

Boot to Boot

COMPANY D
1ST BATTALION
12TH 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 7 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2022

12th Cavalry Veterans Honored by Infantry Association

Fifteen Troopers Inducted into the Order of St Maurice at the National Infantry Museum



L-R John Gergulis (sponsor), Chuck Rose (sponsor), Inducted: Kirk Knight, Alex Barber, Doug Warden, Walt Wilczak, Tom Kjos, Tom Crabtree, Luther Nixon, Don Trotter, Dave Corcoran, Bob Ruiz.

Awarded but not present: Bob March, Mike Van Kirk, Jerry Fell, Frank Crary, Julian Ynostroza

2022 Reunion Set for Las Vegas

Following its successful 2021 Reunion, Delta has decided to return to the South Point Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas in October 2022.

(continued on page 2)

On 25 January, in a unique event at the National Infantry Museum, ten Vietnam veterans of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment were inducted into the Order of Saint Maurice at the replica Vietnam Memorial Wall. Five others were also inducted but not present. Of the 15, who served 1965-68, two were C company, and thirteen D company. (continued on page 4)

The Order of Saint Maurice is awarded by the National Infantry Association and the US Army Chief of Infantry. A nominee for the Order must have served in the Infantry with distinction, or have made a significant contribution in support of the Infantry, and must represent the highest standards of integrity, moral character, professional competence, and dedication to duty.



Relax Poolside



Play Golf

2022 REUNION, LAS VEGAS

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South Point Casino Hotel & Spa

This 2,100 room Resort on Las Vegas Boulevard south of the Strip is a complete Las Vegas destination, featuring a full-service Spa & Salon, Pool, Multiplex Cinema, Bowling Center, 11 Restaurants, 5 Bars, and Showroom entertainment.

Each non-smoking room includes a 50-inch 4K Television, Complimentary High Speed WiFi, 24 Hour Room Service, Coffee Maker, Hair Dryer, Iron/Ironing Board, In-room Safe, Blackout Drapes, Designer Toiletries, and Premium Bedding.

It's no surprise that the price of the reunion and a 3-night hotel stay is up 15% from last year. Including resort fee and tax, our hotel has increased \$12 per night, from \$83 to \$95. Reunion registration is up \$20, from \$128 to \$148 (\$128 for guests). Like other similar organizations, we're switching from "a la carte" to an all-inclusive registration, which is much easier for us to manage.



Airport Shuttle and Free Parking are included in our room-block rate of \$70, \$14 Resort Fee, and 13% room tax, a total of \$95 per night Sunday-Thursday, October 2-6, significantly more weekends. Book direct at 702-797-8901 or on-line at

<https://tinyurl.com/Delta-Room-Reservations>

Group Code: **DCO0923 (DELTA REUNION)**

MONDAY

WELCOME RECEPTION

TUESDAY

GOLF OUTING

(Contact Walt Wilczak at (201) 317-0547)

ENJOY LAS VEGAS

WEDNESDAY

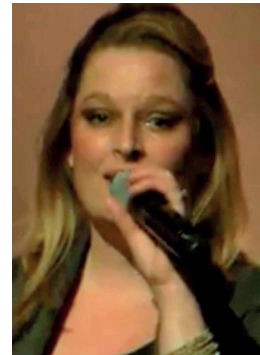
MEMORIAL SERVICE

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

BANQUET

Hospitality Suite Open Every Day!

OUR BANQUET ENTERTAINMENT



DON'T MISS IT!

MORE INFO IN OUR APRIL ISSUE

FIDDLER'S GREEN

Since our last issue of *Bent to Bent* we learned these Brothers are deceased.

DONALD OAKLEY

MARK VINGLISH

For errors or additions, please contact Delta's webmaster at delta@catrack6india.com



First Commander's Corner

In a previous column I wrote of the loss of two Delta veterans who were close to us, who were among those who had renewed acquaintances with our brothers. Now we've lost two more. Don Oakley attended our first get-together in San Antonio, and stayed in contact with many Delta friends. Mark Vinglish's warm smile was there in Las Vegas and at previous events. You know that I "preach," about reaching out to your Delta brothers. In that earlier column, I wrote, "Thank y'all for staying in touch and for being there for each other! You'll never know how much a note, text message, card, or email means to a Brother." I am comforted to know that Don and Mark had the company of their Delta brothers-in-arms in their last years.

This issue is largely dedicated to our Brothers who were recently honored with admission to the Order of Saint Maurice. I am proud to say that I played a part in making that happen. The National Infantry Association is a very important organization, and with the development of the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center has already made a huge contribution to the US Army and our Infantry Branch. If you're going anywhere near Georgia, you'll be very wrong if you passed

up this world class museum. Please, those who served in the later cohorts of Delta soldiers, join the Association. We need you, and we need to have more of you inducted into the Order of St. Maurice.

Also in this issue is information about our 2022 reunion this October in Las Vegas. I personally recommend the venue, where we were last year. Excellent rooms, great service, and everything you need to entertain yourself. I can personally recommend time poolside with an adult beverage and a good cigar! Doug Christ is leading the planning this year. I'm certain this will be "the best yet." I'm particularly looking forward to a very special banquet entertainment program. There will not be many more opportunities to share the memories of a half-century ago with the few men who truly understand it all. No veteran regrets time with his brothers-in-arms at a Delta Reunion.

We hope this newsletter finds you and yours healthy and safe. Stay in touch with each other, and please visit your Delta website at: www.catrack6india.com from time to time. Remember...we love you, Brother!

"THE TRUE SOLDIER FIGHTS NOT BECAUSE HE HATES WHAT IS IN FRONT OF HIM, BUT BECAUSE HE LOVES WHAT IS BEHIND HIM."
G. K. CHESTERTON

Blessings & "Bent to Bent"

Johnny Bergulis

The 1st Cavalry Division Association 2022 Reunion at Dayton, Ohio, 6-10 July 2022.

Information at: <https://1cda.org/annual-reunion/>

The 12th Cavalry Regiment Association Reunion, No information available.

Website: <https://www.12thcav.us/>

(*Order of St Maurice* continued from page 1) This class of inductees is drawn from those who joined Delta in the first three years of the seven that it served in Vietnam. That reflects sponsors John Gergulis and Chuck Rose, who took the initiative to promote both the National Infantry Association and the Order of Saint Maurice, and who served in Delta's earliest years. Those who served with them, and others who have been closely associated with John and Chuck in building Delta's brotherhood of veterans are those who became members of the NIA and thus eligible for the Order of Saint Maurice.

In other particulars, this group reflects make-up of Delta in its first years in Vietnam. Not surprisingly, all but one were Airborne qualified; the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry was an airborne unit on jump status when it arrived in Vietnam. All entered the US Army as enlisted soldiers; all but one were enlisted soldiers at the time of their service with D Company. None were drafted into the service in this first cohort. Very few had a rank greater than Specialist 4th Class when in Vietnam; the jump pay helped, we hope.

It's a group, regardless of rank or time in service, that accomplished great things, in and out of the United States Army. Five of 15 were honorably discharged as SP4's, yet accomplished much in a short military career. Of those, four served in the battalion's Recon Platoon (Delta was initially a Combat Support Company, as was E company later, but sometimes operated as a rifle company). (continued on page 6)

Website Update

Hello Brother Troopers. The web site is still enjoying a continuing high level of activity, about 6000 visits per month.

There have been some minor alterations to the intro page of the website, making it easier for people to find the videos that are now becoming more of an attraction. The Photo and Video indexes were once combined; now they are separated. There is a page strictly dedicated to videos.

It's interesting how sometimes one thing leads to another. As many of you know, the videos that have been presented at our Delta Company reunions have suddenly become popular on YouTube. Although they are often accessed through the website, they can also be accessed directly from YouTube. So far, in the last two months the number of video views has reached over 850,000 and is now averaging about 5000 per day.

It seems that our history is being viewed around the world and particularly in Vietnam. I have recently been getting e-mails and war stories from NVA and VC veterans. It is all very interesting. Soon there will be a web page that can be accessed on our website with information from the soldiers "on the other side." I am awaiting some translation since the stories received are in Vietnamese. We hope that we can obtain stories which relate to the actions that we saw in Vietnam, providing an expanded historical perspective. We'll see how that goes. I would appreciate your feedback on this subject.

I am still scanning photos from Cliff Sorrels and hope to have his page going soon.

As always, more photos and stories are being sought from all Delta members. Even if you have just a few photos, that's great. Dig them out. Next time you think of a war story, call me. It really helps with our historical documentation.

TAKE CARE, DON'T WALK ON TRAILS, AND BRING PLENTY OF AMMO.

CATTRACK6INDIA...OUT

Bob March (360) 627-0918



Mission

The mission of the National Infantry Association® is to support the Chief of Infantry and the entire U.S. Army Infantry Branch; to share the camaraderie of like minded soldiers and citizens who believe in maintaining the Infantry spirit; to recognize, through our awards, outstanding Infantrymen and Infantry supporters; and to preserve the Infantry heritage through support of the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

Membership

Started by Infantry leadership in 1994, the National Infantry Association is the professional association for Infantrymen and Infantry supporters. The NIA, a private, non-profit, fraternal organization, supports the Infantry's role in the security of our nation; helps Infantrymen build closer affiliations with one another; and helps preserve the Infantry heritage. Your membership promotes the only organization dedicated to supporting the Chief of Infantry and the entire Infantry community.

Our membership strength ensures that the Infantry voice will be heard by decision makers. You will share the camaraderie of like-minded soldiers and citizens who believe in maintaining the Infantry spirit, and you can help recognize outstanding Infantrymen through the awarding of the Order of St. Maurice. You will receive the Infantry Bugler magazine, and you will support the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center at Patriot Park, and the educational values associated with it.

To explore the Association further, go to <https://infantryassn.com/>

Secretary's Report

Well Boys, another Reunion is being planned for this October in Las Vegas. We have elected to return to the South Point Hotel and Casino, which hosted our 2021 Reunion. Based on the hospitality that was extended to our brothers by the South Point staff, they have certainly earned the right to host us again.

They did a magnificent job of catering to our Veterans with special needs, that included dietary requirements, electric power for medical equipment, and special rooms for hospital beds. What amazed me is they did it with a smile.

The hotel has 11 restaurants, everything from a 5 Stars to a hot dog cart. There were movie theaters, a bowling alley, rodeo arena (bring your horse), live entertainment, pool complex (very popular with some of the boys) and of course gambling. Wheel chair access was everywhere. You never had to leave the complex.

I can honestly say I heard no complaints about the facility. When have a bunch of Grunts ever gotten together and not bitched?

So spread the word. Those of us that attended in 2021 need to call those we served with who were unable to attend and urge them to come in 2022.

As you are aware our numbers are decreasing let's get together while we still can.

(*Order of St Maurice* continued from page 4) They were inserted into danger as squad and platoon-sized teams again and again at a time when the North Vietnamese Army's best, including its 3rd Division, and the 33rd, 34th and 66th Regiments, had recently been infiltrated into the south's Central Highlands. It was to meet this threat that the 1st Cavalry Division was deployed to Vietnam in September, 1965. One of these young soldiers was wounded on a second tour with the 101st Airborne Division, one was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism; others are recipients of other awards for valor and of the Purple Heart. They're proof that the army is as well-served in the ranks as in its leadership.

Others climbed the army "ladder," for a short time or for a career, including one who went from Private to Colonel, making him the senior recipient of the Order of Saint Maurice among this group of inductees. There's is a "Private-to-Captain," who was a platoon leader with Delta and in a second tour a company commander with the 101st Airborne. One became a First Sergeant, another (continued on page 7)

BOOK REVIEW

LIFE CHANGING EVENTS:

WHO WE ARE NOW

Basil B. Clark

Most of us know Baz Clark; he served with us in Vietnam, was a recipient of the Silver Star and two Bronze Stars with "V". He and Cora attended our Ft. Benning reunion in 2019. We each received copies of an earlier book, *War Wounded: Let the Healing Begin*, at our Tucson reunion in 2017.

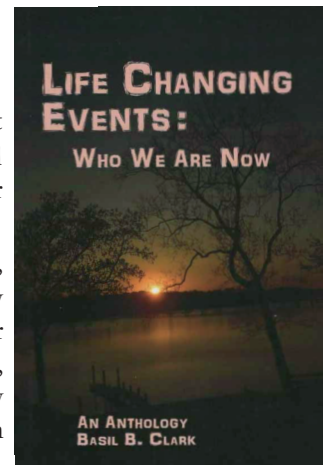
This book is an anthology of 45 stories of EVENTS: pain, tragedy, mistakes, and loss, to name a few. More and more, combat veterans are finally understanding that they can't bury what's happened to them. Since our events will always be with us, we need to take them out, examine them, and finally understand how they have made us who we are. That's the way we will finally heal. This book and his earlier "War Wounded" are an affirmation of our ability to heal.

Suzanna DeAngelis Maresca tells the very first story, of the eight-year-old self she describes as a "sad, sad child." She describes not only the hurt and sadness, but the anger, in the 50 years "she chased a ghost." Suzanna is the daughter of Captain Adamo DeAngelis, killed in action in October 1969 while serving with the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry.

However, this is not a book solely—or even mostly—about events affecting soldiers and their families. By a quick count, ten of forty-five are, and among those are stories of loss years removed from Vietnam. Andy Rios, for instance, a Delta Brother writes of the pain of losing two sons, one to illness and one in an auto accident. Other Delta-related stories are included: Gary DeRigne, David Cyrulik, Ramon Ramoz, and Stacey Unzicker, from whom we learn it wasn't just veterans who were treated with nasty remarks in the years since; it was also their children and widows.

I shouldn't be dwelling on the sadness and hurt here, though, because this is a book more about healing and redemption. If it weren't—if it were all about the negative—I would never have been able to read it in its entirety on my recent trip to Georgia. To buy this book at Amazon:

<https://tinyurl.com/Life-Changing-Events>



(*Order of St Maurice* continued from page 6) a Sergeant First Class. Three became Staff Sergeants, and three were promoted to Sergeant before the end of a single enlistment. One of this group was recently inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame. After that single Distinguished Service Cross, there are multiple Silver Stars and Bronze Stars with “V” Device for valor.

Of course “at the top” are the two sponsors, Colonel John Gergulis (Ret), who was Delta’s first Vietnam commander, and Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Rose (Ret), who served as a Private in that Recon Platoon, and returned to Vietnam later as a young Special Forces officer.

Regardless of the profile of this group, it is no different from that of all those who served in Delta. Through every year in Vietnam this company faced difficult challenges in combat, from Tet 1968, to the relief of Khe Sanh, the Raid into A Shau, the Defense of Saigon, the Cambodian Incursion, and finally holding the line in the Central Highlands while the last ground combat forces were departing. Delta’s infantrymen of those years are as deserving of this honor as this first cohort. They only lack—so far—advocates within the National Infantry Association membership.

There are many from 1968-1972 who should be similarly honored. They are encouraged to become NIA members, and to step forward as sponsors for their brothers.

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, a friend injured or killed 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 earlier 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, discharge, or wound) the unit, his tribe, his support structure, is lost. That’s when symptoms manifest, seemingly out of nowhere. Finding a tribe is essential to dealing with the demons that haunt us. We are innately tribal and find solace in groups of our 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. Treatments aside, you also need to find your tribe, those people you love to be around. Family is one. Another is made up of the brothers with whom you shared those long-ago traumas. Those who have attended Delta’s reunions know what value that can be.

A Delta veteran wrote, “I attended the first [D Company] reunion I knew about, in 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 Las Vegas. You’ll never regret it. -TWK-

Boot to Boot

Postage

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