

ALWAYS FIRST!

No Mission Too Difficult! No Sacrifice Too Great! Duty First!



Soldiers assigned to the Military District of Washington's ceremonial units perform during a Twilight Tattoo at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Va., May 22, 2024. The event celebrated the strength, traditions and history of the Army through dramatic vignettes and musical numbers. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Natalie Pantalos)

Upcoming Reunions

1ID & 1EN BN: Albuquerque, NM July 31- Aug 4, 2024

1 EN BN- 2025: Gettysburg, PA September 14-17, 2025

1 EN BN- 2026: Cantigny Wheatland, IL



Diehard 2024 Reunion Update

The Society of the 1st Infantry Division's 103rd Annual Reunion Albuquerque, New Mexico July 31 to August 4, 2024

A reminder that 1st Engineer reunion will be with the BRO reunion in Albuquerque, on Wed July 31 to Sat Aug 3, We will be sharing a CP with HQ and Support Units, which is where we will likely have our Excom and membership meetings. At the Saturday banquet we share a table with Aviation. You can go on line to Bridgehead Sentinel to download a registration form. Cost is \$55 each to register; \$57 each for banquet. After June 30, no refunds. There are three good tours available. If you only do one, do the Sandia Tram. I can recommend other tours if interested: all have a SW /Native American flavor. And you cannot beat New Mexican cuisine- *Larry Blair*

2024 Society Reunion Schedule



Wednesday, 31 July

0900-1200-1300-1700:QM & Reg Open
1330: Unit Rep Meeting w/ Staff

Thursday: 1 Aug

0800 Unit Meetings in CPs
0900-1200 & 1330-1700 QM – Reg Open
0845-1230: Nuclear Museum
1800-2100: Welcome Party

Saturday: 3 Aug

0800 Unit Meetings in CPs
0900 Memorial Service
1000-1200 QM & Registration Open
1015 General Membership Meeting
1015-1415: TRAM Ride – Aerial View
1800 Cocktails
1900 Banquet

Friday: 2 Aug

0730-0900 Conflict Breakfast
0800 Unit Meetings in CPs
0900-1200 & 1330-1700 QM – Reg Open
0845-1:30: Balloon Museum

1400-1500 Board of Directors Meeting

Key Events

Wed. 1330: Unit Rep Meeting
Thurs 1800: Welcome Party
Friday:
 0730: Conflict Breakfast
 1400: BOD Meeting
Saturday:
 0900: Memorial Service
 1015: General Membership Meeting
 1800: Reception
 1900: Dinner

*Wed July 31 to Friday Aug 2

1000-1200 (15 Minute departure increments)Hotel provided Shuttle to Old Town and Nob Hill and back
1800-2000 (15 Minute departure increments)Hotel provided Shuttle to Old Town and Nob Hill and back

Diehard Current Operations



In May the DIEHARD Battalion built tough and resilient teams by executing another Diehard Challenge. Diehard 6 and 7 led the Battalion on a 4 mile run in kit and 20lb assault pack followed by each company conducting a series of combat focused exercises. Alpha Company, 1st Engineer Battalion took home the trophy.



In May the Diehard Battalion also transitioned commanders. They'll tremendously miss LTC Peacock and his family while looking toward their future with LTC Chambers.



Diehard Past Operations



1968 Iron Triangle C Co First Engineers. Tet counter Offensive. Search and destroy Cu Chi Tunnels.

Provided by Paul Ducey



The battalion commander, BG Hawkins, surveying the battlefield when the ground war started in ODS.

Provided by Brad D'Angelo



The battalion headquarters in Ramadi, Iraq 2003.

Provided by Ernesto Longoria

Book Review

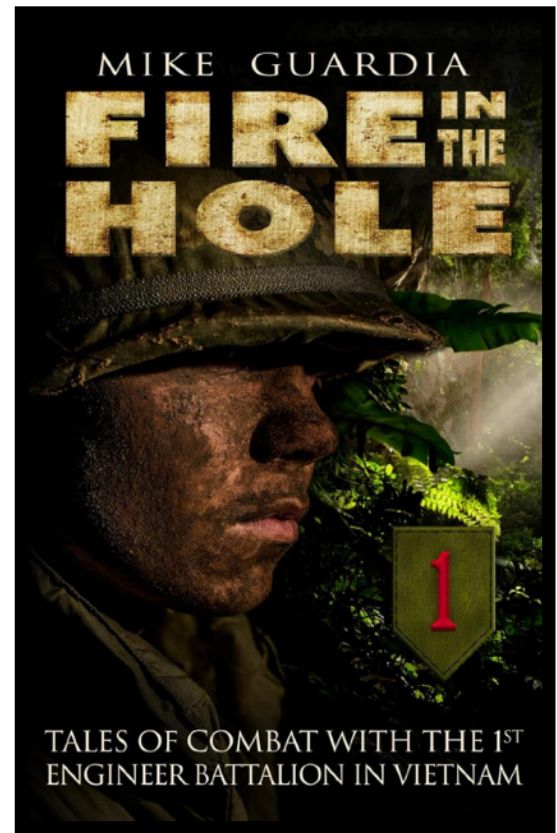
Recommended by F C "Chuck" Humphrey

August 25, 1966. Specialist Dan Crowley was among the handful of demolition experts assigned to a route clearing mission in support of Operation AMARILLO. His equipment load was the same as it had been numerous times before: a Claymore mine, TNT, C-4 explosives, blasting caps, time fuse, det cord, eighteen rounds for his M-79 grenade launcher, two hand grenades, and his Colt .45.

But this would be no ordinary mission.

The Viet Cong had just surrounded an American patrol along Highway 16. Crowley's outfit – Charlie Company, 1st Engineer Battalion – was among the smattering of units thrown together for this impromptu "relief force." History would call it the Battle of Bong Trang.

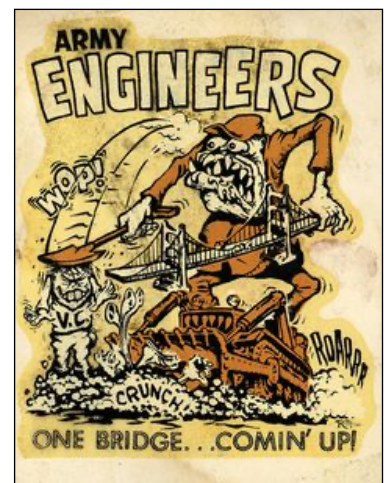
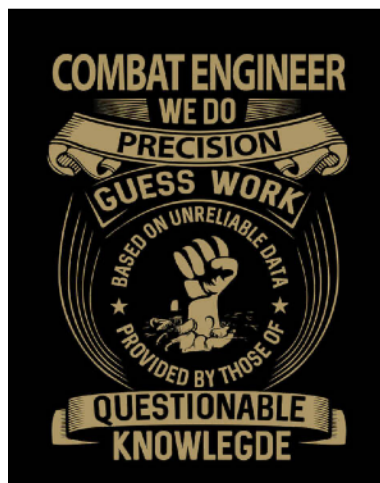
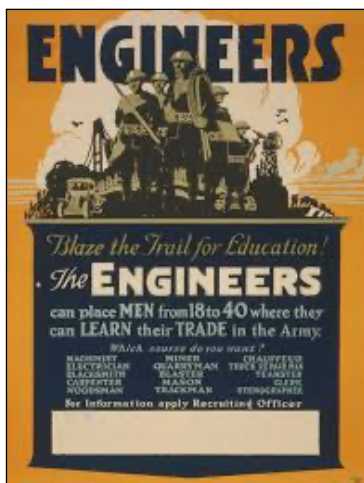
In a war dominated by airmobile infantry, the combat engineers played a critical role in shaping America's battlefield victories. They built obstacles, dug defensive positions, set landmines, performed various types of demolition, and could fight as infantry whenever ordered. Guardia is a military historian and has published several other books about the Vietnam War, including *Danger Forward: The Forgotten Wars of General Paul F Gorman*. ([amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))



Fire in the Hole tells the story of Charlie Company, 1st Engineer Battalion during their deployment to the Republic of Vietnam in 1965-66. Told from the perspective of four Charlie Company veterans – Dan Crowley, Larry Blair, Chuck Humphrey, and Jay Franz – this book provides an intimate, no-holds-barred account of the combat engineers in Vietnam. Available from Amazon.com for \$14.95 paperback; \$4.99 Kindle

Crowley, Humphrey, Franz and Blair are all members of "Veterans of the First Engineer Battalion" and past board members: Crowley served as a board member; Humphrey as secretary; and Franz and Blair as president.

**Engineer Artwork in
recruitment and propaganda**



VA Benefit Highlight

DEPENDENTS and SURVIVORS

VA honors the sacrifices of Servicemembers' and Veterans' dependents and survivors through many benefit programs:

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monthly benefit paid to a surviving spouse, including additional payments for dependent children. It is available to an eligible spouse of a Servicemember who died during active military service or from a service-connected disability, or of a Veteran who was rated totally disabled at the time of death. Parents' DIC is paid to surviving parents based on financial need.

The surviving spouse and child(ren) who are eligible for DIC are also eligible for the following:

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) provides reimbursement for most medical expenses.

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35) provides assistance to obtain a degree and pursue other eligible education and training.

A Survivors' Pension is a monthly benefit payable to a low-income surviving spouse and child(ren) of a deceased Veteran with wartime service.

T 800-827-1000

www.va.gov/benefits

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—NEWSMAX

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- Increase your pension and survivor benefits
- Hidden benefits you didn't know about
- Full information on insurance, appeals, and much more

PAUL R. LAWRENCE, Ph.D.
Former Under Secretary for Benefits,
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2018–2021)

All veterans and their families deserve the maximum benefits they earned by bravely serving their country!

Veterans of the United States armed forces are entitled to a broad range of benefits and services provided by the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Dr. Paul R Lawrence, former Under Secretary for Benefits in the Department of Veterans Affairs, provides an up-to-date, comprehensive and accessible guide to all the benefits and services available to veterans of the US armed services and how to make the most of these benefits and services.

Guidance and Insights for Veterans, Dependents, and Survivors

Chaplain's Corner

A Chaplain Story

by Larry Blair

In June 1966, OPO called me and said “pack your bags—you’re going to Vietnam on emergency requisition to replace the “A” Company CO 1st Engineer Bn, a CPT Kesterson, who was KIA by a mine.

In July, MAJ Leon Treadwell and I arrived on the same flight. Leon was to be S-3, and as soon as we arrived at Diehard HQ, he was sent to bunk with the exalte Field Grade officers. CPT Wayne Lucas had already taken over A company; and Cpt Zielinski had taken C Company [after Jay Franz had been wounded and evacuated]. They had to figure out what to do with me.

So, I was sent to bunk with the Chaplain, CPT Leroy Sisk, in a sagging GP medium tent with holes and a plywood floor. Leroy was a “short- timer” on his tour, but very hospitable. He told me that if I had to pee at night, don’t go to the latrine, as I could get bitten by a “seven -step” snake [a bamboo viper] so named because if you got bitten, you could walk 7 steps and die. He said just step outside to pee; the rain will wash it away. He also cautioned me about, malaria, mosquitos, what to do in a mortar and what to do during a rocket attack-- [hit the floor and cover with the thin pad called a mattress].

My first night, Leroy tucked me in my cot, making sure the mosquito net was well sealed all around. He said a prayer, and doused the flashlight. Some time later, a terrific KRAACK found me on the floor, just as I heard Leroy yell “WHAT THE [EXPLETIVE]!” I fumbled around for my flashlight and found Leroy on the floor, too. Just then the rain came in torrents, as we both sat there looking stupid.

The next night Leroy again tucked my mosquito net all around me, and said a goodnight prayer. Later, I became aware of something crawling up my chest. Thinking a snake was headed for my throat, I called out to Leroy in a quivering voice. He came over and shined his light on a 6- inch lizard, saying “Don’t worry. He’s looking for bugs.” Easy for him to say: I was terrified.

So much for my first two nights in Nam. Leroy later safely rotated home, but we always laughed about it.

Please notify Chaplain Larry Blair if any member of the Veterans of the First Engineer Battalion passes away. Provide details, obituary, name and address of next of kin if possible. blairylar@hotmail.com

Judith Covey Obituary

Judith Diehl Covey passed away on December 11, 2023, at her Lake House in Hickory, N.C. Born November 7, 1942, in Cumberland, Maryland, she was the daughter of the late Charles and Emily Hill and was a proud Malcolm of Scottish descent. Survivors include her husband of 59 years, Chad Edward Covey who is an Army Vietnam Veteran; son, Bret William Covey and daughter in law Karen and their three children Hannah, Madison and Wyatt of Garner, N.C.; daughter Amy Judith Bice and son in law David and their two children Kaitlyn and Dawson of Dallas, N.C.; and sister Maryanne Zizza and niece Emily of Frostburg, Md. Judy was a loving wife, mother and grandmother as well as a gifted artist and interior decorator. She was an outstanding twirler and dancer and was the Head Majorette at Pearl River High School in Pearl River N.Y. and danced on American Bandstand with Dick Clark. Judy also was a twirling instructor at New Berlin High School in New Berlin N.Y. where she led her girls to become N.Y. State Champions. Judy served as church secretary and assistant to Pastor Scott Kavanagh of First Baptist Church in Norwich N.Y. and helped the Church win Guidepost Magazine Church of the Year. Judy was a successful artist and was a member of the Society of Decorative Painters. She served as Hickory Art Museum Guild President for many years and had art pieces displayed in the White House and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. Judy was a beautiful light in the world, and she was known for her generosity, kindness and love for her friends and family.



She will forever be missed.

Chad,

I am so deeply sorry to hear of your loss. Please accept my condolences and also know that this is also coming from every member of the Veterans of the 1st Engr Bn. Judy will surely be missed, and our prayers are with you and your family. Want you to know that I appreciated all the help she gave me during our Reunion in Colorado Springs, Co. Stay strong, safe, and hope to see you at our next reunion.

Sincerely,

President,

Veterans Of The 1st Engr Bn

Jose Vargas

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