

ON THE RIGHT TRACK
1ST BATTALION, 50TH INFANTRY ASSOCIATION
EDITOR LORENE BURCH



APRIL, 2020

COVER

From the TC Hatch

By Jim Seagers

Hello everyone,

I hope all of you are doing well, especially since this has been a hard winter for all Americans. Take care of yourself to avoid prevalent illnesses. Lorretta and I are doing fine. She keeps me busy carrying her to various doctor appointments and therapies related to her cancer. Over-all, she is doing well, only very tired most days. Thank you for your prayers for us. As for me, I have “cabin fever” from lack of going to the golf course because we have had so much rain.

About two weeks ago, Lorretta and I attended the graduation of B Company from the Army’s first new cycle of 22 weeks. As Lt. Col. Gallagher said, “This Company of soldiers is the most prepared of any previous group to graduate from basic training at Ft. Benning due to the longer cycle.”

We were planning to go to the annual Military Ball on the 27th of this month; but due to the Corona virus, the ball has been canceled. Maybe we will be dancing at home, but we always enjoy seeing once again all those officers in the 1/50th and their lovely wives and girlfriends all dressed up. Next month, we will attend the Change of Command for Lt. Col. Gallagher, who will be leaving Ft. Benning for another assignment. This change usually occurs in June, but Lt. Col. Gallagher’s new assignment starts early. He has done an outstanding job with the 1/50th Infantry and will be certainly missed, along with his wife Elizabeth and their family. Our Association wishes you well for a job well done and hopes your future is very bright! Thank you and your men for your service to our country!

At this time, I have not been informed who our new Battalion Commander will be (See LTC Farewell message below); but as usual, I’m sure we will get another outstanding leader to add to those who have been so gracious to our association over the last decade and more.

Play the Game,

Jimmy

From the TC Hatch	P 1
Chaplin’s Corner.	P 2
Farewell from LTC Gallagher.	P 2
Historian/Jim Sheppard.	Pp 3-5
Wreath’s Across America.	P 5
Letter from the editor.	P 5
“C” & “E” Company Reports.	Pp 6-7



Chaplin's Corner

Hello to everyone and I pray that this finds you well.

Spring is upon us and election time is drawing near and I for one am ready for it to be over. I have never seen so many people and many of whom I have known for years be so divided on politics. Also, we now have this virus that's spreading all over the world and has people pointing their fingers at each other. I think it's time we get back to basics and show love for our brothers and sisters and look to a much higher power to solve our problems.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Sergeant Major Lewis for new position at the Infantry Museum. May God Bless, and I hope to see you at the change of command.

Toby

Farewell from LTC Gallagher

As my time commanding 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment comes to a close, I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to every member of the Association. Throughout my over 18 years of service in the Army, I cannot recall any Association being more active or supportive than the 50th Infantry Regiment Association. The camaraderie and support you provide is invaluable for our cadre and trainees, and helps reinforce how all of our actions to build the world's best Infantry are only possible due to the bravery and valor of all those who came before.

Reunion week in particular will be an indelible memory that always stays with me. It has truly been a privilege to serve in the ranks of this storied unit, and I will always be grateful for this singular opportunity.

I look forward to my next challenge, which will be commanding an Infantry Battalion in the 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) based in Fort Hood, Texas. I am confident the incoming commander, LTC Justin Daubert, will be excited to continue building on this phenomenal legacy you have assembled. Thank you for all you continue to do every day!



Fix Bayonets!
LTC Brendan R. Gallagher



From your Historian

“Maturing into a leader”.

I joined Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry at Fort Hood, Texas on December 21st, 1965.

I had enlisted after receiving my draft notice since I had no desire to face the probability that I would end up spending 2 years in the Infantry as a draftee with no choice of my military occupational specialty. At the time of my draft notice and ensuing decision to enlist, I did not know that my high GT score (The military “IQ equivalent”) would likely have positively affected my service commitment assignment. And so I arrived in Texas for my Basic Combat Training.

I learned that the 1st of the 50th had been recently pressed into becoming a training unit due to the increasing expectation that the Vietnam War would escalate. Before training could begin, command offered all the new trainee arrivals the option to take a week of leave for the Christmas Holidays. Not having the financial resources to take advantage of the unexpected leave time, I and many others (about half) remained at Fort Hood. Since training would not begin until after the holidays, our days were spent having mostly “free time” with most of our training cadre. We used this time to begin learning how to set up our individual areas. We learned how to make our bunks, set up our foot lockers, arrange clothing in our wall lockers and arrange and shine our footwear.

Not realizing at the time that I tend to flourish in an environment where things are well organized...I found that I really picked up all of this Standard Operating Procedure quite quickly and quite well. As a result, when everyone returned and we began our Basic Training, I was selected to be one of my platoon’s acting squad leaders...proudly wearing the black armband with Corporal stripes. Since I was now a week ahead of the rest of the trainees who had gone on leave, I not only used my acting leadership to assist in the training of my squad...but also branched out to assist many from my entire platoon. I was also given the task of participating in the final inspecting our platoon bay with our Cadre after our morning cleaning had been completed. On a daily basis, I was the last man out of the platoon bay as I operated the floor buffer in the last sweep down the center of the room. Most days our platoon won the “best platoon bay inspection” for the day that would be determined while we trained.

I found that I really enjoyed the army regimen and I was doing very well in my training. At one point, when our acting platoon leader (Who wore the black armband with Sergeant stripes) was sick, I filled that role for about a week. At the urging of my Company Commander, Executive Officer, 1st Sergeant and my Drill Sergeant, I volunteered to attend Officer’s Candidate School. Although I had only been in the service for slightly over two months...it was a thrill to think I might become an officer! All of my test scores were good...and I had only to go before an officer board for final approval.

(Continued on Page 4)

“Maturing into a leader”, Continued from Page 3

On the day of my interview...I broke starch and wore highly spit-shined boots. I looked the part...but the interview did not go well. Rather than be truthful in answering their questions, I told them what I “thought” they wanted to hear. I remember one question specifically...that was likely my downfall as I failed the review board without explanation. They asked me if I thought I could lead men in combat. My response was that I did not believe I was ready...but expected my training would prepare me to lead men in combat very well. What I should have related was that I had been a leader most of my life. I had been president of my 6th grade YMCA group, an Assistant Captain of my Ice Hockey Team and had always taken the initiative in finding work for myself after school and during the summertime. But I missed my chance.

My Company Commander was furious, but could get no response from the Officer Review Board. As a result of my volunteering for OCS, my enlistment guarantee of a non-Infantry MOS was lost and I ended up remaining with the 1st of the 50th for nearly my entire 3-year enlistment...including a short stint as an Infantryman from September to early November of 1967. Aside from that short stint in combat, I served in the supply room as the Company Armorer...and served in several REMF positions at LZ Uplift...so I was more fortunate than most.

There is much more to the story of leadership qualities during my service commitment. In the fall of 1966, I was selected by my 1st Sergeant to attend the Fort Hood NCO Academy. Once again, I blew a chance for a swift promotion to Sergeant E5 by oversleeping on my first scheduled day of the NCO Academy! I panicked and ran. Going AWOL and finally turning myself in when I came to my senses after nearly 2 weeks.

Those shortcomings are things I am not proud of, but there they were. In the years that followed, I wondered if I was a leader in life. I ventured into a successful hotel career and made it into management without a college degree...but the ravages of alcoholism crushed that career. I got sober in 1980...and have not had a drink since. I have served in several leadership positions in a well-known alcoholism 12-step program...at one time representing nearly a hundred self-help groups in my area. I moved into driving for a career...and held office in an impromptu Taxicab Association in Atlantic City before moving on to drive limousines, working as a chauffeur in the Trump organization for 13 years. I was often selected as being one of the most competent drivers in the fleet...and selected as “Employee of the Month” at the Trump Taj Mahal one year.

In 1998, I found our 50th Infantry Association...and was elected Historian at our 1999 Kansas City reunion. With this new opportunity to “prove” myself, I dove into research, document copying, website management and the creation of our Vietnam Archives. I am probably most proud of my work in memorializing all the men killed in action from our 50th Infantry Regiment on our website. Interacting with the families of those men who made the ultimate sacrifice has been extremely rewarding.

(Continued on Page 5)

“Maturing into a leader”, Continued from Page 4

As I look back on my life now...I can safely say, regardless of my active duty rank, that I have become a leader. Most of all, I have always tried to be an ambassador and lead by example...and not simply by title.

Thank you all for your constant praise, friendship, and support. You all have made the countless sacrifices that come with my Association duties all worthwhile.

Jim Sheppard

Letter from the Editor

Wreaths Across America -The Laying of the Wreaths, in Salina Kansas



In December Roger Burch and several members of the local VFW had a small informal ceremony of the laying of the Wreaths. It was meaningful and they are planning to do more for this next year. We need to thank Loretta Seagers for her support and encouragement to do this in our area.

I do hope you all are remaining healthy and avoiding all the craziness that is going on right now. Maybe it is because of my age or that I live in denial, but I am not panicked. I am just taking precautions and only getting what I feel we may need for the next few weeks. I figure it has to die down sometime. Please keep safe and keep busy. I have finally been able to work on some of the things I have put off for years because I just don't seem to have the time for them. Now that all the appointments have been canceled, I have plenty of time to do the spring cleaning and to just have fun being creative.

Today the sun is shining; give hope for a new day.

Lorene Burch

Newsletter Editor

Charlie Company “Cobras” Report

Over the past seven weeks, Cobra Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment has focused on what it takes to become an infantryman. From the start of basic training we have ingrained in our trainees four simple aspects of being a lethal infantryman; shoot, move, communicate, and survive. Based off of these four rules we are in the process of building the most lethal, disciplined, and intelligent infantryman the world has ever seen.

At the start of basic training or “Red Phase”, training weeks one to three, we received civilians from ages 17 to 34. From day one they got their first taste of their new military lifestyle receiving an initial shark attack from drill sergeants. The First week of class #0027 one station unit training (OSUT) consisted of the Leaders Reaction Course, Obstacle Course, US Mines, and the NBC (CBRN) room. Throughout the first week, trainees learned one of the most important aspects of the Army which is the Warrior Ethos. “I will always place the mission first, I will never accept defeat, I will never quit, I will never leave a fallen comrade” was learned and exemplified through all of week one.

After red phase they progressed to white phase and began developing the most important skill as an infantryman, rifle marksmanship. The trainees progressed through zeroing their weapon, barrier shooting, moving targets, and finally onto the new qualification table. The new qualification table consists of prone unsupported, prone supported, kneeling supported, and standing supported. In this phase they honed their skills as an infantryman, increasing their lethality and progressing into yet another important aspect of being an effective infantryman, fire and maneuver.

Throughout the next weeks of basic combat training the trainees will continue to progress and “turn green,” becoming a part of the Army team. They will continue onto OSUT and soon earn their blue cord, becoming a part of the world’s greatest fighting force, The United States Army Infantry.

-COBRAS!

Echo Company “War Eagle” Report

Over the past year “War Eagle” Company has spearheaded multiple initiatives in an effort to increase the lethality, physicality and knowledge base of Infantrymen graduating One Station Unit Training. Rifle marksmanship, hand to hand combat training, and the OSUT course itself were completely overhauled throughout 2019. The past year also saw the addition of Platoon Leaders in the formation working alongside Drill Sergeants.

Rifle marksmanship has been updated to reflect combat engagements seen in current conflicts across the globe. Soldiers now transition between four firing positions utilizing a hardstand barrier to help support their weapon system as they also conduct combat focused magazine reloads.

(Continued on Page 7)

“War Eagle” Report, Continued from Page 6

The entire qualification scenario is linked to a continual timer so each Soldier must master their fundamentals in order to qualify. Even with the additional complexity of the new rifle qualification, War Eagle continues to produce Eagle Eye shots who hit all 40 targets.

Infantrymen are now given the opportunity to earn a certification in hand to hand combat following a week long instructional period during Infantry OSUT. Each Soldier is taught the basics of grappling submissions, chokes, breaks and self-defense through practical demonstration and exercise. Each Infantryman demonstrates their physical prowess and knowledge by conducting a cumulative evaluation that involves both grappling and a written exam.

In the past year the Infantry OSUT course expanded an additional 8 weeks, bringing it from a 14 week training curriculum to 22 weeks. The additional 8 weeks brought OSUT training back to the basics with more time dedicated to field exercises, weapon immersion, urban operation training and Soldier skills. Throughout Infantry OSUT, future Infantrymen are tested physically and mentally in their ability to become lethal, adaptive warriors capable of winning our nations battles. War Eagle currently has over 600 graduated Infantryman serving across the globe on all continents in an effort to uphold the legacy of War Eagle Company and the 1st Battalion 50th Infantry regiment.

Fix Bayonets!
Suffer Without Complaint!

