

Second Infantry Regiment Association

April 2006

RAMROD



NEWS

WWW.SecInfReg.Org

SecInfReg@AOL.com

Our aim is to keep our members current on Second Infantry matters. Please send us your comments for the next issue – personal updates –news of any kind in which others might be interested. Send them to, SecInfReg@aol.com.

REUNIONS

1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry. The 1/2 held its first annual reunion last month in Pigeon Forge, TN and it was very well attended. About 40 veterans from both the 1st and 2nd Battalions enjoyed the camaraderie and the many activities available. Don Rochat did an outstanding job organizing the logistics and arranging the activities. Honored guests attending the reunion were members of the 278th RCT, Tennessee Army National Guard, recently returned from OIF, where they had been attached to our own 2/2, 1st ID.

2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry. The 2/2 is gearing up for its FOURTHEENTH annual shindig being held this August 17th – 20th in Owensboro, KY. Bob Fulps is again point man for this operation and can be reached by email at, bobfulps@adelphia.net or the old fashion way at,
Robert C. Fulps
1st SGT, US Army, Retired
2516 Bluff Ave
Owensboro, KY 42303

Although organized by specific battalions, these reunions are open to all. And anyone who has attended either can attest A GOOD TIME IS HAD BY ALL.

Bravo Company, 1st Bn. B/1/2 of about 1968-70 has been getting together for a couple of years now. This year's reunion was in early March. **Although**, if you would like info on future affairs, then Jerry Wilson is the man to talk to. He can be reached at (256) 820-6108 and he'd love to hear from you.

Combat-Veteran Officers. The dinner for those officers who served in combat with the First Infantry Division has been going on since WWI. This year's dinner was held in Alexandria, Virginia on 1 April. Call Gary Tucker for the scoop at (703) 538-5325 or Tom Rehm at (703) 323-6891.

THE BIG RED ONE'S BIG DO! The Society of the First Infantry Division will hold its 2006 annual reunion in Phoenix July 12th to the 16th at the Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa. Complete information is available on the Society's web-site, www.bigredone.org, or you can call the Society at (888) 324-4733.

Our Association hosts a hospitality suite at the reunion and we always have a good turn out and a great time. If you can make this affair you won't be disappointed!!!

Society of the Fifth Infantry Division. The Society of the 5th ID will hold its annual reunion, as always, on Labor Day Weekend. This year it will be in Columbia SC and information is available on their web-site, www.societyofthefifthdivision.com or by writing,

Jeff Tuttle

1711 Corsica Dr.

Yuba City, CA 95993-1638

We regret that some information is too late to be of any use this year. PLEASE, if you are interested in attending any of these groups' future affairs contact us at SecInfReg@aol.com, or the point of contact given.

-----NEWS FROM AROUND-----

Bill Vanderschmidt, advises that Ft. Riley is preparing for the arrival of the Big Red One. The post is expecting on the order of 9,000 more folks than they currently have and are planning new housing and other construction. Ft. Riley will become the largest city in Kansas west of Topeka. We believe that Hq 11D and the 1st and 2nd Brigades will be stationed there.

Jack Gallagher, B/2/2, gave a large gift to the Association. We are grateful for the gift, but more importantly, proud that the Regiment is so important to him. He is important to us!

Chuck Chapman, a past Bn XO in Vietnam, has happily remarried.

Rick Anson, our Honorary Colonel, is now recovered after becoming ill on a visit to Russia and having a pretty tough time.

VISIT TO IRAQI FREEDOM-WOUNDED RAMROD

Specialist Manny Melendez-Diaz might be the last Ramrod ever to be treated for combat wounds at the Walter Read Army Medical Center. During the Society of the 1st ID's 2005 Reunion in Washington, DC, several fellow Ramrods took advantage of their proximity to WRAMC to visit him.

A member of C/2/2, Manny was wounded by shrapnel when a roadside bomb hit his HUMVEE during 1st ID combat operations in Fallujah, Iraq in late 2004. Last July, he was at WRAMC recuperating from several surgeries and anticipating several more when the Association arranged to visit with him.

Ramrods Doug Tabb, Bob Douglas, Frank Alessio, Juan Santiago, SSG Colin Fitts, and SPC Jonathan Grannis, joined by Black Lion Luis Burgos, Juan's wife Carmen and Colin's wife Jessica, braved DC traffic to see Manny. Jonathan, one of the Association's guests at the reunion, had served in Manny's squad in Iraq. They took advantage of Colin's intimate knowledge of the WRAMC maze -- gained during his own recuperation from Iraqi Freedom combat wounds in 2004 -- to locate Manny.

During their visit with him, they also met Manny's father, who had moved up from Bayamon, Puerto Rico, to assist in his recovery. Juan, who kept in touch with Manny after the reunion and sent him a promised polo shirt with 2nd Inf Reg crest, has reported that Manny has since been transferred to out patient status to undergo rehab and follow-on surgeries.

In view of the planned closure of the current WRAMC campus and transition of its mission to a National Military Medical Center on the Bethesda Naval Medical Center campus. Manny may well be the last Ramrod to recuperate at WRAMC.

Manny has undergone several operations since that visit and he is steadily making progress. We hope and anticipate that this indomitable Ramrod will be able to attend the BRO's reunion in Phoenix this July as a guest of the Association.

\$\$ DUES \$\$

We do not collect dues as a precondition of membership, but your ante of \$10 helps make good things happen. In the last three years the Association has spend in excess of \$10,000 (far beyond the amount of dues collected) in support of the active battalion.



Gary L. Tucker
President

Second Infantry Regiment Association

30 March 2006

Fellow Second Infantry Association Members:

As your Association president I send you my greetings. As we enter 2006, I am optimistic that the Second Infantry Regiment Association will continue to flourish and grow both in numbers and camaraderie. I am continually amazed at the outreach and communication efforts of our members throughout the year. I encourage all of you to continue in this regard. This is particularly important as we draw in new members from the war on terror. That your efforts are paying off is evident by the fact that our attendance at the annual reunions continues to grow. Please keep it up.

This year promises to be a year of transformation for the active duty Regiment. Throughout the Army changes are occurring and uncertainties exist and our great Regiment is not immune to these. I do not know with certainty what 2006 will hold for our Regiment. At present, they are out of harms way, but the struggle our Country finds itself in is not going to be over soon and I am certain the Second Infantry Regiment's colors will again be tested in battle. Based on the last experience of the Regiment in combat, all I can say is that I feel some pity for the poor "souls" (read some other word I really want to use) that will face our proud soldiers. I know we all wish them luck in whatever the future holds.

What the future holds for many of us is that in July we will again enjoy each other's friendship and company at the annual reunion in Phoenix, AZ. It promises to be a good time and if all the wild and crazy promises made at last year's convention come through, it truly will be memorable. I, personally, am looking forward to the synchronized precision pool chair drill team routine. If any of you are interested in the training tape, let me know by email and I will get it to you. Seriously, I look forward to seeing all of you in Phoenix this coming summer.

Best wishes and best of luck in all you do.

Noli Me Tangere,

Gary Tucker

Gary Tucker



30 March 2006

Greetings to all members of our Regimental Association, to former Ramrod warriors and to our active duty brothers-in-arms:

The year 2005 was a challenging one for our 2-2 Battalion. The Battalion returned to Vilseck in March after distinguishing itself militarily at Fallujah, Iraq. Leading the attack into the city of Fallujah, 2-2 Infantry fought ferociously for over ten days with such bravery and skill that our Battalion was awarded the Army's Valorous Unit Citation. As a result of combat actions in Iraq, SSGT David Bellavia was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (the award is currently under consideration for upgrade to the Medal of Honor) seven warriors of the 2-2 were awarded Silver Stars; twenty soldiers received the Bronze Star for Valor; and over 100 Ramrods received Purple Hearts. It is truly a distinguished combat record and one of which we should all be very proud of.

Unfortunately, we took our casualties as well. I know you join me in prayers for all who gave their last full measure of devotion to assure that we and their families continue to enjoy freedom here at home. God bless each of those valiant men and women.

Since returning to Vilseck, Germany in March 2005, the Battalion has turned in all equipment to either the 2nd Brigade, BRO (scheduled to return to Iraq this year) or to other units in Europe. Over 600 Ramrods were reassigned to other units fighting Terrorism. Given their outstanding accomplishments in Iraq, these dedicated soldiers were very disappointed to have been reassigned as the 2-2 began reorganization and downsizing. The current plan is to deactivate the Battalion on or about 3 May 2006 at Vilseck, case the colors, and move the residual soldiers to Fort Knox, Kentucky. There it will reactivate as the 2-2 (Stryker) Battalion Captain Kirk Manfield is the current Commander of the Ramrod Battalion and will escort our Battalion colors back to Fort Knox. The Battalion will reactivate as part of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. You will hear more about the reactivation ceremony soon.

God bless you all and thank you for your loyal, dedicated support.

Rick Anson

Rick Anson

MG U.S. Army (Retired)

Honorary Colonel of the Regiment,

2nd United States Infantry Regiment

PAGE5



**RAMROD INSPIRES 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION
"FALLEN SOLDIERS" STATUE.**

The winning design for the 1st Infantry Division's "fallen soldiers" statue shows a 1st ID soldier in full battle gear, staring into the distance. One boot stands on a rattlesnake, whose dead body is coiled around a small hill. The soldier's position, with one foot atop the hill and one foot below, ready to take the final step to the pinnacle, symbolizes the division's partly finished mission, according to Staff Sgt. Carlos Arguello of the 106th Finance Battalion.

Arguello, who created the design for the statue, said he was inspired by a quote from President Franklin Roosevelt that also was used in a speech by 1st ID commander Maj. Gen. John Batiste: "When you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush him."

He also drew inspiration from the memory of a close friend, SSG. Victor Rosales-Lomelli, a 1st ID soldier from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, Vilseck killed April 13, 2004, in Baqouba, Iraq.

Arguello, a 12-year Army veteran, is an amateur artist who has never entered a design contest before, and was surprised his entry was the winner.

Since the publishing of our last Newsletter, the following Ramrods have given their lives in defense of our freedoms in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Please remember them, their families, and all who serve or have served in your prayers.

SPC Erik W. Hayes, 24, of Cascade, Md.

Nov. 29, 2004 at Al Miqdadiyah, Iraq

SSG Joseph W. Stevens, 26, of Sacramento, Calif.

SGT Michael C. Carlson, 22, of St. Paul, Minn.

SGT Javier Marin Jr., 29, of Mission, Texas.

SPC Viktor V. Yolkin, 24, of Spring Branch, Texas.

PFC Jesus A. Leon-Perez, 20, of Houston, Texas.

All on Jan. 24, 2005 at Mohammed Sacran, Iraq

1 ID Soldier presented three awards for heroism

May 25, 2005

A 3rd Brigade Combat Team Soldier from the 1st Infantry Division was awarded the Silver Star, the Soldier's Medal and the Bronze Star with Valor this month for his actions on three separate occasions during Operation Iraqi Freedom at ceremonies held in Germany.

1LT Karl Gregory, of the Germany based 1st Infantry Division, was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor at a ceremony in Vilseck, Germany, for exceptional courage and conspicuous gallantry while serving as a Bradley fighting Vehicle Platoon Leader during combat action in Fallujah, Iraq, during Operation Phantom Fury in November 2005.



1LT Karl Gregory, Platoon Leader, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, is presented the Silver Star by LTG Ricardo Sanchez, Commanding General, V (US) Corps, for exceptional courage during combat action in Baqubah, Iraq.

Just days later 1LT Gregory was awarded twice more for his actions on two other occasions.

On 16 May 2005, the Soldier's Medal was presented by 1 ID Division Commander, MG John R.S. Batiste. The award cited 1LT Gregory's dedication to his fellow Soldiers and complete disregard for his own safety when he swam across a canal to rescue four Soldiers trapped in a submerged vehicle.

In the afternoon of the 16th 1LT Gregory was presented his final award in front of the entire division. During the 1st Infantry Division's Welcome Home Ceremony LTG Ricardo Sanchez, Commanding General, V (US) Corps, presented 1LT Gregory the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in the face of superior enemy presence during an insurgent uprising in Baqubah, Iraq on 24 June 2004.

While attached to the 3 BCT Recon Troop during heavy fighting to regain control of key terrain in the city, 1LT Gregory's heroic actions destroyed or dispersed the enemy's presence in the western portion of the city. In fight to regain control of a stadium occupied by more than 30 insurgents several of his soldiers were wounded. 1LT Gregory courageously stood his ground until his wounded were evacuated and both of his Bradleys' turrets were disabled. Even after having been wounded in the face by an RPG and knocked unconscious by an IED, he returned without hesitation to make sure that no one was left behind. Having repaired his vehicles, 1LT Gregory then led his men back into the fight.

"1LT Gregory's actions in the face of a superior enemy presence is an example to all of what makes the United States Army the world's premier fighting force, its soldiers." Said Recon Troop Commander CPT Kirk Mayfield.

The Silver Star is an award designated solely for heroism in combat. Gregory is one of five Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion 2nd Infantry to receive the medal for their actions during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Into the Hot Zone - TIME MAGAZINE - Nov. 22, 2004

After weeks of preparation, the U.S. launches a full-scale assault to take back Fallujah. TIME follows one platoon as it carries out the most dangerous operation since the beginning of the war

By Michael Ware

"We're not going to die!" yells U.S. Staff Sergeant David Bellavia as his rattled platoon of soldiers takes cover from machine-gun fire in the streets of Fallujah. The platoon has been ordered to hunt down and kill a group of insurgents hiding somewhere in a block of 12 darkened houses. It is 1:45 a.m., and the soldiers have been running from fire fight to fire fight for 48 hours straight with no sleep, fueled only by the modest pickings from their ration packs. As they searched through nine of the houses on the block, the soldiers turned up nothing. When they trudged into the 10th house, though, a trap was sprung: the insurgents had lured them in and then opened fire, forcing Bellavia's men to scramble out of the house as shards of glass peppered them and bullets ricocheted off the gates of the courtyard. Bellavia yelled for a Bradley armored fighting vehicle to get "up here now!" The Bradley drew along the gate and poured 25-mm-cannon and M-240 machine-gun fire into the house, blasting a shower of concrete chips and luminescent sparks.

Bellavia, a wiry 29-year-old who resembles Sean Penn, is pacing the street, preparing to go back in. Bellavia's bluster on the battlefield contrasts with his refinement off it. During lulls in the fighting, he could discuss the Renaissance and East European politics. "Get on me now," he says, ordering his squad to close in. There is little movement. He asks who has more ammunition. Two soldiers stand up and join him in the street. "Here we go, Charlie's Angels," Bellavia says. "You don't move from my goddam wing. You stay on my right shoulder. You stay on my left shoulder. Hooah?" The men nod. "I wanna go in there and go after 'em."

Reaching the barred window near the front door, Bellavia tells two soldiers to perch by the house corner and watch for insurgents trying to leap out the side window. He looks at Staff Sergeant Scott Lawson and says, "You're f_____ coming. Give suppressive fire at 45 degrees." Bellavia and Lawson step nervously into the house. From the living room, Bellavia rounds the corner into the hallway. The insurgents are still alive. Their AK-47s fire. Bellavia fires back, killing them both. "Two f_____s down," he says.

Lawson stays downstairs while Bellavia scours the first floor for more insurgents. A string of rapid-fire single shots ring out. Then silence. Then a low, pained moaning. The two soldiers waiting in the courtyard call out to Bellavia, "Hey, Sergeant Bell," but get no response. "Sergeant Bell is not answering," a message is shouted back to the platoon members across the street. "We need more guys." The platoon's other staff sergeant, Colin Fitts, 26, steps up. "Let's go," he says.

Fitts takes a small team over the road. "Terminators coming in," he bellows as he goes inside, using the unit's name in a code to warn that friendly forces are entering. Inside they find Bellavia alive and on the hunt. Upstairs he scans the bedrooms. An insurgent jumps out of the cupboard. Bellavia falls down and fires, spraying the man with bullets. At some point another insurgent drops out of the ceiling. Yet another runs to a window and makes for the garden. Bellavia hits him in the legs and lower back as he flees. When it's over, four insurgents are dead; another has escaped badly wounded. To Bellavia, Fitts says, "That's a good job, dude. You're a better man than me." Bellavia shakes his head. "No, no, no," he mutters.

When it kicked off last week, the battle of Fallujah was billed as a climactic clash between roughly 10,000 U.S. soldiers and Marines and about 2,000 newly minted Iraqi fighting men against the 1,500 to 3,000 armed militants who have turned the city into Iraq's biggest insurgent haven. But the battle has not involved any single Armageddon-style showdown with massed insurgent forces. Instead, for men like the soldiers of Alpha Company's 3rd Platoon, part of Task Force 2-2, the fight was far more intense, chaotic and harrowing. The Americans battled armed insurgents not just street to street or even house to house, but also up close and personal with their enemy, fighting him room to room at point-blank range. Measured by the military's strategic objectives, the assault's first few days produced success. U.S. forces, led by the members of Task Force 2-2, swept down from the north and punched deep into the city, seizing one of Fallujah's most important assets, Highway 10. The Army's assault opened the way for more forces to pour into the center of Fallujah and advance toward the south of the city, with the intent of delivering a blow to an insurgency that has overrun parts of Iraq. Ripping out the heart of the resistance in Fallujah is a necessary step to prevent the insurgents from tearing the country apart.

The U.S. offensive has left much of Fallujah in ruins, as air strikes, artillery barrages and ground fighting destroyed homes and damaged many of the city's mosques. It's impossible to count the number of enemy slain across Fallujah, but the attrition of insurgent forces in the city was decisive. In the long run, however, the rebels haven't been beaten. From the nature of the fight and interviews with insurgents before the attack, it seems clear the nationalist and jihadist leadership had by and large already left the city along with much of their ranks, leaving behind, in classic guerrilla style, a rearguard detail to harass and interdict U.S. forces. The Americans in Fallujah got a taste of what they may confront across Iraq's restive Sunni triangle as the military command attempts to root out the insurgents from their sanctuaries. They are a tenacious enemy who fight as any guerrilla force might—never head on, always from behind or the sides at moments when it's least expected, initiating combat at weak points and then pulling back to strongholds, ducking and weaving all the while.

The U.S. invasion of Fallujah exacted a price. Of roughly 400 men and women from Task Force 2-2, four were killed in action. All told, the battle's first days left at least 24 service members dead and more than 200 wounded. It was a stunning success militarily, but in human terms each loss was deeply felt, etched into the face and being of every soldier. For those who were there, the manner in which this battle was fought and victory claimed will never be forgotten. These are a few of their stories.

Shortly after 7 p.m. on Monday night, Alpha Company paved the road into Fallujah. Engineers used a minesweeper to shoot forward 91-m lines of C-4 explosive to destroy or trigger any booby traps in its path. Battle tanks followed a channel marked in chemical lights, taking positions on the railway berm to cover 3rd Platoon's advance to Objective Lion, a hunk of two- and three-story buildings known to be insurgent strong points. It would be the foothold for the entire Task Force's advance.

Within the Bradley's cramped and musty hold, the shock of the minesweeper's explosion was felt by the infantrymen huddled inside. Among them is Fitts, a lithe, expressive Mississippian and father of three who joined the military eight years ago. He warns his team to "get ready to get out of this big metal bitch." With the bulk of the Marine-led assault force poised on the northern

side of the railway, 3rd Platoon plowed forward, bringing its Bradleys to a halt beneath Fallujah's first houses. The platoon radio net crackled, "Drop ramp. All 3rd Platoon elements drop ramp, drop ramp." And with that, the ground battle began.

Despite all the intel showing heavy movement within the buildings, Object Lion was not defended. But in the street behind it, a mammoth propane tank lay on its side; wire ran from it to a nearby house. A squad was detailed, and went in only to come scurrying straight back out. The presence of gas cans and a car battery suggested that the propane tank and probably the house were rigged to blow.

It was a sign of things to come. Two days later, the platoon took up a position in a three-story house, overlooking the platoon's new domain. In the side street below, twin bombs erupted. A detonator cord led to the adjoining home, and someone thought he saw movement. The platoon lit up the house with volleys of automatic fire, tripping a battery of hidden devices. The house blew forward, and a young sergeant on a balcony took shrapnel in his groin. At every stop in its advance, the Wolf Pack, as 3rd Platoon is dubbed, found countless bombs, plus doors booby trapped and walls set with explosives. The enemy tactic accounted for the soldiers' unforgiving approach to entering buildings, traversing streets and tackling even lone snipers: if it looks suspicious or shoots at you, blow it up with a grenade, a cannon or the main gun of a tank. The U.S. didn't plan on taking any chances.

By dawn the next day, the Wolf Pack had reached Objective Cougar, the Imam al-Shafi Mosque that insurgent leaders used as a meeting point and command center. It sat midway down 3rd Platoon's southward advance through Fallujah's Askari district, home to many former Iraqi military officers. It had been long evacuated and been heavily fortified in anticipation of a U.S. invasion, but commanders had received reports that as many as 150 foreign fighters were ensconced in the area; the battle figured to be tough. Footage taken by an aerial drone earlier in the week showed that the area was strewn with buried explosives. When a U.S. warplane dropped a 225-kg bomb on a weapons cache, it set off a daisy chain of roadside bombs for 90 m along either side of the block. Hoping to stymie any U.S. advance and herd troops into canalized killing zones, insurgents positioned dirt-filled barriers and concrete blast walls throughout the streets. The raw materials they were using had been supplied by the U.S.-led coalition to the Iraqi police and Iraqi National Guard in Fallujah, many of whose ranks have since joined the insurgency.

To breach the mosque and allow Iraqi Intervention Forces to search it, the U.S. employed a Bradley to smash the compound's walls after 25-mm cannon rounds failed to dent its iron gates. The Wolf Pack searched and secured a three-story building, taking a high spot overlooking the mosque and its minaret. At night it almost felt safe inside, but daylight brought the snipers and insurgent cells out into the streets. The attack started in the east but was soon joined by shooting from the north. From three edges of the roof, the soldiers fired at the insurgents, who wore tracksuit pants and the uniforms of the Iraqi National Guard as they dashed back and forth across roads or popped up in windows. The fight lasted nearly two hours. The young grunts defended themselves with all manner of fire, including AT4 antitank rockets, M-203 40-mm grenade launchers and tow missiles from the Bradleys supporting them. A young sergeant went down, shrapnel or a bullet fragment lodging in his cheek. After checking himself, he went back to returning fire.

The heaviest fighting was still to come. The next day the 3rd Platoon and the rest of Task Force 2-2 reached Phase Line Fran, Fallujah's central bisecting road. From there they could stare into the city's notorious industrial area, a hot spot particularly for foreign fighters and the scene of

innumerable past battles with the Marines. Sporadic gunfire from the decaying warehouses, cement plants and junkyards provoked U.S. tanks to unleash high-explosive rounds at insurgent positions. The Wolf Pack's fire-support officer called in mortar fire on buildings and locations where movement was seen. Even in lulls in the gunplay, the Fallujah sound track was alive with detonations and the whumps of tank rounds.

The insurgents had studied the Americans' methods well. To negate the U.S.'s preference to fight in the dark using night-vision equipment, the insurgents focused their attacks in the dim light of dawn and dusk. As the sun set, a decrepit warehouse suddenly sparkled with at least a dozen muzzle flashes. Bullets flew thick over the unit's commandeered building. "Look at the industrial complex," Bellavia yelled at his men. "I want you to shoot, shoot." The Wolf Pack lashed back with chattering automatic-weapons fire. A sister platoon, bunkered down a few hundred meters to the west, joined in, bringing a deadly cross fire to bear on the insurgents. Streams of red tracers scorched into the building as a soft golden sun emblazoned a graying sky.

"The enemy picture is so murky we just don't know anything for sure except for what you see with your own eyes," Alpha Company's commander, Captain Sean Sims, told his officers. The soldiers pushed south into the industrial zone along the eastern corridor, moving into the thick of the cement plants and metal-strewn yards. The soldiers geared up to drive into the teeth of the resistance—the kind of fight the military had been spoiling for. Jdams rocked the earth and artillery carved a path forward as the sounds of fire fights resonated in all directions.

Winding their armor through the desolate buildings bound for their first target—Objective Bud, identified as a congregating point for foreign fighters—the Wolf Pack started taking fire immediately. A Bradley vehicle piloted by Sergeant First Class James Cantrell shuddered and filled with dust as it ran over a roadside bomb. The blast was so powerful it was at first mistaken for a bomb dropped by one of the many warplanes screeching overhead. "Goddam," said Fitts, locked down inside the mechanical beast, his shotgun nestled under his chin.

Within minutes, a thumping clunk beat the vehicle's left side. "Damn, an rpg," shouted a soldier. When they reached Objective Bud, a figure was seen scurrying through a window. The 3rd Platoon spilled into the compound, cutting off any escape. Cantrell maneuvered his Bradley to face the building. The high-explosive rounds set the bottom floor ablaze. First Lieutenant Joaquin Meno called up for the first story to be torched as well. "Let the f_____ burn," said a squad leader. When a group of insurgents brandishing RPGS was spotted 365 m south, Meno called in mortar fire from the rear and Abrams tank fire from the front. The insurgents had no chance. "Hey, LT, good call. That's perfect," said Bellavia. As if to punctuate the score, a direct hit on the building where the insurgents had taken cover set off repeated secondary explosions.

Late that night, while waiting for the Marines to match the pace of 2-2's advance, the platoon occupied a tall house on the northern outskirts of an area code-named Queens. It gave the exhausted grunts a rare respite—an hour's sleep. At 4 a.m. they moved out and took up positions in another building. Within hours they encountered one of their most vicious confrontations yet, as insurgents riddled the rooftop with RPGS and sniper fire. The insurgents weren't intimidated even by the fury of the tanks, daring to step from behind corners to vainly hit them with RPGS. A soldier's ankle was shattered when an rpg sent concrete flying. Linking up with 1st Platoon to consolidate its position, the Wolf Pack fended off the attack.

On Saturday the final assault got under way as the Wolf Pack drove farther south, positioned to swing west to complete the sweep of the city. Alpha Company took more casualties, one a key

member that was particularly bitter, as the battle's end was so close. As the soldiers evacuated their wounded, military sources said Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi was readying to announce the end of combat in the recaptured city. As the fighting in Fallujah dies down, the Wolf Pack and the rest of Task Force 2-2 are due to return to their usual area of operations in Diyala province north of Baghdad. But with the insurgents showing little sign of giving up, the Americans face more battles ahead. The men of 3rd Platoon just shrug their shoulders at the thought. It's as though they were bred to fight. Says Fitts: "I don't know how to do anything else."



Veterans of Fallujah – among the first into Fallujah - Dave Bellavia and Colin Fitts at the Reunion in DC.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT	
ACTIVITY	AMOUNT
Balance 12/30/2004	\$ 9,146.94
Members Dues Collected	2,632.60
Donations to Host Active Ramrods at the Reunion	1,955.00
Donations Collected at the Reunion	673.84
Donation From T-Shirt Sales at Reunion	640.00
Contribution to Active Battalion (Ramrod Fund)	(1,000.00)
Hospitality Expense at the Reunion	(1,452.86)
Expense of Hosting Active Ramrods at the Reunion	(3,802.43)
KIA Memorial Contributions From Association	(350.00)
New Membership Cards for the Association	(1,553.00)
Administrative Expenses (Postage, Shipping, etc)	(726.78)
Current Balance 1/6/2006)	6,163.31

Ramrods Rogues Gallery D.C. Reunion



'Smiling' Dave Banner Assn V.P



Some of the 'BOYS' of C/1/2 vintage 1968-69

President Gary 'Black eye' Tucker
Don't ask. He won't tell!



Rudolph Blaize, John Carlise, Bill Mullen



SPC Jonathan Grannis & fiancée.
Left Dave Banner, Colin Fitts and
John Kerins

Pigeon Forge Reunion

The 1st Annual 1/2 Ramrods Reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN, this past March turned into a rousing success for the sixty people who attended. Renewing old acquaintances and making new ones brought back memories of thirty-odd years ago.



A special presentation of a black scarf was made to the Gold Star Mother of C. Jay Hall (pictured left,) who gave his life serving in Charlie Company, 1st of the 2nd, on 7 November 1969. A large group of his comrades were on hand to witness this emotional event.

Entertainment included a show at the Smith Family Theater and a personal tour by the curator of the Veterans Memorial Museum. Both were touching tributes to our old vets.

Plans are already underway for the 2nd 1st Annual Ramrods Reunion and will be announced at the Big Red One reunion in Phoenix in July. Come join your buddies for this special experience next year.



To the left, from left to right are organizer Don Rochat with Juan Santiago and Dave Banner.

Below are some of the guys and gals who made the reunion such a great **SUCCESS!**

