

Issue #13



Thanks to all who generously support this Newsletter!

What a gathering! With somewhere between 650-700 in attendance, it was our largest ever. Each reunion, I find it hard to believe that we can “out-do” ourselves from the previous one, but sure enough, we did!

Thank You, John, from all hands!



John Mick

2008 Reunion Issue

Ya' got yur ears on?



The banquet hall filled to capacity on Saturday evening, as we all gathered to honor our fallen, and share a meal together. Memorable doesn't even come close to describing the week!

Call me sappy, but I'm in tears as I begin this Newsletter report ... it was such a moving experience to share time with these men and their families, and families of our fallen Marines.

We had well over 100 1st timers, and most we will see again in DC in 2010.

Due to financial considerations, it was determined to change venue from Hawaii in 2010 to Washington D.C. DC is a great Marine Corps destination, and this will be our 5th gathering there. Can't wait to see the Evening Parade at 8th & I again. Makes even a squid proud!

2012 is to convene in Branson MO. There is a new airport being constructed there, and will be in full operation in a year. Branson is centrally located and VERY Vet oriented. Film at 11 ...



The Missing Man place setting

Beginning each banquet is the Colors Ceremony, followed by the honoring of our fallen comrades, so that they may join us in spirit as we celebrate.

Francis McGowin has performed this ceremony in full dress at many of our reunions.

Assisting him, were family members of our fallen Marines:

Ann Ard and France Holland, sisters of Billy Henderson, represented the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters.

Steve Cutshall, brother of David Cutshall, carried the flag, representing the fathers, brothers, and sons.



H & S (partial)



Lima Co. (partial)



India Co (partial)



Kilo (partial)



Mike Co. (partial)



Haircuts between incoming ...

Ed McCourt shared an email and attached photo of Capt. Ripley giving a haircut to Major Stanley (Stosh, Stan, Ski) Wawrzyniak.

Ted Phelps

Rip said, "What a hell of a man/Marine! He was our XO in 2nd Force Recon and a few years later XO again in 3/3, Vietnam. His leadership, field skills and ability to walk into a group of Marines and have them howling within minutes was legendary."

"For some reason I fell in on Stan's good side as did Machete Eddie McCourt and he would convince the Bn CO that one of the two of us should always be on point. When another unit would get us lost, as happened often in the jungle highlands west & north of Dong Ha, we would be pulled out of line and told to "unf*** that mess up there...and get this G** D**** column moving!" He had an endearing term he used for those he liked and after

servicing with him twice I thought my name was Lt, then later "Capt Peckerhead".

If you were called by your given name that was a sign of trouble. Even today I smile when I hear the term."

Col. John W. Ripley, USMC (ret.)

Maj Ski died 10/15/1995 in Swansboro NC

Except from email:

I have attached a picture above of then "Maj Ski" as our Marines called him and myself at the Rockpile with Mutter Ridge in the background. He was down having a look at my company position which was isolated from the rest of the battalion. We had had a number of very successful patrols uncovering much enemy ordnance along with some good kills. Stan loved it! Just before a helo showed up to take him back to the Bn CP he saw our company clippers, threw them to me, and said "gimmie a haircut peckerhead". So there sits the legendary Stan Wawrzyniak on an 81 mortar box getting a field haircut from one of his approved peckerheads.

Over the years I have come to treasure this picture – no faces apparent, dust & tank tracks on a godforsaken fire base between the Rockpile & Razorback, and a couple of grunt Marines doing what came natural; getting haircuts between the incoming (which would start again as soon as Stan's helo arrived).

Col. John W. Ripley, USMC (ret.)
(cont)

Major Ski would don his flack jacket and a pair of heart emblazoned skivvies, while clutching the stub of a cigar in his jaws

and walking about in the open when we had incoming mortars. He would tell everyone else to keep their heads and asses down until the all-clear was sounded. All the while never taking cover himself. He finally caught some shrapnel and his first 3/3 PH on March 25, 1967 while on a sweep with Kilo Company. Must not have been wearing his "lucky shorts" that day. Probably rotted away and disintegrated like the rest of our grunt grundies had done long since.

Doc Hardin

Mini-Reunion

Mike company marines: I went to Phil, PA. My wife had a medical seminar in Philly, so I went along and looked around. I was really impressed with the history of the town. I rented a vehicle and drove down to Lancaster, PA and visited with Mike Co's weapons plt. NCO Norman Buck. I thanked him for coming up and getting me out of a really tight spot under the NVA's guns on March 6, 1968. I told his daughter Abby that to me she had about the bravest guy for a dad any one could ever have. Thanks to Buck, I was medivaced out on a gunship that day and taken to Japan and finally Navel Hosp. in SD Ca. 3 wks later I got to hold my little girl who was born 6 days after we got ambushed. So to Buck and the other marines who got me on that lone gunship that frightful day - Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I try not to take any day lightly and I try to find someone to help. Though not too many marines here, I try to help all those I can. It blesses me more than them and I get a warm feeling. So guys, though your not here in body, your here with me in spirit. May be mike

company will be alive as long as one of us is. Thanks, Robert Tex Dorman M/3/3 67-68 7/21/08

When two Marines and/or Corpsmen get together, it's a reunion!

Never miss an opportunity to meet with an old buddy. Especially now that we can never be sure there will be a next time.

Reach out to them and share a conversation or time together. The number of phone calls, emails, letters, etc. that I've received since the reunion is astounding.

Ton's of pictures! Unfortunately I'm a bit limited in the number I can include here.

The pictures show the joy shared by old comrades, but it is the conversations both during and after the reunion that astound me.

The number of special connections made with old buddies was countless, and the number of poignant meetings of those whose lives were crucial to each other back then ... well, it was overwhelming... Marines hugging Marines, Marines hugging Doc's (*and both in tears*) ... it was a special time.

NEXT REUNIONS

Orlando is history. And on we go to the planning of the next reunions.

Hotels are being scouted, and will be thoroughly researched to insure they can provide the facilities and amenities that we need in order to make the reunions as pleasant and memorable as possible.

Likewise, the areas are being combed for attractions to entertain and/or educate us.

D.C., for 2010, is top notch for USMC activities. The Iwo Memorial, Arlington cemetery, the new USMC museum at Quantico, the Wall, 8th & I for the evening parade, and many others. It would seem there are toooo many options!

Yet it does make for a busy and engrossing venue.

There will probably be a modification in the hospitality area, with a leaning toward a cash bar. This is just an idea at this point, but would alleviate a lot of liability and problems easily and effectively.

Also, we are looking at having AFRI handle the arrangement and registrations as with several prior reunions. It's simply overwhelming to have to deal with all that, along with the myriad of details the sponsoring individuals have to cope with for two years prior to the reunion, right through the reunion, and afterwards for a few months. AFRI's experience brings a lot more savvy on how to get the best deals with the hotel, events transportation, etc.

Tiger Dave is already scouting the potential facilities, etc. in Branson for 2012. The airport at Branson will be in service by mid-year next year, and should be running smoothly by the time we get there, as well as more flights from more destinations.

The reunion sponsors can always use assistance, and it will be much appreciated. Care should be taken not to solicit for private businesses

however. You can't believe the number of businesses that come out of the woodwork at the hint of a group reunion! It just clogs up the works!

Begin now making plans to attend. Get in touch with your comrades and get them thinking also. Network and share rides, rooms, ... whatever it takes to attend. It's an all hands effort!

Attitude is Everything

Joseph Kinney | July 24, 2008

Thirty-nine years ago I was shot in an ambush while a Marine on a night patrol in Vietnam. I had potentially fatal wounds to my chest and a serious wound to my right leg. To put matters bluntly, I had never been more terrified in my life. Would I die? And if I died, would I go to heaven? I also thought about the buddies I was leaving behind. Somehow, I wanted to believe that they would be better off without me to slow them down.

The next morning I woke up at a hospital in Da Nang. The doctors told me that my days as a fighting Marine were over. Somehow, I felt that I had more to give but wouldn't get the chance.

My history is relevant only because there are huge differences between then and now when it comes to our Wounded Warriors. For the past couple of years I have had the privilege of knowing Col. Jack Cox (USA, ret.) who is a stalwart in the Wounded Warrior Program at Fort Bragg. He has been a great friend and mentor, and has taken the time to introduce me to some of this generation's wounded.

There are at least two important differences between my generation and

the young men I have seen at Fort Bragg's Womack Hospital which is near where I live. For openers, the Army acts as if the wounded person is going to remain forever a soldier. That is their basic operating assumption moving forward. Second, the attitude of these kids is amazing. These brave warriors, no matter how badly wounded they are, believe that they will soon be back with their units fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Today, there are 17 Marines who are amputees fighting in Iraq. I am certain that there are as many soldiers doing the same for the Army.

Recently, I received a widely distributed email from Col (Dr.) Brett Wyrick. He was a trauma surgeon at Balad Air Base in Iraq.

He wrote: "If I ever hear (anyone) griping and complaining, I jump into them pretty quickly, now. Most people over here have nothing to gripe about compared to Marines. Marines are different. They have a different outlook on life . . .

"One Marine Private was here for several days because he was a lower priority evacuation patient. He insisted on coming to attention and displaying proper military courtesy every morning when I came through on rounds. He was in a great deal of pain, and it was a stressful to watch him work his way off the bed and onto his crutches. I told him he was excused and did not have to come to attention while he was a patient, and he informed me he was a good Marine and would address ' . . . Air Force colonels standing on my feet, sir.'

I had to turn away so he would not see the tear in my eye. He did not have 'feet' because we amputated his right leg below the knee on the first night he came in.

"I asked a Marine Lance Corporal if there was anything I could get him as I was making rounds one morning. He was an above the knee amputation after an IED blast, and he surprised me when he asked for a trigonometry book. 'You enjoy math do you?' He replied, 'Not particularly, sir. I was never good at it, but I need to get good at it, now.' 'Are you planning on going back to school?' I asked. 'No sir, I am planning on shooting artillery. I will slow an infantry platoon down with just one good leg, but I am going to get good at math and learn how to shoot artillery.' I hope he does.

"I had the sad duty of standing over a young Marine sergeant when he recovered from anesthesia-despite our best efforts there was just no way to save his left arm, and it had to come off just below the elbow. 'Can I have my arm back, sir?' he asked. 'No, we had to cut it off, we cannot re-attach it,' I said. 'But can I have my arm?' he asked again. 'You see, we had to cut it off.' He interrupted, 'I know you had to cut it off, but I want it back. It must in a bag or something, sir.' 'Why do you want it?' I asked. 'I am going to have it stuffed and use it as a club when I get back to my unit.'

I must have looked shocked because he tried to comfort me, 'Don't you worry now, colonel. You did a fine job, and I hardly hurt at all; besides I write with my other hand anyway.'

Now, please tell me that these young guys aren't the Greatest Generation that has ever lived.



Reminiscing



L-R: Lee Ashburn, John Ripley, Chuck Goggin

I went to the reunion in Orlando FL in July. What a time I had seeing Marines that I fought with in Nam, and seeing my squad leader, the CO of Kilo, and my 2nd fire team leader. My wife and I spent the nite with him and his wife and son. His son now calls us his aunt and uncle. If you have never been to one before, go in 2010. And meeting other Marines, and their wives, who were in Nam before and after me. I give thanks to Doc Hoppy, John Mick, Doc Hardin, Craig, and all who help put the reunion together. You men did a hell of a job. Love you brothers ...

Richard A. "Burn" Newburn Saturday, 8/2/08



Doc McBride and amigos



Starlighter's and more

One of the things Corpsmen were supposed to do was to get to know you. First name, wife's/girlfriends name, hometown, etc. I took that to heart and acquired lots of demographic info. For example, I still remember Frank Palma's wife's name. That familiarity was a strong motivating factor with this Doc. However, at the reunion, I was reminded of an incident where I committed a major fox pass (faux pas in CA) on 12/9/66. After inventing a few new "dance steps" to get to him, I worked my magic on Johnny Sumlin. When I was ready to get the hell out of there, I patted him on the shoulder and said, "You'll be all right, Bob".



Good conversation, good memories



Sr's Corner?

When you have personalized death, looked into the eyes of innocent people as the life drained out of them, watched human lives torn apart not once but hundreds of times—friends, enemies, and those caught in between—it brings not only sadness but also an oddly stubborn wisdom. When you have watched an enemy fight with ferocity and often with honor, you tend to conclude that on some level you have more in common with those you were trying to kill than you do with people who view wars only as an intellectual debate. And when you have served among good people, fellow Marines, some of whom you came to love with the same intensity as you do your own family, there are few others you will meet in your lifetime who can ever gain that same level of trust and respect. (James Webb ... A Time To Fight)

*Semper Fi,
Nick Wiltse
"Mike" Co., 3rd Platoon, 3/3*

Deceased 2007 - 2008		
H&S		
Doc WILLIAM D. BECKWITH	05/03/08	ALVIN E. HAFFORD 03/10/07
PETER D. LEONARD	03/16/08	HOWELL D. HUNNICUTT 02/16/07
ANDREW W. PATAKI	02/28/08	Doc BRUCE E. OLSON 02/07/07
Lima		
ROBERT B. WATSON	02/27/08	RICHARD W. ZEIGLER 04/19/08
ROBERT J. JENKINS	12/21/07	EARL M. RAY 02/26/08
JAMES P. MELVILLE	10/11/07	TONY E. AGOSTI 01/08/08
RONALD E. SHARER	09/18/07	JAKE B. SIMS 10/27/07
Doc RONNIE E. EPPERSON	09/14/07	WILLIAM P. ALVARADO 09/12/07
B. RICHARD MAJOR	07/31/07	DENNIS J. FAIRFIELD 06/13/07
JOHN R. MURPHY	07/01/07	JOSE R. GALAVIZ 05/23/07
GARY P. WLODYKA	06/25/07	BENJAMIN C. MICHAEL 01/18/07
WILLIAM JOHNSON Jr.	06/12/07	ALFRED H. ADAMS III 01/18/07
Mike		
KENNETH A. DILLON	05/24/07	WILLIAM C. DICKSON 07/04/08
WALTER R. Russ HAUCK	04/07/07	LARRY W. McKENZIE 04/02/08
Doc AUSTIN RAY HENSLEY	02/25/07	JAMES R. STEPHENS 02/21/08
JACK W. RUBY	01/06/07	Doc "Dutch" VANBENCOTEN 01/29/08
PAUL E. BAILEY	02/21/07	Doc ROBERT L. CLARK 12/24/07
ROBERT H. SAWYER Jr.	01/06/07	ROBERT SMITH 10/28/07
India		
RAYMOND B. MARTIN Jr.	04/15/08	TERRY A. FULLER 10/24/07
THOMAS L. REIDER	03/27/08	JAMES F. SAWTELL Jr. 10/19/07
JOHN F. SISSON Jr.	12/19/07	JACK L. COST 09/27/07
RICHARD R. LEHMAN	10/31/07	GARY C. RAUCH 09/09/07
DAVID P. SMELTSER	08/07/07	ERNEST S. WEAVER 08/25/07
RICHARD W. WALKO	03/31/07	DENNIS E. MEREDITH 08/07/07
CHARLES R. ENOS	03/31/07	KEVIN T. SWEENEY 08/07/07
Kilo		
CALIXTO SILVIA	07/10/08	LEOREN H. MARTIN 07/04/07
W. ALAN CAWLEY	02/03/08	JOSEPH DIXON 06/23/07
JAMES A. WRIGHT	07/24/07	FRANK ADOLPH 06/11/07
DAVID A. RAMSEY	07/15/07	BRUCE E. ROBBINS 06/08/07
WILLIAM L. BOND Jr.	06/18/07	LOUIS A. ZIMMERMANN 06/01/07
GARY F. FERRELL	05/02/07	CHARLES W. VAUGHT 05/17/07
JOSEPH F. WALKER III	04/12/07	WILLIAM F. SHANDS Jr. 05/15/07
ERWIN B. ROBERTSON	03/22/07	WILLIE R. HUTCHERSON 04/20/07
		TED M. DUDASH 02/02/07



Engineers Group (partial)



Honorees for service to reunions

LR: Francis McGowin, Mike Harrington, T.J. Kelly, Doc Hardin, Craig Slaughter, Doc Hoppy, John Ripley, Otto Lehrack and John Mick at podium.



Mike 1965 crew (partial)



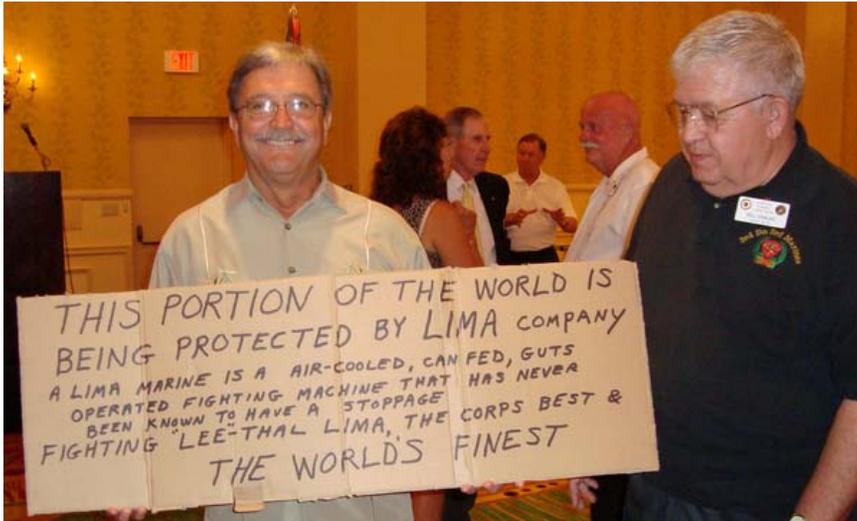
Doc's at Reunion (partial)



Our Doc's just love their Marines ...



... and our brewskies!



Bob Bolson, Bill Chalko (braggin')



Cal Morris and Glenn Johnson



Happy campers!



Ron Biecht & Walter Clarke



Doc doing his "shtick"

This newsletter is supported basically from donations and from the net sales of our 3/3 Coins. It is mailed out 3 times per year to our 3/3 alumni, *to those requesting it*, who do not have Internet access. There is no compensation for printer costs or computers, etc. All funds are used only for basic costs of paper, inks, envelopes and postage. No one is compensated one dime for their efforts. 3/3 RVN Ass'n and ThirdMarines.net have NO dues (*we all paid those long ago!*). 3/3 RVN Ass'n Reunions are supported independently.

All issues of the newsletters are at:

<http://www.mikecompany33.com/0NewsLtr/NwsLtr.html>

The locator website is at: <http://www.ThirdMarines.net> (*roster access via this page*)

The original Bn home site is at: <http://members.aol.com/gruntusmc/index.shtml>

India Co. site: <http://www.homestead.com/dochoppyshelp/indiaco.html>

Kilo Co. site: <http://www.homestead.com/dochoppyshelp/kiloco.html>

Lima Co. site: <http://www.L33namvets.com/index.html>

Mike Co. site: <http://www.MikeCompany33.com>

There are numerous other sites by our alumni, found in the Links pages of ThirdMarines.net (above) ... as well as links to most USMC Nam units, and other sites of interest ...

If you have online access, and email, please let us know so that we can control our mailing list and keep a handle on costs. *The online version is basically identical to the printed version, and all issues are archived and available online.*

I hope you enjoy our efforts, and please contact us for info on old comrades that you may wish to get in touch with. We are locating more every day, and would love to be able to send out a roster to everyone... however, more than 5,300+ have been contacted at this writing (07/25/2008), and the list grows daily. Too many to print, but updated daily online.

Call, e-mail or write Doc Hoppy for a specific individual(s). Additionally, we may be able to provide documentation to assist with VA Claims, or obtain un-awarded PH's. We have documented over 3,400 individual Purple Hearts, 650 who were KIA with 3/3 (*or subsequent units*), and have documented over 1,300 who are known deceased since Nam. That last group is growing all too quickly.

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 Note: Award missed in last issue...  
 [Mine was awarded for June 1-6, 1969]

**Dysentery Squirts Medal** (w/ TP clusters)

