

# ***Bravo Regulars***



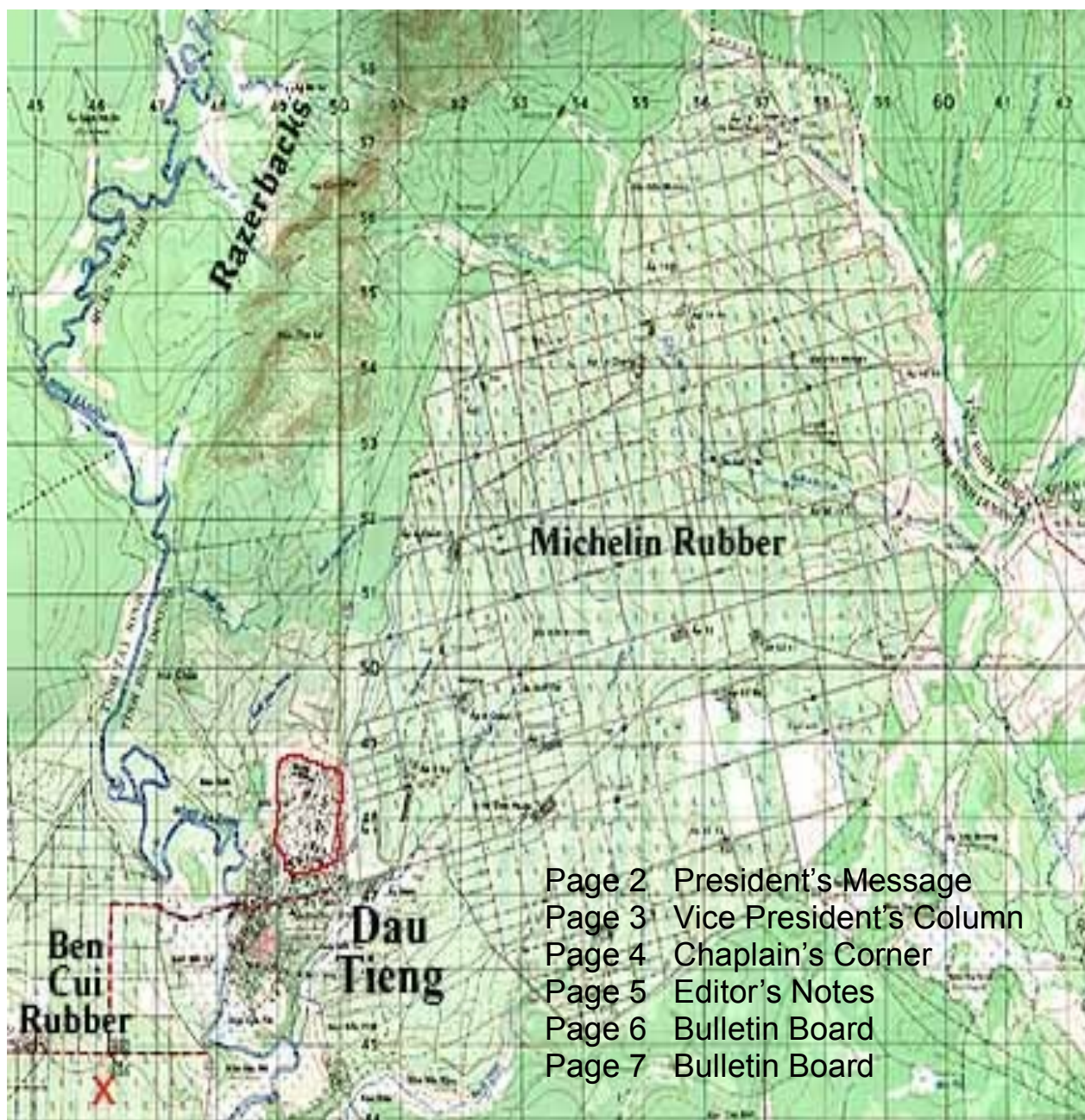
**B Company 3/22**



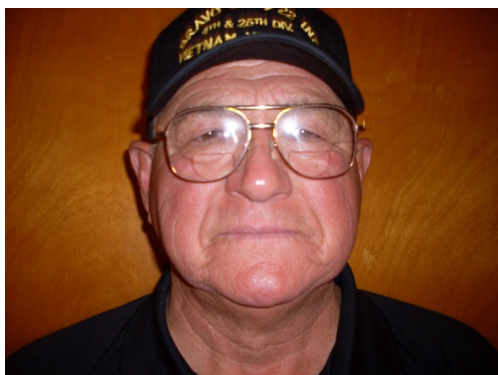
***Vietnam Service***

[www.bravoregulars.com](http://www.bravoregulars.com)

**March 2013**



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## Presidents Message

Max Torres  
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I'm hoping everybody had a happy holiday season. My thoughts and hopes are with Tony and Roxanne Togisala, our hosts for our 2014 Reunion in Salt Lake City, Utah. I have never been to Salt Lake City, but have always wanted to visit that area.

It was great to see all of our brothers who attended the Pismo Beach reunion, especially Patrick Toyama, Jesus Fuentes, Joe Velis, Rudy Candelaria and Ron Thompson. It was also gratifying to have honorary members Annelise Cosme and Joy Shipley in attendance. Also, thank you, Ted Rowley, for all your work and dedication honoring our fallen brothers, especially Mark Rowan, one of our founding members.

I'm already looking forward to having a great reunion in 2014.

*Max Torres*

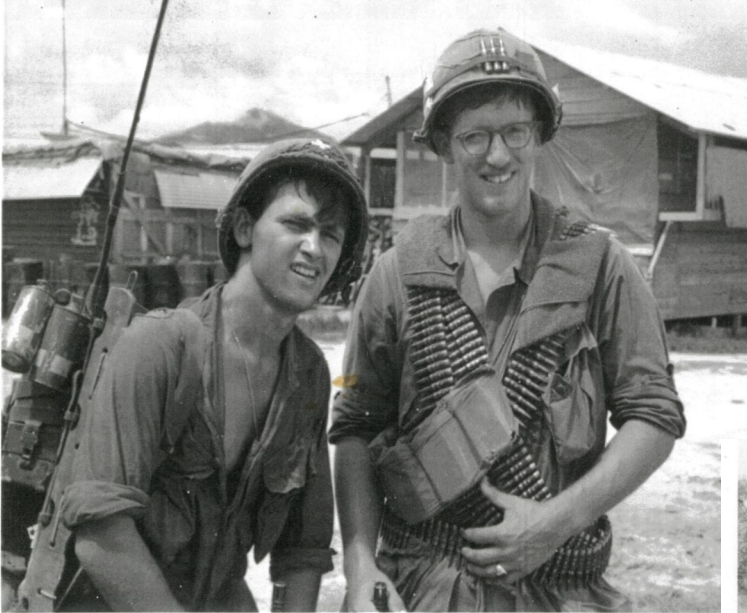






## VICE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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L-R Oscar Green and Norm Bergsma

The photos shown on this page are of the guys I served with in '68/'69. I just wanted to share them with you.



Front L-R Charlie Lokie, Chu Hoy (Scout),  
Jessie "Ace" Childress  
Back L-R Ron Rowley, Tom Belan,  
Ted Silbereis



Front L-R Chuck Bridger, Charlie Lokie  
Back L-R Unknown



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**Chaplain**  
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## ***CHAPLAIN'S CORNER***

It is the end of February and it seems like it has been a long winter. I've felt the chill of 15 below zero, but that was in northern Wisconsin a month ago. We were visiting friends who live on a river covered in snow right now. We got to see a black mink run along the white shore line and a totally white weasel run under the wood pile. As the weather gets warmer, the weasel will turn partly brown and by summer all brown; Mother Nature's way of protecting the weasel from its predators. As a hunter, he is a vicious little killer when it comes to chickens or small mammals. In all the time I've spent in the woods, I've only seen a weasel a couple of times. I've had dealings with far more human weasels in my lifetime.

Since Vietnam, March has always been a tough month for me to get through. Forty-six years ago my life changed forever, just as it did for a lot of you guys. We really didn't ask for the cards we were dealt, but we played the game the best we could. "To weasel is to back out of a situation or commitment in a sneaky or cowardly manner." Maybe this would best describe the 40,000 Americans that fled to Canada during the Vietnam era. But, they have to live with themselves now, for who am I to judge. I wonder how Jesus felt about this? After all, He forgave those that crucified Him, but of course I am sure He could see farther into the future than us. It makes it tough to understand getting denied VA benefits that we earned by serving, instead of running to Canada. After 46 years we shouldn't have the taste of gall in our mouth. Pilate was a weasel by backing out of a situation by simply washing his hands.

At this special time of year called Easter, we look forward to the renewal of God's splendor such as the sounds of cranes in the sky and frogs in the ponds and the sights of eagles soaring and doves flying freely in the blue skies. Let the 2nd amendment live as our forefathers intended with liberty and freedom for all. After all, I believe God came first with them.

People today, our leaders included, seem to be obsessed about money and power. Throw in some computers, cell phones and electronic technology, and I think we could self-destruct. Call me a bit old fashioned I guess, but when I think about the stories my uncle told me when he was young, I always thought to myself what a great time to be alive then. Days of old, but here we are today so let us make the best of it and do what we can to make this a better world.

God passes along His love through others. Before I knew anything else, I knew how it felt to be loved, thanks to Mom and Dad, and guys like Dennis Amily, who is a great example of a healing spirit.

I Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind, it is not jealous or conceited or proud, love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable, love does not keep a record of wrongs, love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth, love never gives up and its faith, hope and patience never fail.

Love is eternal

I John 4,21

The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love his brother also.

My Easter message to my band of brothers,

*Ted*



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## EDITOR'S NOTES

Those of us who served with Bravo Company will immediately recognize our cover. For family and others, it is a topographical map of the area around our base camp in Vietnam. Looking at it brought back a flood of memories. There are very few people who can see it and say 'been there,' and we are them!

At the top of the Bulletin Page is a press release for Blair Moran. If you look at the details, this is a huge honor and great accomplishment. A full list of Blair's credits on behalf of vets and charities would literally fill half a page. Thank you, Blair, and congratulations from all of us.

When we meet for reunions, there is usually press coverage from the local media. Since I had room in this issue, I thought I'd share two with you. The first is from the reunion in Paris, MO in July, 2010 (thanks again Larry and Lis' Young for hosting) and the second from our most recent reunion in Pismo Beach, CA in Sept., 2012 (thanks again Max Torres and Rich Villarreal for hosting). Both are reprinted unedited and both make me proud to be a member of this group.

I spoke with Tony and Roxanne Togisala about our 2014 reunion in Salt Lake City, UT. New for this reunion, the host gets to choose between site-based, as in the past, or hotel-based, held in a banquet room. They are currently exploring both options and will have a report for the next newsletter. RV camping will be available either way.

I have received questions from two members about other associations: *Blair Moran—sent dues to the 25th Infantry Association and they informed me that the 3/22 has been deactivated. Were you aware of this information?* *John Gority—Why aren't we represented in the 22nd Infantry Regiment Association?* I discussed this with John Otte and learned that Bravo Regulars does not maintain membership in other organizations, however, some of our members do. If any of these members would be willing to act as liaison and report on the activities of these organizations, we would appreciate the input.

While doing work on the roster, I received an email from Maria Solis, wife of Andres Solis (4th Platoon, Original) with updated contact information. She also mentioned that Andres has been in ill health for the last few years. Andres may be contacted at [gramaroge@yahoo.com](mailto:gramaroge@yahoo.com).

Our next newsletter will be a special Memorial Day edition in June. I plan to run an updated Memorial Page to honor all of our fallen brothers. Any input, Memorial Day specific or otherwise, would be appreciated and must be received by the end of May to be included.

*Dave out*

Submissions may appear disjointed at times but are often edited for space, content and/or excerpted from larger personal communications between members. Submissions can be sent to either my email or home address (880 N. Solar Drive, Vail, AZ 85641) or to any Officer. Any photos submitted by mail will be scanned and returned



**BULLETIN BOARD**

*Submitted by Blair Moran - Co RTO, 69/70*

As published in Sikeston Standard Democrat by Jill Bock on September 19, 2012 — Sikeston, Mo. Each year Lt. Governor Peter Kinder of Missouri presents an Outstanding Veteran Award. This year 134 vets and their resumes were submitted to Kinder's office and for 2012 Blair Moran (RTO-69/70) received the award from Kinder at Sikeston Veterans Park. Moran is active in veterans affairs throughout southeast Missouri and a member of both the Sikeston American Legion and VFW. He serves on the American Legion National Legislative Commission. Each year Moran organizes the Memorial Day and Veterans Day service for the community of Sikeston. He is also Vice President of the Bloomfield, Mo Assistance League which raises money for the state veteran cemetery located in Bloomfield.

*Submitted by Editor—Reunion Newspaper Accounts*

*As published July 8, 2010 in Monroe County Appeal*—Biennial Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion reunion in Paris—Have you ever watched the movie Platoon? If so between Wednesday, July 7, through Sunday, July 11, in the local Paris area, you can meet members of the actual Bravo company that took part in the action depicted in this film. Members of Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 22 Infantry will converge on Monroe County to hold their biennial reunion. Most of the reunion will be held at Huck Hall, at Buzzard's Roost, in Mark Twain State Park, however on Friday, July 9, a helicopter (possibly an Apache or Blackhawk), from the Jefferson city national Guard, will hold a fly-in, at Lake Village, at approximately 10-11 a.m. Each year the company holds their reunion at different areas of the country as voted by the members. At the last reunion, in Altoona, PA., the members voted to hold the 2010 reunion in the Paris area. "We will have approximately 80-100 vets and between 150-160 at the reunion," said Bravo Company veteran Larry Young. "Bravo Company participated in the battle listed as the longest single day battle besides being referred to as a major battle of the Vietnam War (LZ Gold)," said Bravo Veteran Jack Zuverink, from Seneca, S.C. The weeks activities include a trip to Hannibal coupled with a riverboat cruise (Wednesday); Judge Michael Wilson and Veterans Affairs Officer Jerry Dyar (South Carolina) will address the group on Thursday; Order of the Silver Rose awards will be presented (Thursday); Helicopter will arrive at Lake Village (10-11 a.m. Friday); Members will participate in the Old Threshers parade (Saturday); Memorial Service (Saturday, 2:30 p.m. at Huck Hall); Saturday business meeting; Johnny Ragsdale will perform at the evening's BBQ; Sunday breakfast and goodbyes. "Johnny (Ragsdale) is going to come play bluegrass for the boys," said Lisa Young. The group invited all local veterans and community residents to attend the 2:30 p.m. Memorial Service, at Buzzard Roost. "We would like to have as many veterans there as we can—we invite all vets," said Zuverink. "Any City of Paris resident that would like to donate any baked goods for the Memorial Service can contact me at 573-721-2311," said local organizer Lisa Young. Why does the group meet each year? "We're just like brothers," said Larry Young. "It is 44 years later and we still get together." "We are a lot closer than family," said Zuverink. "It is hard to explain. If I got a call from a Bravo brother I'd be there in a second." "What we went through is totally different from World War II but it is still the same to us," explained Zuverink. "These guys all have stories and they are all the same story," said Judi Zuverink. "We made a good choice coming to Paris." "We are all one," said Larry Young. Zuverink noted that Verna Spangler, of Paris, has created a Bravo quilt that will be autographed by the Bravo company members and then will be displayed in the Missouri State Fair. The quilt will be auctioned off to a Bravo member only. She out did herself, the quilt is beautiful," said Judi Zuverink. "Thank you to everyone in Paris that has donated anything to the reunion and don't forget to come out and see us," said organizers Lisa and Larry Young.

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

*As published September 20, 2012 in The Tribune*—Soldiers who saw hell are reuniting here—If war is hell, as Civil War Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman famously said, then a group of soldiers came face to face with Hades on the morning of March 21, 1967, at Fire Support Base Gold in Vietnam. The battle of Suoi Tre, which lasted roughly from 6:30 to 10:45 a.m., would turn out to be the most intensely sustained fighting of the Vietnam War. And although some 450 soldiers—with about 200 of those troops comprising Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion/22nd Infantry—were outnumbered 5-to-1 by an elite group of highly trained Viet Cong soldiers, the outcome belied the odds. Firebases were artillery-fortified forward positions from which Army infantry would fan out in search-and-destroy missions. As it was later learned, a spy had wormed its way into the inner circles of Gen. William Westmoreland and had learned of the Army's plans for its firebase at Suoi Tre. Some 2,500 VC were dug in and waiting to ambush the Americans as they set up perimeter defenses. The fighting was so intense as wave after wave of VC stormed the compound that howitzers were leveled to horizontal, loaded with canisters filled with thousands of pieces of metal and fired point blank at the hordes of Viet Cong, who ultimately breached the defenses of two sides of the compound. Mario Salazar was a member of 2nd Battalion, 22 Infantry, a mechanized unit made up of armor and artillery. As his outfit raced to reinforce the soldiers at Suoi Tre, he's written: "As we reached the clearing (around 9 a.m.), the scene that we witnessed was worthy of an outrageous Hollywood set." (Indeed, the movie "Platoon" is based on a composite of battles of the firebase at Suoi Tre and, a year later, the battle of firebase Burt. The film's director, Oliver Stone, was a member of Bravo Company.) "There was gun and artillery fire everywhere," Salazar recounted. "The middle of the compromised perimeter was on one edge of the clearing and appeared to be a light show: Artillery rounds, including white phosphorous and flares, grenades, smoke signal grenades and, of all things beer cans, were exploding all around." As those who were there have written, because of the intensity and length of the battle, Bravo Company was running on fumes with ammunition depleted. So when Salazar's tanks and personnel carriers showed up, it was like a Western where a wagon train was under attack and the cavalry rides to the rescue. In the final tally, 647 Viet Cong died; 31 Americans were killed and 109 wounded. Members of Bravo Company and the other military battalions that fought at Suoi Tre were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest honor a unit can receive, comparable to a collective Medal of Honor. I offer this background in honor of those who fought and died in Vietnam, and to let you know that some 105 members of Bravo Company who served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1971 are holding a reunion in Pismo Beach. It began Wednesday and continues through Sunday. Grover Beach resident Max Torres and Santa Maria resident Richard Villarreal fought shoulder-to-shoulder at Suoi Tre, and are co-hosts of this year's reunion. The survivors, now known as Bravo Regulars, a nonprofit, 600-member association, meet every two years at various locations around the country. This is the first time the Central Coast will play host to the group. For five days these once battle-hardened men and their families will eat, catch up, have a casino night and party to local bands at the Pismo Beach Veterans Hall. A trip to Hearst Castle and touring all that the county has to offer is also part of the schedule. A memorial service for their fallen comrades, "Honoring Our Fallen Heroes," will be held Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon at New Life Community Church, 990 James Way in Pismo Beach. State Sen. Sam Blakeslee is expected to attend, as is Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian, AmpSurf co-founder Dana Cummings and Pismo Beach Mayor Shelly Higginbotham. Stone was invited, but didn't respond. The pubic is welcome to attend. Torres, and thousands of other young men who came back from their tour "in country," found themselves fundamentally changed. As a sergeant who led his squad through a never-ending smorgasbord of continuous fighting in dense jungle, rain, heat and humidity, snakes, ringworms and jungle rot, Torres says he and his brothers-in-arms shut down emotionally through self-preservation. When a close friend died, someone who covered their backs, the men simply didn't talk about him anymore, like the guy never existed. For 30 years, while working for Pacific Bell, Torres remained a wary man; he didn't get into fights, but he says he didn't take any guff from anyone, either. He's healed tremendously in the last few years through counseling and can now talk about some of his experiences, although he wept in our conversation when recalling the bravery and sense of mission his band of brothers exhibited. Post traumatic stress disorder may have been what Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was getting at in his Jan. 10, 1946, speech: "I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its stupidity." Welcome to the Central Coast, Bravo Regulars. Thank you for your service to our country. Welcome home.