



June 2011, Issue 28

Contact: [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)

See all issues to date at either of these web sites:

[www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php](http://www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php) or [http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue\\_index.htm](http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm)

## ~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~

### Target Walking.....The RTO



*"As big as this guy is, I would have to say it is Mike Donahue from Florida. This is definitely a recon photo, but from the back it sure looks like Mike."* Pat Bowe, Recon/2/503d

(Feb. '67 photo by Pat)



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# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



**Chaplain Connie Walker**

Sky Soldiers of the heroic HERD – the 2/503d Bn – Families & Friends:

Grace and Peace to you and all Freedom loving people.

## **Psalm 89: 1-2**

*I will sing the story of thy love, O Lord, forever; I will proclaim thy faithfulness to all generations. Thy true love is firm as the ancient earth, thy faithfulness fixed as the heavens.*

## **I Corinthians 13:13**

*In a word, there are three things that last forever; faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of them all is love.*

In the movie “Brave Heart,” actor Mel Gibson played the heroic Scottish patriot, William Wallace (1305 AD), who in his torturous last hours loudly cried, “Freedom!”

Freedom is a root desire of humankind. Our National history is deep and wide and our patriotic citizens have this mighty word on their hearts, minds and bold lips to this very hour.

On March 23, 1775 the vibrant gifted orator and grace-filled leader, Patrick Henry, declared his most ardent speech, “Give me liberty or give me death!” This was an electrifying moment in American History breathing stalwart hope and tenacious will in the hearts of our Nation and people, and very particularly in the heart and spirit of the brilliant leader, Thomas Jefferson. This message of Freedom literally sparked revolutionary zeal within Jefferson’s very being and soul. The news of this inspiring, powerful and principled declaration spread like wild fire throughout Virginia and across the freedom-thirsty country.

The glorious and mighty word “Freedom” is one of the most noble and treasured words in our language. It abides with a devout spirit of thanksgiving and bids all of us to teach this captivating word to our youth and families nationwide.

True freedom is never freedom to do what we want to do, but always freedom to do what we ought to do with a deep sense of rightness – such as the freedom to speak the truth as we ought to speak, the freedom to worship our Lord God as we ought to worship Him, the freedom to assemble for the purpose of justice and mercy, and to defend these freedoms as we ought to defend them with our very lives.

Our Lord God is the giver and defender of all true freedoms by His saving work and words. May our Lord, “the giver of life and freedom” lead us in thanksgiving and a refined sense of loving care to our Herd Family, Warriors, Combat Wounded, Veterans of all ages and ranks, and all citizens as we are able.

Hoping to see as many of you as possible at the 173d Reunion, 22-26 June, San Antonio (Rivercity).

Blessings in abundance to each of you in the Name of our Lord God, our Good Shepherd Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

**Chaplain Conrad (Connie) Walker**

*“The Leapin’ Deacon”*  
National Chaplain Emeritus  
173d Airborne Association and  
Military Order of the Purple Heart



**Chapel at Camp Zinn.** (Photo by MG Jack Leide, CO C/2/503d)





## George's Katy

Katy Dexter, beautiful wife of COL George Dexter, our battalion commander in Vietnam in 1965/66, passed away on May 11, 2011. Our thoughts are with George and his family. Here they are seen together in happier moments.



In a note to friends informing them of the passing of his beloved bride, our commander said:

*Katy died on the evening of May 11 from complications of Parkinson's Disease. She was a beautiful, kind and inspiring woman who loved her family and friends and life. I was greatly blessed for the 63 years we shared as husband and wife, and I will truly miss her.*

*Katy's last few months were not easy, but as a nurse she knew they would not be, and she faced them with courage. Our local children and grandchildren constantly visited her over those months, and the whole family was here for the Rosary and funeral mass and the burial at the Santa Fe National Cemetery last Thursday.*

*She is now at peace with God.*

*George*

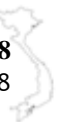
## The Leaving

Is it truly selfish to want you back again?  
I could not calm your mind, I could not ease  
your pain;  
I thought my love would be enough to keep  
you here with me;  
But now I know that was never going to be.  
  
I loved you, I disliked you, we argued and  
we kissed;  
Your face, your touch, your scent forever I  
shall miss;  
To hold you in my arms again, my soul no  
longer lost;  
I'd pay the price and gladly have no worry to  
the cost.

They say that life gets better and time will  
ease the pain;  
They're fools who cannot see the truth, it can  
never be the same;  
No daytime and no nighttime just hour on  
hour on hour;  
And time has no more meaning now life's  
not sweet it's sour.

Some think we have a life-force or a soul  
some others say;  
If I had one I know it died that dreadful,  
dreadful day;  
Sometimes I know I hurt you, I know that  
was so true;  
But please forgive me for those wrongs  
**FOR I ALWAYS WILL LOVE YOU**

A poem by Colin Jarratt



# Keeping A Few More on TEAM LIFE

To All Sky Soldiers / ROCK Paratroopers:

I'm in Afghanistan so do not have the connectivity associated with my home or US-based office but will do the best I can.

I established a Facebook account to remain in contact with and AVAILABLE to ROCK Paratroopers.

I was recently informed one of my "friends" on Facebook and one of my former Paratroopers in OEF VIII, took his own life – this after admirably contributing to the defeat of the many flavors of notorious insurgents in the Pech River Valley, in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.



Col. Bill  
a soldier's soldier

One of our many mantras in the ROCK was/is – “ONCE ROCK, ALWAYS ROCK – ALWAYS OBLIGATED, ALWAYS RESPONSIBLE.” We are Obligated and Responsible to each other – some gave their lives, many gave blood, some emptied their emotional bottle (which we know is sometimes harder to refill than blood). It is unacceptable to lose our fellow Paratroopers at their own hands – whether overtly or masked by careless behavior.

In Kunar (and I imagine in other areas and in other wars), "No Fear" meant rucking up again and again, competently and confidently reacting to contact, and immediately moving to a buddy in need - today, No Fear still means immediately moving to a buddy in need but ALSO means anticipating which buddy is in need. Buddies know who was/is hurting and each embraced those hurting when we were in proximity to each other. Now that ROCK Paratroopers have disseminated through the force – and some returned to their homes - all still need the ROCK "bump" on occasion. All need a buddy to check on them.

I get the bump by staying in contact with ROCK Paratroopers – old and young – and by continuously hiring former ROCK Paratroopers when possible! I ask each to reach out. We say each *"lived their lives for others"*. Our recent loss is no different – let's ensure our loss of his friendship is an investment in others and that we do not lose another ROCK Paratrooper to willful or careless behavior.

I'm hopeful we hear advice from our more experienced veterans as I do not believe the loss of Paratroopers after tough combat is a new phenomenon. When fearless men invest years training and bonding, establish their place in the "family", and then serve an adrenaline-filled year

together it's understandable there is much to be missed – much that can't be found in a bottle or a box.

That missed something can be found in the company of other Paratroopers and Soldiers.

I'm counting on continuously filling that void with like-minded men. I look forward to years of ROCK Reunions, wearing ROCK/Sky Soldier garb and hats with multiple pins, while remembering our fallen and sharing [even more] embellished stories as the years go by! RIP brothers – gone but not forgotten. If present for duty, continue to live your lives for others – “ONCE ROCK, ALWAYS ROCK – ALWAYS OBLIGATED, ALWAYS RESPONSIBLE.” ROCK!

Ostlund

[Sent in by Colonel Bill Ostlund,  
Infantry Deputy Commander, 75th Ranger Regiment]

## Airborne Colonel!

We can surmise there is not one of us from the Vietnam War, and more recently the wars in the Middle East, who doesn't know one, two or more of our buddies who took their own lives following their time at war; sadly, some of our guys continue to take that final, lonely path while others remain at risk. Hell, who knows how many of us have contemplated it – some, most? But, we also know that is not the path to take, though we understand it and them.

Of course, it's a path any of us who've been in combat should never consider, it might even be considered an injustice to our fallen buddies – they died so we might live. As the Colonel so rightly states, we carry a number of 'obligations' with us, and the dearest and perhaps most meaningful of all is, for us to live full lives -- it was gift given to us by our buddies who died.

We're a rare breed, we paratroopers; made of steel, able to chew barbed wire and drink sand. No hill too high for us to climb, no DZ too small on which to land, no enemy too fierce to conquer. A rare breed we are.

But then, inevitably, at some point we leave those days behind, and it becomes our time to move on, to move ahead, but always on the strength of the shoulders of our buddies who made it possible for us to live. If we owe them anything, we owe them our determination to live, and to live in spite of what this life might throw at us – that's all our buddies might ask of us – this we owe to them.

If you or any trooper you know is still fighting the battles of war, immediately call for yourself or hook your buddy up with help – *it's your obligation*. Here's one place. Ed

**National Veteran's Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**24/7 free and confidential**



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## Over 1,000,000 Disability Claims With the VA Remain in Arrears

The information below provided by COL Thomas is a report of the result of the appeal of a Morrison and Foerster class action suit on behalf of every veteran initiated against the VA to take specific action amongst other things to resolve the 1,000,000 disability claims which are currently in arrears. Veterans lives depend on these claims and some have waited up to and over three years. Although there are many good things and many good services provided by the VA, the suit identifies that the system is broken....  
<http://www.veteransptsdclassaction.org/index.html>



**Doc Scott**

....even though this administration has given the VA the largest increase in Presidential history, and has further requested that the 2010 budget be increased to VA by 15% and by \$25 billion over the next five years, including a proposed \$4.9 billion increase for Fiscal Year 2010. According to the VA's admission (*60 Minutes*), over 1,000,000 disability claims remain in arrears. Reports reveal there will be NO NEW PROGRAMS for veterans and NO EXPANSION of CURRENT PROGRAMS, but the additional resources provided by the administration will be directed to refurbishing old VA facilities, building new VA facilities and providing incentives for mid-level managers.

Early in 2007, Gordy Erspamer, the senior counsel from Morrison and Foerster, contacted us for information on veterans who experienced difficulties and delays with the claims process. I explained to him that the list of veterans who didn't have a problem with their claims would be a far shorter list. Over the ensuing months I worked with Mr. Erspamer to develop an on-line form where veterans could document and express their claim concerns.

Our office alone provided over 100 veteran on-line claim concerns, which became part of the discovery for the class action suit.

While in Washington for the annual Coalition of Iraq and Afghanistan last year, I had the serendipitous pleasure to have lunch with the discovering partner of Morrison and Foerster. We discussed the VA Class Action suit at length. He informed me that the case was now with the appellate panel, one conservative judge,

one liberal judge and one somewhat neutral judge. The results of that appeal appear below.

The latest update is as follows:

<https://www.baycitizen.org/veterans/story/appeals-court-cites-va-unchecked/>

The court will allow the VA a reasonable period of time to remedy the situation after which it will put VA Mental Health care in the hands of the courts. **A VICTORY FOR OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.** I have a phonecon scheduled with Mr. Erspamer this week (May), while I am in Washington to discuss how we can continue to support him and support our veterans and their families.

**Some Wounds Don't End with the War,**

**OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES  
DESERVE BETTER.**

Scott Fairchild, Psy.D.  
Doctor of Psychology  
1370 Bedford Drive  
Melbourne, Florida 32940  
321.253.8887  
321.253.8878 fax

In a message dated 5/21/2011 1:31:06 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, [nathanthomashope@cfl.rr.com](mailto:nathanthomashope@cfl.rr.com) writes:

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Press Release

May 16, 2011, No. 11-8

Contact:  
Mokie Porter  
301-585-4000, Ext. 146

## The Time Is Now for the VA To Fix Its Mental-Health System

(Washington, D.C.) – "Within the past week, a federal appeals court issued a scathing opinion of the VA's mental-health system, noting that it takes an average of four years for veterans to receive mental-health benefits," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). "This is a beleaguered process that demands immediate reform."

(continued....)





In the ruling of a three-judge panel, Judge Stephen Reinhardt of the 9th Circuit Appeals Court in Pasadena, California, wrote, *"Veterans should [not] be compelled to agonize or perish while the government fails to fulfill its obligations..."*

*"Although the VA is obligated to provide veterans mental-health services, many veterans with severe depression or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are forced to wait weeks for mental health referrals...For those who commit suicide in the interim, care does not come soon enough."*

*"We could not agree more with Judge Reinhardt," Rowan said. "Despite what excuses have been proffered by the VA and DoD, we maintain that veterans in need deserve better. While the VA and the Department of Defense have delayed for years on the so-called 'seamless transition' from active duty to veteran status, far too many veterans have fallen through the cracks – or rather the gaping holes – in the system that is supposed to help them."*

*"Even staunch defenders of the Pentagon are displeased with the treatment afforded our veterans,"* Rowan added. After the hearing on the Federal Recovery Coordination Program last week, the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Health of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee decried the disservice to our wounded warriors and their families who are getting lost between two large bureaucracies.

*"It's about time we work in concert to fix the system,"* Rowan said. *"It's about time for the VA and DoD to stop guarding their fiefdoms and making excuses."*

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is ***"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."***

## Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) App Helps Thousands

WASHINGTON – The PTSD Coach smartphone application (app), launched in April by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), has already helped more than 5,000 users connect with important mental health information and resources.

*"This new tool is about helping Veterans and Servicemembers when and where they need it,"* said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. *"We are encouraged so many have already downloaded this resource and hope many more will utilize this convenient tool to access VA services."*

Since its launch, the PTSD Coach app has been downloaded by thousands of individuals. While 96 percent of the users so far are located in the United States, the app has also been downloaded in 25 other countries. The app lets users track their PTSD symptoms, links them with public and personalized sources of support, provides accurate information about PTSD, and teaches helpful strategies for managing PTSD symptoms on the go.

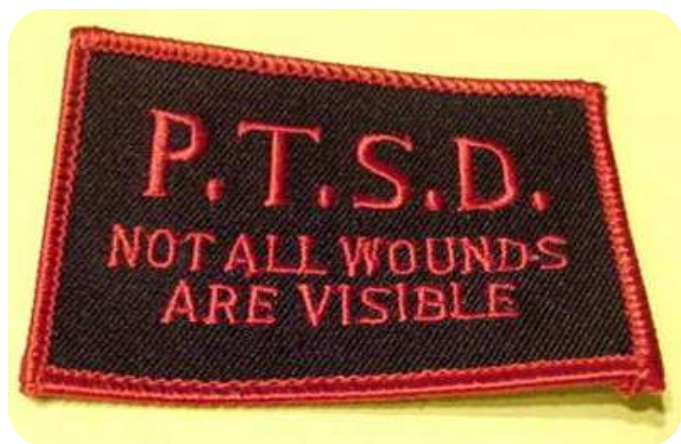
Currently, the PTSD Coach app has received perfect customer review scores on the iTunes App Store. Comments from Veterans and family members are overwhelmingly positive and one user describes the app as *"a must for every spouse who has a family member with PTSD."* Professionals have sent positive reviews, suggestions and offers to collaborate on research evaluating the PTSD Coach app.

The app has also already proven to be a useful tool for the staff at the Veterans Crisis Line. Within the first two hours of the app's official launch, the Crisis Line staff were contacted by a distressed Veteran who reported being instructed by the app to call the crisis line and was subsequently given an appointment at the local VA medical center. Crisis Line staff have begun to regularly recommend this resource to callers.

The app is one of the first in a series of jointly-designed resources by the VA National Center for PTSD and DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology to help Servicemembers and Veterans manage their readjustment challenges and get anonymous assistance. Given the popularity of mobile devices, VA and DoD hope to reach tens of thousands of Veterans, Servicemembers, and their family members with the new suite of apps.

Information on the PTSD Coach app is on the VA's National Center for PTSD Website:

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp>



# Treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder With a Jab to the Neck



By COURTNEY HUTCHISON  
ABC News Medical Unit  
Apr. 30, 2010

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/MindMoodNews/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-cured-shot/story?id=10510842&page=2>

A quick jab to the neck may be all it takes for immediate relief of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), according to new research from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

Some doctors, however, caution that more research is necessary before the procedure is deemed safe enough for widespread use.

In a study published Friday in the journal *Pain Practice*, *Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB)*, a ten-minute procedure that applies local anesthetic to a bundle of nerves in the neck, proved an effective remedy for this anxiety disorder, potentially offering an alternative to the pharmaceuticals traditionally used to treat the flashbacks, anger, anxiety, and sleep disturbances caused by PTSD.

Unwilling to take medication for the rest of his life for his PTSD, John Sullivan, 28, a retired Marine Corps Sergeant from Chicago, sought out the experimental treatment from a Chicago-based anesthesiologist, Dr. Eugene Lipov. Lipov is not part of the Walter Reed study. While the block itself has been used to relieve certain kinds of pain since 1925, Lipov was the first to begin treating PTSD with this injection. He accepted Sullivan as part of a double-blind placebo study he's currently conducting on retired soldiers.



Getty Images

Sullivan was injured by a grenade explosion in 2003 while serving in Iraq. In the years that followed, he would suffer flashbacks, nightmares, and anxiety, but it was not until a year ago that he was diagnosed with PTSD and was prescribed anti-anxiety medication. *"I didn't realize it at first, but I was losing my interest in going out with people, almost becoming a hermit, I wouldn't want to do work, call people... anything,"* Sullivan said.

But medication and therapy *"wasn't working 100 percent,"* Sullivan said, *"I'd take an anxiety pill and then I would be drowsy at work and I'd still be nervous and not want to go out with friends."*

The injection, which he received two months ago, *"was different,"* he said, *"not painful and the results were within five minutes -- I felt more relaxed and calmed down. It's been great."*

Because the study is placebo-controlled, Sullivan does not know if he actually received the block or a placebo procedure, but he felt that *"so far it's working."*

## Neck Jab Provides Relief to Vets With PTSD

Led by Lieutenant Colonel Sean Mulvaney, Friday's report duplicated Lipov's past work with the block through a clinical trial of this treatment in two soldiers -- a 36-year-old white male on active military duty and a 46-year-old Hispanic male whose symptoms began 18 years ago after his service in the first Gulf War.

Both patients, according to the study, *"experienced immediate, significant and durable relief"* of their symptoms -- a relief that pharmacological treatment had failed to provide them.

After the first treatment, one patient reported that he felt as if *"a cloud had lifted"* from his mind and that he hadn't *"felt this good since high school,"* researchers write. This relief continued in the months following the injection and under psychiatric guidance, the patient was able to taper off his medication.

Traditional treatment with therapy and antidepressants can take months to relieve PTSD symptoms, and can cause side effects such as impotence, weight gain, and sedation, Lipov said. But the block offers another way -- it works within 30 minutes and does not have those side effects.

The effects can last between six months and a year, and long-term results have been excellent so far, he said. One patient, he reported, has been symptom-free for a year and a half following his second shot. Though these blocks have been used medically for the better part of a century, Dr. Eugene Viscusi, the director of Acute Pain Management at Thomas Jefferson University said that the procedure *"is far from risk free -- including some potentially very dangerous complications."*

The safety of the treatment would have to be tested *"but these findings are definitely interesting,"* said Viscusi, and worthy of further research.

(continued....)



How can numbing part of the neck fix a psychological problem?

When a traumatic event is experienced, it leads to an increase in nerve growth factor, Lipov said, a change that leads nerves in the brain to "sprout like flowers." In one study, he said, they studied soldiers about to take their first jump out of an airplane and found that their nerve growth factor spiked to nearly twice normal levels. This spike causes nerves to sprout, and this sprouting results in an increased production of adrenaline in the brain, making patients feel anxious. By applying local anesthetic to block a certain nerve group in the neck, Lipov said the nerve growth factor returns to normal and symptoms subside.

In one of his PTSD patients, Lipov noted that trauma centers in the brain would light up in scans when the man was shown violent pictures. After the block, those parts of the brain no longer responded to the trigger.

### Testing Continues

Dr. Michael Roizen, chief wellness officer at the Cleveland Clinic, said more data is needed, especially controlled clinical trials, before this treatment could be used more widely.

With his current double-blind study, Lipov hopes to work towards just that kind of data.

*"I hope this will eventually become the standard treatment for PTSD. It's quick and effective, only \$500 to \$1,000."*

With so many veterans returning from combat plagued by psychological disorders like PTSD, he said, *"I think it's going to be huge in addressing the 'reverse surge' -- all these vets coming back to the country with these psychological problems."*

[Sent in by Dr. Scott Fairchild, LTC, 82nd Abn (Ret)]

## Some Benefit Increases Likely in 2012

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the Consumer Price Index for April is up 0.8 percent over the March CPI. This is important for military retirees, and those drawing VA benefits, because the CPI is used to determine the annual cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) and rate adjustments to VA Disability and Compensation, Vets Pension programs, and other VA rates for the following year. The Military Officers Association of America reports that the April 2011 CPI is up 2.9 percent from the 2008 CPI, which means veterans and survivors may see an increase in compensation and pension benefits in 2012, the first since 2008. Source: [www.military.com](http://www.military.com)

[Sent in by Richard "Airborne" Martinez, B/2/503d]

## Sister Looking For Buddies

Any Sky Soldiers who can identify these troopers and/or knew **Michael LeeRoy Ellis (KIA)**, please make contact with his sister. See her note below. Ed



"Mike is the one in the beret."

My name is Sheri Anderson - my brother, Michael LeeRoy Ellis, was in A Co. 2nd Bn 503rd - He was KIA 19 Nov 1967 on Hill 875. I have been trying to trace and collect any information I can about him and his life. There is really only my sister and I left who knew him. I have been trying to find anyone who may



Mike with his mother in '66

have known him in country. If you can help in any way that would be very much appreciated. Thanks for your service to me, my family and this great country - and thank you for any help you can offer. God bless.

Sheri Anderson

[momsgr8@roadrunner.com](mailto:momsgr8@roadrunner.com)

**Michael LeeRoy Ellis**  
**Specialist Four**  
**A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF, 173 ABN BDE**  
**Army of the United States**  
**20 August 1946 - 19 November 1967**  
**Valinda, California**  
**Panel 30E Line 024**





## Tango, Multi-Tour Ranger Vet



**Aug. 17, 1970:** This Ranger has been in Vietnam for a long time. He's seen the jungles of War Zone C, the Central Highlands and the Bong Son Plains. He's been with the 173d Airborne Brigade's Ranger company since 1967. You might say he was a "Ho Chanh." He's a dog, and the men of November Rangers call him Tango.

Tango has been the mascot of the Rangers since Staff Sgt. Patrick Tadina picked him up in a Viet Cong base camp that had just been overrun in 1967 near Bien Hoa. Tadina took the pooch back with him, and the men adopted Tango as their mascot.

*"Tango is one of us. He spends as much time observing in the CO's chopper as any other man in the company. If he were human, he would have the Air Medal with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters,"* said SSG Nat Turner after he assumed the duty after Tadina's DEROS.

*"Tango moped around for a few days after Tadina left, but he soon perked up and began yapping away as usual,"* said Capt.

Richard Green, the old CO of the Ranger unit.



**Pat Tadina, Tango's buddy.**

Tango is just one of those mascots who has no DEROS. He will be around until he's old and gray – much to the delight of the Rangers. He may only be a dog, but like the man says, "he's one of us."

[Sent in by Robt. 'twin' Hendricksen, N/Co. Rangers]

**RLTW**

## News Flash



### VA to expand caregivers program

By KIMBERLY HEFLING  
Associated Press

The VA says it will begin taking applications on May 9 and the monthly stipend will be ready by July. To participate, the caregiver must agree to a home visit and some other requirements.



**Dr. Amdur**

Deborah Amdur, the VA's chief consultant for care management and social work, said VA officials considered feedback in making decisions on how to implement the program, and she feels confident in how it will be rolled out.

*"We have worked very hard to make this a success,"* Amdur said.

Murray said she'd been so concerned about the original plan that she'd taken up the issue with Obama. She said she's pleased that the administration changed its eligibility requirements.

*"The VA correctly has responded in a positive way,"* Murray said.

**The enhanced benefits are only for caregivers of veterans from the recent wars. But the VA has said it is improving other existing programs for caregivers of veterans from all eras.**

In February, it created a national caregivers support hotline that has received about 5,000 calls. **1-877-222 VETS (8387).**

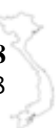
Veterans' service organizations had wanted additional support for all caregivers of veterans, but Congress was not able to come up with enough money to do so. The law instructs the VA to report to Congress within two years about the possibility of providing the enhanced benefits to all caregivers.

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US\\_VETERANS\\_CAREGIVERS?SITE=FLROC&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/US_VETERANS_CAREGIVERS?SITE=FLROC&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)



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There is an awful lot of beautiful poetry around. A lot of verse written during wartime as a continuing reminder of the seriousness of young lives lost. Very rarely does one come across a work which, for the sheer beauty of its imagery, the intensity of its expression, and the prayerfulness of its tone, that it becomes obvious that this poem should stand with the best of the best of poetry. It bears re-reading any number of times, one of the hallmarks of superlative poetry. It bears memorization.

## THE 503<sup>rd</sup> P.R.C.T. HERITAGE BATTALION **Online**

### ~ CORREGIDOR ~

**Silver moon softens shattered walls,  
Only the ghosts remain,  
And the winds howl down the lonely halls  
The tales of blood and pain.**

**And chutes sigh, like long lost souls,  
Stranded in lifeless trees,  
Death lurks in the cave-like holes  
That gape at the lonely seas.**

**O Lord, consecrate and bless  
The loved ones who must rest,  
Who bore your cross and gave their all  
In this their final test.**



**Gertus H. Jones, Sgt.  
Battery "B"**

**462nd Parachute Field Artillery Battery**

On 3 March 2006, this poem was officially consecrated to the recognition of the 503d PRCT's Return to Corregidor. For more about the ceremony, see links from [http://503prct.org/corregidor\\_jones.html](http://503prct.org/corregidor_jones.html)

**Paul Whitman  
503rd P.R.C.T. Heritage Battalion Web Site**



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# 173d REUNION ITINERARY

(Tentative, subject to change)



## June 22 -- Wednesday

1200 - 2000 Registration  
1300 - 0100 Hospitality Room  
1300 - 2200 Vendors  
1800 - 2000 President's Reception



## June 23 -- Thursday

0900 - 1200 Board of Director's Meeting  
1000 - 1700 Registration  
1000 - 2200 Vendors  
1300 - 2400 Hospitality Room



## June 24 -- Friday

0730 - 0900 Gold Star Reception & Breakfast  
0900 - 1500 Registration  
1000 - 2400 Hospitality Room  
1000 - 2200 Vendors  
1000 - Board buses for trip to Fort Sam Houston  
1030 - 1500 Tour Fort Sam Houston  
1700 - 2300 BBQ, Mariachis, Dance at Maverick Plaza

## June 25 -- Saturday

0900 - 1100 Registration  
0900 - 1200 General Membership Meeting  
1000 - 1200 Ladies' Brunch  
1000 - 2200 Vendors  
1000 - 1200 Hospitality Room

### **BANQUET DINNER**

1815 - 1850 Cocktails  
1900 - 1910 Post Colors  
1930 - 2035 Dinner  
2035 - 2130 Speakers & Awards  
2130 Retire Colors  
2135 - ??? Entertainment & Dancing

**Maverick Plaza**

## June 26 -- Sunday

0830 - 1000 Continental Breakfast  
1030 - 1130 Memorial Service, Arneson River Theater  
1130 - Reunion closing. Depart or stay and see more of San Antonio.



**The Alamo**

Reunion web site: <http://www.skysoldiers.com>







# 173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION ~ REUNION 2011 ~



22 June – 26 June 2011, San Antonio, TX

Hosted by Texas Chapter 13

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Unit served with in the Brigade \_\_\_\_\_ Dates served \_\_\_\_\_

Circle Shirt Size: S M L XL 2XL 3XL Male/Female \_\_\_\_\_

Exact hat size \_\_\_\_\_ (Note: A cowboy hat will be given to the 173d member above if Registration Form and hat size are received by March 1, 2011.)

## Guests:

Circle Male or Female and Shirt Size for each guest

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ M / F size S M L XL 2XL 3XL

## Registration/ Event Fees

- \_\_\_ \$173.00 per Association Member
- \_\_\_ \$125.00 per Guest
- \_\_\_ \$125.00 per Gold Star Family Member
- \_\_\_ \$ 75.00 per Active Duty Soldier (Not on Orders)
- \_\_\_ FREE Active Duty Soldiers on Orders (i.e., Command, Color Guard)
- \_\_\_ \$ 75.00 per Vendor Table
- \_\_\_ FREE Gold Star Brunch – 173d Gold Star Families
- \_\_\_ Brunch Ladies Brunch (Included with registration)
- \_\_\_ Please check if planning to attend.
- \_\_\_ \$ 15.00 Trip to Fort Sam Houston per person
- \_\_\_ \$ 15.00 Sky Soldier Adoption Program “Have a meal on me” for active duty soldiers



Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio, Texas

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed



Make Checks Payable to: [Texas Reunion 2011 – 173d Airborne Brigade](#)

Mail Checks to: John Rolfe, 100 Oleander Road, Comfort, TX 78013

**For Hotel Reservations:** Hilton Palacio del Rio, \$119 + tax per night. Call 1-800-HILTONS and request the group rate for The 173d Airborne Brigade Association, Inc., or use the unique group code ABA.

**Overflow Hotel:** Menger Hotel, \$119 + tax per night, Call: 1-800-345-9285 and request the group rate for the 173d Airborne Brigade Association.

Register online: [www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011](http://www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011)

See note on following page.....



## 173d REUNION HOTEL & GOLF INFORMATION

A short broadcast before our 2011 reunion on the 22nd to 26th of June in beautiful San Antonio, Texas. Our flagship hotel, the Hilton Palacio del Rio, has NO more rooms available at our discounted rate. Our overflow hotel is the historic Menger Hotel -- they will charge their prevailing tourist rate (but ask if the earlier discount rate of \$119 plus tax is still available). Visit our website to reserve online:

[www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011/hotel.html](http://www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011/hotel.html)

There are a few remaining openings for our golf outing Friday, June 24th, 2011, so sign-up with Robert Gonzalez at: [rogonzalez173@satx.rr.com](mailto:rogonzalez173@satx.rr.com) or call 210-663-7671. Bring your clubs or you can rent them at the clubhouse. Airborne!

**Scott H. Smith**

**President, 173d Chapter 13**

[www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011/](http://www.texasskysoldier.org/reunion2011/)

## Sky Soldier With A Monkey On His Back



James 'Ben' Harden was a 173d LRRP '66-'67. "Ben was a crew chief before coming over to LRRP. I believe that he deployed with the 173d from Okinawa and then was with the LRRP for 18 to 24 months," says Reed Cundiff, 173d LRRP.

[Photo sent by Robt. 'twin' Hendrickson, LURPs & Rangers]

## Memorial Day Message

**By Scott Fairchild, 82nd Abn Div**

Once again Rolling Thunder arrived Washington, DC en masse with the rumble of 101 motorcycles (the largest contingent ever, with most from Florida) to support the *17th Annual Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors*. (TAPS <http://www.taps.org/>) facilitated by Bob Cooper and Moe and riders from as far away as France. Over a half a million motorcycles are in DC for the annual Rolling Thunder ride from the Pentagon parking lot across the Potomac to The Wall.

This year there were 463 kids who have lost a loved one attending from across the United States. The healing on both sides of the bikes was as palpable as it was heart-warming.



We are just finishing the design of a joint TAPS/Rolling Thunder Patch which will read "Ride for the Children of the Fallen"

My son Cory has stepped up with a servant's heart this year and worked 12-hour days unloading trucks behind the scenes. His dad, well, let's say he just lost his voice and pulled his back, but that's what happens to old men.

Hats off to the many active duty and retired mentors (one per child) of all services from the DC area and around the world (as far as Germany) who come at their own expense to give of their weekend to be here for a child. They are the heart of the program which lets these young children know that the legacy of sacrifice and of their lost love does lives on.

On this special Memorial Day, please keep the families of those who have lost their loved ones defending our nation and freedoms, in your prayers.



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# BATTLE OF THE SLOPES

## HILL 1338

### Request for Recollections



**It's time to record your memories.**

**What did you do?**

**What did you witness?**

**What do you recall?**

**How has that battle changed your life?**

June marks the 44th anniversary of what most Vietnam War historians consider the costliest encounter by a single American unit in the entire war. On June 22, 1967, Alpha Company 2/503 Infantry, and its 120 plus troopers headed for their Base Camp located adjacent to the Special Forces camp and the Dak To airstrip. In less than three hours, a combined NVA and VC enemy force of as many as 1000 annihilated Alpha. Seventy-Six (76) warriors lost their lives along with well over 20 wounded that fateful day.

Though Alpha suffered unimaginable casualties, there were a diverse number of

entities who were intimately involved and affected by the day's events. We're asking not only for Alpha survivors, but Bravo and Charlie companies' remembrances as well as those from sister units. What went through the minds of the 319th or the mortar contingents who pondered the accuracy of their fire missions? We'd like to hear the details from those officers who directed the fighting from the TOC, as well as the Casper platoon who played an integral part throughout the day.

There exists an uncounted number of combatants who still carry a mountain of remorse from when they stood helplessly on the banks of the Po Ko River awaiting the order to saddle up, an order which never came. Lastly, the voices of the families of those lost must be heard.

We ask that your submissions be sent in no later than June 10th for inclusion in the June 22nd Special Edition of our *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter*. Send in your recollections and any photos you have, and please pass on this request to your buddies who survived the *Battle of the Slopes*. As of this writing the Special Edition is approaching 20 pages of history.

All issues to date of our newsletter can be seen at either of these web sites:

[www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php](http://www.firebase319.org/2bat/news.php) and [http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue\\_index.htm](http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm)

**Wambi Cook**

**A/2/503 Survivor of the Slopes**

**CUTOFF FOR SUBMISSIONS IS JUNE 10TH.**

**SEND TO:**

**[rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)**



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## Whodat?

I have a photo of a 173d baptism in the South China Sea. I have no clue who these guys are, but I was told that two of these kids died on an operation only a day after -- cannot confirm that though. Maybe a Whodat? ATW,

**Chuck Dean**  
HHC/1/503d



One of Our Own at White House



Here is Rick Patterson, A/2/503d, the former Executive Director of Disabled American Veterans (DAV), as he presents President Obama with a Louisville Slugger for 'going to bat for veterans'.

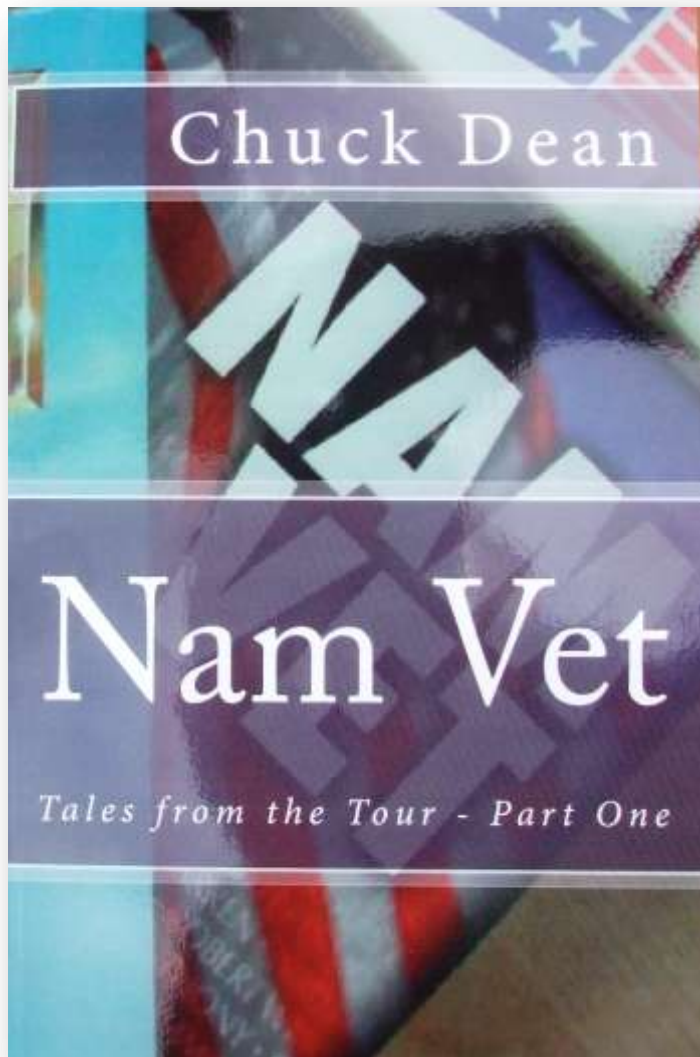
[Sent in by Bill Reynolds, A/2/503d]

***"The U.S. Constitution doesn't guarantee happiness, only the pursuit of it. You have to catch up with it yourself."***

~ Benjamin Franklin

## "Nam Vet: Tales from the Tour"

[Submitted book review]



This latest book by a Sky Soldier is a collection of fictional short stories, powerful in their unity and theme and rich in their diversity of styles. Written by Chuck Dean, Vietnam veteran and author of several best-selling books including *"Nam Vet: Making Peace with Your Past"* and *"Down Range: To Iraq and Back"*, these small vignettes are full of surprises, and hold unique glimpses of wartime duty. Dean served six years in the U.S. Army with two years with the 173d Airborne Brigade, 1/503d, both on Okinawa and in Vietnam. The book is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**Note:** Sky Soldiers who wrote books about the Vietnam War, and 503rd troopers who authored books about WWII, are invited to send in details of their publications and the availability for purchase. These are the only exceptions to our policy of not running for-profit ads in our newsletter. Ed



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## Going to the Reunion



The rig David Zsigo, Gold Star Brother, will be driving to the 173d reunion this month.



David's brother, Alex.

*~ On The Wall ~*

**Alexander C. Zsigo, Jr.**

**Specialist Four**

**A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY,**

**173 ABN BDE**

**Army of the United States**

**19 December 1945 - 22 June 1967**

**Durand, Michigan**

**Panel 22E Line 052**

**Final Mission  
David Taitano  
N Company Ranger  
173d Airborne Brigade  
1968-69**



Attending services in South Carolina included:

Pat "Tad" Tadina 1966-70

Don Giannattasio 1968-69

Drew Love 1970-71

Allen Lohmann 1970-71

Joe Marquez 1970

*~ RLTW ~*

## Welcome to the Vietnam War Commemoration Site

The Vietnam War marked a difficult and tumultuous time in our history. Many returning service members didn't receive the honorable and appreciative "welcome home" they deserved. Now is the time to recognize and remember their service, honor, and sacrifice.

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the Secretary of Defense to conduct a program to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War. To accomplish that, the United State of America Vietnam War Commemoration was establish to honor and pay tribute to Vietnam Veterans and their families. Please visit our web site:

<http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/>

**Richard D. Williams, Dir. Of Comm. Affairs  
Vietnam War Commemoration**

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



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# Saluting the RTOs of the 2/503d



Cover of *Sky Soldier*, December 1968 issue.

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## ~ The RTO ~

### (Radio/Telephone Operator)

(From the Net): He was usually carefully chosen. He had to be someone with experience who wouldn't get rattled under fire. He had to be able to read maps, too. If something happened to the officer, the RTO would often effectively command the unit, calling in fires, calling in medevacs, etc. It was also a dangerous job, since the radio antenna said to the enemy "*Shoot ME first!*"

But an experienced RTO became like a "private secretary" to the officer, anticipating what might be wanted and preparing it in advance. At night, he and the officer, the platoon sergeant, and platoon medic slept close together, alternating radio watch, the "PRC" within reach of all.

RTOs within a unit got to know each other too, and formed a kind of bond, since they performed most of the telecommunications. There was a "status" to being the RTO. Most RTOs administratively reported to the communications section back at battalion. The commo section also maintained your radio for you, out on the field.



**L-R: David Farraro (KIA), Leo "Frenchy" Pellerin and RTO Dominick Cacciatore A/2/503d ready to go on mission.**

### *Some of our RTOs*

We had many more RTOs than those listed throughout this report, but these are all we could identify. Not everyone remembered first names and correct spelling of last names.

Mike Adams, B Co. (KIA)  
 Larry Albright, HHC  
 Don Anderson, A Co.  
 Mike Anderson, HHC  
 Simmie Bellamy, A Co. (KIA)



#### **A gaggle of 2/503 RTOs**

(Photo by RTO Jerry Hassler, Recon/2/503d)

Dennis Begley, A Co.  
 Leonard Benovitz, A Co.  
 John Berry, B/D Cos.  
 Jim Bethea, HHC  
 Walter Bills, C Co.

#### **Unpleasant Red**

I served May 5, 1965 to April 18, 1966. My call sign was Unpleasant Red. James Ratz, May '65 to January 2, 1966, was Unpleasant Blue.

**Dennis Begley**  
 A/2/503d

### **Keep Your RTO Alive**

"An RTO is a radio-man in *Mud And Blood: Vietnam* who can call support on your location. You can have more than 1 RTO if you get lucky. Make sure to keep your RTOs alive, as you are completely cut off from the outside world if they perish. Without an RTO, not only will you lose the ability to send in arty, choppers, etc., but you will also be unable to call for ammo drops, which means your men will eventually run out of ammo and become defenseless."

~ From some web page

(continued....)

