for. Of course, being a bit older now, I have to wonder about the practicality of going into combat with all the attendant confusion via a method that usually gets a bit confused. I believe the "fog of war" raises pretty high. That said, I wish I had one of those little gold stars.

You asked about practice jumps in Vietnam. I have a really shitty story to tell and have told it several times previously. But you can use it if you want. Perhaps in June or July of 65 we made a practice jump. The rumor mill had us jumping into Pleiku. We ended up walking out the tail ramp. But back to my shitty story.

I believe I was the lowest ranking officer in the brigade and was told that, I would be the "pusher" as we prepared to load the caribou's, that we were to jump. Everything was normal until the jump-master gave the order to "stand up". At that, my fellow jumpers thought it would be fun to entertain the pilots by jumping up and down, in unison and then bouncing side to side, in unison. For those of you lacking aeronautical experience, a caribou is a small plane, and was being thrown around in the air by the jumpers. Pilots think this is cute when they do it. But they get the ugly face when the aircraft gets yanked out of their hands by a bunch of crazed killers.



Junction City

The green light came on and we all headed toward the tailgate. I did not have to push anyone. For the non jumpers (legs) out there, it is very important to wait until the static line of the guy in front of you pops up before you exit, because if you get hit with the static line it will feel like a file. The guy in front of me jumps out and

spins around and is holding a little point and shoot camera with a built in flash. The flash goes off and I'm blinded. I can only see to the side, straight ahead is big black spot. I'm trying to see his static line with no success. Out of the corner of my eye I see the green light go out and the red light come on. I'm in no mood to return to the base with the pissed off pilots and perhaps miss out on the big bucks they paid us for jumping, so I jump.

I solved the mystery of the missing static line. It found my left forearm, scraping a layer or two of skin off. After confirming that I had a parachute over my head and not someone's laundry, I began looking around, trying to find the drop zone. Off in the distance I can see a row of trucks and parachutes in the paddy near them. Looking straight down I see some high tension wires and a river between where I'm headed and the drop zone. I think I made 7 slips and managed to just clear the river, landing in the bottom of the paddy.

You will recall that the paddies were fertilized with "night soil" (shit). Being on the downhill side and the fact that I came in fast as a result of slipping, I was buried up to mid-thigh in that stuff. No PLF. Getting out necessitated not collapsing the chute and wallowing around until I was completely covered. Eventually I got unstuck and back to the trucks where the First Sergeant said, while trying to maneuver down wind, *"Sir, you'll be riding in the back"*.

Jim Robinson
FO/B/2/503d

I was on the operation, but arrived by Huey. I remember the C-130s coming over at low altitude and tailgates down. My exact thoughts were *"Shit, somebody jumped in and it wasn't me"*.

Bruce Deville
C/3/319th FO for 2nd Batt

I and others made the jump but there is no record of us as we were in country for 6-7 days before "Junction City 1". Names like Jack Croxdale, Doug Carpenter, Bill Boehm, myself and others were left off by the queers in the rear. One guy that came in with us was named Leyva.....his name was added to the list on Charlie Co. years later. Don't know how it was done, but someone pursued it. I described the jump in the book, *"Blood On The Risers."*

John Leppelmann
173d

(continued....)



On February 22, 1967 I participated in the Brigade's historical first combat jump, in South Vietnam spear-heading the operation, "Junction City."

As I recall we were told of the operation a few days before the event. The day before the jump, our squad leader informed us how we were to assemble once we landed on the Drop Zone. We were told to assemble according to a specific color of smoke. Early on the morning of the jump (it was a very dark morning), we were trucked to the airport with all our personal gear, 3-5 days "C-rations," grenades, ammo for our weapons, plus extra M-60 ammo.

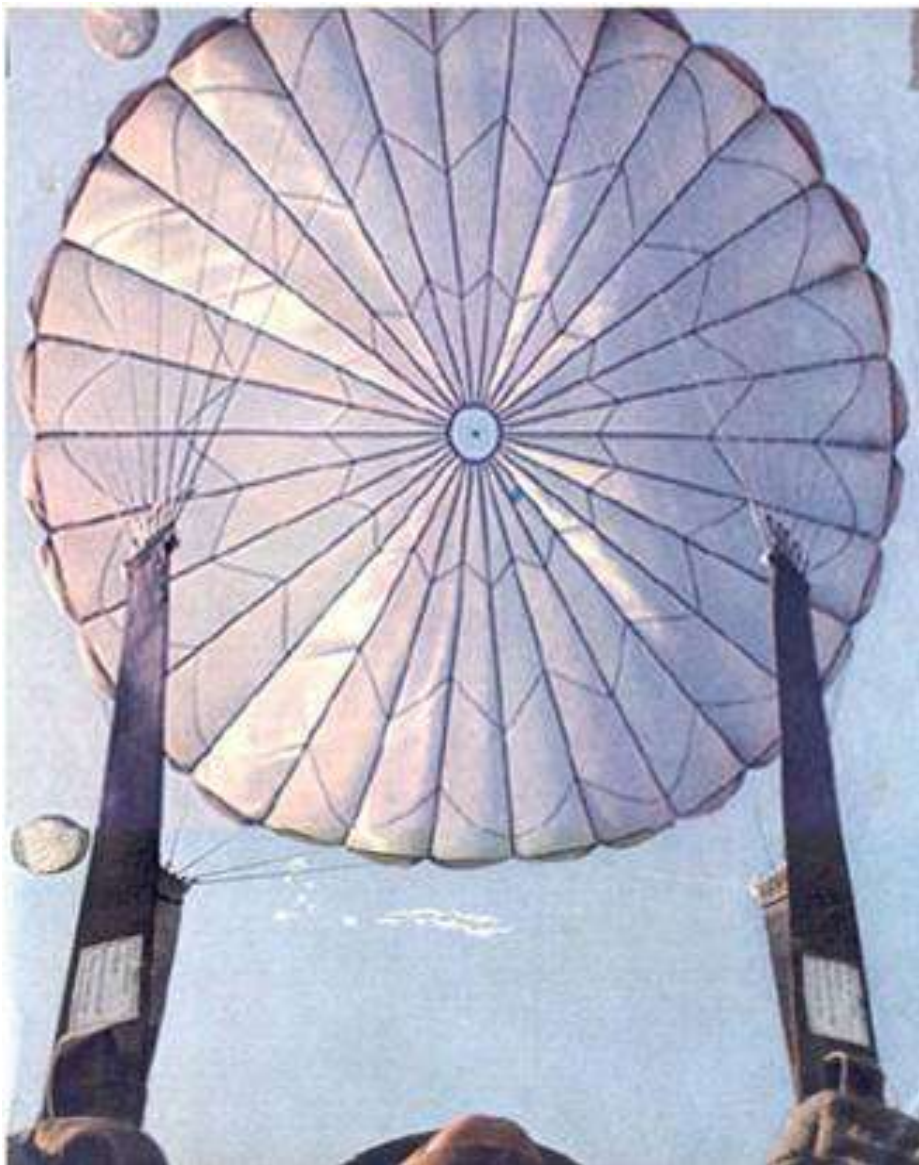
The trucks took us directly onto the tarmac behind the parked C-130's with the tail gate down. We had a parachute-reserve-large bag with a long cord (quick release just before landing). A special holder for our weapons was also issued. All our personal gear-food-ammo-water was packed in the large bag, with our weapon in the special holder. The parachute-reserve was the first equipment we put on. Next came the weapon holder which was tied to our right leg, the big bag dangling in front, from our waist to our knees. We were now ready to board. We assembled in two single parallel lines and began to walk. We were hunched over by all the weight. It appeared as if we were walking on all fours. When all were aboard, the tail gate lifted and the plane began to taxi. When seated, it felt as if our backside was elevated.

From the moment we climbed onto the trucks, until the actual jump, I was impressed by the total silence. There was no talking, even while in flight, the silence continued. You looked at the troopers opposite you and saw the seriousness, the concern, the controlled fear on their faces. I'm sure I had the same look.

The actual descent lasted about one minute. Our recon platoon assembled quickly, and just as quickly we were on our way into the surrounding jungle beginning the 2-3 day mission.

It wasn't until years later that I realized February 22d was George Washington's birthday. A coincidence?

Augie Scarino
C/2/503d



Junction City -- Life Magazine

Note

See February 2010,
Issue 12 of our
newsletter for a
Special Edition
featuring *Operation*
Junction City and the
combat jump. Ed



WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?

By John Arnold

1RAR



“Moving in 5” outside a small ville. John Arnold, on left back to camera, Keith “Pommie” Newman with bandolier, Paul Israel smoking, Kevin “Cricket” Lester right rear.

On October 23, 1965 Charlie Company 1RAR passed through the wire on another bloody job but none of us really knew why or what we were looking for. The job had no operational name and although somewhere in War Zone “D”, none of us had much of a clue as to where we were heading and why we were going there. I THINK this was an independent company operation but can’t recall if this was to assist another unit not belonging to The Herd.

The thought among we who were not deemed important enough to be told anything was that it was a bastard of a thing so soon after returning from Ben Cat and The Iron Triangle and then securing the of AO for the incoming Big Red 1. That particular job (if you remember dear reader) started around September and had carried on until about mid-October. During that period of time my platoon, 8 Pl ‘Body Snatchers’ C Coy 1RAR, had almost been blown to extinction by booby traps, mines and “a bit of gunplay”. We were down to around 14 men for the whole platoon.

On this little skip to the ‘ULU’ (Malay for Jungle) we had been divided up into almost 2 full strength sections (US Squads) and were kept as the ready reaction force for company headquarters. It started off fairly routine on that first day and our boss on that trip was a Lieutenant in the company, Michel Le Barr who, because of his surname, was affectionately referred to as “Frenchy Le Barr,” apparently was from a French line and had served in the British army before joining the Australian army.

He was a good bloke and a good officer and had the most remarkable stable of stories one could ever wish to develop. You could be sitting with this man and he would ask you to say the first word that popped into

your head and using the word you chose he would regale you with a truly riotous (and ribald) story.

Anyhow, later in the afternoon we were waddling along through an area and I moved to my right quite quickly to avoid the attention of a Krait snake suspended from a low bush and right where I had intended to walk. In doing this I bumped into Frenchy. He looked at me and I just said “Krait” and he nodded his head with a comment that they were nasty little bastards, with which I readily agreed.



Well that bloody snake put me in a spot as the incident must have alerted Frenchy to the fact that I was in close proximity to him and shortly after that he called me up to him and pointed to a small signal parachute that had become snagged in a tree. I said something like; “*Just as well it didn’t set the tree on fire when it got caught,*” thinking nothing more of it. A minute or so later he said “*Arnold, shimmy up that tree and retrieve that ‘chute.*” I looked at him and said; “*Who, me Sir?*” He said “*Yes, you sir.*” I thought. “*Oh you bastard, and here I was thinking you were a good bloke.*”

Anyway, I kept my thoughts to myself and started out for the tree but by this time all the other blokes in the platoon had stopped for a smoke, watching out while they watched me.

Now, this tree was only about 5 meters high with no branches or limbs on the first 3 meters or so, topped by a substantial outburst of growth around the trunk, then the remaining 2 meters just a stand of denuded branches and limbs reaching up to the sky with the chute draped over most of them. Just as well I grew up in the bush as I was able to get up the almost smooth trunk, reach the foliage and get beyond that until I could reach the chute and pull it down around me. Now, I don’t have to tell you my thoughts at this time as I just knew that every damn VC and/or NVA soldier within a 20 mile radius was just zoning in on this inoffensive little Aussie soldier and they were going to take my poor government-owned arse out of the picture.

With great relief I got back down the tree, rolled the chute up under my arm, which was no problem even with my rifle, M79, M72 and ruck all hanging off me at varying degrees of position, weight and pain. I walked back to Frenchy and said; “*Here you are boss,*” and he said to me; “*Oh I don’t want it, I thought that you might like it for your car when you get home!*” Hello, I am a 20 year old baggy arse grunt in the Aussie army and I DIDN’T EVEN OWN A BLOODY CAR at that time.

(continued....)



Well I carried that chute with me until we arrived back at Bien Hoa and eventually took it back home and did get to use it for a few months until some bastard who liked it took it off my car one night and I never saw it since.



A quiet moment in the boonies near Bien Hoa. L-R: Fred "Tassie" Watson, Alan "Two Feathers" Wilson-Brown, John Arnold wearing watch, and Bill Beattie.

After that little interlude the job quickly deteriorated so that it became something of a nightmare for many of us in different ways. That same afternoon we were making our way to a night harbour position when mortars started dropping in among us. Naturally this caused a bit of concern among the company and there were several very close calls. Apparently we had been caught in a 'Friendly Fire' situation but I never was able to find out from whom this particular little bit of excitement was initiated.

I recall our OC, Major Jim (GENTLEMAN) Tattum, calling up on the company radio requesting an immediate ceasefire. After a couple of tries with no result he called again and breaking every conceivable rule of radio communications, gave an extremely heated message to whoever the culprits were by demanding that they cease fire immediately or else he was personally going to join up with them and knockout whoever was giving the fire orders. Very quickly after that message the mortars stopped but, unfortunately, not before some of our blokes had been affected from the experience.

That night we harboured up in a company position and maintained our usual night time routine during which there were a couple of attempts by Charlie to probe our perimeter. It is marvelous what a well-placed hand grenade can do to disturb such antics while not giving away our true position.

The next morning while moving out our 9Platoon had just started their patrol when they spotted a group of 20 or so VC and they went into an immediate ambush which resulted in about half of the group of VC being killed and a number of blood trails indicating there

would have been several more wounded and dragged away. The end result of this incident saw a section commander awarded a bravery medal for his actions in the contact.

Sometime later our platoon was ordered out and our 14 stalwarts shook out ready to have a bit of a stroll in the scrub. My mate, Al Hansen, and I were the scout team on this day and we were at the front of the platoon getting instructions and compass bearings from Jock McKillop, one of our platoon section commanders. We three formed a sort of triangle with each of us probably 12 inches apart.

We had just checked the bearing and looked to the direction in which we would be moving to find reference points when Al turned to me -- I thought he was going to ask which of us was going to lead out. As I looked at him waiting for him to speak, I saw a small trickle of blood come out of his throat just under the Adams Apple and he began to slump to the ground. I didn't even hear the shot that got him, and as I looked to where the shot may have come from I could see nothing other than the trees and bushes.

Brian Collet, the platoon sergeant, came up with the company medic and while the remainder of the platoon gave covering fire we carried Al out to a casevac. I don't recall much more of that day or the next and we returned to Bien Hoa soon after this and our next warning for operation was given for November 5th which, as we all know, was the beginning of that wonderful event known as THE BLOODY HUMP.



Funeral escort for my mate and scout and partner Al Hansen KIA 10/25/65

After Al's death I carried what my doctor's diagnosed as "Survivors Guilt" for many years until I met Al's only living blood relative, his sister, Denise, and her husband around 2006 in Brisbane Qld.

