

HONOR & COURAGE

The History of the 8th Cavalry Regiment



Pony Patrol American Frontier

Throughout its long and distinguished history, the 8th Cavalry has been true to those words of its first commanding officer. Its initial mission was tied directly to America's "Manifest Destiny," as the unit escorted settlers, opened trade routes, and fought Indians in the American Northwest. The 8th Cavalry served with distinction in the Spanish American War and during the occupation of the Philippines in the early part of the last century.

On September 13, 1921, the 8th Cavalry Regiment was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas. On the eve of World War II, the 8th Cavalry turned in its horses and was reorganized as an armored unit. Fighting as part of the famed 1st Cav, the regiment distinguished itself in World War II leading the army's attack across the

On July 28, 1866, Colonel John I. Gregg stood in front of the troops of the 8th Cavalry Regiment at Angel Island, California, in honor of the initial formation of the United States Army's newest unit of horse cavalry. In his address to the regiment's troops, Colonel Gregg noted that the first goal was to defend the country against its enemies by fighting with "Honor and Courage." Today, 140 years later, Colonel Gregg's charge to his soldiers is preserved in the unit crest of the 8th Cavalry. Recognizing its heritage as a horse cavalry regiment, the distinctive insignia of the 8th Cavalry includes a horse charging into battle over the words, "Honor and Courage."

Pacific into the Japanese homeland. General Douglas MacArthur gave the 1st Cavalry Division its nickname, "The First Team" in honor of its exploits. The 8th Cavalry shared in the distinction of being "First in Manila" and "First in Tokyo."

After serving as an occupation force in Japan in the aftermath of World War II, the 8th Cavalry was once again called to battle. When the armies of North Korea swarmed across the 38th parallel into the South, the 1st Cavalry Division was thrown in front of the Communist onslaught. The cavalymen were successful in pushing the invaders back across the 38th parallel, and on October 18, 1950, achieved another first--"First in Pyongyang," the North Korean capital. The troopers of the 8th Cavalry spent the next several years battling the North Korean and Chinese armies as the conflict flowed back and forth across the 38th parallel. Although the Korean War officially ended in July 1953, the 8th Cavalry remained in Korea until the early summer of 1965.

The 8th Cavalry would again be ordered into combat. This time, the 8th Cavalry and the 1st Cavalry Division would return to their roots as true cavalry units. But instead of riding horses into battle, the troopers of the 8th Cavalry would ride helicopters. The colors of the 8th Cavalry were returned from Korea, and on July 1, 1965, during a ceremony at Fort Benning, Georgia, the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 511th



First team bayonet charge on the Japanese-occupied island of New Guinea



8th Cavalry takes "Old Baldy" hill 272

Infantry became the 2nd Battalion (Airborne) of the 8th Cavalry. For a brief period of time, the 8th Cavalry was manned by proud paratroopers who would lead the unit into some of the bloodiest combat of the Vietnam War. The 8th Cavalry fought with distinction for more than seven years

in Vietnam and participated in all of the war's major campaigns.

With the exception of the brief predeployment period in 1965, the 8th Cavalry had been overseas for more than 30 years when the unit returned from Vietnam to Fort Hood, Texas, in 1972. Fourteen of these 30-plus years were spent in combat, fighting relentless and dangerous enemies. At Fort Hood, the 8th Cavalry went through another transformation, becoming the Army's premier heavy-armored division. The soldiers of the 8th Cavalry have continued to serve with distinction in Desert Storm, as peacekeepers in the Balkans, and most recently, in Iraq.

During its 140-year history, the 8th Cavalry has charged into battle as horse cavalry, light armor, parachute infantry, airmobile infantry, and heavy armor. But one common thread has united the cavalymen who have worn its colors. From the frontiers of the Old West, to the Philippine jungles, across the Pacific, into



Vietnam paratrooper patrol

the frozen hills of Korea and the swamps and rice paddies of Vietnam, and across the desert battlefields of the Middle East, all have fought with honor and courage. Thus, the troopers of the 8th Cavalry title the chronicle of their experiences in recognition of those who came before them and those who will fight under the colors of this distinguished unit in future battles.