



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



December, 2015

President.....Bill Ray
 Vice President.....David Romans
 Secretary.....Jim Lewis
 Treasurer.....Jim Shamblen
 Chaplain.....Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros
 Sgt. at Arms.....Mike Male

Webmaster.....Walter Lester
 Historian.....Jerry Bright
 Member at Large.....Mike Shaw
 Member at Large.....Oly Guerra
 Past President.....Bruce Fonnest
 Reunion Chair.....Gale Helser



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well Brothers and Sisters, another year has slipped by; another successful reunion has happened and we are now looking forward to a brand New Year. Speaking of reunions, the 2015 reunion was exceptional in that while some locals were leaving the area, we 39thers forged straight into it because that is what we do. Although, in the beginning, it looked as if our time in Norfolk would be a total washout, Gale was able to salvage the best events on our itinerary, being the tours of the USS Wisconsin and the Navy shipyard which were both fantastic. Because of the weather and schedule changes, all were able to congregate in the hospitality room and get to know each better, kind of like the neighborhood barbecues we had way back when.

The year has also been good in that our membership continues to grow as more veterans find out about us; our Lifetime members topped a milestone this year in that we passed the 100 mark. It is still my hope that we can get the Fort Devens veterans to join us; they have so much to share and are a very important part of our legacy. Speaking of our legacy, the 39th is going all out in documenting the 39th from WWII to Vietnam and finalizing at Fort Devens in a new Facebook site and by using

articles/pictures from our website, they are adding flair to their headquarters building at Fort Campbell. I'm not into Facebook, but this might just pull me over out of curiosity.

It also has been a sad year in that we have lost 5 of our Brothers in 2015. Most recently are David Stubblefield passed the 2nd of September and Ed Gac on the 2nd of October. All our deceased Brothers are truly missed and our hearts and prayers go out to their families.

Here's hoping that your Thanksgiving was kind to your waistband, Christmas stuffed your stockings and the New Year brings you good luck.

Carolyn and I are looking forward to hosting you this coming September here in Plano, TX. Can't promise beautiful weather and 80 degree temperatures, but we can promise "NO HURRICANES."

**BROTHERS THEN,
 BROTHERS NOW,
 BROTHERS FOREVER**

Bill Ray, President
 3rd Plt. C Co. 67-68
 Bill39th@sbcglobal.net
 (817) 239-0787 (cell)

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello again, 39th Blue Bulls Brothers & Sisters,
Once again, a reunion has come and gone. For me, my Brothers, it always seems to be so short. We do all this planning for everyone to have a good time, then Wham Bam, it's over. Guess it would have been nice if our tours in The Nam would have been that fast, or seemed that fast.

We had a few lumps and bumps, but overall, Norfolk was a lot of fun, even with the threat of super bad weather, that turned into "not so bad". I would like to thank everyone that helped with tables, ice & drinks. Donald Boney & "Tuff" were Johnny on the Spot again.

I got Name Tags ordered, made and sent out. Those who wanted them mailed should have them. The others will be with me in Plano next year. To all the 39th family, have a great and prosperous New Year.

Now for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our New Members and Lifetime Members, it is with great pleasure to welcome you to the Association.

NEW MEMBERS:

John P. Armstrong	Kevin Gerke	Douglas R. Gray
C & A Co 71	Fort Devins	A Co 68-69
Bob Jackson	Joseph J. Kappel	Richard D. Lawson
D Co 70-71	C Co 67-68	A Co 71
Robert Lewis	Bill Naragon	Dennis Russell
A Co 70-71	HHC 69-70	

LIFETIME MEMBERS:

John P. Armstrong	Henry Barkman	Walter Gurbis
C & A Co 71	C Co 67-68	A Co 68
Ron Mathews	Tom Nelson	Ron Pifer
D Co 67-68	D Co 67-68	D Co 67

James Ton
Battalion Commander, HHC 70
Pray for our soldiers, POW's and MIA's. God Bless America. See you in Plano, Texas next year.

BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW

David Romans, Vice President
A Co. 66-67
usrome@live.com
479-883-3777 (cell)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

39th COMBAT ENGINEER ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING

DATE: 2 October 2015

Meeting was called to order by Bill Ray at 9:10AM, leading the "Pledge of Allegiance". The invocation was given by Jim Shamblen.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Bill Ray, President, David Romans, Vice President, Jim Lewis, Acting Secretary, Jim Shamblen, Treasurer, Fr. Billy Bassakyros, Chaplain, Gale Helser, Reunion Chair, Mike Male, Sgt at Arms.

OFFICERS NOT PRESENT: Dave Miles, Secretary, Jerry Bright, Historian, Mike Shaw, Member at Large
Minutes of the 26 September 2014 Meeting were read. A motion to approve was made, seconded and passed.

Jim Shamblen gave the Treasurer's report. A motion to approve was made, seconded and passed.

Old Business: 39th Engineer Battalion was re-activated and has become part of 101st Brigade stationed at Fort Campbell, KY. 12 members and 8 wives attended the ceremonies held at Fort Campbell

Election of 2015-2017 Officers: Nominations were open to the floor for new officers. No nominations were made and a motion was made to retain current officers, motion passed. There were 2 changes that had to be made, Dave Miles resigned as Secretary and Tim Driscoll, Member at Large passed the first of this year. Jim Lewis was nominated as Secretary, motion made and passed; Oly Guerra was appointed as Member at Large. New officers for 2014-2017 are President-Bill Ray, Vice President-David Romans, Secretary-Jim Lewis, Treasurer-Jim Shamblen, Chaplain-Fr. Billy Bassakyros, Sgt. at Arms-Mike Male, Members at Large-Mike Shaw and Oly Guerra.

New Business: Changing associations By-Laws to recognize wives/partners/significant others for their work on behalf of the 39th to be full members with all membership privileges. Motion was made to have a committee consisting of the officers research this change and bring it before the membership at the 2016 reunion, motion passed. Jim Shamblen is currently researching "Challenge Coins" for the 39th past and present. New member Bob Jackson

introduced himself as having served with John Lewis; he also informed the group he is compiling the history of the 39th Engineers. 2016 reunion to be held in Plano, Tx. September 21-24, 2016; more information to follow.

With no further business or discussion, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded and passed.

Jim Shamblen gave the Benediction.

Meeting adjourned at 1050AM

Jim Lewis, Secretary

FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

TIMES PAST!

Whenever you travel to locations not in your close proximity to your daily life many new ideas and environments greet your eyes and mind. Once out of New York and New Jersey, I had the chance once again see what the rest of the United States looks like. During my vacation I drove down to this year's 39thers Reunion located in Norfolk, Virginia. Because I drove down by car I had the chance to pass through many small towns and suburban areas along the rural scenic route I traveled through.

The alternate route I took was lined with homes that looked like they were abandoned for many years. These homes were laced within the framework of large plantations and farms that sprawled across all of Virginia. Seeing them decaying made me very sad, and to see so many of them in such disarray and decay brought me to think about who lived there. Abandoned homes have a story in themselves, but it is the lives of those who lived there that intrigued me. Were these people workers in the plantations, or farms? Where did their families and children go after leaving the area? These are the questions that I pondered for sometime as I drove down and back again to New York.

Moreover, what really amazed me were the Churches that found prominence along the route. Not one or two in a mile or so, but more than I could count while driving. The majority of the Churches were Southern Baptist, with schools and playgrounds attached to them. However, there were a plethora of smaller churches built in the no-frills Baptist style. At one major intersection in particular there was a very

large Baptist Church on the left side of the intersection called Morning Star Baptist Church, and the street that crossed in front of it was named Pleasure Boulevard. Who knows were that road once or still leads to? How ironic! Maybe that is why they built a Church there in the first place.

Furthermore, with all these houses left to rot, and there inhabitation long gone, who worships in the cornucopia of local Churches I passed? Times have long gone when these churches were packed with "God Fearing" people, who brought their troubles to the door of God's House. Who were these people? Well simple people struggling to make a life for themselves with the sweat and blood from their brow. Many saw the journey they undertook as impossible and unattainable without the trust and love for God in their hearts. What propelled them forward through the trials and tribulations of life were the many hymns they sang which instilled hope in their hearts along with His ever present mercy. These are very powerful hymns that can move an individual to endure hardship of immense proportions, while simultaneously filling them with a love of God and humanity at the same time.

Finally, today this fervent expression of the faith has slowly dwindled and our Churches and religious institutions are filled only a few times a year by the faithful. Similarly, like the many communities I drove through which were at one time vibrant and flourishing parishes are now ghost towns, but for us they are dying not for the same reason. Why? Because we do not have a high rate of attrition due to an outward movement away from a particular location as the people in Virginia who traveled to find work, but for ours it is a lack of interest.

One of the comments I hear all the time is, "what good does going to Church do for me? Will it help me make money or live a care free life without trouble or sickness?" This is what religion has been reduced to. What can it do for me here on earth? If people continue to think this way they have lost what the simple farmers and share croppers of the back roads of Virginia understood, that He is always with us and looking after us in health or sickness, in drought or abundance, in good times or bad. This is the grace that fills our world and He continues to sustain us no matter what our condition is because He loves us. Amen!

Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros

2015 NORFOLK, VA RECAP



Not even a Hurricane named Joaquin can keep the mighty 39th down. There were, however, many challenges to address. Water, water everywhere was the order of the day and we had plenty. The entire

downtown area was under or nearly under water and this was on the heels of an already very recent wet weather history for the area. At one point, all of our activities were canceled due to the wetness. Thank goodness that the Sheraton Downtown was so accommodating; they really stepped up to the challenge and did everything they could to make our event as pleasant as possible. By the time we were

into our 3rd day we were feeling kinda like ducks, but we could see a break in the weather on the horizon.

The events we had planned came to our rescue and modified their contracts to accommodate us on very short notice when the waters finally did subside. We had a great boat trip in the bay checking out the Navy Yard and all of the ships that were in port, very interesting. The Nauticus and the USS Wisconsin also made concessions that allowed us to get that event in as well and as you can see the group photo was taken on the deck of the Wisconsin. The MacArthur Museum was near the hotel and many of the group were able to make that visit. The banquet was very good and the raffle that followed was rewarding and the proceeds will be put to good use to subsidize part of next year's reunion in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. More about that later in this newsletter.

The highlight of the reunion turned out to be the Hospitality Room (imagine that). What started out to be our general meeting turned into a very informative round table of introductions with stories and details about ourselves and our brothers that held the interest of everyone for a couple of hours. I think it gave a good opportunity for us to clear the air and get some issues off our chests relating back to our tours of duty. I know many of the spouses were captivated to hear our take on our experiences.

All in all, it was another GREAT Reunion despite the circumstances. The only event that was totally canceled was the Air Museum. That was primarily due to the fact that the runways for the biplanes and triplanes is dirt, which was transformed to mud. You just can't fly off of that.

Norfolk is a very interesting location for a reunion and maybe one day we can return to take in more of the unique venues and attractions. We hope that those who could not make it to Norfolk due to the weather will be able to join us in Texas in 2016. We promise - no Hurricanes.

Brothers then, Brothers now, Brothers forever,
 Gale Helser, Reunion Chair
 32423 FM 2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583
 (galehelser@peoplepc.com)
 (956) 367-0999

REUNION CHAIR UPDATE

Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas

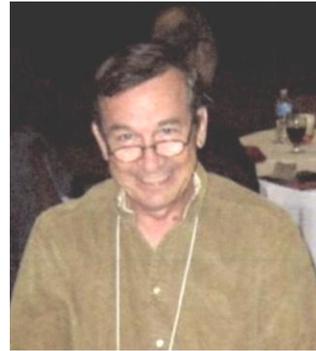
September 21st-25th, 2016 are the dates to block out for this year's reunion. Get ready for a huge Texas Welcome including some events that are not available anywhere else except in Texas. This reunion will be "Operation Cowboy" and I'm not talking about the football team. Get ready for some real hospitality from the state that invented it. The Dallas/Ft. Worth area has so much to offer, it was difficult to decide which events to include.

Here is a sampling of what to expect. Our hotel is located just north of Dallas on Hwy 75 in Plano, Texas, a suburb city of Dallas. Comfort Inn and Suites is offering a very affordable rate of \$79.00 per night and they are ready to start accepting reservations right now. You can call 972-881-1881 which is a direct line to the hotel. Be sure to let them know that you are booking under the 39th Engineer Battalion Reunion Block. This is a newly renovated hotel and the rate includes breakfast.

Some of the events include the Fort Worth Stockyards and cattle drive, Dinner at Joe T. Garcias - a must do place to eat in Fort Worth, and an evening of fun and entertainment at Billy Bob's (the largest Honky Tonk in the world), The Dealey Center in downtown Dallas also known as the Texas Book Depository (the building that Lee Harvey Oswald used to shoot President John F. Kennedy), and we will culminate our reunion with our banquet at the Southfork Ranch, which was the setting for the popular TV show Dallas.

The banquet will be an event to remember and will include entertainment to please everyone. The next newsletter will contain the registration form and additional information. Book your hotel room today; there is no risk involved and you do not have to pay any deposit. Should circumstances prevent you from attending, you can cancel right up to 24 hours prior to arrival. Reserve Today! It makes our planning much easier to have this information as far in advance as possible.

IN MEMORIAM



David Stubblefield
68, of Morristown, died
Wednesday, Sept. 2,
2015, in a plane crash in
Davie County, North
Carolina.

David was the son of Ida
Neal and Fred

Stubblefield, and brother

to Fred (Alma) Stubblefield, Larry (Josie) Stubblefield and Judy (Bobby) Gilmore. His brother, Jerry (Sarah) Stubblefield, perished in the same crash. David studied mechanical engineering at the University of Tennessee and joined Mahle in Morristown in 1981. He retired from Mahle in 2007.

David was an avid pilot, motorcycle enthusiast and talented violinist. He will be greatly missed by his wife, Betsy; daughters, Beth and Amy.

Edward Gac died Oct. 2, 2015 in St. John, Indiana. He is survived by his wife, Deborah and daughter, Lisa. Edward served in A Co., 1970-71 in the 39th Engineer Battalion.



39th Engineer Battalion Alumni
32423 FM 2925
Rio Hondo, TX 78583

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

March 15th for the next newsletter issue.

Please send articles to the editor, Diane Helser at diane_helser@yahoo.com or mail it to Diane Helser, 32423 FM 2925, Rio Hondo, TX 78583. Remember, this is your newsletter and your tool to keep in touch and share information with your Blue Bull brothers.



September 21 - 25, 2016
Dallas/Ft. Worth

Book your hotel room today; there is no risk involved and you do not have to pay any deposit. Just call **972-881-1881** which is a direct line to our hotel – the Comfort Inn and Suites is located just north of Dallas on Hwy 75 in Plano, Texas. Be sure to let them know you are booking under the **39th Engineer Battalion Reunion** Block. They are offering a very affordable rate of \$79.00 per night and they are ready to start accepting reservations right now. This is a newly renovated hotel and the rate includes breakfast.

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