



NUMBER 51

THE LRRP/RANGERS OF THE FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR



APRIL 2007

THIS NEWSLETTER IS DISTRIBUTED ON JANUARY 1, MARCH 1 (REUNION INFORMATION ISSUE) AND AUGUST 1 OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR. IT IS FOR THE MEN WHO SERVED IN THE LONG RANGE PATROL UNITS OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. THESE UNITS ARE: LRRP DET., 191ST MI; HHC (G-2) LRRP; CO. E (LRP), 52ND INF.; CO. H, (RANGER) 75TH INF.; AND DET. 10, (RANGER) HHC, 3RD BGE.

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(NEW) lrrp.rangers@comcast.net

Webster defines strong as having great physical power; as having moral or intellectual power; as striking or superior of its kind.

But with all due respect to Webster, there is strong, and then there is

ARMY STRONG !!

It is a strength like none other.

It is a physical strength.

It is an emotional strength.

It is a strength of character, and a strength of purpose.

The strength to do good today and the strength to do well tomorrow.

The strength to obey and the strength to command.

The strength to build and the strength to tear down.

The strength to get yourself over and the strength to get over yourself.

There is nothing on this green earth that is stronger than the **US ARMY !!**

Because there is nothing on this green earth that is stronger than a **US ARMY SOLDIER !!**

(The words are from a new campaign commercial)



The President Corner

From Larry CURTIS

Well it's that time of year again. Spring is just around the corner, and it's time to start making your plans to attend this year's reunion! Reunions are a time to gather, a time to renew old friendships, and a time to make new bonds that will last forever. The 2007 Reunion is being held in Riverside, California from July 11-15 at the Riverside Marriott. The Riverside Marriott is located at 3400 Market Street. For reservations please call the hotel directly at (951)786-7110, or call Marriott Reservations at (888)236-2427. If the Riverside Marriott is full, the Cav has booked a block of rooms at the Mission Inn which is just a short walk to the Marriott. They also have a block of rooms at the Comfort Inn. If you need assistance with your accommodations, please do not hesitate to contact me. Also if your flying in use the Ontario Airport, the Marriott has a shuttle service that will pick you up. With the reunion being in California we should have a lot of Rangers who will be making their first reunion. Let's see if we can make this year's reunion as big as, or better than, last years! A list of names has been posted on the website of Ranger's who have already registered for this year's reunion. Be sure to check out the web site!

I received a letter from Al and Karen **Voelkel**. They have just retired and are moving to Blairsville, GA. Also, Dale **Markovich** said to tell everyone 'Hi'. He hopes to make it to a reunion when he retires.

I would like to thank everyone who helped Katie Meisel with her school project on a story about Dwight "Bull" **Durham**. Nice going guys. Katie said she got a 90% on the audio/visual part of the report and a 93% on the biography. I just received a copy of the biography and will be sending it to the Saber.

For people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Agent Orange claims, if you require more information to support these types of claims I suggest that you contact the address below.

U.S. Armed Services Center for Unit Record Research (USASCURR)

Kingman Building 2C08

7701 Telegraph Road

Alexandria, VA 22315-3828

It is their mission to research unit records to verify specific combat stressing experiences is support of (PTSD) and Agent Orange. They will be glad to send you the info.

Hope to see everyone at the reunion, 'till then, have a safe New Year

Reunion update from: "Albert Voelkel" 19 Mar 2007

No room left; other Marriott was pricey and Mission Inn extremely pricey. I made reservations at a reasonable rate at Comfort Inn University, two miles away. Might want to pass that on to anyone else who inquires.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

From Dave Klimek

I'm a little behind on things with our unit. After I write this I will try to catch up. If there is anything I was supposed to do for anyone, call me at 724-554-5738 and I will do it.

This past Thanksgiving I began to write again. For some strange reason the magic appeared. I now have over fifty songs and poems, over forty short stories, and one play. The play is about Pilgrim Rangers, but the majority of my stories are about my times with our unit. After another thirty stories, the part about our unit will be done. All of my stories are about rangers that I researched long ago.

I'm enjoying writing again on my laptop, but I also make time for golf. The weather has been poor here in PA, so I go on little trips to get my exercise. I hope all is well with everyone and I look forward to sharing my writing with you. Take care, and God Bless.

Dave Klimek

SLASHING TALON 6 REUNION

From John LEBRUN

I am looking at putting together a mini reunion in the Seattle area November 10-12, 2007. Nothing fancy, but just a little get together for those in the region that are unable to attend the annual reunion held in conjunction with the 1st Cav. will make the arrangements at a local hotel/inn but need an idea of how many would like to attend. I am particularly looking for those members that served with Captain Paccarelli (Slashing Talon 6). Send me an e-mail, or ground mail, at the address under the Merchandise Price List on this page, if you would like to be included.

John LeBrun

JOHN LEBRUN REPORT

Wow, where have the months gone. Seems like only the other day and I was getting the items planned for the reunion.

I have restocked all the items and have added a few new things. I had the Bearcat Training VHS converted to DVD. Turned out well but like everything else it came at a slightly higher cost. Additionally, you will notice a list of other DVD's. A portion of all the DVD's sold will go to the brick fund (\$5 from each DVD). I was attempting to get as many books as possible about our organization and to provide them as opposed to buying them on the Internet or through a local bookstore. I have had no response from unit members.

The next reunion is almost here. You should have already made your reservation and put the date on your calendar to attend. For those that are coming, remember the raffle. For those that can't but would like to donate items for the raffle; you can forward them to me, somebody else that is planning on attending, or ship them direct to the hotel in care of me. All items are greatly appreciated.

I have been out of the country for most of the winter so I apologize for any delays in getting items to you. Fortunately my daughter has been able to swing by the house and ship out most of the orders. If you have a specific request for items or size please let me know ahead of time and I will put them aside for you.

On another note, I heard from **Talon 6**. He had complications after heart surgery but is back at home now. He sends his regrets for not being able to attend the reunion but keeps us in his thoughts. His e-mail address is theproperty@wildblue.net. I'm sure he would appreciate hearing from his fellow Rangers.

Until next time, take care, and see you at the Riverside reunion.

LRRP/RANGER MERCHANDISE PRICE LIST

T-Shirts: Black/White sizes to 4X	\$13
T-Shirts Novelty: Wh, sizes to 4X	\$10
T-Shirts Recondo: Gr. sizes to 2X	\$15
Golf(Polo)Shirts:Blk/Wh sz to XL	\$30
Windshirts:Pullover: Bl: M LR XL	\$36
Sweaters: Bl: M LR XL	\$40
Windshirt: (converts to sleeveless)	\$48
Black With Khaki Trim: M L XL	
Hats: Black or White	\$12
Ranger Ring: size 10 1/2 only	\$50
Belt Buckles: numbered	\$20
Ranger Lapel Pin:	\$4
Cloth Scroll Patch: (Co H 75 th Inf.)	\$4
Cloth Logo Patch:	\$4
Wooden Nickel:	\$1
Ankony's book; LURP's	\$30
DVD's 1 James Gang	\$15
2 Bear Cat Training	each
3 Tribute To Our	
Fallen Comrades	
4 History Channel LRRP's	
Decals: interior/exterior	\$2
ANNUAL DUES	\$15
Shipping per order	\$5

Please mail check/money order payable to

LRRP/RANGER

John LeBrun

932 3rd Street,

Blaine, WA 98230.

caabnranger@yahoo.com

The \$5.00 shipping charge covers only one or two shirts.

Donations are gladly accepted.

Take care and see you in Riverside California in 2007.

BOOKS

by and about LRRP/Rangers

The Ghosts of the Highlands by Kregg P.J.

Jorgenson, Ivy Books. This is about the beginning of the 1st Cav LRRP/Rangers, 1966-67

LRRP Company Command by Kregg P. J.

Jorgenson, Ballantine Books. The 1st Cav LRRP/Rangers, 1968-69

Acceptable Loss by Kregg P. J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. Kregg's autobiography, 1969-70.

MIA RESCUE LRRPs in Cambodia by Kregg

P.J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. One mission gone bad during the Cambodian Invasion.

Above All Else by Ron Christopher,

PublishAmerica. Ron's autobiography about being the TL of the first team to pull a mission as the 1st Cav's LRRP/Rangers.

One-Zulu by Curtis "Randy" Kimes, published by author. About one mission, May 7-9, 1968.

Lurps: A Ranger's Diary of Tet, Khe Sanh, A

Shau, and Quang Tri by Bob Ankony

University Press of America, of Rowman and Littlefield Publishing group, 1967-68

OTHER BOOKS

For What It's Worth by David Klimek,

published by author. Dave's experiences during the Cambodian Invasion before he joined H-75th.

A Troop, 9th Cavalry by Ron Christopher.

PublishAmerica. Ron's experiences with the "Blues" A-1-9 before he joined LRRP.

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HISTORICAL OCCURENCES

LIEUTENANT JOE DILGER

Story by Bob Carr

Written by Eugene Luning

There are some men who refuse to die and then there are some men, too, who refuse to live life only for themselves. It is my honor and pleasure, this issue, to write of a man who is both of these things. Lieutenant Joe **Dilger**.

I first met the lieutenant in the late Fall of 1967. I was in the Central Highlands at LZ Uplift and had just come down for a last-light insertion. It certainly wasn't my first. But it was for Joe. And he was going to be in the Command/Control slick that night. And I remember seeing he didn't have his M-16. So I asked him about it. "I've got my weapon right here," he replied. He was referring to the .45 on his hip.

We dropped into our LZ that night and everything looked proper. The chopper pulled up quickly from between the trees. And, just as soon as that, we were in contact with the enemy. A platoon's worth, I figured. And I remember hearing the sound of the C/C slick overhead and the unfamiliar sound of a handgun up there in the near-darkness. Yes, that's right. Lieutenant Joe Dilger, laying on the floorboard on his stomach, unloading his .45 into the darkened jungle. I remember radioing up in the midst of the firefight, "Well done, John Wayne." But he got us out that night and that's all that mattered. And he never forgot his M-16 again.

Four or five missions later, we got dropped into an LZ in the Sui-Ca Valley. It was another last-light and there were four Americans and two Yards of us altogether. The drop was clean. We zig-zagged out ten minutes and then stopped for our listening halt. I remember the yards starting to talk rapidly. "What's the matter?" I asked them. "Beaucoup VC," they replied. And they were right. So we kept on moving for more than an hour and I remember the fresh trails we

kept coming across. So we set up an NDP in the darkness and laid out the Claymores. We knew they were close but we still hadn't seen them.

And then I heard the lieutenant's voice on the radio. "Be advised," he said. "You have thirty minutes to get back to the LZ." "It took us an hour and a half to get to where we are," I replied. "You don't have a choice," he said. "Do not get compromised."

It turned out there was a full enemy regiment in the area that night. Brigade Intel had failed to pass along the word to the lieutenant until we were already on the ground. But as soon as he heard, he got us extracted. He always did. Lieutenant Joe Dilger always thought of his men first.

And then there was the night south of LZ Pedro, another last-light in the DMZ. That night, the pilot of our slick was new and he was afraid of the size of the designated LZ. When he balked, the lieutenant was all over him on the radio. But the pilot still set us down in the middle of a huge field, hundreds of yards from the tree-line. We were forced to cross a trail we'd been sent to watch. About as compromised as you could be.

At the tree-line, I radioed the lieutenant. I explained our situation. He agreed it was bad, but said we had to head for another LZ. I remember crawling on our bellies into a thicket and setting up our NDP. We weren't far off-grid and I could tell from a hill above us that we weren't far from the new LZ.

Twenty minutes later, we picked up movement. By squelches, I kept the lieutenant up to speed on the situation. We were counting NVA lanterns coming over the hilltop trail. One lantern for each five men. We counted seventy-five lanterns. They were probing near, hoping to draw fire.

Then one of them tripped a Claymore wire and so we blew them all. We busted through up the hill, set up a defensive position, and, within thirty minutes, the lieutenant had us pulled. He'd been working toward our extraction since my first

call at the tree-line. He was always thinking of his men's welfare.

On April 20, 1968, Lieutenant Joe Dilger was the first man on the ground to clear an LZ at Signal Hill in the A-Shau Valley. They had to repel off the slicks to get in. Behind him, the second chopper lost power and most of the men onboard were thrown clear. Except for Sergeant Larry **Curtis**. He was thrown on his back and the skid of the chopper landed on his chest. He was saved only by the softness of the mud and the size of his pack.

Quickly, the lieutenant set up a perimeter with the eleven available men on the ground. But they started taking fire almost immediately. **Turbitt, Lambert, and Noto** were all killed during that first day of the fight. And, at some point, Lieutenant Joe Dilger was struck in the upper chest by an SKS round. The entry wound was no bigger than your pinkie finger. But the exit wound was enormous.

I was the one called in to identify the body. I remember walking in and seeing the lieutenant on the gurney. I didn't want to remember him that way. So I did my job, signed off his death on the log-book, and then got out of there as fast as I could. I believe that was April the 22nd, 1968.

In 1991, I received a phone call from my old team leader, **Seymour**. He asked, "Do you remember Joe Dilger?" I replied, "Of course I do. He was a great man. I had to identify his body."

There was a pause on the line.

"Well, Bob," Seymour said, "from one NCO to another, you sure didn't do a very damn good job. 'Cause Joe just walked into our reunion. Alive and well, Bob."

I literally dropped the phone on the floor.

Two weeks later, I was fortunate enough to get Joe Dilger on the phone at his mother's house in Louisville. I will never forget that conversation.

And I will never forget last year's reunion in Louisville. I remember talking to **Parkinson**

before I flew out and him telling me that some anonymous benefactor had set us up for a prime-rib riverboat cruise. 74 of us. And that anonymous benefactor was none other than Lieutenant Joe Dilger.

It is difficult to sum up my thoughts about this great man. But here's my try: If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here today. Nor would Doug **Parkinson**. Nor would Bob **Ankony**. Lieutenant Joe Dilger was a total leader. He was a man who not only refused to die; he was a man who refused to live life only for himself.

UPDATE

I have asked all of you for assistance in learning the names of the LRRP team that had SP4 Thomas Sprinkle on it. They were hit on 7Jul68 with SP4 Sprinkle becoming a KIA. Myself and one other man from the 1/9th repelled down and got all of them out of there. Today I received an email from Larry **Staiger**. He was the Company Clerk on that day. He remembers the incident and the names. He told me that he went and saw them at the field Hospital. They were in bad shape but okay. Their names were; **Mike Tibbets, Robinson, Aquino, Bowman and Harris**. Does anyone maybe remember these men and possibly their first names? Once again Men, thank you. It was through the LRRP/Ranger newspaper posting of my request that I was contacted. To the Bravest of the Brave. Thank you for your service to Country and your help.

Patrick Bieneman
990 Red River Road
Winchester, KY 40391
859-745-1924
pcbnamin@earthlink.net

historical occurrences
Continued on back

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HOT EXTRACTION

From Paul Hart C/1/9

Historical Help please. About January 8, 1968, I flew a LRRP extraction mission out of LZ Two Bits. I would like your help to determine the exact date of that mission and touch base with any of the team members involved. Here are the details as I recall.

1. Night time extraction - LRRP's in contact.
2. Team was in the mountains right along the coastline.
3. Northeast of Two-Bits and east of English (Bong Son A/O).
4. Single ship into hill/mt. top LZ covered by gun team.
5. Unable to touchdown held aircraft at a hover.
6. LRRP team provided cover fire all the way into A/C.
7. Explosion rocked A/C as team boarded no damage/injuries.
8. Flew team to LZ English.
9. Informed that one team member had been on 12/27/67 mission (not confirmed).

If I can ever locate a member of one of the teams I extracted I would like to have you sign my print of Joe Kline's painting "Gods Own Lunatics".

If those details bring back any memories let me know, thanks,

Paul Hart, C/1/9, "Lift" pilot, 67 - 68.
2107 N. Margaret Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85716
pbhart@cox.net
520-400-9077 (cell)

WET INSERTION

From Bill Elliott

This was one of my first missions after leaving the mountains for the flatlands of Phouc Vinh. An LZ was chosen... a small field of elephant grass near the wood line. We came in at first light and when we jumped from the chopper I heard a splash from behind me about that time I went underwater. We had jumped into a small lake with elephant grass growing out of it... With 80 to 100 lbs. on my back

I went down fast but the water was only about 5 feet deep. We all got out covered with roots and mud without drowning and aborted the mission. I don't remember who else was on the team. If you remember this shout out

DO YOU TRUST ME?

From Jim Regan

Around the end of October '69, I was preparing for another milestone in my life. The "Thirtieth Birthday!" The C.O., Top, and a couple of others knew about the upcoming day. As you may remember, in those days the young folks said not to trust anyone thirty or over.

Well, on that day, my birthday, one of my Teams from the First Plt, made CONTACT in the Divarty A.O.! We all did our "magic" and got things rolling and in the air. Charlie Troop had a slick cranking as I rolled up to the pad on the mule with my gear. A Pink Team from "Cavalier" was already on the scene. Blue Max had bounced a section of ARA. The chatter on the Fox Mike was constant. The Team was in contact with an element of unknown size and taking lots of fire. I called them and let them know I was inbound. The RTO was about as calm as anyone under fire, and acknowledged my call. A few minutes later the RTO calls and his rate of speech told me that they were getting anxious. Give us a panel or smoke and we'll be in to get you, says I.

Several long minutes passed and we had the PZ in sight. Saw the smoke, ID'd it. I called the Team and asked the RTO, "Slashing Talon 3- this is Slashing Talon 15, do you trust me now?" The response was immediate! YES, YES, WE TRUST YOU, he said, COME ON IN!!!

The extraction was text book. Nobody wounded, all accounted for. Called in the "MARK", and headed back to Phuoc Vinh. All the way back I wore a Smile/Smirk on my face. The RTO almost blushed. There were no more conversations around me about not trusting anyone thirty or over!!!

Jim RLW

ONE-ZULU UPDATE

From Randy **Kimes**

Since the publication of "*One-Zulu*" late in 2002, I've received a number of inquiries about the book -mostly from 'grunts' who were airlifted onto the ridge south of Camp Evans in May, 1968. Every so often, I receive an email from someone who tells when, where, and what he was doing during those five days.

This latest email received was sent by a helicopter pilot who was driving the 196th CO around and above the action, and who attempted to reach me, Bob **Teagle**, and Al **Voekel** to rescue us off the ridge and carry us to Camp Evans. Although I had only incomplete information about this part of the incident, this pilot's experience is mentioned in "*One-Zulu*". His email fills in a small portion of the overall story I had no way of knowing at the time.

Here's his latest note;

For your information, Ron Redecker was flying left seat that day in Charger 860, Ron was hit much worse than me. He walked on crutches for several weeks afterwards, but was back in the saddle flying in late June. Unfortunately, Ron was killed in a training accident at Fort Rucker about a year after getting home. The ship had a white knight on a white 'Charger' with the 196th patch as the knight's shield painted on the nose. It was NOT a Rattler, the outfit that provided most of the 196th support. My wounds were minor. I did not even stick around the aide station long enough for them to get my name and number. Just dropped off Ron, picked up our Section commander (a Major) to fly in Ron's place, and back to the action area we went. It was a fairly long day. We had been taking turns flying C&C all that night. Some of the other pilots in the C&C ship during the action would have been, Ben Walton, Joe Moore, and Dennis Priscandaro.

I do have to admit, that was one scared Brigade Commander in the back, thinking both his pilots where hit and a crash was imminent.

TODAY'S MILITARY

From Bob and Cathy **Ankony**

Just a little FYI, our daughter Lt. Catherine Christ is deployed to Manis Air Base, Kyrgyzstan. Her husband left two weeks before her and is also stationed at Manis, both are flying KC135s. Thanks to two great LRRPs who attended their graduation in Colorado Springs, we know they will be blessed in their military career because of the traditions passed on by Doug **Parkinson** and Bob **Carr**.

Also I wanted to let you know we received an email from our daughter about flying support for a CH-47 that crashed in Afghanistan. It had Rangers on board. At least two Rangers from the 75th were killed but one of the ones who lived was from Grosse Ile, Michigan. I've spoken with his parents and explained our connection; they live about a mile from us. So while their son was on the ground and the military was doing what they could to protect the survivors, and recover the dead, the KC135 flying overhead to support their search and rescue mission was our own Catherine and her crew. So isn't it ironic, you guys trained Bob and kept him safe, and he came home, did what he did to bring Catherine into this world, and she did what she did to provide support for a group of Army Ranger's in a crashed CH-47 helicopter in a remote region of Afghanistan.

Also I just received word that my nephew (my brother's son) James Sawyers will be deploying to Baghdad in mid-February. He's an airman with Air Force security.

My gratitude and prayers for all our service people and their families around the world.

The Ankons

Tell your daughter and son-in-law that the next time they support a Ranger unit, to ask if there is a Captain Drew James down there. It would be Jim James' son.

REMEMBERING DAVID IVES

from Bill Carpenter

A few weeks ago, Bill Anton forwarded a request to me from the 75th RRA webpage from someone looking for some information about David Ives, KIA 23 Apr 67. Dave and I had come to LRRP together. John Simones, Doug Fletcher, Geoff Koper, Art Guerrero, and I was on the mission when he was killed.

It seems that the Donut Dollies of Vietnam were having a reunion. A film company was producing a then-and-now film for them. One of the women being interviewed for this film, Joyce Denke, was engaged to Ives when he was killed. They were looking for pictures of Dave when he was in Nam.

Well this request went through the men who served with Dave very quickly. Within 24 hours Joyce had contacted several of us. I talked to her on the phone for about 45 minutes. She found a picture of Dave that was taken the day before we went on that mission. It is now on the webpage. Needless to say this has brought back memories to all concerned. Work on this newsletter took a back seat.

At the time of this writing, Joyce Denke is seriously planning on attending the Riverside reunion.

We all have our specific memories of these women in the bullet-proof blue dresses, but the thing they really did for us was to listen, and listen, and listen, and smile. There are a couple of interesting facts I didn't know. There were 627 Donut Dollies who served in Nam. They logged about 2,125,000 air miles among them.

The film is called *A Touch of Home: The Vietnam War's Red Cross Girls*. This is Arrowhead's third Vietnam War documentary; the other two are *In The Shadow of The Blade* and *An Ocean Away: The Donald Matocha Story*.

The film debut will be held April 21 at the Marriott DFW Airport South, 1-800-228-9290 or

1-800-431-8162. Vietnam veterans who would like to attend dinner and the movie are invited to the banquet on Saturday beginning at 6:30 p.m. \$40 prepaid reservations can be sent to Jenny Young, 203 Hickory Creek Circle, Gun Barrell City, TX 75156. Those who'd like to come just for the movie are welcome to do that, gratis, but please RSVP to jennyyoung6@yahoo.com.

Forty years ago

By Joyce Denke

Thru a curious turn of events, I was recently put in touch with the LRRP's who were with my fiancée David A. Ives when he was KIA 23 April 1967. I have now learned that he was the first LRRP killed in enemy combat. I was 19 years old when I heard the news of Dave and was devastated. He had only been in Vietnam about seven weeks. I kept the copy of the letter his parents received from Cpt. James explaining the circumstances of his heroic death and that Doug Fletcher and John Simones stayed with him until the helicopter arrived. I kept the letters I received from Doug and John. I kept all of Dave's letters and remember his excitement over being selected for this elite group. Every few years, I would stumble across "Dave's box" and sit down to re-read the letters and look at our pictures. As the years went by the memories of our engagement faded. I married and started my new life, **never** forgetting that **my** fiancée had died for his country and often being reminded our times together, in particular when I heard certain songs from the 60's. I will die with some of these memories.

I volunteered to go to Vietnam for the Red Cross in 1970 after graduating from college. I did this as a salute to Dave and to thank him and others for what they had sacrificed. Recently, in preparation for a reunion of "Donut Dollies", I was being interviewed for a documentary and the film editor put me in touch with your web site

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and with Bill Carpenter. Lo and behold! The next thing I know I am talking to the man who last saw Dave alive.

What a range of emotions I have had since that day! Many sleepless nights, some mixed feelings of guilt, some hesitation to get involved again in this memory. I would have to say that it literally consumed me for two weeks!!! But, what an overwhelmingly positive response from LRRP's. I have heard from several on his team and from others who never knew him. I am more at peace now knowing that his team members were such a great group of guys and that you still see each other. I am especially proud that the picture of Dave which I shared is now posted on your website. In his last letter to me, he included this photo and said it was taken before they were to leave that afternoon for what turned out to be his first and only mission. The letter is dated April 19, 1967 and some of it reads: "Well, today is the day I find out if I learned anything in training. I don't have much time before we leave and rain is forecast the next two days. I only regret that I cannot take your pictures and I won't get any mail for 5 days. How do you like this crazy hat and uniform? I really do want to go on this mission."

I have seen your photos from the Kentucky reunion and can just imagine the comradery between you and all LRRP's. James Ross says it best when in an e-mail he stated, "It is the random chaos of combat that rules who lives and who dies". **23 April 1967 was random chaos.** He also said "If God were to send His Angel into this old group of stubborn warrior veterans to tend and heal old wounds, it would certainly be you". Well, to James Ross and all "old warriors", God sent me some angels and I thank each and every one of you for sharing! Joyce Rice Denke jdenke@earthlink.net

So why don't some of you Texas boys go give the Donut Dollies a big "ATTA GIRL".



INFO SEARCH ON ERWIN "SKIP" THESSIN

I am trying to contact soldiers who knew my cousin, Erwin A. "Skip" **Thessin**, in Viet Nam. With the help of many on the LRRP/Rangers website and an article by Gregg **Jorgenson**, I have learned that Lee "Shorty" **Combstock** and Chuck **Donahoo** were wounded with him on 27 May 1970 in Cambodia. It is like finding lost family.

I understand that when Erwin died in 1987, the unit took up a collection and gave \$1000 to his widow and children. The kids are in their 20's now, and know very little about their dad.

I'm hoping to find stories from Ranger pals and make contact with those who knew him. I can be contacted at

Ellen Hernandez
43 Ferris Creek

San Antonio, TX 78254
ellenhernandez@hotmail.com

Thanks so very much.

Everyday Hero

By Katie Meisel

(a high school English report)

Dwight Montgomery Durham is a name that Monty Durham probably only heard when his mother was mad at him, which for a studious but fun-loving kid like Monty, was probably only occasionally. His friends called him Monty when inviting him to ride bikes on the infamous Channel 8 hill, and the name used when asking to play in the coolest treehouse on the block. The meticulously crafted, insulated, and electrically lit treehouse stands out in the memories of all who knew Monty as a youngster.

Born to a seamstress and to a father who enjoyed building amazing treehouses in his spare time, Monty and his two older siblings, Joe Jr. and Patty, grew up on the west side of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Raised Protestant, young Monty grew up with his beloved dog, a Samoyed named Lady, an Archie collection to be reckoned with, and a Sunday morning paper route. The paper route was not only a source of income for the dozen or so boys employed, but also a time for social gathering before the route began – social time which always resulted in rubber band fights. They always got the job done, though, a habit that would prove to be very useful later in life.

Schools on the west side of Tulsa are not known for their stellar reputation – then or now; therefore, Monty's parents sent him to a different school on the other side of town. Intelligence seemed to run in Monty's family – his older brother Joe received a full scholarship to M.I.T., and Monty himself was no slump. He did not let that go to his head though. Monty, in between making stellar grades, still made many good friends, including one Jerry Sinard, a fellow paper boy who covered Monty's route first when he came down with mononucleosis for six weeks, and when he crashed the brand-new bicycle the day he got it riding down the Channel 8 hill and was out of commission for a month. At the time

though, a month's recovery probably seemed worth it.

Monty grew into a caring young man. When his friend Jerry, who had helped him all the times he had needed it, was in a car accident, Monty went to visit although they had rarely seen or talked to each other since Jerry had moved away. After insisting that he wanted to see Jerry's scars, Monty passed out and had to go to the emergency room for the head trauma he sustained during the incident. Not long after that, though, Monty's stomach toughened up as he entered basic training before being sent to Vietnam at 18 years old. "I would say he went from Beaver Cleaver to Rambo in 18 months," Jerry Sinard said of Monty's transformation during his time in the army.

Monty served a regular eight months in the army, but soon got a chance to be something a little more notable. By the age of 19, Monty was deep in the Vietnamese jungle, serving as a Sergeant in the three-year-old Ranger regiment. During Monty's time in the army, he came to be known as "Bull" Durham by his peers. In the few short months he spend with the Rangers, he made such an impact on the men with whom he served that one wrote a song about him. The lyrics are straightforward poetry such as "With sixteens on their shoulders and Claymores in their packs six men went out that day, but only one came back," the sad ballad succinctly encompasses the Vietnam experience. The song has a special meaning to all of the Rangers and is sung at every reunion to this day.

Joining the 75th Ranger Regiment was not just a matter of showing up and falling in – one had to be tested and approved by his peers before being allowed to officially wear the black beret of the Rangers. Regular Ranger missions included locating enemy bases and lines of communication. Sometimes they were given special missions, which consisted of wiretapping, prisoner snatching, raid missions and Bomb Damage Assessment missions after B-52 Arc-

Light attacks. Rangers were known for conducting long-range intelligence collection missions. While at first the US Army only accepted graduates of Army Ranger School and Special Forces trained men, most of the troops in the Rangers were soldiers who did not have a chance to attend the schools. Monty Durham was one such feisty volunteer who was willing not only to fight for his country, but to work to carry the fight to the enemy. The 75th Range Regiment was initially activated about halfway through the war, on February 1, 1969 and remained in action until August 15, 1972.

On Thursday, April 10, 1969, during an operation in the province of Tay Ninh in South Vietnam, Dwight Montgomery "Bull" Durham was killed by way of hostile multiple fragmentation wounds while engaged in combat. He earned two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, a Silver Star and the love and respect of his peers. His remains were recovered and he is buried in Fort Gibson National Cemetery in Muskogee County, Texas.

Just shy of one month away from discharge, Monty Durham had his life taken in an instant. He is remembered by friends for his kindness, playfulness, and bravery. Jerry Sinard says that Monty remains one of his personal heroes, and his picture resides next to his computer where Jerry can see it every day. "Monty was a great guy and would have made a difference in what he chose to do... The world would have been a better place had he lived."

Postscript from Katie

I could not have done nearly so well without the help of so many Rangers. I was amazed how interesting this project turned out to be and I was more amazed at how emotionally connected I got to Monty, and I think it's probably the best project I've ever done. Truly, as much as I could possibly mean it, thank you so much.

-Katie Meisel

BOOK REVIEW

VIETNAM Magazine, April 2007

Lurps: A Ranger's Diary of Tet, Khe Sanh, A Shau, and Quang Tri, By Robert C. Ankony.

Dr. Robert C. Ankony has written a fascinating, highly readable memoir of his distinguished military career. Following him from the decision to join the Army at 17 through the difficult task of becoming a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment, we experience some of the most significant battles of the Vietnam War.

Stylistically, *Lurps* reads more like a first-person novel, with conversations and action written as they unfold, than as a traditional memoir or an academic history. By giving the work a sense of immediacy that many autobiographies lack, this approach allows the reader to live the experiences as Ankony remembers them. But the book is more than a combat diary; it also contains frank discussions, from a soldier's perspective, about the turbulent political and social aspects of the war. These elements combine to make the book a unique addition to the growing field of Vietnam literature.

The story begins with Ankony, a bored and rebellious kid living in a lower middle-class neighborhood in Michigan in the mid-1960s, dreaming of adventure and of one day "getting out." Through service to his country and fellowship with the other Rangers, Ankony slowly becomes a new man. Gone is the impetuous, undisciplined boy who could not stand school and once tried to rob Fort Wayne of a Browning automatic rifle. He has been reborn a decorated veteran (Bronze Star, Air Medal, Combat Infantry Badge) who eventually earns a Ph.D.

The book is not, however, about his own heroism so much as what his service meant, as well as a tribute to those men who helped make him who he is. A pleasure to read, *Lurps* is among the best war diaries available.

Jason Foster, *Vietnam Magazine*, April 2007

RUNNING SLACK

From Bill Carpenter

Well, it happened again, just as I was getting ready to start putting this newsletter together, my computer crashed. My granddaughter said, "Grandpap, you broke it." Then there was the contact with Joyce Denke (see "Remembering David Ives") which definitely occupied my mind for a few days. Anyway, here is the next issue of the newsletter, albeit a little late.

When the computer crashed, I lost all of your email addresses. Everything that is in the newsletters has come to me through the internet.

There are occasions when pieces of information should not wait until the next newsletter, so I send it out bulk mail. I would really appreciate it if you could take a few seconds to send me your email address to lrrp.rangers@comcast.net.

JON VARESKO

From Margie VARESKO

After a long month of problems and a large amount of weight loss and in the hospital, Jonny has been told he has cancer of the pancreas. The doctors haven't given him any indications on what can be done for him, yet. They discharged him from the hospital and told him to call back on April 2nd and they will let him know what, or if anything, can be done. We are not waiting for their decision and are making arrangements at a cancer hospital elsewhere. I wanted to let you know, and if you pray, say a prayer for him. **OK, Rangers, we have a brother in serious need, I know they can really use our support. Contact Jon and Margie at:**

203 Tin Can Hollow Road
Rices Landing, PA 15357
1-724-966-7517
mjv528@alltel.net

ADDING TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF RANGERS

For those of you who do not check our webpage guestbook, Leo **Corey** wanted me to pass along that Shawn David Dickinson has enlisted for the Rangers. He is the nephew of David **Dickinson**, KIA 12/06/67. He shipped out for Ft. Benning on January 26.

Here is what Corey had to say about Shawn, "I'm as proud as if Shawn were my own. I know Bobby (Shawn's father and Dave's brother) is overwhelmed with emotions. We leave it to Shawn to set the bar for the new generation of Rangers."

Remember when you called, or wrote, home and said, "Hey Mom and Dad, guess what, I just volunteered for the Rangers." I'd bet that our parents' reaction was different than ours.

Maybe by the fall newsletter, he may have a permanent address that can be passed along.

RANGER SEARCH

Richard **Wilkie** is trying to find an address, phone number, or some other way to contact Lewis **Davidson**. If any of you can help Richard out, he can be contacted at:

5605 Kingston Way
Sacramento, CA 95822
1-916-447-0265

RANGER FOUND

Andrew **Allen**, '70 has found the association. His address was lost some time in the past. He is thinking about the reunion this summer. If you are interested, he can be contacted at:

4033 South County Road 29
Loveland, CO 80537
Cell 720-480-9241
Damocles10@aol.com

EX-LRRP SURVIVE HELICOPTER CRASH

A helicopter carrying two California Department of Fish and Game employees tracking deer crashed Friday in rural Tulare

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County, but no one was seriously injured. The Bell Jet Ranger went down about 170 miles north of Los Angeles. The pilot had control of the craft during the hard landing.

Capture specialist Bob **Teagle** was on the first day of a two-day project to collar and track a herd of Tule River deer.

When the bird came to a rest on its side after hitting some trees, with capture nets and net gun on top of him, it was reported that Teagle thought "this isn't where I want to be". When asked if he wanted medical assistance Bob replied "I'm a Vietnam LRRP/Ranger, I gotta be tough".

VIETNAM -SE ASIA MAPS

From Glenn **Merritt**

I came across this website that has scanned DoD topographic maps of Vietnam from the early 70s. Place the mouse and cursor over the maps and click on the ones of interest and drill down to the sections. The map sections are very sharp. They contain annotations of air strips and firebases. May be of interest to our members if they don't already know about it.

ND49-09 contains An Khe and Highway 19 (top middle two sections)

ND49-05 contains the Bong Son and LZ English (top, second in from right)

NE48-16 contains Camp Evans, Hue, and Quang Tri (top, second in from right)

NC48-04 contains Phuoc Vinh (bottom, second from left)

ND49-13 contains Da Nang

ND49-01 contains Cam Ranh Bay

I've checked USGS and it looks like they've changed the map series numbers for current available maps and may reflect an updating of the map information, but without seeing one with my own eyes I can't be sure

(<http://erg.usgs.gov/nimamaps/topo.html#Vietnam>).

NOTE: these maps may be a different scale than the ones we used.

UPDATE ON BENNY GENTRY

As reported by Sandy

Bennie is doing a LOT better. The doctor says it will be 3 or 4 months before they can tell how much permanent damage has been done. I look at March or April for them doing an MRI to find that out. We really appreciate everyone's support. Keep IN TOUCH!!

Special Military Earnings Credit for Social Security

Because you served in the active duty military before January 2001 you can get up to \$1200 a year earnings credit for the years you served. When you apply for Social Security bring your DD-214 to your local Social Security Office. You only get this benefit if you ask for it. To read more, go to the Social Security Website at:
<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire2/military.htm>. You do not need to be a retiree to qualify for this benefit, so please tell you friends, neighbors etc.

ROY HATFIELD OBITUARY

Roy Hatfield died in November 2004. His son is looking for pictures of him in Viet Nam or to get in contact with men who served with Roy. The son can be contacted at:

Vonroyce Hatfield
210 N 10th St.

Middlesboro, KY 40965

606-242-2872

bryson2302@yahoo.com

Everything that goes into the newsletter comes from you. All I do is copy and paste, and run a spell check. You have to admit that Bill **Elliott** playing Navy Seal was funny. Keep sending me items and I will put them in.

lrrp.rangers@comcast.net

STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER

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OF THE FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION
DURING THE VIETNAM WAR



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2006-2008

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