

# The VietNam Triple Deuce

An Association of 2<sup>Bn</sup> (Mech) 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry VietNam Veteran Mech Men

Published by John Eberwine • Charlie Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon 2/22 Sep 67 - Sep 68

5018 Fernwood Avenue • Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey 08234-9689

Telephone [609] 653-3025 • E-mail vietvet222@juno.com

This is reprinted from the last Newsletter. I can not encourage you enough, if you are unsure if you want to attend, please get in touch with me at 609-653-3025. I will give you anyone's telephone that you request for you to ask about attending a reunion.

At our average age of 52+, I'll bet that 8 to 10 of us will not be physically able to attend the Fall 2000 reunion, no matter where it is. Some of us will be too sick, and some will probably be dead. These are facts. Once you pass up the opportunity to visit with the men who you sacrificed for, fought with and almost died with, you may never get the opportunity again. Please reconsider!

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## Your Message from the President of the VietNam Triple Deuce - Bill Allison

From: William C Allison

To: VIETVET222@juno.com

Date: Sun, 31 Jan 1999 23:05:39 -0600

Subject: Newsletter for Dallas Reunion

The court down for the "Last Great 22nd Infantry Reunion of the Century" is moving quickly. M C Toyer, Bob Babcock

and Awb Norris have a Texas size welcome mat out for a great Dallas reunion. Therefore, the men who served in or supported the VietNam Triple Deuce Battalion need to send in their reservations as soon as possible. It looks as if we are going to have a large contingent from the Triple Deuce; Norm "The Magnet" Nishikubo plans on most of the Maverick platoon C 2/22 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon) being present. Norm says that we may have as many as 75 members of Chargin' Charlie in Dallas; if we start working now, we may top that number. I hope that Headquarters, Alpha and Bravo Companies will try to top Norm's goal: that would make for a great week end. Let's all take the time now to encourage others to join us. It was very discouraging after our 1997 reunion in Gettysburg that we located men who live only 30 miles from were we had been meeting; if we start making our phone calls now, we may prevent this from recurring.

Martha John and I are looking forward to spending a great week end with the families of the battalion. Our emphasis is on families, and we strongly encourage you to bring your family members to what we feel will be a celebration of a friendship that was formed in the jungles of VietNam over 30 years ago. This friendship laid dormant until a few men started calling other members of the battalion, just 3 years ago. We can thank John Clemente, Awb Norris, Brad Hull and John Eberwine for making those initial calls. Norm Nishikubo joined the hunt later and has been a man with a mission since he started locating men. If you have any doubt about the benefit of going to Dallas, give Norm, John, Awb or me a call. Martha John has found that there has developed a special, warm bond between the family members who have attended previous reunions.

Most of the VietNam Triple Deuce members who are currently active (**Editor's note:** although since this first ran, more and more men from different era's are being found all the time) in our growing organization served under the leadership of Awb Norris, a.k.a. "FULLBACK 6". I believe that the close relationship that continues to grow between our men and their families is a direct result of Awb's guidance. It has often been asked what made the men we served with special since we were assigned to the battalion basically as replacements. Most of us came from all corners of the US; only a few men had been reassigned from other in country units. The common thread that pulled us together was competent, intelligent leadership from the top.

Last summer, Awb wrote a note about the time he took command of the battalion; his remarks will help you understand why the battalion needed strong leadership and why Awb was the right man at the right time. September 1967 was a critical time because it was the one year anniversary of our unit's deployment to VietNam from Ft. Lewis, Washington, as part of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. When he took command, as the first commander who had not deployed with the 4th ID, the last of the combat experienced officers and men departed. To add to his challenges, the 3rd Brigade had just been re-designated the 3rd Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, in a way making us step children. FYI, Awb was initially slated to take command of another battalion; but our good fortune brought him to our battalion 6 months later. Awb wrote: "Some of you may not know the situation in September 1967. The base core of the battalion all came to VietNam together and left together. I entered into a unit with no staff, all new commanders, and virtually 98% new troops. I must say, we learned together, and I was just blessed to

have such outstanding individuals to fill the battalion in September 1967. We had a few "old timers" like Jim Frost and Teddy Manley around, but the majority were "brand new". God was looking after me when he presented me with such fine persons as you. You all came through like champs. I never requested any actions by the companies of that battalion that were not met with "You Bet"..... You did an outstanding job in every situation."

From day one, Awb Norris started rebuilding the battalion with replacements; a tremendous challenge, but one that proved to be very fortunate not only for Awb but also for the men he led. He was able to mold the battalion to fit his hands-on leadership style. His personal "on the spot" observations and innovative tactics, to meet the unique challenges presented by the terrain and enemy, were key during the short transition period. If there were problems, Awb was there asking questions and getting feedback that he quickly put out in his commander's notes.

After thirty years, the men who served with Awb Norris, and all the other Battalion Commanders, in the Triple Deuce are coming together and sharing their experiences. We tell a lot of war stories and share life's experiences, but most of all the reunions give us a chance to say thanks for being there and for helping us make it home.

Please plan to join us in Dallas; I promise that you will enjoy our time together.

BILL

### Where Are the Men from 1966 who left Fort Lewis on the USS Walker????

Gentlemen, this is addressed to all of you men who trained together at Ft Lewis, Washington in the later part of 1965 and early 1966. You went to VietNam as a unit, knowing each other and knowing bits and pieces about each other. Many of you were from the same hometowns and you stayed in touch after coming back from VietNam.

Many of you also had some very close friends, whom you trained with, drank beer, laughed with and shared close moments.

We, who came after you, have a craving to learn what it was like to take a ship to war. I arrived in September 1967 and replaced one of the last *Originals* as we called you. You were hero's to us, the men who blazed the trail, learned firsthand how to stay alive, and then passed those lessons on to us.

I'm reaching out to Captain Peter Danylchuk, Captain Charles White, Lt Roger Frydrykowski; all men who took Charlie Company 2/22 to VietNam and were the first company commanders. Please come to the reunion and reach out to your men. We need to meet and thank you for setting an example that we could follow and also because I believe that your men need to get together again.

Bob Freeman, Pat Ferry, Jackie Benolken, Don Crawford, Sammy Kay, Herbert Deremo, Waldo Elder, Roger Harre, John Posey, Floyd Jamerson, Louis Kimes and on and on and on.

You know.....you could show up, tell us we're all crazy for getting together like this.....and then leave, but unless you show up, you won't know if you'd want to stay or leave.

After two full reunions, and two mini-reunions, I haven't met one man who said he was sorry he came, (or a spouse) on the contrary, each and every man was at a loss for words to explain how good he felt to be back among friends.

### What have you got to loose?

#### Reunion Information

I've attached a registration form to this sheet. It gives all the information about the hotel, telephone numbers to call to reserve rooms. **Please remember, tell them you are with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society** to get the discounted rate.

To those family members of our men who were killed in action and also those who passed away at home, you are especially

welcome to attend. You are part of this family, and always will be.

What more can I say! Keep mailing those letters and dues in.....stay well....and **SEE YOU IN DALLAS!**

John Eberwine

The following is from Norman "Magnet" Nishikubo who served with Charlie 2/22 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon (Mavericks) from 9/67-9/68 (We affectionately call him magnet because he attracted any and all kinds of metal that Charlie could throw our way) Norm was a four time purple heart recipient (I hesitate to call him a purple heart winner!)

### Norman T Nishikubo

C/2/22 09-67 to 08-68

Subject: 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society & The VietNam Triple Deuce Reunion, Dallas, Texas.

Our next Reunion will be held concurrently, therefore jointly, with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society's Reunion in the Dallas/ Fort Worth area during the spring of 1999. The specific dates are May 13<sup>th</sup> through May 16<sup>th</sup>, so mark your calendars and start making plans to attend.

To those of you who have not been in attendance at one of our reunions, YOU HAVE NO IDEA CONCERNING WHAT YOU HAVE MISSED. I urge all of you to give very serious consideration relative to attending the next one. You can not fathom the degree of personal healing that takes place at one of these functions because full understanding is beyond a reasonable ability to comprehend. At the present time all you can do is accept what I have just stated as the truth. If you do, then attend, you will benefit beyond your greatest expectations. Have faith in what I have stated. I have been there, done that! I am not alone concerning how I feel. John Lewis and Marcus Burk also feel as I do. They too felt hesitant about attending their first Reunion, which was the Gettysburg function. Both of them have expressed to me how glad they are that they went. In our last Newsletter Jim and Jill Frost expressed quite well what the

Gettysburg Reunion did for them. I recommend that you take the time to reread Jill's article and fully digest what she is saying about Jim's current healing process. Don't short change yourself by not being in Dallas.

Additionally, all of you made friends during your tour in VietNam, friends for the most part that you have not seen in 30 plus years. In October 1997 the men that I remembered from VietNam and I stood face to face in Gettysburg. All but one of them I had not seen in 29 years. We embraced, laughed and cried. Most importantly of all, the bonds of FRIENDSHIP born of combat were renewed and strengthened. Now, time will never again be allowed to weaken the bonds of friendship and brotherhood that were renewed.

To those of you who have attended a reunion, start to encourage others to be with us. In Gettysburg we set a goal of having 50 former VN 2/22 members present in Texas. As things stand today 50 may just be a walk in the park. If we all do our part relative to encouraging others to attend, Charlie Company by itself just may be able to have 50 present. Fourteen former C 2/22 -1<sup>st</sup> platoon members have told me that they will be there. That number has the potential to increase to 18. If we only get 50 former members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to attend in Dallas we will not deserve the beer we drink in Texas!! Additionally, John Eberwine has challenged the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions relative to who will have the most attendees in Texas. The winner gets free drinks. Come to think of it John did not get Executive Committee approval to issue such a challenge. Therefore, if we lose he buys the winners drinks, smile.

Those of you who are currently on the fence about attending the Reunion in Dallas I strongly recommend that you remove yourself from the fence and commit to the Function this coming May. Remember we are not getting any younger. Most of us are on the downhill side of life. **Don't miss this opportunity. At our age a missed opportunity is truly a misfortune. So fill out the attached registration form and I'll see you in DALLAS!!**

## We need an Archivist

At the reunion in Dallas, I'd like some person, who plans to continue to attend all reunions, to volunteer to serve as the Archivist for the VietNam Triple Deuce.

Many men are willing to donate photographs and mementos, but I've been sort of unwilling to take them as I just do not have the time to catalog them and mount photos and bring them to each reunion.

If you are organized, have some free time and think you will enjoy putting together a history of our time in VietNam, please consider volunteering. Thanks!

## This is a short note from Jim Frost - C 2/22 3rd Pltn 1/66-12/67

John

Have lots to talk to you about. They say things come in threes, well, this weekend the Triple Deuce newsletter was my first. The February newsletter was outstanding. I'm sure after reading this newsletter our VietNam group will be motivated to attend future reunions. The 18 months between reunions helps plan for the financial commitment. There is a sociological adjustment to one's life coming to the first reunion, but it is all worth the trip. While I was reading the newsletter article on the Nov 67 Ambush Patrol by Larry Baker (A good article) the second thing happened. The phone rang, and it was Bill Allison who was calling. What a pleasant surprise to hear his voice. He called to thank Jill and I for our articles in the newsletter, and he wanted to know if we were coming to Dallas. I assured him we would be making the trip. It was not more that one hour after I talked to Bill, when the third thing happen, it was another phone call. Wow! It was Joe Dietz, my first squad leader in the 3rd platoon. I have been trying to locate him for over a year. Joe was also excited that somehow I had found his address. We ended up talking for some time together about old times in C 2/22 Inf. Mech. As we talked many names surfaced from our platoon back in Jan '67. Joe had wondered if I made it out alive from VietNam. He had checked the

traveling wall touring his city once for my name. We talked about the Tet offensive battle Feb 10, 1967 near the Cambodia border where Merrill Mc Killip, our track 50 gunner was killed. Joe was also my squad leader during the battle of Soui Tre March 21st, 1967. Then there was one big fire-fight (area unknown) that shrapnel hit Joe's vest in the shoulder area. That was his third time being hit, and his last time in the field.

That day was a tragic day, while sweeping the bush our platoon ran into a Vietcong ambush with claymore mines. Many men lost their lives that day including our Lieutenant and our RTO. We talked awhile about our lives the past 30 years. Joe is from Oregon, but has plans to move to Florida this fall. I talked to Joe about attending the next reunion and future reunions. It will be nice to see and talk to him face to face when the time comes. next time Jim Frost

**Well.....after reading Jim's short note, can anyone doubt the power of attending reunions, finding old buddies, laughing, remembering and even crying with FRIENDS!**

**SEE YOU IN DALLAS!!!!**

## GENTLEMEN:

When you send your dues, please send a little note with the information about when you were in county and left, what unit, platoon, etc you served with, names of wife and children, if applicable, and any other info you think is pertinent.

Thank you