



THE 12TH CAV

Trooper



Semper Paratus

Serving Those A/4-12 Cav Troopers who Served In The Republic of Vietnam 1968 - 1971

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The Begining: History of the 12th Cavalry

The 12th Cavalry Regiment was organized as a horse cavalry unit at Fort Sam Houston, Texas in 1901. Its mission at that time was to patrol the border between Mexico and the United States. The border was patrolled constantly and because of the poor roads in that area, cavalry was the only practical means for effective patrolling. In 1916 the 1st Squadron was ordered to the Canal Zone where it remained until 1921, but the 2nd and 3rd Squadrons remained on the Mexican border.

The unit was demobilized April 30th, 1924, at Fort Brown, Texas. In 1933 the 1st Cavalry Division was reorganized as a square division composed of two brigades of two regiments each. At this time the 12th Cavalry was added to the division continuously until 1949.

Early in 1941 the entire 1st Cavalry was assembled at Fort Bliss, Texas for intensive training. They were still there December 7th 1941 when Pearl Harbor was attacked. The division continued its intensive training and patrolling the Mexican border during 1942. In 1943 the division was ordered overseas to the Pacific theater as a dismounted unit. The turn in of horses at this time marked the passing of horse cavalry from the United States Army.

The division moved to Australia where the remainder of 1943 was spent training for amphibious and jungle operations. The division, although dismounted retained its organization as a square division. The 12th Cavalry Regiment was part of the 1st Cavalry Brigade.

Early in 1944 the division moved to New Guinea preparatory to being committed in combat. Near the end of February, 1944 the division saw its first action when it assaulted the Admiralty Islands. The 12th Cavalry landed on the Island of Los Negros, after much hard fighting the Admiralty Islands campaign was terminated around mid May.

The 1st Cavalry Division was next committed to the campaign to liberate the Philippines. The 12th Cavalry landed on the Island of Leyte in October 1944. The remainder of the year was spent in hard fighting before the island was cleared. The 12th Cavalry was awarded two Distinguished Unit Citations for its outstanding performance in the Leyte Campaign.

Next the division, by this time battle seasoned, was committed on the Island of Luzon on January 27th 1945. The Luzon campaign was not declared officially ended until June 30th 1945, after months of bitter fighting. Following the termination of the Luzon campaign the division began training for the invasion of Japan and was engaged in training when the Japanese surrendered. As a result of its fine combat record the 1st Cavalry Division was selected by General MacArthur to accompany him to Japan. The 12th Cavalry landed in Japan on September 4th 1945 and was stationed at Camp McGill about 20 miles south of Yokahama.

In March of 1949 the 1st Cavalry Division was reorganized as a triangular division, and the 12th Cavalry regiment being the youngest of the four regiments of the division was inactivated. They remained inactive until 1957 when the combat arms regimental system was established.

In a future the history of the 12 Cavalry Regiment will be continued from 1957 thru the present. We will also have an article describing the history of the Coat of Arms and the Distinctive Unit Insignia. The history of our regiment is colorful and something that will bond past and future members together. We were a proud part of the 12th History, and we should remember the past and the time since our service.



TROOPER SPOTLIGHT

Denny Patrick

Denny Patrick is a familiar face to those of you who have attended Troop reunions in the past. He and his wife Joyce, along with other family members, have been to several reunions. They plan to be in Niagara Falls this year.

A Michigan native, Denny graduated from high school in 1964, and started in the label printing business at \$1.25/hour, “with all the overtime he wanted”. He had a five year military deferment, wherein he attended college, graduating in 1969. That was a big year for Denny, because he married Joyce, and six months later was drafted into the Army. After his stint at Fort Knox, Denny served with A Troop in 3rd platoon, 69-70.

Returning from the war, Denny’s career took flight, as an executive/partner in a label printing business that supplied the automotive companies in Michigan. Those labels you see under the hood of your car might have been made at his company. More than once, Denny graciously donated printing services to the troop. He retired from day to day involvement in January 2008.

He and Joyce have two grown daughters, and three grandsons, with another on its way. They live on acreage near Flint, MI, and spend the winters at their home in Florida.

Along with fellow troopers Jim Good, Ray Gavi, Charlie Russell and Dennis Perino, Denny returned to Vietnam in 2007. He says that even though the traces of the Vietnam War have been erased, it was an “extreme rush” for him to recognize areas where he had been 37 years ago.

When asked if he had a special Vietnam experience, he says “heat, cold, dust, rain, mud, mosquitoes, leeches, odors, sleep deprivation, exhaustion, sights, sounds, weapons, mines, terror, pain, C-Rations, C-4 and friends.” That probably sums up the remembrances of many.

An avid hunter, fisherman, and boater Denny has recently taken up skeet shooting. Spending winters in Florida enables much fishing from his boat. Matter of fact, his main retirement activities are fishing, hunting, fishing skeet shooting, and fishing.

His dream is to enjoy retirement, “keep on the top side of the sod,” and spend time with his grandchildren.



Chairmans Corner

By John Sharpe

In a recent mailing done by Keith, we had 16 returned mailers. It is important to contact Cav brothers when you move to keep our records straight. Maybe these folks have retired and moved to places of their dreams. I hope that is the case and not their passing. It's hard to believe that we are reaching the end of the road and "Fiddlers Green" is a little more in sight. I am told that it has "Smoking and Non Smoking" sections.

This is all the more reason to attend a reunion. We are reaching a point in our lives where we can relax a little more. As Wally Mendoza would say, "Drink a little wine and put the past into perspective." This year's reunion, as you know, is in Niagara Falls. It's a time in our lives to take a vacation, see Niagara Falls. I have seen it several times and I am always amazed by the spectacle of this amazing natural gift. The company isn't bad either. I guarantee a good time.

The first reunion I went to, I didn't know what to expect. I immediately felt at home. I was with people that back in the day did some pretty remarkable things. Things that they don't talk much about to other people because if you weren't there you wouldn't believe. I think some of my friends feel a little guilty about not serving, so I don't bring it up. But I am proud of my service and think about those times everyday as I am sure you do also.

Last year was the fortieth anniversary of the Cav arriving in Viet Nam. I met many of these guys at previous reunions McShane, Swinford, etc. In two years we will be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Cav's return from Vietnam under the direction of Bob Curnell. During those three years the United States experienced the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, a manned

landing on the moon, Apollo 13, Woodstock, the Kent State shootings and protests in Berkley and Oakland Universities. You don't hear too much about Con Thien, Cam Lo, Quang Tri, LZ Nancy, The Rock Pile, etc. But for many of us, those were times and places that were equally as important.

The VFW magazine stated that during the four days of Woodstock, 109 GI's were killed in Vietnam. Now there are three times more people saying they were in Vietnam than were in Vietnam, and four times as many said they were at Woodstock. Those were interesting years alright. Something to contemplate. Drink a little wine and put the years in perspective. (I hate wine.)

Recently, I had a call from Keith Eaton. He and his wife were traveling to Frankenmuth, Michigan, a little tourist trap to the north. I called Dennis Patrick and we all went to dinner together. Dennis and I don't remember meeting each other in Vietnam, although we were there about the same time, but in different platoons. We met at reunions. All Vietnam vets have a certain bond, 4/12 Cav Vets have a brotherhood.

12th Cav In Action

Currently the 1st of the 12th Cavalry is in action in Iraq. With a tentative return date in December of 2009. Their AO is Ninewah Province in and around the town of Mosul. The 1/12 is comprised of 7 companies and they are engaged in civic improvements and training of Iraqi security forces.

Please keep them in your prayers, along with those sent out for our Brothers of A Troop.

Reunion 2009, in just a few weeks we will be holding the 2009 A Troop reunion in Niagara Falls, New York. Beginning September 30th our NDP will be the Crown Plaza Hotel in Niagara Falls, New York. The main event will be our annual Banquet on Saturday Night October 3rd. If you are a late bloomer and have not made arrangements for the reunion. Hurry and Call either Ken Dye at 253-229-5796 or Jim (Rag) Rinaldi at 585-392-6288. At each reunion we become again the family that we were back in Vietnam but now there is no rank to keep us apart. As a family we find that events of 40 years ago don't mean nuttin and we can enjoy our lives in the world. This time also helps our families to understand the things that we endured together so many years ago.

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