

# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST Battalion 50th Association



August 2015

Cover Page

From the TC Hatch

By Jim Seagers

President's Corner

Hello Members,

I hope all is well. We are here in Alabama, but it is so hot. I feel for our soldiers at Ft. Benning having to endure training in such hot weather. It is even too hot some days to play golf. Now that says something!

I want to thank all who attended and worked so hard to make our spring reunion the success that it was. Thank you gentlemen in the 1/50<sup>th</sup> cadre and Lt. Col. Kahmann for the efficient, professional, and outstanding job you did. Thank you also Mrs. Kahmann for being a great hostess. Thank you John Topper for a job well done. Also, I'd like to recognize Jay Copley for representing our Association at every 1/50<sup>th</sup> graduation.

Our reunion will be long remembered for many events especially the moving ceremony and dedication of the addition to our memorial at the battalion. Our members seemed impressed with the Vietnam Wall replica. Every year we wonder how we can top the lastest reunion the next time, but it always amazes me how they get even better each time we meet. The 2017 Reunion will be special because it is the 50<sup>th</sup> year since the

start of our tour in Vietnam.

I was privileged to attend the Hail and Farewell social for Sgt. Maj. Bath, a great soldier and good sport. The soldiers of the current 1/50<sup>th</sup> really know how to let their hair down while sporting an "eighties" theme. See the photo below of Command Sergeant Whittington. The Social was fun. This week Mike McCardell will be recognized at such an event. Thank you soldiers for allowing the 1/50<sup>th</sup> Association to be a part of the life of the present 1/50<sup>th</sup>.

Play the Game,

Jim Seagers

President



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Jim Seagers  
and  
Command Sergeant  
Whittington

## Ladies Home Front Team

Greetings ladies,

I hope this finds you doing well. Thank you to all those who ordered the earrings at the reunion in April. I am sorry to say that I have had problems finding enough emblems for them so have back ordered what I need. Thank you for your understanding and I will send them out as soon as possible. .

Thank you,

Lorretta Segars,

Ladies Home Front

## From the Editor: Lorene Burch



Another successful reunion has past and in this news letter you will find several pictures of the event. For those of you who missed it, please think about attending the one that will be held in 2017, as we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Vietnam.

An item that I would like to bring before you, is the silent auction that we hold each year at the reunion. Several people bring items to be bid on at each reunion to help raise money for the association to help keep the cost of these events reasonable and to be able to purchase the memorials which honor our vets.

If you are a crafty person or have a hidden talent, please think about what you might be able to bring to the reunion for the auction.

## Change in Newsletter

This will be the last News Letter sent completely by mail to those who have email accounts. It is getting more expensive to have the newsletter printed and sent out, so we feel we can utilize our resources better by joining the electronic age and send this out in a group format.

The advantages of changing over:

1. We will save money.
2. Better communication ability for time sensitive information.
3. If we feel there is a need we can increase the number of News Letters to go out without increasing our budget.

So if you did not attend the 20015 reunion and would like to make sure we have your updated email addresses please send it to, Lorene Burch at the following email address: [thelmaburch@gmail.com](mailto:thelmaburch@gmail.com).

If you do not have an email address you will continue to receive the three newsletters a year.

Starting in September look for an email from the 1/50th group. I will be sending out a test email to insure that no one misses an issue. If you do not receive an email in your in box please be sure to check your junk mail. If you do not receive a notice by October 1st then please send me your email address to ensure you receive the news letter without missing an issue. Thank you,

## LET'S TALK

This was a new event this year at the reunion it gave the members and their families to speak out on several issues. I have received a few responses that I would like to put in the news letter each time until they have all been printed. I have put in the first two articles I received, more to follow in next issue. Thank you.

An open letter to the friends and members of the I/50th Association:

THANK YOU! to all of the organizers of the biannual reunion of this association. The members are all aware that without the tireless efforts of people like Jim and Loretta Segars and John Topper (to name a few), the reunions would not be possible!

2015's reunion has come and gone and, as always, was very rewarding and humbling for these men. 50 Years ago, some of these men, fresh out of high school, joined the Army. Some were drafted; some joined in anticipation of their draft number being called up. All survived basic training and were deployed for their tour (or tours) to Vietnam. After completing their tour, they returned home to a country that shunned them for fighting in a war that many Americans felt was wrong. Still, these men HAD served their country with pride!

This week, Ft Benning, again, rolled out the Red Carpet for these guys and showed them the respect that they sorely missed when they returned stateside in the 60s. The veterans were honored with a BBQ by the Cadre of the I/50th Infantry at Uchee Creek on Wednesday night. As the veterans arrived, the Cadre and their families lined up and welcomed them home with a hearty handshake and 'thank you' for their service! A humbling experience for all of these veterans!

The next morning, upon arrival at the I/50th headquarters, the veterans were again, recognized and thanked for their service and gifted with pins, commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the unit's deployment to Vietnam. A Memorial dedication was held, where a monument was unveiled. The monument recognized the fallen soldiers of the I/50th who lost their lives in battles in Vietnam. At this time, family members of some of men who died in Vietnam were recognized and presented plaques that recognized their loved ones for their service and ultimate sacrifice to this country.

This is only a few of the activities from this week, but these were the most memorable and humbling for me, as well as all of the veterans and guests.

I just wanted to take this time to thank everyone who worked so hard to make this event happen. I am looking THANK to the next reunion on 2017. If you missed this year, start making plans to come in 2017, because they promise it will be GREAT, since it will be the 50th anniversary of the deployment of the unit to Vietnam AND the 100th anniversary of the I/50th Infantry Division! So, make your plans to attend and until next time, PLAY THE GAME!!

Gwen Rainwater

(more Let's Talk on page 5)



# Chaplains page



## Our thoughts and prayers for

Randy Smith and family on the death of his father on July 24<sup>th</sup>, may his family find comfort in the celebration of his life.

Also, there are several who are dealing with the health issues of not only their own, but of their parents as well. Please remember to keep one another in your thoughts and prayers over the years as we are all growing older and with that comes some pretty tough decisions

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, Hebrews 12:1 NIV

We each have our own race to run and may we never forget those who have gone on before. May we never forget what they did and the families who sacrificed it all for our freedom.

Drawn in the sand by Shawn Barr.



## A Warrior is Lost

James Fitzgerald was a resilient man who spent much of his life overcoming adversity. The latest obstacle proved to be too much for him, however, he died July 27<sup>th</sup> with his beloved Koren by his side. A warrior is lost.

We all knew he wasn't doing well at the recent reunion, but we didn't know that it was cancer and he wasn't to be with us much longer. And that, of course, is what hurts; we didn't get to share a proper goodbye. By the time the Association became aware of his illness he was in the hospital and no longer able to speak. Some of us called and Koren held the phone for him to hear but he couldn't reply, only listen. Cards were sent but that is a poor substitute for saying goodbye and relaying thoughts and prayers in person.

A warrior is lost to us; but a warrior is gained by those who knew him all those years ago. I expect he is in the midst of a special reunion now and that he and Don Lowe are remembering... and laughing about the good times. And we can't be unhappy about that. Rest in peace brother, you deserve it.





Welcome to our first timers:

From left to right: Ed Jackson, Bill Hunter, Gary Spencer, Robin Bain, Joseph Kwak, Dewayn (Poncho Alire, Bill (Jeff) Jefferson, Tom Keelin and Larry Shipp.

*A poem read by Bobby Quick at the reunion during Let's talk:*

Eisenhower tried to warn us, about the industrial military machine.  
They start a war and keep it going, to make money by any means.

But we were going to fight communism, at least that's what we were told.  
We were naïve and not very old, full of patriotism, willing to do what we were told.

Of course we heard the rumblings, that this was not for us.

But thought we might have our doubts, we still got on the bus.

We were headed to basic training, that's how it all began.  
Drill Sergeants were going to teach us that art of becoming men.

Then it was off to AIT, but that was a piece of cake.

Then, a free ride to Vietnam where we could learn our fate.

We found a band of brothers and we were not alone.

We were all the same 10,000 miles from home.

Reality and humidity soon hit us in the face.

Then all that we would think about is when we could leave this place.

They didn't slap us on the back, and say "Brother, I'm glad you came."

Now we were cherries and new guys, they didn't know our names.

I guess we'd be cherries until we proved our might.  
They want us to prove our worth-to show them how we fight.

Eventually we're shot at—suddenly we're all the same.  
We're now a band of brothers, and they began to learn our names.



<http://cygig.blogspot.com>

By Bobby F. Quick.



## A few of the highlights from the 2015 Reunion



Jim Sheppard our historian added Charlie to the archive room. A full size replica. It was fun watching the different startled reactions upon their first viewing him.

A big thanks for all the hard work you put into making sure our men and women are not forgotten.

A beautiful addition to the museum



## Faces of the 2015 Reunion



Receiving the Order of  
St. Maurice's award.

L to R: Chuck McAleer, Gary  
Quint, Jim Sheppard, Harry  
Wilson and Ken Bath were re-  
cipients.

Presenters were: Dick Guthrie,  
John Topper, Jim Segers, Jay  
Copley and Andy Kahman.

There were so many wonderful things going on this year it is hard to post all of them. If you did not go to the reunion or did not get a chance to share your story please feel free to send it in to me at: [thel-maburch@gmail.com](mailto:thel-maburch@gmail.com) or Lorene Burch at 126 S. Ohio Apt. 1 (I as in Irene), Salina, Kansas 67401. I have several things on file at this time, so it may be a while before your article shows up, but keep watching.

Mike Canavan sent me information on how you can Wear Your Medals on Veterans Day, I encourage any of you who are interested to please look up the information at;  
<http://www.military.com/veterans-day/veteran-medals.html>.



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