

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association



February 2005

Cover Page

To the membership, first of all I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Here it is December already and almost the end of the year. I hope everyone had a great Veterans Day; I had a great one. I was invited by my youngest granddaughter (a third grader) to her school for a presentation to honor the Vets that live in the area. The auditorium was filled to the hilt. There were 83 veterans that showed up with their families. The vets that were there were from WWII, Korea, Viet Nam and Iraq. During the ceremony they asked each of us to stand up and tell what Branch of service we were in, when we served, and what we did. Of all the men there, I was the only one who served in combat, needless to say I felt very proud and so did my family. The children did an excellent job with the show they put on and the songs that they sang.

Thanksgiving came and went and I hope all had a great day. A couple of weeks ago I received a call from Tom King informing me that his brother Jack had passed away. I had the pleasure of talking to Jack many times but had never met him. He served with D Co. mortar plt; in Aug of 68. Jack was looking forward to coming to the reunion in May. His daughter contacted me and wanted info about the reunion and said she will be there and see if she can talk to some of the guys that knew him. F Y I, in case you haven't heard we moved. Sheri and I now live @ 4181 Manchester Rd. N.W. N. Lawrence, Ohio 44666 PH# 330-837-4490. I also have a new email - gold@sssnet.com. If you have something you want to put in the next newsletter please contact me. Looking forward to seeing all of you in May.

Until the next time remember to PLAY THE GAME and may God Bless all of you.



BOB GOLD

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Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read.
Groucho Marx

Viet Nam Vets

He was sent to Viet Nam, so very far away,
From his friends and family, he left that very
day.

A soldier for America, he did not think to hide.
Fighting for his country, he loved deep down
inside.

Through Viet Nam he traveled, so many traps
about,

His buddies falling to the ground, whenever
shots rang out.

Through the marsh he crawled, watching out for
snakes,

Rice paddies mixed with blood, it was more
than he could take.

The Vietnamese children, joined into the fray,
Carrying bombs on their bodies, to blow our
men away.

The friendly natives living there, turned their
backs on him,

For he was fighting a war, that America could
not win.

When the war was over, and the fighting was all
done,

Broken in mind and spirit, they came back from
Viet Nam.

They came home to their families, quiet as can
be,

Remembering the men who died, the
inhumanity.

There was no celebration, when these men
arrived,

No respect for the living, or the many who had
died.

Not even a simple thank you, we know you did
your best,

America turned its back that day, on Viet Nam
Vets.

It's a sorry world we live in, when deserters are
welcomed home,

Instead of our Viet Nam Veterans, whose
courage did not roam.

Let us hope Americans, have learned their
lesson today,

To always thank the Veteran, who did not run
away.

**VICE-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
By Randy "Doc" Smith**

I hope everyone had a great Christmas. I know not everyone was as fortunate as I because I had my family all back home for the holidays. It was a challenge getting to the airport 75 miles away in Indianapolis to pick up the oldest son because southern Indiana just experienced the worse single snowfall in over 100 years. Our small hometown of Seymour actually made the national news. Yes, being reunited as a family during this time is wonderful and can only be truly appreciated by those who have been unable to be together at this time of year. More than a few of us can remember how it was in the late 1960's and early 1970's and I'm sure there were other times missed by many more. But there were those who sacrificed much more and many that sacrificed all. With the war going on in Iraq the sacrifices are continuing to mount. When we give thanks for Gods bounty, lets remember to include those that have, and are making it possible for us to enjoy our reunions and holiday good times through their sacrifices. Lets remember to ask for our troops protection as they give up so much for us. God Bless you all and may this new year be one of your best.

A Soldier's Perspective

I was that which others did not want to
be.

I went where others feared to go, and did
what others failed to do.

I asked nothing of those who did nothing
And reluctantly accepted the thought of
Eternal loneliness....should I fail.

I have seen the face of terror;
Felt the stinging cold of fear and
Enjoyed the sweet taste of a moment's
love.

I have cried, pained and hoped....
But most of all, I have lived times
Others would say were best forgotten,
At least someday I will be able to say
That I was proud of what I was.....

A Soldier

VIEW FROM THE TC HATCH**John Topper**

I joined the 1/50 on 12 May 1967 and remember reporting in just like it was yesterday. As I pulled into the Commanding Officer's parking spot at Company A at Fort Hood, I was greeted by PFC Ron Howell and was to learn very quickly that he was my driver and would be taking care of me. Take care of me he did indeed. One of the first questions he asked was what my favorite C rations were. I thought for a second and allowed as to how I was partial to Beans and Franks. Boy, did I ever eat Beans and Franks – every C meal Howell would secure them for me and hand me a bottle of Louisiana Hot Sauce to go with them. I hinted to Howell that maybe he should let someone else have them, at least on occasion. He was having none of it, and so I finally resigned myself to Beans and Franks as a staple of my diet. This continued through my stay with the company until November 1967 when I moved to HHC.

Incidentally, I believe Ron Howell was the first casualty in the battalion. He was shot through both buttocks, a clean wound that entered one side and exited the other with nothing more than a couple of small bandages and one or two days back at base camp. I suspect I took advantage of his absence to eat some Ham and Lima Beans or Tuna Casserole (or whatever it was called). Thinking about those, I now remember why I was partial to Beans and Franks with hot sauce.

As this year winds its way toward a joyful end, it occurs to me that we are approaching our 38th year anniversary of deployment to Vietnam. That means that the reunion following will be during our 40th year anniversary. And while everything is pretty much in place for Reunion 2005, maybe we should be giving some serious thought as to how we celebrate that 40th anniversary. Perhaps one of you can come up with some great idea for a theme, or special way to celebrate that milestone. Any thoughts you may have are certainly welcome.

I spoke with Michelle Spivey at the Holiday Inn in Columbus and, as one would expect at this early date, the reservations are coming in at a rather slow rate. Just a reminder, call Michelle and make your reservations at 706-324-0231. The rate is \$68/night from 2 -7 May 2005. Making your reservation early helps the reunion committee immensely in their planning efforts.

In talking with Bob Gold, he tells me that we are still having difficulty getting members to contribute to the newsletter. You don't have to be a great writer to have your thoughts published in this newsletter. We are interested in anything any of you have to share and welcome your offerings. Please contact Bob or myself if you have any questions.

I was in Washington in October to attend the annual meeting of the Association of the United States Army and heard presentations from the Chief of Staff (General Schoomaker), Secretary of the Army (Les Brownlee), General Abizaid, CENTCOM Commander and many others. One of the best speeches was from Joe Galloway, co-author with LTG Hal Moore of *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young*. I asked Joe to come to Fort Benning and speak to us; he had to decline. He and General Moore are working on a sequel and they are committed by the publisher at that time. I did run into an old friend, Major General Jerry White. He is a former Chief of Infantry and Commander of Fort Benning, retired in Columbus. He is also chairman of the foundation that is building the Infantry Museum at Fort Benning and he agreed to speak to us at one of our events, probably at a luncheon.

While in Washington, I talked with a lot of soldiers that had been sent from Iraq and Afghanistan to attend the meeting to represent their commands, almost all of whom were represented. The distinct impression each left me with is that they are proud to be serving, proud of their Army and believe we are doing a worthwhile and important job. They are all convinced that taking out Saddam Hussein and his regime was a good thing and that the Iraqi people are much better off and the situation is not bleak, as represented by the news media, but the future is bright for the fledgling democracy.

In speaking with some of the senior officials, however, they cautioned that we have a long way to go. They are concerned that we as a nation stay the course and not give up in the face of the adversity surrounding some of the regions of the country. Privately, most of them feel like we will have a military presence there for several years.

By the time you receive this, Jim Edwards, our printer, is in Hawaii until mid-January, we will no doubt be in 2005. So, wishing you each a happy and prosperous New Year and looking forward to seeing a bunch of you at Fort Benning.

ORIGIN OF RANK**INSIGNIA FOR OFFICERS**

The size of the Army does not permit Army officers in charge of a large group to know all in their command by their name, nor is it possible to know all the duties of the various individuals of an organization if placed in a command, but by means of insignia of grade anyone trained in military organizations and tactics may quickly have a title by which he or she may address an individual and based on the responsibilities commensurate with each grade, they may issue orders intelligently.

General Washington was chosen by the Continental Congress and was informed on June 16, 1775 that he was to be general and commander-in-chief to take supreme command of the forces raised in defense of American liberty. Just thirty days later, on July 14, 1775, a General Order was issued which read: "To prevent mistakes, the General Officers and their aides-de-camp will be distinguished in the following manner: The Commander-in-Chief by a light blue ribband, worn across his breast, between his coat and waistcoat; the major and brigadier generals by a pink ribband worn in a like manner; the Aides-de-Camp by a green ribband."

On July 23, 1775, General Washington states "As the Continental Army has unfortunately no uniforms, and consequently many inconveniences must arise from not being able to distinguish the commissioned officers from the privates, it is desired that some badge of distinction be immediately provided; for instance, that the field officers may have red or pink colored cockades in their hats, the captains yellow or buff, and the subalterns green."

Our present system of officers' grade insignia began on 18 June, 1780 when it was prescribed that Major Generals would wear two stars and Brigadier Generals one star on each epaulette. In 1832, the Colonel's eagle was initiated and in 1836, leaves were adopted for Lieutenant Colonels and Majors, while Captains received two bars and one bar was prescribed for First Lieutenant. Second Lieutenants did not receive the gold bar until December 1917.

Warrant Officers were provided with an insignia of identification on May 12, 1921, which also served as their insignia of grade. In 1942, Warrant Officers were graded and there were created a Chief Warrant Officer and a Warrant Officer (Junior Grade), and separate insignia of grade (gold and brown enamel bars) were approved June 14, 1942. A grade of Flight Officer came into being in 1942, and the insignia was prescribed to be identical to Warrant Officer (Junior Grade) except the enamel was blue instead of brown.

Other than the dates of authorization, nothing has been located as to why the leaf and bar was selected for officer's insignia. Military routinely incorporate the design representing their country in their insignia and the eagle with shield, arrows and olive leaves was taken from the Coat of Arms of the United States.

**1/50th Infantry Association
Reunion 2005
3-7 May 2005**

Register Today

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association

Reunion

May 3-7, 2005

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 Holiday Inn North)

Registration Procedure:**Registration Cutoff Dates:****Registration Costs:**

Mail this form along with check to:

Early: 15 April 2005

(Per Person)

Early Registration: **\$150**After 15 April: **\$175****Host Hotel is the Holiday Inn North 800-465-4329 for reservations (Michelle Spivey)***You can also reach Michelle directly at (706) 324-6583 or (706) 615-2900 (cell phone)****Make check payable to: 1st Bn 50th Infantry Association*****Mail registration form and check to:**

Chuck McAleer, Treasurer

1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Association

PO Box 60522-4863

Oak Brook, IL 6052-4863

Registration Fee Includes: 3 May Evening Reception
4 May Lunch, Dinner, Buses
5 May Lunch, Dinner, Buses6 May Buses
7 May Breakfast
Golf ShirtDinner for Guests
Gifts for Hosts
Door Prizes

1/50th Infantry Association**Reunion 2005 Agenda****3-7 May 2005**

(Tentative as of 19 February 2005)

Tuesday 3 May

1200-1800

Registration - Holiday Inn North Columbus

1800-2100

Reception - Hospitality Suite, Dogwood Room A

Wednesday 4 May

0900-1100

Briefings

Fort Benning Command Briefing

Infantry Training Brigade Briefing

1/50 Slide Show – Training Past and Present

1130-1300

Lunch Officers Club (Major General Jerry White guest speaker)

1300-1600

Live Fire Demonstration (Bradley and other Infantry weapons)

1800-2000

Barbecue with 1/50 Staff and Cadre @ Uchee Creek

Thursday 5 May

0900-1130

Observe Training with 1/50 Staff and Cadre

Mortar Firing

Engagement Skill Trainer (Indoor simulator facility, non-live fire);
or, Marksmanship Small Arms, automatic weapons, machineguns

1200-1300

Lunch with Trainees

1300-1330

Memorial Service

1330-1500

Tour of Motor Pool and Bradley Fighting Vehicle

1900-2100

Banquet and Semiannual Business Meeting - Azalea Room,
Holiday Inn**Friday 6 May**

0900-1030

Graduation Ceremony - Guests of 1/50

1100-1200

Ladies enroute to Warm Springs

1200-1500

Ladies lunch and shopping

1100-1200

Men enroute to Andersonville

1200-1500

Men lunch and tour Andersonville

1500-1600

All return to Hotel

- 1600

Free Time

Saturday 7 May

0800 - 0930

New President's Breakfast

1000

Departure



General George S. Patton, Jr.

For most folks, their knowledge of the extraordinary man that was George S. Patton Jr. comes from their having viewed the 1970 film *Patton*, which covers only a few short years of the General's six-decade existence. They thus have little awareness of the details of his life outside the scope of his accomplishments in World War II, and so don't know, for instance, that he designed the last saber issued to and used by the U.S. Cavalry or that he was the only American to compete in the modern pentathlon in the 1912 Olympics, where he finished fifth. (In those days, the pentathlon events were pistol shooting on a 25-meter range, a 300 meter swim, fencing, riding a 5,000 meter steeplechase, and running a 4,000 meter cross-country foot race.)



The anecdote that is the subject of this article comes from a time in the General's career not covered by the movie. Then a far younger officer, George S. Patton Jr. served under General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing in World War I. Towards the end of the war, he was in France as part of the Army's newest arm, its Tank Corps, which he was instrumental in bringing to fruition. By the cessation of hostilities, he had achieved the brevet rank of Colonel. (After the war, when the forces were subsequently trimmed down, he was reverted to the rank of Captain, but was shortly afterwards promoted to the permanent rank of Major.)



After scouting the area in 1917, he established the Army Tank School in the French village of Bourg in 1918, a place he described as having no shortage of mud, of which "there is certainly a magnificent supply." This following account comes from his memoirs, which were unfinished at the time of his death in 1945 but which were collated and published by his widow, Beatrice Patton, in 1947. He drew his autobiographical accounts from his diary entries made shortly after the events recorded. The diary entry that would have formed the basis for this part of his memoirs would have been written in 1944:

We then drove through Langres, where we had no time to stop, and on to Bourg, my Tank Brigade Headquarters in 1918. The first man I saw in the street was standing on the same manure pile whereon I am sure he had perched in 1918. I asked if he had been there during the last war, to which he replied, "Oh, yes, General Patton, and you were here then as a Colonel." He then formed a triumphal procession of all the village armed with pitchforks, scythes, and rakes, and we proceeded to rediscover my old haunts, including my office, and my billet in the chateau of Madame de Vaux.



The grave of that national hero, "Abandoned Rear," was still maintained by the natives. It originated in this manner. In 1917, the mayor, who lived in the "new house" at Bourg, bearing the date 1700, came to me, weeping copiously, to say that we had failed to tell him of the death of one of our soldiers. Being unaware of this sad fact, and not liking to admit it to a stranger, I stalled until I found out that no one was dead. However, he insisted that we visit the "grave," so we went together and found a newly closed latrine pit with the earth properly banked and a stick at one end to which was affixed crosswise a sign saying, "Abandoned Rear." This the French had taken for a cross. I never told them the truth.

There is an odd linguistic irony to Patton's "Abandoned Rear" tale, one having to do with the man's own life. During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive of 26 September 1918, Patton sustained his only battle-related injury — he was shot while he and five others were charging on foot into machine gun fire. (Four of his companions were killed; the fifth was unscathed.) Though the bullet entered his thigh, it "came out just at the crack of my bottom about two inches to the left of my rectum." It was a miracle the injury did not do more damage to him than it did, as Patton himself recognized: "The Dr. says that he can't see how the bullet went where it did without crippling me for life. He says he could not have run a probe without getting either the hip joint, sciatic nerve, or the big artery yet none of these were touched. 'Fate' again. I have never had any pain and can walk perfectly."

