

## **Once a Cottonbaler! Always a Cottonbaler!**

It's my honour and privilege to thank all the Soldiers, and the family members of Soldiers that have ever served in the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbalers) for their service to our Nation, the United States Army, the Regiment, and their fellow Cottonbalers.

You can be proud of your association with the premier Infantry Regiment in the United States Army, with over 200 years service during which the regiment participated in 12 wars, was awarded 78 campaign streamers, and received 14 unit decorations, making it the most decorated regiment in the United States Army.

37 years ago a group of Cottonbalers got together and formed the 7th Infantry Regiment Association (Cottonbalers). Like most Division and Regimental Associations, the focus of the organisation was on camaraderie and fellowship while hosting annual reunions and awarding educational scholarships to deserving association members and their family members.

With the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March 2020, not being able to meet in person, and not having a social media presence really hurt our Association. We lost track of many of our members, and as a result were not able to fill vacant leadership positions on the Association board, receive dues from members, receive donations for the scholarship fund, or award scholarships.

In the spring 2023 a group of Association members began to meet via Zoom to develop a plan to pull the Association back together. With the help of some very smart young Cottonbalers (members of 2/7 Infantry during Operation Iraqi Freedom) we have made some significant progress.

Thanks to LTC (R) Ernie Jackson, the Association Scholarship Officer, we are developing a new updated website [7thinfrgtassoc.com](http://7thinfrgtassoc.com). Check it out! The website provides links to the website and facebook page of 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry, our active duty Cottonbalers, and other Cottonbaler Groups facebook pages. The number of Cottonbalers posting on these sites is a testimony to the strong relationship among all Cottonbalers.

On 4 January 2024, Ernie Jackson and I awarded monetary educational scholarships to a spouse of a Cottonbaler, 2 sons of Cottonbalers, and 2 soldiers of our Active Duty Cottonbalers. This was an important first step in a new focus for the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbaler) Association. We will continue to focus on camaraderie and fellowship, as we always have. We are good at it! However, we hope to begin a new focus for the Association, **"Cottonbalers Helping Cottonbalers"**! We have a lot of resources in the Association to help each other; not just soldiers, but Cottonbaler families, those currently serving, and those who have served in the 7th Infantry Regiment. We envision this to be a "mentoring type program" where Cottonbalers can share information, and get assistance with finding resources for issues they are dealing

with. Our aim is to make the 7th Infantry Regiment Association (Cottonbalers) a **service organisation** with our focus on Cottonbalers and their families, past, present and future!

**SAVE THE DATE:** We have begun planning the return of the 7th Infantry Regiment Association (Cottonbalers) Reunions. We are looking to piggyback along side of a 2/7 Infantry Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) get together being planned for 8-11 November 2024 in Columbus, Georgia, Fort Moore/Benning, and is open to all Cottonbalers who have served in the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbalers). More information to follow, check on the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbaler) Association website [7thinfrgtassoc.com](http://7thinfrgtassoc.com) and on the Cottonbaler facebook page.

If you are a **“Cottonbaler By God, A Damn Fine Soldier”** and have ever served in the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbalers) I encourage you to go to the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbalers) website and join up. If you are already a member of the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbalers) Association I encourage you to get active again, contact us on the website or on the facebook page and update your contact info. If you love Cottonbalers past, present and future and are interested in helping with the **“Cottonbalers Helping Cottonbalers”!** mentoring program join the 7th Infantry Regiment (Cottonbalers) Association and tell us how you are able to help!

Remember **Once a Cottonbaler! Always a Cottonbaler!** Thanks again for your service in the finest Infantry Regiment in the United States Army, and for all you do for Cottonbalers!

Very Respectfully,

Dave Jensen,  
Honorary Colonel, 7th Infantry Regiment