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ADVENTURE TRAINING TURNED VIETNAM ERA SOLDIERS INTO MECHANIZED INFANTRYMEN

Posted by Dave Hughes on November 20, 2009 at 8:00pm [View Blog](#)

This is a piece I wrote for a recent Fort Carson Mountain Post Historical Center Newsletter



There was a problem facing the Fort Carson command in 1968, after the legendary 4th Infantry Division was organized and converted into the 4th Mechanized Infantry Division. Carson had only been a boots-on-the-ground Infantry post for the first 47 years of its existence.

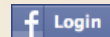
The challenge: how to retrain soldiers returning from Vietnam - where they only knew jungle boots-marching and helicopter-assaulting-into mechanized infantrymen.

The answer in 1970 came in the form of Adventure Training, which the spirited 60's era soldiers soaked up. It was based on traditions known to we Colorado natives, who were then commanders at Fort Carson.

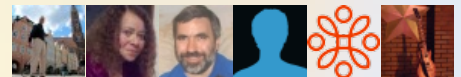
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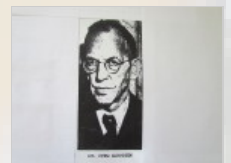

PHOTOS



DR. EINSTEIN'S GRAVE STONE

by Tanja Britton

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DR. OTTO EINSTEIN

by Tanja Britton

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'Mech Infantry' was a true historical military descendent of the Civil War Army 'Dragoons' – men who rode to battle on horseback but fought on foot. Not cavalry, not infantry, but 'mounted infantry.'

So we proceeded to make Fort Carson the Home of the 'Iron Horse Division.'

We devised very challenging 'Mechando Courses' in which every officer and enlisted man -from general to private- had to get into the driver's seat of an M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier. Then alone, buttoned up, peering only through the driver's periscope, the soldier had to first negotiate a heart stopping 'Fire Run' while live frangible fire was directed at him.

He had to climb the steepest hill, span the widest ditch; control the sharpest downgrade that tracks could negotiate. All against time.

And then do the Water Run, plunging into Teller Reservoir, swimming as they would have to while crossing the Elbe River in Germany under fire, and crawl out.

Then the Night Run ran through woods using only black-out lights following fast moving, track-experienced NCOs who had served in Europe.



All of these exercises turned our Mechaneers into aggressive, competent, mechanized-infantry war-fighters. As each 'qualified' via the course, they were awarded a black GI glove with a flared cuff reminiscent of the Dragoons' distinctive riding gloves, but with their name steel-die stamped into it.



PHOTO GALLERIES



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March 23, 2016 all day – [Stargazer's Theatre and Event Center](#)



PINE FOREST SPRING SHOW & SALE

April 23, 2016 at 10am to April 24, 2016 at 3pm – [Lewis Palmer High School](#)



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May 13, 2016 from 7pm to 9pm – [Stargazers Theatre](#)

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It was the proud Mechaneers' equivalent of the Ranger tab, or airborne jump wings. We thus made the switch from a Counterinsurgent Jungle War Vietnam Army to one prepared for any Conventional War in the desert.



And that War became Desert Storm, where Mechaneers trained at Fort Carson helped defeat the Republican Guard in Iraq 20 years later.

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