

# Army buddies help with house project

By Jennifer Archibald  
Staff writer

They looked out for each other in Vietnam, and almost 40 years later, members of the 687th Land Clearing Company are still looking out for members of the unit and their widows.

Shelia Meek couldn't believe what she was hearing when Army buddies of her

late husband, Greg, offered to come and roof and side a house she recently purchased.

"Doug (Eversole) called and asked if I was coming to the 687th's reunion this year," she said. "It was to be in Nevada, and I told him I better not because I just bought a fixer-upper house and there was a lot of work to do." Then came the offer of help. She said she thought "Do

people still do that?" and then she cried.

The offers were just beginning. When family members, friends, neighbors, and the Deer Creek community found out about the project, they wanted to help. Shelia lives outside Deer Creek, and the house she purchased is right in Deer Creek. Army buddies and spouses came from West Virginia,

Missouri, Michigan, and Ohio. They worked last Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, with the locals pitching in, too. Ladies from the community brought in so much food that one refrigerator wouldn't hold all of it.

Shelia said the work went smoothly with the help of an accommodating local lumber company, Wilcox Lumber of Flora, that went out of its way to be of service.

With all the helping hands, Shelia said both the house and garage were roofed and sided in the three-day period. Now she can concentrate on the interior of the house.

Although she couldn't make it to the official reunion, there was a small reunion in Deer Creek. The Army buddies all served together in Vietnam in 1969 and '70.

Among those coming to Deer Creek were Elaine Schnieders of Cincinnati, and her son Darrell. Elaine's husband, Jerry, died in 2003, and Shelia's husband, Greg, died in 2005. The men had served

together and been good friends, but the wives had never met until last week.

Doug said the 687th has been trying to locate members of its unit, and have found 195 who served from 1969-1971. Unfortunately, Jerry Schnieders was not lo-

cated until after his death. Elaine and her son wanted to be part of the efforts to help Shelia.

"This was our second house project," Doug said. "The other one was in Kane, Ill. We try to help out in other ways, too."



## Friends for life

Part of the Deer Creek work crew takes a break and poses for a photo. The men were all Army buddies in the 687th Land Clearing Company in Vietnam. Shelia Meek and Elaine Schnieders are standing in for their husbands, Greg, and Jerry, who also served in the unit. Both men died in the last five years. Pictured l-r are Jane Boley, Shelia Meek, Jimmy Topps, Bob Loeffel, Nancy Loeffel, Charlie Boley, Doug Eversole, Deb Topps, Elaine Schnieders. Another Army buddy helping, but not pictured, was Jack Gilkerson. Photo provided



## Deer Creek house project

A Deer Creek house and garage were roofed and sided last Thursday, Friday, and Saturday thanks to a crew of Army buddies, and Shelia Meek's family, friends, and neighbors. She recently purchased the house, and the exterior renovations became a community project. Among those helping with the house project have been her sons, Shawn and Jeremy. Photo provided

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