



The 11th Engineer Battalion Association

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From the President: I hope that you have not been inconvenienced by the different weather patterns of this summer, and that all is well in your household.

We are quickly approaching the deadline date (AUGUST 15, 2012) for registration to our upcoming 2012 Reunion in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. You are encouraged to call in your registration for a room at the hotel, and to send your registration fees to our Association Treasurer, **John Booth**. Reunion organizers **Jeff & Christina Corker** are working closely with the Hotel staff and local visitor's bureau to make this an excellent reunion. Part of the preplanning process is a presumption upon a minimum number of members participating. Our registration is low at this date. As Secretary **Ron Smoker** recently remarked "Our Annual Reunion provides the forum for our members to meet in a social environment for comradeship and to address business issues incumbent on our Association". The staff is considering a call-a-thon to encourage members to attend the 2012 reunion.

Another purpose of our Association is to support the Active Component 11th Engineer Battalion. We are doing this through liaison **Joe Papapietro**. On 10 August the 11th Engineers are having their Battalion Organization Day. Our Association will present for the third time awards to the Soldier of the Year (SOY), the NCO of the Year (NCOY) and the Officer of the Year (OOY). Certificates, Plaques, and Gift Cards will be presented to each category winner. In addition we also have permission to set up a membership table during the Battalion Organization Day. One other form of support includes Association members volunteering to send monthly "Care Packages" to a Company of our Battalion's deployed soldiers. If you wish to participate in sending a care package, please contact Joe for details. Expanding our membership is important. Association membership is for past and present

"Jungle Cats"! New membership is a responsibility for all members, to encourage your era of comrades to join and participate in the Association.

Reunion attendees are also reminded to bring items that are donated for a raffle that is held after the Banquet Dinner. The raffle is fun, and helps to bring in funds that support the awards and gift certificates that we award to the deserving soldiers. Last year's raffle was a huge success!
Bill Davis

From the 1st Vice President: Hello All!! I hope this summer finds you a little cooler and less sticky than what we have been having here in Alabama!! I am sure that all of us have pretty much had record breaking temperatures this summer which makes the upcoming reunion in the cool, green Smoky Mountains very inviting!! I can hardly wait!!

As you know, the deadline is fast approaching and we have some great things planned. We will be staying at an award winning hotel, banqueting at a unique bistro in downtown Sevierville, entertained by a patriotic musical, not to mention conversing with the BEST company in the world!! Don't miss a great experience.

We missed many of you at the last reunion and haven't gotten the opportunity to meet some of you others yet. The camaraderie we share at these reunions is vital to our organization. The reunion also gives us the opportunity to discuss our mission on how we are going to continue our support to the 11th Engineers.

So, please make your reservations as soon as possible. The deadline is the 15th of August. Like Bill said, it is important for us to attend these reunions. And the more, the merrier!! If you need a registration packet mailed or emailed to you, or you have some questions, please let Ron or I know. We

need your attendance! So, see you in Pigeon Forge!!

Jeff Corker

Notes from the Treasurer: I want to thank everyone that has sent in their 2012 dues. I have 145 members listed in the Association Database. To date I have received dues payments from 79 members (ONLY 54%), additionally 30 members have paid dues in advance (saving themselves future mailing costs), and 10 members have generously made donations to the General Fund.

Because we are a small organization, and our dues are relatively small, members not sending in their dues can hurt our operations and impact our ability to pay things like Awards to the 11th Engineer Battalion of Soldier, NCO, and Officer of the Year. Ron Smoker 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.

The Association bank account was originally set up by NJ Fred with Bank of America. Because of fees on small business accounts and minimum balance requirements we moved our account to the Andrews Federal Credit Union.

As of this writing at the end of July we have over \$7,700 in our treasury. Some of our balance is from registrations for the reunion, so we expect the balance to go down after the costs are paid.

Thank you again for your support. **ESSAYONS! JLB**

John Booth

“Smoke Signals”: We are pretty much at the peak of summer and I hope this edition of our Panther Press Newsletter finds each and every one of you enjoying life and all of the beautiful gifts that have been bestowed on us and our great country.

As most of you already know, the two primary items for our Association at this particular time are: the wrapping-up our 2012 Membership Dues and the upcoming 2012 Reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN, which by the way will be our Association’s 20th reunion. However, I will not be addressing either of them. Not because they are not important – they are very

important but because I believe they have already been well addressed by others in this Newsletter and further action on either is now up to each member based on your own personal feelings and situation.

However, I would like to say a few words regarding our Association. Based on a dream, desire and I’m sure a lot of hard work our Association was established some 20-years ago by its founding Veterans of 11th Engineer Battalion. To the best of my understanding and as supported in the By-Laws, the primary purpose of the Association was for maintaining social comradeship with those of whom Veterans had served. Many of the original founding members, as well as many others who followed, have left us (157) and are recognized on our “Honor Roll of Deceased Members.” For those of us who are still here, it is our responsibility to ensure that dream (11th Engineer Battalion Association) remains solvent in all aspects. For that to happen we all must be proactive in supporting our Association – in one way or another – understanding that each of us have our own beliefs, feelings and personal situations.

In the final paragraph of my article in the Spring 2012 edition of our Newsletter, I said, *“In closing, remember that the 11th Engineer Battalion Association is your Association, please make an effort, in any way possible, to be part of it. Your ideas, recommendations, thoughts and even critical comments are not only welcomed but strongly encouraged. Please drop me an email at ronald.smoker@gte.net or give me a call at 301-212-9870. If I’m not in leave a message and I’ll get back with you as soon as possible.*

My email and telephone number remain the same and I continue to strongly encourage your input. Remember, your recommendations and proactive support is vital in making sure that our Association is doing what its membership wants it to do. Please note: I’ll be away from my home during most of August but I will answer all communications / messages as soon as possible upon my return.

And a few notes from your Editor:

- **63rd Engineer Company (Combat Support Equipment).** The 63rd has settled into Kandahar,

Afghanistan where they are providing horizontal construction support to build/maintain roads, bridges and airfields in theater. Reports from the field are positive (see the Company Newsletter, attached) as the Company adjusts to the pace of operations, unique security concerns, terrain and climate.

The Commander, CPT Etheridge, sends the following special note of thanks for the many Care Packages they have been receiving from Association members:

"The 63rd Engineer Company would like to thank all of the 11th Engineer Battalion Association members for their outstanding support. We currently are operating out of Kandahar Airfield and Forward Operating Base Apache, which is northeast of Kandahar. This deployment is unlike many of those faced by our veteran Soldiers in the past in that we are essentially standing up a new unit here.

"We are taking over Navy equipment and are still working to acquire more equipment to reach our operational strength. The Afghanistan terrain continues to challenge us especially in the areas of logistics and project planning. Despite the dynamic nature of a mission like this, the Soldiers have remained resilient and continue to exhibit the creativity required of engineers when attempting to solve difficult problems.

"Again, the Soldiers are thankful for your support and the sacrifices that you have made to make our lives better over here."

*V/R,
CPT Bob Etheridge, Commanding*

- **Care Packages.** Our efforts help fill the gap with needed items that routine supply channels cannot provide. Many thanks to all of you who have already sent packages, to Mike Ellegood for volunteering to organize the project and for his efforts in enlisting the support of both Starbucks and Albertsons; and to Phil Loftis who signed up the Huntsville SAME post.

For those of you receiving this via 'snail mail' your email brethren are already engaged and sending packages. But don't despair: **YOU** can still support this important effort by sending a box full of one or more of the following items the soldiers need:

Coffee (ground); Chapstick;
Hand lotion; Sunscreen;
Drink mix (individual size packets).

Mail your packages (without rank) to:

**Robert Etheridge,
62d EN BN (63d EN CO),
Kandahar, APO AE 09355.**

IMPORTANT: Be sure to include a note inside the package with your name and address!

Next, email ([msellegood@me.com](mailto:mselfegood@me.com)) , call (602-690-1428) or drop a quick note to Mike at: 920 N. Hunter Ridge Rd, Prescott, AZ 86303.

Thank you for your support of this important effort!!

- **SOY / NCOOY / OOO Awards.** The Association is once again sponsoring awards for the 11th Engineer Battalion Soldier, NCO and Officer of the Year. Each soldier will receive a plaque commemorating the achievement (picture on the back page) along with a \$100 American Express gift card. We're grateful to George Downs for volunteering to travel to Fort Benning to make the presentations during the Battalion's Organization Day on 10 September.

- **New Battalion CSM.** CSM Bruce Machado, newly appointed 11th Engineer Battalion CSM, is en route to Fort Benning from his current assignment Fort Hood. He should arrive about 10 AUG (possibly in time for the Organization Day). The Change of Responsibility ceremony will take place on 28 AUG.

- **Association Coins.** The Association coins have arrived, pictured below, and are available for sale. There are two ways to get one:

- 1) Buy one at the Pigeon Forge reunion (only \$10) and save the postage or
- 2) Order one from John Booth, Association Treasurer, by sending him a request and check for \$12 including postage.



11th Engineer Battalion Association

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