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http://corregidor.org/VN2-503/newsletter/issue_index.htm

~ 2/503d Photo of the Month ~



“Pfc. James F. Duro of Boston, Mass., a member of C Company, (2/503d) 173rd Airborne Brigade, lies exhausted on a canal dike in the swampland of the Mekong Delta near Bao Trai, about 20 miles west of Saigon, on Jan. 4, 1966 (during Operation Marauder). Duro survived friendly fire from a misdirected artillery bombardment that, in addition to enemy fire, left fellow soldiers dead and wounded.” (AP Photo/Horst Faas)



Chaplain's Corner

Leave No one Behind...

Welcome back and let me greet you with that familiar theme from Shakespeare's King Henry V play; *"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,"* I'm using that as a theme in each of my messages for the time I have with you.

In this issue, my mind goes back to an old saying and a commitment I recall from our days in Vietnam... *"Leave no one behind."* As real as that was to me in those days it's just as applicable today. Stay with me and see if you don't agree.

Looking back, to June 29th 1966, I recall that Alpha Company was engaged in a tough struggle with a Viet Cong Main Force Battalion during Operation Yorktown. There are many memories and a host of stories concerning the heroism of *Clem Green* (that name we used for the troopers in A/2/503). The key one for me was the conduct of SSgt Charles Morris. For those of you who were there, you'll recall in our search for the enemy battalion that the 3rd platoon was the first to encounter the enemy, who was in a perimeter defense and well dug in. My two key memories from that day where the actions by Morris, and his words to me as we prepared him for a dust off evacuation. First, a few words from a citation that covers his actions on that day: *"He unknowingly crawled within 20 meters of an enemy machine gun, where upon the gunner fired, wounding him in the chest. Morris instantly returned the fire and killed the gunner. Continuing to crawl within a few feet of the gun, he hurled a grenade and killed the remainder of the crew...finding the platoon medic dead, Morris administered first aid to himself, and was returning to treat the wounded members of his squad with a medics' first aid kit when he was again wounded, knocked down and stunned. He regained consciousness, continued to treat the wounded, reposition his men...wounded again when an enemy grenade shattered his left hand, he armed and threw several grenades which killed a number of enemy soldiers. Seeing that an enemy machine gun had maneuvered behind his platoon and was delivering fire upon them, Morris and another man crawled toward the gun to knock it out. His comrade was killed and Morris sustained another wound...he silenced the enemy machine gun."*

This is just but a part of the citation. The rest of the company closed on the 3rd Platoon with Lt Vose's 1st Platoon coming from the north, S/Sgt Nat Brown's 2d Platoon from the south, and Lt. Vendetti and the Weapons Platoon from the east. I remember as we were getting our casualties out by "dust off", I reached down to Morris and told him we were lifting him out next. He reached up and grabbed my collar and said, *"Captain, don't let them take me out of here until all the others are out first. Sir, we can't leave anyone behind".* And we didn't. I thought he



Cap



Charlie

was going to die immediately and we got the others out who looked as if they would survive. I was wrong about Morris...he lived, and the following year on November 16th, 1967 at the White House, the President presented him with the Medal of Honor, *"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."*

Don't leave anyone behind -- that's a call for us to respond today.

Not long ago I read some recent thoughts from General John R. Deane (our Brigade Commander back then), and the following are a few of his thoughts that I have put together. He said, *"We need to reach out to our brothers... we have brothers returning home now from multiple deployments to the war needing lots of help. They really need brothers to watch their backs, and we need to search out these brothers in our communities and give them support and hope...These guys and sometimes their wives, for whom the burden is more than they can bear, need help...The only way out they see is suicide. If we can save one of these soldiers we are not only generating a great sense of personal accomplishment and an inner warmth, we are doing the work of God."* (Jeremy Staat points out that each day 18 veterans commit suicide -- 6,500 a year). *"While the average trooper does not have the connections or does not have the influence, we can support a guy who needs help...We can accompany him to the VA. We can use our clear minds to be a spokesman for our brother in presenting his case and demanding answers...There are a lot of people who followed us in war, in the Herd or elsewhere in the Army, who are seemingly 'forgotten'. They need help if only in the form of an encouraging word...this applies equally to women facing the responsibilities of motherhood, and to businessmen whose decisions or lack thereof impact the lives of their employees and perhaps people in their communities."*

I was thinking of the many organizations that you and I might and do belong to that do and can carry out the thoughts that the General gave: your 173d Chapter, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, The Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars -- to mention a few. Let me encourage you to find an organization where you will fit in with brothers to help meet these needs. Remember the Scripture..Jesus said, *"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did for Me."* (Matthew 25:40 NIV). Good words, but also the words that you and I have seen and used...***Leave No One Behind.*** It's a demanding call and one that truly belongs to us...yes, to us...***"We Few, We Happy Few, We Band of Brothers."***

Rev. Jack Kelley, LTC (Ret)
Former CO, A/2/503d





Memorial Day, 2012, at *The Wall*

Remarks by the President at the Commemoration Ceremony of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War Memorial National Mall, Washington, D.C.

The President: Good afternoon, everybody. Chuck, thank you for your words and your friendship and your life of service.

Veterans of the Vietnam War, families, friends, distinguished guests. I know it is hot. But you are here — to honor your loved ones. And Michelle and I could not be more honored to be here with you.

It speaks to the complexity of America's time in Vietnam that, even now, historians cannot agree on precisely when the war began. American advisors had served there, and died there, as early as the mid-'50s. Major combat operations would not begin until the mid-'60s. But if any year in between illustrated the changing nature of our involvement, it was 1962.

It was January, in Saigon. Our Army pilots strapped on their helmets and boarded their helicopters. They lifted off, raced over treetops carrying South Vietnamese troops. It was a single raid against an enemy stronghold just a few miles into the jungle — but it was one of America's first major operations in that faraway land.

Fifty years later, we come to this wall — to this sacred place — to remember. We can step towards its granite wall and reach out, touch a name. Today is Memorial Day, when we recall all those who gave everything in the darkness of war so we could stand here in the glory of spring. And today begins the 50th commemoration of our war in Vietnam. We honor each of those names etched in stone — 58,282 American patriots. We salute all who served with them. And we stand with the families who love them still.

For years you've come here, to be with them once more. And in the simple things you've left behind — your offerings, your mementos, your gifts — we get a glimpse of the lives they led. The blanket that covered him as a baby. The baseball bat he swung as a boy. A wedding ring. The photo of the grandchild he never met. The boots he wore, still caked in mud. The medals she earned, still shining. And, of course, some of the things left here have special meaning, known only to the veterans — a can of beer; a packet of M&Ms; a container of Spam; an old field ration — still good, still awful.

It's here we feel the depth of your sacrifice. And here we see a piece of our larger American story. Our Founders — in their genius — gave us a task. They set out to make a more perfect union. And so it falls to every generation to carry on that work. To keep moving forward. To overcome a sometimes painful past. To keep striving for our ideals.

And one of the most painful chapters in our history was Vietnam — most particularly, how we treated our troops who served there. You were often blamed for a war you didn't start, when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor. You were sometimes blamed for misdeeds of a few, when the honorable service of the many should have been praised. You came home and sometimes were denigrated, when you should have been celebrated. It was a national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened. And that's why here today we resolve that it will not happen again.

And so a central part of this 50th anniversary will be to tell your story as it should have been told all along. It's another chance to set the record straight. That's one more way we keep perfecting our Union — setting the record straight. And it starts today. Because history will honor your service, and your names will join a story of service that stretches back two centuries.

Let us tell the story of a generation of servicemembers — every color, every creed, rich, poor, officer and enlisted — who served with just as much patriotism and honor as any before you. Let's never forget that most of those who served in Vietnam did so by choice. So many of you volunteered. Your country was at war, and you said, "send me." That includes our women in Vietnam — every one of you a volunteer. Those who were drafted, they, too, went and carried their burden — you served; you did your duty.

(continued....)



You persevered through some of the most brutal conditions ever faced by Americans in war. The suffocating heat. The drenching monsoon rains. An enemy that could come out of nowhere and vanish just as quickly. Some of the most intense urban combat in history, and battles for a single hill that could rage for weeks. Let it be said — in those hellholes like Briarpatch, and the Zoo and the Hanoi Hilton — our Vietnam POWs didn't simply endure; you wrote one of the most extraordinary stories of bravery and integrity in the annals of military history.

As a nation, we've long celebrated the courage of our forces at Normandy and Iwo Jima, the Pusan Perimeter and Heartbreak Ridge. So let us also speak of your courage — at Hue and Khe Sanh, at Tan Son Nhut and Saigon, from Hamburger Hill to Rolling Thunder. All too often it's forgotten that you, our troops in Vietnam, won every major battle you fought in.

When you came home, I know many of you put your medals away — tucked them in a drawer, or in a box in the closet. You went on with your lives — started families and pursued careers. A lot of you didn't talk too much about your service. As a consequence, this nation has not always fully appreciated the chapter of your lives that came next.

So let us also tell a story of a generation that came home, and how — even though some Americans turned their back on you — you never turned your back on America. Like generations before you, you took off the uniform, but you never stopped serving. You became teachers and police officers and nurses — the folks we count on every single day. You became entrepreneurs, running companies and pioneering industries that changed the world. You became leaders and public servants, from town halls to Capitol Hill — lifting up our communities, our states, our nation.

You reminded us what it was like to serve, what it meant to serve. Those of you who stayed in uniform, you rose through the ranks, became leaders in every service, learned from your experience in Vietnam and rebuilt our military into the finest force that the world has ever known. And let's remember all those Vietnam veterans who came back and served again — in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. You did not stop serving.

Even as you succeeded in all these endeavors, you did something more — maybe the most important thing you did — you looked after each other. When your government didn't live up to its responsibilities, you spoke out — fighting for the care and benefits you had earned, and, over time, transforming the VA. And, of course, one of these Vietnam veterans is now our outstanding Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Ric Shinseki. You looked after one another. You cared for one another.

People weren't always talking about PTSD at the time — you understood it, and you were there for each other. Just as importantly, you didn't just take care of your own, you cared for those that followed. You've made it your mission to make sure today's troops get the respect and support that all too often you did not receive.

Because of you, because our Vietnam veterans led the charge, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is helping hundreds of thousands of today's veterans go to college and pursue their dreams. Because of you, because you didn't let us forget, at our airports, our returning troops get off the airplane and you are there to shake their hands. Because of you, across America, communities have welcomed home our forces from Iraq. And when our troops return from Afghanistan, America will give this entire 9/11 Generation the welcome home they deserve. That happened in part because of you.

This is the story of our Vietnam servicemembers - the story that needs to be told. This is what this 50th anniversary is all about. It's another opportunity to say to our Vietnam veterans what we should have been saying from the beginning: You did your job. You served with honor. You made us proud. You came home and you helped build the America that we love and that we cherish.

So here today, it must be said — you have earned your place among the greatest generations. At this time, I would ask all our Vietnam veterans, those of you who can stand, to please stand, all those already standing, raise your hands — as we say those simple words which always greet our troops when they come home from here on out: Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home. Welcome home. Thank you. We appreciate you. Welcome home.

Today, we're calling on all Americans, and every segment of our society, to join this effort. Everybody can do something. Five decades removed from a time of division among Americans, this anniversary can remind us of what we share as Americans. That includes honoring our Vietnam veterans by never forgetting the lessons of that war.

So let us resolve that when America sends our sons and daughters into harm's way, we will always give them a clear mission; we will always give them a sound strategy; we will give them the equipment they need to get the job done. We will have their backs. We will resolve that leaders will be candid about the risks and about progress — and have a plan to bring our troops home, with honor.

(continued....)



Let us resolve to never forget the costs of war, including the terrible loss of innocent civilians — not just in Vietnam, but in all wars. For we know that while your sacrifice and service is the very definition of glory, war itself is not glorious. We hate war. When we fight, we do so to protect ourselves because it's necessary.

Let's resolve that in our democracy we can debate and disagree — even in a time of war. But let us never use patriotism as a political sword. Patriots can support a war; patriots can oppose a war. And whatever our view, let us always stand united in support of our troops, who we placed in harm's way. That is our solemn obligation.

Let's resolve to take care of our veterans as well as they've taken care of us — not just talk, but actions. Not just in the first five years after a war, but the first five decades. For our Vietnam veterans, this means the disability benefits for diseases connected to Agent Orange. It means job opportunities and mental health care to help you stand tall again. It means ending the tragedy of veterans' homelessness, so that every veteran who has fought for America has a home in America. You shouldn't have to fight for a roof over your heads when you fought on behalf of the country that you love.

And when an American does not come back — including the 1,666 Americans still missing from the Vietnam War — let us resolve to do everything in our power to bring them home. This is our solemn promise to mothers like Sarah Shay who joins us today, 93 years old, who has honored her son, Major Donald Shay, Jr., missing in action for 42 years. There she is. Sarah, thank you for your courage. God bless you.

This is the promise we're fulfilling today to the Meroney family of Fayetteville, Arkansas. Forty-three years after he went missing, we can announce that Army Captain Virgil Meroney, III, is coming home, and he will finally rest in peace.

Some have called this war era a scar on our country, but here's what I say. As any wound heals, the tissue around it becomes tougher, becomes stronger than before. And in this sense, finally, we might begin to see the true legacy of Vietnam. Because of Vietnam and our veterans, we now use American power smarter, we honor our military more, we take care of our veterans better. Because of the hard lessons of Vietnam, because of you, America is even stronger than before.

And finally, on this anniversary and all the years to come, let us remember what binds us, as one people. This is important for all of us, whether you fought in the Vietnam War or fought against it, whether you were too young to be shaped by it. It is important that our children understand the sacrifices that were made by your troops in Vietnam; that for them, this is more than just a name in history books. It's important that we know the lesson of a gift once left at this Memorial.

It was towards the end of the day, and most of the tourists and visitors had departed. And there it was — a football helmet, black with white stripes, and a wristband. And with them was a handwritten note. And it was from a young man, still in high school. And mind you, this was more than two decades after Vietnam. That high school student was born years after the war had already ended. But in that short, handwritten note he captured the reverence — the bonds between generations — that bring us here today.

The letter began, *"Dear Vietnam Veterans, here are two things from me to you that I think you should have."* He explained that it was his helmet from midget football and his wristband from his senior year. So today I want to close with the words he wrote:

"In these two pieces of equipment, I was allowed to make mistakes, correct them, grow and mature as a person. However, that was on my battlefield. You didn't get the chance to do that on your battlefield. Some of you were forced to grow up too fast; all of you died too soon. We do have many things in common, though. We both have pride, heart and determination. I'm just sorry you guys had to learn those qualities too fast. That is why I'm giving you what I grew up with. You are true heroes and you will never be forgotten."

That's from a high school kid, born decades after the end of the war. And that captures the spirit that this entire country should embrace.

Veterans, families of the Vietnam War, I know the wounds of war are slow to heal. You know that better than most. But today we take another step. The task of telling your story continues. The work of perfecting our Union goes on. And decades from now, I hope another young American will visit this place and reach out and touch a name. And she'll learn the story of service members — people she never met, who fought a war she never knew — and in that moment of understanding and of gratitude and of grace, your legacy will endure. For you are all true heroes and you will all be remembered.

May God bless you. May God bless your families. May God bless our men and women in uniform. And may God bless these United States of America.



50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War

I was able to put a contingent of Sky Soldiers together to attend the initial *50th Vietnam War Anniversary Commemorative Event* on Memorial Day. This commences 14 years of 50th Vietnam War Anniversary Commemoratives. Our Sky Soldier comments are noted below.

Robert Getz
Task Force CO, 2/503d

Robert, the ceremony was excellent and designed to say thank you for the dedicated service from a Nation that never took the time to do so. It was fairly well attended by many Veterans and I believe it left me with a sense of gratitude and closure. It was a somber occasion with an opportunity to reflect back over the years and begin the process of healing.

Jerry Harper
C/3/503d

I was glad I got an invitation to this historic event. Units were not mentioned but all vets were honored. My son came with me and his take was that we finally got the honor and respect from the nation. We both felt the speech by the President was not political or part of a campaign. It was all about us and a grateful nations' applause. I felt for the first time in 45 years that it was ok to be a Vietnam Vet. I actually had people step back and give me their place in a crowd or line. Many said thank you and welcome home with meaning. It was the best place for a Vietnam Vet to be. I met some new friends from the 173d who also came to the reunion. We'll stay connected now. Rolling Thunder was awesome. I'm glad I got to see it while Vietnam Vets are still riding. Truly inspiring and patriotic event that should not be missed.

Terry Aubrey
E/2/503d

I thought it was great! It was a great surprise to see President Obama, VP Joe Biden and the 1st Ladies arrive. The President gave a heartfelt speech. My wife and I felt honored to be there. The Honor Guards passing out water during the whole event was a great thing too. We were treated with great respect from all hosting staff. It was truly a pleasure to be there. Of course the heat was extreme and I felt like I was going to drop out. That was a tough part. The Herd wasn't really singled out and noted. It was all Vietnam Vets as a whole recognized.

David Evans
B/3/503d

I am attaching (below) a copy of the first draft of an article on our attendance there that day. On behalf of all of us, thank you for helping make this great and historic opportunity possible.

Terry Modglin
E/4/503d, D/1/503d

SKY SOLDIERS AT 50th COMMEMORATION OF VIETNAM WAR ON MEMORIAL DAY

The Unifying Theme:
*Vietnam Veterans Help the Country Welcome
Iraq-Afghanistan Vets Proudly*

A Sky Soldier contingent that included numerous Chapter 1 Members attended this year's historic Memorial Day Ceremony at the Wall. This year's observance centered around the Presidential Proclamation marking the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. The commemoration of the Vietnam War will span 13 years, the number of years of U.S. involvement from 1962 to 1975.

The core thrust of the Commemoration is to reset the perception of the Vietnam War veterans in America's history through events and initiatives at the national, state, and local level. President Obama characterized the period as an opportunity to "set the record straight – and it starts this day" to "let us speak of your courage." The President told the assemblage "America turned its back on you, but you never turned your back on America." He called the treatment of the returning Vietnam vet as a "national shame, a disgrace that should never have happened."



My Friend Paulie

My friend Paul H. Catozzi died October 18, 2011 in Oakhurst, New Jersey. Paulie is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He served multiple tours in Vietnam, first with "C", 2/503; 3/503; and "N" Co. 75th Rangers.

Paulie and I grew up together in the Bensonhurst area of Brooklyn, New York in the 1960's. We were neighborhood buddies. We spent many days exercising on the monkey bars and playing hand ball in our neighborhood park. We also shared many cold winter nights playing pool at a local pool hall, and in a covered entrance of a neighborhood Kosher butcher shop after the candy store closed, "just hanging out."

We both entered the Army in 1965. Eventually, we were both sent to Vietnam; Paulie in 1966, and me in 1967. Unknown to me at the time, we were both assigned to 2/503; Paulie as a member of Charlie Company, and me as a member of Recon Platoon. In one of those inexplicable events, Paulie and I met in the jungle of Vietnam about three days after the Combat Jump of February 22, 1967.

Returning to Battalion Headquarters, which was set up near the original drop zone, Recon happened to be crossing Charlie Company's perimeter. I was the last one in our platoon line of march. As I got closer to Charlie's line, I observed a soldier standing upright with one leg on a rotting tree trunk, with an M-60 resting on his thigh. My first thought was, "*he looks familiar.*" As I came nearer to him, we both recognized each other, and at the same time shouted our names. We hugged and kissed and enjoyed our brief encounter.

Back in Bien Hoa we spent what time we could together reminiscing and catching up with news from back home. The first night together, we did the bar hopping scene in Bien Hoa, and we were photographed while drinking in one of the bars.

After our discharge and living back in our old neighborhood, we saw each other frequently for a couple of years, but lost contact for many years. Approximately five years ago on a visit to the PTSD program at the Brooklyn V.A. Hospital, while walking in the hallway, I

met Paulie as he was coming out from one of the rooms. Smiles, shouts, hugs and kisses once again. Our friendship was rekindled.



L-R: Augie and his friend Paulie, March 25, 1967

The last years we had the opportunity to talk, share memories and just be buddies again. Paulie was my friend.

Augie Scarino
Recon/2/503d

Note: Along with his tribute to his buddy, Paulie, Augie sent along this photo of the two of them. My wife picked up the picture and said, "*These are two good looking guys.*" Yeah, honey, we were all good looking guys. Ed



Incoming Commander

The command of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division changed command on June 21st for the first time since the brigade activated at Fort Knox in the fall of 2009. Col. Chris Toner relinquished command to Col. William Ostlund in a ceremony on Brooks Field. In addition to senior Fort Knox leadership, leaders from the 1st Infantry Division headquarters at Fort Riley, Kansas, were in attendance along with family members and friends.



Col. Bill Ostlund, on left, as Col. Chris Toner turns over command.

Enlisting in the Army in 1983, Col. William B. Ostlund served with the 1st Battalion, 75th Rangers and was stationed at Hunter Army Airfield through 1987. As a Staff Sergeant he transitioned to the Nebraska National Guard's Long Range Surveillance Detachment and simultaneously enrolled at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and joined their ROTC program.



Taking command, Bill Ostlund, one of ours.

Col. Ostlund was commissioned as a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1990. He served as a Platoon Leader and Company Executive Officer in 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment – 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). This tour included service in Operation Desert

Shield and Desert Storm. He was then assigned to 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment where he again served as a Platoon Leader and a Company Executive Officer. Col. Ostlund next commanded B Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry (mechanized) in the Republic of Korea. He subsequently attended graduate school at The Fletcher School, Tufts University prior to being assigned as an Associate Professor in West Point's Department of Social Studies where he taught American Politics and International Security Studies.

In 2001, Col. Ostlund was stationed in Vicenza, Italy where he served as the Southern European Task Force's Chief of Operations, Operations Officer – 1st Battalion (Airborne) 508th Infantry, and Operations Officer – 173d Airborne Brigade; this assignment included service in the Balkans and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He then served in the Strategic Command's Plans and Policy Division as the Chief, European Support Section and Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction Planner.

In 2006, Col. Ostlund returned to Italy to command 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry Regiment of the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team. The battalion formed Task Force ROCK, deployed for 15 months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and the Valorous Unit Award. Col. Ostlund served as the Deputy Commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment from 2008-2011; from this position, he twice served as the Commander for a Joint Inter-Agency Special Operations Counterterrorism Task Force in Afghanistan. Col. Ostlund most recently completed a Senior Service College Fellowship at Tufts University. He is a graduate of the Joint and Combined Warfighting School, Command and General Staff College, and the Ranger, Jumpmaster, Pathfinder, and Air Assault Courses.

Col. Ostlund's awards and decorations include the Presidential Unit Citation, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with three oak leaf clusters, Combat Infantryman's Badge (2nd award), Expert Infantryman's Badge, Master Parachutist Badge w/combat jump star, and the Ranger tab.

Col. Ostlund is married to the former Heather Clark. They have three sons – Will, Sam and Brenget.



Bill & Heather

Congratulations Colonel! You Sir, make us proud.



Here Ya Go Lady

I recently went to the grocery store the other day and as I was loading the car up, someone saw a sticker on another car's window that said,

**"Medicated for your protection-
Veteran with PTSD".**

My husband and I have always maintained a good sense of humor and not been ashamed of his injuries including his PTSD. We recently ordered such a sticker for our vehicle and obviously the owner two cars down, had the same sense of humor as us. As a lady walked past with her husband, she said, *"I wonder what it's like to live with someone with PTSD?"* with the same disdain in her voice as if she asked *"what's it like to live with a monster?"* I hung my head in shame as they walked on chatting about what they thought our lives would be like, but as for me, I didn't even have an answer at that time and so I let them walk on by.

Normally, the Mistress would be the first to stand up and educate, erase stupidity and hope like hell that the media hadn't completely ruined someone's idea of what these invisible wounds are. I just couldn't and didn't have the strength that day.

On the drive home, I asked myself *"what is it like to live with PTSD and TBI?"* and the answers flooded me as the silence of the car wrapped its safety blanket around me. I had to pull the car over to the side where I could rest my weary head against the steering wheel and just let the tears come. Why could I have not stood up and said

"You want to know what it's like? Here ya go, Lady":

- It's waking up every day not knowing who you will wake up beside or what kind of mood he will be in.
- It's living with a total stranger that you must care for and be treated like the enemies they fought against in Iraq.
- It's eating breakfast, lunch and dinner at home or out always every day, by yourself even when your Veteran is with you.
- It's never having your spouse to talk to.
- It's trying to soothe the fears of people he can see on the side of the road even when you don't even know why he is so afraid or what to say to make it all go away.



- It's assuring him that bags of trash or dead animals on the side of the road are not roadside bombs.
- It's not being allowed to enjoy happiness, love, or things you can enjoy because he gets jealous and ruins it.
- It's being blamed for everything that went wrong, including what happened in Iraq.
- It's sleeping next to someone who never goes to bed without nightmares and you learn to expect each and every sleep walking move he makes.
- It's watching someone every day who gets worse with OCD behavior that you can't explain or understand.
- It's lying to your friends, family, co-workers, and acquaintances that *"everything is just fine"* including yourself.
- It's being challenged in *every way possible* with some obstacles so difficult that you don't know how to get past them.
- It's loving someone who hates everything about you no matter how hard you try or how much you help them.
- It's fighting for someone and loving them so much that you sacrifice it all only to have them push you away.
- It's having someone be so terribly cruel and know it, but finds it easier to walk out the door than saying *"I'm sorry"*.
- It's knowing medications, appointments, and his VA medical records like the back of your hand and not know when your last or next doctor's appointment is, or even when the last time you had a break to yourself.
- It's taking care of them every single day when they are sick, but never get the same in return.

(continued....)



- It's a game of pleasing, soothing, calming and redirecting twelve or more hours a day just to keep some sort of peace in the house.
- It's being a single parent and having to explain to your smaller children that their daddy really isn't mad at them, he is just sick.
- It's juggling parenthood trying to be both mom and dad at the same time.
- It's having every special occasion ignored, sabotaged or completely forgotten about.
- It's having everything taken away from you and not understand where it went.
- It's not being allowed to cry, grieve, be angry or have feelings hurt because you are supposed to be what they want you to be. Mine would rather have us all miserable than enjoy anything he can't.
- It's fighting against something *much larger* than yourself and wounding yourself in the process.
- It's having to take care of yourself without help from your partner because they just don't care and don't want to.
- It's not being able to have civilian friends or even normal military friends because they just don't get it.
- It's finding comfort among others like us because we don't have to explain or be ashamed of their behavior.
- It's walking a crumbling walkway and losing your footing with no one to catch you if you fall.
- It's talking rationally with an irrational person.
- It's having your heart trampled on every single day but still finding the strength to keep going.
- It's saving their life only to have them blame you for it every day thereafter.

Source:

<http://armyreservistwife.blogspot.com/2012/03/whats-like-to-live-with-ptsd-and.html>
(photos added)

The report above was sent in by Dr. Scott Fairchild, Psy.D, of Melbourne, Florida, former LTC with the 82nd Abn who helps vets and their spouses from throughout the country re-adjust after their wartime experience. The Doc is a recognized authority on PTSD and TBI, and has helped countless Sky Soldiers and other vets and their family members.

The wife of one of Doc's veterans added:

I will add:

- It's struggling with the horror of burying every ambition you thought you could share with him.
- It's lying or avoiding telling anyone how you're doing because you don't want to end up making him feel worse.



- It's getting accidentally kicked, punched, or pushed in bed during the nightmares he won't remember in the morning.
- It's balancing the budget while you listen to him drone on and on about his latest obsession.
- It's biting your tongue as he accuses you of being just as PTSD/TBI as he is and that your ambitions are "obsessions".
- It's him not believing in you when you talk about *your* hopes and dreams.
- It's allowing his every sexual fantasy and crying when he sleeps because he doesn't even remember what yours are.
- It's feeling obligated to everyone but yourself, and when given the time, you end up catching up on everything else that's a mess.
- It's the humiliation of anyone coming to the house and seeing a million details left undone and they ask, "*Why don't you have time?*"
- It's hating yourself at night for not doing better, not helping him more, and questioning God's power.
- It's letting yourself fall apart so he can keep going.
- It's the guilt of trying to explain to professionals something you can barely understand yourself.
- It's treasuring the happy moments all the more because you know it won't last long.
- It's keeping the dog in his crate for hours because you are afraid he'll kill him.
- It's watching all your systems of organization come tumbling down because you're maintaining his mood.
- It's romantic suicide with an unshakeable sense of fortitude.

You feel like crying, laughing, screaming, and dying all at the same time. Every day. No breaks.

*The only thing harder than being a soldier,
is loving one.*



A belated tribute from a Sky Soldier

Because we emailed last month's newsletter earlier than usual to give everyone a chance to register for the reunion in Lexington, this fine tribute by good buddy Steve Welch came in too late to be included. Ed

As Memorial Day approaches, we, the brothers of the 173d Airborne Brigade, remember with respect those friends and brothers who didn't make it back to the world.

We of the Herd who served in Viet Nam are older now because time stops for no one. Our memories are the only time capsule we have for remembering those of us who didn't make it home. I spend Memorial Day remembering those friends and brothers who died in that long ago distant land. Some memories of their dying never leave us even with the passing of time because that is "*All the Way*" of the Airborne Soldier.

We, the honored members of the 173d, have a great history of never giving up no matter what the odds are against us. That is our legacy and that is why during this time of the year we pay our respects to those brothers who will live always in our memories.

Steve Welch
C/2/503d

Jan. '67 – Jan. '68
"We Try Harder"



Steve, a young trooper



SGT. MAJ. ASTOR TERRY *A Sky Soldier*

FAYETTEVILLE - Retired Army Sgt. Maj. Astor Terry passed away Saturday, January 28, 2012, in Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, at the age of 71. Sgt. Maj. Terry retired from the Army in 1989. He then started *All The Way Driving School* in Raeford, teaching driver education. He was born in Vest, Kentucky, to the late Johnnie Terry and Lonzo Sparkman. Also preceding him in death were his brothers, Olie Terry and Howard Terry; and his sister, Edna Terry. Astor touched many lives, and he will be greatly missed. Survivors include his wife, Virginia L. Terry; two daughters, Paula Jencks and her husband, Guy, of Hope Mills, and Vickie Hinton and her husband, Rex, of Virginia; two granddaughters, Barbara Hinton of Virginia and Kimberly Jencks of Hope Mills; and siblings, Olive, Estie, Zella, Tom, Tramel, Elizabeth and Martha Jo. Burial with full military honors took place in Sandhills State Veterans Cemetery in Spring Lake.



The Resourceful GIs

BEER CARRYING SPITFIRES IN WORLD WAR II



In the lighter moments of World War II, the Spitfire was used in an unorthodox role: bringing beer kegs to the men in Normandy.

During the war, the Heneger and Constable brewery donated free beer to the troops. After D-Day, supplying the invasion troops in Normandy with vital supplies was already a challenge. Obviously, there was no room in the logistics chain for such luxuries as beer or other types of refreshments.

Some men, often called *sourcers*, were able to get wine or other niceties from the land or rather from the locals. RAF Spitfire pilots came up with an even better idea.

The Spitfire Mk IX was an evolved version of the Spitfire, with pylons under the wings for bombs or tanks. It was discovered that the bomb pylons could also be modified to carry beer kegs. According to pictures that can be found, various sizes of kegs were used. Whether the kegs could be jettisoned in case of emergency is unknown. If the Spitfire flew high enough, the cold air at altitude would even refresh the beer, making it ready for consumption upon arrival.

A variation of this was a long range fuel tank modified to carry beer instead of fuel. The modification even received the official designation *Mod. XXX*. Propaganda services were quick to pick up on this, which probably explains the official designation.

As a result, Spitfires equipped with Mod XXX or keg-carrying pylons were often sent back to Great-Britain for maintenance or liaison duties. They would then return to Normandy with full beer kegs fitted under the wings.

The Spitfire had very little ground clearance with the larger beer kegs.



A staged shot of the Mod. XXX tank being filled.



Typically, the British Revenue of Ministry and Excise stepped in, notifying the brewery that they were in violation of the law by exporting beer without paying the relevant taxes. It seems that Mod. XXX was terminated then, but various squadrons found different ways to refurbish their stocks. Most often, this was done with the unofficial approval of higher echelons.

In his book *Dancing in the Skies*, Tony Jonsson, the only Icelancer pilot in the RAF, recalled beer runs while he was flying with 65 Squadron. Every week a pilot was sent back to the UK to fill some cleaned-up drop tanks with beer and return to the squadron. Jonsson hated the beer runs as every man on the squadron would be watching you upon arrival. Anyone who made a rough landing and dropped the tanks would be the most hated man on the squadron for an entire week.

Note: What is even more amazing about this story; the Aussies weren't involved. ☺



The Combat Jump ~ Junction City

February 22, 1967



Recon combat jumpers
Mike Hargadon (L) &
Jerry Hassler

The sequence of the jump was personnel, followed by equipment and then resupply bundles. During resupply, VC and/or NVA started firing at the C-130s with a heavy machinegun just off the east end of the DZ. The resupply was halted and the AF bombed the area.

These pictures were taken by Capt. Claud Matchette, Asst. Brigade S-2, from a low flying Helicopter. He retired a LTC.

Jerry Hassler
S-2/Recon RTO
2/503d, '66/'67

Photo of the DZ looking north-northeast. Note the parachutes starting at the road and running northeast.

Over the years I have run into attempts to disparage the combat jumps made by the 2/503, particularly the Vietnam and Iraq jumps. Although the Iraq jump was made into a relatively secure DZ, it was made in enemy occupied territory and the DZ was so big it could not be secured completely.

After our jump in Nam, it was stated SF and Irregular Defense Forces (IDF) secured the DZ, which was completely false and evidenced by the study done by the military of all three jumps by the 2/503rd as found in: *"Operation Employment of the Airborne Brigade Combat Team: The 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment as a Case Study - A Monograph by Maj. Matthew J. Konz, U.S. Army for the School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas."*

The location of the DZ was so secreted, not even AF Blue Berets were given the location and the Air Force coordinator, LTC Burrows, jumped in at the same time as the rest of us. The AF presence was to coordinate the equipment and resupply drops. Some rumors dealt with how hot the DZ was and whether or not sniper fire or enemy activity was encountered. The paratrooper that landed in the tree and was stuck up there for several hours allegedly took periodic sniper fire.



Jumpers, with the paratrooper caught in the treetop on the left of the photo.



Smoke from a bomb dropped by a fighter jet.



National Archives

Military Awards and Decorations

How Do I Request Military Awards and Decorations?

Important information for Next-of-Kin Cold War Recognition Certificate.

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) does not issue service medals; that is a function of each military service department. Requests for the issuance or replacement of military service medals, decorations and awards should be directed to the specific branch of the military in which the veteran served. However, for cases involving Air Force and Army personnel, the NPRC will verify the awards to which a veteran is entitled and forward the request along with the records verification to the appropriate service department for issuance of the medals. Use the addresses listed below, and mail your request accordingly.

How Do I Request Military Awards and Decorations?

For the Veteran: in general, the military services will work replacement medal requests for the veteran at no cost. This includes family members with the signed authorization of the veteran.

For the Next-of-Kin: the process (and cost) for replacement medals requests differs among the service branches and is dependent upon who is requesting the medal, particularly if the request involves an archival record.

For the General Public: if the service member separated from military service **before 1951**, the public may purchase a copy of the veteran's Official Military Personnel File (OMPF) to determine the awards due and obtain the medals from a commercial source. If the service member separated **after 1950**, the public may request such information from the OMPF via the Freedom of Information Act (see Access to OMPFs by the General Public).

ARMY	
Where to write for medals	National Personnel Records Center 1 Archives Drive St. Louis, MO 63138 or
Where medals are mailed from	U.S. Army TACOM Clothing and Heraldry (PSID) P.O. Box 57997 Philadelphia, PA 19111-7997
Where to write in case	U.S. Army Human Resources Command

ARMY

of a problem
or an appeal
Soldier Program and Services
Division - Awards and Decorations
Branch
ATTN: AHRC-PDP-A
1600 Spearhead Division Avenue,
Dept 480
Fort Knox, KY 40122-5408

[Thanks to Craig Ford, C/1/503d]

~ Correction ~

Great newsletter, really enjoyed looking at it. It will take a little time to go through it slowly. Would like to make a donation to *Operation Corregidor II*, need address. Also, the one photo of spraying Agent Orange; I was the one who took the picture, the man laying down working on the hose was from Supply. Thanks,

John Cavinee

Cowboys

The photo and caption which appeared in last month's newsletter, with corrected credit. Ed



"This photo shows me in our chopper spraying Agent Orange. Hated to do this job, we had to fly slow for some reason. The pipe was right under my ass." Supply Trooper
(Photo taken by John Cavinee, Cowboys)

The reluctant paratrooper



A 173d, 2/503d Legacy Continues

"Legacy - Something handed down from an ancestor or a predecessor or from the past."

By: Leta M. Carruth

Honorary Member of 2/503d Infantry Regiment

A few months ago I was visiting Fort Benning, GA as a guest at the home of SFC Kevin Rice (Battle Company ROCK Paratrooper from OEF VIII) and his family. Kevin told me that he had something he wanted to give to me. Unfortunately, both of us forgot about it and I left Fort Benning without it.

Three weeks ago I saw SFC Rice again. This time he had the item with him and gave it to me. Yeah, I got all emotional. I don't think I'd be human if I didn't.

He gave me this:

Now some of you may be thinking, "hmmm, so he gave you a 173d flag." And you would be right, of course.

BUT, when he gave me the flag he told me its story.



I'm not sure if the photo is of good enough quality for you to see the dirt and dust stains on it but they are there. This flag was physically with one of the 2/503d Soldiers on the jump into Iraq in OIF 1, and has been taken on every deployment to Afghanistan by a ROCK Paratrooper as well. Those dirt stains are a testament to the fact that this flag has been in Iraq and in more than one place in Afghanistan.

SFC Rice is one of a fairly small group of Paratroopers who know that, in 2011, I was made an *Honorary Member of the Regiment*. He told me that he wanted me to have the flag because he knew that I would ensure it continues to go on any deployment with the ROCK in the future.

I wish there were words more powerful than 'humbled, honored and privileged' because none of those even come close to how I feel that SFC Rice and the ROCK Paratroopers have entrusted me with this flag and its continued legacy. I cannot even begin to image all of the memories this flag holds for them.

The 2/503d (and the entire 173d Brigade) are about to deploy to Afghanistan again. This will be the unit's fourth deployment to Afghanistan. Knowing that this flag **MUST** go on that deployment, I set about to make that happen.

I'm a member of several Facebook pages related to the 173d and the 2/503d. I remembered reading that Dawn Paola-Galante was planning a trip to Italy to visit her son, PFC Matthew Galante, in the near future. So I

reached out to Dawn and her husband Bryan (former Paratrooper with the 82nd) to ask if Dawn would mind hand-carrying the flag to Italy with her. I didn't want to run the risk of mailing the flag to Italy.

Dawn graciously (and I might add, excitedly) agreed that she would absolutely hand-carry the flag with her and deliver it personally to SFC Bobby King who will take the flag with him when he deploys to Afghanistan later this year. She and her husband repeatedly told me it is an honor to be a part of continuing this legacy.

I am grateful to SFC Rice for entrusting me with this incredible part of the history and legacy of the ROCK. I am also grateful to Dawn for assisting in getting the flag to Italy. I am so thankful to SFC King for agreeing to be the keeper of the flag on the upcoming deployment. Such teamwork.

I am currently working on writing the history of the flag so that one day, God willing, when there are no more wars, it can be displayed in an appropriate place and manner.

Such a legacy. Such an honor.

AIRBORNE!!! The ROCK!!!

UPDATE: Rockbridge County grad, former football star killed by IED in Afghanistan

Chase Prasnicki played football at Army after starring at Rockbridge County High School.



Chase

WDBJ7.com

1:46 p.m. EDT, June 28, 2012

LEXINGTON, VA: WDBJ7 is learning more about former Rockbridge County football star Chase Prasnicki, who was killed Wednesday night in Afghanistan. Prasnicki, 24, had been based in Germany before being deployed to Afghanistan on Sunday (with the 173d ABCT). According to his former coach at Rockbridge County, Jason White, Prasnicki died as a result of injuries from an improvised explosive device, or IED. White said Prasnicki was killed Wednesday night. He was a first lieutenant in the Army. Prasnicki graduated from Rockbridge County in 2006. He went on to play football for Army, and graduated from West Point in 2010. Prasnicki leaves behind a wife, Emily. The couple was married last fall. (**Note:** It's reported Chase was the great grand-nephew of Maj. Gus Vendetti, A/2/503, VN).



2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / July 2012 – Issue 43

Page 15 of 64

Ceremony of the Empty Boots Memorial Day Remembrances

By Steve Welsh

C/2/503d

Survivor of Hill 875, Dak To

New jungle boots all lined up in a row
Signifying the young soldiers who wouldn't grow old
It was our custom after a battle to show this respect
As we stood there at attention with time to reflect

The names of the dead were read off
And Life Magazine pictures were taken
Honoring these men so they wouldn't be forsaken

We all stood there in the sweat of the hot day
Feeling their loss in our own special way

All those boots and not one being filled
Showed just how many of us had been killed
Our 2nd battalion of 330 men
Had been reduced to only a few
As fifty plus were able to walk off that Hill in their own
boots

The colors of our flag shown bright in the slight breeze
And none of us wanted to leave

The ceremony was done, but we stayed in a group
As the sound echoed in our ears of the 21 gun salute

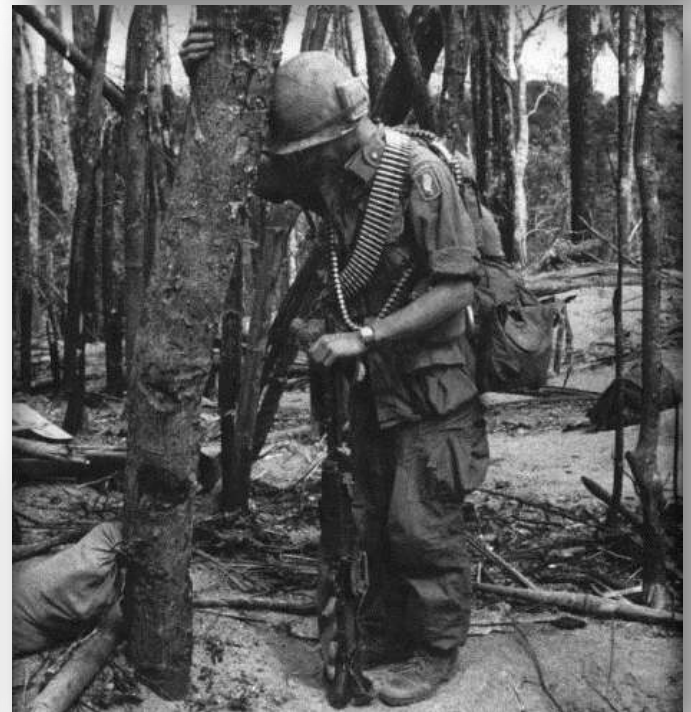
These were our friends, the brave men of the 173d

Our fallen brothers like many in Wars before them are
the hero's respected and honored
On this very special day called Memorial Day

**Central Highlands, Dak To, Vietnam,
November 1967, Battle for Hill 875**



There were not enough boots.



*Do you want to know about war neighbor? We
could tell you about war. But we won't. It would
make you tremble.*

