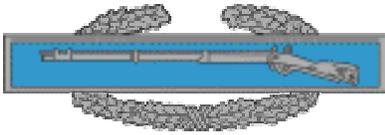


ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association



March, 2009



Cover Page

FROM THE TC HATCH

Jimmy Segars, President

I hope all of you are doing well. I am looking forward to seeing you at the reunion in August. This year's gathering will be another rewarding experience for us with an added privilege of viewing the new Infantry Museum. Ft. Benning has always been so gracious to us each time that we come. We thank the personnel there who continually make our reception so warm and enjoyable.

Today I want to speak to all of you about something that is of utmost concern to me. As soldiers who have experienced combat, we know what it means to stand up for our country on the battlefield. We know what it is like to have an enemy that lurks in the shadows—of jungle, sand, mountain terrain, or in the streets of a strange land—waiting to destroy us and our country. Some are hidden, and some are outright in the open, fearing no one. Such an enemy is easy to destroy once we recognize that he exists, regardless if he is hard to find or not, and as long as we have a clear objective in mind.

Yet, today we face just as great a threat to our country as anything that any of us ever experienced on the battlefield. We are experiencing a battle of a different kind: the battle for the minds of our citizens and the preservation of the great principles upon which this country was founded. Though we see no blood-stained casualties on the streets of America as we do in the streets of Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other war-torn areas in this world in which we live, the battle is just as fierce—perhaps more so, because it is so hidden and sinister without it appearing to be so. The enemy is within the camp and trying to destroy us from within—without firing a shot.

When I was a teen-ager, I remember seeing the Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev banging his shoe on a table in the United Nations and saying that Russia would bury us (America) but that they would do it without firing a shot. And that is what is happening in America today. We are being taken over from within, with no overt enemy firing a shot. If the enemy was waving a red flag, we'd surely respond. But we are casually allowing our country to come to its demise by our silence. Many a great civilization had as its Golden Age 200 years and fell. We must keep that from happening to America. But time is running out. We have to fight for what we believe in. The casualties are the principles upon which our great Constitution was crafted.

It started long ago in a period of world history—the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries to be exact—when people began to listen to great orators and thinkers who proposed new ideas in the name of freedom and science. This was the Enlightenment. One of its philosophies was the idea that man is the ultimate authority and as such can make up his own rules. Man's freedom was thus to be ensured; however, just the opposite happens because eventually someone has to decide who will determine which rules we all must live under, who will rule to enforce them, and what everyone must do to guarantee that he "is free to do as he pleases." Such thinking eventually leads to a total disregard for our fellow man and the idea that all are guaranteed not just equal opportunity but equal success by those in power. Through liberal educational institutions and publications, a large segment of American society has embraced such ideas.

If I read my history book correctly—and by the way most history books today leave out many key references to our great founding fathers and the character principles by which they lived and the reasons they started this great nation—it describes a nation with a governing document that promotes specific principles. It appears today that few of our citizens know what those principles are because they have not been taught. By omission and the promotion of untruth, our nation now has an electorate that is totally uneducated in those principles. Liberal thoughts from the Enlightenment have slowly crept into our collective thinking without our even knowing it. A lie is not recognized as a lie if we don't know what the truth is. (continued on page 2)



Afghan by Lorene Burch – courtesy Roger Burch. Will be on display at Reunion 2009. It's very beautiful in color!

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FROM THE TC HATCH (continued from cover)

So I am asking you to be citizen soldiers who are protecting our country's very existence **on our own soil** by knowing and educating others on what our country is really about: it is **not** about communal materialism and thus that all men are entitled to the property of others, that the definition of family is subject to "enlightened interpretation," that we cannot worship God or even speak His name in public, that parents cannot have a say in what their children are taught, that the sexual revolution should be taught freely, that children know as much as their elders, that media has the right to censure and change the truth, that our country is for sale and thus to be run by those that believe that greed pays off, that life can be terminated in the name of helping others, that we are a pluralistic society that must embrace all ideas with the identity of **American** being thrown out, and finally that freedom has no responsibility.

So what are the principles upon which our country's governing document is based you ask? I refer you to the National Center for Constitutional Studies www.nccs.net who carefully researched and listed these principles.

They are...

1. The only reliable basis for sound government and just human relations is Natural Law.
2. A free people cannot survive under a republican constitution unless they remain virtuous and morally strong.
3. The most promising method of securing a virtuous and morally stable people is to elect virtuous leaders.
4. Without religion the government of a free people cannot be maintained.
5. All things were created by God, therefore upon Him all mankind are equally dependent, and to Him they are equally responsible.
6. All men are created equal.
7. The proper role of government is to protect equal rights, not provide equal things.
8. Men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.
9. To protect man's rights, God has revealed certain principles of divine law.
10. The God-given right to govern is vested in the sovereign authority of the whole people.
11. The majority of the people may alter or abolish a government which has become tyrannical.
12. The United States of America shall be a **republic**.
13. A constitution should be structured to permanently protect the people from the human frailties of their rulers.
14. Life and liberty are secure only so long as the right of property is secure.
15. The highest level of prosperity occurs when there is a free market economy and a minimum of government regulations.
16. The government should be separated into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial.
17. A system of checks and balances should be adopted to prevent the abuse of power.
18. The unalienable rights of the people are most likely to be preserved if the principles of government are set forth in a written constitution.
19. Only limited and carefully defined powers should be delegated to the government, all others being retained in the people.
20. Efficiency and dispatch require government to operate according to the will of the majority, but constitutional provisions must be made to protect the rights of the minority.
21. Strong local self-government is the keystone to preserving human freedom.
22. A free people should be governed by law and not by the whims of men.
23. A free society cannot survive as a republic without a broad program of general education.
24. A free people will not survive unless they stay strong.
25. "Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations: entangling alliances with none."
26. The core unit which determines the strength of any society is the family; therefore, the government should foster and protect its integrity.
27. The burden of debt is as destructive to freedom as subjugation by conquest.
28. The United States has a manifest destiny to be an example and a blessing to the entire human race.

Source: over 150 volumes of the Founding Fathers' original writings, minutes, letters, biographies, etc. distilled into The 5,000 Year Leap by W. Cleon Skousen, published by the National Center for Constitutional Studies, 1981.

WORD FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

The fellowship of living Combat Infantryman lost another member a couple of months ago, with the passing of my father. He was an Infantryman in the 84th Infantry Division, having traveled through France & Belgium, including that little patch of ground called the Ardennes Forest during December 1944.

He died and the funeral was held in a small farming community in southeastern South Dakota. Despite the size of the community – or, maybe because of its size – the local VFW Post put together an honor guard to render military honors. Yes, they were a bit ragged, and most of them hadn't seen their shoes while standing in many years. But, they did this to the best of their ability, and with the sincerest respect to my father and the meaning of the ceremony. Even as impressive was the fact that they had a bugler to play Taps – this young lady is an American Indian (Santee Dakotah) who started doing this in high school and has continued way past graduation.

I earlier referred to the fellowship of Combat Infantrymen – let me elaborate. I consider that everyone that served in an Infantry Battalion during combat belongs to that fellowship – no matter what MOS they might have carried at the time. A special, honored place in that fellowship is reserved for the medic who saved one life and patched up two more of us on that pitch black night on 2 November 1970. To my regret, I can't remember his name – but I remember him. Thanks, Doc.

Hope all is going well with you – and hope to see you at the reunion in August.

FROM THE EDITOR

John Topper

Last Thursday found me and my son (Nathan) and two grandsons (John Ethan and Levi, ages 7 and 4) in Phenix City at the hotel we have selected for the upcoming reunion. Earlier that day, Janet and I had stopped in Atlanta enroute to Benning. She stayed with the girls to engage in some serious shopping and the guys hopped in with me for a grand adventure. The boys were excited because the next day we were to go to Fort Benning and "see the soldiers." We were indeed going to see the soldiers of Company A 1/ 50 graduate on the parade ground of the new Patriot Park where it is co-located with the new Infantry Museum. I too was excited to be a spectator of this historic event.

The next morning we had breakfast with Jay Copley. The boys were pleased to meet "Captain Jay" and regaled him with their understanding of the day's upcoming events. Following breakfast we made our way to the museum parking lot (a much easier trip than that from the north end of Columbus) which was filling up rapidly with family, friends and distinguished guests. The parade ground is huge and most impressive in its layout and magnitude. The weather was picture perfect and everything was on track for a successful dress rehearsal.

We met briefly with Tony Benitez and wished him well. He was calm and quite confident everything was going to go as it should. He did admit that the preparation for this week and next had been a huge effort for he and the battalion. They were up to the task, of course.

Captain Tom Flook and his soldiers did an outstanding job – it was most apparent that they had been well-rehearsed. The Infantry Center band did its usual grand job of providing the music. John Murtha, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee was the guest speaker and he did a grand job (for a former Marine) of outlining the history of the infantry soldier and encouraging the graduating soldiers and their families. It was a non-political speech and well-received by the large crowd.

Following the ceremony, we met with General Jerry White who has dedicated himself to this remarkable achievement for the past six years or so. He was happy to see us and introduced us to Congressman Murtha. We then went out on the field and met Tom Flook (Company Commander) and his wife Angie and talked with some of the soldiers. It was an awesome Kodak moment and I was most happy to have made the trip. Tony was relieved that the event was over, but the big one was coming up the following week and he couldn't relax just yet.

We then went into the museum, not yet open but the Fife and Drum restaurant was hosting a VIP luncheon and we were invited. I met with the caterer for the restaurant and arranged the luncheon menu for the reunion. While I was meeting with her, Jay, Nathan, John Ethan and Levi were treated to the first ever showing of a film in the IMAX theater which is a part of the museum. I got in to see the last 10 minutes or so of *Everest* on the 5-story screen – awesome.

Another element of the museum was open, the Soldier Store, although not fully stocked, we managed to find enough "soldier stuff" to please the boys. Lots of hats, shirts and other goodies will be available by the time we arrive in August.

The next week's event is the really big show – Jimmy Segar and Jay Copley have made plans to be there and it is going to be something. Again, 1/50 will be featured as B Company has the honor of being the graduating company. Plans call for a Sacred Soil Ceremony with descendents of Alexander Hamilton, Theodore Roosevelt, Alvin York and others spreading soil from eight battlefields the US Army Infantry participated in around the world and over the history of our country from its revolutionary beginning to the present.

LTG Hal Moore and CSM Basil Plumley who were portrayed in the movie "We Were Soldiers" by Mel Gibson and Sam Elliott, respectively, will be on hand and the event will be narrated by Elliott. CSM Marvin Hill, senior non-commissioned officer in Iraq and Afghanistan will be the featured speaker.

The ceremony will kick off with a Vietnam era group of aviators called the Sky Soldiers (sound familiar?) who will perform an air show with Huey's and Cobra's.

A grand-opening event will take place on 19 June when the museum artifacts displays will be completed and open to the public. Featured speaker for the event will be General Colin Powell.

Later that day, I met with Tony and his S3 folks to go over the reunion schedule. We have much to do, but we are on the Right Track! I'm confident we will have another successful and fun reunion. Look forward to seeing everyone then. Until August, Play the Game!!!

CHAPLAIN'S

Parker Pierce

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Hello to all. I pray that things are well you and your families. We are still being blessed here in Florida-in spite of us! That phrase is just a pun, but it is really true-God blesses us even though we really don't deserve His blessings! My wife and I are excited and grateful for a new addition to our family-a new granddaughter, so now we have three granddaughters. They are such a joy as many of you about that have grandchildren, and they are really a special blessing from God. In changing the subject I have a first cousin who has been diagnosed with liver cancer! He is in his mid-fifties and definitely realizes what could be the end result of his cancer. A couple of years ago he asked the Lord Jesus Christ into his heart and life (Romans 10:9-10). He just recently wrote letters to two cousins and an uncle letting them know of his condition. In the letters he stated that he wasn't afraid to die, because he was ready and he had that peace in his heart because of Jesus in his life, and he knew he would spend eternity in HEAVEN-what a testimony!! The same peace my cousin has is available to everyone. In closing I know we all are praying for our new president, as he is living up to all his campaign promises and striving to put them forth! My prayer for him and his wife is for God to change their hearts, their choice, and that He will protect them. Let's continue to pray for each other, and all our military around the world. God is still on the throne, and Jesus is Lord! May God continue to bless each of you.

What a country

Tom Ricks

Wed, 02/18/2009

I see where Col. Viet X. Luong, who fled Vietnam as a child refugee in 1975, has taken command of the 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment, AKA the Rakkasans, in the 101st Airborne Division.

My friend Lewis Sorley points out that during the Korean War, that brigade was commanded by Gen. William Westmoreland, of course went on to top command in the Vietnam War.

Brig. Gen. Steve Townsend, a deputy commander of the division, told a local newspaper that, "There is simply no better commander for the Rakkasans' next rendezvous with destiny" -- which is to say, their next deployment with Afghanistan.

Little-known fact: Townsend is half-Afghan, having been adopted as a child by a U.S. military couple in Germany.

AR-15 Assault Rifle



The XM-177E2, commonly known as the Colt Commando. This is a shortened version of the M-16 with a telescoping stock. The CAR-15 was very popular with special ops troops but saw only limited use with line units.

M-16 Rifle



This is the weapon most commonly associated with US troops in Vietnam. Despite early problems with the weapon it has now become a respected assault weapon. The 5.56mm M16A1 is a gas operated magazine-fed rifle capable of semi-automatic and automatic fire with an effective range of 300 meters and a practical rate of fire of 60 rpm.

Combat Infantryman Badge

*Paragraph 2-6, Army Regulation 600-8-22 (Military Awards)
25 February 1995*

a. History.

(1) The Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) was established by the War Department on 27 October 1943. Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, then the Army Ground Forces commanding general, was instrumental in its creation. He originally recommended that it be called the "fighter badge." The CIB was designed to enhance morale and the prestige of the "Queen of Battle." Then Secretary of War Henry Stinson said, "It is high time we recognize in a personal way the skill and heroism of the American infantry."

(2) Originally, the Regimental Commander was the lowest level at which the CIB could be approved and its award was retroactive to 7 December 1941. There was a separate provision for badge holders to receive a \$10 per month pay stipend, which was rescinded in 1948. Several factors led to the creation of the CIB, some of the most prominent factors are as follows:

(a) The need for large numbers of well-trained infantry to bring about a successful conclusion to the war and the already critical shortage of infantrymen.

(b) Of all soldiers, it was recognized that the infantryman continuously operated under the worst conditions and performed a mission which was not assigned to any other soldier or unit.

(c) The infantry, a small portion of the total Armed Forces, was suffering the most casualties while receiving the least public recognition.

(d) General Marshall's well known affinity for the ground forces soldier and, in particular, the infantryman. All these factors led to the establishment of the CIB, an award which would provide special recognition of the unique role of the Army infantryman, the only soldier whose daily mission is to close with and destroy the enemy and to seize and hold terrain. The badge was intended as an inducement for individuals to join the infantry while serving as a morale booster for infantrymen serving in every theater.

(3) In developing the CIB, the War Department did not dismiss out of hand or ignore the contributions of other branches. Their vital contributions to the overall war effort were certainly noted, but it was decided that other awards and decorations were sufficient to recognize their contributions. From the beginning, Army leaders have taken care to retain the badge for the unique purpose for which it was established and to prevent the adoption of any other badge which would lower its prestige. At the close of World War II, our largest war in which the armor and artillery played key roles in the ground campaigns, a review was conducted of the CIB criteria with consideration being given to creating either additional badges or authorizing the badge to cavalry and armor units. The review noted that any change in policy would detract from the prestige of the badge.

b. Intent.

(1) There are basically three requirements for award of the CIB. The soldier must be an infantryman satisfactorily performing infantry duties, must be assigned to an infantry unit during such time as the unit is engaged in active ground combat, and must actively participate in such ground combat. Campaign or battle credit alone is not sufficient for award of the CIB.

(2) The definition or requirement to be "engaged in active ground combat" has generated much dialogue over the years as to the original intent of the CIB.

(a) The 1943 War Department Circular required infantrymen to demonstrate "satisfactory performance of duty in action against the enemy." The operative words "in action" connoted actual combat.

(b) A War Department determination in October 1944 specified that "action against the enemy" for purposes of award of the CIB was to be interpreted as "ground combat against enemy ground forces."

(c) In 1948, the regulation governing badges stipulated that "battle participation credit is not sufficient; the unit must have been in contact with the enemy." This clearly indicated that an exchange of hostile fire or equivalent personal exposure was the intent of the Army leadership. (Continued on page 7)

VIETNAM WAR TRIVIA

1) Before the United States decided to increase its involvement in the Vietnam War, what was the primary nation opposing the activities of Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam?

Choose Your Answer: A: France, B: Germany, C: Great Britain, D: Spain

2) Who was the first American soldier to die in Vietnam?

Choose Your Answer: A: Lt. Col. James Hughes, B: Lt. Cmdr. Phillip A. Kientzler, C: Sgt. Carlos N. Hathcock, D: Lt. Col. A. Peter Dewey

3) On August 2, 1964, three North Vietnamese gunboats allegedly fired torpedoes at the *U.S.S. Maddox*, an American destroyer in international waters. This confrontation became known as...

Choose Your Answer: A: Mekong Delta Incident, B: Gulf of Tonkin Incident, C: Tet Offensive, D: Bay of Pigs

4) What was the name of the U.S. bombing campaign designed to stop the flow of men and supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail?

Choose Your Answer: A: Operation Snake Tail, B: Operation Rolling Thunder, C: Operation Flaming Dart, D: Operation Ranch Hand

5) Which of the following herbicides/defoliants was used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War?

Choose Your Answer: A: Agent Blue, B: Agent Green, C: Agent Orange, D: All of the above

6) What major attack by the North Vietnamese, launched on January 30, 1968, was planned to coincide with the lunar new year festival?

Choose Your Answer: A: Eastertide Offensive, B: Tet Offensive, C: Khe Sanh Offensive, D: Haiphong Offensive

7) What South Vietnamese leader was assassinated by his own generals in 1963?

Choose Your Answer: A: Pol Pot, B: Le Duc Thu, C: Ngo Dinh Diem, D: Nguyen Van Thieu

8) What is the name of the now infamous massacre of hundreds of Vietnamese civilians by U.S. soldiers which took place on March 16, 1968?

Choose Your Answer: A: Nha Trang Massacre, B: Moc Bai Massacre, C: My Lai Massacre, D: Dien Bien Phu Massacre

9) How many Americans were killed or listed as "Missing in Action" during the Vietnam War?

Choose Your Answer: A: 27,380, B: 35,994, C: 58,226, D: 72,811

10) How many Vietnamese were killed or listed as "Missing in Action" during the Vietnam War?

Choose Your Answer: A: 200,000, B: 800,000, C: 1.5 million, D: 3 million

Answers: 1) A, 2) D, 3) B, 4) B, 5) C, 6) B, 7) C, 8) C, 9) C, 10) D

USEFUL MILITARY INFORMATION

“Aim towards the Enemy.”

- Instruction printed on US Rocket Launcher

“When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend.”

- U.S. Army

“Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs are guaranteed to always hit the ground.”

- U.S.A.F. Ammo Troop

“If the enemy is in range, so are you.”

- Infantry Journal

“A slipping gear could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least expect it. That would make you quite unpopular in what’s left of your unit.”

- Army’s magazine of preventive maintenance.

“It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed.”

- U.S. Air Force Manual

“Try to look unimportant; they may be low on ammo.”

- Infantry Journal

“Tracers work both ways.”

- U.S. Army Ordnance

“Five-second fuses only last three seconds.”

- Infantry Journal

“Bravery is being the only one who knows you’re afraid.”

- Col. David Hackworth

“If your attack is going too well, you’re probably walking into an ambush.”

- Infantry Journal

“No combat-ready unit has ever passed inspection.”

- Joe Gay

“Any ship can be a minesweeper ... once.”

- Anon

“Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.”

- Unknown Army Recruit

“Don’t draw fire; it irritates the people around you.”

- Your Buddies

(And lastly) “If you see a bomb technician running, try to keep up with him.”

- U.S.A. Ammo

Combat Infantryman Badge (continued from page 5)

c. Specific eligibility requirements

(1) A soldier must be an Army infantry or special forces Officer (SSI 11 or 18) in the grade of colonel or below, or an Army enlisted soldier or warrant officer with an infantry or special forces MOS, who subsequent to 6 December 1941 has satisfactorily performed duty while assigned or attached as a member of an infantry, ranger or special forces unit of brigade, regimental, or smaller size during any period such unit was engaged in active ground combat. Eligibility for special forces personnel (less the special forces medical sergeant) accrues from 20 December 1989. Retroactive awards for special forces personnel are not authorized.

(2) A recipient must be personally present and under hostile fire while serving in an assigned infantry or special forces primary duty, in a unit actively engaged in ground combat with the enemy. The unit in question can be of any size smaller than brigade. For example, personnel possessing an infantry MOS in a rifle squad of a cavalry platoon in a cavalry troop would be eligible for award of the CIB. Battle or campaign participation credit alone is not sufficient; the unit must have been in active ground combat with the enemy during the period.

(3) Personnel with other than an infantry or special forces MOS are not eligible, regardless of the circumstances. The infantry or special forces SSI or MOS does not necessarily have to be the soldier's primary specialty, as long as the soldier has been properly trained in infantry or special forces tactics, possesses the appropriate skill code, and is serving in that specialty when engaged in active ground combat as described above. Commanders are not authorized to make any exceptions to this policy.

(4) Awards will not be made to general officers nor to members of headquarters companies of units larger in size than brigade.

d. Subsequent awards.

(1) To date, a separate award of the CIB has been authorized for qualified soldiers in any of three conflicts: World War II (7 December 1941 to 3 September 1945), the Korean Conflict (27 June 1950 to 27 July 1953), and the Vietnam Conflict. Service in the Republic of Vietnam conflict (after 1 March 1961) combined with qualifying service in Laos (19 April 1961 to 6 October 1962), the Dominican Republic (28 April 1965 to 1 September 1966), Korea on the DMZ (after 4 January 1969), Grenada (23 October to 21 November 1983) Panama (20 December 1989 to 31 January 1990), and the Persian Gulf War (17 January to 11 April 1991) is recognized by one award only regardless of whether a soldier has served one or multiple tours in any or all of these areas. If a soldier has been awarded the CIB for service in any of the Vietnam era areas, that soldier is not eligible to earn the Combat Medical Badge.

(2) Second and third awards of the CIB are indicated by superimposing 1 and 2 stars respectively, centered at the top of the badge between the points of the oak wreath.