

ALWAYS FIRST!

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

Upcoming Reunions

1ID & 1EN BN

Albuquerque, New Mexico

July 31- Aug 4, 2024

1 EN BN- 2025

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

1 EN BN- 2026

Cantigny Wheatland, Illinois



2023 Annual Reunion

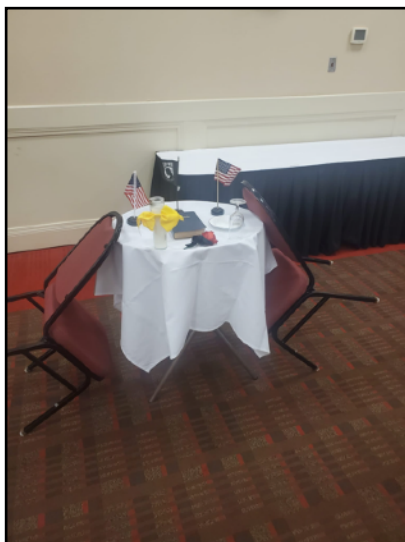
Our 2023 annual reunion was July 30 – August 2, 2023. We were based out of the Four Points by Sheridan in Manhattan, Kansas. Registration for our reunions has been low in the last couple of years. We had to cancel in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID. This year we had 38 people registered but 16 cancelled within 7 days of the reunion for various reasons ultimately having 22 in attendance. Sunday night we had our board meeting and hospitality room. Monday, we went to Ft Riley and toured the Battalion motor pool, visited the Battalion area, had lunch at the dining facility and then visited the Cavalry Museum on main post. That evening we had a buffet dinner and membership meeting. Tuesday, we had a day of roaming on our own and had our reunion banquet that evening. CSM Panquerne, the Bn CSM, was the guest speaker. We had a wonderful meal and some door prizes. We want to thank all the current soldiers and officers that attended for your wonderful support and making us all feel welcome. Even though our numbers were low, I think all in attendance had a great time. *by Dale Greenfield*



Battalion Motorpool



Missing Man Table



2023 Annual Reunion (Cont)

Above: Desert Storm Veterans in attendance from left to right (Dale Greenfield, Michael Ligon, Jerry Salazar, Patrick Zastrow)



Photos provided by Dale Greenfield



Diehard Current Operations



1st EN BN September 9, 2023 FB post. Today the DIEHARD Battalion took part in the Fallen Hero Run to honor and show respect to the fallen and to the Gold Star families. We will never forget!!!



1st EN BN June 21, 2023 FB post.
What a beautiful day for a Change of Responsibility ceremony! We thank 1SG Chad for all of his hard work, and welcome 1SG Perryman to C CO.



1st EN BN August 16, 2023 FB post.
Always First isn't just words. DIEHARD Soldiers live it. Back to back Fort Riley Softball Champs!!!

VIETNAM WAR 50TH YEAR COMMEMORATION

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration was authorized by Congress, established under the Secretary of Defense and launched by President Obama in 2012.

By Presidential proclamation, the Vietnam War Commemoration will continue through Veterans Day, November 11, 2025. Our nation will commemorate this 50th anniversary over a 13-year period.

<https://www.army.mil/vietnamwar/>



Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin



"A Lasting Memento of the Nation's Thanks!"

The Commemoration is providing Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins to Commemorative Partners for dignified public presentations to U.S. military veterans, living at home or abroad, who served during the Vietnam War period as a lasting memento of the Nation's thanks.

Living U.S. veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location, are eligible to receive one lapel pin. Please visit <https://www.army.mil/vietnamwar/> to learn more!



Photos courtesy of U.S. Army

20th Anniversary of Diehard convoy north to Ramadi, Iraq

September 18-21, 2003 *(HHC, 1EN BN CDR CPT Kate Pendry's diary entries/photos)*

Day 1: 18 Sep 03- To CSC Navistar

1 M920 issue, staging issues, 1 5Ton flat. We slept on the trucks in a huge field. No bathrooms, showers, food etc...I had the CSE, Maintenance and BRT with me. Sucky first day.



1LT Eide (HHC XO) and SPC Taylor (HHC CDR Driver)

Day 2: 19 Sep 03- CSC Navistar to Cedar ROM

Today was a rougher day. 5 Tons breaking down left and right. The PLL buildup was the big problem because it was hard to haul. We got in at dusk-slept on the road.



The scenery above (village) (camels) was pretty rare during our journey. It usually looked like the below image.

Day 3: 20 Sep 03- Cedar ROM to Scania

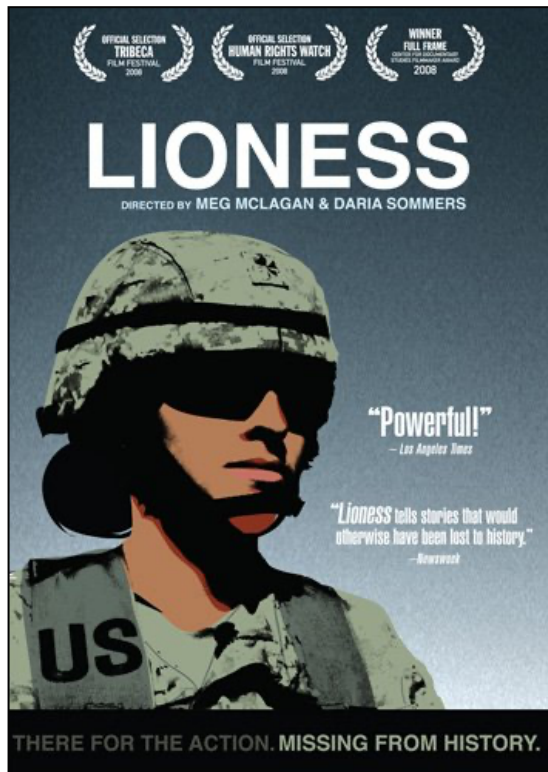
Another shitty day. M870 caught on fire which consumed hours. We had to limp it to a camp and move on. We got into Scania late, slept on trash filled road on the curb. Huge spiders "chasing" people-actually hilarious. Now they say we are in "Indian country."

Day 4: 21 Sep 03- Scania to our FOB

One of my BRT trucks had a problem-quick fix. 5Ton has a flat-longer fix. Gun shot rings out...CSE has negligent discharge through the floor of their own cab. We sat at the linkup point for air cover (too long) and get ambushed. Most chaotic 10-15 minutes because the road was bermed on both sides and hard to tell where the fires were originating. Vehicles shot up a bit. No injuries to personnel. We were lucky today...eye opening.



The Diehard Lioness Program...in the news!



Documentary (2008) highlighting women from the original Lioness program created by the 1st Engineer Battalion in Ramadi, Iraq 2003.



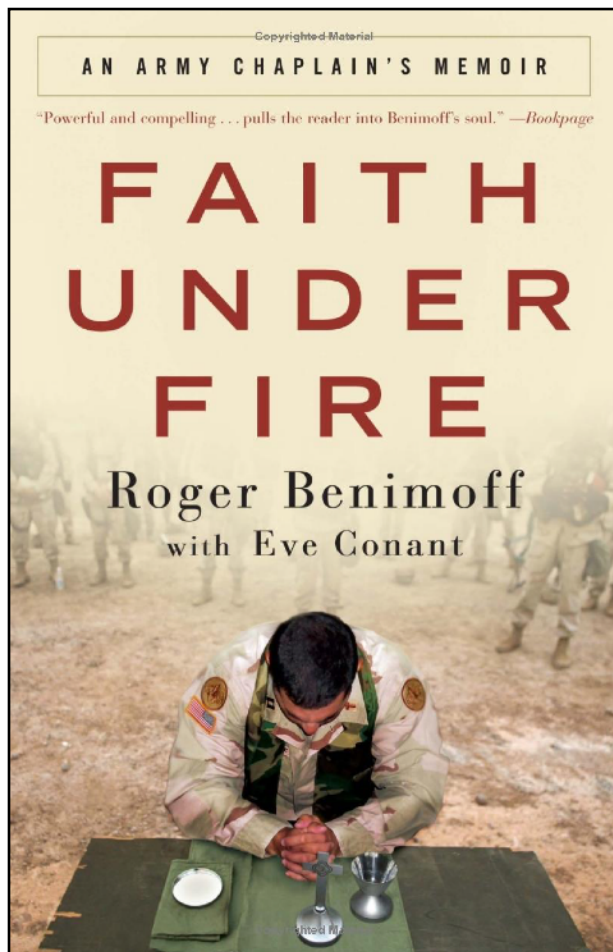
TV Series (2023) that gives a nod in episode 1 to the original Diehard Lioness program and suggests that program evolved into a CIA special ops program.

The Lioness Origin Story Podcast

Welcome to Lioness Origin Story, a special 8-part podcast presented by the Veterans Breakfast Club. Each week co-hosts Shannon Morgan, Army Lioness Vet, and Daria Sommers, Filmmaker/Writer, present, along with special guests, true stories of women who participated in Team Lioness. The goal is to provide an historical counter to Taylor Sheridan's fictional Special Ops: Lioness. As the hosts and their guests trace the evolution of Lioness Teams into Female Engagement Teams and Cultural Support Teams, the series will reveal how these new roles led to the dissolution of the Combat Exclusion Policy and the eventual opening up of military roles to women.

<https://lionesstheoriginstory.podbean.com/>

Chaplain's Corner



As he left for his second tour of duty as an Army chaplain in Iraq, Roger Benimoff noted in his journal: I am excited and I am scared. I am on fire for God...He is my hope, strength, and focus. But not long after returning to Iraq, the burdens of his job—the memorial services for soldiers killed in action, the therapy sessions after contact with the enemy, the perilous excursions “outside the wire” while under enemy fire—began to overwhelm him. Amid the dust, heat, and blood of Iraq, Benimoff felt the pillar of strength he’d always relied on to hold him up—his faith in God—begin to crumble.

Unable to make sense of the senseless, Benimoff turned to his journal. What did it mean to believe in a God who would allow the utter horror and injustice of war? Did He want these brave young men and women to die? In his darkest moment, Benimoff wrote: Why am I so angry? I do not want anything to do with God. I am sick of religion. It is a crutch for the weak.

Benimoff’s spiritual crisis heightened upon his return home to Fort Carson, Colorado. He withdrew emotionally from wife and sons, creating tensions that threatened to shatter the family. He was assigned to work at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he counseled returning soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder—until he was diagnosed himself with PTSD.

Finding himself in the role of patient rather than caregiver, connecting as an equal with his fellow sufferers, and revisiting scriptural readings that once again rang with meaning and truth, he began his most decisive battle: for the love of his family and for the chance to once again open his heart to the healing grace of God.

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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