



ON THE RIGHT TRACK

1ST BATTALION 50TH INFANTRY MECHANIZED

Are you Ready for Reunion 2001?

Mission Statement

The mission of the Association is to publish a newsletter and to maintain an internet web-site.

The Association will use these venues to inform its members of upcoming Association events and current or proposed legislation relative to Veterans Affairs.

Now more than ever is the time to focus on our mission. We are striving to live in a nation where our armed forces are second to none. We want to live in a nation where our veterans have almost as good a health care system plan as members of congress, most who have not served in any form of military units. We want to live in a nation where flag desecration is not free speech, but where school prayer is.

By participating in our government by voting and as citizens (and influencing our lawmakers), we can slowly bring America back to its founding principles. Back to the day where our military was so powerful, they chose to tear down the Berlin Wall rather than further the Cold War. Back to the days when the U.S. flag was protected from desecration. Back to the days when the government did not deny promised benefits to veterans and retirees. Back to the days before e-mail and cyberspace, when politicians shook hands, kissed babies and talked intelligently about important issues. Back to the days when we praised them when they did good (which was not too often) and held their feet to the

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FROM THE EDITOR



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fire when they did wrong! Developing a relationship with government officials is just as important as turning this country around as it is working with kids.

Our Mission: We accomplish great things by reaching out to our elected officials. We must encourage more veterans to do that, not just sit by and watch the world go by.

Did you Know?

Most veterans are aware that the booklet, Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents, is a great resource regarding veterans benefits. Many are not aware, however, that you can order this booklet through:

*Superintendent of Documents
P O Box 371954
Pittsburgh PA 15250-7954*

The cost is \$5.00 each or you can order the booklet via telephone at: 202-512-1800.

Other sources are available to veterans to assist with claims and eligibility issues. We've listed some resources below. Please check out Surfing the Net for Vets to find websites that assist and educate veterans. The following phone numbers are provided for your convenience.

VA BENEFITS
1-800-827-1000

VA INSURANCE
1-800-669-8477

HEADSTONES & MARKERS
1-800-697-6947

HOME LOANS
1-800-729-5772

CHAMPVA
1-800-733-8387



The short memories of American voters is what keeps our politicians in office.....Will Rogers

BROTHER BIOS

Tande, Richard A: Richard served with Charlie Company from October 1967 until October 1968 in second platoon. He now resides in Illinois where he works as a realtor and in the sheet metal industry.

Taylor, Robert T: Bob came over with Bravo Company with the USNS Pope. He was severely wounded in December of 1967. He now works for a trucking company and resides in Mississippi.

Tepen, Dennis R: Dennis came over with Charlie Company on track 331. Dennis left in July of 1968 and he now lives in Illinois with his wife Vicki.

Thelen, Jon: Jon entered service with Bravo Company in December of 1967, spending his time there until leaving country in September of 1968. He now lives in Michigan with his wife Debra and he has two children and four grandchildren. Jon retired from the police force in 1995.

Theurer, Michael: Michael came over with Bravo Company in 1967. Michael has a son Corey in college. He owns his own business in Wisconsin.

Thomas, Brian: Brian was one of Bravo Company's original leaders and rode around in track 211 until wounded in December 1967. Brian now lives in Pennsylvania with his wife Susan. He is currently the Sports Manager for a college in PA.

Tilton, Charles D: Charles was with headquarters Company during his time overseas. He now resides in Utah

Tinko, Stephen V Jr: Stephen was with Charlie Company when they arrived on shore. He served with the mortar platoon and now lives in Pennsylvania.

Tishler, James H: James was an original Charlie Company trooper. He was on track 301 with headquarters platoon. Fred Madia was his driver. Jim now resides in Wisconsin.

Topper, John A: John was Company Commander for Alpha Company. John retired in 1993 as a Colonel. He now resides in Wyoming with his wife Janet and their five children. John has been Director of Fremont County Association of Governments since March of 1995

Toyne, Victor A: Victor was an original boat person with Charlie Company. He left the country in September of 1968 and returned to Iowa, where he is now a farmer and enjoys all types of outdoor sports.

Tracey, Walter A: Walter was a support platoon leader for his tour of duty over there. He now lives in the New Jersey area with his wife Marion.

Troutman, Kenneth: Ken left Fort Hood with the group and became a squad leader for my squad in Charlie Company. Ken was wounded in one of the battles in the spring of 1968. He now works as the Postmaster for a small town in upstate New York. He and his wife have two daughters.

Ussery, Jimmy D: Jimmy was with Alpha Company from June of 1969 until June of 1970. He worked as a mechanic in the motor pool. Jimmy returned to Texas where he currently lives.

Valasek, Melvin: Melvin was an original boat person with Headquarters, he was a medic. Melvin now lives in Nebraska with his wife Marsha.

Valentin, Caryle: Caryle came over to Bravo Company in 1969 and left the country in February of 1970. He lives in the New York Area. Since his discharge, he has worked for the New York Transit Authority. He has three children.

Van Heuvel, John T (Jack): Jack came over with Bravo Company and was later transferred to 5/7th Calvary. he resides in Wisconsin where he works for a paper mill. His wife Barbara and he have four children.

Vann, Alvin Jackson: Alvin was on A.C. 312 when we arrived in the country. He left in December of 1968. He owns a business with his son. They reside in Georgia now. He spends a lot of his time restoring vehicles.

Volmut, Robert: No information available at this time.

Wadleigh, Melvin: Melvin was a mechanic on the VTR's during 1969 and 1970. After the service, Melvin went to work on a farm and garage. He and his wife have two children and they live in New Hampshire.

Walker, LLoyd: Lloyd was in Charlie Company going over with us on the boat. After service, he returned to Pennsylvania where he currently lives with his wife, Felicia.

Walulek, Stanley: Stanley was with Delta Company upon arrival in country. He left country in August of 1968 and took up residence in New Jersey.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Wanner, Thorwald: Thorwald was a cook with Bravo Company from arrival in country until his discharge. He currently lives in North Dakota and farms.

Warner, Gregg: Gregg served with the battalion and after discharged moved to New York State where he currently resides and works as a Disabled Veterans Specialist and Counselor.

Werner, Richard: Richard went by boat with us to Vietnam. He left country in December of 1967 after being wounded. He now resides in Pennsylvania and is self employed. He has one daughter.

Westmoreland, Kerby:

No information available at this time.

Comrade Search

Those of you who remember Richard McJimsey, please contact me right away. His son is looking for any information about his father. He would like to share stories with you. His father passed away recently, so guys, if you remember Richard, please contact me ASAP!

Also looking for anyone who knew George Bensema. George was a 1st Lt., then later became commander of Delta Company. His son David is trying to find someone who knew him. Please let me know what you can about George Bensema as soon as possible. Thanks!

Every day I get up and look through the Forbes list of the richest people in America. If I'm not there, I go to work.

Robert Orben

Coping with Change

Change is a major cause of stress and often out of your control. However, we can control the effects of stress so that we can continue to live healthy lives. Change occurs within our personal lives, and the lives of our family members, our careers, and our finances. Among the greatest stresses are the death of a spouse or child, divorce, job changes, moves, illness and injuries. Even happy events such as retirement or increase in financial assets can cause stress.

Some stress is actually good for us, but when stress is great and prolonged, our bodies may send signs that warn us to do something to protect ourselves. These signs may be headaches, tight neck and back muscles, stomach problems, sleeping problems, anxiety, difficulty in concentration, helplessness feelings, and change in appetite. There may also be a racing heart and change in blood pressure.

Take action when these symptoms occur. You should share your thoughts and feelings about what has happened with someone you trust: a doctor, priest, family member, or friend.

Remember: You do have control over other aspects of your health. Exercise regularly, get 20-30 minutes of exercise at least three times a week. Do things you enjoy and stick with them, such as a hobby, gardening, looking up old friends. Work out anger. Once anger

sets in, get involved in some activity, such as gardening, painting, etc, to forget what caused you to be angry.

Eat a healthy diet. I know that is a hard one to do at times, but cut down on sugars, salty foods, alcohol, and caffeine. These items only mask your feeling, make you more nervous, speed up your heart, and raise your blood pressure. Quit smoking! Use the mental health associations, Public Library, your employee health staff to help you find and practice other stress reducers and relaxation techniques.

Remember: although some change is inevitable, stress is manageable!

Enrichment



ARE WE WORRYING ABOUT THE RIGHT THING?

Typically, people focus a tremendous amount of energy on the rate of return on their investments when, in reality, this is the one aspect of the finances they have little control over. Where you can make an important difference, however, is in the amount of your investments you surrender to taxes. Most people overlook this opportunity.

There are several simple ways to avoid filling the government's coffers at the expense of your own. These small adjustments can make a huge difference to your eventual wealth, especially when combined with other sound investment strategies.

(Continued on page 4)

The federal estate tax starts at between 37% and 41% on the first dollar of your estate above \$650,000, and increases to 55% on amounts exceeding \$3 million.

However, if you are married, anything you leave outright to your spouse, whether by will or joint ownership, will pass completely estate tax-free at the first death. Assets you leave in a marital trust for your spouse's benefit will qualify also. This results from an unlimited marital deduction, assuming both spouses are U. S. citizens.

If either you or your spouse has or expects to have an estate exceeding the initial tax-free allowance, the marital deduction is a superb tax shelter. But beware: relying too much on this deduction to protect the estate of the first spouse to die can cause unnecessary taxes on the survivor's estate. When the survivor dies, the IRS will be waiting to collect taxes on your combined assets exceeding the exemption amount that you leave to individuals other than a new spouse.

To shelter property from tax in the survivor's estate, you can create a "bypass trust, also known as a credit shelter trust. See Table 1 on page 5.

The government encourages gifts to qualified charitable organizations by completely exempting their value from gift and estate taxes. For gifts to public charities, you may deduct up to 50% of your adjusted gross income each year for gifts of cash or unappreciated property; up to 30% for gifts of appreciated property, such as stock. Contributions in excess of this amount may be carried forward for up to five years.

Next Issue: Trusts

(This information was provided by the Bank of Hanover Investments Services Manager).

Surfing the Net for Vets

Surfing the net can not only be fun, but highly informative. The world wide web unlocks a world full of wondrous sites. This article features a few which our cyber-reporter has found to be worth visiting. If you have found a great site and would like to submit a review, please contact the editor.

What better place to begin our cyber-land vacation than at our own website.

1st Battalion 50th Infantry Association Homepage

<http://www.ichiban1.org>

The association maintains this website not only for members, but for any visitors who are interested in learning about our organization and it's mission. The recent addition of the Message Board is an awesome feature which is proving to be a huge success. Show your support by paying a visit and leaving a message. The other guys would love to hear from you.

The American Experience/ Vietnam

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/>

If you have not seen this award winning documentary, you can view the program transcripts at this website. Boasting good design and easy navigation, this site is full of accurate, detailed information. This site is must-see for those who wish to revisit the past, or those who wish to learn more about Americans who served in-country. Our reporter rates this site highly for content, design, bookmarkability, and because we support the Public Broadcasting System and encourage you to do the same.

Dept. of Veteran Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

A complete and comprehensive resource for the vet. General information; benefits and services; public relations; hot topics; congressional and legislative affairs; special events and veteran organizations, are but a few of the topics to be found at this site.

Prairie Ridge

<http://theshop.net/slworley/indx.html>

Stephen L. Worley, SMSgt. USAF (Ret) is a Vietnam Veteran. He is also the webmaster of the Prairie Ridge site. This site is dedicated to patriotism with a capital P. For a dose of good old-fashioned love of flag and country, don't walk, but run to this site. Worley has created a masterpiece site full of quotes, images and patriotic midis. The first page greets you with school children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. That it and of itself was enough to win the heart of this reporter. Pay this site a visit, it's well worth the time.

Learn.Com

<http://www.learn.com>

As it's name implies this is a site about learning. Their catalog is literally bursting with instructional courses for practically any topic imaginable. From Eyeglasses 101 to The Future of Social Security, this site takes you on a step by step learning experience. Because the brain is a terrible thing to waste and we should all strive to learn something new everyday, we encourage your visit to this site.

**PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES,
IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO
ALREADY.
THANKS IF YOU HAVE.**

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.....Thomas Jefferson

The poem below was sent to me by an association member. It was penned in June of 1892. Could this possibly be where our motto, "Play the Game", came from?

The note I received from the member of the Association was as follows:

" I came across the enclosed poem recently. Given the fact that the parent regiment was activated in 1917, this could very well have been the inspiration for its motto. Those who make such decisions would have been of the right age to have been influenced by it."

Play the Game Vitai Lampada

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night,
Ten to make and the match to win.
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And its not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame.
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote,
Play Up! Play up! And Play the Game!

The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke.
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the Regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England far, and Honour a name.
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
Play up! Play up! And Play the Game

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set.
Every one of her son's must hear,
And none that hears it, must forget.
This they all with a joyful mind,
Bear through life like a touch in flame.
And falling fling to the host behind,
Play up! Play up! And Play the game!

TABLE 1
(continued from page 3)

COMBINED ESTATE	ESTATE TAX ALL TO ONE SPOUSE WILL	ESTATE TAX USING BYPASS TRUST
\$ 700,000	\$ 18,500	\$ 0
1,000,000	134,500	0
1,500,000	344,500	76,000

Coming in September

Don't you just love the electronic super highway? Well, our newsletter staff does. In an attempt to defray the cost of publishing the newsletter, we are going to be offering a cyber version, starting with the September issue.

Anyone with an email address please contact Ken by snail mail, email or telephone and let him know what your email addy is so that we can get it into the system by September 15.

The benefits of this are:

- Reduced cost of publication
- Reduction of time spent printing, folding, and stuffing the newsletter into envelopes.
- Online versions will have the added benefit of color accents.
- Reduced cost of postage

Contact Ken at kenr@lobar.com or ichiban@blazenet.net

Many thanks to *The Dixie Chicken* for editorial & artistic assistance with this month's newsletter.

1ST BATTALION 50TH INFANTRY MECHANIZED

1st Battalion



50th Infantry
Association

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Check out our website
<http://www.ichiban1.org>

HOT OFF THE PRESS

There is now a bill before congress, that if passed, will do away with Veteran/Minority preferential treatment now received in the US Government.

What this means, to **any** vet who is working for the government under the Veteran's preference rules is—eliminate that treatment. When you begin to accumulate seniority, the (the government) will be able to fire you for whatever reason they feel is justifiable, without preferential status.

For example....let's say you have 19 years service under your belt and one more to go for the pension, they can dismiss you almost without cause and rehire someone younger to replace you.

Details at this date are a bit sketchy, but those in the know advise us to look for and follow **HR-4642**. This is the number of the bill presently going through the House of Representatives.

**Look for future
updates on this
item.**

REUNION UPDATE

- **Harrah's**
3475 Las Vegas Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV
- **March 11-16, 2001**
check-out Fri. 3/16
- **\$84/per night**
(single or double occupancy)
Each additional person over 2 yrs
of age is \$15/night
- **For reservations call:**
1-888-458-8471
- **Group Code:**
S3FIRS1
1st BTN, 50th Infantry
- Reservations **MUST** be made by 2/19/2001. Rates increase after this date.

1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED) 50TH INFANTRY

" ON THE RIGHT TRACK "

 VOLUME NUMBER 4 -- DATED 30 JUNE 2000 -- ISSUE NUMBER 03

SUPPLEMENT TO NEWSLETTER

The following letter was submitted by one of our illustrious officers, Bravo Company Commander, Richard Guthrie; on their return trip in 1998 to Vietnam. Dick, Brian Thomas, and Toby Milroy made that trip together and the article following is Dick's words on one such portion of that trip. It is in Dick's own words and I apologize to him for not sending this out earlier.

* * * * *

You will also find attached, as a separate brochure, all information currently available on the upcoming Reunion in Las Vegas. Please give a lot of thought to attending. We anticipate a large gathering of the forces there, so make plans now to attend. Don't delay, as room space is at a premium in the Harrah's hotel at this time. I will send with the September newsletter any tours that look interesting and if we receive enough interest in them, I will book them at that time. Do not hold your registration form, or calling for reservations, until then, or you may not be able to be our group in the same hotel. We look forward to seeing a lot of smiling faces there this time and I personally am anxious for March 2001 to get here.

* * * * *

The Annual Directory of Membership will be sent under a separate cover, probably by the middle of July. This Directory goes only to those who are currently paid up with their membership. If you are in arrears, please remit your dues now to the Secretary/Treasurer, so we may send you our Annual Directory of Membership. If there are any corrections to the Directory, please forward them to the Secretary/Treasurer as soon as possible, so we may revise and update the Directory for the next distribution. At any time, if you have changes to your address, phone number, e-mail address, and so forth, please send those to me as soon as possible. There are several of you out there who have not updated your records for quite some time. Please take a moment to check your entry in the Directory and let me know of any changes. Thank you.

Also, as stated in the Newsletter, I will need all current e-mail addresses prior to 31 August of this year. So if you have a change in yours, let me know as soon as possible at one of the addresses or conveniences listed below:

Kenneth G Riley
 200 Georgetown Court
 Hanover PA 17331
 717-632-7604
 e-mail: ichiban@blazenet.net
 e-mail: kenr@lobar.com

MEMOIR WORKSHOP
SPIRITUAL LIFE
TRUONG LAM REVISITED, JULY 1998

We had made a detailed map study and we paid careful attention as the van bumped and lurched over the sandy, dusty cart track until its course turned away from the spot we were looking for. We would need to go the rest of the way on foot.

It was brutally hot and the three of us -- the former medic, the platoon leader and the company commander -- soon were soaked with sweat. Our guide Mr. Ngoi did not seem to notice the heat.

In no time we attracted the carnival crowd of curious villagers of all ages that would gather and follow each time we walked the hamlets and paddies. The group this day included a relatively tall, dignified and well-dressed man who rode up on his bicycle. He persistently queried Mr. Ngoi about what we were after. As soon as Ngoi told him, he got animated and insisted we follow him. Enroute to his destination it came to light that he had been a member of the Viet Cong operating in this area for many years. He had retired a few years earlier at the rank of Major, and would certainly know where a big engagement had taken place thirty years before.

After half an hour of slogging the sandy trail we reached a low mound rising from the paddies that he said had been the scene of a horrendous fight against the Americans, and in fact of another against the French before them. Unfortunately, it had nothing to do with the locale we were after.

I described again the place we wanted. To emphasize that it had been on 10 December of 1967 did not add much, as the conversion formula for his lunar calendar does not seem to be any more common knowledge among those people than it is for us. When I told him in some detail how we had started the fight by stumbling up against a force of several companies, hiding well dug-in along a deep trench, and had fought all day, then attacked again with reinforcements the following day, he nodded vigorously, waved his arms, and rushed us off in another direction. A couple of miles of hot, sandy trail later, the new destination turned out to be as irrelevant to us as the first site had been.

When I reiterated the whole story to him and emphasized that our unit had been in armored personnel carriers, he thought a moment, and strode briskly

in a third direction, telling Ngoi it was about a kilometer away. Part way there, we crossed a deep drainage ditch running North-South towards a distant finger of flat ground that rose a few feet above the rice paddies; it was covered with palm trees and thick hedges and shaped the way we remembered. We followed the ditch and crossed the three hundred meters of open paddy under a blinding midday sun. The closer we got to the higher ground, the more familiar it looked. I paused when we entered new shade and checked my map with our compass heading. We had to be near *our* locale. A few hundred meters further and there was no doubting that we had arrived.

Conversation among us ceased. We slowed our pace, then walked around until we found the exact spot where Brian's first platoon had been stopped by those withering fires thirty-one years earlier. We walked to the ditch, and Brian nodded, signifying without speaking that he now understood what I had told him several times back in Virginia. It would not have been possible to attack through the ditch. The personnel carriers would have gotten stuck, and at angles that would have exposed their undersides to antitank fires. He had been nagged for three decades by the thought that if only he had attacked straight through the ditch, things would have turned out differently. He realized now that had he stayed in one piece and been able to attempt such an attack, the outcome would have been even worse.

As if by common accord the three of us separated, getting some distance from each other. Each of us was lost in his memories, replaying for the thousandth time the events of that terrible bygone day. Even our coterie of locals seemed to sense how deeply we were affected, and they withdrew a few yards, abating their usual loud conversations for a polite few minutes.

Brian knelt in the shade of a palm on the flat ground, about fifteen yards from the ditch which had concealed and sheltered the enemy soldiers who kept us in their sights that day. The tree might have been the very one he had crumpled under, felled by the rifle shot that had slammed up through his thigh and ravaged his gut.

Toby went slowly back to the site of the MEDEVAC helicopter landing pad he had organized after pulling several of our wounded out of the terrible exposure to machine-gun fires in the open field.

After walking to see where our left and right flanks had been, I leaned against a tree and my mind went over yet again the scene that I had replayed so many times during the previous three decades. My throat was too tight to either talk or swallow. Tears mingled with the sweat already pouring down my face.

Being at that spot failed to bring back the details of the countless heroic acts I so longed to recapture. But being there *did* put me, I felt, in very direct contact with the spirits of the twelve men who bravely gave their lives there. I wasn't able to speak, but in a silent prayer I begged their forgiveness for having led them there and allowed this to happen. I sensed from the other side a very real response. Those souls were grateful to us for coming back to that place. Even today, two years later I remain convinced the communication was as real as any conversation I have had in my lifetime.

Keeping a promise they had made to other company-mates, Toby and Brian filled several film canisters with dirt from that hallowed ground.

To thank him for his help we invited the Major to join us for lunch. Over a "*Three-three-three*" beer we learned, through Ngoi's rough translating, that they too have an M.I.A. problem. Only a month or so before, the Major had located the remains of one of his childhood friends at a different battlefield nearby. He had searched for those bones for a quarter of a century and was relieved that he'd been able to see to it that his comrade at long last had gotten a decent burial at one of the many, many National cemeteries that now dot the countryside in Binh Dinh Province.

We agreed that sending two nations' youth off to shoot each other down is a bad way to resolve issues, to settle differences. So we drank an old warrior's toast and solemnly pledged to do what we could to promote peace in this world.