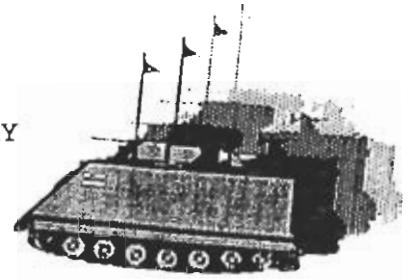




1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED) 50TH INFANTRY

" ON THE RIGHT TRACK "



VOLUME NUMBER 1 -- DATED 31 MARCH 1997 -- ISSUE NUMBER 02

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK...



ONWARD WE GO

It's hard to believe that three months have already gone by since our last newsletter. I heard from many members of the battalion and we thank them very much for joining us. Later in the newsletter, I will add the names of additional members who have decided to come to the reunion in September. When you think about it, that is not so far away. SO! If you have not already made plans to attend, please do so now. I have to reserve another block of rooms.

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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 John E Fellows: He was with Charlie Company, 1/50th. He was assigned to APC # 351. John was in the Headquarters Platoon and arrived in Vietnam by boat, the General John Pope, around 21 September 1967. Fred Maida was the driver of his APC. He has been married 30 years to Sandra Fellow and has one son, Craig, who lives in Charlotte NC. He has worked for National Fuel Gas Co for the last 28 years. In his spare time, he likes to fish for walleyes and vacations in the Caribbean at least once a year.

The second member is James F Delemeester: He was assigned to HHC as Battalion S-4. He arrived in Vietnam in September 1967 and departed 8-30-68. Jim was also assigned stateside with 2/46th Infantry, 1st Armored Division, at Fort Hood; and with HHC 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division in Germany. After discharge he went into the banking business. Jim is currently President of the Community State Bank. He remained active in the Army Reserve until 1986, retiring as a LT Colonel.

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

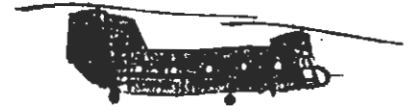
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1. He gave his name to a major unit of the First Cavalry. Who was it?



 EDITOR'S PAGE



As editor of this newsletter, I wish to invite each and every member of the association to send me anything they feel would be an up scale note for all members to read.

This story was sent in by Norm Poage, and although it has nothing to do with our battalion, I found it interesting enough to put here.

HOW MJL SPECS LIVE FOREVER...

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that was the way they built them in England and the US railroads were built by English expatriates.

"They" use that gauge then because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools they used for building wagons, which used that spacing. Okay! Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing the wagons would break on some of the old, long distance roads, since that's the spacing of the old wheel ruts.

OK! Who built the old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe were constructed by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts? The initial ruts which everyone had to match for fear of destroying their wagons were first made by Roman chariots.

Thus we have the answer to the original question. The United State's standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman Army war chariot.

So! The next time you are handed a specification and wonder why it appears to be the south end of a north-bound horse, you may be exactly right. The Imperial roman chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back-ends of two war horses!

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The first newsletter went out to everyone on the list. Because of the high cost of postage, envelopes, and printing, we can not do this every time. Although it is our goal to contact every possible member of the battalion, costs prohibit that from becoming repetitious. Also, it would not be fair to those who have contributed their dues already if everyone were to receive a free copy all the time. We will selective continue to contact all those who have not sent in their membership donation. A short letter will be sent out every three months for the rest of this year only. Anyone wishing to join the Association, please fill out the application that was sent to you and mail it in with your check for Ten Dollars. Anyone who wishes not to be contacted anymore, please drop the Editor a short note or post card telling us your wish. You will be removed from the mailing list permanently...

A lot of ex-Ichabaners have been contacted, though for whatever reason they have, have not responded to our letters or calls. PLEASE! If you know of someone who is a member of our battalion, approach them to at least respond to the letter, it is very costly to continue to search for someone that feels they don't have to respond.

2. What was an "Ontos" and what was it named after?



Where Friends Meet

LETTERS AND NEWS FROM THE GUYS



Heard from several guys this month.

Talked with Steve Tinko at the beginning of the year. He lives in the Erie PA area and would like to hear from all you Mortar guys.

Also heard from Joe Rinaldi of New York. He is doing fine and plans to attend the reunion to look up some "old" acquaintances.

Don Morrison also said HI and he is also looking forward to going to the reunion. For those that don't know, Don was with Bravo Company. He was one of the guys that found the \$150,000 in cash: the biggest haul of currency ever in Vietnam by any outfit.

I put out several letters and calls looking for a good friend of mine from Bravo Company. Elliot Dresher. Guess What? Just tracked him down through the Internet. Great to hear from you again, Elliott.

Was looking for Preston Ingells...Last know address was Waynesboro VA. Found him in Raleigh NC. Haven't heard back from him yet, but expect to shortly. If you are aware of any members of our group who are not listed in the directory, please forward their names and addresses or phone numbers to the editor, so we may contact them. THANK YOU!!

Also heard from our battalion commander, Lt Col Cheney Bertholf, better know to some of the guys as "Silver Fox." YES! Gentlemen, he knew you were calling him that. He is living happily in Florida and has donated several items to the Association, including the battalion colors.

I heard from a great lady today. Met her at the "TET 68" reunion in Richmond VA 31 January 1997. Her husband, Steve Freeman Grubb was KIA in our outfit around 28 May, 1969. She will be at our reunion and I have accepted her as a full member in the association. Anyone that knows anything about her husband, Steve, please contact me as soon as possible. Thank you!

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FOR ANYONE THAT IS "ON-LINE", WE NOW HAVE A "HOME PAGE."

Although a lot of work went into creating this home page, there still is much to do to it. As information is gathered, it will be added. So please take the time to check it out every so often. The address for this new service to all Ichaban troopers is:

<http://web2.airmail.net/npoage/1st50th>

All the work that went into creating this beautiful and well detailed section was done by Norman C Poage, past platoon sergeant for Charley Company. I personally want to thank him very much for his unselfish effort that he put forth. "One hell of a job, Norm." Thank you again.

3. What two main weapons were on the mountain behind Uplift?



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 BOOK REVIEW
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"TEARS OF BLOOD", written by Chuck Lawrence, is a betrayal of American Veterans. Chuck, like so many of us who proudly served our country in Vietnam, was greeted by bureaucratic service structures like the US Department of Veterans Affairs which were unresponsive and difficult to deal with. The USDVA did not fulfill its role of veterans advocate as mandated by law. Chuck has written a compelling story of his experience with the USDVA. He does a masterful job of identifying where this lethargy on USDVA's part impacted his entire life, causing him even a greater amount of trauma than did his service in Vietnam. It is a descriptive analysis that lets us know that all too often our tax dollars are misused. The book identifies the problems in this system. It suggests positive solutions to correct them. Chuck highlights his failures in dealing with the VA in an effort to help others avoid the same mistakes. The book sends out a clear message to all in that it explains in detail why some veterans have become hostile in our society. TEARS OF BLOOD goes beyond the maladies brought on by war and focuses on how those situations build on problems like PTSD and other war related traumas. It provides an avenue for self healing for all veterans who have experienced not only the hardships of combat, but the difficulties associated with accessing the VA system. The narrative is clean, direct, and causes the reader to experience the full range of emotions in a roller coaster fashion.

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Typical Navy stubbornness - Radio conversation released by Chief of Naval Operations:

"Please divert your course 15 degrees to the NORTH to avoid a collision

"No Sir, I will not."

"Recommend YOU DIVERT YOUR COURSE 15 degrees to the NORTH to avoid a collision."

No Sir, can not do that."

"This is the captain of a US Naval vessel, I say again, DIVERT YOUR COURSE."

"No can do, SIR!"

"THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER ENTERPRISE. WE ARE A LARGE WAR SHIP OF THE US NAVY...YOU WILL DIVERT YOUR COURSE NOW!!"

This is a lighthouse, Captain...your call!!

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From time to time I will insert an article about the Battalion or any item of interest about what may be going on with the members from the battalion. The newsletter contains additional information on the 30th Reunion. Next week I plan to visit the hotel and general area. I also have directions to the hotel which we will be staying at, and info on parking I received from the Hotel. Will include that next newsletter.

WHERE TO WRITE
 Department of Veterans Affairs
 810 Vermont Avenue, NW
 Washington DC 20400
 (202) 273-4800

Disable American Veterans
 3725 Alexandria Pike
 Cold Springs KY 41076
 (606) 441-7300

4. What was one of our first two call signs?



MISCELLANEOUS
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By now, all the original members should have their membership card, By-Laws, and other "goodies." Those who joined by the first of the month will be, or should have already, received their packet of stuff. If not, be patient, it is on its way to you.

A list of additional persons contacted will be included with each newsletter. If anyone wishes their name removed from the list, please send a letter to the Editor stating so. Any corrections should also be forwarded to the Editor so he can incorporate those into the next newsletter.

Each year, a new list of names will be sent with the newsletter. SOI GUYS, keep me informed if there is any address change, so I am sure to get this out to you at the right place and on time.

Man goes for his annual physical. Doc asks him how his sex life is? Man says, "Infrequent." Doc asks, "Is that one word or two?"

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In addition to those listed in the December 1996 Newsletter, the following members have committed to the Annual Reunion in September.

26	HOWARD W FLIPPIN	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
27	WALTER S WROBLEWSKI	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
28	MICHAEL D DEAL	-	BRAVO COMPANY	'67 - '68
29	WILLIAM C ROSKILLY	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
30	EUGENE FOPPE	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
31	THORWALD WANNER	-	BRAVO COMPANY	'67 - '68
32	STEPHEN ESCOTT	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
33	JOSEPH R EWING	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
34	RONALD CLEMENTS	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
35	GLADYS A GRUBB	-	WIDOW OF STEVE GRUBB-ALPHA	
36	DENNIS R TEPEN	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
37	NEIL MILLER	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
38	TOM KNEPP	-	BRAVO COMPANY	'67 - '68
39	M M OLIVER SR	-	HHQ COMPANY	'67 - '68
40	DANIEL G MISOFF	-	CHARLIE COMPANY	'67 - '68
41	MICHAEL A THEURER	-	BRAVO COMPANY	'67 - '68
42	WALTER A TRACEY	-	HHQ COMPANY	'67 - '68
43	WILLIAM E BRENNAN	-	HHQ COMPANY	'67 - '68
44	ROGER A BURCH	-	BRAVO COMPANY	'68 - '69
45	MARION R HAY	-	ALPHA COMPANY	'67 - '868
46	FRED M LOHMAN	-	ALPHA COMPANY	'67 - '68

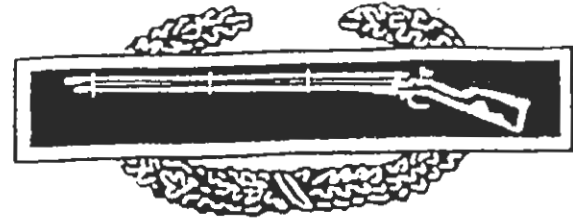
Larry Lewis, PO Box 31998, Estes Park CO 80517; is looking for the following men. If you are aware of their whereabouts, please contact the Editor so I can relay that information to Larry. Thank You!

- 1. Vernon G Frey
- 2. William Hubbs
- 3. Russell Gorde
- 4. Elijah McKisisk

5. What was a "Rice Twigs?"



VETERAN'S AFFAIRS



I have not kept up to date on a lot of bills being presented to congress these days. However, there is one particular bill I wish to bring to your attention. I do not want to bring politics into our newsletter, just wanted to make everyone aware of what is happening out there.

It seems that a career soldier who was injured in combat receives compensation for that injury. When they retire however, compensation paid to them for a service connected injury is deducted from their retirement pay. In no other occupation throughout this country does that happen except in the military.

There is a bill, H R 303, presently in congress to revise that. It states in part:

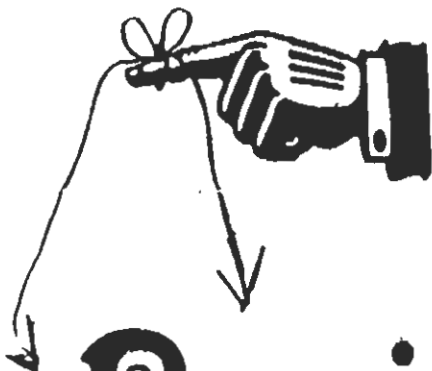
To amend title 38, United States Code, to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have service-connected disabilities to receive compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs concurrently with retired pay, without deduction from either.

Not being either disabled or retired military, I have to say this does not effect me. However, I know there are plenty of you out there who know someone, maybe yourself, who is or will be effected by this. It seems to me that all veterans should stand up and speak out on this issue, to get it resolved now, before the bill is again deadlocked by our congressmen. WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMEN.

REMEMBER...A sucking chest wound was Mother Nature's way of telling you you've been in a fire fight!

You know you are getting old:

When you put your pants on backward, and they fit better.
When you sink your teeth into a juicy steak, and they stay.
When your knees buckle, but your belt won't.



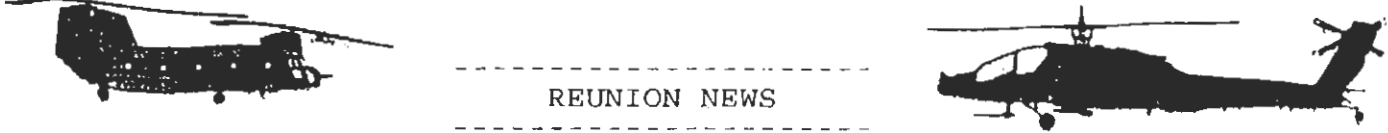
Reminder



"No, I will not let you use one of my biscuits for a hockey puck."

PLEASE! CALL THE HOTEL SOON IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO COME TO THE REUNION. THEY NEED TO CONFIRM THE ROOM NAMES WITH THE LIST I PROVIDED TO THEM.

6. What was a "Trick or Treat" mission?



REUNION NEWS

A correction to the last newsletter. The \$20.00 deposit requested is not deposit toward the room as it seems to read in the past newsletter. This deposit is a registration fee, to provide for additional services we are providing, such as a hospitality room, guest speakers, pictures, meeting room rental, bus transportation, etc. If I have mis-led anyone, please forgive me. I also had to send in a \$500.00 deposit this month, so it helps to cover the cost of the deposit. This money, if returned, will be used to provide additional events and/or door prizes.

I have also included a copy of a form we received just this past week. It concerns parking arrangements at the hotel. if you are driving a vehicle to the hotel, please be aware of this additional charge.

All reservations must be made at the hotel by August 31, 1997. The reservation number is listed below for your convenience. Please understand, the hotel has informed me any rooms not reserved by that date will be released to the general public at their regular rates. So, if you plan on attending the reunion, you MUST have your reservations made by 31 August to guaranty you the special rates we are receiving.

A copy of the reunion schedule will be sent with the June newsletter. Friday evening we will be having a meeting and dinner in the hotel. The dinner is a little expensive in my mind, however I will be trying to negotiate a more realistic price with the hotel staff. Saturday night will be a special program. Casual wear is suggested for Saturday's events.



Please make reservations with the hotel at: 1-800-EMBASSY
Tell them you will be with the 1st 50th reunion group, staying at Alexandria VA.
Must be done by 31 August, 1997.

At our first reunion, we will discuss and vote on a location to hold our next reunion. We would like this to become an annual event. We still need officers. I have accepted the position of Secretary and Treasurer until the reunion, where we will vote on all the officers for the upcoming year, 1998. I need someone to volunteer for President, Vice-President, and Chaplain until the Reunion; then we will elect officers at that time. Mike Deal from Iowa, has gracefully volunteered to be the battalion Historian and I thank him very much for his choice.

For anyone who has not signed up for the Reunion or Association, a copy of the application is included with this newsletter.

ONE NOTE OF IMPORTANCE: I am looking for a picture of Todd A Handy, he was in Charlie Company, track 312. Please let me know if you have one. I will gratefully pay for any duplication costs. Check through your pictures, please, and see if you have one of Todd. He was killed on 2 March 1968, My book is dedicated to him. I would like to include a picture of him with the book.

7. What does an APC and a Chrysler New Yorker have in common?

Dear Civilians, Friends, Draft Dodgers, etc.:

In the very near future, the undersigned will once more be in your midst, dehydrated and demoralized, to take a place again as a human being with the well-known forms of freedom and justice for all; engage in life, liberty and the somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. In making those joyous preparations to welcome him back into organized society you might take certain steps to make allowances for the past twelve months. In other words, he might be a little Asiatic from Vietnameseitis and Overseasitis, and should be handled with care. Don't be alarmed if he is infected with all forms of rare tropical diseases. A little time in the "Land of the Big PX" will cure this malady.

Therefore, show no alarm if he insists on carrying a weapon to the dinner table, looks around for his steel pot when offered a chair, or wakes you up in the middle of the night for guard duty. Keep cool when he pours gravy on his dessert of mixed peaches at dinner with his Seagrams V0.

Pretend not to notice if he acts dazed, eats with his fingers instead of silverware and prefers C-rations to steak. Take it with a smile when he insists on digging up the garden to fill sandbags for the bunker he is building. Be tolerant when he takes his blanket and sheet off the bed and puts them on the floor to sleep on.

Abstain from saying anything about powdered eggs, dehydrated potatoes, fried rice, fresh milk or ice cream. Do not be alarmed if he should jump up from the dinner table and rush to the garbage can to wash his plates with a toilet brush. After all, this has been his standard. Also, if it should start raining, pay no attention to him if he pulls off his clothes, grabs a bar of soap and a towel and runs outdoors for a shower.

When in his daily conversation he utters such things as "Xin loi" and "Choi oi" just be patient, and simply leave quickly and calmly if by some chance he utters "didi" with an irritated look on his face because it means no less than "Get the Hell out of here." Do not let it shake you if he picks up the phone and yells "Sky King forward, Sir" or says "Roger out" for good-by or simple shouts "Working."

Never ask why the Jones' son held a higher rank than he did, and by no means mention the word "Extend." Pretend not to notice if at a restaurant he calls the waitress "Numbah 1 girl" and uses his hat as an ashtray. He will probably listen for "Homeward Bound" to sound off over AFRS. If he does, comfort him, for he is still reminiscing. Be especially watchful when he is in the presence of women--especially a beautiful woman.

Above all, keep in mind that beneath that tanned and rugged exterior there is a heart of gold (the only thing of value he has left). Treat him with kindness, tolerance, and an occasional fifth of good liquor and you will be able to rehabilitate that which was once (and now a hollow shell) the happy-go-lucky guy you once knew and loved.

Last, but not least, send no more mail to the APO, fill the ice box with beer, get the civvies out of mothballs, fill the car with gas, and get the women and children off the streets--BECAUSE THE KID IS COMING HOME!!!!

Love,

Ken

DIRECTORY OF E-MAIL ADDRESSES

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<http://web2.airmail.net/npoage/1st50th>

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Bob Newland JR	bnewland@alpha.wcoil.com
Marion Hay	hayboat@bigfoot.com
Fred Maida Jr	koppa@gate.net
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Larry Ashlock	cashlock@concentric.net