Hotel 2/5 Newsletter

DECEMBER 2015 RETREAT HELL ISSUE NINE



The first flag raising on Iwo Jima. Celebrated by those on the Island



The second flag raising at the moment captured by Joe Rosenthal



Pfc Walter P. Kaclnrek (Port Reading, N.J.) and Gunnery Sergeant Frank Thomas (Niles, Ohio), both of Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, raising up the Star and Stripes on recaptured provincial building in Hue.

Editor's Column

There are a couple of great moments in history that are memorialized by the planting of the flag. One of the most recognized by the world is Iwo Jima. Marines who know their history know that is the second raising.

Another great moment was the raising of the flag at Hue. Of course that was Hotel Company.

I remember reading at the time there was some shit over the fact that it was the American flag that was raised not the Vietnamese. The photo caption is from a DoD photo. Let me know if you see their error.

I have also been able to capture (pirate) a bad quality copy of the a news reel showing the Hue flag raising. We will see if it can be posted on the Hotel web page.

There is a third flag raising that will at some point become as iconic as Iwo. Read Doc Noah's article for the details.

The reunion was a great success. I have a separate article dealing with the after action report.

There is also a great moment in medical rehab concerning one of our own. See Tony Cordisco's article about Jack Fouse's ear implant.

Coming next month will be an update on obtaining your 201 file and medical records and status of the plans for the 2016 reunion in Pensacola.

Semper Fi. Jay



Your Editor

If you need to contact me use either:

jayapeterson@hotmail.com

hotelcompanyreunion@gmail.com



Asst Editor in charge of everything digital Carlie Peterson



Hotel 2/5 Takes Hanoi

By Doc Dennis Noah

In March 2008 I was invited to attend an Asian Banking Conference in Hanoi. After weeks of soul searching I decided to attend and see what the city looked like. I flew into China and then flew into Hanoi. To begin the journey, I had a huge problem getting onto the plane from China to Hanoi because the travel agent FUBARed the ticket arrangements.

While I had a ticket, I did not have an actual seat on the aircraft. I argued with the gate ticket taker for about fifteen minutes and they were about to close the gate for the plane to depart. I stood in the doorway and would not permit them to allow the aircraft to leave. In the U.S. I would have been arrested, but having traveled in China for many years, I knew they would be too polite to do so. Anyway they allowed me on the aircraft and I flew to Hanoi.

It turned out that I did not have a reservation either on the return trip. My wife worked with the travel agent to have this corrected so I could get out of enemy territory. Sue tells me that I was in a state of panic during the three days of negotiations to get an actual reservation. I did get out of there a week later as scheduled.

I have to admit that the people of Hanoi were very welcoming. Most of the population are in the 30's and were not alive during the war. The cab drivers, wait staff, hotel employees, and people on the street spoke English quite well. When I traveled overseas I would wear a travel vest with big pockets to store things for the extended plane flights. On this trip I pinned all types of Marine Corps, Corpsman, and flag pins on it. On the days I was sightseeing I wore it and quite often was saluted by their uniformed guards and soldiers on the street. I am not sure why but they did.

I stayed at a western hotel on the West Lake in Hanoi and daily took a taxi to the conference. The taxi passed this large open area with a large building and lots of people around it. I was told it was their "beloved" Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum where his body was preserved in a glass coffin, their great hero, their George Washington etc. In other words, Uncle Ho was under glass and his body was visible like a preserved frog in a biology lab. For some reason the communist countries like to keep their leaders under glass. The Chinese have Mao and the Russians Lenin. Its creepy!



During the afternoon when there were no conference sessions, I took a cab to the park with a desktop Marine Corps flag I had brought with me. I am not certain why I brought the flag, but it was somehow reassuring, as if Hotel 2/5 was with me. So I walked up to the mausoleum with the flag in my pocket to have a look. I did not have any intention of entering the place, but wanted to check it out.

While there, I thought it would be a good idea to take a photo of the flag by the mausoleum. I wrote on it “Hanoi 16 Mar 2008” and planted it by a tree. I took a couple of photos and drew the attention of a guard. He was out of sight, but suddenly appeared, fully armed in uniform with a weapon. He looked like an NVA to me. He quickly walked toward me and I knew this was not going to be a positive experience. I grabbed the flag and quickly headed the opposite direction across the park. He started shouting "you no do!", "you no do", "you no do". I am not sure what his problem exactly was and did not wish to find out. So I ran. He followed me for about a block or so at a fast pace until I crossed the main street. He then turned back. I half expected to hear an AK47 shooting in my direction, but I guess he thought I was just nuts.

I brought this flag home with me and still have it in my home office. In my estimation its a reminder of the day that H 2/5 was the only U.S. military unit to actually "invade" Hanoi.

Semper Fi!



Hotel KIA

I am continuing to work on a list of KIA for Hotel Company. Not an easy task given the length of time that has past and the sketchy info available. I had hoped to wrap up a first draft that I felt comfortable publishing. This publishing would of course be subject to an ongoing update, editing and redacting. Last month's newsletter detailed the many problems encountered and the ongoing attempts to finalize a list.

I had my list at the reunion and went over it with a few guys. However, Lt. Ken Kromer was unable to attend due to health issues that arose at the last minute. He has a very comprehensive list that I needed to go over with him for clarification. Ken does not utilize the internet so he and I use the snail mail and phone to communicate. That is a real pain in the ass. His health issues have slowed me down a little.

I did get quite a bit of feed back from guys after reading last month's newsletter and I expect to get it posted on the web page soon and we can update it as time for research and faded memories allow.



"Four Marines recover the body of a fifth as their company comes under fire near Hill 484." Vietnam, October 1966. NOTE: At right is the French-born photojournalist Catherine Leroy (1945 – 2006); she was cropped out of the version of this photo that originally ran in LIFE. (Larry Burrows—Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images)

One very interesting point that came out of the compilation of the list is that Bill Jackson, who served with Hotel in 1969, was from the same hometown as Leland Hammond, who is depicted here in a famous Burrows photo from October 11, 1966. Bill sent me an email stating that when this photo was published, the folks in his hometown were convinced that it was Leland. They were correct. The four Marines carrying Leland are Ronald Hoole, Rickey Holloway, Tom Jimenez, and Terry O'Connor. All four survived the war. Ron and Tom have since passed away. I can't confirm any recent info concerning Rickey and Terry.

No Man left behind--No man left out.

NASHVILLE REUNION
AFTER ACTION REPORT

The reunion in Nashville was a great success. My wife and I arrived ahead of the start of the reunion and made a recon of the surrounding area to forage for supplies. We located and toured the Jack Daniels Distillery in Lynchburg and did the tasting tour. An elevated level of touring that included tasting of the various supplies available for consumption. We determined that the "Gentleman Jack", "Honey" and "Fire" were suitable for consumption at the reunion and requisitioned sufficient for the troops. We also scouted the Carter House and the Lotz Mansion at the Franklin Battlefield.





A Group of early arrivers, guided by host Jim Hayden, formed up for breakfast at a local iHop and a trip to the Hermitage, General Jackson's home, just outside of Nashville. Language lessons were provided by the waitress that enabled the group to converse with the local inhabitants.

Company Coins were presented to first time attendees, Dennis Casey, Luther Hamilton, Don Allen and Doc Ray Shockley.



A meeting was held to determine next year's location for the reunion and a spirited debate ensued. That was of course a pun intended. My wife, Carolin and Hilda Alin, Doc Dale Alin's wife, suggested seriously that the next reunion be held in Hawaii. It was ultimately determined that next year's will be held in Pensacola, east coast, followed by Albuquerque/Santa Fe, New Mexico, west coast, to follow. Joe Sonderman and Sonny Heinonen are heading the plans for Pensacola and Dave Harbin is working on plans for New Mexico in 2017. As luck would have it, while on a Platoon size operation in the downtown area of Nashville, contact was made with the King of Pensacola. Well maybe not the King, but he was someone who has a position in Pensacola that will help to facilitate our reunion. Sonny has a contact living in the area he intends to lean on for help as well as contacts with the "Blue Angels" who will be performing about the same time as our reunion. I have advised Sonny that I want a ride along and his reply was that they don't make a barf bag large enough to handle an attorney. Plans are already forming up nicely.







Group trips to downtown Nashville, tours of the Ryman Auditorium and lunch at BB Kings went with a single hitch. Well, maybe a couple of hitches. But nothing that we weren't able to overcome. There were plenty of sites to see. A good time was had be all. Pictures have been forwarded to Larry for posting on the web site.

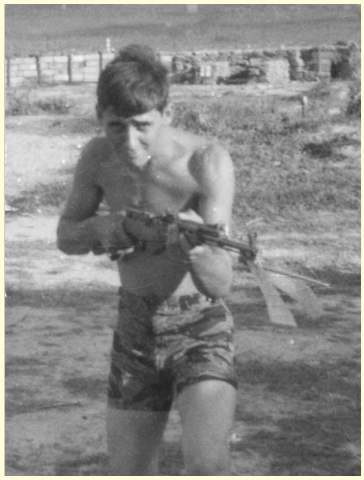
Don Allen was unable to overcome logistical problems to get Elton Armstrong to the reunion, however, he did present a challenge coin in Elton's honor to the Hotel Marines and Corpsmen in attendance.

As always, we are looking for your comments, criticism and suggestions for improvement.



Mouse Can Hear Again

by Tony Cordisco



His name is Jack Fouse, but his nickname is Mouse. He was blinded by a C4 charge at Liberty Bridge in June or July of 69. He also lost most of his arm in the explosion.



He got progressively worse over the years to the point where he also lost his hearing. Because Mouse could not see or hear, when he was introduced around at the 2008 Ohio reunion to both the guys who knew him and to those who did not, we would write out the name on the skin of his partially amputated arm. The skin on that portion of his arm is the most sensitive and it is easiest for him to decipher the spelling. I got a big hug when my name was spelled.

Rudy Wirgau was one of our Corpsmen at Liberty Bridge. When Rudy's name was spelled out Mouse just could not contain himself. He grabbed him and would not let go. He just kept saying over and over again, "You saved my Life. You saved my life." That was the first time the two had seen each other since that night on Liberty Bridge.

Mouse recently had a successful implant surgery enabling him to hear again after 46 years. Mouse was able to get together with a bunch of the Pennsylvania Hotel Members along with Rudy Wirgau, an Honorary Penn member from Tampa, Florida. In the picture below are left to right: Jim Fox, Rich Kratzer, Mouse, Tony Cordisco, Bob Baldwin, and Doc Rudy





At the Nashville reunion this year, we arranged a call to Mouse and passed the phone around. It was quite a memorable experience to communicate with him.

Hotel Company Wine

If you enjoyed the wine at the reunion it is still available through Dave Johnson. The source for the wine is Windsor Vineyards and Dave has a great offer for Hotel Company Marines and Corpsmen. What you get is a case of wine with FREE SHIPPING (for 1 penny) and 3 extra bottles free. That's 15 bottles for the price of 12 and shipping anywhere in the US (except for a few states*)



You can't find this special deal on line. You must call Dave Johnson at 707-921-2656 between 6:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. California time or send him an email djohnson@vintagewineestates.com
Be sure and tell Dave that you want the Hotel 2/5 label.

If you live in one of those states where the wine can't be shipped, Utah, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Kentucky, Delaware, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Dakota, talk to Dave about alternative ideas for shipping.

This deal may not last for ever so, if you want some great wine at a good price with the Hotel Company logo, take advantage of it soon.

The red at the reunion was the "Fusion". The white at the San Diego reunion was a "Moscato". (Both $12.00 per bottle) I order those because I like them.

Windsor has many great selections at various prices. If you did not like the wines at the reunions or if you just want to try something different, go to the Windsor web site (windsorvineyards.com), review the various choices and prices, and then talk to Dave. However, to get the deal you need to call Dave at the above number or by email. The offer is not available on line.

Hotel 2/5 Web Page

Larry is constantly updating and improving the Hotel web site. Be sure and check it out regularly. Most importantly, send Larry anything you want to appear on the pages. He is looking for photos and articles about Hotel to fill the pages. He can't do it without your submissions.

If your having problems accessing the pages, just contact Larry and he will walk you through it.

http://hotel25vv.org/