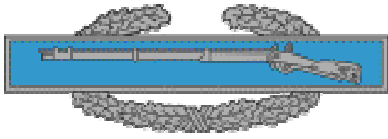


ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association



September, 2007

Cover Page

FROM THE TC HATCH

Jimmy Segars, President

I hope all of you have had a great summer. My family and I have. As we go into September, a new calendar year starts for many organizations. We in the 1/50th see it as a time to encourage our members to further contact men who served in our unit but are still not members. We want to be able to interact with all former and current soldiers of this great battalion. Take time each day to remember our men and women who are fighting every day to protect our freedom.

Speaking of new, a project was informally discussed at our last reunion that has been proposed by our association's wives. They are planning to put together a cookbook tentatively entitled *Cooking in the Field*. Diana Clark has graciously consented to head the project. We are looking for favorite recipes in any category. We are also interested in little tidbits about how we cooked things out in the field in Vietnam, especially humorous stories. You all remember how some of the things that we cooked and the way that we prepared them make for very interesting reading. Also, any side notes that are of human interest (and acceptable for print!) can be submitted. Diana is planning on having everything done and ready for the next reunion. When ready, she can make them available on the web site. The goal is to make them affordable but also profitable to help support the 1/50th. Submit recipes and/or stories to sassydianami@aol.com or mail them to: Diana Clark * 13303 Kimberly Street * Southgate, MI 48195 (Ph. 734-284-9161). You may also contact me as well. Our thanks go to Diana for heading this project. Ideas for the cover and photographs may also be sent to Diana. We cannot guarantee that everything submitted will get in the cookbook, but we will do our best to do so.

The stretched canvas prints for the 1/50th that were purchased at the reunion were recently mailed out. Three more are available at \$125, which includes shipping and handling. Contact me at (256) 878-7437 if you are interested in purchasing one. Also, our Association would like to extend its thanks and gratitude to Herb and Lavone Clark of Salina, Kansas, who graciously made and donated so many patriotic items that we auctioned off at the reunion and gave as mementos to our members. Your gifts made us all feel special. We feel the same about you. Thank you again so much for your support of the 1/50th. Thank all of you members for your support. We wish you well.



REMEMBER VETERAN'S DAY

11 NOVEMBER 2007

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Billie McGregor, Editorial Assistant

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FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

RON LERAAS

In a recent edition of my local paper, there was an article about an individual who had just pleaded guilty to overstating his Army service and awards. He was claiming to be ex-Special Forces with three Purple Hearts, three Silver Stars, and was also showing a letter with a (supposed) General Officer's signature, claiming he was recommended for the Medal of Honor (for those of you who may subscribe to the Army Times, this is the same guy they used as a cover story in the early August edition). The article said he was using this false information to try to convince a car dealer to give him free use of a new car because of his status as an Iraq War "hero". The truth (from both papers) is that he had been discharged from the Army for much the same reason.

I have read Jug Burkett's book, "Stolen Valor", (I very heartily recommend it) and have heard about quite a few wannabees being outed, but had never been directly involved in a situation -- until a friend told me that her granddaughter had just started dating a 20-year old who had been a Navy SEAL, but had injured his knee in an accident on an aircraft carrier and was medically discharged. I don't remember my direct response, but it was along the lines that I considered this story to be of pure bovine scatology, and wondered if the girl had told her father (a retired Air Force NCO) about her new beau's background, with the unspoken wish that I could be nearby when she did. As it turned out, the romance was short-lived; but I still wish I could have met the young man and asked him about life on a carrier and if his BUDS experience was as tough as it's made out to be.

I spent the last week of July at Camp Perry, Ohio -- a National Guard base on the southern shore of Lake Erie -- competing in the National High Power Rifle Championships. I actually did OK, placing 345th out of 1300 shooters in one match and 74th out of 1200 in the next match, but should have done better (of course, all the shooters can say that). I re-entered the sport after a forty-year break (last fired competitively in the Sixties) and was pleased that I was able to pick it up and turn in credible scores at this late stage in my life. My current shooting discipline is Service Rifle, at ranges varying from 200, 300, and 600 yards with iron sights (no scopes), and am about to get heavily involved in Long-Distance shooting (ranges of 800, 900, and 1000 yards -- again, no scopes). Before my hiatus, the rifle of choice was the M1 or M14; now, it's the M16 (albeit a tricked-out one). Who would have thought that our M16s had any utility other than shredding underbrush thirty yards in front of us. I offer this little tidbit of ego-satisfaction partly to reminisce about the RUSH and déjà vu moments you get being in the pits (pulling and scoring the targets) when 220 shooters are simultaneously firing ten rounds within a time period of sixty seconds -- about four feet over your head. Just saw this bumper sticker -- "I was a Vietnam vet before it became cool"

VETERAN LEGISLATION

Following is a listing of Congressional bills of interest to the veteran community that have been introduced in the 110th Congress.

H.R.0089: Combat-Related Special Compensation Act. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to extend eligibility for combat-related special compensation (CRSC) paid to certain uniformed services retirees who are retired under chapter 61 of such title with fewer than 20 years of creditable service. Sponsor: Rep Bilirakis, Gus M. [FL-9] (introduced 1/4/07). Cosponsors (37). Companion bill S.986. To support this bill and/or contact your Representative refer to <http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=9240191>.

H.R.0092: Veterans Timely Access to Health Care Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish standards of access (i.e. 30 days) to care for veterans seeking health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, would allow referral to civilian care in cases where the standard is not met, would require the VA to annually report its performance in meeting those access standards, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep Brown-Waite, Ginny [FL-5] (introduced 1/4/07). Cosponsors (8). Status: Subcommittee Hearings Held. To support this bill and/or contact your Representative refer to <http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=9240456>.

H.R.0109: Disabled Veteran Small Business Eligibility Expansion Act of 2007. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to make service-disabled veterans eligible under the 8(a) business development program. Sponsor: Rep Davis, Jo Ann [VA-1] (introduced 1/4/07) Cosponsors (2).

H.R.0191: Senior Citizens Tax Elimination Act. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the inclusion in gross income of Social Security benefits. Sponsor: Rep Paul, Ron [TX-14] (introduced 1/4/07). Cosponsors (10).

H.R.0243: Combat Military Medically Retired Veteran's Fairness Act. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the payment of Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) to members of the Armed Forces retired for disability with less than 20 years of active military service who were awarded the Purple Heart. Sponsor: Rep Weller, Jerry [IL-11] (introduced 1/5/07). Cosponsors (11).

H.R.0303: Retired Pay Restoration Act. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) and to eliminate the phase-in period under current law with respect to such concurrent receipt. Sponsor: Rep Bilirakis, Gus M. [FL-9] (introduced 1/5/07). Cosponsors (134). To support this bill and/or contact your Representative refer to <http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/?bill=9240026>

H.R.675: Disabled Veterans Adaptive Housing Improvement Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the amount of assistance available to disabled veterans for specially adapted housing and to provide for annual increases in such amount.

THE EDITORS PAGE

JOHN TOPPER

National Infantry Museum Update – with excerpts from an article by Cyndy Cerbin in the Fall Issue of the *Infantry Bugler*.

The museum is ramping up and visible progress is being made at the Fort Benning site. The \$86 million facility is about nine months into the construction phase and a lot of steel is currently in place. The target date for completion and grand opening is for fall 2008. The 186,000 square foot museum is located on a 200 acre parcel of land known as Patriot Park.

Adjacent to the museum is a seven-acre parade ground that will be used for graduation exercises, change of command ceremonies and other events. When the new field is ready, graduates will march onto the manicured grass while their families will sit in a stadium that includes concession stands and rest rooms. A parking area will be provided that is a marked improvement over the current conditions at Sand Hill.

Perhaps the most meaningful feature of the parade field will be beneath the feet of the graduating Infantrymen. The ground will be seeded with soil from Yorktown, Gettysburg, Normandy and other historic battlefields. As these young men join the ranks of America's Army, they literally will be standing on sacred soil fought for by the soldiers who came before them.

At our last reunion, we were treated to a preview of some of the grounds surrounding the museum where we visited the WWII Company Street, a collection of seven authentically restored building that represent a time when 16 million Americans joined the war effort. We were welcomed and briefed by Colonel Greg Camp and then toured the buildings, reflecting on time spent in similar buildings at various posts around the country. The WWII Company Street is the only part of Patriot Park in use today – the chapel is used for weddings, reunions and memorial services.

A key element of the museum will be the Last 100 Yards Ramp. The ramp, 30 feet wide and 100 yards long, will give visitors an intensive and interactive overview of the Infantry's 233-year history as they begin their trek through the museum. The first stop will be Redoubt #10, where Alexander Hamilton's triumph opened the way for American victory in the War for Independence. Next, Union troops can be seen taking the bridge at Antietam. Visitors will walk through a bombed-out building at Soissonne and meet soldiers scaling the daunting cliffs of Omaha Beach. A Huey helicopter drops troops at Landing Zone X-Ray and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle at the top of the ramp bears witness to the successes of the mechanized ground war in Desert Storm. At the end of the ramp visitors will enter the various galleries depicting all wars in which the Infantry soldier has fought. The Vietnam gallery features the heat, humidity and hidden faces of the Viet Cong and brings jungle combat to life.

Other galleries will feature a Hall of Valor, a Ranger Hall of Honor and a gallery that pays tribute to the wives, mothers and children of Infantrymen.

A complete tour of the museum will take about three hours. It will be a prime feature of our next reunion in 2009. Details of that reunion will begin forming next summer.

Cook Book Contributions



Submit recipes and/or stories to

sassydianami@aol.com

or mail them to:

Diana Clark

13303 Kimberly Street

Southgate, MI 48195

(Ph. 734-284-9161)

CHAPLAIN'S

PARKER PIERCE

**O
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N
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R**

Greetings to all of you, I pray that as I write this newsletter, it finds all of you and your families fine and in good health. As we all know things can change in an instant! I personally have just received a good report on my health, of which I am exceedingly grateful to God! As many of us have heard the expression "If you have Jesus you have everything," and this is very true, but adding to "If you have Jesus and your health, then we should most definitely never ask for anything else!" This past Saturday, September 8th, I attended a "home going" service for a Christian brother in Jesus Christ. He was a fifty-three years old "once a Marine, always a Marine" gentleman that I had known for twelve to fifteen years. He was my son's best friend's father. He never went to war or even overseas while in the Marines (early 70's), but this past May he and a team of five went to Iraq to correct and implement a new defense system for our military on our helicopters. He was a civil service employee and one great guy! He was an expert on the hardware of the particular system used in our helicopters. The team worked sixteen to eighteen hours each day in that horrendous heat in Iraq! Their mission was a complete success, but only he became ill after returning to the U.S. He went from a head cold, to pneumonia, to "life support", to lung surgery then eventually into the presence of his Lord in two and one half months! His final task before leaving Iraq was to write the instructions for the new defense system, which will be used around the entire world. Cheek Gordon was his name but most people called him "Chuck". Personally, Chuck and their entire team are American heroes! Yes, they were paid by their company to go but it was a volunteer type mission and only three people were chosen out of the fifteen originally considered. There was a supervisor r, a major (a Navy pilot), Chuck, and two others all experts in their fields. At a gathering after the funeral I mentioned to the supervisor had they received any recognition for their efforts? He did tell me that they had received overtime pay and a bonus, but most importantly, he shared this story. One of the helicopter pilots after returning from a mission went to each team member and thanked them for saving the lives of himself and his crew. He told them that a missile had been fired at them, but he was able to maneuver out of the path of the missile, because the new defense system the team had put into his chopper did its job! No doubt there will be many more similar stories in the future as was told by this American military pilot. I shared this about Chuck Gordon and the others, because I felt in my heart that all of us could appreciate what they did, because of us being in the Vietnam War we know that equipment working properly can definitely save lives. In closing I pray our Lord's continual blessings on each of and your family members. Let's continue to pray for our President, America, our troops, and each other. Please contact me with special prayer request. Thank you. Parker

Battle Dress for an Infantryman (In 2007 \$)
Sources: DOD and Global Security

	WWII	Vietnam	Iraq/Afghanistan	2015
Cost:	\$170	\$1,172	\$17,472	\$28,000-\$60,000 (will vary)
Equipment:	Web belt	Load-bearing gear	Kevlar helmet	Air burst weapon
	Steel helmet	Steel helmet	Night & thermal scopes	Op picture in helmet
	Leather boots	M-16 Rifle	Body armor	Increased body armor
	M1 Rifle	Flak vest	Fire retardant gloves	Kneepads integrated into uniform
	Leggins	Jungle boots	Knee & elbow pads	Hand-held planner with tactical radio
			Close combat	LBE will integrate:
			Optics	Power supply
			M4 modular carbine	Sensors
			Combat boots	Body cooling system
			Safety glasses	Robust radio network
Weight	35.8 pounds	35.1 pounds	75.3 pounds	Weight will vary
Ratio of WIA to KIA				
	2.40 to 1 (41%)	3.1 to 1 (32%)	8.3 to 1 (12%)	
# Soldiers Served	11 million	2.3 million	766,066	

COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE

BY DENNIS DRISCOLL

I was once asked what the badge with the rifle on the blue background indicated. I stated. "It is awarded to infantrymen who have served in combat. The blue background represents infantry; the wreath indicates front line action in a combat zone and the musket dates back to April 19, 1775 to the Battle of Concord and Lexington. That was the first infantry unit." Pondering over my statement, I felt that members of my family, friends and acquaintances did not know the extent of what is involved in receiving this prestigious award. Historically it is wonderful we have never had to fight foreign nations on American soil for an extended period. Do the majority of Americans appreciate the freedoms we have in this country? Has our society become indifferent and take for granted the life style we have? Most Americans have been removed from the experience of front line combat. Military personal who never experienced extended time in an infantry unit cannot relate to the daily routine of all that is involved, required and expected being an infantryman in combat.

The more people know what the experience of war is and war's effects physically, spiritually and psychologically, maybe, just maybe, individuals will show greater respect and tolerance to veterans. Leaders of nations will think more deeply about the avocation of war when they have never been to war or have never been directly touched by war.

It is a great sacrifice. I wished I had taken the time to share some of my experiences with my father before he died. I did not. I feel that he is well aware of my experiences now that I share with you. I hope you may share this with your families.

The following are daily incidents that my brothers and I experienced while severing with the 1st Battalion 50th Infantry Regiment in Vietnam. I share them so those who make decisions of sending others to war do so with great thought and reservation. We are humbly proud to have been awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Combat Medic Badge.

When one group of individuals or country attempts to impose their will on another group of individuals or country this action is called an insurrection, rebellion, conflict or war. War is the worst of all evils. Every possible evil occurs during a war. In the American Armed Forces the units that experience this horror of war more than another unit and has had the greatest number of casualties is the Combat Infantryman of the Army and the Marine Corps Rifleman.

To convey the experience of war to an individual who has not had the exposure of front line combat is close to incomprehensible. In attempting to comprehend the incomprehensible is challenging emotionally and psychologically. The soldier who wears the Combat Infantryman's Badge has experienced the horrors of war from the ground level. All his senses were greatly impacted. The Combat Infantryman may have left the combat zone but the combat will never leave the Combat Infantryman. Years after combat experiences certain stimuli can trigger a response or reaction of one kind or another. The reaction can be a quick movement, a jump, turn, or ducking from a noise of some type. The stimuli can be a smell, sound (such as a light click), heavy rain or a reflection. The click is a reminder of a booby trap or a mine that has been tripped to go off and you are exceptionally close to a pending explosion. It takes us back in time and we relive the event over again.

"Never in the history of the world have any soldiers sacrificed more for the freedom and liberty of total strangers than the American soldier." This was stated by Zell Miller, US Senator from Georgia in 2004. Time magazine prepared a list of the top ten most influential people of the twentieth century. The American "G.I." was selected as the most influential. This holds true today with our front line infantryman. The one who wears the Combat Infantryman Badge knows of sacrifice, courage and dedication to duty. He has learned to control and overcome many fears.

The Combat Infantryman's Badge was established on 27 October 1943 during World War II. "It is high time we recognize in a personal way the skill and heroism of the American infantry." This quote is from Secretary of War Henry Stinson in 1943.

In accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-22, paragraph 2 – 6, personnel possessing an infantry MOS, the unit being in active combat with the enemy during the period and have thirty (30) consecutive days in combat, an infantryman can be awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge. The regulation clearly states that the individual has had to satisfactory performed his duties in action against the enemy.

The basic MOS for infantry is 11B for Infantryman, 11C Indirect Fire Infantryman (heavy weapons include the 50 caliber machine gun, 81 MM mortar and the 4.2 mortar), 11D (scouts) and 11Z Infantryman Senior Sergeant. It has been recognized that of all soldiers the infantryman continuously operated under the worst conditions and performed missions, which were not assigned to any other soldier or unit.

The infantry is the oldest branch of the Army. Ten companies of riflemen were authorized by the Continental Congress on 14 June 1775. In combat the daily mission of the infantry is to close with and destroy the enemy and seize and hold terrain. What was true in 1775 holds and continues to be the infantryman's objective.

Combat is much more than being fired upon or fired at. It involves immediate decisions under all types of hostile conditions. You do not endanger, as much as possible, your comrades in performing a mission. You assist your comrades who are in danger. While the enemy is engaged, each soldier involves himself with many life and death decisions. (continued on page 6)

"Above all, we must realize that no arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women. It is a weapon our adversaries in today's world do not have."

Ronald Wilson Reagan

(continued from page 5)

The infantrymen of the 1/50th Infantry, during their tours in Vietnam, fought under extreme and continually changing conditions. Climatic, topographic, environmental, social, political conditions and spiritual confrontations were dealt with daily. These conditions became secondary when sporadic and intense combat conditions automatically made all troops focus on group and individual survival. The infantryman took care and protected each other with great altruism. Men shared and sacrificed daily.

The health of the soldier was paramount. The medics and doctors were constantly reminding the infantryman to take their pills, practice personal hygiene and field sanitation. This was extremely difficult considering the combat and living conditions.

The diseases we were exposed to included meningitis, malaria, plague, leptospirosis (transmitted through water contaminated by rat urine), rabies, fungus infection, infectious hepatitis, diarrhea, dysentery, smallpox, typhus fever, tetanus, typhoid, cholera, colds, flu and pneumonia. If you forgot to mix your iodine tablets in your drinking water you could get sick real fast for an extended period of time.

All these conditions had great psychological impact on each individual. Each had different levels of apprehension. Being away from mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, wives, children, other family members and friends was difficult. The infantrymen of the 1/50th banded together and met these numerous conditions straightforward. They showed and continue to show great brotherhood from squad, platoon, company and battalion unity regardless of when they served. Members of the armed forces share a common bond. Those who served in combat even have a tighter bond. It is a dignity given and respect that goes beyond words.

When first arriving in Vietnam, whether from aircraft or the USNS John Pope, the climatic conditions were abrupt. Heat, humidity and atmospheric pressure greeted us. It did not take long for the troops to begin to perspire and begin a weight loss program. These conditions drained the men of strength. It was necessary to have clean water as much as possible so dehydration would not affect a unit's preparedness by taking the men out of combat. We also had to learn about new smells and odors and what each of those might indicate. Whether it was food cooking, a cooking fire or rice paddies fertilized with human excrement.

Tropical climate and tropical rain forests have year round warmth with temperature well over 100 degrees. These types of jungles receive well over 80 - 100 inches of rain each year. It is very humid. These tropical climatic zones are homes for millions species of animals and living organisms. The tropical climates in Southeast Asia had monsoons. Monsoons are wind driven heavy rains that can last for an extended period of time.

The infantryman operating in this environment adapted and innovated. Rarely was the combat infantryman dry during the rainy season. He needed to be prepared for insects and snakes of all types. A few species I recall are mosquitoes, ants, leeches, spiders, centipedes, scorpions, bamboo vipers, the Krait, cobras, tree snakes, water snakes and pythons. The infantryman controlled his frustrations and continued to be effective and resourceful. Missions and objectives were performed very well. All these responsibilities were performed and completed with minimal rest or sleep. These infantrymen of the 1/50th were exceptionally professional in their duties.

The infantryman walked all types of terrain in Vietnam. Sandy beaches scattered with punji stakes and man traps, rice paddies of varying depth, jungles, mountains, flooded streams, canals, walked through elephant grass, through dense vegetation, over hills, followed ridge lines, swamps, marshes, open areas and many other topographical features. While performing the mission the men had to be aware of the numerous hazards of minefields, booby traps, snipers or surprising an unprepared NVA or Viet Cong unit. The infantryman watched his every step. We did not want to be surprised ourselves and caught in an ambush. This was the enemy's territory. They were very good.

The Viet Cong and most of the NVA spent years in specific Areas of Operation. They were exceptionally knowledgeable of their terrain. It was their back yard. The enemy had been patrolling and preparing base camps and tunnels for years. They knew best where to set ambushes and make well-prepared attacks. The infantryman had to be exceptionally alert. For many missions it was our first time in a specific area. We were in constant peril. Every infantryman had to be exceptionally alert and react at any indication of danger.

Combat Air Assaults were frequent missions performed by the infantryman. There were missions that the helicopters we were in received hostile fire going into and out of the landing zones. The sounds of enemy rounds varied when they hit the helicopter. Some sounds were like small rocks hitting a tin roof or a big June bug hitting the windshield of your car. The landing zones were hot (receiving fire as the troops unloaded). The platoon and companies would then embark on the assigned mission. The troops would then proceed to an alternate LZ for extractions. The missions were several hours or several overnights. There were insertions when squads disembarked and then were immediately extracted due to the overwhelming presence of the enemy. We learned to love the sound of a helicopter. It was our lifeline.

Types of missions the infantryman performed varied. Duties and missions related directly to combat and had to be adjusted to each topographic feature and terrain. Perimeter guard duty and patrol, listening posts, observation posts, short range ambush, long range ambush, search and clear, search and destroy, sweep missions on foot or with our APC's, reconnaissance patrols, good will missions, village searches, tunnel search, performing security for the National Police, air assault mission, and rescue missions. During all the missions each unit had to establish disciplined fire and maneuver, movement, radio contact with fire support and base operations.

The Infantryman was continually engaged in firefights of varying degrees. These varied from single sniper fire, firefights of a few minutes to several hours and frontal assaults from the Viet Cong and the NVA. The noise could be deafening. Frequently the infantryman could sense that strange stillness before an engagement. At the conclusion or aftermath of an engagement a great stillness would return to the men. It is then the infantryman surveys the extent of any damage upon his unit and then the enemy. (continued on page 7)

"I just wrap my arms around the whole backfield and peel 'em off one by one until I get to the ball carrier....him I keep!"

Big Daddy Lipscomb

(continued from page 6) The aftermath of these engagements leaves lasting impressions. The infantry medics and corpsmen continue about their work in helping the wounded. Squads are checking for casualties. Patrols are sent out to assess enemy movement and location. Medevac helicopters, also known as "Dustoff", fly in to retrieve wounded and the dead. It was with great grief to see a comrade with horrific wounds. The most difficult task, I still feel, is to place a comrade in a body bag. These are sobering and lasting experiences.

A debriefing generally takes place. Then the infantryman continues his obligations towards himself, fire team and unit. Weapons are cleaned and reloaded. Each squad reestablishes their fields of fire and check perimeter security. There is little to talk about. The experience was similar to all. Everyone is alone with their own thoughts as to what happened, the losses and how quickly another firefight could occur.

We have heard war, seen war, smelled war, tasted war and touched war. It takes years for someone to share the intensity of feelings each went through. A great deal of contemplation and thought continues to takes place for the infantryman. Some try not to think of the experience as if it never happened. I believe that all this is part of our individual destiny. Our paths have crossed for reasons we may not know or understand now. It is part of our continuing spiritual experience.

The infantryman is thankful for the brothers who supported them and came to their aid many times. The Air Force with tactical support, the Navy with their long distant fire support and our unit support system. The mail we received was so valuable, food, supplies, USO and great moral support of our comrades and leaders. Today we still cling to that brotherhood. For many of the veterans we were treated far better in the combat zone than on returning home. Things are better now. Welcome home brother!

The infantryman and the rifleman are the best line in our defense. They share a bond and brotherhood that few have. Hopefully you may have an understanding and appreciation to what the Combat Infantryman and the USMC Rifleman dealt with, confronted, experienced and sacrificed. I pray that wars of all types will stop. That prayer depends on the human race. Each person has the free will to choose peace or violence. It is good versus evil. Until then the Combat Infantryman will be there to protect America's freedoms. God Bless You!

"THESE GOOD MEN"

BY MICHAEL NORMAN

I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity.

I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

I cannot say where we are headed. Ours are not perfect friendships; those are the province of legend and myth. A few of my comrades' drift far from me now, sending back only occasional word. I know that one day even these could fall to silence. Some of the men will stay close, a couple, perhaps, always at hand.

As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades - such good men.

Vitai Lampada

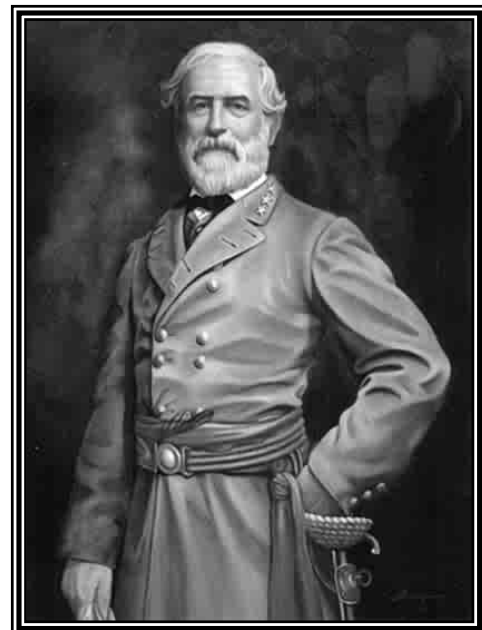
They Pass On The Torch of Life
Sir Henry Newbolt 1862-1938



There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight
Ten to make and the match to win --
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red, --
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;--
The Gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honor a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind--
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"



"It appears we have appointed our worst generals to command forces, and our most gifted and brilliant to edit newspapers. In fact, I discovered by reading newspapers that these editor/geniuses plainly saw all my strategic defects from the start, yet failed to inform me until it was too late. Accordingly, I am readily willing to yield my command to these obviously superior intellects, and I will, in turn, do my best for the Cause by writing editorials - after the fact."

Robert E. Lee, 1863