



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



SEPTEMBER, 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 FINAL UPDATE

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I'm looking forward to November. With over 100 rooms booked already, this looks to be the largest reunion we've had so far.

Floyd Babcock and I were at the National Vietnam Veterans Leadership Conference the week of 6 Aug. 2012. We'll pass on all the good information that learned when we see you in Nov.

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

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Another year end is fast approaching and in a couple of months we will be together once more in Washington, D.C. and I am so looking forward to seeing you all. Reservations have been good and it appears that we will have another good turnout; if you haven't made your reservations with the Crowne Plaza or sent in your registration to Gale Helser, please do so at your earliest convenience. During September Gale, Carolyn and I will be heading to Tucson, AZ to start making arrangements for next year's reunion.

As most of you know, the 39th lost one of the founders of the association in August of this year. Ace Chaney, along with a few other members started getting 39th veterans together back in the 1990's. From that, we have grown to what we are today. RIP BROTHER. Ace's obituary is included in this newsletter.

This has been another good year in membership growth, either through our membership contacting our Brothers and Sisters or by them seeing our reunion postings in the various Veterans magazines and web searches. June was a great month with five (5) new LIFETIME members, and 16 new regular members. Check out the list on page 2.

Let's give a large "BLUE BULL" welcome to each and every one of them.

The Operation Reports and After Action Reports from 1966 through 1971 are going to be available on the 39th web sites in the very near future thanks to Jerry Bright and Walter Lester. These are the same reports that I received from Dr. Larry Roberts (AEA Historian) when we were in Fort Leonard Wood and were on display in the hospitality room. According to some members, these reports have been of great assistance in filing claims with the VA. If, for some reason, you still need help in finding documentation, Jerry or I will do what we can; just let us know.

I just received and viewed "A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER" and even though we were there in D.C. for the 25th anniversary of the "WALL," I was amazed at how much we missed. Mark Arguello did a fantastic job. He has completed the two (2) disc DVD and it is ready for purchase. The sound track was done by our own Dale "Doc" Shepherd and the 39th members and hospitality room are well represented. Visit www.weekendtorememberfilm.com to view the trailer.

A reminder to send any changes in contact information to me at bill39th@sbcglobal.net or call 817-572-5725 to help keep the roster up to date and we can keep you posted on upcoming reunions and other happenings with the Association.

Carolyn and I are looking forward to seeing each of you this coming November and please be safe in your travels.

BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER.

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

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

LIFETIME Members:

Tom Johnson HHC 69-70	Jim Lewis A Co. 67-68	Raymond Maher D Co. 68-70
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Charles Stambaugh 511th 70	Gaylon Waters D Co. 67-68
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NEW Members:

Lester Hankins A Co. 71	Glen Douglas A Co. ?	Warren Haight HHC 73-74
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Henry Holmes HHC 65-66	Boyd Johnson HHC 67-68	Jim Lewis A Co. 65-66
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Frederic Quan D Co. 70-71	Joe Smith A Co. 71	Mike St. Hilaire HHC 77-79
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Tom Walker B Co. 65-66	Mike Wierzba A Co. 69-70	Paul Williams C Co. 74-75
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Glen Bergeron A Co. 67-68	Jay Brown HHC 66/45 Grp. 69
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Robert Waterston HHC 66-67	George Schmeltzer HHC 79-81
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is upon me night and day,' Abraham Lincoln quipped, 'if I did not laugh I should die.'"

People under great pressure as war or any other kind of stress need a change in their daily life and thinking. They face and see tragedy as a daily event and in order to overcome it, they either poke fun at themselves or laugh along with others through the media. Radio programs, comic books, newspapers, television shows, theater, and now the web, all relieve the doldrums of life, but it is only laughter that can lighten the soul.

On the other hand, some see laughter as a imperfection in one's character. They believe that by laughing, you are incapable of assessing the seriousness of life or the situation they find themselves in. Laughter, then, is an indication of the lack of intelligence, and a characteristic of the very feeble of mind. In 1986, a movie entitled, "In the Name of the Rose" was released in America. The book of the same name was written by Umberto Eco of Italy. Eco tells a tale of a Benedictine Monastery in Northern Italy, during the early 14th century where a mysterious death occurs.

To make a very long story short, Sean Connery, who plays a Franciscan monk is sent to investigate the death of a monk, finds out that an old monk put poison on the pages of the only copy of Aristotle's *Second Book of Poetics*. Why you ask? "Believing laughter and jocularity to be instruments of the Devil, he poisoned the pages to stop the spread of what he considers dangerous ideas." I know that this is only a book/movie, but I know people who think the same way today. However for me, laughter is to sadness, what water is to fire.

Furthermore, no matter how heavy a situation can be, laughter will always lighten the load and let the sun shine in. If you have seen or read Harry Potter, you will recognize a creature called "Boggart." "A Boggart is a shape-shifting creature that takes the form of the viewer's worst fears. . . the charm that combats a boggart is Riddikulus. . . the correct way to perform the charm is to push past the fear, and concentrate on something that will make the boggart look amusing. The charm does not, in fact, repel a boggart; it just forces it to assume a shape that the caster will find comical, inspiring laughter, which will defeat a boggart." What a wonderful concept. This is what we are facing each day of our lives. We do not know what shape our next fear will take, or if we can withstand the attack.

"Laughter is a marvelous source of light. A sense of humor is not something extra or frivolous, but a powerful iridescence that can hold off the dark. . . Laughter can rout our fears. Norman Cousins' study show that it can actually heal us, that laughter is truly the best medicine. . . From the perspective of biophysics, medical and spiritual leader Dr. Depak Chopra shows that it is not just the content, the

THE CHAPLAIN'S WORD

Who's Laughing?

Have you ever noticed that when things get tough and hard times fall upon us, our reaction many times is to go to the movies or see a play. However, the genre is usually the same. As a matter of fact, Hollywood during war time has produced some of the best romantic and funniest comedies ever filmed. As far back as Athens during the Golden Age of Greece, Athenians were compelled to attend regularly, dramas and comedies, at the theater. It was not only a device to teach and instruct the citizenry about life and its long-reaching effect on humanity, but moreover, it gave them hope to get through difficult situations in their lives. The Greek Theater was cathartic for them and it gave them a vision of life far more intense than their own.

Furthermore, the mid-1800's was a time that will always remain a very dark and horrific period in American history because of the loss of so many American lives.

The American Civil War was a great catastrophe, but "throughout the conflict, soldiers and civilians, Union and Confederate, laughed at "the comedies mixed up with our country's tragedy." From prisoners of war to members of Congress, Americans joked about serious subjects, meeting disastrous events with goofy gags. . .," writes Jon Grinspan in an Op-Ed article in the New York Times, entitled "Laugh During Wartime." "Weighed down by the 'fearful strain that

humorous thoughts that strike us funny, that have such a positive effect on us, but the very sound of laughter. . . The sound of laughter produces very healing vibrations.”

Finally, “laughter relaxes the whole body. A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after. Laughter boosts the immune system. Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body’s natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain. Laughter protects the heart. Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.” As a result, you can see how laughter is a powerful tool in keeping the body, and soul healthy, while keeping the bogbarts away.

God Bless All of You!
 Very Reverend Vasilios Bassakyros
 (aka, Billy the Greek) “B” Co. 66-67

ACE CHANEY REMEMBERED

ETHEL, W.Va. – Mr. Ace Chaney, 64, of Ethel, was born August 6, 1947, at Sunbeam, a son of the late Dewey Sr. and Dorothy Bias Chaney. He went to be with his Lord and Savior Sunday, July 1, 2012, at St. Francis Hospital in Charleston.

Mr. Chaney was a retired coal miner, a veteran of the U.S. Army serving during the Vietnam Conflict, serving two tours in Vietnam, was a member of the Vietnam Veterans of American Chapter 308, and was disabled Vietnam veteran. He loved auctions, spending time with his family and grandkids, and trying to beat his brother in a friendly game of ‘Risk’. He was loved greatly by his family and friends; was a wonderful father, husband, grandfather and will be sadly missed.

In addition to his mother (1992) and father (1969), he was preceded in death by his sister Kay Chaney McKnight.

Survivors include his wife, Nancy Lou Johnson Chaney; children, Wanda Jean (Bobby) King and Hope Marie Chaney, both of Stollings, Ace Chaney, Jr. of Lexington, Ky., and Faith Von (Roger) Cooper of Whitman; siblings, Dewey (Anna) Chaney, Jr. of Hurricane Paul Richard (Bonnie) Chaney of Sunview Court, Twilla (Ronnie) Queen of Tamcliff and Tressa (Gene) Daughtery of Stollings; 11 grandchildren, Patrick King, Shawn King, Rodger Dalance Cooper, Haley Cooper, Chloe Cooper, Trevor Cooper, Miranda Chaney, Macayla Chaney, Cameron Chaney, Seth Chaney and Keasha Mullins, and four great-grandchildren, Ethan, Lillian, Kayleb and Sophia King.

TREASURER’S REPORT

This update covers from the first of the year. We began the year with \$4,368.43 and presently have \$3,698.07. Since my last report, we have received receipts of \$605 for the year and made payments of \$1,704.41. A detailed report of the receipts and disbursements is below. Included in the receipts is \$500 for Life Membership and \$30 for annual dues. The sale of hats added an additional \$75. This report does not yet include any funds received for the Reunion.

RECEIPTS:		DISBURSEMENTS:	
Annual Dues:	\$ 30	Hats	\$1,052.63
Lifetime Dues:	\$ 500	Flowers	\$ 58.30
Hats:	\$ 75	Newsletter/Mail	\$ 593.48
TOTAL:	\$ 605		\$1,704.41

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 have Red and Black Hats in addition to the White Hat for sale for \$15. I will also bring them to the reunion. In addition we have found some unit crests and will soon have 100 of them for sale at \$6 each. Both the hats and crests can be obtained by sending me a check and your order.

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

**39th
 Insignia Pins
 Now Available**

\$6.00 each

Contact: Bill Ray,
 817-572-5725.



**39th Engineer Battalion Hats
 Now Available**

\$15 each (includes shipping) (Choice of Black, White or Red)

Contact: Jim Shamblen (757) 838-5654.



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

Deadline for Payment: October 8, 2012
Make checks payable to: 39th Engineer Battalion

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 enclosed

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

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

CHOOSE ONE PER PERSON: Pinot Noir Marinated Flank Steak w/5 Peppercorn Port Sauce _____

Chicken Marsala with Sautéed Mushrooms w/Toasted Almonds _____

Vegetarian Dinner _____

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

Total \$ _____ enclosed

Mail registration and make check payable to: 39th Engineer Battalion Alumni
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 956-367-0999 or Bill Ray at 817-572-5725.

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM WILL REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.

READING OF THE NAMES AT THE WALL

Thanks to Bill Ray for getting the initial notice to you. I need responses only from those volunteering to read names at The Wall. Thanks to those who have already responded to read names; please read this and send me your chosen date(s)/time(s). Seating at The Wall ceremony on Sunday will be addressed at the reunion. Here's more information to help you make your decisions:

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO READ NAMES AT THE WALL

– For only the 5th time, there will be a Reading of The Names (all 58,272) at The Wall. We are asking for 39th Volunteers. Names are read in date order; so, it will be by chance if any 39th fallen are in our time frame(s). If we have enough volunteers at the same time(s), we will ask to read as a group(s) of consecutive readers. The available blocks are: **Thursday, Nov 8:** 5-10am, 10am-3pm, 3-8pm, 8pm-midnight; **Friday, Nov 9:** 5-10am, 10am-3pm, 3-8pm, 8pm-midnight; **Saturday, Nov 9:** 5-10am, 10am-3pm, 3-8pm, 8pm-midnight. You have to be there an hour before your scheduled time, could read about 30-60 names in 2-4 minutes, and can leave after you have read.

If interested, please email Jerry Bright NLT Sept 12 with your desired date(s) & time(s). If you choose more than one date/time, you are asking to read at multiple times and not just at any one of them.

THE CEREMONY AT THE WALL – We will not know if we have our requested seating until that weekend. **IF** we get seating, we will collect names of those going to the ceremony at reunion registration. If the names exceed our allocated seats, names will be drawn at our Saturday meeting. The ceremony begins at 1 pm on Sunday, with the wreath presentations at about 2 pm. Of course, the ceremony is available for everyone. Some will just get to fight through the crowd to sit their old butts down.

DRESS – Participants and attendees can dress in most any way acceptable in public – from 'Sunday' to street clothes. No costumes. Veterans with honorable/general discharges and military retirees have the privilege to wear the last dress uniform they were authorized, and they have the responsibility to wear it correctly to reflect the honor and pride of their service. How would you want the people on The Wall to see you?

TRANSPORTATION – Attendees will have to arrange their own way to/from these and other public events. Due to severe traffic/parking restrictions on Veterans Day, personal automobiles are discouraged, and public transit (the Metro) is encouraged.

In October, we will learn our assigned time(s) for reading names. Anything else will be publicized at the

Reunion.

If you are interested, please contact Jerry Bright at 905 Gulfstream Dr., Knoxville, TN 37923, phone 865-690-0443; you can also contact Bill Ray at 6205 Bing Springs Dr., Arlington, TX 76001, phone 817-572-5725.

REUNION CHAIR UPDATE

Attention Men!!! We are down to less than 60 days until Reunion DC 2012. OK all you Shortimers, it's time to get all of your arrangements made.

Hotel reservations: The last day to make your hotel reservations and be guaranteed the \$99 rate is **October 8, 2012**. Still haven't decided to attend? No problem! Make your reservations anyway. If you change your mind or something comes up, you will not be charged as long as you cancel your reservation by 6:00 pm on your arrival date. No Risk - No Worry. If you are considering arriving early or staying a few days after the reunion, please make your reservation first. Then, call me and I will attempt to get your extra days billed at the same \$99 rate. Here is the number to call for your reservations 703-416-1600. Be sure to identify yourself as being with the 39th Engineer Block. **DO NOT** call the toll free number as that will get you to the corporate offices and they are not able to access the room block and will not be able to give you the reduced rate.

The Banquet: Saturday night will be our banquet night. We scheduled it early so that everyone could see and do as many Veterans Day activities on Sunday as possible. Monday is officially check out day, unless you are planning to personally extend your stay and have made your arrangements. The menu selections are: Pinot Noir Marinated Flank Steak with a Five Peppercorn Port Sauce or Chicken Marsala with Sautéed Mushrooms with Toasted Almonds and Balsamic Reduction or a Vegetarian Dinner. Both dinners are served with Fresh Garden Salad with Assorted Dressings, Warm Rolls, Fresh Seasonal Vegetables, and A Chef's Choice of Starch, Dessert and Iced Tea. Be sure to indicate your choice on the registration form to assure that everyone gets their selection. If you have dietary restrictions or need a vegetarian meal, please be sure to indicate that also. Following dinner we will be entertained by the musical trio *The DC 3*, playing a selection of 50s & 60s as well as country and dancing music. They also take requests.

Our Itinerary is not final at this writing, but some of the featured events include a trip to the USMC Museum, which is one of the finest chronological displays of our nation's military involvements done in a very realistic atmosphere.

Lunch at the Museum Galley will be included with the tour. The hotel does not permit catered food, so our annual Pizza Party will be modified. However, we will host some



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

2012 REUNION ITINERARY

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8:	4:00 p.m. Executive Board Meeting. Dinner to follow.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9:	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.. USMC Museum. Lunch included. 5:00 p.m. Group Casual Dinner. Location TBA.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10:	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. USMC Museum. Lunch included. 3:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting. 6:00 p.m. Social Hour 7:00 p.m. Dinner. Dance and entertainment to follow.
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11:	City-wide Veterans Day Ceremonies of your choice.
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12:	7:00 a.m. Past Presidents/Officers Breakfast

sort of dining gathering yet to be determined. Some other informal plans include memorial visits, Arlington Cemetery Tour, and Smithsonian museum tours. There are so many things to see and do, the list could be endless. There just is not enough time to even scratch the surface. The schedule has been intentionally been left very open so that everyone can make their own choices.

Jerry Bright is organizing for anyone interested in participating in the Reading of the Names, information on this is elsewhere in this newsletter. We will post a daily list in the hospitality room of happenings, places to go and things to do as they become available. Be sure to sign up for the USMC Museum tour on the registration form if you are interested in going. It is optional and yes, I know we are not Marines; we were smarter than that.

Registration Form: CRITICAL - A registration form is included with this newsletter and we need it filled out and returned ASAP. Be sure to fill out all sections and include a check for your selections. Make your dinner selections for

each person in your party, and members need to indicate a shirt size. This year our reunion remembrance item is a 39th embroidered OD sweatshirt. In November, it could come in very handy. You never know what the weather will do in November in DC. Be sure to bring your previous 39th apparel with you; let's proudly show everyone who we are. The Sweatshirt is included with your registration for members and we are planning to have extras available for sale once all of the members have theirs in the size that fits. Hats and other assorted 39th merchandise will also be offered at the reunion.

One More Time... fill out your registration form and return it with your check made payable to: **39th Eng Bn**, and mail it to: **Gale Helser, 32423 FM 2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583. (Call with questions: 956-367-0999)**

By the way, we started with a block of 100 rooms and have surpassed that, making this the largest gathering of Blue Bulls in nearly 50 years.