



Alpha Company RTO on PRC-25 as troopers hunker down, 2 Jan 66.

Captain Cavezza was shot in the stomach and had to turn his company over to his executive officer, Lieutenant Linn Lancaster. Cavezza's last words to Lancaster before lapsing into unconsciousness were,

“Win this battle first, then evacuate the casualties.”



Dexter's battalion command group. Seated wearing steel pot with his arms folded is Maj. Bob Carmichael, Bn XO.

Dexter was a highly respected, courageous leader, and one of his greatest assets was his ability to analyze situations. When he later reflected on the battle, he wondered what the outcome would have been had he ordered the night attack, since the enemy was in disarray at that point and the moon was full -- providing plenty of light for a nighttime move. In a monograph he prepared for the Infantry School in 1968, Dexter summarized the factors weighing against the night attack, including the following:

He had fought off one enemy battalion (267th Main Force), but he had no idea where the remainder of the other (506th Local Force) was. He knew that he had already expended his reserve that afternoon, and he knew that he had sustained almost complete turnover of key leadership personnel since he last conducted a night

attack. For example, two of the three line company commanders that night had been in command for less than two weeks. His troops were exhausted.

While the 2/503 was battling the 267th Main Force Battalion, the 1/503 encountered little enemy opposition in its operating area. The troops had discovered an extensive tunnel system, but no VC remained in the tunnels.

The 1/RAR also had experienced little enemy contact. Small groups of VC harassed the Diggers but were driven off by small-arms fire. An unusual incident was later reported by Australian author Colonel Bob Breen in his book *First to Fight*: One of the harassing VC was nicknamed 'H&I (Harassment and Interdiction fire) Charlie' because of his ability to pin down members of the Digger battalion headquarters, located on a small section of dry ground surrounded by a flooded area. According to Breen, this lone VC *'kept popping up from the surrounding waters and spraying the area with rounds from a Thompson submachinegun.'* He would pop up, fire, disappear under water and reappear later in a different place.

Eventually, Captain Bob Hill solved the problem when he directed one of the Prince of Wales Light Horse Troop's armored personnel carriers to drive out in the water and wait. Shortly afterward, when H&I Charlie popped out of the water, he was killed by the carrier's machine-gunner.

After midnight on January 3, Dexter sent orders to his 2/503 companies to continue the attack to the southwest at daybreak. Just after daylight, the battalion started to move out as planned. Then, suddenly, tragedy struck C Company. The company's artillery forward observer, Sergeant Jerry Morton, had called in marker white phosphorous rounds ahead of the company from the support New Zealand gun battery and then called for *'fire for effect'* on a suspected enemy position in front of the company.



Burst at LZ Wine

(continued....)



The rounds were passing over the heads of the members of C Company, and Morton, apparently sensing trouble, yelled into his radio handset, *'Cease fire, cease fire!'* Morton, medic Jerry Levy, Pfc George Geoghagan and Sergeant Johnny Graham were crouched near each other behind a paddy dike. Levy, Geoghagan and Graham were making small talk, and Graham had just tossed Geoghagan a pack of cigarettes. Suddenly, Graham heard a loud *'Woomp'* and was thrown into the rice paddy. Two short artillery rounds had landed in the midst of C Company. When Graham looked up, he saw Morton apparently dead from the concussion and Geoghagan dead from head wounds. Geoghagan had just joined the unit the day before as a new replacement. Graham remembered that Geoghagan had said that he was married and was from Georgia. Levy was bleeding profusely in the groin area and had part of one leg blown off. Seven other troopers in the company were also wounded, including the company commander, Captain Fred Henschell, Graham himself and Specialist Reid.

Vester Reid recalled that the impact of the rounds sent him flying through the air, and he landed 20 feet away with stomach wounds. Tom Tiede, a special correspondent, reported in a subsequent press release:

“After the initial explosion Levy crawled to the aid of a wounded soldier. Even though ripped open by the blast, Levy continued to administer to the soldier. Then Jerry looked down at his own body and fell over mortally wounded.”

C Company's movement ceased. The brigade staff journal indicates that the Kiwi gun battery commander, Major Don Kenning, immediately rechecked the data on the guns and found it to be correct. It appeared that the short rounds were due to damp powder.

The 2/503 Command Group was approximately 600 meters northeast of C Company when word of the short-round incident and casualties were radioed back to the battalion commander. Dexter immediately turned to me, his S-3 air operations officer, and told me that Captain Henschell had been wounded and that I was now the C Company commander. Dexter also told me to evacuate the casualties, reorganize as needed and quickly get the attack moving again. Major Dick Terry, the S-3 battalion operations officer, reiterated the details of the attack plan for the day.



2/503 WIA troopers being Dusted Off at LZ Wine
(cover photo)

I started moving unaccompanied toward C Company, but I found that movement was extremely difficult because I kept getting bogged down in the mud. Bullets often struck in the water around me as I went, and I can remember hearing an occasional *'crack'* as bullets passed overhead. When I looked to my left, in the direction the gunfire was coming from, I realized that several VC had apparently moved around the southern flank of C Company. I thought, *'either these guys are toying with me or they are terrible shots.'* In any case, the gunfire provided the impetus to find C Company as soon as possible.

Shortly afterward, I reached what was left of C Company's command group and was able to talk with Henschell about the company situation for a few minutes while he was being treated by medics. In addition, I looked over the other casualties, telling the medics to evacuate the most seriously wounded first. I saw Levy, who was mortally wounded, being treated by the 1st Platoon medic, Specialist Andrew 'Doc' Brown. I noted the severity of Levy's injuries and asked, *'Can you do something for him?'* Brown sadly shook his head.

The enemy gunfire that concentrated on C Company continued as the medevacs began arriving. As Sergeant Emilio Solis and James Nabors carried Reid, suffering stomach shrapnel wounds, on a stretcher toward the helicopters, Reid was shot in the leg, breaking both bones below the knee.

I quickly reorganized the command group and radioed the platoon to echelon to the southwest so that the VC on C Company's southern flank would be engaged. That tactic worked, and the survivors of C Company soon caught up with A and B Companies. The battalion attack then proceeded as planned.

(continued....)



The 2nd Battalion has pushed what appeared to be an enemy stay-behind force to the west when in mid-afternoon the enemy stopped firing and retreated to the south. As a result, the 2nd closed in on the banks of the Vam Co Dong and formed a perimeter for the evening of the 3rd. That evening the battalion restocked its ammunition and rechecked its casualty statistics for the past 36 hours -- 16 killed and 67 wounded.



2/503d troopers capture VC fortifications and headquarters during Operation Marauder.

Jack Foisie of the *Los Angeles Times* joined the 2/503 that evening and later reported that his '*neighbor for the night*' was Specialist Ron Robinson, whose C Company resting place oozed with water. Robinson grumbled,

"This has been just one bad thing after another,"

referring to the deadly short artillery rounds. But as Foisie noted:

"Robinson was soon sleeping. He was a soldier, and neither sadness nor hardship would get him down for long."

On January 4, the 2/503 sent out platoon-size patrols throughout its sector, and they returned to the battalion perimeter in early evening with few reports of significant enemy contacts. The same mission was conducted the next day. Early on the 5th, the troops got a lucky break. Before the patrol departures, Staff Sgt. Leroy Davis, a squad leader with C Company's 2nd Platoon, while digging a better night-defensive position in a dike, had uncovered a Browning Automatic Rifle, ammunition, data books and the international Communist flag, red with a white crossed hammer and sickle in the middle. All the items had been carefully wrapped in waterproof blue plastic. When the find was reported to battalion,

Colonel Dexter requested mine detectors from brigade, and soon other buried weapons and munitions were discovered within the perimeter.



L-R: Sgt. Brinkle, LTC Dexter & Capt. Faley display captured communist flag.

On January 6, the 2/503 patrols struck a 'mother lode' in the vicinity of Ap Xuan Khanh when they discovered the abandoned headquarters area of the 506th Local Force Battalion. The area was heavily mined and booby-trapped, and a special brigade mine detection and demolition team was helilifted in to deal with the situation. After a careful search, six automatic weapons, 400 grenades and a large amount of ammunition were discovered, including 57mm recoilless rifle rounds.



C Company commander Capt. Tom Faley (L), along with Capt. Bencer and Sgt. Belcher and men study materiel captured from Viet Cong on 6 Jan 66.

(continued....)



Most important, they found more than 7,000 documents, including personnel rosters down to squad level, lists of Communist party members, training documents, maps and even blank letters of commendation.



2/503d grunts uncover enemy bunkers during Operation Marauder.

Between January 2 and January 6, the 1/503 patrolled in sector and apprehended numerous VC suspects. They also questioned residents of the area, who indicated that the 506th Local Battalion had long been operating throughout the brigade sector. They noted, however, that in the past several days they had seen elements of the 506th breaking down into small groups and infiltrating out of the area.

The Australians also were engaged in extensive patrolling activity during the January 2-6 period. They, for the most part, had made small, sporadic contact with the enemy in their sector, killing two VC. However, the Diggers also found an ammunition cache and several large rice caches. On January 5, a Digger patrol made contact with a VC platoon in the vicinity of Hoa Khanh, but the enemy soon broke contact and fled to the southwest.



On right, CSM Mish and Battalion Command Group cross stream during continuation of Operation Marauder, on 3 Jan 66.

On January 8, 1966, the 173d Airborne Brigade terminated Operation Marauder and initiated Operation Crimp, displacing all its combat elements

to a new area of operations in the Ho Bo Woods and Binh Duong province. The brigade report later forwarded to MACV commander summarized the results of Marauder as follows: *"The Viet Cong 267th Main Force Battalion was engaged, outfought and routed from its positions with over 100 VC killed by body count. This Battalion will not be an effective fighting unit again until extensive recruiting and mending is accomplished. In addition, much of the headquarters of the 506th Battalion was destroyed. Intelligence indicates that the bulk of the Viet Cong forces have withdrawn south of the Brigade area of operation."*



**2/503 Troopers
Operation Marauder**

During his several tours in Vietnam, Colonel Thomas Faley served as a reconnaissance platoon leader in the 101st Airborne Division, a rifle company commander in the 173d Airborne Brigade, and a senior adviser to a South Vietnamese airborne battalion.

[Most photos herein were provided by 2/503 troopers
Tom Goodwin, Tom Faley and George Dexter]

Sky Soldiers KIA....Operation Marauder

SGT Timothy W. Aikey, A/2/503d
SP4 Ruben C. Alston, HHC/2/503d
SSG Wallace E. Baker, B/2/503d
PFC Noel M. Bartolf, B/2/503d
PFC Jack D. Bixby, A/2/503d
SP4 George E. Geoghagen, C/2/503d
PFC Johnny H. Leake, E/17th
SP5 Gerald Levy, HHC/2/503d
SP4 Gary F. Lewis, HHC/2/503d
PFC Walter E. McIntire, B/2/503d
PVT Elliott L. Merkle, St Clair, A/2/503d
SGT Jerry W. Morton, A/3/319th
PVT Larry J. Nadeau, B/2/503d
PFC Robert G. Smith, C/2/503d
PFC Juvencio Torres-Acevedo, A/2/503d

LZ Wine in 2005



The FAC was shot down near that tree line. Today this rice paddy is beautiful, peaceful, and quiet.





My Time With The Army Security Agency (ASA)

By Mark Carter
173d LRRP, E-17 Cav

After I left Vietnam I joined the ASA. They like to think of themselves as the 10%ers. ASA troops were outside the Dept. of Army structure and answered directly to the DoD, via the NSA. My MOS was 98J2P, Electronic Signals Analyst/Operator.

I worked in northern Japan, in a small room, in a building that the post commander couldn't enter. My project just happened to have been a Navy project. Every few months a suit from the Puzzle Palace would drop by to give us inspirational talks and pat us on the head. My daily mission was to listen to funny noises on headphones and watch squiggly lines on an oscilloscope. Some of what I watched (1968-the end of 1970) was real-time drama in the skies over SEA. We watched the moon landing on our own equipment. Stuff like that.

Many ASA troops were in college or had degrees. By 1968 some of them were joining up because the recruiters promised them that there were no ASA troops in Vietnam. In fact, however, one of the guys killed there early on was an ASA RDF operator named Davis. Some ASA troops were in SOG units. When I was in training at Fort Devens, I saw about a thousand guys run through basic Morse intercept classes, all of them headed for various places in either Vietnam, Thailand, or Laos. I was in a non-Morse MOS, dealing with fire-control radars and missile telemetry.

The Air Force and Navy versions of the ASA were AFSS and NSG, respectively. All of us were NSA flunkies, at the collection level. The guys on the Pueblo were ASA troops. So were the guys on the Super Constellation that was shot down by North Korea. In the mid 1970's these services were disbanded and their mission funneled into INSCOM, so that they could be attached directly to army, navy and air force units as organic assets.



Mark

In Vietnam, ASA troops broke VC codes and monitored their radio traffic. You will be astonished to learn just how badly our radio traffic had been infiltrated, and then turned against us. Many dead Americans came from lazy radio operators and bad radio procedure. Much of the suspicion was cast toward our Vietnamese allies were because of VC disinformation efforts. They knew their jobs well. In Laos, ASA and AFSS troops manned isolated outposts, to provide DF coverage of North Vietnam for the B52 and other air strikes there. To some extent some bases in Thailand did this. Both in Thailand and Laos, ASA troops were in Mike Force, or other strike units, usually comprised of trans-border mountain tribes who had no love for the Vietnamese, either north or south.

In spite of their more or less non-military bearing, ASA troops were fanatics when it came to the mission. We often worked extra shifts in Japan, voluntarily, to make the mission run smoothly. Many times our product disappeared down some classified rat hole. Other times we watched our work fall out of the sky in flames. The basic classification of my job was SECRET. The stuff we did at work was TOP SECRET, and elevated another couple of notches with a code word. We were read into the job by a guy who told us that we could get confined for ten years per unauthorized disclosure. When we went to the post dentist, a security officer went with us, in case we mumbled while anesthetized.

Our schooling at Fort Devens was done in a vault, behind a door that looked like it should be on a bank safe. I went to the NSA building at Fort GG Meade to polish up my skill on the latest equipment before going to the job in Japan. I saw rooms in the lower basements that were supposed to house the folks selected to survive the missile strikes that they thought were very possible. The cold war stopped being a joke by then. In Japan, I sat on position in Internal Analysis, while another analyst and I tried to figure out whether a Soviet missile launch was a photo recon, or an ICBM.



Russian ICBM's

(continued....)



This happened every time the Soviets shot one up. The guys in DC waited for us to tell them if the world would end in 20 minutes. I believe our site was one of about a dozen tasked with launches.

When I was a grunt I was sometimes afraid, but I had the teams around me. There was an actual "THEY" and THEY were trying to kill me, sure. When I got into the ASA I found out that THEY were trying to kill everybody.

Anyhow, when I was in Vietnam, I had never heard of the ASA, and had only a vague notion that we had guys working their radio traffic. That came later. I DEROSED. I decided to kick it, and I told the recruiter I wanted to be a spy. Crikey. Hell, he didn't know what the ASA was either.

I hope this web site gives you some interesting stuff. Look at the "Lessons Learned" pamphlets from 1970 for a good overview of what the RRU's were doing at the time.

<http://www.asalives.org/ASAONLINE/asa.htm>

The Lima site below, was air force.

If anybody's interested, I have copies of other ASA – related publications.

Mark Carter
Mule98j@charter.net

ASA Site 85



Phou Pha Thi, Laos

Photo courtesy of LTC Jeannie Schiff USAF (Ret)

In the latter half of 1966, the idea was conceived to install a Radar Bombing Control System (MSQ-77) at TACAN Channel 97 (Site 85) in Laos. The MSQ-77 is a sophisticated piece of electronic equipment to direct air strikes without the pilot actually seeing his target. The advantages being 1) that the aircraft can fly at an altitude reachable only by Surface to Air Missiles (SAM) and 2)

bombing can be accomplished in all types of weather day or night. The advantages were obvious, but the political obstacles were going to be difficult. Laos was a neutral country.

Placing this equipment in northern Laos would imply that Laos was allowing another country to use their country to mount an attack on a neighbor, which had recognized their neutrality. But this neighboring country, North Vietnam, was using their soil to transport men, equipment and supplies through the Laos panhandle into Cambodia and South Vietnam (Ho Chi Min Trail).

March 11, 1968, Site 85 was overrun by PAVN commandos. Eleven of the nineteen brave men on Phou Pha Thi (Site 85) were KIA or POW/MIA, no bodies or remains have ever been found. This was the largest single ground combat loss of USAF personnel during the Vietnam War.

[For entire story visit: <http://limasite85.us/>]

Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration Set for March 31, 2012

The Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration for military members and their friends and families will be held on Saturday, March 31.

The USO of North Carolina and Charlotte Motor Speedway, with support from the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters, announced that they will hold an incredible *Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration* for military members and their friends and families that will be held on March 31.

Vietnam veterans never received the type of homecoming celebration that today's troops receive as they return from service. To honor those who served and the military members who returned from combat, the USO of North Carolina is holding a long, overdue homecoming celebration.

Hosted by the USO of North Carolina and Charlotte Motor Speedway, the *Vietnam Veterans Homecoming Celebration 2012* is set to be an unforgettable experience featuring live entertainment, displays and demonstrations, military salutes, and much more.

Visit this web site for details:

http://www.charlottespeedway.com/tickets/vietnam_veterans_homecoming_celebration_2012/600589.html

[Sent in by Larry Hampton, A/1/503d]





Fort Benning, Georgia



History

The idea for the creation of the airborne program as well as the school, was derived from watching the smokejumpers train at the smokejump center in Missoula, Montana. After seeing the effectiveness of the jumpers, the idea was pitched to the higher ups in DC.

Ground Week

During Ground Week, students begin an intensive program of instruction on how to properly wear the T-10D and T-11 parachutes to build individual airborne skills, which prepares them to make five parachute jumps, and five safe landings. They train on a mock door of a C-130 or C-17 aircraft to prepare themselves for a proper exit from each aircraft. Students also learn and practice the parachute landing fall (PLF), a landing technique specifically developed to ensure a safe landing for personnel as they impact the ground while wearing a parachute. Students train to exit the 34-foot (10 m) tower, which prepares them for a safe exit from an aircraft in flight by exposing the students to the physical sensation of an actual jump. Students train on the lateral drift apparatus (LDA) to develop proper technique for controlling a parachute during descent. To progress to Tower Week, students must individually qualify on the 34-foot (10 m) tower, the LDA, successfully complete all PLFs, and pass all PT requirements.

Tower Week

A team effort is added to the training with the "mass exit" concept. Here students will learn the proper technique to exit an aircraft in flight in mass quantity. Students are informed of proper in flight instructions given before a jump. Students are also trained on the 34' tower with all equipment that will be used on the jumps. On the 34' tower they get a chance to work on exiting the aircraft with all their equipment and also lowering their equipment prior to landing. The last 2 days of the week are used



Jump School in the 50s & 60s



The big one

qualifying on the Swing Landing Trainer (SLT) and practicing on the suspended harness. If weather permits, students will attempt 1 drop on the 250' tower on the last day of the week. The apparatus used this week are the 250' and 34' towers, the swing landing trainer (SLT), the mock door for mass exit training, and the suspended harness. To successfully move on to Jump Week students must demonstrate an understanding of in-flight instructions, "mass exit" techniques, proper exits from the 34' tower, and successfully perform all PLF's on the Swing Landing Trainer.

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Jump Week

During Jump Week students make five parachute jumps into Fryar Drop Zone (DZ) located in Alabama, which is part of the Fort Benning Military Reservation. Trainees must run to the air field, conduct pre-jump training, and then get into their harnesses and await their turn to jump. Generally, the first two jumps are "Hollywood", in that the jumper only wears the parachute and reserve. The remaining three jumps are "combat equipment jumps", in which the jumper carries a ruck sack and a dummy weapon. At least one jump, typically the last, is required to be at night. It is possible due to weather and other factors, such as holidays, a student may have all five jumps during daylight hours.

Instructors

The Airborne School instructors are commonly referred to as "Black Hats", due to the black baseball cap with their dress uniform rank insignia and parachutist badge that is the distinguishing part of their uniform.



Black Hat

However, all students within the school are required to call them "Sergeant Airborne" (or Petty Officer Airborne in case of a Navy instructor).

Unusual for an Army school, instructors may come from the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy or Air Force. The reasoning behind this is because students from four branches of the military are able to attend, so each branch insists that they have at least one representative to ensure quality instruction. They train students in the use of static line deployed parachutes. The U.S. Coast Guard does not usually participate in Airborne training as it does not directly relate to the branch's duty of Homeland Security and their daily search and rescue missions.



C-130's were the "new" aircraft

The Battalion

The battalion is organized into six companies: Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) for administrative actions and command and control; four

Line Companies (A, B, C and D) execute the Basic Airborne Course Program of Instruction (POI) and Company (E) provides parachute rigger support. D Company has been disbanded in recent times and a week- long buffer between class cycles occurs.



Peaceful, quiet and with a great view.

Students

The vast majority of students at Airborne School come from the U.S. Army. These include soldiers on assignment to the 82nd Airborne Division, XVIII Airborne Corps, 4th BCT 25th Infantry Division, 173d Airborne BCT, 75th Ranger Regiment, or the Special Forces Qualification Course. Also Marine Recon units as well as ANGLICO Units attend. Recent BUD/S graduates, USAF Combat Controllers, USAF Special Operations Weather Technicians, USAF Pararescuemen and Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) also attend the school in order to be jump qualified. Summer classes are frequently made up of substantial numbers of cadets from ROTC and West Point. The United States Army Parachutist Badge (commonly referred to as "Jump Wings") is awarded to U.S. Armed Forces personnel upon completion of Airborne School regardless of branch or MOS. Upon arrival, students are given roster numbers which must be put on their equipment. Since military rank is not taken away during training, enlisted, cadets, NCOs, and officers are distinguished by a plain number, C, N, or A placed in front of their roster number, respectively.

Airborne.....All The Way!



Troopers of the 503rd...They Earned Their Wings



George Dexter
Bn CO 2/503d



Pat Bowe
Recon/2/503d



John Stepisnik
A/2/503d



Dave Griffin
HHC/B/2/503d



Freddie Parks
A/2/503d



Carl Dognilli
503rd PRCT



Matt Roberts
B/2/503d



Rick Patterson
A/2/503



Adrian Cavazos
C/2/503d



Corky Corcoran
HHC/2/503d



Jimmy Castillo
C/2/503d



Jim Wilson
C/2/503d



Ken Redding
HHC/2/503d



Charles Durden
503rd PRCT



Jim Dresser
A/HHC/2/503d



Kris Klix
A/HHC/2/503d

(continued....)



Troopers of the 503rd....They Earned Their Wings



Chuck Breit
503rd PRCT



Art Frey
A /2/503d



John Smith, Jr.
A/2/503d



Joe Lacari
C/2/503d



Johnny Graham
C/2/503d



Jack Moore
C/2/503d



Marvin Smith
HHC/2/503d



Les Fuller
A/2/503d



Joe Parffit
B/2/503d



Kris Russell
B/2/503d



Richard Moorehouse
B/2/503d



Ed Wilby
HHC/2/503d



Jim Green
B/2/503d



Dave Fultz
HHC/2/503d



Mike de Gyurky
B /HHC/2/503d



Wayne Tuttle
C/2/503d

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Troopers of the 503rd....They Earned Their Wings



Chet Nycum
503rd PRCT



Rick Reynolds
E/2/503d



Harry Cleland
HHC/B/2/503d



Wayne Bowers
C/2/503d



Robert Guy
HHC/2/503d



Lew Smith
HHC/2/503d



Jim Mullaney
503rd PRCT



Jack Owens
A/B/2/503d



Lee Robinson
B/2/503d



Connie Walker
HHC/2/503d



Herbert Murhammer
B/2/503d



Jack Leide
C/2/503d



Wambi Cook
A/2/503d

~ The Paratrooper Creed ~

I volunteered as a parachutist, fully realizing the hazards of my chosen service and by my actions will always uphold the prestige, honor and high esprit-de-corps of the only volunteer branch of the Army. I realize that a parachutist is not merely a soldier who arrives by parachute to fight, but is an elite shock trooper and that his country expects him to march farther and faster, to fight harder, to be more self-reliant, and to soldier better than any other soldier. Parachutists of all allied armies belong to this great brotherhood. Airborne....All The Way!



~ Robert Wesley Haas ~ (1950 - 2011) A Sky Soldier

Robert Wesley Haas, 61, passed away Friday, December 2, 2011. The funeral was held in Mount Olivet Chapel, with interment at Mount Olivet Cemetery. Robert was born May 17, 1950, in Roswell, N.M., to Robert and Ola Haas. He was in the 173d Airborne in the Army during the Vietnam War, where he was awarded two Bronze Stars. He was a mechanic for Trinity Industries for 19 years. Robert was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Thomas Haas, and sister, Marilyn Cook. Survivors include his son, John Robert Haas and wife, Adriana, daughter, Christina Marie Haas, granddaughters, Erica Delara, Chelsea Haas and Courtney Leiann Ramirez, grandson, Christopher Daniel Salas, sister, Kay Hill, and brother, Kenny Bates.



Note: We were informed of Robert's passing by Bud Sourjohn, A/2/503d, who had read about it in his local newspaper. We asked Bud if he could learn more details, allowing us to share the sad news with the 173d family. Bud sent in this note:

Here is all I could find out about Robert Wesly Haas. He served two tours in Vietnam from '69 to '70. He was only 61 when he passed so he was one of us young ones.

My lady, Susan, and I attended the services. I made it a point to wear my mini medals, complete with wings and CIB, on my coat, a red beret, and this time I was able to secure a "herd" patch (thanks to Susan), and wore it on the front of my blazer. As we were walking out of the chapel a lady of the family kind of let out a little gasp as she saw the patch and asked if I had served in the 173d, and I said yes. She then asked if I had known Robert, and I had to say no but as we wore the same patch that made us brothers, that was why I am there. I quizzed her if she knew which battalion he was in but she did not know, however, there was a young lad there who was his son. He said his dad talked about serving with the 173d and was so proud of it. We visited a short while and I gave him a Texas Chapter challenge coin with the Herd patch on the front of it.

It was a good gathering and I could tell Robert was loved very dearly by his family and will be missed. That's all I can say about that without choking up anymore.

Bud

Rest easy Trooper





VVA Urges All Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange be Screened for Prostate Cancer

(December 7, 2011, Washington, D.C.) *“Veterans exposed to Agent Orange are at least twice as likely to develop prostate cancer; their recurrence rates are higher; and recurring cancers are more aggressive,”* noted Dr. Thomas Berger, Executive Director of VVA’s Veterans Health Council, before today’s Congressional Men’s Health Caucus Prostate Cancer Task Force. Berger urged his fellow Vietnam veterans to get screened, noting *“it’s worth the fight.”*

Said Berger, ***“Some three million veterans served in Southeast Asia , and no one knows for sure how many of these veterans were exposed to Agent***

Orange.” In 1996 the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences concluded there is *“limited evidence of a positive association between prostate cancer and exposure to herbicides used in Vietnam , including Agent Orange.”* As a result of IOM’s findings, Jesse Brown, then-Secretary of the Veterans Administration (VA), issued the final rule, recognizing prostate cancer as a service-connected, presumptive disease associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other phenoxy herbicides during military service, allowing such exposed veterans to become eligible for VA disability compensation and health care.

In 2008, University of California-Davis Cancer Center physicians released results of research showing Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange have greatly increased risks of prostate cancer and even greater risks of getting the most aggressive form of the disease as compared to those who were not exposed. The research was also the first to use a large population of men in their 60s and the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. More than 13,000 Vietnam veterans enrolled in the VA Northern California Health Care System were stratified into two groups, exposed or not exposed to Agent Orange between 1962 and 1971. Based on medical evaluations conducted between 1998 and 2006, the study revealed that:

- twice as many Agent Orange-exposed men were identified with prostate cancer than non-exposed;
- Agent Orange-exposed men were diagnosed two-and-a-half years younger than non-exposed; and

- Agent Orange-exposed men were nearly four times more likely to present with metastatic disease than non-exposed.

Further buttressing this link, in 2009, a study of 1,495 veterans in five cities who underwent radical prostatectomy to remove their cancerous prostates showed 206 exposed to Agent Orange had a near 50 percent increased risk of their cancer recurring, despite the cancer seeming nonaggressive at the time of surgery. And the cancer came back with a vengeance. The time it took the prostate-specific antigen, or PSA, level to double – an indicator of aggressiveness – was eight months versus more than 18 months in non-exposed veterans.

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]

Battle for Veterans’ Benefits: Taking on the VA (Xlibris, 148 pp)

By K. David Monahan and Alex Connolly

The book is organized into four parts, each of which is divided into many short, clearly written sections with titles such as *“Who’s Entitled to VA Benefits,” “What you need to File a VA Claim,”* and *“Who is Eligible for Death Pension.”*

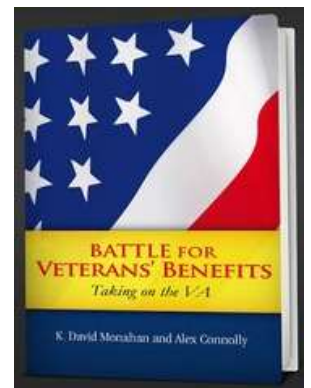
The authors are both Air Force veterans who receive disability compensation and who have personal experience with everything they write about. They also worked as veterans service reps at the VA adjudicating claims.

There is no index, so finding some subjects such as “widows” isn’t easy. Scanning the detailed table of contents helps, but it doesn’t contain the word “widows.” I did find the phrase “Agent Orange” in the table of contents, and because I have done a lot of research on that subject, I read that section with particular care.

The authors do a good job of delineating what veterans should do to file a claim for a disease they have that is presumptively related to AO. That section is detailed, extensive, and useful.

<http://battleforveteransbenefits.com/index.htm>

~ David Willson



VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS Of The Sky Soldier Kind

In Issue 35 (December 2011) of our newsletter, we included *Critical Information for Surviving Spouses of deceased veterans*. We also put out a call for “Sky Soldier” Veterans Service Officers, who are willing to provide assistance to our spouses to help them maneuver through the Veterans Administration upon the death of their military-retired or VA-disabled veteran spouse. To date, these troopers have stepped forward. We suggest you print this list and keep it with details from the earlier report.

~ Sky Soldier VSOs ~

Joe Armstrong

B/4/503d

Sanford, ME

Phn: 207-490-2094

cwomaine@myfairpoint.net

I am the Veterans Service Officer for the John A. Barnes III (MOH) New England Chapter 9, 173d Airborne Association. If any surviving spouse has a question they should not hesitate to contact me at the email address or phone number above. If I do not know the answer immediately I promise I will find the answer and/or refer the spouse to someone who does know the answer.

Joan Haber

(Spouse of Steve Haber, C/2/503d)

Sarasota, FL

Phn: 941-921-9197

joan1@comcast.net

Thanks so much for printing the Critical Information for Spouses. I am hoping this will save many widows some of the daunting task of figuring this all out when they are in the first stages of their grief. As part of my ministerial training was in grief counseling, I would be happy to be listed as a free resource for widows (and widowers) to talk to in their time of need. If you think that is appropriate, you have my permission to list me in the resource guide.

Vic Marciano

HHC/Recon, 1/503d

Palm Bay, FL

vmarciano@cfl.rr.com

I was an American Legion Post service officer. I won't do claims but will give advice on how to ask the right questions of the VA.

Steve Piotrowski

(AKA *The Professor*)

C/3/503d

Madison, WI

Phn: 608-255-3953

Cell: 608-770-2900

I was a county veterans service officer for a number of years, and spent 15 years as the Veterans and Military Case Worker for a US Senator. I am now retired. I have a good grasp of the system and what it takes to win claims, and can offer some help and advice. I am no longer able to take the stress of regular claims work, but would be happy to assist on occasion.



NACVSO was recognized officially by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs “for the purpose of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs”, solely for the purpose of claimant representation before the Department of Veterans Affairs. Also included was the statement that “Accreditation of representatives associated with your organization will be handled on an individual basis...”

County Veteran Service Officers

When you come into the County Veterans Services Office you will be referred to a service officer for assistance. The County Veterans Service Officer has a compassionate understanding of the problems, which confront veterans, widows, widowers, and children. The County Veterans Service Officer knows the extent, the meaning and the application of laws that have been passed by the U.S. Congress in the interests of veterans and their dependents. They also know the rules and regulations adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to clarify and implement those laws. The County Veterans Service Officer will apply specialized knowledge in the best way suited to the needs of every individual veteran or other beneficiary who comes to the office for assistance.

Need Assistance? Want Advice?

If you want assistance or need help in obtaining benefits, contact us and we will do our best to answer your questions or help you contact the County or State Veterans Service Officer nearest your place of residence, or you may go to the “[Contact Us](#)” page on our web site and contact one of our officers directly. In your e-mail, please include the name of your city, county and state. You will receive a response within 24 hours.

<http://www.nacvso.org/index.php>





~ A SALUTE AND FAREWELL ~
TO OUR SKY SOLDIER, RANGER & VETERAN BROTHERS
WHO LEFT US ON THEIR FINAL JUMP THIS PAST YEAR



~ ALL THE WAY, BROTHERS ~



Ernest "Nasty" Asbury



Roy Benavidez



Terry Boggs



Charlie Carmichael



Lloyd Christensen



Jamal Clay



Chuck Drake



George Drish



Lawrence Kelly



Mike Ludas



William McLain



Leonard Negles



Dick Noonan



Dale Olson



Donald Reeder



Vincent Roegiers

(continued....)





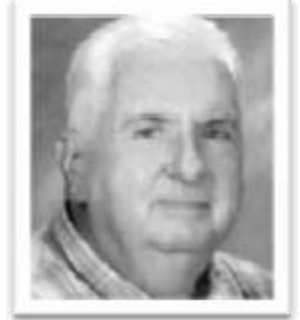
Norman "Tex" Samples



Carl Shefferd



Lee Simpson



Scott Smith



George Stapleton



Michael Strange



David Taitano



Juvenal Vidal Vallejos



John Wassink



Richard Wilson



Ronald Wiseman



***They are gone and I must follow
 To the golden fields above
 Where the mighty God of justice
 Shall reward the patriots love
 Sweet it where I live and love thee
 Sweeter far for thee to die
 With the flower-clad hills around me
 Echoing back my last good-bye.***

The Dying Soldier, lyrics by Rev. P. MacThomas

(Sadly, to be continued)



Veteran's Day at Sunset

A Sky Soldier Remembers



Photo taken on the Idaho-Oregon border on the bridge over the Snake River, Payette Idaho, of Joashua Adam Salazar (C/2/503d), *Veterans Day at Sunset*, 11 November 2011.

