

'Vietnam Experience' opens on Army Heritage Trail

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*Vietnam War veteran Joseph Galloway was the honorary guest-speaker for the exhibits opening. Galloway served as a war correspondent in the Ia Drang Valley for 16 months before serving three tours of duty. He is also the co-author of *We Were Soldiers Once and Young*. Photo by Megan Clugh.*



November 17, 2008 – Forty-three years after the end of the conflict, the battle of Ia Drang is commemorated on the Army Heritage Trail with the opening of the "Vietnam Experience" exhibit Nov. 14.

"This exhibit portrays the sacrifice of the Soldiers during that time," said Maj. Gen. Robert Williams, U.S. Army War College Commandant.

The exhibit is a representation of three different aspects of the Vietnam War. It includes a replica Fire Support Base, a UH-1 Iroquois helicopter and the Ia Drang Valley creek-bed.

The opening featured author and historian Joe Galloway. He was in Vietnam for 16 months in 1965, and on three separate tours in 1971, 1973 and 1975. He is a co-author of three books, including "We Were Soldiers Once and Young", published in 1992. Galloway and battalion commander Harold G. Moore wrote the book, which captured the actions of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment in the significant Battle of Ia Drang. The 450 Soldiers who were airlifted to Landing Zone X-ray near the Cambodian border found themselves outnumbered during several days of enemy attacks. Support from artillery, B-52 bombers and fighter bombers held off the enemy assaults.

"Many years have gone by since the last American helicopter lifted off...but we still remember it

today," he said. "I take this exhibit not as a memorial, but as a living, teaching exhibit of what we went through."



Vietnam War veteran Bill Beck places a rifle at the memorial for fallen Soldiers of the 1st Calvary Division. The ceremony concluded with the playing of Taps and Amazing Grace.

Also highlighted were Russell Adams and Bill Beck, machine gunners in the Battle of Ia Drang Valley, and Joe Newsome, 118th Aviation Company, 145th Aviation Battallion.

The opening ceremony also included a reading of the Veteran's Honor Roll and a Memorial Cross Ceremony by the Michael Novosel Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Association, Harrisburg.



Russell Adams and Bill Beck, machine gunners in the Battle of Ia



Drang Valley, and Joe Newsome, 118th Aviation Company, 145th Aviation Battallion, take a moment of silence during a ceremony Nov. 14 on the Army Heritage Trail. Forty-three years after the end of the conflict, the battle of Ia Drang is commemorated on the Army Heritage Trail with the opening of the "Vietnam Experience." Photo by Megan Clugh.



Taps is played during the ceremony Nov. 14.
Photo by Megan Clugh.



Armed and ready, re-enactors gather in the new "Vietnam Experience" exhibit along the Army Heritage Trail. The exhibit held its ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, Nov 14 with more than a hundred people in attendance.



The ceremony began with the presentation of colors by the Cumberland County Honor Guard. An American flag was also presented at the memorial for fallen Soldiers.