



# *2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Marines*

## *The Battalion Runner*

Number 3– December 2020



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*Merry Christmas*



*Semper Fidelis*



**In this most holy of holiday seasons best wishes to Marines of all faiths and be sure to remember all those who cannot be with us in your prayers and thoughts. Semper Fidelis Marines!!!**

# 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> REUNION 2021

8-12 NOVEMBER 2021

## 2/9's Biggest and Best Ever???

As everyone should be aware at this point Henry Ostaszewski and I had to cancel our November 2020 reunion due to this stinking virus. This year was to be our 28<sup>th</sup> annual reunion and we both agonized over the final decision for weeks. Finally, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October we made the call. Not to belabor the point, but in the end the virus got us. Even if we had proceeded with the reunion there would have been, basically, nothing to do but sit around the hotel in very small groups. Even the Marine Corps cut the wreath laying ceremony on The Birthday back to an abbreviated version where only the Commandant and Corps Sergeant Major laid the wreath and left the Iwo Jima Memorial. No other Marines, no audience, no Marine Corps Bands, no nothing! We had a concern that the Residence Inn would have to charge us a penalty for cancelling so late. Local management indicated they would ask for no such penalty but had no choice but to bump the question up the chain of the Marriott hotels. They never heard back so we, at least at this time, were not financially impacted by the cancellation. Those folks at the Residence Inn REALLY take care of us. We were assured that even if there were to be a financial penalty the hotel would take steps to insure whatever the amount was they would credit it to our account at next year's reunion.

Now on to next year's reunion. **Before getting into the details, everyone has to understand that all this is in the initial planning stages but we are committed to providing the best reunion ever!** Much of what follows is dependent upon future actions and our finances but we honestly think we can get this done.

08-12 November we'll once again be at the Marriott Residence Inn Rosslyn, about a 15 minute walk from the Marine Corps War Memorial. As soon as we get the contract finalized details will be provided on room rates, parking, etc. We will have their conference room reserved as our hospitality room with beverages and snacks provided by the 2/9 Network. As you will see below our plan this year is to hold this reunion at NO COST to attendees other than paying for your room and/or parking at the hotel. We'll have raffle tickets on sale for donated items and a 50/50 raffle. Winners will be announced at our Birthday Dinner. There will also be a few different types of 2/9 items like shirts, covers, etc. for sale in the hospitality room. The hotel normally provides breakfast as part of the room charges.

1. 09 November 2021: **2/9's first ever dance party!** I have been in communication with Ben Hernandez, the son of 2/9's own Dan Hernandez. In his Dad's honor, Ben contacted me and has volunteered to bring his band, the Gallatin Canyon Band, primarily a blue grass band, to Arlington to perform for us at no cost. We are in the initial stages of finding a venue where we can do this. The Residence Inn is obviously too small to host a gathering we expect to be upwards of 150 people so we are searching elsewhere in the Arlington area. This could be a

daytime or evening event dependent upon the venue. I urge everyone to take a look at their website: [www.GallatinCanyonBand.com](http://www.GallatinCanyonBand.com), and watch their performances there. If you are in the Charlottesville, VA, area you might want to consider these guys if you are planning an event that includes a band. These guys are good! The best part of this is that our intent is to provide this day or evening dance at no cost to reunion attendees.

2. 10 November 2021:



- a. **As always we will be attending the official USMC Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial) around 1000 hours.** If true to tradition the Corps will include the President's Own Marine Corps Band, Commandant's Own Drum and Bugle Corps, Marines of 8th and I passing in review, guest speaker, Laying of the Wreath, and the Commandant mixing with his Marines on the completion of the ceremonies. Obviously this is dependent upon weather but if you have not seen this ceremony it is something not to miss.
- b. **Around 1800 hours we will proceed to our Marine Corps Birthday Dinner,** hopefully at the Key Bridge Marriott Hotel in Arlington. This is another item that is dependent upon the venue. Key Bridge has been outstanding in supporting our Birthday Dinner for several years now but has been closed since the advent of the virus

and undergoing major renovation work. Just as with everything I'm discussing in this newsletter we are determined to make this work even if we must consider another venue. In keeping with our plans we also want to make this year's dinner cost free for attendees. Again, this is dependent on finances but that is what we are working toward. At the dinner we have a keynote speaker (and I'm working on an outstanding speaker), Youngest/Oldest Marine Ceremony, Commandant's Message, announcement of the 50/50 and regular raffle winners, and more.

- c. After dinner we will proceed back to the Residence Inn and immediately prepare for **our annual trip to The Wall** to say hello to our brothers and lay our own wreath in their memory. This normally happens around 2300 hours.
- d. 11 November (Veteran's Day): This is a free day for everyone. Many of our members attend the National Veteran's Ceremonies at The Wall, go to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, VA, or just tour the D.C. area.
- e. 12 November: Say our goodbyes and "see you next year".

Transportation is provided for all events listed above but the Veteran's Day Ceremonies and it may even be available for that event. Details will be provided well before the reunion.

**All of the above is keyed to the idea the Covid-19 virus is completely under control and we can be free once again to do what we want, when we want, and where we want.** We shall see.

## FROM THE MAILBOX

**During the time between Battalion Runner 20-2 and this edition I have received quite a few requests for information or notifications concerning fellow 2/9 Network members. Please see those items below.**

**Updates 11 December 2020 Tom Dickinson and Ray Martin**

**Tom Dickinson:** I was notified by son Mike that **Tom Dickinson, Fox, 1965-66 passed away on 05 December** after a brief illness. Tom has been moved to the Last Patrol of Fox Company. Semper Fi.

**Raymond C. Martin;** Matt Piper, a relative of Ray's is seeking information about Ray's service from anyone who served with him. **Ray was KIA on 18 March 1966 while serving with Fox. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his actions that day.** Matt can be reached at [mpiper845@gmail.com](mailto:mpiper845@gmail.com).

**Update 07 December 2020**

I received an email from Jim Tiner today informing me we lost another 2/9 Marine. **Garrette Peck, a champion for a great number of vets in need,** passed away Saturday, 05 December 2020. Garrette was a hell of a Marine and spent a great deal of time back in Vietnam helping people, including being a major player in building an orphanage there. Garrette will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery on a date to be determined. Please keep an eye on the website "Update" section. I will post the date there once received. Rest in peace my friend. Semper Fi.

**Update 02 November 2020**

I received the below from a lady in Australia, Cheryl Bullock. She has possessions belonging to **Norman DeWitte**, who served with 2/9 in Vietnam. There is nothing to indicate the time frame in which he served but she is trying to get in touch with someone who may know, or who knew, DeWitte to return the items. There are another half dozen or so photos of other items she has. If anyone has any information please notify me ASAP and I'll pass the information along to Cheryl, or you can contact her directly through her email address below.

**NAME:** Cheryl Bullock  
**EMAIL:** cherylgoingnuts@gmail.com  
**PHONE:** 487003330  
**STREET:** 24 Ryton Street,  
**CITY:** Kings Meadows..Tasmania.  
**STATE:**  
**ZIPCODE:** 7216

**COMMENTS:** Hi, I hope to return some original "Hell in a Helmet" personal gear to the owner. I have been pursuing this for 20 years. It belongs to N.R.DeWitte Jr. 2349330.USMC. His dog tags, Hell in a Helmet wooden shield, rosary beads, rifle expert badges and colours. Also his year books. After hopefully getting some feed back as to his still being with us or his family contacts, and this Corona virus has gone My husband and I will finally get to the U.S. to fulfil a long time dream of handing them over to his family. Hoping you can help get this to him or his children or family. Regards. Cheryl Bullock.



### Update 02 November 2020

Received the below note from Ken Magyar concerning the passing of **Bill Halsey, from Fox**. Please read his note and contact him if you knew Bill.

**NAME:** Ken Magyar  
**EMAIL:** k.magyar@aol.com  
**PHONE:** 863-840-2596  
**STREET:** 404 Banana Cay Drive  
**CITY:** So. Daytona  
**STATE:** FL  
**ZIPCODE:** 32119

**COMMENTS:** Trying to find some who knows Bill Halsey, Fox 2/9. He passed away. Wife wants to talk to someone who knew him. I served in G 2/9. 1967 1968. You can call. Thanks

#### **Update 02 November 2020**

I received the following request from Lorene Lesh, who's father, **Robert D. Lesh served with 2/9**. Please see the note below and contact Lorene if you knew Lesh.

**NAME:** Lorene Lesh  
**EMAIL:** llesh\_2000@yahoo.com  
**PHONE:**  
**STREET:** 530 Hunters Ridge Drive  
**CITY:** Versailles  
**STATE:** KY  
**ZIPCODE:** 40383

**COMMENTS:** I am not a member but my father, Robert D. Lesh, was in a book about the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines. I was just trying to find some information about his time there. He would not talk about that time and he passed in August. Thank you for your time.

#### **Update 02 November 2020**

Received the below request from Tony Christopher, nephew of **Anthony Phillip Christopher (H&S 63-65)**. Please read the note and feel free to contact Tony via phone or email.

**NAME:** Tony Christopher  
**EMAIL:** tonyinc@hotmail.com  
**PHONE:** 213-804-3348  
**STREET:** 816 Sherman Ct  
**CITY:** Marina  
**STATE:** CA  
**ZIPCODE:** 93933

**COMMENTS:** Thank you all of your service. I am reaching out - as I am researching the life of a young Lance Corporal Anthony Phillip Christopher (1963-1965). His MOS was 5831, Corrections Specialist, with Headquarters and Services Company, 2nd Battalion 9th Marine Regiment 3rd Marine Division. I am his nephew and was named after him. Am trying to honor him by learning about his life and service. Any photos or memories would be appreciated. My research led me here. I apologize if this is not an appropriate request for this site. Thank you all again. Tony

IF ANYONE HAS A SIMILAR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ME AT [twoninencoic@aol.com](mailto:twoninencoic@aol.com). I WILL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO POST YOUR INFORMATION IN A NEWSLETTER AND PRIOR TO THAT ON OUR WEBSITE UNDER THE "UPDATES" SECTION UNTIL THE FOLLOWING NEWSLETTER IS ISSUED.

# DONATIONS

As expected donations were down considerably this year. I received checks from around 25 people out of over 2,000 in our 2/9 Network. With no reunion, people having major problems due to Covid-19, including loss of jobs, and all the other things that have gone on this terrible year that is understandable. Having said that, we are okay financially right now, but if we are going to have the cost free reunion we hope next year we'll need help. I also have expenses involved in keeping our website up and running and including current event updates there. Every dollar helps. Make checks payable to Danny Schuster, and send them to me at 21 Moseley Street, Billerica, MA 01821. Checks must be made out to me because we cannot afford the time or money to incorporate as an official non-profit. I know times are still especially tough now but if you can help out it would be more than appreciated.

## ATTENTION VIETNAM VETS! (this is a repeat from the last Battalion Runner)

**I still have free Vietnam logo decals available. All you need to do is send me a self-addressed stamped envelope and I'll ship one to you. This is thanks to retired Master Sergeant Ken Rooker and his son-in-law Brian McGuire. Brian is a graphic artist by profession and created the decals at no charge.**



## NOTES FROM THE NCOIC!

1. If anyone has any issues with the way I do things I ask that you please send me a note and explain the problem. When I sent the email out in early October about cancelling the 2020 Reunion I referred to this virus as the China virus. That is what it is and what I call it. There was, and is, no intent on my part to do any more than call it that. No political game, no preconceived idea, and no racial or biased connotation. I am not, have not, and never will be a person who observes political correctness. I got two emails from members. One I tried to resolve and after 2-3 exchanges things just got more nasty, including some very nasty remarks for insulting a Chinese immigrant Marine he served with. That folks, is hogwash! I try to deal with everything thrown my way by our members, but at that point I did not attempt to address



the other email and, as both requested, neither of these Marines are any longer members of the 2/9 Network. I consider that a sad situation but it is what they wanted so I gave it to them.

2. I would love getting a revamped, or even brand new, website. Our current website is certainly limited in what I can do or even what our internet provider can do to improve things. The simple fact of the matter is the site is now over 20 years old and technology has far outstripped the things that can be done with it. I had to kill the message forums due to spam, and the "New Member" form section because I was getting buried with spam emails. The "Contact Us" feature is still available and I get new member requests through that sometimes, but most of what I get from there is also spam. Fortunately the email traffic it generates is much lighter than what I got from the "New Member" section. I'm getting to be an old man at 74 and trying to create a brand new website with all today's bells and whistles would be nice, but nearly impossible for me to undertake. I certainly do not have the skills to do something like that myself. There is a great deal of information on the current site I do NOT have access to or for which I have limited editorial capabilities. To create a new site and get all that information and data from the old to the new is something I cannot even fathom. In addition, the cost is something I'm not sure we, as a group, can afford since we are 100% dependent upon donations to not only keep the site going but organize and conduct our annual reunions. The site is still a great place to visit to understand the history of 2/9, view hundreds of photos submitted by members, connect to videos of past reunions, visit and find your brothers from Vietnam on The Wall, or those lost in Iraq and Afghanistan, and check on updates I receive between Battalion Runners. A lot of other great stuff out there including links to sites of interest to most veterans or members of 2/9 during peacetime.
3. If you are reading this newsletter and did NOT receive it via email it is because I had to delete your invalid email address after the mailing rejected back to me. After the last newsletter I had to delete over 50 emails that rejected as being invalid. Most of those, for some reason, were yahoo.com email addresses. I simply do not have the time to investigate each and every time I receive a reject notice for an email address. Send me your current email address and I'll get you back in business!! I'd also like folks to go to your respective company roster on the website and make sure your personal information is up to date. Information not on the website (street address, phone number, etc.) is also present in the background. If you've moved please let me know your new address/phone. That way if someone you know or served with is looking you up I can provide more info once I know they are legitimate. Send me an email or submit updated information through the "Contact Us" button on the website and I'll take care of it.
4. One final note. There have been three people that have run this organization since it was begun by Red Hill back in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Red himself, Gabe Coronado for 10 years, and myself since 2014 when Gabe retired from that job. I well remember what Gabe said to me when he called me about taking over. He said I was his last chance to find someone to do the job. I have tried to live up to the history of what both of those Marines did for our membership. Admittedly, at this point in my life, I sometimes have to really kick myself in the ass to get to work on doing everything possible to keep the Network going. I'm not contemplating "retirement" from doing this job, but I AM concerned that if and when something happens to me there is NO backup. Everything involving communication, website updates, etc., would come to a screeching halt. Make no mistake about it, there is a lot involved with doing this. If anyone out there (and a couple have volunteered in the past), is willing to commit to backing me up let me hear from you. I cannot and will not pass out sensitive information to just anyone, but if the right, hopefully much younger, 2/9 member steps forward I am quite willing to discuss this. There is nothing I want more than to keep the 2/9 Network as strong as it's been for so long.
5. **Special note on Colonel Bill "Wild Bill" Coti's interment in Arlington National Cemetery. Colonel Coti will be interred with full honors on 12 January in Arlington National.**

**Please note that the size of the funeral procession is limited to 100 people due to the virus. Services begin at 1100 hours and interment from 1130-1230.**

**As always, if you have questions or issues please do not hesitate to contact me.**

**SEMPER FIDELIS**

**DANNY SCHUSTER**

**2/9 NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR AND REUNION COORDINATOR**

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