

Second Infantry Regiment Association

December 2004

RAMROD



NEWS

WWW.SecInfReg.Org

SecInfReg@AOL.com

ASSOCIATION REPORT.

===== **PROGRESS ON ALL FRONTS.**

The Society of the First Infantry Division held its 86th annual reunion in Chicago from July 28th to August 1st. As has been customary, the Second Infantry Regiment Association held its annual business meeting during that reunion. The meeting was exceptionally productive.

At our previous business meeting last year in Reno, President Mark Lowrey set an aggressive agenda for

the association. The goals were to compose and approve a constitution and bylaws; to hold elections for a new president and vice-president; to appoint a historian for each battalion; to obtain tax exemption as a charitable organization; and to publish our overdue newsletter. Most of those objectives have been achieved.

At this year's business meeting by acclamation, Gary Tucker (B&HHC/2/2 68-69) was elected president, and Dave Banner (C/1/2 68-69) vice-president. Again by acclamation, the association's constitution and bylaws were approved.

Bill Mullen, Jim Leslie and Bill Sly agreed to work together on a history of the battalions while in Vietnam.

Jim Holland is leading the effort in procuring legal help with our tax status.

And finally, Juan Santiago's wife Carmen along with Jim Holland, have agreed to lend their hands with our newsletter - that you are reading this attests to our progress on that front.

ACTIONS WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF.

With elements of the Division including members of the 2nd Infantry in Iraq last Christmas, the Society of the First Infantry Division organized a holiday drive. Their goal was to supply some amenities to the deployed troops, and some holiday cheer to their families in Germany. Ed Burke of the Society did an outstanding job

coordinating with the various commands, assessing the needs of the troops and their families and expeditiously addressing those needs. To assist in that effort **YOU**, through the association, donated \$3,000 and arranged an additional \$1,700 of corporate sponsorship for that endeavor.

In conjunction with the Division Reunion **YOU** sponsored two soldiers, convalescing in Germany from wounds received in Iraq, to travel to Chicago and attend the reunion. All expenses for our two guests, SSG Colin Fitts A/2/2 and PFC David Willis HHC/2/2, were included. Additionally "meal money" was provided for them and SSG Raymond Bittenger C/2/2. All costs for that endeavor were covered by generous donations made by our members.



[Treasurer Doug Tabb (left) Hon Colonel retired MG Rick Anson (center) and new President Gary Tucker at the business meeting]

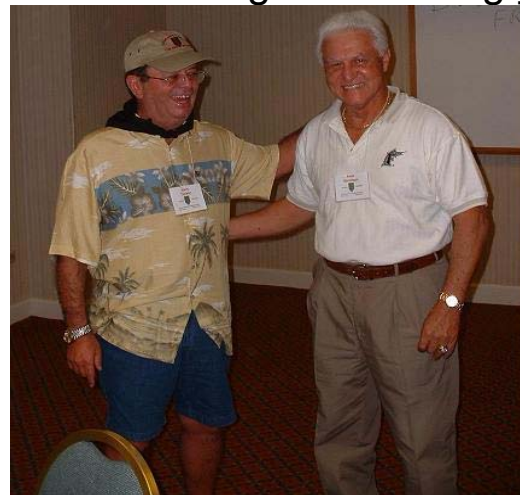
CONTINUING ACTIONS

Hopefully this newsletter will reconnect our Association with the many members with whom we have lost contact. It is the ardent hope of the Association to keep ALL our members informed of and involved in our activities.

Currently our most important concern is maintaining the moral of today's Ramrods. We regard this to be so important that it is mandated in our recently approved constitution. The more members we can

We have established an outstanding rapport with the command of the 2-2, and we are dedicated to assist in whatever manner they request.

[Juan Santiago receives his Life Membership from Gary Tucker during the meeting.]



[Honorary Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen Anson meets with SSG Collin Fitts, center - convalescent guest of the Association, and Silver Star winner SSG Raymond Bittenger]



SSG Bittenger C/2/2, a Chicago native and the Division's first Silver Star recipient in Operation Iraqi Freedom, was sent by the Division to deliver over \$93,000 in cash to the 1st Infantry Division Foundation. The money had been donated by the troops in Iraq to assist in providing for the education of the children of their fallen comrades.

SSG Bittenger managed to get a cardboard box sealed with tape and literally stuffed with cash through customs inspections in Kuwait, London, and the States.

In London, the inspector after having x-rayed the box and realizing it was full of small slips of paper actually asked if SSG Bittenger had robbed a bank. Then the inspector went to open the box. SSG Bittenger stopped him immediately, protesting that the box contained letters from US soldiers in the field that he was to

mail as soon as he reached the States. As such, SSG Bittenger maintained, this constituted official US Mail and if the box was to be opened, he insisted on the customs inspector's supervisor and a representative of the US Embassy being present. The consummate bluff worked and the box was passed through customs.

No one had any idea how much money was in the box until it was counted in Chicago.

The actual box, which had originally held water bottles, was then donated to the Museum of the First Division at Chantigny

SSG Bittenger relayed that story ending in a very matter of fact manner with, "I couldn't let that guy open the box. I was told to bring that money to Chicago and guys were counting on me. It was a real honor to be chosen for that. That was my mission, I had to accomplish it."

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*Gary L. Tucker
President*

Second Infantry Regiment Association

Fellow Warriors and Patriots,

As 2004 draws to a close, our thoughts and blessings turn to home, and our brave and wonderful Second Regiment soldiers fighting in Iraq and their families and loved ones. As President of the Second Infantry Regiment Association it is my distinct pleasure and honor to wish all of you the very best for the future.

Our future appears bright, but still much needs to be accomplished regarding expanding the membership and viability of our Association and doing our utmost to support our active duty warriors and their families. The officers and membership of the Association are committed to reaching out and assisting those families of our Regiment in time of need. Two means of accomplishing this goal are, visiting wounded Ramrods who are hospitalized in your area, and attending memorial services of fallen Ramrods that may be held near you. Our secretary John Kerins, as well as all the Association's officers, are staying on top of this issue and will keep all of you posted as necessary.

Another area where the Association's general membership help is needed is in reaching out to Second Infantry veterans who are not Association members. Several active members are doing exemplary work in finding and encouraging Ramrod veterans to join us. I hope to increase our membership during my tenure as Association president by at least ten percent. The most important point of all this effort is to enjoy getting together at the yearly reunions and to make the reunions as memorable as possible. In July of 2005 the reunion will be held in Crystal City, VA. It is an ideal location for visiting the various sites in and around the Nation's Capital. There are many wonderful things to see and do here, to include visiting wounded Ramrods at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. I will inquire about having as many recuperating Ramrods as possible attend our reunion, just as we did in Chicago last summer. It was my impression the three soldiers who attended last year's reunion would remember it for quite awhile. I know they had a great deal of fun and the Association's attendees certainly enjoyed hosting them.

I will close by again wishing all of you the very best for not only the upcoming holiday season, but for 2005 as well. I hope to see all of you at the reunion next July here in the DC area. It promises to be quite a great time for all. The most important aspect of getting together yearly is to have fun renewing old relationships and making new acquaintances as well. I hope to see you there.

Noli Me Tangere,

Gary Tucker
President, Second Infantry Regiment Association

Then President of the Association Mark Lowrey's comments during the dedication of the plaque remembering all the fallen of the Second Infantry Regiment, held at Arlington National Cemetery on May 7th 2001.

We are assembled here today to honor the fallen of this fine old Regiment. We will dedicate this simple stone memorial to the memory of our colleagues, and I am greatly honored to be able to participate in this ceremony. I hope that you will understand if I avoid the use of words like glory and fame. I will leave them to those who have never had to add up the ledger of misery and death. The names of 554 soldiers of the 2d Infantry are inscribed on the Big Red One Monument beside the White House and Vietnam Memorial on the Mall. Let us do these men and all others who fell throughout our regiment's history, the simple honor of honesty. War itself is the ultimate atrocity - a frightening abomination - whose objective is to impose our government's will by the killing of our fellow man. Those whom we come to honor fought with courage, fortitude and the hope of better days. What they did cannot and will not be forgotten by their families and by those of us who marched, stood and fought alongside them. But their memory is forsaken by the rest of their countrymen and most of all by the very government that sent them to achieve whatever was the "Great National Objective" of the moment. Politicians on the stump like to say that war is cruel. But no one knows how deeply, monstrously cruel it is unless he himself has walked through the fire and been seared by its heat. The men we honor today and all of you have done that. Many who fell died horribly and more than a few died needlessly. When I stand mutely before the black granite wall of the Vietnam Memorial and trace with my fingers the names of those who fell under my own command I am sickened by the towering unfairness that my own name is not there in their stead.

A.E. Houseman, an English writer of the early 20th century, summed up this matter as well as I have ever seen when he wrote:

"Here dead we lie because we did not choose to live and shame the land from which we sprung.
Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose;

but young men think it is, and we were young."

All of the men who fell under the 2nd Infantry's Banner in all our Nation's wars were young. A country's treasure is in its youth and their loss is terrible beyond measure because it is irreparable. More often than not it is the good man who dies - the large act - the spendthrift heart: the medic who goes out to bring in the wounded man, the rifleman who covers his patrol's withdrawal, the soldier who throws himself on a grenade to shield his comrades, the NCO or officer who deliberately exposes himself to deadly fire in order to move his unit forward.

To a man, our Regiment's dead were singularly trusting. They followed their leaders willingly - asking no collateral for the probable surrender of their lives. They demanded no special privileges, no distinctions, no enhanced power or influence as they walked steadily into that fatal valley. Their fate was in our hands and - in part - in the skill of their enemies. Their destiny was to be robbed of their youth. They would never sit and dream as old men on a sunlit riverbank while all around them their grandchildren played without fear.

Our task is to insure that their sacrifice is not forgotten; that their lives had meaning, that their deeds will be remembered, that their achievements will be honored.

This single simple stone is not enough. We must insure that the young men who follow today in their footsteps know the value of their inheritance. We must tell the story of the Second Infantry to the men in Kosovo, Germany, and at Ft. Reilly; to their families and friends and descendants. The great tradition, the priceless legacy, the matchless heritage of the 2d Infantry from 1808 until far beyond our own time must be burnished and spread. This is our task. The men who lie buried here all around us will expect no less.

"Give me your hand, my brother and search my face;

Look in these eyes lest I should think of shame;
For we have made an end of all things base.

We are returning by the road we came.
Your lot is with ghosts of soldiers dead,

And I am in the field where men must fight.
But in the gloom I see your laurelled head
And through your victory I shall win the light.”
By: Siegfried Sassoon, 1918

As of December 1, Operation Iraqi Freedom has claimed the lives of the following Ramrods. Please pause for a moment to reflect on their sacrifice and that of their families. May they rest in Peace.

SPC JASON C. LUDLAM, 22, of Arlington, Texas, died March 19 in Ba’qubah, Iraq.

SPC ALLEN J VANDAYBURG, 20, of Mansfield, Ohio, killed in action Apr. 9 in Barez, Iraq.

SSG VICTOR A. ROSALESLOMELI, 29, of Westminster, Calif., killed in action April 13 in Iraq.

SSG JOSEPH P. GARYANTES, 34, of Rehoboth, Del., killed in action May 18 in Muqdadiyah, Iraq (B-1-34 Armor, TF 2-2).

SGT TYLER D. PREWITT, 22, of Phoenix, Ariz., died Sept. 28 in Landstuhl, Germany, from injuries sustained in action at Baqubah, Iraq, on September 24.

SPC ANDREW C. EHRLICH, 21, of Mesa, Ariz., died Oct. 18 in Muqdadiyah, Iraq.

CSM STEVEN W. FAULKENBURG, 45, of Huntingburg, Ind., killed in action Nov. 9 in Fallujah, Iraq.

1LT EDWARD D. IWAN, 28, of Albion, Neb., killed in action Nov. 12 in Fallujah, Iraq.

SSG JAMES C. MATTESON, 23, of Celoron, N.Y., killed in action Nov. 12 in Fallujah, Iraq.

CPT SEAN P. SIMS, 32, of El Paso, Texas, killed in action Nov. 13 in Fallujah, Iraq.

SGT JACK BRYANT, 23, of Dale City Virginia, killed in action Nov 20, in Muqadiyah, Iraq

SPC Erik Hayes, 24, of Cascade, Maryland, was killed in action Nov 29 in Muqdadiya, Iraq.

[From the right PFC Wallis, SSG Fitts in rear, SSG Bittenger and two other Iraqi vets from the 1/16 during the annual banquet at the Division's Reunion in Chicago last August]



The Association was able to host several convalescing soldiers at the Reunion, and was also able to make a significant contribution to the Division's moral and welfare efforts last Christmas through the generosity of our members, for which the Association is most grateful. The vast majority of donations came from members whom we were able to contact via emails. We implore you,

PLEASE, GIVE US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES!!!!

The association forwards frequent press releases from the Division relating stories that never seem to make it to the evening news. Several members have opted to receive all the press releases, others have elected to receive any that mention the 2nd/2nd, and others received only the bi-weekly sitrep from Task Force Danger, the 1st Infantry in Iraq. We would be happy to add you to any of those distribution lists, should you so wish.

Having your email address will make it easier for us to stay in touch with you, and to inform you should anyone come to us trying to contact you. Our policy is, if someone wants to contact a member of our association we will try to forward that request to that member. We will not disclose members' personal information, other than name, unit, dates of service and city of residence, without obtaining prior permission.

We will be a much more efficient organization once we have all our records up to date. So again,

PLEASE, GIVE US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES!!!!

Originally published in the "American Traveler" the newspaper of the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam on March 25, 1967. The author is Staff Sergeant Richard Graley, Weapons Platoon Leader of Company C, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Phouc Vinh, RVN. During 1966 & 1967 SSG Graley fought many battles with his Black Scarves and knows well of what he speaks. On many occasions I was personally thankful, as were many others, for the close and accurate support his mortars provided.

"The Black Scarf Battalion"

by SSG Richard Graley, 4th Platoon, C Company

I

There's a Black Scarf Battalion
In Vietnam.
In this Black Scarf Battalion,
Every man is a man.
Around their necks
The Black Scarf they wear,
A symbol of strength
Of those who dare.
Fathers would be proud
Of this generation
For they are a product
Of a great land and nation.

II

They have fought
And they have won.
And they will stay
'til the battles done.
Their leaders are proud
Of their impossible task.
None have to be told
None have to be asked.
No one can see
The misery they bear
For its all hidden
Beneath the Scarves that they
wear.

III

They surely have answered
Freedom's call
For there are many Black Scarves,
A hangin', from the wall.
Some are tattered,
Some are torn,
Willed to sons
Still yet unborne.
They want no fame,
No fanfare, or glory.
Their mission is as old
As the Infantry story.
Perhaps some day
History will record
And the Black Scarf Battalion
Shall have it's reward.



POW/ MIA Day Remembered

I went to the POW/MIA Ceremony in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on September 17th. This was sponsored by The American Legion. I have tried to go for the last several years, this year, however, will be one I shall not forget.

I bought a MIA bracelet while on active duty (1989-92) and wore it religiously for 5 or 6 years, until I started working as a nurse. Since then, I only remember to wear it when I go to a veterans' function & POW/MIA Day.

I wore it to the ceremony on Friday and when I got home I took it off. The next day I had a Legion meeting and failed to put it back on. That afternoon, I met a fellow Legionnaire who was from the same town as the soldier on my MIA bracelet. Since going to the services the day before I mentioned this, and as fate would have it, this Legionnaire is friends with the MIA's brother. His family is active in the POW/MIA activities. I gave him my card and asked if the family could contact me and tell me about him. He said that he would.

I am sure that we see the POW/MIA emblem frequently, maybe even daily. . .Is it

possible that we see it so frequently that we become "desensitized" to its symbolism? I have had a POW/MIA license plate on my vehicle for years and flown the banner in front of my home, but it wasn't until this Saturday, that I really "got it." It is not just the soldier whose name is engraved on the bracelet, but the family and friends who have so many questions unanswered and have lost so much.

I look forward to the possibility of this soldier's family contacting me. Whether they do or not, I am going to recommit myself to perpetuating the memory of these men. Next time I am at an American Legion meeting and the POW/MIA ceremony is being done, I am going to have a better appreciation for what it truly represents . . . and next time I consider taking my bracelet off, I am going to think twice about it.

Pete Eisert
2-2 Infantry Regiment, 1990-91

Finance Report from Treasurer Doug Tabb

ACTIVITY	AMOUNT
Balance 10/9/2003	\$ 7,654.77
Member Dues	\$ 675.00
Donations to host convalescing Ramrods at the Reunion	\$ 3,395.00
Reimbursement from the Soc of the 1 st Inf Div.	\$ 3,006.18
Donations from members at the Reunion	\$ 650.00
Contribution to Soc of the 1 st Inf Div 03 Holiday Drive	\$ 3,000.00
Expenses Active Bn Members Reunion Activity	\$ (3,150.00)
Administrative Expenses	\$ (274.01)

TOTAL	\$ 8,956.84

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Please sent in 2005 dues now.

CRAP SHACK, where we supply only quality crap!

Dear Members. We are in the process of adding a 2nd Inf Reg. Association web page where you will be able to purchase hats, shirts, jackets and anything else you would like. Sizes and colors will be made available too, so you may pick. Remember that the proceeds of these items goes straight to the Association. A web link will be on the Regimental web page (www.SECINFREG.org) soon where we will start with a few items and let demand dictate what will be added.

All of the items are of the best quality and will be "Embroidered" with the regimental crest. There will be a direct link to me so should you have any questions please feel free to ask. I have made special arrangements with "Omar" the tent maker so that the "Real Big" sizes are available to those of us who have put on a couple of extra pounds over the years.

We will keep prices as low as possible but at the same time will offer the more expensive items like Callaway Golf and Ashworth Clothing so that you bummers can look real good at the next reunion??????

I would also like to take this time to wish all of you and yours a very Merry Holiday season..

Larry Canoso (Goodaim)

PS The model in the pictures you will see is "NOT" available for Dates!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Second Infantry Regiment Association
34 Lawrenceville Drive
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648



Retired BGR Jack Gallagher B/2/2 says,
"DON'T FORGET TO GET YOUR DUES IN!"
YOU DON'T WANT ME TO SEND 'MONEYMAN'
RAY BITTENDER, OR 'First IN FALLUJAH'
COLN FITTS TO COLLECT THEM!"

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
THE BRO 2005 REUNION WILL
BE HELD July 20th thru 24th, just
OUTSIDE WASHINGTON DC!



IF YOU WANT A COPY OF OUR ROSTER,
NAMES, UNIT, DOS, AND CITY,
SNAIL MAIL OR EMAIL US AND WE' LL
GET ONE OUT TO YOU.

Merry Christmas!
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
PEACE ON EARTH.