

Our Plane?

Jim Robinson, B/2/503d, said he found our plane at an air show, as evidenced by the photo of this C-130.



Burial Sites of our Fallen

Is there any way to find the grave sites of fallen brothers?

Mike Picklesimer
A/2/503d

Hi Mike:

That I don't know. It's a tough one, as guys are buried throughout the country. Maybe someone has the answer, and if such a list doesn't exist perhaps the Association can start building one? You might also do a general web search for obituaries by name which will likely name burial sites for most.

Can probably find some of our guys at Arlington:
www.arlingtoncemetery.mil

Sure you're aware of the *Virtual Wall*. Info there could lead you to the city: <http://virtualwall.org/>

ATW

U.S. Army and Psychology's Largest Failed Experiment—Ever

In the January 2011 issue of *American Psychologist*, the American Psychology Association (APA) dedicated 13 articles, detailing and celebrating a 117 million dollar collaboration with the US Army, called *Comprehensive Soldier Fitness* (CSF). It's being marketed as a resilience training to reduce if not prevent adverse psychological consequences to soldiers who endure combat. Because of the CSF emphasis on “positive psychology”, advocates call it a holistic approach to warrior training.

Criticism arose shortly after the initiative was announced – including ethical questions about whether soldiers *should* be trained to be desensitized to traumatic events. And methodological concerns about large-scale programs similar to this – which have not worked or had adverse effects in the past. **Also problematic, this program is adapted primarily from the Penn Resiliency Program (PRP), which had very little success with a non-military population, and now on its first trial run is going to incorporate 1.1 million soldiers. How about trying it out on small groups of soldiers first?**

Lastly, the CSF program measures soldiers' “resilience” in five core areas: emotional, physical, family, social, and spiritual. The spiritual component of the assessment contains questions written predominately for soldiers who believe in god or another deity. This means tens of thousands of nonbelievers will score poorly and be forced to use religious imagery exercises that are counter to their personal beliefs – not likely to foster resilience.

Rene Arellano, San Francisco State University
Kenn Burrows, San Francisco State University

Holistic my ass!!

“There's the right way of doing things, and then there's the Army way of doing things.”

~ Unknown, but definitely a G.I.





INCOMING!



503rd Patch

I have a favor to ask. Ask the 503rd guys if they still have one of the original old 503 PIR patches some of them used to wear on the A-2 Flight Jackets. I'd love to have one and will be glad to pay for it. I have an old A-2, 1938 vintage, looks like new. Wallace Berry wore it in the movie Test Pilot with Clark Gable and Myrna Loy. On it I have my old 1/501 PIR patch in honor of the guys I lost during the fight for Hue in 1968 and my stamped leather name tag with my Master Parachute Wings.

Mike de Gyurky, MAJ
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Wallace Fitzgerald Beery

(April 1, 1885 – April 15, 1949) was an American actor. He is best known for his portrayal of Bill in *Min and Bill* opposite Marie Dressler, as Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*, as Pancho Villa in *Viva Villa!*, and his titular role in *The Champ*, for which he won the Academy Award for Best Actor. Beery appeared in some 250 movies over a 36-year span.



Sky Soldier doing good work for breast cancer research

This web link takes you into a blog we prepared to give information on what our project is all about.

WWW.STAFFOFLIFEONLINE.COM

A little history behind this: What we are doing is a USA/CANADA project to raise funding for research and awareness for the BRCA hereditary gene.

Hereditary breast cancer is suspected when there is a strong family history of breast cancer: occurrences of the disease in at least three first or second-degree relatives (sisters, mothers, aunts). Currently the only tests available are DNA tests to determine whether an individual in such a high-risk family has a genetic mutation in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes.

When someone with a family history of breast cancer has been tested and found to have an altered BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene, the family is said to have a "known mutation." Positive test results only provide information

about the risk of developing breast cancer. The test cannot tell a person whether or when cancer might develop. Many, but not all, women and some men who inherit an altered gene will develop breast cancer. Both men and women who inherit an altered gene, whether or not they develop cancer themselves, can pass the alteration on to their sons and daughters.

This testing system was developed in Canada at the Women's College Hospital in Toronto; they shared this technique with the United States and other countries around the world, thus our efforts begin with assisting them.

I work directly with Dr. Oletta Polls at the Women's College Hospital where funding is badly needed. The wonderful part of this story is that the teams that are out in the field doing the testing are doing it at their own expense, and our efforts are greatly appreciated.

My idea is to gather as many people as I can to support this project. I wear my Vietnam Veteran hat when trying to approach people. I took it on my own to tell people that I am fighting a different battle now, and your support would be so appreciated, and it works.

Through our newsletter I thought we could rally more vets who have some time on their hands to assist in this worthwhile endeavor to reach objectives. If people are too busy, and I certainly understand, donations in support of this effort are always welcome.

I am sure many of our guys are like me, and know someone with breast cancer or someone who has had it.

I'm asking any Sky Soldier or friends of the 173d who are interested in supporting this effort or to donate to the program to contact me.

Best Regards,



To help raise funds for this project, Ed is selling this "Staff of Life" for \$10. each, with all proceeds going to breast cancer research.



Ed Wilby
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EWilby4111@aol.com



An NVA Meets an ARVN

One of Kien's scouts was Phan, a native of Hai Hung province. He told Kien this story:

"I don't know who he was because he was from the ARVN Special Commandos, on the other side. Anyway, during one fierce battle during the rainy season this guy's company and mine became entangled in a very bloody fight. Rivers of blood; no winner, no loser, both battered. The Americans backed these ARVN units up with artillery from the top of a hill, and when the artillery stopped the Phantoms came in and bombed us. I dropped into a bomb crater and escaped the big bombs. Then the baby bombs, exploding nonstop.

I lay there not moving and then this guy jumped in on me, heavy as a log. I was so frightened I stabbed him twice in the chest through his camouflage uniform, then once more in the belly, then again in the neck. He cried in pain and writhed around convulsing, his eyes rolling. I realized then he'd already been badly wounded before jumping in. His own artillery had blown his foot off and he was bleeding all over, even from the mouth. His hands were trying to hold in his intestines, which were spilling out of his belly and steaming. I didn't know what to do. He was so pitiful. I pushed his guts back into his belly and tore my shirt off to bandage him, but it was so hard to stop the bleeding.

If it had been anyone else, not someone so strong and healthy, he would have died right then. But this guy just moaned louder and louder, tears running down his cheeks. I was horrified and at the same time felt deep pity for him.

So when the raid stopped I jumped out of the crater, telling him to stay there for a while. *'I'm going to find some cloth and bandages,'* I told him. *'I'll be back soon.'*

He blinked at me, the rain pouring down his face, mixing water, tears, and blood. Outside the crater the jungle was destroyed, with trees broken and the ground devastated. Troops from both sides had withdrawn so I searched for a while and found a bag with emergency medical equipment in it, then turned to go back to help him.

But I'd been silly. By then it was dark and I had no idea where the crater was. The trees around me had been broken off and branches scattered all around the place. The ground was pockmarked with hundreds of craters. Where was the one I'd been sharing with the Saigonese? Darkness fell, the heavy rain continued and the water flowed in small streams down the slopes. *'Hey, Saigon, Saigon, hey!'* I called, running around trying to find

him. I fell into a crater. The water came over my knees. That meant that someone sitting inside a crater would now have water up to his chest.

The more I tried to find him the worse the situation became. All I did was exhaust myself. When dawn at last came and the rain eased, you wouldn't believe what I saw. Horrifying. All the bomb craters were filled to the rim with water.

I pushed off. I was going a little mad. I began to imagine his death: water slowly rising on him, a barbaric death stuck in the mud, helpless as the water came over his belly, his chest, his shoulders, his chin, his lips, then reached his nostrils...and he started to drown. He'd died still hoping desperately that I'd come back and save him, as I promised. In which crater had he died?

Now, even after many years, whenever I see a flood I feel a sharp pang in my heart and think of my cruel stupidity. No human being deserved the torture I left him to suffer."

After many years of peace Phan was still tormented by the memory. Would the drowned man ever stop floating through his mind?

The sorrow of war inside a soldier's heart was in a strange way similar to the sorrow of love. It was a kind of nostalgia, like the immense sadness of a world at dusk. It was a sadness, a missing, a pain which could send one soaring back into the past. The sorrow of the battlefield could not normally be pinpointed to one particular event, or even one person. If you focused on any one event it would soon become a tearing pain.

[Source: *The Sorrow of War*, by Bao Ninh]



Airborne Soldier to Rock Legend

A little bit of Airborne History

Before he became the legend who was to become a rock icon, Jimi Hendrix was a paratrooper. James Hendrix got into trouble with the law for riding in stolen cars. He was given a choice between spending two years in prison or joining the Army. Hendrix chose the latter and enlisted on May 31, 1961.

After completing basic training, in November 1962, Hendrix earned the right to wear the "Screaming Eagles" patch and was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division and stationed in Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

His commanding officers and fellow soldiers considered him to be a sub-par soldier: he slept while on duty, had little regard for regulations, required constant supervision, and showed no skill as a marksman. For these reasons, his commanding officers submitted a request that Hendrix be discharged from the military after he had served only one year. Hendrix did not object when the opportunity to leave arose. He would later tell reporters that he received a medical discharge after breaking his ankle during his 26th parachute jump.

While in the Army, forged a friendship with a fellow soldier, Billy Cox, that would last until shortly before Hendrix's death. In his album, *Axis: Bold as Love*, Hendrix briefly spoke of his first parachuting experience: "...once you get out there everything is so quiet, all you hear is the breezes-s-s-s..."

Jimi Hendrix pioneered the explosive possibilities of the electric guitar. Hendrix's innovative style of combining fuzz, feedback, and controlled distortion created a new musical form. Because he was unable to read or write music, it is nothing short of remarkable that Jimi Hendrix's meteoric rise in the music world took place in just four short years. His musical language continues to influence a host of modern musicians.

One of Hendrix's most famous pieces is his psychedelic rendition of the U.S. national anthem, "*The Star-Spangled Banner*." Hendrix died on September 18th, 1970, from drug-related complications.

Jimi Hendrix, 27 Nov 1942 - 18 Sep 1970

[Sent in by Ken Smith, A/2/503d, Sigholtz Chapter]



Social Security Special Extra Earnings for Military Service

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty (including active duty for training), you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings credits may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

Special extra earnings credits are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Special extra earnings credits are **not** granted for inactive duty training.

If your active military service occurred **From 1957 through 1967**, we will add the extra credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits. **From 1968 through 2001**, you do not need to do anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record. **After 2001**, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

How You Get Credit For Special Extra Earnings

The information that follows applies **only** to active duty military service earnings from 1957 through 2001. Here's how the special **extra** earnings are credited on your record:

Service in 1957 Through 1977

You are credited with \$300. in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

Service in 1978 through 2001

For every \$300. in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100. in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200. a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.

[Source: Social Security Administration]



Remembering Colonel Maggie

(Airborne), 503rd Infantry, was up in the Da Nang area of I Corps, under the OPCON of the 3rd Mar Div. & 1st Mar Div. or the USMC.

I was one of the S-3 Air Sergeants of the 4/503d, and we had three Hueys from the Cowboys with us up in Da Nang. I remember getting a call over the phone line that Martha Raye wanted to come up to Da Nang and visit the troops of the 4/503d up in the mountains, hills and old French Forts along the Namu River. I said *"Who wants to see some old women?"* and, *"Our troops would like to see a young lady with those round eyes"*.

Martha Raye did get up the coast to the I Corps, and did visit our troops. Years later, I read a book about Martha Raye's visits to troops in World War II, the Korean War, and the Viet Nam War. I realized that I had to apologize to her and one day I attended the Col. Maggie's Parade and Birthday party in Marina, CA, which was next to Fort Ord, where I took my Basic Training and AIT.

At the local American Legion Post in Marina, CA, I got to meet her and told her about the dumb things that I had said about her in the fall of 1966, and after a drink with her, we changed the subject and took some photos.

When she passed away and was buried at Fort Bragg, NC, I visited her gravesite and a SF Museum on the base that had a lot of items that had come from her old home in the Los Angeles area. I also saved a local newspaper story about her burial at Ft. Bragg, NC, and a photo of the burial was included in the news story.

Years later at a 4/503d mini-reunion in Clarksville, TN, I was able to see some photos of Col. Maggie visiting the 4/503d troops in Viet Nam. Col. Maggie paid her own way to and from Viet Nam, and she was blacklisted by the Hollywood business people for supporting the US troops.

I could not find my black and white photo of Martha Raye while she visited the 4/503d up in Da Nang, RVN. At the "Drop In", Marina, CA, in 1989, is where I apologized to Martha Raye for not wanting to get her a chopper to go and visit the 4/503d troops. She accepted my apology and I then bought her a drink.

I'm in the middle of this photo and the lady to the right is LTC Rolande "Frenchy" Amundsen who served with the OSS in France during World War II. The Gestapo killed her husband and daughter during the war.



Colonel Maggie.....She is Not Forgotten!

The newspaper story (following page) is about the funeral service that was held for "Colonel" Martha Raye at Ft. Bragg, NC, where she is buried and where an SF Museum has a lot of things she had been given over many years.

I've also included this photo of a Cowboy Chopper up in Da Nang, RVN.



On 24 September 1973, the 4/503d, B/3/319th Arty, 1st Plt., E/17th Cav, 173d Engr. Plt., 173d MP Det., 173d Scout Dog Det., 173d MI Det. and a 335th Avn. Co. Det., were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy).

Ray Rameriz
Recon/4/503d



Comedian honored at Services

Raye is only civilian buried at Fort Bragg

By Jullane Basinger

Fort Bragg, NC – Army Special Forces soldiers honored entertainer Martha Raye here yesterday at a funeral that began with Green Berets carrying her flag-draped casket and ended with her jazzy theme song, “Mr. Paganini.”



Raye, with her beloved Green Berets

Her raucous rendition of the song in her 1936 debut movie “*Rhythm On The Range*” with Bing Crosby made her a star. But her greatest love was tirelessly entertaining troops during three wars, including Green Berets in the Vietnam War, who called her “Col. Maggie.”

Raye, who died Wednesday in Los Angeles at age 78, requested several years ago to be buried at Fort Bragg, the home of the Green Berets. Normally, only active duty and retired Army personnel are buried on post. But the Special Forces Association asked military brass to make an exception. They did, and made her the only civilian buried at the post cemetery.

An honor guard from the 7th Special Forces Group Airborne served as pall bearers and the 82nd Airborne Division Band play patriotic songs as about 300 soldiers and civilians came to honor her.

“*This to Martha Raye is worth more than Hollywood,*” her husband, Mark Harris, said after the funeral.

Harris, a 42-year-old Las Vegas agent, became Raye’s seventh husband in 1991 after a 20-day courtship. Raye’s daughter, Melodyne Condos, 49, whose relationship with her mother often had been stormy, also attended the funeral.



Farewell to Col. Maggie at Fort Bragg, NC
Home of the Airborne

Chaplain Tom W. Mitchiner, one of three religious leaders who spoke at the service, said Raye often risked her life to visit soldiers in remote areas. “*She brought her song, dance and humanity in times of war,*” the Protestant chaplain said. “*And those most thankful are the Green Berets.*”

Raye was so beloved by members of the Army Special Forces that President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1966 made her an honorary lieutenant colonel in the Special Forces. She already was a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve Nurse Corps.

Raye appeared in numerous movies and television shows, and had her own television series “*The Martha Raye Show*” in the 1950s. In later years, she was best known as “Big Mouth” in television ads for denture adhesive.

Raye received a special Academy Award in 1969 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom last November for her support of the Army.

Former Special Forces soldiers who attended the funeral each had stories to tell about meeting Raye.

Retired Col. Vernon Greene of Fayetteville said Raye once scrawled “*Col. Greene, I love you,*” in lipstick on his mirror after he let her use his room for a night while she was traveling in the Mekong Delta.





Wreaths Across Arlington

The Wreaths Across America observance began in 1992 under the leadership of Maine businessman, Morrill Worcester. The Wreaths Across America's goal was to decorate the graves at Arlington National Cemetery. Its message: the importance of remembering our fallen heroes, honoring those who serve, and teaching children about the sacrifices veterans and their families made to preserve our freedoms. Wreaths Across America's motto expresses this message well:

Remember, Honor, and Teach.

What began as a single day observance is now a week-long series of events and has expanded to thousands of local areas in 50 states. The culmination event remains decorating the veteran graves on the second Saturday in December. This year's theme - "*The Christmas They Never Had*", in honor of those who have had to spend a holiday away from home, and in memory of those who never made it home.

According to Wayne Hanson, the local volunteer-leader, in the past, 4,000 volunteers decorated 24,000 Arlington graves. This year, the Cemetery has asked that all 224,000 graves in the Cemetery be decorated! This year you have an opportunity to place wreaths where the observance began. Our Chapter is leading the Herd 10 December wreath laying delegation.

We will gather for a no-host breakfast at 0830hrs. at the ground-level restaurant of the Key Bridge Marriott and promptly depart at 0945hrs. by taxi or Metro to the Cemetery, where we will be assigned collectively or separately graves to decorate. The day's activities will conclude with a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown at 1200hrs. Because of the number of graves to decorate, we ask our Sky Soldiers and their families and friends to be prepared to continue to work until 1400hrs.

Participants will return to the hotel on their own. The Key Bridge Marriott is just two blocks from the Rosslyn Metro Station.

The holidays are a time when we especially remember the love and warmth of our family and friends and all of us can have this special re-remembrance of our fellow veterans on 10 December. Please join us.

Ken Smith
A/2/503d
Sigholtz Chapter 1

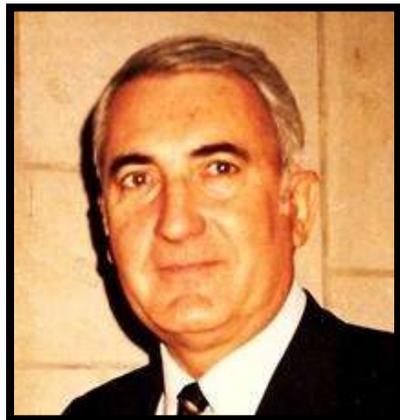


Col. George J. Stapleton

8th Commander of the 3/503d

Mr. Branstetter:

Could you please forward the information that my father Col. George J. Stapleton (US Army Retired) has passed away at his home in St. Simons GA. He commanded the 3rd Battalion 503rd Infantry from 1970-1971. After his 34+ years of service, his proudest moments were his time with the "Sky Soldiers" of the 173d, and was his final wish to be buried with his 173d insignia on his uniform.



Colonel Stapleton, 1932-2011

He gave me the email you sent him about their reunion in Lexington KY because I live in Lexington, and he knew with his declining health he would not be able to attend.

If you could please forward this information to someone who could get it out to his comrades.

Thank you, and also for your service.

"A man who has nothing which he cares more about than he does about his own personal safety is a miserable creature who has no chance at being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself" - FREEDOM ISNT FREE

FDNY-343 NEVER FORGET

"Only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you, Jesus Christ and the American G. I. One died for your soul, the other for your freedom."

Gregory Stapleton
Halli152@aol.com

Note: Please see Page 17 of Issue 34 of our Newsletter for a tribute to Col. Stapleton.

All the Way....Sir!

Scott Smith

1/503d

"The Best of the Best"

Gary Granade called me just now and informed me that Scott Smith passed away today, November 24th, about 12:00. He passed away in his sleep.

Funeral arrangements are pending. Additional information will be forwarded as soon as it is available.

God bless our fallen brother and his family.

You can contact me if you want at

barthelemy47@comcast.net

Airborne!

John Barthelemy
1/503d



Rest easy Trooper

*My heart's calculatin'
My true love will be waitin'
Waitin' at the end of my ride.*

*Move 'em out, head 'em up
Head 'em up, move 'em on
Move 'em out, head 'em up
Rawhide!*



Last Month's *WHODAT?*



Dan Langham, C/2/503d

sears

SUPPORTS MILITARY VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Visit this web site to see the countless number of ways Sears works in support of the military and our veterans:
<http://www.searsmedia.com/tools/press/search.jsp?searchString=military>

This Month's *WHODAT?*



Who is this super, duper 2/503 trooper loading his M79 grenade launcher?

Iraq Mule



Vietnam Mule



John "Top" Searcy, 4.2 Platoon, 2/503d, circa '65/'66

The M274, known as the Mechanical Mule, was developed in the 1950s as a light weight cargo carrier to replace both the 1/4-ton jeep and 3/4-ton trucks in infantry and airborne infantry battalions. The M274 was known as the "Truck, Platform, Utility 1/2 Ton, 4x4" or the "Carrier, Light Weapons, Infantry, 1/2 ton, 4x4".

The M274 family could be fitted for many infantry tasks including transport of personnel or cargo (slowly--keeping up with foot soldiers), for stringing wire with a cable reel, for carrying patients on stretchers, and as a weapons platform for a recoilless rifle or TOW anti-tank missile.

Each wheel had shackles for lifting by helicopter or parachute airdrop. The seat and the foot basket can be detached and stored underneath the platform which can then be rigged as a steerable trailer. The steering column could be set in multiple positions so the driver could operate the vehicle from almost any position, including crouching down.



WWII 503rd Paratrooper Tony Lopez Returns to The Rock and Raises the Flag 65 Years After

By: Steve Kwiecinski



A young trooper...Tony Lopez, F Company, 503rd PRCT



A little later Sunday morning (1 March), Tony Lopez, his wife Mary Louise, sons Tom and Steve, daughter Yolanda, and Yolanda's husband Ron arrived on Corregidor for a two-day stay. (One son and one daughter remained behind in the States).

Tony had been a part of the original parachute team that landed here 65 years ago to liberate the island. Tony had trouble getting approved for a passport, which made the news in Denver, Colorado, and sparked nationwide sympathy.



Tony revisits 28-D, where "F" had its CP the first night. He was the section's BAR man. By virtue of its high rate of fire, it was generally regarded as being the most dangerous weapon in a fight, and consequently it was the weapon that attracted most attention from the Japanese.

For several days the family couldn't get any rest as they received phone call after phone call from interested media people.

Despite having served in the U.S. military, he faced citizenship verification questions due to records having been destroyed in a church fire. The passport was finally issued, but so late that he was unable to be here for the February 16th anniversary of the 503rd's parachute landing.



Tony is escorted down the trail towards 'Banzai Point' by his sons Thomas (left) and Steve (right). Ahead are his daughter Yolonda, and her husband Ron. On the night of 16 February 1945, Tony's platoon was placed in the NCO Married Quarters which covered this track. Effectively it was the demarcation point between the US and Japanese areas for the first 24 hours.

(continued....)



Tony checked out the interior of the NCO Married Quarters as the Japanese could easily lob grenades on the verandah, the men would take cover in the inside rooms. Nevertheless, Tony lost his good buddy "Happy" Hoyt, that evening. Tony had visited "Happy" at the American Cemetery at Ft Bonafacio (formerly Ft. McKinley) the previous day.



However, thanks to continued efforts by Paul Whitman, encouragement from many people – including his family members and a blatantly pleading email from us – he decided to come for the March 2 celebration marking the day of MacArthur's return to the island.



By the way, this whole story began in December when Paul met Tony and about 20 other veterans of the 503rd at a reunion. Paul proposed the trip then, and continued to urge Tony to come to Corregidor.

The rest is now history.

We were honored to have Tony in attendance. We wonder if he will be the last American Corregidor survivor to be able to attend an anniversary here. Thanks to Sun Cruises shifting their schedules, their tourists were able to attend the festivities and greet Tony personally. It made for a very nice turnout, and Tony was overcome by the expressions of gratitude and honor he received. We really enjoyed spending time in the evenings with Tony and his family.

Flag raising ceremony on Corregidor after victory in the Philippines.



On 2 March, 65 years after the flag was raised on Corregidor in the presence of General MacArthur, Paratrooper Anthony Lopez raised it again.

[Source: 503rd Heritage Bn web site]



~ Holiday Card 1968 ~



From Bill Wyatt, HHC/2/503d

