

# 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 5 ISSUE 4

OCTOBER 2020

## Cavalry Raid: Operation Delaware, Part 1

And then there was the time we went to the A Shau Valley

D Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, arrived at LZ Sharon, just outside the City of Quang Tri on the morning of 15 April, 1968, marking the end of its participation in Operation PEGASUS, the relief of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

A few days later, the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade moved by truck from LZs in Quang Province to an assembly area in rolling hills outside Camp Evans, near Hue-Phu Bai. Two brigades of the 1st Cavalry, a brigade of the 101st Airborne, and the ARVN 1st Infantry Division were about to launch the greatest cavalry raid in history. Large scale raiding originated in the American Civil War when armies sent cavalry behind enemy lines to disrupt supply lines and depots, cut communications, destroy railroads, and generally raise hell.

Delta loaded into "duce-and-a-halves," troopers sitting on their rucksacks, weapons in hand, machine gunners standing with M60's resting on the canvas tops of the cabs. With Cobra gunships flying security alongside the convoy, we were in an oddly festive mood riding down Highway 1 toward a rumored "big operation." Vietnamese civilians along the road were waving, kids yelling, begging, as they (Continued on Page 4)



### 2021 DELTA REUNION OVERVIEW

Monday 27 September

HOTEL CHECK-IN, DELTA REGISTRATION, WELCOME RECEPTION

Tuesday 28 September

HOSPITALITY SUITE, ENJOY LAS VEGAS

Wednesday 29 September

BUSINESS MEETING, MEMORIAL SERVICE, BANQUET

Thursday 30 September

HOTEL CHECK-OUT, OR STAY ANOTHER NIGHT, SAME RATE

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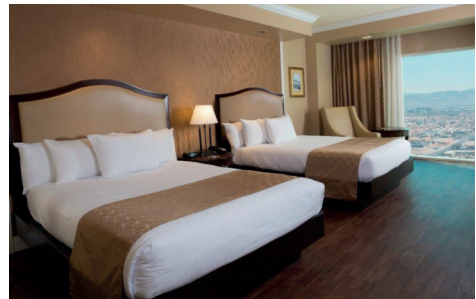


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at <https://tinyurl.com/Delta-Rooms> Group Code: **DCO0924 (DELTA REUNION)**

***The 1st Cavalry Division 2021 Reunion*** at Fort Hood, Texas 22-26 September 2021 will mark its 100th Anniversary since its activation at Fort Bliss, Texas on 13 September 1921.

***The 12th Cavalry Regiment Association Reunion***, Rescheduled to May, 2021 at the Welk Resort, Branson, Missouri. Details: Tom Crabtree at email [mmctlc3@aol.com](mailto:mmctlc3@aol.com) or call (432) 853-4851



The Reverend Dwight Edwards, Past President of Veterans of Delta, was called to Fiddler’s Green on September 22, 2020. Dwight joined D Company at Fort Benning, and deployed to Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry Division in 1965. Later, he earned a BA Temple University and Master of Divinity, Lancaster Theological Seminary. Executive Director of Vietnam Veterans Health Initiative, Pennsylvania Department of Health. Reverend Edwards was a Pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church

Robert Poydasheff, (Col, USA, Ret), former Mayor of Columbus, Georgia and friend of Delta Company, passed on to Fiddler’ Green Thursday, September 24, 2020, age 90. The featured speaker at our Fort Benning Reunion, Bob Poydasheff graduated from The Citadel, served a combat Infantry tour in Vietnam, and earned a Juris Doctor, Tulane University. In the Judge Advocate General Corps, he served as Legal Counsel to the Secretary of the Army.



### First Commander's Corner



It is our fondest wish and prayer that this newsletter finds all of Our Brothers and their loved ones healthy, happy and safe! The good news among the challenges of 2020 is that we're unaware of

COVID-19 striking down any of our Delta Brothers!

At this stage of our lives, we know we'll lose precious Brothers at an ever increasing rate. That doesn't make it any easier. Recent weeks have been especially emotional for your "1st Commander." Two Brothers close to us, and especially to me, were recently called to Fiddler' Green. Past President of Veterans of Delta, and our honorary Chaplain, Reverend Dwight David Edwards, who trained with us at Benning then served with Delta in Vietnam 65-66, passed on at age 74, September 22. Two days later, at age 90, our friend and Brother

Colonel Robert Poydasheff, (Ret), Esq., former Mayor of Columbus, also passed to Fiddlers Green. 'Uncle Bob' was the speaker at Delta's 2019 'Coming Home Reunion.' A contingent of The Veterans of Delta attended a remembrance in his honor at the National Infantry Museum. Look for our report at [www.cattrack6india.com](http://www.cattrack6india.com)

We won't have many more opportunities for the fellowship of the brothers with whom we served, so please plan on being in Las Vegas next September for Delta's Reunion. Brother Doug Christ has been spearheading the planning. Save the dates and look for our brochure with all the details to be sent soon. I look forward to hugging y'all's necks and lifting a glass of Fireball in memory of those beloved Delta Brothers who have been called Home, awaiting our arrival. Lest we ever forget.  
**ONCE A SOLDIER, ALWAYS A SOLDIER...A SOLDIER FOR LIFE**

*Blessings & "Bout to Bout"*

*Johnny Gergulia*

### FIDDLER'S GREEN

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

JOHN ABER  
ESTEL ALIFF  
EDWARD ANDERSON  
ALLEN BAILEY  
JACK BRESE  
NOLAN BROUSSARD  
NELSON BROWN  
WILLIAM DAVIS  
FRANCIS DEBARRY  
DOMINGO DIAZ-MELENDZ  
DWIGHT EDWARDS

GEORGE FREI  
JAMES GARNOW  
GERALD GUILBEAULT  
THOMAS HANCOCK  
HAROLD HATMAKER  
JOHN HILL  
JOSEPH KROWSKA  
BRADLEY LATHERN  
THOMAS MCNINCH  
EARL MILFORD  
JOSEPH MUSIAL

STANLEY NYKIEL  
CARL OBLETON  
DONIVAN OLNEY  
LARRY PIERCE  
THORMAN PETWAY  
RAYMOND RACINE  
JOHN RHODES  
KENNETH RIMMER  
FRANK SANCHEZ  
TOMMIE TOWNSEND  
THOMAS WHITE

*For errors or additions, please contact Delta's webmaster at [delta@cattrack6india.com](mailto:delta@cattrack6india.com)*

## Secretary's Report

First and foremost, I hope you and your families are healthy.

With the help of U S Senator Thomas Carper (Delaware), (the only Senator currently serving in Congress to have served in Vietnam) and the Veterans Administration, we are now searching for the remaining Veterans of Delta not yet accounted for. We hope that this will be accomplished within the next two months.

Should anyone have information on a Veteran who served with Delta and has not been accounted for, please call me (347-853-1281).

As you know plans are underway for our next Company Reunion in Las Vegas in September, 2021. We hope the Corona Virus will then be in the past.

Happy Veterans Day and my best regards for the Holidays. See you in Vegas.

### GOOD HEALTH

*Fred Mac Lennan*

(**Cavalry Raid** from Page 1) always did, for goodies. The boys of Delta obligingly entertained themselves by tossing cigarettes and C ration cans to them. After a while, bored with that, a few threw not to, but at, the kids. We were just kids, too, of course, sometimes doing what kids do. Winning hearts and minds.

Operation DELAWARE had gotten underway during the last days of Pegasus, the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry flying reconnaissance in the A Shau, selecting flight routes, locating antiaircraft sites, identifying targets. From 14 to 19 April, B-52's, tactical fighters, and aerial rocket artillery attacked those targets.

The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and the ARVN 1st Infantry Division moved into positions for ground attacks and air assaults around the junction of Routes 547 and 547A, east of the A Shau, to interdict those routes of egress from the valley toward Hue. The main attack was to be an airmobile assault into the valley by the 1st and 3rd Brigades of the 1st Cavalry. (The Cav's 2nd Brigade remained in the Khe Sanh AO, while the 196th Light Infantry Brigade was responsible for Camp Evans defense.)

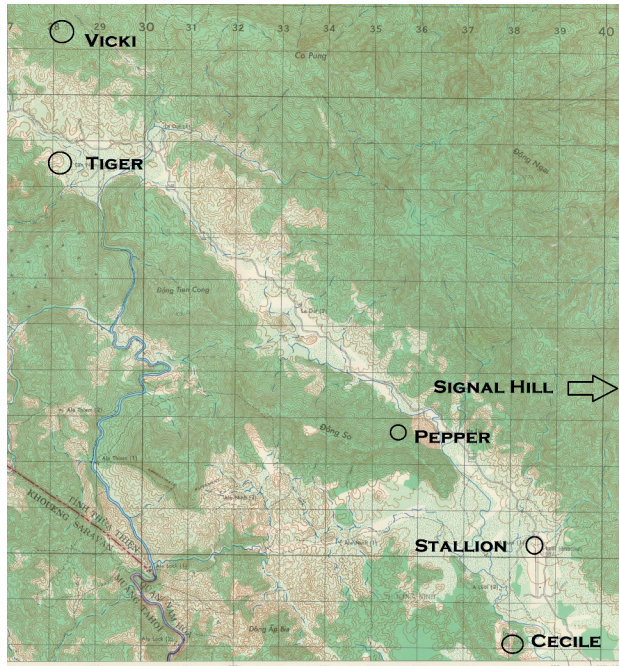
Since the 3rd Brigade was first in Pegasus, the 1st would lead the way in Delaware, assaulting into landing zones around A Luoi, giving the attack early control of the airstrip. However, reconnaissance encountered the heaviest anti-aircraft fire in that area of the valley. Assaults there would likely be very costly, so instead the attack would be opened by the 3rd Brigade attacking further north in the valley.

At 0730 on 19 April, 4 Hueys, 2 Cobras, and a C&C ship lifted off Evans through the overcast carrying LRRP teams to rappel onto Signal Hill, a 4900 foot peak 5 kilometers northeast of A Luoi on which would be established radio relay station vital to the operation. The main attack was underway at 0930, 40 Hueys and 8 gun ships carrying the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, followed by Chinooks with its direct support artillery battery, into landing zone TIGER on the northwest edge of the valley, commanding Route 548, the winding road entering the valley from nearby Laos. The 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry went into landing zone VICKI on the slope north of Tiger. The first sorties largely unopposed, subsequent lifts received intense antiaircraft fire, hitting 23 helicopters and destroying ten. The antiaircraft fire and deteriorating weather forced one-third of the day's planned lifts to be aborted.

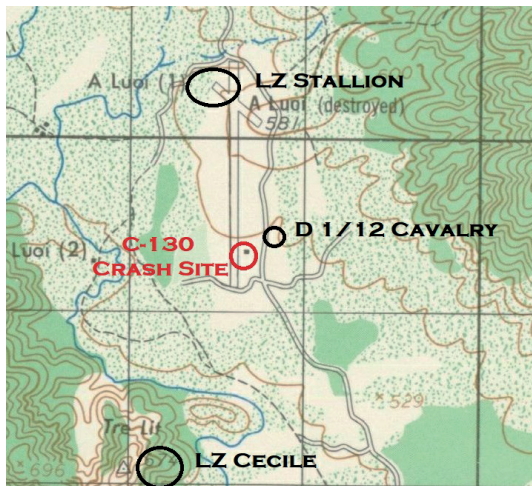
April weather was expected to be good. It wasn't. Not only were the conditions bad in the A Shau, but weather at Camp Evans forced the helicopters to climb through an overcast on instruments, reassemble a formation above the clouds, be radar vectored to the valley, and then search for some sort of hole in the clouds to make a sharp spiral descent into an LZ. On some days the climb (Continued on Page 5)

(**Cavalry Raid** continued from page 4) to clear the cloud tops was to 11,000 feet, a very cold ride. A twenty-minute flight often became over an hour of terror.

The first sorties of 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry flew at 0900 on 20 April, headed into a third landing zone, PEPPER, 8 kilometers southeast of Tiger. It did not go well. After two Hueys crashed, “Blues” (an infantry platoon) of 1/9th Cavalry repelled in with chain saws to enlarge the LZ. By the end of the day, only a single infantry company occupied Pepper. No air assaults were flown on the 21st due to bad weather, though 14 slingload sorties were flown to resupply Tiger. With improving weather on the 22nd, the remainder of 2/7th was lifted into Pepper. After four days, three infantry battalions with their artillery, were finally firmly established in the valley. Delta, with the rest of 1st Brigade, remained bored and wet in the hills near Evans for better weather and for the upper part of the A Shau to be adequately secured.



On 24 April the 2d Battalion, 8th Cavalry, led the 1st Brigade assault into landing zone CECILE two kilometers south of the A Luoi Airfield. The following day, 25 April, the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry lifted into A Shau, the final element touching down at the airfield at 0945, with 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry completing the brigade movement into valley at 1115. First securing the area and beginning the build-out



of LZ Stallion at the airfield, the Brigade began reconnaissance in force operations with 1/8th moving generally to the west and southwest, and 1/12th probing to the south and southeast along Highway 548. D Company was moving south parallel to the road on the 26th, watching the C-130's flying resupply missions. The turboprop cargo planes entered the valley from the east at a point south of us, then made a right turn, flying up-valley to parachute pallets of supplies and ammunition into Stallion at A Loui, the airfield not yet repaired adequately to land the big planes. As Delta moved slowly south, we could hear NVA 37mm anti-aircraft batteries engaging the planes from the vicinity of Ta Bat, about 5 kilometers to our southeast, information that Delta's Forward Observer, LT John Kirby, radioed in. (Continued on page 7)

## Website Update

In the past few months site visits have steadily climbed from an average of about 4500 visits per month to over 6600.

Newspaper articles from Steve Jordon have been posted on the Cambodia Invasion page.

A man doing memoir research saw our 506 Valley web site story. He realized it was his step dad, CPT Edward Wagner, 1/12th Battalion Surgeon who found Michael Noone, still alive in the killing zone. I called CPT Wagner and he gave me additional details, confirmed and expanded by First Sergeant Gene Helgeson. The story has been updated in the Firefighters section. Also posted, an article from Edward Wagner about the "Medical Shock Team" that saved the wounded that night. After 54 years, Michael Noone called and thanked Edward Wagner for saving his life that night in 1966. We hope to see them both at the next reunion in Las Vegas. Their hand shake begs for a photo.

We need your photos, videos and stories. Everything is important! We want to document as much of our history as possible WHILE WE STILL CAN. Contact me.

**BRING PLENTY OF AMMO. CATTRACK6INDIA...OUT**

*Bob March* (360) 627-0918

## BOOK REVIEW

### ANGIE'S WAR

Gary DeRigne

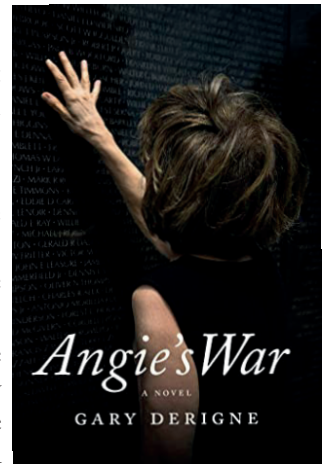
You will enjoy reading this book. Gary DeRigne is one of Delta's own, who served in Delta Company in 1969 and 70. Here he proves that he is indeed a gifted writer and his personal combat experience shines through. The first part of the book vividly paints combat scenes that other members of Delta will understand and appreciate. Gary's writing skills carry the reader through this book in a way that makes it a real page turner.

Early in the novel the plot develops with an unusual incident that has pervasive repercussions. DeRigne cleverly weaves the plot through generations and across the world. The tension is always there. A question must be answered. The reader wonders how it will be resolved. And the resolution is not at all obvious.

This book expands our perception of the impact of war. All veterans feel the pain of the loss of their comrades; for us, those who died in Vietnam. We carry that with us. But, unfortunately, we sometimes failed to consider the horrendous impact on the loved ones who lost a family member. Not until we are older do we begin to fathom how much parents and loved ones are wounded, just as much as ourselves. *Angie's War* does this very well. DeRigne writes with finesse, such that the reader feels these emotions.

Those who served with Gary will quickly recognize some of the characters in the book. There are wonderful illustrations of the value in later life of brothers-in-arms reuniting and supporting one another in times of need. The bonds of service together in war are never severed, a precept which shines forth in his novel.

If you read no other book about Vietnam, read this one. It is not typical. It's no wonder that *Angie's War* has received awards for great fiction. Gary has broken the mold of Vietnam war books. His creativity and writing skills have given us a lasting work of art. -RPM-



**(Cavalry Raid continued from page 5)** In the early afternoon, we'd stopped for a break at YC 387995, when one of the C-130's was hit. As it came into sight and over us, we could see it streaming fuel and hydraulic fluid, part of its tail shot away, a hole in a wing, one engine gone. It was losing altitude, and as it reached Stallion, made a turn back to the south. Now coming down fast, the big plane approached us directly from behind, and at the last second veered right and impacted in flames barely 100 meters to the southwest of us at YC 386994. Smoke rose through the trees as ammo cooked off. Did we see a crew member go out the back? We sent a patrol out to look, there was no one and nothing.



Informed a recovery team would be sent out from Stallion, we moved out again to the southeast.

With explosions continuing at the crash site, we moved quickly down the valley, reaching YC 403973 at 1425, where we found a truck radiator, leaf spring and rear end, along with 300 gallons of fuel. It being an area of significant enemy activity, Delta continued to search through the afternoon, and established its night defensive perimeter nearby. The following morning at 1015, we reported fresh tank and truck tracks. A scout dog working with us picked up a fresh scent; we followed toward the south, firing artillery ahead as we moved. Later that afternoon, a grease rack for vehicles, 200 gallons gasoline,

500 gallons diesel fuel, along with 37mm antiaircraft and 12.7mm heavy machine gun ammunition were added to our list. Vehicle tracks were all over. Antiaircraft fire from south of us continued through the day. We again dug in overnight in that same area.

On 28 April we found our "prize," a truck with its radiator missing; we knew where to find one. The 1st Cavalry Division's Daily Journal recorded "Element will extract and attempt to repair." We did. -TWK-

**(Cavalry Raid will be continued in the January issue of *Burb-to-Burb.*)**



## Notes

- 1- Contributions to "Cavalry Raid" from Richard Kent, George Davey, Ed Johnson, John Kirby, Tom Kjos, Ron Redalen, Ken Goff, Jamie Swidecki, James Neeley, and Gary Downs.
- 2- Daily Journals of the 1st Cavalry Division and 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry
- 3- B Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry <http://www.eagerarms.com/khesanhashauvalleyoperations.html>
- 4- Pearson, Willard, LTG, "War in the Northern Provinces 1966-1968," Department of the Army
- 5- Vietnam Center & Archive, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

*Boot to Boot*

Postage

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