

July 1974

On July 18 the Communist artillery, rocket, and mortar units pounded ARVN bunkers and fire-bases in the area out of existence. The NVA corps then occupied the hills surrounding the valley and fired more rounds into the Da Nang airfield and a base at Duc Duc. On July 29, the 29th NVA Regiment attacked Thuong Duc, a district capital and the westernmost ARVN post in Quan Nam. The 79th ARVN Ranger Battalion held on to the town in the face of fierce infantry and artillery assaults, but had to evacuate the area when the rangers ran out of ammunition.



July 1974



"ON THE ROAD AGAIN -- A Vietnamese youngster flees renewed fighting on the two wooden legs he has used since he lost his limbs in a mine explosion some years ago. The boy and thousands of civilians were fleeing fighting between government forces and North Vietnamese troops recently in the Du Duc district, south of Danang, South Vietnam." (AP Wirephoto via Cable from Tokyo)

6th: Garrison Keillor made his 1st live broadcast of "A Prairie Home Companion" from MacAlester College in St. Paul, Minn. In 2003 the show drew some 3.9 million listeners weekly. The show ended in 1987 and resumed in New York in 1989. It returned to Minnesota in 1993.

11th: House Judiciary Committee releases evidence on Watergate inquiry.

14th: Carl Spaatz, American World War II general and 1st Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, dies at 83.

17th: John Lennon is ordered to leave US in 60 days.

17th: Jay Hanna "Dizzy" Dean, pitcher (St Louis Cards), dies at 63.

19th: Joe Flynn, actor (McHale's Navy), dies at 59.



21st: House Judiciary approves 2 Articles of Impeachment against President Nixon.

23rd: All Star MVP: Steve Garvey (LA Dodgers).

25th: Walter Brennan, actor (Real McCoys), dies at 79.



27th: House Judiciary Committee votes 27-11 recommends Nixon impeachment.

29th: Cass Elliot, singer (Mamas & Papas) dies from heart attack in London at 32.

30th: House Judiciary Committee votes on 3rd & last charge of "high crimes & misdemeanors" to impeach President Nixon in the Watergate cover-up.

July 11, 1995

Full diplomatic relations were established between the United States and Vietnam.

"President Bill Clinton announced the formal normalization of diplomatic relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on July 11, 1995. Subsequent to President Clinton's normalization announcement, in August 1995, both nations upgraded their Liaison Offices opened in January 1995 to embassy status. As diplomatic ties between the nations grew, the United States opened a consulate general in Ho Chi Minh City, and Vietnam opened a consulate general in San Francisco. In 2009, Vietnam opened a consulate in Houston; the United States received permission to open a consulate in Da Nang."

(continued....)



July 1975

“The war divided a nation and cost it a generation of their children. Father and son fought one another, citizens fought their government and hundreds of thousands of young men went to war. Protesting against war was not new. Every war America has ever fought had its dissenters. It is not only the right of a citizen in a free society to disagree with their government's



July 1975

actions, it is a duty of all free men and women to stand up for what they believe. What seems odd today is that what most soldiers thought they were fighting for was the right of their fellow citizens to live in a free country and to be able to speak out against the policies of their government. The argument was not against America or its fine young men who fought in the war. The fight was against the policy that sent them there. The Americans who fought in Vietnam were citizen soldiers who went thousands of miles away to fight for the freedom of other men. There can be no more noble behavior then that. May God hold in high regard all that fought for what they believed in regardless of the side they were on. We were then, as we are now, all Americans....The Vietnam War was the longest and most unpopular war in which Americans ever fought. And there is no reckoning the cost. The toll in suffering, sorrow, in rancorous national turmoil can never be tabulated. No one wants ever to see America so divided again. And for many of the more than two million American veterans of the war, the wounds of Vietnam will never heal.”

http://history-world.org/vietnam_war.htm

8th: President Ford announced he'll seek Republican nomination for president.

11th: Chinese archeologists discover a 3-acre burial site with 6,000 clay statues of warriors dating as early as 221 BC.

14th: EPCOT Center (Florida) plans announced.

22nd: House of Representatives votes to restore citizenship to Confederate General Robert E. Lee.



29th: Ford became 1st US president to visit Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz.



Entrance to Auschwitz concentration camp.
“Work Makes You Free”

AUSCHWITZ WAS THE LARGEST NAZI GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP AND DEATH CAMP. IN THE YEARS 1940-1945, THE NAZIS DEPORTED AT LEAST 1,300,000 PEOPLE TO AUSCHWITZ:

- 1,100,000 JEWS,
- 140,000 - 150,000 POLES,
- 23,000 ROMA (GYPSIES),
- 15,000 SOVIET PRISONERS OF WAR,
- 25,000 PRISONERS FROM OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS.

1,100,000 OF THESE PEOPLE DIED IN AUSCHWITZ. APPROXIMATELY 90% OF THE VICTIMS WERE JEWS. THE SS MURDERED THE MAJORITY OF THEM IN THE GAS CHAMBERS.

“Some years ago my wife and I visited the WWII concentration camp at Dachau near Munich, Germany. It was a cold winter morning. The prisoner barracks had decades ago been demolished yet certain buildings remain standing to this day, including the “showers” and the building housing the ovens, and one where horrifying medical experiments were performed on the innocent, and the wall where those same innocent were executed by firing squads during that war. It was abundantly clear to us we were walking in the midst of a killing field. We toured the area mostly in silence, stepping on those grounds now covered by gravel. Approaching our time to leave and nearing the “Arbeit Macht Frei” front gates, I leaned down and picked-up a single, small stone, a ‘souvenir’ of our time there. Reaching the front gate I stopped, looked at the stone in my hand, then dropped it to the ground. That stone belonged there; I had no right to take it. Except for the Chinese medicine vial I sent Doc Beaton, the rusted lug nut now in a glass jar in Texas mingling with Cowboy Geishauser’s dirt from two wars, and the spent cartridge I gave Jim Healy, I remain in possession of these three, small, rusted pieces of metal from 16 March 1966. I wish I would have left them there, at Zulu-Zulu, where they belong.”

From *The Battle at Bau San*
D. Lewis Smith, Jr.



~ Memorial Day ~

Remembrance of a Time

By Mark Carter
173d LRRP, 17th Cav

Here in Oregon, our little town sticks flags in the ground and has a modest parade on Memorial Day. Many pause to remember the cause, but most people just spread a blanket and eat chicken while their kids run yelling around the park.

Many local folks have relatives in the Guard or are in the Guard themselves, so it's not really a hollow day for them. I differ from them in that my sentiments in this direction come to rise on Veterans' Day. I live within earshot of the Veterans Cemetery, and I can hear them playing taps every time another old fart bites the dust.



For me Memorial Day is remembrance of a time when I was in my early teens. I lived with my mother in those days. At times when I was a bit of a handful, she shipped me over to Jim's house for tweaking. To me, this was a second family. They had a son my age, another son a little younger, and two sisters: one my age and another just a bit younger. Mr. Cruz taught me civility by example, and Mrs. Cruz taught me civility and situational awareness by broom handle.

On Memorial Day, the custom was to pile us kids into the back of their station wagon for a drive to the nearby mountains. Only a few years before,

Mr. Cruz had worked at a lumber outfit call Pine Logging, which provided a small, self-contained village for its milling crew at the



Pine Logging sawmill site, circa 1955

5000-foot level, at the edge of what is now the John Muir Wilderness. For the family it was a sort of idyllic life, even counting the company-store set up. Anyhow, Pine Logging got folded into another consortium, and the family moved to Fresno.

The Memorial Day trip for Mr. & Mrs. Cruz was about good times as a younger couple. Nowadays, for me, it's

about a carload of kids in the back of a station wagon, winding our way up Tollhouse road: 30 miles of switchbacks, two lanes, a steep ascent from the valley floor into the forest, and views across the San Joaquin Valley, all the way to the coastal mountains. Jim and I usually scrunched in the back deck of the car, so we could watch the cars behind us. Kids wave a lot. We put the window down so we could hang our feet out, and spit sunflower seeds between our feet. Up front, Mr. & Mrs. Cruz liked to listen to the radio. For some reason I always conflate midget car races with this trip, mostly because the Vokuviches, father and son, were hot in those days, at the top of the racing heap, and they both were from the Fresno area. The son, Billy, died in a ball of fire one May, so I particularly remember that trip.

At the top of the road, we stop at Cressman's, a country store plus single-pump gas station.



Louie waves at us from his chair in the sun, smiling from ear to ear, dripping sincere goodwill. Louie waves at everybody. That's his job. His mind went south years before, but his folks took care of him. He doesn't talk a lot, but he nods and smiles at anything you say to him. His parents own the store, and Louie works there as a smiling greeter.

Everyone who travels up the mountain knows Louie, and waves to him even if they don't stop at the store. We use the restroom, get fresh sodas and pile back into the car.

Our first destination is the old lumber camp. All the buildings, including the large wooden water tower, are still intact, because they are regularly tended by the Forest Service for use as a base camp for fire crews. We spend only a little time inspecting the place. We kids wander about the edges of the clearing while Mr. & Mrs. Cruz visit the cabin where they'd lived, and the larger building that served as a dining hall.

After a short stroll down memory lane, we piled back into the car and drove to one of several favorite meadows on the plateau.

(continued)



Those of you not familiar with this section of the Sierras may need to know that it's an area dominated by granite.



Some of the rocks are the size of smallish cities, while others are merely townish in their mass. Trees grow out of the living rock here. Meadows are filled with spring runnels, and in those days you could drink the water without filtering it. Snows are all melted, except perhaps small clumps in certain secluded shadows. The



ground is still spring-damp. Vole tunnels are strung about in mounded brown lines, trails of their winter forages under a snow ceiling. All earth surfaces are covered in shades of green and

spotted with early-blooming flowers.

We set up a picnic area and, right away, start on the food. Usually chicken and some sort of home-made chili (salsa for you guys) was the entrée, and a bag of apples and oranges was carry-out for us kids, for when we wandered away after lunch. I can barely begin to describe the afternoons in the forest. Some of them involve moving from place to place while staying only on rock surfaces—touch ground and die. Anything to run and jump, or hide. Later, to sit on a boulder of living rock so large that it was the mountain itself. Warm sun, wind in whispers from any direction, click and ticks from the forest, and the blood rushing in our ears while we absorb the effect of the altitude on our young bodies. We owned this place, and made it home while we were there. The only rule was to stay together, and in earshot of the car horn.

At dusk we piled back into the station wagon, and slept pretty much all the way down the mountain.



Mr. & Mrs. Cruz have both passed away from this version of existence, but they still live for me, especially on Memorial Day.

I Know You

You may not know me, but I saw you.
Your arms reached out.
Your mouth gasping for one last breath.
You carried wounds not seen with scars.
You carried memories that burn deep,
and burn like fire.

The blood dripping from
your hands does not wash off
and the screams within never leave.
You choke up when a flag passes by.

You fall to your knees not from faith, but from
weakness when you hear "TAPS".
The faded army clothes, worn badges,
but proud medals that you wear say so much.

You may not know me, but I know you.
You are a veteran from a war no one liked.
You gave when no one wanted.
You suffered when no one cared.
You saluted a flag that you felt turned its back on you.

You are Vietnam Veteran.
I breathe Freedom, because you cared.
My children know Freedom,
because you fought for it.
You may not know me,
but I know you and I just want to say,
"THANK YOU..".

[Sent in by MG Jack Leide (Ret), CO C/2/503d]





Office of the Honorary Colonel
503d Infantry Regiment
28 June 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Distinguished and Honorary Members,
503d Infantry Regiment

SUBJECT: Update

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Memorial Day is fast approaching, a bitter-sweet day for all of us. We mourn the loss of our fallen warriors but with the passage of time become reconciled to our loss and appreciate even more the privilege we had of walking with them. We remain grateful that our nation is blessed with individuals willing to risk all to protect and preserve our beloved country.



COL Smith

Once again our Regimental battalions will deploy this summer as part of the Sky Soldier Brigade to Afghanistan. As a result of changes in Army deployment policies, this rotation will last nine months. Under the command of Colonel Andy Rohling, the 173d Airborne Brigade deployed to Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, Germany during October 2011. This training included the first Brigade size Airborne Operation since the Brigade's 2003 assault into Iraq. Brigade elements conducted extensive predeployment training during January – March in Hohenfels, Germany including a Full Spectrum Training Rotation at the Joint Maneuver Readiness Center.

Warriors serving in our Regimental battalions have achieved multiple military qualifications and won awards too numerous to mention here. Based on reports from their leadership, they are fully prepared for their upcoming deployment. They do continue to need our prayers for their success and safe return.

I am pleased to announce that Headquarters and Headquarters Company 2/503 and its subordinate elements to include its attached companies, and Company F of the 173d Support Battalion, were awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism during the period 5 June 2007 to 10 November 2007 during service in Kunar and Southern Nuristan Provinces, Afghanistan. For those interested in reading the award, please refer to Permanent order 299-18 dated 26 October 2011. This Presidential Unit Citation is in addition to the previously announced Valorous Unit Award for the same tour (25 January – 30 July 2008).

Earlier this year, Honorary Regimental Sergeant Major Loren Storjohann requested to be relieved of his

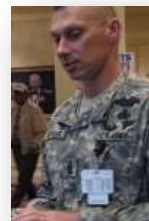
duties. He has held this position since 2006. With great appreciation for his many years of service to our Regiment and for his friendship and sage advice, I have granted this request. I have forwarded to the Office of the Secretary of the Army a recommendation that CSM (R) Richard A. Weik be appointed as Honorary Regimental Sergeant Major. CSM Weik served as 1/503d CSM in Afghanistan and prior to his recent retirement had been CSM of the 198th Infantry Brigade, Ft. Benning, GA.

I have also forwarded to the Office of the Secretary of the Army the names of the following to be designated as Distinguished Members of the Regiment:

Colonel Andrew Rohling, currently assigned as Commander of the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy. Col. Rohling has previously served with distinction in 2/503. Between assignments with the Herd, he has displayed extraordinary support of the Regiment, its heritage and traditions.



COL Rohling



CSM Hartless currently assigned as Rear Detachment CSM for the 173d Airborne Brigade in Vincenza, Italy. CSM Hartless has previously served with distinction in 2/503. While residing at Walter Reed Army Hospital as a patient and subsequently serving there, CSM Hartless was extremely active in supporting the recovery and rehabilitation of our wounded warriors, consistent with the highest traditions of the Regiment.

LTC (R) Harold Nobles. LTC Nobles served with distinction in the 3/503d Infantry, 1968-1969, Republic of Vietnam, and has continued to support Regimental activities as a member of the South Carolina Chapter of the 173d Airborne Brigade Association.



LTC Nobles

(continued....)



The Regimental leadership made changes to the Regimental DMOR/HMOR criteria this year..... When we started looking to whom the distinctions were accorded, we became aware that we were more prone to select individuals by virtue of the position they had held rather than initial and sustained support of the Regimental Battalions/173d Airborne Brigade beyond their duty positions. We made that initial and sustained involvement part of the criteria. The decision to expand the criteria was a tough call and resulted from extensive debate and a lot of soul searching. However, our conclusion was that the toughened criteria will strengthen the Regimental structure.

Two notes about our DMOR's:



COL Matt McFarlane is completing his academic assignment at the National War College and after a two month assignment in Afghanistan will assume command of the 4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division in Fairbanks, AK.

COL McFarlane

COL Bill Ostlund is completing an academic year at Tufts University and is scheduled to take command of the 3-1 IBCT at Fort Knox.



The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation last year launched an initiative to provide a \$300,000.00 endowment **COL Ostlund** Fund for the Memorial. Called the *Spartan Club*, the program is predicated on limited donations by 300 or more "Spartan Warriors" over ten years. For more information on the Memorial Foundation's Spartan Club and how you can participate, please visit the Memorial Foundation Website at www.173dairbornememorial.org. (See Page 21)

The 173d Airborne Brigade Memorial Foundation announced a 50th Anniversary Celebration of the activation of the 173d Airborne Brigade to be held at the Brigade Memorial at the National Infantry Museum 21-24 March **2013**. The celebration will involve a "Reading of the Names" of all our fallen, as well as a commemoration of the Brigade's Airborne assault into Iraq. Opportunities are available for those wishing to participate in the "Reading of the Names." Please visit the Memorial Foundation website at www.173dairbornememorial.org for more information.

Warm regards to all!

Kenneth V. Smith, COL, USA (Ret)
Honorary Colonel, 503d Infantry Regiment
kvsmith173@gmail.com / 252-478-9359

Team Sky Soldiers Win the Trophy for VFW Post 10148

They entered the golf tournament in Florida with high hopes for victory until they saw two or three other teams fielding 6' 5" each bangers all less than half their age. Jim Stephens, 3/319th, was heard to say to Smitty, 2/503d, "Now what the hell did you get us into?!"

The Men's Auxiliary of the Cocoa Beach, FL *Gunnery Sergeant Elia P. Fontecchio* (Iraq) VFW Memorial Post 10148 sponsored this motley crew in the competition to support the "Sanctuary Island 1st Annual Golf Outing to Support Wounded Soldiers". No one really expected them to actually win the thing!



Team Sky Soldiers, L-R: Smitty, Mike Britt (Leg), Tom Sebastian (a bigger Leg), and Jim Stephens.

But, when the totals were tallied, Team Sky Soldiers took First Place! Good thing those Legs had those two paratroopers on the team to tee-up the balls for them.

Our shirts were made by that famous shirt-maker grunt Wayne Bowers, C/2/503d, of Myrtle Beach, SC.

Another first for the 173d Airborne!



Post 10148, Dennis Fontecchio, USMC Vietnam, Commanding



~ COVER PHOTO OF THE YEAR 2011, CONTEST ~

Here are the cover photos of our newsletter from last year. Please select your top three (3) cover photos, ranking them 1 thru 3 (your favorite #1) listing them by month name, 1) Aug; 2) May; 3) Jan, for example, and send in your choices to rto173d@cfl.rr.com by July 15th. We'll report in the August issue the top cover photo of 2011 the

majority chose. Hell, it's something for old paratroopers to do -- I mean, you can only wash the dishes and take out the trash for so long; *"Honey! Can't you see I'm busy here?!!"* Everyone who participates wins ONE FREE PLF for your personal use in your back yard (must be jump qualified), but *not* off the roof. Tried it once..*bad idea*. Ed

January 2011



February 2011



March 2011



April 2011



May 2011



June 2011



July 2011



August 2011



September 2011



October 2011



November 2011



December 2011



Long Beach Poly High School graduate and Military Hero to be honored with a Memorial

Former Long Beach Poly High School graduate, US Army Sergeant Israel Garcia who was killed in action on 13 July 2008, in Afghanistan while serving with the "Chosen" Company of the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503rd Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team, was honored on Friday, May 25, 2012, when the "*SGT Israel Garcia Memorial Bench*" was dedicated at Long Beach Poly High School, 1600 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, CA.



Mr. Steven Kerns, who served in the 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team in Afghanistan and who is a local resident and local college student, had a dream of honoring SGT Israel Garcia at the former high school where Garcia had played Soccer. Steven Kerns started asking, seeking and knocking for donations that would be used to build a Memorial Bench for SGT Israel Garcia at Long Beach Poly High.

During the ceremony, the Long Beach Poly ROTC conducted the presentation of the flag, the US National Anthem was sung, and Mr. Steven Kerns who had created this project spoke, and then Mrs. Lesly Garcia, the widow of SGT Israel Garcia spoke just before the presentation of the Memorial Bench.

The "mission" is complete, and former friends, team members of Israel Garcia, and former "Sky Soldiers" of the 173d Airborne Brigade and members of other military Veterans service organizations attended the Memorial Bench dedication.

SGT Garcia's heroic actions resulted in the posthumous award of the Silver Star which is the 3rd highest award for Valor, and is in addition to his Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal (3), Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Non-commissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon (2), NATO Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Parachutist Badge.

173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) Combat Operations in Vietnam

1. Opord 7 May - 9 Jul 65
2. Frag Order 7 Jun 65 - 2 Aug 65
3. Pleiku 10 Aug 65 - 5 Sept 65
4. Big Red 7 Sep 65 - 8 Oct 65
5. Iron Triangle 8-14 Oct 65
6. New hope 21-27 Oct 65
7. Hump 5-9 Nov 65
8. New Life 21 Nov - 17 Dec 65
9. Smash 17-23 Dec 65
10. Marauder 1-8 Jan 66
11. Crimp 8-14 Jan 66
12. On Guard 17-21 Jan 66
13. Phoenix 26 Feb - 22 Mar 66
14. Silver City 9-22 Mar 66
15. Denver 10-25 Apr 66
16. Dexter 4-6 May 66
17. Hardiwood 16 May - 8 Jun 66
18. Hollandia 9-17 Jun 66
19. Yorktown 23 Jun - 8 Jul 66
20. Aurora I 9-17 Jul 66
21. Aurora II 17 Jul - 3 Aug 66
22. Toledo 10 Aug - 7 Sep 66
23. Atlantic City 13-22 Sep 66
24. Sioux City 26 Sept - 9 Oct 66
25. Robin 10-17 Oct 66
26. Attleboro 7-20 Nov. 66
27. Waco 25 Nov - 2 Dec. 66
28. Winchester 8 Oct - 4 Dec 66
29. Canary/Duck 7 Dec 66 - 5 Jan 67
30. Niagara/Cedar Falls 5-25 Jan 67
31. Big Springs 30 Jan - 16 Feb 67
32. Junction City 22 Feb - Mar 67
33. Junction City II 20 Mar - Apr 67
34. Newark 18-30 Apr 67
35. Fort Wayne 1-4 May 67
36. Dayton 5-17 May 67
37. Cincinnati 17-23 May 67
38. Winchester 28-31 May 67
39. Francis Marion 1-18 Jun 67
40. Stilwell 22 Jun 67
41. Greeley 18 Jun - 14 Oct 67
42. Bolling 19 Sep 67 - 31 Jan 68
43. MacArthur 1 Nov - 14 Dec 67
44. Walker 16 Jan 68 - 31 Jan 69
45. Cochise 30 Mar 68 - 31 Jan 69
46. Darby Crest 1 Feb - 15 Apr 69
47. Darby Trail 1 - 16 Feb 69
48. Darby March 1 Feb - 6 Mar 69
49. Sting Ray 6 - 10 Mar 69
50. Darby Punch II 10 Mar - 24 May 69
51. Washington Green 15 Apr 69 - 1 Jan 71
52. Greene Lightning 1 Jan 71 - 15 Mar 71
53. Green Storm 5 Feb 71 - 15 Mar 71
54. Green Sure 17 Mar - 21 Apr 71

Source: 173d.com



(The Early Days, by BG Ellis Williamson – Declassified, Photos Added)

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
APO U.S. FORCES 96250**

RIABN

7 July 1965

DUTY IN VIETNAM

Last week the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) participated in the largest troop lift operation conducted in the Republic of South Vietnam. Over 144 Army aircraft which included 77 troop carriers using 10 sorties each lifted two battalions of the Vietnamese 2d Airborne Brigade and the 1st and 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry deep into War Zone “D”. This was the first time friendly troops had been that deep into War Zone “D” in many months. The 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery, protected by Troop E, 17th Cavalry, Company D, 16th Armor, and later the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, provided fire support for the infantry units.



“30 Jun 1965, Bien Hoa, South Vietnam --- Troops of the US 173rd Airborne Division leap from a hovering helicopter.”

Despite a three hour weather delay, elements of the 2d Battalion (Airborne) 503d Infantry began landing on LZ North at 1400 hours on 28 June. Prior to this landing the 3rd and 8th Vietnamese Airborne Battalions landed on LZ South and began their drive northwards. Only small arms fire and scattered mortar rounds were encountered on the LZ which was quickly secured by the 2d Battalion.

Following the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry came the troopers of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry who rapidly began their operations to the east and south of the LZ.

The 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery’s Task Force had moved into position Bravo at 0800 hours, 28

June following a stop-over in Tan Uyan for the night of 27-28 June. Their supporting fires rapidly began their operations to the east and south of the LZ.



“173rd Airborne soldier on patrol, 1965”

Captain Moore’s Cavalry Troop, while screening to the north of position Bravo, made one of the most significant finds of the operation. The normally swift moving Cavalry Troop made a thorough search of the area and discovered four cache points which contained an estimated 200 tons of rice, and quantities of cigarettes, tea, milk, corn, barley, and tobacco. After our troops had suffered five casualties due to booby traps in the area, the Engineers under Lieutenant Grubbs, thoroughly cleared the cache areas of booby traps. Several members of the Cavalry Troop distinguished themselves during the search operation. Lieutenant Karr and Lieutenant Hanson, who was wounded at the initial cache, did a fine job. In addition Staff Sergeant David Yellow Robe, Sergeant Daniel and Sergeant Parsons, were instrumental in discovering and disarming the booby traps. Specialist Fourth Class Rember of the 173d Engineer Company and Private First Class Chiaffino, the mine detector operator, were notable for their professional jobs. On 28 June more than 30 tons of rice were sent back to friendly hands with ARVN trucks, the remainder had to be destroyed in place.

(continued....)



The majority of the activity on the night of 28-29 June centered around Position B where the Artillery Task Force received mortar fire and several probing attacks.



“Ellis C. Williamson (L), Commander of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade”

Lieutenant Hill, of the Royal Australian Armor Corps attached to Company D, 16th Armor, received a small arms wound in the side when the VC apparently attempted to capture him, but after treatment returned to lead his men throughout the conduct of the operation. Quick reaction by all forces answered these attacks with small arms, mortar, artillery and 90mm fires and the Viet Cong was forced to withdraw. The tail fins of the incoming mortars identified the round as 81mm U.S. Mortars made in 1955. The shell craters were closely examined, three of them indicated that the rounds were coming from 725 to 730 mils. Artillery and mortar fires were delivered along this line up to the maximum range of the 81mm mortar. The enemy firing stopped.



Sky Soldier & Diggers coming to the aid of an Aussie brother, June 1965.

The Infantry Battalions continued their operation on D+1 and several more caches were discovered.

At 1200 hours on D+1 the decision was made to commit the 1/RAR in the Position Bravo area to help thoroughly search the area and to assist with the security. The quick reacting Australians were brought in on the helicopters which extracted the Vietnamese Airborne, and were on the ground by 1630 hours, rapidly took up defensive positions and began patrolling.

The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry swung south after securing its northern objectives and carefully reexamined the ARVN areas of responsibility.

Again the night of 29-30 June found most of the action in Position Bravo. 20 mortar rounds were reported but once again the quick reaction of our forces halted what would have been a serious problem. On both nights in Position Bravo the medics of the 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery did an outstanding job of treating the wounded under fire and assisting in the evacuation of troopers when appropriate.

On D+2, the last day of the operation, solid contacts were again encountered. The 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry killed two Viet Cong, wounded one, and captured two weapons in a clash around 1200 hours. In addition the 1st Battalion discovered more cache points while the Bravo Bulls of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry discovered and destroyed two trucks in their area. They were in addition to a truck they destroyed on D-Day. Company D, 16th Armor shot a Viet Cong out of a tree with .50 caliber fire and blasted five fleeing VC with 90mm SPAT fire.

At 1415 hours on D+2 the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry began extraction from LZ South under the protection of the 2d Battalion which had secured the LZ. The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry followed the 1st Battalion under the protective fires of the 3d Battalion (Airborne), 319th Artillery. The 3d Battalion closed trails after firing their last volley at 1700 hours and began the long 50 kilometer overland movement back to Bien Hoa. The 1st Royal Australian Regiment cleared the most dangerous portion of the route. After the Artillery moved through, the 1/RAR mounted tracks provided by Lieutenant Colonel Staiger's Support Battalion and rolled into Bien Hoa closing at 2040 hours.

Several troopers of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry distinguished themselves by their outstanding performance during the four day operation.

(continued....)



The 1st Platoon of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry under Platoon Sergeant Adam A. Bernosky kept alive the most impressive record in the Brigade – a VC kill on every operation in which they have participated. They got their man on the last day of the operation as they were fired upon by four Viet Cong near a trail. The point man, Private First Class Robert Pedrotti, was struck in the helmet by an enemy round and knocked to the ground. Although stunned, PFC Pedrotti immediately jumped to his feet and vigorously joined his platoon in the assault on the enemy position. One Viet Cong body and a weapon and documents were recovered and blood trails on the ground indicated that at least two more were dead or wounded.

Sergeant Hector Henbrano of Company B, 1st Battalion reacted quickly when his squad was engaged by an enemy land mine and small arms fire. Although wounded and somewhat dazed by the mine explosion, Sergeant Henbrano led his squad forward and by aggressive fire and maneuver forced the Viet Cong to flee.

Staff Sergeant Sundborg and Sergeant Wooten, the operations NCO and Communications NCO of Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, on their own initiative constantly scouted the flanks during the company movement. On one such excursion they discovered an enemy position and the resulting action produced one Viet Cong kill plus a weapon and documents.



It was our job, and it was their job.

Acting as point squad for the 3d Platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion, Staff Sergeant J.B. Strange's squad came under enemy fire from dug in positions. The lead men quickly returned fire and gained fire superiority. Staff Sergeant Strange maneuvered the remaining men of his squad against the VC emplacements employing hand grenades and AR fire. This violent action routed the VC from their position. During the actions Staff Sergeant Strange was wounded in the stomach.

Sergeant First Class James Akuna's, the Platoon Sergeant of 3d Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, keen observation detected a VC hamlet. SFC Akuna's attention to detail caused him to take a recon patrol outside of the Battalion perimeter to investigate animal sounds that he had detected at dawn and in doing so he discovered a VC hamlet that contained food and medical supplies.

While Company A, 1st Battalion was destroying a cache Staff Sergeant Vicars of the 2d Platoon, upon his own initiative, took a patrol out on recon and found an extremely well camouflaged cache of rice. Staff Sergeant Vicar's investigation resulted in the destruction of this cache as it was off the intended company route.

This operation was unique for us in several ways:

1. It was the largest force we have committed in combat here in Vietnam. In all, nine battalions were involved: Five infantry, one artillery, one support and a composite battalion of cavalry, armor and engineers.
2. The Australians took their place with us as a part of our combat formation.
3. For the first time we worked with the very fine troops of the Vietnamese Airborne Brigade and the ARVN 48th Regiment.
4. Besides being our first large scale probe into War Zone "D", this operation represented the first time any large size friendly troops have operated in this area for over a year.
5. The cache points we destroyed or recovered represent a serious logistical setback to the VC.



ARVN Soldiers

(continued....)



Our total result were of course quite satisfying. By conservative estimate we:

1. We killed over 25 Viet Cong.
2. Wounded 50 or more Viet Cong.
3. Destroyed over 200 tons of rice plus medical supplies, corn, barley, quantities of cigarettes, milk, tea, raw tobacco.
4. Recovered over fifty tons of rice that can be used to feed friends.
5. Destroyed three trucks and eight bicycles.
6. Destroyed many Viet Cong villages, defensive positions, and livestock.

Lessons learned:

1. We have been operating daily for the past two months with some of the most lethal weapons known to the soldier. Familiarity must not breed contempt. Be careful with these weapons!
2. In order to effectively place counter battery fire on incoming mortars we must know the direction these mortars are coming from. This information or Shell Rep as it is called must come in promptly and accurately. As a minimum we need to know where the shells landed, type of weapon (60mm or 81mm Mortar) and general direction the rounds came from.
3. Squad leaders and fire team leaders must keep track of the individual men in their units. Valuable time has been wasted in recent operations because of "lost" individuals.
4. Artillery is a valuable weapon in jungle warfare. Use it to secure flanks, rear, and the front when moving. It is also quite effective as a close-in defensive wall when stopping for the night.
5. Once again the need for flexibility has been emphatically pointed out. Remember plans are guidelines for operations and we must always be ready to adapt to any change that our enemy, terrain, or mission may present.
6. Checking the direction of stream flow in conjunction with your map will give you another means of sure navigation in the jungle.
7. We must concentrate on keeping fire low when engaging the enemy. Our encounters thus far have been brief and fleeting – We must get first round hits.
8. Safety in helicopters cannot be overstressed. On the extraction one trooper from the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry with his feet dangling outside the helicopter was wounded in the foot by a bamboo sliver when the ship made a low take-off over a thicket. Keep your feet inside the helicopters. In addition do not depart the helicopter until it has firmly touched down. The rapid shift of weight of departing troopers before

touch down makes the helicopter very difficult to control and has caused the ships to crash.

9. The medical evacuation ships (Dustoff) cannot take improvised stretchers if they are too long. Be prepared to shift wounded personnel to stretchers that are on the evacuation helicopters.

Once again I can only reiterate my words of praise for your outstanding performance. By your actions in this operation you have provided conclusively that you are fast becoming real professionals in this deadly business. Our superiority over the Viet Cong is quite evident for all to see. Well done.

AIRBORNE, "ALL-THE-WAY"

ELLIS W. WILLIAMSON
Brig Gen, U.S. Army
Commanding



The General

General Williamson participated in the D-Day landings in Normandy in World War II and the Inchon landings in the Korean War. He held high-level posts supervising troop training and, from 1971 to 1973, was chief of the United States military mission to Iran.

In 1963, General Williamson reactivated the 173d Airborne Brigade, which had begun as an infantry brigade in World War I and was absorbed into other units in World War II. For two years, his 3,500 troops trained intensively in Okinawa.

They began arriving in Vietnam on May 5, 1965. Their first mission was to secure, patrol and neutralize any threat to Bien Hoa Air Base. That day, General Williamson said in an interview with the New York Times, ***"I am sure my men will want, as I do, to get out for action."***

Then 47, General Williamson developed tactics for a war with no defined front. Fighting with South Vietnamese troops, he had his men penetrate the countryside surrounding the base and then worked methodically to expand the perimeter with day and night patrols. The members of the 173d were among the first soldiers to use M-16s, the lightweight rifle that became the standard for American forces.

Born in Raeford, North Carolina, died on 28 Jan 2007, and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.





INCOMING!



About the June '67 Chronology

(See Issue 41, Page 14)

I was in training at Fort Devens Mass, for the MOS 98J when the Liberty was attacked. The Liberty was an ELINT ship, a radar-telemetry intercept vehicle, covering the MOS in which I was training at the time. The attack was not a mistake. The Israelis had warned the US to power down the ship's intercept equipment and move it elsewhere, but of course we did not. We were interested in various fire-control radars, both on the ground and in aircraft, plus voice intercept stuff (radio intercepts was out of my field, so I don't know what they did in that area). The ground radars for the Arab factions were Fan Songs, similar to the SAM missile radars we were dealing with in SEA, and we especially wanted to intercept the command string emissions for our Countermeasures officers aboard Phantoms and B-52's. The EW officers used the command strings to spoof commands from the ground stations, and could get the SAMs to follow their beams back to the ground emitters, rather than lock on to a heat signature. Anyhow, the Israelis wanted us blind during the attacks for their own security purposes, so they attacked the Liberty. At Devens we were outraged that our state department let it slide. You aren't supposed to kill Americans with impunity. Only a year later, while I was in Japan, North Korea captured the USS Pueblo, another ELINT ship, and then they shot down a super-constellation which was an ELINT aircraft (not on the same day of course). Typically, signal intercept vessels would be positioned so that they could intercept North Korean fire control radars. Our F-4 Phantoms would fly into the reaction bubble of the radars, and when they came up, the ELINT vessels sitting on that azimuth about 50 to 100 miles away would intercept the emissions. I was on an ELINT site in Japan when this happened. As with the USS Liberty, we were pretty much outraged that we let the Koreans take the vessel in tow—we easily could have sunk everything NK put in the water around the ship. Couldn't do anything about the super-connie, though. NK couldn't take out the F-4s, on account of how our pilots kick ass and take names, but they sure could take down an unarmed, propeller driven airliner. I suppose none of this is any longer classified. Back in 1967, it was all TS Crypto. Finally, thanks for the article by Tom Tiede. I often read his stuff in the *Stars and Stripes*. He was one of the good reporters.

Mark Carter
173d LRRP, 17th Cav



[Sent in by Jim Gettel, A/2/503d]

Looking for Info About His Dad

My name is David Wilde and my father, **John Wilde** served the 173d and dropped into Operation Silver City on March 16, 1966. He survived the combats of Vietnam only to succumb to cancer from Agent Orange on April 2nd, 2009. I am seeking any information, and especially any photos that are out there of my father. I noted some names who might have heard of him since he was also a radio operator and tunnel rat. One name was Tom Goodwin who has supplied you with photos and wrote that he was in communications in the field (same as my father). I have sent a request for his records but I know they won't have any of this information. Could you direct me to anyone who can be of assistance or ask your contacts? I would appreciate it greatly. My father's unit received the Presidential Unit Citation during their tour. It was said he also served as a drill instructor? I can't verify that though. His best friend was **David Epstein** who served with him, but most of his library of information was lost in a recent house fire. Epstein is my Godfather, but contact with him is sporadic. Thank you for your time and any assistance you can lend.

David J. Wilde
thewildeman2@yahoo.com



~ Paul F. Murphy ~ A 503rd Trooper, WWII (1920-2012)

Paul was born on August 18, 1920 and passed away on Thursday, May 24, 2012. Paul was a resident of Manchester, New Hampshire at the time of his passing.

He graduated from Saint Joseph High School for Boys, Class of 1938.

During World War II, he served with the United States Army, 3rd Battalion 503rd Airborne Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR). His tour of duty included the Pacific Theater.

He was preceded in death by his wife Margaret.

The funeral was conducted with a mass of Christian burial and celebrated in Saint Pius X Church, Candia Road, Manchester, NH. Burial with military honors followed in Pine Grove Cemetery, Manchester, NH.



Thank you, Paul. Your legacy lives on,

All The Way!

Note: You may leave a memory of Paul or condolences to his family at this web site:

<http://nh.tributes.com/show/93858206#condolences>



BLESS 'EM ALL



"A veteran kisses the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall, etched with the names of more than 58,000 U.S. servicemen and women who died in the war, on Memorial Day in Washington, May 28, 2012." REUTERS/Yuri Gripas

Local Vietnam veterans reticent about reception

By Doug Harlow, Staff Writer, *Morning Sentinel*

SKOWHEGAN -- A Memorial Day gathering Monday at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., marked the beginning of a national commemoration of the anniversary of the Vietnam War.

"This month, we'll begin to mark the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, a time when, to our shame, our veterans did not always receive the respect and the thanks they deserved -- a mistake that must never be repeated," President Obama said this month.

In a proclamation released Monday, the president said: *"As a grateful nation, we honor more than 58,000 patriots -- their names etched in black granite -- who sacrificed all they had and all they would ever know."* Locally, some Vietnam veterans assembled for Memorial Day ceremonies in Skowhegan were reluctant to share their experiences returning home from the jungles of Southeast Asia.

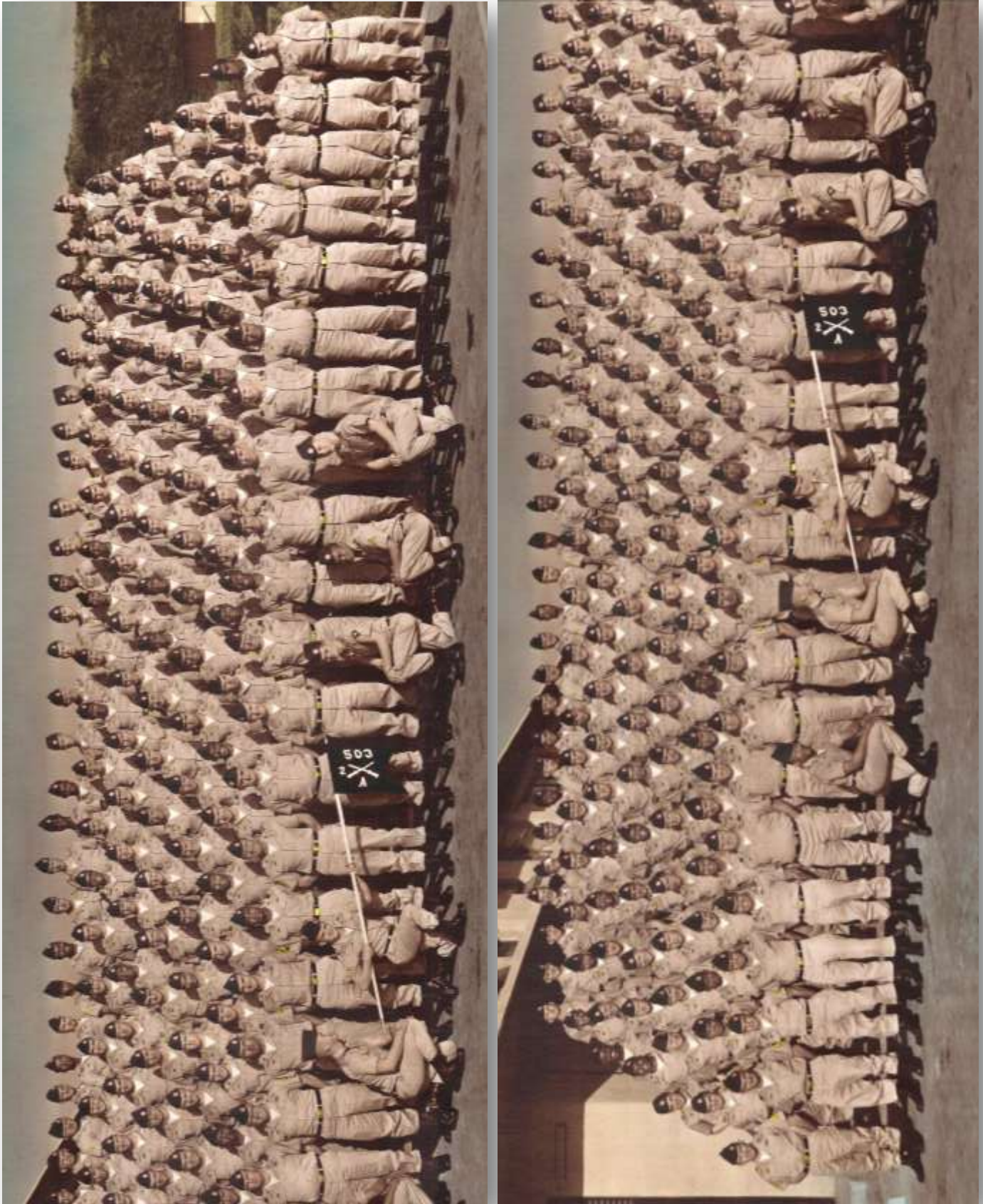
But Gerald Boulette, 67, of Skowhegan, said Monday the treatment returning Vietnam veterans received was nothing short of a national disgrace.

"I was in Vietnam from December of '66 until December '67 -- I was all over South Vietnam," he said at Veterans Memorial Park. *"We were treated like mud when we got back; we were treated like nothing because everyone was against the war."*

Veterans are treated differently now, he said. *"It's a lot different now,"* Boulette said. *"We've got a lot more respect from a lot of people and we really appreciate it."*



~ Alpha Company, 2d Bn, 503rd Inf, 173d Airborne Brigade, on Okinawa ~



Courtesy of Will Rivera, A/2/503d. Thanks to Will, we can email a larger version of these photos to troopers who appear in them. Contact us at rto173d@cfl.rr.com



Michael D. Taylor...

“Ranger Mike”

Michael D. Taylor (Ranger Mike), 63, of Titusville, FL, passed away on June 5, 2012. Mike was born June 9, 1948 in Glasgow, KY and moved to Florida in 1958.

Mike was an Army Airborne Ranger of the 173d Airborne Brigade and served bravely in Vietnam in 1969-1970. He worked with the military Stand Down helping homeless vets and traveled to Washington, DC for Honor Flight as an escort for a WWII veteran. Mike was a life member of the VFW and American Legion, and loved his country and his flag.

Ranger Mike was retired from his job at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station where he was a crane operator.

He was a loving husband and friend who possessed a wonderful sense of humor, was compassionate, honest and exhibited unmatched integrity by all those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

Mike is survived by his loving wife, Diane Rowe Taylor. He is also survived by his daughter Michele Wilkins; son, Jason Taylor; mother, Wanda Taylor; and four brothers and sisters.

A Celebration of Life will be held on July 21, 2012, at 3:00 p.m., at the VFW Post 4228, 4411 Capron, Titusville, FL 32780.



Ranger Mike



~ Rest Easy Ranger. You're Leading The Way ~

More than a Ranger...

Mike was more than a Ranger, although he might have argued that point with you. He loved the Rangers, and the Airborne, and the 173d, and his wife and family. Mike loved life and he lived it every day to its fullest, although life didn't always treat him well. Mike was a brother and a friend.

Those of us who knew Ranger Mike as a friend, have stories about him -- he left us all with so many stories. Stories of the serious kind, and others full of fun and mischief. I'll share just one of those stories with you here, a story which speaks to the character of this man, this trooper, my friend and friend of many, and husband to one.

This Ranger Mike story begins a few years ago in the hospitality suite at our reunion at Ft. Bragg. While sitting at a table near the bar, a loud crash occurred immediately to my rear. It seems one big dude, must have been about 300 pounds, and wearing a Ranger shirt, got cold-cocked by a young waiter. He must have gotten into the waiter's face, but the waiter apparently had never heard of Rangers, and treated our hero to a nice right cross which left him sprawled on his back on the floor. Instantly, out of nowhere it seemed, Ranger Mike was on the scene. He had witnessed what happened, and knew the waiter wasn't at fault -- good thing for the waiter.

Coming to, our tipsy guy struggled to get up, cursing and trying to fight anyone near him. Mike held this mammoth trooper down, yelling in his face, "You're a Ranger goddamit! Now stop it!!" But, he wouldn't stop it, he wanted to fight.

Mike helped the man to his feet and was struggling with him to keep him from harming anyone within arm's reach or hurting himself. Another trooper and I jumped into the fray, helping Mike half carry the guy out of the room, all the while the big trooper trying to hit anyone nearby, including us.

The three of us finally got the fellow out the back door of the hotel, Mike admonishing him the entire way, and onto the loading dock in the rear, where Mike continued to scold him, and control him, and keep him out of jail. Eventually, the big fellow fell asleep there on the dock, while the three of us waited a couple hours for him to sleep it off.

Eventually, Mike retrieved his truck and drove the four of us to the man's hotel, where we dropped him on his bed. The other helpful trooper and I waited outside as Mike made sure his fellow Ranger was trucked in for the night, and safe.

It was later reported the marauding Ranger had experienced a bad reaction to a mixture of medication and alcohol, and apologized to everyone within earshot the following day, and I assume, the waiter as well. Another good Ranger.

Ranger Mike put himself in harm's way (again) that night to keep people from getting hurt, and to keep a buddy from going to jail. That was typical of him, but, that's just one Ranger Mike story; there are many. I miss my friend. Damn you, Mike, you left us too soon bro.

A friend of Ranger Mike's.

RLTW

