

ALWAYS FIRST!!

No Mission Too Difficult! No Sacrifice Too Great! Duty First!



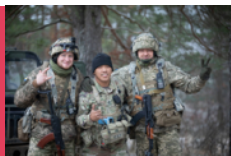
Upcoming Reunions!!!

**Diehard
Reunion 2023**
Fort Riley, Kansas
July 30-Aug 2 2023

**1st Inf. Div.
Reunion 2023**
New Orleans,
Louisiana
9-13 Aug 2023

**Diehard
Reunion 2024**
Albuquerque,
New Mexico

Left. Army Spc. Josh Wyant conducts a patrol prior to a cold weather readiness training exercise in, Alaska, March 11, 2002 (US. Army photo by John Pennell). Right. Spc. Patrick Kusik, low crawls under barbed wire while navigating an individual movement technique lane in Pa. (U.S. Army photo by SSG. Shane Smith)



Current
Operations
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Fort Riley, KS
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Chaplain's
Corner
p. 11



Diehard Current Operations



The Diehard Ball (left) and Change of Responsibility (below) from CSM Kanaly to CSM Panquerne! What a great time with great friends to cap off CSM Kanaly's superb service to our Soldiers and the Battalion and welcome CSM Panquerne! (<https://www.facebook.com/DiehardEngineers>)



**SAPPER LEADER COURSE
ASSESSMENT**

DO YOU WANT TO ATTEND SAPPER LEADER COURSE??

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- SPFT
- DEMOLITION
- RAPPELLING
- COMBAT WATER SURVIVAL
- LAND NAVIGATION
- SAPPER TACTICAL TASKS
- 12 MILE RUCK

COURSE OUTPUS:

- ✓ LEADERSHIP SKILLS
- ✓ TECHNICAL EXPERTISE
- ✓ MENTAL STRENGTH
- ✓ ENGINEER TASKS EXPERT

EARN THE RIGHT!

POINT OF CONTACT:
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victor.al.perez@army.mil

**FOR BRIGADE ENGINEER BATTALION
FORT RILEY, KANSAS**



Class 004-23 SPFT. Sapper Leader Course

Fort Riley, Kansas

<https://www.legendsofamerica.com/ks-fortriley/>



The site of Fort Riley, Kansas, was chosen by surveyors in the fall of 1852 and was first called Camp Center due to its proximity to the geographical center of the United States. The following spring, three companies of the 6th infantry began constructing temporary quarters at the camp. On June 27, 1853, the camp's name was changed to Fort Riley in honor of Major General Bennett C. Riley, who had led the first military escort along the Santa Fe Trail and had died earlier in the month.



Camp Funston was the largest of 16 divisional cantonments (temporary or semi-permanent military quarters) training camps constructed during **World War I**. Designated to be located at Fort Riley due to its central location in the nation, construction began on July 1, 1917, and the camp was completed on December 1 of the same year. With a capacity of over 50,000, it drew trainees from all over the **Great Plains** states. However, not long after the camp was completed and filled with **soldiers**, the 1918 flu epidemic, called the “**Influenza Pandemic of 1918**,” hit the camp. Worldwide, this fatal flu virus cited as the most devastating epidemic in recorded world history killed more people than World War I, an estimated 20 to 40 million people, including some 675,000 Americans. A global disaster, the flu took its toll on Camp Funston and Fort Riley, like it did the rest of the world.

REUNION 2022

Article and photographs provided by Tom Jennings



The Reunion Group at the National Museum of the United States Army

We were a small group - thirty four veterans and family members - but we had a grand time at the National Museum of the US Army and the Washington DC area! It has been three years since our reunion in Deadwood and the Black Hills. We canceled our visit to Fort Riley in 2020 and to this venue last year as Covid took its toll. We lost some good friends and many couldn't travel this year. But our small group of Diehard veterans and family members gathered at the Hilton Washington Dulles Hotel in Northern Virginia to continue the tradition that began in 1983.

Reunion 2022 article continued

We opened the Reunion on Friday evening with a casual evening of banter and camaraderie, renewing old friendships and forging some new ones. Among our guests we were pleased to welcome members of the Vargas and Danielson families. Saturday morning was devoted to a general meeting. The members voted to elect a new slate of Officers, discussed the plans for the 2023 Reunion which will be held on July 30-Aug 2 at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Manhattan, Kansas and will feature a day with the Battalion at Fort Riley. We also reaffirmed our plans to hold our 2024 reunion in conjunction with the Society of the First Infantry Division in Albuquerque, New Mexico. After the general membership meeting, Saturday afternoon was dedicated to visiting the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, the museum our association supported with a multi-year fundraising campaign. On arriving, the group was met by LTG (ret) Roger Shultz, President of the Army Historical Association. General Shultz gave the group a very cordial welcome and briefed us on the museum exhibits, the unit and personal tributes and museum special programs. The museum features displays from all major conflicts including the Civil War, the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm and the Global War on Terrorism. The dioramas and tableaux are exceptional, paying attention to realism and historical accuracy. The museum is unique in that it features the individual stories of America's Soldiers, linking those stories to the battle history of the Army. We saw the stories of heroic figures like Audie Murphy and Sgt. Alvin York. But we also saw stories about the everyday soldiers who were and are the core and backbone of the Army. Soldiers' achievements are highlighted in the exhibit halls with exhibits and displays that date from the Army's inception in 1775 to the present, individual Soldier stories on standards in the lobby area and accounts of heroism and sacrifice in the Medal of Honor Gallery.



The Danielson Family



The Vargas Family

Reunion 2022 article continued

One highlight of the visit was the Special Exhibition Gallery which presented “So Ready for Laughter: The Legacy of Bob Hope”. The exhibit, produced by The National WWII Museum, uses photos, film, artifacts and audio visuals to showcase Bob Hope’s extraordinary contribution to the morale of America’s military men and women. We all left feeling that the Army, the Army Historical Foundation and the museum staff were successful in creating a world-class institution that showcases the Army’s history and honors the generations of Americans who served our country in the US Army. On Sunday we had a morning at leisure. The afternoon was spent on The Washington Mall where we visited the First Division Memorial, World War 2, Korean War and Vietnam Memorials. We found each memorial distinctive in its design but one thing was common to all of them. They remind us of the people who served and died in gave us pause to reflect on the sacrifice of our fellow servicemen and women. Sunday evening was Banquet time.



The National Museum Fund Raising Committee: Gen Shultz Blair Smoulder, Dennis O’Dea, General Shultz, Tom Jennings



We enjoyed an excellent meal. Our guest speaker for the evening was Command Sergeant Major (ret) Bradley Houston, thirteenth CMS of the Army Corps of Engineers, a fellow veteran of the First Engineers and presently a Program Analyst, Strategic Plans & Policy. Dale Greenfield, Joe Vargas presenting a First Engineer Coin to CSM Brad Houston Operations · United States Department of the Army. CSM Houston briefed us on the recent decision to move the Army from a Brigade to a Division centric structure and

the impact on the Engineer community. After dinner the group settled in for another evening of hospitality and camaraderie in the hospitality Room and on into the early hours around the patio fire pit. Jane Humphrey was the lucky winner of our fifty-fifty raffle. Our President elect Joe Vargas, determined to take home a fine bottle of Irish whiskey, made the winning bid in our Redbreast Irish whiskey auction.

Reunion 2022 article continued



Downtime around the fire pit at the Hilton Washington Dulles Hotel

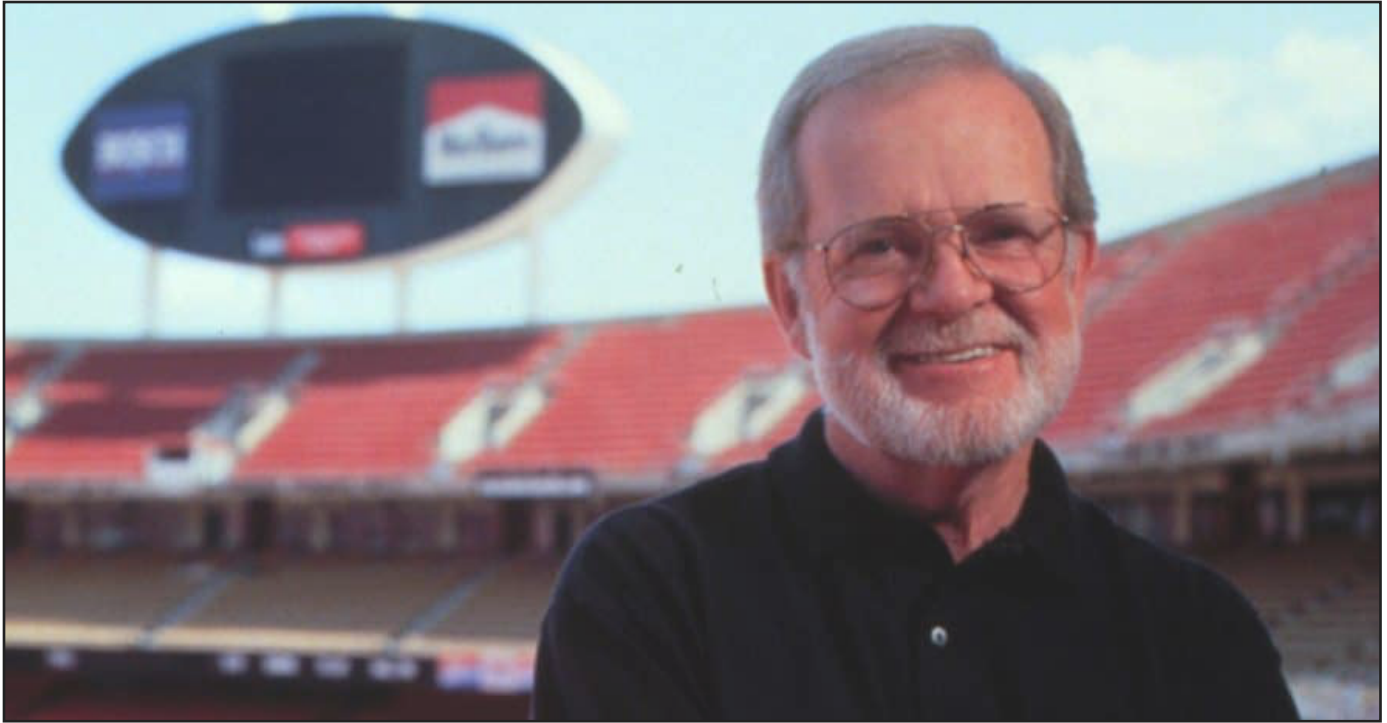
DIEHARD 39TH REUNION!!!

July 30- August 2, 2023

Four Points by Sheridan

Manhattan, Kansas

RON LABINSKI: A Life Well Lived!



When Mr. Labinski got his start in the 1960s, football and baseball teams often shared stadiums in ways that were suboptimal for both. His early work on the Arrowhead football stadium in Kansas City gave him insight on how to tailor a facility for one sport.

He enhanced his name in the late 1980s with the Miami Dolphins' Joe Robbie Stadium, now known as Hard Rock Stadium, where the luxurious club-style seats became a model for others. His firm's work on the Camden Yards baseball stadium in Baltimore, combining throwback style with the latest amenities, reinforced demand for his services from teams in the U.S. and as far away as England, Australia and Hong Kong.

Mr. Labinski's firm, HOK Sport, now known as Populous, was at least in the conversation whenever a new major league stadium was conceived.

Mr. Labinski, who had frontotemporal dementia, died Jan. 1. He was 85.

He asserted that no stadiums were built between the end of the Roman Empire and the birth of the modern Olympics, the Kansas City Star reported. "They don't call it the Dark Ages for nothing," he added.

Ronald Joseph Labinski, the second of four children, was born Dec. 7, 1937, in Buffalo, N.Y. His father's career as a wholesale-food salesman moved the family to Cleveland and Chicago. Young

RON LABINSKI: A Life Well Lived! (Cont)

Ron spent much of his time drawing houses and barns. He also drew a picture of Ebbets Field, former home of the Brooklyn Dodgers, with a ball soaring out of the park. “I guess you could say that was a sign,” he said later.

He served in the Army at Fort Riley, Kan., and earned his architectural degree at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he graduated with high honors and was sent to Europe in the early 1960s as a traveling scholar. In an early job at a Kansas City architectural firm, he designed hospitals. Then another firm hired him to work on the design of Arrowhead Stadium.

“Before Arrowhead, all the stadiums were built to compromise both football and baseball,” Mr. Labinski told the Star. “Arrowhead was the first modern stadium built solely for football. What we did here in Kansas City revolutionized the way people think about stadiums and stadium design.”

He saw Arrowhead as the start of an era in which cities would have to build two new stadiums, one for football and another for baseball, when they retired their old dual-purpose clunkers. “It didn’t take a rocket scientist to realize that there was a market out there,” Mr. Labinski told the Star.

He couldn’t sell all his preferences. For Arrowhead, he and others wanted a roof that could roll open and shut—an idea that was rejected as too expensive.

Nor could he please everyone. Football kickers sometimes griped about tricky winds inside stadiums. Mr. Labinski told the New York Times that wind-tunnel tests were used to make sure that high winds wouldn’t blow stadiums down. “We do not do it to see what the effects are for kickers,” he added. “They’re paid enough money to deal with it.”

Knowing almost everyone involved with stadiums was a big advantage. The Stadium Managers Association named a scholarship after him.

His survivors include his wife, Lee Labinski, two sisters, two children and two grandchildren. An earlier marriage ended in divorce.

In retirement, he designed a pagoda-style workshop and studio for a Japanese neighbor in Fairway, Kan., a shed that matched the style of another neighbor’s house and a two-story playhouse for a granddaughter. ([wsj.com](https://www.wsj.com))

Wall of Names

Article and photographs submitted by Blair T Smoulder

Edward L. Hart who resides in Millbury , OH (population 1247), has been for the past five years constructing the Wall of Names Memorial in his side yard to honor First Engineer Battalion veterans who have passed due to their service in Vietnam. Ed served as a dozer operator in 1965-66 and was a part of the second brigade of the First Infantry Division's deployment to Vietnam in June 1965. His efforts are more inclusive than the First Division Memorial and the Vietnam Wall in Washington, DC which list only kia's. Ed's memorial also includes battalion members who have succumbed to Agent Orange.

The reason for this project is that Ed wanted to be able to visit with his comrades in arms every day to try to understand what their families have gone through. In addition to the wall, the site also honors first responders and other military. Over a five year period it has evolved from the use of sandbags to becoming a more substantial memorial. It still is not a finished product, but the end is in sight. Much more information is provided in Ed's website. I've included a picture from the site of three head markers of members of Bravo Company who served with Ed. Please check it all out at millburymemorial.weebly.com.

Ed has been recognized by the Veterans of the First Engineer Battalion for his most significant endeavor. Two challenge coins have been sent to him which will be professionally photographed for encasement and attachment to the Wall of names. Also, he is in receipt of a letter of commendation from our veterans group. Congratulations Ed. You have brought much pride and are making the star of our battalion shine even brighter.



Chaplain's Corner

"If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way." Napoleon Hill



"There is an unmistakable link between *responsibility* and *service*. The **Four Chaplains** understood that relationship and *gave of themselves*. They were authentically *men for others* to the last ounce of their strength."

-Archbishop Broglio

February 2023 marks the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the Dorchester.

To read about this story please visit the following website:

<https://armyhistory.org/no-greater-glory-the-four-chaplains-and-the-sinking-of-the-usat-dorchester/>

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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