



Photo of a ship at sea. To free up space for evacuation flights from Saigon, choppers are thrown overboard.
(picturehistory.blogspot.com)

29th: NVA shell Tan Son Nhut air base in Saigon, killing two U.S. Marines at the compound gate. Conditions then deteriorate as South Vietnamese civilians loot the air base. President Ford now orders *Operation Frequent Wind*, the helicopter evacuation of 7000 Americans and South Vietnamese from Saigon, which begins with the radio broadcast of the song "*White Christmas*" as a pre-arranged code signal. At Tan Son Nhut, frantic civilians begin swarming the helicopters. The evacuation is then shifted to the walled-in American embassy, which is secured by U.S. Marines in full combat gear. But the scene there also deteriorates, as thousands of civilians attempt to get into the compound. Three U.S. aircraft carriers stand-by off the coast of Vietnam to handle incoming Americans and South Vietnamese refugees. Many South Vietnamese pilots also land on the carriers, flying American-made helicopters which are then pushed overboard to make room for more arrivals. Filmed footage of the \$250,000 choppers being tossed into the sea becomes an enduring image of the war's end.



29th: William Craig Nystul, CPT, and 1LT Mike Shea, two of last US Marines killed in Vietnam.

KIA, SAR CREW FLEW INTO WATER AFTER NORMAL CARRIER WAVE-OFF ON DARK NIGHT, CRASHED INTO SOUTH CHINA SEA

"It was late on the night of the 29th and well into the operation when the CH-46 SAR helicopter crashed into the South China Sea alongside of the Hancock. It was tragic to say the least. Both the pilot, Capt. Bill Nystul and co-pilot 1LT Mike Shea were lost at sea. The other 2 enlisted crewman were rescued (that in itself involved tremendous heroism on the part of Capt. Steve Haley and 1LT Dean Koontz breaking off on deck refueling and executing a night water landing and taxiing around to pickup the 2 survivors). The tragedy is that Bill was a new WestPac arrival to Okinawa when we deployed with all the remaining H-46's and UH-1E's from Futenma [Okinawa]. He had just completed schooling and was re-famming in the H-46. Mike, as I remember, was a CH-53 co-pilot. This is the combination that was orbiting the ship for 4-5 hours and was coming aboard to refuel and launch again! The final approach was waved off, and on downwind (pitch black) they flew into the water with no apparent awareness that it was happening. They did not make any distress call or respond to frantic calls from pri-fly!! The next evening we held the traditional burial at sea service without recovering the remains. The crash site was located in 65 feet of water, but because of the immense political pressures to vacate the area, no attempt for recovery was made. I am positive, according to the time schedule I alluded to, that these 2 Marines were the final Marine casualties of the Vietnam War."

CHIC SCHOENER
Squadron pilot, eyewitness

30th: At 8:35 a.m., the last Americans, ten Marines from the embassy, depart Saigon, concluding the United States presence in Vietnam. North Vietnamese troops pour into Saigon and encounter little resistance. By 11 a.m., the red and blue Viet Cong flag flies from the presidential palace. President Minh broadcasts a message of unconditional surrender. *The war is over.*



~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



A Company 2/327, 101st Airborne, Vietnam Veterans 2012 Gathering

April 26 - 28, 2012, The Marten House Hotel, Indianapolis, IN,

Contact:
Dennis Sheridan
Phn: 817-504-1750



2012 Currahee Reunion, 3rd Battalion 506th Infantry Regiment (Airborne)

May 2 - 5, 2012, Hilton Garden Inn, Columbus, GA

Contact:
Hoyt Bruce Moore, III
Web: www.506infantry.org/reunion.htm



173d Airborne Brigade Association Annual Reunion

June 6 - 10, 2012, Lexington, Kentucky hosted by Chapter 17. See early notice on Pages 35-39.

Contact:
Dave Carmon
Eml: dcarmon@roadrunner.com
Web: www.skysoldier17.com



Recon, HHC, 2/503 '66-'67 is having a reunion in Lexington, Kentucky the same days as the 173d Association annual reunion next June. More to follow.

Contact:
Jerry Hassler
Eml: hassler173@juno.com



4/503d Reunion, Friday, June 8, 2012. We're going to do it during the annual 173d Association reunion in Lexington, KY. Jerry Downard, Donnie Farmer and Joe Flesch are taking the lead. More later, but mark your Calendar.



Casper Platoon Reunion 2012, June 28 - 30 & July 1, 2012, Hilton San Francisco Financial District, San Francisco, CA

Contact:
Steve Greene, Reunion Chairman
Web: greenaire@mac.com



56th Annual Reunion of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team, September 23 - 26, 2012, Holiday Inn, Richmond Intl. Airport, Sandston, VA.

Contact:
Nancy Young, Secretary
youngncy@comcast.net

~ Other Reunions ~

Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion, April 26-29, 2012, Wickham Park, Melbourne, FL. See Page 42 for details.

Contact:
Phn: 321-501-6896
Eml: vets2gether@cfl.rr.com

Note: If you're aware of any upcoming Airborne reunions please send details to: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

ACTUNG!

LOOK FOR DETAILS IN FUTURE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER FOR THE THIRD 2/503d REUNION TO BE HELD IN COCOA BEACH, FLORIDA.

START SAVING YOUR P's FOR...

"2ND BAT ON THE BEACH"



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:

Sky Soldiers 99.00

Spouses & Guests 75.00

Gold Star 75.00

Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner

The Hyatt is taking reservations now.

Call 800.233.1234

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

Also use this code when making reservations on-line
at the Lexington-Hyatt website - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Information and Forms will be posted soon at www.skysoldier.org and www.Skysoldier17.com



~ REUNION PROGRAM ~

Hosted by Midwest Chapter 17



June 6 - Wednesday

0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2230 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
1800 – 2000 President's Reception @ Jasmine-Franklin

June 7 - Thursday

0700 – 1230 Golf Outing TBA GC
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
1300 – 1600 Operation Corregidor II, Kentucky Theatre



June 8 - Friday

0830 – 1030 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast @ Regency 1
0900 – 1100 Board of Directors Meeting @ Regency 3
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Lobby
0900 – 2200 Vendors @ Kentucky Room
1000 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
1100 – 1500 Kentucky Veterans Memorial – Frankfort – VFW Lunch

June 9 - Saturday

0830 – 1000 Ladies Brunch @ Bluegrass Pre-function Area
0900 – 1130 General Membership Meeting @ Regency 1&2
0900 – 1700 Registration @ Regency 1 Foyer
0900 – 2330 Hospitality @ Hyttops Sports Bar
0900 – 2300 Vendors @ Kentucky Room

Banquet

1800 – 1845 Cocktail Hour @ Bluegrass Ballroom
1845 – 1900 Post Colors/Convocation @ Bluegrass Ballroom
1900 – 2035 Dinner @ Bluegrass Ballroom
2035 – 2115 Speakers & Awards @ Bluegrass Ballroom
2115 Retire the Colors

June 10 Sunday

0800 – 0900 Memorial Service @ Regency 1
1130 Reunion Closing

BE SURE TO ATTEND OPERATION CORREGIDOR II



173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION 2012 REUNION



JUNE 6-10, 2012, LEXINGTON, KY

~ Registration Form ~

Please print. Copy form for additional guest(s)

My Name: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Guest: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Brigade Unit Served With: _____

Dates served: _____

Registration/Event Fees

(Check boxes)

Per Sky Soldier Association Member ☒ \$99.
Per Each Guest. (Number of Guest(s) _____) ☐ \$75.
Children free - unless attending Reunion dinner
Per Child or all other extra dinner only guests ☐ \$40.
Per Gold Star Family Member ☐ \$75.
Per Active duty Soldier (Not on Orders) ☐ \$75.
Per Active Duty Soldier on Orders ☐ Free
(i.e. Command, Color Guard)
Per Vendor Table ☐ \$75.
Ladies Brunch (Number attending _____) ☐ Incl
Per player in Golf Tournament (No: _____) ☐ \$45

Enclosed is my check for this Total Amount: \$ _____

Please make Check Payable and Mail to:

Midwest Chapter 17
P.O. Box 09640
Columbus, OH 43209

Hotel Reservations:

Hyatt Regency – Lexington, \$115.00 + tax per night.
Reservations: 1-800-233-1234
Request group rate for 173d Airborne Assn. guestroom block or code G-173A. This is also the code to use if making reservations on-line at - www.lexington.hyatt.com

Overflow Hotel:

To be announced

"HISTORY, HORSES & HOOCH"



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OPERATION CORREGIDOR II

Midwest Chapter 17 is proud to announce we have invited five paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought throughout the Pacific during WWII to attend this year's 173d Association reunion in Lexington, KY as guests of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade. This is *troopers honoring troopers* and is not sanctioned by either the 173d or 503rd Associations. *It's a paratrooper thang.*

In 2010, at the annual reunion in N. Myrtle Beach, SC hosted by South Carolina Chapter 30, five (5) troopers of the 503rd attended as guests of men of our Brigade and friends of the 173d and 503rd. As honest Abe once said,

***“Any nation that does
not honor its heroes
will not long endure,”***

and that's just what we'll be doing in Lexington, honoring these men.

Of the over 3000 men who served with the 503rd during WWII, sadly, less than 100 troopers are still with us. We hope you'll join in not only helping out with the funding (until sufficient funds have been raised), but also attending our reunion this coming June and meeting these troopers personally and attending the WWII interactive presentations.

To date we've raised about 2/3 of the funds needed to cover the cost associated with inviting five 503rd troopers and their spouses or a family member to the reunion. For information about donating to this worthy effort, please contact rto173d@cfl.rr.com for details, or use the form on the following page to send in your donation -- please don't contribute if you're having financial difficulties.

As of now these Sky Soldiers and friends of the 173d and 503rd have made contributions. Our thanks to each of you! *Airborne!!*

Steve Aballa, 2/503 Ron Amyot, 2/503
Ed Anthony, 172d Mid John Arnold, 1RAR
Jim Baskin, 4/503 Bob Beemer, 2/503
Kane Benson, 1/503 Jerry Berry, 4/503
Pat Bowe, 2/503 Wayne Bowers, 2/503
Bravo Bulls, 2/503 Jim Brookmiller, 4/503
Bob Bruce, 1/503 Bob Carmichael, 2/503
Leta Carruth, 2/503 Friend Mark Carter, 173d LRRP
Chapter 27, Australia Chapter 30, 173d
Bob Clark, 5th SF Harry Cleland, 2/503

Honoring Our WWII 503rd Troopers

John Cleland, 173d Bde Dave Colbert, 2/503
Jim Cole, 2/503 Art Coogler, 1/503
Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP Gary Davidson, 2/503
Terry Davis, 2/503 Mike de Gyurky 2/503
Bruce Demboski, C/2/503 George Dexter, 2/503
Roger Dick, 2/503 Tom Dooley, 2/503
Joe Drabin, 2/503 Jim Dresser, 2/503
Frank Dukes, 2/503 Tony Esposito, 2/503
Scott Fairchild, 82nd Abn Pat Feely, B Med
Paul Fisher, 3/503 Craig Ford, 1/503
Joe Franklin, 173d Bde Jim Frelak, Cowboys
A.B. Garcia, 2/503 Tony Geishauser, Cowboys
Jim Gettel, 2/503 Larry Goff, 173d
Johnny Graham, 2/503 Jim Green, 2/503
Bernie Griffard, 2/503 Frank Guerrero, 4/503
Steve Haber, 2/503 Eddie Hair, 1/503
Larry Hampton, 1/503 Tom Hanson, 3/503
Bill Harlan, 2/503 Mike Harris, 2/503
Matt Harrison, 2/503 Jerry Hassler, 2/503
Hank Hatch, 2/503 Eng. Dennis Hill, 1/503, 3/503
Vince Hoang, SVAF Dick Holt, 2/503
Nick Hun, 2/503 Johnny Jones, 2/503
Peter Kacerguls, 3/503 Ken Kaplan, 2/503
Ed Kearney, 2/503 Jack Kelley, 2/503
Dave Kies, 2/503 Bill Knapp, 2/503
Bobby Kohaya, 2/503 Gary Kozdron, 1/503
John Kyne, 2/503 Joe Lamb, 2/503
David Leung, 1/503 Dave Linkenhoker, 2/503
Joe Logan, 2/503 Roy Lombardo, 2/503
Bob Lucas, 2/503 Richard Martinez, 2/503
Tom McGall, 101st Pat McShane, 173d
Bill Metheny, 4/503 Mark Mitchell, 2/503
Jim Montague, 2/503 Butch Nery, 4/503, N75
Bill Nicholls, 2/503 Joe Nigro, 101st
Hal Nobles, 3/503 Bill Ostlund, 173d
Jack Owens, 2/503 Larry Paladino, 2/503
Ed Perkins, 2/503 Lou Pincock, 2/503
Jack Price, 2/503 Gary Prisk, 2/503
Dan Reed, 2/503 Bill Reynolds, 2/503
Jack Ribera, 2/503 Jim Robinson, 2/503
Lee Robinson, 2/503 Graham Rollings, 2/503
Marjorie Royer, 173d Friend Jack Schimpf, 2/503
Roy Scott, 3/319 Bill Shippey, 2/503 N75
Steve Skolochenko, D Maint Ken Smith, 2/503
Lew Smith, 2/503 Jerry Sopko, 4/503
Larry Speed, 1/503 Jim Stanford, 2/503
George Stapleton, 3/503 Kaiser Sterbinsky, 2/503
Mike Sturges, 2/503 Bob Sweeney, 2/503
Bill Thomas, 2/503 Marc Thurston, 2/503
Alt Turner, 2/503 Steve Vargo, 2/503
Jerry Wiles, B/2/503 Ron Woodley, 2/503
Bill Wyatt, 2/503

All The Way!





~ OPERATION CORREGIDOR II ~



Honoring our WWII 503rd Paratroopers at 173d Reunion in Lexington

Yes! I am honored to support bringing to the 173d Airborne Brigade Association's annual reunion in Lexington, KY as guests of our Brigade, paratroopers of the 503rd PRCT who fought in the Pacific during WWII.

My name: _____ Unit: _____

To help offset the cost for this, enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____.

Please add to note line *"503rd Guest Donation"* and mail check payable to:

Midwest Chapter 17
P.O. Box 09640
Columbus, OH 43209

Note: Your donation, not to exceed \$100., will be used to help defray the cost of hotel rooms, reunion registrations and special gifts to our 503rd PRCT guests on behalf of the officers and men of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep).



L-R: WWII 503rd PRCT troopers who attended the Myrtle Beach Reunion in 2010 as guests of our Brigade: Chet Nycum, Chuck Breit, Charlie Hylton, the late Paul Hinds and John Cleland.



Chuck teaching lyrics to *Blood on the Risers* to 1st Bat's Craig Ford in SC.



Charlie ready to burst out in song before doing a mean Texas 2 Step.



You could hear a pin drop as **Chet** told of his PLF on *The Rock*.



Honoring those 503rd super troopers at 173d reunion in Myrtle Beach, SC, 2010.



"Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure"

~ President Abraham Lincoln





~ Operation Corregidor II ~

During our 173d reunion this coming June in Lexington, KY, the Chapter 17 reunion steering committee has secured the *Kentucky Theatre* just a couple blocks from reunion central at the Hyatt Hotel, to serve as site for *Operation Corregidor II*, the interactive meeting with WWII 503rd troopers; *Operation Corregidor I* having been held in N. Myrtle Beach at our 2010 reunion, and *Operation Corregidor* having been held in Corregidor in 1945. This historic building will be ideal for this gathering of paratrooper warriors and their families. Chapter 17 is even providing popcorn and cold drinks!

More than just a movie house...

The Kentucky Theatre is a familiar Landmark to generations of Lexingtonians. It's richly ornamented walls and glowing stained glass fixtures have hosted gala events and entertained overflowing crowds. They have also endured hard times and disasters, both natural and manmade. And so it stands today, a true palace of memories, a hall full of comedy, tragedy, drama, adventure, and just plain fun.

We hope you enjoy this brief look at her history and join us soon to continue the tradition by making some memories of your own.



Publicity stunt for an early "talkie" featuring The Marx Brothers. (Courtesy, University of Kentucky Photo Archives)

1965

The Sound of Music. Thousands lined up daily to see this summer's timeless hit.



The present Kentucky Theatre auditorium

(by Lee P. Thomas)



Operation Corregidor II
coming soon to
the Kentucky



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October, 1921

Construction plans announced. The Builder, Lafayette Amusement Company offered \$20 in gold to name Lexington's "palatial new photoplay house".

The winner, of course, was the "Kentucky."

April 24, 1927

Enter the "talkies". In a major marketing coup, the Kentucky was the first to introduce Warner Brothers' vitaphone sound films to Lexington.



The concession area
(by Raymond Adams)

~ For The Love of a Sky Soldier ~
*The only thing harder than being a soldier,
is loving one.*

Dear 173rd,

I am enclosing photos of my fiancé Leonard A. Lanzarin. He went by Larry. These photos are from 1969-1970. He was and is the love of my life. We were both so excited about our wedding day but that was not to come to pass. I think about him every day. He died November 4, 1970. Amongst the many writings and doodles on his bedroom wall he wrote:



Larry

*“The time has come for me to change
from what I am to what I am going to
be, and from thereafter the world will
see me.”*

Little did we know. Do with these photos as you wish. My part is done. I am letting the world see him. He was with A CO, 2/503 Infantry, 173rd ABN BDE.

Sincerely,

Melinda Valle
melogg@sbcglobal.net

Am I the only one coming out of the woodwork after all this time?

Dear Melinda:

No, my dear, you are not the only one. In fact, you are with many as they are with you, and you are in the best of company.

Leonard Allan Lanzarin

Specialist Four

A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY

173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

San Francisco, California

June 26, 1950 to November 4, 1970

LEONARD A LANZARIN

is on the Wall at Panel 06W Line 039





WH: Compensation Due Some Troops In Foreclosure

March 6, 2012

by Bryant Jordan

Last month's settlement between the government and major banks means servicemembers who were wrongly foreclosed upon will be "*substantially compensated for what the bank did to you and your family*," President Barack Obama announced Tuesday.

"And if you are a member of the armed forces with a high interest rate and you were not allowed to lower it while on active service -- which the banks are required to do by law -- the banks will refund you the money you would have saved, along with substantial penalty," Obama said.

February's settlement includes several specific provisions for servicemembers and veterans. These include relief for servicemembers who were forced to sell their homes for less than the amount they owed due to a permanent change in station; extending certain foreclosure protections afforded under the *Service-member Civil Relief Act* to troops serving in a combat theater; and a requirement that banks pay \$10 million into a Department of Veterans Affairs fund that guarantees loans for vets.

More from Military.com

Assisted Living House and VA Benefits... directvaloans.com

If a home in an assisted living community is what you need, then it's possible that veterans' benefits can help.

Homes in assisted living communities are often for sale rather than rent. VA borrowers with assisted living needs may be able to get a VA-guaranteed mortgage to finance a property located in an assisted living community.

As long as the property meets VA requirements for acceptable use, then it can be considered for VA financing. For instance, condos and townhomes must be on the VA-approved list, and all properties must undergo a VA appraisal and provide safe living conditions.

Qualified veterans or surviving spouses with assisted living needs may purchase approved homes in assisted living communities using the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program, and there may be additional VA benefits available.

Through an underutilized VA benefit called ***Aid and Attendance***, wartime veterans and surviving spouses can receive reimbursement for in-home care. Those who are unable to feed and dress themselves and take care of bathing and other bodily needs without assistance, and those who are bedridden or need help with prosthetic or orthopedic devices, may qualify for the Aid and Attendance benefit. Also, those with physical or mental injuries or illnesses that may require assistance to protect them from daily environmental hazards or dangers may also qualify.

The annual income threshold for Aid and Attendance is currently \$18,234 for a veteran with no dependents. Those with one dependent can make \$21,615 and still qualify. For each additional dependent, the threshold is upped by \$1,866. For surviving spouses with no dependents, the annual Aid and Attendance threshold is \$11,715. For spouses with one dependent, the threshold is \$13,976 and increases by \$1,866 for each additional dependent.

The advantages of buying a home using a VA loan include:

- No money down up to conforming loan limits
- No monthly private mortgage insurance
- No prepayment penalties
- Competitive interest rates

For more information about purchasing a home in an assisted-living community using a VA-guaranteed loan contact a VA specialty lender.



Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard Presents:

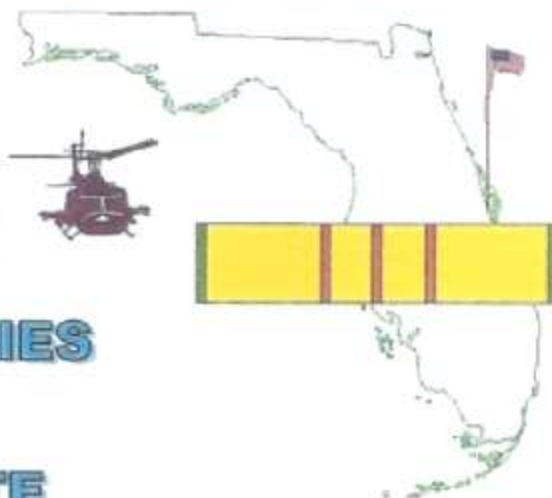
Florida's 25th Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion

The Nations Largest Veterans Reunion
Supported by the Vietnam and All Veterans of Florida, Inc.- VVOF.org

April 26 – 29, 2012

Additionally, come visit The Vietnam Traveling Memorial WALL April 22-29, 2012

LIVE MUSIC
FOOD & DRINKS
MILITARY VENDORS
MILITARY DISPLAYS
POW / MIA CEREMONIES
THE LAST PATROL
THE MOVING TRIBUTE



Also visit the Reunion Web Page at:
floridaveteransreunion.com

Meet Your Vet Brothers & Sisters
All Veterans, Families and Public Invited

Wickham Park
321-255-4307 - Melbourne, FL
Take I-95 to Exit 191 or old Exit 73
No Coolers, Glass or Pets allowed
in the Reunion Area

Per Wickham Park: Golf Carts Permitted
for the Handicapped Only And Must
Abide By FL Highway Laws

Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall
<http://travelingwall.us>

Vietnam and All Veterans of
Brevard, Inc
PO Box 237225
Cocoa, FL 32923-7225



Call For Info:

321-501-6896
321-427-2843
Fax (321) 690-0106

vets2gether@cfl.rr.com
Daydrmr333@aol.com

Vendor Information:
dmwassmer@yahoo.com





INCOMING!



~ A Small Herd World ~

Last night I was sitting in a bar about 30 miles from the U.S. border talking with a guy. The 'army' came up and we had a few words. A guy sitting a few seats down said, "I hear you were in the army." He said me too. I asked who he had served with. He said the 173d. Well, I moved seats and we had a few. He had been in the 3rd Bat and came back with them to Campbell. I have another friend now.

Ron Thomas
173d LRRP

~ About the Jump ~

It was 45 years ago today, 22 Feb 1967, that the 2nd Bn made its jump in Op Junction City. To all of the "We Try Harder" battalion in your network, I will raise a toast to all of them, especially to my Bravo Bulls.

Ken Kaplan
CO B/2/503d

Operation Junction City; the one o'clock position near the Cambodian border. Has it REALLY been that long?

Barry 'slo' Salant
D/2/503d

Wondering if you were going to have anything about the 45th anniversary of the Combat Jump? Hopefully there are still many of us alive that made that jump. It would be nice to know how many of us are left. Just an idea for the February newsletter. Airborne,

Steve Wilby
HHC/2/503d

*Hi Steve: February newsletter went out at the end of January with only brief reference to the combat jump. We featured the jump in an earlier edition, see **February 2011, Issue 24, Pages 13-16**. The March newsletter is being sent today and tomorrow. Will likely return to the jump in a future issue. Thanks bro. Ed*



The Jump

~ The Hammer ~

I ran into 1SGT Jackson at the Fort Dix Commissary this morning. I saw the 173d on his hat and asked what unit. He said C/2/503rd, '63 to '66. I said "You were with 1SG Jackson's unit." He said, "I am 1SG Jackson." We then had a big hug. He's looking good and still getting out there.

Joe Logan
B/2/503d



Desmond Jackson

Drop for 20 Joe.

~ 3/503 Luncheon Scheduled ~

Make a note on your calendars: The 3rd Batt in coordination with the National Reunion activities will be holding a Luncheon on 7 Jun 2012 at 11:30 in the Blue Fire Grill in the Hyatt, our reunion hotel in Lexington, KY. The reservation has been made with Emily Dowd, Senior Convention Services Manager, for 30-50 possible attendees with arrangement made for us to order off the existing menu. The prices are really fair.

I will be bringing a Echo Co Guidon. Paul Fisher tells me he will have one for HHC. Don't know at this point whether Mike Switzer will be present with Charlie Co's Guidon and or if Eldon Meade will there with his Charlie Co. We just might have two for Co C.



Now - is there anyone out there in A, B or D with some Airborne Esprit De Corps who might be interested in obtaining and bringing your Guidon? If so, I purchased mine at Benning Awards. It is the real deal. I keep mine on my "I love Me Wall" at home except for when it is at the Reunions.

Mason Branstetter
Nov Plt, D/3/503 Apr-Jun 70
TOC Dty O, Jun-Oct 70
E Co, 3/503 Oct 70 - Apr 71
503.873.3545
mason@silvertonrealty.com



Do you miss it?

Author Unknown

Occasionally, I venture back to one or another military post, where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, *"Have a good day, Sir!"*

Every time I go back to any Military Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, many years ago.



The military is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced -- a place where everybody is busy, but not too busy to take care of business.

Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score.

Service personnel wear their careers on their uniforms, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their name tag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line military formation that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon.

I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the tarmac, the bark of drill instructors and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business -- especially in times of war. But, I miss the salutes I'd throw at senior officers and the crisp returns as we crisscrossed with a *"by-your-leave"* sir.

I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds.

I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.



2/503 Chargin' Charlies at Zinn....hurry up and wait.
(Photo by Jack Leide, CO C/2/503d)

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender.

I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea.

Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it, and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind with their youth.

Face it - we miss it.....Whether you had one tour or a career, it shaped your life.

[Sent in by Ken Redding & John "Sulli" Sullivan, HHC/2/503d]



GLIMPSES OF A WAR

GIs Go 'Digging' in Iron Triangle

By Leon Daniel
United Press International
The Miami Herald
January 29, 1967

SAIGON – Fourteen months ago a U.S. general said confidently,

“The Iron Triangle is no more.”

Brig. Gen. Ellis W. Williamson, who at the time was commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, believed that his paratroopers had once and for all denied the Viet Cong their traditional sanctuary only 20 miles northwest of Saigon.

The general was wrong.



Camp Zinn. (Photo by Bob Sweeney, B/2/503d)

This is why on Jan. 8 U.S. forces mounted the largest offensive of the war. Their mission was the one Williamson believed his men had accomplished in November of 1965.

The Iron Triangle is a 25-square-mile wedge of jungle and paddy fields. It concealed, according to intelligence reports, the headquarters of the Viet Cong's Fourth Military Region, which controls Communist activities in and around Saigon.

The mission of Operation Cedar Falls was to destroy, utterly and completely, the Viet Cong's base camps, supply depots and field hospitals in the Iron Triangle and make it impossible for the Communists to operate there again.

Military experts have learned the folly of premature optimism in regard to the Iron Triangle, but it now appears that the mission of Operation Cedar Falls has been virtually accomplished.

Gen Jonathan O. Seaman, commander of the Second Field Force, in command of Operation Cedar Falls, says he is cautiously optimistic.

“It will be a few months before we realized the effect this will have on the Viet Cong,” said Seaman, who before his present assignment commanded the First Infantry Division. *“We have undone a good portion of work the Viet Cong have been carrying out for 20 years.”*

The war's biggest ground operation to date involved 28 battalions and 34 artillery batteries – 30,000 American troops.

A foot-by-foot search of the triangle resulted in the finding of miles of underground tunnels, a network housing tons of rice, guns and ammunition.

U.S. planes have bombed the triangle repeatedly for the last year and a half, apparently with little effect.

Some of the tunnels found during the last two weeks were estimated to be 20 years old.

The need for Operation Cedar Falls became clear when the Viet Cong sharply increased their activities in and around Saigon. Incidents of terror have more than doubled in the past year.

Saigon was shelled in November and last month Tan Son Nhut Air Base on the edge of the capital city was attacked.

(continued....)



When U.S. troops made their first foray into the triangle 14 months ago, the Viet Cong simply faded away. U.S. forces were determined this would not happen during Operation Cedar Falls.

The triangle was completely surrounded to cut off escape routes. But the objective was not just to trap the Viet Cong. This time the American intended to destroy the triangle as a base.

To do this 60 bulldozers cut wide swatches through the jungle, destroying the cover the Viet Cong had used so successfully.

From now on the triangle can be reconnoitered by planes and helicopters. The slightest sign of enemy activity could result in bombing and artillery barrages of pinpoint accuracy.

Cedar Falls represents an important departure from previous policy in that U.S. officials decided to raze all hamlets in the area and resettle some 8,000 inhabitants elsewhere.

This monumental task was undertaken so that the Viet Cong could never again rely on the villagers for food and information.



The massive evacuation was carried out by U.S. and South Vietnamese troops and officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The troops were taken by helicopter into the village of Ben Suc on the Saigon River. Intelligence reports said Ben Suc was on the Viet Cong logistics route to War Zone D.

As soon as the soldiers had surrounded Ben Suc a loudspeaker warned the inhabitants not to flee or they would be shot as Viet Cong. The soldiers assembled the villagers, and men between 15 and 45 were led off for questioning.

Within three days Ben Suc and other hamlets in the triangle were deserted. The people and their possessions were loaded aboard boats and shipped downriver to a refugee camp at Phu Couong.

All of the homes in the triangle were destroyed, most of them by burning. Families in the camp, which now contains 6,100 refugees are eligible for a 5,000-piaster (\$42.30) resettlement payment. They also get a daily food payment and supplementary rice and other foods.

There are only about 700 men in the camp and this will make resettlement difficult. Many families are without men to build new homes.

The villagers brought out a large portion of their household goods and nearly all of their livestock, which was lifted out by helicopters.

More than 2,300 tons of Viet Cong rice also were flown to the refugee center for the villagers.

The refugee camp was constructed only three days before the operation in order not to tip off the Viet Cong. Several families live in long canvas tents laid over bamboo frames. The tents are in neat rows.

Many of the refugees are relatives of dedicated Viet Cong guerrillas, some of whom still are being captured in the underground fortifications in the triangle.

Gen. Seaman said the tactics used in Cedar Falls could be used successfully in other areas of the country, but added that ringing the triangle with troops was relatively simple because of the natural borders formed by rivers and roads.

And he said that such traditional trouble spots near Saigon as the Ho Bo Woods and the Boi Loi Woods are far less formidable now than they once were. He said these areas are now relatively clear of Viet Cong.



~ Distinguished Service Cross ~

DSC

The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) is the second highest military decoration which can be awarded to a member of the United States Army (and previously, the United States Army Air Forces), for extreme gallantry and risk of life in actual combat with an armed enemy force.

Actions which merit the Distinguished Service Cross must be of such a high degree to be above those required for all other U.S. combat decorations but not meeting the criteria for the Medal of Honor. The Distinguished Service Cross is equivalent to the Navy Cross (Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) and the Air Force Cross (Air Force).

The Distinguished Service Cross was first awarded during World War I. In addition, a number of awards were made for actions before World War I. In many cases, these were to soldiers who had received a Certificate of Merit for gallantry which, at the time, was the only other honor for gallantry the Army could award, or recommend a Medal of Honor. Others were belated recognition of actions in the Philippines, on the Mexican Border and during the Boxer Rebellion.

This decoration is distinct from the Distinguished Service Medal, which is awarded to persons in



recognition of exceptionally meritorious service to the government of the United States in a duty of great responsibility. The Distinguished Service Cross was established by President Woodrow Wilson on January 2, 1918. General Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Forces in France, had recommended that recognition other than the Medal of Honor be authorized for the Armed Forces of the United States for valorous service rendered in like manner to that awarded by the European Armies. The request for establishment of the medal was forwarded from the Secretary of War to the President in a letter dated December 28, 1917. The Act of Congress establishing this

award (193-65th Congress), dated July 9, 1918, is contained in 10 U.S.C. § 3742. The establishment of the Distinguished Service Cross was promulgated in War Department General Order No. 6, dated January 12, 1918.



~ 2/503d Recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross ~

KARL LEE BULLARD

First Lieutenant, U.S. Army

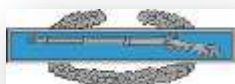
Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.

173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

Date of Action: May 5, 1968

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Karl Lee Bullard, First Lieutenant (Infantry), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. First Lieutenant Bullard distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 5 May 1968 as an infantry platoon leader. A reinforced Viet Cong company launched a violent attack on his company's position near Bong Son. Throughout the attack, Lieutenant Bullard moved from one position to another along the perimeter, directing the fire of his men. When the attack had been repulsed, he called for volunteers to move outside the perimeter with him to recover a friendly squad which was isolated, surrounded and under attack. Lieutenant Bullard was wounded in the leg during the maneuver but refused to stop for medical treatment. When his troops reached the squad, he directed them in laying down a base of fire to cover the withdrawal. After insuring that all the beleaguered element's members had returned to safety, he moved out again to rescue a second isolated squad. Lieutenant Bullard advanced across two hundred meters of enemy controlled terrain before he contacted the surrounded element. When he arrived, he found that all the men in the squad had been wounded and the position was still receiving intense fire. The enemy then mounted a massive ground assault. Several of the Viet Cong fell at Lieutenant Bullard's feet as he directed the fire of his men which succeeded in repulsing the attack. While returning to the company perimeter, he personally killed two more insurgents. When the second squad had been brought to safety, Lieutenant Bullard left the perimeter a third time to recover a radio and machine gun which his men had been forced to leave behind. Lieutenant Bullard was personally responsible for inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy and for saving the lives of twelve American soldiers. First Lieutenant Bullard's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.



EUGENE R. DAVIS

Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army

Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Inf. Reg.

173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)

Date of Action: July 7, 1965

Citation:

The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Eugene R. Davis, Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving as 3d Platoon Sergeant, Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade. On 7 July 1965, Company B was engaged in a search and destroy operation in an area approximately fifteen miles northeast of Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. Moving in a company wedge formation, the 3d platoon led the point. At about 1000 hours, the forward element of the platoon encountered heavy hostile fire from an automatic weapon and small arms which emanated from a concealed insurgent position. In the initial burst, the 3d Platoon Leader and another platoon member were killed. Due to the heavy concentration of fire that followed, the point squad of the platoon was pinned down. Realizing the importance of locating and destroying the insurgent position, Sergeant Davis, with complete disregard for his own personal safety, exposed himself to the hostile fire and charged forward, firing his weapon and lobbing grenades, in a desperate attempt to pinpoint and destroy the hostile gun position. His weapon jammed and grenades expended, Sergeant Davis was forced to halt the assault. Rearmed with a weapon and more grenades, he charged twice again through the murderous hail of insurgent fire, falling back only after expending his ammunition and grenades. However, as a result of his efforts during the third assault, he was able to pinpoint the exact location of the hostile machine gun. Notwithstanding the fact that he was completely exhausted and dazed from a projectile which damaged his helmet and web equipment, Sergeant Davis mustered fantastic courage and fanatic determination and assisted by two others, assaulted the Viet Cong position for the fourth time, inflicting heavy casualties and silencing the deadly automatic weapon. His heroic actions and courage served to inspire the men of Company B to gain the initiative and successfully complete their assigned mission. Sergeant Davis' extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

