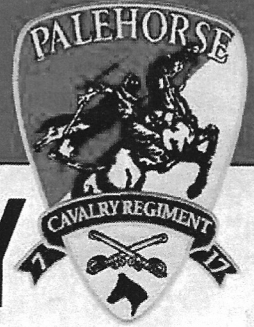




7TH SQUADRON

17TH AIR CAVALRY



7/17th Cavalry and Palehorse Association ~ Winter 2024 Newsletter



SAVE THE DATES

12 – 17 August 2025

Double Tree by Hilton Grand Rapids Airport

Business Meeting & Banquet

Saturday 16 August 2025

Message from our President

As a board, we've talked about sending out a Newsletter for several years ~ glad we finally made it happen! We are sending this Newsletter via email or snail mail to as wide an audience as we can in the hopes of getting the word out about the Association and hope everyone will **SAVE THE DATE** for the **2025 Reunion**. If any of you correspond with others who DID NOT receive it, please bring this news to our attention. I want to thank everyone who attended the 2024 Reunion and all those who helped make it happen! Wish everyone good health plus safe and happy holidays. Talk again in early 2025. Richard 'Red' Getchel **814-331-1251**

The Ruthless Riders Reunion 18 – 22 September 2024 Charleston, SC

The Charleston reunion was a resounding success, with 83 attendees, including family members. Day 1: After a smooth registration process, we kicked off our activities. Day 2: We visited Patriots Point for a private tour of the new exhibit, *The Vietnam Experience* plus the *USS Yorktown (CV-10)*. Following the tour, many of us enjoyed some delicious jalapeno margaritas in Charleston. Day 3: The day was dedicated to exploring the beautiful, historic city of Charleston. That evening, we gathered back at the hotel for a group dinner, an auction, and a hilarious Not-So-Newlywed Game. Laughter and fun were in abundance! Saturday: The day began with a ceremony and a business meeting. In the evening, we enjoyed a delightful banquet dinner. Our guest speaker, Major Ralph Stoney Bates Sr., USMC (Ret), a Vietnam Marine and Army veteran who volunteers at Patriots Point, moved us deeply with his heartfelt speech, leaving few dry eyes in the room.

We look forward to seeing many of you at future reunions!

Luis Rodriquez (321-961-2695)



B Troop weapons platoon pilots about November 1967 Camp Enari

Left to right back row: WO1 James 'Jim' G. Paul; WO1 *Jesse 'Frank' F. Archer; WO1 Leonard 'Filthy' L. Robbins (holding beer can); 1LT *Bill W. Fugit; WO1 Dennis 'Denny' N. Reed; WO1 Larry B. Shelton; CPT James 'Jim' E. Longhofer; WO1 Gerald 'Gary' 'Wabbit' L. Raver; 1LT Michael 'Mike' W. Hodge; WO1 George M. Ronyak.
 Left to right front row: WO1 *Charles W. Rhyne (camera around his neck); WO1 James 'Jim' L. Reeder, Jr. You can see the famous 'Dragon Mountain' in the distance. * denotes individual is deceased.

RECENT TAPS REPORTS

SP5 Gerald L. Getzfreid aged 78, passed away on September 27, 2024, in Muskogee, Oklahoma served with B Troop at Fort Knox and at Camp Enari as CE on UH-1C #66-15066. He and CW3 Walton survived the crash of UH-1C #66-00730 in a revetment on 6 Feb 1968.

1LT Stephen E. James aged 77, passed away on June 20, 2024 in Bee Branch, AR served as Pallbearer 32 in B Troop and H/17 in 1972. He provided the photos for the Dec 2008 VHPA Calendar collage.

WO1 Ron 'Walley' Paul Raible aged 79, passed away on May 29, 2024, in Delray Beach, Florida served with B Troop at Fort Knox and at Camp Enari as a UH-1C pilot. He was seriously injured in the tragic crash of UH-1C #66-15001 on 25 Jan 1968 just outside the perimeter wire. WO1 Milligan Marcus died and PFC D.R. Doss plus PFC G.A. Winters were also injured in this crash.

CPT Randall K. Vester aged 76, passed away on 15 June 2021, of Virginia Beach, VA served as a Cobra pilot in C Troop in 1970. He and CW2 Jackson served an engine failure and crash landing in a Cobra on 3 May 1970.

CW2 Stanton K. Wesson aged 73, passed away on October 25, 2022, in Jacksonville, Florida served as a Cobra pilot with A Troop in '69 and '70.

RUTHLESS RIDERS HAVING FUN!



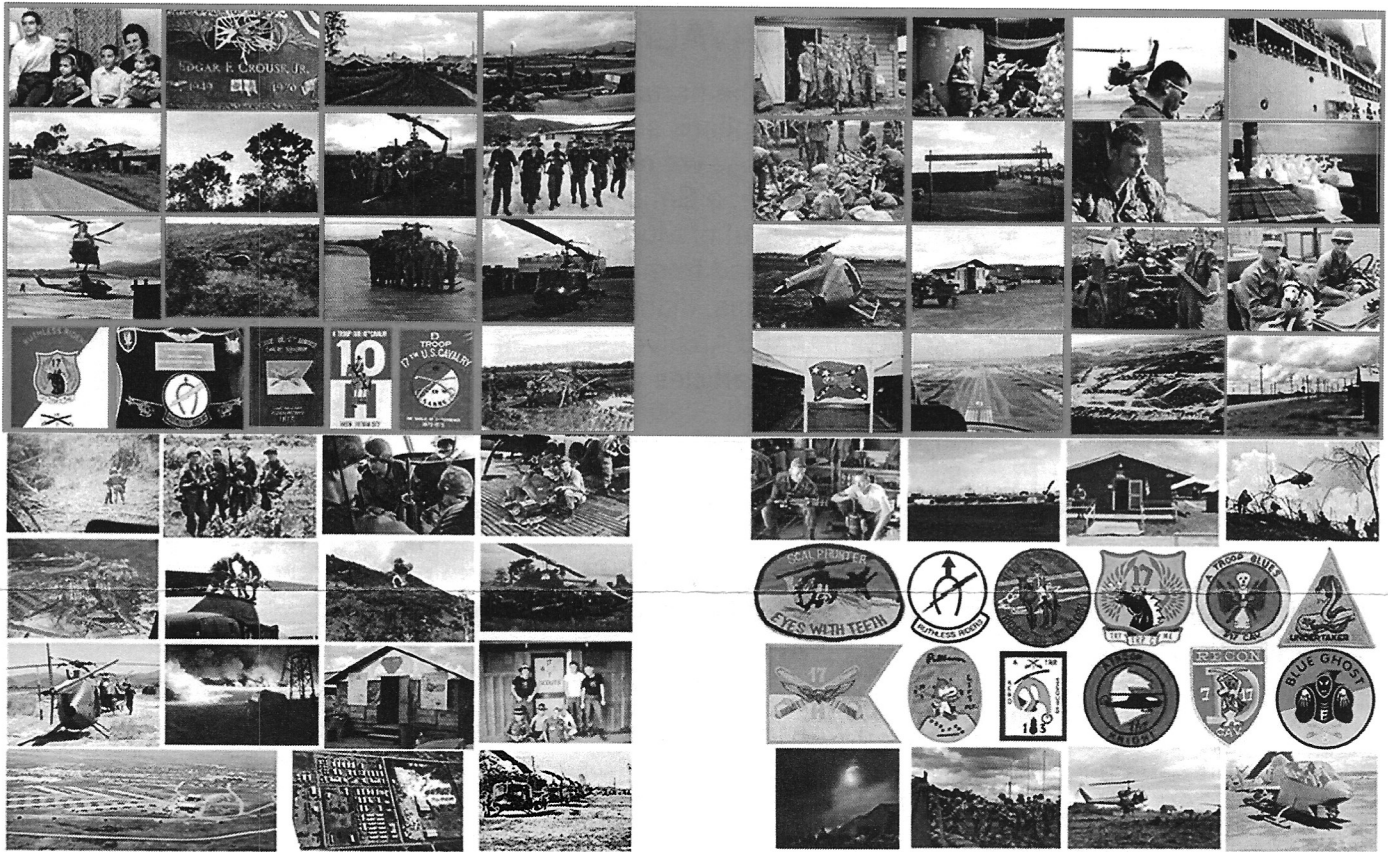
“SP5 John (now goes by Tim) Stidham took this photo while serving in the Public Information Office (PIO) of Headquarters 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry in late 1967 of Delta Troop (the squadron’s ground cavalry troop). Delta Troop was patrolling around Camp Enari, near Pleiku in II Corps. This photo and caption appeared as the Bonus photo in the 2013 VHPA Calendar published by Acclaim Press. This issue is no longer available for sale but can be viewed in the VHPA Calendar Collection at the Viet Nam Center and Archive (VNCA) at Texas Tech University at Lubbock, TX.

SGT Terry Lappe is the man looking at the camera. He provided a copy of the 25 Feb 1968 issue of *Ivy Leaf*, the official newspaper of the 4th Infantry Division. This photo was part of a multi-page tribute to the 7/17th Cavalry printed in that issue. We believe the LOH is from A Troop. Terry was one of the ‘early contributors’ from D Troop to the squadron’s History effort. **John Stidham** was something of a legend among the ‘boat people’ (the originals Ruthless Riders that came from Fort Knox). Thankfully his entire photo collection, mostly in B&W, is now at the VNCA.



3rd Platoon Delta Troop

Photo from
Michael Priest
taken in 1970
most likely near
Camp Holloway



This collage is the front (right side images) and rear covers of the 7/17th Cavalry History when printed as a book

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE 7/17th CAVALRY HISTORY?

Brief answer, it is 'alive and well' after all these decades but you can't buy it in a bookstore or even online! It is only available as a collection of 29 PDFs from Mike Law (830-730-0950). When printed it is about 850 pages. In preparation for the two 2024 Reunions, it was printed and now fills two 2" 3-ring binders. The History is presented in chronologic order starting as the Squadron formed in 1966 and ends in Feb 1973 when both H Troops departed Vietnam. It is **fully indexed** by name (last name order), by aircraft (type then tail number), by location (usually a battle or LZ), by event (a troop relocation or a battle), by reference (a book or diary), and by unit (other than a 7/17th Cav unit). The index is 35 pages.

The History is basically divided into 6-month or half-year increments; for example, 1H70 spans January through June 1970. The narrative history is presented day by day with as much detail as seems appropriate or is known to have happened on that day. Details that do not relate to any given date appear at the end of each month. Following the narratives, the aircraft details are presented by troop, then aircraft type and then in tail number order. The narrative for 1H70 is 66 pages and the aircraft details have 11 pages.

HOW DID THIS HISTORY COME TO BE?

We started out in the 1980s using the various unit histories written in Vietnam. Next we made certain we had details for all the Squadron's 126 KIAs. Then we added details from the VHPA (Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association) helicopters databases. This included battle damage, accident, lost reports plus hours flown by tail number each month that a helicopter was assigned to a 7/17th Cav unit.