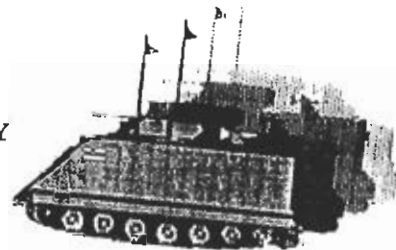


1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED) 50TH INFANTRY

" ON THE RIGHT TRACK "



VOLUME NUMBER 2 -- DATED 31 JANUARY 1998 -- ISSUE NUMBER 01

FROM THE
EDITOR'S DESK...



DEAR TROOPER,

Let me begin first by thanking you again for being a loyal member of the Association. Your support of the Association and its newsletter is the glue which binds together the legend of the Ichaban Battalion. Enclosed with the newsletter is the financial report for the year 1997. You will note that we are in the black and actually have a few dollars to spare. We have not settled with the accountant or lawyer in respect to establishing non-profit status for the Association, but the ball is in their court to proceed with the legal aspects of that. I will keep you posted as to the status. Thanks again for your support! Please keep in mind, there are several of you who have not paid their dues for 1998. An article 15 to you! Please do so now!

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Each newsletter will feature a brief history of one or more of the battalion members. This month's history is about two members.

The first one is Paul Aylmer from Philadelphia PA. Paul was in Bravo Company and went to Vietnam with the battalion in September 1967 by boat. He left country at the end of August 1968. Paul has been married for 28 years and has three children. He has worked in the food business since 1970. Paul graduated from St Joseph's University with a BS in Marketing. Paul has made a suggestion we have an "Honor Roll" to memorialize our fallen comrades. He has made a donation to that cause and I would like to have your comments on how we may accomplish this.

The second fellow is an old friend of mine, Gary Spangler. He resides in Dayton, Ohio. Gary and I were in the same squad in Charlie Company (Track 313). In December of 1967, Gary and I "snuck" down to see the Bob Hope Christmas Show in Phu Cat, along with several other fellows. Later, he was wounded in Bong Son and Gary spent some time in Japan at the hospital. After discharge from the service, Gary took up Law Enforcement, where he still serves as a deputy sheriff in Ohio.

The newsletters will profile members of the 1/50th. I would appreciate it if you would send a brief history of yourself along.

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1. Who printed a booklet of recipes for the dreaded C-rations?

2. Those big orange pills were for what?



EDITOR'S PAGE

This article was e-mailed to me from a good friend that I met in the MVC area of Internet. It was written by Sister Helen P Mroska.

He was in the first third grade class I taught at Saint Mary's School in Morris Minn. All thirty-four of my students were dear to me, but Mark Eklund was one in a million. Very neat in appearance, yet he had that Happy-To-Be-Alive attitude that made even his occasional mischievousness delightful.

Mark talked incessantly. I had to remind him again and again that talking without permission was not acceptable. What impressed me so much, though, was his sincere response every time I had to correct him for misbehaving ... "Thank you for correcting me, Sister!" I didn't know what to make of it at first, but before long I became accustomed to hearing it many times a day.

One morning, my patience grew thin when Mark talked once too often and then I made the novice-teacher's mistake. I looked at Mark and said, "If you say one more word, I am going to tape your mouth shut!!"

It was but seconds later when Chuck blurted out, "Mark is talking again." I had not asked any of the students to help me watch Mark, but since I had stated the punishment in front of the class, I had to act on it. I remember the scene as it occurred that morning.

I walked to my desk, opened the drawer, taking out a roll of tape. Without saying a word, I proceeded to Mark's desk, tore off two pieces of tape and made a big X with them over his mouth. I then returned to the front of the room. As I glanced at Mark to see how he was doing, he winked at me. That did it! I started to laugh.

The class cheered as I walked back to Mark and removed the tape, shrugging my shoulders. His first words were, "Thank you Sister for correcting me." At the end of the year I was asked to teach junior high math. The years flew by and before I knew it, Mark was again in my classroom. He was more handsome than ever and just as polite.

One Friday, things just didn't feel right. We had worked hard on a new concept all week and I sensed the students becoming frustrated and edgy with each other. I asked the class to list the names of the other students on two pieces of paper, leaving a space between each name. Then I told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down.

It took the remainder of the period to finish the assignment, and as each student left the room, they handed me their papers. Mark, last to leave the room smiled and said, "Thank you for teaching me, Sister. Have a good weekend."

That Saturday, I wrote down the name of each student on a separate sheet of paper and listed what everyone had said about that individual. On Monday, I gave each student his or her list. Before long the entire class was smiling. No one ever mentioned those papers again in class. I never knew if they discussed them with their parents or with each other outside of class. But the exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with themselves and one another again.

(Continued)

EDITORS PAGE (CONTINUED)

That group of students moved on. Several years later, after I returned from vacation, my parents met me at the airport. As we were driving home, Mother asked me the usual questions about the trip ...the weather, my experiences, etc. There was a lull in the conversation then and I asked what was the matter? Mother gave Dad a side-ways glance, and simply said, "Dad?"

My father cleared his throat as he usually did before something important. "The Eklunds called last night," he began. "Oh really," I said, "Did they say how Mark was doing?"

Dad responded quietly and with a tear in his eye, "Mark was killed in Vietnam," he said. "The funeral is tomorrow, and his parents asked if you could attend."

To this day, I can still point to the exact spot on the highway where Dad told me about Mark. I had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. Mark looked so handsome, so mature. All I could think of at that moment was, "Mark, I would give all the masking tape in the world if only you would talk now."

The church was packed with Mark's friends and relatives. Chuck's sister sang, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The pastor said the usual prayers, and the bugle played taps. One by one, those who loved Mark took the last walk by his coffin and sprinkled it with holy water.

I was the last to bless the coffin. As I stood there, one of the soldiers who acted as a pallbearer walked up to me. "Were you Mark's math teacher?" he asked. I nodded as I continued to stare at the coffin. "I was Mark's friend, Mark talked a lot about you," he said.

I couldn't hold back the tears, no matter how hard I tried. After the funeral, most of Mark's classmates headed to Chuck's house for lunch. Mark's mother and father were there, obviously waiting for me. "We want to show you something," his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket. "They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it."

Opening the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notebook paper that had been taped, folded and refolded many times. I knew without looking that the papers were the ones on which I had listed all the good things each of Mark's classmates had said about him. "Thank you so much for doing that," Mark's mother said, "As you can see, Mark treasured it very much."

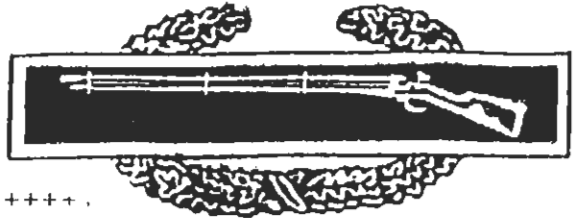
Mark's classmate started to gather around me. Charlie smiled sheepishly and said, "I still have my list. It's at home in my top drawer of my desk." Chucks's wife said, "Chuck asked me to put his list in our wedding album." "I have mine also, Marilyn said. "It's in my diary." Then Vicki reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet, and showed me her worn and frazzled list.

That is when I walked away and leaned against the side of the house and finally lost it. I cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again.

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We still have several members who have not paid their dues for the year 1998. Please remit it today, since this may be your last newsletter if your membership fee is not paid prior to the date of the next issue.

3. Jean Leroy began this 6 am custom and it survived the war. What?



+++++++
TIDBITS
+++++++.

THE CIB (COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE) This article appeared in the September 1997 issue of "Military" Magazine.

"I will probably catch a lot of flack on this one. There are exceptions to the rule, but the badge is special and is awarded only to special people." It was written by a fellow from Company I, 381st Regiment, 96th Division.

"Since WWII, everyone who donned a uniform has clamored for a badge similar to the CIB. I recall reading about some female MP during the Panama incident who was directing traffic at a crossroads and got within earshot of small arms fire. She screamed and whimpered for weeks because she was not awarded a CIB."

"Artillerymen 15 to 25 miles back can't know what it is like living as a front line soldier who must meet the enemy eyeball-to-eyeball. Pulling a lanyard on an artillery piece is just not the same as drawing a bead on a living, breathing human and squeezing the trigger. Nor is it the same as tossing hand grenades over a rise while trying desperately not to get nailed by a hand grenade that an enemy is tossing back at you. Nor the same as living in muddy foxholes day and night for weeks on end; never getting a shower, a hot meal, dry socks, or a decent night's sleep. To add to the misery, toss in raging dysentery from innumerable flies living and breeding on the countless maggot-infested corpses ripening in the hot sun. The danger and discomfort is nearly overpowering as well as relentless."

"If any soldier had an overwhelming desire to earn a Combat Infantry Badge, all he had to do was ask for a transfer to the infantry and go where the war was happening. The few soldiers left standing would have greeted him with open arms."

My guess is this was written by a WWII veteran and not one from Vietnam. Although your chances were less of being killed in the rear echelon positions in Vietnam, they were still dangerous; more so then during World War II and even Korea. Many a base camp had been attacked and even over-run during Vietnam. There was no "Front" as was established during WWII. Many of those stationed in a "rear area" can attest to this by the purple hearts they wear from a mortar attack during the night or sniper fire on a constant basis. As was stated in the first paragraph, there were exceptions to every rule during all wars.

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REUNION 1999

I will contact several people over the next few weeks to discuss formation of a "reunion" committee for Kansas City. Below are three dates which were suggested to me so far for the reunion. Please let me know by March 1 1998 which is the preferred date so I can make contacts with hotels, restaurants, etc. I have received a letter from National VFW that states, "We will cooperate with your group to see you enjoy your stay in Kansas City."

If you are interested in helping with this reunion, contact me so we can get started. Dates: September 18, 19, 20, 1999; July 2, 3, 4, 1999; August 13, 14, 15, 1999. Send your preferred date ASAP. I need to let National VFW in Kansas City know so they can make arrangements.

4. Who were the "Sneaky Petes."

REUNION UPDATE

For the year 2000, I would like to see us gather for a reunion. It will take a lot of planning because of all the celebrations that will be going on for the year 2000. I can tell you the hotel in which we stayed in Alexandria is already booked solid for the entire month of December 1999. Let us think and plan now for such an event before we have to settle for a lessor site. Two choices that come to mind: Las Vegas or a three day cruise to the Bahamas. Please let me know as soon as you can if you would be interested in either of the two picks, or if you have a recommendation for a site to have our "Millennium" reunion.

"TRUE FRIENDSHIP"



True Friendship has many ingredients.
True friendship isn't seen with the eyes,
It's felt with the heart when there is trust,
Understanding, secrets, loyalty, and sharing.
Friendship is a feeling very rarely found in life,
But when it is found it has profound impact
On one's well-being, strength, and character.
A true friendship does not need elaborate gifts,
Or spectacular events in order to be valuable or valued.
To ensure long-lasting quality and satisfaction,
A friendship only needs certain key ingredients: Undying loyalty,
unmatched understanding, unsurpassed trust, deep and Soulful secrets,
and endless sharing.
These ingredients, mixed with personality and a sense of humor,
Can make a friendship last a lifetime.
This is just a thank you MY friends,
For all the wonderful and colorful ingredients
You have brought to my life.

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The mail carrier had a registered letter that needed a signature, but no one answered the knock at the front door. The carrier went to the back door and found it unlocked. Sticking his head inside, he yelled, "Hello, anyone here?"

A high pitched voice from inside said, "Come in!"

He entered and closed the door. Turning around, he was facing the biggest, meanest looking German shepherd he ever saw. The dog bared fangs menacingly at him as he backed tightly against the wall. He shouted, "Lady, call off your dog before he eats me alive!!"

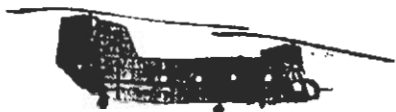
The only reply he got was, "Come in!"

Pressing his body tight against the wall, he inched to the opening from where the voice came. The only thing he saw in the empty room was a Parrot in a cage. "Damn you, stupid bird," he said, "Don't you know any other words, but 'come in'."

Without a moments hesitation, the parrot yelled, "Sic him!"

(This joke was sent in by fellow association member, Larry Lewis)

5. What was a satchel charge?



JUST A SIMPLE SOLDIER
#####

He was gettin old and Paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the VFW, telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies, they were heros, everyone.
And 'thou' sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his buddies listened well for they knew of where he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer, for old Bob has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.
No he won't be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived a very ordinary, very quiet sort of life.
He held a job and raised a family, quietly going on his way,
And the world won't note his passing; 'tho' a soldier died today.
When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell of their life stories, from the time that they were young,
But the passing of a soldier, goes unnoticed, and unsung.
Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land,
Some jerk who breaks his promise, and cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his country, and offers up his life?
The politicians stipend and the style in which he lives,
Are sometimes disproportionate to the services that he gives.
While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal, and perhaps a pension too small.
It is so easy to forget them, because it was so long ago,
That our Bob's and Jim's and Johnny's went to battle, but we know.
It was not the politicians with their compromise and their ploys,
Who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys.
Should you find yourself in danger with your enemies at hand,
Would you really want some cop-out, with his ever waffling stand?
Or would you want that soldier who was sworn to defend:
His home, his kin, his country, and would fight until the end?
He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us, we may need his like again.
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part,
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.
If we cannot do him honor, while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in the paper that might say:
OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING, FOR A SOLDIER DIED TODAY!

BELOW ARE ACTUAL EXCERPTS FROM OFFICER FITNESS REPORTS FROM LAST YEAR.

1. His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.
2. This officer is really not so much a has-been, but more of a definite won't be.
3. When this female officer opens her mouth, it seems that this is only to change whichever foot was previously there.
4. Since my last report on him, he has reached rock bottom and has already started to dig deeper.
5. She sets low personal standards, then consistently fails to achieve them.
6. This officer should go far; and the sooner he starts, the better.
7. The only ship I would recommend this man for is citizenship.
8. This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.

MISC. TIDBITS

These items were taken from the Business News Section of the Central Penn Business Journal:

1997, A WEIRD YEAR ...

Here are some of the more unusual items culled from 1997 faxes received by the paper.

July 23

In the name of atheism, Michael Last, a Hilo Hawaii sewage-treatment plant worker, insists on getting his regular salary ... and nothing more... for holiday work. He convinced his boss, but now faces a fight from the United Public Workers Union. A hearing is set for this week to decide whether an arbitrator will settle the issue.

Oct 8

Judges in Pittsburgh ruled that the now-canceled wedding plans of Rodger Lindh and Janis Surman means that Surman must return a \$21,000 engagement ring. A panel of state Superior Court Judges ruled an engagement ring is a conditional gift that requires a marriage to make the gift complete.

Oct 22

A circuit judge in Lake County FL, revoked custody of Pam Aldridge's two children, after ruling she was spending most of her time in her bedroom with a computer. The judge concluded her obsession with the Internet had clouded her judgement and granted custody of her two children to her ex-husband, Kevin.

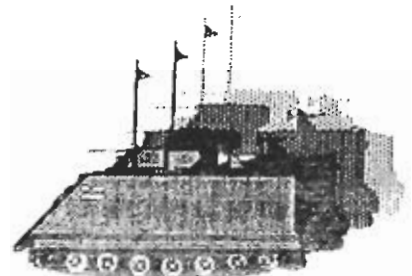
Dec 5

A robbery suspect wound up in prison after he allegedly held up a bakery in Massachusetts. A bakery clerk was able to describe the man's car to police. A Connecticut police officer spotted him and gave chase. The suspect sped away. Then, trying to lose the police, he pulled into a big parking lot and dashed into the lobby of ... a state prison.

That's all folks!!



Where Friends Meet



FIRST BATTALION, FIFTIETH INFANTRY ASSOCIATION INC
(MECHANIZED, AIRMOBILE, INFANTRY)
VIETNAM VETERAN'S CHAPTER
"PLAY THE GAME"

ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

Date: 12/31/97

The undersigned Treasurer's Report of First Battalion Fiftieth (1/50th) Infantry (Play the Game) Association report for the year 1997 is hereby submitted for records and file in the treasurer's book of records.

The balance on hand at the beginning of 1997 was \$ 113.01

Monies received from all sources during 1997:

Deposits for Dues	\$	1,285.00
Deposits from Reunion Registration		1,270.00
Donations --- 50-50 Drawing		324.00
Money collected for Dinners		4,083.08
Money collected for Tours		296.00
Total Monies received for Fiscal Year 1997	\$	7,371.09

Expenses Paid Out during the Year 1997:

Postage, Mailing Costs		623.51
Envelopes, Paper Products		56.29
Banking Charges		12.00
Reunion Supplies		74.58
Entertainment (DJ at Reunion)		275.00
Reunion Meals		4,054.59
Hospitality Room Charges		267.22
Tour of Alexandria		296.00
Bus Costs		525.00
Misc Expense (Christmas Cards)		41.24
Total Expenses paid during the Fiscal Year 1997	\$	6,225.43

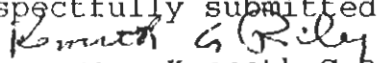
Balance on Hand 31 December, 1997: \$ 1,145.66

The statement of receipts and expenditures shows in detail sources of all monies received, and monies expended. For additional details and itemized income and expenditures, contact the treasurer at:

Kenneth G Riley
200 Georgetown Court
Hanover, PA 17331

The account number (63-874-9), in the Glen Rock State Bank, is entitled "1st Battalion 50th Infantry, Kenneth G Riley," and the headquarters for the Association is at:

200 Georgetown Court
Hanover PA 17331
(717) 632-7604

Respectfully submitted,

Treasurer: Kenneth G Riley
Dated: 12/31/97

File for reference: one (1) copy