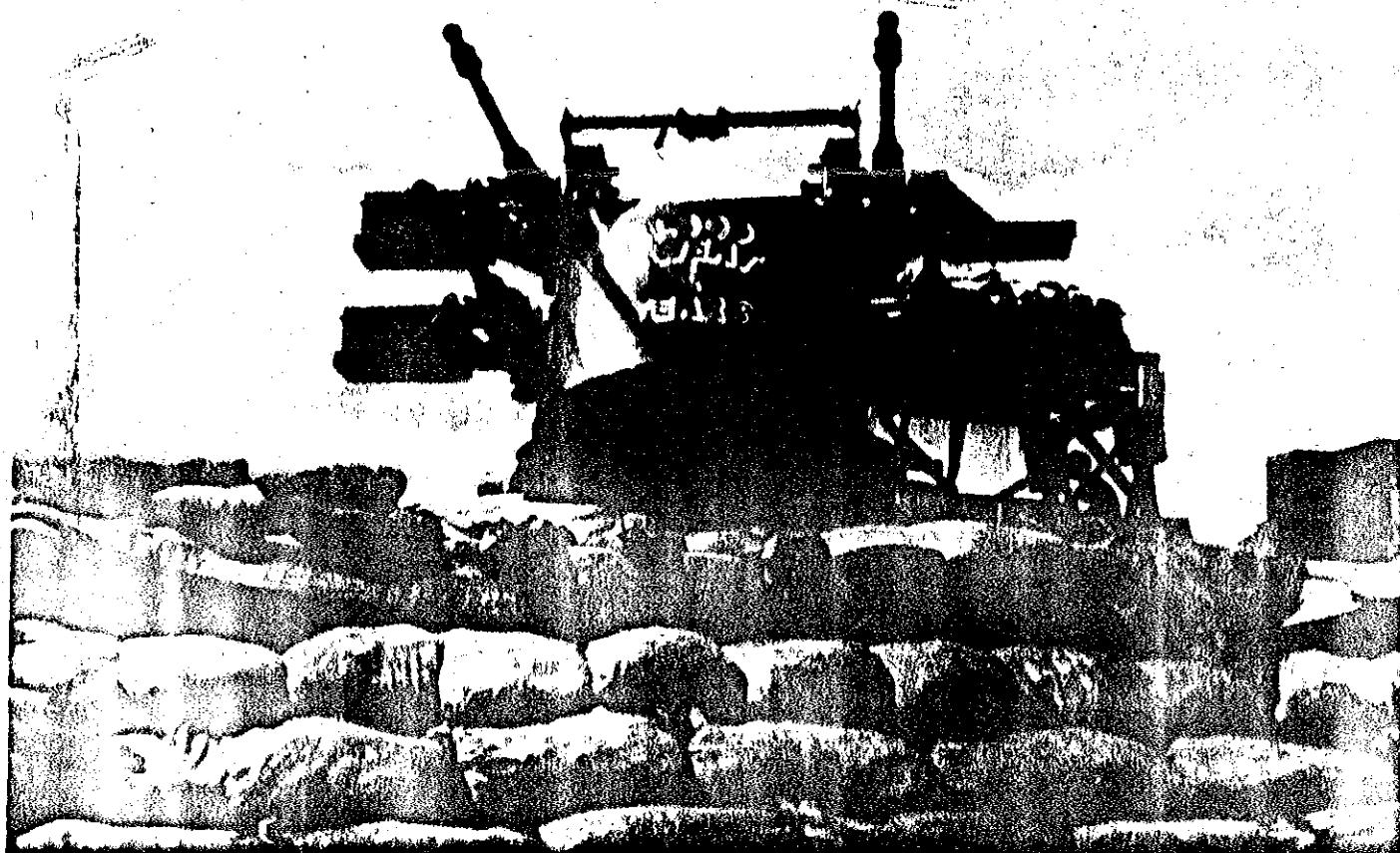


# RIPCORD REPORT

For Friends and Survivors of FSB RIPCORD, RVN

*A Newsletter*

No. 28, February, 1991



**QUAD-FIFTY ON RIPCORD**

**BLOOD, SWEAT, & TEARS**

**PHOTO BY: JACK WILHITE, 1970**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Ripcord Association was founded by Chip Collins (B/2-506) in 1984. From an initial membership of four, the Association has grown to over 200 members at present. Membership is completely voluntary and there are no fees, dues, or other costs involved. Any advertising accepted is printed free of charge. The Ripcord Association subsists entirely on volunteer donations. Members are encouraged to submit articles, or other items of interest for publication. If you desire that an item, such as a photograph, be returned, please indicate this preference on submission. The publication goal is one issue every three months, more frequently if time and submitted material allow.

Send donations to: John "Custer" Mihalko, Treasurer, Ripcord Association, [REDACTED] 9862. (John was with Recon Team B, E/2-506.)

Send articles, submissions, new members to: Chuck Hawkins, Editor, Ripcord Report, [REDACTED] (Chuck commanded A Co., 2-506.)

## BASIC LOAD

### Art/Photos

Staff Journal/LZ Oakton

Editor's History Corner

Vietnam and the Vietnamese

Recon, E/2-506th Awards

Locating Vietnam Veterans

### Contacts/New Faces

Incoming

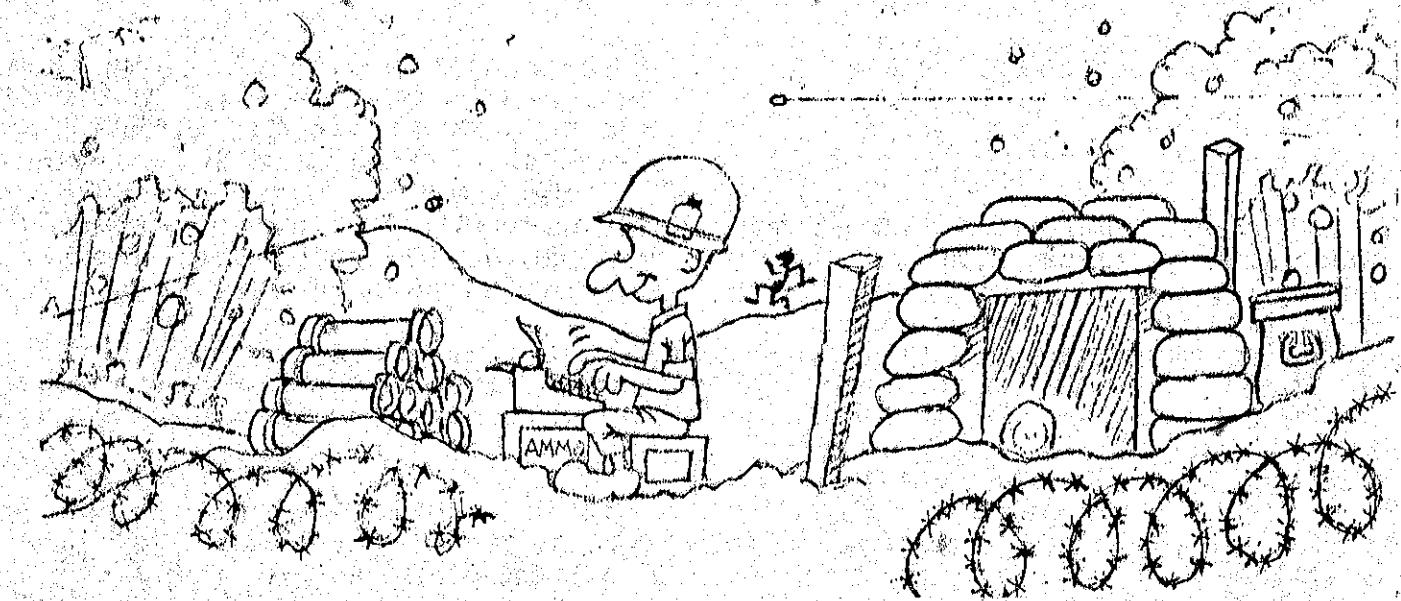
Blind Date Services

D/2-501st Reunion

Pass in Review

Mihalko's Musings





---

#### CONTACTS/NEW FACES

Michael Kelley



Edward P. Davis



101st Avn. Gp., 1970

Chris Lee



---

#### STAFF JOURNAL: LZ OAKTON

Happy Holidays! The crisp winds of Autumn are upon us here in northern Virginia. Seems like a blessing compared to the 100 degree (F) heat we had twenty years ago. Actually, the temperatures had declined in I Corps by November-December 1970 -- they were in the 70s and 80s. Hell, I remember one time it got down into the 40s -- thought it was gonna' damn snow.

Fog. You remember the fog we had from time to time, especially during the early monsoons? Couldn't see piss hit the ground, let alone fly a helicopter. Airmobile my ranger butt! We were legs, ground pounders to the max.

Got socked in on Rocket Ridge once for 14 days. About the end of October as I recall. Nothing flew out of the lowlands. Most men in the company kept an extra LRRP ration or bag of rice in the bottom of their rucksacks -- just in case. They sure came in handy. Even so, we were reduced to sharing one soupy LRRP a day between fire teams. Talk about being a close-knit outfit -- "Hey, man. Lemme put my spoon in our food." Didn't last, though. The weather lifted just enough for a slick to home in on our radio and kickout some C-rats. Only missed us by 200 meters.

And so it goes, or went. Currahee.

INCOMING

Dear Chuck,

I thought these items about the R&R warnings about Sydney, Australia would be of interest. Also included is a newspaper clipping about the rocket attack on HQ Co. at Camp Evans. The picture is the hooch hit by the rocket. It was during early morning and I recall hearing the rocket hit when I was standing up in my hooch. Three guys were hurt by the rocket. This attack happened about May 1971. Also, Chaplain Fox is shown here at FSB Jack holding a service. Great job you and John are doing on the Ripcord Report.

Gary Jesters  
Hampstead, MD  
HHC/2-506

Dear Chuck,

I have just finished reading the August 1990 issue of RIPCORD REPORT, which arrived today; and I am deeply moved by the memories which have been stirred up from smoldering depths within me. Can it really have been twenty years since RIPCORD? Or was it only yesterday? Or did it happen at all? Yes, RIPCORD happened, as "we few...we band of brothers" can attest.

The 1:25,000 scale map of the RIPCORD AO is eloquent in its stark simplicity. Only the veteran of infantry combat can understand the challenge of those closely-spaced contour lines. Only the veteran of the RIPCORD campaign can appreciate the significance of HILLS 805, 902, 1000, and RIPCORD.

Especially moving were your "Ripcord: A Charlie Oscar's View," and John Mihalko's "Let It Be," the order of the memorial service for the soldiers of the 2-506th Infantry who died on and around RIPCORD during July 1970, and your concluding poem "Twenty Years."

"Twenty years, that's just how long it's been since we were young an' trim, an' fought a war we may not win."

It is infuriating and frustrating for soldiers to fight a war they may not win. It is unworthy of a country to send its soldiers into a war which they may not win. Fortunately for our country, American soldiers traditionally have served the nation better and more faithfully than the nation has served them. None have served the nation more loyally, bravely, and tenaciously than the Screaming Eagle soldiers who fought the RIPCORD battle, even after their civil leaders had decided to quit the war and were withdrawing American military forces from the battlefield.

I pray that our brothers of RIPCORD -- and all other veterans of the war in Vietnam -- will cast off any feelings of bitterness or guilt about Vietnam and take a quiet, justifiable pride in having served faithfully and well during a terribly difficult time in our country's history. I am confident that we who survived will keep alive in honored and cherished memory the sacrifices of our brothers who died while serving our country in battle at RIPCORD and other places in what was once the Republic of Vietnam.

Sincerely, Sid Berry  
Arlington, VA

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sid Berry (LTG, USA, RET.) was the Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver of the 101st Airborne Division in 1970, and the Acting Division Commander during the climax of the Ripcord battle on 23 July 1970.

Dear Chuck,

How are you doing? I thought that I would send you a picture out of (my photo) book. While I was only on Ripcord three weeks, I still had taken a lot of pictures while there.

I still have a question that is on my mind; I seem to remember a black captain, who could have been recon or something, maybe you could ask around. It seems he was with C Co. on patrol one time when we came into some gooks and they were hidden in a cave, and there seemed to be quite a few of them.

Well, anyway, thought you would like to use this picture for the newsletter.

Take care, Currahee  
Jack Wilhite  
Springfield, MO  
C/2-506

Chuck,

I ran across Colonel (Ret.) Ed Davis at a conference at Ft. Knox, KY last week. I had dinner with him and told him all about the Ripcord Association. Ed was the CO of the 101st Aviation Group during most of the Ripcord activity. I have enclosed an application for him.

Ron Bryce  
Springfield, VA  
101st Aviation Group

Charlie Oscar,

Having just completed reading the 27 Aug. 90 Ripcord Report, I feel some dates are incorrect. On page 11 of the Report, reference Hill 805, I believe the date is 12 July not June; as the company, D/2-501 stayed on the Hill five days.

Also, the other KIAs on Hill 805 were: SGT William E. Jones, killed on 14 Jul. 70; SP/4 David R. Beyl, died of wounds, 18 Jul. 70; Wilfred W. Warner, died of wounds, 23 Jul. 70; and William D. Rollason, a D/2-501 sniper attached to another unit was KIA on 18 Jul. 70.

Also enclosed is a check to cover a little of the Ripcord Report.

John T. Schuelke  
Ft. Myers, FL  
1SG, D/2-501, Oct 69 - Dec 70

P.S. Its hell trying to watch football and write at the same time.

EDITOR'S NOTE: John is correct about the error in dates in the article "Ripcord: A Charlie Oscar's View.", Ripcord Report No. 27, August 1990. "June" should read "July" where it appears in the story.

Dear Mr. Mihalko,

I am a wounded Vet from the 506th Infantry, 70-71-72. I really like the Ripcord Report. I am looking for a photo of a buddy of mine. His name is PFC Newton L. Tapp, KIA with the 506th on March 31, 1970. We were best pals back then. Does anyone have a photo of Newton L. Tapp? Thank

you very much for reading this letter.

Sincerely, B. J. Terrell  
2002 Missouri Ave.  
Granite City, IL 62040

Dear Mr. Mihalko,

I am writing to let you know that I did receive the last two Ripcord newsletters. I want to sincerely thank you for mailing them to me and I found them to be very interesting. In one of the newsletters, I saw that the wife of an ex 101st Airborne paratrooper wrote, advising that her husband had fought on Hamburger Hill during 1969. I contacted him on the chance that he may have known my friend; however, he didn't.

I would like to keep receiving the newsletter and for that purpose, I have enclosed a donation in the amount of \$20.00 to your association. Additionally, I would greatly appreciate it if in the future you could mention the names of the other individuals that were assigned to my friend's unit, in the hope that one of your readers may know one of these individuals and put me in touch with them.

Once again, thank you for mailing the newsletter to me and I look forward to receiving future newsletters.

Sincerely, Al Lopez  
Miami, FL

EDITOR'S NOTE: In an earlier letter to John Mihalko, Al explained that he is looking for anyone who may have served with, or known, his friend, Robert John Randall, Jr. PFC Randall was sent

to Vietnam in January 1969 and was assigned to E Co., 1-501st, 101st Airborne. He was killed in action by an enemy mortar round on 23 May 1969 along with another soldier, Robert L. Boese, near the hamlet of Duc Tan, Quan Tien Phouc Provence (grid BT158114).

Al has provided a list of names of some of the soldiers who served with Robert Randall (battalion and company) in the hope that someone will recognize a name. If anyone does, please contact Al Lopez at: 4101 NW 2d Street, Miami, FL 33126.. Phone: 305/643-3380.

CPT Steven A. Comeau  
LT J. F. Hitchcock  
SFC R. L. Guse  
SSG G. Tepner  
SSG W. Carroll  
SGT J. Beurie  
MAJ Warren R. MacDiarmid  
SSG Arthur Buckeleu  
SGT Richard E. Emel  
SFC Iva Font-Santiago  
SGT David Guffey  
SGT Gary Hlusko  
SGT Michael Hoelscher  
SP/5 Porter Kidd  
1SG Edward C. Malone  
SGT Lloyd Reese  
SGT Stevean R. Romand  
SGT Arnold Sears  
SSG Charles Sims  
SGT Sigmund Singleton  
SGT John A. Stovall  
SGT Ronald W. Tomko  
SGT James Ward  
SSG Roger A. Williamson



## EDITOR'S HISTORY CORNER

In Gerard M. Devlin's book, Paratrooper, a saga of Army and Marine parachute and glider combat troops during World War II, he writes:

"Most West Pointers like to run their outfits by the book. But such was not the case with Mosely's classmate, Colonel Robert F. Sink, who commanded the 101st Airborne's 506th Parachute Infantry. Upon assuming command of his regiment at Camp Toccoa, Georgia, the first thing Sink did was throw the book out the window. Then, using his own dynamic brand of leadership, and the remarkable abilities of his subordinates, he formed and later took into combat one of the finest and most physically rugged parachute regiments in the U.S. Army. It was Sink's regiment that always passed in review at the double and broke all long-standing records set by military units around the world for marching great distances in short periods of time."

Apparently Colonel Sink's Currahees were not only going to "stand alone," they were going to get there running.

Twenty years ago in the Fall, the Unit History of the 2-506th records these events:

LTC John C. Bard assumed command of the Best of the Currahees after LTC Lucas' death, and the battalion moved to Fire Bases Katheryn and Rakkasan in August and September. Delta Company traded hands as CPT Rollison became the Battalion S-4 and CPT Frank Wilson stepped into his place. We experienced practically no contact with the enemy until early in October.

Delta Company had one platoon led by 1LT James Warren sweeping north toward a ridge line just three kilometers north of Fire Base Rakkasan when the point man encountered an enemy bunker. In the short but fierce firefight that ensued several men were wounded and LT Warren withdrew his men and called artillery and gunships in on the enemy location. Later in the month, Delta Company found NVA graves and booby traps in the same area.

On 11 October, Alpha Company left Rakkasan and moved into an area adjacent to where Delta Company had made contact the week prior. For five days the men of Alpha Company made sporadic contact with the enemy and encountered several booby traps. Finally, on the 18th, several NVA were spotted just before dark carrying heavy rucksacks only 300 meters from Alpha Company's perimeter. The enemy was engaged with small arms fire and gunships were employed. One NVA was killed. Again on the 24th Alpha Company initiated another contact with an NVA carrying party.

SP/4 Dennis Counts led a six man ambush into location along a recently used enemy trail two kilometers north of Fire Base Rakkasan. Just as darkness fell the ambush was set. Throughout the long night the men waited and when morning came, they continued waiting, not moving or eating. At 0830 hours five NVA crept south along the trail, widely dispersed and cautious. Counts waited until the last three enemy had entered his kill zone, and then initiated the ambush by detonating a claymore mine. Two of the enemy fell in the following hail of

small arms fire and the other three dropped their rucksacks and fled south. It was a quiet time, but there were still enemy to be found.

The area of operations remained quiet and the battalion combat assaulted into a new area to the west of Rakkasan, just north of the familiar Fire Base Gladiator. Charlie Company began running into booby traps as did several recon teams now led by 1LT Robert Seitz. As October stretched into November, Charlie Company pushed farther and farther west into virgin territory.

Soon, enemy caves, bunker complexes, and cache sites began to be uncovered. Charlie Company pressed on, engaging the enemy on several occasions. The enemy, however, appeared to have no desire to make a stand, and continued to flee the area. CPT Lamb and his men were finally extracted and the area was subjected to a heavy bombardment of artillery and air-strikes. During much of Charlie Company's operation, LTC Bard was with them on the ground, and once received minor wounds from an exploding booby trap.

On 13 November, Delta Company, while conducting a combat assault, was engaged by enemy small arms fire and RPGs. Two members of Delta Company were killed and several were wounded. As cobra gunships rolled in, the enemy fled.

On 19 November, the battalion returned to Camp Evans for a stand-down; LTC Bard moved up to fill the Division G-3 slot, and LTC Joe F. Bellochi assumed command. CPT Hawkins became the Battalion S-1, and CPT Samuel H. Wrightson took over Alpha Company.

CPT Wilson left for Division HQ, and CPT Peter A. Vanderland became the Delta Company Commander. CPT Lamb left for a job at Division G-3. CPT Francis J. Lynch assumed control of Charlie Company, and CPT Peters turned over Bravo to CPT Carl Jensen. The year was over.

#### Today: History in the Making

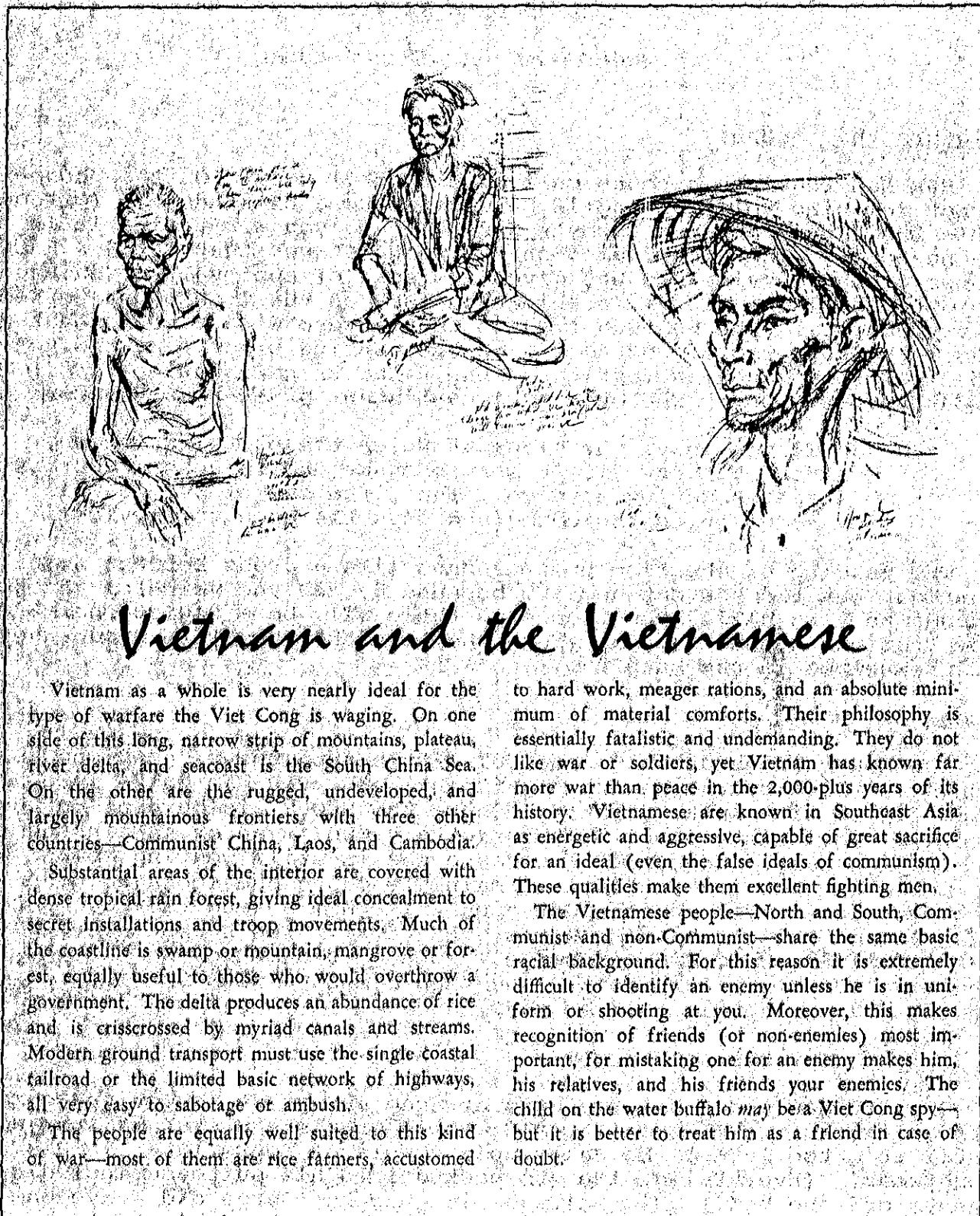
Colonel Randy House, a member of the Ripcord Association, is the Brigade Commander of the 2d Brigade of the 1st Air Cavalry Division in Saudi Arabia on Operation Desert Shield. Randy said that receiving mail in the Persian Gulf is just the same as it was in Vietnam -- you wait days without getting a single letter; then, ten letters appear all at once.

Colonel House, then Captain House, flew lift birds during the entire Ripcord period. He was the flight lead on 23 July when Alpha and Delta were extracted southeast of Ripcord. He later extended his tour and commanded Charlie Company, 2-506th during the first half of 1971.

Randy, we wish you and your soldiers all the best for a speedy tour and a safe return.



INFANTRYMAN LOADING AN M179 GRENADE LAUNCHER



## *Vietnam and the Vietnamese*

Vietnam as a whole is very nearly ideal for the type of warfare the Viet Cong is waging. On one side of this long, narrow strip of mountains, plateau, river delta, and seacoast is the South China Sea. On the other are the rugged, undeveloped, and largely mountainous frontiers with three other countries—Communist China, Laos, and Cambodia.

Substantial areas of the interior are covered with dense tropical rain forest, giving ideal concealment to secret installations and troop movements. Much of the coastline is swamp or mountain, mangrove or forest, equally useful to those who would overthrow a government. The delta produces an abundance of rice and is crisscrossed by myriad canals and streams. Modern ground transport must use the single coastal railroad or the limited basic network of highways, all very easy to sabotage or ambush.

The people are equally well suited to this kind of war—most of them are rice farmers, accustomed

to hard work, meager rations, and an absolute minimum of material comforts. Their philosophy is essentially fatalistic and undemanding. They do not like war or soldiers, yet Vietnam has known far more war than peace in the 2,000-plus years of its history. Vietnamese are known in Southeast Asia as energetic and aggressive, capable of great sacrifice for an ideal (even the false ideals of communism). These qualities make them excellent fighting men.

The Vietnamese people—North and South, Communist and non-Communist—share the same basic racial background. For this reason it is extremely difficult to identify an enemy unless he is in uniform or shooting at you. Moreover, this makes recognition of friends (or non-enemies) most important, for mistaking one for an enemy makes him, his relatives, and his friends your enemies. The child on the water buffalo may be a Viet Cong spy—but it is better to treat him as a friend in case of doubt.

Extracted from: US Gov't. Printing Off., DA Pam 360-518, Know Your Enemy: The Viet Cong, 1966.

BLIND DATE SERVICES

Submitted by: Gary Jesters

Picture this scene:

R&R-Man receives a phone call in his hotel room. On the phone is a sweet feminine voice asking if he would like a blind date. (Of course, it's the "John Farquhar Escort Service" and you won't find it in the phone book.) The sweet voice on the phone states that the R & R Center knows of the service and has given its seal of approval. (You aren't told the seal is a 10 lb. combination lock on the front door to keep everyone out.) The R&R-Man figures that anyone with a voice that sweet has to be Number One, and agrees on the meeting place, and the fee to cover expenses such as setting up the date, transportation, etc. (This amounts to \$25.00.) Then you have to listen to her read the fine print.

If you leave the place at which the party is thrown, you must pay \$15.00 more because she is under contract to the dating service. Thus, the sum of \$40.00 will be given to the date (she pays the escort service).

The reading of the fine print sounds like a cross between Swahilli and Russian, but the R&R-Man accepts because by now the voice on the phone sounds sexy as hell. She then says there will be a \$10.00 charge to cover drinks at the party. (Yes, they say the whisky is good; they make it themselves in the bath tub.)

Scene II

Two hours later at the beautiful little appartment (condemned six months earlier by the Health Department), the R&R-Man walks into a noisy room filled with smoke (that's because the S.O.S. is burning on the stove). He is introduced to "Henrietta," who is an ex-WAC in the Australian Army. He can tell because she is still wearing combat boots. He tells her she is beautiful -- mainly because she looks as mean as his 1st Sergeant, and is built just about like him -- and they go in to join the rest of the group (Farquhar's Commandos). Two hours later the R&R-Man is half-crooked and old Sarge (his secret name for Henrietta) is begining to look pretty good. She then comes up with the idea of going to his place. "I dig it." he says, and off they go.

Scene III (at his hotel room)

The R&R-Man and old Sarge have arrived and start to get undressed for fun and games. (He dosen't realize this consists of karate and judo until it's too late.) He wakes up a couple of hours later in his underwear. (Everything else was packed into his suitcase including the sheets off the bed.) His suitcase is gone but Sarge did leave one item: the pliers she used to pull the gold fillings out of his teeth.

DELTA COMPANY, 2d BATTALION, 501st INFANTRY REUNION

Excerpted from a letter from John Palm, 20 September 1990.

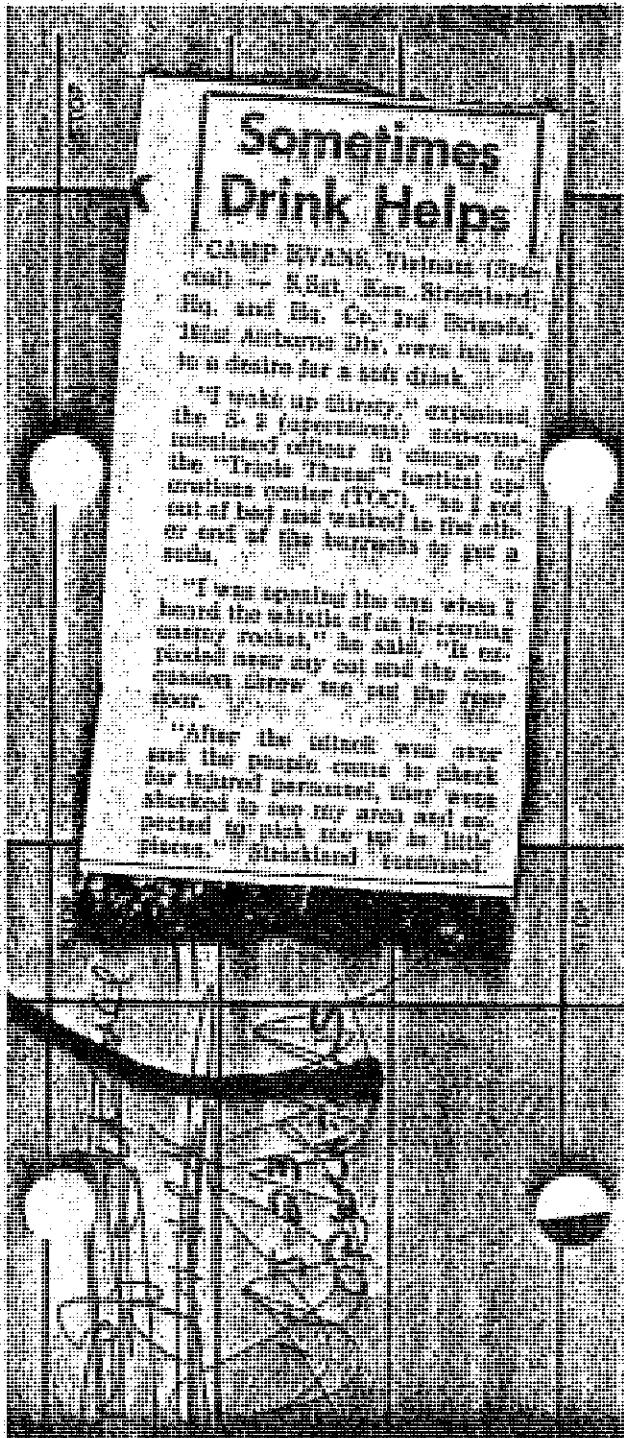
Delta, 2-501, had a notable 5th Reunion in Carrollton, KY over the very July weekend (Friday the 13th) of its Hill 805 anguish. I went -- though I'd missed #3 and #4 -- because I intended to meet Denny Belt from Colo., the most disabled of the 805 survivors, and take him from Cincinnati. At the last minute health made him cancel, but I went anyway. There were some old-timers I knew, but a lot of new ones, especially from the original company (1967-1968), including the renowned McMenamy, who came all the way from Australia, where he'd gone in rejection of the U.S. and its Vietnam War outcome, I gather.

I was pretty overwhelmed at how special I was treated, including the first Hooper-Sims award, a plaque named for the two men from Delta who won the Congressional Medal of Honor at Hue in the 68 Tet offensive. The greatest honor of my life, though so many others shared or helped my efforts. An unforgettable reunion, some 200 people in all, and so well done. Chris Straub and family were there too.

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Palm is a special friend of the Ripcord Report and a member of long-standing in the Ripcord Association. His son, 1LT Terry Palm, was killed on Hill 805. That he should be so honored by the Delta Raiders at their reunion should remind us all of the terrible sacrifices made off the field of battle as well.

John lives in Lutz, FL. The picture to the right is from the letter he wrote and is a copy of a woodblock print by Kawase Hasui, Japanese (1883-1957), entitled "West Park in Fukuoka."

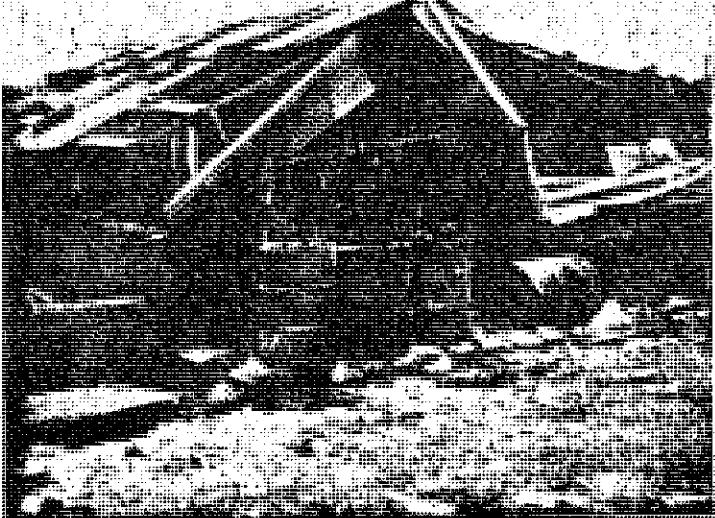




Submitted by: Gary Jesters



Chaplain Fox holding services at FSB Jack.



After rocket attack on Headquarters Company, 1971.

MEMORABLE QUOTATIONS

Dear Congressman:

I take pen in hand to complain about my piece. After months of assiduous care and maintenance of the weapon (M-16) it failed to function at a critical moment, endangering my life and the lives of other men in this company. Last night, at 0300 hours (3 A.M.) I had a clear, unobstructed shot at the captain. To my chagrin, the weapon misfired. It may be weeks before I get another crack at the bastard and in the meantime I am subjected to the ridicule of my associates and can kiss good-bye the \$2,000 in the company pool.

One Mad G.I.

Few had forebodings of their destiny. At the halts they lay in the long wet grass and gossiped, enormously at ease. The whistle blew. They jumped for their equipment. The little gray figure of the colonel far ahead waved its stick.

Hump your pack and get a move on. The next hour, man, will bring you three miles nearer to your death. Your life and your death are nothing to these fields -- nothing, no more than it is to the man planning the next attack at G.H.Q. You are not even a pawn. Your death means no more than if you had died in your bed, full of years and respectability, having begotten a tribe of young.

Yet by your courage in tribulation, by your cheerfulness before the dirty devices of this world, you have won the love of those who have watched you. All we remember is your living face, and that we loved you for being of our clay and our spirit.

Guy Chapman, "A Passionate Prodigality," Magincourt-sur-Canche, France, 21 October 1916

I went where I was told to go, and did what I was told to do, but no more. I was scared shitless just about all the time.

Private First Class James Jones

My military awards include the Bronze Star for Valor, the Bronze Star for "being there," the Air Medal for "being crazy enough to fly around in helicopters," the Army Commendation Medal for "not getting caught doing anything illegal," the Purple Heart for "gallantly absorbing massive quantities of shrapnel," the Combat Infantryman's Badge, and "the usual assortment of awards the Army gives to anybody that shows up for work."

Mike "M-60" Kelley

LOCATING  
VIETNAM VETERANS

Mike Kelley, a new contact, has provided the Ripcord Report with a wealth of information on how to locate fellow veterans. "M-60," or "Machinegun," Kelley served with D/1-502nd, 101st Airborne in RVN as a rifleman and machinegunner from Nov. 69 to Sep. 70, when he was wounded in action. He now lives in California and is a nationally recognized artist who specializes in paintings and drawings related to his experience in Vietnam.

Many of you are aware of locator services provided by the government as well as private sector organizations. To help provide a more complete "picture" of the locator assistance available the Ripcord Report will publish veterans location and related information in this and subsequent issues.

---

LZ Birmingham  
P.O. Box 13044  
Birmingham, Alabama (ZIP?)

24 hour computer line, 1200/2400 baud, 205/870-7770

Find-A-Vet  
Veterans of the Vietnam War  
2090 Bald Mountain Road  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-9609  
717/825-7215  
(\$1.00 donation requested)

Locator, Veteran Magazine  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
2001 "S" St., NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20009  
202/332-2700

Vietnam Veterans Registry  
P.O. Box 430  
Bridgton, Maine 04009  
(Larry Horn)

Vietnam Veterans Locator Sevice  
7303 Volqulardsen  
Davenport, Iowa 52806  
(Chuck Schantag)

Military Information Enterprises  
P.O. Box 5143  
Burlington, NC 27216  
Richard S. Johnson, LTC, RET

"How to Locate Anyone Who Is Or Has Been In The Military" is a directory published by Col. Johnson and costs about \$15.

The Tracking Center for Korea/Vietnam Veterans Memorials/Museums has compiled a Directory (since mid-1983) throughout the United States and other countries. If you are aware of such a memorial/museum in your community, please forward that information to:

Tracking Center for Korea/Vietnam Veterans Memorials and Museums  
2020 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
P.O. Box 219  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: Pegi Donovan

Publication of this directory is set for late 1990.

To get a Name Rubbing from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, write to:

Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
1350 Connecticut Ave., NW, #300  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Name Rubbing  
(\* allow 8-10 weeks)



Hue, 1968, War, Playboy Press, 1978



Vietnamese Girl, Art Wiknik

I am currently researching a project concerning the Viet-Nam War. I am looking for background information on *all* US casualties (KIA or accidental death — USN, USMC, USA, USAF, USCG, civilian). Information needed is: 1. Unit to which each individual was assigned at time of loss; 2. Base where unit was located at time of loss; 3. Country loss occurred; 4. Locale within country where loss occurred; 5. Cause of loss. I basically have all names, pay grades, dates of loss, etc. If anyone can offer the above info, it would greatly help. Send response to: David W. Schill,

★ ★ ★ VIETNAM VETERAN ★ ★ ★

With special tooling the cover of our finest quality quartz pocket watch has been exclusively designed to hold the Vietnam Veterans National Medal. All moving parts are Swiss made.

This spectacular medal is not a reproduction but the authentic medal as issued by the U.S. MINT. Appearing on the reverse side is the phrase, *"In honor of those men and women who gave of themselves in an effort to insure democracy and peace throughout the world this medal is struck by act of congress 1984."*

The uniqueness and limited quantity produced will insure its success as a collectors item. Hand painted to the dial is a POW\* MIA emblem with the words, FORGET NEVER. All phases of design and marketing done by Vietnam veterans. A portion of all proceeds will be donated to PROJECT HOME FREE.

FREE GIFT INCLUDED WITH EVERY ORDER. To order your CUSTOM POCKET WATCH COMPLETE WITH CHAIN AND GIFT BOX. Send \$39.95 check or money order plus \$3.00 postage and handling to:

DESIGN ON TIME,  
19# Oakland Manor Dept. RA  
Highspire, PA 17034

Check here for free gift

Name

Address

City

State  Zip

Money back guarantee if not completely satisfied.  
© 1987 DESIGN ON TIME

PASS IN REVIEW

Summons of the Trumpet:  
A History of the Vietnam War  
From a Military Man's Viewpoint  
by: Dave Richard Palmer  
Presidio Press, 1978

Dave Richard Palmer dedicates his book: "To the two and a half million Americans who heeded the summons of the trumpet and served their country in Vietnam. Veterans of a woeful crusade, they have not found their country particularly grateful for that service."

Palmer, a US Army colonel in the 2d Armored Division when he completed Summons of the Trumpet in 1978, doesn't pull any punches in describing the events that led us to war in Vietnam, and in tracing the history of that war to its gut-wrenching conclusion. This is not a "feel good" book, nor was it meant to be so. In his rigorously researched and documented work he explains, exposes, and condemns and, where appropriate, praises.

Don't expect war stories or numerous accounts of small unit actions, though Palmer does recount the most critical battles and campaigns. The book focuses on political decisions made in both Washington and Hanoi, and their consequences, as well as decisions made in the field by senior military commanders on both sides.

For example, Palmer explains the dilemma that faced Richard Nixon as he assumed the presidency in 1969. The series of escalations in the war under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, each promising victory, had served only to widen and increase the scale and level of conflict far beyond the point of public tolerance. And, President Johnson, with advice from

Secretary of Defense McNamara, had committed to stop bombing North Vietnam and enter into negotiations. The outgoing president had denied the president-elect two important tools for succeeding on his terms rather than Hanoi's. Further, Nixon knew that further escalation was inadvisable; he had little choice but to begin seeking peace with the enemy.

It is clear that Palmer is not without bias, but it is one that he acknowledges -- the bias of a military man. Yet this does not taint his objectivity. Palmer has prepared an excellent, high-level history of the Vietnam War which chronicles each of the key events that define it. The thorough bibliographic references alone make it invaluable. It will be an important source to future historians seeking to unravel the myths and truths about Vietnam.

There are two small errors noted in the book, and they are not egregious. But, for the record, Palmer incorrectly says that Rocky Blier (Pittsburg Steelers) was the only one of America's professional athletes to fight in Vietnam. 1LT James Robert Kalsu, a football player who had been drafted by the Buffalo Bills, served in Vietnam as an artillery forward observer in the 101st. 1LT Kalsu was killed on Ripcord on 21 July 1970.

The other error is perhaps simply Palmer's opinion. In Chapter 26 he describes the Cambodian Incursion (29 April through June 1970). He concludes the chapter, saying: "The remainder of 1970 was more or less uneventful..."

Palmer is presently a Lieutenant General and Superintendent of the United States Military Academy.

Review by: Chuck Hawkins

## RECON TROOPERS TO RECEIVE AWARDS

by: Bob Seitz

Twenty years is a long time to wait for an award, especially one that was earned the hard way in Vietnam. But the US ARMY has a system, and an office, dedicated to correcting past mistakes and errors of bureaucracy. Here's what happened.

This past Summer several members and their families from RECON PLT, 2-506th, met in Washington, DC for a mini-reunion. They spent the days visiting the museums and monuments in our Nation's capital, and during the evenings they reminisced over their time as young soldiers in Vietnam. During these conversations, two RECON troopers mentioned they had never received awards for which they had been officially recommended. Another said that he had received the award, but not the orders.

An inquiry was made to the US ARMY Awards Office located in Alexandria, Virginia. Now, four months later and after a thorough search, all original orders have been found through the 101st Airborne Division personnel and unit archives. The Awards Office said that most such research efforts are not as successful as this one has been.

Who are the RECON troopers to receive belated recognition for their service in Vietnam? Ron Will is to be awarded an Air Medal he earned in the Fall of 1970. Dick Cable will receive a Purple Heart for wounds received in action while on a mission in the jungled mountains southwest of Camp Evans. And Lenny Long is finally getting his official Purple Heart orders (the medal was pinned on him while he was in the hospital, but the orders never caught up to him).

There will be a small award ceremony for Ron Will at 1:00 P.M. Sunday, 16 December 1990 at the VFW Post in Edinburg, Virginia for Ron to receive the Air Medal.

A similar ceremony is being planned for Dick Cable to receive his Purple Heart after the Holidays in Dick's hometown in New York.

Our congratulations to all.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Bob Seitz is a colonel in the US Army serving on the Joint Staff in the Pentagon. Shortly after the Battle of Ripcord ended, Bob, then a lieutenant, took command of the Recon Platoon, 2-506th. If it had not been for his continued loyalty to his soldiers, and his persistence at the US Army Awards Office, the oversights of 20 years ago would not have been corrected.

Special thanks is also due to Lieutenant Colonel Terry Adkins, Chief of the Awards Office, and his dedicated staff. Once the situation had been explained, these individuals left no stone unturned in their research to locate the pertinent records and award documentation.

SIT/REP - FIREBASE WHIPPANY

Greetings and "Currahee" once again from Firebase Whippany. First of all I must extend my sincerest apologies for the extended delay in getting this issue of the Newsletter out to all of you.

Things have been more than hectic the last few months. As of this writing, my wife Kathy and I are in the process of closing down Firebase Whippany. Kathy has accepted a promotion which comes with a transfer. We will be establishing the new firebase just west of Denver, Colorado, near the foothills.

It seems like I can't get away from the mountains. It was much easier back in 1970 to pack a ruck, jump on a slick, and move out. What we have now is a logistical nightmare. Hopefully by April 1st., (that date sure brings back memories) my family will be back together again and I'll have more time to devote to the Association and Newsletter.

Many thanks to Chuck and Glenda Hawkins for coming up to Whippany and visiting the students at Parsippany Hills High School. Chuck did an outstanding job with his presentation, and a memorable day was had by all. I'm sure that Chuck will share his thoughts with you in future issues. I'm really going to miss my students in Parsippany Hills. They are very bright, attentive, and honest and are also very interested in us and the current situation in the Persian Gulf. I promised Jim Duffy, their teacher that I will pay them one last visit before I head out to the foothills.

I would also like to thank Al Lopez, Col. Bob Seitz, (who is really working overtime in the Pentagon) John Schuelke, John Palm, J. "Sneaky" White, and Steve Morgan for their donations to the Ripcord Association. Thanks guys. Now, for the time being, we can afford the new postal rate increase. Wouldn't it be nice to write "FREE" on the envelope like the "good old days."

For the next couple of months, I would appreciate all financial contributions be sent to Chuck Hawkins at 11610 Helmont drive, Oakton, Va., 22124.

Well, I guess that's about it for now. It's getting pretty near time to pick up the kids and go into my Mr. Mom routine. Take care, God bless, and continue to support our troops in the Persian Gulf. Till next time.

John Mihalko



John Mihalko  
April, 1970

FIND-A-VET\*

To have your name listed in the FIND-A-VET\* program, a locator service for veterans who served in Vietnam, please fill in the form below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname \_\_\_\_\_

Current address: \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Military Information:

Military Unit in Vietnam:  
(include Co, Bn, Rgt, Bde, Div, etc)

Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Years Served IN Vietnam from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Home state at time of service in Vietnam \_\_\_\_\_

Service # \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle shoulder patch worn by your unit, if it appears here. If not, you may submit a drawing on back of form.

Return for to:

Tom Sutterfield  
FIND-A-VET\*  
P.O. Box 567  
Stone Mountain, GA 30086-0567

\*Copyright c 1985 by  
Thomas W. Sutterfield, all  
rights reserved.

## THANKSGIVING PRAYER

Let us know Your grace, Lord, for it was Your grace under pressure that gave us our salvation. Let us share Your grace, for the pressures we have felt, and feel today, are nothing compared to what You faced so long ago. And in the knowing and sharing, let us be closer to one another.

Encourage us, Lord, to be gentle and kind in all that we do. Your power was kind, Your strength, gentle. So, therefore, have You set the example for us all. For by Your kindness we shall live with our fellow man, and through Your gentle nature shall we love our families.

Lord, grant us Your courage to stand forth for what we believe is right and just. Fortify us in our stand against tyrants and their oppression. Prepare us to face uncertainty, and help us to overcome adversity. Keep us from hasty and precipitous actions, and help us to be steadfast in our convictions. For Your actions were always just, Your courage always timely, in all that You did.

And Lord, forget not our sacrifice, and the sacrifices of those who have gone before us, and the sacrifices of those who may follow. Forgive our vanity. Forgive our frail nature. Make us whole in Thy name, and give us peace.

In the name of Your son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.