



THE THUNDERING THIRD

NEWSLETTER



THIRD BATTALION FOURTH MARINES ASSOCIATION

23 Hampton Meadows, Hampton, NH 03842

Letter from the President

Pam, and I, hopes this newsletter finds each of you in good health. I have been delayed in getting this newsletter out, since the reunion, as I have had several pressing matters that precluded me focusing my attention on it. Throw in the Thanksgiving holiday, with other travels, and time got away from me quickly.

We have successfully completed another reunion, in Branson, and it was very well attended. From the comments I heard from many, I think everyone enjoyed themselves immensely. If I recall, we had a total head count of 231 attendees and MANY "First Timers" to have ever attended a reunion. I had numerous of them tell me they were having a grand time and would certainly be attending future reunions. John and Lydia Masterjohn, with assistance in planning from Chuck and Carol Lear, really worked hard to make this reunion a success and very enjoyable for all. Branson laid out the red carpet for us everywhere we went to eat or to enjoy various shows. John, Lydia, Chuck, Carol and Mike Madden worked many long hours "standing watch" at the registration table to make sure everyone received their reunion packet and answered questions. Plans for the 2013 reunion have already been put into motion which will be held in Washington, D.C. John Masterjohn and Travis Fryzowicz are teaming up on the plans and I am informed that much has already been accomplished. As you know we always have a great time there! When the reunion arrangements have been finalized we hope everyone will be able to get their reservations secured early and come to D.C. and join in on the festivities and camaraderie. There is so much to do there and the historical significance of the area offers much more than we will ever be able to see in just a few days. If you are able, you might consider going early and staying longer than the reunion dates to take in those sights you've always wanted to see but were unable to visit in the past. If it will be your first trip to D.C. you will love it!! If you have been there previous, then you know what awaits us.....hope to see you there.

The reunion banquet was highlighted this year with a tribute to Chaplain Stan Beach for his many years of continued service to the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, Chaplain Corps and the Association. You probably saw his recent appointment by MOPH National Commander Bill Hutton to the post of MOPH

National Chaplain. Bill knew, from experience, that a finer person could not have been chosen to fill that post so he made the appointment as soon as he was able. Good Job Bill. The Chaplains tribute was given by (Retired) MajGen David Richwine and he did an absolutely splendid job of delivering the speech for the Chaplain. We were able to keep it a "secret" until it was delivered and I can tell you that we caught the Chaplain totally unaware. He was very humbled by the kind words delivered from MajGen Richwine and those who contributed to the background for the tribute. Grace and Travis Fryzowicz built a scrapbook for the Chaplain from letters, pictures and comments from his family as well as all his family of Marines and Corpsmen in the Association and from many others afar. Grace let Travis cut out some of the items that went into the scrapbook but only with blunt-nosed scissors.....seems he's a little dangerous with pointed objects, I heard someone say. It was a very beautiful scrapbook and they did a great job on it. Thank you Grace, and Travis, for your hard work and ingenuity on that wonderful memento for the Chaplain. We know he will treasure it forever.

In talking with the active duty Battalion SgtMajor (Reaves) in late September, he informed me the Battalion would be home just after the middle of November. They held their Ball in Las Vegas and I am sure they had a great time; in fact I know they did, because I've been to their ball in the past and those young warriors sure know how to party!! We are certainly happy to have them all back home.

Dennis Thun has been working with a computer programmer to get portions of the website "automated" in order to reduce his very heavy workload of having to manually enter information into the database for new, and existing, members. He reports that in order to do what we need done would be very expensive and very time consuming and just does not warrant that kind of financial commitment. Basically, a totally new program would have to be developed and that runs into the many thousands of dollars. We will continue to work with what we have for now. We are seeking a new Website Administrator within the association as Dennis has announced to me that he will be "retiring" from that job. He has done it for many years and desires to hand it over to someone with more desire to keep it going.

This past year, culminating with the reunion, brought us many new members into the Association that we have not seen, or talked with, for many years. We had quite a few of them attend a reunion for their very first time. I heard quite a few mention that they were having a great time and we're glad they came and that they are planning to be at the next reunion in D.C.

Membership dues notices will be sent out early in 2012 and we would appreciate you getting those into Chuck Lear as soon as you are able. At the General Meeting the membership voted to increase our dues by \$5.00, now \$25.00 annually. For those of you who are current (paid ahead) on your dues and for those of you who paid at the reunion, your \$20.00 dues remain in effect. The \$25.00 dues will be assessed for new members and returning members who are not current. Going forward, when your current dues membership expires, you will then be assessed the new rate.

We had a good year of membership renewals and getting new members during 2011; let's try to make 2012 & 2013 even better!!

See you in D.C.

Semper Fi,

Roger

Thoughts and feelings from my FIRST reunion

I sit here trying to put words to my thoughts and feelings after having attended my first reunion and find I am not having much luck. I'm just a plain, simple country kid, backwards at times, and have trouble putting words on paper.

This is my first reunion ever, and it was such a unique experience, scary at times, happy at times, very emotional for me to say the least. I'm still trying to decipher all the meanings and feelings. I owe so much to the men of the 3rdBn, 4th Marine Association. And not to overlook the wives either---a lot of the wives were there for me during this time. I thank GOD for each and everyone that supported me, loved, cared, talked, hugged, and even just sat there with me not having to say anything.....just being there.

I joined Navy at age of seventeen in 1961 and left active duty in 1987. I was also Fleet Reserves 1987-1993 when I come back to the farm here in southern Missouri--the farm I ran away from in 1961. In all my career I only had one permanent ship assignment and served in a lot of FMF Units. I owe a lot to Chaplain Stan Beach and Michael Siebentritt as they came to my rescue when I was scraping the bottom of the barrel. They will tell you no doubt that I am too proud to ask for help and would do most anything rather than to grovel and admit defeat---BUT I got to point where I did have to humble myself and ask for help. That came when my former wife was dying with cancer---they were there and so were all of you, the men of 3rdBn, 4th Marines and I THANK YOU so much.

I served with 1st, 2nd, 3rd Marine Divisions at one time or other and was delighted to be an FMF Corpsman. I went to Vietnam with Kilo in 1969 serving under Capt Richard Monjeau whom I still talk today. I was sorry that he couldn't make it. During that same time I served with my really "TRUE" buddy Michael Siebentritt. He was here at the reunion, standing tall and having my back. GOD BLESS YOU my friend, and brother. Due to the loss of my first wife, and a young child to care for, the 3rd MarDiv sent me home and I never returned to 3rd MarDiv. Over the years I crawled into a shell, depression and you all know the stories. I have always felt guilty and not worthy of being called a Kilo Corpsman for not taking care of my brothers. I had many friends as Michael, Capt Monjeau would tell you, didn't make it home---I feel as though I failed them and I am sorry for that.

I would like to give special thanks to several of people, starting with Chaplain Stan Beach, who notified me about the reunion. At first I dragged my feet about coming because I wasn't sure of myself. After talking with the Chaplain, Mike and Doc Cook I decided to come. My good friend Michael Siebentritt who has always been there for me...God Bless You and thanks for everything. Ron "Doc" Cook from long ago Navy Bases, Thank You as well, we have had many laughs over the years, as well as some heartaches. Special thanks to Priscilla Richardson, Chuck's wife. She has a heart of gold as does Robin Hawthorne and Anna Adkins. They talked their heads off with me as I was just about ready to sprout wings and leave out of the reunion and

head back to farm. Thanks to John Masterjohn and wife Lydia, who were truly worried about me while I was off to one side, waiting for hours until Michael arrived from Las Vegas. They kept me under watchful eyes and talked with me and sent people to me. Some of the men I found later had crossed paths with me long prior to Vietnam 1969---I just didn't know it until we talked. I found out you just never know who you will run into at a reunion!! All in all it was a marvelous experience and I really do look forward to the next reunion. Anyway, THANK YOU one and all for a GREAT REUNION.

Last of all I have to apologize to Chaplain Beach who had asked that I read scriptures or to carry the boots at Memorial Services but I just couldn't do it this time. Too many painful memories.

God bless all,

Robert "Doc" Hayes

Soochow Creek Medals Awarded at Reunion

The Soochow Creek medal was created in 1932 at the request of a Lieutenant of the Fourth U.S. Marines to honor his men who bravely defended the area along the Soochow Creek in Shanghai, China during that country's turbulent civil war. His request was denied. The medal remained in obscurity for decades. It has been presented to deserving Marines & Corpsmen who have displayed a tireless devotion to duty and to those who have performed acts of selflessness to their brothers in arms.

As you know, the Soochow Creek medal lives on today through the efforts of members of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, led by Jim Wright one of our Board of Directors. Jim's desire to resurrect this important part of the 4th Marines history and legacy resulted in having the replica medal custom designed to ensure it portrayed the exact detail found on the original. The Soochow Creek Medal is not an official DOD medal.

The Association presented medals to the following members at this year's reunion for their devotion and selflessness as outlined:

Captain Stan Beach (USN, Retired), Chaplain – for his illustrious career in the U.S. Navy, devoted service to the Naval Chaplain Corps, currently serves as an Associate Director for the Presbyterian and Reformed Joint Commission on Chaplains; Chaplain for the Lake Area Chapter of the Military Officer's Association; Chaplain to the National Military Order of the Purple Heart; and Chaplain to the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines Association in addition to his devoted attention to many charitable efforts for those in need.

Ned E. Seath – recent recipient of the Navy Cross (after nearly 45 years) for his courage and bravery under fire from the NVA on July 16, 1966 during Operation Hastings as he calmly dismantled two damaged M60 machine guns (in the dark) and built a working gun from the parts of both while being wounded during the process. He then (literally) stood in the face of the enemy and prevented Kilo Company's defensive position from very possibly being overrun by

the masses of attacking NVA, thereby saving many lives. Ned also received a Bronze Star that was never awarded for his actions of the day before (July 15, 1966) for crawling out to retrieve a wounded Marine, while under sniper fire, again being wounded in the process. The sniper fired on him, grazing his helmet and the bullet lodged in his back.

Chuck Lear – Association Treasurer/Director – for his years of selfless devotion and efforts to the Association as Treasurer and serving on the Directors Committee; for his continual hard work at every reunion to help with registrations, having prepared the numerous items for sale to reunion attendee's at the "General Store" tables; assisting John Masterjohn in the planning stages of the Branson reunion.

Mike Madden – for his years of continuous work and devotion to the success of reunions with attendee registrations, "behind the scene" work at reunions providing assistance to the reunion coordinator to address last minute issues and problem solving to aid in the reunion process to go smoothly for attendee's; and most recently his single-handed project to design/create and present the Gold Star families with permanent name badges, caps and lanyards and bearing the cost of that project as a donation to the association.

John Masterjohn – for his hard work, dedication, continued perseverance to the Association to plan and administer the reunion held in Branson; also for his devotion to work at the registration table at past reunions to ensure members get registered and answer questions for them; to field inquiries from members and resolve issues "behind the scene" in order to make each reunion successful and enjoyable to its attendee's.

INDIA BATTERY



ASSOCIATION

6583 Darcena St ♦ Chino CA 91710

September 26,2011

Roger Kimble
President,Third Battalion Fourth Marines Association
1524 Mallard Court
Richmond,Indiana 47374



Dear Roger,

On behalf of all of the members of India Battery Association,we extend our appreciation and warm thank you for the excellent reunion held in Branson, Missouri recently.You and many of your Third Battalion Fourth Marines Association members worked very hard to plan,organize,and coordinate a terrific reunion and program of quality events.I am also ending a thank you letter to John Masterjohn,who dedicated a tremendous amount of time and energy to make the reunion a big success.We,the members of India Battery Association enjoy being linked with all of you in support,and as part of your "operations".We are grateful that your Association includes us within your Brotherhood.

INDIA BATTERY
ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

President
Thomas G. Furlong

Vice President
John Judziewicz

Secretary
Bruce Mac Donald

Treasurer
John Dovale

Chaplain
Sam Dunson

Historian
Joe Featherston

Parliamentarian
Carl Satterfield

One thing that most of us have in common is once upon a time long ago,and in another lifetime,we were all Marines who traveled in harms way together. We are very proud of that.We are more gray now,but we fully appreciate and understand the pride and camaraderie that you all feel.

We look forward to being with all of you again at the 2013 reunion in Washington,D.C.If I,or India Battery Association can be of any help at all, please let me know.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Furlong".

Tom Furlong,member of 3/4 Association and
President Of India Battery Association
Phone 207-222-2168
e-mail tfurlong@gmail.com



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
James H. Quillen VA Medical Center
P O Box 4000 (135)
Mountain Home, Tennessee 37684

September 22, 2011

In Reply Refer To: 621/135

3rd BN 4th Marines
c/o Mr. Chuck Richardson
1575-A Coleman Road
Knoxville, TN 37909

On behalf of the Mountain Home patients and staff, we would like to extend our appreciation to you for your donation of personal care items. Your thoughtfulness reflects the concern that you feel for our Veterans and for the service they provided to all of us while in service to our country.

Without your support, we could not provide for the smaller niceties that make hospitalization more bearable for our Veterans.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Mike Kromoff Jr.
Acting Chief, Voluntary Service

In accordance with VHA Directive 4721, we are required to state "The Department of Veterans Affairs did not provide you, the donor, any goods or services in consideration in whole or part for your contribution."

Association Website Administrator Needed

Dennis Thun has informed me that he is going to officially "retire" from being the Association Website Administrator. He has performed this task for many years and just wants to step aside and let someone else with more desire to take the reins and keep the website going.

The person who would undertake this task would need to be pretty well versed in database administration, website building/maintenance, etc. I am sure Dennis will be very happy to explain, in detail, what qualifications would be needed in order to maintain what we have now. He has diligently looked into finding someone, or some company, who could automate our website to reduce the need for human intervention on a regular basis. However, his findings have revealed that the cost to do this is immense and very time consuming since they would need to start from the beginning and build it anew. It would not be prudent for the Association to take on that financial commitment, thus we will have to have someone within the organization with skills needed to keep it running and updated as best as possible.

The Association Website, as well as the "Open Forum" link is important to the association for lines of communication, to our membership, on a daily basis. There are many members, and future members, who depend on this venue to keep in touch with other members, check updates for planned reunions, check on the active battalion reports, obtain information on VA activities, changes, etc. as well as a myriad of other things.

If we cannot find someone who has the ability, and the desire, to keep our current website active and updated we will begin to lose valuable connections with our members as the website begins to deteriorate. It is imperative we find someone who can do what Dennis has been doing for the past numerous years and keep it active.

If you feel you are qualified, and are willing to step up and fill those "awfully big shoes" that Dennis wears (!) please contact me, or Dennis Thun, as soon as possible.

You can email Dennis direct at: thun3905@..

Thank you in advance if you are the one who responds to Dennis' appeal.

Semper Fidelis,
Roger

Election of Officers and Directors were conducted during the General Meeting at the Branson Reunion.

Listed below are the Board of Directors who were re-elected.

Ken Christy, Director

Brad Fagerstrom, Director

Frank Pedersen, Director

Wallace Shaw, Director

Dennis Thun, Director/Bn Webmaster

Jim Wright, Director

Tom Bulanda, Scribe/Recording Secretary

Bill Kalm, Vice President

Roger Kimble, President

** Mike Corbett/Bn Historian – Requested to step down as a Director and Battalion Historian to due health conditions, President Roger Kimble appointed Phil Frigm to complete Mike’s current term.

Reunion T-Shirts and Items To Be Sold

As you may know, at each reunion Chuck and Carol Lear have numerous items that are for sale at the “General Store” table, that have been prepared for the reunion being held as well as past reunions. They have asked that someone take over the project of having those items available and getting them to the reunions for the membership to purchase. Chuck and Carol have been doing this for quite a few years and would like to have someone else take over. The task is not very hard to set up and take care of and most of the time that is required is to get the T-Shirts prepared and screen printed. It does require some dedication to the task but the two years between each reunion is adequate time to get everything ready that will be needed, boxed up, and either delivered to the reunion site or taken by vehicle.

It would be most appreciated by Chuck and Carol if someone would be willing to step forward and take over this every two year project.

Chuck will be happy to spend time with you on the phone, email or in person to explain the “who, what, where, when and how” to get it done!

Chuck Lear and MOPH “Wounded Warrior Panel”

Chuck Lear recently represented the Military Order of Purple Heart on a ‘Wounded Warrior Panel’ in Washington, D.C. recently. He was recommended to sit on this panel by Chaplain Stan Beach and the staff were ‘solidly impressed’ (as they should have been!) with Chuck’s spirit and sheer guts to serve as a model for the new wounded. The panel was moderated by Bret Baier of Fox News. Chuck will also be a guest at several VIP events with Congressmen and military leaders, including Marine General Mattis of CENTCOM.

Congratulations Chuck and THANK YOU for serving on this very important panel.

Historic Colt .45 finds owner: There is still some Honor in this world!

August 08, 2011 (Doing the right thing)
Mail Tribune

A historic Colt .45-caliber, semi-automatic pistol stolen more than 30 years ago from a Medal of Honor winner in South Carolina has been returned to its rightful owner.

The gun and owner were reunited after a history buff in Medford, who bought the old handgun in an online auction last month, tracked down the retired Marine whose name is engraved on it.

MARINE JOHN J. MCGINTY'S BRAVE ACT ON MARCH 12, 1968

President Lyndon Johnson presented John J. McGinty with the Medal of Honor during a ceremony at the White House on March 12, 1968. In the presentation, then Marine Staff Sgt. McGinty was cited for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty" during Operation Hastings in July of 1966.

The troops had been battling toe-to-toe with a larger force of North Vietnamese army troops attempting to push south near the demilitarized zone. McGinty was commanding a 32-man platoon serving as a rear guard as the Marine battalion withdrew at the end of a three-day battle.

For four hours, his platoon was attacked by small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire, the citation reads. At one point, two squads became separated from the main body of the platoon.

"With complete disregard for his safety, McGinty charged through intense automatic weapons and mortar fire to their position," it read. "Finding 20 men wounded and the medical corpsman killed, he quickly reloaded ammunition magazines and weapons for the wounded men and directed their fire upon the enemy.

"Although he was painfully wounded as he moved to care for the disabled men,

he continued to shout encouragement to his troops and to direct their fire so effectively that the attacking hordes were beaten off," it continued.

The citation mentions his Colt .45 pistol.

"When the enemy tried to out-flank his position, he killed five of them at point-blank range with his pistol," it concluded.

— [Paul](#) Fattig

"I knew if I found him and it was his gun, I couldn't keep it," said George Berry, 71, who knew little about the history of the gun when he purchased it from an auction house in Pennsylvania.

The story begins when Berry, a retired Navy warrant officer who also served in the Marine Corps, decided this summer to fulfill a lifelong dream of owning one of the historic handguns.

"I've always wanted to own a Colt Model 1911 .45 automatic — always wanted one," he says. "John Wayne had one in every World War II movie I've ever seen him in."

Early in July, he began searching the Internet and discovered that Alderfer Auction, a well-known auction firm in Hatfield, Pa., would be offering three of the Colt .45s in a July 12 auction.

In particular, lot No. 78 caught his eye: "Colt 1911 A1 semi-automatic pistol. Cal. 45. 5" bbl. SN 0103889. Reblued finish on all metal, plain walnut Colt grips, after-market rear sight, no magazine," the description read.

"Faint 'USMC' stamped on right side of slide, partial 'United States Property' wording is visible," it continued. "The name 'John J. McGinty USMC' stamped on left side of slide. Very good."

Berry was hesitant because it had been "reblued" and no longer had its original sights or grips, all factors decreasing its value.

"And it had somebody's name engraved on the left side of the slide," he observed.

He had no idea that McGinty was a war hero, let alone a recipient of the nation's highest military medal for valor.

Still, the gun was manufactured in 1914, making it an early model. And there was the USMC stamp he coveted..

"I decided to buy it in spite of the knocks against it," Berry said. "It was the only one I knew of with 'USMC' stamped on it."

Berry paid less than \$1,000 for the pistol. The two other Model 1911 Colt

.45s in the auction went for roughly \$4,000 and \$6,000 each, he noted.

Curious about who this McGinty fellow was, he began an Internet search. Up popped numerous articles on a John J. McGinty, a retired marine who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage in South Vietnam in 1966.

"The value of the gun just went up five-fold — that was my first thought, anyway," Berry recalled.

As he read more about McGinty and his story, he knew he had to locate him to see if he was the same man who once owned the gun. He also wanted to find out how he parted with the pistol, and whether the former Marine wanted it back.

"His medal citation actually mentions the pistol," Berry observed, referring to the fact the wounded McGinty used it to kill five enemy soldiers attacking his position.

However, Berry did not yet know whether it was the same McGinty associated with his newly acquired pistol. He used the Internet to track down McGinty, 71, in Beaufort, S.C. McGinty had retired from the corps as a captain in October 1976.

The retired Navy warrant officer called the retired Marine Corps officer and asked him if it was his pistol.

"He said, 'Do you mean 0103889?' " Berry recalled, noting McGinty had just recited the gun's serial number.

That's when McGinty informed him the pistol had been stolen in 1978 when it was on display along with his uniform and sword. It was the very same pistol McGinty had used in Vietnam to repulse that final assault.

Berry sent the pistol to Beaufort. After receiving it, McGinty called and wanted to pay Berry for all his expenses.

"I told him I didn't want any money, that I had just wanted a Model 1911," Berry said.

Turns out that McGinty had a completely original Colt 1911 manufactured in 1918 that had been owned by John Finn, a longtime friend. Out of gratitude for having received his pistol back, he sent the Finn pistol to Medford for Berry to pick up last week.

"Can't thank you enough for your kindness," read a July 24 note accompanying the weapon. "I have enclosed some cards and a (Medal of Honor) challenge coin. The John W. Finn card was printed on the occasion of his 100th birthday. John passed away last year. Thank you again, George.."

With his signature, McGinty, who could not be reached for comment by the Mail Tribune, added "Semper fi."

Finn, who died in the spring of 2010 at age 100, was the last survivor of the 15 Navy sailors who received the Medal of Honor for heroism during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Wounded nine times, Finn, who acquired the pistol during the war, was the oldest living recipient of the medal.

"I am absolutely deliriously happy it turned out this way," Berry said.

With the Finn pistol he finally acquired a Model 1911 Colt, but he will tell you that's not the point.

"John McGinty could have just said, 'Thanks, have a good life,' " Berry said. "But no matter what was going to happen, I knew I would feel good about getting that gun back to him.

"Concern yourself with what is right and you'll never second-guess that decision," he concluded.

Berry and his wife, Lilliana, plan to visit McGinty later this year.

God Bless those Navy Corpsmen and an old Mud Marine!

As most of you know, Bill Kalm had a serious heart problem on Sunday morning following the end of the reunion festivities. He, wife Nancy and daughter were walking back to the elevator after breakfast when Bill suddenly collapsed onto the floor striking his head. Doc's Ron Smith, Doc Pritchard, and Dr. Delfino Candalaria (a Mud Grunt) were standing in the buffet line and saw him fall and immediately went to his aid. While one gave Bill mouth-to-mouth CPR another began performing chest compressions to keep the blood circulating. EMT's were called immediately and arrived within minutes and took over for them. They used a defibrillator on Bill four times and got no response from him so they loaded him on a stretcher, into a waiting ambulance and rushed him to the local hospital. Once there, the medical team administered defibrillation six more times and finally got a heart beat from Bill. The doctors said, "had it not been for the life saving efforts of those three men that Bill likely would have not survived and it would be a far different outcome". Our many heartfelt THANK YOU's to those three men for helping to save Bill; just goes to show you....our Navy Corpsmen have NEVER stopped keeping Marines and Sailors alive even after all these many years!

Happy to report that Bill is now back home and under the care of his doctors and with a brand new pacemaker with built in defibrillator! It is reported that his old pacemaker had failed and was what caused all the problems to start.

Bill, take good care of yourself and we'll be looking forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C. in 2013!!

Mike Company Guide-On "Recovered"

While there had been sightings at recent reunions, Mike Company's guide-on has officially been recovered and is now in the battalion archives. Last seen in the vicinity of Khe Sanh in 1968, concern over its disappearance never materialized until a brief sighting in San Antonio, TX in 2005. Private inquiries and behind-the-scene investigations (sounds like 'BS' to me) brought the guide-on out of hiding at the Branson, MO reunion this past September, 2011. Mike Company Marines and Corpsmen are honored to donate this personal artifact to the Third Battalion Fourth Marines Association. (Photo courtesy of ©Flash Point)

Submitted by Phil Frigm

POW/MIA Table Ceremony

During the evening of the banquet, members Mike Lindberg and Leonard Koontz performed the ceremony to 'set' the table for the evening. It is a very solemn and honorable proceeding and will be performed at all of our future reunion banquets.

Thank you Mike and Leonard for providing the items placed on the table and for performing the ceremony for us. It was very moving and brought many tears to those in attendance, as we remembered our fallen brothers. The ceremony was followed by Taps.

Maria Varela Inducted as Honorary Member

A new Honorary Member was nominated early in this year, by Travis Fryzowicz, and she was unanimously approved by the Board of Directors. She was inducted during the evening festivities at the banquet in Branson. She has written a very fine tribute to her uncle, Corporal George Aguirre, and for her family members. Here is Maria's story.

Travis,

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Branson 3/4 Association Reunion, and for contacting Roger on my behalf.

Cpl. George Aguirre was my uncle, my mother's oldest sibling. I knew my uncle until the age of 2 when he was killed in Vietnam. While I don't recall much from that age, my mother and grandmother shared their pride in George by sharing the stories and achievements of his life with me. I was known as his "little Mary."

From these stories and family memories I am working on a scrapbook project for my Mom, brother George and sisters Anita & Virginia's families. When Uncle George left for Vietnam he told my Mom he would not be returning and to tell his life story to her children and grandchildren as a way of keeping his memory alive. My Mom does not read or write, so I feel it is my responsibility as her daughter to document and share the story of our family hero with my siblings, my 10 nieces and nephews and their future children.

Other memorials I have created for uncle George are 1) a special Marine/Vietnam memorial garden in our yard, 2) an area of dedication in our home (which includes his own Christmas tree for Christmas) and a monetary donation to the Marine Corp Heritage Foundation in VA.

I would like to be considered as an Honorary Member of the 3/4 Association as it would be a positive way to honor my Uncle George's memory. I have other family members who were Marines as well, my brother-in-law, and one of my nephews is now enlisted in the Marine reserves and goes to bootcamp in June. Sharing stories with you and other 3/4 members has made me feel like part of the 3/4 family. It would be an honor to me, and my Mom, for me to be a member of such a group of heroes. Please consider me for honorable membership.

Semper Fi,
Maria Varela
1910 Riverstone Court
Westfield, IN 46074
[\(317\) 418-7497](tel:3174187497) cell

PS - It is my goal to be in Branson for the reunion, but I must first confirm the time off with my work.