



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



FEBRUARY, 2013

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

2013 REUNION INFORMATION

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our last reunion was again a record breaker for the 39th. I know that I, along with my wife and granddaughter, had a great time. I sure hope that everyone else had a great time. I want to say that I'm sorry that we did not get a group photo.

Some of the things that you should want to take a look at for the next reunion are who you might want for officers; elections will be held at our next reunion for the next two years. All offices are up for election or re-election. It has been great being your President for the past two years. I also want to thank Bill, Gale and Jim for all of their hard work on last year's reunion. I know that this year's will be just as nice as last year's was. I sure hope that we have a nice turnout for our next reunion. I do know that no matter how many we have at the reunion, I know that we will all have a great time.

For the upcoming reunion on Sept. 28 – Oct. 1 in Tucson, please enter the raffle for \$5 to help support our group and possibly win an executive suite for free!

One last thing – if any of you have any pictures of our fallen brothers that lost their life in Vietnam, could you please bring them to the reunion? I'll make copies. If they do not have their picture on the Vietnam Virtual Wall, I would be honored to place it on there. I'll also have the Honor Roll Books that I set up at the reunion so everyone can get a look at them and give me any ideas for improvement on the books.

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

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

We have said goodbye to 2012 and welcomed 2013 with renewed enthusiasm. It is our hope that each and every one of you had a wonderful and safe Holiday Season. 2012

was a good year for the Association; our membership increased once again by 26 Members, including 9 LIFETIME Members, not quite as good as 2011, but still we are showing growth.

Although the 39th ENG BN (CBT) Alumni Association is a voluntary organization, we depend on our members' dues to help with expenses such as postage during the year. While members join at different times of the year, it would be appreciated if you feel you haven't paid for 2013 to do so at this time. This newsletter will be the only one this year that all members will receive by US Mail. After this, we will go back to electronic mailing for members capable of receiving them, saving us some money on postage.

The 2012 reunion in Washington, D.C. once again had a great attendance and went smoothly consider the time allotted and activities planned. We had approximately 180 members and guests, and judging from the conversations at the banquet, everyone enjoyed themselves; the participation of our members and spouses in the "Reading of Names" and Father Vasilios and Jim Ton with the "Wreath Presentation" went smoothly. Special guests with us this year were David Wagner and his wife Selma. David was with the 39th Engineer Regiment (Combat) 1944-1945 and served in Africa and Europe. The 39th Engineer Regiment is our parent unit and David had some stories to tell; I believe he and his wife had a wonderful time. Our other guest was Belynda Thomas, who was married to G.W. Thomas. G.W. was one of our founding members; we lost G.W. several years back and this was the first time Belynda has been able to make a reunion since then and judging from her ever present smile, she was able to see old friends and make plenty of new ones. We sincerely hope that David, Selma and Belynda will be able to join us at our future reunions.

There were a couple of glitches that occurred that will be corrected, first and foremost was not having a group photo made and although I was not the only one to overlook that important item, I take full responsibility. But, thanks to

THE CHAPLAIN'S WORD

our members, there are many pictures of the reunion and activities on our website; second, not having the reunion for 1 extra day. Starting this year in Tucson, the reunion will be for 4 days instead of our customary 3 days.

Once again, I am in awe of what the spouses, family members and friends do to help keep our reunion running smoothly, especially in keeping up with everything in the Hospitality Room. They also help in making sure that their guys get the registration and reservations made for the reunions so that we can be together each year. My deep heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for doing what I will never be able to do.

As most of you already know, the 2013 reunion will be held in Tucson, AZ, starting on Saturday, September 28th and running through Tuesday, October 1st. The hotel for our headquarters will be at the Hilton Tucson East with the room rate of \$81.00 per day excluding tax; the room rate will be honored 3 days before and after the reunion for early arrivals or late departures. This year, instead of 1 member receiving an upgrade to a suite at the regular room rate, we will have a raffle and one member will receive a two-room Executive Suite with patio free of charge. This package is valued at over \$600.00. Registration forms and information will be forthcoming in the very near future; hope to see you there.

Now for a big BLUE BULL welcome to our Lifetime and New Members; it is great to have you with us.
LIFETIME Members: Lester Lee Hankins, A Co 71
NEW Members: Glen Bergeron, A Co 67-68; Jim Heafner, C Co 69-70; David Schall, Jr., HHC 67-68; Joseph "Joe" Natale, D Co 67-68; John Slater, D Co 67-68; Earl Stewart, B Co 73-74.

We would like to extend our condolences to Freddie Jackson and family for the loss of his eldest son on January 13, 2013; services were held January 26 with Carolyn and I in attendance. Freddie, we are sorry for your loss.

A reminder to send any changes in contact information to me at bill39th@sbcglobal.net; I can also be contacted by phone at 817-572-5725 (home) or 817-239-0787 (cell) allowing the roster to stay up to date so we can contact you on upcoming reunions and other happenings with the Association.

Once again, thanks to each and every one of you for your help and participation in keeping the 39th ENG BN (CBT) Alumni Association growing.

BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER.

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

Heart Ache!

The heart is said to be the center of the person, and without it one does not have life. For many primitive people, the heart is something mysterious. When faced with moral combat against an enemy, the conqueror would eat the heart of their slain foe in order to gain his courage. So, right from the womb, the heart plays a practical, but also a mysterious role in one's life.

Moreover, people make decisions through the lens of the heart, even if they know they will eventually end up hurt. For some people, it is very difficult to keep in balance the heart and the rational mind. Many times we hear, you have touched my heart, or it makes my heart ache when I hear something negative about you. Is this organ capable of feeling? Is this feeling something good and helpful for the individual, or can it interfere with one's daily way of life?

You broke my heart, must be said a million times a day in every language around the world. On the other hand, as one song by the Bee Gees declares, "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart?" Without the mystical part of the heart, we are reduced to mechanical robots going through life with no actual feelings at all. On the other hand, when our heart is broken, we need to look at what and why we feel this way. Is it rational or irrational? Do we see through the heartbreak and can we come up with an appropriate response to mend our broken heart?

This little story is very telling and can move each of us to a better place if we let it. The title is "Does Your Heart Still Ache?"

A woman whose only son had died went to a holy man and asked, "What powers do you have that will lift the ache from my heart?" He said, "There is a wonderful thing you can do. But first you must bring me a mustard seed from a family that has no problems." The woman went immediately to a beautiful mansion, thinking, "Nothing can possibly be wrong here!" She knocked on the door and said, "I have to find a mustard seed from a home where there are no problems. It's very important to me. May I have one of your mustard seeds?" The people said to her, "Oh, you have come to the wrong house." They began listing all their problems. The woman thought, "I certainly know something about few problems. Maybe I can help them." She listened, consoled and comforted. At every home in the town, the same thing happened. Finally, she returned to the holy man and said, "I did not find the seed you wanted. Instead, I gave away all the seeds of love I could give." "And, does your heart still ache?" asked the holy man. "No," she said but then she added with a smile, "but I'm thinking of growing some mustard seed and letting it go to seed."

Whatever you think you are on the outside, you likely are on the inside. The next time you feel like complaining,

remember that your garbage disposal probably eats better than 30% of the people in the world. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have." (Hebrews 13:5).

In Greek, there is an expression, "It could be worse." Letting go of what seems impossible will bring you peace of heart and that is what you are looking for. Turning it over and over again in your mind and heart will only keep you in a loop, like feedback in a sound system. In order to break the loop, you need to refocus and see the blessings that God has given you and appreciate them. Fill your heart and mind with His goodness and live to go on another day.

God Bless All of You!

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial situation of the Association is firm. We began the year with \$4,368.43 and ended the year with \$6,283.85. We received receipts of \$18,572 for the year and made payments of \$16,656.58. Included in the receipts is \$900 for Life Membership and \$150 for annual dues. The sale of hats and shirts added an additional \$2,153 and donations of \$45 were made. An additional \$125 was collected at the reunion and donated to The Education Center at the Vietnam Wall.

We purchased Hats, Shirts, Sweatshirts and Crests during the year and sold \$2,453 worth during the year as well as at the reunion. Additionally, we sold photos, bumper sticker and videos at the Reunion for an additional \$128.

The Reunion in our Nation's Capital was a huge success with over 175 attendees that included members of VVAQ 140 and 267. We had a wonderful time touring Washington DC, the monuments and the Marine Museum. We also had many of us read names at the Wall during "The Reading of the Names" as well as participating and laying a wreath at the Wall during the 30th Anniversary of the Wall Proceedings. Between registration and some donations, the Reunion receipts were \$14,861. Expenditures for lunches, dinners, and pizza as well as the cost of the tour and hospitality room expenses amounted to \$13,452.32. Additionally, \$265 registration fees were returned and \$50 went to Mark Arguello for the videos.

We are in great financial shape and look forward to the preparation of the 2013 Reunion in Tucson, AZ in September-October.

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

FROM THE REUNION CHAIR

Mark these dates: Sept. 28th through Oct. 2nd, or arrive up to 3 days early and/or stay 3 extra days in case you don't get to see and do everything you would like to. The location this year is the Hilton Tucson East, a full service hotel near many area attractions. We have negotiated a fantastic contract with a room rate of \$81 per night and every room is an executive level accommodation. We will all be on the same floor with many extras just for us. Our hospitality room will be located on the first floor conveniently located near the lounge and all of the hotel amenities. The hotel is sponsoring a welcome reception for us on our first day and will be providing special food and beverage perks for us on our executive level.

To book your rooms, call **1-800-HILTONS (445-8667)** and mention the group code **39THEB** or mention the **39th Engineer Battalion Alumni**. This will book you at our reduced rate. This year, a special incentive has been added to our package. Last year as an early bird reservation special, we gave an upgrade to one special 39ther to a suite. This year, we are doing one better. With this newsletter, you are being sent 3 raffle tickets to enter into a drawing for a totally free room - and, not just a room. It's an executive suite - a huge multi-room suite with a spacious outdoor patio for your leisurely pleasure or for socializing with other 39ther's. The tickets are 3 for \$5.00 and the winner will be drawn on March 31st. The value is well over \$600 for the entire 4 nights with check out on the 2nd. Don't miss this opportunity to win a terrific drawing and help support your 39th Eng Bn Assoc. The proceeds will be used to offset some of the costs of the trips we have planned and help keep our registration costs as low as possible. Be sure to fill out your ticket stubs and return them along with your \$5 to Bill Ray, 6205 Big Springs Dr., Arlington, TX 76001. Entries must be received by March 20th, as they will be forwarded to our Chaplain, Father Billy and none of the officers are eligible to win so YOUR odds of winning are even better. Want to improve your odds even more? Just contact me, and I will mail you extra tickets to purchase. My email and phone number are at the end of this letter, or if you would like more information mailed to you about the planned events and available activities in the area, just contact either Bill Ray or myself and we will send you extra info. If you have a computer you can google some of the planned events and see what they are all about.

The next newsletter will have the registration form and fees associated with the events so that you can make your plans accordingly.

Brothers then, Brothers now,
Gale Helser (galehelser@peoplepc.com)
(956) 367-0999



39th Engineer Battalion Alumni

32423 FM 2925

Rio Hondo, TX 78583



39th Engineer Battalion Hats, Sweatshirts, Shirts and Crests

Contact: Jim Shamblen (757) 838-5654 for information on prices and availability.

IN MEMORIAM

Berchard Louie Glant, 90, of Chattanooga was a WWII veteran of the 39th Engineer Regiment and an Honorary Member of our Association. He was wounded and received the Purple Heart. He passed away at his home, Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2012.

Veterans were very special to Louie and he volunteered for the VA Office and had been Service Officer and State Commander for the Military Order of Purple Heart. He was a member of the Mason, Shriners, American Legion and V.F.W. He was preceded in death by his wife, Sandra. He was buried in National Cemetery.

Jerry Bright, Historian

The 2013 reunion headquarters will be at the Hilton Tucson East, 7600 E. Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85710, direct phone to the hotel is 520-721-5600 and will be held September 28 thru October 2, 2013. Room rates are \$81.00 per night excluding tax; this rate is valid 3 days pre and 3 days post the scheduled reunion dates. The Association will raffle off 1 Executive Suite; the winner's room will be free Sept. 28 thru Oct. 2 (a \$600.00 plus value); drawing will be held March 31, 2013 with Father Vasilios (Billy the Greek) officiating. Raffle tickets are 3 for \$5.00 or 7 for \$10.00 and are included in this newsletter; mail check (payable to the 39th Eng Bn Alumni Association) and ticket stubs to: BILL RAY, 6205 BIG SPRINGS DRIVE, ARLINGTON, TX. 76001 The hotel is ultra modern with all rooms on the Executive Level complete with deluxe continental breakfast and a manager's reception each afternoon. The hotel also has a full service dining room (serving breakfast, lunch and dinner), lounge and an excellent outdoor patio and swimming pool; we will also have our customary hospitality room. With the numerous attractions in the Tucson area, we encourage those who can to drive or if flying to rent a car; the hotel has plenty of free parking for autos and RV's. The hotel does not provide shuttle service to and from the airport (we will do our best to accommodate your needs), but does have service for the immediate area. There are also numerous dining establishments within close proximity of the hotel for your eating pleasure

Reservations can be made by calling 800-HILTONS; be sure to say that you are with the 39th Eng Bn Alumni Association. If some unforeseen circumstance should arise cancellations can be made 48 hours prior to arrival date for a full refund.

TENTATIVE ITINERARY

SATURDAY, SEPT. 28

Registration-Hotel Lobby
Welcome Reception-Hotel Lobby
Hospitality Room Open

SUNDAY, SEPT. 29

Breakfast-Hotel
Desert Museum Tour-Morning
Lunch/Old Tucson Tour-Afternoon
Pizza Party-Evening/Hospitality Room

MONDAY, SEPT. 30

Breakfast-Hotel
Titan Missile Museum-Morning
Pima Air Museum-Mid Morning
Boneyard Tour-Afternoon
Hospitality Room Open

TUESDAY, OCT. 1

Breakfast-Members Choice
Members free to sightsee
General Membership Meeting
Cocktail Hour/Banquet-Ballroom
Hospitality Room Open

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2

Farewell Breakfast-Hotel / Reunion Ends-Members Return Home

Bus transportation will be provided for all tours Sunday and Monday. Registration fees and Group Tour fees will be forthcoming in future communications along with menu selections for the banquet. There is plenty to see in the area for your free day and we will have literature available from the Tucson CVB. We look forward to seeing you this year in sunny Tucson, AZ. to renew old friendships and create new ones.

**BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER,
BILL RAY, ASSISTANT REUNION CHAIR**