



THE FRAG

2D Recon Battalion Association Newsletter Fall 2021

Greetings Marines, Corpsmen, and Recon Families,

As I sit down to write this, it occurs to me how quickly time passes. It seems that we were just in the process of planning the reunion and various offsites—now it's time to break out the winter clothing and make Christmas plans. Maybe that's just a function of getting older. Remember when you were a kid? You couldn't wait to turn sixteen, eighteen or twenty-one. That first enlistment seemed to drag by (admit it...we weren't all planning to be "lifers!"). Regardless, a lot has happened this year. We had a great reunion, various offsite get togethers, and on the sad side, we buried four of our own and had one badly wounded.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I'm sure we all remember those holidays during which we were deployed, on those special ones where we made it home.

And by the way, contact your buddies from "back in the day" and get them enlisted!

Semper Fi,

Wayne Dillon
President, 2d Reconnaissance Battalion Association

Reunion 2021



Our annual reunion was better than ever! We saw many new faces and some old ones, too. Our guest of honor, Vic Zwolak, is a “plank holder,” meaning that he was part of the battalion when it was formed in 1958. Vic gave a most entertaining speech at the Association dinner about his larcenious incident while a recruit at Parris Island—he stole the Commandant’s flag! I’m pretty sure that would merit some brig time. However, it’s not surprising he became a Recon Marine—he slipped out undetected!

Thanks to the generosity of those who donated auction items and to those who spent lavishly to buy them, we raised approximately \$9,000 for operating funds and charitable causes. This included \$4,000 for the pavillion at the Sawmill in memory of Rhonda Seaman. Ms. Ina Page, the wife of Bill Page, our chaplain, has made many beautiful quilts for auction. The one auctioned this year brought an incredible \$1,000. Sadly, there will be no more Ina Page quilts, as she passed away this fall.

Reunion 2022

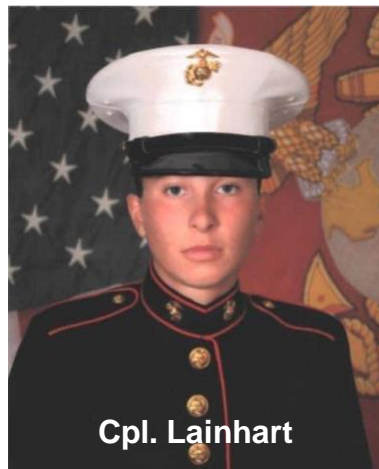
Our 2022 reunion will be held at Sneads Ferry/Camp Lejeune 24-26 June. More information will be coming early next year. Put it on your calendars and plan for it now!

Making the Sacrifice



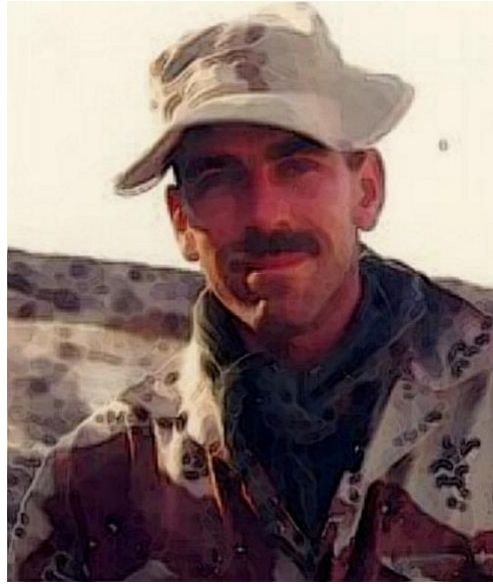
Sgt. Nicole Gee escorts Afghan children

On 26 August of this year, thirteen U.S. service members were killed and numerous others were wounded in a suicide bombing attack as they provided security for the evacuation of U.S. and allied personnel from the Kabul Airport in Afghanistan. One of those killed was Sgt. Nicole Gee, whose husband is a member of the battalion. She was 23 years old and a native of Sacramento, California. Sgt. Gee was assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion 24, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.



Wounded in the attack was Cpl. Kelsee Lainhart, an intelligence specialist attached to Alpha Company. After being treated at Walter Reed Medical Center, she is recovering at a rehabilitation center in Chicago. The Association provided financial support to assist her family in traveling to visit her.

Featured Marine-Steve O'Hara



Oman, 1991

Steve O'Hara was born in 1961 to James O'Hara, a World War II Army veteran and auto worker, and mother Frances O'Hara, a secretary and homemaker. He grew up in Mansfield, Ohio and graduated from Mansfield Christian High School in 1979. He attended Ohio State University and later joined Naval ROTC and subsequently directly enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1985, undergoing recruit training at Parris Island, South Carolina.

PFC O'Hara was designated as an 0351 (Assault Man) upon graduation from Infantry Training School (ITS) at Camp Geiger, NC. where he successfully passed the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion indoctrination. He reported to C Company, 2d Recon at Onslow Beach in June, 1985. After several training deployments and a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) deployment ("float") in 1986, he transferred to H&S Company to work in the dive/boat locker.

While in Panama with H&S Company, Sgt. O'Hara received orders to 3d Recon Battalion in November, 1987. He was assigned as a Team Leader in B Company., Deep Reconnaissance Platoon (DRP), deploying throughout the Pacific region, primarily to the Philippines in support of operations against the Communist New Peoples' Army insurgency.

Sgt. O'Hara received orders to drill instructor duty and reported to Parris Island in January, 1989, serving in F Company. until April, 1991. During this assignment, he served on the Marine Corps Rifle Team where he earned gold medals at Division and National Championships, bronze medal at the Interservice Championship, shot on a record-setting Edson Trophy (pistol) Team, and represented the USA at NATO matches.

Sgt. O'Hara returned to B Company., 2d Recon Bn. in 1991 and immediately deployed to the Central Command area of operations in support of the ongoing operations after the Desert Storm cease fire. Upon returning he was reassigned to D Company. as a platoon sergeant and participated in the Battalion's Joint Task Force 6 deployments in 1992 and then deployed in support of operations PROVIDE PROMISE (Bosnia) and DENY FLIGHT (CENTCOMPANYM AO). While on float he was promoted to staff sergeant. **(cont'd.)**

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Upon return from float, SSgt. O'Hara transferred to Small Craft Company, 2d Marine Division, where he served as Raider platoon sergeant. He was then selected to be an Amphibious Reconnaissance School (ARS) instructor at Ft. Story, Virginia, in April 1994, where he served as Team Instructor, Rigger, Academics NCO, and Embarkation NCO.

SSgt. O'Hara returned to Okinawa in 1998 for duty with 5th Force Reconnaissance Bn., where he served as the battalion operations chief and as a platoon sergeant with A Company. While with A Company he deployed with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Reconnaissance and Surveillance Platoon, including Operation STABILIZE in East Timor. Upon 5th Force's redesignation as 3d Recon Bn., he returned to the S-3 where he was Battalion Training Chief, then to B Company. serving as Operations Chief and acting 1st Sgt. While in B Company he was promoted to gunnery sergeant After several deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom he returned to the S-3 where he served as the Future Operations Officer and Force Protection Officer.

GySgt. O'Hara returned to the United States in November, 2004, and retired in January, 2005. His personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, and Good Conduct Medal.

Upon his service retirement, Steve worked as an application trainer for the Marine Corps' deployment of the Global Command and Control System (GCCS), rising to become the training manager and eventually logistics manager for the GCCS New Equipment Training Team under SPAWAR Systems Center, Charleston, SC. He deployed world-wide in support of New Equipment Training to MEU and MEF staffs. During this period the Marine Corps also became the training provider to the US Joint Staff J36 (Command, Control & Nuclear Operations) for GCCS. He was promoted to Project Manager for the Navy's Atlantic GCCS-Maritime (GCCS-M) installation team, and then to Program Manager for the Navy's Consolidated Afloat Network and Enterprise Services (CANES) Atlantic production facility in Norfolk, VA. He retired in July 2021.

Steve's ongoing service to the Corps and the veteran community at large continues. He is a founding member of the 2d Reconnaissance Battalion Association where he serves as a board member, and the Marine Corps League, where he serves as the local Detachment Commandant in Virginia Beach, and the Department of Virginia Junior Vice-Commandant. He is a fundraiser and Operations Manager for the Semper Fi Fund's Operation Awakening I & II, the Middlesex County Museum in Saluda, VA (Chesty Puller Memorial) and the Hampton Roads Council of Veterans' Organizations (HRCVO).

Steve has three sons: SSgt. James O'Hara (1989), Daniel O'Hara (1991), and Sean O'Hara (1998), as well as two wonderful granddaughters, Cassidy (2017), and Mya (2021). He is engaged to the lovely Lee Ann Starkey.

2d Recon Battalion History



Our unit has probably done something that no other has done. In August, 1993, battalion was heavily engaged in numerous world-wide deployments, including deploying a composite company consisting of two platoons and a command and support element deployed on a Joint Task Force 6 (JTF-6) counter-drug operation in Arizona. For these operations, JTF-6 funded consumables such as rations, ammunition, batteries, etc. and the Air Force provided flights with the condition that they could drop parachutists and cargo on either the insertion trip or the return trip. As the unit had air landed on the trip into the objective, the Air Force wanted to make drops on the return trip to Camp Lejeune. During this time, I was a gunnery sergeant and the assistant operations (S-3) chief. While in the S-3 shop, I got a phone call from the battalion commander, LtCol. J.B. Kiser, a very respected leader. LtCol. Kiser had deployed with the composite company. He instructed me to find a drop zone (DZ) which could handle a C-141 transport drop. The C-141 was a four-engine jet aircraft manufactured by Lockheed and was capable of carrying 168 parachutists. It was a workhorse for the U.S. military until it was retired from service in 2006. As it was a jet aircraft, it required a larger and longer DZ than a slower propeller-driven aircraft such as a C-130.

After responding with an “Aye, aye, sir” (you didn’t say no to big J.B. Kiser) I set to work finding a suitable drop zone. The issue I ran into was that a huge joint service exercise, SOLID SHIELD, was being held. To start with, Camp Lejeune has few large drop zones. Regular Marine infantry doesn’t jump, so that leaves only the smaller and more specialized units such as Recon, Air Delivery, and ANGLICO to jump. **(cont’d.)**

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Every DZ that could accommodate a C-141 was covered with supplies and equipment. We could not jump into Lejeune, period. Not to be thwarted, I started looking for DZs outside of Lejeune. I tried Cherry Point and Fort Bragg (which has numerous huge DZs) to no avail.

Desperate to find a solution, I visited the Air Force lieutenant colonel who served as a liaison with Division G-4. He was very helpful, and told me to look at using the Albert J. Ellis Airport, which serves Jacksonville and the surrounding area. I was incredulous—the airport? How could we jump into a civilian airport? The Air Force officer replied, “Check your AZAR (a publication which details all drop zones). You’ll need to coordinate with the FAA and FCC.” I thanked him and set off to get things in motion.

If you’ve ever flown through Albert J. Ellis, you will know that it is not LAX or JFK. It is in a rural area surrounded by pine forests and tobacco fields. In fact, to exit the plane, you climb down steep stairs and walk across the tarmac. Nothing fancy there! I managed to make the coordination and send the coordinating instructions to the battalion commander. We even had the local newspaper, the *Jacksonville Daily News* on hand to photograph (see photo above) and report the event. The jump occurred on a typical warm, humid eastern North Carolina evening around 1800 (6 p.m.). As was usual, passengers were departing a civilian aircraft and walking across the tarmac. As this was happening, the C-141 lumbered across the sky at 800 feet, making its identification pass. The C-141 was a very powerful plane, and as it rumbled over, all the people on the airfield stopped to look up. Soon, the C-141 returned, and with GySgt. Bob Davis of Bravo Company as jump master, Marines began spilling from the ramp of the aircraft. Soon parachutes blossomed and jumpers were performing PLFs (parachute landing falls) on the airfield and recovering their ‘chutes.

The arriving passengers got some unexpected great free entertainment, courtesy of 2d Recon Battalion!

In Memoriam



Rhonda Seaman Pavilion



John Lynch Internment



David Jaroszewski

Sadly, this year we lost four of our members: Mike Moler, MSgt. John Lynch (Ret.), Ms. Ina Page (wife of Bill Page, our Chaplain), and David Jaroszewski.

However, wherever possible, Association members always turned out to see our comrades off. John Lynch's interment in Arlington National Cemetery saw eight Marines attending, as did Mike Moler's funeral in Illinois. A similar contingent represented at David Jaroszewski's funeral in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Ina Page will always be remembered for the beautiful quilts she made and donated for our fund-raising auctions. She will be sorely missed.

A bright spot in all this was the dedication of the pavilion to Rhonda Seaman at the Sawmill Shootout in October at Frank Seaman's Virtue of Defense shooting academy at Old Fort, NC. Her son, Will, a former 1st Force Recon team leader, was able to travel from California for the event.

Offsites

Memorial Day Weekend: This get together in southwest Indiana is held Memorial Day weekend annually. Site has 131 acres of woods with a 16-acre lake, shooting ranges, fishing, cabin bunks, shower, disco ball, 8-track tape player, and world-class outhouse. If interested contact Wayne Dillon at 931-561-2575 or leatherneck75.wd@gmail.com.

Sawmill Shootout: Held the first weekend of October at Frank Seaman's Virtue of Defense tactical shooting facility in the beautiful western North Carolina mountains. Contact Frank at 828-442-7404 or vodtac@gmail.com if interested.

Supporting our Community

Scholarships

Two scholarships are available to Association members and their dependents. The Larry Ashton Memorial Scholarship, administered by the Ashton family, is dedicated to supporting those who are studying to work as health professionals. The Association administers a general scholarship. The deadline for these scholarships is 15 August. For more information, contact Wayne Dillon at leatherneck75.wd@gmail.com.

Community Support

The Association has recently been able to provide financial support to one of our own facing cancer and job loss. This support is needs-based.

Swag



<i>Charter/Life Member Plank Owner Sultan of Swag Minister of Morale Special Projects Coordinator Social Media Director</i>		<i>Defender of Freedom Casual Hero World Traveler Commie Killer Community Ambassador</i>
Michael "GRAMBO" Graham <i>Sergeant at Arms</i> 423.707.5757		
P.O. Box 743 Milligan College, TN 37682		recondiver8653@yahoo.com www.2dreconbn.org

Our Sergeant at Arms, Social Media director, Sultan of Swag, and all-around go to guy, Michael Graham, aka "Grambo," has coins for sale, pictured above. Pictured is the Lineage Coin, which displays the locations where 2d Recon was stationed around Camp Lejeune, dating back to 1958. The cost is \$15 plus \$5 shipping. Up to five coins can be shipped for the \$5 shipping fee.

Grambo also has a contact for embroidering such items as hats and polo shirts. To order any of these items, please contact Mike at the number above.

Membership



Jason Oliver is our Membership Chairman. Connect with Jason via the following methods:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jason1oliver>

Email: jason.oliver@jasono.com

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Jason Oliver
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