



Newsletter of "The Ghost Battalion"

Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Bn 1st Marines

www.FirstMarines.org



Volume 15 Issue 1

January 2017

Officers & Trustees

Message from the President

Brothers, Family, and Friends



Brothers and friends of Vietnam Veterans of 2/1. It has been a full 1st year as president. Not a day goes past that there is not something to respond to or attend to. The biggest event was, of course the Reunion in San Antonio, TX. That lasted but a few days, but the planning and prep consumed almost the full year. VP Dale Williams got General Mike Hagee, 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps as guest speaker. And what a inspiring 15 minute talk he gave at the dinner. See VP Dale Williams article on how General Hagee changed the sequence of events at the dinner. And thanks once again to Bruce Oliver for the ceremony script and for assisting Trustee Jose Perez with ceremony music.

Thanks to Trustee Tim Dunn for organizing our trip to the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, TX.

Thanks to Dan Kellum for organizing the trip to New Braunfels, Tx for the Wurstfest as well as the participation of the New Braunfels HS JROTC for their participation in the banquet [cake escorts].

Thanks to all the officers, Trustees, and especially the members for making this another successful year.

We provided a NCO of the Year plaque to the Second Battalion, 1st Marines which is displayed in the Command CP. In addition, V V 2/1 provided the NCO of the Year with an NCO sword. Thanks to Tim Stanton, our Southern California representative to 2d Battalion 1st Marines and Treasurer Mario Sagastume on this event.

Mike Valdez has almost single handedly organized and managed to hospitality room for the past 12 years. Well, Mike decided it was time to "retire" from this self imposed duty. We were so use to him having the adult beverages and snacks galore that it was a given that the hospitality room would be the central gathering point for members. To be honest, Mike had some help from his wife, Norma. So, Mike, and Norma, we'll miss you both.

Jesse Tipton from H&S 65-66 has volunteered to take over the hospitality room and was voted in by the membership for a 4 year term as trustee. Also Jose Perez, Tom Isenburg had been re-elected to 4 year terms and Mario Sagastume will be our Treasurer for 4 more years.

HELP WANTED: A member or members who are willing to come to the reunions a day early and stay a day over. To purchase from local stores sufficient beer, wine, soda, snacks, be up at zero dark thirty to ensure the coffee is on, ice is in the cooler, etc, etc. If you are interested in taking on this assignment in helping out, contact me or Jesse Tipton.

In 2017 we will meet again at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn [just across the Potomac River from DC. Put these dates on you calendar: Tuesday 11/07 thru Monday 11/13. Banquet Sunday 11/12. All rooms \$93 + 13.25% tax [\$105.32 / night].

We are planning a day trip to Quantico and the MC Museum / our monument; viewing the Marine Corps Ceremony at the Iwo Jima Monument and a rededication of Battle Streamers ceremony [location to be determined].

Semper Fi, Phil Leslie

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Message from the Vice President Dale Williams

Members, Family, and Friends of 2 /1



Bruce Oliver has handled the Marine Corps Birthday Ceremony single handed for all of the years we have had one. A big thanks for his dedication to the organization in taking care of this. From the script to the music he organized and performed the entire thing. This year since we were going to have a former Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Mike Hagee, as Guest of Honor, Bruce and I looked back at the HQMC website for some guidance. I other words we didn't want to embarrass ourselves. We adjusted the HQMC script to our reality; we just couldn't do a couple of the things that it included but followed it as best we could.

One thing we added to the sequence of events was the Missing Man acknowledgement. Mrs. Hagee was impressed with that part of the ceremony and commented that she had never seen it done before but thought it was appropriate. We rehearsed with the music doing two dry runs. Everything looked good until Gen. and Mrs. Hagee arrived. We went through the program with him and he didn't like the biography I had written. He thought it was too long and detailed so he had me cut 75% of it just leaving three facts: he went to the Naval Academy, he was with 1/1 in Vietnam and he was the last Commandant to have served in Vietnam. Then he told me he would speak before dinner, not after as we had it scheduled. Needless to say we adapted. One thing he did do was keep his talk short. When discussing his attendance at our banquet with his assistant in July, I asked that it be limited to about 15 minutes. I thought his speech was great and within the allotted time. Trust me, when he led the group in the Marine's Hymn after his speech it was a complete surprise. We had it scheduled after his speech which was supposed to be after dinner. In all we thought that the ceremony went well especially with the NJROTC Cadets jumping in and handling the cake escort duties. A big thanks to them. It looks like from now on we will try to incorporate the ceremony as it ended up, accidentally.

Something that did seem to work was the table sign up, lots of favorable comments. As you know, this was a first time try. We will be attempting to expand this for the next reunion. After we talk to the hotel about numbers at each table we will be getting more info out. One thing pretty much for sure, you have to have the correct number of people to fill a table to sign up for one, we just don't know what that number is yet.

One thing that came up after the fact: the free room lottery. Phil and I completely forgot about it on Sunday even though we had both independently harassed the front desk about it on Saturday afternoon. We remembered after the banquet and tried to figure out what to do. We had earned 14 free nights so we got the certificates from the hotel Monday morning. We stood at the front desk and gave them to 14 of our reunion attendees as they checked out. One member was really surprised as he had not attended the banquet and never expected a chance at one. We will try to do better next year.

Don't forget about bricks, I need the forms and payment by 1 April so they can be installed before we visit the monument during the next reunion. Which brings us to next November. We are starting the planning soon so if you have suggestions for the reunion make sure to get them to one of the trustees. I'm sure one of the activities will be a trip to the National Museum of the Marine Corps Quantico and our monument. Additional events could be attending the birthday parade at the Marine Corps Memorial in Arlington and a visit to the Vietnam Memorial on the National Mall.

Witness to War Interviews

By Tim Dunn

As part of our reunion this year, the Board invited Martin Madert of the Witness to War Project to conduct individual interviews of VV 2/1 members who desired to have their combat stories recorded for the Library of Congress. Mr. Madert conducted ten interviews of VV 2/1 members during the reunion, giving those members an opportunity to tell their story of service in their own words. The responses from the members who spoke with Mr. Madert was very positive and the members were glad they had this opportunity.

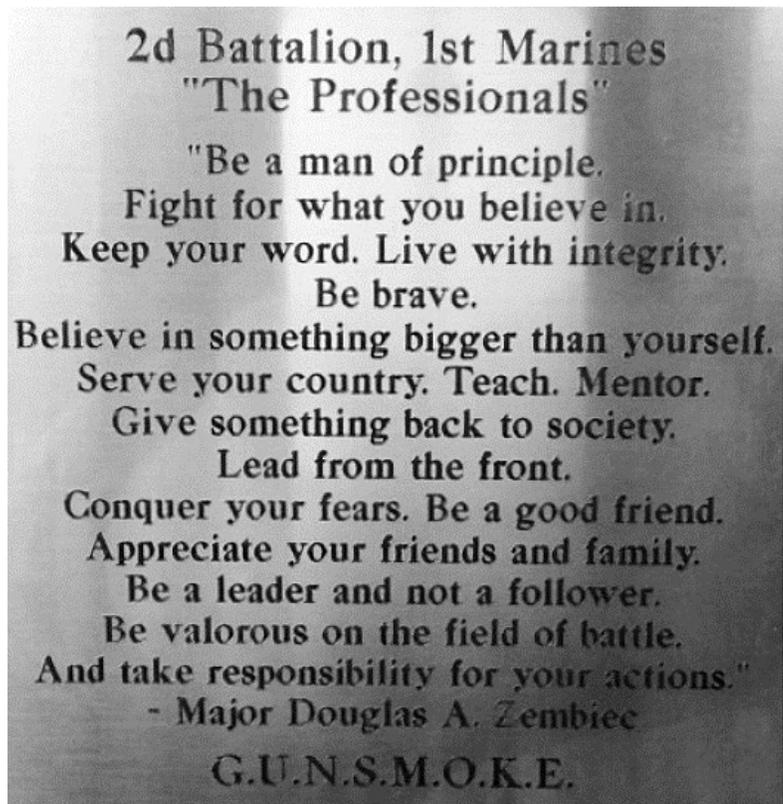
For members who did not attend the 2016 Reunion, and who may want to contact Mr. Madert directly, his contact information is: Martin S. Madert, Witness to War, martin@witnessstowar.org (770-628-0024).

The interviews are at no cost to the veteran, confidential information is respected, the information is submitted to the Library of Congress and you receive two CDs of your interview.

Ghost Statue Article by Tim Dunn

Since its inception in the late 1980s, the Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines (VV 2/1) has endeavored to keep the lines of communication and support between those of us from the Vietnam Era and the active-duty Marines of our esteemed and battle-tested battalion. Due to the increased operational deployments of 2/1 over the last decade and a half, those lines of communication and support sometimes flowed very well and sometimes ebbed to wishful thinking.

All of that changed when LtCol. Jonathan Smith became the battalion commander of 2/1. LtCol. Smith openly welcomed the communication and support between VV 2/1 and his Marines and is supportive of the continued "Warrior Legacy" between those on active duty and the battalion veterans. In that regard, LtCol. Smith assisted VV 2/1 with the Camp Horno Monument dedication in November 2015, attended our reunion as our honored guest, and actively promoted the "Warrior Legacy" concept among his active duty Marines.



As part of LtCol. Smith's commitment to the "Warrior Legacy," he encouraged the development of a portable battalion mascot that everyone could identify as a warrior. In the Summer of 2015, three of the battalion's lieutenants, Ronan Conlon, Nicholas Dominguez and Ryan Faddish demonstrated leadership by managing a cumbersome process (far removed from their infantry officer duties!), including raising funds, and successfully completing the casting of the "Ghost" statue for permanent display at 2/1's Command Post.

The statue represents those of us who have seen combat in our renowned battalion, from the deployment to Vietnam through the present deployments as evidenced by the quotation from the Battle of Fallujah. The uniform and equipment of faceless warrior is familiar to all of us who served in combat with the battalion, but the most striking part of the statue for us VV 2/1 veterans is the statue's name – GHOST! Evocative of our unit's name, Ghost Battalion, it is also emblematic of all combat veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines. LtCol. Smith and the lieutenants felt that the statue should be a Marine from the Vietnam Era and be that embodiment of the Ghost Battalion nickname.

Thank you LtCol. Smith and the recent lieutenants of 2/1 for your leadership and continuing the "Warrior Legacy." Although many of you have been reassigned over the last few months, you have left our battalion in good hands and strengthened the bonds between active duty and veterans. Semper Fidelis.

NCO of the Year Award December 2nd 2016 by Tim Stanton

Ladies and gentlemen, the 2/1 Vietnam Veterans Association has graciously donated funding to create an annual award to recognize the noncommissioned officer who has most inspired his fellow Marines throughout the Battalion by his performance and conduct. The recipient of the 2/1 "Professional of the Year" award is not the stereotypical board Marine. This award is not credit for the highest physical fitness test score or the best range score. In fact, this award is specifically not intended to distinguish simply technical proficiency, as it is acknowledgement for the intangible qualities that make Marine NCOs the backbone of the enlisted ranks. The recipient of this award has been nominated by his subordinates and voted on by his peers as the NCO who most embodies the qualities of leadership by example, motivation towards accomplishing the mission, and demonstrates true inspiration, not from his rank, but from his character.

The 2/1 "Professional of the Year" award is named after Corporal Henry Clayton Casebolt who earned the Navy Cross (posthumously) during the Vietnam War while serving with F Co, 2nd Bn, 1st Marines. Cpl Casebolt was born on 31 January 1942 in St Joseph Missouri. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1961 and in his 5 years of service, he served with the 7th Marine Regiment, 3rd Bn 3rd Marine Regt, and then with 2nd Bn 1st Marine Regiment. Cpl Casebolt's leadership and tactical proficiency was demonstrated by leading his squad from Kilo Company, 3/3 and winning the 1963 Super Squad competition held in Quantico, Virginia. Cpl Casebolt was killed in action in Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam on 28 February 1966. He is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Saint Joseph, Missouri.

In the words of the Cpl B.D. Doherty who served with Cpl Casebolt in Vietnam, "*Cpl Henry Casebolt was by far one of the finest individuals that I have ever met and served with for more than three years. He will be remembered, not only for his courage, but also for his character, talent and kindness. We will never forget "The MARINE" Corporal Henry Casebolt.*"

ATTENTION TO ORDERS:

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Corporal Henry Clayton Casebolt, United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism as Second Squad Leader, Third Rifle Platoon, Company F, Second Battalion, First Marines, FIRST Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in the Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 28 February 1966. While his company was engaged in a search and destroy operation it was taken under heavy machine gun and mortar fire by an entrenched Viet Cong battalion. Without hesitation, Corporal Casebolt maneuvered his squad through intense hostile fire in order to position them in a location where they could block the enemy's retreat. His skillful deployment of his squad enabled his men to kill approximately twenty-five Viet Cong and successfully stop the retreat of many others. When an enemy squad attempted to envelop his squad from the left, Corporal Casebolt and two other Marines assaulted the Viet Cong squad killing them all. Without stopping to catch his breath, he gave orders to his squad to cover him with fire while he crossed a seventy meter rice paddy in an attempt to destroy an enemy mortar position that he had detected. With complete disregard for his own safety he aggressively ran across the open rice paddy toward the enemy shouting instructions to his squad and directing their fire. When he was almost across the open area, the heavy enemy fire knocked him into the rice paddy. Although mortally wounded, he crawled to a mound of earth where he could observe the enemy. From this position, and still the object of intense enemy fire, Corporal Casebolt continued to direct his squad's fire by pinpointing the enemy positions for them and ordering them to deploy to positions where they could better block the Viet Cong retreat. By his tremendous devotion to duty, professional ability, and inspiring leadership, Corporal Casebolt upheld the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

PLEASE TAKE YOUR SEATS.

The recipient of the inaugural 2nd Bn, 1st Marines Cpl Henry Casebolt "Professional of the Year" award is Sergeant Myles Mathew Kerr. He is an 0341 mortarman serving as the platoon sergeant with 81s Plt, Weapons Company. Sgt Kerr is from Charlevoix, Michigan and enlisted on 27 November 2012 and just recently reenlisted. In recognition of his leadership and performance as an noncommissioned officer, Sgt Kerr's name will be inscribed on the "Professional of the Year" board in the Battalion HQs and he will be presented a personalized NCO sword as a symbol of all NCO warrior leaders.

Ladies and gentlemen, Sgt Mathew Kerr, 2nd Bn, 1st Marines "Professional of the Year".

Continued Page 5

NCO of the Year Award - Continued

Ceremony on Dec 2, 2016 at the garden when the NCO of the year award was presented along with the unveiling of 2 plaques that 2/1 is installing to honor the BN and OIF and OEF Marines and Corpsmen from 2/1.



Sgt Mathew Kerr, 2nd Bn, 1st Marines "Professional of the Year"



Wow! What an Honor! Cpl Casebolt was with Fox and it was Operation New York where he earned the Navy Cross. I think he was a squad leader in the 2nd platoon, I was the grenadier with the 1st squad, 1st platoon. That February 28th of '66 operation, by the way, was the last time the men of Foxtrot would serve together as a unit. Because of the accumulated casualty losses the company was disbanded and most of us moved on to other units within the battalion or to the combined action companies in and around Hue/Phu Bai. A company from another battalion was brought in to replace them. The NCO that receives this award should be humbled to know it is in Henry's name and VV 2/1 should be honored that the award was named after him.... Semper Fidelis. Paul Mangano Fox-'65-'66



Bus Trip to Fredericksburg by Tim Dunn

As part of our 2016 Reunion activities, VV 2/1 sponsored a bus trip to Fredericksburg, Texas to tour the National Museum of the Pacific War and the lovely German-themed capitol of the Texas Hill Country. The privately-funded Museum is a tribute to the WWII Pacific Campaign and its principal architect, Fredericksburg's native son, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

A contingent of 90 VV 2/1 members and family traveled by bus and private vehicles to the Museum on Friday November 11th, Veterans Day. As part of their annual recognition of veterans, the Museum conducts a Ceremony of Honor in its Memorial Garden at the precise time that WWI hostilities ended on November 11, 1918 at 11:00 AM. This year, VV 2/1 was recognized for their past service during the ceremony, by the Museum's CEO, General Michael Hagee, USMC, our 33rd commandant. Gen. Hagee gave heartfelt remarks and specific recognition to our battalion for our Vietnam service. Gen. Hagee was also our guest of honor at the reunion banquet.

Our members found the Museum displays to be very extensive with in-depth information for each exhibit area. We Marines found exhaustive examples and commentary for each of the major WWII USMC engagements. Personal artifacts, weapons, equipment, photographs, and film loops enhanced each of the exhibits. If you have not visited this Museum yet, I highly recommend considering a visit.

Following the Museum tour and ceremony, VV 2/1 members fanned-out in Fredericksburg to enjoy the many biergartens, galleries, shops, and local vineyard tasting rooms that make Fredericksburg a tourist destination. A fine time was had by all, and the extended naps on the bus ride back to San Antonio evidenced that good time.



Wurstfest by Dan Kellum

Our Marines, Navy Corpsmen and some of their family members were well-represented at the Wurstfest, a festival celebrating sausage and beer, in New Braunfels, Texas Saturday Nov. 12 during our 2016 Reunion by 104 attendees. Initially, 117 had indicated they would be in attendance during pre-registration for the "unofficial event" but emergencies and unforeseen personal obligations reduced that number. The Downtown Rotary Club of New Braunfels was gracious enough to spring for the cost of admission, one free beer and one free bratwurst sandwich for our members at the Downtown Rotary Club's booth at the Wurstfest. The New Braunfels Knights of Columbus also contributed 20 free parking spaces in their expansive parking area right outside the Wurstfest's front gate. A huge thanks has to go to George Bokorney, Downtown Rotary Club member and former president, for being our point man in arranging 2/1's freebies for the Wurstfest. Numerous food booths' employees noted our Marine insignias on our ballcaps and shirts and offered free beer and food. The Wurstfest from this observer had grown from a compact festival in 1993 to the amazing huge crowd it drew on the Saturday we were there....an estimated 20,000+ festival goers attended and danced away the day in the huge and small dance venues and a long line of cars outside the Wurstfest indicated the night crowd would be just as huge as well.



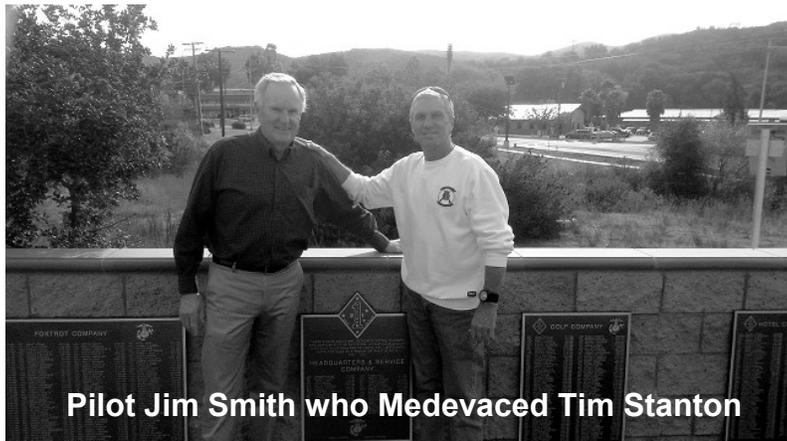
The "Best Headgear" for the Wurstfest has to go to Doc Ron Bobele who donned a floppy-eared cap with antlers. Those 2/1 members who got "The Word" showed up for a photo in front of the Downtown Rotary Club's Food Booth (Photo 454 Reunion 2016). Should we return to San Antonio in the years' ahead, we now know where we can go for a good time in New Braunfels around November 10th.... Semper Fi, Dan



New Braunfels Wurstfest... By Tim Dunn

Local Texas historian and former Echo Company platoon commander, Lt. Dan Kellum, organized a VV 2/1 visit to the New Braunfels, Texas annual Wurstfest on Saturday November 12th. The Wurstfest celebrates the German settlement and influence in the Texas Hill Country with food, bier ("beer" to those not of German heritage), music and crafts. Approximately 150 VV 2/1 members and family traveled by personal vehicle to the Wurstfest and had a wonderful time. Dan was successfully able to get the local Rotarians to sponsor festival tickets for VV 2/1 members. That graciousness by the Rotarians was noted and acclaimed by the VV 2/1 Board during our annual banquet. Our members enjoyed themselves at a local "cultural event," with the additional good news that all personnel returned to base safely at the end of a fun day.

Jim Smith & Tim Stanton Reunite



Pilot Jim Smith who Medevaced Tim Stanton

The pilot Jim Smith and I met for the first time and I learned some more to the story. God had more plans for me in life. We spent the day together at Camp Pendleton meeting with the CO of 2/1 and also visiting the 2/1 Memorial Garden. Following that we spent a couple of hours with the pilots and CO of VMM-364.

Thanks to Dan Kellum research finger (an author with qualities for accuracy) he tracked down the pilot who medevacked me on December 2, 1970 and apparently put the pedal to the metal to get me where I needed help. Dan was acting CO at 2/1 in country on the day I was hit and he started gathering data.

I suppose there would not be a way you would recall this medivac but the consensus those first 3 days on the Sanctuary was that I would not make it due to so much blood loss and organs fluttering on and off but here we are. Jim, your speed and promptness along with Gods will and the extra Doc's you apparently brought along I am here to function another day. The CO of 364 at that time made me an honorary member of the "Purple Foxes" so, I can claim a grunt outfit and a wing outfit as home. On our wall of KIA's it shows Frankie Vega as being KIA from the same area of incident.

"Jim said it was an emotional experience to meet Tim" and listen to what he went through on 12/2/1970 and I thank God that our 364 medevac crew was able to get Tim to the USS Sanctuary in a timely manner and yes we did exceed the airspeed limit. This entire experience reminds all of us what it means to be a Marine. I would do this again in a heart beat and I know that the current generation would do the same.



REGIMENT CMDR SPOKE OF THE GREAT RELATIONSHIP WITH 2/1

I went to the change of command at CAMPEN and the REG CMDR SPOKE OF THE GREAT RELATIONSHIP the 2/1 unit has with its past legacy through the Vietnam Veterans of 2/1 membership and it is the beacon for other organizations to emulate he noted the professional of the year award that we sponsor and stated he was unaware of other similar organizations that have that outstanding relationship our organization was put on display for all to hear this is how to do business in our Marine Corps LtCol Smith thanked our org immensely and hopes it will continue the incoming skipper heard the message loud and clear and made a beeline for me after the ceremony he assured that we would walk the same path and continue the great relationship the new skipper has a lot of experience in the Regiment as he has been in 1/1 and 3/1 already he is an athletic guy from Montana the SGTMAJ is simply going to swap desks with the REG SGTMAJ and he also is on board with us so it is looking good after the first of the year congrats from our org to the new CO might be nice but just call me touchy feely out..... Semper Fi, Tim Stanton

Quick Survey

Can you help us make the our next reunion even better by answering a few questions?

A: HOTEL: El Tropicano Riverwalk.

Location

Staff

Accommodations

Room Rate. Great, OK, too high?

Breakfast Tickets [did you get the tickets?]

Would you go back to the hotel?

B: Hospitality Room

Did you go to the Hospitality Room

Did you have any beverages / snacks?

If so, what.

What would you like different. Add / remove.

C: PX:

Did you go to the PX?

What did you purchase

What would you like to see added?

What would you like to see eliminated?

D. Raffle:

Did you purchase any raffle tickets?

What would you add to the raffle?

E. Company / Unit

Did you meet with any other Marines / Corpsmen from your:

Fire Team;

Squad;

Platoon;

Company;

Other Units;

F. Banquet

Ceremony

Speaker

Speaker's Topic

Room and Table Arrangements

Meal

Please mail to: Vin Burdziuk PO Box 685 Hanson MA 02341 or Email your answers to: Vin@FirstMarines.org

Memorial Bricks Make a Long Lasting Gift



Its never too late to late to purchase your Memorial Bricks.

They will be placed with our Monument at the Marine Corps Heritage Center Museum.

For a donation of \$300, your name, or that of someone you wish to honor or remember, will be engraved on a brick lining our Monument in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park overlooking the Museum's awesome structure.





Memorial Bricks - Enclose 1 Form for Each Brick Ordered

ENGRAVED MEMORIAL BRICKS

A double row of Engraved Memorial Bricks line the pathways of the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park, National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA. Additionally, approximately 450 bricks were placed around our monument and are available for engraving. To date 176 of these had been sold. Each engraved brick honors the donor or another person. Each brick costs \$300 and you may order as many as you like.

Vietnam Veterans of 2d Bn. 1st Marines will continue to sell bricks as long as there is space to place them at our monument. The museum installs bricks several times a year. We will submit brick orders to the museum in groups to coincide with their ordering and installation pattern.

Bricks must be paid for at the time of the order. Make check or money order payable to V V 2/1.

Engraving is limited to 3 lines of 20 characters each. A character includes all letters, punctuations and spaces. Each line must end with a full word or name (words and names will not be hyphenated and continued on the next line.)

Memorial Brick Inscription (1 form for each brick ordered.)

Order placed by:

Name: [LAST] _____ [FIRST] _____ [Middle Initial] _____.

Address[1]: _____.

Address[2]: _____.

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____.

Phone: _____

Email _____

Signature _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

Date: _____ Amount Paid: _____

Authorized by: _____ Date _____

Send this form along with payment made out to Vietnam Veterans of 2d Bn 1st Mar to:

Dale Williams 225 Hine Dr. Clayton, NC 27527









Lupe Lopez, Sotelo, Joe Joe Cortez, Doc Paul Stein, and Jim Jordan
Vietnam Veterans 2nd Bn 1st Marines Reunion
November 10-14 San Antonio 2016



Newsletter of "The Professionals"
Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Battalion 1st Marines
2209 Cushendun Ln, Garner NC 27529



Reunion 2017 Washington D.C.

Tuesday Nov-07 thru Monday Nov-13
Banquet Sunday November 12

Holiday Inn Rosslyn @ Key Bridge
1900 N Fort Myer Drive
Arlington, VA 22209

<> Phone # 703-807-2000 <>

Free Parking and Internet

****To guarantee the room rate be sure to identify yourself as part of the group***

"Vietnam Veterans of 2d Battalion 1st Marines"

All rooms \$93 + 13.25% tax (\$105.32 / night)

Vietnam Veterans of 2d Bn 1st Marines is Tax Exempt under IRS 501(c)3 Non-Profit