



**James McCullough**

## Police batallion serves nation

**By James L. McCullough,  
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946<sup>th</sup> Combat Military  
Police Batallion**

My unit arrived at the campus of the University of Mississippi in October 1962. The 66 Military Company was ordered there as part of a 25,000 man contingent of paratroopers and military policemen sent to help quell the violence precipitated by the admission of James Meredith, the first Black person to attend the university.

We joined a contingent of federal marshals, U.S. Border Patrol agents and federal prison guards already stationed on and around the campus to protect Meredith.

The first contingent of federal officials to arrive was attacked by students and elements of the local citizenry throughout the night that was using guns, bricks, Molotov cocktails and bottles. Buildings were burned and numerous cars were destroyed as well.

After three nights of violence, at least 200 persons were reported wounded by gunfire or injured in other ways. Two deaths were reported on the campus, but later, an "unofficial" report placed the number dead at 11.

Eventually the riots were brought under control. When the violence ceased, we were given responsibility for providing around-the-clock

protection for Meredith. Security perimeters were set up around his dormitory due to continued bomb threats and other threats of violence.

We personally escorted Meredith to classes and other areas where potential danger existed. Finally verbal assaults and other low level harassment became the norm.

The paratroopers were eventually withdrawn from the campus which left the military police behind to control the situation. My unit spent a total

of 41 days on the university campus before returning to our home fort in Arkansas.

Meredith graduated from Ole Miss and Columbia University Law School to later become a college professor, still engaging in the Civil Rights struggle.

I must say this was a frightening experience for a young soldier from the relative calm of Crockett, Texas; never having been exposed to this level of mass violence and death.

But more was to come. A few years later, my unit landed at Tan-Son-Nhut Airbase, Saigon, Vietnam for a tour of duty. I harbor no regrets for my service. It was educational. It made a young Black soldier from rural East Texas better understand the dynamics of race in America and allowed my exposure to a foreign people and their culture.

Answering the call to service made me a stronger person as well as a more enlightened citizen of this country.

## Letter to the Editor

As a youth growing up in Crockett, often I stopped in the lobby at Houston County Courthouse to view names of African-American soldiers who served in the Second World War from Crockett and Houston County.

Their names were displayed on a large board in the lobby. Names of those killed in the war were noted with gold stars by their names. I feel my respect for those soldiers somehow influenced my decision to join the military as a young man.

A tradition of service by young African-Americans from this area has continued up to the present. They have served honorably in Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, Afghanistan and the current war in Iraq.

Briefly I would like to note those from this area who distinguished themselves by serving in Vietnam to include myself, being the first soldier from this area to do so.

These are known soldiers who served in Vietnam and my apologies to those, which may have served, absent my knowledge:

Floyd Ball, Floyd Stewart, Lee Howard Barrs, Dave Durens, Jr. (disabling injuries), Albert Lee Warrens (disabling injuries), James Earl Simmons, Thomas E. Denby, Donald Ray Patton (disabled), Willie Creag Warrens (killed in action), Ruzell Grey (killed in action), Henry Earl Robbins (killed in action), Sammy Williams (killed in action), and Michael Jones Tutt.

Desert Storm-Gulf War: Terrell Porter McCullough, Alfred McCullough, Shawn Sweet.

The young men mentioned above served honorably in their branches of services as well as in their individual capacities with some making the supreme sacrifice.

So on this Veterans Day occasion, I extend my salutes to these brave young men as well as all others from

Crockett and beyond who offered themselves in service to this country in both war and peach.

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946<sup>th</sup> Combat Military  
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