

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

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HARDER!**

2/503d
VIETNAM
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Contact: rto173d@cfl.rr.com

December 2010, Issue 22

~ Medal of Honor ~

Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta

Company B, 2d Battalion, 173d Airborne Brigade, 503rd Infantry Regiment



President Barack Obama presents the *Medal of Honor* to 173d trooper SSG Sal Giunta during the award ceremony at the White House.

See all issues to date at: www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php or http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm



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~ Presentation of the *Medal of Honor* ~

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated. On behalf of Michelle and myself, welcome to the White House. Thank you, Chaplain Carver, for that beautiful invocation.

Of all the privileges that come with serving as President of the United States, I have none greater than serving as Commander-in-Chief of the finest military that the world has ever known. And of all the military decorations that a President and a nation can bestow, there is none higher than the Medal of Honor.

Today is particularly special. Since the end of the Vietnam War, the Medal of Honor has been awarded nine times for conspicuous gallantry in an ongoing or recent conflict. Sadly, our nation has been unable to present this decoration to the recipients themselves, because each gave his life -- his last full measure of devotion -- for our country. Indeed, as President, I have presented the Medal of Honor three times -- and each time to the families of a fallen hero.

Today, therefore, marks the first time in nearly 40 years that the recipient of the Medal of Honor for an ongoing conflict has been able to come to the White House and accept this recognition in person. It is my privilege to present our nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, to a soldier as humble as he is heroic: Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta.

Now, I'm going to go off-script here for a second and just say I really like this guy. I think anybody -- we all just get a sense of people and who they are, and when you meet Sal and you meet his family, you are just absolutely convinced that this is what America is all about. And it just makes you proud. And so this is a joyous occasion for me -- something that I have been looking forward to.

The Medal of Honor reflects the gratitude of an entire nation. So we are also joined here today by several members of Congress, including both senators and several representatives from Staff Sergeant Giunta's home state of Iowa. We are also joined by leaders from across my administration and the Department of Defense, including the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral

Mike Mullen. Where's Mike? There he is, right there. Army Secretary John McHugh; and Chief of Staff of the Army, General George Casey.

We are especially honored to be joined by Staff Sergeant Giunta's fellow soldiers, his teammates and brothers from Battle Company, 2d of the 503d of the 173d Airborne Brigade; and several members of that rarest of fraternities that now welcomes him into its ranks -- the Medal of Honor Society. Please give them a big round of applause.



During invocation.

We also welcome the friends and family who made Staff Sergeant Giunta into the man that he is, including his lovely wife, Jenny; and his parents, Steven and Rosemary; as well as his siblings, who are here. It was his mother, after all, who apparently taught him as a young boy in small-town Iowa how to remove the screen from his bedroom window in case of fire. What she didn't know was that by teaching Sal how to jump from his bedroom and sneaking off in the dead of night, she was unleashing a future paratrooper who would one day fight in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan 7,000 miles away.

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During the first of his two tours of duty in Afghanistan, Staff Sergeant Giunta was forced early on to come to terms with the loss of comrades and friends. His team leader at the time gave him a piece of advice:

“You just try -- you just got to try to do everything you can when it’s your time to do it.” You’ve just got to try to do everything you can when it’s your time to do it.

Salvatore Giunta’s time came on October 25, 2007. He was a Specialist then, just 22 years old.

Sal and his platoon were several days into a mission in the Korengal Valley -- the most dangerous valley in northeast Afghanistan. The moon was full. The light it cast was enough to travel by without using their night-vision goggles.

With heavy gear on their backs, and air support overhead, they made their way single file down a rocky ridge crest, along terrain so steep that sliding was sometimes easier than walking.

They hadn’t traveled a quarter mile before the silence was shattered. It was an ambush, so close that the cracks of the guns and the whizz of the bullets were simultaneous. Tracer fire hammered the ridge at hundreds of rounds per minute -- *“more,”* Sal said later, *“than the stars in the sky.”*

The Apache gunships above saw it all, but couldn’t engage with the enemy so close to our soldiers. The next platoon heard the shooting, but were too far away to join the fight in time.

And the two lead men were hit by enemy fire and knocked down instantly. When the third was struck in the helmet and fell to the ground, Sal charged headlong into the wall of bullets to pull him to safety behind what little cover there was. As he did, Sal was hit twice -- one round slamming into his body armor, the other shattering a weapon across his back.

They were pinned down, and two wounded Americans still lay up ahead. So Sal and his comrades regrouped and counterattacked. They threw grenades, using the explosions as cover to run forward, shooting at the muzzle flashes still erupting from the trees. Then they did it again. And again. Throwing grenades, charging ahead. Finally, they reached one of their men. He’d been shot twice in the leg, but he had kept returning fire until his gun jammed.



Sal’s buddies.

As another soldier tended to his wounds, Sal sprinted ahead, at every step meeting relentless enemy fire with his own. He crested a hill alone, with no cover but the dust kicked up by the storm of bullets still biting into the ground. There, he saw a chilling sight: the silhouettes of two insurgents carrying the other wounded American away -- who happened to be one of Sal’s best friends. Sal never broke stride. He leapt forward. He took aim. He killed one of the insurgents and wounded the other, who ran off.

Sal found his friend alive, but badly wounded. Sal had saved him from the enemy -- now he had to try to save his life. Even as bullets impacted all around him, Sal grabbed his friend by the vest and dragged him to cover. For nearly half an hour, Sal worked to stop the bleeding and help his friend breathe until the MEDEVAC arrived to lift the wounded from the ridge. American gunships worked to clear the enemy from the hills. And with the battle over, First Platoon picked up their gear and resumed their march through the valley. They continued their mission.

It had been as intense and violent a firefight as any soldier will experience. By the time it was finished, every member of First Platoon had shrapnel or a bullet hole in their gear. Five were wounded. And two gave their lives: Sal’s friend, Sergeant Joshua C. Brennan, and the platoon medic, Specialist Hugo V. Mendoza.

Now, the parents of Joshua and Hugo are here today. And I know that there are no words that, even three years later, can ease the ache in your hearts or repay the debt that America owes to you.

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But on behalf of a grateful nation, let me express profound thanks to your sons' service and their sacrifice. And could the parents of Joshua and Hugo please stand briefly?

Now, I already mentioned I like this guy, Sal. And as I found out myself when I first spoke with him on the phone and when we met in the Oval Office today, he is a low-key guy, a humble guy, and he doesn't seek the limelight. And he'll tell you that he didn't do anything special; that he was just doing his job; that any of his brothers in the unit would do the same thing. In fact, he just lived up to what his team leader instructed him to do years before: *"You do everything you can."*

Staff Sergeant Giunta, repeatedly and without hesitation, you charged forward through extreme enemy fire, embodying the warrior ethos that says, *"I will never leave a fallen comrade."*

Your actions disrupted a devastating ambush before it could claim more lives. Your courage prevented the capture of an American soldier and brought that soldier back to his family. You may believe that you don't deserve this honor, but it was your fellow soldiers who recommended you for it. In fact, your commander specifically said in his recommendation that you lived up to the standards of the most decorated American soldier of World War II, Audie Murphy, who famously repelled an overwhelming enemy attack by himself for one simple reason: *"They were killing my friends."*

That's why Salvatore Giunta risked his life for his fellow soldiers -- because they would risk their lives for him. That's what fueled his bravery -- not just the urgent impulse to have their backs, but the absolute confidence that they had his. One of them, Sal has said -- of these young men that he was with, he said, ***"They are just as much of me as I am."***

So I would ask Sal's team, all of Battle Company who were with him that day, to please stand and be recognized as well. Gentlemen, thank you for your service. We're all in your debt. And I'm proud to be your Commander-in-Chief.

These are the soldiers of our Armed Forces. Highly trained. Battle-hardened. Each with specialized roles and responsibilities, but all with one thing in common --

they volunteered. In an era when it's never been more tempting to chase personal ambition or narrow self-interest, they chose the opposite. They felt a tug; they answered a call; they said, *"I'll go."* And for the better part of a decade, they have endured tour after tour in distant and difficult places; they have protected us from danger; they have given others the opportunity to earn a better and more secure life.



"I really like this guy." President Obama

They are the courageous men and women serving in Afghanistan even as we speak. They keep clear focus on their mission: to deny safe haven for terrorists who would attack our country, to break the back of the Taliban insurgency, to build the Afghans' capacity to defend themselves.

They possess the steely resolve to see their mission through. They are made of the same strong stuff as the troops in this room, and I am absolutely confident that they will continue to succeed in the missions that we give them, in Afghanistan and beyond.

After all, our brave servicemen and women and their families have done everything they've been asked to do. They have been everything that we have asked them to be. ***"If I am a hero,"*** Sal has said, ***"then every man who stands around me, every woman in the military, every person who defends this country is."*** And he's right.

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This medal today is a testament to his uncommon valor, but also to the parents and the community that raised him; the military that trained him; and all the men and women who served by his side.

All of them deserve our enduring thanks and gratitude. They represent a small fraction of the American population, but they and the families who await their safe return carry far more than their fair share of our burden. They fight halfway around the globe, but they do it in hopes that our children and our grandchildren won't have to.

They are the very best part of us. They are our friends, our family, our neighbors, our classmates, our coworkers. They are why our banner still waves, our founding principles still shine, and our country -- the United States of America -- still stands as a force for good all over the world. So, please join me in welcoming Staff Sergeant Salvatore A. Giunta for the reading of the citation.



Reverend Carver.

MILITARY AIDE: The President of the United States of America, authorized by act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded, in the name of Congress, the Medal of Honor to then Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta, United States Army.

Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity, at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty, in action, with an armed enemy in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan, on October 25, 2007.

While conducting a patrol as team leader, with Company B, 2d Battalion Airborne, 503d Infantry Regiment, Specialist Giunta and his team were

navigating through harsh terrain when they were ambushed by a well-armed and well-coordinated insurgent force.

While under heavy enemy fire, Specialist Giunta immediately sprinted towards cover and engaged the enemy. Seeing that his squad leader had fallen, and believing that he had been injured, Specialist Giunta exposed himself to withering enemy fire and raced towards his squad leader, helped him to cover and administered medical aid.

While administering first aid, enemy fire struck Specialist Giunta's body armor and his secondary weapon. Without regard to the ongoing fire, Specialist Giunta engaged the enemy before prepping and throwing grenades, using the explosions for cover in order to conceal his position.

Attempting to reach additional wounded fellow soldiers who were separated from the squad, Specialist Giunta and his team encountered a barrage of enemy fire that forced them to the ground. The team continued forward, and upon reaching the wounded soldiers, Specialist Giunta realized that another soldier was still separated from the element. Specialist Giunta then advanced forward on his own initiative.

As he crested the top of a hill, he observed two insurgents carrying away an American soldier. He immediately engaged the enemy, killing one and wounding the other. Upon reaching the wounded soldier, he began to provide medical aid, as his squad caught up and provided security.

Specialist Giunta's unwavering courage, selflessness and decisive leadership while under extreme enemy fire were integral to his platoon's ability to defeat an enemy ambush and recover a fellow American soldier from the enemy.

Specialist Salvatore A. Giunta's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Company B, 2d Battalion Airborne, 503d Infantry Regiment and the United States Army.

Photos: J. Scott Applewhite / Associated Press; Win McNamee Getty Images; Department of Defense.



TO SSG SAL GIUNTA FROM VIETNAM & WWII ERA VETS OF THE 173d & 503d ABN

SSG Giunta: On behalf of the President and members of Chapter 27 Southern States AUSTRALIA 173d Abn Bde we congratulate you on your honour and thank you for your service. May your God keep you and yours safe and happy. AIRBORNE.

**John Arnold, Chapter Secretary
1RAR**

SSG Sal Giunta, B/2/503d: Congratulations on receiving your Medal of Honor. Best of luck in the future. Regards,

**John Barr
B Coy, 1RAR, '65-'66**

Dear SSG Giunta: After reading the account of your service, listening to the comments of your brother troopers and watching the way you conducted yourself during your interviews, I can only say what a credit you are to your Family, Country, Unit and brothers in arms. I look forward to the opportunity of meeting with you at a future 173d convention so I may have the honor of shaking your hand. Airborne All The Way:

**Robert Beemer, SGT
B/2/503d, '67-'68**



Reception at White House following MOH presentation

SSG Giunta: Congratulation on your award.

**Bill Bennett and Family
1 Troop PWLH, 1RAR**

Sergeant Giunta: You make us all proud to be Americans and I'm especially proud to have served with "B" Company "Bravo Bulls" 2/503 173d Airborne in the Republic of Vietnam in 1965. "B" company has produced some of the greatest warriors of all time. Thank you,

**Bryan Bowley, SSG
B/2/503d, '65**

SSG Giunta: Wishing you CONGRATULATIONS and a big THANK YOU for your service to your country and especially for your service to your fellow troopers. In times like those, no man thinks about what he is going to do, he just acts. As a decorated Combat Veteran of the Vietnam war, I can appreciate your feelings of *"just doing your job"* as that is all anyone can do. A wise man once said, *"There are no extraordinary men, just extraordinary circumstances that made ordinary men react in extraordinary ways."* Wear the MOH proudly because you were not 'given' it, you EARNED IT by your extraordinary actions!

Sincerely yours,

**Gary 'Buzz' Cox, SGT
C/D/2/503d, '67-'68**

Howdy Sal: Congratulations on your MOH. It was a honor to meet you in Columbia Falls. Hopefully we will meet again someday under happier circumstances. Your humbleness and dignity are a great inspiration for all. If you're ever back in Montana, you and yours are always welcome at our fire. God Bless. All The Way.

**SGT Carl (Mike) Carver, SGT
B/2/503d**

SSG Sal Giunta: I watched and recorded when President Obama awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR to you. I stood tall (5'6" frame) with pride and honor, tears for the families, for what they had to endure and sacrifice their sons. Airborne! Thank You and the "HERD" for meeting the Obstacles head on. The 173d is carrying the tradition.

**Jaime (Jimmy) Castillo, SP4
C/2/503d, '66-'67**

Please accept our congratulations on your award of the Medal of Honor. You are upholding the traditions of the 173d. From all the Aussie Veterans and Members of Chapter XI Downunder in Australia.

**Sal Cheeseman
1RAR**

I would like to thank you for your efforts to save fellow soldiers. I'm extremely proud of you and the fact that you represented our unit in a time of conflict. Your courageous actions are what it takes to receive this MOH award. I'm sure that you feel as though there are others that deserve the same recognition...but the fact is that someone noticed that you preformed your job in an exemplary way. Airborne!!

**Harry Cleland, SP4
B/2/503d, '66-'67**

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Dear Sal: Congratulations on your recent award. You are now a member of an elite group of fighting men that our nation deems worthy to honor as its bravest. I especially want to thank you for your service and the great pride you bring to the 173d Airborne. Sincerely,

Roger Conley, SSG
H&S Battery, 3/319th Arty (ABN), '68-'69

SSG Giunta: Welcome home trooper! We are very proud of you and all of our troops in harm's way. We, the Vietnam era 173d Abn Bde 503d Abn INF veterans, understand and appreciate what you experienced and had to contend with. Well done and thank you very much.

Dr. Tim Cloonan, COL
Co B (Med) Spt Bat, '69

One hell of a job. Thanks for stopping something that could have been worse. Makes me proud to be part of the "HERD".

Roy Doster
November Ranger, November Team '70-'71

Dear SSG Giunta: Congratulations on earning the Medal of Honor! The whole saga of B Company 2/503 in *Restrepo*, their courage, skill and initiative against a dedicated enemy, are in the very best traditions of the 503d Airborne Infantry. Your particular reactions to the Taliban ambush that night in the Korengal have earned the admiration of your squad and platoon mates and are an inspiration to Sky Soldiers everywhere. Airborne All the Way!

George Dexter, COL
Bn Cmdr, 2/503d, '65-'66

SSG Giunta, my name is Mark P. Dickinson, C Co {Sup. Bn} 173d Abn Bde {Sep} 1963-66. I want to thank you for being The man, Trooper and Brother you are and for the extreme sacrifice you put forth for your fellow troopers and dedication to your country and the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team. AIRBORNE!! God Bless You and your family!

Mark Dickinson
C Co. Sup. Bn, 173d Abn Bde, '63-'66

I agree with you when you said you were doing what you were trained to do, that's what being a paratrooper with the best is about. You're the man, run with it for all it's worth. Good luck, God bless, and thank you.

Alton Fisher
A/3/503d, '70-'71

SSG Sal Giunta: My congratulations upon this memorable occasion. Well Done. Airborne !!

Ken Gann
105 Field Bty., Royal Australian Artillery, '65-'66

G'day Sal: From the other side of the world where I live, I am proud of you brother. I served with the Herd with the 2/503d mortar platoon '65-'66. I am very proud to

be a Sky Soldier. We wish you all that life can for your deeds of Heroism. It takes one tough brother to do what you have done. It's admirable Sal. If you ever want to visit Oz, we're 'ere mate!! I live in a little place called Loch Sport in the State of Victoria. You can Google it if you type in 66 Wallaby St in Loch Sport. We have a bed for you brother.

A.B. Garcia
HHC/2/503d, '65-'66



Sal with family and friends.

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations for accepting the MOH for what you did and for all the buddies you served with that day. SP4 Al Rascon of the 1/503d is a name I'm sure you know. He was put in for the MOH for his actions on 16 Mar 66 - the day I got shot down flying re-supply for the 2/503d. Had I run just a little later than I was running, the Bn would have saddled up and moved out and been promptly slaughtered by the 2,000 VC/NVA waiting for them. Al would not have been coming to our aid because there would have been no one to aid. It would have been a massacre, Stuff sometimes works out. We had few KIAs but countless WIAs that day. It could have been a full blown massacre. Al did a wonderful job protecting his troops while he provided medical aid to them. It took nearly 40 years for the paperwork to get through to the right people to allow him to stand where you did the other day to receive your medal for yourself and all those who are always with you. Well done, son. You have the right attitude and you know that every buddy on every patrol has a piece of that hardware. Thanks for receiving it for them as well as for yourself.

Tony Geishauser, MAJ
Pilot, 173d Cowboys, '65-'66

Congratulations fellow Sky Solder and job well done. I am very proud of you and you deserve the medal for what you did. I was the medic for Charlie Company 2/503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade in Vietnam, 1971. God bless you and your family.

Ismael (Doc) Gonzales, SP5
C/2/503d, '71

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Sal with wife, Jenny, at 173d reception.

SSG Giunta: Your selfless actions exemplify the quality and leadership of the U.S. Army's Non-Commissioned Officer Corps and, in particular, those of the Airborne community. Your actions set the example for our young Sky Soldiers who will become tomorrow's small unit leaders. Congratulations and all the best in your future endeavors.

Bernard Griffard, Cdr, COL
B/2/503d & Bn Staff, '67-'69

Congratulations SSG Giunta on a job well done beyond the call of duty. Your bravery and the examples of bravery set by all MOH recipients of the 173d make me humbly proud to have been a member of this prestigious brigade. Thanks for continuing the tradition.

Earle Graham, SSG
A/2/503d, '67-'68

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations on your award of the Medal Of Honor. The last living Medal of Honor recipient I knew personally was SSG Charles Morris A/2/503d, 173d Airborne. To see you receive the MOH made me so proud to be in B/2/503d 1966-67. You have made all of your fellow paratroopers proud and honored. Your Bravery and Courage will set the example for all. Thank you and may God Bless You and Protect you. Respectfully,

David "Griff" Griffin, SGT
B/HHC/2/503d, '66-'67

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations and best wishes on the next phase of your Army career.

Jim Grimshaw, CPT
D/2/503d, '68-'69

Always remember PFC Dolby. Carry on the tradition. Rangers all the way – Airborne!

James Henkels
2/503d

Congratulations! Sal, from a former B Co 2/503 3d platoon 3d squad Sky Soldier. You have made me extremely proud to have served in the 'Herd'. Your selfless display of bravery and non-self-promoting attitude after your award are truly the best our country can offer. B Co veterans do have an annual reunion and I hope that you may attend sometime in the future. I wish you the best always.

James Allen Jackson, SP4
Bravo Bull, '65-'66

Warmest congratulations to a great soldier. You are the second (or perhaps third) Bravo Bull to have been awarded the MOH. All of us are real proud of you. Sincerely,

Ken Kaplan, LTC
B/2/503d, '66-'67

SSG Sal Giunta: You are correct in your assessment that many heroic acts go unrecognized. But it is always great to see that some are. Congratulation on a job well done.

Stu Kumasaka, SP4
HHC/2/503d, Recon, '65-'66

Dear SSG Giunta: First I want to thank you for your service. I appreciate what you did for the others in your unit. I salute you in being singled out as a recipient of the Medal of Honor. Wear it proudly, never dishonor it.

Don MacCuish, LTC
B/3/503d, '69-'70



B/2/503d trooper Ed Kearney & lovely bride, Joyce, at reception. Thanks Ed for all the great photos.

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The President of the United States said *"I like him,"* and so do I. SSG Sal Giunta, MOH you and your wife represent what it's all about. Australia and the United States have fought alongside each other since the First world War. You make us all proud that the tradition continues. God bless you both and America.

Peter Mackie, WO1 rtd
1RAR (Aust Log Sup Coy) '65-'66

Sal, just a note of appreciation for your exemplary conduct under fire which has inspired many of us who at one time were also in the crucible of war. Thank you for your efforts to bring your men back, dead or alive. For me personally, I can identify with the gratitude of the parents of the trooper who you rescued from the hands of the insurgents. My Brother Julian E. Marquez was KIA on the 15th of Feb. 1971 in Vietnam. His body and those of two others who fell in the same action laid in front of an enemy position for three days of attempts before they could be reclaimed by their comrades. Two more were wounded in the final successful effort. But I had the privilege of thanking some of those same men this past May for bringing us back our dead and allowing us the opportunity to bury them. The loss was great, but would have been greater had you not risked your own life to defend your fallen brother in arms from the savagery of the enemy. Though you failed to save his life, you did spare his family from the uncertainty, or worse, the desecration of their loved one. May God grant you peace in that you did your duty and more. And by doing so honored those with whom you served, your nation, and those of us who have been in the position to know the sense of loss mingled with pride that combat casualties inflicts. *Our lives are but for a moment, while what we do or leave undone will echo down through eternity.*

Joe Marquez
C/1/503d, '69 N/75th, Juliet, '70 A/2/503d, '70 Chaplain

SSG Giunta "Airborne All The Way."

David Maxey, SGT
B/HHC/2/503d, '67-'69

Stand proud, lead the way, wear your Honor for those who cannot. Reflect well what you can, but you are here where the memories fade with time. Guide those soldiers you may encounter with the leadership you possess. Thank you for being the person you are. Hold your Family close and cherish each and every day.

Eldon Meade
C/3/503d, '70

SSG Giunta: Simple words cannot describe how proud and humble you made me feel when you received the award that you so truly deserve.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.
Always,

Ted Mobley, SGT
HHC/2/503d, '65-'66



Dave Glick, Sal Giunta & Mike Broderick

Sal: I saw your interview on "Colbert" Friday 19 June. Didn't hear much. Was too busy yelling things like *"Airborne!"* and *"the Rock!"* Congratulations. Proud of "The Herd."

Ken Minehan, Chapter XXIII
1 RAR Group, '65-'66

Sal Giunta: "Congratulations" just doesn't seem to be the correct word. I can't think of a word in the English language that describes my thoughts when I read your MOH citation. God bless you Sal.

Jim Mullaney
Company H, 503rd PRCT, WWII

SSG Giunta: Congratulations on earning the Medal of Honor. You epitomize the true Sky Soldier spirit by accepting this award in honor of your fallen comrades for they too are true heroes. Thank you for representing the 503d Infantry and the 173d Airborne Brigade with distinction and humility. We are all proud of you. Airborne, All the Way.

Gerard "Butch" Nery, Jr., COL
A/4/504d; E/4/503d & N/75th Rangers, '70

Sal: Here's another thank you to add to the countless congratulations you've gotten. I knew your B Company MOH predecessor, Milton Olive. We fought together in Vietnam. There's always been something special about the company, the regiment, the battalion, and, of course, the 173d Airborne Brigade that can't be adequately explained to others.

Larry Paladino, SGT
B/2/503d, '65-'66

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Sal: It was an honor for Me to see you on TV and hear your "definition" of a soldier. You make the title of a soldier honorable. As a Vietnam vet it's an honor for Me to count you in our brotherhood. And, you can stand assured that every Nam Vet has your "6".

Jose Perez Ortiz, SFC
D/16 Armor, '68-'69

I would like to take this opportunity in congratulating SSG Sal Giunta B/2/503d on his well-deserved Medal of Honor. All us boys over here in Aussie Land are so Proud when one of our own receives any sort of praise in the line of duty, so I know I speak for all our boys in sending best wishes. Take care and God Bless you all.

Jack Panossian, Pte
1st Bn, Royal Australian Reg. [1RAR], '65-'66 & '68-'69

SSG Giunta: Thank you for your courage and dedication to a fellow Sky Soldier and personal friend. Brothers like you are the epitome of what it means to be a "Herd" member. Continued success in your future, and forever *"Airborne!"*

Ed Perkins, MSG
Recon/A/2/503d, '67-'68

Sal: You brought great pleasure to me to see another soldier of Company B/2/503 be awarded the Medal of Honor. I was there the day Milton Olive died, and have been to his grave. From this day forward, your life has forever changed. It will be not only an honor, but a burden, as you must carry all of us with you! We are your brothers in combat, and know the depths of this award as no others. God Bless you and yours.. and our soldiers.

Jack Price, CPT
B/2/503d, '65-'66

SSG Sal Giunta: American soldiers are the truest reflection of the patriotic nature of a country that is exceptional in its continuing quest for individual liberty. Unlike any other nation or empire on earth, throughout time, America has delivered on her promise to keep its people free. On a lonely ridge overlooking a remote valley, in a country time has passed by, you risked your life to rescue a wounded paratrooper – a man who was a member of your squad – your dearest friend. As time goes by you will find that this night, and this firefight will echo as if an episode your soul most treasures. Cherish this memory for it is yours alone. Wear your Medal of Honor with gusto, as if representing the valor of paratroopers from Corregidor, Normandy, Korea, Vietnam, and on to Iraq and Afghanistan. Your humble nature bodes well, for you have lost far more than you have gained. Stand tall, SSGT Sal Giunta...we of the 2nd Battalion are proud of you.

Gary Prisk, CPT
C/D/2/503d, '67-'68

Congratulations Sal! You have made all of us very proud to have served in 2/503. Every time I mention having served in the same unit you are in I get the "yeah right". Even though I'm in my 70s and you in your 20s. The uninitiated just don't understand the Brotherhood of the 173d! My best to you and your family!

Ed Privette, MAJ
HHC/2/503d, '67-'68

Dear SSG Sal Giunta: I would like to congratulate you on being awarded the Medal of Honor. Your actions hold up the courage and traditions that the 173d Abn Bde (Sep) has been known for. The courage, honor and the selfless act you showed that day surely shows what kind of Non-Commissioned Officer you are. You are a true American Patriot and Soldier. *"ALL THE WAY!"*

Thomas Quinn, CSM
Casper Aviation Platoon
HHC, 173d ABN BDE, '69-'72

San Diego 173d Airborne Association Chapter 28 sends their congratulations to SSG Sal Giunta.

Gilbert Reynoso, SP4
C/3/503d, '67-'68 & 82nd Abn B/2/505th
President, 173d Chap. 28



COL William Ostlund and SSG Sal Giunta
at 173d reception in Washington, DC.

(continued....)





Medal of Honor recipient SSG Salvatore A. Giunta at White House....we all like this guy.

Sal: Congrats on your award. I read the documentary that's been circulating throughout our Herd emailing, the one from *60 Minutes*. I'm a combat vet from Vietnam, Purple Heart, proud to say and proud to have served with MOH recipient Charlie Morris, and Airborne All the Way. God bless you and yours. Welcome Home,

Jack Ribera, PFC
No Deros Alpha 2/503d, '66

Dear SSG Giunta: I was moved by your CBS *60 Minutes* interview. Courage comes to those willing to receive it when others need it most. You are a man of courage and a member of our brotherhood of combat veterans. I served as a grunt and artillery observer in the 2/503d during Vietnam. You bring honor to us all past, present and future. Welcome home brother. Congratulations on your award and for a job well done. Respectfully,

George Rivera, SGT
E/2/503d

SSG Sal Giunta; There among the 503rd Abn Inf Regiment, 173d Abn Bde (SEP) Vietnam Combat Veterans are those of us who understand your thoughts....your words...and your actions on that ever present night... now in the fading distance in time and

history. You need not hear any more accolades that, although, well-meaning do not comfort the loss of brothers, the shoulda coulda's or the intrusive thoughts...or when you venture to that secret quiet place that only you can go for refuge. I will remind you...in a quiet way...You kept the E'spirit and the silent legacy of uncommon courage that is common among the 173d, and to which we, Paratroopers, hear echoing from famous battles and no name places in distant Pacific jungles, South East Asian triple canopied mountains, Mid-East deserts, and the Hindu Kush valleys. That is what I hear in your words...I see in your eyes...and your bearing. I am honored that you kept that Legacy and E'spirit under a high degree of stress and at a point in time when you were most needed by your cohorts...and then continued the mission. Thank You!... For keeping the E'spirit and the Legacy of the 2nd Battalion 503rd Abn Inf and the 173d ABN Brigade. Again, Thank you! In the simple words of an Airborne Trooper,

Tome Roubideaux, DSW
LRRP/2/503d, 173d LRRP Plt/74th Inf Det., 75th Rgrs.

(continued....)





Sal's buddies, troopers all.

Sal: I watched with great interest and pride during the presentation of your Medal of Honor. Being retired now, I was able to watch it live on CNN. Your personality, humility, and determination comes through just watching you. I can see why the President said that he really liked you. I know that this is all very difficult for you....and even though you "only" did what was expected of you, it was truly amazing and worthy of recognition. Yes, you do wear that medal for all the men who were with you that day. But even more, you wear that medal for all of us who served with the 173d Airborne. You exemplify the spirit of the Airborne and the glorious history of the 173d. We are all with you, and support you. I hope to meet you someday. Until then, *Airborne!*

Jerry Sopko, SGT
D/4/503d, '69-'70

SSG Sal Giunta: I am honored to be able to send this congratulatory note to you on the occasion of your award of the Medal of Honor. Your actions have brought great credit to the 173d, one of the finest units in the history of the US Army. God Bless the USA.

George Stapleton, COL
Commanding Officer, 3/503d, VN

Very proud to have you as a brother of the "Herd."
Welcome Home.

Jim Stephens
B/3/319th, '67-'68

SSG Giunta: We know you are embarrassed by the attention and adulation being heaped on you right now. It will of course fade with time, but as long as it lasts you know that you are serving as point-man/flag bearer who is the delegate of all the Sky Soldiers and

other military who have served over the years with little or no recognition. But seeing you honored, we all stand a bit prouder, quietly sharing in those honors and appreciating your modesty in sharing attention. *Airborne!*.... and may St. Michael, patron saint of paratroopers watch over you and your family.

Mike Switzer, LT/Platoon Leader
C/3/503d, '68-'69

SSG Sal Giunta: Congratulations on your recent reception of the Medal of Honor. Watching you receive the award made me proud. Proud, not only because I served with Bravo Company, 4th Battalion 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) and Charlie Company 75th Airborne Rangers during the Vietnam War, but proud

of you, and for you. You accepted our nation's highest medal for heroism with honor, dignity, humility and selflessness, all attributes of a true warrior hero. You make us old Sky Soldiers proud. I know you will go forth into the future utilizing this great honor, that you so justly earned, not for self-glory, but as a means to continue to help your brother and sister warriors and our nation as a whole. God's speed young warrior. *Airborne!!*

Jerry 'Rocky' Stone
B/4/503 & C/75th Rangers, '67-'70

SSG Sal Giunta: I would like to congratulate you for having been awarded the Medal of Honor. The Third Herd, forever...

James Thomas, SFC
D/2/503d, '67-'69

I am proud of you Sergeant Giunta. If I can ever help you in your career, please don't hesitate in contacting me. My son is also airborne and currently serving in Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division. I was with the Herd in Vietnam, 1969. *Airborne all the way!*

Dave Tong, PFC
B/4/503d, '69

Congratulations, I know you accept this for your comrades, but please do not let that bother you more than you can deal with, they all still walk with you in peace not anger.

Frank Vans Evers
173d LRRP, '66-'67

(continued....)





Bravo Bulls back row L-R: Bob Warfield, Mike Broderick, 173d Brigade Commander Bill Ostlund, Phil Farrow. Barry Herbison, Battle Company SSG Sal Giunta, Jim Robinson and Roy Lombardo. Front row L-R: Ed Kearney, Jack Price, Dave Glick and Joe Logan.

Dear Sal: I'm sure it's hard to accept that under such terrible circumstances you are the recipient of such an honor. We're all very proud of you, the honor that has been bestowed upon you; and the manner in which you accepted it makes us all proud to have been a part of the 173d. Best wishes for your continued success in whatever you choose to do.

**Dave von Reyn, SP4
C/2/503d, '68-'69**

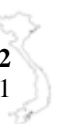
SSG Sal Giunta: I watched your interview today on Fox News. As a fellow Soldier I am amazed. I witnessed the real SSGT Giunta on TV today and I like you as a person and admire you as a Soldier. Keep up the good work. AIRBORNE!

**Jerry Wiles, SGT
B/2/503d, '67**

SSG Giunta: Thanks for your service, and your acts of bravery refusing to be defeated by the Taliban. You've made us all proud, especially a fellow 2nd Battalion / 503d Infantry soldier. With all of the Marine hoopla, it is so encouraging to see the Herd is kicking tail and

taking names!! Your bravery has done wonders for we older generation of "war fighters" from the Herd back in Nam.

**Rich Whipple, SGT
HHC/2/503d, '68-'69**





ROY S. LOMBARDO, JR., COL (Ret)
Commanding Officer, B/2/503d
Republic of Vietnam

Dear Fellow Sky Soldiers & Friends of the 173d Airborne:

I am writing to thank you for your help in financing the BRAVO BULL MEDAL OF HONOR CEREMONY for SSG Sal Giunta on 16 November. Following the presentation at the White House, SSG Giunta, his family and the families of Josh Brennan and Hugh Mendoza (both KIA), Sky Soldiers from BATTLE Company of today and my fellow veterans of yesteryear (Bravo Bulls, 2/503d) assembled to remember the paratroopers that we marched among and to honor SSG Giunta's bravery. We were joined by other current Sky Soldiers and friends of the Giunta's until the total exceeded 400.

To celebrate, the Bravo Bulls use our unique silver and gold punchbowl and engraved cups, one for each of our absent companions. Uniquely, the Bravo Bulls of '65 – '66 included Milton Olive, the first MOH recipient from B/2/503, and 4 DSC recipients (Davis, Edwards, Lopez and Gipson). We have been connected with the men of BATTLE Company since 2004 when they returned from the parachute assault into Iraq. Each year we visit them in Vicenza to welcome them home and one year later to send them forward under St. Michael's over-watch back to Afghanistan.



Ranger Roy presiding over ceremonies



BDQ Roy & Sal Giunta

We can rest easy that another major assault has been successfully dealt with due to your generosity. No active duty soldier paid a penny, which is only how it should be because they have already given so much.

Thanks again. You and yours remain in my daily prayers!

Fondest Airborne regards, Roy.

This reception mission was a tough one because we didn't have any control over the attendance of the families, which were large. Nevertheless, with the help of you, veteran Sky Soldiers, and other patriotic Americans, we are amassing enough to settle the cost for the reception.



Wife Jenny and guests toast 173d Medal of Honor recipient Sal Giunta.



A Gift for All Ages: The Significance of the Seemingly Insignificant

Dr. Ronald Reese Smith
1LT, FO, B/2/503d, 3/319th
ronaldreesesmith@gmail.com



LT Ron

In the early 19th century, a war-weary world was anxiously watching the march of Napoleon as he swept across helpless hamlets like fire across a Kansas wheat field. Nothing else was half as significant on the international scene. The broad brush strokes of the historian's canvas gave singular emphasis to the bloody scenes of tyranny created by that brilliant but diminutive dictator of France.

In 1809, somewhere between the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, babies were being born all over Europe and America.

- William Gladstone was born in Liverpool, England;
- Alfred Lloyd Tennyson was born in Somersby, England;
- Oliver Wendell Holmes drew his first breath in Cambridge, Massachusetts;
- Edgar Allen Poe, a few miles away in Boston, started his brief and tragic life;
- Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg, Germany;
- A physician named Darwin and his wife called their infant son, Charles Robert.
- Robert Charles Winthrop wore his first diapers.

America's 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, was born in Hodgenville, Hardin County, Kentucky to an illiterate, wandering laborer in a rugged log cabin.

All of that (and a lot more) happened in 1809 -- but who cared? The destiny of the world seemed to be shaped on the battlefields in Austria -- or was it? Now, 202 years later, is there the slightest doubt about which made the greatest contribution in history -- those battles or those babies? It is doubtful anyone other than a handful of history buffs could name even one Austrian campaign. But, who can measure the impact of those other lives?

What appeared to be super significant to the world has proven to be no more exciting than a Sunday afternoon yawn. What seemed to be totally insignificant was, in fact, the genesis of a new era.

So it was with the birth of Jesus. Eighteen centuries before, who would have cared about the birth of a baby laid in a cattle trough in a drafty cave when the entire world was watching Rome in all of her splendor? Bound on the west by the Atlantic, on the east by the Euphrates, on the north by the Rhine and Danube and on the south by the Sahara Desert, the Roman Empire was as vast as it was vicious. All eyes were on Augustus Caesar who demanded a census of the entire Roman world in order that he might determine a measurement to enlarge taxes. What could possibly be more important than Caesar's decisions in Rome? Who cared about a baby born to a poor carpenter and his betrothed from the insignificant little village of Nazareth? (Nazareth was so insignificant it was never listed among the cities and towns of Israel). The Bethlehem crowds had no inkling that the Son of God was asleep in their little town. Indeed, only a few shepherds came to see him, and they left, glorifying God.

Apparently, God did. It is doubtful that Augustus Caesar realized that he was sent from central casting -- an errand boy for the fulfillment of Micah's prediction, a pawn in the hand of God, a piece of lint on the pages of prophecy.

For the first time in history since the Tower of Babel, the entire world spoke the same language -- Koine Greek -- the business language of the world -- thanks to our friend Alexander the Great. When Alexander conquered the then-known world 330 years before the birth of Christ, his methodology for governing his conquest was simple: Hellenize it! He commanded soldiers to settle down, marry the local girls, teach them Greek art, Greek culture, Greek philosophy, and, of course, the Greek language.

Later, the Romans brought their contribution. For the first time in history the entire known world was at peace and enjoyed the *Pax Romana*. Not only did the Apostles have freedom of movement through the entire world to share the good news of God's arrival, but also, thanks to the Romans, they had roads on which to travel. Some of those roads, such as the Appian Way, are still in existence, and in some places in Italy, still in use. It's doubtful that Alexander or any of the Caesars ever realized that they were instruments in the hand of God to prepare the world to learn of the greatest story ever told. While Rome was busy making history, Jesus Christ arrived. He pitched his tent in silence on straw, in a drafty cave, under a star. And the world did not even notice -- did not even notice Mary's little lamb.

(continued....)



Yes, indeed! What appeared to be super significant to the world has proven to be no more exciting than a Sunday afternoon yawn. What seemed to be totally insignificant was, in fact, the genesis of a new era.

While Jesus Christ stood on the threshold of heaven, stepped across the universe and took on humanity, becoming the unique God-man--both fully God and fully man – while born into the world as all of the rest of us; he did not stay a baby. He grew in favor with both man and God. He came into this war-torn world of selfishness and sin for one purpose--to die as a sacrifice for our sin. The forgiveness he offers will satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts. Truly, Jesus is a gift of all ages. No gift is more needed by a dying world than the life-giving Savior, Jesus Christ. He and He alone gives meaning and purpose for living.

As young men, and women, we all suited up and marched off to war -- some to the war that was supposed to end all wars; some to a war that was called "a conflict" on the Korean Peninsula. Many of us went off to southeast Asia and Vietnam, and more recently, the countries of Iraq and Afghanistan. We've all done so in the service of our country and with the hope and intent that our service and sacrifice would bring about a greater peace. While our service might have helped stabilize or bring peace for a season, ultimately, real peace will come when Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, rules in our hearts. You will experience peace, as only God can give, as you yield your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is still a "gift for all the ages."

An object His grace....**Ron**



~ Editorial ~ Religion, Soldiers and Stuff

Upon undertaking the honor of producing our newsletter, I looked at other old soldier newsletters to get an idea what they were all about. Of the publications I researched, without exception, each had a Chaplain's Corner or some section equally appropriately named where a man or woman of the cloth would share uplifting words of glory and benevolence and the like. After all, god and soldiering and war have been inseparable throughout the history of our country. Hell, nations fight because of and over gods, and I certainly didn't want to produce the first ever old soldier newsletter without Him having a presence.

After the first couple of trial editions, I went on a preacher man search and find mission. It really wasn't much of a mission as a very close friend was a retired minister from Greybull, WY, a sniper who had served with the 4/503d, experienced in the glory stuff, and someone who knew god personally, Mike McMillan. "I'll be happy to," Mac told me when I invited him to fill the role of chaplain in our Chaplain's Corner.

For many months that Geronimo trooper did just that, and as far as I can tell, did a damn good job of it too. We never received a single complaint, and, lightning hit my house only once....no shit.

In spite of the uplifting sermons Mac shared with us, I wanted a 2nd Batt preacher to fill that slot, and we have many within our ranks. After finding Bravo Bull LT Ron living nearby in Orlando, I invited him to take the holy reins, and Mac stepped aside as the gentleman he is. For the past many months Ron too has shared words of glory and grace and the hereafter with nary a complaint from the troops; more importantly, the house here hasn't once been struck by lightning since Mac took his leave. Now, I'm not saying god doesn't like the 4th Batt....

It's reported about 85% of Americans believe in Christianity or some like faith, meaning an equal number of you share such beliefs; but that leaves me and the other 15% as godless heathens, friendly like, but still heathens. We're the agnostics and atheists or, in my case, secular humanists....the non-believer soldiers. I once asked Mac if I should include an "Atheist's Corner" in our newsletter, he said, "You better not." So, I didn't.

While not agreeing with followers of Christ and Buddha and Allah, or Cao Dai for that matter, I certainly respect everyone's right to their beliefs, however amusing they might seem at times. But, what I do question, and it seems too often lately, is the hypocrisy demonstrated by too many of these people of faith, these people of the church, these believers in the teachings of the Bible – sadly, this includes many of my soldier buddies.

Many rail about our black president, because he's black, poor people who are "*taking away my hard earned money*," while they themselves are on the receiving end of government relief, unwilling to provide medical coverage to *all* Americans as we send billions of dollars overseas to impoverished and war-torn lands (how dare they!), or demonizing other faiths out of misguided fear and ignorance, almost without exception these complaints come from people who proclaim themselves to be Christians. It makes me wonder sometimes, *what does it mean to be a Christian?*

A Sky Soldier buddy of mine, another Hell destined sinner, ends all his email messages with this note:

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." FDR

And, I'm very disappointed with LT Ron for not once mentioning Santa Claus in his Christmas message. I believe in Santa Claus, he brings me stuff. **Smitty Out**





National Infantry Museum Wins Prestigious Award

Thea Award recognizes excellence in the themed entertainment industry

The National Infantry Foundation is proud to announce the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Patriot Park has been selected for a prestigious national award.

The 2010 Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement *"recognizes excellence in the creation of extraordinary visitor experiences, celebrating storytelling around the globe."* It honors the creative partnerships formed between attraction owners and designers.

Boston-based Christopher Chadbourne and Associates designed the exhibits for the museum. The signature exhibit, called *The Last 100 Yards*, takes visitors on an emotional journey through the history of the American Infantryman. It is built on a 100-yard ramp that cuts through the center of museum, representing the Infantry's role in taking the last 100 yards of the battle.



Medal of Honor and provides visitors with a place for contemplation.

The Family Gallery, which honors the sacrifices of spouses, parents and siblings of soldiers is believed to be unique among military museums.

Other key members of the project team include architects E. Verner Johnson and Associates, video producer Donna Lawrence Productions, exhibit fabricators Design Craftsmen, Inc., sculptors Studio EIS and project managers Newton Aaron and Associates.

The Thea Award is the Themed Entertainment Association's version of the Oscar. It will be presented to representatives of the National Infantry Museum at an awards gala in Hollywood next spring.



Six era galleries surround the museum's Grand Hall. The Hall of Valor is a striking, glass-walled space that honors those who have earned the

