

*The First*

*Screaming*

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF  
THE 1ST BRIGADE (Separate) 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION  
in Viet Nam from July 1965 through January 1968



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January - April - July - October

*Eagles*  
*in Viet Nam*

1st Brigade (Separate) Viet Nam



101st Airborne Division

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# ***The ALWAYS FIRST Brigade***



## **STAND IN THE DOOR**

This issue of the magazine is very special to me. I traveled to Fort Campbell in February to attend the memorial service for the First Brigade Combat Team (327). The memorial service for the 2nd Brigade Combat team was two weeks later and Charlie Gant agreed to send me pictures. These solemn ceremonies with the families of those who did not return alive from Iraq are a stark reminder that the units we served with in Viet Nam are continuing to serve and remain on the front line of the defense of our country.

I have talked to a number of our 2/327 veterans and many are very concerned about the health of Colonel Joe Wasco who recently buried his wife.

I hope you know how important your input to the magazine is. When you look through this copy you will see a number of our First Brigade veterans who have taken a great deal of time to put their remembrances on paper so they can be shared with you.

I am having a cloth patch made that will depict the First Brigade (Separate) logo that is used on the cover of the magazine, except that it will be in full color. My sample was scheduled to be ready for advertising in this magazine but is late arriving. Look for it in the July magazine.

Terry Zahn is working on the 2010 reunion to be held in his home town of Omaha, Nebraska. I hope we will have a reunion date for publication in the July issue so you can begin planning to attend.

The use of the First Brigade website has slowed to a trickle. I know that numerous other websites, e-mail forwarding and other means of communicating with our fellow First Brigade veterans have taken precedence with some, but I would like to know what you believe would make the website more attractive and more visited. Let me know.

I have a number of cartoons drawn by Raymond Gregory Brown. These were loaned to me by CPT (R) Charles (Jim) Apodaca, 2/502 B 5/66 – 4/67. I hope to print at least one in each succeeding magazine until they are all used.

This magazine is produced by and for veterans of the ALWAYS FIRST BRIGADE who served in the brigade from July 1965 through April 1968. The publication will chronicle the military history and accomplishments of veterans who served, as well as units that were assigned, attached or supported the brigade. The editor solicits material about the brigade for use in the magazine and for future publication in a book that will contain a comprehensive history of the brigade.

Another goal of the editor is to lead an initiative to place a monument, to honor members of the brigade, at the Wings of LIBERTY Military Museum at Fort Campbell, Kentucky (the museum will be located on the Tennessee side of Fort Campbell).



At the Always First Banquet during the 2008 reunion (L to R) LTG(R) The Honorable James B. Peake, M.D., 2/502 A 6/67-6/68 and MAJ(R) Ivan Worrell, INFO OFF 5/66-5/67, discuss the mementos presented by Worrell and Terry R. Zahn, SPT BN HQ Elt 7/65-5/66, following Secretary Peake's speech to the assembled Viet Nam veterans of the First Brigade (S).

I plan to go to the Airborne Awards celebration in Atlanta in early April. The First Brigade (Separate) representation is usually very sparse. I hope we can interest more of our veterans to attend in the future. I find it a great place to see men I served with in other units like the 82nd Airborne Division and Special Forces.

Information about the 101st Airborne Division Association 2009 reunion is in this magazine. It will be in Hampton, Virginia, this year and I can attest that the William C. Lee Chapter knows how to host a reunion. I hope many of the First Brigade (S) veterans will take advantage of this opportunity to meet with 101st veterans of all eras.

I am working on a plan to help our Omaha 2010 reunion host, Terry Zahn, raise some up front money to make his position as reunion host more secure. One idea is to have a list of raffle items in each magazine and urge those who plan to attend to purchase raffle tickets in advance. I hope many would donate raffle items and purchase their raffle tickets in advance. Ken Potts, 1/327 C 12/66-12/67 has already donated two items I believe to be very special. Let me know if you wish to participate in this fundraiser for the coming reunion.

In reading the guest books of some of the First Brigade units I find our veterans looking for friends. I am sure I cannot find them all. If you see or hear of a First Brigade veteran who is looking for those he served with, please forward the information to me and I will try to help by publishing the request.

The transition to a subscription fee of \$25.00 per year is going smoothly. Many, as you can see from the \$ signs in the renewals are chipping in with extra dollars to help the cause of keeping the magazine financially healthy.

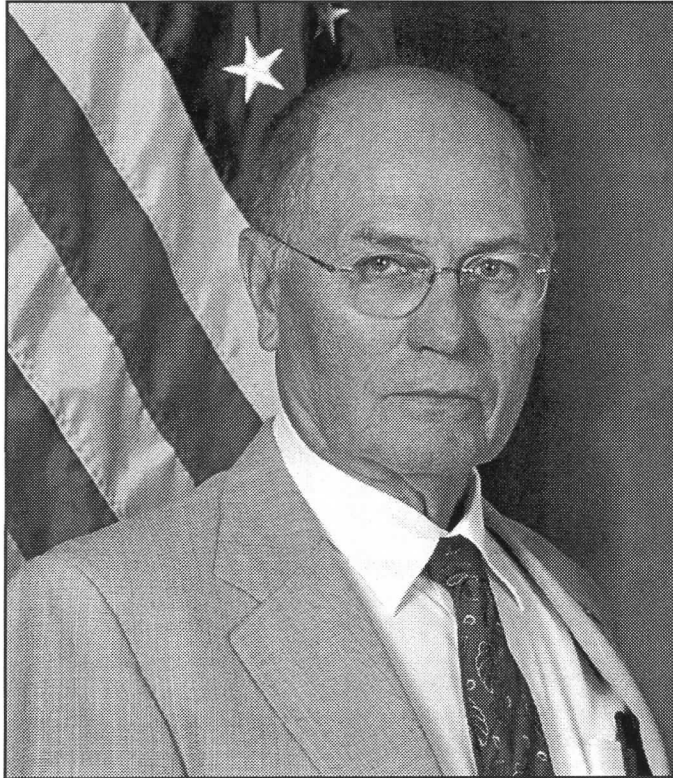
The 2009 C Company 1/327 Reunion at Cobra Lake near Crossville, Tennessee will be June 26 and 27. Contact Kenneth F. Ihle, 1/327 C 7/65-7/66, P. O. Box 414 Crossville, TN 38572-0414. This is great annual gathering of those who have served in Cobra Company.





# TRUNG LUONG

## B Company 2nd Battalion 327th Airborne Infantry



By LTC(R) Louis M. McDonald, 2/327 B 5/66-10/66

Preface: Having received orders for the 1st Brigade, I fully expected to become a platoon leader in one of the Airborne Battalions. I faced two major hurdles. The first was at Camp Alpha. Upon arrival in early May 1966, the camp commander stated that my orders had been changed. I was to be the new "Post Education Officer at MACV." I explained to this AG major that my normal career path would be platoon leader, company executive office, and then company commander. When this tactic didn't work I asked him... "how is it going to look on my Form 66...Infantry, Airborne, Ranger and Post Education Officer?" An unsuccessful argument.

Dejected and a little depressed I headed to the Officers Club at Tan Son Nhut. Standing at the bar I overheard several combat arms lieutenants expressing apprehension about their pending combat assignments. Leaving the bar to drain the lizard it hit me, a solution! Back in the bar, I stood on a chair and announced to all that Maj McPhee was taking interviews for any company grade officer interested in assignment as Post Education Officer - no combat or field duties. When I returned from the latrine the club was almost empty.

The second hurdle was to actually acquire a platoon leader position. No easy task when you are a senior 1LT. I made my case with LTC Wasco; and he agreed. But I first listened to his

combat philosophy in Vietnam. His sage advice was greatly reinforced by his Wild Gypsy booming voice. I took his advice to heart and off to Company B I went.

20 Jun 1966:

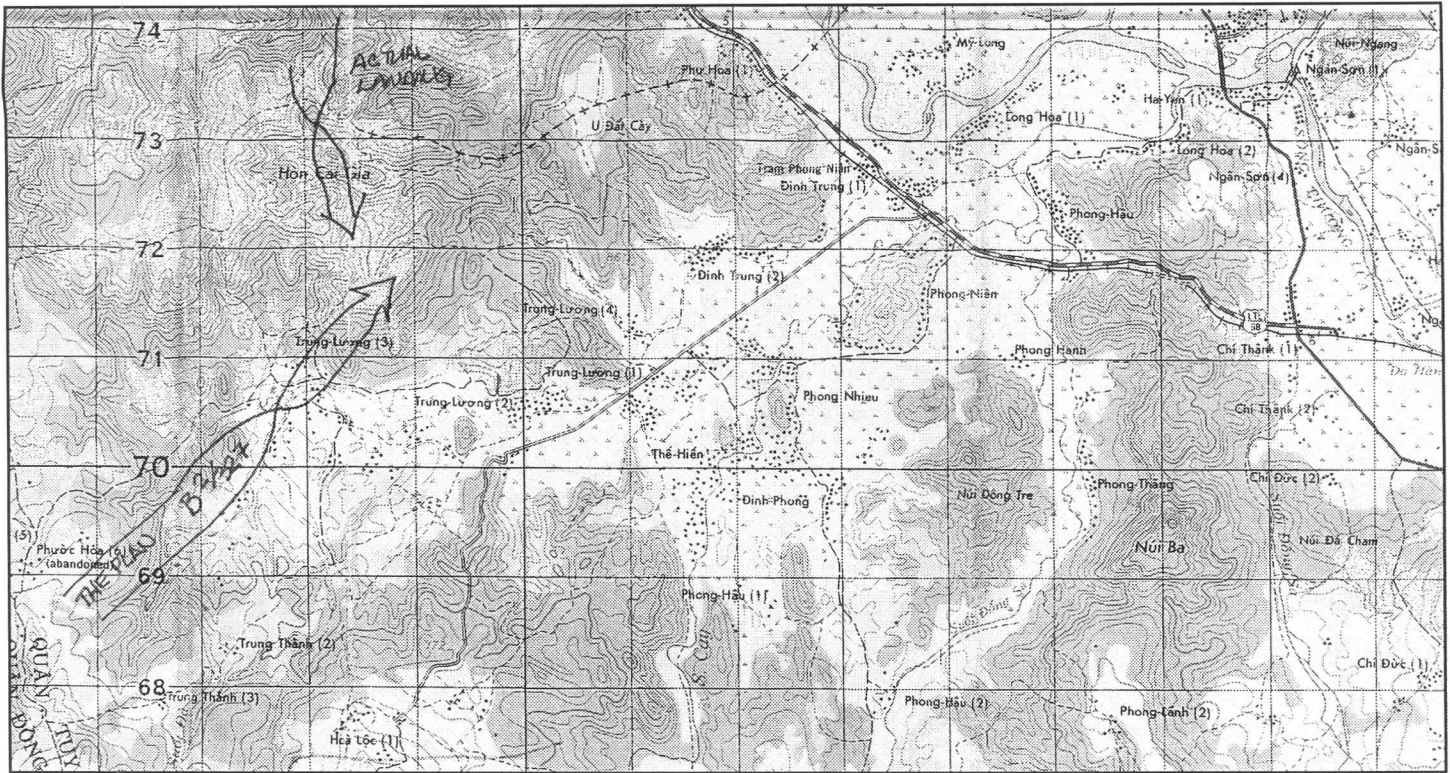
From the forward area at Tuy Hoa we were jerked to Dak To - arriving in the middle of the night and the middle of the fight. When we were ordered back to Tuy Hoa our return trip was just as hasty. Even though we knew we were needed for another operation we were ecstatic about returning to our parent battalion. Little information about our pending mission was available at Dak To but there had been a lot of enemy activity in and around the Dong Tre Special Forces camp. Rumors and conjectures flew. It was believed that our battalion had been attached on 19 June to a Marine unit recently arrived from the States and that the Marines were to make an amphibious assault North of Tuy An with our Company A and Company C acting as their blocking force somewhere in the valley near Trung Luong.

Closing into Tuy Hoa South at about 1000 hours we were quickly supplied and equipped for the pending mission. Mission briefings were held--but much of the attachment details remained sketchy. During the platoon leaders' briefing there was certainly no mention of a change in attachment. Company B's mission was to land on top of Hill 258, directly above Company C and too attack down the hill to pull the pressure off them. This was the identical type of mission we had when we were attached to 502 at Dak To. Since this was the dry season along the coastal plains, water would be critical to both sides. Hill 258 was a sparsely wooded saddle shaped like a V. The right hand leg of the V was slightly higher in elevation and had the most vegetation ... a few scrub trees and knee high grass. The left hand leg, was lower in elevation, with the front edge--toward the V being the highest plateau. The hill sloped down from the plateau and slightly away from the other leg and flipped back to a knoll at the end. The point of the V was the lowest point between the two legs. We were to air assault from the SSW to NNE or right leg of the hill from the south. It was not known if Hill 258 was defended. When in doubt...It's Hot!

By 1300 hours 138 of our 144 man company were loaded into Hueys and airborne for Hill 258.

Still believing we were attached to the Marines, I had assumed the Marines flushed out numerous NVA units from the coast as they began deploying back into the interior where Companies A & C had set up their blocking positions. Companies A & C were trying to hold the NVA in check but as I saw it they were





*Map of the Trung Luong area.*

in danger of being overrun and wiped out. Their positions were in a valley floor between two mountain chains. Military intelligence estimates and captured NVA documents later indicated that there were between two and four NVA regiments opposing the No Slack Battalion (-). The enemy had these two companies outnumbered approximately 1200 to 300; and we paid dearly.

During the period of 19-20 June, one med-evac crew headed by CPT Ken Trotter and 1LT Ron Martin evacuated approximately 160 troopers from A & C Companies. (Oct 2005 Screaming Eagles in Vietnam)

On 20 June, Company B may have been the largest rifle company in the 1st Brigade with a foxhole strength of 144 troops. Despite our size we had numerous NCO vacancies. In 1st platoon, my platoon, I had PFC Carl Cuta (d.1995) as a squad leader. Trung Luong was the first time the 1st Platoon actually had an E-7 Platoon Sergeant. PSG James Hargrove (KIA 24Sep66) who had just arrived from ROTC duty in Ohio. We had barely introduced ourselves when we took off for 258.

On lift-off for Hill 258 we did not know the identities of the units we would be fighting. Much later we were informed by military intelligence (boy is that an oxymoron) that we had been fighting the 18B Regiment and portions of the 95th Regiment; and that the NVA had been using the top of Hill 258 as a combat rest area for a one to two battalion size force. Both units were North Vietnam Regular Infantry units; and the 18th B was rated as one of their very best. My first exposure to NVA soldiers was at Dak To and I thought them every bit as well trained as we were. So when you fought the NVA, you'd better have your stuff together. The major difference was our Mobility, Artillery and Air Power.



We circled near the landing zone for several minutes waiting for the prep to be completed. It looked as though the wrong LZ was being prepped. The left leg of the V was being prepped but the plan was for Company B to land on the right leg. As we began our approach all was quiet - there was no incoming fire. As soon as the helicopters touched down all hell broke loose.

We had landed on the slightly lower and more sloped left hand portion of the V in grazing fire. The enemy, on the right hand portion of the hill was firing across the forward portion of the landing zone. To make matters worse, we landed mixed up, without platoon integrity. I landed toward the V with my platoon headquarters section, mortar platoon, and portions of third platoon. The Mortar Platoon Leader, Lt George B Pearson III (KIA 17Sep66) landed with my platoon--damn near 30 helicopters back and all the way to the rear of the LZ. PSG James Hargrove took charge and got the platoon in a perimeter defense around the small knoll at the end of the left hand leg. Good NCOs are worth their weight in gold. The only platoon that landed relatively intact was Lt Frederick Seig's third platoon.

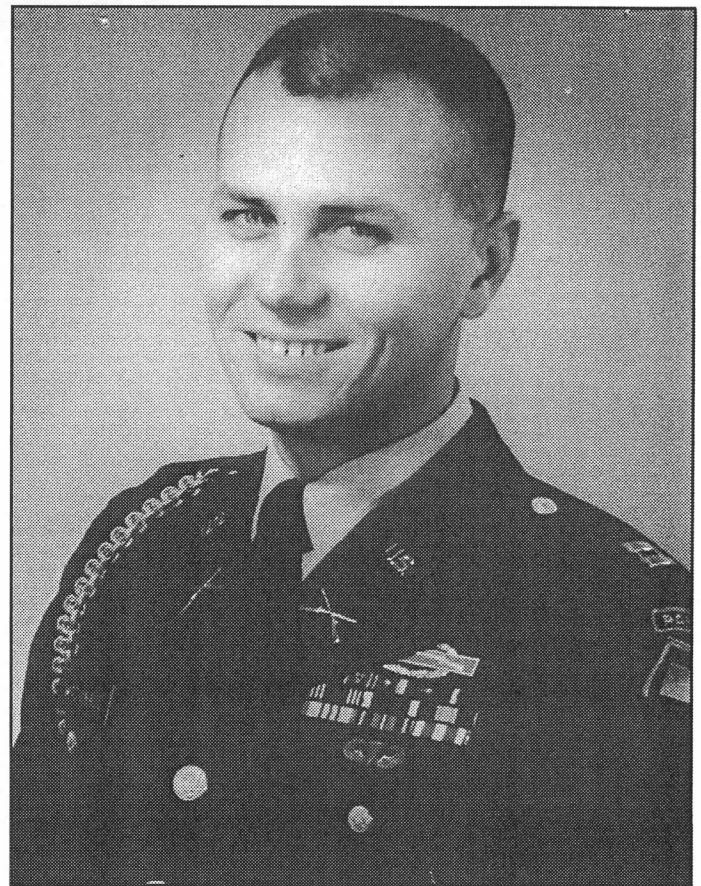
Within seconds of landing, everyone exiting the left hand side of the first seven helicopters except my platoon medic Sp4 Jerold Janis, Sp4 Douglas Field (WIA 17Sep66) and I were dead or wounded. Just before we touched down, Janis asked me if the landing zone was hot or cold. I told him I did not know. Janis, being the wily veteran that he was, dove out of the helicopter and was in the prone position before the Hueys landed - hard. I was knocked over the aircraft commander's seat onto the console. After I regained my feet, with the help of the crew chief, I dove out of the left side as the helicopter was taking off. I don't know how Doug missed getting hit exiting the aircraft...maybe he was just a lot thinner back then.

I knew immediately we were on the wrong LZ; but it was my platoon's job to secure the LZ from 0 to 90 degrees (North to East). There were 30 plus helicopters trying to take off behind me, and I could not hear, see or feel the NVA firing. Doc Janis crawled over to me and slapped me on the ankle and said, "Sir, you'd better get your ass down they're shooting at you." Being a doubting Thomas, I kind of ambled down behind a small rock and was looking around to see what was going on. Just then, the rock cracked in half, there was a searing burning sensation along my neck and a huge explosion in my ear. A round had hit the rock, split it in two, ricocheted along my neck, passed my ear and landed in my rucksack. I was convinced that my jugular was severed only to find out that it was a burn across my neck. Holding the rock together with my fingers, since this was the only cover I had, I was clearly having second thoughts about turning down the Post Education Officers position in Saigon.

Lt Fred Seig gathered most of his third platoon and started a flanking movement on the right side of the hill. The only covered route without crossing an expansive open shallow valley between the two ridges of the hill. Within the first three minutes of Fred's maneuver seven of his men and Fred were wounded and two were killed. Fred was hit with two or three rounds to the head behind the right ear. We brought Fred and the other wounded to our defensive position. I knew we needed a miracle if we were going to be able to save Fred's life. Just then the miracle occurred, a single slick set down about ten feet away from the wounded. Almost 30 years later I learned it was the slick that had brought in Sp4 Burgee's gun crew consisting of Pfc Milo Cadotte, Pfc John Whiting (KIA 20Jun66), Pfc Dennis Williams and B Company's so to be urban legend Cpl Charles E. McAdams into the battle. Sp4 Tony Burgee's gun crew from Lt Fred Seig's platoon had remained at Tuy Hoa South for a second lift. Fred was evacuated and operated on within 15 minutes of being wounded. Fred is alive today and lives in Columbus, Ga; and I am convinced it was Burgee's slick that saved Fred's life.

Most of B Company's casualties from the initial assault lay in the open draw between the two ridge lines. Doc Phillip Nichols (KIA 2Nov68), the company medic made several trips to and from this open area retrieving wounded soldiers. During his many trips he was wounded five times. He was one of three medics at Trung Luong awarded the DSC. The other major surprise was our urban legend Cpl McAdams, a Sp5 cook demoted to Cpl after an incident at Tuy Hoa. McAdams a rather large man for a paratrooper like Doc Nichols made several trips back and forth into this no-man's land sometimes bringing back two soldiers at a time. McAdams was given an impact award of the Silver Star and an immediate promotion to Sgt E-5. One of the fastest demotions and promotions that I have ever witnessed.

Calling artillery fire on the NVA's hill top positions was ineffective since the guns were positioned to support A and C Companies in the valley below. There was a problem with angle fire having to fire over an outcropping of rocks between the firing position and our hill top. Their volleys were bracketing the NVA and our positions at the same time. The



*Captain Lou McDonald after his tour in Viet Nam*

only indirect fire we were able to bear on the enemy was M-79 fire. During a training period in early May we had decided to take each grenadier and mark his sling keeper to a set position on his sling and then mark various foot positions for 35, 45, 50 and 75 yards. We could then gather the gunners, tell them a distance and general direction and use them as a small mortar battery. We grabbed all the M79 gunners we could find and began directing their fire on the enemy to the reverse slope of the hill's left leg.

While all this was going on, PSG Hargrove brought the first platoon over to my position and CPT Mack instructed us to attempt the same maneuver as Lt Seig's. Because of the terrain there were not many options. Only this time, we would maneuver under cover of an air strike. We were in the bottom of the V with our back against a cliff that dropped at least 250 feet when an F105 air strike arrived. They dropped napalm and strafed the right hand leg. When they dropped the napalm, their tanks were released over the valley and it looked like they were going to fry my platoon on the cliff. When the planes passed over on their strafing runs I could have lobbed a hand grenade with an underhand toss into their intakes. They were between 50 to 100 feet off the deck. That's close air support! (Many years later I learned on the History Channel that these crews had never trained for close air support missions until they arrived in Vietnam. (Boy am I glad I didn't know that back then) We attempted to maneuver under the last strafing run but were beat back by significant automatic weapons fire.

About then, a marine helicopter appeared in the area. I

thought, thank goodness, they've finally arrived; but the word quickly spread that the marines had too many heat casualties and were no longer advancing toward us. Lord knows, that our Battalion was experiencing numerous heat casualties too.

B Company had taken approximately 44 casualties within the first two to three minutes of the landing. The fury of this combat was awesome. After our second attempt to flank the NVA, CPT Mack regrouped the company and we desperately tried to defend ourselves for the night.

We were out of water, what water we had was given to the wounded; and were getting low on ammunition.

From my position on the cliff, I had good communications with battalion; whereas CPT Mack from his position was relaying through Dong Tre Special Forces camp some miles to the east. I called for resupply. The ammo resupply arrived sometime during the night; but was dropped on the right hand leg of the hill--the LZ where we were supposed to have been.

Throughout the night we could see what appeared to be signal lights flashing throughout the valley and the mountain range to the far side (south) of the valley. There had to be a very large NVA force there. I had never seen them be so bold as to use signal lights. The whole mountain seemed to have lights flickering. I thanked my God that we were not over there tonight.

**21 Jun 1966:** In the morning, a brigade of the 1st Air Cav arrived. I do not remember how many companies landed on the hill--the one I do remember was CPT Plummer's B 1/8 and the Cav's Brigade Commander, COL Hal Moore (Chief Yellow Hair). COL Moore came over to my position, laid down and

asked me what we had been up against. I told him what I knew; and he replied he thought it was only a reinforce rifle squad. This was almost Col Moore's last breath and the beginning of a long tour at Leavenworth for me. I wish I had said, "This is the same squad you were up against in the Ia Drang Valley." Also arriving were cans of coffee and hot chocolate and those god-awful Army chocolate bars--- but no water. Nice, but not thirst quenching. The Army's gritty hot chocolate leaves a lot to be desired when you are absolutely parched.

After securing the right hand leg of the hill with B 1/8, we regrouped. The remainder of the company, approximately 100 were extracted and sent to the far side of the valley to search for all those signal lights we had witnessed the night before.

In 1999 at the No Slack's Trung Luong Reunion, I learned from the S-3 Maj Dick Hinkle, that the battalion had been attached to the Marines before the start of the battle of Trung Luong; but on 19 June we were actually attached to the 1st Brigade of the 1st Cav. So for thirty three years I had been falsely deriding the Marines. I owe them an apology...or at least a half hearted one.

According to my recollection, B Company arrived at Trung Luong with 144 troopers and left with 100. Eleven troopers gave their lives on this hill and 33 were wounded--about 30% casualties.

During the month of Jun 1966, Company B 2/327th received two Presidential Unit Citations...One for Dak To when we were attached to LTC Emerson's 502d and the second for the Battle of Trung Luong with the No Slack Battalion. These are the first Presidential Unit Citations awarded in the 101st Division since the Battle of Bastogne, WWII.

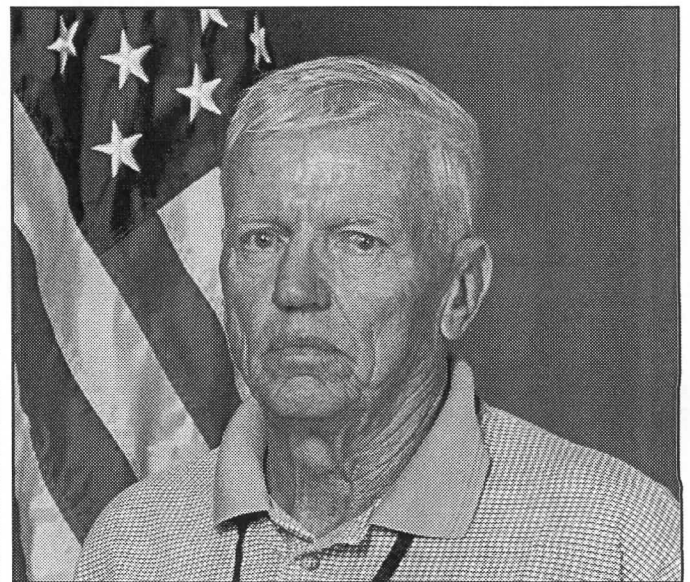


# TRUNG LUONG

## C Company 2nd Battalion 327th Airborne Infantry

SFC(R) John Burke, Jr., 2/327 C 12/65-12/66, 11018 Le Jardin Cir Apt 102, Temple Terrace, FL 33617-2849, (813) 914-0781 sent the following letter. I have two fold -- one is my new address and the second is to put my Plt Ldr in for the DMOR for his actions at Trung Luong June 19 to 22. I believe a soldier in the 1st Bde should receive the outstanding award for his actions in combat not his working for the VA, etc.

LTC(R) Charles L. Beegle, 2/327 C 1/66-1/67, Abn Ldr for six months. He received a promotion to 1st LT for his actions during the Battle of Trung Luong. He received a Purple Heart and Silver Star. When he retired he had closure with a trooper's family that died after he was wounded from mortar fire the last night. His family was very happy. This soldier was my type -- in and out of the field. I base this on my experience in the field and training as a Rifle Plt, Wpn Plt, Recon Plt, Long Range Patrol team leader. L Co Ranger Plt Sgt acting Plt Ldr D 2/502 for two months and numerous awards for training as a Plt Sgt 82nd Abn Inf in the field in training and combat for 22 years.



By SFC(R) John Burke, Jr., 2/327 C 12/65-12/66

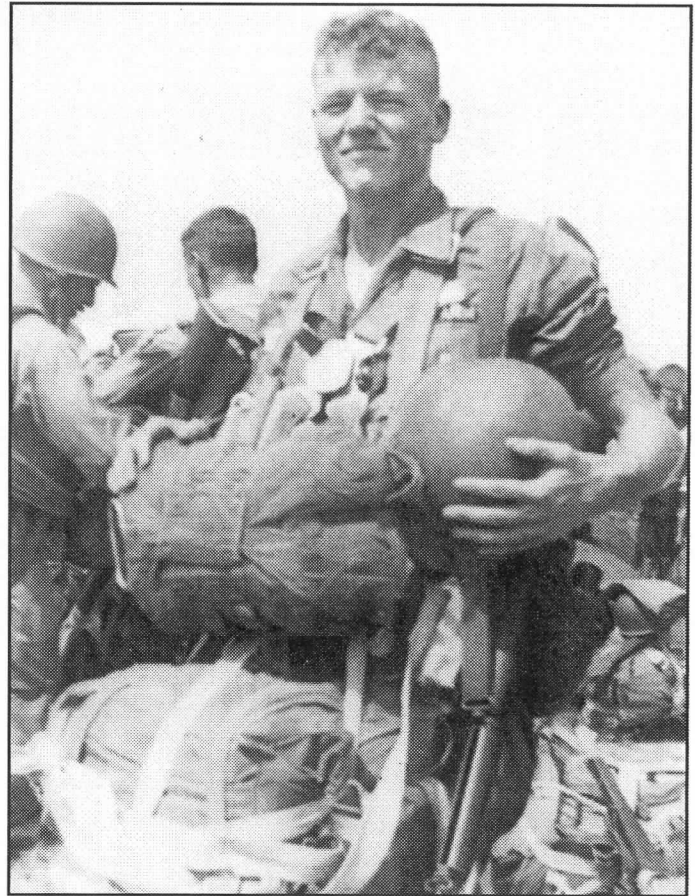
## Trung Luong

We got the order to move into Trung Luong. The Battalion was one Company short. B Company

We moved off the LZ and moved to the creek under fire. They were in two positions around us. We killed one up stream and 2nd Platoon one down stream. We set up in a perimeter. The Weapons Platoon Sgt was the first one shot. The 2nd Platoon left the perimeter to link up with A Company and got hit about 100 meters outside of the perimeter and left the dead there and came back in that night. Early in the morning we were under a heavy mortar attack. Our Platoon took it to call for the fire of the FPF by blowing a whistle and yelling to fire the FPF. He's coming behind the mortars. One pulled a rifle out of a PFC's hands. Two came in the perimeter. The last day the 1st Platoon went out to our front. Ten were laying there and three to the Weapons Platoon. After the mortar attack the next morning we went in the attack 2nd left 1st right. We moved across the open rice paddy. 2LT Beegle called to the 2nd Platoon to open up. We opened up first. We had one KIA on the hill and one Squad Leader wounded in the 1st Squad. Next to the 2nd Platoon the medic went to the aid of our Squad Leader from the 2nd Platoon and a Squad Leader got shot also. Our medic went to the aid of the 2nd Platoon who had their medic KIA. We got the word to pull back to the Company perimeter. We carried one wounded in my section on a poncho stretcher. One was shot two times before we made the perimeter. The B Company NCO was there when we came back in. We moved back to our positions. The fire was going on all day. Pulling back the fire was coming from two directions. Later the Platoon went out and was hit and pulled back in. The last night we were receiving mortar fire. I assumed they were expending their mortar rounds and were getting ready to move out.

The CAV landed in the A Company area we had that night. Five wounded – three on the LP and two in the perimeter. The next morning we went out on patrol to the front. Ten enemy were laying to our Platoon's front. We moved down the cart path with flank security on the high side. LT Beegle saw the CAV leaders and made a decision to return to the Company perimeter -- which was very good. We could have received mortar fire from the CAV if they brought their mortars.

We returned down the creek bed and picked up one of our weapons from the LP that got hit with mortar the night before. The CAV came into our Company area. The CO and BDE Commander Colonel Moore then came in. GEN Pearson who said get the dead out of the creek. We never left our dead in the field. I will relieve you. The 1st Platoon went down to the creek with Sgt Huddle as point with three PVTs. He didn't know where they were and had to kick them in the ass to move. An NCO asked our Platoon the day before to help. We said no problem. We stopped and LT Beegle got hit with fire. SFC Arnold who came in from R&R took control of the Platoon. We returned and moved to Trung Luong PZ. We returned to base and went to chow. I said "where is everybody." My good friend got killed in A Company. We had services and decoration awards. We went back out in the field the third day. I had a hard time getting the PVT back in. This is just an outline of C 1st Plt 2/327.



*John Burke, Jr., Paratrooper*

**1st Platoon B 2/327 Roster 1966:** Alvarado, Reynaldo Sp4 E-4; Anderson, Sidney K SGT E-5; Armstrong, Donald PFC E-3; Arroya, Adrian PFC E-3; Autry, Jerald T PFC E-3; Bowman, Sylvester Jr SGT E-5; Burgess, Leslie PFC E-3; Cudmore, John D PFC E-3, WIA 16 Sept 66 Deceased 01 Feb 99; Curry, Wallace E PFC E-3; Cuta, Carl A Sp4 E-4 Deceased 17 Sep 95; Divine, Edward F PFC E-3; Douglas, Frank PFC E-3 KIA 16 Sep 66; \*Field, Douglas N PFC E-3 WIA 16 Sep 66; Foster, Robert L Jr Sp4 E-4; Gray, Tyrone Q PFC E-3; Grindstaff, Larry J Sp4 E-4; Hamilton, Eddie L PFC E-3; Hargrove, James M MSG E-7 KIA 24 Sep 66; Hudson, Charles E SGT E-5; Jenkins, Robert M SGT E-5; Marco, Anthony D PFC E-3; May, Harry L Sp4 E-4; \*McDonald, Louis M 1Lt 0-2 WIA 16 Sep 66; McGill, James SSG E-6 WIA 16 Sep 66; McNeal, Richard T PFC E-3; Mines, Johnny L SSG E-6; Nations, Michael G SGT E-5 KIA 16 Sep 66; Neal, David B PFC E-3; Norton, Robert PFC E-3; Pedersen, Roy A PFC E-3; Pounds, Gene A PFC E-3; Reynas, William Sp4 E-4; Robinson, George A SGT E-5; \*Saucedo, Anthony PFC E-3; Shambree, Ollie Sp4 E-4; Sherrod, Frank E SGT E-5; Sherwood, John W PFC E-3; Shoemaker, David M PFC E-3; Smay, Atlas JM PFC E3 KIA 16 Sep 66; Stanley, Loonard D PFC E-3; Tennant, Donnie PFC E-3; Tucker, John R Sp4 E-4; Voner, John W Jr PFC E-3; \*Whitehead, Ralph PFC E-3; Young, George W PFC E-3; Zych, Walter F PFC E-3.

\* In The First Screaming Eagles in Viet Nam database.



# YOUR HERO AND MINE, *Scott*



By Scott A. Christofferson



By Susan Weich  
**ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**  
12/14/2008

Like many of the other young men who fought and died in Vietnam, Scott Christofferson had big dreams.

He wanted to be a writer, and he had plans to start his own magazine, but first he wanted to see the world.

Now, 41 years later, his brothers and sisters have compiled a collection of letters he wrote as a GI into a book, "Your Hero and Mine."

Scott was born in November 1947, less than two years after his father, Frank, returned from his tour as a Navy pilot in World War II.

Scott was the third of eight children in the Christofferson family; they lived in Richmond Heights.

Scott graduated from Ladue Horton Watkins High School in 1965 and, after spending the summer working at an oil camp in Canada, started taking classes at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

## A Unique Memoir of an Unusual Young Man in a Turbulent Era

Scott Christofferson was an aspiring writer when he dropped out of college after just one semester, choosing to see the world first-hand as an enlisted GI-turned combat reporter during the turbulent Vietnam years. This book of his letters chronicles his life and growth with startling honesty, humor and insight, from the time of his high school graduation at

age 17, to his idealistic decision to quit college and enlist in the Army at 18, and ending with his combat death in Vietnam just one month shy of his 20th birthday. Included are numerous photographs and copies of original source documents, making this book a compelling read as well as an excellent resource for the study of the Vietnam era.



He hoped to major in journalism, but after just one semester he dropped out and joined the Army.

He told his parents why in a letter dated Jan. 24, 1966:

"The only purpose I would have right now to get a degree would be for a high-paying job. All I want to do is be a writer. No college can teach me that, so why should I go?"

Other letters detail his days in boot camp in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and his Airborne training in Fort Benning, Ga. Peppered throughout are his musings on Army life.

"I had been waiting six weeks to see a typical, three-war veteran, aged and strong, *weathered and hardened*, half-crazy and fanatically military. At the gas chambers yesterday, the master sergeant there was like this. Boy, what a nut. But I felt sorry for him that he had become so ornery and hateful of people in general. Guess he fought one war too many."

After Scott finished training, he was stationed in Germany. His letters express disappointment, and he said he would apply for a transfer to Vietnam.





"Why do I want to go to Viet Nam? A little bit of patriotism. A little bit because I honestly believe the Chinese are dangerous and must be contained — better in Viet Nam than in India, Japan or Australia. But mostly because I want to see firsthand the tragic results of man's failure as a thinking being."

At the end of May 1966, Scott arrived in Vietnam and began working as a combat writer and photographer. He would spend a few days in the field before coming back to write about the soldiers there. His stories were published in a brigade newspaper, but they also could be picked up by the news wires or Stars and Stripes.

"Just to give you an idea of the kind of stuff I write ... a guy in a recent firefight, had a bullet hit his chest and fall off (it was fired from a great distance and ran out of steam); tripped a booby trap which failed to go off; walked all over a mine field and escaped unscathed; and finally, to top it off, found a gaping bullet hole in the radio on his back once the fight was over."

In July, he wrote a letter with this observation:

"The average GI doesn't give a darn about this country, only half believes in the administration's goals here, and his only dedication is to come out of here alive. I have found that the men in the rear who never have been in combat are a lot more philosophical and idealistic than those up front. Naturally."

By the end of August, Scott had become disillusioned with the war.

"I want to see this war ended before more guys die in vain and out of political blunder. War is the ultimate evil, and I want to see man save himself before he discovers the ultimate war."

On Oct. 8, Scott was with a platoon that was attacked by two North Vietnamese Army companies. When they were ordered to withdraw, Scott stayed behind to provide cover fire. He was fatally wounded and later was awarded the Silver Star for bravery.

Scott's writings might have stayed in a box in his mother's closet a few more years, if his sister, Carrie Christofferson Handy, hadn't stumbled across them in 1982. She had been just 11 when her brother died.

"I started reading them, and it was as if I knew him for the first time really," Carrie said.

She transcribed the letters using a typewriter, then photocopied them and gave them to her siblings. They were lent out to students studying Vietnam over the years, but for the most part, they were back in a box.

Then last Christmas, Carrie's younger sister used a computer to make a hard-bound version.

"That kind of got us all interested in a project to get our brother published," Carrie said.

The siblings, who are scattered across the country, started having monthly conference calls. The oldest is a lawyer, and he handled the copyright aspects. Carrie, who has a background in journalism, did all the editing, layout and cover design. Another sister developed a website, yourheroandmine.com. Other siblings requested records.

"It just got to be a really fun project," Carrie said. "But we did it for him; he wanted to be a writer, (and) we wanted to see him get published."

The book includes not only letters, but photographs, poems, copies of military orders and telegrams the family received, including the one informing them of Scott's death. The book is available on Amazon.com.

"When you have somebody close to you die like that, especially under those circumstances, it's a defining event, and keeping us connected through him has been really important," Carrie said.

Scott often joked in his letters that stories he was sharing would be perfect for his memoirs, and they are.



The newspaper clipping pictured appeared in the ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH on October 8, 1967, the day Scott was killed in action in Vietnam. His family was notified of his death October 10.

#### Tuned In on Baseball

Six St. Louis area paratroopers with the First Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, are joined by 15-year-old Xuan, a resident of Chu Lai, Vietnam, in wishing the Cardinals luck in the World Series. Front row, from left: Pfc. Robert J. Saddler, 2831 Dayton, St. Louis; Xuan; Spec 4 Scott Christofferson, 3 Thorndell, Richmond Heights. Back row — Capt. John E. Miller, 2005 South Roanoke, Springfield, Mo.; Spec 4 Edward W. Eppy, 1104 Purtscher Drive, Peoria, Ill.; Staff Sgt Lester E. Hite, 4204 Miniel Court, St. Louis and Capt. Michael Welch, 1111 Dawn Drive, Belleville.

## Namesakes & Remembrances of Those Passed Away !

(A reflection by CPT Barry Hana, formerly with 1st Brigade PIO/VN)

How do fathers name their sons?

Do they name them after themselves, grandfathers, uncles?

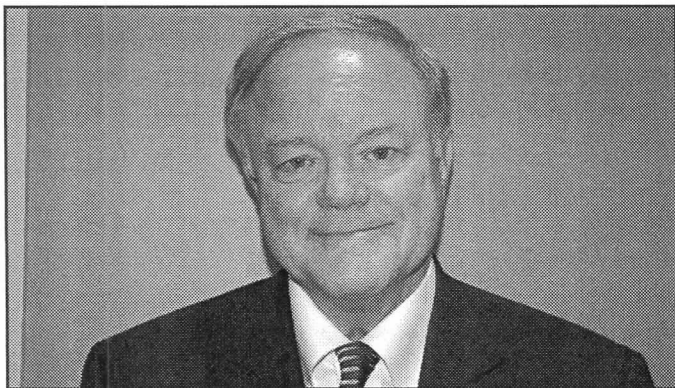
Best friends? Celebrities? Sports Figures? Presidents?

Spiritual Leaders?

Or, do they honor brothers-in-arms – from another time and another place?

SP4 Scott Christofferson, remembered so lovingly by his family in “Your Hero and Mine,” has a namesake of sorts, a boy born January 8, 1969 -- Christopher Scott Hana, my son.

When I returned to the states in 1968, I wanted three things: a banana split, a red convertible and a son. The ice cream was good. Very soon I was driving a red, 1968 Chevrolet Camaro convertible. And 10 months later, my wife and I became proud parents of a first-born son.



*CPT Barry Hana, HQ-PIO 3/67-3/68*

I had carried other thoughts home from Vietnam, too. How unfair it seemed, that I survived while so many others were killed in a land so far away. I imagine all Vietnam vets have similar thoughts. As the “guilt” passes over time, we then think how can we best honor and remember those lost in battle? We pray for the fallen, we build memorials to the dead, and we go on living, as we hope they have found their eternal rest with God.

As we considered names for our son, I had this voice within remind me that Scott would never experience a life that could have been. Somehow that thought helped me transform his name into one fashioned, with love, for my son, who, God willing, would enjoy a longer and fuller life.

What drew Scott to my memory, and those of others? Was it his smiling, boyish nature shifting into manhood? He was so eager to serve and full of life. He sought adventure and took great pride in the 101st. He was all the things you see in the letters he wrote home – brave, fearful, impatient, frustrated, full of dreams and plans, seeking personal meaning, intellectualizing, thinking of girls, interpreting the geo-politics of the times. He was creative with words and descriptions. Now that the family has made them available, you should read those letters. They probably sound a lot like some you wrote home, postmarked 101 - USARV, or some you wanted to write but didn't.



### HEADQUARTERS AMERICAL DIVISION APO San Francisco 96374

GENERAL ORDERS

2 December 1967

NUMBER 1512

#### AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced posthumously.

CHRISTOFFERSON, SCOTT A. RA \_\_\_\_\_, SPECIALIST FOUR E4, United States Army, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division APO 96347

**Awarded:** Silver Star

**Date action:** 8 October 1967

**Theater:** Republic of Vietnam

**Reason:** For gallantry in action against a hostile force on 8 October 1967 in the Republic of Vietnam, Specialist Four Christofferson distinguished himself by his fearless courage and intense devotion to duty. On that date, his platoon was attacked by two North Vietnamese Army Companies using automatic weapons, mortars and recoilless rifles. When ordered to withdraw, Specialist Christofferson elected to remain in his vulnerable position to cover the withdrawal of his comrades. Despite heavy mortar and automatic weapons fire, Specialist Christofferson was unrelenting in his resistance of the enemy until fatally wounded. Due directly to his gallant efforts many of his comrades were able to reach safety. Specialist Four Christofferson's undaunted determination and unselfish concern for the lives of his fellow soldiers were in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Americal Division and the United States Army.

**Authority:** By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918.

Terry L. Wren, 2/327 A 4/67-2/68, RTO for A Company CO John P. Lawton, 2/327 A 67-68, sent this account of 8 October 1967 at the request of the Editor who thanks him for his help and support.

### Scott Christofferson's last day

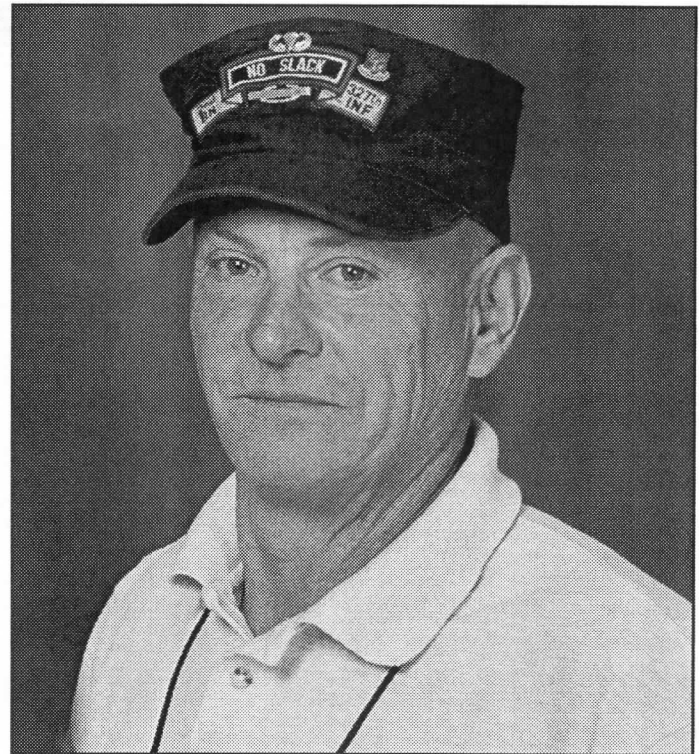
Scott was a reporter for 327 Inf Battalion and died the morning of Oct 8th 1967, west of Chu Lai near a village called Tam Ky. I new Scott personally but not by name, just by newspaperman. Scott joined A Company the day before on a hot food and melted ice cream resupply. When Scott got off that chopper, I asked him, "What are you doing out here?" He said, "I'm here to bring the company luck."

In the past, Scott would come out to A Company when the unit was taking casualties, and for some reason A Company would stop taking casualties, and that happened more than once in the past with Scott.

Early on the next morning of Oct 8th the CP, two squads from third platoon and second platoon were taking mermite cans and food containers from the day before over to Charlie Company's position so choppers could pick them up. After leaving Charlie Company's position, A Company moved into the hills above C Company. The CP and two squads from third platoon set up around a hooch and second platoon moved out on a recon of the area. Scott went with second platoon, for what reason I don't know.

That was the last time I saw Scott and most of second platoon alive. Shortly after moving out, second platoon made contact and shortly after that they knew they were in big trouble! They made contact with a large unknown size unit from the 2nd NVA division. The CP and two squads from third platoon moved to reinforce second platoon. On the way the CP and third platoon engaged NVA troops and our unit had broken into two separate groups during the fighting. The CP and three third platoon members made it to second platoon, but it was almost over by then. The A Company Commander was wounded trying to take command of second platoon. Four more CP paratroopers died trying to reach the company commander. It quickly became a survival mission instead of a reinforcement mission.

Battalion was notified of our situation and Charlie Company was ordered to A Company's last known position. I knew when C



Terry L. Wren, 2/327 A 4/67-2/68

Company was getting close because the NVA were taking off like rabbits and sure enough C Company stepped out of the tree line. We immediately started looking for survivors. When I found Scott's body he was lying along side two other paratroopers. I was asked to write a short article about Scott because I saw him just before he died and helped recover his body.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that second platoon was not ambushed! Second platoon engaged a large enemy force, which was on the move, and second platoon's point man engaged this enemy force. Second platoon's point man told me this later on a stand down and his information coincided with the radio traffic that morning.

My reason for writing this article is to thank the Officers, NCOs and brave men of Charlie Company for the rescue and recovery of fellow paratroopers on Oct 8th, and last but not least, for the elimination of as many NVA as you could find!

From a grateful member of A Co 2nd BN 327 Inf, Terry Wren



## Radioman Gets His Outfit Out of a Jam

Pacific Stars & Stripes 7  
Monday, Oct. 30, 1967

By SP4 DAN STROEBEL  
CHU LAI, Vietnam (IO) — While a monsoon rain raged through the jungles and a platoon of 101st Airborne paratroopers were cut off, a radio-telephone operator (RTO) remained calm and radioed for assistance.

Spec. 4 Terry L. Wren was credited with saving many lives when he directed a relief element to the fighting, pointed out enemy positions and led to the wounded, including his company commander.

The 2nd Platoon of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., had been cut off from other elements of the company by two NVA companies. Bitter fighting ensued as the paratrooper com-

mand element fought its way to the encircled platoon.

Sixty NVA bodies were found after the contact in which 17 paratroopers were killed. Wren called in the help that forced the NVA to break contact.

"We felt like a big battle was coming," said Wren. "I don't know why, but you could feel it in the air. We had been mortared the night before, so they knew we were in the area."

"We knew they were in the area too," he recalled. "One look at the almost new weapons we captured the day before told us we were up against NVA."

"That morning the 'Old Man' halted a moment in a hut to radio the day's plans to the

platoon leaders.

"That's when we first got hit."

A sniper opened fire on the command element and the 2nd Platoon quickly deployed to silence the enemy. Wren and the rest of the command group followed them in the search.

The first sweep was fruitless and the platoon moved through the thorny vines and trees a second time, firing on enemy positions.

Wren and the command group moved to a nearby hamlet, hoping to glean information from the villagers.

"The people wouldn't look at us," said Wren. "We knew they were frightened and their eyes

flitted around the area.

"Suddenly the 2nd Platoon began firing on full automatic," said Wren.

A mortar round scored a direct hit on a hut near Wren and the command element. Quickly they moved toward the 2nd Platoon and the sounds of fighting.

Wren, sensing the magnitude of the situation, quickly called a nearby company for assistance. The relief element killed three NVA in camouflaged uniforms. When the paratroopers arrived, Wren briefed them. They quickly maneuvered and the enemy broke contact.

"I called a medic for the captain and we patched him up the best we could," said Wren.

"Then we found the artillery forward observer and he was hurt badly too."

After the wounded were evacuated, Wren mopped the rain from his face, noticing it for the first time in five hours. It was the same rain that kept helicopter gunships grounded.

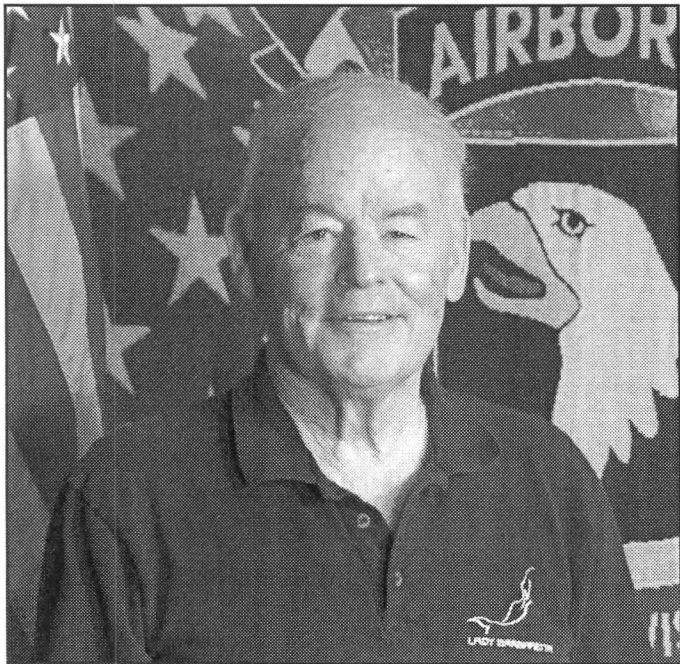
"I'm lucky to be alive," he said. "Everything happened so fast."

The rescuers counted 60 enemy dead, 2nd Platoon suffered 17 killed.

"No one would have survived if Wren hadn't called for help," said Sgt. Ronald G. Nixon. "The NVA had us outnumbered and they knew it. But our boys made them pay dearly."

# {1} The Battle of the Que Son Valley – 8 October 1967

## A2-327, 101st Airborne Brigade (Separate)



By COL(R) John P. Lawton, Company Commander A 2/327

### Dedication

Captain Tony Mavroudis (Zorba), C Co. Cdr, KIA

Sp/4 Scott Christofferson, KIA<sup>21</sup> 8 Oct 67

Sp/4 Jeff Flourney, one of my two RTO's, KIA 8 Oct 67

Lt. Robert Fergusson, my F.O., DOW Nov 8 67

Lt. Dunkenburger, one of my Plt Ldr's, KIA 8 Oct 1967

Sgt Terry Wren, my 2nd RTO & Sp/4 Rich Luttrell, my friends and fellow soldiers in all that I describe

And, numerous other soldiers of my company, whose names I can no longer remember

I wish that some 38 years later, I could remember all the details under which all my soldiers served; especially those paratroopers who were lost. But these are my memories, as the Commander of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Parachute Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (Separate). Keep in mind this is written almost 40 years later; I'm 71 years old and was never known as the swiftest guy on the block.

I've cross-checked some details and timing against various references; The 2-327, 101st (Abn) Sep, Bn Staff Duty Log; the Battalion After Action Report of Operation Wheeler, dtg 28 Nov, 1967; Sp/4 Christofferson's Silver Star and my Distinguished Service Cross citations and the book the Christofferson's brothers and sisters wrote, Your Hero and Mine. Finally, I reviewed the Brigade newspaper articles on this battle and even Gen. Colin Powell's autobiography, My American Journey in which Tony Mavroudis<sup>13</sup> is mentioned.

### Three Big Factors in These Battles

Weather. The weather was awful. We'd been through a lot of contact (big and small) and A Co was next to be extracted from

the field for a much needed rest. I remember two books, one by Marine Corps general, one of the Corps heroes, Chesty Puller and the other by Army LTG Robert Kingston, both dealing with combat in the Korean War in the November 1951 timeframe. They stated that the Chinese and N. Koreans were not the biggest killer in the war; Mother Nature and the extreme cold accounted for more soldiers and marines lost in the war, than from combat.

The Vietnam problem was the same, *but the extreme opposite*. I'll guarantee you old Mother Nature was working hard - extreme heat and humidity and to top things off, we fought in the middle of one hell of a Monsoon – heavy rain, on and off and of course thick, thick fog. The December 6, 1967 edition of the Brigade Newspaper, the Screaming Eagle, describes all this - "*The largest single action of the operation occurred Oct 8 when the paratroopers of A Co., 2nd Bn (Abn) 327th Inf., killed 60 NVA in a pitched battle fought during a driving monsoon storm.*" NOTE: the Bn Staff Duty log lists the U.S. dead as 17 KIA, 4 WIA; 66 NVA KIA.

What are the effects of all this weather? Helicopters couldn't fly to evacuate the wounded, bring-in replacements and resupply. Gunships couldn't get there to support us and artillery couldn't fire as we couldn't see where it landed – we couldn't adjust it. The Opn Wheeler AAR pulls all this together with – "high winds, heavy rain and typhoon weather ... often prevented combat support missions from leaving the rear area ..." Ray Millard/the Green Hornet (cmd'd B Co) summarizes the effect of this weather – "During the monsoon season all aerial support is tenuous in the extreme ... helicopter utilization in the form of resupply, medevac and gunship support may be suspended for days on end (Op Wheeler AAR)." Trust me weather was a very major element in these battles and Mother Nature definitely was not kind to us.

Morale. The battalion, including A company assaulted in on 12 September and experienced constant fighting through the 8 October fight. Even though we had been in combat for more than a week in the weather described, contacts consisting of one or two NVA shooting at us, small skirmishes against squad and platoon sized elements, and for good luck (*my warped sense of humor*) being mortared periodically, all the while constantly pushing what was estimated to be a NVA regiment into a blocking force.

The NVA were cornered with *less and less* maneuver room and they were fighting hard. Lt. Norm Fretwell, one of the best officers in the company, if not the best, not only had dysentery and if I remember correctly was suffering from malaria. He could barely stand-up, much less walk. We were missing some great, courageous leaders/fighters.

Before the big 8 October fight, I left Norm with a group of soldiers (I'm guessing, but maybe 15 to 20 soldiers) with similar health problems. Even so, morale was good. I can say this with no bravado; these were well disciplined, professional paratroopers.

The intelligence situation. Indications were we were fighting “two NVA divisions and three VC/NVA regiments with 5 supporting battalions (AAR Opn Wheeler).” From my perspective we were fighting the 3rd NVA Regiment in a typical ‘hammer and anvil’ operation. Battles/fights were getting bigger and more intense and against NVA company and battalion-sized forces. The NVA were cornered with less and less maneuver room and all the companies were now engaging bigger and bigger sized units.

In sum, the brigade was fighting Mother Nature and a cornered enemy. Keep these factors in mind (weather, morale and the enemy forces who were well trained/disciplined).

The 2-327 Parachute Infantry Battalion’s MISSION:

“...Conduct Airmobile assault into assigned portion of Uden AO, and commence S & D (search and destroy) Opns SW in zone to find, fix and destroy VC/NVA forces and neutralize VC/NVA base camps.” Taken from the Battalion AA Report, 28 Nov 1967.

Entering into the battle area; assault onto a hot LZ,<sup>14</sup> initially with 2 downed Huey’s, later 3. Securing them & the night attack to relieve C2-327

Background. The battalion was inserted into the operating area on 12 September 1967. When you think of the 8 October fight, remember we’d been operating in the field since 12 September. On this very first day we found the decomposed body of a U.S. jet fighter pilot hanging in the triple-canopied jungle, still in his ejection seat; can’t say how long he’d been there, but once we got him on the ground, we literally scooped him into a body bag.

On 29 September, A Co was pulled from an area South of the Song Thu Ron & Song Trahn Rivers to conduct an air assault to secure the downed command and control helicopters of the Bn Cdr (LTC Yerks) and the Deputy Brigade Commander’s (Col. Collins). When Col Collins’ aircraft was shot down, LTC Yerk’s helicopter went in to get them out and was shot down. In the ensuing assault, A Co had another Huey shot down.

I can never talk about the 8 Oct 1967 battle in which we were eventually overrun, without first describing a night attack on 29 September to relieve an “*element of C Co ... pinned down and receiving heavy fire from 3 directions (AA Report Opn Wheeler).*” A and C companies will always be joined in my mind; A Company conducts a night attack to relieve an element of C Co under attack, only to have C Company (8 days later) come to our rescue on 8 Oct 1967.

One other point, C Co commanded by Tony Mavroudis had Frank McGee of NBC and a TV crew filming a documentary named ‘Same Mud, Same Blood’ whose objective was to show that race made no difference to soldiers in combat<sup>15</sup>.

The Night Battle to relieve C Company

A2-327 was operating in and around this area, South of the Song Thu Ron and Tranh Rivers. Over time, I have referred to

this whole area as the Que Son Valley. The overall brigade mission was to clear, capture or kill elements of the 3rd NVA Regiment operating in the Que Son Valley. The other companies of our battalion along with other brigade battalions (in essence the rest of the Brigade) were operating North of the Song Tru Ron and Tranh Rivers. The 1st Cav and the 23rd Infantry Division (the Americal) each had a brigade in the area together with a Vietnamese Division, all acting as the blocking force. The Separate Brigade 101st Airborne was the hammer, in a hammer and anvil type operation.

Alert and air-assault onto a small hill to secure downed Huey’s. On 3 or 4 October, I received a radio call from Battalion late in the afternoon around 1500 or 1600 and asked how long would it take to move the company to a pick-up zone (PZ). I answered that I could have one platoon on the PZ almost immediately, another within 10 minutes and rest within 30 to 40 minutes (to include the company command group consisting of two company RTO’s<sup>16</sup>, my FO, his RTO and 4 engineers). I was then given a frag<sup>17</sup> order to assault onto a small hilltop at L921259 and secure two choppers that had been shot down; both aircraft made controlled, crash landings. Ltc Yerks and Col. Collins and some passenger’s had been rescued by another helicopter in the area. The aircraft crew were left in a last minute decision, as they were told A Co had been alerted, was airborne and in-route to secure them.

Assaulting-in. I started all the platoons moving to the pick-up site and briefed the Platoon Leader who was on the PZ as to what was happening. Information was sketchy, including the number of choppers we would get, how ‘hot’ the LZ was; obviously it was hot at one time. All this confusion<sup>18</sup> wasn’t unusual; we received and passed information to the platoons and flight leader, as it was sent to us. Fortunately, I had two; well trained, experienced RTO’s<sup>19</sup> who relayed most of this info as I listened in, while taking care of numerous other requirements.

Initially, there were enough choppers to lift one platoon; they loaded and departed. I don’t remember the exact sequence of details, but I ‘roughed-out’ a plan that I’d try and get a second platoon into the LZ along w/the company command group and then depending upon the situation, I’d have the two remaining platoons land where we were or at another, close-by location. I was already receiving reports that the initial lift was taking fire on the assault-in – light to moderate fire.

I remember the chopper ahead of us was close to touching down (if it didn’t just touch down), suddenly ‘jerking’ and then falling (flying) down the side of the hill, but under control. We saw a trooper<sup>100</sup> fall or jump from the chopper, but from where we were, we assumed he had jumped and everything was under control. The platoon I was with and the platoon already landed, coordinated and moved off the hill to begin securing the area. One of the choppers in our lift was hit and made another ‘controlled crash landing’ – we now had three (3) choppers down.

I was trying to get info from the platoon leaders on the Hill and the status on the pickup of the other platoons to divert them, make contact with either of the platoon leaders on the hill or one of the pilots in the remaining lift to divert them, get



locations of my platoons moving off the hill and get my FO<sup>(11)</sup> (artillery officer) placing artillery fire on suspected locations of the enemy, etc.

What I distinctly remember is one of the most unusual sights I saw in the midst of all this. The crews of the first two choppers shot down were 'tying-down' the blades of their aircraft, preparing them to be lifted, just as though this was a routine, day-to-day assignment. I shouted for them to get down off the aircraft and hit the ground. While the enemy fire wasn't heavy, it was enough to keep us low to the ground and earlier, to shoot three choppers down.

One of the crewmen said they were just about finished, when I interrupted and told him in a language that soldiers understand, to get off those helicopters and get down before they were killed. I diverted the last lift of two platoons to a location on the side of the Hill that seemed to be taking the least amount of fire.

To sum this up, we secured the hill and the downed-Huey's amongst continued light fire. We were also trying to get an accounting of the troops, coordinating with battalion as to when we'd lift the downed choppers out (the decision was the next day) and all the while aware of a large firefight/building/going on at the base of the hill – C Company and the T.V. crew were in contact. Darkness/night was overtaking us.

### The Relief of C2-327

I started-out this 8 Oct 1967 'story' with my company (A2-327) moving down a hill to join the battle where Tony was in heavy contact and noted, darkness was upon us. By listening to C Company on the Command net and the tone in Tony's voice (tense, excited, but under control), we knew a fight was developing - a big fight. There was also some concern about the civilians with them (the NBC Same Mud, Same Blood TV crew).

#### Several highlights:

We had to be careful not to fire into C Company as some of the NVA were between us and them. We were helped by several factors. The NVA fired green tracer rounds; the U.S. used red tracers. This helped locate/maybe pinpoint some of the NVA and C Co troops.

The NVA must have felt we would not move at night; generally we didn't. When I took command I was aware of this fact and felt it was important to be able to use the night. I began periodically to make short night movements. With a lot of discussion and training over time I felt that if we made contact and used pre-planned illuminating artillery – we'd prevail (easier said than done)<sup>(12)</sup>.

In moving down the hill, we killed (and surely surprised) a lot of NVA. In one instance we walked right into an 82mm mortar position before they even knew we were there. The crew and other NVA in the area were killed reacting; we captured a couple of 82 mm mortars, some machine guns, etc.

When the fighting ceased and A & C companies were linked-up both Tony and I began accounting for our people, but we had time for a short cup of coffee. I met the McGee people. We then started up the hill to account for our one missing soldier.

I don't exactly remember the time line/sequencing to make complete sense of this night attack, the link-up and the 8 October fight. I do remember the 82 mm mortar pit of the NVA, their dead laying around and a very brief link-up with Tony.

### 8 October 1967 A Company is overrun

Late on the evening of 7 October, it was decided that weather permitting, A Co would be extracted on 8 October. Accordingly, I was directed to take my recently gained re-supply to C Company who was hurting. How or when I got the re-supply I have absolutely no memory of.

Since the platoons had key personnel KIA, medevaced because of wounds, others sick or exhausted, etc, I decided to put together/reinforce a platoon. Lt. Dunkenburger's platoon was chosen. I provided some fillers to round out the platoon. Lt. Dunkenburger (for short, called Dunk) was new and inexperienced, but he had 'the fullest' platoon and a strong platoon Sergeant. 'Dunk' was a good officer.

I felt relatively comfortable traveling alone with my CP group (dropping back and not being in/amongst the platoon), but not so far away, I couldn't be there ASAP). Dunkenburger had already been through the area, one of the other companies had worked this area or areas close to it, so (*I assumed*) there could be no large enemy formations in the area. Ha!

What remained of the company was left with Lt. Fretwell. For the life of me, I can't recall where Lt. Williams and his platoon were. He was a very strong and experienced platoon leader, and if I remember correctly, the same was true of his Platoon Sergeant. At approximately 1000 hours on the morning of 8 October, I left approximately a little more than half of my Company and moved myself, the command group and the 1st Platoon to C Co. We linked-up, effected the re-supply and then began the return journey to join the rest of my Company.

(NOTE: I was asked recently, why didn't you call the rest of the company for help! At some point in all this, I discovered the radio I was using had a couple of rounds in it. I thought I was communicating, but probably wasn't; I had already been wounded twice. What also may have affected my thinking was that the people I left were in bad shape anyway; I do remember talking to Tony at some point. But I am getting ahead of myself; at this point, resupply to C Company had happened and we were returning to where I left the remainder of the company.

About an hour's distance from C Company, the 1st Platoon took several sniper rounds – no one injured. I directed the platoon leader via radio to fan-out and search for the enemy snipers. Reconstructing what then happened, I believe the



platoon spotted the snipers running from the area and gave pursuit. I suspect these snipers had the mission to draw the platoon into a large enemy ambush which in fact they did.

A critical understanding and what may have happened - Leading versus commanding. A day or two before the 8 October battle, Lt. Dunkenburger's platoon got in a small fire fight and I happened to be there. In essence I saw him 'leading' his platoon from within. I ate chow w/him that night and 'informally' counseled him (I don't like this word). I talked to him about leading from the front and how important it was, saying in essence - *your title is platoon leader; the Marines call the same position - a platoon commander.*

The Army specifically titles your position *plt leader* because we expect you to lead, especially in combat. Sometimes that is the only way to get the troops, firing and maneuvering.

I told him in a heavy contact, the soldiers will look to you for orders and they expect you to lead; they'll do what you do, but it is kind of difficult to expect them to charge head-on into oncoming fire. You don't always have to always be out front and normally are not, but when rounds are coming at you, people are being wounded and killed, trust me you can't point in the enemy direction and say - go get 'em. That is leadership!

He was a good officer, but leading a platoon in combat was new to him. If this 'counseling' is not handled just right, it could be perceived that I was implying he was a coward; trust me, he wasn't - just new. In talking to the officers and NCO's I stressed this leadership ideal, as I strongly believed it. In talking to the Company, I told them that whatever happened, they could count on me - I'd be there and if necessary, I'd go down with them; I felt strongly about both points.

I truly believe Lt. Dunkenberger accepted the counseling and may have overreacted on 8 Oct and influenced the platoon. There is a schematic I drew from memory of the battle area that may help also understand all this.

Anyway, suddenly the fire intensified; it was obvious Dunk was into a battle royal. Now the guessing: looking back and analyzing it all, I think the platoon was suckered into a well planned ambush. A couple of NVA fired at the platoon, let themselves be seen hi-tailing it. Dunkenburger pursued and the platoon followed.

I am really guessing, but when I finally got into Dunk's position, there was dead and wounded all around; the land was a wide open, dry rice paddies with limited scrub-bushes around. Some of the troops around Dunk were in a small round indentation (maybe 1 foot deep - not much more), but others were 15 to 20 feet ahead of him. Lt. Dunkenberger had his hands full; dead and wounded immediately around him and 15 to 20 feet ahead of him, between him and the NVA. Before I got to him, I was not getting much from him, in the way of coherent reporting.

There was a thick tree line between the battle area and my command group. Lt. Dunkenberger was screaming and

shouting that he was heavily engaged and had a lot of dead & wounded. I tried to let him know I was not far from him and was moving to him. As much as possible in that situation you just try and calm people down. I'd normally call for artillery and gunships - but that was impossible - damn weather. Sporadic rounds were coming our way through the bush, not aimed at us, but rounds over-firing Dunkenburger's platoon.

Hearing a volume of firing and the platoon leader crying (screaming) into the radio that he was "under heavy fire," I began to maneuver the Cmd Gp. I had to go through a heavily wooded area which took time. As I got to the far side of the woods, I saw in the open the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldiers carting off wounded and attempting to complete the encirclement of the platoon. Stretching along the edge of the woods was a two to three foot high rock wall. I directed the command group through arm and hand signals to deploy along the rock wall. We had not been seen - so far.

At my signal, we let loose with a barrage of fire that laterally mowed down the NVA - their wounded, encircling soldiers and all. At that time the NVA at the flanks began to bring fire us. We moved/crawled over the wall toward the platoon. There are numerous side incidents that occurred and are stories in themselves, but detract from a description of the battle<sup>(13)</sup>. Upon reaching the platoon, I could see U.S. dead and wounded and the remaining U. S. soldiers attempting to set up a perimeter.

The battle continued throughout the day as the NVA tried and eventually overran us. During that period of time, I was hit in the arms while attempting to pull into our position some wounded. Later on, I was hit again, this time in the leg, suffering a compound fracture, while attempting to again get U.S. wounded to some safety. One of my clearest memories is the NVA; they were dressed in their NVA green uniforms, pith helmets and over their uniforms, a gray plastic sheet acting as a poncho. Over a period of time, I watched them fire and maneuver against us; take wounded, fall back, regroup and start over. As an enlisted man and infantry officer, I've conducted and critiqued my fair share of fire and maneuver drills - and what I was witnessing was amazing - absolutely amazing. These guys were doing it by the book. What was awful in all this, is our inability to recover our dead and wounded. What was admirable is the troops never gave up; they turned back NVA rush after rush; they never gave up trying to recover the dead and wounded. At one point I ordered all soldiers who could walk to get out. I knew there would be no break in the weather, our ammo was low, and I could see the NVA forming/maneuvering to overrun us.

Some soldiers did go. Terry Wren moved into a tree line, and continued to remain in radio contact, helping direct C Company into our position and keeping Bn updated. At one point, I felt a couple of rounds go over my head towards the NVA, seeing a couple of NVA hit & fall down. I looked to my rear to see my 2nd RTO Jeff Flourney and Lt. Fergusson, my F.O. about 5 feet away. I again shouted at Fergusson to get the hell out while he still could. He shouted back, *Sir, I will not leave you!*<sup>(14)</sup>. I told him he was setting a bad example for Flourney and to go.



To say the least, things were hectic and confusing. At approx. 17:00, the NVA overwhelmed our position and were shooting, killing and stripping the dead and wounded.

My right arm was tied to my body by a bandoleer, but blood was all over my upper torso; my bone was sticking out. My lower left foot had sustained a compound fracture wound with a great deal of blood all around and was lying at an odd angle – so for a period of time I ‘faked’ dead.

My airborne ring was taken from my finger, my religious medal ripped from my neck and the classified operating instructions tied around my neck and inside my jacket upper pocket, were taken. All this was returned later, when the NVA walked into a U.S. ambush position.

Lead elements of C company were close and trying to break through. I was on the ground on my back. An NVA kneeling next to me suddenly was aiming his weapon and firing in the direction of C company. At that point, I figured I was going to die anyway and taking my good left arm, I reached-up and threw it around his neck and tried to pull him down. He reacted pulling himself up and in doing so, pulled me halfway up on his back. The NVA next to him fired and shot-off my left upper buttock’s cheek. One of the ‘rounds’ came out between my left leg/thigh and my testicles<sup>[1]</sup>. I remember screaming and I then passed out. To this day, I don’t think I could ever reproduce that scream and the absolute fear associated with it.

When I came to, a C Company medic was treating me and Tony Mavroudis was trying to talk to me. I remember while C Co was ‘policing-up’ the battlefield, I heard that Jeff Flourney was dead and Lt. Fergusson was badly wounded with a head wound. Robert died in Japan while being put on a medevac plane headed for the U.S.

I remember Terry Wren coming to me crying as the medics worked on me and apologizing for leaving. I told him he had done what he was ordered to, that he had nothing to apologize for; that he was a great soldier and friend – he was and is. I later heard numerous soldiers praise Terry for what he did, staying calm and helping guide C Company into our position. The only other survivor was one sergeant, Sergeant Johnson. He and I ended up in Walter Reed together. He married a nurse on his ward.

As a result of my wounds, I spent one week short of two years in various military hospitals, starting with the Marine hospital at Chu Lai; next the Evacuation Hospital at Qui Nhan; then because I almost died enroute to Japan when I started bleeding excessively from the buttocks wound, I spent approximately a week in the American Air Force hospital in the Philippines; then six weeks to two months in Camp Zama, Japan at the 106th Field Hospital, and finally at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington, D.C. I don’t think the number of hospital stops was normal, I was pretty badly wounded.

During the early part of this hospitalization, I had both an arm and leg in traction with a pin drilled through my elbow and

another my knee to help align these limbs. Any movement was extremely painful. I had to learn to be absolutely still and mentally to occupy my mind to disorient it from the pain and shock I was going through. I questioned the *immediate* events of my life – what did I do right, wrong, and how could I have done better. I also promised myself that if I was able to continue as a soldier, there were certain things I would never compromise on. Anyway, this battle is imprinted on my mind, on my life. I was the Company Commander of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 387th Parachute (Glider) Infantry Regiment, the Separate Brigade (1st Brigade) of the 101st Airborne Division.

I’m proud of that and most thankful that God has allowed me to live this long and have the wonderful friends I’ve made – and especially to continue to serve in the military for a successful 37 and ½ year career.

But most important, to have met my wife (knew her before I went over and even then it took me 4 or 5 years to get smart and marry her). We have five (5) really terrific children. I’m proud and thankful my West Point graduate, airborne/ranger son (CI of 98) survived a harrowing tour in Iraq and another – a one year tour as a contractor.

#### Lawton END NOTES

- [1] Part of Operation Wheeler
- [2] KIA – Killed in Action
- [3] Tony was a fellow company commander, a great soldier/fighter, a friend and character to be around!
- [4] ‘Hot’ LZ – a landing zone that is under fire.
- [5] One bit of humor. When Tony ended-up with NBC’s Frank McGee and his crew, the Co Cdrs teased him about coming-out of Vietnam as a well known war hero, and we’d just be run-of-the-mill guys. We asked Tony, with all this fame and fortune, would he remember us on occasion, suggesting that maybe he could just wave at us/or shout a short hello. Tony responded w/something to effect – first of all ‘don’t worry, I’m already working on an idea to get this thing called Greek American soldiers and black Soldiers – and I’ll guarantee you guys, I’ll never remember the lot of you!’ Two to three weeks later, Tony was killed when his 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant stepped on a mine while inspecting the companies’ night defensive positions. The book Your Hero and Mine, Scott discusses the Same Mud, Same Blood crew on p. 154.
- [6] RTO – radio telephone operators. One is in contact with Battalion and the second with platoons.
- [7] Fragmented or short, brief order & is in many cases verbal with as much information as available at the time to get the operation started.
- [8] Confusion in battle is normal; Clauswitz calls it the *fog of*





war – what an appropriate description for this battle. The old G.I. calls it Murphy – ‘Murphy did this, Murphy did that.’

[9] A Specialist Terry Wren and Sgt Jeff Flourney; both were well trained, had plenty of initiative and were combat experienced. Terry remains a close friend right up to today. Flourney was killed in a later battle as he and my FO (Lt. Fergusson) refused to leave me and were killed. One other note; it was somewhat unusual to let the RTOs do any of the talking, but at times it gave me the freedom to think ahead, access the situation, maneuver the platoons, coordinate, etc. I talked more with the platoons more than to battalion.

[10] At the time I assumed this trooper (later identified as Sgt Farmer, a terrific fighter and soldier) wasn't injured. It appeared he just fell from the helicopter as it 'jerked,' before touch-down and was operating with his platoon. It turns-out that the jerking of the helicopter threw him from the chopper. I guess the rounds that hit the chopper, caused the pilot to momentarily lose slight control, tilting the aircraft and in doing so, the blade hit Sgt Farmer in the head, killing him. I just don't have the words to describe Sgt Farmer, but in appearance he was everything you want in an airborne NCO, well built and absolutely fearless - a natural leader. The troops idolized him, as did I. Late at night, as we tried to account for all our troops, he was discovered missing. A search at first light found him and somewhere in this time frame it all came together – the person we saw was Farmer and he was thrown from the chopper – he didn't jump. I don't consider myself too emotional, but this was one of two times I burst out crying and when it came to reporting his death, I had to have my RTO do it; I just couldn't talk.

[11] Field Artillery officer – Lt. Robert Fergusson.

[12] But all this theory isn't just done. I had to convince the company that it could be done. I started w/the Plt Ldrs and NCOs explaining that if we were moving in darkness and made contact, the NVA would be as 'screwed-up as us, if not more so; we were hoping for contact, they weren't expecting it. We had artillery to kill or illuminate and could pre-plan it, and we also had available immediate gunship support – helicopter or 'Smoky the Bear.' Finally, we had moved at night movement (not a lot) and this fact alone made it a little easier to decide to attack.

[13] Once over the wall and crawling through NVA dead and wounded, a wounded NVA lying on a stretcher rolled his head and looked at me; I remember he had a mouth full of gold teeth; he smiled. I think I remember him smiling and was going to kill him, but just couldn't. I crawled on, into Dunk's position.

[14] One big regret I carry with me is this incident & Fergusson. While I was in Walter Reed, Fergusson's father (at that time the Commanding General of the Berlin Brigade) visited me. He wanted to know the details of his son's death, etc. At some point, he asked me to recommend his son for the Medal of Honor. I could have and should have, but here was

my problem. In taking command I naturally asked about personnel in the company, etc. Fergusson I was told attended West Point & didn't graduate. He flunked out either because of academics or had an honor problem – never got the answer. Flunking out was never a problem with me, hell I had. Not only flunked out once, I was readmitted and flunked out a second time – but any question of honor was a problem. He also was too damn friendly w/the enlisted men – he was called by his first name, and I talked to him about that. Worse yet, he couldn't read a map and just was not that great an FO. I was bound when we came out of the field to get a new FO. All this should not have dissuaded me; the 'actions' of Robert were heroic, and I think he should have been nominated. There is also a lesson – sometimes we make hasty judgments of people and maybe we need to back off a little. Robert gave his life for me. He did receive a DSC.

[15] Because of all the pain, I really didn't discover this exit wound until I was in the hospital in Japan. At this point (even though my leg wound was the most painful), guess what was my biggest concern? Ha! Each morning they had ward rounds and I was going to ask the Doctors on the status of my 'main equipment.' They came to the soldier in the bed next to me. He had a block of TNT go off as he was crimping it; blew off both arms, legs and blinded him. In looking over, I saw just a little noodle for his penis (the actual tube he pee'd thru; no testicles). He asked the doctors was he OK 'down there?' Could he and his wife —? They assured him he was. I didn't ask about myself – waste of time.

**Editor's Note: All material sent by John Lawton could not be used in this magazine. More will be used later and I hope to be able to display the entire story, maps and photographs on the web site. His footnotes had to be converted to endnotes because of the magazine format and other slight changes and omissions were made.**

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*This battle took place October 8th, 1967. Listed below is a partial list of those brave troopers killed due to this action.*

*Sp4 Samuel Donald Amantea - West Mifflin, PA; Sp4 Richard Andresen - West Kettering, OH; Sp4 James Walter Arms - Cahokia, IL; Sp4 Theodore Joseph Chason - Wilmington, DE; Sp5 Jack Deaver - San Diego, CA; 1Lt David George Dunkenberger - Flushing, NY; Sp4 Stephen Ely Feistner - Cedar Grove, NJ; Sp4 Jeffery Donald Flournoy - Chicago, IL; Sp4 Larry Lee Gaskins - Marion, OH; PFC Ray Gevara Jr. - Scottsbluff, NE; Sp4 John H Harding - Benton, AR; Sp4 Demetrio Lomeli Hernandez - Patterson, CA; Sp4 Richard Van Huggins - Monroe, NC; PFC John William McMaster - Merced, CA; Sp4 Jerry Franklin Walls - Kansas City, MO; and PFC Robert W. Hebert - Watervliet, NY.*



**COL(R) John P. Lawton,  
2/327 A 67-68 DSC**

Major John P Lawton, U.S.A.  
Citation: Distinguished Service Cross  
War: Vietnam War



Major John P. Lawton, USA, received the Distinguished Service Cross for his extraordinary heroism on 8 October 1967 as the commander of an infantry company during a mission near Chu Lai. He received word that his second platoon had been heavily attacked in an open rice field by an estimated North Vietnamese Army company firing automatic weapons and mortars and had suffered many casualties. He maneuvered another of his platoons to a position from which he could observe the battle and, after a quick estimate of the situation, called for a relief force from a sister company. Not waiting for its arrival, he personally led one squad of his force toward the beleaguered platoon while the remaining squads set up a base of fire to cover the movement. Upon reaching a woodline flanking the rice field, Captain Lawton could see that the trapped platoon's casualties were exposed to an extremely intense cross fire from three enemy machine guns and realized that they had to be recovered immediately. Despite the withering fire and exploding mortar rounds he charged across fifty meters of open rice paddy. As he ran toward the injured men, he received multiple wounds in the leg, arm and chest from a hail of enemy machine gun bullets. Disregarding his severe wounds, he continued to crawl to the casualties, only to discover that they were all either dead or so seriously wounded that they couldn't be moved easily. For a full forty-five minutes he single handedly held the attackers at bay and prevented them from searching the dead or capturing the wounded. He then began directing his men in an attempt to rescue as many of the surviving casualties as possible. He placed suppressive fire on the insurgents to cover his troops' maneuver until he ran out of ammunition and his position was overrun. Captain Lawton, with a burst of reserve energy, lunged forward to grab a weapon from on the enemy, but was wounded for the fourth time and left for dead. Through his courageous actions he had delayed the enemy force to such an extent that when the relief force arrived moments later the attackers were caught in the open and were quickly routed, suffering heavy casualties. Captain Lawton's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

*Editor's Note: See story headlined as "60 NVA KILLED IN BATTLE" on page 17. This story was reproduced in the book.*



# UPCOMING EVENTS!

**Week of the Eagles at Ft. Campbell**  
August 14 - 20, 2009

**101st Airborne Division Association Reunion**  
will be in Hampton, Virginia  
September 9 -13, 2009

For more information contact Sam Bass  
Executive Secretary and Treasurer  
101st Airborne Division Association  
931-431-0199, ext 33 or check the web site at  
<http://www.screamingeagle.org/>

Following are those in **The First Screaming Eagles in Viet Nam** data base mentioned in the Nov 8, 1967 THE SCREAMING EAGLE reprinted in the center section.

**TROOPS DISCOVER ROCKETS**, page 1, John D. Roberts, 2/502 A 8/66-7/67.

**14 VC DIE IN STREAM**, page 1, Peter Mitchell, 1/327 C, A & HQ 66-67. (Deceased 7/26/03)

**60 NVA KILLED IN BATTLE**, page 1, COL(R) John P. Lawton, 2/327 A 67-68.

**BULLET-PROOF**, page 2, James Russell, 1/327 C 67-68.

**SCRATCH 3 VC**, page 2, John Hamm, 2/327 C 2/67-2/68.

**MELLENDEZ REACTS**, page 2, Sal Melendez, 2/327 HHQ Medic 7/67-6/68.

**HAWKS SWEEP VILLAGE**, page 4, Larry M. Young, 2/327 Hawk Recon 9/67-9/68.

**CIDG ZAP FOUR VC**, page 4, Wyman Helms, 1/327 HHQ TF 5/67-5/68.

**JAMMING COSTLY TO NVA**, page 4, James "Mac" Hayes, 2/502 C 7/67-1/69.



# The Screaming Eagle



Vol. 1, No. 8

1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division

November 8, 1967

## Troops Discover Rockets

CHU LAI—Two Chinese-Communist 75mm recoilless rifles were discovered by paratroopers of the 101st Airborne near here during Operation Wheeler.

While sweeping through the mountainous jungles, the 2nd Plat. of B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., found an NVA poncho covering something bulky.

Sgt. Charles Casher, Mobile, Ala., pulled the poncho away, exposing the two deadly weapons, their long, black barrels gleaming in the sunlight.

Nearby, the 1st Plat. was following a tip from a wounded Viet Cong. The captured enemy led paratroopers to a one-hut weapons repair shop. Inside, a forge anvil, scrap metal, forging tools and half-completed booby traps were found.

As the 1st Plat. searched a trail near the hut, Staff Sgt. John A. Roberts, Dallas, discovered an ammunition cache in a hut concealed in deep foliage.

In the thatch-roofed hut were 1,000 rounds of 50-caliber ammunition, 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, 60 and 82mm mortar rounds and sighting equipment for the recoilless rifles.

Gathering the captured ammunition, paratroopers of the 1st Plat. moved back to the company command post. Enroute they discovered another cache—two enemy rucksacks filled with documents and 100 trenching tools.

## 14 VC Die In Stream

DUC PHO — Fourteen Viet Cong were killed as they relaxed by a waterfall when paratroopers of the 101st Airborne surprised them during Operation Cook west of here.

A Co., of the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th, was moving along two ridges when they saw three VC wading in the stream 75 feet below.

Employing one element to maintain surveillance of the enemy trio, Capt. Peter Mitchell, Levittown, N.Y., moved another element around a curve in the stream to establish a blocking position.

As the blocking force rounded the curve they heard the gushing sound of a waterfall below them. Peering over the cliffs, the paratroopers saw VC resting near the falls. As the enemy laughed and talked, they were joined by the three VC slushing up the stream bed.

A surrender appeal was broadcast to the enemy. They failed to respond.

On signal, the paratroopers dropped grenades into the canyon and raked the area with small arms fire.



**Pooooof!!**

Pfc. Howard D. Strozier, West Palm Beach, Fla., blows out a candle on a C-ration pound cake to celebrate his 20th birthday. Strozier is an assistant machine gunner with C Co., of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Manglameli)

## People Sniffer Nearly Snuffed

CHU LAI — People sniffing at 100 mph, 25 feet above the roller coaster-shaped mountains near here literally has its ups and downs.

Members of the 101st Airborne's 20th Chemical Detachment operate the people sniffer for the Screaming Eagles. On their ninth mission, the "sniffers" were almost snuffed.

Flying in a 71st Assault Gun Co. helicopter were Capt. John B. Jones, Petersburg, Va., First Sgt. Louis M. Marinez, Merced, Calif., Spec. 4 Gilbert R. Grulbs, Chicago and the people-sniffing instrument.

Following the sniffer chopper

were a spotter ship and two gunships.

The lead chopper flew a low, irregular pattern along the mountainside while Marinez and Grulbs kept their eyes fixed on the instrument.

On the first pass, there were positive readings. Jones at the radio was poised to give the spotter ship the signal.

One word is given when the enemy is detected.

"Hotspot! Hotspot! Hotspot!" said Jones over the radio.

The two ships made a wide arc and passed over the area again. This time enemy automatic weapons fire greeted

them.

The sniffer chopper took two hits, one through the windshield, missing both pilots by inches.

Glass and metal fragments splattered back through the helicopter. Grulbs was hit in the arm.

As the sniffer and spotter ships withdrew, the orbiting gunships screamed down to make their pass on the enemy positions.

Three NVA were killed as the gunships fired rockets at a bunker set in deep foliage.

The sniffer and gunships turned homeward, a successful sniff completed.

## 60 NVA Killed In Battle

CHU LAI — A company of the 101st Airborne fought off two well-armed North Vietnamese Army companies northwest of here recently, killing a confirmed 60 NVA in a four and a half hour battle fought during heavy monsoon rains.

A Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. reported the high enemy body count while suffering 17 paratroopers killed and four wounded.

The "No Slack" paratroopers were sweeping a valley 18 miles west of Tam Ky when at 1:40 p.m. they received 82mm mortar fire. The enemy mortars wounded several Screaming Eagles.

Following the mortar attack, the NVA force initiated a two-prong assault cutting off and encircling one paratrooper platoon. Other elements of the Screaming Eagle company had to break through the enemy ranks in bloody, hand-to-hand fighting.

Medevac helicopter pilots braved heavy rains and zero visibility weather to evacuate seriously wounded paratroopers. Those with minor wounds refused evacuation.

Air Force jets and helicopter gunships were grounded as the rains grew heavier. Artillery support had to cut off to avoid hitting paratroopers when the fighting was closest.

B Co. and the nearby Hawk reconnaissance platoon moved toward the besieged A Co. Enroute, B Co. killed three NVA in green camouflaged uniforms at 3:15 p.m.

Capt. John Lawton, Bethesda, Md., commander of A Co., was hit during the contact yet directed the paratroopers with wounds in the leg and shoulders while lying on the ground.

His radio-telephone operator and the artillery forward observer were hit as they ran to his aid.

Also killed in the contact was a combat reporter from the brigade information office. He was hit by enemy fire while firing on advancing enemy — the fourth information specialist to die in battle since the brigade arrived in Vietnam.

The battle ended at 5:30 p.m. Twenty-one individual weapons were captured. A Russian light machine gun, a 60mm mortar sight and assorted rockets also were found.

Five Viet Cong were killed in other contacts, bringing the day's body count to 68. The 68 kills made Operation Wheeler the largest single sweep conducted by the Screaming Eagles since their arrival in Vietnam July 29, 1965.

Operation Hawthorne, conducted near Dak To in June, 1966, had been the largest search and destroy mission. In that operation, 531 enemy were killed.



### Direct Fire Mission

Redleg paratroopers of C Btry., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 320th Arty., place 105mm howitzer fire on an enemy target during Operation Wheeler. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Mangiameli)

## Howitzer 'Snipes' 3 Enemy

By SSG Miko Mangiameli  
CHU LAI — A 105 howitzer served as a "sniper's weapon for the 101st Airborne during Operation Wheeler recently, resulting in three Viet Cong dead.

Lt. Charles G. Vaughn, Gadsden, Ala., acting as a forward observer with the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 320th Arty. was scanning a valley through his binoculars when he spotted three black-clad figures moving along a rice paddy.

"At first I wasn't sure if they were VC," said Vaughn. "I followed their movements and noticed they were heading toward some type of structure in a nearby woodline, probably a hut."

"I adjusted my binoculars, but I couldn't see too clearly because of a mist hanging over the valley."

As he shifted his field glasses back to the three figures, the sun broke through the mist.

"Quickly I scanned the woodline. What I thought was a hut turned out to be a bunker. But I still didn't know if the figures were VC."

Then two of the figures picked up weapons.

"They stopped near a rise at the edge of the rice paddy and picked up two rifles. Then they continued their walk to the bunker."

Vaughn alerted one of the 105 howitzer crews to a fire mission on the bunker 1,800 meters away.

"It was close enough for direct fire," said Vaughn. "I called for the first round to fall 50 meters beyond the bunker. When it exploded the three VC ran to the bunker for protection. We dropped our next round 50 meters and scored a direct hit."

When the smoke cleared, only the side walls of the bunker were left standing.

## Troopers Like Chris

DUC PHO—A squad of paratroopers of C Co. from the 1st Bn (Abn), 327th Inf., believe the feminine tones of Armed Forces Radio D-J Chris Noel is "numbah one," but wonder what the Viet Cong think about her.

The discussion began when Spec. 4 Harold Gainey, Fort Meyers, Fla., crawled out of a VC tunnel during a recent operation.

Gainey and Staff Sgt. Fred Mitchell, Jr., Clarksville, Tenn., had been searching tunnels all morning. "We hadn't found anything," said Mitchell, "until Gainey and I crawled into this one narrow tunnel."

"We found a pistol belt, canteen, hand grenade, some cooking utensils and two small bags of rice," said Mitchell. "Then Gainey found a portable radio."

Back outside the tunnel, the two paratroopers examined the radio: an eight transistor, dual speaker job in good condition.

"I wonder if the VC ever listen to her," questioned Gainey. "Naw," replied Spec. 4 Willie Hooker, Boston. "Chances are 'Charlie' couldn't understand her."

"Yeah, but with a voice like hers," quipped Pfc. Thomas T. Springer, Newport Beach, Calif., "who needs to know what she is saying."

# Screaming Eagle Briefings

### Gift Cookies

Employees of the Ladd and Busch branch of the National Bank of Oregon sent home-made cookies to Capt. Carl A. James, HHC, 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. for distribution to paratroopers.

Accompanying the cookies were letters from employees concerning happenings in the United States.

The cookies and letters were distributed to the companies and reconnaissance element of the battalion by James, who lives in Salem, Ore.

### Bullet-Proof

A cigarette lighter, an M-16 magazine and a steel pot saved paratroopers of C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. from serious injuries recently during Operation Wheeler.

Pfc. John Campos, Oxnard, Calif., was knocked to the ground and thought he was wounded during a contact with an NVA force.

"I was stunned for a minute and called to a buddy that I was hit," said Campos. "Then I realized I wasn't bleeding anywhere, but there was a burning sensation in my trouser pocket."

Checking his pocket, he found his cigarette lighter with an enemy bullet lodged in it.

Spec. 5 Aaron McDaniels, Newark, N.J., had a similar experience.

"I was firing at 'Charlie' when an enemy round hit my M-16 magazine," said McDaniels. "That magazine saved me a serious wound."

Pfc. James Russell, Rockford, Mich., had his steel pot to thank after the action.

"I was pinned down by enemy

fire when a round hit my pot," said Russell. "It rolled me over, stunned me and put a small cut on my head, but otherwise I was all right. The bullet had penetrated the helmet and liner, grazed the top of my head and went out the same hole. I was pretty lucky."

### Scholarships

Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne's support battalion recently presented 101 scholarships to needy Vietnamese high school youngsters in the Community Recreation Center in Phan Rang.

The Screaming Eagles voluntarily contribute 68,500 piasters each month to support the scholarship program, now in its second year.

To be eligible for a scholarship, the students must be academically proficient, but financially unable to continue their educations.

Some students who received scholarships are orphans, refugees or member of families victimized by the Viet Cong.

### Caches Found

Caches found by B Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. during Operation Wheeler have hurt the local Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers operating near Chu Lai.

During a recent search and destroy operation, the 1st and 2nd Plats., commanded by Lts. Howard L. Helfman, Yonkers, N.Y. and John C. Finnucan, Springboro, Pa., discovered two rice caches and a weapons cache.

The 1st Plat. found a four-ton rice cache west of Tam Ky. Refugees from the Tam Ky center, evacuated the rice in

four hours with the aid of Chinook helicopters from the 178th Assault Helicopter Co.

The 2nd Plat. discovered a weapons cache consisting of 2,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, Chinese-Communist claymore mines and grenades, 700 blasting caps, 12 radio batteries and six bundles of enemy documents dating back to 1965.

### Scratch 3 VC

Three Viet Cong fell to a pair of faster-shooting paratroopers of the 101st Airborne recently in a gunfight during Operation Cook.

As the 3rd Plat. of C Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. was combing a hill near the Song Ve valley, a lone VC was sighted. Two paratroopers — Spec. 4 John W. Hamm, Cahokia, Ill., and Spec. 4 Eric L. Ottey, Brooklyn, hastened down the trail in pursuit.

"We ran smack into three VC on the way down," said pointman Hamm. He and Ottey didn't hesitate, immediately firing at the enemy.

One VC struggled to get his weapon off his back, another's weapon misfired and the third was unarmed. Quickly the gunfight was over.

"They must not have expected us," said Ottey. "They looked surprised."

### Melendez Reacts

Paratroopers of a 101st Airborne platoon climbed a hilltop during Operation Wheeler when suddenly the platoon radio blared: "We're got a man hit!"

Quickly, Spec. 4 Salvatore Melendez, Chicago, grabbed his aid kit and started back toward the rear security element of 4th Plat., B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. A Viet Cong sniper had struck.

Sprinting 300 meters through heavy brush, Melendez arrived to find a paratrooper already applying direct pressure to the wound.

"He's hit in the leg," said Pfc. David J. Barduson, Appleton, Minn., as he let the medic take over. With swift efficiency Melendez gave the wounded man a shot of morphine and applied a new dressing to the wound. For 10 minutes he labored over the downed paratrooper, protecting against shock and infection.

As the litter bears are carried

the wounded paratrooper to the "Dust-Off" Melendez had a parting word:

"Say hello to those pretty nurses for me."

### 'Hot' Shower

What started as a cool shower turned into a hot exit for Lt. Sgt. John E. Quinn, Green Bay, Wis., when a VC sniper zeroed in on the bathing paratrooper.

Quinn, serving with B Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. was washing away the jungle grime when a sniper's bullet pinged off the Australian shower bucket.

"The only thing I could grab was my pants," said Quinn. "I think 'Charlie' fired at me because I was enjoying the bath."

Other 101st paratroopers silenced the sniper. Quinn returned to the shower.

"I wonder," asked Quinn, "how long that VC watched the shower waiting for someone to step in?"

### Hodson Scores

Pfc. Harry C. Hodson Jr., Arlington, Va., reaped a combat dividend near here when the 101st Airborne paratroopers fired on one sniper and killed two.

Hodson's platoon from A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. was moving along a jungle trail during Operation Benton when he spotted an enemy sniper raising his weapon.

Quickly, Hodson fired a heavy burst from his M-16 rifle and watched the sniper collapse.

When Hodson moved up to investigate his kill, he was surprised to see two enemy bodies sprawled on the ground.

### Monkey Attack

A squad of rock-throwing monkeys attacked a platoon of the 101st Airborne recently but retreated in haste.

The 1st Plat. of B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. thought enemy soldiers were ahead when they saw bushes moving. A rock fell into the paratroopers' position.

The Americans hesitated a moment to consider how to combat the monkeys. Then Spec. 4 Rodney M. Ward, Lebanon, Conn. and Pfc. John Files, Portland, Maine took action, counter-attacking with rocks.

The monkeys found the Screaming Eagles' aim too accurate and beat a hasty retreat.

## The Screaming Eagle

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# Japanese Correspondent Tested in Combat

CHU LAI—A Japanese correspondent covering the 101st Airborne's Operation Wheeler was tested in combat near here recently as the paratroopers engaged a reinforced North Vietnamese company defending a battalion base camp.

Koichiro Morita, a writer-photographer with International News Service, Pan-Asia Newspaper Alliance, came to the Screaming Eagle base camp in search of combat news. He quickly got all he needed and more.

Morita was accompanying C

Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf. when contact with the NVA force was made.

"We moved off a hilltop at 7 a.m.," said Morita. "We were moving in a field toward a river when an enemy machine gun opened up on us."

"I was lying flat in the field for an hour before I could move," said Morita. "The enemy fire was heavy and my squad was pinned down."

"I was behind a sergeant who was firing from behind a tree," said Morita. "He was hit, turned and said to me: 'Call the

medic'."

"I called for the medic and he crawled over to our position." "No need," the medic said. "The Sarge is gone."

The medic continued treating other wounded in the immediate area as enemy bullets filled the air—several whizzing past Morita's head as he was shooting pictures.

For three hours Morita was in the midst of the fight. He watched a paratrooper sergeant and four men flank the enemy machine gun position. Crawling to within grenade range, they

attacked.

One of the paratroopers was killed, but the gun was silenced.

Contact continued but as dusk approached the fighting diminished. Nine enemy dead had been counted and three automatic weapons captured. With nightfall the enemy broke contact and the paratroopers set up a perimeter. Two Screaming Eagles had been killed in the fighting and several wounded.

The next morning they advanced and found eight more enemy dead and numerous blood trails.

When a resupply chopper came in, Morita asked Capt. Cordell Godboldte, Philadelphia, company commander, to be extracted. He wanted to rush his film and story to Saigon for shipment to Tokyo.

When asked if he got all the information he needed, Morita said: "Plenty. When I was in the middle of the fighting I said to myself 'No more of this for me.' But now the excitement is over. I'll be ready for my next assignment in the field."

## 16 Enemy Killed

# Company Meets Stubborn NVA

By SSG Mike Mangiameli  
CHU LAI — The 2nd Plat. of C Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., was on a routine check of hamlets and villages west of here during Operation Wheeler when the point element entered a seemingly harmless complex of huts.

"As soon as the first three men entered the village fire broke out," said Lt. James M. Hayes, Santa Fe Springs, Calif. "We were hit with automatic weapons fire and grenades. The NVA were so well camouflaged some of my men were five feet from the enemy and didn't know it until they opened up."

The 1st and 3rd Plat., minutes behind the 2nd, received the report and rushed to the

pinned-down paratroopers' aid. First to arrive was the 3rd Plat., with Staff Sgt. Larry A. Fletcher, South Point, Ohio, in command.

The acting platoon leader quickly issued orders to his platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Harvey C. Reynolds, Orlando, Fla. Each took an element and began fire and movement on the entrenched enemy.

"Fletcher led the assault," said Reynolds. "By the time we got within effective grenade range of the bunkers and tunnels, part of the 1st platoon had entered the fight."

"Several of the men were wounded," said Capt. Cordell Godboldte, Philadelphia, "but I couldn't get them to leave the fight. They wanted to get the NVA out of those holes."

Spec. 4 John Yeager, Weirton, W. Va., was shot through the leg charging the complex. He rolled when hit, jumped up, fired a quick burst into the bunker killing one enemy. Then he began helping the more seriously wounded, refusing evacuation until others were medicated.

Spec. 4 Theodore Carlow, Perris, Calif., was shot through the hand while setting up his machinegun. Carlow later was evacuated.

"Carlow only jerked his hand when he was hit," said his assistant gunner, Pfc. George Ragsdale Jr., Fayetteville, N.C. "He only lost a couple of seconds in setting up the gun. He kept calm the whole time and directed my fire while the medic bandaged him up."

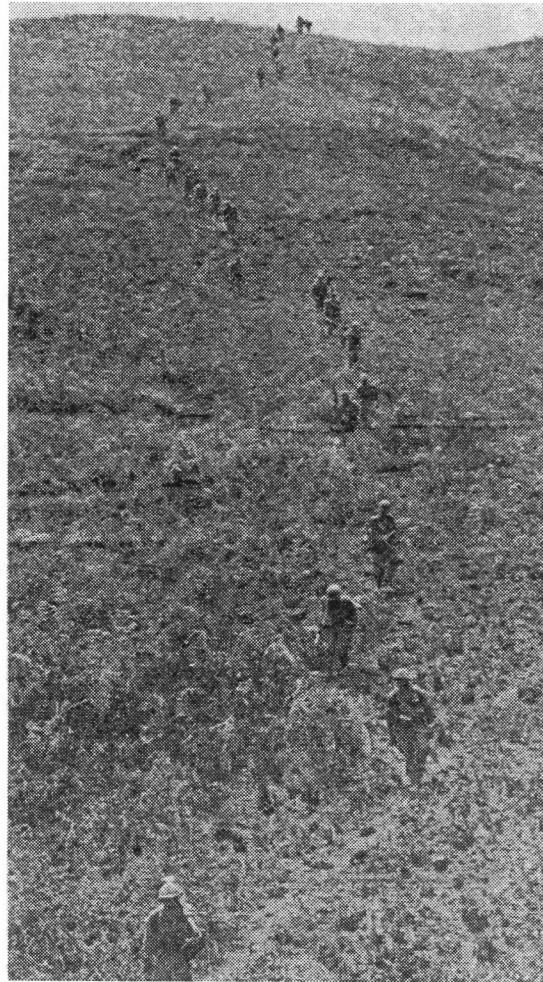
Others had close calls. "The fighting died down," said Fletcher. "I was checking holes. I looked to my left and felt a quick ripping sensation in my shirt. I could see green tracers and thought they were coming from my right. I turned and sprayed the area but someone behind me pinpointed the fire and killed the 'Charlie.' He was only four feet from me in the brush."

As Fletcher talked he fingered three bullet holes in his jacket pocket.

Another paratrooper had his hair parted.

"I was pinned down behind a rice paddy dike," explained Staff Sgt. Hamilton M. Sullivan, Jacksonville, Fla. "I jumped up to throw a grenade when something knocked me to the ground. 'Charlie' had put a round through my helmet but it only parted my hair."

When the battle ended, 17 enemy lay dead. The paratroopers policed up five AK-47s, one Mouser rifle, an RPD machine gun and a B-40 rocket launcher. Other NVA were seen running into the nearby hills.



## Long Walk Down

Paratroopers of B Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. move off a hilltop landing zone during a recent operation.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Art Campbell)

# 3,000 Deaths Estimated By Two Screaming Eagles

CHU LAI — Two paratroopers of the 101st Airborne accounted for an estimated 3,000 deaths between them recently during a civil affairs project in the village of Pho Hiep.

Armed with a case of insecticide, Spec. 4 Caesar Weekes, Long Island, N.Y., and Pfc. Cleo Armstead, Cleveland, sprayed 41 Vietnamese homes, killing insects and rodents.

"I'd say we got at least 3,000," said Weekes, a member of the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. While Weekes and Armstead were killing pests, other para-

troopers were treating the residents of Pho Hiep for disease and illness.

Capt. Joseph A. Westbrook, Atlanta, and his team of medics treated 236 persons, 121 children, 77 women and 38 men. After the medical treatment, the children were given candy and the natives instructions in bathing and personal hygiene.

For the month of September, the battalion civil affairs team treated 432 civilians, and distributed 320 pounds of soap and 170 pounds of candy.

# Rifle Bolt Tips Off Trooper

CHU LAI—The sound of an enemy rifle bolt alerted a 101st Airborne point man during a recent search and destroy operation, resulting in 10 enemy killed.

Spec. 4 Larry Hart, Pontiac, Mich., halted at the sound and saw a North Vietnamese squad enter a village. He passed word back to other members of B Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. The company commander, Capt. James McElroy, Arlington, Va., sent the 3rd and 4th Plats. to flank the village.

Hart and his "slack" man, Spec. 4 Andrew Lewis, Mt. Olive, S.C., led the 4th Plat. along a rice paddy dike on the edge of the village.

"They'll be ready for us," Hart whispered. Then the enemy opened up.

Lewis killed one NVA in a bunker during the initial burst. Another paratrooper was hit and called for the medic.

Pfc. Cecil "Doc" McKinney, Midland, Tex., reacted. Four rounds zipped through a towel attached to his web gear as he leaped for cover near the fallen paratrooper.

Both airborne platoons withdrew, forming a tight perimeter around the village. Then artillery and gunships raked the area.

"I was glad to back off," said McKinney. "All I had to fight with was a bottle of antiseptic."

After the fire support lifted, the paratroopers searched the village. They found 10 NVA dead, heavy blood trails and a carbine.

# Paratrooper Finds Bomb

DUC PHO — What appeared to be a piece of pipe buried in a road of the 101st Airborne forward base camp here turned out to be a 500-pound bomb.

Sgt. Johnnie D. Golden, Jacksonville, Fla., was supervising a police call by troopers of 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. when he saw the piece of metal partially buried in the road.

"I walked on by it," explained Golden. "Then I got to thinking what is a piece of pipe doing in the road. We got some shovels and began to dig around it."

Lt. William A. Wise, Fort Payne, Ala., A Co., 326th Engr., examined the device. "It was not a booby trap, but a bomb probably dropped in the area years ago," said Wise. "There was no fuse, but it could have been dangerous."

An Explosive Ordinance Demolition (EOD) team from 133rd Ordnance Det. evacuated the explosive and detonated it.

## Hawks Sweep Village

CHU LAI — Sgt. Larry M. Young, Burke, S.D., knecled in a helicopter of the 176th Aviation Co. as it carried him over the mountainous jungles near here. He and other members of a reconnaissance platoon of the 101st Airborne were poised for their mission: A raid on a suspected VC village.

Four choppers descended as they neared the target and suddenly swooped into an adjacent rice paddy. The paratroopers leaped out, encountering sporadic enemy fire as they waded through knee-high water toward their objective.

With swift precision the raiders of the 2nd Bn. (Abn.), 327th Inf. split into six-man teams and maneuvered on the village. One VC guard was killed as he defended a hut at the edge of the rice paddy.

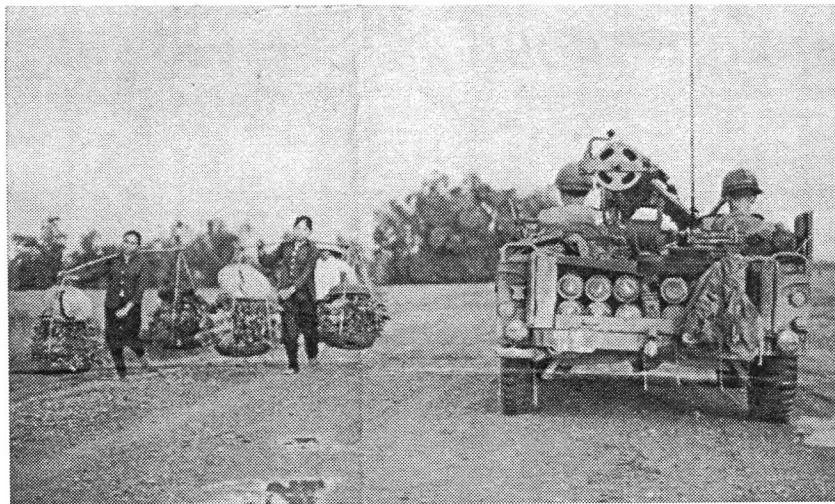
The paratroopers continued to advance. Enemy fled from another side of the village, but were cut down by orbiting gunships.

Pfc. Rafael A. Salvato, Adams, Mass., advanced on a hut at the edge of the village. A VC charged out and met a burst of M-16 rifle fire.

Quickly the paratroopers swarmed into the village, systematically checking each hut. Spec. 4 John E. Montgomery, Riverside, Calif., found a Viet Cong hiding in a bunker and captured him singlehandedly.

"We sure surprised them," said Montgomery. "Old 'Charlie' never knew what hit him."

With two dead VC in their wake, a prisoner and a bundle of captured documents, the paratroopers regrouped at a pre-arranged pickup point. On cue, 15 minutes from original setdown, the helicopters carried away the raiders and their prisoner. Mission accomplished.



## Protection on the Roads

While members of A Troop, 2nd Sqdn. (Abn), 17th Cav., patrol Highway 1 near Tam Ky, Vietnamese women, in their tireless stride, carry goods to the marketplace. (Photo by Spec. 5 William P. Singley)

## Troops Keep Highway Clear

TAM KY—Since the 101st Airborne moved north to Chu Lai, A Troop of the 2nd Sqdn. (Abn), 17th Cav. has been performing convoy and perimeter defense at Tam Ky, the forward supply point (FSP) of the Screaming Eagle brigade.

Also at Tam Ky are a MACV compound, a Navy Construction Battalion (Seabees) and an ARVN unit.

Occasionally the Viet Cong mortar the large compound. Recently, on one of the rare clear nights, the mortars fell in routine fashion. Then a probe was made on the northwestern edge of the perimeter.

"I heard the whistling and thought it was a flare," said Pfc. James E. Armstrong, Maple Glen, Pa. "When it exploded I knew it was mortars again."

Armstrong grabbed his weapon and headed for the sand-

bagged bunker. In the darkness he met other paratroopers running for the bunker.

Pfc. Kazimierz Gorczyński, Pine Island, N.Y., was shaken out of his sleep by the first round. "I thought the world was coming to an end," he said. "But I'm getting used to it."

When the mortars stopped, the Viet Cong laced the entire perimeter with heavy machine gun fire.

Inside a bunker machine gun-

## CIDG Zap Four VC

By SP4 Matt Pesce

MINH LONG — An argument between seven VC and members of the 141st CIDG Co. (Abn) netted four enemy kills and three captured weapons during a recent operation.

The CIDG paratroopers were working with the Tiger element of 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. as the 101st Airborne and other Free World Military Forces conducted search and destroy operations.

Special Forces adviser Staff Sgt. Randall Berry had just checked the CIDG perimeter as darkness fell.

"The VC approached our perimeter," said Berry. "We were challenged. The enemy began an argument with the CIDG forces over who was VC and who was not."

The "yes-you-are; no-I'm not" quarrel lured the VC closer and convinced two of the enemy to cross inside the perimeter.

"One of them overheard me in a radio conversation with the Tiger force commander," recalled Berry. "He shouted a warning to the other VC outside our defensive positions."

One of the CIDG troopers grabbed the VC's weapon and a fire-fight broke out with the remaining five. Three escaped leaving heavy blood trails.

Paratroopers, Spec. 4 Robin Varney, Seattle, and Pfc. Wymon Helms, Fort Meade, Fla., witnessed the incident and praised the CIDG unit.

"They're a fine bunch," said Varney. "We enjoyed working with them."

Helms added: "They fight hard, move quickly and quietly through the roughest jungle. They're the best CIDG outfit I've ever seen."

## Jamming Costly To NVA

CHU LAI—Three North Vietnamese Army soldiers were brought down by three paratroopers of the 101st Airborne because an enemy weapon jammed during Operation Wheel-er west of here.

Lt. James M. Hayes, Santa Fe Springs, Calif., led a three man reconnaissance team through thick jungle to a stream, checking an ambush site.

"Just as we neared a sharp bend in the trail," said Hayes. "My point man motioned for us to get down."

"I spotted an NVA filling his canteens about 30 meters from me," said Spec. 4 Leonard T. Taylor, Cincinnati. "He had a Mauser strapped across his back and I thought we could capture him."

But above the small patrol of the 2nd Plat., 2nd Bn. (Abn.) 502nd Inf. was an NVA with an automatic weapon.

"As soon as we hit the ground 'Charlie' opened up," said Sgt. Arthur J. Blanchard, Keene, N.H. "He got off a three-round burst and then I heard a sharp 'click'. I fired a 10-round burst at him and he fell on the trail about five feet from me."

"When the NVA opened fire, a third NVA jumped out of the bushes near the one at the stream," said Hayes. "By that time the other 'Charlie' had unslung his rifle and both were about to fire when Taylor got them with a quick burst."

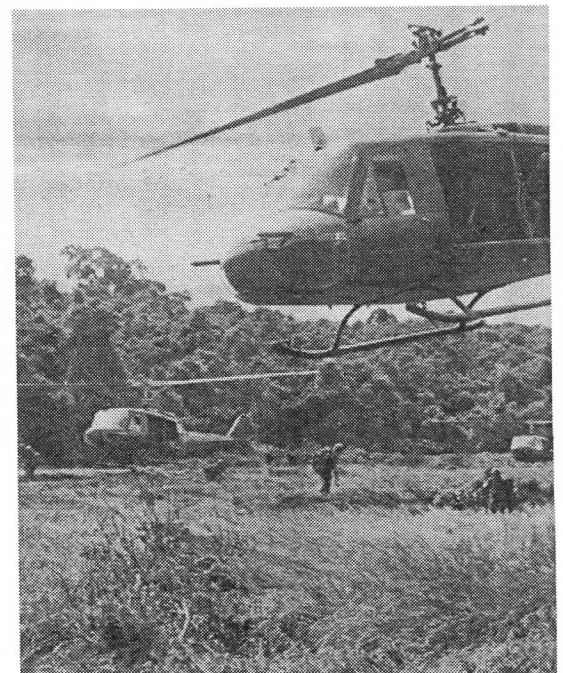
After the firing, the three checked the area for more NVA. The area was clean.

"I went to the NVA Blanchard got," said Taylor. "Sure enough, his rifle had jammed. It probably saved our lives."



## Water Obstacle

Paratroopers of C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., cross a stream during a recent operation. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Art Campbell)



## Combat Assault

Paratroopers of C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., air assault west of Chu Lai. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Art Campbell)

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Nancy Hesler Associate - 1/10 602 Taft Ave. Charleston, IL 61920-4133	COL(R) Bernard J. McCabe, Jr. 1/327 C 6/67-12/69 - 10/09 12210 Vista Bay Lane Houston, TX 77041	COL(R) Kenneth W. Pfeiffer 1/327 C 8/66-8/67 - 1/10 9330 Laurel Grove San Antonio, TX 78250-3552	Michael Shelby HHC 1st Bde 65-66 - 10/09 5600 Kearny-Mesa Road San Diego, CA 92111
Thomas A. Hoesch 2/327 A 4/67-4/68 - 10/09 8 Sixpenny Lane Elverson, PA 19520-9549	Timothy McGlynn 2/327 A 4/67-4/68 - 10/09 24051 County Z Richland Center, WI 53581	James Piecuch 2/502 B 7/65-6/66 - 10/09 P.O. Box 86 Keno, OR 97627	Lyndol Sizemore 1/327 C 7/65-6/66 - 1/10 1745 N. St. Paul Wichita, KS 67203
Robert H. Hopkins 1/327 HQ & A 7/67-7/68 - 10/09 770 Milton Ave. Rock Hill, SC 29730	Arthur B. Macdonald \$ 2/327 C 7/66-7/67 - 10/09 13050 N. Farley Rd. Platte City, MO 64079-8189	Jessie F. Qualls 2/502 B 4/64-7/67 - 10/09 431 N. Locust St. Florence, AL 35630-5507	Alfred D. Smith 2/327 B 7/65-1/68 - 1/10 P.O. Box 1481 North Highlands, CA 95660-1481
John L. Hughes, USA (R) 1/327 HQ T.F. 6/65-6/66 - 10/09 4051 Cedar Circle Nashville, TN 37218-1906	Roderick J. Marshall 2/327 HHQ Hawks 5/66-5/67 - 1/10 2784 Mountain Terrace Memphis, TN 38127-8824	1SGT(R) James B. Rawlinson 2/502 12/65-12/66 - 1/10 139 Michael Lane Talladega, AL 35160	LTC(R) David B. Smith 2/320 FA A Btry 7/65-6/66 - 1/10 P.O. Box 1481 Vernonia, OR 97064-9426
Robert P. Johnston SPT BN 7/65-3/66 - 1/10 21500 Limit Road Easton, KS 66020-7144	Robert O. Martin 2/327 HHC Recon 1/67-11/67 - 1/10 1041 55th St. Downers Grove, IL 60515-4824	MG(R) Fred Raymond 1/327 HHC,A,C,E 1/68-6/69 - 4/10 5609 Cannonade Drive Wesley Chapel, FL 33544	Jean Louis Soucy 1/327 T.F. 5/67-10/67 - 10/09 231 Bordeaux Lane Savannah, GA 31419-2869
Richard J. Keogh \$ 1st LOG Lsn 11/65-8/66 - 4/10 431 Nahua St., Apt 203 Honolulu, HI 96815-2915	Mrs. S. H. Matheson Family (HHC CG 1/67-1/68) - 1/10 26080 Mesa Drive Carmel, CA 93923	SSG(R) John Raymond 1/327 C 67-71 - 10/09 359 Meadow Lane Oak Grove, KY 42262-9211	Donald J. Stevenson 2/320 FA HHB 8/67-11/67 - 1/10 1434 Lone Star Ct. Allen, TX 75013-5450
John Kerins 2/320 FA A Btry 11/67-11/68 - 1/10 11612 Via Montana Fontana, CA 92337-7934	Carl E. Midkiff \$ HHC AIR SECT 12/66-12/67 - 4/11 1029 David Court Radcliff, KY 40160	Donald M. Reddeman 2/502 A & E 8/67-3/69 - 1/10 5115 Eagle Rd. Highland, MI 48356-1401	Vince Tavitian 1/327 A 67-68 - 1/10 5969 Matthew Drive Whitehouse, OH 43571
Thomas Kinane 1/327 C 4/67-12/68 - 10/09 2529 NW Edenbower Blvd., Apt 90 Roseburg, OR 97470	Ralph John Mobilio 2/502 HQ 7/65-6/66 - 10/09 9324 B Maryland St. Oscoda, MI 48750	T. Brian Redington 2/320 FA HQ 9/66-3/68 - 10/09 1340 White Hawk Drive Crown Point, IN 46307-2689	Frederick J. Terhune \$ 1/327 A & HHC 5/66-6/67 - 7/13 115 Fairfield Ave. Mineola, NY 11501-3337
Patrick A. Knaub 2/320 Arty HHQ 4/67-11/67 - 4/10 550 Lioners Creek Rd. Dallastown, PA 17313-9502	Jay Moore 2/320 FA Btry C 3/67-2/68 - 1/10 P.O. Box 500 Penryn, CA 95663-0500	COL(R) Lawrence A. Redmond 2/327 A 5/67-2/68 - 4/10 336 Crystal River Dr. Kissimmee, FL 34759-5212	Tommy Thompson Family(Kirk KIA 66 2/17) - 10/09 225 Fourth Ave. #203 Venice, CA 90291
Don Koivisto 1/327 D&HHC 7/67-4/69 - 1/10 611 Urban Ln Brookhaven, MS 39601-2445	Richard H. Murphy, Jr. 1/327 HHC T.F. 8/66-3/69 - 1/10 63 Washington St., Unit 2 Dedham, MA 02026-1928	Kenneth M. Reese 2/502 C 1/67-12/67 - 10/09 2589 Ridge Road Cobbs Creek, VA 23035	Frank C. Trout 1/327 ABU 2/66-6/66 - 10/09 328 N. Wilmette Ave. Westmont, IL 60559-1553
Jose S. Laguana \$ 2/502 A 12/65-9/66 - 1/10 P.O. Box 21823 Barrigada, Guam 96921-1823	Jesse W. Myers, Jr. 2/327 HHC&C 6/67-6/68 - 1/10 8564 Kilty Court Charlotte, NC 28269-6113	John D. Roberts 2/502 A 8/66-7/67 - 1/11 617 McDonald Church Rd. Rockingham, NC 28379-8525	Earnest O. Turpin 2/327 A 7/66-2/67 - 1/10 1225 Linden Rd. W. Sacramento, CA 95691-5101
James E. Leggette \$ 2/327 B 7/66-7/67 - 10/09 206 W. 157th Street P.O. Box 1481 Harvey, IL 60426-1481	David "Doc" Nelms \$ 1/327 HHC TF Med 10/66-10/67 - 10/09 PO Box 311 Hayes, VA 23072-0311	COL(R) Marvin Rosenstein \$ 2/327 HHC 5/66-7/67 - 1/11 2104 Chinaberry Cr Harker Heights, TX 76548	MG(R) Paul E. Vallely 2/327 A 1/66-6/66 - 10/09 P.O. Box 1596 Bigfork, MT 59911-1596
Donald R. Lenc \$ 2/320 FA HHB 6/67-6/68 - 4/10 5240 Windfall Rd. Medina, OH 44256-8750	Art Osborne 2/327, 3/506 7/67-7/68 - 1/10 3650 Denewood Ct. Columbus, GA 31909-3741	Frank E. Rowe 2/502 A&E 9/67-9/68 - 1/10 508 Sundance Dr. Lawrenceburg, TN 38464	James C. Walden 2/502 B 4/66-4/67 - 4/10 74 Branch St. #16 Scituate, MA 02066
Albert "Josh" Lucas 1/327 ABU 7/66-7/67 - 1/10 810 S. Jackson Ave. Mason City, IA 50401-4917	SSG John Pasquale 2/502 B 12/65-2/66 - 1/10 15 Indian Point Estates Wheeling, WV 26003-4541	COL(R) Ben Schlapak, P.E. 326 ENGR A 6/67-2/68 - 1/10 1545 Molina St. Honolulu, HI 96818	CSM(R) Dewey Walker 1/327 HQ 3/63-7/66 - 1/10 P.O. Box 7452 Jacksonville, FL 32238-0452



James W. Wallace  
2/502 HHC 12/66-12/67 - 1/11  
6882 N.C. Highway 194 N  
Boone, NC 28607-9065

Bill West \$  
1/327 HHC 4/67-4/68 - 1/11  
201 Park Drive  
Oxford, MS 38655

MAJ(R) Fred M. White  
2/327 C&A 8/67-8/68 - 1/10  
3 Fairway Drive  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

Terry L. Wiley  
2/327 B 7/67-2/69 - 10/09  
P.O. Box 391  
Middletown, DE 19709-0391

Dennis Rae Wright  
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4510 Custis Ave.  
Sacramento, CA 95822-1440

Mike Yancey  
2/502 E 9/67-9/68 - 1/13  
4510 Union Place  
Flowery Branch, GA 30542-3643

John Yeager, Jr.  
2/502 C 11/66-9/67 - 1/10  
Law Ofcs of John Yeager, Jr.  
3312 West Street  
Weirton, WV 26062-4610

\$ = Above Subscription Price

## Address Corrections

December 16, 2009 through  
March 3, 2009

Clay Barker  
181st MI DET 6/66-6/67 - 10/09  
3910 Lochview Ct.  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29588-6759

SFC(R) John Burke, Jr.  
2/327 C 12/65-12/66 - 7/09  
11018 Le Jardin Cir Apt 102  
Temple Terrace, FL 33617-2849

Paul L. Grady  
2/327 C 8/66-8/67 - 4/09  
37847 Vance Rd.  
Albany, OH 45710-9069

Thomas Kinane  
1/327 C 4/67-12/68 - 10/09  
2529 NW Edenbower Blvd., Apt 90  
Roseburg, OR 97470

Raymond T. (Rocky) Ryan  
1/327 A 1/64-66 (WIA 65) - 10/09  
5021 Peregrine Dr.  
Shallotte, NC 28470

Leonard A. Vitha  
2/502 Recon HQ 7/66-7/67 - 10/09  
200 US Highway 71 S, Apt 5D  
Jackson, MN 56143-1706

COL(R) Joseph Wasco, Jr.  
2/327 CO 1/66-1/67 - 4/09  
St. Catherine's Nursing Center  
331 S. Seton Ave.  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

# HAWK PLATOON HHC 2/327 EASTER 1967



I enjoyed the January newsletter which included pictures from the recent reunion. The pictures confirm the widely held opinion that ex-paratroopers age better than most. The group picture of the Hawk platoon HHC 2/327 caught my eye.

I was a member of the Hawk platoon and although I didn't recognize any of the names of the men in the picture, it is understandable. The platoon was volunteer and for reasons both good and bad, turnover was high.

I've enclosed a copy of a picture of the platoon taken on Easter Sunday, 1967. HHC had received a combat ribbon for recent actions by the platoon.

At the time our battalion had been sent back to the Tuy Hoa area and told to "bail out" the Fourth Infantry Division. I don't know if bail out was the right description, but it sounded good at the time.

The Fourth had taken over Tuy Hoa when the brigade was sent to Kontum. What I remember about Kontum was that it was the only place in Vietnam where I froze my buns off at night. We also made that goofy pay jump to start operations.

In any case this picture may be of interest to some of the guys who might recognize a face or name.

Bottom Row, left to right  
Ranger Stock, Plt. Sgt. Jones, SSG Westerman,  
SSG Morales

Middle Row  
Paschall, Golden, Kirst, Cooney, Meyer, Haste,  
SSG Copeland, Karpuska, Bowen

Top Row  
SSG Melesko, Moses, Kruger, Hall,  
Morehouse, Rule, McGiver, Ewing, Goodwin,  
Carter, Chiles

Not in the picture: Raleigh, Ursillo, Crane and that's about as good as my memory works after 41 years.

I recently retired after 38 years as a pipefitter and hopefully will have time to enjoy future reunions. I have no computer skills, no E-mail, no cell phone, just grandkids, a good fishing boat and a great family who put up with my nonsense.

Life has been good and I owe a lot of that to the time spent with the finest combat brigade of the Vietnam war. Airborne, All the Way.

Hank Meyer 2/327 HHC 6/66-6/67  
9226 S. Avers Avenue  
Evergreen Park, IL 60805  
708-423-6720



# Lt. Gen. Harry W. O. Kinnard

from ARMY Magazine March 2009

Lt. Gen. Harry Kinnard

The death of Lt. Gen. Harry W.O. Kinnard, U.S. Army retired, on January 5, revived memories of that great soldier. As an ardent student of military history, I had placed him high on my list of soldiers to emulate. I never considered that I would have the opportunity to meet him.

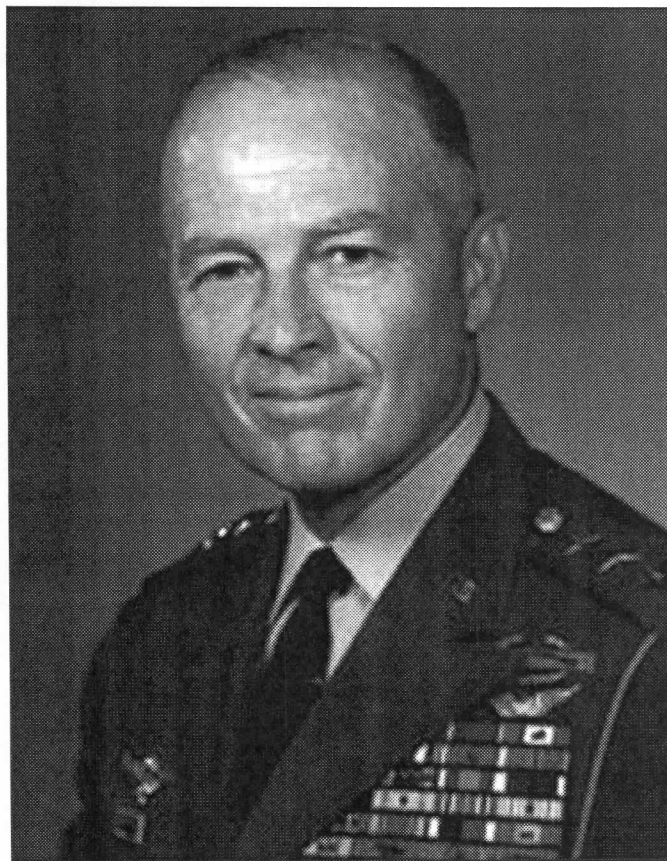
In September 1965, the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, was sent to An Khe, Republic of Vietnam, to secure the area for the newly deployed 1st Cavalry Division. My rifle platoon in Company B, 1/327th Infantry, was pulled out of the field to serve as the honor guard for Gen. Kinnard's arrival. He was 50 then and the best-looking soldier I had ever seen. Following the ceremony, Gen. Kinnard tapped the patch on his right shoulder and said to me: "I earned the Screaming Eagle on another battlefield. I know it will always mean as much to you as it has to me." My spirits soared.

In 1968, I returned to the 101st proudly wearing the Screaming Eagle on both shoulders. In the spring of 1969 my rifle company, Company D, 2/506th Infantry, was detailed to secure Fire Support Base Bastogne, west of Hue. It was a sprawling fire base with several artillery batteries. But something was missing. I had my company arrange sandbags on the landing pad to spell out in big letters "NUTS!" [Gen. Kinnard had inspired Gen. Anthony McAuliffe's storied "nuts" retort to a German demand for surrender in the Belgian town of Bastogne during World War II.]

Patrick H. Graves Jr. 1/327 B 7/65  
Huntsville, Ala.

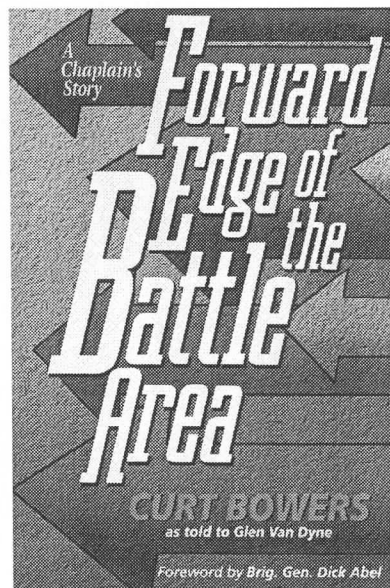


*Then-Brigadier General Anthony C. McAuliffe and Lieutenant Colonel Harry W. O. Kinnard.*

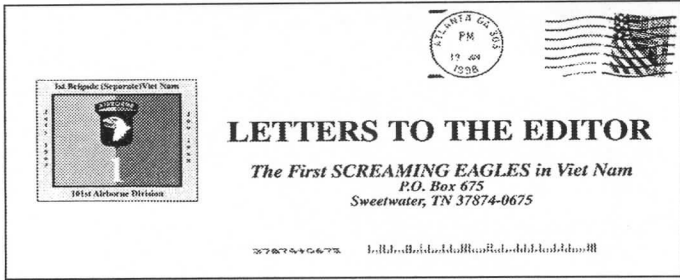


*Lieutenant General Harry W. O. Kinnard*

## Forward Edge of the Battle Area



A few copies of the book FORWARD EDGE OF THE BATTLE AREA by Chaplain (COL-R) Curtis R. Bowers, 1/327 HQ 7/65-6/66 are left from the reunion. Price is \$10.00 + \$2.00 shipping. See page 34 for order form.



## E-MAIL MESSAGES

+ C. W. DINKLE, 1/327 TF Recon 7/65-7/66  
 2440 Roark Mill Rd., Hurt, VA 24563-3556  
 work (434) 944-2231 home (434) 324-8508  
 cwd6343@yahoo.com

Hello Ivan, I have been thinking about this since Chaplain Bowers talked about it at the reunion in Hampton. A group of us went back on the night of February 7, 1966 to retrieve the two bodies. Chaplain Bowers said he considered it suicide to try and retrieve the bodies and he tried to talk us out of going. We went back into the North Viet base camp under cover of darkness, not knowing what we might run into. We got the bodies of Lt. Gardner and O'shounesy (Not spelled correctly) out and back to the platoon. I do not remember the names of the other guys that went. I carried everyone's M-16 so they could carry the bodies back.

I think this should be documented as to the names of the people that went and what they did. Lt. Foley should have kept a record of this. Can you find out more about this?

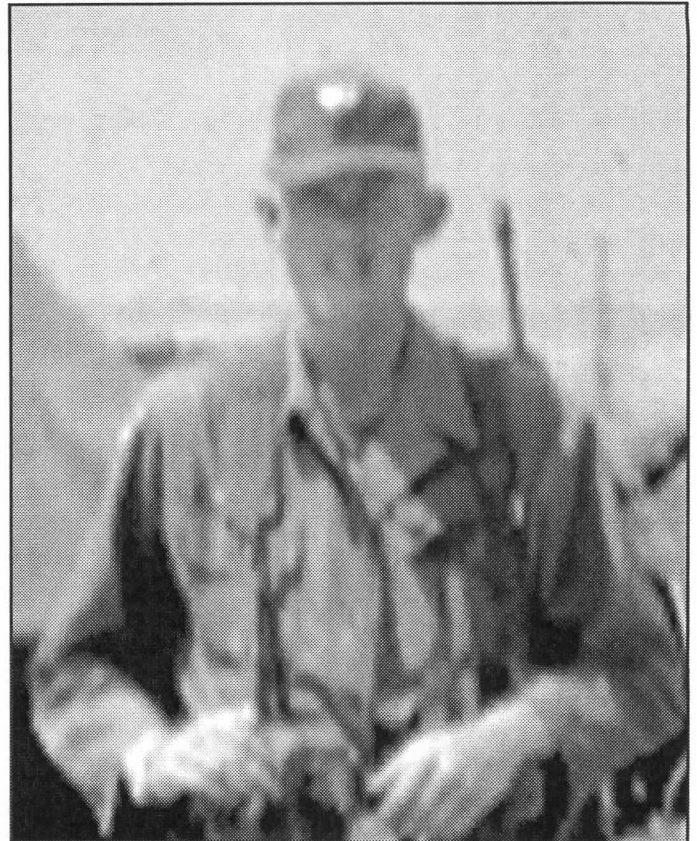
Thank you and Merry Christmas  
 Carroll Dinkle, Tiger Force 1965-1966

*Editor's Note: If you have any information on this please contact the editor.*

+ STEPHEN D. EICHERLY, Det 3, 3rd RRU 7/65-2/66  
 11382 Mac Duff St., Garden Grove, CA 92841-1516  
 (714) 290-9039  
 seicherly@sbcglobal.net

I thought I had sent this in before but never saw anything published.

I would like to identify, by name, two friends of mine from Vietnam. They were both MPs with Hqs, 1st Bde, in 1965.



I was with Det 3, 3rd RRU, 1st Bde, and our tents were near each other. I would also like to hear from any of the 1st Bde MPs who might be able to identify the two MPs in the attached photos.

Thanks for your assistance,  
 Stephen D. Eicherly

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## U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

+ BG(R) JOHN W. COLLINS, III, DCO 7-12/67 CO 12/67-7/68, 210 Hillview Dr., San Antonio, TX 78209-2205, (210) 822-0873, along with his subscription renewal wrote: Hands and wrists are a mess. Cannot travel, drive or dress myself – growing old too fast.

---

+ MG(R) FRED RAYMOND, 1/327 HHC,A,C,E 1/68-6/69, 5609 Cannonade Drive, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544, (813) 994-0454 wrote the following. I've enclosed my check for another year's membership. Better early than late.

I noticed in the January magazine that Joseph A. "Burt" Westbrook registered for the reunion. He was my company commander in Vietnam. I would like to contact him and say hello. Do you have an e-mail or postal address for him?

Happy New Year!  
Fred

*Editor's Note: I sent Fred Raymond address info for Joseph Westbrook.*

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+ MRS. JAN MCMULLEN, American Red Cross VN, 6318 23rd St. N.W., Gig Harbor, WA 98335-7525, (253) 265-8589 who served with the First Brigade (S) in Viet Nam and is a subscriber sent a Scout Dog video, titled WAR DOGS, with the following note: "Ivan, I hope you will know a Scout Dog handler who would like to have this video. Jan McMullen." The video was sent to James Moore, also a subscriber, 42nd Scout Dog 7/67-7/68, P.O. Box 243, Lovell, ME 04051, (207) 928-2553 along with a letter of explanation.

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+ DONALD R. LENC, 2/320 FA HHB, Redleg C 2/327 Inf 6/67-6/68, 5240 Windfall Rd., Medina, OH 44256-8750, work (216) 276-0977 home (330) 722-1879 along with his subscription renewal wrote: Great job on the reunion! I had a good time seeing old friends and making new ones. You'll never find a better group of people than the 1st BDE. Enclosed check for another year and extra to help as needed.

---

COL(R) MARVIN ROSENSTEIN, 2/327 HHC 5/66-7/67, 2104 Chinaberry Cr, Harker Heights, TX 76548,

work (254) 289-7276 home (254) 698-6675 wrote: Enclosed is a check for a two (2) year renewal plus a bit towards the expenses you are incurring doing an outstanding job of keeping the spirit of the First Screaming Eagles alive.

Your efforts are truly appreciated.

Marv Rosenstein (Easy Eagle)

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+ JOHN L. PATTEN, 2/320 Arty HQ 4/67-10/67, 600 Vine Street, Middletown, PA 17057-2263, (717) 944-4940 along with his renewal wrote: Thanks for the reminder. Here is my year's subscription. Do as you wish with the additional. Thanks, too, for the great job you do. My first reunion in Hampton was great. All the best. Airborne

---

+ JAMES W. GEARY, SPT BN A 7/65-1/66, 216 Elm Drive, Upper Sandusky, OH 43351-1046, (419) 294-5739 sent the following along with his subscription renewal and order.

I just finished reading the January 2009 issue of THE FIRST SCREAMING EAGLES IN VIET NAM and enjoyed it immensely. I found the coverage on the 11th Biennial Reunion to be especially interesting. As always, a job well done!

I am presently co-chairing a committee on the upgrading of veteran color guard uniforms for the three local major veteran organizations in town (AMVETS, American Legion and VFW). My co-chair is a Marine who served in Vietnam and we are in the process of developing a common uniform patch that can be worn on the left shoulder. He has assembled various catalogs, including one from SGT GRIT, a firm that specializes in Marine Corps memorabilia including customized patches and items.

Some years back I suggested that you might consider ordering the 2"x 3" rectangular 1st Brigade flag patch that could be made available to 1st Brigade members who might wish to purchase one or more. It would be one way of generating additional income for the organization. Personally I think the 1st Brigade rectangular patch would look attractive on a uniform or a blazer.

Please process my order at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions, or need further information, please call me at (419) 294-5739. I can be reached most weekday mornings. In the meantime, keep up the great



work on behalf of 1st Brigade (Separate) veterans. Best wishes for a happy and successful 2009!

Sincerely,  
/S/ James W. Geary

---

+ CARL E. MIDKIFF, HHC AIR SECT 12/66-12/67, 1029 David Court, Radcliff, KY 40160, (270) 351-1950 sent the following: Looks like it's subscription renewal time again. Enclosed is enough for a two-year renewal plus a little for you to use for your expenses.

Hope this finds you well. I had spine surgery last year. Takes a while to recover at our age (75) but things could be worse.

At my granddaughter's request I am copying a lot of my old slides onto a DVD. Lots of pictures from my tour which started at Kontum in Dec '66 to Chu Lai/Phan Rang in Dec '67. I'll send you a DVD when I get it finished.

Keep up the good work Ivan, everyone who served in the 1st BDE appreciates the great job you are doing.

Best Wishes,  
Carl Midkiff

*Editor's Note: Thanks Carl! I look forward to getting the pictures on a disk.*

---

+ RAYMOND T. (ROCKY) RYAN, 1/327 A 1/64-66 (WIA 65), 5021 Peregine Dr., Shallotte, NC 28470, (910) 579-1382 when becoming a new subscriber sent the following: I moved from Chadwicks, NY to Shallotte, NC in 2001. Please let everyone from 1st Brigade and 1/327 know. I served from 64-66 with Abu Company. I stepped on a mine September 10, 1965.

*Editor's Note: I have been trying since the Hampton Reunion to find a correct address for Ray. There was no address listed when he registered at the reunion. After listing his name in the Bad Addresses in the January 2009 issue - he has been located. Thanks to whoever let Ray know I was looking for him!*

+ = Current Subscriber



## OBITUARY

Marie Wasco,  
wife of COL (R) Joseph Wasco, Jr.,  
2/327 CO 1/66-1/67 (Wild Gypsy)

Marie Wasco WESTMINSTER, MD - Marie Wasco, 82, of Union Bridge, MD, died on Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009, at the Carroll Hospice Dove House in Westminster, MD. Born on June 10, 1926, in Cream Ridge, NJ, Mrs. Wasco was the daughter of the late George and Elizabeth (Bordash) Fazakas Sr. She was the wife of 63 years of Ret. Colonel Joseph Wasco of Union Bridge, MD. Mrs. Wasco was a manager of food concessions at Fort Dix, NJ, and was a devoted homemaker during her husband's travels through Europe, the Far East, Hawaii and the United States. She was a communicant of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Taneytown, MD. Surviving, in addition to her husband, are children, Marie E. Wasco of Union Bridge, MD, and Joseph Wasco III of Hawaii; granddaughter, Marahea, and a great-granddaughter, Jene'. She was the last of her immediate family, being predeceased by a brother, George Fazakas Jr., and a sister, Elizabeth Fazakas. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at 11 a.m. Thursday, March 5th, 2009, at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 44 Frederick St., Taneytown, MD, with Msgr. Martin E. Feild as celebrant. The family will receive friends 2-4 p.m. Sunday at the Myers-Durboraw Funeral Home, 136 E. Baltimore St., Taneytown, MD, with rosary prayers recited at 4 p.m. A graveside service and interment will be held at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10, in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA. Memorial contributions may be made to Carroll Hospice, 292 Stoner Ave., Westminster, MD 21157.



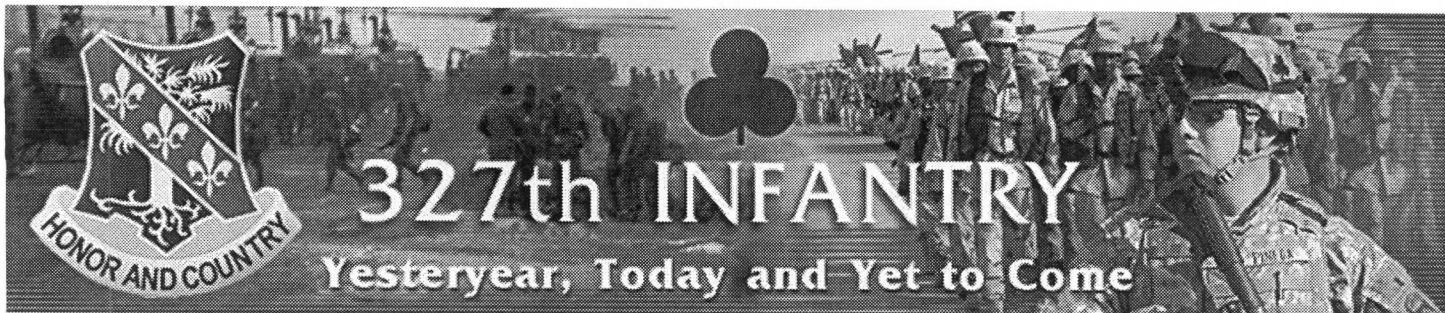
## FIRST BRIGADE SCRAPBOOK



The FIRST BRIGADE, 101st Airborne Division SCRAPBOOK was compiled by Department of the Army "For Fighting Men too Busy to Keep Their Own!"

The SCRAPBOOK contains 105 8.5 x 11 inch pages and is three hole punched ready to be secured in a regular three ring notebook. Great care was taken to make copies that are true to the original.

Cost is \$15.00 per copy postpaid. See the order form on page 34.



## Monument honors First Brigade fallen

by Spc. Richard Daniels, 1st Brigade Combat Team  
 Published: Friday, February 13, 2009  
 THE FORT CAMPBELL COURIER

Hundreds of Soldiers and civilians gathered Friday to attend a Bastogne memorial service and monument dedication ceremony at the 1st Brigade Combat Team's parade field.

A large stone monument bearing the names of 34 Bastogne warriors, who made the ultimate sacrifice during the last two rotations in Iraq, was unveiled to families, friends and Soldiers of the 1st BCT.

Colonel Michael S. McBride and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Wright were on hand to unveil the granite monument, which sits among other memorials to fallen Bastogne Soldiers near the Brigade's headquarters.

"This ceremony today is for the Soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice to our nation," said McBride. "These men and women sacrifice, so that others might live; both Iraqi and American. So that 16-year-old boys, instead of carrying guns, they can go to school."

The solemn audience listened as McBride shared stories about who these Soldiers were and the impact they had on both their units and the Iraqi people.

"Their efforts in the first seven months were tough," said McBride. For 15 months, Bastogne Soldiers worked tirelessly to terminate a fledgling insurgency in the Salah ad Din province, while securing population centers and providing support to the burgeoning Iraqi Security Forces.

"They brought security to a population," said McBride, "allowed the economy to thrive and allowed people to travel freely. "Most of all their efforts brought something that was lacking in October 2007 that you can clearly see in November 2008...there is hope," he said proudly.

Bastogne was deployed to Salah ad Din Province, Iraq September 2007. Their missions focused around the cities of Samarra, Tikrit, Balad, Baiji and Ad Dujayl.

Through their efforts in cities such as Samarra, Tikrit, Balad, Baiji and Ad Dujayl, the Soldiers of the 1st BCT were instrumental in reducing attacks by more than 70 percent.

As the brigade prepares for its next rendezvous and as the new replace the old, Bastogne Soldiers will always remember the sacrifices of those who gave everything over there.

"We will not forget our Soldiers sacrifice," said McBride. "They did not go in vain."



(L to R) Commanding Officer Colonel Michael S. McBride and Command Sergeant Major Robert Wright of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, stand at the new Memorial to 1st BCT Killed in Action during the dedication ceremony. COL Scott McBride in his earlier presentation called the name of every soldier honored on the memorial, told where each died and what the action in which they made the ultimate sacrifice did to advance the freedom of that part of Iraq. Following is a list of those whose names appear on the memorial: SGT Thomas B. Turner, PFC Benjamin T. Zieske, CPL Ty J. Johnson, PFC Joseph J. Duenas, PFC Scott A. Messer, PFC Allan A. Morr, PFC Christopher L. Marion, SGT Rickey E. Jones, SSG Gregson G. Gourley, SGT Clifton J. Yazzie, SSG Rickey Scott, PFC Matthew C. Frantz, SGT Dennis J. Flanagan, SGT Louis A. Griese, SPC Jermaine D. Franklin, SSG Jonathan L. Martin, SGT Eric J. Hernandez, PVT Dewayne L. White, CPT Adam P. Snyder, SPC Phillip J. Pannier, PFC Ivan E. Merlo, SGT David J. Hart, CPL John P. Sigsbee, PFC David H. Sharrett, PFC Danny L. Kimme, SPC Steven J. Christofferson, SGT Adam J. Kohlhaas, CPL Benjamin K. Brosh, PFC John T. Bishop, 1LT Timothy W. Cunningham, PVT Branden Haurert, SGT Blake W. Evans, SFC Steven J. Chevalier, PFC Jennifer L. Cole.



## In memory of... Strike remembers fallen Soldiers at monument unveiling



*502nd Memorial (photo by  
Charles R. Gant, 2/502 A&D 12/67-12/68)*

### THE FORT CAMPBELL COURIER

Vol. 45, No. 7 February 19, 2009

by Staff Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd Brigade Combat Team

When the 2nd “Strike” Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, deployed to Iraq in October 2007 they took on the job of stabilizing Iraq’s government and economy, while simultaneously weeding out criminal and insurgent forces throughout northwest Baghdad.

“We partnered with the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police to provide security to the people. They teamed together for a noble cause; a cause for security to the Iraqi people in a nation long oppressed by a ruthless dictator, living under the thread of al Qaeda and a rogue militia,” said Col. William B. Hickman, commander of the Strike Brigade.

This was a job the Soldiers of the Strike Brigade took very seriously, as they spent countless hours walking the streets of Baghdad, or meeting with local sheiks.

However, often the best Soldiers pay the ultimate sacrifice in creating stability and control in a foreign land.

When the Strike Brigade returned to Fort Campbell in late November 2008, 22 Soldiers who embarked on that journey were no longer seen among Soldiers in formation, for they had given their life in defense of something greater than them.

“We will never forget the sacrifices of these fallen Soldiers and their continued sacrifices to their families,” Hickman said.

To honor those 22 men and women who died during the brigade’s recent deployment to Iraq, the Strike Brigade held a memorial ceremony Feb. 12.

With many family members, friends and fellow Soldiers watching, the Brigade unveiled a monument dedicated to their fallen comrades.

Just as past monuments have depicted, this particular one highlighted the sacrifices of these 22 Strike Soldiers.

“Twenty-two men and women gave their lives so others could be free. Twenty-two men and women, we honor today as special Americans who came forward and answered their nations call,” said Hickman. “These Soldiers [who] gave their lives in areas of Iraq that will always be part of the history of this regiment where our units went forward, faced a determined enemy and won. These will be remembered as places where our Soldiers went, with their sweat and blood, and made a significant impact.”

The sacrifices these Soldiers made will never go unnoticed, Hickman said. Throughout the 14-month deployment, as the main effort in Baghdad, the Strike Brigade targeted the various criminal organizations, brought water and electricity back to the poorest of areas, and restored the Iraqis faith in the Iraqi Security Forces. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Inf. Regt., while separated from the brigade accomplished the same mission south of Baghdad in Iskandariyah.

Most importantly they met their intent of creating success within the Iraqi Security Forces, said Hickman. They empowered them to stand up to the insurgents, the militias, the rogue elements, and to protect the Iraqi people from senseless violence.

“... and for that I’m extremely proud of their accomplishments,” Hickman added. “But no words today will make your loss less painful.”

“The sacrifices of our Soldiers will never be forgotten and were not in vain. Our nation will succeed in Iraq. Our nation is safer because of their success. Our nation will forever be indebted for our Soldiers and their families continued sacrifices.”

This monument will forever lie upon the grounds on which current and future Strike Brigade Soldiers will walk upon.

For Staff Sgt. Justin Black, a squad leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, who has served two tours in Iraq with the regiment, the monument will forever hold a special place in his heart.

“[The memorial] helps you remember,” said Black. “It helps you remember the past and what good the person brought to your everyday life.”

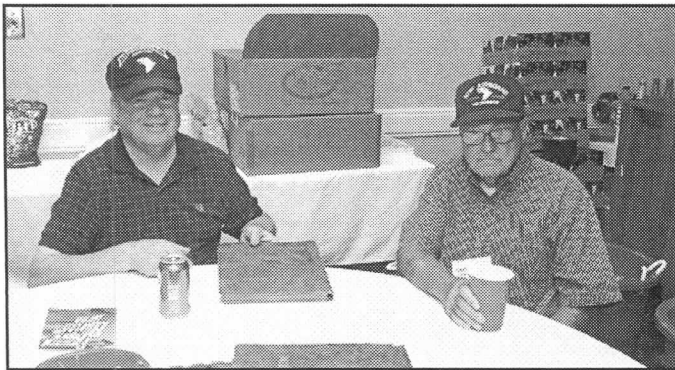
His fight will be for remembering them and carrying on the legacy that comes with being a Strike Soldier.



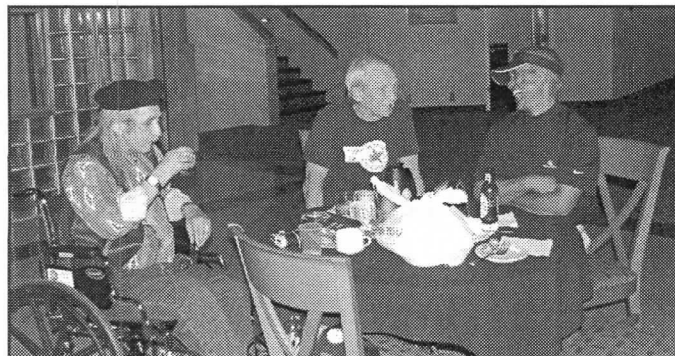
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 101st Abn Div  
 Sept. 25-28, 2008  
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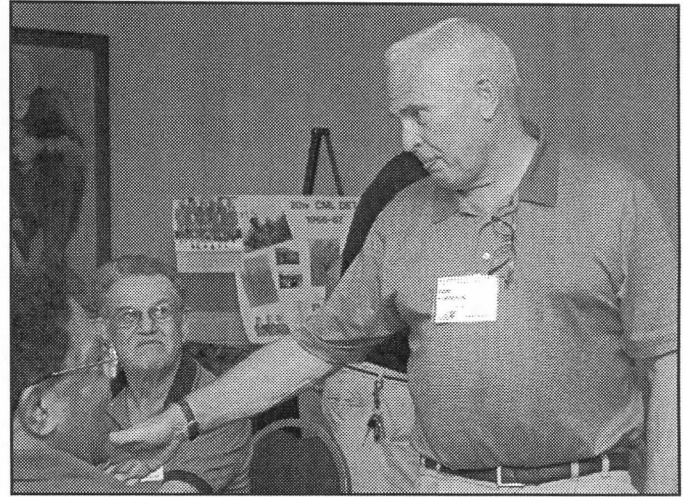

(L to R) Fred Behrens, President of the Gen William C. Lee Chapter, 101st Airborne Division Association helps Master of Ceremonies COL(R) Lawrence A. Redmond, 2/327 A 5/67-2/68, with a glass to use in proposing a toast.



(L to R) Thomas W. Dohnke, 2/327 A 7/67-5/68 and C. W. Dinkle, 1/327 T.F. Recon 7/65-7/66 review some historical records in the hospitality room.



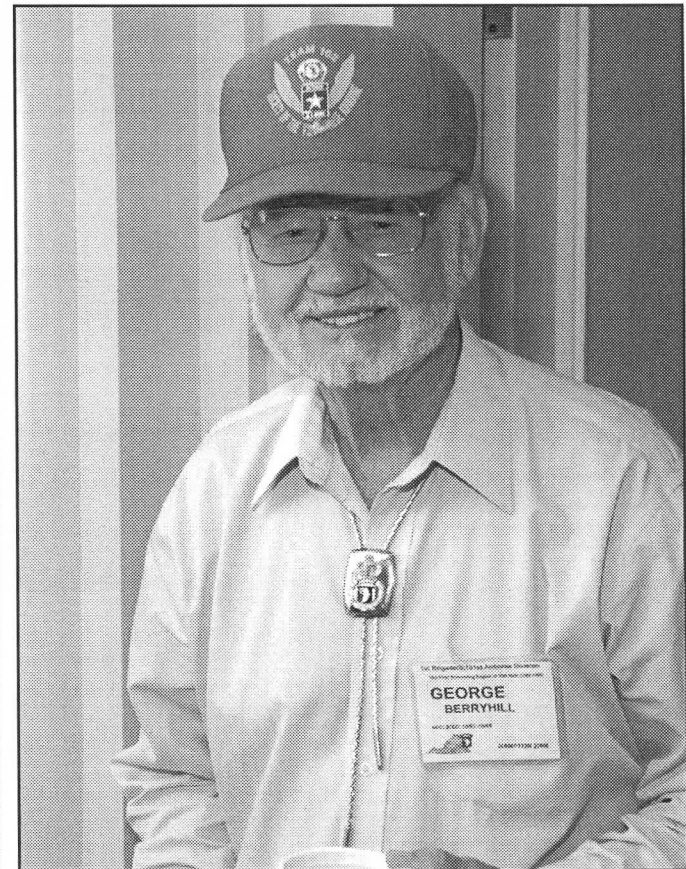
(L to R) Robert J. (Buffalo Bob) Corey, 2/502 HHC 10/65-1/67; Dennis M. Fague, 1/327 HHC T.F. and Douglas Abran, 2/327 A 67-68 enjoy a drink and story in the hotel bar.



LTC(R) Charles T. (Tom) Furgeson, 2/327 A & HHC 5/66-5/67 helps to make a point in the hospitality room (sorry the others cannot be identified).



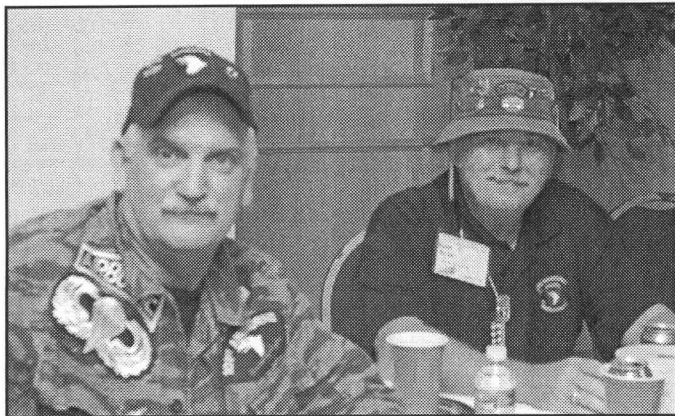
A good time was had by all in the hospitality room.



CW4(R) George T. Berryhill, 2/327 HHC 10/67-10/68







(L to R) Perry B. Larson, 2/320 FA C 7/66-7/67 and David "Doc" Nelms, 1/327 HHC T.F. Med 10/66-10/67 selling raffle tickets.



(L to R) Ruth Mew, Donald Mew, 2/502 C 12/65-9/66, and Wilford E. Roe, 2/502 B 8/64-9/65, in the hospitality room.



Henry Willey, 2/502 A 2/67-2/68; Terry L. Wiley, 2/327 B 4/67-2/68 and Dean Beaupre, 2/502 A 1/67-1/68.



Jean Louis Soucy, 1/327 Tiger Force 5/67-10/67, and Yun Cha



Hilarity in the hospitality room with (L to R) Sarah Quarles; Jim Joiner, 2/327 B & C 1/67-1/68; Robert Hudson, 2/327 C 8/64-7/66; Harvey P. Appleman, 2/327 HQ 2/67-3/68 and John P. Lawton, 2/327 A 66-67.

# LRRPs Ambush VC Column; Capture Rocket Launcher

PHAN RANG—The dense jungle loomed menacingly on each side of the trail. The men of the 1st Brigade's Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) were alert for enemy ambush positions. Quietly, they moved down the narrow path.

Suddenly the point man, Staff Sgt. Lester E. Hite, St. Louis, dropped to his hands and knees. The rest of the column repeated his movement. Where once a string of men had stretched down the trail, no one could be seen. Camouflaged fatigues blended into the dark green foliage.

The late afternoon sun filtered through the heavy jungle, Barely audible, footsteps could be heard on the trail ahead.

Hite removed his rucksack. Inching his way forward, he saw the point element of the enemy squad.

Sgt. Ray Martinez, Los Angeles, crawled forward with his M-60 machine gun. The Viet Cong point man noticed the movement and shouldered his rifle. Quickly Hite fired a burst from his M-16. Martinez immediately raked the area with machine gun fire.

As the volume of fire increased, Hite saw an insurgent aim a rocket launcher.

"That was a pretty nervous moment for me," said Hite. "We started firing with everything we had. We couldn't allow them to fire that damn thing."

Spec. 4 Jack MaGill, Los Angeles, moved alongside Martinez and Hite.

"We crawled forward to throw grenades," said MaGill. "But that bamboo made the going slow."

The paratroopers pitched grenades into the enemy positions. In return, a VC tossed a grenade toward Hite, Martinez and MaGill.

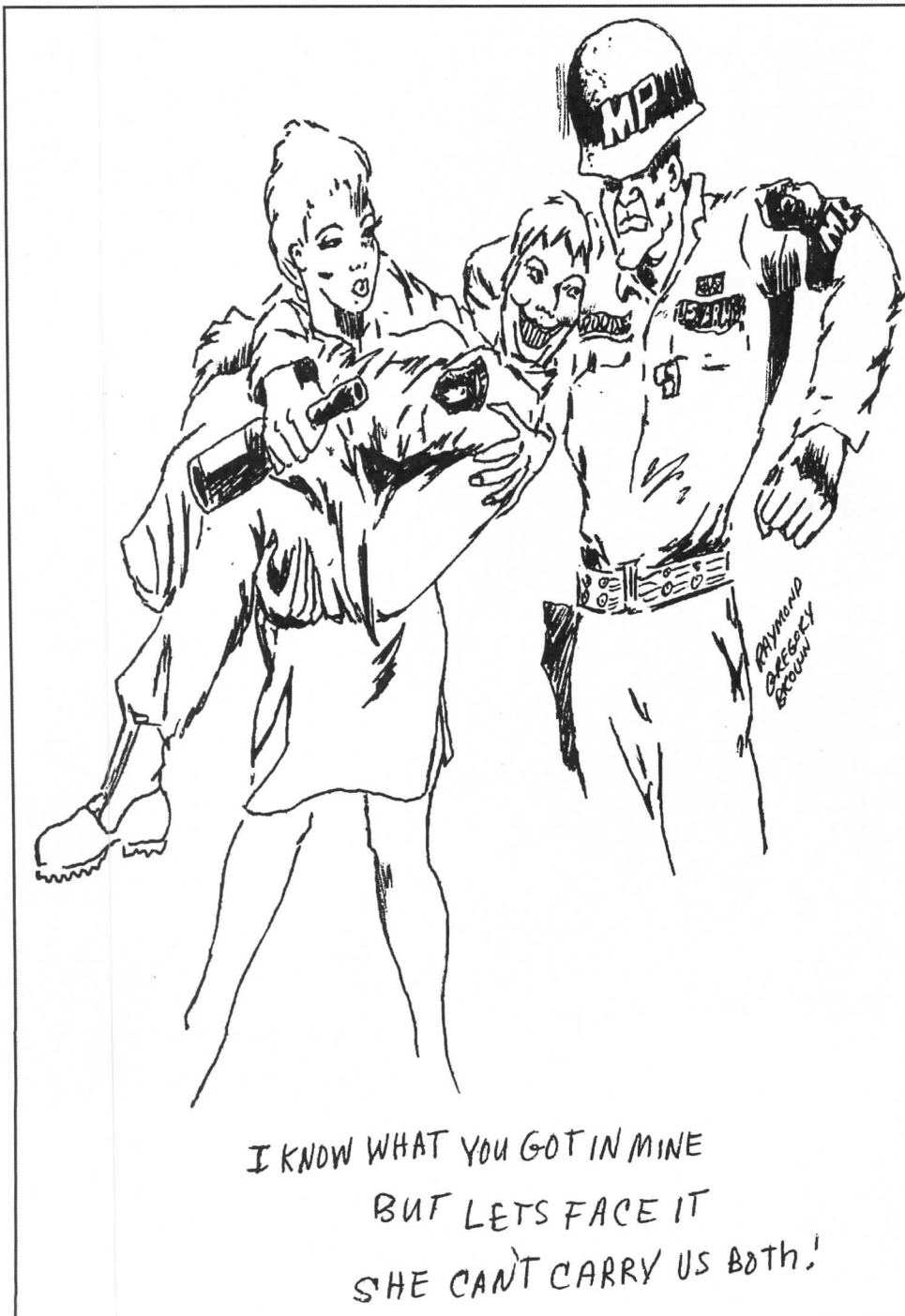
"Grenade!" yelled Hite.

The explosion shattered the staccato beat of the automatic weapons. Shrapnel ripped through the area. Hite felt hot metal cut his back.

"It knocked me over, but I didn't have time to think about it," he said.

The VC abandoned the heavy rocket launcher and fled. The LRRP's moved into the enemy positions, found the rocket launcher and two rockets.

"We didn't find any bodies, but that rocket launcher won't be used to hit any of our companies," said Hite.



I KNOW WHAT YOU GOT IN MINE  
BUT LETS FACE IT  
SHE CANT CARRY US BOTH!



Issue #1



Issue #2



Issue #3



Issue #4



Issue #5



Issue #6



Issue #7



Issue #8



Issue #9



Issue #10



Issue #11



Issue #12



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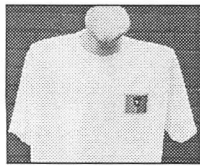


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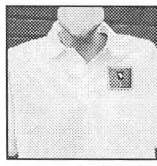


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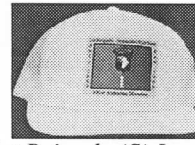
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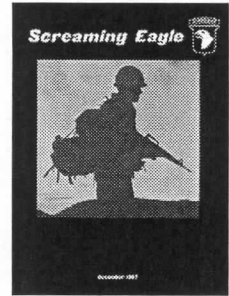
Issue #44



The 1st Brigade (S) plastic auto tag is not new but it has been improved. It now can be ordered with magnets on the back so it can be attached to any ferrous metal surface. Regular tag without magnets \$5.00. Improvement costs \$3.00 - total price \$8.00.



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[Actual 1 1/2 inch size]

The 1 1/2 inch diameter coin is crafted in vivid colors, has a beveled edge and is coated with a clear acrylic to preserve the coin's surface. (It is unfortunate that it cannot be shown here in color.) Cost is \$10.00 per coin, postpaid. See page 34 for order form.

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# Following is a short description of the contents of this magazine.

**TRUNG LOUNG .....PAGES 1 – 5**

The story of this brutal 1966 battle as told by LTC(R) Louis M. McDonald, 2/327 B 5/66-10/66 and SFC(R) John Burke, Jr., 2/327 C 12/65-12/66.

**YOUR HERO AND MINE, SCOTT .....PAGES 6 – 16**

Report on a book published by the siblings of Scott Christofferson who was KIA while performing reporting duties. The material contains material by CPT Barry Hana, HQ-PIO 3/67-3/68; Terry L. Wren, 2/327 A 4/67-2/68 and COL(R) John P. Lawton, 2/327 A 67-68.

**THE SCREAMING EAGLE .....PAGES 17 – 20**

Copy of the Brigade unit newspaper published November 8, 1967.

**SUBSCRIBERS LIST .....PAGES 21 & 22**

A list that contains names and addresses of new subscribers, renewals and address corrections.

**HAWK PLATOON .....PAGE 23**

Picture and commentary about the Hawk Platoon of 2/327 by Hank Meyer, 2/327 HHC 6/66-6/67.

**LTG HARRY W. O. KINNARD .....PAGE 24**

Patrick H. Graves Jr., 1/327 B 7/65 tells of an encounter with General Kinnard in a Letter to the Editor first published in ARMY magazine.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR .....PAGES 25 – 27**

Messages from First Brigade (S) veterans that arrive by e-mail and the U. S. Postal Service. Messages from the brigade website have not been numerous nor topical in the past months.

**OBITUARY .....PAGE 27**

Report of the death of and arrangements for Marie Wasco wife of COL(R) Joseph Wasco, Jr., 2/327 CO 1/66-1/67.

**FIRST BRIGADE MEMORIAL .....PAGE 28**

Report and photograph of the memorial service and monument to honor 327th BASTOGNE troopers killed in Iraq.

**SECOND BRIGADE MEMORIAL .....PAGE 29**

Report and photograph of the memorial service and monument to honor 502nd STRIKE FORCE troopers killed in Iraq.

**REUNION PICTURES .....PAGES 30 & 31**

More pictures from the 2008 First Brigade (S) reunion in Hampton, Virginia.

**LRRP AMBUSH STORY .....PAGE 32**

Story from the March 8, 1968, THE SCREAMING EAGLE about First Brigade LRRPs, also a cartoon drawn by Raymond Gregory Brown.



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