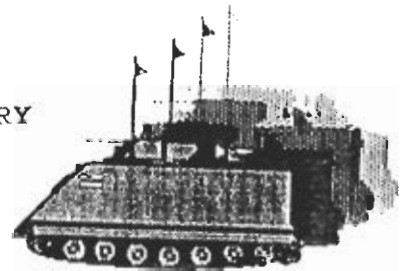


1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED) 50TH INFANTRY

" ON THE RIGHT TRACK "



VOLUME NUMBER 1 -- DATED 10 JUNE 1997 -- ISSUE NUMBER 03

FROM THE
EDITOR'S DESK...



THINK ABOUT IT!

I am reminded of a story about four people named "Everybody," "Somebody," "Anybody," and "Nobody." There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could do it, but Nobody did. Somebody got angry because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

I bring this up for one good reason: The Association is still without an acting President, Vice President, and Chaplain. PLEASE!! Somebody accept a position until the reunion, when we will vote on all officers. I also need volunteers to help with several committees for the reunion which I have detailed further on in the newsletter. Just check the By-Laws to see what the duties of each position is.

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Each newsletter will feature a brief history of one or more of the battalion members. This month's history is about one member.

Norman Poage was the First Platoon's sergeant for Charlie Company in late 1967, until a fateful day in April, 1968 almost took his life. The bouncing betty killed one and injured several. Norm was one of those injured. After many months of hospital recuperation, Norm went on to college. Graduating from there, he set out on several ventures in his career, until going back once more to college. Norm now works for GAO in the State of Texas and he has been helping with many things for the Association and Reunion. Norm is married and has seven (yes, count them, 7) children. Been a busy fellow down there in Texas, Norm. Trying to raise his own little Army, I guess.

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The newsletters will profile members of the 1/50th. I would appreciate it if you would send a brief history of yourself along.

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1. What was the APO address for 1/50th while stationed at LZ Uplift?



EDITOR'S PAGE

I come to you today to relate a tragedy. Several months ago, a Gulf War veteran, living in California, took his own life. His name was Johny Samuel Tony II. He left behind a 7 year old son. He killed himself with a shotgun. I talked with a veteran who received a call from his sister, living in Missouri. She wanted to know if this could have been war related. He was diagnosed with PTSD by Kaiser Hospital, yet they did nothing for him.

His sister told the guy one of the reasons why this happened was because of an illness Johnny experienced, including rashes, swelling, and nobules under his skin. He was in the Army, serving with the 1st Infantry Division, as a "cable dog" (wire-runner). Johnny witnessed a good friend of his, Roy T Damien Jr, die from a land mine explosion. This, along with everything else, had the predictable effect commonly dollied out by the VA as a diagnosis. They along with others, have named stress (PTSD) as a cause of Gulf War Syndrome, and acknowledge it as a TREATABLE ailment. Why then, does the VA not treat those they diagnose?

There is a lot of talk about PTSD being part of this illness. Most seem to think it as a minor part. It is not! It needs to be included as a major killer of Veterans the world over. Johnny's mother, living in California, asks what she can do about this tragedy. How can it be prevented from happening again? I am calling on you in this endeavor, with all vets and their families.

Find out what you can about this problem and try to do something about it. NOW! We have been and are doing a lot of things for people that will help in the years to come, but there are those like Johnny, who need help now. I also want to ask if anyone has an idea how many of these incidents have happened.

Is anyone keeping up with the numbers? It is time now to come forward with the statistics on such a thing. Show the public this is happening a lot more than anyone thought. A general who presided at Johny's funeral stated, "his death was Combat related." It does not get any clearer than that. We need to act now.

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I sent the first newsletter out to many people on the mailing list who had not made a contribution to the association. The second one went to only those who donated to help the association stay alive. This one will also go only to those who contributed. I hate keeping everyone who has been contacted not informed to the activities and events of our great battalion, but costs prohibit that from happening. I will still continue to contact all those who have not sent in their membership donation. A short letter will be sent out every three months for the rest of this year only. Anyone wishing to join the Association, please fill out the application that was sent to you and mail it in with your check for Ten Dollars. Anyone who wishes not to be contacted anymore, please drop the Editor a short note or post card telling us your wish. You will be removed from the mailing list permanently...

"Been married so long, we are on our second bottle of Tabasco Sauce!"

2. What do the initials "HE" stand for?



LETTERS AND NEWS FROM THE GUYS

Heard from several more guys in the past three months.

Heard from Marty Howard. He was with Alpha Company, arriving in country September of 1968. He says he missed all the fun!

Been receiving a lot of good stuff from Tim Culbertson of Cincinnati lately. Appreciate all the help there, Tim. Lots of new names coming. Almost every week, another package arrives in the mail. Thanks, Tim!

Talked with Marvin Kuntz (Alpha Co.) a few days ago. He is now running a restaurant in Abilene Kansas.

Got a note from Homer Osborn. He was in HHQ Company, Maintenance. Hopes to be at the reunion and wants to see the other maintenance people.

Jeff Felder, a member of the association, just tracked down Travis Robbins, also living in his home town. Travis was also involved with Bravo Company when they found money in a cave.

Talked recently with Pete Robinson. He has a picture of Todd Handy, one I was looking for from the last newsletter. Says it is on its way to me. THANK YOU PETE!! Pete is coming to the reunion.

One Sunday in April, I found a fellow through the Internet who served with us in 1969 down at Phan Thiet. His name is John L Gerber. Seems he lived less then ten (10) miles from me the entire time he was out. AND we never knew it! Small world out there guys. Had a great conversation with him. Hope to see him at the reunion.

I had the opportunity to meet Norman Poage on the 18th of April. Not knowing what to expect, I sat in the Atrium of the hotel sipping a beer and watching for his arrival. There he was! We talked. I found myself in awe after talking with this man for a few minutes. Although he lost an arm in Vietnam, his attitude was superb. There was no bitterness in this man's heart. I left that meeting with a different feeling about many things. NORM ... Thank you!!

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FOR ANYONE THAT IS "ON-LINE", WE NOW HAVE A "HOME PAGE."

Please take the time to check it out every so often. The address for this new service to the Ichaban troopers is:

<http://web2.airmail.net/npoage/1st50th>

When Norm gets a chance, he adds additional items to our page and I think he has done one hell of a job. If anyone wishes to contribute any information to the page, please send it to the editor, and I will see that Norm receives it. We are especially looking for names of our KIA to include on the Home Page. Anyone can help with that.

3. What was every medical corpsmen called?



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 MEMORIAL DAY
 ++++

Although it has come and gone, Memorial Day meant many different things to different people. To a non-vet cab driver, it meant time and a half and a fatter paycheck; to a young boy from Alabama, it meant an exciting extravaganza complete with marching soldiers and colorful bands; to a vet in Washington State, it meant a day spent with his war buddies at a picnic assaulting a keg of beer and some hot dogs.

For many other Americans, though, it's a time that brings back the pain of bad days: a knock on the door announcing the loss of a loved one; a flag-draped casket; a color guard; rifle volleys; the haunting sound of taps; the carefully folded flag; and the words, "On behalf of a grateful country..." Without the sacrifice made by our veterans, this great republic would not enjoy the liberty many of us...especially many American youth...take for granted.

Of all our living veterans, none have taken a worse rap than the 2,594,000 veterans from South Vietnam. During the Vietnam War...which divided our nation like no conflict except the Civil War...peacenicks such as Jane Fonda said those who have fought were baby killers and murderers. Upon returning home, our soldiers were abused, spat upon, and in many cases accused of being yellow bellied punks who caused our country to lose its first war. I'm sure the Fonda's are now sorry they attacked the young men and women who dutifully went when the nation called. Just as most of the 13 million Bill Clintons, who didn't do their duty, now regret that decision. No doubt Jane Fonda laments going to the enemy's capital and allowing herself to become a photo op with a North Vietnam gun crew while her countrymen were fighting and dying on the orders of their president.

For the infantry grunt, Viet Nam may have been America's toughest war. For most...unless they went out on a litter or in a body bag... Vietnam meant 365 tormented days where contact was imminent from hit and run opponents who fought from the shadows, and every time they took a step, they didn't know if a mine would take their foot, their leg, or their life. Most Vietnam Veterans ended up with more days in combat than any other living war vet, except the members of two WWII units ... the Japanese American 442nd Regiment and the 3rd Infantry Division.

HEAR THIS PEOPLE: Have no doubt that our Vietnam Veteran fought well and stood tall. That bad war was not lost because of them, but because of lousy US politicians and leadership!

++++

Below is listed the officers and positions filled and those still to be filled. PLEASE! Consider becoming a part of the battalion Association by volunteering to be an officer of the association.

- | | | |
|----------------|---|-------------------|
| PRESIDENT | - | Unfilled Position |
| VICE PRESIDENT | - | Unfilled Position |
| SECRETARY | - | Kenneth G Riley |
| TREASURY | - | Kenneth G Riley |
| HISTORIAN | - | Mike Deal |
| CHAPLAIN | - | Unfilled Position |

Check the By-Laws to see what the duties of each office is.

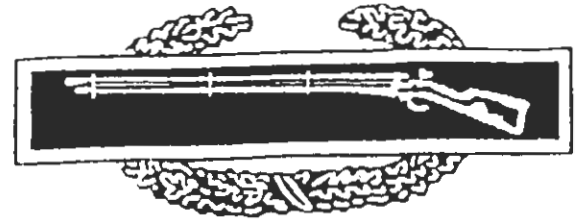
4. Every serviceman was guaranteed two hot meals a year. When?



THE BATTALION ASSOCIATION



MISCELLANEOUS
#####



Some comparisons to think about:

In prison, you spent most of your time in an 8' x 10' cell.
At work, you spent most of your time in a 6' x 8' space.

In prison, you get three meals a day.
At work, you only get a break for lunch, and you have to pay for that.

In prison, you get time off for good behavior.
At work, you get rewarded for good behavior with more work.

In prison, a guard locks, unlocks, and opens all doors for you.
At work, you have to unlock, open, and lock all your own doors.

In prison, you can watch TV and play games all day.
At work, you get fired for doing that same thing.

In prison, you might get screwed if you drop a bar of soap.
At work, you get screwed no matter what you do.

In prison, they ball and chain you when you go somewhere.
At work, you are just ball and chained.

In prison, you get your own toilet.
At work, you have to share your toilet.

In prison, they allow your family and friends to visit.
At work, you cannot even speak to your family or friends.

In prison, all expenses are paid by taxpayers, with no work required.
At work, you have all the expenses to go to work and then they deduct the taxes from you to pay for the prisoners.

In prison, you spent your life looking through bars wanting to get out.
At work, you spend most of your time wanting to get into bars.

In prison, you can join many programs which you can leave at any time.
At work, there are some programs you can never get out of.

In prison, there are wardens who are often sadistic to you.
At work, we have office managers.

Again, I mention a correction to the first newsletter. The \$20.00 deposit requested is not deposit toward the room as it seems to read. This deposit should read "a registration fee," to provide additional services, such as a hospitality room, guest speakers, group picture, meeting room rental, bus tours, etc. If I mis-led anyone, I apologize. Further on in the newsletter, I will discuss the reunion in detail. I also have a schedule set up and that is included, subject to change. PLEASE forward your registration fee if you have not already done so!

5. What were the phonetic alphabet words for "Ichaban?"



Where Friends Meet

REUNION UPDATES

Additional members who signed up for and plan to attend the reunion are listed below. These are in addition to the previous two newsletters. We are gathering a well rounded selection of men from all the companies and time periods when we were in Vietnam.

Table with 4 columns: Number, Name, Company, and Service Years. Lists members from DON RAINWATER to BRUCE A BRAUN.

If a snake lands on your windshield, does that make it a windshield viper?

REUNION NEWS

On April 18th, 19th, and 20th, of this year, I spent my time at the hotel arranging the dinner for Friday, entertainment for Saturday and finalizing the bus for Saturday's trip to the Wall.

PLEASE! If you plan on attending the reunion, call NOW to the hotel and reserve your room. Much more delay and those rooms may be taken.

RESERVATIONS: 1-800-EMBASSY Please mention at either # that 1-703-684-5900 you are 1/50th Infantry Reunion

This guy saw his neighbor leaving with a monkey wrench and asked him what he was doing. "Going to get a monkey," he answered.

A day later, he saw his neighbor carrying a roll of duct tape and again asked him what he was doing. "Going to get a duck," was the reply.

The next day, he saw his neighbor leaving with a pussy willow branch. He yelled out the window at his neighbor, "Wait for me."

6. What was a "Honeypot?"

A NOT SO PLEASANT LETTER



Received a copy of this letter from an anonymous source.

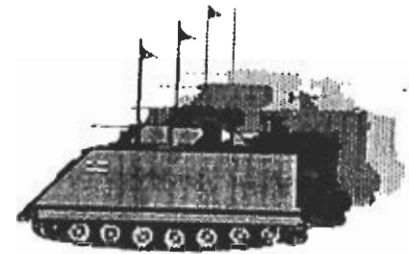
I went to the party Mom, I remembered what you said.
You told me not to drink Mom, so I drank soda instead.
I really felt proud inside Mom, the way you said I would.
I didn't drink and drive Mom, though the others said I should.
I know I did the right thing Mom, I know you were always right.
The party finally ended Mom, as everyone drove out of sight.
As I got into my car Mom, I knew I'd make it home in one piece.
Because of the way you raised me Mom, so responsible and sweet.
I started to drive away Mom, but as I pulled into the road,
The other car didn't see me Mom, and hit me like a road.
As I lay there on the pavement Mom, I heard the policeman say,
The other guy was drunk Mom, and now I'm the one to pay.
I'm lying here dying Mom, I wished you would get here soon.
How could this happen to me Mom? My life burst like a balloon.
I heard the medic say Mom, I would die in a short time.
I just wanted to tell you Mom, I swear I didn't drink.
It was the other guy Mom, he just did not think.
He was probably one of the guys at the same party as I.
The only difference is Mom, he drank and now I will die.
Why do people do that Mom, It can ruin someone's life.
I'm feeling sharp pains now Mom, pains just like a knife.
The guy who hit me is walking Mom, and I don't think that's fair.
I'm lying here dying Mom, and all he can do is stare.
Tell my brother not to cry Mom, tell daddy to be brave.
And when I go to heaven Mom, put "Daddy's Girl" on my grave.
Someone should have told him Mom, not to drink and then to drive.
If only they had told him Mom, I would still be alive.
My breathing is getting shorter Mom, I'm becoming very scared.
Please don't cry for me Mom, when I needed you, you were there.
I have only one question for you Mom, before I say good-bye.
I didn't drink and drive Mom, so why am I the one to die.

+++++

Additional volunteers will be needed to help with several functions of the reunion. I have listed some of the duties and committees in which help is needed.

1. Hospitality room... will be open from 10PM Friday until 2 AM, and 11 PM Saturday till 3AM. Need people to stay in room for two hour shifts.
2. Registration desk will be open in the main lobby from 2 PM on Friday, 26 Sept., until 8 PM. Then from 10 AM Saturday, until 12 Noon. Will need people to man the table - 2 hour shifts.
3. Entertainment Committee ... To assist in setting up room for us on Friday. Also, help in planning Saturday night events.
4. Also need anyone who has access to making or getting badges for name tags to hand out.
5. If someone would volunteer to bring a good VCR along to record event, will pay for tape and later reproduction of same. The hotel wants to charge an outrageous figure to rent it.
7. How much did it cost to send a letter home from Vietnam?

.....
TIDBITS
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Although I sent directions to the hotel with the first newsletter, I am again providing them for anyone who may have lost the first sheet of directions. It is easy enough to find. Just be careful coming through DC on Route 95. Watch your exit right off the bridge to Route 1. It is the first exit once you cross the bridge.

KEEP IN MIND ... those of us who go to the "WALL," we have started a Memorial Book. This book will have a "rubbing" from the "Wall" of anyone who was KIA from our outfit. We wish to get every name from the battalion entered into this book. SO! Anyone out there that already has a "rubbing" and can part with it, send it to the Editor to include in the book. I will send it back once I have copied it. On our first reunion, we will visit the "WALL." Those of you who know of a name on there, please collect a "rubbing" for our book, in addition to any you may personally want.

.....

The Phillipsbury Dough Boy, Puff N Fresh died Friday of a severe yeast infection. He was 71. He was buried Tuesday in one of the biggest funerals in years.

Dozens of celebrities turned out, including Mrs. Butterworth, The California Raisins, Hungry Jack, Betty Crocker, and Hostess Twinkies. The grave side was piled high with flours as longtime friend, Aunt Jemima, delivered the Eulogy; describing Fresh as a man who "never knew he was kneaded." Most people though, described him as a well-bread gentleman.

Fresh rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with turnovers. He was not considered a smart cookie, wasting much of his dough on half-baked schemes. Still, even as a crusty old man, he was a roll model to millions. Fresh is survived by his second wife. They had two children and one in the oven.

I have included a menu of Friday night's dinner and meeting. We have worked diligently with the hotel caterer to provide a balanced meal and still keep the costs within reason. Please let me know as soon as possible if you will be attending the dinner. I have to book the exact number of meals they are to provide no later than August 10, 1997.

Saturday night will be similar. The place we are going to is an American Legion located in downtown "Old Towne Alexandria." The meal will be catered by an excellent restaurant located nearby. See schedule for times. A one hour "Ghosts of Alexandria Walking Tour" will start at 9 PM on Saturday. The cost for this is around \$4.50 per person. It is very enjoyable and informative.

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Sometimes, a Vet feels the whole world is against him. But deep down, we all know that's not true. Some of the smaller countries are neutral.

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8. What was "SWIMMER SWITCH?"

VIETNAM WARRIORS: A STATISTICAL PROFILE-

IN UNIFORM AND IN COUNTRY

Vietnam Vets: 9.7% of their generation
9,087,000 military personnel served on
active duty during Vietnam era (5 Aug,
1964 - 7 May 1975.
8,744,000 GIs on active duty during the
war (5 Aug, 1964 - 28 March 1973).
3,403,100 (including 514,300 offshore)
personnel served in Southeast Asia.
2,594,000 personnel served within the
borders of South Vietnam.
Another 50,000 men served in Vietnam
between 1960 and 1964.
Of the 2.6 million men, between 1-1.6
million either fought in combat, or
provided close support.
7,484 women (6,250 were nurses) served
in Vietnam.
Peak strength in Vietnam: 543,482.
(30 April, 1969)

CASUALTIES

Hostile deaths: 47,378
Non-hostile deaths: 10,800
Total: 58,202 (includes men formally
classified as MIA-POW)
Men who since died of wounds account
for the changing total.
8 nurses died --1 was KIA
Married men killed: 17,539
61% of men killed were 21 or younger.
Highest state death rate: West Virginia
(84.1 for every 100,000 males in 1970)
National average: 58.9 for each 100,000
Wounded: 303,704-153,329 hospitalized.
Severely disabled: 75,000 --23,214 are
100% disabled; 5,283 lost limbs.
Amputation or crippling wounds to the
lower extremities were 300% higher than
in WWII and 70% higher than in Korea.
Multiple amputation occurred at a rate
of 18.4% compared to 5.7% in WWII.
Missing in Action: 2,338.
POW's: 766 (114 died in captivity).

DRAFTEES VS VOLUNTEERS

25% (648,500) of total force in country
were draftees.
Draftees accounted for 30.4% (17,725)
of combat deaths in Vietnam.
Reservists killed: 5,977.
National Guard: 6,140 served; 101 died.
Total draftees (1965-73) 1,728,344.
Actually served in Vietnam: 38%.
Marine Corps draft: 42,633.
Last man drafted: 30 June 1973.

RACE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND

88.4% of the men who served in
Vietnam were Caucasian; 10.6%
(275,000) were black; 1% belong
to other races.
86.3% who died in Vietnam were
Caucasian (includes Hispanics)
12.5% (7,241) were black; 1.2%
belonged to other races.
170,000 Hispanics served in
Vietnam; 3,070 (5.2%) died.
86.8% of men who were killed
as a result of Hostile Action
were Caucasian; 12.1% (5,711)
were black; 1.1% belonged to
other races.
14.6% (1,530) of non-combat
deaths were black.
34% of Blacks who enlisted also
volunteered for combat arms.
Overall, blacks suffered 12.5%
of deaths in Vietnam at a time
when 13.5% of total population
was Black.
Religion of dead: protestant -
64.4%; Catholic - 28.9%

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

76% of the men were from lower
middle/working class background
75% had family incomes above
poverty level.
23% of men had fathers with
professional occupations.
79% of the men had high school
education. (63% of Korean vets
and 45% of WWII vets had high
school education.)

WINNING & LOSING

82% of veterans who saw combat
believe war was lost because of
lack of political will.
75% of the public agrees it was
a failure of political will.

HONORABLE SERVICE

97% of Vietnam Vets were honor-
ably discharged.
91% of Vietnam Veterans and 90%
of combat veterans are proud to
have served their country.
66% of Vietnam vets say they
would serve again if called.
87% of the public now holds the
Vietnam vets in high esteem.

ANSWERS TO THE TRIVIA QUESTIONS



- 1. APO 96490 SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA
2. HIGH EXPLOSIVE
3. 'DOC'
4. THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS
5. ICHABAN = India; Charlie; Hotel; Alpha; Bravo; Alpha; November.
6. 'HONEYPOT' was half of a fifty-five gallon drum used as the bottom of a latrine at base camp. Remember the 'shit burning' details and the after effects of the smoke.
7. Nothing. You just had to ride the word 'FREE' where stamp would normally go.
8. SWIMMER SWITCH was a call sign for 1/50th over the 'land lines.'

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The By-laws of the Association provide that the officers and members of the Association shall be elected by the General Membership at the General meeting conducted during the Annual Reunion.

Terms of office for the following positions are to be filled as of 28 September, 1997: President, Vice President, Chaplain, Historian, Secretary-Treasurer. Any member in good standing who wishes to be considered for a position, should forward a letter stating so, with a brief resume, to the Secretary-Treasurer, Kenneth G Riley, 200 Georgetown Court, Hanover PA 17331; requesting consideration for that specific office. Requests must be received no later than midnight August 31, 1997 to assure sufficient time to process and consider.

The election will be held during the Reunion at the General Membership meeting on Friday, 26 September 1997. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted. Voting will be by written ballot.

ANYONE THAT WISHES TO DONATE A PRIZE OR GIFT CERTIFICATE FOR DOOR PRIZES AT THE REUNION ON FRIDAY NIGHT, PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHAT BEFORE THE REUNION, THEN BRING WITH YOU TO THE REUNION. THANK YOU!

Can anyone send to me the original General Orders we were required to memorize during basic training, but not many ever knew them all? Would appreciate it if you have a copy of them to send me. Next year's dues to the Association will be paid by myself for the first person who gets those General orders to the editor. Thank You!

Sunday, 28 September 1997

8:00 AM - 10 AM Breakfast in the Atrium.
11:00 AM Checkout of hotel.
12:00 NOON Trip to Arlington Cemetary and the Changing of the Guard



***** DIRECTORY OF E-MAIL ADDRESS *****

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