

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

**WE TRY
HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ *newsletter*



June 2012, Issue 41

Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

See all issues to date at the 503rd Heritage Battalion web site:
http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



335th AHC Cowboys delivering their cargo of 2/503d troopers into the rice paddies of SVN.
(Photo by Door-Gunner John Cavinee, Cowboys, cousin of Ron Cavinee, A/2/503d, KIA)



Chaplain's Corner

"I Got Your 6"

This is my second opportunity to share with you, and I'm glad that you are back! Let me review, just a moment, where we were and where we finished last month. The Scripture I used was from Isaiah 6:8 *"Here am I, send me."*



Cap

You'll recall the theme of my messages is the words from Shakespeare's play...King Henry V. The English are surrounded by the French in France in the year 1415; the odds are 5-to-1 and it doesn't look good. But the King has a vision, and he shares it with his men and...the victory is theirs. Likewise, in the Stephen Ambrose book *"Band of Brothers"* these same words are shared; *We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers.*

In our daily battles and struggles it will always be easier if the fight is not ours alone. The first priority is that we call on the Lord. Then, who are the brothers in your life that you can reach out to in times of trouble and need? Likewise, can those same brothers reach out to you and me when they are up against the wall? If they can and if we can, then we are truly a band of brothers.

One of the commitments that I have always found comfort in is when a brother offers to lend a hand and shows that he is with me. In the military, at least back in the old days when I served, there was an expression... *"I Got Your 6."* The meaning to me was just as applicable to my friends in the Air Force and Marines. If we were organized for the fight, then there would be flank security on the left and right and a recon or advanced element to the front. What always was a concern to me, both in the military and in civilian life, was what was coming up behind me, and to hear a brother say... *"I got your 6 covered"* was a commitment that someone was looking after me, was praying for me. It was also a commitment I find that I need to make to ensure that friends of mine know that I'm concerned about them -- and, am willing and prepared to cover "their 6" when they face difficulties. Make sense? Do you do that?

I remember once speaking to a men's group in a church and sharing with them about *"I got your 6 covered"* and what it meant. I used as an example their pastor and their responsibility to ensure that he was covered and

that the criticism that pastors face was countered and that his needs were being shared, met, and overcome. The next Sunday, the Pastor stood up behind the podium as church started and on the podium were a stack of notes--each saying... *"Pastor, I got your 6 covered."* They were praying for him and guarding him, so to speak, and they were part of his team.

Just maybe the Lord has a call on your life to reach out and help someone else. I believe He has a mission for you and me. Even as you read this message, and regardless where we might be...God has a purpose for us right now, right where you are, and no matter who you and I are. Whatever we might have encountered in our past or what's in our future, He has permitted us to be in this place and time for a specific reason... *"for such a time as this"* (Esther 4:14).

Look and search for that duty that He wants you to participate in. Seek those opportunities. He has something specific for you to accomplish in your present situation, and He wants us to look for the opportunities to serve Him in our present sphere of influence. We are part of His plan and He is calling us...and our response should be... *"Here am I, send me"* (Isaiah 6:8).

Let me challenge you to seek out this week a brother in need. What might you do to help him? Maybe it's a need that several of you need to join together to accomplish. Look for the opportunity to share with that brother and tell him... *"I've Got Your 6."*

Look forward to being with you next month--check out Philippians 4:8--and until then remember who we are...

We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers.



2/503d Recon, circa '66/'67. A band of brothers.

(Photo by Pat Bowe, Recon/2/503d)



FALLEN COMRADES' FAMILIES FOUND

By Wambi Cook

Alpha 2/503, 2/67-2/68

Thanks to our newsletter's special *Battle of the Slopes* edition this past June 2011, I was finally able to connect with families with whom I was unsuccessful in contacting years back. Surprisingly, those sources instrumental in my successes were not from the Herd, but are everyday citizens only loosely connected with the deceased.



Stephen Mika

Nannette D. put me in touch with David Heller's family in Colorado. Susanne, a Chicago transplant now living in Seattle, somehow got hold of the same issue, and was the catalyst in my finding Thomas Duffy's six siblings in Illinois and Washington State. Many thanks to a friend, who initiated contact with me in his attempt to ascertain info on the last days of his older brother's dear childhood friend, Russell "Rusty" Engle. Through his efforts, I'm in close contact with Stephen Mika's sister, Pat, who still resides in Northwest, Ohio.

Just a couple weeks back, I found a military video clip which not only contained images of her younger brother, but that of several other A Company members both living and dead.

**Tom Deschenes,
Unk, Tom Duffy,
Charles Kizer**

Last August I received an email inquiry about an A Company KIA, last name Duffy, mentioned in my article, *Buckets of Blood* (see June 2011, Issue 29). Susanne, a classmate and family friend, inquired if the Duffy I referred to in the article had the first name of Thomas, a native of her hometown of Oak Glen, IL. I immediately responded with an affirmative and through several subsequent emails, Susanne provided me with personal details that resulted in a conference call with five of Tom's remaining siblings located in Illinois and Seattle. According to the Duffys, I was the first and only person they'd spoken with who actually knew their



brother personally. (After AIT and Benning, myself and a dozen or so others from 49th class were assigned to Alpha). Our hour plus conversation was cleansing for all of us. Brian Duffy hopes to attend the reunion in Lexington where he'll meet a couple other Slopes survivors who knew his big brother.

I also wrote of KIA medic Joseph Junior Heller who I'm convinced saved several of our asses on 6/22/67, all without firing a shot. Keith Hale contacted me desiring personal insight into his older brother's best friend, Russell "Rusty" Engle another Slopes KIA. I recalled cursory encounters with Engle, but was unable to shed more light on his last days or hours. Keith never served in the military, but recognized early on how close Rusty's death affected his older brother even to this day. After all these years some family members have yet to come to grips with the death of their loved ones. Such is the case of Heller's brother, a Marine, whose vain requests to deploy to Viet Nam so that his older sibling could come home were approved a couple months too late.

Lastly, without Keith's persistence, I would never have been able to speak with John "Mac" Meacham's niece from Ohio. She and several other family members are military vets, and were overwhelmed to hear first-hand about her Uncle John who died when she was five years old.

The outpouring of gracious thanks bestowed upon me was underserved to say the least. I assured them that these exchanges have done as much for my mental well-being beyond my wildest imagination. Often times such encounters elicit terms such as "closure and finality", but I look upon them as "Long overdue beginnings."

After almost giving up on reconnecting with families of my friends, I've been rejuvenated and the impetus to drive on is stronger than ever. Perhaps I've shown to someone else that it's never too late.



Greg and Brian



Army Names Fort Bliss Soldier Family Care Center In Memory of SPC Hugo V. "Doc" Mendoza

By Leta Carruth

On Thursday April 12, 2012 the Army held a Memorial Naming Ceremony at Fort Bliss/Biggs Airfield, TX to rename the Soldier Family Care Center to the "SPC Hugo V. Mendoza Soldier Family Care Center" in memory of SPC Hugo "Doc" Mendoza. SPC Mendoza was killed in action in Afghanistan on October 25, 2007. The 143,000 square foot clinic is the largest free standing clinic in the Army.



SPC Hugo V. Mendoza Soldier Family Care Center

It could not have been a more beautiful day for the ceremony. As you can see from the photo above, the sky was blue. The temperatures were moderate. There was a bit of a breeze from time to time.

SPC Mendoza was killed in action on October 25, 2012 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan while tending to his wounded battle buddies during an ambush during Operation Rock Avalanche.



SPC Hugo Mendoza in Afghanistan during OEF VIII

SPC Mendoza enlisted in the U.S. Army on 31 May 2005. During his time in service, he completed Basic Infantry Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Medical Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. On 6 March 2006, SPC Mendoza reported to his first duty station at Caserma, Ederle, Vicenza, Italy. He was assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry – The ROCK. SPC Mendoza was then assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company with duty as a combat medic in Battle Company. He immediately found his home among the combat warriors of 1st Platoon – The Celts. SPC Mendoza trained, deployed and fought side by side with his band of brothers in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM VIII. SPC Mendoza distinguished himself in The ROCK as a heroic medic, charismatic Paratrooper, and an overall altruistic human being.

On October 25, 2007 as the paratroopers were making their way back to the KOP (Korengal Outpost) when they were ambushed by the enemy. The enemy had set up a classic "L" shaped ambush in anticipation of the paratroopers. SPC Mendoza, was wounded almost immediately but continued to both return fire and treat the wounded until he succumbed to his wounds.

As the Army band and the high school choir played and sang the National Anthem a huge gust of wind came barreling through the venue. The wreath in front of the speaker's podium slammed face first into the ground. Then the tents were lifted off the ground. The poles came loose from the tents in a couple of places. Some Soldiers ran to secure the tents to keep them from slamming down on the crowd. No one (other than the Soldiers securing the tents) seemed to move and the choir never missed a note. I have to confess that the hair on my neck stood up. The ceremony continued with a few much less strong gusts from time to time. After the ceremony was over all of the paratroopers were in agreement that the blast of wind was Hugo checking in to say "all is well". An incredibly poignant moment.

COL (Dr.) Bruce Adams, the outgoing chief of medical staff at William Beaumont Army Medical Center spoke at the ceremony. He said, "Soldiers join the Army to serve the nation. Medics join the Army to serve soldiers. It's a sacred bond." It took a year and a half to get this honor for Mendoza approved by the Army, Adams said. Three criteria had to be met to have the clinic named after him – "display distinguished service, have a local connection and be a doctor, nurse or medic."

(continued....)



COL Adams also said about SPC Mendoza, *"The El Pasoan exemplified what it means to be a combat medic."*

After COL Adams spoke SSG Sal Giunta, who served with SPC Mendoza and was in the ambush that fateful day, spoke about Hugo. In part, Sal said, *"I promise you he was an honest-to-goodness hero,"* said Salvatore Giunta, a former Army staff sergeant and a Medal of Honor recipient who attended the ceremony. *"And he was a great man. Seeing Mendoza have a medical clinic named after him is 'bittersweet,'"* said Giunta.

"He was the type of man who wanted to do good things for other people," said Giunta. *"He's no longer here to do that, and we'll now have to step up and live our lives by helping others out and treating people with respect like he did."*



SSG Sal Giunta - Medal of Honor Recipient for his actions on the same day SPC Mendoza was killed by the enemy

After COL Adams and SSG Giunta finished their remarks they accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Mendoza and SPC Mendoza's two brothers to the beautiful garden in front of the Soldier Family Care Center to unveil the plaque honoring SPC Mendoza.

Then the Soldiers in attendance who had served with SPC Mendoza unveiled the wall in the garden.



SPC Mendoza's family, Sal and Colonel Adams at the unveiling.

It was such an honor and privilege to be present for this. The Mendoza family is one of the most loving and accepting families I have ever met. I am happy for them that some of the Soldiers who were with Hugo that fateful day were able to attend as well as the large number of the Mendoza's family and friends from California, Arizona and Texas. Most of all I am happy that the Army chose to honor SPC Mendoza by naming the Soldier Family Care Center in his memory so that his name will live on forever even to those who didn't know him.

Rest in Peace Hugo. You will certainly never be forgotten.



Welcome to Bien Hoa G.I.

Subject: A movie covering part of the period from 1966 until Operation Junction City, 1967
[produced in 1968]. See film at
<http://www.archive.org/details/gov.dod.dimoc.30209>

This is a slick propaganda piece for sure, but very interesting nevertheless. All the action here happened before my time in the Nam. I wonder how many of you guys appear in this?

Hugh "Hubie" Imhof
N75 Rangers



Hubie

Watch out for bayonet attacks

Yeah, that movie was a scream. I'm glad the guy with the pipe hung around to get the skinny on the brigade, although I don't remember seeing him anywhere. Good job, old sport.

Those guys getting off the boat; I was there somewhere. We got off the USS Breckenridge in the offing of the Saigon River, boarded two LSTs and chugged up the river to Saigon. A Vietnamese band and a bunch of women wearing áo dài were waiting for us on the dock.



Mark

The air force had laid on a couple dozen trucks for us. They were lined up across the street from the dock. The pics of troops going through town don't show our leg of the convoy. In our part of the convoy, we all locked and loaded, and stood up facing outboard, on account of how the air force drivers took great pains to warn us about civilians and kids with grenades, and we should especially be wary of second-story windows until we got out of town because of the VC snipers. If you ever went to Saigon, you know that *all* the goddam buildings had second story windows, several of them, and that day, the Vietnamese filled them all so they could cheer our arrival, but they were sort of put off by us sighting in on them as we drove through town. The first miracle of our arrival was that we didn't shoot anybody before we got out of town.

The drivers hauled us to Bien Hoa, down the main highway at 70 miles per hour, honking and yelling, creating a bow wave of civilian traffic diving for the side of the road. At Bien Hoa, we stormed through town, ignoring intersections, apparently on the theory that our trucks were bigger than their bicycles. The drivers took us to the north side of the airfield, then dumped us outside the last perimeter fence, which was heavily mined. They told us that this was where the VC had set up their mortars a couple of weeks before. They pointed

to the tree line north of us and told us the VC were that way, *don't go near the fence, y'all have a nice evening.*

Then they took off back to Saigon.

We dug holes all night. Red dirt packed like concrete, on my knees, my entrenching tool folded to an L, whacking away, like I thought I was getting somewhere.

About 0200 the 319th opened up with all batteries, firing H&I not quite over our heads, but definitely with us far enough in front of the barrels to get the most out of the muzzle blasts. The guns were just over the hill to the northeast. Nobody told us they were there, so you can imagine the surprise. Ha ha. For a little while we tried to figure out what was incoming and what was outgoing, all the while digging like gophers to make the fighting holes deeper. I was down to about four inches by this time, and it seemed a bit too shallow.

Somebody finally came around to give us the hot skinny about all the noise. We were relieved to know that none of that stuff was aimed at us, but we ran on adrenalin the rest of the night. All night long we heard digging to the northwest. We took turns on NDP and digging, waiting for the screamers and trumpets to come pouring over the hill like red ants, figuring it would be a bayonet charge, and all we had were them goddam little plastic rifles and shit-filled boots. By dawn we'd filled about 2 million sandbags and stacked them up along the road, and hunkered down to await the assault.



**Beautiful Downtown
Bien Hoa 1966**

Sometime after first light a major came by in his jeep, and told the parachute officer that 2nd Battalion had dug in just over the hill in front of us, and asked us to please not shoot at their NDPs. We had a minefield in back of us, four batteries of artillery to the northeast, and a thousand boonie rats just over the hill in front of us. We felt a lot better. Right after chow of the first morning one of the jeeps got a little too close to the fence, and a bouncing Betty took off the fender on the driver's side, but nobody was hurt.

Then, a few days later the whole goddam airbase blew up. But that's another story. I know Ron Thomas was there for that show.

Mark Carter
173d LRRP/E-17th Cav





Beware – scam emails - that appear to be sent by DFAS employees!

There are emails being sent to individuals, including military members, military retirees, and civilian employees, which appear to be sent by a DFAS employee. Although the email appears to come from a DFAS employee and displays a dot mil address it is actually from a non-government email account. This is an example of what's called "spoofing."

The emails indicate that individuals who are receiving disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may be able to obtain additional funds from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These emails are **not** issued by DFAS and will likely result in a financial loss if you comply with the suggestions in the email. Bottom line – **do not send your personal information or copies of your tax returns and 1099s to the individual listed in the email.**

The email indicates that individuals receiving VA disability compensation can receive additional funds from the IRS. The email states that such funds can be obtained by sending copies of your VA award letter, your income tax returns, your 1099-Rs, your RAS statements, and a copy of your DD 214, to a so-called retired Colonel at an address in Florida. **DO NOT** follow the suggestions in the email because you will be providing a significant amount of your personal information to a complete stranger, which could result in a financial loss to you.

[Sent in by Tony Esposito, C/HHC/2/503d]

*"My memory's not as sharp as it used to be.
Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be."*

Our first casualty in Vietnam

Randolph Truman Hicks

Private

**HHC, 173RD ABN BDE, US ARMY SPT CMD
VIETNAM, MACV**

Army of the United States

McEwen, Tennessee

December 12, 1946 to May 28, 1965

RANDOLPH T. HICKS

is on the Wall

Panel 01E Line 126full profile



Randolph Hicks. Casualty, Friday, May 28, 1965. Randy was the 1st 173d casualty in Vietnam. We went through basic, AIT, jump school, and a slow boat ride to Okinawa together. We were put in different companies in Okinawa, but were able to see each other on occasion. This was in March 65. I got word of Randy's death sometime in June 65 from a buddy. Randy was killed in a vehicle rollover in Bien Hoa area. He was from McEwen, Tennessee.

Johnnie L. Peoples

**"A" Co., 1st Bn., 503rd Infantry
173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)**



Cowboy 707

"Freedom Bird" on short final

I received your newsletter yesterday and have been through it in some detail. Well done! Please do keep me on your subscription list.

I was Aviation Officer of the Brigade Jan-Jun 1967, then Cowboy 6 June to Nov. In both assignments I worked for Gen. Deane (Call sign: *Uncle Jack*) - a great commander, a great officer, a great person! I'm still in contact with him. Being with the 173d was my favorite assignment of my 25 years in service. I'm already anxious for the next issue!

When we planned the jump in February - I told Gen. Deane if he made the jump - I was going with him! Of course I knew he'd be the first one out the door with Sigholtz out the other door. I hadn't made a jump in 11 years - but no problem except for a backache from doing a bad, bad PLF in a dried up rice paddy but what an adventure! Our chief FAC hadn't made a jump in 14 years - his was a great adventure too! I still have sympathy for the unfortunate GI who got tangled in the top of a very big tree! Stayed there for hours until things settled enough for us to get him down! An accidental hero! No, a genuine "Herd" hero, like all our other Herd grunts!

I was there too when the four Cowboy slicks had the midair enroute to a pickup zone! Catastrophic! A serious morale buster for all of us! Thinking it best, we kept them on the ground for a day then put them back to work. A few days later we gave them more time off. Recovery was not a problem! They, and all of us, had a job to do!

Soon after I became Cowboy 6 and while at Camp Enari (as unwanted guests of the 4th Inf Div!) - we got new "H" models. One of the tail numbers ended in "707" - it immediately became mine! Yep, "Cowboy 707" was



Chuck

welcome anywhere and anytime! Lined up and waiting - maybe it was a "Freedom Bird" on short final!

Your email and newsletter has caused me to go back to those days - and to remember the great honor and privilege it was for me to serve with "the Herd!" My favorite grunts of all times!

I'm also in contact with some Cowboys and Caspers. Some of us are planning a get-together at the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association in New Orleans in August. You know there will be a lot of "grunt" stories going on! And some helicopter crew stories as well! Like the time one of our grunts got tangled on his rappel rope - about halfway down it! We took him back to base camp dangling under the slick - at 1500 feet! General Deane trailing behind on one side, I was on the other. I never did have the opportunity to talk to that young man - and to apologize.

Intended a short note - kinda got carried away -- cause it felt good!

Welcome Home, Brothers! Thanks again.

Chuck Utzman
Cowboy 707



Cowboys on Assault. Photo by Cowboy John Cavinee, cousin of Ron Cavinee, A/2/503d, KIA.

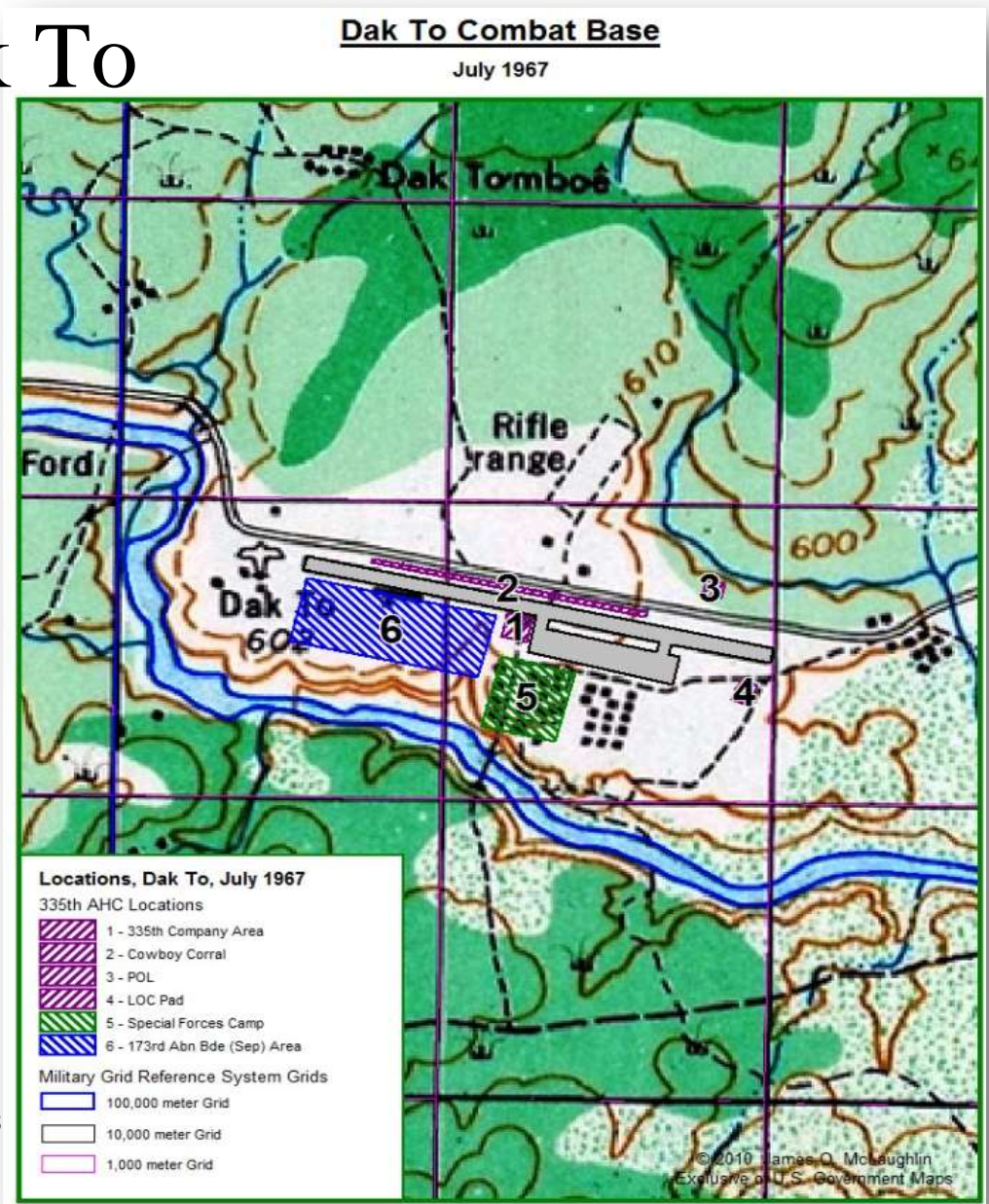


Map of Dak To

This is a map of the Dak To Base Camp area that I'm passing around for input purposes. I would like for those who were there to print this out (8.5x11) and draw in what they remember (they can do it electronically if they have the capability), and return their thoughts to me. There are no wrong answers to this memory test and just because I have something on the map doesn't mean I'm right. In the end we will compile and create and hopefully come up with a relatively accurate map for the time period May – Sept 67. When this is done I will include it in my digital map and I will provide you a copy of a printable file for the newsletter and a file large enough to print up to poster size that can be passed to anyone who wants it. My goal is to capture our history in visual form and in the programs I work with everything I put on the map creates a row in a data base with information about it. I'm also asking the Cowboys to do the same in their next newsletter.

Jim McLaughlin

335th AHC (Cowboys), July '67-July '68
jomclaughlin@comcast.net



30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALL READING OF THE NAMES

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is hosting the *Reading of the Names* of 58,272 service members inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. as part of the special activities planned this November to commemorate The Wall's 30th Anniversary.

The Reading of the Names will take place at The Wall for 65 hours over a four-day period beginning with an opening ceremony on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. Volunteers will read names for approximately eight hours from 4 p.m. on November 7 to 12 a.m. on November 8. Participants will then read the names for 19 hours daily from 5 a.m. until 12 a.m. on November 8, 9, and 10.

The Reading of the Names took place in Washington, D.C. just four other times in The Wall's history. In November 1982, the names were read aloud at Washington National Cathedral as part of a week-long National Salute to Vietnam Veterans. The names were read at The Wall during the 10th Anniversary celebration in November 1992, during the 20th Anniversary celebration in 2002 and during the 25th Anniversary celebration in 2007.

If you are interested in participating in the Reading of the Names, you must fill out the online form at <http://www.vvmf.org/ROTN>

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



NAMES

A key element to the design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is the names of the men and women who died

while serving with the U.S. armed forces in the Vietnam War. There are more than 58,000 names inscribed on the black granite Memorial.

The list of names begins at the vertex of the walls below the year of the first casualty and continues to the end of the east wall. It resumes at the tip of the west wall, ending at the vertex, above the year of the last death. With the meeting of the beginning and ending, a major epoch in American history is signified.

Each of the walls is composed of 70 separate inscribed panels. The largest panels have 137 lines of names; the shortest have one line. There is an average of five names per line. Each panel is numbered from "1" to "70" at the base, with West Panel 1 and East Panel 1 meeting at the vertex, leading out to East or West Panel 70.

The names of the first casualties appear on the top of East Panel 1 below the date "1959." The chronological listing by casualty date of the names proceeds left to right, line by line, down each panel, and then to the top line of the panel to its right, as though the panels were pages in a book, until East Panel 70, whereupon the sequence of names begins on West Panel 70, proceeding to West Panel 1 at the vertex. The last casualties are listed on the bottom line of West Panel 1 above the date "1975."

The original 57,939 names and inscriptions were gritblasted in Memphis, Tennessee, by Binswanger Glasscraft using industrial equipment and stencils produced through a photographic process. The names were arranged chronologically by date of casualty and typeset in Atlanta, Georgia, by Datalantic from a computer tape of the Vietnam casualty list provided by the Department of Defense. Typesetting was done using a digitized version of Optima, a typeface designed by Bruno Zapf.

Names added since 1982 were inscribed on The Wall by Great Panes Glassworks in Denver, Colorado, and since 2007 by Engrave Write, also in Denver, using the same photo-generated stencils as before. Portable grit-blasting equipment is used with aluminum oxide grit. The letters are .53 inches high and inscribed to an approximate depth of .015 inches.



~ This Month in History ~

"They were the best of times; they were the worst of times."

June 1965

When the decision was taken in February 1965 to commit 'main force' US units to Vietnam, their task was seen as a purely limited one -- to create 'enclaves' of American military presence on the coast, partly to protect existing airbases, but also to ensure that pockets of organized force would remain if the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) collapsed.
(*Nam* by Tim Page & John Pimlott)



June 1965



Diggers of the 1RAR arrive Vung Tau, Vietnam.

1st - The Commanding Officer, 1 RAR and a party of troops depart Richmond Air Force base in Sydney, bound for Saigon. He is followed by a succession of flights, ferrying the remainder of troops.

4th: Rolling Stones release "Satisfaction".

7th: 173d Airborne Brigade continues Operation Frag Order.



7th: US General Westmoreland reports that North Vietnamese troops are infiltrating South Vietnam (SVN) and ARVN forces are reluctant to assume the offensive and in some cases their steadfastness under fire is coming into doubt. He asks for another 41,000 combat troops now and another 52,000 later. He also states; *"Studies must continue and plans developed to deploy even greater forces, if and when required"*.

8th: US troops ordered to fight offensively in Vietnam.

8th: 5.30 am - HMAS Sydney with B Company, The 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) arrives at Vung Tau. The remainder of 1RAR and supporting arms, establish at Bien Hoa with the US 173d Airborne and operate as its 3rd Infantry Battalion.



10th: At Dong Xoai, a South Vietnamese Army district headquarters and American Special Forces camp is overrun by a full Vietcong regiment. U.S. air attacks eventually drive the Viet Cong away.

12th: South Vietnam General Nguyen Cao Ky succeeds Phan Huy Quat as premier.

12th: Big Bang theory of creation of universe is supported by announcement of discovery of new celestial bodies known as blue galaxies.



16th: A planned civil disobedience turned into a five-hour teach-in on the steps of - and inside - the Pentagon. In two days, more than 50,000 leaflets were distributed without interference at the entrances and inside the building. A World War II artillery officer, Gordon Christiansen, turned in his honorable discharge certificate.

17th: 1st bombing by B-52 (50 km north of Saigon).

18th: Nguyen Cao Ky takes power in South Vietnam as the new prime minister with Nguyen Van Thieu functioning as official chief of state. They lead the 10th government in 20 months.

(continued....)



22nd: David O Selznick, producer (Gone With the Wind), dies at 63.

25th-26th: 1RAR Operation 1/65. Formations/units: 1RAR, with indirect support 3/319th Arty (US) less one battery, in support E/17th Cav (US). Description: The battalion shake-down operation on joining 173d Abn Bde (Sep) (173d Bde) at Bien Hoa air base, in the form of a battalion search-and-destroy operation in an AO between the convergence of Routes 1 and 15 on Bien Hoa. The AO, of 24 square kms, lay astride a likely VC line of approach to attack the air base. Undulating terrain covered mainly in jungle. The operation was designed to clear a base area for the incoming 2d Bde 1st Inf Div (US). Deployment by helicopter. Location: West central Bien Hoa province, eleven kilometers SE of Bien Hoa air base. Results: Two platoon-size VC camps located, VC documents and books captured. Remarks: The accidental detonation of a grenade on return from the operation killed three Australians and one US soldier, with a further soldier dying of wounds; eleven soldiers were injured including two US soldiers. US strength now at 125,000.



27th: "General William Westmoreland launches the first purely offensive operation by American ground forces in Vietnam, sweeping into NLF territory just northwest of Saigon." (Note: The 173d Abn Bde was already running combat operations before this date. Ed)

27th: The 173d Airborne Brigade participated in the first joint U.S.-ARVN operation of the war. Nine battalions were involved in this mission which penetrated deep into the Western part of the Tan Uyen area of War Zone "D". Over 400 VC casualties resulted from this combined operation. This was the first major engagement between the VC and the 173d. The brigade destroyed a hard-core VC battalion.



30th: NFL grants Atlanta Falcons a franchise.

June 1966

Counteroffensive: Following the U.S. victory in the Ia Drang Valley, American forces for the remainder of 1965 and well into 1966 sought to keep the enemy off balance while building base camps and logistical installations. This involved search and destroy operations to protect the logistical bases under construction along the coast and the base



June 1966

camps for incoming U.S. units in the provinces near Saigon. Also of particular concern to the American military mission was the protection of the government and the people of South Vietnam. To accomplish the tasks outlined U.S. efforts were concentrated in the most vital and heavily populated regions.



For Sky Soldiers like this trooper, wading through the streams, rivers and rice paddies of Vietnam, the leech (inset) was often an unwelcome and painful travelling companion.

(Nam)

June '66: "Beginning in late May 1966, the North Vietnamese 324B Division crosses the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and encounters a Marine battalion. The NVA holds their ground and the largest battle of the war to date breaks out near Dong Ha. Most of the 3rd Marine Division, some 5,000 men in five battalions, heads north. In Operation Hastings, the Marines backed by South Vietnamese Army troops, the heavy guns of U.S. warships and their artillery and air power drive the NVA back over the DMZ in three weeks.

1st: 2,400 people attend White House Conference on Civil Rights.

4th: A three-page anti-war advertisement appears in the *New York Times* signed by 6400 teachers and professors.

6th: NFL & AFL announce their merger.

6th: Stokely Carmichael launches "Black Power" movement.

(continued....)





1st Platoon A/2/503d, 1966. (Photo by Bob Guy, A/HHC/2/503d)

8th: On May 16, the 173d Airborne Brigade launch Operation Hardihood, ending on June 8, in the Phuoc Tuy Province. On 19 May the 1/503d Infantry became engaged with an estimated fifty VC. The firefight that ensued resulted in twenty VC killed with minimal friendly casualties.



9th-17th: 173d Airborne Brigade immediately opens Operation Hollandia in the Phuoc Tuy Province. The brigade deployed to the Lon Hai Peninsula, east of Vung Tau, to search for elements of the 274th and 275th VC regiments and their controlling headquarters. Two deserted base camps revealed sizeable quantities of rice and miscellaneous equipment.

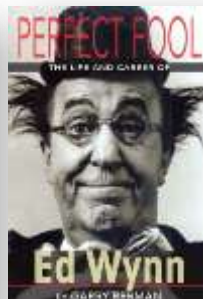
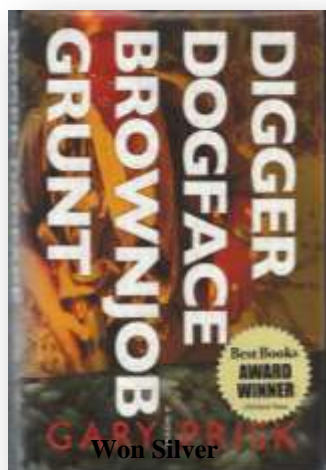


10th: Beatles "Paperback Writer" is released in UK.

10th: Mamas & Papas win Gold record for "Monday, Monday". Years later *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt*, a novel by Capt. Gary Prisk, C/D/2/503d, would win a Silver medal.

13th: Supreme Court's Miranda decision; suspect must be informed of rights.

18th: Sandy Alomar, Salinas Puerto Rico, catcher (Cleveland Indians), born.



19th: Ed Wynn, comedian (Ed Wynn Show), dies at 79.

23rd: Operation Yorktown commences for the 173d Airborne, ending July 8, in the Long Khanh Province approximately 37 miles east of Bien Hoa in Xuan Loc Province. Three platoons of A/2/503d Infantry engaged an enemy force between 75-100 strong employing 50 caliber machine guns and grenade launchers.



24th: Period of relative peace following WWII exceeds that following WWI. (*Huh?*)

25th: Political unrest in South Vietnam abates following the crackdown on Buddhist rebels by Prime Minister Ky, including the arrest of Buddhist leader Tri Quang. Ky now appeals for calm.

29th: Citing increased infiltration of Communist guerrillas from North Vietnam into the South, the U.S. bombs oil depots around Hanoi and Haiphong, ending a self-imposed moratorium. The U.S. is very cautious about targeting the city of Hanoi itself over concerns for the reactions of North Vietnam's military allies, China and the Soviet Union. This concern also prevents any U.S. ground invasion of North Vietnam, despite such recommendations by a few military planners in Washington.



Viet Cong, 1966

30th: Vice Adm William F. Raborn, Jr, USN, ends term as 7th director of CIA.

30th: On Route 13, which links Vietnam to the Cambodian border, American forces are brutally assaulted by the Viet Cong. Only American air and artillery support prevents a complete disaster.

(continued....)



30th - "Iron" Mike Tyson, NY, youngest heavyweight boxing champ (1986-90), born.

June '66: By the end of 1966, American forces in Vietnam reach 385,000 men, plus an additional 60,000 sailors stationed offshore.

More than 6,000 Americans have been killed in this year, and 30,000 have been wounded. In comparison, an estimated 61,000 Viet Cong have been killed, however, their troops now numbered over 280,000.



June 1967

During 1967 the Americans pursued two strategic aims in Vietnam. On the one hand, they were determined to disrupt the build-up of NVA/VC main force strength in the South, creating a protective shield of 'Free World' forces astride likely infiltration routes and destroying any enemy formations which tried to break through; on the other, they recognized the need to clear existing communist bases in the South as a preliminary to more effective pacification.
(*Nam* by Tim Page & John Pimlott)



June 1967

June '67: The Mobile Riverine Force becomes operational utilizing U.S. Navy 'Swift' boats combined with Army troop support to halt Viet Cong usage of inland waterways in the Mekong Delta.

June '67: "The CIA initiates **Phoenix Program**. After the Tet Offensive, the U.S. government stepped up its covert operations, the most famous of which was the CIA-led Phoenix Program, which had been initiated in June 1967. Among other objectives, the program was meant to assassinate Viet Cong leadership. Although approximately 20,000 people were assassinated under the Phoenix Program, the program was reported to be plagued by corruption, mismanagement, and faulty intelligence, and many of its victims were likely not Viet Cong at all. In many cases, unscrupulous South Vietnamese officials named their opponents as Viet Cong and requested that the Phoenix Program eliminate them. When the details of the program later surfaced, many protested that its activities amounted to nothing more than war crimes."

Source:

<http://www.sparknotes.com/history/american/vietnamwar/section7.rhtml>

1st: Beatles release "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" in US & goes Gold. Years later *Digger*, *Dogface* would remain at Silver.

1st-18th: 173d Airborne engage in Operation Francis Marion in Pleiku area.



2nd: Race riots in Roxbury section of Boston.

3rd: Aretha Franklin's "Respect" reaches #1.

3rd: Anderson Cooper, American reporter (CNN), born.

5th: 6 Day War between Israel & Arab neighbors begins. **Note:** Those of you who were stationed with the 509th Airborne in Mainz, Germany at the time will recall we were put on alert when that action broke out. I recall the day we were issued weapons when an old Sergeant gave me mine and said, "You're kinda young to be going to war." My reply to him was, "I'm kinda young to be coming from a war!" Ed

5th: Murderer Richard Speck sentenced to death in electric chair. **Note:** I recall HHC/2/503 '66, hooch buddy, the late Andy "Lum" Lombrazo from Chicago, telling me he was a friend of one of the nurses killed by that maniac. Ed

6th: Israeli troops occupy Gaza.

8th: The **USS *Liberty* incident** was an attack on a United States Navy technical research ship, USS *Liberty*, by Israeli Air Force jet fighter aircraft and Israeli Navy torpedo boats, on June 8, 1967, during the Six-Day War. The combined air and sea attack killed 34 crew members (naval officers, seamen, two Marines, and one civilian), wounded 170 crew members, and severely damaged the ship. At the time, the ship was in international waters north of the Sinai Peninsula, about 25.5 nmi (29.3 mi; 47.2 km) northwest from the Egyptian city of Arish.



Midships damage to USS Liberty

(continued....)



Both the Israeli and U.S. governments conducted inquiries and issued reports that concluded the attack was a mistake due to Israeli confusion about the identity of the USS *Liberty*, though others have rejected these conclusions and maintain that the attack was deliberate. In May 1968, the Israeli government paid US\$3,323,500 (US\$22.2 million in 2012 dollars) as full payment to the families of the 34 men killed in the attack. In March 1969, Israel paid a further \$3,566,457 in compensation to the men who had been wounded. On 18 December 1980, it agreed to pay \$6 million as settlement for the final U.S. bill of \$17,132,709 for material damage to the *Liberty* itself plus 13 years' interest.

8th: Laverne Andrews, vocalist (Andrews Sisters), 1911-1967, dies.



Maxene, Patty & Laverne

“Ms. Laverne Andrews and her sisters, Patty and Maxene, were one of the most successful women's singing groups, with 19 gold records and sales of nearly 100 million copies. The sisters began performing in the early 1930s when the Depression wiped out their father's business. In 1937, the sisters scored their first big hit with 'Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen.' In addition to 'Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy', their best-known songs included 'Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree' and 'Rum and Coca Cola'. The trio officially broke up after the death of Laverne in 1967, and a suitable replacement could not be found.”

10th: USSR drops diplomatic relations with Israel.

10th: Spencer Tracy, US actor (7th Cross, Father of the Bride), dies at 67.

11th: Race riot in Tampa Florida; National Guard mobilizes.

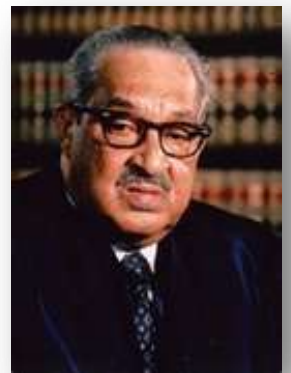
12th: Israel wins 6 Day War. (Thank you Israel. Ed)



Another war

12th: Race riot in Cincinnati, Ohio (300 arrested).

13th: Thurgood Marshall nominated as 1st black Supreme Court justice, and was one of the most successful civil rights proponents in the country.



Thurgood Marshall

14th: “Steve Allen Show,” premieres on CBS-TV.

15th: Governor Reagan signs liberalized California abortion bill.

17th: 1st Chinese hydrogen bomb explodes. China becomes world's 4th thermonuclear (H-bomb) power.

18th-22nd: Operation Greeley in the Dak To /Kontum area is where *The Battle of the Slopes* began as a routine search and destroy mission involving the 2/503rd. Alpha Company began leaving its night laager when its point squad ran into several NVA's. An intense firefight occurred preventing 2nd platoon from linking up with its point squad. Alpha's perimeter came under attack by the NVA cutting off the 2nd and 3rd platoons. The 1st and 2nd platoons were down to fifteen effective men when radio contact was lost. The 2nd platoon withdrew the remaining men to the Company Command Post, which then moved back up the ridge to a more defensible position.



(continued....)

