Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

November/December 2026 Volume 26, Issue 6

Hotel Co. 2/5 Annual Reunion is a Great Success!

Most of us that attended the reunion are still talking about it since returning home from San Diego. It was a sweet time of fellowship with our brothers and sisters whom most of us haven't seen each other in a whole year. Please take the time to read Jay Peterson's "After Action Report". (Click on the red highlighted title to read it on our website.)

A Triad of Thanks

By Editor, Dennis Casey

The 2026 Hotel 2/5 Reunion has passed into history. This year it was held in San Diego. It is always an appreciated event when we gather to enjoy each other's good company. We make a point to remember those that we have lost, both, in Vietnam and since. We know that we will see each other again one day, in a special place, where there is no pain and suffering, or hate and death. We know that this is not an easy world. We learned that lesson at a young age. These reunions remind us all of the goodness that is in this life. Very simply put, that is what we wanted when we went to Vietnam. We just wanted human beings to treat each other better, to respect their rights and to be able to live in peace while being free. That's really not too much to ask.

We've reached a point in our lives and in our reunions where we talk about the future, almost, ironically. It's as though we expect to be here eternally. And, you know what, we will. We are concerned about our dwindling numbers. However, a good measuring stick for that concern might be: 'can we talk to every person in attendance and let them know of their importance to us'. The answer is, of course, 'no'. That's a good thing, in an odd kind of way. One day, that will not be the case. There will be too few of us for that to be a problem. Unless younger members of our military family carry on with the memory of Hotel 2/5, you know, kind of like the 'sons and daughters of the American Revolution', these reunions will fade away.

Continued on page 4

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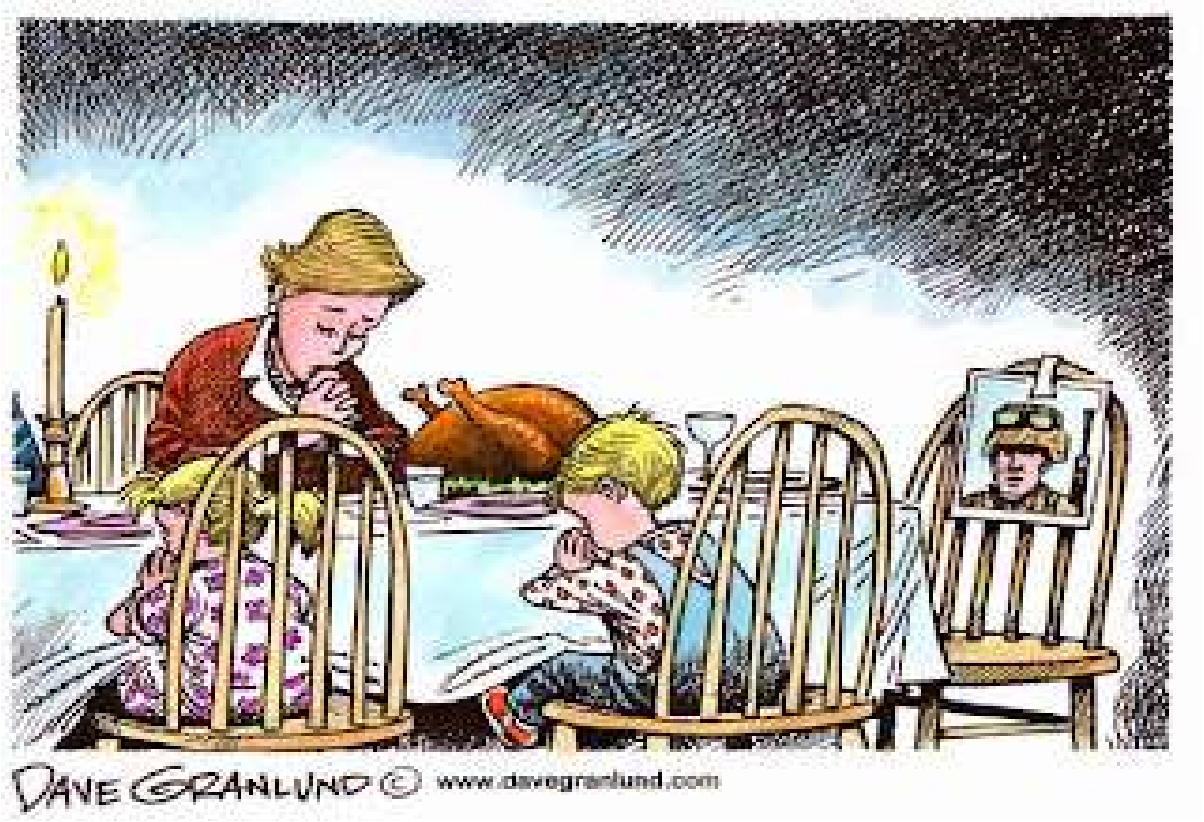
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Our next reunion yet to be Determined. Larry is working on it.



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THIS THANKSGIVING, STOP TO SAY A PRAYER FOR OUR TROOPS AROUND THE WORLD WHO ARE MISSING OUT ON THEIR FAMILY THANKSGIVING DINNER THIS YEAR. WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THEM AND THEIR SERVICE TO US.


VETERANS DAY
November 11, 2026
HONORING ALL WHO SERVED
Freedom 250
Veterans Day National Committee

A Triad of Thanks (continued)

Having completed this most recent reunion, the time is appropriate to recognize three people who have made most, if not all, of the reunions, possible. These three individuals are Jay Peterson, Joe Sonderman and Larry Tyler. It's always a little scary to 'pick out' a few people from a group to 'highlight'. Often, someone feels left out. But, here in Hotel 2/5, we should be in safe territory.

Jay Peterson created a special coin to welcome each new veteran to our reunions. He was in contact with many of us before we decided to attend. His easy manner helped to reassure us. He reminded us that we did, indeed, belong in this group. That was no small accomplishment to people accustomed to being 'relegated to a renegade'.

Joe Sonderman, as we all know, is a Navy Corpsman. At my first reunion in 2015, he and I talked for a short time. Our tours had overlapped in Vietnam. He said to me, "We all walked the same ground." Those words still resonate and say so much. Just like Jay, he welcomed me. All of us in Hotel, still 'walk the same ground'.

Larry Tyler built and rebuilt our website. He did it for you and me. In 2015, I watched him give his presentation on the website and how it worked. He went into detail because he wanted everyone to understand how to use it. As a new attendee, I quickly understood that this man was welcoming us in his 'own special way'.

These three men bring their own unique gifts to our military family. Each one is a blessing to us, in and of himself. Many other people have worked countless hours to make these reunions a success. There are so many people to thank.

We don't know how long the 'Hotel 2/5 Experience' will last for us. One thing we do know, is that these reunions have a strong impact on each of us, and our families. If not for Jay Peterson, Joe Sonderman and Larry Tyler, the reunions would never have become the momentous events which they are today. These are three men who made us feel welcomed and reminded us that we, and what we did, mattered. That is one of the greatest gifts which any human being can bestow on another.

Veterans' Day and Thanksgiving are upon us. The Newsletter gives thanks to each of you, and your family and friends, for being in this cherished group. We thank you for your dedication, your humble spirit, and your sacrifice in desperate times. As Roy Rogers and Dale Evans used to sing, "Happy trails to you, until we meet, again!"

The Newsletter wishes everyone a very meaningful Veterans Day! Happy Thanksgiving, too!

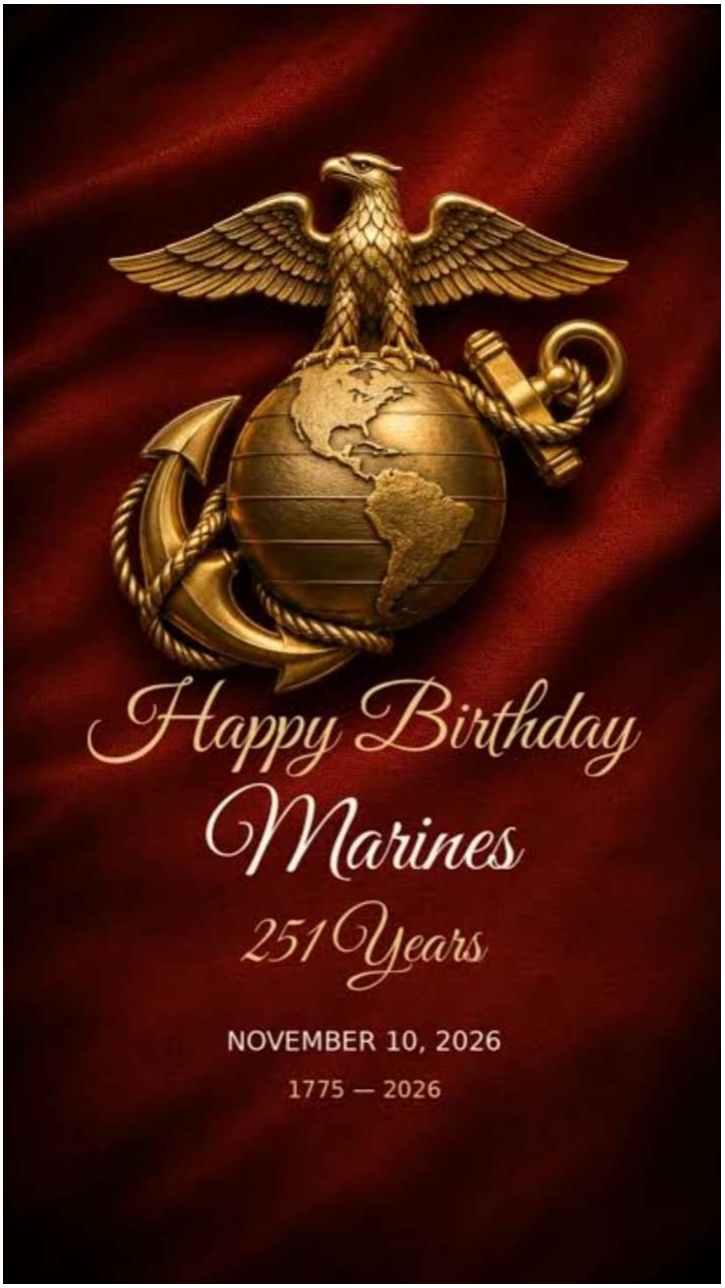
Dennis Casey, Editor-in-Chief & Senior Editor

Happy Birthday Marines!

Enjoy listening to the Commandant's birthday message to us:

https://www.cmc.marines.mil/Birthday/ (Click to see 10 minute video.)

Correspondence 10 November 2026 A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS. **Happy 251st Birthday, Marines**! Eric M. Smith and Sergeant Major Ruiz … 2026 …



Hotel Company 2/5 Website: What's New

hotel25vv.com · Changes and improvements · November 2026

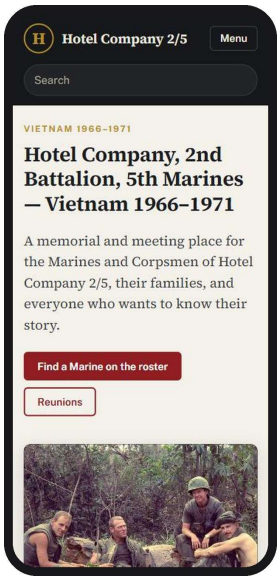
We have Jay Peterson to blame for all the changes that Larry Tyler has made to the Hotel 25 website. It appears that Jay no longer uses a computer to look at information on the internet; he uses his cell phone only. Our old website did not support iPhones or other cell phones very well. So, after the reunion, Larry sat down and spent two weeks rewriting the website. We hope you enjoy it. We trust you'll get more out of it.

The Hotel Company 2/5 website has been completely rebuilt. The new site went live at hotel25vv.com on October 31, 2026, bringing over the history, pictures and documents of the old site and adding a long list of improvements since. The biggest change is one you can hold in your hand.

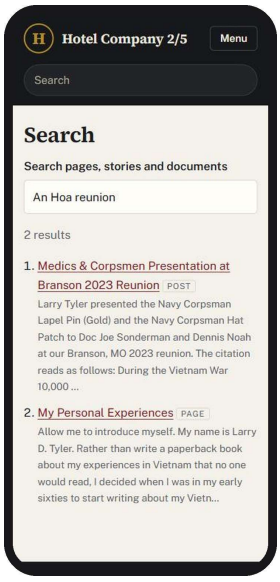
2,228	2,253	59	522
Marines and Corpsmen on the roster	pictures in the Photo Gallery, 1,000s coming	operations documented	pages on the website

The Whole Website, Now in Your Pocket

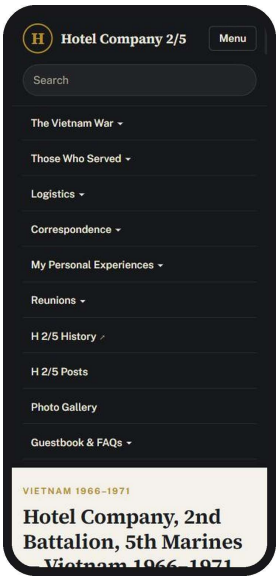
Pull out your iPhone, go to hotel25vv.com, and it is all there. The site now reshapes itself to fit your phone: type you can read, buttons sized for your thumb, and pictures that fill the screen. The roster, the Photo Gallery, the operations, the reunions and the newsletters all come with you, wherever you are. A **Search box sits at the top of every page**, so the answer is only a few words away. There is nothing to install, no account to create and no password to remember.



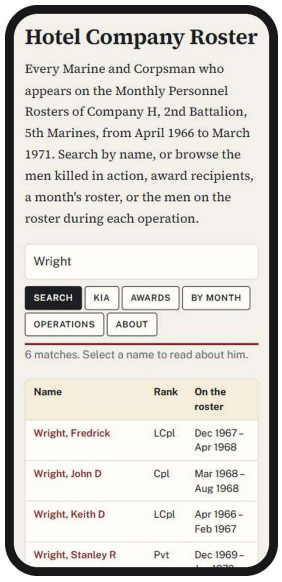
Up front. Search, the roster and reunions on the home page.



Search stories, pages, documents and roster names.



One Menu button opens every section of the site.



Find a Marine. Names appear as you type.

SEARCH

Find It in Seconds

What you want	What to do on your phone
Search the whole website	Type a few words in the **Search** box at the top of any page.
Look up a Marine or Corpsman	On the home page, tap **Find a Marine on the roster**, then start typing a name.
See those killed in action	On the roster, tap **KIA**.
See who was on the roster for an operation	On the roster, tap **Operations** and choose the operation.
Find a picture of a person or place	Tap **Menu**, then **Photo Gallery**. Type in the search box or pick a filter.
Watch a reunion video	In the Photo Gallery, tap the **Reunion Videos** tab.
Check on the next reunion	On the home page, tap **Reunions**.
Read a newsletter	Tap **Menu**, **Correspondence**, then **Hotel 2/5 Newsletters**.

The Photo Gallery

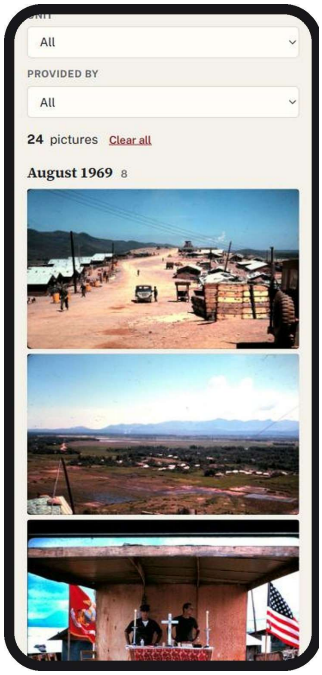
The new Photo Gallery brings our pictures together in one searchable place, in four tabs that each show a running total: **Vietnam War Pictures (1,929)**, **Reunion Pictures (324)**, **Reunion Videos (30)**, and **Vietnam War Videos**, which is ready for its first videos.

- **Search and filter.** Type a name, place or caption, or narrow the pictures by date, location, person, operation, unit, reunion, or who provided them.
- **Organized the way you think.** Vietnam pictures run in date order and jump by year. Reunion pictures and videos are grouped by reunion.
- **The story with each picture.** Caption, date, location, the men in it, who provided it, and a description. Anyone can download the full-size original.
- **Pictures from our own people,** including Lt Col Frederick D. Leder's 1970 album, Steve Russell's reunion pictures, and Rita Tyler's pictures and Todd Wright's videos from Seattle 2024. Volunteer editors now keep adding names and details.

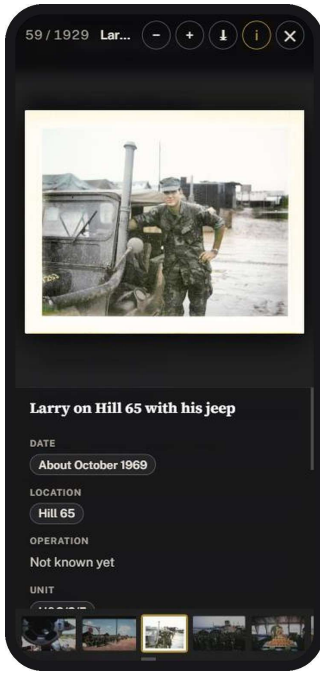
On your iPhone: swipe to flip through the pictures, pinch to zoom in on a face, and tap the **i** button to read the details. A strip of small pictures runs along the bottom so you always know where you are.



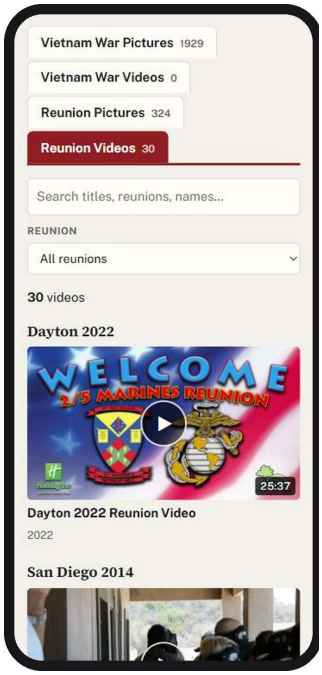
Four tabs, a search box and filters.



Searching "Hill 65" finds 24 pictures.



The **i** button shows the story behind the picture.



Reunion videos play right on your phone.

Try this on your phone: find a picture

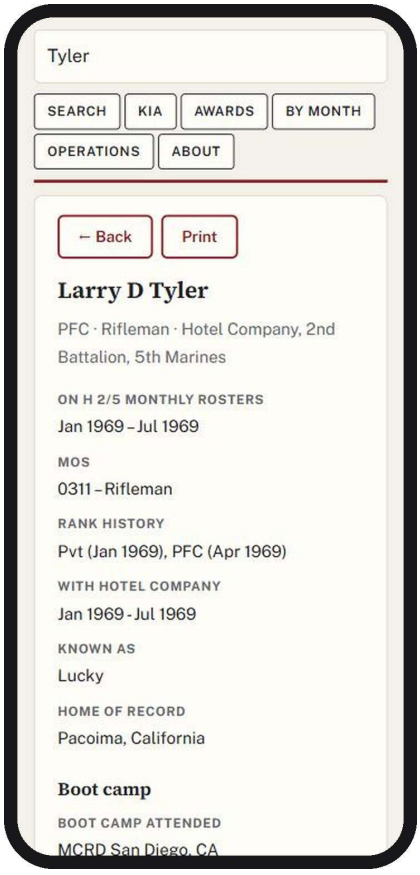
1. Tap **Menu**, then **Photo Gallery**.
2. In the search box, type a place or a name, such as **Hill 65** or **An Hoa**.
3. Tap any picture. Swipe to see the next one, and tap **i** to read about it.

The Hotel Company Roster

Every Marine and Corpsman on the Monthly Personnel Rosters of Company H from **April 1966 to March 1971**: **2,228 men**, transcribed name by name from microfilm across 57 months of records. Six views put them at your fingertips:

- **Search** by name, and open a profile with rank history, job specialty and time with Hotel Company, plus nickname, home, boot camp and notes where known.
- **KIA:** our 191 killed in action, in date order, with each man's panel and line on The Wall.
- **Awards** (58 men with personal decorations on record), **By month**, **Operations** and **About**, which explains the sources.
- **Help us get it right.** A link on the roster page sends an addition or correction. Service numbers are never shown.

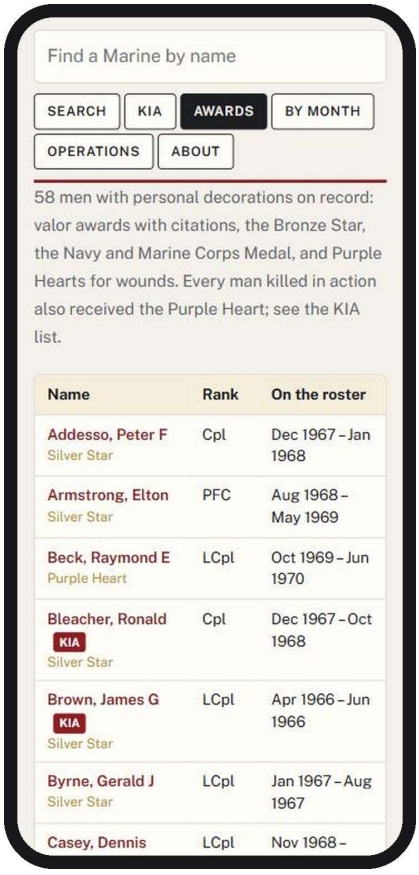
On your iPhone: this is where the new format shines. Standing at a reunion, you can type a name and be reading a buddy's dates with the company before the conversation moves on. Every list fits the screen, and every name is a link.



A profile for every man on the roster.



Those we lost, with their place on The Wall.



Valor awards and other decorations.

Try this on your phone: look up a buddy

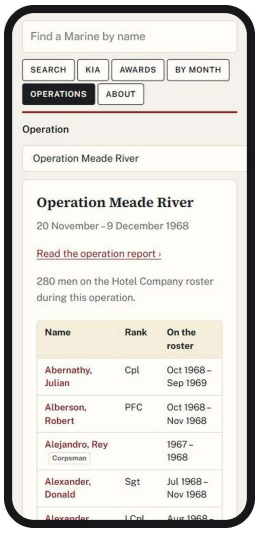
1. On the home page, tap **Find a Marine on the roster**.
2. Start typing a last name. The list narrows with every letter.
3. Tap the name to open his profile. Tap **Operations** to see who was on the roster for each operation.

The Operations

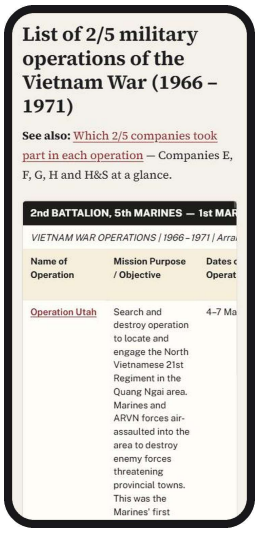
All **59 operations** of 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines from 1966 to 1971 are now documented and tied directly to the roster. There are three ways in:

- **The full list.** Every operation in date order, with its mission, dates, locations, tactical area and the units involved.
- **Company participation.** Which of Companies E, F, G, H and H&S took part in each operation, at a glance.
- **Roster by operation.** Choose an operation and see every Hotel Company man on the roster while it took place, with a link to the operation report. Each name opens that man's profile.

On a phone, the big tables slide sideways under your finger while the operation's name and the column headings stay in view. Operation Maps are under Logistics, and the Photo Gallery can filter pictures by operation too.



Operation Meade River: 280 Hotel Company men on the roster.



All 59 operations, with mission, dates and places.

More New Enhancements

- **Reunions page.** "Our Next Reunion" and "Our Last Reunion" boxes give the place, dates, a photo and a description.
- **Newsletters.** The 2025 and 2026 issues are posted, listed by year in issue order.
- **After Action Reports.** The San Diego 2026 report by Jay Peterson is posted with the earlier ones.
- **Home page.** A brighter 15-picture slideshow, and the latest posts listed on the H 2/5 Posts card.
- **Videos restored.** 42 YouTube videos on 29 pages that were lost in the move are back.
- **Site search.** The Search box at the top of every page, on a phone or a computer, covers the site and every person on the roster.
- **Old links still work.** Bookmarks and links to the old site carry you to the right new page.
- **Forms you can trust.** Reunion registration, the Guestbook, Lest We Forget and Featured Marine forms now have spam protection.
- **Dark mode.** The site follows your phone's light or dark setting.
- **Faster.** Pages are built ahead of time and delivered from Cloudflare's worldwide network.

Try it right now

Open Safari on your iPhone and go to **hotel25vv.com**. To keep the site one tap away, tap the Share button and choose **Add to Home Screen**. Then look up your own name on the roster. If you spot a mistake or someone missing, use the correction link on that page.

Returning to Our Beginnings: Hotel 2/5 Reunion in San Diego

By Stephanie Casey, Assistant Editor

A familiar scene greeted arrivals at the Crowne Plaza San Diego in early October. Marines and Corpsmen greeted one another as though no time had passed, spouses laughed as name tags went on, and the ballroom filled with flags, maps, ribbons, and stories. From October 8 through 11, 2026, Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines Vietnam Veterans gathered for their annual reunion. The theme was “Returning to Our Beginnings.”

The veterans returned to San Diego, home of MCRD and close to the bases of the Fighting Fifth, to honor 1966, when Hotel 2/5 headed for Vietnam. Many veterans later flew in and out of that war. Hotel’s 1966 trailblazers arrived by sea. They hit the beaches of Chu Lai in April of 1966 and served in Vietnam.





The reunion recognized those who were there at the start, including Dale Pappas and Rick Bowling, who came ashore at Chu Lai on April 14, 1966, and Tony Marengo and Gary Woodruff, who followed weeks later. Their recognition among friends was one of the highlights of the week.

The gathering took months of planning. Jay Peterson lined up buses, installation access, registration, lanyards, name tags, and shirts. Larry Tyler brought Hotel history into the room with flags, reunion ribbons, wall banners and maps, presentations on Hotel 2/5’s 1966 travel and operations, audio gear, and his Vietnam bugle. Roughly fifty veterans and guests registered from across the country. The Crowne Plaza was a great place for the stories and laughs shared.

Larry’s historical presentations took attendees back to 1966: what the world looked like, what young Marines were leaving behind, and what waited across the Pacific. For some attendees, Vietnam had not yet become a daily word that year. They had been finishing school, getting married, or thinking about joining the Corps. Hearing those months described, with maps on the walls, helped connect their own memories to Hotel Company’s history.

On the final day of the reunion, attendees gathered at Camp Pendleton for a ceremony honoring Marines killed in action. Active-duty Marines stood with the veterans for group photos, camouflage utilities beside black polo shirts and ball caps. The young Marines were eager to hear from Hotel's veterans. The ceremony honored their fallen Marine brothers.



Hotel 2/5 veterans and active-duty Marines at Camp Pendleton for the ceremony honoring Marines killed in action in Vietnam.

Semper Fi.

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

By Stephanie Casey, Assistant Editor

Contributions from reunion attendees gave the auction a personal touch.



Lois Casey once again made a beautiful afghan, and Robert Hardrick again made his delicious salsa. Others donated several cool items for the auction as well.

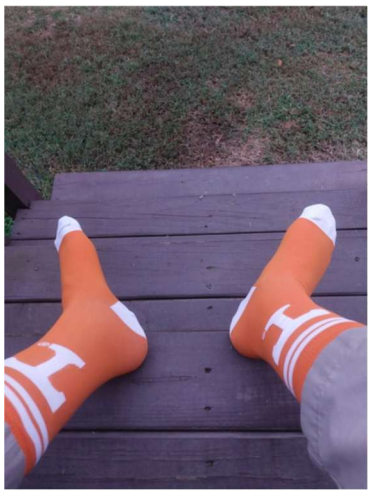
Lois Casey's afghan at the reunion auction.

Stephanie Foote, daughter of Cletus Foote, attended again in honor of her father.



A warm welcome went to Carl Abernathy, who attended his first reunion.

Carl Abernathy and Mike Burton.



Randy Pate, known as "Raddy," was missed at this year's reunion. Although he could not attend, he stayed in touch with the newsletter staff. The friendly rivalry between Raddy, an Alabama boy, and Stephanie Casey, a Tennessee girl, continued after the return from San Diego, when Tennessee played Alabama. The previous year, Stephanie had worn Alabama socks after Alabama's win. This year, it was Raddy's turn to wear UT socks.

Raddy paid up in UT socks.

November and December Birthdays and Anniversaries

The confirmed December birthdays were Stephanie Bates on December 5 and Tom Keene on December 19. No November birthdays or November or December anniversaries had been confirmed for this list. Please contact Stephanie Casey at stephcasey2018@gmail.