

THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

INCOMING

CO 001-07

DATE RECEIVED: AUGUST 31, 1990

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: THE HONORABLE JOHN J. MURRAY JR.

SUBJECT: COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE CRISIS IN
THE MIDDLE EAST

		ACTION		DISPOSITION	
ROUTE TO:		ACT	DATE	TYPE	C COMPLETED
OFFICE/AGENCY	(STAFF NAME)	CODE	YY/MM/DD	RESP	D YY/MM/DD
BILL CANARY		ORG	90/08/31	WC	90/09/06
REFERRAL NOTE:					
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COMMENTS: FORMER MAYOR, DEPUTY MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL
MEMBER OF SAN MATEO, CA

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: 2501

IG MAIL USER CODES: (A) (B) (C)

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*ACTION CODES:          *DISPOSITION          *OUTGOING          *
*                        *                      *CORRESPONDENCE:   *
*A-APPROPRIATE ACTION  *A-ANSWERED          *TYPE RESP=INITIALS *
*C-COMMENT/RECOM       *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL *                OF SIGNER *
*D-DRAFT RESPONSE      *C-COMPLETED          *                CODE = A   *
*F-FURNISH FACT SHEET  *S-SUSPENDED          *COMPLETED = DATE OF   *
*I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC*                      *                OUTGOING *
*R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY *                      *                      *
*S-FOR-SIGNATURE       *                      *                      *
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MANAGEMENT.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 6, 1990

Dear Mayor Murray:

On behalf of President Bush, thank you for your message concerning the situation in the Middle East.

The President has condemned the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq as naked aggression, and he has called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces. He has been encouraged by the broad, international support for the United Nations Security Council's resolutions condemning Iraq's illegal occupation of Kuwait and imposing mandatory economic sanctions against Iraq. The degree of individual and collective compliance with those sanctions thus far has been heartening.

The United States is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. America does not seek conflict, nor does it seek to chart the destiny of other nations. However, President Bush has made clear America's intention to stand by its friends, saying, "No one, friend or foe, should doubt our desire for peace, and no one should underestimate our determination to confront aggression."

The sovereign independence of Saudi Arabia and our other friends in the Middle East is of vital interest to the United States. Not just our country but most of the nations of the world depend on imported oil, a large share of which comes from this region. Iraq's history of aggression poses a threat not only to the freedom of Saudi Arabia and other nations in the Persian Gulf but also to the stability of the world's economy. As the President pointed out, "Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of one man, Saddam Hussein. So, we've made our stand--not simply to protect resources or real estate, but to protect the freedom of nations. We are striking a blow for the principle that might does not make right. Kuwait is small. But one conquered nation is one too many."

Therefore, President Bush responded to the Saudi request for U.S. assistance in defense of their homeland by ordering American armed forces to deploy to Saudi Arabia. He has also responded to a request from the Emir of Kuwait to coordinate multinational efforts to enforce sanctions aimed at convincing Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait and restore Kuwait's independence. He is heartened by the number of other countries--including Arab nations--that have joined this international defense effort.

The President appreciates the comments and suggestions of individual Americans concerning this matter of grave importance to our national security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. J. Canary, Jr.", written over the word "Sincerely,".

William J. Canary, Jr.
Special Assistant to the President
for Intergovernmental Affairs

The Honorable John J. Murray, Jr.
Office of the Mayor
257 Del Mar Way
San Mateo, California 94403



171041

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

257 Del Mar Way
San Mateo CA 94403

8/23/90

Dear Mr. President:

After my four terms as Mayor, five as Deputy Mayor during my sixteen years on the City Council, I am sure the current Mayor will not object to my using this letterhead.

I wish to call your attention to the enclosed - my original article in Vietnam, the copy of it in the Dept. of Defense News Supplement and the clipping from the front page of the San Mateo Times.

After a 2 1/2 year "love affair" with the 101st Airborne - especially Co. A 1/327th Infantry, 1st Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, the City of San Mateo is gearing up again to help raise the morale of our adopted sons "as high as the clouds."

You indeed know the perils of armed conflict and your decision was not made lightly. It was a brave and noble one. I am just one aging citizen - and most Americans agree - believe you were correct and will support you wholeheartedly.

I believe a letter in response to this, from you, when properly publicized (as I can see you will see to) will help me and others convince our citizenry to respond with letters to our troops as they did so many years ago. And moreover help all of our beloved Country's citizens to do the same. Our men need our love and support.

Thank you, Mr. President. God bless and keep you!

Sincerely, John F. Murray Jr.

B. Canary

enc

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
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Comments:

San Mateo's 'Eagles' off to Mideast

Support will not be lacking for A Company

By CARLOS ALCALA

Times Staff Writer

SAN MATEO — With Johnnys — and Janies — marching away from home again, San Mateo is once again gearing up to give moral support to the soldiers sent far away.

Having adopted an infantry

company during the Vietnam War, San Mateo is now going to see that unit — A Company of the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division — sent to the Middle East as part of the United States' largest military mobilization since the undeclared war in Southeast Asia.

Elements of the 101st Division, known as the Screaming Eagles, have already gone to Saudi Arabia, and more are awaiting callup, said Lt. Col. Frank Hancock, commander of the 1st Battalion, stationed at Ft. Campbell, Ky.

Hancock, 39, said his men —

all men in the infantry — are apprehensive, but ready to do their job. "I don't mean to sound macho. You're always a little apprehensive, but then again, we are soldiers."

They hope that when they go, they will have the support of the city that adopted them in 1967. "When you deploy, the best morale booster you can give, other than to return home, is to send them mail," Hancock said, speaking by telephone from the base, where San Mateo Avenue marks the special relationship between the city and the soldiers.

Linda Patterson is ready to

See EAGLES, Page A2



Eagles

Continued from Page One

make sure that the soldiers do get mail from here. As Linda Giese, Patterson spearheaded the Vietnam era efforts to support A Company on the request of her brother, Sgt. Joe Artavia, a member of the unit.

Shortly after the city resolved to be a morale booster for the unit, Artavia was killed in action. Still, residents of San Mateo sent letters, books, food and Kool Aid, and welcomed the unit home in 1972 with a parade and celebration in Central Park.

Patterson, although she now lives in Southern California, has hooked up with Hancock to relay a roster with the names of the company's men to people here, who will write on a regular basis to the men once they are sent to the Middle East.

Patterson and those involved in past and current support efforts say that the adoption of the military unit is a humanitarian action, not a statement of political support for American policy.

"With Vietnam, it came strictly out of the hearts, to give the men that contact with home," Patterson said. "Maybe our letters were the last they saw.

"The politics did not enter into it."

Then-Mayor Jack Murray agreed, although there was plenty of political opposition to the Vietnam War at the time San Mateo adopted the unit.

The same thing should apply now, he said, although "if you're fighting for oil, it's not the same thing as fighting for a political philosophy."

"This has nothing to do with politics, with the rightness or wrongness of the war."

Murray hopes someone will move San Mateo to get involved again. "But I don't know if there is going to be another Linda Patterson around."

Some interest has already been expressed. Mayor Tom Mack said he will introduce a resolution to the City Council reaffirming the city's support for the Screaming Eagles. "We want to show our support of these young men," said Mack, who also emphasized that it was a non-political action. "It's purely for morale support."

SUPPLEMENT



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MONDAY, July 16, 1990

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Military Life

VIETNAM

August 1990

Pg. 23

MORALE HIGH AS THE CLOUDS

When Abu Company's troopers went into battle, they had a secret weapon: the moral support of the citizens of the city of San Mateo, California.

By John J. Murray, Jr.

The "Abus" were a special breed from the start. Actually "A" Company ("Alpha" Company in usual Army parlance), 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, the nickname Abu was from the unit's mascot, a mythical figure (originally called an "Ibu") that had a gorilla's body, a lion's head, a moose's horns and an alligator's tail, wore a parachute and jump boots, and clutched a pistol in one hand and a bloody knife in the other. Originally deployed to Vietnam in July 1965 as part of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (the "Screaming Eagles"), the Abus participated in some of the toughest fighting of the war.

Their first major battle was in March 1966 on the coastal plain near Tuy Hoa at the village of My Phu. In hard fighting against a North Vietnamese Army battalion, the Abus enabled both their battalion and their brigade to win Valorous Unit Citations, equivalent to the individual award of a Silver Star for gallantry in action. In June 1966, the Abus moved west into the Central Highlands near Dak To. Again the fighting was intense as the Abus went to the relief of Captain William S. Carpenter's Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry, in one of the war's more publicized battles. The Abus' valiant actions, however, were overshadowed by the widespread publicity given to Carpenter, once West Point's famous "lonesome end," when he called a napalm strike down on his own position to stave off an enemy attack.

A year later, in the summer of 1967, the Abus received a new replacement, 19-year-old Joe Artavia of San Francisco, Calif., who would add a new dimension to their distinguished record. Volunteering for the Army at age 17, Artavia had also volunteered for airborne training and for service in Vietnam.

In August 1967, Sergeant Artavia wrote a short letter to his sister, Linda Giese, then living in San Mateo, Calif. Never did it enter his mind that his letter would set off an amazing chain of happenings.

"Dear Linda," Sergeant Joseph G. Artavia wrote. "Hi, there! First off there is something I would like you to do for me. . . . You see, by having a town or city adopt our company, it would bring the morale of the guys up as high as the clouds. Then, on special occasions, like Christmas, people will send things to the company. People could write to us and in turn we'll, all of us here, write to them. . . . I was wondering if you could talk to someone in San Mateo and fix it so they would adopt our company. If you can get this request in the newspaper, we'll all of us here be grateful."

He closed his note with two words, "Please try."

Linda Giese was no sophisticate. She had no experience with newspaper editors, mayors, city councils, or women's clubs. But she loved her kid brother and resolved to do what was necessary to fulfill his request.

A clerk in a modest savings and loan office, she approached her boss, Ron Wright, who suggested sending her request to Congressman Pete McCloskey, an ex-Marine with plenty to say (mostly unfavorable) about Vietnam. He bucked the letter through to California Senator Richard Dolwig, who, in turn, forwarded it to the mayor of San Mateo, Calif. Too hot to handle in those days of war protests? Or too much bother? Who knows?

Linda found a sympathetic ear when, at the urging of Wright, she approached the mayor of San Mateo. He told her that two years before, he had introduced a city resolution calling on the people of California to "pronounce their support for the young soldiers doing their hard duty in Vietnam." That it went over like a too controversial lead balloon didn't matter. He suggested that Giese make her request before a Monday night session of the city council. He promised to support her.

Obviously nervous in such strange formal surroundings, she and Wright made an emotional plea. Greeted kindly by the mayor but stonily by the council, she felt assured enough to turn and snap back at a shouted protest from the audience in the council chambers. The mayor then proposed a resolution wherein the city of San Mateo would "adopt the men of Company A, First Battalion, 327th Infantry, First Brigade, 101st Airborne Division." The action was to be "non-political," he said, and merely the "adoption" of a couple of hundred lonely young men. The council typically put matters over until a later date.

As the chastened Linda Giese and Ron Wright left the council chambers, she was followed by Vera Graham, long-time city hall reporter for the *San Mateo Times*. Graham knew a good story when she heard it. Her sensitive interview with Giese on Joe Artavia's request was a major story next day.

Clubroom doors, especially the Elks Lodge and the Lions Club, began to open up to Giese. Women's groups welcomed her for luncheon talks. Fire Chief Noe Chanteloupe and his firemen offered their stations as collection depots for transshipping gifts. Several school teachers asked children to write

MORALE...CONTINUED

letters. The people of San Mateo were truly touched. After all, Joe Artavia was one of their own.

It took some tough political activity by the mayor and others before the cautious members of the city council majority agreed, weeks later, to take some action.

On March 4, 1968, the council unanimously approved a resolution adopting the Abus as its own and urging full citizen support of the city's "adopted sons."

Vera Graham and the *San Mateo Times* ran continuing positive articles. The people of this rather proper West Coast city, with a then population of about 60,000 and located 15 miles south of San Francisco across the bay from riotous Berkeley, reacted with a wave of affection that astounded young Artavia, his company and, in time, his division. Thousands of letters, gifts, Kool Aid, food packages, sugar and books began to be sent by children and seniors, by families and churches, service clubs, city hall departments, hotels, restaurants and corporate offices. New groups and committees were continually established to take care of "our adopted sons."

People said, "To hell with the politics behind this damn war." The only concern was they had to find enough packs of candy and games to send to Abu Company. The city's organized protest groups were shouted down or ignored. Linda Giese was everywhere, speaking, wrapping packages, organizing new committees.

And then, only a few months after the city council's adoption resolution, came the terrible, shocking word that the city's own, its first adopted son, had been killed in action.

Two months earlier, on January 31, 1968, during Tet, the Vietnamese New Year's celebration, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong had launched an offensive to overrun South Vietnam. One of their major objectives was the old imperial city of Hue. To its defense rushed the U.S. 1st Marine Division, supported by elements of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division and the 101st Airborne Division, including the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry and its Abu Company. On March 24, 1968, while walking point at the head of a patrol seeking to fix the remnants of the fleeing North Vietnamese Army assault forces, Sergeant Artavia was killed by a burst of enemy automatic weapons fire.

Sergeant Joe Artavia's full military funeral service at Golden Gate National Cemetery was attended by grieving thousands of all ages who wept when they saw the bayoneted rifle standing upright, crowned with a helmet, and with freshly shined combat boots on the ground by the grave. When the second bugle on a hillock echoed taps, the city's resolve was strengthened. Joe would be remembered.

A few weeks before Christmas that year of 1968, a now self-assured Linda Giese decided to go to Vietnam. It seemed to be a rash act. She had no money. The whole country was a war zone. How would she find the 101st? The city could not allocate public funds for a private trip. Linda would not be dissuaded. She was going.

She borrowed a few dollars, accepted cash gifts from women's groups, scratched it out. She wrote to Abu Company and advised them of her coming. The city council approved the striking of medallions with the city's seal, surrounded with the embossed caption, "San Mateo's Adopted Sons," and with each soldier's name engraved on the obverse. A letter and Christmas card from the city council were printed for each trooper.

On December 9, 1968, Linda Giese stepped off a civilian Boeing 707 at Tan Son Nhut Air Base where she was met by Lieutenant Stephen J. Patterson of Abu Company. No sightseeing this trip. They flew into the Hue Airport the next day.

It had been planned for the company to have a four or five day stand-down, but because the soldiers were engaged in heavy fighting, it was decided they could only spend a day and a half at Camp Eagle, the 101st Airborne Division base camp. Moreover, she'd have to wait for at least four days while Abu Company fought its way out of the mountain jungle.

Lieutenant Patterson escorted Giese everywhere as she toured the entire battalion rear area. She flew to the tactical operations center and was put in touch by telephone with troopers from Abu Company in the field. She worked with medics and visited a local school. Her tour of the once beautiful city of Hue, scene of the war's bloodiest battle, still stands out in her mind. Lieutenant Patterson was particularly attentive, but then so was everyone.

Major General Melvin Zais, commander of the 101st, had her as his guest for dinner. Other meals she ate with battalion officers, NCOs and enlisted men. It was VIP treatment all the way because the entire division knew of San Mateo's adoption of Company A 1/327, but Giese only wanted to get on with why she had come. Besides, Christmas Day was at hand and the company, she was told, was still in the hills chopping its way through the undergrowth. Suddenly, several Chinooks popped into view to set down and discharge their dirty, bedraggled and rain-soaked cargo.

The Abu commander, Captain Christian Shore, with his officers and men, lined up in ragged formation to be greeted by this pretty young woman who had come alone and so far to bring them Christmas greetings from a city whose location they hardly knew and from people who called them "adopted sons." Linda Giese cried as she shook the hands and embraced her soldier-brothers.

After washup and a clothes change, the party began. A small combo played dance music and Linda danced with officers and men one after another. And the Abus laughed and partied through the night. After all, it was Christmastime. Next day, at a touching ceremony, including a short memorial service for the members of Abu Company who had been killed—including, of course, Linda's brother Joe Artavia—she read the city council's adoption resolution and the Christmas greeting letter, and presented each man with his medalion. There were few dry eyes among the troops.

That night there was another party with Christmas carols followed by a midnight Christmas mass. Giese returned exhausted by helicopter to her cot at Fort Chasity, the nurses' quarters of the 22nd Surgical Hospital at Phu Bai. As she was leaving the next day for Saigon and return to the United States, she was given gifts—including a company guidon—by Captain Shore. Abu Company went back into the jungle.

But they went, as Sergeant Artavia had prophesied, "with the morale of the guys up as high as the clouds." While many Americans serving in Vietnam, especially in the later days of the war, wondered if anyone back in the "world" knew or cared about their sacrifices, the men of Abu Company were assured that the people of San Mateo were solidly in their corner.

During the following months, the Adopted Sons Committee maintained its interest and activities. Letters and pictures and mementos and plaques were sent to and from Vietnam, between an ever-changing group of young soldiers and civilians who they might never meet. Almost every week a shy young soldier, his year in the country completed, would find his way to San Mateo as a first stop before heading back home south or east or north. The city's fire stations were favorites for a break or a stateside meal. Hotels and motels provided free accommodations. The Villa Hotel kept a "Welcome Adopted Sons" sign on its streetside reader board. Lists

MORALE...CONTINUED

were maintained at firehouses or private homes where exhausted but excited soldiers could spend a night or a weekend. And so it went.

When a Bob Hope Christmas show in Vietnam for the 101st was televised, the citizens of the city were proud to see a young soldier hold up a hand-printed placard. "Hello, San Mateo" is all it said. That was thanks enough.

Late in 1971, the once-mayor, still a member of the city council, learned that the 101st Airborne was scheduled to leave Vietnam. He proposed that the Army be asked, as a tribute to the city's efforts, to route its "Adopted Company A" home by way of San Mateo for a real welcome reception. Retired Army Colonel John F. Condon, then serving as mayor of San Mateo, promptly agreed, as did the city council. Telegrams, letters and phone calls were exchanged. The president was from California. The Pentagon well knew of San Mateo's adoption. The word came down. The paper shufflers cut the orders.

On January 20, 1972, San Mateo erupted with joy as 160 troopers, in camouflage and newly shined boots, marched proudly up Third Avenue to Central Park, where they were kissed and hugged and mauled and fed hot barbecue and cold local beer. They had been red-carpeted from Saigon to Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield and bused to San Mateo—VIP all the way. In San Mateo, they didn't see a single bearded anti-war protester, just happy children and seniors and families wearing "Welcome Home, Adopted Sons" badges with their eagles screaming away. At that post-parade picnic in the park, the delighted young troopers surrendered their helmets and insignia and patches as souvenirs—one sergeant even gave up his trousers and had to be shipped to a hotel in a cab.

The smiling thousands of San Mateans did not realize or even care that they were making history, or that San Mateo would be the only city in the country to so welcome home troops from Vietnam. The men were assigned private homes in which to stay after the civic banquet and an old time pancake breakfast in the park the next day. Miss San Mateo and

Miss This and That from neighboring cities and schools, in white gowns and sashes, were their dates. It was one hell of a bash. Bay area newspapers and TV stations, finally awake to the adoption, were there en masse. It was a once-in-a-lifetime welcome home orgy of joy and love.

The troops went back to their families and that should have been the end of it. But it was not. So many plaques, pictures, letters, news articles and memorabilia (no weapons, no war material) had been collected during the past years and at the welcome home celebration that proper storage was a problem. The mayor suggested that a 101st Memorial Room be established in the main library. Businesses and individuals contributed to a fund for cases and frames and reproductions. The dedication ceremony turned the city into a minor military encampment once again. Active military of all branches—from the Presidio at San Francisco, from Fort Ord, from nearby Treasure Island and from Moffet Naval Air Base—attended. The delegation from the 101st Airborne, Fort Campbell, Ky., of course, were the stars. The "Screaming Eagles Memorial Room" continues to be a place for thanks and a silent prayer.

On March 4, 1988, San Mateo commemorated the 20th anniversary of the adoption with a touching ceremony in the Screaming Eagles Room. Linda Giese and Steve Patterson (who were married in 1976) recalled past events to a visibly moved audience. Representatives from Fort Campbell brought formal notification that San Mateo had not been forgotten there. Every new Abu was fully indoctrinated about San Mateo and its continuing love affair with the company and the division. The commanding general, 101st Airborne Division, sent a certificate declaring that "every citizen of San Mateo is hereby made an honorary member of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division from this day forward." □

John J. Murray, Jr., served 16 years on the San Mateo city council, including four terms as mayor. Further readings: About Face, by David H. Hackworth; and The Offering, by Tom Carhart, contain accounts of Abu Company's combat actions in Vietnam.

SIDEBAR

TO VIETNAM WITH LOVE

San Mateo was not the only American city to show its support for America's fighting forces in Vietnam. Duluth, Minnesota also did its bit, thanks to the efforts of Jack Soetebier, a Korean War-era Army veteran who owned the Patty Cake Shop, a small retail bakery. In 1967, he had the idea of making and sending Christmas cookies to Duluth servicemen and servicewomen in Vietnam and throughout the Pacific. When word of his effort got around, a local coffee distributor, the Arco Company, offered to vacuum-pack the cookies in their two-pound coffee tins; bakery suppliers donated the ingredients; the Duluth Welcome Wagon Newcomers Club volunteered to pack the cookies and address the boxes; and the Chamber of Commerce volun-

teered to pay the postage.

Thousands of macaroons, spritz, sugar and ginger cookies were baked, and, during the first year, some 423 packages were mailed to provide a "little bit of northern Minnesota Scandinavian and German Christmas" in the steaming jungles of Southeast Asia. Thanks, mostly by way of Christmas cards, came from Army artillery, armor, engineer, helicopter, radar and transportation units from the 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division, along the DMZ. They came from the U.S.S. *Eldorado*, *Montrose* and *Prairie*. They came from Air Force radar operators and from a nurse at Udon Royal Thai Air Force Base.

After such an overwhelming response, the whole "Christmas Cookie Caper" was repeated again and again

at Patty Cake until the war came to an end. It was an effort long remembered by Duluth veterans. In October 1984, a letter-to-the-editor was published in the local newspaper. "Picture a tired, mean, old, grumped-out 26-year-old Marine captain sitting in a stinking flight suit in a soggy shack in Phu Bai, Vietnam," it read. "Picture this sad guy thinking about missing Christmas and trying only to live long enough to lay eyes on a new daughter he hasn't seen. Now picture how he felt when he whooshed open the Arco coffee can to find real cookies: fresh, honest-to-goodness Duluth Christmas cookies. It was a life-saver. It's almost 16 years ago, and I haven't forgotten the cookies in the coffee can."

Ginny Mae Mattson

AUGUST 1990

U.S.: \$2.95; CAN.: \$3.50

VIETNAM

Hamburger Hill

BUFS Over
Hanoi

Behind
Enemy Lines



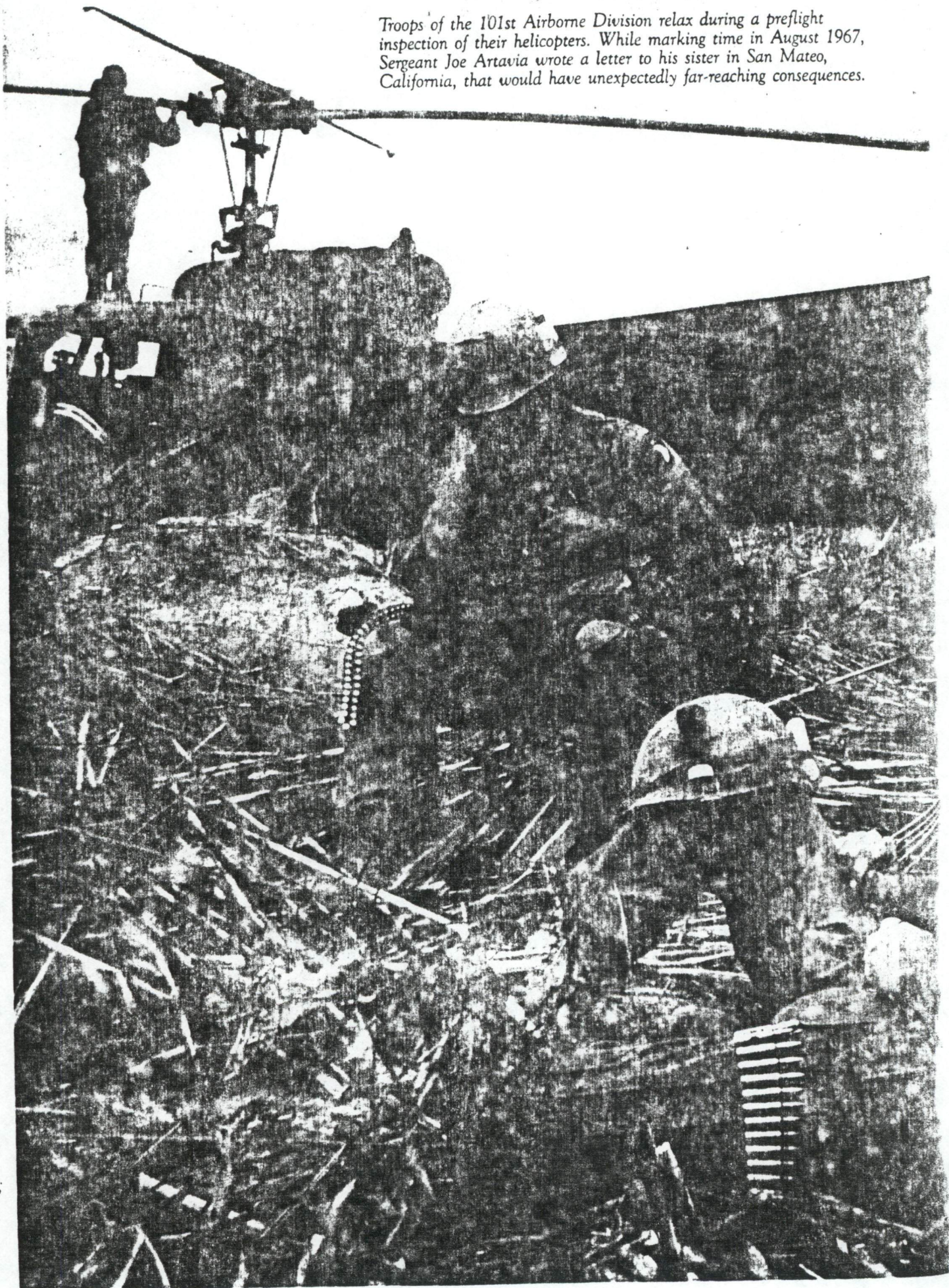
Revolution
Betrayed

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JOHN MURRAY JR UNAM
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SAN MATEO, CA

94403

Troops of the 101st Airborne Division relax during a preflight inspection of their helicopters. While marking time in August 1967, Sergeant Joe Artavia wrote a letter to his sister in San Mateo, California, that would have unexpectedly far-reaching consequences.





MORALE HIGH AS THE CLOUDS

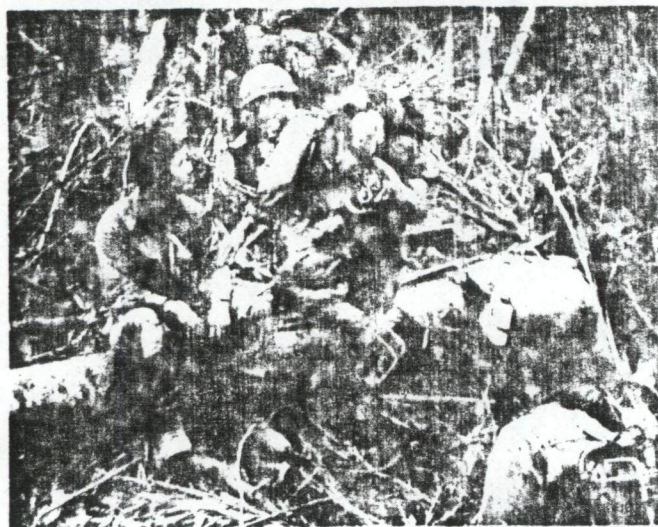
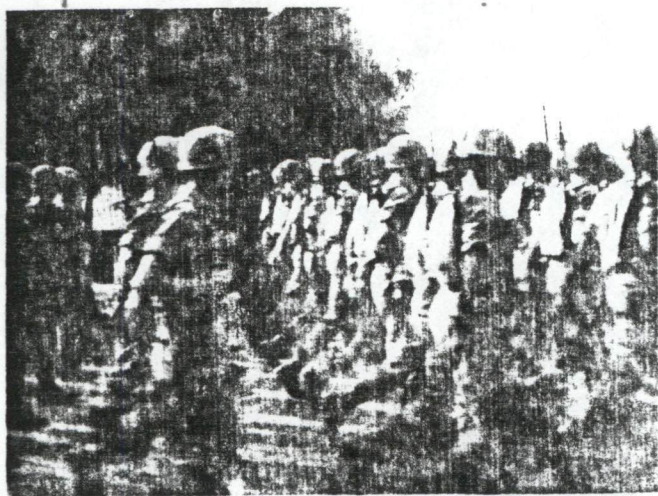
When Abu Company's troopers went into battle, they had a secret weapon: the moral support of the citizens of the city of San Mateo, California.

By John J. Murray, Jr.

The "Abus" were a special breed from the start. Actually "A" Company ("Alpha" Company in usual Army parlance), 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, the nickname Abu was from the unit's mascot, a mythical figure (originally called an "Ibu") that had a gorilla's body, a lion's head, a moose's horns and an alligator's tail, wore a parachute and jump boots, and clutched a pistol in one hand and a bloody knife in the other. Originally deployed to Vietnam in July 1965 as part of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (the "Screaming Eagles"), the Abus participated in some of the toughest fighting of the war.

Their first major battle was in March 1966 on the coastal plain near Tuy Hoa at the village of My Phu. In hard fighting against a North Vietnamese Army battalion, the Abus enabled both their battalion and their brigade to win Valorous Unit Citations, equivalent to the individual award of a Silver Star for gallantry in action. In June 1966, the Abus moved west into the Central Highlands near Dak To. Again the fighting was intense as the Abus went to the relief of Captain William S. Carpenter's Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry, in one of the war's more publicized battles. The Abus' valiant actions, however, were overshadowed by the widespread publicity given to Carpenter, once West Point's famous "lonesome end," when he called a napalm strike down on his own position to stave off an enemy attack.

A year later, in the summer of 1967, the Abus received a new replacement, 19-year-old Joe Artavia of San Francisco, Calif., who would add a new dimension to their distinguished record. Volunteering for the Army at age 17, Artavia had also volunteered for airborne training and for service in Vietnam.



TOP: Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division—better known by its self-chosen nickname of “Abu Company”—comes home via San Mateo on Jan. 20, 1972. MIDDLE: Lieutenant Stephen J. Patterson cheerfully sets off on a patrol. In December 1968, he provided escort to Linda Giese when she visited Vietnam. In 1976, he escorted her down the aisle to make her Mrs. Linda Patterson. ABOVE: In battle dress and spit-shined boots, the Abus prepare to meet the townsfolk who adopted them.

In August 1967, Sergeant Artavia wrote a short letter to his sister, Linda Giese, then living in San Mateo, Calif. Never did it enter his mind that his letter would set off an amazing chain of happenings.

“Dear Linda,” Sergeant Joseph G. Artavia wrote. “Hi, there! First off there is something I would like you to do for me. . . . You see, by having a town or city adopt our company, it would bring the morale of the guys up as high as the clouds. Then, on special occasions, like Christmas, people will send things to the company. People could write to us and in turn we’ll, all of us here, write to them. . . . I was wondering if you could talk to someone in San Mateo and fix it so they would adopt our company. If you can get this request in the newspaper, we’ll all of us here be grateful.”

He closed his note with two words, “Please try.”

Linda Giese was no sophisticate. She had no experience with newspaper editors, mayors, city councils, or women’s clubs. But she loved her kid brother and resolved to do what was necessary to fulfill his request.

A clerk in a modest savings and loan office, she approached her boss, Ron Wright, who suggested sending her request to Congressman Pete McCloskey, an ex-Marine with plenty to say (mostly unfavorable) about Vietnam. He bucked the letter through to California Senator Richard Dolwig, who, in turn, forwarded it to the mayor of San Mateo, Calif. Too hot to handle in those days of war protests? Or too much bother? Who knows?

Linda found a sympathetic ear when, at the urging of Wright, she approached the mayor of San Mateo. He told her that two years before, he had introduced a city resolution calling on the people of California to “pronounce their support for the young soldiers doing their hard duty in Vietnam.” That it went over like a too controversial lead balloon didn’t matter. He suggested that Giese make her request before a Monday night session of the city council. He promised to support her.

Obviously nervous in such strange formal surroundings, she and Wright made an emotional plea. Greeted kindly by the mayor but stonily by the council, she felt assured enough to turn and snap back at a shouted protest from the audience in the council chambers. The mayor then proposed a resolution wherein the city of San Mateo would “adopt the men of Company A, First Battalion, 327th Infantry, First Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.” The action was to be “non-political,” he said, and merely the “adoption” of a couple of hundred lonely young men. The council typically put matters over until a later date.

As the chastened Linda Giese and Ron Wright left the council chambers, she was followed by Vera Graham, long-time city hall reporter for the *San Mateo Times*. Graham knew a good story when she heard it. Her sensitive interview with Giese on Joe Artavia’s request was a major story next day.

Clubroom doors, especially the Elks Lodge and the Lions Club, began to open up to Giese. Women’s groups welcomed her for luncheon talks. Fire Chief Noe Chanteloupe and his firemen offered their stations as collection depots for transshipping gifts. Several school teachers asked children to write letters. The people of San Mateo were truly touched. After all, Joe Artavia was one of their own.

It took some tough political activity by the mayor and others before the cautious members of the city council majority agreed, weeks later, to take some action.

On March 4, 1968, the council unanimously approved a resolution adopting the Abus as its own and urging full citizen support of the city’s “adopted sons.”

Vera Graham and the *San Mateo Times* ran continuing positive articles. The people of this rather proper West Coast city, with a then population of about 60,000 and located 15 miles south of San Francisco across the bay from riotous Berkeley,

reacted with a wave of affection that astounded young Artavia, his company and, in time, his division. Thousands of letters, gifts, Kool Aid, food packages, sugar and books began to be sent by children and seniors, by families and churches, service clubs, city hall departments, hotels, restaurants and corporate offices. New groups and committees were continually established to take care of "our adopted sons."

People said, "To hell with the politics behind this damn war." The only concern was they had to find enough packs of candy and games to send to Abu Company. The city's organized protest groups were shouted down or ignored. Linda Giese was everywhere, speaking, wrapping packages, organizing new committees.

And then, only a few months after the city council's adoption resolution, came the terrible, shocking word that the city's own, its first adopted son, had been killed in action.

Two months earlier, on January 31, 1968, during Tet, the Vietnamese New Year's celebration, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong had launched an offensive to overrun South Vietnam. One of their major objectives was the old imperial city of Hue. To its defense rushed the U.S. 1st Marine Division, supported by elements of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division and the 101st Airborne Division, including the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry and its Abu Company. On March 24, 1968, while walking point at the head of a patrol seeking to fix the remnants of the fleeing North Vietnamese Army assault forces, Sergeant Artavia was killed by a burst of enemy automatic weapons fire.

Sergeant Joe Artavia's full military funeral service at Golden Gate National Cemetery was attended by grieving thousands of all ages who wept when they saw the bayoneted rifle standing upright, crowned with a helmet, and with freshly shined combat boots on the ground by the grave. When the second bugle on a hillock echoed taps, the city's resolve was strengthened. Joe would be remembered.

A few weeks before Christmas that year of 1968, a now self-assured Linda Giese decided to go to Vietnam. It seemed to be a rash act. She had no money. The whole country was a war zone. How would she find the 101st? The city could not allocate public funds for a private trip. Linda would not be dissuaded. She was going.

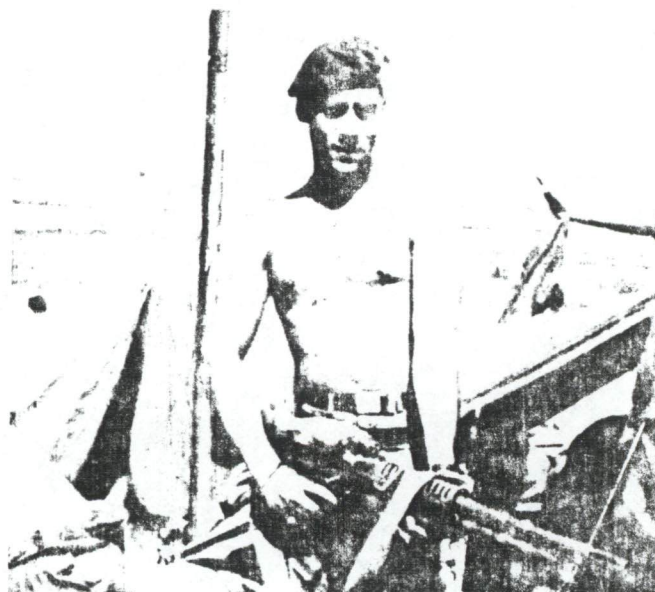
She borrowed a few dollars, accepted cash gifts from women's groups, scratched it out. She wrote to Abu Company and advised them of her coming. The city council approved the striking of medallions with the city's seal, surrounded with the embossed caption, "San Mateo's Adopted Sons," and with each soldier's name engraved on the obverse. A letter and Christmas card from the city council were printed for each trooper.

On December 9, 1968, Linda Giese stepped off a civilian Boeing 707 at Tan Son Nhut Air Base where she was met by Lieutenant Stephen J. Patterson of Abu Company. No sight-seeing this trip. They flew into the Hue Airport the next day.

It had been planned for the company to have a four or five day stand-down, but because the soldiers were engaged in heavy fighting, it was decided they could only spend a day and a half at Camp Eagle, the 101st Airborne Division base camp. Moreover, she'd have to wait for at least four days while Abu Company fought its way out of the mountain jungle.

Lieutenant Patterson escorted Giese everywhere as she toured the entire battalion rear area. She flew to the tactical operations center and was put in touch by telephone with troopers from Abu Company in the field. She worked with medics and visited a local school. Her tour of the once beautiful city of Hue, scene of the war's bloodiest battle, still stands out in her mind. Lieutenant Patterson was particularly attentive, but then so was everyone.

Major General Melvin Zais, commander of the 101st, had her as his guest for dinner. Other meals she ate with battalion



TOP: Troops of the 101st Airborne prepare to move out from the landing zone at the start of another airmobile sweep. Abu Company's war began in earnest at My Phu in March 1966, and the outfit fought with equal distinction to relieve Captain William S. "Napalm Bill" Carpenter's C Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, at Dak To in June. ABOVE: The man who started it all. An airborne volunteer at age 17, Joe Artavia was a sergeant at age 19. On March 24, 1968, he was killed in action.

officers, NCOs and enlisted men. It was VIP treatment all the way because the entire division knew of San Mateo's adoption of Company A 1/327, but Giese only wanted to get on with why she had come. Besides, Christmas Day was at hand and the company, she was told, was still in the hills chopping its way through the undergrowth. Suddenly, several Chinooks popped into view to set down and discharge their dirty, be-draggled and rain-soaked cargo.

The Abu commander, Captain Christian Shore, with his officers and men, lined up in ragged formation to be greeted by this pretty young woman who had come alone and so far to bring them Christmas greetings from a city whose location they hardly knew and from people who called them "adopted sons." Linda Giese cried as she shook the hands and embraced her soldier-brothers.

After washup and a clothes change, the party began. A small combo played dance music and Linda danced with officers and men one after another. And the Abus laughed and partied through the night. After all, it was Christmastime. Next day, at a touching ceremony, including a short memorial service for the members of Abu Company who had been killed—including, of course, Linda's brother Joe Artavia—she read the city council's adoption resolution and the Christmas greeting letter, and presented each man with his medalion. There were few dry eyes among the troops.

That night there was another party with Christmas carols followed by a midnight Christmas mass. Giese returned ex-

hausted by helicopter to her cot at Fort Chasity, the nurses' quarters of the 22nd Surgical Hospital at Phu Bai. As she was leaving the next day for Saigon and return to the United States, she was given gifts—including a company guidon—by Captain Shore. Abu Company went back into the jungle.

But they went, as Sergeant Artavia had prophesied, "with the morale of the guys up as high as the clouds." While many Americans serving in Vietnam, especially in the later days of the war, wondered if anyone back in the "world" knew or cared about their sacrifices, the men of Abu Company were assured that the people of San Mateo were solidly in their corner.

During the following months, the Adopted Sons Committee maintained its interest and activities. Letters and pictures and mementos and plaques were sent to and from Vietnam, between an ever-changing group of young soldiers and civilians who they might never meet. Almost every week a shy young soldier, his year in the country completed, would find his way to San Mateo as a first stop before heading back home south or east or north. The city's fire stations were favorites for a break or a stateside meal. Hotels and motels provided free accommodations. The Villa Hotel kept a "Welcome Adopted Sons" sign on its streetside reader board. Lists were maintained at firehouses or private homes where exhausted but excited soldiers could spend a night or a weekend. And so it went.

When a Bob Hope Christmas show in Vietnam for the 101st was televised, the citizens of the city were proud to see a young

TO VIETNAM WITH LOVE

San Mateo was not the only American city to show its support for America's fighting forces in Vietnam. Duluth, Minnesota also did its bit, thanks to the efforts of Jack Soetebier, a Korean War-era Army veteran who owned the Patty Cake Shop, a small retail bakery. In 1967, he had the idea of making and sending Christmas cookies to Duluth servicemen and servicewomen in Vietnam and throughout the Pacific. When word of his effort got around, a local coffee distributor, the Arco Company, offered to vacuum-pack the cookies in their two-pound coffee tins; bakery suppliers donated the ingredients; the Duluth Welcome Wagon Newcomers Club volunteered to pack the cookies and address the boxes; and the Chamber of Commerce volunteered to pay the postage.

Thousands of macaroons, spritz, sugar and ginger cookies were baked, and, during the first year, some 423 packages were mailed to provide a "little bit of northern Minnesota Scandinavian and German Christmas" in the steaming jungles of Southeast Asia. Thanks, mostly by way of Christmas cards, came from Army artillery, armor, engineer, helicopter, radar and transportation units from the 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division, along the DMZ. They came from the U.S.S. *El Dorado*, *Montrose* and *Prairie*. They came



Duluth postmaster Frank Blatnik, Ray Rouse, Arco Coffee's John Andresen and Jack Soetebier prepare to mail 2,000 dozen cookies to Vietnam.

from Air Force radar operators and from a nurse at Udon Royal Thai Air Force Base.

After such an overwhelming response, the whole "Christmas Cookie Caper" was repeated again and again at Patty Cake until the war came to an end. It was an effort long remembered by Duluth veterans. In October 1984, a letter-to-the-editor was published in the local newspaper. "Picture a tired, mean, old, grumped-out 26-year-old Marine captain sitting in a stinking

flight suit in a soggy shack in Phu Bai, Vietnam," it read. "Picture this sad guy thinking about missing Christmas and trying only to live long enough to lay eyes on a new daughter he hasn't seen. Now picture how he felt when he whooshed open the Arco coffee can to find *real* cookies: fresh, honest-to-goodness Duluth Christmas cookies. It was a life-saver... it's almost 16 years ago, and I haven't forgotten the cookies in the coffee can."

Ginny Mae Mattson

soldier hold up a hand-printed placard. "Hello, San Mateo" is all it said. That was thanks enough.

Late in 1971, the once-mayor, still a member of the city council, learned that the 101st Airborne was scheduled to leave Vietnam. He proposed that the Army be asked, as a tribute to the city's efforts, to route its "Adopted Company A" home by way of San Mateo for a real welcome reception. Retired Army Colonel John F. Condon, then serving as mayor of San Mateo, promptly agreed, as did the city council. Telegrams, letters and phone calls were exchanged. The president was from California. The Pentagon well knew of San Mateo's adoption. The word came down. The paper shufflers cut the orders.

On January 20, 1972, San Mateo erupted with joy as 160 troopers, in camouflage and newly shined boots, marched proudly up Third Avenue to Central Park, where they were kissed and hugged and mauled and fed hot barbecue and cold local beer. They had been red-carpeted from Saigon to Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield and bused to San Mateo—VIP all the way. In San Mateo, they didn't see a single bearded anti-war protester, just happy children and seniors and families wearing "Welcome Home, Adopted Sons" badges with their eagles screaming away. At that post-parade picnic in the park, the delighted young troopers surrendered their helmets and insignia and patches as souvenirs—one sergeant even gave up his trousers and had to be shipped to a hotel in a cab.

The smiling thousands of San Mateans did not realize or even care that they were making history, or that San Mateo would be the only city in the country to so welcome home troops from Vietnam. The men were assigned private homes in which to stay after the civic banquet and an old time pancake breakfast in the park the next day. Miss San Mateo and Miss This and That from neighboring cities and schools, in white gowns and sashes, were their dates. It was one hell of a bash. Bay area newspapers and TV stations, finally awake to the adoption, were there en masse. It was a once-in-a-lifetime welcome home orgy of joy and love.

The troops went back to their families and that should have been the end of it. But it was not. So many plaques, pictures, letters, news articles and memorabilia (no weapons, no war material) had been collected during the past years and at the welcome home celebration that proper storage was a problem. The mayor suggested that a 101st Memorial Room be established in the main library. Businesses and individuals contributed to a fund for cases and frames and reproductions. The dedication ceremony turned the city into a minor military encampment once again. Active military of all branches—from the Presidio at San Francisco, from Fort Ord, from nearby Treasure Island and from Moffet Naval Air Base—attended. The delegation from the 101st Airborne, Fort Campbell, Ky., of course, were the stars. The "Screaming Eagles Memorial Room" continues to be a place for thanks and a silent prayer.

On March 4, 1988, San Mateo commemorated the 20th anniversary of the adoption with a touching ceremony in the Screaming Eagles Room. Linda Giese and Steve Patterson (who were married in 1976) recalled past events to a visibly moved audience. Representatives from Fort Campbell brought formal notification that San Mateo had not been forgotten there. Every new Abu was fully indoctrinated about San Mateo and its continuing love affair with the company and the division. The commanding general, 101st Airborne Division, sent a certificate declaring that "every citizen of San Mateo is hereby made an honorary member of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division from this day forward." □

John J. Murray, Jr., served 16 years on the San Mateo city council, including four terms as mayor. Further readings: About Face, by David H. Hackworth; and The Offering, by Tom Carhart, contain accounts of Abu Company's combat actions in Vietnam.

Welcome HOME **SCREAMING EAGLES** SAN MATEO'S ADOPTED SONS



TOP: A "Screaming Eagles" banner goes up to greet the returning Abus as they arrived to meet their collective family-away-from-home. ABOVE: Joe Artavia closed his unusual request to his sister with the words, "Please try." Try she did, and succeed she did. She was there to meet the Abus when they came to San Mateo on Jan. 20, 1972.