

# The Beidorn Switchboard

## 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association

Volume 2 Edition 2 Summer 2021



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### REUNION 2021 WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!!!



Pat & Janet Malherek, Coeditors 28<sup>th</sup> FARA Newsletter

Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of the 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Association newsletter. We hope everyone is having an enjoyable summer with their family and friends as we return to a sense of normalcy!!!

A **HUGE WELCOME** to our newly elected members of the association's board of directors. We have articles from each of them in this edition of the newsletter. We also have a recap of the reunion held at Lawton/Fort Sill from June 3-6 which included the dedication of the beautiful monument to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. The monument is located at Constitution Park adjacent to the Field Artillery Museum in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

The newsletter also includes a continuation of Tommy Houston's *The History of Bleidorn Kaserne* and Bill Dunham's *2-28 FA Ski Team*. We also have interviews with Jim Snitker, Scott Sumpter, and Vangie Romero.

If you have any suggestions or comments, please feel free to contact us at [Newsletter@28fara.org](mailto:Newsletter@28fara.org). In future editions we would like to feature an article on each of the batteries in the battalion. If anyone would like to submit article for a battery, please let us know.

We hope ALL our 28<sup>th</sup> FARA Family are continuing to do well and are staying healthy. The reunion was truly an enjoyable time....it was so nice for so many of us to be able to see each other again and catch up with what is going on in our lives. We are already looking forward to the next reunion and hope that even more people will be able to join us.

Pat and Janet Malherek ☺

28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association



**Presidents Corner  
Association Update**  
Tommy Houston



## **28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association Goals!!!**

Colleagues of the 28<sup>th</sup> Artillery,

First off, thank you for reelecting me for a second term as the President of our Association. To me personally it is an honor I do not take lightly. I pledge to you to put as much energy into this next term as I did the first. Thank You!

It was really great to see everybody who attended our Biannual Reunion, 5-6 June at Fort Sill. For those of you who couldn't make it, you really missed a great time, but I won't rub it in!!! Just focus on making the next one in 2023!!! Our great 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Dave Mohan, has the responsibility for the planning and execution of our reunions. Dave has started the process for the planning of our next reunion where we will do our "due diligence" in picking a great place. If you have suggestions or would like to participate in our Reunion Committee, please contact Dave at his 28 FA Association email, [2ndVP@28fara.org](mailto:2ndVP@28fara.org).

Our Association is founded on three goals which we confirmed again at our Reunion at Fort Sill. These goals are:

- To connect veterans of the Battalion through different media such as Social Networking, the Internet, Reunions, etc.
- To ensure the legacy of the unit is remembered through things such as our monument, our scholarship program, and articles in professional organizations or publications along with other venues.
- To take care of our own within our means through programs such as VA assistance, help in times of sickness, bereavement, etc.

In our first two years of existence the Association and the Board of Directors was predominately “externally focused” with things such as raising money for the monument and gathering our first set of members. We also worked awfully hard at making sure all of our processes were in place so that we could rightfully claim our status as a 501C(3) organization.

In this next term we would like to shift to be more “internally focused.” That is to do more in support of our membership. To that end we are doing the following:

- **VA Assistance:** Very few of us know exactly what benefits we have earned and are entitled to or even how we go about getting them. CSM (Retired) Doyle Watters has volunteered to lead a group that will assist our members with understanding the benefits and how to apply for these benefits. Along with CSM Watters are two other volunteers who have offered to help, 1SG (Ret) Miguel Rosario and Kent Christopher. I have asked this team to be proactive with their help and to reach out to each of you and conduct a “VA screening” to see what you might be entitled to with the VA. This team will be available to help you and answer questions you may have about the VA. They will be calling you soon for an appointment. By giving them some of your time, you may find out that you are indeed entitled to something you are not getting!!
- **Membership Communications:** Our new Sergeant Major “Rock” Young has organized our membership committee to expand our internal communications. He is establishing “Battery Coordinators” who will be responsible for making sure the members from their specific battery are contacted every month. They will collect news that will feed our newsletter while also finding out if a member is having some tough times and might need some help from us, even if it is just somebody to talk to. CSM Young’s committee is also going to work on recruiting and reaching out to the veterans of the unit we have lost contact with. If you have some time, we could sure use your help here with tracking down our old comrades. **If you are interested, please contact CSM Young at his 28<sup>th</sup> FARA address, [CSM@28fara.org](mailto:CSM@28fara.org).**
- **Family Members:** We are going to set up a committee this year that will help do a better job concerning spouses and family members. Membership in the Association is a family membership, so spouses, children, grandchildren, etc. are members just like you and ONE membership fee pays for you all. I hope this committee can find things that we can do to include the families that is not just at the Reunion.

Finally, we will be kicking off our scholarship program this year under the capable leadership of our 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Dave Mohan. So, this is a heads up for those of you with children or grandchildren who will be starting any kind of secondary education program in the next two years. Stay tuned for more information from Dave about this program.

**GUNSHOT!**

Tommy Houston



**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**  
**28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment Monument Update**  
Bill Dunham

**IT IS FINISHED!**

What began as Tommy Houston's vision in 2019 has finally been realized. We began the design phase in the spring of 2019 and after cracking the code of how to get a monument approved for Constitution Park, Fort Sill, we began the fundraising.

Our initial estimate was that everything would cost us \$25,000 and we were quite close. The granite with engraving and coloring was \$8,000. Transportation out there cost us \$950. Then the installation was \$13,000.

I traveled to Fort Sill to meet with the museum curator to select a site and talk to the landscaper. I then returned about 6 months later to meet with the memorialization committee and change the site of our monument. The moving of the site saved us about \$8,000 in landscaping costs.

Then the wheels of the Army's bureaucracy began. Little did we know what a process this would turn out to be. We received approval from Fort Sill in a timely manner but then everything bogged down. A new level of command (Installation Management Command – IMCOM) got involved and everything proceeded at a snail's pace. Some of the delay can be blamed on COVID-19 but not all of it.

We were assured that approval would be finalized not later than 1 March 2021. In light of that assurance we decided to commence with our reunion/dedication for June. Well, things simply did not work out. Our landscaper had everything slated for a mid-March installation but when approval was not forthcoming that put us behind in every way possible.

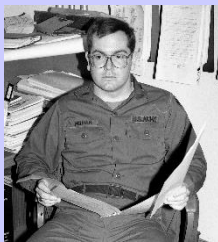
I travelled out to Fort Sill in early May pulling the 3,600 pound monument and base behind my pickup on a U-Haul trailer. That way the landscaper would have it on hand when authorization was finally received. When it was not received in a timely manner we pulled out the big guns. Charlie Morte contacted the senator from Oklahoma and asked him to inquire why the approval that was supposed to have been completed in March was still not forthcoming in mid-May. Like a miracle approval was given in less than 48 hours. Ah, the dreaded Congressional Inquiry we all remember so well!!

Even with the approval on hand the landscaper simply was not able to orchestrate the cement and crane components of the process in time for our reunion. So, that is why our monument was not installed on 4 June. Everyone was busy and simply could not change their schedules to fit us in since we had delayed their services in mid-March. We could have had the concrete poured by another company but it would have cost us an extra \$3,000. The board all agreed that the extra expense was not worth it.

The monument was installed the week after our reunion and after some arm twisting the landscaper installed the bricks the week after that. The cleanup and sod repairs have been completed.

John Williams and I traveled back to Fort Sill last week to inspect everything and to take pictures of the finished product. So, here it is, at long last, but I believe you will agree it was worth the wait:





**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**  
**Reunion Planning Moving Forward!**  
Dave Mohan

Greetings, 28<sup>th</sup> FARA Members! What a great reunion we had at Fort Sill last month! It was great to see everyone, and a highlight for me personally was the dedication of our monument. More in detail on that elsewhere in this newsletter. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for the contributions of the many people who pitched in to make everything come together. It takes teamwork to pull off an event with so many great activities going on, and the success of the overall event was due to the planning, coordination, and execution by many people. Thanks to them all!

**2023 Reunion:** We are looking for OIC/NCOICs and helpers for all of the activities at our next reunion. If you'd like to be part of that team, contact me at [2ndVP28thFARA@gmail.com](mailto:2ndVP28thFARA@gmail.com) or 717-542-4630. The Board is beginning the process of selecting the 2023 Reunion location, and we hope to announce that decision by late 2021 or early 2022 so you can make your travel plans. Just so you know, we use four criteria to choose our reunion locations:



- **ACCESSIBLE** – the location should have an airport within shuttle or Uber/Lyft distance of where we're staying.
- **AFFORDABLE** – reasonably priced lodging in some major metro areas (NYC, Washington DC, and Seattle) is hard to find near the attractions we would be interested in seeing, and we want to make attending affordable for as many members as possible.
- **ATTRACTIONS** – sightseeing or tourist attractions that would make the location a desirable destination even if we weren't having a reunion. Would you want to visit there on vacation?
- **CONNECTION TO THE ARMY** – doesn't have to be an actual Army post, but there should be something of military or historical significance as a focus of our reunion (example: WWII Museum in New Orleans)

**28<sup>th</sup> FARA Scholarship Program:** Now that our monument is installed and dedicated, our fundraising and development efforts going forward will focus on funding our scholarship program. One of the tasks before the Board for the immediate future is to finalize and approve a scholarship operating document and appoint members to a Scholarship Selection Committee. But to give you an overview of our intent,

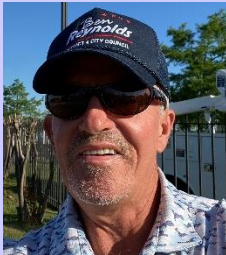
- **WHO:** members in good standing, their spouses, children, and grandchildren.
- **WHAT:** financial grants toward tuition, fees, and course-related expenses.
- **WHERE:** any accredited post-secondary educational institution (community college, tech/trade school, college, or grad school).
- **WHEN:** beginning Dec 2021 for the 2022-2023 Academic Year.
- **HOW:** tax-deductible charitable contributions to the 28<sup>th</sup> FARA, a 501c(3) non-profit.



We could use your help identifying and contacting potential donors AND potential award recipients. Because of our non-profit status, individual and corporate donors may be able to deduct the amount of their donation from their Federal income tax. Please contact Tommy Houston if you'd like to make a donation or refer a potential corporate sponsor.

Look for more detailed information and instructions for applying for a 28<sup>th</sup> FARA Scholarship later this year. We'll reach out through individual emails, an announcement on our website, and in future issues of this Newsletter.

Dave Mohan 717-542-4630  
[2ndVP28thFARA@gmail.com](mailto:2ndVP28thFARA@gmail.com)



**Treasurer**  
**Report as of June 2021**  
John Williams

I must start by thanking COL (RET) Ralph Ripley for his Herculean efforts to put our association on great financial footing. And, recognizing the behind-the-scene tireless efforts of Madonna Stecher for all she has done to ensure our accounting is beyond question.

As you can see from the below chart, we are doing very well—even after paying for the monument and its installation in full.

After brick sales cease at the end of this month, we will be totally dependent on contributions and membership dues—please consider becoming a **lifetime member** AND recruiting another to do the same.

We will continue to scrutinize our spending which will allow us to take advantage of opportunities while staying within our means.

I look forward to starting our first budget process which will keep us on mission and assure financial stability for years to come.

**Our financial picture through 30 June 2021:**

<b>Current Cash Balance</b>		<b>\$17,202.68</b>
<b>Starting Cash</b>		<b>\$27,273</b>
<b>Revenue Received</b>		<b>\$3,470</b>
Memberships	\$150	
Donations	\$1,000	
Brick Sales	\$2,320	
<b>Expenses</b>		<b>\$13,541</b>
Monument	\$13,000	
Bricks	\$237.95	
Reunion	\$244	
Online fees	\$59	
<b>Projected Expenses:</b>		<b>\$0</b>

Photo from  
the earlier  
days  
coming  
soon!!! 😊



**Senior NCO of the Board  
Everybody Fall IN!!!**

Keith Young



To My 2-28 Brothers....

First off, thank you for electing me as your Association Sergeant Major. I can't tell you how much I am honored to serve as the Senior NCO for our organization. I have publicly said that over my 40 Year career in the Army, two of my assignments stand out above all others: My time in 2-28 FA and my assignment as a Drill Sergeant. The 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery is in my blood.

I first also want to publicly thank my predecessor, 1SG(Retired) Charlie Moretz for doing such a great job during his term as the Senior NCO for the 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association.

It was great to see everyone at Lawton/Fort Sill for our reunion and the dedication of our monument. For those of you who couldn't make it, you missed a great time. It was so great to see all of you again, time just seemed to roll back to when we were all together at Bleidorn.

Just like in the Army, I see that the most important part of my job as the Sergeant Major on the Board of Directors is representing the NCOs and Enlisted soldiers. In accomplishing this task, I want to hear from you, and you can contact me any time at my 28FA Association email which is [CSM@28fara.org](mailto:CSM@28fara.org).

We are reorganizing our membership committee with a goal of improving our communications to you members as well as getting 100 more veterans to join the Association by our next reunion. The new Member Committee will have a cadre consisting of Scott Sumpter, Mike Johnson, Frank McCook, and Ron Lindgren. We will reorganize the membership around the Batteries with each battery having a Battery Coordinator or "BC" who will help to make sure we communicate with all members monthly as well as helping us to meet the goal of 100 new members by the next reunion.

We could really use your help with membership. If you enjoy looking for old friends and colleagues or could help us as a Battery Coordinator, please contact me ASAP. More later on this.

Again, I look forward to the next two years and reaching out to all of you.

**Rock Steady!  
GUNSHOT!**

**CSM Keith Young**

Photo from  
the earlier  
days coming  
soon!!! 😊

Current photo  
coming soon!!!



### **Enlisted Members of the Board at Large**



Rod Lindgren



Frank McCook

## **Fellow Redlegs!**

We are proud to be newly elected members of the 2/28 FARA Board!

The Board is committed to keeping the legacy of 2/28 BN alive and relevant. We are committed to finding our fellow Redlegs and growing our membership.

We are equally committed to assisting our brothers who may need some help. If any of you know of a brother or family who may need some assistance, please contact any of us at anytime. We will be here.

As the Enlisted Members on the Board, we will be working to represent and assist members who were E-4 and below during their time at Bleidorn. Will also be the chairs of the Awards Committee for our biennial reunion award presentations.

Although Frank had to miss the reunion at Ft. Sill for medical reasons, WE are committed to you, our families, and our shared pasts and futures!



**Adjutant/Secretary**

Tom Stecher

**GREETINGS from your Association's NEW Adjutant/Secretary!!!**

Hello, I'm Tom and I'm your new Adjutant. I was elected at the Lawton/Fort Sill Reunion on June 3-6, 2021. A lot of fun and historical things occurred at this Reunion. On June 3, the old and new Board of Directors discussed where the Association had been successful since our organization in 2018 and where we needed to improve during the next two years. The results were great. We have prioritized missions, goals, and committees to help us grow, make our reunions better and to get more to attend our reunions. After registration, we held a reception, meet and greet and uncased of our unit's colors. On June 4, we dedicated our Unit Memorial at Centennial Park, located beside the Field Artillery Museum on Fort Sill. It was truly a touching service for those of us that attended. AND, it was the first time that an active-duty soldier carried our Battalion Colors in over 30 years. Afterward, we ate in a state of the art, new mess hall. To be honest, ours at Bleidorn beat it, hands down. Then we took a tour, set up by our host unit, the 428<sup>th</sup> FA Brigade. And to end the night we ate at a German Restaurant. To be honest, the hospitality and selection of food just wasn't the same as eating at an old Ansbach Gasthaus. On June 5, the day started with our Association's General Membership Meeting. A lot of areas were discussed to improve our Association and Reunions. After the meeting and all the required discussions, it was free time to golf, sight see, ride motorcycles, relax, or sit around the lobby and try to out lie each other. That last night we held our 2/28 FA Reunion, Cocktail Reception & Awards Banquet. This was the first time that awards were presented. Make sure you watch the videos, taken by George Hardin of the three ceremonies. In closing, I beg you all to please consider coming to the next Reunion, if you missed this one, we missed you too! I'll be sending out an email to the membership once I get my feet on the ground as your Adjutant.

**2-28 FA Association WELCOMES the following NEW MEMBERS since our Previous Newsletter:**

Russ	Adams
Randy	Bailey *
Gary	Dallas Sr.
Raul	Dinzey
Chris	Dolan
Bruce	Ellis
Gary	Griffin
Thomas	Juarez
Christopher	Kent
Ronald	Lindgren
Robert	Michaud +
Roel	Moya *
Miguel	Rosario
Otha	Taylor
Doyle	Watters +

\* Denotes Membership Pending - Awaiting Fees  
 \*\*Denotes Membership Renewal Pending - Awaiting Fees  
 +Indicates Lifetime Membership.

***RECRUIT your former  
2-28 FA brothers and their families  
to join the Association!!!***





**28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association (FARA) Wants YOU!!!  
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION!!!  
Renewal Process & Lifetime Membership Options!!!**



We value your membership and you are the reason we exist. We hope that you have reunited with some of your 28 FARA brothers from the past and are enjoying all that this membership has to offer. We are into our third year as an Association and it's the Association's mission to increase our membership to 150, active paying members, before our 2023 Reunion! With that in mind, if you join the Association before October, your \$45.00 fee will pay for your membership until January of the next year. If you paid the \$45.00 after October 1<sup>st</sup>, your annual dues of \$25.00 will be due in the January, 12 to 15 months later and then every January thereafter. A Lifetime Membership however is paid once, and the annual payments are no longer required. Please see the information below that was sent out in a letter about Membership Renewal.

*Membership renewal is due in January of every year after your first year of membership paying your initial \$45.00 Fee. The renewal fee is \$25 each year thereafter. We also have a lifetime membership which is prorated by your age (less than 60 years of age: \$350; 60-69 years of age: \$250; those 70 years and above: \$150). **This option allows you to pay the lifetime fee one time and you don't have to pay the annual renewal fee again.** Many of us have selected the lifetime membership option.*

*Your updated membership has its benefits. One of the upcoming benefits for you and your guest will be allowed to attend the reunion without having to pay a conference registration fee. All others will be required to pay a \$55 conference registration fee. So if you haven't paid/renewed you will want to do so right away to receive the full benefits of your membership.*

*Please advise us of your intentions of renewing your membership to the Association. If you have attempted to make a payment and experienced technical issues, let us know and we can get someone to assist. Thank you in advance for being attentive to address this issue no later than 1 October 2021. We appreciate your interest in continued membership with the 28 Field Artillery Regiment Association.*

**Please visit the FARA's website to JOIN or RENEW your membership TODAY!!!**

**[www.28FARA.ORG](http://www.28FARA.ORG)**

**Please review the steps and options listed below for joining.**

### **Membership Options**

#### **Year to Year Membership:**

- a) For those joining for the **first time** the fee is \$45 for your first year of membership.
- b) Membership **renewal** for 1 year is \$25.

#### **The Association is offering LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS for interested members as follows:**

**Members interested in the LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP option will **PAY the Lifetime Fee ONE TIME** and **WILL NOT** have to pay an annual renewal fee.**

- a) Members who are currently under 60 years of age: \$350
- b) Members who are currently between 60 to 69 years of age: \$250
- c) Members who are currently 70 years of age or older: \$150



# **LIFETIME MEMBERS**



We celebrate and thank those who have chosen to be **Lifetime Members**.  
We INVITE YOU to JOIN the LIFETIME MEMBERS CLUB.



*David Dehnel  
Jim Dubinsky  
Bill Dunham  
Robert Greene  
George Hardin  
Tommy Houston  
Wayne Madewell  
Patrick Malherek  
Ronald Scott Deal  
Robert Michaud*

*Danny Marksberry  
Charles Moretz  
Robert Pollock  
Ralph Ripley  
Ernie Romero  
Thomas Stecher  
Jerry Taylor  
Robert Whigham  
Keith Young  
Doyle Watters*

*Gary Cheek  
David Mohan  
Jeff McCausland  
Richard Swain  
James Snitker  
Thomas Thornton  
John "Box" Williams  
Paul Lange  
Frank Price*

**The Association thanks all who have renewed their membership or became lifetime members!!!  
EACH of YOU are APPRECIATED!!!**



## MEMBERSHIP

Total Membership: 100

The numbers below the guidons reflect soldiers who were in any and all batteries during their time in 2/28 FA.



(HHB includes the Battalion Staff)

**Please catch up on your dues!!!**

We had a great time at these last two Reunions, and we want you to be joining us in 2023. We want you and yours to carry on our legacy. We once made a difference! Our Association now needs to continue carrying on your memories, our stories, and our great legacy. But most of all, we want to reunite and share that military comradery that only a soldier understands.

If you have chosen not to continue to be a member in the association, please send an email to CSM Doyle Watters ([CSM@28fara.org](mailto:CSM@28fara.org)) and explain why. Membership is our major mission these next two years. We want to make our Association better and bigger, and we need your input!!!



**Corporate Donations**

(Donations of \$1,000 or Greater)

**Diamond H Timber LLC**



**Timber LLC**

**Together in Hope**



**Bar S Meats**



**General Dynamics Land Systems  
Of Sterling Heights, Michigan**



**Individual Donations**

**Base Piece Donations**

(Donations of \$500 or Greater)

\*Tommy Houston

**F flank Piece Donations**

(Donations of Less than \$500)

\*John Donahue

\*John "The Box" Williams

**Anonymous Donations**

\*\$1,000 Restricted Donation to be used for recruiting



## **Chaplain's Corner**

COL(R) Chaplain Danny Marksberry

On July 4th while doing my morning devotions, I came across this article and its message impressed me so I thought I would share it with you in this newsletter.

### **GOD'S TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE**

It is Independence Day, the day we celebrate how free we are in the United States. But people in the United States are not really free. Just look around: Anger, bitterness, division, and censorship. Is that freedom?

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) Here is something we need to understand: We can live and still not be free. There is a freedom even greater than the freedoms we have in the United States. That is the true freedom that only God can bring.

We think that the more we can do what we want, the more free we are. We say: It is a free country, so I can do whatever I want. Do you know where that thought started? In the Garden of Eden. With a snake. "if you do what you want, if you eat this fruit, then you will be free, then you will have the knowledge of good and evil"

Do you want to be really free? Then listen to Jesus: Freedom does not come from a country or political party. It comes from the truth. "The Truth will set you free." The enemy's lie is that freedom is doing what we want. The truth is that real freedom is trusting in what Jesus did for us. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:36). Now think again of our country. What do we need? The truth. We need more of God's Word. That is what changes hearts. That is what changes minds. Whenever we feel weighted down by the cares of this world, God's truth will set us free. Whenever we feel trapped by worry and stress, God's truth will set us free, whenever we feel oppressed and held down, God's truth will set us free.,

As we watch fireworks and wave flags in celebration of this Independence Day, we need to pause and reflect on our nation's heritage. We need to take a moment to thank God for all that our freedom allows and for the men and women who paid with their lives for that freedom.

May God Bless America with His grace and the full knowledge of the truth in His Word.

**Chaplain Danny Marksberry**

*The*  
**CHAPLAIN'S**  
*Corner*

### Sick Call

*The following Veterans or Family Members are/or have been infirmed.*

*Please contact the Chaplain if you know of any more.*

*We want to make sure they know we care and are thinking of them.*

- \*Harry Broaddus - Medical Issues**
- \*Willy Salary - Medical Issues**
- \*Tommy Houston - Medical Issues**

### Honors To Those Who Have Passed On

*In loving memory of great soldiers, family members, and friends  
who have gone before us.*

*We hold your memory close in our hearts today and always.*



**Command Sergeant  
Major David Stewart**  
Battalion Headquarters



**Krista Stewart**  
Wife of  
CSM David Stewart



**First Sergeant  
"Sonny" Bumgardner**  
A Battery and  
Service Battery



**Ann Salary**  
Wife of  
First Sergeant Salary



**SFC John Spellman**  
B Battery



**First Sergeant  
Ed Carmichael**  
Headquarters Battery



**Barbara Ann Carmichael**  
Wife of First Sergeant  
Ed Carmichael, HHB



**First Sergeant  
Russel Meinke**  
HHB and  
Service Battery



**Sergeant First Class  
Earl "Cornbread" Jones**  
C Battery and  
B Battery



**Cathy Lange**  
Wife of Major  
Paul Lange, HHB



**Linda Smith**  
Wife of  
Sergeant First Class  
Bob Smith  
C Battery



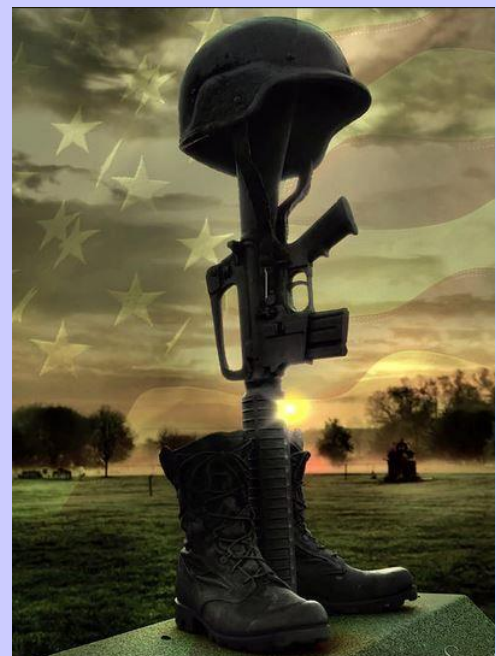
**Master Sergeant  
Peter Volin**  
HHB



**First Sergeant  
Desmond O'Keeffe**  
B Battery



**Lt. Colonel  
Llyle J. Barker, Jr.**  
Battalion Commander



## How We Can Help

We understand how stressful and difficult the passing of a loved one can be. At our age, all of us have been through this at one time or another and in one capacity of another.

One of the goals of our Association is to make sure that, within our power and means, that every veteran of the unit is provided the proper honors upon their passing and to provide the surviving spouse with as much assistance as we can give. All of this is based on the desires of the family of course.

The rules and regulations of the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense can be confusing. Also, when a death occurs, there is not a lot of time to go look for the information. Also, we have found some funeral homes are well familiar with the rules and regulations, whom you need to contact etc and some are not.

To help our members, the Association will appoint a duty officer from the board of directors to be available every 90 days to assist the family of the Veteran or Family member. The duty officer familiar with all the information that you need as well as having access to the resources of the Association. This support continues after the funeral.

Besides information to assist the family, we wish to provide honors to the Veteran, but much of what we can provide will be dependant on location and how many members can attend the services. As a minimum, the Association can provide someone for the Family to call and get information. However, depending on location and the availability of other veteran members, here are some examples of the services we can provide:

- Depending on how many veterans that can attend the services, provide fellow 28<sup>th</sup> FA veterans as pall bearers.

- Provide the Battalion Colors and appropriate guidon to be displayed at appropriate services. These will be shipped Fedex to a 28 FA member who is in the area who will be responsible for the display as well as returning the items to the Association.

- A "soldiers cross" consisting of a helmet, dummy rifle with Bayonet, boots and dog tags. These will also be shipped to a veteran member that is in the area and can attend the funeral who will be responsible for setting up the display and returning it to the Association.

- Depending on member availability a 28 FA member/vet who will represent the Association/Battalion and can speak of the member's service at the Service.

- The Association Chaplain will be available via phone to council and support

- Setting up a donation account through the Wounded Warriors foundation or a Veterans Charity of the families choice in the veterans honor.

- The least we will do is to ensure that the Veteran/Family Member is honored on our web site, newsletter and official association functions such as reunions.

The key to all of this is timing. Our Chaplain, Danny Marksberry, is the Association's contact point for this type of support. Danny will connect the "duty officer" with the family so that we can render our offer of assistance. Make sure that the family knows to contact Danny if there is a death or serious illness that occurs to a Veteran member or family member. Danny will get the word out to the appropriate people. ***It is imperative that we know about the situation as soon as possible!!!***

To provide you with an idea of how the Association can assist, below is a check list that is used by our Bereavement Duty Officer once we are notified of the passing of one of our members:

Casualty Officer Check list for death of member of 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Association:

- Receive death notification.
- Get as much information as possible, ie. obituary, widow/next of kin information, date of funeral and where and when it will be held.
- Determine if the deceased member is a retiree. (if so, see below)
- Disseminate to membership via email of the death including obituary if available. (Time is of the essence)
- Determine if any members are in the area that could possibly attend the funeral or other events. Contact those members to see if they can/will attend
- Contact the family and ask if they would like our help. If so, help any way needed
- Ask the family if it has the veteran's DD214, (Discharge Form). If not, and a replacement is needed, have them call 1-866-272-6272
- Ask the family if the veteran desires to be buried in his uniform. Have them send you a picture of the uniform and check to see if it is put together properly.
- Contact Treasurer or CAO to authorize flowers from the association, if enough lead time, if not find out which veterans organization they desire to receive the donation by the Association in the Veterans name.
- If a military headstone is wanted have the family inform the funeral director and the funeral home can the arrangements with the VA.
- If the service member is a retired Army veteran, in addition to the above do the following:
  - Inform the family to make sure the survivor stops the retired pay. To report a retiree's death call 1-888-332-7411.
  - Inform the family that if the retiree is receiving disability compensation call 1-1-844-698-2311.
- If another member is attending the services, ask the widow/next of kin if they want to have a memorial at the funeral such as a soldier cross (helmet boots, fake weapon with bayonet and dog tags) to put in front of the funeral. Also if they would like the appropriate Battery Guidon present.
- If this is desired by the family, coordinate with another member that will be attending the services. Make sure they are OK with receiving "the kit" and setting it up.
- If this is acceptable to the family and the members attending, contact the Quartermaster to have the "kit" sent to a member attending the service.
- Contact President of the Association to send a letter of condolence to the family.
- Each attendee should submit an AAR to the chaplain so we can continue what we did well and improve the areas that we need to.
- After the Services, Contact the members that did attend and find out how things went.
- Provide a copy of the obituary to the Webmaster and Newsletter editor.

Photo from  
the earlier  
days  
coming  
soon!!! 😊

Current  
photo  
coming  
soon!!! 😊

Veterans Assistance  
Here to help!  
Doyle Watters



### Topic: Veteran's Disabilities

My name is Command Sergeant Major Doyle Watters (US Army, retired). I was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> BN 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery in June of 1987, which was commanded, at that time, by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph R. Ripley. A Change of Command took place in November of 1987 between Lieutenant Colonel Ripley, the outgoing Commander, and the incoming Commander, then Lieutenant Colonel Gary B. Griffin. In 1988 there was a flag change and the 2<sup>nd</sup> BN 28<sup>th</sup> FA's colors were cased and the colors of the 3<sup>rd</sup> BN 17<sup>th</sup> FA were uncased.

I was recently contacted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> BN 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental President, Lieutenant Colonel Tommy Houston (Retired), regarding acceptance of the position as VA Disability Claims Information Officer. Of course I did not hesitate to accept the offer. As a Veteran I believe it is my responsibility to share my knowledge of VA Claims and Benefits that I have learned over the past ten years with other Veterans. My job will be to aid an already functional team which provides information in the form of written and or oral correspondence to individuals seeking to file a VA Disability claim and or upgrade an existing claim. At no time will we be doing the job of the County Veterans Service Officer. I tell veterans it is not my job to write and or submit their claims but to merely tell them how to get from point A to point B by informing them of the process. I want to make it known there will never be any pressure from our team. Of course if one finds they need assistance, contact us. Any information discussed between us will be confidential.

Many veterans in our society have a fear factor when it comes to filing a claim. Our biggest job will be to help you gain the confidence necessary to face the task head on. The more one knows about the process of filing a claim the more comfortable they feel. There is nothing about the filing of a VA claim that can't be found online. My suggestion is to get to know the subject by reading and asking questions. Remember the VA Hospital is not the Veterans Administration, know the difference.

Veterans were trained to be a team therefore they will always be a team. No one knows more about being a veteran than a veteran. They have endured hardships, failures and successes all for someone else. It is time for those who think they might have a claim to find out if they do.

Doyle Watters  
CSM (R)





### Chief Information Officer & Webmaster

George Hardin

Hi 28Fara Members,

The high point of our association this year was the reunion at Lawton/Fort Sill. This was my first time to travel since Covid started. We could finally talk face-to-face without a mask and not worry about dying. We gave each other a hard time and laughed a lot while talking about the good old days at Bleidorn Kaserne.

When I got on the airplane at Dallas, I noticed 15 young guys who were also flying to Lawton. I asked them if they were stationed at Fort Sill and they said no, they were going to basic training. Later while I was drinking a beer and talking to my buddies, I thought about these guys who were probably not having as much fun.

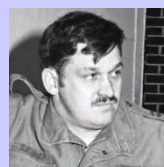
All I can say is this visit to Fort Sill was much more pleasurable than my last one in 1983. I had a lot of work to do when I got home, making videos, updating the biographies for our new board members, and updating the website with pictures and videos. If you have any pictures send them to me and I will add them to our website. I am very proud to be a part of an organization that has already accomplished so much in so little time.

If you ever have any problems with our website or forum, please contact me at [CIO@28fara.org](mailto:CIO@28fara.org) or 916-581-2899. George Hardin



### Special Assistant to the President

Dave Dehnel



### Judge Advocate,

Bill Savage

Thank you to those who participated in the recent 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association elections.

**The people listed below were elected to the Board of Directors or appointed to positions during our Reunion in June 2021:**

#### Board of Directors

*These positions are for a two-year term:*

**President** - Tommy Houston  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President** - Bill Dunham  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President** - Dave Mohan  
**Adjutant** - Tom Stecher  
**Treasurer** - John Williams  
**Senior NCO** - CSM Keith Young  
**1<sup>st</sup> Enlisted Member** - Rod Lindgren  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Enlisted Member** - Frank McCook

#### Appointed Positions

**Chaplain** - Danny Marksberry  
**Chief Accounting Officer** - Madonna Stecher  
**Chief Information Officer** - George Hardin  
**Veterans Assistance** - Doyle Watters  
**Judge Advocate** - Bill Savage  
**Quartermaster** - Vacant  
**Historian** - Tommy Houston  
**Special Assistant to the President** - Dave Dehnel  
**Newsletter Editors** - Pat & Janet Malherek

If you are interested in finding out more information about any of the positions above, please contact us. We are always looking for help!

Contact Information: **Dave Dehnel** / [daviddehnel2@gmail.com](mailto:daviddehnel2@gmail.com) / 919-523-2542 (mobile) leave a message.  
**Bill Savage** / [getsavage1@me.com](mailto:getsavage1@me.com) / 719-332-7166

We want to hear from you!!!  
We want to hear your ideas and suggestions!!!

**Contact Information for the Board of Directors & Appointed Positions:**

President and Chairman of the Board: **Tommy Houston** - [President@28fara.org](mailto:President@28fara.org)

1st Vice President/XO: **Bill Dunham** - [1stVP@28fara.org](mailto:1stVP@28fara.org)

2nd Vice President/OPS: **Dave Mohan** - [2ndVP@28fara.org](mailto:2ndVP@28fara.org)

Treasurer: **John Williams** - [Treasurer@28fara.org](mailto:Treasurer@28fara.org)

Chief Accounting Officer: **Madonna Stecher** - [Finance@28fara.org](mailto:Finance@28fara.org)

Adjutant/Secretary: **Tom Stecher** - [Secretary@28fara.org](mailto:Secretary@28fara.org)

SR NCO Member of the Board at Large: **CSM Keith Young** - [CSM@28fara.org](mailto:CSM@28fara.org)

Chief Information Officer: **George Hardin** - [CIO@28fara.org](mailto:CIO@28fara.org)

1<sup>st</sup> Enlisted Member of the Board at Large: **Rod Lindgren** - [Enlisted1@28fara.org](mailto:Enlisted1@28fara.org)

2<sup>nd</sup> Enlisted Member of the Board at Large: **Frank McCook** - [Enlisted2@28fara.org](mailto:Enlisted2@28fara.org)

Veterans Assistance: **Doyle Watters** - [VA@28fara.org](mailto:VA@28fara.org)

Special Assistant to the President: **Dave Dehnel** - NEW BOARD EMAIL TBD

Judge Advocate: **Bill Savage** - [JAG@28fara.org](mailto:JAG@28fara.org)

Chaplin: **Danny Marksberry** - [Chaplain@28fara.org](mailto:Chaplain@28fara.org)

Newsletter Editors: **Pat and Janet Malherek** - [Newsletter@28fara.org](mailto:Newsletter@28fara.org)

**Just a few notes on How to Use Our Website:**

**Access the Members Only pages of our website:** Go to Membership, Members Only, then Login or “sign up for a new account here”. New accounts are activated once paid membership is verified (3-5 days). The Members Only page gives you full access to the membership roster, pictures and the 28FARA Newsletters. The roster is updated monthly.

**Pay Dues:** Go to Membership, Membership Dues, then choose the appropriate yearly renewal or lifetime membership purchase. You can either use Paypal or mail a check to **Treasurer, PO Box 4596, Rio Rancho, NM 87174.**

**Access the 28FARA Forum:** Go to <https://login.proboards.com/register/7064633> and create a new login account. New accounts are activated once paid membership is verified.

**Login-Password Reset:** If you forgot your Members Only password, or want to change it, go to Membership, Login-Password Services, and follow the instructions.

**Roster Information Updates:** If you want to update your personal roster information, go to Membership, Join the 28FARA, Application, then enter your last, first name update (for example: Hardin, George update), email address and then any other information that needs changing, click submit. You can also email your updates to [CSM@28fara.org](mailto:CSM@28fara.org).

**Reunion 2021  
28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association  
Award Recipients**



**CONGRATULATIONS to the following individuals  
who were presented with awards during Reunion 2021!!!**

**Individual Awards-**

**Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher Award** – The Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher recognizes those individuals who have voluntarily contributed in significant and meaningful ways to the improvement of the Field Artillery Community.

**Madonna Stecher**

**Base Piece Award** – Given to the person who has done a preponderance of great things for the Association since our last reunion. The membership will nominate people and the Awards Board will select a winner based on the nominations from the membership. (Normally this award is given to only ONE person, but with this term so much happened and so many people did so many great things, special dispensation was granted to award multiple awards).

**Bill Dunham  
George Hardin  
Tommy Houston**

**The 8 Ball Award** – This is a fun award given to the person who has done something funny, either lately or when they were in the battalion. People are nominated at our Reunion Banquet and the winner is selected by vote of the membership at the Reunion. *(Please see next page for more information about the 8 Ball Award!!!)*



**Scott Sumpter**

**Battery/Group Awards**

**Battery Membership Award** – Given to that Battery who has the most members in good standing on the rolls at the start of the Reunion.

**C Battery**

**Battery with the most new members** – Given to the Battery with the most new members since the last reunion at the start of the current reunion.

**Not given this year since we are all new members!**

**Battery with the Highest Score on the OFSQT** – This is given to that battery that has the Highest Score on the OFSQT (Old Fart Skill Qualification Test)

**Event had to be cancelled this year! ☹**

**Best Battery Award** – Given to the Battery based on points awarded for membership, new membership, and OFSQT.

**C Battery**

**Red Solo Cup Golf** – Given to the Foursome Team who has the best score on the Golf Challenge.

**Bill Dunham, Vicki Dunham, John Donahue**

## THE “8-BALL” AWARD



### **BRIEF “8-BALL” HISTORY:**

I am Tom Stecher, your Association’s new Adjutant/Secretary. I was the father of the “8-BALL” when it was born at Bleidorn Kaserne, Ansbach, Germany in March of 1984. Here’s the reason for the “8-BALL” award. Every quarter, the officers of 2/28FA and their wives had at least one “Hail and Farewell.” At these events, I noticed the officers telling stories about their fellow officers and then harassing and joking with them about what they’d just heard. I thought it would be fun for all of us to hear these stories and then vote on who did the funniest thing to deserve an award. And so, the “8-BALL” was born. The “8-BALL” started as a softball, painted to look like an 8-ball. Once presented, the awardee had to display the “8-BALL” in an ashtray, on their desk, until the next “Hail and Farewell.” Eventually, “my Baby” grew up to become a black bowling ball, painted to look like a really, large 8-ball, with an attached chain that could fit around an awardee’s ankle. As the “Hail and Farewells” continued, the “8-BALL” nominees began to complain, “I didn’t do that!” or “It didn’t happen that way.” SO, our response became: “It’s not what you did! It’s how we tell the story!” Unfortunately, no records were kept as to all those officers that once were awarded the “8-BALL” Award. But I’m sure there are those of us that if memory serves us correctly, we could remember a few names.

As soldiers, we know that eventually we’ll all get reassigned. And in late 1985 that happened to the “8-BALL.” Unfortunately, no one knew where the “8-BALL” was assigned from late 1985 until its surprise appearance at the Colorado Springs, Colorado Reunion in June 2013. Fortunately for me, at that reunion and at the Savannah, Georgia Reunion in June 2015 and at the New Orleans, Louisiana Reunion in September 2018, I was the recipient of the “8-BALL” Award at all three. I’m not sure I did what they really said I did, but as we’d all once agreed, “It’s not what I did! It’s how they told the story!”

### **“8-BALL” TRANSITIONS:**

On June 5, 2021, at the Lawton, Fort Sill Oklahoma Reunion the “8-BALL” made history. For the first time in 37 years, the “8-BALL” was awarded to an NCO in our 2/28 FARA Association. The new awardee is SSG Scott Sumpter, who was a Gun Chief in Charlie Battery at the time he committed the crime for which he won the award. I say crime, because from what I remember about the Uniform Code of Military Justice Manual, what he did may have been a crime. Is reporting that all section’s personal weapons are accounted for, when they’re not, a crime or just a mistake? So, what do you think?

### **FUTURE “8-BALL” CONTROVERSIES:**

Since the “8-BALL” was in my possession for the last eight years and now the shelf of honor where it once sat is empty, I miss “my baby.” Plus, from what Smoke Sumpter is sharing about “8-BALL,” I am concerned that the “8-BALL” may not survive until the next Reunion. So, stay tuned to future 2/28 FARA Newsletters where Scott and I will share our perspectives about what is happening in the life of our Association’s “8-BALL.”

## 28<sup>th</sup> FARA Brick Club



*Customized Brick Sample*

The **28 Field Artillery Regimental Association** unveiled and dedicated a monument at Constitution Park at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma to commemorate the historic service of our unit from 1968 through 1989. The monument dedication ceremony took place during the 28<sup>th</sup> FARA Reunion held at Ft. Still, Oklahoma in June of 2021. The monument is surrounded by customized bricks (*like the one shown above*) that will help, in part, to tell the story of our special unit and its soldiers. These customized bricks were purchased by soldiers and family members of the 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery and will ensure that these members are honored through a lasting tribute on the grounds of the home of the Field Artillery at Fort Sill.

On behalf of the organization, we thank the individuals who purchased 28<sup>th</sup> FARA bricks. Listed on the next page are the people who purchased bricks. The list does not necessarily represent who the bricks were purchased “for” or “in behalf of”.

*(Please note: The bricks have been sold out and can no longer be purchased.)*



4/23/2019 Bill Dunham X 2  
 4/23/19 Bill Dunham  
 4/26/2019 Richard Swain  
 5/10/2019 Ricky Earleywine  
 5/13/2019 Martin Scheeher (BD)  
 5/13/2019 Martin W Scheeher  
 5/27/2019 John Williams  
 5/29/2019 Bill Dunham  
 7/21/2019 Ralph Ripley  
 7/22/2019 Thomas Houston  
 7/24/2019 George Hardin  
 8/3/2019 Thomas Thornton  
 8/12/2019 Stephen Elle  
 8/16/2019 James Snitker  
 8/18/2019 Richard Swain  
 9/2/2019 Mark Fairbotham  
 9/8/2019 Ralph Ripley  
 10/15/2019 Shari Reinemann  
 10/17/2019 John Snead  
 10/18/2019 John Hartman  
 10/26/2019 Patrick Malherek  
 10/26/2019 Earl Jones (PM)  
 11/8/2019 William Savage  
 11/16/2019 Allan Cupicciotti  
 12/11/2019 Gary Cheek  
 12/19/2019 Chris Dolan  
 1/2/2020 Charles Moretz X 2  
 1/7/2020 Thomas Houston  
 1/25/2020 Barbara Pollock  
 1/29/2020 Richard Swain  
 2/1/2020 William Dunham  
 2/2/2020 Danny Marksberry  
 2/6/2020 Danny Marksberry  
 2/6/2020 Madonna Stecher  
 2/7/2020 Duane Scarborough  
 2/14/2020 William Dunham  
 2/26/2020 Paul Lange Jr.  
 2/26/2020 Robert Greene  
 2/29/2020 Robert Greene  
 3/1/2020 Robert Scott Deal  
 3/9/2020 William Dunham  
 3/18/2020 Donald Davidson

**28<sup>th</sup> FARA  
BRICK  
CLUB**



6/1/2020 Sherman Takatori  
 6/2/2020 William Dunham  
 7/9/2020 Edward Walz  
 9/2/20 20 Ralph Ripley X2  
 9/8/2020 Frank McCook  
 9/18/2020 Thomas Houston X2  
 9/28/2020 Bill Dunham  
 11/4/2020 Eulis Madewell  
 11/12/2020 James Snitker  
 11/30/2020 Thomas Stecher  
 12/8/2020 Bill Dunham  
 1/4/2021 Scott Schwartz  
 1/24/2021 Ronald Ownd  
 1/27/2021 Ricky Earleywine  
 2/1/2021 Jeffrey McCausland  
 2/8/2021 Curtis Pendergraft  
 2/8/2021 William Foley  
 2/14/2021 David Dehnel X2  
 2/19/2021 Darren Lantz  
 3/2/2021 Timothy Gorrell X2  
 4/13/2021 Robert Pollock  
 4/14/2021 Michael Johnson  
 5/2/2021 Bruce Ellis  
 5/3/2021 William Sealey  
 5/3/2021 William Dunham  
 5/7/2021 William Sealey  
 5/11/2021 Robert Michaud  
 5/14/2021 James Dubinsky  
 6/3/2021 Robert Whigham  
 6/3/2021 William Dunham  
 6/8/2021 Danny Marksberry X6  
 6/10/2021 William Dunham  
 6/28/2021 M Rosario Quinones  
 6/28/2021 Thomas Stecher  
 6/28/2021 Mark Roasting  
 6/28/2021 Anna Barr  
 6/28/2021 James Dubinsky  
 6/28/2021 Michael Boyce  
 6/29/2021 Kent Christopher  
 6/29/2021 Gary Griffin  
 7/1/2021 John C Williams X2  
 7/24/2021 Gary Dallas



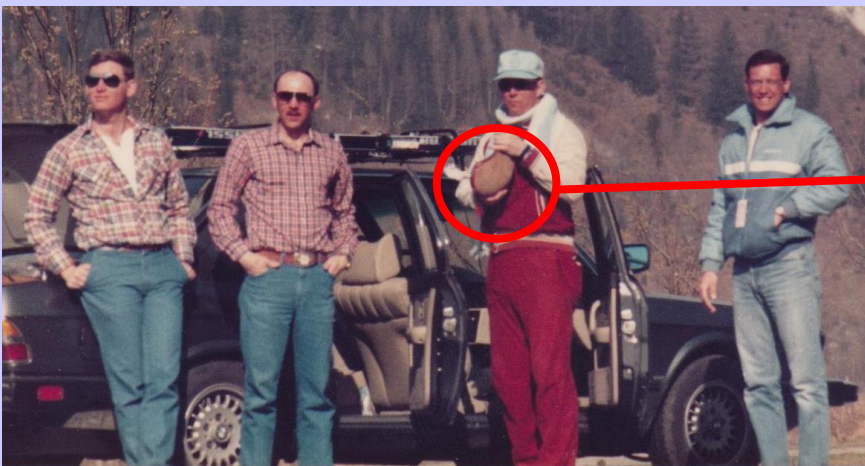
## 2-28 FA Ski Team

Bill Dunham

### Episode 2 - The Force is With Us

Now that I knew how to ski it became a passion. If you have never skied before or have not tried it you simply don't know what you are missing. It is an absolute joy. You are usually in the midst of crystal clear skies, cold yet invigorating air, and just enjoying the natural high.

We quickly established some cherished traditions. When we went on the first ski trip of the season a bottle of champagne was carried to the top and everyone had to partake. Then we had the custodian of the Bota bag, usually Bruce Ellis. It was filled with Jack Daniels initially but quickly became Apfelkorn. As you can tell, our trips centered not only around the ski slopes but alcohol. The other great tradition was "dusting the major." Whenever Tom Stecher fell, which was often (like most of us) we would quickly come up beside him and then turn quickly to cover him in sprayed snow. Childish, I know, but hey, we were having fun.



**The WELL KNOWN  
BOTA BAG!!!**

The trips usually crystalized in the same manner. Someone would notice that it had snowed to our south in the Tyrolean Alps and that we had a free weekend. The notice would be put out that we would depart at 0400 on Saturday morning with the destination being either Sölden, Austria, Kitzbühel, Austria, or Stubiatal, Austria. Our DA Form 31s were prepared and ready to go. Then the real planning began.

2-28 FA Ski Team continued....*The Force is With Us!!!*



Bruce had a 528i BMW that could seat 4 people and it had a ski rack that could accommodate 7 sets of skis. I had an Audi 5000 that could seat 4 people comfortably with a couple sets of skis going through the center of the back seat into the trunk if it was necessary. Then the cooler was packed with our favorite bier, Budvar! Looking back nearly 40 years later it is a small wonder that we lived through it all.



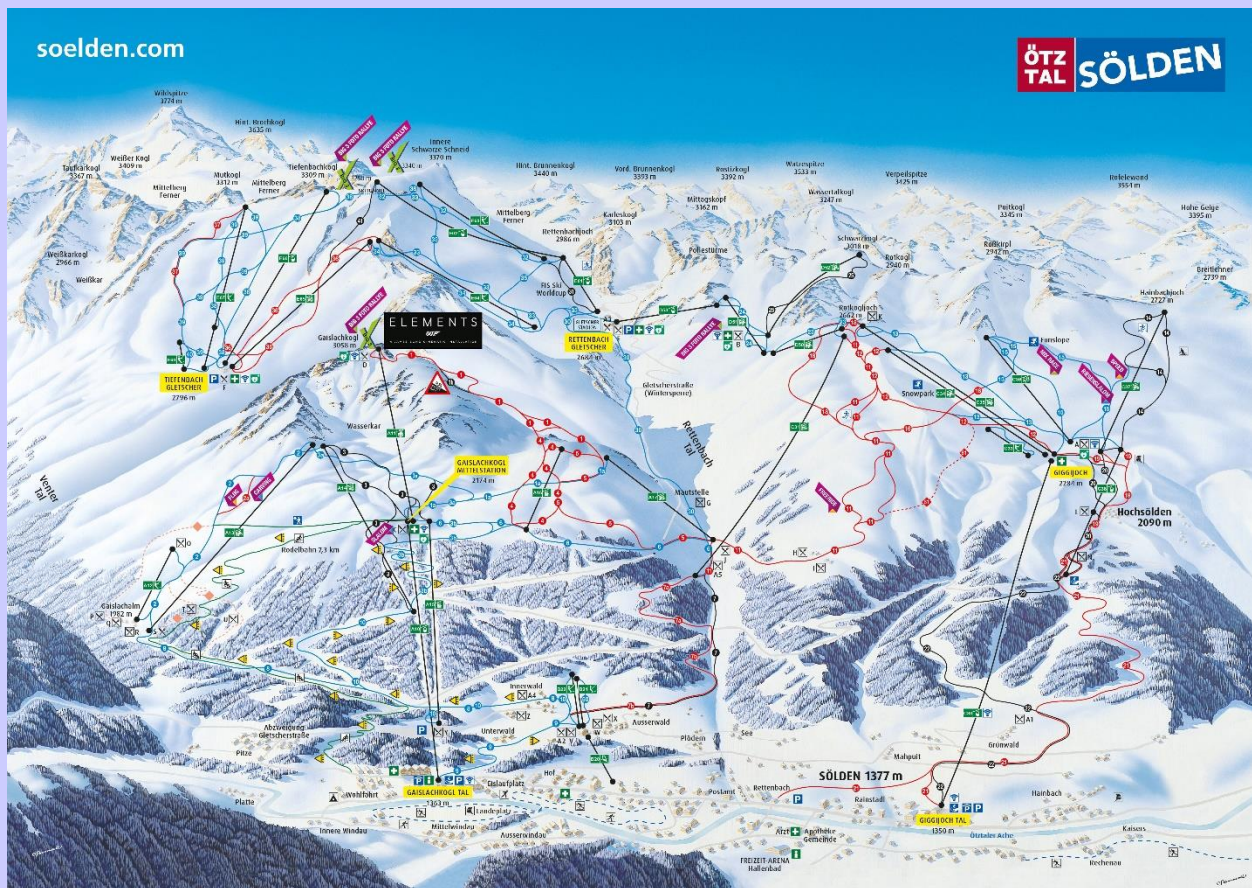
When everyone assembled at Katterbach for the 0400 march order the drinking immediately began (especially if it was a stag trip). On the occasion when our families went with us we were much more sedate. We would hit the Autobahn and cruise at 100 mph. One car carried the cooler and bier. We would pass bottles between the cars while maintaining our speed. It was truly a miraculous accomplishment in that none of were killed. The Force had to be with us, it is the only explanation.

### 2-28 FA Ski Team continued....

Someone would have made reservations at a local gasthaus mit zimmer but we would make certain we were at the ski slopes when they opened at 0800. Most of us were novices and had very little form or style. We would simply point our skis downhill and see how quickly we could make it to the bottom. I know I have fallen down some of the best slopes Europe has to offer.



Our favorite destination became Sölden, Austria. Not only was the skiing great but the town was your typical, picturesque, Tyrolean village. It didn't hurt that we found a gasthaus with an outdoor bar. The owner of the place had lived in Long Beach, California for a while so we became great friends with him. The food was great, the bier was plentiful, and the accommodations had a bed and früstück.



**2-28 FA Ski Team continued....**



Our problem quickly became Bob and Shari Michaud (Obi Wan and Princess Leah). Bob had grown up in Maine, Shari in Sun Valley, Idaho. Ergo, they both were excellent skiers. Bob would show up in his skin tight green ski outfit (he looked like a frog) while Shari was in her form fitting snow bunny togs. Bob was difficult to follow because he never fell and was a quite aggressive skier. To our amazement he even brought his video camera (remember the first generation ones that had to be rested on your shoulder?). He would ski backwards!?! and film everyone coming down the slopes. We couldn't for the life of us figure out how he did that.

Shari, while an excellent skier, was more cautious. We all quickly agreed that we would follow her down any slope. She even taught us the lingo: "I caught an edge on a Cat track." "The light is getting flat."

**In our next episode we will examine the emergence of the Rebel Alliance (the 2-28 FA Ski Team) and the new lieutenants that could really ski!**

If you have any additional recollections and stories you would like to share about your 2-28 skiing experiences we can include in the newsletter, please send them to [newsletter@28fara.org](mailto:newsletter@28fara.org). We would love to be able to share more stories and memories with everyone!!!

## Trivia Questions

EVERYBODY LOVES TRIVIA.....Especially when it is MILITARY TRIVIA!!!

Trivia questions are a great way to bring back so many memories of the time we spent in 2-28, the military, and Ansbach, Germany!!! A huge **THANK YOU** and **SHOUT OUT** to Tommy Houston for providing the Trivia questions/answers. Tommy is a wealth of information and knowledge...he kept amazing notes on EVERYTHING and is now happy to share that information through the Trivia questions. The answers can be found in a different part of the newsletter for those who like to challenge themselves!!! 😊 **ENJOY!!!**



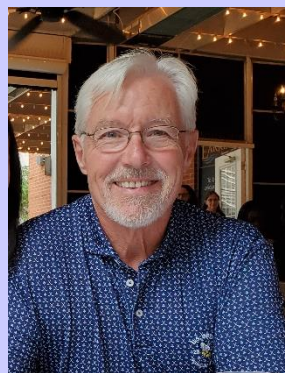
## Military Trivia



1. What Divisions and separate maneuver Brigades were assigned to VII Corps in the 80s?
2. What were three of the Chemical Agents we were most concerned about the Russians using if WWII had happened?
3. What are the two principal types of Chemical Agents?
4. What was the nomenclature of the decontamination device that looked like a Fire Extinguisher?
5. What was the military name for D Cell Batteries?
6. What was the common name for Duct Tape?
7. What was the slang name for an M-35A2C?
8. On average how many times per year did 2-28 pull Guard at NATO-23
9. What was the normal length of a Battery tour at NATO-23?
10. How many increments are in a Green Bag Powder?

**\*\*Answers can be found on Page 45...**

With each issue of the Newsletter, the Editorial Staff will highlight members of the Association. To gather their memories of their time in Germany with the Battalion. To make sure we get those memories from different perspectives, we will interview Officers, NCOs, EMs and Spouses. This month's interviews are with: Colonel (Retired) Jim Snitker, Sergeant First Class (Retired) Scott Sumpter, and Vangie Romero (*spouse of 1SG Ernie Romero, Retired*).



**Interview with LTC (Retired) Jim Snitker  
A Battery Commander**

**When were you assigned to the Battalion and what was your MOS/Jobs?**

I came to Ansbach in mid-June 1983 as a leg artillery 13B Captain. Before coming to the battalion I was assigned to Fort Sill, where I attended the FA Officer's Advanced Course and then was a Gunnery Instructor for the Officer's Advanced Course from April 1981-June 1983. Dave Dehnel was one of my students there and I was very pleased when he came to the battalion, though he came about the time I left it. For the majority of the time I was in the Battalion, I was the A Battery Commander.

I left the battalion in April 1985, reassigned to 210th Brigade Headquarters at Herzo Base, to be a Brigade Assistant S-3. So I was assigned to 2/28 FA for 21 months, from the summer of 1983 to spring 1985.

**What was your marital status when assigned to the Battalion and where did you live?**

I was married to Zulima (Zee) Snitker back then, and have a stepson and daughter. Stepson Boris Brito was age 11-13 when I was in the battalion. Alena was 2 when we arrived. Alena just turned 40 and Boris is now 51. Zee and I divorced in 1990.

We lived in Bleidorn housing right behind the tennis courts and motor pool in a first floor 3 bedroom stairwell apartment. I wasn't there long before I whispered in the ear of Major Lange and got a key to the back gate so I wouldn't have to run around to the main gate when we had a Lariat Advance. He told me to keep it secret and I did. Many wondered how I would magically appear in the motor pool during alerts. Thanks Paul! I never admitted having the key but I think LTC Michaud had suspicions.



**Father's Day 2021  
Jim Snitker and his daughter, Alena McMahan**

**Who was in your chain of command and what do you remember about them?**



**Jim Snitker and Tom Stecher**

When I arrived I was assigned to the S-3 shop under Major Tom Stecher for 90 days while I prepared to take command of A Battery. I took command I think the same day or within days of Colonel Michaud taking the battalion, and he was still in command when I left. Major Lange was XO and Stecher was S-3 for most of that time. When Paul Lange left Bob Greene came in to be the S-3 and Stecher went to XO. CSM Stewart was CSM for the entire time I was there. The battery lieutenants were Jim Brothers, Roy Parker, and Bill Zeigler. The First Sergeant when I took command was Richard (Sonny) Bumgardner, and later Willie Brown.

**When you hear the term “Graf” or “Grafenwoehr” what comes to mind?**

I actually really liked Graf...but then I didn't have to hump jo's or powder or fix broken track. Graf was where we got to get as close to the real deal as we could, without being in danger of being shot at. Garrison time is just train and maintain and try to not get too bored. Graf was a blast - it's what we all signed up for - to put rounds on target and to smell gunpowder. It was a nice break from Ansbach.

Although you didn't ask about it, those winter exercises where we took the howitzers and trucks to the GDP positions and set up in simulated war conditions were really a hoot. Can you imagine Germany letting us do that now?!

The most thrilling thing I always enjoyed was to watch a firing battery advanced party prep a position at night under strict light discipline, and then the howitzers arrive and are emplaced and the battery laid, all with little but the stars above and those red flashlights and glow sticks on the aiming stakes to guide everyone into position.

**What were your toughest times when you were in the Battalion?**

Well, most everyone probably knows that story. We got a new First Sergeant in the battalion from somewhere as a rehab transfer and he got assigned to be my First Sergeant, and SFC Bumgardner went to Service Battery. Didn't take me long to realize the new First Sergeant had a serious drinking problem. So I coordinated with CSM Stewart and did the Skilcraft action and then escorted him to the USAREUR alcohol treatment center at Bad Canstatt. When he came back he was sober and much better at first, but then started drinking again and his performance deteriorated. I recommended to LTC Michaud and CSM Stewart that he be relieved before 1LT Fallen took command from me. Who knew that the Brigade Commander retained authority to relieve E-7 and E-8 throughout the Brigade? Not anyone in our battalion, sadly. That all blew up about the time I was ending battery command and leaving the battalion. The best of intentions sometimes turns to a raging river of odious effluent in a heartbeat.

Other than that I wouldn't say it was tough. I liked the battalion; we were a great group of professionals, officers and NCOs. In retrospect I wish I had hoarded a few battery and battalion rosters like Tommy Houston did so I could find a few of those guys.

**What did you like best about your time in the Battalion?**

I liked being Battery Commander and the service with the great men in A Battery. I liked it that for most of that time we had a separate GDP wartime mission than the rest of the battalion, though few knew it. We essentially had a DIP (die-in-place) mission with the 2d ACR where they had no ground troops to put into a little valley just big enough to be a Soviet regimental avenue of approach, so A Battery got to plan and train as a separate entity, and knew that if the balloon ever went up we would go to this little regimental approach and fire rounds till we ran out, then we would meet our maker. For a while I had the men call ourselves "Alpha Battalion" which I don't think was appreciated in the rest of 2/28, but we had fun with it. I'm glad we didn't have to go do that mission for real.

**Whom is the person you remember the most from your time in the Battalion?**

I remember most of the officers, many of the senior NCOs and some of the soldiers. Thanks to Tom Houston and his vision for the 2/28 FA Regimental Association we've gotten reacquainted and I have enjoyed that.

Beyond those, the three people I remember most are Frank Phillips, who was my BC driver for most of the time I was Battery Commander, and we are still in touch. He has lived in Katterbach since he married his sweetheart Gisela there about 1985.



**Jim Snitker's jeep when Frank Phillips was his driver!**

I remember my first First Sergeant, SFC Sonny Bumgardner, who I understand has passed away. He and I butted heads but I think always recognized that each of us is professional and dedicated and wanting to do the best for the soldiers in A Battery.

Then, the other person I remember most is the A Battery Supply Sergeant, James Dugger. He was knowledgeable, dependable, professional, and solved every problem big and small for the battery. When LTC Michaud authorized me to award just one impact ARCOM after a long and arduous field exercise, I recommended SSG Dugger for that award. Damn was he good. I wish I could see him again. I hope he had a good career and life since I last saw him.

I remember some of the soldiers but wish my memory was better about those - we had some good soldiers in the battery.

**Who or what had the greatest impact on your life after your assignment to the Battalion?**

I left the battalion in the spring of 85 to go to Herzo Base because I was a senior in grade captain and needed to get to a senior captain/major assignment. I went to 210<sup>th</sup> Brigade S-3 shop as Brigade Assistant S-3. I was there only three months when LTC Sam Floca, Battalion Commander in 3/37 FA, an 8 inch battalion at Herzo Base, fired a BC who was not performing and asked Colonel Hood for me by name. So I got to command a battery again, for about 15 months as I recall. Then the new 3/37 FA battalion commander LTC Clark asked me to stay on as S-3 and Colonel Clifton Potter, who was the Brigade Commander by then, fought off all attempts to put anyone else from 7<sup>th</sup> Corps Artillery into that job. I had been selected for Major by then. I was S-3 for 2 years. So I did an entire 3+ year tour at 3/37 FA, and had an equally great time in that battalion as I had in 2/28. So to answer the question directly, I really appreciate that Colonel Slammin' Sam Floca asked for me to command C Battery 3/37<sup>th</sup> FA - as that opened the door for me to command a battery all the way till I made Major, and to be battalion S-3 for 2 years, and to remain in USAREUR and 210<sup>th</sup> FA Brigade for a 5 year stretch, which is about unheard of for an officer. Sadly Sam Floca died at Fort Hood about two years ago. We exchanged some emails but I didn't get to see him again and always had hoped to. He was already too ill by the time we reconnected online.

I was then at five years in Germany (83-88) and stepson Boris was going to go to college so I rotated back to the US. 2ACR offered me the job of Regimental FSCOORD (the job held by Major Hanna for most of the time mid-80s) but I turned it down. Had I known I would never be assigned to troop duty again I would have stayed. One door closes, another opens.

**Give us an overview of your life after Bleidorn (Marriage, kids, jobs, where you lived, career, etc.)**

I already described my life at Herzo Base. When I came back to the US I taught ROTC at Ball State in Muncie Indiana for 2 years (88-90), then I went to the Command and General Staff Course at Fort Leavenworth (90-91), then I went to the bowels of the Pentagon and stayed there for 5 years on the Army and Joint Staff (91-96) and retired a Lieutenant Colonel.

Ball State was great - I got to impact young people with a desire for the Army and I always loved doing that. I was also able to get a Master's Degree in Education and a divorce.

I was assigned at Fort Leavenworth attending the standard Major's course, the Command and General Staff School, during Desert Storm.

In the Pentagon I was first assigned to the Army Operations Staff that managed all Force Structure for the Artillery, and I knew where every howitzer, ammo vehicle, and bullet was worldwide. I spent a lot of time working with the project office for Paladin (M109A6) and got to fly to Fort Sill on the private plane of the Army Chief of Staff to be present for the welcoming of the first Paladin Battalion in the US. Army. I also spent a lot of time working with the research and development companies for the next generation howitzer, the Advanced Field Artillery System, which used liquid propellant and fired 6 rounds per minute with a crew of 3. But they couldn't get the weight under 70 tons nor keep the tube from corroding after 100 rounds, and finally the project was killed, which I agreed with.

My last job in the Army was with Joint Staff Operations J3, tracking readiness of our joint and combined forces worldwide. And I became a "PowerPoint Warrior" - making slides and preparing Generals and Admirals for Congressional testimony. I went to the Senate Armed Services Committee with the Vice Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff, Admiral Willam Owens; and spent a lot of time briefing in the tank for General John Shalikashvili.

The last thing I did in the Army was to write a brand new topic Joint Publication for the CJCS (General Shalikashvili) signature - "The Chairman's Guide to Joint Readiness Assessment." If you have trouble reading check it out it will put you to sleep in moments. I retired in February 1996.

After retirement from the Army I stayed in Northern Virginia and started a small consulting firm working with federal contractors - those hogs at the trough of our government dollars, helping them win contracts. It's a whole another world. If you worked in it you know what it was like, if you never did be thankful. It was like being back in a battalion TOC during an ARTEP - bad food, long hours, high stress, stale coffee - I was in my element. It was hard but fun and I made good friends.

Zee and Alena moved to Florida for a while after the divorce in 1990 and then to Greenville, South Carolina. Alena was 9 when we divorced and I didn't get to see her except about 2-3 times a year. Divorce is tough on kids. When I decided to throttle back on working I moved to Greenville in 2013, and fully retired about 2018. Alena has given me three grandsons, Dylan (19), Riley (13) and Grayson (11).

I spend time with my daughter and my grandsons. I hike, I golf, and before the pandemic I traveled and need to get back to that. I have hiked to the base of Mount Everest in Nepal twice, from 9000-18000 feet, 9 days to hike up (acclimate on the way) and 4 days to come back down to Lukla and then Kathmandu. I have ridden my motorcycle across the US a few times, as well as in New Zealand, and really love long distance motorcycle touring on my artillery red BMW 1300cc 165HP touring machine. I rode to an Iron Butt Saddle sore 1000 (1000 miles in 24 hours) and Bun Burner 1500 (1500 miles in 36 hours) as I was coming back from the Grand Canyon four years ago, with more than half of that time off of the Interstate. I will not do that again. Those of you who ride may have done that or know about it. I'm 67 now and hope to do one more cross country ride next year, with an excursion into the Canadian Rockies, and then sell my bike.

#### **What would you like to see with our 28th FA Association?**

I applaud those with big plans for the association - scholarships etc. Personally I think we have mission accomplished with the emplacement of the monument and the last memorial brick sold and at some point we may just strike the tent and CSMO and celebrate what has been accomplished. But that's not for me to say. The reunions are always memorable; I have reconnected with old friends like Dave Dehnel who I knew before I went to Ansbach, many friends from my time there, and made some new ones like Dave and Lisa Mohan, who I never served with but my life is enriched by getting to know them.

I want to close by applauding Tom Houston and Bill Dunham - the true visionary and the get it done no matter what guy, as well as all of the other people who worked so hard to get the monument in place and to get us to where we are today. Bravo Tom and Bill and everyone who helped out - what you accomplished will stand at Fort Sill attesting to us for hundreds of years to come.



**During 2/28 FA**



**After 2/28 FA**



**Now!!!**

**Interview with SFC (Retired) Scott Sumpter  
HHB and C Battery  
Section Chief and Training NCO in C Battery  
Assistant Battalion Training NCO in Battalion S-3**

**When were you assigned to the Battalion and what was your Battery, MOS, and Job assignments?**

I was assigned to the battalion from October 1985 to October 1988. My MOS was 13B20/30 (Charlie/HHB Battery), section chief and training NCO in C Battery, and assistant battalion training NCO in the battalion S-3. My duties as section chief included the training and development of soldiers in all artillery cannoner skills as well as basic infantry tactics and skills and to ensure soldiers were always prepared for combat/deployments/alerts at all times. As battery training NCO I maintained the qualifications records and training schedules. As battalion S-3 assistant training NCO I made sure all training and development at battery level was being conducted in accordance with the Army standards.

**What was your marital status and where did you live while you were there?**

I was married and my son Levi was born in Nuremberg in 1987. We lived in the Bleidorn lease apartments (white building located between Bleidorn and Barton Barracks).

**Who was in your chain of command and what do you remember about them?**

My chain of command consisted of 1<sup>st</sup> COC: SSG Edgar Cox (Gunnery Sergeant) and SFC Bobby Trice (Chief of Firing Btry/Smoke), 1SG Charles Moretz and CPT Thomas Houston (Btry Cmdr), [note; LT Nils Strombom XO and LT Sneed FDO], CSM David Stewart (Bn CSM), LTC Ralph Ripley (Bn Cmdr); 2<sup>nd</sup> COC: SSG Cox (Gunnery Sgt), SFC Trice (CFB/Smoke), 1SG Moretz and CPT David Dehnel (Btry Cmdr), [note; LT Sneed XO and LT John Donahue FDO], CSM Stewart and LTC Ripley (both still in Cmdr); 3<sup>rd</sup> COC: SSG Gary Dallas (Gunnery Sergeant) and SFC Reynolds (CFB), 1SG Ernest Romero and CPT Pat Malherek (Btry Cmdr), [note; Sneed XO and LT Donahue FDO], CSM Doyle Watters (Bn CSM),

LTC Jeff McCausland (Bn Cmdr), then CPT Ricky Earleywine (Btry Cmdr), rest of chain of command remained the same.

All the Battery Commanders had their own unique style of leadership & personality in their own rights. I learned a lot from each. However, the three commanders that stood out the most to me at the battery level; CPT Dehnel, he was a compassionate and tolerable commander, who always looked out for the soldier's wellbeing. Loved serving with him because he taught me (a hardass) to have empathy and understanding. CPT Malherek, he was an NCO commander. He had confidence in the non-commissioned officers' corps. However, he put his foot down when integrity came into question, as well as doing and knowing our jobs. I enjoyed serving under his command because he taught me setting standards for the purpose of mission accomplishment. Finally, CPT Earleywine, he was an all-in commander, by that I mean, he trusted and believed in his NCO's and soldiers. I enjoyed serving next to him because he always had a commonsense approach and a continue to set goals mentality to achieve success. He was an enlisted soldier before becoming an officer. He was soldier street smart, great commander. As for the NCO Corps in my chain of command, only three stand out. 1SG Moretz, he was an arrow straight meticulous and git-er-done NCO. Loved serving with him because he taught me about paying attention to detail. SFC (Smoke) Bobby Trice, this NCO was the best field artilleryman in the Army in my view. No one taught me more about my job and his job than SFC Trice. Smoke Trice did three tours in Vietnam and struggled with the loss of some of the men that served with him, but he always made sure to pay it forward to future Gunnery SGT's & Smokes. He was not a garrison (spit shine/starch fatigue) soldier, he was a field (artillery) soldier, so make no mistake about that. Greatest non-commissioned officer in the field artillery I ever served with. He taught me everything about being a 13B (Salute). 1SG Ernest Romero, WOW! Now I will say I was blessed with great leadership with all of these NCO's. However, 1SG Romero brought the greatest training that all NCO's should never let go of, and that is infantry tactics and maneuvers. 1SG Romero brought his combat experience to C Battery, and impressed upon us that should our equipment breakdown, you become foot soldiers, and that infantry training was necessary to be a complete soldier. Absolutely loved serving with him because he taught me how to be a genuinely soldiers first caring non-commissioned officer, and to know all aspects of the NCO's job. One person I don't want to forget, CPT Tommy Houston, he was the commander who trusted in me as E-5 section chief, this gave me confidence.

**When you hear the term "Graf" or Grafenwoehr what comes to mind?**

Training and fun, doing my sweat and tears artillery J O B!!! Note: (LOL) M16A1 (934628)

**What were your toughest times when you were in the Battalion?**

I overall did not have any tough times. In fact, this was one of the best assignments in my career. Only two incidents that I considered a tough time was when SGT Donavon Arnold died as a result of a car accident. He had a wife and kids that went through this unfortunate time. The other was a young soldier whose nickname was Ziggy. He died while on Reforger as a result having epileptic seizures. LTC Ripley put his name on the 175mm gun we had on display to honor him.

**What did you like best about your time in the Battalion?**

Training and teaching my soldiers about all aspects of their job. Taking soldiers that others had no patience with, turning them into soldiers. I also, I won Basepiece on more than a few occasions, competing with two fine NCOs (SSG Gary Dallas & SSG Keith Young). Winning the Diamond Bucks Battalion competition, and the ultimate honor of winning Top Gun of VII Corps Europe. None of this could be possible without the support and confidence of the chain of command, and especially without the great execution of each individual soldier in my section.

**Whom is the person you remember the most from your time in the Battalion?**

Three Non-Commissioned Officers; 1SG Moretz (attention to detail and git-er-done mentality); SFC (Smoke) Trice (best artillery trainer I have ever met in the Army and excellent field soldier); 1SG Romero (best combat Infantry trainer and leader I met. Learned how to be an all-around soldier and have compassion, empathy, and understanding for the soldier). All three made me a better soldier and NCO.

**Who or what had the greatest impact on your life after your assignment to the Battalion?**

I would have to say without question, Smoke Trice, SSG Dallas, and SSG Young. They were great field artillery soldiers (NCOs). In the spirit of competing to be the best, I had to figure out how to beat the best, and the only way to do that was to know and execute my job and training by staying on my toes at all times. These two section chiefs were the battalion's best non-commissioned officers, and I recognized when I got to 2/28. Not only were we competitors at just field artillerymen, but we also enjoyed being selected to attend Drill Sergeant School. After learning what each one did at the school (Dallas & Young graduated top of the classes), I could not let them win, so I also accomplished that same feat. Then, not only did we get assigned to the same training battalion, but we eventually were also in same training battery (different platoons) with the competing war still going. So, I would say these two NCOs were a huge impact after my assignment in 2/28 FA.

**Give us an overview of your life after Bleidorn (Marriage, kids, jobs, where lived, career, etc.)**

I was only married for four years. I was committed to the Army, and my soldiers. My son Levi was born while I was assigned in battalion. As for places lived and life/career after service, I am going to keep that private. I will just say I had a tough time transitioning from military service.

**What would you like to see with our 28<sup>th</sup> FA Association?**

I am new to this, but I had an awesome time at the Ft. Sill Reunion. Seeing all of you was the greatest five days of my life since being in the service. I saw some of finest officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers I had ever served with. My hope with the Association is to continue to see and have the passion and dedication, and professionalism I saw with CPT (LTC) Tommy Houston and 1SG Charlie Moretz. These two guys, both said "Welcome Home Smoke." I will never forget those words. Thank you to the 28<sup>th</sup> FA Association for opening your arms and bringing me back home. Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier. "ROCK STEADY & LEAN FORWARD IN THE FOXHOLE"!!!!!!!!!!!!

**GUNSHOT!!!**



**Interview with Vangie Romero  
Spouse of 1SG (Retired) Ernie Romero, C Battery**

**When were you and your family part of the 2-28 FA? What was your husband's assignment in the battalion?**

Ernie was the First Sergeant of Charlie Battery from December 1986 - July 1989.

**While in Ansbach, did you have a job? Were you involved with any volunteer activities?**

I was a paraprofessional/teacher's aide in kindergarten and special education with the DODs Schools. I volunteered with the Charlie Battery Wives - we had bake sales to buy items for Charlie Battery's day room in the barracks, we planned special themed parties (Halloween, 50's Night) for GI's. Our daughters would bake birthday cakes for each GI's birthday. This was special because Ernie (1SG) would give them to the soldiers at last formation.

**When you hear of Grafenwoehr/Graf, what do you think about?**

I remember the wives getting together and sending care packages with goodies to Battery. We'd also prepare for their returns by having sandwiches and baked goods for them after their travels.

**What was your toughest time while your husband was assigned to the battalion?**

I didn't really have a tough time. I stayed busy with our daughters and our Army friends. The Charlie Battery wives would also be there for each other if we ever needed anything while our husbands were away. I always felt supported.

**What did you like most about your time in Germany?**

Being able to travel to close countries and discovering Germany. We also loved the "togetherness" of our Charlie Battery community.

**What did you and your family do for rest and relaxation?**

Travel, swimming, shopping, day drives (exploring).

**Who is the person you remember most from your time in Ansbach?**

I remember Glenda Taylor, Barbara Pollock, Paula Johnson, and Marisol Morales. These were my close Charlie Battery/Bleidorn friends.

**What was the funniest thing you remember from your days in Ansbach?**

Lots of laughter at our Charlie Battery Wives meetings and at our parties.

**Give us an overview of your life (marriage, kids, job, career, etc.) after leaving Ansbach.**

I brought the girls back to the states in the summer of '89 to get them ready to start school. Ernie came back in the winter of '89. It was hard adjusting to life without Charlie Battery. We no longer had our community that we were used to.

We also moved into our first house that wasn't military housing. I worked different part time jobs, Ernie finished his Army career in CO, and the girls completed school and college in CO.

**What would you like to see in our new 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Association?**

I hope to see a sense of community and support for each other. It is nice to have others to keep in touch with that have had similar experiences. The reunions are wonderful to look forward to.



**\*This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> PART of a series on the history of Bleidorn Kaserne.**

## The History of Bleidorn Kaserne

By Tommy Houston

### The Growth of Bleidorn

The first US Army unit to enter Bleidorn Kaserne was the 9<sup>th</sup> Armored Infantry Battalion which was part of the 9<sup>th</sup> Armored Division. The 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry found the Kaserne deserted, however, several tons of artillery ammunition was found in the underground storage, wired for detonation. Of course, the detonation never came, otherwise we would have all been stationed somewhere else other than Bleidorn!!



Flossenburg Refugees at Bleidorn

Like many other former German Army Kasernes occupied by the allies after the end of the war, Bleidorn was used to house displaced persons from the Nazi concentration camps. 2000 of these displaced persons/refugees came to Bleidorn from the Flossenburg Concentration camp which, interestingly enough was located near the Czech Border near the city of Hof and was liberated by the 2<sup>nd</sup> US Cavalry. What makes this even more interesting is that our GDP mission for the Battalion in the late 70s and 80s was in the same area and in support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Cavalry!

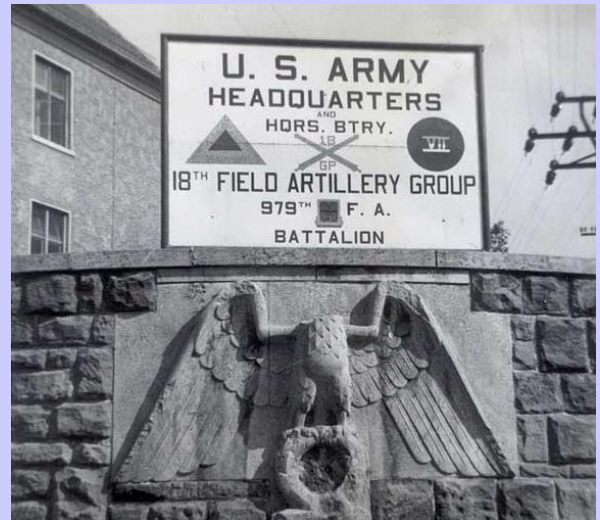
The SS had used the Flossenburg Concentration camp for “political prisoners” from the German occupied countries of Russia, The Netherlands and Czechoslovakia with an additional 1000 German Political prisoners that were homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witness and other non-descript political outcasts declared by the Nazi regime. During the war, the inmates of Flossenburg provided slave labor to the nearby granite quarries from which the products were shipped to Berlin to be used in the construction of Hitlers “new Berlin” vision.

During 1945-47, besides a few US soldiers for security, the Kaserne was primarily under the control of the Red Cross and other post war relief agencies. One of the interview teams that spent a significant amount of time on the Kaserne was the interview team that supported the Nazi War Crime trials. This unit occupied the first floor of the building that later housed the Band and MPs. The unit conducted interviews with the Displaced Persons from Flossenburg which resulted in conviction of many of the Nazis that were associated with the Flossenburg concentration camp.

Most of the Refugees were released to return to their homes by the end of 1947 and Bleidorn was placed on "caretaker" status. While on caretaker status the Kaserne housed about 30 soldiers under the command of a Lieutenant who reported to the US Constabulary that governed Germany until 1952.

In January 1949, the Kaserne was taken over by the 130 man, 539<sup>th</sup> Signal Construction Company along with its companion 200 man German Labor Force company. The mission for this unit was to install a modern military telephone system in Germany to support the US Military. Most of us can relate to the system which was later called "DSN" and continues to serve US forces in Germany today. The unit had its headquarters in the first floor of the Headquarters building (mess hall) and billeted the US Soldiers in the building to the left (Headquarters and HHB). The German laborers were housed in the C and B Battery barracks with the remaining buildings being vacant at the time.

1950-52 saw the beginning of massive construction at Bleidorn. The US Army issued contracts for the construction of the housing area on what had been the German Artillery school training grounds. On the actual Kaserne, contracts were awarded for the construction of the Gym, as well as expansion of the building we knew as Battalion Maintenance/S-4. The purpose of the expansion of Battalion Maintenance/S-4 was for the construction of a movie theatre, bowling alley as well as offices and a studio for an Armed Forces Network (AFN) AM radio station which would service all US units in Bavaria. This was all done with the anticipation of more US forces being assigned to the Ansbach area.



**Entrance to Bleidorn Kaserne during the occupation of the 18<sup>th</sup> FA Group**

*Photo courtesy of USARMYGERMANY.COM*

With Construction completed in 1952, Bleidorn became the home of principally Field Artillery units for the remainder of its time as a US Army asset. In 1952, the Headquarters for the 18<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Group moved in and occupied the Headquarters (Mess Hall) with the troops of the unit billeted in the HHB Building.



**18<sup>th</sup> FA Group Band Practicing on the Kaserne Parade ground**

*Photo courtesy of USARMYGERMANY.COM*

For the next several years, the building most of us knew as the mess hall, was actually used as a Headquarters building. The Mess Halls for the troops were Battery level functions. Each unit had its own Mess Hall located in the basement of each of the buildings.

## !!!MILITARY TRIVIA ANSWERS!!!

1. 3rd Infantry Division Headquartered in Wurzburg, 1st Armored Division HQ in Ansbach, 3rd Brigade 1st Infantry Division (Forward) Stationed in Goppingen, 2nd Armored Cavalry HQ at Merrill Barracks in Nurenburg
2. Nerve Agent, Blood Agent, Mustard Agent
3. Persistent and Non-Persistent
4. M-11 Decontamination device
5. BA-30
6. 100 Mile an hour tape
7. Deuce and a half
8. Twice per year
9. Two Weeks
10. 5

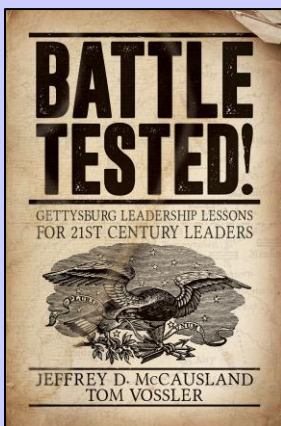


The 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association is proud to announce that one of our members, COL Jeffrey D. McCausland, US Army (Retired), has co-written a book called

***BATTLE TESTED!***



Jeff served as the Battalion Operations Officer and Executive Officer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. He also served as the Battalion Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 17<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery during Operation Desert Storm!!!



***Summary of the Approach of the Book:***

Gettysburg was the largest battle ever fought on the North American continent. Over 170,000 Union and Confederate soldiers engaged in this struggle and roughly 25 percent were casualties after three days. Union victory at Gettysburg was vital to end the rebellion, preserve the nation, and set a course for the future. Lincoln later honored Union soldiers for giving “the last full measure of devotion” to the nation, and its memory is deeply embedded in the American psyche.

This iconic event provides contemporary leaders a superb opportunity to examine enduring leadership principles, including:

- How leaders and organizations operate under enormous stress
- How leaders make the hard decisions
- How the leadership skills of several well-known military officers such as Lee, Stuart, Meade, and many others, can provide insights for modern leaders

You may never visit the Gettysburg battlefield, but understanding historic lessons from *Battle Tested!* will have a profound influence on not only your leadership abilities, but also your life, organizations, and career.

The book, *Battle Tested!*, is available on Amazon: [bit.ly/D6battletested](https://bit.ly/D6battletested)

**CONGRATULATIONS JEFF!!!**

With each Edition of the Newsletter we want to share news and pictures (*past and/or present*) from members of the 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Association. If you have anything significant in your life like the birth of a child/grandchild, a child graduating from college, entering the military, things your families are doing, trips you have taken, reunions, etc.....send them our way!!! We want to share them with our 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Family!!! Please email them to us at...

[Newsletter@28fara.org](mailto:Newsletter@28fara.org)

**THE REUNION WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!!!**

*Enjoy the pictures!!! 😊*



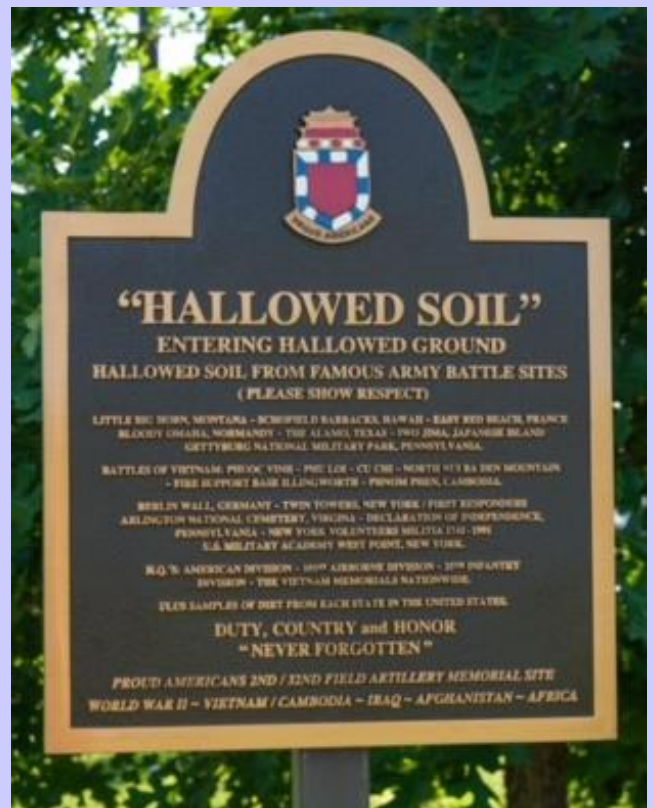
WELCOME  
&  
*Uncasing of the Colors!!!*



*Uncasing of the Colors*



## Monument Dedication Ceremony



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



### Monument Dedication Ceremony



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



*Monument Dedication Ceremony*



*Unit Demo*



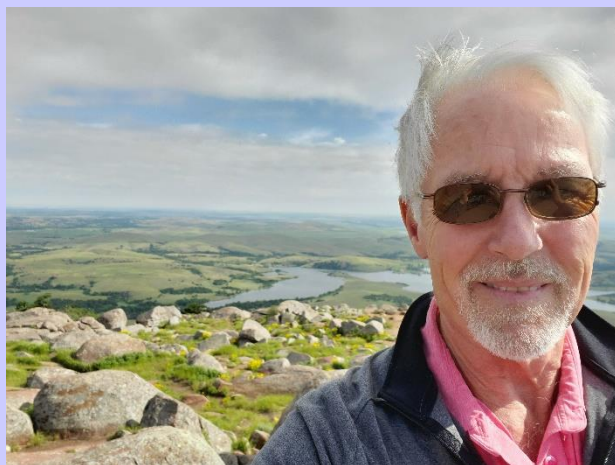
*German Restaurant*



*Activities and Having Fun*



*Activities and Having Fun*



*Banquet*



*Banquet*



## Banquet

The *Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher Award* was presented to Madonna Stecher at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association Reception and Awards Banquet. This award is given to those who have voluntarily contributed in significant and meaningful ways and distinguished themselves through faithful and devoted service to the Field Artillery Community.

**CONGRATULATIONS MADONNA!!!**



*28<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regimental Association  
Reunion 2021....  
A HUGE SUCCESS!!!*





**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
CALL FOR  
ARTILLERY**