



# THE HARD CHARGER

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## COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT - AUGUST 2015

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The 22nd Annual Reunion was held in Branson, MO, from the 3rd to the 6th of June, and thirty-nine Hard Chargers were in attendance, along with twenty-six family members and guests. The early arrivals helped with the stocking of the hospitality suite - in Missouri, Walgreens and Walmart stock liquor and beer, making these fine establishments subject to several return visits for resupply as “ammo” stocks dwindled in the course of the reunion.

As the attendees gathered, the usual embellished tales about actions in Vietnam began to pile up knee deep to a tall giraffe, and it required a break every couple of hours to remove the expended brass. Thursday morning began with the General Membership meeting, and in the course of the meeting it was decided to hold the 2017 Reunion at Lake George, NY, near Fort Totten. The meeting was followed by the Memorial Service. To the solemn recitation of the names of those lost in Vietnam and earlier conflicts, John Hoetker and Bill Bilo added the names of those who died at Camp Funston, KS, in 1918 and 1919, primarily from the deadly flu outbreak of that time, and also remembered were those Hard Chargers and family members who have left us since the Reunion at Fort Sill.

That afternoon, both the Barry Williams show and the Haygood Family show were available as group activities, and a number of the crew took advantage of those. Friday was a day for individual exploration and enjoyment, of which there is no shortage in Branson!

On Friday night we were entertained by Hard Charger Eric Miller and his talented wife Mary. They performed a 2.5 hour mix of Country, Western and Jazz music that was fun-filled and action packed. They have been playing together for 42 years, and are just getting warmed up! They promised to come to Fort Sill next year, and we are looking forward to seeing them again.

Following the catered supper, which no one left feeling hungry, the awards ceremony took

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place. The list of awardees can be found elsewhere in the newsletter, and as is always the case, we are pleased to welcome those to the honors and recognition bestowed on them.

The evening and the Reunion concluded with the World Famous Auction. Treasurer Jim Harris and Yours Truly did our best to put FUN into fund raising! Lots of laughs, much hootin' and hollerin', and a great time was had by all! We'll do it all again next year at Fort Sill. See you there!

HARD CHARGER 9G  
END OF MISSION - OUT!

*Dan Gillotti*



**What's wrong with this picture?**

(answer: Not a beer can in sight!)



### **It's Miller Time!**

use or copy this form to pay your dues

For those members who enroll as active members on a yearly basis, please complete this form and send it in with check as indicated. You can also take this opportunity to enroll as a lifetime member and end the annoyance of having to do this every year!

First name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ W/M \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

\$15.00 check enclosed for 2015 dues ( )

or \$99.00 check enclosed for lifetime membership ( )

Contribution (\$ ) enclosed to assist with Association expenses

Mail form and check to: Jim Harris, 30th FAR Association Membership  
212 Brittain Court, Brentwood, TN 37027

## *On to Fort Sill in '16*

Branson is now behind us - a very successful and entertaining reunion, in one of the best tourist spots in this country - and now we prepare for our 23rd annual get-together in our familiar destination, Fort Sill. We are only two plus years away from celebrating the 100th Anniversary of our Regiment in 2018, and this upcoming reunion will be the lead-in to the celebration of the big One-Oh-Oh. Those who attended the last Sill reunion will remember how different it was from earlier meetings there, and we can sure hope that we will be able to find as much originality and stimulation in next year's gathering as well.

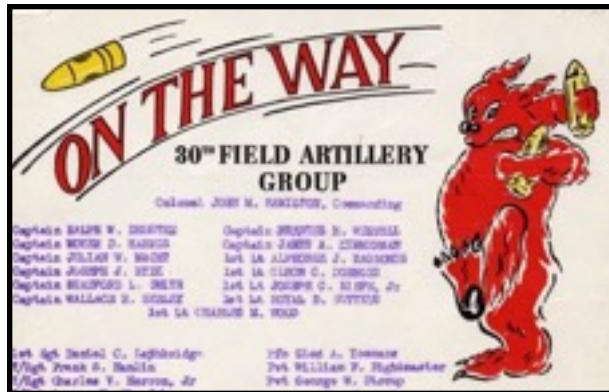
In between the next two Sill meetings, the focus will shift well east of the Mississippi to New York state, where the odd-year meeting will be at Lake George. This 32 mile-long lake north of Schenectady is considered to be one of the most beautiful in America, at least according to Thomas Jefferson, and will represent a very different aspect for us in comparison to the meetings which will sandwich it at Fort Sill!

At any rate, many thanks to Wayne Crabtree and the others who worked diligently and effectively to make the 2015 Reunion a success and an enjoyable place to be. They had to work on short notice, after the post-reunion decision made in late 2014 that Washington, D.C., was out of the appropriate price league. In spite of that handicap, everything came together well and the 30th FAR Association can add another to the now 22 times that our veterans have had the opportunity to get together, to renew friendships forged in war and maintained in peacetime. May the tradition continue!





## The Rite to Arm Bears



Most of us are familiar with the 30th FA Group's logo of the shell-throwing bear, a fiery creature whose origins apparently arose from the unit's deployment in Alaska early in WW II. We have used the bear occasionally in our printed materials, and it served as the basis for the reunion pin in 2010.

Bill Bilo recently came across a real life story of an artillery bear, whose career as a cherished and respected pet of a Polish Artillery Supply Company "bears" repeating.

After the swift defeat of the Polish Army in 1939 by the combined Nazi and Soviet forces, troops loyal to the pre-war Polish government who had evaded capture and escaped to areas under Allied control were formed into new units and deployed to North Africa and the Middle East, where Britain was fighting alone, not only against the Axis powers but also against German-leaning organizations and governments in the same area that are battlegrounds today. One such unit was the Polish 22nd Artillery Supply Company. The men of the unit found a bear cub in 1942 and named him Wojtek (Voytek). The cub, no bigger than a state fair game prize, was fed with the usual fruits, vegetables and honey, but he also developed a taste for beer and tobacco. The animal moved with the unit as they campaigned through Iran and Palestine, becoming the unofficial mascot of the company and living pretty much as the men did - eating, drinking, and sleeping in tents. He was taught to salute when greeted.

The British, however, had rules against pets in camp, so the Polish Army formally enlisted Voytek as a Private, gave him a serial number and carried him on the rolls. As the Poles participated in the bloody struggle up the Italian boot, it is alleged that Voytek's moment of glory came at the Battle for Monte Casino. During the attack, Voytek actually "hand-carried" boxes of ammunition from the supply trucks to the gun sites, and his actions were so inspiring that after the battle, the insignia of the 22nd Arty was changed to show the bear walking on his hind legs and carrying a large shell.

After the war was over, many of the Polish soldiers, still in exile because of the Soviet occupation of their state, settled in Scotland, and Voytek became a resident of the Edinburgh Zoo. There he lived out his days, perking up whenever he heard the Polish language, and was visited constantly by his former comrades, who frequently brought his favorites, beer and cigarettes.

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There are statues and/or plaques honoring Voytek in Poland, Edinburgh, and the Canadian War Museum.

Voytek died in 1963 at the Zoo at the estimated age of 22.

One never knows just what stories are “bruin” in the Field Artillery!

Your Editor



### **The Branson Reunion Attendees - June 2015**

#### **Awardees**

#### **Order of St. Barbara**

Daryl Dunkelberger

Mike Jones

Larry Knight

Mike Ray

#### **Order of Molly Pitcher**

Diane Dunkelberger

Star Jones

Katherine Knight

Christine Ray

## **YOUR QUARTERMASTER'S TWO BITS**

I believe that we just had one of our best reunions ever. Wayne Crabtree did a great job in setting it up and Dan Gillotti somehow kept most everything running smoothly. I thank everyone who made a purchase from the HARDCHARGER store. For a non-Fort Sill reunion, we did really well in sales. While we missed a few of our regular members, including the newsletter editor, it was great to see the members who did make it. If you were not there you missed a lot. Just the musical performance by Eric "Trashman" Miller and Mary Miller was worth the trip! Also worth the trip was being able to shake Frank Milburn's hand. Good to see him and Bobbie back. Rich and Alice Jones looked good also. Alice, as always, looking better than Rich. Hope to see everyone at Sill next year!

### **Computer Hacks**

Guys: A subject that I am no expert on but have felt the effects of in the last years - in the last thirty-six months, I have had a computer hijacked by outside persons and have received emails from at least five of our members who have passed away. I believe that the computer equipment of our deceased members has been sold without anyone wiping the hard drive. I just wanted to give all a warning to watch what you open. Not everyone has a backup computer and has saved everything to that computer or to their internal cloud

### **A Quick Story**

One of our members will get a kick out of this: I talked to a retired E-9 today who deployed to Vietnam with the 1-7 CAV. He saw the 30th crest, which I wear on my work smock, and asked what unit it was. He had been an RTO. After a little talk back and forth, he told me about a time that they could see lights disappearing into a nearby mountain. They knew there was a cave there and they called in artillery fire. The fire hit everywhere but in the cave, and the FO radioed back and told them to have someone "go shake that gun." Things were quiet for a few minutes, and then a round went right into the cave opening. THE REST OF THE STORY: It was one of our members who left the FDC, went over to the gun, laid, loaded and fired the round that hit the cave. The trick was using direct fire instead of lobbing the rounds in. Sometimes we miss the obvious!

Well, that's my two bits worth, and as always, worth everything you paid for them!

**Charles "Comma" Causey - OUT!**

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Deadline for submissions - 13 November

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