

## Soldier Forever; Retired Reservist Goes Above and Beyond Call

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The “Old soldiers don’t just fade away, if they got any heart and guts at all, they find another mission to do.” Some may consider this quote cliché, but when uttered by Master Sgt. (Ret.) James Goodall, it’s a way of life. Goodall’s wide-ranging military career in the Army Reserve and Air Force are just the beginning of his mission of serving his country in a variety of capacities, many of them quite unique.

Goodall, 62, first realized he was destined for military service as a youth while riding on a ‘troop train’ with his father bound for the east coast after WWII. That experience, the war movies of the day and the massive scrap and war bond drives he witnessed as a youth peaked his interest in the military. Once Goodall began school as a youngster, he discovered he had a special skill and he put that skill to use.

“I had a natural talent to draw, and like most kids of that time, I did drawings of military things,” said Goodall. After taking art classes throughout his youth, Goodall acted on his military interest and joined the Air Force in 1960. He worked as a heavy-equipment operator, but word soon spread about his artistic ability. “I was always called upon to do art work for the Officer’s Club and the NCO (Non-Commissioned Officers) Club,” expressed Goodall.

In 1964, Goodall, who had married his high school sweetheart before joining the Air Force, had begun his family and wanted, “... my kids to have a home and roots.”

After his enlistment in the Air Force ended, he purchased a small farm in Daviess County, Ky., and began work at a chair factory while studying art and history at night. He eventually went to work for the Texas Gas Transmission Company in 1968 as a visual communication artist. It was there that he was persuaded to become part of the Army Reserve family. “At the time, Texas Gas had 14 employees in the 100<sup>th</sup> Division of the US Army Reserve, and I was talked into joining the unit in 1978,” said Goodall. Goodall became an armor (tanks) instructor, but was once again called upon to put his artistic talents to use.

“The 100<sup>th</sup> Division of the USAR made use of my artistic ability to do maps, operation boards, presentations for general officers and special projects. My unit always looked good with all the specially illustrated artwork on the walls,” said Goodall. “I did most of the training aids for our unit when we could not get logistical support from the Army.”

Goodall didn’t just serve as an artist in the Army Reserve, his love for the field and being a tankerman shines through in his voice. “I would volunteer for any field mission just to get out in the field in tanks to run and gun,” said Goodall.

Goodall takes pride in the Army Reserve, and got the unique chance to demonstrate this pride to one of the active Army’s elite units. On a joint training exercise with a unit from the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, Goodall got the chance to prove his mettle in a combat manner rather than in an artistic one. Acting as platoon sergeant, he led his platoon in an attack on the 101<sup>st</sup>’s bivouac (headquarters) area. They took the paratroopers by surprise at dawn, and as Goodall explained, “...they stood up from their sleeping bags looking at us coming at them full speed. At some point, it dawned on them they had better get out of there.” As Goodall fought his tank through the 101<sup>st</sup> area, he ended up in pursuit of a jeep that launched one of its riders into a “mud-hole full of water,” said Goodall. When Goodall realized that one of the jeeps occupants was the opposing unit’s commander, a full colonel, “We saluted and got the hell out of there!” said Goodall.

This story and many more Goodall shared all made apparent he not only tremendously enjoyed his experiences in the Army Reserve, but took great pride in the Army Reserve as an extremely capable organization. As Goodall explained in relating these stories about interaction with active Army units, “We gained their respect.”

Goodall continued his artwork and military career well into the 1990s, with many Desert Storm images to his credit. Goodall was promoted to master sergeant in 1998 and ended his military career a year later.

“August 3, 1999, was my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and my last role call as an active member of the 100<sup>th</sup> Division USAR,” said Goodall. “It was time to retire.” Although Goodall decided to end his active military career in the Army Reserve, in no way did he end his service. His interest was peaked in the Fort Knox Patton Museum when the movie ‘Patton’ was released, and even more so because his uncle served in Patton’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Army during WWII. He joined the Patton Museum’s volunteer group at Fort Knox, Ky. and he continues to be active in that respect to this day. He helps to restore and rebuild vintage tanks, and also operates them. “I’m doing more tanking now than before,” joked Goodall.

Goodall also volunteers in many veterans groups in and around his home, organizing Memorial Day services and a Veterans Day parade. His service to Army and community does not end there though. Goodall also sits on the board of directors of the Association of the Century, a 100<sup>th</sup> Division support group. His involvement in all these activities has also led to his involvement in local schools.

**Continued on Page 22...**



Master Sgt. (Ret.) James Goodall at a WWII reenactment at the Patton Museum in Fort Knox.

He is dressed as a master sergeant and is carrying a Thompson .50 caliber machine gun. Goodall is leaning against a WWII M-20 command car.