

1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED) 50TH INFANTRY

" ON THE RIGHT TRACK "



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VOLUME NUMBER 1 -- DATED 1 SEPTEMBER 1997 -- ISSUE NUMBER 05  
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FROM THE  
COMMAND TRACK...



DEROS IS SOON...

This newsletter is coming to you earlier than normal. I want to relay all the final preparations and details concerning our reunion. Additional information is being provided with this newsletter in hopes of providing a relaxing atmosphere for every one who comes.

For so many of us, this will be the first time we will see our many friends from "Way Back When." This is what it is all about: to renew those friendships and make new ones from more than a quarter century ago.

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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 two members.

Howard "Tooter" Flippin was originally with the 2/41st Mechanized Infantry at Fort Hood. He moved to the 1/50th in the spring of 1967. At Quin Nhon, he went with Charlie Company, 4th platoon, on their exploits and tour of the beautiful countryside. Picking up malaria in country, he DEROs in August of 1968. He worked for several railroads (Missouri Pacific, Union Pacific, and the Missouri North Arkansas). He is presently married to his first wife since November 1969, and has two children. He wrote, "I still get excited by helicopters."

The second person I wish to report on is John A Topper, the original Company Commander for Alpha Company. John enlisted in the Army in June 1959, attending OCS in 1964. He was one of the original "boat people," arriving in Vietnam later in September of 1967. He retired in 1993 as Colonel. John and his wife Janet live in Wyoming. Since 1995, He has been Executive Director for the Riverton Community Development Association and for IDEA, Inc. He is a member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, along with various military Veterans Associations. John was inducted into the United States Army Infantry Hall of Fame in 1986.

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1. What were the White Mice?



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 EDITOR'S PAGE  
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This article came from Don R Catherall, a Phd. in psychology and co-founder and executive director of the Phoenix institute in Chicago, which specializes in treating trauma survivors of all ages. He has counseled Vietnam Veterans suffering from (PTSD) Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder and has been an advisor to the Department of Veterans Affairs. He was a combat soldier with the Marine Corps in 1967-1968 and authored "Back from the Brink", a family guide to overcoming traumatic stress.

Catherall believes:

Vietnam Veterans are less likely to blindly accept the orders and perceptions of others.

They are perhaps more likely to measure others by reliability, i.e., "Is this someone with whom I could share a foxhole?" They are less hung up on appearances, less easily fooled, and have had enough bullshit thrown at them that they may see through it a little better than others.

"I think we share a sadness and a brotherhood that is rare," says Catherall. "It may not be an active part of our lives most of the time, but Vietnam Vets are able to connect in a way that goes very deep. Think about the guys hugging each other at the Wall. This is the same thing that the current men's movement is trying to achieve, and it's no accident that the foremost group has chosen the name 'Warriors'. I think those of us who were real warriors have found [Iron John] 'wild men' in ourselves."

"We know how to take orders and give orders. We have shared our canteens with all classes of people. We've seen death real close up. We've experienced big-time loss. We've faced our fears and found our own courage. As a result, we are different in a way that the Indians understood and prized, but which our society does not well understand and so often fears. We have had the experience of being judge, jury, and executioner."

"Many of us were free to take life without having to account for our reasons. We were all affected by having that incredible power of living through an experience in which there was no law. We were the law."

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Since it will only be a few days before we start gathering at the reunion hotel, please keep in mind that this is a casual affair. You may wear any clothing you wish to bring along, but none of the events are meant to be a "Suit and Gown" affair. Just come and relax and enjoy meeting some of your old friends. I can assure you, you will also meet some new friends there. We have guys coming who closed out our tour of duty in Vietnam at the end of 1970. I want to extend my "WELCOME HOME" to each and every one of you. Please introduce yourself to any person you see at the reunion. Who knows!! It could be a long lost buddy you just don't recognize. Remember! We have all gotten a little bit older (except the Editor) and changed our appearances a bit. Make sure you stop by the registration desk for your name tag.

2. What does the term, "Blue Max" refer to?

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LETTERS AND NEWS FROM THE GUYS  
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*When Friends Meet*

Heard from several more guys over the past two months.

Heard from Dexter Bargy the other day. Found his e-mail address through another contact and sent him a note. He says he will try to be at the reunion.

Received a call from Don Kochniarczyk one Sunday. He was in Delta Company, 4th Platoon. Says Hi to all you Mortar guys out there.

Met with Toby Jordon in June as he was coming through York County on his way home from a wedding. Had a great time that Friday if only for an hour or so. Thanks for stopping by Toby.

Talked with John Goltz from Chicago one Sunday. He has volunteered to be President for the Association, at least until election time. Thanks!

Had a very nice phone conversation from Gary Spangler (Charlie Company original) in June. Gary plans to spend the whole week in DC so anyone wishing to come down to the reunion early, please do. I will be there most of the week to show you around.

Bill Hayes just called me at the end of June. Says he will be coming to the reunion. Bill resides in Texas these days.

Got a short note in July from Mike Canavan. He says he will be at the reunion probably Saturday morning. "Get there in time, Mike. The cooks have prepared a real good breakfast for you!" HAM AND WHAT!!!

Talked briefly with Norm Poage (via e-mail). Norm updated the Home Page and added several more of our KIA's to the list. Great job, Norm...

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Bill and Hillary Clinton are on a sinking boat. Who gets saved?  
( The nation.)

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


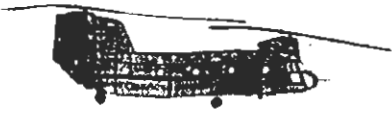
Please take the time to check it out every so often. The address for this new service to the Ichaban troopers is:

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

As you will see when you visit the site, Norm has taken great pains to provide as much detailed information as possible. Drop in on the site and send Norm and myself a note to let us know you were there. Our e-mail addresses are listed on the page. Send any suggestion or comments you may have on how we can improve this free service.

3. What is the significance of "Nui Chop Dung?"





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EDGES OF THE WALL  
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The date "1959" is engraved on the upper left hand corner of the first panel on the east side of "The Wall." At the lower right corner of the first panel of the west side, we find the date "1975." When the memorial was finished in 1982, some people expressed surprise at those dates. The Vietnam War they thought started in 1964 or 1965 and ended in 1973 with withdrawal of troops following the Paris Peace agreements. Thanks to the efforts of our own historians, nearly everyone knows the origin of the conflict dates much earlier. The truth is, however, that 1959 and 1975 do not even begin to encompass the years of grief brought to American families by the Vietnam War.

On line 1 of the first panel on the east side of "The Wall," two of the names are indeed soldiers who died in 1959. They are Chester N Ovnard from El Reno Ok, and Dale R Buis of Pender NE. Both men were killed on July 8, 1959. But they were not the first Americans killed in Vietnam.

Harry G Cramer was killed nearly two years earlier, on October 21, 1957. His name however appears on line 78. Cramer was a Captain in the Army from Johnstown PA. Johnstown's losses began in 1957 and did not end until 1973, with the death of Kenneth Doyle Scasife. Between those dates, Johnstown PA lost 24 of its sons to the war. With population of Johnstown at 42,000 during that time, Johnstown lost three times the national rate of people to the war.

The last KIA from the Vietnam War is more difficult to determine. Eleven hours before the cease-fire deadline, on January 27, 1973, Lt Colonel William B Nolde was listed as the last US "combat death." However, American personnel continued to die. More than two years after the peace agreement went into effect (May 13, 1975) 25 Air Force lives were lost, and on May 15, 1975, another 18 Americans were killed. On November 8, 1975, Jon O Nacy, an Army PFC from Detroit was killed. November 15, 1981, Major Eddie B Story of Jonesboro TN was added to the list, and the names continue to be added to "The Wall."

The honor of the oldest soldier killed in action goes to Master Sergeant Jimmie Ray Harrison of DeKalb IL, who was born on November 13, 1903 and who died on March 14, 1968, An old soldier who was not content with just fading away.

These names and numbers suggest some of the edges of the Vietnam conflict, but those edges are not nearly as distinct as the edges of other wars. Was it a real war? Who was responsible? When did it begin? The answer to that last question seems to depend on what you mean by "begin." When did it end? Again, the answer is not easy, but the addition of names to "The Wall" since 1982 suggests that "The Wall" is still a work in progress. The better question seems to be "When will it end?"

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

We are constantly looking for your story, anecdotes, experiences, tidbits, or personal reflections for YOUR newsletter. "On the Right Track" is committed to providing information about and for all its membership. If there is a special announcement you have coming up, please forward to the editor as soon as possible.

4. And then, what was the "Inlaid Speeder?"

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REUNION NEWS  
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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	-	JOHN GOLTZ
VICE PRESIDENT	-	Unfilled Position *****
SECRETARY	-	KENNETH G RILEY
TREASURY	-	KENNETH G RILEY
HISTORIAN	-	MIKE DEAL
CHAPLAIN	-	TOBY JORDON

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

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Several people asked me if anyone is bringing their kids along to the reunion. I told a few yes, but I had no idea what their ages were. Please! If you wish to bring any children along, do so. They are part of "our family" now and are very welcome. Except you Norm! They don't have a room big enough for your clan. My god boy, seven kids!!!

All preparations for the dinners and bus trips have been secured. I still need some help with the hospitality room and the registration desk. If anyone wishes to help for an hour or two, please contact me immediately so I can figure up the schedule of times. So far, Fred Lohman and myself are the only two who have offered to help with the various activities. Can you spare an hour or two? If so, give me a call, or send me a note, PLEASE!

If anyone has any items they would like to donate as a Door Prize or that we could raffle off to help defray costs for the reunion, please let me know and also bring them along with you to the reunion. I would greatly appreciate anything that you could donate.

So Folks! Our perimeter has been set up, the flares and claymores are out on line and the guards posted. It will soon be time to "chow down" and "mail call," and I hope to see your smiling faces there on Friday the 26th. Just remember, Dinner starts promptly at 19:30 Hours (7:30 PM for you civilian types).

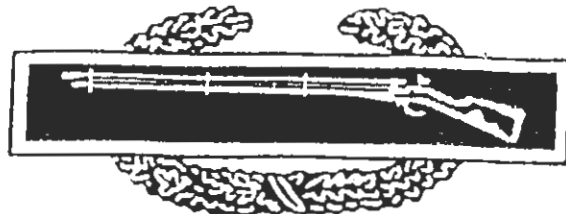
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There are still a few out there who have not sent in their \$20.00 registration fee. Please do so immediately. Also, time is all but out for the return of the form with the necessary information on which events you plan to attend. Please, guys, do so now!! It is hard to arrange for the proper amount of food at the dinners without this information. Also, the bus costs are eating up much of the funds and I do not want to "book" any extra bus trips that may not be necessary. Again, each member who is coming to the reunion, whether you stay at this hotel, another, or drive, we still need a \$20. registration fee to help defray costs of hall rentals, busses, etc. Please!!

5. Who used the call sign, "Webbed Payroll?"



REUNION UPDATES



Additional members who have signed up for and plan on attending 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.

57.	MARK E BELZER	-	ALPHA COMPANY	'70 - '70
58	JOHN A HOPP	-	HEADQUARTERS COMPANY	'69 - '70
59	BILLY W HAYES	-	BRAVO COMPANY	'67 - '68
60	HERBERT RANDALL ED.D	-	CHARLIE COMPANY CO	'67 - '68
61	TOBY JORDAN	-	ALPHA COMPANY	'67 - '68
62	THOMAS ZAMZOW	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'68 - '69

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 What does Bill Clinton say to Hillary after having some great sex?  
 ("Honey, I'll be home in 20 minutes.")

6. What was the name given to the small mountain south of Dam Tra-o?

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 A NEW FORMAT  
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Beginning with the next newsletter, due to come out within a few weeks after the reunion, I hope to have several additional columns to add to our newsletter. I want to have the President, Historian, and Chaplain include with each newsletter a brief column of their own. It can be an entire page or just a short paragraph. I hope to have some interesting stories from the reunion included with the newsletter. And as I stated before, if any of the members have an article that might be of interest to the Association members, a story from the past, an update on their life right now,...anything...please feel free to send it to the editor and we will include that article in the next available newsletter.

I would also like to start a Birthday Club. If everyone would send to the editor their birthdate, I will post them in each newsletter for the three month period whose birthday occurred during that time. Of course, being the discretionary person I am, the year will not be published.

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For anyone who has not yet booked a room at the Embassy Suites, Sorry! Time has run out and they have used those rooms for additional guests. If you wish a room, try the following:

- Sheraton Old Towne
- Ramanda Old Towne
- Old Towne Holiday Inn



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The following form is an example of one which I will pass out at the reunion during our general meeting. We will be deciding at this meeting where our next reunion will be held. If any of you would like to volunteer to assist in the planning of the next reunion, please fill out the information here and bring along to the reunion, or send to me prior to the reunion so it may be brought up on the floor. Thank you.

SECOND ANNUAL 1/50TH INFANTRY REUNION 1998

Reunion Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Member No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZipCode \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Reunion Site \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Hotel(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Nearest Major Airport \_\_\_\_\_

Does Hotel offer Shuttle Service? \_\_\_\_\_ Does hotel allow beverages? \_\_\_\_\_

Free Parking? \_\_\_\_\_ Hospitality Room available \_\_\_\_\_ Dining? \_\_\_\_\_

Attractions nearby \_\_\_\_\_

Tours Available \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteers to help you with reunion:

Name	Address	Phone Number
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Name	Address	Phone Number
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Name	Address	Phone Number
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Please forward this to the Secretary as soon as you have provided the necessary information.



# 1/50th MECHANIZED INFANTRY BATTALION

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## ADDRESS CHANGES

While most of you have not moved recently, there are several who have and have not notified me of this change. Please clip the form and save for future use if you contemplate an address change. Several of you have kept me informed of address change or a different phone number or area code, some have not ... An Article 15 for those bad offenders.

It costs a great deal of money to send out over 100 newsletters five times a year and when they are returned undeliverable because of address changes, it costs us twice then, once we find your new address. So please, take a few minutes to update your records when there is a change. Please help us get "The Right Track" out to you on time and as cost effective as we can by utilizing the form below.

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We want you to receive your copy of the newsletter without any delay. Notify us of your new address here. Include with form your old address so we can remove it from the directory and database.

Clip this address change form and mail to:

Kenneth G Riley  
200 Georgetown Court  
Hanover PA 17331

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Please \_\_\_\_\_ Print)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
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\*\*\*\*\*  
DIRECTORY OF E-MAIL ADDRESS  
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1/50th Home Page      <http://web2.airmail.net/npoage/1st50th>

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Richard Guthrie      RPGUT3@aol.com

A SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL MEMBERS:

On 30 July, 1997, Stanley Walulek became the 100th member to join the association. Gentlemen, this association was formed officially on 1 January 1997. In less then 7 months, I was able to contact and interest the 100th member to join our association. This is in part due to a lot of you out there who sent me names and addresses or even made that contact yourself of a previous battalion member. To that I say thank you very much. BUT! we can not rest there. Somewhere scattered across these United States of America are many more guys who still have not been approached. Please! Keep up the good work and contact that one guy you might know and have him get in touch with me. One Hundred is great to belong to an association...Two hundred would be fantastic!!