



## Seventh United States Cavalry Association

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Phill Zook                      Robert J. Anderson

"Troopers of the 7th Cavalry "

"GarryOwen"

*It seems like only yesterday that I was finishing up our latest column and now Labor Day has come and gone, Halloween is fast approaching, and then Thanksgiving will be upon us. Time certainly does fly by. I achieved 2 life milestones during the month of August: first Julie and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary and then on the 28th I reached the magical age of 65 years. So with this back drop I'll reach into the old saddlebags and draw out some e-mail stories that you have so generously sent in.*

*Ron "Shortround" Migut reports that the latest edition of the Federal Benefits Book is now online and can be accessed at: [http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits\\_book/2012\\_Federal\\_benefits\\_ebook\\_final.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2012_Federal_benefits_ebook_final.pdf).*

*The 2nd annual Gathering of Eagles was again held in Rhinelander, WI hosted by Jim Hackbarth in late July. The weather was absolutely perfect which we attributed to Jim's wife Opal. I was able to defend my winning toss in the sandbag event but we crowned a new overall champion in Bob Baldwin. Last place finishers in each contest had to dig a hole to help bury Jerry (a housecat) who had passed several months prior. By the time all competition was over the hole represented a magnificent foxhole that I remembered from VietNam when Captain (Colonel, ret) Patrick J. Keane made us dig in after a long day of searching for the elusive enemy in III Corps.*

*Marc Levy a Silver Star recipient while serving as a Medic in D 1/7 from '69 – '70 reports. I met up with Jeff Motyka, RTO for 2/6 platoon in D 1/7 Cav '70 in Salem, MA recently. We'd seen each other last on 23 April 70 in the TOC on LZ Frances after he got hit during a mortar attack. I had just dragged in Jean Locklear, who was also hit to be tended to by the Battalion Surgeon Captain Theodore Pluscinski III. Two guys from 2/6, Bob Tilton and Lorenzo Coleman helped me carry Jeff down the TOC's dirt steps. I heard someone moaning and looked up to see Jeff. We were the only guys in Delta (and possibly the Cav) who were dental retainers. I called out, "Jeff!" He said, "Doc!" and then fainted. At the time I didn't know how badly he was hit. He spent nine months at Walter Reed and was in Salem, MA for three days. We caught up on many things and recalled our tours. One day he mentioned a guy named Lorenzo, who had helped him into the TOC after a mortar attack on Frances. With the D 1/7 Morning Reports and luck I located Lorenzo Coleman. Lorenzo was fuzzy on details but glad to talk and looked forward to hearing from Jeff. We'd all been on Compton when it was mortared. Jeff and Lorenzo had the difficult task of cleaning out the bunker where James Aalund was KIA during the mortar attack. During the confusion he looked out a gun port at the worst possible time. When Jeff and Lorenzo were talking it helped him to recall that fateful night on the firebase including his bunker catching on fire, helping Jeff into the TOC, combat assaulting into Cambodia and other events and grunts from his tour. Jeff spent thirty years in the law enforcement division of the IRS. He's been married 43 years, retired, and lives on a fifteen acre spread in TN. Lorenzo lives in Chicago and is doing well. I put him in touch with Odell Newton of 3/6 platoon. Odell returned to VN about three years ago. For more interesting reading including some of Marc's poetry go to his link: <http://medicinthegreentime.com/medic-in-the-green-time-2/>*

*Ken Howser, Jr. the Secretary of the 12th Cavalry Association forwards this report. Bill Bocock recently went in for a pre-op consult with a physician's assistant prior to cataract surgery. Surprisingly, the PA had been a medic in the 1/7 from September '69 to September '70. His name is Richard Bohnemann and he came back to the States after Viet Nam service and was a medic at Walson Army Hospital at Fort Dix before going to Physician Assistant School. Although our time at Walson overlapped, we did not know each other there. You might encourage a little fraternal good will by letting the corresponding secretary for the 1/7 know that one of theirs turned out successfully and met up years later with a 2/12 trooper in far-off, exotic Phoenix. Semper Paratus! My thanks to both Ken for forwarding and to Bill for taking the time to make this report which is an excellent example of what makes the First Team the best Army Division. GarryOwen to you both!*

*Mike Kovitch sends us this report and a request. Lt. Raymond Johnson, Jr. was my 3rd Platoon Leader when I was assigned to Alpha Company 2/7 in July '66. I later became his RTO before being transferred to the CP to become Captain Davison's RTO and only learned of his passing from this website sometime in 1994. Recently, I posted a new photo and info album on the Alpha Company site including a couple of photos showing Lt Johnson receiving the Silver Star sometime in 1967. I am hoping that you might have a family contact for Lt. Johnson and can send them a link to the photo album showing him receiving that award. He was a fine officer, a great leader and just a good guy. It was with a big lump in my throat that I learned of his passing. I had always hoped to again shake his hand some day after Vietnam. You can give them my email address, if you like. Garry Owen! If anyone knows the whereabouts of Lieutenant Johnson's relatives, Mike can be reached at [kovmike@bellsouth.com](mailto:kovmike@bellsouth.com).*

*William A. Richardson, President Emeritus of OUR 7th Cavalry Association sends the following. I just read the 7th Cavalry article in the latest SABER and I want to thank you for your kind words about Eva and me. I am honored to be chosen as President Emeritus of the 7th Cavalry Association. I also want to thank you for all that you have done to keep our Association in order, in addition to your other duties as scribe and most of all Secretary and Treasurer. You have done an outstanding job and have really set the bar high for anyone who follows. I surely hope that some capable troopers will step forward to take the jobs as President and most importantly the duties of Secretary / Treasurer. It is going to be hard to find someone to take our place. Bill it has been my privilege and honor to serve with you, Jim Brigham, Rolando Salazar, John Guillory, Phil Zook and Bob Arbasetti during these last 14+ years as we tried (and succeeded) in building a stronger and more viable 7th Cavalry Association. Just to remind every one of our readers that it was Troopers like Bill Richardson, HORSE SOLDIERS IN THE FINEST TRADITION, who fought in the Pacific during World War II that had the foresight to form this great Division Association. We owe a debt of gratitude to them that mere words can not do justice! When you see Bill and Eva in Chicago, please stop them and thank them for their selfless sacrifice and service. GarryOwen!*

*The 7th Cavalry recently lost another of our great VietNam Battalion Commanders. William Dougald Macmillan IV died on Friday, July 12, 2013 at his home in Fayetteville. Born Jan. 25, 1926 he and twin brother of Robert Thompson Macmillan, who predeceased him in 2009. Dougald served as an Infantry Officer in the United States Army for over 33 Years and retired in 1981 as a Colonel. He was drafted in 1945 and commissioned A 2nd Lieutenant through Officer Candidate School in 1946. He graduated from UNC in 1949, and entered their Law School that same year. Recalled to active duty when the Korean War began in 1950, he later received his Regular Army Commission in 1956. He served seven tours overseas, two in South Vietnam. He was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Silver Star with olc, the Air Medal with V device and olc and the Bronze Star while serving as the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Air Cavalry Division in 1968. His other awards include: the Legion of Merit, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Republic Of Vietnam Cross Of Gallantry with Palm and the Senior Parachutist Badge. Dougald was one of the many whose call sign was Red Baron Six and I was proud to call him – friend! Part of this tribute was sent to us by our Web Manager – Jim Savage.*

*Chuck Holtz who served as a squad leader in A 1/7 in '71 reports that Rick and Joanne Hattan spent a 3 day weekend with he and Dee during the dog days of June. We had a great visit and it saved us from reunion withdrawal. He did the 15 1/2 hour drive straight thru from NY and did it again Sunday morning. What a "Trooper". What a friend! The guest quarters are most times without guest and ready, even if "any" of you are just passing thru and need a place for the night. My old comrade Lieutenant John Talbott along with several other warriors from A 1/7 are helping Bonnie Montana with information on her Social Security Application. It seems as though the government wants the name of the closest "town" where Jimmie was when he was killed in Cambodia in June of 1970. With the power of the A 1/7 web site and the documents that many possess the needed information was gathered. Only the government could ask such inane questions. Steve Place sends this report on Canadian fishing. Gary Woods and I ventured up to Foleyet, Ontario, Canada the last week in July for a fly-in fishing trip. We had a great week together (incredible). There were 9 of us on the trip, 7 guys I know from my home town and Gary and I. It takes about 11 hours to drive from here to the base lodge and under an hour to fly out to Rice Lake. Once we landed on the lake we taxied to the dock, unloaded our gear, food and supplies and set up our cabin for the week. The plane would return once during the week with ice and anything else we might need, other than that, there's no contact with the world. Next order of business is to get in the boats and head out on the lake, no guide, maybe a map? I brought a compass and we got down to the fishing. I had told Gary the fishing was pretty good, as I had gone with the group the year before, but had no idea what this week would bring. The total fish count for the group was over 2,400 walleyes and 490 some northern pike! This reads like it was really a fun time Steve. C 1/7 had a reunion in North Carolina the weekend of September 7. A report will follow in the next Saber. Phil and Suzanne Zook's daughter Christine was married on September 14th in Bloomington, IN.*

*"Hanoi Jane" Fonda recently told us veterans we need "to get a life," amid some protests and calling for a boycott of her role as Nancy Reagan in the recently released movie The Butler. To the younger generation of warriors Ms. Fonda went to Hanoi and was photographed while sitting on an anti aircraft gun. She later claimed she was naive. Sorry to inform you but we do have a life and won't ever forget your actions. Protesting in the US is one thing but to go to the capitol of our enemy was way too much. Many thought she should have been tried for treason for this action but she managed to wiggle out of that as well.*

*The year was 1996, the car a rusty old Ford station wagon loaned to a Wakefield couple, John and Debbie Benedetto, by a friend of theirs named Chester. He's deceased now and so is the Ford. When John and Debbie began cleaning out the car, in the back, among the empty oil cans and busted jumper cables, they found two small boxes containing four military medals: a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Air Medal and a Vietnam Service Medal. Three medals bore the inscription "John F. Fitzgibbons." No service affiliation. No rank. No clue as to how or why they had wound up in an old junker Ford, a generation after the Vietnam War ended. "I felt bad, you knew they belonged to somebody," says John Benedetto, 64, sitting in his kitchen next to Debbie, 59, his wife of 27 years. "You don't just throw those away." They put the medals in the office desk, figuring they would find the rightful owner, or his survivors, someday. That day would come 17 years later, in a selfless act of honoring a fallen soldier's service that should make this July Fourth holiday one that the Benedetto and Fitzgibbons families will long remember. "Bringing John home" was Debbie's phrase for returning the medals and it required persistence and luck. Some might even view it as going above and beyond the call of duty. From the moment they found the medals, the Benedettos were intrigued by the mystery surrounding them. But they felt stymied by the search process, and wary about what the outcome might be. The Benedettos of Wakefield wrapped the medals in a miniature American flag and mailed them to a cousin. They tried the local phone book at first, but there were no Fitzgibbons listed. Where else to look? It was a big country, and tools like Internet search engines*

were years away. Busy lives took over but from time to time, the Benedettos would take the medals out and wonder who was John F. Fitzgibbons? What had he done to earn them? You didn't serve in VietNam and earn a Bronze Star and Purple Heart for no good reason, John Benedetto knew. His own father had been a Marine who had fought at Guadalcanal. Still, he says, they didn't know the back story, and whether anyone wanted the medals back. "Did the family disown him because he went to Vietnam?" he says, recalling how polarizing that war was, how it divided the country and even families. "You just don't know." A decade passed and then, seven more years. The medals were, if not forgotten, at least out of mind. Then, one morning this May, John and Debbie were having coffee in the offices of S. Benedetto & Sons, the family's leasing business. For whatever reason and they are still not sure why, John pulled out the medals that morning and looked them over. "Oh my God," said Debbie, "you still have those." She realized the significance of the moment: In the years since the medals had been tucked away, new search tools had come along, and with them the real possibility of finding a veteran named John F. Fitzgibbons. This excerpt was sent to me by Bob Skole who was a T/5 serving in the 8th Cav in Japan. Unfortunately space dictated that I just whet your appetite and please stay tuned for "the rest of the story" in the next column.

Garryowen and BOO from Michigan.  
Bob Anderson  
Boots & Saddles Staff Writer  
The 7th United States Cavalry Association