



The Life and Times of G. “Bev” Garrett

My first recollection of military life started when I was a mere lad of 7, making 25 cents a day for running hourly to the end of the Coast Guard ship refueling pier in Boston harbor to punch the time clock for the security guard, while he remained snuggled in his guard shack making time with my older sister. The money wasn't bad and he let me wear his sailor hat.

Fast forward to fall 1962. I am a starry-eyed 18-year-old freshman at Arlington State College. A crusty old MSG named Dixon is selling me on the benefits of joining the ROTC Kay-Det Corps, not the least of which was having my pick of the litter amongst the campus lovelies. Not exactly what happened but close. I was hooked, and shortly thereafter I joined the ranks of the Old Sam Houston Rifles. I never looked back.

Following a semi non-spectacular 5-year career as a student, I received my commission in the Infantry and packed it off to Ft Benning Georgia, reporting for IOBC on 7 July 1967. I finished up the basic course and received accolades for my prowess as a “borne leader” of fine fighting men. Testament to that came on the eve of graduation when two of my classmates who had received battlefield commissions, one for action in the Ia Drang Valley with the 1st Cav and the other for equally intense service with the 1st Bde of the 101st Airborne Division, took me to the I-Bar for a celebratory drink. Little did I know that at that time no one was allowed into the I Bar unless he had a CIB and a Combat Patch? Trust me, had they not vouched for me it would not have been pretty. Years later, when I was “qualified” to be there I witnessed the beginning of the end of my army. I was there the day

the first female officer was allowed in the place. The ensuing fracas was not pretty either. But I digress ,,,

Following IOBC I laid up sorry in the Black Angus Motel on Victory Drive in Downtown Columbus, Ga doing what every self respecting newly trained “killer LT” should be doing (And that is all I will say about that) until I was posted to basic Airborne School.

Following Airborne School and a short home leave I reported to the 2d Bde, 101st Airborne Division just in time to deploy with The Division to the Republic of Viet Nam. Now, Viet Nam is one of the most beautiful countries you could imagine. And the natives had this quaint custom of shooting at us and other such non-neighborly things. And that is what was charming about the place. What a helluva time that was.

During that tour I was assigned as platoon leader of the Security Platoon, HHC 2nd Brigade and later as a platoon leader in Co C; 1-502d Infantry Regiment (airborne). In September of ‘68 I was transferred to HHC, 1-505 Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

At the end of my tour I was posted back to the US and given a choice assignment to the Presidio of San Francisco. At the time, probably the best tour of duty a soldier could have when not involving active combat. In those days, if one walked the streets of the Tenderloin or Haight-Ashbury in uniform one might think he was in active combat. But I wouldn’t know anything about that. I was assigned as Executive Officer of the Special Processing Detachment responsible for processing and pre trial confinement of all AWOLs and deserters collected throughout the 6th Army Area. I was later chosen over numerous officers senior to me to Command HHC, USAG Presidio of San Francisco. In addition to the doctrinal manning I was responsible for over 400 soldiers enlisted under what was known as “McNamara’s Project 100,00”. I also had a detachment of WACs assigned to the company. Highlight of that tour was when we established a perimeter fronting the main gate on Lombard Street and prevented the “flower children” from storming the gate. Like I said, a really great “non combat” tour.

After 9 months of fun and relaxation I volunteered for a return engagement and was voluntarily posted back to Viet Nam in February 1970. I signed into the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) for yet another “go” at the South East Asia live fire extravaganza. I was given command of the 24th Military History Detachment (which consisted of myself, a SP4 awaiting trial for some crime or another, a ¼ ton jeep and trailer, GP Small tent and a Royal typewriter). In just three short months me and my trusty side-kick documented the decimation of the 322nd Main Force NVA Regiment, not just once, but three separate times. We were so good that we successfully penned an award of the Silver Star for a Senior Officer for an action that took place while he was on R&R in Manila.

In June Of 1970 I received the highest accolade any true Infantry Officer could aspire too. It was my privilege and honor to assume command of CO C, 2-503d Infantry Regiment (Airborne), a company of Americas Finest young men.

Following a return to the Infantry Officers version of Mecca, Ft Benning, for the Infantry Officers Advanced Course, I was posted (voluntarily) to 46th Special Forces Company (Airborne) in the Kingdom of Thailand. My initial assignment was as XO/S3 of Detachment B-461. That was followed by an assignment as Commander FTT II that consisted of two resident and three TDY Operational A-Detachments.

Then it was back to Fort Benning to spend what ended up as my last three years on Active duty. I spent time as an Instructor in the Small Arms Committee and as Commander, CO A, USAG. The highlight of that tour was my engagement (the first of a couple) to a lovely lady of the Philippino ethnic persuasion.

After being paid a handsome sum to leave active duty I spent most of my severance pay on wine ,, women ,, and song ,, and sobered up three months hence in Hawaii where I joined the Honolulu Police Department.

Fighting crime was, in many ways, similar too and as much fun as fighting wars. Three years later the opportunity arose for me to take it on the road again, this time to Micronesia to “train” the local police department in the ways of modern crime fighting. That gig lasted for three years during which I also served as Executive Assistant to the Governor. After marrying my second Phillipina fiancé, we returned to Honolulu in 1982 with our son and settled in for the long haul.

I took a full time job with the Hawaii Army National Guard, which I kept for 14 years, serving in a dual capacity as technician Monday to Friday and as a drilling Guardsman in the 29th Infantry Brigade (Asst S3 and S4); S2/3 and XO of the 159th Maintenance Battalion, later re-designated as Support Battalion, 29th SIB, State Mobilization & Readiness Officer and State Training Officer.

I transferred to the US Army Reserves in February of 1990 serving in positions of varying importance and degrees of difficulty to include Instructor and S3, 4960th Multi Functional Training Brigade; NE Asia Desk Officer, Pacific Army Liaison Command, and Commander of the 4960th MFTB.

My tour as 8th Military Support Officer, wherein I was responsible for planning and coordination of DOD support to civilian first responders in times of natural and man made disasters, prepared me well for my last tour of active duty heading up the Homeland Security/Defense efforts for the Islands of Hawaii and surrounding territories. I performed that function until I reached mandatory retirement on 1 July 2002. On 3 July 2002 I was

recalled to active duty in retired status to complete the mission. I retired for the final time on 1 July 2003.

My civilian position as an Exercise Coordinator for US Army Pacific requires that I travel extensively to South East Asia, where I am responsible for planning and conduct of bilateral Army-Army training exercises with Malaysia and Singapore Armed Forces.

I proudly earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the US Airborne Qualification badge, and Royal Thai Special Forces Airborne Wings. Over the years I was given the Legion of Merit; Meritorious Service Medal; Bronze Star w/V device; and a few other miscellaneous awards, decorations and promotions.