

1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED) 50TH INFANTRY

" ON THE RIGHT TRACK "

VOLUME NUMBER 1 -- DATED 18 JULY 1997 -- ISSUE NUMBER 04

FROM THE
COMMAND TRACK...

A SHORT UPDATE

Dear "Ichanbaners:"

This short newsletter is to keep you up to date on the reunion. I spoke with the hotel in Alexandria VA on Sunday, 13 July 1997. They informed me that forty-five (45) rooms have so far been booked. The reason I bring this to your attention is that the hotel is allowing us only sixty (60) rooms. So you can see, well over half the rooms reserved for our reunion have already been taken. I spoke with two fellows late Sunday and they both were going to call this week. Gentlemen, if you have not already made your reservations at the hotel, please do so soon or you may not be able to get a room at this hotel.

So far, I have exactly 60 guys who said they would be coming to the reunion. On Tuesday, 24 June, I sent 47 letters to guys I found an address for. If several of those intend to come to the reunion, we could be out of rooms real soon. PLEASE!! If you plan on coming, do not wait much longer. In addition, the hotel is very firm about the 10 August cut-off date on the original 60 rooms. They will release any un-booked rooms to the general public at their normal rates, which are approaching \$200.00 a day in this area.

Another subject I wish to cover right now is concerning the various veteran's organizations we have in the Good Old US of A. Several months ago, I went on-line with AOL and found a "chat" room called MVC, (Military Veteran's Conference Room.) Talking with the many fellows and gals in that room over the past few months, I found out that most do not belong to one of the different veteran's organizations out there. When I asked them "Why not?" the overall response was, "Most of those organizations don't do anything to help the Vietnam Vet." Well, guys...to that I say "Bull!" The reason they think that is, "they don't get any assistance or 'handouts'" from the groups." Gentlemen, the only way we (The Vietnam Veterans) are going to get that support and representation in Washington DC is to get involved ourselves and "do it."

I myself got involved several years ago. Sure, I went into the "club" like so many others did; to get away from the bar scene, to get that cheap beer and food. But after awhile, I noticed things were not "right" with the way current issues were being handled. So, I asked questions; I volunteered to help at this, assist at that; and sooner or later, things started to happen. Things started to happen so fast that a short while ago, I was nominated for, and elected to, the position of Commander of our local VFW post.

Now, if things don't happen, or if benefits are taken away from us, guess who I can blame for not doing his job...ME!!! But that isn't going to happen as long as I can find the strength to stand up and be counted.

Well, enough for my soap box speeches. Why I bring this up is simple: If you aren't involved with a veteran's organization, get involved. Do something to help yourself assure the veteran's of this country that when the time comes for them to use benefits available, they will still be there. Join an organization, whether it be the VFW, American Legion, AmVets, Veterans of Vietnam War, or the many other fine groups out there. As an example, I just came back from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's VFW Convention in Pittsburgh. Over 2600 veterans from past wars were there. We passed many new resolutions effecting the veterans, we sent out hundreds of letters to congressmen and house of representatives asking, ...no, telling them to vote the right way on many bills that would seriously curtail our benefits in the future. After all guys, the senators and house reps were voted in to represent the wish of the American people and not their own desires, and by god, we are going to let them know what that wish is!!

So please get involved, if only for a little volunteer work. Let them know all us Vietnam Vets are not the crazed killers and drug addicts that so many "civilians" think. Join a post nearby and get involved.

Now I come to my part...anyone out there that would like to join the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) I will help you do that. See, as commander of the only All-American Post in Pennsylvania last year, I am here to offer you membership in our post. Sure, we are hundreds, maybe even thousands of miles from you. But by joining our post, this gets you in the system; it makes you a member of the National organization, it gets you the state and national magazines, which cover a multitude of veteran's subjects. It helps out this year with my membership drive for sure, but once you get into the system, it also entitles you to the right to walk into any VFW post anywhere. ANYWHERE!! Once you have your membership, you can visit any VFW post in the land. If you find one close to you that you like, we can transfer your membership to that post easy enough.

Should you not be near an active VFW post, then it still gives you that chance to drop by any post in the nation while you are traveling. Believe me, you won't find a more friendlier group of people once they find you are from an out-of-town post. They welcome you like a brother in every post I have been lucky to visit so far, and guys, that has been a few over the past couple of years.

So think about what I said; join a veterans organization and get involved. Of course, I would like you to join my post and the VFW; but, join some organization. You might just be glad you did. I can give you more info if you are interested in joining. Please call or write and I will pass it on.

One change in the reunion agenda I have to report. Because of the size of the group (All you fellows out there), I had to change the location of the Saturday night dinner. The American Legion called the other day to tell me they may not be able to handle our group because of the size of their dining room. In lieu of going there, we will be stopping at an Eagles Banquet Hall in Alexandria, which is only two blocks away from the Legion. And, it is closer to the start of the Ghosts of Alexandria tour anyway.

I have several guys who are bringing along their entire family, or at least a part of it. If your children wish to come along, they are most welcome. I will do my utmost to see they have things there to entertain them. Afterall, I don't want our first reunion to turn into "just another bunch of vets getting drunk at the local lounge." I am trying to arrange things so there is something there for everyone to participate in. I also am looking for several vendors to be there to sell badges, caps, tee-shirts, and the usual array of stuff you find at reunions or conventions. Not much luck so far though! If any of you are aware of vendors who do this type of thing, let me know so I can contact them.

The VA Health Care System is currently undergoing a major transformation. In the past, it was communicated to us the fact that ALL honorably discharged veterans have health care available through their local VA Health Care System, whether the disease or injury was service connected or non-service connected.

Now, this message is URGENT. If you have not enrolled at your nearest VA Medical Center or Outpatient Clinic, now is the time to do so. Recent changes in the law may limit your care in VA Facilities, if you are not already registered in the system. (Deadline has been set for 1 October, 1998.)

I encourage all veterans to contact the VA today and have your name entered into the system. Have your DD-214 handy when you call for an appointment. They will ask you the necessary questions in order to "log" you into the system. While you are at it, make an appointment to have a physical exam. It won't hurt, trust me!

You can also document your enrollment by filling out VA Form 10-10F, Application for Medical Benefits. Complete the form and attach your DD-214 to it and send to the nearest VA Outpatient Clinic or VA Hospital.

The health care system in the United States can stay strong only if we veterans use the system's services. If you are not using the VA for your health care, give them a try.

Below is listed the officers and positions filled and those still to be filled. PLEASE! Consider becoming a part of the battalion Association by volunteering to be an officer of the association.

PRESIDENT	-	JOHN GOLTZ
VICE PRESIDENT	-	Unfilled Position *****
SECRETARY	-	KENNETH RILEY
TREASURY	-	KENNETH RILEY
HISTORIAN	-	MIKE DEAL
CHAPLAIN	-	LAWRENCE (TOBY) JORDAN

Check the By-Laws to see what the duties of each office is.

Because of the high cost of a professional photographer, if anyone out there who is coming to the reunion and will be there for Friday Dinner and meeting have any "professional type" camera gear, please contact me so we can make the necessary arrangements for film for your use. We will pay for your services.

One day, two elderly gentlemen were talking about their favorite sport, baseball.

"I wonder if there will be baseball in heaven?" Ed had asked.

"Of course there is," Joe responded, "That is why they call it heaven."

Not long after that, Ed passed away. Then, one night while Joe was sleeping, Ed appeared in all his radiant glory in a bright light at the foot of Joe's bed. Of course, Joe was really shaken up by this.

"Calm down, Joe," Ed reassured his friend. "Everything is going to be all right. I just came back to visit and to bring you some good news and some bad news."

"What's the good news?" Joe asked.

"The good news is, there is baseball in heaven."

"That's great!" Joe exclaimed. Then after a long pause, he slowly asked Ed, "Now, what's the bad news?"

"Well Joe, the bad news is, you're scheduled to pitch in this coming Saturday's game."

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At first, people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done. Then they begin to hope it can be done. Then it is done...and everyone then wonders why it was not done before.

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A man was killed one night at a railroad crossing. His relatives sued the railroad, claiming negligence on the part of the watchman.

During the ensuing trial, the watchman was called to the witness stand. The prosecuting attorney asked him several questions:

"Were you on duty at the crossroads at the time of the accident?"

"Did you have a lantern?"

"Did you wave your lantern back and forth as a warning?"

To all of these questions, the watchman answered yes and his testimony helped the railroad win the case.

An officer of the railroad came to see the watchman later to thank him for giving evidence in favor of the railroad. The officer inquired of the watchman, "Tell me Mr Jarvis, were you nervous during the questioning at the trial?"

The watchman replied, "Yes sir, I was. I feared at any moment that their attorney would ask me if the lantern was lit!"

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A Philadelphia firm sent flowers to an associate in Baltimore upon the opening of its new office. Through some mix-up, the ribbon which was attached to the floral piece read "Deepest Sympathy for your loss."

When the florist was informed of his mistake, he let out a cry of alarm, "Good Heavens," He exclaimed, " then the flowers that we sent to Uncle Joe's funeral read, 'Congratulations on your new location!'"