# Son of Kentucky was doctor to all

#### Leitchfield native, Vietnam vet subject of tribute

solution feed into the patient's arm, then After Ron Fischer, a tube into the soldier's retired lawyer for U.S. windpipe to maintain Steel, received an invitation to his high school an open airway. Spec. 6 Francisco Flores, his reunion in La Crosse, Wisconsin, last year, he began making plans to blood pressure and attend. And as he did other vital signs. so, he said he thought of a friend and former high school classmate,

saphenous veins. He Russell Haas, who was applied a clamp to the killed in action in spurting femoral artery and sutured it. Once "I wondered how he the patient's condition died and so I started had stabilized, he was the research for an artihelicoptered to a surgicle in tribute to him," cal hospital from the Fischer, who lives with hardened dirt helipad his wife in the which was within feet Pittsburgh area, said. "I of the aid station. located some of the True to his Soldiers from the 1st Hippocratic Oath, Cave Battalion, 50th Infantry had done his job. He who served with him had stabilized and and were with him

Cave looked for the

medevac'd the wounded when he died. When Soldier. No one need these Soldiers learned mention to him that that I was researching the patient whose life for an article about he had just saved was Russ they invited me to an enemy soldier who attend the 1-50th reunion at Fort Benning from the battlefield by in April of last year." Soldiers of Cave's 1st The research from battalion, 50th Infantry the trip helped complete the story Fischer wrote about his friend, which July 1967

was published in the La Crosse Tribune's Memorial Day edition last year (http://bit. ly/1SSiwa0). It also meeting Cave at Fort icluded the story of Bruce Simms, the 19year-old medic who battalion surgeon. By During that trip to the time of Cave's

the Soldiers he spent him an interesting story indoctrinated about the did not seem to call of another man. chain of command. "I met many former Officers issued orders, medics while research-

non-coms and enlisted ing the story about men obeyed those Russ and Bruce," he explained. "They spoke very glowingly of the doctor whom they had served under in Vietnam and they suggested I may wish to write about him. My

interest was piqued." yer from Pittsburgh traveled to Leitchfield, Kentucky, where this doctor the medics spoke of, was from. It was there that he met and interviewed the daughters and many of the former colleagues and

friends of Dr. Ray Cave. The following is the first in a three-part story of Cave, as written and submitted to the Gold Standard by Ron Fischer in tribute to a doctor he never knew, but whose efforts did not go unnoticed.

### January 1968

s Kentucky-born Milroy was more Ray Cave looked nervous at the prospect Cave's disclaimers: "I know where you went vacated table at the battalion aid station, Landing Zone Uplift base camp, Vietnam, responsible to save medics approached wounded G.I.s in comwith a litter borne bat, under fire, with Soldier who was obvionly 10 weeks of medic ously in the end stage training at Fort Sam of hemorrhagic shock.

The wounded pare him. Soldier's lower legs had Sure, he had been been blown away and taught how to do intra- zone 10,000 miles from he appeared listless. venous feeds, apply The medics lifted the hemostats to stem casualty onto the table blood flow, inject morand Army Capt. Cave phine and apply tournihat Cave easily went to work. He knew quets, but those tasks his job was to stop the required steady hands bleeding and help the and concentration. He toon would not have breathing. He inserted and his fellow trainees surprised any of his



of Gen. Dwight

had traveled to

Eisenhower—Spurling

Germany in December,

into its medical train-

ing lessons which had

peen learned on battle-

ields in World War II

school faculty was

self-confidence and

future approach to

medicine was well

grounded in the train-

,000, about 80 miles

outh of Louisville.

There he joined five

Grayson County War

other physicians at the

Memorial Hospital. The

doctor served in multi-

obstetrician, emergency

ple capacities as an

room physician and

general family medi-

cine practitioner. On

any given day, he may

have delivered babies,

treated auto, hunting

tims in the emergency

department or tended

or farm accident vic-

and Korea. The medical

and strongly committed

to public service. Cave's

CAPT. (DR.) RAY CAVE (LEFT) WITH MEDICS at LZ Uplift battalion aid station.

had been shown recent neighbors and friends Vietnam combat footage of horrifically wounded Soldiers-Could he perform while ing fishing, baseball under fire?

Yet, when he met general terms what lay popular among his ahead, Cave had a quiet confidence which was reassuring. They would get through this

ombat medic Pvt. In physical appear-Toby Milroy, from ance, Cave was not remarkable. He wore glasses and was slightly over 6 feet in height. Hood, Texas, along with His blond hair was cut other members of 1-50's short in a "flattop," a medical platoon. Cave popular hairstyle at was to serve as 1-50's the time. He was older than many of the other Soldiers. In manner bers of the medical pla- was impressively inteltoon, Milroy had been ligent and able, yet he attention to himself. Following that initial meeting Milroy knew the medical platoon orders. Yet Cave did not was in good hands. But

comport with Milroy's Cave may have had his previous impression of own doubts. officers. From the start, Shortly after Cave the doctor engaged his arrived at Fort Hood, charges in conversa- he met the battalion tions about their home commander, Lt. Col. Al towns and interests. He Hutson, a decorated

The retired steel law- to establish the param- veteran combat officer. was attracted to the Photo provided by Cave family

CAPT. (DR.) RAY CAVE IN VIETNAM with

Son OF KENTUCKY- eters of their relation- Leitchfield friend, Miles earned a degree in DR. RAY CAVE, M.D. ship. Cave's informality and easy cordiality

Thomas, in whom Cave sometimes confided sometimes confided war memories, Hutson would hear none of Vietnam than he would to medical school. have admitted. Here he You're my battalion was at 19-years-old,

surgeon!" As his command and the Soldiers with whom he served would later learn, the University of Louisville School of Medicine had Houston, Texas, to pre- well prepared Cave for the challenges of combat medicine in a war

RAY CAVE'S ROOTS related to mem-L bers of his pla-

in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. He was the boy who grew up enjoyand music-particularly the trombone. Ray Cave, his mind was put excelled academically at ease. Discussing in in high school and was

Kentucky State College—now Western Kentucky University. Cave entered the University of Louisville 1945 to attend to medical school (class of Patton's dying husband, '60) along with 88 Gen. George S. Patton. classmates. One of his classmates, Louisville obstetrician Charles



CAPT. (DR.) RAY CAVE IN VIETNAM with civilian patients.

Tn Cave's senior year Oberst, remembers of high school, as a their medical training **▲** favor to his grand- as intensive. Oberst a family friend's daugh- worked long hours, parter and her date to a did not rely on his rank WWII and Korean War community dance. Cave hospital rotations, and Having been pretty lady, who was advised of his two years younger. designation as Family lore does not pattalion sur- record the name of the young lady's date that evening only that Ray and Frances remained together as a loving couple till a fateful afternoon some 42

years later. They married two weeks after Frances' According to fellow

high school graduation. Ray sold his trombone to buy Frances' wedding ring and they Vietnam vetmoved to Bowling Green where Ray eran and

mates learned in the operating room at the elbow of renowned surgeons such as Dr. R. Glenn Spurling, who had earlier served as

the first chief of sur-

gery at Walter Reed

Hospital. And at the

personal request of

ticularly during their their junior and senior years 30 percent of their training was surgery-related. The as many as 80 patients University of Louisville Hospital was nationally suffering from illness known for its trauma center which had been established in 1911. Cave and his class-

or malady. The next two editions of The Gold Standard will continue the story of Leitchfield's Dr. Ray Cave, his time in Vietnam and his

return home. For more photos and text from this story visit http://bit.ly/1TA34LW —or www.flickr.com/photos/ fortknox ky/albums/ 721576 68012912761. **■** 



DR. RAY AND FRANCES CAVE FAMILY PORTRAIT

THE GOLD STANDARD

EDITORS NOTE: This is the second in a three-part story about Leitchfield, Kentucky's Dr. Ray Cave, who served in Vietnam as the battalion surgeon for the men of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry. The following is the story of Cave, as written and submitted to the Gold Standard by Ron Fischer in tribute to a doctor he never knew, but whose efforts did not go unnoticed.

and blooded in

Vietnam. Troopers

USNS GENERAL

JOHN POPE

n Sept.1, 1967

Topper, who hailed

from Santa Claus,

an Army colonel,

about

medi-

started

Cave's breadth of

knowledge, but was

even more impressed

The ship arrived in

LZ UPLIFT

Capt. Ray Cave

along with the

renda Riggs of rest of the battalion BClarkson, Kentucky rememboarded the troopship, "USNS General John bers her mother Pope," in Oakland, bypassing more established physicians to travel from their home the Republic of South in Upton to young Dr. Vietnam. The "Pope" Ray Cave's office in was designed for maxi-Leitchfield. Her mom mum capacity, not for suffered from a colcomfort. Officers were lapsed lung which had been misdiagnosed by her previous physician. Riggs remembers the throng of people in mander, West Point Cave's waiting room. alumnus Capt. Dick She also remembers his kindness, corrective diagnosis and timely as an Army colonel. treatment.

In those days before Medicare and Medicaid, many patients could not afford Cave's services. They would learn not to worry. He treated them without charge and did so quietly without drawing attention. well with the communiremembers lengthy ty, were widely respected and appreciated. Eventually the family and Cara. Life was

Then, in July 1966,

Cave was inducted into the U.S. Army. He was commissioned a captain and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry. In 1967 the 1-50th had an authorized strength of 900 Soldiers, split among four field companies, tactical and special staffs. Cave's medical platoon, 26 in number, consisted of a headquarters' contingent and individual combat

Vietnam at Qui Nhon Sept. 22, 1967. Russ medics assigned to each Haas, Company C, of the platoons within wrote in a letter to his the four field compafamily in La Crosse, Wisconsin that the The battalion was temperature was equipped with, and was already over 100 expert in the use of, degrees when the armored personnel carriers. The APCs were tracked for overland mobility in rigorous terrain and were each equipped with a 50 caliber and two M60

ferred in August 1967 the Central Highlands from the 2nd Armored in the midst of hostile Division to the fabled hamlets and enemy 1st Air Cavalry divi-The North Vietnamese sion, already deployed main supply route, the Ho Chi Minh trail, fed within the 1-50 wore directly into this area. the vaunted 1st Air The primitive base-Cavalry shoulder patch, camp was a square and the air mobile 1st half-mile piece of dirt, Cav would now have mud and more mud. the overland mobility Continually under and punch earlier miss- threat from enemy

ing from its arsenal. attack, Uplift's perime ter was marked with three rolls of concerting wire stacked in pyramid style. Fire posts were set up with machine guns inside the perimeter to repel attackers; outside the wire there were additional foxholes to serve California and began a as listening posts and three-week voyage to to give warning for Cave's medical prac-

give him covering fire while he raced toward tice in Vietnam was dictated by unusual challenges. He was Haas covered most paired in rooms about responsible to minister the size of walk-in clos- to Soldiers who lived on of the 25 yards to the the battalion aid staets. Cave's roommate life's edge. The troopers was Company B., com- within the four line companies spent up to unarmed medic, Bruce they could count on a month in the field Sims, was running to Cave and his medics for Guthrie (U.S.M.A. '63). during serial search He would later retire and destroy missions which were punctuated trated his fire on the Upon learning of Ray's by all too brief respites hedgerow. Sims passing many years of two or three days reached Haas and later, Guthrie wrote of back at Uplift. They the doctor as a "blend were vulnerable to land began to drag him back Cave's duties allowed, toward cover when he, he would join them. of considerate and pen- mines, leeches, immertoo, was shot down. For sive..." Company A, sion foot, mosquihis actions, Sims postcommander, Capt. John to-borne malaria, humously received the oppressive heat, mon-

Cave spent most of his time.

sprang into action as

troopers attempted to

Eventually, Haas

Silver Star.

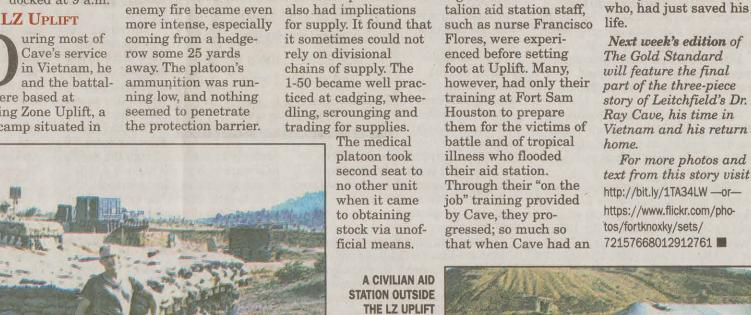
During Cave's tour



Courtesy photo uous. out as a RUSSELL HAAS AND BRUCE SIMS and so shared Cave's 1967, Spec. 4 Haas interest in medicine. wrote home "...I don't

He was impressed with like having my life hours a day." On Jan. 26, 1968 he wrote he with how down to earth was going into the field ring to the 173rd that day, "That's why Airborne Brigade. For a hand on the patient's my handwriting's shaky." Later, Haas would earn two purple hearts and a bronze action March 2, 1968. Haas' platoon was pinned down by the

star for valor, awarded after he was killed in called upon time and North Vietnamese out- long-standing connecside Thuan Dao as tion to its parent units lage. A few of the bat-"Pope" docked at 9 a.m. Cave's service row some 25 yards in Vietnam, he away. The platoon's and the battal- ammunition was runmachine guns. While at ion were based at ning low, and nothing Fort Hood, the 1-50 was Landing Zone Uplift, a seemed to penetrate administratively trans- base camp situated in the protection barrier.



because of its mobility

again to meet the lat-

est enemy threat. The

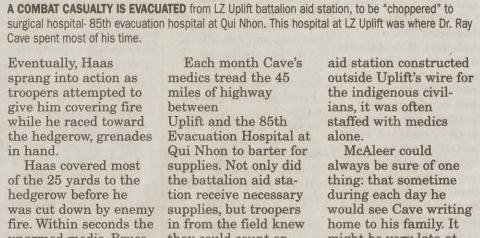
and fire power was

battalion's lack of

AREA of operation that Dr. Ray Cave created for the cal residence. He let his more experience medics run th station and would visit it when he could. (LEFT) CAPT. (DR.)

RAY CAVE IN

VIETNAM at LZ Upli



dirt-floored "patio"

station. And when

night. It might even be Haas. Every other man a steak and beer when- after the artillery bataside the battalion aid begun to systematically cannonade—the nightly

over a desk

THE MEDICS OF 1-50TH BUILD a bunker at

Capt. Charles with pen and paper. McAleer, who would **FEBRUARY 3, 1968** later retire as a lieuoby Milroy tenant colonel, served Dec. 13, was not surprising. The as the battalion's chief remembers the \_\_\_ firefight at Vinh 1-50 was a stepchild. It medical operations offiserved under the 1st cer and worked closely Air Cavalry till March with Cave. He rememhanging on a string 24 1968, then the 4th bers Cave had a way of Lt. Bob Ballard, the Infantry Division for a assuring wounded cer with the Louisiana month before transfer- Soldiers, often by tone of voice and by placing drawl, charge forward each of its parent units, shoulder, as if to reasdown. Milroy rushed the 1-50 was the fire sure the patient that he forward to render aid. brigade, the unit which was in good hands and Just as he reached the all that was necessary prone Ballard, he heard automatic weapons fire would be done. from behind and saw The medics who an enemy soldier go into fatal spasm not

staffed the battalion aid station grew in experience and experfront of him. Someone, Milroy never found out Next week's edition of enced before setting foot at Uplift. Many, Houston to prepare them for the victims of Vietnam and his return battle and of tropical illness who flooded For more photos and their aid station. text from this story visit Through their "on the http://bit.ly/1TA34LW -orjob" training provided https://www.flickr.com/phoby Cave, they pro-

tos/fortknoxky/sets/



## Leitchfield native remembered for compassion

By RON FISCHER PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

s Cave neared the end of his tour in Vietnam, EDITORS NOTE: This is the final in a three-part story about Leitchfield, Kentucky's he did not relent in his Dr. Ray Cave, who daily regimen in tendserved in Vietnam as ing to his Soldiers, yet the battalion surgeon he grew excited at the for the men of the 1st prospect of returning to his family. On June 25, Battalion, 50th Infantry. The following 1968 he wrote his last is the story of Cave, as letter home. Clearly, he written and submitted loved his family and to the Gold Standard despite all, he had by Ron Fischer in tribretained his humanity ute to a doctor he never and sense of humor. H knew, but whose efforts wrote his wife, in part: did not go unnoticed. "Dear Madam,

Received your inqui-

he enemy's lifery this date as to my less form colfuture plans. You are L lapsed into the correct in that I am spider hole which had soon to retire from miliearlier shielded him tary service. I might be from view. Lt. Bob interested in a full time Ballard was motionless. job as you offer, as both He had been struck husband and father. I with an RPG from such might even be interested close range that the in a sideline as physimissile had not detocian in a small country nated when it struck town. There are a few him. Soon Capt. Dick stipulations though Guthrie, Cave's roomwhich, if you will mate aboard the "Pope," accept, I will definitely was there. Toby Milroy

and Guthrie carried Ballard mand helicopter. In air, Guthrie radioed the battalion aid station and alerted Cave that their friend was badly wounded and in need of a miracle. landed at Uplift's helipad, close to Cave and the

awaiting med-DR. RAY CAVE WITH HIS CATCH FOR

The doctor immediately his favorite hobby. went to work aside the helicopter on First, I must have a his friend's inert form, loving wife of about 32 desperately trying to years of age. I would resuscitate some sign of expect her to be able to life. Nothing that Cave cook, sew, iron, wash had been taught by the clothes, and be a good venerable Dr. Spurling housekeeper. I would or at his distinguished also prefer that she be alma mater would be of interested in sporting use to him today. He had Ballard carried to ing and fishing. the aid station, as if the The children must be instill in his patients Cave's soft-spoken

change of venue would all females, cute, loving, the sense that all was serve a purpose. But it vivacious, and in the being done that was did not. Those who had approximate age ranges necessary, that to the grown accustomed to of 3 to 8 years. I would nature were surprised three daughters. at the oaths he uttered The country town as the doctor gradually should preferably have ing voice, and the abilihad known at Fort realized his friend was a population of around ty to communicate with Hood and LZ Uplift.

a mine while transporting wounded in Vietnam.

Courtesy of the Cave family his experience in Vietnam. His hospital THE DAY. Cave was an avid fisherman and rounds began at 4 a.m., Street expanded to enjoyed quiet moments on the water with and by the time he 8 a.m., the waiting room was often full. Patients didn't need appointments, but could simply walk in. He retained the assuring demeanor Toby Milroy and Chuck McAleer had observed

nad been awarded him.

the combat medical

padge he had earned

for having served in

combat under direct

enemy fire, about the

years earlier at Fort Hood and LZ Uplift. activities such as bowl-Cave continued to extent humanly possi-

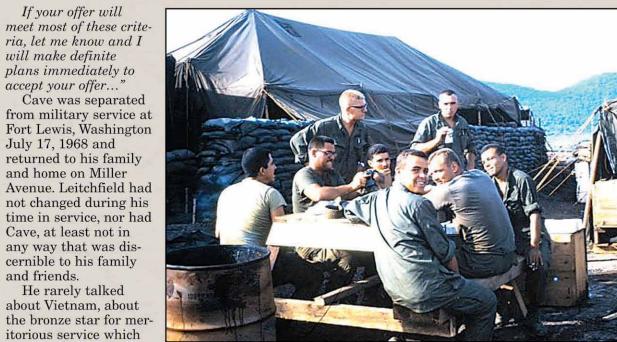
prefer approximately ble, he had everything under control. He still had the steady assura sympathetic hand on During breaks at the

SOLDIERS FROM THE 1ST BATTALION, 50TH INFANTRY, REPAIR an ambulance that was struck by memorialized at Fort



Photo provided by retired Lt. Col. Chuck McAll

AN EVACUATION "CHOPPER" USED BY THE 1ST BATTALION, 50TH INFANTRY prepares to evacuate a casualty in Vietnam



he Kentucky

▲ Association later

posthumously honored

Cave with a resolution

recognizing him as "a

remarkable gentleman

specially noting his

and country doctor" and

exemplary service to the

to the KMA

through his

poor. He had, according

(LEFT) CAPT. (DR.) RAY CAVE SPORTING HIS FLAT TOP AND GLASSES, STANDS WITH MEDICS and

the patient's shoulder. Cave's family flourr. Joe Petrocelli friends he had lost or ished as a fourth daughabout his days at LZ ter, Diana, was born in 1970. His practice grew straight-speaking His skills as a physi- and the group of physitrauma surgeon from cian had been honed by cians who had staffed New Jersey had moved Grayson War Memorial to Leitchfield many Hospital on East Market years earlier and had grown to rely on include talented young Ray Cave as a friend made it to the clinic at doctors recruited from and mentor. But this far away. The old hospiday he had received an tal building was no lonemergency call from the ger adequate, so a large regional medical center crew alertbuilt in the late '70s on ing him the west side of town, that they

the Twin Lakes Regional were Medical Center. Hospital enroute staff now included some with Cave 35 highly trained physito to the hoscians. Throughout the pital. The changes, Cave remained ambulance a steadying and guiding arrived with police Had any of his medescort and

ics seen Cave in his

have recognized the

same down-to-earth,

skilled physician they

nospital, he could most

likely be found, not in

alking outside with

He would retreat for

rivate moments doing

16 foot aluminum boat

on Kentucky lakes and

n this simple way the

knows to what extent

intruded on those pri-

he dwelled often on his

troopers like Russ Haas

his war memories

friend Bob Ballard,

or others who are

mbulance drivers,

RAY AND FRANCES CAVE

later years, they would Cave had earlier been driving home to have lunch doctor who served his with Frances, as he did every day, when he ately, Guthrie probably was stricken. He tried summed it up best in to get back to the hoshis post in memory of pital but didn't make it. his old friend to the Minutes later ambu-1-50th association's the doctors' lounge, but lance attendants discovered Cave's car "Ray Cave was a which had careened off great doctor and an

best efforts their loving 72157668012912761. ■

chnicians and nurses. the road. Ray Cave was being, who truly cared wheeled into the operwhat wasn't possible in ating room and upon Vietnam, fishing in his examination, Petrocelli was stunned. Cave's his abdominal cavity doctor relaxed. No one was awash in blood. Petrocelli did his best, but he knew it was not enough. The second most difficult thing Petrocelli did that day was to go in the adjoining room and explain to

for our Soldiers. Each and every one. Directly or indirectly, every man aorta had ruptured and better off as a result of Dr. Cave's tireless efforts on our behalf We owe him our gratitude, our respect. May For more photos and Frances and her daugh- https://www.flickr.com/photers that despite his tos/fortknoxky/sets/

"Ray Cave was a great doctor and an even greater human being, who truly cared for our Soldiers. Each and every one. ... We owe him our gratitude, our respect. May his soul rest in peace."

-Retired Col. Dick Guthrie, as posted on the 1-50th Association's website