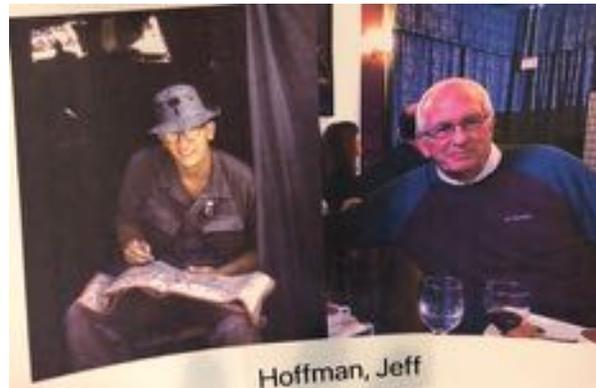


My 50th Ranger Reunion Notes

OK, so with my final exam in the book, the submission of the semester grades for my Radford University students into the Registrar's office and Sean's graduation now out of the way, I have had time to put together a short report (as I promised I would) on our 50th Ranger class reunion at FT. Benning, April 25-29, 2018.

First, it was a great time, far exceeding my expectations. I took our youngest son, Sean, with me and he too enjoyed meeting, talking with and sharing the experience/stories with my Ranger classmates. Kudos to Jim Godfrey and Jeff Hoffman who were the driving force behind the reunion. They did a terrific job and all who attended were the beneficiaries of their efforts.



Our first night we had a reception and I met for the first time the owner of Ranger Joe's, Paul Voorhees.



Ranger Joe's has been outside Ft. Benning since at least 1965, as I shopped in the store to get my supplies/equipment for my first attempt at Ranger School in August of that year, after completing IOBC

(Infantry Officers Basic Course) That time I made it through 5 (of the nine) weeks, into the Mountain Phase at Dahlonga, GA, where I got pneumonia and spent the next 2 weeks in Tripler Army Hospital and on convalescing leave. Next I went to Airborne School and got my jump wings, though I broke my right ankle on my 5th jump and was therefore not recycled back into Ranger School until the summer of 1968, when I started all over. So, I'm a 14 week Ranger, with a 3 break between classes.



On day one we bused to the Airborne Ranger Training Brigade for a briefing by the Brigade Commander; then to Victory Pond for the graduation of a new class of Rangers where some of us had the honor of pinning tabs on the newly minted Rangers.



Then lunch, with Sean back at the Ranger dining facility (I don't remember eating a lot in any mess hall at Ranger School but the food in this facility was very good;



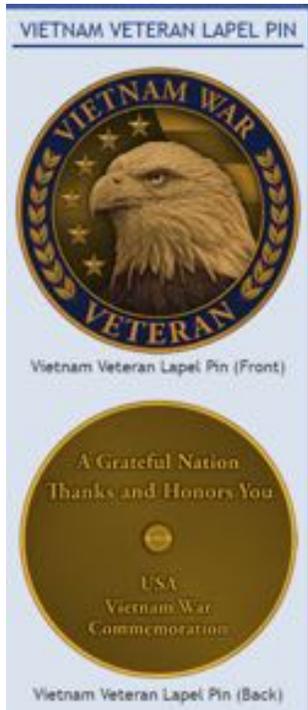
and finally to the Ranger Memorial where we held a memorial service for the Rangers from our class who died in combat or as a result of hostile action.



Saturday we spent much of the day at the new Infantry Museum, built with private funds and the best museum of its type I've ever seen. It was as impressive as it was beautiful. If you are ever near Ft. Benning it is well worth any extra time it will take to add it to your itinerary.



The staff at the museum was very kind to us, allowing us every courtesy and even presenting each of the Rangers with a specially authorized by Congress pin to commemorating our service in Vietnam. The museum director made a short speech on how we were poorly received by the nation when we returned from Vietnam, saying it was wrong and thank us for our service before presenting to each of us our pin and then giving us a hug. Several of the Rangers were unable to hold back tears; I found it difficult to speak when she presented my pin.



The museum has numerous excellent exhibits and memorials, both inside and outside the museum. My particular favorite is the exhibit: *"The Last 100 Yards."* It is a sloped ramp contains which contains life-sized dioramas depicting significant battles in the history of the American infantry: including Yorktown, Antietam, Soissons, Normandy, Corregidor, Soam-Ni, LZ X-Ray, and Iraq. The figures in each battle scene are not mannequins, but are cast sculptures of Active Duty Soldiers who auditioned for the opportunity to represent their predecessors. These soldiers had to wear the plastic and plaster of Paris masks and body casts for between 45 minutes and 4 hours.



Redoubt # 10 at Yorktown and the successful night bayonet charge led by LTC Alexander Hamilton



Attack across Burnside's Bridge at the Battle of Antietam in the Civil War



The

WWI Battle of Soissons



Attack by the 2d

Ranger Battalion on the guns at Pointe du Hoc on D-Day, June 6, 1944. In my first Ranger School class in 1965 there were several sergeants at Camp Darby who had been Rangers in WWII. It was remarkable to be able to talk with them in the evenings after training was done. I can still remember us sitting around them, asking questions. I wish I could remember their answers.

on this quest (where to go, what records that I might access) I'd love to hear them.



There were also exhibits on a bayonet charge in the Korean War,



an airmobile assault at LZ X-Ray in the Central Highlands of Vietnam by the 7th Cavalry Division which is the subject of the book; *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young*; and the movie: *We Were Soldiers*.



and an exhibit on Operation

Desert Storm

Saturday night we attended the reunion banquet, talked with Ranger Mike Ranger via Face Time. Mike could not attend because he was very sick. Yes, there was a Ranger in our class whose name was Ranger. Although I heard him called out several times by the cadre, I never actually met Ranger Ranger during the nine weeks and was never really sure I was hearing the cadre correctly.

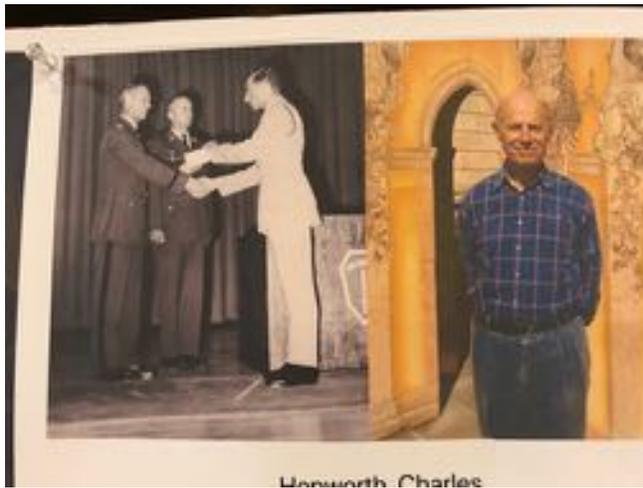
My Ranger buddy, Chapin Hunt, who was unable to attend, also called in and spoke to the group, telling a story of a cold, rainy night on an ambush in the Mountain Phase at Dhlonega, Georgia, that got a huge laugh. Something about he and I were so close under a poncho, so cold and so wet that the only way he could have been closer was to give me a kiss. Everyone of the Rangers at the reunion remembered that night and how miserable it was.



Chapin with his new Ranger

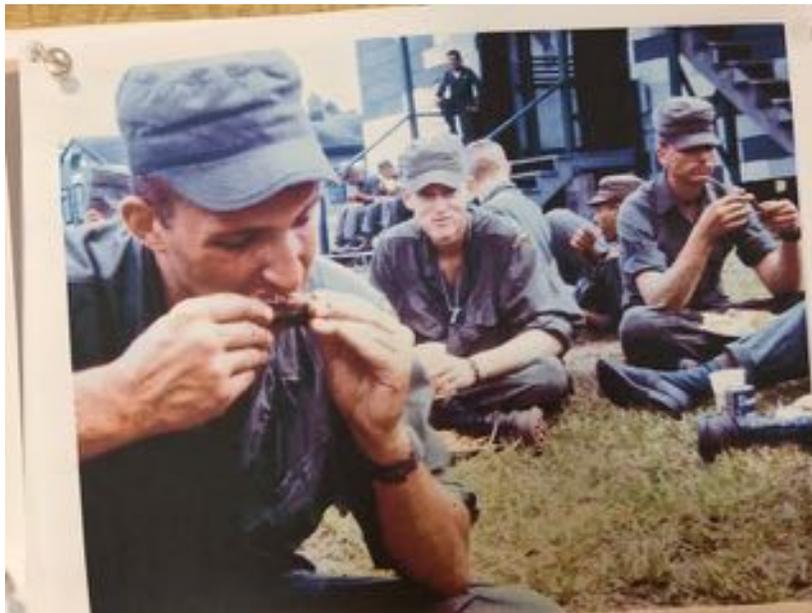
Tab and Chapin today.

In the hospitality suite there were several pictures of Ranger School that I thought you might find of interest:



This is our Lt

Charles Hepworth, British Army, at IOBC graduation, today somewhere in the UK and with me at the 9/11 Memorial at the Infantry Museum. Charles is a great guy and was the Distinguished Graduate, he graduated first in our Ranger Class.



This is the chicken dinner just after tabs were pinned on. I was not at this formation, as I left the day before to start another class - the Infantry Officer Advanced Course at Ft. Benning. That may be Chapin biting into a chicken wing?



before graduation

I think this is in Florida just



This is just after Ranger school, 26 pounds lighter, at the Wedgefield Court Appartments outside Ft. Benning where Buz Altschuler, Carl Savory, Tom Needham, Ron Walters, I and others lived until we went to Viet Nam. It was a fun place to live, very newly constructed and has many good memories for those of us who lived there... The apartment behind me with the open

door is mine and the one to the right is where Tom Needham and Ron Walters lived.



And this is why it is often not a great idea to go back. Wedgefield Court now looks like this, is a rough neighborhood and not a place that is on any recommended list of quality apartments in the area.

At the reunion I met Buz Altschuler and Carl Savory, who I did not know before, even though we were in the airborne platoon in Ranger School and lived opposite ends of Wedgefield Court. We did, however, know many of the same people at Ft. Benning and later. Buz and Carl were Ranger buddies and have been close friends in the years since.





Buz and his wife Kathi and the Saturday night banquet.



(a photo of me near Tay Ninh in 1969 and the Ranger graduation/tab pinning of Sean's older brother, Devon, at Victory Pond in the Spring of 2003)



My last photo is of Clark Washington, Bill Hendrickson, Sean and I at the wonderful dinner we had on Friday night at the Meritage restaurant in Columbus. Sean had a great time and on a final note, instead of his plan to join the Air Force, when we got back to Virginia we went to an Army recruiter. So, some of the reunion's magic rubbed off on him.

OK, so that's a not so short tour of my first ever reunion. I enjoyed it so much and am sorry I haven't attended others. I am hoping that we are going to repeat the drill at the 75 anniversary of D-Day, in June, 2019.

Best regards,
Rusty

F.L. Rusty Capps
President
CT/CI Training Partners LLC
4 Hamilton Drive
Lexington, VA 24450
Telephone: 540-460-3662