

I never ever thought that I would be asked to write about myself for a news letter insert, I am truly honored to share my story with my Brothers in Arms for whom I have the utmost respect, and admiration.

I was born May 22, 1942, in Boston Massachusetts, and grew up and went to school in Dorchester, Ma. I graduated in May 1959, and enlisted in the Army on August 7, 1959.

I was sent to Ft. Dix (NJ) for both basic and Advanced Infantry Training. In AIT we were offered the opportunity to try out for the Airborne, some 50 tried, and only 6 of us passed the PT test. Upon completion of AIT, I was given a few days leave, and reported to 82nd. Airborne Replacement Company, and arrived the day before Christmas.

In those days the units needing replacements sent their Sgt. Major to address us, they gave us the BS about their units, and Sgt. Major Finn's bill of goods sold me on the 2/503, and on Jan 4, 1960, I was assigned to Bravo Company, 1st. Platoon, the Rock had its newest member. Shortly afterward I was in Jump School, class 1-60, and earned my Jump Wings.

In Late March, early April we were told that the 2/503 would be moving to Okinawa in May, and the tour of duty would be 18 months, well that turned out to be 24 months for many of us due to tensions in areas that you are familiar with. We jumped not only on the Yomitan DZ on Okinawa, but also on the Han River DZ, Seoul Korea, Clark Air force Base, and Ping Tung Air force base in Taiwan.

I served in all the basic Infantry MOS's, Basic Rifleman, BAR man, 3.5" Bazooka man, and my favorite the M1919A6 Browning Light Machine-gun.

I was a good Soldier; all my scores for conduct, and efficiency while in the 2/503 were excellent. I did manage to earn several Article 15's, and in a pissing contest with MSGT. Robert Burnette, I earned a Summary Court Martial. I made E-3 twice, and was promoted to SP4 on March 20, 1962, just 49 days prior to leaving Okinawa for CONUS.

Not long after my separation, the Cuban Missile Crisis blossomed, and I was ordered to report to Army Reserve Headquarters, and advised that I would be recalled to active duty. Khrushchev blinked, and I put the freshly packed duffel bag back into the closet.

Fast forward to October 6, 1973, Egypt, and Syria attack Israel, and it appears that all is lost on both fronts. I volunteered to go over, and help in any capacity. I was in Israel's Golan Heights from early November 73 to end of August 74. From my arrival in the Golan until the Israeli-Syrian cease fire agreement in May, we were under almost constant artillery, missile, fire, constant threat of Commando attacks, and in several instances bombed by Syrian Migs.

The morning of April 11, 1974 started off like any other day, a group of 5 of us were going to patrol a Pipeline that runs to the border of Lebanon. We finished the first leg, and then continued on to Kiryat Shemonah to refuel the jeep, drink some coffee, and repeat the first leg in reverse. We were drinking coffee at the gas station when the siren went off, the signal that a terrorist attack was either in progress or imminent. As luck would have it the attack was on a hillside street opposite to the gas station. We were there, we were armed, and we set out in a 5 man skirmish line to try and locate the terrorists. We were nearing the top of the street when we heard a window being opened, we looked up at the 4th floor, and saw 3 weapons pointed at us, a Kalashnikov, a light machine gun, and an RPG, and they opened fire at a distance of 50-60 meters, how they missed us I will never know. We raced for cover behind some parked cars, and when the MG stopped firing we ran to take cover behind a huge boulder. We held our fire as we did not want to hit any survivors / hostages. The IDF (Israeli Defense Force) arrived, we gave the location of the terrorists, and they ordered us out, they gave covering fire and we withdrew down the hill. It was a savage day, the terrorists killed 15 civilians, mostly woman and children. In the final assault the terrorist killed 2 Israeli Soldiers, and the Sgt. leading the attack was wounded and paralyzed.

Fast forward to January 15, 1991, it is 14:30 hours and I have just landed in Israel, again as a volunteer willing to do what ever was asked of me to help out. Less than two days latter the Iraqis hit us with the first of (by my count) 41 Scud ICBMs. I hooked up with an organization that helps the elderly, shut ins, and the mentally challenged, with daily food and meds. I and a friend were assigned to the Jaffe-Tel Aviv-Ramat Gan areas. Basically we were working in the bull's eye.

You had to be there to appreciate the situation, most Scud attacks happened after the sun had set. You can actually see the incoming Scuds, and then you see the Patriot anti-missiles fired in pairs at the Scuds, a finger of flame streaking down from the heavens, and two oval shaped balls of fire from the Patriots, all streaking toward each other at a combined speed of about Mach 8-9, and the ensuing explosions put the best of 4th of July fireworks to shame. During one missile attack which I will never forget, my friend and I were caught out in the open on our way to Tel Aviv to drink some beers (we managed to send his wife to stay with her parents in a safer location), so we took cover in a large Citrus Grove. We actually had a short argument as to where to take cover until we looked up and saw this huge finger of fire pointing straight down (from our perspective) and almost simultaneously two Patriots were closing in on the finger of fire, and bang two huge explosions (the Patriots), and the next sight is the Scuds rocket propulsion system just tumbling through the air, tossing of these huge red balls of fire, just when we thought things were over, this deafening sonic boom from the missiles damn near gave us a heart attack. We continued on to Tel Aviv, and yes we definitely put some brews away. The next morning we learned that the war head from the Scud did land intact in our Citrus Grove and was recovered by the military, theirs and ours. These Scuds, and Patriot Missiles exploding in the air, and on the ground caused a lot damage. Our apartment building was hit by pieces of Scud, and Patriot missiles, one chunk hit beside my bedroom door, and a large chunk of Patriot Missile motor landed beside the propane gas tanks we use for cooking.

I moved to Israel in January 2000 and true to my double volunteer (RA, & Airborne) I joined the all volunteer Civil Guard as a uniformed volunteer Police Office. I had a great 10 year adventure that sadly at age 67 (22 May 09) I will have reached mandatory Civil Guard retirement age. I am not sure what adventures the future holds, but I do not intend to roll over and play dead.

Once again I want to thank Dennis Hill, and the 173rd. Airborne Association for the privilege of sharing some of those moments that are forever etched into my mind.

Once Airborne, always Airborne.

Most sincerely yours,
Steve Goodman