



# The 12th CAV Trooper



## Semper Paratus

Serving Those A/4-12 Cav Troopers who Served In The Republic of Vietnam 1968 - 1971

Volume IV, Issue 3

March 2007

## A Troop Marches Again

Just after the 2005 reunion, J.T. Tillman came up with the idea that we should march again as A Troop in the 2006 Las Vegas Veteran's Day Parade. The idea was adopted by the 2006 Reunion Committee and Terri and Tom McPhee volunteered to organize our participation. Forms were filed, a banner printed and a uniform (black sweat shirt with Cav Logo) was conceived and supplied by Jim Clark.



All was ready—or so we thought. The day before the parade, while double checking the parade activities, Terri discovered that our paperwork had not been received by the parade organizers, and we were not registered to march. The McPhees rose to the occasion and got things straightened out, insuring that a great day was had by all.

November 11<sup>th</sup> 0800 hrs. Troopers and families gathered in front of the Gold Coast Hotel. Our bus arrived and we boarded for the trip downtown to the parade's staging area, while our wives and families waited for the second trip. As it happened, we were dropped off near the end of the parade route, so after

milling around for a few minutes, we walked back to the beginning of the parade route. At the staging area, we formed up by platoon and waited for the start of the parade.

1000 hrs., the parade got underway, and we began what was to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. We were led by Bob Rebec and John White, carrying a banner with our unit designation and service area. They were followed by incoming chairman, John Sharpe, carrying the American Flag. Charles Cooper, outgoing chairman, was given the honor of carrying our original guidon from Vietnam. He was followed by the rest of the troop, in platoon order.

As we traveled the parade route, it seemed that we were welcomed home by the entire city of Las Vegas, and the cheering seemed to follow us the entire route of the parade. Near the reviewing stand we heard a cry of "We Love You" from our assembled families. Needless to say, there was probably not one dry eye in the troop at that point. As we passed the reviewing stand, the troop was announced with a brief description of our unit and its service in Vietnam.

At the end of the parade, we re-boarded the bus for the return trip to the hotel. I know that all of the troopers who participated want to thank J.T. Tillman for the idea, Terri and Tom McPhee for the organization, and Second Platoon reunion hosts Bob and Diane Rebec and John and Jeannie White for including this event in their reunion plans.

## 2006 Frank Canda Award

Tonight I am honored to present the Frank Canda award to a deserving Trooper. This award is given in the spirit of Lt. Frank Canda, who's work demonstrated outstanding dedication and service to the members of A Troop. Now, let me tell you a little bit about Frank. Some of you may not have known him. He was a special guy. Frank was the kind of man you could rely on to do the right thing. He cared about the men in our troop both in Vietnam and during the formative years of our reunification. He was a positive person, a person who would do many tasks for the good of the Troop not for personal recognition but because it was the right thing to do. I guess more than anything, Frank was a good friend, to me personally and many of you. This award is an outstanding and appropriate way to memorialize Frank Canda.

Last year the first Franky went to J.T., J.T. exemplifies the spirit of Frank Canda by spending many hours of tracking down and contacting missing Troopers. I think the best thing about this award, it is not a prize you can set out to win, but it is an award that shows what kind of character you have when no one is watching. I could name at least half dozen Troopers right now who deserve this award. This Troop has been blessed with many men and wives who go the extra mile for the brotherhood doing things that go unnoticed by most that are necessary for the general good of us all.

Tonight we present this award to a special Trooper who has never said no to us. He is a quality guy. He has been involved in the organization of the troop since we started finding each other over six years ago. He has continually demonstrated his dedication to the brotherhood of the Cav and I tell you the truth and I don't know if we honor him or he honors us more by being here tonight. He has been our leader for the first several years of our association, giving hundreds of hours of his time to serve the men and families of A Troop. He has earned our respect and gratitude and has never asked anything for himself, always giving freely of his time even though it took time away from Barbara and his family. I am sure if he can count, it is not that he is unable to count, the number of telephone calls and emails regarding the Troop that he received during and after the dinner hour, it would add up into the many hundreds. If he wasn't before, these past few years he has become a special friend for a lot of us. Sometimes Frank was called fearless leader and I guess we could say the same about this man. I wouldn't miss his speech here, his acceptance speech for anything in the world. To put it simply, the 2006 Frank Canda award goes to our friend Coop.

In reply to this introduction and presentation Coop, replied that the Troop has given more to him than he has given to the Troop. With that in his humble way he accepted the award



Frank Canda Addressing The Troop



Charles Cooper Accepting the 2006 Award



# A Troop On Parade





# A Troop 2006



*Headquarters Platoon*  
Front Row left to right: Charles Curnell,  
Raymond Beatty, Jim Clark, Wally Mendoza  
Back Row: Remley Campbell,  
John Smith, Dennis Perrino, Jim Davis, Keith Eaton



*First Platoon*  
Front Row Left to right: Brooks Styles, Albert Christine,  
Wally Mendoza, Jim Rinaldi, Ken Dye, Jim Mills, Warren  
Swinford, Glenn Costanza  
Back Row: Jerry Malan, Gene Clark, Ian Losee, Charles  
Cooper, Ron Coronato, Dave Larson, Jim Davis, Tom  
McPhee, Walt Ferguson.

**Reunion 2007 Grand Casino Tunica, Mississippi**  
October 11,12, and 13  
If you do not have computer access you can contact  
Greg Beining at 414 -769-0071 or Earl Schorpp at 717-243-9164 or 717-243-5021  
for additional reunion information



*Second Platoon*

*Front Row left to right: Merle Reed, John Richardson, Dennis Perrino, Bob Taylor, William Garrison, Ynasio Rendon*

*Back Row: John Sharpe, David Boshell, John White, Neal Smith, Floyd Weaver, Phil Burt, Bob Rebecc.*

*Missing: Dexter Lehtinen*



*Third Platoon*

*Front Row Left to right: Charles Russell, Joe Adams, Gary Thrappas, Bud Pollitt, Bob Schlitzberger*

*Back Row: Greg Beining, Jim Good, John Reynolds, Kent Drake, Darell Ivory, Earl Schorpp*

After you read this issue of the Trooper, call a friend and try to get them to attend this year's event. Each year brings something special and you never know what you might miss. Old friends, old and new memories it will all be special to you and your family.



### Women's Luncheon

The first women's luncheon was held Friday November 10th at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino. About 30 women attended. This was a wonderful opportunity for the women of the Cav to get to know each other better. We had a lovely lunch of grilled chicken cesar salad and a decadent chocolate dessert. This event was enjoyed by all. Hopefully this will become an annual event.

### *The 12th Cav Trooper*

Is the authorized publication of The A Troop, 4th-12th Cavalry Association, 66 Belvidere Blvd., North Providence, RI 02911. It is published biannually in the Fall and Summer.

The cost of this publication is paid by the donations of the members of the Cav Brotherhood.

#### Mission Statement

The driving force of the Association is to continue promoting camaraderie of A Troop 4/12 Cavalry (Vietnam Era) through reunions, memorial services, and communications.

Editor/Publisher: Dennis Perrino,  
66 Belvidere Blvd., North Providence, RI 02911 e-mail  
zp15@cox.net

Chairman of the Association: John Sharpe, Email  
JSHARPE@EDTECH.MCC.EDU

Web Master: George Gresaba,  
aka Pineapple,  
Email gslime54@hotmail.com



## A Troop 4/12 Cav Reunion

### Dateline: November 2006 Las Vegas

Our 6th Annual Reunion was held at the Gold Coast Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada this past November 9-11th. Bob Rebbec and the Reunion Unit (Diane Rebbec, John White, and Jeanie White) deserve a very special THANK YOU for overcoming some very unusual obstructions to bringing this year's reunion together. It's not often that the hotel that's scheduled your event decides to close its doors at the last minute, without any advance notice! Yet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plt. Committee rallied and rose to the occasion. The committee would like to extend a special thanks to John and Cheryl Sharpe, Neal and Diane Smith, Bob and Sherri Taylor, Terri McPhee, Jim Clark, Dennis Patrick and Ken Dye for their assistance.

Every year there are some very special events/moments, and this year the troop was honored to receive into its possession the original TROOP GUIDON that Captain Larry Robinson brought with A Troop to Nam from Fort Carson in 1968. (Bob Rebbec related a little side note—when he opened the package that Cpt. Robinson sent, his wife mentioned how dirty the guidon was, and suggested that perhaps it needed to be cleaned!) Needless to say, we are very proud to have the old and dirty guidon **as is**. We are happy to report that there were over 100 troopers and guests attending the Saturday night dinner. Thank you to Barbara Cooper, Jessica Walker, and Cara Cooper for their usual great job of handling the Troop Mug Shoots and candid photos of the reunion. Jerry Malan and Bob Taylor were this year's Color Guard, John White handled the Invocation, John Sharpe the Missing Trooper Remembrance, and John and Jeanie White, the raffle. Thanks to David July, Val Larson, and Bob Curnell for contributing some very special raffle items.

This year's Guest Speaker (not really a guest since he is one of us) was Dexter Lehtinen (Lt., 2<sup>nd</sup> Plt, 70-71). From 1969 to 1972, Lehtinen served in Vietnam as a paratrooper and Army Ranger, and was seriously wounded in 1971 while serving as a reconnaissance platoon leader in A 4/12, 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon.

Lehtinen has had an extremely successful and varied career these past 35+ years. Retiring at the rank of captain, he went on to graduate from Stanford Law School. He served in the Florida state senate, as well as three terms in the state house of representatives. Later, after being appointed U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, he supervised the prosecution of Panamanian dictator, Manuel Noriega.

Lehtinen has maintained an active academic presence

as an adjunct professor in four of South Florida's universities; teaching law, economics and American government. Recently, he traveled to Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait as a Miami Herald correspondent.

In his speech, Lehtinen shared his observations and thoughts regarding his recent travels, and compared the events in the Middle East with the Vietnam Era. One could sense the emotion he was experiencing when he stepped to the podium, and that special bond one has when in the presence of fellow troopers. Thank you, Lt., for attending the reunion and presenting a very in-depth and interesting speech.

Pineapple, aka George Gersaba, was unable to attend this year's reunion, but he did send a very special replacement—a video slide show (set to music) of all the past reunions. Mr. P, all we can say is, "WOW!!!" (If you have not seen this show, you need to get a copy.)

And if you've never been to a Cav reunion, it is an experience you will never forget. You owe it to yourself to be there, so try your hardest to get to the 2007 reunion. To that point, here's a message from one of our troopers that was posted to the Troop Commo Net following the 2006 Reunion:

*" Sorry i (sic) could, nt (sic) make it to another reunion fellow troopers. It seams (sic) as though something always keeps me away. Life seams (sic) to say [ some other day] or [ maybe tomorrow]. For me tomorrow may not come . I now have termenal (sic) disease. Don, t (sic) hold off until (sic) tomorrow what you could have done today. There may not be a tomorrow. I could, nt (sic) make it to another reunion but you guys are in my heart and in my prayers. LONG LIVE THE CAV."*

Alan Snyder (HQ, 69-70)



Dinner a family affair

## Changing of the Guard

This year marked a changing of the leadership of A Troop 4/12 Cav. After working as Chairman of the Troop for the last 3 years Charles (Coop) Cooper stepped down as our leader. John Sharpe 2nd. Platoon stepped up and was named the new Chairman of the Cav. This changing of the guard took place during the annual banquet. In Coop's final statement to the troop he said

*First I would like to thank all Troopers of A Troop 4/12 Cav. for the honor of being your chairman for the past 3 years. Your unit leadership worked hard during this period of time in keeping the Brotherhood together and moving forward. I would like to thank these individuals who have given their time and energy to make this a total team effort.*

*It is hard to put into words all of the emotions that I feel at times and this is one of those times. I can only say that I have always received more from the experience of being chairman than I could ever put in the role of chairman.*

*Barbara, Jessica, Cara and I would like to thank ya'll for the privilege and honor you have given us.*



After Coops final comments to the Troop, John Sharpe addressed the Troop for the first Time as our Chairman.

*I am honored to serve as chairman for the Cav. I fought a hard campaign. Okay, no one ran against me, because nobody wanted the job. I hope I can carry on the good work done by Cooper in the past. We are very well organized and I will try to keep the ball rolling.*

*I can't tell you how good I feel when I walk into the reunion. It's great seeing old friends. Even the ones I didn't know in Viet Nam, I look forward to seeing each year. Probably we all think about our Viet Nam experience everyday and being with people who shared that same experience is beyond words. Most of my friends at home are not vets.*

*They couldn't comprehend life in Viet Nam. The mud, the heat, the rain, the cold, the fear, the adventure, the friendship. When I walk into the reunion I am humbled to be among you. We all mutually endured the same experiences. Old frictions are gone now, there is no rank. As someone once said, "When the game is over the King and the Pawn are put in the same box."*

*After 35 plus years, many of us are zeroing in on retirement. We have had a life beyond the Army. I think that makes the reunions even sweeter to find what each other has done. We experience the joy of having a common bond and of making the best of our lives since returning home. Recently on the commo net a person mentioned that he kept putting off going to the reunion and now has a terminal disease and won't be around for the next one. I will miss him. I hope those who have not yet attended a reunion will do so in the future. It is an uplifting experience.*

*By the end of our tour with A Troop 4/12 Cav. We came to have one thin in common...*

### The Brotherhood of the Cav.

The Newsletter Editors would like to thank the following people for their help in compiling this issue of the Trooper. Barbara Cooper and Dave Blancett for the photos they took of the reunion events. Linda Eaton for the artical on the ladies luncheon. Diane Rebbec for her assistance in editing the articles in the newsletter and Bill Barnes for his assistance in setting the newsletters format. Look for more from the reunion along with the Spotlight Article in the next edition of The Trooper

**A Troop, 4th Squadron, 12th Cavalry  
66 Belvidere Boulevard  
North Providence, RI 02911**

**Place  
Postage  
Here**



**Disclaimer**

The 12th Cav *Trooper* is an authorized publication of the A Troop 12th Cavalry. Articles or opinions expressed in this publication, however, reflect the views of the authors and do not imply endorsement by the Association.

**Change of Address**

Provide all changes of address to *The Trooper*, 1612 Culberson Mesquite, TX.75150  
c/o Charles Cooper



***The 12th Cav  
Trooper  
Needs Your Support***

We hope you enjoy receiving *The 12th Cav Trooper*. As you can see, the format and contents are new and will continue to improve. The production of such a quality newsletter, however, is not inexpensive. The newsletter constitutes one of the highest expenses of the Association budget. Many thanks to those who have contributed. Many more contributions are needed, Please send your check (Payable to A Troop, 12th Cavalry) along with the form below to Bob Taylor, P.O. Box 2152, Globe, AZ 85502. We will list all who donate in the next issue.



**Thanks for your Support  
*Patriot***

*Warren Congleton  
David Kagimoto  
Joe Shue  
Ray Farve  
Charles Lea  
Ron Coronato  
Walt Ferguson  
Mitchell Skolnekovich  
Brian Mannix  
Harold Moles  
Dexter Lehtinen  
Thomas Sawyer  
John Davis  
Andrew Scheffler  
Charles Demeo  
Robert Schlitzberger  
Daniel Sjolund*

**I Support *The 12th Cav Trooper***

Patriot \$25 Trooper \$15 Scout \$10

Name \_\_\_\_\_