



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



www.39thengrbn.com

February, 2021

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Yea, a new year and hopefully it will be better than the one we just tossed in the trash. We are hoping and praying that this COVID pandemic will be under control by early fall and we can all be together and share our stories of this nightmare with a smile.

Our hope is that each of you are weathering this and that your health and that of your family's is good. Cancelling last year's reunion was not an easy decision but under the circumstances, the best one that we could make.

We will continue to monitor conditions in the upcoming months to assure that we do not put our members or us in harm's way. We do want us to all be together but will postpone again if circumstances dictate it for safety and health reasons.

This year's reunion is set to resume in Dayton and will be the same as what we had planned for 2020. Our hotel will remain the same and will have the same room rate this year. We will still do our trip to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force that I believe all will enjoy without tiring us out. We will be giving the Light Denim Long Sleeve Shirt with pocket and the 39th logo embroidered on the left front to members registered at this year's reunion.

The reunion starts on Wednesday, September 29 and ends Sunday October 3, 2021. Our headquarters will be the Crowne Plaza Dayton Downtown, 33 East 5th Street with easy access off I-70 and will have the option of arriving 3 days before and staying 3 days later if desired.

Now for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our new member. Welcome and we look forward to seeing

you at one of our future reunions.

NEW MEMBER

Glenn Coplin
D Co. 69-70

LIFETIME MEMBER

Glenn Coplin
D Co. 69-70

We now take time to say good-bye to our Comrades in Arms.

DECEASED MEMBERS

Arnold "Arnie" L. Grutz, C Co. 1968-1969 from Peosta, IA passed March 25, 2020. Terrence "Terry" Rossiter, C Co. 1967-1968 from Davison, MI passed October 30, 2020. Obituaries can be found later in this newsletter.

We held our second Memorial Service for all members who have passed at the Milwaukee reunion and we hope to be able to include the members we lost during our time in Vietnam at the upcoming reunions. If you have a member that you would like to have recognized, please send me an e-mail with the member's name, unit and dates served, and their date of passing.

As always, Carolyn and I wish each of you good health and prosperity and please stay safe during this trying time of COVID-19; we look forward to being able to be with you all in Dayton, OH in September.

Bill Ray
3rd Plt. 3rd Sqd. C Co. 67-68
bill39th@sbcglobal.net
817-239-0787 (Cell)

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

OPERATION CHASE: (Cut Holes And Sink Em) was a United States Department of Defense program for the disposal of unwanted munitions at sea from May 1964 until the early 1970s. Munitions were loaded onto ships to be scuttled once they were at least 250 miles offshore. While most of the sinkings involved conventional weapons, four of them involved chemical weapons.

The disposal site for the chemical weapons was a three-mile area of the Atlantic Ocean between the coast of the state of Florida and the Bahamas. The Chase program was preceded by the United States Army disposal of 8000 tons of mustard and lewisite chemical warfare gas aboard the scuttled SS William C. Ralston in April 1958. These ships were sunk by having Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams open seacocks on the ship after they arrived at the disposal site. The typical Liberty ship sank about three hours after the seacocks were opened. In August 1970, I was in charge of the Engineer detail of CHASE 10.

The following story is my weeklong, all-expense-paid train trip, courtesy of the U. S. Army.

My involvement started as a result of my being a platoon leader in the 522 Armored Engineer Company at Fort Knox. I volunteered to be in charge of the engineer detail on the chase train that would follow the trainload of chemical weapons from Lexington, Kentucky to the Marine base at Cherry Point, North Carolina. At Fort Knox, we loaded several flat cars with trucks loaded with decontamination equipment. We took apart the ramp from an AVLB to make it narrow enough to fit on a train car and loaded it with a rough terrain crane with a clam shell bucket. The plan was that if a container was compromised, the train would be broken at the crane car, the ramp would be used for the crane to get on the ground and it would dig a hole and put the leaking container in it and it would be filled with decontaminant. The trains traveled at 35 miles an hour and only stopped to change train crews. It took two days to reach Cherry Point. We were in pullman cars. The seats did not recline. The air conditioning was powered by the wheels, and at that slow speed, it did not cool very well. When we reached the end of the trip and were parked on a siding. The air conditioning did

not work at all and we could not use the toilets since they dumped out onto the tracks. It was 100 degrees after a day of sitting around. The majority of the troops, except nine of us, were flown back to Fort Knox. We were to escort the equipment back.

This is Part 1 of a multi-part series. See future newsletters for more memories.

John Lewis
C & D Co.
39th Cbt En Bn 1971
lewisjohn49@twc.com
812-385-6044

FROM THE SECRETARY

Greetings from the planet Earth. The New Year started off about as well as 2020 ended. Not sure why people in our neighborhood need to fire rounds to bring in the New Year but a visit from our local police department calmed everything down pretty quickly.

We sit back and reflect just how lucky we are. No Covid in our home, stayed quarantined for 10 months now and only trips outside for food or medicine. Best part is, we realized how fortunate we are to have each other even if we get cabin fever and get a little cranky. Thank goodness for Zoom and video chats!

Starting this year with so much hope. Hope COVID disappears, hope we stay healthy, hope our reunion will happen this Fall. Dayton is so ready for us, so please get your reservations in ASAP.

We proudly announce our granddaughter is now A1C with the Air Force. Had to watch live streaming and it was tough to figure out which short blonde airman wearing identical masks she was. The girl is already planning an overseas assignment and we are anxious to travel wherever she is for a visit.

Enough to say we are missing you all and counting the days till we meet in late Sept. Stay well, wear a mask, and wash your hands as well as social distance. We can beat this if we try. God bless our new President and we pledge our support for his efforts.

Respectfully,
Jim and Sandy Lewis, Secretary/Reunion Co-Chairs
A Co. 67-68
Jim1010lewis@yahoo.com
219-730-8140

REUNION 2021

The Reunion dates are **Sept. 29th thru Oct 3rd**. The **Crowne Plaza** is easy access off I-70 and airlines into Dayton International Airport include Allegiant, American, Delta and United. There are several non-stop flights out of major hubs. Our hotel offers a *free shuttle* to and from the airport. Rental car companies at the airport are Alamo, Avis, Budget and Enterprise. We have scheduled two tours on Thursday.



Dayton Aviation Heritage Park, Wright Brothers Interpretive Center. Tour this small museum depicting the life of Wilbur and Orville Wright and the early days of flight.



Included is a 20-minute video providing an overview of the Wright's and their contribution to history.



And then the location where the action took place - **Huffman Prairie**. This is the actual site with a replicate to the catapult used by Orville and Wilbur. If available, a park ranger will provide a detailed summary of the time the brothers spent in this field and guests can get out or stay on the air-conditioned coach. Limited walking at these two sites.



The **National Museum of the U.S. Air Force** galleries present military aviation history, boasting more than 360 aerospace vehicles and missiles on display -- many rare and one-of-a-kind -- along with thousands of historical items and powerful sensory exhibits that bring history to life and connect the Wright brothers' legacy with today's stealth and precision technology.



The newest 4th hangar opened in June 2016, houses the Presidential planes, along with space exhibits and a guided tour of Southeast Asia exhibit.



- Wheelchairs (30) and motorized carts (10) are available on a first-come, first-serve basis for free.
- The IMAX Theater, within the Museum, will have a show for an additional fee of \$7, for any guest that would like to shorten their walking tour. Show titles and times will be announced on the way to the Museum, for any guest that would like to buy their ticket upon arrival.
- A nice cafeteria is available for lunch (on your own) at the museum.

Friday is left for you to go touring on your own. The Hotel shuttle will go within a 5-mile radius of our hotel.

Some attractions for individual sightseeing are: Carillon Park, 2nd Street Market, America's Packard Museum, and Hawthorn Hill.



Carillon Park immerses you in the region's history – from Dayton's founding in 1796 through

two centuries of expansion, industrialism and innovation. Learn about these revolutionary achievements while



strolling through the Park's 25 historical buildings and interacting with the hundreds of artifacts in the exhibits. Meet the "founding fathers" of Dayton (Wilbur Wright, Orville Wright, Col. Edward Deeds, Charles "Boss" Kettering and John Patterson) in an amazing 4D Theater production in the theater. You see the original 1905 Wright Flyer III, the world's first practical airplane and National Historic Landmark, 1835 B&O steam locomotive (Grasshopper), and the first automobile self-starter. This park has plenty of benches to take a break and enjoy the gorgeous grounds.



2nd Street Market hosts local growers, bakers, culinary specialists and artisans fill the charming historical freight house. Reminiscent of European markets, it's alive with vendors, people and activity during market hours. **Hours of operation: Thursday-Friday 11:00am to 3:00pm, Saturday 8:00am to 3:00pm and Sunday 11:00am to 3:00pm.** (600 E. 2nd Street/1 mile from hotel)



Have lunch at the Carillon Brewing Company or the quaint Culp Café. **Hours of operation: Monday-Saturday**

9:30am to 5:00pm; Sunday 12:00pm to 5:00pm. (1000 Carillon Blvd./3 miles from hotel)

Built in 1917, **America's Packard Museum** is the only restored Packard Dealership operating as a museum. It houses the largest public collection of Packard automobiles and memorabilia in the world.



Hours of operation: Sunday-Saturday 12:00pm to 5:00pm. (420 S. Ludlow Street/half mile from hotel.)

Hawthorn Hill is Orville Wright's success mansion. Join the ranks of Charles Lindbergh, Henry Ford, and



Thomas Edison as visitors to the world's first pilot's last home.

Hours of operation: Monday-Saturday 9:30am to 5:00pm and Sunday 12:00pm to 5:00pm. (1000 Carillon Blvd./3 miles from hotel)



**2021 Annual Reunion
39th Engineer Battalion Alumni
Crowne Plaza - Dayton, Ohio**

Name _____ for name badge _____

Spouse/Guest name _____ for name badge _____

Unit and Years in country _____ E-mail address _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Emergency contact & Phone _____

Registration fee: _____ \$50.00 member _____ \$45.00 Spouse/Guest Total \$ _____

Member Gift: Long Sleeve Denim Shirt Sizes: S - M - LG - XL - XXL - XXXL (**circle one**)
(Registration includes member gift, hospitality supplies, pizza/wings party, beverages & snacks)

Special requests for beverages or snacks? _____

10/01 U.S. Air Force Museum \$35.00/person _____ number attendees Total \$ _____

<https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil>

Banquet: \$40.00/person _____ number attendees Total \$ _____

Menu Selection includes Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans w/Lemon & Garlic, Fresh Garden Salad w/Assorted Dressings, Warm Rolls, Iced Tea and 39th Sheet Cake for dessert.

Menu Choices: (Choose one per person)

1. Herb Roasted Prime Rib w/Horseradish Cream Au Jus _____

2. Grilled Salmon w/Creamy Leek Sauce _____

3. Grilled Chicken w/Honey Brie Dijon Sauce _____

4. Vegetarian Plate _____

Total enclosed (min. deposit required to hold all selected events \$100/or pay in full) Total \$ _____

(Fully refundable if canceled prior to Aug. 29, 2021)

If paying by credit card: Circle one: VISA MasterCard Discover American Express

_____ Expiration Date: ___ / ___ 3-digit Code on Back of Card: _____

Describe any special needs (i.e., room amenities, mobility issues, dietary considerations, etc.)

Arriving via (check one) _____ flying _____ driving

Crowne Plaza airport shuttle 937-224-0800

**Mail reservation Form and payment to: Bill Ray
6205 Big Springs Drive
Arlington, TX. 76001**

Make checks payable to: 39th ENG BN

BET ON THE WINNER

I am a gambler. O.K., my secret is out. Well, frankly it is not much of a secret and if the truth be known, I am not much of a gambler. Oh, I enjoy our monthly poker game with friends (until COVID-19 struck), and visiting a casino on a somewhat regular basis (again, until you know what hit us). We have a nice game room with an inlaid roulette table from Italy, eight slot machines, poker table, arcade games, etc. Say, perhaps I am more of a gambler than I thought -

Whatever the situation, I would have bet big money that, in my lifetime, I would never experience such a health situation as the world is suffering. But each of us can work to help push the odds of surviving this pandemic more in our favor. There are now options for a vaccine, along with respect for scientific protocol to minimize exposure.

Of course, due to the situation, we canceled last year's annual reunion – and wisely so. However, considering advancements in immunization, along with proper measures taken, the outlook for drastic improvement by the time of our 2021 gathering looks favorable. The reunion will be pretty much what was planned, and from a gambler's viewpoint, the “odds are good” we can pull it off. Details are included in this newsletter.

And it is in times such as these that we need to look forward to better days with family and friends. The 39th reunion in Dayton is a giant step in the right direction towards a return to normalcy. In that spirit I urge each of us to strongly consider attending the Dayton event. In addition to an outstanding planned schedule, reconnecting with fellow comrades will be a huge boost to one's wellbeing. Consider attendance as therapeutic – which it will be.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in Ohio!

“Red Seven – Straight UP! You can't lose...yea, sure...”

Respectfully submitted –
Mike Shaw, Member at Large
C Co. 70-71
nsxtarga@bellsouth.net
678-895-1871

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

I thought it time to quote another reflection and words of wisdom from our fallen brother George Wesley (Grub Worm) Thomas, since we all have been trying to traverse the heavy and dark unknown that the COVID Virus has put us all through for so long. I hope it will bring a little reassurance and solace to all. Enjoy.

“Don't Be Afraid!”

“When I'm afraid . . . I will trust the promises of God.

Psalm 56:3 Have you any idea how much it's costing you to fear things that never happen? Meteorologists say that a fog capable of covering half a square mile is made up of only one glass of water, divided into 60 million particles. But when it settles, it can obscure your entire vision! A little fear can do the same thing.

Why do almost half of us suffer from stress related disorders? Because instead of walking by faith, we think we're supposed to fly like jets on supercharged adrenaline – and we pay for it in terms of fear and anxiety.

It's so easy for fear to replace faith because they've got something in common – both challenge you to believe that which you can't see is about to happen. Fear will persuade you to run from something that's not after you at all.

Billy Sunday said, ‘Fear knocked at my door. Faith answered. There was no one there.’ But how do I overcome fear? By faith – and faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Begin to feed your faith on the Scriptures, and watch your fears starve to death!

Howard Chandler said, ‘I spend the first 15 minutes of every morning filling my mind with God's Word; that way there's no room left for worry.’ Good formula!

David says, ‘When I am afraid, I will . . . trust the promises of God.’ And you've got to do the same! Today, get into His Word and you'll discover that God's got everything under control.” The End
Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros
Chaplain

OBITUARIES



Arnold "Arnie" L. Grutz, 78, of Peosta, IA passed away suddenly on Tuesday, March 25, 2020, at Mercy One Medical Center.

In accordance with state and federal guidance on gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, private family services were held.

Interment was in Dubuque

Memorial Gardens Cemetery with military honors accorded by the Iowa Army National Guard. Written or video condolences can be sent to the family at: www.egelhofsiegertcasper.com.

Arnie was born September 17, 1941, in Dubuque, the son of Joseph and Martha (Frost) Grutz. He attended school in Dubuque, and was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1967. He served during Vietnam with the 39th Engineer Battalion 18th Brigade, and was awarded the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Bronze Star for heroism in battle. Following his honorable discharge, Arnie married Susan Strait on February 12, 1971, in Galena. He was employed for 16 years with Dubuque Community Schools as the Assistant Transportation Director, CDL trainer, and garage supervisor, and for 20 years as Grounds Mechanic for Thunder Hills Country Club.

Arnie enjoyed working in the yard. He was an aficionado of classic and antique cars, and was a member of the Antique & Classic Car Club of Dubuque and the Corvette Club. Motorcycles were another passion for Arnie: Harley Davidson. Along with Susan and "The Iowa Gang," he attended Sturgis several times. He loved drag racing and motorcycle racing. Arnie was an amazing cook and baker. Arnie and Susan developed a love for Cairn Terriers, and he will be missed by Rob Roy and Baillie.

Arnie is survived by his wife of 49 years, Susan, of Peosta; his daughter, Kristin (Chad) Caszatt, of Dubuque; his honorary daughters, Angela Osterkamp, of Peosta, Jen (Joe) Kunsch and their daughter Julianne, of Naperville, and Wendy (Joe) Kruse and their daughters Audrey and Ashlyn, of Dyersville; his sister-in-law, Sandy Thompson, of Nocona, TX; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and his aunt and godmother, Wilma Gansemer.



Terrence "Terry" P. Rossiter of Davison, MI age 73 died Friday, October 30, 2020 at his residence with his wife, children, and grandchildren by his side. Honoring his wishes, cremation has taken place.

Terrence was born in Detroit, Michigan on May 3, 1947 the son of the late Robert and Mary (Gallagher) Rossiter. Terry was joined in marriage to Jenny on August 24, 1990 in Grand Blanc, Michigan. Terry answered the call of his country and served during the Vietnam War as a combat engineer with the 39th Engineer Battalion where he gained many great friends and brothers. Terry graduated from Frank Cody High School in Detroit, Michigan. And attended Schoolcraft College.

He leaves to cherish his memory wife: Jenny; his four children: Deborah and her husband Robert Dunbar, Aron and wife Jill Rossiter, Kristi and husband Carlos Tlahuettl, and Zacheary Rossiter; four grandchildren: Dexter, Blayn, Aurora, and Van; siblings: Katy and husband Terry Kittleson, Patty Rossiter, Brian and wife Carole Rossiter, Sharon Rossiter and Husband Marty, Tom and wife Jayme Rossiter, Mary and husband Dale Micallef, and Robert and wife Pam Rossiter; faithful companion Chico and grand pup Coco; many nieces and nephews and a host of other relatives and friends; Please share your condolences at www.HansenFuneralHome.net.



**MAKE YOUR
RESERVATIONS
TODAY!**

Call the Crowne Plaza Hotel during normal business hours at **937-229-9835**, Monday through Friday. Be sure to ask for the 39th ENG BN Alumni Association Room Block.

Send the **Reservation Form** in this newsletter with your payment to:
Bill Ray, 6205 Big Springs Dr., Arlington, TX 76001.



39th Engineer Battalion Alumni
941 W. Rio Guaymas
Green Valley, AZ 85614

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2021
39TH ENGINEER
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REUNION
29 SEPTEMBER 2021 – 3 OCTOBER 2021
DAYTON, OHIO

Save the dates! Room rates are \$119.00 with 3 days before and after the reunion available at the same rate. The Crowne Plaza is easy access off I-70 and airlines into Dayton International Airport include Allegiant, American, Delta and United. There are several non-stop flights out of major hubs. Our hotel offers a free shuttle.

Some attractions include the Dayton Aviation Heritage Park, Wright Brothers Interpretive Center, Air Force Museum, Carillon Park, Packard Museum, 2nd St. Market, Wright Brothers Memorial and Hawthorn Hill.