



ALPHA TROOP ASSOCIATION

January 2026 NEWSLETTER



Greetings ALPHA TROOPERS,

I hope that everyone is doing well and enjoying the season.

I want to bring you up to date as to what the Board of Directors and the Officers have been working on for next year. If you are not aware of a recent decision by the Army concerning the 2/17th, they are Casing the Colors in May of 2026 at Ft. Campbell, KY. More on this will be on our website, Facebook Page, and in this newsletter. There is going to be a special surprise for this Celebration, and you will not want to miss this.

The next Reunion will be in Clarksville in May 2026 in conjunction with this celebration. This one is looking like it will be the last one for Alpha Troop, as we (from the Vietnam era) are getting on up in years and seem to be slowing down. After all, we are in our mid 70s and 80s. We would love to have some of the younger troopers step in and fill the leadership roles and keep this Association moving forward.

On a lighter note. I was talking with a friend of mine from our days in high school, (57 years ago). As we talked about old times, our kids, and grandkids, our conversation went to our times we were in the Army and Vietnam. We lost touch with each other when we got drafted. When he was sent to Vietnam, he was assigned to F Troop, 8th Cav, 16th Aviation Group, of the 123rd Aviation Group, based in Chu Li. When the Lam San 719 operation began in early 1971, his unit was brought up to Quang Tri as Air Cav Support. Here we were, two school buddies just across the road from each other and had no clue. We looked at each other as if to say, there we were, 5000 miles from home and wound up in the same place and had no clue about it. We laughed and said, "what were the odds" that that would happen.

I remember there were a LOT of aircraft and troops there for a few weeks. I would have loved to see a face from home at that time. Even though I was in aircraft maintenance we knew what was going on at Khe Sanh. Just a short story from my time there.

I want to encourage everyone to attend the reunion and let's make this the best one we've ever had. Come and be a part of this GREAT ASSOCIATION and let's represent "A" TROOP as our motto says, 'OUT FRONT'.

Jack Roberson, Chairman

From the Prez - Finally.....Hello everyone. We hope you had a great holiday season. Your Alpha Troop Association directors and officers, along with a handful of core members, have been busy.

We have identified a time and place for the 2026 reunion, so you can start making your plans. As you are well aware, we are billing this as our last “official” reunion, unless we can locate younger Alpha Troopers to jump in and actively run the Association (or at least the reunions). However, smaller reunions may certainly be organized and regionalized if a bunch of us want to get together in the future.

This does not necessarily mean the end of our Association. Current plans are to maintain the website, Facebook page, membership database, and newsletter. So, here we go.....

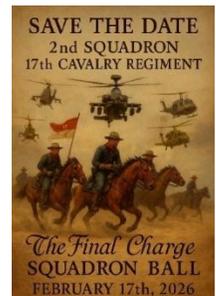
Glen Venno, President

Active Unit – The active Unit returned from Kuwait throughout October and began making plans associated with the Army wide Air Cav inactivation/ deactivation effort. While the future plans for the Apaches and drones have not been disclosed, various career paths and early out options are being developed for our active Troopers, on a case-by-case basis.

As most of you are likely aware, per direction from the DoD, the 101st Airborne will be deactivating the 2/17th Cav on May 16th, 2026. Other Air Cav Units have already been deactivated, and the remaining Units are scheduled to be deactivated by the end of 2026.

As you can imagine, the scheduling of the May 15th “Casing of Colors” ceremony had a major impact on deciding when to hold our reunion. We have been invited to attend both events (“Final Charge” and “Casing of Colors”) associated with the deactivation of our Unit.

Final Charge - The formal “Final Charge” Ball, is being held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at the Silo Event Center, Hopkinsville, KY. Due to its popularity, tickets are available on a “wait list” basis only, they are \$70 per person and you will need to contact the current CO, CPT Megan Kinsey to register. You can do so by calling her at (931)735-1572 or emailing her at Megan.R.Kinsey.mil@Army.mil. Just remember, this is a formal event. Active-duty Troopers will be wearing their dress uniforms w/Cav hats, veterans can wear whatever dress uniforms they deem appropriate and civilians are asked to wear a conservative suit/tie or tux. The event is supposed to begin at 5pm and end by 10pm.



Casing of Colors - The “Casing of Colors” ceremony, is planned for Friday, May 15, 2026, at Saber Field, Fort Campbell, KY. Association members have been invited to attend the ceremony, which is currently scheduled to consume not more than two hours. While we are all invited, so are the alumni of all the other Troops. There is a limit to how much space can be dedicated for attendees, so we need to know how many of our members plan to attend and get that information to the organizers, ASAP (see attached reunion registration form).

The ceremony is expected to consist of a speaker podium/stage, active-duty personnel formation, and a backdrop of aircraft (see next **GoE** article).

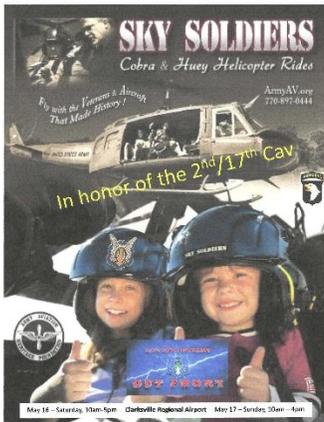
In addition, based on the information we have, the “**Week of Eagles**” is also to begin on May 15th, so there should be a lot of activities going on throughout the post and surrounding area during the subsequent days. And, for those of you who are members of the **101st Airborne Division (alumni) Association**, they indicate that they will be holding their reunion, May 20 - 23.

GoE - As a salute to the 2/17th, your Association has taken the initiative of working with the active-duty Squadron and A Troop Command to enhance the ceremony by bringing in vehicles/aircraft that represent a timeline (of sorts) of the equipment rode, maintained and supported since Vietnam. We plan to fly in a static display Vietnam veteran Cobra for the “Final Charge” and more aircraft/vehicles for the “Casing of Colors” ceremony. For lack of a better term, we are calling this project the “Gathering of Eagles” (GoE).

For the May 15th ceremony, we are planning to have a M151A “jeep” to represent our initial deployment to Vietnam, while the CONUS Unit was converting to an “Air” Cav Unit, back at Campbell. Then, we plan to have an OH-6 Cayuse, UH-1 Iroquois (Huey), and AH-1 Cobra. Additionally, we are expecting an OH-58 to represent the post-Vietnam era up through the early Gulf War deployment of Kiowa Warriors. Hopefully, the active-duty Command can supply a UH-60 Blackhawk as well as the AH-64 Apache. Command hopes to line the jeep and aircraft on the tarmac, behind the Troop formation. This should be pretty impressive and represent a timeline of the equipment we lived and worked with.



After the ceremony, the OH-6 and OH-58 are expected to retire to the Clarksville Regional Airport (Outlaw Field) as static displays for us and the general public to view. Additionally, the Huey and Cobra will relocate to Outlaw Field and offer rides to the public throughout the weekend.



The Huey is a Vietnam veteran also. Want to take one last ride in a Huey? The cost of a Huey ride is expected to be around \$125 per person. We are attempting to negotiate a discount. Ten at a time can go aloft. The flight itself is approximately 10 minutes long, doors wide open, with some “tactical” maneuvers will be executed. Riders must be able to climb on board and disembark with minimal assistance, using a 2 step, step ladder.

Wanna ride a Snake? She is also a combat vet. Since the Cobra can accommodate only one rider (in the front seat) and it is the only ex-military attack helicopter that is FAA authorized to offer rides to the public, it is kinda pricey. But it may be the only time we have the opportunity. Based on 2026 pricing, it will likely cost somewhere around \$800-\$850. Agan, we are attempting to negotiate at discount.

However, you will experience tactical maneuvers, like RTTs (Returns To Target) and other Snake “movements”, for about 20 minutes. As you can imagine, riders must be able to climb up the side of the Cobra (ammo bay door and attached footrest) and deplane, with minimal assistance. Of course, as you likely remember, the front is quite narrow, so we gotta be able to squeeze in there.

Getting all of these aircraft to (and from) Fort Campbell (for two separate events), as you can imagine, represents a significant financial commitment. The Association has limited funds, so we have several members beating the bushes for sponsors and donations. Donations are coming in. We have reached out to the Banshee and Condor alumni for additional support, and their donations are also coming in. If you are in the position where a donation for this effort is within your means, please donate what you can. You can send Keith a check or make a donation via Zelle, if you know what that is and how to use it. If you have an account with a Bank that supports Zelle transactions, the phone number to use is Keith's (325 518 2927).

Reunion – We have made arrangements to hold the reunion at the Hiton Garden Inn, in Clarksville. The official dates of the reunion are May 13 - 17, 2026. Please fill out and return the attached registration form by March 15, 2026, so we can make meal and transportation arrangements. Hotel reservations can be made at your discretion, but we only have a limited number of rooms set aside as our “block”. Since the active-duty Troops’ relatives/friends and all alumni groups may also be looking for rooms, the earlier the better. We suggest you make hotel reservations immediately if you think you may be attending. When making reservations use code **90J**, if requested. The single King or double Queen room rate is \$115 (plus taxes, approx. \$138.30/night) per night and the deadline for the block rate is April 22, 2026.

The reunion is expected to follow previous protocol regarding a banquet dinner, business meeting, and memorial service. Since we are expecting to attend the “Casing of Colors” ceremony on Friday, we will only offer one other tour, to the Tennessee Wings of Liberty Museum in Clarksville. With this being our last “official” reunion, additional free time is factored in so we can sit and chat, play poker and generally socialize.



Bogart Memorial Fund - If you need financial assistance in attending the reunion, the Bogart Memorial Fund is available. Just a reminder, the Bogart Memorial Fund was amended to authorize a caregiver to attend a reunion with a member. Contact Keith Reed (325) 518-2927 for assistance.

Fiddlers Green - Since the previous Newsletter, the Association has been notified of the passing of our fellow Trooper, who went to Fiddler’s Green.

<u>First & Last</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Platoon</u>	<u>In A/2/17</u>
Llewellyn Charbonneau	November 11, 2025	332 nd	68-69
Lionel Ingram	March 7, 2025	TrpHQ	69-70
Eddy Joiner	October 26, 2025	Scouts	69-70
Richard Malboeuf	November 5, 2020	Scouts	71-72
Glenn Potter	August 7, 2015	Maint	71-72
William Sellers	March 1, 2021	332 nd	68-69
Rudy Smith	April 3, 2025	Grnd	65-65

A Blast from the Past – LTC Rider; Lam Son 719



THE AIR CAVALRY

Lieutenant Colonel Archie A. Rider, commanding officer of the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, had these comments on his unit's participation in this operation.

"During Lam Son 719 the Cav's job was primarily one of reconnaissance during the early phases of the operation, and later one of security. Put simply, we had to find and fight NVA forces which might have opposed the ARVN during their offensive.

"At this time we were operating in a very sophisticated antiaircraft environment, up against an enemy who, rather than running, was seeking to initiate contact just as we were. After some adjustments we were able to effectively carry out our missions in spite of the stiff resistance.

"This ability to quickly adjust to any situation is typical of the airmobility concept. Whatever the environment, the job of finding and fighting the enemy remains basically the same. To do this job, adaptability and the delivery of massive firepower in a short period of time are of vital importance."



Col. Archie A. Rider (LTC, as CO of 2/17th Cav, Mar-Oct. '71) waits for us at Fiddlers' Green, having passed away in 1998. The colorful and aggressive CO retired in 1985 with 30 years' service. After his 4th tour in RVN, he spent most of the '70's at the Pentagon, then as Prof. of Military Science and head of the University's ROTC department at Jacksonville State University in Alabama from June '80 - October '84 when he reported as Special Assistant to the Commanding General of the Third ROTC Region.

An Army review board found that LTC Rider (as well as his XO, Maj. Dick Albrecht) was unjustly relieved of command in late Oct. '71 following a lengthy & acrimonious relationship with a general officer in Divisional command to whom LTC Rider eventually found himself reporting. Various issues, some preceding this direct reporting relationship, included but were not limited to, the following: (1.) LTC Rider's principled refusal to withdraw from a forward position in mid-operation which he had been granted authority to occupy, when such action would have placed at unacceptable risk to the lives of ~200 men. (2.) His respectfully declining of a request (then, an order), to recover bodies from a downed aircraft in Laos where he (but not the officer responsible for the aircraft's presence there) had the authority to operate, but when such action would have directly conflicted with directions from higher authority NOT to mount operations for the recovery of bodies or aircraft across the border. (3.) His refusal to replace his XO (Maj. Albrecht) for unjustifiable reasons. LTC Rider and Maj. Albrecht were shipped out virtually overnight, an action that so angered his troops that Maj. Langley Chavis (acting CO & successor XO) was advised to visit & pre-empt D Troop (the aero-rifle ground troop) who were "saddling up" for an unspecified action with consequences that no one could foresee.

LTC Rider spent the next 6 years appealing to Army Review (Corrections) Boards. Testimony from numerous associates and participants in some of the actions leading up to his relief, including Maj. Albrecht, Maj. Langley Chavis & ARVN Maj. Doan (CO of the Hoc Bao), among others, convinced the Board and LTC Rider was granted 6 years back pay and grade and the disciplinary action expunged from the record. Maj. Albrecht was also vindicated. The general officer involved retired very shortly thereafter. Though vindicated, the episode probably deprived Col. Rider of attendance at the War College & very likely, a star. He never had a chance to claim the 2/17th Cav patch he commissioned at Camp Eagle, featured on this page.

Many thanks to the sources for this update, which include telephone &/or email interviews with Maj. Langley Chavis (ret.)-1999, Maj. Dick Albrecht (ret.)-2003 and most particularly, Regina Rider Estes (devoted daughter, who had the foresight to retain transcripts and a recorded oral history) 2002-03, without whom this brief bio would not have been possible.

Huey 661 - As some of you Alpha Troopers already know, I have found my Huey after all these years. It currently resides in the American Flight Museum, Topeka, KS. It is being restored for static display at this time, but it is a slow process which depends on volunteers and funding as donations are received. It is now in the primer stage for painting its original color (our favorite olive drab). They are looking for a trailer to make it easier to move in and out of the hangar to facilitate working on it.

A brief history of UH-1H 67-17661: Alpha Troop originally received six Hueys in October, 1968. I was assigned as Crew Chief to 67-17661 and remained with that bird through training at Ft Campbell until I DROS'd from Vietnam in August, 1969. She was a great helicopter and suffered a few injuries during my tenure; but recovered and went on to further service after Vietnam.



Briefly:

- From March 1971 to December 1971, served on loan to the University of Michigan for Naval Research.
- From January 1972 to December 1975, served with the 421st Medical Co in Germany.
- In July 1996 she returned to the USA at Mather Field for storage.
- She was rescued from that bone yard by the museum where she now resides.



Many of the Blues troops rode in 661 during our Ft Campbell training days and into Vietnam. You probably won't recall the tail numbers of the birds you flew in, but I remember the faces of a number of you who rode with me. Pilots who flew 661 included Keith Reed, Mark Stevens, Roy Dowdy, and Lou Herrick (RIP). Others flew her too, but the names have faded for me with the passage of time.

To honor her service, I am asking for donations to help restore 661 to her original glory. All donations should go directly to the AMERICAN FLIGHT MUSEUM 6930 Se Ross St, Topeka, KS 66619-1364 C/O Museum President Robert Rice. At this time, the best method for donations is by check, or via PayPal on the museum website, donation link.

I will not receive any info regarding your donations. ** Please indicate on your donation that it is specifically for Huey 661 restoration. Thanks in advance, Ron Morse Crew Chief, 67-17661 1968-69 (760) 533-8744 if you have any questions; sgtmorse@sbcglobal.net

Leadership – As per our By-Laws, we will be electing another Board member for the Board of Directors at our reunion. All Officer positions will also be open. So, if you are willing and able, be sure to throw your hat in the ring (see the registration form).

Directors and Officers

Chairman

A. Jack Roberson
1521 Forest Ridge Drive
Stanley, NC 28164
704-502-8172
jjackroberson@aol.com

President

Glen Veno
6397 Kinyon Drive
Brighton, MI 48116
810-599-9999
gveno36@comcast.net

Director

Gilbert M. Dickson
206 Barbee Blvd
Oak Island, NC 28465
910-818-5180
gdickson5342@gmail.com

Vice-President

Vacant

Director

Joseph Repya
14231 Moonlit Way
Estero, FL 33928
612-270-4443
jrepya@aol.com

Secretary

Vacant (currently Roberson)

Newsletter

Vacant (currently Reed, Doerr & Veno)

Website

Doug Doerr
1719 10th Street North
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
904-509-2814
DDoerr4UF@aol.com

Treasurer

Nathan Keith Reed
209 Ruger Street
Tuscola, TX 79562
325-518-2927
nkreed30@gmail.com

Reunion Coordinator

Vacant

Asst Treasurer

Gregory Hale
2672 Folsom Road
Mims, FL 32754
321-271-4502
gshale1970@gmail.com

Dues - Keep in mind that the Association dues are for the calendar year. In January 2026, dues are payable again. If your membership card contains the year 2025 or earlier, dues are payable for 2026. If you do not have a membership card, please become an active member by paying dues. There has been no increase in dues at \$25.00 per calendar year. The Association needs your support. The address is:

Alpha Troop Association
c/o Keith Reed, Treasurer
209 Ruger St
Tuscola, TX 79562-3917

The check should be payable to Alpha Troop Association. If you have any questions about dues, contact Keith. His cell phone number is 325 518-2927. His email is nkreed30@gmail.com. With increases in postage, it would really help to notify the Association of your correct address and contact information.

Reunion registration form (next page)

Send the following form & CHECK (payable to "**Alpha Troop Association**") for the total amount to:

Alpha Troop Association
c/o Keith Reed
209 Ruger St, Tuscola, TX 79562

Contacts: Glen Veno – 810 599 9999
Jack Roberson – 704 502 8172
Keith Reed – 325 518 2927

Refund Policy:

Cancellation before April 1st, 2026 will receive a full refund, minus \$15.00 processing fee. There will be no refunds after that date. All tours must have a minimum number of people (50) per tour. If you register for a tour and do not attend, you will NOT receive a refund. You will receive a confirmation letter detailing your selection within 7-10 days of us receiving the registration form.

You can use this QR image to go directly to our Hilton Garden Inn room reservation webpage. Just hold your cellphone over it, as if you were taking a picture...but do not take an actual picture.



Submit this reservation form as soon as possible, so we can make appropriate plans for the Hooch, tours, etc.
 Make your Hilton Garden Inn hotel reservations today, at 931 647 1096 (code: 90J).

REGISTRATION

**Hotel reservation
 deadline April 22nd**

**Alpha Troop 2/17 Cavalry Reunion – Clarksville, TN
 May 13th – May 17th, 2026**

**Reunion registration
 deadline Mar 15th**

This name will be used on your name badge(s):

First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Spouse _____ Guest(s) _____
 Address _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
 Cell Phone _____ Email _____
 Years in Alpha Troop: from _____ to _____

Number of Persons X Cost per person = Total Cost

Wed – sign in, meet & greet
 Thr - #1 Tennessee Wings of Liberty Museum w/transportation _____ @ \$20.00 = _____
 Fri – #2 Squadron 2nd/17th “Casing of Colors” w/ transportation _____ @ \$20.00 = _____
 Fri – #3 In Hooch pizza party _____ @ \$15.00 = _____
 Fri – Memorial service _____
 Sat – Business meeting _____
 Sat - #4 Hooch Deli buffet lunch _____ @ \$20.00 = _____
 Sat / Sun – optional helicopter displays & rides (no transport planned to/from Outlaw Field – Clarksville Regional Airport)
 Huey ~\$125 per person (for planning purposes, # of riders interested, no commitment reqd) _____
 Cobra ~\$850 per person (for planning purposes, # of riders interested, no commitment reqd) _____
 Sat – #5 Buffet banquet dinner _____ @ \$50.00 = _____
 Dinner preference: Ribeye _____ Baked Chicken _____ Grilled Salmon _____
 Sun – Farewells

I would be interested in serving as Board member ___ President ___ Vice President ___ Secretary ___
 Treasurer ___ Assistant Treasurer ___ Newsletter editor ___

Registration (includes breakfast coupons, limited Hooch snacks, processing fees, no booze/beer)
 Each attendee must pay this fee _____ @ \$30.00 = _____
 Annual membership Pay forward _____ years @ \$25.00 = _____
 Bogart Fund donation _____
 General Association donation _____
Total = _____

Emergency Contact (Someone NOT attending):
 Name: _____ Phone: _____ Relationship: _____
 Do you need wheelchair capable transportation? Yes (___) No (___)
 Dietary concerns/allergies: _____