

# Boot to Boot

COMPANY D  
1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION  
12<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY  
VIETNAM, 1965-1972



FOR HE TODAY THAT SHEDS HIS BLOOD WITH ME SHALL BE MY BROTHER FROM THIS DAY TO THE ENDING OF THE WORLD

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2

APRIL 2019

## Delta's 2019 Reunion to Celebrate the American Infantry Soldier National Infantry Museum Highlights "The Last 100 Yards"

### 2019 Delta Reunion

Fort Benning &  
Columbus, GA  
October 3-6

DOUBLETREE BY  
HILTON

BOOK BY PHONE  
(706) 327-6868

TELL THEM IT'S FOR  
DELTA, 1/12TH CAV  
BOOK ON-LINE AT  
[https://tinyurl.com/  
D-1-12-Cav](https://tinyurl.com/D-1-12-Cav)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

Arrive

Welcome Reception

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

National Infantry  
Museum

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

Memorial Service  
Business Meeting

Banquet

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6

Depart

We were Cavalry. Some were Airborne. We were awarded for our Service and our Valor. Most of all we were Combat Infantry. Here are some things to know before you journey through momentous events in the history of the American Infantry Soldier at the National Infantry Museum.

**REDOUBT NO. 10** In the summer of 1781, the Revolutionary War had entered its seventh year. General Henry Clinton had ordered Lord Charles Cornwallis to secure a harbor in the lower Chesapeake Bay. Cornwallis chose Yorktown, and on August 1, his army of 8,300 began constructing ten small forts (redoubts), each with artillery and connected by trenches.

George Washington's Army was already marching from New York, reaching Williamsburg in mid-September. Days before, the French had defeated a British fleet bringing reinforcements. Cornwallis was trapped. On 28 September, Washington's army marched the final 13 miles from Williamsburg to Yorktown and began digging a seige trench just 800 yards from the British. A second trench just 400 yards from enemy lines couldn't be completed without capturing Redoubts 9 and 10. Lt. Col. Alexander Hamilton would lead the Americans at Redoubt 10. To achieve surprise the attack would be made in darkness; muskets wouldn't be loaded until reaching the redoubts. A fog settled over the battlefield on the evening of October 14. A quarter mile away stood Redoubt 10, behind a deep ditch, its high parapet bristling with cannon. Artillery had left the target intact, and Hamilton's infantry was about to storm it with their bayonets fixed and muskets unloaded. Soon after dark Hamilton's battalion surged out of its trenches. British artillery fire ripped into its ranks. Sappers hacked through the abatis, and the infantry crossed the ditch

(continued on Page 3)

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## **Veterans of D Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Calvary (Vietnam) Reunion at Fort Benning & Columbus, Georgia 3-6 October 2019**

### **HOTEL – *Doubletree by Hilton***

Included Breakfast, Airport Shuttle, Hospitality Suite, On-site Restaurant, 172 Rooms, Room rate \$126 including all taxes and fees.

### **Thursday, 3 October**

Check into hotel and register. Welcome Reception with cash bar in the *Azalea Room*. Our Hospitality Suite opens after the reception.



### **Friday, 4 October**

Visit the *National Infantry Museum* where we will have a catered lunch. Enjoy combat simulations, dioramas of historic infantry events in America's wars through the centuries, and much more.

### **Saturday, 5 October**

In the morning is our Memorial Service and Business Meeting. The *Benning Club*, Fort Benning's former Officer's Club, hosts a reception in *Fiddler's Green Pub*, the club's "salute to Cavalry Soldiers past and present," with our banquet following in the soaring *Regimental Room*, a vaulted gallery whose flags honor the Army's historic Cavalry and Infantry Regiments.



### **Sunday, 6 October** – Departure day.

Delta's success in finding its Brothers-in-Arms has made its reunions bigger and better every time. Our Columbus/Fort Benning Reunion will be a spectacular military celebration and a homecoming for many of our brothers who served there before and after Vietnam.

### **OTHER CAVALRY REUNIONS**

*The 12th Cavalry Regiment Association Reunion*, 11-15 September 2019 at the Welk Resort in Branson, Missouri. Details Tom Crabtree at email [mmctlc3@aol.com](mailto:mmctlc3@aol.com) or call 432-853-4851

*The 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division Association's 72<sup>st</sup> Reunion* will be held 5-9 June 2019 in Killeen, Texas and at Fort Hood with the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division. <https://1cda.org/annual-reunion/information/>

**100 Yards** (continued from Page 1) and climbed the parapet. Braving intense musket fire, Hamilton led his men into the redoubt. Minutes later, in hand-to-hand fighting, the Redoubt No. 10 had fallen. Five days later, a drummer led a British officer carrying a white flag out of Yorktown.

**THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE**, known at the time as Rohrbach's or the Lower Bridge, was built in 1836 over Antietam Creek. The Civil War Battle of Antietam, in which the bridge was key, was the bloodiest single-day battle in American history with over 23,000 casualties in roughly 12 hours.

On September 16, 1862, Maj. General George McClellan's Army of the Potomac confronted Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Sharpsburg, Maryland. At dawn on September 17, Maj. General Joseph Hooker's Union 1st Corps mounted a powerful assault on Lee's left flank. Repeated Union attacks and Confederate counterattacks swept back and forth across Miller's cornfield and the West Woods. Despite the Union numerical advantage, Stonewall Jackson's Corps near the Dunker Church held its ground that bloody morning.

At the center of the battlefield, Union assaults against the Sunken Road pierced the Confederate center after a terrible struggle. The advantage was not followed up.

The stone Lower Bridge over Antietam Creek on Lee's right flank was defended by 450 Georgians of Toombs' Brigade, commanded by Col. Henry Benning. Late in the day, after two failed attempts, Maj. General Ambrose Burnside's 9th Corps pushed across. AP Hill's division arrived on the field from Harper's Ferry to drive back Burnside, saving the day for Lee. McClellan's piecemeal commitment of his Army gave Lee's Army a tactical victory. Ending Lee's invasion of Maryland was a strategic victory for the Union.

**THE BATTLE OF SOISSONS** July 1918 was a watershed month in World War I. On the 15th, General Erich Ludendorff launched the fifth Imperial Army offensive of the year. German troops attacked east of Château-Thierry, hoping to open a gateway to Paris. In their path stood the US 3rd Infantry Division and two regiments, the 38th and 30th Infantry, whose resolute defence earned the division the nickname "Rock of the Marne." Ludendorff's attack stalled, and the tide finally began to turn in the Allies' favor.

Now the Allies could launch a counter-offensive near Soissons to push the German army back beyond the Vesle and Aisne rivers, ending the threat to Paris. Leading the attack would be the American 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions, anchored by the battle-hardened North Africans and Foreign Legionnaires of the 1st Moroccan Division in the center.

Attacking eastwards on 18 July, the three divisions concentrated on key road and rail links from Soissons to the Marne. By the end of the first day the assault had penetrated four miles into German lines. Against vigorous counter-attacks, the American divisions still kept up the pace of the advance. In spite of rising casualties, the 2nd Infantry Division drove deep into the southern part of the sector, gaining seven miles in just over 24 hours. By 21 July German divisions were withdrawing from the salient as the XX Corps drove beyond the road from Soissons to Château-Thierry. German resistance continued into November, but the speed and aggression of the American Infantry had made a statement. For the first time in 1918, the German armies found themselves on the retreat. They would mount no further offensive in the remaining months of the war.

**POINTE DU HOC**, between D-Day beaches Utah and Omaha, was one of the most dangerous German defensive positions on the Normandy coast. Its 100 foot cliffs were to be attacked during the early morning of 6 June 1944 by the 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions. To initial assault would be organized into two elements, designated Force A and Force B. A would land just below Point du Hoc. B would land on Omaha Beach, climb the 90-foot cliffs of Pointe de la Perce three miles to the west, then move east to link up with A at Pointe du Hoc. (continued on Page 7)

## GULF COAST FLORIDA’S SANIBEL ISLAND

Last month the *Raymond E. Redalen Foundation* made a fully furnished, gulfview condominium at one of America’s premier vacation destinations available, free of charge, to any Delta Vietnam veteran. Just steps to the beach, the condo has over 1,200 square feet, two bedrooms and two bathrooms, and is close to the causeway, shopping and restaurants. So far, sixteen of D Company’s Vietnam veterans have booked a week. Five (Saturday-to-Saturday) weeks in August and September remain. For information email [delta112cavalry@gmail.com](mailto:delta112cavalry@gmail.com), subject line “Sanibel.”

### Delta’s Research and Outreach

Finding the 1st Cavalry Division’s Vietnam General Orders in 2012 in the National Archives launched Delta’s Outreach. In those 72,000 orders were the names of nearly all who served with D Company in Vietnam. With the names in those 72,000 orders we began searching. Now we’ve accounted for over half of Delta’s Vietnam veterans. (Chart below).

D CO 1/12 <sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY	1965-66		1967-68		1969-72		Vietnam	
	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT	COUNT	PERCENT
KIA	29	9%	36	7%	19	3%	84	6%
DIED SINCE VIETNAM	41	12%	117	24%	110	18%	268	19%
TOTAL DECEASED	70	21%	153	32%	129	21%	352	25%
FOUND	75	23%	115	24%	224	37%	414	29%
ACCOUNTED FOR	145	44%	268	55%	353	58%	766	54%
NOT ACCOUNTED FOR	186	56%	215	45%	258	42%	659	46%
NAMES ON ROSTER	331		483		611		1425	

Having just made another visit, we’ve added Unit Daily Journals, Intelligence Reports, and After Action Reports, a foundation on which to build a complete Delta combat history. Still, there is much work to do—straightening, cropping, naming and indexing what we have. We have succeeded so far because of the work of a few volunteers. If you can help, contact Fred Mac Lennan (347-853-1281).

### III CORPS DELTA VETS PLANNING VIETNAM RETURN

Delta veterans Fred Lange and Dave Hendrickson, who were on the D Company 1/12th “all years” trip in 2017, are planning a visit to Vietnam to spend more time in III Corps where Delta fought from November 1968 into early 1972. Fred and Dave are looking for veterans, Delta and otherwise, who would like to go along on the September 8-22, 2019 trip. If interested, call Dave (785-628-2173) or Fred (989-855-2367).

Trip plan at <http://www.vietnambattlefieldtours.com/tours/2019/19091/tour.asp>

## FIDDLER'S GREEN

We remember the Delta Brothers we lost in Vietnam and those who have passed away since our return. Since January we have identified the loss of these 23 Delta veterans.

LARRY BEARD  
CHARLES COCKRAN  
DETLEF DEL SIGNORE  
JOHN GEE  
DON GRIGG  
TRINADAD GONZALES  
JERRY HYATT  
ROBIN KAPPLEMAN

HERBERT LEONG  
DAVID MATHIAS  
WILLIAM PHIEFFER  
BRUCE REPERT  
KERNIS SALTZMAN  
CLIFFORD SCHOLL  
SHERMAN SEABORN

RICHARD SMELTZER  
MICHAEL SNYDER  
ERNEST STAPLETON  
MICHAEL TURPIN  
DANIEL WHEATON  
CHRISTOPHER WILFORE  
BILLY WISDOM  
RONALD YATES

*If we have listed someone in error, please contact Delta's webmaster at [delta@cattrack6india.com](mailto:delta@cattrack6india.com)  
Do the same if you know of a Delta Veteran who has gone on to Fiddler's Green.*

### COMMENTARY - THE VALUE OF THE TRIBE

Soldiers see things that can never be forgotten. Catastrophic events—battles like Tam Quan, or Tet 1968—unarguably are traumatic to those who experience them. Lesser known is the cumulative effect of “smaller” events—being shelled at Khe Sanh, seeing a friend injured by a booby trap. Over time, the effect of these events piles up.

Some believe that trauma and tragedy “hasn't affected me.” It's possible, I guess—certainly its impact is an individual thing. Worse, though, is avoidance—suppressing the memories. This “self-treatment,” is a symptom (social withdrawal) itself. Borne of an old school “tough guy” mentality this self-imposed isolation too often leads to depression, alcohol and drug abuse and even suicide.

In his book, *Tribe*, Sebastian Junger draws on his experience with a US Army platoon in Afghanistan, recounted in his book *War*, to explain how groups offer strength and support. This is particularly true of military combat units, Junger found. They laugh together, cry together and experience the same horrific events together. When a soldier leaves (via DEROS, rotation, or discharge) the unit—his tribe—that support structure is lost and that's when symptoms manifest out of nowhere. Finding a tribe is essential to dealing with the demons that haunt you. Humans are innately tribal and find solace in groups of their peers. That's why group therapy is a widely accepted treatment for PTSD.

The images of combat will never go away. “I wish my head could forget what my eyes have seen,” expresses it well. But it's not hopeless. There are treatments, but you also need to find your tribes, those people you love to be around. Family is one, and another is made up of the brothers with whom you shared those traumas. Those who have attended Delta's reunions know what a value that can be.

One of Delta's veterans wrote, “I attended the first [D Company] reunion I knew about, 2017, and my first comment to my wife after seeing just a few of the guys was, ‘...this is very therapeutic for me.’”

You took an oath to your country, and carry not only the pride, but the burden of your service. No one said you had to do it alone. We hope to see you in Columbus. You'll never regret it. -TWK-



## First Commander's Corner

March was an emotional time with two more Delta Brothers called Home to Fiddlers Green, joining hundreds of Delta Warriors who have gone before them.

Under brilliant blue skies, the red rocks of The Garden of the Gods and snow-capped Pikes Peak framed Pikes Peak National Cemetery for the interment of Chuck Doole (Delta 1963-1966). Brother Mike Van Kirk, and I were honored to have been asked by Linda, Chuck's wife of 35 years, to participate in an emotional farewell.

Michael and I conducted the "Airborne Empty Boots Ritual," Mike placing a Delta Recon Patrol Cap alongside empty Jungle Boots. A hallowed place for Chuck's earthly remains had been prepared among the Military Headstones in the meadow below. Overwhelmed by the warmth and love of the Doole Family, Michael and I joined them at the reception, where many Fireball toasts honored Brother Doole. We told the Doole family that any family, of any brother we have lost will always be welcome at Delta Reunions, the next of which is in early October at Fort Benning, where for some of us it all began in the summer of 1963.

Returning home, we learned that we had lost yet

another Delta Brother. Frank Oxendine (Vietnam 65-66) had joined Chuck in Fiddler's Green. Happily, on short notice Brother Dave Corcoran was able to represent our Delta Veterans at the funeral of his dear friend and foxhole buddy. These two were comrades at Benning and in Vietnam, but all who have gone on to Fiddler's Green are deeply missed (23 reported in this newsletter alone).

These losses all moved me deeply. Over the years I have come to understand I have responsibilities to those with whom I served: to call, to visit, while I still can, the Delta Brothers with whom we shared challenges and experiences, on and off the battlefield. I have learned that in serving my brothers I also serve myself (see "Commentary—The Value of the Tribe" in this issue). Please, join me in this challenge; to care, to support, to always be there! We can do no less!

Register soon for our "Coming Home" 2019 Reunion at Fort Benning in October. Encourage your brothers to join you. And please, when you register, add whatever you can to maintain your "non-dues/nonprofit" Veterans of Delta. God bless each of you and yours.

**THE GREATEST CASUALTY IS BEING FORGOTTEN** ©  
Wounded Warrior Project

*Blessings & "But to But"*

*Johnny Sergulis*

## Secretary's Report

I hope everyone had a good Easter and was able to enjoy it with family and friends.

The October reunion at Fort Benning is less than 6 months away. For those of you that are considering attending this reunion, I ask you to look thru the roster of men found and when you see a familiar name give them a call and urge them to attend. As you can see, many whom we served with have passed. That number will not go down. When you look back at previous reunions the best part is seeing and speaking with guys that you served with.

Let's try and make this the most attended Reunion to date.

Good Health

*Fred Mac Kennan*

April 2019 6

**THE LAST 100 YARDS** (continued from page 3) The Rangers were launched in the dark for the rough, cold trip to the beach. As the early morning sun began to rise, Force A realized that the choppy seas and a strong current had pushed it three miles off course. Meanwhile, B landed on Omaha Beach, fought its way to the cliff, and began the ninety-foot ascent to the top. Of the original seventy-man team, only thirty-five were left to climb the cliffs.

A finally landed to the east of Pointe du Hoc on a beach thirty yards wide, and fired rockets with ropes and rope ladders attached to grapnels; many failed to catch hold or were cut by the Germans at the top. Climbing wet, slippery ropes into a hail of fire, the Rangers reached the top and subdued the defenders.

The 2nd Battalion had 77 killed, 152 wounded, and 38 missing. The 5th: 23 killed, 89 wounded, and 2 missing. 14 Rangers received the DSC; the 2nd Ranger Battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

**AIRBORNE ASSAULT ON CORREGIDOR** On 16 February 1945, the 503rd Parachute Regimental Combat Team jumped on Fortress Corregidor to liberate the island from occupying Japanese forces. Two miles off the southern tip of the Bataan Peninsula in Manila Bay, "The Rock," dominated the harbor.

The island posed serious challenges. With formidable defenses, the only possible area for a parachute drop was approximately 300 feet by 200 feet on top of a 500-foot-high rock. High winds could blow the paratroopers over the cliffs into the ocean.

The C-47s would approach at 400 feet, would be over the drop zones for just six seconds, and only six to eight troopers could be dropped at one time. The planes would have to fly over the drop zone three or four times until the paratroopers were out. The margin between success and failure was practically zero. "That's the beauty of it," said an officer of the 503rd, "the Japs will never expect it because it looks impossible. No army in this war has pulled anything like it."

The battle for The Rock would last another eight days before the island was declared secure. Japanese sources have estimated there were 6,550 Japanese on the Island when the 503rd landed. Of those, only 50 survived. The 503rd lost 172 men killed and many more wounded or injured. For the capture of Corregidor, it was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and received the nickname, "Rock Regiment."

**BAYONET CHARGE ON HILL 180** Company E, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment was attacking an entrenched Chinese position on the frigid slopes of Hill 180 near Soam-Ni, Korea, on 7 February 1951, when a platoon was pinned down. Captain Lewis Millet's other two platoons were given the order to "Fix bayonets and follow me!" Despite vicious opposing fire, they stormed to the crest. Out of about 50 enemy dead, roughly 20 were killed by bayonets. The location, now occupied by Osan Air Force Base in South Korea, is known as Bayonet Hill. Army historian S.L.A. Marshall called the assault "the most complete bayonet charge by American troops since the 1864 Battle of Cold Harbor." Company E, 27th Infantry Regiment (Wolfhounds) had earned the nickname "Cold Steel Easy."

**LANDING AT LZ X-RAY** The Battle of Ia Drang was fought between the 1st Cavalry Division and the NVA, 14-18 November 1965. As veterans of the 1st Cavalry Division we know the story of the Ia Drang well. But the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry—with Delta Company—was there first.

On October 19, two NVA Regiments attacked the Plei Me Special Forces camp. It held, and the NVA's ambush of the ARVN relief column also failed. As the enemy fled west toward the Chu Pong Massif, the 1st Cav's 1st Brigade moved to interdict in the Ia Drang Valley. On November 1, Delta's Recon platoon was air assaulted to investigate an NVA aid station southwest of Plei Me, and fought a sharp engagement with the NVA. Read "Story of the Battle at the Hospital" (<http://www.cattrack6india.com/Nov1Hospital.html>)

Two weeks later the 7th Cavalry landed at X-Ray.

**THE DESERT WARS** At our last stop of *The Last 100 Yards* a Bradley Fighting Vehicle is featured with our infantry brothers still fighting today in Afghanistan and the Middle East.



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