



THE FRAG

2D Recon Battalion Association Newsletter

Greetings Marines, Corpsmen, and Recon Families,

Some of you may be able to remember the polio epidemic of the 1950s, but for most of us the COVID19 pandemic is an event such as we have never witnessed. David Leathers told me his son, Patrick, had to quarantine for fourteen days prior to shipping to Parris Island. Once at Parris Island, he had to quarantine again when another recruit tested positive. (By the way, he is on a Recon contract...of course!) However, it appears that we are seeing a return to normalcy after over a year of quarantines, mask mandates, political arguments, home schooling, etc. Some areas are more open than others, but it seems like as a whole, we are getting back to normal. As you know, we had to cancel the reunion last year due to the pandemic, but the reunion is a GO this year! See page 2 for details.

I want to thank Steve Burgess for sharing the incredible story of his team's exploits during the Gulf War. Many of us are Gulf War veterans, where 2d Recon played a pivotal part in 2d Marine Division's success.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the reunion and at any offsites you can attend. And, by the way, contact your buddies and bring them!

Semper Fi,

Wayne Dillon
President, 2d Reconnaissance Battalion Association

Reunion 2021



Itinerary 2d Recon Bn. Association Reunion 2021

Thurs. 24 June:

Arrive Hampton Inn Sneads Ferry/North Topsail Beach, 1248 NC Hwy. 210, Sneads Ferry, NC 28460. Check in time is 1500.

Fri. 25 June:

0700: Board Transportation

0800-1200: Interactive activities (range, boats, etc. TBD)

1200-1230: Enroute Bn. area

1230: Awards formation at 2d Recon Battalion front parking lot

1300 to Completion: Static display/BBQ with BN members at ORP in the back of the Bn

1430: Board transportation enroute Hampton Inn

1600: Leadership meeting in Osprey Room

1700: Membership meeting in Osprey Room

Sat: 26 June:

Day is open for families to enjoy the beach, local attractions, etc.

1700: Board transportation enroute Paradise Point Officers Club

1730-2030: Association Dinner

2030: Board transportation enroute to Hampton Inn.

Sun. 27 June:

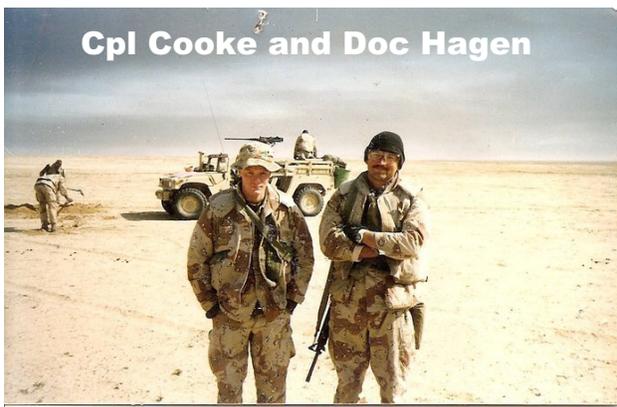
1100: Check out/depart

To register, go to the 2d Recon Association website, <https://www.2dreconbn.org/>. For lodging, we have a group rate of \$129 per night at the Hampton Inn/Topsail Beach, Sneads Ferry. Phone 910-327-5555 and mention the code 2R3. This rate is good until 25 May. We stayed there in 2019 and were very pleased.

One Marine's Story

C-3-2's Mission in the Gulf War

By Steve Burgess



Mission dates: February 17–22 1991

I will start with the last movement to the berm at the Saudi Arabia/Kuwait border. We received our mission and warning orders and returned to our team areas. As usual, we gathered our gear and ammo and commenced to preparing for the mission. I had only been with the battalion since November, straight out of the School of Infantry. I checked into Second Reconnaissance Battalion and was escorted to Delta Company for Reconnaissance Indoctrination Platoon (RIP), where we were met by Sgt. Bacon and a few others. However, no more RIP classes were scheduled due to Operation DESERT SHIELD heating up. That's when each of us was assigned to a team. I was sent to Charlie Company, 3rd Platoon, Team 2, (C-3-2), whose members were Bates, Blackburn, Cooke, Owens, George, and Doc Hagen. I went blank on one other teammate.

Even though I was an 0311 (infantryman), Sgt. Bates decided to make me the radio operator. From the time we landed in country I had to learn the PRC-77, -104 and the -113. Talk about a crash course! I collected all the batteries and items I needed to prepare all the radios and got them to the other members of the team.

After a few hours we had our first inspection and packed everything up and staged our gear. Then it was back to studying the maps, routes and communication plans. Once all gear was staged and all briefs and inspections were done, we got some rest before the insert later that night.

We crossed the berm sometime after dark. When we began the patrol, Cooke was point, Bates team leader, me as radio operator, and Blackburn taking up the rear, Owens right flank, and Doc Hagen left flank. We traveled about 500 meters or so and made a security halt in order to let our eyes adjust and to listen to get the feel for the normal sounds of the night. After about 20 minutes, Sgt. Bates gave the signal to move out. As the night went by the visibility dropped from the darkness and the smoke. We would conduct security halts about every hour and then continue the patrol.

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A few hours before sunrise we would set up an area for our harbor site for the day. Each night we dug three trenches that accommodated two men each, covered them with a shelter half, and then covered them with dirt for camouflage. Sgt. Bates and I in one, Blackburn and Owens in the second, and Cooke and Doc Hagen in another. At the top we left an opening from which we could observe each direction and dug a grenade sump at the bottom.

Later that morning while monitoring the radio we heard that Stroud's team had contact and Iraqi troops were trying to surround them. From our position we could see the area where a building was located. Close air support was requested and two AV-8B Harriers showed up. It took two hours before they were cleared to provide support. Command wanted to make sure it would not impact their plans. After a while, we saw Light Armored Vehicles (LAVs) racing to extract them under fire. It was a little hard to rest after that, but we rotated security until the night arrived.

As we left our trenches, we had to fill them in so no one would know we had been there. The patrol continued as normal, making security halts and then moving out. At one point we thought we walked into an occupied area. We thought we heard voices and so on. Once we resumed the patrol we were on high alert. We made it to the next harbor site and repeated the process.

The next two days were uneventful and basically were a repeat of the night before. As we were filling in the trenches and preparing to step off, three rounds of artillery hit just over 500 meters from our location. Sgt. Bates gave the gas signal everyone got their gas mask out and put them on...well, except one, and I won't say who. He had his rucksack emptied and did not have it. We got everything packed and got on the radio trying to make comm to report the situation. Nothing! We lost comm for about 12 hours, and as a result, we missed a few comm windows. The rest of the night was uneventful. We set up our harbor site and set in for the day. At some point of the day, we heard vehicles and voices. An Iraqi unit had stopped, and as you can imagine, we were on edge. Each of us moved grenades and ammo in case we needed it. After a while they left and we finished the day with no further issues.

When night fell, we packed up again, filling everything in and continued on. We had no issues that night. We set up our hide again as usual. The only thing different was that we were less than 500 meters from the enemy's minefield. Once the sun came up, we saw an Iraqi unit about two kilometers (a little over a mile) from us. We reported this and requested artillery, which was denied. After an hour or so, Bates, Owens and Cooke prepared to recon the minefield during the day. They set up and returned a few hours later. Owens climbed a power line tower and made realistic drawings of the area. Cooke found a path thru the mine field and marked and photographed it. Keep in mind, *this was in broad daylight!*

Once they were back, we continued with rest and prepared for the move later that night. As dark fell we packed up and filled everything in, then started on the 13k patrol back. About an hour from the time we departed, a round of rockets hit the area where we had spotted Iraqi unit. I had never jumped so high! They had not given us any warning. Our patrol back did not stop as the sun came up, and kept moving until we linked up with Cpl. Kevin Korpinen's team, at which point we formed a huge wedge formation all the way back to the berm and safe area.

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Once back to the battalion area, the teams moved back into their areas and dropped their gear. We were then debriefed, with one of the debriefs being conducted with the Division Commander, Major General Keyes. Once the briefs were done, we went back to our areas and started with gear cleaning, inventory, and collecting hand grenades.

The next event has been etched into my brain and I will never forget.

Owes and Cooke had gathered all of our grenades and placed them on the ground in front of them for inventory and storing them. I had all the communications gear, and Sgt. Bates was collecting other gear. Owens and Cooke were sitting about ten yards behind me, and Bates was standing over my right shoulder as I handed him my magazines. *Then it happened--we heard "GRENADE!"* I laid over to my side and then, *the explosion*. A few seconds later we were setting up a perimeter and turned to look and saw the white smoke. Cooke had laid himself on the grenade and took the full blast. Cooke was killed instantly and Owens took a lot of shrapnel to the legs. A few others also took a few pieces from the blast. I am going to stop here with who did what and other details. That was a devastating day. Soon, two CH-46s landed, and the ones that were seriously wounded were loaded into the aircraft and evacuated.

This mission on the mine field set the breach site for the Second Marine Division to cross into Kuwait, smash the Iraqi army, and send it fleeing back into Iraq. Sgt. Bates, Cpl. Cooke and Cpl. Owens received Bronze Stars medals with "V" (for valor) device. Cpl. Blackburn, LCpl. Burgess, and HM3 Hagen received Navy Commendation medals with "V" devices.

Offsites

Memorial Day Weekend: 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: To be held 1-3 October at Frank Seaman's Virtue of Defense tactical shooting facility in beautiful western North Carolina. Contact Frank at 828-442-7404 or vodtac@gmail.com if interested.

In Memoriam



Michael Eugene Moler

We lost one of our Brothers, Mike Moler, on May 11th. Mike served in the Marine Corps from 1986 to 1991. He served the bulk of this time with 2d Recon Battalion, where his specialty was field radio operator. Mike served in various companies and teams and was a Gulf War veteran. After his honorable discharge, he displayed typical Marine leadership traits, rising in the leadership of the water industry.

Though it was a sad day, a bright spot at his funeral in Robinson, Illinois on May 15th was the attendance of eight Association members. Funeral support was provided by 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, USMCR, from Terre Haute, Indiana, whose performance and appearance was superb.

Mike leaves behind his wife, Christina; his children, Jessica, Sydney, Jackson, Michael, and Grace; and numerous family members and friends. You will be missed. Semper Fi, Brother.

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. This year, we have been able to award two scholarships—one to Will Seaman, a former Force Reconnaissance Marine and the son of Frank and Rhonda Seaman, for equipment needed for the firefighter academy, and the second to Samantha Kelley, the daughter of Dan Kelley. Samantha will be attending South Dakota State University.

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.

Membership



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

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

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