



Seventh United States Cavalry Association

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Robert J. Anderson

"Troopers of the 7th Cavalry "

"GarryOwen"

Its June again as I sit down at the keyboard hunting and pecking on this edition of 7th Cavalry News! In reality we escaped the Federal Tax man this year but the due date for the column was advanced because of the reunion which is just a few weeks from today.

A look back on the 10th anniversary of entering Baghdad. On March 19, 2003, Luke Devlin, now 32, was a 22-year-old 2nd lieutenant, a 7th Cavalry tank platoon leader camped on the Iraqi border, about to cross what the Army called the Line of Departure as part of the 3rd Infantry Division's historic move north to take Baghdad and topple Saddam Hussein. Everybody was ready for it. We had been sitting in the desert for quite some time. At that point, it was getting kind of old. Everybody was ready to go home. It felt like the fastest way to go home was north, through Baghdad. As we crossed the LD, it was surreal. If I saw someone, I could open fire. Devlin's platoon was ambushed en route to An Najaf, forcing the Air Force spotter to call in bombs "danger close," within 400 meters of their own position. Later, in a dust storm, there was a brief, desperate exchange of machine-gun fire when an Iraqi force stumbled into them. Outside Baghdad, they encountered 16 dug-in T-72 tanks. Six U.S. tanks took them out "in about eight minutes." By the end of the initial invasion, they found themselves at Abu Ghraib, at the Baathist regime's notorious prison. I think I was just lucky a lot of times. We felt better about what we were doing when we saw the torture chambers and the mass graves there. There were exposed body parts, only partially buried. After the heavy combat was over, I can't remember one conversation where everyone wasn't happy to see us, wasn't happy that Saddam was gone. That made us feel good about what we had done. In 2003, our squadron must have had an angel - 1,241 men in, 1,241 out. In the second deployment in 2005, we lost five. In 2003, we came away with a great feeling. In 2005, it was just a mess. They were giving us the cold shoulder. There was a lot of mistrust. It was on edge. You thought, 'How are we ever going to win this war?' I didn't have an answer. It felt unwinnable.

Devlin was serving as an ROTC instructor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology when the surge strategy stabilized Iraq. Today, he said, despite the losses and the hard times of the insurgency, he has no regrets about the war he served in. Devlin noted the explosion of democratic movements in the Middle East that began after Arabs explosion of democratic movements in the Middle East that began after Arabs elsewhere saw Iraqis and Afghans voting freely after the Americans removed murderous regimes. I would absolutely do it again. I wouldn't change a thing. I am very proud of it. The birth of

democracy is always bloody.

As of March 5th Marion Siara reports that 29 men along with many spouses have indicated they plan on attending the C 1-7 reunion in Black Mountain, North Carolina on Saturday, September 7th, 2013. This gathering represents a contingent of warriors from the '70-'71 time frame including many who served in Cambodia. Marion also sends in this link regarding Pearl Harbor after visiting hours. It deals with the inurnment of Sailors who survived the sinking of the USS Arizona and wish to be placed there after their deaths to remain with their shipmates who were killed. It is a very moving tribute. Most people have no idea that this occurs. I know I didn't.

I pose this question: Is our National Security being compromised by the Political Gamesmanship currently being played in Washington? Garland Schnack sends this report from the Associated Press. A top general says federal budget cuts that will ground one-third of the U.S. Air Force's active-duty force of combat planes including fighters and bombers means "accepting the risk that combat airpower may not be ready to respond immediately to new contingencies as they occur." Gen. Mike Hostage, commander of Air Combat Command at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Virginia, issued the warning as the Pentagon braces for more effects of the automatic spending cuts triggered by the lack of a budget agreement in Washington. Hostage said that only the units preparing to deploy to major operations, such as the war in Afghanistan, will remain mission-ready. Other units would stand down on a rotating basis, he added. The Air Force didn't immediately release a list of the specific units and bases that would be affected, but it said it would cover some fighters like F-16 Fighting Falcons and F-22 Raptors, and some airborne warning and control aircraft in the U.S., Europe and the Pacific. The Air Force says, on average, aircrews "lose currency" to fly combat commissions within 90 to 120 days of not flying. It generally takes 60 to 90 days to train crews to mission-ready status. Returning grounded units to be ready for missions will require additional funds beyond Air Combat Command's normal budget, according to Air Force officials. The "stand down" will remain in effect for the remainder of fiscal year 2013 barring any changes to funding. "Even a six-month stand down of units will have significant long-term, multi-year impacts on our operational readiness." The Department of Defense overall faces a \$487 billion reduction in projected spending over the next decade and possibly tens of billions more as tea partiers and other fiscal conservatives embrace automatic spending cuts as the best means to reduce the government's trillion dollar deficit.

When the President submits his fiscal year 2014 budget, the Pentagon blueprint is expected to include requests for two rounds of domestic base closings in 2015 and 2017, a pay raise of only 1 percent for military personnel and a revival of last year's plan to increase health care fees and implement new ones, according to several defense analysts. Recently Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said another huge concern is the uncontrollable cost the Defense Department is paying for health care and other benefits. He said money spent on that is not being used on preparing pilots for missions and troops for combat. The greatest fiscal threat to the military is not declining budgets, Hagel warned, but rather "the growing imbalance in where that money is being spent internally." Aircraft maintainers plan to clear up as much of a backlog of scheduled inspections and maintenance that budgets allow. On the same day, the Navy confirmed that the Blue Angels aerobatic team would be cancelling the rest of its season.

Will Parish a veteran of the bloody Ia Drang as a member of Charlie 1-7 was recently accorded a high honor from the State of Oklahoma where he lives.

Jerry Riley who served with the 1-9 and is also a County Veteran Service Officer told State Representative Skye McNeil about Will's service and the ball was officially rolling. On the 8th of April Will journeyed to the State Capitol where he opened the session of the State Legislature as the Veteran

of the Week. He was introduced, lead them in the Pledge of Allegiance and also offered the invocation. He was presented with a Citation and an American Flag that had been flown over the State Capitol. Congratulations Will on achieving this recognition of your service to our Nation. GarryOwen! This report came about as a result of an e-mail that Shortround Migut, himself a veteran from C 1-7 sent. Thanks Ron! Will also reported to me that Joe Galloway will be in Tulsa on the 27th to speak at the Aviators Ball.

I received a nice letter from LTC Jeffrey Gottlieb who recently assumed command of the 4th Squadron, 7th Cavalry. It reads as follows: "Thank you for your kind letter. It is a great honor to join the long tradition of proud 7th Cavalry Troopers as the Commander of the 4-7. All remains secure along the DMZ, with the 4th Squadron standing Out Front on freedom's frontier in the Republic of Korea. GarryOwen continues its mission with the professionalism and dash one would expect. We stand in the boots and sit in the saddles of the fine Troopers who came before and recognize our duty to pass on the legacy to those who will follow us. Know that I will mention the association from time to time to encourage them to join. Having been a member of the 2nd Cavalry Association for a long time, I recognize the importance of what you and the association do, not only for the members but also for the Army and the Nation as a whole." Thank you Sir! Lest we forgot with tensions mounting daily in Korea that this Squadron of our 7th Cavalry literally goes in harms way each and every day.

The Department of Defense recently announced the death of three soldiers who were supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. They died April 6 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked their unit in Zabul, Afghanistan with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. They were assigned to the 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armor Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Georgia. Three more GarryOwen Troopers gave their last full measure in defense of freedom a long way from home.

From Military.com: Veterans groups are rallying to fight any proposal to change disability payments as the federal government attempts to address its long-term debt problem. Government benefits are adjusted according to inflation, and the President has endorsed using a slightly different measure of inflation to calculate Social Security and retirement benefits as well. Benefits would still grow but at a slower rate. Advocates for the nation's 22 million veterans fear that the alternative inflation measure would also apply to disability payments to nearly 4 million veterans as well as pension payments for an additional 500,000 low-income veterans and surviving families. Under the current inflation update, monthly disability and pension payments increased 1.7 percent this year. Under chained CPI, those payments would have increased 1.4 percent. The Congressional Budget Office projects that moving to chained CPI would trim the deficit by nearly \$340 billion over the next decade. About two thirds of the deficit closing would come from less spending and the other third would come from additional revenue because of adjustments that tax brackets would undergo. (Ed note: While I believe there are billions of dollars to be saved in our wasteful government, why do we need to "punish" those who have already sacrificed)? There are dozens if not hundreds of duplicate examples of wasteful spending at the Federal level. Why not start there?

Ron Killingsworth who writes the column for Headquarters and Special Troops for the Saber sent this report. I just read your column in the March /April issue and the letter from Walter "Doc" Roberts answered a question I have been trying to resolve for many years. I was assigned to FSB Mace from April '71 to about February '72 and worked very closely with the medics on the base. They had quite a large medical building next to the chopper pad and received medevac flights with wounded quite often. They also received wounded POW's. As part of an intelligence team from 191st MI assigned to the base, we interrogated the prisoners while the doctors worked on them to stabilize them for Evac back to the hospital in Bien Hoa or Long Binh.

We then sent the intelligence info back out to the unit that was in contact with the enemy. We also often took the medics into the local village of Gia Ray and let them to treat the local nationals, especially the children. We would hand out candy from the sundry packs to the village children. There was also a dentist on the base. We called him "Painless" and often took him into the village and he would pull teeth for the locals on the hood of my jeep. I have long been trying to reach some of those medics from Mace but had thought they were assigned to 15th Med. I would like to hear from any of the medics at FSB Mace from Apr/May '71 to early '72, who were obviously assigned to the 1-7 Cav. Thanks. You're welcome Ron and my thanks for this additional info. Ron Weeks, Delta 5-7 in 1968 has responded to Joe Persaud's question regarding grid conversions. In the March/April edition of Saber, you asked about map grid conversion. I asked the same question of a friend last fall and he provided me with these Websites. Thanks Ron for your help.

www.earthpoint.us/Convert.

www.arsitech.com/mapping/mgrs/

Carl Bruer sends in this report. I just received a call that Bill Keijzer passed away on April 3, 2013. He had a brief hospitalization and returned home after being told there was nothing more they could do for his lymphoma which was his second bout. Bill is another victim of Agent Orange. Bill was one of my medics in Vietnam in 1968, he was with HQ Company 1-7 Cavalry and assigned to C Company. He is survived by his wife Miko and his daughter Amy. I plan to go to his memorial service at Riverside National Cemetery on April 24th.

From Jim Savage comes another report: Kunduz Province, Afghanistan – Troopers from across the 3rd Squadron, 7th United States Cavalry spent several days training with their German allies, hoping for the chance to earn the coveted German Schützenschnur. The event involved not just the Germans and Americans, but members of the Dutch and Swedish Armies also based out of the Kunduz area. The Schützenschnur, or the German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Marksmanship was established as a decoration and has existed in various forms dating back to the Prussian Army of the 19th Century. In order to earn the badge one must qualify on at least two of three German weapons, the Heckler & Koch G36 assault rifle, the Rheinmetall MG3 machine gun, and the Heckler & Koch P8 pistol. Based on the results of the qualification, the badge may be awarded in three grades, bronze, silver, and gold. Troopers will be awarded their badges in a ceremony held by the Germans and attended by leaders of all levels based out of Kunduz. Once earned, Troopers will be eligible to wear the badge on their dress uniforms, which will serve as a permanent reminder of their achievement. More important than the award itself were the bonds built and solidified at this event. The daily interaction between the various nations involved in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan has been one of the hallmarks of this deployment for Saber Troopers and the opportunity to build friendships across many different cultures will pay dividends in the future.

I hope everyone who attended the Division Association reunion had a wonderful time. I'll see you at the next reunion in Chicago. Garryowen

Garryowen from Michigan.

Bob Anderson

Boots & Saddles Staff Writer

The 7th United States Cavalry Association