

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST BATTALION 50TH INFANTRY ASSOCIATION



August 2014

cover page

From the TC Hatch

By: Jim Seagers

President's Corner:

I hope you are having a great summer. It doesn't seem quite possible that a year has gone by since our last reunion, but that is good because it means that we are one year closer to our next one. Plans are already in the making for our 2015 get-together at Ft. Benning. Start making your plans now to attend.

The Welcome Home we received at the National Infantry Museum will perhaps always be the most outstanding memory of all our reunions. I want to personally thank Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson and his staff for making that possible. It is difficult to express my gratitude for all that this outstanding leader has done for me and our Association. He, Michelle, Sgt. Maj. Woods, and Mike McCardell along with others at the current 1/50th went way above and beyond expectations to help and encourage us veterans, particularly those of us who served in Vietnam. We officers were overwhelmed when we were given the Medal of St. Maurice.



Dick Guthrie was presented the Order of St Maurice at Hunter's Pub dinner

My wife is still awed that these officers planned a military ball, mostly because she had made the comment that she had never been to one. If that is not gallantry, we don't know what is. The list goes on and on of all the wonderful tributes Lt. Col. Nelson gave us. The tributes should really go to him for his outstanding service to the men of the 1/50th and our country. We will forever be grateful for such a friendship. Every commanding officer at Ft. Benning with whom our Association has been honored to partner with has been very gracious to all of us. Gentlemen and your wives, we salute you.

We wish Lt. Col. Nelson and his family much happiness as they take up a new assignment: training ROTC men at the Georgia Military College.



Jim Segars presenting Tom Nelson a statuette of our memorial

I am happy to introduce to you the new commanding officer of the 1/50th: Lt. Col. William Kahmann. He and his wife Amanda have come from Ft. Campbell, KY. LTC Kahmann began his military career as an enlisted soldier serving in the 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 82nd ABN Division and participated in Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield, and Desert Storm. The other officers and I of our Association have met this fine couple who are also excited to continue the relationship we have established over the years with Ft. Benning. (Picture on pg. 4, complete Bio on pg. 5) We look forward to supporting him and his staff as they lead the 1/50th Battalion of fine new recruits and seasoned officers.

Sincerely,
Jimmy

Play the Game

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

LORENE BURCH, EDITOR

From the TC Hatch	1
Chaplain's Corner	2
From the Editor	2
Myths about Vietnam	2
Treasure's Report	3
Historians Report	4
Bio on Lt. Col. Kahmann	5

Chaplains Corner

By: Toby Lawrence

Hello to everyone, I hope that all of you made it through the cool spring and have adjusted to this summer heat. We've had Memorial Day and I hope that each of us remembered the ones that have fallen to keep our country free.

If you've been watching the news you know about the VA problems that could affect our health care, and the exchange that was made for the soldier that was being held by the Taliban. My prayer is that it settled by the time this is published. I hope that everyone has a great summer and that you are making plans to attend our next reunion it will be here before we know it. Remember to pray for each other and may God Bless, Toby.



Shawn Barr with Gwen Rainwater at the 2013 reunion

From the Editor



It is such an honor to serve this group as editor, and it is always hard to know what I could ever say that is important enough for you all to read.

The 2015 reunion is in the planning stage and we will have dates in the next newsletter. Some of you have attended and stopped coming for whatever reason and some have never attended one. Maybe some believe it is an experience you care to no longer relive or maybe you just don't feel it is important enough to reconnect.

I have witnessed compassion shown among this group that it is hard to find anywhere else. It is more about looking forward by reconnecting to the past. It has made some stronger and more able to serve their family and communities better. So, if at all possible plan to attend the 2015 reunion, whether you are a soldier or a spouse or family member. Age is not a factor, as our grandson at the age of 12 was in awe by the guys and would like to someday join them by serving in our military. Lorene Burch, Editor

Myths about Vietnam: sent in by Harry Wilson (He has 10 myths and I will be putting in one or two each edition until they are all printed. I found them interesting. Thank you, Harry.)

Myth: Common belief is that most Vietnam veterans were drafted.

Fact: 2/3 of the men who served in Vietnam were volunteers. 2/3 of the men who served in World War II were drafted. Approximately 70% of those killed in Vietnam were volunteers.

Myth: Common belief is that a disproportionate number of blacks were killed in the Vietnam War.

Fact: 86% of the men who died in Vietnam were Caucasians, 12.5% were black, 1.2% were other races. Sociologists Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler, in their recently published book "All That We Can Be," said they analyzed the claim that blacks were used like cannon fodder during Vietnam "and can report definitely that this charge is untrue. Black fatalities amounted to 12 percent of all Americans killed in Southeast Asia, a figure proportional to the number of blacks in the U.S. population at the time and slightly lower than the proportion of blacks in the Army at the close of the war."

From the Treasurer

By: Chuck McAleer

Over the years the financial posture of the association treasury has been a positive one.

However, it has been sustained primarily by the reunion registrations, sales, the silent auction and the generosity of some anonymous benefactors. After expenses from the reunion are deducted the net income to the treasury has always been positive, but can be quite limited depending on variables, such as memorial donations to the battalion.

Currently, the account balance is just over \$14,000 but our expenses continue to increase due to costs associated with the presentation of statuettes, monuments and their updates, flowers for our deceased brothers and the publication of the association newsletter, and expenses associated with the reunion. Buses for the reunion are always an unknown and can negatively affect cash flow dramatically. Next year the Board is contemplating an update of the memorial that sets in front of the battalion headquarters that is projected to cost about \$7500. Last year's gift to the battalion was about \$4500 (Legacy Passed print) and the original memorial with names (dedicated in 2003) was about \$11,000.

The newsletter is a major quarterly expense considering the costs of printing and postage. The newsletter is sent to everyone who at one time or another matriculated with the association of which we currently have a large and disproportionate membership who are life members. This is a good thing, however, in terms of annual revenue generation it is not a contributing factor. With renewals and new active annual memberships we average approximately ten a year which brings me the point of this article.

We need to curb expenses that cannot be sustained by shrinking membership participation. This would involve limiting distribution to active dues paying members and life members. Current annual dues are \$25 a year and life membership is \$150.00. If you did not send in your dues this year you are not current. This being said, I am establishing August as "dues renewal month" in order to set a more consistent annual dues revenue stream now and

into the future. Reminders in future years will be published in the newsletter. Also, please note that the address for sending in your dues is on the web site .

So what should we do with our treasury account? An annual academic scholarship to students who are descended from our fallen comrade's as well family members of our current membership may be a consideration. However, this is a subject that would require further review and discussion.

With regards to silent auction items at the reunions, my experience with donations made by the attendees have been that they are very much appreciated. They have generated much needed revenue, even when the item is sold at less than its value. However, the practice of making a donation and asking the association to reimburse the donor will no longer be approved because many of these items have auctioned at a loss.

In closing, the reunion has been a success each and every year and continues to be an even greater experience. It's always great to see the same faces at each reunion as well as all the new ones that come. In addition, having families of our fallen comrades attending is not only heart warming but also gives them a sense of connection to our association who truly knows and understands their loss. They have now become a part of our family as well.



HISTORIAN REPORT - JULY 2014

This quarter saw your historian accompany a small but dedicated group of Association Officers to witness the Change of Command for the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry.

We had a chance to have dinner the evening before the event and, unlike previously, meet the incoming Commander before the hectic day that followed. It was outgoing LTC Nelson's idea...having remembered that he felt "shortchanged" at his installation as he had no time to really get to know those of us who travelled to Fort Benning to represent the men who served with the Battalion in Vietnam.

During this 2-day event, Jim Sheppard, Jay Copley, John Topper, Dick Guthrie and Jimmie Segars had some time to go over details for the next reunion in the spring of 2015. The event will be highlighted by the addition of another plaque at our Memorial. As I mentioned in my last report, I created memorial pages for all the men who were killed in action in Vietnam who served with 50th Infantry designations that were not part of the contiguous 50th Infantry Battalion. The decision to so honor these men who briefly served in our 50th Infantry Regiment was a rightful and necessary step...particularly since these designation, "E" and "F" Company have been added to the current day training battalion. In fact, we previously took part in the ceremony where one of the current troop barracks was named after SSG Johnston Dunlop, who served with Company E (Long Range Patrol), 50th Infantry of the 9th Infantry Division...and was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The units to be included are Dunlop's Company E, Company F (Long Range Patrol), 50th Infantry of the 25th Infantry Division and Companies E and F (Rifle Security), 1st Log Command, USARV at the port of DaNang. 33 men were killed in action while assigned or attached to these units while they held the 50th Infantry designation. We will be adding 36 names, as 3 others have been added to our pages who died in action after transfer to other units in Vietnam.



LTC Kahmann

The plan is to add another stone wedge...similar to the two existing plaque holding stones that flank the inverted M-16 status at our memorial,. The additional stone will be added behind the existing memorial... but facing outward , so one can walk around the memorial and at all times be facing some front part of the collection of memorial plaques.

The cost of the new addition will be shared by the Association as well as a donation from the current Battalion.

This means I will be dedicating a large portion of my time between now and the next reunion trying to build a database of family and friends for these new additions. I plan to invite as many people as I can find to help us honor these men. A few have already been in touch with me as a result of the efforts involved in finding and contacting Johnston Dunlop's family. As you may recall, we also had former "E" Company Long Range Patroller Rick Stetson at the Wreath Laying/Building Dedication ceremonies in 2013. Rick will help spread the word to the men who served in the LRP unit of the 9th Infantry Division. Others I have been in touch with will be contacting the men of the other units involved...and we are hoping to have good representation of all the units involved.

Finally, I still hope to try to visit the National Archive in College Park for more research trip before the next reunion....Possibly sometime this fall.

Bio on Lt. Col. Kahmann
Sent in by John Topper

LTC Kahmann began his military career as enlisted Soldier serving in 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 82nd ABN Division and participated in Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield, and Desert Storm.

LTC Kahmann graduated from Missouri State University and was commissioned as an Infantry Officer in December, 1995. He has graduated from the Infantry Officer Basic Course, the Engineer Captains Career Course, the Combined Arms Service and Staff School, and the Command and General Staff College. LTC Kahmann has also earned a Masters Degree from Kansas State University.

LTC Kahmann's officer assignments include serving as a Lieutenant in 3rd Battalion, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment; at Fort Bragg, NC; as a company grade staff officer with 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division and 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, CO; Alpha Company Commander, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, at Fort Carson, CO; Observer Controller at Fort Irwin, CA, Small Group Instructor for the Infantry Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, GA; Military Transition Team Leader with an Iraqi Army Infantry Battalion in Baghdad, Iraq; S3 and Executive Officer for 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment and later the Brigade S3 for 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss, TX. His most recent assignment was the Deputy Chief of Staff, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY.

LTC Kahmann's operational deployments include three tours to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn, and one tour to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

LTC Kahmann's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star (three OLC), the Meritorious Service Medal (two OLC), the Army Commendation Medal (four OLC), the Army Achievement Medal (four OLC), the Valorous Unit Award, the Meritorious Unit Commendation, and the Army Superior Unit Award, Combat and Expert Infantryman Badges, Master Parachutist Badge, and the Ranger Tab.

LTC Kahmann is married to the former Amanda Leatherman of Mountain View, MO. They have two children; Jessica (15) and Andrew (11).



AMEREN 50th Anniversary Vietnam War Celebration/Memorial Dedication. L-R Patrick Quint, Chris Quint, Kay Quint, Gary Quint, Harry Wilson, John Topper, Janet Topper 22 June 2014 in St Louis sponsored by AMEREN



Wreaths Across America coming up again this December.

Articles needed! We still need your help in order for this news letter to develop into all it can be.

To each of you who have contributed to this edition, I say Thank you and look forward to hearing from more of you in the future. **This is your news letter, take ownership of it.**

Submit them to: helmburch@gmail.com

Questions: 785-452-2978, leave a message. Thanks. Lorene

