

Alpha 2/503 troopers stopping the hump for C's.



The two chaps in the center are Mike "Mr. Te" Thibault and Ron Sedlak of A/2/503d with friends and family. *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt* decorates the table.



Left is Jack & MaryAnn Owens, and to their left are Carole & Dominick "Dom" Cacciatore and Frank "Dukes" Dukes.



Jim Gettel & Dave Milton CO A/2/503. Waiting (patiently?) for chow. *"No Cap, you can't have my pound cake & peaches."*



Officers & Gentlemen



The Unwashed



~ Freddy E. McFarren, LTG (Ret) ~

Featured Speaker at Reunion Banquet

By Col. Jerry Cecil
C/1/503d

LTG (Ret) Freddy E. McFarren delivered an inspiring talk during the closing banquet on Saturday evening at the reunion.

General McFarren is no stranger to the airborne community. He served over 12 years in the 82nd Airborne and 18th Airborne Corps, from Battery Commander to Corps Artillery Commander. As a Brigadier General he was the Commandant of Cadets at West Point. As a Major General he was the Division Commander of the 24th Infantry Division (MECH) at Ft. Riley. He retired as the Commanding General of 5th US Army at San Antonio.

General McFarren's remarks opened with an accounting of the historic legacy of the 503rd PIR, giving a nod to the Corregidor veterans present, and a summary of the Brigade's legacy from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. As an Airborne trooper himself, he derided those 'armchair critics' who sought to minimize the danger of parachuting into combat. He quickly reminded the assembled paratroopers that when you are preparing for a parachute operation and approaching the drop zone there is more uncertainty and danger than anyone can predict. The individual soldier must still *"jump into the unknown,"* into a place he knows little about, land without injury, and then complete the mission.

As a veteran of Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, and Desert Storm, General McFarren exuded the credibility of a soldier that silenced the audience as they listened intently.

General McFarren then shifted his remarks to the theme of *"taking care of yourself and your buddies,"* correctly pointing out this reunion gathering was all about the unbreakable bonds of friendship, sacrifice, and love for one another.

He said that as we all grow older, we must continue to take care of ourselves and look out for our buddies who continue to need the comfort, care, and concern of a fellow soldier who has *"been there and done that."*



He added, others cannot and will never fathom the depth of these bonds that endure between soldiers who fought together, bled together, mourned together, and now heal together.

He closed by acknowledging it was a privilege and honor to be with the storied 173d Airborne Brigade at this reunion and wished the audience well in the future.

Lieutenant General Freddy E. McFarren, a native of Texas, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and awarded a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Military Academy in 1966. He also holds a Masters degree in Education from Duke University. Prior to his retirement in 2003, he was the Commanding General of the Fifth United States Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Lieutenant General McFarren also commanded the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Riley. Before that, he served as Chief, Office of Military Cooperation in Cairo, Egypt. In the

Pentagon, he served as the Director of Training for the Army and was a military assistant in the Army Secretariat. He was also the Commandant of Cadets and a Company Tactical Officer at the United States Military Academy.

Twelve years of his career were spent at Fort Bragg with various units of the XVIII Airborne Corps and the 82d Airborne Division. His combat service included Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, and the first Gulf War. In Vietnam he was an advisor

to a Vietnamese Ranger Battalion. He has been awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Master Parachutist Badge, the Ranger Tab, two Distinguished Service Medals, the Silver Star, five Legions of Merit, four Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, and numerous other decorations.

Lieutenant General McFarren and his wife, Aubrey, have two sons: Preston, a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, and William, a businessman in Moscow, Russia. Lieutenant General McFarren now serves as a military consultant and lives in Spring Branch, Texas.





Terry Aubrey on left of photo, presents a smiling 173d Airborne Association president, Roy Scott, with the “Kentucky Colonel” award on behalf of Kentucky Governor, Steven Beshear.

Kentucky Colonel is an honorary title bestowed upon individuals by approval of the Governor of Kentucky. It is not a military rank. Award of the title requires nomination from an existing colonel. Nominators are expected to consider the nominee’s service and contributions to the global community before making a nomination. The sitting governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky bestows the honor of a Colonel’s Commission, by issuance of a certificate. *Congratulations Colonel Scott!*





Speech by Roy Scott

President 173d Airborne Brigade Association during closing banquet at Lexington Reunion 9 June 2012



~ They Were Young Men, and Paratroopers ~

They were young men, boys many of them, not unlike us a few years ago. They were a mixed bag of Americana, coming from the Ozarks of Arkansas, the big cities of New York and Chicago, the farmlands of Iowa and Kansas, and the sun baked sands of Florida and California, and all points in between. They were white and brown and black and red, but all were red, white and blue. They were Baptists and Catholics and Jews, and maybe even an atheist or two until their first foxhole. They were buddies.

Their nation and their world was being threatened and attacked by pure evil, and they, like so many before them and following them, answered the call to duty. But, simply being a soldier wasn't enough for these guys – they each were cut from a different cloth...or was it silk?

Fighting in WWII as a Leg just didn't fit the character of these men, and according to 503rd trooper Ray Basham, he liked the Army life but after the War started in Dec. 1941, he became unhappy with the unit he was assigned to because, as he stated, *'They could not pass on inspection'*. When the Army requested volunteers for the new elite paratrooper units he eagerly volunteered and was assigned in July 1941 to the 503rd at Ft. Benning, GA for paratrooper training, then off to combat in some islands few had ever heard of.

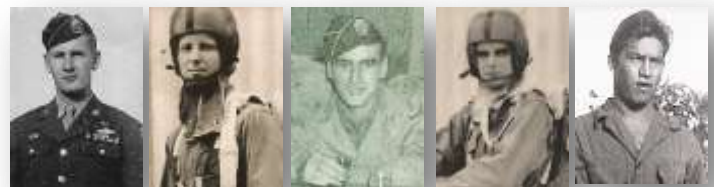
And it was Airborne All The Way for trooper Tony Cicchino, who at the age of 17 completed 5 weeks of jump school before heading off to war. Like all young men during war, he would quickly age beyond his youthful years, leaving behind the young boy on those Pacific Islands, and replacing him with a battle proven man.

Young officer, Jim Mullaney, after seeing paratroopers in training became more than interested, and wondered if he might be good enough to someday be one of them. He was. Somehow surviving battles throughout those islands, he would later learn his older brother had died in a Japanese prison camp. Jim would later remark, *"I was there until November 1945, and received orders to journey home. After several days on Leyte I boarded a ship called the 'Hugh Rodman' and headed for home sweet home. Got there in early December. God Bless America."*

Also joining the Army at 17, was Tony Sierra, perhaps born with paratrooper blood running through his veins. Tony said, *"At Camp Roberts two paratroopers set up shop in the cafeteria to recruit new jumpers. When I saw them in their dress jump suits and the trimmings, mainly the wings, I was instantly sold."* About his 503rd buddies Tony added, *"As the years have passed my fellow Troopers have become my family, and I cannot imagine what my life would have been if I had never become one of them."* We know the feeling Tony.

Recalling a return visit to the Island of Corregidor, The Rock, trooper Dick Adams poignantly wrote, *"The Rock once again is a lush tropical island with beautiful sunsets and panoramic views of Bataan. But, protruding from the carpet of green are the grey stone memories that I recall when I think about February, 1945. The Mile-Long Barracks, the curved line of the officer's quarters, the buildings at Middleside, Malinta Hill, the dock at Bottomside, the road around Malinta Hill toward Monkey Point are all lined with memories in spite of their green covering. The parade ground is still there minus the shell holes, but the golf course is unrecognizable...no shell holes or blown-off trees, just waist high green. The lighthouse, two water tanks and the old white metal flag pole still stand."* When General MacArthur returned to Corregidor in March 1945, Dick and his buddies were there.

These men of the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, these men of the airborne brotherhood heeded the call of their country. They were young men, and paratroopers, and we honor them and Bless 'Em All.



Dick

Ray

Tony C.

Jim

Tony S.





~ CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION ~



**IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR SERVICE IN THE
ARMY PARATROOPS
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DURING COMBAT IN THE PACIFIC THEATRE
DURING WWII**

Awarded to Paratroopers

**RICHARD ADAMS
RAYMOND MORRIS BASHAM
ANTHONY CICCHINO
JAMES MULLANEY
TONY SIERRA**

503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment

On behalf of Sky Soldiers of the 173d Airborne Brigade, 503rd Infantry Regiment, we extend our thanks and sincere appreciation of a grateful nation for your contribution of honorable service to our country. You served to maintain the security of our nation and the world during a critical time in history. You served with devotion to duty, commitment to your fellow paratroopers, and in keeping with the proud spirit and tradition of the Army Airborne. With our deepest and forever lasting gratitude ~

Airborne! All The Way!

Roy Scott
President, 173d Abn Bde Assoc.



Dave Carmon
Chairman, 173d Reunion 2012



Following Roy's speech and reciting the award, a *Certificate of Appreciation* was presented to each of the 503rd Troopers.



Terry Aubrey, E/2/503d presents *Certificate of Appreciation* to 503rd Trooper Dick Adams, as Dick's wife Nancy looks on.



503rd Trooper Ray Basham, joined by his bride, Mary, receives *Certificate of Appreciation* from Terry.





Terry presents *Certificate of Appreciation* to 503rd PIR Trooper Tony Cicchino, accompanied by his friend, Theresa.



503rd PIR Trooper Jim Mullaney is presented with *Certificate of Appreciation* as his daughter, Mary Lea Quick, proudly looks on.





503rd PIR Trooper Tony Sierra receives Certificate of Appreciation, joined by his wife, Elizabeth.

"At a time in their lives when their days and nights should have been filled with innocent adventure, love, and the lessons of the workaday world, they were fighting in the most primitive conditions possible across the bloodied landscape of France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and the coral islands of the Pacific. They answered the call to save the world from the two most powerful and ruthless military machines ever assembled, instruments of conquest in the hands of fascist maniacs. They faced great odds and a late start, but they did not protest. They succeeded on every front. They won the war; they saved the world. They came home to joyous and short-lived celebrations and immediately began the task of rebuilding their lives and the world they wanted. They married in record numbers and gave birth to another distinctive generation, the Baby Boomers. A grateful nation made it possible for more of them to attend college than any society had ever educated, anywhere. They gave the world new science, literature, art, industry, and economic strength unparalleled in the long curve of history. As they now reach the twilight of their adventurous and productive lives, they remain, for the most part, exceptionally modest. They have so many stories to tell, stories that in many cases they have never told before, because in a deep sense they didn't think that what they were doing was that special, because everyone else was doing it too." Tom Brokaw

The Greatest Generation.....Indeed



**Asiatic-Pacific
Campaign Medal
WWII**



**American Campaign
Medal
WWII**



**WWII
Victory
Medal**





They were young men, and paratroopers.



Jim, Ray, Tony & Dick.

~ Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal ~



For service in the US Armed Forces within the **Asiatic-Pacific Theater of Operations**. The bronze medal is 1¼ inches in width. On the front is a tropical landing scene with a battleship, aircraft carrier, submarine and an aircraft in the background with landing troops and palm trees in the foreground with the words "ASIATIC PACIFIC CAMPAIGN" above the scene. On the reverse side, an American bald eagle close between the dates "1941 - 1945" and the words "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."





From our 503rd Guests...

I want to personally thank all the 173d Brigade and All Skysoldiers for inviting my father Raymond Basham, my Mom Mary and our family and friends to your reunion in Lexington. I find it difficult to find the words to express how much we all appreciated it and enjoyed every moment of the visit. My Dad was so moved by all the recognition and honor that you showed for the 503rd PRCT. The Brotherhood that all you paratroopers share is a treasure.



Trooper Ray

I am still trying to steal Mom's 503rd jacket but she has it under lock and key!

I hope we all can meet again someday. It was all great thanks to the 173d.

Airborne...All The Way!

Sincerely,
Lin Basham
SFC (Ret)



**503rd troopers ready
for the Nazdab blast,
1945.**

Courtesy of the 503rd
Heritage Battalion
website.

Gentlemen,

I'm certain you remember the Bob Hope song *Thanks for the Memories*.

Those words are the best I can think of as I write this note. Yes ~ thanks for the memories of the Lexington gathering.

All of the 173d ~ especially you people ~ are the tops.

The way all of you treated the 503 WWII guys and their families just can't be easily described. I and all the others will be forever grateful.

Thanks for the memories.

Jim Mullaney
WWII 503rd PIR



Trooper Jim

Jim:

It is we who thank you and your buddies Dick, Ray, TonyC and TonyS and your families who joined us at our reunion, and all the troopers of the 503rd, past and present.

With apologies to Bob Hope, Leo Robin & Ralph Rainger; for you guys – sung (imagine the voice of Bob Hope) to the tune of *Thanks for the Memories*:

~ Thanks for the 503rd Memories ~

Thanks for the memories,
of tower jumping boys,
chutes instead of toys,
running 'round the Benning ground
it must have been a joy.
We thank you, so much.

And thanks for that ocean trip,
across to distant land,
with Brothers of a Band,
with kits on back and ammo packed,
ready to make a stand.
We thank you, so much.

Markham Valley was no picnic,
combat jump one for you,
but you just hoped to kick nips,
and you did just that,
and thanks to you.

And thanks for the memories,
of the landing at Ley-te,
better you than me.
The Jap attacks you threw them back,
you brought them to their knees.
We thank you, so much.

Your time on Negros was fearful,
you'd had your share of that.
To fallen buddies a tear-ful,
but what the heck,
you went right back.

And thanks for the memories,
of low flying in a plane,
at Corregidor 'neath your Main,
of coming down to that Rock's ground
and never once complain.
WE THANK YOU...SO MUCH.

The original song was sung by Bob Hope with words and music by Leo Robin & Ralph Rainger, and arranged by Gordon Jenkins. Originally from: *The Big Broadcast of 1938*. If I get sued for writing lyrics to their music, I'm sending them to you 503 guys, and *All the Way!* Ed



Comments about our WWII 503rd Guest Paratroopers at the Lexington Reunion

~ A Salute from 42nd ISPD ~

I can imagine there are very few of them left but think what your group did for them and their families was terrific. It makes Tom (a WWII Vet) and I darn glad to know you guys and even more so proud to see what you did at your reunion. The 42nd ISPD Scout Dog Platoon had three vets from WWII but lost them about three years ago before our reunions. We still have some of them from the Korean era and got to meet two of them last year at our reunion. God Bless all of you on what you did.

Jackie (Mom), Tom and Brandy McIntyre
42nd ISPD Platoon

No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversations as a dog does. Christopher Morley

Acquiring a dog may be the only opportunity a human ever has to choose a relative. Mordecai Seigal

~ Just Like Them ~

All any of us wanted to do was to be just like them.
Thanks for sharing, ATFW,

Marc Thurston
D/2/503d

~ Generations Meet ~

I'm truly happy those 503rd troopers got to meet the generation after them and the new generation. My son-in-law leaves in 2 weeks for a 9 month deployment with the Herd. By the way, Gary Prisk's book? I already spotted people I knew and the WO guy with the white helmet and Alfred E. Neuman on the back is Gary Bass of the Cowboys, he dusted me off that damn hill. Talked with him just before Thanksgiving last year after a 44 year loss in contact.

Jim Baskin
B/4/503d

~ National Guard Update ~

Just dropped off the remaining sodas to the Kentucky National Guard and got this update. The officer assigned to *Operation Corregidor II* was grumbling because he had to buy the drinks and then travel to Lexington, be late for kid's game, etc. When he got to the Kentucky Theatre he stayed long enough to hear the start of the program. It got his attention and he was one of the last to leave. He told everyone at his unit about how cool it was to meet these WWII paratroopers and hear their stories. "What an event!" he said.

Terry Aubrey
E/2/503d

Note: Bet he was a Leg, but was glad he got a taste of the Airborne World. Terry, on behalf of so many, I can't thank you enough for all you did with arranging the meeting, the welcome reception for the 503rd guys and their families, and making them all feel welcomed and honored -- all that plus your other reunion chores, and always with a smile on your kisser. You deserve a medal. You are to feel very proud my brother. It was an honor to work with you and the entire reunion crew. Ed

~ Daughter of a WWII 503rd Trooper ~

We had such a great time. I've attached a picture of dad next to the wonderful poster of the panel discussion. Dad really enjoyed every minute of the reunion. Thanks so much for including him. You guys are truly members of the "Best Generation" and it was an honor getting to spend time with you.

Mary Lea Quick
Daughter of 503rd Trooper, Jim Mullaney



Trooper Jim

~ New Friends Were Made ~

I really appreciate the invite to the reception for the 503rd guys and wives. My wife Page and I got to know Elizabeth and Tony Sierra, and Nancy and Dick Adams as well as we could in five days. But we made a special connection with Nancy and Dick. Had dinner and lunch with them and of course a drink or two. Dick gave me a piece of the canopy he discovered on Corregidor. This will be added to my collection and framed along with a piece of a canopy Nick Pavone, father of Bill Pavone 2/503d who jumped into Normandy. In addition I have a piece of then Capt. Tim Culpepper's canopy he jumped into northern Iraq along with his combat patch. Thanks again for including me. Meeting and talking to these men made my reunion the best ever. *Your brother Paratrooper for life,*

Paul Fisher
HHC/3/503d

Note: Paul was kind enough to personally present each of the 503rd Troopers with his 173d/503rd Medallion. Very nice of you, Paul.





~ *BLOOD ON THE RISERS* ~

(Our song which wasn't sung. So, sing it.)



He was just a rookie trooper and he surely
shook with fright.
He checked off his equipment
and made sure his pack was tight;
He had to sit and listen to those awful
engines roar,
"You ain't gonna jump no more!"

**Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die.
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die.
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die.
He ain't gonna jump no more!**

"Is everybody happy?" cried the Sergeant
looking up.
Our Hero feebly answered "Yes," and then
they stood him up;
He jumped into the icy blast, his static line
unhooked.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

(CHORUS)

He counted long, he counted loud,
he waited for the shock.
He felt the wind, he felt the cold,
he felt the awful drop.
The silk from his reserve spilled out
and wrapped around his legs.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

(CHORUS)

The risers swung around his neck,
connectors cracked his dome.
Suspension lines were tied in knots
around his skinny bones.
The canopy became his shroud;
he hurtled to the ground.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

(CHORUS)

The days he'd lived and loved and
laughed kept running through his mind.
He thought about the girl back home,
the one he'd left behind.
He thought about the medic corps
and wondered what they'd find.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

(CHORUS)

The ambulance was on the spot,
the jeeps were running wild.
The medics jumped and screamed with glee,
rolled up their sleeves and smiled.
For it had been a week or more
since last a 'chute had failed.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

(CHORUS)

He hit the ground, the sound was "Splat,"
his blood went spurting high.
His comrades they were heard to say:
"A hell of a way to die!"
He lay there rolling round
in the welter of his gore.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

(CHORUS)

There was blood upon the risers,
there were brains upon the chute.
Intestines were a'dangling from
his Paratrooper suit.
He was a mess; they picked him up,
and poured him from his boots.
And he ain't gonna jump no more.

**Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,
Gory, gory, what a hell of a way to die,
He ain't gonna jump no more!**

Airborne....All The Way!



And what are reunions....if not to remember.

