

# 11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Association Newsletter Fall 2004

Serving those Builders,  
Sappers, Drivers, Watermen,  
Rock Crushers, Graders, Mine  
Sweepers, Diggers, Nail  
Drivers, Quartermasters, Docs,  
Steel Workers, Bridgers,  
Electricians, Plumbers,  
Drillers, Sand Baggers and  
Bunker Rats who built  
Leatherneck Square

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## **2004 Reunion** **MCB Quantico, Va.**

The week of 24 August, on the piedmont plains of Virginia, engineers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion gathered once more to meet old friends, share memories and shed new light on the actions which took place in Leatherneck Square in the 60's.

The event was attended by 75 Marines, corpsmen and family members.

In addition to touring many of the facilities housed on the Quantico Marine base, major memorials in Washington, DC were visited and an evening with the Commandant of the Marine Corps at the Marine Barracks (Eighth and 'I') was enjoyed by all.



*11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion at the Marine Corps War Memorial, Arlington Cemetery*

Base tours included the Marine Corps University Library and Archives, the Basic School, the Martial Arts Center for Excellence, HMX-1 - the President's helicopter squadron and the Marine Corps Association's publication center and book store.

Marine Barracks (8<sup>th</sup> & 'I') and then spent the evening watching the famous silent drill team and listening to the Marine Corps Band.



*Visiting HMX-1, the President's Helicopter Squadron*



*Tour transportation was provided by the United States Marine Corps*

Our tour of Washington included Arlington National Cemetery, the Marine Corps (Iwo Jima) War Memorial, the Vietnam Wall, the Korean and World War II memorials and the Smithsonian Museums. The day was topped off when we had dinner at the

Dinners were held at the Officers Club at the Clubs at Quantico facility. Our two guest speakers were Lt. Col. Joseph Shusko, Commanding Officer of the Martial Arts Center for Excellence and Lt. Col. Chip Houston, USMC, Ret.

An auction was held on Saturday, 24 August at the Crossroads Inn. Everyone participated in a very enthusiastic session and were very generous in their bidding.

## **Reunion Financials**

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Income:              |           |
| From prior treasurer | 200.00    |
| Gifts                | 185.00    |
| Registrations        | 7,619.00  |
| Shirts/Caps Sales    | 1,484.00  |
| Auction Sales        | 1,202.00  |
| Total                | 10,690.00 |
| Expenses             | 6,966.79  |
| Net to Treasurer     | 3,723.21  |

## **New Officers Elected**

New Battalion officers were elected at the business meeting held on Saturday, 28 August, 2004.

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Commander | Bill Lyell    |
| Treasurer | Gary Gratton  |
| Secretary | Dennis Sutton |

Please welcome them in their new responsibilities and direct any battalion business related information to the appropriate officer.



*Business meeting on 28 August*

Contact information can be found on the last page of the newsletter.

## **New Business Topics**

During our business meeting, several topics were discussed.

In addition to the election of new officers, forms of organization for our battalion and plans for the next reunion were offered.

The new Secretary, Dennis Sutton, will conduct research on various forms of organization and deliver the results to our membership for consideration.

As far as the next reunion (2006), a poll was taken as to what we would like to do.

In 1<sup>st</sup> place, a cruise was suggested. Coming in a close 2<sup>nd</sup> was a southern climate reunion (Gulf coast area).

Tommye Lyell was assigned the responsibility of researching

potential reunion types and places and reporting back to the Battalion Staff.

## **Reunion Auction a Great Success**

Thanks to all of the very generous participants and the high-pitched level of bidding, the auction raised \$1,202 for the treasury.



*Frank Howard (left) and Tom O'Keefe provide the auctioneering.*

The money brought in will help to offset the newsletter printing and distribution costs.

## **Happy 229<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

As we gather to celebrate the 229<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Marine Corps, let us pause to remember the brave men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice to insure liberty and freedom in our great country.

We must continue to follow in the footsteps of our founding fathers when they said:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*

## Commander's Corner

It is a great honor to be chosen to lead the efforts of the



Association for the future. I trust that I will live up to the expectations of the membership as the staff and I begin our new responsibilities.

We see our initial mission as straight-forward: to organize the Battalion Association so as to maximize the benefit to its members, i.e.:

Form our organization in a sensible and simple manner.

Seek out and promote new member participation from those who served with us in Vietnam.

Schedule and coordinate group activities from time to time to create an environment suitable to camaraderie and the sharing of memories of events and actions past.

Accept and maintain a fiduciary responsibility to handle assets properly and to use these assets to further the goals of the Association.

Care for the men of the 11<sup>th</sup> Engineers and their families in their times of need, making sure that their safety and welfare are foremost in our minds.

I welcome the opportunity of working with Gary Gratton as our Treasurer and Dennis Sutton as our Secretary. This staff will do its utmost to fulfill its duties appropriately.

Semper Fi,

Bill



*Paying respects - Arlington National Cemetery*

### 2006 Reunion Survey

Help us plan appropriately for our next reunion. Let us know what you would like to do. Your input is important.

Ocean Cruise?  
Gulf Coast City?  
Mountain Geography?  
Big City Lights?  
Marine Corps Facility?

Drop Bill an e-mail or note at the address listed below.



*On the bus to Washington - 27 August*

### 11<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Assn. Staff Information

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## Read Captain Coan's New Book

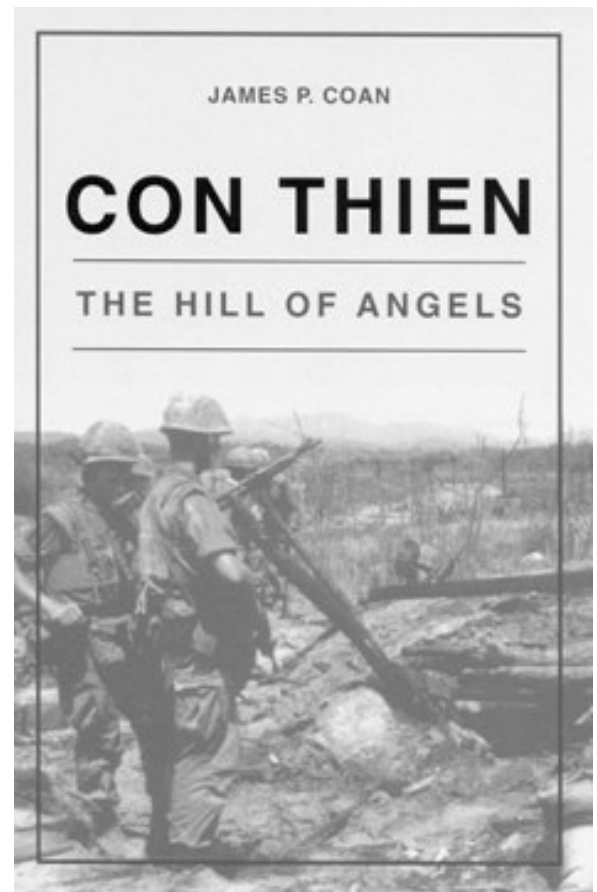
Throughout much of 1967, a remote United States Marine fire base only two miles from the demilitarized zone captured the attention of the world's media. That artillery-scarred outpost was the linchpin of the so-called McNamara Line, intended to deter incursions into South Vietnam by the North Vietnamese Army. As such, the fighting along this territory was particularly intense and bloody, and the body count rose daily.

In *Con Thien*, James P. Coan combines his personal experiences with information taken from archives, interviews with battle participants, and official documents to construct a powerful story of the daily life and combat on the red clay bull's-eye known as "The Hill of Angels." As a tank platoon leader in Alpha Company, 3d Tank Battalion, 3d Marine Division, Coan was stationed at Con Thien for eight months during his 1967-68 service in Vietnam and witnessed much of the region's notorious carnage.

Con Thien was heavily bombarded with impunity by enemy artillery because it was located in politically sensitive territory and the U.S. government would not permit direct armed response from Marine tanks. Coan, like many other soldiers, began to feel as though the government was as much the enemy as the NVA, yet he continued to fight for his country with all that he had. In his riveting memoir, Coan depicts the hardships of life in the DMZ and the ineffectiveness of much of the U.S. military effort in Vietnam.

*A 'tell it like it is' account. Factual interaction between the grunts, tankers and 11<sup>th</sup> Engineers (mentioned a dozen times). Sgt. William E. Lyell, USMC, Ret. 11<sup>th</sup> Engineers*

*I recommend this book to anyone who is curious about 'what it was like' and to those who were there and want a riveting jolt back in time. Sal Bafumo, 11<sup>th</sup> Engineers*



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