

THEN A SOLDIER

A JEWISH ODYSSEY

Richard G. Kurtz

Then a Soldier: A Jewish Odyssey

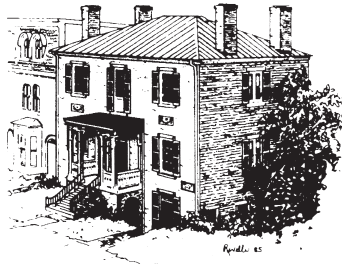
© 2020

Richard G. Kurtz

ISBN: 978-1-629670-62-1

Revised Edition

No portion of this book may be reproduced
without the written permission
of the author.



Warwick House Publishers
720 Court Street
Lynchburg, Virginia 24504

SYNOPSIS

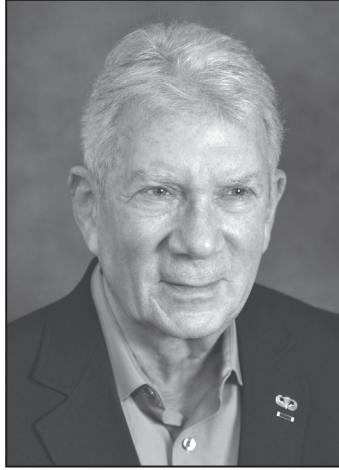
Then A Soldier is the memoir of a Jewish boy from the Bronx who chose the Army as a career, and how and why this happened despite the prevailing cultural and sociological norms that this was not a proper pursuit for Jewish youth.

The book describes a time in American society which no longer exists—when ancestry and religion could determine what school you attended, the zip codes in which you could live, and to an extent, the professions you could enter. The book explains how these influences and a growing awareness of the history of the Holocaust combined to encourage the author's entry to ROTC in college, and from there, the decision to make the Army a career. The book describes his initial training and duty assignments, and his volunteering for a combat assignment in Vietnam.

The author includes a concise review of the events that led to our involvement in Vietnam, describes three battles in which he fought, and analyzes these battles in terms of what went right, and what went wrong.

Then A Soldier is the story of the most important year of the author's life—a year in combat in which he discovers that he is an Everyman-soldier, no more afraid and no less effective in combat than other soldiers. It is the story of a young man testing himself and finding a new dimension of his makeup.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Richard Gary Kurtz served thirty years in the US Army, retiring as a Colonel. Almost ten of those years were spent overseas, including two years in Vietnam with the 1st Infantry and 101st Airborne Divisions. He was later a battalion and brigade commander and served two tours as a Pentagon staff officer. He then worked as a consultant to the Department of Defense on missile defense issues. Mr. Kurtz has a BS from the City College of New York (CCNY) and an MS from the University of Texas at El Paso. He is recently retired and lives with his wife, Carol, in Alexandria, Virginia. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

CONTENTS

Synopsis	iii
About the Author.....	v
Acknowledgments.....	ix
Introduction—Why?	xi
How Army Units Are Named.....	xiii
Chapter 1 June.....	1
Chapter 2 Parkchester	8
Chapter 3 Ancestry	22
Chapter 4 Beavers	30
Chapter 5 Fitting In.....	51
Chapter 6 Europe	63
Chapter 7 For Tin and Tungsten.....	73
Chapter 8 Forward Observer.....	79
Chapter 9 Company Town	85
Chapter 10 Company Men.....	91
Chapter 11 Loc Ninh.....	101
Chapter 12 The Captain	113
Chapter 13 And God Laughs	120
Chapter 14 Running into Burning Buildings	134
Chapter 15 Respite.....	148
Chapter 16 Meaning Making	151
Chapter 17 Getting To Know You.....	161
Chapter 18 Bong Trang.....	171
Chapter 19 Making Monkeys	193
Chapter 20 Change.....	200
Chapter 21 “Servabo Fidem”	209
Chapter 22 Prek Klok II.....	216
Chapter 23 Chickens, Pigs, and Bicycles.....	221
Epilogue	224
Glossary	239
Index	245

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The battles of Hill 150 and Bong Trang were historically insignificant, but, nonetheless, lethal, difficult and confusing. Attempting to describe them made me think of the proverbial problem faced by two blind-folded men touching different parts of an elephant, trying to reach a consensus on how it might look—the man at the tail having a wholly different opinion than the man at the trunk.

Several men helped me portray that elephant. Major Ray Blanford (Retired) and Mr. Richard Meadows added clarity and coherence to my initial description of the fight for Hill 150. Brigadier General Bill Mullen (Retired) and Mr. Tom Galvin provided a broad, overarching appreciation of the battle of Bong Trang, far beyond the narrow, “soda straw view” I had observed.

My wife, Carol, kept my experiences in perspective and executed well her wifely duty to keep my hat size in check. She was an army nurse during the late 1960s, working in a stateside hospital caring for the long-term injured soldiers with slow-healing, complicated wounds. She knew what a wound was, and what was one, only in a technical sense (e.g. mine). In addition to this, she knew firsthand the sad emptiness resulting from the death of the young men who served in that war. Her high school days had been filled with the laughter and exuberance of two of her classmates, both sons of senior Fort Benning officer families. And then they were gone, their budding lives extinguished by a war that quickly grew unpopular.

Professor Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, of Northwestern University, enabled a vastly expanded understanding of my ancestry, within the context of my choice to make the military a career. His book, *Jews in the Russian Army, 1827-1917*, is a meticulously researched account of a relatively undocumented segment of the

Russian society in which my grandfather lived and in whose army he served before immigrating to America.

Ms. Joyce Maddox of Warwick House Publishing did yeoman's work in producing the first edition of this book, Mr. Brian Schwartz, of Wise Media Group, did the same in producing the revised edition. I am grateful to both for making this book possible.

My last acknowledgment is not to an individual, but to the collective spirit of thousands. The 1st Infantry Division was the most difficult and transformative of all my life experiences. It was the no-nonsense, no-excuses, get-it-done school of war. The men in its ranks were imbued with the ethos of veterans of World Wars I and II. They all, both the current and past soldiers, taught me how to be a man, and that was a lifetime gift

INTRODUCTION— WHY?

“We have some impulse within us that makes us want to explain ourselves to other human beings.”

MAYA ANGELOU, AUTHOR

This memoir bridges two seemingly disparate and unrelated worlds—the world of combat in Vietnam, and the world of growing up Jewish in the Bronx, in the 1950s and early 1960s. How these worlds relate to each other and how they came to produce my “Jewish Odyssey” is at the core of why this book was written.

Equally central is my belated realization of the need to preserve family history. Long after my parents and relatives had died, I became interested in my ancestry and answers to such basic questions as to what are our origins; how did we live; where; and why, exactly, did we come to America? All I could learn was that my family history seemed to begin on the shores of America, which my grandparents entered as immigrants from Eastern Europe in the late 1890s and early 1900s. It was as if all family history before that time had been erased. The best I could do for myself and my family was to produce a macro-history of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. This memoir summarizes that macro-history and is insurance against further erasure of my personal, family-specific, history.

This book is also designed to place a spotlight on what had heretofore been my Elephant in the Room—my experiences with physical anti-Semitism in my Bronx neighborhood, which led me to explore the nature of anti-Semitism, its ultimate manifestation in the Holocaust, and how it all combined to set me on the road less traveled to become a career Army officer.

I also wished to portray combat in a realistic, non-glamorized manner. War is not heroic. Soldiers are heroic. War, as I knew it, was an industrialized process, often described as a “kill-chain,” wherein each soldier has a role or function to perform in producing the desired lethal effect. I was part of that kill chain. I did my job; I fulfilled my responsibilities. Even though decorated for valor, I did not consider myself brave or daring. I considered only that I was executing my assigned responsibilities, as an officer serving in an infantry rifle company, an infantry battalion, and as a battery commander in a howitzer battalion. In this book, I try to portray my view of war and close combat, as seen and experienced from those perches. This book will not serve as a script for a profitable and popular war movie. I never intended to write it that way.

I want my readers to understand the quiet dignity and courage of soldiers in combat. They face danger, repeatedly and steadfastly. They must control all impulses for self-preservation and subordinate their survival instincts for the good of the group with whom they serve.

My first year in Vietnam accounted for only a small fraction of 30 years’ worth of experiences in the Army, and another 25 as a non-kinetic military contractor. Friends have asked why I didn’t write about my second tour in Vietnam in 1971 or my time as a battalion and then a brigade commander at Fort Hood, Texas, or my duty as a contractor in bi-lateral military exercises in Germany, Korea, the Netherlands, and Israel. I explain it is because my one year in combat, with the First Infantry Division, constitutes all I know about being a soldier. It was the purest, most honest work I ever did.

HOW ARMY UNITS ARE NAMED

Later in this memoir, you will come across US Army unit designations consisting of seemingly meaningless letters and numbers. This short primer is designed to explain that “unit naming” convention and enable the reader to focus on the narratives in which unit designations are embedded.

You will read in Chapter 9 that I was assigned to Charlie Battery, 2d Battalion, 33d Artillery with duty in Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, abbreviated as C-2-33 Artillery and A-2-28 Infantry. Let’s “unpack” these alpha-numeric sequences and learn what they mean.

Each unit in the US Army is given a unique alpha-numeric designator, or in civilian terms, a “name.” It is like the combination of our first, middle, and last names, coupled with our birthday or Social Security number to uniquely identify each of us for legal or financial purposes. In the military, this uniqueness is paramount in a time of war during which orders are issued to specific units to accomplish specific missions at specific times and places. There is no room for error in the wrong unit receiving an order not intended for it. Or, in an operations center or command post, tracking unit locations and progress, it is imperative that there be no confusion over which unit is being reported.

By this convention, my “home address” in combat was abbreviated as A-2-28 Infantry. The first letter pronounced “Alpha,” in the military phonetic alphabet system, represented the rifle company in which I served. The other rifle companies in my battalion were designated “Bravo” and “Charlie.” We were assigned to the 2nd battalion, thus the number “2.” All combat units are named after a famous or notable ancestor, just like people are. This unit ancestor is a regiment, which can trace its history or lineage back

in time. Thus, the final number, “28,” indicating that our battalion is affiliated with and named after the 28th Regiment of Infantry, which was made famous in combat in France in WWI. When referring to the battalion as a whole, without regard to the individual companies, the designation is 2-28 Infantry.

Again, for simplicity, just think of these alpha-numeric designators as similar to people’s first, middle, and last names which are associated with famous ancestors.

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts...
At first the infant...
And then the whining school-boy...
And then the lover...
Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth...*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

AS YOU LIKE IT

CHAPTER 1

JUNE

*“Men love war...it’s the only thing that
stops women from laughing at them.”*

JOHN FOWLES

A terse radio report by the point squad announces that they “have a situation”—a deliberately understated military term for a major problem requiring more senior leadership than is already at the scene. When we cross over to the reverse slope of the hill, I see bodies lying along the bank of a drainage ditch. One figure looks familiar. As we get closer, I know it is the teacher from the village, even before I see her face. Her dress is distinctive. I had seen her in it a few days earlier.

Each step forward reveals more detail. She lies next to her father. Her upper arms are bound behind her with the all-purpose, thin, black, plastic-clad copper-steel wire we use to connect our field telephones. It is ubiquitous and in plentiful supply. Everyone uses it as a binding material. Then I notice her elbows. They are almost touching, with her forearms splayed out at a forty-five-degree angle. Out of curiosity I sling my M-16 rifle across my chest and force my elbows back toward each other, trying inately to replicate her posture. I cannot; the gap is considerable.

Then I notice the back of her head appears to be covered with rice. At first, I do not comprehend. Then, instinctively, I do. My stomach turns. I gag and try hard not to let it show. This is not rice. What at first looked like little white seeds is the Tropics’ version of the circle of life trick, whereby a formerly complex life-form is transformed into a more primitive one. They are fly eggs, soon to

be maggots that will feed on the open gunshot wound to the back of her head. She serves now as a commissary for blowflies.

The peasant women in the Loc Ninh Rubber Plantation dressed in black, pajama-type garb, just like the men. Their femininity was well hidden. The teacher, however, wore a simple but flattering long, cream-colored dress called an Ao-Dai. Her attractiveness was out of place but certainly welcomed by the soldiers. She was the closest thing to the “girl back home” that any of us would see for the rest of the year.

We, her formerly appreciative audience, are the men of an infantry rifle company. I am the forward observer. My military function is to provide artillery fire support. At the moment, that is the sum total of any thought of which I am capable.

When I first met the teacher a few days earlier, I had not yet seen combat. Between then and now, I have been in battle. I am exposed. The dead and the wounded are no longer novel; they have become the backdrop of war. Nonetheless, as I begin the slow realization of the circumstances of her death, my emotions build and then drain out of me, unexpressed. I am numb. I do not know what to say. It is the same with the others. They cannot verbalize their shock. The young soldiers around me are silent. Their faces are blank. They light up cigarettes and stare into the landscape.

Looking through the gray haze of the resultant smoke from a dozen soldiers, I try to take in the meaning of the teacher’s death. It is a painful thought process. My brain goes into overdrive to structure a memory of the past week’s events for clues to my possible causation of her death.

We had patrolled through her village about seven days earlier. She watched us with uncertainty like we were a militarized biker gang from a far place that had to be first placated and then hurried on its way.

But my ego was soaring. I was two weeks a soldier. So far, war had been a great and non-lethal adventure. We had neither yet met the enemy nor suffered any casualties. I was full of youthful enthusiasm and feeling particularly “in role” as a combat officer. I wanted her to notice me; I wanted her to like me. Since we were in a French rubber plantation, under French management, I assumed

that she spoke French. While our company commander, Captain Ray Blanford, spoke with her father, the village elder, using our Vietnamese interpreter, I engaged her in the best of my college French, which was never that good and certainly had gotten no better after three years of only sporadic use.

Cumulatively, we spoke for no more than fifteen minutes, as I struggled to construct the simplest of sentences, and fumbled for the French translation of military terms, which were not contained in my college readings of Verlaine and Rimbaud. I must have sounded comedic. I asked what she had seen that might be of interest to us, and what she thought of the Americans compared with the French. I imagine she understood enough of what came so clumsily from my mouth, because she answered, speaking way too rapidly for me to understand. I responded, asking her to please speak more slowly. She smiled, and we both knew that I had overplayed my hand in trying to engage her in conversation. At any rate, her answer amounted to her knowing nothing and thinking nothing about anything. She didn't even ask where I had learned to babble in French. It was a totally dead-end conversation; it went nowhere.

Worse still, out of the corner of my eye, I had noticed some of our soldiers nudging each other as they watched the new lieutenant putting the moves on the best-looking girl for many miles around. She was not exactly dismissive. True to what one expects of a good-looking woman upon whom all other favorable attributes are automatically bestowed, she showed her classiness in letting me off the hook by excusing herself to attend to her duties. When we left the village, having accomplished nothing of military value other than to show our presence, Blanford asked, in perfect deadpan, "Did you get her number?" Stung by his sarcasm, I made a mental note to redeem myself the next time we passed through her village.

The next time came this past Saturday. The village was deserted, and gunfire filled the air. We were in the battle for Hill 150¹.

¹ I believe the teacher and the other executed villagers were taken hostage early Saturday morning and judged and executed several hours later. The remaining villagers probably fled after realizing that they were caught between us and their teacher's executioners.

Afterward, Sunday was gifted to us as a twenty-four-hour stand down. There was no grief counseling; the term had not yet been invented. Instead, we cleaned ourselves and our weapons. It was, in effect, a ritualistic washing away the preceding day's unpleasantness. A new company commander, Captain John Hutcheson, was sent down from brigade staff to replace Blanford, whose right eye was shot out in the initial assault on the hill. Nine new replacements also arrived, as partial compensation for our twelve dead and wounded in the fight.

Today's operation, Monday, 13 June 1966, was to be a "tune-up patrol" with our new commander and the replacement infantrymen. It was supposed to be "routine," just something to get us back in the swing of things. We had not expected to find the murdered village schoolteacher.

The men around me finish their smokes and drift back into patrol formation. I consider, briefly, the possibility that the teacher was killed because she had been seen talking to me and because the battle that soon followed went badly for the enemy. That thought bathes me in guilt. It makes me wish I were somewhere else, doing something else. That, of course, is not possible. Besides, there are other villagers along that ditch, and I had not spoken with any of them; yet they, too, were executed. Reflexively, I shift my focus to the role of the enemy. Years will pass before I allow myself the luxury to consider more carefully my part, if any, in causing her execution. For now, I see the enemy's cruelty and culpability as predominant.

The teacher's execution is the work of the Viet Cong, the communist insurgent movement, assisted by North Vietnam, whose objective is to "unify" South Vietnam with its neighbor to the north. The United States, as part of its national strategy to contain communism, is "assisting" South Vietnam in resisting this unification. Our rifle company is but a minor instrument in this struggle, and the teacher and the other villagers in the drainage ditch are but the scrap work of the unification process.

The name we give our enemy reflects their place in the wider, on-going global conflict. Viet Cong is Vietnamese for "Vietnamese Communist." It was developed as a pejorative term by the US

Information Agency, circa 1957, to discredit the Vietnamese forces opposing the government favored by the US. It leveraged the fear of communism that peaked during the Cold War. The Viet Cong were known to themselves as the “Viet Minh”—the League for the Independence of Vietnam. This group was founded by Ho Chi Minh, their Vietnamese communist leader who fought the French, Japanese, and Americans for independence, before, during, and after WWII. In the US Army phonetic alphabet, the term “VC” is spoken as Victor Charlie, and our apolitical, but “hip,” soldiers refer to the Viet Cong as just “Charlie.”

I deflect further thought of the schoolteacher by turning my attention to the broken typewriter. It is an old one, full size. It, too, lies by the drainage ditch. At first, I assume it is part of the VC battalion headquarters, used to type orders and such, and left there when they retreated in haste after the battle turned against them. Then I realize it is too large for use by a mobile combat unit. Eventually, I conclude that it belonged to the village and was seized and made inoperable for the same reason the teacher was killed. In the rural margins, a typed notice represented something official, something authoritative. It connoted orderliness. The typewriter was a token of governance, and that was the basis of its, and the teacher’s, death warrant.

The strategy of insurgency is purely utilitarian. All is permissible so long as it is effective. And if you are lucky or brutal enough to win, you will control all moral judgments. No more typed notices for the villagers to read means no more governmental authority. Children sitting in an empty classroom knowing that their teacher was cruelly executed will not miss the point—the VC are the real authority and are to be feared more than the Americans. But it was an unnecessary lesson. The teacher had avoided contact with us, as she carefully navigated through a VC dominated environment. The village understood who wielded the enduring power long before their teacher, her father, and other local “officials” were executed.

If we were living in movieland, we would carry her body back to the village, and lay her to rest alongside her ancestors. I would say a few words, finally, in flawless French. Then we would hunt

down her killers and dispatch them without mercy. However, it is nothing like that. We are sickened by what we find, and anxious to put it behind us. We report in by radio, and resume our patrol, assuming conveniently, that the teacher and the other villagers will be properly buried.

The remainder of our patrol is uneventful. On our return leg, I ask Hutcheson if we can make a minor diversion in our route so that we cross Hill 150. I tell him I will point out, on the ground, where it all happened. We approach the hill in a direction different from which we attacked forty-eight hours earlier. Somehow, this disorients me. Nothing looks the same.

I search for landmarks in the military world of the millimeter, a unit of measurement, abbreviated as mm, with about twenty-five millimeters equaling one inch. I seek out the shell craters along the trench line that the VC had occupied and on which I had directed 105mm howitzer fire. I find none. I look for the broken treetops in which some of our 81mm mortars had prematurely detonated. I see none. I jump into the trench line and search for the 7.92mm shell casings from the German World War II, MG-34 machine gun we had captured. There are none. Tellingly, there are no enemy corpses. I had counted upwards of six dead enemy soldiers two days earlier. Now there is no trace, begging the dual questions of who cleans up battlefields after a fight and why were the VC dead recovered but not the teacher and other villagers? In this case, it looks like the work of a local VC support unit; the only evidence left to be found, for shock value, would be the dead villagers.

I turn to my Radio Telephone Operator (RTO), Specialist Four (Corporal) Robert Dooley, a tough, eighteen-year-old Irish draftee from Detroit, who carries, in addition to his own load, a twenty-six-pound battery-powered, PRC-25 field radio that we use to call for artillery support. He was by my side during the entire fight and guided me through my first taste of combat. Trying not to look the fool, I whisper, "Dooley, this is the place, isn't it?"

But Dooley is preoccupied. This morning, before departing on the patrol, he had "mass-produced" letters to three different girlfriends and placed them in the company mail sack. Around mid-patrol, he experienced a frightful flashback leading him to

believe that in his haste he might have stuffed the letters into the wrong envelopes. He has since been eager to return to base and retrieve the letters before they are flown out on the evening resupply helicopter.

I, personally, am in a romantic hiatus. My on-again-off-again high school summer love, now in medical school, has recently married. Adding to that, my friends have written that my college ex-soulmate for life was serving as a front-line soldier in the “sexual revolution,” doing the work of three or four. Rounding out my misfortune is the fact that my girlfriend in Germany prematurely adapted to my forthcoming transfer. I was “gone” before I ever got on the airplane. In response to my question, as if confirming the disparities in our problems, Dooley takes a desultory look around, pretends to consider the terrain, and then just shrugs.

His gesture sums up my immediate future. This, the third June since college graduation, is an anomaly. June used to be the best month of the year for me. I especially remember grade school Junes: the last day of the school year, the turning in of textbooks, and then absolute freedom for the nine weeks of summer. My two previous Junes in West Germany were cheerful enough: they marked the first noticeable transition from wet, cold, gray winters to something that looked and felt like spring. But this is a different June. Almost the entire month is spent on patrol, living outdoors and sleeping on the ground. The meals are mostly cold and from a can. There is no running water. It is a hobo existence, with the added possibility of death or injury by gunfire. The tour of duty in Vietnam is one year unless seriously wounded. If I stay lucky, I am here until the next June.

A number of the men around can rightfully blame others for sending them here. They are entitled to have murder in their hearts for the members of their draft boards, or the recruiters who told them everything about army life, save this. My case is different. This morning I got a good look at the person responsible for my being here. He was staring at me from the mirrored surface of my artillery compass as I shaved, using my helmet as a basin. I am here by my own choice and because I am Jewish, and that requires some explanation.

CHAPTER 2

PARKCHESTER

*“Other people have a nationality.
The Irish and the Jews have a psychosis.”*

BRENDAN BEHAN

(Of the Irish)

*“This is one race of people for whom
psychoanalysis is of no use whatsoever.”*

ATTRIBUTED TO SIGMUND FREUD

The trail that led me to an infantry rifle company in combat began in my birthplace, Parkchester, a private venture, owned and operated by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, designed to provide affordable housing for working to middle-class families. Parkchester operated under rent control regulation. In 1950, the rent for our two-bedroom apartment was \$80.00. Adjusted for inflation, this equates to \$852.00 in 2020 dollars, which is barely enough to rent a doghouse in New York.

Construction began in 1938, on the former grounds of the New York Catholic Protectory, a trade school and farm for wayward children, established just after the Civil War. The name was derived from two communities adjacent to the Protectory: *Park Versailles* and *Westchester Heights*. My parents arrived in 1941. I was born the following year.

Weekdays in Parkchester were a beehive of organized activity. Dozens of men in working khakis painted the outside metal works, mowed the lawns, tended the flower beds, and trimmed the hedges. After winter snows, they shoveled the sidewalks clean.

Each building had an assigned “porter” to maintain cleanliness, to include polishing the brass mailboxes in the lobby. Plumbers and electricians, with their toolboxes, kept all in good repair. Other men, in blue uniforms, patrolled the streets and raised and lowered the American flag at dawn and sunset, respectively. Parkchester was a meticulously regulated and maintained aberrational oasis in the otherwise freewheeling, teeming, hectic Bronx.



Grounds of Catholic Protectory before Parkchester. View is along Unionport Road. Photo from Bronx County Historical Society Archives.



*Parkchester under construction, 1940.
Photo from Bronx County Historical Society Archives.*

The development encompassed 129 acres and was about 800 yards, or almost a half-mile, on edge. It was large enough to have its own post office and zip code. The 171 redbrick building complexes, of either seven or thirteen levels (ground through six or twelve, respectively) housed 12,273 families. The floor plans consisted of one, two, and three-bedroom apartments, all with only a single bathroom. The kitchens were small but functional, with metal cabinetry. There was room for a washing machine if one of the cabinets was removed. Damp clothing was hung in the single, small bathroom. The buildings had elevators, incinerators, and centralized hot water heat, but no air conditioning. The remedies for the hot humid summers were fans and a prized architectural feature known as “cross-ventilation,” bedrooms with windows on two adjacent walls.



Aerial photograph of Parkchester in 1955. Two major roadways, Unionport Road running northwest to southeast, and Metropolitan Avenue running northeast to southwest, crossing at Metropolitan Oval, divide Parkchester into four quadrants.

Photo from Bronx County Historical Society Archives.



*Parkchester stoves to be installed, 1940.
Photo from Bronx County Historical Society Archives.*



View along East Avenue, 1940. My building is at head of street to the left. Photo from Bronx County Historical Society Archives.



*Metropolitan Oval, circa 1940s. My building is in center background.
Photo courtesy of Parkchester South Condominiums archives.*



*Another view of Metropolitan Oval, circa 1940s. Photo courtesy of
Parkchester South Condominiums archives.*



Parkchester, circa 1940s.

Photo courtesy of Parkchester South Condominiums archives.

The landscaping was, as the name suggests, park-like. There were gardens, fountains, and playgrounds, and a singular preoccupation with “grass,” the type you look at, rather than smoke. Parkchester management treated grass like people at that time treated the front parlor—it was to be admired, but not used. It was a serious infraction of the rules to be caught, by the Parkchester Police, playing in the grass. This infraction often resulted in our names being “taken” and a follow-up letter to our parents, summarizing the offense. Too many such letters could endanger the renewal of the rental lease. This is a prime example of the rule-centric nature of Parkchester.

Parkchester youth took care of themselves. They organized their own play and sports activities and got to where they had to be on their own, via foot, roller-skate, or bicycle. In the summer, kids left their apartments right after breakfast and were ordered to be sure to return in time for dinner. All activities—roller-skating, shooting marbles, flag-football, jump-rope, punch-ball, softball, etc.—were done “in season” and in unison. There were so many kids in residence, always in motion and always at play, that Parkchester was also known as “Storkchester.”

Parkchester was 100 percent Caucasian. There was a waiting list to live there. The application process required photographs of the prospective tenants and in-home interviews by Metropolitan Life Insurance agents, to assess suitability for residence in the new development. In this manner, no African American families were admitted. To keep this onerous policy in perspective, racial segregation was practiced in many other Bronx neighborhoods, where individual realtors, rental agents, and building managers were responsible, as opposed to single, very identifiable, corporate entity. Ultimately, this segregation was reversed, with unintended consequences. As a result of the 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* ruling, children from predominately African American, low performing grade schools were bused into the Parkchester grade schools. The hope was that these children would thrive once enrolled in a better school. Instead, the busing policy was a significant factor in inspiring “white flight” to the suburbs. Finally, in the late 1960s, Parkchester was integrated.

The Parkchester Police, when not inanely preoccupied with keeping kids off the grass, were charged by the management with preserving good order and safety. The primary thrust of this goal was to keep outside youth gangs off the premises. Many of the police force were military veterans, and in their dark blue, authoritative uniforms, they were as effective as they looked. Thus freed from the necessity of forming alliances against an external threat, Parkchester youth were free to look inward for enemies.

In the 1950s, the population of the Bronx was approximately 35 percent Jewish. Parkchester had a population of 40,000, of which no more than 15 percent was Jewish. It was commonly believed, but not documented or proven, that the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company imposed an unofficial, “gentleman’s agreement” type quota on Jewish tenants, very much along the lines of those imposed by private colleges. Some attribute this statistical anomaly to Jewish ethnocentricity—a desire to remain in Jewish neighborhoods, and perhaps this is a part of the explanation.

For the most part, our parents either interacted favorably or ignored each other without incident. For example, my father



Playground, circa 1950s.

Photo courtesy of Parkchester South Condominiums archives.



Good Humor ice cream man, in white uniform.

Photo courtesy of Parkchester South Condominiums archives.



East Quadrant basketball courts, circa 1950s.

Photo courtesy of Parkchester South Condominiums archives.

belonged to a shuffleboard club with equal numbers of Jewish, Protestant, and Irish members. The club hosted an annual, secular Christmas party for the members' pre-school children, which I eagerly attended.

However, after the age of five, when school began, the Jewish and Irish youth gravitated into two separate worlds. Jewish children and most of the small minority of Protestant children attended public schools and wore regular clothing. The majority of the much more numerous Irish Catholics attended parochial schools, the closest being Saint Helena's, which was tuition-free. They wore a uniform consisting of a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a dark blue tie for the boys and a blue jumper with a white blouse for the girls. The Jews and the Irish stood out like two distinct tribes. Anyone, and everyone, could immediately discern who was what.

There was a constant, low-level tension between the Irish and the Jewish youth. This tension was not invented in Parkchester. It had existed in our parents' time on the Lower East Side where Irish and Jewish youth gangs had battled over their respective territories and religions. In a like manner, Parkchester was territorialized. It was divided into four "quadrants," North, South, East, and West.

Each had its own playground area, mini-park, and like a small city-state, its own flagpole. The South quadrant was traditional Irish territory. The West was recognized as Jewish territory. The North had the only ball fields. It attracted both Jewish and Irish youth and was a borderland where, by necessity, enemies learned to precariously coexist, and sometimes fight. The same was true of the East quadrant, except there it was a matter of basketball courts.

At first, I just understood that there was hostility. Later, I learned its name, anti-Semitism, and its more recent origins. The Irish Catholic Church played a role. In addition to the “ordinary” Catholic anti-Jewish dogma from the fifth century AD on, in the 1930s, in Ireland, various Catholic journals and newspapers warned against the Jewish role in spreading communism, and in contributing to a general atmosphere of moral corruption.² In addition to the parents’ prejudices against the Jews, many of the teachers (Brothers) in Parkchester’s parochial school came from Ireland, and I assume that in class they expressed the general anti-Jewish rhetoric to which they had been exposed in Ireland. And Parkchester was target rich; there were more Jews there than in all of Ireland.

The actual anti-Semitic incidents were not frequent, and not all the Irish behaved badly all the time. The Irish kids fought among themselves as much as with us, and I would guess that a relatively small fraction of the Irish accounted for most of the anti-Semitic incidents. There were ice balls thrown through the synagogue’s stained-glass windows, name-calling, and occasional fights, resulting in no more, for me, than bloody noses and sprained wrists. I would say that the majority of the Irish kids were passive observers to these type incidents, and I had no problems whatsoever with the Irish kids who lived in my building—we interacted “normally” when we met in the elevators, lobby, and entrance area. But, for me, there was a constant awareness of what *might* happen, as informed by what *had* happened previously.

For example, early in my sophomore year in high school, when I was feeling particularly grown-up and tough, having moved on

² Dermot Keogh, *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland*, (Cork University Press, 1998), 92-95.

from childish junior high school, some friends and I were playing basketball in the East Quadrant. Our ball rolled onto an adjacent court being used by Irish kids our age, and a bit older. One of them picked it up and threw it over the playground fence. As one of our players went to retrieve the ball, he was pushed hard several times and challenged to fight a bigger Irish kid. I came to his defense, shoved the Irish boy back, and challenged him to do something about it. He backed off, but his friends chided him for doing so.

When we left the playground, the more numerous Irish followed us, taunting us to fight them. Then they rushed us. Those with me ran. Only my best friend stood fast. The Irish surrounded us, but it was me that they wanted. I imagine they had to avenge the honor of their compatriot who had backed off and remind me of my proper place in their view of our universe. There were about ten of them. They selected their friend from the basketball incident to fight me.

I cannot recall exactly what I felt at the time, but I think I was terrified. The Irish had a definite psychological advantage; they were already picking the next guy to fight me when this round was done. I did not want more than one fight, so I chose not to provoke a rematch. I fought back just hard enough to preserve my honor. It was a standard schoolyard fight, not much by movie and television standards. We pushed each other several times, and then grappled and boxed badly. The others cheered him on with suggestions that he should kick me in the balls, which unnerved me.

But it remained a fair fight, and it did not last long. In retrospect, I think we were all trying to act tougher and meaner than we actually were. "Technically," I lost, so there was no need for a rematch. But my relief was dampened by the fact that all but one of my friends had left me in the face of danger. I feared being alone and was ashamed for my fleet-footed friends. I dreaded that the next time might be worse.

Sunday mornings were particularly unpleasant. My parents would send me to the bakery, which was owned by Jews, for rolls, a sliced, seeded rye bread, and buns. But the streets, and the bakery, were teeming with the Irish, coming from and going to Mass, responding to the call of the Saint Helena church bells. They were

dressed in their Sunday finest, and I was not. I stood out conspicuously as the only Jewish kid on the “bakery run mission;” it was me, and only me, against “them.”

Most of the time nothing happened, but once as I walked to the bakery, I noticed an older man, dressed in a suit, presumably coming from or going to Mass, chiding a group of Irish kids for attacking another youth for not going to church, in effect, not being Catholic, when they, themselves, were not at church. I guess I had dodged that bullet by a matter of minutes.

Parkchester’s anti-Semitism triggered in me a different response than it did in most of my friends. Based on observation, I would say my friends viewed their not frequent anti-Semitic experiences as independent and isolated instances of bad luck. The incidents were not tests of honor; they were to be avoided and, failing that, gotten through with a minimum of response. Even the few really tough Jewish kids portrayed that attitude. I, however, viewed the incidents as an inter-related continuum and tied them together with our overall history of oppression.

From the age of twelve and onward into college, I read all I could on Jewish history and anti-Semitism, trying to understand its basis and, more importantly, why the Jews were so easily victimized. The Holocaust made the biggest impression. I could not fathom why most Jews went passively to their slaughter. I was gripped by documentaries, based on captured German film, depicting Lithuanian Jewish families being shot and dumped in mass graves by Lithuanian collaborators working under German supervision and encouragement, in late summer and fall of 1941.³

Particularly haunting were the images of the women who had been forced to strip naked by their executioners. They were moments from death yet trying desperately to preserve their modesty by seeking to cover, with only two hands, their three most private areas. They were so vulnerable, so in need of protection. I was gripped with alternating waves of shame, sympathy, anger, and fear.

The scenes presented two incomprehensible extremes: the scope of the Lithuanian barbarity and the lack of resistance by

³ British Broadcasting Corporation, *The Nazis: A Warning from History*, 1997, Disc 2.



Lithuanian militiamen at execution site in Pajouste Forest, 1941. Jewish women in background are being forced to strip naked before being shot. Photo from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum archives. The views or opinions expressed in this book and the context in which the image is used do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of, nor imply approval or endorsement by, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

the Jews. The murderers had mothers, wives, and children of their own, yet they could kill their mirror images without mercy. A recently published history establishes, based on a firsthand account, that the Lithuanian savagery offended even German Army sensibilities.⁴ The Lithuanians' lack of a moral compass defied comprehension. And how could the Jewish men not will themselves to die protecting their wives, sisters, daughters, and mothers? Who could remain still while their women were stripped naked and then slaughtered? One way or another, they were going to be shot. Why not at least be shot trying to resist?

⁴ Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich At War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), 217-218.

My mind placed my mother in those scenes—her family came from Lithuania. I wondered who would have been there to save her and her sister, had my grandparents not immigrated to America in the late 1890s.

The Holocaust and World War II presented a paradox that I struggled to resolve—almost a million Jews had fought in the Russian and Allied armies against the Nazis, and there were some notable instances of Jewish resistance, such as the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the Bielski Partisans, the Kovno Partisans, and the uprisings at Sobibor and Treblinka. And yet, the vast majority of the Jews were slaughtered without resisting. Clearly, for the Jews not in a military structure, the means to resist—the weapons, the organization, and the training were virtually nil. When I looked around me, I was not reassured. My father was a rough and tumble guy who would brook no intimidation, but I was not sure whether the majority of the other Jewish adults around me were of the same spirit. Accordingly, I resolved to learn how to fight and how to be strong.

Parkchester also heightened my awareness of political and social power, who had it and who did not, and its relationship to opportunity. Clearly, the Irish had it in Parkchester and in the Bronx at large. I was also vaguely aware, in a very simplistic manner, that people known as Episcopalians ran vast parts of America and controlled the presidency, while the Baptists ruled in the South and the Mormons in Utah. My people, the Jews, wielded no such political power. Others determined where we were welcome and where not, and what we could be and what we could not be. All of this was based on ancestry: those who had the right kind, and those who did not. My future was bound by my ancestry.

GLOSSARY

AC-47. A two engine, DC-3 type aircraft used to provide fire support to soldiers on the ground.

ACAV. Armored cavalry assault vehicle. A modified M-113 with one M-2 and two M-60 machine guns.

AK-47. Russian designed 7.62mm assault rifle. Very rugged and dependable.

Ambush Patrol. A small group of soldiers, usually five or fewer, set up at night, outside the main Laager or NDP, to intercept enemy soldiers on the move in the immediate vicinity.

Army Brat. A term used, with pride, by the children of army personnel to describe themselves.

BAR. Browning automatic rifle. A .30 caliber automatic rifle with a 20-round magazine used in WWII and Korea. Replaced in the US inventory by the M-60 machine gun.

BOQ. Bachelor Officer Quarters. On-base housing for unmarried officers. Usually consisting of a bedroom, bathroom, and shared kitchen facilities.

Ball Ammunition. Regular ammunition, as distinguished from Tracer Ammunition

Battalion. US Army formation commanded by a lieutenant colonel containing four batteries or companies.

Battery. A US artillery unit, commanded by a captain containing about 100 soldiers and six cannon. Equivalent to a company.

Bazooka. A shoulder fired anti-tank weapon system employing a rocket propelled shaped-charge projectile

Body Count. The number of enemy soldiers killed. A key, but often inaccurate metric used during the Vietnam War to measure success.

Brigade. US Army formation commanded by a colonel containing two or more battalions.

Bush. Slang for the jungle.

Butt Pack. A canvas pack worn on a soldier's **Web Gear**, in the lumbar region, to carry essential equipment.

- C-7.** A twin-engine army medium transport aircraft called the Caribou.
- CH-47.** Large multi-purpose helicopter, known as the Chinook.
- C-123.** The Provider. A two-engine air force transport aircraft used for paratroop training and combat resupply.
- C-130.** Four engine transport aircraft capable of landing on dirt airfields.
- CO.** Commanding Officer. Usually referring to a company commander.
- Charlie.** Slang for Viet Cong, pronounced phonetically as “Victor Charlie.”
- CP.** Command Post. Location of commander and his key personnel where the command and control function is accomplished.
- Colt .45.** Standard issue .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol.
- Command Group.** The commander, his key staff and associated RTOS required to accomplish the command and control function.
- CIDG.** Civilian Irregular Defense Group. Groups of local Vietnamese recruited by the US Special Forces as mercenaries, who usually lived with their families in the Special Forces camps when not on patrol or interdiction missions along the border areas.
- Claymore.** A small, shaped charge, anti-personnel mine, firing ball bearing size projectiles.
- Company.** US Army formation commanded by a captain with about 185 soldiers organized as four platoons and a headquarters element.
- Donut Dolly.** Slang for a Red Cross girl (serving coffee and donuts).
- F-4.** US fighter-bomber, commonly called the Phantom, used to support soldiers on the ground.
- F-105.** US fighter-bomber, commonly called the Thunder Chief, used to support soldiers on the ground.
- FDC/FDO/FO.** Fire Direction Center. A place where soldiers working under the FDO, Fire Direction Officer, compute the settings to be transmitted to the guns to hit the target radioed in by the FO, Forward Observer.
- Fire Team.** A sub-element of a squad containing four to five soldiers.
- First Sergeant.** The senior NCO in a company or battery. Revered for their toughness, wisdom, experience, maturity, and judgment. Roughly equivalent to the fabled Roman Centurion.
- FM.** Field Manual. Official, authoritative US Army publications containing approved doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures for all combat and combat support activities.

Four Deuce. 4.2-inch mortar.

Fourragere. A cloth and metal shoulder loop representing a military award, distinction, or membership in a unit.

Friendly Fire. Artillery, air strikes, and ground fire from our own forces which inflict unintentional friendly casualties.

GP Small/ Medium Tent. US Army general purpose tent that can nominally sleep 4 and 10 soldiers, respectively.

HAWK. Homing All the Way Killer. A US radar and missile medium altitude anti-aircraft weapon system.

Happy Hour. Time set aside in military clubs for reduced price drinks and other special attraction to encourage attendance and promote comradeship.

Headspace and Timing. Pre-firing adjustments to the M-2 machine gun bolt and firing pin assemblies to ensure proper functioning of the gun in automatic fire.

Honest John. A US surface-to-surface missile system.

Howitzer. A relatively high angle of fire artillery piece. Can be fired from behind a hill mass between it and the target.

Huey. Standard US UH-1 helicopter used in Vietnam to transport troops, supplies, and serve as fire support platform firing rockets.

Hump. Slang for trudging through the jungle (the **Bush**).

KP. Kitchen Police. A term describing various clean up and serving duties in support of the cooks, assigned to (non-cook) soldiers on a roster basis to ensure fairness.

Laager. A type night defensive position (NDP) for a battalion or larger unit in the field, from which to be resupplied by helicopter in preparation for continued operations at daybreak.

Leg. A term of derision for non-paratroopers. Referring to soldiers who have to walk, using their legs, to get to the fight, as opposed to paratroopers who jump into the fight.

Lensatic Compass. Standard army compass used for navigation and adjustment of indirect fires.

LZ. Landing zone. A natural or man-made clearing to accommodate helicopters.

M-1 Carbine. Standard light .30 caliber rifle/carbine used in WWII and Korea. Capable of automatic fire. Used a smaller, less lethal, round than the M-1 rifle. Had a 20-30 round magazine. Replaced by the

M-16 during the Vietnam War.

M-1 Rifle. Standard US Army .30 caliber semi-automatic rifle used in WWII and Korea. Had an eight round clip. Replaced by the M-16 during the Vietnam War.

M-2 machine gun. Heavy US Army caliber .50 machine gun.

M-16. Standard 5.56 mm rifle issued to soldiers in Vietnam. Capable of automatic fire. Had a 20-round magazine.

M-17 Protective Mask. Standard US Army “gas mask.” Worn on left side, in a canvas case.

M-48. Standard medium US tank used in Vietnam.

M-60. Light, 7.62mm machine gun.

M-113. Standard US Army tracked, tank-like armored personnel carrier (APC). Could carry upwards of ten soldiers (a squad).

M-1911 caliber .45 Colt pistol. Standard side arm from WWI onward. Semi-automatic with a seven-round magazine.

Mortar. A relatively simple high angle of fire weapon system capable of firing from behind a hill mass or other barrier between it and the target.

NCO. Non-commissioned officer. A soldier in the rank of Corporal to Sergeant Major. Most commonly used as a generic term for any grade of sergeant.

Napalm. Jellied gasoline bomb fill. Highly combustible upon detonation.

Nike Hercules. A US radar and missile high altitude air defense weapon system.

NDP. Night Defensive Position. A temporary position for company size units or smaller, from which operations will be resumed at daybreak.

OCS. Officer Candidate School. A training process to produce officers from the enlisted ranks.

OH-13. A light, two-man observation and command and control helicopter.

Officers Field Ration Mess. A dining facility for officers offering standard army-issue food, at a fixed rate.

Out. Radio brevity code word meaning, “I have nothing further to transmit.”

PRC-25. Portable Radio Communications. The standard back-pack FM field radio used in Vietnam.

PX. The Post Exchange. An on-base army facility offering clothing, toiletries, jewelry, furniture, garden, and other department store-like items.

- Platoon.** US Army formation containing 44 soldiers organized as four squads and a headquarters element.
- Point Man / Slack Man.** The Point Man is the first in line in a tactical formation, responsible for maintaining the compass direction and pace count (distance travelled). He must be able to “read” the environment for signs of the enemy. The soldier to his immediate rear is the Slack Man. He covers the Point Man, maintains a pace count, and provides over-watch security. These are the two most important and dangerous jobs for an infantry unit moving tactically.
- RC-292.** A man-portable FM radio antenna mounted on a sectioned mast.
- ROTC Summer Camp.** A six-week basic training camp for ROTC cadets between their junior and senior years.
- RPG.** A rocket propelled grenade with a shaped charge warhead, used by the Vietcong to attack US vehicles, bunkers, and even hovering helicopters.
- RTO.** Radio-telephone operator. The soldier who carries the PRC-25 field radio, commonly called the “Prick 25.”
- R&R.** Rest and recuperation leave. A one-week leave granted to each soldier to such locations as Australia, Hong Kong, Thailand, The Philippines, and Hawaii.
- Recoilless Rifle.** A weapon system firing a relatively low velocity projectile with a shaped charge warhead. Part of the propellant charge is allowed to exhaust at the breech end, producing a rearward momentum which counterbalances the forward momentum of the projectile. The net effect of this momentum balance is no recoil.
- Registration.** The process of adjusting artillery firing tables for local metrological conditions and variations in cannon/projectile velocity in order to produce the most accurate fires possible.
- Roger.** Brevity code word used on the radio to mean “I have received your message and understand.”
- SKS Carbine.** A Russian-designed forerunner of the AK-47, subsequently manufactured by Communist China.
- S-2.** Intelligence Officer on a battalion or brigade staff. In combat, primarily responsible for collecting and disseminating information on the enemy.
- S-3/S-3 Air.** Operations Officer on a battalion or brigade staff. In combat, primarily responsible for preparing plans and managing

their execution. The S-3 Air is one of his subordinates responsible for planning and managing the execution of air support operations. On division staffs, or in separate formations commanded by a general officer, these staff officers are designated G-3/G-3 Air.

Shaped Charge. A warhead formed around an inverted, copper conical liner. Upon detonation, the conical charge blows forward, forming a hot jet of gas and molten copper which can penetrate armored vehicles.

Snipe Hunt. A fool's errand; a prank. Named for the Snipe, a shore bird that is difficult to hunt/catch. The term, sniper, derives from one skilled enough to shoot this difficult quarry.

Spoon. The handle of a hand grenade.

Squad. US Army military formation containing 10 soldiers.

Stick. A row of parachutists on one side of the airplane. Terry and the Pirates. An American action comic/newspaper comic strip series set in China with a wartime theme. Popular from the mid—1930s to the early 1950s.

Thompson-sub-machine gun. The .45 caliber “Tommy Gun.”

Topographic Map. A map representing a depiction of the terrain as seen from above, indicating elevation and shape.

Tracer. A rifle or machine gun round with an incendiary charge in its base that produces a red glowing trail to mark the projectiles trajectory as seen by the person firing it.

VRC-47. Vehicle Radio Communications. A configuration of the standard VRC-46 vehicular mounted FM radio used in Vietnam. The VRC-46 had a single transmitter and receiver. The VRC-47 had two receivers, so that two frequencies could be monitored simultaneously.

WP. Spoken as “Willie Peter.” White phosphorus. A shell or hand grenade filling that produces thick white smoke when exposed to air upon detonation.

WASP. White Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

Web Gear. Term for canvas harness and belt system used by soldiers to carry canteens, packs, holsters, first aid kits, etc.

XO. Executive Officer. Usually the second in command in a company, battalion, or brigade. Usually one rank junior to the commander.

INDEX

Symbols

1-2 Infantry 171, 173-174, 180,
184-186, 190
1-4 Cavalry 171, 173, 180, 182,
184, 211
1-16 Infantry 174, 182, 187,
201, 204, 213, 216
1-26 Infantry 171, 174, 180-183,
186, 188, 190
1st Brigade 171, 174, 177, 181,
186-187, 197, 199, 209
1st Infantry Division 74, 78, 91,
100, 116, 140, 153, 158, 172,
194-195, 209, 213, 221
2-2 Infantry 211-212, 216-220,
223
2-28 Infantry 174, 187, 190,
214
2-33 Artillery 223
2d Brigade 92, 210
3rd Brigade 85-86, 91, 147, 161,
174, 204, 209, 211
4th Infantry Division 209
8th Infantry Division 64
9th VC Division 153, 209, 213
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment
210
25th Infantry Division 209-210
90th Infantry Division 64
173rd Airborne Brigade 209, 211
196th Brigade 209
273d Regiment 153, 158

A

Airborne School 44, 53-54, 58-
59, 61, 63, 233
anti-Semitism 17, 19, 24, 38, 71,
162, 231-233, 237

B

Berry, Colonel Sid 181-183, 186
Billet, PFC Conrad 159
Blanford, Captain Raymond 3-4,
91, 95, 97, 100, 105, 108-
111, 113-121, 124-133, 135,
138-139, 141, 144-146, 154-
157, 159-160, 221, 225-228
Blizzard, Sergeant 132
Bong Trang 171, 180, 198-199,
224
Boroski, Captain Ed 189
Bronx 9-10, 11, 14, 21, 52, 57,
67, 111, 235, 237
Burch, Specialist Henry 138,
159
Bushey, Lieutenant Peter 44

C

Camp, Colonel Marlin 140
Caruthers, Colonel Lawrence, Jr.
207-208
CCNY 31-36, 38, 40-44, 46-48,
50, 52, 99, 135, 233-235
Contratto, SFC Robert 54, 58-
59, 61

D

Daniel, Lieutenant Colonel
 Charles, Jr. 165-166, 175,
 201-203, 208
 DePuy, Major General William
 E. 153-154, 174, 192-195,
 197, 199, 211, 221, 225
 Detroit, Michigan 6, 227-228
 Dobol, Ted 97
 Dooley, Specialist Robert 6-7,
 107, 129, 137-138, 140, 142,
 143-144, 148, 160, 204, 227-
 228
 Drzewiecki, Dr. Ted 40

E

Eads, First Sergeant Troy 206-
 207, 212, 217

F

Fairburn, Sergeant First Class
 185, 189
 Fort Benning, Georgia 53, 57,
 63, 98, 116, 166, 230, 233
 Fort Bliss, Texas 51-53, 229,
 233
 fraternities 41-44
 Friedman, Mammie 29
 Friedman, Max 29

G

Galvin, Lieutenant Tom 196
 German Army paratrooper 230
 Gilbert, Major John 50
 Gilligan, Dick 233
 Gorman, Lieutenant Colonel Paul
 182, 186-187, 189
 Grimes, Specialist Harold 159

H

Hale, Sergeant First Class Loyal
 98, 121, 123, 128-129, 141-
 142, 144, 158
 Hanson, Victor Davis 95, 197
 Hutcheson, Captain John 4, 6

I

Irish 6, 8, 14, 16-18, 21, 33, 52
 70-71, 233

J

James, PFC Jimmy 159
 Jezior, Major Tony 167-169,
 174-175, 180, 187, 189-190,
 198
 Johannsen, Captain Nils 173,
 180
 Joulwan, Captain George 180

K

Kelley, Sergeant First Class Ber-
 nard 44
 Knight, Captain Peter 183
 Koshima, Sergeant Major 203-
 204
 Kurtz, Carol 62, 229, 230, 238
 Kurtz, Isidore 29

L

Lai Khe 85, 87, 89, 92, 95, 98-
 101, 106, 147, 155, 169, 171,
 175, 184, 192, 194, 207
 Lindquist, First Sergeant 104,
 109, 123, 125, 136, 144, 146,
 160
 Loc Ninh 2, 100-102, 104, 106,
 108-109, 111, 118, 120, 132,

140, 147, 153-156, 158, 160,
199, 224-225
Lyons, Lieutenant William, III
44

M

Madden, Captain Jim 180, 193
Mainz 57, 63-65
Marshall, Brigadier General S. L.
A. 157
Mavroudis, Major Antonio 44
McConnell, Mike 233
Meadows, Specialist Richard
123, 130, 144
Miller, Corporal 175-176
Miller, Sergeant John 138
Moran, Captain 48, 79-80, 233
Morton, Captain John 174
Mullen, Captain Bill 173, 180,
182, 184-186, 194-195, 199

N

Needels, Lieutenant Chris 185,
190
Nelson, Specialist David 139,
159
Nicosia, Chief Warrant Officer
Nick 67
Nicosia, Rene 67

O

Operation El Paso II 100, 147
Operation Junction City 207,
213, 221
Operation Tucson 204

P

Pale of Settlement 25
Parkchester 8-17, 21, 30-31, 35,

52, 70-71, 149, 233, 235
Pasco, Major Allen 44
Pendleton, Elmer 194
Pitt, PFC Roy 138, 159
Prek Klok 211, 216-217, 219,
221, 224-225

R

Rab dau, Major Jim 118, 120-
121, 141
Rasmussen, Specialist Raymond
131
Rinker, Major 203, 214
Rosenberg, Julius & Ethel 38
Rosenberg, Captain Kenneth 44
ROTC 36-42, 44-46, 49-50, 56,
68, 79, 98, 117, 135, 137,
150, 225, 234-235, 243
Russian Army 21, 24-29, 65,
160, 225, 232

S

Saigon 77, 85-86, 94, 101, 171-
172, 195, 207, 225
Schneider, Major Robert 203-
204
Smith, Lieutenant Elvin 98, 121,
123, 127-128, 138, 140-142,
159, 185
Sorrel, Lieutenant Al 98, 124,
126
Strickland, PFC Arthur 130
Sullivan, Specialist Curtis 159
Summer Camp (ROTC) 46, 48-
49, 56, 79, 135, 137, 233

T

Tactay, Specialist Eugene 159
Taylor, PFC Galen 159

W

Wackernheim 65-66

Wallace, Lieutenant Colonel

George M. III 162-163, 165-
167, 169, 174-177, 180, 183-
184, 186-190, 194, 197-198,

Walton, PFC Cleveland 159

Wilson, Captain Carroll 185

Y

Young, Captain John 44

Z

Zais, Major General Melvin 197