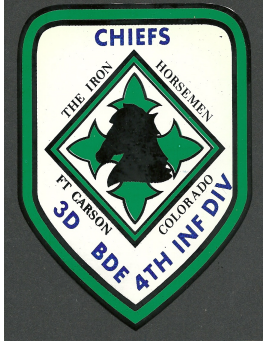


## ***The 3d (Chiefs) Brigade and Mechando***



The 3d Bde  
and 4th  
Mech Logo

I took command in November, 1971

## Fort Carson (8)

Category: Fort Carson 1968-1972

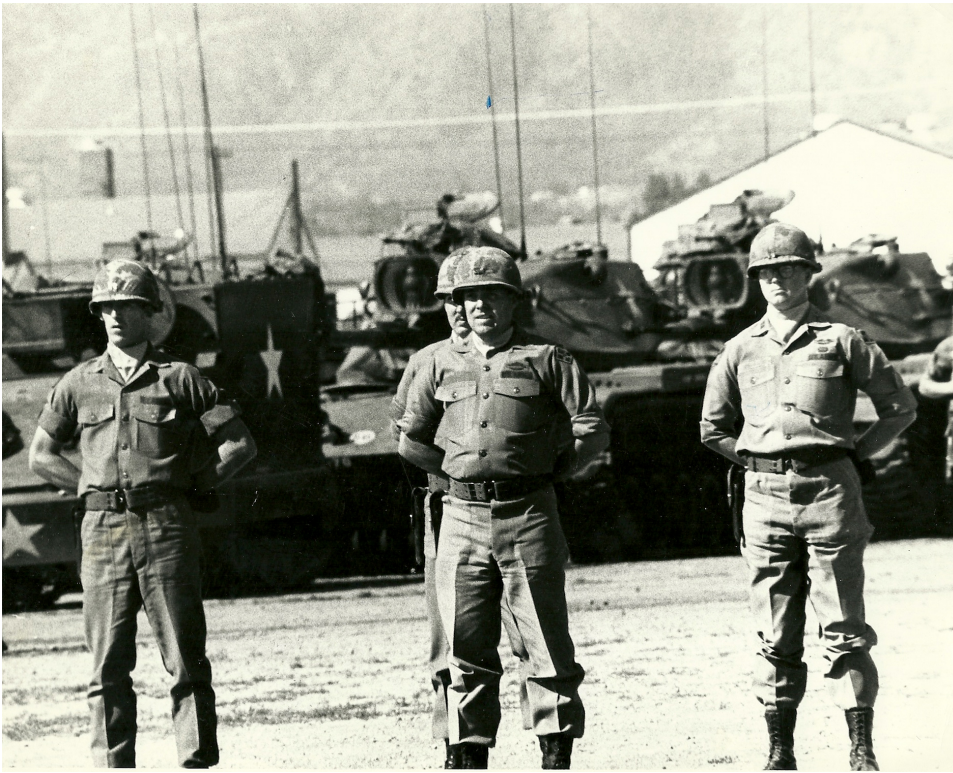
Published: Wednesday, 12 October 2011 10:07

Written by dave

Hits: 6220



From Staff Officer to  
Commander



## Taking over Command of the Mech Infantry Brigade

My predecessor, Col Ross had done a good job implementing General Roger's 'Volar' changes in the 4000 officer and man Brigade.

And General Bennett seemed ready to continue them, Division and Post wide. I didn't feel like I had to contribute new innovations in the 'life of the soldier' side.

But for several reasons I was ready to really tackle the 'Mechanized Combat Training' side.

First of all, almost none of the soldiers, NCOs, or officers who had served during the Vietnam War and were assigned to Fort Carson later had ever been near M113 tracked vehicles - which was for Mech Infantry the same as Huey Helicopters were in Vietnam - the way to get small units to the immediate battlefield. Yet, with our Division Mission to get ready to fly to Germany and then fight a Mechanized war with Mech Infantry vehicles, my soldiers and leaders did not know enough about them or how best to fight from them.

Secondly my 'Infantry' officers had never gone through any specialized 'Mech Infantry' training. Mech Infantry did not have a 'Branch Home.' Artillery officers went through Fort Sill, Armor officers went through Fort Knox, Airborne officers went through Fort Bragg, and Infantry officers went through Fort Benning. And even the Air Mobile officers were going to find a home at Fort Hood. Mech Infantry was an Orphan.

It occurred to me the 'new' Fort Carson for a 'new' Volunteer Army could become the Home of the Mech Infantry.

Thirdly, I had observed that soldiers, some having built up savings in Vietnam, came to Carson, and then, off-post, bought motorcycles or jalopies, hopped them up on weekends to explore Colorado. But they hated to be marched to the Motor Pool to do vehicle maintenance by the numbers.

I had to make training 'interesting' for a risk taking, free wheeling, outdoor liking, generation. It was called, under VOLAR 'Adventure Training'

But I had to adapt it to Mechanized Infantry.

I pondered the question, what was the essential battlefield function of Mech Infantry? As a western American native, who grew up with horses, I realized there had been a precedent, as late as the Civil War. The Dragoons! Men who rode to battle on horses but fought on foot.

Not Cavalry which had become Armor - tankers who fought FROM their tanks. Not Infantry, but a hybrid - which Mech Infantry was.

And since we were at Fort (Colonel Kit) Carson - western frontiersman, we were horsemen of a type. We were IRON Horsemen. And thus I gave birth to - and General Bennet endorsed, the name of the 4th Mech as the "**Iron Horse Division**" Which still exists.

And just in the early days when the horse mounted Cavalrymen trained before wars, they rode to the hounds, had riding competitions, and had their own form of "Adventure Training" through which hard battlefield skills were mastered.

Since the M113s were designed to cross country, climb slopes, even swim lakes and rivers - all while protecting the Infantrymen inside from small arms and shell fragments right up to the point they had to discharge the armed soldier squad which then assaulted on foot - supported sometime from the .50 caliber

machine gun mounted on top the track.

Now at Carson at Turkey Creek Ranch we had a "Recondo" training area. Where some men were trained in lonely Reconnaissance missions as difficult and dangerous that 'Rangers' went through. Training with Pride of Individual accomplishment.

Combining Mech and derrying Do Recondo, out came the name of the Adventure Training program that would challenge all.

The name, the program, the brand '**Mechando**' was born.