

The Long HUE Home

The Letters from Vietnam Of

David Lee Wilkerson

*Killed in Action near Hue
March 24, 1968*

Awarded the Silver Star
Congressional Medal of Honor Pending



Hue - The old capital of Vietnam is pronounced "Way"



The Bustle in a House
The Morning after Death
Is solemnest of industries
Enacted upon Earth -

The Sweeping up the Heart
And putting Love away
We shall not want to use again
Until Eternity.

- Emily Dickinson (1866)



*These letters were written to me
between 1966 and 1968.*

*By compiling them,
I am "Sweeping up the Heart".*

~ Jo Ann B. Wilkerson

June, 2003

2/12/66

Hi everybody,

I am sorry that I did not write you sooner than this. I just never did get a chance to. You wrote that the snow came this year. Well I am kind of glad that I missed it. The weather down here has been great. The temperature this week has been about 75° and the sun has been shining all the time it's really been great.

How about Judy's engagement I thought that we were never going to get rid of her. I really think it is wonderful. Hank is a real nice guy. I think you would like him a lot.

Hey Conley how about Kentucky's number one national ranking. I sure hope that they don't lose any games and that they can do good in the tournament.

I'm doing pretty well out at J.C. I just turned 19

and I hope the Draft Does not
get me. I heard on T.V. the
other night that the were drafting
freshmen who Don't have at least
15 hours and a 2.5 average. so
I just hoping that they over
look me or something.

I did real well in my art courses
last term. My figure Drawing
teacher wanted me to arrange my
classes so that I could come in
and draw with the figure class this
term, but I could not get the
classes so I could not.

I am sending you a Drawing
of Winston Churchill. I hope you
like him. I have been working
on him for half a year off and
on. He was taken from a book
cover. I hope you like him.

Thanks alot for the Christmas
money I bought me a pair of
pants which I needed real bad.

Thanks alot

David

357



THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS

Hi

SORRY I DID NOT
WRITE YOU SOONER
BUT I WANTED TO
WAIT AND GIVE YOU
MY RETURN ADDRESS.

P.F.C. DAVID C. WILKERSON
DA. 14 969 550

101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
1ST BDE 1ST/321 BTN.
APO S.F. 93647.

HAD A GREAT TIME
AT THE PLAYBOY CLUB.
REALLY DID ENJOY THE
BUNNIES AND ALL.

THE RED CROSS IS
CLOSING UP NOW SO
I WILL HAVE TO WRITE
YOU AGAIN THE NEXT
CHANGE I HAVE.
LOVE DAVID.

Mr. David Hilkenson
5270 Helene Pl.
St. Palm Beach, Fla.
33407

Aug '66.

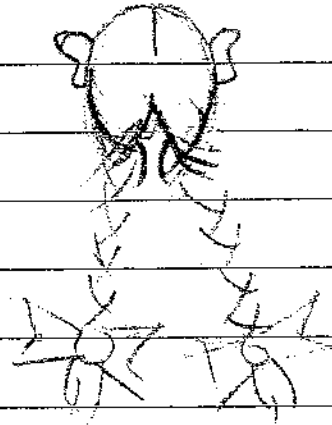
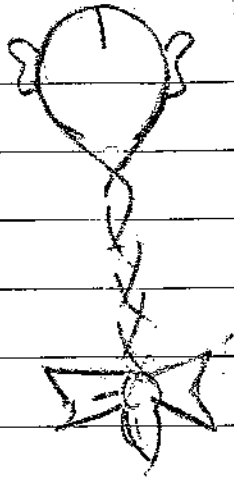
Hi

Sorry I am so long
waiting but I just never
get around to writing. I'm
getting ready to leave on
the trip I have planned and
I wanted to write to you
about the sketches you wanted
before I left. I have drawn
a example of what I think you
want. I would like you to
see them before I want any
farther. You can tell me
if this is what you wanted
or not. If not give me
a more of a complete idea
of what you want. It sure
was nice to see everybody
when we were in Kartusky.
The wedding was nice and
we had a real good trip home
sure was nice to get back.

David

over →

tell nancy you can not see
her neck so she want be left out



These drawings will be
much more clear when
they are painted rather than
drawn. I also like to
know what colors you want
to be used.





14 JAN 67

UNITED STATES ARMY

CONLEY AND JO ANN,
SORRY I DID NOT WRITE BEFORE
I HAVE ONLY WRITTEN THREE LETTERS
SINCE I BEEN IN THE ARMY. WE
HAVE THIS SATURDAY OFF SO
I GOING TO CATCH UP ON MY WRITING
THEY REALLY HAD US GOING
SINCE WE CAME BACK FROM CHRIST-
MAS LEAVE, THEY TOOK US TO
THE GAS CHAMBERS LAST WEEK.
MAN! THAT WAS BAD. WE
HAD TO TAKE OFF OUR GAS
MASKS WHILE WE WERE IN THIS
BUILDING FILLED WITH ^{TEAR} GAS. THEN
5 OF US HAD TO REPEAT OUR
RANK, NAME, SERIAL NUMBER, AND
BIRTH DATE ONE AT A TIME. I WAS
THE ~~LAST~~ LAST MAN TO SAY THIS AND
BY THE TIME IT GOT TO ME
I COULD NOT EVEN SAY MY
RANK AND NAME. LIKE I SAID
IT WAS BAD.

PART OF LAST WEEK WE
WENT TO THE TRIPLE RANGE.
I WAS SURPRISED AT THE
LITTLE KICK THE M14 HAS.
IT CAN FIRE A 20 BOUND
MAGAZINE IN A BLINK
OF AN EYE, AND THAT
IS NO EXAGGERATION.

14 JAN 67



UNITED STATES ARMY

HOW IS EVERYTHING GOING.
~~DO~~ DID JO ANN'S BOOK GET ACCEPT.
HOW ARE UNCLE AND NANCY IN
SCHOOL AND EVERYBODY DOWN
HOME. SEND ME DADDY ROY'S
ADDRESS AND I WILL WRITE TO
HIM SOME TIME.

WE GOT OUR PICTURES
TAKEN YESTERDAY. WHEN WE
GET THEM AT THE END OF THE
MONTH (I THINK) I WILL SENT
YOU ONE.

WILL TAKE IT EASY ANYTIME
YOU CAN.

DAVID,
MOTHER SAID THAT THEY MESS
UP THE RETURN ADDRESS ON THE
OUTSIDE SO I AM WRITING IT
ON THE INSIDE ALSO,

PVT. DAVID L. WILKERSON
RA. 14 969 550
COD 11TH BN, 3RD TR BDE, USATC
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA, PCT#1
31905.

IT HAS TO BE WRITTEN LIKE
I HAVE IT ABOVE.

P.S. THANKS FOR THE
CHRISTMAS PRESENT. I USED
IT TO REPAIR MY I.D.
BRACKET.

THANK ALOT.



Feb. 67

CONLEY AND JO ANN.

CONLEY YOU BETTER STOP WORKING SO HARD AND PAY MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR KIDS. JO ANN SOUNDED KIND OF MAD AT YOU, THOSE LEGAL ENTANGLEMENTS COULD GET YOU IN THE DOG HOUSE.

HOW HAVE YALL BEEN DOING. I'M DOING REAL WELL. I HAVE THE HIGHEST PAY, TRAINING AVERAGE AND LAST WEEK WE HAD A PUGAL BOWLS. PUGAL IS A PADDED STICK YOU USE THE SAME WAY AS YOUR WEAPON WITH BAYONET. I ENDED UP AS CHAMP OF THE COMPANY. YOU HAVE ONE ON ONE BOWLS FOR THE PLATOON CHAMP THEN THE FIVE PLATOON CHAMP FOUGHT IT OUT. MY DEIN SERGEANT WAS REALLY HAPPY ABOUT ME WINNING. WE LEAVE THIS DATE THE 17 OF THIS MONTH. MAN IT WILL BE GREAT NOT TO BE CALLED TRAINEE ANY MORE. THEY ARE OFFERING THIS LEADERSHIP COURSE IN A.I.T. FOR PEOPLE WHO WERE RATED AS POSSIBLE LEADERS BY THE GUYS IN HIS PLATOON.

Feb '67

IF YOU TAKE THE COURSE,
WHICH ADDS TWO WEEKS TO
YOUR AIT. YOU AUTOMATICALLY
MAKE SQUAD LEADER AND
IF YOU HAD TO GO TO
VIET NAM YOU BECOME ACTING
SERGEANT AND ASSISTED SQUAD-
LEADER.

JOAN YOUR IDEAL
ABOUT SKETCHES WAS VERY
GOOD. I START AS SOON
AS I GET A CHANCE TO
DO SOME DRAWING.

MOTHER HAS TWO JOBS
ONE IN PALM BEACH SEWING
AGAIN & SHE DOESN'T THINK
SHE WILL STAY THERE VERY
LONG. THE OTHER SHE SEWING
AT HOME FOR SOME SHOP.
BILLY SUPPOSED TO BE MAKING
GOOD CREDIT THIS TIME.
IT ABOUT TIME, DICKIE'S
SHOULDER HAD A CYST REMOVED
FROM HER SHOULDER LAST WEEK.
THAT ABOUT ALL THE NEWS
I GOT FROM HOME. WRITE
AND GIVE ME DADDY ROY'S
ADDRESS PLEASE ALSO
REARERS I GUESS
THAT THE WAY
YOU SPELL IT.
THANK ALOT,
DAVID.



ARMY XM-50 HONEST JOHN ROCKET

1 MAY 67

United States Army

Conney AND JOANN

SOUNDS LIKE YOU ARE REALLY
BUSY, MAN! I HAVE BEEN THESE
LAST NINE WEEKS. I THOUGHT
I WROTE YOU WHILE I'VE
BEEN AT FORT SORDEN, I
GOT YOUR LETTER THE 26TH
WHILE I WAS ON BIBUL.
WE JUST CRAWLED OUT OF
A SWAMP AND I WAS SO
TIRED I DID NOT EVEN
GO TO MAIL CALL. YOUR
LETTER HELPED ME MAKE IT
THRU THE NIGHT. THEY
THROW GAS, SHOT FLARES
AND ATTACKED WE WERE
LUCKY IF WE GOT 1 HOUR
SLEPT THE WHOLE NIGHT.
OUR PICTURES CAME
TODAY SO I'M SENDING
YOU THE DOCKET BOOK



ARMY NIKE-ZEUS MISSILE

United States Army

SIZE PICTURES
I GOT ONE BIG
COLOR PICTURE

AND SIX LITTLE ONES. THEY
CAME OUT PRETTY GOOD
I ALWAYS TOOK A LOUSY
PHOTO. IT'S GREAT NEWS
THAT EARLINGTON FINALLY WON
AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF
TRAINING. I CALL MOTHER AND
TOLD HER SHE WAS REALLY
TICKLED TOO. YOUR PACKAGE
PROBABLY ~~WILL~~ WILL GO FIRST TO
BERNARD THEN GORDEN AND
BACK TO BERNARD. START
JUMP SCHOOL NEXT WEEK MAN
WOULD I BE GLAD TO
LEAVE THAT GARIBAGE.

I GO TO BENNING FOR
THREE WEEKS AND THEN HOME.
THEY SAY HERE THAT WE ALL
ARE GOING TO NAM BUT
YOU CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT
THE GENERALS, COL, AND CAPTAINS
SAY I HOPE,
WE SHOULD GET A TWO
WEEK OR MORE LEAVE IF
YOU ARE ASSIGNED TO NAM.
IF THIS HAPPENS I WILL
BE SURE TO COME AND SEE
YOU. IF I DON'T I HOPE
TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE
JOINT AT FORT CAMPBELL.
I WRITE YOU WHEN I
GET TO BENNING.

LOVE
DAVID

*A very Happy Mother's Day
to the woman who brought
me up right! I still remember
all the manners you used to
teach me!*



SELF-PORTRAIT WITH
PROPERLY EXTENDED PINKIE

*The other night in a restaurant
I saw a man eating peas with
his knife, and it shocked me so
badly I dropped a whole handful
of mashed potatoes!*

LOVE
David

TO THE WOMAN
I MOST LIKE TO
BE MY SECOND
MOTHER.

YOUR GREAT
SEE YOU IN
ABOUT A MONTH

(Happy Mother's Day!)

I HOPE,

357



THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS

Hi

SORRY I DID NOT
WRITE YOU SOONER
BUT I WANTED TO
WAIT AND GIVE YOU
MY RETURN ADDRESS.

P.F.C. DAVID C. WILKERSON
DA. 14 969 550
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
1ST BDE 1ST/321 BTN.
APO S.F. 93647.

HAD A GREAT TIME
AT THE PLAYBOY CLUB.
REALLY DID ENJOY THE
BUNNIES AND ALL.

THE RED CROSS IS
CLOSING UP NOW SO
I WILL HAVE TO WRITE
YOU AGAIN THE NEXT
CHANGE I HAVE.
LOVE DAVID.

#1

Aug '67

Hi

I FINALLY GOT A
CHANGE TO WRITE AND
FINISH THAT LETTER I
WROTE BACK AT PHAN RANG.
BEEN HERE A MONTH ALREADY
SEEMS MORE LIKE A YEAR.
THE ONLY THING BAD ABOUT
BEING OUT IN THE FIELD
ALL THE TIME IS THAT
YOU ARE EATING C RATIONS
ALL THE TIME. HAVEN'T
HAD A HOT MEAL SINCE
THE 1ST OF JULY. THE
LAST 2 DAYS WE HAD IT
NICE WE CAMPED DOWN
BY THIS RIVER SO WE
GO SWIMMING EVERY DAY.
MY FIRST REAL BATH

#2

Aug 67

IN THREE WEEKS.

GUESS YOU HEARD
ABOUT MOTHER BEING IN
THE HOSPITAL. SHE IN
FOR SOME KIND OF TEST.
THEY GAVE ~~HER~~ HER FOUR
PINTS OF BLOOD AUG 15TH
BUT I DON'T KNOW
WHAT WRONG WITH HER.

WHAT HAPPENED AT
YOUR PLACE. DID YOU
GET THOSE SILK PAINTBOXES
I SOLD WHILE I WAS
AT PHAN RANG. THEY
WERE PRETTY AND ONLY
COST 65¢ + 15¢ SO
I BOUGHT THEM. ~~THEY~~

#3

Aug '67

©

HERE IS MY ADDRESS
WRITE WHEN YOU CAN.

PFC. DAVID L. WILKERSON
DA 14 969 550
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
ABU 3RD PLT 1ST/327
APO S.F. 96347

WHEN YOU WRITE PUT
A PACK OF KOOL-AID IN
WITH YOUR LETTER. DON'T
SEND ANY PACKAGES OF
KOS-^{AND} BECAUSE WE DON'T
GET PACKAGES OUT IN
THE FIELD. SO AM I
W/ LIKE TO LOOK UP
MILITARY HISTORY. SEE
IF YOU CAN FIND WHERE
CO A 1ST/327 GOT THE

#4

Aug '67

NICK NAME ABU^{CO}. THE
WORD IS HERE THAT ~~THE~~ A
CAPTAIN HAD A DREAM
DURING THE KOREAN
WAR AND HE SAW THIS
ANIMAL CALL A ABU. IT
TOLD HIM THAT IF YOU
BELIEVE IN ME COA WILL
NEVER BE WIPE OUT.
SO FAR ABU CO NEVER HAS
BEEN COMPLETE WIPE OUT
BUT THAT HAS SOME
PRETTY CLOSE CALLS.

LOVE

DAVID

#1

30 Aug 67

Hi.

GOT YOUR DREAM
LETTER YESTERDAY.
SO YOUR ON VACATION.
HOPE YOU ARE HAVING
A GOOD TIME.

NOW WE ARE ON
A STAND DOWN BACK
IN DUC PHO. A
STAND DOWN IS WHERE
YOU GET HOT FOOD,
COLD BEER AND COKE,
AND YOU GET TO
SEE TWO MOVIE MOVIES
A DITE. THE BEST
PART IS YOUR IN
A SECURE AREA AND
DON'T HAVE TO WORRY
ABOUT MR. CHARLES.

#2

THEY SAY THAT DOWN
SOUTH YOU CALL HIM
CHARLIE BUT UP HERE
HIS NAME IS MISTER
CHARLES. UP HERE
YOU GOT TO RESPECT
HIM OR HE WILL KILL
YOU. HE REALLY HAS
HIS STUFF IN ORDER.
UP IN CHU LAI WE
FOUND A TRAINING CAMP.
IT HAD NUMBERED BARRACKS,
MOCK UP OF CHOPPERS,
P.T. FIELDS, AND EVERYTHING
ELSE YOU NEED TO TRAIN
MEN.

I GUESS YOU
READ ABOUT THE
FIRE FIGHT WE
WERE IN THE 18TH
OF AUG.

#3

MY SQUAD LEADER PUT ME IN FOR A AR.COM. (ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL) FOR VALOR, IF THE MEDAL COMES THRU I REALLY DON'T DESERVE IT. ALL I DID WAS ~~BE~~ PICK UP THE MACHINE GUN AND FIRE BACK IN SELF DEFENSE. IN THAT ONE FIRE FIGHT WE LOST MORE THAN $\frac{1}{3}$ OF OUR PLATOON. WE HAD 4 K.I.A.'S 6 W.I.A.'S AND 5 MORE WHO JUST WERE NO MORE USE TO THE PLATOON SO WE SENT THEM IN.

WE ARE SUPPOSE TO GO BACK UP TO CHU LAI AFTER

44
THIS STAND DOWN.
THE WORD IS WE'LL
STAY UNTIL ^{END OF} NOV. THEN
GO BACK DOWN TO
PHAN RANG FOR
CHRISTMAS AND NO-
BODY KNOWS WHERE
NEXT.

GUESS I'D BETTER
STOP BECAUSE I DON'T
REALLY HAVE ANYTHING
ELSE TO SAY. HOPE
YOU HAVE A GOOD
TIME ON YOUR VACATION.

LOVE DAVID.

P.S.

SEND A PACKAGE OF
KOOL-AID WITH YOUR
LETTERS.

THANKS
ALOT.

3 Sept 67

I thought I write you another letter while I have the time. I this way you will owe me two letters. We are moving out into the field tomorrow. Some where down here in Duc Pho. The operation is only supposed to last for 15 days. Then we move the ~~the~~ whole brigade up to Chu Hai. Who knows how long we will be up there. I might see D.EROS. from that place.

How did your vacation out to the wild and woolly west go. Probably never crossed the Mississippi River. I hope you

had a good time no
matter where you went.

In 3 more days

I will be down in the
200 day bracket. Big deal.
Wished I was down in
the 2 day unit.

Well got to go
and eat now. Write
and tell me how your
trip came out.

Love David.

A/

17 Sept 67

Your vacation
sounded wonderful.
Glad you really
enjoyed yourself.
Kansas sounds like
the place you
most enjoyed. Wished
I could have been
with you. I'm
seeing alot of
Viet Nam. We
try to avoid the
natives as much
as possible where
you made a special
effort to see them.

The terrain
in Chu Hai is
much like the
rest of Viet Nam.
Real mountains
with rice paddies

#2
Down in the
~~valley~~ valleys between
the mountains.

Chu hai does not
have as big of
mountains as other
parts of Nam. In
the area of operations
(A.O.) were in now
the tallest one is
around 500 meters.

The last A.O. had
them up to 1500
meters. Boy! Did
we hate to hump
those. The dense
jungle you hear
about is all over
the place. We
try to avoid this
when possible because

#3

there are no V.C.
in ~~this~~ there and
its too hard to walk.
Charlie is lazy too
he walks the trails
and stream beds. and
if he walks them so
can we because he
will not bobbly trap
something he is going
to use himself.

Viet Nam is a
beautiful country.
The only thing that
messes it up is the
people.

Tell the 4th grade
to write. This company
C.O. will be leaving
before Christmas so
it will do no good
OVER

to ask him. Just
have the teacher
write to the company
and explain what
its about. They from
there will distribute
the letters to the
mon

You ask me
what you can
send in a package.
Stuff like candy
bars, ~~candy~~ fruit and
vegetable canned and
just candy. Don't
sent to big a box
because it takes to
long to get here.

Thanks alot.

Love David.

#1

2 Oct 67

Hi.

We got in the
near the 19th it was
a surprise. We did
not plan on coming
back for another 30 days.
Got your package. Sure
did enjoy all of the
goodies. Everybody in the
cat so much that we
all got sick. But
we did not care we
did not have any candy
or good stuff in over
a month. So we
acted like a bunch
of kids who were
taken loose ~~in~~ a candy
store.

You heard about
our contact. We heard
stories about us being

#2

in hand to hand combat
and that our company
had been surrounded and
wiped out. Well there
was no hand to hand.

One platoon of the
2nd BN. did get wiped
out. 17 men killed.

Our Company did get
surrounded but the same
company who later had
a platoon wiped out
came to our ~~aid~~ aid.

The worse than about
up here is mortars.

Man is Charlie good
with those things.

You asked me
about what the men
over here think about
the war.

#3

Well most gup over here think that we should stay in Viet Nam until we get this mess ~~worked out~~ worked out. We do not want a all out war at any cost. This may sound bad, but if you were over here seeing your buddies die you would not want to step up the land war either. We would like to see more bombing of North Viet Nam and even Hanoi. Most gup over here think the war will go on for sometime so they want to put their year in then go home and forget about the war.

#4

That all anybody every
talks about is going
home. But they are
glad to give up a
year to ~~some~~ for
these country. We
feel that it's our duty.
As soon as your year
is up you feel you have
given enough and now
it's somebody else's turn.
That about all I have
to say I hope that
I have helped you
in some way. Don't
think that we are a
selfish generation.
But when you hear
about the riots, Draft
Dodgers who are home
enjoying the things we
don't have over here

11/5

You would wanted to
~~to~~ get home too. These
are more of my thoughts
than anybody else's but
I think I speak for
the - guys over here.

Thanks for the
information about ABE.
I gave it to the first
Sergeant who was in
the old 187th Inf. He
told me to thank you
and said that your
papers will be put in
the Company's history
section.

The first case
sounds good. Be sure
to put the whole fifth
in the case and don't
go hitting any off
yourself. I need it worse.

4

Thank you. Tell Condy
to write. If he does
not have enough time
have his good looking
~~secretary~~ write ~~me~~
She better looking any
way. You keep writing
and I will keep you
filled in the best I
can.

Thanks again
for the package and
information on ABW.

Love
Dave

#1

29 Nov 67

Hi.

We came back to Phan Rang for a stand down. I got your two packages and sure did enjoy them. Tell Huey and Nancy thanks for the cards they were real cute. The packages are great but write some in between so I know what is going on around the house.

We will be going back out to the field on the first of Dec. I will be going into my sixth month. Almost half way home. Wow!

Mother writes me and said that her Dad was sick. Billy has a job on some naval research team.

Doesn't sound like a bad job. He goes to school and work after school.

#2

lets see what else do
I know about the house
you don't. Mother seems to
like her new job out at
the mall. I guess Judy
is still kicking around.
Have not heard anything
about her lately.

Well that about all
but write and tell me
what is going on.

Love
David

8 DEC 67

Hi.

THOUGHT I WOULD WRITE YOU ANOTHER LETTER TO MAKE UP FOR THE ONE I WROTE YOU IN THE DEAR. WE HAD SO MUCH TO DO BACK THERE THAT I DID NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO WRITE ALL THE LETTERS I WANTED AND THOSE I DID WRITE WERE JUST HELLO AND GOOD BYE NOTES. WELL NOW WE ARE OUT IN THE FIELD & IT SEEMS LIKE ~~WE~~ ~~THE~~ HAVE MORE TIME OUT HERE THAN BACK IN THE DEAR.

WE ARE SOME PLACE WEST OF PHAN THIT I DON'T KNOW HOW IT IS SPELLED BUT IT IS PRONOUNCED (FAN-TE-ATE). IF YOU ARE LOOKING ON A MAP IT IS SOME WHERE ^{SOUTH} WEST OF DANG RANG. ~~SEE~~ SO FAR IT HAS BEEN A GET OVER OPERATION WE HAVE NOT HUMPED MORE THAN A ~~COUPLE~~ ^{COUPLE} OF MILES FROM OUR L.Z. (LANDING ZONE) IN THE LASTED 8 DAYS. NO CONTACT TO SPEAK OF NICE TRAILS TO WALK DOWN AND PLENTY OF WATER.

2

8 DEC 67

HOW WAS THANKSGIVING AT YOUR HOUSE. TURKEY AND ALL THE TRIMMINGS. WE ATE WHAT THE ARMY CALLED THANKSGIVING DINNER, BACK AT PHAN RANG, BUT YOU COULD NOT PROVE IT TO ME. GHOST RIDER THE BATTALION COMMANDER CAME IN THE MESS HALL AND ASKED US HOW WE LIKED IT. EVERYBODY JUST GRINNED AND SHOOK THEIR HEADS YES. I GUESS WHEN HE GOT HIS HE COULD UNDER STAND WHY. Boy! IT WAS REALLY LOUSY THE ONLY THING ^{THAT} WAS GOOD WAS THE BEER THEY SERVED WITH IT. BUT WHO COULD GOOF UP A CAN OF BEER.

ARE LUCY AND NANCY LOOKING FORWARD TO ~~THE~~ CHRISTMAS. ~~THEM~~ TELL THEM THAT I AM TOO, BUT FOR A DIFFERENT REASON. WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES HALF MY TIME ~~IN~~ IN COUNTRY WILL BE OVER. THEN I START GOING DOWN HILL. WOW! YES. I WILL TAKE MY R & R AND AROUND JUNE A LEAVE SO REALLY I ONLY HAVE AROUND 4 MORE MONTHS

#3.

8 DEC 67

TO SPEND ON LINE. THAT A
GOOD ENOUGH CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR
ME.

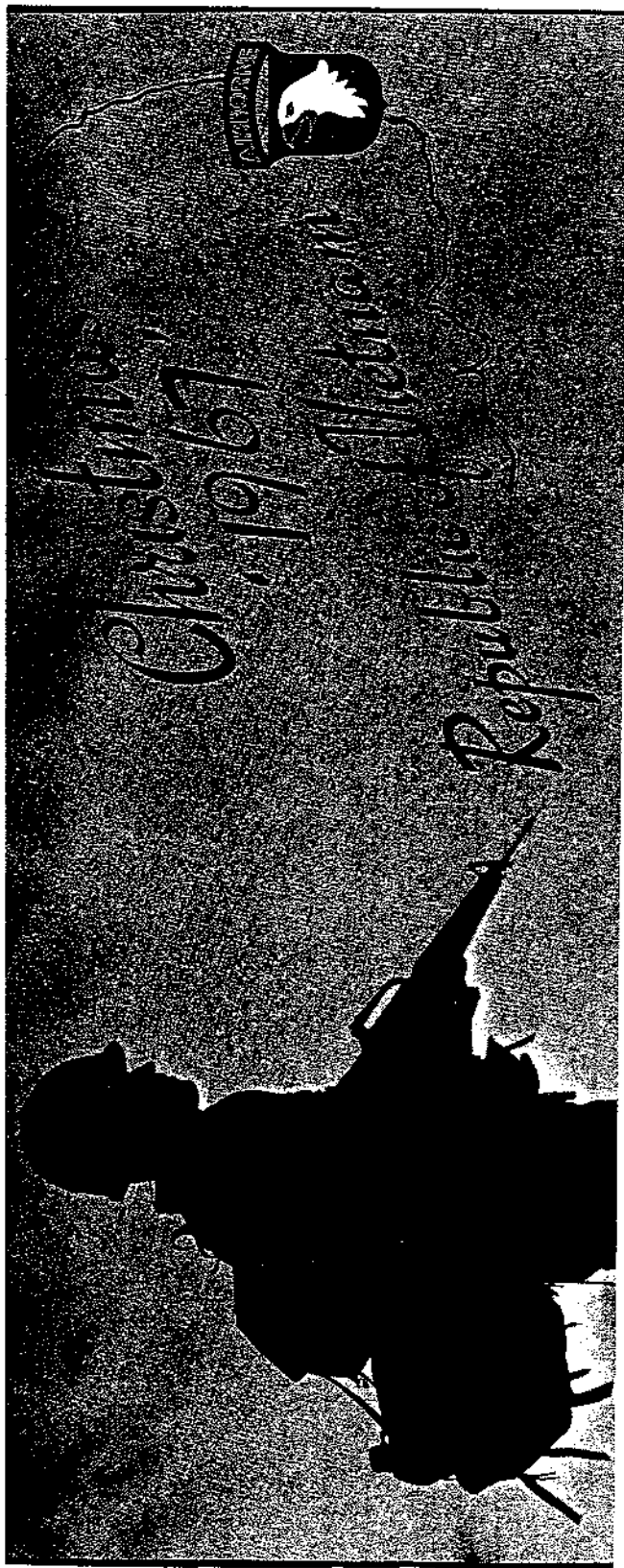
I READ A GOOD BOOK THE
OTHER DAY IT ^{IS} ~~WAS~~ CALLED THE MAN
WHO PLAYED GOD BY ST. JOHN.
I THOUGHT IT WAS A REAL GOOD
BOOK AND HOPE YOU CAN FIND THE
TIME TO READ IT. IT'S KIND OF
LONG 573 PAGES BUT THE ONLY
TIME YOU GET TIRED OF IT IS
THE LAST 100 PAGES OR SO.

WELL I HAVE TO GO NOW.
WRITE AND TELL ME HOW THINGS
ARE AROUND THE HOUSE.

LOVE DAVID.

THANKS AGAIN FOR THE PACKAGES
AND NANCY AND LUCY'S CARDS.

* Trying to rest between all the death from the mortars, the snipers,
the heat, the terrible smells, the ten-foot-tall elephant grass, the filth,
the grinding fatigue - David reads, "The Man Who Plays God" by St. John.
What an image!



...that there may be Peace—for all Mankind

Happy Christmas
Love David

1st Brigade
101st Airborne Division

#1

17 Jan 68

To Ann.

YOUR LETTER WAS
JUST GREAT. YOU SHOULD
HAVE YOUR OWN COLUMN IN A
NEWSPAPER. THE SOUL OF
JO ANN. YOUR LETTER ~~HAD~~
EXPRESSED SOME REAL GOOD
IDEAS THAT MORE PEOPLE NEED
TO READ THAN JUST ME.
TAKE ME SERIOUS. YOU EXPRESS
YOUR OWN ^{TRUE} ~~FREE~~ FEELINGS IN A
WORLD WHERE MOST PEOPLE
ARE AFRAID TO EXPRESS WHAT
THEY FEEL. IT WAS A
REFRESHING CHANGE. ONE
OF MY BUDDY READ IT
AND SAID THE SAME THING
SO IT JUST NOT MY
OPINION.

* The original of this letter is so dirty that it is barely readable. What horrors he was enduring is unimaginable.

#2

NO! I DID NOT GET TO
SEE ANY OF BOB HOPE'S
CHRISTMAS SHOWS. I GUESS
YOU HAVE NOT HEARD. I
WAS IN THE HOSPITAL FROM
THE 22ND OF DEC TILL THE
7TH OF JAN WITH MALARIA.
THE COMPANY WAS OUT IN
THE FIELD CHRISTMAS AND
NEW YEARS DAY. THEY GOT
A HOT MEAL ON CHRISTMAS
AND THAT WAS IT. THE
HOSPITAL WAS REALLY GREAT.
HOT AND COLD RUNNING WATER,
SHEETS ON THE BED, BOTH
+ FIRST SINCE I BEEN IN
VIET NAM. MOVIES EVERY DAY
COKE WITH PEAK ICE. I
DON'T KNOW IF I WILL

#3

BE ABLE TO TAKE THE
LIVE AGAIN.

NOW WE ARE OVER
ON THE CAMBODIA BORDER
AT A PLACE CALLED SONG BE
(PRONOUNCED SONG BAY)
YOU SHOULD START READING
ABOUT US IN THE PAPER.
THIS IS GOING TO BE
A ~~MASSIVE~~ PUSH TO
STOP THE SUPPLY ROUTES
ACROSS THE BORDER. I
SURE HOPE NOT BUT
IT LOOKS LIKE WE
MIGHT END UP ON THE
FRONT PAGE. THEY SAY
CHARLIE HAS TRUCKS,
MOTARS AND EVERYTHING.

#4

SORRY THE PAPER IS
SO DIRTY BUT YOU CAN'T
KEPT ANYTHING CLEAN
IN ALL THIS DUST. I
HAVE NEVER SEEN A PLACE
SO DIRTY. I LOOK LIKE
I HAVE BEEN WORKING
IN A COAL MINE FOR
THREE WEEKS.

THANKS FOR
WRITING. WILL WRITE
AGAIN AS SOON AS I
GET A CHANCE.

LOVE
DAVID.



Rough Going In Vietnam

A PARATROOPER of A Co., 101st Airborne Division, raises his arms to lead in a medical evacuation helicopter as fellow troopers help wounded buddies into

David's Company —AP Wirephoto

a clearing in the heavy foliage of Vietnam. The 'copter pickup of wounded was in territory controlled by the North Vietnamese west of Hue. The American unit was on a five-day patrol.

- * This compelling, tragic photograph by Arthur Greenspon of the Associated Press is the most famed photograph of the entire Vietnam War. Although the Lieutenant is reaching up to an unseen helicopter, he could just as well be reaching up for Divine Deliverance. Please note that it was David's unit.

GREETINGS!

...FROM THE DECK

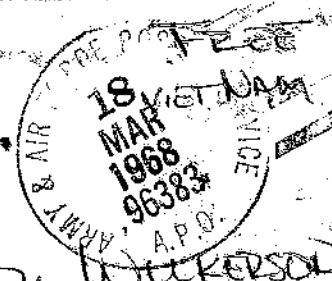
OF.....HELL!

#1

Well here I am
back in the boomer
once again and how
I wish I was out.
You will be glad
to hear that after
my tour of duty
is over in Nam
I'm going back.

over

SP4 DAVID L. WICKERSON
RA 14 969 550
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
APO SF 96383
1ST/3RD 24 HEED



MR & MRS. CONLEY WICKERSON
3948 RUTH LANE
CINCINNATI, OHIO.
45211

Home and become
a D.I. So now you
and Conley can stop
worrying about me.
Colonel

I tell Conley
that I also got
a promotion ~~while~~
while I was gone.
I am now a Specialist
4th class. All it means
is that I get \$16 more
dollars a month than
a PFC.

Go AW I really
liked your poems.
The one to Ruby

GREETINGS!

...FROM THE DESK

OF

#3

I really enjoyed
if you dream up
one about me he
~~is~~ sure to let me
~~know~~ know if I can
help you in any
way.

My unit is at
a place called PHU BIA
It is north of Hue
There are a lot of
Charlies up here

* Note that David asks me to write a poem about him sometime

#4 But I still keeping
my head down.

Well I guess
I get going. Write
and tell me how
you doing.

Love
David

We now have a
new APO. NUMBER.

APO SF 96383

Telepathy?

That Saturday morning, a letter arrived from David. I had not known his new address and I was obsessed with writing him and getting it to the post office before it closed at noon. I finished writing "the letter" sometime around 11:30AM EST, tugged the garage door up out of the snow, drove to the little Cheviot post office. When I arrived there, I found a line inside the glass-fronted building with a postal clerk locking the front door saying that fire regulations required that no more be allowed inside. I started crying - and he let me in to take my place in the line to get "the letter" weighed, stamped and mailed. *Look at the postmark.*

I became so ashamed of having written "that letter" - all my previous letters to him were cheerful and newsy. I wrote him another one - full of hopes and plans for the future of himself and Billy. *Check the postmark.*

THEN, I got the awful call. Accounting for time zones, David was going through the very fight that killed him on the other side of the world at the exact time I was writing that terrible first letter. You explain.

These two letters to David were returned and stamped, "*addressee verified dead*".



Rec'd
William Ernest Bishop
14-4-68



SP/4 DAVID L. WILKERSON

RA 14 969 550

~~101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION~~

~~ABU 1ST/327 3rd HERO~~

~~APO S.F. 96383~~

PAID MAIL

MRS. CONLEY G. WILKERSON
3948 RUTH LANE
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45211

Verified DECEASED
RETURN TO SENDER

W. S. Brumfield
1st
1 MAY 1968



Letter #1

Dear David:

Nene was I more glad to get a letter than I was yours this am. We have been frantic with worry & I did not realize you were at the same Co. address. Now that I know where you are I shall keep the mails hot & the quality may not be so fine but there will be more of them - for what it's worth.

I have a bad case of cabin fever - Nene has been sick for a week with a "virus" (the name they give to anything they don't know what it is!) and I haven't seen the light of day except through the windows. She is about over it, I'm sure, as she is a holy terror to manage.

Conley & I are trying to slap some paint around so we can see the house & try to get one with more room - extra bedroom & a family room so that you, Billy & Judy will spend all your free time with us & call this "home" at every possible opportunity.

Billy has promised to finish Jr. College

(2)

to graduate in August. After that we'll try to send him to U. Cincinnati, U. Ky. or Florida State. We have asked him to decide soon so we can try & get him ~~accepted~~ ^{accepted} - but haven't heard from him yet. Must get on him again.

Conley & I are jumping for joy that you are being sent back to states at end of your tour. We hope & pray you will stay in one piece until then!

David, no one could be idiot enough to try to ever, ever fill your mother's shoes - but if "it helps the governor" I shall try to be a "stand-in" for her - if you let me. There's no fanny here either - for I'll get more than I'll ever give for you, my love, will be that son Conley & I never had. We're not too old to accomplish the feat, but I'm not about to fill up the back yard with girls trying to get a boy. Besides, you're much nicer - no diapers,

(3)

battled & measles to go through!

Enough Sloppy Sentiment - Knowing you, you've probably already said a big, loud "all yuck!"

While I'm writing this, there is the biggest snow storm outside & it's absolutely beautiful! It looks like there is about six inches of whipped cream on everything.

Wear it did ~~at~~ went out to get the paper the other day, slipped on the ice & broke his arm! What some people will do to get attention!! ha!

Golly, I sound like some nut, but that snow is so lovely! It is the wet type & just hangs onto every branch & fence. We have had lots of snow this year - but I have never seen such a sight!

This calls for a fire in the fireplace tonight & a hot brandy. Oh! How I wish you were here to enjoy it instead of that hellish place. Come back to us & we'll try to make some of it up to you.

David, this may seem awful to speak of - but I know that some commanding officers try to write the nearest & kin

(4)

when one & his men is killed in action - And in my reading recently, I came across a little known quotation that your Commander ~~at~~ might like to know in case he has to do this sad task for one & his men. It was used in just this same situation over a hundred years ago by one of this nation's greatest men - as given it to your Commander:

"In the midst of doubt, in the collapse of creeds, there is one thing I do not doubt and that is that the faith is true and adorable which leads a soldier to throw away his life in obedience to a blind accepted duty, in a cause which he little understands, in a plan of campaign & which he has no notion, under tactics of which he does not see the use."

— Capt. Oliver Wendell Holmes
20th Massachusetts Volunteers

By the way, the State & City has taken an option on "400 Days To Perryville" & they are considering publication. I'll let you know what they decide - but at least they have

gone so far as to request that it be
copyrighted if they publish. Your
illustration will be in it if they do!

Please, please take care of yourself &
take no chances or indulge in heroics.
Conley, Lucy, Nanny & I love you dearly.

Will write again real soon -

Love,
Jo Ann

Remember to number your letters!

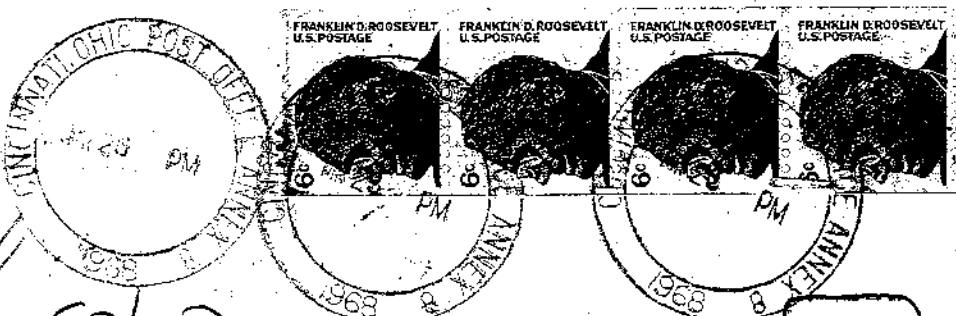
Congratulations on your promotion! I knew
you could do it - after all you come from
a fine line of "illustrious" military men - Col.
Conley not withstanding! Ha! During my
3 yrs. & research on C.W. I came across
no less than 16 officers by the name of
Wilkeham from N. Carolina whose orders have
survived. They are per your distant kin, no
doubt, as that's where all the Wilkeham's
came from originally. How 'bout that?

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

MARCH 1966

17	18	19	20	21	22	23
17 November's booked by at proctor program	18 10:30 A.M. F.D.H.	19	20	21	22 9:15 A.M. booked wed first on floor was born	23 "booked" wed made the letter
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		12 November's booked by at				
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
David 31 wed pulled at noon on 9:45 PM			27 we went informed at 7:30 AM			

3948 Ruth Lane
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45211
 RETURNED TO SENDER
 REASON CHECKED
 No such street
 U.S. MAIL
 480, 485
 MAY 1968
 26 APR 1968
 96383



Air Mail

SP/4 David L. Wilkerson
 RA 14 969 550
~~101st Airborne Division~~
~~ABU 1st/327 3rd HERO~~
~~A.P.O. S.F. 96383~~

SEARCH
 William Ernest Bishop
 1st Sgt Carmel
 44-4-68

Hear David:

It's 1:00 AM & I should be in bed at this hour if I intend to awaken in time to get the troops fed & off to school! But, I vowed to try & get a note off to you tonight.

Earlier tonight I got a call from Billy. He has been forced (?) to drop one course & a professor is trying to get him to drop another. I told him not to give ~~up~~ⁱⁿ to this second attempt - & still continue going to this class until we get it through the administration's heads that he is going to graduate in August - & not a single "if, and or but" about it.

I think he feels better - & will do fine, but just needed some loving "authority" concerning what to do.

He is sending me his Transcript, plus list of courses he's taking now & those he plans to take summer term. So with this in hand, I intend to get him accepted at Ky or U.C. (or someplace near) so that he will be registered, signed, sealed & on his way by the end of June. If I succeed, I think the draft will

leave him alone while he makes
the transfer from Junior College to a
full college or university. I want him
to be registered, tuition paid &
room assigned before he finishes at
Palm Beach. The simplest bag &
he'll be in uniform - & I don't
need to worry about books & you.

You are about all I can handle
right now !!!

Your truly is going to apply
for a teaching job for next year -
hope I can find a spot that
is not in some blackboard jungle.
Some of our local high schools are
such that the teachers should
draw combat pay. And it has
been so long since I've taught
that I'll admit I'm scared green.
But that is the one thing I
can't let show or I'm lost.

It's getting awfully sleepy
in here - so I'll sign off, but
promise to write in next day or two.

Take good care; no heroes, please.

Love,

Sam

Dear David:

Before I settle down to work I thought I would write just a line & get this letter in the mail.

I don't know whether Father told you or not but about two weeks ago old clumsy me fell in the snow & cracked my left arm. You should have seen me trying to operate with my arm in a cast. I just got the cast removed & am getting along pretty well now.

I am real glad to hear of your promotion. Keep up the good work. Be sure & let us know about all the promotions & honors you receive. We are real proud of you. But do be careful & take care of yourself.

Nothing much is happening to me that would be of interest to you. Just the same old routine, lots of work & that is about all. I do have a big evening coming up tonight. Lucy's girl scout troop is having their father-daughter banquet & I am pledged to attend. Lucy is really looking forward to the affair. I am sure it will be lots of fun. I must close & start earning my pay. Write often & we will try to do the same.

Love
Conley

Death Notices

Former Local GI Is Killed In Vietnam

Word has been received here of the death of David Lee Wilkerson, 21, formerly of Earlington and Madisonville, who was killed March 24 in Vietnam action.

Wilkerson was the son of the late Kerney Lee Wilkerson, who was killed in a mine accident at East Diamond mine in 1955, and Mrs. Margaret Kirkwood Wilkerson, who died Feb. 9 in West Palm Beach, Fla.

The young soldier was called home for the funeral of his mother and had been back in action only three weeks when he was killed. He was a member of the 101st Airborne Division.

Surviving are two brothers, Richard B. Wilkerson, Cocoa, Fla., and Billy Wilkerson, West Palm Beach, Fla., and a sister, Miss Judy Wilkerson, West Palm Beach; two grandfathers, Roy Wilkerson, 43 South Daves St. and David Kirkwood, 342 Lake St., Madisonville; four aunts, Mrs. Patsy Chiasson, Thibadoux, La.; Mrs. Lelia Fleenor and Mrs. Cora McLemore, both of 110 Boggess Blvd., and Mrs. Aretta B. Ligon, 43 South Daves, Madisonville; and two uncles, Maurice Kirkwood, West Palm Beach, Fla., and Conley G. Wilkerson, Cincinnati.

The body is being returned to Northwood Funeral Home in West Palm Beach. Funeral plans are incomplete. Wilkerson would have completed his Vietnam tour of duty in June.



DAVID LEE WILKERSON

Rites Set Monday For GI Killed In Vietnam

Funeral services for David Lee Wilkerson, 19, former Earlington and Madisonville resident, will be conducted Monday at West Palm Beach, Fla., with burial in a cemetery there.

Wilkerson was killed March 24 in Vietnam action. He was the son of the late Kerney Lee and Margaret Kirkwood Wilkerson.

Wilkerson was called home from Vietnam for the funeral of his mother on Feb. 9 and had returned to action in Vietnam only three weeks before his death. He would have completed his Vietnam tour in June.

The body is at Northwood Funeral Home in West Palm Beach. Survivors include two brothers, Richard B. Wilkerson, Cocoa, Fla., and Billy Wilkerson, West Palm Beach; a sister, Judy Wilkerson, West Palm Beach and two grandfathers, Roy Wilkerson, 43 South Daves St. and Dave Kirkwood, 342 Lake St., Madisonville.

305-
Nowling Florist - (tel. 832-4264)
457 Northwood Rd.

West Palm Beach, Fla. 33407

Northwood Funeral Home (tel. 844-4311)

David's grave:

Royal Palm Cemetery

Feb 17th

March 23rd

- yellow mums (potted)
with attached butterfly

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters 101st Airborne Division
APO San Francisco 96383

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 1499

15 June 1968

SECTION I

THE SILVER STAR MEDAL (POSTHUMOUS)

1. TC 320. The following AWARDS are announced.

WILKERSON, DAVID L RA14969550 (SSAN: 261-78-9752) SPECIALIST FOUR (E-4)
Company A 1st Battalion (Airborne) 327th Infantry APO San Francisco 96228
Awarded: The Silver Star Medal (Posthumous)

Action Date: 23 March 1968

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For gallantry in action in the Republic of Vietnam on 23 March 1968. Specialist Wilkerson's company was cutting a landing to med-evac an injured man, and his platoon was given a recon mission to thoroughly search the area to the west before heading for higher ground. After some contact with the enemy they moved onto slightly higher ground where the point man ran into a well used trail. Specialist Four Wilkerson, third platoon's machine gunner, was placed on the high ground looking west down the trail. At the foot of the high ground a footbridge crossed the stream and continued on. The platoon set in and waited. Approximately 35 minutes after the platoon had set the linear type ambush into position four North Vietnamese Army Regulars, well spaced out, came walking down the trail across the footbridge. Specialist Wilkerson waited until the lead man of the four enemy soldiers was within 15 feet of his position before he opened fire on them. The initial burst dropped the first three enemy soldiers and the fourth tried to get back down the trail. Specialist Wilkerson then opened up on him, and at this point three enemy soldiers started to fire and maneuver toward his position. Specialist Wilkerson picked up his machine gun and through intense enemy automatic weapons fire began maneuvering while firing on the enemy soldiers. With complete disregard for his own safety he kept firing and silenced the automatic weapons fire.

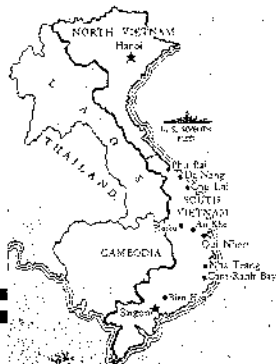
On the following day, 24 March 1968, the third platoon was moving west through very thick undergrowth. As the company moved along the second platoon, which was the middle element, was ambushed by an undetermined size enemy force. The initial enemy burst wounded the second platoon's machine gunner and immediately the call came for another machine gun. Almost simultaneously Specialist Wilkerson picked up his machine gun and made his way through an intense hail of enemy automatic weapons fire to the point where the initial contact was made. He immediately began laying down a base of fire covering the entire area so the second platoon could pull back their wounded personnel. Specialist Wilkerson kept firing and moving, remaining alone and exposed, covering the second platoon's withdrawal until he himself was killed by enemy gun fire. His actions are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President of the United States under the provisions of an Act of Congress established 9 July 1918.



Mr Terry B Hereford
1570 3rd st
La Verne, Calif

91750



Mr C. G. Wilkerson
3948 Roth Lane
Cincinnati, Ohio 45211

UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES - VIETNAM

Mr Terry Hereford
1570 3rd st
La Verne, California

91750

Handwritten: Jerry Herford
R.E. 1531

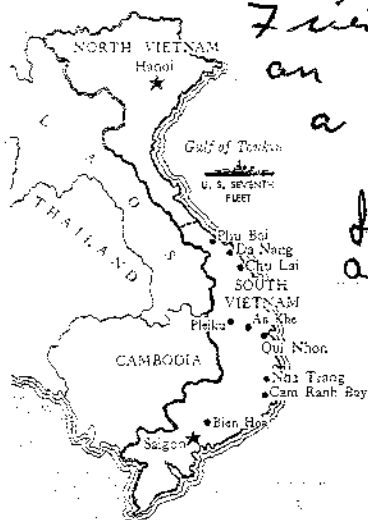
16 June 68
La Verne, Calif

Dear Mrs. Walkerson

let me start out by
telling you that my name is
Jerry Herford and that I was
a squad leader the the same it
as David.

I got home and started
looking through the pictures I
had taken over there and
discovered this one of you soon
I was sure you would want
it so I sent to the Company
and got your address.

David was one of my Best
Friends over there. He was
an out standing Person and
a very good Soldier.



If I can help you with
any information, please let me
know

Yours truly

Jerry Herford

Ballad for David - March 24, 1968

*A Butterfly with Fey on his wing
Fell to earth on the Fourth Day of Spring*

(A soft anvil beat accompanies the reading)

West Virginia coal dust fell on his crib
West Kentucky coal dust dirtied his bib
While a love-filled daddy met his fate
Under a slab of falling slate.
So the stoic mother of gothic pose
Made their living sewing other's clothes.
Moved her brood to Palm Beach - West,
Stitchin' for the rich, the better dressed.
Bought her a house, ever so small -
That did just fine - all in all,
With dime-store dishes and bent-steel spoon
And a sewing machine in the livin' room.
He seemed to thrive in their sunny climb,
Where the summer's hot and the winter's fine,
In tennis shoes and a loose-tailed shirt,
The former full of sandy dirt.
Skin turned tan, legs grew long,
And odd jobs makin' his muscles strong
For stealing bases, little-league style,
Football passes and runnin' the mile.
If academic analyzing;
Less on study than socializing.
Slightly smart or slightly lazy,
Often drove his teacher's crazy.
Under that squirming, kiddish lid
A wondering, thoughtful soul was hid.
Honored all nature, made things grow,
Loved the skies and the earth below.
Had an artist's eye and an artist's pen,
Yet doubted what he had within.

Part Two

The scene is changed, turn back the pages
To view a world where turmoil rages.
The Geneva Conference of fifty-four
(Much like the old Korean sore)
Divided a nation - North and South,
To halt the fire from the cannon's mouth.
Yet red poison flowed beyond that gate
Under the tired guise "to liberate".
The Southern government, hoping to stand,
Cried for America's helping hand.
We sent them arms and technical advisors
(No dissenters then - just sympathizers)
Plus Special Forces of J.F.K.
Wearing their jaunty green baretts.
Yet far beyond our first intentions
The conflict grew past all dimensions.
Honoring our word and solemn trust
Spills American blood on Asian dust.
Then one dark night in Tompkin Bay
(what really happened few can say)
"We're under attack" the skipper shouted.
All believed, some later doubted.
From the facts we had at hand,
The commander was an honest man.
Reports were sifted all that night -
Then American bombers were put in flight,
Joinin' homesick men, hard-bitten pack.
Many movin' out - some comin' back.

Part Three

Long-legged kid of irresistible grin,
Wonder what he might have been.
Joined the troops of the 101st,
Floating through skies, quenchin' the thirst
For adventure and service beside the men
Who proved their courage again and again
In the steaming jungles of a land so far
That neither a prayer or a wishing star
Could reach into that terrible place
Where death and danger were face to face.
Man seldom lives beyond the date
Marked on a calendar by the hand of Fate -
If Fate, the Master, awful and wild,
Has marked a man to be His child.
Fate marked this child from the start
To win our love, then break our heart.
When our butterfly with fey on his wing
Fell to earth on the fourth day of spring.

- JoAnn B. Wilkerson
(*Written for Father's Day, 1968*)

THOSE who may or may not have protested the Vietnam War probably have not changed their minds about the war - **BUT** -surely wish to undo an injustice that denied the Congressional Medal of Honor to a young American soldier, David Lee Wilkerson of the 101st Airborne Division, who knowingly and willingly laid down his life so that his platoon members could escape from Hue in 1968. *His posthumous award was downgraded to a Silver Star solely because the 1968 protesters of the war accused the military of giving too many medals.*

Now, 35 years later, his old division stands poised to again be sent into battle. Please undo the old injustice to one of their heroes - and it will send the message that heroism will be rewarded in spite of politics.

Be sure and at least read the last final paragraph of the attached citation: It will break your heart

	Department of the Army
Attached;	Headquarters 101st Airborne Division
	General Orders Number 1499 15 June, 1968

Notes Regarding David Lee Wilkerson - Military Citation

1. The Wilkersons lived in UK President Lee Todd's hometown, Earlington, Ky until David was in the third grade.
2. David's father, my husband's older brother, was killed in a coal mining accident during the time my husband, a World War II veteran, was in law school.
3. David's mother, a gifted seamstress, took her children and bought a tiny house in West Palm Beach, Florida so that she could earn enough in nearby ritzy Palm Beach to support her family.
4. David graduated from high school in West Palm Beach and entered college in Florida but was distressed with those who were there only to avoid the draft. He joined the army and was sent to 101st Airborne in Kentucky.
5. David was sent to Vietnam and was put into a search and destroy unit in the jungle. His mother died and he was pulled out, sent home to attend her funeral then sent back into the jungle.
6. In March, 1968 near Hue in the Tet offensive, his unit was trapped. He stayed back with his machine gun and held off the enemy while his platoon members escaped. He kept firing until he was killed.

I have ALL his letters from Vietnam to me, and I have **not** bought Kool Aid in 35 years!! I sent him weekly packages of goodies that always contained the requested packages of Kool Aid that made the water he purified in his helmet taste better.

No Man's Land (The Green Fields of France)

Words and music: Eric Bogle
Copyright: Larrikin Music, Sydney, Australia.
Reproduced here by kind permission of the author.

Well how do you do young Willie McBride,
Do you mind if I sit here down by your graveside,
And rest for a while 'neath the warm summer sun ?
I've been walking all day, and I'm nearly done.
I see by your gravestone you were only nineteen
When you joined the great fallen in 1916.
I hope you died well, and I hope you died clean,
Or, young Willie McBride, was it slow and obscene ?
Did they beat the drum slowly, did they play the fife lowly ?
Did they sound the *Dead March* as they lowered you down ?
And did the the band play *The Last Post* and chorus ?
Did the pipes play the *Flowers of the Forest* ?

And did you leave a wife or sweetheart behind,
In some faithful heart is your memory enshrined ?
Although you died back in 1916,
In that faithful heart are you forever nineteen ?
Or are you a stranger without even a name,
Enclosed and forever behind the glass frame
In an old photograph, torn and battered and stained,
And faded to yellow in an old leather frame ?
Did they beat the drum slowly, did they play the fife lowly ?
Did they sound the *Dead March* as they lowered you down ?
And did the the band play *The Last Post* and chorus ?
Did the pipes play the *Flowers of the Forest* ?

The sun now it shines on the green fields of France,
There's a warm summer breeze, it makes the red poppies dance.
And look now the sun shines from under the clouds,
There's no gas, no barbed-wire, there's no guns firing now.
But here in this graveyard it's still no-man's-land,
The countless white crosses stand mute in the sand,
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man,
To a whole generation that were butchered and damned.
Did they beat the drum slowly, did they play the fife lowly ?
Did they sound the *Dead March* as they lowered you down ?
And did the the band play *The Last Post* and chorus ?
Did the pipes play the *Flowers of the Forest* ?

Now young Willie McBride, I can't help but wonder why.
Do all those who lie here, know why they died ?
And did they believe when they answered the cause,
Did they really believe that this war would end wars ?
Well the sorrows, the suffering, the glory, the pain,
The killing and dying, was all done in vain.
For Willie McBride, it all happened again,
Did they beat the drum slowly, did they play the fife lowly ?
Did they sound the *Dead March* as they lowered you down ?
And did the the band play *The Last Post* and chorus ?
Did the pipes play the *Flowers of the Forest* ?

These laid the world away, poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth, gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhopd serene,
That men call age, and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Rupert Brooke (1914)



Privately Printed for the Family By

Conley and JoAnn Wilkerson
Sugar Bush Farm
3065 Mitchellsburg Road
Danville, Kentucky 40422