

Third Battalion, Fourth Marines Association Newsletter  
August 31, 2019  
Norfolk/Virginia Beach Reunion

To all members,

We have another reunion behind us now, and are eagerly looking forward to the next one!

The Norfolk/Virginia Beach Reunion 2019 was really a great one. There were, at last count, over 190 members/spouses/significant others and guests signed up to attend. Just before the reunion week, we had a few cancellations and we're sorry those who had to cancel were not able to attend. Hopefully, they will be able to make it to the next one which will be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado in 2021. The plans for the next reunion are already in the mill and once we will get those worked out over the next year, or so, we will be announcing them to everyone. Not only will we announce the reunion plans on this website, but the dates and location information will also be on your NEXT dues card, so be sure to save that card for reference.....AND, please mail in your dues when you receive it!

This year's reunion was a great success! Though we had to deal with some road construction in the immediate area of the hotel we were able to get around without a lot of problems. The hotel did all they could do to make everyone comfortable and attended to in fine fashion. I don't think there were any problems/issues at all; if there were I never heard anything about them. They were very accommodating to us and made sure we were well cared for. The hospitality room got a lot of business as reunion attendee's reacquainted themselves with old friends and hopefully, made a few new friends along the way. We had FIFTEEN members attend the reunion for their very first time and we were thrilled to have them come and be with us. We hope we made an impression on them that will bring them back again, and again. Those 'FIRST TIMERS' were: Leroy Summers; Dale Wittler; Dennis Egan; James "DOC" Drum; Michael "DOC" Griffin; Ned Leroy; Allen Willyerd; William Barron; Joseph Dudas; Richard Corl; Roger Nelson; Richard Booher; Terrell Wheeler; Dom Buscemi; Aron Griffin. THANK YOU GENTLEMEN for coming to the reunion! Look forward to seeing you at the next one.

Our first excursion was on Thursday when we visited the Nauticus Maritime Center and toured the Battleship Wisconsin (DD64). She is a formidable battleship sporting nine 16 inch guns, 6 fore and 3 aft, along with twenty 5 inch guns and was later fitted with an array of 20mm and 40mm guns to fight off enemy aircraft. She served in the Pacific Theater during WWII and later served in the Korean Conflict and Post Korean Conflict and later in the Gulf War for one year and was then moved to the museum location where she now rests and is a museum ship. It's amazing she could hurl those 2200 pound 16 inch shells up to 22 miles and the 5 inch guns would reach out to 10 miles. Her nickname is "Wisky" and those who served aboard her in all wars/conflicts were a proud bunch who still speak volumes of praise about her.

Friday morning found us going to the MacArthur Museum at the Norfolk Navy Base. The museum contained many, many artifacts of MacArthurs as well as a large amount of documents and historical information on WWII. This was a very interesting tour and in the Memorial Building, both General MacArthur and his wife, rest eternally in the rotunda area after you enter through the front doors. The afternoon found us at the David Adams Chapel at the Navy Base. As always, Chaplain Beach delivered an excellent program as well as LtCol (Retired) Bill Kalm. Following that, we had the memorial service as the Honor Guard brought forth "Old Glory" as well as the Marine Corps Flag, followed by members of each platoon who brought forth the Company Guideon's and Dog Tags of our fallen brothers and placed them on the footlocker at the front of the chapel. Members then called out names in remembrance of fallen brothers, and then the Gold Star Family members came forth and placed flowers on the dog tags in honor of their loved one's. This is always a very solemn moment during the memorial and there were a lot of tears shed by those in attendance.

Saturday morning we held the General Membership Meeting with one of the largest crowds in attendance that I can remember. During the meeting we read a letter from the Commandant of the Marine Corps addressed to Al Claiborne, who is a 2nd cousin to Lt Norman Lane Jr, who was KIA in Vietnam. Al was not aware, for many years, that Lt Lane was a cousin and after completing much research on him, founded a memorial to Lt Lane for his service, detailed much about the Vietnam war and, in particular, our battalion. We also covered the financial statement provided by our Treasurer, Chuck Lear, and raised the donation amounts that we provide annually, to the 3 Mariposas Montessori School Foundation, the "Honoring the Sacrifice" Foundation, the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation and Wreaths Across America. Following that, we had election of Officers and Directors for those who were due to be re-elected and to fill vacancies. The following members were re-elected for another term: Roger Kimble (President); Travis Fryzowicz (Scribe/Recording Secretary); Michael Madden (Director); Frank Pedersen (Director); Wallace Shaw (Director); and George Bennett (Director); Jim Wright (Director). The

office of Vice President required a replacement as Jim Conklin had asked to step down; Joe Fallon was nominated and elected to that position; the position of Secretary (vacated with Joe's election to VP) was filled by Larry Hawthorne by nomination and election. A vacancy in one of the Director positions was filled by Tom Steiner by nomination and election. It was brought up in the meeting that the association has lost several of our members have passed away over the past 2 years and we started a list of those known to have passed. I was surprised at the number, but we should all recognize that this list will only continue to grow over the next several years. Most of our membership falls within the 70-78 year old range and with that there are many that have been afflicted with maladies of all kinds that Vietnam has given us. The Vietnam War has not been kind to us in terms of our health.

Banquet evening, on Saturday, was a great success. The room was full of active chatter from all over the room and everyone seemed to be having a great time. We had several speakers come to the podium, among them Phil Frigm who had been involved in a project involving an officer Marine Lt John Robert Burns, Jr who was in the battalion in Vietnam and his fiancé (Donna Sheehan) at the time of his departure for Vietnam. The short of it is, they were a young couple who dreamed of someday being married but he received orders to Vietnam soon after his graduation from OCS. They did not marry prior to his departure and unfortunately he was killed in action in Jan 1968 leading an ammo resupply group to 3rd Plt, Lima Company along Rt 9. When he left for Vietnam he had left his officers Mamaluke Sword with her for safe keeping. She kept it for over 50 years, at times looking at it, and remembering what could have been, but, alas, was not. After so many years had passed, she decided she needed to donate the sword to a worthy institution. In 1971 she reached out to Al Claiborne to arrange for gifting the sword. He in turn contacted LtCdr Cris Frigm, USN Chaplain (Phil Frigm's son). The sword was passed to LtCdr Frigm at Soldiers National Cemetery, Gettysburg, PA and eventually found its way to Phil Frigm, our Battalion Historian and safe keeper of artifacts. Phil brought the sword to the banquet along with a picture of young Lt Burns to whom it belonged and made a formal acceptance speech.

We also had a speaker, Eric Young, who is an Analyst with Southeast Asia, Indo-Pacific Directorate/Research Support Division Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in Arlington, VA. He has been involved in the "Strange Disappearance of L/Cpl James W Jackson" which occurred on Sept. 21, 1969 (a book was written on this subject and there is considerable information on the internet also). He gave us a background talk on the continuing search for Missing In Action veterans in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and is actively investigating L/Cpl Jackson's file with hopes of getting a team to return to Fire Base Russell with maps of the firebase in regard to fighting positions and bunkers. I have learned that this group is returning in Sept 2019!!!! There is speculation that L/Cpl Jackson may have been involved in a premature detonation of TNT to destroy bunkers and was killed, as well as buried, by the debris, in one of the bunkers. The team returning to search are in great hopes they can discover his remains and solve this mystery. It has been long believed that L/Cpl Jackson was wounded and placed a chopper to a rear Navy hospital location. Navy personnel who had served there, have said they remembered him being brought in on a chopper and helped into the hospital by two corpsmen. From that point nobody knows what happened to him. He was not missed for three weeks. At this point there is no tangible positive proof he went, and arrived at, the hospital or was ever treated by anyone there. Hopefully, the search team may find some remains in the bunker complex of what was once Fire Base Russell, but.....who knows what will turn up? Mr. Young is very interested in interviewing anyone who may recall this incident, was on site when the bunkers blew up, or can positively confirm if L/Cpl Jackson did indeed get on a chopper or did not. If anyone in the association served at Fire Base Russell during this time, has recollection of this event and can provide ANY substantive information for Mr. Young, please contact myself or Travis Fryzowicz and we will get the contact information for Mr. Young and hook the two of you up.

We also had two Navy Corpsmen who had never been to a reunion, and as a result we were not aware where they were living so we were not able to get their "DOC" Coin and Soochow Creek medal presented to them at the Chicago reunion. DOC Drum and DOC Griffin were both presented their coin, Soochow Creek medal with Certificate, as well as a certificate for first time attendee's. Thank you Doc's for attending the reunion and we look forward to seeing you at many more.

Our Keynote Speaker was one of our own! Major General David A Richwine (USMC Retired) and former Company Commander of Kilo Company. General Richwine delivered, as always, a very interesting presentation as well as personally having every single Marine and Corpsman to come forward to shake their hand and say "Welcome Home". He had planned to present each member a Vietnam Veterans Pin but the Department of Defense unwittingly sent a box full of those pins to Travis and Grace earlier in the year to be given to our members. They were not aware at the time that General Richwine was going to make a presentation of those pins because he had not yet made plans and preparations to do that, and they had already placed them in each attendee's bag of things to be handed out as they registered for the reunion. So, the DOD grandstanded General Richwine before we knew what was going to happen. However, he adapted and overcame the situation and just told everyone that his step 4 of his presentation was prematurely performed!! It all worked out fine.

At the end of the night we had the raffle for items that were provided to the members IF they bought raffle tickets. It appeared to me that LIMA Company's Chuck Richardson and PK had the table that won quite a few items. The last item to be drawn for was a framed cross-stitch made by my wife, Pam, which took almost 2 years to complete. Tickets were sold at \$5 each and there many bought up at "one ticket" rate, then a "challenge" went out by Carol Lear in the hospitality room and many more were quickly bought up with Chuck Richardson buying \$60 worth, Grace Fryzowicz buying \$70 worth, and finally Jane and Jack Dougherty buying \$100 worth. Chuck and Grace started the buying challenge but in the end the ticket that was drawn was one that Chuck and PK Richardson and bought. There was a lot of cheering at that table for sure!! That buying challenge ended up raising over \$700 for that prize.

Sunday morning found a lot of reunion attendee's in the banquet room for our final breakfast and eventual departure. There was a lot of joyous chatter, hugs, back slapping and even some tears as we said goodbye to old friends with hopes of seeing each other in Colorado Springs in 2021. HOPE TO SEE EACH OF YOU THERE ALSO. We've never been there before but it should be a very interesting reunion as the Air Force Academy is there, several museums and numerous natural caves in the area. Start making your plans now, it will be here before you know it!!

Semper Fidelis to everyone

Roger Kimble  
President