

The Viet Nam Triple Deuce, Inc.

An Association of 2 Bn. (Mech)

22nd Infantry Regiment

Viet Nam Veterans



Together Then.....Together Again!.....

Thanks for Being There...&...Welcome Home



Editor: David Allin, DMOR A&HHC 69-70

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

The following letter explains why this organization exists about as well as it can be done. This Lady wants to know her uncle, one of our Brothers tragically lost in January 69. If you knew him, please help her and yourself out by contacting her at the email address provided. In any case Judy and I want to wish each and every one of you a great and safe holiday season, and hope we can all see each other at the next reunion in 2022...

I recently was contacted by a niece of Jim Ascher, the guy we all knew so well in Vietnam. If you remember, I knew Jim in the states and was his replacement in third platoon Alpha company. She wants to communicate with anyone who knew him then as she was only three when he was killed in January 69. I don't know if she is putting a memorial together for him or what, but she seems like a very good person, now in her 50's who wants to know him through us. If you can help her, please contact her at her email address, jadrie_66@yahoo.com

Her name is Jill Mohr, and she will greatly appreciate it, and you will probably get to meet her at the next reunion if you go too. If you think about it she's part of the Triple Deuce family just as much as we are. Hope you are well and good in these crazy times, and if you want to talk about this or anything else I'm available any time day or night at 309 537 3536. Thanks Brother...

Dick Nash , A Co. & HHC, 69

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

A lot has been happening with the 22nd IRS and 2/22VN, so we have a lot of articles this quarter. You have probably been notified by 22IRS that they are discontinuing the paper version of their newsletter and will only send out electronic versions by email. Rest assured that Triple Deuce Vietnam will continue to send out paper copies of our newsletter as before. If you would like an electronic copy in full color emailed to you in addition to the paper copy, just email me at dnjallin@gmail.com and I will put you on the list.

This quarter we had the Reunion in Dallas, the Paver Dedication Ceremony, and the Old Goats visit to Ft. Drum, all of which are told about in this issue. In case you didn't see it in the 22IRS newsletter, the next Reunion will be at Ft. Benning, and the one after that will tentatively be in Nashville. I hope to see you all there at both.

If you didn't watch the live-stream of the Paver Dedication ceremony, you can still watch the video. See Lon's article for instructions.

I really appreciate all the articles and information you are sending me for the newsletter. Keep it up.

Eventually, I hope, the pandemic will go away and we can all resume a normal life. Please stay safe and take appropriate precautions. Some of us are starting to get old, and we need to care of ourselves.

DEEDS NOT WORDS

David Allin, DMOR A Co. & HHC, 69-70

REUNION PHOTOS, PLEASE

Steve Irvine, svirvine@gmail.com, would appreciate any and all photos taken at the Dallas reunion. Steve, Web Master for VN 222, will arrange and post the photos to the VN 222 Web Site. Once the 22nd Infantry Regiment Society's Web Site has completed the changes that are now underway, the photos will be posted on that Site. Please include names and any explanations when you contact Steve.

**Jim May, HMOR
Prov., Co. 1968**

REUNION REPORT

You can read all about the reunion in the 22nd IRS newsletter, but I'd like to add some things that only pertained to Triple Deuce Vietnam. As you may have heard, Dick Nash and his wife arrived early, only to have his wife become ill. She flew back home, but Dick stayed at the hotel, isolating himself in his room when it was determined his wife had COVID-19. I hadn't seen Dick since 1969, so I bravely put on a mask and went to his room to visit. Both of us were fully vaccinated and masked, and did no smooching, so I felt safe. We had a good talk, and I survived. Unfortunately, Dick came down with COVID also, but he and his wife are now fully recovered.

Understandably, the reunion was not as well attended as last time, but we still had a good crowd and a fun time. LTC Armstrong, the current commander of our beloved battalion which is now stationed at Ft. Drum, New York, gave great talk about their current status and training schedule. It made Tigerland sound like a walk in the

park. There was a raffle with some great prizes, the best of which was this quilt (which I did not win).



Dave Allin, DMOR, A/HHC 1969

PHANTOM 34 REPAIR



In 1974 I built a model of the track I rode, The Phantom 34. At the Atlanta reunion I showed a photo of the model to Lon Oakley, and he asked me to build one for him. I did, but it was damaged in mailing, so he brought it to the Dallas reunion so I could repair it. I had to replace the antenna and I made a better flag that was the right size for the one he flew on the track in VN. This is how it looks now. Lon emailed this photo to some of us, and John Poggi added this comment:

Sadly, I don't have a 1969 image of any Charlie Company APCs, a misfortune attributable to storing one's possessions in a fuse box inside a track. It turned out that those fuse boxes, while providing excellent protection against moisture, don't stand up well to an RPG hit and the resulting fire fueled by diesel and ammunition.

But, I do have a more recent shot of a vintage APC, taken in December 2019 at the Military History Museum located on Điện Biên Phủ Road in the [Ba Đình](#) District of Hanoi, just across from Lenin Park. You would be amazed at how much of our stuff they have there!

Standing next to the track, one of my first thoughts was, "Did we really climb on and jump off this thing a dozen times a day?"

DNW,

John



You may remember from a previous newsletter that a Japanese model company put out a different kit of the M-113 that featured a painting on the box of Captain Crocker's track. Triple Deuce led the way!

Dave Allin, DMOR, A/HHC 1969

Paver Dedication Ceremony

When the Newsletter first announced the program for the Paver Program, I signed on. My wife Mary Pat and I planned to attend the dedication. We had previously visited the National Infantry Museum in April, 2016 with our grandsons, Coulter 7 and Easton 6. They were very impressed and inquisitive. My daughter and family live in Auburn, Alabama with is about 45 minutes from Fort Benning. It was our good fortune that Veterans Day was the date for the paver dedication. Veterans Day was a scheduled school holiday, so our grandsons now 12 and 11 as well as their mom (my daughter Natalie) were able to attend and were excited to be able to share this occasion with me. The ceremony was very moving and impressive. LTC (Ret) Mark Woempner eloquently spoke and mentioned the importance and significance of the pavers to commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who served in the 22nd Infantry Regiment. The introduction of the guest speaker was awe inspiring. Wow, what hasn't this soldier done! CSM Sean J. Rice, has a long and impressive biography. He had a terrific message and it was an honor to have this very accomplished individual speak to us at the paver dedication ceremony. I was proud to meet him and shake his hand. As we were walking towards the pavers, I noticed foreign

uniformed military personnel. I met and spoke to a CSM from the Netherlands Army, a soldier from Japan, and a Lieutenant Commander General from the UK. He stated that he did not know who sent him the invitation to attend, but knew he was coming across the pond. He was impressed as was gentleman from the Netherlands. We milled around with our fellow brothers, took pictures and did rubbings/etchings of the pavers. My grandsons did etchings of my paver and others. This experience for them I believe will enhance for them of the significance of Veterans Day. We all toured the National Infantry Museum. There were new exhibits and other things that I had not noticed previously. The grandsons had memories of the previous visit and specifically wanted to go through the jungle, part of the Vietnam section they remembered from 2016. Walking through the main areas of the museum with sections depicting each war is very moving, especially for me a Vietnam Veteran. Walking between the displays, there are windows which look out onto the military parade grounds. The museum is a great visual education of military history. We then drove to the area with the monuments and looked at our 22nd Infantry Regiment monument. Standing in front of this large monument with the knowledge that almost 3,000 soldiers are honored here for making the ultimate sacrifice from the War of 1812 to the present is very emotional. I can name 7 of my closest brothers who are etched on this monument and I am certain all of you have your own brothers on this monument. It is good to remember them and reflect back. I encourage all of my brothers of our 22nd Infantry Regiment to make the effort to visit this special place. If you have visited before, go again. The next reunion is in Columbus, Georgia in May 2023 which is

less than 10 miles from Fort Benning and our monument. Add this to your calendar and plan to attend. The price is right for this and all reunions. Inquire about details from our officers listed in the Newsletter.

I remain as always "Deeds Not Words"

Dennis Di Bon, 2nd BN(MECH) 22nd IR, 3rd BDE, 4th ID, 1966-1967

PAVER DEDICATION CEREMONY VIDEO

Anyone interested in seeing 22nd Infantry Regiment Paver Dedication Ceremony from Veterans Day can view it on National Infantry Museum's Facebook Page. Click on Videos and it comes up. Mark did super job in his short but effective talk talking to the heritage of the Regiment Look for special short story with photos soon from us. Special thanks to Martin Gaworecki for his photo contributions along with others submitted by those present. And special thanks to all those who joined us.





LON OAKLEY

PAVER LOAN OFFER

The Members present at the VN 222 Business Meeting in Dallas voted to establish a Paver Loan Program for the

purpose of helping Members purchase a Paver for placement with the other 22nd Infantry Vets, from all wars, at the National Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning, GA. The 22nd Pavers have been and are being placed in a Section, 22A, that is reserved for 22nd Active Duty Soldiers and Vets.

The qualification for the Program is the same as other Loan Programs. The person making the request must be a Member in Good Standing with VN 222. There are no payment schedules or interest charges. Loan payments are made at the discretion of the member taking the loan. The loan remains a private matter between the Treasurer and the Member.

If a member wishes to take advantage of the program, or if they simply wish to have a Paver placed in the 22nd IR section they should request a Paver Form from Lon Oakley. Lon is the liaison to the NIM and the lead person on the project. Once the Form has been completed, it can be returned to Lon if payment is included with the Form or to me if a loan is requested. Lon can be contacted at

ldo82288@icloud.com or 210-878-7072

NIM has extended the reduced cost of a Paver at \$200.00 until February 2022. After that the cost will be \$250.00

You can read about the dedication of the Pavers elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Jim May, HMOR

Prov. Co., 1968

Reminder to those who took advantage of the Loan Program. Please send your payments to me at the address posted in the Merchandise Section of this Newsletter. Make checks payable to Vietnam Triple Deuce.

JUST AS RED

I think you may get a kick out of a program the Nashville Country Music Hall of Fame Museum put me through this last summer. Several years ago they started a non profit designed to help PTSD vets deal with their monsters. They transport vets to Nashville and put them through a series of tutorials on how to write a song, all the while asking questions that help them learn all about the vet and his or her military experience. The vet sits with a professional songwriter or two for three one hour sessions and then in two 7 hour sessions they write and record a song about whatever subject the vet wants to do. It is an amazing process that helps the vet in so many ways when finished. I did it twice this past summer for the first time since they had to shut it down for COVID, once via Zoom and later when I drove to Nashville to do it in person. I have attached the first one of these songs to this email for your listening pleasure (I hope). It was a product of my sitting with the guy who wrote Trace Atkin's number one song "Arlington". It was a hoot as we say in the boonedocks. I recommend downloading the lyrics first so you can follow along with the audio. The fellow singing is kind of hard to understand in spots...

DICK NASH, A Co. 1969

PS Judy and I are recovering well from our COVID adventure. Gonna be awhile getting any sort of normal energy back, but better every day...

Editor's Note: It sounds even better than it reads. I couldn't attach the audio, but here are the lyrics:

JUST AS RED

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Dick Nash, Chris Bickel, Dave Turnbull,
Lewis Brice

Every 18 months or so
It's like tonic for the soul
To sit and have a beer somewhere
With all the boys that were over there

Nobody's wearin' Army greens
We're all 22nd infantry
We're the names not etched up on the wall
We all gave some but some gave all
We're still fightin' the battles
Even though there ain't no rifles in our hands

Memories are bright as a candle
Like the tracers in a place called
Vietnam
Nobody cares about that war
That's what I've got my brothers for
To help me to remember and forget
All the stories, all the scars
And how we soldiered just as hard
How the blood we shed was just as
red
Just as red

We feel guilty for the ones we've lost
Comin' back alive has had it's cost
Everybody's got their cross to bare
Be it here or be it there
It's still around us everywhere

CHORUS

As the fields we left
And the thoughts we dread
Running through our heads

CHORUS

Can't Forget
Don't forget
It was just as red

DINING OUT

2ND BN, 22ND IR, 10TH MTN DIV

OCTOBER 22ND 2021

After a long absence due to the Covid 19 epidemic, a Battalion Ball was scheduled and held on October 22nd at the 3 Willows Event Center in Lyons Falls, NY. This provided some of the Members of the Old Goats Squad the opportunity to make an early appearance at Ft Drum, an opportunity that I do my best to never miss. As in the past, I left my home in Maine in the wee hours and headed for the Syracuse Airport where **Skip Fahel, Bravo Co., 2-22, 1967-1968**, would be arriving around 13:30 HRS.

Got Skip into the 22nd IR Staff Car and headed to Ft Drum and Battalion. I'd been up since 0300 HRS and had eaten only an Egg McMuffin so I suggested that we stop at the Cracker Barrel for something to eat. Skip said he wasn't very hungry, but would keep me company while I ate. We were seated, handed menus and upon the return of the waiter Skip proceeded to order just about everything on the breakfast menu. His meal was brought out by the waiter and an assistant. Skip had no less than two large plates and a side plate in front of him. I didn't think it possible for Skip to finish what was in front of him when he slid three biscuits off the side plate, covered them with gravy and devoured them. About twenty minutes into the drive Skip said that he might have eaten too much. I commented that for a man who wasn't hungry he'd done a fine job of consuming everything that the kitchen had to offer. We arrived at Ft Drum and as always, were politely asked to state our business by the CQ at the front entrance to the Triple Deuce HQ Building. Skip, as always, told the CQ that we were here to see the BN CO and

CSM and proceeded to walk down the hall to their offices. As usual, I stay behind so I could explain who we are, Members of the Old Goats Squad, and why it's OK for us to take liberties with protocol.

LTC Armstrong and CSM Frantz were busy with all that's necessary to run an Infantry Battalion. So, we, I in particular, stopped everyone moving through the hallway and asked what they are up to. I found myself talking with a JAG Officer and her Legal Aide Assistant. I did not ask why JAG was in the building, but I did learn that Brigade has a legal team as part of the HQ element.

Things have surely changed since my days with the 197th Infantry Brigade.

With the visit over, Skip and I went to check in at the Ft Drum Hotel. We have learned our lesson regarding where to stay while on Post. The Ft Drum Hotel is all that one would expect from a fine hotel. There were beds with sheets, pillows, blankets, and plenty of towels and toiletries in the bathroom, and a BIG TV with lots of channels to select from. Our days at Officers Loop are now part of our history. After checking in, we decided to take 'old man' naps. I certainly needed one. When we woke up, Skip said he was still full from the breakfast meal, so we wrote off a trip to Watertown for an evening meal. I did need to get some lounge shorts, but the PX was closed, so we proceeded to the Wal Mart just outside Post. With the shopping done I said that I was hungry but that all I needed was something from one of the fast-food places along the strip. Burger King appeared to be the least busy, so we stopped and went in. While I was trying to navigate the kiosk menu, (I live in a place where people still talk to one another, so the kiosk thing is something I hope I never become familiar with.) Skip was punching select tabs then standing at the pick-up

counter. For a man who “isn’t hungry,” he certainly isn’t afraid to order up a good quantity of food. We took our Burger King bags back to the room and settled in for the evening.

In the morning we checked out, we were not staying at the Ft Drum Hotel on Thursday evening because there was no point in staying at Ft Drum because we would not be visiting with the BN on Friday morning. We would be staying at the hotel next to the 3 Willows Event Center in Lyons Falls, NY, which is about an hour and fifteen minute drive southeast of Ft Drum.

We proceeded to the PX and did a little walking around looking for anything that we didn’t have, didn’t need, but wanted. Skip found some things he was looking for so the trip wasn’t wasted. We stopped at the food court for coffee and a cookie. Skip was now more concerned about the presentation he was going to be making to Bravo Co. (OK, Bushmaster Co.) than how not hungry he was. Skip’s presentation wasn’t going to happen until 1500 HRS, but that was OK, because there was uncertainty about how his slides would be presented. He was correct in his assumption that there might be some difficulties.

I was to meet with **CPT Matt Jacobsen** and the “G” Co., Soldiers at 1100 HRS. My intent was not to disturb the Soldiers activities, but that’s not what happened. When I approached the motor pool, I could see the “G” Company Triple Deuce Guidon being proudly displayed. This is the Guidon that the Society presented to “G” Co. Now they fly both the 10th BSB Guidon and the Triple Deuce Guidon. This is how it should be. They are part of an Infantry Battalion. Skip came along which proved to be a good move because, along with my preaching to the “G” Co. Soldiers about how during a deployment they will be responsible for

FOB security, these Soldiers wanted to know about Infantry Squad numbers and activities. Skip was the right man for providing answers. There were many questions, not only from the Soldiers but from me. I wanted to know how the improved MAW DEUCE was head spaced. I learned that the armors in “G” Co. head spaced barrels to individual MG’s and then identified the barrels with serial numbers. The improved MAW DEUCE must still be timed. Interesting, well for me it is. After the meeting Skip and I returned to BN HQ where we took our position next to the CQ desk and stopped every Soldier and visited with them. Skip’s presentation with “B” Co. Was still a ways off, so I opted to go to the food court to get something to eat. Skip was trying to get his slide presentation loaded into a lap-top that he could use. It wasn’t going well, so he stayed with the IT Lieutenant.

The “B” Co. Soldiers started filing into the room, they were not moving with a sense of purpose. This was attributed to the fact that they had just returned from a 22.2 mile ruck hike. I took the opportunity to explain the advantages of MECH to these more than willing to listen Soldiers. The line, “MECH Soldiers carry nothing,” always gets the attention of Leg Soldiers, especially after a ruck hike.

The room was filled, Skip was introduced, but gremlins were still in control of the lap-top, so Skip began the presentation, undeterred by the lack of graphics, Skip referred to the unseen graphics as if they were in plain view. Yes, Skip was undeterred. I would not have been as resourceful. I would have resorted to leading the group in camp songs or some other mindless stalling tactic. After about ten minutes I noticed that heads began bobbing. These young Soldiers were tired.

Good News is that before any of the Soldiers fell off their chairs, the slides began to appear. Now, as Skip was explaining why the tracks were positioned as they were, one could plainly see on the screen where they were, the Soldiers took notice, they became alert and interested. The presentation was a success. Should the reader have the opportunity to see Skip's presentation, I suggest you do so.

Tradition states that the former Officers invite the present Big Five out to dinner during a visit, tradition held. However, the BDE CO had summoned all the BDE's Majors and OPS SMGs to a meeting, so the Big Five was reduced to the Big Two, LTC Armstrong and CSM Frantz. LTC Armstrong had selected a nice restaurant, Zero Dock Street in Carthage, NY. We had a fine dinner and the chance to discuss ideas that we hoped would strengthen the relationship between the 22nd Active Soldiers and the Society. Skip and I agreed that the present relationship between the BN Command Group and the Old Goats has never been stronger.

After dinner Skip and I continued to head south to Lyons Falls where we would spend the night at the Edge Hotel. This site was selected because it is next to the 3 Willows Event Center. On Friday morning I drove Skip to the airport, Skip would not be attending the Ball, he had promised his wife that he would attend an event with her, so he was keeping the promise and returning home. Before leaving for the hotel Skip and I were directed to a restaurant in Lyons Falls. From the outside the little building didn't look like much, but when we entered, we knew we were in the right place. The tables were filled with locals, all engaged in conversation. Skip and I were greeted by some of the locals, yes, we were in the right place. With breakfast taken care of, Skip

and I headed for the airport. While Skip and I were driving to the airport, **Mark Woempner, HHC, 1/22, 2001-2003** was driving from the airport to the hotel. Mark had taken a Red Eye in from the West Coast. I had made arrangements with the hotel for Skip's bed to be stripped so that Mark would be able to get some sleep when he arrived. When I got back to the hotel, I found Mark fast asleep. The plan had worked.

I left the room and made my way over to the Event Center where the Ball Committee was preparing the room for the evening's festivities. I had requested that two flag stands be available so that the AFG-IRAQ 22nd Guidon and the VN 222 Guidon could be posted. **LT Logan Starr** pointed out the two flag stands. I posted the Guidons which would be joined by the Colors when they were posted.

Mark and I got dressed and headed over to the Event Center where we were seated with our respective Companies. We were soon joined by **John and Valerie Poggi, Charlie Co., 2/22, 1969** and **Rob and Kim Schexnayder, HHC, 2/22, 2013-2015** who were also seated with their respective Companies. It is always a pleasure to be among the Soldiers. I am reminded that there are many young men and women in this Country who care about and honor the American way of life. It is good to be among people who understand that The USA is the finest Country on Earth and is so because of the sacrifices that were made by those who came before us. I will take the opportunity here to thank **CPT Matt Jacobsen, CO "G" Co.**, and all the members of "G" Company for the warm welcome that was extended to me.

John Poggi, gave a well thought out and well presented speech. It will be posted in this newsletter along with John's account of

the evening. You will understand why John was well received by the attendees after reading the speech and John's account. The Colors were retired, the music started playing and LTC Armstrong took off his jacket, the sign that it was time to party and party they did.

There's more to tell, but I've gone on long enough with this writing and will end by thanking all that extended their hospitality and help during the visit. Special thanks to **Kim Armstrong** and the entire Ball Committee and an Extra Special Thanks to **LT Logan Starr** for the effort he put forth in organizing and taking care of all the unforeseen details that came up during the evening. Job well done, Logan.

Jim May, HMOR
Prov., Co. 1968

JOHN POGGI'S SPEECH TO THE COURAGE BATTALION BALL, OCTOBER 22, 2021

Spouses and partners of the Triple Deuce, Soldiers, veterans, honored guests, Distinguished Leaders: I am honored to be invited to speak to you this evening on behalf of the 22nd Infantry Regiment Society, and to represent the Society's "Old Goats Squad." I should clarify that the word "Goats" in "Old Goats Squad" is not the modern acronym, "**Greatest Of All Time.**" The word simply refers to *goats*, the animals: ornery, but often playful creatures . . . that thrive equally well in mountainous, arid or heavily forested terrain . . . and will eat almost anything. And the word "Old" in "Old Goats" just means . . . old. We have several Old Goats with us tonight. All have been recognized by Department of

the Army as Distinguished or Honorary Members of the Regiment.

As I call your name, please give us a wave:

Jim May, 25th Provisional Co., 1968-69

Rob Schexnayder, Triple Deuce, Co Cdr Bosnia 2001-02; Bn Cdr 2013 -15

Mark Woempner, First Battalion, 2001-03, Bn Cdr Iraq

If you get a chance later, be sure to introduce yourself to an Old Goat, and say hi. They love recounting what it was like to *advance into battle . . . on horseback . . .*

How very elegant everyone looks!

The last Military Ball I attended was in 1968, a few months before being commissioned a second lieutenant. My date that evening was the lovely lady seated at the table there with the Boonins and the Holskers.

Valerie has graciously attended several of my forays into public speaking, where she provides not only moral support, but also invaluable real-time quality control. So, if you should see Valerie shaking her head, making desperate hand signals, hiding her eyes, or holding her face in her hands, and I have failed to notice:

Please! Do whatever is necessary attract my attention.

While pondering what I might share with you tonight, I struggled with a fundamental disconnect: I was preparing to say a few words to a group whose hallowed motto is "*Deeds Not Words.*"

A second challenge stemmed from the uncomfortable realization that my Vietnam-era military experience is more distant in history to you than was World War I when I wore the uniform. So, to bridge that gap, I thought I might offer a few historical observations on that distant era.

Over the next few minutes I will touch briefly on:

1. Changes in the **social footprint of the U.S. military** since the mid-20th century;
2. A concise history of the **role of Triple Deuce in Vietnam**; and
3. Some **comparisons** between the Vietnam Triple Deuce and Courage Battalion today.

To add a modicum of educational gravitas, there also will be **three** military trivia questions.

The customary disclaimers apply: none of what follows is intended to reflect the views of Department of Defense. Or any other carbon-based life form.

Let's start with a military trivia question:

How many Light Infantry Soldiers does it take to beat up a paratrooper?

*The answer is **FIVE**: four to cut the paratrooper out of the tree, and one to administer the beating...*

Changes in the social footprint of the U.S. military

During World War II, the U.S. mustered **12 million** young adults and teenagers into the armed services – fully **10%** of the total population. Every family in America had sons and daughters, relatives and friends who served.

At the height of the Vietnam war in the late 1960's, our active-duty military, in all services, numbered **3.5 million**, about **2.8%** of the adult population. The active Army was 1.5 million soldiers strong – about three times the size of today's force – and comprised largely of draftees serving two-year commitments. Every American family personally knew young soldiers.

Today, total active-duty forces number fewer than **1.5 million**, less than **1%** of the adult population. Most American families do

not know a single active-duty Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine.

During the Vietnam era, the number of U.S. senators and congressmen with prior military service ranged from 75 to 80 percent. In today's Congress, that number is below 20 percent.

There is one constant: **infantry** remains the pointy end of the spear, the 1% of the 1%.

That being so, I am bewildered by the media's fixation on special forces units.

I have immense respect for every professional who trains to excel in their chosen profession of arms, but the reality is that most battles in American history have been fought and won by line units of novice warriors, many 19 or 20 years old, who learned fast, adapted quickly, and won victory through their **Will and Skill**.

Consider this: a notable highlight of the war on terror was the 2011 takedown of Osama Bin Laden by about two dozen members of DevGru, formerly Seal Team Six. It was a well-executed op, but no aspect of that mission involved underwater demolition or a HALO parachute insertion; it was a classic light infantry operation.

Now, imagine if Colonel Armstrong gathered up his pride of young lions and said, "We're getting a custom-built replica of a lightly defended target compound, together with 400,000 rounds of ammunition for training, dedicated air support and six weeks to spin up for a platoon-minus night helicopter assault on a **very** high-value target. Who wants in?"

I mean, damn – the Old Goats would stand up for that one . . .if only we could muster a couple of good knees among us . . .!

Military trivia question number two:

What was the primary reason Department of the Army began reactivating Ranger battalions in 1974?

Ranger battalions exist ...because SEALs and Marines need heroes too!

I promised a concise history of the Triple Deuce in Vietnam...

From 1966 to 1970, battalions of the 22nd Infantry were assigned at various times to either the 4th or the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. The 1st and 3rd battalions were light infantry, but Triple Deuce was mechanized, meaning we had our own M-113 Armored Personnel Carriers – with the word “armored,” referring to one inch of aluminum, being a bit of an overstatement. Our area of operations was lightly populated agricultural countryside and jungle extending west and north from Saigon to the Cambodian border.

The Viet Minh and Viet Cong communist guerillas had been active there for decades, successively – and successfully – fighting invading Japanese, colonial French and the anti-communist South Vietnamese government. Seemingly uninhabited jungle sheltered well-camouflaged VC camps and underground tunnel complexes. In fact, the 25th unwittingly built its sprawling Cu Chi base camp right on top of a major VC tunnel complex. It took a couple of years for folks to figure out how VC sappers in black pajamas kept popping up at night so deep inside the perimeter.

Our AO also was a southern terminus for the “Ho Chi Minh trail,” the network of jungle supply routes from North Vietnam to the South, so, in addition to local Viet Cong,

regular North Vietnamese Army units usually were nearby or in transit. Platoons swept the roads daily with teams of engineers to remove the mines – IEDs to you folks – that had been planted overnight. Company-level operations, for a day or a week, were targeted at locating and destroying the NVA and their hidden bases. There were occasional large multi-battalion offensives with name like Operation Junction City, a hammer-and-anvil strategy in which Triple Deuce was part of the anvil. Triple Deuce won a Presidential Unit Citation for the Battle of Suoi Tre, in which over 600 enemy bodies were recovered after a single day. But after the Communists suffered massive casualties in the 1968 Tet offensive, Vietnam was largely a war of patrol and ambush, with enemy contact typically initiated at very close range.

Since stealth in the woods is hard to achieve with noisy 11-ton APCs, we often operated dismounted as traditional light infantry, with occasional airmobile insertions. But when weather grounded the helicopters, mech infantry was the sole reaction force for the entire AO.

In 1969 the policy of “Vietnamization” gained momentum; U.S. forces, including Triple Deuce, worked closely with ARVN infantry to teach them our fire and maneuver tactics, and how to use artillery and air support.

We operated under strict rules of engagement prohibiting “hot pursuit” across national borders. Then, in the spring of 1970, the order finally came for a major attack against NVA strongholds in previously off-limits Cambodia. Triple Deuce was the spearhead leading over 100,000

U.S. and ARVN troops in a massive strike west across the border. Later in 1970 the Vietnam War officially ended for Triple Deuce when the 25th Infantry Division rotated home to Hawaii. Joyous celebrations after the early announcements quieted down considerably when the first sergeants said, *“Listen up, everyone with less than seven months in country, check the S-1 shop for new orders – you’re being transferred out of the 25th.”* For a sense of how mech infantry fought in Vietnam, I encourage you to explore the novels of David Allin – spelled A-L-L-I-N . David was an infantryman with Triple Deuce in 1969, later became a Russian language specialist, and retired as an E-8. You can find his books on Amazon.

A quick Vietnam postscript, up at the geopolitical level:

By 1971 U.S. forces in-country had been significantly reduced, and largely ceased offensive operations. The 1973 Paris Peace Accords, negotiated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger without South Vietnamese approval, effectively ended the war – but permitted NVA forces to remain in the South, with entirely predictable consequences. In 1975 NVA regulars rolled into the southern capital of Saigon, many riding military vehicles made in the U.S. And the last images most Americans remember from the Vietnam War are of a chaotic helicopter evacuation from the roof of the U.S. embassy.

Some historians conclude the U.S. lost the war in Vietnam. But every warrior knows there is a distinct difference between a military **defeat** on the battlefield, and a political **decision** to withdraw. I am one of

over 2 million American veterans of the war in Vietnam who can assure you, *“We were winning when I left.”*

Triple Deuce yesterday and Courage Battalion today

A key takeaway message: Old Goats of the Vietnam era do not just respect today’s Soldiers – for multiple reasons, we flat-out envy you.

We envy you because of your unit training and cohesion. When duty takes you in harm’s way, you are likely to deploy with brothers and sisters you know and trust. In Vietnam, every unit in-country processed a continuous stream of individual replacements on staggered 12-month tours. We envy you because: *Your leaders receive more extensive training*

During Vietnam the Army was desperately short of NCO’s. A promising AIT graduate could go directly to the Noncommissioned Officer Candidate Course (NCOCC) and 21 week later become an E-5. If the new E-5 successfully completed Ranger School, he became an E-6. They were called “instant NCOs,” or “Shake ‘N Bake sergeants.” My platoon had no platoon sergeant. But our three young Shake ‘N Bake squad leaders were *outstanding*. I had a fourth squad leader, an “Old Army” type you don’t see much anymore – he had been up and down from E-1 to E-5 three times. I later heard he made it back to E-1 a fourth time. Ask me later tonight, and I might tell you about him . . .

As for officers –

Today, the **Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course** at Fort Benning lasts 19 weeks. In 1968 the **Infantry Officer Basic Course** was nine weeks, less than half as long. My specific training in *mechanized* infantry operations totaled five days.

A lieutenant commissioned in 1967 could make captain in two years. With some

lieutenants graduating from OCS at only 19 years old, senior O-3s were heard to complain: *"These days you can make captain at age 21 – or with the signed permission of both parents."*

Despite all that youth and inexperience, I am compelled to note that the learning curve in combat is steep, and a great many Shake 'N Bake sergeants and young officers became exemplary leaders.

We envy you because: *Your fellow Americans respect and appreciate your service.*

Earlier this month a group from the 22nd Infantry Regiment Society's reunion toured the Dallas Cowboys' football stadium, many wearing Triple Deuce shirts and caps. At every turn people stopped and said, "Thank you for your service." I'm never sure how to respond to that, but it felt ... nice.

Vietnam veterans came home to a country deeply divided by the war. Young people especially seemed to have forgotten the high school civics lesson that decisions to fight in foreign lands are made not by the Army, but by our elected government. There were no parades. Soldiers were counseled not to wear their uniforms off-post; and no one said, "Thank you for your service."

It is better now.

And we envy you because: *Your facilities are, like, way cooler than ours were!*

Stateside in the 1960s, trainees occupied World War II era wooden barracks that were uninsulated, un-air-conditioned firetraps. You have gyms, and weightlifting equipment!

If you've seen vintage photos of skinny, shirtless draftees in Vietnam, you will correctly assume that we could not challenge you guys at bench presses or deadlifts. We were mech, so don't even think about suggesting a "Norwegian ruck"

– we had a ride to work, thank you very much!

In the field we exuded a certain individualistic charm – some wore the heavy armor vests, others chose not to. Helmet covers often were customized with peace symbols, or the ever-popular Army acronym for *"Fun Travel and Adventure."* Extra belts of M-60 ammunition dangled everywhere. We were chronically short on radios, and long on non-regulation haircuts. *But yet — but yet . . . here is what I know.* Outside the wire, in the bush, **we were Triple Deuce**. If I could ruck up today with my crew of skinny draftees, as we were in 1969, we would not hesitate to go tactical against **any infantry** from **any army** in history – even you guys – and I am confident that – *how to phrase this gently?* – **WE WOULD KICK YOUR ASS!**

Now, two other things I know:

One, that you Light Infantry Soldiers hold that same confidence about **your** ability to take down . . . **any** . . . adversary . . . on the planet.

And **two**, in the unlikely event that there is a Triple Deucer who does **not** firmly believe that today – there are leaders in this room who very soon **will** get them to where they do.

I've run long, but before closing, I owe you one last trivia question, and we have a couple quick administrative matters. The trivia question:

How many military parachute jumps have been voluntarily completed by LTC

Armstrong and CSM Frantz, combined?

*The answer is **NONE** – we have it on good authority that they both had to be pushed out every time!*

First administrative matter: I have a note from the Old Goats for tonight's DJs. It contains only two words: **"Motown"** and **"Springsteen."**

And the second administrative matter involves scheduling. Are there any lieutenants here this evening? Would you please raise your hands for a moment? Excellent! – in 52 years, *there will be a Courage Battalion Military Ball* – at which one of you lieutenants will be the Old Goat guest speaker. That will be Sunday, October 22, 2073. Please mark your calendars! And if any of you lieutenants are married, please ask your spouse to check in with my wife. Valerie has some useful hand signals to pass along! To conclude – *Old Goats*, and *only* Old Goats: **ON YOUR FEET!** We Old Goats *stand* in *respect* and *admiration* of what Courage Battalion *is* today, and what you strive to achieve tomorrow. We hope that in coming years, you Soldiers and your families will attend an occasional reunion of the 22nd Infantry Regiment Society

- to **reconnect** with fellow Soldiers
- to **meet and mingle** with brothers and sisters you didn't know you had, and
- to **celebrate** the long and distinguished military tradition of which **you are**, now and forever, an important part.

Thank you for your hospitality and indulgence. Please join me in raising a glass –

Deeds Not Words!

DAVE BINDER

To All Dave's Friends:
Dave was born June 26, 1949, at Appleton, Wisconsin, and left us on September 3, 2021. He was 72 years young. Dave grew up in Oshkosh. He went to school at Sacred

Heart. Dave served in the Army from 1966 to 1973, including three tours in Southeast Asia. He served in 2/22 Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Dave's hobby was riding a Harley every chance he had. I know he looked forward to the reunion, getting together with whoever was there. It was my honor to have me all of his Army friends.

Marilyn Binder

HELLOS & COMMENTS

GUEST BOOK HITS

NEW FINDS

TAPS

Col Edward Schulte
HHC 25th ID 11-67 to 8-68
Died 9-5-2021

David Mullins
Attached to B Co. 2-22
Died 5-21-2021

Jim Frost
C Co. 4th & 25th ID, 67 to 68
Died 9-23-20

David Binder
C Co. 25th ID, 67 to 68
Died 9-3-21