



39TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



December, 2016

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

Another year is fast approaching the end and what a year it has been. A new President of the United States which some people are glad and some are not and a great reunion for the 39th here in the Lone Star state. It was good seeing everyone and we hope that all had as good a time as Carolyn and me. There were a few hiccups along the way but all in all by the end we hope there were no regrets. We want to thank all who attended; it is always good to see you but what we truly miss is the ones who could not attend. The years are speeding by and we so want to get reacquainted with all our Brothers and Sisters so here is hoping that the 2017 reunion in D.C. will allow more to attend.

At this year's reunion general membership meeting we discussed several items like having some of the wives/family members or significant others write short articles for the newsletter about what it is like to attend the reunions and what they liked about it. The other item of interest to you would be having a 39th challenge coin; we are in the process of deciding the right coin for us and hopefully will have them available by the D.C. reunion. Next year we will also be electing officers for 2018-2019 so be there to promote and vote for your candidate. We also passed out to all members in attendance the 50th Anniversary Vietnam Commemoration pin and Vietnam Veteran decal. These will also be available next year in D.C. for the anniversary of the "WALL".

It is with great sadness that I pass along the passing of 4 of our Brothers; it is never easy to lose a Brother but at this time of the year it is even harder. Richard R. Ebert, C Co. 66-67 passed December 18,

2015. Samuel "Sam" Pilkinton, Lifetime member, Unit and years unknown passed March 13, 2016. Holsey Tinsley Jr., A Co. 68 passed April 8, 2016. Michael Barrett, A Co. 71-72 passed July 10, 2016. Obituaries are located elsewhere in the newsletter.

Now for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our new members and Lifetime members. Welcome Home Brothers; we look forward to seeing you at one of our future reunions.

NEW MEMBERS

Marvin Cannon	Bob McDonald	James R. Pittman
C Co. 68-69	HHC ?	HHC 68-69
Thomas Radcliff		Bob Watts
C Co. 66-67		A Co. 71-72

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Raul "Roy" Flores	Bob McDonald	Tom Senick
HHC 65-66	HHC ?	HHC 66
Bob Watts		
A Co. 71-72		

Please remember to send me any changes to your contact information so we are able to stay in touch.

Carolyn and I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone a wonderful Holiday Season; if you travel during this time of the year please be careful and we will see you next year.

BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW, BROTHERS FOREVER

Bill Ray, President
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How many 39ther's does it take to break a bucking bull? See the answer on page 2.

REUNION RECAP



It's a Baker's Dozen taming that bull at Billy Bob's!

And a good time was had by all!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! What more can I say besides this year's reunion in the Dallas/Fort Worth area was a huge success.



It sure helps to have a member of the 39th who lives nearby to attend to some of the finer details of planning and execution of our events. If you are so lucky as to live near one of our future reunions, please consider lending a hand "engineers get it done". Next year will be our anniversary march to our nation's capital.

The visit to the Dealey Center, the location from which Lee Harvey Oswald fired the fatal shot that took President John F Kennedy from us, was a most interesting tour. The building is set up for a self-guided tour with individual head sets and will walk you through all of the events leading up to and culminating with the tragic event. If you were not able to attend, I would highly recommend taking it in should you be in the Dallas Area. We followed that with a fantastic meal at Joe T Garcias in Fort Worth. The food was great and no one left there hungry, another must do if in the area.

We spent an evening at Billy Bob's, the world's largest Honky Tonk; the proof of how much fun that was is evident in the picture of 39ther's and the Bull, it is not blue but we managed to tame it.

Our banquet at Southfork Ranch (the movie set for the nighttime soap opera, Dallas) was some of the best Texas Hospitality and authentic western cuisine and food available. The staff was very helpful, professional and friendly considering we were delayed by nearly an hour due to some transportation snafu's but everyone had a great time and our entertainer did a wonderful job of singing many of the songs that were hits during our tours of duty and involving the audience - it was a riot.



And thank you to our speaker, Lt. Col. Jesse Curry from Fort Reilly, Kansas.

He brought his two sons and they got a chance to talk to some of us old farts.

After the banquet we returned to the hotel for some more entertainment provided by our own Butch Hankins and

several others who sang and provided some musical talent to last into the wee hours of the morning.



A huge congratulations goes out to our Treasurer James Shamblen on being selected as our Bluebull of the year. Congrats, Jim. This is a tradition that we will continue on

an annual basis and will accept nominations from the membership for candidates. Just submit a recommendation to any officer anytime during the year in writing, snail mail or email accepted.

Next year, we will be electing new officers. This is just a plug for anyone who has an interest in serving and helping our organization to grow and prosper. This would be a good time to step up and get involved. It is not a great deal of work and does not take a lot of time, so give it some consideration. Likewise, anyone who might be interested in being an assistant reunion planner, please let me know and I will make arrangements to train you. I could use an assistant and maybe someday a replacement; give it some thought.

The great state of Texas will never be that same now that the 39th has been there.

Gale Helser, Reunion Chair (956) 367-0999
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(galehelser@peoplepc.com)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Many thanks to Gale Helser and his talented wife Diane for their hard work in creating the Plano, Tx. Reunion. Sandy and I had a wonderful time. Bill Ray, Fr. Billy, Jim Shamblen, and Dave Romans work very hard for all of us and we certainly appreciate their efforts. It was our pleasure to laugh and share these good times with you all. Thanking the Lord we were able to attend.

This article is one in a continuing effort to make our membership aware of how Agent Orange has affected Vietnam veterans. Some Facts quoted from VietNow National:

"The history of Agent Orange includes its design for use during the 1940's. Originally used as a farming tool to defoliate and rid weeds from the fields. It was reformulated for use in Vietnam and was originally hand-sprayed by the Army; later the Navy was the first to spray it along the rivers; then the Air Force used planes and helicopters. Needless to say, all nearly branches of the service have used and been affected by AO. As you all know, it is a chemical defoliant used during the Vietnam War to defoliate dense jungle. AO is a mixture of 2, 4, 5, 7-T (trichlorophenoxyacetic acid) and 2, 4-D (dichlorophenoxyacetic) creating an impurity known as "Dioxin". Others agents include:

Pink 1962-1964 (2, 4, 5-T)

White some 2-4-D

Blue

Purple 1/62-64 (2, 4-D and 2, 5, 5-T)

Green (2, 4, 5-T)

and a host of others

Blue destroys vegetation (plants that emerge from seed), and was used mainly for the destruction of grain. **White** was used with AO to destroy the forests of South Vietnam. Other chemicals and insecticides were also used. One of particular interest is Malathion. Malathion was an insecticide and was sprayed from 1967-1972."

More to follow in the next newsletter.

Jim Lewis, Secretary / Co. D, HHC 67-68

Veteran's Service Officer (VSO)

Vietnam Veterans of America

Cell 219-730-8140

CHAPLAIN'S WORDS

When I was growing up in the wonderful borough of Brooklyn, New York in the mid 1940's, what gave most of us kids enjoyment was going to see the Brooklyn Dodgers play at Ebbets Field. The field was not far from where we lived, and on Sunday afternoons after Church and the usual delicious Sunday lunches mom would prepare, dad and I went to the field to watch our beloved team play. Tickets were only seventy-five cents and we sat in the left field bleachers in order to catch a homerun ball. The atmosphere and field appeared to be magical to us young kids and the energy of the crowd was exhilarating. By the start of school in September we all rushed home after class to hear the game on the radio, no real TV yet, and the field didn't have any lights so the games had to be finished before dusk.

Moreover, what a luxury it was to have three major-league baseball teams in New York City that were only a few miles apart. The rivalry between the three teams was enormous, and the fans of each were just as dedicated. The Bronx Bombers (Yankees), New York Giants, and Dem Bums (Brooklyn Dodgers), are the names we called each team. If we (Dodgers) made it through the pennant against the Giants we knew we were going to face the Yankees in the World Series, where we always came up short. "Losing forged a toughness that manifested itself in the Dodgers' most glorious run of all - pennants in 1952-53, 55-56. The 1953 team was most impressive, with Snider (.336, 42 HR, 126 RBI), Campanella (.312, 41 HR, 142 RBI), Furillo (.344, 21 HR, 92 RBI) and Hodges (.302, 31 HR, 122 RBI) in peak form. At the end of each year the slogan that dominated the streets of Brooklyn was always the same, "Wait until next year!"

Well, next year came and went with the same result, and we had to endure another winter without anything to show for our dedication and prayers for Dem Bums. In 1955, it looked like once again we would make it to the pennant and finally to the World Series. I cannot describe what I felt as the season went on. People had their radios outside their windows so all could hear the play-by-play from the now famous announcer Vincent Edward "Vin" Scully. He always started out the same way, "It's time for Dodger baseball! Hi, everybody, and a very pleasant good (afternoon/evening) to you, wherever you may be." He was a New Yorker and understood the attitude of the fans that loved each of their teams. Red Barber, and Mel Allan were a few others that also did play-by-play announcing for the Dodgers.

After seven failing attempts to win the World Series, our time had finally come. With each pitch our hopes of becoming World Champs drew closer. In the past we were so close but in the 9th inning they faded quickly away. This year we said would be different, and the slogan "Wait until next year" was never on our lips. The anticipation of winning a World Series that had eluded us for so many years was once again at our doorstep. Each pitch that Johnny Podres threw brought with it both euphoria and disappointment. The score was 2-0, and we were up once again, but we lost many a game in the 9th inning. To make matters worse we were playing the seventh game in the House that Ruth built, and not Ebbets Field, so the Bombers had last licks. Could we lose another one like before or could we find the strength and grit to grind it out and win?

Miracles do happen, and in the bottom of the 9th inning it happened. First up for the Yankees was Bill Skowron, who grounded out. Next it was Bob Cerv, who hit a fly ball and 2 outs, and finally Elsten Howard, grounded out for the 3rd out. All bedlam broke out in Brooklyn and I can remember people running in the street screaming as if war had ended, but for Brooklyn fans it finally did, "when the Dodgers beat the Yankees in seven games for the franchise's only world championship in Brooklyn." It took them seven games, but the victory set off a wild celebration in the New York borough matched only by the V-E Day celebration a decade earlier.

Finally, it took dedication and determination to reach the pinnacle of baseball for Dem Bums. Disappointment was our slogan, "Wait until next year," but in 1955 we showed the world that a team that played in such a small field could beat the monolithic Bronx Bombers. We all have disappointments in our life, and in order to overcome them we need the same grit that those who played for the Brooklyn Dodgers demonstrated for years. As one of the writers stated above "Losing forged a toughness that manifested itself in the Dodgers . . ." Losing is what can drive a person to go beyond what they think and imagine they cannot do. When you fall, get up and continue to your destination; do not feel sorry for yourself and think that the whole world is against you. Ask God for help and strength to continue on as we did so many times in Brooklyn for our beloved Bums. It is persistence and courage that will enable you to find the prize you are looking for, and not feeling sorry for yourself. Why, because you may miss the blessing coming your way if your eyes are not on the goal, but on the ground. God bless all of you!

Fr. Vasilios (Billy) Bassakyros

A WOMAN'S VIEW

WOMEN, THE 39th REUNION WANTS YOU!!

The 39th Vietnam Combat Engineer Battalion would like to send a special message to the women of our brothers, inviting all of you to join us each year to celebrate and enjoy our soldiers who fought for our freedom and returned to enjoy our great nation with us. Guys, please make sure you share this with your wives or special ladies. Our reunion group works very hard all year to make each reunion memorable and the best it can be.

My husband and I heard about, and attended our first reunion in 2011, and he was very adamant with me before we left for that reunion, that he did not know what to expect and he was not going to relive hard and sad memories, that he had tried to put aside. He said he would turn around and come back home if he was uncomfortable.

One of the first guys that he ran into, he had worked closely with during his time in Vietnam. He and his wife have become our forever friends and we consider the 39th reunion a blessing because of our love for them and all of their family. We have others we've met that way that we cherish. Later, my husband learned that everyone he met had a lot in common with him. I heard things that I had never known before and have a much better understanding of the hardships that our military men go through for our country and their loved ones.

Ladies, we have been to all but one reunion since that time, and always look forward to seeing our friends in common. Just as the guys have formed wonderful friendships, so have the gals. I urge you to consider joining your man at the next reunion. I personally think it means a lot to them to have us with them, learning, supporting them, helping them and having fun with the members & partners of the 39th Vietnam Combat Engineer Battalion that were faithful to keep our nation free.

Please consider our invitation to join us next year and get acquainted. MERRY CHRISTMAS. And, we hope to see you in DC in November.

Shirlie Romans

REUNION 2017

Reunion 2017 -35th Anniversary of "The Wall"

We will be returning once again to our nation's Capital November 8 – 12, 2017 to honor and remember our fallen brothers, and to participate in the comradery of

our fellow 39th's and other Vietnam veterans. This is still the largest gathering of VN vets in the nation.

Our contracted hotel for this reunion is the Washington Dulles Hilton, located in Herndon, VA just minutes from the Washington Dulles Airport. The Hilton is a full service luxury hotel and comes to us for the unbelievable rate of \$99 per night. That's the same rate we paid 15 years ago. The rate also includes a full buffet breakfast in the price; you can't do better than that. The hotel will provide airport transportation to and from Dulles airport and local transportation within 5 miles of the hotel.

Our reunion will be one of the least costly reunions to date. Our only costs will be the hotel, registration and Banquet, making this the most affordable reunion yet. All of our activities and essentially free. The only cost will be getting to and from some of the attractions. The hotel will provide at no cost a shuttle to go to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum located near the Dulles Airport several times a day every day that we are there. On Veterans Day the 11th, the hotel will provide 2 shuttles to and from the Metro Station located minutes from the hotel which is still too far to walk, all day. So the only transportation cost will be your metro pass, which is very reasonable. You can also drive if you wish or even take taxis for local travel. I do not recommend driving into the District of Columbia, as parking is very limited. There is free parking at the metro station if you prefer that rather than taking the shuttle.

There are 60 rooms blocked at this time and I expect them to be sold out rather quickly. Remember, you can make these reservations at NO RISK or COST up front. Reserve today and take up until 48 hours prior to arrival to cancel without any charges should something prevent you from attending. We do have the opportunity to increase our room block, but we need to be able to react quickly. Any increase in the number of rooms available is subject to filling our block first, then is subject to any other group who may contract for rooms which depletes the inventory of available rooms. As well, any other events that may be taking place at the same time as our reunion again depletes their inventory. So you see, if we want to be sure that everyone who wants to go to the reunion will have the opportunity, we need to get our block filled ASAP and contract for additional rooms. Please do your part and reserve early. You can reserve by calling 1-800-HILTONS. By next newsletter, we will have our own reservation web link available.

A registration form and additional information will be coming in the next newsletter in the spring.

39TH ENGINEER MEETING MINUTES

*39th Combat Engineers
General Membership Meeting
Comfort Inn Suites
Plano, Tx*

Sept. 23, 2016

Start time 1200; Opening prayer: Fr. Billy Bassakyros;

Pledge of Allegiance: Bill Ray

Officers present: Bill Ray, President; Dave Romans, VP; Jim Lewis, Secretary; Jim Shamblen, Treas.; Fr. Billy Bassakyros, Chaplain; Gale Helser, Reunion chair; Mike Male, Sgt at Arms; Member-at-large, Oly Guerra

Minutes from the last meeting were read and approved. Treasurer reported cash on hand of \$20,363. Treasurer's report approved as read.

Old Business: Pending adding wives, significant others is under review at this time.

Challenge coins – still investigating design

New Business: Vote taken for 2018 Reunion venue.

Options: Seattle; Milwaukee; New Orleans. Seattle, WA was selected by majority vote.

President Ray announced that there were several handouts available to all for membership. Handouts were donated by the late Edward Gac before his passing in 2015. VSO checklist is available should any member need advice on what is needed to file a claim. VP Romans is taking orders for permanent identification badges.

Activities and schedules for the remainder of the reunion were presented.

Next reunion is in Washington, DC at the Hilton Dulles Airport Hotel, November 8-12, 2017. Address is: 22400 Flagstaff Plaza, Ashburn, VA.

Fr. Billy read the closing prayer. Meeting adjourned at 1230 hrs.

Respectfully submitted: Jim Lewis, Secretary

OBTUARIES



Richard R. Ebert, 69, passed away on Friday, December 18, 2015, at St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac. He was born on November 30, 1946, the son of Vilas and Rosella (nee Wagner) Ebert, and on May 3, 1969, he was united in marriage to Barbara Butzke at St. John Lutheran Church in New Fane. Barbara

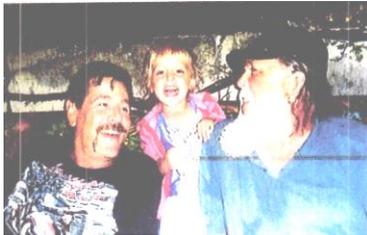
preceded Richard in death on July 10, 2014.

Richard worked at Regal Ware in Kewaskum for 44 years. He enjoyed reading, watching Packer football, shooting pool, shooting tap, and traveling with Barbara. Richard was a longtime member of St. John Lutheran Church in New Fane and the XYZ card club.

Those Richard leaves behind to cherish his memory include his two children, Eric (Tina) Ebert of Campbellsport and Melissa (Chris) Kohnke of Eldorado; four grandchildren, Hailey and Kaitlyn

Ebert and Jacob and Makenna Kohnke; his father, Vilas Ebert of Campbellsport; a mother-in-law, Kathleen Butzke of Campbellsport; two brothers, Norman (Mary) Ebert and Russel Ebert both of Campbellsport; a sister, Donna Schmidt of Campbellsport; two brothers-in-law, David (Cindy) Butzke and Daniel (Kay) Butzke both of Campbellsport, many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

In addition to his wife and mother, Richard was preceded in death by a father-in-law, Melvin Butzke and a nephew, Keith Schmidt.



Michael Barrett (Mike/Grandpa/Popo/Ponytail/Dog), born March 31, 1951 in Bluefield, West Virginia to Eugene (Gene) and Joyce Barrett passed away on July 10, 2016 while doing

one of the things that he loved best, riding his Harley trike. He leaves behind wife, Diane Mobley-Barrett, a daughter, Amy Sue (Louis) Mangiacapra of Mims, FL, two sons, Michael (Courtney) Barrett and Bradley Barrett; three brothers, Eugene (Gene) Barrett, Jr. (Karen) of Charlotte, Gary Lee (Frog) Barrett of Pink Hill and David (Djoni) Barrett of Jacksonville; six grandchildren, Kristal (Nolan) Mulholland of Wichita Falls, TX, Louis (Monica) Mangiacapara of Little Elm, TX, Tyler Mangiacapra of Peoria, IL, Adam Mangiacapra of Clarksville, TN, Isabella (Izzy) Mangiacapra of Mims, FL and Russell Barrett of LA; two great grandchildren, Samuel and Seth Mulholland of Wichita Falls, TX, his uncles, Bill Barrett of Buhl, ID, and Johnny Sadler of Salisbury, MD, his aunt, Launa Barrett of Greensboro, NC, and many very close and dear friends, Moose Lodge members and VFW members. He is predeceased by his parents, Eugene Barrett and Joyce Martha Sadler Barrett, his son, Jason Doss Barrett and his brother, Charles (Chuckie) Barrett.

Mike made a great impact on everyone he met. He never met a stranger, could always find something to talk about to most anyone he met. He loved to fish and deer hunt, volunteered to help at many community functions (Shriner's Fish Fry, Wreaths Across America, care packages to our overseas troops, and so many more). Many of the community/volunteer activities that he was involved in were initiated by him and were very close to his heart.

Mike proudly served our armed forces in the Army during the Vietnam War. Hi truly was a patriot. He respected our flag, expressed his gratitude to his other comrades, flew the flat at his home and wanted all who had ever served our country to be recognized by placing flags at their graves. Although Mike had declining health, he would hold the door for others, helped people get their packages out of their shopping carts, working on friends'

homes when needed and do whatever he could to show his care for others.

Mike had been a long distance driver, was a past employee of Murphy-Brown/Smithfield and Bill Carone of Wallace. He was a life member in the VFW, Cooties and a member of the Wallace Moose Lodge.

Anyone who knew Mike loved him and he loved them, especially his grandchildren. In his last few years (after retiring) he spent

much of this time with his daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren and volunteering for many great causes with his friends. His wish was to have his ashes spread in Bluefield, WV.



From Left to Right: 1st Lt. Alfred Mack, PSG Troesch, 1st SGT Holsey Tinsley, CPT Bruce Elliot, Company A Commander

Holsey "Brother" Tinsley

Funeral services for Sergeant Major Holsey "Brother" Tinsley, Jr. were held Monday at St. John C.M.E. Church with burial in South View Cemetery. The Rev. Marcus J. Rogers officiated. He died April 8 following an extended illness.

Mr. Tinsley was born August 17, 1917 to the late Holsey and Susie Tinsley, Sr. of Monticello. He graduated from the Jasper County Training School and attended Xavier University before enlisting in the U.S. Army and serving throughout World War II.

At the end of his enlistment he returned to Xavier University to complete his Bachelor of Arts degree. He then reenlisted in the Army and served with honors in both the Korean War and in Vietnam. Mr. Tinsley achieved the rank of Sgt. Major in the United States Army (Top Sergeant), the highest noncommissioned officer's rank.

Retiring after 33 years in the Army, he returned to Monticello and became active in the community. At St. John C.M.E. he served as Sunday School Superintendent. In 2002 he was recognized as the Outstanding Citizen of the Year by the Monticello-Jasper County Chamber of Commerce.

Though he never had children of his own, Mr. Tinsley worked tirelessly for the community children which included selling hot dogs at athletic events in addition to planning and participating in summer camps.

He was a charter member of the Bonner Street Civic Club.

In 1985 he married his high school sweetheart, Chase Funderburg, who preceded him in death. He was committed to his family throughout the years, caring for his mother following the death of his father in 1943.

Survivors include his step-children, Patricia Chase and Thomas McJunkins, both of Atlanta; six nieces, Susie Andrews of Washington, D.C., Ruth Jordan and Erica Grant, both of Atlanta, Dorothy Tinsley, Beverly Nesbitt, Marsha Bass, all of Macon; three nephews, Robert Tinsley of Eatonton, Randy Holsey Tinsley of Monticello, and Michael Zanders of Warner Robins; a sister-in-law; two brothers-in-laws; two special friends, Troy Johnson and Dorothy Johnson; and a number of other relatives and friends.

Samuel Talmage “Sam” Pilkinton III

August 23, 1949 – March 13, 2016

Sam was preceded in death by his parents Samuel Talmage Pilkinton Jr and Helen Clark House Pilkinton. He is survived by wife Melinda Walls Pilkinton, son and daughter-in-law Samuel Talmage Pilkinton IV and Shauna Staryak-Pilkinton, siblings Hedi Konieczni, David, Charlie, and Jim and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, his sisters-in-law, and friends.

Sam left Marion Military Academy in 1969 to volunteer for service in the Army. He was age 19 years at the time of his enlistment. After basic and advanced training, he left immediately for Vietnam. He served with many honorable and brave men in the Army including those from the 23rd Infantry Division “Americal” while in Vietnam and in Desert Storm with the 1st Infantry Division (“Big Red One”) in Iraq. Between the two combat deployments he served 25 years, rising to the rank of E-7 in 1978. In 1979 he was promoted to Warrant Officer 1 while serving with the 541st Engineer Battalion in Germany. He returned to the U.S. to attend Warrant Officer School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and was then assigned to Fort Polk, Louisiana. His family remained at Fort Polk while Sam served two tours in Korea and numerous temporary duty assignments. He retired as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 in 1993.

Sam was awarded the following decorations: five Army Achievement medals, seven Army Commendation Medals, three Meritorious Service Medals, three Purple Hearts, Bronze Star with Valor and Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Legion of Merit. His awards include numerous campaign medals from the Republic of Vietnam and Southwest Asia.

Following military retirement, he and Charlie built Pilkinton Brothers Catfish Farm where Sam worked for the next 18 years. Sam was self-employed at the time of his death. He had several business interests: cattle, farm supply, dirt work, and land management. What he did exactly is not crystal clear, but

whatever it was, he did a lot of it. He worked all the time, for himself and for others. He liked to help people – he thrived on making everything better. He has stopped to cut fallen trees in the road during storms, changed numerous flat tires, picked up friends when they have been down and was enriched and validated by every helpful act – large or small. It was his privilege to serve others and he did it every day with an open heart and no expectation of personal gain. He would give you the shirt from his back – but if you crossed him, he would tell you in exacting terms what he thought.

He was known for opinionated views which he shared generously. He abhorred waste, corruption, stupidity, and deceitfulness. Those categories alone kept him busy – he did not have to look far for material for which to opine openly. Thank goodness he had a wonderful coffee group every morning with local businessmen who would argue, debate, challenge, and laugh with him. My deepest appreciation goes to all of you at the Ramada: I am saner for your sacrifices.

Bovine clichés apply to Sam: ‘bull-headed’, and ‘bull-in a china shop’ come to mind readily. He was rough and tumble; he would take on any fight if he sensed injustice, as he perceived it. He championed his friends and family with a fierceness that might not be replicable. But there was a softer side. His favorite book as a child was “Ferdinand the Bull”, which his father read to him. In the book, the character Ferdinand was strong but gentle. I think there is a parallel between Sam and Ferdinand. Sam was caring and loving with his cows and calves, barn cats, his house cat George, and his beloved Smooth Fox Terriers: Polly, Gus, and Precious. His association with animals gave him peace and contentment. He always said that if God lets people come back to earth after death as other life forms, then he wanted to be a bull... nothing to do all day but eat and... well... a reference most farmers can appreciate.

Sam died suddenly on his farm doing what he enjoyed most. We were working on a project the day of his death and visiting with a friend. His passing leaves a void not only in his corner of the world, but ripples outward in every direction. With loved ones scattered far and wide, he will be missed.

Sam donated his body to the Anatomical Gifts program at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. A memorial service is planned for March 19th at 2pm at Magowah Gun and Country Club. A private burial will be held at a later time.

The family requests, in lieu of flowers, memorials should go to a charity of the donor’s choice.



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Green Valley, AZ 85614

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Let's make Reunion 2017 a "Family Affair"

In the past, we have encouraged our members to bring their spouse or significant other with them to the reunion.

We really are an organization that includes our wives, etc. With our next reunion in Washington, DC, it's a great time to expand our attendee base. Some of our members have invited their children and sometimes close friends. This is something we would like to encourage and bring more families into the mix. There are so many family-oriented things to do – the Smithsonian Museums, the Kennedy Center, Ford's Theatre, the Holocaust Museum, and the Reagan Center just to name a few. Don't forget all the memorials and monuments dedicated to WWII, Korea and Vietnam as well as the 3 Soldiers, the Nurses' Statue, the Roosevelt Memorial and the new Black History Museum.

Someday we may need our family to assist us in making these reunions possible. After all, most of us are not getting any younger. I know that by inviting my own children to attend, they learned a lot about what we, the Nam vet, are all about and what the significance of the war was because they were not learning about it in school. You'd be doing yourself and your family a favor by inviting them to join us.



November 8-12, 2017

WASHINGTON, DC

Book your hotel room TODAY; there is no risk involved and you do not have to pay any deposit. Just call **1-800-HILTONS** to book your room. Be sure to let them know you are booking under the **39th Engineer Battalion Reunion Block**. They are offering a very affordable rate of \$99.00 per night, which includes a buffet breakfast each day, and they are accepting reservations right now. And, for anyone requiring a handicapped room, please be sure to request that when you make your reservation. Should circumstances prevent you from attending, you can cancel right up to 48 hours prior to arrival.

Reserve Today before our block of rooms fills up!