

# 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 3 ISSUE 4

OCTOBER 2018

## Vietnam Veterans Reunite a Half-Century Later

### Gathering in San Antonio Celebrates and Renews Bonds Forged in Foxholes

San Antonio's el Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel hosted a 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry reunion that included 56 Delta veterans.

LTC Ryan Long, Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at



Fort Hood, described victories and challenges of the battalion in 2018 at Saturday's Banquet.

We were honored by the attendance of the family of SGT Harry G Lute, KIA at Two Streams on 7 April 1966.

**Delta Company's  
2019 Reunion  
at Ft Benning/  
Columbus Georgia  
October 3-6  
Where it all began**



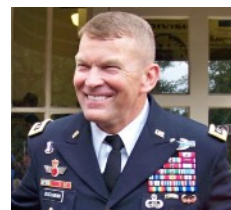
Incoming VETERANS OF DELTA (VIETNAM) President Colonel John Gergulis (Ret) followed LTC

Long at the banquet podium with an entertaining account of his first days in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 187<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Airborne), developing the Airmobile concept at Fort Benning. The battalion was "reflagged" as the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (Airborne) before being deployed to Vietnam as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

Delta's third reunion was shared with others of 1/12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, notably Alpha Company, represented by 15 veterans. With family and friends, Saturday's banquet totaled 158.

Veterans arrived Thursday, signed in, and visited the hospitality suite before the

Southwest-themed Welcome Dinner hosted by VFW Post 76. Our own Dusty Cray, engaged to Sandy Trebbe at our Tucson Reunion, was awarded the DSC at Fort Huachuca in May, and married Sandy Trebbe at San Antonio!



Fort Sam Houston was the birthplace of the 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1901. LTC Jeffery Buchanan, 5<sup>th</sup> Army Commander, hosted our visit to the historic frontier fort, following which we lunched and imbibed at Mi Tijera in San Antonio's Mercado.

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Delta Veterans of 1969-72, L-R - Dale Deforge, Arthur Colbert, Mike McKinney, Dave Guenther, Fred Lange, John Flukes, Dave Hendrickson, Dwayne Foreman, Fred Mac Lennan, Rod Milroy, Fred Bell, Lafe Smith



Cutting the Cake



1968 CP - FO John Kirby, CO Dick Kent, Medic Ken Goff, RTO's Ron Redalen, Renny Parker and Doug Christ



Dave Hendrickson, Fred Lange, Arthur Colbert

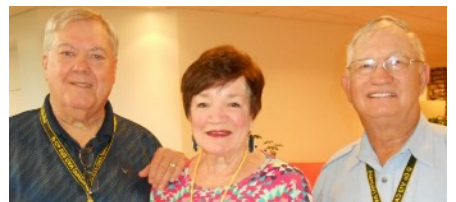


L-R Mike Van Kirk, Frank Heidel, John Gergulis, Ed Walz, Mike Parkhill (1/9th)



John Gergulis with SGT Harry Lute's Family

Peter & Susan McPhee with James Neeley



## BLOODY BONG SON: TAM QUAN, DECEMBER 1967

Little noticed at the time, and still little known nearly 50 years later, the Battle of Tam Quan (known to the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning as the Second Battle of Tam Quan) was one of the most significant of the Vietnam War.

The first contact was 6 December 1967, by aviation elements of the 1st Squadron 9th Cavalry, who discovered the headquarters of the 22nd NVA Regiment near the hamlet of Dai Dong(1). Bravo Company of 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry was quickly thrown into the fight, and the next day was joined by the battalion's A Company. On the 7th B and C companies of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry were committed by Brigade Commander Snapper on the east to seal the contact area. Moving toward the west, they made contact with elements of the 22nd at Dai Dong(3) a few kilometers east of the original battle site. The 1st Battalion 50th Infantry, (Mechanized) supported the Cavalry's 1st Brigade in these early December contacts and throughout the Tam Quan battle.

The NVA's 22nd Regiment retired to the south overnight on the 7th, only to run head-on into the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the ARVN 40th Regiment, 22nd Division, with whom significant contacts were fought on December 8th and 9th.

The 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, at Dak To since early November, was released from OPCON to the 173rd Airborne on the 9th and flown by C-130's into LZ English. By mid-afternoon B, C, and D Companies had air assaulted into beach LZ's near the coastal town of Tam Quan. Bravo Company, 1/50th Infantry, OPCON to LTC Daniel French's 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, had an all-day battle with a battalion of the 22nd NVA Regiment at Truong Lam near the beach on December 10th. B and C 1/12th were flown in late that afternoon to support the Mechanized infantry unit, which suffered 11 KIA's on its worst day.

The NVA regiment then dropped from sight except for sporadic contacts with small elements. On 11 December D Company was crossing rice paddies, moving from hamlet to hamlet searching for elements of the 22nd. LT Watkins' third platoon, on point, crossed a paddy to secure the far side for the company's advance. They had just reached the hamlet when they were engaged by the enemy. Artillery and gunships quickly routed the enemy. As the company crossed to join the third, Watkins consolidated his position, quickly accounting for all of the platoon except point man Daniel Maguire, who was soon found dead a few meters forward. The previous day he'd received a care package from home. Along with the usual goodies was a miniature Christmas tree that revolved and played Jingle Bells. When found, SP4 Maguire's pack, rifle and boots were gone, but there was the tree, revolving round and round, playing Jingle Bells! How it started to play, no one will ever know. LT Tom Kjos replaced Watkins the following day, and on the 14th D Company was withdrawn to LZ English for a well-earned stand down. We showered, drew clean fatigues, had a hot meal, and settled in to watch Raquel Welch in *One Million BC*, when the announcement came, "Delta 1/12th platoon leaders report to your company area." With us for the first time that night - when we learned that radio intercepts had again located the 22nd NVA - was LT Roy Southerland, who would take the 2nd Platoon out in the morning and be dead by mid-afternoon. The NVA were in My An(2), just a kilometer south of Dia Dong(3), where the 2/8th Cavalry had fought on the 7th. The 22nd Regiment had overrun our Charlie Company on LZ Bird just after Christmas 1966. LTC French's 1/12 was given the task to trap and destroy the NVA Regiment.

The battle of Tam Quan resumed at My An(2), Binh Dinh Province, on 15 December, 1967. This time dug in with the 22nd Regiment's headquarters units were two of its battalions and its heavy weapons company. 1st Battalion 12th Cavalry fielded three of its companies, again reinforced by the armored personnel carriers of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry. (continued on page 7)

## First Commander's Corner



I am deeply honored and humbled to lead this very special group of men for a second time, the first being when we first set foot at Qui Nhon, Republic of South Vietnam in 1965. Thus, the “first” in the title above. The entire 'Delta' 1/12 Vietnam team has made this Old

Soldier very proud. For the second time in my life, I am most grateful for your confidence and support.

I know you all join me in a special thank you to previous Veterans of Delta President 'Brother' (Reverend) Dwight D. Edwards, for his years of service. In recuperative mode, 'Brother' Dwight will be up and running soonest, and sends his very best to all the Brothers.

Congratulations also to Brother Charles Rose and his reunion team for their hard work in bringing us

the wonderful Delta (and 1st Battalion) 12th Cavalry (Vietnam) Reunion in San Antonio. Well done and Mission Accomplished!

Your Executive Board is pleased to announce that our 2019 Delta Reunion will be held at Fort Benning, Georgia, 3-6 October, where the the 1/12th took the baton from the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry (Airborne) Rakkassans and, for the first cohort to serve in Vietnam, it all began! It was a long shot to be able to put any reunion together just one year out, but this puts us on our intended schedule of “stand alone” in odd-numbered years, and a “piggy back” on the 1st Cavalry Division Association Reunion in even-numbered years, 2020 being in Louisville, Kentucky. Mark your calendars accordingly!

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

*Blessings & "Bvt to Bvt"*

*Johnny Sergulis*

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Our San Antonio Reunion is over and a good time was had by all. For those of you who did not attend, you missed out on another opportunity to meet with your Brothers in Arms. The comradery at these reunions is something you need to experience.

During the Business meeting at the Reunion I asked for help in locating Veterans of our unit that have not been accounted for on our website roster. We are trying to account for everyone who served in Delta during the Vietnam War. Since the reunion I have received only one call from anyone willing to help. This is disgraceful. We are better than this and these men deserve the opportunity to be made aware of this organization and the benefits of attending a reunion with those that they served with.

Fellows, please look thru the roster from your era. If you have any information pertaining to someone who has not been found (where he was from, phone number, email address, nickname, platoon served in...anything), please let me know. If the individual does not wish to have his information put on the site, we will respect that, but at least let me know he is alive so I can stop looking for him.

I feel there are guys out there that have not spoken to anyone about their experiences during the Vietnam War since their DEROS date. Anyone who has attended a Reunion can attest to the therapeutic cleansing that occurs when you talk with those who served with you, and who truly understand. I will gladly assist anyone who is willing to find these men. Let's find these guys. They earned it.

Good Health.

*Fred Mac Kennan*

## Delta, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reunion Fort Benning, Columbus, Georgia 3-6 October 2019

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

Included Breakfast, Airport Shuttle, Hospitality Suite, On-site Restaurant, 172 Rooms, Room block rate \$126 including all taxes and fees. Booking information will be provided in our January Newsletter.



### **MAJOR EVENTS**

#### Thursday, 3 October

Check into hotel and register. Welcome Reception, *Doubletree Azalea Room*. Our Hospitality Suite opens after the reception in the Azalea Room and is then open each day.



#### Friday, 4 October

We visit the *National Infantry Museum* where we will have a catered lunch. Enjoy combat simulations, dioramas representng the infantry in America's wars through the centuries.

#### Saturday, 5 October

The *Benning Club* is Fort Benning's Spanish Colonial style former Officer's Club, built in 1934. After a reception in *Fiddler's Green Pub*, the club's "salute to Cavalry Soldiers past and present," our banquet will be held in the soaring *Regimental Room*, a vaultated 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. 72 veterans gathered in Tucson in 2017, then 84 at San Antonio in 2018. 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.

## FIDDLER'S GREEN

Sadly, we report two more who have joined our brothers in  
*That shady meadow green, the eternal resting place known as Fiddler's Green.*

HARRY FORSYTHE

EDWARD HARDEE

### WEBSITE UPDATE

*BOB MARCH*

The Delta Company 1/12th web site (<http://www.cattrack6india.com>) continues to be very popular thanks to many of you who have provided data, stories, and photos. Keep up the interaction and send what you may have.

Fred Bell and and Richard Rock provided old videos they filmed while in Vietnam. These were then edited into a video story which was presented during the reunion banquet. The video is now available on the web site, and can be found on the Photo Index page. (Or, e-mail me.) Check the Cambodia "Firefights" page for the 1970 Invasion of Cambodia portion of the video. There may be more of you that have old film up in the attic. Talk to me and we'll incorporate it into something for the website and the next reunion. The same goes of course for photos.

Added the Ken Rimmer diary (along with comments) provided by John Coleman. This is a fascinating day to day account of his time in RVN which will bring back lots of memories. It is added "as is", located on the "Info and Stories" page. Thanks John for providing.

The San Antonio reunion photos are posted and the link can be found on the Intro Page

Posted Fred Bell photos. These are very well done and high quality. One of them contained a photo of the Delta Company Headquarters sign which included the Delta motto: HONOR, COURAGE, UNITY. That motto applies today. The photo is now on the intro page of the website along with an earlier similar photo of 1965.

Posted photos from John MacFarlane who passed away in 2012. It's a minor miracle how we received these photos six years after his death. Check them out on the Photo directory page.

Added Tom Kjos's excellent story about TET 1968 at Quang Tri to the "Firefights" page.

For those of you with a perverse desire, the Delta Company Bylaws are now available for viewing.

Maps of the 506 Valley firefight are posted on the "firefights" page.

I have interviewed several of our Delta Company Brothers to help construct a written historical perspective of Delta Troopers experience in Vietnam. I solicit your input for any stories you may have. Some of you I will be calling. Thanks for your cooperation.

**THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. BRING PLENTY OF AMMO. CATTRACK6INDIA...OUT**

### **Help Requested for Delta's Outreach**

"Is anyone currently a private investigator with access to a searchable database like LEXISNEXIS?"  
Contact Doug Christ at (714) 865-3467 or [dfchrist3@gmail.com](mailto:dfchrist3@gmail.com)

### 1/12<sup>TH</sup> DOCUMENTARY INTERVIEWS FILMED AT SAN ANTONIO

With the help of Chuck Rose, Executive Producer Thomas Lon Crabtree brought his documentary team to San Antonio, where a score of Delta veterans were filmed telling their Vietnam stories. Episodes are \$15, available as they are completed. Six episodes are planned.

Order DVD's of completed episode from Thomas Crabtree, 195 Buzz Street # 18 Branson, MO 65616  
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TAM QUAN 1967 (continued from page 3) From a contemporaneous document, "The terrain was a large village surrounded by rice paddies and small, numerous, heavily grown hedgerows considerably restricting visibility. Enemy force exceeds a battalion in size. He is well equipped with recoilless rifles, light and heavy machineguns, and well supplied with ammunition. His position is carefully chosen and well fortified. Enemy morale is high. Company D's morale is high after brief stand down, but the company is extremely under strength; just 85 infantryman are flown into battle on UH1B Hueys on that early morning in December."

The plan that morning called for Bravo 1/12th Cavalry, reinforced by APC's of B Company, 1/50th Infantry, to attack north to south while the battalion's C and D companies defended a blocking position south of the suspected enemy location. The companies already in the field moved toward their planned positions, while D Company air assaulted from LZ English at 0700 and moved southwest to 922053 where it began digging in to a blocking position. Von Moltke the Elder wrote "no plan survives first contact with the enemy." This plan came apart even before the enemy could contribute when C company, expected to tie in to Delta's left, continued moving west, crossed the boundary with the 40th Regiment, 22nd Infantry Division (ARVN), and almost immediately became heavily engaged. Soon after, B Company also became engaged at 921055. With Delta now the only element capable of maneuver, LTC French sent Captain Orsini's company southwest, then north in a flanking movement to bring it in on C Company's left. Delta came under intense fire shortly after turning north at 913054. It was now late morning, and four companies were fully engaged. As the battle continued, 1st Brigade commander Col. Donald Snapper Rattan now added the tracks of Alpha of 1/50th Infantry to reinforce C and D on the south, put companies from 2/5, 1/8, and 2/8 Cavalry, along with the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the 40th Regiment (ARVN) into blocking positions to contain the battle area. As always with us, there were heroes, including Medal of Honor to D Company's Specialist 4 Allen Lynch, who went forward to rescue three comrades, then defended them all day, bringing them into the Delta perimeter at dusk after the company had withdrawn and put artillery and airstrikes on the enemy (and on Allen) to break contact. Captain Orsini was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his many tries to get to Lynch's position.

The all-day engagement was the biggest of Tam Quan, with 26 Americans killed in action and more than 100 wounded, while the NVA Regiment was nearly destroyed...but not quite. After scattered contacts from 16-18 December, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry again took up the battle when the remnants of the 22nd were discovered to be in the village of An Nghiep, on the south bank of the Lai Giang River, on the South China Sea downstream of the town of Bong Son. The battalion cordoned the village with all four of its rifle companies, and after heavy air and artillery bombardment on the 19th, D Company swept through An Nghiep the morning of the 20th while A, B and C companies held the cordon. What had remained of the 22nd NVA Regiment of the 3rd (Yellow Star) Division (PAVN) had been destroyed by artillery and air strikes the previous day and night.

The Battle of Tam Quan officially ended at midnight December 20th after two weeks of combat. US casualties were 58 killed in action and 250 wounded, nearly half on the 15th. Killed in Action for the 22nd NVA Regiment were estimated to be 650, more than half its strength. Lieutenant General John Tolson, Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division that December said later, "The Battle of Tam Quan had a much greater significance than we realized at the time [in that] it preempted the enemy's Tet offensive. As a result, northern Binh Dinh was least affected of any part of South Vietnam at Tet."

*Tom Kjos*

*Boot to Boot*

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