Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

May / June 2025 Volume 25, Issue 3



REGISTER NOW FOR OUR H 2/5 COLUMBUS REUNION

Get ready for a great time! I spent last week in Columbus visiting all the venues for this year's reunion. Everything is falling into place, and I am beginning to get excited about seeing all of you.

Lynn and I walked through the Veteran's Museum and visited the memorial garden. It is beautiful and will provide a fitting place to honor our brothers. The Covelli Foundation has covered all the costs of the Museum visit and Memorial service. Rick Bowling has offered to play taps, and the Columbus Fire Department will provide a bagpiper. Sandwich platters and drinks will be catered. I have reserved a bus for our transportation, depending on registrations we can add another bus if necessary.

Our Tun Tavern mixer is on. I visited the VFW, and the hall is large enough to accommodate all of us. We will have our own bar and bar tender. Schmidt's Restaurant is providing a German buffet dinner. I am working on getting together a soundtrack to match the occasion. The VFW was very accommodating and actually moved their meeting night so we could have the hall. They also comped the room.

The hotel is beautiful. They have a reception each night with complimentary drinks and finger food. We are not permitted to bring outside food or drink into the meeting room. I am trying to make a work around for that.

The folks at Mott's Military Museum are excited to have us visit. They checked out the history of 2/5 and are really pleased to host us.

I have recruited Maj Shawn Engle ret. to be our guest speaker for our banquet. Shawn retired after a career that started as a grunt and wants to tell us about the importance and impact of Vietnam vet NCOs during his career. He admires the dedication and tradecraft of those NCOs.

The most important thing that we do at our reunions though is get together to celebrate our bonds and honor our brothers.

Please complete your registration so I can get an accurate number to reserve meals and order shirts. Give me a call for questions or if you just want to talk.

Semper Fi. Doc.

Submitted by: Joe Sonderman 614-294-8402

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Our next reunion will be in Columbus, Ohio.

Oct 8 - 12, 2025

BACK THEN AND NOW

We would like to continue to have this section in our newsletter. However, we need your participation in giving us your information about when you severed in what capacity, what you did for a living, and what you are doing now. No one has submitted a Then and Now for this portion of our newsletter in the past three months. Unless we receive your input, we will eliminate this column in our newsletter the next time we go to print!

Please submit your name to:

Stephanie Casey at stephcasey2018@gmail.com to provide your Back Then and Now job responsibilities. We need your input for this section of our newsletter.

THE INSIDE STORY - Help Raise PTSD Awareness

There are currently about 12 million people in the United States with PTSD.

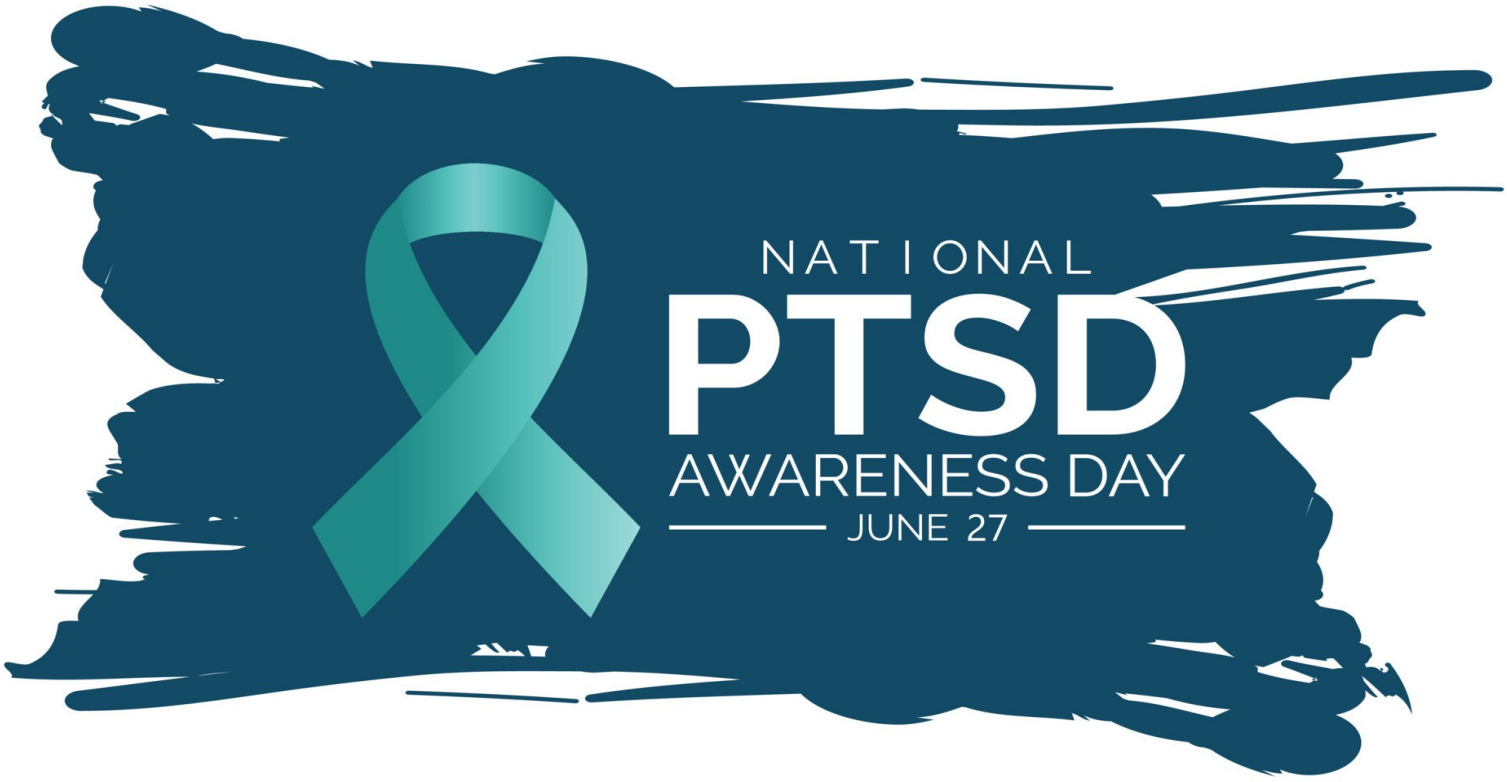
Even though PTSD treatments work, most people who have PTSD don't get the help they need. **June is PTSD Awareness Month.**

Help us spread the word that PTSD treatment works.

Everyone with PTSD—whether they are Veterans or civilian survivors of sexual assault, serious accidents, natural disasters, or other traumatic events—needs to know that effective treatments can reduce symptoms and lead to a better quality of life.

June is National PTSD Awareness Month, dedicated to raising awareness about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and promoting resources for treatment and support. PTSD is a mental health condition that can develop after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. It's crucial to understand that PTSD can affect anyone, and support is available .

Click here on this link to download the PTSD Booklet. It is a must read for all combat veterans.



SECOND LIEUTENANT THEADORE R. VIVILACQUA





SILVER STAR BY DATE OF ACTION:

11 May 1969

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to Second Lieutenant Theodore R. Vivilacqua, United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Platoon Commander with Company H, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, FIRST Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on May 11, 1969. On that date, during a search and destroy operation in Quang Nam Province, Second Lieutenant Vivilacqua's platoon came under heavy fire from a North Vietnamese Army Force occupying well-concealed, mutually supporting bunkers.

Reacting instantly, Second Lieutenant Vivilacqua, ignoring the hostile rounds impacting around him, maneuvered his platoon against the bunkers and, despite the extreme heat and dense tree lines, successfully assaulted and destroyed the fortified positions. As the engagement continued, the platoon accounted for thirteen hostile soldiers killed and captured five AK-47 rifles, sustaining no friendly casualties.

Continuing his determined efforts, Second Lieutenant Vivilacqua, with complete disregard for his own safety, led his men against the hostile survivors. When his platoon's ammunition began to run low, he aggressively pursued the retreating enemy soldiers, firing at them with captured hostile weapons. His bold initiative and heroic efforts inspired all who observed him and enabled the company to capture a fortified enemy village.

By his courage, aggressive leadership, and steadfast devotion to duty, Second Lieutenant Vivilacqua upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

Action Date: 11-May-69
Service: Marine Corps
Rank: Second Lieutenant
Company: Company H
Battalion: 2d Battalion
Regiment: 5th Marines
Division: 1st Marine Division (Rein.), FMF

FOR THE PRESIDENT, H. W. BUSE, JR. LIEUTENANT GENERAL, U.S. MARINE CORPS COMMANDING GENERAL, FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC

TEDDY VIVILACQUA

POSTHUMOUSLY

Most of us didn't get to know Lt. Teddy very well. He had been with Hotel Company only a few months when he was KIA during a skirmish in the Arizonia Territory.

I, Larry Tyler served under you as a combat Marine rifleman and radio operator in 2nd platoon for a short time while you were platoon commander. Thank you for your leadership and steadfast devotion to duty and to us soldiers under your command. You gave your life for your country. May we always remember your service, your words of kindness, your greatness, and your smile. Semper Fi .





Did You Know? - Fifty Years Ago, April 30, 1975



It was on this day fifty years ago, April 30th, 1975, that South Vietnam fell. James Webb, a Vietnam veteran among other things, mentions this event along with other notable observations about 'our war' and 'our times', which still resonate all these years since. This speech was made in 1976 as he was given, 'The Outstanding Veteran Award' from the 'Vietnam Veterans Civic Council.'

"The most important part of an award such as this is its symbolic value as notice to the community. I don't need to elaborate in front of this assemblage about how incredibly difficult it has been for the Vietnam Veteran. His anonymity and lack of positive feedback about himself and his fellow veterans have intensified all the other difficulties he has faced. Including those shared by non-veterans. With the exception of a few well publicized disaster stories, he is invisible.

To my mind, the roots of this problem go back 10 and 11 years when the veteran suffered the irony of having people, who directly opposed both his views and his acts, become accepted as his spokesmen, in the name of the generation gap, since he and they were from the same age group. But it's obvious that it wasn't age that separated views on Vietnam, and especially on what to do about it: It was culture. And the cultures that fought Vietnam have traditionally lacked access to the media and power centers of this country. As a result, their views have gone unheard and it has been presumed that, on the whole, "youth" embraced the views of the antiwar faction.

The lack of positive feedback persists. A Vietnam Veteran looks for success stories within his own age group and finds that, by and large, they belong to people from one of two subgroups. Either the person managed to avoid the war altogether, with no stigma for doing so, and was able to devote full time to his field without the interruption of being in the service; or he actively opposed the war and has now converted his anti-war activities into credential – much as the veteran of World War II did with his campaign ribbons.

The anonymity persists. I recall my most frustrating moment as a Vietnam Veteran. The day after Saigon fell and it was finally over, a local newspaper ran what was tantamount to a special edition on, "What Vietnam Did to America." On the front page were two human-interest stories. One detailed the frustrations of a draft resister. The other was about a person who had quit his civil service job because he had "lost faith" in the American system of government, and then sadly, had to become a lawyer. The center of the front section had two full pages of interviews – at least 50 of them – with people from across the entire spectrum of American cultures.

With one exception. There was not one interview with a Vietnam Veteran. It was as if he had ceased to exist along with the government of South Vietnam or perhaps was merely considered irrelevant in determining the effect on the rest of society of the very issue that had touched him the most directly and intensely. And the whole notion of invisibility persists in other forms as well. We read repeated editorials and articles urging amnesty for the ones who fled.

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I realize that there is much room for differences of opinion on this issue, even among veterans. But no matter what a Vietnam veteran's position on the amnesty issue, he cannot help but feel the knife twist every time he reads articles that elevates the ones who fled, collectively, to the level of prophets and moral purists. The phrase that sticks in my mind, used quite often, is that they "obeyed a higher law that of their own consciences, and fled."

The unwritten implication, again and again, is that the Vietnam Veteran, who merely obeyed the "lower law", that of his country, did so out of immorality or lack of conscience. Or to be blunt: We seem to have reached the anomaly where the very institution, and the same newspapers, who only a few years ago called for us to bleed, have now decided that we should be ashamed of our scars.

Well, I'm not ashamed of mine. And I will always believe that the individual who agonized over the incredibly complex moral and political issues of Vietnam, and then went there, displayed an equal level of conscience, and a hell of a lot more maturity than his counterpart who fled. To go required an acceptance, sometimes conscious and sometimes visceral, of the premise that he was living in a nation of laws and not specially privileged people. It also required a sublimation of self to what, at least then, was perceived to be in the public good. The person who fled, no matter how great his agonizing, finally decided the issue in his own self-interest. If he had been a true moral purist he would have gone to jail for his beliefs.

The Vietnam veteran has a lot to be proud of. If the anti-war elements in this country had opposed the war with the same maturity and patience that he displayed in fighting it, perhaps 10,000 more of his contemporaries might be alive today. People being what they are and emotions what they are, Vietnam would have been a less volatile issue, and the war would have ended sooner. I earnestly hope that awards such as this will encourage the community to accord the Vietnam veteran with dignity and respect. He has always deserved it."

Mr. Webb wrote, 'Fields of Fire', later, he became the Secretary of the Navy and a U.S. Senator. He has been a bold and proud advocate for the Vietnam Veteran and the story of our experience. The newsletter may use some of his writings for future editions. His words are always worth hearing! Hopefully, they will inspire and inform us and future readers about the truth and relevance of the Vietnam War for decades to come.

Officially, the Vietnam War ended on April 30th, 1975. But as we know, it lives on inside each of us until the end of our time.

Did you know? Operation Frequent Wind was the final phase of the evacuation of American personnel and South Vietnamese citizens from Saigon before the city fell to North Vietnamese forces in April 1975. It was one of the largest helicopter evacuations in history, involving the rescue of thousands of people from the U.S. Embassy and other locations in Saigon, using primarily U.S. Navy and Marine Corps helicopters.

- *Submitted by: Dennis Casey*

Columbus Reunion



Hey Folks! It is that time of year again - time to start thinking about this year's Hotel 2/5 Reunion. Our event will be held in The Buckeye State, in the beautiful city of Columbus, on October 8th-12th 2025.

Joe Sonderman has been working overtime to ensure that we have an amazing experience at our annual affair.

Wednesday our "meet and greet" will be held at VFW Post 9857 with a "Tun Tavern" theme, a bar available, and a catered German meal.

Thursday we will be touring the Ohio State University football stadium, followed by a guided tour of Mott's Military Museum.

Friday we will hold our KIA memorial service in the garden at the National Veteran's Memorial. After the service we are free to tour the museum.

Saturday evening is our banquet. The dress code is in effect and veterans are encouraged to wear their medals and awards. We cannot wait to see you all there!

The average temperature in Columbus in October for a typical day ranges from **a high of 67°F (19°C) to a low of 45°F (7°C)**. Some would describe the temperature to be mildly cool. The general area may also feel breezy.

- *Contributed by Stephanie Casey*

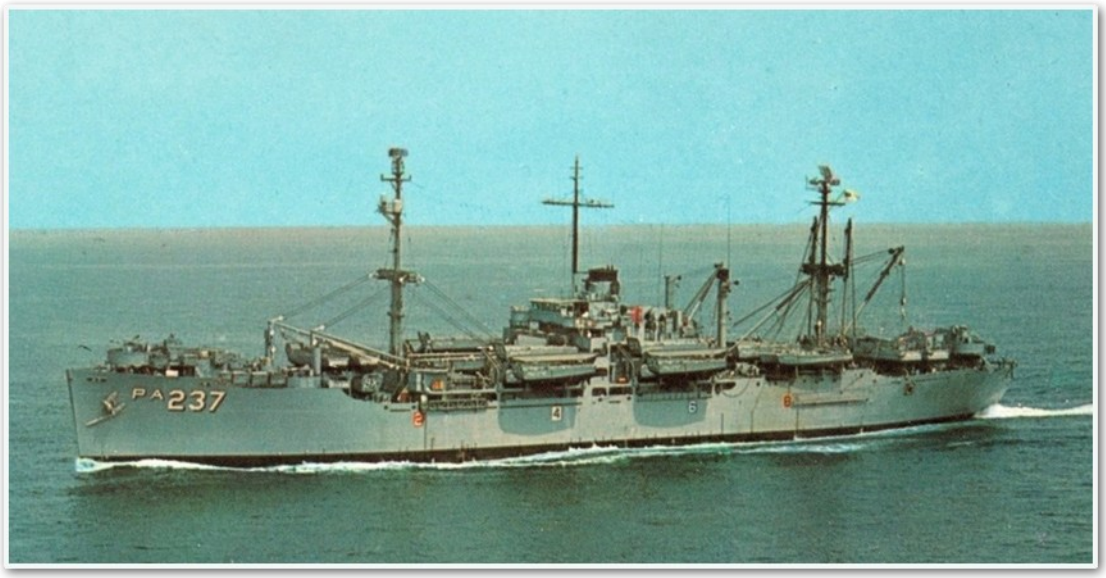
Hotel Company Enters the Vietnam War—Part 1

Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment

The 60 year anniversary is fast approaching. April 1966 was the amphibious landing of Hotel Company on the beaches at Chu Lai. Although I say that Hotel Company landed at Chu Lai, we were not alone. 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment was designated Battalion Landing Team 2/5 and the landing included Echo, Fox, Golf, Hotel and H&S companies.

At the last reunion in Seattle, I had an opportunity to talk to two of Hotel's Marines who made the landing. Using this as a basis to start looking, I decided I would see if I could find some photos of that landing. You would think that would be a simple task. There were reporters everywhere in Vietnam. Access was almost unlimited for them. In addition to "war correspondents" the military had their own photography and video personnel. We have all seen "Full Metal Jacket".

Hotel shipped out of Long Beach aboard USS Bexar headed to Okinawa where 2nd Battalion was designated BLT 2/5.

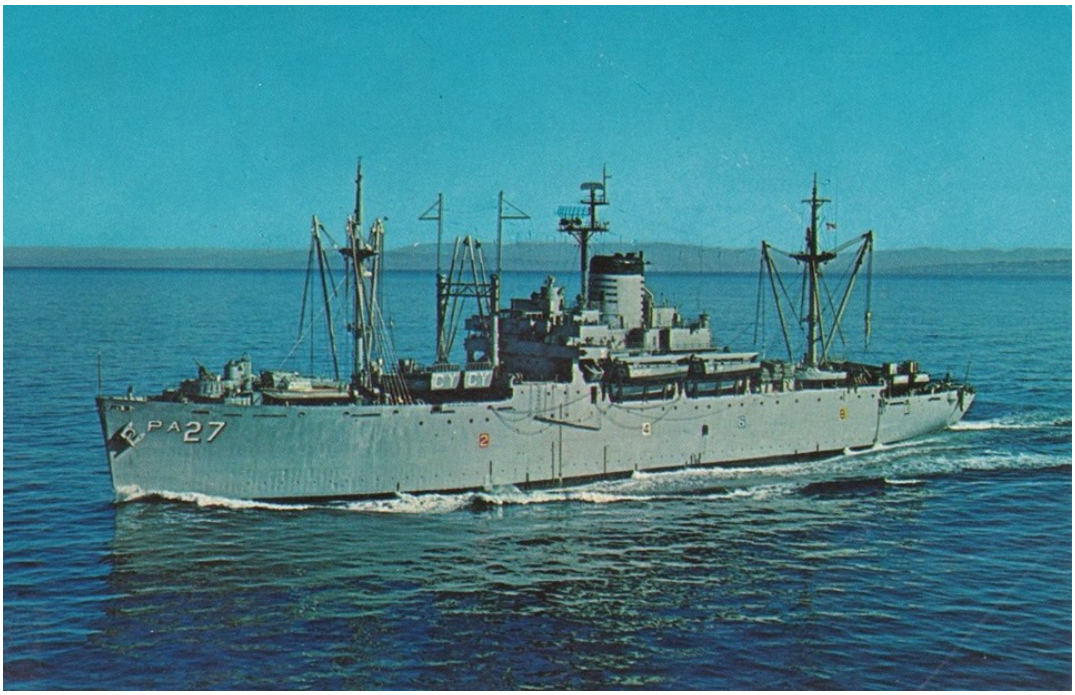


USS Bexar

Prior to April of 1966 BLT 2/5 conducted a four day amphibious landing exercise at Kin Beach, Okinawa and then departed for Vietnam on April 8, 1966 aboard "Attack Transport".

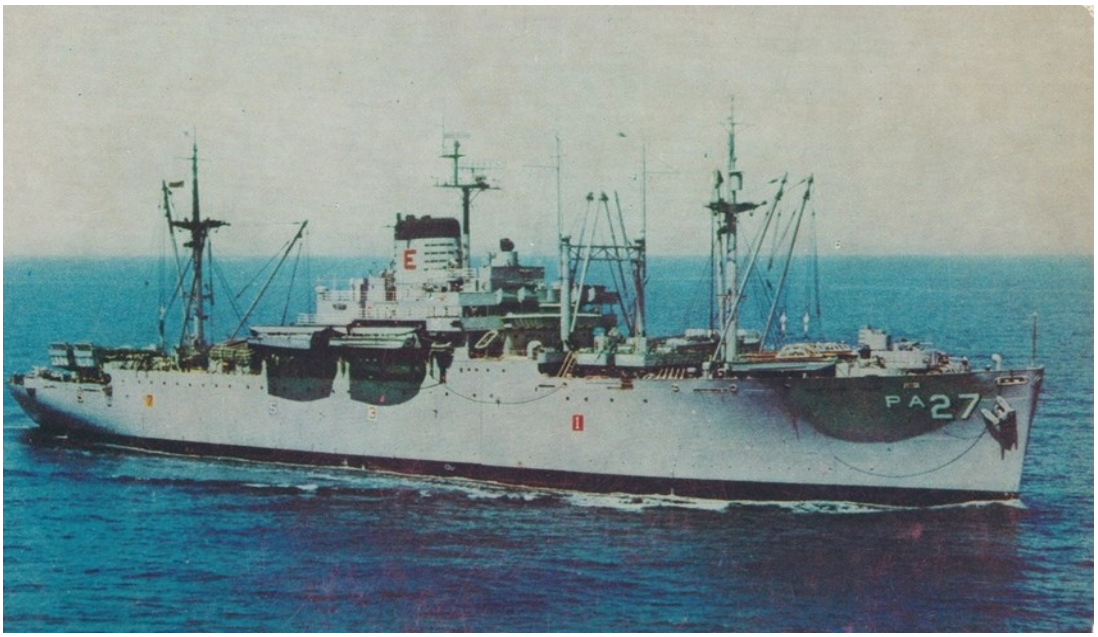
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As Hotel Company headed to Vietnam they were aboard the USS George Clymer, an Arthur Middleton Class Transport, Captained by Captain John M. Thomas, USN.



USS George Clymer

The USS George Clymer was laid down as the SS African Planet, a Maritime Commission type (C3-P&C) hull, under Maritime Commission contract at Ingalls Shipbuilding, Pascagoula, MS.



It was launched, September 27, 1941, before the entry of the United States into WWII. The SS African Planet was renamed George Clymer June 9th and acquired by the Navy June 15, 1942, participating in the North African landings in Algeria- Morocco. It was re-designated "Attack Transport (APA-27) (APA stands for Auxiliary Personnel, Attack) February of 1943 and began participation in campaigns in the Solomon Islands, Bougainville, Marianas, Leyte and Okinawa. BLT 2/5 arrived at Chu Lai on April 13, 1966. The Battalion was divided into two command groups. Alpha Command Group consisting of Golf and Hotel assumed responsibility for the TAOR at 1200 hours on April 14, 1966.

Submitted by Jay Peterson

HOTEL 2/5 VIETNAM VETERANS NEWSLETTER

We continue to add new information to our website each month. If you haven't been on the website in a while, take note of the "Recent Posts" section on the righthand column on the frontpage. It has some pretty cool information.

https:\\hotel25vv.com

Editor-in-Chief & Senior Writer:

Dennis Casey
lcasey@benlomand.net

Assistant Editor:

Stephanie Casey
stephcasey2018@gmail.com

Copyeditor & Proofer:

Lois Casey
lcasey@benlomand.net

Published by:
Larry Tyler
17242 Sierra Sunrise Ln
Santa Clarita, CA 91387

Phone: (661) 373-1949
E-mail: ltyler@apellestech.com

FAMILY TIME

Birthdays

Paul Kellum- May 10th
Randy Neff—June 6
Dennis Noah—June 10
John Bates (Golf 2/5) - June 13
Steve Russell—June 21

Anniversaries

Larry & Rita Tyler—May 1

Dennis & Lois Casey—June 10

John & Stephanie Bates—June 10

Roy & Shirley McCain—June 20

If you talk to any of these beautiful people, wish them a happy celebration! Anyone who would like to share a special day, please let me know and I will put it in an upcoming newsletter. Just contact me at: stephcasey2018@gmail.com

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Stephanie Casey

Celebrating the Special Days with the H 2/5 Extended Family

Spring is here. The birds are singing, and the sun is shining. It is a wonderful time to celebrate! Listed above are the special days of our guys and their lovely ladies for the months of May and June. Congratulations, everyone! Enjoy your special day.

If you talk to any of these amazing guys or gals, wish them a happy celebration. Anyone who would like to share a special day, please let me know and I will put it in an upcoming newsletter.



Just contact me at: stephcasey2018@gmail.com

-Submitted by: Stephanie Casey