

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association



June 2003

Cover Page

Here it is two weeks already after the reunion. Seems like it was yesterday. It seems that the older we get the old clock speeds up. The reunion was the best that my wife and I have been to so far. The word that comes to mind that best describes this event is OUTSTANDING. All of us that attended really appreciated the work and effort that the following people contributed to make the reunion a success. John Topper, Ottis Ponds, Chuck McAleer, Gary Quint, Ray Sarlin, Jim Sheppard, and the others who helped in various ways, such as selling the raffle tickets etc. We all thank you so very much.

EDITOR



BOB GOLD

Upon arriving on Wednesday the 23rd. of April the party started. Registration was set up and our rooms were ready. Special thanks to the hotel and it's staff for being so considerate and helpful, what ever we needed they were there to assist us. The hotel was great. We enjoyed seeing everyone again and saw some new faces, some that I haven't seen since Viet Nam. There were a total of 101 people including wives and there families. I thought it was special to see that some of the members brought their families with them. This had to be an experience that they won't forget, seeing their fathers being hugged by their fellow brothers, and sometime a tear or two. Thursday morning the scheduled events started. At 7 AM we had breakfast and at 8 AM the busses were ready. We went to Doughboy Hall on post for a briefing by Col. Torres, which was very interesting. He explained about all the training that went on at Ft. Benning, and the equipment they were taught to use. We then went to lunch at the officers' mess and then toured the Infantry museum. What a great place to see. Our next stop was the live fire exercise of the Bradley vehicle. The weather turned bad, and it started to rain. There was a grand stand there with a roof, which helped keep us dry. The Bradley was explained and we were introduced to the new and modern rifle teams. The Bradley is one awesome machine and I wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of it. I see now why we are number one in the world. The rifle team did a great job too, and showed how they performed. They had (3) mortars also, the 81, 60, and the new 120 mm. The old four deuce was retired some time ago. I'm sure all who saw the demonstration were appalled. I know I was. We left there, went to the hotel for a change of clothes and went back to the officers club for supper. The food we had was great. After the dinner, John Topper presented Lt. Col. Payne with the statue we had made in honor of those who gave their lives in Vietnam from 1967 - 70. (a picture of the statue will be posted on the web site). Col. Payne was totally surprised and very grateful for what the association did to honor and pay tribute to our fallen brothers. The statue will be placed in the hallway of the Battalion Headquarters. We wish to thank Lt. Col. Payne, Col. Baldy and their staff for going out of their way to show us a fantastic time. We were all treated like royalty.

IN THIS ISSUE

Bob Gold
Editor

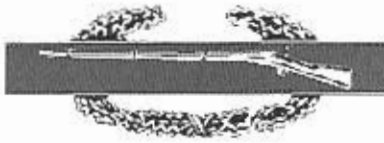
Billie McGregor
Editorial Assistant

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When John was giving his speech and presentation of the statue, I kept looking around the room and observing the faces of how proud we felt in presenting the statue in honor of our fellow brothers, and yes, we all had tears in our eyes. I hope in spirit they were all there to see that they were not forgotten and never will be forgotten. LTC. Payne gave a wonderful speech and telling us how admiral we were for all the hardships we endured and most of all for paying respect to our fallen brothers who gave so much for freedom. That night back at the hotel all got together in the hospitality room to look at the albums and have some BEER and drinks. All who attended were given a T -shirt with our unit crest on them, a hat with the same, a plastic cup for the car and a coffee mug.

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Friday after breakfast we boarded the busses and headed for the post to a graduation class of trainees. We had lunch with them and most were inquisitive about V N. We then went to the rifle range and saw the boots qualify with the M-16. As they finished they gave us 20 rounds and put us in the foxholes and let us fire the M-16. What a grand time we had. That evening we went to a cook out that was put on by LTC. Payne's wife. Like I said, they went out of their way to show us a good time. LTC. Payne and his staff told us several times how proud and honored they were that we chose to come to Ft. Benning for the reunion. Later when we returned to the hotel we had more beer and discussed some of the good and bad times we endured in V. N.

Saturday we started on the busses at 0800, some went to Calloway Gardens and some went to Andersonville prison. All seemed to have a great time and I never heard any complaints. That evening we had our dinner and membership meeting. The meeting started with the election of officers. It was unanimous that we keep the same officers. The treasurer and secretary gave their reports, which will be in the newsletter. Now came time for the raffles. Bob Knightly won a 50/50 drawing for the amount of \$535.00. Which he collected half. Dotty Edwards won a plaque, which was donated, and we collected \$138.00 for the Assoc. All the members received a free ticket for a multiple drawing of all the patches that were left over. Now came time for the awards. A plaque was given to John Topper for his time and effort in producing this fine reunion. The Assoc. members provided this. Dotty and Jim Edwards were presented with a picture of a man standing in front of the wall with a flag in his hand. We can't thank you enough for the time, effort, and the money that you and Seiple's have saved the Assoc., in the printing and mailing of our newsletter. Thank you. A motion was made on the floor by John Nichols to have a pig roast in Texas next year. I told him that pigs don't fly. When this was brought up, my wife was out of the room. She and I discussed this prior to the reunion and she said she really didn't want to. When she returned to the room John Topper brought the motion to the floor, and caught me by surprise. I slid back from the table in fear, not knowing what to expect. Surprisingly she was OK with the motion. Thanks John. There will be more on the issue in later additions of the newsletter. After we finished with the multiple drawing it was time to return to the hotel. Both busses took up a collection for the drivers. They really appreciated this and they did an excellent job in getting us around. We thank you for your friendliness and patients. Upon returning to the hotel, we met in the hospitality room to have a few more beers and say a few good byes. This and Sunday were the sad parts of reunion. I really hated to see everyone go.

Now in closing, I wish to thank all those who helped in making this reunion a great success.

PLAY THE GAME

And may God bless all of you.

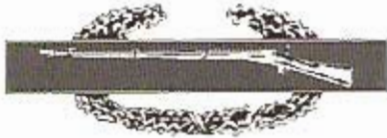
Bob Gold, Editor

2003 REUNION ATTENDEES

Noel and Winnie Allen-Gus Allbritton-Herman and Inge Allmendinger-Kevin and Antoinette Begley-George and Sandy Borges-Ken Bradley-Lorene and Roger Burch-Angie, Arianna and Shawn Burch-Paul Buckholdt-Michael Canavan Thomas and Diana Clark-Monica Copeland-James Croker-Lawrence and Jeannie Curtis-Jack Dortch-Dennis and Ginny Driscoll-James and Dotty Edwards-Paul W. Ehrlich-Gordon Fennell-Edward Fischer -James Fitzgerald-Aaron Gage-Vilnis Gailitis -Leon Gallant-Bob and Sheri Gold-Gladys Grubb-Richard Guthrie-Toby Hamon-Curtis and Nancy Harper-Roger and Patti Irvin-John and Sandy Johnston-Dianne and Willburn Jones-Toby and Brenda Jordan-Richard and Marlyce Kerr-Don Kinard-Tom Knepp -Robert and Pat Knightly-Bryan and Nancy Lagimoniere-Fred Lohman-Chuck McAleer-Robert Melendez-Toby Milroy-Dan and Dan (Jr.) Missoff-Joe Mlinac-John Nichols-Jack Noble-Bob Page-Parker Pierce-Thurman Pike-Otis Ponds-Gary and Kay Quint-Don and Gwen Rainwater-Hank Renfrow-Frank and Lucy Romano-Russ Roth-Ray and Marti Sarlin-Bob Schaller-James, Lorretta, Michael and Tanya Segars Jerry and Matt Seliski-Bob Schaller-Jim Sheppard-John Smerdon-Randy and Mary Jane Smith-Jon Thelen-John Topper-Joe and Kathy Torres-Harry Wilson-James Wonsick-James and Gloria Woodall-John Wright

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Revisiting our roots!

Ray Sarlin

Webmaster

1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Association

ray@1st.net.au



Heading home to Australia from the battalion's 2003 reunion at Fort Benning, my wife Marti and I drove from Columbus to Daytona Beach and then via Fayetteville, NC, to visit her mother in Chapel Hill. We threw in a day trip to Washington, D.C., as well. Coming on the cusp of the victory of American, British and Australian troops over Iraq, it may be interesting to make a few observations about differences in national pride and patriotism amongst the victors.

Although the casual observer probably wouldn't notice, Australians are quietly patriotic. They turn out for dawn memorial services on Anzac Day to honour their war dead from all wars since World War I. The Australian War Museum is well funded... and well attended. While a staunchly liberal media ranted against the war in Iraq with marked early success, the majority of Australians now feel a pride in how effectively the Australian Army Special Operations, Navy and Air Force troops performed in Iraq. Aussies separate politics from patriotism, something that we Americans seem to be having a bit more trouble with lately.

The stickers that I sometimes see on Australian vehicles tend to be defensive, saying things like "Vietnam Veteran – and proud of it!" In the States, a sticker reading "Nam Vet" says it all; there's no need to elaborate. While wearing my "Vietnam Veteran" cap sightseeing in the USA, most people smiled supportively and occasionally other Nam Vets would come up and say hello. Patriotism in the USA is expressed much more openly than in Australia; it isn't considered "corny". There are American flags on cars and mailboxes and houses even in liberal college towns like Marti's hometown Chapel Hill and in Seattle where I hail from.

Sure, there are still turkeys on the streets protesting, in fact, many are still the very same turkeys. But most Americans can see through politics to see what's right and what's wrong. The changes in the polls as the war in Iraq rolled along reflected this resurgence in patriotism in Australia and Britain too.

The Fort Benning reunion was my very first veterans' reunion. It was also the first time since I left the Army over 20 years ago that I've been back to the source. I again felt the pride and honour – and, yes, patriotism - that I'd felt in being a soldier in the best Army in the world. I again experienced the camaraderie and friendship and understanding and trust of brothers in arms. I felt alive... and renewed! Hopefully, you'll see some of that renewal in the Association website over the coming months.

The Ichiban website is our website, yours and mine. It belongs to everyone who served in the 1st of the 50th in Vietnam, and to our families and friends. I welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions and, most of all, your input! I invite your continued help and support in making our website a record of our history, our service, and our legacy... a record of our stories... of our roots!



SURFING THE NET FOR VETS

Billie McGregor

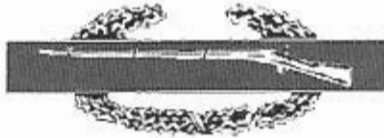
mdixiechicken@hotmail.com

1. **Air War College Gateway to Internet Resources**
<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awcgate.htm> This place has a mass of info. for anyone researching military history.
2. **Military Quotes, Mottos, Jokes and Humor**
<http://www.military-quotes.com> As the name implies, this site is packed full of quotes, mottos, joke and humor.

Do you ever get bored and just want to surf the net? Check out some of the military webbrings. Use your search engine for "military webbrings" and just follow the links provided. You can find lots of interesting and fun sites to visit. If you know of a great site, please submit and we'll feature it in this column.

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Vice President's Column

Randy "Doc" Smith

For those of you who came to the reunion at Ft. Benning, congratulations – you have experienced the best. For those who missed it, don't despair. Although a vote for the location of our next get-together is in the future, I'm quite confident as to how it will come out. That's because I conducted an unofficial poll by asking many people how they felt about the reunion and if they would like to return. Nearly everyone polled said we should come back to Ft. Benning for our next reunion, and we have been invited back. So if you missed this last one, start making plans for the next in two years! It will be here before you know it wherever it is held.

One thing I noticed about this reunion was how people from different time periods were bonding more and more. It wasn't like everyone stuck with those they were in Vietnam with but are starting to get to know others. That's a good thing and should be encouraged even more at every reunion and get-together we have.

If everyone had as good a time and felt as at home as I did, I think we will have a lot of returns for the next one. But maybe we can get others by then, too. Can anyone find someone who doesn't know about the Association? There may be a friendship out there waiting to develop. Pass on the website address (<http://www.ichiban1.org>) so anyone who hasn't seen it might have the opportunity. Which brings about another highlight I experienced at the reunion -- meeting Ray Sarlin, the Webmaster, who came in all the way from Australia. God bless him for all he does for the Association.

So, with friendships renewed and tall tales retold, I'm ready for next time. Take care and remember to "Play the Game!"

QUARTERLY TREASURER'S REPORT First Quarter 2003

Charles F McAleer III
Association Treasurer

The undersigned Treasurer's Report of First Battalion Fiftieth (1/50th) Infantry Association, Inc. report for the 1st Quarter 2003 is hereby submitted for records in the treasurer's book of records.

The balance on hand at the beginning of 01/01/2003	\$9,896.60
Monies received from all sources from 01/01/2003	
Deposits for Dues and Life Memberships	395.00
Sale of Unit Crests	30.00
Reunion Registration Fees	7,375.00
Total Monies received for 1 st Quarter 2003	7,800.00
Expenses Paid Out during 1 st Quarter 2003	
Postage, Mailing Costs	37.00
Reunion Expenses	350.00
Supplies	214.44
Software	116.94
Total Expenses paid during 1 st Quarter 2003	718.38
Balance on Hand end of 1 st Quarter 2003	\$16,978.22

The statement of receipts and expenditures shows in detail sources of all monies received, and monies expended. For additional details and itemized income and expenditures, contact the treasurer at:

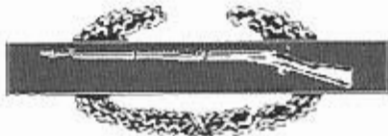
Charles F McAleer III
PO Box 1104
Kennesaw, GA 30156

The account number (003271909725), in the Bank of America, is entitled "**The First Battalion Fiftieth Infantry Association, Inc.**". Both the President and the Treasurer are authorized signatories on the checking account. The Headquarters for the Association is at:

200 Georgetown Court
Hanover, PA 17331
(717) 632-7604

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VIEW FROM THE TC HATCH

John Topper

Reunion 2003 is now behind us, although there is still some follow-up necessary to wrap things up. My thanks go out to all who attended and especially to a handful of guys (and a gal) who did more than their share of making it a success. Special recognition needs to be given to our Secretary, Gary Quint who organized the administrative aspects, placing his inimitable brand on everything from the nametags to the rosters of attendees. Chuck McAleer is doing a splendid job as our Treasurer and it was evident in that we came close to breaking even with the unanticipated costs of the event. Had I heeded his advice to make the registration fees higher, we would have fared better and still got a great deal for our money. Otis Ponds put in a stellar performance as our man on the scene with his tireless efforts in chasing around Fort Benning. Jim Shepherd has done an awesome job as the Historian and if you haven't taken advantage of his exhaustive research, you are missing out on some truly great work that can answer many of the questions we all have about what happened when. Our General Counsel, Harry Wilson pitched in with the heavy work at the Officer's Club on a rainy Thursday evening as he and I regaled a couple of young Infantry Captains with tales of yesteryear. Harry is a marvel in keeping us out of trouble.

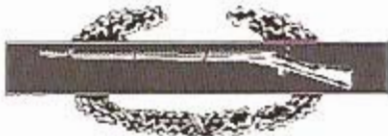
Our newest Association member, Lieutenant Colonel Bill Payne and his wife Linda, were absolutely amazing in their support and hospitality. Without them and the level of effort they expended to make us feel at home, our return to the home of the Infantry would not have been so great. Ray Sarlin, who never ceases to amaze me with his considerable abilities and talents, was there for us prior to and again, during, the reunion helping with his incredible feats (and fingers, ugh!) on the computer. Toby Jordan continues to serve as your Association Chaplain in his own quiet, unassuming and compassionate way. We are truly blessed simply by his presence. Bob Gold's fingerprints were everywhere (except on a .50 caliber) with his great ideas coming fast and the follow up even faster. I've learned that when Bob asks, "Can I?" it is a good idea to get out of the way because he will – with no encouragement needed. Association VP, Randy Smith was there in the background for the most part, biding his time until he is given an opportunity to take over as President in 2005.

The Bi-annual General Membership Meeting, as required by our Constitution and By-laws, was held on Saturday evening and there were some necessary issues that were ratified by the membership. Most were of a routine nature, with one exception; the annual donation (dues) was raised to \$25. Other changes are already posted to the website and can be downloaded from there. Anyone needing a hard copy let me know and I will mail it. Also on the agenda for the meeting was the election of officers. The current slate of officers was nominated for reelection and was railroaded accordingly – thank you.

This reunion was especially gratifying for me as I was invited to address the graduation of Company A, the company I was fortunate to command from May to November 1967. What a thrill that was! If you will recall in my last column in this newsletter I stated my belief that (for a variety of reasons) we did not need to return to the draft. Well, the young soldiers affirmed that belief we met with and talked to from A, C and D Companies – B Company was beginning a cycle the following week. Our Army is in great shape and the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry is, in large measure, responsible for that. They are turning out some motivated soldiers who know what they are about and why they are there. Our infantry units are receiving the best-trained soldiers in the world and our successors are in the forefront of that effort, carrying on the high standards set by members of this Association.

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VIEW FROM THE TC HATCH

John Topper

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In the coming months you will be afforded an opportunity to vote on the next reunion site. At the general membership meeting, two sites were nominated – Fort Hood and Fort Benning. Both have a great deal to offer and we will endeavor to provide the respective attributes of each so you may make an informed decision. Rich Kerr will visit Fort Hood and see what they are willing to do for us. Once we have that information, we will address it in the next newsletter along with a ballot with which you may cast your vote.

One of the suggestions received in the feedback survey we conducted before leaving Fort Benning was to have women on the planning committee. That is a great idea and I welcome any of you ladies who would be interested in helping us with the next reunion.

One final bit of unfinished business: we presented a bronze statue to the battalion as a gift from the Association. A picture is enclosed of the bronze – it commemorates the comrades we lost in Vietnam. The artist is working on inscribing the names of the 200 plus members of the battalion on plaques that will be attached to the bronze upon their completion. Ray Sarlin, Gladys Grubb and Jim Shepherd have spent a considerable amount of time and effort to ensure we have all the names, but if anyone knows of someone left off the list, please contact me. Once we have the list completed and the names inscribed, we will take the plaques to Fort Benning and formally affix them to the statue. It will reside permanently in a place of honor within the battalion headquarters.

The artist Ben Foster, (www.fostersfineart.com) agreed to do miniature bronzes of the piece and about forty members have purchased their own personal copies. Anyone desiring to buy one of the miniatures please contact me for details. Incidentally, Ben is now working on his next project, a statue of an infantryman.

As I have said repeatedly in this column, this is your Association and I am open to your suggestions. If you have an idea, please let me (or one of our Association officers) know about it. We welcome your input because we know we don't have all the great ideas and because we serve the membership and want to do what it is you wish of us.

Thanks again to all who made this a great reunion. These things don't simply come together, a lot of effort from a number of people is necessary, and I am deeply grateful for all the people who contributed to the success of this one.

PRAYER LIST

Men & women of our armed forces.

School kids during summer vacation.

Lost children & their families.

CHAPLAIN'S

Toby Jordan

O Hello to every one. I hope that all of you are well and in good spirits. In light of some things that are going on in this world today it's a pretty big job keeping the spirits up. Anyway, for those of you that were at the reunion, I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. And for those that missed it please try and make the next one. I'll have to keep this brief because as usual I'm late getting it turned in. I haven't heard from any one about any sickness or other prayer concerns so I'll take that as good news. But if any of you need anything from me please don't hesitate to drop me a line or call. May God be with you and may He bless you.

DO YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST?

Email:
Toby Jordan
Association Chaplain

ljordan@sheltonbbs.com

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GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2003 7:15 P.M.

FT. BENNING OFFICER'S CLUB

The Bi-annual General Meeting was brought to order by John Topper, President of the 1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association, and opened with acknowledgments of Officers and members who support the Association.

Gary Quint, Secretary

Chuck McAleer, Treasurer

Otis Ponds, Organized 2003 reunion @ Ft. Benning

Jim Sheppard, Historian

Ray Sarlin, Creator and Webmaster of Association Website

Bob Gold, Editor of Newsletter

Billie McGregor, Formats Newsletter

Jim and Dottie Edwards, print and mail Newsletter

John Topper recognized Bob Gold who acknowledged Jim and Dottie Edwards and Seiple Lithographers for their contribution and hard work on behalf of the Association.

The floor was yielded to Chuck McAleer who recognized Randy Smith, who then presented John Topper with a plaque from all members acknowledging all he has done for the Association.

Chuck expressed thanks to all of those members who ordered bronze statuettes'. A copy of the financial report was handed out and the Treasurer's report was given. It was decided that the financial report would be given on a quarterly basis instead of annually. A motion was made by Toby Hamon and seconded by Roger Burch to accept the Treasurer's Report. The report was accepted by the membership.

Gary Quint gave the Secretary's report. Members were asked to update Directory information including address with zip codes, phone numbers as well as E-Mail addresses. A motion was made by Joe Mlinac and seconded by Roger Hamon to accept the Secretary's report. The report was accepted by the membership.

John Topper discussed amendments to Bylaws

Business meetings will be biannually

Dues increased to \$25.00 per year

Dues will be payable from January 1 to March 31 of each year.

Life dues will remain \$150.00

The Chairman entertained a motion to accept the new by-laws. A motion was made by Jim Segers and seconded by Herman Allmendinger. The motion was carried. John Topper discussed the fact that the by-laws call for biannual election of Officers and entertained a motion as to election of new Officers. A motion was made by Roger Burch to retain all present Officers. The motion was seconded by Toby Hamon and carried.

John Topper recognized Ray Sarlin who explained how to use the Website. He asked for any stories or pictures to be displayed on the site. Helpful to have the topic, Company, when, where and what unit accompany all pictures. Will accept anything that pertains to the 1st of the 50th.

John Topper then discussed the bronze monument given to Fort Benning. It will contain all the names of our KIA as soon as the list is finalized. The front plaque will contain a Purple Heart, Unit Crest and "In Memory of Lost Comrades". The monument will be placed inside the Battalion Headquarters on a pedestal.

John Topper then recognized our Chaplain, Toby Jordan who expressed a need for notification of illnesses and deaths in a more timely fashion. Toby's E-mail is on the Association Website.

Chairman asked if there was any new business. The next reunion was discussed. Suggestions: Plan at better time of year so teachers can attend and a volunteer planning committee. Location for the next reunion was also discussed.

Bob Gold was recognized and stated that he was trying to improve the PX Web

Roger Burch and Family were recognized and presented with an engraved Brunton Compass in the name of and in honor of PFC Ray Burch, 101st Airborne Div., who is currently serving in Iraq.

Chairman entertains motion to adjourn meeting John Johnson made a motion to adjourn Toby Hamon seconded the motion. The motion was accepted by the membership. Meeting was adjourned