

The 9th Engineer Post

Volume 1, Issue 1

Fall 2005

Special points of Interest:

- Reunion 2006 Savannah, GA
- Treasurer's Report

Vietnam Veterans

Each face will lose his name, and time will not defer, but there will always be the bond, between what we are and where we were.
 --Ned Broderick



Inside this issue:

Vietnam Vets help returning Iraq/Afghanistan vets	2
Treasurer's Report	2
Bury Me With Marines	3
RFTW thru the eyes of a FNG	3
Band of Brothers	4

Make your Reservations for the 2006 Reunion in Savannah, GA

Hey Marines! The 9th Engineers and 1st Shore Party will gather at the Marriott Savannah Riverfront Hotel in the beautiful city of Savannah, Georgia on Thursday through Sunday, 17-20 August. Savannah has been dubbed "the most beautiful city in America" and "one of the top 10 cities to visit in the U.S." Touring historic Savannah provides a fascinating and enriching step back into time.

In addition we have arranged our traditional Engineer Hospitality Room at the hotel, organized a great banquet, have a planned southern shrimp boil and a bus trip to Marine Recruit Depot, Paris Island. We're even working on arranging a Familiarization Fire of the M-16 for

those who want to shoot the modern day Marine rifle, including you wives if you want. That's not all—there's more being planned, but you—everyone of you—are the most important thing that makes for a fun reunion. Friendships and camaraderie is what it's all about. Being with your buddies—the people who understand what it is like to be a Vietnam Veteran—the people who know what it's like to be a Marine Engineer.

So make your reservations NOW by calling the Marriott Savannah Riverfront Hotel at 800-285-0398. Tell them you're with 9th Engineer Battalion, Group Code **engenga** and you will get a room

rate of \$115 plus tax plus \$5 parking. You can also make your reservations online at www.marriott.com/savrf, Group Code **engenga**.



Savannah, Georgia

So what are you waiting for? Make those reservations and we'll see y'all in Savannah!

Semper Fidelis!



Email: Are you electronically connected?

Can you believe it? Two-thirds of our members do not have email addresses listed with our Association. If you're one of them please forward your email address to Mike Cummins (mcummins@9thengineers.com) to be included in the electronic mail distribution that enables you to get regular information and frequent announcements that are sent out from time to time. Also, if you don't have a computer and an email address the Association can provide you with free web based email that you can check from any computer that you have access to. Simply call Mike Cummins at 954-557-4477 and he will set you up to be electronically connected. Sound too easy? It really is ... like the Marine Corps, we don't promise you a rose garden, but we can get you electronically connected with your buddies.



Vietnam Vets help returning Iraq and Afghanistan war wounded

In January 2004 when I realized Marines were going back into Iraq and that it would not be easy, and that America would be in it for the long haul, I decided to visit some of the returning wounded at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Over three decades ago after returning from Vietnam I served as one of the Marine Liaison Officers at St. Albans Naval Hospital in NYC, so I kind of had an idea as to what to expect. I now try to visit Bethesda every week or so because there is a continuous stream of wounded returning from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In spite of everything one may have experienced in life, you're never quite prepared for what you see at a military hospital during wartime. During each visit many emotions flood through my mind, including some from Vietnam, but here are some things that continue to impress me:

- The youthfulness of the Marines and soldiers and their families – many of the parents are in their late 30s or early 40s and are in shock when they see their severely wounded son or daughter.
- The severity of the wounds and the amazing ability of the young to heal.
- That there are women wounded – some with very severe and lifelong wounds.
- That these Marines are not high school drop outs – many have college time, some a lot, and many have computer skills. In general, they are very bright young men and women.

Having had a long and successful career in construction, I knew this industry would be able to use the talents and skills of some of these Marines when their military service is over. But I was a little surprised when my good friend and retired Judge, Jack Farley, who many of you know, informed me that over 40% of the amputees now return back to active duty.

Regardless, I decided to approach Turner Construction Company, and with Jack Farley's help, some of the top people in the Marine Corps and Army in an attempt to influence them to set up web sites to help wounded veterans search for career opportunities in the construction industry when they returned to the real world. I am happy to say that we're beginning to have some success in this endeavor.

As many of you already know, Jack Farley is a decorated Vietnam Veteran and amputee. He now dedicates himself as an advisor and mentor at Walter Reed Hospital and continues to help with skiing and golfing programs for amputees. We both help with a fly fishing program that some of the guys set up. Everyone should know that the staff at both Bethesda and Walter Reed do an incredible job, beyond what you can imagine and deserve the nation's admiration and thanks.

But unfortunately the war continues to produce many wounded and as the days pass Marines and soldiers continue to arrive. And yes, I've met young wounded Marine engineers ...and as you all know ... they are usually a little brighter than the Grunts ... and as they recovered from their wounds I told them about the 9th Engineer and 1st Shore Party Vietnam Veterans Association. These incredible young men and women know we Vietnam Veterans will never abandon them and that we are committed to do all we can to help them return to a successful and fulfilling life.

They also know that I am very proud to know them.

—Submitted by Bob Nilsson—



Treasurer's Report

The Association has no liabilities.
Account balance as of September 16, 2005 is \$7,545.49
Interest accrued to-date in 2005 \$9.93
Interest accrued in 2004 \$21.27

Bury Me With Marines

I've played a lot of roles in life; I've met a lot of men, I've done some things I'd like to think I'd never do again. And though I'm young, I'm old enough to know some day I'll die, And to think about what lies beyond, and beside whom I would lie.

Perhaps it doesn't matter much; still if I had my choice, I'd want a grave 'amongst Marines when at last death quells my voice. I'm sick of the hypocrisy, of lectures of the wise. I'll take the man, with all the flaws, who goes, though scared... and dies.

The troops I knew were commonplace; they didn't want

the war; They fought because their fathers, and their fathers had before. They cursed and killed and wept...God knows they're easy to deride...But bury me with men like these; they faced the guns and died.

It's funny when you think of it, the way we got along. We'd come from different worlds to live in one where no one belongs. I didn't even like them all; I'm sure they'd all agree,

Yet I would give my life for them, I know some did for me. So bury me with Marines, please, though much maligned they be. Yes, bury me with Marines for I miss their company.

We'll not soon see their likes again; we've had our fill of war. Bury me with men like them...till someone else does more.

Written by
an unknown Marine



RFTW THRU THE EYES OF A "FNG"

They told me "it will blow your mind" and that "it will be a life-changing experience." Well, here I am, almost 60 years old, a relatively new "biker" going with my VVA brothers from Chapter 785 Orange County, CA. I have to admit I had some reservations: would I be able to "keep up" while not disrupting the flow of the run, or overstepping any boundaries of safety that we had to adhere to on the road; questions bounced around in my head along with some self-doubt and apprehension ... I told myself to "STUFF IT!" I thought "mind-blowing", life-changing"...I HAD TO DO THIS!

Day 1 - Ontario, CA to Williams AZ.; approximately 250 bikes, trikes, bikes w/sidecars; 420 Miles. ... I (We) did the first leg! WOW!! "Mind-blowing"? "Life-changing"? No—more like "What a spectacle"; "Awesome sight and sound" of this "Rolling Thunder" charging down the road; and I was a part of it ... Very Cool! But I thought to myself, what am I missing? Why am I not feeling what they (my VVA brothers Greg Young and Bill Mimiaga) felt last year? Maybe this isn't going to grab me like it did them. I felt a little sad that I didn't have the depth of feeling for RFTW as Greg and Bill. But I decided to just open up to the experience and absorb it all moment by moment.

Day 2 - Williams, AZ to Gallup, NM; 230 miles. We all attended the morning riders meeting, then our VVA 785 group decided to hit the road ahead of the main pack. Up the on-ramp, on to the Interstate leaving Williams behind; we settled into our staggered formation ... Harry Parmer at "Point," followed by Bill Mimiaga, Gene and Lisa, myself, Binh Pham, and John Boyle "Tail-end Charlie"; enjoying the beautiful day and awesome scenery and then ... TEARS! I started crying and could not stop!

For the next 20 minutes tears flowed from my eyes and down my face. What the hell is going on inside of me? And then it hit me like a ton of bricks! Our Squad was heading out to "the bush" from our base camp, going on patrol once again! We were going because others were not able! Now I understood the mission, and my place in it. Yesterday I reported for duty; today I was part of a special squad put together to perform a special mission WITH and FOR Special people!! It "blew my mind"; it "changed my life"!

With deep humility and honor,
Sgt. Bruce Pilch USMC
Vietnam - Nov. 1967 - Nov. 1968
2nd Battalion 26th Marines
SEMPER FI

FROM:

**9TH ENGINEER BATTALION VIETNAM
VETERANS ASSOCIATION
613 Sunrise Dr.
Sullivan, IL 61951**

TO:


9th Engineer Bn

"Send in the engineers!"

**We're on the web:
<http://www.9thengineers.com>**

Band of Brothers

Whoever does not have the stomach for this fight, let him depart. Give him his money to speed his departure since we wish not to die in this man's company.

Whoever lives past today and comes home safely will rouse himself every year on this day, show his neighbor his scars, and tell him embellished stories of all their great feats of battle. These stories he will teach his son and from this day until the end of the world we shall be remembered.

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for whoever has shed his blood with me shall be my brother.

And those men afraid to go will think themselves lesser men as they hear of how we fought and died together.

