



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



www.39thengrbn.com

March, 2018

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Vice President.....	Mike Shaw	Historian.....	Jerry Bright
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Chaplain.....	Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros	Past President.....	Bruce Fonnest
Sgt. at Arms.....	Mike Male	Interim Reunion Chair.....	Bill Ray

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I will be starting my article for this newsletter differently than I have ever done in the past. It is with great sorrow and sadness that I announce the passing of Gale Helser; Past President and long-time Reunion Planner. I met Gale and Diane at the 2006 reunion in San Antonio; in fact, they were the first two people that I met at my first reunion. I don't know what they thought of me, but they made me feel right at home and very comfortable; for those of you who haven't heard my story, I will give you a short version. After finding the Association in 2005, I decided to attend the next reunion; living only five hours from San Antonio, the drive would be nothing. During that time there was a lot of politics, religion and just plain bitterness being posted on the 39th site and that made me somewhat uncomfortable, causing me to pull over 5 times during the trip to turn around and head back home. Thank the Lord I didn't and that is in large part to Gale and Diane Helser. I believe that Gale knew something wasn't right in the days leading to the D.C. reunion but didn't let on to anyone. By the end of December his health had gone from not so good to really bad. He was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer which had spread to his brain and was ravaging the rest of his body without any hope of a cure. Carolyn and I had the opportunity to spend some time with Gale, Diane and their son, Graham in the middle of January and I am so thankful that we could be there with them. Gale Helser will be greatly missed by all. His obituary is later in the newsletter.

Jim and Sandy Lewis will be taking on the task of reunion planning beginning with our 2019 reunion

that is slated to be held in the Milwaukee, WI area and I would like for all of us to thank them for stepping up for the betterment of the Association. Jim and Sandy, welcome on board.

Hello 2018, the planning has been completed for the upcoming reunion in Tucson. Our reunion in Washington, D.C. was a great one, which always makes planning the next one an even larger task. Gale had a real good plan, so it made it much easier to come in and make the final arrangements for what should be a wonderful time in the warm and sunny West. We have a really good hotel located close to the airport and a terrific program planned, which I will explain in detail later on in this newsletter, along with the registration form for all we have planned. One thing that I will mention now and can't emphasize enough is - ***if you have the need for special accommodations such as handicap accessibility, it is your responsibility to take care of that with the hotel when you make your reservations***; the Association can't do that for you without breaking the law.

Now for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our newest members.

NEW MEMBERS

Doug Anderson Lawrence Morris
Fort Devens 85-86 B Co. 67

I definitely want to thank LTC Brian Sawser again for being our special guest for the 2017 Washington, D.C. reunion and being a presenter in the Wreath Laying ceremony at the "Wall". I hope that each of you had the opportunity to visit with him and get to know more about the Brothers and Sisters that are carrying on the 39th legacy.

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

BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER

Bill Ray

3rd Plt. C Co. 67-68

bill39th@sbcglobal.net

817-239-0787 (Cell)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

First, our deepest sympathy to the Helser family at the passing of our brother Gale. He left a huge hole in our organization that cannot be filled. He and his family will be in our prayers. To Diane: You will always be a part of the 39th Engr. family and we encourage you to let us share your grief and your friendship.

Recently, questions have been submitted about benefits for Veteran families. Most of the benefits sought are for surviving spouses with/without qualified dependents.

1. Get a Veteran's Service Officer (VSO) to deal with interactions with the VA. Call your county administration building and ask to speak to the county VSO.
2. Quickly relay your concerns to the VSO and make an appointment to meet.
3. Get a folder for all your paperwork which you need to hold onto for your records. The VSO does NOT hold your paperwork. This is YOUR responsibility.
4. Bring the following: DD214 or Discharge papers, Death Certificate, Marriage Certificate and Birth Certificates of disabled or MINOR dependents. Get the names, addresses and phone numbers of any doctors who have seen your veteran until they passed. If the veteran was getting compensation from the VA, bring his award letter. Bring a copy of all your out of pocket medical expenses (co-pay, doctor visits, and uninsured medications). Bring proof of Social Security payments for both the vet and

spouse...the gross income, not the VA compensation.

5. If your veteran was disabled, in a nursing home or homebound, the VSO must be notified.
6. If your veteran is in a local hospital, you have 72 hours to notify the VA for transfer to a nearby VA facility. Otherwise your incurred medical expenses are yours.
7. I can't possibly cover ALL the information on the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), death pensions, prior marriages, common law marriage, etc. in our newsletter. Each State has its own regulations. GET A VETERAN'S SERVICE OFFICER before burial because you may want to use a National Cemetery, if nearby, which sometimes offer a free or low cost interment to the veteran family.

Jim Lewis, Secretary
Co A; 39th ENGR(CBT)
Veteran's Service Officer (VSO)
Vietnam Veterans of America
6664 W. 157th Lane
Lowell, IN 46356
Cell 219-730-8140
In God We Trust

What Is A Soldier

What is a soldier
Some may ask,
Answers are many –
Such is the task.

But one common thread
You often will hear,
Duty, honor, country -
And family so dear.

So what is a soldier
The answers are varied,
Many have suffered –
Too many buried...

Mike Shaw

REUNION 2018

Tucson is an exciting area for a reunion; for you that were with us here in 2013, I am not telling you anything that you don't already know. For you first timers, hang on to your hat. We have worked and planned to make this year a huge success. Our schedule is full but we have left time for renewing old friendships and making new ones in the Hospitality Suite. We have also made time for individual sightseeing trips for those who would like to go it on their own for the day when group trips are not planned.

Now is the time to get your reservations made for September 30th through October 3rd, with 3 days prior and 3 days after the reunion dates at a special rate of \$104.00 plus tax at the Desert Diamond Casino & Hotel (www.desertdiamondcasino.com) and you can call direct to 877-777-4212 or 520-342-3012 and refer to 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni Association room block. The hotel will also give a \$10.00 food credit per day to each guest for use at all restaurants and food courts in the hotel and casino for the length of your stay; limit to two (2) food credits per room. There is a hotel flyer included in this newsletter with all their amenities along with the 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni Association link. The hotel offers shuttle service to and from Tucson International Airport and airlines serving the area are Alaska, American, Delta, Southwest, United, Sun Country, and Via Air; rental car agents include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Enterprise, Hertz and National.

On Sunday, once you have checked in, come up to the 4th floor South Tower where some of your rooms will be located along with the Hospitality Suite and you will be able to register and pick up your information packet. At 6:00pm we will have a Southwestern-style Mini-Buffer Meet and Greet rather than our usual Pizza Party in the foyer by the elevators and in the Hospitality Suite (for you smokers, you will enjoy this because the suite housing the Hospitality Suite has 4 balconies where smoking is allowed). Hospitality supplies and sundries are included in your registration fee. Stay late and visit, as Monday is an open day.

Monday's activities after breakfast (6:00-8:30am) have been left open for everyone to explore some of the many attractions and places to visit on their own. The hotel will have available one of their shuttles that will transport groups to the Titan Missile Silos, Pima Air Museum and San Xavier Mission; other attractions in the area are listed below. We request that you let us know if any of these trips are of interest, as we need to let the hotel know 30 days in advance if we will be requiring a shuttle. Of course, the Hospitality Suite will be open all day.

Tuesday's activities are: Breakfast from 6:00-8:30am. Then, we will hold our General Membership Meeting at 10:00am. We will meet in the Hospitality Suite for our General Membership meeting. We have left the afternoon open for any short term sightseeing. At 6:00pm, we will board our motor coaches for the Gaslight Dinner Theater which will consist of the melodrama "Vampire" and Pizza Dinner. After the show, we will board our motor coaches to return to the hotel for hospitality and beverages.

Wednesday's activities are: Breakfast from 6:00-8:30am. At 9:00am we will board our motor coaches for Fort Huachuca for tours of the Fort Huachuca Historic Museum dating back to the Original Buffalo Soldiers and the Military Intelligence and Drone Museum. On our return to the hotel, we will have sack lunches, snacks, water and soda. At 6:00pm, we will meet in the banquet room on the first floor for our Social Hour/Cash Bar; 7:00pm will be our Annual Banquet (menu selection is on the registration form) with the Cash Bar continuing. The Hospitality Suite will be closed during the Social Hour and Banquet but will reopen afterwards for visiting and beverages.

Thursday we will say our goodbyes and box up the Hospitality Suite to be shipped to the 2019 reunion location.

AREA ATTRACTIONS

Tucson CVB – www.visitTucson.org

Tombstone – www.tombstonechamber.com

Fort Huachuca – www.visitarizona.com/business/fort-huachuca-historical-museum and www.explorecochise.com/US-Army-Military-Intelligence-Museum

Titan Missile Silo – www.titanmissilemuseum.org
 Pima Air Museum – www.pimaair.org
 Steward Observatory – <http://mirrorlab.as.arizona.edu>
 Kartchner Caverns – www.AZStateParks.com
 South AZ Transportation Museum –
www.TucsonHistoricDepot.org
 San Xavier Mission – www.sanxaviermission.org
 Gaslight Theatre – www.thegaslighttheatre.com
 Pinnacle Peak Restaurant – www.traildusttown.com
 OK Corral – www.okcorral.com

Once again, I will mention and can't emphasize enough is: ***if you have the need for special accommodations such as handicap accessibility, it is your responsibility to take care of that with the hotel when you make your reservations***; the Association can't do that for you without breaking the law.

This year registration forms and money will be sent to either me: Bill Ray, 6205 Big Springs Drive, Arlington, TX 76001 or to Jim Shamblen, 10 Jacklyn Circle, Hampton, VA 23666.
 BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER
 Bill Ray
 3rd Plt. C Co. 67-68
 bill39th@sbcglobal.net
 817-239-0787 (Cell)

THOUGHTS FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Your brain is a muscle, and like all muscles, must be exercised or it will atrophy. So, with that thought in mind, here is a brief brainteaser that has been circulating for many years, but does provoke thought: Three fellows check in to a hotel, and the desk clerk tells them it will be \$10 each - \$30 total. (I did say this was an old story). Shortly thereafter, the clerk realizes he made a mistake and the fee should have only been \$25. He gives the bell hop five one dollar bills to return to the guest. On the way there the bell hop is thinking that it is difficult to divide five dollars between three men and after all, he is doing the work. So he decides to just give each man one dollar and keep two dollars as his tip – which he

does. Therefore, guest paid \$10, minus one dollar, or \$9.00 each. Three times 9 = 27, plus the two dollars kept by the bell hop equals 29. What happened to the other dollar? And yes, I know, it sounds like how the government sometimes operates.

Or perhaps...

Wit is frequently used to make a point. And one person who in my opinion excelled at the art was a humorist named Dorothy Parker (1893 – 1967). Here are but a few of her pithy and witty sayings: “Beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes clean to the bone.”

“I’ve never been a millionaire, but I know I would be good at it.”

“If you want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people he gave it to.”

“Men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses.”

“The best way to keep children home is to make the home atmosphere pleasant...and let the air out of their tires.”

When reviewing a book – “This novel is not to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown with great force.”

“Of course I talk to myself. I like a good speaker and appreciate an intelligence audience.”

“Time may be a great healer, but it is a lousy beautician.”

“A hangover is the wrath of grapes.”

“I’d rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy.”

“Ducking for apples. There but for one letter is the story of my life.”

“I love to have a martini, but only two at the most. After three I’m under the table – after four I’m under the host.”
 And the epitaph on her tombstone – “Excuse my dust.”
 An interesting old girl with a lot to say about life – in a humorous way.

Regards,

Mike Shaw

Stone Mountain, GA

C Co. 1970-71

nsxtarga@bellsouth.net

(678) 895-1871 (cell)



39th ENG BN Reunion 2018 – Tucson, AZ – Sept. 30-Oct. 4
Desert Diamond Casino and Hotel, Tucson, AZ

Name _____ for name badge _____

Spouse/Guest name _____ for name badge _____

Unit & Years in VN _____ E-mail address _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Cell phone _____

Emergency contact & Phone _____

Registration fee _____ \$50/member _____ \$45 x no. of guests Total \$ _____
(Registration includes member gift, hospitality supplies, meet & greet, beverages & snacks)

Any special requests for beverages, snacks or special food requirements? _____

Tues., Oct. 2 Gaslight Theatre/Pizza \$40/person x _____ no. of attendees Total \$ _____
www.thegaslighttheatre.com

Wed., Oct. 3 Fort Huachuca Historical Museum and Intelligence Museum \$30/person x _____ no. of attendees Total \$ _____
www.visitarizona.com/business/fort-huachuca-historical-museum and
www.explorecochise.com/US-Army-Military-Intelligence-Museum

Wed., Oct. 3 Banquet \$40/person x _____ no. of attendees Total \$ _____
_____ Chicken Picatta, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables
_____ Pot Roast, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables
_____ Vegetarian or Vegan Choice
All choices come with a Garden Salad and Ranch Dressing
Dessert will be the 39th Layer Cake and also a Sugar Free Cake.

Free-time Choices: Titan Missile Museum _____ no. of attendees
Pima Air & Space Museum _____ no. of attendees
San Xavier Mission _____ no. of attendees Total \$ free

Total enclosed (min. deposit required to hold all selected events \$100/or pay in full.) **Total \$** _____
(Fully refundable if canceled prior to Sept. 1, 2018)

If paying by credit card: Circle one: VISA MasterCard Discover American Express
_____ Expiration Date: ____ / ____ 3-digit Code on Back of Card: _____

Or 4-digit Code on front of Am Exp Card: _____

Arriving via (check one) _____ flying _____ driving (Call Desert Diamond for Shuttle Service)

Mail Reservation Form and payment to: Bill Ray, 6205 Big Spring Dr., Arlington, TX 76001

Make checks payable to: 39th Eng Bn

Please note: If you have the need for special accommodations such as handicap accessibility, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to take care of that with the hotel when you make your reservations.

OBITUARIES



Gale Donald Helser, 71, passed away peacefully on Feb. 7, 2018, in his home after losing his battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Diane, his sister, Karen Dyer (Wayne Dyer), his two children, Charity and Graham (Tammi), and his two stepchildren, Jessica

Stevanovic and Michael Behncke. He has five grandchildren, Joshua Pook, Jeni Fuchs, (James Fuchs), M. Jerry Pook from his daughter, Charity, and Dylan and Abigail from his son, Graham. He has one great grandchild, Liam Pook from his grandson, Josh. He has two nieces, Holly Butler and Heather Jackson. He was preceded in death by his parents, Jeannette and Victor Helser.

Gale was born in Beloit, Wisconsin to Victor (Bud) and Jeannette (Jeannie) Helser. It was here that he learned his love of the military. His father was the photographer in the plane behind the Enola Gay during WWII and shot pictures showing the bomb dropping that fateful day. And, of course, it didn't help that his dad was on the draft board and told Gale he could either volunteer or his number was going to come up first, but he could choose whichever he wanted!

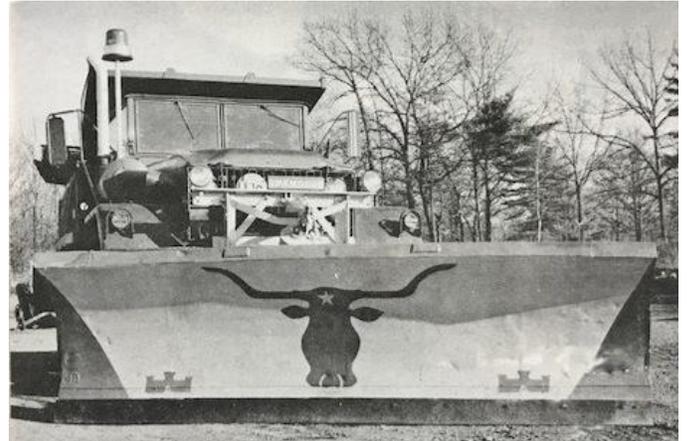
He was proud to be a Vietnam veteran. He was active in the 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni Association, as a past president and, most recently, the Reunion Chair. He was a lifetime member of the VFW Post 2410 in Harlingen, TX, a lifetime member of the American Legion Post 534 in McFarland, WI, he was a member of the Elks Lodge and a past member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Chapter III Southern Wisconsin Vietnam Vets. He will be missed by his family and many friends in Green Valley, AZ, San Benito, TX and McFarland, WI.

There was a Celebration of Life held at the American Legion Post 66 in Green Valley at 2:00 p.m. on February 15, 2018. There will be a Celebration of Life in McFarland, WI on June 9th and one in San Benito, TX in April.

He will be interred in the Niche Wall at Arlington National Cemetery.

39TH HISTORY FROM FORT DEVENS

James Jeffrey and Steve McElhenney, current 39th Engineers stationed at Fort Devens posted these bits of history in the 39th Engineer Battalion.



There's more snow on the way for us tomorrow! This photograph from a 1973 issue of the 'Fort Devens Dispatch' shows "Babe" ready to take on the snows of winter. The truck was driven by Spec. 4 Donald Moore of Bravo Company, 39th Engineer Battalion.



100 Years Ago, many men and women were far from home. We wished them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and May you spend the holidays with those most important to you, in person and in spirit.

Desert Diamond Casino & Hotel

is pleased to welcome the

39th Engineer Battalion Alumni Association

September 30, 2018 - October 3, 2018

Rates starting at \$104 + tax

HOTEL AMENITIES

Complimentary Wireless Internet Access
Business Center
Fitness Center – Open 24 Hours
A Variety of Dining Options – One Open 24 Hours

Free Airport Shuttle Service
Refreshing Pool & Hot Tub
Unlimited Gaming Excitement
Concierge Service

IN ROOM AMENITIES

Double Pillow Top Mattress & Premium Linens
Complimentary Internet Access (Wireless & Data Port)
Large Work Desk & Dual Line Speaker Phone
Cable TV

In Room Safe (Laptop Size)
Refrigerator & Coffeemaker
Hair Dryer & Make-Up/Shaving Mirror
Iron & Ironing Board

To make reservation, click on the following link:

[39th Engineer Battalion Alumni Association](#)

Reservations may also be made by calling 877-777-4212 or 520-342-3012.

Refer to **39th Engineer Battalion Alumni Association room block.**

Reservations must be made by **September 3, 2018.**

Room availability and special rate may not be available after this date.



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

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September 30th – October 4th, 2018 **Tucson, Arizona**



Mark your calendars for the next reunion of the 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni.

This newsletter contains the phone number of the Desert Diamond Hotel in order for you to make your reservations TODAY!

Join us for the best stories (they get better every year), the best entertainment (check out The Gaslight Theatre – it will have you laughing all night long), the best lodging (check out the website for the Desert Diamond Casino and Hotel), and the best friends you'll only get to see once a year!