



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



[www.39thengrbn.com](http://www.39thengrbn.com)

March, 2020

President.....	Bill Ray	Webmaster.....	Walter Lester
Vice President.....	John Lewis	Historian.....	Jerry Bright
Secretary.....	Jim Lewis	Member at Large.....	Oly Guerra
Treasurer.....	Jim Shamblen	Member at Large.....	Mike Shaw
Chaplain.....	Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros	Past President.....	Bruce Fonest
Sgt. at Arms.....	Mike Male	Reunion Chair.....	Jim & Sandy Lewis

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to 2020 and the beginning of a new decade. We hope each of you are in good health. I would like to meet whomever labeled this time in our life "The Golden Years". I am sure that he or she must have been young.

We have a terrific reunion planned for this year in Dayton and I want to thank Jim and Sandy Lewis for a job well done. We have a fine hotel for our headquarters and have a nice tour set up during our stay. They have put together a special trip to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force that I believe all will truly enjoy without tiring us out. The itinerary is listed in full later in this newsletter.

The reunion will start on Wednesday, September 30 and end Sunday, October 4, 2020. Our headquarters will be the Crowne Plaza Dayton Downtown, 33 East 5th Street with easy access off I-70 and is close to restaurants and sights for all to enjoy with a good room rate of \$119.00 including hot breakfast daily which also allows you to come 3 days early or stay 3 days after if you choose. We are expecting a large turnout, so you need to make your reservations early by calling the Crowne Plaza direct at **937-229-9835** during normal business hours, Monday thru Friday or after business hours call Central Reservations at 800-689-5586. Be sure and ask for the 39th ENG BN Alumni Association room block. Room rates are not guaranteed if reservations are made after August 29, 2020. In the case you must cancel, there is no charge if reservations are cancelled 48 hours prior to the arrival date. Although you have made reservations and received a confirmation number, you do have to abide by the

hotel's check-in time which is 4:00pm. The hotel will attempt to accommodate early arrivals, if possible.

**We are very fortunate to have a special guest at this year's reunion and a very good friend of Jim and Sandy Lewis. Tom Burke, Vice President of the VVA and his wife will be joining us at the reunion and will be the guest speaker at our banquet.**

We will also continue our Shotgun Raffles, so we encourage those of you that would like to donate items for this year's reunion to bring those items with you when you check in. We also ask that you send in your registration form and at least the minimum payment as soon as possible. This is needed so that we can make sure that we have everything to make your reunion a great one. Registration refunds will be made if we are notified by August 29, 2020. We are bringing back by popular demand a favorite gift for the membership this year; we will be giving the Light Denim Long Sleeve Shirt with pocket and the 39th logo embroidered on the left front to members registered.

Once again, I want to mention and can't emphasize enough is that **"if you have the need for special accommodations such as handicap accessible, 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.

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

James Michael Faris  
HHC 64-66

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

James Michael Faris  
HHC 64-66

We held our second Memorial Service for all members who have passed 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.

### DECEASED MEMBERS

William Wilkerson, C Co. 1969-1970 from California passed May 2, 2002. Richard Henry Goodrich, C Co. 1969-1970 from Illinois passed October 17, 2008.

Victor Stassi, C Co. 1969-1970 from California passed February 29, 2012. Gerald Duhe requested help in finding these individuals. Jerry Bright our Association Historian was able to find this much information, no obituaries were found.

As always, Carolyn and I wish each of you good health and prosperity. We are so looking forward to seeing each of you in Dayton this September.

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

Bill Ray

3<sup>rd</sup> Plt. C Co. 67-68

bill39th@sbcglobal.net

817-239-0787 (Cell)

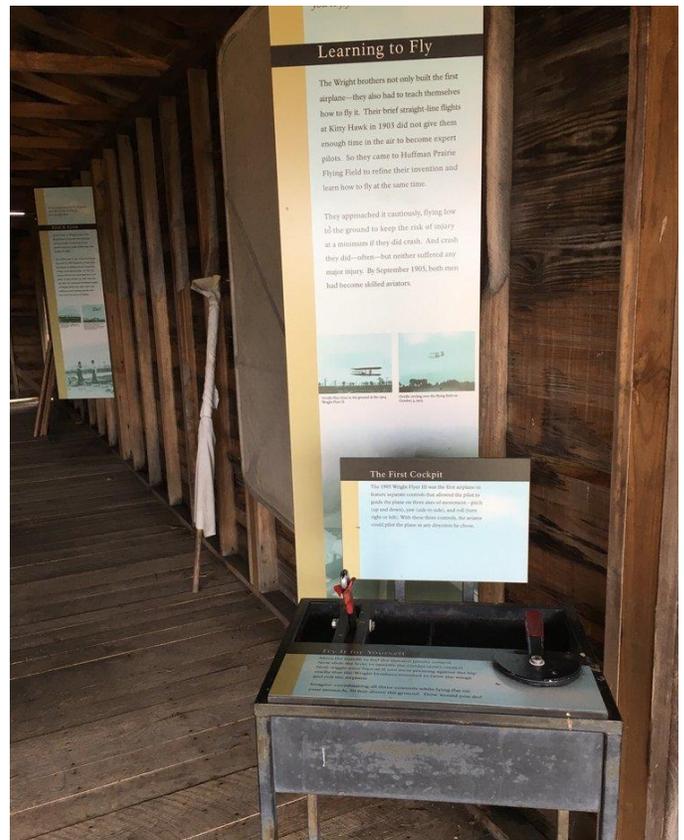
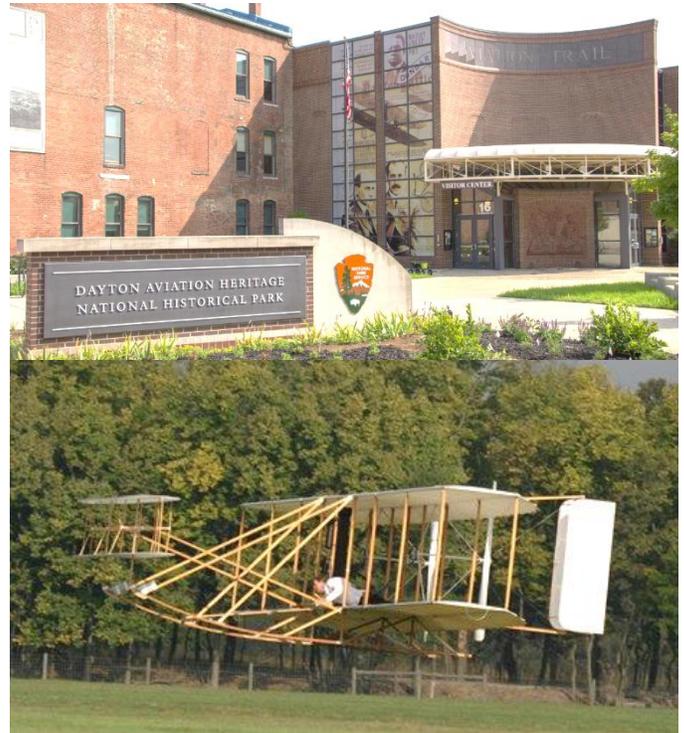
## REUNION 2020

Well, Milwaukee is behind us and we are looking forward to Dayton, Ohio. Dates for the reunion are Sept. 30th thru Oct 4th. 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 a scheduled tour of the Air Force Museum on Thursday. Some attractions for individual sightseeing are: Carillon Park, Packard Museum, 2nd St. Market and Hawthorn Hill. These are all great sites that may be of interest during your free time.

### Thursday scheduled event:

**10:00 AM:** Depart Crowne Plaza Hotel, 33 E. Fifth Street, 45402. (Begin loading at 9:45 AM)

**10:30-11:30 AM: 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. Includes 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. A park ranger (if available) 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.



**12:00-3:15 PM 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.

**3:15 PM:** Depart the Museum and arrive back at The Crowne Plaza about 3:30 PM.

**Sites of interest for individual sightseeing:**  
**Hotel shuttle will go within a 5-mile radius of our hotel.**



**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. Plenty of time to tour, at your own pace. Where else can you see the original 1905 Wright Flyer III, the world's first practical airplane and National Historic Landmark, the 1835 B&O (Grasshopper) steam locomotive, and the first automobile self-starter?

- This park has plenty of benches to take a break and enjoy the gorgeous grounds.
- 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)**



**Packard Museum** 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)**



**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)**



**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 pilots 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)**

Just wanted to give a shout out to our helpers at Milwaukee...Brenda Lewis, Joe Pollack and Pam Guerra. Could not have done it without you. Diane Helser came thru as always with printed materials. We are so grateful for you all.

Hope you all had a great time and now on to Dayton.

Jim & Sandy Lewis, Reunion Chairs  
A Co. 67-68

[Jim1010lewis@yahoo.com](mailto:Jim1010lewis@yahoo.com); 219-696-0140  
[Sllewis6664@hotmail.com](mailto:Sllewis6664@hotmail.com); 219-775-0256

## CHAPLAIN'S WORDS

### *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*



Every year, Priests of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese meet with their Metropolitan (head of their district) to get ready spiritually for upcoming Great Lent. This year, our new Greek Orthodox Archbishop of America Elpidophoros decided that we in the Direct Archdiocesan District have our Retreat in Washington, D.C.

As you know, we in the 39th have our Reunion every 5 years in Washington, D.C. So, it was great to go with my fellow priests and experience our Capital and the monuments alongside them. We all know what the Capital and the monuments mean to us, but to priests who have never served in the military, is another.



Of the approximate 50 priests in our group, only two served in the military. Moreover, I was the only one who served in a combat zone and experienced war. All the rest went to college and then seminary to avoid

the draft if they were born in the 1940s or '50s. The younger ones could have volunteered, but it did not fit into their life scheme.

Our accommodations were bare-bones at the Franciscan Sister's Retreat House, part of the Catholic University of DC who hosted us. Their campus is huge and the buildings are scattered all around the area. The center of campus life is the very massive Catholic Cathedral with mosaics and frescos covering the entire interior of the building. Above the altar area, Christ is depicted with a superior physique on the Apse Wall

facing the people. It was shocking for us to see that he resembles the guys at the gym!

Furthermore, we had time to visit many of the monuments in between the days of lectures and downtime. Our itinerary included a visit to the White House, but it was canceled due to the State of the Union Address and the impeachment hearings coming to a conclusion.



However, the highlight of our trip was offering a Memorial Service for all who are buried at Arlington Cemetery, including Gale Helser. All 50 priests chanted the Orthodox Memorial Service with Fr. Eugene and I leading the group. Since both of us served in the military we were humbled and honored to offer a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



What an experience and a life-changing event to be able to walk down the stairs and onto the plaza escorted by the 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers who guard the Tomb 24-7. With the assistance of the Sergeant of the Guard and the Honor Guard, we placed the Wreath on the stand. At this point we presented Arms and the Trumpeter played Taps. It was all very surreal for both of us, to realize that we had just done what the President of the United States does every year on Veterans or Memorial Day. What a

humbling experience; I will never forget it!

Fr. Vasilios Bassakyros

## ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL

A few people may think the maxim “All Gave Some – Some Gave All” a bit trite. To me, it is Gospel.

And recently that thought was brought to mind. As I was leaving a restaurant, I noticed a gentleman getting into his car that had a Vietnam Veteran tag. I opened my conversation along the lines...“I see that you, too, got that free all-expenses-paid trip to beautiful Southeast Asia.” From that intro, I usually segue to when and where.

But this fellow said no. Although he was in the military during the conflict (a euphemism for “war”), he remained Stateside for his entire service.

Frankly, at first, I was somewhat disappointed that this individual would display a Vietnam Veteran tag while not having served there. But, upon further reflection, I was wrong to jump to that conclusion. Each of us played a part; some on center stage - others in the wings. We all answered the call to service.

It is true that some volunteered and many conscripted. But the point is that we performed. In my case I enlisted and was “RA”, if not “All the way!” As I was preparing to graduate college and lose my 2-S deferment, the draft lottery was instituted. The first birthdate drawn was September 14th – mine! I am a gambler, but never that lucky at the casino.

So, I enlisted as a Private E-0. OK., I realize the rank was E-1, but at the time it felt like zero. I did so with the recruiter’s promise of attending OCS after competition of Basic Training and AIT. The Army upheld their part of the bargain and I upheld mine.

We all entered military service accepting the uncertain future and everything such a commitment entails. As in life, the luck of the draw determined where we would go and how our story would end. This gentleman took his chances and remained U.S. bound due to the needs of the service.

For that, I cannot slight him as he, too, did his part, along with countless men and women who served in ways other than deployment...and I thank them.

And I thank each of you as well!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michael Shaw



39<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (CBT)  
Alumni Association



### ITINERARY 2020 REUNION

Monday September 28	Early arrivals
Tuesday September 29	Early arrivals (officers etc.) Set up hospitality room 5:00pm Exec. Board meeting Hospitality room open
Wednesday September 30	12:00pm Registration Hospitality room open 6:00pm Meet and Greet pizza and wings party
Thursday October 01	6:30-9:00am Breakfast 9:45am Load buses for tour of Air Force Museum. Lunch on your own at the museum restaurant 3:00pm Return to hotel 3:30pm Hospitality room open
Friday October 02	6:30-9:00am Breakfast Open day for individual sightseeing Hospitality room open all day
Saturday October 03	6:30-9:00am Breakfast 10:30am General Membership meeting Hospitality room open. Open afternoon for individual sightseeing 6:00pm Social hour cash bar, Hospitality room closed 7:00pm Banquet and cash bar 8:00pm Blue Bull presentation, announcements Hospitality room open following banquet. Raffles and silent auction winners announced
Sunday October 04	6:30-9:00am Breakfast 8:00am-12:00pm Farewell in hospitality room and clean up



**39th Engineer Battalion Alumni  
2020 Annual Reunion  
Crowne Plaza, Dayton, Ohio**

Payment Deadline: August 29, 2020

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 39<sup>th</sup> 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, 2020)**

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: 39<sup>th</sup> ENG BN**



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

PRESORT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
McALLEN, TX  
PERMIT NO. 333



**2020**  
**39TH ENGINEER**  
**ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REUNION**  
**30 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 4 OCTOBER 2020**  
**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 Air Force Museum, Carillon Park, Packard Museum, 2nd St. Market, Wright Brothers Memorial and Hawthorn Hill.