



## **From the President:**

Carol and I wish to extend to you a Merry Christmas, a Happy Holiday filled with family and friends. In addition, may you experience a wonderful New Year!

I am constantly impressed with the professionalism, the positive enthusiasm, the high level of participation of our Board of Directors. I wish to commend past Treasurer Mike Hermanson, past 2nd VP Russ Meredith, and past Association Chaplain Loy Sperry for their commitment and dedication to the 11th Engineer Battalion Association! Building upon past accomplishments, Joe Papapietro is now 1st VP in charge of the Annual Reunions, Jeff Coker is now 2nd VP heading up membership duties, Jim Rock is the Association Chaplain, and Phil Loftis is the Panther Press Editor. With John Booth as Treasurer, and Ron Smoker as Secretary, we have a dynamic leadership team!

Jeff and Christina Coker put together a wonderful reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN. We all thoroughly enjoyed the events and the camaraderie. Four first time attendees were present this year, a goal realized by advertising and contacting 'old soldiers' (of the 1960s). Welcome, Welcome, Welcome!! Our raffle brought in a record \$700, which was generously matched with a donation made by member Carl Baswell. This fund helps us finance the plaques and gift cards our Association presents to the winner of the SOY, NCOY, and OYO (Soldier of Year, NCO of Year, Officer of Year) contests conducted by the Active 11th Engineer Battalion. In addition, Michael Ellegood is guiding our members on sending "Care Packages" to deployed Soldiers, a very appreciated and popular program. See the write

up under "And a few notes from your Editor" for an update on this endeavor. Finally, I had the honor, as president, to present Association Coins to our Banquet guests Jim Miller of the American Legion, and Speaker Jack Maness. Also Coins were presented to Karen Boelsche and Charlotte Boelsche for their 20 years of supporting "NJ Fred" Boelsche's selfless work making the 11th Engineer Battalion Association the organization it is today. (Contact John Booth if you wish to purchase a souvenir Coin...see the last article in this edition of the Panther Press for more information.)

Joe Papapietro presented his research for next year's reunion, the first ever cruise. More detailed information can be seen in Joe's section of this publication. A two year planning process is crucial for planning reunions. Thus begins the planning for our 2014 reunion to be held in Charleston, SC. To further advertise our Association, we are exploring the construction of an Internet Web Site. This end goal is to have an operative web site for our Association, with current information of the Association, our officers, membership applications, a POC (point of contact), Reunions, etc. for enhancing membership of any 11th Engineer soldier to our Association.

Bill Davis, PO Box 336, Cool, CA 95614 (530) 885-3917, [wrd1945@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wrd1945@sbcglobal.net)

## **From the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President:**

I am pleased to be writing my initial Panther Press article as the Association's new 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. Let me begin by offering my sincere thanks and appreciation to my predecessor, Jeff

Corker, and his very able wife (and reunion planning assistant) Christina. The Association is blessed to have members like Jeff and Christina. Their energy and commitment set a high bar for all of us. Richel and I realize that we have some big shoes to fill as we assume this responsibility and will strive to live up to the example they have set.

**Reunion 2013:** I'm especially happy to announce that planning for the 2013 cruise reunion is ahead of schedule. As of this date (29 Nov) we have already booked a total of 13 cabins. Indications are that we're going to have a great turn out. Here's a quick summary of the cruise details:

**Dates:** 9 Dec - 14 Dec  
**Ship:** Celebrity Constellation  
**Itinerary:** Ft Lauderdale - At Sea - Cozumel - At Sea - Key West - Ft Lauderdale

**Stateroom Costs will be slightly less than estimated due to the group booking discount:**

- Inside Cabin from: \$334
- Outside Cabin from: \$384
- Veranda (Balcony) from: \$469
- Suite from: \$834

**NOTE:** These rates are guaranteed through 30 December. I am working with Celebrity to get this date extended but recommend you reserve a cabin soon as possible to avoid a possible increase.

**Other Costs:**

- Gratuities: from \$57.50/person (\$11/day/person)
- Taxes and fees: \$105.89 per person

**CABIN CREDITS:** Each cabin will receive a \$50 credit. This can be used as you see fit: to pay gratuities, offset on-board expenses, etc. Because we have booked at least 8 cabins the group will also receive an additional rebate equal to one passenger fare divided by the number of

cabins. This, too, will be credited to your cabin account. If we book 16 cabins, we will receive a second "passenger fare" credited back to the group.

**RESERVATIONS:** Call Erika Trivett at Celebrity Cruise lines (1-888-727-4907 x13337) to reserve your cabin. If she is not available any other agent at that number will be able to help you. Be sure to ask for the "11th Engineer Battalion Association" reunion, using cruise Group Number 2059484.

**DEPOSIT:** When you make your reservation a credit card deposit will be required. If you want to select your cabin (recommended) the deposit is \$100 per person. You can also reserve a cabin but let the cruise line assign you one later for a deposit of only \$25 per person.

**FINAL PAYMENT:** Due NLT 25 Sept 2013.

**IMPORTANT: The stop in Mexico means this is classified as an *international* cruise....ALL personnel (except children under the age of 16) must have a current US Passport.**

**Excursions:** I am looking into excursions for our stops in Cozumel and Key West and will provide more details in the next Panther Press. If you have any special requests or recommendations please contact me as soon as possible.

**Questions? Concerns?** Richel and I are not cruise experts but we have sailed several times in the past. If you are new to cruising or have never cruised or just have questions please do not hesitate to contact me. If I don't know the answer I will find out. My home number is **717-767-1563**. My email address is: [o6ret@aol.com](mailto:o6ret@aol.com)

**Reunion 2014:** Association members attending this year's Pigeon Forge extravaganza (which was GREAT, by the way!) selected Charleston, SC as the venue for our September 2014 reunion. I have not been there in years but know

from a previous visit that it's a great locale with plenty to offer. Even as I write this I'm getting excited about beginning the early planning. SPECIAL REQUEST: If there is a member out there who lives in or near Charleston or who has knowledge of the area please contact me if you are able to assist in planning.

**Reunion 2015:** It's not too soon to be thinking about where the Association should go next. If you have ideas or recommendations please send them to me so I can develop a slate of options and have it ready for a vote during next year's cruise.

Joe Papapietro

**From the Treasurer:**

At the reunion annual meeting it was agreed that we should seek to have the 11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Association recognized as a 503(c)(19) Veterans Organization.

I contacted the IRS and established the Association as a 503(c)(19) Veterans Organization. If the association wanted to file a form 1023 and pay \$400 we would be issued a Determination Letter. The IRS explained that we did not need the Determination Letter to be a 503(c)(19) Veterans Organization as long as the association annually filed a Form 990-N (e.Postcard). I will file the 990-N for 2012 in January.

I want to thank everyone that has sent in their 2012 dues. We have 136 names in our member database. To date I have received 2012 dues payments from 90 members (65%). For 2013, 45 members (33%) have already sent in their 2013 dues. We also want to thank those members that included a donation to the General Fund.

The dues payments support:

- communications with our members without email addresses to include the Newsletter distribution,
- awards for the 11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion of Soldier, NCO, and Officer of the Year,

- reunion planning and preparation costs, and
- the development and maintenance of our new website.

Ron Smoker and I communicate almost daily, and he has been very good in sending out membership cards to those that have paid, so if you do not have a current membership card you are most likely delinquent.

As of this writing at the end of December we have over \$10k in our checking account. We have about \$3.5k in outstanding liabilities which we will pay when we receive the bills, so we expect the balance to go down after these bills are paid. All said we have about the same balance we had at the beginning of 2012.

Thank you again for your support.

ESSAYONS

John L. Booth

56 Hope Road, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

732-345-1134

**"Smoke Signals":**

Let me start by offering best wishes to you and your families for a Blessed and Merry Christmas Season and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year for 2013.

This past year has provided many achievements and highlights for our Association. Our Association's 20th Reunion in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee was a truly awesome event that was enjoyed by all, well supported by our Membership and to which the majority of its success can be attributed to Jeff Corker, Reunion Chairman, and his creative and wonderful wife, Christina.

At our 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Association Business Meeting we installed our Officers: Bill Davis was re-elected for another term as our President. Joe Papapeitro relinquished his duties as Newsletter Editor and was elected as our 1<sup>st</sup> VP. Joe will continue with his duties as the Association's Liaison Officer to the Battalion and Historian. Jeff Corker, our previous 1<sup>st</sup> VP, resigned from that position so that he might focus on Membership

as our newly elected 2<sup>nd</sup> VP. Jeff will be replacing Russ Meredith who impressively served our Association for so long in that key position. John Booth will continue with his innovative activities as our Treasurer. Phil Loftis has taken over the challenges and duties as our new Panther Press Newsletter Editor. Jim (Rocky) Rock has taken over the duties as our Chaplain from Reverend Loy Sperry who has unselfishly served our Association in that position for a long time, and I will remain as your Secretary. While there were many highlights at our 20<sup>th</sup> Reunion, I'd like to briefly address one that recognized the dedication and untiring efforts of our Association's late-past Secretary and one of its founders, NJ Fred Boelsche. Our Membership was unanimous in officially naming its Soldier of the Year Award after NJ Fred, which will hereafter be known as the "11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Association Annual NJ Fred Boelsche Soldier of the Year Award." In addition Charlotte Boelsche, NJ Fred's wife and who was in attendance at the Reunion with her daughter Karen, was made an Honorary Lifetime Member of our Association in honor, recognition and tribute to her late husband and his tireless efforts to our Association.

By now, you should have received your copy of the 11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Association Annual Dues Form Calendar Year 2013. The Form is similar to last year's with one key change being our request that you provide a point-of-contact telephone number or email for a next of kin. Over the past year we have had many problems trying to reach some of our members and this change was implemented in an attempt to mitigate that issue. Remember our dues and donations provide financial revenues by which our Association conducts business. In case you may not have received your Dues Form, a copy is included with this Newsletter. Please send in your dues, along with your completed Form, as soon as possible.

On November 15, 2012, Liela Mae Hermanson, wife of our former Treasurer Mike Hermanson, passed. Our deepest sympathy and ardent

prayers are with Mike and his family for the loss of a wonderful lady. God Bless!

Our member Bob Ploof is recovering from bypass surgery that he went through in November 2012. Our best wishes and prayers go out to Bob for a full and timely recovery. A special thank you goes out to Jim Loose for keeping us posted on Bob's condition.

Please keep all of our members and their families in your hearts, minds and prayers over the Christmas Holidays and throughout the New Year. Also, consider giving one of our members a special present by picking up the telephone and personally wishing them a Merry Christmas or other appropriate Happy Holiday Greeting.

If anyone has questions regarding the dues Form or needs any assistance or information regarding our Association, please feel free to call or email me at 301-926-9870 or 301-212-9378, [ronald.smoker@gte.net](mailto:ronald.smoker@gte.net).

#### **And a few notes from your Editor:**

Mike Ellegood has led our effort to support an engineer unit overseas. A recap of what our association has accomplished in this effort follows:

"Support of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Company (CSE)"  
By now, most of our members are aware of our Association's support of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Company, Combat Support Equipment's deployment to Afghanistan. The plan, as it was initially conceived, was to ship "Care" packages to the unit via USPS and through the Unit Commander, CPT Robert Etheridge. Since there were a number of volunteers and since the deployment was anticipated to last nine months, it was felt that we needed to add some structure to the effort. Without structure, it was probable that the unit would receive many packages in one or two months and then none for the remainder of the tour. One of our members, LTC (ret) Michael S. Ellegood, PE, volunteered to organize the effort. Mike developed a "duty roster" assigning a volunteer to one of the deployment months.

There were more volunteers than months so the holiday months had more than one volunteer.

In an E-mail, CPT Etheridge expressed that the unit wanted coffee, specifically Keurig type coffee pods. Mike and Julie Ellegood have a family friend who is a Starbucks District Manager in Phoenix, Arizona. After hearing of the 63<sup>rd</sup>'s want, he volunteered to solicit the support of his Starbucks District. His store managers responded with great enthusiasm! Not only did the unit receive some surplus coffee but also many of the stores had donation boxes and the customers responded with even more enthusiasm. Over a one-month period over 50 pounds of coffee were collected and delivered to Mike and Julie. These were put into USPS large priority flat rate boxes for shipment. Over a four - month period these "Care" packages were shipped to CPT Etheridge.

The unit has received them and responded with thank you notes expressing their profound appreciation for the Association's support! See

the photo/thank you message from the 63<sup>rd</sup> and note to Dominique and Sean at Starbucks below.

The 63<sup>rd</sup> is expected to DEROS (come back stateside) in March of 2013 and it takes about six weeks for mail to reach the Unit. So the last packages should be shipped in mid-January, 2013.

As a side note, based on the identification of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Company by our association, the Huntsville SAME Post sent 2 shipments to the 63<sup>rd</sup> of a total of 25 boxes weighing more than 260 lbs.

Many thanks to all who supported this effort.

- **Association Coins.** The Association coins have arrived and are available for sale. Order one from John Booth, Association Treasurer, by sending him a request and check for \$12 including postage.

Phil Loftis  
[loftis@knology.net](mailto:loftis@knology.net)  
256-536-1411

## **11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Association**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012 - 2013**

William R. Davis – President  
Joe Papapietro – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Jeff Corker – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

### **APPOINTED OFFICERS**

Ron Smoker – Secretary  
John Booth – Treasurer  
Joe Papapietro – Historian (Temporary)  
Jim Rock – Chaplain  
Phil Loftis – Newsletter Editor  
Robert Diehl – Web Master

### **EMERITUS**

William H. Van Ort – President  
Harry H. "Dutch" Heiney – President  
Ernest Seymour – President  
Ernest Reeves – Treasurer  
Rev. Allan Eubank - Chaplain



**11th Engineer Battalion Association  
Annual Dues Payment Form  
Calendar Year 2013**

As your 11th Engineer Battalion Association Secretary this is a reminder of payment for Annual dues (\$15.00/year) for Calendar Year 2013, which are due on January 1, 2013. We are currently summoning the collection of dues at this time and asking that you **please update** the information requested, so we can verify/update the information on file as it pertains to you and your service with the 11th Engineer Battalion. In addition, over the past year we have had problems attempting to contact some members. To assist in this matter, please provide alternate telephone # and/or email address for a next of kin, so we might contact them in the event that we are unable to reach you directly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unit(s) Designation: \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location(s) Served: \_\_\_\_\_ Period(s) Served: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name/Telephone Number and/or Email for Alternate Point of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

As previously mentioned our dues continue to remain at **\$15.00 per Membership Year**, which coincides with the Calendar Year, i.e., January 1 to December 31. In the past, some members have opted to pay dues for a number of years in advance and/or have sent in additional funds that are put into our Association's General Fund, some of which may be used to pay dues for a few of our less fortunate members. We encourage both!

Please complete: 2013 Dues Payment: \$15.00 Additional Years at \$15.00/years: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Funds to General Fund: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Pre-paid Membership Dues through: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total Amount Enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check #/other: \_\_\_\_\_ (Checks or Money Orders only.)

Please send your payment of dues, any donation to our General Fund and this completed form so as to reach us by **January 1, 2013**. Also, if there is an issue, comment or recommendation that you believe is for the good of our Association and/or that you would like to further discuss, please appropriately make note in the space below or the back side of the form.

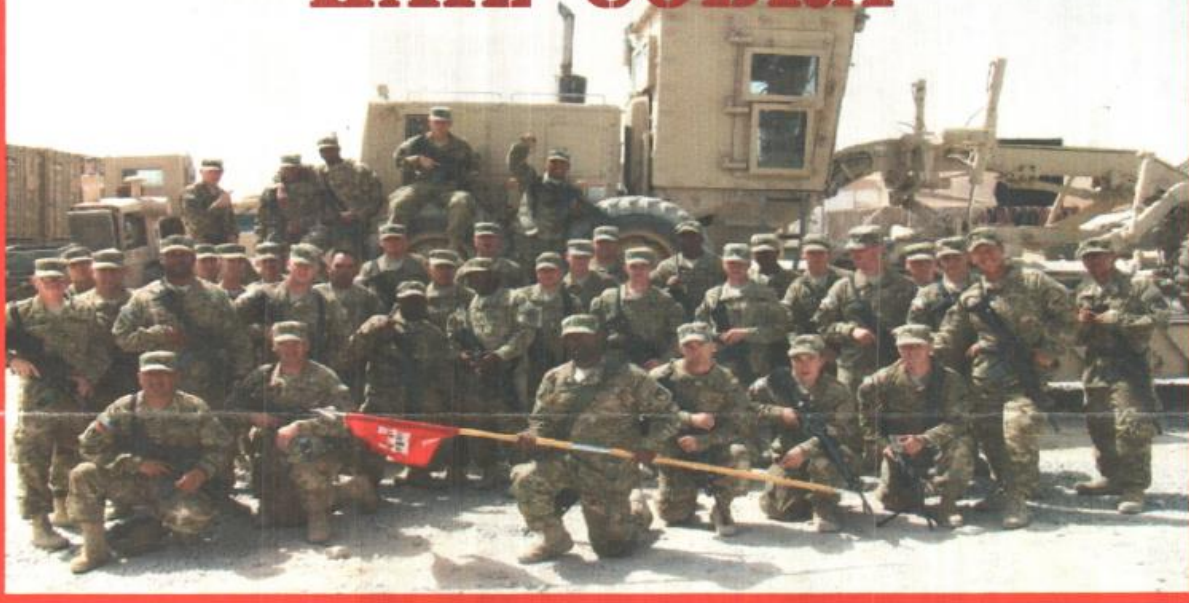
**Please make your Check/Money Order out to "The 11th Engineer Battalion Association" and mail to:**  
**John L. Booth**  
**Treasurer, 11th Engineer Battalion Association**  
**56 Hope Road**  
**Tinton Falls, New Jersey 07724**

Once John receives and processes your form and payment he will forward your information onto me. Upon receipt, I will verify/update your information, as applicable, on our Association Roster and send your Membership Card reflecting its new expiration date. If you have prepaid your dues for 2013, or beyond, please note that fact on the above form. However, please still complete the information requested on this form and send/email it in so we can verify/update our Association's records.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (Ron Smoker) at 301-926-9870, 301-212-9378 or email: [ronald.smoker@gte.net](mailto:ronald.smoker@gte.net).



# "HAIL COBRA"



**THE SOLDIERS OF THE 63<sup>RD</sup> ENGINEER  
COMPANY WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT DURING OUR  
DEPLOYMENT TO AFGHANISTAN.  
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**



Thank you!

*Jay B* *LT*

Thank you for your support  
SGT Broadway Jerome

Your support means a lot to  
the soldiers in my Platoon.  
Thank you very much.  
-2LT Joseph Park-

"Sir,  
Thank you for your  
support and service!  
CW2 Krieg  
Thank so much for everything  
2LT STEVEN HO  
Stew [Signature]

Thank you VERY much  
*Sgt [Signature]*

THANK You  
SGT Best

*[Signature]*  
*[Signature]*  
KS

Thank you  
SGT [Signature]  
[Signature]

Thank you for  
being there  
SGT [Signature]

Dear Dominique and Sean,

I would like to personally thank you for the amazing gifts you have sent for my Soldiers. As the air begins to cool here in Afghanistan, the coffee intake has only grown. The Soldiers are spending more time than usual in our operations center to partake in the delicious coffee drinking. We are honored to serve you. Once again,  
**THANK YOU!**

Very Respectfully,

Cobra 6

CPT Rob Etheridge

Commander, 63rd Engineer Company