

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Stephen Crabtree

My Friend, Ken

I just received word that an old friend just died. Ken Rice tried to help me out back in the mid 60's as both of my parents were deceased. I didn't listen to him either. We went our separate ways as he went to Vietnam around 1966 and became a door gunner. I was



**Stephen
Crabtree**

drafted into the Army in 1968. Ken came back, joined the San Diego Fire Department and rose to the rank of Battalion Chief. We started communicating again in 2001 because both of us had been diagnosed with cancer. Ken had lung cancer, I had colon cancer. I tried and tried to get him to file for Veterans Administration benefits because lung cancer is recognized by the VA caused by exposure to dioxins (Agent Orange). Ken wouldn't file with the VA because he was being taken care of by the SDFD. I told him that he could give the money to charity if he wanted but to file for the sake of our troops in

harm's way now. Vietnam Veterans are dying off at an alarming rate. Many of the ones dying now are from service-connected disabilities. From my unit alone (E Company, 51st Infantry and Golf Company Ranger, 75th Infantry), the following men have died from service-related disabilities: Tony Avgoulis, Bob Simpson, John Fritzing, Jerry O'Dell, Bob Halbert, Lance Chandler, Earl Toomey, Paul Grondines, Bud Watson..... These are service-related deaths from only one unit. How many others are out there? These men would be alive today had they not opted to serve their country. We owe it to the men & women in the service today and especially to those returning from Afghanistan and Iraq to see that they are properly taken care of by the VA for service related disabilities. The best way to see that this happens is for each and every person who has a service related disability to file with the VA. If we don't file, the VA has one less statistic to reject claims. If we do file, the claimant has one more statistic to support their claim.

Ranger Hall of Fame

We submitted James Bell, Steven Mattoon and Robert Bryan as our 2006 nominees for induction into the RHOF. BG David Grange, Danny Jacks and Col. John Lawton are all members of the RHOF and nominated Ed Scholes, Earl Toomey and Roy Boatman respectively. RHOF Inductees have the privilege of nominating potential inductees without going through any of the authorized Ranger organizations. We, as a Ranger Association, are allowed to submit three packets for submittal to the selection board each year. Aside of the three packets submitted by former RHOF inductees, we only received three. Our submittals were mailed to the RHOF Executive board on 4 Jan 2006. The biographies in all three were too long and had to be shortened. On 28-31 March the RHOF Executive board will convene at Fort Benning and select this year's inductees. On or before 11 April inductees (or next of kin) will be notified both verbally and in writing. Each nominating association will be likewise informed and given copies of the minutes of the RHOF meetings. The induction ceremony is tentatively scheduled for 29

June 2006. If you have never attended an induction ceremony and marched/walked in with the members of our association, you're really missing out. I sincerely hope to see all of you there.

Let's not procrastinate, start thinking about next year (2007). I have put together the instructions for putting a RHOF packet together. It is available for anyone who wants to submit a packet. Unfortunately I didn't receive it in time to send it out this year. December 1st 2006 is the drop dead date for submitting packets to me. That gives me about 6 weeks to send them out for grading and deciding on which three will be passed on to the RHOF Executive Board. Any member of our association may submit a packet but it must be submitted to me via your respective Unit Representative. Any packet submitted by a RHOF member may be submitted directly to: Ranger Hall of Fame Executive Board; Attn: SSG Xavier Burns, RS5; 6400 Infantry Brigade Loop; Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-4625. This year the drop dead date for submitting packets to RHOF was 10 January, 2006. The date has not been set for next year.

Ranger Coffee

If you're a coffee drinker or looking for a special gift you should check out the website below. CPT Zach Thomas sent me a pound and after tasting it, you have my word on it that this coffee tastes umpteen times better than cold C-ration coffee we drank in the jungles of Vietnam. Association or Unit Logos may be added to the packaging. I recently received the following request From Zach:

"I recently left active duty to go into the Chaplain Candidate Program. I was the Operations Officer for the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course at 4th RTB less than 5 months ago and I used to work with ya'll to get the plaques for our Honor graduate. The reason I am writing you is to inform you of a business that I recently started to help me get through Seminary and support my family while I am in the Chaplain Candidate Program (a Reserve Officer Program). Please check out my website and let me know what you think. www.rangercoffee.com." Followed by, "Almost forgot, I would like to donate \$1.00 for every bag sold (through my website) to the 75th Ranger Regiment."

Membership Fund

Our membership fund currently has over \$6000 on deposit. This money is for those of you who need help. It is not for a beer party or a trip to Disneyland for you & your family but if you need food, medication, help getting to a reunion, etc., it is there for you. We recently made a disbursement of \$250 to a Ranger who was having hard times. Contact your Unit Representative with your request and he will present it to the officers. We will review the request and decide if the request merits disbursement.

Children's Christmas Parties

Letters of thanks are pouring in for our donations to the children of the enlisted (E5 & below) Rangers in the three battalions. We gave \$3000 for Christmas presents and \$750 for food certificates for