



Newsletter of "The Ghost Battalion"

Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Bn 1st Marines

www.FirstMarines.org



Volume 18 Issue 1

February 2020

Message from the President



Brothers, Family, and Friends of the Vietnam Veterans of 2/1

Best wishes to all as we begin a new decade, especially to our recently retired President Phil Leslie. Although "filling his shoes" is an impossibility when considering his longevity as an officer and director of VV 2/1, the high standards of service to our Association that he established and followed present clear guidance for me to follow as your new president.

Phil's devotion to our Association was evident in all he did for VV 2/1, regardless of the office he held throughout his years of service to the membership and the organization. He left his imprint on VV 2/1 and the organization is strong and vibrant as a result. Although no longer an active officer of our association, his advice will continue to be received and his counsel will always be considered by the Association officers and Trustees. I consider Phil VV 2/1's sage consigliere.

My mission as your new president is simple: carry on the policies of our past presidents by providing informative and helpful information to our membership, support those members and their families, and provide an enjoyable annual reunion of the association.

I am supported in this mission by a strong and capable group of officers and Trustees, many of whom have served the Association for repeated terms. At the 2019 San Diego Reunion, Tony Kilroy was elected to the position of Vice President following my elevation to president. Mario Sagastume was re-elected as Treasurer and Vinnie Burdziuk was reconfirmed as Trustee and Webmaster.

The dedication of the officers and Trustees to VV 2/1 is unselfish and genuine, often paying their own expenses to attend out of town meetings or funding incidental Association expenses. During our monthly conference calls, the Trustees are always discussing how to make things better for the membership of VV 2/1. It is an impressive group and I am proud to be a part of them.

Over the last two years VV 2/1 has discussed holding some of our reunions at times other than over the Marine Corps Birthday/Veterans Day period. Many members expressed a desire to attend Marine Corps Birthday celebrations in their local communities. To that extent, we will have our next two reunions during months other than November. This coming September (8-13) we will meet in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to accommodate some of our brothers who live in the northern states. Our next newsletter will have our planned itinerary for that reunion. Our 2021 Reunion is in the early planning stages for Washington, DC to coincide with the parade season at The Marine Barracks at 8th & I.

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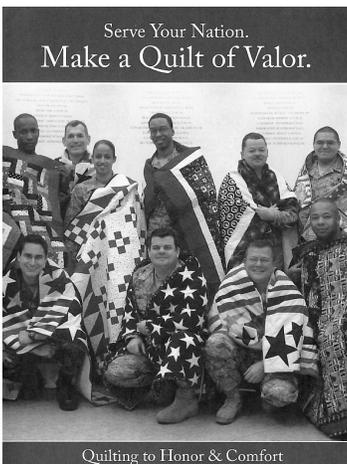
Message from the President - Continued

In closing, I thank our prior officers and Trustees for making this Association the continual success it has become. Periodically, I attend reunions of sister battalions and other USMC associations. Those other groups marvel at V V 2/1's recognition of our corpsman and the fact that one of our reunion cakes are dedicated to those brave brothers who attended us when we were in harm's way.

That distinction and the caring for each of our members is what makes this association the great organization we all know. My obligation as president is to sustain that status.

Thank you for your support in electing me to be your president. I also thank you for your membership in the Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines. Your membership and participation is what makes V V 2/1 a great Association.

Semper Fidelis, Tim Dunn (Hotel 1966)



Quilts of Valor

A nationwide group of volunteer quilters established the Quilts of Valor Foundation www.qovf.org which makes and distributes hand-made unique quilts to veterans at no cost to the veteran. If you haven't already applied for a Quilt of Valor, access the link above and start the process. These are high quality quilts made specifically for veterans and are a great memento from a grateful group of quilters for your service to our country.

Why Quilts of Valor? Blue Star mom Catherine Roberts hit upon the idea that inking quilt top makes with machine quilters in a national effort of awarding a healing quilt to returning service men and woman touched by war. Quilts of Valor are tokens of appreciation that unequivocally say, "Thank you for your service, sacrifice, & valor."

It Only Took Fifty One Years

During several months in 1968, the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines was engaged in combat operations in the immediate vicinity of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The engagements between the battalion and the North Vietnamese Army units were intense, bloody and seemingly never ending.

The Third Tank Battalion supported 2/1 and were in the thick of the engagements as much as the rifle companies they supported. The Marines and the NVA fought in the death-grip that only veterans of those engagements know first-hand.

On the banquet night of our San Diego reunion, Fred Kellogg finally met Dr. Sheldon Kleiman, MD, the surgeon who saved Fred's life at Khe Sanh. Although it took fifty one years to meet each other, it was a joyous and heart-felt reunion.

The accompanying photograph shows Fred and Dr. Kleiman along with Cliff Heino (H&S 68), a long-time friend of Fred's at the reunion. The smiles speak volumes.

One never knows which former buddy may show up at our reunions. I have witnessed several such meetings over the years and benefitted from a few myself. Those "reunions" are what our annual gatherings are all about. Let's spread the word and see if we can get more "old hands" to reacquaint.

Semper Fidelis

THE RIFLE



LtCol Smith was the guest of honor at VV 2/1's reunion banquet. At the banquet he was presented with a rifle replacement, a broom, much to everyone's relief and humor. (Nov 2015)

The Rifle

During the early stages of 2/1's Viet Nam deployment, in late 1965 to early 1966, the battalion was operating in the Hue/ Phu Bai area of Thua Thien Province. LtCol Robert T. Hanifin, Jr. was the battalion CO. He led the battalion from embarkation at San Diego, through the Dagger Thrust operations of 1965, and onto the land deployments in Thua Thien Province in support of the 3rd Marine Division.

While in the Hue/ Phu Bai area, the mayor of Hue (also the province chief of Thua Thien Province) made a gift of a K-44 Mosin Nagant bolt action carbine to LtCol Hanifin. The rifle had an engraved brass plate on its shoulder stock assembly thanking LtCol Hanifin for his service to Viet Nam. The rifle became part of LtCol Hanifin's personal collection of memorabilia. LtCol Hanifin died in 1991, admired by those who served in his command.

In November 2015, as part of VV 2/1's annual reunion, the Association dedicated plaques to our fallen brothers at Camp Horno's Memorial Garden. LtCol Jonathan R. Smith commanded the active duty 2/1 at that time. As part of VV 2/1's dedication ceremony reception, the family of the late LtCol Hanifin presented the rifle given to LtCol Hanifin by Hue's mayor to LtCol Smith. Since the gift presentation was made on base at Camp Pendleton, it caused a little heartburn for LtCol Smith. How was it brought on base without a permit? What do I do with it now?

LtCol Smith was the guest of honor at VV 2/1's reunion banquet. At the banquet he was presented with a rifle replacement, a broom, much to everyone's relief and humor. Apparently, the rifle was safely and securely relegated to 2/1's battalion armory.

Fast forward to November 2019. LtCol Smith moved on from commanding 2/1 a few years ago. VV 2/1 knew prior to our reunion that the active duty battalion was on a deployment and would not return to its Camp Horno home until after our reunion ended.

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The Rifle - Continued

Consequently, and much to our collective disappointment, there would be no VV 2/1 reunion excursion to visit with the active duty 2/1 members.

However, on Friday afternoon, November 8, 2019, Tim Dunn received a telephone call from a corporal who worked in 2/1's armory. In an excited voice he explained that he was ordered by his SNCOIC of the armory to find out everything he could about this old rifle they had in their armory. After a few questions, it was determined that "the rifle" was indeed the K-44 Mosin Nagant given to LtCol Hanifin and then presented to LtCol Smith. As the corporal explained, the current battalion commander wanted the rifle made operable again and his armory SNCOIC wanted him to get details about the rifle from VV 2/1 or it would be no weekend liberty for him.

The corporal drove from Camp Pendleton to San Diego and met several Trustees at the reunion registration desk. He had photographs of the rifle which included the brass plaque on the stock. As the person with the most first-hand knowledge of the rifle, Tom Isenburg (Echo 65-66), who served under LtCol Hanifin, and was part of the LtCol Smith "presentation" in 2015 was reached by telephone and asked to help the armory corporal. Tom graciously spent time speaking with the corporal, who took copious notes of his conversation with Tom. At the end of the call, the corporal left the rifle photos with the Trustees and promptly left the hotel in order to report back to his SNCOIC and, hopefully, get weekend liberty. The rifle photos were given to Tom Isenburg later that evening as thanks for saving a young corporal's weekend liberty.

So the next chapter of "the rifle" is yet to be written. Did "the rifle" get put back to operable condition? The answer must wait until one of VV 2/1's Trustees visits the current 2/1 command and see the rifle in person. Stay tuned. We'll keep you informed.

Membership Meeting - San Diego California - November 10, 2019



Annual Membership Meeting

MINUTES

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

Annual Business Meeting – San Diego, California

November 10, 2019

1. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by VV 2/1 Business Manager Bruce Oliver (Golf 68-69).
2. Meeting was called to order by President Philip Leslie (Golf 68).
3. The Treasurer report was presented by Treasurer Mario Sagastume (Fox 67). Mario stated that the association currently had funds in excess of \$40k due to the generous donations given for the memorial at Camp Horno. A copy of the financials is included as an attachment to the Minutes. Contributions to the Vietnam Children's Fund for the school building fund honoring Lt. Lew Puller totaled \$1450. A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by member Dennis Smith (Fox 69) and seconded by Bruce Oliver. The report was accepted on a 53 to 1 favorable vote.
4. Bruce Oliver sent out first class notices to membership to help with validating the roster. Only 47 responses were returned indicating 11 members who have died and 7 change of addresses. 15 returned with unknown at the address.
5. Dale Williams (Fox 68-69) led a discussion on the memorial bricks at Quantico. The bricks are available at a cost of \$300 each to our members and guarantee placement at the 2/1 Monument. Purchases through the Museum are at a higher cost and placement in the Memorial Garden is random. A motion was brought forth to fill in the first row of bricks with the 2/1 Battalion Commanders who served during our deployment to Vietnam. The

Annual Membership Meeting - Continued

cost of provisioning the bricks would be between \$1260 to \$1470. The motion passed with a 49 to 4 favorable vote.

A second motion on the bricks indicated that there was an anonymous contributor who would underwrite the cost of the bricks for the Battalion Commanders. This motion passed with a 53 to 1 favorable vote.

6. Lt Col Charles Daugherty (S-3 68) and SgtMajor Ellis (Fox 68-69) were introduced to the membership as honored guests of the business meeting.
7. VV 2/1 Web Master Vinny Burdziuk's (H&S 66) report on the Web Site was read indicating that there have been 660,840 visitors to the website and 89 emails submitted.
8. Member Jim Roos (Golf 67) gave an overview of the USMC Scholarship Foundation. MCSF.org. He requested a donation from the organization to help fund the foundation. The foundation makes selections from applications. They guarantee up to \$30K for a 4-year program. An honorable discharge is required. There is a \$100K income limit per family applying for scholarship. Jim was requesting a \$1000 donation. The board said they would take this under advisement and decide.
9. Working parties were requested to help with moving the guide-ons and a cake detail. Trustee Jesse Tipton (H&S 65-66) also notified the assembly that there would not be any further beverages bought for the last day of the reunion. This was to minimize the excess that would have to be hauled back after the reunion ends.
Member Paul Mangan (Fox 65-66) requested that non-alcoholic beer be provided for next reunion. Jesse said this will be accommodated.
A work detail was requested for Monday morning to help pack up the Hospitality room and the PX.
This year we had a popcorn machine, it was seldom utilized so it will be discontinued for future reunions.
Member Phil Odom (Fox 68-70) requested a "round-of-applause" for Trustees Jesse Tipton and Jose Perez (Golf 69-70) for providing a super Hospitality Room for the reunion.

Membership Meeting - Continued

10. Gail Mills of Mills Custom Art gave a short presentation of the customized art she sells. Her late husband Lt. Scott Mills (Echo 70) served with 2/1. The art was displayed in the Hospitality Room during the reunion.

11. Four first time attendees to the reunion were recognized:

Joe Estrella – 69-70 Hotel

Angel Ferrer - 68 Hotel

Steven Ipson – 65-66 Fox

Zak Rinderer – 67-68 H&S

12. The list of the next three reunion sites was announced:

Milwaukee, WI – Sept 8-13, 2020.

Washington DC – Sometime in Mid-May 2021 to accommodate review of the Evening Parade at the 8th & I Marine Corps Barracks.

Fort Worth Texas – November 2022 timeframe to coincide with the major Veterans Day parade in Dallas, TX.

13. A notification was made that member Robert M. (Doc) Adams (Golf 68-69) was to receive the Bronze Star for his gallantry in Vietnam. The award will be presented by President Philip Leslie at the Banquet Ceremony.

14. Secretary Anthony Kilroy (Fox 69) said that there are surveys on each of the chairs and in the Hospitality Room. He requested that the membership complete these surveys and put them in a labelled box in the HR. These surveys will help to improve our reunions in the future.

15. Paul Mangan was recognized from the floor. He enabled a discussion on donations made by the Association. He moved to donate money to the MCSF and Doc Adams foundation. This in turn prompted other members to request donations for other organizations. Anthony Kilroy stated that we currently do not have a budget for donations and that we need to vet any and all organizations to which the Association donates. Anthony Kilroy also stated that as a 501(c)(3) organization we are obligated to donating a certain portion of any monies received after expenses. However, upon

Membership Meeting - Continued

further review it was discovered that our organization does not have this obligation.

Paul Mangan submitted a motion that the membership would give the board recommendations for organizations for which we should donate funds to during the year. The motion was seconded and passed with a 53 to 1 favorable vote.

Paul Mangan also made a motion to donate \$500 to Doc Adams organization, The Midwest Veterans Homeless Shelter. The motion was seconded and was passed with a 51 to 3 favorable vote.

Member Gary Gordon (H&S 68-69) made a motion that the Board would determine the amount of money available for charitable contributions from the Association. The motion was seconded and passed with a 53 to 1 favorable vote.

The request by MCSF for a \$1000 contribution is under consideration by the board.

16. Elections were held for the position of President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. The results of the membership vote are as follows:

Timothy Dunn (Hotel 66) – President – 53 to 1 Favorable vote

Anthony Kilroy – Vice-President – 53 to 1 Favorable vote

Mario Sagastume – Treasurer – 53 to 1 Favorable vote

Since Anthony Kilroy (formerly the Secretary of the Association) accepted the Vice President position and no one opted to run for the Secretary position, the Secretary position will temporarily be served jointly by Timothy Dunn and Anthony Kilroy.

Vin Burdziuk (H&S 66) was reappointed as Trustee by acclaim. He is also VV 2/1's Webmaster for which a vote is not required.

17. With no further business brought before the Board of Trustees, the 2019 Business Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines, Inc. was concluded.

2019 San Diego Reunion

Between November 6th and 11th the Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines, Inc. held their 2019 Reunion in San Diego, California. A return to San Diego by the Association is always welcomed by our members and this year we had members attending from distant points such as Puerto Rico, British Columbia, Canada, and places along the Atlantic Coast. Of course, many of our Pacific Coast brothers and their families also attended.

Tony Kilroy (Fox 69) and Doc Stein (Golf 68-69) smoothly managed the reunion reception desk. A welcome package was available for each party that contained a reunion itinerary, an ID badge with lanyard, meal tickets and excursion information. The member check-in process received very positive comments from the members. Additionally, Tony and Doc updated member information on our roster as people checked in for the reunion.

We continued the practice this year of providing Reunion ID Badges and 2/1 Lanyards to all attendees to great success. The popularity of the badges and lanyards was evident when looking at the impromptu reunion photos.

Barry Noe (2/1 Scouts 67-68) volunteered to become our reunion photographer in San Diego. Barry was everywhere with his camera and the photos he took of us in San Diego look great. Thank you again, Barry for your excellent service to VV 2/1.

We had four "first timers" attend the reunion: Joe Estrella (Hotel 69-70), Angel Ferrer (Hotel 68), Steven Ipson (Fox 65-66), and Zak Rinderer H&S 67-68). Let this not be the last time, gentlemen.

An interesting reunion coincidence occurred when Charlie Davis (Hotel 68) met Bonnie Goodwin. Reverend Bonnie, wife of Ken Goodwin (H&S 65-66) has given the banquet invocation during the last two reunions. She is also friends with Charlie's sister and mother, unbeknownst to Charlie. They met each other in the reunion hospitality room following a telephone call between Charlie and his sister. When his sister learned where Charlie was, she informed him that her friend Bonnie was also in attendance at the same reunion. Small world!

Our reunion excursion this year was a trip to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. VV 2/1's West Coast Liaison, Tim Stanton (Echo 70) made the arrangements with MCAS. The MCAS command and staff were gracious hosts to VV 2/1. We toured the security dog compound, including a demonstration by the dog handlers and their beautiful Belgian Malinois military working dogs, followed by a tour of the base museum and lunch with the active duty Marines in their impressive chow hall. The tour ended with a static display of aircraft and firefighting equipment, a visit to the control tower to watch live flight operations, and meeting with base and squadron personnel. It was a memorable trip. Thanks to Tim Stanton who organized the excursion with MCAS. Tim did great liaison work for VV 2/1.

We invited Martin Madert of the Witness to War Foundation to the reunion. The foundation conducts interviews of veterans which are then submitted to the Library of Congress as a historical record of the veteran's service. Twenty of our brothers sat for interviews during the reunion and were able to tell the story of their service in their own words. They will receive a CD of their interview for posterity.

We had two guests of honor attend our Annual Business Meeting: LtCol Charles Daugherty (S-3 67-68) and Sgt.Maj. Maurice Ellis (Fox 1st Sgt 68-69). We also elected members to the vacated offices of president and vice president (see Minutes).

Simultaneous to the Annual Business meeting, a Women's Meeting of VV 2/1 affiliated women was held separately at the hotel. Debra Sprague, a noted author and public speaker spoke to the assembled women about unique issues experienced by spouses/significant others who are living in long term relationships with combat veterans. The meeting was informative and well attended.

We attempted to organize banquet seating by lottery selection with tables requested by members who desired to sit together. It worked mostly well, although we failed to account for one table.

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2019 San Diego Reunion - Continued

Apologies to our brothers and their families at Table 7 for adding confusion to and otherwise enjoyable banquet evening. We promise to do better next year. Overall, the seating process was less of a scramble and the pre-selection of tables seemed to work well.

We served 204 meals at the banquet, including our three custom-made reunion cakes, one of which was for our corpsmen. Sgt.Maj. Ellis was our banquet guest of honor. Master of Ceremonies Bruce Oliver noted the Sgt. Maj.'s long USMC service from the Pusan Perimeter battles through Viet Nam and several tours on the drill field. He received the first slice of cake at our cake ceremony.

Following the cake ceremony, outgoing president Phil Leslie pinned a Bronze Star with a combat V on Robert M. (Doc) Adams (Golf 68-69) for a delayed recognition of his heroic protection and treatment of a Golf Company Marine during an artillery barrage in Con Thien. Phil was Doc Adam's platoon sergeant at the time of the action. It was meaningful that Doc Adams was recognized in the presence of VV 2/1 members and that Phil was the person who pinned the award on him.

Our banquet speakers were two retired pilots from HMM 364 (Purple Foxes), a Ch-46 squadron that supported 2/1 in Viet Nam. LtCol Duane Jensen and LtCol Jim Smith gave us grunts an insight into helicopter flight operations and missions during the time that the Purple Foxes supported 2/1.

Of further note, LtCol Smith was the pilot who transported a wounded Tim Stanton off the battlefield in 1970, saving Tim's life by hustling him to an off-shore hospital ship. Through the efforts of Member Dan Kellum (XO Echo 70), Tim met Jim several years ago and has stayed in communication with him since. During our reunion, a local ABC TV affiliate filmed and broadcasted the story of Tim, Jim and Dan as part of San Diego's Veterans Week. A great tribute to Tim and Jim and notable thanks to Dan for his research and accommodating the meeting of pilot and grunt.

By all accounts, the meals served in San Diego were far better than the ones served in New Orleans in 2018. Although the Association has no control over the food preparation, quality and taste, our members are quick to inform the Trustees when the meals are sub-par. This year the food was acceptable to our members.

The 2019 Reunion ended with our annual raffle/fund raiser. Some members had a "lucky hand," winning several drawings. As customary, we also raffled the free rooms given to us by the hotel. Based on attendance, the hotel gives us a certain amount of complementary rooms which we make available to the membership by lottery drawing. We will continue this practice at each reunion to benefit our members.

We enjoyed ourselves in San Diego. Hope to see you all at the next reunion in Milwaukee.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF 2D BN 1ST MARINE REGIMENT

REUNION TREASURER REPORT 2019

Banquet Revenue \$12,595.00
Check to Crown Plaza (\$10,782.57)
Asset Gain \$1,812.43

Trip to Miramar: Collected \$2,120.40
Paid Out (\$2,614.40)
Deficit (\$494.00)

Raffle: Ticket Sales \$2,158.00
Purchases (\$1,774.92)
Asset Gain \$383.08

Cash in Bank \$39,242.32



Mario Sagastume
Treasurer

San Diego 2019 Reunion Pictures





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2020 Reunion Milwaukee, Wisconsin <> September 8 - 13 2020

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

More info to follow after the Trustees Mid Year Meeting



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