



# THE THUNDERING THIRD

## NEWSLETTER



**THIRD BATTALION FOURTH MARINES ASSOCIATION**  
**23 Hampton Meadows, Hampton, NH 03842**

### *Letter from the President*

Dear Fellow 3/4 Marines:

How time flies!! It seems as though we just left Savannah a few weeks ago and Christmas is nearly upon us already. Pam, and I, extend our best wishes to each of you, and your families, for a most Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. May the future bring happiness, prosperity and good health along with the time to enjoy it all with your loved ones, and friends.

I have been in frequent contact with the new Battalion Sergeant Major (James D. Walsh) and he informs me that the Battalion continues to train rigorously for their eventual return to Iraq in early 2008. He, and I, have discussed several issues and we have made great strides in strengthening the bond between the Association and the active Battalion. SgtMajor Walsh is very pro-active with us and has been championing our cause among the Marines and Corpsmen. He is very active in encouraging the Marines to become involved in the Association as members. As a result, we have issued several new memberships to those young Marines and we truly welcome them aboard. SgtMajor Walsh has also finalized the recipient for "NCO of the Year". A presentation ceremony has been planned, and may have been conducted by this newsletter mailing. The recipient is Sergeant Phillip Olmstead.

As you know, the Marine Corps recently celebrated its 232nd Birthday and I hope many of you were able to attend a Ball, or other celebration, in your area. SgtMajor Walsh assured me that he would "raise his glass" in our honor and offer up a toast to all of the Marines and Corpsmen who served in the Battalion, both past and present. I wish I could have been there to participate and visit with the young Marines who carry on the legacy of Third Battalion, Fourth Marines. Rest assured, they will continue to do us proud.

The new "dues notifications" will be forthcoming soon. As was discussed, and approved, in the General Meeting in Savannah the Association will notify all members that anyone who does not keep their dues current will not receive a U.S. Postal mailed copy of the newsletter in the future. This is particularly important to those members who do not have computer access to the web-site and have not been 'paid' members in several years. The newsletter will continue to be available on the web-site for anyone to access. If you are able to read the newsletter online, please notify the Association that you no longer wish to receive the newsletter in the U.S. Mail. It will save us several hundred dollars per year in mailing expenses. The association members will no longer continue to foot the bill for those "non-paid" members newsletters.

Please continue to search for our Brothers and let them know the Association is alive and well, and encourage them to become 'active' members. We need to continue to grow the active membership in order to continue funding the various programs we face annually. The membership has voted on funding several programs in addition to our dedication to sending the very large "care boxes" to the Battalion when they are in Iraq. We must continue to have a steady influx of funding for the steady outgo of money!

As we move into the new year, let us not forget that the 2009 Reunion will be upon us before we know it. Pam, and I, look forward to seeing all of you in San Diego at the reunion. I am certain it will be a great one.

Semper Fi,  
Roger Kimble

## Submitted by Doc McNiff

About fifteen years ago a Mr. Worcester of Harrison, Maine started bringing wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery to decorate the graves of our fallen heroes. The first year he brought about two thousand of them. He has done this each year since except it is a little different this year. He will bring ten thousand wreaths in what he calls Wreaths Across America. His two tractor-trailer loads will bypass his usual route on I-95 and travel on Rt. 1 so that they may go through the cities and towns from Maine to Washington, DC. The trucks will be escorted by the Patriots Riding Club who will help, along with the boys & girl Scouts of the DC area place the wreaths on the gravestones. Veterans groups along the way will welcome and support them in their quest. On Monday, December 9, 2007 they passed through Hampton, NH and I was there to represent 3/4.

Also to honor 3/4 I have joined a group called Pease Greeters who meet troops coming home and deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan in order to welcome them home or wish the God-speed at the former Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, NH. So, as you can see 3/4 is well represented in the veterans activities here in NH.

## From: Battalion Sergeant Major James D. Walsh

Let me start by saying Happy Birthday to all. The Battalion held its Birthday Ball on 15 November in Primm, Nevada. Bill Hutton, from the association, attended and it was a great event as always. The Guest of Honor was Col Bristol, currently the Commanding Officer of I MEF Headquarters Group, and the father of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP). Like Mr. Hutton, a true battle tested warrior. It was an honor having both of them present.

As a Battalion we continue to reconnect with our history and legacy. The Battalion XO, Major Norton, and I have spent a lot of time researching our past and acquiring whatever we can to assist our newest generation in understanding where we came from. I am sure staying in contact with the Association will be a great step in that direction.

The battalion is well into its pre-deployment training and the Marines and Corpsman are becoming more and more proficient by the day. We will no doubt be as ready as we can be when the time comes to head out to Iraq. In December we will have a block leave period, followed by a month of training out in the field during Mojave Viper, the pre-deployment training event required of all units prior to deploying. In late February, early March we will head over to Iraq for the 5th time as a Battalion. Just as we were the first Battalion in the Marine Corps to deploy four times to Iraq, we will be the first to deploy five times.

As we prepare for our deployment, and during our deployment, I will keep the association updated on our progress. I will also try to send in as many pictures as I can to help keep the web site updated.

Semper Fidelis

SgtMaj James Walsh

## GENESIS:

*by Battalion Historian, Mike Corbett*

The Marine Corps, in its customary highly efficient and timely manner, ordered the troops of Third Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment, to go 'afloat,' in early March 1965, as a result of increased tensions, and some crispy Buddhist monks, in another far-off land called "Vietnam." Or, was it "Viet Nam?" Before long, the learned Marines will have visited the library and discovered that 'Indo-China' had nothing to do with table settings. The Marine Corps, naturally, took every opportunity to make this event a learning experience for this predominantly non-combat tested force.

Headquarters Company, along with two other line companies, boarded the USS Calvert, an "APA" troop carrier that saw action in World War II and Korea. Much to my delight, this ship was named after the last Lord Baltimore, of the pre-American Revolutionary period; being from Maryland, I actually felt a kinship with this boat. (I know, I should not call it a boat, but using the word 'ship' at that point felt redundant).

After joining the Corps, on my 18th birthday, in July 1964, just days out of high school graduation, I completed "ITR" at Camp Pendleton, and received my first set of orders - I was going to 'Paradise.' I quickly called my Father - SgtMaj Bert Corbett of US Army fame, and squawked into the telephone that I am going to spend two whole years in Hawaii. My Mother had always complained that the SGM never seemed to have any influence in choices of duty stations. She had always wanted to go to the 50th state, but 'the old man' was only permitted stop-overs on his way to such exotic locations as Korea - back then, an unaccompanied tour. Needless to say, when I arrived home on leave, before shipping-out, my Father had very little to say about it. But, as leave time ended, he wished me well - I was off to Staging Battalion, and he was preparing to retire after 24 years as an Army 'lifer.'

If I struggled in boot camp, I excelled at Staging. 1st Sgt Brown and I shared a bus from LAX to Camp Pendleton and we spoke about the things all Marines discuss. Among other things, he learned that I had once worked in an office. We knew we would be in 'Staging' together, on our way to Hawaii. I was surprised, however, when in the morning after we arrived at Camp Pendleton, I was summoned to the 'office,' after all, I hadn't had time to get in trouble. 'Top' Brown, I found out was assigned as Bn. CO, and he, in turn assigned me as Bn. Clerk. I have to admit, the job kept me busy and out of any trouble I may have encountered. We thought we would be moving-out within a short time. "Operation Silver Lance" was to be shortly underway and the bulk of the men assigned to Staging were told we would be returning to Hawaii with the troops that would soon storm the beaches of Camp Pendleton, from Kaneohe Bay.

But, as all things Marine, the "Murphy" rule applies, so wait we did - two weeks turned to four, and by early February 1965, we thought we would never get to Hawaii. Living out of our seabags didn't seem an overwhelming problem. Having to pay for another week of keeping a locker in town, to hold our civilian clothes, was getting expensive. Eventually, "Silver Lance" was either truncated or cancelled entirely and we were flown on Air Force "C-130's" to Hickam Field, then taken by cattle car to K-Bay. Look-out "wahines," Corbett is on the island.

Apparently, my prowess with a typewriter (think computer keyboard, but without the computer and all those wires), became well-known before I arrived in Hawaii. A week after settling down in the barracks, I was called to HQ and told that "Top" Brown, had recommended me for promotion as a result of my good and hard work in Staging. This was particularly great news because I then went from \$119.00 to \$137.00 pay per month - \$18.00 more dollars to spend on 'liberty.' I was then assigned to the Bn. Legal Office, where I met L/Cpl. Falloon, and L/Cpl Alsobrooks, among others. Falloon, though an office 'pogue' like myself, would be killed in Vietnam after he volunteers to go on a patrol and, from what I was told, was shot in the gut, right where he kept a magazine. He might have been alright had the magazine not exploded. I met Alsobrooks at PI, sometime after I returned to the States and was assigned there.

Hawaii turned-out to be all that I had envisioned. I worked from about 0800 to 1700 each day, then I would go play baseball with other Bn members, on fields adjacent to our barracks. I loved the warmth of the island, the bright sunshine every day, and the company of many, many wonderful people I would meet. Weekends, on the other hand, gave me a chance to unwind, and I did so with other Marines. We would hail a "Kamikaze" cab outside the gate and scream our heads off as they wildly drove the route to Waikiki. There are many more stories of our exploits and triumphs in Waikiki, but that will be saved for another time. For now, you only need to know the place - the "Mai Tai Cocktail Lounge." It was in a hotel on the

strip, but I could not begin to tell you which hotel.

Somewhere, somehow, President Johnson (Lyndon, not Andrew), found out I was enjoying the hell out of Hawaii, and he decided it was time for me to move on. I'm certain my Father had something to do with this, but I cannot prove it. Orders came down in early March '65, that we were 'on alert.' That meant packing our seabags, making-out wills and powers-of-attorney, and the 'awfullest' part - restriction to base. On March 10th, the advance party boarded the ships; by March 15th, we were sailing westward.

As with the Waikiki period, the period of time in Okinawa will also remain a story for another time. This is the story of the "Thundering 3rd" landing in Vietnam - the Genesis. We boarded ships on April 9, 1965, and made our way to the coast of Vietnam, where, on April 13, the Navy lowered the landing craft; the Marines were gearing-up to go over-the-side, for an assault. However, shortly after all the landing craft were in the water, they had to be retrieved because a 'typhoon' had suddenly overtaken the ship. Marines stood, in full combat gear, on the deck as we watched the sailors try to maneuver their little 'dinghies' back into the 'Mother ship.' Many of those 'tars' became sick and began chumming in the South China Sea.

Early morning, April 14, 1965, Vietnam's jungles stood in the distance reminding me of the prehistoric scene in one of those old black and white movies - just before the dinosaur tramples everything in sight. The landing craft are circling out in the ocean, the Marines, in full regalia, ready for combat, standing on the deck. The Captain of the ship announces over the loud speaker, about Marines from the earliest times having made landings on foreign shores, bringing unimaginable pride and valor to our Corps. Then he says, "Godspeed." And, I'm thinking, "god speed my sorry ass back home!"

As a 'machinegunner' in HQ I'm carrying a .45 (M1A1 - you know...), and the M60, with ammo crossing my chest left and right - John Wayne, eat your heart-out! I've heard the story about my lasting only 7 seconds after hitting the beach. I'm sure my Father will console my Mother as my body arrives home.

I board the stinking little landing craft - who can breath in this MF sardine can? All I can smell is the fuel that they probably poured on the deck to fry Marines. I'm surrounded by dozens of other Marines all trussed-up in their combat gear - I think this is meant to get us to sink directly to the bottom of the South China Sea, rather than give the enemy a chance to say they killed so many "Amelican Malines." 'LT' says, men, put your 'safeties' on until I say "hit the beach." We all hunker-down, the 'boatswain,' (or whatever they call him) revs the engine and we're off to war.

Everyone is saying a little prayer...well, some saying larger prayers than others, I'm sure. The exhaust from the craft is overpowering, but somehow, we all survive, only to get cut-down as we storm the beach, I'm sure. Suddenly, there's a grinding noise, as the bottom of the landing craft reaches the shoreline. LT says, "Men, give 'em hell." Then the clanking of the chain as the ramp goes down. I'm sure, if I stay close behind this big guy next to me, they'll miss me with the first shots and I may get to shoot at something. LT says, "Marines, hit the beach." The ramp splashes in the water. Marines start their war cry. Boots hit the water. Then "ka-boom." And, another "ka-boom." "Oh my God - I'm gonna die in some god-forsaken jungle where no one will ever be able to find my body," I think as I get soaked up to my belt. I'm holding the M60 and aiming toward land ready to kill. "Why do I hear music?" "Am I dead?"

As the Marines clear the beach head, I see the band, the group of people waving American flags. LT says, "weapons on Safety. Form up on the left."

"Huh!"

That "ka-boom" we heard as we arrived on the beach, was the big drum in the local Vietnamese band welcoming us to their country. "Wow, if this is war..."

Articles – Any member wanting to have an article, or interest item, included in the Newsletter please send your copy to me at the address on the top of this Newsletter. You may include photo's, old or new.

## SgtMajor Walsh seeking 3/4 Memorabilia

I have a request of the Association. I have located all our historical photograph's here in the Battalion, which sadly were in a Conex box and were all broken and covered in dust. I have had them all sent out to be professionally framed, along with our updated Lineage, Medal of Honor recipients, and a shadow box for our fallen Marines and Corpsman from all our OIF deployments (we've lost 20 to date. Nothing in comparison to prior wars maybe, but a loss of even one brother cuts deep as you know). Anyway, we have purchased two trophy cases to display historical memorabilia, and such, from times past as well as future ops. What I ask is that if anyone in the Association would like to donate an item for display we would be proud to do so and the placard with the item will credit those who donated. Even if it is just loaned to us for display, that would be great. We could return the item to its owner before we deploy if you'd like. We have also been aggressively trying to get a copy of "Alamo in the Pacific" by the late Mr. King, formerly of Lima 3/4 I believe. We are having a tough time of not only finding that book, but also of getting in touch with any living 3/4 "China" Marines, or even actual 3/4 pictures of that time frame. The historical society can produce 4th Marines pictures, but cannot verify if it was actually 3/4. Anyways, that was my sales pitch. Whatever you could do to assist in anyway would be greatly appreciated. If you will email me and let me know what you have, I will respond as quickly as possible. Training is consuming much of our time but I will get back to you as quick as I can.

Our Current address here in the States is:

3rd Battalion, 4th Marines  
Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center  
Twentynine Palms, California 92278

Feel free to use my name on the address.

Again, I am eager and honored to correspond with you all and am proud to be a bona fide member of the Association.

Semper Fi,

SgtMajor James Walsh  
Battalion Sergeant Major  
3rd Battalion, 4th Marines  
james.walsh@usmc.mil

Dues – A reminder is appropriate here about dues. If you received this Newsletter and have not paid your dues, someone else has picked up your tab. Dues are only \$20 a year. Please make your check payable to "Third Battalion, Fourth Marines Association" and send it to our treasurer Chuck Lear, 708 S.S. Basil Ct. Lees Summit, MO 64063.

THIRD BATTALION FOURTH MARINES ASSOCIATION  
23 HAMPTON MEADOWS, HAMPTON, NH 03842

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
CHAGRIN FALLS, OH  
44022  
PERMIT#141



## THE THUNDERING THIRD

Visit our website at:

<http://Thundering-Third.org>