

# The TMCA News

Volume 38, Issue II

November 2014

Editor: David Hoagey



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## 2014 Fall/Winter Show

**Where:** Franklin Marriott Conference Center / Hotel  
Cool Springs 700 Cool Springs Blvd., Franklin, TN 37067

**When:** Friday, **November 28** - Dealer Set up & Members Only 8 am - 12  
Public Admitted 12 noon - 6 pm  
Saturday, **November 29** - 8 am - 3 pm

**Admission:** \$5. for Non-Members **TMCA Members get in free - Wear badge** Children under 12 free. Also admitted free, if in uniform: Members of US Military, Fire and Police, R.O.T.C. and military re-enactors.

**What Will Be There:** Uniforms, Medals, Insignia, Badges, Helmets, Weapons, Veterans, re-enactors. Buy-Sell-Trade.

**Table Reservations:** 6 FT. Tables ~ **Member Prices:**  
Sale and Display Tables - \$45 each.

**Contact Ronnie Townes @ 615-661-9379 to reserve.**

**Room Reservations at Hotel:** Call 615-261-6100 or 1-888-403-6772, and ask to receive the **TMCA discount rate of \$97**, plus tax (normal standard room rate is \$209). **Deadline for this special rate is November 5, 2014**

## Club News

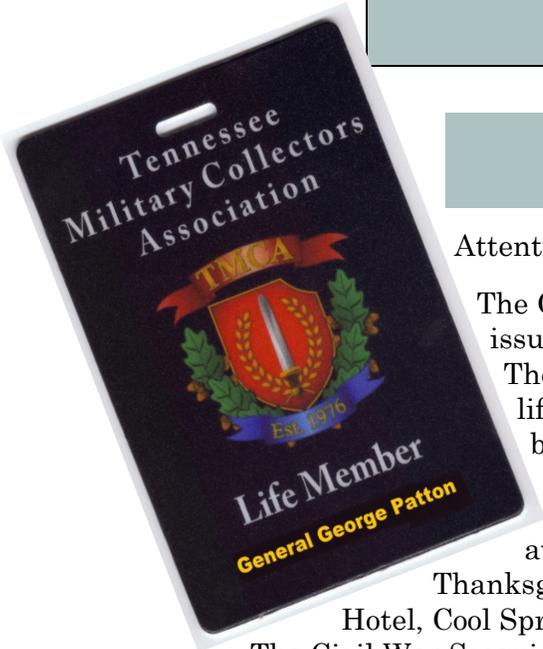
### New Life Membership Badges

Attention Members:

The Club Officers and Board of Directors are proud to announce the issue of the first Life Membership badges in the history of the club. The new life membership badge reflects the commitment of the life member to support the Club and the hobby they enjoy. The badges have been specially produced with the Club's coat of arms in a distinct color combination to make them stand out from the regular member badges. The special badges will be available for pickup at the upcoming Fall/Winter Show on Thanksgiving weekend (November 28 & 29, 2014) at the Marriott Hotel, Cool Springs, Franklin Tennessee. The show is sold out.

The Civil War Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Franklin is the theme of the Show.

There will be several special guest; Dr. Michael Bradley, Historian, Author, and member of the TN Sesquicentennial Committee; USMC Edgar Harrell, USS Indianapolis Survivor and Author; Col. Robert Hamsley, US Army, Patton's Third Army. Look to see you there!



## Heinz Gonnermann 1923-2013

### Fallschirmjager 10th Kompanie Regiment "Baranthin"

One of my most prized items in my personal collection happens to be a Luftwaffe paratrooper badge with a broken lower pin catch and a replaced swastika.

They always say you should buy the artifact, not the story. Well in this case, I just happen to love the story much more.

Many years ago, I was standing in the lobby of a Louisville, KY hotel. It was the night before the start of the annual OVMS/SOS show. Soon an older man with an accent approach me and he asked if I was going to the show the next morning. When I told him yes, he asked if he could catch a ride.

His name was Heinz Gonnermann and he had just flown in from Canada. I soon found out that Heinz was actually a former Luftwaffe Fallschirmjager who was captured in North Africa in 1943. We quickly became friends.

Heinz was born in 1923. Like most German kids in the late 1930's he had joined the Hitler Youth. He told me that he enjoyed being in the HJ and had lots of fun, but that he was always getting into trouble. One day he slipped away and ran home, which was akin to going AWOL.

In 1942, Heinz finished his apprenticeship and became a plumber and installer for the Karl Will Company in Eschwege, Germany. Shortly after obtaining that job, he was conscripted into the German Army for WWII.

Following his enlistment, Heinz decided that he wanted to join the paratroopers. He said that as kids, both he and his brother always loved to jump near the Amalia mines with bed sheets, pretending to be paratroopers. Little did they know then, that later both of them would become real Fallschirmjager's during the war. Heinz's brother was captured in Normandy in 1944, and both survived the war.

Because of his age (19), he had to obtain his fathers permission to join the paratroopers. On May 10, 1942, he was assigned to Braunschweig (Brunswick) training school III. He trained first as an infantryman, them as vehicle driver and repairman. He also qualified as an MG34 gunner. Training ended in late September 1943 and he was sent to Wittstock an der Drosse near Berlin for "Jump School".



Paratrooper Heinz Gonnermann  
SR# 62585 168 Age 19  
Helmstedt, Germany June 1942



Heinz's original paratrooper badge worn throughout his time during the war. It is made by JMME & Sohn Berlin.

In recent years, Heinz had a jeweler make a new swastika for it. He had de-nazified this badge just after the end of the war.

On November 3, 1942, Heinz made his first jump. A week later, on November 10, 1943, he had completed all his jumps and received the coveted Luftwaffe paratrooper badge. Two days after completing training, he was loaded on a train and headed south to Italy and then on to North Africa.



Heinz at a reunion in Normandy France.



Heinz and a few buddies in boot camp.

jumps and received the coveted Luftwaffe paratrooper badge. Two days after completing training, he was loaded on a train and headed south to Italy and then on to North Africa.



**Fallschirmjäger Heinz Gonnermann  
Naples, Italy 1942.  
Photo taken in route to North Africa.**

On November 20th, 1942, just 10 days after completing jump school, Heinz landed via JU-52 in North Africa near Tunisia. Heinz quickly was assigned as a motorcycle courier.

Action started right away for Heinz. He was sent immediacy to Bizerta Harbor to help unload ships carrying food and supplies, and each night the harbor was bombed. On November 24th, the British attacked the Harbor all day long. He watched as several allied bombers were shot down.

When asked about his tan painted helmet as seen in his photo taken in Tunisia, Heinz said this: "We were never issued the traditional Fallschirmjäger style helmet, this was because they did not want the enemy to know that Fallschirmjäger's were deployed into the area". As far as the tan paint goes, Heinz said that they lined up all our helmets on the ground in the motor pool area. Then, they came by and sprayed them all tan using the same paint that was used on the trucks and tanks.

Heinz remained basically in the same area until February 27, 1943 when his unit moved to Sidin Sir, a small Arabian village with a railroad station. This was an area of heavy fighting just two days before where the Germans overran several English positions. Heinz's unit was under the command of General Manteufel and was used as ground infantry during several battles.

During this time, his paratrooper unit fought the British 2nd Para Battalion (Red Berets) with heavy casualties on both sides. German survivors of this battle were all awarded the Iron Cross II class, including

Heinz himself.

By May 7th, the Germans had to give up Mateur due to lack of gas and ammunition. The Americans occupied Bizerta and the English Tunis. Heinz was stationed on a farm by the river Medjerta. On May 8th they received orders to destroy all their military supplies and vehicles. They had to give up and surrender. Heinz said that the night of May 8, 1943 was sleepless night for everyone since they knew that they would be surrendering the next day. Many feared of what would become of them in enemy hands.

They had a choice to surrender to either the Americans on one side or the British on the other. They chose the British. They were all taken to Tunis to a prisoner collection point and then on to camp Oued Zarga. Later they were moved to Algeria. At the end of May, they were transferred to the Americans. Their shoes were taken away to discourage escape. They soon went by rail to Casablanca, Morocco. When they arrived, everything they had that the Americans could use, was confiscated, all except their uniforms and a spoon. They were later issued new American shoes.

It was at this time that Heinz decided to hide his coveted Paratrooper badge in his sock. He did not want the souvenir hungry Americans to take it from him. One day the pin catch became snagged in his sock and broke off. It has remained broken ever since.

They remained in POW camps in Morocco for about 5 months. In late September 1943, the camps were very crowded, but he did say that conditions and the food continued to get better as more and more prisoners were being moved out. Heinz was finally loaded on a Liberty ship and taken to the United States. The voyage took 21 days.



**Heinz Gonnermann  
February 1943  
Mateur, Tunisia Helmet was painted  
at the motor pool with vehicle paint.**

Heinz landed in the United States at New Port, Virginia. He spent the next few years in various POW camps throughout the US. He was moved from Ohio, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas. Most of the POW camps in America were located in the south. This was due to two facts: (1)The warmer winters saved on fuel cost. (2)The prisoner labor could be used in agricultural fields that were much more common to the southern areas.

On May 8th, 1945 while Heinz was working in a Sugar Cane field at Port Allen near the Mississippi River, word came of Germany's surrender.

Going home still took awhile. Prisoners were not released right away. In fact, Heinz was lucky and was selected for early release in a group of 10,000 selected to help the American Occupation Forces in Germany. He attributes this to the fact that he had always attended Church services while in camp and also took American History and English classes.

On May 2, 1946, almost a year after the end of the war, he was discharged and headed home. He had been gone away from home for 4 years.

Heinz went back to Germany, but later he settled back into Canada and Florida. He made a business out of installing vacuum system tube-runs at banks. The type of tubes that move your money around from car to teller.

When I first met Heinz, he was carrying his Paratrooper badge in a leather case, sort of like a policeman's badge. He was very proud of it. The swastika was missing and he told me that he had de-nazified it so that he would have no trouble passing through customs while traveling. One year, not very long ago, he showed up once again at the SOS show and I saw that the swastika had been replaced. He said he did not plan to ever go back to Germany again and so he had a jeweler make him a new one and attach it to the badge.

When I asked Heinz who treated him better, the Americans or the British, he said it was actually the Black American troops who treated the Germans the best.



In the south, black troops were used a lot to guard enemy Prisoners of War.

Many, Heinz felt were sympathetic to the plight of being held as prisoners, and they would sneak extra food and supplies to the Germans.



**Heinz's original Dog Tag.** Unlike the Americans, German dog tags were coded and did not bare a soldiers name. This became a problem when the records were lost, or when tags got mixed up between soldiers. Many tags found on dead bodies, were later identified to soldiers who were actually still alive.

**R.I.P Heinz**  
**We will all miss you.**



The Swastika was de-nazified (broken off) by Heinz following the war. Heinz had a jeweler in Canada make a new one and attach it back on.



Prisoner of War Camp  
Ruston, Louisiana, USA  
This

### Certificate of Achievement

is awarded to  
Heinrich Gonnermann

who has successfully completed a course in ENGLISH LANGUAGE for  
Prisoners of War

In witness thereof, the undersigned have hereunto set their names this 22 day of November 1945

*Kenneth R. Pomeroy*  
1st Lt. C. A. C.  
Asst. Executive Officer

*Edmond*  
PW Director of Camp

**APPROVED IDENTIFICATION CARD**

Name Heinrich Gonnermann  
Address Herrengasse 15a  
City Reichenbach  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Employed By S.O.W.  
Security No. 816 89877

SEX M. AGE 22 WEIGHT 160 HEIGHT 1.72 HAIR Black EYES G.

Photo of  
Thrust Print

**Heinz's text books and diplomas for taking classes while being held in American POW camps. Louisiana Oct. - Nov. 1945**



**Heinz Gonnermann  
Hitler Youth - 1938**

Prisoner of War Camp  
Ruston, Louisiana, USA  
This

### Certificate of Achievement

is awarded to  
Heinrich Gonnermann

who has successfully completed a course in AMERICAN HISTORY for  
Prisoners of War conducted at Prisoner of War Branch Camp, Tallulah, Louisiana

In witness thereof, the undersigned have hereunto set their names this twenty-fourth day of October 1945.

*Kenneth R. Pomeroy*  
1st Lt. C. A. C.  
Asst. Executive Officer

*Michael Dinkley*  
PW Director of Camp

*Thomas A. Day*  
Capt. F. A.  
Commanding

315804  
CONTROL FORM D-2  
Kontrollformular D-2

**CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE**  
Entlassungsschein

1266

ALL ENTRIES WILL BE MADE IN BLOCK LATIN CAPITALS AND WILL BE MADE IN INK OR TYPESCRIPT.  
Alle Eintragungen mit Tinte oder Schreibmaschine in Blockbuchst.

SURNAME OF HOLDER Zusammen des Inhabers <b>GONNERMANN</b>		DATE OF BIRTH Geburtsdatum <b>7.12.1923</b>
CHRISTIAN NAME Vorname <b>HEINRICH</b>		PLACE OF BIRTH Geburtsort <b>BOCHUM, WESTPH.</b>
CIVIL OCCUPATION Bürgerlicher Beruf <b>PLUMBER</b>		FAMILY STATUS Familienstand <b>SINGLE</b>
HOME ADDRESS Wohnort <b>REICHENSACHSEN/ESCHWEGE KASSEL/KURHESSEN HERRENGASSE 153</b>		NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ARE MINORS Anzahl minderjähriger Kinder <b>NONE</b>

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THE PARTICULARS GIVEN ABOVE ARE TRUE.  
Ich erkläre hiermit, daß nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen obige Angaben des Wehrpflichtigen richtig sind.

I ALSO CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE "INSTRUCTIONS TO PERSONNEL ON DISCHARGE" (CONTROL FORM D-1).  
Ich erkläre außerdem, daß ich die "Anweisungen an Militärpersonal" entlich ihrer Entlassung" (Kontrollformular D. 1) gelesen und verstanden habe.

SIGNATURE OF HOLDER  
Unterschrift des Inhabers  
*Heinz Gonnermann*

NAME OF HOLDER IN BLOCK LATIN CAPITALS  
Name des Inhabers in Blockbuchst.  
**HEINRICH GONNERMANN**

CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE über US-\$ <b>4.40</b>	MEDICAL CERTIFICATE Medizinischer Ausweis <b>NONE</b>	MILITARY PAYMENT ORDER über US-\$ <b>59.40</b>
DISABILITY, WITH DESCRIPTION Invalidität mit Beschreibung <b>4 Feb. 1945</b>	DISABILITY, WITH DESCRIPTION Invalidität mit Beschreibung <b>NONE</b>	DATE OF DISCHARGE Datum der Entlassung <b>4 Feb. 1945</b>

MEDICAL CATEGORY  
Medizinische Gruppe  
**Landeszentralbank Eschwege**

SIGNATURE OF MEDICAL OFFICER  
Unterschrift des Militärarztes  
*John E. Miller*

NAME AND RANK OF MEDICAL OFFICER IN BLOCK LATIN CAPITALS  
Name und Rang des Militärarztes in Blockbuchstaben  
**JOHN E MILLER CAPT MC**

THE PERSON TO WHOM THE ABOVE IS ISSUED  
Die Person, auf die die obigen Angaben

PARTICULARS REFERRED TO ARE SHARED ON  
Angaben, welche auf diese Angaben

RIGHT THUMBPRINT  
Rechts-Handabdruck  
**ARMY**

OFFICIAL IMPRESSED SEAL  
Offizielles Amtssiegel  
**ARMY**

CERTIFIED BY  
geprüft von  
*Donald C. Miller*

NAME, RANK AND APPOINTMENT OF ALLIED DISCHARGING OFFICER IN BLOCK LATIN CAPITALS  
Name, Rang und Wallangstellung des alliierten entlassenden Offiziers in Blockbuchst.  
**DONALD C MILLER MAJ F A  
HQ 774th TANK BN**



**Discharge papers from:  
Prisoner of War camp. 1946  
Listed as:  
Special Prisoner:  
Heinrich Gonnermann**

**Bann Meißner (274)**

**RHf. Heinz Gonnermann**  
errang im **Gef. II**  
**100 m-Lauf**  
den **II. Sieg**  
mit der Leistung von **12.1"**

In Anerkennung der Leistung  
verleihe ich diese Auszeichnung

ESCHWEGE, DEN **22.6.1944.**

LEITER FÜHRER DES BANNES MEISSNER (274)  
*Gonnermann*

**ARMY SERVICE FORCE  
POW SPECIAL PROJECT CENTER, PORT EUSTIS, VIRGINIA**

Subject: **Special Prisoner**  
To: **Whom it may concern**

1. Selected cooperative individual. Possible assistance for the occupation forces in the administration of Germany.

**GONNERMANN, Heinrich**  
816-89877

*M. Casbarra*  
**Silver W. Casbarra**  
2nd Lt C.M.P. 0-1799987

**Display Award Winners**

**Spring Show 2014**



*1st Place*

**Donnie Shearer**  
Military Uniforms



*2nd Place*

**Sam Barnes**  
TN Heroes & Their Guns



*3rd Place*

**Trey Stancil**  
Japanese Military Handguns

**James Clemens High School  
TF-9J Cougar Restoration**

**The Project**

James Clemens High School in Madison, Alabama is restoring a Navy fighter aircraft to become its official mascot, the James Clemens “Jets”. The Madison City Board of Education approved an agreement to receive the TF-9J Cougar aircraft from the National Naval Aviation Museum located in Pensacola, FL. The plane is currently housed at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Huntsville, AL. School officials, led by James Clemens JROTC leader COL Courtney Taylor, negotiated the transfer of the aircraft to James Clemens at no charge on a permanent loan. The only cost to the Madison Board of Education will be insuring the aircraft against damages as required in the agreement. The expense of relocating, refurbishing, painting and affixing the plane on a mounting pole will be borne by donations and fund raisers. The jet will be displayed in the roundabout at the main entrance to the school. The U.S. Navy approved, plans calling for use of the Blue Angels paint scheme or a semblance thereof to match somewhat the blue color of the school. Completion of the project will depend on the pace of donations received. Hopes are to unveil the plane in conjunction with the beginning of the 2015/16 school year. The TF-9J Cougar jet flew in missions around the Korean War period as well as seeing combat in the Vietnam Conflict. The TF9-J Cougar was the first jet powered aircraft to be selected as part of the Navy’s elite demonstration flying team, The Blue Angels.

**Your Support** -This is such a rare event and we hope you will be involved and become a part of this adventure as a sponsor. All contributions will be used to help fund the restoration effort. This will supplement funding we have already earned from people that want to make this effort a reality. Your donation of revenue or materials will help acquire sheet metal repair, replacement hardware, aircraft transportation, tools, supplies, paint, parts, and other necessary expenses.

Thank you in advance for your support. James Clemens High School has already set up an account for donations from any company or citizen who would like to donate to the effort of restoring and mounting the plane. Please contact: COL Courtney Taylor, JCTaylor@madisoncity.k12.al.us , or 910-850-1524.

Current Condition



Proposed Similar Method of Display



**ANNUAL  
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**DEC 9, 2014**

**Seating is limited, so  
please call Emily now for  
reservations at:  
615-661-9379 or email  
TMCA@comcast.net**

***Currey Brook Farmhouse  
910 Currey Rd. Nashville  
(615) 482-5401***

**6:pm \$25 each**

**Speaker will be:**

***Colonel Wallace  
“Stan” Tyson***

**Commander 1/12 Cavalry  
Vietnam 1971-1972**

**CLASSIFIED ADS**

Ad's are **FREE** for all TMCA members – email: [dhoagey@comcast.net](mailto:dhoagey@comcast.net)

FOR SALE: US 1903 Springfield rifle MK1 \$1,500, 1903A3 (Remington) \$895, Harrington-Richardson Model of 1873 Carbine, mfg. in 1970's, mint cond., cal.45-70 \$695.00, ASTRA 400, 9mm Largo \$295.  
 Colt 1873 SA revolver US property marked, w/Colt letter, \$7,500 or trade for firearms or something interesting.  
 Arisaka Type 99-Late war, \$295. Japanese Army NCO Sword \$495.  
 US Model 1840 NCO Sword \$295. US Model 1850 Staff & Field Officers Sword \$495.  
 William Price TMCA Life member #006  
 email: [williamprice4@comcast.net](mailto:williamprice4@comcast.net)

**Middle Tennessee Civil War Show**  
*The Original Nashville Show*



**FRANKLIN CIVIL WAR SHOW**  
**Don't Miss It!**  
**Franklin Civil War Show**  
**DEC. 6 & 7. WILLIAMSON CO. AG EXPO**

When: December 6 & 7, 2014  
 Where: Williamson County Ag Expo Park  
 4215 Long Lane  
 Franklin, TN 37064

Dealer Setup: Friday, December 5 10 AM - 7 PM  
 Saturday, December 6 7 AM - 9 AM

Public Hours: Saturday, December 6 9 AM - 5 PM  
 Sunday, December 7 9 AM - 3 PM

Admission: Adults - \$8 Under 12 - Free  
 Number of Tables: 1,000  
 Table Price: \$85

**Wanted**  
 U.S. Medals  
 Purple Heart, Silver Stars, Valor Awards, Campaign Medals, Etc.  
 All Time Periods  
 Singles, Groups, Collections  
**ROBERT WILSON**  
[tarbridge@earthlink.net](mailto:tarbridge@earthlink.net)  
 Cell: (910) 977-7207  
[www.purpleheartsnorthcarolina.com](http://www.purpleheartsnorthcarolina.com)



**Culver Johnson**  
 Hunting & Forestry  
 Personality Items  
 Military Tableware  
 Antique Firearms  
[culver2@bellsouth.net](mailto:culver2@bellsouth.net)  
[www.culversmilitaryantiques.com](http://www.culversmilitaryantiques.com)



**WANTED & COLLECTING**



Civil War and Confederate Photography  
 German Hunting Association Items

Email: [rrtownes@comcast.net](mailto:rrtownes@comcast.net)

Robert Koerber won the (\$105 value) 3:00pm Dealer Prize



**The Alabama Military Collectors Association's**  
**17<sup>th</sup> Militaria Show**  
**January 16 - 17, 2015**  
 Huntsville Jaycee's Community Building  
 2180 Airport Rd, Huntsville, AL 35802

**180 Tables - Buy - Sell - Trade - Display - 24 hr Security**

Antique & Military Guns, Knives, Edged Weapons, Uniforms, Medals, Helmets, Flags, Badges, Field Gear, Photographs, Documents, Patches, Books and More....

Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>  
 • Exhibitors: Set-up 9am to 1pm  
 • Members: 1pm to 7pm  
 • Public: 1pm to 7pm

Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>  
 • Exhibitors/Members 8am to 6pm  
 • Public: 9am - 4pm



Admission \$5 Per Adult...\*

2-Day Pass \$8.00

**"Alabama's ONLY True Militaria Show"**

Children under 12: Military, Police, Fire & Rescue & Re-Enactors in Uniform admitted Free

Table Reservations: 6 ft Tables  
 • Members: \$45  
 • Non-Members: \$55  
 • Display Tables: \$25

AMCA, P.O.B. 14001 Huntsville, AL 35815  
 For Additional Information Visit:  
[www.almilitarycollectors.org](http://www.almilitarycollectors.org)  
 or Email: [amcahq@comcast.net](mailto:amcahq@comcast.net)  
 Ph: (256) 651-7302



**TENNESSEE MILITARY COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION**

**PO Box 1006  
Brentwood, TN 37024-1006**

**Phone Hot Line: 615-661-9379 Email: TMCA@comcast.net  
TMCA on line website: www.tmcaonline.org  
Yahoo groups: TennesseeMilitaryCollectorsAssociation**

President: Jimmy Howell  
Vice President: Rick Moody  
Secretary: Emily Townes  
Treasurer: David Hoagey  
Sgt. at Arms: Ricky Taylor  
  
Show Director Ronnie Townes



**TMCA Life Member Ron Black**

**Dothan, AL**

**1947-2014**



**TMCA sadly loses another Military Veteran and TMCA Life Member**

Born in 1947, Ron spent his youth like many others playing in the woods of Alabama and Florida. After graduating from Hewett Trussville High School, where he served as Drum Major for the Marching Band, Ron enrolled at Jacksonville State University to further his studies. After spending a year in school, Ron was called to serve his country and proceeded to enlist in the United States Army. After basic training, Ron was awarded the American Spirit Award for the "most outstanding graduate" of his basic training class. With a clear idea of what he wanted, Ron then Graduated from Airborne training at Fort Benning, GA and soon after was awarded his Ranger tab. Still wanting more, Ron then completed the "Q" Course to become a member of the elite Army Special Forces, AKA "The Green Berets" and was assigned as a Lieutenant with 5th Group Special Forces and was deployed to II Corps and in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. While in country, Ron served with the II Corps Mobile Strike Force (MIKEFORCE) and served his country with distinction. During his time in Vietnam, Ron was awarded, among others, the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman's Badge, and Bronze Star with a V for valor. Upon his return to the US, Ron served with the Ranger Cadre until he left active duty. After active duty, Ron continued to serve with the 20th Group Special Forces until his retirement. After leaving the Army, Ron met his wife

**Ron Black** (Photo: Nov 2011)

Martha Kirk Black and began a life in Dothan, AL. There, Ron served his community with the Dothan Police Department where he spent 24 years and retired at the rank of Captain.

*Ron has won numerous display awards with the TMCA and will be deeply missed by all of us.*