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FORT HOOD - Talk to a 4th Infantry Division family member about the deployment to Iraq and one name inevitably surfaces. Bob Babcock, a Heavener, Okla., native and Vietnam veteran has become synonymous with the deployment since he began his daily updates in May.

The updates are carried on the 4th Infantry Association's Web site and two other battalion-level sites set up for the families. "It's hard to describe the positive feedback I get (from families)", Babcock said Wednesday. "I feel I made a good decision to commit to something I had no idea what I was getting into. It has been a great trip."

In Killeen this week for the division's national reunion through Saturday at the Plaza Hotel, Babcock's history with the unit began in November 1965 when he became a rifle platoon leader with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment. "We trained troops straight out of basic training and took them to Vietnam," Babcock said.

While his service with the division and 22nd Infantry Regiment ended two years later in July 1967, Babcock's heart and passion for those units remained during the 34-year career at IBM that followed.

In 1990, Babcock attended his first division reunion. He later assumed the association's presidency from 1998 to 2000 and became the liaison for the association and the active-duty division. His book, "War Stories" about the division cataloged about 450 stories from Utah Beach to Pleiku, Vietnam.

Babcock, now president of the 22nd Infantry Regiment, said he takes pride in maintaining the division's history. "The 4th Infantry Division has a great history that a lot of people don't know," said Babcock, who now includes daily snippets of that history in his hugely popular Internet updates.

Using today as an example, Babcock said the date was significant for the Fort Hood-based division, long before the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. Those attacks in New York and on the Pentagon set the course for the division's year long stay in Tikrit, Iraq.

"On Sept. 11, 1944 the 4th Infantry Division became the first allied troops to go into Germany," Babcock said. "We had a patrol from the 22nd Infantry Regiment go into Germany through the Siegfried Line, the great wall where the Germans had their fortifications on the border."

To preserve that history as the veterans pass on, Babcock said he and his wife, Jan, embarked on what has become the largest venture of their marriage - a living video history of experiences from the nation's recent wars and campaigns.

"We're betting the farm on this," Babcock said of his nonprofit venture, Americans Remembered Inc. Partnered with the Library of Congress, Babcock said his organization is attempting to compile 60- to 90-minute interviews with surviving veterans of wars from World War II to Korea, Vietnam and Iraq.

However, since its formal inception Sept. 11, 2001, Babcock said the nonprofit's drive has had to battle both time and costs. Babcock said of the nation's 19 million veterans, about 1,700 are dying daily, taking with them a piece of history about the campaigns they fought in.

His volunteers, many of whom are former veterans, are attempting to seek out those veterans, paying particular attention to the World War II era, because of the veterans' ages.

The volunteers then interview the veterans and others connected to the war, using their own video cameras and interview guidance sheets that cover biographical information and questions.

"Veterans will talk to other veterans," Babcock said. "They'll open up because we've been there and will understand. It's family. There's no words to describe combat and no words to describe the brotherhood of those who experience it."

"But the volunteers do not have to be veterans," said Babcock, noting one of his best volunteers is Gary Swanson in Kansas City, his first boss at IBM.

Swanson, a non-veteran, eagerly embraced the concept. Following his first interview Jan. 23, Swanson set a goal of doing about 200 to 225 interviews. He has completed 160. "He believes in those veterans and what they did," Babcock said. "He believes he owes it to them."

Babcock said the interviews are not limited to veterans. The program also interviews family members and civilians, known as homefront workers, who supported the war effort.

Once the interviews are complete, the tapes are then copied. One stays with Babcock to become part of a database for an educational project he is working on. Another tape is given to the subject's family. A third copy is put on a DVD and sent to the congressional library as part of the Veterans History Project, Babcock said.

The expense per interview is about \$25 to \$30. The Fund-raising to cover those costs has become the focus of Jan Babcock, who also left IBM to pursue the joint passion.

"The target for our fund-raising is virtually anyone who believes in this worthwhile effort and would like to have a part of making the veterans history project successful," said Jan via telephone from their home in Marietta, Ga. Jan said donors can be individuals, corporations and charitable foundations.

"This has been Bob's passion," Jan said. "We both gave up very lucrative careers to really dedicate our lives to the program's success."

Bob said he will try to gather for the project while he is in Killeen. He is hoping particularly to energize 4th Infantry families and area veterans to help in a blitz of interviews planned for when the 4th Infantry returns to Fort Hood this spring.

Funds permitting, Babcock said the goal is to have energized volunteers committed to about 20 interviews a year. Babcock noted 100 volunteers at that rate would accomplish 2,000 interviews for the project.

"That's where we're starting to make an impact," he said. "The stories are there."

Because of the content of the interviews, Babcock said the interviewers need to be able to deal to keep the subject's focused on their stories. "To become an interviewer, you basically sit down and start talking through their life story as it relates to the military," Babcock said. "You will run into emotions. You have to be able to deal with that."

Babcock said the volunteers should be at least high school age and have an interest in history. They also need access to a video camera and the time and means to devote to the project.

"Every story is important," Jan Babcock said. "This is the only way our young people will have any opportunity to touch and feel the experience of those veterans."

Volunteers and contributors can contact the organization through its Web site at www.americansremembered.org.

Babcock also will meet with 4th Infantry families at an informal gathering that begins at 10 a.m. at the division's museum on Fort Hood.

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