



Newsletter of "The Ghost Battalion"

Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Bn 1st Marines

www.FirstMarines.org



Volume 16 Issue 1

February 2018

Upcoming 2018 New Orleans Reunion November 6th to 12th



Crowne Plaza New Orleans Airport 2829 Williams Blvd Kenner, LA 70062 (504) 467-5611
Rooms \$119 / night. Cut Off Date October 5, 2018 for reunion room rate (or a hotel room during the period).

The selected city for the 2018 VV 2/1 Reunion is New Orleans. As customary, a recon team of VV 2/1 Board members is sent to the reunion location to select a hotel and assess local amenities.

The recon team of Phil and Sally Leslie and Tim Dunn went to Louisiana in the sultry month of August to make their assessments and concluded that the best options for the reunion are:

Crowne Plaza New Orleans Airport offered the best deal in the area for these reasons:

Free parking of any sized vehicle. This is HUGE in New Orleans. Most parking lots start at \$25/day. Hotels do not own the parking garages, they are separately owned and managed (and are expensive).

Free breakfast. Not available at other hotels.

Ball Room capacity. We have grown and seat over 300 per banquet. The Downtown New Orleans hotels could not accommodate more than 200.

Price. \$119/night. Downtown New Orleans hotels started in the high \$120s/night, and they couldn't guarantee rooms for our reunion length.

Close to Downtown but closer to local restaurants. Downtown is accessible by jumping on the Interstate (15 – 25 mins). Local restaurants (and national chain restaurants) are a very short drive (or walk) in either direction from the hotel.

Day Trip to WWII Museum. VV 2/1 will sponsor transportation to the WWII Museum in the Warehouse District of New Orleans. This fascinating and unique museum is a series of buildings that contain theatres, a flying fortress bomber, a restaurant, a P-40 fighter, a gift shop, or a torpedo bomber. We are negotiating with the museum for a group rate and other types of amenities. Do not miss this excursion. It is a fantastic visit. You'll even get snowed on! Stay tuned, we'll be sending more information on this trip.

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Upcoming 2018 Reunion - Continued

Day Trips, Excursions and Transportation. The hotel is actually in Kenner, LA, about 17 – 20 miles from town. Various vendors met with our recon team to discuss transportation options which will be finalized during the mid-year Board meeting. We are also reviewing local excursion and tour options for our members to consider.

The recon team stayed several nights in the hotel and ate several meals in its restaurant and had no complaints. The hotel is sufficiently removed from the airport and the noise is abated. Hotel shuttle service works very well and the rooms were neat, clean and comfortable. The staff is friendly and accommodating. This looks like a good place.

As an added bonus, our recon team got a first-hand look at how the hotel accommodates a reunion. Their last night was the first night of a Star Trek convention – costumes, makeup, and all! Our recon team slipped away in their ghillie suits, scotches in hand to a safer vantage point. But the hotel did well, so we should have a good reunion and a good stay at this hotel.

Attention Reunion Banquet Attendees



In the past our Association has lost money trying to guess how many meals are needed for the Banquet. Because of this, the Banquet Committee has decided that banquet tickets must be paid for prior to the reunion.

Many of our members already pay in advance and we are asking everyone to do this going forward. Advanced payment will give the committee a more accurate meal count to give the hotels. We are asking anyone attending the Banquet to please send the Treasurer their payment by 31 October. The price of the dinners are \$55.00.

Make all checks payable to Vietnam Veterans of 2/1

Meals requested after 31 October cannot be guaranteed seating the night of the Banquet.

Please contact our Treasure, Mario Sagastume, with any questions at: 530-521-3298

From Tim Dunn

Brother Marines and Corpsmen – Thank you for the honor of electing me as VV 2/1's secretary. My association with our organization began with members of Hotel Company gathering in Quincy, Massachusetts in 1985 for the christening of AK-3009 Pfc Dewayne T. Williams (Hotel MOH posthumously). From there, as you know the organization grew into what it is today – a great group of Marine Vietnam Veterans committed to comradery.

I served in the second platoon of Hotel Company from mid-August to the end of December 1966 as a rifleman and a company sniper before being transferred to 1st Marines Scout Snipers in January 1967.

As with many of us over the years, my active participation with VV 2/1 was dependent on work schedules and other life demands. Since actively participating in the reunions over the last few years, I have reacquainted with Vietnam buddies – Larry Lelito (Hotel) and Ted Umbehagen (Echo). Meeting old buddies is energizing for me, as I am sure it is for you, and I hope to meet more at future reunions.

I was also motivated to take an active role in the organization. Ben Dickson, VV 2/1's long-serving secretary, set an example of excellence that makes assuming this position a smooth transition.

The officers and trustees of VV 2/1 are a very dedicated group of veterans. I look forward to working in this group to make our reunions enjoyable ones and to pass along helpful information regarding ser-vice related issues important to members of our organization.

Semper Fidelis



Tim Dunn

Presidents Message

Phil Leslie

I Phil Leslie the Officers and Trustees [The Board] sincerely wish all a new year filled with great health, family, friends, and spirit. And speaking of years, 2/1 sailed for Vietnam 53 years ago, this year. Where has the time gone? And, this past year really went quick; here and gone in a blink.

The 2017 Reunion at Holiday Inn Key Bridge, Rosslyn VA was well attended as we had 26 room nights [1 free room night for every 40 room nights booked = 1040 nights]. Plus we had 15 overflow rooms at the Marriott just down the street [no room night credit for these nights].

The Board learned a lesson on the Hospitality Room supply system. Stock up Big Time on day one! Several of us spent some part of each day heading to the Ft Meyer PX or Costco to purchase adult beverages and snacks. Mike Valdez had this down to a science. He stocked up big time on day one; lesson Learned!

Although the next DC reunion is not scheduled until 2021, your Board will start doing research on hotels in the DC area. The Holiday Inn has been a mainstay for many many years, but we still need to check out other options to get the best we can for our members and guests. In the past, the Holiday Inn had a contract proposal for the next reunion ready for signatures.

However, this year, the management was silent on this when asked about a future contract. We will scour the area for another hotel close to transportation and restaurants.

The Board is now in the planning stages for the 2018 Reunion which will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel, 2829 Williams Blvd, Kenner, LA during the period Thursday, 8 Nov thru Monday 12 November. Rooms are available at our rate of \$119 with breakfast for 2 included. Also there is no daily parking fee [\$20 / day] for our members. The Board will meet at the hotel sometime this Spring / early Summer to hash out the nitty gritty details with the hotel staff as well as look over sight seeing opportunities. Secretary Tim Dunn and I visited the hotel mid 2017.

The one venue that we believe all members would enjoy is the National World War Two Museum. We will try to obtain reduced ticket prices as well as provide bus transportation to and from the museum. (www.nationalww2museum.org).

The New Orleans Saints home game schedule is not out yet. See you in New Orleans

Semper Fi, Phil Leslie



Treasurer's Report

As of the time of this printing, our bank balance is \$29,785.15. This amount is unencumbered, meaning we have no liabilities and our liquidity is in excellent shape.

As you all know, we opted, some years ago to eliminate monetary membership dues. It was determined that we paid our dues with blood, sweat and tears in Viet Nam. We are life members by that mere fact. We depend on your generous donations, which are always welcome no matter the size.

If any member would like a copy of our most current Financial Statements, please let me know. We operate on a fiscal year running from 01-OCT-30-SEP. It is a great honor to hold the position of Treasurer of this Organization and I thank you for that privilege.

Mario Sagastume
Fox '67.



Aka: Amada the Pirate





I would like to comment on the November reunion. The first two activities were the White House and Pentagon tours. The Secret Service didn't do us any favors in capping the number of attendees and giving us the same day that had been arranged for the Pentagon tour. Most that had their names drawn in the Secret Service Lottery opted for the White House. The Pentagon tours shrunk accordingly and a further disappointment was all of the last minute cancellations. The second group had a surprise when the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps invited (maybe not a strong enough word) them into his office for a Q&A. From what I heard, all three groups enjoyed their tours. On Saturday's trip to the National Museum of the Marine Corps we had a very informal wreath lying at our beautiful monument. The problem is there is just not enough room at the monument site for a formal program. Maybe next DC reunion we can make arrangements for a more structured program inside the museum. The Sunday banquet had its starts and stops. The hotel didn't seem to have enough help particularly when it came time to serve dessert. **LtGen and Mrs Toolan really enjoyed their time with us. They didn't leave the PX area until 11:00 PM listening to stories visiting with the brothers. Mrs Toolan emailed me describing her surprise and appreciation for the donation to the Semper Fi Fund.** In all, I thought it was a great reunion.

Additionally, maybe you haven't noticed but we are getting older. It seems every week Vinnie sends out a "Taps Notice" The youngest any of our members can be, unless they lied about their age, is 65 by June this year. (1971 we left Vietnam - 18 minimum age for deployment to Vietnam = 1953 birth year, 2018 - 1953 = 65) My point is, if you ever want to see someone you served with or just be with guys that shared the same experience's, now is the time. My personnel experience was that I got to see Don Pirtle at several reunions. We were in the same squad for about 11 months and before the 2009 DC reunion hadn't seen each other for 39 years. He passed a couple of years ago but the memory of him is more vivid and up to date. I'm glad we had a little time together. Over several reunions we shared memories and made new ones. Don't miss the opportunity to renew friendships and see the people we call "Our Brothers" before its too late.

Looking forward to New Orleans in November and remember we're always looking for volunteers.

Dale Williams, 2/1 Vice President



Membership Meeting**Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines****Annual Membership Meeting
Sunday November 12, 2017
Arlington, Virginia****Officers:**

Philip D. Leslie, President
Lansdale B. Williams, Vice President
Benjamin L. Dickson, Secretary
Mario A. Sagastume, Treasurer

Trustees:

Vin Burdziuk (Webmaster)
Timothy Dunn
Bruce Oliver
Jose Perez
Jesse Tipton

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Vietnam Veterans of the 2nd Battalion 1st Marines (VV 2/1 or Association) was **Called to Order** by President Philip D. Leslie, following which, he led the assembly in the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

In attendance were all the Officers and Trustees of VV 2/1 and 100 members of the Association.

President Philip D. Leslie – Opening Comments. Phil noted to the assembly how much we have grown! He noted that the response to this reunion has exceeded all expectations and that he and the Board glad to see everyone.

Vice President Lansdale B. Williams – Comments. Dale welcomed the membership, especially the new attendees. He reminded the members that purchasing bricks for our memorial site through the association economically helps VV 2/1 with reduced costs and guarantees that the brick will be placed at the memorial and not randomly throughout the memorial park. Dale noted the positive response on table reservations for the annual banquet, which will be continued as long as it works well.

Treasurer Mario A. Sagastume gave the Treasurer's Report. VV 2/1 is solvent with a small cash reserve in a dedicated VV 2/1 bank account. VV 2/1 uses September 30th as its fiscal year-end date. The Association will make its annual IRS filing on a Form 990 EZ Report. Any member is welcome to look at the books of the Association upon request. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Secretary's Report. The motion was unanimously accepted by the membership.

Secretary Benjamin L. Dickson gave the Secretary's Report. The report was the 2016 Membership Meeting Minutes. Dickson reminded the membership that the minutes will be on the Association's web site for all to view. The 2016 Membership Meeting Minutes were accepted by proclamation by the membership.

Webmaster Vin Burdziuk – Communications Report. Vin gave an overview of our web site visits (636,000) and the ability to post photographs, citations, stories, etc. on our web site. Vin also noted that the "Get Well" card program started by Phil Odom is still going strong. Send information along about ill or infirm members, as well as members who have passed. Sadly, this year, Doc Byars passed away.

Membership Meeting - Continued

Membership/Registration – Gary Gordon. Gary reminded the membership about the importance of keeping the Association informed about address/contact changes in order to keep our membership informed of upcoming events.

Hospitality Room – Jesse Tipton. Jesse introduced himself to the membership as the new Hospitality Room Manager for our reunions. Jesse told the members he will build on what Mike Valdez established over the years and asked the members to bring their suggestions to him.

Elections

As required by VV 2/1's By-Laws, elections must be held annually for expiring terms or resignations of officers and trustees. Candidates serve for various lengths of office and are expected to fund their own expenses while on Association business. The election results are:

Secretary – Ben Dickson decided to “retire” after long and excellent service as secretary. **Tim Dunn was elected** VV 2/1's secretary.

Trustee – Bruce Oliver's term as trustee was **extended** for another term. **Newly-elected trustees are Doc Paul Stein** (Golf 68-69) and **Wayne Thornton** (Fox 70-71).

All candidates received unanimous votes of approval from the members.

New Business**Reunions**

Phil opened a discussion about moving the reunion dates from November annually to other months so we may visit other cities during more moderate temperature periods. There was a general consensus that moving dates and locations seem to be a good idea.

Dale gave an overview of the reunion dates and locations for the next five years.

2018 – November. New Orleans

2019 – November. San Diego

2020 – Open. Suggestions are being considered. Let us know what you think.

2021 – Washington, DC. Jun/Jul/Aug? Sunset Parade season.

2022 – Florida. Suggest a city. Nov/Jan/Feb?

This is an opportunity for all members to consider locations and months for future reunions. Send your thoughts along.

Membership Meeting - Continued**Donations**

Several members brought proposals to the assembly to petition for donations.

Corpsman Memorial at Camp Johnson in the Camp Lejeune Base. Doc Ron Bobele (Echo 69-70) petitioned the membership for a one-time donation of \$2,500.00 to support this memorial project for corpsmen.

Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans. Paul Mangan (Fox 65-66) petitioned the membership for a one-time donation of \$1,000.00 to support this shelter for homeless Midwest veterans. Vin Burdziuk sought to amend this proposal to an annual donation of \$1,000.00. Paul agreed to amend his proposal and support Vin's amended proposal.

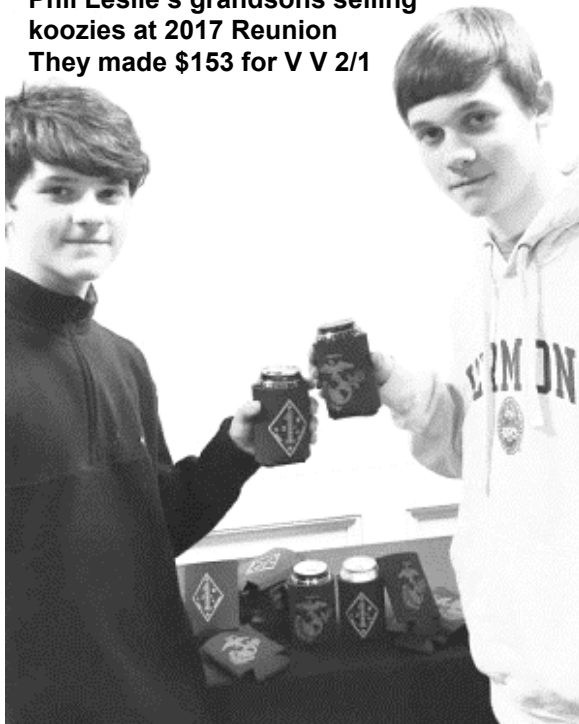
Marine Corps Scholarship Fund. Jim Roos (Golf 67) petitioned the membership for a one-time donation of \$1,000.00 to support the scholarship fund which provides education benefits to the children of fallen and wounded Marines.

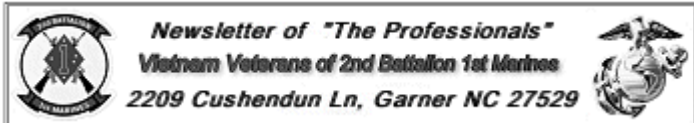
A voluble, but supportive discussion by the membership ensued. Fortunately, with parliamentarian guidance from MgySgt Frank Odzimowski, the three petitions became one voting package. The membership voted unanimously for the proposals which committed VV 2/1 to a \$2,500.00 donation to the Corpsman Memorial, a recurring \$1,000.00 donation to the Midwest Shelter, and a \$1,000.00 donation to the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund.

Closing

Phil closed with a brief overview for the 2018 reunion in New Orleans and wished everyone smooth sailing as we concluded for VV 2/1's Membership Meeting 2017... **Semper Fi, Tim Dunn 2/1 Secretary**

**Phil Leslie's grandsons selling koozies at 2017 Reunion
They made \$153 for V V 2/1**





Reunion 2018 New Orleans

Thursday Nov-06 thru Monday Nov-12

Check-in between 6th - 8th

Come early to Visit downtown New Orleans on your own!

Banquet Sunday November 11

Crowne Plaza New Orleans Airport

2829 Williams Blvd

Kenner, LA 70062

Toll Free Reservation Number # 888-871-7402

Direct Phone Number to Hotel # 504-467-5611

Free Parking, Internet, and Breakfast

****To guarantee the room rate be sure to identify yourself as part of the group***

"Vietnam Veterans of 2d Battalion 1st Marines"

GROUP CODE "V V Z"

All rooms \$119 + Tax

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