



# The 12th CAV Trooper



## Semper Paratus

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

Volume XIV, Issue 1

January, 2017

### Branson 2016 Is History

The 2016 A Troop reunion is history, those Troopers that missed the reunion missed a great time. Shows, Food and Comradery were the staples of this reunion. The Welk Resort was a great venue for our event and they stood tall in fulfilling all of our needs. Silver Dollar City also provided a great venue for us to enjoy. The weather was perfect and so was the company of old friends and their wives and families. We had some new Troopers attend and we also had a few of the Ft Benning newbee's attend I guess we didn't scare them off.

Thursday evening we attended the Million Dollar Quartet as a group we had great seats and enjoyed a great show. After the show some of our people had photos taken with the cast.

Friday late afternoon we had another group event a dinner cruise and show on the Branson Belle. We enjoyed watching Jeannie White and Sherri Taylor on stage as audience participants. The food and music was great.



Troop and Sisterhood Group Photo, Taken by Dave Cain, Flash Photo, Branson Mo.

### News Flash

Hello Brothers and Sisters, Happy New Year to Everyone. We will be returning to the Gold Coast Hotel this year for our Reunion. We will be marching in the Veterans Day parade again this year and there is a possibility of a group tour also during the reunion. That tour has yet to be nailed down so it will be a surprise in the August/Sept issue of the Trooper.

Be sure to read all of the information regarding the 2017 Reunion in this issue of the newsletter and remember to make your reservations early. Make this a real family affair rooms will be available 3 days prior to the scheduled events and 3 days after. There's a lot to see in Las Vegas and remember what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas

Peace, Rag

2017 Reunion Las Vegas Gold Coast Hotel and Casino
November 8th Thru Sunday November 12th

Trooper Name \_\_\_\_\_ Registration \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_
Dinner @ \$50.00 per person \_\_\_\_\_
Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_ Total Cost \_\_\_\_\_
Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_
Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Ladies wanting to attend \_\_\_\_\_
Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_ Ladies Luncheon on Friday \_\_\_\_\_
Please make your Checks out to A Troop Number of Men wanting to go to The
Mail Checks to: Ken Dye Shelby Heratige Center on Friday \_\_\_\_\_
10908 66th Avenue East
Puyallup, Wa. 98373
Trooper Platoon \_\_\_\_\_ and Year \_\_\_\_\_

2017 Reunion Las Vegas, Nv. November 8th through the 12th
Goldcoast Hotel and Casino
4000 West Flamingo Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 89103

This years reunion is being Hosted by the 1st Platoon, Jim Rinaldi and Ken Dye are co hosts for the event. If you have any further questions regarding the event feel free to give them a call at the numbers listed below.

There are two ways you can make your reservation for the reunion, the first is on line, the second by phone in both cases you need to give the the group reservation ID or Group Code: ATROOP7 this allows them to give the special rates we have contracted for this reunion.

Option 1 : Is reservations on-line: Go to (http://www.goldcoastcasino.com/groups) this page will ask for the Group Reservation ID or Code listed above. Our special rates will be available for the contracted dates. If you want additional days other than those listed you will need to do the phone reservation.

Option 2 : Telephone reservations for the dates of the reunion and or additional nights, call the Central Reservations department toll free at 888-402-6278. You will need to reference the Group Number ATROOP7 to receive your special discounted rate.

Room rates prior to the cut off date of October 7th 2017 are listed below.

Table with 3 columns: Room Rates, Deluxe Rooms, Rates including resort fee and taxes. Rows include Sunday through Thursday nights and Friday and Saturday nights for both Deluxe and Premium rooms.

All rooms have one king bed or two double beds; both smoking and non smoking rooms are available. Inventories of specific room types are limited. The hotel will make every attempt to accommodate requests for specific room types but cannot guarantee availability. Currently we have a block of 50 rooms set aside for this reunion and have the availability for more if these rooms are taken prior to our cut off date. If after the cut off date rates are subject to the current prevailing rate or a minimum 20% increase. Please make your reservations early.

Jim Rinaldi E-Mail : rinaldi01@frontier.com Phone:585-314-8782 Ken Dye E-mail kendye7@msn.com Phone 253-229-5796

### Chairmans Corner

We keep asking for people to write an article for the Cav Newsletter, This time we got 2 articles so you still have me here again. I want to relate a little story we all took part in.

I received a call from Don Knutty, 2nd Platoon and HQ 1969-70. What a wonderful surprise. I didn't know Don very well from Viet Nam as he left the field shortly after I arrived, but we spent Christmas Eve together on a bunker line. I knew it would probably be one of the most memorable Christmases of my life. I have been blessed with good friends and family. After about seventy years, the Christmases all seem to blend together, but for the Cav, our Christmas in Vietnam will always be remembered. It was cold and wet. The roaches were eating C-ration crumbs and the rats were eating the roaches. The circle of life. Kind of makes you feel all warm and fuzzy just thinking about it. An occasional "Pop Flare" illuminating the tangle foot and barbed wire. I don't know if you could get much further away from home. Ironically we felt safe, because we were in a firebase and not in a NDP. Despite the fact that we were within shelling distance from North Vietnam.

Don and I reminisced about that night and having our picture taken in the morning with a small Christmas tree someone had. We talked about old friends, Gary Axelson, Sgt. DiSanto, Pedro Holder. They are all at "Fiddlers Green". Don made my day. I urge you to make some Cav members day. Give them a call. No matter how long it has been. If you are in their town visit them. Life has not treated us all the same. Some are successful and poor, others are rich and unhappy, but probably all of us would like to hear from a fellow Cav member. Try It. You will both feel better.



L to R : Front: Dennis Perrino and Tom Oldham. Rear: Bob Rebbec, Bob Taylor, Mark Frutchey, John White, Neal Smith, John Sharp and Floyd Weaver



Gina Kalinowski , Andrea and Bob Richards waiting for photos



Our new Memorial has been placed in the Memorial Gardens at the Current home of the Infantry Museum and the Future home of the Armor Museum. This new stone was required due to material restrictions placed on all monuments in the gardens. It is polished granite. with our original plaque mounted on it's face. Long Live the Cav.



Willy ( Tony ) and Arnette Hunter with Dennis Perrino



## My Friend Jimbo by Fergie

The snow at Ft Knox, KY was light and this was the first time I had walked around in real snow. There would be many more first times in the Army. During that March of 1970 is when I first met Jim Cox and little did I know we would become lifelong friends. Jim and I did our advanced military training at the Ft. Knox, Ky. "Disney" barracks. The fancy brick ones, much nicer than the WWII style barracks we did our Basic training in. When we arrived, we were divided up into squads of five-six men, each squad had their own room. Everything else was common area. Sergeant Shoemaker, with the Smokey the Bear Hat, and loud voice was our drill instructor. When things weren't going well for you, the Sergeant was fond of asking "Do you have shit for brains!?" On the only leave we had, about half way through training, Jim, Glenn Costanza, Larry Goodlet, Jerry Willoughby, Richard Kelly, Gary Monks and I headed to the fine city of Louisville, KY for drinks and tattoos. Monks and I were the only ones that had shit for brains on that day and got tattoos.

It was another tumultuous time in American history, with the student killings at Kent State University by our National Guard and the U.S. excursion into Cambodia. There were certainly heated discussions on these subjects. We were all patriots, right? Upon graduating with the Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) of Armored Reconnaissance Intelligence Specialists (11D10) we then believed ourselves to be pretty damn smart. It was amazing how smart we felt. No more shit for brains. We all got orders for Vietnam and little did we know, except for Monks we'd end up in the same unit and same platoon on the other side of the planet.

Within a few days of arriving at Quang Tri Firebase with 1st Platoon, A Troop, 4/12 Armored Cavalry we were "in the field" manning a M-60 machine gun as crew members on Armored Personnel Carriers (APC). The reality of our situation had now fully set in; no more Disney barracks. During our year long tour, we spent most of our time on reconnaissance acting as the first line of defense and reactionary force for Firebases near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). At night, we usually set up a defensive perimeter in the dirt on some unknown hill. When we had those visits to the "Rear" area at Quang Tri Firebase for a few days' downtime and general maintenance, Jim was the guy you wanted to hang with and have a few beers, hence a name change to Jimbo.

Jimbo was fearless, smart and he followed the motto of the 12th Cavalry "Semper Paratus" or "Always Ready". Our platoon spent a number of months working in the "Backyard" around the Quang Tri Firebase and other remote Firebases along the DMZ. If anyone says the DMZ was off limits, our Commanding Officer, Captain Waldrop didn't get the memo.

Our mission changed in January 1971 with the military operation named Dewey Canyon II or Lam Son 719 and the South Vietnamese Army's invasion into Laos. Early in the operation A Troop, 4/12 Cav. provided security along Hwy. 9 close to the "Rockpile" and Firebase Vandergrift leading to the Khe Sanh Valley and Laos. There was plenty of fight in our area. In March 1971, A Troop, 4/12 Cav. arrived in the Khe Sanh Valley, where Jim would earn a Bronze Star Medal for his actions helping rescue a U.S. Army Sniper Team from atop a hill outside the Khe Sanh Firebase. That night was exceptionally dark and there was a light rain, a time to hunker down and hang tight. At about 0100 hours, the radio call came in that a U.S. Army Sniper Team was under attack and could be overrun. Jimbo was ready and drove one of three vehicles that broke out of our cozy hilltop perimeter. Andy Bellendir, another one of Jim's lifelong friends was driving the other APC that made it to the top of that slippery ass hill. Their combined skill during the extraction of the Army Sniper Team that night helped save American lives.

After finishing our tour in Vietnam and a short leave at home, we arrived in Ft. Riley, Kansas. Stationed together, of course we managed to get in some trouble again. Nothing serious, just an overnight stay in the Abilene, Kansas jail. This was after five big cornhuskers made those slanderous remarks directed at the questionable local ladies. Of course, we felt obligated to defend their honor. Were we set up? Again, I'm reminded of Sergeant Shoemaker's indelible words. Did I say Jimbo helped pay my \$15 fine and \$3 court costs?

Oh, the memories. It was an amazing journey with my friend Jimbo. We lost contact after the war. Then after many years struck it up again and never lost a beat. One of the best decisions I made was to check in with him again. He was a kind and gentle man with lots of love for those around him. He had such a terrific time at Branson, MO Troop reunion, seeing his old friends was very special for him. He said "Fergie this is just great, but I think this will be my last one."

He was glowing up until the end. Although he could only whisper those last few weeks, he could still smile right through the phone. Those whispers were always encouraging. We spoke that Sunday only hours before he left for Fiddlers Green. I said "I'm on my way for a visit Jimbo". His last words to me were "OK Fergie!"

On December 4th James Edward "Jimbo" Cox left on his Journey to Fiddlers Green.

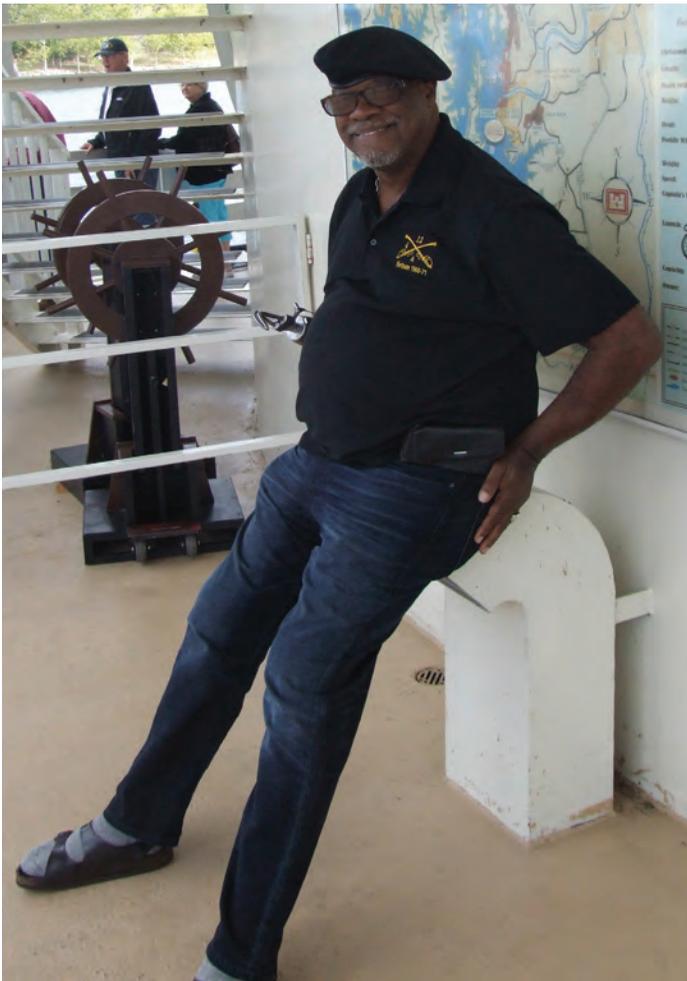
A Troop, 4/12 Cavalry were honorary pallbearers and represented at the funeral reception and graveyard services by Andy Bellendir, Walt Ferguson and Bob Curnell. Bob's wife, Nancy was there to help support us and the family. We all agreed, it was an exceptional honor for all of us to attend.



1st Platooners L to R Bob Kerin, Larry "Red" Goodlet Walt "Fergie" Ferguson, Glenn Costanza, and Jim "Jimbo" Cox



Nancy and Bob Curnell Waiting for Group Photos



George Gibbs enjoying the showboat Branson Belle



Gary and Linda Stover



The Trooper would like to thank the following people for their help in filling the pages of the newsletter. Joe and Lori Shue, Walt Ferguson, John and Cheryl Sharpe, Linda Eaton and Anonymous. With out the assistance of people like these, I would not be able to put together something that people like to receive.

Thanks Again The Editor



Ladies of the Sisterhood Taking advantage of the various shopping possibilities of Branson.  
L to R : Linda Eaton, Arnette Hunter and Janine Drake



A Troop was not the only Cavalry Unit on the dinner cruise. D Troop of the 9th Cav was also aboard. Here Bob Rebbec and Earl Schorp along with an unidentified Trooper from D Troop share some stories.



Chris and Delores Phillips Getting ready to enjoy the Dinner and Show on the Branson Belle



Diane Rebbec and Cheryl Sharpe enjoying the Evening on the Branson Belle



Carol and Bob Bice with Dale and Nancy Bail on the Belle



Bob Rebbec on Left presenting his hand made knife to Jim Littlepage winner of that silent auction



Mary Oscendosky and Ted Whipple on the Belle



Walt and Wendy Ferguson



Beverly and Glenn Lucas



Kerry and Annette Peple and Earl Schorpp on board the Belle

**The 12th Cav Trooper**

Is the authorized publication of The A Troop, 4th-12th Cavalry Association, 5548 Hazelwood Rd. Columbus, OH 43229. It is published biannually in the Winter and Early Fall.

The cost of this publication is paid by the donations of the members of the Cav Brotherhood.

**Mission Statement**

The driving force of the Association is to continue promoting camaraderie of A Troop 4/12 Cavalry (Vietnam Era) through reunions, memorial services, and communications.

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Being a Trooper from A Troop does not only mean meeting at reunions but getting together at other times to enjoy our friendships and to enjoy life. Here are two photos of John White 2nd Platoon 69/70 and Kent Drake 3rd Platoon 70 Ice fishing in Northern Minnasota. Kent told me the temperature was 32 below but the fishing shanty was so warm they kept the beer outside to stay cold. On the plus side Kent caught the biggest fish this year.



**HQ Platoon : L to R** Jeff Bloomquist, Bob Richards, Dennis Perrino Ken Kline, Charles Curnell, Keith Eaton, and Tom Oldham Missing from photo are James Mooney and Roy Weick

**At the Branson Reunion I ask for Items to be included in the Newsletter here is one submission.**

When ask to write something about this year’s reunion , it came to mind immediately that it was a light-hearted and fun event- a bit of relief from last years emotional meeting at Ft. Benning.

We were met with lovely accomodations, and offered fine entertainment on the Branson Belle and at the “Million Dollar Quartet” concert. There were luncheons and shopping excursions and hours of enjoyable reconnecting in the hospitality room. Linda and Keith Eaton made our trip so nice that **I almost forgot why we were there.**

I almost forgot that you men fought in a war-with many of you wounded both physically and emotionally.

I almost forgot the unjust reception you received upon coming home all those years ago. And the stigma you’ve endured since.

I almost forgot that you not only witnessed death in the field, but since your return from the front-with your fellow soldiers falling by the way insidiously and prematurely.

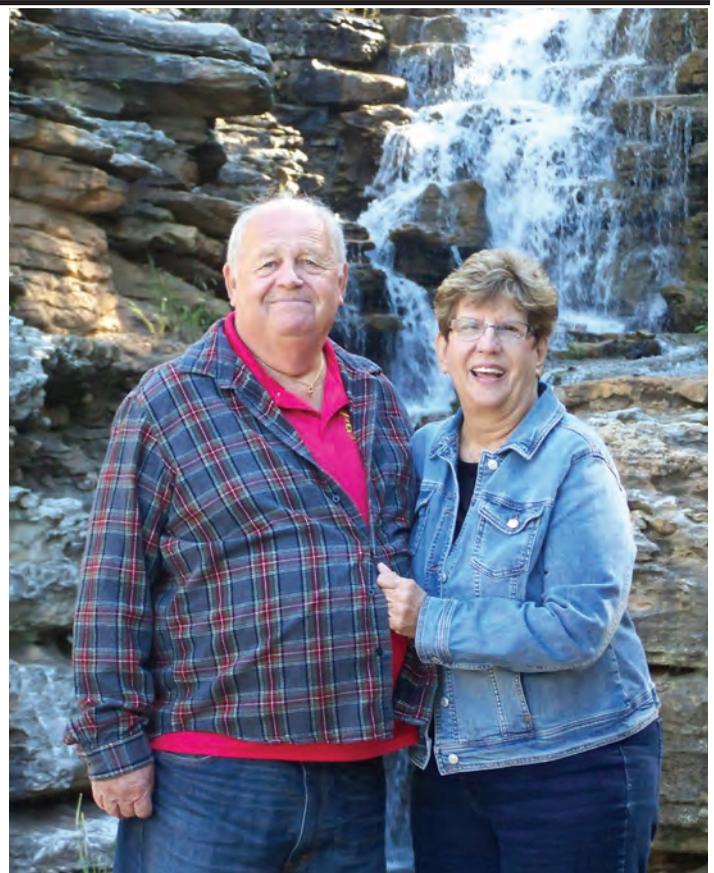
I almost forgot that you not only live with the memories of war, but that you must deal with the ever-present specter of Agent Orange and its ravages-- hovering constantly.

I almost forgot just how brave a man must be to have endured all that.

**But Not Quite**

As long as I live, I’ll never forget. You are my heroes. I’m proud to be married to one of you, and honored to attend reunions and be part of the fine group of people known as the A 4/12.

Anonymous



Al and Susan Christine at Lost Canyon Cave and nature Trail



### A Troop's Brotherhood

From the same hive, these "warrior" bees  
Each from different queen mothers  
The swarm, A Troop, 4/12 cavalry,  
Brought together by war, formed this "Band of Brothers"

In a land far away, our battle zone,  
Just passed where east meets west.  
We struggled with life, death, and pain.  
Our brother's hand always there, we are blessed.

We rode into battle on our iron horses  
With fire in our eyes and fierce determination.  
We were willing to die to save our brothers,  
But not for a nation.

Though we did live for the battle and battled to live,  
We fought hard to win the battle for our crew.  
our mindset was sincere and loyal  
And to freedom we were true.

Now we swarm each year to a new hive  
To talk and reminisce about the past  
The wisdom that comes with age,  
Sheds light and knowledge on things that last.

So when we make that last recon mission,  
It will be to discover, not to kill.  
The eternal brotherhood of A Troop  
Is not fiction but real.

You will discover when a brother rides through the gate,  
It is certainly okay to cry  
Because the basis of our brotherhood is our spirit and  
our love  
The only two things that never die

*This poem was penned October 1st 2016  
by our Poet Lauret Jim Littlepage  
1st. Platoon*



Joe and Lori Shue's Granddaughter Melanie poses with a Belle at the Branson Belle

Group Photos in this newsletter were taken by Dave Cain of Flash Photo in Branson Mo. Dave was approached at the last minute and fitted us between two other groups on Saturday night. And delivered our photos prior to check out Sunday morning.

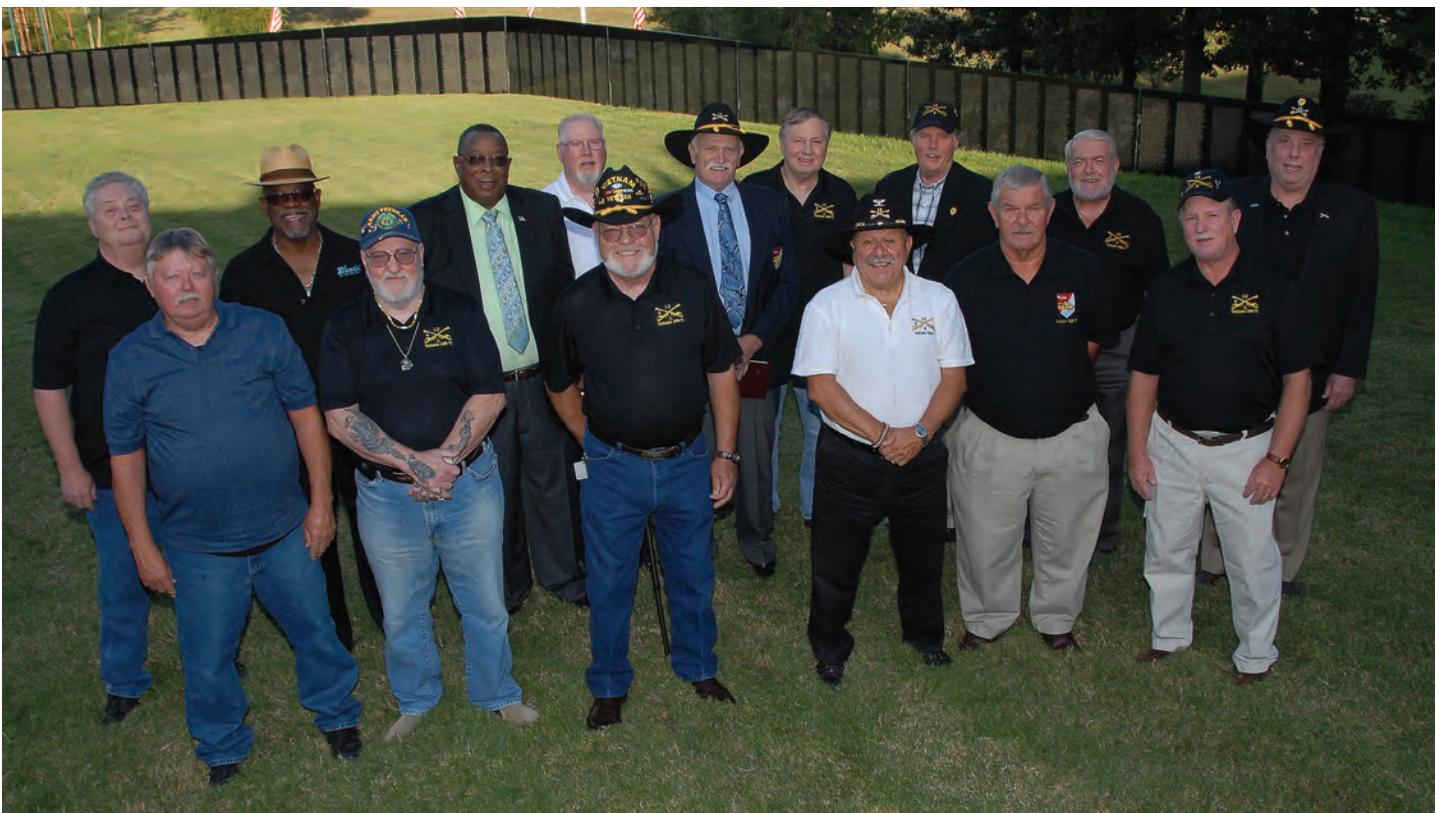
Thanks Dave

**Agent Orange Exposure :** The VA has a new app. for I Phones and I Pads, and it's free, detailing exposures, conflicts, dates, and locations. Go to (<http://go.usa.gov/cuxvB>) to download. Be sure to tell anyone who had boots on the ground in Vietnam to get on the Agent Orange registry. I met a Navy Seabee in the Vickburg VFW after our reunion who was at Quang Tri in 1968 who now has diabetes and knew nothing about the Agent Orange registry. We must all act as ambassadors informing veterans from all branches of service about the registry.

Bob Taylor Agent Orange corrdinator  
A Troop 4/12 Cav



**First Platoon: L-R Row 1:** Charles Cooper, Jim Rinaldi, Glenn Costanza, Ken Dye, Warren Swinford, Jim Littlepage, Paul “ Hap” Shannon, James Cox.  
**Row 2:** Larry Goodlet, Chris Phillips, Edward Kalinowski, Ted Whipple, Bob Kerin, Dale Bail, Bob Bice, Walt Ferguson, Joe Shue  
**Row 3:** Dave Larson, Kerry Pepple, Chuck Swiers, Warren Congleton, J.T. Tillman, Al Christine, Andrew Bellendir



**Second Platoon L-R Row 1:** Doug Wick, Floyd Weaver, Ted Vires, Dennis Perrino, Tom Oldham, Gary Stover  
**Row 2:** Michael Rich, George Gibbs, Tony Hunter, John White, John Sharpe, Mark Frutchet, Bob Rebbec, Neal Smith, Bob Taylor



**Third Platoon: L-R :** Dennis Patrick, Don Scott, Glenn Lucas, Richard Stefani, Earl Schorpp, Bobby Schlitzberger, Kent Drake



At one of the reunions several years ago, I met Don Scott. Don was third platoon 68-69. We both happen to be pilots and have gone to the airshow in Oshkosh, Wisconsin together twice. I never miss an opportunity to call a fellow Cavalryman whether I served with him or not. If I am in the area. Don said he would like to see his friend Steve Wilmer who he served with on Track 31. Steve lives in a somewhat remote part of the world, Larium, Michigan on the Kewenaw Peninsula. There are two interesting signs 1.) Miami 1990 Miles and 2) winter 1978-79 record snowfall 390 inches. The picture to the left is of Don and Steve. As you can see they haven't changed much in the last 47 years. Steve has lived in Larium pretty much his whole life. He's been married 43 years, has a son, and grandson. After spending the day with Steve, touring the Lake Superior shore and reminiscing, it was time to move on. Perhaps Don and Steve can get together again in less than 47 years. It was great fun.

John Sharpe

**A Troop, 4th Squadron, 12th Cavalry**  
**5548 Hazelwood Rd**  
**Columbus, OH 43229**



**Disclaimer**

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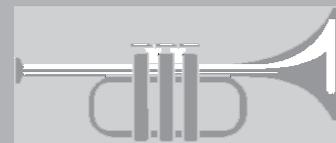
**Change of Address**

Provide all changes of address to *The Trooper*, 5548 Hazelwood Rd. Columbus, Ohio 43229  
c/o Keith Eaton



***The 12th Cav Trooper***  
**Needs Your Support**

We hope you enjoy receiving *The 12th Cav Trooper*. As you can see, the format and contents are new and will continue to improve. The production of such a quality newsletter, however, is not inexpensive. The newsletter constitutes one of the highest expenses of the Association budget. Many thanks to those who have contributed. Many more contributions are needed, Please send your check (Payable to A Troop, 12th Cavalry) along with the form below to Neal Smith, 3002 Arapaho Dr. Fitchburg, Wisc. 53719 We will list all who donate in the next issue.



**Thanks for your Support**

**Patriot**

*Gary Stover*

*Joe Shue*

*Jim Clark*

*Joe Shipp*

*Thomas Sawyer*

*Charles Demeo*

*Charles Caputo*

*Michael Rich*

*John Smith*

*Jim Littlepage*

*Lynnette Vance*

*(Daughter of*

*Gary Pflaster)*

**I Support *The 12th Cav Trooper***  
Patriot \$25 Trooper \$15 Scout \$10  
Name \_\_\_\_\_