



Newsletter of "The Ghost Battalion"  
**Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Bn 1st Marines**

[www.FirstMarines.org](http://www.FirstMarines.org)



Volume 10 Issue 1

February 2012

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## Message from the President

*Brothers, Family and Friends of 2/1*

I begin this message with a humble 'thank you' for electing me to a second term as your 2/1 President. We've come a long way in a few short years and I promise you your association leadership will continue to work hard to accomplish more. I am grateful for your confidence and support.

What a reunion!! This year was, as far back as I can recall, the first time we had so many reservations that we sold out the hotel. Four of our attendees stayed at the hotel across the street and were shuttled back and forth, and we even had a couple of guys double up to make room for one more. We wound up with more attendees to the banquet than anticipated and had to have the hotel bring in extra tables, five minutes before the start of the program. Thanks to the Trustees and others that scrambled to get it done. And thanks to all that attended for graciously tolerating those snafu's and fubar's that occurred during the reunion. Unlike other associations that hire outside convention/reunion management professionals, our reunion is planned and programmed by your trustees it's all voluntary, and they do the they best they can. Thanks for your understanding.

Throughout this Newsletter you will read stories and updates as well as see pictures about the reunion and I think all that attended will agree there were a lot more things happening this year and everyone had something to do. To see more, you might want to go to the website [www.1stmarines.org](http://www.1stmarines.org) to look at more photos which, from the last count I heard, we have over one thousand pictures of the 2011 reunion posted so far.

The 2011 reunion added another part to our 2/1 family's progress when we held our first breakout/educational sessions for spouses and family members, which were well received by those attending. We had two sessions for spouses and family members and from the results we will continue with them into the future. Special thanks to Trustee Gary Gordon and the specialist on spousal issues from the Memphis VA, also thanks to Doc Weed for leading the panel discussion. Great job all.

A big thank you to Nanette Sagastume and everyone attending from the area Healing Touch for another year of helpful therapy through the healing touch process.

*Continued Page 2*

### ***Presidents Message Continued***

During the annual meeting, (see the minutes for details of the 2/1 annual business meeting) one item of special note was the vote to investigate the cost and process of placing a 2/1 monument in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park on the grounds of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, VA. As we get more information we will post the results in the 2/1 Email Update and subsequent Newsletters. If the cost and process is reasonable, and there is enough confidence in our ability to raise the funds to complete the project, it will be brought to a vote at this year's annual meeting in San Diego. If the membership approves the monument the objective would be to have it completed in time for us to dedicate it when we hold our reunion in Washington, DC next year (2013).

The 2012 reunion in San Diego, on beautiful Mission Bay, is from November 8 through the 15<sup>th</sup> and the location is one of the best reunion hotels we've ever had in Southern California. This year's reunion dates work out well for those of you that may only have extended weekends to get away for reunions. The preliminary schedule for this year has the bulk of reunion activities occurring on Thursday evening through Monday morning, with the banquet/ball scheduled for Saturday 10 November. Fly, drive or take the train to arrive Thursday afternoon and plan your return for Monday afternoon (which is a federal holiday) and you won't miss much work or time away from home. Make your arrangements, for Reunion 2012 now, call the **Bahia Resort hotel at 800-576-4229**, or email [https://shop.evanshotels.com/bahia\\_groups/vie1108b12.html](https://shop.evanshotels.com/bahia_groups/vie1108b12.html) See the reunion details elsewhere in this Newsletter. See you in San Diego.

Semper Fidelis, Paul Mangan - Foxtrot '65-'66

### ***Heartfelt Thanks***

We would like to give our heartfelt thanks to the Vietnam Veterans of 2/1 for presenting plaques of remembrance at the 2011 Memphis reunion banquet to Scott Leftwich and Bill Leftwich III honoring their dad, Lt.Col. William Groom "Bill" Leftwich Jr., (CO of 2/1 from May to September 1970 operating out of Camp Lauer, RVN), for his outstanding service as CO of 2/1. The Navy Cross (Hoai An battle March 9, 1965 as advisor to the VNMC) and Silver Star (Cam Sa Raid as CO of 2/1 August 4, 1970) recipient has a special place in the hearts of all those of us who served under him at 2/1 and later at 1st Recon Battalion where he was KIA 18November1970. We Few, We Proud, We Marines and Navy Corpsman from 2/1's 1970 era. Semper Fi, Cpl. Ron Robison, Cpl. Don Youmans, HM2 "Doc Mike" Shuck and 1stLt. Dan Kellum, Echo Co., 2/1

### ***Help Needed***

I would like to contact any of our old Echo Company guys that I served with from August 1967 to August 1968. I wrote a book a couple of years ago about Echo Company, with lots of pictures and stories. Last year I was contacted by a publisher on the east coast and asked to do a re-write of the book and given suggestions for certain areas of the book. I am trying to finish that book this year and am hoping to make contact with some of the guys from our company, platoon or squad.

A few years ago Cpl Mike House from Bremerton WA, Cpl Chuck Estes from Dallas, TX, Doc John Turner from Pollack, LA, Doc Jerry "Shotgun" Slater from CA, and myself, Cpl Gary Christensen from Salem, OR got together at the Oregon Coast for a mini-reunion. Since then, Cpl Mike Coates, our Combat Photographer from the Bay Area, CA and Cpl Steve "Bernie" Bernston from Tacoma, WA, our Combat Correspondent have been included in our meetings, conversations, etc. Hope you all enjoyed the reunion and I do hope to hear from you.

Semper Fi, Gary "Chris" Christensen 503-363-6267 [gary@elementds.com](mailto:gary@elementds.com)

## Welcome to 2012

I am certain that each New Year there are some of us who wonder how the heck we made it this far? At times we were not certain that we would live another day let alone another year. It seems like it has been a long time. Well, so much for philosophical reflection.

Looking back I am very pleased with our organization's efforts to outreach to our fellow VN Veteran 2/1 Marines and their families. Our membership has grown as we get the word out to others and it looks as if this trend will continue. The list of people that have worked on our membership efforts is too great for me to present in this format. Our growth would not be possible if we were not working to become the type of organization any Marine would be proud to call their own. We offer each other something. Each individual brings his or her little bit that when added together becomes much more than what any of us could be by ourselves. This is no different than what we did when we were a bit younger and full of Gung Ho determination to survive the day.

As the New Year unfolds, I ask that any and all continue to keep up the good work that has led to the growth we are experiencing. I, and your Board of Directors, will certainly do the best we can to support your efforts.

Respectfully...Gary Gordon  
Trustee – Membership Chairman



**Vietnam Veterans  
2nd Bn 1st Marines**

**Reunion 2012**

San Diego, California  
BAHIA Resort Hotel - Mission Bay

November 8 – 15

The majority of the reunion activities occurring on the 9th 10th 11th & 12th

BAHIA Resort Hotel  
998 West Mission Bay Drive – San Diego, CA 92109  
Room rate: \$124.00 per night single or double

Reservations: 800-576-4229 or online@  
[https://shop.evanshotels.com/bahia\\_groups/vie1108b12.html](https://shop.evanshotels.com/bahia_groups/vie1108b12.html)

For reunion event and agenda details go to:  
[www.FirstMarines.org](http://www.FirstMarines.org)



## Family of Marines

I received a call from my grandson Victor Runion who lives with his mom and dad in Phoenix. He took his aptitude test and other exams and scored a whopping 93%. He signed the paperwork on the delayed entry program and will go into boot camp in May. He will be, barring anything, the 10th Marine and the 4th generation.

**Semper Fi, Staff Sgt Ben A. Drake Sr.**

## Proud Marine Mom Needs Help

Saw your site on the internet and would like to talk to anyone who knew my son John Whitney. He was in Golf Company 2/1. He was wounded 10/05/68 and died 8/29/70. Also looking for Cpl Ron Reese who was with John when he was wounded. Lt. Puller was the Senior Officer. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Semper Fi - God Bless you all...Ellie Whitney  
Proud Marine Mom  
[teddiangel@webtv.net](mailto:teddiangel@webtv.net)

**Annual Business Meeting - Olive Branch Mississippi****V V OF 2/1 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
12 NOVEMBER 2011**

The meeting was called to order by President Paul Mangan at 0915hrs. A roll call of all officers and trustees was called. Gary Gordon was not present, all others were present.

The minutes from last years meeting were posted to the newsletter update in January of 2011. Waived reading of the minutes.

It was requested that we open with the pledge of allegiance and a motion was made and approved to open all future meetings with the pledge. All present recited the pledge of allegiance.

**Presidents Report**

1. A discussion was opened regarding our organization being a "last man standing", or opening it up to other members to keep it going.
2. The president gave details of how we have put in place a method to reach out and help the OIE vets start their own group if they so desire. A question of our assets was brought up and if we had a succession plan. It was discussed about how the younger men are very connected with social media, etc. and do they need or want to be in our group or have their own group. After many comments, a motion was brought forth and passed to have the board research how we can expand our organization to include brothers from other conflicts and maintain our own identity and to come up with a plan for our assets. The results of this research will be brought to the membership at the San Diego reunion.

**Treasurers Report**

1. Mario made a statement on the transparency of the books, organization and assets to remind us that our board meets on a regular basis and periodically reviews the financials to insure all is in order and above board.
2. A reading of the financial statement was given and a discussion of the balance sheet was read. It was reminded that the documents are available to anyone but we do not post them to the web for everyone to see.
3. The financial statement and balance sheet was approved as read.

**Committee Report**

1. Membership: The report from Gary Gordon was read and outlined the increase in the numbers added to the roles for the last year. It detailed what a great job the committee and Bruce Oliver have done to enhance the membership roles and the mailing list. Much work has also been put in by Phil, Mario, and Vinnie. Kudos to these gentlemen.
2. Communication: Vinnie noted the number of hits to the website, the numbers of get well and sympathy cards that have been sent out. These programs have been very successful and greatly appreciated by those who have been sick, and the families of brothers we have lost in the past year. Vinny has also purchased four domain names to keep us current on the web. Web site visits: total 498,000. Last year 34,400. Last 30 days 2800.

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**Annual Business Meeting - Olive Branch Mississippi - Continued**

We have over 7000 pictures on the site and project going over 8000 after the reunion photos are posted. Vinnie has done a great job and thanks to those contributing to the site.

**Elections for this year are as follows:**

*President:* nominated is Paul Mangan. No other nominations. 2<sup>nd</sup> was confirmed and the vote was carried. Congratulations to Paul for another term.

*Trustee:* nominated is Dale Williams. No other nominations. 2<sup>nd</sup> was confirmed and the vote was carried. Congratulations to Dale for his term.

**By Law changes recommended:**

1. "Audit of the budget: At each annual business meeting, the Association Treasurer... will present an overview of income and expenses (the books) for the budget year ending 30 September. In addition, the "books" are open and any member may request to see a copy of the Association's expenses and income for that year. A vote of the members present shall be taken on whether or not an audit of the treasurer's records will be conducted. However, an audit by a reputable CPA firm is very expensive. A majority vote requires the Association to have an audit conducted with the expense of the audit paid from Association assets. Should any member wish to have an audit conducted when a majority of members have voted "No", such audit may be conducted solely at the expense of the dissenting member(s). Should an audit determine that improprieties have occurred with the finances, then the cost of such audit if paid by member(s) shall be reimbursed by the association.

A call for discussion. Several questions regarding the costs of audits were clarified by the president. A call for the vote was made and a 2nd confirmed. The vote carried.

2. Chaplain: "The President may appoint an Association Chaplain whose... responsibility is to provide spiritual assistance to any member who requests such assistance and to conduct services as assigned by the president." The Chaplain provides religious guidance and solace for the 2/1 Marines, bothers, families, and friends. When requested by 2/1 and /or the members, the Chaplain will to the best of his ability: participate in 2/1 events, answer questions, offer guidance, or offer counseling. The Chaplain will act in a non-denominational capacity respecting all religious and nonreligious beliefs.

A call for discussion. Questions about the Chaplain serving as the president appoints, was clarified. A call for the vote was made. A 2nd was confirmed. The vote carried.

**Old Business**

1. Phone numbers of the board will be posted to the newsletter. They are currently on the web page also.

**New Business:**

1. A monument is suggested to be placed at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. (NMMC).

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### **Annual Business Meeting - Olive Branch Mississippi - Continued**

The cost is estimated at \$10,000-\$20,000. Donations would be made through a special program set up by the Association. (Similar to the designated funds for the Esprit de Corps Fund currently in operation.)

Discussion: Phil Leslie outlined the basic estimated costs for a decent memorial at the site and some of the particulars.

A motion was presented that we move forward with a committee to research the project and the trustees will bring recommendations back to the membership. The motion was 2nd and carried.

**2. Several requests for donations were made and passed by the members:**

“The Ride Home” - \$130.00

“Wounded Warrior Fund”- \$1500.00

“Semper Fi Fund” - \$500.00

**3. Recommendations for future reunion sites was opened. Suggestions for the board to research:**

Parris Island

Charleston S.C.

Branson, MO

Savannah, GA

Boston, MA

Irving (Dallas), TX

Camp Pendleton in 2015 to coincide with the 2/1 Landing

Anniversary in 1965.

**4. The meeting was adjourned at 1105hrs.**

### **Steve “Doc” Lepley Invitation**

**HM3 Steve “Doc” Lepley (Doc Short)**

APRIL 1971 FOX 2/1

AUG 1970 1ST MED BN

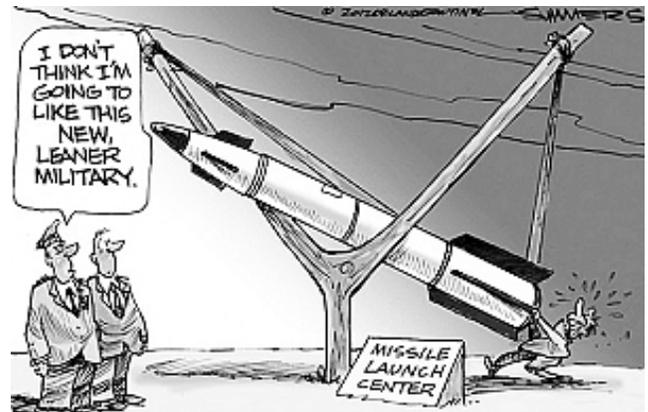
SEPT 1970 KILO 3/7

Doc started a Facebook page called “Combat Corpsman” it is a site open to all Marines and FMF Corpsman and requires you have a FaceBook account. Any Doc's and Marine's are welcome to join. He will be at our San Diego Reunion with Doc James Dew.

You can contact Doc Lepley at: [slns1@hotmail.com](mailto:slns1@hotmail.com)

Copy the link below than sign into your FaceBook account:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/142046675906781/>



**From Dale Williams**

When I was introduced at the Birthday Ball as the FNG Trustee, I knew I was in trouble. I remembered how they got all of the "good" details. I can't wait to see the missions that I'm assigned.

I'll provide a little background to introduce myself to those that don't know me. I was with Fox Co. from Feb '69 to Feb '70. I was released from active duty upon return to CONUS, got married, started a family, participated in the active reserve, completed college and returned to active duty. I retired from the Marine Corps in 1995. I have been a member of the organization since 1991 but only attended one reunion prior to 2009.

How I found the organization and my disappointment in meeting only one person that I had served with is what finally got me off the dime so to speak and start participating. I was actually in Kuwait when I saw the announcement in Leatherneck about a 2/1 reunion. When I returned to the States I got in contact and joined. I finally went to a reunion in Charleston in the late 90's. Jim Kirk, who has attended almost every year, was the only one there that I had known in country. As great as it was to see him, it was disappointing that he was the only one. Sometime in the summer of 2008 I realized that the next year would be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my Vietnam experience. I thought about how much I wanted to see the guys that I had gone through it with. Over the years I had had seen two, Jim Kirk and Don Huth, and had telephone contact with two others. At that point I set out to find as many as I could.

I won't go into the detail of the searches but so far I have contacted over 30 that were in my platoon or attached to it during '69. Over the last three reunions we have had an average of 10 guys and 7 wives attend, 16 different individuals and 13 wives. My point in all of this is it takes someone close to the individual to make contact and tell them about the organization. Someone that shared the experiences to find them and let them know we are here.

I want to thank those that founded the organization and those that have kept it going. I hope that I can make a positive contribution and that we continue to have reunions that maintain the quality of the past several that I have attended.

Semper Fi, Dale Williams

**Treasurer's Report from Mario Sagastume**

Following, is a brief summary of the report presented during the business meeting in Olive Branch, November, 2011. The results are for the fiscal year ended September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011:

Total Revenue	\$16,685
Total Expenses	<u>19,439</u>
Net Income <Loss>	<u>\$&lt;2,754&gt;</u>
Cash and inventory	<u>\$28,112</u>

The Trustees agreed not to have a donation drive in 2010 which resulted in reduced revenue compared to the prior fiscal year. The plan is to request donations from the membership bi-annually. The Organization remains solvent as you can see by the balance in Current Assets against no debt. If any member would like to see the complete set of financial statements, please feel free to request them from me or any of the Trustees.

Thanks for the generosity, support and confidence you have demonstrated at the reunions and purchasing items from our PX.

I had a great time in Olive Branch for our reunion and I am looking forward to being with all of you, brothers in San Diego this year. Amanda misses you, also.

### Monument to Vietnam Veterans of 2/1

The membership at the 2011 Annual Business Meeting voted to move forward on pursuing the establishment of a monument to the Vietnam Veterans 2nd Battalion 1st Marines to be located at The Semper Fidelis Memorial Park, which is adjacent to The National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Virginia. [see the minutes of the meeting].

This project will not proceed, until all the details and costs are explained at this year's annual 2012 San Diego meeting, and the membership votes to go forward with the project.

This undertaking will require input from the membership, extensive planning and will be somewhat expensive. Funding will be by donations specifically designated for this project. However, it will be a fitting memorial to all the Marines and Corpsmen who served with the battalion in Vietnam.

Most of the monuments that have been approved to date are based on classical geometric shapes. Examples of installed monuments can be found at the Museum's web site, [www.usmcmuseum.org](http://www.usmcmuseum.org) and <http://www.klinememorials.com/veteranscivic-memorials>

A committee made up of Officers, Trustees, and members will be established for oversight and coordination. All members are encouraged to submit their ideas. V V 2/1 will have to provide a detailed design including dimensions, a materials list, any text to be included, name of sculptor or manufacturer, and a sketch of the finished proposed memorial to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation for approval. Upon approval, the design will be referred to a selection committee chaired by the President, Marine Corps University.

Some of the requirements: Footprint for the monument shall not exceed 9 square feet in an area 6 feet by 6 feet and the height must not exceed 10 feet. Avoid features that collect water. No moving parts are allowed. No external lighting is allowed. Avoid features that can be easily climbed on, swung upon, or otherwise be broken from visitor interaction.

Consideration should be Granite and bronze are the most commonly used materials and work well together, but bronze and marble do not.

The cost is estimated at \$10,000-\$20,000. Donations would be made through a special program set up by the Association. (Similar to the designated funds for the Esprit de Corps Fund currently in operation.)

**Donations may be mailed directly to our treasurer:**

Mario Sagastume  
778 Silverado Estates, Chico, CA 95973-5317.

**Send any suggestions as soon as you can to: Phil Leslie - at - [pdleslie@mindspring.com](mailto:pdleslie@mindspring.com)**



2011 Olive Branch Reunion



2011 Olive Branch Reunion



2011 Olive Branch Reunion





## Vietnam Veterans 2nd Bn 1st Marines Reunion 2012



November 8 - 15 San Diego, CA Room Rate for Garden View  
\$124 One or Two Adults \$144 ( 3 ) Adults - \$164 ( 4 ) Adults

### Bahia Resort Hotel

998 West Mission Bay Drive, San Diego CA 92109

Call Now!! 800-576-4229 Reservation Code: Vietnam Veterans of  
2nd Bn 1st Marines

Annual Banquet - Golf - Etc.

PX - New Items Raffles & Give Away's

*\*Agenda Subject to Change!*

Check for Updates at: [www.FirstMarines.org](http://www.FirstMarines.org)

**Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Bn 1st Marines 2012 Reunion in San Diego**



Newsletter of "The Professionals"  
Vietnam Veterans of 2nd Battalion 1st Marines  
2209 Cushendun Ln, Garner NC 27529

