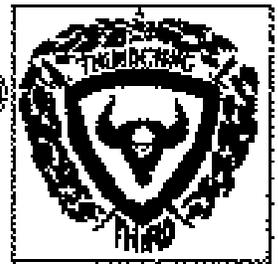




# THE THUNDERING THIRD NEWSLETTER



## THIRD BATTALION, FOURTH MARINES ASSOCIATION

44 Old Marlborough Road, Maynard, MA 01754

### *Letter from the President*

Dear fellow Marines,

I'd like to wish all members a Happy New Year 2002. It's hard to believe that it has been 37 years since I put on my first set of utilities and learned to call my hat my cover. I can still recall New Year's Eve 1966 at Camp Carroll in Vietnam when we were issued two cans of Korea's famous Crown beer to celebrate the New Year. Even though times have changed, I cannot help reflect that today; Marines still "celebrate" the New Year in distant combat situations. Let us pray for a swift victory and the safe return of our fellow Marines.

We are making good progress towards the Seattle reunion and I plan to travel there in the spring to look at several hotels and hopefully sign a contract for the best choice. Reunion chairman, Jim Wright has been hard at work and is in the midst of planning several exciting events. He will begin providing a reunion update in each newsletter to keep all of us apprised of his progress.

I'd like to take a moment to address the issue of conduct at our reunions. I'm sure that we can all agree that these reunions are about camaraderie. It is what has drawn us together and it is what we share over drinks at the hospitality suite. However, at our recent reunion in Washington D.C., I received more than a few complaints about the inappropriate behavior of a few members after too many drinks in the hospitality suite. Some members cannot seem to control their language in mixed company. Such conduct is outrageous and cannot be condoned by this organization. Many family members were exposed involuntarily; and rightfully so, were quite offended. Other members have confided that they have not attended recent reunions rather than expose their families to such offensive behavior.

I understand that we are an organization of former Marines, but I can guarantee you that the Corps would not have accepted such behavior then, and will not accept it now. I've heard the argument that family members were not there during the battles and should not be included in the reunions. However, those that say this should remember that our time in combat was short and that our family members have endured over 30 years of living with us since. For many members, the support of wives and children is not only important, but also necessary.

I urge anyone guilty of such poor behavior to clean up his act before Seattle. I am considering taking additional measures to control inappropriate behavior. I don't want to have to police our reunions but will do so if necessary. I'd like to hear from the membership on that issue. Please direct your ideas to me at the below address.

Semper Fi,

Jim Conklin  
Email [jbcdde@concentric.net](mailto:jbcdde@concentric.net)  
Or mail  
8370 W. Cheyenne  
109-94  
Las Vegas, NV 89129-2174

Also, we did not properly record the names of the Association Directors. And, they are to begin working on our financial plan. All directors are requested to notify me ASAP with their email address.

## Officers of the Third Battalion Fourth Marines Association as of the Reunion in Washington, DC, summer of '01

**President** – Jim Conklin email [jbeddc@concentric.net](mailto:jbeddc@concentric.net)

**Vice President** – Frank Pederson email [fpederson@ci.la-mesa.ca.us](mailto:fpederson@ci.la-mesa.ca.us)

**Secretary** – Doc McNiff email [Docmcniff@aol.com](mailto:Docmcniff@aol.com)

**Treasurer** – Chuck Lear email [clear@kc.rr.com](mailto:clear@kc.rr.com)

**Reunion Chairman for Reunion '03 in Seattle** – Jim Wright email [gunner312@qwest.net](mailto:gunner312@qwest.net)

### Notice

Member Dave deChant of Pre-Paid Legal Services please contact me re your advertisement.

Thanks,

Doc McNiff



## DA HERD

*by Don Rait*

VA news of the 3/4 Newsletter

In a flurry of last-minute activity in December '01 the following happened:

...Congress provided January '02 Pay Raises of at least 5 percent with higher raises for senior officers.

...Authorized full funding for military care programs – first time in many years.

...Bars Secretary of Defense from forcing military retirees to choose between VA and military for health care coverage.

...Authorized concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation (This will only happen in the President proposes legislation and funding which appears to be highly unlikely)\*

...VA provides \$50 monthly special compensation for retirees who served at least 20 years on active duty and received VA disability rating at least 60% within 4 years of retirement.

...Continues the \$100 to \$300 a month for similarly qualified retirees who are rated 70% or higher.

...VA has changed co-payment from \$50 to \$15 for Veterans not receiving service-connected compensation.

Also, the VA co-payment for Rx's goes from \$2 to \$7 on February 1.

\*Perhaps the most important thing that has happened recently is the passing of the concurrent receipt bill. What has been a truly unfair and nasty policy is that of deducting VA Compensation from retiree's retired pay may be close at hand. It took a long time for retired members to get their health care, Tricare for Life, is now a reality. Let's hope VA concurrent pay of Disability Compensation and Retired pay is right around the corner.

## Chaplain's Corner

*by Stan Beach*

The rhetoric since 9/11 indicates a new mood in America. People now applaud the military...and they talk about God! Let's make certain it isn't the reaction suggested by the cynic who wrote;

"In times of war, and not before,  
All men God and the soldier adore;  
But when things are righted,  
God and the soldier are slighted.

Seriously, it is heartwarming to see the new appreciation for our military. I'm disappointed for all of you that it didn't happen 35 years earlier! The new appreciation is fostering pride among those in uniform as well. Both have good reasons for their feelings. It's really about the **Legacy** of performance the Corps established over the years. You were a part of that, so accept the new adulation no matter how late it is in coming.

Religious interest in Vietnam, some joked, increased in direct proportion to the recency of the last firefight. I confess I did consider sending my Clerk out to pump a few rounds into the CP on Saturday night to ensure a good Sunday attendance. The current renewed religious interest isn't about feeling safe, but about seeking answers to life's most important questions – Who is God, how can I personally know Him, and how does He give strength, hope and peace into our kind of world? It has been a rude awakening to realize some religions justify violence and killing innocents. Chaplains tell me those seeking their counsel has quadrupled since 9/11! I hope this will encourage all of us to examine what we believe, to seek that personal relationship with God, and to let this shape how we live.

My Chaplain's Assistant, Don Miller, and I saw this new spirit in \_ when we visited in Okinawa recently. They are a proud unit, well led, and a super chaplain to guide them as they seek spiritual truth. Miller fielded their serious questions for hours, until he lost his voice. Miller with no voice is something to experience! There is a new patriotic and spiritual interest sweeping our country and the military. Make certain you are a part of that. Don't let it get away from us!

## Reunion Report

*By Reunion Chair Jim Wright*

Okay, guys a report on the progress so far for the reunion. The dates have been agreed upon a vote at the last reunion for Seattle that last weekend in July 2003, which will include the dates of Wednesday, July 23 through Sunday, July 27. I have located a GREAT hotel, The Seatac, WA Doubletree Hotel for the reunion and Jim Conklin and I are presently in negotiation over the details.

The hotel we have picked as the primary has a limo service to and from the airport that runs every 15 minutes. It is on the Main Bus Line to downtown Seattle, but if you don't want to ride the bus there is a shuttle service to Pioneer Square, Pike Place Market as well as the Seattle Center that can be arranged. The hotel will also run a shuttle to the Mall at South Center for the wives who want to get a little shopping in.

We plan to have the registration desk open for business Wednesday morning. On Thursday there will be a trip to Fort Lewis and tour of the base. The memorial service will be held at the base chapel. Fort Lewis Military Museum will be open for our pleasure at the Officer's Club will have a buffet lunch for us. Our sponsoring unit is the USMC Shore Party Reserve unit that is based at Ft. Lewis. I hope to arrange a tour of their unit and a display of their equipment and facilities, but they are a small unit and don't have a lot of people.

The highlight, as always, will be the chance to see old friends and the Hospitality Room will be open as always.

We are planning a trip to Victoria, B.C. for a day, leaving early in the AM and returning that evening. The Victoria Clipper is a passenger-only ferry that runs between the two cities. The city of Victoria is a Historical Place and will remind all who have been to England and Europe of the cities there. Two things to see are the Bouchart Gardens, a Victorian garden that is (in my opinion) the best on the North American continent. The wives will want to attend High Tea at the Queen Victoria Hotel and you guys might like to go also. It is an experience.

There are more places in consideration for the time we will be here, but it's going to be impossible to get them all in , so we will do what we can.

I will keep you all up to date in the Newsletter. If anyone has a suggestion, you can contact me by email at [gunner312@qwest.net](mailto:gunner312@qwest.net) or by landline at 206-878-3325 or FAX at 206-878-2433.

I am looking forward to this and it is looking good and we are on schedule for dates and times.

Semper Fidelis

Jim Wright  
India Battery, '64 - '66

## The Reunion in Washington, DC, summer of '01



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