



GREG HUGHES, SR.
(1949-2011)



Greg Hughes Sr., 61, of Sycamore, IL, died Tuesday, September 20, 2011, in his home surrounded by his family, after a year-long battle with cancer.



Born September 27, 1949, in Sycamore, to Eugene and Laura Francis (Roush) Hughes, Greg was a 1967 graduate of Sycamore High School. After graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He proudly served his country during the Vietnam War with the 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) from 1967-1970. During his time overseas, he was awarded several medals, including the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

Greg was an active member of the Sycamore V.F.W. in which he participated in more 200 military funerals. He was married to Diane Gass on March 28, 1981, at Sycamore Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Diane; seven children, Jenny (Kevin) Beasley, Sarah Braffett, Angie Parnett, Ellen Hughes, Greg (Jenny) Hughes Jr., Raymond Hughes and Alex Hughes; eleven grandchildren; and brother, Randy Hughes. He was predeceased by his parents.

Greg was the rock of his family's foundation and he will be missed by all.

The family expresses a special thanks to DeKalb County Hospice and the Sycamore V.F.W. To share a memory or condolence, visit www.olsonfh.com.

~ Geronimo Brother ~



Rexford "Rex" W. Stickler
Captain
HHC/2/503d



Rex Stickler, age 75 of Elmira, NY, passed away on Thursday, March 8, 2012.



He was born October 24, 1936, the son of the late Mack and Lila (Lewis) Stickler. He is survived by sisters Esther A. Blew and Joy L. Dugan; also numerous nieces, nephews and cousins; very special friend Pat Benson; and his special companion, his dog "Beebee". He was predeceased by brother Melvin Stickler; sisters, Cleoral Lovell, Bonnielyn King, Evangeline Sease and Thelma Frantellizzi. Rex was a United States Army Veteran of the Vietnam War, having served with distinction with the 2/503d, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep). He enlisted in June of 1958, and joined the Army Paratroopers. He also served in Germany and Korea before his separation from the service in May of 1968. Rex reached the rank of Captain and was awarded two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars. Rex opened his own machine Shop, "Sun Machine Shop" in Elmira, NY in 1973; he produced parts for Powers Manufacturing which became Emhart Glass Manufacturing, until his passing. Captain Stickler was interred with Military Honors at Woodlawn Cemetery, Elmira, NY

~ Farewell Cap, job well done Brother ~



Honoring a 173d ABN Combat Vet and PTSD Counselor

I was in the waiting room at a VA clinic for my annual physical when I saw a brochure that said “Service to Veterans By Veterans”. I asked the receptionist about this and she explained that it was a clinic run by Combat Vets specifically for Combat Vets only, well that got my immediate attention. The brochure went into detail about the services provided by this clinic and as it turned out it was geared specifically to treating combat Vets with symptoms of PTSD.

With 40-some years of burying combat stress from my Viet Nam war experience into the dark recesses of my mind...and not even acknowledging that I had symptoms of PTSD...I was OK...really. I was convinced that I did NOT have PTSD. After all, I was a 173d and a 101st Airborne trooper who sucked it up, manned up, whatever you want to call it. In stark reality, the decades of not facing the PTS Demons was taking a toll and it was finally time to face the music.

With much apprehension I made an appointment for a PTSD assessment at the Combat Vet Center. The waiting area in front had a flat panel and there was a continuous slide show of images from the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Viet Nam. There were several showcases full of memorabilia dedicated to the different wars fought. I was met by a “readjustment counselor” who introduced himself as Mike. I followed him into his office with some trepidation.



Sky Soldiers Mike McCawley (L) and Rene “Dutch” Macare

Mike said that he had looked over my records and noticed that I served with “The Herd” in Viet Nam, which is why he chose to help me. I was a bit puzzled until he explained that he also served with the Herd, he had been a combat Medic with the 1st Batt. It turns out that Mike had served in numerous combat deployments with the 173d Airborne Brigade....*Holly Shit, this guy*

had definitely earned his wings the hard way!!! Well needless to say, not only was there an immediate respect for him based on his combat duty, but this guy was a 173d Airborne Sky Soldier to boot!

I had been seeing Mike for almost a year in one-on-one sessions working on identifying the depth of my PTSD and unmasking/managing the symptoms. There were some tough times facing the reality of suppressed combat stress for over 4 decades. When I came in to the early sessions, Mike would ask me “*So how do you feel when you come here to these sessions?*” I did not have to search very long for an answer, it just came right out and I said, “*Mike when I walk in here, I feel immediate relief. I know that I am among fellow Combat Vets who share the same stresses that I have. I do not feel threatened, I do not feel mistrust, and most of all I feel accepted for who I am and what I went through, and that is huge!*”

After close to a year of Mike ferreting out my symptoms and successfully working on managing them, he asked if I would be interested in moving into a group session. He had been working on setting up a new Viet Nam Veteran Group and had enough interest to start very soon. He explained that the intent and main “Mission” of the group would be to discuss current concerns, and share experiences in order to help one another to move forward. He called it a “Longevity Group” focusing on our health and welfare. That made a lot of sense to me as well as the other Vets in the group and within 2 weeks we got the group started.

We are now on session number 10 I believe, and even though I have a full-time job I make the extra effort to not miss a session, it’s just *that* important to me. We have learned a lot about ourselves, and have built a great respect for Mike. With his guidance and counseling we have regained our self-respect, and learned how to better manage our individual PTSD manifestations, knowing that it does not go away -- you just learn how to deal with it. It has been a blessing to be a part of a great bunch of Nam Vets with the guidance of Mike McCawley.

One evening as I was online checking my 173d Airborne Brigade Facebook page I ran across a really cool looking set of 173s ABN Challenge Coins that were made by another VN Vet by the name of Paul Fisher. It turned out that Paul was a commo officer on the same base (LZ UPLIFT) in the Central Highlands where I served! What I also learned was the reason why Paul was making these coins...

(continued....)



They were dedicated to honor the service of 173d Airborne combat Vets, and better yet all the proceeds from the sale of these coins were going to various charities, to support the 173d Memorial and to feed and clothe the less fortunate.

Initially I purchased several 3rd Batt coins, one for myself, and I bought one for a Boonie Buddy who fought alongside of me in Viet Nam. The idea then struck me to purchase a 1st Batt coin for Mike as a thank you for his Combat Service with the Herd and also for his PTSD counseling service. I placed my order for a 1st Batt coin, and to my great surprise when the order arrived there was not only the 1st Batt coin but also the beautiful 503rd "ROCK" medallion! The note included from Paul regarding the extra medallion just said, "We 173d guys honor those who honor fellow Paratroopers".



One of Paul Fisher's 1/503 coins presented to Mike

With great pride I presented both the 1st Batt coin and the "Rock" Medallion to Mike at our next counseling session. Mike was quite grateful to receive the coins, and in his humble manner he said, "You did not have to do this". I told him that there are a lot of things in life that one "does not have to do" -- but I chose to do this to honor a fellow 173d combat veteran who more than earned these coins. After all, is not our continuing duty to look after our fellow Veteran brothers? I see it as good Karma, Paul Fisher calls it AGAPE....look it up...and practice it with gusto!

Michael McCawley, M.S.W. (I) Readjustment Counseling Specialist, is what his business card reads...but at the end of the day he is a 173d Airborne Sky Trooper.

All The Way!

Bless you Mike & Paul, and Bless all Combat Vets.

Rene "Dutch" Macare
A/3/503d Sky Soldier
Proudly served in Viet Nam '70-'71



Faces of Our Fallen

March 28, 2012

On behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and the First Lady of Virginia, I would like to invite you join us on Tuesday, April 3rd at 11:00 a.m. at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond to kick-off a partnership to gather photographs and stories of fallen Virginians listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In 2009, VVMF launched a national "Call for Photos" campaign to put a face with each of the 58,000 names listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. When collected, photos will be displayed for generations to come at The Education Center at The Wall, a place on our National Mall where our military heroes' stories and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

To date, VVMF has collected photographs of only 571 of the 1,306 Virginians listed on The Wall. It's important that the faces and stories of Virginia's lost are remembered and shared with future generations, telling of their commitment and sacrifice during the Vietnam War. Mrs. McDonnell will announce her support for the Call for Photos and her commitment to finding a photo of each of the remaining 735 "faceless" Virginians on The Wall.

I hope you will join Mrs. McDonnell and me in preserving these great legacies. Please RSVP to VVMF's Community Outreach Manager Danielle Schira by email at dschira@vmvf.org or at 202-393-0090, ext. 105.

Thank you for all your support. I look forward to seeing you on April 3rd. If you have a photo of a loved one or fellow veteran whose name is on The Wall, help us honor these individuals by putting a face with their name by bringing it with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan C. Scruggs".

Jan C. Scruggs, Esq.
Founder and President
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]



2/503d **VIETNAM** Newsletter / April 2012 – Issue 39

Page 19 of 64

~ CORRECTIONS ~

Things That Go Boom

Smitty, In the section entitled "This Month in History" on the 9th, 1965 (Issue 38), you say "...Napalm, a petroleum based anti-personnel bomb that showers hundreds of explosive pellets"..... I think you are mixing up napalm and CBUs aka "cluster bombs". Might want to check your source on this one. I love getting the newsletter, even though I was in E/17 Cav, not 2/503. Keep up the great work.

Fletcher Coker, MG (Ret)
E/17 Cav

Of course you're right, Fletcher. I cut and paste most of this stuff but some items escape these old eyes when proofing the thing. I guess my third stripe is out of the question? Thanks for the correction General. ATW Ed



Cluster Bombs



Napalm Bombs



Newsletter editor doing pushups

Name on Photo

As usual, another great edition. On my photos, don't know why I didn't catch it first time around, but the one of me in my civies with the two officers and Sgt. Dockery; the officer on the left is Capt. Boykin, not Capt Brown. All rest is okay. Just make that correction for when the final book of photos comes out. Thanks.

Jerry Hassler
Recon/2/503d



CPT Boykin, Sgt. Dockery, SP4 Hassler & LT Shelby

New VN Vet Bumper Sticker

Courtesy of Roger Dick, C/2/503d.



Generally between 1 and 3 p.m. on Tuesdays.
Then we rest.





2/503d Troopers....Where Are They Now?

Wambi Cook was born in Pittsburgh, PA. He studied at Knoxville College via Penn State University, and grad school at the University of Tennessee at



Knoxville. His early working years were in real estate where he sold primarily new inner-city town homes. He relocated to Cleveland, OH and managed a real estate office for a couple years. For twenty-five years he taught in post-secondary education eventually earning a state lifetime certification as a state post-secondary school administrator. He transitioned to public secondary education in 2000 as a high school principal -- a position he expected to hold for no more than a year at best. He is thrice married with five adult daughters and his oldest namesake. *I'm supremely proud of each of my progeny and the successes in their chosen life pursuits. And who've provided me with four of the grandest grandkids a Papi could ask for.* Wambi received his draft notice literally days later. *I could have elected to delay my status because of my young son, but I figured I'd let Uncle Sam pay for my education once I made good on my obligatory two year commitment.* He volunteered for airborne more for the additional \$55 a month than the glory. He was informed upon completing basic at Fort Jackson that his AIT would be at Ft. Gordon. After receiving his jump wings in January of 1967, *there was no question as to where I'd next be residing.* Wambi landed in Vietnam on February 18, 1967 quite aware he'd been assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade. *The who? Never heard of said unit. It was the 101st or nothing for me. Just how do I make it happen? I'd only been in Camp Zinn for a couple days when my attitude about the "Herd" changed. Most of the 2nd Battalion would be returning to the states within the next three months leaving us FNGs to drive on as best we could.* But that wasn't the case: These grizzled vets instinctively knew conditions would only get worse, *and they took us cherries under their wings in hopes of making our next year more tenable. I shall forever be in their debt.* Their mission was clear; *Kick ass and take names. And during the late winter and early spring of 1967, we did just that. Most of us expected similar outcomes once we moved north to the Central Highlands.* The highly trained North Vietnamese regular army thought otherwise. *I witnessed their strategy first-hand on the Slopes that June 22nd and five months later just a few kilometers to our south on Hill 875.* Wambi was wounded on three separate occasions between April and the last time on Mother's Day. He DEROSed one year less seven days, and arrived home on Valentine's Day 1968. *It wasn't until I revisited Vietnam in April 2008 and again in February 2011 that I finally realized what a toll Nam had taken on me. Demons I'd refused to admit ever existed for over 40 years were slowly exorcised from my psyche. Moreover, since I renewed long forgotten relationships within the brotherhood of the 173d Association, my quality of life has appreciably improved.*

Robert D. (Bob) Sweeney, Jr. was born on February 12, 1942. He grew up as an Army Brat and joined the Army in August 1961. After Basic Training at Ft. Ord, CA he was assigned to



the AG school at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana for AIT as a stenographer. Following AIT he was assigned to Hq. Co. OCS Bn. at Ft. Benning, GA as the Company Clerk for 51st OCS Co. Bob applied for, and was accepted for OCS and graduated from 52d Co. OCS in March 1963. From OCS Bob attended ABN School at Ft. Benning and was subsequently assigned to the 2nd Inf. Div. at Ft Benning. After serving as a platoon leader in Co. C, 2nd Bn. 9th Inf., he was transferred to the 173d ABN Bde in Okinawa in early Aug. '65. Upon arriving in Okinawa Bob learned that the 173d ABN Bde had PCSed to Vietnam. When Bob arrived at the 173d ABN BDE in Bien Hoa he was assigned to the 2nd Bn. 503rd and became the Weapons Platoon Leader for Charlie Company, 3rd Bn. After a few months as the Weapons Platoon Leader he became Charlie Co. XO and served as XO until after Op Silver City, at which time he was assigned to HQ&HQ Co. 2nd Bn as the Support Platoon Leader. Bob returned to the States in Aug. '65 and was assigned to Ft. Ord as a Basic Training Company CDR. Bob made a branch transfer to the Signal Corps in 1967 and served in various Signal Corps unit and staff positions throughout his 24 year career. Some of his notable assignments were: Signal Advisor to the Nationalist Chinese Army on the island of Kinmen, Systems Engineer for the Central Army Group-Europe, Communications Systems Control Officer for the Defense Communications Agency, Director, Training Analysis Branch-US Army Signal School at Ft. Gordon, and Project Manager for HQ US European Command's Alternate Command Center. Bob retired as a Lt. Col. in April 1985 while assigned to the World Wide Military Command System Engineering Office in Stuttgart, Germany. He remained in Stuttgart for six years as a Communications Systems Engineer for a civilian company supporting HQ US European Command. Bob returned to the States in June 1990 and soon afterwards he and his wife Barbara started up a "Mom & Pop" antique business which they owned and operated for 12 years. In Jan. '07 they moved to North Augusta, SC, and now live in their new home on the east bank of the Savannah River. Bob and Barbara have been married for 32 years, have a son and daughter and two granddaughters. Bob spends part of his free time playing golf with a group called the *Geezers* and the rest of his time he and Barbara enjoy the sunsets from their back porch overlooking the Savannah River. Bob continually thanks God for his life in the military and bringing his wife Barbara to him.

2/503 troopers: Send in your before and after pics along with a write-up of what you've been doing over the years. Let your buddies know you're still alive and kicking.



National Veterans Golden Age Games

May 31 – June 5, 2012 - St. Louis, Missouri



About the National Veterans Golden Age Games

Life begins at 55, at least it does for more than 700 Veterans competing in this national event, the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States. It is the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It is one of the most progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports programs in the world, offering 14 different sports and recreational activities.



www.va.gov/adaptivesports

Contacts

Event Director

Dewayne Vaughan
(202) 632-7138

Local Host Coordinator

Maura Campbell
(314) 894-6113

Media Contact

Anthony Hardman
(734) 845-5059

Sponsors & Hosts

Presented by VA, Help Hospitalized Veterans and Veterans Canteen Service (VCS), with financial assistance from corporate sponsors and individual donors.



Athletes at the Arch

Registration for the 26th National Veterans Golden Age Games in St. Louis is now open! The Games will be held May 31 – June 5 offering exciting competition for Veterans age 55 and

older who receive care at the VA. NVGAG 2012 is also a qualifying event for the 2013 National Senior Games. See you in St. Louis!



~ This Month in History ~

"They were the best of times, they were the worst of times."

April 1965

April: 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) on Okinawa gear-up for 'temporary' duty in Vietnam.



1st: At the White House, President Johnson authorizes sending two more Marine battalions and up to 20,000 logistical personnel to Vietnam. The President also authorizes American combat troops to conduct patrols to root out Viet Cong in the countryside. His decision to allow offensive operations is kept secret from the American press and public for two months.

5th: 37th Academy Awards - "My Fair Lady," Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews win.



Andrews & Harrison

7th: President Johnson delivers his "Peace Without Conquest" speech at Johns Hopkins University offering Hanoi "unconditional discussions" to stop the war in return for massive economic assistance in modernizing Vietnam. "Old Ho can't turn that down," Johnson privately tells his aides. But Johnson's peace overture is quickly rejected.

13th: Beatles record "Help".

15th: A thousand tons of bombs are dropped on Viet Cong positions by U.S. and South Vietnamese fighter-bombers.

17th: In Washington, 15,000 students gather to protest the U.S. bombing campaign. Student demonstrators will often refer to President Johnson, his advisors, the Pentagon, Washington bureaucrats, and weapons manufacturers, simply as "the Establishment."

20th: In Honolulu, Johnson's top aides, including McNamara, Gen. Westmoreland, Gen. Wheeler, William Bundy, and Ambassador Taylor, meet and agree to recommend to the President sending another 40,000 combat soldiers to Vietnam.

20th: People's Republic China offers North Vietnam military aid.

24th: President Johnson announces Americans in Vietnam are eligible for combat pay.

27th: Edward R Murrow, newscaster (*Person to Person*), dies at 57.

28th: US Marines invade Dominican Republic, stay until October 1966.

April 1966

3rd: Tom Seaver, signs with the Mets for a reported \$50,000 bonus.

10th thru 25th: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Denver* in the Song Be, Phuoc Long Province, III Corps. This was a search and destroy operation designed to reduce the steady infiltration of VC into War Zone "D". The 173d Abn Bde concentrated on the Song Be Sector. Eagle insertions and show of force patrols in VC areas yielded 34 tons of rice caches and over 2,000 docs.



Operation Denver: American armored personnel carriers transported troops of 1RAR, during Operation Denver, 16 April 1966. (AWM CUN/66/0320/VN)

(continued...)



11th: Emmett Ashford becomes 1st black major league umpire.

12th: B-52 bombers are used for the first time against North Vietnam. Each B-52 carries up to 100 bombs. Target selections are closely supervised by the White House. There are six main target categories; power facilities, war support facilities, transportation lines, military complexes, fuel storage, and air defense installations.



B-52 bomb run over North Vietnam

13th: Viet Cong attack Tan Son Nhut airport in Saigon causing 140 casualties while destroying 12 U.S. helicopters and nine aircraft.

28th: 20th NBA Championship: Boston Celtics beat LA Lakers, 4 games to 3.

April 1967

6th: Quang Tri City is attacked by 2500 Viet Cong and NVA.



Quang Tri City looking northeast, fall 1967: the Quang Tri Citadel is at the upper left. Village beyond it; the Thach Han River is in the center.

8th: Don Michael, C/4/503d, sacrifices his life in combat and is awarded the Medal of Honor:



Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sp4 Michael, U.S. Army, distinguished himself while serving with Company C. Sp4 Michael was part of a platoon which was moving through an area of suspected enemy activity. While the rest of the platoon stopped to provide security, the squad to which Sp4 Michael was assigned moved forward to



investigate signs of recent enemy activity. After moving approximately 125 meters, the squad encountered a single Viet Cong soldier. When he was fired upon by the squad's machine gunner, other Viet Cong opened fire with automatic weapons from a well-concealed bunker to the squad's right front. The volume of enemy fire was so withering as to pin down the entire squad and halt all forward movement. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Sp4 Michael exposed himself to throw 2 grenades, but failed to eliminate the enemy position. From his position on the left flank, Sp4 Michael maneuvered forward with 2 more grenades until he was within 20 meters of the enemy bunkers, when he again exposed himself to throw 2 grenades, which failed to detonate. Undaunted, Sp4 Michael made his way back to the friendly positions to obtain more grenades. With 2 grenades in hand, he again started his perilous move towards the enemy bunker, which by this time was under intense artillery fire from friendly positions. As he neared the bunker, an enemy soldier attacked him from a concealed position. Sp4 Michael killed him with his rifle and, in spite of the enemy fire and the exploding artillery rounds, was successful in destroying the enemy positions. Sp4 Michael took up pursuit of the remnants of the retreating enemy. When his comrades reached Sp4 Michael, he had been mortally wounded. His inspiring display of determination and courage saved the lives of many of his comrades and successfully eliminated a destructive enemy force. Sp4 Michael's actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect the utmost credit upon himself and the U.S. Army.

(continued...)



March 20th thru April 13th: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts Operation JUNCTION CITY II in Minh Thanh Province. Phase two began with the establishment of fire support bases along Route 13 from Lai Khe to Quan Loi (east of An Loc). A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry came under attack north of the village of Bau Bang. Massed troops of the VC 273rd Regiment erupted out of the rubber plantation, swarming over the ACAVs and tanks on the southeastern perimeter. Calling in artillery support from A/3/319th the VC were destroyed leaving behind 227 killed while the Americans suffered 3 casualties.



Air drop of supplies in Operation Junction City

14th: Richard M. Nixon visits Saigon and states that anti-war protests back in the U.S. are *"prolonging the war."*

14th: In the Vietnam War, US planes bombed Haiphong for first time.

15th: Anti-war demonstrations occur in New York and San Francisco involving nearly 200,000. Rev. Martin Luther King declares that the war is undermining President Johnson's Great Society social reform programs, *"...the pursuit of this widened war has narrowed the promised dimensions of the domestic welfare programs, making the poor white and Negro bear the heaviest burdens both at the front and at home."*

18th-30th: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Newark* in War Zone "D".



21st: - Josef Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, defects to US.

24th thru May 11th: Hill fights rage at Khe Sanh between U.S. 3rd Marines and the North Vietnamese Army resulting in 940 NVA killed. American losses are 155 killed and 425 wounded. The isolated air base is located in mountainous terrain less than 10 miles from North Vietnam near the border of Laos.

24th: General Westmoreland condemns anti-war demonstrators saying they give the North Vietnamese soldier *"hope that he can win politically that which he cannot accomplish militarily."* Privately, he has already warned President Johnson *"the war could go on indefinitely."*

27th: Rocky Marciano retires as undefeated boxing champ.

April 1968

March 30th, '68 thru January 31st, '69: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Cochise* in the Bong Son Province.



1st: The U.S. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) begins *Operation Pegasus* to reopen Route 9, the relief route to the besieged Marines at Khe Sanh.

3rd: North Vietnam agrees to meet US reps to set up preliminary peace talks.

4th: Civil rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King is assassinated in Memphis, TN. Racial unrest then erupts in over 100 American cities.



(continued....)



8th: The siege of Khe Sanh ends with the withdrawal of NVA troops from the area as a result of intensive American bombing and the reopening of Route 9. NVA losses during the siege are estimated up to 15,000. U.S. Marines suffered 199 killed and 830 wounded. 1st Cavalry suffered 92 killed and 629 wounded reopening Route 9. The U.S. command then secretly shuts down the Khe Sanh air base and withdraws the Marines. Commenting on the heroism of U.S. troops that defended Khe Sanh, President Johnson *states* "...they vividly demonstrated to the enemy the utter futility of his attempts to win a military victory in the South." A North Vietnamese official labels the closing of Khe Sanh air base as America's "gravest defeat" so far.

11th: Defense Secretary Clifford announces Gen. Westmoreland's request for 206,000 additional soldiers will not be granted.

11th: President Johnson signs 1968 Civil Rights Act.



President Johnson signing the Civil Rights Act of 1968

23rd: Anti-war activists at Columbia University seize five buildings.

23rd: United Methodist Church forms.

26th: Students seize administration building at Ohio State

27th: In New York, 200,000 students refuse to attend classes as a protest.

30th thru May 3rd: The Battle of Dai Do occurs along the Demilitarized Zone as NVA troops seek to open an invasion corridor into South Vietnam. They are halted by a battalion of U.S. Marines nicknamed "*The Magnificent Bastards*" under the command of Lt. Col. William Weise. Aided by heavy artillery and air strikes, NVA suffer 1568 killed. 81 Marines are killed and 297 wounded. 29 U.S. Army are killed supporting the Marines and 130 wounded. For the time being, this defeat ends North Vietnam's hope of successfully invading the South. They will wait four years, until

1972, before trying again, after most of the Americans have gone. It will actually take seven years, until 1975, for them to succeed.

April 1969

1st February thru 15th April '69: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Darby Crest* in the Crescent of Hoai An District.



1st February thru September 26th, '69: The 75th Infantry, Company N is awarded the *RVN Gallantry Cross w/Palm*, and the *RVN Civil Actions Honor Medal*



3rd: U.S. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announces that the United States will start to "Vietnamize" the war effort.

5th: Massive antiwar demonstrations occur in many U.S. cities.

12th September '68 thru 12th April '69: The 173d Quartermaster Company is awarded the *Meritorious Unit Commendation*.



9th: 300 anti-war students at Harvard University seize the administration building, throw out eight deans, then lock themselves in. They are later forcibly ejected.

15th April '69 thru 1 January '71: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Washington Green* in the Binh Dinh Province.



15th April '69 thru 16th March '71: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) RVN, is awarded the *Civil Actions Honor Medal*.



15th: North Korea shoots at US airplane above Japanese sea.

17th: Sirhan Sirhan is convicted of assassinating Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

23rd: Sirhan Sirhan sentenced to death for killing Bobby Kennedy.

(continued...)



24th: US B-52's drop 3,000 ton bombs at Cambodian boundary.

28th: Charles de Gaulle resigns as president of France.

30th: U.S. troop levels peak at 543,400. There have been 33,641 Americans killed by now, a total greater than the Korean War.

April 1970

1st: President Nixon signs bill limiting cigarette advertisements effective 1/1/71.

11th: Apollo 13 launched to Moon; unable to land, returns in 6 days.

20th: President Nixon announces the withdrawal of another 150,000 Americans from Vietnam within a year.

26th: Gypsy Rose Lee, stripper/actress (Pruitts of South Hampton), dies at 56.



29th: 50,000 US & South Vietnamese troops invade Cambodia.

30th: President Nixon stuns Americans by announcing U.S. and South Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia "...not for the purpose of expanding the war into Cambodia but for the purpose of ending the war in Vietnam and winning the just peace we desire." The announcement generates a tidal wave of protests by politicians, the press, students, professors, clergy

members, business leaders, and many average Americans against Nixon and the Vietnam War. The incursion is in response to continuing Communist gains against Lon Nol's forces and is also intended to weaken overall NVA military strength as a prelude to U.S. departure from Vietnam.

April 1971

March 17th, '71 thru - April 21st, '71: The 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) conducts *Operation Green Sure* in the Binh Dinh Province.



1st: President Nixon orders Calley released pending his appeal.

5th: US Lt William Calley (My Lai Massacre) sentenced to life.

7th: President Nixon orders Lt Calley (Mi Lai) free.

10th: US table tennis team arrives in China PR.

12th: Shannen Doherty, Memphis TN, actress (Little House, Beverly Hills 90210), is born.

14th: President Nixon ends blockade against People's Republic of China.

15th: 43rd Academy Awards - "*Patton*," George C Scott and Glenda Jackson win.

19th: '*Vietnam Veterans Against the War*' begin a week of nationwide protests.



19th: Charles Manson sentenced to life (Sharon Tate murder).

20th: US Supreme Court upholds use of busing to achieve racial desegregation.

(continued....)



24th: Another mass demonstration is held in Washington attracting nearly 200,000.

28th: Samuel Lee Gravely, Jr, becomes 1st black admiral in US Navy.

29th: Total American deaths in Vietnam surpass 45,000.

April 1972

2nd: In response to the Eastertide Offensive, President Nixon authorizes the U.S. 7th Fleet to target NVA troops massed around the Demilitarized Zone with air strikes and naval gunfire.

2nd: Gil Hodges, Dodgers, then manager of NY Mets, dies of heart attack at 57.

4th: In a further response to Eastertide, President Nixon authorizes a massive bombing campaign targeting all NVA troops invading South Vietnam along with B-52 air strikes against North Vietnam. *"The bastards have never been bombed like they're going to be bombed this time,"* Nixon privately declares.



5th: Baseball season is delayed due to a strike.

9th: 36th Golf Masters Championship. Jack Nicklaus wins, shooting a 286.

10th: Heavy B-52 bombardments ranging 145 miles into North Vietnam begin.

10th: US, USSR & 70 other nations agree to ban biological weapons.

12th: NVA Eastertide attack on Kontum begins in central South Vietnam. If the attack succeeds, South Vietnam will effectively be cut in two.

15th: Hanoi and Haiphong harbor are bombed by the U.S.

15th thru 20th: Protests against the bombings erupt in America.

19th: NVA Eastertide attack on An Loc begins.

19th: USS Higbee attacked by North Vietnamese MIG-17.

Pacific Stars & Stripes Saturday, April 22, 1972

DAN NANG, Vietnam (AP) – *"MIG coming! MIG coming!"* yelled the lookout, and seconds later the afterdeck of the destroyer Higbee was aflame. The North Vietnamese jet dropped a 250-pound bomb onto the deck of the destroyer, wounding four seamen and destroying a gun mount that housed two 5-inch guns. The U.S. Command said at least three enemy jets attacked an American task force in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of North Vietnam late Wednesday afternoon. The command said one of the planes was shot down, two enemy torpedo boats were believed sunk and shrapnel from shore battery fire caused minor damage on the cruiser Oklahoma City, the flagship of the 7th Fleet.

Capt. Ronald Zuilkoski, skipper of the Higbee, said the MIG attacked his ship at least twice before the bomb hit the deck. *"In the first two passes, bombs fell left and right of the ship,"* he said, *"but on the third try one hit the deck and exploded under the mount. She flew so low over the deck that you could see everything."* Luckily the gun mount was empty, the 12-man gun crew having been ordered out while a round stuck in one of the barrels was hosed down to keep it from exploding. But three men in the ammunition storage compartment under the mount were wounded. Other men pulled them out as the ammunition began to explode.



"Le Xuan (left) shows how he attacked the destroyer USS Higbee on April 19, 1972 with 2 bombs of 250 kgs with his MIG-17. Nguyen Van Bay (right) hit the USS Oklahoma City in the same attack, but caused only slight damage to the ship."

(continued...)



27th: Paris peace talks resume.

30th: "Arthur Godfrey Time" ends a 27 year run on radio.

30th: U.S. troop levels drop to 69,000.

April 1973

April '73: President Nixon and President Thieu meet at San Clemente, California. Nixon renews his earlier secret pledge to respond militarily if North Vietnam violates the peace agreement.

1st: Captain Robert White, the last known American POW is released. *On March 29, 1973, the Viet Cong announced that White was to be released on April 1. He was the last American in the repatriation program dubbed "Operation Homecoming". In his debrief, Capt. White reported that he was held with Graf in various prison camps until late January 1970, when Graf escaped with another POW. Before his release, the National Liberation Front area commander told White to inform the U.S. authorities that Graf had drowned during an escape attempt in February 1970. Former residents of this area also reported this story to officials and that his remains were buried in the Long Toan area.*

1st: Rachel Maddow, American radio personality and political analyst is born.

8th: Pablo (Ruiz y) Picasso, Spanish/French painter (Guernica), dies at 91.

12th: France recognizes North Vietnam.

30th: The Watergate scandal results in the resignation of top Nixon aides H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman.

April 1974



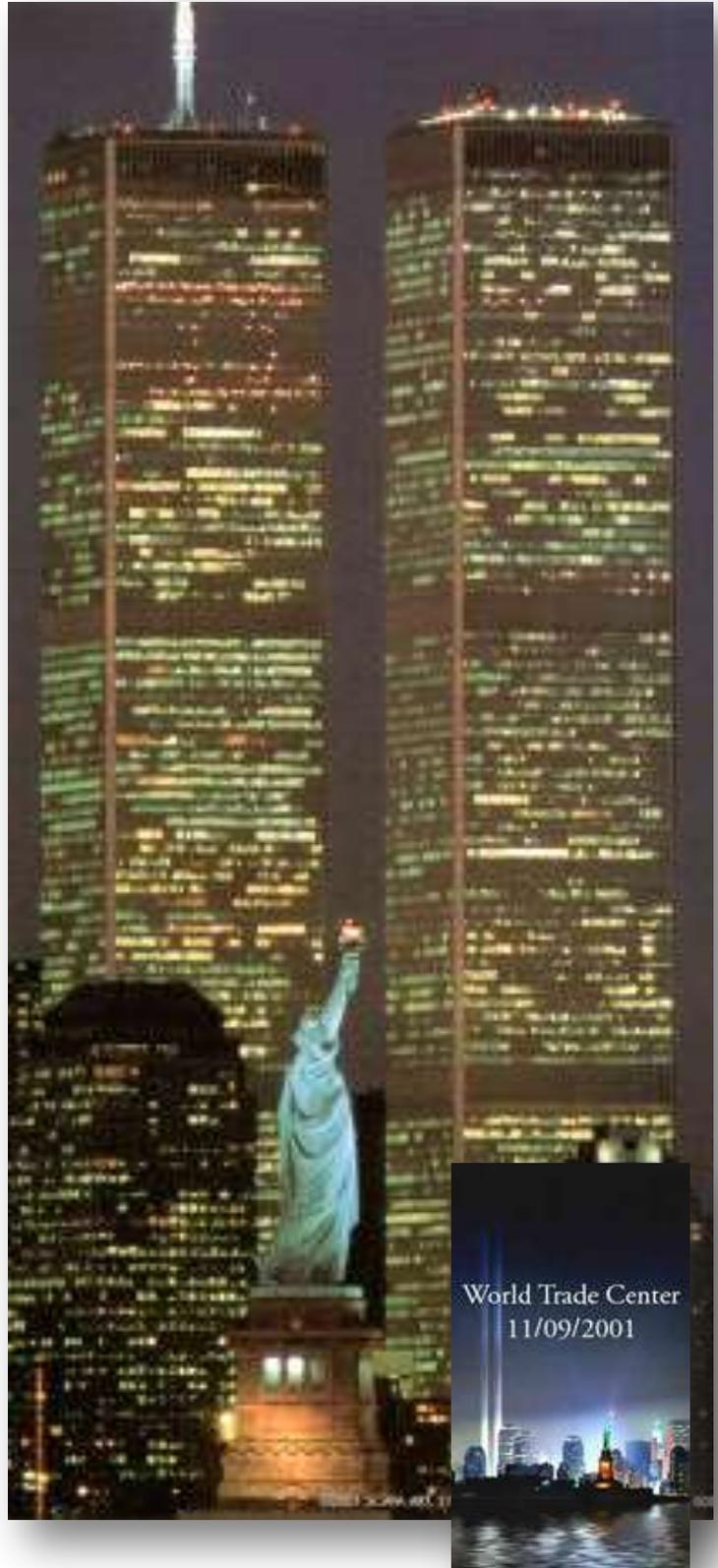
(Walter Looss, Jr. photo)

1st: Ayatollah Khomeini calls for an Islamic Republic in Iran.

4th: Hank Aaron ties Babe Ruth's home-run record by hitting his 714th.

Hammerin' Hank tying the Babe's record in '74 opener.

5th: Then tallest building, World Trade Center opens in NYC (110 stories).



11th: WWII war criminal JP Philippa arrested.

(continued...)



24th: Bud Abbott, comedian (Abbott & Costello), dies at 78.

Who's On First?



Abbott: Well Costello, I'm going to New York with you. You know Bucky Harris, the Yankee's manager, gave me a job as coach for as long as you're on the team.

Costello: Look Abbott, if you're the coach, you must know all the players.

Abbott: I certainly do.

Costello: Well you know I've never met the guys. So you'll have to tell me their names, and then I'll know who's playing on the team.

Abbott: Oh, I'll tell you their names, but you know it seems to me they give these ball players now-a-days very peculiar names.

Costello: You mean funny names?

Abbott: Strange names, pet names...like Dizzy Dean...

Costello: His brother Daffy.

Abbott: Daffy Dean...

Costello: And their French cousin.

Abbott: French?

Costello: Goofè.

Abbott: Goofè Dean. Well, let's see, we have on the bags, Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know is on third...

Costello: That's what I want to find out.

Abbott: I say Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know's on third.

Costello: Are you the manager?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: You gonna be the coach too?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: And you don't know the fellows' names?

Abbott: Well I should.

Costello: Well then who's on first?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: I mean the fellow's name.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy on first.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The first baseman.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy playing...

Abbott: Who is on first!

Costello: I'm asking YOU who's on first.

Abbott: That's the man's name.

Costello: That's who's name?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: Well go ahead and tell me.

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: That's who?

Abbott: Yes.

PAUSE

Costello: Look, you gotta first baseman?

Abbott: Certainly.

Costello: Who's playing first?

Abbott: That's right.

Costello: When you pay off the first baseman every month, who gets the money?

Abbott: Every dollar of it.

Costello: All I'm trying to find out is the fellow's name on first base.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy that gets...

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: Who gets the money...

Abbott: He does, every dollar. Sometimes his wife comes down and collects it.

Costello: Whose wife?

Abbott: Yes.

PAUSE

Abbott: What's wrong with that?

Costello: Look, all I wanna know is when you sign up the first baseman, how does he sign his name?

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: How does he sign...

Abbott: That's how he signs it.

Costello: Who?

Abbott: Yes.

PAUSE

Costello: All I'm trying to find out is what's the guy's name on first base.

Abbott: No. What is on second base.

Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.

Abbott: Who's on first.

Costello: One base at a time!

Abbott: Well, don't change the players around.

Costello: I'm not changing nobody!

Abbott: Take it easy, buddy.

Costello: I'm only asking you, who's the guy on first base?

Abbott: That's right.

Costello: Ok.

Abbott: All right.

PAUSE

Costello: What's the guy's name on first base?

Abbott: No. What is on second.

Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.

Abbott: Who's on first.

Costello: I don't know.

Abbott: He's on third, we're not talking about him.

Costello: Now how did I get on third base?

(continued)



Abbott: Why you mentioned his name.
Costello: If I mentioned the third baseman's name, who did I say is playing third?
Abbott: No. Who's playing first.
Costello: What's on first?
Abbott: What's on second.
Costello: I don't know.
Abbott: He's on third.
Costello: There I go, back on third again!
PAUSE
Costello: Would you just stay on third base and don't go off it.
Abbott: All right, what do you want to know?
Costello: Now who's playing third base?
Abbott: Why do you insist on putting Who on third base?
Costello: What am I putting on third.
Abbott: No. What is on second.
Costello: You don't want who on second?
Abbott: Who is on first.
Costello: I don't know.
Abbott & Costello Together: Third base!
PAUSE
Costello: Look, you gotta outfield?
Abbott: Sure.
Costello: The left fielder's name?
Abbott: Why.
Costello: I just thought I'd ask you.
Abbott: Well, I just thought I'd tell ya.
Costello: Then tell me who's playing left field.
Abbott: Who's playing first.
Costello: I'm not... stay out of the infield! I want to know what's the guy's name in left field?
Abbott: No, What is on second.
Costello: I'm not asking you who's on second.
Abbott: Who's on first?
Costello: I don't know.
Abbott & Costello Together: Third base!
PAUSE
Costello: The left fielder's name?

Abbott: Why.
Costello: Because!
Abbott: Oh, he's centerfield.
PAUSE
Costello: Look, You gotta pitcher on this team?
Abbott: Sure.
Costello: The pitcher's name?
Abbott: Tomorrow.
Costello: You don't want to tell me today?
Abbott: I'm telling you now.
Costello: Then go ahead.
Abbott: Tomorrow!
Costello: What time?
Abbott: What time what?
Costello: What time tomorrow are you gonna tell me who's pitching?
Abbott: Now listen. Who is not pitching.
Costello: I'll break your arm, you say who's on first! I want to know what's the pitcher's name?
Abbott: What's on second.
Costello: I don't know.
Abbott & Costello Together: Third base!
PAUSE
Costello: Gotta a catcher?
Abbott: Certainly.
Costello: The catcher's name?
Abbott: Today.
Costello: Today, and tomorrow's pitching.
Abbott: Now you've got it.
Costello: All we got is a couple of days on the team.
PAUSE
Costello: You know I'm a catcher too.
Abbott: So they tell me.
Costello: I get behind the plate to do some fancy catching, Tomorrow's pitching on my team and a heavy hitter gets up. Now the heavy hitter bunts the ball. When he bunts the ball, me, being a good catcher, I'm gonna throw the guy out at first base. So I pick up the ball and throw it to who?
Abbott: Now that's the first thing you've said right.
Costello: I don't even know what I'm talking about!
PAUSE

Abbott: That's all you have to do.
Costello: Is to throw the ball to first base.
Abbott: Yes!
Costello: Now who's got it?
Abbott: Naturally.
PAUSE
Costello: Look, if I throw the ball to first base, somebody's gotta get it. Now who has it?
Abbott: Naturally.
Costello: Who?
Abbott: Naturally.
Costello: Naturally?
Abbott: Naturally.
Costello: So I pick up the ball and I throw it to Naturally.
Abbott: No you don't, you throw the ball to Who.
Costello: Naturally.
Abbott: That's different.
Costello: That's what I said.
Abbott: You're not saying it...
Costello: I throw the ball to Naturally.
Abbott: You throw it to Who.
Costello: Naturally.
Abbott: That's it.
Costello: That's what I said!
Abbott: You ask me.
Costello: I throw the ball to who?
Abbott: Naturally.
Costello: Now you ask me.
Abbott: You throw the ball to Who?
Costello: Naturally.
Abbott: That's it.
Costello: Same as you! Same as YOU! I throw the ball to who. Whoever it is drops the ball and the guy runs to second. Who picks up the ball and throws it to What. What throws it to I Don't Know. I Don't Know throws it back to Tomorrow, Triple play. Another guy gets up and hits a long fly ball to Because. Why? I don't know! He's on third and I don't give a damn!
Abbott: What?
Costello: I said I don't give a damn!
Abbott: Oh, that's our shortstop.



25th: NFL moves goal posts and adopts sudden-death playoff.

27th thru May 2nd: The Battle of Svay Rieng as the last major operation of the Vietnam War to be mounted by the South Vietnamese army against the Communist VPA forces.

30th: President Nixon hands over partial transcripts of Watergate tape recordings.

April 1975

2nd: Thousands of civilian refugees flee from the Quang Ngai Province in front of advancing North Vietnamese troops.

4th: 130 killed as USAF plane evacuating Vietnamese orphans crashes.

6th: Chiang Kai-Shek, Nationalist Chinese leader, dies at 87.

9th: NVA close in on Xuan Loc, 38 miles from Saigon. 40,000 NVA attack the city and for the first time encounter stiff resistance from South Vietnamese troops.



South Vietnamese troops displaying captured communist flags after a victorious battle at Xuan Loc in April 1975.

17th: Khmer Rouge captures Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Kampuchea National Day).

20th: U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin meets with President Thieu and pressures him to resign given the gravity of the situation and the unlikelihood that Thieu could ever negotiate with the Communists.

21st: A bitter, tearful President Thieu resigns during a 90 minute rambling TV speech to the people of South Vietnam. Thieu reads from the letter sent by Nixon in 1972 pledging *"severe retaliatory action"* if South Vietnam was threatened. Thieu condemns the Paris Peace Accords, Henry Kissinger and the U.S. *"The United States has not respected its promises. It is inhumane. It is untrustworthy. It is irresponsible."* He is then ushered into exile in Taiwan, aided by the CIA.

22nd: Xuan Loc falls to the NVA after a two week battle with South Vietnam's 18th Army Division which inflicted over 5000 NVA casualties and delayed the 'Ho Chi Minh Campaign' for two weeks.



Civilians fleeing Xuan Loc

23rd: 100,000 NVA soldiers advance on Saigon which is now overflowing with refugees. On this same day, President Ford gives a speech at Tulane University stating the conflict in Vietnam is *"a war that is finished as far as America is concerned."*

27th: Saigon is encircled. 30,000 South Vietnamese soldiers are inside the city but are leaderless. NVA fire rockets into downtown civilian areas as the city erupts into chaos and widespread looting.



...miles northeast of Saigon moments before the NVA/Viet Cong overran it. (picturehistory.blogspot.com)

28th: 'Neutralist' General Duong Van "Big" Minh becomes the new president of South Vietnam and appeals for a cease-fire. His appeal is ignored.

(continued...)

