



2nd Battalion, 9th Marines

THE BATTALION RUNNER

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Opening Remarks

My apologies for the delay in getting this first newsletter of 2024 out to all of you. Please read this edition carefully as there is a lot of straight-forward and important information, not all of it good news. I did not want to send this while wintering down south in Alabama since January until I got home. Forwarded mail from MA to AL is a very iffy thing and I did not want to miss any mail that may come in from the contents of this version of the Battalion Runner. For the first time since I took over the website and 2/9 Network in 2014 we are in financial difficulty. I had to go back through a myriad of old documents, newsletters, photos, and bank statements for the 2/9 account to come up with the information that will follow.

Last year at this time we had nearly \$10,000 in our bank account. That was the lowest the account had been in May for several years. At the time I'm composing this newsletter we have \$4,000. Since last year's reunion I've received less than \$500 in donations. We are okay with paying for the website, but the reunion and some other expenses are a different story. Since our reunion in 2019 the expense for all we do has gone from approximately \$10,000 at no charge to anyone, to nearly \$14,000. Our Birthday Dinner alone has gone from about \$30

per meal to this year's cost of over \$53 per meal (after service fees and taxes). This year our dinner contract calls for a minimum payment of \$4,200 (about 76 people). Last year we had 130 for dinner and that would cost nearly \$7,000. Do the math and our reunion costs alone have gone up nearly 40% since 2019. Donations, our sole source of income other than 2/9 shirts, etc. and raffles and donations at the reunion itself have gone down 30%. 5 years ago donations came in from around 100 people. Last year I didn't get donations from 70. Over 1,200 people receive this email. While I realize a lot of folks cannot attend reunions due to health, family, or financial reasons, getting donations from only 70 Marines is becoming the beginning of the end of most of what we do with the 2/9 Network. I have been fearing this for several years now with close to 75% of all communications I receive being death notices. Time does not stop for anyone, and our core membership, Vietnam Veterans, are starting to pay the price more and more often, including myself. I'll be 78 by the time we have this year's reunion. We're a lot closer to the end than we are to the beginning.

The most obvious way to alleviate our current finances is with an increase in donations. Four years ago I received nearly \$11,000 in donations. Since then donations have dropped to less than \$7,500. If Marines who care about the 2/9 Network have not donated in the past and want to help keep us running successfully into the future sending a few bucks will help. You can make checks out to me and send them to me at 21 Moseley Street, Billerica, MA 01821. Some in the past have asked me if I accept online cash donations through apps like Venmo. Unfortunately, I am not a technical guy and have enough trouble just trying to compose this newsletter and maintain our database. Please send checks.

While reunions are clearly the most expensive thing we face our website is just as important if not more so. 2/9 has a proud history in any conflict in which we have been involved, from WWII through Iraq and Afghanistan. Our peacetime members have also received top level recognition for their humanitarian work in places like the southwest Pacific. I have tried to keep the website updated as much as possible but traffic into the Mailbox has become nearly non-existent. Members are interested in your stories. No matter the era in which you served in 2/9 if you receive recognition, whether military or civilian, let me know and I'll publish it online and in the Battalion

Runner. As one fine example see the story involving our own Bob Slattery in this edition's "From the Mailbox".

Our younger, post-Vietnam 2/9 Marines are also vital to the 2/9 Network's future existence. I have, unsuccessfully, tried for years to convince you guys that we really need you. In a few years there is an undeniable fact that there won't be anyone left to run things unless you get involved, at both reunions and running the website. Red Hill started the 2/9 Network in the late 1980s with emails, phone calls, etc., and eventually started the website with other members helping out. The number of members has gone from just around 100 to now more than 2,500 people. Sadly, several hundred of them are now in the Last Patrol of the website. Of the thousands of Post-Vietnam 29 Marines, not even 400 of them are members of the Network. Get your fellow Marines to sign up by sending me an email with the appropriate information outlined on the website and I'll get them set up there and for receipt of the Battalion Runner and other important information I send in email blasts occasionally. If someone wants to help out running the website email me and we'll talk. Let's keep this great thing going beyond our Vietnam veterans!!! Now back to some better news.

31st Annual Reunion

07-12 November 2024

Marriott Residence Inn Rosslyn, Arlington, VA

Despite all I said above our reunion this November will still go on as always. **However, there are important date changes to the events we conduct or attend.** Those planning on attending should take special note of the changes and plan your room reservation dates at the hotel accordingly. In a normal year we hold our jam session at the hotel with the Galatin Canyon Band on 09 November, attend the USMC official Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Iwo Jima Memorial on the morning of the Birthday on the 10th, hold our Birthday Dinner that evening, and those interested travel to The Wall to see our lost Vietnam buddies after dinner. This year, since the Birthday on 10

November falls on Sunday, dates have been changed to accommodate that. Our Jam Session will be held on the afternoon of Friday, 08 November. The official USMC Wreath Laying Ceremony will be held on the morning of Saturday, 09 November. Our Birthday Dinner and visit to The Wall will still be held as usual on 10 November. Folks may want to come in a day earlier than usual to be sure not to miss these great events.

The Jam Session with the Galatin Canyon Band has become a staple at our reunions and a great time. Ben Hernandez and his band put this show on at no charge in memory of his Dad, Dan Hernandez, a 2/9 Marine who died tragically in a car accident a few years ago. Blue Grass music at it's best! We provide beer, soft drinks, water, and snacks at no charge to all from 1500-1800 hours in the restaurant of the hotel.



The Marine Corps Wreath Laying Ceremony begins at the Iwo Jima Memorial at 1000 hours on 09 November. If we have decent weather you'll see performances from the Marine Corps Band, Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, and 8th & I passing in review. Speeches by the Commandant and a prominent guest speaker. We also usually have our group photo taken at the Memorial with the Commandant following the ceremony. The Memorial is a 15-20 minute walk from the hotel and we provide transportation to and from for those who choose not to

walk. If you have not experienced this before it is a sight to behold. It never gets old for me.



Marine Corps Birthday Dinner

The highlight of our reunion is always our Marine Corps Birthday Dinner at the Sheraton Pentagon City hotel. It's a full course dinner with salad, chicken dinner and desert. Dinner begins at 1800 hours but there is a cash bar available for adult beverages beginning around 1700-1730. We ask that folks dress smart casual (collared shirt and slacks for men), but we've had everything from Evening Dress uniforms to guys looking like they just came back from a two week Platoon Patrol in the monsoon season in Vietnam! It's a great time with our youngest and oldest Marine Ceremony, great guest speakers, announcement of our raffle and 50/50 raffle winner, a very short business meeting, and more. Transportation will be provided to and from the dinner for those who need it. Parking of private vehicles at the hotel is free for dinner attendees. The fly in the ointment here is the cost of the dinner. With the price being over \$53 for each meal and our current financial situation, unless donations go up, we will have no choice but to charge people for their meal. I am very hopeful we won't have to do this but if we must I'll send another Battalion Runner or an email to everyone letting you know how much you may have to pay. I do NOT anticipate you having to pay the full price. **I will need a count for the dinner, so if you are going please send me an email telling me how many will be at the dinner from your party. twoninencoic@aol.com.**



Our hospitality room at the Residence Inn will be open from the evening of 07 November until the morning of the 12th. There will be free beer, soft drinks, bottled water, and a lot of snacks available for everyone. Even if you want to attend the dinner but won't be staying at the hotel because you live locally (which is fine for the dinner), you can stop by anytime and tell war stories, lies, and more with fellow 2/9 members and their families.



Here is a shorter synopsis of our reunion events:

- 1. 07 November: Hospitality room opens.**
- 2. 08 November: Jam Session at 1500 hours. Snacks and beverages provided at no charge.**
- 3. 09 November: Marine Corps Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Iwo Jima Memorial at 1000 hours. Transportation provided as necessary.**
- 4. 10 November:**
 - a. Marine Corps Birthday Dinner at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel at 1800 hours. Transportation provided as necessary.**

b. Trip to The Wall to see our Vietnam buddies, approximately 2300 hours, after our Birthday Dinner. Leaving from the Residence Inn with transportation as necessary.

5. 11 November: Free time. Veteran's Day Ceremonies at The Wall around 1300 hours. National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, VA (near Quantico), about a 45 minute ride. See our great 2/9 plaque permanently displayed on the memorial wall in Semper Fidelis Park on the museum grounds. Red Hill's plaque is there near the chapel and war dog memorial.

6. 12 November: Say our goodbyes until the next time!!!

Room Reservation and Parking Information at the Residence Inn

Room Reservations: It may be hard to believe but this will be our 11th year at the Residence Inn Rosslyn. In that time the room rates have risen less than any other aspect of our reunion expenses. This year the rate is set at \$145/night plus taxes. That includes a free breakfast and wi-fi. Our contract has rooms available from 06 through 12 November. The hotel has once again set up a unique reservation page for our members. [Book Your Group/Corporate Rate | Marriott International](#) You can also call them at 1-800-331-3131, but be sure to tell them you are making them under the 2/9 Reunion package.

Cut off date for reservations is close of business on 11 October 2024. If you don't have a room booked by then you will have to pay the going rate, and that is more than \$250 per night. If you have problems making a reservation email the Residence Inn sales office at sales@rirva.com and explain your problem. The staff will be very glad to help. If that does not work email me at twoninencoic@aol.com and I'll try to help.

Parking at the hotel: Normal parking rates at the hotel are \$29 per night. Our contract includes a clause that gets us a 50% discount on

parking, so it will be \$14.50 per night. The garage accommodates almost all SUVs and pickup trucks, but there is a height limit. Be sure you know you can get through the garage door.

From the Mailbox

Traffic to the mailbox has been nearly non-existent since our last Battalion Runner in December, but here is one excellent example of something I love receiving so I can pass the story along to all our members.

2/9's own Bob Slattery, 66-67, was honored by the New York Islanders as "The Military Hero of the Game". Here's his report on that honor:

"I was recently privileged to be honored by the NY Islanders hockey team as "The Military Hero of the Game". They showed some photos of me in Viet Nam, and some from the NYPD on the big screen (Note: Bob is retired from the NYPD), and the fans loved it. They also presented me with an Islanders jersey. Usually it would have had the number 24 for the year and my last name above the number, however my son Todd had a better idea, and the Islanders okayed it. The enclosed photos are the result."

Semper Fi,
Bob





Oh-Rah Bob!!!

Donations

I have already said about all that I can about donations, but there are two things I am adding.

- 1. I will never forget the steadfast support from all the Marines and/or their families in the form of donations in the past 10 years. We would never have made it this far without them. Thank you all!!!**
- 2. The following men are those who sent donations since our last Battalion Runner in December 2023:**

**Bob Slattery
Ed Gorman
James Joyce
Glenn Siegler (and calendar!)**

Conclusion

I expect some of the statements I've made in this Battalion Runner may upset some people. However, I wanted to be straight forward and honest about where we stand as an organization. The begging for money is what I felt I needed to do to help us survive.

It is still my hope we can run this reunion this year at no charge to anyone. That depends on what happens with donations in the next two months. I'll be sending another Battalion Runner or email with final information in July.

There have been some continuing issues with our website for the past year but I think our ISP has finally identified the problems and fixed them. We'll see how that works out.

Don't forget, all our reunion information is also on our website, and every Battalion Runner I've send since the spring of 2014 is also on the website. There are separate links buttons of the left side of the Home Page for both things.

The other good feature is our links page. You can find all kinds of information, like how to obtain your service record books (SRBs), and other info linked to your military service and other things.

As always, if anyone has any questions, comments, or suggestions feel free to email me at twoninencoic@aol.com.

SEMPER FIDELIS

**Danny Schuster
2//9 Administrator and Reunion Coordinator
Echo, 1967**

Donations

Thanks to the following who graciously have donated to our cause since the last newsletter in September 2023

**Ed Gorman
Roger Fogus
John Kasparian
Dave Garner
Richard Brungardt
Javier “Taco” Salas
Scott Whelan
Glenn Siegler
Rich LoDolce
Adolph Novello
Bertrand Cottam
Michael Quinn**

I hope I did NOT forget anyone. If I did I apologize. Besides these I cannot forget all the people who bought raffle tickets, 2/9 hats/shirt/sweatshirts, 50/50 raffle tickets, and simply gave cash donations at the reunion this year. If you can help out any amount contributed would be greatly appreciated as we begin planning for our 2024 reunion. Checks should be made out to me and mailed to 21 Moseley Street, Billerica, MA 01821.

CONCLUSION

That's it for this Battalion Runner with a couple of additional notes. I am going to continue recommending strongly to our post-Vietnam 2/9 members to consider joining us at our annual reunions in Arlington, VA. I know many of you have families, jobs, and financial considerations, but if you ever show up I am certain you will NOT be disappointed. We try to keep expenses to an absolute minimum for everyone. In fact, even though our Vietnam Vet numbers are beginning to decline more rapidly (sucks getting old), we still hope to provide everything free of charge at our reunions. The only expenses would be getting there and home, and paying for your rooms and parking. That depends on donations, since that is the only income we have to cover reunions and the website expenses.

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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