

Once the beachhead was secured, the 504th PIR and the 376th PFAB began an attack to recover Altavilla on September 16, 1943 and the division fought towards Naples which it reached on October 1, 1943 and moved in to the next day for security duty.

"Leg Infantry"

After Naples, the 504th PIR & the 376th PFAB were detached from the 82nd Airborne temporarily and fought as "leg infantry" through the hills of southern Italy as part of the 36th Infantry Division. On October 29th they captured Gallo. They then battled in the Winter Line commencing with attacks up Hill 687 on December 15th, 1943.

On 9 December 1943 Colonel Gavin was promoted to Brigadier General and assumed the duties of the Assistant Division Commander of the 82nd Airborne while Lt Col Herbert Batchellor assumed command of the 505th. During the early months of 1944, units of the Division were moved to England as the allies were preparing for the assault on Western Europe. The 505th PIR again changed commanders on 22 March 1944 when Lt Col William Ekman assumed command. He would lead the 505th through the remainder of the war.

Anzio - Operation Shingle

On January 22nd & 23rd 1944, the 504th PIR, landed on the beach at Anzio and participated in heavy combat along the Mussolini Canal. It was their fierce fighting during this defensive engagement that earned the 504th PIR the nickname *"Devils in Baggy Pants."* The nickname was taken from an entry made in a German officer's diary.



All Americans in Normandy

D-Day - Operation Neptune

While the 504th was detached, the remainder of the 82nd was pulled out of Italy in December 1943 and moved to the United Kingdom to prepare for the liberation of Europe. With two combat jumps under its belt, the 82nd Airborne Division was now ready for the most ambitious airborne operation of the war, Operation Neptune - the airborne invasion of Normandy. The operation was part of Operation OVERLORD, the amphibious assault on the northern coast of Nazi-occupied France.

In preparation for the operation, the division was reorganized. Two new parachute infantry regiments, the 507th and the 508th, joined the division. However, due to its depleted state following the fighting in Italy, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment did not take part in the invasion.

On June 5-6, 1944, the paratroopers of the 82nd's three parachute infantry regiments and reinforced glider infantry regiment boarded hundreds of transport planes and gliders and, began the largest airborne assault in history. They were among the first soldiers to fight in Normandy, France.

The division dropped behind Utah Beach, Normandy, France between Ste Mere-Eglise and Carentan on June 6th, 1944. They were reinforced by the 325th GIR the next day. The division remained under strong German pressure along the Merderit River. Eventually,



Charles DeGlopper

the 325th GIR crossed the river to secure a bridgehead at La Fiere on June 9th. It was during this action that Pfc Charles N. DeGlopper single-handedly defended his platoon's position and subsequently was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism.

The next day the 505th PIR captured Montebourg Station and on June 12th the 508th PIR crossed the Douve at Beuzeville-la-Bastille and reached Baup. They established a bridgehead at Pont l'Abbe on June 19th. The division then attacked down the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula and captured Hill 131 on July 3rd. The following day the 82nd seized Hill 95 overlooking La Haye-du-Puits.

(continued....)



By the time the All-American Division was pulled back to England on July 13, 1944, it had seen 33 days of bloody combat and suffered 5,245 paratroopers killed, wounded or missing. The Division's post battle report read,

"...33 days of action without relief, without replacements. Every mission accomplished. No ground gained was ever relinquished."

Following the Normandy invasion, the 82nd became part of the newly organized XVIII Airborne Corps which consisted of the U.S. 17th, 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. General Ridgway was promoted and assumed command of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Meanwhile, Assistant Division Commander, General James Gavin was also promoted and assumed command of the 82nd Airborne.

~ An All American ~

Robert (Bob) M. Murphy

Colonel (retired)

**Company A, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment,
82nd Airborne Division
Pathfinder**

Bob Murphy (ASN 11090385), born on 7-7-1925, son of Joseph and Anna Murphy. He joined the army on October 1st, 1942 at the age of 17 from Massachusetts. He volunteered for the paratroopers in 1943. He was assigned to company A of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Still at the age of 17 he landed at May 10, 1943 in Casablanca, Africa with the 82nd Airborne Division. He missed the Sicily jump because of a severe case of malaria. He jumped at October 1, 1943 with the 505th PIR at Paestum, Salerno.



After the Salerno jump Bob volunteered for Pathfinder School. He was part of the first official school of Pathfinders at Conise, Sicily in November 1943. After completing Pathfinder School he left Italy and went to Ireland and then England.

On June 6, 1944 Bob jumped as a Pathfinder/radio-operator in Normandy, France. After his Pathfinder duties he rejoined A-505 PIR and was involved in the battle at La Fiere bridge. On September 17, 1944 Bob jumped at Groesbeek, the Netherlands for Operation Market Garden. He was involved in the fight of Mook and Plasmolen and the Nijmegen Bridge. During the Battle of the Bulge he suffered a relapse of malaria. Among the medals Bob earned are 3 Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star. After the war he finished High School and attended Law School.

Unfortunately Bob passed away October 3rd, 2008.

Bob wrote a book about the actions of the 82nd Airborne Division in the Sainte-Mère-Église - Chef-du-pont perimeter. In the book, he recounts the actions around the La Fiere bridge, where the Airborne Division saw its toughest battle in the Normandy campaign. Many first-person testimonies and eye witness accounts are featured in the book.



Operation Market Garden

In September, the 82nd began planning for Operation Market Garden in Holland. The operation called for three-plus airborne divisions to seize and hold key bridges and roads deep behind German lines. The 504th now back at full strength rejoined the 82nd, while the 507th went to the 17th Airborne Division.

On September 17, the 82nd Airborne Division conducted its fourth combat jump of World War II into Holland. Fighting off ferocious German counterattacks, the 82nd captured the Maas Bridge at Grave, the Maas-Waal Canal Bridge at Heumen and the Nijmegen-Groesbeek Ridge. The next day attempts to take Nijmegen Highway Bridge failed.

On 20 September the 504th carried out a heroic assault crossing the Waal. With artillery support the first wave of the 504th assaulted, in twenty-six assault boats, under intense fire, taking 200 casualties in the process. Finally on D+4 the 504th finally secured their hold on the bridge, fighting off another German counterattack just before noon.

(continued....)





82nd Airborne paratroopers and trophy, a Panzer IV. In Holland, Operation Market Garden, September 1944.
(rudeerude)

It was in this skirmish that Pvt. John Towle earned the Medal of Honor. Its success, however, was short-lived because of the defeat of other Allied units at Arnhem. The gateway to Germany would not open in September 1944, and the 82nd was ordered back to France.

~ John Roderick Towle ~

Born: October 19, 1924 at Cleveland, OH
Entered service in the US Army from Cleveland, OH

Earned the Medal of Honor during World War II for heroism September 21, 1944 at Oosterhout, Holland

Died: September 21, 1944 at the age of 19



The rifle company in which Private Towle served as rocket launcher gunner was occupying a defensive position in the west sector of the recently established Nijmegen bridgehead when a strong enemy force of approximately 100 infantry supported by two tanks and a half-track formed for a counterattack. Private Towle immediately and without orders left his foxhole and moved 200 yards in the face of intense small-arms fire to a position on an exposed dike roadbed. From this position he fired his rocket launcher and hit both tanks to his immediate front. Armored skirting on them prevented penetration by the projectiles, but both vehicles withdrew slightly damaged. Still under intense fire and exposed to the enemy, Private Towle engaged a nearby house which nine Germans had entered and were using as a strongpoint and with one round killed all nine. Replenishing his ammunition, he then rushed approximately 125 yards through grazing enemy fire to an exposed position from which he could engage the enemy half-track with his rocket launcher. While in a kneeling position preparatory to firing on the enemy vehicle, Private Towle was mortally wounded by a mortar shell.

Battle of the Bulge - The Ardennes Offensive

Suddenly, on December 16, 1944, the Germans launched a surprise offensive through the Ardennes Forest which caught the Allies completely by surprise. The 82nd moved into action on December 17th in response to the German's Ardennes Counteroffensive and blunted General Von Runstedt's northern penetration in the American lines. On December 20th the 82nd attacked in the Vielsalm-St. Vith region and the 504th PIR took Monceau. This fierce attack forced the German units back across the Ambleve River the next day.



His first name was Gerd

However, further German assaults along the Salm hit the 505th PIR in the Trois Ponts area on December 22nd and by December 24th the division lost Manhay. On December 25th, 1944 the division withdrew from the Vielsalm salient then attacked northeast of Bra on December 27th reaching Salm by January 4th, 1945.

On January 7th the 508th PIR *Red Devil's* launched an attack with the 504th in the vicinity of Thier-du-Mont where it suffered heavy casualties. The 508th was then withdrawn from the line and placed in reserve until January 21st when it replaced elements of the 2d Infantry Division.

On January 29, 1945 First Sergeant Leonard Funk, Jr. of Company C, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment earned the Medal of Honor for action at Holzheim, Belgium, after leading his unit and capturing 80 Germans.



On February 7th, 1945 the division attacked Bergstein, a town on the Roer River.

President Truman presenting MOH to 1Sgt. Funk

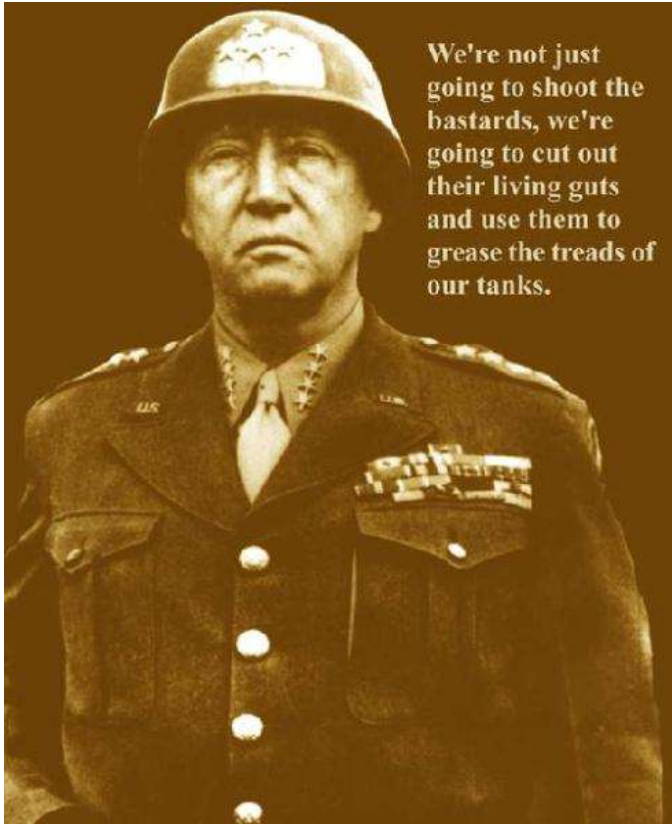
The 82nd crossed the Roer River on February 17th. During April, 1945 the division performed security duty in Cologne until they attacked in the Bleckede area and pushed toward the Elbe River. As the 504th PIR drove toward Forst Carrenzien, the German 21st Army surrendered to the division on May 2, 1945.

(continued....)



Occupation

Following the surrender of Germany, the 82nd was ordered to Berlin for occupation duty. In Berlin General George Patton was so impressed with the 82nd's honor guard he said, *"In all my years in the Army and all the honor guards I have ever seen, the 82nd's honor guard is undoubtedly the best."* Hence the "All-Americans" became known as *"America's Guard of Honor."*



The 82nd returned to the United States January 3, 1946. Instead of being demobilized, the 82nd made its permanent home at Fort Bragg, North Carolina and was designated a regular Army division on November 15, 1948.

Source:

http://www.ww2-airborne.us/division/82_overview.html

(Photos added)

A Few Other Quotes Credited to 'Blood & Guts' General Patton

A good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan executed next week.

A piece of spaghetti or a military unit can only be led from the front end.

A pint of sweat, saves a gallon of blood.

Accept the challenges so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory.

All very successful commanders are prima donnas and must be so treated.

Always do everything you ask of those you command.

Americans love to fight. All real Americans love the sting of battle.

Americans play to win at all times. I wouldn't give a hoot and hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost nor ever lose a war.

Battle is an orgy of disorder.

Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge. It brings out all that is best; it removes all that is base. All men are afraid in battle. The coward is the one who lets his fear overcome his sense of duty. Duty is the essence of manhood.

Better to fight for something than live for nothing.

Courage is fear holding on a minute longer.

Do your damndest in an ostentatious manner all the time.

Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.

I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs but how high he bounces when he hits bottom.

If a man does his best, what else is there?

If a man has done his best, what else is there?

If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking.

If we take the generally accepted definition of bravery as a quality which knows no fear, I have never seen a brave man. All men are frightened. The more intelligent they are, the more they are frightened.

If you tell people where to go, but not how to get there, you'll be amazed at the results.

Thirty years from now, when you're sitting around your fireside with your grandson on your knee and he asks you, *"What did you do in the great World War II,"* you won't have to say, *"Well... I shoveled shit in Louisiana."*

Not to be outdone by his counter-part, the German General, Erwin Rommel, the *Desert Fox*, had one of his own:

"In the absence of orders, go find something and kill it."



(continued....)



James Maurice Gavin

"Jumpin' Jim"

James M. Gavin was a prominent Lieutenant General in the United States Army during World War II. He was also referred to as "*The Jumping General*", because of his practice of taking part in combat drops with the paratroopers whom he commanded.

In his mid-30s at the time, Gavin was the youngest U.S. Major General commanding a division during World War II. During combat, he was known for his habit of carrying an M1 Garand rifle typically carried by enlisted U.S. soldiers, as opposed to the M1 carbine rifles and Colt Model M1911 .45 caliber pistols traditionally carried by officers.

His men respected him a great deal, affectionately referring to him as "Slim Jim" due to his athletic figure. Gavin fought against segregation in the U.S. Army, which gained him some notoriety.



Jumpin' Jim Gavin

Among his decorations, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star and the Purple Heart. He was also awarded the British Distinguished Service Order.

James M. Gavin was born in Brooklyn, New York on 22 March 1907. The birth certificate lists his name as James Nally Ryan, although Nally was crossed out. When he was about two years old, he was placed in the Convent of Mercy orphanage in Brooklyn, where he remained until he was adopted in 1909.

In school, he learned about the Civil War. From that point on, he decided to study everything he could about the subject. He was amazed at what he discovered and decided if he wanted to learn this "magic" of controlling thousands of troops, from miles away, he would have to continue his education at West Point.

His adoptive father was a hard-working miner, but the family still had trouble making ends meet. Gavin quit school after eighth grade and became a full time clerk at a shoe store for \$12.50 a week.

At the end of March, 1924, Gavin spoke with a US Army recruiting officer. Since he was under 18, he needed parental consent to enlist in the Army. The recruiting officer took him and a couple of other underage boys who were orphans as well, to a lawyer who declared himself their guardian and signed the parental consent paperwork.

On April 1, 1924, Gavin was sworn in to the US Army, and was stationed in Panama. His basic training was performed on the job in his unit, the US Coast Artillery in Fort Sherman.

Gavin spent his spare time reading books from the library, notably *Great Captains* and a biography of Hannibal.

Gavin arrived at West Point in the summer of 1925.

Gavin attended the United States Army Infantry School in Fort Benning, Georgia. This school was managed by Colonel George C. Marshall, who had brought Joseph Stillwell with him to lead the Tactics department of the school. Here Gavin found the army he was looking for: an army actively seeking new innovations and possibilities.

Gavin was very concerned about the fact that US Army vehicles, weapons and ammunition were at best a copy of the German equipment. "*It would not be sufficient to copy the Germans*", he declared. For the first time, Gavin talked about using Airborne forces: "*From what we had seen so far, it was clear the most promising area of all was airborne warfare, bringing the parachute troops and the glider troops to the battlefield in masses, especially trained, armed and equipped for that kind of warfare.*"

He took an interest in the German airborne assault on the Fort Eben-Emael in Belgium in May 1940, which was assaulted and conquered at night from the sky by well-equipped German paratroopers. This event, and his extensive study on Stonewall Jackson's movement tactics led him to volunteer for a posting in the new Airborne unit in April 1941.

Gavin was Commander of the 82nd Airborne and began training at the Airborne School in Fort Benning in July 1941, and graduated in August 1941. After graduating he served in an experimental unit. His first command was as Commanding Officer of C Company of the newly established 503rd Parachute Infantry Battalion.

One of his first priorities was determining how Airborne troops could be used most effectively. His first action was writing *FM 31-30: Tactics and Technique of Air-Borne Troops*. Later, when Gavin was asked what made his career take off so fast, he would answer: "*I wrote the book*".

In the spring of 1942 Gavin and went to the Army Headquarters in Washington D.C. to discuss the order of battle for the first US Airborne Division.



(continued....)





C-47 of the 303d TCS/442d TCG in invasion markings. The 442nd TCG carried the 1st Battalion 507th PIR on D-Day.

The US 82nd Infantry division (stationed in Camp Claiborne, Louisiana) was selected as the first division to be converted into an Airborne division. Lesley McNair's influence led to the 82nd Airborne division's initial composition of two Glider Infantry Regiments and one Parachute Infantry Regiment, with organic parachute and glider artillery and other support units.

Gavin became the commanding officer of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment in August 1942. He was promoted to Colonel shortly thereafter. Gavin built this regiment from the ground up, seeing this as the best way to reach their vision and goals. Gavin led his troops on long marches and realistic training sessions, creating the training missions himself and leading the marches personally. He also placed great value on having his officers *"the first out of the airplane door and the last in the chow line"*. This practice has continued to the present day in US Airborne units.

In February 1943, the US 82nd Airborne Division — consisting of the 325th and 326th Glider Infantry Regiments and the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment — was selected for the Allied invasion of Sicily. This selection came as a surprise for the division; most members thought that the US 101st Airborne Division would be selected, as that division was led by the "Father" of the Airborne idea, William C. Lee. Not enough gliders were available to have both glider regiments take part in the landings, so the 326th Glider Infantry Regiment was relieved from assignment to the 82nd on February 4, 1943 and replaced by Gavin's 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment effective February 10, 1943.

On April 10, 1943 Matthew B. Ridgway explained what their next mission would be: Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. Gavin's regiment would be the first ever in the US to make a regimental sized Airborne landing. Gavin declared: ***"It is exciting and stimulating that the first regimental parachute operation in the history of our army is to be taken by the 505th."***

Ridgway selected Gavin's regiment for the operation. General Patton suggested performing the invasion at night, but Ridgway and Gavin disagreed because they had not practiced night jumps. After mounting casualties during practice jumps, Gavin canceled all practice jumps until the invasion.

Gavin was part of Mission Boston on D-Day. This was a parachute combat assault conducted at night by the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division on

June 6, 1944, and part of the American airborne landings in Normandy.

For the first time General Gavin would lead the 82nd Airborne into combat. On Sunday, 17 September, Operation Market Garden took off. Market Garden, devised by the British General Bernard Montgomery consisted of an Airborne attack of three Airborne Divisions. The 82nd was to take the bridge across the Maas river in Grave, seize at least one of four bridges across the Maas-Waal canal and the bridge across the Waal river in Nijmegen. Also the 82nd was to take control of the high grounds in the vicinity of Groesbeek, a small Dutch town near the German border.



Gavin receiving the DSO from British Field Marshal Montgomery in Mönchengladbach, 21 March 1945

The 82nd Airborne consisted of the 504th, the 505th, and 508th Regiments. On September the 23rd, the 325th Glider Regiment would land to reinforce the 82nd. In the drop into Holland, Gavin landed on hard pavement instead of grass, injuring his back. He had it checked out by a doctor a few days later who told him that his back was fine, so he continued normally throughout the entirety of the war.

(continued....)



The battle of the 82nd Airborne culminated on September the 20th, with the famous Waal crossing of the 3rd Battalion of the 504th Regiment, under the command of Major Julian Cook. The 82nd would stay in Holland until November 13, when it was transferred to their new billets in Sisonne et Suippes, France.

Gavin also played a central role in integrating the U.S. military, beginning with his incorporation of the all-black 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion into the 82nd Airborne Division.

The 555th's commander, Colonel Bradley Biggs, referred to Gavin as perhaps the most "color-blind" Army officer in the entire service. Biggs' unit distinguished itself as "smokejumpers" in 1945, combating forest fires and disarming Japanese balloon bombs.

After the war, Gavin went on to high postwar command. He was a key player in stimulating the discussions which led to the Pentomic Division. As Army Chief of Research and Development and public author, he called for the use of mechanized troops transported by air to become a modern form of cavalry. He proposed deploying troops and light weight armored fighting vehicles by glider (or specially designed air dropped pod), aircraft, or helicopter to perform reconnaissance, raids, and screening operations. This led to the Howze Board, which had a great influence on the Army's use of helicopters — first seen during the Vietnam War.

While he was the US Army's Chief of Research & Development, he established a requirement for an armored, tracked, air-droppable Universal Carrier. This requirement crystallized in 1956 as the AAM/PVF (Airborne Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle).

Gavin retired in March 1958 as a Lieutenant General. He wrote a book, *"War and Peace in the Space Age"*, published in mid-1958, which, among other things, detailed his reasons for leaving the army at that time.

Upon retiring from the U.S. Army, Gavin was recruited by an industrial research and consulting firm, Arthur D. Little, Inc.



General Gavin speaking to President Kennedy

In 1961 President Kennedy asked Gavin to take a leave of absence from ADL and answer his country's call once again, to serve as US Ambassador to France. Kennedy hoped Gavin would be able to improve deteriorating diplomatic relations with France, due to his experiences with the French during World War II, and his wartime relationship with France's President, General Charles De Gaulle. This proved to be a successful strategy and Gavin served as the U.S. Ambassador to France in 1961 and 1962.

President Jimmy Carter, in 1977, considered the 70-year-old Gavin for CIA Director, before settling on Adm. Stansfield Turner.

He married Jean Emert Duncan of Knoxville, Tennessee, in July 1948 and remained married to her for 42 years, until his death in 1990.

Lieut. Gen. James Gavin, 82, Dies; Champion and Critic of Military

By Glenn Fowler

Published: February 25, 1990

Lieut. Gen. James M. Gavin, a World War II commander who went on to become a top Army administrator, a diplomat and a leading management consultant, died of complications from Parkinson's disease on Friday at the Keswick Nursing Home in Baltimore. He was 82 years old and had homes in Wianno, Mass., and Winter Park, Fla.



When he retired abruptly from the service in 1958 after a dispute with the Pentagon over what he considered a diminished role for the Army in missile development, General Gavin was, at 51, the military's youngest general officer of three-star rank.

James Maurice Gavin was a native of Brooklyn who was orphaned in childhood and reared by adoptive parents in the coal country of Pennsylvania. He left school after the eighth grade and worked at odd jobs until he joined the Army at 17.

Setting his sights on West Point, the young private took after-hours courses to gain a high-school education and passed a competitive examination to win appointment to the United States Military Academy.



“It Don’t Mean Nothin’”

An excerpt from *Nam Vet, Making Peace with Your Past*
by Chuck Dean, 1/503d & Support Battalion
173d Association National Chaplain Emeritus

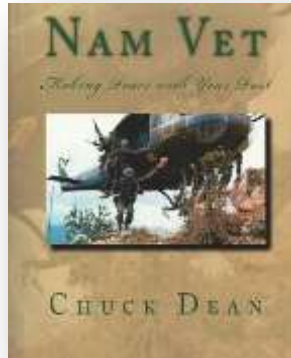
John sat down in an exhausted heap. The red dust puffed up as he leaned back on his heavy rucksack and pulled a cigarette from a small plastic container he kept in the camouflage band around his helmet.

The long hours of the battle for Hue City had lulled into a sudden stillness, leaving the soldiers of the 101st Airborne wondering if the 1968 Tet Offensive was over. They hoped it was, because the low cloud-cover had prevented them any access to air support from Navy jets. And “Charlie” had been pounding them unmercifully with everything he had.

Looking around through tired, eighteen-year-old eyes, John witnessed the carnage of a once-beautiful Asian city. Not one building had escaped the millions of pockmarks from bullets and shrapnel. The city was a complete shambles. Across the open square in front of him lay dead, mangled people and cattle. Cries of pain and wails of grief came from every direction.

The 120-degree sun already was boiling the putrid odors of decaying flesh and excrement into his nostrils, and he felt a helplessness engulf him. It was as if he had fallen into a dream, with no control to stop it. There was nothing he could do about where he was or what was going on around him. He must have already died and gone to hell, he reasoned, and this was what it was like there. It was the only logical answer for what he was experiencing, but what had he done to deserve being there?

All seemed lost in that moment. His life would never be the same again.



That was one young trooper’s experience after a hard-fought battle in Vietnam. It is also a classic example of how many veterans were inflicted with the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder of Depression. Depression is accompanied by a crippling sense of helplessness. It’s tough for a veteran to climb out of that hole, especially when he feels no one would ever understand the sorrow, guilt, anger, and pain he has witnessed or is currently feeling.

In the case of John, the ravages of the battle in Hue City brought on his depressed state. He is still haunted by the effects of those terrible hours in 1968. A few years ago he was working as a welder at a Seattle shipyard and happened to be in conversation with a couple of the younger men who had not been in ‘Nam. He was telling them about the cloud-cover over Hue which had kept air support from taking part in the battle. It was a cloudy day in Seattle, which is not unusual, and while relating the story to his friends, John felt a sudden rush of panic. He fell immobilized on the deck of the ship they were working on and had to leave work to recuperate from the shock of his “flashback.”

Depression is difficult to define, even more difficult to treat, yet is one of the most common afflictions known to humans. In order for you and others to understand your depression, we need to consider the traumatic wartime and postwar circumstances which brought it on. One major focal point is that we felt helpless as a result of our continuing to live in an apathetic environment.

For many a war never ends...

Although the Vietnam War officially ended in 1975, it still rages in the lives of thousands of veterans and their families. This book not only tells why so many Vietnam veterans suffer from flashbacks, depression, fits of rage, nightmares, emotional numbing, and broken relationships, but it offers solid answers and gives hope. It reveals the way to peace on the subject of post-traumatic stress disorder for those who have survived the ravages of combat.



Chuck

“‘Nam Vet’ is an intensely personal book in which Dean bares his life and soul. Because of that, it is one of the more practical, helpful and timely books to hit the shelves in the past few years.”

Charles Edgren, *El Paso Herald-Post*



2/503d Newsletter Editor’s Choice

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On War, Guilt and 'Thank You for Your Service'

By Elizabeth Samet

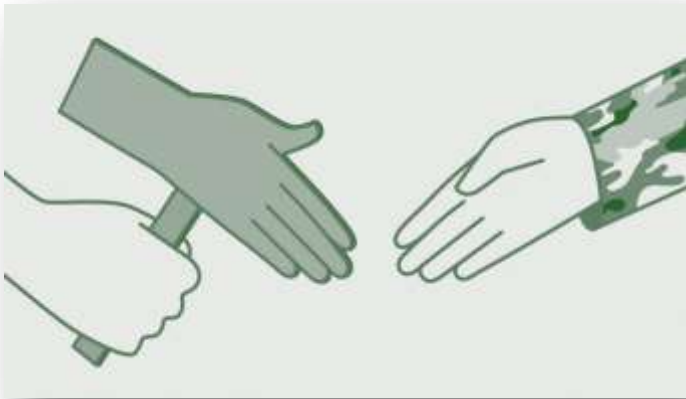


Illustration by Ethan Buller

Watch a 1940s or 1950s movie set in New York City -- noir, comedy or melodrama -- and you are sure to spot him: straphanging on a crowded subway car, buying a newspaper at a kiosk or sitting in a coffee shop. The anonymous man in uniform is a stock extra in these films, as elemental to the urban landscape as the beat cop, the woman with the baby carriage or the couple in love.

But today, a woman or man in military uniform dining in a restaurant, sitting on a bench in Central Park or walking up Broadway constitutes a spectacle. I have witnessed this firsthand whenever one of my military colleagues and I have taken West Point cadets to the city to attend a performance or to visit a library or museum. My civilian clothes provide camouflage as I watch my uniformed friends bombarded by gratitude.

These meetings between soldier and civilian turn quickly into street theater. The soldier is recognized with a handshake. There's often a request for a photograph or the tracing of a six-degrees-of-separation genealogy: "My wife's second cousin is married to a guy in the 82nd Airborne." Each encounter concludes with a ritual utterance: "Thank you for your service."

Obligatory Thanks

One former captain I know proposed that "thank you for your service" has become "an obligatory salutation." Dutifully offered by strangers, "somewhere between an afterthought and heartfelt appreciation," it is gratifying but also embarrassing to a soldier with a strong sense of modesty and professionalism. "People thank me for my service," another officer noted, "but they don't really know what I've done."

Sometimes, the drama between soldier and civilian turns plain weird. One officer reported that while shopping in uniform at the grocery store one evening, she was startled by a man across the aisle who gave her an earnest, Hollywood-style, chest-thumping Roman salute. My friend is unfailingly gracious, but she was entirely at a loss for a proper response.

These transactions resemble celebrity sightings -- with the same awkwardness, enthusiasm and suspension of normal expectations about privacy and personal space. Yet while the celebrity is an individual recognized for a unique, highly publicized performance, the soldier is anonymous, a symbol of an aggregate. His or her performance is unseen.

Spitting on Soldiers

The successful reincorporation of veterans into civil society entails a complex, evolving process. Today, the soldier's homecoming has been further complicated by the absence of a draft, which removes soldiers from the cultural mainstream, and by the fact that the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have little perceptible impact on the rhythms of daily life at home.

Whether anyone ever spat on an American soldier returning from Vietnam is a matter of debate. The sociologist and veteran Jerry Lembcke disputed such tales in *"The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam."* Apocryphal or not, this image has become emblematic of an era's shame, and of the failure of civilians to respond appropriately to the people they had sent to fight a bankrupt war.

The specter of this guilt -- this perdurable archetype of the hostile homecoming -- animates today's encounters, which seem to have swung to the other unthinking extreme. "Thank you for your service" has become a mantra of atonement. But, as is all too often the case with gestures of atonement, substance has been eclipsed by mechanical ritual. After the engagement, both parties retreat to separate camps, without a significant exchange of ideas or perspectives having passed between them.

Collective Responsibility

When I broached the subject with a major with whom I had experienced the phenomenon, he wrote a nuanced response. Although he's convinced that *"the sentiments most people express appear to be genuinely FELT,"* he nonetheless distrusts such spectacles. *"Does the act of thanking a soldier unconsciously hold some degree of absolution from the collective responsibility?"* he asked.

(continued....)



No reasonable person would argue that thanking soldiers for their service isn't preferable to spitting on them. Yet at least in the perfunctory, formulaic way many such meetings take place, it is an equally unnatural exchange. The ease with which *"thank you for your service"* has circumvented a more enduring human connection doesn't bode well for mutual understanding between soldiers and civilians. The inner lives of soldiers remain opaque to most of us.

A Seductive Transaction

"Deep down," the major, who served in Iraq, acknowledged, *"my ego wants to embrace the ritualized adoration, the sense of purpose, and the attendant mythology."* The giving and receiving of thanks is a seductive transaction, and no one knows that better than this officer: *"I eagerly shake hands, engage in small talk, and pose for pictures with total strangers."* Juxtaposed in his mind with scenes from Fallujah or Arlington National Cemetery, however, his sanitized encounters with civilians make him feel like Mickey Mouse, he confessed. *"Welcome to Disneyland."*

Thanking soldiers on their way to or from a war isn't the same as imaginatively following them there.

Conscience-easing expressions of gratitude by politicians and citizens cloak with courtesy the often bloody, wounding nature of a soldier's service. Today's dominant narrative, one that favors sentimentality over scrutiny, embodies a fantasy that everything will be okay if only we display enough flag-waving enthusiasm. More than 100,000 homeless veterans, and more than 40,000 troops wounded in action in Iraq and Afghanistan, may have a different view.

Lincoln's Consolation

If our theater of gratitude provoked introspection or led to a substantive dialogue between giver and recipient, I would celebrate it. But having witnessed these bizarre, fleeting scenes, I have come to believe that they are a poor substitute for something more difficult and painful - a conversation about what war does to the people who serve and to the people who don't. There are contradictions inherent in being, as many Americans claim to be, for the troops but against the war. Most fail to consider the social responsibilities such a stance commits them to fulfilling in the coming decades.



We've been there, and done that.

Few Americans have understood more clearly the seductions and inadequacies of professing gratitude than Abraham Lincoln. Offering to a mother who had lost two sons in the Civil War *"the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic,"* Lincoln nevertheless acknowledged *"how weak and fruitless must be any words ... which should attempt to beguile"* her from her grief. Expressions of thanks constitute the beginning, not the end, of obligation.

(Elizabeth Samet is a professor of English at the U.S. Military Academy and the author of *"Soldier's Heart: Reading Literature Through Peace and War at West Point."* The opinions expressed are her own.)

Source:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-08-02/war-guilt-and-thank-you-for-your-service-commentary-by-elizabeth-samet.html>



"Thank you for your service."

Gee. What took ya?



This appeared in the local paper here in Florida:

**Just say
thank you
for service
compliment**

Dear Abby: My husband served in Vietnam and proudly wears a Vietnam veteran insignia on his jacket or cap everywhere he goes. People approach him all the time and thank him for his service, which is wonderful. The big question is, how should he respond? He isn't quite sure what to say back to them – *"You're welcome"*? *"It was my honor to serve"*? *"Thank you for caring"*?

I told my husband I'd ask you. What's the proper thing to say when someone is kind enough to take a minute to say thanks?

--Vet's Wife in Phoenix

Dear Vet's Wife: I'm sure being thanked for his service in Vietnam is music to your husband's ears. When members of the military returned home from Vietnam, many of them were treated with hostility. A proper response when someone thanks him for his service would be any of those you offered, or a simple, *"Thanks for saying that. I appreciate it."*

--Abby

Being thanked for our service in Vietnam is a new phenomenon for us. We posed the same question to some of our guys, and here's what they said:

"I wear a 173d hat and get that a lot from young adults and even teens. It makes me feel proud to have served my country. Whenever someone *'Thanks me for my service'*, I always tell them they are welcome, and I feel great about it. I wish it could have happened years ago when we returned home from Viet Nam. Airborne, All The Way."

Ron Amyot
Recon/HHC/2/503d



"I really feel great when someone thanks me for my service. Many times it's a vet from a different conflict and I put my hand on their shoulder and thank them back. Tears sometimes flow."

Bryan Bowley
B/2/503d



"I kind of get this by saying *'thank you for your service'* to our recent generation of warriors; somehow it gives me comfort. I will often pick up their tab at a fast food restaurant or bar; again it is kind of like me somehow getting the thank you myself."

Wayne Cleveland
A/2/503d

"Because of the way they treated my troops when they came home, I'll never forgive that generation, especially the ones in San Francisco to which I was a witness. One of my great young sergeants who went home after his tour of duty, suddenly returned four weeks later. I was astonished when I saw him. He was a tall lanky, good looking kid. I quickened my steps and caught up with him on my way to the Fire Fly Chopper Pad at Bong Son. I had been signing paperwork at the Orderly Room, when the S-3 called me and told me that my company had made contact with an NVA unit and the CO's Chopper was coming in to pick me up. So I'm heading for the chopper pad and see this kid walking, head bowed down. I recognized him immediately. Funny how one knows ones troops even from a distance.

(continued....)



I caught up with him and as I pulled up beside him I asked him, 'You, here? What in the hell are you doing here; I thought you hated the Army'. He stopped, looked at me with tears streaming from his eyes. Shit, I still start to cry as I think back. He looked at me through his tears and said, 'Sir, this is the only home I have. This is my family.' My father called me a baby killer -- his father had fought in WWII. My First Sergeant was Henrique Salas, and we are still in touch. You have to remember, that I was not affected by much except the deep personal pain of others. I saw my first mass executions at the age of 6 and a half in January 1945, and spent two years in a German orphanage after the war, with a year and a half in hospitals before I came to this wonderful country. The first American soldiers I met were from the 101st Airborne Division, they bought me my first milkshake. I fell literally head over heels in love with America and there was nothing I wanted to be more than an American. It really didn't matter to me what names people called me. As a little boy in Germany in the orphanage, I was used to being called a Hungarian Swine. But my troops, I took care of and anyone who hurt their feelings I hated as much as I hated the Communists. This is why I always smile and say 'Thank you ma'am, the ammo was free, and I hate commies, so it was a pleasure'. Here's my last 'official' photograph taken 6 years ago at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Notice the 173d lapel pin on my jacket."



Mike de Gyurky
B/HHC/2/503d



Mo at the ready

anyone says *thank you for your service*, I normally say that you *are welcome* and keep the rest inside."

Darrell "Moe" Elmore
C/D/HHC/2/503d & SF

"I usually say, 'Well, Thank You, I appreciate that. You are thoughtful and kind.' I then introduce myself and offer to shake the person's hand. This photo was taken in January on one of my Striped Bass fishing trips. The photo is with my son, retired 1SG Joe Esposito (with the winter facial hair) and some of our catch." ☺

Tony Esposito
C/HHC/2/503d



Joe & Tony

"I often wear my 'Vietnam Veteran's' cap and sense appreciative and respectful glances. When someone says 'Thanks for your service', I always reply with, 'You're welcome, and thank you'. I have had Vietnam-era veterans say thanks and apologize for not having served in RVN. To that I tell them they did their part by serving. The photo includes me, second from left and between two original Tuskegee Airmen. The man on the right is an honorary member. I don't know their names.

Earle Graham
A/2/503d



(continued....)



"I just say thank you. Sometimes I remember not saying anything, or I just nod or I'll shake hands if a friend, or I'll shake hands and hug if a Vet or wife of a Vet, or then I'll just give a big, warm Texas hug for family members. I am a 22 year Army retiree, and I just got it pounded into me and taught from older servicemen; *it's my job*, or, most of the time while in the Army, really all the time while in the Army or at home. I just say plainly and softly, *I was just doing my job*; that is what I was doing, it was my business to do the Army's job, with no or little thank you expected. I was getting paid and I loved my job. I guess it's how you look at things, or maybe how you were brought up. After a while you just come up with your own mental attitude towards praise and thanks and pats on the back. I know in my job, unless I told the cook that he or she did a good job, that they would never get thanked. Whenever we would win a trophy for cooking in the field or being the best on a Post, I always, always picked a cook to receive the trophy or praise or honor. It's very few times a cook can get recognition for just his or her everyday job. You see, a dining facility is the hub of the wheel, the center gathering place 3 times a day or even maybe 4 times a day. And, it's the place to unload if the food is not better than just good. We see our co-workers, including the officers and civilians, if any on base, each day. I was always proud of my cooks. We always were one of the best wherever we were. We prided ourselves in doing more than just what was required. I was the trainer, the teacher, and the helper. My cooks did the work, and they deserve the thanks, always. Just my own simple opinion. Even when I was in the infantry and an Airborne Ranger, I still acted the same. I was taught the old way, of what a soldier and NCO does or doesn't do. I have nothing but the utmost respect for any and all who served their country. Me, I was drafted. I put food on the table and took care of my family, and we went around the world twice. I retired as an E-8. I miss the Army. I miss the challenge. I miss the knowledge of knowing that I did a great job, *The Army Way*, not my way. I miss old friends and longtime friends far-away. I miss all the fun and travel. Just so many good memories. Take care, and God bless."

Chris Henhofer
B/2/503d

"I generally respond (if I know the individuals background) to soldiers: *Thanks for your service, as well.* To non-soldiers, *Thanks for being a great American.*"



Carol & Ranger Roy
Roy Lombardo
B/2/503d

"I usually just say, *'Thank you. That means more than you will ever know.'*"

Olaf Hurd
Recon/2/503d



Olaf, on left, being presented with an award by his Recon buddy Jerry Hassler.

"Hey You Old Fart....That Little Boy was Big enough to Make you Cry .. Huh .. !? Yeah, that shit happens to all of us now and then. Kinda like my Dad Finally Giving Me a Pat on the back and telling me *"Great Job Mowing the Lawn, and you didn't run over any of your Mother's Roses this time."* I was finally GOOD Enough. Just a TINY Bit Of Recognition is all I (WE) ever wanted. I know it's not what you're talking about BUT Finally a Thank You we've been wanting for So Long. I'll see if I can find a Recent pic. I know there was one good one in the Post Office some time back, it even had a side view -- they might have taken it down by now. All The Fuckin' Way...DOWN.....Airborne!"



Post Office Photo?
Richard "Airborne" Martinez
B/2/503d

"I've had that happen several times. I'm always taken with it, almost speechless (imagine that), and do my mumbled thank you. I've been thanks by a civilian, a SGM and a Colonel, so I guess I've caught the spread. **It is not the destination but the journey."**

David Maxey
B/HHC/2/503d

(continued....)



"I recently started using the services of a local cleaners and when I met the proprietor I walked in as a young female Marine soldier was making her way out the door. I stopped her for a moment and 'thanked her for her service to our country' to which she replied, *'It is my privilege, Sir, to serve this great nation of people like you!'* The owner, Glenn, told me he was still a bit uncomfortable doing that. I was in a hurry yet I promised to let him know the next time I picked up my clothes 'why it was important to me...' A week later, I did. I explained that I had been asked to be a pallbearer at a funeral to a 'great aunt' in my former wife's family. She was a great lady and I felt compelled to carry out the family's request. When I arrived at the church I met a young Marine in full dress uniform who was related by marriage, as well. We spoke briefly and I was very impressed with the quality of his character. After the funeral, I left to return home. A few short weeks later I received news that the young Marine had been killed in Iraq shortly after he had returned to duty...it seems that morning he was killed he had gone to the dispensary where one of the soldiers had gone berserk and had killed a bunch of our troops at the medical clinic, indiscriminately...the young Marine never knew what 'hit' him. I cried like a baby. I told Glenn that one never knows when war will claim its next victim, and that when I spoke to his mom she informed me of the pride the young Marine had in serving his country...our country. I think of all the times that 'no one ever came and shook my hand for having served in Southeast Asia as a young Combat Medic'...and it made me feel 'privileged' to have been around long enough to acknowledge the service of others. I have always gone the extra distance to greet all soldiers, whether they are in line at the grocery store or at the local gas station, and I have found a few WWII survivors as well...they tell me that the Vietnam era vets are dying at the rate of almost (400) a day and that there are some 850 thousand of us left. I would like to thank all of them collectively and individually for their 'time in Hell'...on behalf of a grateful Nation...and the rest of us. It is the proper and well-deserved honor we should bestow on them. I do not care to be recognized in that fashion so much for me as it would be a tribute to all those who didn't come home....like we did. There should never be any concern over walking up to a soldier and giving them the few moments it takes to 'thank them'...the more 'we' do it, the more others will see that it's the right thing to do. This Nation was built by warriors who sacrificed everything to give others a chance to live in freedom. This country has been at war some 209 years out of the total years we have been 'a country', always helping others around the



globe and taking only the earth it takes to bury someone in as a form of land grant. I served in the 'Nam for a year...365 days, yet, our unit fought its way through 230 days of some form of engagement in battle, as I know the rest of you guys did, as well. These days, the only 'peace' I get is when I approach our fine soldiers and 'thank them', accordingly. You never know whether you will ever see them again or whether what you say gives them that sense of peace that they are doing the right thing. Regardless of whether you get that from others, it is our obligation to those who serve us today to tell them 'we care'. Sincerely, a Combat Medic in the 'Nam."

Rick 'Doc' Navarrete'

The 'Herd'

A/2/503d

Central Highlands, '68'69

"It is indeed refreshing, after all these years, to be thanked for service to our country. Like so many of us, I was really caught off guard by my first "Thank you!" experience just a few years ago. And like so many of us, I've learned to accept it with great pride. My response is a friendly, humble smile, a warm handshake, and a thank you in return. And after nearly 50 years, it feels GREAT!"

Jerry Nissley

B/2/503d

"I ALWAYS thank anyone that I can identify as a veteran. I will walk 20 feet out of my way to do so. I do not wear a veteran's cap or shirt very often. That way the veteran is receiving my praise not knowing that I am also a veteran. To me, this has a much more effective result. On the few occasions that I do wear, no one has ever thanked me. That's o.k.



by me. I receive a lot of different responses, many such as *"That was a long time ago"*. Many say, *"I'd do it all over again"*. I see a big smile from the veteran as well as their wives. Some hug their husband, pull him close holding on to their arms. I used to get a little teary eyed when I first started. My wife also enjoys the responses as everyone is smiling. That is my welcome home, and I enjoy every minute of it. As all of our veterans are aware, few have ever been thanked for their service. If it were I receiving the recognition, I would respond with a thank you and a smile!"

Dave Norman

A/2/503, 68-69

(continued....)



"If you knew what I did for you, you probably wouldn't thank me."

Gary Prisk
C/D/2/503d



Company CO, the "Teenage Captain" Gary Prisk (C), taking a coffee break with his *Hill People* somewhere in Southeast Asia. *"We were young once, and soldiers."*

"I was standing in line at a Stop & Shop grocery store. I was wearing a 173d shirt, muscles bulging, and the couple in front of me turned, noticed my shirt (and muscles) then asked if I was in Vietnam. *Uh, yeah*, I said. They smiled and said, *"Thank you"*. The old guy shook my hand. I thought of that all the way home, with a few tears. When I got home, I told my wife, Peg. She held me, and I cried. The last time, I was coming out of the VA. I was again wearing a Herd shirt, lettering front and back, when a young vet from Iraq, I think, walked past, stopped and turned. He held out his hand and said, *'Welcome home, brother'*."

Jack "Jackattack" Ribera
A/2/503d

Editor's note: Now, Mr. Ribera is a close friend. In fact, he and I and other troopers from the 2/503d & 1/503d reinvaded VN in 2001. And, I must admit his brief story here did cause some fog to happen. But, I'll be damned if I know what the hell those *'bulging muscles'* are he keeps talking about! Ed



A/2/503 troopers Mike Sturges on left with the multi-bulging muscled Jack "Jackattack" Ribera at war museum in Saigon 2001, introducing an old friend they met in '66. *Welcome home brothers, and yes, thanks for your service.*

"Recently you asked us for our responses when folks thanked us for our service. I am seldom asked, as my hat rarely causes folks to ask about Vietnam. However, I always wear a miniature set of jump wings on my lapel whenever I am wearing a sport coat or suit. Occasionally, some asshole will bellow (mostly for his audience) *'I can't understand why anyone would jump out of a perfectly good plane Ha Ha.'* I usually smile and say, *'Well sir, it has been my experience that the guys who ask me that question usually lack the intelligence to grasp the concept or the balls to execute it.'* Obviously, I don't make many new friends at cocktail parties. I just say *'thank you'* then try to change the subject."

Jim Robinson
B/2/503d

"It is something very new and I am often surprised at this recognition, albeit unexpected. It too at times stirs the emotions. My response is often a simple nod, a smile and thank you...followed at times and circumstance with a handshake! I try to acknowledge their intent and to return their recognition of our service with a quiet smile and a nod. Regards."

"Tome Dancing"

Tome Roubideaux

A/2/503d, 173d LRRP, 74th LRP and N Co 75th RGR



"Last July Fourth, I found myself hobbled after stepping into a two-foot hole. When it was time for me to attend the parade, I was wearing my 173d cap and using a walking stick. A tall, young man came climbing out of the crowd, extended his right hand, and *'thanked me for my service'*. This was new to me, as well. I believe this happened because of my hobbling, since it hadn't occurred before. I was a bit taken aback...but I did manage an *'Uh...uh... It was my pleasure; any time.'* Man, but I didn't feel all that great about it; as though I'd used a prop for sympathy. Upon reflection, however, I realized that the young man was doing his best to recognize *us all*; good for him!"

'tooslo'
D/2/503d

(continued....)



"My wife and I were at a Denny's enjoying our senior-discount breakfast, with me wearing my 173d cap to cover the ever-widening bald spot which had invaded my scalp, when a young lad maybe 9 or 10 years old approached our table.



Smitty & Smittytoo

He stopped in front of me and said, "Thank you for your service." Frankly, I was dumb founded, and I did my utmost to mumble a *thank you* while at the same time trying my best to hide the tears welling up in this old soldier's eyes. It was good to be thanked, finally."

Lew "Smitty" Smith

HHC/2/503d

"Like you, I was dumb founded the first time I was thanked for my service a few years ago. I coughed out, 'It was my honor.' On the occasions I'm thanked for my service, that's my response. ATFW"

Marc Thurston

D/2/503d

"The first time I was thanked was in '90 or '91 when I finally made myself visit the Wall. I'd gone down to DC with a friend who was researching a play so, while he was working in the Library of Congress I walked down the Mall. It took all morning and when I finally got there only a few people were around. I walked up and down from one end to



Russ. A good lookin' young trooper

the other. There were all sorts of mementos at various places along the Wall. I kept walking along searching for names, found a few, and scanning the gifts, when I saw a small piece of paper in a plastic sheet protector. I looked closer, and on it in the handwriting of what looked like a 10 or 12 year old was a simple message saying '...thank you for protecting us...' Up until then I hadn't felt much from my visit, but reading that note kicked my knees out from under me and I cried like a baby. It's been hard over the years to judge the sincerity of thanks for service. It seems to have become a response similar to 'Bless you' when you sneeze. But that simple note helps with perspective -- at least a little. Thanks."

Russell Webb

HHC/2/503d

~ 503rd Paratrooper Extraordinaire ~

It is with the deepest remorse that I write to inform you of the passing of my Father, Prior A. McCallum. He fought in the Pacific during WWII and helped defeat the Japanese at Corregidor and take back The Rock. His health has been declining for the last year. He passed away quietly on March 23rd at 93 years young. His heart was always with all of you even though he could not be there. I would just like to say thank you all for your service and for keeping an old man going with things such as the *Static Line*. He has been almost completely blind for the last three years. I would read every edition to him. At no other time would you see him pay more attention than at these times. My Dad loved God, his Flag and his fellow Paratroopers. God Bless you all.

Thomas McCallum

Son of a Paratrooper

Prior A. McCallum

1918-2012

A native of Baton Rouge and resident of Ventress, born August 13, 1918, in Plaquemine, he passed away peacefully on Friday, March 23, 2012, at 5 p.m. He was 93. Interment was held in Greenoaks Memorial Park Cemetery, Baton Rouge. He is survived by his brother, Edmund McCallum, of Baton Rouge, and daughters, Pam and Elma Sue; a daughter, Noy Spann, of Pensacola, Fla., and her family; a son, Thomas McCallum and family, of St. Francisville; nephew, Ronnie McCallum and family, of Port Hudson; was related to the Gascon's from Plaquemine area; and many grand, great and great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Belle E. McCallum; daughter, Joan L. Fleegle; two sons, Robert "Bobby" P. and Steven W. McCallum. He served our country proudly in the Pacific during World War II. He was a member of the 503rd parachute regimental combat team that recaptured Corregidor, also known as "The Rock" in 1945. Thanks for your service, dad, and may you rest in peace.



To sign the online guest register, visit

www.nilandfuneralservice.com.



3/319th Sky Diver Skip Kniley & Friends

This photo was taken after his free-fall onto the shoreline of Cocoa Beach, FL during one of the 2/503 reunions. Damn Arty get all the good Red Cross packages! Hooters girls were on-hand serving wings to the guys with wings.



Skip with Hooters

True story: As Skip and his Vietnam vet buddies were plummeting to earth (sand?), two, young, local bikini-clad sea creatures ran by hoping to meet Skip and his fellow daredevils. After they all hit the DZ safely, save one trooper who landed a couple hotels south of the drop zone, the young ladies slowly and dejectedly walked away. One was heard to say, "Where are the young paratroopers?" No shit. Just standing there listening to them was like a knife to the heart. Ed



Them Yummy C-Rats

Remember the fine cuisine we ate in Vietnam???

John "Top" Searcy
HHC/2/503d)



Sturges: *I'll trade you my Salem's for your pound cake.*
Gettel: *Hell no!*

It's A Small World After All

In the biography of Dick Adams (see Page 35) on his WWII 503 PRCT experience and his return to Corregidor, I spied a familiar name. He mentioned Peter Parsons, son of CDR Chick Parsons, who helped guide him and his wife around the island. In 1927 to 1930, I was 3 to 6 years old and was living with my parents at Petit Barracks, a one battalion US Army post just outside of the Province Capital of Zamboanga on the Philippine Island of Mindanao. My father was company commander of D



Col. Dexter on Okinawa
circa '64/'65 ready to blast

Company, 45th Infantry, Philippine Scouts (colonial troops under command of US Army officers) at Petit Barracks. There were a handful of civilian Americans who lived with their families in Zamboanga or nearby, businessmen or administrators in the colonial administration, and they mingled socially with the American officers and their families at Petit Barracks. Chick Parsons was one of these friends of my parents whose name I remember. During World War II word somehow got back and circulated among the old Petit Barracks crowd that Chick Parsons was involved with the guerrilla movement in Luzon, the northern island of the Philippines. In 1946 or 1947 I was stationed in Manila and somehow learned that Chick Parsons owned a shipping business in the Manila port area. I looked him up and managed to spend an hour with him in his office where he reminisced about my folks and the prewar days in Zamboanga.

George Dexter, Col. (Ret)
2/503d Bn CO, RVN '65/'66

~ 2/503d Photo History ~ All Years in Vietnam

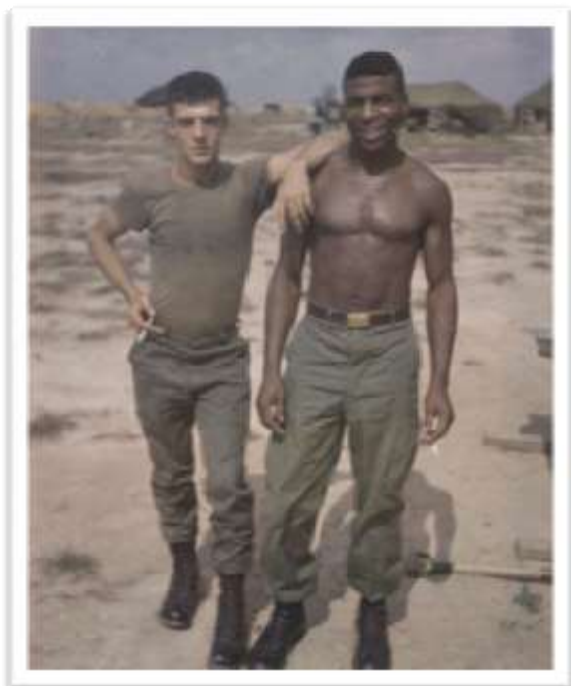
Don't forget to email all your photos from Vietnam for our *Photo History*. Please send as JPEGs with brief descriptive information to rto173d@cfl.rr.com

See following sample page....



2/503 Photo History ~ Vietnam 1965-66

Les Daniels, A/2/503d, Collection



L-R: SP Alimeda & PFC Robert Wright at Zinn



Playing softball outside camp – *who's on first? Hell, who's on guard?!*



Les with Montagnard kids



Jack Lynx from Cleveland





Thank you for your service.

