

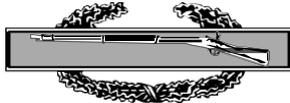
JUMPING MUSTANG BUGLE

1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Division

March 2019



8th Cavalry
Regiment



Volume 38

Issue Number 1

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I hope all of you had a Merry Christmas and moving into a safe New Year. Spring is just around the corner, so before long the grass will need to be mowed.

As I take over the president job, I would like to say a big thank you to Harvey Auger for his leadership and hard work these last three years as President, also for his time spent being the Master of Ceremonies of the Memorial Dinners. Thanks, also, to Jim and Jane Knafel for all they do to keep our group sailing along smoothly. Thanks, also, to Wayne Volk for volunteering to become Vice President. I know he will do a great job.

Thanks to Allen and Sharon Jacobsen for hosting the 38th reunion in Colorado Springs. It was a great reunion. I'm looking forward to this year's reunion in Anaheim, California—close to Disneyland. Mike and Ginger Price are already working hard to make it a memorable reunion. Hope you all will make plans to be in California in September. Reunions have been a "healing" event for me and other attendees.

Thanks also to all of you who attend our conventions. They couldn't be done without all of you!!! For those of you who have never been, please consider attending the next one in California or the one for 2020 in

Gettysburg, PA.

I heard this saying a couple of months ago: You die twice—once when you leave your physical body and the second is when your name is never spoken. I encourage all of you to keep your buddies alive by telling others about them. I feel a good way is to use the Bugle—write a memorial; share an experience; or just honor them.

I would like to honor one of my sergeants, Sgt. Thomas Grant. When I got to his platoon, he must have seen that I needed a lot of work if I was going to survive. He took me under his wing and guided me on how to be a good soldier. He died December 15, 1967. I learned later that he was a POW in Korea. I thank him every day.

I encourage all of you to have an Agent Orange Healthy Exam. Ask your VA about it, if you have not already had this exam.

I leave you with a quote from John Wayne: Courage is being scared to death and still saddling up any way.

Honor and Courage

**Rick Wagner
President**

JUNE 2019 EDITION OF THE BUGLE

Did you have an incident happen to you in Vietnam that you would like to share with the other members of the Jumping Mustangs? Or, do you have some information that would be of benefit or interest to the membership? The Bugle is published each quarter to provide all members with articles and information, as well as activities. I strongly encourage each of you to send articles or information to me that can be published in the June 2019 editions of the newsletter.

Please submit your articles or information to be included in the March Bugle to me no later than May 17, 2019. Thank you for your involvement.

Any views expressed are those of the individual who wrote them, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Jumping Mustangs. Articles about memories of events and experiences are not checked for accuracy. The editor can make changes to articles so they are more readable, remove negative remarks about individuals, or to remove vulgar or offensive language.

Jerry Prater

OLD MEMBER NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

Frank Flores franknpat01@me.com

TAPS

Charles Schell C Company 3-68 to 3-69, passed away December 21, 2018

If you know of a member of the Jumping Mustangs that has passed away, please notify Jim Knafel at jknafel@gmail.com or Roger Talmadge at rogertalmadge@cox.net as soon as possible.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership dues for the Jumping Mustangs are \$10.00 per year, payable at the date of the annual reunion. The dues paid at the 2018 reunion in Colorado Springs were for the year 2019. If you have not paid your 2019 dues, you can use the reunion pay sheet because the address to where the payment is to be mailed is printed on the pay sheet.

If you have not paid your dues each year, we ask that you pay the \$10.00 for each year in which you have not made payment. Membership dues are very reasonable, and they do help offset a lot of the expenses incurred as the result of the Jumping Mustangs activities.

Thank you for your membership, and thank you for keeping your dues current.

Jerry Prater

WITNESS TO WAR FOUNDATION

The Witness to War Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization from Atlanta, GA that is dedicated to preserving the oral histories of combat veterans and is planning to attend this year's 72nd Annual Reunion in Killeen, TX, 5-9 June 2019, to help you capture your stories for future generations. These interviews are on video, last around an hour, and focus on your personal stories the way you want them told. You will receive 3 DVD copies of the unedited interview mailed to you in addition to a copy being donated to the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project. For more information or to sign up for an interview, contact their interviewer Martin Madert at Martin@WitnessToWar.org or 770-628-0024, or visit www.WitnessToWar.org to see their work (search 1st Cavalry Division as well!).

Dara C. Wydler

RICHARD FERRALEZ

My twin brother Richard Ferralez, was with D Company 1/8 Cavalry. Richard was killed on 26 May 1968 in the Quang Tri Province. I would love to meet someone who knew Richard, and was with him at that time. Some years back I was in touch with my brother's Sergeant, who was with him when he died. He lived in Oklahoma. It would be great if I could meet him in person.

Please contact Albert Ferralez at 909-986-0085, or ferralezalbert@yahoo.com

LAST NIGHT IN THE FIELD

On 16 March 1967 I was Acting Company Commander of Bravo Company 1/8 Cav. Captain Raul Villaronga was the C.O., but was on R&R. We were providing perimeter security for the 1/8 HQs (Forward) and a battery of 105s from the 2/19th Artillery on LZ Sand, located on a small ridge that ran west to east from the mountains that separated the An Lao Valley from the Bong Son Plain. Early that morning I was called to Battalion and was briefed on our mission for that day. Bravo was to conduct an air assault from LZ Sand into the mountains to our West and from there conduct a sweep to the South for approximately three kilometers before returning to the Bong Song Plain south of Sand where we would establish an NDP (Night Defensive Position), pending orders for the next day. The air assault went as planned and we lifted off around 0900 hours and headed to the mountains above and west of the LZ. The landing went without incident and once all platoons were on the ground we began moving south. Progress was slow as we moved through the triple canopy jungle which covered the mountains, but visibility was fair and at times we could see the Bong Son Plains below. Around 1300 hours we observed and heard a tremendous explosion several kilometers away in the direction of the South China Sea. Monitoring the command net we heard that a recon unit, not further identified, had been hit by a command detonated mine, believed to be a 500 pound bomb. The Platoon Leader and his RTO were KIA while several others were wounded.

Around 1500 hours the point platoon reported they observed what appeared to be a platoon size unit of enemy soldiers in the open moving towards the mountains to our south. I and Lt Neal Laughy, the Artillery Forward Observer (FO), and his RTO quickly moved forward and also observed the enemy force. Laughy called for fire support, but was told there was none available at that moment. The enemy quickly vanished into the thick vegetation at the foot of the mountains, but we now knew there were NVA/VC in the area where we were to set up our NDP for the night. It was also evident we had been spotted as we moved down the ridge toward the plain below, not a comforting thought.

Once out of the mountains, the Company conducted a thorough search of the area where we had seen the enemy unit with no luck; they had just vanished as they did so many times during my tour. We discovered some spider holes and tunnels in hedgerows along, but none showed any signs of recent

activity. Darkness was just starting to set in when I received notification the Battalion CC (Command and Control) Chopper was inbound to pick me up for a briefing at LZ Sand for our next day's mission. I selected an area to establish the NDP and ordered Lt Roger Riffle, the 3rd Platoon Leader to move the company to the area and to dig in and stay alert. I was then picked up and met with the Battalion Staff on Sand where I was given the mission to continue to the east and search several hamlets/villages along the route before turning north back to LZ Sand in the afternoon. Lt. Col. McClure, the Battalion Commander, then asked "aren't you due to DEROS pretty soon, Lieutenant." I responded, "Yes Sir, my DEROS is in a couple of days, but to date I haven't received any orders". He went ballistic exclaiming "Why in the hell are you still in the field." I pointed out Captain Villaronga was back at Base Camp from R&R and would be back ASAP to relieve me. He responded "you will go back to the unit tonight, begin the operation as planned, but you will be out of the field as soon as I get your C.O., and that will be early tomorrow." I nodded in agreement, and probably let out a sigh of relief.

On conclusion of the staff meeting, accompanied by the Battalion Commander and several staff members, we mounted the CC Chopper for the flight back to the Company NDP some three kilometers South of LZ Sand. We lifted off to the East over the Bong Son Plain then swung South before banking and turning to the West toward the Company location. Just as we came out of the bank and as we flew over a Hamlet/Village about a kilometer from the NDP I watched what appeared to be softball size lights in great numbers coming from the ground toward us. I quickly realized we were under heavy fire at time as the crew chief shouted "we're taking fire". The pilot responded "Roger that, I can see it" as he continued toward the Company's position. He descended into the NDP where we were met by 1st SGT Bob Craig, Lt Laughy and several others. As I jumped out the CC lifted off and headed back to Sand while Craig yelled "How in the hell did you make it through all that fire. All we could see from here was a solid sheet of fire and you guys flying right through it. Absolutely amazing you were not shot down". I remember telling him "don't ask me, somebody must have been watching over us". I then turned to the FO and told him to get fire on the village. He did so without delay. The artillery fire was both accurate and deadly. Needless to say we remained on edge the rest of the night expecting an attack on our position at any time, but surprisingly the night passed quietly. Most of the night all I could think of was that helicopter could

have been shot down and all aboard killed on my last night in the field and only days before going home.

At first light we moved east as directed and entered the village, which was heavily damaged by the artillery. Only a few women, children, and older people were still present as we searched the village but we learned from them a large NVA force had been there when we flew over, thought they had been discovered, and therefore opened fire on the helicopter. We also learned the enemy force was preparing to attack LZ Sand, but thinking they had been discovered had quickly withdrawn to the South and West into the surrounding mountains with numerous casualties.

As we again began moving east after searching the village the CC Chopper appeared and, as promised, Col. McClure delivered Captain Villaronga back to take command of the Company. I was ordered on the chopper and I was flown back, not to LZ English as expected, but all the way to An Khe to begin out processing. My tour with the 1st Battalion 8th Cavalry had finally come to a close and in my opinion none too soon. I departed An Khe for Pleiku on 19 March and left the next day on a Big Bird headed for the land of the Big PX.

Bill McCarron

REMEMBERING ROGER ROOT

It was a typical Vietnam morning. I had been in country a short time. As I had taken part in several air assaults and sweeps I didn't think much about the ugliness of war. I had not seen any enemy action yet so I was still a cherry.

We landed on fairly solid ground and all had jumped out of the choppers ok. We took no fire that I knew of, although the gunships and door gunners came in blazing. By the end of my time in country I would know this as our door bell.

Once on the ground and setting up our defenses, the plans were followed to sweep the nearest village. As we moved out we formed a chain of soldiers that created a sense of security for me. I would soon find this false. All seemed to be going well and I was talking with another medic while my fellow soldiers went into the huts and interrogated the locals.

Suddenly the sound of gun fire broke through the air. Everyone immediately took a position, ready to do

whatever was needed. The experience of time in war meant no one needed to be told what to do. I think I was the only guy who had to be told to get down. This would be my first time in a firefight situation. It was determined the fire came from a hooch and our attention turned instantly when someone called out 'medic'. Although this was my first time under fire there seemed to be nothing holding me back from going toward the danger. When I heard 'medic' my mind and body instantly responded as trained. If there was fear inside I didn't feel it right now. I would learn much later that fear comes only when you start to think about what you are about to do.

As the soldier walked and stumbled away from the hooch, we arrived to give what aid necessary. I removed my aid pack from my back and zipped it open, then I opened Roger's shirt. Suddenly I realized I did not have enough stuff in my pack to help. I counted several bullet holes in his chest and abdomen and realized that nothing could be done to save this life. One member of the platoon moved to the location where Roger fell, and was with him as Roger stopped breathing and lost all color. I still have not been able to get that image or memory of that day out of my head.

Roger was pulled back from the hooch and others from our assault team moved in to find the enemy. Memory tells me Roger found and was inspecting a spider hole when he was shot. On this day we had some tanks that were available to our unit and one responded to our request for assistance. Our men were pulled back from the hooch and the tank moved into position. The tank fired three or four rounds in the area where the shots had been fired. This blew the hooch completely away and a body flew into the air in an arch I guess landing in a field or rice paddy.

As I witnessed this I became very confused. I was never told about this part of life. I have struggled with my feelings ever since. For some odd reason I was glad to see that body blown out. Somehow I felt it justified. But my upbringing told me it wasn't right. I think there is a very thin line between sanity and insanity. Sometimes I wonder on which side of the line I live.

I didn't know Roger at that time. I would come to know he had been married just a short time, like I was, and that connected me with Roger. I never knew if he had children. I never knew his wife although I have thought of her often over the years. I love Roger in a way I never knew possible.

Who ever said war changes a person was spot on. Some days are ok. Others are unbearable. The triggers for memories are everywhere. To give up is to dishonor those that were lost. Strength comes from knowing I am not alone in my life struggle. Thank you to my brothers who support, whether or not I know you.

Donald "Doc" Ferguson

A LITTLE HUMOR FROM VIETNAM

Once, when we were working in the Bong Song Crows Foot Region, my platoon was ordered to go into a village at night and search it for Viet Cong. The idea was that we would sneak in, go into each hut to see if there were any men of military age. If so, they were to be treated as the enemy and captured, if possible.

Then they could be interrogated for information on what the enemy was planning.

Around midnight, we moved out of the wood line, and across some rice paddies. As we neared the village, a good bit of noise began on my left front. I ran to the site to find that one of my men had walked up on a Vietnamese who was posted as a sentry to protect the village, but had gone to sleep. He was talking loudly, obviously trying to warn the village. I quickly stuck about four inches of my rifle barrel into his mouth and he immediately understood English command to shut up!! When I pulled my rifle out of his mouth, he shut up and didn't make any more noise the rest of the night.

We tied his hands and stuck a gag in his mouth and took him with us.

One of my soldiers, PFC Joseph Bailey had lost or damaged his eyeglasses, but he did have a pair of prescription sun glasses, which he was wearing on this very night. Remember, it was after midnight!

As we patrolled through he suddenly disappeared! The man next to him ran over to find out what had happened. The Vietnamese made their wells by digging a hole in the ground. They built no barrier around the wells, and Bailey had just walked into the well. It turns out the well was not too deep and we got him out without much trouble. Why the noise we made didn't wake up the whole village still amazes me, but it didn't.

During our search, we only found one Viet Cong besides the sentry we found going in. Sgt Cox walked into the hooch (they rarely had doors) and shined a flashlight on him while he was sleeping.

He rolled out of his bed and picked up a package beside his bed. It turned out to be a couple of uniforms which had been recently washed.

Sgt Cox said: "Sorry Charlie, you are not going anywhere tonight except with us." Apparently he had been expecting to be called out for some mission.

We took our two prisoners out of the village, holed up for the night and sent them out on helicopters the next morning.

With a lot of jokes about Bailey walking into the well!

Bill "Hawk" Hawkinberry

MORTAR PIT

We Viet Nam Vets are reaching the top rung of our life's ladder, memories beginning to fade. Excuse this author for a lack of time and date beyond spring of 1968.

Our adventure begins as a full prep air assault on a mountain just north of the Quang Tri River and further west of LZ Ann in the I Corp. The objective - build a fire base on a piece of real estate much the same as Ann but in reverse. The small peak is facing south, a smaller saddle, to the north. If memory serves, the LZ is to be called White, not to be confused with the one built months later near the Cambodian border.

As our Hueys slowly approached the site, a Sikorski flying crane passes us to drop a blivit full of fuel on the future fire base, the gunships poised to ignite the fuel and burn off the LZ. As it passes, I am thinking "and then we are going to land?"

As it turns out there was no need to worry. Sir Isaac Newton takes over! The blivit hit its target, bounced high to the right doing its best ping-pong ball imitation till it reaches the valley floor below. No one could say BF Goodrich did not build a quality product.

I and my mortar platoon had been assigned to support

Alpha Company's build, occupation and defense of the new fire base.

Upon landing we looked around and decided to occupy the peak, the best spot for us to perform our assignment. We trudged up the small hill. After a survey of the area I assigned where our bunkers were to be built to close the perimeter, linking up with Alpha. We started digging.

We were a new platoon, formed primarily out of Bravo 1/8. At age 20 I was one of the old guys. I had assigned the 1-0 position to a new guy named Cawley, who took his work of supplying us very seriously. His "negotiating" skill somehow brought us a small group of engineers, a back hoe, and PSP (corrugated metal used for landing strips to be used for the roofs of our bunkers!) All at the cost of a couple of cases of beer.

In next to no time we had our bunkers built. We constructed our mortar pits contrary to SOP. While on a fire base we built them up, not into a hole as taught in AIT.

We laid a layer of sand bags on the ground to form a slightly elevated platform for the mortars base, a double thick ring of sand bags to form an 8-10' diameter circle 2' high with a small bunker like structure to store our mortar rounds, covered, with both plastic sheets and several layers of sand bags to keep the ammo dry and safe.

Life was good, we were dug in, snug as bugs in a rug.

Alpha continued building the base, chopping trees and bamboo to cover the overhead on their bunkers before applying sand bags.

Walking down the hill Alpha Company's mortar platoon Sargent approached me. "Are you in charge of those guys on the hill?" "Yes Sergeant", and identified myself.

He told me I had to move my positions. He ordered me to move my mortars to be underground and on a defilade. He did not say to where. I said no Sergeant. To make this short the standard tale of my ass being grass and him being a lawn mower ensued. The fire in his eyes built up and "you're going to LBJ" came next.

I responded again with, "no Sergeant I am not moving." I was then ordered to stand in place. He left and returned with Alpha's Captain. The Captain went directly to court martial mode. I again said no, explaining to the Captain that my positions were dug

and under cover, my fields of fire cleared, my mortars are up and the ammo is under cover. The Captain turned and directed the salivating Sergeant to fetch the Colonel.

After a few tense minutes of receiving additional threats, the Colonel came walking up to us. "Sargent Shuttleworth, what seems to be the problem" the Colonel asked? The Captain seemed surprised the Colonel knew me.

"Well sir" I replied, "When we landed, I chose where my platoon could provide the most support for this base - on the hill. We have our positions dug, fields of fire cleared, claymores out, mortar pits constructed to serve as a fallback position on the hill should it be necessary and our mortar rounds under cover." The colonel considered this for a second and nodded his head.

Turning to the Captain and his Staff Sargent, the Colonel said to them that they could learn a lot from the Sergeant, he has been here a lot longer than you. With that we both left, leaving behind a stunned Captain and a very angry Staff Sargent.

Fast forward about a week. It has been raining hard for 2 days and a typhoon is close by, it is 0 dark thirty and the radio crackles to life. TOC is calling for a Medivac. A bunker has collapsed from the rain-soaked sand bags, and there are two injured. One man has a fractured pelvis and the other is in critical condition with a fractured skull.

The field hospital tells TOC that the medivac will not fly unless illumination can be provided to light up the LZ. My RTO, Chick Osborn and I look at each other in disbelief. Some loony pilot is going to come out in Huey? It is gusting past 50 kts, visibility in the intermittent rain squalls is iffy at best! TOC then calls Birth Control, our artillery unit both on the LZ and back at LZ Ann. Birth Control responds that they cannot fire, the rain and mud have rendered their guns unusable. TOC asks Alpha Company if its mortar platoon can fire. They say they cannot, their tubes are under water.

I take the hand set from Chick. "Pig Iron this is Ramrod 4-5, we will fire, guns up."

We hustle out of our bunker and up to the mortar. Chick rounds up Shervy and a couple of the guys. Water is streaming out of the mortar emplacement through the plastic shipping tubes we had installed as drains in its walls.

Luck is on our side, it is blowing like snot with intermittent rain but our ammo bunker is to windward so the distance from our ammo prep to the mouth of the tube is short, helping to keeping the propellant charges dry. Shervy arrives and starts prepping the illumination rounds. The request for a first round comes in a few minutes. Someone says to me these pilots really have big ones!

We peer into the darkness and see only black, no moon at all. We look and listen for the chopper – nothing! The command comes, “Fire when ready”. The round burst from the tube. Our tube is at about a 45-degree angle. The round goes up, by the time it ignites it has blown almost overhead! Its burst illuminating our position as it swiftly blows past us towards the chopper!

We adjust the tube down to about 20 degrees, slightly to the side to avoid the choppers approach. At this angle we have to throw the round into the tube with enough force to insure it ignites.

It now takes the round about 8 seconds travel out ignite and blow back past us. After about a dozen rounds, we receive a cease fire from the chopper.

We break out the flashlights.

We can now see them battling the headwinds as they attempt to reach us. The pilot struggling to maintain position in the gusting wind. His hover is more like a drive by to our right. We duck down, stories of LZ Quick fresh in our minds. The injured are quickly loaded and just as quick they are gone! What balls!

High fives all around. Felt wonderful to know we had helped to possibly save a life.

I don't think it was the next day, perhaps the day after, after the rain finally stopped, I walked down the hill.

Alpha's mortars were on the side of the ridge dug into the defilade, the tubes and pits, completely filled with water.

The sad part of this story is that Alpha's mortar platoon Sergeant gave me a look that should have struck me dead.

Let's be clear, my crew and I are not the heroes of this story. We just did our jobs.

The heroes are the Medivac crew who risked their

lives responding to the call of injured brothers. Men who had never trained to fly in a typhoon, yet accepted the risk without question.

The heroes here are the soldiers that took me under their wings when I arrived, taught me their hard-learned lessons. Randy Breedlove, my first platoon Sergeant, Stan Rudiwick and Miller who kept me straight, taught me” how to act”. Lt. Larious who knew how to stand his ground. Thanks guys.

Ed Shuttleworth

2019 REUNION – ANAHEIM CA

The 2019 Jumping Mustang reunion will be September 4 to September 8 at the Sheraton Park Hotel at Anaheim Resort in Anaheim, CA. If you fly, John Wayne is the closest airport, approximately 20 minutes from the hotel. No shuttles are available to the hotel from any airport, but you can use Uber or Lyft transportation services. The cost of this service from John Wayne Airport will be a little less than \$20.00. Please be reminded that you will be charged \$12.00 per day to park a vehicle at the hotel.

Mike Price will provide information about many of the activities available in and around the Anaheim area in the next two editions of the Bugle. The attached reunion pay sheet provides the contact information and cost of the hotel.

**Mike Price
and
Jerry Prater**

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Jumping Mustang President – Rick Wagner, 13950 Lake Mahogany Blvd. #1212, Fort Myers, FL 33907; email bwagner@wyoming.com or phone 239-337-2557.

Jumping Mustang Treasurer - Jim Knafel, 5510 East, 500 South, Columbia City, IN 46725; email jkknafel@gmail.com or phone 260-244-3864.

Bugle Editor - Jerry Prater. 143 Killarney Lake Road, Ardmore, OK 73401; email jerryprater1018@yahoo.com; or phone 214-263- 4567.

**JUMPING MUSTANG
34th ANNUAL REUNION**

ANAHEIM CA SEPT 4 TO SEPT 8, 2019

Sign up Now for the 34th Annual Reunion. Make your Registration Fees Payable to the 'Jumping Mustangs.' Mail to James Knafel, 5510 E. 500 South, Columbia City, IN 46725. Be sure to include the number and names of those in your party. Please DO NOT SEND ANY after August 10th as Jim Knafel will be in-route. Bring it with you to the Reunion. **If you are not attending, please use this page to send your annual dues to Jim.**

For Hotel Reservations, Call Sheraton Park Hotel at Anaheim Resort at 714-750-1811 between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm Pacific Time. In order to get the special rate, just tell the reservationist you are with the Jumping Mustangs. Daily room rates are \$139 plus tax, which includes 2 breakfast buffets per room per day. The deadline for the reservations is August 7, and this price is valid from 25 Aug thru 12 Sept if rooms and rates are available. There is a \$12.00 parking fee per day. The Hotel address is 1855 South Harbor Blvd Anaheim CA 92802

DUES FOR 2019 YEAR (MBRS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS ONLY) @ \$10. \$ _____

ICEBREAKER (Thursday, Sept 5)

Number attending _____ @ \$35 ea \$ _____

ENTERTAINMENT NIGHT (Friday, Sept 6)

Number attending _____ @ \$35 ea \$ _____

MEMORIAL DINNER (Saturday, Sept 7)

Number attending _____ @ \$35 ea \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT SUBMITTED: Renew Membership even if not attending. \$ _____

NAME OF MEMBER AND GUEST(s) for name tag preparation: _____

Assigned to Company _____ 1st of 8th during the following years: _____

If this is your first Jumping Mustang Reunion, check here _____

Questions to Mike or Ginger Price at 949-903-3335, or email b68mustangs@yahoo.com