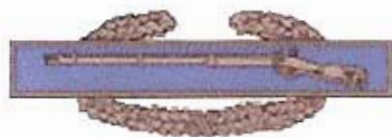


ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association



June 2005



Cover Page

FROM THE TC HATCH

Randy "Doc" Smith, President

If you missed the 2005 reunion you missed one of the best. One thing I noticed was that people from different time periods in Nam are beginning to know one another from the reunions and are becoming great friends whether they served together or not. I'm sure this will only get better the more reunions we have.

A list of the attendees at the reunion and an agenda of the activities enjoyed by those people are included in this newsletter.

Once again the 1/50th active personnel made us feel like family and treated us like royalty. The association owes much gratitude and would like to thank Major General White, COL Henry, LTC Burns, CSM Kaufman and the entire cadre involved in making our reunion the huge success it certainly was. Thanks also go to LTC Payne and his wife Linda whose help we could not have done without. Thank you so very much. Also at the Memorial Service were three young ladies that added so much to the service. The National Anthem was very respectfully sung by Brittany Spalding and Taps was performed masterfully by Jennifer Robinson and Keisy Dillard. They only had to look around at the tears shed to know how moved we were and how very appreciative the entire group was to these fine examples of the upcoming generation.

While on the subject of giving thanks I would like to also acknowledge some individuals from within our association. Individuals who have spent countless hours in service to the association these last few years and who are appreciated more than they know.

Ray Sarlin our webmaster has continued his service through sickness, career changes, a 2700 mile residential move, and difficulties too numerous to list. Everyone who has visited the website and especially those of us who use the message board owe a big thank you to Ray.

Jim Sheppard our historian has continued putting together archives of our unit amounting to research and work hours numbering into the thousands. He has continued this work through a residential move and great personal losses including the loss of his daughter and grandson. God bless you Jim and thank you for all that you do.

Gary Quint our secretary has been a rock of stability in changing times. Most forms you see or sign come from Gary. Those at the reunions will remember him as the one who gets them registered. I know personally he is the one I go to for answers to questions I need solved. Gary is the paperwork man behind our reunions and so very much more. For all that you get accomplished Gary we in the association benefit from your work and owe you a big debt of gratitude. Thank you.

Bob Gold has been at times our newsletter editor, flower fund chairman, PX administrator, and much more. He has been the driving force in locating and signing up new members in our association, spending countless hours on the

phone at his own expense. How many reading this right now has been on the other end of that phone line with Bob?

Maybe he contacted you about buying a miniature bronze statue of our memorial to the battalion. I know he sold several to people that were so glad he called them about it. It was also Bob that hosted the Great Ohio Pig Roast. The unofficial reunion or so called "get together" that was enjoyed by so many association members. All in all Bob has been a "get 'er done" guy doing whatever has been needed mostly on his own. Some things never change. Thanks brother.

Toby Jordan our Chaplain for so many years has stepped down and been replaced by Parker Pierce. We will miss Toby as Chaplain but know that he is being replaced by a Godly man. Thank you Toby for your service, your patience and your prayers. Go with God but return to us good friend.

John Topper our president has stepped down after a masterful four years. However, we refuse to let him go and he has agreed to take on the newsletter editor job. Thank you John and thank God for men like John. I can't begin to list the things John has done for this association. I do know that if you like the way the reunions came off so flawlessly you can thank John Topper for coordinating everything with the military at all levels. My son came to the reunion with me this time. Thanks John for the memories we will share forever. Thanks for everything Cap'n.

There were some changes made at this reunion. Randy Smith will fill the vacancy left by John Topper as president. Jim Segars will fill the vacancy left by Randy Smith as Vice President. And as mentioned before Parker Pierce will fill the vacancy left by Toby Jordan as Chaplain. Good luck to all in their new positions.

The by-laws were changed by majority vote to allow membership into the association for any veteran of the 1/50th Infantry Battalion regardless of the time period served. Anyone that has "PLAYED THE GAME" is now welcome.

IN THIS ISSUE

John Topper, Editor
Billie McGregor, Editorial Assistant

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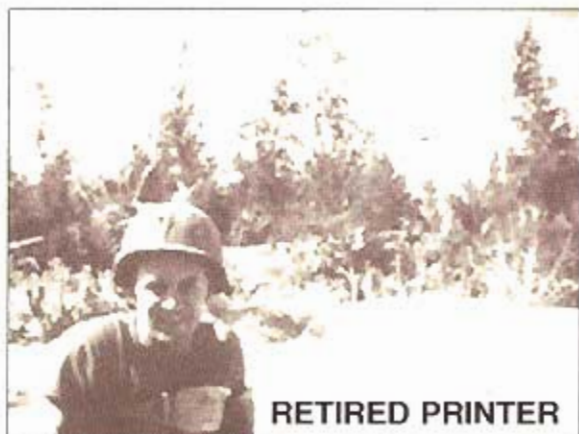
RECOGNIZE THESE SOLDIERS?



HAWKEYE



USED CAR SALESMAN



RETIRED PRINTER

VICE-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Jimmy Segars

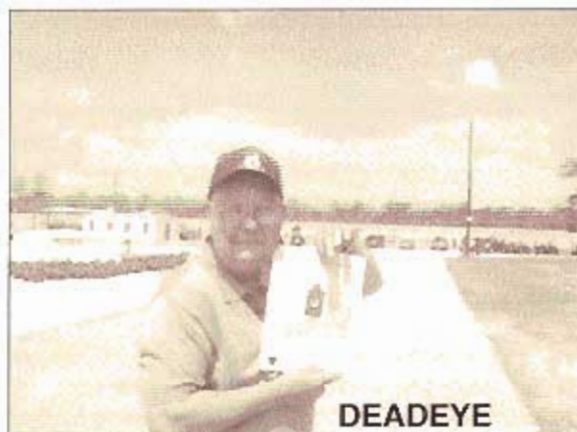
Where do I begin? Among my thoughts at the Reunion were: "They have lost their minds asking me to be Vice-President. And then I have lost mine for saying yes and seeing everyone else agrees to it." Well, I feel honored to be asked; and I hope to do you a good job.

The Reunion was a great success. There were a number of first timers at this reunion, and it was good to be with them and to get to know them as well as learn about their "time in country." We all had a wonderful get-together.

One particularly moving event was the Memorial Service for our fallen-but not forgotten-friends. The present 1/50th unit has done a professional job in arranging the memorial, and it has become the envy of the post. We can thank our association for the great job done in getting such a talented artist to make the memorial and our present unit at Ft. Benning for making it an outstanding display.

Colonels Burns and Payne along with Linda made our reunion very memorable in that we saw and had hands-on experience with the latest technology used in teaching our new recruits effective use of their weapons: computerized and simulated weapons fire. Afterward, we went to the range and fired the M-16 and had the privilege of having lunch in the field with the **Boys**. They have it "hard" in the field with their rations - steak, chicken, spaghetti with cake and a type of PowerAde (no C Rations or MREs). We joked with them about the food. We were also able to see a live fire demonstration of the infantry's present capabilities. We thought we could put out a lot of firepower but nothing like they can today.

All in all, we had a great time being with each other even though we were always poking fun and carrying on. For those who were not able to make it, we missed you! Start now planning to attend our next Reunion.



DEADEYE

CHAPLAIN'S

O Greetings to all fellow Nam veterans of the 1/50th and your family members. I'm Parker Pierce, who was humbled and blessed to be asked to become the chaplain of our association. I will strive with God's leadership to perform the duties of chaplain in a manner that will honor Christ and be a blessing to all with whom I will come in contact. Toby Jordan did an honorable service for our association the years he served as chaplain – a job well done Toby!

R Our reunion as always was great for all that attended. If you didn't make it this year try to be at our next one in 2007. At each one, first timers are there with their special family members. Many stories are shared of our time in Nam, which helps to bring closure to memories, which we may have come to think have never happened, but knowing they actually did! Let's all make an effort to locate and invite 1/50th members who have not joined our association or attended a reunion.

As I conclude I want to assure you of my prayers for our members and their families. Please contact me for any special prayer requests, and considering all that is going on in the world take time to take a look at "THE BOOK" and consider it! God bless you all!

Parker

(pbpjr@bellsouth.net)



1/50 Vietnam Monument in front of battalion headquarters, Ft Benning.

1/50 Vietnam Monument with wreath placed during Reunion 2005 (5 May)



EDITOR'S PAGE**John Topper**

Looking back on the reunion held at Fort Benning earlier this month, I am struck by the tremendous amount of support which was so graciously provided by LTC Frank Burns, CSM Kaufman, their soldiers and the families of the battalion. It was outstanding. As was the effort of a couple of civilians, Rob Nelson (LTC Ret, MP Corps) and Linda Payne who were instrumental in ensuring a successful reunion.

Within our own ranks, Bob Gold, Gary Quint, Jim Shepherd, Toby Jordan and Randy Smith put forth a great deal of effort, contributing their time, money and other family resources (thanks Kay, Sheri and Brenda) into making this reunion one to remember. I am personally grateful to each of them and to all who attended. Without participation there is no reunion and I hope even more of our members attend next time and bring family.

Speaking of family, especially grateful I am (Yoda?) to Denny Driscoll for bringing his grandson Jason. It is great to see so much enthusiasm for things military as Jason exhibited throughout, especially on the rifle range – his attendance was icing on the cake. Thanks Denny and Ginny for bringing Jason.

As the newly appointed editor of the newsletter, I would like to extend an invitation to any and all who would like to contribute to this publication. It is your Association and your newsletter, so take advantage of it and send me articles, pictures, quotes, jokes or whatever. I know someone out there has a Danny Scott/Mick Hawkins story. Or a Johnny Johnston story. So send them in – I will clean them up if necessary to ensure respectability. That may not be possible with those three, come to think of it. :) We are approaching Memorial Day as I write this and I am reminded of what I believe to be my favorite event of Reunion 2005. On Thursday morning, 5 May – a significant date in the history of our battalion – Frank Burns and the very professional soldiers of his battalion honored the 202 members of the battalion who lost their lives in Vietnam. I have never been more touched than by the heartfelt tribute paid to our fallen comrades by our friends now serving in the battalion. What a remarkable event. Thank you Frank.

At our biannual business meeting, we elected to admit any current or former member of the battalion (without regard to service in Vietnam) into the Association. The newest Life Member of the Association is LTC Burns, leading the way.

My goal as your editor is to publish a product you are happy with. So, please let me know what your desires are for the newsletter.

"I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means...."

John Adams



Holiday Inn Lobby



LTC Frank Burns and COL Jim Woodall
Battalion Commanders, Past and Present



2005 ARMY BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

On June 14, 2005, we proudly celebrate the United States Army's 230th Birthday. For 230 years, the Nation has entrusted the Army with preserving its peace and freedom, and defending its democracy. Since 1775, American Soldiers have answered the call to duty. They are imbued with the ideals of the Warrior Ethos and motivated by an unwavering belief that they will be victorious. Our Soldiers have understood that our Constitution and the freedom it guarantees are worth fighting for. They sacrifice their personal comfort and safety to answer a higher calling: service in the cause of freedom, both at home and abroad.

America is at war, and the call to duty pierces the air once again. Our adversaries have declared war on our way of life, attacked our homeland, and vowed to attack us again. America is threatened, and it is our duty to serve. America's sons and daughters who are answering the call to duty are engaged in the noblest work of life, protecting our Nation and enabling others to live free.

Today, our Soldiers protect our national interests around the globe, serving in more than 120 countries. Recently, in joint, combined environments, Soldiers helped to rescue two nations from oppression, and liberated over 50 million people. Since then, more than 1 million Americans have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and many are returning for a second or third time. Our Soldiers understand that this is a struggle we must win. We are humbled by their sacrifices in the service of our Nation. Despite the hardships, and the danger to life and limb, duty calls, and our Soldiers continue to answer.

Our Nation appreciates your courage, your sacrifice, and your selfless-service. This week the United States Postal Service is demonstrating support for our Soldiers with a special cancellation stamp that commemorates our Army's 230 years of service to the Nation. They are also assisting in the Freedom Team Salute, a program to send an Army Birthday card to every Soldier. We thank the US Postal Service for their role in recognizing the service of our troops. They are joined by a host of organizations around the country celebrating the Army Birthday.

To our Soldiers around the world, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your families on this 230th Army Birthday. You are volunteers, doing your difficult duty against an enemy who does not value life, is afraid of liberty, and desires to crush the individual pursuit of a democratic way of life. You are playing a crucial role in the War on Terrorism, and your dedication to this noble effort underscores your determined professionalism and tenacity. We are proud to serve with you, as you place the mission first and live the Warrior Ethos. You have made our Army the most respected institution in the United States and the preeminent land power on Earth. Thank you for answering the call to duty.

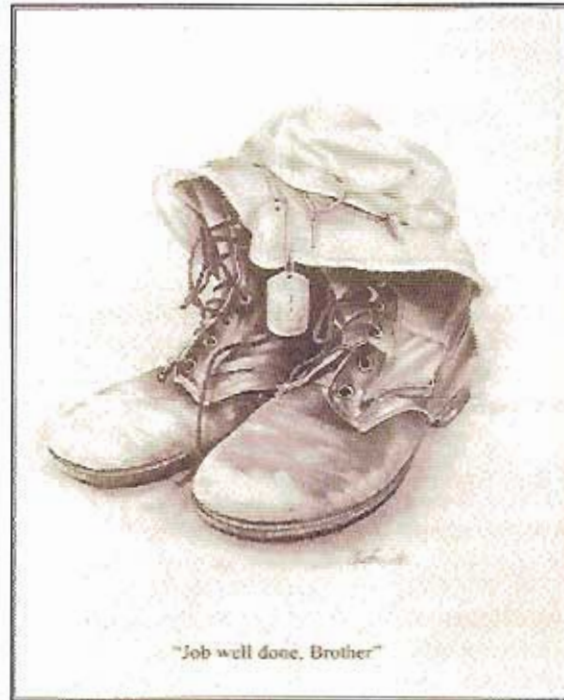
God bless each and every one of you and your families, and God bless America.

Kenneth O. Preston
Sergeant Major of the Army

Peter J. Schoomaker
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Francis J. Harvey
Secretary of the Army

ASSOCIATION FUNDRAISER



This piece was created by Roland Castanie, an artist in Houston, Texas and a friend of our own Toby Hamon. The artist can individualize the picture (done in grayscale) with medals, crests, patches and badges in color. Toby presented one to John Topper as outgoing Association president at the reunion in Fort Benning, see picture below. They make great gifts for Vietnam veterans and a portion of the proceeds go to the Association.

Roland can be reached at 281-534-1033 or wildtexas@houston.rr.com Website: wildtexasart.com



Vietnam Veterans Benefit From Agent Orange Rules

They are society's leaders. They run businesses; direct organizations; hold political office. In their mid-50s, they are at the height of their social and economic power, earning more than others in their age group. Yet, with their success, they can't escape the inevitable health concerns of a graying population.

They are Vietnam veterans, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is concerned they may regard diseases associated with aging, such as prostate cancer, as just another illness rather than as the result of their military service in Southeast Asia.

VA wants these Vietnam veterans to know that they may be eligible for compensation and health care for certain diseases associated with Agent Orange, the defoliant sprayed to unmask enemy hiding places in the jungles throughout Vietnam.

Special health care and compensation benefits are available to the 2.6 million men and women who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975, only 3,300 of whom remain in uniform today. Those discharged during that period are the largest group of veterans receiving VA health care and monthly compensation.

Yet a small percentage of their disability claims are for illnesses scientists have listed as being associated with Agent Orange. VA presumes that all military personnel who served in Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange, and federal law presumes that certain illnesses are a result of that exposure. This so-called "presumptive policy" simplifies the process of receiving compensation for these diseases since VA foregoes the normal requirements of proving that an illness began or was worsened during military service.

Based on clinical research, the following diseases are on VA's Agent Orange list of presumptive disabilities: chloracne, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, porphyria cutanea tarda, respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx and trachea), soft-tissue sarcoma, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy and prostate cancer. A regulation is being developed to add diabetes mellitus.

Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war also are eligible for a complete physical examination. If a VA physician suspects a disease might be related to Agent Orange, VA will provide free medical care. Those who participate in the examination program become part of an Agent Orange Registry and receive periodic mailings from VA about the latest Agent Orange studies and new diseases being covered under VA policies.

Vietnam veterans and their families can contact VA for more information about these benefits. For the Agent Orange Registry physical examination, call a local VA hospital or clinic listed in the government pages of your phone book. To file a compensation claim for a current disability related to Agent Orange, veterans can call 1-800-827-1000 for an application form or visit VA's Web site at: <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov>.

Editor's Note: *I found this on the VA website. Thought it might help some of you who have questions.*