Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

September/October 2026 Volume 26, Issue 5

Hotel Co. 2/5 Annual Reunion is Only Days Away

By now, most of us attending the reunion are busy getting airline tickets and/or getting our automobiles in good shape and ready to travel to San Diego, California. Yep, it's time to be thinking about what clothes I need to take and wear at our reunion in San Diego.

For the most part, the weather in San Diego in October will be partially cloudy and overcast, averaging 72 degrees. Being an El Niño rainy year, you might want to bring your umbrella just in case you receive a bunch of rain.

Jay Peterson has been busy planning and preparing for this great reunion. There is always a lot of planning tending to the bus arrangements, gaining access into MCRD and Camp Pendelton facilities. Be sure to bring your government issued ID with you.

If you have not registered and still want to come, we welcome you. Unfortunately, you will not be able to attend our activities at Camp Pendleton or MCRD since ID information has to be submitted thirty days in advance of the event.



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Our next reunion will be in San Diego, CA.

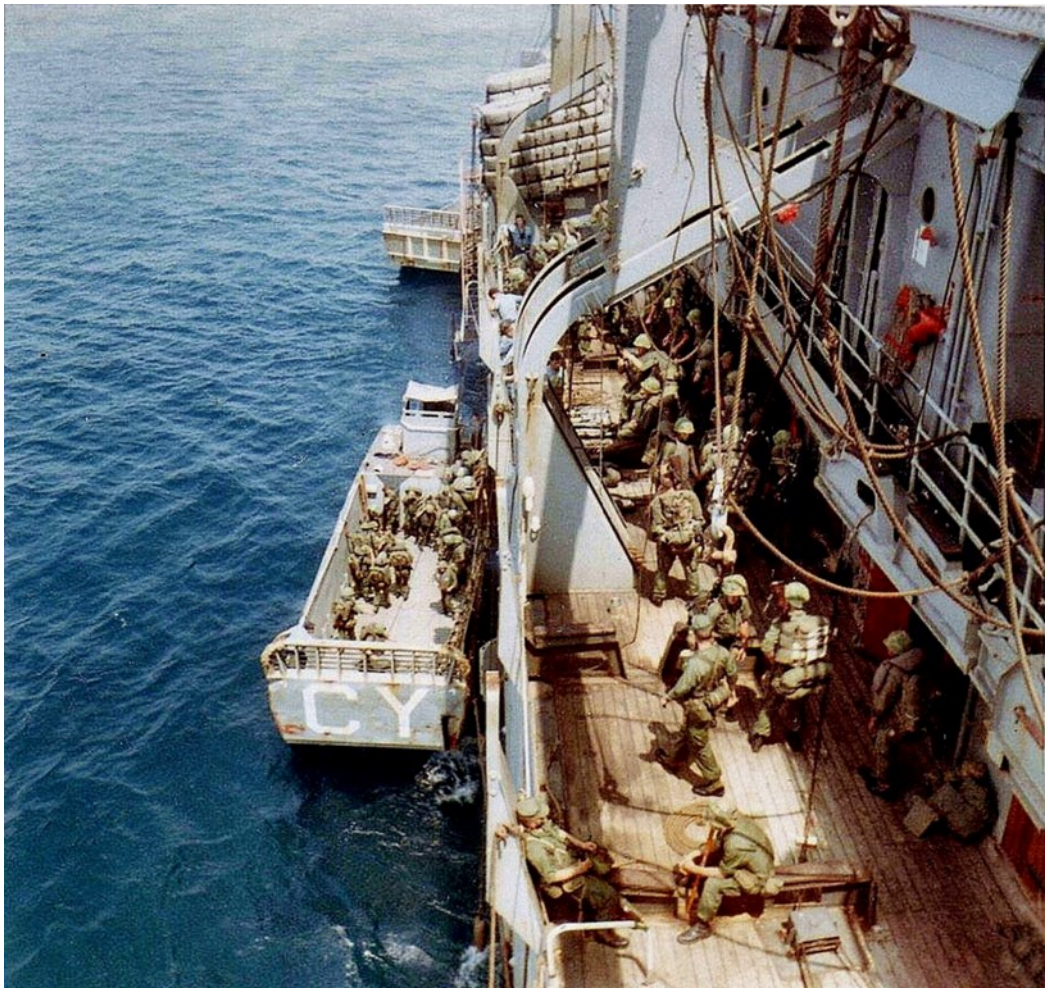
Oct 7 - 10, 2026

58 registered as of 9/12/26

We will be turning back the clock to the year 1966 when Hotel 2/5 gathered up all of their combat knowledge and skill sets and headed to Vietnam. Many of us veterans flew in and out of Vietnam on an airplane, but not so for our Hotel buddies in 1966.

Larry has prepared several historical presentations to remind all of us what happened back there in 1966. For many of us in 1966, we certainly were not thinking about Vietnam or fighting in a war. Can you remember what you were doing in 1966? Some of us were graduating high school, some of us were graduating college, some of us were getting married, some of us were thinking about getting married, a few of us were thinking about joining the Marine Corps.

We will be honoring a few of our attendees this year that were there in 1966. So, we will be rolling out the red carpet and be appreciating our trailblazers who went before us in Hotel 2/5 and hit the beaches of Chu Lai in April of 1966, traveling throughout Northern Vietnam, and fighting the enemy as brave soldiers.



Hotel 25 Company disembarking from The USS George Clymer APA-27.
headed for Chu Lai Beach, Vietnam on 13 April 1966.

Moral Courage and Physical Courage

Editorial by: Dennis Casey

There's an age-old argument about courage. One side says 'moral courage' is more important than the physical version of it. The other point of view believes risking or giving one's life has no equal. Maybe they're part and parcel of the same behavior. Like many things in life, they may have more similarities than differences. Both beliefs have many facets to them. We can't know of them all or discuss all them here. But a few points might allow themselves for extended review.

Usually, people who have never been in combat or any other type of severe violence seem to give 'moral courage' the advantage. Those who have participated in life threatening situations are inclined to support 'physical courage' as the superior of the two. But, of course, there's always that 'third choice', or maybe even more options, which further delineate the subject.

What if 'moral courage' comes first and makes possible the 'physical courage' which is needed later? In other words, without 'moral courage', there would be no 'physical courage'. But if 'physical courage' is 'freestanding', as some might say, then there would be no requirement for 'moral courage'. Courage during violent times would be spontaneous with no thought behind or in front of it. In other words, basically, physical bravery would be an 'animalistic response' to the event of the moment and tend to prove the superiority of human 'moral courage'. In the real world, maybe all these suggestions are true, or none of them.

In the military, and especially during wartime, it's hard to imagine any service person, whether enlisted or drafted, who hasn't crossed the 'moral courage' line of demarcation. We say to ourselves, "I may be killed or badly maimed if I go through with this!" The stakes don't get any higher. The 'moral courage' defenders seem to dismiss this possible outcome and its finality. They seem to forget that when 'moral courage' prevails with no need for 'physical courage', the 'hero' still lives. He/she does find 'glory' in their actions whether that was their goal or not. The 'physical courage' combatant is, quite often, dead. There is no glory in war, nor in death from it.

The argument between these two versions of bravery will probably continue forever. They are both worthy concepts. It appears, though, that when they are connected and need each other for existence, their power and importance are elevated because they more fully explain and highlight the complexity and decency of the human spirit. Many people sadly say, "Most people are bad!" War, oddly enough, seems to disprove that notion. If people were mostly 'bad', why would virtually everyone who partakes in war/combat come away from it in a broken and confused state.

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Moral Courage and Physical Courage
Continued

Some of us never survive it. Most of us 'put ourselves back together again', albeit, with a few pieces missing. As we grow older, we look for the 'lost parts of our being', and sometimes, we find them in the most unlikely of places. We understand the conflict between 'moral and physical courage'. We passed that test a long time ago. We know they are combined, not independent of each other. War isn't independent of peace. Strangely, they do go together.

There are no greater 'peace-lovers' than the 'old soldiers' who sit alone in the dark, and remember the words of Marine Corps Captain Dale Dye, "You ain't superman. You do what you can and then you try to live with the fact it wasn't enough!" We don't worry too much about this divide between 'moral and physical courage' because we don't see much difference in them. We leave that for others to debate. We know that bravery, of any type, is often not enough, as Dale Dye explains.

So, we're left alone to 'hash out' the answers to questions which have no endings. Sometimes, that's the toughest war of all. Human beings are searchers, seekers of the unknown. We think about many things to which we once thought we had answers for, only to realize towards the end of our adventure that our answers were merely opinions or suggestions of fact. This is not to say that there is no truth. In many cases, it seems pretty elusive for souls who hunger for it, knowing that it resides somewhere else besides here.



Surprising Fun Facts About San Diego You Need To Know

by Stephanie Casey

As Hotel 2/5 reunion attendees prepare for our event in San Diego, CA, I thought it appropriate to share some fun facts about “America’s Finest City”.

- The California burrito started here. It’s carne asada, fries, cheese, guacamole, and sour cream wrapped up together, and it tastes exactly as over-the-top as it sounds.
- Theodor Geisel lived here (La Jolla) for years. Most people know him as Dr. Seuss.
- San Diego has more dog-friendly restaurants per capita than anywhere else in the country.
- Christmas lights are supposed to come down by February 2.
- Home to MCRD, the San Diego Zoo, Coronado Island, and the Navy Shipyard.
- The yearly average sits around 70 degrees, which is why visitors keep showing up in January and July alike.
- At the San Diego Air and Space Museum you can see the Spirit of St. Louis, the only flying replica of the plane Charles Lindbergh used in May 1927 when he crossed the Atlantic alone.



One Marine's Experiences in Vietnam and the Battle of Hue

Cpl. Charles McMahon was on a convoy entering Hue when the NVA seized the city. He spent the next month fighting through it with Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines.



By Allen Frazier



D. R. Howe (Glencoe, MN) treats the wounds of Private First Class D. A. Crum (New Brighton, PA), Company H, 2nd Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, during Operation Hue City. (USMC Photo)

Here is a fact-based summary of the story contents:

Charles McMahon was searching the backyard of a house in Hue City when a North Vietnamese Army soldier suddenly walked out of the bushes.

A Marine watching from the road witnessed what had just happened. He said, "good shooting."

It was Jan. 31, 1968. McMahon, a 19-year-old corporal from Cambridge, Massachusetts, had just fired some of the first shots of the Battle of Hue, the monthlong urban engagement that would become the bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War.

"It was definitely one of the first engagements," McMahon said.

Nobody at Phu Bai had told McMahon the NVA held the city when his convoy rolled into the Hue suburbs. He and his Marines exited the area to rejoin their unit for the impending fight to retake Hue from the communists.



Continued in Nov/Dec 2026 H 2/5 Newsletter

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

Family Time with Hotel 2/5

Once again, we celebrate the special days of our beloved, extended Hotel 2/5 family. If you see any of these guys out (or on Facebook) wish them a happy birthday and/or anniversary.

Birthdays:

Dan Smith – July 4th
Tony Cordisco -July 18th
Roy McCain -Aug 12th
Brenda Smith -Sept 10th
Robert Hardrick- Sept 15th
Joe Sonderman- Sept. 27th
Don Thomas- Oct 4th
John McKay -Oct 7th
Robert Van Leeuwen- Oct 10th
Tom Keene -Dec 19th



Happy Birthday to Joe Sonderman Sept. 27th

Anniversaries:

Dan and Brenda Smith- Sept. 14th
Tom and Judy Keene – August 17th

If you would like to be included in our special day section of the newsletter, please contact Stephanie Casey at 931-580-3260 or stephcasey2018@gmail.com. I will be happy to add you to our list.

-by: Stephanie Casey

Our reunion theme is:

"RETURNING TO OUR BEGINNINGS"