



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



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

July, 2018

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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Here we are, 90 days and counting until we gather for our annual reunion in Tucson, AZ. Reservations and registrations are coming in, but at a slower pace than I would like. To plan a reunion for our group, it is essential that we have some idea of the number that will attend. So, making your reservations and sending in the registration with at least the minimum down payment is a great help. We know that circumstances happen that can change your plans during the year; reservations can be cancelled and any monies paid in can be returned as long as we are notified by September 1, 2018. With this in mind and if you think you might be attending, please make your reservations and fill out and mail or e-mail the registration form to me at the address listed on the bottom of the registration form. We are going to be hosting silent auctions this year; if you have anything that you would like to donate, please let me or one of our officers know. 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 without breaking the law.

Jim and Sandy Lewis have made their first reunion expedition to the Milwaukee, WI area and have come up with some great ideas on locations for us to headquarter at and have also researched some nice events to occupy our time. We will be able to cover the itinerary during the general membership meeting in Tucson.

Now, for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our new and Lifetime members. Welcome and we look

forward to seeing you at one of our future reunions.

### NEW MEMBERS

|                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Robbins Holly<br>HHC 65-66  | Michael Lamp<br>Fort Devens |
| Vernon Oliver<br>D Co 70-71 | Ron Smith<br>511th PB 69    |

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Jerry Glasgow<br>A Co 70 | Roy Thompson<br>C Co 68-70 |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|

The one part of writing a newsletter article that I do not look forward to is when I have to inform you of the passing of members. I have been informed that we have lost two members: Clarence R. Taylor, D Co. 67-68 passed on May 3, 2017. Ron Ward, C Co. 68-69 passed on March 10, 2015. Sean Holland (son of John Holland B Co 69) passed May 27, 2018. Obituaries are later in this newsletter.

We are planning to hold a Memorial Service for all members who have passed at the upcoming reunion this year to be held during our general membership meeting. 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.

As always, Carolyn and I wish you a happy and safe summer. We are so looking forward to seeing you September 30, 2018 in Tucson for the annual reunion.

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

Bill Ray  
3<sup>rd</sup> Plt. C Co. 67-68  
[bill39th@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bill39th@sbcglobal.net)  
817-239-0787 (Cell)

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

President Trump just signed the Mission Act, which is supposed to help ailing US Veterans get prompt care, including the ability to see a civilian doctor on Uncle Sam's tab.

Don't count on it.

The fine print shows that vets are guaranteed nothing. The Veterans Affairs secretary is simply empowered to make rules for who gets civilian care. Though Trump and his pick for secretary, Robert Wilkie, favor making it easy for vets, Wilkie's rules could last only as long as Wilkie remains in office. Worse, they don't go into effect for two and one-half years.

That's too late for the hundreds of Vietnam vets, now in their 60's and early 70's, who are carrying a dangerous parasite picked up in Asia called liver fluke. Many don't know it, but it's a ticking time bomb likely to kill them.

The VA is doing zip to identify and test these infected vets, even though an ultrasound can detect liver-fluke infection in minutes and medicine can slow its progression into lethal bile-duct cancer.

In January, researchers found that one out of every five vets tested who remembers eating raw fish in Vietnam - a common practice when rations ran out - is carrying the parasite. The parasite lingers in the body for decades.

The VA claims that there is no evidence that vets have higher infection rates than the general population. That's ridiculous. You can't get infected with liver fluke in the US. The parasite doesn't exist here. Sadly by the time symptoms appear, it is too late. The VA claims there is no definite link.

Copied from the VA report dated 6-14-18

Sandy (Muta) Lewis

Jim (Bernie) 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*

## REUNION 2018

We are going to be hosting silent auctions this year; if you have anything that you would like to donate please let me or one of our officers know.

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 and 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 4th 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](http://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 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 Airlines 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 register and pick up your information packet. At 6:00pm, we will have a Southwestern style mini buffet 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 have been left open for everyone to explore on their own some of the many attractions and places to visit. The hotel will have available one of their shuttles that will transport groups to the Titan Missile Silos, Pima Air Museum and Mission San Xavier; other attractions in the area are listed at below. We do 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 6-8:30am. We will meet in the Hospitality Suite for our General Membership meeting at 10:00am. 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 at 6-8:30 am. At 9:00am, we will board our motor coaches for Fort Huachuca for tours of the Fort 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 box 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](http://www.visitTucson.org)

Tombstone – [www.tombstonechamber.com](http://www.tombstonechamber.com)

Fort Huachuca – [www.huachuca.army.mil](http://www.huachuca.army.mil)

Titan Missile Silo – [www.titanmissilemuseum.org](http://www.titanmissilemuseum.org)

Pima Air Museum – [www.pimaair.org](http://www.pimaair.org)

Steward Observatory – <http://mirrorlab.as.arizona.edu>

Kartchner Caverns – [www.AZStateParks.com](http://www.AZStateParks.com)

South AZ Transportation Museum –

[www.TucsonHistoricDepot.org](http://www.TucsonHistoricDepot.org)

Mission San Xavier – [www.sanxaviermission.org](http://www.sanxaviermission.org)

Gaslight Theatre – [www.gaslighttheatre.com](http://www.gaslighttheatre.com)

Pinnacle Peak Restaurant – [www.traildusttown.com](http://www.traildusttown.com)

OK Corral – [www.okcorral.com](http://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 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 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

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

[bill39th@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bill39th@sbcglobal.net)

817-239-0787 (Cell)

## ARLINGTON CEMETERY INFORMATION

Arlington National Cemetery is taking a survey about its future:

<https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/eligibility-survey>.

Some of us may have a vested interest, but the survey appears to be open to everyone.

I was/am somewhat ignorant about the criteria for burial there. There's a good fact sheet at:

<https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Portals/0/Docs/Eligibility-Fact-Sheet-20170701.pdf>.

My apologies if you have already seen this. We want everyone to have every opportunity to vote.

Thanks,

Jerry Bright, Historian

## FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Sadness!

In everyone's life grief and sadness are part and parcel of being human and for some to a greater extent than others. No matter how much pain and suffering we go through in our life it is up to us to battle back at what our ancestors gave us as a legacy by touching the "Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil." As a result of their actions we are faced with many periods of joy and of rejection and sadness. The ups and downs of life can leave anyone in a state of confusion or even worse, depression. So how can we deal with this true reality, and still be joyful in the Lord?

There is a cycle that all grieving persons go through. It is something that has been studied for years, and here they are: shock/denial, inward anger, outward anger, depression, and finally, acceptance. In Vietnam, when one of us was wounded or killed, each of us experienced some or all of these emotions. However, a letter from a girlfriend (Dear John) saying that she has moved on and found someone else will have the same effect on the person as someone who experienced death of a family member or friend.

All the statistics compiled in dealing with grief all point to these five stages, and that each of us must go through as many of them as we can in order to reconcile the emotion we are feeling. When life becomes a roller coaster ride, it is very difficult to see clearly the blessings we receive every day in our life, because of the dark shadow that sadness will cause upon your soul.

Furthermore, another aspect of loss is the real phenomenon of survivor's guilt. How many times have I seen and heard of people who survived some catastrophic event or events feel that they should have died along with the others, but did not for one reason or another? That is why we need to become involved in volunteering or doing something for other people less fortunate than you are. This will not alleviate the pain you feel, but it will give you satisfaction knowing you can still help others who are suffering as you are.

God Bless All Of You and Your Families. Fr. Billy

## OBTUARIES

**Clarence Russell Taylor**, age 70, of Kingsport, went home to be with the Lord on Wednesday, May 3, 2017, at Wellmont Holston Valley Hospital in Kingsport.

Russell was a veteran of the United States Army having proudly served his country in the Vietnam War. He was a retiree of Eastman Chemical Company with 32 years of service and later became a bus driver for Sullivan County with 15+ years of service. He had also proudly been a part of the local masonic lodge and member of the American Legion in Kingsport. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend to all those who love him. He will be greatly missed.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Taylor, Sr.; father, Mr. W.C. Taylor, Jr. and wife, Nell; mother, Mrs. Dorothy Carlile and husband, A.O.; and brothers, Keith Taylor and Ernie Taylor.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Peggy Taylor; son, Conley Taylor and wife, Karen; daughter, Ginger Taylor; grandchildren, Josh Taylor, Logan West, Zach Taylor, and Kaitlyn Brooks; brothers, Kenneth Taylor, Ronnie Taylor, Jerry Taylor, Jim Taylor, Rick Taylor, and Mike Carlile; several nieces, nephews and a host of extended family and friends.

The family received friends from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm on Sunday, May 7, 2017 at Carter-Trent Funeral Home in downtown Kingsport. Funeral services were at 2:00 pm with Rev. Nate Ware officiating.

Interment followed at Gunning's Cemetery with military honors provided by "The Rolling Thunder" and American Legion Hammond Post #3/265 presiding.

**Ronald Wayne Ward**, of Vidor, lost his battle with cancer Tuesday March 10, 2015. At his home with his loving family by his side. He had lived in Vidor since 1990. Ronald was born January 17, 1948 in Montgomery, Alabama. Ronald Ward served in the Vietnam War. Then he became a heavy equipment operator.

He is preceded in death by his parents, J.C. and Margorie Ward.

He is survived by his loving wife 22 years, Patricia Ward of Vidor; son, Rodney Wright of Vidor; daughters, Angie Boudreaux and husband Bryan of Spring, LaDonna Lee of Vidor and Tammy Foy and husband Brian of Vidor; sister, Jan Montalvo and husband Arthur of Vidor; grandchildren, Jaden and Gracelyn Lee, Austin and Gavin Foy, Sydney and Lane Wright and Blake and Colby Boudreaux.

A memorial gathering was held at 12:00 p.m., Noon, Saturday March 14, 2015 at his daughter's home at 2320 John Street, Vidor, TX 77662. All who wished to pay respects to Ronald or his family were welcome to attend.

His family requested that all flowers be sent to his daughter, LaDonna's home in Vidor or in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to his Go Fund Me account at [www.gofundme.com/oh56f8](http://www.gofundme.com/oh56f8) to help support his widow, Patricia. Thank you for all your support and prayers.

John Holland, B Co. 69, wrote to inform the group of the loss of his son, **Sean Holland**.

He wrote: The 39th, and our reunions, meant a great deal to Sean. In fact, it was Sean who encouraged me to join seven years ago. He was so interested in my Vietnam service, and he wanted me to rekindle my relationship with my fellow veterans. At his urging, I joined the 39th Alumni Association, and our annual reunions became a yearly tradition for us both, something we both looked forward to. We traveled together to Washington (twice), Norfolk, Nashville, Tucson, and Dallas, which provided us with some of the best father-son time we ever shared.

I want our members to know how much they meant to Sean. He loved sitting with them, and so enjoyed hearing their stories. He especially loved to hear Butch sing, and to watch as the Colonel's wife did the Hula.

Sean died from an undiagnosed heart condition on May 27th at the age of thirty. He was laid to rest near the veterans section of our local cemetery, where all of our nation's service flags can be seen

waving nearby. He would have liked that; he loved our military.

My wife Doreen and I have been working hard to cope with this unexpected loss, and trying to do all of the things that Sean would want us to do, and surely, letting all of the members of the 39th know what they meant to him would be one of those things. Please let our members know that they added greatly to my son's life, and for that I will be eternally grateful.

At the time of Sean's wake and funeral, we requested that donations be made to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in lieu of flowers, and we are very gratified to learn that several hundred dollars were donated in his name. Time spent with Sean at our reunions always meant a great deal to me, but I never knew how much until now. I will cherish those times for the rest of my life, and I deeply appreciate the efforts of the men and women of the 39th who made those wonderful occasions possible.



## **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!



**39<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](http://www.visitarizona.com/business/fort-huachuca-historical-museum) and  
[www.explorecochise.com/US-Army-Military-Intelligence-Museum](http://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.**

# 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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## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE



### **Sunday, Sept. 30:**

**8AM**-Set up Hospitality Room.

**All day**-Arrival and registration on 4th floor.

**3PM**-Executive Board Meeting.

**6PM**-Southwestern style finger foods and meet and greet 4th floor.

### **Monday, Oct. 1:**

**6-8:30AM**-Breakfast.

**Open Day**-Titan Missile Museum, Pima Air and Space Museum, San Xavier Mission tours available.

**3PM**-Hospitality Room open, late registration.

### **Tuesday, Oct. 2:**

**6-8:30AM**-Breakfast.

**10AM**-General Membership Meeting Hospitality Room.

**12 Noon-6PM**-Free time.

**6PM**-Board buses for Gaslight Theater.

**7-8:30PM**-Show and pizza.

**8:30PM**-Board buses to return to Desert Diamond Casino.

**9:30PM**-Hospitality room open.

### **Wednesday, Oct. 3:**

**6-8:30AM**-Breakfast.

**8AM-6PM**-Free time, Hospitality Room open.

**9AM**-Board buses for Fort Huachuca Buffalo Soldiers, Military Intelligence and Drone Museums.

**6PM**-Social Hour, Cash Bar. Hospitality Room closed.

**7PM**-Banquet, Cash Bar continues.

**9PM**-Hospitality Room open.

### **Thursday, Oct. 4:**

Goodbyes, guests depart.

Tear down Hospitality Room