



CSA MESSAGE TO
THE FORCE

P. 2



LARRY BLAIR

P. 4



BOOK OF INTEREST

P. 6



WWI

P. 7

ALWAYS FIRST!



Happy
Veterans
Day!

Photos courtesy of the US Army





UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF

17 August 2021

Soldiers, Civilians, Family members and Soldiers for Life:

Over the past two decades, you have answered the call to serve our great Nation when needed. The sacrifices you've made, have and will be a lasting legacy of honor and commitment for all to remember.

As we all reflect on the events of this past week in Afghanistan, I want you to know how much I appreciate your service and your sacrifice and I could not be more proud of what you have accomplished. We have Soldiers presently supporting combatant commanders around the world and I know that you will continue to serve with honor and valor when called upon.

The attacks on September 11, 2001, reminded us of the true strength of our Nation and our military. You are a reflection of what makes us the best Army in the world and I ask that you remain committed as we work to get through this tough time.

In the next few days and weeks, I'd ask that you check in on your teammates as well as our Soldiers for Life, who may be struggling with the unfolding events. We will continue to move forward and serve our Nation with honor and dignity.

PROUD TO SERVE WITH YOU!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. McConville', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James C. McConville
General, United States Army

Remembering & Honoring two great Americans!



Photos courtesy of Getty Images

General Colin Powell

April 5, 1937-October 18, 2021



“Our profession is built on the bedrock of trust - the trust that must inherently exist among Soldiers, and between Soldiers and their leaders to accomplish their mission in the chaos of war.”

General Raymond Odierno

September 8, 1954 - October 8, 2021

National Museum of the US Army via AMTRAK

by Larry Blair

First of all, why did we go, when the Diehard reunion was cancelled?



We had made reservations on AMTRAK way in advance [which you must do to get rooms on the train]; we needed some relief from the Covid ordeal; we both had gotten our shots; and at our age, we dare not tarry when opportunities arise.

I am guided by the story of the very elderly owner of a beautiful manor covered with stately trees that he loved. He told his groundskeeper to plant a walnut

tree. Thinking of his master's advanced age, the servant replied "But sir, it takes a long time to grow a walnut tree". The owner said "Then plant it tomorrow". So we said: "Let's do it".

After Tom Jennings notified us of the cancellation, I changed our hotel reservation to Springfield VA, which is only a few miles from Ft Belvoir, and right on the Washington DC Metro, a fabulous transit system, which gave us easy access to everything in DC.

So, we boarded AMTRAK in Albuquerque, checked into our sleeping room, and headed to the diner for a sit-down meal with other passengers, and with cloth napkins and tablecloths and real silverware [plus masks, of course]. The meals on AMTRAK on the western double deck trains are excellent; east of Chicago, they are substandard but edible.

Changed trains in Chicago, went thru Indianapolis and Cincinnati in the middle of the night, then some beautiful Allegheny scenery before arriving in Washington DC.

In Washington DC, we caught the Metro from Union Station to our hotel in Springfield VA. The highlight of the DC area was the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Even in a driving rainstorm they never missed a step performing their solemn duty. It brings forth strong emotions, even as we got thoroughly soaked.



I will say that the Metro attendants, the bus and taxi drivers, and hotel staff were all very courteous and helpful, but we did encounter some petty officials who enjoyed exercising their government-granted authority to boss people around. For example, Kathy and I wanted to visit the Capitol building, but a guard came out and yelled at us "You can't come in here!" We felt like telling him that we own that building, but he had his orders from Nancy.

I toured the National Museum of the US Army on my own, as Kathy stayed in the hotel to dry out and ward off a cold. The museum is truly awesome; a stunning modern edifice, surrounded by groomed grounds. I got my picture taken near the First Engineer Plaque, by LTG Roger Schultz [Ret], President of the Army Historical Foundation, with whom I had a nice chat. I later located other spots in the Museum where the Battalion is recognized.

As General Schultz pointed out, the Museum emphasizes the American Soldier, and the role the soldier has played in all our wars, to include current issues. The exhibits are incredibly lifelike: one almost expects them to start moving. There are displays of armor; weaponry; vehicles; and battleground scenery that fills one's vision. The volunteer docents and guides fell over themselves being helpful and informative. I spent seven hours, and didn't see everything.

Also visiting were Vietnam veterans from the First Signal Brigade who were having their reunion, and spent the full day there. We shared some war stories.

I paid extra to play the virtual games. Didn't enjoy the flight one much, but the simulated bunker under attack was fun, as was the simulated tank in the attack. The snack bar food was good, with a good menu and prompt service.



Our last day was spent on the Potomac River waterfront and historic district of Alexandria, and enjoyed some great seafood. Alexandria was once the slave trading capital of the country, but there's not much told about that [yet].

Back on AMTRAK, we went thru the Shenandoah Valley and five states to New Orleans, where we spent two nights. Visited the fabulous WW II Museum. It, of course, only

deals with WW II, and places more emphasis on military and political campaigns and leaders, but it is a must-see if in New Orleans. Had a meal of raw oysters and crab-stuffed shrimp, and the obligatory beignets; but NOLA requires proof of vaccination to even get into a restaurant. We also rode the St Charles street trolley to see the hundreds of Victorian mansions along the way. Lots of downed trees and foliage from the recent hurricane.

Then, back on AMTRAK for the long haul to Los Angeles [46 hours], with stops in Texas cities, including the pretty town of Del Rio. Didn't see any migrants, but did see lots of border patrol facilities along the Rio Grande.

After a several- hour layover in LA, we boarded AMTRAK for overnight to Albuquerque, ending a 6,300 mile train trip that was very relaxing and fulfilling. In addition to gaining a few pounds, it was wonderful to witness the variety, majesty, and grandeur of this great country; something you don't experience in an aluminum tube at 30,000 feet.

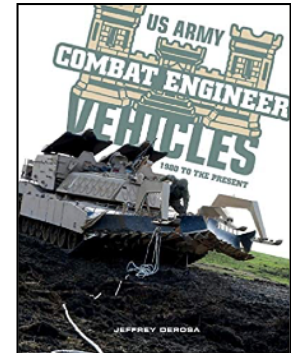
US Army Combat Engineer Vehicles: 1980 to the Present

By Jeffrey DeRosa (Author)

Hardcover-January 25, 2022 ([amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))

NEW BOOK!

The struggle for armored dominance sometimes overshadows the vital and unsung heroes of the battlefield: the engineers. Combat engineer vehicles spearhead armored attacks, breach obstacles, and prepare defenses. Born of necessity, these amazing vehicles have developed from humble beginnings to technological and mechanical marvels. After a slow and unimaginative start, the US Army has developed and fielded some of the most prolific and advanced combat engineer vehicles ever used. This book provides a rare look at these amazing machines and the crews that operated them. Vehicles covered are the M728 Combat Engineer Vehicle; Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge; M9 Armored Combat Earthmover; M9 ACE and M60 AVLB; M1132 Stryker Engineer Squad Vehicle; M2 Bradley, Wolverine, and Assault Breaching Vehicle; and Grizzly and Panther 2, as well as experimental and limited-use vehicles. Along with providing technical information, author Jeffrey DeRosa analyzes the operational effectiveness of each vehicle.



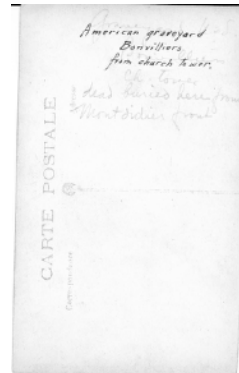
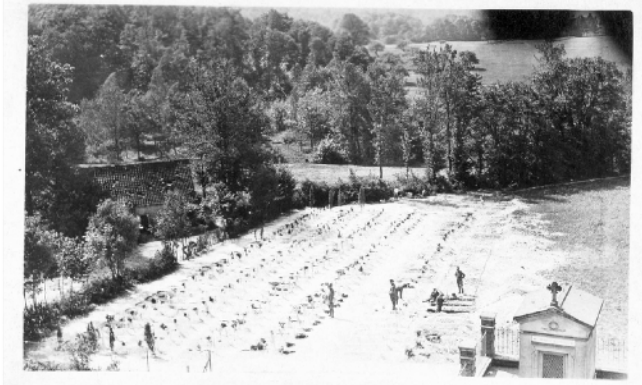
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1st Engineers in World War I



123 HEADQUARTERS AT BANTHEVILLE
(see: Hist. of 1ST ENG., W.W.I., Pg 49)

Bantheville, October 1917.



Bonvillers Cemetery, May 1918.



Buzanct Monument, built in 1919.

Photo provided by the 11D museum

Chaplain's Corner

Obituary for Bruce R. Le Beau (March 13, 1944 ~ July 7, 2021 (Age 77))

Bruce Richard Le Beau, 77, of Bettendorf, Iowa and formerly of Mobridge, South Dakota, passed away peacefully surrounded by his closest family on Wednesday, July 7, 2021 in Bettendorf.

In accordance with Bruce's wishes and directives, there will not be a service, visitation or wake. Bruce has chosen to be cremated and will be laid to rest along with his wife and daughter at 10:00 a.m., Monday, August 2, 2021 at Rock Island National Cemetery so that he may join all of his military brothers. Those wishing to attend the service should meet at McGinnis-Chambers Funeral Home in Bettendorf by 9:30 a.m. on Monday morning.

Bruce was born March 13, 1944 in Cheyenne Agency, South Dakota, the son of Lloyd & Helen (Azure) Le Beau.



Bruce grew up on the family ranch south of Mobridge on the Cheyenne River Reservation. He was a member of a band called The Wonderlands. The band was inducted into the South Dakota Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2014. This early 1960's group of four musicians recorded a 45 RPM record titled "Make Up and Break Up" written by lead guitar player and singer Bruce Le Beau. The flipside was an instrumental titled "Castaway" also written by Bruce Le Beau.

Bruce enlisted in the Army and was part of the First Engineer Battalion as a demolition specialist in the 3rd Platoon of C Company where he and two others volunteered to search the Viet Cong tunnels (this was before these men were known as Tunnel Rats.) Bruce was wounded three times while serving his year in Vietnam. He was awarded the Purple Heart, Vietnam Service Medal, Rifle Expert Medal, Republic of Vietnam Good Conduct Medal and the Army Commendation with Merit Medal.

After leaving the Army, Bruce spent years as a rancher on the family ranch, worked as Conservation Officer for the State of South Dakota, became a machinist at the Rock Island Arsenal and later retired from the Bureau of Indian Affairs with the Eagle Butte, South Dakota school system as a route bus driver.

Bruce was united in marriage to ElWanda Azure (Pridemore) on October 25, 1968.

Those left to honor his memory include his sons and daughters-in-law, Jeffrey & Sarah Le Beau of Muscatine, Iowa and Randall & Eugenia Le Beau of Bettendorf; his grandchildren, Chelsea (Dan) Woods, Ethan Le Beau, Bruce J. Le Beau and Luke Le Beau; his great-granddaughter, Kaylee Woods; his sisters, Theresa Ducheneaux and Patsy (Virgil) Hertz; his brother, Wesley (Maida) Le Beau; as well as many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his wife, ElWanda, Bruce was preceded in death by his parents; his daughter, Tiffany; and his brother, Stuart.

In lieu of memorials to the family, they request that if you are able, please consider becoming a lifetime blood donor. Were it not for the great people who donate blood, it would not have been possible for Bruce to have had the last few years of time spent with family and friends. Bruce was receiving 1-2 units of blood every other week for the longest time and then weekly most recently. If you are unable to donate blood, the family requests any memorials be made in Bruce's name to your favorite military charity. Online condolences may be expressed to the family by visiting Bruce's obituary at www.McGinnis-Chambers.com

Obituary for CSM (Ret.) Ioakimo "Niko" Falaniko

Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Ioakimo Falaniko hails from the island of Samoa and entered the Army on 29 December 1976 and retired in December 2008. He received One Station Unit Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri as a combat engineer. His stateside assignments include: Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Three tours at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Bliss, Texas; and Fort Lewis, Washington. His overseas tours include: Hanau, West Berlin, Giessen, Germany; Camp Indian and Camp Howze, Korea and recently serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq from 2003 to 2004.

CSM Falaniko served in all key leadership positions in the field of combat engineers starting from Team Leader up to Command Sergeant Major. He was Command Sergeant Major for the 14th Engineer Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington; a former Command Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored Division, Engineer Brigade at Giessen, Germany; and a former Command Sergeant Major of the 1st Engineer Brigade at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He was the Senior Instructor for the Sapper Leader Course. Since retiring from military service, he was the Training Supervisor for the IED Division of Counter Explosive Hazards Center on Fort Leonard Wood and also worked as a consultant.



His military education includes: Bridgeman Primary Technical Course; Primary Leadership Course; Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course; Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course; Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course; Drill Sergeant School; Master Fitness Trainer Course; Sapper Leader Course; Instructor Training Course; Instructor Supervisor Course; Airborne School; Ranger School; Air Assault School; Jumpmaster School; French Commando Course; and First Sergeant Course.

CSM Falaniko is a graduate of Class-49 of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy. Additionally, he holds an Associate Degree in General Studies from Central Texas College and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration with a Minor in Human Resource Management from Columbia College.

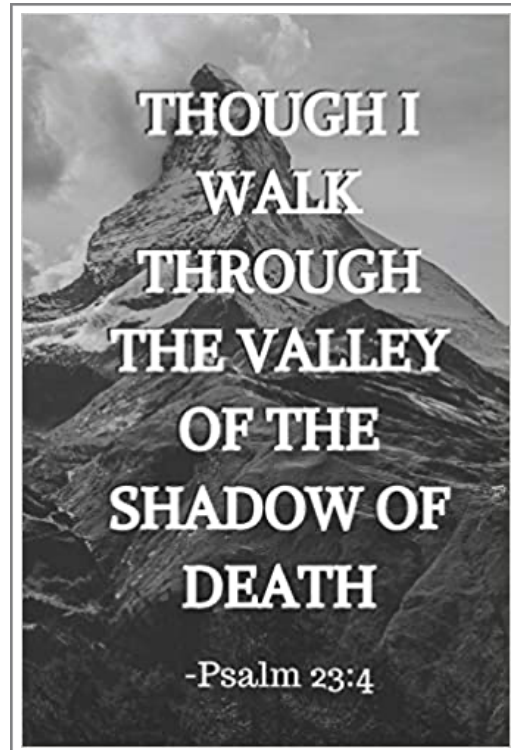
His awards and decorations include: The Legion of Merit, (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster) Bronze Star Medal (with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster); Meritorious Service Medal (with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters); Army Commendation Medal (with 3 Oak Leaf Cluster); Army Achievement Medal (with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters); Good Conduct Medal (10th Award); Army Occupation Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Korea Defense Service Medal; Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal; NCO Professional Development Ribbon (4); Overseas Service Ribbon (4); Army Service Ribbon; Ranger Tab; Sapper Tab; Master Parachutist Badge; Air Assault Badge; Drill Sergeant Badge; French Commando Badge; Canadian Parachutist Badge; and German Bronze Marksmanship Badge. He also was awarded the DeFleury Bronze and Silver Medal of the Army Corps of Engineer.

CSM Falaniko the winner of the military Meritorious Service Award presented by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council for his significant contributions to the advancement of Asian Pacific Americans and the promotion of equal employment opportunity in the Federal work force and APA community. CSM Falaniko and his family are members of Gold Star Families.

CSM Falaniko was a co-founder and a board member of the Sapper Association and also served in the position as Treasurer. CSM Falaniko is survived by his wife Maliana Afano Falaniko of St. Robert, MO, his son Niko Falaniko of Lakewood, Washington, his daughter Adeline Fuata and her husband Walter Fuata of Waynesville,

MO, and his daughter Otilia Falaniko of St. Robert, MO. He is preceded in death by his son Jonathan Falaniko, killed in action of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003; Niko and Maliana have six grandsons, Niko Jr., Jonathan, Mario, Julian, Randy, and Leikoi and one granddaughter, Ariana.

CSM Falaniko passed away Wednesday, October 20, 2021 in his home in St. Robert, MO having attained the age of 67 years.



Please notify Chaplain Larry Blair if any member of the Veterans of the First Engineer Battalion passes away. Provide details, obituary, name and address of next of kin if possible. blairylar@hotmail.com

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2022 REUNION
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE US ARMY
DIEHARDS – ITS GAME ON FOR 2022
WE STRUCK OUT IN '20 AND '21
BUT WE CAN SCORE IN '22
IF YOU AND YOUR BUDDIES ARE IN THE GAM

MARK YOU'RE CALENDAR! The 38th Annual Reunion has been rescheduled to September 16 – 20, 2022.

The Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, our hotel partner for the Reunion, has agreed to hold the room rate at \$109 (\$122 inclusive of tax) and will offer the same rate three days prior and after the reunion for those wishing to spend more time in the Washington area. The **NEW** dedicated Hilton reservation link for Reunion 2022 is: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/iadahhf-v1eb22-4a8f4930-b707-4d80-b0f7-fe7bb36b17bc/>. **PLEASE NOTE**, the previous link is no longer good.

We will have the same program in 2022 and are striving to keep any price increases to a minimum. Price and registration information will be available early in the New Year.

Please direct any questions to Tom Jennings at:
tomandgeri07@gmail.com

Friday, September 16

12-6 PM	Registration /Hospitality Rm. Open
4-6 PM	Board Meeting
6-7:30 PM	Dinner on your own
7:30-?? PM	Hospitality Room Open

Saturday, September 17

9-11 AM	General Membership Meeting
11 AM- 12:30 PM	Lunch on your own
12:30-1 PM	Meet in lobby – bus to Museum
2-5 PM	Tour Army Museum
6-7 PM	Hospitality Room Open
6:30-8 PM	Italian Buffet dinner
8-?? PM	Hospitality Room Open

Sunday, September 18

AM	Open
11:45-Noon	Meet in lobby – Bus to Memorials
	First Division, Vietnam and WW 2 Memorials
	Wreath Laying at the First Division Memorial
5:30-7 PM	Hospitality Room/Pictures
7-8:30 PM	Banquet – 3 course plated dinner
8-?? PM	Hospitality Room Open

Monday, September 19

AM	Farewells and Departure
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Tuesday, September 20

Late Departures On your own