

Thanks for your service

To the Original Outlaws from the Iraq Outlaws

Thank you B Troop, 1/158th Aviation Regiment for your warm welcome and gracious treatment during our Ft. Hood visit, 7 & 8 April. As one of the ten (6 men and 4 spouses) "Original Outlaws" group, we stayed at the comfortable Plaza Hotel coordinated by Al Iller. Thursday evening B Troop Commander and our host, CPT Sean Huggins, came to greet and accompany us to the Ft. Hood hangar where his B Troop Orderly Room, Admin area, and aircraft are located. It was the site of B Troop's Hail & Farewell party Thursday night and Change of Command ceremony Friday morning. There we were met and welcomed by B Troop soldiers who thanked us for our service in Vietnam forty years ago. During the Hail & Farewell CPT Huggins honored each Original Outlaw, presenting to us a framed Order of the Spur Certificate to include a set of spurs earned through our patriotism and soldierly skills demonstrated on the fields of battle in Vinh Long Province of Vietnam. We were also given a 21st Cavalry Brigade (Air Combat) coin awarded to B Troop for excellence, and a B Troop tee shirt.

Met B Troop soldiers including CW3 Jackie Koonce, a Senior Aviator, and 16-year Army veteran. She hails from Tacoma WA where our Bob Koonce, no relation, now lives. Another woman aviator was CW2 Lori Gaff, a Kansas State University graduate, who had always wanted to fly. She took advantage of the Army Warrant Officer flight-training program. CW2 Gaff enjoyed her flying experiences and duty in Iraq. Would not be surprised to see CWs Gaff and Koonce at our R2K+6 reunion in New Orleans. CW4 Wayne Durasko was B Troop maintenance officer. Like most maintenance officer/test pilots, he worked uncommonly long hours to ensure B Troop could support all assigned missions with safe well-maintained aircraft. They did. Will send crew chief Sp4 Shane Durbin information concerning desired information VLOA Associate Membership. Comments of appreciation were received for both the VLOA plaque I presented as Director, VLOA to CPT Huggins and a letter Tom Anderson wrote to CPT Huggins and B Troop, which was read by Al Iller during the Hail & Farewell party. After the Change of Command ceremony and reception and prior to our departure from Killeen Friday, VLOA members were treated to an Oriental Buffet luncheon, compliments of Ernie and Linda Isbell.

B Troop will be added to our VLOA Newsletter mailing list. Our visit was a memorable occasion for each of us. Their soldiers were sharp, enthusiastic, and dedicated. It was obvious B Troop benefited from the decisive but compassionate strong leadership of CPT Sean Huggins and 1st Sgt Bruce Robertson. They received strong support from their senior headquarters, 21st Cavalry Brigade (Air Combat). The U.S. Army is in good hands as demonstrated by our soldiers and their supportive families from B Troop, 1/158th Aviation Regiment.

s/Tim Bisch, VLOA guest of B Troop