



589th Engineer Battalion Association (Vietnam)
Minutes of the September 5, 2024 Business Meeting

The 589th Engineer Battalion Association (Vietnam) business meeting, which was held in conjunction with the 2024 reunion at the Courtyard by Marriott in Norfolk, Virginia, was called to order on September 5, 2024, at 1430 hours by Perry Blanchfield, pursuant to a notice of meeting made to all members. Blanchfield declared a quorum present for the conducting of business.

Agenda. A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda as distributed to each member in attendance. Motion Carried.

Invocation. Clifton Felts gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance. All members stood, addressed the American Flag, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes of the October 7, 2023 meeting. A copy of the minutes of the 2023 Business Meeting was provided to each attendee for review prior to the meeting. A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve the minutes of the October 7, 2023 business meeting as printed and circulated. Motion carried.

Welcome. Perry welcomed four first-time reunion attendees, Raymond Johnson from Virginia, Jonathan Nickles of Virginia, Dennis Ryan of Pennsylvania, and Joseph Lomonaco from New Jersey, after which each one stood and introduced himself. Blanchfield continued by providing a brief update on activities associated with the reunion.

Financial Report. Tim Cameron reported that the audit committee, consisting of Bill Carter and himself, had met with Bob Spencer as a committee and reviewed the Profit & Loss Statement and the Notes to the Financial Statements. Copies of the financial reports, as well as the Notes to the Financial Statements, were presented to each of the meeting participants earlier to provide them with an opportunity to review and study the documents in advance of the meeting. Cameron reported that the Audit Committee did not find any irregularities in the financial reports and suggested that they be accepted. Spencer addressed the meeting and offered to respond to any additional questions those in attendance might have, but there were none. At the conclusion of the reports, a motion was made and seconded to accept the financial report. Motion carried.

Discussion paper on the future of the 589th Engineer Battalion Association – Vietnam. Bob Spencer facilitated a robust discussion on the future of the Association, with various individuals contributing their experiences and personal perspectives on issues such as declining reunion attendance and how much longer the Association can expect to retain the critical mass necessary to support battalion sized reunions. Several incontrovertible factors negatively influencing participation in the Association were identified, i.e. any one of the countless consequences of growing older; health issues; the inability to travel; the illness of a spouse; family obligations; financial issues; and scheduling conflicts. Following the discussion, a motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to adopt the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the 589th Engineer Battalion Association – Vietnam held its first reunion in 2009, at which time those in attendance passed the necessary resolutions to approve the formation of the Association, and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Association as delineated in its Bylaws is to locate and bring together Vietnam veterans of the 589th Engineer Battalion and attached units, preserve and foster the spirit of fellowship

among Association members, and to commemorate the memory of 589th Engineer Battalion soldiers who gave their lives in service to our country, and

WHEREAS, it was with enthusiasm the 589th Engineer Battalion Association – Vietnam was formed and over 700 individuals were located and became members of the Association; an active website was established, an on-line PX program was launched, and a group of dedicated volunteers christened the Honor Our Fallen program in memory of the soldiers we lost in Vietnam, and

WHEREAS, since incorporation, the Association has held reunions almost annually and in years when Battalion reunions were not held, the Association encouraged mini reunions to be held regionally, and

WHEREAS, attendance at reunions grew and even the mini reunions experienced robust participation for the first half-dozen years, then participation plateaued for a couple of years, but since has been declining, and

WHEREAS, the Association has attempted every strategy it could identify to alter declining attendance trends, including adjusting reunion sites, activities, and timing, and

WHEREAS, the feedback received from countless member conversations informs us that the declining reunion attendance is not the result of declining interest or willingness to participate, but due to those factors associated with an aging membership, i.e. any one of the countless consequences of growing older; health issues; the inability to travel; the illness of a spouse; family obligations; financial issues; and scheduling conflicts, and

WHEREAS, although exact numbers are not known, statistics and aging profiles tell us that attendance at reunions is also declining because an estimated one-half of our membership has died since our first reunion, a trend that will accelerate exponentially into the future, and

WHEREAS, it is with certainty we can predict that eventually the 589th Association will have no living members, and some years prior to that will have no members willing or able to attend a reunion because of end-of-life issues; unfortunately, we will not understand where we are on that continuum until we see it in the past, and

WHEREAS, the 2024 Reunion attendance provides some additional evidence as to the consequences of an aging population, in that at least 50 members expressed their intent to attend the 2024 reunion, but by the time of the reunion only 25 of those were able to attend, and two of those had to leave the reunion early due to unexpected health issues, which resulted in the loss of 5 reunion participants, and

WHEREAS, declining reunion attendance begets additional declines in reunion attendance, i.e. if one person's friend isn't going to attend, he is likely not to attend either, resulting in a death spiral that results in even lower attendance, and

WHEREAS, the members of the 589th Association are saddened to accept the reality that the Association is in the fall of its life, it understands that dissolving a corporation can be more difficult than creating one, and dissolution requires planning to be done properly, and

WHEREAS, the members of the Association want to carry-on as many of the intended goals and purposes of the Association as possible, making sure that the assets of the Association are committed to those ends, that a detailed plan be developed describing the necessary action to be taken, and that such a plan receive a majority vote of the members present at a meeting called for that purpose.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Board of the 589th Engineer Battalion Association – Vietnam schedule a final Battalion Reunion of the Association, to be held during the year 2025, preferably at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that during the 2025 Reunion participants celebrate the life of the Association and the history of the 589th Engineer Battalion – Construction, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Board do its best to encourage and incentivize all members of the Association to attend this final Battalion Reunion, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Board be responsible to develop and present to the Association's membership for consideration a plan that will:

1. Provide an explanation of what will happen to the assets of the Association, i.e. resale inventory, memorabilia, and cash on hand, so that the Association remains in compliance with its Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and the Internal Revenue Service due to our 501(c)19 status, and that funds are expended for those future activities the Association deems most appropriate.

2. Provide for a framework for continuing to recognize and honor our fallen Brothers.
3. Provide a governance plan that extends from the date of the 2025 Reunion thru dissolution of the Association and its activities
4. Discuss how the Association's website may be utilized to support the fraternity of 589th Brothers, i.e. inform regarding deaths and/or serious illness, publicize regional or mini reunions that individuals want to organize, etc.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution, plans for the 2025 Reunion, and any discussion material prepared for the membership meeting to be held in conjunction with the 2025 Reunion be dispensed to the members as early as possible, and their feedback be encouraged.

Honor Our Fallen. The number of Volunteers able to visit the gravesites of our Fallen continues to shrink because of age and illness, with 21 of the 26 gravesites actually visited by a 589th Volunteer in 2024. However, arrangements were made to have flowers laid on each of the remaining gravesites by a florist. Spencer noted that one of the gravesites is not visited as per the family's demand. It was recognized that although we would prefer to be able to visit each of the gravesites ourselves, the declining number of volunteers will make that progressively difficult as we project the needs of the Honor Our Fallen Program into the future. The financial details surrounding the Program's activities were detailed in the financial reports.

The designation of Dedicated Friends of the 589th Engineer Battalion Association – Vietnam. Blanchfield reported that three individuals had been nominated as Dedicated Friends of the 589th, those being Jane Carter nominated by Tim Cameron, Marti Miller nominated by Bob Spencer, and Shawn Gourley nominated by Nick Kallas. After reviewing each of their contributions to the Association, a motion was made and seconded to honor each of the nominees as a Dedicated Friend of the 589th Engineer Battalion Association – Vietnam. Motion carried.

Toast to our Fallen Brothers. Those present participated in the Toast to our Fallen Brothers.

Closing prayer. Clifton Felts offered the closing prayer.

Adjournment. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert Spencer, Secretary