



Second Battalion, 4th Marines Association, Inc. The Magnificent Bastards



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Aug 2016 *Sea Horse*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 2016 reunion has just concluded. The weather was perfect as was the location. Most days saw mid to upper 70 degree weather without humidity. The hotel and restaurants were smoke free and I didn't smell anything except lightly and briefly twice near the casino portion. So, for Colleen and I, the physical aspects of the reunion were exceptional. Many thanks to host Donald Greengrass, President of the Ho-Chunk Nation and guest speaker, Wilfred Cleveland, Ho-Chunk Veteran Service Officer and guest speaker, Robert Mann, Ho-Chunk Nation Legislature Executive Director of Business, Robert Mudd, and his staff, Beth Anacker [Marketing], Lorena Mass [Group Sales, Patricia Reyes [Group Sales], CaraLee Murphy [Marine veteran], Margaret "Muggs" Murphy [Veteran Service Officer] and Pierre Decorah [Assistant Veteran Service Officer and Wahira singer]! The Ho-Chunk Nation is to be complimented on their beautiful facility, and friendly and efficient staff. The Wahira ceremony presented by the Ho-Chunk Nation dancers and singers on Friday evening was very special and spiritual. The food and service were excellent. There were a number of first time participants at our reunion. We welcome them and hope that what we are doing at reunions and as an Association will encourage them to return. The reunion was deemed a huge success by all!

A huge thank you to member Fritz Warren for standing in as this reunion's Chaplain. Also, many thanks to GySgt Randy Bjerke, USMC (Ret), for playing his bugle at our memorial service and the Sanford White Eagle American Legion Post 556 Color Guard for presenting the colors at this event and banquet.

I am proud to report that James "Doc" Swann is the recipient of the 2016 Wild Bill Weise Magnificent Bastard Award for serving our Association long and faithfully. He initially volunteered to serve three months until we could find a replacement for the outgoing treasurer at the time. Eleven years later and counting, he still serves us all. Thank you Doc!!!

Congratulations to Treasurer James "Doc" Swann and Director Jim Rogers for being reelected to their positions on the Board for the next two years.

James has, however, given his notice that this will be his last hurrah, so we must actively start looking for someone to be our treasurer in 2018. Again, please remember that this Association is only as good as those who put their time into it. If we don't have volunteers to do the various jobs, then the Association falls apart. All of you are important, but we need you to step up to the plate when a need is identified.

On a different note, we now have a new Membership Chairman. Many thanks to Wayne Sasser for stepping up to do this very demanding, but extremely important job. John Hembrough has done a magnificent job for four years and given us a solid base upon which to grow. We truly appreciate his hard work and dedication, and are sorry he is leaving. Also greatly appreciated are John's crew: Cindy Greer and Secretary Manny Travassos. It takes a team to do this job and they all stepped up to the plate in fine fashion.

I am looking for a Social Media Coordinator [potential new billet] to direct and manage our internet affairs. I have been the Web Sergeant for several years, but I have had to use an outside professional to make the actual entries of changes and information that constantly stream to me for the web site. We would be well served to have someone from the younger generations to not only be involved with the web site, but take us further with Facebook, Twitter, etc. These forms of communication are essential to maintaining and growing our Association for the future. If there is anyone out there who might be interested in doing this, please contact me at 575-209-0932 or Brooks@ADanceofLight.com.

Please note that raises in most categories of dues was voted in earlier this year and now are official as of 1 August. These changes will be posted on the web site and application form as soon as possible. This was necessary to preclude the slow hemorrhage of our treasury. I have heard a very small amount of negative feedback concerning the increase of annual dues. While I understand the unhappiness of the minority, the majority vote was for the raise. Of 455 ballots mailed to our membership only 128 were returned with a vote cast [123 for and 5 against]. Active participation is necessary for everyone's voice to be heard. If one doesn't vote, then there is no one to blame but oneself. I know this may be a hardship for a few, therefore, the best course of action would be to consider paying for a life membership in three installments at the present time. This would make the cost more manageable. PayPal explains how to do this in more detail during the membership application process on the web site. I have also just asked the Board to readdress this issue, but, for now, the new dues have been voted and approved by the majority of the membership. Any future change to annual dues would require another vote later in the year or at the next annual meeting. Please know that those having difficulty paying higher dues can still attend reunions and see the Sea Horse newsletter on the web site. Paying dues, however, allows you to vote in elections and policy changes, and run for office. I hope all will give what I have related here some thoughtful consideration.

Our annual battalion awards presentation to the outstanding Marines and Navy personnel of the active Battalion will take place on 14 December followed by a late Marine Corps Birthday Ball the next evening. This is due to the Battalion arriving home late in the year from deployment to WestPac. If you live in the San Diego area, consider attending one or both functions to support our Battalion.

Lastly, please put a reminder on your 2017 calendars that we will be having our 2017 reunion in Charleston, SC. General Jim Livingston and Robert Mastrion will be our hosts. Some of the fun activities which are being considered for this reunion are a dinner cruise with visit to Patriot' Point to see the MOH Museum, visit to Fort Sumter, visit to Parris Island for a graduation and lunch with some DI's, carriage ride and Charleston visit plus the normal meetings, memorial service and banquet. Dates and details will be published as soon as they are known.

Semper Fi & Anchors Aweigh,

Brooks

Brooks Wilson

President

NEWS FROM THE BATTALION COMMANDER

STATE OF THE BATTALION – May, June & JULY 2016

27 MAY 2016

Marines, Sailors, Families, and Friends,

First, I want to say thank you to our adopted community of San Clemente, our Family Readiness Officer and Spouses, and the friends & family of our Magnificent Bastards. Each of you made our transition from home to Okinawa, Japan smooth and memorable. The Marines are now stationed aboard Camp Hanson, and are actively integrating with the rest of the Marine elements on 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)

During the past month, we have promoted 19 Marines to the rank of Lance Corporal, seven to Corporal, two to Sergeant, and nine to 1st Lieutenant. There have been three change of commands, with seasoned 2/4 leaders filling new roles as the Battalion Operations Officer, Weapons Company Commander, Headquarters & Services (H&S) Company Commander, and Echo Company Commander. Undoubtedly, these final adjustments have enabled the battalion to have its best foot forward as we step off onto the summer patrol.

Training during the past month has included the Marine Corps Combat Readiness Exercise (MCCRE) aboard Camp Pendleton, where the battalion was evaluated and found fully capable for all mission sets and associated tasks for operations customary to the MEU. Upon completion of the MCCRE, the Advanced Party quickly departed for Okinawa and enabled a seamless transition with our sister battalion (1st Battalion, 5th Marines), assuming the duties as the Battalion Landing Team. While the Advanced Party was busy setting ideal conditions to receive the remainder of 2/4, the Main Body—still aboard Camp Pendleton—completed all marksmanship requirements and enjoyed some well-deserved pre-deployment leave. Additional training included the simulated helicopter crash at sea training at the “Helo Dunker,” a mechanical mock helicopter that drops Marines in full combat loads upside-down underwater and forces them to exit quickly. Upon the battalion’s return from leave the Magnificent Bastards departed for the hot and muggy jungles of Okinawa, Japan.

Your Magnificent Bastards are standing ready to support operations across the Pacific and globe. Thank you for your continued support. If you would like to see pictures of our training or updates on our battalion, please “like” us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/2dBattalion4thMarines>.

28 June 2016

Your Magnificent Bastards continue to raise the bar high and train in any climb or place! We have hit the ground running in the Pacific by conducting jungle training, professional military education, and integrating with our new higher headquarters – the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The weather is hot and humid in Okinawa, Japan, but our Marines and Sailors’ physical fitness and mental toughness allowed them to quickly adjust.

The highlights to this month’s training have been on the individual Marine or Sailors professional development and technical training. We conducted both a Lance Corporal Seminar and a Corporals’ Course. These courses develop the Marines and Sailors to be prepared for their next promotion. We focused the curriculum on how to train, lead, and communicate with subordinates and seniors. This past month’s training focused on operating in a jungle environment. We sent a Platoon size element of leaders to the Jungle Warfare Training Center where they graduated as jungle leaders and are putting their new patrolling, navigation, and survival skills to work teaching the battalion. The companies have been conducting patrolling exercises, urban training, and live fire events; all while integrating the training with our mechanized vehicles, boats, and aircraft. Currently, we are participating in a two week MEU Exercise, honing our skills and preparing for any mission that may arise. This month alone, the Battalion promoted over 50 Marines and Sailors. We continue to maintain a high readiness level and are postured to support any mission!

Sgt.Maj. Vargas and I continue to be humbled by the outstanding work of our Marines and Sailors. They epitomize the greatness of our country. June 22nd marked the 71st anniversary of the end of the Battle of Okinawa, one of the hardest fought battles of World War II. Since that day Marines have never taken our presence on the island for granted. Your Marines and Sailors of Battalion Landing Team 2/4 remain focused, postured, and ready to support our country in any capacity.

28 July 2016

This month, your Magnificent Bastards have undergone extensive training while preparing to embark naval shipping in the coming weeks. Training has taken our Marines throughout the Pacific from Palau to Mount Fuji, solidifying our capabilities to meet the demands as an expeditionary force in readiness. The men are strong and are eager to set sail. Undoubtedly, the battalion has found its “sweet spot,” a level of proficiency produced over the last eleven months of tough and realistic training.

Before setting off on a much deserved four-day liberty pass to celebrate the Nation’s independence, we promoted two Marines to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant, 10 to Sergeant, 13 to Corporal, and 20 to Lance Corporal. During the 4th of July holiday, some Marines took the opportunity to visit the great city of Tokyo while others enjoyed deep sea fishing trips, rounds of golf, and other beach festivities. The men have been working hard and it was good to see them enjoy time off.

The primary training this month focused on Realistic Urban Training Exercise, or RUTEX. The fighting men of Echo Company superbly demonstrated their ability to conduct long range vertical assaults as they flew over 950 miles from Okinawa to Mount Fuji to raid a large objective. Their actions were fast and lethal. In addition to RUTEX, your Bastards honed their command and control skills practicing countless battle drills over four dynamic scenarios in the blistering heat. The battalion also underwent a maintenance stand-down in order to prepare our vehicles for embarkation. Our logistics Marines are topnotch performers—truly the heartbeat of the battalion. Furthermore, the battalion hosted a tough three week long Martial Arts Instructor Course, graduating 33 Marines from seven different commands within Okinawa. Lastly, our Advanced Party for embarkation left late this month for Sasebo, Japan to ensure conditions are set for the battalion to board naval shipping in the coming weeks.

Sergeant Major Vargas and I are truly honored to watch the men in this battalion grow, personally and professionally. I can say with utmost confidence that we are ready for whatever missions our country asks of us.

**Thank you for your continued support for your Marines and Sailors. If you would like to see pictures of our training or updates on our battalion, please “like” us on Facebook at:
<https://www.facebook.com/2dBattalion4thMarines>.**

Semper Fidelis,

Lieutenant Colonel Brian Greene (Battalion Commander)

Jim &Carla Hogan

The Hogan’s continue to support the Magnificent Bastards by organizing fundraisers. Their current event is a Golf Tournament at Bella Collina Golf Club in San Clemente, California to mark the 15 year anniversary of America’s Global War on Terror and to support the American Men and Women who continue to protect us today.

Carla also hosted a dinner for the 2/4 wives at the Ritz Carlton in Laguna Nigel as the midway point of their husbands deployment. The women were pampered by Carla at this beautiful resort.

Please show your support by going to <http://scmcsg.org>

2ND BATTALION, 4TH MARINES ASSOCIATION

2016 REUNION - WISCONSIN DELLS, WI



Brooks Wilson & Guest Speaker Marine Robert Mann of the Ho-Chunk Nation



General Weise pinning 2016 Wild Bill award on Recipient James Swann.... Glass Art Piece made by Brooks Wilson presented to Ho-Chunk Nation for their Hospitality.



GySgt Randy Bjerke Playing Taps at Memorial Service



Memorial Service Hug



President of the Ho-Chunk Nation and Marine Wilfred Cleveland



Wahira Female Dancer





Wahira Male Dancer

Reunion Host Donald Greengrass Wahira Male Dancer

DIC and CRSC

I have been the US Army Hawaii Retiree Council Co-Chair since 1984. Each year I am dismayed at the number of military retirees who are unfamiliar with two important benefits that they are eligible to apply for. DIC (Dependency Indemnification Compensation – a VA Program) and CRSC (Combat Related Special Compensation (An Army Program for Army retirees. Each service has their own CRSC).

To participate the retiree or widow MUST apply and many times unfortunately the widow is not told about DIC from the Survival Assistant Officer. There is a one year window that the widow must apply for DIC payment which is current \$1252 a month, tax free, when approved. The death must be service related or service connected. In the case of Vietnam War veterans many have “presumed” medical conditions which will assure approval of DIC. The death certificate must list one of the conditions as the primary or secondary cause of death. For example a secondary condition could be diabetes II or Ischemic Heart Failure or any other service related condition and chances are the DIC will be approved.

If the military retiree has SBP then it is important for the widow to apply within one year of his death, because if she does and it is approved for DIC, the DFAS will recompute the retiree’s SBP premiums and send her a cash refund for the difference. It is frequently more than \$23K. The DIC payment, tax free, is deducted from the SBP payment (which is taxable). The widow receives a check from the VA and the DFAS will send her a check for the about over the \$1252. So her total payment is the same except \$1252 is tax free and she gets the premiums recomputed. Nobody will tell you about this, not the VFW DAV or other agencies because they do not know how to do it in most cases. It is not on the SAO check list in many cases.

CRSC is another benefit that Vietnam War veterans especially have overlooked, especially those veterans with a rating from 10-40%. They MUST submit a DD2860 to Fort Knox for CRSC consideration and once approved the payment, tax free can be retroactive for up to 72 months or 6 years. That is a lot of money. Even if the rating is 50% or higher the retiree should submit his DD2860 along with the VA rating to Ft. Knox for evaluation. They just may be entitled to CRSC. Many receive CRDP (Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay) which is taxable and they think that is it and so remain ignorant of the CRSC benefit.

Recently one of my former bosses, a Colonel, who never applied for CRSC because he only had 20% but I insisted he do so and he did. Now he gets 6 years retroactive tax free pay at the 20% level. Certainly worth the postage.

Don Devaney

DIC Application is VA Form 21-534EZ – be sure your spouse or NOK is familiar with it. When completed attach the death certificate and mail to VA Regional Center in St. Paul, MN

"EYE WITNESSES NEEDED"

On the night of 16-17 March 1967 at Vin Quan Thuong. PFC Frank Mirabal of Hotel Company, although seriously wounded himself, dragged a badly wounded Marine from the kill zone of an enemy ambush to safety, thereby saving his life. Frank Mirabal was told that he would be recommended for a Silver Star. He remembers the name Ernest Bachelor from Philadelphia who was involved in the event. If you have any knowledge of this event contact Vic Taylor <victaylorwest@aol.com> or Bill Weise <wweise2@gmail.com>."

John Schassen

John has started the first week of Cancer treatment and everything is going well. We're spending a lot of hours at the Portland VA but it is interesting to people watch. Please let everyone know how well he is doing. He misses seeing everyone at the reunion and is thinking about you all.

Thanks to everyone who has sent good wishes, thoughts, and prayers our way. I'm sure this is the reason John is being so successful with his treatment.

Hope you all had fun in Wisconsin. Miss being there.

Semper Fi,

Nancy Schassen

Please send emails to John or Nancy at: jnschassen@aol.com

George Welling

George is back in the hospital at CPMC. His new room # is 416B. Phone # is 415-600-8015

The good news - his heart pump and drive line are all good.

The plus factor for here is there is a lot of activity. So there is noise besides the TV.

He has the phone handy, so if you call he is able to answer calls. There have been several doctors seeing George.

He has a very ugly infection on his leg. About the size of a small tennis ball. A plastic surgeon has looked at his leg, X-rays have been taken. They were concerned that the infection might have gone to the bone- but that doesn't seem to be the case. He will be having surgery on it soon.

He has a rash all over his body- due to a reaction to one of the drugs that he has been taking.

And then of course he is NOT eating- although he pretends that he is. The feeding tube was removed accidentally- but has put back.

Please send emails to Patty Ciampi at: pattyjocake@mac.com



Frank Valdez visits George Welling for a mini 2/4 reunion.

Message from Geoff Melvin

To all my 2/4 brethren, for those who know 1stSgt Vancey Pachal (Fox Co) and GySgt Absalon Cabrera (Golf Co) from our 2004 Ramadi deployment...we will be back from the 13th MEU sometime in September.

All three of us coincidentally met after 11 years since seeing these guys...small Corps. With that said, we would like to have a get together at Bastards Bar/Canteen 11045 Downey Ave, Downey, CA. on Saturday September 17th. We are ready to come back and get some good food, beer, and be with our bro's. Nick, are you opposed to a nice gathering of Magnificent Bastards to greet their brothers home from deployment? Hope to see you all there...

Bastards Canteen is proudly owned and operated by Nick Velez former 2/4 Marine. Nick hosts MANY events to support the military. They have amazing food and enjoy the company of other veterans. You can view his website at <http://bastardscanteen.com> He can also be found on Facebook and Twitter. Feel free to email Nick at: Bastardsamerican24@gmail.com