

# 196<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade

## “Chargers”



### SHOULDER INSIGNIA

The 196<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade Shoulder Insignia. The color blue is used to denote infantry, the yellow and red symbolize cavalry and artillery. The double-headed match, used during the days of the matchlock musket, is lighted at both ends to ensure readiness. The 196<sup>th</sup> was activated 15 September 1965 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, by General Order Number 266.

### UNIT HISTORY

The 196<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was first organized in 1921 as an element of the Army Reserve's 98<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Then, as now, its mission was to train soldiers. During World War II, the 98<sup>th</sup> Division arrived in Hawaii in April 1944 and was given the mission of defending Kauai and Maui initially; later it was made responsible for the defense of Oahu.

In May 1945, the division began intensive training in preparation for its role in the invasion of Japan but the war ended before the unit could leave Hawaii. It went to Japan for occupation duty, where it was inactivated in February 1946.

The 196<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade was raised at Fort Devens in September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1965 and originally scheduled to be sent to the Dominican Republic in mid-1966, but was rushed to Vietnam instead and posted in the western portion of the III Corps Tactical Zone. It initiated Operation Attleboro into War Zone C of Tay Ninh Province, which developed into a major action after a large enemy base camp was uncovered, 19 October 1966. In April 1967 the brigade was selected, along with the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, to form a provisional division-sized unit called Task Force OREGON and moved to the I Corps Tactical Zone. The brigade stayed with this command, which was converted into the 23d Infantry Division (AMERICAL) 25 September 1967. The 196<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade officially joined this division, 15 February 1969. It operated throughout northern Vietnam, and after the division closed out of Vietnam, 29 November 1971, the 196<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade was reconstituted as a separate (provisional) brigade-sized element to safeguard the same area of operations.

In April 1971 the brigade was relocated to Da Nang for major port security duties. It finally departed Vietnam as the last U.S. Army combat brigade to leave in Increment XII of the U.S. Army withdrawal. The brigade earned 14 campaign streamers during its six years in Vietnam. Four of its members received the Medal of Honor for Vietnam action. One thousand of the "Charger" Brigade have their names engraved on the Vietnam Wall in Washington, DC. The brigade was inactivated at Oakland, Calif., on June 30, 1972.

## ORDER OF BATTLE

Brigade Infantry & Brigade Artillery  
 2d Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry  
 3d Battalion, 82d Artillery  
 B Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 14<sup>th</sup> Artillery  
 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
 3d Battalion, 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry  
 Brigade Reconnaissance  
 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry  
 Troop F, 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (Air)  
 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
 Troop F, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (Armored)  
 Brigade Support  
 8<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Military Police Company  
 26<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion  
 175<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company  
 687<sup>th</sup> Signal Company  
 156<sup>th</sup> Signal Platoon  
 635<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Detachment  
 27<sup>th</sup> Chemical Detachment  
 10<sup>th</sup> Public Information Detachment  
 HHD & BAND, 196<sup>th</sup> Support Bn (Prov)  
 328<sup>th</sup> Radio Research Company  
 Arrived Vietnam: 14 August 1966  
 Departed Vietnam: 29 June 1972

## Commanders:

COL Francis Conaty	Aug 66
BG Edward H. deSaussure	Sep 66
COL Francis Conaty	Sep 66
BG Frank T. Knowles	Nov 66
BG Frank H. Linnell	May 67
COL Louis Gelling	Nov 67
COL Frederick J. Kroesen, Jr.	Jun 68
COL Thomas H. Tackaberry	May 69
COL James M. Lee	Nov 69
COL Edwin L. Kennedy	Apr 70
COL William S. Hathaway	Nov 70
COL Rutland D. Beard, Jr.	Jun 71
BG Joseph P. McDonough	Nov 71

## Bde HQs:

Tay Ninh	Aug 66 - May 67
Chu Lai	Jun 67 - Oct 67
Tam Ky	Nov 67 - Mar 68

Phong Dien  
Hoi An  
Chu Lai  
Da Nang

Apr 68 - May 68  
Jun 68  
Jul 68 - Mar 71  
Apr 71 - Jun 72

## **REACTIVATED**

A ceremony at Fort Shafter returned the colors of the Army's last combat brigade in Vietnam to the active rolls. The Training Support Brigade - Pacific was redesignated as the 196<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade during a ceremony on Palm Circle at 9:00 a.m., May 26, 1998.

The mission of the brigade is to train and assist Reserve component units in the Pacific Theater attain and maintain the highest levels of training, logistics, maintenance, and readiness. The Army calls brigades such as this 'Training Support Brigades.' The Army made a decision a year back to give all Training Support Brigades a number designation from a historical brigade.

The brigade is comprised of 106 soldiers divided into four battalions, three infantry and one forward support battalion. An infantry battalion is located in Alaska, another in Guam, an one in Hawaii, with companies in American Samoa and California. The forward support battalion is in Hawaii.

The commander of the brigade is COL Ronnie W. Tucker. COL Tucker is a Vietnam vet who has served in a variety of command and staff positions since 1970.

The 196<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was the last U.S. Army combat brigade to leave Vietnam. It departed on June 29, 1972.

The new 196<sup>th</sup>, headquartered at Fort Shafter, works with Reserve Component units in Hawaii, Alaska, Guam, American Samoa and Japan, to assist these units in staying trained and ready at all times. About one soldier in three of U.S. Army Pacific is in the Reserve Components. The focus of the 196<sup>th</sup>'s training support is on those more than 13,000 soldiers.

Although the redesignation adds no personnel to the unit nor changes its mission, it does return a great deal of history to the Army in the Pacific.

The new 196<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade inherits the lineage, battle honors and colors of this history-rich unit. As part of the redesignation activities, the commander of the 196<sup>th</sup> who took it to Vietnam in 1966, retired Col. Francis Conaty, participated in the ceremony. Conaty, a veteran of combat in the Pacific during World War II, as well as multiple tours in Vietnam, assisted Lt. Gen. William M. Steele, commanding general of U.S. Army Pacific; Col. Randy Tucker, the current 196<sup>th</sup> commander; and 196<sup>th</sup> Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Cambra in unfurling the colors before an audience which included several 196<sup>th</sup> veterans from the Vietnam War.

Speaking to the soldiers of the new 196<sup>th</sup>, Conaty rendered a salute to them, both literally and with words.

"I salute you," Conaty said. "We'll be watching you, we old soldiers"

# The Charge Of The Light Brigade

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
'Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!' he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Was there a man dismay'd ?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd:  
Their's not to make reply,  
Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd:  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volley'd and thunder'd;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?  
O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred!

## 196<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY BRIGADE

### A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

- Capshaw, Gary. "Vietnam, 1971-71: A Private's War."  
n.p., 1995. 111 p. DS559.5C358.1995.  
Co. C, 2/1<sup>st</sup> Inf.
- McCaffrey, William J. "Wrapping it up in South Vietnam."  
Army 22 (Oct 1972): pp. 57-64. Per.
- Nolan, Keith W. Death Valley: The Summer Offensive, I Corps, August 1969.  
Novato, CA:  
Presidio Pr, 1987. 324 p. DS552.3H54N65.
- Stanton, Shelby L. Vietnam Order of Battle.  
Milwood, NY: Kraus, 1981. p. 88.  
DS552.55S73.1986.
- U.S. Army.  
Command and Info Unit. Scrapbook For Fighting Men Too Busy To Keep Their Own.  
Wash, DC, 1966. 41 p. #605-196.1966.
- U.S. Army.  
3d Mil Hist Det. "History of the 196<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, Americal Division."  
Photocopy of typescript, 1970? 5 p. #605-196.1970.
- Wilson, John B.,  
comp. Armies, Corps, Divisions and Separate Brigades.  
In the official Army Lineage Series.  
Wash, DC: CMH, 1987. pp. 709-11. UA25W547.1987.  
Lineage & honors from WW2 through Dec 1984.