



The Official Newsletter of the Seventh United States Cavalry Association

2019 Issue 1

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"Troopers of the 7th Cavalry "

Greetings to all 7th Cavalry Regiment folks, and a most happy New Year to you and yours. If you're like me, you've already had several opportunities to break all those New Year's Resolutions that you made, like not eating as much, exercising more, not stalking all of the Vietnam Vet sites on Facebook, and spending more time thinking about the future instead of the past.

Can you believe that we are already this far into the New Year? Wow! Time flies when you're having fun, doesn't it? Time is moving so fast that the Reunion in June seems to be just around the corner. If you have not registered, please consider doing so as soon as you can.

Those of you who have been reading this column over the years surely remember Bob Anderson, the former scribe and current Treasurer of the 7th Cavalry Association. Bob has served the 7th Cavalry Association for almost two decades, he was scribe for 18 years. (I, on the other hand, have only been here for 12 months.) Bob was recently recognized by Kent County, Wisconsin as the Veteran of the Year. Following is a story written by Michael Kranz and published in the Grand Rapids News. Please congratulate Bob when you have the chance.

U.S. Army Veteran Bob Anderson has helped provide final honors at funerals for nearly 830 fellow servicemen and women in the past four years. "It's a way to give back and honor someone that like me and so many million other Americans, served their country in her time of need," Anderson said. "I think I have a calling to do this."

The United Veterans Council of Kent County recently named Anderson as Kent County's Veteran of the Year. The Kent County Board of Commissioners honored him at their meeting Thursday, Nov. 8. "It was surreal, actually," Anderson said.

Every other nominee was as equally deserving as me. It's just a tremendous honor to have received this award from the United Veterans Council of Kent County." Four others were nominated for the title. Anderson is a Veteran of the Vietnam War. He served as a First Lieutenant infantryman in the Army's 1st Cavalry Division, earning, most notably, a Purple Heart, two Bronze Stars for Valor and one for Meritorious Service. While overseas in April 1970, Anderson was wounded by shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade, earning him the Purple Heart. Later that same day, he said, the company commander was killed, forcing him to take over and lead the Troops out of danger. He and the platoon sergeant later carried his commander's body off the battlefield. He earned a Bronze Star for those actions. In June 2014, the 70-year-old Ada resident joined the Kent County Veterans Honor Guard, a group of just under 100 Veterans who put on about 600 military funeral honors ceremonies each year in the county. Since that time Anderson has participated in roughly 830 of them, sometimes up to four a day.

"You do what you can," he said. "There are a number of us that do anywhere from 160 to 180 funerals every year." Each ceremony consists of an eulogy, a prayer, a three-volley rifle salute and the playing of Taps, folding of the flag and presenting the flag to next of kin. Lastly, there is the final salute. Anderson's role, most often, is funeral detail commander, the person designated to talk with the family beforehand.

"The family members are always so gracious and so thankful that we're there," he said. "I can't impress probably enough how much an honor and a privilege it is for us to do this." Anderson concedes some funerals, particularly those involving suicide or a young Veteran, can be tough. But, he said, just like his combat service taught him, it helps to distance emotions from service.

"If our emotions get too involved then we aren't able to provide the service that the Veteran is entitled to," Anderson said. "Just like in combat, you can't let your emotions show or the Soldiers that you're leading are going to have some trouble." Thanks Bob, for all that you do and have done.

This from John Guillory, President, 7th US Cavalry Association:

Hello all you former Garryowen Troopers, I have a few announcements for those attending the 1st Cavalry Division Association 72nd Reunion.

1. To all of you participating in the Golf Tournament, 0900-1300 Wednesday, June 5, let me know if you want to make some current and former Garryowen mixed-teams. Please contact me as soon as possible with your name and contact information.
2. The 1/7 and 2/7 Open House at Fort Hood is scheduled from 1200 to 1500 Friday, June 7. If you have any questions or comments about this event, please contact me.
3. For those of you who desire a "Gold Spur" certificate, please contact me and provide your full name and your rank at the time you served in the 7th Cavalry. You must be at the 72nd reunion in order to receive the Gold Spur certificate, no certificates can be awarded to those who do not attend. Feel free to contact me at 951-278-3740 or <manhunter6869@yahoo.com>. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in 2019, in the great state of Texas.

Thank you, John Guillory, President, 7th US Cavalry Association

I had a great telephone conversation with COL (retired) Allen Brewster, who served as a forward observer for Company A, 77th Field Artillery during the Korean Conflict. During his time in Korea, he had the honor of being a forward observer for each of the line companies in the 7th Cavalry. He wasn't sure if being FO for all five-line companies was an honor or something else. He told me that it was a great experience, until the unit was overrun. COL Brewster is trying to find a person who was responsible for saving his life.

Do any of you know the whereabouts of Michael Dearth from Lodi, Ohio?
If so, please contact me and I will relay the information to COL Brewster.

I had another conversation with a Korean Conflict Veteran, talked at length with Bernie Shankman, currently of Cayce, SC. He sent me a few pictures of that war. And he told me the following story:

"I was drafted in 1943. When I reported for basic training, they asked if anyone in the group had experience riding motorcycles. Well, I'd been riding bikes forever, so I raised my hand. After basic training, I was sent to Camp Hood, where I became a motorcycle scout for an Armored Division that would be headed for the war. Before we had a chance to go, I was reassigned to the artillery and was sent to Camp Sill for training there. While I was there, some people from the Army Air Forces came around and asked if any of us wanted to be pilots. I raised my hand, and they sent me off to Camp Roberts in Colorado for flight school. But then the siege began at the Battle of the Bulge and all draftees were pulled back into the Army to await deployment overseas.

"In 1944, I was assigned to the 70th Infantry Division and we made our way to Camp Campbell. While we were in training there, someone came in and asked if any of us wanted to become officers. I raised my hand. I went off to Officers Candidate School (OCS) and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry. From that point, I became a training officer and moved to Camp Croft, South Carolina where I trained recruits. After a while there, I was transferred to Camp Roberts, California to again train recruits. In 1946, I was transferred to Fort Meade, Maryland, where I was mustered out of the service and I went home after being promoted to First Lieutenant.

"When Korea broke out in 1950, I was called back from the Army Reserve to active duty. My first assignment Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. My job was a scout platoon leader. We did many patrols scouting out the enemy, but we also attacked a lot of hills. So many hills I can't remember all the names and numbers of them.

On one attack in October of 1951, the Chinese were firing mortars from the top and a shell exploded behind me. I was hit in the back with shrapnel. It was bad enough that I had to be sent by train to a hospital in Pusan for surgery and recovery. Once I was ready for duty, I became a liaison officer for the 1st Cavalry Division G3. My first job was to be liaison between MG Harrold, the Division Commanding General and General Cassel, the commander of the British Commonwealth Division.

In 1952, the 1st Cavalry Division was reassigned to Japan, where we became part of the occupation force. Again, I was a liaison officer between the 1st Cavalry Division and the US Air Force. While we were there, we were instructed in winter warfare by Swedish ski instructors. I mustered out of the Army in 1956.

I still ride my motorcycle, I have a Harley-Davidson. I belong to the American Legion Honor Ride and to the Patriot Honor Ride. We provide honor mission motorcycle escorts for fallen heroes here at Fort Jackson." 1LT Shankman is a spry 95 years old and has many stories to tell. And I'm here to tell you he is still sharp as a tack. That's what being Cav will do for you!

Former PFC Larry Stevenson has been writing articles and stories for local newspapers for a few years, and he was kind enough to send some of them to me. I plan to share them with you over the next few issues. Larry joined the Army in 1964 and had the luxury of taking basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in February. After that, he went to Fort Sill for AIT. Then, on to the 1st Bn 7th Cav about 2 months before full deployment of the Division. Once in Vietnam, he was assigned as a mortarman in Delta Company.

This is one of his stories.

The year was 1965. The location was deep in the jungles of South Vietnam. The base camp at An Khe was now completed. Strong restrictions were placed on the local Vietnamese who came to the base camp as workers; they had to have a pass to enter and leave the compound. Portable electric generators were now in use, we had lights in the tents and bunkers and around the grounds. Beginning to look like home. We had constructed a drainage system, all by hand, to move the rain water away from the base camp to reduce the amount of mud we had to deal with.

One morning, I heard a loud whirring, thumping noise and looked to the sky. Slung beneath a giant CH-54 "Skyhook" was a gigantic refrigeration unit equipped with, of all things, an ice maker! It wasn't quite automatic, though, we had to carry water to the ice machine for it to work. Can you believe that there, in the middle of the jungle, we had ice to cool our drinks? What a life!! And life was getting better!!

During the few times I was able to go into the village, I would gather together a big bag of that ice and take it with me. The village kids knew me and would flock around me just to get some of that ice, they would even beg for it. I enjoyed passing the ice out to all who came to get it. This simple act gave me great pleasure; it was something to see those Vietnamese kids putting the ice into cups with their drinks or just eating the ice, usually something they had not done before. Here at home we take such simple pleasures for granted. Life for us has always been so much better."

Thanks for your time. Looks like I've run out of things to say for this issue. A reminder to you that if you would like to see a story published, then all you need to do is send it in! If you would rather tell me the story, then feel free to give me a call. My phone number, address, and email address are all at the top of the column. I look forward to the possibility of seeing some of you at the Annual Reunion in Killeen in June.

Garryowen,
Karl Swenson