



Newsletter of "The Ghost Battalion"

Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Bn 1st Marines

www.FirstMarines.org



Volume 17 Issue 1

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Officers & Trustees

Message from the President



Brothers,

First, thanks to the Officers and Trustees for their continued management of the organization. We, as an association are doing very well in all categories. However we could not do this without the continued support of all our members.

The 2018 Reunion was held in New Orleans area, in the town of Kenner, LA. I remember when NOLA was first proposed several years ago, there were some who were adamantly opposed to the site because of crime. To date, I have not heard of any such issues.

However, we now have an on-site resource in the NOLA area, Ramona Ratcliff, sister of Top Ski who is ready to assist us with securing a more centrally located hotel in the greater NOLA area. Although we had contracted with the reunion hotel before we were aware of Ramona, she was instrumental in the success of the annual dinner; she provide all of the table center pieces. Thank You Ramona.

This year we head back to San Diego. However, as I understand it, 2d Bn 1st Marines will be afloat and not at Camp Pendleton during our reunion. The Officers and Trustees will assemble early in this year at the reunion hotel to meet with hotel management and plan the reunion schedule and events. We will publish those plans in the newsletter following our mid-year planning meeting.

Vice President Dale Williams stepped down as VP at the reunion. Dale had major heart surgery recently and needs less stress in his life. Thanks to Dale for all he has contributed starting with the design and placement of our memorial in Quantico. Because of that change, Secretary Tim Dunn moved into the VP position and Tony Gilroy was nominated and accepted the position of Secretary.

I salute our Offices and Trustees, for without their dedicated involvement and commitment, none of these things would have occurred.

Wishing all a wonderful, happy, and successful 2019.

Semper Fidelis

Phil



President

Phil Leslie

PDLeslie4@gmail.com

919-210-4559

Vice President

Tim Dunn

TimothyDunn@comcast.net

303-887-9275

Secretary

Tony Kilroy

fox1alfa@aol.com

314-477-8800

Treasurer

Mario Sagastume

choncho0331@sbcglobal.net

530-521-3298

Trustees

Jesse Tipton

sergeantjtusmc@aol.com

310-350-1255

Doc Paul Stein

Doc287pstein@gmail.com

845 341-3807

Jose L. Perez

plj49@cs.com

972-816-2706

Vin Burdziuk

Vin@FirstMarines.org

617-840-6700

Bruce Oliver

olliegolf21@gmail.com

973-960-8239

Business Agent

Bruce Oliver

olliegolf21@gmail.com

973-960-8239

Webmaster

Vin Burdziuk

Webmaster@FirstMarines.org

2018 Kenner Louisiana Reunion

The Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines, Inc. held its 2018 reunion in Kenner, Louisiana, in the greater New Orleans metro area from 7 - 12 November. As typical with our membership, many VV 2/1 members used the hotel's room rate extensions to come to the area early and, for several members, stay beyond the reunion dates to explore the area.

VV 2/1's "Official Excursion" was a group trip to The National WWII Museum in the Warehouse District of New Orleans. The Museum was the

brainchild of several prominent individuals, notably the late author, Stephen Ambrose and actor Tom Hanks. Over 100 members and their families attended the reserved showing of the multi-sensational movie "Beyond All Boundaries," where your seat vibrates as the tank scenes appear and snow falls during winter scenes.

Following our reserved movie presentation, we were free to explore the extensive campus of the Museum. Displays of an original B-17 and a B-25 in ceiling suspension to small squadrons of fighter and observation aircraft, made the Museum's flight pavilion dramatic and impressive. Equally impressive were the displays of the various WWII campaigns of Europe and the Pacific, which were complemented by in-depth presentations of Bob Hope's WWII troop entertainment trips as well as the story of the last voyage of the USS Tang. And, the Museum restaurant was very good, endorsed by the number of VV 2/1 members lunching at the establishment.

Throughout the week, members also took many local walking tours, plantation tours, visited Mardi Gras World and generally explored New Orleans. Of course, the requisite trips to Bourbon Street, The French Quarter, taking in jazz along Frenchman Street or beignets at Café Du Monde were made by many VV 2/1 members while in the city. The good news is that all revelers returned safely.

As with our 2017 Washington DC Reunion, the hotel accommodated VV 2/1 by providing a buffet breakfast in our designated Hospitality Room. That afforded the membership to dine at their leisure among the membership. It worked very well for us. We shall continue this as much as practicable at future reunions.

In recognition of our attendance numbers, the hotel sponsored a wine-and-cheese reception one evening. It was a good "mixer" and well attended, including our guest speaker, Major General David Mize (Ret) and his wife Jane.

This year's banquet was attended by 200 members and guests. Our Banquet Ceremony commenced with the posting of the national and USMC colors by a Color Guard from the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing. The ceremony invocation was given by Pastor Bonnie Goodwin, spouse of Sgt. Ken Goodwin (H&S 1965-1966). MGen. Mize gave well-received remarks about beginning his professional career as a platoon commander with Echo Company and how the lessons learned as a combat leader served as a foundation for him as he assumed more responsibilities with subsequent promotions, culminating in the command of the 4th Marine Division.

During our banquet, MGen. Mize awarded a delayed award of the Navy Commendation Medal to Sergeant Thomas (Blue Boy) Ray who was recognized for his actions while serving as an S-2 Scout with 2/1 (1969 - 1970). Sgt. Ray's personnel records were also updated, through the assistance of Master Gunnery Sergeant Frank Odzimowski, to correctly authorize the Combat Action Ribbon for Sgt. Ray. As customary, the Reunion Banquet ended with a lively raffle of Marine-related items and a healthy infusion of humor from our auctioneer, Treasurer Mario Sagastume.

As the Trustees of VV 2/1 review this year's reunion, the most critical question we have is whether or not the membership had an enjoyable time. Based on the comments by many members and the positive parting comments, it looks like that question has been affirmatively answered.

The Trustees of VV 2/1 look forward to our next reunion in San Diego, California in November. Hope as many of you as possible can make the trip. It is always good seeing our members and to be in their company.

Semper Fidelis



Vice Presidents Message



Timothy Dunn

Happy 2019 wishes to you and your family. May the New Year bring continued good health and prosperity.

I am honored that you have selected me as Vice President during our New Orleans Reunion this past November and I will continue the service I give to the Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines, Inc. It is my privilege to serve the members of this Association and their families.

Beginning in 2015, our Association has moved through a fifty-year anniversary sequence of deployment to Viet Nam. Much has transpired for us individually and organizationally during this half-century, yet the brotherhood of those who served has remained strong and supportive.

I have made many friends in this Association and we didn't serve together overseas. We met at our reunions, established those friendships and saw those friendships strengthen and grow over the years. It is a recognition of our unique shared experiences that help us find one another and provide continued mutual support.

As many of us have experienced and recognize, we are a distinctive group, at once mutually supportive and distinctly self-sufficient. Often at our reunions, I see members engaged in conversation with other members who they may not have served with, but are nonetheless brothers. I can easily see that we relax among ourselves, feel comfortable with each other, and share those thoughts that only combat veterans can with one another. We are a 2/1 brotherhood and I am honored to be a member of that brotherhood.

2018 REUNION FINANCE REPORT

BANQUET MEALS SOLD	\$ 12,220.00	
COST OF MEALS	\$ (8,539.22)	
BIRTHDAY CAKES	\$ (698.94)	
SURPLUS		\$ 2,981.84
RAFFLE AND AUCTIONS REVENUE	\$ 3,673.00	
COST OF RAFFLE ITEMS	\$ (2,842.00)	
SURPLUS		\$ 831.00
DONATIONS RECEIVED AT REUNION	\$ 2,258.00	
HOSPITALITY EXPENSES	\$ (1,441.66)	
SURPLUS		\$ 816.34
MUSEUM/BUS FEES COLLECTED	\$ 4,859.00	
TICKETS PRE-PURCHASED	\$ (2,454.00)	
REFUND FOR UNUSED TICKETS	\$ 98.16	
BUSES	\$ (2,040.00)	
SURPLUS		\$ 463.16
NET (COST) SURPLUS OF REUNION		\$ 5,092.34
PX SALES		\$ 6,797.00



Treasurers Financial Report
From Mario Sagastume
Fox Company 1967



Annual Membership Meeting**Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines**

**Annual Membership Meeting
Sunday November 11, 2018
Kenner, Louisiana**

Officers:

Philip D. Leslie, President
Lansdale B. Williams, Vice President
Timothy Dunn, Secretary
Mario A. Sagastume, Treasurer

Trustees:

Vin Burdziuk
Bruce Oliver
Jose Perez
Paul (Doc) Stein
Jesse Tipton

President Philip D. Leslie – Called the assembled sixty members to order and notified them that Master Gunnery Sergeant Frank Odzimowski (Ret) has been appointed the Association's Sergeant-at-Arms and Parliamentarian.

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines (VV 2/1 or Association) was **Called to Order** by MGySgt. Odzimowski, following which, he led the assembly in the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

In attendance were all the Officers and Trustees of VV 2/1 and sixty Association members.

Award Ceremony - Recognition was made public by MGySgt. Odzimowski that former Sgt. Thomas (Blue) Ray [H&S S-2 Scout – 69-70] rates the Combat Action Ribbon for his Vietnam service in 1969 and 1970. A corrected personnel-record oversight now gives overdue authorization for Sgt. Ray to wear the ribbon. The order was publically read by MGySgt. Odzimowski to the assembly. Sgt. Ray was also awarded the Navy Commendation Medal at the banquet by MGen. Mize following a several-decade delay due to lost supporting documentation.

President Philip D. Leslie – Opening Comments. Phil said that he and the Board are glad to see everyone, especially the new attendees. He gave a brief overview of the site selection process and the importance of parking and free breakfast held in selecting a hotel. Phil then gave an update on VV 2/1 – we're in good shape and always looking to serve the members better.

Vice President Lansdale B. Williams – Comments. Dale welcomed the membership. He stated that he is not seeking reelection as vice president or as a trustee, but he will stay involved with the brick program. Dale thanked the members for their support during his time in office and looks forward to being with his Fox Company brothers.

Treasurer Mario A. Sagastume gave the Treasurer's Report. VV 2/1 is solvent with a small cash reserve in a dedicated VV 2/1 bank account. VV 2/1 uses September 30th as its fiscal year-end date. The Association will make its annual IRS filing on a Form 990 EZ Report. Any member is welcome to look at the books of the Association upon request. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Secretary's Report. The motion was unanimously accepted by the membership.

Annual Membership Meeting

Secretary Timothy Dunn gave the Secretary's Report. The report was the 2017 Membership Meeting Minutes. Dunn reminded the membership that the minutes will be on the Association's web site for all to view. The 2017 Membership Meeting Minutes were accepted by proclamation by the membership.

Webmaster Vin Burdziuk – Communications Report. Vin gave an overview of our web site visits (649,588) and the ability to post photographs, citations, stories, etc. on our web site. Vin also noted that the "Get Well" card program started by Phil Odom is still going strong. Send information along about ill or infirm members, as well as members who have passed. Total cards sent this year was 34.

Membership/Registration – Timothy Dunn and Doc Stein. Tim and Doc reminded the membership about the importance of keeping the Association informed about address/contact changes in order to keep our membership abreast of upcoming events. Members were asked to return the membership info form by the end of the reunion.

Hospitality Room – Jesse Tipton and Jose Perez. Jesse thanked the assembly for their care of the Hospitality Room. Jesse also solicited requests on the variety/selections of beverages and snacks. He will consider all requests and suggestions to keep the Hospitality Room friendly and enjoyable.

Jose has monitored the beer and wine consumption and successfully kept the products in stock. Please send him suggestions of beer for future events.

Silent Recognition – A moment of silence was held at 1100 hours in recognition of the 100 Year Anniversary of Armistices Day.

New Business

Recognition – To Ramona Ratcliff for her generous donation of banquet table centerpieces.

Donation Requests

Mike McNeely (Echo 65-66) presented a written request for a donation consideration to the North Carolina Veterans Residential Services of Wilson. The Board will review this request following a post-reunion accounting of income and expenses.

Dan Kellum (Echo 70-71) inquired about a donation to care for the Camp Horno Memorial Garden. Dan was advised of Tim Stanton's Battalion Liaison role. Dan will communicate directly with Tim Stanton.

Elections

Annual Membership Meeting

As required by VV 2/1's By-Laws, elections must be held annually for expiring terms or resignations of officers and trustees. Candidates serve for various lengths of office and are expected to fund their own expenses while on Association business. The election results are:

Vice President – Dale Williams decided to “retire” after long service as vice president. Tim Dunn (Hotel 66) was elected VV 2/1's vice president.

Secretary – Tony Kilroy (Fox 69-70) was elected VV 2/1's secretary.

All candidates received unanimous votes of approval from the members.

Trustee – An interim Trustee position was vacated when Wayne Thornton submitted his board resignation. Following By-Law guidance, Vin Burdziuk (H&S 65) succeeded Wayne as a Trustee.

Reunions

Phil opened a discussion about moving the reunion dates from November annually to other months so we may visit other cities during more moderate temperature periods. There was a general consensus that moving dates and locations seem to be a good idea.

A formal motion was made to move the reunion date in 2020 to an alternate date (other than the usual November 10/11th range) by Lupe Renteria (Fox 67-68). The motion was seconded and an open discussion ensued.

Should we have our reunions around national holidays? What about significant dates to the USMC, 1st Mar Div, 2/1, etc.?

Washington is a required reunion site by the By-Laws for every fourth year. Should we have our 2021 Reunion coincide with 8th&I's Parade Season?

The question was called to vote on having a reunion “off-cycle” in 2020. The motion passed unanimously.

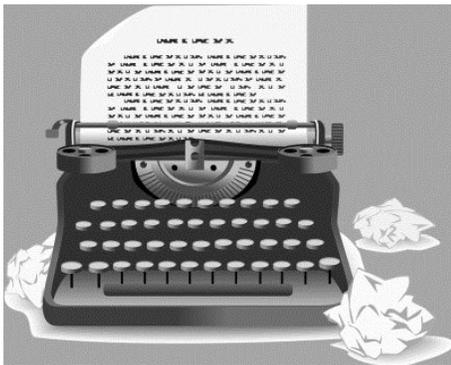
Reunion venues were explored, championed, debated and listed below:

- 2019 – San Diego, CA (Nov 5-12)
- 2020 – Site Suggestions by members:
 - Milwaukee, WI (Summer) Lupe Renteria (Fox 67-68)
 - Orlando, FL (Nov) Doc Bo (Echo 69-70)
 - Boston, MA (Summer) Roy Greenleaf (Fox 67-69)
 - Branson, MO (S/S/F) Tom Leary III (Echo 67-68)
 - Ft. Worth, TX (Nov) Jose Perez (Golf 69-70)
- 2021 – Washington, DC. Jun/Jul/Aug? Sunset Parade season.
- 2022 – Suggest a city. Nov/Jan/Feb?

Membership Meeting - Continued

This is an opportunity for all members to consider locations and months for future reunions. A vote from the floor to close the site discussion was made by acclimation.

Closing - Phil closed the annual business meeting and wished everyone fair winds and smooth sailing as we concluded VV 2/1's 2018 Membership Meeting. See you all in San Diego next year.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BOOK 3 ?

Your Story

We veterans of VV 2/1 have reached the middle of the battalion's mid-point of its fifty-year deployment to Vietnam (1965 - 1971). For many of us, it seems like fifty years ago, yesterday. Many of those experiences, stories, remembrances, thoughts, feelings may feel as if they are still fresh in our minds/consciousness (and they are!), but time is not on our side.

In earlier years, we produced two volumes of our story *We Remember*, to very favorable acclaim. But it has been a while. During that time, we have had other members of the battalion become active members of VV 2/1. Surely, they must have stories to record. Plus, those who have previously submitted stories for publication may have other stories to contribute to the literature of our battalion's deployment to Vietnam.

Is it time for us to compose a third volume of our story? We are a dwindling group, as we are aware. I remember remarks by Gen. Anthony Zinni a few years ago that the majority of those who served in the Vietnam War have already passed. Notwithstanding the cumulative number, we are at the age (and often on-set condition) where our numbers are shrinking at an accelerated rate.

I am interested in your comments about a third volume. Email me at timothydunn@comcast.net. If there is enough interest, we will explore creating another volume.

Also, during past reunions, we were visited by a member of the "Witness to War" project. The premise of the project is to conduct a taped interview with a combat veteran, allowing them to tell their unique story in their own words. A copy of the interview is sent to the Library of Congress as a permanent record of the veteran's remarks. The veteran receives several CD's of the interview at no cost. Again, your story - your words. If this is something that you have interest in (send me an email), I will ensure that a "Witness to War" representative attends future reunions.

Tim Dunn
timothydunn@comcast.net

Reunion Survey

Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines, Inc.

New Orleans Reunion Survey

Greetings – Regardless if you were a New Orleans Reunion attendee we ask your help by completing this survey. Your comments contribute to making future reunions more enjoyable for you and your family. Send completed forms to Tim Dunn 212 S. Washington St., Denver, CO 80209, or timothydunn@comcast.net Thanks for completing the survey and your helpful comments.

Tim Dunn VV 2/1 VP

Hotel

Location Good Mediocre Poor
 Room Quality Good Mediocre Poor
 Staff Interaction Good Mediocre Poor
 Check-In Good Mediocre Poor

Comments/ Suggestions

WWII Museum Trip

Attended Yes No

Liked Yes No

Comments/ Suggestions

Banquet and Ceremony

Attended Yes No

Liked Yes No

Food Good Mediocre Poor

Seating Open Ability to reserve

Ceremony Too Long Just Right Too Short

Entertainment/Dancing costs are between \$1,000 and \$5,000 from VV 2/1 Treasury.

Shall we have “entertainment” at each reunion (music group, comedian, etc.)? Yes No

Shall we have dancing at each Reunion Banquet? Yes No

Comments/ Suggestions

Future Reunions and Suggested locations:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Have a military-themed excursion every reunion? Yes No

Your Other Suggestions

Reunion Pictures

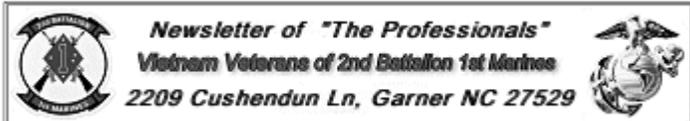


Reunion Pictures



Reunion Pictures





2019 Reunion San Diego, CA November 6 - November 11

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
2270 Hotel Circle North
San Diego, CA 92108**

Call 7am to 100pm EST # 888-233-9527

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

"Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Battalion 1st Marines"

Room Rate \$135.00 includes breakfast

Three or more in a room there will cost an additional cost per person

Parking is \$5 a day

More info to follow after the Trustees Mid Year meeting in mid April

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