



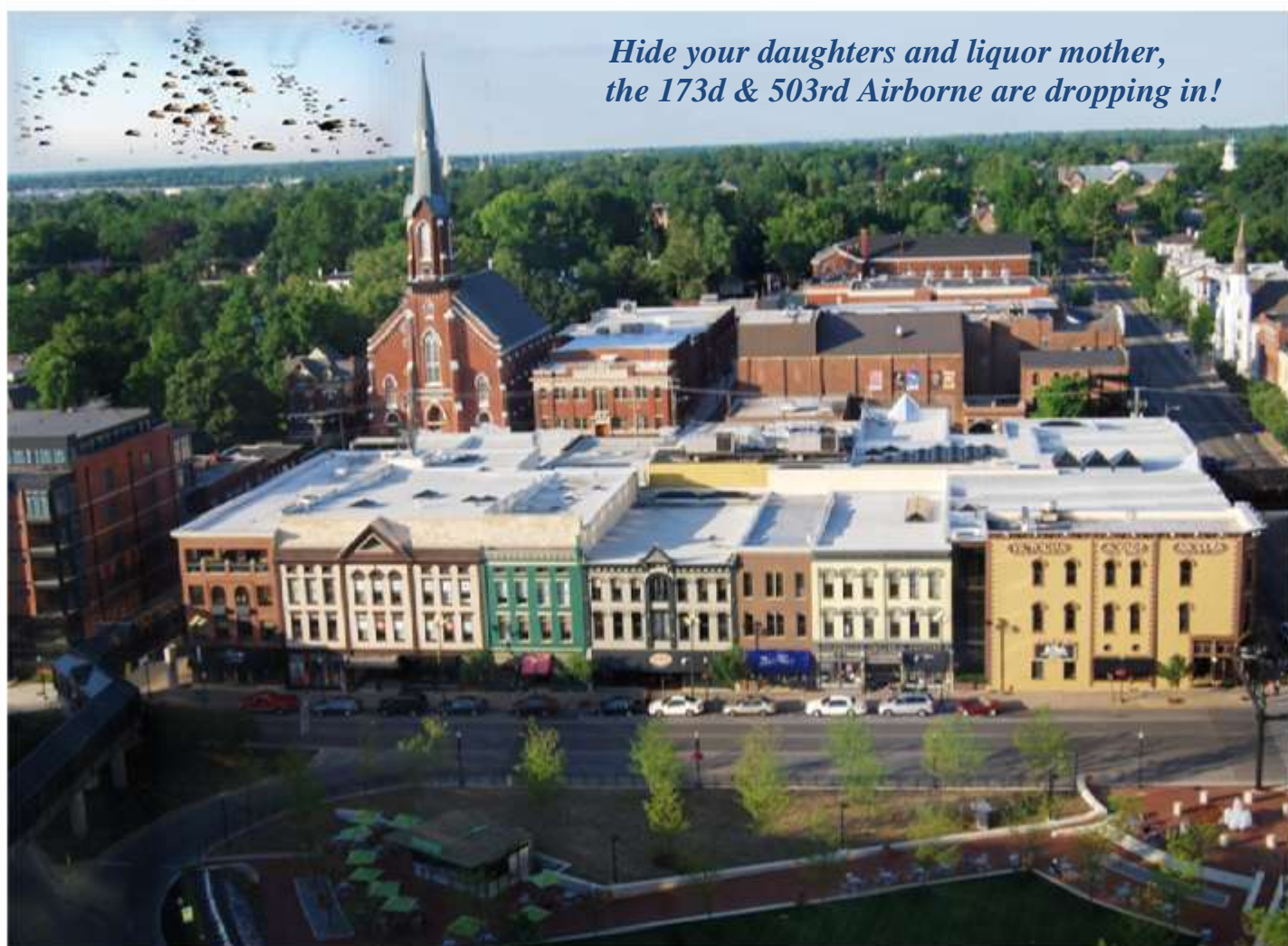
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~SPECIAL EDITION~

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~ The 173d Airborne Brigade Reunion in Lexington ~



*Hide your daughters and liquor mother,
the 173d & 503rd Airborne are dropping in!*

Downtown Lexington as seen from the Hyatt Hotel. A neat, clean and active city worth visiting.



Faces of a 173d Airborne Reunion under The Blue Skies Of Kentucky



Thanks for coming!



History, Horses & Hooch

What a great reunion it was in Lexington, KY, and troopers Roy Scott, Dave Carmon, Skip Kniley, Terry Aubrey and their entire reunion organizing crew are to be commended for their hard work and putting on a most successful event. Although some of us had questioned the wisdom of holding a paratrooper reunion in 'horse country', any concerns were quickly dispelled upon arrival in this beautiful part of our nation. Then again, we are *The Herd*.

For this trooper and his bride, our reunion began Tuesday evening upon arrival at Whispering Hills RV Park about a 20 minute drive to reunion central, the Hyatt Hotel in Lexington. There, my wife Reggie and I were greeted by good friends Jerry Wiles (B/2/503) and his bride, Harriet. After checking in our little van and parking it alongside Jerry & Harriet's bigass RV, we all headed to Georgetown, a quaint little berg nearby for some vittles. Returning to the camp, we crashed early following our 900 mile drive from Florida.

Just before leaving Florida's Space Coast on that Monday, Larry Hampton of A/1/503 sent an email with the saddest of news Ranger Mike Taylor, 2/503, a mutual buddy here in Florida, had died from a heart attack at the age of 63. On that sad note we began a solemn journey north, often talking about Mike and his wife, Diane. Mike would be remembered by many throughout the week in Kentucky, Mike's home state, and will be remembered beyond. *RLTW*



Ranger Mike

Wednesday morning this squad of four loaded-up and headed to Lexington, ever on the lookout for Blue Grass, but finding none. The reunion was in full bloom with troopers of every size, age, color and hair pattern, or lack thereof, running every which-way....actually, there was very little running going on, but a lot of limping. Many of these warriors had already found the hospitality suite where beer was flowing freely, while the hardcore drinkers went on a search and find mission for the upstairs or downstairs bars where troopers were hoping to meet the local Kentuckian, Jim Beam.

After having our 2/503 banner hung in the hospitality suite (no doubt to the chagrin of 1st, 3rd & 4th Bats), we noticed old friendships were being reestablished while new friendships were developed; many quickly and

stealthily eyeballing name tags to confirm the name matched the face they remember.

In the early afternoon we attended a small reception for the five guest WWII 503rd troopers and their family members. It was great to meet these guys and their families. Roy Scott and Dave Carmon made brief welcoming remarks, and then Skip and Terry presented each of the troopers and their companions with specially-designed 173d/503rd reunion jackets produced earlier by good buddy Wayne Bowers, C/2/503, and on behalf of the many Sky Soldiers and friends of Sky Soldiers who made possible our inviting these men of the 503rd PIR to the reunion. Eight 'volunteers', including trooper Dick Adams of the 503rd PIR, led us in a fun round of *Blood on the Risers*, with everyone joining in on the chorus, which brought the welcome reception to a close. For the record, Jerry Wiles should never again sing in public as it could frighten little children and small animals.



At reception, donning their neato jackets, WWII 503rd troopers Ray Basham (L) and Jim Mullaney shake hands. They served together on The Rock in 1945, and are meeting here for the first time. In background 503rd trooper Dick Adams speaks with Mary Lea Quick, Jim's daughter.

Following this gathering was scheduled a 'President's Meeting', which, having not attended, little can be added here about it. The balance of the evening was spent with buddies laughing and crying together, you know, the stuff we do.

Returning to the RV Park our ladies retired for the evening while Jerry and I did our utmost best to polish off a quart of Caribbean rum. As the night worn on into the early morning hours, the quart of rum became a half-quart of rum and our war stories began depicting us as having been much braver as we told them for the second and third times. By about 2 a.m. we agreed we were both deserving of the MOH, or at least two Silver Stars each, and would file a complaint the next day.

(continued....)



The next day, Thursday, this old RTO somehow awoke, with a splitting headache and not so brave, while the bride helped me get dressed and into my golf shoes for the big tournament, STARTING AT 8 A.M! I'd like to meet the bastard who scheduled that so early in the morning! **AUBREY!!!!**

Arriving the course with no time to spare, I teamed-up with Bob "Luke" Lucas and Terry "Woody" Davis of A/2/503, and our ringer, *Long Ball* Paul Dinardo of 3/319th. We managed to get thru the course o.k., altho losing many of our little white balls along the way, with minimal hope of actually winning the thing. *We won the thing!* Well, sort of. Leaving that threesome behind to collect the spoils, I quickly headed to the Kentucky Theatre in Lexington for *Operation Corregidor II*, the WWII 503rd presentations.

Cowboy chopper dude, Tony Geishauser, who led *Operation Corregidor I* in Myrtle Beach a couple years ago, again served as moderator for this year's meeting, and did one hellofajob of it too. Arriving late from golf I missed the video of those 503rd troopers crashing into the rocks of Corregidor (it can often be seen on the Military Channel), but did catch most of their talks.

In my view, this meeting, and having the opportunity to meet those 5 troopers of the original 503rd, was the centerpiece of this year's reunion. Their stories and recollections kept us spellbound, and there was no shortage of questions by Sky Soldiers for these men of the Pacific Theatre. As good buddy Marc Thurston D/2/503 said in a note the other day, *"All we ever wanted was to be like them."* Yes, Marc, well put bro.

A short evening with a stop for Thai food, and Thursday became history; altho the bar at the Hyatt remained active as we snuck out the door, lest we be challenged by some coin-carrying soldier of the Sky kind -- which reminds me of Bob "Luke" Lucas who the night before foolishly slammed his challenge coin on the bar top. Silly boy. Ears perked-up throughout the room like prairie dogs -- as no doubt Luke's ears will when his wife sees his Amex bill. Thanks Luke.

Part of Friday was spent driving to nowhere, getting a taste for this beautiful countryside, while back at reunion central troopers reminisced of days of yore when we were young men, fighting other young men. Has it really been nearly 50 years? Nah, can't be.

Saturday was another action packed and fun filled day hanging with the brothers. About mid-afternoon many of these Sky Soldiers and their Sky Soldierettes retired to their rooms to don pretty outfits in anticipation of

the closing banquet that evening. We would learn the general meeting had been held and Ft. Bragg, *Home of the Airborne*, will be the site of our 2014 reunion; Las Vegas having already been selected for next year.

Our RV friends, Jerry and Harriet decided to skip the meal, but we were fortunate to share a table with good buddy Craig Ford C/1/503, and two Sky Soldier families, as we watched young kids post colors. Craig didn't want my chicken and Reggie stole my dessert -- there ain't no joy in Lexington....or is it Mudville?

There were a few speeches, including one by a General who did a yeoman's job honoring the troops. But the surprise of the evening was when Capt. Gary Prisk, "Cap", C/D/2/503, took the mike at center stage. Speaking extemporaneously, Cap had us all near weeping one moment, then laughing our asses off the next. The trooper is not only a good author, he's a great orator; **Cap, enlightening the masses** but, he didn't buy me one of the many rum drinks he owes me during the entire reunion, so I won't mention his book, *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt*, here. It won silver.



From this old paratrooper's perspective, the most moving part of the evening was Roy Scott's speech about our WWII 503rd guests, and the award presentations which followed. The entire house stood, applauded and honored each of the 503rd troopers as each man was presented with a special certificate of appreciation from troopers of the 173d. Roy's speech and the text of the award appear in this newsletter.

For two reunions, this one and Myrtle Beach, we had planned to end the ceremonies with a round of *Blood on the Risers*, with everyone joining in on the chorus, but failed to do it both times. Too bad. Vegas, are you listening? *"He ain't gonna jump no more!"*

Hugs all around, slaps on the back, and *"I'll see you soon's"* followed the banquet, and another 173d Airborne Brigade reunion faded into history. That is, of course, until we all see one another again, soon.

Be well brothers, be very well. ATW

Lew "Smitty" Smith
HHC/2/503d, '65/'66



~ Around and About the Reunion ~

Diggers, Dogfaces, Brownjobs & Grunts were all in attendance



Wambi Cook A/2/503 on left with Gary Prisk, C/D/2/503d.

The good Captain, Gary Prisk, former company commander of Charlie Company 2/503 seen here with Wambi, did something very special at the reunion. Gary donated 500 copies of his award-winning novel, *Digger, Dogface, Brownjob, Grunt* to raise money for the 173d Memorial Maintenance Fund. For hour after hour the Cap sat at his table signing copies of his book for Sky Soldiers and friends of Sky Soldiers in attendance. Thanks to Gary and everyone who made a donation, thousands of dollars were raised. ATW Cap! And thanks to Terry Aubrey's wife for allowing him to store the books in their house for weeks, all the while threatening divorce or some appropriate punishment.



SGM Mike Deeb and wife Pat.



Bill Nicholls (A/2/503) and his wife Judy, Reggie's 'Airborne Sister'.



Col. Ken Smith and his wife Susan during closing banquet.



The Herd meets the herd.





Ed Carns, CO A/2/503 & Recon, & Wambi Cook, A/2/503.



Charles Kizer and Wambi A/2/503d, 2/67-2/68



In the vendor area was this fun 173d shoot 'em up arcade game by Jeremiah Minor, B/2/503 ABCT.



503rd Trooper Jim Mullaney on left, with a young fellow touching American history.



L-R: Pam Geishauser & Reggie Smith, chowing down on popcorn. They were heard to say, "Cheap husbands, this is dinner? Where are the young paratroopers?"



"Okay. I'm gonna say this once. Which one of you took my glasses?"





Maj. Tony Geishauser, Cowboy pilot, moderator of *Operation Corregidor II*, and golfer extraordinaire.



A picture of Craig Ford, C/1/503, taking a picture.



A great pic of 2/503d's NO DEROS ALPHA wild turkeys out on patrol. L-R: Jim Miskel, Ron Sedlak, Jim Gettel and Dave Zsigo, brother of Alex Zsigo KIA, Dak To.





Alpha still on patrol. *"Only two things fall from the sky; bird shit and paratroopers."* Hmmm



Pam Geishauser spending Tony's ill-gotten gains at the Hyatt.



Dickie Wright, Recon, 2/503d



Ron, ridin' 'em hard an puttin' 'em away wet. *"Hey guys, come back! Someone help me off this thing! Hey!"*



Dapper lookin' HHC/Recon 2/503 trooper Pat Bowe, with Carol Lamb and Judy Donohue more interested in Words with Friends.





**HHC/2/503 Recon Platoon from '66/'67.
L-R: Dickie Wright, Ed Carns, Jerry Hassler,
Joe Lamb, Pat Bowe and Dave Kies, with
Mike Donohue kneeling and Chuck Spagnola
with hand on Mike's shoulder.**



**HHC/2/503 Recon Platoon after combat jump in February
1967.**





At 503rd welcome reception, L-R: Tony Sierra, Ray & Mary Basham, Nancy & Dick Adams, with friends and family.



L-R at reception: Pat Sirmeyer 3/319th, Theresa Poklop, Tony Cicchino 503rd, and Reggie Smith.



Danny Day center and Roy Scott right meeting some new friends. The lady is a nurse at VA and that's her husband.



Thank you Sir.



At the track, Kentucky's fastest.





Was told this Mustang on display at the reunion was purchased by a 173d ABCT trooper, KIA. His father later decorated the car in honor and in memory of his son. Unfortunately, we could not identify names.



The 3 Amigos. Three A/2/503 company commanders, L-R: Jack Kelley, Dave Milton & Ed Carns.



Kathy Weatherman, Dave Milton and Ed Weatherman. Ed & Dave both survived the Battle of the Slopes in June 1967. This is Ed's first reunion in 45 years.



Danny Day, 173d Engineers & Master Blaster.



Mike "Mr. Te" Thibault, A/2/503d. Years before this photo was taken in Lexington, Mike would build a dormitory at a high school outside of Saigon for needy kids in memory of his father. Good job G.I.



A/2/503d guidon returns to the jungles of the "D" Zone in '05, by Gus Vendetti and Bill Vose.





503rd PIR Trooper Ray Basham and his bride Mary.



503rd PIR Trooper Tony Sierra and his bride Elizabeth.



Three buddies. They were young men, and paratroopers.



Sky Soldier golfer on right with Golf Tournament organizer Terry Aubrey, who started the tournament AT 8 A.M! He should drop for 20 for that.



Golf Course in Lexington

Somewhere hiding in the blue grass of Kentucky our lost little white balls call out to us, "Here, here, I'm over here!"



Momma Ski (is that Eric Hitchcock?), with Gold Stars Robert & Paula Lehmiller speaking with Craig Ford in the background.





Paratroopers, mugging for the camera. L-R: Lew “Smitty” Smith (HHC/2/503), Jerry Wiles (B/2/503), Gary “Cap” Prisk (C/D/2/503d), Bob Fleming (A/D/2/503), Larry “Big Dog” Hampton (A/1/503), Danny Day (Engineers) & Mike Nale (B/2/503). If this photo doesn’t scare the VC, nothing will.



Won Hung Lo: *Did you see those guys?*
Phuc Me: *Yeah. Who are they?*
Won: *I dunno, but they sure are scary looking.*
Phuc: *Should we shoot them?*
Won: *We better not, I think they’re Sky Soldiers.*
Phuc: *Yeah, I heard of them. Why do they have only one wing on their patch?*
Won: *You dummy. It’s because they can fight with one wing tied behind their backs!*
Phuc: *Let’s di di before the guy with the socks sees us, I hear he’s crazy.*
Won: *Not him, he’s o.k. It’s that attorney Vose you’re thinking of -- he’s not in the photo.*



173d AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)





Angela & Bob Fleming (A/D/2/503d).



Sky Soldierettes, L-R: Judy, Susan, Pat & Angela.



2/503d's finest, Ed Weatherman, Jerry Cecil, Ken Smith, Bob Fleming & Mike Deeb. They clean-up well.



~ 2/503d's NO DEROS ALPHA ~



Looking strac.

*"I don't know but I've been told.
Alpha troopers are mighty bold!"*

