



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



November, 2014

President.....	Bill Ray	Webmaster.....	Walter Lester
Vice President.....	David Romans	Historian.....	Jerry Bright
Secretary.....	Dave Miles	Member at Large.....	Mike Shaw
Treasurer.....	Jim Shamblen	Member at Large.....	
Chaplain.....	Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros	Past President.....	Bruce Fonest
Sgt. at Arms.....	Mike Male	Reunion Chair.....	Gale Helser

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to thank all members for their support this past year and a special thanks to the members who attended the reunion in Nashville; we had a great turnout and I believe all had a great time (I know Carolyn and I did). The Association continues to grow in current and new membership being more involved in our reunions and now with the 39th coming back to life at Fort Campbell under the 101st, it is my hope that the members from 1972 through 1992 will also join in. I have talked by phone with several members from the Fort Devens era and explained that although we started the association back in 2001 as a Vietnam Veterans group, our thinking changed with time and included our WWII Veterans and now we would love to have our Brothers past, present and future join in the camaraderie that we all enjoy. The 39th has a great history and now our history books are having new chapters added with a new generation carrying on the great tradition which began back in the 1940's. We all have stories of our time serving in the 39th, whether it be in a foreign land or here in the United States, and those stories are what make us who we are.

Our reunion this year was a great one with a good attendance and our trip to Fort Campbell to meet with some of the troops that are the beginnings of B Company of the 39th were some of the greatest people that I have had the pleasure of spending time with and they look so young. They showed us around the post and gave us ideas as to how the unit will be set up and the equipment they will be working with; not going to be our 39th but a new and improved 39th. I wish I could remember all the names of the soldiers that I met while there but there is no way (couldn't do it when I was

young and definitely can't do it now) but if you are reading this newsletter "THANK YOU FOR A GREAT DAY". We also had the pleasure of having some of the new 39th with us for the banquet Monday evening with our special guest speaker CSM Silva who will be the CSM for the Battalion and what a great talk he gave on Veterans and the 39th; past, present and future. Also in attendance along with CSM Silva and his wife at the banquet were CPT Archer, CPT Cook, CPT Ellis, CPT Frazier, LT Kennedy and his wife, LT Webb and SFC Sanchez. What a great way to draw to an end a very special reunion with good food, a great speech and a wonderful bunch of Brothers and Sisters. I will be in contact with CPT Ellis as to the activation date for the 39th which by last account was going to be April 2015 and will pass that information along as it is received. Myself, David Romans and Jim Shamblen are planning on being there and hopefully we can have more association members in attendance also.

Gale will be giving a rundown on all the other happenings at the reunion so I won't go into that and he will be giving you information on our upcoming reunion in Norfolk, VA later in this newsletter.

In closing, Carolyn and I would like to thank all of you who made this year's reunion and we truly missed you who could not attend due to unforeseen problems. We wish each and everyone a happy and joyous holiday season; please be safe in any holiday travels and we will see you next year in Norfolk, VA.

BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER

Bill Ray, President
(817) 239-0787

6205 Big Springs Dr., Arlington, TX 76001
3rd Plt. C Co. 67-68

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello again, Brothers and Sisters of the 39th Blue Bulls, and a very heartfelt hello to all the wives, friends of our members and the family members that are a very important part of the association. Another reunion has come and gone and what a wonderful time we had. Shirlie and I had such a great time. It was so good to see everyone again. We also had some new Brothers and family members that we were so very glad to meet and talk to. This reunion, I think was the best for me since Shirlie and I learned of the reunions and started coming. I did not realize that a bunch of old Vietnam Vets could dress up and look so handsome. Now the ladies, well they are good looking all the time. They just dress up, knock your socks off, and make us men look better. Bottom line, we had a great banquet and our "to be 39th" visitors made it even better. They treated us as family during our trip to Fort Campbell and I really think they felt the same when they came to Nashville. My thanks go out to each one of the officers, NCOs, and enlisted men and women that made our trip to the 101st a big success. I would also like to send a special Blue Bull Thank You to the Mess Hall, NCOIC, and all of his staff. Wow, what a great meal, and everyone was so nice and helpful to us. Thank you so very much.

A big thank you to the other officers and wives of the association that made this reunion possible and thanks also to the members that helped with the set up on Saturday morning to kick off the reunion and those who helped clean up the last morning.



helped make it a great one, and to those that could

Special thanks to Donald Boney and our go to guy "TUFF" for all their help. Last, but for sure not least, to all the members that came to the reunion. You

not make it, we missed you very much.

Now for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our New Members and Lifetime Members; it is with great pleasure to welcome you to the Association.

NEW MEMBERS:

Tim Burnham	Tom Corr	Bill Jordon HHC, 70-71
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Pete Kelley C Co. & HHC, 67-68	Thomas LeFort C Co., 70-71
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Bob Lewis A Co., 70-71	Larry Lopez D Co., 68-69
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LIFETIME MEMBERS:

Oscar Guerra D Co., 67-68	Boyd Johnson HHC, 67-68	Jim Long D Co. & HHC, 67-68
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John Pedro A Co., 67-68	Leonard Yates HHC, 69-70	Chet Malanowski B Co., 66-67
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Michael Robinson C Co., 66-67	Vaughn Rowland D Co., 67-68
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George Smeltzer
HHC, 79-81

To all the 39th family, have a wonderful year. Pray for our POWs and MIAs. God willing, we will see you all in Norfolk next year.

BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW

David Romans, Vice President, 479-883-3777 (Cell)
A Co. 66-67, usrome@live.com

TREASURER'S REPORT

REUNION RECAP: The Reunion was a great success and everyone had a good time and we were busy most of the time! The registrations brought in \$17,740 and other collections for Buses and Raffles brought in another \$3635 for a grand total of \$21,364. We paid out a total of \$20,473 in preparation and conducting the Reunion. The remaining \$800+ will be put into the upcoming Reunion in Norfolk.

Major item with the cost in parenthesis are Opry (\$4310), Coaches (\$2500), Sheraton for the Banquet and other items (\$4457), The lunch at Margaritaville was (\$2117), Lunch at the DFAC at Ft Campbell was (\$433). Additionally the Pizza was (\$400), and we spent (\$1400) on the Hospitality. Finally we spent over (\$1750) for the handouts and administration

items such as name tags, printing and miscellaneous items. All in all we spent most of the funds we received as it should be. We also will be returning over (\$1500) in refunds for those who notified they could not make the reunion.

Jim Shamblen, Treasurer
10 Jacklyn Circle
Hampton, VA 23666
(757) 838-5654 (H); (757) 344-7371 (C)

NASHVILLE RECAP

I've said it before and I will say it again, this has been our biggest and one of the most successful reunions ever. I hope to say the same thing next year and every year thereafter. It all depends on you - and you are proving that it can be done by attending and helping our organization grow. Thank you for attending and being an active member.

No reunion goes 100% as planned and this year was no exception. This time we can place the blame on a disgruntled air traffic controller in Chicago. We sadly missed some of our brothers attendance as a result of a total air travel shut down in Chicago which unfortunately also affected many connecting flights. This resulted in a number of our members not being able to get to Nashville. We missed you and look for you to attend next year in Norfolk.

The highlights of the reunion experience in Nashville were many but the day trip to Fort Campbell no doubt topped the list. We were all treated like VIP's and enjoyed visiting with members of the new 39th. Meeting many of the key personnel and being allowed to play with their engineer toys was well received and the mess hall did themselves proud; what a great meal. Much of the credit for this very welcome reception at Ft. Campbell was due to the ongoing efforts of our President Bill Ray who tirelessly kept knocking on anyone's door who would answer for nearly a year to make the necessary contacts for our visit, and to our Treasurer Jim Shamblen who, as a result of his many contacts and trips to Fort Campbell, was able to track down the key contacts to assure that we were given a VIP reception. A big bag of kudos to both of you for all your efforts.

Our busiest day packed a lot of events into a very delicately balanced schedule. Our motor coach did



an excellent job of getting our attendees to quite a number of local events and attractions. We started with

a private room lunch party at Margaritaville downtown Nashville. The huge burger that was served was reason enough to wander the streets of Nashville just to work it off. Our coach also made stops at the Parthenon and The Hermitage for our group to visit President Jackson's home and the only exact replica of an ancient Greek landmark. We also had opportunities for shopping and buying souvenirs for the grandkids at the Opry Mills Mall before we spent the evening being entertained by an American tradition at the Grand Ole Opry.

Our Banquet was the coup de gras of our event. Several of the officers and enlisted from the newly formed 39th were our guests for dinner. We also



welcomed them as the newest members of our organization. We are looking forward to this stand up of the 39th as part of the 101st as a source for new growth and a rekindling of our ranks that we may have a continued growth and a longevity to our society. The official stand up for the reactivation of the 39th is slated for April 15, 2015. We will keep



everyone posted as to the progress as many of our members are interested in attending the ceremony.

The hospitality room, as always, was the focal point for our comraderie and R&R. Once again this year we had our own "Sing Along" with Butch. If you

haven't had the pleasure of exercising your vocal chords, you should definitely plan to attend next year and join in; pretty sure that Butch will be there. We have some other talented entertainers within our group and maybe next year we can develop a Jam Session.

Now, start planning for next Year. The dates are Oct 1 - 5, 2015, mark them on your calendar. Brothers then, Brothers now, Brothers forever, Gale Helser, Reunion Chair
32423 FM 2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583
(galehelser@peoplepc.com)
(956) 367-0999

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

February 1st for the next newsletter issue. Please send articles to the editor, Diane Helser at diane_helser@yahoo.com or mail it to Diane Helser, 32423 FM 2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583. Remember, this is your newsletter and your tool to keep in touch and share information with your Blue Bull brothers.



Lieutenant General (Lt. Gen.) Jeffrey W. Talley is the senior leader for the United States Army Reserve, a single component and command of the United States Army. His first active duty leadership position was with 1st Platoon,

Company A, 39th EN BN (CBT) at Ft Devens. Sworn in as the 32nd Chief of Army Reserve (CAR) on 9 June 2012, he also assumed duties as the 7th Commanding General of United States Army Reserve Command. As CAR, he is the principal staff adviser to the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff on all Army Reserve Affairs. He develops Army Reserve budgets, training programs and policy decisions; manages the Army Reserve troop program units, individual mobilization augmentees, and the active guard/reserve program; and serves as the appropriation director of all Army Reserve funds. He also commands all Army Reserve troop program units worldwide, with total end strength of 205,000 Soldiers and 12,600 civilians, and an operating budget of over \$9 billion dollars.

Lt. Gen. Talley graduated from Louisiana State University in 1981 with a Regular Army commission in the Corps of Engineers. During more than 31 years of active and reserve service, he has commanded units at every echelon, from platoon to division-level, with duty in Korea, Kuwait, Iraq, and the United States. In February 2003, he mobilized and deployed in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM/OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM as Chief of Operations, 416th Engineer Command, Coalition Joint Forces Land Component Command. Upon return from theater, he served in the Pentagon as a strategic planner in the Deputy Directorate for the War on Terrorism, Strategic Plans & Policy Directorate (J-5), Joint Chiefs of Staff. In January 2008, he mobilized again, deploying in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM where he was the Commander, 926th Engineer Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the Baghdad Provincial Engineer. From June 2009 to April 2012 he served as Commanding General, 84th Training Command at Ft. Knox, KY where he was responsible for assessing the readiness of Army Reserve units through Combat Training Center-like exercises. He also served on the Secretary of Defense's Reserve Forces Policy Board from 2009 to 2012.

Prior to his return to active military service, Lt. Gen. Talley was President & CEO and Co-Founder & Lead Investor of Environmental Technology Solutions (ETS Partners); and also, an Adjunct Professor at The Johns Hopkins University. Other civilian experiences include leadership positions at Southern Methodist University, University of Notre Dame, Malcolm Pirnie, Inc., and the Corps of Engineers. He has over 31 years of experience in multiple academic, design, consulting, and military positions involving hundreds of environmental and business projects throughout the United States and abroad.

Lt. Gen. Talley holds a Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University and an Executive M.B.A. from the University of Oxford in England. He also holds multiple master's degrees in strategic studies, environmental engineering and science, liberal arts

(history and philosophy), and religious studies. He is a graduate of the Army War College. He is also a registered Professional Engineer, a Board Certified Environmental Engineer in Environmental Sustainability, and a Diplomat, Water Resources Engineer.

Lt. Gen. Talley and his wife, Linda, have four grown children: Christopher, Joshua, Matthew, and Ashley; and a Labrador named Baxter. Their youngest son, Army 1st Lieutenant Matthew Talley, is a combat veteran.

Lt. Gen. Talley's awards and decorations include the Army Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit Medal, three Bronze Star Medals, the USACE Silver De Fleury Medal, four Meritorious Service Medals, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, two Army Commendation Medals, four Army Achievement Medals, Parachutist and Air Assault Badges, Ranger Tab, and the Army Staff, Joint Staff and Office of the Secretary of Defense Identification Badges.

REUNION 2015

NORFOLK, VA

OCTOBER 1-5, 2015

Now is the time to mark your calendar for next year's 39th Reunion. We will be headquartered at the Sheraton Inn Downtown. The hotel sits right on the waterfront and every room will feature a view of the bay in the heart of Norfolk, within walking distance of every event we have planned. On the agenda will be a visit to the Douglas MacArthur memorial and museum just a few blocks from our hotel, a bay cruise on the Victory Rover which will sail as close as you can possibly get to the Naval Fleet in the Port Of Norfolk, a visit to Nauticus marine museum and a tour of the USS Wisconsin, one of the largest battleships ever built which is within view of every one of our rooms. To preview some of our events and the hotel check out these websites:

www.sheraton.com/norfolk

www.nauticus.org

www.vistoryrover.com

www.macarthurmemorial.org

www.visitnorfolktoday.com

We have blocked 60 rooms to get things started and early reservations are highly encouraged.

Remember, a reservation does not cost anything until you arrive and you can cancel up to 6:00 pm the day prior to arrival so there are no risks. If you are considering attending, please make the hotel reservation NOW. The reservation number is 800-325-3535. Be sure to reference the 39th Engineer Battalion Reunion to get the discounted rate of \$99, which is good for 3 days prior and 3 days following our reunion for those who like to make it a longer visit. Included in this rate is free valet parking, which is a savings of at least \$22 per night. Once you have made your reservation please let me know via email or phone to assure that we have you in our block or rooms. Email galehelsler@peoplepc.com or call 956-367-0999; leave a message if there is no answer or you can text me a message at the same number. If we need more rooms, it is necessary to know early so we can increase our block. Reservations must be made by September 1, 2015 or the balance of the rooms are returned to the hotel inventory and our rate is no longer protected.

Our registration form will be out in the next newsletter scheduled for delivery in March. This year should prove to be a very economical gathering as the events are both close to the hotel and very reasonably priced and we will not need to charter any motor coaches unless we add an optional event outside of the downtown area.



FROM THE SECRETARY

Due to the fire in Chicago that affected air traffic all over the United States Dave Miles our secretary was unable to attend this year's reunion. This is a short version of what was discussed at the General Membership meeting held at the Music City Sheraton in Nashville, TN.

Meeting opened in due form by President Bill Ray at 930am on October 26, 2014.

Officers present; Bill Ray, President; David Romans, Vice President; Jim Shamblen, Treasurer; Gale Helsler, Reunion Chair/Past President; Bruce Fonnest, Past President; Mike Male, Sgt. at Arms; Jerry Bright, Historian; Mike Sham, Member at Large; Walter Lester, Webmaster. Officers unable to attend: Dave Miles, Secretary; Father Vasilius, Chaplain.

Discussions of upcoming reunions: 2015 reunion will be held in Norfolk, VA and 2016 reunion will be held in the Fort Worth/Dallas, TX area. The reason for no voting on the 2016 reunion location was the other 2 cities under consideration were not willing to make any type of

concessions for our group. It was noted that with the 39th now becoming part of the 101st, we will have more power as a group and can possibly get better concessions. Gale brought up the need to get more information from the members as to who will be attending in a timely manner such as the information sheet, reservations and travel arrangements. This will help the planners make necessary reservations for events that we will be taking part in during the reunion.

The schedule for Monday's trip to Fort Campbell was discussed with the buses departing the hotel at 800am; cost is \$10.00 per person (bus & noon meal included) with any balance being picked up by the Association. We will be back at 330pm to rest and cleanup before the banquet with special guests being Officers' and NCOs' from the newly formed 39th; SGM Silva who will be the CSGM of the new 39th will be our guest speaker. Election of Offices for the Association will be held next year in Norfolk, VA.

With no further business meeting adjourned at 1015am.

Bill Ray/President



39th Engineer Battalion Alumni

32423 FM 2925

Rio Hondo, TX 78583

Reunion 2015 – Norfolk VA – Sheraton Inn Downtown Oct. 1-5, 2015

Next year we are going to hold our reunion on the east coast and have selected The Norfolk Virginia Downtown Sheraton Inn as our HQ. Our rate is again held at \$99 per night - a very good rate for the area. Included in the package is FREE valet parking, normally a \$15-20 per day fee. All rooms are Harbor facing rooms giving every attendee a great view. All of our activities will be within walking or hotel shuttle distances so we will not need to charter a coach or need to drive anywhere. We have a block of 60 rooms set aside for us but if we fill those early we will be able to increase the block so we can all be together for the entire reunion. More information will be available at the Nashville Reunion.

We will also be voting on our location for the 2016 reunion in Nashville. The proposed cities are Dallas/Ft Worth, Colorado Springs and a return to Tucson. Then we are back to Washington DC in 2017 for the 35th anniversary of "The Wall".

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