

39TH ENGINEER **BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS**



www.39thengrbn.com			July, 2017
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Sgt. at Arms	Mike Male	Reunion Chair	Gale Helser

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is just under 4 months to our upcoming D.C. reunion and I know there have been some glitches with some of your reservations. We are truly sorry for that and Gale has assured me that he is on top of the situation and will have everything straightened out in the near future. If you run into problems when making your reservations, please let me and Gale both know about it so that we can move forward.

It has been quite a journey in coming up with a design for our Challenge Coin that all our Officers agreed on but I believe we have one that all will find to their liking and will be available for D.C. Here is





the draft of the approved version. The version in our newsletter only shows it in black and white. Visit our website at www.39thengrbn.com under 39th Engineer Battalion Newsletters for the full color version.

Also, in this newsletter we have an article from LTC Sawser, the new Battalion Commander for the 39th BEB that I think you will find interesting. It is refreshing to know that the new 39th is interested in knowing more about us so that the 39th legacy can be carried forward.

Again, I have the duty of letting you know of the passing of members and family members since our last newsletter. Walter H. Gurbisz Jr., son of Walter H. Gurbisz Sr. (Twiggy) passed April 9, 2017. Gerald Hastings passed May 8, 2017. Dot Ton, wife of Jim Ton passed May 22, 2017. Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers. 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 MEMBER

John J. Demidio HHC. 66-67

LIFETIME MEMBERS

John J. Demidio **Daniel Ovshak** HHC. 66-67 C Co. 72-73

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 got 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. Again this year we will be looking for volunteers to participate in the "Reading of Names On the Wall"; please contact Jerry Bright at jbrightone@comcast.net. Carolyn and I are looking forward to seeing you all.

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

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

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Greetings fellow 39th Engineers:

Some people have asked how the VA classifies PTSD. The following is an excerpt from the VA's General Rating Formula for Mental Disorders and provides ONLY examples of ratings:

0%- A mental condition has been formally diagnosed but symptoms are not severe

10%- Occupational and social impairment from mild or transient symptoms which decreases work efforts – symptoms controlled by medications.

30%- Inability to perform work tasks but able to function with self-care, conversation. Symptoms include: depressed mood, anxiety, suspiciousness, panic attacks, sleep impairment, mild memory loss.

50%- Reduced reliability and productivity due to: panic attacks more than once a week, difficulty in understanding complex commands, impairment of long and short term memory, impaired judgment, difficulty in establishing and maintaining work and social relationships.

70%- Deficiencies in areas as work, school, family relations, judgment, thinking, mood due to symptoms as: suicidal ideation, obsessional rituals, illogical, obscure speech, near continuous panic or depression affecting the ability to function independently, impaired impulse control (impaired impulse control/periods of violence), neglect of personal care/hygiene, inability to maintain/establish effective relationships.

100%- Total occupational and social impairment, due to symptoms as: gross impairment in thought process or communication; persistent delusions or hallucinations; grossly inappropriate behavior; persistent danger of hurting self or others; inability to perform minimal personal hygiene; disorientation to time/place; memory loss for names of close relatives, own occupation, or name.

While these are the guidelines, they are not all encompassing. Other qualifying data may be attributed to a PTSD diagnosis. The best results will come from a consultation/diagnosis with a psychiatrist with whom you are comfortable. There are many group and well as private sessions available thru your local VA office.

As a Certified Veterans Service Officer (VSO), it is my intent to inform my brothers of the availabilities the VA can provide. If you have an issue you want addressed, a question that is bothering you, or if I can be of service to you in ANY way, please contact me via cell (219) 730-8140 or e-mail jim1010lewis@yahoo.com. Looking forward to seeing you all in Washington. Have a great summer! Jim Lewis, Secretary Co A; 39th ENGR(CBT) Veteran's Service Officer (VSO) Vietnam Veterans of America Cell 219-730-8140

39TH MERCHANDISE

WINE GLASSES (29)	\$ 4.00 EA.		
WINE BOTTLE COVERS (19)	\$ 6.00 EA.		
COZIES (29)	\$ 2.00 EA.		
39TH SEW ON PATCHES (90)	\$ 4.00 EA.		
39 TH STICK-ON DECAL (16)	\$ 2.00 EA.		
39 TH CREST PIN (0)			
39 TH WOODEN WALL PLAQUE (0)			
39 TH BALL CAPS			
WHITE BLACK LETTERS (2)	\$10.00 EA.		
WHITE RED LETTERS (2)	\$10.00 EA.		
BLACK WHITE LETTERS (20)	\$10.00 EA.		
RED WHITE LETTERS (18)	\$10.00 EA.		
39TH WINDBREAKER			
BLACK XXX-LARGE (1)	\$35.00 EA.		
NASHVILLE 39 TH T-SHIRTS			
RED LARGE (5)	\$10.00 EA.		
RED MEDIUM (1)	\$10.00 EA.		
39TH T-SHIRTS (NO POCKETS)			
RED X-LARGE (3)	\$10.00 EA.		
RED LARGE (4)	\$10.00 EA.		
39 [™] MEN'S POLO SHIRTS			
RED W/POCKET LARGE (4) \$20.00			
RED NO/POCKET X-LARGE (1)	\$20.00 EA.		
RED NO/POCKET LARGE (4)	\$20.00 EA.		
WHITE NO/POCKET SMALL (1)	\$20.00 EA.		
39 [™] WOMENS'S POLO SHIRTS/NO POCKET			
WHITE LARGE (1)	\$20.00 EA.		
WHITE MEDIUM (6)	\$20.00 EA.		
WHITE SMALL (3)	\$20.00 EA.		

TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial situation of the Association is firm. We began the year with \$8,062.49 and presently have \$8,412.49. We received receipts of \$350.00 for the year and made no payments. Included in the

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receipts is \$300 for Life Membership and a \$50 donation.

I have a supply of Hats (\$15 for one and \$10 for each additional one) in Red, White, and Black as well Unit Crests (\$6), Unit patches (\$4), and Cozies (\$2) available. Call me at (757) 838-5654 or send checks to 10 Jacklyn Circle, Hampton VA 23666 to get these items mailed to you before the Reunion! Jim Shamblen 10 Jacklyn Circle Hampton, VA 23666 (757) 838-5654 (H) (757) 344-7371 (C)

39TH BEB CMDR

Blue Bulls,

Greetings from Fort Campbell - home of the Screaming Eagles and Strike!

Wish I would have sent this note out sooner, but since landing in Nashville on 30Apr it has been a whirlwind. Chris Payant and I conducted the CoC on 11May and the pace only picked up. Having served in the 101st previously, I fully expected it. Nevertheless, I wanted to contact you sooner. Thank you for your service and most importantly thank you have keeping the 39th legacy alive and well. I've attached my bio and picture for a little insight into who I am.

CSM Robert Lake and I are quickly settling in. We've proposed some ideas to the incoming Brigade Commander, COL Joe Escandon (Strike 6), on changing our call sign to better integrate the Blue Bulls with the Strike Brigade. Nothing final yet, but we want to bring the Bull back to the 39th. I hope to have a decision before the end of the month.

I know several of you know Ty Ellis. He commands our Bravo Company. Caitlin is standing up a new position in the battalion. One of the duties of this position will be to keep the lines of communication open to our veterans and work to increase integration as much as possible. Caitlin takes a platoon later this summer and will be replaced, but this duty will remain.

I had the pleasure to meet Jim Shamblen last week during the Week of the Eagles. We had a great conversation. Hope to get the chance to meet some of you in the near future.

Last note. I received an email from Scott McCleskey. He served in the 39th during the 80s. Not sure if you all know him or not, but Scott tipped me off to a significant retirement later this month. MG Conboy, Deputy Commander of the Army Reserve Command, retires later this month. He is a 39th alum from the 80s as well. We will be sending him a gift or recognition of some sorts. Thought it appropriate that the 39th Association know of this significant event... in the event you are not already aware. All the best.

Fight, Build, Destroy! LTC Brian D. Sawser Commander, 39th BEB Office: (270) 798-7968 Mobile: (931) 542-7441



LTC Brian D. Sawser is a native of Salem, Oregon and commissioned as an Engineer Officer following graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1999. He was initially assigned as a Sapper Platoon Leader in the 9th Engineer Battalion (Combat

Mechanized), 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Schweinfurt, Germany. He would later serve as an Assault and Obstacle Platoon Leader and Company Executive Officer before deploying to Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Guardian as the Battalion Adjutant.

After completion of the Engineer Captain's Career Course, LTC Sawser served as a Plans Officer for the 7th Army Training Command in Grafenwoehr, Germany. He then moved to Bamberg, Germany to serve as the Battalion S4 for the 54th Engineer Battalion (Combat Mechanized), 130th Engineer Brigade. He assumed command of Bravo Company, 54th Engineer Battalion while deployed downrange in Ramadi, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Following Company Command, LTC Sawser served as an Instructor and Assistant Professor in the Department of Systems Engineering at West Point.

LTC Sawser served as an Executive Officer for the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Currahee), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and deployed in

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support of Operation Enduring Freedom where they conducted base defense operations and led the closure of FOB Salerno in the Khost Province, Afghanistan. Following redeployment, LTC Sawser joined the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff Engineer, United States Army Europe (USAREUR) serving as the Operations Officer and Executive Officer. Prior to reporting to Fort Campbell, LTC Sawser served as the Executive Officer to the USAREUR DCG.

LTC Sawser's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (1 OLC), Meritorious Service Medal (3 OLC), Army Commendation Medal (1 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (2 OLC), Combat Action Badge, Air Assault Badge, Sapper Tab, and German Troop Proficiency Badge (Silver). He holds a BS in Engineering Management from USMA, Master of Science in Civil Engineering from Missouri S&T, and Master of Science in Industrial Engineering from Texas A&M University.

LTC Sawser is married to the former Ms. Susanne Poetzl of Wuerzburg, Germany. They have three daughters and one son: Sophia (11), Helena (8), Johanna (6), and Jonathan (7 months).

CHAPLAIN'S WORDS

Freedom!

I think all of us can remember the day we took the Oath of Enlistment into the Armed Forces. We all raised our right hands and repeated the following: "I, (your name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

When I was a child, oaths were a big part of my life. In Public School, we proclaimed the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America each and every day. In the Boy Scouts, we had to learn and recite the Boy Scout Oath, and in Church we all had to learn the Creed with its twelve declarations affirming what we believe as Orthodox Christian. Oaths are what we use to declare our allegiance to something greater than ourselves. They also reflect what we believe and wish to emulate in our character in order to live a life

with values.

This weekend is a time when we commemorate all those who gave their all for this wonderful and great country. The Oath they took to defend this country was however to the death, and if you could ask them now would they do it again, I am sure they would answer yes. Even though some of us were drafted into the Armed Forces, which did not preclude our love for this country.

However, this weekend has been turned into barbeques and parties by many Americans with no reflection at all of the patriotic individuals who gave their life for this country of ours. What we have seen recently is a dislike and distain for the military, and as such many see our patriotism for this country as a hindrance to peace. The Oath we all recited many years ago empowered us to become defenders of this country and to preserve our God given rights as is stated in "the preamble of the declaration . . . We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." The freedoms we experience today in America are because of the men and women who answered the call as we did. Patriotism is something not all Americans possess. However, they all want to reap the benefits and rewards of all the sacrifices we made defending "against all enemies, foreign and domestic." Unfortunately, some gave all. I know we can place a finger into the names of our fallen friends memorialized on "The Wall."

Finally, it is a shame that the "Fallen" have been neglected by most in our countrymen today. I can remember as a young boy in Brooklyn seeing all the veterans marching and honoring our "fallen heroes." The crowds overflowed on the sidewalks cheering them on for their service, sacrifice, and dedication to our country in the face of death. Everyone said they missed their buddies and those who they fought with. Patriotism was honored with tributes and accolades, but today it is seen as something that perpetuates and glorifies war. How pathetic some have become. Because without those who stand up and defend our country, even while facing the threat of death, we would not have the freedoms we have today. Moreover, today we would be speaking German or Japanese.

Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros

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A WOMAN'S VIEW

Greetings Ladies, and Gents!

SPRING HAS SPRUNG! It makes me feel so good to see the new flowers spring up - grass and trees turn bright green, the feel of warm sunshine, and multi colored skies at sunrise and sunset.

Folks, mark your calendars and make your reservations soon for our 39th Engineers Combat Battalion Reunion, to be held November 9-12 in Washington DC. The dates for 2017 are a little later than usual because we want to honor our fallen brothers on the 35th Anniversary of "The Wall" in our Nation's Capital. It's a great way to remember, give thanks and celebrate 2017 Veterans Day. This is also a great time and place to show appreciation, thank you, and love to our returned Veterans. Just think of how fortunate we are to have our guys with us today and have them enjoy friends, family and their Military Brothers like we are able to.

THANK YOU 39th FOR OUR FREEDOM.

Wives and significant others, if you have never been to one of our reunions (and I say 'ours' because these Brothers show appreciation and respect for our support and make us feel wanted in their group), there's no better time to join us. What a wonderful opportunity to share with our loved ones some of the times they went through when we were unable to be a part of it.

Please try it, I think you'll like us. Hope to see you in November.

Shirlie Romans

REUNION 2017

It's time to meet!!! November 9-12, 2017 will honor the 35th anniversary of "the Wall" in our Nation's Capital, Washington DC. Let's all go and bring the family. This year we are attempting to include our families in our reunion activities. I believe we have an opportunity and obligation to share our memories and the history of our efforts to make our country safe and free for our children.

The schedule has been left very open to allow for the maximum of personal preferences for where to go and what to do and see. Our only planned events are the pizza party and the banquet. Everything else will be offered as optional activities. Some events are listed in other articles within the newsletter and more will be posted at the reunion upon arrival. We have also kept the costs to an affordable minimum. \$50 per person for the registration and \$50 per person for the banquet. Registration is the same for members and guests and includes the pizza party and the hospitality room supplies. The pizza party will be an extended menu so everyone will be able to find something they like to eat.

One event you may want to consider is "the reading of the names". Every 5 years the VNMF organizes the reading of all of the names on the wall. It takes 3 days to accomplish this monumental task and you can be part of it. It is strictly voluntary and you must sign up in advance to participate. The information for this is in Jerry Bright's article. Sign up early and you can choose your preferred time or even a specific group of names. I have read for the last 15 years and it is my way of showing respect for our brothers who did not return with us.

The Hilton Dulles will be our headquarters this year. Located in Herndon, Virginia, it is very conveniently located near Dulles Airport and a shuttle is provided by the hotel for transportation to and from the airport. If you are flying into National be sure to research shuttle services to the hotel as it is out of range for the hotel shuttle. The Metro is also within hotel shuttle range from the hotel and the Metro is the fastest most convenient and cost-effective transportation in the DC area. If you are driving, parking is free and you are welcome to drive in to the district. But be forewarned that parking is extremely scarce and strictly enforced. The Metro is your best bet.

This is looking like our largest event to date. Our original block of rooms started at 60 rooms per night; we have exceeded that. We have extended our block to 90 and it is quite possible we will run out of rooms once again. I cannot emphasize enough that you need to make your reservations NOW. It costs nothing and you can cancel the reservation up to 48 hours before arrival without any charge or penalty so you can see there is nothing to lose. Even if you are just considering going, you should make your reservation without any risk. Our \$99 rate expires 30 days prior to arrival, so reserve now. Late registrants may still be able to get accommodations, but it may not be at our protected rate. The rate is also extended for 2 days after our event so you can stay on the 12th and 13th to allow

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more time to enjoy the area's attractions. Unfortunately, the hotel does not have rooms available on the days leading up to our beginning date on the 9th. Another group is in the hotel during that time. If you have any issues with your reservation or have any difficulties, please contact me and I can intervene to help you get what you want or need.

Gale Helser, Reunion Chair HHQ, 67-68 bluebullvn@yahoo.com 956-367-0999 (cell)

OBITUARIES



Gerald Wayne Hastings, 73, of Isle, passed away peacefully in his sleep on May 8, 2017 at Aitkin Health Services in Aitkin, MN. A celebration of life was held May 13, 2017 at the Wahkon Inn. Military honors by the Isle Honor Guard was also held in a private ceremony that day.

Gerald is survived by children Tina (Chris) Skaurud, Jesse Robb,

Samantha (Chad) Bernu, Melinda (Ben) DeCoursey; grandchildren McKayla, Sydney, & Garrett Skaurud, Tayler, Kylee, Jacob, & Jaiden Robb, Joslyn Danielson, Brad, & Cloe Bernu, Natalie Webeck, John, Alex & Addisyn DeCoursey; greatgranddaughter Ryker Robb; Sisters Joan Lundquist, Gloria Paulsen, sister in laws Nancy Rizer-Schmidt, Julie Dietz; brother in law Dale Anderson; many nieces, nephews and extended family.

Gerald is preceded in death by his wife Darlene; parents Wayne and Mary Hastings; his infant son; brother in laws Lloyd Lundquist, Joel Paulsen, John "Auggie" Rizer, Ray Schmidt, and Herb Dietz; nephew Bob Lundquist.

Gerald was born June 12, 1943 to Wayne and Mary Hastings in Pokegema Lake Township. He attended school in Wahkon and then in Isle where he graduated in 1961. Gerald resided in Isle after graduating and worked at the lumberyard. In 1966 Gerald enlisted into the United States Army. He served in the 39th Combat Engineer Battalion, A Company, 66-67 and fought in Vietnam. After his discharge from the Army he worked for a couple different places including the gas company in Onamia and the Supervalu warehouse in the Twin Cities. Gerald then purchased Wayne's Sanitation from his mother following his father's death in 1977. Gerald and his wife Judy had their daughter, Melinda in December of 1979. Gerald spent a lot of time playing in his band The Country Ramblers alongside his friends, he always enjoyed singing, drumming and playing quitar. Gerald was a lifetime member of the VFW post 2816. He spent many years enjoying wagon train in Montana, POW/MIA walks around Mille Lacs, racing stock car on Friday nights, and

wrestling gators down in Florida which always guaranteed he would have a good story to tell. Gerald was remarried in March of 1993 to Darlene Robb, and they continued to operate Wayne's Sanitation until they retired. During retirement together they enjoyed woodworking, the outdoors, gardening, taking care of their yard, and watching the deer from their porch. They also loved spending time with their grandchildren, their children and their friends. Gerald always had a unique way of remembering people by giving them nicknames. Gerald will always be remembered for his generous heart, his sense of humor, and his unforgettable smile. Gerald will be greatly missed by his family and friends.



Walter H. Gurbisz, Jr., 38, of Mount Royal, Walter H. Gurbisz Jr. age 38, of Mount Royal, NJ formerly of Bayonne, NJ passed away on Sunday, April 9, 2017. Born in Bayonne, Walt was an avid sports fan, but was a Die-hard San Francisco 49ers Fan. In his spare time he enjoyed fishing, and collecting & trading sports memorabilia which he sold all over the world.

Walt is survived by his parents,

Walter H. Gurbisz, Sr. and Rose (nee Deptula), his sisters Lisa Pires and Jodi Smearman & her husband Jerry, his niece Gabriella Pires, his nephew Jeremy Pires, and many cousins. He was the cherished nephew of Anthony & Diane Deptula, and John & Marilyn Miller. Walt is also survived by his 2nd family, Pat Hingleton, and twins, Cory & Tory Hingleton. Memories & condolences can be shared at www.smithfhmantua.com.



Dorothy (Dot) Ton passed away peacefully at her Las Vegas home in Sun City Summerlin on Monday, May 22nd, 2017. Born in New York City, she was the 5th child (out of 8) of Tom Gang and Toy Wan. Attending New York Public Schools, she graduated from Central Commercial High School. She married Jim Ton on June 7, 1953 at the Mable Collegiate Presbyterian Church in NYC.

Dot enjoyed Karaoke, travel, golf, bowling, gaming (craps), crossword puzzles, Sudoku and spending time with her family and friends. She travelled extensively with her husband during his active duty Army career spanning 27 years. One of her great passions was hula dancing, which she learned and taught while her husband was stationed in Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. She loved Hawaii and returned to visit the islands many times. She performed the hula solo or in groups on numerous occasions and organized a Hawaiian Luau at the Officers Club when they were stationed at a North Dakota Army Base.

She is survived by her husband, Jim; her daughter, Patricia (Mark) Costello and granddaughter, Maria; two sisters Florence Wong and Rose Gang; two brothers Edward (Carol) Gang and Robert Gang; and many wonderful nieces and nephews.



39th ENG BN Reunion 2017 – Washington, DC – Nov 9-12 Dulles Hilton, Herndon, VA

for name badge			
for name badge			
mail address			
CityState Zip			
ell phone			
\$50/person for banquet tality supplies, pizza party and beverages & snacks) s? alance due upon arrival or Pay in full now) Total \$ r to Nov. 1, 2017 if cancelation is necessary)			
A MasterCard Discover American Express			
xpiration Date: / 3-digit Code on Back of Card:			
Describe any special needs (i.e., room amenities, mobility issues, dietary considerations, etc.)			
driving			
Gale Helser 941 W. Rio Guaymas Green Valley, AZ 85614			



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

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PREVIEW 2018 REUNION

Where: Seattle WA Hilton Hampton Inn

(SeaTac)

When: October 5-8, 2018

Room Rate: \$99

Reservations will be available after

November 2017

DC BY THE NUMBERS

- 1. Save the dates November 9-12, 2017
- 2. Include the family
- 3. Make your hotel reservations 1-800-HILTONS- (445-8667) and reference the 39th Engineer Room Block
- 4. Confirm to reunion chair: Gale Helser 956-367-0999 (leave message) or bluebullvn@yahoo.com

39[™] VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO READ NAMES FROM THE WALL DURING OUR REUNION

Volunteers are needed to read all 58,318 names on The Wall as part of the 35th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. 39th volunteers have done this at several previous Veterans Day celebrations. Reading will occur at The Wall for eight hours from 4 p.m. until 12 midnight on November 7, and for 19 hours daily from 5 a.m. until midnight on November 8, 9, and 10. Each volunteer will read 30 names in about 2 minutes. More information is available at http://www.vvmf.org/reading-of-the-names.

Registration is now open online at http://www.vvmf.org/rotn. You can select to read certain names or at certain dates/times or both.

Please email Jerry Bright at ibrightone@comcast.net with your selection(s).

It may help to have other 39th readers go with you. If you want to buddy-up, email Jerry with your desired date/time, and he will coordinate among our readers and the VVMF.

Registration deadline is August 11.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONY AT THE WALL

There will be a memorial on Saturday, November 11, at 1 pm. The 39th has reserved seating that will become available around 11:30 am. Transportation will probably not be provided. If you are planning on attending and want to sit with us, please email Jerry Bright at jbrightone@comcast.net with the number of needed seats (1 per butt, please). That will give us a projected count so that we can adjust our number as needed.