

# Vietnam vet buys his comrades dinner through volunteer group of cattlemen

By Ron Wilson

director, Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development  
Kansas State University

There's a battalion on the move. This battalion is mobilized and has a mission in mind. But these aren't uniformed troops on foreign soil. These are people in the U.S. beef industry who are finding a way to support our brave soldiers here at home.

Bill Broadie is the founder and chairman of the board of the All American Beef Battalion, a voluntary organization of people in the beef cattle industry working to support U.S. troops. Bill is a fourth generation cattleman from Ashland, a Marine and a veteran who was wounded in the Vietnam War. He also works for Superior Livestock Auction.

One day Bill was driving to Colorado for a load of cattle. He got disgusted with what he was hearing on the radio: "I was listening to the mainstream media and all they were talking about was what was wrong with young people," he said. Bill had seen another side, having served with brave young men and women in the military, and he wanted to honor them.

"I come back to this statement," Bill said. "Who out there wouldn't buy a soldier a steak?" Since many

people would be willing to buy a steak dinner for a soldier who is getting ready to deploy, Bill conceptualized an organization which would provide steak feeds for soldiers. It was a way of uniting two of Bill Broadie's passions.

"There are only two things I've done," Bill said with a smile: "The Marines and cattle." As a lifelong cattleman and a decorated Marine, he liked the idea. To his boss, he pitched the idea of a non-profit organization to support steak feeds for soldiers, and he got enthusiastic support.

On April 26, 2008, this new organization put on its first steak feed. The organization was called the All American Beef Battalion.

The goal of the All American Beef Battalion is to organize and sponsor steak feeds, entertainment, programs, meetings and projects for service members and their families. The larger purpose, according to the organization's website, is to "foster among the people of the United States an appreciation, respect, and honor for our Armed Forces military service members whose sacrifices have and will continue to make our freedoms possible."

With support from private sector donations, Bill and a group of volunteers joined together to implement this project. Typically, they

provide 18-ounce ribeye steaks with complete dinners to wounded warriors or to military units who recently redeployed or are getting ready to deploy. Local hosts provide water, electricity and tables, and the All American Beef Battalion provides everything else. There is no charge to the soldiers.

Demand for these events has been strong across the nation. The All American Beef Battalion has held steak feeds for soldiers and their families in California, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Arkansas, Louisiana, Kentucky, Georgia and Virginia. Bill estimates that, as of last month, the All American Beef Battalion fed more than 140,000 people.

That's quite an accomplishment for rural America. Bill comes from the rural community of Ashland, population 962 people. Now, that's rural.

How is this possible?

"The ag community has been very supportive," Bill said. Creekstone Farms and U.S. Premium Beef have donated steaks and others have made cash donations. Cattlemen like Galen Fink have supported the cause. One 8-year-old in Wyoming donated \$500 from his 4-H project. Funds have

been raised at rollover auctions, where the buyer donates the animal back and it is sold over and over again.

The result is a touching but tangible tribute to the troops. "We thank them for what they're doing," Bill said. "I've had soldiers say, 'I didn't know people out there cared this much.' I've seen a lot of healing."

For information or to donate, go to [www.steaksfortroops.com](http://www.steaksfortroops.com).

This battalion is on the move – not on some foreign battlefield, but supporting our soldiers right here at home. We commend Bill Broadie and all those involved with the All American Beef Battalion for making a difference by feeding and honoring these troops. They are on a mission worth accomplishing.

## Presentation tells New York orphans' stories

Between 1854 and 1929 over 250,000 orphans and unwanted children were taken out of New York City and given away at train stations across America.

This virtually untold chapter of American history comes alive through the one-hour multi media presentation, Riders on the Orphan Train, at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, in the 1879 Stone Church at the

Ellis County Historical Society. Admission to the presentation is free.

The last train stopped at Sulphur Springs, Texas, in 1929. This "placing out" system was originally organized by Congregationalist minister Charles Loring Brace and the Children's Aid Society of New York. His mission was to rid the streets and overcrowded orphan-

County Sheriff's Office, released same day to responsible party.

• Daymond Christopher Hanley, 18, Brewster, Nov. 16, probation violation, Juvenile Justice Agency, released Nov. 18 for time served.

• Samantha Renee Jones, 21, Colby, Nov. 16, theft – less than \$1,000, Colby Police, released same day with charges pending.

• Torry Thomas Barleen, 28, Salina, Nov. 18, driving under the influence, domestic battery, refusal to take breath test, driving with license suspended or revoked, Colby Police, released same day on notice to appear.

• Marshall Williams, 51, Indianapolis, Ind., last Monday, driving under the influence, transporting open container/alcohol, Highway Patrol, released Tuesday on notice to appear.

• Gary Roy Slusher, 21, Goodland, Tuesday, theft, Thomas County Sheriff, released Wednesday on \$100,000 appearance bond.

ages of homeless children and find new homes for them in places such as Kansas.

Phil Lancaster and Alison Moore of Austin, Texas, utilize live music, video and storytelling.

For information, visit the museum at 100 W. Seventh St. in downtown Hays or contact (785) 628-2624 or [visitors@elliscounty-historicalsociety.org](mailto:visitors@elliscounty-historicalsociety.org).

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