



Cav hosts Association's 66th reunion

By Sgt. Kim Browne
HQ, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas – Stetsons, old and new, covered the bleachers of the 1st Cavalry Division's Cooper Field as the sounds of veterans telling war stories cut through the crowd -- smiles welcomed missed friends and tears remembered those who have passed.

This annual event brought more than 400 1st Cavalry Division veterans and families together for the 1st Cavalry Division Association's 66th Annual Reunion June 5 to June 9 here.

Kicking off the reunion was a golf tournament at the Courses at Clear Creek here. The tournament started cavalry-style with the firing of a canon.

The First Team hosted many activities for the Association. Buses came and went from the division museum where on display were current and past weaponry and vehicles. Attendees talked to current Cavalry Troopers and asked questions about equipment such as Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles, the M109A6 Paladin and an M1A2 Abrams Tank.

Festivities continued as former Troopers visited the Horse Cavalry Detachment Stables, where today's Soldiers put on a horse-led demonstration. The Horse Det. Soldiers also gave tours of the Ferrier Shop, Leather Shop and a short visit with the



Photo by Sgt. Kim Browne, HQ 1st Cav. PAO

Ken White, a 1st Cavalry Division Association member and former Trooper with the division 1966 to 1968, talks with period-dressed Soldiers June 7 at the 1st Cav at the division headquarters Cooper Field at Fort Hood, Texas, about his time with the Cav.

horses.

The Association held War-era, regiment and unit luncheons for the attendees throughout the week, such as the Korean War, former Soldiers with the 5th Cavalry Regiment and Artillery Soldiers. This gave the former Troopers time to catch up and reacquaint.

First Team Troops provided additional support June 7 at the "Spirit of the Cav" tableau; a French word depicting a scene or reenactment.

Reveille and lowering the flag started "Spirit of the Cav" and a traditional Cavalry Charge was also demonstrated.

The tableau depicted Soldiers from each era of the 1st Cavalry Division since 1921. Some period-dressed Soldiers

walked across Cooper Field with their steed and others with just the rifle and personal equipment from that war or era.

Vehicles and weapons representing the different wars were displayed behind the Soldiers. Some of World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, the Gulf and today's vehicles sat on Cooper Field and Battalion Avenue for all to see.

The 1st Cavalry Division Band was also in attendance playing era specific music for each Trooper walking onto the field.

Following the ceremony, reunion guests and their families walked the field to talk to current Troopers and exchange war stories.

The whole reunion

went beyond his expectations and his favorite part was the Spirit of the Cav, said Joe Scholl, a 1st Cav. Div. Association member and reunion attendee. Scholl was formerly a generator mechanic in 1967 and 1968 with Headquarters Company, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

The subsequent evening, the division commanding general talked to all attendees during a banquet held in their honor.

"Thank you for building a proud legacy for those of us who serve in the division today enjoy and aspire to live up to," said Maj. Gen. Anthony Ierardi, 1st Cav. Div. commanding general. "Thank you for your continued

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Retired Vietnam vet remembers fallen Cav son

By Sgt. Christopher A. Calvert
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas — When Vietnam veteran John L. Harris opened his apartment door on a bleak March morning in 2007, he saw standing in front of him the worst nightmare of every Service Member's parent; Soldiers in Class A dress with somber expressions.

Every day since he has dedicated his life to helping parents across the U.S. face such tragedy, while continuing the healing process for himself.

John L. Harris enlisted in 1969 as an Armor Crewman, where he would go on to serve for two decades, including a tour of Vietnam from 1971 to 1972 with Headquarters and Headquarter Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, as a Bell UH-1 Iroquois (Huey) door gunner.

"We were the first bird to arrive at the landing zone and the last one to leave," Harris said. "We usually flew for 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry's commander and his Soldiers. If any of his units received contact we would go and immediately pick the commander up."

During his combat tour, Harris was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor for his actions in rescuing crewmembers off a fallen Boeing AH-6 while being engaged by multiple enemy sources.

"If we were fired upon, we would pop red smoke to let friendly's know what to expect," Harris said. "We never left a Soldier behind, no matter what, and those crewmembers were no exception."

After leaving active duty, Harris began settling down in Colorado and was married to his wife, Deborah, in 1982. They would go on to have their only child, Blake A. Harris, on April 25, 1984.

Immediately young



Sgt. Blake A. Harris (right) poses with friend Pfc. Adam Barnes outside of Baghdad in 2005 during their first overseas tour. Harris was killed in action in Baqubah, Iraq, March 5, 2007 by a command detonated improvised explosive device during his second deployment with the 1st Cavalry Division. (Courtesy Photo, 1st ACB Public Affairs, 1st Cav. Division)

Blake began imitating his father who he would often see in uniform at a young and impressionable age, Harris noted.

"He was a good kid, and he wanted to be like me," Harris said. "He would see me in my uniform when he was a child and I think that rubbed off on him, as he always wanted to be a Soldier like me when he was growing up."

Blake grew up in Central Colorado and would go on to graduate from Pueblo South High School, Colorado in 2002. He was then sent to Fort Benning, Ga. as part of the delayed entry program, where he began his training as an Indirect Fire Infantryman.

"I didn't hear from him much during training, but I saw him during his (advanced individual training) graduation and even had the chance to pin his blue cord on," Harris said. "He said he enjoyed being in, and I was proud of him, and still am."

After leaving Fort Benning, Blake was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, where he showed up at reception with a small clerical error in his paperwork, which prevented him from having a unit of assignment.

"Once Blake got there, he didn't have a unit to report to," Harris explained. "So he told the receptionist his father was in

the Cav. The receptionist quipped back, 'Once Cav always Cav,' and he was sent to 3rd Brigade, 2-7 Cav."

Upon arriving to the unit, Blake was deployed a year later to Iraq in 2005 where he would provide crucial support to the Marines in Fallujah.

"He'd call me once in a while and he sounded so upbeat," Harris said. "He'd tell me he was helping people out, and that he was doing great things which weren't always being reported on the news. He liked it so much he even reenlisted over there."

After redeploying, Blake wed his girlfriend he knew since high school in Pueblo, and they had had son, Jonah, on October 31, 2004.

"He came back from his deployment and he got married in Pueblo, which he was so excited about," Harris said. "After his leave was over, we loaded up his truck and I helped him move to Copperas Cove, Texas. He was so happy during this time; he was following in the footsteps of his father, just as he always wanted to."

Shortly after coming

back to Texas, 2-7 Cav was redesignated 1-12 Cav, and a short time later Blake received orders he was heading back to Iraq for a year to serve at Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

"Before deploying again, Blake came and visited me for two or three days, and we just goofed off and had a blast," Harris said. "It was then that he told me if anything happened to him, he wanted me to be in charge of his remains. It made me feel unnerved, but I didn't ask any further questions about it; I assumed it would never happen to me."

On March 5th, 2007, 22-year-old Sgt. Blake A. Harris was killed in action in Baqubah, Iraq by a command detonated improvised explosive device, while providing support as part of a security detail to VIPs, much like his dad before him did countless times with the Cav in Vietnam.

"At nine that morning, I received a buzz at my apartment door, and when I looked out I saw a captain and a sergeant first class in Class A's," Harris said. "I knew what they were here for, but I assumed they had to be here for some-

one else even though they buzzed my specific apartment. I just knew they couldn't be here for me; I was in instant denial."

After grieving with family members and friends, Harris said he experienced every emotion possible during this troubling time.

"I felt angry, I was hurt, at one point I even thought why did it have to happen to me," Harris explained. "I went through the full gamut of emotions be-

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commitment to this division because the reality is this: even if you take off the cavalry yellow and black patch, we all cherish and love, even if you no longer wear the Army uniform, the reality is – once you join America’s First Team you never really leave its ranks.”

Closing out the reunion June 9 was a memorial service at the 1st Cav. Memorial Chapel for the former Troopers to pay respects to their fallen comrades.

The 1st Cavalry Division Association began July 17, 1944 by a group of First Team Soldiers participating in the New Guinea Campaign of World War II and was in the Admiralty Islands.

According to the association’s website, the establishment of the 1st Cavalry Division Association is for Soldiers and veterans to preserve old friendships and conduct periodic reunions.

For more information about the 1st Cavalry Division Association visit their website at www.1cda.org.



Thomas Quigley, a native of Saint Petersburg, Fla. and 1st Cavalry Division Veteran since 1967, is the first to depart the bus that brought veterans to the 1st Cavalry Division Museum during the 1st Cavalry Division Association 66th Annual Reunion, June 5 to 9. (Photo by Sgt. Omar Estrada, 3rd BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.)

1CDA reunion golf tournament



(LEFT) Jesse Crimm (center) tees off at the Clear Creek Golf Course during the 1st Cavalry Division Reunion at Fort Hood, Texas, June 5. Crimm served with the 8th Engineers during the Vietnam War from 1970 to 1971. (Photo by Capt. John Farmer, 41st Fires Brigade Public Affairs).



Col. Robert Akam, the 1st Cavalry Division chief of staff, aims for the green during the 1st Cavalry Division Association reunion golf tournament at the Clear Creek Golf Course on Fort Hood, Texas, June 5. His golf partner, Chief Warrant Officer 5 (retired) Scott Wilson (left) served with the 1st Cavalry Division from '77-'78, '80-'82, '97-'03 and '06-'08. The 1st Cavalry Division Association reunion brings in troopers from every era of the First Team’s history so they can spend time with old friends and pay homage to those who came before. (Photo by Capt. John Farmer, 41st Fires Brigade Public Affairs).



Ken McAteer (left), Jack "Cactus Jack" Craigen (center) and Steve Schroeder, pose for a photo during the 1st Cavalry Division Association reunion golf tournament at the Clear Creek Golf Course on Fort Hood, Texas, June 5. These men served together in the same squad during the Vietnam War with Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment. (Photo by Capt. John Farmer, 41st Fires Brigade Public Affairs).

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fore realizing I needed to find a way to carry on and do something in Blake's memory that could also help parents who are experiencing this same pain."

In efforts to self-heal, Harris joined the Denver chapter of the Patriot Guard Riders in March 2007, where he has made a commitment to attend every military funeral in the local area to show his support.

"I'm still going through rough times myself, but talking to families and providing support to others really seems to be therapeutic not only to

them, but to myself as well," Harris said. "I even created a patch that says 'All gave some, my son/daughter gave all' that I pass out to the parents at funerals."

Harris attended the 1st Cav. Div. Association's 66th Annual Reunion, where he had the opportunity to visit Soldiers in Blake's old unit.

"It was a phenomenal experience," Harris said. "Everyone was very professional and I had the opportunity to interact with several Soldiers ... It made my day to know members and leadership of his old unit still remember him and his fellow fallen warriors."



Sgt. Blake A. Harris mounts a M240 machine gun on the turret of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle to provide security outside of Baghdad in 2005. Harris died while providing support as part of a security detail to VIPs, much like his dad before him did countless times with the 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam. (Courtesy Photo, 1st ACB Public Affairs, 1st Cav. Division)



1st Cav Association hosts memorial

Members of the 1st Cavalry Division Association bow their heads in remembrance of fallen Troops during a memorial ceremony held at the 1st Cav. Div. Memorial Chapel June 9 at Fort Hood, Texas. The ceremony took place during the association's 66th annual reunion that featured events such as modern and historical military vehicle and weapon displays, Gatling gun demonstrations and museum tours. (Photo by Sgt. Christopher A. Calvert, 1st ACB PAO)

The Spirit of the Cav



Sgt. Jason Cray (right), an engineer assigned to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, explains some detail about the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle to Rick Ellison an Emory, Texas native. (Photo by Sgt. Omar Estrada, 3rd BCT PAO)



(RIGHT) Patrick Murphy, a Carpinteria, Calif. native and 1st Cavalry Division veteran since 1970, receives a tour June 7, along with his Family, through the Division horse stables during the 1st Cavalry Division Association 66th Annual Reunion. (Photo by Sgt. Omar Estrada, 3rd BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.)



Tommy D. Guinn, 1st Cavalry veteran since 1970, listens to Staff Sgt. Ratka, a 1st Cav. Div. Trooper, as he explains some of the fire-power of the Multi-Launch Rocket System during the 1st Cavalry Division Association 66th Annual Reunion, June 7. (Photo by Sgt. Omar Estrada, 3rd BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div.)