



## 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV (AASLT) “STRIKE HISTORY” 30 March – 05 April 2014



30 March 1968

Seven and one-half miles east of Hue, D/2-501 IN found 31 NVA killed in a previous day's action in their area of operation (AO).

30 - 31 March 1968

D/1-501 IN first new objective was to clear out and eliminate a large NVA unit entrenched in a small farming village located about three miles northeast of Hai Lang and just north of the boundary between Quan Tri and Tua Tien Provinces. D Company (consisting of its Headquarters element of about 6 and three Platoons of about 25 each) arrived near the outskirts of the village late in the afternoon on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The village stood out clearly; it was surrounded by a vast expanse of rice paddies. The NVA, dug in and fortified, were certainly prepared to defend the village and its nearby cemetery. Since they were surrounded, they had no choice.

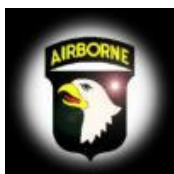
A short time after arrival at the village outskirts, D Company Commanding Officer decided to conduct small-unit probing attacks to ascertain the strength and strong points of the NVA. The several probing attacks in the late afternoon and early evening proved one sure thing for the CO and the D Company paratroopers; the NVA were ready to fight and to fight hard since there was little hope for most of them to sneak away and escape.

The CO established the plan of attack which called for an assault by two Platoons at first light the next morning. The attack plan was direct and simple (there were few, if any, options considering the fact that the village was isolated out in the rice paddies) with two Platoons comprising the initial attack element. The remaining Platoon, as standard procedure, was to stand by in reserve. In D Company, the CO established the reserve Platoon on a daily rotational basis between the three Platoons. As such, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon's turn as reserve was on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon would then comprise the initial “first light” assault elements with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon on the right and the 3<sup>rd</sup> on the left.

The village, as noted previously, was isolated out in a vast rice paddy area. The village was typical Vietnamese farming enclave with its adjacent and traditional Vietnamese cemetery above 50 yards from its outskirts.

Off to one corner of the village and along the left side (the left side being from the direction of the attack) of the cemetery was a shallow drainage ditch with scrub bamboo and other brush growing in it. As planned, the vegetated ditch was to serve as the dividing line between the two attacking Platoons.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, first light soon arrived for the paratroopers of Delta Company and the attack by the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon on the village commenced. The NVA were quick to respond to the assault on their positions. The paratroopers faced intense rifle, machine gun and rocket propelled grenade fire from the entrenched NVA. In spite of the heavy enemy fire (which resulted in several wounded-in-action casualties to their ranks), facing the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoons made slow but steady progress toward their objectives. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon initially cleared out several enemy positions firing at them from the drainage ditch. Alternatively taking cover where available and laying down suppressing fire, the Platoon began maneuvering toward the small farm structures at the village edge. Upon receiving instructions from the CO, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon temporarily held its position while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon dealt with an unexpected strong enemy resistance at the cemetery. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon maintained its position and exchanged concentrated fire on the enemy at their defensive positions within the village. This action drew the village bound NVA's



total attention. They were unable to provide support to the NVA that was stiffly engaging the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon as it approached the cemetery. The grave sites were ideal for defensive fighting positions and on the morning of March 31<sup>st</sup>, the NVA put them to good use.

With courageous and skilled leadership, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon Leader maneuvered his paratroopers who placed withering fire on the enemy at their grave site fortifications. The accurate and concentrated fire from their rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers kept the enemy down allowing effective use of hand grenades and more careful maneuvering. After more than two hours of this tactic, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon eliminated several enemy grave site positions along the edge of the cemetery and closest to its line of attack. Finally, the tables of the battle for the cemetery had slowly started to turn in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon favor. From the beginning of the attack at first light and throughout the period leading up to the taking of the first few grave site enemy positions, there were no questions that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon were a “well-oiled” fighting machine as it engaged NVA with each paratrooper doing his job in a first-class resolute manner.

By this time the battle for the village had moved well into mid-morning. With the few initial grave site positions now in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon’s control and with the limited protection they provided, it was able to engage the stubborn NVA in fire and maneuver actions going from one grave site to another adjacent grave site eliminating the NVA in each as progress was achieved.

31 March 1968

The last day of Operation Carentan saw no let-up in the relentless search for enemy Soldiers and local Viet Cong in the Hue area. Fifteen miles northwest of the imperial city, airborne artillerymen from the 1-321 ARTY were called by an aerial observer and immediately trapped 85-100 NVA Soldiers in an open field with accurate fire. Thirty of the NVA were killed. Six and one-half miles west of Hue, members of the 1-501 IN BN encountered a well-positioned enemy company. They called in air strikes that resulted in several secondary explosions. A quick search of the area uncovered 18 enemy dead. During the operation, 861 enemy were killed. The total weapons and munitions captured included 186 individual and crew-served weapons, while 1,027 rocket, mortar, and artillery rounds were kept from the enemy. More than 41,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and 45 hand grenades were captured, along with nearly 17 tons of rice and grain.

31 March 1968

**Operation JEB STUART/CARENTAN:** At 0905H, C/2-502 vic. YD607086, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon engaged squad sized enemy force. Results: 4 US WHA, 7 NVA KIA Captured: 1 RPG, 2 AK-47, 2 SKS and documents.

31 March 1970

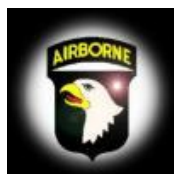
**Operation RANDOLPH GLEN:** Operation Randolph Glen drew to a close. It proved to be a fitting operation with which to initiate the New Year. Success of the operation is attested to by the impressive statistics compiled by the battalion during the period. Sixty-three enemy were killed, fifty-two individual weapons were captured, along with nine crew-served weapons. (2-502 Unit History, Vietnam 1970; Approved by LTC Lloyd N. Cosby, IN Commanding)

31 March 1991

Easter Sunday. 1/320th FA departs KFIA at 0600 local time by PAN AM 747. Layovers were in Rome and New York’s JFK arriving at Ft. Campbell Army Airfield, 1750 hrs local time.

31 March 2003

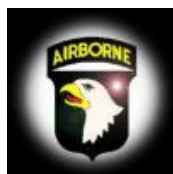
**Battle for South Al Hillah.** 2BCT was ordered to seize the objective of enemy bunkers and trenches south of Al Hillah, a city approximately 30km north of Al Kifl. Crossing the line of departure at 0600, two Companies from 2-70 AR and C/1-502 began to move north on Highway 8, with air units coming on station shortly thereafter. At 0630, an AH-64 from C/3-101 came under fire, and less than ten minutes later, the ground unit became decisively engaged as well. What had begun as a demonstration with only minimum contact expected quickly grew into the largest and fiercest fight that any unit in the 101<sup>st</sup>



Airborne Division (Air Assault) was to face during the entire war, as well as the only time that the enemy employed the Republican Guard as a coherent, combined arms team.

Although already having been in a running gun battle for over fifteen minutes, upon halting at the limit of advance alongside the campus of the Babylon City College, the ground unit found themselves in the midst of two dug-in infantry Battalions of the Republican Guard supported by a Company of armor, two Batteries of artillery that had recently registered their guns, and an extensive air defense system. For the next five hours they were to experience fighting that at times was so fierce and close at hand that the coaxial machineguns on the M1A1 Abrams couldn't be traversed low enough to engage the enemy. Throughout the day, multiple flights of Apaches continued to rotate through the battle, with an entire Battalion of attack aviation thrown into the fray instead of just the initial Company. As the Apaches returned to base after expending both their ordnance and fuel, crew chiefs were in some cases pulling unexploded RPG rounds from the skin of the aircraft, and staring up at rotors that had been riddled with holes from the intense ground fire. In all, a total of 8 Apaches returned to base damaged, with one pilot receiving a purple heart for wounds sustained in the battle. Supporting the battle on the ground with almost constant fire missions, 1-320 FA fired over 400 rounds throughout the day, being forced at one point to shut down due to the breeches on their 105mm artillery pieces overheating. At 1730, after vastly exceeding the expectations of the demonstration, COL Anderson ordered the task force to return to Al Kifl. All told, the 502<sup>nd</sup> had accounted for the total destruction of 1 dug-in Infantry Battalion of the Republican Guard, 1 Armor Company, 2 Field Artillery Batteries, and 1 Air Defense Artillery Battery. The 502<sup>nd</sup> lost one Soldier. The demonstration had turned into a vicious fight, but in the end it was hugely successful due to the exemplary performance of so many finely trained Soldiers both on the ground and in the air.

- April 1971      **Operation LAM SON 720:** In early April it became obvious that the NVA was making extensive use of the A Shau Valley to move troops, equipment, and supplies. The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade was assigned the overall mission of disrupting the enemy's logistic system and impeding his use of the A Shau Valley area. The Brigade Commander elected to employ airmobile raid tactics with rapid operations of a short duration. For five days the companies patrolled the area around FB Jack and took turns refining rappelling techniques at FB Jack. (2-502 Unit History, 1971)
- 01 April 1968      A/1-502 IN OPCON to 3d Marine Division. The other units conducted normal operations with negative results.
- 01 April 1968      2-501<sup>st</sup> BN deployed to Utah Beach North of Hue and subsequently established Firebase Hardcore southwest of this area. During the operations in this area over 60 NVA were killed.
- 01 April 1970      **Operation TEXA STAR** commenced with renewed efforts in the Vietnamization of combat operations in northern Military Region 1.
- 01 April 2003      In Al Kifl, Strike Brigade continued to expand its control in the area through continuous combat operations aimed at known or suspected enemy locations. One such location was the An Najaf University campus, a site believed to be used as a Fedayeen training camp. 2-502 confirmed those suspicions when they attacked and cleared the site, finding a land mine production facility with over 1200 AP mines and 400 AT mines.
- 01-04April 2006      AH-64 is shot down in 1-502 IN sector. 1-502 IN spends three days recovering the downed aircraft. 1-502 IN and elements of 2-502 IN, 2-101 BTB, and 526 BSB clear more than 23 IEDs along five kilometers of road in just over thirty-six hours, in order to secure and recover the downed aircraft and crew. Excepting the aircrew, no Soldiers were wounded or injured during the operation, which was conducted in the heart of AQI's protection zone along the Euphrates River Valley.

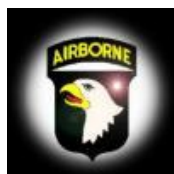


At 1725 on 01 Apr, 1-502 IN Executive Officer (MAJ Fred Wintrich) and S3 (MAJ Rob Salome) are informed that MND-B has declared a "Fallen Angel" for an AH-64 shot down in area 309. Talon 6 (LTC Tom Kunk) directs MAJ Salome to move immediately with the BN PSD to PB Yusufiyah and lead the B/1-502 security element to the crash site and establish C2. At 1730 B/1-502 TOC reports one platoon is REDCON 1 and will begin movement from PB Yusufiyah to the crash site within 15



minutes. 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade coordinated for aircraft to move to PB Lions Den, in order to life SCT/1-502IN directly to the crash site. Additional resources include AWT from 1-3 AVN OPCON to 1-502 IN, Strike Iron Claw, and a recovery team from 526 BSB. Talon 3 departs with the BN TAC (-) for PB Yusufiyah to link up with the company commander and security element. They depart PB Yusufiyah at approximately 1810 and insert to the crash site using farm and canal roads. This route selection prevents the initial security element from being disrupted by insurgent IED obstacle efforts. At 1816, SCT/2-502 IN is wheels down at the crash site and reports no survivors in the vicinity, with a blood trail leading southwest towards an adjacent road. The 2-502 IN Scouts secure the immediate vicinity of the crash and conduct a limited search of the area for signs of life and additional equipment. At 2026 Talon 3 reports that there is one crewman confirmed Killed in Action, with another Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown – the wreckage has completely destroyed the crew compartment and the only way to confirm the second crewman is to lift the damaged fuselage off of the crash site. The aircraft has come to rest in a bean field, and the engine and some smaller debris are still on fire. The weapons racks and some of the missiles are strewn across the field; in total the debris field covers an area approximately 80m by 40m. At 2036 Talon 3 reports that they have recovered one crewman's remains and some ALSE gear. Elements of B/1-502 IN begin limited recovery by hand and with pioneer tools from their combat vehicles. The ground security element uses hand tools and litters to move debris from the crash site to an adjacent farm road in order to prepare for recovery assets. Concurrently, 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT reallocates key resources including route clearance assets, engineer assets and EOD to FOB Yusufiyah; the scheme of maneuver is to conduct route clearance at first light along the Mullah Fayyad Hwy to the crash site in the vicinity of Rushdi Mullah. Throughout the night of 1-2 April, 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT and 1-502 IN continue to coordinate the delivery and synchronization of recovery resources which now include a DART from the Aviation Brigade moving by air to the crash site to support the recovery. The 1-502 IN Commander, LTC Tom Kunk, conducts a series of key leader engagements with the sheiks who lead tribes in the crash area to garner their support for security and recovery operations.

On 02 April at 0130, Strike Iron Claw and 526 BSB recovery assets arrive at PB Yusufiyah with a lowboy with front end loader, two S&P trailers, a PLS flat rack, and HMMT wrecker – all assets are under the control of LT Mike VanDyke, A/2-101 BTB. At 0726, Strike Iron Claw and supporting recovery assets depart PB Yusufiyah to link up with Talon 3 and B/1-502 IN (-) who continue to secure the crash site. IPB for the operation includes extensive IED emplacement along the primary (and only viable) avenue of approach, as well as severe weather predicted for mid-morning. At 0805 Strike Iron Claw reports their first IED discovered along Mullah Fayyad Hwy. This is the first of more than 20 IED's cleared into and out of the crash site over the next three days. The Aviation Brigade DART arrives at the crash site at 0835; the team is led by the Aviation Brigade Commander. At 1300, Talon 3 reports from the crash site: weather and difficulty of recovery has reduced effectiveness of unit on ground, requests replacement of two Infantry platoons and BN C2. He also recommends, based on weather effects, possible additional shelter and warming area for exposed Soldiers. The Aviation Brigade Commander has reported that the search for remains is complete and they are coordinating to extract remains of both pilots via Hero Flight. The 1-502 IN





Commander reallocates A/1-502 IN (-) and a platoon from D/1-502 IN, along with the BN XO, to relieve Talon 3 and B/1-502 IN (-). The element departs FOB Mahmudiyah at 1430 and moves along the Mullah Fayyad Hwy and links up with the rear of the recovery element that is still clearing the primary route. At approximately 1600, Talon 3 and Talon 5 link up vicinity of the crash site. The DART is conducting sling load recovery of the engine and main fuselage. The commanders of B Company and A Company conduct battle handover of the perimeter security positions and C2 of the AWT overhead. During the relief in place, insurgents engaged one of the blocking positions and the AWT with small arms fire and RPG fire. At 1700, Talon 3 and B/1-502 IN (-) depart the crash site. B/1-502 IN (-) leaves one M1114 on site. A/1-502 IN secures the crash site while the engineers use on hand bucket loader and trucks to prepare the debris for ground movement. The unit also uses the remaining daylight to begin hand clearing the entire field of debris. The Aviation Brigade DART and commander depart by helicopter prior to sunset and A/1-502 IN (-) secures the site for the night.

On 03 April, the Battalion XO and A/1-502 IN (-) remain and the crash site, sterilizing the site and then attempting to recover the M1114 and M88 that also became stuck as part of the recovery. D/1-502 IN is tasked to re-clear Mullah Fayyad Hwy along with another M88 – an operation that takes all day and night into the early morning of 4 April. E/526 BSB provides the recovery team, led by SSG Charles Sherwood – who recovers both the M1114 and M88 in less than 90 minutes. The combined A/1-502 IN and D/1-502 IN patrol re-clears the route back out to Mullah Fayyad and Yusufiyah; an operation that finally culminates at 1700 that afternoon.

02 April 1968

A/1-502 IN OPCON to 3rd Marine Division. Company "B" captured 2 tax collectors in village. vic. YD5731. They also destroyed 3 bunkers and 3 VC KIA. Company "D" had 1 man injured by BBT.

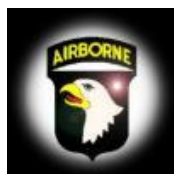
02 April 1968

**Operation JEB STUART/CARENTAN:** At 1115, Recon/2-502 engaged unknown sized enemy force in bunkers. Also received sporadic SA fire from SW, reinforced Redondo's was with 3-5 Cav. Platoon and a Platoon from B Co. These elements maneuvered up the hill against the enemy bunkers positions, overrunning the bunker. Results: 6 US WHA, 2 NVA KIA, and captured 1 AK-47.

02-04 April 2003

**Battle for An Najaf.** The battle for An Najaf was a synchronized operation involving 2 Infantry Brigades, along with assets from the Division's Attack and Assault Aviation Brigades. The town was reported to contain enemy forces from Al Hillah, Karbala, and Baghdad who intended to disrupt the Coalition's advance. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, as the Division Main Effort, would spearhead the attack of the city from the north, while 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team would attack from the south once the 502<sup>nd</sup> established a foothold. At 0900Z a synchronized three-pronged attack was launched into the north and east of the city by the 502<sup>nd</sup>. 1-502 IN, along with C/1-41 IN (M) and A/2-502, attacked into the northwest area of the city as the Brigade Main Effort. At the same time, 3-502 IN attacked south along the west bank of the Euphrates, while 2-502 IN attacked over the Al Kufa Bridge into the eastern suburbs. The remainder of 2-70 AR, as 'Task Force Tank' remained in blocking positions to the north of Al Kifl preventing any movement of enemy forces south from Al Hillah.

On 2 April, the assault was initiated by a smoke screen being fired into the central corridor of the northern suburbs. Despite encountering a minefield and one AH-64 being hit by small arms fire, the attack into the heart of the city ran at a steady pace with 1-502 and 3-502, supported by C/1-41 MECH in the west and 2-101 AVN in the east, methodically sweeping forward to their respective limits of advance. 2-502's movement across the Al Kufa Bridge (OBJ Panther) was delayed by the discovery of mines on the bridge, requiring engineers to clear a lane while snipers and mortars placed suppressive fire onto key enemy defensive positions. Eventually they pushed across, allowing the rapid build-up of combat power and the swift clearance of their assigned sector. Throughout the operation, 2-101 AVN and 2-17 CAV flew continuously over the city. In its direct support role, 1-320 FAR destroyed enemy fighting positions with responsive artillery fire. According to the FA Journal, 1-320 FAR artillerymen were able

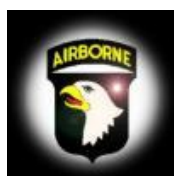


to fire with extraordinary precision “in close proximity to friendly forces. In at least one instance, friendly troops were clearing the lower floors of a building when HE/ VT swept the roof of enemy Soldiers. (This was confirmed by the infantrymen who looked out the windows to see the dead and wounded foe fall past them).”

As the day drew to a close, the entire northern portion of the city was cleared, and defensive positions were established in Company and Battalion Areas of Responsibility. The 502<sup>nd</sup> felt a strong sense of gratification with the highly disciplined and professional conduct of the Soldiers and officers who had enabled the Brigade to move rapidly through the city, surgically clearing the area of enemy forces, while maintaining situational awareness of innocent civilians and sites of historical and religious significance. Seven enemy Soldiers were killed, and over 40 enemy Soldiers were taken prisoner. Each of the 24 schools in the AO had arms caches hidden within that were moved out of town and destroyed.

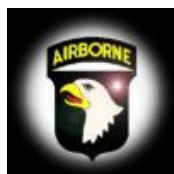
The following day, 2BCT continued to push south and consolidate its position in the northern half of the city while it waited for 1BCT to finalize its plans for a relief in place. It encountered Fedayeen members firing from behind crowds. The Battalions continued to discover and destroy weapons caches. C/1-41’s Executive Officer’s vehicle hit a mine on Highway 8 as it drove into the city. By 1600Z the Brigade linked up with 1BCT and continued planning for the subsequent relief in place that was completed by 1200Z the following day.

- 02 April 2011 STRIKE’s Main Body 1 arrived at Fort Campbell Army Airfield. Throughout the month of April, 11 Main Body and 6 Strat-Air flights brought the majority of Combined Task Force STRIKE Soldiers home.
- 03 April 1968 A/1-502 IN returned to the battalion from 3rd Marine Division. There was negative enemy contact in the Battalion.
- 03 April 1970 **Operation TEXA STAR:** at 0033 at FSB Arsenal (YD812080), C/1-502 IN received RPG fire followed by the attack of approximately 50 enemy Sappers from the south. A Flare ship and ARA were on station in ten minutes. Artillery fires were employed on suspected escape routes while the defenders repulsed the attack. A search revealed six NVA KIA and two POW’s. US casualties were four WIA.
- 03 – 15 April 1991 The bulk of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) returns to Ft. Campbell Army Airfield. The Division colors returned with General Peay on 12 April 1991.
- 04 April 1968 A day of light contact with B/1-502 IN receiving sniper fire vic. YD5927. Negative friendly or enemy casualties. Delta Company had a grenade thrown in their perimeter. They engaged with small arms resulting in 1 VC KIA.
- 04 April 2003 **Objective Murray.** In the early morning hours, after being relieved by 1 BCT, the Brigade moved back into Al Kifl for the planning of two missions under an extremely compressed timeframe: One reinforced Company team would depart later in the day to seize the town of Al Hindiyah, while the Brigade itself, once again the Division Main Effort, was ordered to attack the city of Karbala the following morning instead of Al Hillah as planned. Select members of the Brigade staff and the Assistant Division Commander for Operations flew to and conducted a battle handover briefing for the mission to Karbala with the 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. Upon return, 2nd BCT executed a hasty mission planning sequence as the 101st Division Main Effort and issued a Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) at 041800L April 2003. That evening at 2100L, the Brigade TAC departed the Al Kifl base of operations and linked-up with 1-320 FA TOP GUNS in preparation for the next morning’s attack. After linking up with all of the units involved and issuing the order, “Team Hutch” departed by ground and attacked to seize Al Hindiyah, a small city on the Euphrates River between Al Hillah and Karbala. Decisive to the success of this operation was securing a critical bridge spanning the Euphrates River that was rigged with explosives, up to 20 AT mines placed around the bridge near fighting positions. The Engineers and Infantrymen cleared the bridge by 0600. Following the seizure of the bridge, Team Hutch continued to clear the town. Key



discoveries during the clearance included a deserted Ba'ath House and a Palestinian Liberation Training Camp with 55 gallon oil drums inside. The discovery of several camps that contained toxic chemicals suspected to be materials for field expedient weapons of mass destruction made the mission inherently more dangerous. Several Soldiers tested positive for non-persistent nerve agent inhalation and were subsequently decontaminated. These critical sites were secured until the Division chemical units were able to analyze their contents.

- 05 April 1968 2nd Brigade Artillery fires 1400 rounds in support of operations around Hai Lang.
- 05 April 1968 A platoon of NA were spotted in an open field north of Hue by an FO of the 1-501 IN BN and blasted by the guns of the 1-321 ARTY BN. Twenty-two enemy Soldiers were killed. Airborne infantrymen from C/1-501 engaged the enemy on two successful ambush attempts and fought a two-hour battle north of Hue resulting in 21 enemy killed for the day's action.
- 05 April 1968 A/1-502 IN provided mine sweep on QL#1 from An Lo to Camp Evans. 1 platoon moved by truck to vic. YD6030 to act as a blocking force in support of Bravo Company conducting RIF from vic. YD5829 to vic. YD6127. They engaged only 1 sniper but had 1 US KIA and 3 WIA from BBT. They found BBT's, a sub machine gun, 3 B40 rockets and several other small arms.
- 05 April 1970 **Operation TEXAS STAR:** For the first week of operations contact was light. On this day the Reconnaissance Platoon engaged one enemy. Once again the Battalion moved its headquarters, this time to FSB Falcon, a new firebase cut out of the triple canopy vegetation by Bravo Company and one platoon from A/326 ENG located at (YC587988), FSB Falcon served as a new forward base of operation from which the STRIKE Force could make further strikes into enemy areas of activity. FSB Falcon was occupied for only four days. (2-502 Unit History, Vietnam 1970; Approved by LTC Lloyd N. Cosby, IN Commanding)
- 05 April 2003 526 FSB moves with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade 90 miles north of An Najaf to execute Operation Free Karbala, a ground and air assault designed to clear remnants of the Special Republican Guard's Medina Division from the city of Karbala. 526 FSB supported the operations with two separate FLEs – a heavy ground FLE established a forward logistics base five kilometers south of Karbala and a medical-heavy FLE positioned on Landing Zone Robin in Karbala provided combat health support during the operations.
- 05-07 April 2003 **Battle for Karbala.** The attack on Karbala would be a combined arms fight, for which the 502<sup>nd</sup> was supplemented with 2-70 AR, 3-101 Attack Aviation and 2-17 CAV, in addition to artillery support from 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 320<sup>th</sup> FA, C/1-377 FA and a Battery of MLRS from C/2-37 FA. Artillery assets totaled 36 guns, 2 launchers, and 3 radars. In total, 10 Battalions would be under the control of the 502<sup>nd</sup>. The plan involved a Ground Assault Convoy (GAC) up Highway 9, and an air assault utilizing all three of the Division's assault aviation Battalions moving 731 Soldiers by 23 UH-60s and 5 CH-47s from a series of LZs around Al Kifl, into three LZs to the south, west and north of Karbala. The Main Effort was vested with 3-502 IN which would land first at LZ Sparrow and move into the northwest of the city. 2-502 IN, second in the Air Movement Plan, would land at LZ Robin to the south of its sister Battalion and move into the center of the city, while 1-502 IN would complete the air assault into LZ Finch and proceed to clear the enemy in the south parallel to Highway 9. H Hour was set for 05 1100L April 2003.



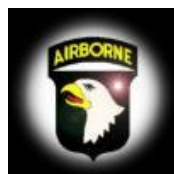
With the lead serial landing at LZ Sparrow, the 502<sup>nd</sup> initiated its attack against an enemy stronghold estimated to be 400-500 strong. Then, in extreme desert conditions, 28 M1 Abrams tanks and 16 M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles entered from the east and northeast along Route Venezuela. The resistance they encountered was heavy. The infantry Battalions soon found themselves engrossed in heavy street clearance against an unstructured enemy, armed with a large collection of weapons. 3-502 IN (ME), under the command of LTC Chris Holden, bore the brunt of it.



Its Companies had encountered an unexpectedly long approach march towards the city. When they entered the city, they became involved in a series of battles that required each Soldier in the ranks to be leaders at every turn. Further south, 2-502 IN moved in similarly methodical fashion, street-by-street, building-by-building. Stockpiles of arms were found in schools and homes. 1-502 IN, pressing in from the southeast of the city, denied the enemy access to multiple caches. 2-17 CAV



provided brave and unquestioning support in destroying targets hindering the infantry's advance by either independent action or by marking targets for artillery and Close Air Support (CAS) to engage. Through sound tactical execution and bold leadership, the 502<sup>nd</sup> fought its way into the city with undaunted courage, closing with and inflicting heavy casualties upon the fanatical Fedayeen Saddam with a fierce and indomitable fighting spirit. Overhead, Kiowa Warrior pilots from 2-17 CAV displayed phenomenal courage and utter disregard for their own safety while observing and adjusting indirect fires, and placing their own fire on key enemy strong points, facilitating the advance of the task force within the city. Fierce fighting continued throughout the day, along with the treatment and evacuation of friendly casualties. By nightfall, 2BCT had cleared and secured nearly half of their sectors. It had secured a frightening amount of weaponry, including 2 ZPUs, 5 S60s, 14 mortar systems and 36 RPG launchers. It found a possible terrorist training camp, replete with bunkers, obstacle courses and planning tables. 1-320 FA Batteries fired more than 100 smoke canisters to screen infantrymen moving onto the streets. Through the next day 2nd BCT infantry units cleared the remainder of their sectors, at times still encountering resistance. Each and every school system was found to contain some sort of weapons cache, Saddam Hussein propaganda, and evidence of foreign insurgent assistance. Baath Party Headquarters were stocked with "Oil for Food" rice and flour bags, as well as audio/video and Pro-Hussein political paraphernalia. Karbala was considered cleared of any subversive elements and deemed secure by 06 1700 April 2003. At approximately 06 1730 April 2003, the 20 foot steel molded statue of Saddam Hussein was symbolically torn from its pedestal by elements of the 2-70 Armor Battalion and the Iraqi people. Though the Brigade departed Karbala on 07 1600 APR 09, 1-502 IN remained in the city until 10 April to conduct a RIP with the 2nd Brigade from the 82nd Airborne Division. After the continuous high intensity urban combat, the 502<sup>nd</sup> had accounted for over 200 confirmed Fedayeen Saddam and paramilitary forces killed in action, 80 enemy prisoners of war, the destruction of 22 technical vehicles, untold numbers of mortar tubes, and many tons of weapons and equipment left by fleeing enemy forces in numerous caches. These actions resulted in the death of one Soldier, SPC Larry Brown of C/1-41 IN, who was hit by shrapnel from an RPG, 14 WIA, and the destruction of one M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle and one HMMWV. The actions of the 2nd BCT eliminated Iraqi attacks on V Corps Lines of Communication (LOC) and allowed the attack toward Baghdad to continue unhindered. Karbala was a defining moment in the Regiment's history. It had defeated a pugnacious





enemy over 2 protracted days through a combined arms assault using aviation, air assets and massed artillery fires. It involved synchronized attacks with armor and mechanized infantry. It was characterized by bravery, sweat and a determination to free an oppressed city. 2BCT departed from Karbala a different unit than when it had landed on 5 April. It was now ready for anything.

**During this week, in the span of 72 years since the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment originated in July 1941 as the 502nd Parachute Battalion, an experimental unit formed to test the doctrine and tactics of parachute assault, the following awards were awarded to members of 2BCT and the 502<sup>nd</sup> IN Regiment.**

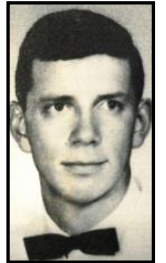
- 1 x Distinguished Service Cross
- 5 x Silver Star Medal (1 x Posthumously)
- 4 x Bronze Star Medal with Valor
- 4 x Army Commendation Medal with Valor
- 125 x Bronze Star Medal (3 x Posthumously)
- 34 x Purple Heart (28 x Posthumously)
- 1 x Military Merit Medal and Gallantry Cross with Palm
- 3 x Non-Hostile Injury or Illness

30 March 1968



SP4 William P. Murphy (HHC/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from small arms gun fire wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

30 March 1968



PFC James E. Mc Pherson (D/1-501 IN) earned the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and wounds received which resulted in his death from small arms gun fire wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

30 March 1968

1LT Ronald E. Burdette (C/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart for wounds received in action in the Republic of Vietnam. (HQ, 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV. G.O. No. 9394)

30 March 1969

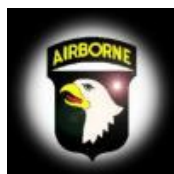


The following Soldiers: PFC Lawson D. Nelson (C/2-501 IN); SP4 Nelson L. Horchem Jr. (Pictured) (B/2-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and wounds received which resulted in their deaths from small arms gun fire wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

30 March 1970



CPL George M. Anaya (B/1-501 IN) died while at an artillery firing position when artillery fire from a friendly force landed in his area, in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.



30 March 1970

SGT Floyd S. Franklin (A/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and wounds received which resulted in their deaths while at a night defensive position when the area came under attack by a hostile force in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

30 March 1970



The following Soldiers: SSG David W. Barrus (Pictured) (A/1-501 IN); SGT Gleason C. Helton (E/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and wounds received which resulted in their deaths from small arms gun fire wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

30 March 1970



SGT Russell C. Hibler (A/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

30 March 1971

PFC Robert J. Skewes (B/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and wounds received which resulted in his death from other explosive device wounds in the Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam.

30 March 2011

SSG Anthony Feaster (A/4-4 CAV) earned the Purple Heart for military merit and for wounds received during actions in combat when insurgents attacked his dismounted patrol with small arms fire. He is assigned to Troop A, 4th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

31 March 1968



SP4 Don J. Yelverton (B/1-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

31 March 1968

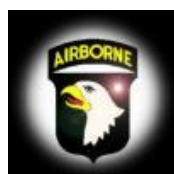


The following Soldiers: SP5 Jerry L. Patrick (Pictured) (HHC/2-502 IN) and SGT Leslie A. Ball (A/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in their deaths from small arms gun fire wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

31 March 1968



SGT Ezekiel Paige (B/1-501 IN) earned the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from small arms gun fire wounds 6.5km NW of Hue, in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.



31 March 1968



PFC Danny L. Stephens (D/1-501 IN) earned the Military Merit Medal and the Gallantry Cross with Palm (Posthumously). (Letter to Parents; 14 Feb 1969, Signed MG Kenneth G. Wickham, The Adjutant General)

31 March 1968

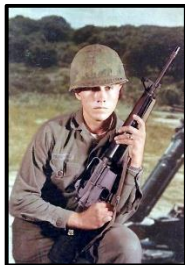


PFC Danny L. Stephens (D/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds 6.5 km NW of Hue, in the Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam.

31 March 1968

PFC James O. West (A/1-502 IN) died in the result of apparent drowning which occurred in the Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam.

31 March 1969



The following Soldiers: CPL Charlie Hill III and SP4 Edward J. Frenbling (Pictured) (D/1-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

31 March 1970



SGT Daniel K. Kohl (A/2-501 IN) died while at an artillery firing position when artillery fire from a friendly force landed in his area, in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

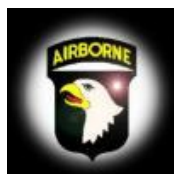
31 March 2003



SPC Brandon J. Rowe (C/1-501 IN), 20, of Roscoe, Illinois; earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death when he was killed in action after receiving a gunshot wound to the abdomen while serving as his vehicles SAW gunner on an M1A1 in Al Kifl, Iraq.

01 April –  
30 November 1968

The following Soldiers: PFC Spencer Coleman, SP4 Kenneth Cooley, SP4 Donnie C. Cooper, SP4 James C. Conell, PVT James W. Culberson, 1LT Pierce T. Graney, SP4 John A. Gray, SGT Ronald Groothoff, SP4 Juan A. Ibarra, SGT Bruce L. Johnson, SFC Johnny Jones, PFC William S. Kear III, SGT Charles K. Mants, SP4 Jeffrey Miller, SP4 Geral E. O'Leary, SP4 Conrad Olson, PFC Johnny L. Parker, PFC Donald Payne, PFC Robert L. Peebles, SP4 Thomas Quicksall, SP4 Robert E. Rehder, SP4 John C. Rieck, SP4 Leonard Schroeder, SP4 John Sharatz, SP4 Willie A. Stone, PFC Eugene Suber,



SGT Bobby E. Taylor, 1LT Clifton Whittaker, SGT Jimmy C. York, PFC Joe A. Ysias was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in connection with military operations against a hostile force. (HQ, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, Special Orders Number 123; 7 January 1969)

01 April –  
30 November 1968

The following Soldiers: SP4 Harold E. Ross, PFC James L. Johnston, PFC Eldrew Jones Jr., SP4 Leon J. Kubin, PFC Terry L Markham, PFC Lanny R. Martin, PFC Robert L. Mason, PFC James H. McLain, SP4 Perez Pedro Oliver, SGT James D. Poindexter, PFC Roy A. Rowlette, PFC Geral D. Russell, SP4 Daniel A. Warren, PFC Arthur J. Watis, PFC Timothy Yougblood (C/2-501 IN); SGT Roy L Barber II, SP4 Salvator Bongiorno, PFC David J. Brown, PFC Dominick Donatone, SGT Robert T. Dunn, SP4 Robert W. Duquette, SP4 Sheldon Eccleston, SP4 David C. Eckrote, SP4 Perfecio Escubedo, SP4 Willard E. Ferrell, CPT Michael H. Feurer, SGT John M. Findley, SP4 James M Fitzgerald, SP4 Frankie D. Gaines, 1LT Edward L. Hogenauer, SGT Tommy R. Lawley, SP4 Wallace J. Leon, PFC Thoams J. Meeks, SP4 Charles E. Morrow, 1LT Ronald E. Phillips, Sp4 Donald P. Pickett, SP4 Henry L. Powers, PFC Curtis D. Rhoton, SGT Samuel P. Royer, PFC Leroy R. Seib, SP4 Leroy L. Sheldon, SP4Fancis T. Sykes, SP4 David P. Thomas, SP4 Arthru Williams Jr., SP4 Scott Wilson (D/2-501 IN); SP4 Douglas Anderson (E/2-501 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in connection to military operations against a hostile force. (HQ, 101 ABN DIV; General Order Number 125; 7 January 1969)

01 April -  
30 November 1968

The following Soldiers: SP4 Marshall L. Moore, SP4 Noah R. Purtee, PFC Ronald Rigo, SP4 Ralph D. Schroeter, SP4 Alexander Vigil, SP4 William Ward Jr., PFC James R. White (E/1-502<sup>nd</sup> IN); SP4 Larry Aldridge, SP5 Edwin H. Barbour, CPT Terrell D. Bridges, CPT James C. Britton, SGM Cecil Cash, SGT Hector Colon-Rios, SP5 Solomon Dezelle, CPT Ivan R. Farris, SP4 William C. Foreman, 1LT Allen D. Gibbs, SP4 Dennis D. Gibson, SFC James Gibson, SP5 David Hopper, SGT Jeffery D. Howe, SGT Victor Hyatt, CPT Timothy B. Jeffrey, PFC Alvin Kellog Jr., SP4 John R. Lazomby, CPT David Leeper, SFC Triveit Lloyd, SGT Ronald E. Long, SGT James P. Mason, SP4 Phillip Matio, SGT Floyd P. McNeill, SP4 Melvin B. McWorter, SP4 Joe E. Mikles, SP4 Jerome Newman, SFC Javier S. Nunez, SP4 Dean W. Ohl, SP5 Richard J. Oliva, SP4 Kenneth A. Osmoe, SP4 Pedro Ramirez Jr. SSG Stephen S. Rivera, SP5 Jorge R. Sanchez, SP4 Craig Sanguinetti, 1LT Gooffrey L. Scanlon, CPT Terran Spiegelberg, and SP4 Francisco Vasquez (HHC/1-502<sup>nd</sup> IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. (HQ, 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV; G.O. Number 130; 7 January 1969)

01 April 1968

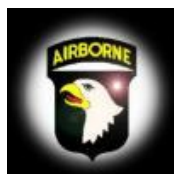


PFC Gerard A. Lavigne (B/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from fragment wounds while setting up mine in base camp after hostile attack on camp when mine detonated in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

01 April 1969



PFC Robert E. Van Dusen (A/1-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.





01 April 1971

CPL Peter L. Winter (A/2-501) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from misadventure (friendly fire) while at a landing zone on a military mission when the area came under mortar attack by a hostile force 17KM East of Laos in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

01-21 April 2008

CPT Daniel B. Cannon (C/1-64 AR) earned the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for his actions while serving as an Armor Company Commander in Sadr City, Iraq. CPT Cannon's valor and leadership ensured his unit cut off enemy logistical supply lines and contained the enemy in the area of operation.

02 April 1968



PFC Jewel L. Rainwater (C/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

02 April 1969

SGT William H. Brown Jr. (A/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

02 April 1970

SSG Robert J. Wrobel (D/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death while enroute to a night defensive position when a booby trap detonated in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

04 April 1968

PFC Roger G. Anderson (C/1-501 IN) for wounds received in action earned him the Purple Heart. (HQ, 101st ABN DIV; General Order Number 1625)

04 April 1968

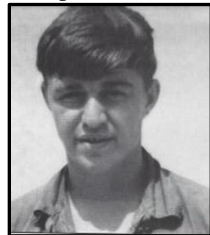
SGT Coulbourn M. Dykes (A/1-501 IN) for wounds received in action earned him the Purple Heart. (HQ, 101st ABN DIV; General Order Number 1625)

04 April 1968

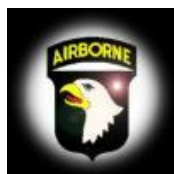
The following Soldiers: SP4 Charles L. King (C/1-501 IN); SGT Mark G. Stickels (HHC/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in their deaths from small arms gunfire wounds in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam. (Pictures L-R)



04 April 1970



PFC Daniel K. Welin (E/1-501 IN) died from Non-hostile causes as a ground casualty from burns received while at an artillery firing position when a white phosphorous round he was handling accidentally detonated in the Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.



04 April 1971



CPL Michael E. Giese (D/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from other explosive device wounds 10 KM N-NW of Ca Lu Air Field in the Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam.

04 April 2006

SPC Duanallen Niemeyer (E/4 FSB) earned the Purple Heart for military merit and for wounds received when wounded in action by an IED while conducting vehicle recovery operations. He suffered a ruptured left eardrum and a contusion on lower right back.

05 April 1968

SGT Gary A. Rhodes (B/1-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple fragmentation wounds in the Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam.

05 April 2003



SPC Larry K. Brown (C/1-41 IN), 22, of Jackson, Mississippi; earned the Purple Heart (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death while in action in Iraq during the Battle for Karbala.

05 April 2006

SPC Kevin Menzer (D/2-502 IN) actions in combat earn him the Purple Heart. During a combat mounted patrol, SPC Menzer's M1114 was struck by an IED. He suffered a perforated ear drum from the blast.

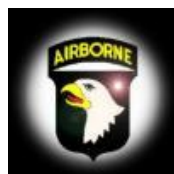
### **STRIKE HISTORY (Citation's and Awards):**

30 March 2008

SGT Jared Sonderegger (A/1-502 IN) earned the Army Commendation Medal with Valor. SGT Sonderegger's platoon was conducting a dismounted patrol in Hurriya, Iraq when his platoon came in contact with the enemy. As the patrol was receiving direct fire from three directions, SGT Sonderegger quickly identified a building that would provide the best advantage to gain fire superiority. He quickly maneuvered from behind cover through the kill zone to enter and clear the building. Once inside the building they both ascended stairs to the rooftop and were once again exposed to enemy fire. SGT Sonderegger then began engaging targets from all three directions which caused the enemy to break contact. SGT Sonderegger's actions enabled the platoon to repel the attack and continue their mission.

30 March 2008

PFC Ryan C. Balintfy (A/1-502 IN) earned him the Army Commendation with Valor. PFC Balintfy's platoon was conducting a dismounted patrol in Hurriya, Iraq when his platoon came in contact with the enemy. As the patrol was receiving direct fire from three directions, PFC Balintfy witnessed his team leader moving to a building that would provide the best advantage to gain fire superiority. Of his own accord and with no regard for his safety, PFC Balintfy aggressively maneuvered from behind cover through a hail of bullets to assist his team leader with entering and clearing the building. Once inside the building they both ascended stairs to the rooftop and were once again exposed to enemy fire. PFC Balintfy then began engaging targets from all three directions which caused the enemy to break contact. PFC Balintfy's actions enabled the platoon to repel the attack and continue their mission.



30 March 2011



SPC James Lechusz (D/2-502 IN) earned the Army Commendation Medal with Valor while distinguishing himself by exceptionally valorous service with 2nd platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) during Operation Enduring Freedom.

SPC Lechusz distinguished himself by exhibiting exceptional courage under fire while serving as a junior team leader during a dismounted patrol in the Zharay District, Afghanistan. Due to the battalion relocating to FOB Ramrod, SPC Lechusz's team leader had already arrived to the FOB as part of the ADVON party. SPC Lechusz was appointed as a team leader for the rest of RIP/TOA with 1-32 IN.

The platoon was conducting a Relief in Place patrol with 14 leaders of the incoming unit in AO Sartak, the toughest kinetic fight in the battalion's area of operations. While the platoon leader was showing the D/1-32 IN replacements previous enemy fighting positions and likely infill/exfil routes, the platoon came under heavy contact from 3-5 insurgent fighters from the northeast. At the time of contact, the platoon was receiving immediate effective small arms fire from approximately 70 meters away. The terrain was heavily vegetated with low visibility, making it hard to determine exactly where the insurgents were firing from.

SPC Lechusz was located in the northeast corner of the platoon's security position, nearest to the insurgent's location. Immediately following the initial contact, all members of the incoming unit immediately took cover. Instead of taking immediate cover and in complete disregard to his own personal safety, SPC Lechusz returned fire directly at the insurgent fighting position. The insurgents continued to accurately fire at SPC Lechusz while he kept the insurgents fixed in their location. Having eyes on the objective, SPC Lechusz then called out the distance and direction to the entire platoon to include the leaders of the incoming unit, allowing more fires to be oriented towards the insurgents.

As a result of SPC Lechusz fixing the enemy and directing the platoon's fires, he allowed the platoon to directly engage the enemy with high explosive weapons to include LAWs, SMAW-Ds, and 40mm HEDP. This caused the enemy to egress rather than maneuver to the platoon's flanks, the TTP of the insurgents.

SPC Lechusz's valor, heroism, and courage under fire pinned the enemy down, preventing them from further engaging coalition forces. Without SPC Lechusz's actions, the insurgents would have had freedom to maneuver within hand grenade range as well as engaging the platoon's flanks.

31 March 1968



PFC Danny L. Stephens (D/1-501 IN) earned the Bronze Star Medal (Posthumously) for distinguishing himself by outstanding meritorious service in connection with ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam during the period of 5 January 1968 to 31 March 1968. Through his untiring efforts and professional ability, he consistently obtained outstanding results of the every changing situation inherent in the counterinsurgency operation and to find ways and means to solve those problems. The energetic application of his extensive knowledge has materially contributed to the efforts of the United States mission to the Republic of Vietnam to assist that country in ridding itself of the communist threat to its freedom. PFC Stephens's initiative, zeal, sound judgment and devotion to duty have been in the highest traditions of the United States Army and reflect great credit upon him and on the military service. (HQ, 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV; General Order Number 394; 15 April 1968)

31 March 1969

1LT Timothy P. McCollum (D/1-502 IN) was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company D, 1st Battalion, 502d Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. First Lieutenant McCollum distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 31 March 1969 while leading his platoon in the hills south of the A Shau Valley. His company was engaged in a fierce firefight with a North Vietnamese force holding ridge from well-fortified positions. A ravine separating the two opposing forces obviated a direct assault on the enemy's positions. Undertaking an intricate flanking maneuver, Lieutenant McCollum infiltrated his men across the open ravine under heavy crossfire and ascended the heights behind the enemy as the company's main force continued firing on the hostile element's front. After overtly signaling friendly fire away from his position, he initiated a systematic sweep



down through the enemy's hillside emplacements. He attacked an enemy bunker and overcame its unsuspecting occupant. An alerted North Vietnamese then turned and fired from his spider hole, seriously wounding an American. Realizing that the wounded man's recovery hinged on immediate evacuation, Lieutenant McCollum enlisted another soldier's aid and together they carried the casualty down the ridge through enemy positions. Their descent was obstructed by harassing fire from a nearby bunker. Lieutenant McCollum destroyed the fortification with grenades. When the wounded soldier had been delivered to safety, he made his way back to his men by the same treacherous route under a storm of machine gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire. First Lieutenant McCollum's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 3418 (September 7, 1969))

31 March 1971



PFC Robert C. Saal (A/2-501 IN) was awarded the Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM) with Valor for heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. Private First Class Saal distinguished himself on 31 March 1971 while serving as a rifleman during combat operations near Fire Base Veghel, Republic of Vietnam. Upon being inserted into a landing zone that was under hostile fire, Private Saal immediately began to deliver accurate and devastating suppressive fire on the enemy. He assaulted the enemy bunkers and threw hand grenades, forcing them to withdraw. Pursuing the enemy, he engaged them with a continuing burst of suppressive fire. His actions were instrumental in routing the enemy from the area. Private First Class Saal's heroic actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, 101st ABN DIV, G.O. No. 2980 (11 April 1971))

31 March –  
01 April 1971

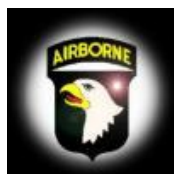
SP4 Robert J. Ivy (A/2-501 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism in connection with ground operations in the Republic of Vietnam. Specialist Four Ivy distinguished himself on 31 March 1971 and 1 April 1971 while serving as a squad leader during combat operations in Quan Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam. Coming under an enemy mortar and small arms attack, Specialist Ivy delivered suppressive fire while his squad set up a defensive perimeter from which to better engage the enemy. He continued to engage the enemy until the hostiles were routed from the area. On the following day, his squad again came in contact with the enemy. Quickly organizing his squad, he delivered accurate and devastating suppressive fire which silenced the enemy positions. Specialist Four Ivy's personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV, G.O. No. 2927 (09 April 1971))

31 March 2003

SSG Walter E. Wolfe (C/1-502 IN) earned the Silver Star for gallantry and intrepidity against the enemy. SSG Wolfe's platoon was ambushed by enemy fire from all directions. During the battle that ensued, SSG Wolfe eliminated two enemy Soldiers at short range while running from position to position. He then proceeded to move toward an enemy bunker which he cleared with small arms fire. Then he exposed himself to a second bunker, prepared a fragmentation grenade and threw it with great precision into the spot in the bunker where sniper fire was believed to have been coming from, without regard for his own safety. In doing so, he single handedly destroyed a bunker that had pinned down roughly half of his platoon. SSG Wolfe displayed bravery above and beyond the call of duty. His courage, leadership, and initiative were essential to the platoon's destruction of the ambushing forces and the survival of the platoon. Altogether, the platoon inflicted more than forty casualties on the enemy.

01 April –  
30 November 1968

SGT William P. Hudek (D/2-502 IN) earned the Bronze Star Medal for distinguishing himself by outstanding meritorious service in connection with ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. Through his untiring efforts and professional ability, he consistently obtained outstanding results. He was quick to grasp the implications of new problems with which he was faced as a result of the ever changing





situations inherent in a counterinsurgency operation and to find ways and means to solve those problems. The energetic application of his extensive knowledge has materially contributed to the efforts of the United States Mission to the Republic of Vietnam to assist that country in ridding itself of communist threat to its freedom. His initiative, zeal, sound judgment and devotion to duty have been in the highest tradition of the United States Army and reflect great credit on him and on the military service.

03 April 1969

1LT David F. Kornegay (C/2-501 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 3 April 1969. Lieutenant Kornegay distinguished himself while serving as a platoon leader of the Second Platoon of Company C, 2d Battalion, 501st Infantry, on a combat operation in the A Shau Valley, Republic of Vietnam. On the cited date, the Second Platoon was given the mission of reinforcing the Third Platoon which was in contact with an enemy platoon. Upon reaching the beleaguered element, Lieutenant Kornegay began to position his men in the most advantageous positions to place effective fire upon the enemy. He repeatedly moved through the intense enemy fire in order to better place his men. Upon receiving word that two members of the Third Platoon had been seriously wounded, he crawled through the heavy enemy fire to administer emergency aid and to carry the two wounded men to safe position for medical evacuation. His leadership and personal direction were an inspiration to his men and rallied confidence in their abilities. Lieutenant Kornegay's personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military, and the United States Army.

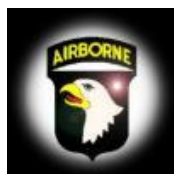
03 April 1969



SP4 Tony Placios (A/2-501 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) for gallantry in action while engaged in military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 3 April 1969. Specialist Four Palacios distinguished himself while serving as rifleman in Company A, 2nd Battalion, 501st Infantry, during a reconnaissance in force operation in the A Shau Valley, Republic of Vietnam. Specialist Placios volunteered to walk in the lead position. While negotiating a particularly dense area of thick brush, he spotted several enemy soldiers crouching on the jungle floor just ahead of his advancing platoon. He then passed a hand warning to his platoon, alerting it of the impending danger, and then proceeded to steal the initiative from the enemy. He assaulted into the enemy position, personally killing two North Vietnamese and forcing the others to retreat. Late in the afternoon, heavy rainfall accompanied by a thick fog reduced visibility to near zero, and the platoon was subjected to sniper fire. Specialist Palacios, from his lead position, was first to spot the source of fire. He directed his M-16 rifle fire into a clump of thickly foliated trees to his right flank, and the sniper fire stopped. He found a blood trail and an abandoned AK-47 rifle. He personally accounted for at least three enemy casualties and one captured weapon. Specialist Placios' personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

04 April 1968

CPT Russell J. Stoewe (C/1-501 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 4 April 1968. Captain Stoewe distinguished himself during the conduct of combat operations in Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam. The company was heavily engaged with a well-entrenched enemy battalion. Captain Stoewe was well to the front directing the movement of his elements. Throughout the battle he personally directed the retaliatory fire of his men while repeatedly exposing him to the intense hostile small arms, rocket propelled grenade, and machine gun fire. On several occasions he personally directed the withdrawal of his platoons in contact and coordinated for close air support.



Only when he was certain the company had withdrawn completely would he withdraw, thus allowing close air support aircraft to unload their ordnance. Several times Captain Stoewe formed rescue teams to evacuate the wounded under hostile fire while he himself returned fire, covering the extraction of the wounded and dead. His courage and outstanding leadership contributed immeasurably to the success of the mission. Captain Stoewe's personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

04 April 1968

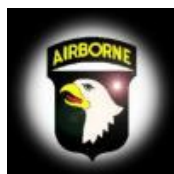
SGT Coulbourn M Dykes (A/1-501 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism in ground combat against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Dykes distinguished himself with exceptionally valorous actions on 4 April 1968, while serving as fire team leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry, during the conduct of a search and clear operation in the village of Thon Lu'on'ng Co, Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam. During an initial sweep of the village, Company A confronted slight enemy resistance from a platoon size enemy force of North Vietnamese Regulars and Viet Cong who were in the village, well concealed in bunkers and spider holes. Sergeant Dykes had captured a Viet Cong when he noticed a well concealed bunker to his immediate front. He cautiously approached the bunker and called for its occupants to come out. Three Viet Cong surrendered and one remaining North Vietnamese Non-Commissioned Officer threw a grenade and opened fire from the bunker. Despite being wounded by the grenade fragments, Sergeant Dykes immediately placed small arms fire on the bunker, rushed it, and threw in a grenade. The determined North Vietnamese Non-Commissioned Officer threw the grenade back out, narrowly missing Sergeant Dykes, who dove for cover. Unhesitatingly Sergeant Dykes again threw a grenade into the bunker and the North Vietnamese Soldier threw it out, wounding Sergeant Dykes with more fragments. Again Sergeant Dykes, with the help of a member of his squad laying down a base of fire, rushed the bunker, threw in another grenade and this time killed the enemy. Sergeant Dykes unhesitatingly and valorous actions resulted in four enemy Soldiers captured, one killed and the seizure of a cache of enemy weapons. Sergeant Dykes' personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

04 April 1969

2LT Donald A. Bailey (A/1-502 IN) was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for heroism in ground combat against hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 04 April 1969. Lieutenant Bailey distinguished himself while serving as platoon leader of the First Platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, near the A Shau Valley, Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam. Early in the morning on the cited date, his night defensive position was hit with accurate rocket propelled grenade and automatic weapons fire, and satchel charges. As the enemy attack on the company perimeter continued, the machine gun position was hit with a satchel charge, wounding the gunner. Lieutenant Bailey resolutely moved forward and helped extract the wounded man from further immediate danger. He then had the machine gun moved to a position from which it could bring effective suppressive fire on the enemy. His quick reactions motivated his men in the defense of the perimeter. Lieutenant Bailey's personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, 101st ABN DIV; General Order Number 7186)

05 April 2003

1LT Stephen A. Thorpe (C/1-41 IN) earned the Silver Star Medal while distinguishing himself as a Platoon Leader, while attached to the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Widow Maker Battalion. First Lieutenant Thorpe's Platoon led the company attack to destroy enemy forces in zone in the vicinity of Karabala. Upon entering Objective INDIA, his crew was in direct contact with intense small arms and RPG-7s from all sides for more than nine hours. As a result of his aggressiveness his crew engaged and destroyed four enemy RPG pits, one gun truck, one anti-aircraft gun, and 25 enemy soldiers around Objective INDIA. These actions allowed Bravo Company 2-502d to gain a foothold. As First Lieutenant Thorpe's crew and section pushed forward to the next Objective his Bradley



Fighting Vehicle was hit by two rocket propelled grenades which penetrated through the left side of the vehicle turret. As a result, First Lieutenant Thorpe was wounded in both legs by several fragments of shrapnel. The vehicle then ignited into flames, which caused the entire crew to evacuate from their vehicle. Although being injured and bleeding from both legs, First Lieutenant Thorpe took charge of the situation on the ground and led from the front, alongside of the other eight injured soldiers in the platoon. Without regard for his own life and injuries, he relentlessly maneuvered his soldiers while still under hostile enemy fire for about 800 meters until they reached the last friendly Infantry Strong Point, sustaining no further injuries to his men. After being treated for shrapnel wounds, First Lieutenant Thorpe jumped track with his gunner and a volunteer driver and immediately rejoined the fight with his platoon. While still in an extreme amount of pain, First Lieutenant Thorpe again braved the gauntlet of fires to get back to his platoon to continue the fight.

**\*STRIKE HISTORY NOTE:**

A major reorganization took place on 3 February 1964, when the 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division was activated at Fort Campbell, replacing the 1st Airborne Battle Group, 501st Infantry Regiment. The reorganization from the battle groups to brigades and battalions placed two battalions of the 502<sup>nd</sup> in different brigades of the 101<sup>st</sup>. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade with 1-327<sup>th</sup> and 2-327<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Which deployed to Vietnam 1965, in was most notable commanded by LTC Hank "The Gunfighter" Emerson. The new 2nd Brigade's original organic battalions were the 1st and 2d Battalions, 501st Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry.

December 1967, 2nd Brigade deployed by C-141 aircraft to the Republic of Vietnam. Over the next five years, soldiers of the "Ready to Go" Brigade participated in twelve campaigns, compiling a distinguished combat record as well as an enviable reputation for success in the rehabilitation of a war-torn nation. The President of Vietnam personally decorated the colors of the Brigade three times, twice with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and once with the RVN Civic Action Honor Medal. The Brigade redeployed to Fort Campbell in April, 1972.

In 1984, with the reorganization of the Combat Arms Regimental System, the 2nd Brigade became the parent headquarters for the 1st, 2nd, and 3d Battalions of the 502nd Infantry Regiment. With this reorganization, the Brigade adopted the regimental motto, "Strike."

