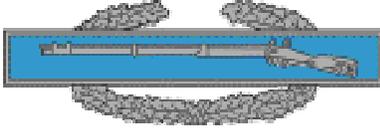


# ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association



September 2010

Cover Page

## FROM THE TC HATCH

Jimmy Segars, President

September is a good month for remembrance and reflection. It is the time we remember what happened to our country on 9/11. At that time, all Americans pulled together and remembered what is important in life: God, family, and country.

But as a nation we seem to have a short memory and have forgotten those core values. We need to remember and to return. Let's resolve to act once again according to those values. We remember how everyone flew a flag not only from their homes but also from their vehicles and storefronts. Why can't we do that all the time? It's the right thing to do. I challenge you as veterans to lead in setting the example for each of your communities. When we sing, "Oh say does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave?" I pray that we never have to answer, "No." But one of our founding fathers, I think it was Thomas Jefferson, said, "All it takes for evil to take over is for good men to do nothing."

Many of us also remember that we boarded a ship in September headed for Vietnam. The 1/50<sup>th</sup> can be proud that we fought valiantly for the liberty of the South Vietnamese through 1971. We are equally proud of those currently serving in the 1/50<sup>th</sup> who serve around the world and particularly in combat zones and are so professionally trained at Ft. Benning. You current troops carry on the legacy that those of us who fought in Vietnam upheld. We all serve America, so let's not let liberty slip through our hands because we are not "fighting" on the home front as well today by being good citizens. We need to teach our children about honor, respect, and reverence. Remembrance and reflection: it is serious times that we live in, and we need to take the times seriously. God bless you and may God bless America. Play the Game,

## CHAPLAIN'S

Parker Pierce

**O** Hello to all the 1/50th family. I pray that everything is going well with each of you. There has been a lot happening in the Pierce home in the month of August. Our fifth grandchild-a boy-Sawyer, was born on the 10<sup>th</sup>-P.T.L.! We were also blest to have our six months old granddaughter at our home from North Carolina for a week. Kayla Naomi, and her parents, my son and his wife, spent the last week of August with us, what a blessing! With everything that is going on in the world, it is a special blessing from God when we get to share special times with family. I know all of you also strive to have those special times with your family members. We make memories that will last for a lifetime! Life is going by so fast that from one week to another it is like a blur! God is so good, that He still blesses our nation in spite of all we do that likely displeases Him. We can never thank Him or praise Him enough for what He does for us, and our great country. I pray God's continued blessings for each of you, and I know we will all continue to pray for each other, our President, our troops, and our wonderful God bless America! For Him, Parker



Pictured from the left are, Tony Benitez, Dan Kessler and Mike Hastings during the 1/50 Change of Command held on 15 June 2010

### IN THIS ISSUE

John Topper, Editor

Billie McGregor, Editorial Assistant

From the TC Hatch	Cover
Chaplain's Corner	Cover
Military Trivia	2
Historian Report	3
From the Editor	4
Mini Reunion/Gettysburg	4
Mini Reunion Registration Form	5
Texas Aggie – Medals of Honor	6
Vietnam Glossary	7

## Military Trivia

- ❖ The name of the barbaric German tribe that overran Gaul, Spain and North Africa and sacked Rome in the fifth century was the 'Vandals'.
- ❖ The U.S. secret agents abandon plans--approved by President Franklin D. Roosevelt--to drop live bats from airplanes to frighten the Japanese during World War II because the bats froze at high altitudes, before they could be released.
- ❖ The unsung role played in American history role of William Dawes and Samuel Prescott was to accompany Paul Revere on his celebrated midnight ride to warn their countrymen that "the British are coming."
- ❖ The infantryman (and actor-to-be) James Arness was picked to go first when the troops aboard his landing craft splashed ashore during the Allied attack at Anzio during World War II because at 6 feet 6, he was the tallest man in his outfit--and his commanding officer wanted to know just how deep the water was.
- ❖ The profession of Hitler's mistress, Eva Braun was Photographer's assistant.
- ❖ During the Civil War, 23 states fought for the Union and 11 for the Confederacy.
- ❖ The two nations involved in a year-long conflict that was popularly know as the Pastry War were France and Mexico in 1838. It was triggered by Mexico's refusal to pay for damage done by Mexican army officers to a restaurant run by a French pastry chef in Tacubaya, now a section of Mexico City.
- ❖ It was President Harry S. Truman who ordered the integration of America's armed forces in 1948.
- ❖ The famous American who signed the Treaty of Kanagawa was Commodore Matthew C. Perry, on March 31, 1854. The treaty opened Japan to western trade.
- ❖ While Adolf Hitler called his country home Eagle's Nest, Winston Churchill called his Cosy Pig, although it was formally known as Chartwell.
- ❖ The American billionaire who tried to airlift 28 tons of medicine and Christmas gifts to American POWs in North Vietnam n 1969 was Ross Perot.
- ❖ Charles de Gaulle served as ghost-writer of the book "The Soldier". It was about the famous World War I military hero Marshal Philippe Petain, whose 1945 death sentence for collaboration during WWII was commuted by de Gaulle to life imprisonment.
- ❖ The Battle of Bunker Hill was actually fought in June 1775 on Breed's Hill, southeast of Bunker Hill.
- ❖ The Allies' password on D-Day was "Mickey Mouse".
- ❖ Gen. Black Jack Pershing, arriving in France in 1917 after the U.S. entered WWI was the American military leader who said, "Lafayette we are here."
- ❖ The physical ailment that was said to have contributed to Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo was hemorrhoids, which prevented him from surveying the battlefield on horseback.
- ❖ The Boer War (1899-1902) was the first to have authorized film coverage?
- ❖ Caedwalla, King of Gwynedd (north Wales), ordered his soldiers to wear leeks fastened to their helmets when they battled the troops of King Edwin of Northumbria in 632 A.D. so he could tell his men from the enemy. Caedwalla was victorious, Edwin was slain, and the leek later became the national emblem of Wales.

### EDITORIAL ASSISTANT MARKS TEN-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

This edition of the newsletter marks the ten-year anniversary of the gal that makes this a successful operation. Billie McGregor found our website while looking for something unrelated, became intrigued with it and contacted Ken Riley. She volunteered her considerable talents, Ken said he needed help with the newsletter and the rest is history. It has been a personal delight and professional privilege to work with Billie the last six or so years I have been editor. Without her there would be no newsletter – without her I would have given up long ago. This remarkable lady has given much to our Association and deserves to know just how much she is appreciated. You can tell her at: [tdnixiechicken@hotmail.com](mailto:tdnixiechicken@hotmail.com)

## HISTORIAN REPORT

**Jim Sheppard**

As many of you may know, I fully retired last April. This has finally given me the freedom to work on our archive efforts full time!

Work on our KIA Memorial pages is moving along very well and I have just 54 more men to do to complete the 1st stage, which is to have a completed memorial page for every man killed in our battalion in Vietnam. We are also including those men we thought were ours but improved databases have shown that they were with other units.

As if this wasn't enough to keep me busy, I have now made two week long trips to the National Archives Text Records center in College Park, MD. The first of these was back in May, when I collected copies of the Daily Staff Journals for the 173rd Airborne Brigade for April through August of 1969. I also began copying General Orders (These were the orders that came from Division and/or Brigade for all medals)...beginning with the 1st Cavalry Division. Unfortunately all the orders did not make it back to the archives...and there are many missing from the 1st Cav files.

The second of these trips was last week...when I spent Monday through Saturday collecting the remaining 1969 173rd Airborne Daily Staff Journals. Unfortunately, the Daily Staff Journals of the 173rd Airborne for 1968 did not survive the trip from Vietnam to the archives. Sad that there are such huge gaps in the official records that survived the war. Not nearly enough priority was given to the importance of these documents.

After completing the work on those Daily Journals, I returned to copying the General Orders. I learned a few interesting facts. The 1st Cav continued issuing orders for us well into April! Even though we left them the end of February! No General Orders were issued by the 4th Infantry Division as far as I can see. Unfortunately, none of the 4th Infantry Division General Orders survived either...so that point is moot. However, it appears that the 1st Cav issued orders covering many of the events in March...which explains why many of the family of the men killed in March believed we were with the 1st Cav in March as well...when we were technically with the 3rd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division.

After obtaining copies of as many 1st Cav General Orders as I could find, I moved on to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The first General Order they issued was for Bob Gold!..for action on March 9th at LZ Litz. So we had men receive orders from two separate commands for that one battle. The 173rd's orders were a bit more complete than the 1st Cav...but still had many missing...including all of 1969.

I finally moved on to the IFFV General Orders and, just as with their other records, nearly all orders were on file! The last General Order for the Battalion in Vietnam was issued to our own Ray Sarlin. I miss Ray, who has not communicated with us for some time.

The end result of this work was nearly 2300 pages of new documents for our Archives. Also, just about all the Memorial Pages I have completed will have to be updated...as I now have documentation of awards...many that family and friends might not even be aware of.

Finally, the editing of all those pages will take me away from the Memorial Pages for a few weeks, but these General Orders were such a great "find" for us. They often have battle details and on occasion name a Platoon! As such, some questions were answered that have lingered. Since we have little in the way of Battalion Histories for the period between September of 1967 and April of 1968, these Award Citations will allow us eventually to "create" some sort of After Action History...emphasis on "After" since it has been 43 years since this stretch in the Vietnam Timeline of the 50th Infantry.

Aside from all my archival activity, I am looking forward to attending Ken Riley's gathering in Gettysburg at the end of this month. Since I won't be schlepping our Archives to this one, it will be a relaxing few days for me. Unfortunately, my bride will not be able to attend...as she will be helping her daughter move into a new apartment in Chicago that weekend.

In October I will begin preparation for a mailing to all the Family and Friends of our KIAs with details about our next reunion, the end of April in 2011. I am hoping that given more notice this time (For the last reunion, these folks were only given about 30 days notice)...we may have quite a few more people show up representing our men killed in action. The wreath laying ceremony will be extra special this year as the Battalion has moved to a brand new complex just a few clicks from the old Treadwell Barracks. Our Memorial was moved as well along with several of the shrubs from the old location and some of the surrounding soil. Our Memorial now sits on top of a hill in front of the new Headquarters. The setting is awesome. I hope I will see many of you there, old friends and new! Mark your calendars, put in for your vacation days and BE THERE!

**REMINDER NOTICE  
NOVEMBER ELECTION  
DON'T FORGET TO VOTE !**

## From the Editor

John Topper

The dates for the 2011 Reunion have been set for 26-29 April. The host hotel this year will be the Wingate by Wyndham. Some particulars are still undecided, but generally it will follow this broad agenda:

- Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>: Evening - Reception at hotel.
- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>: Morning - Business Meeting  
Lunch - TBD  
Afternoon - Infantry Museum  
Evening - BBQ (Uchee Creek)
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>: Morning - Memorial Service  
Lunch - With 1/50 Troops  
Afternoon - TBD  
Evening - Banquet (Location TBD)
- Friday 29<sup>th</sup>: Rangers In Action - Ranger School

The hotel is located at 1711 Rollins Way, Columbus, GA 31904 (706) 225-1000 and is part of Michelle Spivey's group. The Quality Inn where we were last year experienced a fire and is being renovated. Jim Sheppard, Dick Guthrie and I visited the Wingate and were impressed with it. It sits on a dead-end street and traffic is minimal. It is within walking distance to a shopping mall and has a great pool where a CP can be established easily. Michelle says the staff at this hotel is the most customer-friendly of all her properties. The rate is \$84 nightly.

Mike McCardell is working on getting military buses to shuttle us around. If he is successful that will save us a lot of money. Any suggestions are welcome. It's your reunion - let me know your ideas - along with suggestions on how to implement them. I will have the details worked out and published in the December Newsletter. Until then, mark your calendars for 26-29 April, keep your powder dry and your hatchet scoured. And Play The Game!

## MINI-REUNION/GETTYSBURG

Ken Riley

As far as I can tell, there are a couple rooms left from my block of rooms I originally had; however, since the August 25th date passed, I am not sure what the rate may now be if you did not book a room. I could use two or three more couples if you still want to come but did not book or room or send in your registration.

Thursday, September 30th, is registration and get acquainted day.

Friday, October 1st, you will learn all about the Gettysburg battlefield and the surrounding area.

Saturday morning and afternoon is all yours to re-tour the battlefield, check out the antique and gift shops, relax by the lounge across the street or many other restaurants and lounges in a five-block area from the hotel (yes - the hotel is located just a couple blocks from Gettysburg Square); or for the adventuresome, visit the Apple Harvest festival, less than 8 miles north, which normally draws upwards to 80,000 people that Saturday and Sunday.

Saturday night at 5:00 PM we will head for my hometown VFW for a good dinner, and an entertainment show, the likes of which many of you may have not seen.

Sunday is checkout for many; however, you are all welcome to stick around and tour the country side. A casino is less than an hour away, Carlisle War College is less than an hour away; and Hershey park and the great candy manufacturing facility is just over an hour away. Eisenhower farm, of course, is right there outside of Gettysburg. Too many other attractions to list here; but, those who come will have a choice of many other things to do with their time if they want, or you can just relax in the hospitality room provided.

Hope to see a few more of you attending. Those that do will not be sorry! Later Brothers

**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Vietnam Veterans**  
Gathering at Gettysburg September 30<sup>th</sup>, October 1<sup>st</sup>, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010  
Gettysburg, PA 17325  
**Registration Form**

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

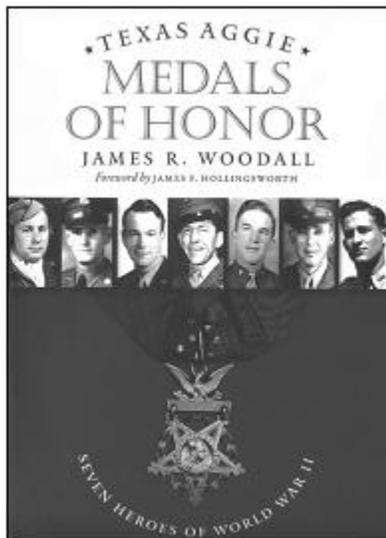
***Host Hotel is the: The 1863 Inn of Gettysburg (Breakfast included). Call 866-953-4483 for reservations. YOU MUST make your hotel reservations DIRECT with the hotel. Submitting this registration form does NOT cover your hotel reservations. Ask for 1/50<sup>th</sup> Infantry rate of \$129.00 per night for single/double occupancy. Cutoff for this rate is August 15, 2010. Gentlemen: THERE ARE ONLY 25 ROOMS AVAILABLE TO US. All I can say is first come, first serve. If you delay too much, you may miss out on a great experience.***

**Registration Procedure:      Registration Cutoff Dates: August 15, 2010      Registration Costs:**  
(Per Person)  
Early Registration: (Before August 15, 2010): ..... **\$125.00 per person**  
After August 15, 2010: ..... **\$150.00 per person**

**Mail this form along with check to:**      Kenneth G Riley  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association  
200 Georgetown Court  
Hanover PA 17331

**Please make check payable to: Kenneth G Riley**

**Registration Fee Includes:** 30 September – Registration starts at Noon, Gift Bags, Hospitality Room  
1 October - Box Lunch, Tours, Guide, Pre-show, Bus, Wine Tasting  
2 October - Dinner, Entertainment at Night, Bus



## Texas Aggie Medals of Honor Seven Heroes of World War II

James R. Woodall

Foreword by James Hollingsworth

Every Medal of Honor represents a story of gallantry, courage, and sacrifice. Conceived in the early 1860s, the Medal of Honor, awarded "in the name of the Congress of the United States," has been presented to 3,467 members of the United States armed forces. Seven of the 464 Medals of Honor awarded during World War II went to Texas Aggies.

Author James R. Woodall, a 1950 graduate of Texas A&M University and a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, carried out a dedicated search of archives, family collections, and scores of other resources to gather, for the first time, the complete stories of these seven courageous men:

- **Lloyd Hughes Jr.**, who completed his critical bombing mission at Ploesti at the cost of his own life;
- **Thomas Fowler**, who continuously exposed himself to enemy fire in order to reconnoiter his unit's advance, at the same time clearing a path through a minefield, personally capturing enemy combatants, and rendering aid to wounded comrades;
- **George Keathley**, who crawled from foxhole to foxhole while under a vicious enemy barrage, gathering ammunition and rendering aid to the wounded and later leading his platoon in holding off an attack, even as he was bleeding to death from a mortal wound;
- **Horace Carswell Jr.**, who took heavy fire while persisting in his bombing attack on a Japanese fleet, then sacrificed his own life by refusing to abandon his damaged aircraft in order to save as many of his crew as possible;
- **Turney Leonard**, who, despite being wounded and under withering fire, moved ahead of his troops to effectively direct anti-tank weaponry and reorganize confused and leaderless infantry units;
- **Eli Whitely**, who charged through enemy mortar and small-arms fire in a fierce house-to-house attack, personally killing nine enemy combatants and capturing twenty-three others while sustaining severe injury;
- **William Harrell**, who, unaided, held off an attack on his lonely command post, killing at least five enemy combatants and sustaining wounds that cost him his right hand.

*Texas Aggie Medals of Honor* will undoubtedly be of great interest to former students of Texas A&M University, members of the Corps of Cadets, and others associated with the university and its distinguished tradition of military training and service. But the book will also hold great appeal, in the words of one advance reader, "to those interested in the nation's highest award for valor and the individual stories of ordinary men who did extraordinary things when confronted by life-threatening situations in combat."

**JAMES R. WOODALL** '50 holds, among other awards, the Silver Star and three Bronze Stars. Following his tenure as commandant of cadets at Texas A&M University, Colonel Woodall retired from the U.S. Army and presently makes his home in College Station.

### What Readers Are Saying:

"Jim Woodall's *Texas Aggie Medals of Honor* is a one-of-a-kind, scintillating story of seven innocent young Texas Aggies who went off to war and became heroes of the highest order. In a superbly organized and researched effort, Woodall tells their stories with completeness and eloquence. On reading the manuscript one afternoon, I couldn't put it down until I had finished it. Following was an empty night where I couldn't sleep for thinking about the horror and heartbreak of war and the unbelievable bravery of the men I had just read about. Like many other men of their generation, they were willing to pay whatever cost, take any action, and die for the sake of freedom. The book will shake you to your boots and fill your heart with gratitude. It will inspire and motivate any reader. Aggies of all ages will find it a wonderful read and so will people who are interested in military history, national security or sacrificial service. It is a wonderful book! Don't miss it."—Thomas G. Darling '54, Major General, USAF (Ret.), Commandant Emeritus

"Col. Woodall has delved deeply in writing the story of Texas A&M's seven Medal of Honor recipients. He brings to this task a life experience, an understanding, a commitment, and compassion like no other. This is a remarkable story, well told!"—Henry C. Dethloff, Prof. Emeritus, Texas A&M University; author of *The Centennial History of Texas A&M University* and *Texas Aggies Go to War: In Service of Their Country*

**TEXAS AGGIE MEDALS OF HONOR**  
978-1-60344-204-6 cloth \$25.00  
6x9, 192 pp. 32 b&w photos. 8 maps. 7 Apps.  
Bib. Index.  
Military History. Aggie Books.  
October

## Vietnam Glossary

### *Popular Words, Terms and Phrases from the Vietnam War*

#### A

Agent Orange - Defoliant/herbicide containing 2,4,T Dioxin  
AK47 - Soviet/Chicom 7.62mm Kalashnicov assault rifle  
Albumen - a blood expander carried by medics to replace lost blood  
AN/PRS-4 - Mine detector used by combat engineers  
AN/PVS-2 - Smaller Starlight Scope for use on individual weapons  
AN/TVS-2 - Larger Starlight Scope for use on crew-served weapons  
AO - Area of Operations, your "neighborhood". Ours were Cochise-Green & Walker  
APC - Armored Personnel Carrier, usually an M-113  
APDS - Armor Piercing Discarding Sabot -The baddest antitank round on earth  
ARA - Aerial Rocket Artillery - gunships  
Arc light - Radio code for a 3 ship Cell B-52 Strike  
ARVN - collection of non-hostile South Vietnamese with weapons  
Ash and Trash - Administrative functions of HHC  
AVLB - Armored Vehicle Launched Bridge (usually on an M-60 tank chassis)  
AW - Automatic Weapons

#### C

C4 - Plastic Explosive in Claymores we used for heating coffee  
C and C - Command and Control Ship, usually a Huey, sometimes a Loach  
CAR-15 - Carbine version of M-16 with collapsible stock - Officers and Special Forces only  
C Rats - C-Rations. Dog food left over from WWII and canned for GIs in Nam  
Charlie - Viet Cong, from phonetic alphabet for VC, Victor Charlie  
Charles - Formal reference to Charlie  
Charm School - Initial training and orientation upon arrival in-country

#### B

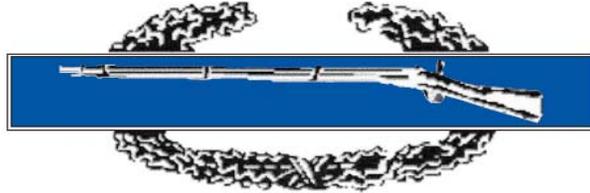
B40 - armor defeating shaped charge projectile fired by RPG2 and RPG7; origin unknown.  
Band-Aid Box - Radio code for the medic vehicle, usually an M-113 APC.  
Band-Aid - Radio code for the medic.  
Baseball Grenade - Defensive Fragmentation hand grenade: explodes on impact.  
Base Camp Commando - See REMF (REMF - Rear Echelon Mother F\*\*\*er)  
Base Piece - howitzer closest to the battery center, fired first round of fire mission  
BDA - Bomb Damage Assessment - we counted the craters  
Beaucoup - Many  
Beehive Round - 90mm cannon round containing 8,500 darts or "flechettes" called "Green Can"  
Bic - Vietnamese for "understand" "No bic" means "I don't understand"  
Big Boy - Radio code for a tank  
Black Can - 90mm Canister round containing 1,000 1/2x5/16 inch pellets  
Blivet - huge rubber tire-like container for water or diesel fuel: towed or airlifted  
Blue Legs - Infantrymen  
Blue Line - Radio code for a stream or river  
BMFIC - Big Mother F\*\*\*er In Charge (Usually the Division Commander or ADC maneuver)  
Boom-Boom - sex with a prostitute  
Boom-Boom Girl - A prostitute  
Box - Radio code for an M-113 APC  
Break Brush - To travel off a trail to avoid mines and booby-traps  
Break Squelch - To press the transmit button on the radio handset without speaking: Twice for all-clear, once for enemy near.  
Broken Arrow - Radio code for a unit about to be overrun; diverts all Tactical air to support that unit  
Bug Juice - Insect Repellent  
Bua out - get out of the area

More in next issue!



Gary Quint  
438 Fairway Lane  
Kirkwood, MO. 63122

## On The Right Track



1st Battalion 50th Infantry Mechanized

---