



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



JUNE, 2012

President.....Bruce Fonnest
 Vice President.....Bill Ray
 Secretary.....Floyd Babcock
 Treasurer.....Jim Shamblen
 Chaplain.....Billy Bassakyros

Sgt. at Arms.....Blayne Jones
 Webmaster.....Walter Lester
 Historian.....Jerry Bright
 Past President.....Doc Shepherd
 Reunion Chair.....Gale Helser

REUNION NEWS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, we are about to have another reunion in DC. I just hope that we can have another great turn out like we had in Missouri.

I know with the economy like it is, it's going to be hard for some of you to make it to the reunion. Of course, this reunion is going to be special because it is the 30th anniversary of the dedication of the Wall. And, I know that every one of you that can make the reunion will, and we will have a great time.

If you cannot make this year's reunion, I sure hope that you will be able to make the 2013 reunion in Arizona. The Battalion is getting bigger every day and I sure hope that it will continue to grow. This is all due to Gale Helser and Bill Ray. Thanks guys, JOB WELL DONE.

Bruce W. Fonnest
A-Co. 70-71
President

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

I can't believe this year is almost half over; I have been told time flies when you are having fun, but I believe that time flies as we get older and right now I am feeling older than dirt. In a few short months, we will be together in Washington, D.C. and I swear we just said goodbye in St. Robert, MO. For those of you that have made your reservations for this year's reunion (and I have heard from several), I want to say THANK YOU for doing so early; for the rest of

you that haven't got your butts in gear, please do so as soon as possible. The better idea Gale and I have as to the number of attendees, the easier it makes our job of planning our itinerary and banquet.

Our membership growth has been slower this year than I was hoping for, but we are still growing and members of units attached to the 39th are starting to find the association, either through our own membership or the website and veterans magazines listing our upcoming reunions. If any of you know of someone who served and is not joined up, please talk to them and explain the kind of group we are; if you need help in recruiting, let me know and I will help in any way possible.

I would like to thank the members who participated in the oral interviews with Dr. Larry Roberts; I know that I thanked you at the time, but reports back from the A.E.A. and Dr. Roberts continue to praise each one of you for the honesty and openness shown during that two hour interview. I also enjoy hearing from you members that participated and your feelings about being able to open up about something that is very sacred to each of us.

I would like to acknowledge Phillip "Alan" George for his selflessness in donating his "Silver Star and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry" to the John B. Mahaffey Museum this past Veterans Day. The 39th is now represented by George's medals and story and also by the "Battalion Plaque" lest anyone should forget who we are.

Now for a big BLUE BULL welcome to our LIFETIME and NEW Members; it is great to have you with us.

LIFETIME Members:	John Holland B Co. 69	Jim Gottheardt C & HHQ 67-68	Patrick O'Brien 137th 69	David Miles C Co. 68-69
NEW Members:	Michael Barrett A Co. 71-72	Mike Morey A Co. 68-69	Randy Ridenour 511th 70-71	Stephen Rideout D Co. 69-70

Please accept my thanks again for all of your help during 2011 and the beginning of 2012. I look forward to working with each of you the duration of this year and into the future. It is mine and Carolyn's hope to see each of you this November in D.C. for Veterans Day and the 30th anniversary of the Vietnam Memorial also known as the "WALL".

In closing, I would like to ask all of the members that when moving, doing away with your land line in favor of a cell phone, or changing carriers for your e-mail, PLEASE send the changes to me so I can make the necessary adjustments to our roster. This is our main source for keeping each of you informed on the annual reunions and other useful information through our newsletters which are sent either by e-mail or the US Postal Service. Thank you for your cooperation – and remember, ALL INFORMATION IS KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. It is not passed on to members or other entities without your consent. BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER

Bill Ray
Vice President
3rd Plt. C Co. 67-68

REUNION INFORMATION

Congratulations to HOWARD GOOLSBY, the Early Bird registration winner. His room has been upgraded to a suite.

We are edging closer to our reunion in Washington DC from November 9-12, 2012. It looks like we will once again have a record turnout, how great is that! As our membership grows, we are seeing a lot of old friendships rekindled and many new friendships develop. In the past 11 years, it has been exciting to see the steady growth of our organization. There were times I thought it would never catch on. But, it's great to see that the efforts of all our members have paid off handsomely.

As you know, this is the 30th year anniversary of "The Wall" and, as a result, there will be plenty of events to attend and opportunities to both honor and remember those of us who gave all and have gone on before us. I expect that most of the happenings will be held on Sunday, November 11th (Veterans Day). Therefore, we have left that day open with no scheduled activities. You will be on your own to go, do and see whatever you wish. We will have a schedule of what is happening in the DC area posted each day in the hospitality room so you will know what services and memorials are being observed during our entire stay.

Our activity schedule is not finalized as yet. However, we are planning some very interesting events that you may wish to participate in. Once all of our plans are finalized, we will post the itinerary on the web site and will have copies available to email to every registrant. I can tell you a little of what we are hoping to be able to offer. First, the USMC has one of the finest military museums in the area, headquartered in Quantico, VA. We are arranging to have a motor coach take us there for a half-day visit and will include lunch in the museum galley. The museum pays tribute to all the wars of our history in a chronological order and includes the finest representation of the Vietnam War that I have seen. This is a "don't miss" event.

Second, we are attempting to secure a tour of the Pentagon. Since 9/11, they have discontinued tours. But, we are trying to get some inside help with this. No promises as yet.

We are also trying to secure a guest speaker for our banquet on Saturday evening. We will hold our banquet at our hotel and plan on having a small band for your listening and dancing pleasure, so bring both left feet. The menu selections will be on the registration form. Unfortunately, we may not be able to have our annual pizza party at the hotel. (They are

a full service hotel with a restaurant.) Catered or brought-in food is prohibited, but we're working on it.

We are also working on some options for outside dining opportunities. Some suggestions have been a local steak house, Phillips Seafood Restaurant in DC (we were there 5 years ago), a dinner cruise on one of the scenic Potomac River boat excursions, or just hanging at the hotel. More will come on this topic as we get closer to our reunion.

If you have not made your hotel reservations yet, now is the time. We are close to filling our room block and we need to have as many reservations made by mid-July as possible in order to add extra rooms to our block. Once our block of rooms is filled, we can negotiate for additional rooms at the same rate. So, the sooner you reserve, the better. We will be able to accommodate everyone who wants to attend. Remember, by reserving a room, you are not risking any out of pocket expense as you can cancel your reservation right up to the day we arrive. No risk, No worry. *Be sure to tell them when you register that you are with the 39th Engineer Battalion group to get the reduced rate of \$99 per night.* This is a great rate in the DC area. (Some of our attendees have already found out that the regular rate is over \$250 per night.) Once you have made your reservations and have a confirmation number, you can contact me (my information is below) to secure any additional room nights or services you may wish to request with the hotel. *I cannot make promises*, but the hotel has been very cooperative.

I see that our Treasurer, Jim Shamblin has secured additional 39th caps and has them for sale now. See Jim's article to order yours. I'm sure that we will have them available at the reunion as well.

My info is: Gale D Helser, 32423 FM 2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583. Ph 608-225-6090.

Email: galehelser@peoplepc.com.

Brothers then, Brothers now,

Gale

TREASURER'S REPORT

This update covers from the first of the year. We began the year with \$4,368.43 and presently have \$4,797.98. We have received receipts of \$440 for the year and made payments of \$10.95. A

detailed report of the receipts and disbursements follows. Included in the receipts is \$300 for Life Membership and \$70 for annual dues. The sale of hats and shirts added an additional \$70.

RECEIPTS:	DISBURSEMENTS:
Annual Dues: \$ 70	Mail Package \$ 10.95
Lifetime Dues: \$ 300	
Hats: \$ 20	
Shirts: \$ 50	
TOTAL: \$ 440	\$ 10.95

We are in great financial shape and look forward to the preparation of the 2012 Reunion in Arlington, VA for the Veterans Day Holiday in November.



I am getting a new batch of hats, both Red and Black in addition to the White Hat for the Reunion. The black hat will have red lettering and a red crest, and the red hat will have white lettering and a

white crest. If you want one prior to the reunion, these will be ready for shipping by 1 July for \$15 each, including shipping. Send check to:

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

THE CHAPLAIN'S WORD

"The Rocks." In a world that is ever so changing, it is hard to keep a sense of equilibrium in one's life. When one feels that he/she has things in hand and under control, something always comes along to shake up the peace and stability that one has tried so hard to cultivate and maintain. The result is a feeling of loss of peace and well-being, which, when left alone, will elevate anxiety and can escalate into a fight-or-flight response from the individual. This is the worst case scenario that one can imagine – a feeling of no way out except fight or flight. Trying to function rationally in this condition is almost impossible except for those who have been trained to deal with them as normal daily occurrences. In order to gain and

maintain a state of homeostasis and equilibrium during times of trouble, one must not see the situation as threatening, but manageable.

Moreover, since we live in a fallen world, our lives are continuously affected by many obstacles and daily pressures that we need to weed through just to function as human beings. Work pressures, or the lack of work, personal interactions with friends, loved ones and family or just trying to get through the day takes a toll on us. However, with the right state of mind one can function very well under these pressures. How can this be? Well, one way is to know and recognize what avenues are open. Do I react to the external pressure that I am facing, or do I just let it go and not react at all?

Furthermore, the active word here is external! How one responds to negative external stimuli is one way of dealing with a potentially upsetting situation. One way which will escalate the situation and destroy your peace along with others around you, is to turn it over and over again in your mind. This will certainly cause you more trouble than you can imagine. On the other hand, by realizing your options and just letting it go will aid in de-escalating the situation. In other words, external triggers can take us where we do not want to go, and can bring back memories that have negative effects on us. That is why many monks have realized the frailty of human nature, and have spoken and written about it so carefully. Here is one story that expresses these same sentiments.

On my first trip to St. Catherine's, I had the opportunity to stay with the only hermit at St. Catherine's. The first time I was invited to go up with him to his hermitage, I encountered many obstacles along the path. The climb up was very difficult and dangerous, but like a mountain goat, he moved up the mountain with ease. I, on the other hand, found the path narrow and full of small rocks and pebbles. Since it was so steep and winding, even with my hiking boots on, I slipped many times as I made my ascent. As we approached his hermitage, the air was permeated with the aroma of roses which were growing all around the entrance door. Once inside the walls, a small open air area greeted us, and I had the opportunity to sit and rest from the climb. Since it was almost 9,000 feet above sea level, the air was

very thin, and I found it difficult to breath.

Father Andrianos, without any request from me, handed me a glass of clear sparkling water to quench my thirst. After a drink or two he asked how the trip was, and by the very expression on my face it was very evident that it was hard. Then he asked if I had tripped on some rocks climbing up? I, of course, answered with a resounding, "Yes." What was he getting at, I thought? With the wisdom of all who lived on the Holy Mountain before him, he began to tell me what people in the world do when they try to climb up the mountain of life. Each and every time they trip on a rock and fall down, they pick it up and yell at it. Why? Because they want to know why it tripped them? So, unable to give a reply, they put the rock in their pockets in hopes of one day it will give them an answer why. This happens all the way up the mountain of life, and by the time they almost reach their destination they cannot move anymore because of all the rocks they have accumulated along the way in hopes of one day they will be given a good reason why they all tripped him/her.

The lesson he was trying to teach me was to let the many negative incidents in my life go, and to focus only on the goal of life. Also, not to store any problems that tripped me up during the day in my mind, in hopes that one day they will say they were sorry. So, if each and every one of us tries to practice what the hermit taught me, we will be more able and adept at handling what life has to throw at us. Do not let the rocks of life keep you weighed down and paralyzed from moving freely toward His loving presence, and fulfilling your goals and desires in life.

God Bless All of You!

Very Reverend Vasilios Bassakyros
(aka, Billy the Greek) "B" Co. 66-67

ANNUAL REUNION

Friday-Monday, 09 – 12 November 2012
Crowne Plaza, Crystal City, VA

Call for reservations: 703-416-1600

Tell them you're with the 39th Engineers!
BOOK NOW! (You can cancel up until 6 pm on the day you would check in with no penalty.)



**39th Engineer Battalion Alumni
2012 Annual Reunion
30th Anniversary of "The Wall" Washington DC**

Name _____ Nickname for name badge _____

Unit and Years in country _____

Spouse/Guest _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Email address _____

Registration fee: \$40 member \$30 Guest/spouse = \$ _____ total

Shirt Size: S-M-LG-XL-XXL-XXXL (circle one)

Banquet: \$45.00 per person X _____ persons = \$ _____ total

Marine Corp Museum \$20.00 per person X _____ persons = \$ _____ total

Deadline for Payment: October 1, 2012
Make checks payable to: 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni

Total \$ _____ enclosed

Special dietary requirements (explain in detail) _____

Emergency contact name & phone number _____

If you have mobility or special needs please explain (we will make whatever arrangements available) _____

Are you interested in participating in early arrival activities? YES NO
(Additional information will be mailed to you, including costs.)

Mode of transportation for arrival: Car Air

Which airline? _____ Flight No. _____ Arrival Time: _____

Make check payable to: 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni
and mail with registration to: Gale Helser
32423 FM 2925
Rio Hondo, Texas 78583

NOTE: This is your registration for the 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni Reunion.

You must call in your hotel reservations separately to: 703-416-1600 and tell them you're with the **39th Engineer Battalion Alumni**. DO NOT use the 800 number, as they do not have the ability to give you the \$99 room rate.

For more information, contact Gale Helser at 608-225-6080 or Bill Ray at 817-572-5725.

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.



39th Engineer Battalion Alumni
 32423 FM 2925
 Rio Hondo, TX 78583

BIG NEWS!!

The film is ready for DVD Duplication! More details this week and other products to be announced!

Visit the new revised film website:

www.weekendtorememberfilm.com

VIETNAM-SPECIFIC MEDALS AND AWARDS



Vietnam Service Medal

The Vietnam Service Medal is awarded to all members of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in Vietnam and contiguous waters or airspace there over, after 3 July 1965 through 28 March 1973. To qualify for award of the VSM, an individual must have been attached to or regularly served for 1 or more days with an organization participating in or directly supporting military operations.

One bronze service star is authorized for each campaign during which individuals were assigned or attached to and present for duty with a unit during the period in which it participated in combat.

Of the Vietnam campaigns, the 39th has been credited with (3) – (16):

- (1) Vietnam Advisory Campaign, 15 March 1962-7 March 1965.
- (2) Vietnam Defense Campaign, 8 March 1965-24 December 1965.
- (3) Vietnam Counteroffensive, 25 December 1965-30 June 1966.
- (4) Vietnam Counteroffensive, Phase II, 1 July 1966-31 May 1967.
- (5) Vietnam Counteroffensive, Phase III, 1 June 1967-29 January 1968.
- (6) TET Counteroffensive, 30 January 1968-1 April 1968.
- (7) Vietnam Counteroffensive, Phase IV, 2 April 1968-30 June 1968.
- (8) Vietnam Counteroffensive, Phase V, 1 July 1968-1 November 1968.
- (9) Vietnam Counteroffensive, Phase VI, 2 November 1968-22 February 1969.
- (10) TET 69 Counteroffensive, 23 February 1969-8 June 1969.

- (11) Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969, 9 June 1969-31 October 1969.
- (12) Vietnam Winter-Spring 1970, 1 November 1969-30 April 1970.
- (13) DA Sanctuary Counteroffensive, 1 May 1970-30 June 1970.
- (14) Vietnam Counteroffensive, Phase VII, 1 July 1970-30 June 1971.
- (15) Consolidation I, 1 July 1971-30 November 1971.
- (16) Consolidation II, 1 December 1971-29 March 1972.
- (17) Vietnam CEASE-FIRE, 30 March 1972-28 January 1973.



Army Meritorious Unit Award

First: 1 Jan 66 - 20 Jan 68, DAGO 39, 70

Second: 21 Jan 68 - 3 Feb 70, DAGO 2, 71

Additional awards are represented by an oak leaf cluster.

Individuals who were unit members during a cited time period may permanently wear the medal; others, only when assigned.



Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (Non-US)



RVN Civil Actions Honor Medal, FC (Non-US)

29 Oct - 11 Nov 70, DAGO 5, 73, 39th Engineer Battalion

3 May 70 - 30 Apr 71, DAGO 6, 74, 39th Engr Bn, Headquarters & Headquarters Company.

SOURCES: Army Regulation 600-8-22, 11 December 2006, and Army Pamphlet 672-3, 29 January 1988