

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

Tellico Village VFW Post 12135



Jeff Corthell was born in Sandusky, Ohio and grew up on nearby Catawba Island (peninsula). He attended The Ohio State University where he took Army ROTC. He graduated as a Distinguished Military Graduate, and entered active duty with a two-year detail in the infantry, in Germany.

After two years he reverted to his basic Quartermaster branch, and was then reassigned to the 9th Infantry Division in Vietnam. The 9th Division had too many QM captains when he arrived, so he was offered the XO position in the 39th Cavalry (Prov), an experimental Armor recon unit comprised of air cushion vehicles (ACV). All the ACVs were inoperable due to missing parts at that time, so his first task was to establish a supply section and obtain the needed parts. In a month, all the ACVs were operational, and Captain Corthell spent the rest of his Vietnam tour in the field. During his Vietnam combat tour, Captain Corthell was awarded four Bronze Stars and the Air Medal.

After Vietnam, Captain Corthell attended the Quartermaster Advanced Course, and then The Ohio State University graduate school and earned a Masters of Business Administration with a specialty in logistics. Captain Corthell's next assignment was to the Defense Electronics Supply Center in Dayton Ohio. He was then selected for early attendance to the Command and General Staff College, at Fort Leavenworth, KS, and selected "below the zone" for early promotion to major.

Major Corthell was subsequently assigned to Korea where he served as deputy G4, I Corps Group. His first mission was to develop a logistics simulation (war game) to evaluate potential war time ammunition usage, supply availability, and lines of communication. The simulation results revealed serious shortcomings in ammunition storage and road capabilities. A briefing was set up and Major Corthell personally briefed Korean President Park Chung-hee, and members of the Korean General Staff. Major Corthell's recommendations were accepted and within weeks, construction began on a new ammunition supply point and road improvements.

Major Corthell's following assignment was with the 101st Airborne Division (AA) at Fort Campbell, KY. He served as a battalion executive officer, and was then picked to be the division project officer for the field test of the new Army Division Supply System (DS4). The field test did not go well, as numerous interface problems surfaced, which could not be easily corrected. The Army Computer Systems Command wanted to go live with DS4, even though that would mean no parts resupply to the division for an extended period. Knowing the readiness impact on the 101st if DS4 was implemented, Major Corthell "raised the red flag" up the chain of command. The FORSCOM CG

(4 star) halted the DS4 implementation pending a general officer review at Ft Campbell. The review was conducted by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics of the Army, whose opening remarks detailed how congress had given the Army the funds, the computers were sitting in warehouses, and any delays would be an embarrassment to the Army. That afternoon Major Corthell received a call informing him he was being immediately reassigned to Minneapolis, to command the Military Enlistment Processing Station there. (After DS4 was turned on at the 101st, the division operated in a stand-down mode for eight months.) Seven months after arriving in Minneapolis, Major Corthell was again selected "below the zone" for early promotion to Lt Colonel. Six months later he came out on the battalion command list.

In June 1982, Lt Colonel Corthell assumed command of the 13th Supply and Service Battalion in Ludwigsburg, Germany. The 13th was comprised of seven companies spread throughout Bavaria, and several companies were in diminished states of readiness, three having failed their previous Annual General Inspections (AGI's). Lt Colonel Corthell spent many hours on the autobahns upgrading the readiness of his companies. During his two-year command tour, all companies passed their AGIs. After his command tour, Lt Colonel Corthell spent his final year in Germany at the Theater Army Material Management Center as the chief of the War Reserve Division.

While in Germany Lt Colonel Corthell faced a serious family crisis, and was forced to choose between his military career and his family. He chose family and requested a final, pre-retirement tour in Tennessee. Lt Colonel Corthell completed his military service at the Defense Depot Memphis, where he served until eligible to retire.

Jeff then worked at a large non-profit outside of Memphis, where he ran their production department: think mail, millions and millions of pieces of mail! While in Memphis, Jeff met and married his wife, Sandra McEntire, who was an English professor at Rhodes College. In 2000, they decided to retire early and that summer they moved to Knoxville and purchased a "hobby farm" in north Knox County. Over the next thirteen years they enjoyed the country life, keeping two horses, gardening, winemaking, and pottery. Sandra also founded the Elf Project for a Child's Christmas, a 501(c)(3) Christmas charity.

In 2013 they decided to concentrate on less strenuous activities and improve their social life, and they moved to Tellico Village in October 2013. Jeff is one of the founding members of VFW Post #12135, and has been the post Quartermaster (treasurer) since the post's establishment in April 2016.

The Tellico Village VFW Post #12135 General meeting is held at 7:00 p.m. in the Tellico Village Yacht Club every third Wednesday of the month. Further information can be found on the Post website at: <https://www.tvvfw.org/>