

~ Spectacular Artwork by a Sky Soldier ~

Sky Soldier Henry Galindo, HHC/1/503d, '64-'66 was kind enough to share some of his fantastic sketches and graphics he personally produced, such as this fine piece here. We'll run more of Henry's excellent work in future issues of our newsletter. *Airborne Henry!*



Is Paratrooper-Sex Work?

A 2/503d battalion commander, we'll call him Dexter, who had just returned to Camp Zinn, Bien Hoa from Okinawa, was about to start the morning briefing. While waiting for coffee to be served, he decided to pose a question to his staff officers assembled in the mess hall.



COL George Dexter

He explained that his wife had been a bit frisky the other night on the island, and he failed to get his usual amount of sound sleep before catching his flight back to Vietnam. He posed the question of just how much of sex was "work" and how much of it was "pleasure?"



LTC Bob Carmichael

The S-1, a rather rotund Major from Texas, we'll call him Carmichael, chimed in with 75-25% in favor of work. Then a Captain, the Bn commo officer, we'll call him Goodwin, said, it was 50-50%. A prematurely balding 2nd Lieutenant anti-tank platoon leader, we'll call him Vose, responded with 25-75% in favor of pleasure, depending upon how much cheap wine he had been drinking at the time.



MAJ Tom Goodwin

There being no consensus, Dexter turned to a Private standing nearby, we'll call him Gettel, who was in-charge of making the coffee.



CPT Bill Vose

"Private Gettel, what do you think?" asked the Colonel. Without hesitation the young Private responded, *"Sir, it's gotta be 100% Pleasure."*

Somewhat surprised with the answer, the Colonel asked, *"And why do you say that, Private?"* SP4 Jim Gettel

"Well Sir, if there was any work involved, you officers would have me doing it for you."

A silent shock filled the room, when the Colonel replied, *"Airborne, Private!"*



[Note: Photos shown are purely coincidental]



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BEGINS PROJECT FOR VIETNAM WAR VETERANS

By Terri Moon Cronk
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) -- More than three decades after the war's end, the Defense Department has begun a project to pay tribute to the nation's Vietnam War veterans.



LTC Holliday

The **50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration** was spawned from the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

"It was a very important time period for veterans, because most Vietnam veterans as a whole never received the homecoming that our troops receive now," said Army Lt. Col. Hunter Holliday, public affairs officer for the commemoration.

At the center of the project is a website, "**50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration**," at www.vietnamwar50th.com which will serve as a clearinghouse for information on commemoration activities once it is fully functional, a milestone expected this spring.

Information gleaned from the website is expected to be used for myriad purposes, such as to chronicle facts, provide educational materials, and offer resources for a commemorative partners program, Colonel Holliday said.

The partners program will comprise guidance and materials for agencies, veterans groups, local government and nongovernment organizations to conduct their own Vietnam War commemoration activities.

The website is expected to play a major role in the campaign, said Jeff Wilson, who handles marketing for the project, noting it will be highly interactive and will include content on historical events, a timeline, photos, documents, video and audio. A calendar will list major Defense-sponsored events.

(continued....)



The website offers a prelude of activities and ceremonies to:

- Honor Vietnam War veterans and their families -- including prisoners of war and those listed as missing in action -- for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States.
- Highlight armed forces service during the Vietnam War, in addition to contributions made by government and private organizations.
- Pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by U.S. citizens.
- Highlight the advances in technology, science and medicine in military research made during the war.
- Recognize contributions and sacrifices made by U.S. allies during the war.

"Hopefully [the commemoration] will be a healing process for the veterans who were never recognized properly when they came home," Colonel Holliday said, noting the volatile political landscape that surrounded the war.

For more retiree news and information, please visit www.retires.af.mil

[Sent in by MG Jack Leide, CO, C/2/503d, '66-'67]

FBI Arrests Alleged Phony SF Colonel

By Bryant Jordan
Military.com

A man who claimed to be a retired Green Beret colonel and an expert in the international sex-slave trade has been arrested in Maryland by the FBI.

An FBI spokeswoman said William G. "Bill" Hillar was charged with mail fraud in connection with a scheme to use bogus military and academic credentials toward teaching and training employment.

For years Hillar allegedly scammed universities, non-profit groups and law enforcement organizations by claiming his daughter was kidnapped by human traffickers in Asia and that he spent months in a failed effort to rescue her. He parlayed his "expertise" and faux Army Special Forces career into thousands of dollars in teaching and lecture fees.

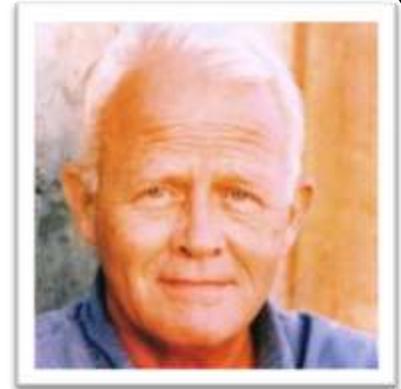
[Sent in by my older VN vet SF brother Bob Clark, different dads. Ed]

"This asshole had the guts to show up at our convention last year."

Bob (Big Bear) Clark, 1st/5th/7th SF

BB. I suggest you and your guys invite him to your reunion in Orlando this year for a special Special Forces welcome. You know, drinks, slaps on the back. Ed

FAREWELL TO ONE OF OUR TROOPERS



LTC Dick Noonan

This past Saturday I attended a Memorial Mass for Richard B. (Dick) Noonan, LTC (Ret), who served in the 82nd, the 5th Special Forces, and the 173d. The Mass was held in North Hollywood, just down the street from Toluca Lake, CA, where Bob Hope lived. A grandson of Richard Noonan spoke about his grandfather and how he respected Major Charles Watters, a Chaplain who was serving with the 2/503d in Dak To in June and November of 1967, and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

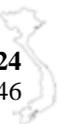
As a member of the Army Airborne Infantry, Dick served with the 82nd Airborne (Ft Bragg NC) , 5th Special Forces, (Berlin for the US Commanders Office and Heidelberg for Commander in Chief's Office). He served in Vietnam with the 173d Airborne, retiring at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1974. His commendations were many over his career including Silver and Bronze Stars for valor in combat and the Purple Heart.

Did Richard Noonan serve in the 2/503d? It sure sounded like it, but his son and daughter did not have his military records nor did they know which battalion he served with in Vietnam. LTC Noonan died on December 11, 2010, of bladder cancer and he was buried at the Williamette National Cemetery in Oregon, he was 78 years old.



The Colonel was involved with a documentary film company called "44 Blue Productions", in Studio City, CA. His son-in-law is Rasha Drachkovitch and he runs the film company now. His email is: rdrachkovitch@44blue.com. If anyone from the 2/503d knew an officer by the name of Richard B. Noonan, they would like to hear some stories about him.

**Ray Rameriz
Recon/4/503d**



Mortarmen and Their Piss Tubes

Good buddy A.B. Garcia (the *Aussino*) of 4.2 Platoon, 2/503d, '65-'66, found himself in Australia after the war and discovered, "Hey! They have a lot of beer here!!" That was enough for him to take his lovely bride Ursula to Oz where they've made their home all these years. On our trip together back to Vietnam in '01, I gave A.B. the nickname "*Aussino*", a cross between an American Chicano and an Aussie....it seemed to fit.

Here's our cammo'd hero below doing his best impersonation of an Aborigine Tribesman. It's amazing what beer makes people do at times. Ed



A.B. (the *Aussino*) down under blowing his big didgeridoo

THE CHAPTER EXCURSION TO THE WILD MURRAY RIVER AT "THE HOUSES BY THE WATER" 'WAHGUNYAH'

(Excerpt) "The chapter's end of year get together for 2010 was held in the border towns of Wahgunyah, Victoria and Corowa, NSW basing ourselves at the Victorian TPI units in Wahgunyah and roaming the countryside to harass the local inhabitants and plunder their treasures.

After some people did a taste test on the chocolates on display, the group converged on the 'Tea Room' for morning break. There was a good selection of fare and I think the scones were the highlight due to their size. So much that I don't think anyone finished their "Devonshire Tea" completely, with Garcia even buying a couple just so he could study them and regale his grandchildren on the size of them.

We are not sure what the sign REALLY refers to or means "Are you in the Club?" but trust there are Surprises on the way for the GARCIA'S! The only Mexican American Comanche Australian to ever be seen playing the didgeridoo using a plastic tube with rainwater down the pipe. As he never checked what was inside it first it was just as well Garcia BLEW instead of SUCKING the pipe!"

**John Arnold
1RAR**

(Photo and excerpt stolen from the Newsletter of the Southern Hemisphere Chapters "*SITREP*", Vol. #3, Issue #11, Feb. thru May 2011. Thanks Ray & John]



"I love the infantry because they are the underdogs. They are the mud-rain-frost-and-wind boys. They have no comforts, and they even learn to live without the necessities. And in the end they are the guys that wars can't be won without."

Ernie Pyle

[Sent in by Jim Jackson, B/2/503d]



173d Airborne Brigade Marker at Arlington Cemetery

As most of you know, the Association leadership has assigned Chapter I (Sigholtz Capital Chapter) operational and financial responsibility for updating (replacing) the 173d Airborne Brigade Marker in Arlington Cemetery. The upgrade, approved by Association President Roy Scott, will reflect that fact that the brigade was reactivated in 2000; other than changing the wording, the new marker will closely resemble the original marker including both the New Zealand and Australian Army Crests.



In order to replace the marker and conduct appropriate protocol events, Chapter I needs to raise \$3,000 - \$3,500. The stonecutter has not yet provided a definitive price for the marker and the cost of installment. The Chapter will also provide a wreath appropriate to the dedication ceremony. In response to an appeal sent out to each of you some weeks ago, donations of more than \$2,400.00 have been received. Contributions include \$800.00 from our Australian brothers (Chapters 23 and 27), and \$900.00 from members of Chapter 1 plus a number of donations from individual Sky Soldiers. Chapter VII (Florida-Jim Bradley) has indicated that a donation will be forthcoming soon.

The generous donations and pledges from this small group of people is greatly appreciated but does not reflect the nature of this memorial stone nor its importance to those gold star survivors and veterans who come to Arlington to remember their fallen, as well as our collective service. Large donations are not required if our many Chapters would pitch in and contribute a share of the total cost -- the job can be done.

Chapter 1 intends to dedicate the new marker on May 7th 2011 in conjunction with the annual "Reading of the Names." Specific information will be placed on the Chapter 1 Website and circulated to the Association Chapters through Sky Soldier newsletter, this newsletter and the Association Webpage.

Please send your checks made payable to the "Sigholtz Chapter" to: Chapter 1, P.O. Box 15133, Arlington, VA 22215-0133. www.173dabnchap1.org

Ken Smith
Chapter 1, Treasurer

A Brother Coming Home....Again

Here are a couple of recent photos of me assisting the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC) School of Excellence (SOE) Commandant in awarding recent Commando graduates of an advance skills course at Camp Morehead, Afghanistan.



Col. James Velky, center, with his Commandos

I'm due to redeploy to CONUS (back to Virginia Beach, where I reside) and back to Joint Warfighting Center as a SOF Instructor/Controller for Modelling and Simulation this month (January), but meanwhile am keeping about as safe as I can inside the wire... however, we've all taken our chances every time outside the wire on convoys.



James on left in Afghanistan

James L. Velky, COL (Ret)
Former SGT D/2/503rd Inf and SP4 Door Gunner,
Casper Platoon '69-'70

"First In, First Out"

James

Welcome home, again, brother!



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / February 2011 – Issue 24
Page 23 of 46



The Commander In Chief at Tucson Memorial



“The loss of these wonderful people should make every one of us strive to be better in our private lives - to be better friends and neighbors, co-workers and parents. And if, as has been discussed in recent days, their deaths help usher in more civility in our public discourse, let's remember that it is not because a simple lack of civility caused this tragedy, but rather because only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to our challenges as a nation, in a way that would make them proud.

It should be because we want to live up to the example of public servants like John Roll and Gabby Giffords, who knew first and foremost that we are all Americans, and that we can question each other's ideas without questioning each other's love of country, and that our task, working together, is to constantly widen the circle of our concern so that we bequeath the American dream to future generations.”

President Obama

And Old Trooper Suffering From Battle Fatigue, Shell Shock & PTSD

Your husband is suffering from a very severe stress disorder. If you don't do the following he will surely die. Each morning fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant at all times. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal. No chores. No nagging. Oh yes, and make love several times a week. Do this for the next year and he'll regain his health completely!



[Sent in by Bob Fleming, A/D/2/503d]

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me; I want people to know 'why' I look this way. I've traveled a long way, and some of the roads weren't paved.

Will Rogers



~ Drop on Corregidor ~

By Major Thomas C. Hardman
503rd PRCT

The lead bombardier spotted his target through a break in the clouds that hung over Manila Bay. Seconds later, a B-24 load of 500 pound bombs whistled down on "The Rock". The air blitz of Corregidor had begun.

One by one, Liberators of the 13th Air Force's 307th Bomb Group passed over cloud-obscured Cavite, made 180 degree turns over Manila's docks and came in for their bomb runs on the tiny island bastion that stands like a sentry at the entrance of the harbor. The Libs dropped their 500-pounders from 17,000 feet, and 85 percent of them blanketed the target. Tremendous blasts tossed smoke and debris more than 3,000 feet into the air. One string of bombs found an underground dump, and the resulting explosions appeared to race along an L pattern as the earth erupted.

This strike was made shortly after noon on January 23. By the 17th of February, Corregidor was to become the most heavily bombed island per square foot of any invaded area in the Southwest Pacific.

The green light for the air blitz on "The Rock" had been flashed several days earlier in the form of an unqualified compliment to airpower. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area, and General George C. Kenney, commanding general of the Far East Air Forces, were discussing ways and means of capturing Corregidor, held as a bloody symbol since its day of surrender back in May of 1942.



The Signal Station Topside
(Signal Corps photo)

"General," remarked the FEAF commander, "Let me take Corregidor from the air."

General MacArthur hesitated but a moment and replied, "All right, George, go to it." And the discussion ended.

The 13th's Liberators, which had gashed the jugular vein of Jap supply arteries to the south with strikes on such "out-of-reach" targets as Truk, Yap and Balikpapan, were the first of the big parade of heavies, medium and

fighters to be thrown against the three and three-quarter mile long island.

Next came three veteran groups of the 5th Air Force — the 90th's Jolly Rogers, the Ken's Men of the 43rd and the 22nd's Red Raiders. These were the boys who had pasted the Japs almost daily since the 1942 days at Port Moresby. B-24s of the 7th Air Force joined in from their bases in the Central Pacific.

For two weeks, the heavies poured it on in rotation. Enemy anti-aircraft batteries, feeble from the start, were knocked out in short order, and by the first week in February, B-24 photo-recons could circle unmolested 3,000 feet over the island.

The Japs had dug in. This called for the A-20s of the 3rd Attack Group. The Grim Reapers they are called. These low-level bombers and strafers rounded out General Kenney's team for the first half. 7th Air Libs in the morning, 13th Air Force B-24s at noon, 5th Air Force A-20s in the afternoon, and 5th Air Force Libs just before evening chow.

Ton by ton, the bombs rocked "The Rock." The heavies with their 500 and 1,000-pounders blew up gasoline dumps, neutralized artillery positions and dug deep into the underground labyrinth, while the A-20s skimmed in low with bombs and .50 caliber bullets to pound away at the cliffs and ridges where Jap troops were burrowing in for a stand against inevitable invasion.

Then came the fighters...P-38s, P-47s and the newly arrived P-51s...with 1,000-pound bombs shackled under each wing. Buzzing the island from every conceivable angle, they made 134 sorties and dropped 133 tons of bombs. They dropped them into cave mouths, barracks building doorways, gun pits, and, just to make sure, they fired 3,000 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition into the targets.



Ruins of San Jose Barrio, looking from Malinta Hill toward Topside. (Signal Corps photo)

(continued...)





Post Hospital, Fort Mills

In 25 days, Corregidor had been shaken by 3,128 tons of bombs in target areas totaling little more than one square mile...a record unmatched in the Southwest Pacific. By contrast, Lae, in the two months prior to its invasion, had taken less than 1,000 tons. During the weeks preceding the Finschafen landing, Allied bombers had expended 134 tons over that target, Cape Gloucester had taken 5,000 tons of bombs, but they had fallen on an area of over nine square miles. Nearly 2,000 tons had blasted Hollandia, but here again the area covered at least ten square miles. Wake Island, with its two square miles, probably had been Corregidor's closest statistical competitor, absorbing almost 2,000 tons of bombs during a relatively brief bombardment period.

Now, with Corregidor's surface defenses and much of its underground installations battered to a pulp, the time had come for one of the most difficult operations in airborne military history.

At 0830 on the morning of February 16, a C-47 appeared over the hazy horizon, flying at 1,000 feet. Lt Col John Lackey, CO of the 317th Troop Carrier Group, was at the controls and behind him sat 24 hardened veterans of the 503rd Parachute infantry Regiment. The smoke of the final combined naval and air bombardments still billowed over Corregidor as the C 47 neared "Topside" -- a rocky plateau with its two tiny "jump" areas, the largest of which was 1,700 by 700 feet and perilously close to 500 foot sheer cliffs. Eight paratroops tumbled from the big transport.

Other C-47s followed close behind, flying in two strung-out trains. They came in nosed slightly downward on a gentle glide at about 110 miles an hour, a thousand feet above sea level but less than 600 feet above the bomb shattered terrain. Jumpmasters counted four seconds at the "go points" before loosing their eight-man "sticks." The areas were so small that to drop nine men at a time would have the last man falling into the bay.

The wind velocity increased and the Jumpmasters' counts went up to 10 seconds as the two sky trains

passed the dropping area and diverged north and south, swinging in two great counter rotating circles for their second and third eight man runs.

For one hour and 20 minutes, 50 C-47s sowed their human cargo on the plateau until the ground was literally blanketed with white parachutes.

All during the paratroop operation, A-20s had made strafing runs over the neck of the chop shaped island, erecting an effective wall between the main portion of "The Rock," where our men had landed, and the tail of the chop where surviving Japs had formed into a strong pocket.



Colonel George M. Jones, CO of the 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment, stands beside the original Fort Mills Plaque.

(Signal Corps photo)

Paratroops of the 503rd Regiment alone held Corregidor for 40 minutes, and at 1030 the first waves of landing craft hit the island's only beach. The men walked ashore with their rifles on their backs. It took some hard, hand-to-hand fighting to dig the Japs out of the holes they had burrowed into, but on March 1, General MacArthur announced that the destruction of the enemy garrison on Corregidor had been completed for all practical purposes. Four thousand, two hundred and fifteen enemy bodies already had been counted while hundreds of others had been sealed in the tunnels and caves of "The Rock." Our losses: 136 killed, 531 wounded, 8 missing. 



Individual Efforts ~ Our Memorial

Since the Dedication of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial in June, 2010, I have received a number of emails and notes regarding the Memorial, its appearance, and its appropriateness as well as a few personal accolades. While I appreciate all these messages and well wishes, I would like to make one thing clear and wish that you would forward it on to your Chapter Members and friends.



The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation Board of Directors consisted of eight members. It was my privilege to be designated as the "public face" of the Foundation and it was easy to fill that role because of the number of talented people that had my back. But the Memorial never would have been built, much less be as magnificent as it is, without the individual efforts of so many dedicated individuals.

First, there would not be a Memorial if **Terry Modglin** had not picked up the torch in 2005 and won approval to establish a separate Foundation at the 2006 reunion. Aided by **Jean O'Neill**, Terry was the enabler who opened the door to this project.

Don Dali, one of the most talented and creative people I know, pulled together the Memorial's conceptual design based on foundation member input and his own vision of what it could and should be. He translated this vision into plans, did the contracting, spent countless hours examining each detail of every plan, and then provided needed oversight of construction activities. He worked with our lawyers to ensure that all contracts were appropriate and in his spare time designed the memorial Coin that we cherish and carry. We would not have the beautiful structure that sits at the entrance to the *Walk of Honor* without this creative and dedicated Foundation Board member.

Bob Wolfgang, Director of Heraldry, was drafted to supervise the vital task of determining what data would be on the granite panels. He put together a team of dedicated researchers and sent them back into the archives again and again to verify names of KIA's and the accuracy of records. No detail was so insignificant that it was not double checked. Once the data was assembled, Bob worked extensively with the Columbus Monument artists to develop and lay out the panels and with his wife's assistance, read, reread and reread again the proofs of each table. His contributions are reflected in the almost flawless work on the granite tables that we dedicated on 1 June 2010.

Craig Ford, the Foundation treasurer, pinched each dollar until George Washington cried. Despite the unpopularity of the job, he was our fiscal watchdog. In addition to managing and investing the Foundation's finances, he undertook the enormous task of keeping us squared away with the IRS and the State of Georgia, an unglamorous but

vital function. Craig also doubled as a logistician for the Foundation both in facilitating event execution and obtaining needed supplies.

Floyd Riester did a tremendous job on special projects, using the experience he had gained in the construction of the Rochester Memorial to move the Foundation's progress along. His now famous "*Rawhide Rides*" not only generated needed income but also brought us the publicity we needed to enlist support for our cause from a variety of donors. Floyd's liaison with the Fort Benning Garrison facilitated the pageantry that was evident at the dedication.

Karen Riester, who joined our Board late but had been an active supporter of the Board for many years, put together in a short amount of time all the protocol for the Dedication and accompanying events (not an insignificant task given the scope and delicacy of protocol endeavors), and also served as the vital link with our Gold Star families. The excellence of her planning and execution was evident in the flawless ceremony and events throughout the dedication weekend.

Ray Ramirez served as utility infielder, taking on every small task that did not fit into anyone's portfolio. Among other endeavors, Ray was instrumental in spreading information to veterans organizations and publicizing events. He made key inroads into obtaining corporate sponsorships, including our good friends from Avis and Delta Airlines. He established contacts with news media outlets and was our "public face" at numerous events, producing income that moved us toward our financial goal.

Sharon Goens, Gold Star sister of MOH recipient Don L. Michael, served as Recording Secretary for the Foundation.

Although not formally a member of our Foundation, I would be remiss if I did not mention the contributions of **General John R. Deane, Jr.** to the Memorial effort. "Uncle Jack" served as adviser and mentor, and devoted considerable effort in raising funds for our project. His wise counsel and advice was invaluable.

I am sure that I have overlooked many accomplishments of Board members and supporters, and for this I apologize. However, every Sky Soldier and friend of the Memorial Foundation needs to realize that our striking Memorial was the result of a collegiate organization dedicated to accomplishing this vital task, and not the product of a single individual. It was my privilege to work with this talented team.



Ken Smith

Memorial Foundation President



173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

~ National Memorial ~

Fort Benning, Georgia



Former G.I. Awarded DSC for Afghan Ambush

Knight Ridder/Tribune
January 24, 2011

MOORESVILLE, N.C. -- Former U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James Michael Takes, 27, has a difficult time putting into words the brotherhood that forms between Soldiers deployed overseas.

That bond is so strong, that when members of the 173d Airborne Brigade were ambushed during a mission in Afghanistan on Nov. 9, 2007, he risked his own life to help his friends and fellow Soldiers.

In recognition for his bravery in combat, Takes received the Distinguished Service Cross -- the Army's second-highest military decoration after the Medal of Honor -- during a ceremony at Mooresville Town Hall on Saturday morning.

"I am proud to be here in Mooresville to recognize a true American hero -- a hometown hero to Mooresville," said Col. William Ostlund, former commander of 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment.

During the ambush, Takes was providing cover gunfire so the rest of the unit, which was made up of American and Afghan troops, could make it to safety. He was shot in the arm while firing.

Takes later said that the group was nervous about the mission. It took place in an area they nicknamed Ambush Alley for its rugged and steep terrain. The terrain practically lends itself to that purpose, he said.

Even though he was knocked unconscious at one point, he continued to assist others once he recovered. He was shot in his other arm while trying to get another Soldier to safety. Unable to carry him any further, Takes administered first aid and gave the Soldier his own helmet to keep his head protected before once again going to assist others.

"Despite a completely desperate situation, the calm and decisive action from Staff Sgt. Takes saved his brothers-in-arms," said Maj. Matt Myer, who was Takes' company commander during the battle....

"Acting selfless and ensuring their safety above his own, knowing, if they were able, they would do the same for him."

Six American Soldiers were killed during the ambush, and Takes made sure to memorialize them during the ceremony.

"Thank you for a job well done in defending our freedoms," said Maj. Gen. Rodney Anderson.

After the ceremony, Takes expressed humility at being recognized.

"I feel like the third-string punter that someone handed the Super Bowl trophy to," he said. *"When it was a group effort, I'm just the one holding the trophy at the end."*

Takes said he believes the other Soldiers in his unit would have done the same thing for him. He said the situation dictated itself, and he simply did what he knew was right.

"I remember the majority of it, and I'm glad I do," Takes said. *"I embrace those moments. They changed my life."*

Born in Danville, Va., in 1984, Takes comes from a family of strong supporters and participants in the military. His sister, Jessica, is a Marine Corps recruiter and his father is also a Marine, said Takes' mother, Cindy Anderson.

Anderson said her son didn't tell her all of the details of the ambush. She has been learning more and more about what happened to him that day.

"That is James because he is so selfless," she said. *"I couldn't be prouder."*

Takes joined the Army in 2003 and was honorably discharged in 2009. He lives in Mooresville and is one of the partners at Ace Hardware on Brawley School Road.

Currently, he is attending classes at Mitchell Community College and plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to obtain his Masters of Business Administration.

**[Sent in by Buzz Cox, C/D/2/503d and
Larry Hampton, A/1/503]**



The *Love Love* was built to look as if it is sinking

French artist Julien Berthier has designed a fully functional boat to look as if it is sinking. The 6.5m (21ft) yacht was cut in half with a new keel and motor added so it remains in the sinking position while being fully functional. He describes it as *"the permanent and mobile image of a wrecked ship that has become a functional and safe leisure object."*



The Love Love. French drinking way too much wine again.

~ The Little Con Artist ~

This is little Kim from the village....she was a real shyster and con artist. She ran the whole group of kids with an iron fist. She would whip all of them with a bamboo switch and line them up if we were passing out any candy, trinkets, whatever. She also used to collect 3 C-Rats for washing a set of jungle fatigues. Went to the ville one day to see that she gave all the pants to one, all the shirts to another, all the underwear, handkerchiefs, whatever, to yet another. She would give them one can, period, for all their work, and she'd reap all the profit. She'd get so ticked at us for popping them open with a P-38! I don't think they wanted to sell them as much as having food to last for a while.



Jerry with his little friend Kim in An Do Valley north of North English.

I gave up my M-16 when one of the squad left the field-- carried the 79 for a while until we got someone who would be grenadier. I liked carrying it. We had a guy named Johnson who could put 14 M-79 rounds into the air before the first one hit. Of course, that was under ideal conditions while in the perimeter. He'd bend over a box of rounds and go to town when we got fired up. It was like having your own mortar support!

We would periodically fire off a round in the night as H&I fire. We started playing games with those things, and what began as a random shot into a suspected VC trail or wet line became a game of *"I'll bet I can get one closer to the perimeter than you can."* There were some tense moments after that "thunk" sound. Eventually, we were getting a little too dangerous for our own good and the LT made us stop.

Jerry Sopko
Team Leader, D/4/503d, '69-'70





MEDALS



Here is the web site address where our guys can get all the information on how to obtain their medals, a new DD-214 if needed, etc.

Web Site: <http://www.archives.gov/>

It takes a while to get any medals you were awarded but the government will send them to you at no cost.

Individual Awards you should be eligible for:

1. If you were wounded you should get a Purple Heart.
2. Vietnam Campaign Medal (you have to buy this one the Government does not give it to you)
3. US Vietnam Service Medal
4. RVN Gallantry Cross with Palm Medal
5. National Defense Service Medal
6. Good Conduct Medal
7. Combat Infantry Badge (if you had an Infantry MOS)
8. Parachute Wings
9. Army Shooting Badges (Sharpshooter, Marksman or Expert on weapons you qualified with and noted on your DD-214)

Unit Ribbons:

1. Presidential Unit Citation
2. Meritorious Unit Citation

There may be more but you need to get an updated DD-214 to see if you have any others coming. I know I qualified on more weapons than the M-14 but only received the shooting badge for Sharpshooter on the M-14 as that was all that was on my DD-214. I am not sure when you were in Nam but in the first year we never got Air Medals or a Bronze Star. If you were there after '65/'66, you may be eligible to receive both those medals as most guys I know who were there in later years were awarded them automatically.

I hope this helps. Just remember the government works slow so expect it to take several months before you get everything.

Take care brothers,

Airborne, All The Way!!

Craig Ford

C Company, 1/503d

173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

3/64 to 4/66

Email: cdford1503@frontier.com



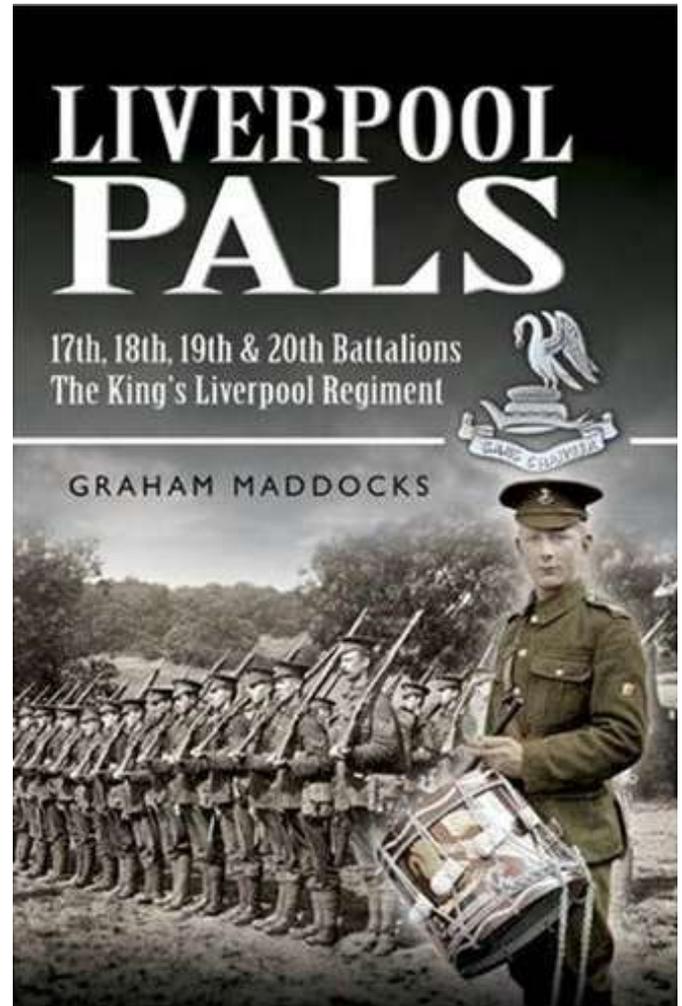
Craig in Sydney '05

Thanks 1st Bat Guy!

The Pals Battalions

[Sent in by Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP]

PALS is a poignant name from the First World War. Had to Google it and there are a lot of references to the PALS battalions, the following excerpt is from Wikipedia.



The **Pals Battalions** of World War I were specially constituted units of the British Army comprising men who had enlisted together in local recruiting drives, with the promise that they would be able to serve alongside their friends, neighbors and work colleagues ("*pals*"), rather than being arbitrarily allocated to regular Army regiments.

At the outbreak of World War I Lord Kitchener (Secretary of State for War) believed that overwhelming manpower was the key to winning the war and he set about looking for ways to encourage men of all classes to join.

(continued...)



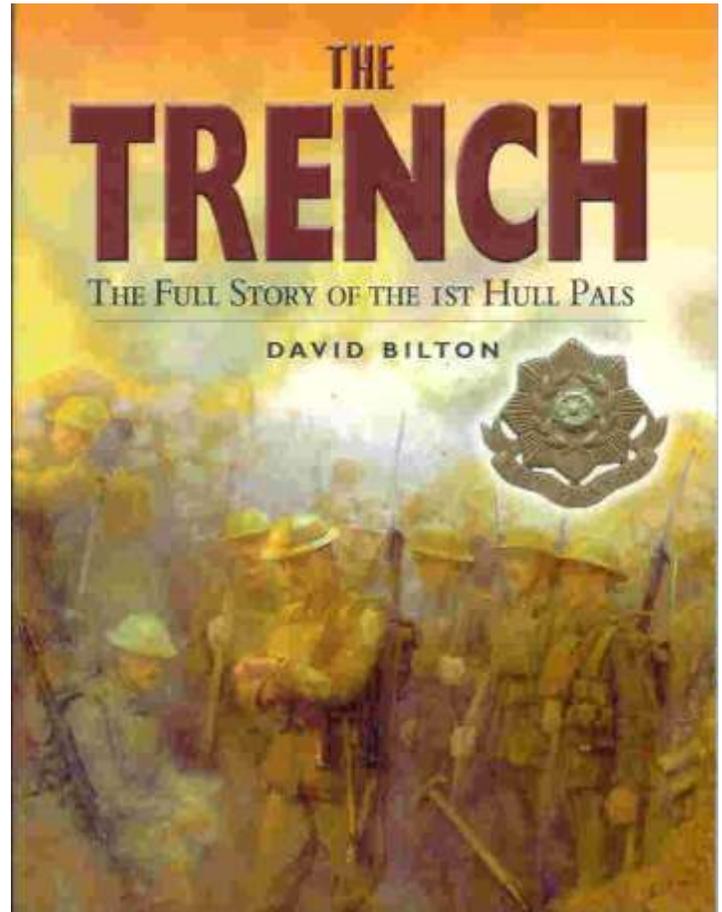
General Sir Henry Rawlinson suggested that men would be more inclined to enlist in the Army if they knew that they were going to serve alongside their friends and work colleagues. He appealed to London stockbrokers to raise a battalion of men from workers in the City of London to set an example. 1600 men enlisted in the 10th (Service) Bn Royal Fusiliers, the so-called "Stockbrokers' Battalion", within a week in late August 1914.

A few days later, Edward George Villiers Stanley, 17th Earl of Derby decided to organize the formation of a battalion of men from Liverpool. Within two days, 1500 Liverpoolians had joined the new battalion. Speaking to these men Lord Derby said: *"This should be a battalion of pals, a battalion in which friends from the same office will fight shoulder to shoulder for the honor of Britain and the credit of Liverpool."* Within the next few days three more battalions were raised in Liverpool.

Encouraged by Lord Derby's success, Kitchener promoted the idea of organizing similar recruitment campaigns throughout the entire country. By the end of September 1914, over fifty towns had formed Pals battalions, whilst the larger towns and cities were able to form several battalions.

The 'Grimsby Chums' was formed by former schoolboys of Wintringham Secondary School in Grimsby. Many other schools, including some of the leading public schools, also formed battalions. Several sportsmen's battalions were formed, including three battalions of footballers (17th and 23rd (Service) Bn Middlesex Regiment) and 16th (2nd Edinburgh) (Service) Bn Lothian Regiment Royal Scots, the last-mentioned battalion containing the entire first and reserve team players, several boardroom and staff members and a sizeable contingent of supporters of Scottish professional club Heart of Midlothian F.C. Out of nearly 1000 battalions raised during the first two years of the war, over two thirds were locally-raised Pals battalions. Some pals battalions were trade/background linked rather than area linked: i.e. "artists battalions", "sportsmen's battalions," etc.

Several of these battalions suffered heavy casualties during the Somme offensives of 1916. One of the most notable was the 11th (Service) Battalion (Accrington) East Lancashire Regiment, better known as the Accrington Pals. The Accrington Pals were ordered to attack Serre, the most northerly part of the main assault, on the opening day of the battle. The Accrington Pals were accompanied by Pals battalions drawn from Sheffield, Leeds, and Bradford. Of an estimated 700 Accrington Pals who took part in the attack, 235 were killed and 350 wounded within the space of twenty minutes.



The policy of drawing recruits from amongst a local population ensured that, when the Pals battalions suffered casualties, individual towns, villages, neighborhoods, and communities back in Britain were to suffer disproportionate losses. With the introduction of conscription in January 1916, further Pals battalions were not sought. Most pal battalions were decimated.

Decimated my ass, that is one out of 10. I figure that when you take 80% casualties in twenty minutes that's being decimated eight times. By the end of 1917 or start of 1918, most were amalgamated into other battalions to regularize battalion strength. Cripes, this meant that most of the young men in a community were dead or maimed.

We were in France about 15 years ago and even the smallest towns had dozens of names for those killed in WW I on their war memorials. The one in Chamonix noted that there were no surviving graduates of the local school for half of the classes from 1908 to 1915. We really do not comprehend what the French and Germans (and Russians and UK) went through in WWI.

**Reed Cundiff
173d LRRP**



RANGERS WITH THE MAN



L-R: MAJ Jeff Streucker, SGT James "Buck" Lambert, Me SGT James "Jimmy" Bruinsma, the President, SSG Corey Remsberg, I can't remember the guy next to him for the life of me, and CPT Menendez.

By Jimmy Bruinsma
3/75th Rangers

President Obama is a class act. I got to meet him in France, and he wasn't even supposed to come and talk to us. His aid kept trying to get him to go over and socialize with the other big wigs, but instead he looked over at us and told his aid he was going to come and chat with us because the last thing he wanted was a "bunch of pissed off Rangers."

I also had the honor of being the protective escort to Michelle Obama, and she was so polite. I told her that my girlfriend loved her. The First Lady then asked her aid for a coin to give me for my girlfriend, but the aid didn't bring any. Michelle then asked me if she could call her (my girlfriend). Of course, I told her, and they talked for a good 5 minutes, and the whole time she was just really sweet and nice.

As soon as he walked in we were instructed to stand in the corner where the pictures were taken because President Obama was going to talk to the WWII vets who were receiving the French Legion of Merit -- so we did. His aid was pretty hard set on him going to say hello to the other world leaders who were there, including Prince Charles, Gordon Brown, and Sarkozy.

The President kept looking over at us, and when his aid tried to direct him over to the rest of the crew who was there he pulled away and said he wanted to come talk to us. He said, "These guys can kill me with their bare hands," and came over and asked us where we were from and had a little conversation with each one of us.

The crazy thing was, he knew a little something about each of our home towns. I told him I was from Katy, Texas, and he knew about how we had a bad ass football team.

I have been so lucky in my career. The right people always saw me doing the right thing at the right time. I got a medal in Iraq from General McCrystal, and another one from General Miller. I had General Petraeus and General Powel come down to Fort Benning for a leadership conference at the Infantry School. I was down at the airfield directing a detail of lower enlisted to help out the guys coming back from deployment and they were standing right behind me the whole time. I felt a tug at my sleeve from behind and said "What's up man?!" and when I saw who it was I snapped to attention and said "Oh shit... Sir!" They laughed, and General Petraeus

handed me a coin and told me that I exemplified what he had come down there to talk about.

I totally enjoyed my time as a Ranger, and getting out was one of the hardest things I have done. I got to know some of the greatest men anyone could ever meet in their lives. I was deployed by the best combat leaders the Army has ever seen. I became brothers with some of the strongest guys ever. What was I thinking, getting out? The good definitely outweighed the bad. I love that in 6 years I lived more than most will have lived in an entire lifetime.



First Lady with the Troops

I honestly cannot say enough good things about all the Rangers who were picked to go to France. Words just don't do these guys justice. To be frank, the only reason I got to go was by a stroke of good luck. So many other guys deserved to be there in my spot, and I just happened to be at the right place at the right time.



Deadline Approaches for Some Combat Veterans

Department of Veterans Affairs



WASHINGTON -- Certain combat veterans who were discharged from active duty service before Jan. 28, 2003 have until Thursday to take advantage of their enhanced health care enrollment opportunity through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The enhanced enrollment window was provided for in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. That law gave combat veterans who served after Nov. 11, 1998 but separated from service before Jan. 28, 2003, and did not enroll before Jan. 28, 2008, three years, beginning on Jan. 28, 2008, to apply for the enhanced enrollment opportunity.

These veterans will still be able to apply for health benefits with VA after Jan. 27, 2011, but will have their status for receiving VA health care determined under normal VA procedures that base health care priority status on the severity of a service-connected disability or other eligibility factors.

Veterans can apply for enrollment online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez or by calling 1-877-222-8387.

Treasury Department Says No Paper Checks for VA Benefits After 2013

Department of Veterans Affairs



WASHINGTON -- The Department of the Treasury announced a new rule that will extend the safety and convenience of electronic payments to millions of Americans and phase out paper checks for federal benefits by March 1, 2013.

On that date, VA will stop issuing paper checks. People who do not have electronic payments for their federal benefits by that time will receive their funds via a pre-paid debit card.

Another deadline affects people receiving VA's compensation or pensions for the first time after May 1, 2011. Those people will automatically receive the benefits electronically.

For more information or to change VA benefits to direct deposit, visit www.GoDirect.org.

Distinguished and Honorary Members of the 503d Infantry Regiment



Honorary CSM of the Regiment Loren Storjohann and I are pleased to announce the following nominations, forwarded to the Department of the Army in December, for designation as Distinguished or Honorary members of the Regiment.

To be designated as Distinguished Members of the Regiment:

SSG Salvatore A. Giunta, assigned to B/2/503d, for conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty during OEF VIII.

CSM William H. Acebes, assigned to B/1/503d, 1965-1966, Vietnam, and subsequently served as CSM of the Infantry School, for superior leadership and multiple contributions to the Regimental heritage.

BG Wesley B. Taylor, Jr., assigned to 4/503d, Vietnam, and subsequently served as Commanding Officer of the First Ranger Battalion and then the Ranger Regiment, 1987-1989, for gallantry in action and for multiple contributions to the heritage of the 503d Infantry Regiment and that of the United States Army.

Major Jack K. Tarr, Commanding Officer of C/4/503d, 1966, and Commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade Jungle School, 1966-1967, Vietnam, for sustained efforts in promoting the heritage of the Regiment.

Captain J. Robert Wolfgang, assigned to Headquarters Company and C/4/503d, Vietnam, 1966-1967, for sustained efforts in promoting the heritage of the Regiment as a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation.

To be designated as Honorary Members of the Regiment:

Sebastian Junger, for Journalistic excellence and sustained efforts in promoting the heritage of the Regiment, 2007-2010, and the United States Army.

Leta Carruth, for providing sustained physical, moral and substantive support to the warriors of the 2/503d from 2007 forward.

CSM Storjohann joins me in wishing you a rewarding and prosperous 2011.

Kenneth V. Smith
COL, USA (Ret)
Honorary Colonel
503d Infantry Regiment



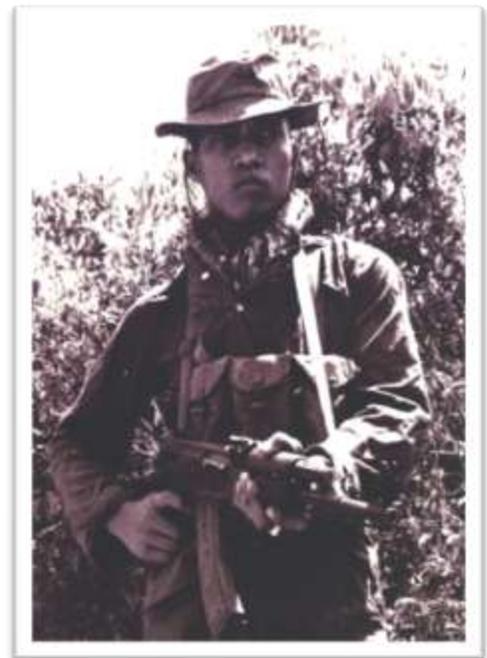
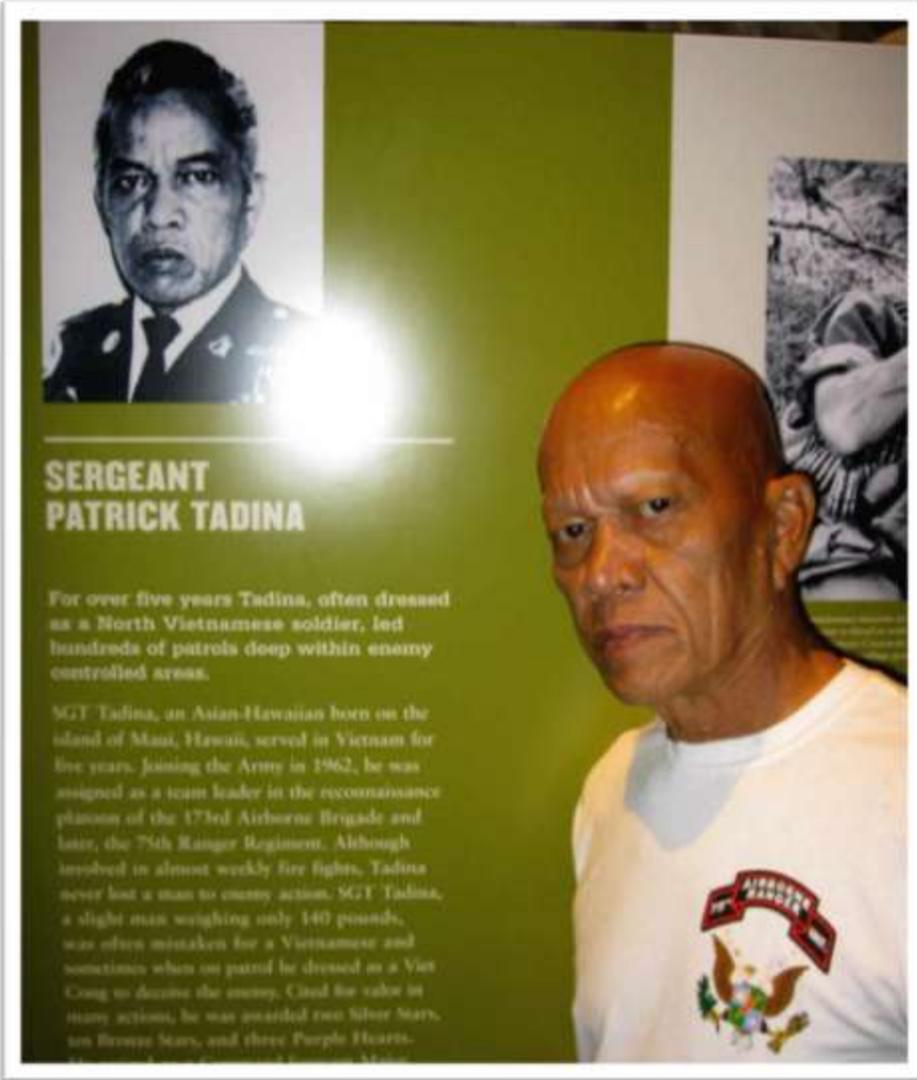


~ SKY SOLDIER EXTRAORDINAIRE ~



Patrick “Tad” Tadina, CSM Recon 1/503d, LRRP & 75th Rangers

After all these years Tad is still soldiering for his buddies, keeping them safe and out of harms’ way. Just the other day after learning a fellow trooper was undergoing some desperate moments and was at risk, the Command Sergeant Major drove from North Carolina to South Carolina specifically to pull the trooper in from the bush. *Airborne Tad!*



In the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning, GA this tribute to Tad reads:

“For over five years Tadina, often dressed as a North Vietnamese soldier, led hundreds of patrols deep within enemy controlled areas.

SGT Tadina, an Asian-Hawaiian born on the island of Maui, Hawaii, served in Vietnam for five years. Joining the Army in 1962, he was assigned as a team leader in the reconnaissance platoon of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and later, the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Although involved in almost weekly fire fights, Tadina never lost a man to enemy action. SGT Tadina, a slight man weighing only 140 pounds, was often mistaken for a Vietnamese and sometimes when on patrol he dressed as a Viet Cong to deceive the enemy. Cited for valor in many actions, he was awarded two Silver Stars, ten Bronze Stars, and three Purple Hearts. He retired as a Command Sergeant Major.”



National Infantry Museum



Last week I met Neil Duncan, the brother-in-law of a young man who I work with. He lost both legs in Afghanistan...and was in the 173d Airborne, 2/503d. He is a great guy with a great attitude and is in his second year of college at Denver University making straight A's. I sent his brother-in-law a copy of your awesome recent newsletter, and he was going to forward it to Neil. So I thought I would tell you about a great man of the 2/503d.

Neal Stanley
326 Med

Three Disabled American Veterans Summit Mount Kilimanjaro

Associated Press
August 11, 2010



Aug. 6: Showing from left, Kirk Bauer, 62, of Ellicott City, MD, Neil Duncan, 26, of Denver, CO and Dan Nevins, 37, of Jacksonville, FL, as they pose together at Gilman's point before making the last push to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

NAIROBI, Kenya -- The three American veterans from three different wars had only one good leg among them. But that didn't stop them from summiting Africa's highest mountain.

The three soldiers -- veterans of Afghanistan, Iraq and Vietnam -- scrambled, clawed and plodded to the top of Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro, hiking up the domed mountain's scree-filled paths on one human leg and five prosthetics made of titanium and carbon fiber.

They skidded. They fell. They removed their legs to adjust their shoes. And after six days of climbing they stood at 19,340 feet (5,895 meters) -- Africa's highest point.

"The message we're trying to send back to the USA is no matter what disability you have you can be active," said Kirk Bauer, the executive director of Disabled Sports USA and a 62-year-old Vietnam veteran who lost his leg in 1969. Bauer, of Ellicott City, Maryland, was one of the triumphant climbers.

"If three amputees from three different wars and two different generations with literally one good leg can climb Kilimanjaro, our other disabled friends can get out and go hiking or go biking or swim a mile, can get out and lead a healthy life," he said.

The youngest of the veterans, 26-year-old Neil Duncan, lost both legs to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan in 2005. The Denver, Colorado resident tried to summit Kilimanjaro last year, but poor planning and a fast ascent schedule doomed the trip.

This time a different guide planned a route specifically for the veterans. The group took six days to ascend, instead of three or four, and a special permit for the disabled allowed them to spend the night in tents at 19,000 feet (5,800 meters). Last Saturday morning they made it to the top.

"It was evidence that with the right planning and right preparation and right execution anything can be done," Duncan said. *"That was why I was so set on coming back. I knew it was attainable. It was proof that you can bounce back from a failure in anything. You can regroup, recuperate, re-plan and use your previous experience and be successful."*

The third veteran, Dan Nevins, a 37-year-old from Florida, who lost his legs in Iraq, developed a pressure boil on one of his leg's stumps, which may have led to his developing of a high fever, coughing and congestion. After reaching the summit and descending to 15,000 feet (4,570 meters), Nevins was evacuated down on a wheeled stretcher.

That illustrated just one of the challenges the amputees faced. On Day 5, the group hiked from 15,500 feet (4,724 meters) to 19,000 feet (5,800 meters), a 12-hour day in thin air that left everyone struggling to breathe.

(continued....)

