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Date: Tue, 16 May 2000 15:20:29 -0400

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Subject: FW: Maltese Cross

From: "James H. Merryman" [redacted] | [Block address](#)

To: dick detra [redacted] >

Dick Had to go to john Zugswarth to get the answers. He was an original member of the battalion See his great input below and invitation for you to ask him anything else you need to know. Jim.

From: "johnz" <[redacted]>
To: "'James H. Merryman'" [redacted] >
Subject: RE: Maltese Cross
Date: Mon, May 15, 2000, 4:34 PM

Jim, Thanks for the opportunity to provide some input to the 269th history.

The headquarters was formed at Ft. Bragg in the fall of 1966. I was the first assigned officer to report in. It was satellite on the 82nd Avn Bn and had a TDY major who was in charge before I arrived. To a great extent we were a carrying unit taking replacements to Vietnam. While we did have quite a few aviators we did get several NCO's who had reserve commissions and were called to active duty. One was the XVIII Corps SGM, Capt Darius Grogg. He was hqs commandant for a while. We also had a finance officer, AG and others. We did draw all our equipment and had to pass an ATT administered by the 82nd Avn. Bn. I was then the chief umpire for their annual ATT. In Dec66/Jan67 we shipped our equipment from Charleston with a few NCO's in charge. Some of us took our families home and joined the remainder of the bn in San Diego for ship transport to RVN. The majority flew via a contract Standard Air from Bragg to SDO. Major Roger Waterberry, flew with the troops and one of the stewardess gave them a black scarf which

they carried on the ship. Enroute the wheels started turning and seeing that our Bn. CO was LTC Byron E. Sheppard we put the black scarf and Byron (Baron) together and came up with the name "Black Barons". It stuck and when we arrived in RVN we had the logo made and had to put the Unit Crest in the middle. We knew that the 187 would be assigned to us before we left Bragg where they were also organizing and I guess they chose the Blackhawk name to have recognition with the 269th. As I recall, the 188 and 21st picked their name when they were assigned to us in RVN. The 116th was long in country and had a well established name. The 242nd, I believe may have had their name before assignment to us. Jim, you may recall the unit crest in the Maltese cross. Still have mine. We arrived in Vung Tau in mid January, loaded on a LST and came on shore to be picked up and delivered to Chu Chi by Chinook. We set up a tent city and as I recall we were mortared the first night. We had a young leg Signal Corps Captain who was really impressed and we could not get him away from filling sand bags and digging holes. Us aviators were shipped out to other units for in country training. I went to the 11th Bn, flew with the Tomahawks and worked with Neil McGillicuddy their S-3. Sheppard went to 12th group and we got another LtC who got sick and had to be med evaced in about a week or so. We next got LtC Henry Nagayo for a short time and then settled in for the long term with you. Roger Waterberry got shot up and crashed during in country training and never fully recovered. I did stop and see him in Fayetteville in the 70's. I was one of the very few originals that spent their entire tour in the 269th. Believe Ernie Sprinkel was one also. Left RVN end of Dec 67 and went to Atchison, Ka to get my degree and then to Leavenworth. When I got to Leavenworth they were going to start teaching RVN combat tactics. I had a copy of our operations order for Yellowstone in Dec 67, one of the largest air lifts conducted. They took it, called it something else, used our opns order ver batum except changing names to Gayman commanding and shertz S-3. Pretty cute. I still have the original op ord and the Leavenworth package. Guess they taught it there for some time. If Dick has our after action files he has something great. As I recall you really emphasized that and it taught us all a lot and we sent it on to many others. Great contribution.

If anyone has any questions that I may be able to help with just call.

Hope

this helps and also hope to be seeing you again soon. Thx, Z

-----Original Message-----

From: James H. Merryman [mailto: [REDACTED]]

Sent: Monday, May 15, 2000 1:33 PM

To: john zugschwert

Subject: FW: Maltese Cross

John See Detras message below. Need some help. I am not sure but thought

they were named before leaving CONUS. Do you remember? Jim

From: Dick Detra < [REDACTED]>

To: Jim Merryman < [REDACTED]>

Subject: Maltese Cross

Date: Sun, May 14, 2000, 3:32 PM

Jim,

I need your help on the heraldry text I'm writing on the Bn. I have all the correspondence between you and the Institute from Dec. '67. I plan on using most of it. My question has to do with using BLACK in the Bn. companies. The 116th and 242nd had established logos? The other three 187th, 188th and the 21st did have Black

incorporated into their names. Can you explain what exactly the story is behind this concept? Who picked the name Black Widows for the 188th? I'm pretty close to winding up the text for your Bn. including three articles written about the 269th. Hope to hear back from you soon. Dick Detra

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