



**THE 69<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY - A RICH HERITAGE:  
PROUD TO SERVE - FROM CIVIL WAR, WWI, WWII TO IRAQ AND CURRENT DAY READINESS**  
[PHOTO CREDITS - WIKIPEDIA; 69TH BATTALION]



## VETERAN CORPS BULLETIN

### DECEMBER 2020

### Veteran Corps Meetings Schedule:

#### Executive Board:

#### Until Further Notice:

**Executive Board meetings will be held via conference calls  
on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 1900 Hours**



#### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

#### Sunday Membership Meetings – 2021 SCHEDULE:

Due to pandemic, until further notice membership meetings are  
suspended.



### SCHEDULE – Executive Board Meetings: Subject to Change

Exec – Board of Officers	1/12/2021	Tuesday	1900
Exec – Board of Officers	2/9/2021	Tuesday	1900
Exec – Board of Officers	3/9/2021	Tuesday	1900
Exec – Board of Officers	4/13/2021	Tuesday	1900
Exec – Board of Officers	5/11/2021	Tuesday	1900
Exec – Board of Officers	6/8/2021	Tuesday	1900

***Wishing all Veteran Corps members and their families  
a safe and peaceful holiday season!***

#### Veteran Corps 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment Mission Statement

*The mission of the  
Veteran Corps 69<sup>th</sup>  
Regiment is to  
preserve and  
expound the  
history and  
traditions of the  
Regiment, to  
provide a venue to  
inform and foster  
camaraderie among  
veterans of the 69<sup>th</sup>,  
and to assist the  
Commander of the  
active unit with the  
morale and welfare  
of the soldiers and  
their families.*



**From Jose A. Flores, CSM (ret)**  
Commander, Veteran Corps 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment



The end of the year is near – and I believe many, if not all of us, are ready to kiss this year 2020 adios and so long! It has and continues to be a tough year for all of us – but hopefully with the start of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution we will see the numbers of those infected decrease and will be able to get together sometime in 2021! We will continue to provide updates to you as we watch the news and guidance from the government and local authorities as to when we can gather again in meetings and other functions. Until that time – I urge you all to stay safe, follow directions of the CDC and local health officials in wearing masks, hand-washing frequently and social distancing.

This bulletin is brief – but I wanted to send a bulletin in December. I hope all of you were able to get together with your immediate families during the Christmas holiday or by other means – technology is amazing – but I am not a “Zoomer”!



**Other updates:**

❖ **Irish Defense Forces – Veterans Organization:**  
Many of you may recall the members of the Irish Defense Forces – 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion Association who have in recent years traveled from Ireland and marched in the St. Patrick’s Day parade with the Veteran Corps. Sadly, I received an update from their commander a few weeks ago with a report that they have lost 17 members of their veteran organization as a result of the COVID-19 virus. May we remember them in our prayers and offer a moment of silence for them.



*IRISH DEFENSE FORCES - VETERANS ORGANIZATION  
2 INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION - MARCH 2018*

❖ **Lexington Avenue Armory – Status Report:**



**Lead Clean-up:** The work in the Armory related to the lead clean-up continues; the Veteran Corps room is off-limits as construction is in that area. The current update is that it will be at least June 2021 before we can access that area within the Armory. As I get updates – will pass them along.





Col Geoffrey Slack (Ret)

## THE LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT (EDITION 25 – DECEMBER 2020)

Dear fellow 69<sup>th</sup> veterans, families, and supporters of the 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry,

First, a brief war story from the 69<sup>th</sup>'s deployment to Iraq back in 2004-5. It is getting on to be a long time ago but when certain events occur the memories come flooding back – often unwanted. One such memory stemmed from the loss of one of our Bradley Fighting Vehicles in early January 05 with its entire crew of seven great men. This fall weather almost always causes me disquieting memories because here on Long Island the late fall weather is similar to the weather in Al Taji, Iraq in the same months: dark, often very cold, rain and lots of it, and mud. Long Island has been experiencing such weather recently and the story I will briefly tell hit me a few days ago as it so often does – while having a smoke in the quiet of early dawn - in the chill and rain.

*Charlie 24* had just died. The radio call told the tale. Bad news was almost always accurate. They had tied to cross an IED saturated area but never made it. Seventeen buried 105MM howitzer rounds were command detonated under the Bradley and everyone was gone in a nano-second. They died just outside Awadi Al-Hussein, a very bad place, the stuff of nightmares. At least to me. A very long and painful day and night followed. Recovering a heavy vehicle like a Bradley while coordinating a defense and most importantly treating our fallen brothers with every care possible was beyond emotionally and physically draining. Early on the second day I returned to the orderly room of our attached Louisiana company, the company that had lost that Bradley and its men, and found myself sitting in a state of shock with that company's leadership as well as many of the battalion's leaders. I will be perfectly honest, I realized for the first time since we had arrived three months earlier that we had absolutely no defense against these massive buried IED's. I sat there knowing more was to come and I had no solution. I looked up to see all those faces waiting for the order to return that company back out and into the fight and though I tried I found I could not speak. I couldn't give the order.

In that resounding silence one man stood up and gave to order to man the gun trucks and Bradley's and deploy back into the war – the First Sergeant of Black Sheep Company – Clifford Ockman. No man, no leader loved his people more than 1SG Ockman but he was a true professional and a God honest leader through and through. Pain was deeply etched in his face. That order cost Ockman a lot and we knew it. Without a word every man in that company – exhausted, filthy, cold, and deeply sad – stood up and walked to their vehicles, formed their columns and went back out. I have stood in awe of this man ever since.

Earlier this week I got a text message from Louisiana. Clifford Ockman has been appointed their new State CSM. He was once a Wolfhound First Sergeant. Probably no one in Louisiana still wearing the uniform is around to tell a state full of soldiers about the Cliff Ockman and the man and soldier he is. You know how it goes, just another guy who made rank. Today's "Joes" are as merciless toward senior guys as they were in Washington's Army. Too bad. They are being led and guided by a hero. Please join me in wishing CSM Cliff Ockman and his wife Valerie Godspeed. They may not be New Yorkers but they are Wolfhounds!

Yours in a common cause,  
Geoff Slack  
[geoffslack@aol.com](mailto:geoffslack@aol.com)





**Letters, Emails, and Conversations:**



**Tom Fitzsimmons, Past Commander**

As part of my update – I would like to include an announcement of the promotion of LTC Samuel Ramos Jr. – U.S. Army Reserve:

➤ Samuel Ramos Jr.:



Wolfhound Veteran Samuel Ramos Jr. was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve on 1 October 2020. Sam Ramos served in the 1/69th Infantry from 1999-2006. He served in “B” Company, “A” Company and HHC as a Rifle Platoon Leader, HHC Executive Officer and Battalion Maintenance Officer (BMO). He has 33 years of cumulative service in the Army, Army National Guard and the Army Reserve as both an enlisted soldier and a commissioned officer.

In 2001, Sam deployed with the battalion to the site of the World Trade Center in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks for search and recovery operations and later with the two companies of the battalion that deployed to the United States Military Academy in support of Operation Noble Eagle in November 2001. In 2018, he was the Commander for Security Forces (SECFOR) that provided force protection for the Office of Military Commissions at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (pictured right).



Then Major Ramos celebrated his 30th year of military service on 26 July 2018 observing his soldiers provide courtroom security for the criminal trial of the 9/11 conspirators including the infamous Khalid Sheik Mohammed. LTC Ramos has served in Operations Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Noble Eagle, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. He served during the "Cold War" and participated in border security operations from 1988-1990 along the former border between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Democratic Republic of East Germany before their reunification in 1990. LTC Ramos is an Assistant Chief of Police for the New York State University Police in his civilian employment and he is married with four children.

The Veteran Corps congratulates LTC Ramos on his promotion and wish him success in his endeavors in this role and thank him for his continued service to our country!





