Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

January/ February 2026 Volume 26, Issue 1



Hotel Co. 2/5 Celebrates a New Year

Marines of Hotel Co. 2/5 wish all our Marines, Corpsmen, and all military personnel around the world and all our American veterans, families, and friends a very Happy New Year.

May you find peace, safety, good health, and happiness throughout this new year 2026.

May you remain focused on God, Family, Country, and Corps.

Semper Fi

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Celebrating New Year 1
Island in the Mist 1, 3
Happy Valentines Day 4
To All Veterans 5
Honor Flight 6

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

Featured Marine 2
Family Time 7

"Island in the Mist"

By Editor Dennis Casey

In February of 1969, the road from Danang to An Hoa was a lonesome ride. Parts of it looked like the American West with more open spaces than one might imagine. Along the way, there were the occasionally burned-out hulks of vehicles which had met an uneven fate. We hoped that our trip would go better and be safer. We were in a truck (six-by). It was full, a little overloaded, even. A South Vietnamese soldier and his new bride had joined us at the last minute. Between the open range environment of the landscape (in places) and the danger which existed all around us, our trip took on the feel of a stagecoach ride from the old cowboy movies. We were all armed. The driver was, too.

Now, the movies had become real, and yet, a sense of excitement lulled us into a carefree mood. We talked and joked as we travelled on our way. It was actually one of the more enjoyable times in Vietnam. The trip from Danang was about twenty miles long, maybe twenty-five. Up ahead we could see a compound with a bridge in front of it. Phu Loc Six was just ahead. It was an outpost, a lead-in to the main base at An Hoa, a few more miles down the road. We had heard about this place, this Phu Loc Six, the same way we heard about so many places, many of which we would never see. Others, we would know only 'too well.' Now, we quietened down, all seemingly silenced by the same sense of 'impending doom'. At least, that's how it appeared to one Marine.

He shuttered as he observed this place. From our vantage point on the road there seemed to be a 'pall,' a 'death cloud,' hanging above this encampment One of the marines in our group was going to Phu Loc Six. We were going to 'drop him off there.' We crossed the bridge which spanned the shallow river.

Continued on Page 3



Our next reunion will be in San Diego, CA.

Oct 7 - 10, 2026

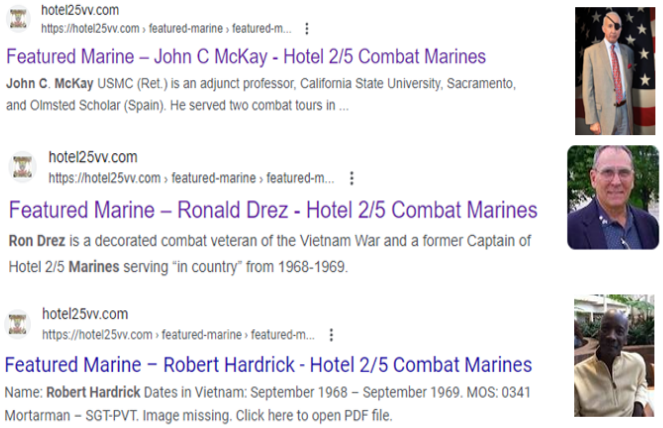
How to Become a *Featured Marine*

HOTEL 2/5
UNITED STATES MARINES
The Few, The Proud
Always Faithful
Vietnam Veterans

Website: https://hotel25vv.com

What is a Featured Marine?

A complete page set up on the Hotel25vv.com website that features information about you. When you Google "Featured Marine — your name, you will find yourself listed in the Google search.



They have served not only on active duty in a combat environment, but during their civilian life they have proudly worked and served in their local communities throughout the United States of America protecting, encouraging, and helping American citizens. Our members are from all walks of life with a common heritage and bond of brotherhood. They served in Vietnam from 1966 – 1971 to serve where Freedom was challenged. They fought in the Vietnam War the local South Vietnamese people and to help stop communism from spreading throughout Southeast Asia.

The American people owe them a great deal of gratitude. We salute You. God Bless, and Thank You.

Our section of "Featured Marines" is dedicated to all the MARINES AND CORPSMEN of the Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Era. These men have served our country and our Beloved Corps with Honor.

How to Become a Featured Marine?

Gather together copies of all the information you would like to have displayed on your "Featured Marine" web page. Your information should include:

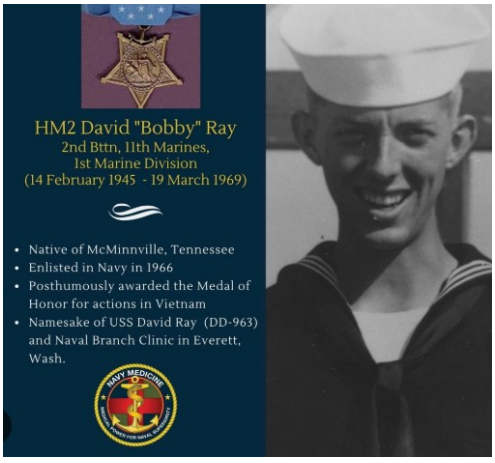
- A copy of your DD214
- Written information about your involvement in Vietnam
- Dates you were in the Vietnam War
- Your rank when involved with Hotel 2/5
- Copies of all your medal awards
- Clippings from newspapers, books, written materials mentioning you
- Internet links from others mentioning you
- A current picture of yourself
- A Vietnam War picture of yourself
- List of your publications, if any
- Picture of your military medals and awards
- Documentation about your Purple Heart Award if you received one or more
- Copy of Biography or Autobiography
- Digital pictures of your Vietnam pictures

Submit above information to:

Larry D. Tyler
17242 Sierra Sunrise Ln
Santa Clarita, CA 91387
Email: ltyler@apellestech.com
Phone: (661) 373-1949

But here the walls weren't made of stone. They were composed of Marine infantrymen as they protected the artillery firebase stationed on this piece of ground. We weren't at the camp for long. We all 'wished the Marine well' as we left. We had become friends on our 'road trip to hell'.

About a month later, in March of 1969, Phu Loc Six was attacked by a large and determined force of NVA. The camp was overrun and a bitter, brutal fight took place. Like most battles in Vietnam, the numbers of combatants (counting both sides) were not large. Usually they numbered in the scores, or maybe hundreds of participants. What these battles lacked in size was usually compensated through intensity.



A navy corpsman, Bobby Ray, won the Medal of Honor at the struggle there at Phu Loc Six. He became injured from the enemy. Despite heavy loss of blood, Ray managed to crawl through the barrage of enemy fire to assist another fallen Marine, shielding him from a grenade blast. In the act of saving this Marine's life Ray ultimately sacrificed his own. Very few Americans have ever heard of it, or hundreds of other places very similar. They are like 'Islands in the Mist'.



When we look back at the Vietnam War, it appears like an island in the mist, a lot like Phu Loc Six appeared on that mysterious day in February of 1969. Vietnam seems adrift in that proverbial 'sea of discontent'. Ships pass 'right by it' but never see it. Others see it off in the distance with no desire to move closer. It's like the Bermuda Triangle with more than three sides and no way out. It's a place to be feared, avoided at all costs because not only do the lessons of it 'cost too much' but the American people are satisfied with whom must explain it.

Vietnam is unlike any war which America has ever endured. It was embedded in a strange time (The Sixties) when our country was going through upheavals never before encountered.

Most American want to leave 'our war' behind, pretending that it never occurred or worse yet, that no lessons can be learned from it. They are more than content to 'leave it be,' to let it be an island inhabited by the inmates to which it belongs. That's us, we know, but as time has passed we've become accustomed to this duty, to this responsibility, to ourselves and to others.

The other day a Marine veteran of Vietnam said, "When someone tells me, 'Thank you for your service or Welcome Home', it's always a young person. It's never one of our peers, someone our own age!" That does seem to be the case very often. Our contemporaries from 'that time', who opposed what we did, do act as though Vietnam never happened because history has spoken, and, coronated them as the heroes of that era. They talk about 'moral courage' and how it's superior to 'physical courage' while never learning that moral and physical courage are the two sides of the same coin.

They seem to have forgotten almost sixty thousand names on 'The Wall'. We don't forget them. They reside with us on the 'Island in the Mist.' But maybe the young don't forget them, either. It's almost impossible for a 'thinking heart' to totally dismiss the deaths of thousands of teenagers and twenty-something individuals, and never ask the question, 'why'. These young people seem to know who has the answer and it's not the 'anointed ones'. It's the inmates on the 'Island in the Mist'.



My Forever Marine

To my love, my veteran, strong and true,
A silent promise in all that you do.
You faced the storm, the battle, the fray,
For freedom's light, in a land far away.

Now home with me, the journey complete,
My heart finds its rhythm to your steady beat.
Your past a shadow, of sacrifice and pain,
My love, the shelter through wind and through rain.

The pride in your service, a flame burning bright,
Guiding our future, through the day and the night.
You're my hero, my anchor, my dearest friend,
My love for you, Marine, will never end.





A special thanks to all our wives for sticking with us for all these years. Thank you for your support and love! Thank you most of all for loving us forever!

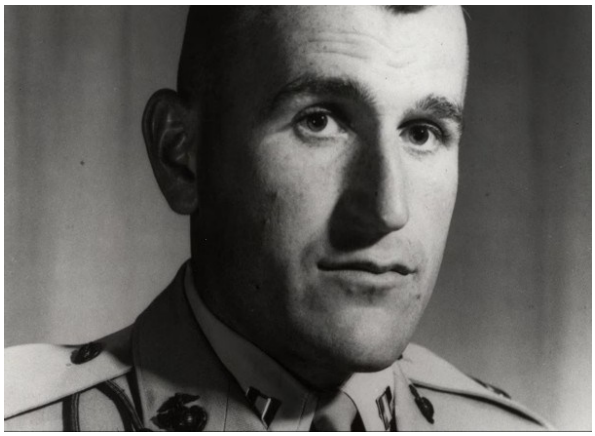


Campaigns Within the USMC to Upgrade Vietnam War-Era Medals



While the campaign to upgrade Danny Hernandez's Silver Star from Mike Company, 3/1 Marines remains active, other Vietnam-era Marines have seen similar efforts to recognize extraordinary heroism decades later.

This edition, I took time out to mention some of those individuals.

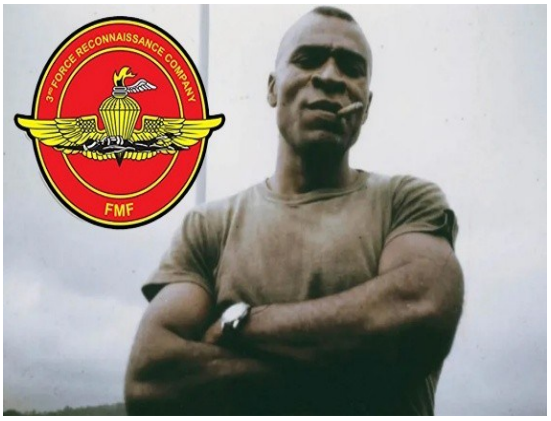


Hotel 2/5 deployed early to Vietnam, operating in tough areas around Da Nang and An Hoa. The battalion earned three Medals of Honor overall during the war—all original posthumous or timely awards, not upgrades. Recipients included Captain James A. Graham and PFC Melvin E. Newlin (both Foxtrot Company) and GySgt Allan J. Kellogg Jr. (Golf Company). Graham's 1967 sacrifice—calling artillery on his position to cover his men's withdrawal—exemplifies the unit's bravery.



One of the most celebrated Marine upgrades belongs to retired Sgt. Maj. John L. Canley. During the brutal Battle of Hue City in 1968, then-Gunnery Sergeant Canley of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire. He carried wounded Marines to safety, led charges against fortified positions, and assumed command despite wounds. Originally awarded the Navy Cross, persistent advocacy from survivors led to its upgrade to the Medal of Honor in 2018—the first living Black Marine to receive the honor for Vietnam actions. President Trump presented it at the White House, highlighting how Canley's leadership saved countless lives amid urban warfare.

More recently, as of 2025, Congress introduced legislation to upgrade the Silver Star of retired Maj. James Capers Jr., a legendary Force Reconnaissance Marine. In 1967, Capers led a nine-man team deep behind enemy lines. When ambushed and severely wounded (losing an eye), he continued directing fire, evacuating his team, and calling in airstrikes that destroyed an NVA regiment headquarters. Advocates argue his actions—while critically injured and outnumbered—warrant the Medal of Honor.



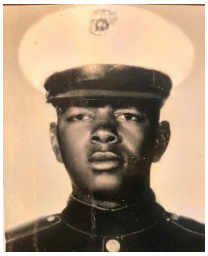
Hearing stories like these reminds an ordinary civilian like me of the extraordinary courage and sacrifice our service members display, while we remain safe and comfortable at home. Thank you.

-Stephanie Casey

Honor Flight

Honor Flight is a national non-profit program dedicated to honoring American veterans by flying them to Washington, D.C., at no cost to visit the memorials built in their honor. The Honor Flight Network organizes these trips through local hubs across the country, focusing on providing a day of gratitude for veterans' service and sacrifices.

The program prioritizes World War II and Korean War veterans, followed by terminally ill veterans from any era, and then Vietnam-era veterans (often with specific criteria like disability status). Trips typically include visits to key sites like the World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, and more.



On October 29, 2025, Roy McCain of H 2/5 was privileged to join with 61 other veterans to participate with the 113th Mission of the Greater St Louis Honor Flight. He was flown from St Louis Lambert Airport to Baltimore Maryland where he was greeted by 300 people and an honor guard. He boarded a chartered bus and was taken to Washington D.C. where the veterans toured the Vietnam, Lincoln & Korean Memorials. They also visited Arlington National Cemetery and witnessed the changing of the Guards as well as the USMC (Iwo Jima) and USAF. Upon their return to St. Louis, they were greeted by a military marching band & 500 people welcoming them home and thanking them for their service. Roy said it was a very emotional day which he stated he was treated with dignity, compassion, and respect. This reflected his return home from Vietnam 58 years ago, but this was remarkably different- and made him feel very proud.





- Submitted by Stephanie Casey

Click on the Honor Flight Network artwork above for more information.

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

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FAMILY TIME

Special Days

It is time once again to celebrate our special veterans and their lovely ladies. Those with birthdays or anniversaries in the months of January and February are the highlight of this edition. Enjoy your day, guys and gals! If you would like to be added to our birthday or anniversary list, please contact Stephanie Casey at stephcasey2018@gmail.com.



Birthdays

Shirley McCain- January 8
Margo McKay- February 7
Judy Keene- February 9
Larry Tyler- February 24
Le Jones- February 25

Anniversaries

Joe and Lynn Sonderman- January 2
Dennis and Susan Noah- January 24
Sonny and Linda Heinonen- February 28

-by: Stephanie Casey

SAN DIEGO HOTEL 2/5 REUNION—OCT 7-10, 2026

Be sure to check out Jay Peterson's 'Call to Muster' on our website at:
https://hotel25vv.com/2026-call-to-muster
YOU CAN NOW REGISTER AT THE HOTEL IN SAN DIEGO
Go to https://hotel25vv.com/hotel-reservation-san-diego
to register at the hotel.

Our theme is: "RETURN TO OUR BEGINNING"

We have a block of 30 rooms available for the reunion Wednesday October 7, Thursday October 8, Friday October 9, and Saturday October 10, 2026 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel San Diego, 2270 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA 92108