

# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST Battalion 50th Association



April 2019

Cover

## From the TC Hatch

By Jim Seagers



### President's Corner

Hello, Fellow Members,

I hope all of you are doing well and that you had a great day celebrating our country's birthday. Every day we are reminded how blessed we are to live in a free country and how grateful we are to all of our military who sacrifice so much to keep us free. Fellow veterans and soldiers in the 150<sup>th</sup>, we thank you so much for what you do for our country.

In May, we enjoyed another great reunion. Thank you to Lt. Col. Gallagher and his staff for all you did to make us feel welcomed. Our Association has been privileged to have the honor to serve our military at Ft. Benning, especially the 150<sup>th</sup>, for several years now. We always look forward to interacting with the fine men and women who serve there.

Our Association was also honored to attend the retirement gathering for Sergeant Major Chris Lewis and his lovely wife Mikey. We will miss his expert work on behalf of the Association. For a while now, he will remain at Ft. Benning, working with the National Infantry Museum. We wish both Chris and Mikey well in their new phase of life. Many new faces have been added to the cadre, among whom is the new Sergeant Major Duckett. We welcome him and all the others on board. The officers of the 150<sup>th</sup> have always been great.

It is with sad hearts that we recognize the passing of Jimmy Copeland. Many of us wondered why he was not at the reunion because he always comes. We recently received word from his wife that he had passed away last November. He was a faithful member of our Association who will be missed.

Lorretta and I want to thank all of you for your prayers and concern for our health. I am doing very well, and Lorretta is on a path to recovery with treatments starting next week. All of you are so kind to us. May God bless you.

Play the Game  
Jimmy Segars

Editor: Lorene Burch

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## From the Chaplin



Hello to everyone:

Hello to everyone hope the summer heat hasn't kept you inside too much. Here in Southern Missouri it has been an unusually wet and hot summer so far, but the farmers still have managed to have a great looking crop.

It's hard to believe that as far away from election time as it is that the political ads have already started and of course the negative talk about each party. So let us stay positive in our daily prayers for our families our country and of course for our leadership of this great country. I've taken up enough space here so I'll sign off. May God bless you and your family.

God bless,  
Toby



No MRE's for us this year. Look closely as to who they put to work. What a wonderful surprise for everyone including those who are serving. Thank you for being such good sports.





## ARMY NATIONAL MUSEUM

Cameron Lynn and Bruce Braun. Cameron is the Director of the Unit Wall of Fame recognition walkway leading into the entrance of the new Army Museum. It was taken at the temporary office of the Army National Museum in Washington, DC. The museum was scheduled to open last week, but that was curtailed by the fire marshal. We timed our meeting with Cameron to meet in her new office, but, obviously that didn't work out. The Association voted to donate \$5000 during our recent reunion to have 1/50 recognized. Bruce and I met with Cameron to discuss the form that would take, the Association voted to use the picture Legacy Passed, that was done for us by Roland Castanie in 2013. Unfortunately, the vendor is unable to replicate that picture. We discussed several alternatives using our unit crest and the patches of our parent units in Vietnam. Cameron will provide us with samples for our selection. The vendor is new and has not developed all its techniques with colors so they will have to approve anything we decide on.



John Topper, Cameron Lynn and Bruce Braun.

On the brighter side, Cameron was very much impressed with Legacy Passed, and assured us she would have it framed and that it would have a place in the museum.

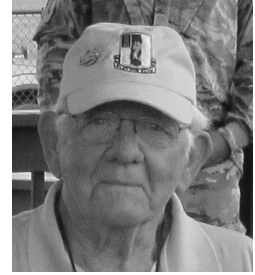
John Topper





## MOVING ON

By Dick Guthrie



During my short-timer's thirty-day countdown, it was all I could do to restrain my rising anticipation. Now, even though my year was ending, the confusion of overlapping film clips carnage and mayhem I'd survived seemed to multiply. These revenants weren't new. Ever since our first armed engagement a week into our tour, they'd plagued me regularly. Now heading home, I felt an urgent need to deal with those intrusions.

Signing-in to the Replacement Center at Long-Binh, the baby-faced Spec-Four at the desk nodded once. My heart jumped. His head-bob confirmed that there was a seat for me, on the next day's Freedom Bird back to The World.

Elated, I heaved my duffle bag to the shoulder and headed to the officers' billets with spring in my step. Our little family was about to come back together! I fretted about how to deal with those unrelenting intrusions. Otherwise, how could I learn to be a father to Laura, the tiny newborn I'd met on R&R half a year before. What I most needed I thought, was to get together with some of the guys who'd arrived in country with me and B Company—men who knew firsthand what went down in our piece of Binh Dinh Province this past year.

The barracks screen door slammed behind me and I walked the length of the narrow aisle between the aligned rows of cots, looking for a familiar face. Reaching the end of the rows I'd recognized not one! Distraught, I dropped my duffle bag on the nearest empty rack. Seconds later, a pack of sergeants-REMF's all—barged in to shout us and our luggage outside. After badgering us into an open formation, they had us empty all our belongings onto the tarmac. Then, pairs of them moved down each rank ferreting with the intensity of gold prospectors through every last drop kit, sock, shoe or shirt pocket. Finished with one man's pile, the teams sidestepped to the next pile and started over. They were looking for explosives, weapons, war souvenirs or any form of contraband. This may have been a necessary procedure, but it royally pisses me off. After such a trying year how could my Army allow harassment like this to delay our reunification?

The following morning after yet another formation and a second full-blown shakedown inspection a sergeant waved me to the cluster of those who'd passed. Another hour-long wait and we were herded aboard a smelly olive drab school bus that soon plunged into Saigon's pandemonium of busses, truck, cars, taxis, motorbikes, mopeds—all honking nonstop. The chaos and cacophony so unnerved me that my shoulder muscles turned into hard, aching knots. I felt naked without a rifle and for every instant of the two-hour stop-and-go ride, I cowered in my seat, dreading the snap of incoming rifle shots I just knew had to be inevitable.

At Tan Son Nhut airport our busload piled out to join other short-timers already waiting inside the vast oven of a terminal. Near a door leading to the flight line strutted another officious young soldier, high on the power vested in him by the clipboard he brandished. When he called out the flight manifest he mumbled our names in a monotone that somehow managed to reduce us to a rank lower than his. Hearing my name, my heart pounded and I shouted "HERE! And hustled through the door into blinding sunlight on the flight line. Squinting, I joined the herd shuffling towards the rickety metal steps. Our excited pack clambered up with a vigor that set the contraption a-wobble, emitting a jangling chorus of rusty steel-on-steel chirps and thudding the padded threshold hard against the aircraft's tender flank. I ducked into the rear galley of the World Airways Boeing 707 and a sour mélange assaulted my nose. First came essence of old puke, the result of seasonal air turbulence over the Pacific. The familiar sharp stink of fear that came next, doubtless was left behind by successive waves of new arrivals aboard the USA-to-Saigon leg of earlier flights.

Adjusting to the dim interior light, I focused on grimy, frayed seats and worn carpeting. God, I prayed let this grubby aircraft get me safely across the Pacific and home to my girls. That reunification was obviously what I most desired, but to disengage from this part of my life to close it off, I still needed to face-off against the damned replays. I couldn't do it alone I needed to get with guys who knew firsthand what went down in our piece of Binh Dinh Province this past year. I needed seasoned Boonie Rats, familiar with Ten December, the Tet Offensive. Five May...all the high cost battles, and even the prosaic but equally crippling losses to booby traps, stay sniper rounds, vehicle accidents.



Still lacking the words to describe those heartbreaks, I searched for a seatmate who could help midwife my unburdening without needing a lot of explanation. Moving up the plane's narrow aisle, I scanned carefully. Seeing only strangers, I stopped at the first empty aisle seat and extended a hand. "Hey, I'm Dick Guthrie," I said with a smile. "Came over by troopship from Fort Hood with 1<sup>st</sup> of the 50<sup>th</sup> Mech Infantry. We went to LZ Uplift—south of Bon Son. Any of you guys spend time in Binh Dunh?"

The man in the middle seat returned my handshake and told me he'd served his year in a Quartermaster Stevedore outfit that offloaded munitions at the seaport at Long Binh. Clearly, this guy wasn't the one I needed.

Across the aisle, an artilleryman chimed in, "I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 49<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery," he said returning my handshake, "Palace guard around Saigon. I spent time as Forward Observer with a rifle company."

A fellow Boonie Rat who can help me unpack my terrors! Eagerly, I pumped his hand and sat down. "No shit?" I blurted, buckling myself in, "Who was the company commander?"

"Well, I don't remember his name," he said, "I was only with him for a week between the Christmas and New Year's Cease-fires. Their regular FO was on R&R." My heart sank.

"By Tet," he went on, "I was already back at the firebase." He shook his head, "and plenty glad to be there." Clearly, this artilleryman wouldn't be the answer to my prayers.

I stared at the seat in front of me. There wouldn't be a confessor for me on this flight, and I wouldn't be unburdening myself this day. All I could do was continue pretending my films weren't playing, and keep on sweeping them back under the rug.

A spectator now, I felt myself rise to hover wordlessly above the aircraft. Looking down, I watched my shoulders shrug and my head shake.

I didn't yet know it, but this intense frustration was good training for what the future soon would bring. Like all who saw fighting, I was groping my way home in an overwrought emotional state. Like most, I desperately hoped to fit back into some familiar niche or role I couldn't define. I only knew I longed to get on with life as I'd known it before. I utterly ignored how impossible this would prove to be.

Too soon, we would all discover that the very compatriots who paid our way over there now wanted to hear nothing about the confusion and anguish we lugged with us. Apparently, acknowledging our distress would lay back on them the bad decisions to invade Vietnam. In the end, the public gave us a "welcome home" that turned out to be a kick in the groin. They strung it out for decades, and was every bit as destructive as the daily closed-loop replays of mayhem that we already knew by heart.

In stuffy heat, the cabin air soon reeked of man-sweat. Near the cockpit, a stewardess materialized. All eyes snapped to her, and conversations shut down. She set out towards the stern and her energetic pace triggered the enticing jiggle of all her femininity. The sound of the men's sharp intakes of air cascaded with her down the aisle. Passing by me, her wake exuded essence of woman, fortified with Duty-Free perfume. A hundred horny men mentally undressed her, and her Mona Lisa smile suggested she was enjoying it.

In the rear, she heaved the passenger door shut, and the plane's engines shrieked. Soon, cool air flowed. The aircraft lurched and began to roll, taxiing for what felt like miles. I was giddy with yearning to see Cynthia and Laura.

When the plane wheeled onto the main runway, the pilot locked the brakes long enough to rev the jet engines one last time. I held my breath. The massive bird trembled. The brakes released and I felt the lumbering take-off roll. We gathered speed and someone started a yell in rising cadence: "Go!...Go!..GO!" Then, the runway's vibrations faded. We were airborne!

The spontaneous roar of applause and cheering nearly drowned out the engine noise. The nose tipped skyward.

Back to The World!

We love-starved warriors too soon would discover that America's welcome mat wasn't out for us after all. For the moment, we'd cheated the Grim Reaper and were safe! At long last, we were moving on!

(Publishing date to be announce at a later date.)

**1/50th Infantry Association  
General meeting  
16 May 2019**

President Jim Segars call the meeting to order at 9:30 on 16 May 2019.

Chaplain Toby Jordan gave the invocation

President Segars led the Association in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SECRETARY REPORT**

Secretary Quint, in lieu of reading the minutes of the previous meeting, requested that a motion be made to accept the minutes as published in the on-line version of the April 2019 News Letter.

A motion was made to accept the minutes as published by George Bell and it was seconded by John Topper. The motion was passed by the general membership

**TREASURER REPORT**

Treasurer Chuck McAleer reported that after all expenses, in spite of reducing the registration fee, the Association should have \$20,000 in its coffers. This is due to contributions that have been made by Tom and Diana Clark as well as the son of a KIA, Seth Sindel. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer Report. This motion was carried by the majority of members

**OLD BUSINESS**

President Segars asked if there was any old business. There was no old business brought forth by the membership

**NEW BUSINESS**

John Topper informed the members that he has filed the proper documents to obtain a Valorous Unit Citation for the Battalion.

Bruce Braun proposed that the Association contribute \$5,000 to the National Museum of the United States Army presently under construction at Fort Belvoir Virginia. The contribution will buy a block that will be incorporated into the building. The design of the block will be at the Associations discretion. Chuck McAleer reported that after the \$5,000 contribution had been considered in the expenses of this years reunion and therefore, the treasury will still retain a balance of \$20,000 after the contribution is made. A motion to carry was made by Bruce Braun.

The motion was seconded by Chuck McAleer and approved by vote of the membership.

**JIM SHEPPARD**

Jim Shepard discussed the panorama World War I photo that the Association would present to the Battalion was framed by a friend at no charge. He asked that we remember a KIA Bruce Backes of C company.

Jim has digitized 5,000 pages in PDF form and this information on thumb drive for \$10 as well as the directory for \$10. All money is not for profit but will be used for his expenses.

President Segars announced that the busses, for the Turning Blue Ceremony, would be leaving at 7:45 am on 5/16/2019. Everyone is to wear the shirts they received at this year's reunion.

**JIM SEGARS**

Jim Segars asked if there were any suggestions for a meeting place for the next reunion.

Bob Schaller made a motion that the reunion be held in St. Louis, MO. No one seconded the motion. For the lack of a second to the motion no vote was initiated.

Secretary Quint made the motion the we return to Fort Benning. The motion was seconded by John Topper and was carried by the majority of members.

#### PARKER PIERCE

Parker Pierce requested a change in the month the Association holds the reunions due to children being in school and high school graduations etc. John Topper explained that the date of our reunion is based on the schedule of graduations at Ft. Benning which is determined by the Department of the Army. It has been traditionally the last week of April or the first week of May.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

There were no nominations brought forward by the membership. John Topper made a motion that the current slate of board officers be re-elected for another two year term.

President:	James Segars
Vice President:	Roberto Melendez
Secretary:	Gary Quint
Treasurer:	Charles McAleer
Historian:	James Sheppard
Chaplain:	Lawrence Jordan
Legal Advisor:	Harry Wilson

The motion was seconded and carried by the majority of members.

#### OPEN BUSINESS

Bob Quick asked if the Association could advertise, for example in the American Legion magazine, as he found us by chance. President Segars explained that the publications require notice six months in advance and the graduation schedule varies making it difficult to provide correct information. Jim Shepard volunteered to research what regulations publications have before the next reunion. If it is possible to publish, Talmadge Cain will give his E-mail as a contact.

#### REGISTRATION

Since the shirts for the reunion must be ordered 8 weeks in advance John Topper reminded everyone to register as early as possible so as to improve the sizing disparity.

#### NEWS LETTER

President Segars mentioned that the News Letter has a lot of information and encouraged all members to go on-line to read the News Letter as well as the Association Web-site. The News Letter can also be mailed for those who do not have a computer.

#### INCIDENTAL BUSINESS

Secretary Quint mentioned that the shirts are distributed according to the date the registration form is received which assures that you get the size you need.

He also mentioned that if riding the bus to be sure to take the same bus on your return trip as the bus you rode on arriving. The drivers must do a head count and if the number is off it causes unnecessary delays.

#### ADJOURNMENT

President Segars made a motion to Adjourn which was seconded by Gary Quint and carried by the majority

#### BENEDICTION

Chaplain Jordan gave the Benediction



## May They Rest In Peace

### 50th Infantry veteran's Deaths since last reunion

Below is a list of Vietnam Era 50th Infantry Regiment Veterans who have either died since the last reunion....or we have learned of their deaths in prior years since the last reunion. (As of April 27, 2019)

Cheney I. Bertholf, HHC, January 2016: Arthur Borr, C Co, October 2017: William Brennan, S-4 HQ Co. February 2012: Stephen K. Dennis, C Co, May 2018: Joseph A. Gelarden, A Co, December 2018: John Gilbert, HHC, November 1995: Richard Hanna, C Co, October 2014: Ted Hardy, Bn S-3, August 30, 2010: Anthony Juliano, HHC, July 2010: Keith LaRue, A Co, October 2018: Alfred R. Ludwig, D and HQ (S4) December 23, 2013: John L. Nichols, HHC May 2018: Stephen Oliphant, Medic, November 2016: Ron Overcashier, D Co., September 30, 2008: Robert E. Payne, A Co, November 2017: Walt Peterson, Medic, February 2011: Ron Provencher, Medic, January 2005: Herbert E. Randall, C Co, February 2019: Seth Sindel, C Co, December 2018: Albert Smith, C Co, October 2017: Bradley L. Smith, E Co, January 2016: Randy Smith, Medic, August 2017: Sam Strickland, Medic, July 2018: Charles D. Tilton, D Co, March 2019: Terry Wade, C Co, August 2006: and Gordon Wemmitt, A Co, March 31, 2007.

MAY THEY NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.





Gary E. Quint  
438 Fairway Lane  
Kirkwood, Mo

### Editors Comments:

As you can see I have been moved to the back page. I love that so much has been put into this newsletter. I ran out of room, but part of it is because I wanted to you be able to see how wonderful it was to get together with those we see only every other year. There was so much more to report on. Those who received recognition for their many wonderful deeds. You all deserve medals in my book for serving your country in such a way that it has affected so many of you in so many ways. I pray that God will be with each and everyone of you as we grow a little older and perhaps a little wiser. For we understand that the things that were so important to us as youth isn't really important at all. It is the journey we walk and the people we meet along the way that is important. I wonder what kind of a legacy will I leave.



So just know that until we meet again I will try to do my best to serve the 1/50th through the newsletter and if there is something you would like to see in this letter, please send it in.

I am just a phone call or an email or a letter away. Check out the website: [www.ichiban1.org](http://www.ichiban1.org)

Lorene Burch

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