Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Reunion Registration 1
Until We Meet Again 2
The Power of Gratitude 4
Collaborative Hollow Form 5
C.H.F Continued 6
Family Time 8

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

Featured Marine 3
In The News..... 7
Family Time.....8

Hotel Co. 2/5 USMC Reunion: Columbus, Ohio 2025

Marines of Hotel Co. 2/5, if you have not registered our annual reunion, the time is now! The event will take place October 8-12, 2025, at the Embassy Suites Columbus Airport. This is our time to reconnect, honor our brothers, and make new memories in Columbus, Ohio. Expect a packed four days of camaraderie, reflection, and good times.

We kick off Wednesday evening with a Meet and Greet, aka Tun Tavern at VFW Post 9857, featuring a cash bar and fingers crossed, a dart board for some friendly competition, because I throw a little darts.

Thursday, we're touring Ohio State University's iconic Horseshoe stadium, walking the field and checking out the locker rooms. After lunch at Budd Dairy Food Hall, we'll head to Motts Military Museum for a guided tour of its incredible military artifacts.

Friday night, Joe Sonderman returns by popular demand to host our auction. On Friday evening October 10th we will have our company meeting. Joe has arranged for a Patient Advocate from the VA to join us and make a brief presentation, he will be available to answer any questions you may have regarding the VA and benefits. Also on tap will be awards and coin presentations and an updated version of the fundraising auction. We welcome any piece of valuable memorabilia, handcrafted items, or 250TH USMC anniversary items. Bring it along—your contribution fuels our brotherhood.

The week caps off Saturday at 6:00 PM with our annual banquet. Dress code is in effect: men, wear ties, jackets, and your medals; ladies, rock semi-formal dresses or pants suits that make you feel confident and beautiful.



Our next reunion will be in Columbus, Ohio.

Oct 8 - 12, 2025

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN



In Memory of Our Marine Brothers

Hotel 2/5 deeply mourns the recent passing of two of our esteemed marine brothers, Charles "Cletus" Foote, (pictured, left), who passed away on June 2, 2025, and Steve Russell, (below), who left us on July 25,2025. Their absence will be profoundly felt by those who served alongside them in Vietnam all those years ago, as well as by their families, with whom they have since shared their lives, growth, and love.

"IF I SHOULD GO TOMORROW"
AUTHOR UNKNOWN

IF I SHOULD GO TOMORROW
IT WOULD NEVER BE GOODBYE,
FOR I HAVE LEFT MY HEART WITH YOU,
SO DON'T YOU EVER CRY.
THE LOVE THAT'S DEEP WITHIN ME,
SHALL REACH YOU FROM THE STARS,
YOU'LL FEEL IT FROM THE HEAVENS,
AND IT WILL HEAL THE SCARS.





If you have not yet registered for our Columbus reunion, there is still time. Join us in celebrating another opportunity for connection and brotherhood.

Register here:
www.hotel25vv.com

CAPTAIN ROBERT POOLAW



Captain Robert W. Poolaw, Sr. was born 17 July 1938 in Lawton, Oklahoma, and is a citizen of the Kiowa Nation. He enlisted in the US Marine Corps in 1956 and served four years in Communications and Electronics. After earning a college degree in 1964, Poolaw re-entered the USMC as an officer.

Poolaw completed two combat tours in Vietnam. In April 1967, while leading his Marines in battle on Hill 881 South, First Lieutenant Poolaw commanded Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division. With enemy gunfire inches over his head, Poolaw was wounded as he crawled through heavy brush to rescue his severely wounded Squadron Leader and drag him to safety.

During his command of Company G, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division in May 1969, Poolaw's company mission was to establish a blocking position to trap North Vietnamese Army forces from escaping into Laos. Involved in a firefight in the "Arizona Territory" three miles east of the Laotian border, they could not establish the blocking position. Poolaw's Company evacuated their position during which two Marines could not be accounted for. Once found, as they headed back to rejoin the Company, one of the two rescued Marines was fatally shot, and Poolaw was wounded by AK-47 assault rifle fire. Despite his wounds, Poolaw threw the body over his shoulder, and they made it to safety with their fallen comrade. ***For his service in Vietnam, Poolaw was awarded two Bronze Star Medals with Valor, two Purple Heart Medals, and the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Valor.***

Poolaw's impressive personal fitness prowess led to his selection to the All-Marine Track & Field Team where he excelled in the 800 meter run. With 27 years of service, Poolaw retired in 1987. In 1996, Poolaw and two fellow Marines organized the Native American Marine Veterans' Association.

In 1996, Poolaw and two fellow Marines organized the Native American Marine Veteran's Association to help recognize Marines and celebrate the Marine Corps birthday. Open to all Native American Marines, the celebration includes a pow-wow each year honoring selected individuals as well as garnering financial assistance for active duty Marines to facilitate their leave. Poolaw has been very active in Boy Scouts of America in the Anadarko community. Not only did he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, his example influenced his son Robert Jr., and Robert Jr.'s three sons, to also earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

In November 2012, the Oklahoma City Chapter of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution awarded Poolaw their Service Medal with Vietnam Bar and Purple Heart Pin. He will be inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame October 21, 2016.

CAPTAIN ROBERT POOLAW, SR.

Poolaw re-entered the Marine Corps as an officer in 1964 and retired after 27 years of active service.

Capt. Poolaw was originally with Golf Company 2/5. Prior to returning to Vietnam Capt. Poolaw served with Bravo 1/26 at Khe Sanh. While serving with Golf Co. 2/5, he and his Company Gunny were wounded and evacuated to the hospital in Da Nang, He received a call from the Battalion Commander that another company was available if he was up to it.

He had been shot in his right arm and the bullet went clear though his right arm. Capt. Poolaw said he was up to taking over the company. He knew as soon as he saw the Battalion Commander he would have to salute him, from that very moment he attempted to lift his right arm. He continued to do this each day until he could render a salute practicing with everyone in the hospital until the salute was correct. After five days he was executing the hand salute 500 times a day and ready for discharge. This was not accomplished without extreme pain.

He returned to assume command of Hotel Company 2/5. He reported to the Battalion Commander and saluted him prior to assuming command of H 2/5. He was one tough Skipper. God Bless him and I will forever miss him, never forget him and his courage. Tony

The Power of Gratitude by Dennis Casey

Hotel Company 2/5 has lost several members this year. We lost some last year, and every year since we sat foot on a piece of land known as Vietnam, going back to 1966. These losses are never endured easily. From then, until now, almost sixty years have passed. We aren't the eighteen, nineteen, and twenty-year-old boys (some maybe a little older) that we were back then. But, for the time being, we are still here, and we remember. It's been said that "We shouldn't live in the past, but the past should live in us." If contentment is the highest form of happiness, then, maybe gratitude is the highest form of love! We are thankful for all the members of Hotel Company. From those who died on the battlefield long ago, to these more modern times, each passing takes its toll. To remember and to be appreciative of the past gives us all a pathway home.

There was a man once who owned a Rock (this is a true story). In deference to his memory, the word 'Rock' is capitalized here because it was so important to him. He would tell anyone who he met about his Rock, how he found it, how long he had it (since he was a boy), and those type things. As he began to speak, many listeners would think that he was unstable. But the more he spoke, the more they listened. By the time he finished his story, they wanted their own Rock. The man wasn't unstable, and many a listener would feel unfulfilled as they walked away empty handed. This man was talking about the past, his past. But he didn't glorify it, he honored it by bringing it with him. Maybe the simple, old Rock was his way of remembering that he was grateful for all the important and meaningful people in his life. He lived in a little room and worked at a nearby factory, there in town. It would appear that he had very little in the way of material wealth. And yet, he was one of the most energetic and happy people that anyone could ever hope to see. Maybe he adhered to both adages mentioned earlier. Maybe he was the epitome of contentment and gratitude, and the Rock was the proof of it. He understood that the past is important and so is how we remember it. One day, we will be part of the past, too.

We may not have a Rock, in the literal way. But in a sense, we do. We have each other and the people of Hotel Company (veterans and family and friends). We honor them because we've 'passed this way together' and because of them that 'passage' has meaning. We bonded in war, a very violent experience, no doubt, and yet, the underlying foundation to it all was love. The people of the past are our Rock. The sooner we realize this, the stronger we become. More importantly, the more grateful we become. That was the lesson that 'the man with a Rock' was trying to tell us. As we grow older and maybe a little infirm, we lean on them, these 'Rocks from the past'. We remember their strength, their devotion and, above all else, their love for us as we love them. The man, from long ago, understood that his Rock represented Love. So, he carried it with him everywhere he went. That's a good lesson for us all. Hotel Company, 1966-1971, taught us that lesson as young men in a dangerous, foreign land. We saw up close how families are the same no matter where they live. Love is what holds them together and gives them hope for a better life. Naturally, the same is true for us. We learned our lesson well and we still carry it with us until this day. That's why we remember those we have lost this year, and every year before them. We carry them with us forever. Just like in Vietnam, when we heard the words 'saddle up', we knew it was time to put one foot forward and keep going, no matter how tired or thirsty or hungry we were. That's kind of where we are today. We have to keep going, but we do it as one. Today our weariness, thirst and hunger are not so much of a physical kind. They are more mental, emotional and nostalgic. But like an old song says, "All I knew how to do/was to keep on keeping on/like a bird that flew." And 'so it goes'. So do we. When we cross over into Valhalla, we will do it with every single member of Hotel Company, going back to 1966. We won't leave anyone behind, as we were taught by the Marines who came before us! When we approach Heaven's Gate, as mentioned in 'The Marine Corps Hymn', we will arrive with everyone present. We started as one and we will arrive as one. Our love for each other will have carried us through. Love is our Rock!

Gratitude is the ability to experience life as a gift. It liberates us from the prison of self-preoccupation." - John Ortberg

Collaborative Hollow Form

STORY BEHIND THE FORM



At the last reunion Dale Pappas, my daughter Carlie Peterson and myself sat around solving most of the worlds problems. During those sessions we all learned that we had a common interest. Woodturning. Dale is one of the original 2/5 Hotel Marines who made the amphibious landing in April of 1966.



Carlie, my daughter has made a few reunions and is known to many Hotel Marines. Dale pointed out that he has acquired a Robust lathe which immediately put me on the defensive due to the fact that my lathe at that time was somewhat inferior to his. However, since then I have acquired an Omega Stubby 750 which is equal to, if not far superior to the Robust.

After the reunion Dale sent Carlie and Me a couple turning blanks. One was an apple blank that Dale had turned while green and wet. It had dried some by the time we received it, but it also shrank and dried disproportionally causing it to be less than proportional.

Continued on Page 7

Collaborative Hollow Form continued



After remounting and turning we were able to determine a form that would provide a pleasing form. The result was a hollow form which is defined as some object where the opening to the interior is smaller than the exterior of the vessel. A few detail touches were added to the bottom to enhance the beauty of the piece.

The next thing we needed was a lid for the hollow form. Carlie stepped up and fabricated a finial from a single piece of walnut. The end result was a lidded hollow form that will be donated for auction at the next reunion in Ohio.





The end result was a lidded hollow form that will be donated for auction at the next reunion in Ohio.

Submitted by Jay Peterson

IN THE NEWS



If you watch television, then you have heard the much-publicized story of NASA astronaut Nichole Ayers, who along with fellow astronauts Anne McClain, Takuya Onishi, and Kirill Peskov, comprise NASA's SpaceX Crew-10. Nichole is the granddaughter of Hotel 2/5's Colonel Tom Keene and his wife, Judy. Nichole is from Colorado Springs, Colorado and is an active duty Major in the U.S. Air Force.

On June 5, 2024, NASA Crew-9 astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore launched aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft on what was intended to be an eight-day mission to the International Space Station (ISS). During the flight, Starliner experienced technical difficulties that NASA deemed too dangerous for Williams and Wilmore to risk returning on the spacecraft, so they remained on the ISS while the Starliner returned to Earth.



What began as a brief mission turned into a nine month stay on the ISS for Williams and Wilmore. On March 16, 2025, Crew-10 arrived to relieve Williams and Wilmore, who were then transported back to Earth, arriving on March 18, 2025. After five months in space the crew returned on August 9, 2025, and headed to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston to reunite with loved ones.

Read more about Nichole here: Air Force major pilots NASA's SpaceX Crew-10 mission > Air Force Life Cycle Management Center > NEWS

-Stephanie Casey

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.

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FAMILY TIME

Special Days

In every edition of our newsletter, we like to take time to celebrate the H 2/5 veterans and their wives by acknowledging their birthdays and anniversaries. If you are interested in sharing your special day with us, please email me at stephcasey2018@gmail.com and I will add you to our list. We hope you have an amazing day!

Birthdays

Dan Smith – July 4
Anthony Cordisco – July 18
Roy McCain – August 12
Brenda Smith – September 10
Robert Hardrick – September 15
Joe Sonderman – September 27
Don Thomas—Oct 4
John McKay—Oct 7
Stephanie Bates Dec 5
Tom Keene Dec 19

Anniversaries

Tom & Judy Keene celebrate 58 years together on Aug 17, 2025
Dan and Brenda Smith celebrate 52 years together on Sept 14, 2025

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Stephanie Casey