

Armor Corps Celebrates 75th Anniversary

by Anna Pedron

In honor of the 75th anniversary of the U.S. Army Armor Corps, the Armor School dedicated an M551 Sheridan tank July 10 at Eubanks Field.

“Today is a great opportunity to celebrate the history, lineage and traditions of both the United States Army Armor Corps, which the 75th anniversary of its inception is today,” said CSM Michael Clemens, command sergeant major of the Armor School, “and also the 73rd Armor Battalion, which is an airborne battalion with the 82nd Airborne Division, both represented by the Sheridan behind me.”

The M551 Sheridan – a tank touted as being mobile, amphibious, air-droppable and armed with gun and missile systems – was developed primarily to support airborne divisions. It entered service in 1967 during the Vietnam War and worked in various combat operations (including Operations Desert Shield and Storm) until 2004, when the model was retired.



Figure 1. An M551 Sheridan tank is dedicated July 10 at Fort Benning’s Eubanks Field.

“It is very appropriate that today, on this great day, we enshrine this vehicle here on this special field, in front of all of these soon-to-be paratroopers, because of what this vehicle represents,” said BG Scott McKean, Chief of Armor. “There was an entire division of paratroopers who demanded (its) presence on every operation they conducted because of what this vehicle brought ... a corps of Soldiers that were really the ones that made this battalion, the 3rd of the 73rd, and its predecessor, 4-68 Armor, so special.”

“We are here to dedicate the armor reconnaissance airborne assault vehicle, better known as the Sheridan tank, into the museum. A fitting tribute to all who served and fought on this platform,” said keynote speaker CSM John W. Troxell, command sergeant major of U.S. Forces Korea. “From combat in Vietnam to Desert Storm – this vehicle was the ‘combat arm of decision’ of 82nd Airborne Division. The Sheridan was a unique blend of firepower, mobility, shock effect and protection.”

Troxell told stories of his time in the Sheridan, describing the 1989 U.S. intervention in Panama (Operation Just Cause), where 10 Sheridans were airdropped from a C-141 aircraft directly into enemy territory, where they accompanied 82nd Airborne Division.

He told the crowd about the “culminating event” for him during Operation Just Cause: when his section was shopped to 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, and he was rumbling down the streets of Panama City with a squad-plus of heavily armed Rangers on top of his vehicle moving to an assault objective.

“I knew that this was going to be the precursor to what we were going to be doing in the future,” Troxell said. “That there was the beginning of the Special Operation Force general-purpose integration that we now do so well in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.”



Figure 2. CSM John W. Troxell, former command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Armor School, tells stories of his time in a Sheridan tank.

McKean, Clemens and Troxell all served with 73rd Armor Battalion and were all very proud to be a part of the Sheridan dedication ceremony.

“It’s awesome to bring a bit of my own personal history, as someone who served on this vehicle, and in that battalion, here to Fort Benning and represent that to the community at large,” Clemens said.

“My time spent on this vehicle and being associated with the finest American paratroopers will always be my fondest memories of my long career,” Troxell said.

As part of the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the Armor Corps, the Armor School hosted events including an armor run, organizational day and one-station unit training graduation.

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