

# 2/503d

FOR THE MEN, AND THEIR  
FAMILIES, OF THE 2ND BATTALION,  
173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)



We try  
harder.

# VIETNAM

newsletter

April 2012, Issue 39

Contact: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)

See all issues to date at either of these web sites:

<http://firebase319.org/2bat/news.html> or [http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue\\_index.htm](http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm)

## ~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



**One month at war. Bravo Bulls chowing down on 10 Jun '65 in the rubber trees on perimeter of Bien Hoa AFB. *TDY my ass!***  
(Photo by SP5 Jose C. Rivera, USA Sp Photo Det, Pacific. Sent in by Jerry Taylor, C/2/503d)



# Chaplain's Corner

Cherished Sky Soldiers,  
Families and Friends:



Grace and Peace!

**The Leapin' Deacon**

It has been a blessing to visit with you in the "Chaplain's Corner" this past year. I say farewell to you with our treasured Jump Commands. A good part of my 30 plus years on Active Duty was spent in the Airborne Community. It was an absolute delight and honor to serve as Chaplain and Pastor with these highly motivated special kind of Warriors of our loved Country. Life was packed with extremely demanding challenges and gifted opportunities.

The paratroopers did considerable vigorous preparation and high adventure training to successfully exit a troop-carrying aircraft flying 1,000 feet above the earth at 150 knots per hour.

The Jumpmaster calls out eight (8) "Jump Commands" and uses 'hand signals' to direct the eager paratroopers as they get ready for an Airborne Operation Mission. I prepared a sermon/message on each of the "Jump Commands" with a Biblical parallel passage. The paratroopers were in a LISTENING mode just prior to the jump. The Lord used this sacred time to win, hold, develop, and disciple our Sky Troopers.

The First Jump Command: **GET READY!** There are several Biblical passages that can be used. St. Luke 12:35-37 emphasizes "Readiness" to get ready for a deeper and more sure and meaningful walk with our Lord. This is a great an ultimate moment! We are 'ready' to successfully exit an aircraft 1,000 feet at 150 knots. (In combat the paratrooper jumps out at 500-700 feet – so the adversary cannot take too many shots at them on the way down).

The Second Jump Command: **STAND UP!** Psalm 27 and 103 herald forth as well as Ephesians 6. Stand up with and for your Savior and Lord in true high adventure living. The fully equipped paratrooper with an extra hundred pounds of gear, ammo, and needed resources for a period of little re-supply, boldly stands up and prepares to do the mission at hand – to jump on an Airborne Operation. This is the time to excel and he/she does just that with a deep sense of accomplishment and courage.

The Third Jump Command: **HOOK UP!** There are many Biblical texts, Psalm 23 and 51, St. Luke 9:28, that underscore our vital communication and life line with our Lord in Prayer! The paratrooper 'hooks up' his parachute to the strong and heavy cable overhead. The hook up is like a lifeline.

The Fourth Jump Command: **CHECK STATIC LINE!** Years ago I had a tremendous and tough Commander who deeply cared for all soldiers, and excelled in getting things done right. One of his key statements was, "Check, Check, Check!" On this fourth command the paratroopers would give a vigorous check and pull to assure that all was hooked up correctly. It was also a time of extreme care for the paratroopers around you – checking that they are safe and ready for this mission.

The Fifth Jump Command: **CHECK EQUIPMENT!** The Biblical parallels are many, but we will use primarily Ephesians 6:10-20 – "Put on the full armor of God...stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."

The Sixth Jump Command: **SOUND OFF EQUIPMENT CHECK!** Psalm 107 and I Peter 3-5. All is checked out and well – you "Sound off" with a loud "OK" as you sharply slap the rear end of the person in front of you. The Sky Soldier is ready!

The Seventh Jump Command: **STAND IN THE DOOR!** St. John 10:9 "I am the DOOR!" Wow! What a Promise and Blessing! This is the ultimate moment of our training! By the open door of the aircraft are two (2) lights, one Red meaning stop/hold and you know what the Green one means. In all my many hundreds of jumps, I have never faced the open 'Jump Door' without the abiding and sure promise in the Word of God – "I am the DOOR!"

The Eighth and final Jump Command: **GO!** The Green light is on and out you go. You count to four (4) – one thousand to four thousand, as your main parachute canopy opens. What a beautiful and jubilant sight! The Biblical passage – St. Matthew 28:16-20, the Great Commission, "Go into all Nations...I am with you ALWAYS!"

We are blessed to be blessings. A most sacred and grace-filled Lenten Season, Holy Week, Easter, and Passover to you!

**Chaplain Conrad N. Walker, COL, Ret.**  
**"The Leapin' Deacon"**  
**National Chaplain Emeritus**  
**173d Airborne Association**  
**Military Order of the Purple Heart**



Dear Connie:

On behalf of all officers and men of the 2/503d, thank you for sharing your uplifting messages over the past months, but most of all, thank you for being there for your Sky Soldiers during time of war. *All The Way, Sir!*



The White House  
Office of the Press Secretary  
March 29, 2012

Presidential Proclamation -- Vietnam Veterans Day

**VIETNAM VETERANS DAY  
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
A PROCLAMATION**

On January 12, 1962, United States Army pilots lifted more than 1,000 South Vietnamese service members over jungle and underbrush to capture a National Liberation Front stronghold near Saigon. Operation Chopper marked America's first combat mission against the Viet Cong, and the beginning of one of our longest and most challenging wars. Through more than a decade of conflict that tested the fabric of our Nation, the service of our men and women in uniform stood true. Fifty years after that fateful mission, we honor the more than 3 million Americans who served, we pay tribute to those we have laid to rest, and we reaffirm our dedication to showing a generation of veterans the respect and support of a grateful Nation.



Our veterans answered our country's call and served with honor, and on March 29, 1973, the last of our troops left Vietnam. Yet, in one of the war's most profound tragedies, many of these men and women came home to be shunned or neglected -- to face treatment unbecoming their courage and a welcome unworthy of their example. We must never let this happen again. Today, we reaffirm one of our most fundamental obligations: to show all who have worn the uniform of the United States the respect and dignity they deserve, and to honor their sacrifice by serving them as well as they served us.

The Vietnam War is a story of service members of different backgrounds, colors, and creeds who came together to complete a daunting mission. It is a story of Americans from every corner of our Nation who left the warmth of family to serve the country they loved. It is a story of patriots who braved the line of fire, who cast themselves into harm's way to save a friend, who fought hour after hour, day after day to preserve the liberties we hold dear. From Ia Drang to Hue, they won every major battle of the war and upheld the highest traditions of our Armed Forces.

Eleven years of combat left their imprint on a generation. Thousands returned home bearing shrapnel and scars; still more were burdened by the invisible wounds of post-traumatic stress, of Agent Orange, of memories that would never fade. More than 58,000 laid down their lives in service to our Nation. Now and forever, their names are etched into two faces of black granite, a lasting memorial to those who bore conflict's greatest cost.

Half a century after those helicopters swept off the ground and into the annals of history, we pay tribute to the fallen, the missing, the wounded, the millions who served, and the millions more who awaited their return. Our Nation stands stronger for their service, and on Vietnam Veterans Day, we honor their proud legacy with our deepest gratitude.

Now, therefore, I, Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 29, 2012, as Vietnam Veterans Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Vietnam War.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

Barack Obama



# AIR FORCE ON THE GROUND

We were supposed to make a combat jump at Vo Dat for “New Life 65” so I was learning to do PLF’s off of the tree stumps and other objects in the company area. My greatest disappointment was we didn’t make the jump.



Original photo caption: “During operations in the Iron Triangle in 1965, two soldiers of the 173d help a wounded comrade to safety.” (TimeLife Photo)

**M**y name is Orville Thomas “Tom” Branham. I arrived in country in August 1965 with 4 others from the 1st Direct Air Support Flight out of Yokota AFB, Japan. Our mission was to provide Close Air Support to elements of the 173d. A couple of days later I was sitting on a grassy knoll at Camp Hollaway in Pleiku.

We returned to Bien Hoa and on 14 September we accompanied the 2nd 503rd to Ben Cat, this was followed by search and destroy sweeps in the “Iron Triangle”.

On 8 October we were once again in the Iron Triangle and experienced a B52 strike at night. That was pretty exciting cause I knew that the Air Force, other than the O1’s with our unit, were the only ones that had a vague idea where we were and you could hear the bombs being walked closer and closer to us.

In November I went on Operation Hump with the 1st Battalion, We called in over 40 airstrikes on that operation.

My fondest memories are the times I spent with the 2nd 503rd. One time we were in the bush and during resupply the chopper brought in a block of ice and they gave us all a canteen cup of ice.

We flew in a couple days early and saw where the bad guys had dug emplacements for their 50 Cals along what would have been the DZ. We went down the road to where we set up for the operation.

We chose the hooch next to the medics. When we went in there was a big snake coiled in the ceiling that someone removed so we could occupy the hooch.

I had been saving my turkey loaf C’s and pound cake and I was going to invite the medics over for Thanksgiving dinner, when someone said chow is here.

We walked around toward the front of the hooches and there was Thanksgiving “hot” and with all the trimmings. I think it was the best Thanksgiving dinner I ever had.

Being with the battalion I learned how to prepare C’s ala C-4, dig really deep foxholes, and sleep just about anywhere.

The photo above was taken after “Hump”. I was walking out to catch a ride back to Bien Hoa and there was this photographer who just flew in to take a picture and was waving his arms telling me to get out of the picture. I replied something about his parental lineage and sexual habits. The guy was not wounded, he was with the engineers and I think a tree fell on him while he was cutting down trees for the extraction. The guy on the left I think was just policing the area. I just wanted to go home; that is me on the right with the M-16 unslung.

**Tom Branham**  
**173d Abn Brigade**  
**2nd 503rd**  
**TACP**





# The Brazosport Facts



Member Associated Press

Friday, April 22, 1966

Freeport, Texas

INCLUDING LAKE JACKSON MAN

## Paratrooper dies to save companions

By GLENN HEATH

### ***“Run Lieutenant – grenade!”***

Those were the last words of a heroic paratrooper private who thrust a Viet Cong grenade under his body to shield four companions.

His words were shouted at First Lt. Jimmy B. Stanford of Lake Jackson, his platoon leader.

It was Lt. Stanford who made an official citation of the soldier's heroism, asking that Pfc. Milton Olive, III of Chicago be considered by Congress for the posthumous awarding of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

At noon Thursday, the dead soldier became the third person and the first Negro to be awarded the nation's highest honor for service in Viet Nam.

The White House ceremony was conducted by President Johnson in the presence of the soldier's father and about 20 relatives flown to Washington for the presentation.

In a letter to his brother, J.A. Stanford of 108 Haven Street, Lake Jackson, Lt. Stanford described the action that brought about the act of heroism.

It was on Oct. 22, 1965, in the general vicinity of the Bien Hoa airport.

*“We got pinned down by automatic weapons,” Lt. Stanford wrote, “and they (the Viet Cong) started throwing hand grenades at us. He (Pfc. Olive) grabbed it and crammed it under him. He saved all of us from getting it real bad.”*

Lt. Stanford was also wounded in the incident. He received 11 shrapnel wounds from the grenade that killed Pfc. Olive. But the soldier's body had absorbed most of the shock, robbing the shrapnel of lethal velocity.

He didn't know he had the wounds until later in the night, Lt. Stanford wrote.



**PFC Milton Olive**



**LT Jim Stanford**

Recently, Lt. Stanford was in Lake Jackson to visit his brother and mother, Mrs. Susie Stanford.

He attended Lake Jackson schools and Brazosport Senior High, entering the service before graduation. He received his commission through a service officer training school.

For most of his service in Viet Nam he was in the Special Forces (Green Berets) but at the time of the Oct. 22 engagement he had been transferred back into his former post with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

The dead soldier's father was honored at a Chicago City Council meeting Thursday. Milton L. Olive, a soft-spoken warehouseman, pointed out World War II statements casting doubt on the bravery of Negro servicemen. *“I am convinced now,”* he told councilmen, *“that the service the Negro soldier has given in Viet Nam has erased for all time the disparaging statements made about Negro servicemen. This honor gives us a richer heritage.”*

### **Excerpt from President Johnson's remarks during the posthumous presentation of the Medal of Honor to the father and family of Bravo Bull, Milton Olive, III:**

*“The Medal of Honor is awarded for acts of heroism above and beyond the call of duty. It is bestowed for courage demonstrated not in blindly overlooking danger, but in meeting it with eyes clearly open.*

*That is what Private Olive did. When the enemy's grenade landed on that jungle trail, it was not merely duty which drove this young man to throw himself upon it, sacrificing his own life that his comrades might continue to live. He was compelled by something that is more than duty, by something greater than a blind reaction to forces that are beyond his control.*

*He was compelled, instead, by an instinct of loyalty which the brave always carry into conflict. In that incredibly brief moment of decision in which he decided to die, he put others first and himself last. I have always believed that to be the hardest, but the highest, decision that any man is ever called upon to make.*

*In dying, Private Milton Olive taught those of us who remain how we ought to live.”*



# NASCAR to honor Redlands family in remembrance of fallen son

By Suze Knobler, Staff Writer  
*RedlandsDailyFacts*

NASCAR in Fontana will honor the memory of Redlands' Sgt. Raymond Alcaraz by taking his family onto the field and formally presenting the "Honor and Remember" flag, which is a national campaign of remembrance, to them on March 25 in front of a crowd of up to 100,000 people.

In August 2010, Redlands lost this hero, a 20-year-old combat airborne medic. Alcaraz was killed along with three other soldiers in the line of duty when their vehicle was attacked with an improvised explosive device. He was 43 days away from the end of his tour.

On Monday Alcaraz' parents Paul and Alma Murphy received a call from the Honor and Remember Organization president George Lutz. Lutz extended an invitation to the Murphys to spend the entire day at the NASCAR California 500 race in Fontana.



**Sgt. Raymond Alcaraz  
A Sky Soldier**

The Murphys are a Gold Star family, which is having an immediate family member dying in combat. They will spend the day with Lutz and be introduced to the drivers, pit crews and also watch the race from a VIP booth. *"I feel very honored and humbled, but because of the type of person I am, I had to ask George, 'Why just us?' There are 680 other Gold Star Families out there,"* Paul Murphy said.

Lutz said that although they stand behind all Gold Star Families, they can't honor all of them. They chose one family. They chose the Murphys.

*"This is such a tremendous honor. We don't want our son's memory to fade away, so being honored like this is another forum to say that Ray will never be forgotten and is a lasting legacy,"* Murphy said.

*"When Ray died, my wife and I were in a fog, and we asked ourselves what was it all for to have our son die at 20,"* said Murphy. *"When I finally came out of the fog, I wanted to reach out and give back because we received so much support. So I reached out to Gold Star Fathers, because we know where Raymond is now and that gives us peace to move on and help others."*

Murphy was asked to be the California Captain for the Goldstar Fathers branch. The group's purpose is to ensure that Gold Star Fathers are not alone during the funeral ceremonies of their children who have died for our freedom, their website says. They work with the Department of Defense, which enlists them to go to grieving families and help their healing process. As part of this effort, Murphy attends funerals of fallen soldiers.

*"There is also a Gold Star Mothers website, because as I have learned through this, men and women sometimes handle grief differently,"* he said.

The Murphys will attend the NASCAR races to be honored, but also to represent all the families who have lost their hero, Murphy wrote in an email signed "Proud Father of Fallen Hero, SGT Raymond Alcaraz."



## **Our Mission:**

To create, establish and promote a nationally recognized flag that would fly continuously as a visible reminder to all Americans of the lives lost in defense of our national freedoms. All Military lives lost not only in action but also in service, from our nation's inception.

## **Rationale:**

In our over 200 year history there has never been an official national symbol that recognizes in gratitude and respect the ultimate sacrifice made by members of the United States military in service to our nation. The Honor and Remember Flag was created for that purpose.

## **Goals:**

To promote the vision of the Honor and Remember Flag and request that visitors to the website sign a petition and pass the word about the importance of this new symbol. To build a consensus among the branches of the United States military, veterans organizations, service and civic groups, businesses and individuals in order to collectively solicit the Department of Defense and the United States Congress to propose and accept the Honor and Remember Flag as the official flag for honoring all fallen servicemen and servicewomen.

To promote broad national awareness of and groundswell interest in the flag, so that military, government and educational facilities as well as households throughout the country would begin flying the Honor and Remember Flag in recognition of our nation's fallen warriors.

To place one personalized Honor and Remember Flag in the hands of immediate families who have lost a loved one in military service to America.

<http://www.honorandremember.org/>





# JAPS IN AMERICAN CLOTHING –

## THE HEROIC DEATH OF SSGT JOHN M. GUTHRIE

By: Chet Nycum  
with Paul Whitman



**INTRODUCTION:** *When things stick in your craw, then by definition it's hard to dislodge them - in this instance, not even 65 years has been able to help me.*

*Arriving on Negros we boarded trucks and were moved inland. The 40th Div. was already in combat on the island, and we were moved to their left flank, to engage the troops that were flanking the 40th Div. Our fighting was always uphill, the Japanese were dug in. Paratroopers have no heavy weapons so it all had to be done with small arms. I have no idea how many men were killed as we moved forward, but one I will never forget.*



Chet

On the 22nd of May 1945, under the command of Lt. Whittig, I was lead scout of a "G" Company, third platoon patrol into an area feeding a trail which went by the name of "the Secret Trail." The patrol, ordered by Lt. Whittig, was of squad strength, with Staff Sergeant John Guthrie in charge. My second scout was Andy Pacella.

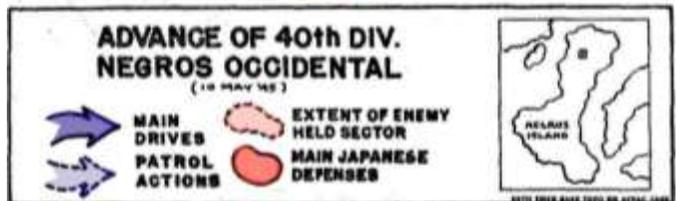
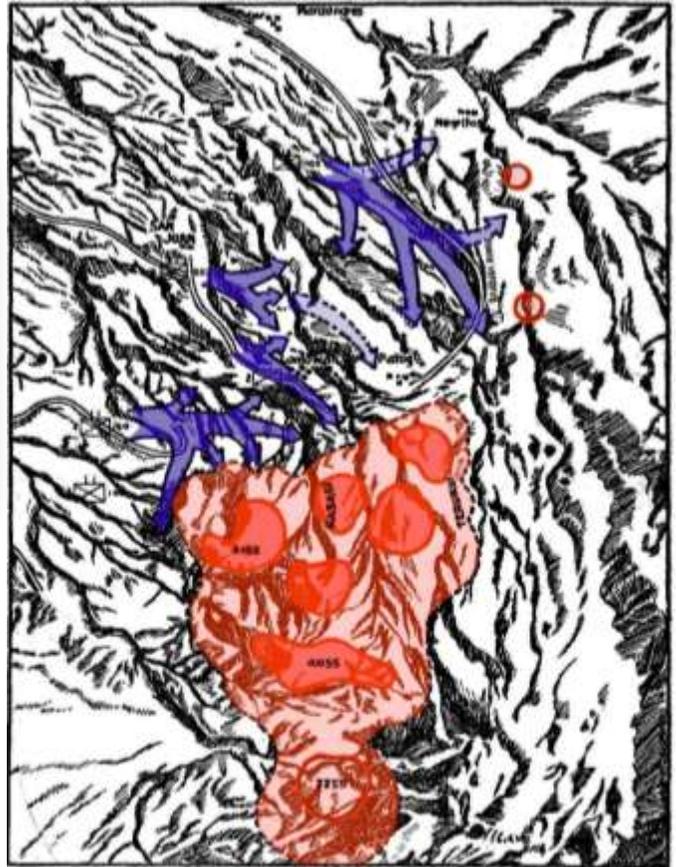
Now, whether this "Secret Trail" had ever been a genuine secret, I cannot say, but certainly by the time I was scouting the area, it was no secret at all, especially from the Japanese. I had been told that there were no friendly troops between our positions and the river, the course of which was not far away to our left flank. Our patrol was to check the extreme left flank of the 503d PRCT's position, and to deal with any Japanese forces which might attempt to out-flank our line.

The mountains in the interior of Negros were steep, varying from two thousand to six thousand feet, and the Japanese had had ample time to choose their battlefields ahead of us - some positions were covered by as many as two dozen pillboxes aligned in three supporting lines,

and always above us. Nor did they appear to have any shortage of automatic weapons, heavy machine guns or mortars.

There were Japanese forces still occupying Hill 3355, many dug into positions where it was impossible, because of the terrain, to flank them. Throughout the sector, they had chosen their positions in such a way as to ensure that the only means we had of dealing with them was to attack them, day after day, from lower ground.

### NEGROS OCCIDENTAL SITUATION MAP AS OF 15 MAY 1945



The patrol had gone off without any contact being made, and we were still proceeding on an outward leg. It was mid-morning when I saw a few men crossing from my left to my right, some two-hundred yards away. They were on the "Secret Trail" moving towards my right. The trail itself sloped upward towards the left of our positions steadily increasing grade.

(continued...)



At some point before my patrol had made it to that very spot, this 'lost' patrol had crossed in front of us traveling to my left, and presumably were returning whence they had come. They shouldn't have been there between us and the river.

I was damn surprised to see a patrol of Americans come from the left across our front, crossing to my right, on higher ground. Being of the 3rd Battalion, and situated at the far left of the entire front occupied by the 503d and the 40th, they had no business being there. I could see them clearly. They were in US fatigues, wearing US helmets, and were carrying M-1's, and I assumed they were from our second battalion who had strayed out of their area following the clear trail through the dense rainforest. They must have crossed our path some hours before we had gotten to our position, following along the trail.

I held my tommy-gun in my left hand and raised my right arm in a wave signal and called to them, "Hey, we're Americans!" Simultaneously, they started shooting -- their guns were going off and bullets were flying towards our position. Two or three of the men of my patrol were bunched up near me, and had raised up about to wave, "Americans! We're Americans!" The distance between us was approximately 200 yards, visibility good.

It all happened in less time than it takes to blink an eye. Instead of any response, our patrol attracted an instant hail of gunfire. When we'd raised up to identify ourselves, they'd started opening fire, it was just that fast.



**"G" Company Troopers on Negros Island, 1945**  
(Photo from Frank Foster Collection)

I knew all too well the sound of the Jap 25's, and I was hearing M-1's. There's a big difference in the way they sound. They turned tail and ran to the right, and even though they had the advantage over us, they were running from further contact. When they started to run, we stood again.



**A break from combat on Negros for a little  
"G" Company Airborne PT**

(Photo from Frank Foster collection)

As I faced the men near me, we all heard the good-solid bang of a hand-grenade detonator igniting. It had been on John Guthrie's webbing, close to his left shoulder, and I figured in that instant of a second that one of their rounds had dislodged it and set it off. We were bunched up, standing with him, and he was no further away from me than four feet. We exchanged glances, and everybody scattered and hit the dirt.

Guthrie had a very short delay before making his decision, it must have been an eternity for him, but it was an instant for me, and he then dived upon the grenade to protect the rest of us.

There was nothing more clear to me, nothing in my life, not before, not since, than that he had made the conscious decision to protect us. None of us were hit, not by the patrol which had fired on us, nor by the grenade which destroyed Guthrie's life. It had all happened so quickly, and we had not fired a shot.

We carried Guthrie home.

*(continued....)*





**Early prisoners at Fabrica, Negros, August 15, 1945**  
 (Photo from Frank Foster collection)

We talked it over since, and came to the view that the 'lost' patrol had been from "E" Company, which had been at our immediate right flank. At some point earlier in the morning, their patrol had crossed in front of us, and were returning to their perimeter when we surprised them. We reported the contact as Americans who had fired on us, and run.



**Surrender of Japanese forces to 3d Bn on September 2, 1945 at Negros**  
 (Photo from Frank Foster collection)

Later, word came down to me that the contact had been "with Japanese in American clothing." This was completely false in my eyes, but I figured that there might be some justice in the way that the Army would recognize Guthrie's heroic act of self-sacrifice. Maybe, I thought, that if the patrol was identified as Japs, then the contact was a contact with the enemy, and not just a friendly-fire incident, and Guthrie could get recognition.

It didn't happen.

Fate had decreed that there wasn't an officer around who witnessed it, or any officer who could write a commendation supporting Guthrie. If anything was ever written down, then it was sure to be wrong.

What makes it worse through the years was that "E" Company claimed that on that day they had a contact and had killed "one Jap". That's just another bit of the official record that Regimental HQ got wrong, for posterity's sake, maybe not even knowing either way. If only for his family, his bravery should be recognized.

There's no doubt in my mind that S/Sgt. John M. Guthrie, late of Arkansas, who died on 22 May 1945, saved my life, and the lives of others, and got not enough recognition for his selfless act. I recall him often. Like I said, it sticks in my craw, and it'll stay sticking there until I am gone to meet him again.

**Chet Nycum  
 G/503rd PRCT**

[Story, photos and graphics courtesy of the 503rd Heritage Battalion web site]

**SSGT John M. Guthrie**  
 AR, G Co, 37100662, 503rd, Negros  
 Morning Report: Record of G Company men killed.



# Lawmaker Pushes Database to Stop Fakers (excerpt)

February 29, 2012

By Bryant Jordan  
[Military.com](http://Military.com)



A Utah lawmaker called Wednesday for the Defense Department to build an awards database that could help solve the problem of so-called "fakers" claiming service or awards they hadn't actually earned.

*"I really do believe ... that if there was a will the [DoD] would find a way to do it,"* said Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah. *"Collectively the Department of Defense failed to recognize the problem, failed to recognize the need [for a database], and never put forward a plan to solve this problem."*

Chaffetz made his comments during a hearing on the issue of "stolen valor." The Supreme Court recently heard arguments on the *Stolen Valor Act*, through which Congress made it a crime to falsely claim having earned awards such as the Medal of Honor.

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Just a few of the sonsabitches....



## Book by a Sky Soldier

A Family Affair!

First Vietnam Veteran, Crey Higgins is secretly programmed to perform espionage duties for the CIA, and then his adult daughter, Willie Higgins falls into the same line of work and becomes a super sleeper agent without even knowing it. Inside Shadows is a trilogy of three works "After Ashcroft", "The Second Crow" and "Le Corbeau on Ice". Each have been published as single individual components involving the same, or relative, characters and are connected by theme. It is an all-in-one publication designed to provide harmony of reading and ease of transition from story to story.



INSIDE  
SHADOWS  
CHUCK DEAN

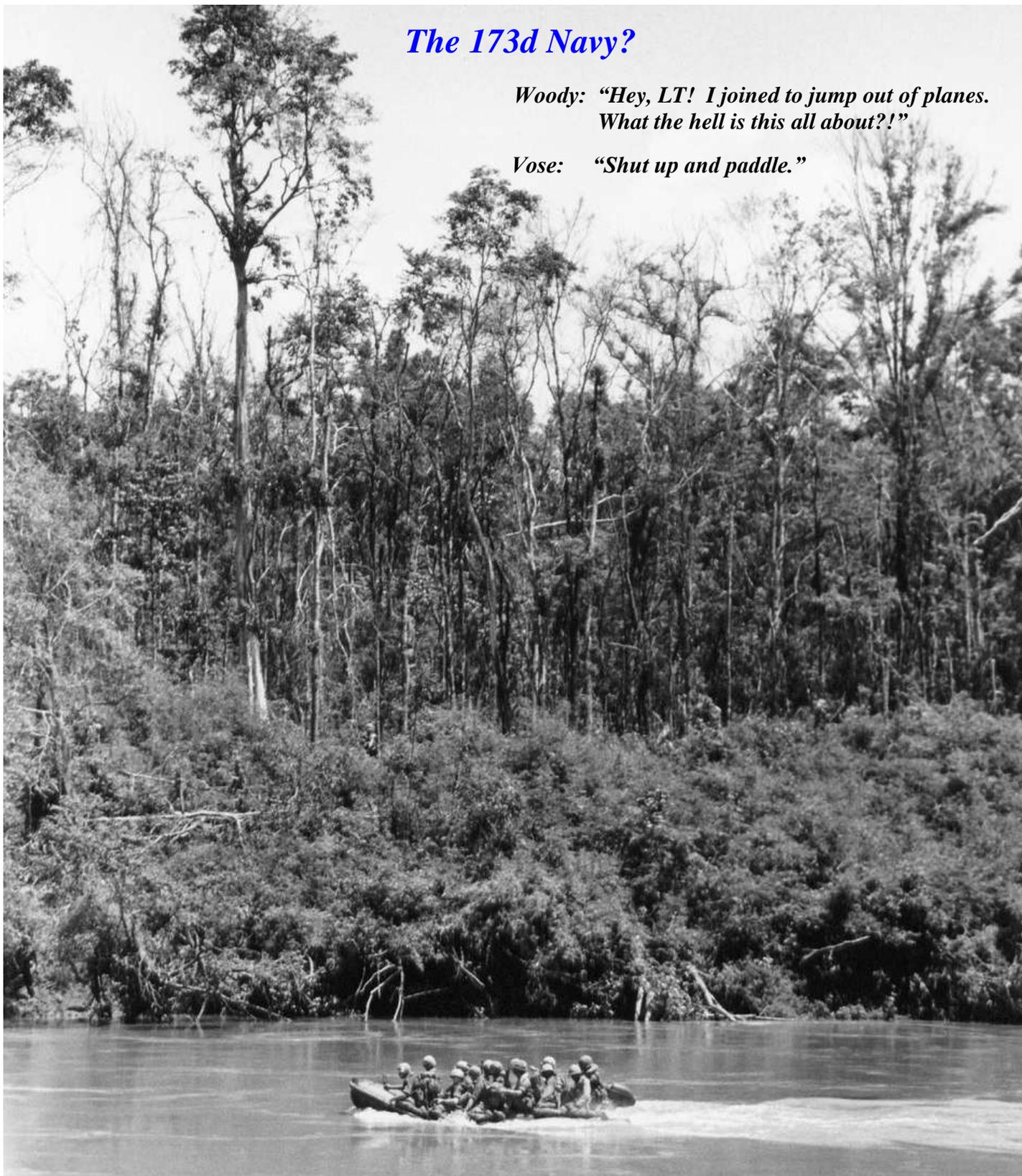
Available on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)



## *The 173d Navy?*

*Woody: "Hey, LT! I joined to jump out of planes.  
What the hell is this all about?!"*

*Vose: "Shut up and paddle."*



"Paratroopers of the (A/2/503d) 173rd U.S. airborne brigade make their way across the Song Be River in South Vietnam en route to the jungle on the North Bank and into Operation Sioux City in the D Zone on Oct. 4, 1966. Troopers and equipment were flown in by helicopter to the central highlands area, but the choppers couldn't land in the D Zone jungles. The operation began late in the week of September 25." (AP Photo) (Sent in by Woody Davis, A/2/503d) In describing the photo Woody said, "That was Alpha, the precursor to stealth special warfare troops!" My reply: "They look more like ducks you see in an amusement park shooting gallery." Ed



## More about that boat ride and operation....

Memory is slipping, but maybe others will either correct me – or add to it. We were going across to check a B-52 strike. We had with us Horst Fass the photographer...can't remember what we did, but think that when we went back across after the operation General Westmoreland was there to greet us. Seems we had several mishaps during the initial crossing; engine failure, someone got bit by a snake, etc. Blessed day, **Jack Kelley, CO, A/2/503d**



**Horst Faas**

Gen. Westmoreland came out to watch us cross that river. He was walking around and talking to guys and asked Bob Johnson if he could get batteries for his radio and how many he carried....We had guys scattered for 1000 yards down that river. Lucky nobody drowned and lucky Charles wasn't on the other side.

**Jim Gettel, A/2/503d**

Two separate times but the rubber raft thing was when Westmoreland was there. The snake bite was a guy named Cross. We needed to cross a river, wasn't too large across but too swift and deep to go on foot. An engineer blew a tree but it fell backwards and someone went up stream and floated down until he got to the other side. We all started to cross hand over hand when Cross looked as if he was losing his helmet and tried to reach back for it and slipped away from the rope and sank under the swift current. We found him shortly down river near a bend. The medics were trying to revive him with CPR when someone noticed the marks on the back of his neck. We were told to get to the other side and don't remember who was left behind while waiting for a dust off. **Leo (French) Pellerin, A/2/503d**

Roger that, Frenchy. Will never forget that day. Cross must have been the trooper immediately behind me, about mid-stream. I had just reached the opposite bank and was being pulled up by a buddy, RTO Lee Braggs, I think, when we heard yelling behind us -- don't remember anyone else on the rope. I turned just in time to see the man's ruck bob once or twice before he went under and downstream. For well over 30 years I thought he had drowned, but at one of the reunions, maybe Rochester in 2000, one of you guys told me he had been snake bitten. Another bad day. The only Cross from our battalion on the *Virtual Wall* is PFC Joseph Alexander Cross, A/2/503 from Philly, KIA 11/15/66. Was Joseph the same guy? Didn't recall the name of the operation either, but probably not Sioux City, which ended October 9. **Lew (Smitty) Smith, HHC/2/503d**

## Joseph Alexander Cross

**Private First Class  
A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY  
173RD ABN BDE, USARV  
Army of the United States  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
February 9, 1948 to November 15, 1966  
JOSEPH A. CROSS  
is on the Wall at  
Panel 12E Line 073**

## ~ Horst Faas 173d Photos ~



**Operation Marauder, January 1966, Mekong Delta**



**Sky Soldiers...40 miles northeast of Saigon**

*(continued....)*



## ~ More Horst Faas 173d Photos ~



**Horst Faas** (born 28 April 1933 in Berlin, Germany) is a photo-journalist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner. He is best-known for his images of the Vietnam War. Faas began his photographic career in 1951 with the Keystone Agency, and by the age of 21 he was already covering major events concerning Indochina, including the peace negotiations in Geneva in 1954. In 1956 he joined the Associated Press (AP), where he acquired a reputation for being an unflinching hard-news war photographer, covering the wars in Vietnam and Laos, as well as in the Congo and Algeria. In 1962, he became AP's chief photographer for Southeast Asia, and was based in Saigon until 1974. His images of the Vietnam War won him a Pulitzer Prize in 1965. In 1972, he collected a second Pulitzer, for his coverage of the conflict in Bangladesh. Faas is also famed for his work as a picture editor, and was



instrumental in ensuring the publication of two of the most famous images of the Vietnam War. The notorious "Saigon Execution" photograph, showing the summary execution of a Vietcong prisoner by Saigon police chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan, taken by Eddie Adams in Saigon on February 1, 1968 was sent under his direction. Nick Ut's famous "Napalm Girl" photograph caused a huge controversy over at the AP bureau; an editor had objected to the photo, saying that the girl depicted was naked and that nobody would accept it. Faas ordered that Ut's photo be sent over the wire. In September 1990, freelance photographer Greg Marinovich submitted a series of graphic photos of a crowd executing a man to the AP bureau in Johannesburg. Once again, AP editors were uncertain of if the photos should be sent over the wire. One editor sent the images to Faas, who telegraphed back, "*send all photos.*"



# Saigon Execution

The real story behind Eddie Adams' iconic Vietnam War photo.

By Jason Zasky



“Saigon Execution” is one of the most recognizable photographs in military history, and it played a contributing role in turning public opinion against the Vietnam War. The image—by combat photographer Eddie Adams—captures the moment a uniformed South Vietnamese officer fires a bullet into the head of a man who appears to be a civilian.

Taken out of context, the photo seems to evince a senseless act of brutality, which explains why it was later used in support of the moral argument that protestors made against the war. But the reality is that the shooter (General Nguyen Ngoc Loan), was executing a ruthless Viet Cong assassin (Nguyen Van Lem, aka Bay Lop), who was leading a team that had targeted the general himself.

To help put the photo in context, I asked James S. Robbins—author of *“This Time We Win: Revisiting the Tet Offensive”* (Encounter Books)—about the incident, and what impact it had on the war effort and the life of General Loan.

## What do most people not understand about “Saigon Execution”?

The photo shows General Loan, arm outstretched, shooting a prisoner who looked like a civilian, though he was actually a Viet Cong guerrilla. The picture was front-page news and ultimately won the Pulitzer Prize for spot photography. But Eddie Adams later said that the picture didn't tell the story and that he was sorry he took it.

The man who was shot was Bay Lop, who had beheaded people, been caught in the act of gunning down policemen, and killed the family of one of General Loan's friends. That doesn't necessarily justify what Loan did. But when stripped of context, it looked like someone from the South Vietnamese national police gunning down some helpless guy, and that was not the case. Bay Lop was the leader of a sophisticated assassination team that was attempting to knock off all the top leaders [of South Vietnam], and General Loan was on their list.

## But the picture had a big impact in the U.S., right?

It had a huge impact, because people who were against the war immediately seized on it. And the North Vietnamese put on a propaganda tour around the world using the photo as its centerpiece, telling people: *This is who we are fighting—this terrible regime in Saigon that guns down helpless prisoners.*

## What effect did the photo's fame have on General Loan?

It became an opportunity for his political enemies to go after him. But he was wounded in action a few months later, and that's when he was removed from his job. His leg was shot up to the point where it was later amputated, and he couldn't do his job anymore. Later, when he came to the United States, the Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS) wanted to deport him on the grounds of moral turpitude based on the photo. But Eddie Adams came to his defense. When the INS asked him to testify against Loan, he said: *“No, I'll testify for him.”* He got to know General Loan after Tet and found he wasn't a bad guy; he was just in a bad situation. So Loan was not deported and he lived in northern Virginia until 1998, when he passed away.

## Read more:

[http://www.failuremag.com/index.php/feature/article/saigon\\_execution/#ixzz1ojMjm8DX](http://www.failuremag.com/index.php/feature/article/saigon_execution/#ixzz1ojMjm8DX)



Led by Auburnian

# Fighters Describe Ordeal

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Capt. John A. Leide, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Leide of 1 Woodward Place, commands C Company of the 2nd Battalion. Its nine-day jungle patrol is described in this Associated Press dispatch from Viet Nam.

**BY JOHN NANCE**

Xuan Loc, South Viet Nam (AP) – Eyes peered from faces grizzled with whiskers and crusted with dirt.

Men stared vacantly into space or into the mud and leaves that oozed around their ankles.

Arms and faces were scratched. Trousers were torn. Uniforms were stained with sweat, mud and red clay.



**Capt. Jack Leide, CO C/2/503**

Charlie Company of the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, had come in from nine days and nights in the jungles near Xuan Loc.

The official report said they had killed 20 Viet Cong and suffered light losses themselves in Operation Yorktown.

The statistics were not impressive. There had been no major battles, no big finds of supplies or fortifications or documents.

But Charlie Company had known death and fear and nine days and nights of grueling jungle warfare.

The severest test came one day shortly after dawn. Thin light filtered through the jungle canopy. Charlie Company stirred through the mud to break camp. Suddenly, bursts of enemy fire seemed to slash from every direction.

Superior firepower finally forced the Viet Cong to break and retreat. Artillery shells crashed into the jungle and followed their withdrawal. Explosions shook the earth. Sounds of fleeing wounded reached the American encampment.

Charlie Company counted 15 Viet Cong bodies, some only a few feet from American foxholes.

Four paratroopers died, all in the first onslaught of fire. The men watched wounded buddies lifted away in helicopters. The dead wrapped in ponchos followed.

Two days later a bank of guerrillas struck from concealed positions.

The paratroopers plunged to the ground and began pouring fire into the trees and brush.

The Viet Cong slipped away. They left one dead American.

The jungle was so thick no helicopter could come in. Four men carried the dead man, wrapped in his poncho.

Within an hour monsoon rains poured down. The ground turned slick.

*"We've got to get more sleep,"* said Capt. John Leide of Auburn, N.Y. *"One or two hours a night is about all we've been able to get."*

On the ninth day the company was ordered to the base camp of the battalion artillery. The sun broiled down as the troops moved out of the jungle in two long columns. Nearing the camp the lead man speeded the pace. Rest was not far away.

Near the end of a column, a team carrying the heavy tube and steel plate for the 81mm mortar began to falter. A sergeant bawled at them: *"You keep goin', you keep goin'! You're not gonna come this far and fall out now."*

Half an hour later, Charlie Company trudged past the troops guarding the base camp.

Under the shade of trees in a rubber plantation, men flopped to the ground. They threw off their helmets and dropped their packs.

Charlie Company could relax – for a while.

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**A Chargin' Charlie embarking on his final trip home.**

*"That picture of the 'Dust Off' was pretty famous during that period. We had to use det chord to blast a small opening in the triple canopy. He couldn't get the chopper all the way down to the ground, but as with all dust off pilots they risked all to get to a point where we could get our precious paratrooper out. That picture is worth a thousand words. The guy who is in the forefront lifting our comrade was our totally dedicated medic, who like all of our medics, as well as our chaplains like our Connie Walker and Father John McCullough, were our comforting rocks."*

**Jack Leide, MG (Ret)**



# ~ 173d Photographs, Operation Yorktown ~

## by Robert Hodierne

Anyone know which battalion these troopers were with? The photographer was new in-country and apparently still learning the difference between a division and a brigade. Ed



“Firefight. On July 4, 1966, radio operator (RTO) Pfc. Mike Farmer, Atlantic City, N. J., crouches to avoid sniper fire during Operation Yorktown. The operation is being conducted by the 173rd Airborne Division about 40 miles northwest of Saigon.”



On July 4, 1966, troops from the 173rd Airborne Division move through fields on a sweep during Operation Yorktown in Long Khanh province about 40 miles northwest of Saigon.



“An exhausted trooper from the 173rd Airborne Division pauses in tall grass during a sweep as part of Operation Yorktown in Long Khanh province about 40 miles northwest of Saigon. The photo was taken July 4, 1966.”



“Freelance photographer Robert Hodierne with the 173rd Airborne Division during Operation Yorktown in July 1966.”

Source: [vietnamphotography.com](http://vietnamphotography.com)

