



THE THUNDERING THIRD

NEWSLETTER



THIRD BATTALION FOURTH MARINES ASSOCIATION

23 Hampton Meadows, Hampton, NH 03842

Letter from the President

All Members,

The 2009 reunion held in San Diego, CA is past us now and it seems that all of the attendee's had a great time, from the emails and postings on the website I have read. Frank Pedersen and his side-kick Dennis Kimball did a fantastic job of putting this reunion together and had a nice variety of activities for all to enjoy. They are to be commended for their hard work, determination and knowledge of what makes a reunion successful, for this one truly was that! The Southern California weather cooperated for us and everything seemed to come off very well. Many especially enjoyed the Marine Graduation ceremonies at MCRD San Diego. It was something to watch all those young Marines parade by us, their heads held high, walking tall, chests pushed out to the point of bursting and the pride we could see in their eyes as they strutted their stuff!! That was my first, as well as some others of us, trip back to San Diego since graduation in 1965 and it brought back a lot of memories, to be sure. Some of the base facilities have changed, (I noticed a huge influx of civilian contractors) but that Big Ol' Grinder was still the same. I remember marching what seemed like miles and miles up and down it as we sharpened our Close Order Drill routines in preparation of Graduation Day. Each day we refined our skills and it wasn't long before WE were the platoon's that everyone else was watching as we sharply maneuvered our way around that asphalt deck. The day finally came when it was OUR turn.....and we were just as proud then as those who preceded us and all those who have, and will continue, to follow for many years.

We had many "first time" attendee's at the reunion and hope they, and others, will return to future reunions. Of special note, Travis Fryzowicz located numerous Lima Company Marines over the past two years and several of them attended their first reunion. Former "Kilo" Company Commander LtCol (Retired) "Lefty" Gonzalez and his wife, Toni, attended his first reunion. In attendance at the banquet was Major General (Retired) David Richwine, who spoke briefly to the audience at the banquet. We were especially happy to see former Battalion Commander, LtCol. Lee Bendell and his lovely wife in attendance.

As always, Chaplain Stan Beach, prepared a very somber and deeply felt Memorial Service for our fallen comrades. The family members of those Brothers who were killed in action participated in the service and it reminded all of us what they have gone through for so many years after losing their loved one. The sacrifice they have endured touched everyone and many tears flowed freely that day. We will never forget those who died in Vietnam.

We look forward to our next reunion, a scant less than two years away. We hope to see everyone in Branson, MO to celebrate with us. John Masterjohn has already completed a lot of ground work in planning for this reunion and he will be taking a trip there in early 2010 to get a feel for the "lay of the land" in preparation of

the reunion in 2011. Chuck Lear, who lives about an hour away, is planning to meet him there to talk with some event planners about getting the ball rolling in anticipation of our "Battalion Landing". John will update us in the future of what he has discovered and how things are shaping up. All should remember that the next reunion will be a "packaged" reunion. One price for everything (hotel accommodations, transportation, meals, events, etc.).

Membership continues to grow as I still continue to sign Membership Certificates for new members. I am very happy to report that there are several of the active Battalion Marines who are signing up. It's important that we get these Marines/Corpsmen involved in the Association and try to get them to future reunions, as they will someday be the one's who continue the legacy of the Association. But, there are still many Marines and Corpsmen who served with us in Vietnam that we have not been able to locate and get involved in the Association. So, I urge you to take a page from Travis' "book on how to locate former 3/4 Marines" and search for your buddies. I am sure Travis can give you some easy methods and maybe even some shortcuts.

See you in Branson, in 2011.....!!
Semper Fidelis,
Roger

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will soon be built in our nation's capital. It is a testament to the honorable service and patriotic sacrifice of the more than 3 million living veterans disabled in the line of duty, and all those who have gone before. This \$87 million tribute to the women and men who have paid an extraordinary price with their bodies and their emotional well-being for the rest of their lives, has been approved by the Congress of the United States in Public Law 106-348, signed by President Bill Clinton.

Conceptualized by former Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the late Jesse Brown, and given substance by Philanthropist Mrs. Lois Pope of Florida, through generous donations exceeding \$10 Million, the foundation charged with collecting private donations, building and administering this memorial to the extraordinary heroism of American sons and daughters injured, wounded, or falling ill in the line of duty, is now but \$5.5 Million from ground breaking.

With the approval of the Memorial design concept in 2004, by the National Capital Planning Commission, and final acceptance of the Memorial design by the Commission of Fine Arts in 2006, the 109th Congress passed, and President George W. Bush signed the land transfer legislation transferring the 2.4 acre Memorial site to the National Park Service.

Additional information about the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial (AVDLM) is located at the AVDLM website: www.avdlm.org

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will be entirely funded by private donations, where, at present, more than 1 million individuals, small businesses, large corporations, and many, many veterans organizations have already donated over 90% of the total needed to begin construction.

Donations may be made to: AVDLM, 6290 Linton Blvd, Suite 104, Delray Beach, FL. 33484
Michael C. Corbett (3/4: '65-'66) Veterans Fundraising Coordinator
Disabled Veterans LIFE Memorial Foundation, 6290 Linton Blvd - Suite 104, Delray Beach, FL 33484
800-331-7590, 561-637-1525 ext: 207, mcorbett@dvlfm.org

Lima Company makes GREAT showing at the Reunion!!

Lima company Marines, and Corpsmen, seemed to literally come out of the woodwork at the reunion and they just may have had the largest contingent present of all Company's represented this year. This was largely due to the efforts of Travis Fryslowicz as a result of his single-handed performance of locating Lima Marines/Corpsmen over an 18 month period preceding the reunion. Travis scoured the internet, phoned, wrote and used any method he could think of in order to track down some of those he served with in Vietnam. The results of his hard work paid off and he was instrumental in getting the following Marines/Corpsmen and their Ladies to attend:

George and Marion Bradley (sadly, Marion passed away three weeks following the reunion. Our thoughts and prayers are with George and his family during his time of great loss)

Stan and Pat Delano

Jake and Virginia Huckabee

Harold and Rose Hall

Bob and Linda Nabors

Colonel Roger and Donna Ryman

Mike Churchward

Danny Cooper

Bill and Joyce Dizmag

Tom Whalen

Jim and Yolanda Fortner

Jim Gresham

Charles Oldham

David and Jill Hicks

Carlos and Kim Saiez

It is my understanding that all these good folks were attending our reunion for their very FIRST time!! We truly hope they had a wonderful experience and will come back for the next, and all future reunions. It was a pleasure to have you with us.

As for Travis.....JOB WELL DONE, MARINE!!

This just goes to show you what a little bit of effort can result in achieving. If each of us would just locate ONE Marine or Corpsman who has never been to a reunion, and get them to attend in Branson, imagine what kind of crowd we would have attending. Give it a try and let's see what happens.

(Footnote: Travis is also in contact with several sons and daughters of deceased Marines he served with and continues to stay in touch with them. I am sure he will encourage them to come to a future reunion.....perhaps many!)

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, 2497 Hertzog Lane, Lee's Summit, MO 64086**

From Behind the Scene's at the Reunion

There are always a lot of members, and non-members, who give their time and effort to help make our reunions as successful as they are, and I would like to make mention of those who pitched in to help at the San Diego Reunion. Most of the time they are not noticed because often working in the background to make sure things go smoothly, or as smoothly as we hope to make them, for the members attending. Here is a list of folks who pitched in to help, and I hope I didn't miss anyone:

Member Registration:

Chuck Lear; John Masterjohn; Wallace Shaw; Mike Madden (all of these guys worked long hours and quite often without any breaks to get members registered and ensure they received their tickets for the functions they planned to attend)

PX Table and Snack Bar:

Carol Lear (she was at the tables to help everyone with obtaining T-Shirts, Caps, patches and stickers and taking orders for anything in the PX that you wanted to order for later mailing; she also set up the Snack Bar in the Hospitality Suite to ensure there were finger foods for everyone to enjoy)

Raffle Ticket Sales:

Lydia Masterjohn (grabbed up the roll of raffle tickets and began working her way through the crowds, each day, in the hospitality room to give everyone a chance to purchase their tickets for the drawings that took place at the Banquet)

Hospitality Suite Bar:

Amanda Arko (VFW Auxiliary Guard Post 2275), Sheri Carrington (President VFW Auxiliary Post 2275), Barbara Cimmarusti, (Senior VP VFW Auxiliary Post 2275) came in and set everything up as well as returned each morning, or afternoon, to ensure that the bar was adequately stocked, drinks iced down and then tended bar for us on their own time. Doug Carrington (Commander VFW Post 2275) who arranged for us to get all of the soft drinks, mixers, beer and liquor provided at a very reasonable cost through their VFW Post.

Battalion Archives:

Mike Corbett (boxed up and shipped all of the binders containing the Unit Diaries to the hotel so members could go through them for information they might be looking for)

Battalion Deployed to Afghanistan – Care Packages Being Sent

As you know the Battalion has been deployed to Afghanistan. We will be sending them the usual crates of Beef Jerky and Cigars after the first of the year, probably shipping in March. This will give us time to get our 'act together' and get contributions in from those who would wish to help offset this great expense to our coffers. Dennis Thun will take 'point' on getting the jerky and cigars ordered, crates prepared and shipped out for us.

If you would like to donate to this "Care Package Fund" please send your check to:

Chuck Lear
24907 Herzog Ln
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

Mark your check as "Care Package Fund" so Chuck will know to earmark your contribution for that purpose only.

How we found ourselves...

...as the lost Marines of 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, in Vietnam.

It was said, and most of us believed, the average age of a Marine in the Republic of Vietnam when the initial build-up took place in 1965 was 18. We believed it was because most Privates, PFC's, and Lance Corporals with whom we were more intimately associated were within months of that age and surely we made up the bulk of Marine Corps ranks in-country at that time. Of course, we had a handful of young Lieutenants who had to be in their early twenties. And certainly, the Captains, Majors and "light" Colonels had to be in their mid-thirties to early forties. The only other Marines in camp were the real "old salts", the true leaders of men, the proverbial "old Corps" senior enlisteds. I remember SSG Reed, 1SGT Rose, and SSG Palomares - other names come to me from time to time so I'll just have to wait for more. It really was up to these older Marines to keep our butts clean and out of trouble. If they had been in WWII or Korea they held a lot of sway with us young "John Waynes." The earliest days in Vietnam were mostly a trial and error period where we would be told not to load our weapons and to produce a body if we fired them or pay the cost of the rounds expended. It was not the kind of war we had come to love from watching so much television.

Those first few months we lived a threadbare existence - 2-man tents in the sweltering heat. Showers when it rained and hopefully it rained long enough to get rinsed-off. Our base camp in Phu Bai was at the base of a hill we climbed every day just to get a good view of the countryside. It may have given us an advantage during daylight hours but at night there was no advantage.

Patrols were organized and run out of the camp daily. Often, several platoons and squad-sized units moving about the territory at once. We quickly became familiar with the issue of fratricide - when one friendly unit fires on another because someone neglected to call-in their position. We lost a man or two like that in those early days. Occasionally, a sniper would 'ding' one of our men. More often, it was booby-traps that got us. Patrols would go out and come back a man or two short because someone tripped a booby trap. We lost about a dozen men in that manner in the first few of months. We hardly got to see a real live enemy, but we were losing men fairly regularly.

Patrols went out at night and returned at dawn. "Clean your weapons," advised the Platoon Leader, "stand inspection in one hour." If all was well and proper, we were permitted to hit the rack for a few "z's," until lunch time or if they needed us to go over the line, again. It was almost routine to send out patrols and lose a man without a firefight. That was the most demoralizing thing. To a man, we were losing our identity and didn't know it.

But, I recall the day - it must have been July or August 1965, when my unit returned from an ambush, shoulders hunched over, outlook mostly very dim; no one wanted to clean a rifle or polish another boot. We were exhausted and wished we had a way of telling LT that we just want to be left alone for a couple of days. But, this morning would soon surprise - and delight all of us.

As we rounded the turn from behind the hill and straightened out our route of march back to the main base camp, there, in the distance, we could see the one thing that could raise the level of morale for most any hardened group of US combat vets. The evening before, the Engineers had erected a flag pole and there she was, blowing in the breeze of the early morning hours - "Old Glory." It was like we were all returning home as each of us raised our eyes to the familiar and beautiful 'stars and stripes.' We suddenly marched a bit straighter, stood a bit taller; and, finally, found ourselves in this strange, far-off land....

M. Corbett

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Visit our website at:

<http://Thundering-Third.org>