



# 39<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



April, 2017

President.....Bill Ray  
 Vice President.....David Romans  
 Secretary.....Jim Lewis  
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 Sgt. at Arms.....Mike Male

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 Member at Large.....Oly Guerra  
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 Reunion Chair.....Gale Helser

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well here we are at the end of the first quarter of 2017. We have a new Commander and Chief of the United States which some people are glad and some are not but all have to admit that he has changed our opinion of the man who holds the highest office in the United States. Most of us have lost an hour sleep since the last newsletter due to Day Light Savings Time which most acknowledge is an aggravation. Carolyn and I have been busy participating in the 50th Anniversary Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans two pinning ceremonies held during the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo in February. We are doing this to keep in compliance with the 39th ENG BN (CBT) Alumni Association being a Commemorative Partner. This has been a rewarding time spent with Vietnam Vets from around the area. The 39th held its own ceremony at last year's reunion and our plans are to do the same at the November reunion in Washington, D.C.

Our Brothers and Sisters of the 39th BEB, 2 BCT, and 101ST ABN DIV (AASLT) have completed their tour in Iraq; they returned to Fort Campbell January 5th & 8th, 2017. Welcome Home and Job Well Done.

At last year's reunion general membership meeting we discussed several items like having some of the wives/family members or significant others write short articles for the newsletter about what it is like to attend the reunions and what they liked about it. We did have an article in the last newsletter and I hope this will continue. The other item of interest to you would be having a 39<sup>th</sup> challenge coin; we are in the process of deciding the right coin for us and hopefully will have them available by the D.C. reunion. I would like to thank Raul (Roy) Flores for his time spent drafting a design for the coin; there have been some tweaks done to the original design and the Officers are making the

final decision. Hopefully, we can have the approved design to show you in the next newsletter. Next year we will also be electing officers for 2018-2019 so be there to promote and vote for your candidate.

The 39th has lost two loved ones since the first of the year. Martha Gottheardt, wife of Jim Gottheardt who passed March 3, 2017 and Gary Marsh, brother of Donna Boney and grandfather of Brian "Tuff" Delaharty, who passed January 29, 2017. Obituaries are located elsewhere in the newsletter.

Now for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our new members and LifeTime members. Welcome Home Brothers; we look forward to seeing you at one of our future reunions.

### NEW MEMBERS

Lou Perches  
 HHC & D Co. 67-68

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

Joe Pollack  
 HHC 65-66

Please remember to send me any changes to your contact information so we are able to stay in touch.

There is more complete information about this year's reunion included in our newsletter. Please make your reservations early; we have already gotten quite a few reservations made. If you have made a D.C. reunion, you know the great times we have; if you haven't, then you don't know what you are missing, so please join us. Carolyn and I are looking forward to seeing you all.

**BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER**

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## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Greetings fellow 39th Engineers:

My article today is on the presumptive conditions allowed by the VA for compensation. Note: These presumptives may have time limits or exclusions depending on your overall health issues.

Cancers: Bronchus, Larynx, Lung, Trachea, Fibrosarcoma, Alveolar soft part Sarcoma, Angiosarcoma, some Leukemia, Clear cell Sarcoma of the Aponeuroses, or tendons, Congenital Fibrosarcoma, several tumors of the bone, skin layers, soft tissues, blood, lymph nodes, blood vessels, muscles, fibrous connective tissue, bone marrow, Hodgkins Disease, Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.

Other issues include Parkinson's Disease, Diabetes Mellitus and Pheripheral Neuropathy.

If any of these look familiar to you, contact your local VSO for follow up and filing claims. All claims MUST come with a CURRENT (no more than one year old) written diagnosis from your provider.

Before you attempt to file a claim, you MUST bring in the following information.

1. DD214 OR OTHER DISCHARGE (under conditions other than Dishonorable) - no one will even start paperwork without it.
2. Copies of important documents, i.e. marriage license(s) his and hers if multiple – bring all in, birth certificates of dependents, Social Security numbers of dependents/wife, proof of income (SS, retirement, investments, savings, properties, mortgage, etc.), divorce decree(s), etc.
3. CURRENT written diagnosis/test results from your private physicians.

Some claims may take longer to process and be reviewed than others but if you come in prepared, it will process efficiently without delay.

More in the next newsletter – PTSD General Rating Formula.

Have a warm, wonderful summer.

Jim Lewis, Secretary / Co. D, HHC 67-68  
 Veteran's Service Officer (VSO)  
 Vietnam Veterans of America  
 Cell 219-730-8140

## DC BY THE NUMBERS!

1. Plan your trip. Our reunion for 2017 starts with check in on the 9th of November and ends with check out on the 12th. (3 nights - the 9th, 10th, and 11th). However, we have an extended window before and after the event at the same rate, \$99 subject to availability. If you are planning to spend some extra time in our Nation's capital, please reserve early before the hotel fills up.
2. Call the Hilton Reservations toll free number at 1-800-HILTONS (1-800-445-8667). The reservation office is not on site at the hotel. Tell them you are with the 39th Engineer Block to get the \$99 rate.
3. Let me know that you have made your reservations. You can call at 956-367-0999, (leave a message if I am not able to take your call) or you can text to the same number or email me at bluebullvn@yahoo.com and, of course, via snail mail USPS: 941 W Rio Guaymas – Green Valley, AZ 85614. It is very important that you let me know so that I can keep track of how many rooms we have reserved. We have a limited ability to add additional rooms once our block of 60 rooms is filled. I can tell you that our block is already over 50% filled and days before and after our reunion may already be full (8th or before, 12th or after). Early reservations will help us to be able to keep our entire reunion all together in one place.
4. The call center for reservations only has limited information and may not be able to attend to details like the need for handicapped accommodations, special needs like room refrigerators, even in some cases, the room preferences (King or Doubles or upgrades). If you find that they cannot give you confirmation for any request, CALL ME! Make your reservation as best you can, then call me and I will negotiate any corrections or needed arrangements with the hotel management.
5. Make your travel arrangements. If you are flying, the closest airport is Washington Dulles and a free shuttle is provided by the hotel. If you are driving, the address is 13869 Park Center Road, Herndon, VA 20171. I highly recommend using GPS to lead you there. Additional information about the hotel can be found on line by googling dulles hilton.

6. Rental cars are available at the airport, but I do not recommend driving in the District. Parking is ridiculous. We are close to a Metro Station and transportation from the hotel is being provided to the station and back. It's the cheapest, safest, and fastest way to get around.
7. Come, Relax, Enjoy, Commiserate, Reunite and have a good time.

Gale Helser, Reunion Chair  
 HHQ, 67-68  
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## CHAPLAIN'S WORDS

As most of you know last year we spent a week in Dallas, Texas for the reunion of the 39th Engineer Bn. Many of the soldiers and their wives were there and they came from all over the United States. For many of us, it is a week of storytelling along with sharing deep feelings about the past that still linger and haunt our memories. It is a very sacred time that we spend together, and it brings not only tears, but also laughter. You could say it is a one-week group therapy session. All of us know the horrors of war, but it is the glue that unites us all. Many of my buddies never open up to anyone about their experiences in Vietnam. That is why these yearly reunions are so important for the healing of our psyche.

One of the soldiers I served with had fallen asleep in the Lord some years ago from illness, but his wife always attends our reunions, and she calls herself Sugar. I spoke with her husband G. W. on many occasions once we found our way to the battalion's website. G. W. and I were in the same company and served the same years together. He told Sugar about meeting me in Vietnam, and that I was becoming a priest. G. W. had an innate ability to write poetry, and by the time he fell asleep in the Lord he had compiled a large volume of them. At this year's reunion Sugar presented me with a bound loose-leaf of his entire compendium of poetry. She said that he wanted me to have them.

Since he was very religious and was brought up as a Southern Baptist, his vision of Christianity was part and parcel of who he was. Below is one poem that I think will help you understand how he understood life

and this Fallen World. The name of this poem is "Our Savior Is Jesus." I hope you enjoy it.

### OUR SAVIOR IS JESUS

Tomorrow when we waken and even if we don't,  
 We will be with Jesus, don't even say we won't.  
 He has our daily blessing ready to spread around.  
 The things we need today for life pound upon pound.

He loads us with blessings too many for us to bear.  
 It's by his blessed hands and from his great care.  
 No one else could love us the way he does indeed.  
 He fills most of our wants and all of our every need.

Jesus is our savior; he gave his life for our love.  
 Please don't disappoint him, for soon he'll take us above.  
 I know you love Jesus, I can tell by your eyes that smile.  
 No fear shall we ever face as he takes us that last mile.

We'll shout and praise him while eternity goes on by.  
 No longer will we hurt and no longer will we cry.  
 Thank you God for Jesus, oh hear the heavens ring.  
 We'll give him our crowns gladly for He alone is king.  
 By – G. W. Thomas

Finally, G. W. was a person who always saw the blessings of the Lord even in the face of such human destruction and terror. Even in his sickness he always had something good to say to those who called or stopped by to see how he was doing. I thank Sugar for giving me such a wonderful gift from a person I spent thirteen months in hell with. May God always keep G. W. in His glory and show us through his poems that Glory he saw throughout his life. God Rest Your Soul G.W.  
 Amen!

Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros

## REUNION 2017

### Reunion 2017 -35th Anniversary of "The Wall"

We are just over 6 months out from our next reunion in our Nation's Capital, Washington D.C. and the 35th anniversary of "The Wall". Every 5 years, we make our trek to the DC area and we never run out of things to see or do. This year will prove to be no exception to that rule and with a new administration who knows what we may experience. Our schedule is



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being left wide open. We will try to make some arrangements on a voluntary basis for the events planned for veterans on Saturday the 11th. Our only organized events will be at the hotel and include our annual pizza party and banquet and hospitality room. The rest of the time is wide open for you to do whatever you enjoy.

One very close attraction (and the hotel will provide free shuttle service) is the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Steven F Udvar-Hazy Center. A very impressive and FREE attraction right next door to Dulles Airport. Registration forms will be sent out with the next newsletter.

This year our reunion will be one of the most economical events. We will only be charging for our banquet, hospitality room expenses and pizza party. So, save your money and see the sites of DC, most of which you have already paid for with your taxes.

This is the 50th Anniversary of my Vietnam experience and I plan to invite my grown children to join us and make this a family affair. Please consider doing the same. Here are some websites that may interest you.

[Airandspace.si.edu/visit/udvar-hazy-center](http://Airandspace.si.edu/visit/udvar-hazy-center)  
[Washington.org/navigating-dc-metro](http://Washington.org/navigating-dc-metro)  
[www.MountVernon.org](http://www.MountVernon.org)  
[www.thewall-usa.com](http://www.thewall-usa.com)  
[www.fxva.com](http://www.fxva.com)

## OBITUARIES

**Gary H. Marsh**, 72, died January 29, 2017. He was born December 27, 1944, in Oviedo, FL to Bostwick and Lelia (Wester) Marsh. He was a resident of Okeechobee for over 50 years. He served his country as a member of the U.S. Army 1<sup>st</sup> Calvary, Dog Platoon.

After 35 years of employment, he retired from the USDA. Hunting and fishing were his hobbies and he enjoyed ranching and spending time in the woods, but the most important things to him were the Lord and the love his family shared.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Gwen Marsh; daughters, Tammy JR) Bricker of Okeechobee and Melody (Dillon) Haywood of Sebring; grandchildren, Tuff and Kelly; a sister, Donna (Donald) Boney; a nephew, Darryl (Patti) Boney; and a great-niece, Mason Boney, all of Okeechobee.

**Martha P. Gottheardt** It is with great sadness that we announce the passing on March 3rd of Martha "Marty" Gottheardt, wife of Association member Jim Gottheardt. Martha was a regular attendee at Alumni Association reunions, either with Jim or as his representative when his health prevented him from making the trip. She would often joke that her attendance was also a way for her to keep an eye on her "two boys", Association members Dave Tanner and Lonnie Jones, and make sure they did not get into any trouble.

Martha, a devout fan of the Green Bay Packers, was spirited, opinionated and a friend to all. She held a Masters Degree and spent 20 years as a 4th grade teacher near her home in Audubon, Pennsylvania.

In addition to Jim, her husband of 48 years, Martha is survived by her son Christopher and his wife Tracy, daughter Karla and her husband Ted, and three grandchildren.