



PANTHER PRESS

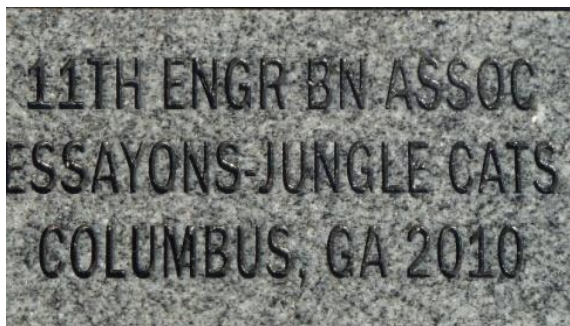


Volume 20 Edition 1

Winter 2012

President's Corner:

Carol and I send our warmest wishes for you and your families and trust that the blessings of the recent holiday season stay with you throughout the New Year.



For Veteran's Day, 11-11-11, an 11th Engineer Battalion Association paver was placed and dedicated, along with other similar pavers, in front of the National Infantry Museum at FT Benning, GA. Thanks to Ms Ashley Woitena of the Columbus, GA Convention & Visitors Bureau for coordinating this event and George Downs for attending, preparing a report and providing photos of the event.

Year 2011 was a tough year to bear for the loss of our beloved members. Our 2011 reunion held at Branson, MO was small, but excellent. Jeff and Christa Corker hosted reunion 2011, making it one of the most pleasant reunions we've attended in many years. Thank you for your warm reception and organization of this event.

We are on the brink of turning the Association into a highly desirable Veterans organization. Following are bullets of progress we've made in the last year:

- By-Laws reviewed, updated, and ratified. It is now being 'fine-tuned'.
- Association Liaison, Joe Papapietro, is in active communication with the 11th ENGR BN HQ.

- Jeff Corker presented Association awards to the 11th ENGR BN winners of the Soldier of Year (SOY), NCO of the year (NCOY), and Officer of the Year (OOY).
 - An Association Coin is authorized to be struck, to be presented by the Association President to persons supportive and helpful to the Association. Members will be offered the opportunity to purchase the coin.
 - Mike Hermanson retired as Association Treasurer. John Booth is the newly appointed Association Treasurer. The transition of responsibilities, signatures, and funds is currently in process.
 - Joe Papapietro is our interim Historian for this year. We encourage a member at large to volunteer as our Association Historian.
 - Robert Diehl is our "computer" liaison who is developing a web site for the Association.
 - Reunion 2012 will be held in Gatlinburg, TN. Jeff Corker will give details.
 - Reunion 2013 was voted to be a "Cruise", with details being developed.
- Our (all members) current challenge is to encourage former 11th Engineers to join the Association. The target group of former soldiers would be those that served in the '60s, 70s, and 80s. This age group is now retiring from their civilian jobs, affording them time to participate in the reunions. Of course we want all former Engineers to join the Association at any time.

My current Presidency will end at the reunion 2012. The By-Laws authorize me for a 2nd two-year term should I be voted to continue. Shortly I will appoint a Nomination Committee for the coming year. Please let me know if you wish to participate.

See you in Gatlinburg,
Bill & Carol Davis

1st Vice President / Reunion Chairman

Hello All!!! We had a great time at the last reunion! It could have been better if we were

able to see all of you that weren't able to make it! Hope that you are planning to come to the 2012 reunion that will be held the last weekend in September in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. We have already lined up the hotel and are working on all the extras. So, make sure you reserve the dates (Thurs, 29 Sept thru Mon, 1 Oct) and plan to come! We are going to have a spectacular time!! Hope to see you then!!

God Bless,
Jeff & Christina Corker

“SMOKE SIGNALS” from the Association Secretary

When you receive this edition of our Panther Press Newsletter it will either be sometime between or shortly after the Christmas/New Year Holidays, so let me start by wishing all of our members and their families a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

The New Year of 2012 will usher in a significant number of new and exciting adventures for many of us. One of those at the top of the list, although some/many might not see it as new and exciting, is payment of our Annual 11th Engineer Battalion Association dues. Along with your copy of this Newsletter you should have received and hopefully have already located a copy of, the “11th Engineer Battalion Association Annual Dues Form Calendar Year 2012.” The Form is designed to assist with the handling and the processing of 2012 dues payments and to obtain some general information as it pertains to your Service with the 11th Engineer Battalion, so that we might verify and/or update our Membership records with the information we are requesting from you. We’ve tried to keep the Form as short and simple as possible, while at the same time, attempting to obtain the required information for verifying/updating our files. Our request for updating of information is required because as time has passed many of our Members have

relocated to different addresses, changed telephone numbers and acquired or changed email addresses. Also, although we have information on most of our Members regarding their Service with the 11th Engineer Battalion, there are still voids that we are hoping to fill. If you have any questions or concerns with the Form, please contact me – my contact information is on the Form.

Our President, Bill Davis, provided a thorough rundown of our Association’s major activities, events and accomplishments for 2011, so I won’t reiterate his efforts. However, I would like to say that I believe this past year has been a very productive and successful one for our Association under Bill’s leadership and the tireless efforts of a number of our Members, whose names and accomplishments/contributions Bill has already noted.

During a recent attempt to catch-up with some magazine reading, I came across an article, “History of Heroes,” in the December 2011 edition of the MOAA, Military Officer Magazine. As part of the article a photo of Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith, 11th Engineer Battalion Medal of Honor recipient, appeared with a short narrative. The article did not provide any details on SFC Smith but it does provide many interesting facts marking the 150 years of the Medal of Honor and its traveled path lightened by heroism and shadowed by controversy, as paraphrased from the article. Worth well reading to those of you who receive the magazine.

In closing, I want to encourage each of you to attempt to recruit one new Member to join our Association during 2012 – just think if each one of us did that our Association would double in size. I also want to take this opportunity to personally thank Mike Hermanson, our outgoing Treasurer, for all of his outstanding contributions to our Association and its

Members and especially for helping me personally in my attempt to get organized with my duties as your Secretary. Mike – thank you for everything you have done for our Association and for me in particular. I will miss talking with you on a periodic basis and I hope you already know that my prayers and warmest wishes go out to Liela and you. God Bless!

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

REMINDER, MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

WHAT: The “20th Annual 11th Engineer Battalion Reunion,”

WHERE: Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

WHEN: Thursday, Sept 27th to Monday, Oct 1st, 2012.

11th ENGINEER BATTALION EVENTS

The 2011 Fort Benning Commanders Cup Championship was awarded to the 11th Engineers. This is the *eighth straight year* that the battalion has won the coveted prize! The Championship consists of intramural sports including: basketball, football, golf, soccer, softball and volleyball.

Captain Thomas Dyer, the Army’s first Buddhist Chaplain, has been assigned to the 11th Engineer Battalion. Dyer, who works to provide spiritual guidance and counseling to a growing number of Buddhists at Ft. Benning, leads a weekly service for about 200 people – mostly trainees -- every Sunday at the Regimental Chapel on Sand Hill. Dyer said: "My first responsibility is to the battalion. I want to insure that Battalion ministry is very solid. I want to avoid becoming known as 'the Buddhist chaplain.'"

EDITORS NOTES: Please take note of the following enclosures:

- A brief summary of the Gatlinburg – Pigeon Forge area providing some details on the location, how to get there, the climate and a few links that offer more information on both indoor and outdoor activities.
- A sketch of the Association coin for which I am currently soliciting bids.
- Notes from the 2011 Business Meeting conducted during the Branson reunion.

**11th Engineer Battalion Association
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010 - 2012**

William R. Davis – President
Jeff Corker – 1st Vice President
Russel A. Meridith – 2nd Vice President

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Ron Smoker – Secretary
John Booth – Treasurer
Joe Papapietro – Historian (Temporary)
Rev. Loy Sperry – Chaplain
Joe Papapietro – 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