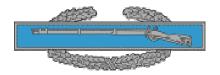
# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association







**June 2010** 

**Cover Page** 

## FROM THE TC HATCH

## Jimmy Segars, President

This Memorial Day our church made a video with photos of all the men in our congregation who have served in the military. First was the current group picture of all of us—"older," grayer, but still active. Then with the words of the Lee Greenwood's famous patriotic song—"Proud to Be an American"—being sung in the background, pictures scrolled across the screen of each man (so young) in his military uniform from a time long ago. Some served in combat: World War II vets—the Battle of the Bulge, Italy, the Pacific--Vietnam vets, and one currently serving in Iraq. Others served not in combat but in support in war zones or in peacetime or stateside—Korea, Germany, Iraq, various battleships, and tours of duty around the world.

Then I was given the privilege of talking about what Memorial Day means to me. It means that we honor the soldiers who have gone before us to protect our freedom and those who do so today. It means that some gave the supreme sacrifice for what we are able to have in this country today—our freedom. It means that we remember the soldier, the marine, the sailor, and the airman who did what he had to do when our country called upon him/her. It means that we remember those who unselfishly defend us but do not recognize that they have done something great. WE RECOGNIZE WHAT THEY HAVE DONE AND SAY THANK YOU ON MEMORIAL DAY AND ALWAYS. Every day should be a Memorial Day. That's one reason that I am so proud of the 1/50th Association because we attempt to recognize those who serve us in the military every day. I feel confident that we will keep on doing so, and that is the reason we exist as an organization. I look forward to the opportunity to represent us, along with others from our association, at the Change of Command ceremony at Ft. Benning next week. PLAY THE GAME! Thank you for the privilege of serving you. Being a soldier has been a great privilege. I will never forget what it means and those I served with. You are all special!

Greetings to all the 1/50th family. As this newsletter is received I pray that it finds all of you and your family members in good health. The U.S.A. just celebrated two significant days of our history. The first being Memorial Day, and the other being, as it is commonly known, D-Day the 6th of June, 1944. These special days that we celebrate from our past have become more

# CHAPLAIN'S

#### **Parker Pierce**

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and more meaningful and sentimental to me as I get older, because without the ultimate price being paid by many great Americans from our past and present wars, and days like the 6th of June, 1944, we would not be enjoying the luxury and the freedom we have today in our great nation. In a few weeks we will celebrate July 4th and the independence of America. In all of these observances of these very special events in our history I know that the 1/50th family feels privileged and blessed to be able to celebrate them in still - what we all have enjoyed throughout our lives - a country to call our home that has had and still has insurmountable freedoms! I know we all thank God for this great country and the freedoms we continue to cherish. I am forever grateful to God for the time in military service, and all the years since that era of our lives that we as the 1/50th family have shared together. I'll continue to pray for all of you, and for America, our military and their families, and our

Official Quartermaster's description of C-Rations used in Vietnam

President. May God continue to bless each of you. In Him, Parker

"The Meal, Combat, Individual, is designed for issue as the tactical situation dictates, either in individual units as a meal or in multiples of three as a complete ration. Its characteristics emphasize utility, flexibility of use, and more variety of food components than were included in the Ration, Combat, Individual (C Ration) which it replaces. Twelve different menus are included in the specification.

Each menu contains: one canned meat item; one canned fruit, bread or dessert item; one B unit; an accessory packet containing cigarettes, matches, chewing gum, toilet paper, coffee, cream, sugar, and salt; and a spoon. Four can openers are provided in each case of 12 meals. Although the meat item can be eaten cold, it is more palatable when heated.

Each complete meal contains approximately 1200 calories. The daily ration of 3 meals provides approximately 3600 calories." (Continued on pg 4)

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## MINI-REUNION/GETTYSBURG

**Ken Riley** 

Welcome Home Brothers! Hope you all had a great Memorial Day!

Please note: we have a few rooms still available for the Gathering in Gettysburg PA. Please do not delay too much longer since there is no guarantee the hotel will honor more than the original 25 rooms available for us. There is a major event in the local area that weekend and most rooms have already been promised!

Please call the hotel (The 1863 Inn of Gettysburg at: 866-953-4483) as soon as possible to book your reservations. We will have registration on Thursday, September 30, 2010, and will be staying Thursday, Friday, October 1, and Saturday, October 2, 2010; check out on Sunday, October 3, 2010. For those that wish, the hotel will honor our \$129.00 rate for early birds, who would like to come to Gettysburg a few days early. Several have already told me they were coming on Tuesday or Wednesday – I will be available to give guided tours or let you know the hot spots to visit.

Registration form is included and needs to be returned to me no later than August 15, 2010, so I can pay for buses, dinners, tours, entertainment, etc. Of course, if you would like to send it early, that would be great so I can cover the obligations I have made!

Hope to see a bunch of you in G-Burg! Kenr17331@yahoo.com \* Cell:717-451-5522

## HISTORIAN ACTIVITY REPORT

## Jim Shepard

As for my Association Activities - they have really ramped up with my retirement. I made a weeklong trip to the Archives the week of May 5th & gathered documentation from the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Most of what I gathered was information we already had from our own 50th Infantry Documentation, but they covered a few things we missed - not much. I had hoped they would have Daily Staff Journals from 1968, but they do not. They did have all of 1969, also well covered by the 50th since we have all our DJs from 1969, but I am copying theirs DJS for 1969 as well. I have found that some of my investigations call for knowing where other units were located and their logs cover that information better than ours did, obviously. I copied April through August of 1969 and will get the first three months on my next trip. I also copied two large ORLLs (Operations Report - Lessons Learned) - 1 May to 31 July and 1 Aug to 31 Oct. I finished the former and am working on the latter. What I mean by "working on" - since I "killed" our Association Scanner, I have moved on and am using my digital camera to photograph documents. This works extremely well at the archives (Scanning is very slow...and copying on NARA copiers is now ridiculously expensive), but calls for some extra work editing the document "photos"...as they need to be cropped back to document size and then converted to .pdf files. Lastly I print "hard copy" for our Association archive files.

I also began exploring the General Orders possibilities, as I am hoping to find copies of awards orders for our membership (Mainly those KIA). I started with the 1st Cav and looked at October, November and December. Not much there as the files do not have complete coverage (Many orders, filed numerically, are missing). I believe I copied about 40 or so awards. Remember that there is a "lag" between the actual event and the award of a medal so I do not expect to see many until I can get back and pull the Jan, Feb and March of 1968 Cav General Orders. Next will be the 4th Infantry Division and then 173rd Airborne. I'm not sure on those two and we may come up with blanks, unfortunately. I have a report that the IFFV General Orders are quite complete, but will get to them last.

This work has temporarily taken me away from my Memorial Page Creation. I will be back at them by the end of the summer and hope to have them completed by December. That will give me time to prepare for the next reunion.

I hope to begin "restructuring" my Document CDs, converting them to DVD format. All this means is that I will be able to get nearly all our documents on a single DVD or, at the very least, everything other than 1970 on a single DVD. All files will still be viewable via an Adobe Acrobat Reader (.pdf format). I am going to rename many documents to more closely match their actual names and file nearly everything by related date, making it easier to do research on various events.

Eventually I will get back to some website revamping and redesign. I'd like to set up a separate computer to act as an Association "backup" of the entire website, something we do not currently have and a catastrophic loss by Lanji would be devastating, although I am positive Chris has the site backed up in more than one location. On that note - the "rift" that formed over our website issues seems to have "cooled". It seems things work very well until we have an "issue" which, fortunately, is not very often. Eventually I might consider recommending a change, but would prefer to do so with a cool head and when I can devote more time to same - likely in a year or so.

# You Can Leave The Military, But It Never Really Leaves You! By Ken Burger

Occasionally, I venture back out to the air base where I'm greeted by an imposing security guard who looks carefully at my identification card, hands it back and says, "Have a good day, Colonel."

Every time I go back onto Charleston Air Force Base it feels good to be called by my previous rank, but odd to be in civilian clothes, walking among the servicemen and servicewomen going about their duties as I once did, years ago.

The military, for all its flaws, is a comfort zone for anyone who has ever worn the uniform. It's a place where you know the rules and know they are enforced - a place where everybody is busy, but not too busy to take care of business.

Because there exists behind the gates of every military facility an institutional understanding of respect, order, uniformity, accountability and dedication that becomes part of your marrow and never, ever leaves you.

Personally, I miss the fact that you always knew where you stood in the military, and who you were dealing with. That's because you could read somebody's uniform from 20 feet away and know the score.

Service personnel wear their careers on their sleeves, so to speak. When you approach each other, you can read their nametag, examine their rank and, if they are in dress uniform, read their ribbons and know where they've served.

I miss all those little things you take for granted when you're in the ranks, like breaking starch on a set of fatigues fresh from the laundry and standing in a perfectly straight line that looks like a mirror as it stretches to the endless horizon.

I miss the sight of troops marching in the early morning mist, the sound of boot heels thumping in unison on the sidewalks, the bark of sergeants and the sing-song answers from the squads as they pass by in review.

To romanticize military service is to be far removed from its reality, because it's very serious business, especially in times of war.

But I miss the salutes I'd throw at officers and the crisp returns as we crisscrossed on the flight line.

I miss the smell of jet fuel hanging heavily on the night air and the sound of engines roaring down runways and disappearing into the clouds. I even miss the hurry-up-and-wait mentality that enlisted men gripe about constantly, a masterful invention that bonded people more than they'll ever know or admit.

I miss people taking off their hats when they enter a building, speaking directly and clearly to others and never showing disrespect for rank, race, religion or gender.

Mostly I miss being a small cog in a machine so complex it constantly circumnavigates the Earth and so simple it feeds everyone on time, three times a day, on the ground, in the air or at sea.

Mostly, I don't know anyone who has served who regrets it and doesn't feel a sense of pride when they pass through those gates and re-enter the world they left behind.

# The nomenclature for the saber is saber for all officers, model 1902. The blade is 31 inches long (more information about sword lengths). The nomenclature for the sword is noncommissioned officer's sword, model 1840. Figure F-1 shows the nomenclature for pertinent parts of the saber (sword) and scabbard.

**NOMENCLATURE** 

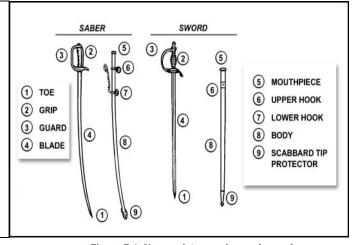


Figure F-1. Nomenclature, saber and sword.

# From the Editor

# John Topper

Last Monday night found Jimmie and Loretta Segars, Jim Sheppard, Jay Copley and I at the Holiday Inn Express in Columbus, Georgia to attend the change of command ceremony the following morning at Fort Benning. Jay treated us to Country Barbecue, which was delicious and very much appreciated. Upon returning to the hotel, we were greeted by Toby Jordan and his two traveling companions and Dick Guthrie rolling in from his earlier flight into Atlanta. Since we had already eaten and they hadn't, Jimmie and I accompanied them to Texas Roadhouse. After a couple beers and fine steaks we called it a night and walked back to the hotel for an early morning trip to Sand Hill.

We all gathered, joined by Jay's granddaughter, Lauren, at Kennell Field, Jimmie presented Tony Benitez with a statuette in appreciation for his support and service to the Association. Tony then relinquished command to Mike Hastings during a stirring ceremony, highlighted by Tony's poignant speech. The general consensus of the Association members present is that we have been blessed with another fine commander in Mike who is now at the helm of "our" battalion. As Dick Guthrie said, "we need to be re-blued from time to time", and that happened. It's difficult to watch a parade with a band and not feel blessed to be a small part of the infantry's traditions.

Following the ceremony, we drove to the new battalion "starship" – more like Battlestar Galactic. It is an imposing site – the majority of it sits atop a substantial hill with buildings strewn over about 3/8 mile from the battalion mess to Fox Company. Outside the battalion headquarters is a flagpole and the Association memorial. The landscaping around the memorial is very well done and impressive to visitors coming into the area. Getting to the top is somewhat of a challenge, I believe I counted 94 steps leading up to level ground from the parking lot when I climbed it on Monday. Fortunately, we got an escort on Tuesday and were able to drive to the top.

Mike McCardell took us on a guided tour of the site and we were suitability impressed with everything we saw. It is bigger than huge – the dining facility alone can seat 1000 troops. McCardell says it is the largest in the Army and I have no reason to think otherwise. The barracks (it was difficult for me to imagine them as barracks) are very modern and spacious. Complete with the normal equipment of bunks and lockers, there is a mega laundry room complete with several commercial washers and driers and really well-lit shower and bathroom facilities. The bunk mattresses are some sort of composite material that is probably a foot thick and most comfortable.

Later that day, Dick, Jim and I checked out the National Infantry Museum where we found their pavers and also that of the Association, which we bought at the last reunion. The 173d Airborne Brigade had just dedicated a monument to commemorate its wartime service. It is located adjacent to the bleachers on the new parade field. We checked it out and were pleased to note that it shows the service of 1/50 in Vietnam.

That evening we invited Michelle Spivey, Sales VP for Magnolia Properties that provides us the housing for our reunions in Columbus to dinner at Hunter's Pub. Delightful. Negotiations have begun for next year's reunion, but much is yet to be done toward that and it will be one of the subjects for the September newsletter.

#### **HOW TO MAKE A C-RATION STOVE**

(Continued from cover page) The small cans included in the meal were ideal for making a stove. Using a "John Wayne", pierce a series of closely spaced holes around the top and bottom rims of the can. This stove was satisfactory, but did not allow enough oxygen to enter, which caused incomplete burning of the blue Trioxin heat tablet, causing fumes, which irritated the eyes and respiratory tract. A whole heat tab had to be used.

A better stove was created by simply using the can opener end of a "church key" (a flat metal device designed to open soft drink and beer containers with a bottle opener on one end and can opener on the other, commonly used before the invention of the pull tab and screw-off bottle top) to puncture triangular holes around the top and bottoms rims of the can which resulted in a hotter fire and much less fumes. This type of stove only used half a Trioxin heat tab was needed to heat the meal and then the other half could be used to heat water for coffee or cocoa. A small chunk of C-34 explosive could also be substituted for the Trioxin tablet for faster heating. It would burn hotter and was much better for heating water. A stove was usually carried in the backpack or cargo pocket and used repeatedly until the metal began to fail.







#### **HOW TO COOK A C-RATION MEAL**

- 1. Choose the meal to be consumed
- 2. Open the can lid leaving at least 1/4 inch metal attached
- 3. Bend the still attached lid so that the inside of the can lid is facing 180 degrease from it's original position (inside up).
- 4. Bend the edges of the can to form a handle
- 5. Set meal on stove and heat to desired temperature, stirring frequently to prevent burning

#### "Outstanding" Ham & Beans

- ❖ Open and heat a can of Ham and Lima Beans
- When hot, add one can of cheese spread and stir until all cheese is melted.
- Crumble 4 crackers into the mixture and blend thoroughly.
- Eat when the crackers have absorbed all excess moisture.

(Continued on pg 7)

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Vietnam Veterans Gathering at Gettysburg September 30<sup>th</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup>, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 Gettysburg, PA 17325

## **Registration Form**

Member Name		Phone Number				
Address		City	State	Zip		
		Guest Name				
Arrival Date	Departure I	Date				
Ask for 1/50 <sup>th</sup> Infantry rat	e of \$129.00 pe ONLY 25 RO	nitting this registration form doer night for single/double occu OMS AVAILABLE TO US. A	pancy. Cutoff for this rate i			
Registration Procedure:	Registration Cutoff Dates: August 15, 2010 Registration Costs:  (Per Person)					
	Early Registration: (Before August 15, 2010):					
Mail this form along with	check to:	Kenneth G Riley				
		200 Georgetown Court				
		Hanover PA 17331				
Please make check payabl	e to: Kenneth (	G Riley				

Registration Fee Includes: 30 September – Registration starts at Noon, Gift Bags, Hospitality Room

1 October - Box Lunch, Tours, Guide, Pre-show, Bus, Wine Tasting

2 October - Dinner, Entertainment at Night, Bus

# 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association **Page 6**

FROM THE VP Ron Leraas

I spent this past Memorial Day weekend at home, tending to the myriad of farm critters while my young lady participated in a two-day endurance ride in the Texas Hill Country.

During one of my bachelor evenings, I was channel-surfing and happened upon a re-airing of HBO's mini-movie "Taking Chance", the true story of Marine LTC Strobl, who escorted the body of LCpl Chance Phelps, KIA in Iraq during 2004, to a small town in Wyoming for burial. The story line, based on LTC Strobl's After-Action-Report, outlines the actions that the casualty center at Dover AFB take to prepare the body, and the intense amount of respect they display while performing this job. But, more importantly to me, the (true) story documents the amount of respect from the general populace accorded the body (and LTC Strobl) as they drove from Dover to Philadelphia, flew to Bozeman, Montana (changing flights in Minneapolis), and on the road trip from Bozeman, Montana, to the final destination. The movie is quite a dichotomy, giving an uplifting message while documenting a sad and solemn occasion; but, the dark cynic in me has arisen, wondering if the story would be the same if it were today, and in an area of the country other than the Midwestern states.

On a happier note, I want to give a very loud shout-out to Kristen Holt, the lady who coordinates the National Infantry Foundation Paver Program. My family, tired of asking what I wanted for my birthday and getting the "Nothing" response, purchased a paver in my honor, and Kristen promised the miniature paver would arrive at the house in time for my birthday. The package arrived on time, as promised, but when opened, it contained a miniature paver engraved for a CSM Wallace.

We contacted Kristen, who was very apologetic, and arranged for the supplier to create a new (correct) one, delivered to her personally, and sent UPS Overnight. The UPS driver picked up the package – but forgot to scan it – so there is now a miniature paver, with my name on it, somewhere in the UPS undeliverable package system. She realized the error and called us; then followed up by providing three miniatures to make up for the delay and hassle. So, I now have three miniatures, with the possibility that the one lost in the UPS system may eventually see light of day. We were so impressed with her genuine concern and immediate response that we ordered another paver in honor of my father (an Infantryman in WWII). So, as of the dedication ceremony on Memorial Day, there are side-by-side remembrances of a small part of my family story.

#### From the editor: I would credit this, but I don't remember where I found it.

- The name of the British commander who ordered the ill-fated attack in the charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean war was Lord Raglan. The attack was led by the 7th Earl of Cardigan. Both men are better remembered for fashions they introduced during the war. Cardigan for the woolen jacket he designed for his troops and Raglan for the unique sleeves on the coat he wore.
- Hermann Goering, who went on to become one of Adolf Hitler's closest associates, became commander of his "Flying circus" fighter squadron after German flying ace Manfred von Richthofen was killed in action in World War I
- The meaning of the Comanche phrase posah-tai-vo, the term Indian code-talkers in the Army Signal Corps used on the battlefield during World War II to refer to Adolf Hitler, was crazy white man.
- ❖The aircraft type used to drop bombs in the first German air raids on London in 1915 was a Zeppelin.
- ❖ Switzerland's army in 1996 was the last in the world to disband its carrier pigeon service.
- The code names for the five beachheads invaded by the Allies on D-Day, June 6, 1944 were Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword.
- The message transmitted to the French resistance during World War II that the D-Day landings were about to begin was first line of the Paul Verlaine poem Autumn Song "The long sobs/Of the violins of autumn".
- ❖ A GI Moe was World War II American army slang for an army mule.
- ❖The Coast Guard Academy was the first to admit women in July 1976.
- The nuclear submarine USS Triton during its historic 1960 underwater circumnavigation of the globe surfaced only twice. Once to remove a sick crew member and once to pay tribute to Ferdinand Magellan on the island of Mactan in the Philippines, where the explorer was killed in 1521 during his circumnavigation of the globe.
- The color khaki was first was used for uniforms in the Afghan War in 1880. The color was considered good camouflage.
- General John J. Pershing was issued ID number 01 when the U.S. military started issuing dog tags in 1918.
- The Carthaginians catapulted earthenware pots of poisonous snakes onto the decks of the Roman ships to defeat the Romans at sea during the third century B.C.

# ON THE RIGHT TRACK June 2010

# 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association **Page 7**

Editors Note: This piece was written by Mick in March, well before the AG of Connecticut, Richard Blumenthal, was caught up in his "misspoken" claims about Vietnam service. Mick must be prophetic!

Wannabe Harley "Mick" Hawkins

This is the term given to people who claim to be something they are not. When I was drafted I knew very little about the army. I knew there were generals and sargeants - I knew General Washington and Sqt. York, but that was about all I knew about the army.

When I received a letter from my friends and neighbors that I had been selected to enter the armed forces, I was 99.9% sure I would end up in Vietnam as a rifleman. The choices I thought I had were to go to Canada, hide, burn my draft card, get married to someone who already had some kids or go to the army. I elected to go to the army.

I was proud of the training I received, the people I met while in the service and the service I thought I had provided to my country. I was glad to get back to the world and drinking beer and chasing girls until my wife Carolyn decided it was best I settled down and start making something of myself (I would have never thought of that one myself).

I never thought much about my service, the people I served with or my time in Nam. Then I got a call from Bob Gold, followed by a call from Randy Smith, telling me about the Association, the reunions and the fellowship of the 1/50th. I had never joined the VA, the American Legion or any other veteran group and had a very bad feeling about all of it. After talking to other 1/50th veterans, attending reunions and getting to know the officers and men of the Association I started feeling better about my time in the service and the men I served with. After getting off the phone with Randy I told my wife that Randy was a medic who had patched me up a time or two and was just a great guy.

Now I told you all of that to tell you this about wannabes. Sometime after my time in the service and now, the country decided it was time to tell us Vietnam Vets that they were proud of our service. It even seemed like more and more people thought we had done our duty. Now should you be proud of your service? Well let me tell you this.

- > Brian Dennehy, an actor, producer, director, and screenwriter. Winner of Emmys and Golden Globe awards said numerous times in interviews that he had fought in the Vietnam War and tells of his service there. He never left the states.
- > Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Patrick Couwenberg falsely claimed to have been a CIA agent in Laos and had fought in the army in Vietnam . All claims were false.
- > Tim Johnson, Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Manager lied about his service. Telling about his battle experiences in the Vietnam War. Johnson never served in Vietnam. He was in the Marine Corps Reserve (that is a good thing) but he never left the states.
- Joseph Ellis, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and former Dean of Faculty at Mount Holyoke College lied about fighting in Vietnam.
- > U.S Rep. Wes Cooley, politician lied about being in the Special Forces and serving in the army.

Now doesn't it make you feel good that these men who had it all would want to be like you? I would say you should feel very good about your service with people like this wanting to be you. Remember we were Vietnam Vets before it was cool.

The U.S Army left South Vietnam in 1973, two years before North Vietnam invaded the South, so tell me again how it is we lost the war two years after we withdrew.

**C-RATIONS** (continued from page 4) There were 4 choices of meat in each B group. Because there were several "vintages" of C's issued to the Army in Vietnam, more than 4 items may be listed in the B groups as well as the brands of cigarettes included in the accessory pack.

*Accessory Pack
Spoon, Plastic
Salt
Pepper
Coffee, Instant
Sugar
Creamer, Non-dairy
Gum, 2 Chicklets
Cigarettes, 4 smokes/pack
Winston
Marlboro
Salem
Pall Mall
Camel
Chesterfield
Kent
Lucky Strike
Kool
Matches, Moisture Resistant
Toilet Paper



Gary Quint 438 Fairway Lane Kirkwood, MO. 63122

# On The Right Track



1st Battalion 50th Infantry Mechanized