

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST Battalion 50th Association

August 2023

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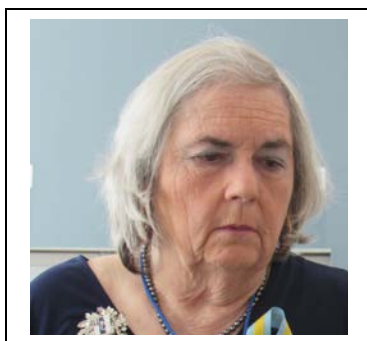


From the TC Hatch

The President's Corner
By Jim Segars



It is with a heavy heart that we report Loretta passed away June 30th as she lost her battle to cancer.



"Bruna Lorretta Camp Segars", "02/15/1947 - 06/30/2023" Loving wife, treasured mother, and adoring grandmother, passed from this life Friday, June 30, 2023 at the age of 76. She is preceded in death by her parents Rose and Fred Camp. She is survived by her husband James Roland Segars; her children Michael Kirk Segars (Tanya), Monica Karol Copeland (Charlie), and Joy Ann Bowman; grand-children Amelia Rose Segars, Noah James Copeland, and Alexander Gabriel Segars; and brother, Tony Camp (Linda).

A graduate of Albertville High School in 1965, she was awarded class Valedictorian. She continued her education at Jacksonville State University where she completed a Bachelor of Science in Education and would go on to earn a master's degree in both English and History. She taught middle school English at Albertville Middle School, Art at Culbertson Elementary, Culbertson, Montana, and was a History and English Professor at Gadsden State Community College.

On October 15, 1965, she married the love of her life James Segars.

For the past several years she has been a major part in making the reunions special...Jim's right hand. She will be missed as she was a great friend and cared deeply about each of us.
RIP Loretta.

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Chaplin's Corner



Hello to everyone,

Hope this newsletter finds you in good health and enjoying life. My wife and I just got back from meeting up with Walter and Connie Billups, Gary and Kay Quint to attend a memorial service for our friend and brother Robert Cleon "Bob" Schaller. That was the second funeral the first being for the sweetest lady and a big part of our reunions, Loretta Segars, who is sorely missed by everyone who knew her.

It's getting to be to regular of an occurrence for us as we get older, but there's a great reward waiting if we follow our God and believe. That's all I have for now, keep the faith, by keeping God in your life.

Bye for now, Toby.

Editor's note:

Lorene Burch



Greetings:

We have been busy since we returned from the reunion. Little did I know how much the time we spent together would come to mean so much.

Will miss Loretta, her smile, and her way of expressing herself. Peace and comfort to Jim and the family.

Shortly after we returned, my mother started going downhill. We moved in the hopes of being able to keep a better eye on her. She passed on July 25th here at home in her room and we laid her to rest on August 1st. I am so thankful I could be by her side. The reason this is so late getting out.

Am praying for each of you as there have been so many we have lost over the past years. May you all be healthy and blessed.

Lorene Burch
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Please send in articles in any of the following ways.



Open Mic Night

This year's open mic had a different feel to it. It was interesting to hear Toby Milroy's remembrance of his time with Guthrie in Vietnam. It one of those times you just had to be there. Sorry guys, try as I may, I cannot create his wonderful rendition. All I know is that he stated that he blew up the air mattress for Guthrie to sleep on each night and that Guthrie appreciated his guidance so much that he promoted him. If there was a way of putting a video in this news letter I would do it. But, to bad I didn't' video it anyway.

Others told of the way the brothers in the 1/50th have assisted one another throughout the years that they know they can call on one another in a time of need and each of you would be there, if at all possible to help.

Once again I am amazed and feel so privileged to be a part of this group of wonderful people. Thank you for allowing me to serve you.



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Sims Memorial

By Chuck McAleer

I stand before you today to honor Private First-Class E. Bruce Sims a medic, and a man of courage and conviction who lost his life in the service of his country and foremost the members of the 3rd Platoon, "C" Company where he was assigned.

The vast majority of those seated here today never heard of, and much less knew Pvt Sims. I for one, however, knew Bruce quite well during the two weeks he served in the Battalion Aid Station prior to being assigned to Charlie Company. He was an honorable man with a strong moral fiber governed by unwavering personal strength and beliefs.

On March 2, 1968, the day Pvt Sims died as a result of small arms fire while giving aid to a fallen comrade...Russell Hass. To honor both Russell and Bruce, Russell's sisters, Paula Bantle and Susan Anderson are here today.



Pvt Sims was only 19 years old when he died, which was the average age of those serving in Vietnam. But what makes his death all that more daunting is that he had served just 40 days in country when he was killed.

Pvt Sims will not just be remembered for his bravery but rather more for the man he was. You see, a little-known fact about PVT Sims is that he was a conscientious objector. He did not object to serving in the military, however, he did object to bearing arms which could result in the death of another human being. He felt his cause and purpose in serving in the military was not taking lives but rather saving lives.

So, what does it mean to be a conscientious objector and who qualifies? In general, once an individual gets a notice from his draft board that he has been found qualified for military service, he can make a claim for classification as a Conscientious Objector (CO). A registrant making claim for CO status is required to appear before his local draft board to explain his beliefs. He may provide written documentation or include personal appearances by people he knows who can attest to his claims. His written statement might explain; how he arrives at his beliefs and the influence his beliefs have on how he lives his life. As a result of the draft Boards findings Pvt Sims was granted conscientious objector status.

Pvt Sims did not choose the easy way out by taking alternative public service but rather chose to serve as a non-combatant medic.

At this time, I would like the following medics in attendance today to stand and be recognized for their service and dedication to duty and the lives they helped to save on the field of battle.

- Kevin Begley
- James Cruz
- Robert Melendez
- Toby Milroy



I salute you, and a grateful Battalion salutes you as well. I know for a fact that many of the members of this Association would not be here today had it not been for your bravery and heroics.

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1st Battalion 50th Infantry arrival in Vietnam 1967

Submitted by Historian Jim Sheppard

This is the story of how the 1st Battalion 50th Infantry first arrived in Vietnam on September 7th 1967. Most of you infantry were on that “Luxury” liner leaving from San Francisco. There was about 10 personnel that stayed behind called the “rear party”. They were responsible for closing up the battalion area at Fort Hood. The “rear party” would then become the “advance party” we were told we would be taking a C-141 into Vietnam, however, when we arrived at the air force base all our equipment was loaded onto a C-130, Colonel Hudson felt that there wasn’t enough room for all the personnel and the equipment so he ordered me and the Sergeant E-5 from S3 to board the C-130 and he would follow with the rest of the personnel on the next available aircraft.

From Texas we flew to California refueled and took off from Hawaii. When I landed in Hawaii eight hours later I decided to find out the status of Colonel Hudson and the advance party. Not having information about which plane he was on I had no idea if he was on a plane or still in Texas. After they gave us a box lunch and fueled the plane it was off to Wake island. We landed early morning; again I inquired about Colonel Hudson and the rest of the advance party’s whereabouts but had no luck and no help from the Air Force. After that I was off to Guam. Nothing significant stands out in my memory about Guam; we landed at night and then took off later for the Philippines. Out of boredom I decided to talk to the pilots, what a mistake that was. When I climbed up to the cockpit everybody was asleep except for the tech sergeant who was flipping switches. I returned back to my cot. We land in the Philippines around 10 a.m., and was pretty happy that we were going to be landing in Vietnam early in the day. But we were stuck in the Philippines until 2 o’clock in the afternoon. Still with all that time staying in the Philippines I could not find any information about Colonel Hudson again I had no help from the Air Force.

We landed in Vietnam, specifically in An khe around 5:30-6:00 o’clock at night. That’s when I first learned that my unit was a part of the 1st Air Calvary Division. Again the big question was whether or not the rest of my party was already there or still behind. We taxied down the runway to some warehouse type building. The ramp dropped I stepped off the C-130 and in a instant I knew that Colonel Hudson was not in Vietnam. There to greet was a one Star General, the entire division staff consisting of Colonels, Lt. Colonels, and the entire staff of the infantry brigade we were attached to. There were more Colonels and even a Major. The first question they asked me was “where is Colonel Hudson?” I told them I had been trying to find out since Hawaii but the Air Force was no help. I could tell that one of the Colonels thought I did not try hard enough to find him, until they were unable to find Colonel Hudson. He landed the next day in Qui Nhon.

(Historian’s note: This story was sent to me a few years back and I scanned the text intending to post it somewhere on our website. In the years since, I lost the original correspondence and with it...the author’s name. If you are the individual who sent me this story, I apologize for not giving you credit.)



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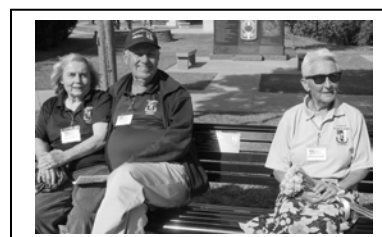
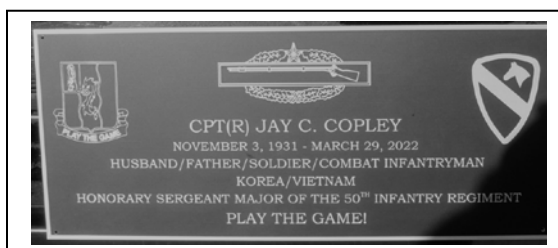
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Memorial Bench for Captain Copley

A bench was revealed on the final day of the reunion. to honor Captain Copley's Many actions during the Vietnam war as he served in the 150th. During his service he was awarded the Silver Stark, Bronze Star and Air Medal, Purple Heart and the Combat Infantry Badge with Star. He retired from the military in 1973.



Those we were aware of that passed between the 2021 and 2023 reunions are as follows:

Craig Reed

Mike Theurer

Waylon Morris

Hilan Jones

Happy Gilbreath

Jerry Mize

Louis Frisbie

Jay Copley

Bill Black

Buck Buckley

John Blochberger

Jacl Brodigan

Jim Vonesh

Russ Roth

Marshall Duer

To the families we offer our prayers and condolences. It is always hard to lose a dear family member, they may never be replaced but will always be remembered.

He's Only Gone on Ahead

By Kelly Roper

He's only gone on ahead of you,

Not just left you behind.

Although you can't be with him right now,

He lives on in your heart and mind.

The day will come when you'll meet again

On Heaven's distant shore,

And the two of you will walk hand in hand

Together forever more.

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LAURA

Submitted by Dick Guthrie

Read at Open Mic Night

On 21 December, almost four months into our time in-country, we were back operating mounted in the familiar Crescent. For two days, despite numerous *Cordon and Search* operations, all I had to report to that point were “negative results.” I was starting to look for a good place to set up for the night when the S-3 called from the TOC with a short-notice change in mission. I marked the new objective on my map, and winced: Late in the day, Bravo Company was being sent several kilometers up the 506—the Valley of the Shadow of Death! We were to head into a location we knew to be a dangerous place in broad daylight when we were operating at full strength. With our heavy losses from Ten December, our paddy strength was still at about 70. Faithful indicators of my stress level, my neck and shoulders tightened noticeably.

To reach our assigned objective, we’d have to thread our lumbering vehicles up that narrow one-lane dirt road that wound through one perfect ambush site after another. Even worse, just as we got into the most treacherous part, we’d run out of daylight.

I didn’t like this new mission at all.

The sun was less than an hour above the western skyline when we turned off Route 1 to head up the narrow cart track called 506. Impatient as I was to get us properly set up for the night, I reined in my urge to move us faster. Rolling at high-speed, drivers and track commanders couldn’t discern hidden mines or detect signs of ambush. At the same time, moving slowly left us more vulnerable to the odd Vietcong with a rocket launcher who just might want to take out an APC with his last remaining Rocket Propelled Grenade.

My eyes were scanning the roadway ahead nonstop when battalion frequency crackled with a new call:

“Bold Barbarian six, this is Blue Dolphin three-Kilo: Message, over.” It was always easy to recognize Master Sergeant Larson’s radio voice because to me, his words sounded slurred—as if his tongue was too big for his mouth. I hope this call might bring the good news that we were to head someplace other than the 506 Valley. I tugged at grease pencil from my breast pocket, and stood tall in the hatch, ready to scrawl new coordinates on my map’s plastic covering. Squeezing the push-to talk-, I gave the customary response:

“Barbarian Six: Prepared to copy, Send your message, over.”

“Blue Dolphin Three-Kilo, Message follows: ‘Daughter...Lauran...six pounds six ounces....two-zero and one-quarter inches long arrived two-one December at one-seven-zero-eight hours, local—break—mother and daughter doing splendid, over.’”

I couldn’t breathe. At once, congratulatory slaps stung both calves. I crouched down in the hatch. Down in the troop compartment, Radio Operator Tom Downs and Lieutenant Chuck Turner were delivering congratulatory pats. I gave them a thumbs up and stood back up.

The due date for our firstborn was Christmas day. I’d been worrying about the birth for some weeks, but I had no one to share my concerns with. As far as I knew, none of my officers had ever been married, and of course it wasn’t appropriate for me to share something like prenatal jitters with the troops. Now, my spirits soared, and the happy news almost eclipsed my concern for our safety.

My mind a joyful blur, I tried to imagine how it would feel to pick up an infant “twenty and a quarter inches long” and weighing “six pounds six ounces.” I estimated she’d weigh less than an M-16 with empty magazine. Another call interrupted my reverie:

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(continued from page7)

“Bold Barbarian six, this is Tarheel six, over,” the clear, laconic voice drawled over my battalion freq. It was Major General John J. Tolson the First Cav Division’s commanding General!

“I’m inbound your location, over,” he said. I was stunned.

“Roger, Tarheel,” I answered, “We’re currently underway on the road—break—I’ll call soon as we have a spot where you can set down, over.” Grabbing the company mic, I called Lieutenant Thomas and told him to find: “a one-ship Lima Zulu asap.” He wasted no time and called back with the encoded location of an open area just off the right-hand side of the road. I told him to start a wagon wheel with his element and directed the other platoons to fill in on either side of the one-six. Back on battalion freq, I gave the general the location.

Just as my APC jerked to a stop at the center of our hasty perimeter in that clearing, Private Downs jumped to the roof to snap a picture of me proudly pointing at the scribbles on my map cover: Laura’s weight and length. I would reread that data for days before my constant consultations of the map wore the notes away.



Laura’s statistics 1967

As the Huey settled in just outside the hasty perimeter, I dropped down from my hatch, banged through the narrow door, and double-timed over to report to General Tolson as he walked energetically towards me:

“Congratulations, Captain Guthrie! How are you feeling?” He pumped my hand and slapped my shoulder.

“Fine, General great?” Thrusting a White Owl cigar at me, he set off at a brisk pace to chat with the men. I jogged up to his left, a step behind him. “Better light it on up,” he said in a cheery voice. I immediately tore off the cellophane wrapper—printed with a pink bow and the caption “It’s a girl!!” —and dug out my ever-present Zippo. By the time I caught up to him again, the general was already standing on the tail ramp of one of the APC’s on the perimeter, surrounded by soldiers.

It is quiet unassuming way with the troop, General Tolson quickly found out if mail was getting through, and whether the men felt they had all the ammunition, water, and food they needed. He listened to their responses and looked each man in the eye. Before leaving to visit the next squad on the perimeter, he lowered his voice and said:

“Men, listen up: Captain Guthrie here has just become a father.” He said in low tones, “You know, it’s the first time for him and I’m afraid he’s liable to be a little nervous about it. So tonight, you all need to take special care of him, all right?” Flashing wide grins and thumbs up, they nodded vigorously.

As he moved between squads, the General quizzed me about our latest actions. To my surprise, he seemed interested in my assessment of the situation in the Area of Operations. In a quarter of an hour, he’d worked the perimeter. Just short of his helicopter, he again clapped me on the back, and shook my hand. As his Huey shuddered to lift off, he leaned out to wave and give me the thumbs-up.

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Banquet



Flanked by Jimmy Segars and Dick Guthrie: Talmadge Cain, Kevin Begley, Antoinette Begley, Lenny Harp, and Tom McGovern receiving Order of Saint Maurice and Shield of Sparta.



CPT Freddie Celetine

Company C Commanding Officer

Receives Vintage Co C 1950s Photo from Fort Leonard Wood



Katie Ramey (life membership)

Faces of the reunion



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(The next edition will cover the tour of the museum.)



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