





DELTA RAIDERS
CO D 2/501 INF
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

D- 2/501 Infantry Holds Reunion Honors 54 Fallen

Vietnam veterans of D-2/501 Infantry held their biennial reunion at Fort Eustis, Virginia, 11-13 July 2008. The “*Delta Raiders*” of D Co. 2/501 Infantry, 101st Airborne Division served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1972. During that time they lost 54 soldiers and had two Medal of Honor recipients (Joe Hooper and Clifford Sims). One of the Medal of Honor recipients, Joe Hooper, is considered by many as the most decorated soldier of the Vietnam War.

The Delta Raiders began regrouping in the 1980’s when the father of one of its KIAs began researching the history of the battle of Hill 805, where his son gave his life in July of 1970. This was the catalyst for locating former unit members and the forming an association to be called the “Delta Raiders of Vietnam Association” or DROVA.

DROVA holds a reunion every other year at a different location across the nation. The linchpin of the reunion is a memorial service where the survivors of the unit honor those who did not return. A ceremony includes Delta Raiders stepping forward and placing dog tags of their lost brothers on a memorial board and saluting their fallen comrades. Surviving spouses (Mary Simms Parker and Faye Hooper) of the unit’s two Medal of Honor recipients place a wreath by the memorial board. The memorial concludes with a firing squad salute and taps. With the Raiders, bonds formed on the battlefield 40 years ago are still strong.

DROVA fallen have been recently memorialized through the donation of a hand-made Turkish rug featuring the unit insignia surrounded by 54 stars representing fallen comrades. The rug was designed and donated by Colonel (R) Stan Akins and presented at this year’s reunion.

In addition to biennial reunions, DROVA mails frequent newsletters to located members of the unit.

The 501st Infantry has had an “on again, off again” relationship with the 101st Airborne Division. The 501st saw combat with the 101st in WWII and Vietnam. The 2/501st was inactivated on 31 July 1972 as part of the Post Vietnam Reorganization.

From 1967 to 1972, over 1100 soldiers served in Vietnam with the Delta Raiders (D-2/501). Of those, nearly half have been located. The association continues to search for former members of D-2/501. DROVA can be contacted at their web site at www.blackied2501.com/drova.htm.

Submitted by James M. Potter
Delta Raiders of Vietnam Association

Photo 1: (left to right) Fallen Raider Ron Bales’ brother Bill and daughter Annette stand with Raider Terry Moore next to the memorial dog tag board at the Raiders memorial service.

Photo 2: Delta Raiders memorial rug features the unit insignia surrounded by 54 stars representing their fallen comrades. The Turkish rug was designed and donated by Colonel (R) Stan Akins.