



# Thunder Run

Vol 39-No. 1

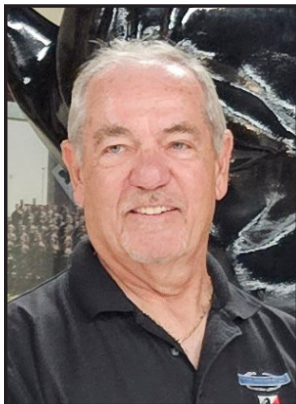
“Together Then - Together Again”

1st Edition, 2025

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

## President's Message

Frank Church



In the 40 years the 11th ACVVC has been in existence it has accomplished many very positive things. I will attempt to recap as many of those accomplishments as much as my space will allow.

In the process of building one of the most envied Military organizations around we have also built a Blackhorse family that has gone beyond the Troopers that served with the 11th Cav in Vietnam. Reunions began with a relatively small group of veterans,

compared to the larger numbers of later years, and have grown to include their spouses, significant others, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, and friends.

We watched our kids grow up, graduate from high school, and go off to college. Recognizing the cost of higher education, we started a scholarship fund that has given out \$2,500,000 to members, their children, and grandchildren. Not all want to attend a university, so we added trade schools to the program, which was a much-appreciated addition to the program. Each scholarship is dedicated to one of our KIA's in Vietnam and a certificate honoring them is sent to the scholarship recipient. This is just another way to honor our brothers lost in combat and preserve their memory.

In 2015 The Armor Center was moved from FT. Knox to Ft. Benning (now Ft. Moore). The membership decided that we should move our Memorial also. The Memorial was dismantled and then reassembled with the original monuments and memorial bricks along with major upgrade to the entire site. All costs were largely covered by donations from our members with contributions and assistance from the Blackhorse Association. Also, all the work was done primarily by members of the 11th ACVVC, with help from the BHA. There have been several upgrades and updates along with needed maintenance. The cost of these were again covered by our members' donations. We now have a fund held by the National Armor & Cavalry Heritage Foundation to be used for the long term maintenance of the site. Our Memorial is the most prominent structure in Patton's Park and will be there long after we are gone, thanks to our members.

Our first reunion in Arlington Texas drew 175 troopers that served with the 11th Cav in Vietnam. Over the years it has

grown to a peak of 2,026 attendees in Louisville in 1996 and 1,622 in San Antonio in 2016. These reunions serve to reunite our guys that lived, laughed, fought, and cried together in Vietnam. The reuniting of troopers who had not seen each other since they left Nam is an emotional event that brings tears and laughter, then hours of sharing photos and memories. The bonds of war are reaffirmed and bring them back year after year to relive a part of their youth that for good or bad shaped the rest of their lives. A bunker is a place of physical safety and refuge, our reunion bunker provides that for our souls. Hence our motto, “Together then, Together again.” The need to be together is strong enough to bring many back year after year, we have members that have attended every year. We still have Troopers that attend for the first time, a remarkable experience for everyone. We also assist Troopers that desire to attend a reunion and needs financial assistance, we have a fund for that and is discreetly provided.

We also include our active-duty troops at Ft. Irwin. We invite them to join our reunions to be Color guard and guest speakers, or just to join us in Blackhorse comradery. They want to support us as much as we want to support them, if they can do it, they eagerly accept. In concert with the cadre at Ft. Irwin, we offer to recognize their achievements in the form of gift cards or sponsorship in Regimental activities. We want to stay in contact with them as they look up to us as being a defining part of the Blackhorse's history and we see them as little brothers.

Unfortunately, due to our age it has become harder to travel. Sadly we are also losing members at an accelerated rate from diseases rooted in our time in Vietnam and natural causes. But we have family members of lost Troopers, both in Vietnam and since, that still attend our reunions. This is a testament to the bond we all have as they have become members of our Blackhorse family. Last year we had more guests than Troopers.

This is the link to more info on our reunions-  
[www.11thcavnam.com/reunion/Past%20Reunion.htm](http://www.11thcavnam.com/reunion/Past%20Reunion.htm)

Our regularly printed newsletter is always eagerly awaited by all our members. It is professionally done and contains articles and poems our members have written and pictures that they took in Vietnam.

Please turn to “President's Message” on page 3



[www.11thCavNam.com](http://www.11thCavNam.com)





## 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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# President's Message

Continued from Page 1

It keeps the membership informed of the activities of our organization by way of messages written by the Chairpersons of our various committees, remembers those that have gone on to Fiddlers Green, and gives credit for donations from our members. The annual calendar is another highly anticipated publication. It is also a high-quality publication that contains pictures of daily life with the 11thCav in Vietnam. It is easy to imagine that we see ourselves in many of those pictures. Families of departed Troopers still request them, and they are given with no conditions, they are still our family.

When we get notification of one of our guys that has passed on Troopers in the immediate area of their home are notified and requested to attend to represent the 11th Cav. This is very much appreciated by the families and is an honor for the representatives. They are also remembered in our reunion Memorial Service by way of reading their names in the presence of the members and it is a very emotional event. Our Chaplain sends a letter of condolence to the family and our Blackhorse Women's Group makes and sends prayer shawls to the surviving spouses as a remembrance. We also make effort to find burial sites of our Troopers to order to assure the grave is clean and noticeable then we salute them and say their name one more time.

Our annual reunions are concluded each year with a banquet that recognizes individuals that have made distinctive contributions to our organization's success. The ceremonies are ended with our Blackhorse salute video that honors the sacrifices that we made as young men in answering our country's call to serve bravely and proudly. More importantly it remembers, honors those that did not return. Our banquet program is emotional and therapeutic. We get many requests for copies of the video.

I have spent a lot of words on the good things that the 11thACVVC has done. It is a broad look that does not include lesser-known activities but when put together it creates a more comprehensive representation of all that we

have accomplished. All the above would not be possible without the dedication and hard work done by the leaders of our organization. It started with finding 20,000 thousand of the 25,000 men that served with Regiment in Vietnam and resulted in a total membership of over 10,500 - the current membership base is 7,000. Maintaining that database was and continues to be a monumental task. A current membership base is critical for the success of any organization. Without that we could not do all the things that make us who we are. Future articles will have detailed accounts of the good things that we have done and continue to do.

Over the years our leaders have managed the organization's activities in a competent and prudent manner. They work year-round to keep the organization running smoothly and maintain a healthy financial state, and we have ample funds to continue all these good things well into the future. Doing all this is not an easy job. It requires daily commitment to the tasks of being in a leadership position. But they do it willingly, unlike many other Military organizations, they do not get, or ask, for compensation for that work. For me the pay is in being part of the good times we all have while being together.

We also acknowledge that the members are our most valuable asset, without them there would be no 11th ACVVC. They are the ones that come to the reunions every year, they are ones that give generously of their time and money to the many activities that have provided continued for our success and accomplishments.

I am honored to have been chosen to lead the 11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia. Thank you all for your support.

Allons,  
Frank



***"We were, we are, we will always be,  
proud Blackhorse Troopers"***

## **NOTICE! NEW DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THUNDER RUN!**

At our 39<sup>th</sup> annual reunion in Omaha, Nebraska, the motion was made and passed to:  
*"Reduce the number of issues to three per year."*

### ***New Deadlines- Due dates to submit articles for Thunder Run***

***1st Third .....February 1***

***2nd Third .....June 1***

***3rd Third .....October 1***

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

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## Message from COL Kevin T. Black, 71st Colonel of the Blackhorse

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To the 11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia,

As the 71st Colonel of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, it is both an honor and a privilege to serve in this esteemed role, leading a unit with such a storied history and vital mission: I come to this position with a deep appreciation for the legacy of the Blackhorse Regiment and a steadfast commitment to excellence in all that we do. Over the course of my career, I have had the privilege of serving in various leadership roles across combat, training, and operational environments, all of which have prepared me to lead this exceptional Regiment.

The Blackhorse has consistently exemplified courage, resilience, and professionalism throughout its distinguished history, from the battlefields of Vietnam to our modern role as the Army's premier training force. Under my command, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment remains steadfast in its mission to train and prepare Soldiers for the complexities of the modern battlefield. This critical work would not be

possible without the invaluable support of the Blackhorse Association, whose dedication ensures that the legacy of our Regiment continues to inspire and endure.

Looking forward, I am committed to fostering a strong partnership between the Regiment and the Blackhorse Association. Together, we will honor our shared history while strengthening the bonds between past and present Blackhorse Troopers and their families. Your steadfast support is a source of great inspiration, and I look forward to working alongside you to uphold the proud traditions of the Blackhorse. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our Regiment.

Kevin T. Black

71st Colonel  
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment

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## State of the Reunion

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Tulsa Oklahoma is the destination for our 2025 reunion. The first thing you need to know is the phone number for Hyatt Regency Tulsa is different from the numbers previously published, they are call centers and may not have accurate information. The number in the 4th quarter 2024 Thunder Run and the 2025 calendar are not for room reservations. The correct number is **918-234-1234**.

The registration form in this edition of Thunder Run has been updated. Please use only this number. These are the details for reservations:

**September 2, 2025-September 7, 2025**

**Hyatt Regency Tulsa, 100 E. Second St. Tulsa, OK 74103**

**Reservations by phone: 918-234-1234**

**On-line: <https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/TULRT/G-ACVV>**

**Scooter Rental: T-Town Mobility 918-600-2112 On -Line: [stephanie@ttownmobility.com](mailto:stephanie@ttownmobility.com)**

We were given an \$8,000 rebate from Visit Omaha as an incentive to hold our 2024 reunion there if we met a specified attendance. We met that requirement and received the funds. The officers unanimously agreed to give that money back to the members. Thanks to the work of Laura Stevenson of Helms Brisco, Daniel Sidock of Sidock Hospitality, and the Hyatt Regency staff, we were able to make it happen. As a result of that I am very pleased to tell you that there will be a \$10 per night room rate off-set for Wednesday -Saturday. The contracted rate of \$149 per night is still the room rate but \$10 per night will be deducted from your bill upon checkout. Just be aware that the \$10 will be subject to tax included in the discount.

For general information: pets are allowed up to 50 lbs. There is no dedicated shuttle service from the airport other than general service to downtown. We get a 20% discount at the Daily Grill located in the hotel, but you will need to tell the staff that you are with the 11th ACVVC to get the discount, they will not automatically apply it. Self-parking is \$10 per night. Wi-Fi is complimentary. All functions will be in the hotel, no sky walks, and they accept cash. The 71st Regimental Commander of the 11th ACR COL. Kevin Black from Ft. Irwin has accepted our invitation to be guest speaker and hopefully will bring along a color guard. I will continue with any needed updates in future Thunder Run editions.

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I am looking forward to seeing you in Tulsa.  
Frank



Preliminary, subject to change



# 11th ACVVC 40th Reunion Schedule Tulsa, Oklahoma September 2-7, 2025

**Tuesday, Sept. 2, 3:00 PM**

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

**Storage - Diplomat/Executive**

**Wednesday, Sept 3**

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  
BOD meeting  
Silent Auction Items Accepted

Oklahoma Ballroom  
Weather Center  
Tulsa Ballroom  
Executive Office  
Weather Center

**Thursday, Sept. 4**

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

TBA  
Oklahoma Ballroom  
Weather Center  
Tulsa Ballroom  
Weather Center

**Friday, Sept. 5**

9:00am-2:00pm  
9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
10:00am-12:00am  
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

Blackhorse Women's Tour and Lunch  
Quartermaster Store Open  
Veterans Seminar  
Silent Auction Items Accepted  
Registration Open  
Bunker Open  
Silent Auction Sell Off  
Silent Auction Pay/Pick Up

TBA  
Oklahoma Ballroom  
Promenade Ballroom B  
Weather Center  
Weather Center  
Tulsa Ballroom  
Promenade Ballroom A  
Promenade Ballroom A

**Saturday, Sept. 6**

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

Annual Membership Meeting  
Blackhorse Womens Group  
Quartermaster Open  
Memorial Service  
Quartermaster Open  
Registration Open for Late Arrivals  
Cocktail Hour (Cash Bar)  
**Banquet room Doors Open**  
Banquet, Presentations and Salute  
Dancing (DJ)

Promenade C/D  
Promenade Ballroom B  
Oklahoma Ballroom  
Promenade Ballroom C/D  
Oklahoma Ballroom  
Weather Center  
Tulsa Ballroom  
  
Tulsa Ballroom  
Tulsa Ballroom Foyer

**Sunday, Sept. 7**

10:00 am - 11:00 am  
All Day

Worship Service  
Farewells and Safe Travels

Promenade Ballroom B  
No space Required

# 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.

## General Fund

### PLATINUM LEVEL

David Coover  
*In Honor of Peter Walter*  
Diersch Family  
Foundation  
Arthur Ehrenberg  
The Silvernail Family  
*IMO Marty Silvernail*

### GOLD LEVEL

George Dunn

## Scholarship Fund

### PLATINUM LEVEL

David Coover  
*In Honor of Peter Walter*  
Diersch Family  
Foundation  
Arthur Ehrenberg  
James Gelsomin  
Thomas Kirchoff  
Daniel Rambo  
*IMO Arthur Rambo*  
Everett Roper  
The Silvernail Family  
*IMO Marty Silvernail*  
John Tamulonis

### GOLD LEVEL

Wavely Cartwright  
Mason Epperly  
John Hrom  
Edward Lump  
Britt Miller  
Richard Morris  
Harold Nichols  
Jill Nixon  
Dale O'Dell  
*IMO Richard (Rick)*  
Leo Pierce  
John Poindexter  
Patricia Puskarich  
James Ritter  
John Roppolo  
*IMO SP 5 Dan Nutter*  
Jim Southerland  
Richard Stobbs  
William Stokes  
Patrick Vaughan

### SILVER LEVEL

David Corriveau  
James . Davis  
Stanley Hopkins  
Albert Jackson  
Kenneth Ray  
Lawrence Vandeventer

## BRONZE LEVEL

Robert Garrott  
Cousin ITT  
Earl Lane  
Dennis Lane  
Alfred Pankey  
Joseph Peters

## Calendar Fund

### PLATINUM LEVEL

John Atchley  
Frank Church  
Dennis Creal  
Steve Dennis  
William Gaston  
Richard Justesen  
Larry Swartz  
Peter Wallace  
Ralph Ware  
Eddie Wood

### GOLD LEVEL

Daniel Ahrens  
Kevin Andersen  
Jackson Andrews  
William Bachman  
John Ballantyne  
Martin Balzarini  
Lawrence Bernthouse  
Donald Barrett  
William Barrows  
James Belver  
James Bland  
James Blawat  
Carlton Bledsoe  
Daniel Bock  
George Bostick  
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*IMO Michael Bourdeau*  
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Bill Brawn  
Warren Bricker  
Grey Brill  
Ronald Brockwell  
Timothy Brooks  
Wade Browder  
Carl Brown  
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*IMO*

*Charles M. Dumdei*

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Frederick Pimental  
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Theodor Rauh  
Jack Rawlings  
Kenneth Ray  
Sylvester Redmond  
Johnnie Reynolds  
Michael Reynolds  
George Richeson  
Howard Rinne  
Arlise Robinson  
John Rogen  
Ronald Rubas  
Jack Runion  
W. Arthur  
Terry Stivers  
Michael Stresser  
William Strycker  
Robert Suever  
Max Sweet

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# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

## 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.**



# 11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

by Mike "Doc" Rafferty, Scholarship Committee Chairman  
E mail address: [platoonmedic36@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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 at 575-915-2921.

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, 2025. I look forward to receiving applications from your children and grandchildren.

## 11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC Raffle to Benefit Scholarship Program in 2025

By: Mike "Doc" Rafferty, Scholarship Committee Chairman

The proceeds from this year's raffle will go towards providing scholarships for our children and grandchildren. From 1996 through 2024, the 11th ACVVC's Scholarship Program has awarded 787 scholarships totaling \$2,479,500 to children and grandchildren of our members! This year we will award more scholarships to deserving applicants (number of scholarships yet to be decided). This is an incredible accomplishment, due solely to the generosity of our membership.

You can help fund the scholarship program by participating in the 2025 raffle. The drawing will be held on Saturday, September 6th, during the 40th annual reunion in Tulsa, Oklahoma. You need not be present to win. 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 of this year. If you have not already done so, 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 me a donation for the 11th ACVVC scholarship program.





**11th Armored Cavalry's Veterans of Vietnam & Cambodia  
Scholarship Application (effective September 19, 2024)**  
Please review Scholarship Guide at [www.11thcavnam.com/scholar.html](http://www.11thcavnam.com/scholar.html)  
Application Deadline May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025



**IMPORTANT: A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN AWARDED AN 11<sup>TH</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC.  
 Child  Grandchild of a deceased life member of the 11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC.  
 Child  Grandchild of an 11th ACR veteran who was killed in action in Vietnam or  
**Cambodia.**

Your Sponsor (11<sup>th</sup> Cav Veteran): Full name: \_\_\_\_\_ E mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's 11<sup>th</sup> 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 (10<sup>th</sup> 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 extra-curricular 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Sponsor Veteran or Guardian Printed Name Date

Please send your completed application and grade transcripts to:  
Mike "Doc" Rafferty, 11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC Scholarship Chairman, PO Box 13188, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88013  
Email: [platoonmedic36@gmail.com](mailto:platoonmedic36@gmail.com)

# Blackhorse Hoofbeats

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

Don Snedeker, 11th ACVVC Historian

## Part I

Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) – the backbone of the Army – affected everyone in the 11th Cav during its 5½ years in Vietnam and Cambodia, from the Trooper that just joined the Regiment to Blackhorse 6 (the Regimental Commander). Some of these Blackhorse NCOs came to Regiment with experience to match the number of stripes they wore. Others earned their stripes ‘on the job’.

Sergeant (SGT) Paul Letourneau (B Troop, 1/11, 67-68) had been in country less than 24 hours. Weary from the trans-Pacific plane ride, he was nonetheless keyed up. He’d already learned what FNG meant – the soldiers in the faded fatigues and worn boots boarding the plane he had just gotten off of made sure he and the other 135 in their brand new jungle fatigues and shiny boots knew they were FNGs. By the time he’d gotten to Blackhorse Base Camp, he’d probably heard it a dozen times (it probably seemed like a hundred). So when he met his new Top Sergeant, he asked him for advice. What’s an FNG NCO to do?

‘Good question, son. I’ll answer it and you can take any part of what I’m going to tell you,’ Top said in his deep commanding voice. ‘I don’t care how many NCO academies you’ve been distinguished graduate and other awards you got, like your expert infantry badge. You are now in Vietnam and the decisions you make will be life and death decisions, not only yours but others under you. You are a ‘Fuckin’ New Guy.’ You don’t know jack shit about the bush or the Cong ... Experience isn’t always associated with rank. Use your head, do your job, understand and follow orders, and keep your men and your own stinkin’ ass alive and in one piece.’

FNG Paul Letourneau thought: “Holy shit! Is this really happening?” The short answer was yes. He and the First Sergeant got in the jeep and he was off to a combat tour with the Blackhorse.

NCOs affected everyone, most even before they became Blackhorse Troopers.

Artilleryman ‘Big Jim’ Holt (HOW 1/11, 67-68) remembers two of his Drill Instructors from Basic Training at Ft. Polk:

My two drill instructors were Vietnam vets. They had already been to Vietnam ... They’d get us aside and say, ‘You screwed up, and here’s what it means; this will get you killed if you do it. This is why we’re teaching you this,’ and I’ll never forget that. I can’t even remember their names, but if I saw either one of them I’d know them and I’d kiss them because they really did, they taught us stuff that probably you remembered later on it helped you and everything like that.

Staff Sergeant (SSG) Grady Cowan (M Company, 3/11, 65-67) was a career soldier, the kind of soldier and leader that was the heart and soul of the Army in the 1950s and 1960s. In

1953, at the age of 17, Grady joined up. The Korean War had just ended, so he didn’t see wartime service there, but he was trained by those who had. By 1965, he was 12 years into his career as a tanker, assigned to the Blackhorse Regiment, where he took his new platoon leader under his wing. That platoon leader, John Casterman (M Company, 3/11, 66-67), described Grady this way:

“He was every wild story of every great Sergeant that anyone of us ever served with, all wrapped up in one man. He was a rascal, a nemesis to the Company 1st Sergeant, a subject for the Chaplain’s Sunday sermon, a daily challenge to his Platoon Sergeant, and a ‘god’ to his tank crew. To me, he was just everything a Lieutenant could hope for in a tank commander - intelligent, tenacious, intuitive, and selfless. Grady was the type of tank commander you wanted next to you when you found yourself in the red zone ... He was a truly brave and courageous combat soldier.”

The Blackhorse was blessed to have a long line of veteran NCOs who had seen the elephant before and who helped train the Troopers and junior NCOs. Third Squadron’s command sergeant major in 1968-69, CSM Robert Macon, was just such a man. He fought his way into Bastogne in the winter of 1944 as a member of the famous 4th Armored Division. He fought off the Chinese hordes when they crossed the Yalu River as part of the 6th Medium Tank Battalion in Korea in 1951-52. Yes, Robert Macon had seen the elephant before, and he imparted the wisdom and experience gained from his 24-plus year career in armor to all who would listen.

First Lieutenant (1LT) Paul Baerman (C Troop, 1/11, 69-70) also remembers his first platoon sergeant – ‘Big Al’ Littlejohn (C Troop, 1/11, 69). By official organization, a recon platoon was authorized a Sergeant First Class (SFC) who generally had about 15 years in the Army. But by 1969, when Baerman assumed command of his platoon, the war had been going on for four years and combat specialty NCOs who had not been killed or seriously wounded were up for their second or third tour in Vietnam. There was an Army-wide shortage of experienced NCOs (with most of the WWII and many Korean War veterans choosing retirement rather than another combat tour in a war that they weren’t being allowed to win), so many men serving in platoon sergeant positions were Staff Sergeants.

Big Al, with five months in the platoon and 10 years in the Army, was just such an SSG; the fact that he was the Sixth Army boxing champion did nothing to diminish his reputation – or the respect accorded him by the Troopers. He had been around long enough to have been trained by ‘old Army’ NCOs, at least one of whom had shared something with him not found in the field manuals or textbooks. Paul Baerman recalls:

Big Al also taught his new lieutenant an important lesson right off the bat, one that I had never heard discussed in any of my college psychology of leadership classes. After a fight, at his insistence, he and I always made our way through the platoon talking to every soldier and looking them in the eye, followed by a firm grasp of the shoulder. If a soldier shied away from the touch or wouldn't return your look, it meant leadership had to spend more time with him, talking through the battle. There is something about human touch and a caring face that brings soldiers back to the present and heals the mental wounds in the aftermath of a fight. Al's wisdom using this technique and imparting it to me kept all of us going.

Bill Gregory was the leader of the 1st Platoon, H Company, 2/11, in early 1970. He was one of the fortunate few; he had an experienced NCO, Platoon Sergeant (PSG) James Morrill (H Company, 2/11, 69-70), as his platoon sergeant. Three decades later he recalled:

I was very lucky that I had a really good platoon sergeant when I got there. He had about six months in country and he was a senior, senior E-7 ... He'd had a lot of experience. And he and I made a deal when I first got there. I just told him, I said: 'Sergeant ... you know and I know that I don't know what I'm doing so I need you to teach me.' And he said: 'Well, I'll tell you what, why don't I run it until I think--until we both think that you're ready to take over, and then we'll let you take over.' So I pretty much watched him for a while ... And then one day he said: 'Do you think you're ready', and I said: 'Yeah', and he said: 'Okay, now, we'll do it this way.' Which was, he ran it when we were inside the perimeter administratively, and I took care of the tactics when we were out in the field ... He knew I respected him and what he did, and he tolerated me.

PSG Harry Burton (A Troop, 1/11, 68-69) was a native of New Zealand who became a naturalized American citizen. His professionalism and natural leadership abilities were never more in demand than inside the cauldron that was the ambush site on 11 January 1969. When five of the six ACAVs in the platoon were left burning by multiple rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) hits, PSG Burton joined his platoon leader, 1LT Hal Fritz (A Troop and Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1/11, 68-69), on the ground to lead and inspire their fellow Blackhorse Troopers. Harry Burton survived that inferno only to be killed in the awful battle of 13 April 1969.

Top Sergeant Edmond Ellsworth joined Alpha Troop in January 1966 when there were just 30 Troopers assigned. He helped convert the 100-plus new recruits into Cavalrymen, then led them into combat. As he neared his one-year tour end, 1st Sergeant (1SGT) Ellsworth decided that the new crop of Blackhorse Troopers could benefit from his leadership and experience – so he extended. Not once, but twice. Glenn Snodgrass was a platoon leader in 1968 (A Troop and Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1/11, 68-69). Four decades later, he vividly remembers the 6'2" tall first sergeant: "He had a well-earned reputation as a gruff

man... He was a huge man, gruff voice, on about his fifth extension, [who] always wanted to be in the field."

Ellsworth understood that the 1st SGT needed "to be at the right place at the right time"; the Blackhorse was the right place, and two-plus years was the right time. His first troop commander, CPT John Bailey (A Troop, 1/11, 66-67), called him "the most extraordinary noncommissioned officer I have ever come in contact with."

Top Ellsworth was legendary in the 11th Cav. He knew why he was there, and didn't mince words about it. When the First of the Blackhorse was invaded by a hoard of Annual General Inspection (AGI) REMFs from Headquarters, U.S. Army Vietnam (USARV) in 1968, Paul Renschen (Headquarters and Headquarters Troop and Alpha Troop, 1/11, 68-69) recalls Ellsworth saying "in a very loud voice, 'What are they going to do if we fail? Declare us 'not combat ready' and ship us back to the States?'" That's the kind of NCO 1SGT Ellsworth was.

First Sergeant Rosalio 'Monte' Montelongo (C Troop, 1/11, 66-67 and L Troop, 3/11, 69-70) was typical of the group of professional NCOs assigned to the 11th Cav. Although he did not deploy to Vietnam with the Regiment, Monte joined Charlie Troop in December 1966, just four months after the Blackhorse marched ashore at Vung Tau. He had been drafted in 1942, rising to the rank of platoon sergeant in the 88th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, the 8th Armored Division's eyes and ears during the crucial Bulge, Roer River, and Ruhr Pocket battles in 1945. When the Korean War rolled around, Monte was once again out front, serving in the reconnaissance company of the 3rd Infantry Division for over a year in some of the toughest combat seen by U.S. forces.

Monte did two tours with the Blackhorse in Vietnam, in Charlie Troop until the end of 1967 and then with Lima Troop in 1970, where he was awarded the Silver Star for actions on 10 March. On that date, Lima Troop fought a six-hour battle with a dug-in battalion of the 209th (NVA) Regiment in a rubber plantation southwest of Loc Ninh. The citation for that medal speaks of the kind of leadership the 50-year old Top Soldier provided to the young Blackhorse Troopers.

Sergeant Montelongo immediately left the relative safety of the troop's night defensive position to join the troops in the contact area ... He then moved forward, assaulting the enemy positions by placing accurate suppressive fire with his machinegun. Sergeant Montelongo then dismounted his vehicle and crawled from one vehicle to another carrying the wounded personnel to his vehicle and assuring their evacuation. Sergeant Montelongo led a dismounted patrol to the flank of the troop and assaulted the enemy bunkers with hand grenades and his rifle.

There's one thing left out of this account, however. The 41st Colonel, Donn Starry (RCO, 1969-70), recalled the incident.

I remember one radio transmission where he was talking to the troop commander telling him what was going on, and he says: 'Excuse me a minute.' And you hear this 'blam' noise in the microphone and he went on with his conversation. Turns out what he had done was he pulled his pistol, turned around and shot a Vietnamese, a North Vietnamese off the back of a track, where the guy was trying to climb up and drop a grenade in the track, and then went on with the conversation.

Jack Stoddard (Air Cav Troop, 68-69), who served as an Aero-Rifleman (ARP) and knows something about courage himself, remembers Monte.

As I watch the news today, they seem to use the word hero, for everything, from NASCAR drivers, basketball players, etc. I do not think any of those people deserve the word hero. Some people call anyone that goes to war a hero. Few are in reality. However, one thing I can say, like so many others have said before, Monty was a True American Hero. He never wanted the title. He earned it because of heroic deeds during many battles, some fought hand-to-hand. I asked him at the Nashville reunion [2002], 'Monte how did you get thru so many battles, what kept you going?' Monty told me that he usually worked alone as a recon Scout. He talked about being in the Battle of the Bulge, Korean War and Vietnam War. And he said that he put his faith in God, and that every night when he returned from a mission, he said a little prayer thanking God for another day. Monte never told war stories or even admitted to having any medals other than to say, 'I have a few.'

Second Squadron Howitzer Battery's Carl Daschke is a prime example of a 'home-grown' Blackhorse NCO. He joined the Regiment as a Specialist 4th Class (SP4) at Camp Pickett just a couple of months before shipping out to Vietnam in 1966, and by the time he returned to The World in August 1967 he was an SSG. You could make rank quickly in the 11th Cav, but the work was hard and the price in blood and sweat was high.

Bobby Ray Allen arrived in Vietnam in early 1969 as a just-out-of-school Private First Class (PFC). He joined the 3/11 Aviation Section and was assigned as a Huey crew chief. Over the next 20 months, PFC Allen was successively promoted to become SSG Allen. His final assignment was as the section sergeant – a position usually reserved for a much longer-serving and more-experienced NCO. When Bobby Ray died in 2014, his honorary pallbearers included one colonel, four captains, four warrant officers, and four fellow NCOs, all of whom had served with Bobby Ray Allen in combat.

Ollie Pickral (K Troop, 3/11, 68-69) recalls how he became a Blackhorse NCO. "After my first 3 months driving a 4-deuce mortar track (M106), I was sent to the F.O. [Forward Observer] track, as the Track Commander [TC] was headed home in a short while. I was promoted from PFC to Corporal [CPL] and given 'acting jack' Sgt. stripes. I was the TC of the F.O. for 9 months and wore Sgt. stripes. My official rank was Corporal

but in reality, I was a Sgt."

PSG Francisco Cantu (E Troop, 2/11, 69-70) was an acting platoon leader in Echo Troop. Sewall Menzel (G Troop, 2/11, 1970) remembers that it was Cantu "who figured out how to rig a Claymore anti-personnel mine tripwire ambush that just drove the dinks nuts along the Cambodian border trail networks." Whether it was his many years of experience, his previous combat tours, or a sixth sense that some people develop on the battlefield, PSG Cantu saved lives one evening in western Tay Ninh Province.

Echo Troop had just occupied its night defensive position (NDP), and Cantu's 1st Platoon was tasked to do a last-light recon around the perimeter. Tay Ninh Province was "a surreal place" by early 1970, with "smashed tree trunks, shattered tree limbs, hundreds of bomb craters and a dozen or so knocked out tanks, artillery pieces and other vehicles" littering the area. The terrain around the NDP was fairly flat, strewn with scrub bushes rather than the heavy jungle and rubber plantations that 2/11 Troopers had gotten used to near Loc Ninh.

But Francisco Cantu seemed to sense the presence of the enemy. He warned his Troopers to be alert. His platoon's lead Sheridan wasn't more than 30 seconds outside the perimeter when the TC opened up with his caliber .50. Skittering between and hiding behind the scrub bushes were about two dozen enemy soldiers – the leadership of a company from the 7th (NVA) Divisions sapper battalion – conducting a reconnaissance of the NDP in preparation for an attack later that night. PSG Cantu reported what he'd found, then brought his ACAVs and Sheridans on line. The dismounted NVA recon team didn't stand a chance. Although many of them were carrying RPGs, with the massed firepower of an armored cavalry platoon raining down on them, few if any escaped. The RPGs that were fired slammed into the ground in front of the vehicles or sailed over the NDP to crash harmlessly in the jungle.

This victory over the 7th (NVA) Division was particularly sweet. Good tactics – and the combat experience of a professional NCO – deterred an attack on Echo Troop. But even better news came the following morning. As the Troopers searched the battlefield, they found the corpses of about two dozen NVA soldiers. Many of these soldiers had recently been awarded Tank Destroyer First Class medals; each medal was engraved with the date 26 November 1969. CPT Menzel reviewed the diary notes and other documents found on the dead NVA soldiers and determined that these were the same sappers who had attacked the 3/11 Command Post (CP) during Operation Texas Traveler on 26 November 1969.

Pay back is, well, sweet.

(Part II will appear in the next issue of Thunder Run)

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# THE 2025 SILENT AUCTION

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The 2024 Silent Auction raised \$7,486 for the **11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC Scholarship Fund** with 201 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 40th Annual Reunion in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Items peculiar to the 11<sup>th</sup> 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 **George Bostick, 18065 E. 480 Road, Claremore, OK 74019-4221** **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 on 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](mailto:gregmason311@gmail.com) or 813-220-9027. I will respond to your email as I receive them.

## 11<sup>th</sup> 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:***

11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC  
c/o George Bostick  
18065 E. 480 Road  
Claremore, OK 74019-4221

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 Tulsa and thanks in advance to all the donors!

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## **THUNDER RUN, FEBRUARY 2025**

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Before I start, there are a few things I want to cover first. I would like to thank all the guests that have attended all the reunions throughout the past 39 years with their Blackhorse Trooper. There were 346 guests attending this year. Without your support we would not have as many troopers attending our reunions. This year we had 268 troopers in attendance.

### **SCHOLARSHIP.**

Your support to our scholarship program has exceeded all expectations that anyone could have imagined. With your donations that you all give when you get the calendar in the mail sure makes a big positive difference in giving scholarships to our kids.

### **RAFFLE.**

The raffle program has done so much to aid in giving scholarships to our kids. This is done by all the donations that you all give. The more we give the more scholarships we can award.

### **SILENT AUCTION.**

Your support in providing items for the silent auction helps to raise funds to add to the total amount for scholarships. Here at my home, we look throughout the year for items that we can donate to silent auctions and sometimes we get lucky and find something great to bring.

### **FIRST TIMERS.**

I always get goose bumps when I witness a trooper seeing someone that they haven't seen in years. I chuckle when they say that they still look the same as they did when they were in Vietnam. Most of the time they start their conversation with, do you remember so and so? To our guests, thank you for attending the reunions and making us feel like we are all a part of a huge family.

A big thank you note here to all of you who gave a handshake, a pat on the back or a big hug and a big welcome home yell to all the First Timers. We had 18 Troopers, 20 Guest, 5 Gold Star Family Members and 9 Next of Kins attending their first reunion this year. We had a total of 28 Next of Kin in attendance and 11 Gold Star Family Members attending. They can be recognized by their special name tags [Red White and Blue ribbon].

### **REGISTRATION.**

As soon as we get your registration form, we will update the list on the web site. This list shows who is planning to attend the reunion, what unit they were in, when they were in Viet Nam and where they live now. Make sure you complete the registration form. Double check to make sure all the information is correct and readable. Also, at the same time make your hotel reservation.

If you have any questions, please call, or e-mail me at home 608-372-5892 or cell 608-387-3346.

E-mail: gtroopbob@gmail.com I am the one that inputs all the information onto the list of who is coming to the reunion on the web site. If there is a correction that needs to be fixed, please let me know and I will make the corrections needed.

Now as we here in the Moreno house begin registrations preparations for 2025 Tulsa reunion, we hope everyone stays healthy and safe. God bless and we will see you at our next reunion in Tulsa Oklahoma.

“ALLONS”

ROBERTO “BOB” MORENO, G TROOP 2/11TH 12/68-12/69  
11TH ACVVC BOARD OF DIRECTORS, REUNION REGISTRATION



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# VETERANS DAY, 2024

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7 troopers traveled 1655 miles to The Wall to honor their brother-veterans of the 11th ACR on Veterans Day, 2024 – 3,310 miles round trip: an average of 474 miles each way,



Left-to-right: Charles Hertel (M CO Commander, 66/67), from McLean, VA; Lane Schultz, (HHT 3 67/68) Middletown, PA; Allen Hathaway, Manassas, VA; (HHT Reg, 66/67); Bill Karabinos, Williamsburg, VA (HHT 2 71/72); Gary Rieth (HOW 1 68/69), Schuylkill, PA; Jack Burns, Sandy Hook, CT (HOW 1 66/67) and Andy Trabanco, The Villages, FL (HHT 3 66/67).

Gary was accompanied by his wife, Janet [who to my recollection, has not missed a Veterans Day visit in at least 15 years]; Colonel Hertel, by his daughter [born while he was in Vietnam] and Lane Schultz with his daughter Amy [also a frequent and loyal guest]. Sgt Grayson Caron (an active duty soldier at Fort Liberty and scheduled to be deployed) and Brian Kramp of Lancaster (former student of Chaplain Bill) also made the trip.



# Blackhorse Women's Group News

Sheryl Myers, Women's Group 1st Edition 2025

Dear Ladies,

Even though it is only February, your Blackhorse Women's Group is already planning activities for the TULSA REUNION, September 2nd - September 7th. Please mark your calendars now!

Because the Thunder Run will now be published only 3 times a year, we will try to keep you up-to-date through our Blackhorse Womens Group page on the website, [11thcavnam.com](http://11thcavnam.com) We will also send out an email, if we have your email address!

We have planned a motor coach tour of Tulsa, with a Guide. The tour will include a couple of stops for exploring and then lunch. The tour will be on Friday, Sept 5th, from 9:00am - 2:00pm.

The Registration form for the tour will be published in the June Thunder Run; shown on our website page; and sent by email. Please sign up as soon as you can, as we must secure the motor coach early.

Our Saturday morning "get-together" will begin at 9:30am. Details of the program are not finalized yet, but it promises to be very special.

We do need volunteers to help the BWG support our Troopers and families. If you can volunteer in one of these projects, please contact us.

**Prayer Shawl Project** - If you can knit or crochet, we need you!

**Fundraising Table** - Grab a friend and help raise funds for the 11th Cav Scholarship Fund. Sign up for a 2 hour time slot that is convenient for you. It's actually a lot of fun.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Tulsa!! Questions??

Please contact:

Sheryl Myers - 571-721-9189 [sheryl.e.myers@gmail.com](mailto:sheryl.e.myers@gmail.com)  
Marguerite Austin - 320-212-1068 [mardale@charter.net](mailto:mardale@charter.net)

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# 1LT Daniel L. Mullins, ROTC Hall of Fame Inductee

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By Allen Hathaway, Vice President



1LT Lieutenant Daniel “Danny” Lee Mullins, who was killed in action on August 31, 1967, while serving with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, was inducted into the East Tennessee State University ROTC Hall of Fame in a ceremony held on November 14, 2024, in Johnson City, TN. The induction ceremony was attended by several university officials, prior Hall of Fame inductees, ROTC alumni and ROTC cadets.

Lieutenant Mullins was born on October 21, 1943, in Jenkins, Kentucky. He graduated from Pound High School then attended Virginia Military Institute before transferring to East Tennessee State University (ETSU) and the ROTC program. Danny excelled in the ROTC program. Danny graduated from ETSU in 1966 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army.

Attending the ceremony on behalf of the family was Allen Hathaway, vice president of the 11th ACVVC. Normally a family member would attend the induction ceremony and represent the inductee, however Mullins’ family has passed away. Allen was humbled and honored to attend and accept this honor and speak on behalf of Danny. During his comments, Allen remarked that “We, the veterans who served with Danny, are his family. We are brothers in arms.”.

In his remarks, Allen spoke of the 11th ACVVC and emphasized one of the primary purposes of the organization is to honor the sacred memory of our war dead, such as 1LT Daniel Lee Mullins. He continued to tell the story of Danny Mullins.

1LT Daniel Mullins joined the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in May 1967 and was assigned as a platoon leader with K Troop, 3rd Squadron.

On July 21, 1967, two months after arriving in Vietnam, LT Mullins was involved in his first major encounter with the enemy. He was serving as one of the platoon leaders in a convoy when the convoy was suddenly attacked by a superior enemy force. During the attack, and as he was directing his men to take up positions to repel the attack, an anti-tank round hit his

ACAV, throwing him from the vehicle. Despite being wounded he continued to direct his men to counter the attack. Fourteen men were lost that day.

For his actions, he was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor and Purple Heart.

Five weeks later, on August 30, 1967, LT Mullins and members of his platoon were called to set up security around an ACAV that hit a mine in the road near the 11th Cavalry basecamp near Xuan Loc. As traffic was moving around the scene of the explosion, a second bomb detonated, severely wounding LT Mullins. He was immediately evacuated to a hospital in Saigon but succumbed to his wounds the following day on August 31, 1967.

By all accounts he was a good officer who was well respected by the men in his platoon.

Mike Brautigam, one of the men in his platoon wrote: “LT Mullins was not only a fine officer, but also a fine man. I served with him on that day.”.

Dale Sabine, another from his platoon wrote: “I served with LT Mullins right up to the day he was killed. In fact, I was standing next to him just before the mine went off that took his life. He was a very brave soldier and cared dearly for his men.”.

1LT Daniel Lee Mullins is laid to rest in Powell Valley Memorial Gardens, Big Stone Gap, Virginia. He is remembered on panel 25E, line 75 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

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## WHO ART IN HEAVEN

He bore the yoke of loving joyfully and willingly, knowing there was a chance his heart could be twisted in a world of trickery, yet feeling it was worth it.

He sang songs gentle and warm, and molded those he sang with a knife of strength and tenderness.

He was a light in a time of darkness, a hope in time of despair, a lover amongst bigots.

What he leaves us is a piece of himself, a family graced with his presence, a world awed by his touch, and a friend adorned with his friendship.

These things shall never die. And because they are him, he lives forever within us.

What we give to him is that piece of himself that he gave to us, to the world.

We must live as he lived, sing as he sang, work as he worked and love as he loved.

The world has been robbed by his death it is true, but to steal twice would please him not.

I loved him,

I mourned him,

And now I shall live as he lived.

What greater tribute could we pay him?

*(Editor's Note: March Racicot served as Governor of Montana from January 4, 1993 to January 1, 2001. He was a friend of Art Rambo and went to the same college as Art. In 1969, when he learned of the death of Art, he penned the following poem. Governor Racicot is a veteran United States Army.)*

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# Veteran Service Officer Information

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Daily, I will receive five to six calls from veterans inquiring why their claims are taking so very long to process. Yes, claims are taking longer to process. I'll attempt to provide a few reasons why.

Several years ago, just before Covid hit, the VA decided to institute a "specialized" system where all VA Regional Offices would be designated to process claims according to type of claim (additional info to follow) and the stage of the claim.

The life of a claim can be broken down as: receipt, development, rating, review and adjudication.

**Receipt:** Whether a claim is submitted to the VA by the veteran directly or by a VSO (like me), the claim is uploaded to the VA via computer and is received at a VA intake center. For the region east of the Mississippi, the intake center is in Janesville, Wisconsin. It is here that the claim will be sent to a VA Regional Office for development. VA correspondence is sent to the veteran from here stating that the claim has been received.

**Development:** This is where a VA person reviews the claim, requests a veteran's military records (medical and personnel), review evidence submitted by the veteran (private medical records). If additional information/evidence is required, this individual will send the veteran correspondence with the requested specific info. NOTE: the VA will wait up to six weeks to receive the requested information. IF the information is not received, another letter will be sent and an additional six weeks waiting period will be in effect. THIS IS TWELVE WEEKS, THREE MONTHS, that the claim has sat idle. I always advise veterans, open all mail from the VA and respond quickly. It is the veteran's claim and the veteran's responsibility to answer. Once all required evidence is gathered, the claim is ready for VA examinations. The claim is then transferred to another regional office for this. Once all exams are completed and returned, the claim is then transferred to ratings.

**Ratings:** This is where a rating specialist will review the examinations to ensure that the required medical questions have been addressed and a medical opinion for a diagnosis and opinion that the medical condition is indeed related to the in-service period of the veteran. Once a rating is rendered, the rating is transferred to a quality review team.

**Quality review:** Here a VA review specialist ensures that all the above has been addressed and is ready for the proper percentages of a rating to be applied. Once all have been addressed, the claim is sent to the adjudicators for release of any monetary awards.

**Adjudicators:** Here the monetary award(s) are distributed to the veteran's financial institution. ANOTHER NOTE: If the veteran did not include his/her bank information, another letter will go to the veteran requesting same. And yes, the VA will wait for that response.

Okay, all the above is essentially a summary of a claim process. There are many variables along the way which can delay a claim. Some of the problems are on the VA to be sure, yet some are on the veteran as well. These are processes I have observed for the past thirteen years,

**VA problems:** When the VA decided to "broker" these claims, VSO's have no idea where the claim truly is in its development - From Janesville, it may be sent to New York for development, Seattle for exams, Tallahassee for ratings, Denver for monetary disbursements. Further, all pension/survivors' claims go to Milwaukee, Wisconsin and all MST claims go to Puerto Rico. During the "Old Days", I could go upstairs at the Chicago Regional Office and talk with a VA rater or coach to solve a problem or hurry it along. Those days are gone. Anyway, this is part of the problem.

**Vet problems:** Vets may miss important medical evidence, not be specific as to their medical condition, not provide private medical records, NOT respond to VA correspondence, not attend a scheduled VA compensation exam, not complete the claim form accurately, not return my calls or worst, not follow my advice.

Add to all this the VA is receiving historic claim submissions! Why? Good question.

So, again, this is all very, very basic. I trust this does shed some light. As always, my best advice remains to seek the assistance of a VA accredited Veteran Service Officer. Further, I may be able to shed light for any member of the 11<sup>th</sup> ACVVC. Understand it may take a day or two, but I will reply. NOTE: If you call, make sure you tell me you are a member and please leave your contact info. I always tell Nam vets; I'll go extra for us.

Allons

Chuck Bosko  
708-205-3541 cell  
312-980-4512 office  
chuckbosko@att.net

# Veteran Service Officer Information - Lawyers

Sharks, nature's perfect predator, unless we talk about land sharks. You know - the "attorneys or agents" who call veterans with messages of helping veterans submitting disability claims to the VA - for a fee! Okay, I am not disrespectful of attorneys and agents who are accredited by the VA. Those individuals provide a service for a veteran, usually when a veteran wants to appeal a rating decision. No, sharks are individuals who are not accredited by the VA. These individuals charge veterans a "retainer fee" for services such as "coaching, preparing and processing" documents which the VA terms, illegal! A veteran cannot be charged for submitting a claim, no matter what the process is called, it is devious!

I have included a copy of an "agreement" between a veteran, whom I am assisting, and such a person. Take a good look at this agreement. No letterhead, no telephone number, no address, no indication of VA accreditation. If the veteran continued with this "shark" she would have to pay the guy 40% of what we call retro payment, plus the \$5,000.00 fee! How can any of this stand up?

Folks - if you ever need to obtain the services of an attorney/agent, ask these questions:

1. Are you accredited by the VAs Office of General Council?
2. Ask for their accreditation number.
3. Ask what their fee will be. Do not agree to any amount over 20%.
4. Members of the 11th ACVVC can call me with the name, city, etc. of an attorney/agent and I'll look the person up.

Fellow Cav guys, I see this often. Don't fall for it, beware, be careful and be prepared.

(Yes, I had to redact some stuff per my agency guidelines.)

Chuck Bosko  
708-205-3541  
chuckbosko@att.net

**[REDACTED] Services; Statement Of Client's Rights**

I have, before signing this fee agreement, received and read the statement of client's Rights, and understand each of the rights set forth therein. I have signed and received a copy to keep and refer to while being represented by the undersigned Rep.

There is a retainer fee of \$5,000 dollars which includes coaching, mentoring, preparing, researching, investigating, and processing of all necessary documents. That includes communicating with Veteran Affairs, postage and the attainment for all other necessary documents to be filed. The fee agreement of \$5,000 dollars can be paid in 5 installments of \$1,000 or all at one time. At no time will there be any upfront money coming from the Veteran. All money for the processing is on contingents that the case is won by [REDACTED]. If the case is not won there will be absolutely no fees or any charges owed by the veteran.

I hereby agree in all terms to pay for service rendered by [REDACTED] regards to my case. There will also be a one time 40% charge of any back pay and no more of the total amount paid by VA. The 40% represents back pay paid by VA and is not part of the veterans monthly Disability pay. (\$5,000 attainment fee plus one time 40% back back from VA)

If there is any additional work to be performed after an initial decision by VA is rendered which constitutes an appeal the agreement of 40% will still be in effect. Evidence and relevant materials in order to win an appeal are prepared and filed on the behalf of the client, research conducted, postal postage, communications between [REDACTED] and The Department Of Veterans Affairs for (Appeal purposes) . No upfront out of pocket monies will come from the Veteran. I understand and agree that if I am awarded compensation from the VA and I decide not to pay my debt for [REDACTED] services rendered, I could be taken to court and have a lien placed on my property.

I take full responsibility, and I agree that if my claims are denied because I did not go to the doctor to get checked out as needed in order to give my disability claims the best chance to be approved, and if I want my claims to be appealed there is an additional fee of \$500 dollars that can be paid in 2 installments of \$250 dollars.

I \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ By signing this fee agreement I approve and agree entirely with the fees stipulations and purposes. My signature represents agreements between both parties [REDACTED]

Client: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign \_\_\_\_\_  
Agent: \_\_\_\_\_ Sign \_\_\_\_\_



# Chaplain's Corner

*Krispy Kreme.*

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

What a morning wakeup call. As I started my coffee before dawn in early January, I noticed a white box of Krispy Kreme donuts on the counter. That was a pleasant surprise as we don't usually have donuts on our kitchen counter. Must have had company yesterday. Smiling as I looked at the multi-colored Christmas lights reflecting off of the new fallen snow and smelled the coffee running through the Keurig, I noted the date on the side of the box: 1937. "*Krispy Kreme since 1937.*" Wow, that's the same year I was born and rejoiced knowing that my life is still filled with miracles, small though they may be.

The miracle of being a proud American, slightly humbled the day before, as I watched the funeral rites accorded President Jimmy Carter. The military honors presented and the special care our service men and women offered as they so carefully and reverently carried him through to his internment in Plains, Georgia, to me echoed so many other military funerals I've attended and was again touched by the out pouring of love, respect for duty, honor, country and an admiration of a really good man. God had blessed America once again by giving us Jimmy Carter.

And then I leveled off to my profane self, and savored the Orange Bowl results as Notre Dame had beaten Penn State in the last seconds with a field goal that cleared the bar by only "*a gnat's eye lash.*" This was a good week. It also was a week filled with patriotic fervor, and the thrill of victory (at least for half of America's college football fans).

Just thinking of all this, smelling my coffee brewing, licking my fingers after touching the icing on a Krispy Kreme donut, feeling elated at a Notre Dame victory and sadly sorry for my fellow Pennsylvanians over Penn State's loss, I still could not stop thinking that Jimmy Carter was a veteran. His funeral made me realize once again that I have lived my life within the bubble of a miracle, so much of that miracle revolving around my feelings of Patriotism.

I will not judge his presidency, history and the results of programs he may or may not have set in motion, will do that. At one time, his face had no chance of being carved at Mount Rushmore, but now, after five decades of reflection, maybe - Stone Mountain.

Still, it was a day of pride for patriots; and that is what you are.

**Patriots, pure and simple.**

Informed patriots, caring Americans and loving human beings, all of us had just experienced something epic. And we did so all together on January 9, 2025.

Before James Earl Carter, Jr., raised his right hand and swore and oath as Governor of Georgia, before he did so on the Capitol steps when he was sworn in as the President, he had taken that oath at Annapolis when he entered the Naval Academy: he swore that he would "***protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic, so help me God.***" You too took that same oath before you were sent off to Vietnam.

For me, and I really believe for you too, we all of a sudden were given a gift, a brilliant, beautiful thing, a new enlightenment, an arrangement, even a political intervention based on the astounding "**assumption**" that our Continental fathers had won for us a quarter of a millennium ago on the battle fields at Ticonderoga, Saratoga, Dorchester Heights, Monmouth Court House, Cowpens, Kings Mountain and Yorktown. This **assumption** that we are all equal, that from where you start doesn't dictate where you end up but may dictate how much greater your triumph.

In Vietnam, we kept that **assumption** - keep the dream alive: father to son, mother to daughter, down through the generations, inspired by the excellence of those who have forged our way, walked point before us, set the standards and created the Legend. And despite the heartbreaks we have encountered along the way (who of us has not been affected by the depression of wars, the fluctuations of our received core values, the tearing down of statutes, the scorning of our flag, the ingratitude of our respect and the defunding of our authority figures, the changing of traditional names and the eating away of our cultural and traditional support venues) we still held our heads high, shouted the phrase "USA" and forged forward.

We, patriots, and, even the whole nation, have been doing this for 249 years since that first 4th of July even in the face of all those attitude changes of our world. For us, 53 to 55 years since we returned from Vietnam.

And, if I might add, that date on the box of Krispy Kreme donuts tells me that I have lived, and shouted, laughed and cried with you and a lot of other patriots for over one-third of our nation's history. God grant you the same miracle.

*Chaplain Bill*



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





# 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](http://www.11thcavnam.com)

**James Christopher Aldridge**, 919th Engineer Company (1968-1969) passed away on June 4, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Lakeland, FL. He was laid to rest in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL.

**Jerry Lee Blasdel**, Air Cavalry Troop (1968-1969) passed away on October 25, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Richmond, TX. He was laid to rest in Greenlawn Memorial Park, Rosenberg, TX.

**Amos Edward Brown**, A Troop, 1/11 (1968-1969) passed away January 13, 2022. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Reno, NV. He was laid to rest in Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, CA.

**Larry Odell Burnette**, B Troop, 1/11 (1968-1968) passed away on October 22, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Stuart, VA. He was laid to rest in John Adams Cemetery, Patrick Springs, VA.

**Joseph Lewis Coopet**, A Troop, 1/11 (1968-1969) passed away on December 8, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Woodbury, MN.

**Lee Edward Duke**, HHT, 2/11 (1968-1969) passed away on September 7, 2021. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Coatesville, PA. He was laid to rest in US Military Academy Cemetery, West Point, NY.

**David Raymond Derk**, I Troop, 3/11 (1968-1969) passed away on February 3, 2025. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Pinconning, MI. He was laid to rest in Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly, MI.

**Cova Steven Gee**, K Troop, 3/11 (1969-1969) passed away on June 21, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Louisville, KY.

**Wiley Landon Graham**, I Troop, 3/11 (1967-1968) passed away on October 21, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th

ACVVC and resided in Hazlehurst, GA. He was laid to rest in Philadelphia Baptist Church Cemetery, Jeff Davis County, GA.

**Charles Arthur Henne**, B Troop, 1/11 (1970-1971) passed away on October 29, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in San Antonio, TX. He was laid to rest in Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, TX.

**Kenneth P. Hetrick**, Howitzer Battery, 2/11 (1967-1968) passed away on November 19, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Grantville, PA. He was laid to rest in Zion Lutheran Cemetery, Granville, PA.

**Mantora Hollins**, HHT, 2/11 (1970-1971) passed away on September 3, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Ypsilanti, MI.

**David Keith Jarrell**, F Troop, 2/11 (1966-1967) passed away on January 26, 2025. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Gastonia, NC. He was laid to rest in Hollywood Cemetery, Gastonia, NC.

**Ronald Joseph Jaski**, I Troop, 3/11 (1970-1971) passed away on December 23, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Mchenry, IL.

**Warren Emory Jiggins**, G Troop, 2/11 (1970-1971) passed away on October 10, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Auburn, WA.

**James Ivan Johnson**, D Company, 1/11 (1968-1969) passed away on January 11, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Mount Vernon, IL. He was laid to rest in Little Springs Cemetery, Dale, Hamilton County, IL.

**Frank Kemplin**, G Troop, 2/11 (1971-1972) passed away on November 24, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Harrodsburg, KY.

**Bruce M. Kersis**, HHT, 1/11 (1970-1971) passed away on October 22, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Kingman, AZ.

**Gerald J. Lamb**, L Troop, 3/11 (1967-1967) passed away on August 30, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Portland, OR. He was laid to rest in Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, OR.

**Larry R. Longworth**, I Troop, 3/11 (1969-1970) passed away on June 11, 2012. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Wapakoneta, OH. He was laid to rest in Greenlawn Cemetery, Wapakoneta, Auglaize County, OH.

**Ruben Martinez**, Howitzer Battery, 2/11 (1968-1969) passed away on November 20, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Casa Grande, AZ. He was laid to rest in Mountain View Cemetery, Casa Grande, AZ.

**Earl Henry Minor**, M Company, 3/11 (1966-1967 & 1970-1971) passed away on October 29, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Mobile, AL. He was laid to rest in Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Spanish Fort, AL.

**James R. Moses**, Howitzer Battery, 3/11 (1969-1970) passed away on December 1, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in San Jose, CA.

**Duncan Colquitt Murrow**, C Troop, 1/11 (1968-1969) passed away on October 26, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Dunn, NC. He was laid to rest in Western Carolina State Veteran Cemetery, Black Mountain, NC.

**William Ostermeyer**, 188th Maintenance Det (1966-1967) passed away on December 17, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Cincinnati, OH. He was laid to rest in Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North, Williamstown, KY.

**William Stuart Powis**, HHT, 2/11 (1970-1972) passed away November 15, 2022. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and lived in Loveland, CO. He was laid to rest in Ft. Logan National Cemetery, Denver, CO.

**Dennis Allen Rapp**, K Troop, 3/11 (1967-1968) passed away on November 13, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Friedens, PA. He was laid to rest in Friedens Lutheran Church Cemetery, Friedens, PA.

**David Michael Sierzega**, B Troop, 1/11 (1970-1971) passed away on February 8, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Golden, CO. He was laid to rest in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood, IL.

**Steven Michael Sinclair**, Howitzer Battery, 3/11 (1968-1968) passed away on November 27, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Hillsboro, OR.

**Jerry Lee Stahl**, 124th Combat Support Maintenance Det (1970-1971) passed away on October 26, 2023. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Lampasas, TX. He was laid to rest in Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, Killeen, TX.

**Victor William Sternberg**, HHT, 3/11 (1970) passed away on February 3, 2025. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Brooksville, FL.

**Frank Anthony Townsend**, D Company, 1/11 (1968-1969) passed away on December 16, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Hanover, IL.

**Rexell Howard Whalen**, 541st Military Intelligence Det (1966-1967) passed away on January 21, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Denham Springs, LA. He was laid to rest in Louisiana National Cemetery, Zachary, LA.

**Thomas Eugene White**, Secretary of the Army (2001-2004), 52nd Colonel (1986-1988), Air Cavalry Troop (1968-1969) passed away on December 10, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Spring, TX. Funeral arrangements are still pending at this time.

**David Bruce Williams**, C Troop, 1/11 (1968-1969) passed away on December 5, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Bellingham, WA. He was laid to rest in Greenacres Memorial Park, Ferndale, WA.

**Jerry Ray Wilson**, H Company 2/11 (1967-1968) passed away February 15, 2022. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Indianapolis, IN. He was laid to rest in Rest Haven Cemetery, Edinburg, IN.

**William Robert Wolfenden**, K Troop, 3/11 (1966-1967) passed away on October 22, 2024. He was a LIFE member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Jasper, GA.

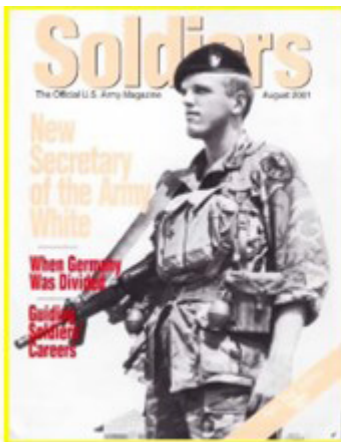
**Herman Duane Yaeger**, 6th PSYOPS (1968-1969) passed away on December 19, 2024. He was a member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Woodlawn, IL. He was laid to rest in Oakwood Cemetery, Mount Vernon, IL.

**Carl Edwin Zehren**, Howitzer Battery, 1/11 (1970-1970) passed away on September 10, 2014. He was a member of the 11th ACVVC and resided in Shawano, WI.

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## Brigadier General (Retired) Thomas E. White, Jr.

### 52nd Colonel of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 19th Secretary of the Army



BG (Ret.) Thomas E. White, Jr. passed away December 10, 2024 after a lengthy illness. Tom commanded troops with great distinction at every level from armored cavalry platoon through regiment, including three tours with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. He later continued his service to his country as the Secretary of the Army.

From June 1968 to May 1969, Tom was the Platoon Leader, M Company, 3/11 ACR; and later he served as Troop Commander of K Troop, 3/11 ACR — both while in Vietnam.

From June 1979 to June 1981, he was the 11th's Regimental S-3 (Operations Officer) and then the Regimental Executive Officer. Then from June 1981 to June 1983, he commanded 1st Squadron, 11th ACR. From June 1986 to June 1988, Tom commanded the Regiment.

When more details are available, we will update the Association's members.

The Blackhorse Association mourns the passing of Tom White, and we extend our sympathies to his family, his friends, and the troopers with whom he served.

*(Editor's note: Reprinted with permission of The Blackhorse Association)*



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# Just one more day

by Robert "Bob" Kickenweitz

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September 23, 1967, for the past 36 hours or so I've been very anxious as I had already turned in my helmet, flak jacket, and my M-16. I left Blackhorse base camp for the last time on my way to Long Binh, South Vietnam for final out processing. With all my paperwork completed, I sat around all day on pins and needles. At two thirty or three o'clock, we were sent over by truck to Bien Hoa Air Base, again we had to wait until about four o'clock. They called out our flight, and as we got to the person at the gate, we had to call out our last name, first name, and service number. Then we got on board the Intercontinental Airlines 707 (the Freedom Bird). As I boarded the plane with about another 160 guys you could cut the anxiety with a knife, nobody wanted to be this close to getting home and then be killed. You could have heard a pin drop in that plane. NOBODY was talking, I mean NOBODY! As I sat in my seat on the port side of the plane, the sun shone through my window. I could see my reflection in the window, and I can remember thinking to myself this is like a scene out of a movie. I also remember thinking that now that it's over, that year went fast. The door closed, and the plane started to roll toward the end of the runway. Engines revved up and we started rolling down the runway, then the nose lifted and under full throttle we took off. We climbed at a very steep angle to get altitude quickly and still NOBODY is saying a word. After a minute or two the pilot came over the loudspeaker and said, "Gentleman we have left South Vietnam air space" and all hell broke loose! After 11 months and 21 days I was out of there and on my way home, I made it!

So here I am 57 years later, and although I'm not physically in Vietnam I'm still there mentally. If you have never been in a war zone you probably have no clue to the anxiety level that is felt on a 24/7 basis for an entire year. The anxiety is always there, even if you don't realize it. It's always hiding somewhere in the shadows or over your shoulder but it is there. War is strange, one minute you could be bored out of your mind, and the next you're fighting for your life. You never want to let down your guard even when you're bored, if you do, you go home in a body bag. You just want "One more day Lord, just one more day." That's what you pray for every night "Just one more day." I'm so blessed to have the family I have, especially my wife Patti. They may not know what I'm thinking about at times, but they know it's somehow related to Vietnam and they are always supportive of me. Someone once wrote, "Not everyone who lost his life in Vietnam died there, not everyone who came home from Vietnam ever left there." One thing I have come to realize is that you can never forget Vietnam, so you might as well embrace it.

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# Florida Elks (Sebring) Veteran of the Year.

## Congratulations to Doctor Nick Cifelli!

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Captain Nicholas Cifelli, former Medical Officer, 37<sup>th</sup> Medical Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron, 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment (1971-72) was selected as veteran of the year by the Sebring, Florida Elks Lodge for 2024. **Doc Cifelli**, as we knew him in the Nam, had moved to Florida from New Jersey in 1994, to head the office for the Columbia Health Care Systems. Once there, he joined the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2000, working full time in Primary Care at the Fort Myers Veteran Clinic until 2010.

This is the same Doc Cifelli, the very last medical officer of the Legendary Black Horse Regiment in Vietnam and the same *"Mustached Medicine Man"* [*Thunder Run – 2Q2010*] who fifty-three years later, is still serving his fellow Vietnam veterans as well as the men and women who wore different camo-khakis in Korea and have recently, in subsequent wars served their country well - and the same Doc Cifelli who is now an 83-year-old retired Medical Doctor.

Not quite retired! No, Doctor Cifelli did retire once in 2010 From his full-time VA Primary Care physician position, but continues these last 15 years, part-time. He just can't stay home and play Pickle Ball or clean up after hurricanes, instead, he volunteers at least three days a month: ever on call.

In 2014, he learned that the Port Charlotte VA had a waiting list of a few hundred veterans trying to establish medical care, and so he worked four days a week to empty that backlog. He registered, examined and prescribed medication and treatments, as well as consulted with other specialists as needed, until that list of veterans was closed. *"It took several months"* as Doctor Nick tells it.

Then, in 2023 he found a waiting list of over a hundred veterans at the Sebring VA Clinic and volunteered to "take his show on the road" and handle that backlog until each veteran was examined and registered, as well as, prescribed with the appropriate medications. And so, as in Vietnam, where he served and cared for the 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment troopers (as he made them laugh and smile), five decades later, he is still working as a dynamic "advocate" for his brother veterans.

*"As far as I was concerned, I was just helping out to expedite medical service for fellow veterans,"* Nick responded when receiving the award.

As retired Colonel William Stokes, the last 11<sup>th</sup> Cav squadron commander in Vietnam, recalls: *"Yes, Doc Cifelli liked to take his show on the road, maybe because he so enjoyed carrying a side-arm while he was in the field. But that advocacy and concern for veterans in Florida is not much different from the care he exhibited in Vietnam. But I always wonder how he put together that lobster roast in Chu Chi?"*

Like the Legendary Blackhorse Regiment, whose Troops were seldom in one place for an extended period, Nick Cifelli liked jumping on helicopters to get to the troops in the field or firebases. Once there, and after completing his rounds, he often moved down the road to small villages in the middle of no-where to run "Med caps" and with a Kit Carson interpreter, bringing care, comfort and healing to poor and isolated Vietnamese villagers.

*"Fifty-three years ago in dulled, drab but always starved jungle fatigues he looked down the throats of young and old Montagnards or other rice-farmers and villagers,"* Chaplain Bill recalls: *"he also would spend hours in the hot sun of orphanages' schoolyard, caring for deaf-mute children and instructing the Vietnamese nuns as to how to properly dress wounds or deliver medication".*

John Hrom, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron Platoon Leader in Vietnam adds: *"The guy was a tyrant relative to*

health care, and a sought-after friend for many an 11th Cav trooper. When Nick was around you had to smile. His scintillated phrases of wisdom often ended on an irrepressible note of facetiousness, balancing the seriousness of each event in real-time practicality. Nick was the kind of guy you would take on a “Bear Hunt” or on a train ride across country: never a dull moment.”

He was always there for his brothers. Even while working at the Fort Myers VA Clinic, the Patient Advocates would always send the most difficult cases, either with medical or personal problems to him. One particular heart-warming story involved a Vietnam veteran from North Carolina who had been trying for 10 years to receive service-connected disability for his diabetes/Agent Orange problem. He had been denied on 3 or 4 occasions. He had been originally treated in North Carolina for really severe uncontrolled diabetes that did not respond to oral medication or stan insulin treatment: his Endocrinologist put him on an Insulin Pump, which probably saved his life, but the VA would not approve that treatment as Agent Orange related. Doctor Nick told him to reapply and then Nick had lengthy discussions with the C&P doctor, carefully explaining the situation and proving that the veteran had the type of diabetes to be service connected. He was successful and then once approved, it was deemed retro-active for 10 years.

As Churchill said in 1940: “Good things happen to those who stand and wait.” Needless to say, the first check was large, and the veteran was now self-sufficient. He had been unwilling to get married because of his finances. This all changed. The Patient Advocate at the VA Clinic in Fort Myers was a Notary and in Florida, could officiate the marriage. The veteran was married at the clinic ... and Doctor Nick, once Captain Cifelli of the Legendary Blackhorse Regiment was his Best Man.



11<sup>th</sup> Cav/37<sup>th</sup> Medical Company **Medcap** at Khiem Han, Vietnam

Doc Cifelli at Father Bob Crawford’s Orphanage in Saigon.

The child Captain Cifelli is holding was not a random orphan. In fact, she was in the process of being adopted by the Cavanaugh family – an officer who had served in Vietnam prior and a man Nick had known while stationed at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland.



**REGISTRATION FORM**



**40th Annual 11th ACVVC Reunion**

**September 2, 2025-September 7, 2025**

Hyatt Regency Tulsa, 100 E. Second St. Tulsa, OK 74103

Reservations by phone: 918-560-2219 use code ACVV

On-line: <https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/TULRT/G-ACVV>

Scooter Rental: T-Town Mobility 918-600-2112

On -Line: [stephanie@ttownmobility.com](mailto:stephanie@ttownmobility.com)

Registration fee is \$130 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 21, 2025. All hotel reservations must be made by August 4, 2025. 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 21, 2025.

**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)**

_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
<b>Total Registration Fee</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

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      Please enter Security Code/CVC# here \_\_\_ \_\_\_

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

# 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



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



#3 Bumper Sticker \$3.00



#4 Window  
Sticker \$3.00



#11 Flag, Indoor/Outdoor \$60.00



#30 Value  
Computer Case  
\$20.00



#43 Outdoor Wide  
Brim Hat \$25.00



#31 Messenger  
Brief Case  
\$24.00



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



#47 11th Cavalry  
Cap \$18.50



#32 Large Active  
Duffel  
\$34.00



#34 Camouflage Sport  
Duffel  
\$40.00



#17 Blackhorse Pin  
\$5.00



#20 Vietnam  
Blackhorse Pin,  
Wreath \$5.00



#14 License Plate  
Frame, Black  
w/white letters \$5.00



#33 Heavy Blend  
hooded sweatshirt  
\$28.00



#13 License Plate, Blackhorse \$9.00



#7 Blackhorse Patch  
Colored \$5.00



#18 11th ACR  
Regimental Crest  
\$7.00



#48 Sportsman Hat  
\$18.00



#10 Small Blackhorse Magnet  
\$6.00



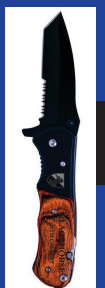
#26 Large Blackhorse Magnet  
7 X 8 1/2" \$10.00



#19 Blackhorse Cavalry Pin \$6.50



#36 Allons  
Decal \$3.00



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



#37 Gray Cotton  
T-Shirt \$20.00



#35 Circuit  
Backpack  
\$20.00

The Quartermaster Store is now on line at: [11thcavnam.com](http://11thcavnam.com)



#5 Hoodie Sweat Shirt \$30.00



#55 4" Vietnam Cambodia Patch \$5.00



#57 4" Stadium Blanket (Gray or Red) \$22.00



#49 Dry Zone Grid Polo \$30.00



#27 Eddie Bauer Polo \$32.00



#21 Port Authority Soft Shell Jacket \$52.00



#53 Woodland Shirt Jacket \$52.00



#56 Leatherette Koozie (Black or Red) \$7.00



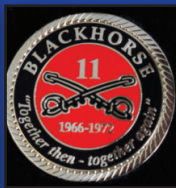
#50 Ladies Jersey Knit Cardigan \$40.00



#24 Blackhorse Fleece Vest \$29.00



#25 Blackhorse Coin \$15.00



#52 Blackhorse Pendant \$12.00



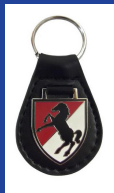
#28 Blackhorse Logo Sticker 2" X 2.5" with adhesive on back" \$2.00



#54 Flag Pin \$6.50



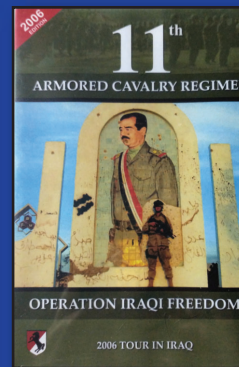
#6 Knit Cap \$18.00



#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



#58 Distressed Military Cap \$18.50



#15 Leatherette Coaster 4" Rawhide Coaster \$4.00



#38a



#38b



#38d

#38 Poplin Hats \$18.00



#23 White 11th ACR Vietnam cap \$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 | 1st Edition 2025

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			
10.	Small Blackhorse Magnet .....	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 .....	5.00			
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.	White 11th ACR Vietnam Cap .....	18.00			
24.	Blackhorse Fleece Vest.....	29.00			
25.	Blackhorse Coin .....	15.00			
26.	Large Blackhorse Magnet (7" x 8.5") .....	12.00			
27.	Eddie Bauer Polo .....	32.00			
28.	Blackhorse Logo Sticker - 2" X 2.5" with adhesive on back .....	2.00			
30.	Value Computer Case .....	20.00			
31.	Messenger Briefcase .....	24.00			
32.	Lg. Active Duffel .....	34.00			
33.	Heavy Blend Hooded Sweatshirt .....	28.00			
34.	Camouflage Sport Duffel .....	40.00			
35.	Circuit Backpack .....	20.00			
36.	Allons Decal .....	3.00			
37.	Grey Cotton T-shirt.....	20.00			
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			
43.	Outdoor Wide Brim Hat <input type="checkbox"/> S/M <input type="checkbox"/> L/XL.....	25.00			
46.	Blackhorse Saber.....	89.00			
47.	11th Calvary Cap .....	18.50			
48.	Sportsman Hat (S/M or L/XL) .....	18.00			
49.	Dry Zone Grid Polo .....	30.00			
50.	Ladies Jersey Knit Cardigan .....	40.00			
51.	Lightweight Wind Jacket .....	34.00			
52.	Blackhorse Pendant .....	12.00			
53.	Woodland Shirt Jacket.....	53.00			
54.	Flag pin.....	6.50			
55.	4" Vietnam Cambodia Patch.....	5.00			
56.	Leatherette Koozie (Black or Red).....	7.00			
57.	Stadium Blanket (Grey or Red).....	22.00			
58.	Distressed Military Cap.....	18.50			

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

Shipping and Handling  
Total

### 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**

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## **Show Your Blackhorse Pride!**

Walker (REG HHT, 69-70) and Kathy Malone of Germantown, Illinois show their Blackhorse pride with their new 4' x 2' stone sign received from their four children.

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