

# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST Battalion 50th Association



August 2016

Cover Page

## From the TC Hatch

By Jim Seagers

Hello first of the 50<sup>th</sup> members,

I hope your having a great summer. We are here in Alabama except for the heat. It's been an unusually summer for Lorrette and me since she broke bones in both feet on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Last week she transitioned into a boot and a shoe, but she still has therapy to go. Needless to say , I've been on KP and laundry duty for several months. I'm ready to relinquish command of household chores as soon as possible.

I hope your Fourth of July celebration was memorable. I think this year especially with all that is going on in our country that we defiantly need to celebrate and honor the very essence of what freedom is. I am especially proud to be associated with all of you in the 1/50<sup>th</sup> because you know what freedom means and what is at stake in guarding it. As patriotic Americans, we need to stand firm on our countries values and principles . I am very happy that our associations does just that. And one more point, be sure to vote this coming November. It important!! It's necessary!!! And it's the right thing to do!!

Start planning now to attend our 50<sup>th</sup> Year of Deployment and 100<sup>th</sup> Year of Formation Reunion next may 2<sup>nd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup>. We are going to

have a blast! We know this will be an exciting reunion, so get in touch with your buddies, and get them and their spouses to attend.

Once again, the 1/50<sup>th</sup> has been honored with a great commander, LTC Franklin F. Baltazar. We met him, his wife Audrey, and three children at the June Change of Command. We welcome them on board and know that all and our association will have a great a relationship with them. We wish for LTC William A. Kahmann, Mandy, and their two children continued success in their military career. We will miss them. We encourage all of our former commanders to come all our future reunions. They continue to be a vital part of our association.

Play the Game,

Jim Segars

Lorene Burch,

Editor

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# REUNION NEWS

Mark your calendars for May 2-5th.  
Details on page 8 of this news letter.



# From the Chaplin



Greetings, it's been a while since I've had anything in the newsletter, we all have our excuse but I probably should have taken the time to write anyway. I have been, and continue to battle bladder cancer. I've had three procedures and hopefully am done with those except for the checkups every three months. And with God's help I'm sure everything will be okay.

The events that are going on in this world today are really disheartening and I've gotten to where I don't want to turn on the news. The best thing we can do is pray for our country and that our leaders look to God for guidance.

If anyone has any prayer request let me know, my e-mail address is on the web page. I'll be glad to make a prayer list and pray for you daily. Looking forward to seeing you at the next reunion until then be safe and may God bless. Toby



Those who served with us who have passed on. Although they are gone they will not be forgotten.  
(Forgive me if I missed someone who has passed away recently. This is something that I have recently started and am praying it will be helpful in getting the word out.)

**Matthew Stuart Morrison III**, age 71, of Dalton, Georgia passed away Monday, December 28, 2015. He was born January 31, 1944. He is preceded in death by his parents, Matthew Stuart Morrison, JR and Douglass Morrison. He is survived by his daughter, Mandy Morrison and Shawn Green of Tunnel Hill; sister and brother in law, Sally and Kenny Runyan of St. Simons Island, GA; grandchildren, Rayleigh Morrison and Raygan Green; special friend, Brenda Hart of Dalton; stepsons, Ryan Minningham and his wife Jamie of Atlanta, GA, Sye Minningham of Los Angelas, CA; step grandchildren, Leo and Ellie Minningham.

Burial:

Chattanooga National Cemetery

Chattanooga

Hamilton County

**Mitchel Collins**, 73, Claypool, IN, was born November 22, 1942 to Sam and Cloria (Conley) Collins. He passed away at the Select Specialty Hospital in Fort Wayne, IN on December 31, 2015 at 4:50 p.m.. Mitchel graduated from Sidney High School in 1961. He then joined the Army and served in the Vietnam War. After the Army he worked for Whitley Products, Pierceton, IN as a Tool & Die Maker and retired after 27 years. He was an avid wood carver. Mitchel married Evelyn F. Taylor on October 5, 1963. He is survived by his wife Evelyn; two sons David Collins, Warsaw, IN and Matthew Collins, Warsaw, IN; one brother Estel (Donna) Collins, Pittsboro, IN; two sisters Leana (John) Heinlein, Plymouth, IN and Lessie (Merl) Montel, Pierceton, IN; and two grandchildren. Mitchel is proceeded in death by his parents Sam and Cloria (Conley) Collins, and his brother Wetzel Collins.



**ORDAZ - Rigoberto "Rigo" Felix Ordaz**, 69, passed away on June 14, 2016, at his residence in Mission. Rigo is preceded in death by his parents, Felix and Delfina G. Ordaz; sisters, Raquel O. Vargas, Rebeca O. Laredo, and Rosalinda O. Hernandez. He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Hilda E. Ordaz; daughter, Christina Ordaz Dominguez; grandchildren, Abigail Y. Dominguez, Adrian J. Dominguez. He is also survived by his siblings, Maria Rene O. Cortez, Ricardo Ordaz, Rodolfo Ordaz, Rosa Maria O. Garcia, Rosa Elia O. Chacon. Rigo Ordaz served in the US Army in Vietnam with the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry as a Recon Platoon Scout and an Infantry Rifle Platoon Squad Leader. Among his awards were the Bronze Star for Valor and Purple Heart.



## Commemoration Ceremony of Armed Forces Day of South Vietnam

### From the Editor: Lorene Burch



Greetings:

Hope this finds you all doing well.

This marks the 5th year since you all were brave enough to vote me in as editor. I have enjoyed it very much and it is with great pleasure that in this edition you will find updates from the 1/50th units. What a joy to be able to fill the news letter with news from our extended family.

Sincerely,

Lorene Burch

### Ladies Home Front:

Hello, Ladies,

I hope your summer is going well. I spent most of mine in bed with my “toes above my nose” as my doctors orders say. Swelling and cast and boots evidently go together. But I am thankful I can now walk, though gingerly. By September I hope orthopedic doctor releases me to return to normal duties. My husband has been phenomenal in taking good care of me!

We have an opportunity to send a care package to our own LT C Thomas Nelson, who is deployed over seas. If you would like to contribute an item or send funds, forward to me as soon as possible to: Lorretta Segars, 2323 half-Sectionline Rd., Albertville, Al. 35950. Thanks for your support.

Don't forget to vote this November, Our future is at stake.

Lorretta Segars



Gary was invited to join our Vietnam Community in a Commemoration Ceremony of Armed Forces Day of South Vietnam. Of course other Vietnam Vets were also invited all from various branches of service.

What a terrific group of people. All of our Vets were individually recognized and thanked for his service in their country.

The personal stories were heartwarming and proved what a resilient and strong people the Vietnamese are.

To top off the evening they fed us an incredible dinner.

Sent in by:  
Kay Quint



P.S. I almost forgot. Mike McCardell says we can get lady sizes on our next reunion shirts. You can start anytime now emailing me your size so you won't have oversized ones at registration; [segars-jim-lor@charter.net](mailto:segars-jim-lor@charter.net). Thanks! See you at the next reunion!



## INTRODUCING LTC FRANK BALTAZAR

On 8 June, 2016, I took command of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and became part of this incredible unit and association. I'm extremely impressed with the professionalism of the battalion's officers, Non-Commissioned officers, and Soldiers. Their mission is absolutely critical to the Army – to build the foundation of the Army for a generation! I assure you that the infantrymen being produced by this battalion will continue to carry on your legacy. They display the very same values and patriotism as you have on previous battlefields. When the time comes, I promise you that they too will demonstrate the very same acts of bravery.



I wanted to take this opportunity in this forum to thank all of you for welcoming me and my family. We couldn't have asked for a better welcome. We had the opportunity to share a meal at Hunter's Pub in Columbus, GA and meet many of the association's officers. The 1-50<sup>th</sup> IN Association is what makes this battalion great. The support you put behind this battalion is remarkable. My wife, Audrey, and I look forward to seeing all of you at the reunion next year.

**FIX BAYONETS!**

## Blackhawk Cadre

Greetings from the Blackhawk Cadre and Families. It has been a busy year for us at Bravo Company. We started early in the year with a Change of Command. CPT Troy Singleton relinquished Command of Bravo Company to CPT Curtis Hoffman on 1 April 2016. Immediately following, we graduated 186 new Infantrymen and sent them out to the force, well trained and proficient at their chosen profession. During the break between picking up the next batch of trainees, we had a Change of Responsibility. 1SG Mathew Salinas moved to Alpha Company to be the 1SG there, leaving the seat open for SFC Gerald Mullins to step up as Blackhawk 7. Currently, we are half way through Cycle 6102 which is a Split Option Class. Trainees that choose the Split Option come to Basic Training for the first portion of their training prior to graduating High School. The Drill Sergeant's train them for 9 weeks forging them into Soldiers then send them back home for their Senior Year of High School. After the Trainees graduate High School, they come back to finish off their Infantry tasks and training to mold them into Infantrymen. As always we are planning ahead for the next cycle and batch of Trainees and are looking forward to the next 1/50<sup>th</sup> IN event.



This team begins to move the final pieces of equipment across the water obstacle at the Leadership Reaction Course.

- Blackhawk 5



## Foxtrot Instills Strength and Honor into a New Batch of Infantry Soldiers

Foxtrot Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment graduated a class of 179 new Infantrymen on 17 June 2016, sending them to Infantry units around the world. Many will be sent to airborne school, some of them to Ranger School and the Ranger Regiment, and a select few will be sent to prepare for Special Forces Assessment and Selection



This cadre of world class trainers originally picked up 220 new Soldiers in March. The rigors of the first 72 hours would prove too much for 3 of the Soldiers, who were so overwhelmed that they were shown the door almost immediately. The rest of the new trainees would have to stick it out, at least until

the end of Red Phase. More than 30 Soldiers expressed a desire to quit at one time or another during Red Phase, but the Battalion policy of refusing to let Soldiers off so easily (unless they became a detriment to training) gave the Drill Sergeants of Foxtrot plenty of time to work on toughening up these new recruits and show them their inner warrior. The end of Red Phase saw only 15 die hard quitters, with the rest of the Soldiers proving to be tougher than they had thought themselves to be and continuing on with the rest of their training.



The Red Phase included an introduction to many basic soldier skills, including communication equipment, first aid, land navigation, and marksmanship. After getting a solid foundation in these skills they moved on to more advanced instruction in White and Blue phase. The class finished qualifying on their main weapon system, the M4, with 57 of them shooting expert. They familiarized themselves with the heavy support weapons organic to infantry squads such as the M240, M249, and M320 as well as heavier weapons. They became more confident in their land navigation skills. They participated in Buddy and Fire team Live Fire exercises, demonstrating a basic level of courage and skill in a deadly environment.



Black and Gold phases wrapped up the cycle with culminating events and broadening training. They were introduced to the mechanized assets of the army, Bradley IFVs and Stykers. They conducted MOUT training, which included simulation rounds and a room where Drill Sergeants conducted live combative scenarios with them. The FTX finished the cycle off, with a focus on conventional warfare techniques such as static defense and aggressive infantry tactics.

Immediately after graduation, Foxtrot conducted a change of command, took block leave, and returned ready to receive and train the next batch of would-be infantrymen.

Submitted by: 1LT Vincent P. Delany



## Cobra Company

Since April 2016, C/1-50 trained over 200 infantrymen to join our nation's Army. During this time, C/1-50 conducted a change of responsibility between former Drill Sergeant Bizich, who made the E-8 list, and 1SG Broe, who is preparing for retirement after 20 years of service. 1SG Broe's impressive career included multiple combat tours to Iraq and Afghanistan. Along with 1SG Bizich, CPT Richard Chandler lead C/1-50 as the company's command team. The platoons are led by Senior Drill Sergeant (SDS) Locken, SDS Martin, SDS Parrish and SDS Florio. Currently, the company has 11 Drill Sergeants providing over 70 years' worth of experience, including 20 years' worth of combat experience. Needless to say, C/1-50 has the Drill Sergeants necessary to mold our Army's



**1SG Bizich and his family  
after his frock ceremony**

Trainees go through a 14 week cycle, learning the fundamentals of becoming infantrymen. During this time, our C/1-50 Drill sergeants provide the highest quality training, producing combat ready infantryman, prepared for today's Army. This training includes physical fitness, marksmanship, and land navigation. Additionally, they conduct buddy team and fire team live fires. During this training, trainees combine the fundamentals of marksmanship, hand-arm signals and individual movement techniques to successfully demonstrate their ability to shoot, move and communicate. The fun does not stop there. Trainees are introduced to a plethora of other weapons to include the Claymore Mine, Fragmentation hand grenade, 50 cal machine gun, 240 and 249 machine guns, M-19 automatic grenade launcher and AT-4 rocket launcher. Drill Sergeants teach the trainees the capabilities and limitations of these weapons systems, and the proper techniques to employ them. Trainees complete their training with a 5 day field training exercise implementing all the tasks that they have learned over the cycle.

They end their field exercise with the bayonet foot march. They start at 10:00 pm and finish around 1:00 am, finishing their foot march on Honor Hill where they receive their infantry cross rifles. A week later, they march off the parade field at the Nation Infantry Museum during their graduation and are stationed at infantry units across the world.



**C/1-50 Trainees  
conducting Mounted  
SQD Attack  
(on left)**

**C/1-50 Trainees  
conducting Bayonet  
foot march  
(on right)**



Training statistics confirm the superb work of the Drill Sergeants of C/1-50. On average, a new trainee's average PT score goes up from 187 to 250 over the 14 week cycle. This pattern continues with their rifle qualification. The company averages 34 hits out of 40, with the majority of the trainees qualifying expert. C/1-50 trainees also received one of the highest average scores in the Battalion during their Eagle Skills Assessment. Charlie Company trainees having been scoring, on average, 90% when tested on 16 infantry skills, ranging from medical, communication and movement technique skills. The Drill Sergeants of C/1-50 ensure these new infantrymen carry on the legacy of their predecessors.

**Submitted by: 1LT Vincent P. Delany**



## Echo Company 1-50<sup>th</sup> IN, BN

### By SFC Justin Smith

Our Company's last cycle graduated 17 December 2015. Since then, we assisted the battalion with numerous details and additional duties. On June 10, 2016, we picked up our first cycle. This cycle is a Split Training Option 2 (STO 2). A STO 2 Cycle is only seven weeks long, and usually around 130 to 150 Soldiers within the Class. Instead, we only received 81 Soldiers. We honestly thought this was going to be the easiest Cycle ever conducted. We were wrong in my personal opinion. This Cycle has challenged us in several different ways.

First, it has been nearly seven months since this Company had actually had a Cycle. This led to the Company as a whole forgetting all the little things that need to be done for us to be successful. Although we didn't drop the ball on anything, we had to continuously go over the training calendar and ensure we didn't miss anything important. Complicating things, we also conducted a Change of Command shortly before the pick-up date, and the previous Company Commander planned out the entire Cycle already.

These Soldiers attended the first nine weeks of their training last summer with not only a different company but a different battalion as well. Now standards are standards and as Drill Sergeants we are the standard bearers. We figured these kids knew the standards. We didn't think they would forget what they had been taught. This was frustrating to us. We did not expect to have to teach some of the basics all over again.

Picking up only 81 Soldiers was another challenge for us. Now I know you are thinking this should be easy and for the most part it has been. We have more than enough Drill Sergeants to conduct training and more than enough time. Honestly the training quality overall has been above standard. Complacency did not take long to set in though. We started taking time for granted and I have noticed that occasionally we have found ourselves rushing to get things done.



Overall I think the last month has been a success for our Company. The Soldiers are getting quality training and so far we have had only minor injuries. The normal bumps and bruises. The Drill Sergeants are taking care of not only the Soldiers but each other as well. Which in this environment is very important. Our Command Team has done an exceptional job of taking care of the Company as well. With only three weeks left this Cycle has flown by but we have learned a lot and so have these Soldiers. I'm looking forward to seeing them later on down the road. Hopefully still achieving their goals and becoming more successful every day.



I know everyone says they have the best Company in the Battalion and Brigade. It's that competitive drive that makes our military so great. I believe that for a unit to truly be the best they have to admit that they need work in certain areas. Echo Company does just that. We know we are not only good at some things, but know that we need to and can be better in others. We constantly strive to make things better. Not just for the Soldiers but for each other as well. That's what makes Echo Company great. In the last month we have had some challenges. At the end of every day we have been able to overcome those challenges. I have no doubt that Echo Company is producing quality Soldiers and will continue to do so in the future.



# 50 years



## REUNION 2017

Planning has begun for next year's reunion. The dates are 2-5 May and the headquarters hotel is the Hampton Inn, Phenix City. Reservations should be individually confirmed no later than Friday, April 7, 2017 by calling our reservations department at (866)799-3642 or hotel direct at (334)664-0776. Guests should identify the group as *1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Reunion* to ensure they receive the contracted group rate. Reservations are being accepted now.

The event format will be the same as last year. Tuesday evening reception at the hotel with refreshments furnished by the hotel. Wednesday evening BBQ at Uchee Creek, and Thursday evening banquet at the Benning Club Regimental Room are already booked. Thursday morning Turning Blue ceremony followed by the memorial service are scheduled as is Friday morning graduation ceremony. Other times and venues are undecided at this time.

Costs are incomplete but are coming together and it is certain that the registration cost will be considerably less than last year. Total costs will be determined soon and registration information will be made available for the next newsletter.

The reunion will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battalion's departure from Ft Hood in 1967 for Vietnam. We will also celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in 1917 during World War I. Any suggestions as to how and what we can do to commemorate those anniversaries will be greatly appreciated. Contact John Topper at [jtl@pscinet.net](mailto:jtl@pscinet.net) to offer any suggestions.

# 100 years ago





## Association of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry

### Historian Report for the Summer of 2016

**Jim Sheppard, Charlie Company, 1965-1968**

In early June, I attended the Change of Command for the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was joined by Jimmie and Loretta Segars, John Topper, Dick Guthrie and Jay Copley as LTC William Kahmann relinquished Command to Incoming Commander LTC Franklin Baltazar. We were also able to set the dates for the next Reunion, which will be from Tuesday, May 2nd to Friday May 5th, 2017. Once again we will use the Hampton Inn and Suites Hotel in Phenix City as our Host Hotel. More details may be elsewhere in this newsletter or forthcoming in the next issue. I will be posting all information on the Website as soon as details and registration fees and information have been finalized.

I am still trying to "catch up" on many items of responsibility...mostly connected with our website. I have added quite a few Obituaries and will be adding a new page for the recent Change of Command with a few key photos. I find I temporarily have limited time to dedicate to my duties due to our move from New Jersey to Fallbrook, California last year after the reunion.

Our new home is Fallbrook in Northern San Diego County and is renown as the "Avocado Capital of the World"...although I do believe they have been surpassed in production by Mexico.

I love our new property. We have an orchard that covers about 1/2 acre that includes an Avocado tree. We also have 5 Washington Naval Oranges trees, 5 Lemon Trees, 4 Lime Trees, 2 Grapefruit Trees, 1 Pink Grapefruit tree, a Peach tree, an Asian Pear tree, two Almond Trees and a Macadamia Nut Tree. Interspersed and surrounding the house are dozens of rose bushes and other flowers. It's a full time job maintaining all of these...particularly the irrigation that goes with them. It's been quite a learning process, but it keeps me active.. The previous owners had a gardener, and we may go that route eventually, but for now, I am enjoying the work.

The back 1/2 of our 3 acre property is loaded with Eucalyptus trees...so I have had plenty of work harvesting firewood for our chilly winter evenings. There is a 30 foot deep ravine between the trees and our home...so in addition to the sawing and splitting, I have to lug that stuff up to the back deck! Regardless, the place is a dream...particularly since the custom pool was put in back in January. I am in the Jacuzzi spa almost every day...and honing my snorkeling skills in the pool 3 or four days a week as well.

So life is good. Ruth is well and enjoying her new office out here. She works from home 1 or 2 days a week as well. We are both in the process of acquiring new doctors. I am fairly well on my way...as I have a new VA primary care physician at the nearby Oceanside VA Clinic...which is a fantastic facility....probably better than most VA Hospitals back East. There are so many retired and active Navy and Marine vets here that I suppose there was a strong push for good facilities. I have a new Cardiologist to keep an eye on my cardio health...and will be seeing an Endocrinologist in September to begin keeping an eye on my blood-sugar...as, although not dangerous yet...I am very close to the warning zone. Given our (Vietnam vets) tendency for type 2 diabetes...I need to be carful.

Needless to say, I am hoping I can stick around and enjoy life for the next decade or so. Ruth, 13 years my junior, will probably not think about retirement for at least another 5 years...and I want to stay healthy so we can enjoy retirement together.

I will have more "Reunion Oriented" details in our next newsletter.

Your Historian

Jim Sheppard