



Rear Security

25th Div LRRP - Co F, 50th Inf (LRP) - Co F, 75th Inf Ranger

LRRP
LRP
Ranger

February, 2003

It has been almost 15 months since the last issue of Rear Security - far too long. There are several issues that we felt you needed to know about, so here they are. In this issue:

- **Co F Reunion scheduled!**
- Co F Challenge coins
- After Action reports
- Taps - members who have died (or who we learned have died) since the last newsletter.
- Don Purdy's election to the Ranger Hall of Fame
- Thanks to those who have routinely helped us.
- Commie Flag - mission report by Gene Tucker

Bill Mrkuicka

After Action Reports

In November, 2002, Joe Gentile and I spent two grueling days at the National Archives. The Archives have located and filed quite a number of after action reports that we had not seen in previous visits. We managed to copy about 700 of these reports. They have been scanned and Dave Regenthal managed to come up with a way to post them on the web site.

There are quite a number of reports for missions in 1968 and 1969. We found only one AAR from 1966; very few from 1967; none from November, 1970 through April, 1971. There were a number of reports from April, 1970 to November, 1970 that we did not have time to copy.

If you want to look at these AARs, take a look at our web site that Dave has run for years. Its address is "www.LRRP.com". Click on the "AARs" link and it will take you to the index of reports that are on the site. If you do not have internet access, take a trip to your local library. Most public libraries now have PCs that you can use to surf the internet. Enjoy.

"Challenge coins for our Unit are now available"

Marshall Huckaby has designed and had a coin produced which represents our unit from Birth to Retirement.

The front of the coin has the 25th ID Patch with words "25th Infantry Division * LRRP * F Co - 50th Inf (LRP) * Co F 75th Inf Ranger" encircling the patch.



On the reverse there is a CIB under which there is a scroll where one can have their name or Recondo Number engraved. Over the CIB are the words Republic of Vietnam, and under the scroll are the dates the unit was in Vietnam "1966 - 1971".



These mint grade coins come in solid Bronze in a lucite case for \$13 or 1 Troy Oz .99% pure Silver Proofs in lucite and a Army of the United States leatherette presentation case for \$18. Add \$5 per total order for mailing.

Marshall funded the \$2800 up front cost to get the dies made and the coins produced. He has 120 bronze left but only 25 silver. Send Check/funds to:

Marshall Huckaby
699 Willow Dell Drive
Senoia, GA 30276

▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ **THIS IS YOUR NOTICE!!!!** ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪
**FOR A 25TH DIVISION LRRP COMPANY, CO F, 50TH INF (LRP-LRRP)
AND CO F, 75TH INF (AIRBORNE RANGER) REUNION**

WHO: Anyone who's ever been a member of our organization!

WHAT: Our own reunion, for ALL of us, as an organized effort, not a word-of-mouth, quasi-organized effort.

WHEN: Unless otherwise changed, tentatively from October 15 through 19, 2003. (Tentatively its a four night 5 day event, arriving on a Wednesday, departing late Sunday.)

WHERE: Colorado Springs/Fort Carson, Colorado area. (Until information survey sheets are returned by mail, motels we recommend, Reunion HQ, placed to eat as a group/individuals, and other things you want to know, will be published and sent by mail.)

WHY: Because too many of us are becoming history, and part of the 1,800 veterans who are dying each and every day (granted the great majority are WWII and Korea vets).

If we don't do organized events, those guys we once said – "We'll meet in _____ city, every X years after we get out!" "We'll write or call _____ a year, for old times sake!" But we didn't!

So, put the should'a, would'a, could'a crap behind you and plan now for this reunion and plan for what we want as an organized group to do. Saying, "I don't know any of those other guys," is just another mealy-mouthed excuse we've made for 30 years. Plan to bring your wife/significant other/friend or family. Some guys are coming with their family, wives, one is having their 20TH wedding anniversary at the reunion.

A retired general former CG of the 1ST Inf Div, Dir Ranger Dept, and CO of a Ranger Company, as a guest speaker; the first company commander our unit had will be the keynote speaker; tours of: Cheyenne Mountain HQ, Air Force Academy, Fort Carson; tours for wives and family; Vets forums with Ft Carson, AF Academy, ROTC, or other active duty folks who want to set and talk to the likes of us.

But, this is only possible/happen if, you plan to attend. Act now! If you haven't received a Reunion Information Survey by January 31, write or call Mike Rohly at: 1604 Spruceway Street, Abilene, Kansas 67410-1544; call at (785) 263-3035. The survey information is necessary to negotiate for lodging, banquet facilities, transportation, etc. Without solid addresses to send information to attendees, or for future reunions, we need current addresses we can mail information to. We can't have a reunion without knowing who wants one. I hope to see you and shake your hand at Colorado Springs in October. Mike Rohly Reunion Coordination.

Mike and a few other people who have "volunteered" to help him, have put a lot of hours and a quite a bit of money into planning this reunion. Please, have the courtesy to call or write Mike and let him know (a) if you will attend, (b) if you might attend, or (c) you will not attend. Knowing approximately how many will attend is critical in order to plan the right size hotel, hospitality room, etc. It also is key in getting discounts for the group for the hotel rooms, transportation and other such things.

TAPS

Singman

In the last issue, I forgot to notify you of the death of Norton Singman (Dec 1968 to Dec 1969). Norton died April 25, 1996. He was my teammate and friend.



Hanratty

Robert N Hanratty who served with us in 1969, died December 5, 1998.

Hitchens

Joseph Hitchens, served with us in 1968, died June 10, 2001.

Rowland

John Rowland died on August 31, 2002. John served in the 25th Division, 3rd Brigade LRRPs in 1966/1967

TAPS FOR JOHN ROWLAND

With the premature death of John Rowland, the nation, the Army, and our Special Operations community have lost a genuine hero and a first-rate combat soldier. It is my honor to say that he was my comrade in arms during two tours, and a good friend.

John was a great American, a genuine hero who lived by the slogan "Duty, Honor, Country." Even in elite volunteer units full of superb soldiers, John stood out by virtue of his accomplishments, capabilities, and his confident, aggressive leadership. Suffice it to say that John did his duty in many hot spots both overt and covert, in peace and war.

John Rowland was a fugitive from the law of averages who was filled with the natural exuberance of having lived through his experiences and that exuberance affected his personality and every aspect of his life.



Young Rowland had loud, aggressive confidence and kick-ass leadership in spades. I don't think he was afraid of the Devil himself. Right or wrong, John always called everything like he saw it and he didn't stutter when he called it. His troops loved him and would have followed him anywhere. About 40 years ago when his body was still young and strong he could back up all the stories which had sprung up about him. In recent years John suffered from the effects of his multiple wounds and his considerable PTSD and his hard life style and he lost about ninety pounds and got so thin and crippled that he could barely walk. John hated being confined to that thin crippled body in which he had become trapped.

I saw him one morning at the 2000 reunion in Savannah, drinking heavily at about ten AM when he was suffering from bleeding ulcers and diabetes, and everyone knew that he wasn't supposed to drink at all. He got up and put his arms around me and started to cry. Then he said, "I love you, man." I had to choke back my own tears then because it hit me that my friend was dying and he knew it; and in fact he was deliberately not doing those things which would prolong his life. It wasn't long after that until he ordered a brand new set of dress blues and medals and hung them in the closet wrapped in plastic, ready. I'm convinced that he kept himself alive just long enough to attend this last round of reunions and to see us and all his old comrades in arms just one more time. He looked worse than I've ever seen him in Columbus, GA in July 2002. I waited for the phone call which would tell me that John had passed on and on Saturday, August 31st, it came.

From John's initial tour in an elite Military Intelligence unit, gathering intell on Communists in East Germany during the early sixties, John went to Vietnam where he served multiple tours in reconnaissance and infantry units. Although he earned a direct commission in 1970 for his heroism as a LRRP Sergeant under fire the complete truth of John's heroic service to America will probably never be known. You may have heard that while serving as a Lieutenant during the invasion of Cambodia, he earned the DSC in a fierce battle during which he and his understrength platoon slugged it out toe-to-toe for two days against numerically superior enemy forces firing automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades. You can read the citation when we post it here on the web site. You may not know that John was wounded about 15 times and MEDEVAC'ed out four times during his career. In typical hardheaded Rowland

fashion he refused evacuation again and again and continued to fight and direct the combat effort until he was convinced that he had done his duty and that his men were as safe as they could be.

He might have exhibited a tough exterior to the outside world, but my assessment is that in his heart he was always thinking of others. His wife Carol told me how he died, and I recognized his last actions as a typical Rowland trick. Carol said that on his last day with us, John had fallen, and when she came to assist him in getting up, he told her that he was OK, he just wanted to rest a bit on the floor no problem, she should please go and take care of other things and after a while she could stop back by and help him up. Then, as she was turning away, he said, "I love you, Carol, you are the best thing that ever happened to me." I am convinced he knew that it was his time, and he sent Carol away so she wouldn't have to watch him die. When it's my time, I hope I will have enough class to do the same.

If I were in a hell of a tough spot and wanted to get out of it, the young John Rowland is one of the guys I would want right there with me. And I know that John would come running to that spot without hesitation, wearing a smile. Some one who quite obviously knew the deal remarked that all combat veterans are living on borrowed time, moving toward the final objective. As you might expect from a Duty-Honor-Country guy like John, he's now out front "kicking point" for the rest of us. John will live forever in my finest memories as he was, young and strong as I first knew him.

I can see him now, smiling, surrounded by fallen comrades. He will have everything reconned. He will have a defensive position organized and several missions planned out in his head. He will reach down into a waterproof bag full of ice and offer me a beer (obtained from God-knows-where) and his first words will be, "We've been waiting for you, old man. What took you so long?"

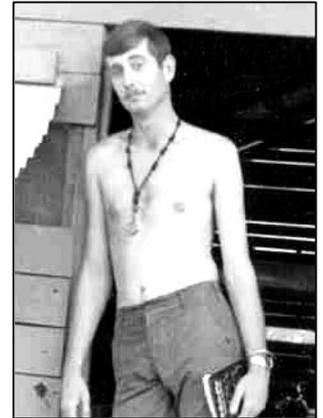
Ron Harrison

Mullinax

Oscar Mullinax died September 1, 2002. Oscar served with John Rowland in the 3rd Brigade LRRPs in 1966/1967.

We will deeply miss all these gentlemen. They were LRRPs, Rangers, our brothers.

Hello Bill,
Just a small "Human interest story". I received your picture of Cy. Did you notice the necklace he has on? The peace sign is made from a handgrenade pin. I made it, it was the only grenade I threw while in the Nam. The deal was that I would give it to him and if we met again he would give it back to me.



Billy Thornton

Editors Note: Sounds like we have two guys who owe it to each other to attend the reunion in October.

The Vietnam Cross of Gallantry

Mark Ponzillo sent us the following information:

Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm

Awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States and its Allies: for valorous achievement in combat during the Vietnam conflict, March 1, 1961 through March 28, 1973.

Every American and every nation Allied with the United States who served in Vietnam was awarded the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry.

The Cross of Gallantry is recognized by the United States government and all federal agencies.

Because the Cross of Gallantry does not appear on every U.S. Vietnam veteran's DD-214 Vietnam veterans may receive government acknowledgement of this medal by requesting a DD-215 from the National Records and Personnel Center in St. Louis, MO using standard form (SF) SF-180. To obtain an SF-180 please travel to URL:

<http://members.aol.com/forvets/htomr.htm>

For more information about the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, travel to URL:

<http://www.amervets.com/replacement/vcog.htm#isr>

Donald Purdy - Inducted Into the Ranger Hall of Fame



We learned that Donald Purdy (1969 - 1970) was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame last summer. The citation in the HOF reads:

**COMMAND SERGEANT
MAJOR DONALD E. PURDY**

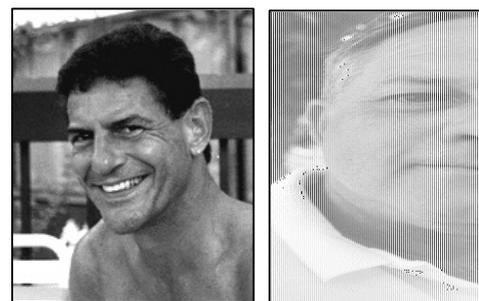
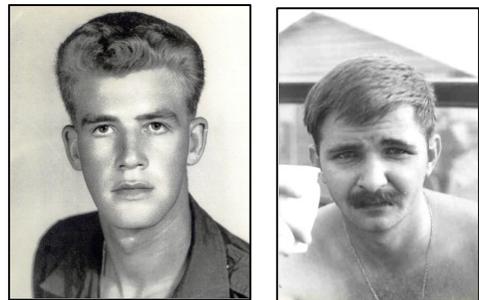
Command Sergeant Major Donald Eldon Purdy is inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame for his extraordinary service to the Ranger community. He established a record of profound service as a Ranger in the Ranger companies of the Vietnam War, in the activation of the First Ranger Battalion, and in Operation Desert One. Command Sergeant Major Purdy also served as the interim Command Sergeant Major of the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, and in his final Ranger assignment, the Command Sergeant Major of the 4th Ranger Training Battalion. He distinguished himself in numerous engagements during the Vietnam War. As a part of a 13-man patrol assigned to destroy an enemy communication site, CSM Purdy's team engaged a Viet Cong Regiment. Ranger Purdy's weapon was destroyed on initial contact but he continued to fight the enemy with grenades while giving ammunition to other Rangers. For his actions above and beyond the call of duty, CSM Purdy was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" Device. During another battle his team of Company F Rangers stopped a battalion of NVA from crossing the Vam Co Don River on the Cambodian border. Command Sergeant Major Purdy's element killed 55 NVA while sustaining only three Rangers wounded. He also served with distinction in reconnaissance and hunter killer operations in the Boi Loi Woods, and prisoner of war recovery actions. Company F's gallantry in these actions resulted in the award of the Presidential Unit Citation. From Vietnam through Desert One, CSM Donald E. Purdy served his country as a soldier and a Ranger.

RANGERS LEAD THE WAY!!!

Congratulations Don! You earned it.

Thanks

After the last newsletter, one of the guys wrote me and basically said that the people who are doing a lot of the work for the 25th Div LRRP / Co F guys remain hidden - not recognized for their efforts. Seems like that is the way it normally goes in any organization - large Corporations, small businesses, our group. I know I will miss some, but, here are some of the guys who have worked hard at helping us: In order: Dave Regenthal, Dick Ewald, Joe Cassilly, Ron Harrison, Tom Cahill, Marshall Huckaby, Dutch Lane, Dan Nate, Joe Little, Emmett Hiltibrand. Drop these guys a line and say "thanks". Better yet, drop by the reunion and tell them in person. They'll be there.



THE COMMUNIST FLAG

We did not have team numbers so our team which consisted of myself Gene Tucker, Hugh Howerton, Jerry Spicer, Perry, (sorry no first name) and Charles White departed on a mission to locate a Battalion of NVA located about twenty miles North West of Cu Chi.

This mission began on the 7th or 8th of August 1966. We were inserted by helicopter using the usual technique of false landings with us jumping out on one of them.

Things went well the first evening. The next day as we moved through the area, we began to notice numerous signs of several large enemy units of a battalion size or larger. We also moved farther into the wooded area and soon began to see even fresher signs of large-scale movement. After our setrep we set up near a trail where we could watch it, we did so for a day but did not see any enemy.

The third day we began to hit the edge of a rubber plantation. Since it was a rubber plantation we moved very slow and cautious. Apparently we were not as stealthy as we thought. At about 1530 hours we were startled when a VC began to run from a position about ten meters in front of us. We later determined that we had surprised him and he had laid low until he felt that we were getting too close. Anyway, the first three of us saw that his rifle was pointed in our direction and we all fired one shot. He went down. He was dead, he had a courier bag. Upon inspection we noticed that it contained what seemed like important information on troop positions and movements. There was also a communist flag inside.



At approximately 1600 hours while we were reporting this information our security element, of which I was a member came under fire from a Viet Cong machinegun. While we were pinned down I saw Hugh Howerton and Charles White crossing a small clearing and the machinegun took them under fire. Seeing them being fired upon and pinned down, I began to place fire on the machinegun and they were able to get free. We began to run and broadcast the words "Flaming Arrow", which was our emergency distress signal.

We ran from a large unit, size unknown but they sure were not afraid to make noise and they wanted us badly. When we turned to go in another direction, they were there. They knew our tactics to get them off our tail. It took about 40 minutes for the D Troop gun ships to arrive on station. We used the usual means to mark our advance and get them off our backs with the two smoke grenades. The gun ships strafed and used rockets to keep them down while we were extracted.

When we returned we gave the flag to the unit and it hung in the command shack.

- *Gene Tucker*

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We have found a few of our teammates since the last newsletter. A big thanks to Paul Moody from the Special Forces for helping find these guys. Without him, we would not have been able to locate them. Among the guys we found:

Roger McClanahan (67-68) in Charlotte, TN
Lunnell Hollingshed (1968) in Kansas City, KS
Peter Perkins (9/67 to 7/68) in Topsham, ME
David Hitt (1968) in Margaretville, NY
Hureal Major (1968) in Daytona Beach, FL
Earnest James (67-68) in Lumber City, GA
Charles Smothers (67-68) in New York, NY
Dennis Hackmack (68-69) in Quincy, IL
Eugene Reilly (1970) in Marietta, GA
Jesse Moreland (68-69) in Arlington, TX
Clyde Normand (1970) in Enterprise, AL
Darrell Damron (68-69) in Gardendale, TX
Leon Jones (67-68) in Rialto, CA
Cyril Marney (68-70) in San Jose, CA
Robert Parson (67-68) in La Porte, TX
Leonard Manual (1968) in Sacaton, AZ
John Hicks (67-68) in Mesa, AZ
Leonard Nathan (67-68) in Corpus Christi, TX
Richard Bumgradner (67-68) in London, KY
Charles Reau (68-69) in Kaneohe, HI

We also located:

Steve Teems (68) in Ardmore, OK
Bobby DeYoung (68-69) in Fontana, CA
David Reinhardt (67-68) in Riverside, CA
Ron Elliff in (67-68) Spanaway, WA

Joe Little wanted to tell all about "the free VA life insurance when someone receives an award of 100% total and permanent disability, that the VA pays for as a result of compensation. It is time limited for one year to apply. The VA has a middle name and that is cost containment and the way it works is we have benefits, however, you don't ask they don't tell; that is why it is important to have a rep when applying for benefits." If you recently received an award, get in touch with the VA at once!