

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST Battalion 50th Association



December 2017

Cover Page

From the TC Hatch

By Jim Seagers



The President's Corner

Today, I spent one part of our Veteran's Day celebration with my New Hope grandkids. Combined with Grandparents' Day as well, we had breakfast with Lex and Mia at their school, enjoyed a school program for grandparents and veterans, and heard Mia sing with an ensemble, *God Bless the USA*, a song she and her mother sang at one of our reunions. That song always has an emotional effect on me for what it means and also the fact that some of our schools are actively teaching our children patriotism and respect. Tomorrow, I will visit with Noah at his school in Albertville, enjoy their patriotic program, and participate in an Honor Walk for veterans with this grandson. It's always fun when Noah often dresses up like a soldier on that day. Simultaneously, Lorretta will be going with her dad and brother to a neighboring town to do the same things. Her dad is 93 years old and a WWII vet. Then she and I will meet in Albertville and head out for a graduation at Ft. Benning and spend some time with the active soldiers there. At the graduation, Lt. Col. Baltazar told Jay Copley's story to commemorate Veteran's Day. It is such a blessing and privilege to be able to share Veteran's Day in such a personal way.

I think of those who cannot celebrate this way, either through debilitating wounds or by making the ultimate sacrifice. The men and women of our military are outstanding Americans who give of themselves so we can have freedom! I wish all of our veterans and currently serving soldiers God's blessings of good health, safety, love of family, and love of country. We Americans all salute you—not just on Veteran's Day but every day of the year! Thank you!!

In July, we attended the 70th birthday of Randy Smith. To our shock he suddenly passed away within a month. Randy was a great member of our association as were all the others that we have lost since we began our association over a decade and a half ago.

For those of us who were able to go, we enjoyed an added associational treat by shar-

ing a barbeque meal with Lt. Col. Baltazar and his lovely wife Audrey and members of the 1/50th cadre and neighbors. It was very nice of the Colonel to cook up his special BBQ recipe just for all of us. For those of you who don't know, the Colonel won a national BBQ contest. So we reaped the rewards as well! Thank you Colonel and Mrs. Baltazar for your kind hospitality and friendship!

During the barbeque, Randy Smith's family was there. The association presented a posthumous award to this family for the contributions that Randy had made to our association.

On November 15, Lorretta and I and Wilfrieda and Jay Copley were honored to attend the Inactivation Ceremony of F Company. This company has a long history of service going back to 1967. The casing of the guidon was quite moving and a ceremony one does not see every day. Thank you F Company for your service!

This year our association's participation in the Wreaths Across America event in Arlington appears to be growing. We hope more of you show an interest in this worthwhile event honoring deceased 1/50th members buried there. Members of our extended family have asked to attend with us this year. The more the merrier. This event adds to the Christmas spirit of giving back to those who gave all. The event is always the second Saturday in December. We go a couple of days early to sight-see a little. Then we all make sure our comrades lying in the "bivouac of the dead" (a quote on an arch in Arlington) have a wreath. You never forget the sight of rows and rows of white crosses with green and red wreaths next to them in orderly fashion for as far as the eye can see. This truly is hallowed ground as are all cemeteries, but there is just something awe-inspiring about this place. Come with us and find out. It's not too late to make reservations. We are staying at the Crystal City Marriott in Arlington, VA. Call there to make yours. Also, thank you to you members who participate at your local

Lorene Burch,
Editor

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cemeteries Across America event. That is just as important. The Merrill Company that makes the wreaths sends them to national cemeteries all across America and to Europe. It's such a great idea! Hats off to Mr. Merrill for starting this fine activity.

Lorretta and I hope your Thanksgiving is filled with remembered blessings and the presence of loved ones. For those of you not fortunate to have immediate family with you during the holidays, please know that you are especially in our hearts. Consider our association and our family your family during such times. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

Love to all of you,

Jimmy



From the Chaplin



Hello to everyone I hope this news letter finds you well. This has been a busy year, but a blessed one. I had a good report on my last checkup I was cancer free, Praise God.

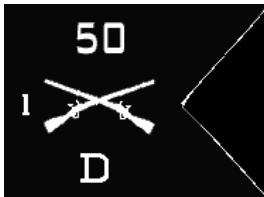
My wife and I spend the summer on the road in our motor home visiting Alaska. There is so much to see here in this great country of ours and I'm so thankful we have the freedom to enjoy it.

The year has been full of ups and downs, we lost some friends this year in our association. May we never forget them or their contributions to the 1/50 association.

Obituary for Randolph 'Randy' Smith, III (Past President of the 1/50th)

Randolph 'Randy' Smith III, 70, of Seymour, passed away at his home on August 21, 2017. He was born to the late Randolph and Ethel (Albertson) Smith. He was a graduate of Seymour High School, class of 1965. He married Mary Jane Gladden on February 21, 1971; she preceded him in death on December 23, 2015. He retired as a welder-fabricator for Cummins after 41 years of service. He was a lifetime hunter and golfed with the Hoosier Hackers travelling golf group. He was a leader of Cub Scouts Pack 502.

He served in the Vietnam War as a senior medic, where he was awarded a Combat Medical Badge, Bronze Star for Valor, Air Medal, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and Vietnam Campaign Medal and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross. In May of this year, he was awarded the Order of Saint Maurice by the National Infantry Association for his lifetime service to the U.S. Army infantry. He was a lifetime member of Veterans of Foreign Wars, serving as community service officer, the American Foreign Legion and Disabled American Veterans, all of Seymour. On November 12, 2000, he became a lifetime member of the 1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association at Fort Benning, GA, where he served as vice president and then president of the group. He is survived by his sons, Randolph 'R.J.' (Kelly) Smith IV and Adam Wade (Trish) Smith; sisters, Patty (Mike) Cockerham, Sherry (Junior) Dowling, and Cindy (James) Campbell; several nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Mary Smith; and daughter, Veronica Smith.





D/1-50th Graduation

At the graduation, Lt. Col. Baltazar told Jay Copley's story in honor of Veteran's Day. (Submitted by Loretta Seagers) The following is a copy of his edited speech.



LTC Frank Baltazar

Good morning and on behalf of the 198th Infantry Brigade, welcome to the graduation ceremony, MG Wesley, CSM Bryzak, BG Donahue, CSM Celestine, COL Kendrick, CSM Blount, CSM Retired Jay Copley and Mr. Jimmy Segars, two of our Vietnam veterans from our regiment, distinguished guests and veterans, friends and family, thank you for your attendance today.

I want to thank the Cadre and Drill Sergeants on the field for doing an amazing job transforming your loved ones into infantrymen. I also want to thank each and every one of you for making the trip to Fort Benning and being part of this ceremony. And all of you have made personal sacrifices to be here. Your presence today demonstrates your support to our Nation, the United States Army, and the Soldiers. It is indeed my distinct pleasure to stand before you as the Commander of 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment, but more so as a fellow Soldier and a fellow Infantryman. Today, not only are we celebrating the accomplishments of the men and women on the field, we're also observing Veterans Day and reflecting on the service and sacrifice of our Veterans.

So, let me start by telling you a short story about this battalion and my friend Jay Copley; It was a Sunday morning, May 5, 1968, in South Vietnam, A CO was conducting a reconnaissance mission. What Alpha Company didn't know that day was they were about to be ambushed by a regimental sized force from the North Vietnamese Army. If you look out on the field, that's roughly 5 times as many people that are standing in formation. A CO had 50 personnel and 9 vehicles. During that engagement, 11 Soldiers from that company were killed, 26 wounded, and 4 vehicles were destroyed. As the enemy continued to attack, the remaining Soldiers began securing a small perimeter and treating their wounded. C CO, commanded by Jay Copley, was alerted of the situation and ordered to reinforce A Company. They arrived just as the enemy launched its final assault. The timing was effective but not without cost. C Company suffered 2 Killed in Action and 30 wounded. Jay was among the wounded, sustaining a life threatening gunshot wound to the neck. He continued to lead his company even while injured and successfully repelled the attack that day despite being outnumbered. For his courageous actions, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. We're very fortunate to have Jay here with us. He serves as our honorary Command Sergeant Major.

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Echo Company 1-50th IN, BN Continues Training Excellence

1LT Sean Kelly

November 21, 2017

Echo Company, 1-50th Infantry Regiment continued its efficient and effective training of new Infantryman over the past quarter. Class 7049, a class of 133 Soldiers completed their One Station Unit Training (OSUT) in September after a week-long Field Training Exercise in the woods of Fort Benning. The FTX gauged the Trainees' ability to implement the individual and collective tasks they had learned throughout the cycle. In an effort to train them for the modern battlefield, this training event placed greater emphasis on urban operations and even implemented the use of Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicles into the instruction.



Class 7049 celebrated the end of their training on Sand Hill by welcoming the families of Trainees for two major events. The Turning Blue ceremony took place on September 8 and during this special



occasion parents, families, and friends were reunited with their Trainee and were able to award him the coveted Infantry Blue Cord. During the ceremony many individuals were recognized for their performance during the cycle. SPC Jared Molina was named the Soldier of the Cycle and SSG Stephen Johnson was named the Drill Sergeant of the Cycle. Echo Company hosted the graduation of Class 7049 at the National Infantry Museum on September 9,

providing an inspiring ceremony to celebrate these newly-minted Infantrymen.

The cadre of Echo experienced plenty of turnover in the last several months. In between cycles Echo Company said goodbye to SSG Johnson who moved on to Fort Stewart, Georgia and SSG Arrendale who moved to Fort Richardson, Alaska. The Company welcomed an astonishing seven Drill Sergeants to the team in the last several months. SSG Diaz, SSG Agans, and SFC Miller arrived as reinforcements from Foxtrot Company, 1-50 IN to supplement the staff on hand. SSG Ramirez is welcomed to Echo Company after serving at Fort Drum, New York, SSG Johnson transferred to Echo after a stint with Task Force 1-28 IN on Fort Benning, SSG Salisbury arrived after time in Fort Polk, Louisiana and SSG White served at Fort Campbell before joining the team. The Company now stands 21 strong on the cadre side, more than enough to handle the training requirements of our mission. (Con't on Page 9)



Wolfpack Strives for Excellence.

1LT Jai Hong Park

Since September 2017, the trainees and cadre of Alpha Company accomplished much. The month started off with a red phase, in which class 7077 conducted and trained on an obstacle course, a teamwork development course, a CBRN, a first aid, a Commo class, and a basic land navigation skill course. Once red phase was over, they moved to white phase, in which trainees used their rifles to engage 40 targets and achieve at least 23 out of 40 hits to meet a graduation requirement. All trainees completed the rifle marksmanship (RM) training, and every trainee met the graduation requirement on RM training; with most trainees scoring sharpshooter or expert. At the end of white phase, the cadre of Alpha Company got to spend quality family time during the BN Halloween party on 21 October 2017.



Class 7077 still has a long way to go before their graduation on 12 January 2018. Before the graduation week, many hardships await them in blue, black, and gold phases. While in blue phase, the trainees received instruction and training on US weapon systems such as a M320 grenade launcher, a M249 SAW, a M240B machine gun, an AT4 launcher, a MK19 grenade launcher, and a M2A1 .50Cal machine gun. Following this, they trained their land navigation skills and hand grenades. In the meantime, Drill Sergeants prepared and successfully earned the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, in which all the cadre achieved a silver badge or higher. Buddy team (BTLF) and fire team (FTLF) live fire exercises closed out the remainder of the blue phase and the cadres of Alpha Company will be able to spend a weekend with their families during the Thanksgiving.



During the Thanksgiving, trainees will have an opportunities to get their meals served by Battalion Commander, Command Sergeant Major, Company Commander, First Sereant, and their Senior Drill Sergeants

After relaxing and resting during Thanksgiving weekend, class 7077 will return to training and hit the ground running with a week of urban operations, follow by STT and finishing up with a five days of FTX. After the FTX, trainees will have a chance to go on a Holiday Block Leave on 18 December and come back on 04 January 2018 to graduate the following week.





Diamondback Company Update

By: 1LT Andrew Miller

In early August, Diamondback Company picked up 220 Trainees for Class #7056, who had agreed to undergo the rigorous training to become an Infantryman. The initial shock of Red Phase proved to be too much for 17 Trainees, who decided they didn't have the fortitude to follow through with the Oath they swore to their country, and were subsequently sent home.

Following Red Phase, the Company transitioned into M4 rifle marksmanship training. In the face of tremendous adversity, long hours, and the unrelenting Georgia humidity, the Drill Sergeants displayed why NCO's are known as the "backbone of the Army" – 93% of the Trainees qualified as either Sharpshooter or better, with just above half qualifying as Expert.

Shortly after the completion of rifle marksmanship, the Company progressed into training on the M249 and M240B, hand grenades, MK-19, .50 Cal, and BDM. Following this training, the Trainees executed the buddy and fire team live fires, urban operations, and Stryker training.



All of this training led to the culminating Field Training Exercise, where the Trainees demonstrated their readiness to serve as a Rifleman upon reaching their units. Those who accomplished this task were presented the Crossed Rifles during a ceremony on the final night of the FTX.

With the completion of all necessary training behind them, the Trainees began the recovery period. The Trainees were successful in passing their final inspection, thereby securing the ability to graduate. Also dur-

ing this time, Delta Company moved into the building previously occupied by Fox Company.

The final week of the cycle was packed with rehearsals for both the Turning Blue Ceremony and Graduation. On November 10th, after a grueling 14-week cycle, 194 Soldiers became Infantrymen, thus ending the chapter on Class #7056.

Moving forward, the Company is preparing to pick up class #8006 and the journey to turn civilians into Infantrymen will begin again.



Yearly memberships are due in January.

Thank you



Charlie Company Striking Hard

1LT Larry Ellis

November 21, 2017

Charlie Company, 1-50th Infantry continue to train the skills required for each soldier assigned to be successfully at their initial duty station as an infantryman. Class 7066, a class that began with 220 soldiers at Fort Benning, Georgia on Friday 08 September 2017 are ready to complete one station unit training (OSUT).



Soldiers from Charlie Company conducted multiple tasks to continue the transition to become infantrymen during 14 weeks of rigorous mental and physical tasks conducted with the highest Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) average of 34.8 out of 40 points. Cadre assigned ensure the success of each infantryman by inspiring a sense of esprit de corps to each individual soldier to complete the mission.

Recently on Monday 13 November 2017 – Friday 17 November 2017 Charlie Company Cobras completed Urban Operations training at Malone Mout Site. The soldiers learned effective way to stack, at a door way, enter and clear a room, transition positions in the stack, movement to an building from the wood line, overhead clearing, and ensuring each room corner is clear of enemy threat. The soldiers spent an entire week conducting the UO training to ensure that each soldier understood and could easily conduct such operations if required upon arrival at their first duty



assignment within FORSCOM.

On Thursday 16 November 2017 the soldier of Charlie Company got to experience a mounted react to contact from a Stryker fighting vehicle. These soldiers were excited to receive instruction from qualified infantrymen on the Bradley fighting vehicle on Friday 17 November 2017 to understand and be prepared to join mechanized infantry unit as their first assigned duty station. The instructions received gave each soldier an understanding of what to expect from a mechanized infantry unit non commissioned officers as part of their chain of command.

Charlie Company is hard at work with over 200 Trainees in class 7066. The cycle is well underway and the Company is currently executing field operations focusing on squad battle drills and field survival. Class 7066 has completed five fitness tests and recently completed the 12 mile road march on Thursday 16 November 2017. They demonstrated proficient sharpshooter marksmanship and recently experimented with a newly developed marksmanship qualification table implementing barriers and standing fire behind cover into the qualification. The Soldiers continue to work hard in their training with a graduation date scheduled for December 15 and they are excited to move out into Infantry units around the Army.





(con't from Page 3)

Ladies and Gentlemen, that's just one story, there are many more. I'm sure he'll attest to this, as an ordinary man who chose to do something extraordinary. And I believe that everyone who chooses to wear our country's uniform is doing something extraordinary. Our nation's veterans represent the millions of American men and women who have served our Nation over the past 242 years. Fortunately, this country has been blessed with citizens, just like those standing on the field, who have taken their civic responsibility seriously and willing to march to the sound of the guns whenever and wherever the rights of men and women have been threatened. See, having a military as a Nation is a requirement, but service in our military is a choice. As we stand here today, there are more than 187,000 volunteer Soldiers serving in more than 140 countries around the globe in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Africa, Eastern Europe, South America, and Korea, just to name a few and defending the freedoms we often take for granted. The legacy of our Veterans continues to inspire our American Soldiers today to answer the call to duty. In the formation in front of you, we have Soldiers that joined our Army coming from all corners of the United States and around the globe. These Soldiers represent 39 states and 7 different countries. They come from socio-economic backgrounds running from both ends of the spectrum. And, they all volunteered and took an oath to support and defend the constitution of the United States, against all enemies, both foreign and domestic. And I assure you that they are prepared to meet our adversaries under any condition, regardless of the weather and terrain, to close with and destroy the enemy. Just like our veterans who are sitting here today, these men and women before you are willing to sacrifice so much, so that all of us can continue to live in the greatest country the world has ever known, the United States of America.

More than 14 weeks ago, when these Soldiers raised their right hand, they became part of the one percent of Americans who serve in the military. By completing all their training requirements, they are now part of a much smaller population – a proud few. They've become the greatest weapon on the planet – a US Army Infantrymen.

To the men and women of Charlie and Delta Companies, the Command Sergeant Major and I are extremely proud of you. You are a special breed and part of the proud few who wear the bright blue infantry cord. Whether you serve for 20 years or get out after your initial enlistment, you are, from this day forward, until you're dying day... a US Army Infantryman. A title that so many respect, but so few have earned.





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In addition to conducting our Basic Training mission, Echo Company cadre continue to pursue professional endeavors around Fort Benning and service around the Columbus, Georgia area. Drill Sergeant Alex Brown recently graduated from Airborne School on Fort Benning and six members of the cadre completed the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB). The GAFPB consisted of a basic fitness test, a 9 mm pistol shoot, a 100 meter swim in uniform, and a 12 kilometer ruck march.



Additionally, Echo Company has begun volunteering with the 1st Grade classes of Dawson Elementary School, a local school in Columbus, a rewarding experience for the students and cadre.

Echo Company is hard at work with over 200 Trainees in class 7076. The cycle is well underway and the Company is currently executing field operations focusing on squad battle drills and field survival. Class 7076 has completed five fitness tests and road marches of distances up to 12 miles. They demonstrated proficient marksmanship and recently experimented with a newly developed marksmanship qualification table implementing barriers and standing fire behind cover into the qualification. The Soldiers continue to work hard in their training with a graduation date scheduled for December 15 and they are excited to move out into Infantry units around the Army.

EDITOR'S CORNER



Thanksgiving is over, although I am still feeling very thankful for so many things. Especially family and friends. Often we look at what we have lost rather than what we have gained in life. God has been good to Roger and I as we have an ever growing family and the Holiday's helps to bring us together across the miles. So I pray that each of you will have a Merry Christmas and be blessed by all the wonders of the season. It isn't about what is under the Christmas tree that matters it is what we have in our hearts that matter.



MERRY CHRISTMAS



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