



# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association Newsletter

## AMERICANS UNITE IN THE SHADOW OF OLD GLORY

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to publish a newsletter and to maintain an internet homepage.

The Association will use these publications to inform its general membership about events within the Association and about current or proposed legislation that might affect veterans of all wars.

Members of the Association will strive to preserve the memory of those who served in the "ICHIBAN" Battalion and to publish only the facts concerning any particular battle, person or situation.

This homepage is also intended to give individuals who served in the Battalion a forum in which to be heard and a medium where they can communicate, make contact, and share the events in their lives with their fellow soldiers and their families.

### IN THIS ISSUE

From the Editor	2
Suggested Reading	2
A Sergeant's Letter	3
Reunion 2003	3
Chaplain's Corner	4
Veteran's Day Salute	4
Endure America	4
Things They Carried	6
Notices	6
Brother Search	6

EDITOR – Robert Melendez  
 DESIGNER – Billie McGregor  
 PRINTING – Jim Edwards

### WHAT IS A VETERAN?

Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg -or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity. Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking.

What is a vet? He is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel.

He is the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel.

She - or he - is the nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night for two solid years in Da Nang.

He is the POW who went away one person and came back another - or didn't come back AT ALL.

He is the Quantico drill instructor that has never seen combat - but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account rednecks and gang members into Marines, and by teaching them to watch each other's backs.

He is the parade-riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.

He is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.

He is three anonymous heroes in the Tomb of The Unknowns, whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies unrecognized with them on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep.

He is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket – palsied now and aggravatingly slow - who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.

He is an ordinary and yet extraordinary human being - a person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.

He is a soldier, or sailor, or airman, or Marine, and a savior and a sword against the darkness, and he is nothing more than the finest, greatest testimony on behalf of the finest, greatest nation ever known.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say, "Thank You." That's all most people need, and in most cases it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded.

Two little words that mean a lot: **"THANK YOU."**

Remember November 11th is Veteran's Day.

It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who had given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier, who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protestor to burn the flag.

Father Denis Edward O'Brien, USMC

*Thanks to Dick Guthrie for submitting this inspirational poetry.*



**FROM THE EDITOR**  
**Robert Melendez**



**Binh Dinh:  
Past, Present and Future**

As some of you know, Dick Guthrie, Daryl Sourwine, Bill Moore, Chuck Hackenmiller, Fred Lohman, Frank Romano, John Nichols, Jack Noble, Russ Roth and I went back to Vietnam in October.

Our group began the adventure in San Francisco where we boarded a flight for Hong Kong. Immediately, it was obvious that things had changed since September 11: The extensive airport security force carried fully loaded M16s! Some of us remarked that we hadn't seen that weapon carried openly since 1967-1968-1969. Our flight took us from San Francisco to Hong Kong (14 hours!). After a few hours in Hong Kong, we boarded another jet, which took us to Saigon (2 ½ hours.)

The spectacular trip included stops in Saigon, Qui Nhon and many other sites in our original *Area of Operations* including Phu My, An Khe and Bong Son. We also went down the *504*, *505* & *506 routes* but sometimes were prevented from going further due to impassable road conditions. Remember *Highways 1 and 19? Mang Yang Pass?* How about the *Dam Tra'o Lake?* We were able to visit those areas as well as *LZs Ichiban, English and Uplift* though nothing really is left of them other than some of the paved perimeter road at *LZ Uplift* and "Pentaprime" airstrip at *LZ English*.

Each of us may have taken the trip for different reasons: searching for things within ourselves or perhaps seeking things outside ourselves in Binh Dinh Province. But, we did discover that Vietnam still has the same beautiful, pristine countryside, which has changed only by the introduction of electricity. It seemed that life and work have gone largely unchanged.

Though there were sights, sounds and sensations everywhere, though there was so much for our eyes to take in, interacting with the people was one of the highlights for me. Whether it was the waitress or bartender in a restaurant, people working in a rice field or just curious school kids wanting to practice their English on the visiting Americans, they were all fascinating.

And most of the young adults and children we came into contact with had no real memory of the war; so our presence caused more of a stir due to our cameras and other signs of wealth than to any memory of the war. Furthermore, the people were generally so unknowing and uncaring about our war experience that it was as if the past came into contact with the future.

**SUGGESTED READING**

*Send your suggestions to the Editor.*



***The Fire in the Lake* by Francis Fitzgerald**

One of the earlier, prize-winning books about the Vietnam conflict. It traces the historical, social and cultural differences between the U.S. and Vietnam and how these monumental differences played a large role in our misunderstanding and eventual failure in establishing the government of South Vietnam as an independent, viable government capable of surviving on its own.

***A Bright Shining Lie* by Neil Sheehan**

One of the best (and biggest!) you'll ever read on Vietnam. Tells the story of John Paul Vann, one of the chief architects of the Vietnam War and of his eventual disillusionment. Highly recommended.

***Catfish and Mandala* by Andrew X. Pham**

This book is subtitled: 'A 2-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam.' Andrew Pham was born in Vietnam and returns after nearly all of his life in the U.S.

***Hell in a Very Small Place***

***Street Without Joy* by Bernard B. Fall**

Both excellent books on Vietnam history. The first chronicles the French disaster at the battle of Dien Bien Phus in 1954. The second looked at how the United States came to be involved in Vietnam by examining US and European events of the 1940s and 1950s. These help explain why the US took its stand against Communism in the 1960s.

### ***Ripcord* by Keith Nolan**

This book is subtitled: 'Screaming Eagles Under Siege, Vietnam 1970'. I have not read this book yet, but several people have recommended it to me.

### ***The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien**

This piece of fiction stands as monumental work on the enigma of Vietnam. While being a fictional work, the author says that many of the stories are grounded in fact. Yet throughout the various stories truth and reality and fact and fictional become mixed with one another. This work emphasizes the "reality of the experience". Highly recommended.

### ***We Were Soldiers Once and Young* by Moore & Galloway**

Probably the best book on Vietnam. Written as part historical account and part first person reporting; this book is both inspiring as it chronicles the heroes and sad as it describes poor command decisions which ultimately cost many soldiers to die. Highly recommended.

My emotions would surface when I was struck by the ever-present contrast between the serene countryside and the painful memories of comrades lost those many years ago. Each time the group stopped at a particular site and one of us would recall how a battle had unfolded and how buddies were killed--- I would marvel at how a place of such placid beauty could be the site of horrible events. Perhaps the tension I felt was the Past being confronted by the Present.

I think most of the guys on the trip are still sorting out their feelings, reactions and memories all brought into sharp focus during the trip. I know that I'm in the middle of that process now; I struggle with my feelings, memories, pain and present-day images. But the trip was TREMENDOUS! It was sweet and painful; it was beautiful and ugly (sometimes); it held both good & bad memories. And Vietnam is a place of such joy and heartbreak...so would I go again? Would I do it again? Yes, in a minute. I will go back and hopefully, many of you can join us on the next return trip to Binh Dinh.

To all:

*Received this today from a friend in Georgia. I am forwarding it for a couple reasons: 1) It is touching; and, 2) if true, believe we may want to do something about it. Since the Cracker Barrel in the story is in Randy's hometown of Seymour, IN, I thought Randy might check it out.*

*Randy, if you are so willing and can find the waitress, I believe a letter of gratitude from the Association would be fitting and I would certainly be happy to write one to her and maybe even to the corporate office in Tennessee.*

*Let me know what you think.*

*We're Number One!!*

*John*

#### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I would like to take a moment to relate an incident that occurred yesterday, 14 Oct 01. My wife was returning from Camp Atterbury, In., to our home outside Ft. Knox, KY. As an Army Nurse, she had been providing medical support for personnel that were parachuting from helicopters. Hungry, she stopped at a Cracker Barrel near Seymour, In. After the meal, the waitress brought out the check, laid it on the table, and then laid cash money on top of it.

She told my wife that The Cracker Barrel would like to pay for her meal because she was in military uniform. Upon taking the money to the counter to pay, she asked to see the manager. She wanted to express her gratitude for the store having such a policy in place. She immediately realized, from the expression on the manager's face, that it wasn't a policy: the waitress had paid for my wife's meal.

I am a Drill Sergeant; the guy with the "Smokey The Bear" hat that screams at people when they first get in the Army. I don't have a very soft heart, but I have a weakness: **Patriotism.**

## **REUNION 2003 Tentative dates: April, 24-27, 2003 (Thursday to Sunday)**

*(Easter is April 20)*

### **COLUMBUS, GA (Ft. Benning Room) Buffet**

	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Dinner</b>
<b>RIVERTOWN INN</b> <i>(Includes continental breakfast)</i>	<b>\$63</b>	<b>\$15</b>
<b>COURTYARD</b>	<b>\$97</b>	<b>\$10-20</b>
<b>HILTON</b> <i>(Dates 5/1-4/2003; they cannot accommodate 4/24-27)</i>	<b>\$95</b>	<b>\$25-30</b>
<b>HOLIDAY INN NORTH - AIRPORT</b>	<b>\$80</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>SHERATON - AIRPORT</b>	<b>\$69</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>WASHINGTON D.C.</b>		
<b>EMBASSY SUITES - ALEXANDRIA*</b>	<b>\$210</b>	<b>\$32</b>
<b>EMBASSY SUITES - CRYSTAL CITY*</b>	<b>\$160</b>	<b>\$33</b>
<b>DOUBLETREE - CRYSTAL CITY</b>	<b>\$130</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>HILTON - CRYSTAL CITY</b> <i>(National Airport)</i>	<b>\$145</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<i>*Included in the room rate is a fully cooked to order breakfast, plus free drinks for 2 hours each evening.</i>		

What that waitress displayed was pure America. When my wife told me about it, I had to fight off tears. That girl probably used money that she earned from tips.

This is why I serve my country. This is why I would die for my country. That one incredible act will do more for your business than any amount of money that you have spent on advertising in 2001. I am a man of action; I intend to tell everyone I know this story and will probably write a few letters to editors of newspapers.

May God bless our country; our soldiers, our families, and May God bless the heart of gold within that one waitress.

Sincerely,  
SFC Preston  
Senior Drill Sergeant  
C/2/397th Cavalry



#### VETERANS DAY SALUTE

Walk Softly Among The Sacred Graves  
by Gary Jacobson © 2001

Walk softly among the sacred graves...  
For today in memorial the very air interweaves  
In braveries sweetest breath leaves  
Blessings on this hallowed plot

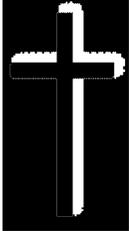
Where courageous men unselfishly wrought  
Carried the lamp of liberty fearful nation's sought  
Fighting for those oppressed who would not be slaves  
Battled tyrannical oppressors who liberties bastion depraves.

Walk softly among the sacred graves...  
For freedoms grandest hope at long last raves  
For them a grateful nation in memorial bestows  
On those boys lying peaceful now in sweetest repose  
Our most favored sons

Who valiantly faced hatreds flaring guns  
Wielding valiant freedom's flaming sword  
Unjust despots with might of right abhorred  
Men of noble calling stood up to tyrannies bullies  
That the very precept of morality sullies.

Walk softly among the sacred graves...  
Loyal sacrifice upon sanctified ground engraves  
Righteous spirits now comfort those that grieve  
Who cannot bring themselves to believe  
Somber sound of guns lay now in silence of retreat  
All anguish withdrawn from battle's dews and heat  
Abiding peaceful dignities grave discreet  
No longer in war's wretched hurting  
No rival disconcerting.  
No longer buffeted with grim anger's agony  
Finally free...  
Finally free...  
Oh God, of this mortal foil they're free...

# CHAPLAIN'S O R N E R



By Toby Jordan

*The Lord is my  
shepherd, I shall not  
want.....*

Psalm 23

Hello to everyone, it is my hope and prayer that each of you are in good health and spirits. There has been such a tragic chain of events happening in our nation that it has made this writing very difficult. September 11<sup>th</sup> will be in our memories for the rest of our lives, and now the anthrax scare that is taking place. It has awakened some old memories of fear that I haven't felt in a long time. As I was remembering the way I felt such a long time ago, and the fears that were present each day, I wondered if any of you were stirred and moved the same as I was? But then, I thought of my wife and family and how they are experiencing the same fears. And how our families, yours and mine, have already felt this fear from being here in a secure nation and having someone in harm's way so far from home. And how that very thing makes our loved ones the veterans this time. So I urge each of you to be brave and take heart in the fact that through it all we have someone on our side that is mightier than anything the Taliban can dream up. That is our God. He has been with us all this time, guarding and protecting. He is the same God that was with us 30 some odd years ago. He is the same God that was with our families then to comfort them. And He is the same God that will be with us in the future to guard and protect. So join me each morning when I first get out of bed, and thank Him for all that He has done and is going to do for our Great Nation and us. God Bless America.

#### ENDURE AMERICA by John Topper

The following essay is the author's point of view and should not be construed to represent the 1st of The 50th Organization, its Executive Committee nor its General Membership. Opposing points of view are not only welcomed but also encouraged; please send these viewpoints directly to the Editor or the Author. Incidentally, the next Newsletter will include an "opinion corner" with a prominent, political topic featured. Every member will be encouraged to offer his/her own opinion either side of the issue. Members can respond by sending their opinion e-mail to the Editor. Both the question or issue and some of the responses will be featured in following newsletter."

*War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things: the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks nothing worth a war, is worse...A war to protect other human beings against tyrannical injustice; a war to give victory to their own ideas of right and good, and which is their own war, carried on for an honest purpose by their own free choice - is often the means of their regeneration....John Stuart Mill in "The Contest in America", 1859.*

The recent acts of terrorism in America underscore just how fragile the freedoms we hold so dear really are. The soldiers guarding those freedoms today deserve the support they did not have a few short weeks ago. Rudyard Kipling wrote about that many years ago - the soldier isn't wanted until he is needed. All of us can relate to that. But, this is a time of need and now our country is closing ranks and is once again supportive of our armed forces.

Perhaps it is time to take advantage of that support and return to a time when our country's values were different than they have been since our misadventure in Vietnam. While the terror on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon defies the belief of all, and it is certainly something we wish had not happened, maybe it will serve to bring back those values. Is this the catalyst that will bring prayer back into our schools? Will these deplorable acts weaken the morally indignant voices of the junior senator from New York? The "Reverend" who heads up the Rainbow Coalition? Oprah and Rose? Will more moderate and reasoned voices rise up and demand that our military resume its traditional role and replace sensitivity training with warrior training? Will Congress stop the social experiments that have been visited on our Army for too many years? Let's hope so.

America is at a defining moment in our history and the next few months will be critical in terms of the direction we take as a country. Are we prepared to let our leaders do those

Walk softly among the sacred graves...  
 Give the due beleaguered spirit craves  
     Our sons  
     Our daughters  
 Loved liberty more than life  
     Our fathers  
     Our mothers  
 Held fast to cherished values in glory rife  
     Our brothers  
     Our sisters  
 Freed now from all worries strife  
 Our beloved who gallantly answered the call  
 In reverential honor stood proud, and very tall.

Walk softly among the sacred graves...  
 Honor stouthearted men who very adoration bereaves  
 Who heard a trumpets divine cadence  
 Rushed to give a patriots breath in honor's defense  
     Always faithful,  
     Ever memorable,  
 Doing their duty without question or pause  
 Defending the weak in independence cause.

Walk softly among the sacred graves...  
 Feel lingering spirits the fight eternal right braves  
 In the flower of youth snatched  
 Respect those in horrors misery dispatched  
     Their loss lingering dear  
     Bringing sadness lo many a year  
 Losing a generations brightest hope  
 Loved ones sad and wearily cope.

Walk softly among these sacred graves...  
 Witness consecrated dying that forever waves  
 Great joy lies among these revered stones too  
 For brave soldiers did forthrightly tyrants eschew  
 Engaging dictators with lightning swords of truth  
 Stole thunder from the fascist bigmouth  
 Who individual rights would evilly suppress  
 May their honored peace forever and ever  
     Humbled hearts bless...  
 For the life we live, in truth, they gave us...



things necessary to accomplish the goal of eradicating terrorism? Maybe. But maybe not and I give you our so called "war on drugs" as a perfect example of America's lack of resolve. We have not been serious about abolishing drugs in this country as evidenced by the vast amounts that continue to pour into it. If we are not careful, the lunatic fringe of America will derail the efforts to stamp out terrorism in much the same way it has hampered the "war on drugs" by placing human rights above accomplishing the mission.

We Americans must understand that we are embarking on a war that cannot be won by our military in the traditional sense. Getting down in the gutter with our enemy and fighting on his home turf, while protecting our own, will win it. It will require getting our hands dirty and it will best be fought with the American public having little knowledge of the means, only the results. As a people, we are too sensitive to consort with criminals and the unsavory sorts who are going to be crucial in forming the cadre of an intelligence network that can infiltrate the various terrorist groups around the world. In that sense, we need to unshackle the CIA and the FBI so they can recruit the people necessary to accomplish this task. It will be a filthy business because of the vary nature of our adversary. This enemy does not respect the civilized world's rules of engagement.

Intelligence is the key to success in the campaign we are embarking on. And law enforcement agencies may well play a more significant role in the long run than the military. We need to establish our willingness to use our military might to its fullest, letting the world know our resolve is absolute, but it cannot win this war alone. To engage only the tactics we used in Kosovo for example, would not work. Air strikes are useful, but almost always involve civilian casualties and that invariably works against us. We need people on the ground in the places where our enemy resides and conventional military formations are not suited for such an operation. It is difficult to hide an army. We need small, covert groups of assassins who can slip in, do their work and quietly leave. And we need to stop the stampede to political correctness. It is okay to let our police be suspicious of Middle Easterners. There are no groups of mass terrorism representing other religions, only Islam. Now, I'm not advocating stopping every Arab or Muslim and interrogating him based solely on his looks or religious beliefs, but we can't cause our police to be timid about questioning someone because he, or she, is afraid of being reprimanded or taken to court on a frivolous charge. It makes no sense just as many other of our "human rights" policies make no sense in this kind of warfare. Its okay to love America and show our patriotism and if this offends some, so what? This approach will upset some American's - to them I say "tough, deal with it." It is this kind of thinking that has made us vulnerable to the attacks our enemy has successfully mounted against us and it is time for responsible leadership to regain control of our country from the naive, "can't we just all get along" crowd, because the answer to that question is "no, we can't."

This is a war we can win - but it won't be won by simply sending forth our military forces to capture Osama bin Laden. Or end in the unlikely event he surrenders. It goes far beyond him and it is going to take much longer than many Americans will be keen to tolerate. We become discouraged easily, and quickly. We all want it to be over, now. It will require a tremendous effort by our national leaders to keep the American people focused on the objective at hand, and that is to rid the world of this insidious enemy we call terrorism. It will also call for the good people of this great national to stand up and demand of our leaders the courage to oppose the lunatic fringe who serve to undermine the effort with their "violence begets violence and therefore we shouldn't fight back" attitude.

Our military is the finest in the world, our intelligence community can be rebuilt and put on a footing to do its job and our law enforcement agencies are skilled in their investigation techniques. President Bush has assembled the finest team imaginable for the job at hand. That leaves only the question of the resolve of the citizens of our great country - do we have it in sufficient measure to see this war through to completion? Can we endure for three years? Five years? Early success is essential, but a single action won't get this job done. Determination, perseverance and staying the course defined by our Commander in Chief will.

At the beginning of this article I quoted John Stuart Mill, an English philosopher who also said, "The worth of a state, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it..." It is time America showed her true worth.

## THE THINGS THEY CARRIED

They carried P-38 can openers and heat tabs, watches and dog tags, insect repellent, gum, cigarettes, Zippo lighters, salt tablets, compress bandages, ponchos, Kool-Aid, two or three canteens of water, iodine tablets, sterno, LRRP- rations, and C-rations stuffed in socks.

They carried standard fatigues, jungle boots, bush hats, flak jackets and steel pots.

They carried the M-16 assault rifle.

They carried trip flares and Claymore mines, M-60 machine guns, the M-70 grenade launcher, M-14's, CAR-15's, Stoners, Swedish K's, 66mm Laws, shotguns, .45 caliber pistols, silencers, the sound of bullets, rockets, and choppers, and sometimes the sound of silence. They carried C-4 plastic explosives, an assortment of hand grenades, PRC-25 radios, knives and machetes.

Not all at once.

Some carried napalm, CBU's and large bombs; some risked their lives to rescue others. Some escaped the fear, but dealt with the death and damage.

Some made very hard decisions, and some just tried to survive.

They carried malaria, dysentery, ringworms and leaches. They carried the land itself as it hardened on their boots. They carried stationery, pencils and pictures of their loved ones - real and imagined. They carried love for people in the real world and love for one another. And sometimes they disguised that love: "Don't mean nothin'!"

They carried memories for the most part; they carried themselves with poise and a kind of dignity. Now and then, there were times when panic set in, and people squealed or wanted to, but couldn't; when they twitched and made moaning sounds and covered their heads and said "Dear God" and hugged the earth and fired their weapons blindly and cringed and begged for the noise to stop and went wild and made stupid promises to themselves and God and their parents, hoping not to die. They carried the traditions of the United States military, and memories and images of those who served before them.

They carried grief, terror, longing and their reputations.

They carried the soldier's greatest fear: the embarrassment of dishonor. They crawled into tunnels, walked point, and advanced under fire, so as not to die of embarrassment. They were afraid of dying, but too afraid to show it.

They carried the emotional baggage of men and women who might die at any moment.

They carried the weight of the world.

**THEY CARRIED EACH OTHER**

*Author Unknown*

## DAM TRAO LAKE



ROUTE 504  
ROUTE 505  
ROUTE 506

## NOTICE! NOTICE!

Summer get-together. July 5th-6th. Bob Gold's house.

Cost will be \$30 per single - \$45 per couple. Includes cookout on Friday evening and pig roast on Saturday. Beer, soft drinks, beer, MREs, beer, snacks, road kill, & did I mention beer?

We are getting special pricing from several area motels. Holiday Inn, Comfort Inn, & Fairfield Inn. All within ten minutes of Bob's house.

**Please contact Bob by email at:**  
RobertJRRjunkie@aol.com

**Or by snail mail at:**  
Bob Gold  
10545 Wright Rd.  
Uniontown, OH 44685  
Or by phone:  
330-305-1495

Everyone that signs up will receive a packet with maps and complete info. Cut off date for sign up will be June 1, 2002.

## BROTHER SEARCH

I just received e-mail from a gal who is looking for information on her father's friend, who was KIA with the 1/50th Infantry. Can anyone supply me with info on John; I will patch it through to the girl's father. Or, I can supply you with her e-mail address and you can chat with her, either way I would appreciate anyone contacting me that knew him. John Moody, Jr. was KIA in Binh Thuy on July 13, 1970.

Thanks,  
Ken Riley

---

Association Founder and Chairman Emeritus Ken Riley reported in the April 2001 newsletter that, "The year 2001 was one of exceptional growth for the Association. Our membership has increased by more than 25 and many new programs are being developed to increase this number."

As we close in on the Christmas holidays, Ken's statement looks more and more understated, particularly in terms of our ability to satisfy our Association's Mission to publish a newsletter and to maintain an internet homepage" that will "inform Ö membership about events within the Association and about current or proposed legislation that might affect veterans of all wars", "strive to preserve the memory of those who served in the "ICHIBAN" Battalion" and "give individuals who served in the Battalion a forum in which to be heard and a medium where they can communicate, make contact, and share the events in their lives with their fellow soldiers and their families."

Starting with the April issue, our Association newsletter "On the Right Track" took on a more professional look under the stewardship of Editor Doc Melendez and Publishers Jim and Dottie Edwards. And with this issue, we announce the "virtual publishing" of our "new" Association website at <http://www.ichiban1.org>, following a lengthy transition onto a new server and a whole new operating platform. Thanks to Chris Lange of Webmasters, Inc., this process is now complete. At the same time, we are now seeing the first work from our new Webmaster, Ray Sarlin. Ray was with the battalion from May 1969 to May 1970, serving a brief apprenticeship in A Company, and then in D Company, S4 and C Company. He has been working with Jim Sheppard as Assistant Historian, with a focus on 1969 and 1970. Ray said, "I liked the look of the earlier site, so why fix something that isn't broken? But one thing we can do to improve is beef up the content, and that will be my priority. That isn't something I can do by myself, and I'll welcome any help that's offered."

Give our website a look, and bookmark it to visit often... and to contribute. A lot has already been accomplished in a short time (three weeks) including a new threaded discussion page, a colorful unit history, a page for current (and 30+ year old) news, and many new photos. But as Ray says, "This is just the beginning."