

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

By Dr. Scott Fairchild, Psy.D.
LTC USA (Ret)
82nd Abn Div

Army leaders and some psychiatrists are marshaling on the City of Brotherly Love this week in an attempt to convince the American Psychiatric Association to change the diagnosis of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder to Posttraumatic Injury. Military officers led by General Peter Chiarelli (Ret) insist that effecting this change will reduce the stigma that keeps troops from seeking treatment. Retired General Chiarelli was the first to drop the word “disorder,” referring to the condition as PTS. The new name was adopted by officials at the highest levels of the Pentagon, including Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta. But PTS never caught on with the medical community because of concerns that insurers and government bureaucrats would not be willing to pay for a condition that wasn’t explicitly labeled a disease, disorder or injury. Plagued by increasing suicide rates the Department of Defense spent millions of dollars studying suicides and largely came to conclusions which blamed the victim.

In 2009, Colonel Elspeth Ritchie, Army psychiatrist now retired, said problems within family or marital relationships back at home were the significant factors leading to suicides, revitalizing the antiquated adage that if the military wanted to have a wife and a family, they would have issued you one. Are they genuinely so naïve as to attribute 300,000 cases of PTSD to having problems with a wife and family?

Currently it is reported that more than 60 percent of troops who believe they have post-traumatic stress disorder are not seeking treatment through the military. The nonprofit *Blue Star Families* found that only 35 percent of service members displaying symptoms of PTSD sought military medical treatment. Others sought civilian treatment or ignored their symptoms.



In the report, service members stated, “*Command didn’t think he needed it and didn’t make time available for help.*” Another reported, “*My husband did not want to be ‘excused’ from the military after 16 years of service with no retirement and without a medical board.*”

The military is in the business of war fighting. The Army’s Medical Department motto is, “*Conserve the Fighting Strength*”. It is no wonder that the stigma against seeking mental health support will never be eradicated. The Army Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program, under the direction of Army Urologist BG Cornum, and in conjunction with *Don’t Worry Be Happy* psychologist



Dr. Martin Seligman launched a multi-million dollar Resiliency Training Program (formerly called *BattleMind Training*) based on a small pilot program conducted at the University of Pennsylvania with non-military participants. The program returned military mental health to the dark ages and Resiliency became the 21st Century version of the archaic *Suck it Up and Drive On!*

The Army’s emotional resiliency program diverted huge amounts of money and attention away from what was really needed; an end to multiple forced redeployments to combat zones, and an overhaul of the military’s mental health screening and treatment protocols to reduce red tape and stigma.

My own research, plus a slew of investigative reports of others, documents the military’s history of keeping warm bodies on the battlefield and away from pricey health care — even if that means drugging unhappy troops to keep them in combat, ignoring signs of distress, or placing institutional obstacles in the way of distressed soldiers seeking care. The program has grossly failed to reduce the skyrocketing suicide rates and increasing cases of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

And now, having wasted valuable tax dollars and failed, these same leaders want to direct how PTSD is diagnosed. If we can’t solve the problem, let’s just eradicate the problem by calling it something else. Let’s examine the faulty logic for relabeling Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as an injury.

(continued....)



1) Military leaders are *not* clinicians and have NO place in determining or even suggesting what are appropriate criteria and labels for mental health diagnoses. As I once told an Army Chaplain who wanted to administer psychological tests, *"I don't administer communion in my office, and if you want to administer psychological tests, go to school and get the appropriate credentials."*

2) Repetitive exposure to psychological trauma produces permanent changes in the brain. We are all products of our experience. Servicemembers having been exposed to trauma evidence increased activity in the basal ganglia, the thalamic nuclei, and the anterior cingulate gyrus, all visible through SPECT imaging of the brain. Quantitative EEGs reveal that individuals diagnosed with PTSD have extremely elevated beta, the brain waves responsible for our learning. Individuals exposed to trauma forever have the survival instinct etched in their brain, even when they return to a safe environment. Does calling it something else make it go away? I think not.

3) Downgrading the name of a mental health disorder does NOT in any way modify the intense suffering and symptoms experienced for those impacted by trauma. Will our rape victim dramatically feel better and will it reduce the stigma if we just refer to her rape as an Adverse Sexual Encounter? I think not. The 1978 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (DSM II) deleted the PTSD/Trauma category completely. Did that mean that those who had experienced trauma were suddenly healed? I also think not.

4) Servicemembers suffering from PTSD and its torturous symptoms struggle daily to cope with their conditions. Having their condition downgraded to an injury becomes a secondary wound, similar to our Vietnam veterans who experienced the second wound of not being welcomed home. Researcher Ed Tick author of *Soldiers Heart: Supporting or Returning Veterans*, clearly elucidates the importance of welcoming home and embracing our warriors. For most of the veterans I assist with Veterans Disability Claims, it is NOT at all about the money, but actually about validation and recognition of their sacrifice. Do we really want to diminish the sacrifice of our young warriors by downgrading the impact of their trauma? I think not.

5) A shift to "injury" could make it harder for service members to collect permanent-disability payments for their condition from the government, some experts warn. *"When you have an injury, you follow a treatment regimen and expect to get better, this change is about medicine, but it is also about compensation. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars."* The VA already makes it extremely difficult for veterans to file claims and there are currently over 1,000,000,000 claims

in arrears with an over three-and-a-half year wait on appeals. Do we want to add to that burden for our returning warriors? I think not.

6) After Vietnam, our motto became, *"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."* Can we really consider diminishing the valiant sacrifices of a new generation of warriors by denying their condition or robbing them of the benefits they deserve to collect? **If a nation does not have the resources to take care of the warriors who sacrifice so much, then the nation and its leaders should NOT wage the war.**

7) *"The whole history of psychiatry is to change the names of conditions. If the problem doesn't go away, we change the name,"* said Bessel van der Kolk, a professor of psychiatry at Boston University. *"It makes us feel momentarily better. But it doesn't change anything."*

8) The current diagnostic manual already has a category for the Posttraumatic Stress Injury. It is called *Acute Stress Reaction*. If the symptoms persist for more than four weeks, the condition becomes Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

9) If the Army really wants to protect soldiers, it will limit the number of tours that troops are permitted to do in Afghanistan/Combat environments. Medical studies have suggested that a soldier's resilience is depleted with each battlefield tour. Research with QEEG can predict suicidality in service members. As long as we wage wars there will be devastating human consequences.



Let us not abandon those who answered the call, who sacrificed that we might be free, who suffered the invisible wounds. Our warriors deserve a better welcome home than adding insult to their injuries.

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~ Reunions of the Airborne Kind ~



[Sun City "All Airborne" Fiesta VI](#), July 4-8, El Paso, TX.

Contact:

Phn: 915-562-9969

Eml: bp82cmdctr@bpaac.org



[70th Birthday of the 506th Infantry Regiment \(Currahee\)](#) July 20, 2012 - Fort Campbell, KY.

Contact:

Web: 506infantry.org



["Parachutes Over Pittsburgh", 2012 Convention](#), August 8-11, 2012, Monroeville/Pittsburgh, PA.

Contact:

Tommy Thompson, 724-206-0290

Eml: 82paratrooper@comcast.net



[101st Airborne Division Association 67th Annual Reunion](#), August 14-17, 2012. Marriott Nashville Airport, Nashville, TN.

Contact:

Phn: 931-431-0199



[2nd International Paratrooper Reunion](#), August 17-19, 2012, The Interessengemeinschaft Fallschirmjäger n.e. V, Leipziger Chaussee 111, Am Flugplatz, 39120 Magdeburg

Contact:

Eml: http://www.paratroops-reunion.de/html/home_.html



[56th Annual Reunion of the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team](#), September 23 – 26, 2012. Holiday Inn, Richmond Intl. Airport, Sandston, VA.

Contact:

Nancy Young, Secretary

Eml: youngncy@comcast.net



[2012 FSB Ripcord Association Reunion](#), October 3-6, 2012, Indianapolis Marriott East, Indianapolis, IN.

Contact:

Web: www.ripcordassociation.com

~ Other Reunions ~



[29th Annual Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Reunion](#), July 30 - August 5, 2012. Hilton Hotel, New Orleans, LA.

Contact:

Phn: 800-505-8472

[Battle of the Bulge Veterans](#), September 26-30, 2012. New Orleans, LA.

Contact:

Doris Davis

Phn: 650-654-0101

Eml: doris@battleofthebulge.org

Web: <http://www.battleofthebulge.org/>



[2012 Combat Infantryman's Reunion](#), October 18-21, 2012. Nashville, TN.

Contact:

Web: <http://cibassoc.com>

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



Political Stuff

We shy away from making political statements in your newsletter, yet regularly report on matters involving the Commander-In-Chief and legislation impacting vets. Given the political climate in our country I have longed believed what is needed to pull us back together as a people is **A PARATROOPER IN THE WHITE HOUSE!** Finally, one brave soul is standing in the door.

VOTE THOMAS FOR PRESIDENT!

Like many voters I was giving a great deal of thought to trivial issues such as our economy and high unemployment. I am so grateful that we peons have been enlightened as to the real issues by the political pundits.

The left makes a compelling case. How can one support a candidate who accepts the endorsement from a guy who was sleeping at a Springsteen Concert? That, coupled with where the Romney dog rode on a trip, obviously makes Romney unacceptable.



All The Way with Thomas!
(Pushups may be involved)

The right also makes a good case. I was shocked to find grown men employed by the government drank and employed prostitutes. Obviously, their Commander in Chief is inept. I'm certainly glad none of *my* paratroopers drank or hired hookers while *I* was in command.

I'm running as a write-in candidate for President. I don't hire prostitutes for three reasons; I don't have the money, my wife wouldn't allow it, and at my age I don't remember what I'm supposed to do with one anyway. Our puppy doesn't travel. I have never fallen asleep at a concert. By current political spin standards, I'm the only qualified man for the job running. Vote Thomas!

William Thomas
LTC U.S. Army (Ret), C/2/503d

Hmmm. The Colonel does make a strong case. Should we vote for him and he wins, my only fear for us is, pushups might be involved! And there's that drinking part. Then again, those 173d visits to the White House for Saturday BBQs and PLF practice and volley ball on the White House lawn might be fun! No hookers tho, damn. Ed

No Doo Dads in *This* Newsletter! *well, sort of*

After 43 issues we believe we've done a reasonably good job adhering to our self-imposed policy of not including advertisements for 'stuff' in your newsletter – this newsletter is about *you*, not doo dads. The exception to this has always been running free reviews and info about books written by Sky Soldiers & 503rd Troopers and, of course, notices of reunions and 173d related fund raisers, such as Ken Smith's *Spartan Club* which raises funds for the maintenance of our 173d Memorial at Benning (see following page).

But, we've decided to bend the rules this one time -- because we can. Even here it involves support of the 173d Memorial maintenance program mentioned.

After seeing the neat 173d/503rd jackets presented to the WWII 503rd Troopers who attended the reunion in Lexington last month, a number of our guys have expressed interest in obtaining a copy of the jacket for themselves.



Only 12 of the jackets were produced for the reunion.

Our good buddy, Wayne Bowers, C/2/503d, personally created the design of the jacket, including stitching the 503 patch on the back which required 113,000+ stitches. (Hopefully, a machine did the counting).

Anyone interested in ordering a jacket from Wayne can contact him at bowway@aol.com for details and pricing. Wayne has offered to donate 10% of proceeds to the *173d Memorial Maintenance Fund*. We here at your newsletter have no interest in this endeavor, financial or otherwise.

Wayne mentioned because each jacket is essentially 'hand-made', it will take a little time to complete each request.

We now return to our 'no advertising doo dads' policy.



173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation

The 173d Spartan Club

In 480 BC, three hundred Spartans stood in a rocky mountain pass at Thermopylae and for seven days held off the mighty Persian army, allowing Greek forces to muster and eventually defeat the invaders. Three hundred warriors preserved the cradle of civilization. Three hundred Spartan Warriors made a difference.

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation needs the support of 300 warriors to preserve and maintain our Memorial that was dedicated in June 2010 at the National Infantry Museum campus near Fort Benning, Georgia.

The Memorial Foundation requires a minimum of \$5,000.00 annually for basic maintenance costs (electricity, landscaping and irrigation). In addition to periodic costs of adding new information to the Memorial, funds will be required for maintenance, minor repairs, insurance and the Foundation's administrative costs. To ensure perpetual care for the Memorial, the Foundation has established an endowment fund goal of \$300,000., raised over ten years, in addition to annual donations received from other sources.

The Foundation is seeking 300 warriors willing to help preserve our legacy and maintain our memorial. This letter constitutes your invitation to become a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation's *Spartan's Club*.

We ask each Spartan Club Commander to pledge between \$200.00 and \$1,000.00 for each of the next ten years. We ask each Spartan Club Centurion to Pledge between \$173.00 and \$199.00 for the same period and each Spartan Club Lancer to pledge between \$25.00 and \$172.00 for a similar period. If the Spartans contribute an average of \$100.00 each for the next ten years, the Foundation Endowment Fund will achieve its objective. Each Spartan Club member will receive periodic communications regarding events held at the Memorial, as well as receiving recognition in our annual programs and reports.

As with the Spartans at Thermopylae, the burden of preserving our memorial and heritage is shared equally regardless of position, title and rank. Membership in the Club is open to all Sky Soldiers, their families, and military and patriotic organizations and friends of the 173d. As in the past, we hope that you will accept this challenge and support your memorial.

**Ken Smith, Chairman
173d Memorial Foundation**

The 173d Spartan Club

I/We wish to share the honor of preserving our memorial and heritage as a member of the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation *Spartan Club*.



Beginning in 2011, and for nine succeeding years thereafter, I pledge to donate the following amount each year to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation:

As a **Spartan Club Commander** (\$200.00 or more)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Centurion** (173.00 to \$199.00)
\$ _____

As a **Spartan Club Lancer** (\$25.00 to \$172.00)
\$ _____

(Please print)

Full Name: _____

Primary Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Please mail your signed pledge form and your check (payable to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation) to:

**173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation
1160 Lake Royale
Louisburg, NC 27549**

Pledges may be paid electronically by going to the 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation website at www.173dairbornememorial.org and clicking on the tab, "Memorial Donations."

To assist you in remembering the timing of your annual pledge donation, the Foundation will send you electronically or by mail a brief reminder.

Note: The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Fund has been granted 501(c)3 status by the Internal Revenue Service. Contributions may be deductible under Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.



1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975

~ This Month in History ~

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

July 1965

The Wrong Strategy?

"The shift from a strategy of defending enclaves to one of 'search and destroy' wedded the American forces to a conventionally fought war in Vietnam. General William Westmoreland wished to use the American forces, with their weight of firepower, to take on large communist concentrations, while the ARVN contained the guerrillas. Many members of the US defense establishment had different ideas.



July 1965

They believed in the concept of Counter Insurgency (COIN), as an answer to guerrilla warfare. COIN involved a close co-ordination of political, military and social policies, in order to isolate the guerrilla from the general population. When the allegiance of the population was won, then the guerrillas could be defeated. The US Marines, moreover, had their own theory, known as the Combined Action Program (CAP). It involved, for example, a specifically trained Marine squad protecting a village, while civic and medical aid was provided. Westmoreland rejected this type of strategy partly because one such policy – the 'Strategic Hamlet' programme – was proving unworkable in Vietnam, and also because he believed that his combat troops were needed to meet an immediate threat of large concentrations of the enemy breaking through. Influential voices opposed Westmoreland, but he got his way, and Starlite was the result. Whether it was the right result is another question entirely." (Nam, by Tim Page & John Pimlott)

1st: Viet Cong stage a mortar attack against Da Nang air base and destroy three aircraft.

3rd: Trigger, Roy Rogers' horse, dies at 25.



"Trigger. The smartest horse in the movies."

6th: Rock group "Jefferson Airplane" forms.

8th: Henry Cabot Lodge is reappointed as U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.

14th: Adlai Stevenson, US Ambassador to UN/ Presidential candidate, dies.

21st-28th: President Johnson meets with top aides to decide the future course of action in Vietnam.

23rd: Following several months of USAF operations against North Vietnamese targets, the first F-4C was downed by an SA-2 missile.

24th: Four F-4C Phantoms escorting a bombing raid at Kang Chi are the targets of antiaircraft missiles in the first such attack against American planes in the Vietnam War. One is shot down and the other three sustain damage.



This F-4 Phantom II served with the USAF in the Vietnam War. It shot down a North Vietnamese MiG 17.

27th: President Johnson signs a bill requiring cigarette makers to print health warnings on all cigarette packages about the effects of smoking.

Smoking impede a erecao? Now that can't be good.



"..and put on your socks!"

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28th: During a noontime press conference, President Johnson announces he will send 44 combat battalions to Vietnam increasing the U.S. military presence to 125,000 men. Monthly draft calls are doubled to 35,000. *"I have asked the commanding general, General Westmoreland, what more he needs to meet this mounting aggression. He has told me. And we will meet his needs. We cannot be defeated by force of arms. We will stand in Vietnam."*

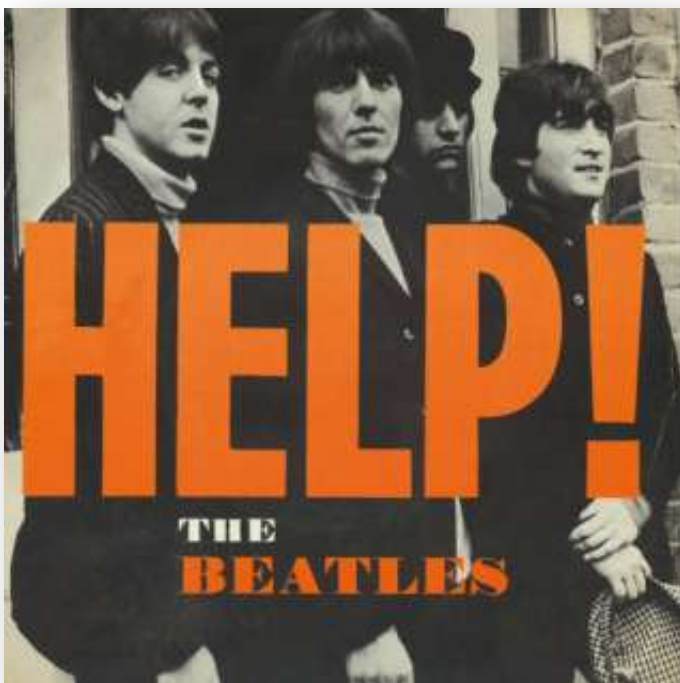


Napalm bombs explode on Viet Cong structures south of Saigon in the Republic of Vietnam, 1965.

(National Archives)

"...I do not find it easy to send the flower of our youth, our finest young men, into battle. I have spoken to you today of the divisions and the forces and the battalions and the units, but I know them all, every one. I have seen them in a thousand streets, of a hundred towns, in every state in this union working and laughing and building, and filled with hope and life. I think I know, too, how their mothers weep and how their families sorrow."

29th: Beatles movie "Help" premieres, Queen Elizabeth attends.



30th: LBJ signs Medicare bill, which goes into effect in 1966.

July 1966

VC Tactics in Action:

The Viet Cong were no weekend soldiers as the Americans found to their cost. Here suddenly they are caught up in stage three of the VC's 'one slow, four quick' strategy. The US Special Forces camped at A Shau was set in the middle of VC territory, near Laos.



July 1966

Nevertheless, the opposing forces had adopted an uneasy policy of live and let live. This changed abruptly in 1966, when the Green Berets heard digging outside the wire. Then a white phosphorus shell signaled that co-existence was at an end. All night the VC poured shells, mortar rounds and machine gun fire onto the camp. Morning brought the possibility of an allied air strike, but the VC's meticulous planning scored again and low clouds reduced the effect of the Phantom's attack. Nightfall brought another heavy barrage. Creeping out from their carefully prepared trenches, the VC used Bangalore torpedoes to blast their way into the camp. Machine gun fire and Claymore mines cut down the first wave of VC, but sheer weight of numbers pushed the Americans into the northern corner. Once again, daylight brought with it mist and low clouds. The Air Force mounted a rescue bid, even though it meant emerging low through the clouds into a hail of VC fire, losing six aircraft. The Special Forces had fought courageously but had been defeated by careful preparation and weight of numbers in a classic Viet Cong assault.

(Nam)

1st: Medicare goes into effect.

3rd: Race riots in Omaha Nebraska.

4th: LBJ signs Freedom of Information Act.

6th: Hanoi Radio reports that captured American pilots have been paraded through the streets of Hanoi through jeering crowds.

9th -17th: 173d Abn conducts *AURORA I* conducting search and destroy operations in northern Long Khanh Province and eliminating VC tax collecting in the province.



(continued....)



10th: US launches Orbiter 1 to the Moon.

11th: The U.S. intensifies bombing raids against portions of the Ho Chi Minh trail winding through Laos.

12th: Race riot in Chicago.

15th: Operation Hastings is launched by U.S. Marines and South Vietnamese troops against 10,000 NVA in Quang Tri Province. This is the largest combined military operation to date in the war.

17th: Jim Ryun sets mile record (3m51s3).

19th: 50 year old Frank Sinatra marries 21 year old Mia Farrow in Las Vegas. (He did it his way).

21st- Aug. 3rd: During *AURORA II* the 173d Abn Brigade deployed 80 kilometers northeast of Bien Hoa into the Long Khanh, Binh Tuy Lam Duong Province. 25 Sampans were sighted and subsequently destroyed by gunship, tactical air and artillery fire.



23rd: Montgomery Clift, movie actor (*From Here to Eternity*), dies.



Montgomery Clift in *From Here To Eternity*, 1953.

25th: At 70, Mao Tse Tung swims Yangtse River, 15 km in 65 minutes. (On this same day pigs were seen flying over the Great Wall).

30th: For the first time, the U.S. bombs NVA troops in the Demilitarized Zone, the buffer area separating North and South Vietnam.

July 1967

Despite their resilience, the North Vietnamese were not immune to pain and fear. The U.S. air offensive probably killed a

hundred thousand civilians and, at an early stage, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong (N. VN) told a British journalist in an unusual outburst of emotion that *"I'm not acting when I say that I am obliged to cry – literally cry – at the suffering and the losses."* The region just to the north of the seventeenth parallel, where North Vietnamese units



July 1967

assembled to move south, was a special target of American aircraft. Years after the war, an inhabitant of the area, Ho Thanh Dam, recollected the day in July 1967 when they struck Vinh Quan, his village: *"The bombing started at about eight o'clock in the morning and lasted for hours. At the first sound of explosions, we rushed into the tunnels, but not everyone made it. During a pause in the attack, some of us climbed out to see what we could do, and the scene was terrifying. Bodies had been torn to pieces – limbs hanging from trees or scattered around the ground. Then the bombing began again, this time with napalm, and the village went up in flames. The napalm hit me, and I must have gone crazy. I felt as if I were burning all over, like charcoal, and I lost consciousness. Comrades took me to the hospital, and my wounds didn't begin to heal until six months later. More than two hundred people died in the raid, including my mother, my sister-in-law, and three nephews. They were buried alive when their tunnel collapsed."* (Vietnam, by Stanley Karnow)

July: General Westmoreland requests an additional 200,000 reinforcements on top of the 475,000 soldiers already scheduled to be sent to Vietnam, which would bring the U.S. total in Vietnam to 675,000. President Johnson agrees only to an extra 45,000.



Westmoreland in '67

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7th: Beatles' "All You Need is Love" is released.

7th: North Vietnam's Politburo makes the decision to launch a widespread offensive against South Vietnam. Conceived in three phases, the first phase involves attacks against remote border areas in an effort to lure American troops away from South Vietnam's cities. The second phase (Tet Offensive) will be an attack against the cities themselves by Viet Cong forces aided by NVA troops, in the hope of igniting a "general uprising" to overthrow the government of South Vietnam. The third phase involves the actual invasion of South Vietnam by NVA troops coming from North Vietnam.

7th: Vivian Leigh, actress (Scarlet-Gone with the Wind), dies at 53.



*"Fiddle-dee-dee. War, war, war. This war talk is spoiling all the fun at every party this spring."....
"Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn."*

10th: Operation GREELEY continues from 18 June – 14 October 1967 in Dak To / Kontum area. The 4/503rd was rapidly deployed to the Central Highlands after the Battle of the Slopes. On 10 July, moving up Hill 830, A Company came under intense fire from the NVA. On 12 July, after taking the hill, D Company discovered a single network consisting of 60 bunkers with supporting foxholes. In short order, two more bunker complexes were discovered.



12th: 23 die in Newark race riot.



16th: Will Ferrell, American comedian, born.

17th: Race riots in Cairo, Illinois.

19th: Race riots in Durham, NC.

20th: Race riots in Memphis, Tennessee.

20th: Rolling Thunder targets were revised again offering 16 additional targets and 23 road, rail and waterway segments inside Hanoi-Haiphong. Bridges bypasses, rail yards and military storage areas were bombed to slow or halt traffic between Haiphong and Hanoi.

21st: Basil Rathbone, actor (Sherlock Holmes), dies of heart attack at 75.

22nd: Carl Sandburg, poet (Abraham Lincoln: Prairie Years), dies at 89.

23rd-27th: 43 die in race riot in Detroit (2,000 injured, 442 fires).

24th: Race riots in Cambridge, Maryland.

24th: Race riots in Detroit force postponement of Tigers-Orioles game.

27th: LBJ sets up commission to study cause of urban violence.

29th: A fire resulting from a punctured fuel tank kills 134 U.S. crewmen aboard the USS Forestal in the Gulf of Tonkin, in the worst naval accident since WWII.



30th: Race riot in Milwaukee (4 killed).

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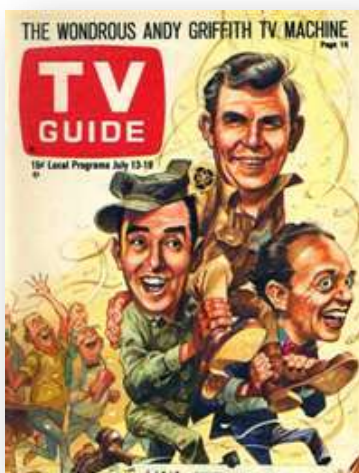


July 1968

A New Team – A New Ball Game?

When it became clear that Richard Nixon would be the next president to walk into the Oval Office, political analysis predicted a change in strategy. *“I shall not seek, and will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president,”*

Johnson’s war would soon be over. In July 1968, three months after LBJ dropped his bombshell, General



July 1968

Westmoreland was appointed Chief of Staff of the Army. There was now a new man at the helm of MACV, General Creighton Abrams. Up until early 1968 the role of US main-force units had seemed fairly straightforward – to ‘hold the ring’ around South Vietnam. But now, in the light of the Tet Offensive, it was clear that an urgent reassessment of US strategy was required. Johnson had refused to run for the presidency on the ground that he wanted to ‘rise above partisan divisions’ and devote himself to the pursuit of an honourable peace. During the last weeks of 1968 the successful candidate, Richard Milhous Nixon, waited in the wings. Recognizing that Vietnam could not be won by force of arms alone, and believing that the Soviet Union and China were disposed toward the North Vietnamese entering constructive peace negotiations, Nixon had decided on a more flexible policy to the war. Inaugurated on 20 January 1969, he set about organizing a team of advisers to implement this strategy—a marrying together of American troop withdrawals and diplomacy into a package that was intended to gain peace with honour. In came Henry Kissinger as National Security Adviser, a master of diplomatic intrigue. The new Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, was given the task of working with Abrams to implement the programme of troop withdrawals and combining this with the gradual handing over of the prosecution of the war to the ARVN – a policy known as ‘Vietnamization’. Where Johnson and Westmoreland had been portrayed as floundering in their attempts to find a solution to the war, Nixon and his team seemed set to bring the conflict into a new phase. As the first units withdrew from Vietnam in July 1969, the nature of the war did indeed begin to change. (Nam)

July: Congress passes a ten percent income tax surcharge to defray the ballooning cost of the war.

1st: General Westmoreland is replaced as U.S. commander in Vietnam by General Creighton W. Abrams.

Creighton Williams Abrams, Jr.

(Sep. 15, 1914 – Sep. 4, 1974) was a general in the United States Army who commanded military operations in the Vietnam War from 1968–72 which saw U.S. troop strength in Vietnam fall from a peak of 543,000 to 49,000. He served as Chief of Staff of the United States Army from 1972 until shortly before his death in 1974. In honor of Abrams, the U.S. Army named the XM1 main battle tank the M1 Abrams. The IG Farben building was also named after him from 1975 to 1995.



1st: The Phoenix program is established to crush the secret Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) in South Vietnam. The VCI, estimated at up to 70,000 Communist guerrillas, has been responsible for a long-standing campaign of terror against Americans, South Vietnamese government officials, village leaders and innocent civilians. However, the Phoenix program, which is controlled through CORDS under the direction of Robert Komer, generates huge controversy in America concerning numerous alleged assassinations of suspected Viet Cong operatives by South Vietnamese trained by the U.S. The controversy, generated in part through North Vietnamese propaganda, eventually results in Congressional hearings. Testifying in 1971 before Congress, Komer's successor William E. Colby states, "The Phoenix program was not a program of assassination. The Phoenix program was a part of the overall pacification program." Colby admits that 20,587 Viet Cong had been killed "mostly in combat situations.. by regular or paramilitary forces."

“Under the Phoenix Program, assassination and torture were regularly used against Viet Cong fighters and their civilian supporters, in order to gather intelligence and to strategically weaken the VC insurgency. Pictured here is a squad of U.S. soldiers posing with beheaded Viet Cong operatives, circa 1968.”



(Wikipedia)

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19th: President Johnson and South Vietnam's President Thieu meet in Hawaii.



26th: South Vietnamese opposition leader Truong Dinh Dzu is sentenced to five years hard labor for advocating the formation of a coalition government as a way to move toward an end to the war.

26th: The first attack on a U.S. Air Force Base in Thailand took place Friday evening, July 26, 1968 at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base. Security was routine except for precautionary support of a C-141 medical transport standing by for possible evacuation of three prisoners of war who had been released by Hanoi. Security for the aircraft included placing a sentry team close-in and a quick reaction team nearby. At 10:25 pm, approximately 25 attackers from four locations opened fire with automatic weapons against the northwest corner of the base.

July 1969

Communist intractability and Nixon's growing inflexibility meanwhile nourished each other. In his 1969 Foreign Affairs article, Kissinger had described the Johnson administration's vain attempts to negotiate as having been "marked by the classic Vietnamese syndrome: optimism alternating with bewilderment; euphoria giving way to frustration."

Now, in 1969, he and Nixon were on the threshold of the same experience, which was to go on for the next three years.

(Vietnam, by Stanley Karnow)



July 1969

"What interests me is what you can do with power."

~ Henry Kissinger

July: President Nixon, through a French emissary, sends a secret letter to Ho Chi Minh urging him to settle the war, while at the same time threatening to resume bombing if peace talks remain stalled as of November 1. In August, Hanoi responds by repeating earlier demands for Viet Cong participation in a coalition government in South Vietnam.

8th: The very first U.S. troop withdrawal occurs as 800 men from the 9th Infantry Division are sent home. The phased troop withdrawal will occur in 14 stages from July 1969 through November 1972.

17th: Secretary of State William Rogers accuses Hanoi of "lacking humanity" in the treatment of American POWs.

20th: Project Apollo: Apollo 11 lands on the Moon and Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin become the first humans to walk on its surface.



25th: The "Nixon Doctrine" is made public. It advocates U.S. military and economic assistance to nations around the world struggling against Communism, but no more Vietnam-style ground wars involving American troops. The emphasis is thus placed on local military self-sufficiency, backed by U.S. air power and technical assistance to assure security.

30th: President Nixon visits U.S. troops and President Thieu in Vietnam. This is Nixon's only trip to Vietnam during his presidency.



Tricky Dick in the War Zone

(continued....)



July 1970

By 1970, most of South Vietnam was firmly under the control of the South Vietnamese Government, and Communist forces avoided contact with allied forces. Only in northernmost I Corps were the Communists willing to engage in combat: in II, III and IV Corps, they had been largely driven back to the Cambodian border area. The American effort to 'Vietnamize' the war was well under way, and troop units amounting to over 100,000 US soldiers had returned to the United States. Over 47,000 Communist troops had 'rallied' to the South Vietnamese side during 1969, and the South Vietnamese forces structure had swelled to more than 950,000 soldiers. Clearly, the Communists were losing the war.

(Battles and Campaigns in Vietnam, by Tom Carhart)

July: Air America was equipped with 24 twin-engine transports, 24 short take-off and landing aircraft (STOL), and 30 helicopters. During 1970 A/AM air-dropped or landed 46 million pounds of food in Laos and flight time reached more than 4,000 hours a month. A/AM also transported thousands of troops and refugees, flew emergency medivac, rescued downed airmen, inserted and extracted road-watch teams, monitored sensors along infiltration routes, conducted reconnaissance and engaged in numerous clandestine missions.

4th: 100 injured in race rioting in Asbury Park, NJ.

12th: Blues-Rock singer Janis Joplin debuts in Kentucky.

14th: Preston S. Foster, actor (Waterfront, Gunslinger), dies at 69.

18th: Willie Mays becomes 10th baseball player to get 3,000 hits.

29th: 6 days of race rioting in Hartford, CT.

31st: Chet Huntley retires from NBC, ends "Huntley-Brinkley Report".



July 1970



*Good night, David.
Good night, Chet.*

July 1971

In 1971, the war was in its seventh year, and there was no end in sight. U.S. troop levels were down from a peak of 540,000 to 270,000. Dr. Henry Kissinger offered to negotiate a deadline for withdrawal of U.S. forces in exchange for a cease-fire and the release of American POWs. This triggered an exchange of comprehensive proposals that would ultimately lead to an agreement. Throughout 1971, however, Le Duc Tho (lead negotiator for the North Vietnamese Gov't) held firm to his insistence that President Thieu (President of South Vietnam) be removed and no breakthrough occurred.

1st: State of Washington becomes 1st state to ban sex discrimination.

1st: Maj. Gen. DeWitt R. Searles replaces Maj. Gen. Andrew J. Evans, Jr. as commander of the 7/13AF at Udorn.

1st: 6100 American soldiers depart Vietnam, a daily record.



July 1971



Going back to the World

1st - Wanda Gonzalez, Miss Connecticut USA (1996), born.

3rd: Singer Jim Morrison of The Doors is found dead of a heart attack in his bathtub.

(continued....)



4th: Koko, sign-language gorilla, born.

5th: 26th amendment certified (reduces voting age to 18).

6th: Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, jazz musician (Hello Dolly), dies at 71.



13th: All Star MVP: Frank Robinson (Baltimore Orioles).

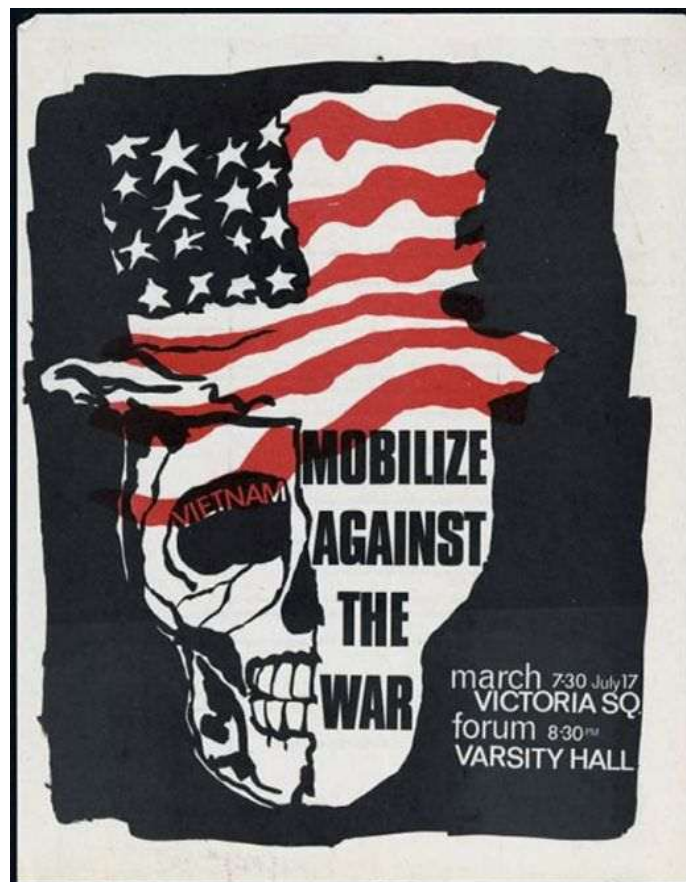
15th: President Nixon announces he will visit Communist China in 1972, a major diplomatic breakthrough.

17th: The 'Plumbers' unit is established in the White House by Nixon aides John Ehrlichman and Charles Colson to investigate Daniel Ellsberg and to 'plug' various news leaks. Colson also compiles an 'enemies list' featuring the names of 200 prominent Americans considered to be anti-Nixon.

26th: Apollo 15 launched (Scott & Irwin) to 4th manned landing on Moon.

30th: Japanese Boeing 727 collides with an F-86 fighter killing 162.

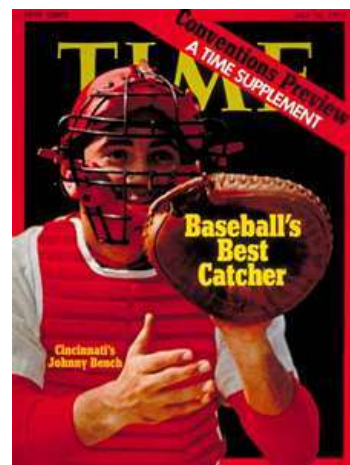
30th: US Apollo 15 (Scott & Irwin) lands on Mare Imbrium on the Moon.



National mobilisation poster against the war in Vietnam, 17 July 1971. (National Library of New Zealand)

July 1972

1972 in the Vietnam War saw foreign involvement in South Vietnam slowly declining. Two allies of America, New Zealand and Thailand, which had contributed a small but effective military contingent left South Vietnam this year. America still fought tenaciously while negotiators in Paris tried to hammer out a withdrawal strategy for the United States. One American Operation that was later declassified years after the war was Operation Thunderhead which was a highly classified mission that attempted to rescue escaped POWs.



July 1972

(continued....)



~ Operation Thunderhead Overview ~

In 1972, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized U.S. Pacific Command to execute Operation Thunderhead in which a small group of hand-picked SEALs were employed to assist in the rescue of Prisoners of War being held in North Vietnam. A number of POWs were planning to escape, steal a boat, and flee via the Red River to the Gulf of Tonkin. Although mission training, planning, and rehearsal was conducted, many the POWs were moved prior to their escape without the SEALs knowledge, and no POWs were rescued. The operation was the first combat-use of a mini wet-submersible SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV).

The operation would be conducted in two parts: surveillance to detect the escapees, and the rescue. Lt. Melvin S. Dry commanded Alfa Platoon, SEAL Team ONE. His forces would depart a submerged submarine, the USS Grayback (SS 574) off the coast of North Vietnam in the Red River delta area and position themselves to make an early sighting of the escapees. Lt. Philip L. "Moki" Martin, then a Chief Warrant Officer, was a member of Dry's platoon and a critical asset to the team.

On June 3, 1972, Lt. Dry and His men were forced to abandon a swimmer delivery vehicle when its batteries were exhausted by heavy currents during a night reconnaissance mission. Dry rallied the four-man team in enemy waters for eight hours. Dry made the decision to tow to sea and scuttle the inoperable SDV, preventing detection by the enemy and preserving operational security. Upon their rescue, while aboard the USS Long Beach (CGN 9), Lt. Dry made the decision to return to the Grayback to continue to lead future SEAL insertions.

On June 5, 1972, while returning to Grayback by helicopter to continue the mission, when signaled to exit, the team unhesitatingly jumped. In harsh conditions, Lt. Dry was killed instantly and two others were injured. Nearly losing consciousness, Martin located the survivors and kept them alive through another eight-hour night.

The details of the once secret operation and the accounting of the SEALs' actions were reported in a magazine article in October of 2005. When retired Capt. John D. Chamberlain, the then commander of USS Grayback, the submarine the SEALs launched from during the operation, read the article and realized that neither Dry nor Martin were ever recognized, he collected naval messages, official documents, and personal statements from witnesses and submitted awards for the two SEALs in November 2005. The Navy authorized the medals on Oct. 26, 2007.

2nd: Joseph F. Smith, Jr., leader US Mormon Church, dies at 95.



Smitty and his gals, 1901.

"Take care of your polygamous wives; we don't care for Uncle Sam now."

- Prophet Joseph F. Smith, 1896 dedication speech for the Payson, Utah meeting house, quoted in William Edward Biederwolf, *Mormonism Under the Searchlight*, 1915.

Note: Tried to convince the wife we should join the Mormon Church and take-up this polygamy thing. That was just before the head injury which sent me to the hospital. I'm doing fine now, really. D. Lewis Smith, Jr. (Ed)

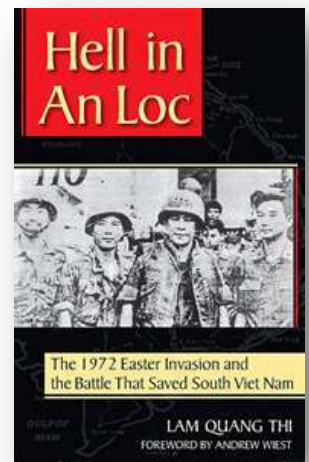
7th: Dutch Minister decides to ignore soft drug usage.

8th: Cpt Richard S. Ritchie and Cpt Charles B. DeBellevue of 555 TFS, 432 TRW shoot down two MiG 21 aircraft.

11th: A North Vietnamese Army attack on An Loc was defeated by South Vietnamese troops, with the assistance of American B-52 air strikes. Eight days later, South Vietnamese troops started a major counter-offensive campaign against the North Vietnamese Army in Binh Dinh Province.

12th: Democrats nominated George McGovern for president in Miami, FL.

13th: The Paris Peace Talks resume. The following day, the Democratic Party chose Senator George McGovern, an outspoken critic of the war, as their candidate for president in the upcoming election. McGovern advocated 'immediate and complete withdrawal' from Vietnam.



(continued....)



14th: Deborah Mailman, Australian actress, born.

16th: Smokey Robinson & Miracles final live performance.

18th: During a visit to Hanoi, actress Jane Fonda broadcasts anti-war messages via Hanoi Radio.

19th: With U.S. air support, the South Vietnamese Army begins a drive to recapture Binh Dinh province and its cities. The battles last until September 15, by which time Quang Tri has been reduced to rubble. Nevertheless, the NVA retains control of the northern part of the province.

21st: Bloody Friday: 22 IRA-bombs explode in Belfast.

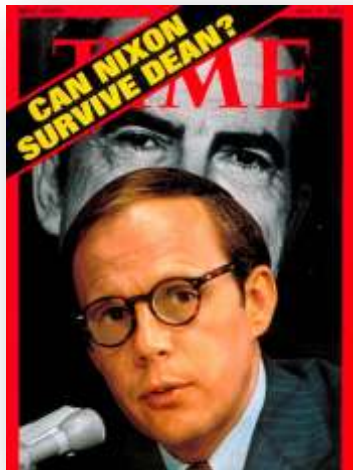
21st: Dodgers release and end career of pitcher Hoyt Wilhelm.

Hoyt Wilhelm served in the U.S. Army during World War II, seeing action in the Battle of the Bulge. He rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant, thereby, acquiring his nickname, "Ol' Sarge".



July 1973

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War began as a small commitment of 30 men in 1962, and increased over the following decade to a peak of 7,672 Australians deployed in South Vietnam or in support of Australian forces there. The Vietnam War was the longest and most controversial war Australia has ever fought. Although initially enjoying broad support due to concerns about the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia, as Australia's military involvement increased a vocal anti-war movement developed. To a large extent this focused upon conscription, which had been an issue in Australia dating back to the First World War, however, considerable portions of society were opposed to the war on political and moral grounds. The withdrawal of Australia's forces from South Vietnam began in November 1970 when 8 RAR completed its tour of duty and was not replaced. A phased withdrawal followed, and by 11 January 1973 Australian involvement in hostilities in Vietnam had ceased. Nevertheless, Australian troops from the



July 1973

Australian Embassy Platoon remained deployed in the country until 1 July 1973, and Australian forces were deployed briefly in April 1975, during the Fall of Saigon, to evacuate personnel from the Australian embassy. Approximately 60,000 Australians served in the war; 521 were killed and more than 3,000 were wounded.

July: The U.S. Navy removes mines from ports in North Vietnam which had been installed during Operation Linebacker.

1st: 1st US-China basketball game, US collegiates beats Shanghai 96-61.

2nd: James R. Schlesinger is sworn in as the 12th United States Secretary of Defense.

5th: "Live & Let Die," James Bond film premieres

6th: Joe E Brown, comedian, dies after long illness at 80.

10th: Bahamas declares Independence from UK & adopts constitution.



It's better in the Bahamas!



11th - Robert Ryan, US actor (The Dirty Dozen, Longest Day), dies at 63.



12th: Lon Chaney Jr, actor (Wolfman), dies after long illness at 66.



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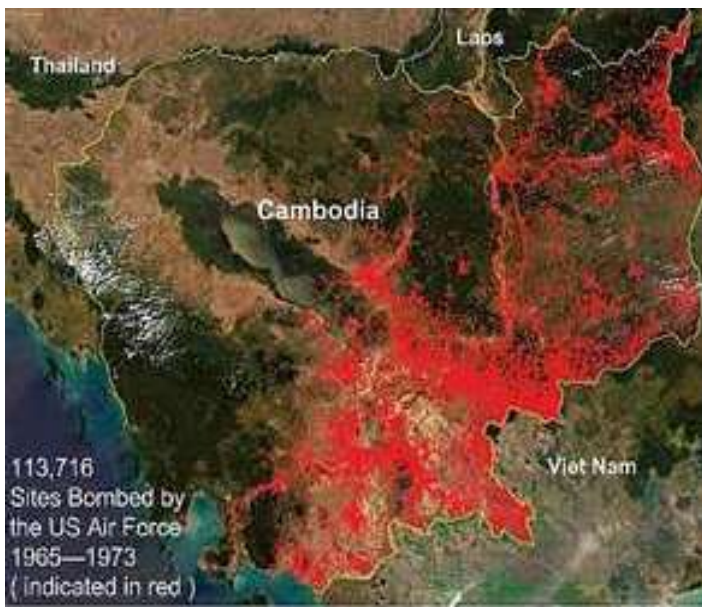


16th: The U.S. Senate Armed Forces Committee begins hearings into the secret bombing of Cambodia during 1969-70.

16th: During Watergate hearings, Butterfield reveals existence of tapes.

17th: Military coup in Afghanistan; King Mohammad Zahir Shah flees.

17th: Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger testifies before the Armed Forces Committee that 3500 bombing raids were launched into Cambodia to protect American troops by targeting NVA positions. The extent of Nixon's secret bombing campaign angers many in Congress and results in the first call for Nixon's impeachment.



20th: The US Senate passes the War Powers Act.

The War Powers Resolution of 1973 (50 U.S.C. 1541-1548) is a federal law intended to check the President's power to commit the United States to an armed conflict without the consent of Congress. The resolution was adopted in the form of a United States Congress joint resolution; this provides that the President can send U.S. armed forces into action abroad only by authorization of Congress or in case of 'a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces.'

The War Powers Resolution requires the President to notify Congress within 48 hours of committing armed forces to military action and forbids armed forces from remaining for more than 60 days, with a further 30 day withdrawal period, without an authorization of the use of military force or a declaration of war. The resolution was passed by two-thirds of Congress, overriding a presidential veto.

The War Powers Resolution was disregarded by President Reagan in 1981 by sending military to El Salvador, by President Clinton in 1999, during the bombing campaign in Kosovo, and by President Obama in 2011, when he did not seek congressional approval for the attack on Libyan forces, arguing that the Resolution did not apply to that action, and again when troops entered Pakistan to kill Osama Bin Laden. All incidents have had congressional disapproval, but none have had any successful legal actions taken against the president for violations. All presidents since 1973 have declared their belief that the act is unconstitutional.

23rd: Eddie Rickenbacker, WWI fighter pilot, dies at 82.

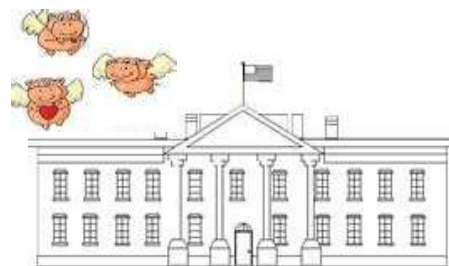


Edward Vernon Rickenbacker (October 8, 1890 – July 27, 1973) was an American fighter ace in World War I and Medal of Honor recipient. He was also a race car driver and automotive designer, a government consultant in military matters and a pioneer in air transportation, particularly as the longtime head of Eastern Air Lines.

23rd: President Nixon refuses to release Watergate tapes of conversations in the White House relevant to the Watergate investigation. (Bill Clinton visits White House and Nixon gives him a souvenir cigar...just kidding).

23rd: Monica Lewinsky, San Francisco, California, American White House intern noted for improper relationship with President Bill Clinton. (She was known to like cigars...not kidding).

"Now, I have to go back to work on my State of the Union speech. And I worked on it until pretty late last night. But I want to say one thing to the American people. I want you to listen to me. I'm going to say this again: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky. I never told anybody to lie, not a single time; never. These allegations are false. And I need to go back to work for the American people. Thank you."



(continued....)

