

MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND

HAPPY NEW YEAR

TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE EXTENDED

2ND BATTALION, 9TH MARINE FAMILY!!!





The Battalion Runner

2016 – Number 4 – December 2016

2nd Battalion, 9th Marines



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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.

REUNION 2016 Was a Great Success!



175 Marines, Family and Friends. 160 at our Birthday Dinner at the Marriott Key Bridge Hotel.



The Commandant, General Neller, took special note of 2/9's presence at the Wreath Laying Ceremony the morning of The Birthday at the Iwo Jima War Memorial and prior to our group photo (above), addressed us as a unit. Quite an honor as I'm sure those present would agree with. More on General Neller's comments following the reunion discussion.



2/9 Member Ken Kitchen addressed the group at our dinner and spoke of his experiences in Vietnam and about the deep connection Marines have for one another. He was followed to the podium by Mrs. Judi Van Cleave, President of the National Gold Star Wives, who urged any Marine with health issues to take immediate action and get to the Veterans Administration. Failure to do so leaves a family shortchanged regarding VA benefits for surviving family members. Great advice to many of us who tend to be very thick-headed about seeking assistance from the VA or anyone else!

Reunion photos have been linked to our Network website, www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org. Go to the Photo and Video Link button on the left side of the Home Page and click on it. Find the 2016 Reunion link and enjoy the photos. I have those pictures on Photobucket, where you can download any of them for your personal enjoyment or use.

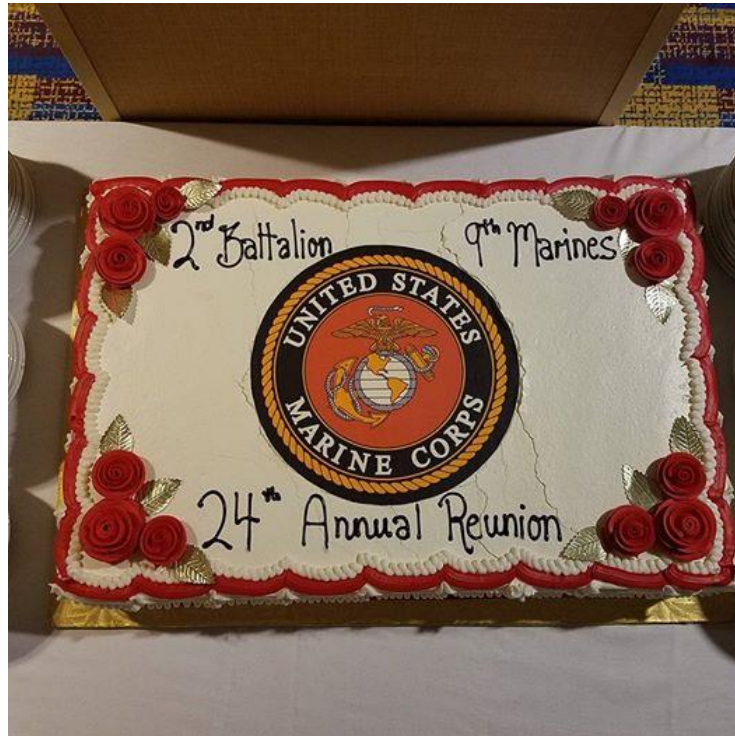
A great deal of thanks goes out to those who helped make this reunion a success. Henry Ostaszewski and Debbie Crist did yeoman's work to provide 2/9 covers and shirts and obtain both our reunion and dinner venues, respectively – and much more than that. A simple thank you would never convey the appreciation I hold for both their efforts. I could not name all the great volunteers we had throughout the 4-5 days of the reunion; selling raffle tickets, registering attendees, ensuring pickup and delivery of our Birthday Cake, and much more. We never had a time when someone did not step forward to help out. Finally, the folks who donated items to our raffle, resulting in one of the best raffles we've ever conducted. There were quite a few donors who could not even make it to the reunion but wanted to contribute in some way. That is the true mark of brotherhood!

This year we honored two members of the Network who have attended all 24 reunions held to date. Henry Ostaszewski and Dave Bigler have been to them all. Here's where Murphy's Law came into play. I thought I had done my homework in determining who had been at all the reunions. As it turns out I did not study hard enough. There was a third member who has been at them all. Apologies are due from myself to John Kasparian, who has also been to every reunion. Sorry for that mistake John and see you next year!

COMING UP: REUNION 2017, OUR 25TH, SILVER ANNIVERSARY, REUNION

WE ARE ALREADY WORKING TOWARD OUR NEXT REUNION IN 2017. SAME TIME, SAME PLACE, WITH CONTRACT DISCUSSIONS ALREADY UNDERWAY. 8-12 November 2017 at the Marriott Residence Inn Rosslyn, in Arlington. This will be the 25th Annual Reunion – our Silver Anniversary Reunion. Red Hill got a small group together in Arlington way back in 1993, and that laid the groundwork for what we have today. We will be working hard to make this the biggest and best reunion yet. As details become available they will be posted in Battalion Runners, special emails as necessary and on the 2/9 Network website. We have run out of rooms two years in a row now so if you plan on attend once the details for room reservations are announced please do not procrastinate

or you could lose out on staying at our hotel, as some have done for the past two years. We can only do so much once reservation or dinner deadlines are reached.



General Neller's Comments to both the entire audience at the Wreath Laying Ceremony and to 2/9 as a separate group stressed the need to include younger Marines in our thoughts and actions. In the case of the 2/9 Network that means those Marines who served post-Vietnam. I had the privilege of a short discussion with him following our group photo with the Iwo Jima Memorial in the background. That discussion centered on the specific topic of our post-Vietnam 2/9 membership. After I described to him our mostly unsuccessful attempts to get those members involved in our reunions he was quite convincing in stating I should not give up on those efforts. His concern about younger Marines continuing the legacy of any and all Marine Corps organizations and realizing the importance of continuing ties with brother and sister Marines they served with was, to me, quite genuine. We Vietnam members understand his thoughts all too well. For many of us we started realizing that too late, and many of our fellow Marines were gone when we began attempting to re-establish our ties. I was very impressed with his thoughts and it convinced me to basically repeat the note I had in the previous Battalion Runner, aimed at our younger members.

We now have more than 450 post-Vietnam members in the 2/9 Network. Unfortunately we see very few at our reunions. While I understand family, work, and finances can prevent younger people from taking off and traveling for 4-5 days I also urge those that can to think about contacting some of your fellow Marines and heading to Arlington. Jordan Glover is one post-Vietnam 2/9 member who attends reunions as often as possible. This year Alex Bailey, another post-Vietnam 2/9 member, attended with his wife. Alex pledged to contact as many of his fellow Marines as possible and try to

convince them to attend next November. My hope is that he is extremely successful. I cannot tell you how many Vietnam members of our Network have told me they didn't realize how important it was going to be to them to meet up with the Marines they served with until it was too late. I imagine it took most of us quite a while before we finally woke up and wondered whatever happened to all the good Marines we served with. We also wondered why the hell we didn't act sooner.

Tragically, far too many of them were gone before we acted. I suspect exactly the same thing is going to happen with many of our younger members. The difference is you are reading this and we can tell you with no doubt that the day will come when you will wonder why too. Think about it, it does not have to be that way. You will be welcomed with open arms and become our friends. When

Red Hill started looking for his fellow Marine warriors more than 20 years ago over 20 years had passed since they served together in Vietnam. His success in finding just over a dozen or so of his friends was the beginning of what is now a 2/9 Network more than 2,600 strong! Sadly, more than 400 of those members are now in our Last Patrol.

Danny

FROM THE MAILBOX - received since Battalion Runner 16-3, August 2016

Unfortunately the mailbox has been unusually silent since the last Battalion Runner. However, there is one significant story I received from USN CDR Curtis Jenkins, NRSW RCC, San Diego, their PAO. CDR Jenkins did yeoman's work communicating with a United Kingdom newspaper, The Sentinel, of Stoke-on-Trent, United Kingdom, putting one of their editors, Mr. Richard Ault, in touch with several members of Golf, 2/9 to obtain the details in the story below written by Ault. It is the history of the loss of Lance Corporal Stuart Woods, one of the very few Brits KIA in Vietnam and his ultimate inclusion on his home town's War Memorial. Please forgive the errors you might see in the story. Remember, this is a British story and some of the spellings are in accordance with their version of English, and I had to take a PDF file version and convert it to Word to get the article in the Runner. Not an easy task so I may have screwed up some of it. There are also two URLs at the end of the two articles below that will, if they work, link you to the actual online newspaper articles from that days Sentinel. The one concerning Stuart's inclusion on the War Memorial has quite a bit more than the one I included here.

Vietnam hero Stuart John Wood died trying to save lives in his U.S. Marine company – and the Viet Cong fighters they had trapped in a bunker.

RICHARD AULT tells the story of the soldier from Tunstall who fought in Asia with the Yanks.

'He was a good marine, it was a damn shame he died'

LANCE Corporal Stuart John Wood was just 20-years-old when he was killed on Hill 174 in Vietnam – a location also known as, 'where the devil lived'. He had emigrated

from Tunstall to America, looking to start a new life in Seattle. When he was drafted to serve in the American military, He opted to remain in the U.S. – and volunteered to serve with military intelligence as a scout. The former Alsager Secondary Modern pupil was taught basic Vietnamese and was then attached to a unit of Marines. Part of his role was to speak to Viet Cong (VC) fighters and try to persuade them to surrender, under the Chieu Hoi programme – a propaganda campaign to try to convince VC to give up the fight. Thousands of leaflets were dropped in the jungle calling on the guerrillas, also known as the North Vietnamese Army, or NVA, to ‘Chieu Hoi’, which came to mean, ‘sur render’. It was while trying to persuade a platoon of VC soldiers to come over to the American side that Stuart Was killed on July 20, 1968. Captain David Buckner was commanding Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment when Stuart was killed. Speaking from his home in Virginia, U.S., he said: “Stuart was what was known as a sniper scout. He had some rudimentary Vietnamese language training so that he could be an interpreter if there was a prisoner or a civilian I wanted to talk to. “The scouts also had this rudimentary language training because the South Vietnamese government had a programme, known as Chieu Hoi, which means, ‘open arms’. It became shorthand for surrender. People would talk about how you want to get this guy to Chieu Hoi, and Stuart would talk to them. Most were defecting VC.” On July 20, Captain Buckner’s company had been dropped off by helicopter to explore the DMZ around Hill 174. They found a company of NVA soldiers waiting in a bunker – and a fierce fire fight immediately broke out. “We were shooting at them, they were in a bunker and were shooting back at us,” recalled Capt Buckner. “There was no way they were going to get out of that situation. No-one was going to come to their rescue and they had no way of getting out. “Stuart was with me, with my little HQ group which consisted of me, my radio operators, my gunnery sergeant and Stuart. There was a lull in the fighting and we heard, ‘Chieu Hoi’. The division intelligence had put a bounty on prisoners. The guys that took one would get a few days R&R (rest and recuperation), if they wanted they could go to Singapore or Australia. Not a good idea, because it gave young guys the motivation to do dangerous things – not that I’m saying that Stuart was motivated by that. “Stuart says to me, ‘how about if I get up there a little closer and talk to those guys’? I said, ‘okay, but you be careful’. He said, ‘yes sir’, and worked his way about halfway over to them. He was speaking Vietnamese, it was going back and forth, then he yells back over, ‘they are going to come out and surrender’, I said, ‘great’. “At that time, Stuart stood up. Probably to show good faith on our part. But they shot him, so down he went. “The fighting resumed with much vigour. Then, after a while, we Heard another, ‘Chieu Hoi’. I knew what was going to happen, but there was nothing I could do about it. The Marines were saying, ‘yeah Chieu Hoi’. There was one guy left – he disappeared in a big puff of red mist. He was hit with shell fire, rockets, heavy grenades, everything we had. “We hauled Stuart back and put him in a body bag. He was not with me very long. I do remember he was a cheerful guy. His nickname was ‘Limey’. He was very good natured, a real upbeat guy. “I do remember asking him, ‘what the hell are you doing here’? I think it was the adventure that appealed to a young guy. “But he was making a difference. He was one step below an NCO (noncommissioned officer). He got his promotion (to lance

corporal) because he did a good job. ***He was a good Marine. It was a damned shame he died.*** “He just wanted to get those guys out of the bunker. He decided they were trustworthy and to show Them it was not a trap, he stood up. “We were really down for quite a while after that. He was a good guy. His death was so senseless. Stuart was not a war monger, but I think he enjoyed the excitement. I think there was a real sense of service there too. “He was a fine Marine.” Michael Norman was Golf Company ’s radio operator at the time. He said: “I fired the first shot. I’d just spotted a camouflaged NVA about 20 yards away. And he had spotted me. As he turned to either run or jump in a hole, I fired. Then all hell broke loose. “Stuart had recently joined the company. Limey either enlisted in the Corps or was drafted off a student visa. I think the deal was, he had to do two years service, then he was free to return to college. “My American comrades, of course, were curious about how a Limey ended up in the Marine Corps. Why didn’t he just give up his visa and go home? And why did he join the Marine Corps when he just as easily could have fulfilled the government’s requirement by service at some safe Air Force base or aboard ship? “Limey died on Hill 174 in mid-1968. And the reason I remember that point so well is that his death really rattled the company. Yes, in those roughly two hours of combat others were killed and wounded, but Limey was well liked, full of good cheer and bon homie, and those who knew him were shocked when he was carried into a bomb crater, where we were stacking the dead and wounded for transport.” Mr Norman added: “Thank you for remembering my comrade.” Jim Maddox was a navy corpsman, a medic – always known as ‘Doc’ – attached to the 9th Marines. The first action he saw was at Hill 174 when Stuart was killed. Doc Maddox, who was wounded in the same fight, said: “We knew they were up there. Everyone knew we were going to be in a fight. We had spotted movement and dropped mortars. I was so new I didn’t know what to think. “All of a sudden, all hell broke loose. It was indescribable. If you can imagine hundreds of AK 47s all firing at once and incendiary explosions. Someone started yelling. I hunkered down and crawled through a bomb crater, which turned out to be an NVA toilet. I had to try and wash my hands as I reached this guy who had been blown up by a grenade. People were screaming. A grenade landed next to me, so I got on top of this kid I was treating. I thought that was it. Another Marine came to help and he got hit. I got up and started dragging this guy. It was chaos. “Stuart was shot in the head when he went to talk to the NVA about Chieu Hoi. It was like they lured him down there and shot him. “As far as I know the guys really, really liked him. They called him Limey. ” An official American military report of the action on Hill 174 said: “A company size patrol came upon a heavily built, cleverly camouflaged enemy bunker complex. This complex was manned by units of the 27th NVA Regt. In the ensuing battle, friendly air, artillery and mortar fire was called in with deadly results for the enemy. Seemingly caught unaware, the enemy chose to retreat towards the refuge of the Demilitarised Zone, where he was brought under fire by our artillery officers and forward air controller. After the battle, an examination of the area revealed many facts. The bunkers were all linked by comm wire to a central bunker built into the side of a 1,000lb bomb crater. Covered with sticks and pieces of log, the bunkers were invisible from the air and almost that effective from the ground.” The report lists 33 NVA killed

during the battle. Doc Maddox added: "One of my corpsmen buddies was very close with Stuart. He was very religious. He was going to be a minister when he went home. I got in touch with him after the war and he told me that after Stuart was killed he gave up on God, religion and everything and he never went back, that's how much it affected him."

The name of one of the only British soldiers to be killed in Vietnam has been added to a war memorial in his home town in Stoke-on-Trent.

Stuart Wood left Tunstall in the 1960s to emigrate to America, settling in Seattle, where he had family. Stuart had told friends he was planning to return home after he received his draft papers to serve with the American Army during the Vietnam war. But instead Stuart decided to stay and earn either a 'green card', or American citizenship, allowing him to remain in the United States. Stuart volunteered to work for military intelligence as a scout, putting himself in the thick of the action in Vietnam. Lance Corporal Stuart John Wood was killed on July 20, 1968, aged 20. He was given a full Military funeral, and is buried at Tunstall Cemetery. Stuart is remembered in America, with a place on the Vietnam Wall of Faces. After The Sentinel contacted Stoke-on-Trent City Council with information about Stuart, his name was this week inscribed on Tunstall War Memorial. Stuart's cousin Simon Wood, of Trentham, said: "All the family members are delighted to have his name on the memorial since the only other thing that did remain was a bench that used to sit near his grave. The Marines paid for that to be inscribed, but it was subsequently burned by vandals." Simon added: "He went to America to gain a better future as a draughtsman was nationalised and called up to serve. He didn't have to go but would have been sent home with no chance of returning to America so he went and hoped it would be okay."

Links to the online Sentinel articles from above. The first one is a much more detailed story describing how Stuart was added to the local War Memorial. You will probably have to copy and paste the URLs to your web browser to see the articles, and I hope the Sentinel keeps their online version of the paper available and free so anyone who wants to see them can do so. They also include photos taken the day Stuart was KIA.

<http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/stoke-on-trent-vietnam-hero-is-added-to-tunstall-war-memorial/story-29884483-detail/story.html>

<http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/tunstall-hero-died-trying-to-save-lives-in-vietnam/story-29884681-detail/story.html>

DONATIONS

Here we go again. Our reunion costs came close to \$10,000 this year. Thanks to the extreme generosity of members prior to and during the reunion we were able to cover all those costs and come away with a balance we can use toward paying our website host expenses and begin preparations for next year's reunion. I also must include a comment about the many members who contribute even though they are not able to attend the reunion. Anything anyone can donate would be deeply appreciated since that is the only source our funding. Make checks payable to Danny Schuster and mail to 21 Moseley Street, Billerica, MA 01821.

NEW MEMBERS SINCE BATTALION RUNNER 16-3, August 2016

(I have made a change in how I enter personal information on the website. More and more often I hear from 2/9 Marines who have no internet connection. From this point forward when a new member is registered if you see a phone number in the email address block of the company rosters it means that person does NOT have internet access and the phone number is their mode of contact.)

2/9 Network – New Members appear in the order in which they joined with the newest members listed first.

Frisbee, Lee "Friz/Wham0"	Rochester, NY	HQHS	77-78
Miller, John	Statesville, NC	Command	90-91
Fierro, Rolando "Pete"	Clint, TX	Fox	68-69
Renna, Ronald "The Hobbitt"	The Villages, FL	Fox	68-69
Watson, Todd L.	Greeley, CO	Fox	89-92
Hisel, Barton A.	Tyler, TX	HQHS	08-11
Perron, Richard	Temecula, CA	Echo	89-94
Labbe, Wayne	Arundel, ME	HQHS	75-76
Klempnauer, Henry J. "Hank"	Atchison, KS	Echo	68-69
Nagele, Mark	Laredo, TX	HQHS	77-78
Matthews, John	Orange City, FL	Fox	66-67
Broderick, BG Matthew	Leesburg, VA	Golf	68-69
Smith, Michael R. "Mick"	Hanover, PA	Golf	66-67
Henson Jr., James B. "Henson"	Bremen, GA	Hotel	69-70
Yancey, Jimmy "Jimbo"	Rolesville, NC	HQHS	65-66
Mance, Joe	Cave Creek, AZ	Hotel	65-66
Smith, Isaac "Doc"	Mifflinburg, PA	Echo	12-14

Avila, Charles	Lyndhurst, NJ	Fox	92-94
Taylor Jr., James L. "Junebug"	Buffalo, NY	HQHS	75-76
Sparks, Milton "Sparks"	Petal, MS	Fox	66-67
Dix, Jon	Southgate, MI	Echo	92-93
Carlson, Mark	Shelton, WA	Hotel	74-75
Gifford, Joseph	Rosenberg, TX	Golf	82-85

The Last Patrol (since August 2016)

13 DECEMBER 2016 - Solomon Starr Sr., and Norman L. Lenhart

I've received word recently on the loss of two more of our brothers. Solomon Starr Sr., passed away on 14 November 2016. His company is unknown but he served in 1966. I also received word from Jim Lenhart that his brother, Sgt. Norman L. Lenhart, Weapons, 1965-1966, passed away. Both are now members of our Last Patrol. Semper Fidelis Marines.

15 SEPTEMBER 2016 – Mel Horowitz

Several 2/9 Marines notified me yesterday that on Saturday, 13 August, we lost one of our strongest supporters of the 2/9 Network. Mel Horowitz passed after a long and hard battle with an illness that claimed him in the end. Mel is now in the Last Patrol. Rest in peace Mel, you will be missed. Semper Fidelis!

02 SEPTEMBER 2016 – Dan Darden

I received the sad news from Lee Stander that during the last week of August, 2016, we lost 2/9 Marine Dan Darden. Dan is now in our Last Patrol. Semper Fi Dan!!!

Guarding the Gates of Heaven. Semper Fi Marines!

As always, anyone is invited to email me at ditson35@verizon.net with comments, questions, current items affecting our members, or recommendations. Stories like the ones concerning Stuart Wood in this issue of the Battalion Runner are excellent ideas for inclusion in future Runners. One word of caution. I am the sole arbiter of what becomes published and what does not. If you are going to send me something you'd like to see posted make sure it is relevant to our brotherhood of Marines and in good taste.

Regarding the Last Patrol Section: I cannot honor those men we lose if someone does not email me and tell me of their passing so I can place them in the "Last Patrol" section of our

company rosters on the website. You can also use the “Contact Us for Info and Updates” button on the 2/9 Network website to contact me. I will receive an email with your information.

SEMPER FIDELIS,
Danny Schuster
2/9 Network Administrator and Reunion Coordinator
Echo, 1967