

**Note:** Bob Clark, known as Big Bear or “BB” to his army buddies, my older brother (different dads), served multiple tours with the Special Forces in Vietnam until his luck ran out on his third tour. I asked Bob to share the story of when his war ended. Ed

## SF in Dak To Area ‘67

In May ‘67 we (5th Special Forces) were told we were going to pull special ops outside our normal area of operations. We were not given any reason, just told to get familiar with areas in II and III Corps along the Cambodian/Laotian borders.

On June 5th we were pulling ops in III Corps; these were 5-day operations with no contact. We pulled out and went back to base to rest, etc. On June 14th we boarded choppers for a long ride, and were given maps for areas approximately 30 km outside of the Dak To SF camp. This time we were given reasons;

seems every time the SF camp sent out patrols they were



**Fighting soldier from the sky**

getting hit -- they also lost a complete team. Another reason the 173d Airborne was sent into that area.

Charlie was watching, so SF Operations pulled teams from I Corps and IV Corps and put us in outside of Dak To where we pulled short ops as well as long-range ops into Cambodia and Laos (secret stuff at the time). We were not to make contact if at all possible.



**One tour down, two to go**

Our strength consisted of three or four American and 6 Viet teams for long range patrols. On June 19th we just crossed this little river and were getting ready for the night around 2045 hrs. I was watching from near a tree when all hell broke loose.

I never saw it coming from across the river; we took heavy fire and I was hit in the right side of my neck and shoulder. After getting back up mortar rounds started coming in killing LT Hendricks and SFC Lechak -- I was again hit with shrapnel, this time up and down my right side. SSG Brown came to my aid along with the remaining Viets while we continued firing back and radioing for air support.

As I was firing, my Swedish K took a round off the front which ricocheted through my left eye -- that for the most part was it for me. My right eye was closing from earlier shrapnel and my left eye was completely gone. The last thing I remember was seeing the sky light up -- found out later it was from air strikes hitting around us.

The next thing I recall was being on a chopper with a medic trying to take my K from me. I gave it up for a cigarette...guess I was easy. I was in and out of consciousness until arriving hospital in Japan.

I was later told we had been hit by a small force of North Vietnamese Regulars and that we took-out only five of the enemy, with other body parts found from bombings and air strikes. It was not enough for the loss of the LT and SFC.

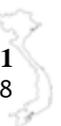
That’s about it, otherwise a lot of walking to get to the desired spot.



**Bob’s Army days over, Japan**

**Bob Clark, SSG  
101st Abn & 1st/5th/7th Special Forces Groups**

Today, Bob is retired and living in Las Vegas with his lovely bride, Lorraine. They are both active in the SF Chapter there and, I suspect, spend way too much time in the casinos. Bob also served in the Dominican Republic conflict. He has over 1000 parachute jumps, one of them real airborne troopers! Good job brother-brother. Ed



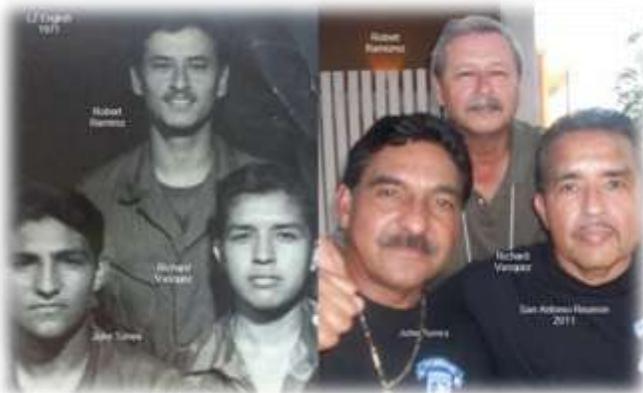
# The Best & Worst Vietnam War Movies of All Time

Let us know your choice for the Top 3 best Vietnam war movies, and the one worst Vietnam war movie of all time. We'll compile everyone's choices and report the results in an upcoming issue. Rank 1 thru 3 your choices, with 1 being the best, and name the single worst movie (my SF brother is gonna hate me). Send your selections to [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com) by August 20th please. Here are some to consider:

- *A Yank in Viet-Nam* (1964)
- *Operation C.I.A.* (1965)
- *To the Shores of Hell* (1966)
- *The Anderson Platoon* (1967)
- *Philcag in Vietnam* (1967)
- *The Green Berets* (1968)
- *The Ballad of Andy Crocker* (1969)
- *The Losers* (1970) – see Nam's Angels
- *Free The Army tour* (1972)
- *Rolling Thunder* (1977)
- *The Deer Hunter* (1978)
- *Go Tell the Spartans* (1978)
- *The Boys in Company C* (1978)
- *Coming Home* (1978)
- *Apocalypse Now* (1979)
- *The Odd Angry Shot* (1979)
- *A Rumor of War* (1980) (TV)
- *The Last Hunter* (1980)
- *How Sleep the Brave* (1981)
- *Some Kind of Hero* (1982)
- *The Uncounted Enemy* (1982)
- *Don't Cry, It's Only Thunder* (1982)
- *Streamers (film)* (1983)
- *Uncommon Valor* (1983)
- *Missing In Action* (1984)
- *Missing In Action II: The Beginning* (1985)
- *Birdy* (1985)
- *Platoon* (1986)
- *Combat Shock* (1986)
- *Full Metal Jacket* (1987)
- *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987)
- *Hamburger Hill* (1987)
- *Tour of Duty* (TV series) (1987–1990)
- *Gardens of Stone* (1987)
- *Hell on the Battleground* (1987)
- *The Hanoi Hilton* (1987)
- *Thou Shalt Not Kill... Except* (1987)
- *Bat 21* (1988)
- *Braddock: Missing in Action III* (1988)
- *China Beach* (TV series) (1988–1991)
- *Off Limits* (1988)
- *Platoon Leader* (1988)
- *Distant Thunder* (1988)
- *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989)
- *Casualties of War* (1989)
- *The Siege of Firebase Gloria* (1989)
- *The Iron Triangle* (1989)
- *84C MoPic* (1989)
- *A Better Tomorrow 3* (1989)
- *Air America* (1990)
- *Bullet in the Head* (1990)
- *Jacob's Ladder* (1990)
- *Flight of the Intruder* (1991)
- *The Lost Platoon* (1991)
- *White Badge* (1992)
- *White Ghost* (1988)
- *Heaven & Earth* (1993)
- *Firehawk* (1993)
- *Forrest Gump* (1994)
- *The Foot Shooting Party* (1994)
- *Operation Dumbo Drop* (1995)
- *Dead Presidents* (1995)
- *The Walking Dead* (1995)
- *The War at Home*
- *Heroes Without a Cause* (1998)
- *Tigerland* (2000)
- *Father Xmas* (2001)
- *Going Back* (2001)
- *We Were Soldiers* (2002)
- *Word of Honor* (2003)
- *Gamma Squad* (2004)
- *R-Point* (2004)
- *Faith of My Fathers* (2005)
- *American Gangster* (2007)
- *Rescue Dawn* (2007)
- *Journey from the Fall* (2007)
- *1968 Tunnel Rats* (2008)
- *Sunny* (2008)
- *Long Tan* (2011)

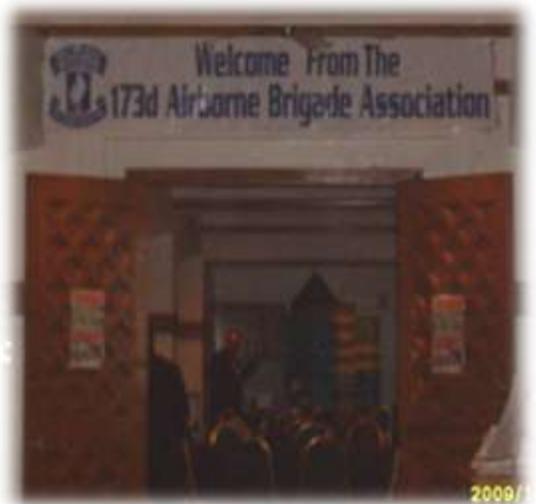


# 173d Airborne Brigade Reunion in San Antonio, Texas 2011



(continued....)





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Photos by Sky Soldier Jim Lazo, courtesy of Jim, and John Bathelemy, Chapter 13



# Office of the Honorary Colonel 503d Infantry Regiment

26 July 2011

## MEMORANDUM FOR:

Distinguished and Honorary Members,  
503d Infantry Regiment

## SUBJECT: Update

During the recent celebration of the nation's 235th birthday, I could not help but recall the service and sacrifices of the warriors of the 503d Infantry Regiment who have contributed so much to preserve our freedom and continue to do so today. And while there is constant change in our units' ranks, there also is a consistency in military excellence within our regimental battalions.

The warriors who led our battalions in Afghanistan have surrendered their positions of leadership and moved on to new assignments. LTC Jeremy Schroeder assumed command of the 1st Battalion, 503d Infantry, taking over from LTC Matt McFarlane on 3 June 2011. A day prior, LTC Mike Larsen assumed command of 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry, taking over from LTC Bill Butler. Like their predecessors, both incoming commanders have a long and distinguished history of airborne experience and will, I am sure, uphold the heritage and traditions of the Regiment.

LTC Butler has been assigned as a Maneuver Task Force Senior OC-T at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany (OC-T is Observer Controller-Trainer). He helps train all of the Army Brigade Combat Teams when they conduct their mission readiness exercises before going down range. LTC Matt McFarlane is in transit to the Washington, DC area, where he will attend the National War College at Fort McNair for academic year 2011-2012.

On 9 June, the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation conducted an "Honors Ceremony" at the Brigade Memorial located on the National Infantry Museum Campus near Fort Benning. The names of nine fallen warriors from OEF X and that of SGT Clinton Cook (D/4/503, 1970) who fell in Vietnam were unveiled on the granite panels.

On a segment of the granite panel designated for the OEF X fallen, the names of Lucas T. Beachnaw (HHC/2/503), Nicholas S. Cook (B/2/503), Russell F. Madden (D/1-91 Cav), Matthew R. Hennigan (B/STB), Louis R. Fastuca (HHC/1/503), Vinson B. Adkinson III (A/SPT), Raymond C. Alcaraz Jr. (C/SPT), Matthew E. George (A/SPT), and James A. Page (A/SPT) were revealed.

The Foundation also added the name of SSG Salvatore Giunta to the panel containing the names of Medal Honor recipients.

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation continues to require funding to maintain and update the Memorial. It receives no annual financial support from the 173d Airborne Brigade Association. Please visit the Foundation web site for information on how to contribute to this important and on-going effort: <http://173dmemorial.org>

Unit and individual awards are still pending for OEF VIII and OEF X. On 7 February 2011, the warriors of the 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry were notified that they had been awarded a "Valorous Unit Award" for "...extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy...." during the period 25 January 2008 through 30 July 2008 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. Over the next year we will attempt to provide a comprehensive update for both deployments, documenting the heritage of our Regiment.

Last year, eight names were added to the rolls of Distinguished and Honorary Members of the Regiment. Once again, I solicit nominations for this honor. An extract of Army Regulation 600-82 specifying the criteria for appointment is provided below:



**Sal Giunta at ceremony**

*"...The primary mission of these special appointees is to perpetuate the history and traditions of the Regiment, thereby enhancing unit morale and esprit.*

*Distinguished Members of the Regiment (DMOR) ...may include active duty or retired officers, warrant officers, enlisted personnel and civilians (non-retirees). Examples of DMOR would be a prior enlisted member of the Regiment recognized for his or her active duty accomplishments or a distinguished member from the civilian community with former service in the Regiment. All DMOR must have served in the Regiment.*

*"Honorary Members of the Regiment (HMOR) are soldiers, their spouses, or individuals who have made a contribution or provided a service to a Regiment but who are not members of the Regiment making the presentation. Recognition of Active Army, USAR, or retired soldiers and civilians is appropriate."*

Please provide your nominations along with a written justification to me by 30 September 2011 at the address below.

Also, please remember to keep me advised in changes of address including e-mail. Many of you are receiving this letter by email instead of through the postal service. Anyone wishing to change transmittal status should contact me at [kvsmith173@gmail.com](mailto:kvsmith173@gmail.com).

CSM Storjohann joins me in wishing all of you continued health and happiness.

**Kenneth V. Smith, COL, USA (Ret)**  
**Honorary Colonel, 503d Infantry Regiment**  
**1160 Lake Royale, Louisburg, NC 27549**  
[kvsmith173@embarqmail.com](mailto:kvsmith173@embarqmail.com), 252-478-9359



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# Remembering the Battle of the Slopes

By Ed Anthony, LTC (Ret), 172nd MID

Although I was not directly involved in the horrendous ground combat that was experienced by the extraordinary soldiers of A/2/503, I have very vivid memories of that fateful day. My perspective on that battle is from my assignment that day as the S-2 officer on duty in the Brigade TOC.



2LT Ed Anthony, Dak To, November '67

I was a 2LT assigned as a POW Interrogator with the 172nd MID. I also spent a great deal of my time on Brigade TOC duty, especially when we had no captured prisoners to deal with. As we had just deployed to the Dak To area and were in the early stage of operations, we had not yet captured any prisoners. Consequently, I was manning the S-2 position in the TOC when the battle began.

We were setup in a position where we could look directly west on to the side of the hill where the battle raged. We watched as the gunships and A1-E Skyraiders attempted to support with little apparent effect. I remember frantically working the S-2 radio net to the battalion as the Brigade TOC attempted to discern what was happening within our sight. I also remember the frustration experienced by the S-3 and all others, as they desperately tried to find a way to get aid to A/2/503.

One of my functions was to coordinate all calls for Dustoff's and that became a major task on that day -- I spent hours doing so. Despite the valor of the pilots, some of the assigned missions were less than successful due to the intensity of the battle and the lack of suitable LZ's. We were monitoring all the nets in the TOC, even down to company level, and the reality of what was truly happening on the ground was clear. The futility of not being able to quickly provide ground support deeply affected everybody.

About three/four days later, as our troops pursued the NVA back towards the Laotian border, two severely wounded NVA POW's were found left behind in the jungle and evacuated to B Med on the Dak To airstrip. As soon as myself, and SFC Bob DeStatte, were notified we went to the B Med. Two of the NVA were being treated there prior to being sent to Pleiku.

We started to interrogate them even as Cpt Stacy MacMarlin worked to patch them up. I remember that he was clearing and patching up a serious chest wound on the NVA SGT I was interrogating. Bob and I managed to get some very basic information before the NVA were shipped out. I sent Bob to Pleiku with them to further interrogate.

One subsequently died and the other turned out to be a simple NVA private. I subsequently briefed the information that we had obtained to BG Deane who was less than enamored with it. So much for my first direct contact with the Brigade Commander. The info that I briefed subsequently was proven to be essentially correct when the overall after action report was put together.



L-R: 1LT Lester Foote, 2LT Ed Anthony  
172d MID, May 1967

As I recall that day some 44 years later, I am immensely proud to have had the honor of serving with the superb paratroopers of the finest unit the U.S. Army has ever fielded....the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep).



# Vietnam: Prisoner of War Interrogations in the 173d

Prisoner of war interrogations within the 173d Abn Bde (Sep) were the responsibility of the 172d Military Intelligence Detachment in which I served from Apr 67 thru Apr 68. The MID was comprised of Order of Battle Analysts, Imagery Interpreters, Counter-intelligence personnel, and POW interrogators. All sections were represented in the field. An interrogation element was always deployed along with the most forward Bde command post.



**Ed Anthony, 172nd MID**

Our most active mission was to conduct interrogations of all NVA, VC, VC sympathizers, and any other persons picked up and detained during Bde operations. Our focus was to obtain tactical intelligence which could identify the enemy we were currently engaging or were likely to face in the near future.

We interrogated all prisoners as far forward in the AO as possible. We usually only had a short time to deal with them before we were directed to send them to the rear. The majority of POWs were brought into a MP-managed containment area close to the Forward Bde Hq. Interrogations were conducted immediately in order to garner enemy operational data which the Bde could take action against. If reliable data, such as possible enemy positions, base camps, arm caches, food caches, was learned, it was used by the Bde as a key part of the operational planning process.

In several cases, the POW agreed to point out locations of food/arms caches, and accompanied by the interrogator, went with the line companies to follow up.

The interrogators also accompanied units on cordon and search missions around small villages in the AO, worked with MP's at road blockades and other checkpoints, went out with civic action teams, and on any other occasion that presented an opportunity to gather intelligence within the AO. We also served in any other capacity that the S-2 needed, such as TOC duty officer.

During the year I was there, we were quite busy engaged in interrogation work, especially during our periods in Tuy Hoa. Some of our major battles around Dak To, on the other hand, did not result in many POWs. The Battle of the Slopes only resulted in two NVA for us to interrogate, and I can only remember two or three coming in during the Hill 875 battle. We did have several in the aftermath of TET. In several instances, however, we had to plea for one to be brought in so that we could hopefully get some intelligence. I, for one, truly understand why that was sometimes the case.

Within the interrogations section, we had several of us that spoke Vietnamese to varying degrees, as well as a dedicated Vietnamese interpreter that was eloquently fluid in English. During the time of my assignment we also were blessed with SFC Bob DeStatte, a super fluent Vietnamese speaker. He spoke Vietnamese with a Hanoi accent and was an invaluable resource. He always astounded the NVA with his ability to speak in great detail in their language and in their own terms. He could also intimately describe neighborhood areas in Hanoi, even down to specific street names. He gained this detailed knowledge from his wife who was a native of Hanoi and was an instructor at the Defense Language School, in Monterey, Ca.



**A Viet Cong prisoner awaits interrogation at the A-109 Special Forces Detachment in Thuong Duc, Vietnam, (25 km west of Da Nang), 23 January 1967.**

(AFP PHOTO/National Archives)

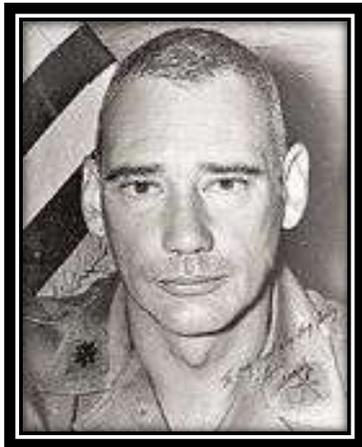
I am quite proud of what our interrogation teams achieved. Our teams were instrumental in providing solid information that aided immensely in the superb performance of our courageous paratroopers and the enviable mission achievements of our famed 173d Abn Bde.

**Ed Anthony, LTC (Ret)  
172nd MID**



## Chapter 1 Says Farewell to a Dear and Valued Comrade-in-Arms

We are very sad to report that Chuck Drake, stalwart member of the Association and Chapter 1, who served with the 3/319th Artillery '67 - '68, passed away last Saturday, July 16. He is survived by his wife Rose, whom he met while stationed at Fort Stewart, and by their five children and numerous grandchildren. Chuck fought valiantly against a number of medical problems during the last year. He was delighted that Terry Modglin and Jeanie O'Neil were able to visit him about two months ago. Totally in character, he described his medical maladies off-handedly while he regaled us with stories from his career, especially his days as US Commandant of the NATO School. Chuck entered the Army in 1946 and was commissioned in 1951.



Chuck's Funeral Mass and burial were held in Maine, where he was from and where one of his sons resides.

With prayers for his repose and gratitude for knowing such a stalwart trooper and gentleman, from the officers of Chapter 1 and yours truly,

**Jean F. O'Neil**  
Chapter 1 - 173d ABN BDE ASSN

## 173d Room in Vincenza, Italy



[Sent in by Jerry Hassler, RTO Recon/S-2/2/503d]

## Two Good Friends



Larey McCorkle on left with "Woody" Davis, both A/2/503d. Sadly, Larey is fighting a terrible battle with Alzheimer's....we wish you well brother.

## Looking for Buddies



I want to say that I had the honor of meeting Wambi Cook and other Sky Soldiers in Wasco, CA. I was a medic with HHC/2/503d. I always went out on missions with Charlie Company. I spent about 3 months with the Herd after spending my first 9 months in-country with the 1st Air Cavalry.

I do not recall any names with the Herd and it really frustrates me to this day still. If anybody remembers me please contact me. I am airborne qualified and also served with the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, N. Carolina before deploying to Vietnam.

**Ismael M. Gonzales**  
[igonzales2@bak.rr.com](mailto:igonzales2@bak.rr.com)

*(Looking for Buddies continued....)*



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## B/2/503d '69 - '70

I was wondering if you could do me a favor. I am looking for anyone from B/2/503d from Nov. 1969 – Nov. 1970. Both my brother and I were in Bravo Company (I think it was 2nd Platoon) for a short time before he DEROS'd home in Nov. 1970. I am trying to reach out to anyone who served with Bravo Company during the above mentioned time period who might have photos of either one of us. He was a squad leader (E-5) with sun-bleached blond hair and I was a (Sp4) medic. I remember replacing Doc Murphy (curly redhead), at a small beach where I met up with my brother on a 2-day stand down before we headed back out to the field. If you could run something in the newsletter sometime I would appreciate it.

**Jim "Doc" Gore**  
B/2/503d  
[gorej@charter.net](mailto:gorej@charter.net)

**Note:** We're also looking for photos of Alex Hodges C/2/503d, and George Rivera A/2/503d. Ed

## Never Lose Your Grandson!

A heart-warming story about an old 2/503d paratrooper grandpa.



My small grandson got lost at the shopping mall...

He approached a uniformed security guard and said, "I've lost my grandpa!"

The guard asked, "What's his name?"

"Grandpa"

The guard smiled, then asked, "What's he like?"

The little tyke hesitated for a moment and then replied, "Crown Royal whiskey and women with big tits."

[Sent in by a 2/503d trooper-grandpa...of course]

## ~ 173d Reunions ~

Like many other Sky Soldiers, I have just returned from a wonderful Herd Reunion in San Antonio, TX and I am reflecting on how it was such a rewarding experience. My only regret about the Herd Reunions is that I had not taken the plunge many years ago and started attending earlier.

If you have not yet attended I strongly recommend that you give it due consideration about attending next year's Herd Reunion in Lexington, KY and the following year, 2013 in Las Vegas, NV. I will forward the dates as soon as I know them. (See Page 58 for early info on next year's reunion).

You might also check: <http://www.skysoldiers.com/> or



our Facebook page: **3rd Batt 503rd IN (ABN) 173rd BDE** occasionally.

Please give me a call at: 503-873-3545 Ext. 303 or email me at [mason@silvertonrealty.com](mailto:mason@silvertonrealty.com) if you have personal questions about the Reunions.

**Mason Branstetter, LTC (Ret)**  
HHC/D/E/3/503d

*"What a cruel thing is war: to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world."*

~ **Robert E. Lee, letter to his wife, 1864**



myhealth.va.gov



Upgrade Your Account...  
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and gain access to **critical** health information



### 1. Improve Your Online Activity with VA

- ★ Register for a My HealthVet account at: [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)
- ★ Fill out the required information and click "Save"

### 2. Improve Your Access

- ★ Once registered, select "In-Person Authentication" under "Quick Links" on the home page
- ★ View the "It's Quick, Easy, and It's for You" video online or at your VA facility
- ★ Print and Sign a copy of VA Form 10-5345a-MHV (also available at your VA facility)
- ★ Bring your signed form and photo ID (Veterans Identification Card "VIC" or driver's license) to your VA facility and show an authorized VA staff member

### 3. Sit back and enjoy the benefits of an upgraded account

- ★ Refill VA prescriptions online by name
- ★ Get VA Wellness Reminders
- ★ Secure Message with your provider<sup>1</sup>
- ★ Single Sign On to eBenefits<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>These features are being rolled out nationwide throughout 2010-2011; check with your local VA facility for details. In-Person Authentication, IPA, may also refer to In-Person Proofing or IPR.

It's **quick, easy,** and it's **for you!**



Veterans Health Administration | Office of Health Information  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

8/10/2011 10:02 AM Desktop (1)



**Mate:**

**I'm attaching a short story you might think will be of interest in the next 2/503d Vietnam Newsletter. I hope you blokes don't mind some of us Aussies trespassing into your pages but many of us enjoy reading it and appreciate the opportunity to give a bit of input.**

## THE (ALMOST) BATTLE OF BIEN HOA

Going back in history to the Second World War, huge numbers of American troops were stationed in Australia for recovery, training and on duty stations. An infamous incident occurred in the city of Brisbane in 1942 that has mainly avoided public knowledge and because of that I suggest that you may like to read up on this incident by checking out Google for "Battle of Brisbane 1942" for your background information.

NOW, during the tour we did in 1965-66 at Bien Hoa, I believe that we Aussies and Yanks really liked each other despite the differences in our approach to jungle fighting and tactics. Even when our different accents caused communication difficulties, particularly after a few beers were shared among us. It was then that we discovered that not everyone speaks Australian English.

I am not sure when the event I am about to describe occurred but THINK it may have been after the job at Hobo Woods but the Aussie contingent were allowed to choose either Saigon or Bien Hoa leave, when it came around to our turn. Obviously Saigon was the big drawcard as it was the 'Big Smoke' to us blokes and Bien Hoa was a tiny pisspot of a village, therefore it stood to reason that ALL of our debauched instincts could be met in Saigon better than Bien Hoa.

Where the 'Bosses' made THEIR mistake was that while Saigon leave was from 09.00 hours to 15.00 hours, then back on the trucks for the trip back to camp; Bien Hoa leave was from 09.00 hours to 21.00 hours and only a short trip on a truck to and from our area. Much better unmilitary drinking/fraternizing time and it wasn't long before the master planners among us were developing a way to have our cake and eat it too. Bien Hoa leave gained popularity and almost no-one sought Saigon leave unless visiting a mate in hospital or wanting a trip to the Cholon PX.

So began the habit of requesting Bien Hoa leave and getting the appropriate leave pass and off we would go. Once in Bien Hoa we would make our presence known to the authorities by visiting a couple of bars for a few beers and being seen on the streets. Then a group of us,

usually four, would make a return trip deal with a taxi to get us into Saigon and wait around until an agreed time and return us to Bien Hoa. In doing this we reasoned that we could get into Cholon PX, have a bit of a time in the Saigon bars, massage parlours or whatever and get the return taxi trip before the Saigon leave trucks started rounding up their passengers. In doing this we were aware of the associated dangers of travelling the highway between the two locations but when you're around 20 years old, thirsty, randy, ten foot tall bullet proof and indestructible; what the hell? Looking back one can imagine how the excreta would have hit the oscillating air displacement apparatus if any of us got killed, wounded or in some other kind of situation.

Anyway, on one particular leave (I think I had one Saigon and one Bien Hoa leave in that 12 months) we arrived back in Bien Hoa, sexually satiated, well primed with beer but ready for a few more and hungry. We went into a restaurant and had a meal and a couple of beers; Ba Mi Ba, the only beer you could go crazy drinking by about the third can.



Now isn't it the way that when you are out having a good time and well lubricated there is ALWAYS ONE loudmouth trouble maker who can spoil it for all? Well this day we had two of them and I don't even know how they got tied in with us as we didn't start the day with them because of their reputations. I think it was just our luck that they tagged onto us after we went into the restaurant. I won't name them in this as I am not definite as to who actually caused the next sequence of events and who was the "little Sir echo" in it all.

We had finished the meal and decided to go to a bar that someone suggested had some good music playing so we could have a few more refreshing ales to finish off the day while waiting for the trucks to take us back to our lines.

(continued...)



We are sitting on the verandah of this bar, having a real good time when a small US truck with about 4 or 5 GI's in it drives past us and in some way sprays us with a little dirt and mud. Now I don't think this is a deliberate act but one of our 'tagalongs' who has a mouth bigger than the entrance to Sydney harbour and is full of Dutch courage, yells out to the driver, questioning his parentage and reason for being. Then he and his just as silly mate start to run down the street yelling abuse at the departing vehicle. A number of us yelled at the two morons and told them to shut gobs and behave themselves and tried to ignore them while they are going on about how good they were and they were "lean mean killing machines" or shit similar to that.

Probably 10 minutes or so after this all settled down, there is a roar of motors, a screech of tyres and we look up and there are two vehicles containing about 8 or so very agitated American GI's pointing M60's at our group from a VERY short range. Time has clouded the actual conversation that took place but I would suggest from my way dim grey memory bank:

- Us:** "WTF?" (fill in your own words.)  
**Them:** "OK you smart ass Aussie heroes what do you say now?" (Click, clack and loaded)  
**Us:** "Hey hang on Yanks, we ARE on the same side you know?"  
**Them:** "Not so brave now, are you M.....F.....S?" (funny swear words to us).  
**Us:** "Come on fellas, it's not that serious, get over it."

More words to this effect between some pretty pissed GI's and apologetic Aussies who by now are starting to feel the effects of the beers and food and more beers consumed, can't stop their legs from shaking and wondering if they are going to shit themselves. THEN A VERY BRIGHT LIGHT flashes in the mind of one of our group, whose mind is not too overcome by booze and fear.

He stands up, walks over to the moron among us, flattens him with a tremendous right hook, goes to hero number two, who is trying to get away, plants a very sizeable foot into THAT arse and turns to the GI's and asks something to the effect; "That do you blokes?" With that the GI's seem to be satisfied that their honour has been replaced and a couple of brief discussions, a couple of surreptitious beers and away they go.

The incident sobered us up pretty smartly and it was a rather subdued group of diggers that returned to the battalion lines that night.

[Sent in by John Arnold, 1RAR]

Great story, John, about the (Almost) Battle at Bien Hoa! A couple of us almost got into it one nite in Bien

Hoa with an equal number of Aussies, beer was involved of course. A lot of yelling, threatening and shoving, but no blows thrown. Good thing we were all unarmed at the time. Young, dumb and full of cum. Always good rivalry until some idiot, like the ones in your story, pull weapons. Thanks John.

Oh, while this thing is chiefly a 2/503 publication, we're the sum of all our parts, including the malfunctioning Aussie parts. :)

Be well digger, Ed

## 2/503d Flash Coin

~ Limited Edition ~



**\$10. Each**

(please add \$2. per coin for postage)

An equal share of the profits will be donated to the 173d Airborne Memorial Foundation and a local Food Bank for the needy.

**Contact or mail check to:**

**Paul Fisher, LTC (Ret)**  
**HHC/3/503d**

**81 Oak Lane, Eastontown, NJ 07724**

**Phn: (908) 489-0366, Eml: [fisherppd@att.net](mailto:fisherppd@att.net)**

**Be sure to include your return mail address.**

**Note: The coin is so heavy you'll need help slamming it on a bar top. Ed**

## 503rd Reunion in Savannah

At the WWII 503rd Reunion in Savannah last month we gave two of Paul's coins to two troopers who made the historic combat jump onto Corregidor. They really enjoyed receiving them from the Sky Soldiers who were there. In turn, WWII 503rd trooper Chuck Breit gave us a supply of hologram cards with the 503rd and 173d patches on the face. We'll mail the card free to the first 100 Sky Soldiers requesting them, one per trooper. Send your request to [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com) and include your return mail address.



*Anyone there? Over.*



Larry Paladino B/2/503d RTO extraordinaire on R&R in Florida testing a PRC25. No one told him there was no battery in it.

## MEDICS OF THE 173d & SISTER UNITS

Plans are still in the works to feature the brave Medics of the 2/503d and *all* 173d sister units. Please send your medic stories and photos to [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com) As Bob Beemer, B/2/503d so rightly said,

*“How do you write a story about the greatest people in the world? Everyone of them should receive a lifetime achievement award.”*

## *Them Aussies*

Question in a letter from the U.S.A. sent to the Australian tourist office, and their reply...

**Q:** *Will I be able to speak English most places I go?*

**A:** *Yes, but you'll have to learn it first.*

[Sent in by Ken Gann, 1RAR/RAA]

Which brings us to our study of the Australian language in the ongoing series entitled...

### **WHY CAN'T THE AUSSIES TEACH THEIR CHILDREN HOW TO SPEAK (English)?**

For example, certain like-words in *real* English and *Aussie* English have entirely different meanings, such as those which follow. This will come in handy should you ever visit Down Under or in the event the Aussies attack California by mistake thinking they're invading Canada, which is not a bad idea either:

#### **Barrack**

*Real* English: A place where paratroopers sleep and polish boots.

*Aussie* English: To encourage one's team from the sidelines, not always in complimentary terms, e.g., *“Get in there and fight, you bunch of bloody pansies!”*

#### **Matilda**

*Real* English: Generally the name of your aunt or grandmother. Today this name seldom makes the top ten list of prospective first names of newborn in the U.S.

*Aussie* English: An assortment of one's personal possessions rolled up in a blanket. If one goes *“Waltzing Matilda”*, in the words of the national song, one is deemed to be *“humping the bluey on the Wallaby”*.

**(Editor's note:** The fact *‘Waltzing Matilda’* is their national song, should tell you everything you ever wanted to know about Aussies. *“Humping the bluey on the Wallaby”* will be covered in the advanced course.

#### **Mickey**

*Real* English: A special drink you might give to an attractive, intelligent lady in a lounge who otherwise would not be caught dead in your presence. Also, a little furry creature chiefly found in California and Florida who takes all your money as you chase grandkids from ride to ride.

*Aussie* English: To tease one – to go along with one's story then tease them about it.

Kinda like what we're doing here. Ed



# In Purple Heart Medal, Researchers Seek Clues to Combat Stress Resilience & Longer Life

**Washington, D.C.** – A study led by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers found that aging Veterans who earned the Purple Heart show decreased mortality compared with those who had not earned the medal. Additionally, those war-wounded Veterans who survive into later life -- especially those who do not develop posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) -- may provide valuable clues as to the factors that lead to resilience to combat stress.



A team of VA researchers who studied more than 10,000 Veterans of World War II and the Korean War produced these findings, which appear online in the journal *Depression and Anxiety*. “Among the older Veterans we studied, those with Purple Heart citations had half the mortality rate of those without Purple Heart citations,” said lead author Tim Kimbrell, MD, a physician-researcher with the Center for Mental Health and Outcomes Research, based at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System.



**Wounded soldiers are given medical treatment at a first aid station, somewhere in Korea. 25 July 1950.**

Whether the Purple Heart holders had chronic PTSD or not, they were about twice as likely to still be alive after some 10 years of follow-up, compared with those with no Purple Heart and no PTSD. The study included

Veterans who were 65 and or older in the late 1990s. It tracked their survival through 2008.

It is estimated that more than a million Servicemembers received a Purple Heart in World War II, and nearly 119,000 in the Korean War. In recent years, researchers with VA and the Department of Defense have sought insight into the psychological and neurobiological factors that enable some Servicemembers to not develop PTSD after traumatic events. The authors of the new VA study say Purple Heart holders who survive long past their war experience without PTSD may be the ideal population on which to focus such research.

*“Our theory was that there are many factors that contribute to resilience to PTSD, and these same factors may increase survival,”* said Kimbrell.

The researchers were surprised to find that among Purple Heart recipients, those *with* PTSD had slightly lower mortality than those *without* PTSD. This is a contradiction to several studies that have shown a link between chronic stress conditions such as PTSD and worse survival. Kimbrell and colleagues suggest this finding is due to what they term “early attrition.” Those who had been physically injured in World War II or Korea and suffered PTSD may have been less likely to survive until age 65 in the first place; the PTSD-Purple Heart group included in their study may have been an exceptionally healthy and hearty cohort of Veterans.

The researchers say further studies involving these Veterans, as well as those who were wounded in combat but did not develop PTSD, may lead to new insights to help prepare future Servicemembers to cope with the stress and trauma of war.

Kimbrell, in addition to his VA role, is also a professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. He collaborated on the study with other authors from his site, as well as with colleagues from the Houston Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies, at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center; Baylor College of Medicine; the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, SC; the Medical University of South Carolina; and the University of Texas Health Science Center.

For more information on VA research, visit [www.research.va.gov](http://www.research.va.gov).



Folks, things are heating up in preparation for next year's reunion. This is the first release of information in response to early requests. We are featuring a new lower registration fee structure in hopes of attracting more Sky Soldiers.

NOTE: Booking early helps the cause.

Help spread it around and tell folks they can expect updates and more information. The web site links are under construction as you read this. There is a planning/organization meeting in the 2nd week of August at Lexington. If you are interested in being part of the organization team just let Dave Carmon ( [dcarmon@roadrunner.com](mailto:dcarmon@roadrunner.com) ) know in the next 10 days so we can plan for you to join us. Skip Kniley, 3/319th

# The 2012 173d Reunion

Lexington, KY

June 6 -10, 2012

Hosted By Chapter 17

Room rate 115.00 plus tax per night with Free Parking

#### New Registration fees:

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The Hyatt is taking reservations now.

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Ask for the 173 Airborne guestroom block or code G-173A.

Also use this code when making reservations on-line  
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Information and Forms will be posted soon at [www.skysoldier.org](http://www.skysoldier.org) and [www.Skysoldier17.com](http://www.Skysoldier17.com)

