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"Troopers of the 7th Cavalry "

Greetings to all my brothers in the 7th Cavalry! It is good to be able to sit down and write this column, recounting the bravery, heroism, and service of this "band of brothers" that stretches generation over generation, war over war, always willing to fight for the freedoms in which we believe. Thanks to every one of you for your brave and enduring service! I know that we hear that a lot more than we used to, and it seems that for some folks it is more of a greeting than it is a true gesture of thankfulness. However, I have come to accept each of those "thank you for your service" comments to express to them that it was my HONOR to serve in the 7th Cavalry, and it was my HONOR to faithfully serve my country.

We received a request for information from anyone who may have served with Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry. The son of John C. Kelley, Jr. is attempting to reach out for information concerning his father and his service in Vietnam. Here is his email to us: My dad John C. Kelley Jr. served in the 1st Air Cavalry Division 2nd Battalion 7th Cavalry Company B in Vietnam. Sadly, he passed away last November. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. I want to know if there is any information you can share about his company? Dad did not like talking about his time there probably for good reason. However, it would be great if I could possibly connect with some of his company to let them know he passed away. I have a few pictures I could share with them. Thank you for your help. The email is signed by Brad Kelley, who can be reached via email at brad.kelley84@gmail.com or by telephone at (901) 483-0312. Brad also tells us that he read a letter written to his grandmother by John indicating he was there at the end of 1968 into 1969. He went to Australia for his R&R around January 12, 1969. The letter indicated he only had a few more weeks left of his tour after his R&R. If you remember John, or have information about him, please reach out to his son. I can remember how I wanted to know what my dad had done in WW2, because he would never talk about it. And I never got the opportunity to find out just what he endured...

The following is a story that appeared in the Archer County News, Archer County, Texas. It was written by the editor of the paper, Barbara Phillips. A ceremony on Saturday, October 13, 2018, at 3:30pm was held at the American Legion Post 198 in Archer City to officially change the name from "The Ira Jones Post No. 198 American Legion, Department of Texas" to "Gary Johnston Post 198 American Legion, Department of Texas." The new name honors two Gary Johnstons: Gary C. Johnston (April 13, 1948-April 16, 1970) and SGT Gary S. Johnston (May 24, 1985-January 23, 2007). The Legion Post has held the Ira Jones name since their charter was signed on April 14, 1919. Reasons for the change according to Burk Morris, Finance Officer Post 198, "Ira Jones was a Veteran of WWI who was killed in Action. Although he was an Archer County resident, I never knew him or his family. We in no way want to belittle his sacrifice; he is an American hero. There are no longer any Vets from WWI in our chapter and we are losing more of the WWII guys nationwide every day. "The fourth phrase in the 'Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion states 'to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars' brings to my mind both Garys and many other Vets. I knew the first Gary and was his underclassman at ACHS. He was a good young man.

I am also a Viet Nam era Vet. I felt it was time to honor these two men and all the men and women of the more current era that served and sacrificed." SSG Gary Clarence Johnston of Archer City was Staff Sergeant D CO, 1st BN, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), USARV, Army of the United States. He was killed in action on April 16, 1970, in Binh Long Province, Viet Nam. He was the brother of Nubbins Johnston of Windthorst, TX. His friend Jeff Motyka, with whom he served, made a comment on the online "The Wall of Faces": "Gary and I were both members of Company D, 1st Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. Gary was in 3rd Platoon, and I was in 2nd Platoon. Gary was a natural leader, and he inspired confidence in all who served with him. Gary was a nice guy and was fun to be around. On the day he died, I had breakfast with him. We were relocating to a new area of operations that morning. Gary expressed concern for the unknown but probable dangers in this new area. Gary's concerns proved prophetic. In the days following Gary's death, Company D took numerous casualties. I think fondly of him often." SGT Gary S. Johnston of Windthorst, Texas was a 2003 Windthorst High School graduate where he was a standout football player and a standout individual. He made all-district his senior year when he played on both sides of the ball as a linebacker and fullback. He also played basketball, baseball, and ran track. Gary had lived in Archer City until the sixth grade when he moved to Windthorst. While in Archer City, he became a member of the 4-H Shooting Sports, earning numerous awards consisting of the 1999 Beretta's Top Gun Award where he received a new Beretta Shotgun. He had won various state championships in 4-H Shooting Sports and the Amateur Trap Shooting Association. In 2003, he received the Texas State Trap Shooters Association's Memorial Scholarship. Gary graduated from Windthorst High School with honors. He then attended Midwestern State University before enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in May of 2004. In his two-and-half-year career as a Marine, he had attained the rank of Sergeant. One of his proudest moments as a Marine was when he was assigned to the protection of President George W. Bush in Mongolia. He was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Windthorst where he had been an altar server and usher. SGT Gary S. Johnston was killed in action on January 23, 2007. Gary was preceded in death by his uncle and namesake, SSG Gary C. Johnston, who was killed in action on April 16, 1970; his paternal grandparents, Clarence and Cindy Johnston; and a special friend and namesake, Scott Edge. He was 21. How appropriate that this American Legion Post be renamed for an uncle and nephew, both lost in combat, one in Vietnam and one in Operation Enduring Freedom. Garryowen, Gary, we will see you again on Fiddler's Green. Until we meet again, I am proud to be your scribe and look forward to continuing to pen this column. I ask that you continue to send more stories my way so that I can share them with all of our brothers. Send more stories.