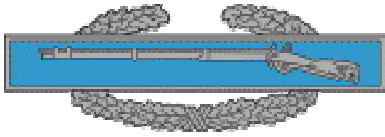


ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association



December 2012

Cover Page

FROM THE TC HATCH

Jimmy Segars, President

Hello, Fellow Members of the 1/50th. First, I hope each of you celebrated Veteran's Day in a meaningful way and I wish each of you a blessed Thanksgiving, and a wonderfully Merry Christmas. On Veteran's Day we took time to honor our men and women who served in the past and are currently serving in our military. Our church dedicated a play to its veterans. Also, the Semper Fi Task Force in Huntsville held Heroes Week last week to bring in approximately 30 male and female Wounded Warriors for a week of fun and encouragement. Among other things, they took part in a fishing rodeo at the lake near our home. In the past they were invited to hunt at a local game ranch. Lorretta and I are going to look into these activities and perhaps find a place with them to serve and represent our 1/50th Association. The ladies of Operation Home Front are going to check into this. I know all of you are involved in helping veterans in many ways, too. I am very thankful to be a part of an organization that does so much to help, not only our members, but others also. If you wish to send information on the activities in which you take part, please contact our Newsletter editor.

This Christmas there are approximately 8 members signed up to go to Wreaths across America scheduled for December 13-15th. We are in the process of applying for clearance to go to Bethesda Hospital again to make presentations to the Wounded Warriors there. We may also get a chance to participate in a USO program for Wounded Warriors at Ft. Belvoir Hospital about 13 miles from Arlington. We have no definite answer on these, but we hope we can report in the next newsletter that we were able to get in to see these fine soldiers and let them know that the 1/50th Infantry Association appreciates their service. We definitely will be laying wreaths at the graves of America's finest at Arlington beginning at noon on Saturday, December 15.

Lorene asked me to write about a memorable Christmas while I was in service. I was only in a combat zone deployed in Vietnam with the rest of the 1/50th for one Christmas. My wife was in college. Every chance she got when she was home on the weekends she and my mom would get together and bake me goodies for care packages. The Christmas of 1967 during Christmas break between semesters my mom, my wife, and the mother of another soldier in our outfit who happened to live in the next town got together and made us a special Christmas decoration. One item my wife liked to make was fruitcake. She knew that the longer it set, the better it tasted. Also, cut into individual pieces and wrapped, it could not easily be mashed in mail transit. So they planned the baking, etc. weekend, packaged the goodies, and mailed them. One day during mail call, the soldier called out "Segars, I have a very heavy package for you." Then he pitched me a large tin can. I braced myself for the impact. Before I knew it, the can came flying, and I nearly fell over when the very lightweight object landed in my hands. I wondered what in the world my wife had sent me this time. When I opened it, inside was a Christmas tree made of delicate netting and all decorated with small ornaments. I later learned that the ladies had mailed one to my buddy, too. I carried that tree around in my track for weeks. Also, at mail call I received a very large box, a suit-sized box. Inside was lots of fruitcake. For weeks, I asked other soldiers if they would like some fruitcake. "Where did you get fruit cake out here?" was always their question. "From my wife." "She sure must have made a lot. I'd love some." "Yeah, she did. She knows I like fruit cake and had buddies who also needed a taste of home at Christmas." I also remember sending my mom money to buy my wife a nice outfit for Christmas. The two of them went to Lorretta's favorite store and she bought a dark pink suit. She wore that suit for years. That was a memorable Christmas. I was happy to hear from home and to be alive to do so. Not many weeks before that Christmas, our battalion had gone through the ordeal of the December 10 battle and at Christmas we realized even more, that peace comes at a price.

Remember our men and women far away from home this Christmas serving our country. Send them care packages if you can all year long.



Miss Ana Burch is flanked by her grandfather, Roger Burch on the left and her father, Roy Burch on the right, during a Celebration to honor Veterans at her school. Ana was a happy and proud girl to have Dad home for this celebration.

IN THIS ISSUE

Lorene Burch, Editor

Billie McGregor, Editorial Assistant

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FROM THE EDITOR

Lorene Burch, Editor

What a wonderful time of year. We are all busy trying to figure out how we are going to cram multiple dinners and parties into just a few short days.

Since the last newsletter Roger has been in the hospital six times for something to do with stones, bladder and kidney. It has been a real challenge, especially since we were also in the middle of a move. No, I am not totally unpacked. The thought came to me that I was near the end of it and mom started having TIAs (mini strokes), she is fine now, but will be moving in by the end of December. So guess what? All that unpacking and organizing has to be redone, to make room for mom. Sound like a night- mare? Not really, as it is necessary to concentrate on what is important. During the busy holidays ahead we can choose to concentrate on all the extra activity or on what is important. We are to have 10-15 people here for Thanksgiving, instead of getting uptight about how the house will look I am thinking how nice it will be to have those we love to come and share a meal with us. Who knows what next year will bring.

I am learning to take one day at a time more seriously and am praying you will as well. My Bible Study group is going to support a family this year, to help make their holidays a little brighter. Roger and I are not so concerned with getting more as we are with sharing what we have with others.

How will you spread the joy of the holidays? Concentrate more on the needs of those around you. It doesn't have to be expensive. I remember packing boxes for Roy and some of the guys serving with him as he served in Iraq and Afghanistan. I remember Roger would say, "No one ever sent me anything when I was in Vietnam." Then he would sigh and couldn't wait to hear back what the guys had to say when he opened the box. There is no way I can relate to how important that box is when you are so far away from home. Help to make someone else's Christmas, it will be one of the best things you can do at this time of year. Heck! Why not continue doing it all year round?

Merry Christmas to all and I hope to see all of you at the reunion in April.

1/50th Ladies Support Team

Lorretta Segars

You will notice in the President's Corner that Wreaths Across America, Operation Bandanas, and Bethesda Hospital are mentioned. For this article, I will give you a little history of these organizations.

Morrill Worcester, who owned a wreath manufacturing company in Maine, started the program, Wreaths Across America in 1992. He conceived the idea to put as many wreaths as possible on the graves of veterans buried at national cemeteries. The program became a national movement from 5,000 donated wreaths the first year to an expected 105,000 this year. This year's National Remembrance Ceremony at Arlington will take place on Saturday, December 15, 2012. The wreaths are escorted to Arlington from Maine in a parade of semi-trucks. Stops at schools for educational programs are made along the way as the trip takes around a week. Support and ceremonies take place in 350 locations around the world. If you view the YouTube entitled The Wreaths Across America Story, you will get a great presentation of what this event is all about. Once you view it, you will certainly want to go. I encourage all of you to plan ahead to do this with our Operation Home Front next year. You will never forget it. There are also places on the Wreaths Across America website for you to donate a wreath or get thank-you cards for veterans. Donors range from corporate gifts of as much as \$250,000 to an individual's gift of \$15 per wreath. The whole organization is about telling the story of veterans and honoring their sacrifice. It's a great way for your children and grandchildren to learn about patriotism and honor.

Operation Bandanas is also a non-profit organization begun in 2006 by Mary Gray and dedicated to showing love, encouragement, and spiritual access to our soldiers by making Psalm 91 Operations Bandanas. Over 215, 000 such bandanas have been given to our deployed troops as of 30 June 2012. Each bandana costs \$3.25. These are very popular with our military personnel. Look at their website for more information on this organization.

What was once Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., has now been incorporated into part of Bethesda Hospital. Walter Reed National Military Medical Center was set up on November 10, 2011, combining the National Naval Medical Center and Walter Reed Army Medical Center on the grounds of the former NNMCC in Bethesda, Maryland. The WRNMMC represents 170 years of helping care for war heroes. Presidents use the facility as well. We have submitted our official request to visit this institution while we attend the events at Arlington. We want to show the 1/50th's appreciation in as many ways as we can. See The Presidents Corner for more information about our plans. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of helping show compassion and respect for our military personnel. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas.

1/50th BULLETIN BOARD



50th Infantry Regiment of the United States Army

A History & Timeline

- ★ As authorized in the National Defense Act of 1916, the 50th Infantry (Regiment) was Constituted on 15 May 1917 in the Regular Army
- ★ The 50th Infantry was organized beginning 1 June 1917 at Syracuse, New York, drawing a majority of it's initial members from drafts of the 23rd Infantry Regiment which had previously seen occupation duty in Alaska in 1867 after that territory's acquisition from Russia.

Belated Happy Birthday
John Topper
November 4



Welcome



Maggie Rea Churchill

October 29, 2012

Parents: Deacon & Kerri Churchill

Grandma: Billie McGregor

(1/50th Editorial Assistant)

Salem, Massachusetts



On 11/09/2012 students at Oakdale Elementary in Salinas, KS honored area Veterans & First Responders with a celebration that included a medley of songs for each branch of the Armed Forces. At the end of the program the children were able to greet each person and thank him or her for their service. Among those honored were Roger and Roy Burch, husband & son of Lorene Burch, 1/50th newsletter Editor.



50th U.S. Infantry - 16 October 1917 - Camp Syracuse, New York. This recruitment and training camp was set up on the New York State Fairgrounds in the Lakeland section of Syracuse near Lake Onondaga.

the warrior's code of honor

paul r. allen

Dedicated to absent friends in unmarked graves

Paul Allen is a recipient of the Purple Heart Medal. He is a former Combat Infantryman with the U.S. Army 7th Infantry Division, Korea, as well as a Life Member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) and a Life Member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). When asked why he had written the "Warrior's Code of Honor", he explained that, even though he completed his education with the help of the G.I. Bill and was successfully employed after his discharge, something was missing. It seemed that "something" that was missing was peace of mind and serenity, even though at the time, he was unable to identify it as such. He only knew that he was successful on the outside, yet inside he was desperately unhappy, broken, and dispirited. In his desperate attempt to identify the cause of his distress, he checked himself into the V.A. hospital only to be diagnosed as suicidal and was checked into the psychiatric ward where he was kept heavily sedated. Mr. Allen's journey into the wilderness, where he lived alone for a year, sober and drug free, allowed him to identify how his combat infantry experience had forever changed the boy he was when he enlisted, into the man with severe PTSD that he had become upon discharge. Not only was the Warrior's Code written to help him heal his own heart and soul but also to help his fellow veterans, who find themselves faced with similar feelings, to know that they are not alone. Mr. Allen's website is: The Warrior's Code of Honor www.warriorcodeofhonor.com

As a combat veteran wounded in one of America's wars, I offer to speak for those who cannot. Were the mouths of my fallen combat friends not stopped with dust, they would testify that life revolves around honor. In war it is understood that you give your word of honor to do your duty to stand and fight instead of running away and deserting your friends. When you keep your word despite desperately desiring to flee the screaming hell all around, you earn honor. Earning honor under fire changes who you are. The blast furnace of battle burns away impurities encrusting your soul. The white-hot forge of combat hammers you into a hardened, purified warrior willing to die rather than break your word to friends – your honor.

Combat is scary but exciting. You never feel so alive as when being shot at without result. You never feel so triumphant as when shooting back – with result. You never feel love so pure as that burned into your heart by friends willing to die to keep their word to you. And they do. The biggest sadness of your life is to see friends falling. The biggest surprise of your life is to survive the war. Although still alive on the outside, you are dead inside – shot thru the heart with nonsensical guilt for living while friends died. The biggest lie of your life torments you that you could have done something more, different, to save them. Their faces are the tombstones in your weeping eyes, their souls shine the true camaraderie you search for the rest of your life but never find.

You live in a different world now. You always will. Your world is about waking up night after night screaming, back in battle. Your world is about your best friend bleeding to death in your arms, howling in pain for you to kill him. Your world is about shooting so many enemies the gun turns red and jams, letting the enemy grab you. Your world is about struggling hand-to-hand for one more breath of life. You never speak of your world – those who have seen combat do not talk about it. Those who talk about it have not seen combat. You come home but a grim ghost of he who so lightheartedly went off to war. But home no longer exists. That world shattered like a mirror the first time you were shot at. The splintering glass of everything you knew fell at your feet, revealing what was standing behind it – grinning death – and you are face-to-face, nose-to-nose with it! The shock was so great that the boy you were died of fright. A stranger, who slipped into your body, a MAN from the Warrior's World, replaced him. In that savage place, you give your word of honor to dance with death instead of running away from it. This suicidal waltz is known as: "doing your duty." You did your duty, survived the dance, and returned home. But not all of you came back to the civilian world. Your heart and mind are still in the Warrior's World, far beyond the Sun. They will always be in the Warrior's World. They will never leave for they are buried there.

In that hallowed home of honor, life is about keeping your word. People in the civilian world, however, have no idea that life is about keeping your word. They think life is about ballgames, backyards, barbecues, babies and business. The distance between the two worlds is as far as Mars from Earth. This is why, when you come home, you feel like an outsider, a visitor from another planet. You are. Friends try to bridge the gaping gap. It is useless. They may as well look up at the sky and try to talk to a Martian as talk to you. Words fall like bricks between you. Serving with Warriors who died proving their word has made prewar friends seem too un-tested to be trusted – thus they are now mere acquaintances. The hard truth is that earning honor under fire changes you so much that you return a stranger in your own hometown, an alien visitor from a different world, alone in a crowd. The only time you are not alone is when with another combat veteran.

-Only he understands that keeping your word, your honor, whilst standing face to face with death gives meaning and purpose to life.

-Only he understands that your terrifying, but thrilling, dance with death has made your old world of backyards, barbecues and ballgames seem deadly dull.

-Only he understands that your way of being, due to combat damaged emotions, is not unusual, but the usual and you are OK.

A common consequence of combat is adrenaline addiction. Many combat veterans – including this writer – feel that war was the high point of our lives, and emotionally, life has been downhill ever since. This is because we came home adrenaline junkies. We got that way doing our duty in combat situations such as:

- Crouching in a foxhole waiting for attacking enemy soldiers to get close enough for you to start shooting;
- Hugging the ground, waiting for the signal to leap up and attack the enemy;
- Sneaking along on a combat patrol out in no man's land, seeking a gunfight;
- Suddenly realizing that you are walking in the middle of a minefield.

Circumstances like these skyrocket your feelings of aliveness far above and beyond civilian life: Never have you felt so terrified – yet so thrilled; Never have you seen sky so blue, grass so green, breathed air so sweet, etc.; because dancing with death makes you feel stratospheric aliveness. (Continued on page 6)

HISTORIAN REPORT

Jim Sheppard
Charlie Company, 12/1965 to 06/ 1968

The past few months have been busy for me. I have already posted of the appropriate registration form and information on the "Reunions" page of our website. I hope we have a good turnout, as usual!

Remember that we will have Tom Kjos with us at this reunion. Tom is writing a book on the Battle of Tam Quan & will be interviewing anyone involved in the battles that ran between December 6th and 21st in 1967.

On my end, I am finishing up work on documentation I obtained on "F" Company (LRP), 50th Infantry. As you may know, "E" and "F" Company designations were used in different locations in Vietnam. Most, if not all of us, had no idea these units existed until well after the war.

Also of significance - I received a request from Mike McCardell and SSG Thomas Daily of the 1/50 at Fort Benning. They requested a history of the regiment, something a bit more interesting than the one we see printed all the time, which is full of gaps and lacks information beyond a simple date upon which a change of assignment took place. The goal is to have something of interest to display for the trainees.

I realized that I had gathered much documentation over the years on many of the areas not well covered in the existing regimental lineage & history and I had not yet sat put it all together. It took me about a week to compile an updated history & timeline and I have forwarded a copy to SSG Daily. I hope to update our website as well.

A final note: I would like to thank all who expressed concern during the recent hurricane which struck our New Jersey Shore on October 29th. I had the good sense to remove my boat from its in-water marina and move it safely inland. That same marina was under about 7 feet of storm surge water and boats were moved all about the neighborhood! News cameras had my marina in the local spotlight and on the day after the storm, the President visited my marina on a tour of the devastated areas of New Jersey!

The storm waters have subsided and the marina lot has been cleared and they are back operating their mechanic shop, but there was extensive damage to many of the docks. I was amused to see that a new hose I bought and securely wrapped around a piling near my boat slip is still exactly as I left it! Of course, there is no planking to reach the hose, but it will be there for me next summer after the owners rebuild the wooden walkways.

Looking forward to seeing you all in the spring!

CHAPLAIN'S

Parker Pierce

O Hello to all the 1/50th members and families. I pray that everyone is doing well. We are at the beginning of a very significant time of the year. It is a time when families and friends get together to celebrate and express thankfulness for all their many blessings.
R The most significant event in history is a large part of the celebration during this time of the year; the birth of Christ! In the Holy Scriptures in the book of Matthew it records the life of Christ from His birth to His death. These verses are very interesting and
N exciting to read, because as has been written before, as they tell, "The Greatest Story Ever Told"! Also, in the book of Luke it tells of Christ's life from His birth to His death. Both of these books also discuss Christ's complete ministry while He was here on earth.

E
R In the book of Isaiah the 53rd chapter it tells of Christ's physical appearance, His character and His total commitment to God's purpose and reason for putting Him here on this earth. I pray that these particular books from the scriptures will be a source of hope and encouragement to each of you and your families.

Now, as much as ever before, in the history of our great nation we need divine intervention. May God's blessings be upon you and each of your family members during the upcoming holiday season. Have a safe and wonderful time of fellowship and sharing together. Let's most importantly be praying for our nation, our President, our military troops and their families, and each other.

(Continued from page 4)

This unforgettable experience of being sky-high on adrenaline is why you come home basically "thrill-crazy" – that is: crazy for thrills. But do you know that you are an adrenaline junky? No you do not, because being whacked-out on it 24/7, day after day, month after month, becomes the "new normal." You do not think anything is wrong with being constantly high as a kite on adrenaline because it is not un-usual but the usual – the common everyday condition of combat. Then you come home where the addictive, euphoric rush of aliveness / adrenaline hardly ever happens in the normal course of events. You miss being sky-high on it and find normal boring. You hunger for your "fix" of thrills/danger like an addict hungers for his "fix" of heroin. So what often happens? "Quick, pass me the motorcycle" and/or fast car, thrill-driving, drag race, speedboat, airplane, parachute, extreme sport, rock climbing, big game hunt, fist fight, knife fight, gun fight, etc. Another reason Warriors may find the rush of adrenaline attractive is because it lets them feel something rather than nothing. The dirty little secret no one talks about is that many combat veterans come home unable to feel their feelings. It works like this. In battle, it is understood that you give your word of honor to not let your fear stop you from doing your duty. To keep your word, you must numb up/shut down your fear. But the numb-up/shut down mechanism does not work like a tight, narrow rifle shot; it works like a broad, spreading shotgun blast. Thus when you numb up your fear, you numb up virtually all other feelings as well. The more combat, the more fear you must "not feel." You may get so numbed up/shut down inside that you cannot feel much of anything. You become an emotionally dead man walking, feeling virtually nothing for nobody (if you let yourself be stopped in the flow of fighting by feelings of grief for fallen friends you may join them). This condition is known as "battle-hardened," meaning that you can feel hard feelings like hate and anger, but not soft, tender feelings (which is bad news for loved ones). The reason that the rush of adrenaline, alcohol, drugs, dangerous life style, etc. is so attractive is because you get to feel something, which is a step up from the awful deadness of feeling nothing. Although you walk thru life alone, you are not lonely. You have a constant companion from combat

- Death. It stands close behind, a little to the left. Death whispers in your ear; "Nothing matters outside my touch, and I have not touched you YET!"
- Death never leaves you – it is your best friend, your most trusted advisor, and your wisest teacher.
- Death teaches you that every day above ground is a fine day.
- Death teaches you to feel fortunate on good days. And bad days well - they do not exist.
- Death teaches you that each day of life is sufficient unto itself.
- Death teaches you that you can postpone its touch by earning serenity.

Serenity is earned by a lot of prayer and acceptance. Acceptance is taking one step out of denial and accepting/allowing your repressed painful combat memories, and repressed coming home disappointments to be re-lived/suffered thru/shared with other combat vets – and thus de-fused. Each time you accomplish this dreaded but necessary act of courage / desperation: The pain gets less than the time before; More tormenting combat demons hiding in the darkness of your gut are thrown out into the healing sunlight of awareness, thereby disappearing them; The less bedeviling combat demons, the more serenity earned. Serenity is, regretfully, rather an indistinct quality, but it is experienced as an immense feeling of fulfillment/satisfaction deep down inside; from having demonstrated to be a fact that you did your duty under fire no matter what cost, thereby proving that you are a Warrior, a Man of Honor and from being grateful to Higher Power/your Creator for sparing you. It is an iron law of nature that such serenity lengthens life span to the max.

Down thru the dusty centuries it has always been thus.

It always will be, for what is seared into a man's soul, who stands face to face with death, never changes.

Prescription for Peace

Written by Steve Goodier published in Daily Guideposts, October 1983

Many years ago, Dr. A. J. Cronin occasionally prescribed an unusual treatment for some of his patients who were feeling "blue," "down," or generally blah. He would insist that for six weeks the patients say, "Thank you" for every kindness and keep a record of it. According to Dr. Cronin, he had a remarkable cure rate.

If you find yourself depressed, please consult your medical doctor. But everyone gets down at times, and sharpening your sense of gratitude can make an important difference in the way you feel. I have observed again and again that people's day-to-day happiness is not usually found in getting what they want; it comes from appreciating what they have, no matter how little.

Writer Arthur Gordon* used to tell about asking a physician friend of his for the name of the most effective prescription he knew. "Well, I'll tell you," his friend said. "A colleague of mine once had a woman patient who suffered from depression. Got to the point where she stayed at home all the time, listless, apathetic, indifferent to just about everything. The usual medications didn't seem to help." One day this doctor delivered a small pack-age to the woman's home. "I want you to take what's in this package," he said, "and spend ten minutes of every day looking through it at some object in this room." In the package there was a strong magnifying glass. The woman faithfully took the prescription. She began looking through the lens at the warp and woof of the fabric on her sofa. She was amazed at what she saw. Then she examined the veins in a flower plucked from her garden, the color dots in an old photograph, and even the texture of her own skin. In days before close-up photography, she'd never seen the likes of it before. She was amazed and astounded at the brand new world opening up before her eyes.

Perhaps the doctor knew what Abraham Heschel put so well: "The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living." As this woman gazed at her world through a magnifying lens, she saw, in a completely different way, what had been around her all along. Her sense of wonder gave way to another, more powerful emotion. The physician said that her experience with the lens, more than anything else, was the turning point of her illness. She began to get well because this unusual prescription had aroused within her the most curative of all emotions – gratitude. Do you practice gratitude? I think you'll discover that it is no less than a powerful prescription for peace.

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association
Reunion 30 April-3 May 2013
Fort Benning, Georgia
Registration Form

Member Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____ Badge Name _____ Shirt Size _____

Guest Name _____ Badge Name _____ Shirt Size _____

(Use separate sheet for additional guests)

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____ Hotel Name _____

(Host Hotel is Hampton Inn and Suites, Phenix City, AL)

*Host Hotel is the **Hampton Inn, Phenix City** (866)799-3642 for reservations). **YOU MUST** make your hotel reservations **DIRECT** with either the Hampton or other hotel of your choice. Submitting this registration form does **NOT** cover your hotel reservations. Ask for 1/50 rate of **\$89** (29 Apr - 4 May) cutoff for this rate is 5 April. Hotel POC: Michelle Spivey, 706-615-2900.*

Registration Procedure:

Registration Cutoff Dates:

Registration Costs:

(Per Person)

Early Registration: (Before 20 April, 2010) \$200

After 20 April:.....\$225

Mail this form along with check to:

Gary Quint, Secretary
1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Association
438 Fairway Lane
Kirkwood MO 63122

Please make check payable to: 1st Bn 50th Infantry Association

Registration Fee Includes:

30 Apr Evening Reception
1 May Lunch, Dinner, Buses
2 May Lunch, Dinner, Buses

3 May Buses
Gifts for Hosts
Event Shirt

Dinner for Guests
Auction Items
Door Prizes