



The Battalion Runner

2016 – Number 2 – May 2016

2nd Battalion, 9th Marines



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www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org

SPECIAL NOTES

If you are reading this Battalion Runner and you did NOT receive it from me via email there are only two possible reasons for that. I do not have a valid email address for you or you are not registered on the 2/9 Network website at www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org. If you send me an email at ditson35@verizon.net or, if not registered on the website, go there and click on the "Member Registration" button on the left side of the screen, fill out the information and submit it. I will get an email with your information and promptly register you and add you to our email distribution lists. Battalion Runners are also posted on our website and on the two different pages for 2/9 on Facebook. Previous Battalion Runners going back to 2014 are archived on the website for viewing.

Special Note: I have received rejected emails from several men who have their email protected and ask me to request permission to send them email. I do not have the time to do that. If you are one of those men and want the Battalion Runner and other special notices sent you will need to add me to your accepted list of email addresses and send me a note so I can put your email address back on the distribution lists.

REUNION 2016

The site for the reunion is once again the **Marriott Residence Inn in Arlington, VA, 1651 N Oak St, Arlington, VA, 22209**. Visit their website to view photos of the hotel: <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/travel/wasrr-residence-inn-arlington-rosslyn/>
Your guest can start to confirm their lodging accommodations using the directions below, reservation must be made on or before Friday, October 14, 2016 in order to received group rate:

The hotel has a special page for our reservations. Directions for on-line Bookings for Residence Inn Arlington at Rosslyn. Last year we booked the entire hotel and some members had to stay elsewhere, so book early. Without this having been announced until this Battalion Runner we still already have more than a dozen rooms booked!

1. Visit the hotels website: <http://cwp.marriott.com/wasrr/twonineremarines>
2. Look for the section titled "Check rates and availability"
3. Enter your arrival date and departure date
4. Under Special Rates and Awards, enter your group code:
TNNTNNA = Studio Suite Rate \$120.00 or TNNTNNC = One Bedroom Suite Rate \$120.00
5. Follow prompts until you receive a reservation confirmation number

NOTE: If you have difficulty with the online reservation system use the instructions below.



Reservations using Toll-Free numbers for Residence Inn Arlington at Rosslyn

1. Dial 1-800-831-3131
2. Give the agent the Hotel name, "Residence Inn Arlington/Rosslyn"
3. Give the arrival and group code TNN

Negotiations are already under way for our Birthday Dinner on November 10th. I will be sending a special email, and post details on our Facebook page and website once we have a finalized agreement. We are hoping to return to the Marriott Key Bridge Hotel, outstanding hosts for our dinner last year. If donations to the 2/9 Network – see the "Donations" section below – are strong enough we will be able to offset some of the costs for the dinner.

The Marriott Residence Inn is half a block from Clarendon Blvd and a block and a half from Wilson Blvd where there are many restaurants, a Safeway, and a drugstore. It is a 10-15 minute walk to the Marine Corps (Iwo Jima) Memorial. Everything else is within easy walking distance.

Please do not hesitate to email me at ditson35@verizon.net with any questions you may have involving the reunion or dinner.



The next page explains why we have reunions more than I ever could. Thanks to Bob Driver for sending me this.

The Marines Reunion

Autumn leaves rustling, together at the appointed place, the old warriors come.

Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.
Where they meet is not important anymore. They meet and that's enough for now.

Greetings echo across the lobby. Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces, that
as young men they were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to accept so lovingly.

But deep within these Indian Summer days, they have reached a greater understanding
of life and love.

The shells holding their souls are weaker now, but hearts and minds grow vigorous, remembering.

On a table someone spreads old photographs, a test of recollection. And friendly laughter echoes
at shocks of hair gone grey or white, or merely gone.

The rugged slender bodies lost forever. Yet they no longer need to prove their strength. Some are
now sustained by one of "medicines miracles," and even in this fact they manage to find humor.

The women, all those who waited, all those who loved them, have watched the changes take place.
Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other, as glad to be together as the men.

Talk turns to war and battles and foreign lands. Stories are told and told again, reweaving
the threadbare fabric of the past.

Mending one more time the banner of their youth. They hear the guns, the snarl of shrapnel tearing
through the air, the chatter of the machine guns and the hissing of the grenade. They can feel
again the agony and pain of wounds that are now stripes and gouges across their limbs.

They can feel again the comradeship that comes with sharing the last few drops
of water in a canteen.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit, move
silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.
Each in his own way may wonder who will be absent in another year.

The room grows quiet for a time. Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns. The
talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of many remember when's.

So this is how it goes. The past is so much present. In the ceremonies, the allegiances, the
speeches and the prayers, one cannot help but hear the deep eternal love of country and Corps
they will share forever.

Finally, it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday,
but the past cannot be held too long, for it is fragile.

They say "Farewells"... "See you another year, God willing."

And as always each keeps a little of the others with him forever.

Semper Fidelis
(Adolf P. Sgambelluri)

UPDATE 12 MAY 2016

Mary Nieto, one of the 2/9 Network's strongest supporters and widow of 2/9 Marine Ramon Nieto, recently underwent heart surgery. I'm sure Mary would greatly appreciate any note from members, and please keep her in your prayers. Mary's email address is marybird@yahoo.com. GET WELL MARY, AND SEE YOU IN NOVEMBER!!!

UPDATE 28 MARCH 2016

I received the following sad news via email from Paul Mountain regarding Pete Balcunas:

Danny, wanted you to know that Pete Balcunas 2/9 Golf Co passed away this morning in Davie Florida. His wife is Digna Balcunas. A retired Marine, retired Florida Police Officer and a Boxing Coach for many years. He will be missed. Paul

UPDATE 24 MARCH 2016

Thanks to Marine John Ebenger for the following information. John was discharged from Treasure Island in February 1969, and while at the SF Airport someone gave him a cigarette lighter engraved with 2nd Bn 9th MAR 3RD MAR DIV, hoping he could find the Marine who forgot it in the airport. Recently after moving from Ohio to Washington John found the lighter, that had been with items of his Mother's in a shoe box, after 47 years! He contacted me and I now have it in my possession after John mailed it to me. If anyone wants to claim it email me at ditson35@verizon.net. Danny

UPDATE 04 MARCH 2016

Received the following from Robert Cowles looking for information on Thomas Michael Joyce, Golf, KIA 10/26/1966:

"I am searching for information about Thomas Michael Joyce, who served with Golf Company, for his sister, who was 12 years old when he was killed in Vietnam." Robert can be reached at phone 217-652-7986 or email address rkcowles@gmail.com

UPDATE 01 MARCH 2016

I received the following from Corpsman Dan Ryan regarding the death of Mack Paul Mohamed CPL 2/9 Echo KIA Sept 7, 1967

"I read an email a few years ago about his sister trying to contact anyone who knew him in Echo company. I was a corpsman who floated to many different platoons in 2/9; I was never in a platoon for long. I'm not even sure which platoon he was in but I do remember the day he died vividly. We were called to act as reaction force for some guys from Hotel company who were pinned down in a dry paddy. A squad led by CPL "Mo" that I was attached to attempted to move along a tree line on the left. About halfway along the tree line we were exposed to machine gun and AK fire. We found cover behind a mound of earth. As the tracers were flying over us, Mo attempted to locate the source. I said, "get down" and he said "It,s O.K., Doc; it's not my time to die." Our position was useless, so we withdrew and reformed with the rest of our platoon. The platoon leader repositioned us north and west and we got on line to

sweep eastward through mixed open and tangled terrain that ascended gradually. We heard a single shot on the right end of the line. One Marine down, condition unknown. We were now trying to rescue one of our platoon from the most tangled area. I was the only corpsman, since we had had 15 Marines med-evaced earlier in the week and he had to keep two of them alive on the trip to Delta Med. I was about to descend a slope into the tangle when "Mo" said, "You stay here; you're our only corpsman." He followed the others down the slope and there was a burst of AK fire and a Chicom grenade went off. He was running back up the hill holding his lower abdomen and he fell and died. The rest of the night was a mosquito nightmare. I have thought of this incident every day for 49 years and had terrible nightmares about it until I got some therapy specifically dealing with dreams. I had many other experiences that were horrible but the specifics of this incident haunt me most. I tried to contact his sister several years ago, but I think I scared her by including the truth that I recall this event every day. I saw the email about her request again when I was looking at the web site recently. I sent another email, not expecting much. Yesterday I received a call from his brother. We ended up talking for over an hour. He had a lot of questions. I told him that my time with "Mo's" platoon had been relatively short and full of casualties. Looking back now I know that I was reeling, and that things got increasingly worse as the month went on. My mind went blank to any names that might help in the search for people who could tell him more about his brother's 8 or 9 months in-country before his death. (After all, I enlisted in the Navy. They surprised me with the FMF thing. Lenny (his brother) told me his sister was afraid that I might be a con man trying to scam her with a story about thinking about him everyday. My wife can attest that I do think of him. His name is on a memorial brick in the Little Canada, Minnesota Veterans Memorial Park. I don't spend a lot of time on the computer. It has taken me about an hour to do this email. I hope you can suggest a way of contacting people who knew him, for the sake of his family. They just want to talk or see pictures or something. I hope I can come to the next reunion in November and maybe see somebody that can help on their quest. Thank You, former HM3 Daniel J. Ryan. His brother's email: lennymo83@AOL and his cell phone: 754-246-0543. Somebody out there has to remember. Semper Fi, Hell in a Helmet. Oh, yeah. I was the one who got shot by a marine's personal weapon, by accident while we were on operation north of the Cam Lo river and east of Dong Ha Mountain and west of Charlie 2. I was trying to get him sent in on the next chopper to get his dentures made at a previously arranged dental appointment. No hard feelings. He got me in both thighs but our crazy battalion surgeon kept me in-country, unable to walk, at Camp Carroll. No boots, either, when I could walk. Eventually I got back into the field."

UPDATE 21 February

Larry Kirby, nearly 92, our own Iwo Jima vet, gave a short speech at the Massachusetts State House. I wish I had this link before I had released the February Battalion Runner. Hope the link works. If it does just click on the blue button that has "Listen" imbedded in it. Larry sent it to me today. It is a 4 minute speech that says everything about our lost brothers no matter the war. Outstanding Larry!!! <http://www.wbur.org/2016/02/19/state-house-iwo-jima-battle-ceremony>

Keep those emails coming folks! You can notify me of members passing away, special requests for contacting old friends, notices of special recognition of any of our members, and other information/actions you'd like to see published on the website. I try to update the "Recent Items" section as often as possible with that information. I will also try to publish photos you may like to see posted to the website. Each time I issue a Battalion Runner I will move all the recent items from the website to that Battalion Runner and remove them from the website. Old Battalion Runners are posted on the Network and the "Recent Items" section will

be used to publish information received between those newsletters. You can email me directly at ditson35@verzion.net or use the “Contact Us for Info and Updates” button on the Network website at www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org. I will receive an email if you use that button.

Personal Note for Post-Vietnam 2/9 Members

This is basically a repeat of the article I included in the last Battalion Runner, but it still contains a significant message and I hope post-Vietnam 2/9 Marines take it to heart.

The 2/9 Network is first and foremost a Vietnam Veterans organization. Red Hill started everything well over 20 years ago by starting out to look for a small number of the men he served with in Vietnam. That initial search for a few Marines has resulted in today's Network where we now have more than 2,600 members. Unfortunately a few hundred of those members are now in our Last Patrol. But, we have reached the point now where we have nearly 400 members who are post-Vietnam 2/9 veterans. You ARE welcome! We want your input. We want you to consider attending our reunions. We want to sit down and get to know you, tell war stories and lies to each other, and partake of beverages of all types with you. We cannot do that if you choose not to attend. I also understand the demographics involved with younger people. You have jobs and families and probably financial limitations that prevent you from spending the money required to attend a 4 or 5 day reunion in Arlington, VA. That is a fact of life. However, if there are those of you out there that don't attend because you feel we will mistreat you I have one suggestion. Try it, you might like it.

We Vietnam Vets are getting old in a hurry. Most are approaching or are already in their 70s. One of the things I did not envision when I took over this website nearly two years ago were the number of men I'd have to report as passing on, many that I knew personally. It is the saddest part of what I do. Someone before a hell of a lot longer is going to have to get seriously involved to keep our 2/9 family together. Gulf, Iraq, and Afghanistan vets are those who will have to do it. I have no illusions that I have the answer to how we would ever approach something like that but it's got to happen sooner or later. We are a Vietnam Veterans organization. There is no getting around that. However, there is room for everyone in the 2/9 family. I think I can confidently say that I believe I speak for the huge majority of 2/9 Vietnam Veterans when I say we care deeply about carrying on the traditions of the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines. In the coming years we'll all have to work together to make sure we keep those traditions alive. How we could accomplish that is a subject for another time.

DONATIONS

As I always explain in this section, the 2/9 Network website and reunion costs are based 100% on donations received from members. Those donations are our ONLY source of revenue. Please consider helping out with any amount you can afford. I continue to try to improve our website and lines of communication and today we have nearly 1,200 members on our email distribution lists. What we can do with the website and what costs we can afford to offset for the reunion are all based on member generosity. If you can contribute please mail a check, made out to Danny Schuster, to 21 Moseley Street, Billerica, MA, 01821. I CANNOT cash checks made out to 2/9. The bank won't do it unless we incorporate as an official non-profit. That is a difficult, time consuming, and paperwork nightmare that we cannot do. Please help out if you can, and a huge thank you to those members who have donated since the last Battalion Runner!

As always, I am open to any suggestions, comments or recommendations. You can reach me via email at ditson35@verizon.net.

Semper Fidelis,
 Danny Schuster
 Echo, 1967
 2/9 Network Administrator and Reunion Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS SINCE BATTALION RUNNER 16-1, FEBRUARY 2016

(This list may contain some members who had changes made to their personal information since February 2016.)

McSherdon	Joe	Lillian AL	HQHS	65-66
Schuler	Steven David	Peotone IL	Echo	67
Cole	James L. "Jim"	Maurice LA	HQHS	65-66
Gay	Elizabeth "Liz"	Marlinton WV	Lt. William Gay's wife	
Middleton	David "Doc"	Aiken SC	Fox	85-86
Taylor Jr.	James L. "Junebug"	Buffalo NY	HQHS	75-76
Gonzalez	Fidencio "Gonz"	Hometown IL	Fox	83-85
Dunlap	Mark	Hazle Township PA	Wpns	84-87
De Los Santos	Jesse	Brenham TX	Golf	75-76
Wille	Marshal "Smasher"	Gainesville FL	Wpns	11-12
Warnstaff	Daniel "Dan"	Clemmons NC	Golf	77-78
Sharp	Stephen "Doc Sharp"	Roseville CA	Golf	65-67
Richardson	Bob	Orlando FL	Golf	78-79
Nelson	David S.	Las Vegas NV	Golf	64-65
Hott	Allen	Canton GA	Wpns	55-56
Hall	Stephan J. "Slick Sleeve"	New Bern NC	Hotel	73-74
Murphy	Bill "Murph the Surf"	East Lansing MI	Golf	68-69
Marvin	Dale "Backblast"	Joliet IL	Echo	67-69
Chatterton	Thomas "Tommy"	Dickinson TX	Fox	89-91
Bartlett	Stephen	Hopkinton MA	Fox	77

Petty Sr.	James A.	Washington DC	Golf	69
Watson	Michael H.	Ridge MD	Fox	69-70
Baird	Bill	Excelsior Springs MO	Fox	67-68
Aiton	Mike "Plug"	Corpus Christi TX	HQHS	68
Friedman	Joe	Orange VA	HQHS	67-68