

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST Battalion 50th Association



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From the TC Hatch

By Jim Seagers



The President's Corner

Hello, fellow members,

I hope and pray that all of you are well. We are hanging in there. Lorretta's cancer has spread, and a miracle is what we need. We appreciate all of you who have contacted us with your concern. Our band of brothers does include our families as well. Lorretta's WWII dad, Fred Camp, passed away last month. We look forward to a documentary in the not-to-distant future and a movie about his experiences in the Italian Campaign from 1943-1945 and his romance with his Italian war bride. We send our condolences to all of you who have had family to pass, particularly veterans. Bob Gold is one of them. He was in a mortar company of the 1/50th in Vietnam and an avid supporter of our association. He has sent me several items to be placed in the 1/50th's headquarters' entrance at Ft. Benning. As soon as allowed to go on post, Lorretta and I will take them there. While there, I look forward to be able to get to know our new commander, Lt. Col. Dustin Daubert. COVID has interrupted that as well as so many things in all of our lives.

We do not have any details to share with all of you at this time about next year's reunion. The virus has made it difficult to be able to plan ahead. Perhaps we may at least have a date in October.

I ask that all of you who wish to pray for our country. We are living in a time that none of us have ever experienced nor thought possible: an

attack on America's roots and very culture. No country is perfect, and we can always improve ourselves, but America is the hope of the world for peace and understanding. Our roots are based on Judeo-Christian principles that are timeless. As Charles Dickens once wrote, "These are the times that try men's souls." We have been through war times that tried our souls, but this underground "war" is different in so many ways. It is trying to indoctrinate our children in the classroom, to eliminate our history, and to completely transform our everyday lives. I believe we are to stand for our principles of honor, duty, and country while remembering that we are all equal and that all lives matter. We are to teach our children truth so they will have a basis for making decisions that are in their best interests. We are to teach them our history, good citizenship, courage, and love. After all, the family is the basic unit of society. And as soldiers, we believe in law and order.

I will be happy when we can get together again. I value the privilege of serving you. In the meantime, stay safe and well.

Play the Game,
Jimmy Segars

Editor: Lorene Burch

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Chaplin's Corner

Well it's July the 11 at the time of this writing, the temp outside close to 100 daily now. I hope you guys are in good health and avoiding the Covid. Here in our part of the world we have very few cases to this date but that could change soon the way the news is reporting. I hope that this will pass and we can get back to normal soon. We are going to have Sunday school at our church tomorrow for the first time since this Covid thing started.

I hope we can have our reunion next year missing the change of command was bad enough. Anyway, I've rambled enough hope the rest of summer is filled with fun and good health take care and May God Bless, Toby.



Letter from the Editor

Greetings:

This past nine months has been milestones for me. Roger and I celebrated our 50th anniversary and I turned 70. Some exciting and wonderful times to celebrate and to see how far we have grown through the hard times. Not sure about anyone else but it has caused me to stop and evaluate my life and the things that are important, especially in a world that seems to be in so much turmoil

My grandkids say I live in Grandma world, where everything is good. Maybe so, but there is one thing I know that through all the stuff going on I have a God that is bigger than all of it. I can't control what is going on in this world, but I can help to make the part of the world I live in a better place. It is how we respond to these times that teach those around us how to deal with stress and opposition. I see it as a challenge to be better than I was yesterday.

So, I hope you join me, in trying to make the world a little better. Get out and vote. Do what you can for others in kindness. Stop the hate and promote the love of God and country. Smile at someone, pay for a meal or a tank of gas or whatever is needed at the moment. A listening ear goes a long way. Give an encouraging word to someone you see struggling. This is the day the Lord has made rejoice and be glad in it.

Keep safe and healthy:

Lorene Burch: editor

thelmburch@gmail.com

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Historian Report August, 2020

I hope everyone is staying safe in these dangerous times. I have used the period to catch up on a ton of backlogged work! For those who do not follow the website updates, I will use this Historian report to bring you all up to date on the list of projects I have completed.

I added photo albums for Duncan Moore, Company A, 1067-8 and Danny Henson, Medic with Company B in 1967. I updated the photo album of Bill Bontemps on the "Photo Albums" page. Bill's photo album was one of the first albums I posted after taking over the day to day website duties in late 2005. I was not very well versed in the hypertext coding needed to display everything correctly at that time...and the album was in need of much correction. I was able to improve many of the photo descriptions as well.

I updated the photo album of Russ Roth on the "Photo Albums" page. All the photos were enhanced and description pages were improved. I still need help in identifying many of the individuals in these photos.

I have also put all the extra time this pandemic has afforded me into much needed improvements of our "Reunions" page. The reunion descriptions, attendee's lists and photo album pages for the 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2003 reunions and Bob Gold's 2002 Pig Roast have been re-worked and improved. Of particular note are the 68 new photos added to the "Reunion Photos" page for the 1997 Reunion in Washington, DC. These new photos were supplied by Neil Miller and Bruce Braun. I also added some photos of the small Barbeque gathering at the Baltazar's in September of 2017. With all the turmoil of my divorce and moving back East that ensued in October of 2017, these photos for the barbeque got lost in the shuffle. Working on the reunions page updates I remembered this event and noticed I had never added the photos. Please visit the reunion photo pages mentioned here as I need help identifying quite a few people. Many of the people in the photos have not been back to reunions...and, of course, some of these folks were as much as 23 years younger, so I had some issues trying to identify people. Lastly, I am looking for photos from our first reunion at Fort Benning in 2003. I see that my "go to" people for reunion photos were all there...and I am hoping to gather some photos. Lorene Burch, Loretta Segars and Diana Clark can contact me if they have these event photos. It was after this 2003 reunion that our website responsibilities shifted to me (Jim Sheppard). Although there were no full size photos of the reunion...Ray Sarlin did a great job of written descriptions of all the events. I hope to add to his good work with some additional photos of that 2003 event.

With all the photo work completed, I began working on some new document collections for several major battles. Most of you who have visited my archives room during the past half dozen or so reunions will remember that I began creating loose-leaf notebooks for most of the major engagements of the battalion. I have added to these 2 new loose-leaf collections the Battle at An Tinh/An Lac(2) on January 2 & 3 of 1968...and the Attack on LZ Betty on May 3, 1970. In the process of gathering personal accounts, I had occasion to reach out to former Webmaster Ray Sarlin...and am pleased to say that we have set aside our past differences and re-established our friendship! I hope to gather some new personal accounts of that May 3, 1970 attack in the coming years. If you were involved in that battle, or, for that matter, the battle on January 2-3, 1968, your remembrances would be appreciated for our archives. I currently have a detailed description written by Dick Guthrie and also a personal account written by Mick Hawkins for An Tinh...and also only a few short accounts of the attack on LZ Betty. Submit your personal accounts to me via my email address: kiss-ac@juno.com.

See you next year at Fort Benning for another great reunion!

Jim Sheppard

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Reunion 2021

I've spoken with the folks at Ft Benning and have little to report with respect to Reunion 2021. We won't have the training fill schedule until October. At that time we will select the reunion dates based on projected graduation dates.

Of course, the unknown is where the country will be next Spring with the COVID 19 pandemic. Department of Defense has currently curtailed travel of military personnel and their families on official travel orders, meaning they are only moving on PCS orders on an exception basis. LTC Gallagher was granted exception in April when he relinquished command of 1/50 and moved to Ft Hood where he assumed command of another battalion that was scheduled to deploy overseas.

Residents are also subject to local commanders' discretion as to how far they may travel from their current base. Currently that is 150 miles for the troops and families at Ft Benning.

Access to the post is prohibited at this time without a specific purpose and an invitation in hand. Casual visitors are not permitted. However, the Infantry museum is not located on Ft Benning property and is currently open to the public with certain restrictions in place.

As things progress, I will keep the leadership informed and hope to have more definitive information for the next newsletter.

Take care, wash your hands and Play the Game!

John Topper



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TIME LINE OF A VIETNAM HISTORIAN AND HIS LIBRARY

JIM SHEPPARD, JULY, 2020

From the time I was elected Historian of the Association, I vowed not to be a Historian in name only. I did not want to be one of those ego inflated people who simply puff up their chest and boast of their important position. I wanted to become a true historian.

Initially, my quest was to become a knowledgeable historian for all things related to the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry in Vietnam...and I began visiting the National Archives Text Records facility in College Park Maryland to obtain copies of documentation for our unit's history.

To make a long story short, my goals morphed into becoming a historian for all things related to the 50th Infantry Regiment...and in 2014, I completed a complete history timeline of the regiment from the time it was formed in 1917 to the current training battalion at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Along the way, another important factor entered into my personal evolution as a historian.

At our 50th Infantry Association Reunion in 2005, I was holding court in my Archives Display room at our host hotel in Columbus Georgia. Our association archives had gotten to a size that no longer could be accommodated in a studio type hotel room...and I had a conference room at my disposal for the first time. It was crowded with files containing documentation I had been copying for 6 years at the National Archives. I was beginning to pride myself with being quite the historian indeed. I had several people in that room one afternoon and the conversations drifted into a discussion about Bernard Fall's books on Vietnam. To be sure, I was familiar with the title "Street without Joy"...but suddenly I realized how little I actually knew about the entire Vietnam war...particularly the history of that part of Indo China where our "American War" took place. To say the least, I was somewhat embarrassed to realize that...although I was gaining respect as a historian of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry, I was not necessarily a true historian of the Vietnam conflict my unit participated in all those years before.

And so it began. One by one, I bought all of Bernard Falls Books...and read them...cover to cover. He was not an easy author to read...as he tended to write rambling sentences that were crammed with fact after fact. To be honest, although

I came away from reading his books hoping to read many more offerings on the war going forward...I was taken by the fact that so many people in power during "my war" had more or less completely discounted his warnings and his complete history of the war. I must also admit that I got the best understanding of Bernard Fall and his life from a book his wife wrote after his death. She created a compilation of all of his work into an excellent biography that became my most favorite "Fall" book.

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Over the ensuing 15 years, I amassed quite a Vietnam Library...now totaling over 500 volumes. I concentrated in obtaining mostly (about 98%) hardcover editions...and admittedly...most of my books other than the reference portion deal with the U. S. Army. 142 of these books are strictly "Series" reference books...and the remainder are reference as well as memoirs and other books...mostly written by men who served in Vietnam. Two of these series collections are my complete collection of the "Foreign Relations of the United States in Vietnam"...consisting of 29 volumes covering the period from 1945 to 1975. Many of these volumes are no longer available. Many are extremely rare. One of the Volumes (1950) I purchased to complete this set cost over \$200.00! a half dozen others were over \$100.00 each.



My second most prized collection is "The Pentagon Papers".

In November of 2011, Nimble Publishing began publishing what was to be a 14 book publication of the entire version. The books were rather expensive and crude but legible copies of the actual National Archives 7000+ page offering. After receiving 9 books, I detected that two of the book's covers were mislabeled with incorrect dates. I contacted the publishing company and complained. I received promises that the book would be corrected...but no such correction was ever made and a refund was sent for the price of 1 of the books.

Adding insult to injury, the remaining 5 books were never published. Numerous emails to the publisher resulted in promises that never came to fruition. I finally gave up and



obtained the missing book content via the National Archives download offering. I "created" copies of the missing books by printing these pages and loading them into loose-leaf notebooks of approximately the same size as the Nimble Books...matching the colors of same. I relabeled the entire 14 book set to accurately reflect time-order and contents of each book. The National Archives .pdf versions aside, my self-created set may be the only printed hard copy of its kind in existence.

Between my Foreign Relations series and the Pentagon Papers, I can document a wealth of information from every portion of the American War.

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Contact Information

If you would like to check in on what is going on at any time you can go to our web page at: <https://www.ichiban1.org/>. At this site you can get information on how to get ahold of the officers of the association and so much more. So, reconnect with your fellow brothers and sisters of the 1/50th.

If you would like to have something put in the news letter send me the information at thelmaburch@gmail.com.

Don't have a computer, no problem, write to me at Lorene Burch, 821 Meadowbrook Rd. Salina, Kansas 67401. Would love to hear from you all. It would be a nice problem to try to fit things into the newsletter than to try to fill space, without filling it with dribble.

Jim Sheppard would love to hear from you about your experiences (so would I) and if you can identify anyone from some of the photos he has. kiss-ac@juno.com.

