



Thunder Run

Vol 38-No. 2

“Together Then - Together Again”

2nd Quarter, 2024

The 11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia

President's Message

Frank Church



It is said that the only constant in life is change. Our age brings change to our bodies and our minds. It brings change to our family life and social interactions. Change is brought by world, national and regional events. The war we were placed in during our youth, whether by our own choice or that of our government of that time, changed us forever. We came home a changed person and had to adapt to a changed world. Some of us were able to resume our lives as we had originally planned but most of us had a very difficult period of adjustment. Some of us are still not there. Change is unavoidable and the acceptance of it is difficult but we must survive.

Any Trooper we lose saddens us and each one will have an impact on the organization and the ones who were close to them. When we lose part of our leadership team it can leave a huge gap in the functioning of the 11ACVVC. Most changes are created by unexpected events, and we must react to them. If we can anticipate a loss by an officer choosing not to seek reelection or their health deteriorates to the point of not being able to serve we can act proactively and minimize the impact.

Our organization started with a very small group and grew. With that growth came necessary changes because of that growth, and we adapted. That adaptation required us to take steps to conform to the rules and norms that applied to a formal nonprofit military organization. The rapid increase in membership required us to seek larger venues to hold our reunions. For a few years we held reunions in a city of a trooper who volunteered to organize it. That soon became too much for one person to handle and was beginning to cost more than it should. We had to modify our approach and went to a professional organization to help with selecting reunion sites and prices, that was very successful, so successful we still use them. It was a very positive change. Our reunion attendance grew and attracted a thousand troopers and their families regularly. With our larger numbers we could secure a site in any city we chose and got very affordable pricing.

About 5 years ago the rate of our decrease in numbers was becoming very apparent. The 11th ACVVC Officers began to consider how to cope with that. We had a basic plan on

how to make changes to adjust. Then the biggest change in our lives came with Covid. We lost many members because of that. Our membership numbers declined at an even more rapid rate. Our reunion attendance plummeted. So, we had to rethink our long-range plans. Post Covid came with a huge increase in costs of everything. We were not immune to that and again we had to adjust.

It is the responsibility of the Officers of the 11thACVVC to manage the organization and they willingly accept this. We do not have the need for a large hotel nor can our members absorb the cost that comes with them. We do not have the bargaining power that we once had. We send out requests for proposals to all those favorite big name and glamorous cities we have gone to in the past but our opportunities with them are very limited or not there at all. This is one of those changes our membership, and officers, are having difficulty in adjusting to.

Change does not have to be a bad thing. There are many smaller cities that are very much interested in hosting our reunions. They do not have the allure of larger cities but can provide a very comfortable and affordable site. Grand Rapids is one example and I believe Omaha will also be rated on the same scale.

Our reunion requirements and the management of the 11th ACVVC will continue to change but what will never change is our desire to meet every year with our buddies we served with in Vietnam and the new friends we make at the reunions. That is the constant behind the decisions we make for the organization. We may not always get it perfect but together we can make the impact of change easier for all of us.

“We were, we are, we always will be Blackhorse Troopers”

Allons,
Frank





11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia (11ACVVC)

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Thunder Run covers present and future interests of the organization that includes membership and reunion information, various fund raising activities, and other items relative to the membership. Submissions are welcome and encouraged. Correspondence and inquiries concerning Thunder Run should be made in writing to: Editor, "Thunder Run," Peter L. Walter, 8 Tallowood Dr., Westampton, NJ 08060-3721.

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Message from COL Timothy J. Ferguson,

70th Colonel of the Blackhorse



ALLONS! Merry ALLONS! from the Troopers, NCOs, and officers of the Best Damn Regiment and the **FINEST IN THE LAND!** The Regiment is wrapping up a well-deserved block leave for the holidays and we hope that it has been a relaxing holiday season for all of you as well.

The fall was a very busy season for the Blackhorse as we fought a rotation with 1st SBCT, 4th Infantry Division and then executed several major training events before another rotation. My wife Alex and I were very honored to attend the ACVVC reunion in September in Grand Rapids, MI and the opportunity to meet many of you. It was an amazing experience that we both will cherish.

Blackhorse fielded the Army's newest and most lethal tank, the M1A2SEPV3 and has now fired two gunneries with them. We also held an E3B, which consists of training and testing for the Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB), Expert Soldier Badge (ESB), and Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB). We had nearly 100 Troopers win one of the three coveted badges.

Our final force-on-force fight was in November against 3rd ABCT, 4th Infantry Division and the Regiment did exceptionally well. We followed that with a break for Thanksgiving and a Blackhorse Commander's Cup challenge, which 2/11 "Eaglehorse" took in a close competition. As we moved into the final weeks before the holiday, we conducted multiple training exercises to include a tank gunnery, team and squad

live fire exercises and several holiday events to celebrate 2023.

As always there is much going on in the Blackhorse every day and it is a very exciting time here in the high desert of California. Our best wishes from all of us to all of you as we look forward into 2024. This will be another busy year of rotations, training, and ultimately transition as the summer approaches. You are our legacy, we are the present, and we each look fondly toward the future of our Regiment and continuing to serve our nation.

DEATH RIDES A BLACKHORSE!

Allons!

Sincerely,

COL Timothy J. Ferguson, 70th RCO

Editor's Note: This article was inadvertently omitted from 1st qtr 2024 Thunder Run. I apologize for any inconvenience.



"The Long Walk", 38 miles from Fort Irwin to the Barstow Veterans Home, an annual tradition.



"Santa's Tank", Christmas at Fort Irwin.



The 11th ACR Horse Detachment retires "Fritz", "Comanche" and "Garryowen".

THE 2024 SILENT AUCTION

By Greg Mason and Mike Rafferty

The 2023 Silent Auction raised \$5,909 for the 11th ACVVC Scholarship Fund with 184 items donated and available for bid. The donated items included many hand-crafted items and one-of-a-kind items with a Blackhorse theme. We are not allowed to have alcoholic beverages or firearms in the auction as many state laws prohibit it. We look forward to another successful auction.

The auction process will be as follows:

1. Items are needed for the Silent Auction to be conducted during our 39th Annual Reunion in Omaha, Nebraska. Items peculiar to the 11th Cavalry are always favorites, and any item of value is welcome, Cavalry related or not.
2. We will have a **collection site** set-up in the registration area to collect donated items brought to the reunion beginning on **Wednesday from 1pm to 5pm, Thursday from 1pm to 5pm, and Friday from 1pm to 4pm.**
3. You can ship items to **Tom Doll after April 1,** to collect, hold and bring the items to the reunion for display. If you plan to ship items, please use the convenient Silent Auction Donor Form printed in this issue. If you bring the items to the reunion, also complete the donation form and include it with the item.
4. The **auction** will be from **6:30pm to 8:30pm on Friday night** with the bidding ending precisely at 8:30pm. Those in wheelchairs or motorized chairs may be allowed in at 6:15 to allow them a little time to view the items before the crowds enter if our space in the rooms is tight.
5. Winning bidders must be present, pick up their items and pay for them between 8:30pm and 9pm after the bidding is closed.
6. If the item is not picked up, the item will be awarded to the next highest bid at 9pm or auctioned off at 9:15pm Friday evening. The bid form will have a place for you to leave a cell phone number in case we need to call you to let you know to pick up your item.
7. We will be able to accept cash, checks, Visa or MasterCard for payment.

We do need volunteers to work at the collection site and the night of the auction. We are setting up the collection site schedule in 2-hour shifts and if you would like to volunteer please contact me at gregmason311@gmail.com or 813-220-9027. I will respond to your email as I receive them.

Our reason for requiring items to be picked up and paid for the evening of the auction is because of the difficulties we have had in prior years getting all the items delivered and paid for. We appreciate your understanding. We look forward to seeing you in Omaha and thanks in advance to all the donors!

11th ACVVC Silent Auction Donated Items Information Form

Please provide the following information with your donated item.

If you wish to donate anonymously, please check the box below.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Description of Item donated: _____

Name of Donor: _____

Address of Donor: _____

Phone number of Donor: _____

Value of Item Donated \$ _____ I wish to remain Anonymous (Check here) _____

Mail Silent Auction Items After April 1 to:

11th ACVVC

C/O Tom Doll

4412 Hickory Street

Omaha, NE 68105-2413

Editor's Corner: Thunder Run, Annual 11th ACVVC Calendar & Funeral Honor Guard

The winter chill has hit North America, the holidays have passed and many of us will now hunker down and hope spring arrives early in this year of 2024. We have snow on the ground here in the northeast and not being a hunter or skier, this is an opportune time to stay inside and try to catch up on items that have not been addressed recently.

Thunder Run – Everyone has a story, and though we may not think our story will be interesting to others, your story matters. If you want it told, while you're still here to see it in print and answer possible follow-up questions, do this now! Put pen to paper (actually, type it in MS Word!), and commit your memories and thoughts to words. Send your stories to me via email (as an attachment), or if this is not possible, send me a hard-copy letter via USPS. As our numbers decrease, we are receiving less input for Thunder Run. So, think about it. Tell us about your time in Vietnam, the Army, and if possible, how all of that may have affected your later life. We need to hear from you! Also, if you have a new idea for something we should be including in Thunder Run, please let me know. And if you have complaints about the content in TR, stifle yourself! Just joking here, if there is something inaccurate or offensive, please let me know. Thunder Run is your publication, and it will only continue to be successful with your input.

11th ACVVC 2024 Calendar - By now all dues-paid members of the 11th. ACVVC should have received their personal copy of our 2024 calendar. If you have not received a calendar please contact Allen Hathaway (11thcav1966@comcast.net, phone: 703-791-6610) or me (base-piece70@verizon.net, phone: 609-261-5629). The 2024 calendar features fourteen color photographs, all submitted by members of the 11th ACVVC. In addition, it includes historical information on significant dates in the history of the United States and your Regiment. We have already received several compliments on the 2024 calendar along with many generous donations and we thank you for your continued support!

This full-color calendar is the first of our 2024 Scholarship fundraising efforts. It is yours to keep and enjoy whether you donate or not. We do, however, ask for your support with a tax-deductible donation that you make to assist the children and grandchildren of 11th ACVVC members to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Scholarships can be used for college, trade school, or any other educational training following high school. The Scholarship application is in this issue as are articles by our dedicated and long-time Scholarship Chairman, Mike "Doc" Rafferty.

It is imperative that you the members of the 11th ACVVC continue to search through your old photos and submit the best quality photos you can find to be considered for inclusion in future issues. We transitioned to the full-color version years ago and to continue to publish a full-color

calendar we need a large pool of high-quality color photographs. The best photos for reproduction purposes are high quality 35mm prints or slides showing groups of Troopers performing every-day combat missions and chores along with images of the landscape, hamlets and indigenous Vietnamese. If you have the capability of electronically scanning photos at a resolution of 300 dpi, you can send them to me as jpg images attached to an e-mail. This is the easiest, cheapest, safest and quickest way to submit photos. If you choose to mail your images, please send copies and retain your original. Information describing the subject matter, identity of Troopers, date, location, etc., is appreciated. This calendar shows your service, your history... please help me continue to make it a great production that we can all be proud of! Also, a correction is in order. Charles Hunt (K Trp & ACT, 1968 – 1970) pointed out that the September photo is misidentified as a Vulcan Cannon; it is in fact an M134 "Mini Gun". Thank you Charles and Kathy for catching this and notifying me!

Funeral Honor Guard - Our 11th ACVVC website (11thcavnam.com) is our best way to communicate on a daily basis. There are updates and notices there that can be posted almost instantaneously by our webmaster Allen Hathaway. If you scroll down the front page you will come to a three column, six row grid with titles that when clicked on will link you to that specific area of interest. Please check the "Funeral Honor Guard" every time you go to the website. On that link you will find the obituaries of your fellow Blackhorse brothers, including date/time/location info for their services when available. Unfortunately, we often learn of the passing of a Trooper after the services have been held. But you still have the opportunity to visit his grave, as Chaplain Bill encourages you to do in his article in this issue. If you know of the death of a Trooper, please call or email me with the details as soon as possible. If I know in advance, I contact Troopers in the area and provide them with the details and urge them to attend the services. I can assure you, the family will appreciate your presence. Every one of our members who has visited with the family of a deceased Trooper will tell you how meaningful it was not only to the family, but to the visiting Trooper. It is our last chance to show the respect, honor and love we have for our brothers who wore the Blackhorse patch during the Vietnam War.

Finally, thank you all for everything you do for the 11th ACVVC!

Pete Walter, 11th ACVVC BOD
Thunder Run & Calendar Editor
Funeral Honor Guard Chairman

Editor's Note: This article was inadvertently omitted from 1st qtr 2024 Thunder Run. I apologize for any inconvenience.



Membership is Our Strength
It's not the price you pay to belong, it's the price you paid to become eligible to join



11TH ACVVC DONATIONS

Donor Levels: Platinum Level \$500+ Gold Level \$100-\$499 Silver Level \$50-\$99 Bronze Level \$1-\$49

Members donations are used for the sole purpose for which they are intended. Whether it be for Scholarship, Reunion Assistance, Memorial or the General Fund, member donations are used to support that specific fund. (IMO = In Memory of)

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Richard Zimmerar
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Darrell Zipp

The Wall

There is a place
Not far from here
Where spirits walk
And heroes live
And honor still resides.

It is a wall
With names inscribed
Of those who served
When they were asked...
The brothers of my youth.

I go there still
To walk and think
About my life,
And what I've done since
And things that might have been.

There is a debt
I can't repay
Too many lives were spent.
And one man's life cannot suffice
To make their deaths worthwhile.

But there is hope
In the memory
Of those we leave behind
Who know the price that freedom
brings
Who can carry on in kind.

I send you now
To touch a name
So the vision can be passed
Remember there is honor still
It is for you to see it lasts.

They are not dead
And have a wish
As all old soldiers do
The reflection you see before you
now
Is their wish to live in you.

Author unknown

(Editor's note: I found this poem on a website tribute to a deceased Black-horse Trooper. The poster did not know the origin and we believe it is in the public domain.)

The 3rd Annual Marty Ognibene Memorial Golf Outing

Thursday, September 5, 2024 Miracle Hill Golf Club
1401 N 120th Street, Omaha, NE 68154
402-498-0220

In 2024 we will make our first trip to Nebraska and as usual, we've planned a great reunion and a wonderful golf outing! We'll play Miracle Hill Golf Club in Omaha, a championship 18 hole course located in the heart of Omaha, Nebraska. Originally a dairy farm called "Friesland Farms", when the dairy farm closed the Davis family decided to build a premier golf course in what was then "western Omaha". Things moved quickly and the course was completed in 1961. On Oct 7, 1965, Bob Mitera teed up a ball on number 10 and let it rip. His ball bounced, hopped, and rolled...all they way down and into the cup. 444 yards, a Guinness Book of World Records mark!

The entry fee includes balls, tees, greens fees, cart, LD & CTP contests, continental breakfast, luncheon and prizes. Complete the form below and mail it to the address shown with a check for \$99 per golfer (payable to Peter L. Walter). Form and fee must be received by August 22, 2024 to guarantee your entry! You do not need a foursome to enter. Include your average score for 18 holes and I'll pair you with a golfer of equal (or worse!) talent or include the names of all golfers in the group for whom you are paying. The outing is open to men and women. Dress code: no denim, shirts must have collars, shorts must be Bermuda length, soft spikes only!

Call 609-261-5629 if you have questions. You will receive confirmation of you registration in the mail. All entries must be prepaid. We will have an 8:00 shotgun start with lunch and prizes following golf. Each golfer is responsible for getting to/from the golf course. All golfers who will be driving should offer rides to their fellow golfers. Do not delay!!! Mail today!!! August 22 deadline!!! **"FORE!"**

32nd Annual Marty Ognibene Memorial Golf Outing *(Please include an e-mail address if you have one!)*

Name _____ Average Score _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Name _____ Average Score _____

Name _____ Average Score _____

Name _____ Average Score _____

E-mail _____

Mail entry form and check to:
Pete Walter
8 Tallowood Drive
Westampton, NJ 08060-3751

Three positions will be up for election this year during the General Membership Meeting to be held Saturday morning, September 7th, during the 2024 Reunion. The three positions are President, Secretary and one Director.

The President and Secretary will serve two-year terms beginning January 1, 2025 and ending December 31, 2026. The Director will serve a three-year term beginning January 1, 2025 and ending December 31, 2027.

All candidates must be Life Members of the 11th ACVVC. Candidates will have an equal opportunity to state their qualifications at the General Membership Meeting. The elected candidates should be able to attend the annual reunion and participate in Board Meetings during their elected term that are generally held by conference call.

The elected candidates must be able to communicate by e-mail with the other Board members and be able to help the Board make decisions on a variety of organizational matters. Each candidate must be highly organized and be able to commit time and energy to a specific project or committee as directed by the President. Excellent skills in using Microsoft Word and Excel are required in order to prepare

reports and other documents required of all positions.

The position of President requires considerable time and superb organizational skills. The President needs to frequently multi-task in his responsibility to oversee all projects, programs, and activities of the organization.

Candidates for Secretary should be able to intently follow and record organized minutes, summarize reports, actions and decisions from official meetings, and maintain records of the 11th ACVVC and its numerous projects. He should have strong language and writing skills and know basic Robert's Rules of Order. Information management skills on a computer are required.

The Directors are expected to commit themselves to a specific area of interest within the 11th ACVVC or as directed by the President.

Nominations for these positions should be submitted in writing to the Secretary or submitted from the floor at the General Membership meeting. Please consider participating on the Board of Directors serving the 11th ACVVC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

11th ARMORED CAVALRY'S VETERANS OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

Membership is open to all troopers who served with or were attached to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment while in the countries of Vietnam or Cambodia from August 1966 thru March 1972. Membership is also open to the wives, parents and children of our Troopers killed in action.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

UNIT _____ DATES: FROM _____ TO _____
(Troop, Sqdn) (Mo/Yr) (Mo/Yr)

SER NO RANK (during tour) _____ SSN NO _____

OTHER INFORMATION _____

TYPE MEMBERSHIP: NEW RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP NUMBER _____
 ANNUAL (\$15) LIFE (\$50)

IN ADDITION, PLEASE ACCEPT MY TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION FOR \$ _____

I authorize the release of my address/phone number to other Troopers who served with the 11th ACR

(Sign) _____

Visa Mastercard Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ Security Code/CVC _____

Signature _____

Please make checks/money orders payable to: **11th ACVVC**. Mail this form with your check or money order (no cash) to: **11th ACVVC Membership, Ollie Pickral, 571 Ditchley Rd., Kilmarnock, VA 22482.**

The Night I Danced with the General's Wife

Reynaldo Caceres, CW2, Sqdn Mnt., 3/11 ACR, 1970-1971



In 1968, I was assigned to the 4th Battalion 73rd Armor in Boblingen, Germany. One morning it was raining, cold and miserable. A jeep pulled up behind me and a Staff Sgt E6 got out of the jeep and asked "Are you CWO Caceres" and I said "Yes". He told me there's an officer sitting in the jeep that wants to talk to you and I asked him who he was and what he wanted. He said he couldn't tell me who he was because the man didn't want me to know. I told him I'd be out in a few minutes and find out what he wanted. After a short wait, he came back again and said "Chief, you better talk to this man because he wants to talk to you now". Again, I asked who it was and he wouldn't tell me but insisted that I get up and talk to him now.

I was working on the M88 and walked over to the jeep. He opened the door, I looked at him and he looked at me and I said "Blackhorse". It was General (then Colonel George Patton, IV. He asked me where the officers club was. I told him on top of the hill and he asked if I had time to take him there. I told my motor Sgt to call brigade and battalion commanders and tell them George Patton Jr. is in the Officers Club. I took the General to the Officers Club and introduced him to the mess officer.

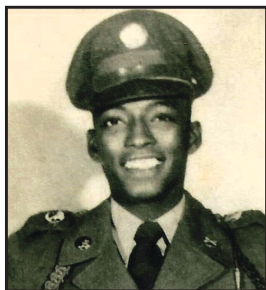
He told the mess officer he wanted a dinner for approximately 100 people. The mess officer said he could take care of it and no problem. After they got the menu settled for the dinner, he asked me if I had my dress blues

with me and I replied yes. He said I want you to be there for my special dinner and he asked me to stay close to him in case he needs someone to get something done. He also wanted two tanks going to the main entrance of the Officers Club with the guns making an arch as they walked into the club.

On the evening of the occasion, there were several officers, brigade commanders, battalion commanders, and company commanders. Five Mercedes' sedans and dignitaries came out. I asked who they were and was told he was the mayor of Stuttgart, and his name was Manfred Rommel, who was the son of Desert Fox Rommel. After introductions by George Patton, Jr. and Rommel, there were speeches made by both of them. I noticed there were no photographers taking pictures to commemorate the event.

After that, people started to depart. George Patton Jr. hollered out "Chief...my wife wants to dance, and I don't feel like dancing". So, I asked Mrs. Patton if she would do me the honor of dancing with me. We walked to the dance floor, and I told her I wasn't a very good dancer and she replied "That's okay Chief, neither am I. And call me Joanne". I told her "Thank you Joanne".

I know she's in heaven dancing with the angels.



SFC Harold Montana, KIA, 15 JAN 67, I Troop, 3/11 ACR, Helen Montana and Theresa Montana

Platoon Sergeant Harold Montana - 57 years ago today he was killed in Vietnam! Sergeant Montana epitomized how a US Army Sergeant should conduct himself!

He was a "role model" for the other US Army's NCOs in Vietnam.

He was my sergeant! When Sgt. Montana spoke you paid attention, because it wasn't very often that he spoke; however, when he did it was always military.

His words were in the form of an "order" he was giving to us his troops. He was passing down through the army's "chain of command." Sgt. Montana's orders were delivered in a calm & gentle manner. Never did he bark at us like some other officers & sergeants. I never heard Sgt. Montana say anything that wasn't military.

That changed on January 15, 1967. My life changed that day, too! I remember January 15, 1967, VIVIDLY!!!

It was just after sunrise 1-15-67. The morning was cloudy it had rained during the night. I was walking out of the woods to my outfit "I Troop" that was about 50 yards away in a clearing where many ACAVs and M-48 Patton tanks were encircled.

Myself and five other 11th Cavalry Troopers had just spent the night in the woods on a nighttime ambush patrol. My jungle fatigues were wet, and they stunk. I hadn't had a shower in awhile, I was stinking too! My face was swollen with welts from being bitten by Vietnamese insects, all night long.

I was hungry, due to the weather and terrain the helicopters hadn't brought us any "hot chow".

I was going to have some more C-rations for breakfast. I was walking past Sgt. Montana's ACAV when he said, "Rick, come here, take a knee, I want to read you a letter I just wrote to Helen, my wife."

Sgt. Montana was sitting on the tailgate of the ACAV, and he gave me his big, beautiful smile with his straight white teeth. My concerns

vanished! The morning got brighter! All it took was his big smile to make the day a "good day" He read his letter to me, "Honey, I'm sorry I scolded you in my last letter for not writing to me. Yesterday the mailman delivered four letters from you. Sometimes we get so far 'out in the sticks' the mailman can't find us. I'll be coming home in August, leave the kids with grandma, meet me in California, then we'll "rock a slow train" back home to Arkansas!

I love you...Harold."

It was the first time I had ever seen or heard a non-military side of Sgt. Montana.

Then Sgt. Montana quickly changed back into his military persona and said, "Rick we have orders to scout out those trees over there to see if we can find any Viet Cong in them. So, you seem to be always on the point, you know I always got your back! But not today Rick! Today, I'm going to take the point! I'll show you how to run "The Point". Watch me, I'll show you how to do it, RIGHT!" Sgt. Montana gave me his beautiful smile, again! It was delightful hearing and seeing

Sgt. Montana trash talking!!

I went over to my track and got behind and we started following Sgt Montana's ACAV into the tree line...suddenly... BOOM! Sgt. Montana's vehicle was blown up! His track had run over a command detonated mine. I jumped out of my vehicle and ran over to his vehicle and saw what the explosion had done to my sergeant's body!

I then saw the electric cord the Vietcong had used to detonate the command detonated mine. Myself and the other soldiers in my squad charged into the lush, green vegetation following the electrical cord with our M-16 firing aimlessly on automatic mode into the jungle, while we were screaming obscenities! We wanted revenge for them killing our Sergeant Montana!

Like always the United States Army was too powerful. The Vietcong knew they could not defeat us. So they used "hit & run" tactics!

Later that night reflecting on the day's events...I had this thought that became engraved in my thoughts from that day (1-15-67) on PERMANENTLY! WHY? Why did Sergeant Montana read me the letter he wrote to Helen, his wife, and showed me a non-military side of himself for the very first time?

WHY did he change his orders to me that killed him, but saved me from being blown up?

SGT. MONTANA SAVED MY LIFE!

During the next four decades on occasions I'd relive my memories of 01-15-67 with certain strangers and they would ask, "did you ever contact Helen, the wife, that Sgt Montana wrote the letter to?" I'd say, "I tried, but with no luck." Until I met a lady named Sally...I told her & she went to work on her laptop. Sally gave me a number to call in Chicago, Illinois.

I got to speak with Theresa Montana! (We both cried tears of pure joy over the phone). Theresa Montana was eight years old in 1967 when her father was killed in Vietnam.

I met Theresa August 2016 in Columbus, Georgia at a 11th ACVVC reunion. Theresa gave me something very, very special! She said, "Sgt. Montana, he was my father, so now you get to be my Dad!" Wow! What an Honor for me!

The second time I saw Theresa was in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The third time we hugged each other was in her home in Chicago, Illinois.

I met Helen Montana in Chicago for the first time, while hugging Helen the first words she whispered in my ear, "The Montana Family just got bigger, we have included the Organ Family."

Helen went to be with our Sergeant Montana on February 3, 2021.

Theresa Montana & I we are in constant communication with each other! Look up in the dictionary the word "GOOD PERSON" and a picture of Theresa Montana should be there!

It was a BLESSING to be drafted into the US Army! I've had remarkable experiences, especially meeting the Montana family.

I owe my life to Sgt. Montana. January 15, 1967, his ended; mine started.

Rick Organ, 1 Trp,
66-'67
Amarillo, Texas



Warriors Of Our Generation

K.H. Elliott, 541rst MID, 11th ACR

We were the warriors of our generation. Not always by choice. Some of us were forced into the role via the draft. But some (a lot) of us volunteered for military, and Vietnam service. It didn't matter once we were in the field, draftees and regular army enlistees looked the same, bled the same, and we depended on each other the same. I guess we had different points of view about the war, but in the middle of a firefight none of that mattered. Survival was what mattered. So, in most cases draftees fought just as hard as enlistees because at the end of the day it didn't matter how you got to the 'Nam, the fact was we were all there with a common goal of getting back to the world in one piece. In retrospect I don't know how many of us really had an opinion about whether we should be in Vietnam or not. We lived day to day, mission to mission, our only real goal to survive.

We formed friendships with people we never would have even considered being associated with in the real world. We were close. We became brothers (of the gun). We knew each other's secrets, stories of each other's origins, we shared stories about our families, our neighborhoods, our girlfriends, and hopes and plans for the real world after the 'Nam. We all planned to survive and do great things after we got home.

The realities of our return to the world turned out to be a lot different than we had fantasized during our tours. It wasn't our fault. In such a bad place, our experiences were so far outside the realm of the way even our poorest soldiers had been raised, it wasn't surprising that we would elevate our memories of home, and expectations for our return to the real world.

In the end many of us were disappointed. For the most part we came home to families and girlfriends and wives that loved us. But some of us had girlfriends and wives who ran off with other men,

or families who did not support our roles in the war. We came back to a country that was hostile (at best) to our service; a country that failed to realize we were not the root of their perceived problem with our involvement in Vietnam. We came home to an economy not ready to absorb and provide jobs for such a great number of returning veterans. And, by the way, what jobs were an infantryman/machine gunner/armored vehicle crewman qualified for anyway? Those of us who were lucky used the GI Bill and went back to school, although even after graduating with a higher education the economic climate of the time still left us struggling to find jobs and make our way back in the world.

We thought we would be able to put our past as warriors behind us. We were wrong. We came home to a new fight that still goes on to this day. We came home as the pariahs of public opinion about the war and were forced to engage in a new struggle to gain recognition for our sacrifices in an unpopular war. We had to become warriors against the social, political, and economic climate of that time. A climate that made it more challenging to gain recognition for the needs for veteran's medical care and benefits; for recognition and compensation for the effects of Agent Orange, PTSD, and to recognize and address the subject of veteran suicide. 50 plus years on since our war and we are still fighting for recognition of new illnesses associated with Agent Orange, and the Veterans Administration still struggles for budget dollars to meet our ongoing needs.

We were the warriors of our generation, and we gave all in an unpopular war. We are no less heroes than the veterans of the War on Terror, or any of our nation's other conflicts. Our country owes us (and all veterans) whatever it must take to meet our needs and repay our service and devotion to duty.

Blackhorse Hoofbeats

Echoes from the Regiment's Service in Vietnam 1966-1972

Don Snedeker, 11th ACVVC Historian

May 2024

Blackhorse Troopers: George Smith Patton grew up in a soldier's family, the son of a great Cavalryman. He served in two wars and with the 11th Cav twice. He knew something about soldiers in general and Blackhorse Troopers in particular. Looking back on a career that spanned three-plus decades, he concluded: "The soldier in Vietnam, for the record, and I've said this a thousand times, both publicly and privately, the soldier in Vietnam was the best soldier that I have ever seen, in peacetime and wartime, in 34 years of continuous service."

Contrary to the popular notion at the time, most of those who became Troopers in the 11th Cav in Vietnam were volunteers, not draftees. While some joined the Army in order to pick their duty station or specialty (at that time, if you enlisted in the Army for three years, you were guaranteed either training in the branch you requested or your first duty assignment; if you were drafted, that was not the case). Others were motivated by patriotism, a need to get away from home, trouble with the law, and a wide variety of other reasons. Daryl Carlson (I Troop, 1969-70), for example, signed up with Uncle Sam because he had "too many traffic tickets".

For Darrell Carey, Sr. (M Company, 1967-68), it was John F. Kennedy's call to action. "The United States always looked after other people's rights, and that's what I felt I needed to do." G Troop's Walter Weyher grew up in rural Michigan. He joined the 11th Cav in August 1967. He was almost 26 years old when drafted, quite a bit older than most of his fellow draftees. He said that for country boys like him, "it was a disgrace if you didn't go" into the Service. Bryant Nelson (HOW Battery, 1/11, 1969-70), says "My father-in-law...[who] served as a fighter pilot for the famous Flying Tigers in China and Burma ... without saying a word, had strong influence on me to pick up the responsibility to serve my country and help in whatever way I could in a war I believed help free the Vietnamese from the yoke of Communism."

The Terry brothers from Monroe, LA – Gary, Pete, and Wesley – all volunteered for the Army when they came of age. All three served in the Blackhorse in Vietnam. Wesley joined A Troop in 1967 (he was wounded and medevaced in January 1969). Gary was assigned to HHT, Regiment in early 1969. Younger brother Pete came to K Troop at the end of the year. They knew about the Army policy to not assign brothers to the same unit; they weren't about to let a policy stand in their way. Gary recalls:

While Wesley was home on convalescence leave and I was home on leave going to Vietnam he told me some stories about the 11th Cav, I remember the last thing he told me before I boarded the plane was that I didn't need to go to the 11th but as luck would have it I was the only one at the 90th Repo [90th Replacement Detachment] to get assigned to them that day ... I knew about the no brothers policy before Pete came over but decided if he really

wanted to come then I would do what I could to get him assigned with me and it worked out that we were able to do it with some help from the personnel officer of the regiment.

Most of these young men were in their teens or early twenties. They were still figuring out what they wanted to be in life. They were, in many cases, away from home for the first time, thrust into the Big Green Machine with a bunch of other guys. David Drake (541st Military Intelligence Detachment, 1970-71) was drafted out of law school in 1969. He recalls that his basic training company at Ft. Bragg, NC, "was about equally split among blacks from inner city Detroit; whites from the mountains of Western NC; and college graduates like me. It was an interesting mix."

Your bunkmates in basic were guys who didn't necessarily look, talk, or think like you did (the author's first commander in the Army was from Roundup, Montana; until he joined the Army in 1967, he had never seen an African-American live in person before). You were subjected to humiliation, torment, and stress like never before in your life – and that was just on the first day. Somehow, you made it through basic and advanced individual training and home leave before arriving in Vietnam. Get off the plane, get on the bus, get off the bus, get into formation, do this, do that ... Man, what have I gotten myself into?

And then, finally, the voice on the loudspeaker announces your winning lottery number. Joseph Wetmore (HHT, 3/11 and K Troop, 1967-68) recalls that moment. "Finally I heard my name called along with several others and whoever was doing the announcing said 'You guys are going to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the Blackhorse'. He said this with enthusiasm, leading us to believe we'd lucked out. We didn't even know what an 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was."

Like every other unit in the United States Army in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was a mix of volunteers and draftees. The Blackhorse Troopers who went to Vietnam were young (and some not so young) men, sons of fathers who had lived through the depression and survived World War II. They were part 50s generation and part 60s generation – part Ricky Nelson and part Jimmie Hendrix. They were not, as G Troop's Top Sergeant Jim Embrey (1966-67) admitted, "perfect soldiers". Some "delighted in putting grey hair on their First Sergeant's noggin." They flew kites in a war zone, got the pet monkey drunk on beer, and held a memorial service when a VC rocket demolished the crapper. The airborne had its Band of Brothers; Top Embrey had his "Special Band of Troopers."

Much was (and still is) made in the media and Hollywood of the long-haired, pot-smoking, ill-disciplined hippies in uniform that served in Vietnam.¹ True, there were some of these stereotypical GIs who joined the Blackhorse, but they were far outnumbered by

¹ Despite the lack of memory of the media, the young American men who went to war in South Vietnam in the 1960s were not dramatically different from their predecessors who went to war in the Philippines just after the turn of the century. In an October 1901 article written about the discipline issues associated with the Troopers of the Eleventh United States Cavalry, then in training at Ft. Myer, Virginia, in preparation for shipping out to the Philippines, the Washington Times reported that six Troopers had been court-martialed: two for larceny, two for being AWOL, one for disciplinary violations, and one for drunkenness. Lima Troop's Private Joseph Nammock, who was absent from duty for the seventh time, was sentenced to six months' hard labor and a dishonorable discharge. Not to be outdone, Private Patrick McCarty, also of Lima Troop, was dishonorably discharged after three months of hard labor for nine instances of missing reveille and drunk in quarters.

young Americans who either raised their hands as volunteers or were drafted and didn't run away to Canada. Because they felt it was the right thing to do, they served their country under some pretty awful circumstances.

George Kinback, a pilot in Air Cavalry Troop in 1966-67, says such Hollywood stereotypical derelicts were "not in my Army ... All of the enlisted men I worked with in Vietnam were conscientious, knowledgeable, hardworking, sober and, importantly, well disciplined and cheerfully obedient." Jack Nielsen, 1/11 commander for much of 1968, agreed. "Enlisted men in general were outstanding. I think they were a better soldier than we had in World War II or Korea. They required little or no motivation, just direction and teaching."

But those were the early days. Everyone admits that the Army that went to war in 1966 was a different one than the Army that went into Cambodia four years later. Arnold Gaylor, the D Company commander in 1970, summed up what many Blackhorse leaders experienced with members of the 60s Generation. When asked how he would characterize the Troopers who had served under his command, he replied:

With one word ... Outstanding! I haven't been in too long, this is my 7th year active. The quality and caliber of the people that work for me in this unit far exceeds that of any unit I have ever had. The youngsters we have coming in today may not be professional in the sense that they have different out-looks and value system than what I have; like wearing their hair exactly the way I may want it; but these people are over here to do a job, most of them for two years, and they do the best job for 2 years they possibly can. I think we must recognize the fact that they are better educated, have a broader outlook on life, they have a firmer grasp on what the world situation actually is and they are different from the troops we are normally used to working with.

Arnold's contemporary over in L Troop, Ralph 'Captain Midnight' Miles (1970-71), felt similarly. "I have had every race, creed, and color in my troop, and yet when the time came to do the job it was done perfectly. They do the job not mainly because they're showing their allegiance to America, but rather to the guy next to them who's in just as deep as they are." Doc Bahnsen, (Air Cav Troop and 1st Squadron, 1968-69), recalls, with great affection, his Troopers. "I would say most of my track and tank commanders have been Specialists 4 or Privates First Class. They turn over so fast that we do not even get to make them acting sergeants ... What they lacked in experience and knowledge they made up in enthusiasm and the ability to get out and get the job done."

Albert Charles was in B Troop in 1968-69. He had been trained by NCOs who earned their stripes in World War II and Korea. His barrel chest and stern demeanor might give one the impression that he was 'old school'; follow my orders because I'm big and mean enough to make you do so. But behind that gruff exterior was a thoughtful leader, a Blackhorse NCO with a keen eye for talent amongst the 60s Generation of "kids [who] were soft – too much money, too much fun 'never make [it] in the Army' types." This veteran sergeant concluded: "He is proving every day in Vietnam, and elsewhere, that he is not what we thought he would be. We are finding that he is easy to motivate, that he is easy to train, and that he can be trusted ... We see in him the qualities that our Army needs."

Air Cav Troop's Sam Adams (1966-70) was one of those Troopers. He joined the 11th Cav at Ft. Meade, not much different from the several thousand others who brought the Regiment up to wartime strength. But Sam had something that none of the others did – longevity. Because, you see, Sam Adams did four back-to-back-to-back tours with the Blackhorse. When he finally returned to The World, he had 48 months continuous wartime service in Vietnam and Cambodia. In that time, he had served as an ARP, a door gunner, a mechanic, and as a crew chief. When he departed in November 1970, he was the platoon sergeant of the Lift Platoon. Why did he stick around for so long? He told a 17th Public Information Detachment reporter in July 1970: "I thought I probably would be returning [to Vietnam] anyway, and the 11th Cav was a good outfit, doing a good job, so I thought I'd stick with it". What finally convinced him to go back to the World? The girl back home said yes when he asked her to marry him.

Different individuals had different reactions when they were assigned to the 11th Cav, but most appreciated the fact that they weren't jungle-boot-mobile grunts. New York-born and airborne-qualified infantryman Aloys Ortiz (C Troop, 1968-69) volunteered to join the Blackhorse after serving in an infantry unit because he was "tired of walking and decided to do some riding for a change." Sheridan driver Frank Phillippe (F Troop, 1971-72) expressed a similar opinion: "Being in the jungle may not be the best location in Vietnam, but being with the Armored Cav sure beats walking through the dense vegetation."

Gunner Wagner (D Company, 1966-67) came to be a Blackhorse Trooper in a rather unique way. As a "recently busted down PFC", he was leaving Korea and had orders for the 9th Infantry Division at Ft. Riley, KS.

My SGM in Korea told me in Korea in Feb. '66 [that the 11th CAV was headed for Vietnam]. That's why I reported to Fort Meade instead of Riley where I was supposed to go! The God awful 9ID was there getting ready to go too. I wanted no part of another infantry division, with only 27 tanks at the time. The 3-5 Cav was at 120% strength so I would have been an earth pig (infantry)! To this day I think that SGM in Korea called the First Squadron SGM. Why else would he tell me to go only there? Gotta love the old soldiers who 'take care of the troops'! ²

And members of the Regiment weren't the only ones to recognize just how good the Blackhorse Troopers were. Bob Alexander, who served in the 1st Air Cav Division (1969-70) wrote a letter to the 11th Armored Cavalry Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia. He wrote: "You Dudes may be NUTS, but you were some of the finest troopers I ever hope to meet!"

Edmund Ellsworth (A Troop, 1966-68) – who extended his tour in Vietnam twice as a recon troop first sergeant – has the ultimate word on his Blackhorse Troopers, saying that the "men are knowledgeable, resourceful, and brave and are the best that he has encountered in the Army."

² Gunner took his mentor's take-care-of-the-troops-philosophy to heart. Almost five decades later, a retired MSG himself then living in the Philippines, he was unable to attend the upcoming 2014 Blackhorse Association (BHA) reunion in Colorado Springs. His health was failing: "Legs are not working, lungs at 66 percent, don't hardly go out anymore", he wrote. But he was still looking out for the members of his crew: "Jimmy Harris 'pony' from my crew in Delta Co. will be there, take care of him?"; he asked Glen Snodgrass, the BHA President. Gunner died not long after that.

REGISTRATION FORM



39th Annual 11th ACVVC Reunion

September 2, 2024-September 8, 2024

Hilton, Omaha 1001 Cass St., Omaha NE 68102

Reservations by phone: 1-888-943-2768

Use Code- Armor / 11th ACVVC

On line link : <https://book.passkey.com/e/50691621>

Scooter Rental: Mobility Omaha- 402-804-8668

On -Line: www.mobility.plus.com/omaha/

Registration fee is \$120 per person. This fee is required for attendance at the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday night Bunker Parties and Saturday evening banquet dinner.

All registrations must be received by August 7, 2024. All hotel reservations must be made by August 7, 2024. Any registration received after this date will be returned. Registration refunds will be paid in full to our members if cancellation is received by the Treasurer no later than August 23, 2024.

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

(print clearly or use mailing label)

Name _____ Telephone No: _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

Unit Assignment _____ Dates in Country _____

(Example: B TRP, D CO - List only one unit. This is your banquet seating.) (Example: 1966-1967)

KIA Relative? Yes, Name of KIA: _____

Relationship to KIA: _____ Unit: _____

ATTENDEES, INCLUDING YOURSELF (please print)

_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

Total Registration Fee \$ _____

Banquet Meal Selection (Indicate number for each selection) Chicken ___ Beef ___ Veggie ___

Is this your first reunion? Yes No Wheelchair or special needs banquet seating? Yes

Visa MasterCard

Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature (Required for credit card) _____

Make checks payable to 11th ACVVC. Please mail registration form along with payment to:

11th ACVVC
C/O OLLIE PICKRAL
571 DITCHLEY RD
KILMARNOCK, VA 22482

Reunion Registration Chairman

How time flies as we get older, it just seems like I finally finished putting away stuff from last year's reunion to now having to start pulling it all out for this year's reunion in Omaha Nebraska.

As always, a reminder for you that it is never too early to register for this year's reunion. Please, if you have address labels put one on the registration form, this helps me with the spelling. Sometimes I have a challenging time reading some of your handwriting. Also make sure you fill in everything including all meal selections for your whole party, that's one meal per person. The year you were in country example (69-70) and what unit you were with in Vietnam. This is especially important as it will determine what unit you and your guest sit with at the banquet.

I still get registration forms that are being trimmed to the smallest possible size. Please send the whole page intact, it makes it easier when I file them in my reunion registration binder.

Now would be a suitable time to make your hotel reservation. If after you make your reservation and something comes up and you have to cancel make sure to call the hotel at 1-402-998-3400 or 1-402-998-4242 before the cutoff date [August 7, 2024] and cancel your hotel rooms. You also need to call either me, Bob Moreno [1-608-387-3346] or Ollie Pickral [1-804-435-3658] and inform either one of us that you and or your guest are canceling your attendance at the reunion. You may request your registration be refunded to you or you can donate it to the scholarship fund or one of the other funds that we have. Remember that the cut off date for a refund is august 23, 2024. After that date we have already paid for all of your meals.

Also, if you are interested in attending any of the extra activities such as the golf outing or other trips please contact the appropriate person for information. Contacts and information can be found in the Thunder Run.

We have GOLD STAR family members and friends attending this year's reunion. They can be identified by the red, white, and blue "GOLD STAR FAMILY" ribbon on their name tag. A star family member is some one who lost their Blackhorse trooper in Vietnam. Please take the time to talk with them and make them feel welcome.

We do have First Timers attending this year's reunion. They have a Yellow "1st TIMER" Ribbon on their name tag. Please make them feel welcome and give them a hardy "WELCOME HOME" salute.

We also have Next-of-kin family members and friends attending. They will have a Red, White, and Blue "NEXT OF KIN" ribbon on their name tag. Please welcome them to the reunion. Next of kin are family members and friends who lost their Blackhorse trooper after they served with the 11th ACR in Vietnam. Remember whether they are a Gold Star, Next of kin, or a 1st Timer we are all part of the Blackhorse family.

If you have a story or experience and you would like to get it printed in Thunder Run to share with your fellow troops, please send it to the editor Pete Walter. For more information, please contact Pete.

Well, I'll save anything else for the next time. Make sure you get your registration in early and be sure to make your hotel reservation now! And by all means call me if you have any questions.

Stay safe and God bless.
"ALLONS"

Roberto "Bob" Moreno
G troop 2/11th [12/68-12/69]
Member of the 11th ACVVC
Board of Directors - Reunion Registration

State of the Reunion 2nd Qtr. 2024

The 39th annual reunion of the 11th ACVVC is on for September 2 – September 8, 2024 in Omaha, Nebraska. Room rate is \$137+ taxes per night in the Omaha Hilton. The hotel address is 1001 Cass Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102. Registration fee is \$120 per guest. Scooters can be rented through Omaha Mobility by phone, 402-804-8668 or on line at: www.mobilityplus.com/omaha/. Pets are welcome but they do charge a \$50 nonrefundable fee. The hotel is located between two entertainment areas, the Capitol District and the Old Market Entertainment District. The area surrounding the hotel has many restaurants, cafes, and shops. A river walk is within walking distance. Omaha offers an art museum, a zoo, and an art deco themed railroad museum. Omaha has the region's largest airport with over 200 flights daily on 6 major airlines. The airport is 5 miles from the hotel and offers complimentary shuttle service. Parking is currently \$8 per night.

Hotel room registration is open. Call the front desk at 1-888-943-2768 to register. Tell them you are with the 11th ACVVC to get the reunion rate. The easiest way to reserve a room is using the web link. Reunion registration is open for mail in forms. All reunion info can also be found on that form. The online reunion registration is not open currently but we anticipate it being open soon. Check our website or facebook page for updates.

As an aside, please use the latest issue of Thunder Run for registrations, silent auction item form and Quartermaster purchases. Our QM has a new vendor with new pricing and merchandise. Any orders using the old forms will not have the current prices and items and will slow down shipments. The address for the silent auction donations changes every year. The latest form is found on a separate page in the current issue of Thunder Run.

Make all your reservations early, it makes the job of planning for the reunion much easier and gives us more accurate projections of attendance.

Stay well and safe. See you in Omaha.

Frank



**11th ACVVC
39th Reunion Schedule
Omaha, Nebraska
September 2 - 8, 2024**

Tuesday, Sept. 3, 3:00 PM

**Rooms available for set up
No Reunion Functions**

Storage - Herdon

Wednesday, Sept 4

10:00 am - 5:00 pm
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm
2:00 pm - 12:00 am
5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Quartermaster Store open
Registration
Bunker Open
BOD meeting
Silent Auction Items Accepted

Hill
Cozzens
South Ballroom - CHI Center
Washington City
Cozzens

Thursday, Sept. 5

8:00 am - 3:00 pm
9:00 am - 5:00 pm
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm
2:00 pm - 12:00 am
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

32nd Annual Marty Ognibene Golf Outing
Quartermaster Store Open
Registration
Bunker Open
Silent Auction Items Accepted

Miracle Hill Golf Club
Hill
Cozzens
South Ballroom - CHI Center
Cozzens

Friday, Sept. 6

9:00 am - 5:00 pm
10:00am - 11:00am
1:00pm - 2:00pm
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
2:00 pm - 9:00 pm
2:00 pm - 12:00 am
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
8:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Quartermaster Store Open
Veterans Seminar-Benefit Claims-1
Veterans Seminar-Benefit Claims-2
Silent Auction Items Accepted
Registration Open
Bunker Open
Silent Auction Sell Off
Silent Auction Pay/Pick Up

Hill
Blackstone A
Blackstone A
Cozzens
Cozzens
South Ballroom - CHI center
St. Nicholas
St. Nicholas

Saturday, Sept. 7

9:00 am - 12:00 pm
9:30 am - 12:00 pm
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
5:45 pm - 6:45 pm
6:00 PM
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
10:00 pm - 1:00 am

Annual Membership Meeting
Women's Meeting
Memorial Service
Quartermaster Store Open
Registration Open for Late Arrivals
Cocktail Hour (Cash Bar)
Banquet room Doors Open
Banquet, Presentations and Salute
Dancing (DJ)

Grand Central Ballroom
Blackstone A
Grand Central Ballroom
Hill
Cozzens
South Ballroom Foyer - CHI Center

South Ballroom - CHI Center
South Ballroom Foyer - CHI Center

Sunday, Sept. 8

10:00 am - 11:00 am
All Day

Worship Service
Farewell and Safe Travels

Blackstone A
No space Required



Blackhorse Women's News

Sheryl Myers, Women's Group 2nd Qtr 2024

Dear Ladies and Supporters of the Blackhorse Women's Group,

Happy Spring to all. Your Ladies Board is looking forward to seeing you all in Omaha, in September. There will be opportunities for you to support the Ladies Group by volunteering at our Fundraising Table and attending the events we have planned with you in mind.

Tentative schedule of events for the Ladies Group: Volunteering (2 Hr Time Slots)

Wed, Sept. 4th - Fundraising Table - Quartermaster Store 10am-5pm

Thurs, Sept 5th - Fundraising Table - Quartermaster Store 9:00-5pm

Friday, Sept 6th - Fundraising Table - Quartermaster TBD

Veterans Seminar - Friday, Sept 6th 10am-12:00

11th ACVVC President Frank Church shared with me that the Veterans Seminar this year will be especially meaningful to the Ladies of the Blackhorse. We hope you will join us there.

Blackhorse Womens Group Meeting - Saturday, Sept 7th 9:30am

We have asked Don Snedeker, our 11th ACVVC Historian, to return as our guest speaker. His podcast presentation 3 yrs ago was so well received, we asked him to return with another chapter of Blackhorse Women history. His presentation this year is titled "Women of the Blackhorse - 1901-2024."

More news coming in 3rd Qtr Thunder Run

Sheryl Myers, sheryl.e.myers@gmail.com

Tet, 1968

(Background - I arrived in Vietnam in early December 1967. After a week or so of indoctrination and training at the base camp in Xuan Loc I flew out to Loc Ninh where the second squadron was operating. I'm sure, from what I've read over the years, that just about everyone in the 11th ACR was in Loc Ninh at one time or another. Anyway, we spent Christmas and New Years there and all the way until Tet 1968 conducting numerous operations, which have their own stories, which I won't go into at this time.)

I was the left machine gunner on an ACAV in the 1st Platoon, E Troop, 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in 1968.

As we all know on the evening of Tet we made that all night road march south, down what we called Highway 13. Road blocks, barricades, ambushes all night all the way down. Puff was working out in all its splendor. What an amazing sight to see at night. We arrived early the next morning in Long Binh. Looked like a ghost town. About the only thing I saw were dead bodies of enemy soldiers lying on the sides of the streets. Every once in a while a Lambretta would go down the street, alter its course and run over the dead bodies. We ended up establishing a perimeter around a POW prison camp which was full of prisoners.

We spent a few days camped there and during the daylight hours some of our elements went on an operation and the others would remain on the perimeter. Evening chow was served inside the prison camp confines but outside in a plaza. In order to get to the food we had to walk by ARVN's who were interrogating prisoners. Their interrogation procedures included beating the holy hell out of the prisoners as we saw.

Anyway, one of those days we took off for an operation to a village outside Long Binh. Apparently it had been reported that there were some VC holed up there. On the way we hooked up with elements of the 101st Airborne. Some of them climbed up on the ACAV's and some continued walking. Once we got near the village we were told the plan. We were to go full speed, like a Thunder Run, through the village shooting our weapons into the hooches all the way through to the other side and set up a blocking force. The elements of the 101st Airborne would then walk through the village herding the enemy towards us. We began receiving fire from the Airborne troops and had to button up in the ACAV's to prevent getting shot ourselves. The Airborne troops finally reached us but they weren't herding anybody. When we sped through the village we didn't receive any fire, nor did we see anyone.

After this maneuver we set up a perimeter around the entire village. Shortly after a slow-moving single engine plane, like a Bird Dog plane, flew

Please turn to **Tet** on Page 31

Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery

The Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA, is also known as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and has never been officially named. The Tomb of the Unknowns stands atop a hill overlooking Washington, D.C. On March 4, 1921, Congress approved the burial of an unidentified American soldier from World War I in the plaza of the new Memorial Amphitheater.

The white marble sarcophagus has a flat-faced form and is relieved at the corners and along the sides by neo-classic pilasters, or columns, set into the surface. Sculpted into the east panel which faces Washington, D.C., are three Greek figures representing Peace, Victory, and Valor. The six wreaths, three sculpted on each side, represent the six major campaigns of World War I. Inscribed on the back of the Tomb are the words:

***Here rests in honored glory
an American soldier known but to God***

The Tomb sarcophagus was placed above the grave of the Unknown Soldier of World War I. West of the World War I Unknown are the crypts of unknowns from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Those three graves are marked with white marble slabs flush with the plaza.

THE UNKNOWN OF WORLD WAR I

On Memorial Day, 1921, four unknowns were exhumed from four World War I American cemeteries in France. U.S. Army Sgt. Edward F. Younger, who was wounded in combat, highly decorated for valor and received the Distinguished Service Medal in "The Great War, the war to end all wars," selected the Unknown Soldier of World War I from four identical caskets at the city hall in Chalons-sur-Marne, France, Oct. 24, 1921.

Sgt. Younger selected the unknown by placing a spray of white roses on one of the caskets. He chose the third casket from the left. The chosen unknown soldier was transported to the United States aboard the USS Olympia. Those remaining were interred in the Meuse Argonne Cemetery, France.

The Unknown Soldier lay in state in the Capitol Rotunda from his arrival in the United States until Armistice Day, 1921. On Nov. 11, 1921, President Warren G.

THE UNKNOWN OF WORLD WAR II AND KOREA

On Aug. 3, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a bill to select and pay tribute to the unknowns of World War II and Korea. The selection ceremonies and the interment of these unknowns took place in 1958. The World War II Unknown was selected from remains exhumed from cemeteries in Europe, Africa, Hawaii and the Philippines.

Two unknowns from World War II, one from the European Theater and one from the Pacific Theater, were placed in identical caskets and taken aboard the USS Canberra, a guided-missile cruiser resting off the Virginia capes. Navy Hospitalman 1st Class William R. Charette, then the Navy's only active-duty Medal of Honor recipient, selected the Unknown Soldier of World War II. The remaining casket received a solemn burial at sea.

Four unknown Americans who died in the Korean War were disinterred from the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. Army Master Sgt. Ned Lyle made the final selection. Both caskets arrived in Washington May 28, 1958, where they lay in the Capitol Rotunda until May 30.

That morning, they were carried on caissons to Arlington National Cemetery. President Eisenhower awarded each the Medal of Honor, and the Unknowns were interred in the plaza beside their World War I comrade.

THE UNKNOWN OF VIETNAM

The Unknown service member from the Vietnam War was designated by Medal of Honor recipient U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Allan Jay Kellogg Jr. during a ceremony at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, May 17, 1984. The Vietnam Unknown was transported aboard the USS Brewton to Alameda Naval Base, Calif. The remains were sent to Travis Air Force Base, Calif., May 24. The Vietnam Unknown arrived at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., the next day. Many Vietnam veterans and President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan visited the Vietnam Unknown in the U.S. Capitol. An Army caisson carried the Vietnam Unknown from the Capitol to the Memorial Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day, May 28, 1984. President Reagan presided over the funeral, and presented the Medal of Honor to the Vietnam Unknown.

The president also acted as next of kin by accepting the interment flag at the end of the ceremony. The interment flags of all Unknowns at the Tomb of the Unknowns are on view in the Memorial Display Room. The Memorial Bridge leading from Washington, D.C., to Virginia is lined with a joint-service cordon as the remains of the Vietnam War Unknown are taken by motor escort to Arlington National Cemetery for interment in the Tomb of the Unknowns.

(The remains of the Vietnam Unknown were exhumed May 14, 1998. Based on mitochondrial DNA testing, DoD scientists identified the remains as those of Air Force 1st Lt. Michael Joseph Blassie, who was shot down near An Loc, Vietnam, in 1972. It has been decided that the crypt that contained the remains of the Vietnam Unknown will remain vacant.)

Source: The Official Website of Arlington National Cemetery



Both our children and our heroes

Talk about a happy feeling. Few moments are as refreshing and entertaining as hearing a greeting of “Allons” and getting a back slap on a Sunday morning, coming out of church.

Turning quickly, I stared into the smiling eyes of a stranger. He was then, but soon I recognized him as a friend and a brother.” His next greeting was “H Company” and I knew he was a fellow Blackhorse Trooper. Jim Crowley, 68/69. The somber, joy filled prayerful beginning of my Sunday morning, exploded into triumph and excitement. “Welcome Home Brother” were his next words and though I understood, there were a number of exiting churchgoers looking puzzled.

“Allons” is the motto of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment of the United States Army. H Company was a tank company that supported three field Armored Cavalry Troops of the 2nd Squadron of the 11th Cav in Vietnam. The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, proudly known as the Legendary Blackhorse Regiment served in Vietnam and Cambodia from 1966 through

1972, and Captain Jim Crowley, now of Williamsburg, Virginia served as Platoon Leader in 1968 and 1969. I served in 1971 and 1972, though not at the same time, still we wore the same combat patch and, in effect, we are “brothers-in-arms.”

The war in Vietnam threatened to tear our society apart in the late 1960s and early 1970’s, and the veterans returning home from that war were often greeted with scorn, spittle, verbal abuse and scary eyes filled with hatred. There were few “Welcome Home” at the airports on the [Left] west coast.

There were numerous moral and philosophical disagreements about the rightness of the war and as President Reagan said: “*we cannot forget them because there is no wisdom to be gained in forgetting, but we can forgive each other ... and I think it’s time we did.*” When he spoke at the dedication of the statue of the Three Grunts at the Vietnam Memorial forty years ago (Nov. 11, 1984) he mentioned

that some of our countrymen were unable to distinguish between their “*distaste for war and the stainless patriotism of those who suffered its scars.*”

Love that terminology – “**stainless patriotism.**” Thank you, President Reagan, you were more than president, you were a man of character.

For me, that dedication ceremony was a healing moment. The resentment I had for those who mocked our veterans faded away. I was lucky enough, with my wife and seven-year-old son, to be seated within twenty to thirty feet of the President; in the second row at The Wall which had been dedicated two years earlier. He reminded us then, that The Vietnam Memorial Wall is reflective, just as a mirror reflects. When we touch a name on The Wall we had been searching for, we find it in our own reflection. The President mentioned that The Wall has been called a wall of healing, and that it so often reflects a hunger for healing. Believe me, and so many other Vietnam veterans who return



11th ACVVC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE



by Mike "Doc" Rafferty, Scholarship Committee Chairman
E mail address: platoonmedic36@gmail.com

We are now accepting applications for 11th ACVVC scholarships. Children and grandchildren of current life members, deceased life members, and troopers who were KIA in Vietnam or Cambodia are eligible to apply. More information about applicant eligibility requirements can be found online at www.11thcavnam.com. If you have additional questions or are not comfortable using a computer, please do not hesitate to contact me at the e mail address listed above or give me a call.

You will find the latest application in this issue of Thunder Run. Please have the applicant send the completed application and required grade transcripts to me at the following address:

Mike "Doc" Rafferty
11th ACVVC
PO Box 13188
Las Cruces, NM 88013

The deadline for applications this year is May 15th, 2024. I look forward to receiving applications from your children and grandchildren.

Scholarship Raffle Program 2024

Note important change in prize amounts

By: Mike "Doc" Rafferty, Board Member and Scholarship Committee Chairman

The proceeds from this year's raffle will go towards providing scholarships for the children and grandchildren of life members, deceased life members, and our KIAs. If you have a grandchild or child who is planning on attending a university, community college or trade school, please encourage them to apply for an 11th ACVVC scholarship. Please advise them to look at the scholarship guide and application on our website (www.11thcavnam.com/scholar.htm) or contact me for more information or if they have questions.

You can help fund the scholarship program by participating in the 2024 raffle. The drawing will be held Saturday, September 7th during the 39th annual reunion in Omaha, Nebraska. You need not be present to win. Only one prize per person. The suggested ticket price is \$1.00 per ticket and is not tax deductible. The prize pool consists of:

FIVE \$500 PRIZES

Raffle tickets will be mailed to all 11th ACVVC members in May. Please consider purchasing tickets to help fund this important program. If you do not wish to participate in the raffle, you are still welcome to send a donation to the scholarship program. Any checks received that are not accompanied by tickets will be recognized as donations.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

The East Texas Blackhorse Round Up will be held in Carthage, Texas at the Carthage RV Park, May 14 – May 19, 2024.

The phone number is 903-693-5543.

Code word **BLACK HORSE** to book a campsite.

There are five hotels about two miles south for non-campers. For more information call

Jan Beamon at 903-780-5621 or
Jerry Beamon at 903-530-2718.



**11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam & Cambodia
Scholarship Application (effective August 1, 2023)**
Please review Scholarship Guide at www.11thcavnam.com/scholar.html
Application Deadline May 15th, 2024



**IMPORTANT: A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN AWARDED AN 11TH ACVVC SCHOLARSHIP IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY AGAIN.
Students working on advanced degrees (master's, doctoral) are not eligible to apply.**

Applicant's full name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Applicant's social security number: _____ E mail address: _____

Street address: _____ Apt./Unit # _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone #: _____

Applicant's Status: Child Grandchild of a current life member of the 11th ACVVC.
 Child Grandchild of a deceased life member of the 11th ACVVC.
 Child Grandchild of an 11th ACR veteran who was killed in action in Vietnam or
Cambodia.

Your Sponsor (11th Cav Veteran): Full name: _____ E mail: _____

Sponsor's 11th Cav unit in Vietnam: _____ Dates in Vietnam _____

Name and Address of College or Trade School you plan to attend: What is your major? _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Schools and Colleges Attended (10th Grade to Present)

Name	City, State	Dates (From/To)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**You must attach a copy of your grade transcripts from your last 2 yrs. of High School or College.
Requirements: at least a 3.5 unweighted Grade Point Average for applicants pursuing a 4 yr. degree. At least a 3.0 unweighted Grade Point Average for trade or vocational school applicants.**

Briefly tell us about your extracurricular and volunteer activities and include your name and email address on a separate sheet of paper.

I, the undersigned verify the answers given above are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I give my permission for a copy of my high school/college grade transcripts to be submitted with this application.

Signature of Applicant	Printed Name	Date
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Signature of Sponsor Veteran or Guardian	Printed Name	Date
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Please send your completed application and grade transcripts to:
Mike "Doc" Rafferty, 11th ACVVC Scholarship Chairman, PO Box 13188, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88013
 Email: platoonmedic36@gmail.com



Chaplain's Corner

Mount Up!

Chaplain Blandin Karabinos, HHT 2/11 ACR 71-72

Pack your saddle bags, mark the route on your map and get on your horse. You are a Blackhorse Trooper on a mission.

New year, new challenge, new attractions to see, new adventures to begin ... and a chance to relive memories of days gone by. Begin with your regiment, the 11th Armored Cavalry. Begin with your unit and time in country. Remember that guy "who was my buddy over there." Then drive your wife and kids crazy by telling them we are going to look for a grave. Or, if they are not interested, go alone.

Every year Blackhorse troopers and many with family members come to Washington to visit memorial sites and yes, the graves of our brothers who bled out in Southeast Asia; or who have succumbed recently, since their return from Vietnam, now wore down by age and their continuing effort to make this world a better place for their family, their friends, their community, their country. They come to The Wall on Memorial Day and Veterans Day in respect for their Blackhorse brothers. Or to reminisce with men they served with, trained with, fought with: their compeers of the regiment ... their band of brothers. You come because you remember and appreciate those lads (as we were then) who sacrificed, some with their blood in the Nam, but all with their sweat, their jabber, their shared agony, their care for one another in a distant land far away.

Some of you have come to the Tomb of the Unknown in a winter blizzard and stood on frozen and ever cold marble to honor our entire regiment, and its cadre multiplied by 120 years. You come because you are still a living part of that Legend. We don't cry as much as laugh, because we all face the same fate; we will all someday be lying in a tomb or grave. We are realists who honor by our presence our fallen brothers; in the hope that someday, one of us, or our children, or children's children, will come at some future date to pay us homage ... and to say or think a prayer. Remember Yogi Berra once said, "*If you don't go to their funeral, they won't come to yours.*"

We all want to believe that "*life doesn't end, but merely changes,*" and as we were together in Vietnam or some other foreign turf, we will be together again, in heaven or on Fiddlers Green, or floating above the void. It is what we believe, what we hope. You come out of respect and because your DNA is stamped "**Patriot.**" You wore the uniform, you stepped up to the plate, you stood tall, and you all want to be "*buried with soldiers, for I miss their company ... bury me with men like them, till someone else does more.*"

So, I am not kidding. Make plans this year to travel to at least one cemetery. I don't mean your final trip, though it may be a warmup. I used to laugh listening to some eulogies, about how good a Christian the corpse had been, and thought: "*yes, he went to church twice in his life, and both times had to be carried in.*" Of course, that was too judgmental, that wasn't my call, it was God's place to render the verdict. Nonetheless, I was there out of respect.

Out of respect, why not go and visit the grave of one of our KIA's; maybe a lad you served with, or a lad from your Troop or Battery. Maybe a name picked at random or a Blackhorse Trooper who lived close by, or near a place you are traveling to. You can find one of our troopers' graves usually within 100 miles of your home, or of your vacation destination. If you look on our web site (11thcavnam.com) you can find a listing of all our KIA's, as well as a listing of over 9,000 of our troopers who have passed since they returned stateside. You can also find a listing of national cemeteries and military post cemeteries where they are buried. In fact, for so many of our lads, you can maybe find the name of the church yard, community or private cemetery memorial garden, or state veteran cemetery, where our brothers are buried. If you can't and are looking for one in any location or by any name, call us; we will help you.

Allen Hathaway, Director, Operation Embrace has compiled an extensive list. Allen, and any of the Board Members are more than willing to help, so too, is this chaplain. Call us or email us: we are all listed on the second page of each **Thunder Run**.

As an example, we lost Captain Clark in late February, of 1972. He was the G Troop Commander and preparing his Troop for the final march from the field to base camp at Phu Loi. The 2nd Squadron was ordered to stand down and was going home. It did clear out by the 27th of March. But the enemy wasn't ready to let us ride out quietly, so he led a patrol to successfully suppress their harassment den and died as a result of sniper fire. He was one of the last men to die as a result of enemy ground contact with the regiment in Vietnam. Captain Clark was from Florida but is buried at the Fort McClellan Post Cemetery. I owe him a visit. I haven't talked to him since he was medevac'd out 52 years ago, and I owe him a prayer and blessing in Alabama.

Do me a favor. Go. Go visit the grave site of one of our KIAs or one of our Blackhorse troopers who have passed away in the past few years. Take a picture of the headstone or marker, maybe a picture with you at his marker. Send it along to me, or Allen, or Pete Walter or to any officer. We can match it up or even print it in **Thunder Run**, and if we get so many, display or talk about them at the reunion. But also note the condition of the gravestone, see that it is properly cared for, in good condition. If not, do something about it. Talk to the caretaker, or let us know, we want that site to remain a well-preserved National Treasure, to remain a bright and shiny memorial to a true patriot. It is your DNA duty assignment; you are still and ever will be a Blackhorse Trooper.

Chaplain Bill

Editor's Note: This article was inadvertently omitted from 1st qtr 2024 Thunder Run. I apologize for any inconvenience.



Fiddler's Green

We are sorry to report the following Troopers have taken the journey to Fiddler's Green. We send our heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolences to their families and friends. We honor their service to our country and to our regiment by posting their names.

Over 500 U.S. newspapers are checked daily for the keywords "11th Cavalry" or "11th Armored Cavalry". Information is then posted on our website to allow us to post notices. Please check the "Funeral Honor Guard check daily" at www.11thcavnam.com

Tommy Neil Adams, E Troop, 2/11 (1969-1970) passed away on August 1, 2023. He was a member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Edgewater, FL. He was laid to rest in Lucy Hall Cemetery, Mcdowell, KY.

John C. Bahnsen (BG Ret), Air Cavalry Troop (1968-1969) passed away on February 21, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in New Cumberland, WV. He was laid to rest on the family farm in Georgia.

Donald B. Brydge, F Troop, 2/11 (1970-1971) passed away on March 6, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Virginia Beach, VA. He was laid to rest in Albert G. Horton, JR, Memorial Veterans Cemetery, Suffolk, VA.

James Carl Burba, I Troop, 3/11 (1968-1969) passed away on December 29, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Lakewood, WA. He was laid to rest in Tahoma National Cemetery, WA.

John Mack Casterman, M Company, 3/11 (1966-1967) passed away on February 19, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Redwood City, CA. He was laid to rest in San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery, Santa Nella, CA.

John Sherman Crow (BG Ret), HHT Regt (1970-1971) and 49th Colonel of the Regiment (1979-1982) passed away on April 9, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Jonesville, LA. He was laid to rest in Christ Church Cemetery, Bastrop, LA.

James Kenneth Dags, HHT, 2/11 (1967-1968) passed away on September 27, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Waldron, AR. He was laid to rest in Duncan Cemetery, Waldron, AR.

Kenneth William Finch, HHT Regt (1969-1970) passed away on April 1, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACCVVC and resided in The Villages, FL. He was laid to rest in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL.

Joseph Allen Fureigh, E Troop, 2/11 (1971-1972) passed away in February 2022. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Oscoda, MI.

Thomas Francis Garrity, E Troop, 2/11 (1971-1972) passed away on November 12, 2018. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Conway, NH. He was laid to rest in Conway Village Cemetery, Conway, NH.

Zane Daton Gray, I Troop, 3/11 (1968-1969) passed away on January 3, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Casper, WY. He was laid to rest in Oregon Trail Veterans Cemetery, Evansville, WY.

Michael Edward Gunn, Howitzer Battery, 3/11 (1970-1971) passed away on 01/31/2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Arabi, LA. He was laid to rest in Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Slidell, LA.

Jerry Thomas Harwood, Air Cavalry Troop (1971-1972) passed away on July 25, 2022. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Maryville, TN. He was laid to rest in Bradford Cemetery, Bradford, TN.

Ronald Dean Herndon, HHT, 2/11 and F Troop, 2/11 (1967-1968) passed away on March 25, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Rose Hill, KS. He was laid to rest in Kansas Veterans Cemetery at Winfield, Winfield, KS.

Michael G. Huml, I Troop, 3/11 (1967-1968) passed away on February 5, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Philadelphia, PA. He was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA.

Joseph Steve Hunter, K Troop, 3/11 (1969-1969) passed away on February 7, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in San Antonio, TX. He was laid to rest in Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, TX.

Roger Martin Janke, I Troop, 3/11 (1967-1968) passed away on January 11, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Long Beach, CA. He was laid to rest in Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, CA.

Richard Milo Lundahl, Howitzer Battery, 1/11 (1967-1968) passed away on April 8, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Killeen, TX. He was laid to rest in Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, Killeen, TX.

Joe Don Matlock, HHT, 2/11 (1971-1971) passed away on July 29, 2022. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Amarillo, TX. He was laid to rest in Claude Cemetery, Claude, TX. **Timothy**

Michael McCann, HHT REGT (1968-1969) passed away on January 20, 2022. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in South Haven, MI. He was laid to rest in Fort Custer National Cemetery, Augusta, MI.

Frank Paul Morath, HHT, 1/11 (1967-1968) passed away on March 10, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Albuquerque, NM.

Edward Rock Murray, Howitzer Battery, 3/11 (1970-1970) passed away on March 9, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Scotia, NY. He was laid to rest in Most Holy Redeemer Cemetery, Niskayuna, NY.

Lonnie Deryl Neugebauer, A Troop, 1/11 (1968-1970) passed away on January 22, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Rogersville, MO. He was laid to rest in a private ceremony.

Nicholas Raymond Palmarozzo, A Troop, 1/11 (1966-1967) passed away on January 16, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in E Patchogue, NY. He was laid to rest in Calverton National Cemetery, Calverton, NY.

Earl Wayne Ray, A Troop, 1/11 (1966-1967) passed away on July 21, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Columbia, MO. He was laid to rest in Old Lamine Cemetery, Lamine, MO.

Robert E. Sandrok, HHT, 3/11 (1969-1970) passed away on December 6, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Wheaton, IL. He was laid to rest in a private ceremony.

Marion Lee Silvernail, HHT REGT (1969-1970) passed away on December 26, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Arvada, CO. He was laid to rest in Ft. Logan National Cemetery, Denver, CO.

Quewanncoii Casanova Stephens, E Troop, 2/11 (1967-1968) passed away on January 30, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Charleston, WV.

Henry Walker Tarwater, F Troop, 2/11 (1967-1968) passed away on February 7, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Watertown, NY. He was laid to rest in Sackets Harbor Military Cemetery, Sackets Harbor, NY.

Dennis Paul Tonkovich, HHT, 1/11 (1968-1969) passed away on December 29, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Belleview, FL. He was laid to rest in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL.

Scott J. Whitcomb, Howitzer Battery, 3/11 (1969-1970) passed away on January 31, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Orlando, FL.

Vance Craig Wood, K Troop, 3/11 (1966-1967) passed away on March 11, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Roseville, MI. He was laid to rest in Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly, MI.

Mini-Reunion in Phoenix, Arizona

Frank Church



Pictured are the Troopers with their names in no certain order: Stephen Perry, E Troop, 84-86; Greggery Radcliff, 2nd How, 76-79; Sammy Decker, HHT1, 83-85; Stanley Carter, A Troop; Burl Swain, E Troop 68-69; Ed Cure, Air Cav Trp, 72-75; Jim Turner, Air Cav Trp, 73-75; Fred Laraway, 2/11, 75-78; Chuck Young, C Troop, HHT, B Troop, 83-86; Mark Van Atta, 3rd How FSCC, 68-69; Ron Kreuger, HHT 1, 66-67; Paul Gissible, G Trp 68-69; Tom Morrison, E Troop, 67-68; Frank Church, G Troop 69-70

On March 23, 2024 a mini reunion of all Blackhorse troopers was held for the Phoenix, Arizona and surrounding areas. The event was coordinated by Ron Krueger and hosted by Tom and Terri Morrison. This wasn't just 11th ACVVC members, it also included several Troopers from different eras who served in the Regiment. Having the opportunity to spend a few hours with those Troopers was enlightening and very enjoyable. We found common ground and pride in having the privilege of wearing the Blackhorse patch. There was a lot of story's and shared perspectives of life in the Cav from different eras.

Most significantly, in the words of one of those Troopers, "We were instructed to honor and respect the patch and the legacy of the 11th Armored Cavalry as being an elite unit."

I invited all of them to come to our reunions, they would fit right in.

**Memorial Day
Wreath at the
Vietnam Veteran's
Memorial
(The Wall)**

Downtown Dixon Mural Memorializes Area Veterans

IT WAS CREATED WITH THE HELP OF 11th ACR VET MICHAEL COLEY

The following story was published in the November 8, 2023 "Thank You Veterans" issue of the Dixon Telegraph, Dixon, Illinois. The 11th ACVVC thanks Charlene Bielema, Sauk Valley Media Editor, Dixon Telegraph, Sterling Gazette for permission to reprint this story.

Large pieces of art depicting celebrities over the years have greeted those who enter Topsy, a bar on Hennepin Avenue in downtown Dixon.

But owners Scott and Linda Burkitt felt something was missing - specifically, a tribute to veterans - and last year decided to have a mural painted on one of the business's doors to remind patrons of military members' sacrifices. The result is the large mural that now covers the back entrance of Topsy.



"I just feel that the vets in general need more recognition," Linda said. "I don't know if there is much recognition in Dixon. We have a beautiful site over there by Palmyra, but I think this is more in your face every time someone comes in."

The new artwork features scenes of veterans, two of them local - Willard Simpson of Franklin Grove, who is a World War II veteran, and Michael Coley of Dixon, a Purple Heart recipient who served in the Vietnam War.

Coley is a friend of the couple. They got to know Simpson through a personal friendship they developed with him when they owned a business in Franklin Grove and heard many stories from him.

Two others who served with Coley in Vietnam in the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, known as the Blackhorse Regiment - Bob Zwikle of Billings, Montana, and Larry Barth of Salem, South Carolina - also are featured. They are depicted in artwork of photos that Coley took while serving, which also include one of him selfie style and another of his tank.

Veterans are near to the couple's hearts. Linda's brother served in Vietnam, where he was a teacher. She said photos taken in Vietnam show so much to those who view them.

Plans for the mural had been in the works for about a year, with the work started and completed this fall by artist Sydni Reubin, a Dixon native.

Newsletter Deadlines

Due dates to submit articles for
Thunder Run

1st Quarter Jan 1
2nd Quarter Apr 1
3rd Quarter Jul 1
4th Quarter Oct 1

All submissions for publications must be sent to: Peter L. Walter
8 Tallowood Drive
Westampton, NJ 08060-3721
email: basepiece70@verizon.net

All Blackhorse Troopers, family, and friends are invited to participate in the Annual

Memorial Day wreath laying at the Wall.

When: 10:00 AM, Monday, May 27, 2024. Please be there by 9:45 AM.

Where: Near the Three Soldiers Statue at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington D.C.

Who: All Blackhorse Troopers from all eras, family and friends.

What: We will initially gather by 10:00 AM near the statue of the Three Soldiers, make introductions, say a few words, and then informally carry the wreath to the apex of The Wall.

Look for the Blackhorse Patch wreath that will be there by 09:45.

Please pass this information to anyone who might be interested in participating.

over and over again, it is a therapeutic healing talisman.

It has been over fifty years since the last U.S. serviceman left Vietnam, and now we have a designated Day, the 29th of March, to reflect and remember. Now, too, fifty years later so many good people thank us for our service. Now, fifty years later, we are honored. Still now, fifty years later, we still greet our brother warriors with a cheerful "Welcome Home."

Whether a surviving Vietnam veteran has gone to visit The Wall only once, or maybe for the tenth or thirtieth time, he still remembers the youthful faces of his buddies when he looks at the statue of the three jungle warriors, who now stand as sentinel before that melancholy Wall. All of us, veterans and other patriots, still pay homage to those who gave their lives in Southeast Asia. Blackhorse veterans still greet smartly the comrades they meet either at The Wall or all across the country. We don't forget. We haven't forgotten pivotal moments like remembering loading a buddy on a "Dust-off" and then sucking in our tears and returning to the battle. The President told all of us that day: "*You fought on, sustained*

by one another and deaf to the voices of those who didn't comprehend. You performed with a steadfastness valor that veterans of other wars salute, and you are forever in the ranks of that special number of Americans in every generation that the Nation records as true patriots."

The 29th of March celebration of National Vietnam War Veterans Day is not as yet a big event. Banks will stay open, kids won't get a free day from school, and few municipalities will have parades. There may be small gatherings at local parks, VFW and American Legion posts, but they will be insignificant compared to Memorial Day or Veterans Day, or even September the 11th. But I think that in the future, the significance of that day will grow.

Even now, especially since President George Bush dared to stride to the mound after September 11th 2001 and threw the first pitch at Yankee stadium while the nation was still fearfully remembering the tragedy of the twin towers and American Patriotism was returning to a new high; when thousands of our fellow American would greet veterans and active-duty soldiers daily with: "*thank you for your service*" -- some

even offering their hand, respect for veterans has become significant.

As I write this, a small glistening of tears swell in the corners of my eyes. What a difference from that October evening in 1972 when our plane, returning from Vietnam, had to be diverted to Travis Air Force Base in Oakland, because of angry protesters, not exactly waiting to thank us for our service, had crowded the San Francisco airport.

So, when President Reagan dedicated that statue of those "Three Grunts" and acknowledged and said thank you to Vietnam veterans for their courage, their sacrifice, their resolve to stand for freedom, as those who fought did, and to always try and protect and preserve the peace; even as he pleaded with us to be patient with our fellow countrymen, I still hear his final words.

The men and women of Vietnam ... were both our children and our heroes. We will never forget them ... their devotion and their sacrifice. They stand before us, marching into time and into our shared memory forever. May God bless their souls.

Chaplain Bill

Two Dimes and a Penny

I tape two dimes and a penny on a calling card, and with my challenge coin, leave it on the gravestone of one of our fallen Blackhorse brothers. Twenty-one cents. The best I can do, as I can't fire a twenty-one-gun salute. It is my way to show the highest honor. I even do it in private cemeteries where I can find a flag or in a church graveyard. Because almost anywhere we go in this country, we can find a military cemetery, a Post cemetery or a graveyard. And so many of them contain the remains of a Blackhorse Trooper.

United States Senator Tom Cotton, once Platoon Leader in the 3rd Infantry Regiment ("The Old Guard") at Arlington National Cemetery, writes in his book *Sacred Duty*:

Why twenty-one? It symbolizes the love we feel for our war dead, and the honor we pay them. The twenty-one-gun salute is the highest military honor, otherwise reserved for presidents and former heads of state. A gun salute reflects a universal custom of rendering one's weapon inoperable to demonstrate peaceful intent. As long as men have fought wars, this custom has appeared, be it an American soldier in Iraq putting his rifle muzzle into the ground or a warship firing cannon out to sea when entering a harbor. The origins of the number of guns are, to a degree, lost to the mist of time. Some say it reflects the number seven, the number of days in which God created the Earth, multiplied by the number three, the Holy trinity. Others say it relates to the number of cannons on early war ships. In any case, the twenty-one-gun salute was established by the late nineteenth century as the highest military honor between two nations and for the head of state. As one Sentinel put it to me, whatever its origins, the symbolism of twenty-one reflects our nation's commitment to pay the highest honor to our war dead.

Long before my military days, I first visited Gettysburg in 1951. I was 13 and didn't even know there was a town of the same name. All I saw and remember was a massive battlefield with giant monuments and a rock formation called Devil's Den. There was a cemetery there filled with dead soldiers. Yankees mostly, but some Rebels and my scoutmaster told me, it made no difference; all those lads were Americans. We climbed an old metal fire tower and the view bit me like a snake had sunk its fangs into my leg.

In subsequent years I would visit dozens of military cemeteries and battlefields, walking as many as 200 years after the action and recently only 50 years. In all of them, I touched gravestones, most in perfect rows with matching headstones. The stones matched, though the years were often different, and I paused, I wondered. And yes, 52 years ago I walked battlefields where soldiers had died only days, hours and even minutes before.

30 years after that first visit to Gettysburg, I did so with my son and now he does it with his son. I started his National Cemetery tours at Andersonville when he was but nine. There we saw old gravestones, edge to edge, in endless rows. Most had the same two years as the date of burial, and many were etched with one name: "Unknown." His grandfather, my wife's father is buried there, not with the Civil War dead, but as a Veteran of World War II. So too, is his grandmother in the same plot.

A generation after the Andersonville trip, he, now as a scoutmaster took his own son to Gettysburg and just about every other National Park or cem-

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Radio Research?

You've probably seen references to the 409th Radio Research Detachment/11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, sometimes shown as the 409 RRD or 409 RRU. "Radio Research" was used as the cover designation for the U.S. Army Security Agency (ASA) units during the Vietnam War. The 409th was a direct support unit (DSU) of the regiment, with a primary mission of Communications Intelligence (COMINT) and Communications Security (COMSEC). COMINT included radio communication intercepts and direction finding; COMSEC involved monitoring and advising the supported command on proper radio procedures.

COMSEC increased in importance after the elements of the 1st Infantry Division discovered a VC/NVA radio intercept unit on 20 December 1969 in an underground complex within the Michelin Rubber Plantation. Thirteen members of the Technical Reconnaissance Unit A-3 were captured, along with U.S. and ChiCom radio equipment and detailed logs of over 2,000 intercepted transmissions. The complex also contained booklets each with communications intelligence on area U.S. units — including the 11th ACR.

The 409th RRD operated out of ACAVs that were internally upgraded to support classified radios and encryption equipment. A secure radio teletype track and an Airborne Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) monitoring track were deployed with the regiment's forward headquarters, and intercept tracks were deployed with the squadrons. 409th RRD tracks were the first Radio Research (ASA) units to enter Cambodia during the 1970 incursion.

History of the ASA

ASA was formed on 15 September 1945; they replaced the Signal Corps' Signal Security Agency. To coordinate U.S. military* efforts in communications and electronic intelligence, the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA) was formed in May 1949. It would later be replaced by the newly created National Security Agency in November 1952.

On 13 May 1961, elements of the first ASA unit landed at Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base, Saigon as the 3rd Radio Research Unit. Their arrival marked the first time an entire Army unit was deployed to Vietnam — four years in advance of major ground combat troops; previously, only

individual advisors were assigned. Radio Research (ASA) units continued in Vietnam until March 1973.

Initial 3rd RRU personnel were required to carry U.S. passports and wear civilian clothing. If asked, they were to indicate that they were military advisors attached to the Military Assistance Advisory Group – Vietnam (MAAG-V). Medical Records were stamped with "If injured or killed in combat, report as training accident in the Philippines."

On 22 December 1961, Specialist 4th Class James T. Davis, who was on a short-range radio direction-finding mission, was KIA in an ambush near Cau Xang. He's recognized as the first combat casualty of the Vietnam conflict. The 3rd RRU's facility at Ton Son Nhut was soon dedicated in his memory as "Davis Station." ASA would lose 64 KIA of the 6,000 ASA soldiers deployed to Vietnam. The 409th lost two: 1st Lt. John F. Cochrane (24 October 1966) and SP5 Harry J. Colon (21 June 1969).

As U.S. involvement increased, the 3rd RRU was replaced by the 509th Radio Research Group in 1965. The 509th consisted of three battalions. The 303rd and 313th administered the direct support units attached to infantry, cavalry, and special forces units; and the 224th coordinated the aviation units primarily responsible for ARDF.

Similarly to the Specialist ranks above E4, ASA no longer exists. On 1 January 1977, ASA merged with the Military Intelligence branch to become the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command.

References for the above article are mainly from published public material. The primary sources are listed below, both of which provide additional details of the Army Security Agency activities in the Republic of Vietnam.

Unlikely Warriors – The Army Security Agency's Secret War in Vietnam 1961-1973. Lonnie M. Long & Gary B. Blackburn – iUniverse; 1st edition (May 14, 2013)

The Most Secret War: Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam. James L. Gilbert – Military History Office, US Army Intelligence and Security Command (January 1, 2006)

*Army Security Agency, Naval Security Group, Air Force Security Squadron

Author: David W. Mathis served with the 409th Radio Research Detachment (ASA) from July 1968 to May 1970.

History of the Department of the Army Emblem

Background: Prior to the establishment of the Department of the Army Emblem, there was no official display item to identify the Army. The Army seal traditionally had been used to authenticate documents only and was not authorized for display. In recognizing the need to provide a display item, The Secretary of the Army approved the design as the official emblem to represent the Army on 29 January 1974.

Description: The Army emblem is derived from the Army seal and differs from the seal in several respects:

- The emblem is displayed in color while the seal is not.
- The emblem includes the inscription, "Department of the Army," instead of the seal inscription, "War Office."
- On the emblem, the American flag is on its own right (observers left) to reflect the current custom for display of flags. The Army flag pattern has been added to the other flag.
- The Roman numerals "MDCCLXXVIII" which indicate the date the Army seal was adopted, were replaced with the date "1775" to reflect the date the Army was established.

Symbolism: The symbolism for the elements of the Army emblem is the same as for the Army seal with the above deviations and additions: The colors of the design elements are those traditionally associated with the ideals of the United States and of the Army. The flags are in proper colors. Blue is symbolic of loyalty, vigilance, perseverance and truth. Red denotes courage, zeal and fortitude. White alludes to deeds worth of remembrance. Black is indicative of determination and constancy. Gold represents achievement, dignity and honor.



Continued on page 31

The 11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia

QM Store



#1 Allons Patch -
3 " x 2" inches
\$5.00



#16 Eddie Bauer Hooded
Soft Shell Jacket \$94.00



#3 Bumper Sticker \$3.00



#4 Window
Sticker \$3.00



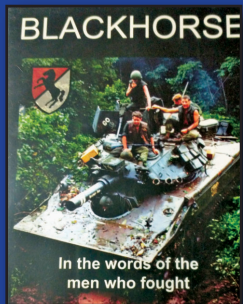
#2 11th Armored Cavalry Patch
3" x 2" \$5.00



#11 Flag, Indoor/Outdoor \$60.00



#9 CIB car
magnet,
3"x4" \$6.00



#23 DVD Blackhorse \$15.00



#47 11th Cavalry
Cap \$18.50



#48 Black Cotton
T-shirt \$20.00



#17 Blackhorse Pin
\$5.00



#20 Vietnam
Blackhorse Pin,
Wreath \$5.00



#14 License Plate Frame, Black
w/white letters \$15.00



#13 License Plate, Blackhorse \$9.00



#7 Blackhorse Patch
Colored \$5.00



#18 11th ACR
Regimental Crest
\$7.00



#19 Blackhorse Cavalry Pin \$6.50



#26 Large Blackhorse Magnet
7 X 8 1/2" \$10.00



#12 "The Beast" Blackhorse Knife
- It is a multi-purpose tool. \$22.00



#5 Hoodie Sweat Shirt \$30.00



#49 Dry Zone Grid Polo \$30.00



#27 Eddie Bauer Polo \$32.00



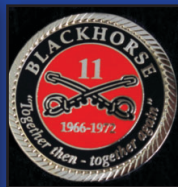
#50 Ladies Jersey Knit Cardigan \$40.00



#24 Blackhorse Fleece Vest \$29.00



#25 Blackhorse Coin \$15.00



#21 Port Authority Soft Shell Jacket \$52.00

#28 Blackhorse Logo Sticker 2" X 2.5" with adhesive on back" \$2.00



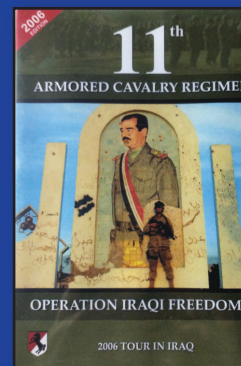
#6 Knit Cap \$18.00



#8 Metal Crest on Leather Key Tag \$8.00



#41 & 42 Dark Denim Shirt Available in Long and Short Sleeve



#22 DVD 11th ACR in OIF III \$15.00



#46 Blackhorse Saber \$89.00



#15 Leatherette Coaster 4" Rawhide Coaster \$4.00



#38a



#38b



#38d

#38 Poplin Hats \$18.00



#51 Lightweight Wind Jacket \$34.00



#39-#40 T-shirt, Light Gray and Green Gildan ultra cotton with full color insignia \$20.00





Quartermaster

ORDER FORM | 2nd Qtr 2024

11TH ARMORED CAVALRY'S VETERANS OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

Item No.	Product Description	\$ Amt	Size	Qty	\$ Total	
1.	Allons Patch	5.00				
2.	11th Armored Cavalry Patch	5.00				
3.	Bumper Sticker "I Rode With the Blackhorse" w/ full color BH insignia	3.00				
4.	Window Sticker, full color BH insignia and Vietnam service ribbon	3.00				
5.	Full Zip Hooded Sweatshirt	30.00				
6.	Knit Cap - Black and Grey	18.00				
7.	Full Color Shoulder Patch	5.00				
8.	Metal Crest on Leather Key Tag	8.00				
9.	CIB car magnet, 3"x4"	6.00				
11.	Flag, indoor/outdoor 3'x5' with color insignia	60.00				
12.	"The Beast" Blackhorse Knife.....	22.00				
13.	License Plate, metal red & white background with crossed sabers & 11.....	9.00				
14.	License Plate Frame, metal, black w/Blackhorse 11th US Cavalry in white	15.00				
15.	Leatherette Coaster - 4".....	4.00				
16.	Eddie Bauer Hooded Soft Shell Jacket	94.00				
17.	Blackhorse Pin.....	5.00				
18.	Allons Unit Crest	7.00				
19.	Blackhorse Regimental Pin – 11 over cross sabers.....	6.50				
20.	Vietnam Blackhorse Pin - With Vietnam Wreath	5.00				
21.	Port Authority Soft Shell Jacket	52.00				
22.	DVD 11th ACR in OIF III	15.00				
23.	DVD - Blackhorse	15.00				
24.	Blackhorse Fleece Vest.....	29.00				
25.	Blackhorse Coin	15.00				
26.	Large Blackhorse Magnet (7" x 8.5")	10.00				
27.	Eddie Bauer Polo	32.00				
28.	Blackhorse Logo Sticker – 2" X 2.5" with adhesive on back	2.00				
38.	Hat, Poplin adjustable <input type="checkbox"/> 38a <input type="checkbox"/> 38b <input type="checkbox"/> 38d	18.00				
39.	Blackhorse T-shirt, 100% cotton, preshrunk, full color BH insignia. GREEN.....	20.00				
40.	Blackhorse T-shirt, 100% cotton, preshrunk, full color BH insignia. GRAY.....	20.00				
41.	Dark denim shirt – men's short sleeve.....	35.00				
42.	Dark denim shirt– men's long sleeve.....	35.00				
46.	Blackhorse Saber.....	89.00				
47.	11th Calvary Cap	18.50				
48.	Black Cotton T-shirt	20.00				
49.	Dry Zone Grid Polo	30.00				
50.	Ladies Jersey Knit Cardigan	40.00				
51.	Lightweight Wind Jacket	34.00				
					Subtotal	
					Shipping and Handling	
					Total	

Note: unless otherwise noted, all clothing items are available in size medium through size 3XL. Specify size and color preference of item requested.

Shipping Costs: (Includes multiple Items)

- A) \$3.00 — \$5.00 = \$3.00 C) \$10.00 — \$35.00 = \$15.00 Gear Bag Only = \$25.00
- B) \$6.00 — \$10.00 = \$9.00 D) \$36.00 and up = \$20.00 Gear Bags with other items = \$28.00

Visa Mastercard Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ CVC Code _____

Signature _____

*** If paying by check, please write your drivers license number on the check.**

*Name _____ Phone _____

*Address _____ Email _____

*City/State/Zip _____

Check if address change

Please include the largest of chosen items S/H costs with your order. Checks or Money Orders should be made payable to **Finish Line Awards**. **ALL PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE**. Previous price lists are invalid. Mail order to: **11th ACVVC QM, c/o Finish Line Awards, P.O. Box 475, Wellington, CO 80549**

*** Required info to process your order**

Description and Symbolism of the Army Seal:

Background: The traditional seal used during and since the Revolution was redesignated as the Seal of the Department of the Army by the National Security Act of 1947. The Department of the Army seal is authorized by Section 3011, Title 10, United States Code. The date “MDCCLXXVIII” and the designation “War Office” are indicative of the origin of the seal. The date (1778) refers to the year of its adoption. The term “War Office” used during the Revolution, and for many years afterward, was associated with the Headquarters of the Army.

Description: In the center is a Roman cuirass below a vertical unsheathed sword, point up, the pommel resting on the neck opening of the cuirass and a Phrygian cap supported on the sword point, all between, on the right an esparton and, on the left a musket with fixed bayonet crossed in saltire behind the cuirass and passing under the sword guard. To the right of the cuirass and esparton is a flag of unidentified designs with cords and tassels, on a flagstaff with spearhead, above a cannon barrel, the muzzle end slanting upward behind the cuirass, in front of the drum, with two drumsticks and the fly end of the flag draped over the drumhead; below, but partly in front of the cannon barrel, is a pile of three cannon balls. To the left of the cuirass and musket is a national color of the Revolutionary War period, with cords and tassels, on a flagstaff with spearhead, similarly arranged above a mortar on a carriage, the mortar facing inward and in front of the lower portion of the color and obscuring the lower part of it; below the mortar are two bomb shells placed side by side. Centered above the Phrygian cap is a rattlesnake holding in its mouth a scroll inscribed “This We’ll Defend.” Centered below the cuirass are the Roman numerals “MDCCLXXVIII.”

Symbolism: The central element, the Roman cuirass, is a symbol of strength and defense. The sword, esparton (a type of half-pike formerly used by subordinate officers), musket, bayonet, cannon, cannon balls, mortar, and mortar bombs are representative of Army implements. The drum and drumsticks are symbols of public notification of the Army’s purpose and intent to serve the nation and its people. The Phrygian cap (often called the Cap of Liberty) supported on the point of an unsheathed sword and the motto, “This We’ll Defend,” on a scroll held by the rattlesnake is a symbol depicted on some American colonial flags and signifies the Army’s constant readiness to defend and preserve the United States. (Source: The Institute of Heraldry, U. S. Army Center of Military History)



etry we could get to. I think he was bitten by the same snake. And I can say, that one of the proudest moments in my life, one of the many miracles that have sustained me, was maybe 5 years ago when Michael, now the Scoutmaster, took his troop (and family members) on one of the battlefield trail hikes. He walked now, with his son Jacob (one of the scouts) on the Johnny Rebel Trail of about four miles. When he stopped at the cemetery during the hike, he gathered all and without notes or a handheld iPhone, recited The Gettysburg Address to a rapt audience. When he finished, I was so proud that I once again climbed a fire tower and in the blazing July sunshine, at age of 80, completed the hike.

On the way back to Virginia, grandson, Jacob, said he was glad that trip was over as he was exhausted. To which I said: “I think you are going to be coming back, Jacob. You are a good scout, a true blooded American and you are going to come again. Look at me squeaking and sweating and fighting to earn a badge for my hat at my age. It is in your blood. You have a patriot’s DNA.”

Thinking about what I said to my grandson about patriot blood, I realized it was something I truly believe. I know that in my, and my son’s, and it will soon be his, internal universe there is a mission etched in a secret language, like the drawings on the wall of an ancient cave, that gives us direction and meaning. It cannot be erased or altered and will always be there to guide us on the right path.

Not so strange, it is the same for you, Blackhorse Troopers. You have all been bitten by that same snake; it is in your blood. You visit battlefields and don’t think it is strange to walk through military cemeteries and talk to the headstones. You have that Patriot DNA.

It is reinforced every time we gather together, at reunions and especially at the Memorial Service; at the Tomb of the Unknown in Arlington, on the Birthday of the Regiment. When many of you come to The Wall, often twice a year, and at other military cemeteries where you pay homage to our friends, our KIAs, our brothers who survived Vietnam only to pass away in our homeland: many too recently.

So, I urge you to go to our website, find the cemeteries listed by states, or our KIAs listed by name. Visit one of those sites, find one of their graves. For where they lie: that is dedicated soil, that is consecrated ground. Stop and salute, say a prayer or just talk with him ... don’t expect an answer, but don’t be afraid, if you get one. You don’t have to leave 21 cents and of course don’t fire a Twenty-one-gun salute (even if you have an open carry permit). Instead, feel that snake bite knowing you possess the same DNA as that Patriot who lies there.

Chaplain Bill

Editor’s Note: This article was inadvertently omitted from 1st qtr 2024 Thunder Run. I apologize for any inconvenience.

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over the village. It was announcing in Vietnamese to those in the village what we presume to be “...come out and give up”. No one came out. Shortly after that a jet plane flew over and bombed the village. Villagers and the enemy started streaming out of the village together. We had to try to separate the villagers from the VC. Which we did to some degree but some of the enemy remained in the village and began firing at us. A firefight erupted. One of our ACAV drivers was shot and killed. The ACAV was unable to move until we could get the driver out of the hatch. We were still receiving fire from the village. We couldn’t get the driver out by going through the rear of the ACAV up to the driver’s hatch. We would have to go on top of the ACAV and lift the driver out while still receiving fire.

There were about five or six of us trying to figure out the best way to get the driver out of the ACAV and get the ACAV moving out of harms way. Someone took charge. About three of us, including me, remained on the ground firing into the hooches where the rounds were coming from. You could hear the bullets banging off the ACAV and whizzing by. The other two climbed up on the ACAV and were able to lift the driver out and return to safety.

I returned to my ACAV which was on the line a hundred or so yards away. We stayed on the perimeter until the Airborne troopers finished cleaning up in the village.

That is what I remember about this operation.

Thank you
Paul Passanisi, E Troop Tet 1968



Show Your Blackhorse Pride!

Keith Williams displays his Blackhorse Pride on both his Camaro and his pick-up truck!



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