



# 39<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI NEWS



July, 2015

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 Vice President.....David Romans  
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 Member at Large.....  
 Past President.....Bruce Fonnest  
 Reunion Chair.....Gale Helser

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Boy, time continues to fly by; in only two months we will be together once again in Norfolk, VA. Looking forward to seeing everyone, just not looking forward to how we will get there and back home. I hate to fly. It's really too far to drive and be able to enjoy the reunion.

The reactivation/standup of the 39th in April was an awesome experience; one which I never thought I would see. When our "Colors" were uncased, there was a feeling that came over me that I cannot



explain. In talking with our other members in attendance, all had similar feelings. Who would have ever thought a 20 year old draftee from 1966 would get goose bumps and a few tears seeing those "Colors" come into view in 2015 but I did. The officers and personnel in our new 39th were excellent hosts from the time the ceremony started to the end; we were recognized by the new Battalion Commander and also the Commander of the Engineer school at Fort Leonard Wood. The new Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Christopher Payant and his wife treated us

like old friends. Mrs. Payant had a smaller version of our 39th Crest pin made to present to each of us and



our wives before the reception at the 101st museum; quite a treat for 12 veterans that probably never thought what we did would be appreciated in our lifetime. In all, the association had 12 members and 8 spouses at the reactivation and we pretty much took over the hotel we were staying at; it was a short visit but so well worth it.



Another thing that we are involved in is the "50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR WELCOME HOME CEREMONY"; as approved by the DOD, this celebration will run from 2015 thru 2025. Being on the planning committee for the event has been time-consuming, but that isn't the worst part. Our first attempt for an event on May 9th was

canceled because all military bases were placed on high alert due to terrorist threats. We are attempting to right the wrong by having a smaller event on August 1st at Veterans Park in White Settlement, TX (a Fort Worth suburb) just west of the Joint Reserve Base. Of course, by the time this information gets to each of you, the event will have already happened. But, as with anything, the first attempt usually has hiccups. So, maybe the second event will be scheduled where we have more time to get the information out.

As mentioned above, the 2015 reunion is coming up this October 1st thru 4th in Norfolk, VA and, as always, we are hoping for a great turnout. Gale will give more information in this newsletter as this will be our last newsletter before then. Don't forget - this reunion will be nominations and election of officers for the 2016-2017 term.

Because we served with the 39th, we are automatically members of the Association. However, it still costs us to operate. Items such as mailing, printing, etc. all come out of our dues. The monies in the general fund are used to curtail the cost of certain events during our reunions which help all our pocket books. It would be of great help if annual dues were paid or better yet, become a LIFETIME Member.

It is with great sadness that I pass along the loss of one of our Brothers and loyal member: **DAVID GATES, D CO. 68-69. PASSED JUNE 15, 2015.**

Please keep our Brother's family in your prayers; he will be missed more than we ever let him know.

**BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW,  
BROTHERS FOREVER**

Bill Ray, President  
3<sup>rd</sup> Plt. C Co. 67-68  
Bill39th@sbcglobal.net  
(817) 239-0787 (cell)

## **VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Not much to report from here in Fort Smith, AR. It is hot, so Shirlie and I are trying to stay cool and not do much.

Looking forward to October and seeing a great

bunch of guys and girls at the reunion; I am sure that I will hear some new stories, which is always a real treat. We truly enjoyed our trip to Fort Campbell, KY for the reactivation; what a great bunch our new 39th Brothers and Sisters are.

Now for a big "Blue Bull Welcome" to our New Member and Lifetime Member; it is with great pleasure to welcome you to the Association.

<b>NEW MEMBER:</b>	<b>LIFETIME MEMBER:</b>
Louis Agostino	Thomas Hutcheson
B Co., 67-68	C Co., 65-66

Brothers and Sisters, come out to our next reunion in Norfolk, Virginia. You never know what blessings may be in store for you.

**BROTHERS THEN, BROTHERS NOW**

David Romans  
Vice President  
A Co. 66-67  
479-883-3777 (Cell)  
usrome@live.com

## **IN MEMORIAM**



David Michael Gates, 69, of Pensacola, went to be with the Lord on Monday, June 15, 2015 surrounded by his loving family at Select Specialty Hospital in Pensacola FL. He was born to the late Robert Perry and Jane Marion (nee: Kelly)

Gates on March 16, 1946 in Pensacola, FL. He served honorably in the U.S. Army in Vietnam with the 39th Engineer Battalion and awarded four Bronze Stars.

He was a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles. He enjoyed dancing, riding his Goldwing trike, traveling, fishing, and socializing with friends.

He is survived by his loving wife, June Gates, daughter, Buffy (Tammy) Lovejoy; two grandchildren, Amara (Jeff) and Eric (Dixie); two step-children, Kim (Joe) Cogelia and James Waldman; two step-grandchildren, Cali Weldman and Michael Cogelia; brother, Richard (Ina); sister, Sue Jowers and many nieces and nephews.

## REUNION CHAIR REPORT

It's almost here!!! Reunion 2015. We are now less than 60 days from our Norfolk Reunion. If you have not made your reservations yet, DO IT NOW. **Our \$99 rate is only good until August 30** before the hotel rates go back to their regular rates of \$189.

If you're even *thinking* about attending, call your reservations in to 800-325-3535. Be sure to tell them you are booking in to the 39th Engineer Battalion block to get the reduced rate. If you decide that you will not be able to attend, simply cancel at least 24 hours prior to the reunion and there will be no charges. Every room is a harbor view and valet parking is free. Plus, you can come and go from the parking lot as you please with no fees for this service, either. If you plan to arrive early or stay late, please notify me directly. I will try to get the nights at the special rate. No guarantees, but worth the try.

Be sure to return the registration form that is in this newsletter. Payments can be made upon arrival if necessary, but we need to know head counts for the planned events and what your dinner choices are. We now know the cost for the Military Aviation Museum -\$50/person (includes transportation and admission).

Here is a brief rundown of what is planned. At noon, Registration starts on Thursday, October 1 in the Monticello Room which will also be our hospitality room for the entire event. Opening night will feature our annual Pizza Party in the hospitality room. This is also our Meet & Greet session. If you see a new face or are a first timer, don't be bashful! Introduce yourself and let's get acquainted. Due to Virginia law, please do not take any beverages out of the hospitality room. If you have memorabilia or photos to share, bring them with you. There will be a table for these items which will be secured at night after the hospitality room closes.

This is going to be a very busy reunion, like the past ones haven't! We have a lot planned and have strived to keep the costs down. Most of our events are close to the hotel and are in walking distance or you can use public transportation. The Downtown area has many restaurants and attractions that you can experience during your free time.

**Friday, October 2:** We start off with a look at the Navy from a great vantage point. The Victory Rover is a 125 passenger boat that gives us the closest possible view of the Navy yard. Located right across the street from our hotel, we will start boarding at 10:30 and sail at 11:00 for the 2-hour narrated tour. The Rover also has beverages and snacks available for a nominal fee.

**Saturday, October 3:** We will experience a phenomenal experience of WWI aircraft at the Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach. We will travel via luxury Motor Coach departing from the hotel at 10:00 am. Plan on spending from 10:00am until 4:00pm to see this wonderful show.

**Sunday, October 4:** At 9:00 a.m., we will hold our annual membership meeting. Any business to take care of and election of officers will take place then. If you have business to bring before the membership, please submit it in writing to any officer 24 hours prior to the meeting. Following the meeting, we will begin our activities at noon with a trip just down the street to the Nauticus and the battleship USS Wisconsin. We are planning to take a group picture on the deck of the Wisconsin right under the big guns at 1:00 p.m. Bring your cameras.

When you are ready to leave, you can visit the General MacArthur Museum, again just a short walk from the hotel, on your way back. If shopping is on your list of things to do, we suggest that you head over to MacArthur Mall, also a short distance from the hotel with transportation available to and from. To check them out online, go to [shopmacarthur.com](http://shopmacarthur.com). We will finish off the night with our Banquet. Social hour starts at 6:00, dinner at 7:00, festivities to follow.

As always, the Hospitality room will be open all during our reunion. We will close at midnight and at 5:00 pm on Sunday prior to the banquet until after the festivities.

For websites to visit, see the Registration form. Brothers then, Brothers now, Brothers forever,  
Gale Helser, Reunion Chair  
32423 FM 2925  
Rio Hondo, TX 78583  
([galehelser@peoplepc.com](mailto:galehelser@peoplepc.com))  
(956) 367-0999



Below is our reunion schedule of events as they are planned at this time. Please note that events and times may change and a final schedule will be in your welcome packet when you arrive.

Wednesday, Sept. 30 – Early Arrivals

Pre-Con – Gale Helser & Hotel Staff

Officers' Board Meeting

Officers' Dinner (off-site)

Thursday, October 1 – Arrival Date

12:00 (noon) Registration in Monticello Room

Hospitality Room opens

3:00 Hotel check-in

6:00 Annual Pizza Party

12:00 (midnight) Hospitality Room closes

Friday, October 2 – Breakfast on your own

9:00 Late Registration

10:30 Depart Hotel for Victory Rover

11:00 Cruise the Harbor and Navy Shipyard

12:00 (noon) Hospitality Room opens

1:00 Return to Hotel

Afternoon open – Free time

12:00 (midnight) Hospitality Room closes

Saturday, October 3 – Breakfast on your own

10:00 – 4:00 Military Aviation Museum

12:00 (noon) Hospitality Room opens

5:00 Evening Free – Hospitality Room open

12:00 (midnight) Hospitality Room closes

Sunday, October 4 – Breakfast on your own

9:00 General Membership Meeting and Election of Officers

12:00 (noon) Depart for Nauticus and Battleship USS Wisconsin

1:00 Group Picture on deck – USS Wisconsin

12:00 – 5:00 At your leisure – Visit General MacArthur Museum

12:00 – 5:00 At your leisure – Shopping at MacArthur Mall

6:00 Social Hour

7:00 Banquet

8:00 Raffles

Following Raffles - Hospitality Room opens

12:00 (midnight) Hospitality Room closes





**39<sup>th</sup> ENG BN Reunion 2015 – Norfolk, VA Oct.1 – 5, 2015**

**LZ WATERFRONT**

**SHERATON DOWNTOWN NORFOLK, VA**

**[www.SheratonNorfolkwaterfront.com](http://www.SheratonNorfolkwaterfront.com)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ for name badge \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest name \_\_\_\_\_ for name badge \_\_\_\_\_

Unit & Years in VN \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact & Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee \_\_\_\_\_ \$45 members/ \_\_\_\_\_ \$40 guests Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Registration includes annual remembrance gift, hospitality supplies, pizza party and beverages & snacks)*

Friday Victory Rover Cruise: \$20/person \_\_\_\_\_ number attendees Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Beverage service is available on the boat) [www.navalbasecruises.com](http://www.navalbasecruises.com)*

Saturday Biplanes & Triplanes Air Show: \$50 per person

Please indicate number in party attending \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***[www.militaryaviationmuseum.org](http://www.militaryaviationmuseum.org)>Air Shows>WWI October 3-4, 2015***

Sunday Nauticus and Battleship Wisconsin tour \$18/person \_\_\_\_\_ number attendees Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***[www.nauticus.org](http://www.nauticus.org) or [www.usswisconsin.org](http://www.usswisconsin.org)***

Sunday Banquet \$45/person \_\_\_\_\_ number attending Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please select for each person \_\_\_ Beef \_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_ Salmon)*

Total enclosed (min. deposit required to hold all selected events \$100/or pay in full.) Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**(fully refundable if canceled prior to Sept. 20, 2015)**

Describe any special needs (i.e., room amenities, mobility issues, dietary considerations, etc.)

Arriving via (check one) \_\_\_ flying \_\_\_ driving

*Shuttles are available from the Airport to the Sheraton for a nominal fee*

**Mail Reservation Form and payment to: Gale Helser  
32423 FM 2925  
Rio Hondo, TX 78583**

**Make checks payable to: 39th Eng Bn**

***Be sure to visit each website for more information***



**39th Engineer Battalion Alumni**  
32423 FM 2925  
Rio Hondo, TX 78583

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
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McAllen, TX  
Permit No. 333

**CALL NOW!**  
**800-325-3535**  
Our rate of \$99 is good until August 31, 2015. Call, text or email me to confirm your reservation. If you have any difficulty, call me right away!  
**[galehelser@peoplepc.com](mailto:galehelser@peoplepc.com)**  
or **956-367-0999**

A few more Stand Up Photos:

