



Raider Tales

Stories of Courage & Valor

The combat Marines of "E" Co. 2nd Bn, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division

Volume 2, Issue 1

echoraiders.com

Winter 2022

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Reunion 2024

Echo Gathering Set for Savannah, GA



Lt. Marshall Croy
Platoon Commander
2nd Platoon
"E" 2/1

Greetings Echo Raiders. A new year is upon us and the Echo Raiders 13th annual gathering is set for the **Hilton Garden Inn in Savannah, GA** from **May 21st–May 24th, 2024.**

King put it when we were planning this event, **"Let's Keep it Going"**.

In planning this year's gathering, we considered Texas and South Carolina, but settled on Savannah as the best location. As Echo Rockets man **Bruce**

Inside this issue of the **Winter Raider Tales** newsletter, Echo Rifleman **Paul Stenzel** has written an authoritative piece about the origin of the Echo

Raiders moniker. It explains how we got the name and how we first went into action.

Also, one of our fellow Raiders has passed. See the obituary for **Bob Dunbar** on page 8. And one of our fellow Raiders has wed. See the wedding photo of **Terry Dunne** and his bride on page 6.

Once again,
Happy New Year!

—**Marshall Croy**



Aboard the USS Valley Forge (LPH-8), U.S. Marines from Fox and Golf 2/1 board UH-34 choppers to attack Viet Cong strongholds on the coast of Vietnam during 1965's Operation Dagger Thrust. Echo made amphibious landings via amtracs launched from the USS Point Defiance. See Origin of the Echo Raiders, page 3.



First Person Account

Origin of the Echo Raiders



Cpl Paul Stenzel
Rifle Squad Leader
1st Platoon
"E" 2/1

The origin of the Echo company Raiders began in the spring of 1965 at [Camp Pendleton](#) with the forming of the **Vietnam Era 2nd Battalion 1st Marines**. The Battalion Commander, **Lt. Col. Hanifin**, or perhaps someone above him, wanted one company trained to conduct small targeted operations. Marines in Echo company first learned of scheduled **Raid Training** in May of 1965. It would be a supplement to all the other normal battalion infantry training conducted that summer at **Camp Pendleton**.

Training began in early June working with rubber boats at [Lake O'Neill](#). It included an individual night swim across the lake wearing Mae West life jackets. Then the company moved to [Del Mar](#) and spent two weeks training with rubber boats in the ocean. The training consisted of getting a fully loaded boat off the beach through the crashing surf and navigating in the ocean. During this period everyone really began to embrace the "Raider" moniker. All of the rubber boat work led up to an ambitious training exercise conducted off the coast of **Camp Pendleton**. The mission was to land the company at night from a



The Raider plaque: a Sea Turtle with a knife on its shell and the letters RAID.

work led up to an ambitious training exercise conducted off the coast of **Camp Pendleton**. The mission was to land the company at night from a

Navy ship, locate and destroy a radio transmission facility, return to the



Operation Harvest Moon

ship and be gone before sunrise. Echo company launched rubber boats in the dark, landed, marched inland to attack the objective, and returned to the beach where they were greeted with a huge crashing surf. The unforgiving, pounding surf overturned many boats trying to get off the beach leaving it littered with Marine equipment and even one or two field stripped M14 rifles.

Eventually most got off the beach and returned to the ship before sunrise as planned.

Orders finally came to ship out to **Vietnam** and 2/1 left **San Diego** in August of 1965 sailing to **Okinawa**.

During the short stay in Okinawa, Echo company conducted one more night time training raid in rubber boats; it was also the very last time we used them.

The primary reason for the stop in Okinawa was for 2/1 to become the infantry component of the **Navy/Marine Special Landing Force (SLF)**. The SLF consisted of both amphibious and helicopter landing components with Echo and Hotel companies aboard the [USS Taladega APA208](#) and Fox and Golf companies aboard the [USS Iwo Jima LPH2](#). In addition, the [USS Point Defiance LSD-31](#) car-

Echo company would be the lead company for the amphibious component of four Dagger Thrust raids, transferring to the USS Point Defiance and hitting the beach in amtracs.



The USS Port Defiance deploys the Echo Raiders via amtrac on the Dagger Thrust raid

ried the [Amtracs](#). The SLF left Okinawa in early September. Five [Dagger Thrust](#) operations on the coast of **Vietnam** were planned. Echo company would be the lead company for the amphibious component, transferring to the **Point Defiance** and landing in amtracs on four **Dagger Thrust** raids.

"The Raider moniker faded away but it was not forgotten; it would live on in the memories of individual Marines.

During this period someone crafted a Raider plaque; it had the image of a **Sea Turtle** in the center with a **Knife** on it's shell and the letters **RA** and **ID** on each side of the turtle.

The **Dagger Thrust** operations weren't very productive but they gave 2/1 their first taste of the war. Between operations we had a short diversion to the Philippines in order to change two of the SLF ships - the **Taladega** and the **Point Defiance**. During our stay Echo company participated

[USS Valley Forge LPH8](#) with **Fox** and **Golf** companies aboard. After completing the last **Dagger Thrust** operation, 2/1 was unexpectedly committed to [Operation Harvest Moon](#) on December 10. It was a grueling and miserable operation that took place in the [Que Son Valley](#) between [Da Nang](#) and [Chu Lai](#). 2/1's job was to enter and search the [Phouc Ha Valley](#).



USS Point Defiance LSD-31

While this was strictly grunt work, the Raider identity was still strong in the minds of some Marines. In one action, Echo (3rd Platoon) killed five VC. Someone left our "calling card" by marking the bare behind of one of the dead VC with the letters **RAID**.

It was my last memory to any reference to Echo company Raiders. After Harvest Moon, the battalion left the SLF and took over responsibility for the [Phu Bai combat base](#). Sometime



USS Monticello LSD-35

in a five-day jungle survival course on the **Bataan Peninsula**. We marched into a mature bamboo forest and learned the basics of staying alive with limited resources. **Echo** and **Hotel** left the Philippines in early November aboard the [USS Montrose APA-212](#) along with the [USS Monticello LSD35](#) and rejoined the SLF helicopter carrier



USS Iwo Jima LPH-2

in January 1966 the makeup of the battalion and Echo company began to change.

There was a large cross transfer of Marines between battalions and companies in order to stagger the 12/13 month tours of individual Marines. Echo company Marines transferred out and we received Marines from other battalions.

Replacements and new additions did not share our history. From then on it was just plain grunt



USS Montrose APA-212

work in an ever expanding war.

The Raider moniker faded away but it was not forgotten; it would live on in the memories of individual Marines.

— Paul Stenzel
Vietnam
1965-66

1st Person Accounts

Combat Stories

Send in your combat stories. Email them, text them, dictate them. Remembering the exploits of Echo Co — the hair-raising close calls, the brushes with death, the ass-kicking we gave the Viet Cong and NVA — it would be a shame not to record for posterity the things we saw as young men in Vietnam.

All combat stories are welcome. First person accounts of fire fights and booby traps make them come alive. Ambush descriptions, ours and theirs, have great value. Multiple first person accounts shine light on long ago complex events.

Send them in. We'll publish them in **Raider Tales** for the Echo membership to view, discuss, and contribute to. Email/text combat stories to:
tdunne3@tampabay.rr.com • (352) 999-1576



The Old Days

Can You Identify?

If you can ID any of the Marines in these old photos, please email or text your IDs to:
tdunne3@tampabay.rr.com or
(352) 999-1576

We will add the IDs to the photos and post the photos on the Echo Raiders website, echoraiders.com.

Photo #1 – Lt. Suydam's Radio Man



Photo #2 – Two Echo Rifleman



Photo #3 – Command Structure



Member News

Seeking Family News

The most important goal of the **Raider Tales** newsletter is to keep track of Echo Co. members and their families.

Wedding anniversaries, family milestones, grandchildren — these are the things we want to hear about.

Send or text your photos to:
tdunne3@tampabay.rr.com • (352) 999-1576



Family News

Echo Raiders Webmaster Weds




Echo Raiders webmaster Terry Dunne pledged his troth to Barbara Lombardo at a wedding ceremony at Marine Corps League 708 in Brooksville, FL. Participating in the ceremony were Marine Corps League Honor Guard members Travis Laurion, Ken Creeger, Jay Haverty, Scott Davis, Joe Mecus, and Roy Paroline. Best man was Marine Corps League 708 Commandant Jim Bravico.

2024 Echo Gathering

Echo's 13th Annual Reunion

The 13th annual Echo Gathering will be held from May 21st – May 24th, 2024 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Savannah, GA. Rooms, after taxes and fees, range from \$187.85– \$210.85-a-night. Check-in time is 3:00 pm. Check-out time is 12:00 pm. Make reservations by Sunday, April 21st, 2024. Call the Hilton Garden Inn at (912) 369-4407 to make a reservation.



Hilton Garden Inn Savannah Airport
80 Clyde E. Martin Dr. Savannah, GA 31408
P: 1 912-964-5550 | F: 1 912-964-5150

Group Sales Agreement

Account: Echo 2 /1 Marine Corps Reunion	Group Name: Echo 2/1 Marine Corps Reunion
Contact: Bruce King	Phone: (912) 369-4407
Address:	Email: bjke9@comcast.net
Booked Date: 12/4/2023	Contract Due: 11/8/2023

We are delighted to submit the following terms of agreement between Marine Corps Reunion and the Hilton Garden Inn Savannah Airport [Hotel] agreeing as follows:

STATUS: The Hotel agrees to hold the guestrooms listed below on a tentative basis with the understanding that you will sign and return this contract by 11/8/2023. If the Hotel and Marine Corps Reunion do not have a fully executed agreement on or before this date, the Hotel will release the rooms for general sale.

GUESTROOMS & RATES:

Property	Room Block	Room Type	Tue 05/21/2024	Wed 05/22/2024	Thu 05/23/2024	Total
Hilton Garden Inn Savannah Airport	Marine Corps Reunion	1 King Bed	10	10	10	30
		1 King Bed Suite	2	2	2	6
		2 Queen Beds	6	6	6	18
		King Accessible Room w/ sofa pull out	2	2	2	6
		Booking Total	20	20	20	60

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: All reservations must be guaranteed to a credit card or to company (if approved for billing). Those reservations not canceled by 48 hours prior to arrival will be billed accordingly.
 Nightly rate after taxes:
 1 King Bed or King Accessible- \$187.85
 2 Queen Beds - \$193.60
 1 King Suite - \$210.85

TAX: All room rates are net non-commissionable and are quoted exclusive of appropriate state and local taxes, currently 7% state tax, 8% city tax and \$5 occupancy tax.

CHECK-IN: Check-in Time: 3:00 PM Check-out Time: 12:00 PM
 We cannot always ensure guestrooms will be available for those checking in before that time. Every attempt will be made, however, to assign guestrooms to early arrivals as clean and ready guestrooms become available.

Obituary

Robert "Bob" Dunbar 1946–2023



Robert "Bob" Dunbar, born on May 3rd, 1946, passed away peacefully on September 7, 2023, in Clermont, FL. He was surrounded by his loved ones.

Bob served in the United States Marine Corp and was a Vietnam Veteran, serving with Echo company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division in 1967 and 1968.

After returning home Bob protected the City of Hollywood, FL, as a police officer for 30 years. Bob, AKA "Timebomb", was a lifetime member of the Nam Knights Motorcycle Club. He was also a diehard football fan, always rooting for his Dolphins and Hurricanes.

Services were held on September 14, 2023. Friends and loved ones were welcomed for visitation at the Becker Funeral home.

A mass was held at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. Burial and graveside service was held at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL with an Honor Guard provided by Marine Corps League 708.

Robert "Bob" Dunbar Rifle Squad Leader Echo 2/1

Bob left behind his beloved wife, Millie, of 53 years. He is the father of Deborah (Robert) Mener, Roberta Ehlers, and Michael (Erica) Dunbar and the devoted grandfather of Brendan, Kaitlin, Emily, CJ, Bella, and Madison.

Following the service, a celebration of life was held at the Nam Knights Clubhouse, in Groveland, FL 44736.