



The Official Newsletter of the Seventh United States Cavalry Association

2014 Issue 1

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Robert J. Anderson

"Troopers of the 7th Cavalry "

"GarryOwen"

I hope that everyone had a Merry Christmas and celebrated the ringing in of this New Year in the finest traditions of the cavalry. Hopefully it isn't too late to rush out and get that special someone in your life a special thought for Valentine's Day. My first order of business is to report that my computer crashed and burned about the middle of November which left me struggling and wringing my hands for several weeks over my lost data and Saber To Do list. Fortunately (at least for me) and with the help of a 9th Infantry Division former NCO, I'm mostly back in business. Almost all of my data files on the Cambodian "Incursion" were lost but I did have hard copy printed files to work with. So my word to the wise is to make sure you back up your files regularly. Even though I did so the newer operating system didn't recognize some of my backups, especially my email files even after purchasing a conversion program!

Another Alpha Company Phantom Raider that I served with in Vietnam passed away recently. Bob Watson who lived in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania died in November. A contingent of former Phantom Raiders attended his funeral with his only request that GarryOwen be played at the funeral. I received notice from John Huger who served in C 1-12 Cav from '68 '69 that a 5-7 Trooper passed away on the 14th of November: FrankA Valadez. After passing this information on, Karl Haartz reported that Frank was one of the Mortar men in Charlie 5-7 and that he and five others were privileged to attend Frank's funeral. Sergeant Tony Dawson lost his battle with cancer on 9 December and was buried in Oak Park, Michigan. Tony was also a member of A 1-7 Derosing in May of 1969. Tony retired from both General Motors and the MIANG. Jim Savage, our Website Manager, reported that JerryA. Maguire, of Bravo 2-7 in 1970 passed away on 6 November 2013. Johnny H. Theodore who served in HHC of the 2nd Battalion during the Korean War passed away on 31 December. Walter Niemeyer who served with D 1-7 in '64 '65 passed away on 5 January.

Joe Galloway reports that he has sold his home in Texas and has relocated permanently with his lovely wife Doc Gracie and Jacques the Wonder Dawg to North Carolina. They were at Joe's old home packing up for the move when someone stopped by to take a peek and after a twohour showing made an offer. This must be a record in today's economy. Joe's vast library of over 3,000 books also made the move. As you may recall Joe is also serving on the 50th Anniversary Commission of the Vietnam War and is still advocating for veterans of ALL conflicts and we thank him for his tireless work.

An important message for all concerning our Veterans Administration Identification Card, and comes to us from Ron (Shortround) Migut, C 17. Your identity could be stolen from data that is contained in the magnetic strip on this card. Take the necessary steps to protect yourself. You can also get a new card from the VA which doesn't have compromising data embedded. New books recently published by 7th Cav veterans include: Eden Lost by Richard Taylor; Gray Horse Troop, Forever Soldiers by Charles Baker and The Missing Horsemen by Don Campbell. Suggested by Karl Haartz and Bob Kincaid. Reflections on Albany by James T. Lawrence, who was one of the original LT's from Fort Benning to the IaDrang and afterwards. Donut Dolly: An American Red Cross Girls Story by Joan Puffer Smith. Joan was one of the first Donut Dollies for the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in An Khe and this is a great story about how these few girls lived and brought some civilization to us guys so far away from home. Reflections and Donut Dolly were suggested by Bud Alley, a warrior from the 2nd Battalion. I recently ordered Reflections and Hal Moore and will be reviewing them in a later column. If you are a Civil War history buff I recommend the memoirs of John Singleton Mosby, who was a Cavalry Commander under J.E.B. Stuart. The book is full of history and letter excerpts to his wife regarding many of his campaigns, and gives us a glimpse into the cavalry tactics of the CSA.

Colonel Mosby is buried in Warrenton, Virginia which is the home of our President Emeritus Bill Richardson, himself a southern gentleman and career soldier. Happy Birthday to General Moore who turns 92 in February.

John Margenau was named Ambassador of the Month by Hawaii VA Loans. He served with the 1st platoon of C 17 '68'69. Sent to Glynn Donaho who was his OneSix and forward by Ron Migut. . Our Website manager Jim Savage has been working tirelessly to get the 7th Cav forms back online after a computer glitch by the web server. Maurice E. Waters is looking for any info on medic Walter L. Wonnacott who was KIA on 28 December 1966. Did anyone know him and where was he KIA? He started out with Delta Company 18th Cav and then was switched to 17th Cav. He was from Downey, California. He and Maurice served together in the 8th Cav.

Mikhail Kalashnikov, the designer of the primary infantry rifle theAK47, used against many of us in VietNam, Iraq, and Afghanistan has passed away at the age of 94. Once asked about his "contribution" to warfare he responded, "It's the politicians who are to blame for failing to reach an agreement and thereby resorting to violence." An estimated 100 million of this weapon are scattered around the world.

The final excerpt from the John Fitzgibbons story: After that, the family did its best to move on, much as America would, and especially other families who had lost loved ones in 'Nam. By the mid1970s, just a few years after John's death, his parents, Daniel and Jean Fitzgibbons, were semiretired from the family business and had moved to Florida but seven of the children stayed behind in the family house in Wakefield. In 1980, the house was put on the market and sold. No one is exactly sure what happened to the medals. "Emptying a 16room house was no small job," wrote Joyce in a June 21 letter to the Benedettos, guessing at the sequence of events. "The timing was such that the family was going to take advantage of an annual sidewalk collection, by the town, of unwanted items. We believe that at least one large box of family collectibles was inadvertently directed for collection. "Other household items were distributed among family members. Everyone assumed the medals were with one sibling or another but nobody took

A church deacon played taps on a bugle at the end of the service. Paul Delaney, Fitzgibbons' old BC buddy, is not a regular St. Francis Xavier churchgoer, yet he was there that morning. As he walked into church, DeVeer approached him for a private word. "Paul," said DeVeer, "they found John's medals." At her home in Tewksbury, Joyce Fitzgibbons shows a visitor her late brother's medals and expresses her profound gratitude towards the Benedettos, whom she still has not met in person. "We will be forever grateful for your kindness and the way you cherished the memory of a young man you did not know — but you knew he mattered to someone," she wrote in her letter to the Benedettos. "What a wonderful example of loving your neighbor as yourself." Arrayed on a table with a photo of John, these keepsakes are wonderful to have, she acknowledges. "My brother has always been in my heart, though," Joyce says softly. "I don't need medals to remember him. In our humanness, we need something tangible for our connection, I suppose. But I've always felt close to my brother, a knowing." The return of the medals has sparked a familywide conversation about John, she continues, and that's a very good thing. She would like to take the medals on a road trip from sibling to sibling, currently scattered from Vermont to Georgia. One stop will most certainly be Forest Glade, a veterans' cemetery in Wakefield, possibly in the company of the Benedettos. After finding whom the medals belonged to, Debbie Benedetto, after another exhaustive search, also located where Fitzgibbons is buried. His gravestone, it turned out, is roughly 50 yards from those of John Benedetto's father and several other family members. Debbie and John had been driving past John Fitzgibbons' grave for years. When she solved that final piece of the mystery, she again wept tears of joy. "We'll visit with him now," she promises. "He'll be a stop on our travels." John Francis Fitzgibbons is on Panel 38W, Line 57 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He was killed in action on 25 November 1968. Again, my thanks to Bob Skole who provided this wonderful and heart warming story of a hero gone but never forgotten.

The cold and ice has gripped Michigan for the past week and with widespread power outages some longer than seven days. I'm again in awe of our brothers in arms who fought the North Koreans and Chinese during the Korean War. As bad as it sometimes was in Vietnam at least we didn't have to deal with the numbing cold. You are not forgotten.

I never know where a column thought might come from but I got this idea from a friend at the Vet Center recently. Thornell was a member of the 173rd Airborne and made the only Combat Jump of the Vietnam War with the 2nd Battalion in February of 1967 prior to being wounded around Dak To and medevaced back to The World. We were talking about family histories and how those stories outline the history of our respective families. Thornell then pointed out that when you see the initial tag line in an obituary it usually reads like 1925 2012, which represents my father's dates. It's that dash between those 2 dates that reflect the measure of the person, so don't forget the dash. Sometimes we can get caught up in describing ourselves as a Vietnam, Korean War, World War II, OEF, or OIF veteran when in fact for the majority of us it's just a small percentage of who we really are. Our military experience shouldn't be the only adjective to describe who we are, although it was and is most likely the singular emotional aspect of our life. Embrace it, but don't let it govern your daily experiences. Another interesting story is that Thornell had been using the Detroit Vet Center prior to moving to Grand Rapids and mentioned the Team Leader there by the name of Cory Buckley. I asked if Cory had a brother that was MIA from Vietnam? It turns out that I have been wearing the MIA bracelet of SFC Louis

Buckley, Jr. for over 20 years. What a very small world indeed!

Several months ago a number of us old 17 warriors from RVN were discussing one of our soldiers who had been killed and we were trying to find out more information. One of the guys made reference to the Coffelt Data Base and provided the following link: . This database is a treasure trove of information on the casualties from Vietnam including in many cases the Task Force Joint Accounting record of the casualty. The only drawback is that you aren't able to print out any of the information.

Please consider putting your name up for 7th U.S. Cavalry Regiment Association Officer elections to be held at the Chicago reunion in July. Currently the office of President is vacant and my term as your Secretary/ Treasurer expires at the end of that reunion. To date I have only received one inquiry. It would be sad to think that OUR great association may go stagnant if no one steps forward. Speaking of that reunion, please make your plans ASAP as time is running short. So far Bob Palumbo, Mike Brennan, and I have committed from the A 17 '69 '70 group. Bob Arbasetti from New Jersey will be there too as well as a contingent from C 17 who served together in Cambodia. President Emeritus Bill Richardson and Eva are planning to attend. Chicago is easy to get to from almost any airport in CONUS. 2014 marks the 45th year since I went to Vietnam and next year is the 50th anniversary of the First Team going to war in the Central Highlands and the Bloody battles at XRay and Albany. The years are fast piling up on us and makes it that much more important to reach out to that buddy or to attend a gathering of your squad, platoon, company, battalion, or division. As mentioned a few lines ago time is running out.

From the Patriot's Almanac: the 1st of January: 1863, President Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation; 1892, Ellis Island begins processing immigrants in New York Harbor; 1902, the first ever Rose Bowl is played and Michigan beats Stanford; 2014, the 100th Rose Bowl is Played and Michigan State beats Stanford.

Don't forget that special lady in your life on Valentine's Day. GarryOwen from Michigan!

Attend a reunion, it's good therapy! 67th Annual Reunion of the 1st Cavalry Division Association 9-13 July 2014 in DuPage County, IL

Garryowen.

Bob Anderson

Boots & Saddles Staff Writer

The 7th United States Cavalry Association