

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST Battalion 50th Association

December 2023

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From the TC Hatch

The President's Corner
By Jim Segars



Hello, fellow members,

I would just like to start out by saying thank you to everyone for the cards, calls, visits, support and sympathy during the passing of Lorretta.

Several things have been occurring at the 1/50th this fall. I was able to attend the Change of Responsibility in September. Command Sergeant Major Bell is the outgoing CSM. We want to wish him well in his new endeavors. The new Command Sergeant Major is CSM Dennis P. Morton. He has been with the 1/50th before as a drill sergeant. We want to wish him the best in his new assignment.

I have also been able to attend several graduation and turning blue ceremonies at Ft. Moore, formerly Ft. Benning.

I want to wish you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas in the upcoming months.

Play the Game,

Jimmy Segars



CSM Dennis P. Morton

Editor: Lorene Burch

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Chaplin's Corner

During this season of Christmas, it is important that we remember the hope and peace that is given through Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:1-3 "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure."

Greetings one and all:

I am hoping all is well with you.
I can't believe how quickly time has flown.



We celebrated Thanksgiving when the boys came home at the first of this month. It was nice having the family home for a joyous occasion.

Please send what you would like to have published in the news letter. I love hearing from you.

Not much else to say, except that I hope you all have a joyous Holiday season. MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!!

Praying for each of you.

Blessings,
Lorene

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Gone But not forgotten.
RIP

Submitted by Carolyn Hayes (wife)

Billy W.(Bill) Hayes served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. He passed away on 9/24/2023, at his home, in Burleson Tx, after a long battle with Parkinson's. He would have been 79 years old in December.

Was buried at DFW National Cemetery on 10/5/2023?



Submitted by: Kevin Ehrlich a nephew of Paul Ehrlich

Paul William Ehrlich of Norwood, MA born September 16, 1947
passed away on October 12, 2023 at the age of 76.

Devoted father of Jason P. Ehrlich and his wife Michaela of
Douglas, MA, James M. Ehrlich and his husband Corey French of
Amherst, NH.

He went to Norwood High School for two years but ultimately graduated from West Genesee High School in Camillus, NY in 1965. After high school, he enlisted in the United States Army. He attended Officer Candidate School in Fort Benning, GA. He was initially stationed in Germany before he was deployed to Vietnam and was promoted to first lieutenant. He was well decorated for his heroic actions and bravery with a silver star, four bronze stars, and three purple hearts.

He attended University of Massachusetts Boston, and earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1973. He went on to earn a master's degree in computer science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1977.

He spent time in Tolland, CT and Reston, VA before ultimately moving back to Norwood. He spent years working in Boston, MA as a branch manager for Satellite Business Systems. He co-founded B&E Associates, acquiring sites for cell phone tower construction which was eventually sold to American Tower.

He was a dedicated life member of the North Walpole Fish and Game Club for many years as well as a devoted member of St. Timothy's Parish in Norwood.

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A Good Soldier!

Webmaster's Introduction

“How can a contact that merits only a few lines in the official record be so meaningful years later? After years of searching, I finally received the Staff Officer’s Journal for a little-known action that occurred the evening of 17 January 1970, when Sergeant John Murl McDaid was killed. I have never before acknowledged the nature of John’s death to anyone, but I have often thought on it. His struggle to stay alive and strive to do his job despite a mortal wound is an amazing testimony to his strength of will and character. John was the first man to die “on my shift” as Charlie 6, and his example was inspired me to strive to work at the absolute peak in everything that I have ever done since. I fail from time to time because I’m only human, but I pray that I will never stop trying to give my all. Thank you, John for your personal example...and for your sacrifice. “

You might think that memories would dim after more than 30 years, but some memories won’t go away. One was the night of January 19, 1970 when I sent John Murl McDaid to lead his squad on a patrol in the bush in Binh Thuan Province, Vietnam. I was John’s company commander, and had held the position for just over a week, but had already determined that Sergeant McDaid was someone to rely upon, a good squad leader. Squad leaders hold perhaps the most important position in the infantry, because they lead by example, by day-to-day and second-to-second life and death decision making, by personal influence, by pushing and pulling... and they are responsible for everything that their people do or fail to do. There are higher ranks and broader responsibilities, but no one is closer to the action. No one.

I was more than a click (1,000 meters) away when the contact started. It started sharp and heavy like all contacts tended to do in Nam, with a burst of fire and then a grenade blast followed by a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire and more explosions. The event unfurled like this, we would place ambushes out each night in a variety of ways, being careful to never set a pattern. Although we didn’t know it at the time, that contact was to be the first of nearly two weeks of heavy contacts as North Vietnamese regulars tried to chase us out of the area because we were hurting them so badly. An ambush patrol would set up a temporary location, and then relocate after dark to another in case they have been seen.

John was leading his small patrol of some eight to second site, traveling carefully in single file down a trail through tall elephant grass that reduced visibility and masked movement. John became aware of other movement behind his group, and signaled for them to cut 90 degrees off the trail to the left and set up a hasty ambush. They silently moved into the thick grass hunkered down as the first NVA troops moved by along the trail that they had been on. John quickly saw the way the NVA were arranged that the unit was at least a platoon (some 30-40 men) and maybe more, so he signaled his squad to hold their fire. But the situation was tense with help a long ways off and heavily outnumbered, but then things took a turn for the worse.

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Another line of NVA troops appeared on the other side of the tiny ambush patrol, a second column travelling along a parallel path. Now the patrol was surrounded, but still unseen. And then one of the new soldiers panicked and fired his M16. The two columns of NVA broke into a run, tossing grenades towards the source of the firing as they ran to the edge of the clearing and whirled to continue the fight. John was severely wounded in the head in the first blast, but his will to live was strong. He had been keeping me informed by radio as events unfolded, and when he was hit his RTO began shouting incoherently into the radio; when we got him calmed down, he reported that John was down, but still alive.

Judging the enemy force to be at least a company (100-150 troops), our mechanized infantry reaction force set out to close the gap within minutes, and found our pinned down patrol under heavy fire but giving plenty back. The heavy firepower of our Armored Personnel Carriers changed the tone of battle, but the enemy had 51 caliber machine guns and rockets to fire back. It was a fight to the bitter death, and then the U.S. Air Force came on station, diverting airstrikes and, more importantly, Spooky to our aid. As our reaction force reached the patrol, John was holding on but past pain. We had already called for dustoff, the medivac chopper, and it came up on our radios asking for directions as it looked down on a battlefield alight with crossing red and green tracers.

One of our Platoon Sergeants, a Ranger, had reached John with his medic, and told me that we had to get him out immediately. I talked to the dustoff, who asked for a position and then some of the bravest, or most foolhardy, selfless acts I ever witnessed occurred as John was rescued. The sergeant gathered John in his arms and waving a flashlight to guide the chopper, ran into the middle of the exploding battlefield, enemy rounds flying all around, as the chopper flew in over the NVA tracers and John was loaded aboard with barely a pause and then flown off straight over the head of the enemy unit. John continued to fight for his life in the chopper, but he was simply too badly wounded. By some miracle, the sergeant wasn't hit, but died only days later in another incident. May God bless them both.

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