

The Battalion Runner

2019 – Number 1 – May 2019

2nd Battalion, 9th Marines



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I finally got this done! The past two months have been a horror show with computers and hard drive crashes. My laptop hard drive crashed in Alabama during late March and I lost everything – email addresses, access to documents, and all my applications on the laptop (Microsoft Office, Excel, Powerpoint, and Access). I had to reinput more than 50 changes or additions to our 2/9 Network databases in Access, on the website, and on our email distribution listings for these newsletters. I just finished that and am getting this out as quickly as possible.

As you'll see on the following pages of the newsletter 2019 Reunion plans are mostly completed, the corrected 2/9 Memorial Plaque has been installed at Semper Fidelis Memorial Park, and Red Hill's Memorial Plaque has also been installed there. This year's official USMC Wreath Laying Ceremony on the Marine Corps Birthday looks like it could be another disaster waiting to happen. Details are below. Our Birthday Dinner on November 10th is booked and we're once again getting an outstanding deal from the Key Bridge Marriott Hotel in Arlington. The Marriott Residence Inn Rosslyn in Arlington will continue as our official reunion hotel. This is another great deal from them. Room reservation information, and a link to a unique 2/9 reservation page, is provided below. I've added some "From the Mailbox" items that I think will be of interest to most. Let's hope for a great spring, summer and fall leading to our 27th annual reunion in Arlington!!!

FORUMS ON THE 2/9 NETWORK

They have been nothing but trouble. I'm going to try one more thing and if it doesn't work out I intend to delete the forums completely from the website. It's been crashing repeatedly and taking me, and our internet host, hours to get it back up and running every time. The forum is ancient, and rarely used by our members. I'm going to release the requirement for usernames and passwords to post on the forums in hopes that will resolve some issues. If, however, that results in a deluge of spam postings the forums will be gone. I'll notify everyone by email if that is ultimately what I do, since I know a few of you use them occasionally to honor lost brothers or special moments in your time with 2/9. I'll try to give you enough time to access your favorite posts and copy them. I'd ask everyone to give our Facebook pages a look. There are three of them out there and if you go to Facebook and do a search for 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines you'll find them easily enough.

REUNION 2019

8-12 NOVEMBER

Marriott Residence Inn Rosslyn, in Arlington, VA
1651 N. Oak St., Arlington, VA 22209



It's hard to believe that the Residence Inn will be hosting our reunion this year for the 7th consecutive year. Their staff, from senior management on down to the maintenance and kitchen staff, have treated us in an exceptional manner. Detailed information is below, but in a nutshell our rooms will be \$129 per night (plus tax), and parking will be a special rate of \$12 per night. We will have their conference room available 24 hours a day as our hospitality room where you will find the normal snacks, beer, non-alcoholic beverages and more. There is also a free continental breakfast every morning. There is NO CHARGE for the reunion! The only thing you need to pay for is your room, parking, and, if attending, our Marine Corps Birthday Dinner (more below).

27th ANNUAL REUNION

50th Anniversary of 2/9 Rotating Out of Vietnam!

For those of us who served in Vietnam this is a significant anniversary. Some of us were there and gone well before August of 1969, when 2/9 rotated back to Okinawa. Others took part in that rotation, and still others later served in Vietnam as part of BLT 2/9 and the Mayaguez/Koh Tang Island incident. As I sit here composing this I cannot help but think of the more than 520 men from 2/9 who did not come home. They are all on The Wall, including a lot of my friends. This year we are going to try to come up with a special type of observance in their memory. Plans are still in the works and I'll provide more information in a special email or the next Battalion Runner Newsletter. Info will also be posted on the Reunion page of the 2/9 Network website.

The reunion will run from 08-12 November, and as I noted in my introductory remarks above there could be hiccups similar to the ones we've experienced the last two years. I've been in direct contact with the "Scheduler for the Commandant", and she has told me the official Marine Corps Birthday Wreath Laying Ceremony is on the Commandant's calendar with a placeholder of 08 November, and "hopes" it will be at the Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial). She also stated that is subject to change since the Change of Command for the Commandant is sometime in late summer. I've fired off a fairly sternly worded reply to her and told her frankly that 08 November means nothing to Marines, that the Marine Corps should be observing the memory of those lost throughout the Corps history on the only day that matters – 10 November. While it is traditional for the Marine Corps to hold the ceremony on the 9th when the 10th falls on a Sunday, as it does this year, 08 November is not good. I also noted to her several other things: The flag on the War Memorial was in tatters moments before the ceremony last year, the ceremony itself was over in less than 20 minutes in both of the last two years, and no one could find out what the hell was going on. I tried to be respectful and she will be a great contact so we know exactly what is going to happen, where, and when in plenty of time to plan. Please keep in mind if you are attending that the 08 November date, if it happens, means if you want to attend you'll have to be in town by 1000 hours on the 8th or you'll miss the ceremony. For those of us that have been there when done right it is a truly impressive memorial service with the Commandant and a special guest speaking, performances by both the Marine Corps Band and Drum and Bugle Corps, performance by the Silent Drill Team from 8th & I, and them passing in review. Let's hope that is what we get this year.



ROOM REGISTRATION DETAILS

Online Reservations: The Residence Inn has developed a unique web page for our members to obtain room registrations at our special rate of \$129.00 per night (plus 13% tax). Click on, or copy and paste, the following link to find that page:

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1555697392418&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

Phone Reservations: If you want to reserve your room by phone call the Residence Inn: 1-800-331-3131 and tell them you want the group rate for the 2/9 Marine D.C. Reunion. That number usually works, but if you have trouble try calling the hotel directly at 1-703-812-8400. Please do not call that number first – only if you have difficulty with the 1-800 number.

No matter how you get your room reservation make sure you get a confirmation number and keep it! That's the only way to be certain your room is available.

If you are driving to the reunion be careful if you have a very large pickup truck. The parking garage is under the hotel and there is a height limit. Most trucks can make it but some monster pickups could have a problem and there is NO alternative parking area. Parking is at a special rate of \$12 per night (it's in our contract), so make sure you do not get overcharged for parking.

Our group contract makes rooms available at the above rates from the evenings of 07 through 11 November, with check-out on 12 November. Give them the dates you will be arriving and departing. Room reservations **MUST** be completed by 19 October, at which time the hotel will release any rooms not taken in our contract for public reservations. If you make your reservation after 19 October you may well have to pay the going rate for the room, currently over \$200 per night. **GET YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY.**

Here are current, but flexible, agenda items with dates:

1. Attend the official Marine Corps Birthday Ceremonies at the USMC War Memorial/Iwo Jima Memorial on either 08 or 09 November.
2. 2/9 Marine Corps Birthday Dinner at the Key Bridge Marriott Hotel in Arlington from 1800-2300 hours on 10 November (details below).
3. Travel to The Wall to visit our brothers and have our own wreath laying ceremony following the Birthday Dinner. We leave for The Wall after returning to the Residence Inn and leave from there. This is usually around 2300 hours.
4. We have no official item for the Veteran's Day Ceremonies at The Wall but members can attend as they see fit.
5. All other time is free time.

Free transportation will be provided back and forth to all the events listed above.

2/9 Reunion Marine Corps Birthday Dinner

Marriott Key Bridge Hotel
1800 Hours, 10 November 2019



Cake cutting ceremony – 2018

The Key Bridge Marriott has again come through for us with a great deal for our Marine Corps Birthday Dinner on November 10th. Although our initial booking this year is in their Potomac Ball Room, as it has been for the last three years, if no one else books the Capitol View Ballroom within a week or two of our reunion, we will be moved there again. Those that have been there before know what a spectacular view it provides of the Lincoln Memorial, Mall, and Capitol building. The Potomac Ball Room is no slouch either but I know we'd all like to be "upstairs". Their price has gone up to \$35 per dinner. That means in the last four years they have raised the price \$5. That price includes room rental (normally at least \$10,000 just for the room), the meal, audio visual material, and all tips and taxes. There's gotta be a Marine involved there somewhere!!! The low price does come with one downside. That is that we are limited to one choice for the entrée, and that is chicken. The dinner includes a salad, entrée, and dessert. Please don't ask for substitutes since they cannot be accommodated under our contract. We'll have a cash bar as always but water and soda are provided as part of the meal price. As I previously mentioned, transportation will be provided both to and from the Residence Inn to the Key Bridge. The agenda for the dinner this year will remain true to form:

1. Cocktail hour commencing at 1800 hours.
2. Dinner served around 1900 hours.
3. Short 2/9 Network business meeting.
4. Keynote Speaker(s). I'm still working hard on this.
5. Hot Damn Ceremony (for new attendees wait until you experience this!)
6. Marine Corps Birthday Ceremony, including reading of Commandant's messages and youngest and oldest Marine cake cutting.
7. Raffle and 50/50 Raffle winners.
8. Break up approximately 2200-2230 hours and return to the Marriott Residence Inn where we will gather together for our trip to see our brothers on The Wall.



1st time – 2018

As with many things there is good news and bad news with the dinner. The bad news is the dinner costs \$35 and you MUST PAY ME IN ADVANCE. **The good news is that the 2/9 Network, due in great part to the outstanding \$3,000 donation made last year by Jim Joyce (more on that below), will be picking up \$15 of that cost.**

That means you need to send me a check or money order, made out to me, Danny Schuster, for \$20 for each meal you want ordered. Send me the check at the following address:

Danny Schuster
21 Moseley Street
Billerica, MA 01821

Even with Jim's donation, this is a move based on the last 5 years of donations from our members. If donations approach those of the last 5 years we'll be fine, so please keep that in mind when I beg for money below!

Post-Vietnam members: Please see my note near the end of this newsletter.

OUR TRIP TO THE WALL

After our dinner we will all return to the Residence Inn and gather in the lobby in preparation for our annual trip to the Vietnam Wall to visit our brothers and perform our own wreath laying ceremony. The Wall is obviously a special place, but it seems, at least to me, to be more of a healing experience when visited at night without the hustle and bustle of tourists all around you. Please consider joining us. Transportation will be provided to and from The Wall.



Memorial Plaques for 2/9 and Red Hill

Both the corrected and final version of the 2/9 Memorial Plaque and the Memorial Plaque for Richard “Red” Hill, the founder of the 2/9 Network and the reason most of us know each other, have been installed at the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico. Red’s plaque cost \$5,000 and at last year’s reunion Jim Joyce won our silent auction for a replica of the 2/9 Memorial Plaque for \$3,000. It is the most generous donation I’ve experienced in my 19 years of attending our reunions. I’m sure I speak for every member of 2/9 when I say “Thank you Jim”. The Network donated an additional \$2,000 to fully pay for the plaque and perpetual care by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.



IN MEMORY OF
SGT RICHARD
"RED" HILL
VIETNAM, 1968-1969
FOUNDER AND INSPIRATION FOR
THE 2ND BATTALION
9TH MARINES NETWORK



Special thanks to my cohort in running the reunions – Henry Ostaszewski – for the photos.

NOTES FROM THE MAILBOX

Received the following from Craig Roberts, Hotel, 1965:

I wanted to let you know that we lost one great 2/9 Vietnam veteran about two years go (maybe three?). SgtMaj Clyde Shireman passed away in the hospital near his home in Union City, California, due to lung cancer. My experience with Sgt Major Shireman was when we were members of H/2/9 when we made the original landing from the USS Pickaway on China Beach on July 7th, 1965 out of WWII landing craft. We then had to move inland to Hill 327 and set up security there (1/9 had landed earlier and had secured the airbase).

After that, my platoon (2nd platoon under 2ndLt John Rowe) had to go back to Da Nang bay and unload a ship full of ammo and arty rounds from the USS Renville, also a WWII APA landing ship.

After building the first ammo dump at Hill 327, near the ARVN rifle range (north of the airbase), we finally moved to the field by crossing the river at Bridge One (Phong Le Bridge) and sweeping and securing Duong Son (1). That was the first ville swept and occupied outside Da Nang, and the rest is history.

Then, on 10 October, after 2/9 had moved back to the airbase after being in the field since July to become a 30 day airbase defense battalion, 3/9 who took our place in the field lost almost an entire platoon in a U-shaped ambush. To replace that platoon my platoon was picked and we went right back to the field! So, at the time my platoon became 2nd platoon, Mike Company, 3/9 and remained there until late May of 1966.

Shireman was our E-5 Right Guide, but in actuality he was our platoon sergeant. Our actual platoon sergeant, an E-6, was seldom seen in the field. Somehow he managed to support us from the rear...somewhere.

Clyde made a career out of the Corps, and did a second tour in RVN as a mortar platoon sergeant. He later served Embassy Duty in Peru where he met his wife at the Embassy, then did a stint on the drill field, the I&I at a reserve center in Eugene, OR, and finally as 1stSgt and Sgt Major in the Air Wing at El Toro plus other assignments listed on his "Together We Served" page.

He was a great guy and a super Marine. We had a chance to get together with our old 2/9 Skipper, Captain Joe Guggino (who was our CO when we landed) in Phoenix, AZ for the Marine Corps Birthday celebration a few years back. That was the first time we had gotten together since our stint in Vietnam.

Received the following from Joy Schaefer Yowler:

Hello, My great uncle, Jack Gump, served in Golf Company, 2nd Bn, 9th Mar, 3rd Marine Div. Before she passed, my great aunt & his sister, allowed me to scan family photos. Among them was a booklet made by James Joyce with photos of their time in Vietnam. I would be happy to share them with you, if you are interested (**admin note – I have these photos**). Sadly, Uncle Jack has passed. His death info is: Jackie Ardell "Jack" Gump 1945–2004 Born 2 Dec 1945 Wileyville, Wetzel Co., WV. Enlistment 19 Jun 1964,

Release 18 Jun 1968. Died 4 Aug 2004, Wetzel Co., WV. Buried Lowe Higginbotham Cemetery in Coburn, Wetzel Co., WV. The 2nd photo in your gallery "Heading Out from Phu Bai", is among the photos I have. The photo comment is: (l to r) Carl "Hoss" McKown, James Joyce, ??, Richard Gerdes, Robert Procknow, ??, Bill Lynch, Russ Trickler. Submitted by Paul Morin. I have photos including PJ Morin, Carl "Hoss" McKown, James Joyce, Robert Procknow, Bill Lynch. Note: Jack Gump may be the soldier behind James Joyce. I have been researching Uncle Jack's time in the military & would appreciate any assistance you can provide. Looking forward to hearing from you, Sincerely, Joyce Schaefer Yowler 704-208-0158, jyowler@carolina.rr.com



Here is the photo Joy refers to above:

Since receipt of her email Joy has had a great conversation with Jim Joyce, and Jim has put her in contact with Hoss McKown. If anyone knew Jack Gump and wants to talk to her please feel free to do so at the phone number or email address listed above the photo. Joy is anxious to learn as much as she can about Jack and his service. Danny

NOTE: I greatly appreciate the chance to include stories like those above. If you have a fairly short story to tell about your service – in Vietnam, Somalia, Iraq, or Afghanistan, please don't hesitate to send me a note. I'll include it in the Battalion Runner that follows my receipt of your email. Send it to me at twoninencoic@aol.com Danny

2/9 Golf Shirts and Decals

Short story here. They are gone. Hope those of you who have one or the other are enjoying them. We rarely have 2/9 clothing or other paraphernalia since the expense and time involved in tracking, shipping and handling is simply too much. We always have something for people who attend the reunion, but that is the extent of what we can do. I do have one thing that may be in the works. There is a possibility I'll have some 2/9 bumper stickers at some point in the future. If I do they will include information that makes them an "all eras" bumper sticker. More to come on that if it comes to fruition.

NOTE TO POST-VIETNAM 2/9 MARINES

I want you to know you have not been forgotten. I also realize the thrust of this year's reunion is pointed toward Vietnam vets. Let's hope you do not feel neglected or insulted because we are emphasizing Vietnam this year. Since this year marks 50 years since the Battalion's exit from Vietnam it is something I had to emphasize. No apologies for that. We will be honoring the more than 520 Marines who died in the Vietnam War including the Mayaguez/Koh Tang incident. I have been trying for 5 years now to get you guys to attend our reunion. Please consider it. You will find a willing reception and I'm sure you guys can tell war stories and bullshit just as well as any Vietnam Vet!!!

One of the final things I need to get accomplished this year is finding a keynote speaker for our Birthday Dinner. Among the prominent 2/9 members being pursued are a couple of very well-known Marines from your era. No promises, but I'm trying.

2/9 Network Notes

- 1. With all the computer problems I've been having the Network website has not been updated as often as I should be doing. I promise I'll try to do a better job of keeping you up to date between Newsletters from this point forward. As soon as this Newsletter is out I'm getting a new desktop, and my laptop already has a new hard drive. I refused to replace my current flawed desktop until this was done because I'm scared to death that when I finally do it I'm going to lose some stuff. I hope not, but when you start trying to transfer all kinds of stuff only bad things tend to happen, especially to a technologically challenged guy like me.**
- 2. It continues to amaze me how members of the Network support us via reunion attendance, donations, stories like those above and other things. Our numbers among Vietnam veterans continue to shrink due to the nasty ravages of age. I am receiving more and more death notices, and there isn't anything that's going to send us back to a more youthful time. We'll mourn but move on as long as we can, and remember our lost brothers. Those of you who think about finally attending a reunion but say, "Oh I'll do it next year", should reconsider. Get to this year's reunion. You never know what tomorrow holds and I've got story after story from surviving spouses, sons, daughters, or friends who tell me about the passing of a 2/9 member who said, basically, "he always wanted to attend a reunion but kept putting it off until next year". My advice – don't wait!!!**
- 3. One of the saddest notes I received earlier this year was the passing of one of our Iraq/Afghanistan members who took his own life. I would be surprised if almost all of us do NOT know a veteran who committed suicide. I know the huge majority of us are not specialists in suicide prevention but I do know this from personal experience – talking to someone helps! My phone number is out there. If you are reading this and are having dark thoughts you can call and talk. I'm sure you have contact information from some of your old buddies. Please use them if you need to. It doesn't matter one iota if you are a Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, or peace time 2/9 Marine. Call someone and talk it out. You will find, without doubt, that others have had similar experiences and faced them down. Semper Fidelis means a great deal to Marines and every damned one of us is here for you if you need us. Enough said.**
- 4. This organization exists solely on the support of our members through donations. We're in good shape now, but only because of the generosity of members. What we can and cannot do is a simple mathematical issue. If we have money we can do things. If we don't we can't. If you want to help out send me a donation. Every dollar helps. Make checks payable to Danny Schuster, and send them to me at 21 Moseley Street, Billerica, MA 01821.**
- 5. 2/9 has at least three Facebook Groups out there. If you don't use Facebook for anything else you may want to consider joining just to use those groups. I'm admin for one of them, Jordan Glover for another, and John Frank from a third. Sign into Facebook and choose one, or all of them if you want, and the admins will grant you**

access if you are a 2/9 Marine. This will become more important for communications on a larger scale if and when I have to delete the forums from our 2/9 Network website.

6. I have permanently disabled the New Member automated registration page on the website. I was getting deluged with bogus requests for membership. After conferring with our internet service provider we realized the website has been victimized by BOTS (automated spam generation programs), and there was little to nothing we could do about it. If anyone wants to join the network now the website has a new page with directions for a manual submission directly to me via email containing all the info I need to process their membership request. To this point, the "Contact Us" feature has not been heavily attacked, so that automated feature is still available for you to use to tell me about changes of address, phone numbers, email changes, etc., and for any questions or concerns you want to convey via the website.
7. I'm sure I forgot something. I just hope it isn't that important that I'll have to send 1,400 emails again in a short time frame. I've kind of rushed this out because it is so late and I wanted to get reunion information out as quickly as possible. Hope it kept your interest long enough to get to this point. As always, if you have questions or issues please do not hesitate to contact me at twoninencoic@aol.com or call me at 978-667-4762.

SEMPER FIDELIS

DANNY SCHUSTER

2/9 NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR AND REUNION COORDINATOR

978-667-4762, twoninencoic@aol.com or ditson35@verizon.net

Apologies for typos and other errors you might find. Notify me if and when you find one but this is going out without the normal edit I try to do.