# Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

May 1, 2024
Volume 24, Issue 3







## SEATTLE REUNION IN SEPTEMBER

For those who haven't yet signed up, we need you to sign up very soon. We will be staying at the beautiful Radisson Seattle Airport hotel, September 18th-22nd, near the SeaTac Airport. For those using the airport, great news; our hotel provides free complimentary shuttle service between the airport and the hotel, a 10-minute ride.

We have some very fun events planned for this reunion. All of our group events have been carefully planned out. On Wednesday evening we will be at Tun Tavern with our Meet and Greet time with lots of fun, two free rounds of drinks. We will be spending the day together at the hotel Thursday with a group of great speakers. On Friday, we will be having a wonderful Memorial Service at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park. Then, next door, we will spending our time at the Museum of Flight.

Friday late afternoon and evening, you will be on your own so you can go and explore the great city of Seattle. Saturday morning, we will be going on an excursion boat ride to visit the Seattle Harbor. The Saturday evening formal banquet dinner will be very special this year. Yes, you will need to dress up, men with coat and tie for this great evening. Ladies in dresses. Sunday morning will be packed with the finishing up of our silent auction during breakfast, and then our business meeting time together before saying our goodbyes.

## OPERATION STARLITE

In 2022, a new book about "our war" was published. It's entitled, "Triumph Regained." It's actually the second book of a literary trilogy, with the third book yet to be written. The first book was released in 2006. Its title is, "Triumph Forsaken." That edition covered the years 1954-1965. This second edition, "Triumph Regained", covers the years 1965-1968. Many of us served in Vietnam during this time.

The Hotel Company newsletter is gradually reading this book, and the new information from it is pretty astounding! Much of the truth discussed in it is about things we already know, having been up-front participants in this adventure. But other tidbits of information are coming through which are eye-openers and quite opposite of the so-called "conventional wisdom" about the Vietnam War, which so often, seems to contain little wisdom, at all.

For example, many history books and documentaries discuss the battle in the Ia Drang Valley in November 1965 as the first encounter between American forces and the North Vietnamese regular army troops. However, in this book (with newfound information), that was not the case . Earlier in the year (1965), in Operation Starlite, our Marine Corps first faced off against NVA soldiers.

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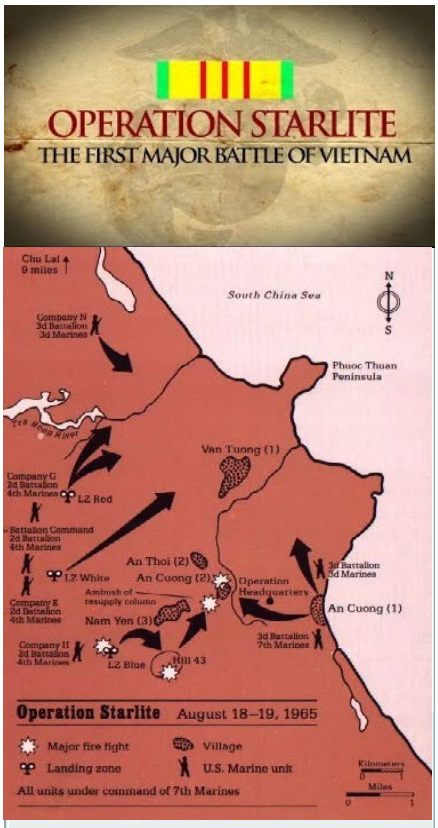
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**Seattle Reunion 2024**

**September 18th—22nd**



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BACK THEN AND NOW

**Captain Ronald Drez** served with Hotel 2/5 from October 1968-March 1969 and received two Bronze Star medals for his service as Company Commander. Ron is an award-winning author and historian. He lives in New Orleans, Louisiana with his wife, Judy.

**3rd Platoon Sergeant Al Bresser** served with Hotel 2/5 from 1968-1969 and was often "acting Platoon Commander". Born in Manhattan, New York, Al traveled the United States as a long-haul truck driver before retiring and settling in Andalusia, Alabama. Al enjoys fishing in his spare time.

**Hospital Corpsman Dale Allin** served in the second platoon of Hotel 2/5 in 1967. Dale worked as a CPA before retirement but continues to do tax preparation. Dale currently resides in Portland, Oregon and has a lovely partner named Hilda.

Even then, Main Force Viet Cong units were manned mostly by the "invaders from the North!" What the author writes in the first chapter of his book is very interesting and goes against what military historians thought they knew for over fifty years.

We wonder, "Did the Marines who fought in Operation Starlite not know this?" It's hard to believe that they didn't. But the main point still stands. Not long after America's arrival in Vietnam (March 1965), North Vietnam sent its best troops up against us! As we can all attest, the enemy we faced in 'Nam never considered it playtime. They meant business and they sent their best to get the job done as quickly as possible! This revelation in "Triumph Regained" takes us back to the "preamble" in James Webb's novel. "Fields of Fire."

James Webb is a former Secretary of the Navy and former U.S. Senator. He served in "Delta" Company 1/5, mainly in 1969. He won the Navy Cross, and he wrote the novel, "Fields of Fire." In the very first entry into his book, he recounted the conversation between a New York Times war correspondent, and an unnamed U.S. General. The general said to the reporter: "And who are the young men we are asking to go into action against such solid odds? They are the best we have. But, they are not McNamara's sons, or Bundy's. I doubt they're yours. And they know they're at the end of the pipeline. That no one cares. They know."

What the general told the reporter lines up with "Operation Starlite." The enemy was sending its best against us from day one. Of course, we know (being Marines), that America's best was facing them down. Later in the war (early 1967), during the famous "Hill Battles", up near the DMZ, a war correspondent asked a Marine Company Commander how good the NVA troops were. The officer replied, "They (NVA) were very good! But not as good as my eighteen - year-olds!" That comment verified what this anonymous general had said earlier in the war, also. North Vietnam sent their best troops southward to invade and destroy. What we faced weren't "old papa-sans armed with a flintlock rifle", but crack troops who fought to their death or, ours!

Operation Starlite began on August 18 and ended August 24th, 1965. Unlike most of the fighting in Vietnam, it was an amphibious assault by the Marines, very similar to WWII battles. The NVA troops were entrenched in the village of Van Tuong in Quang Ngai Province. This was in I Corps or "Marineland", as previously mentioned in the last newsletter. The Marines had 45 KIAs and 203 WIAs. The NVA lost 614 killed.

(Continued on page 4)

# FEATURED MARINE

## ANTHONY HENRY MARENGO





***SILVER STAR BY DATE OF ACTION:***

January 26, 1967

**CITATION:**

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Staff Sergeant Anthony Henry Marengo (MCSN: 1692871), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Platoon Sergeant with Company F, Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, FIRST Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with combat operations against insurgent communist (Viet Cong) forces on 26 January 1967, in the Republic of Vietnam.

During Operation TUSCALOOSA near An Hoa in Duc Duc District, Quang Nam Province, Staff Sergeant Marengo's company was crossing the Song Ba Ren River when it came under a heavy volume of enemy automatic weapons and mortar fire from the village of Le Nam on the opposite bank. Reacting instantly, he quickly and aggressively assisted in executing the river crossing. Approaching the village, his platoon came under intense enemy small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire, temporarily pinning down the lead squad and causing numerous casualties.

Displaying exceptional tactical skill, Staff Sergeant Marengo expeditiously aided in organizing his platoon to deliver effective fire on the enemy positions. Then, with complete disregard for his own safety, he advanced under heavy enemy fire to the lead squad and carried a mortally wounded fire team leader to a covered position. With dauntless courage and fearless determination, he again exposed himself to hostile fire to return to the point squad and lead it to a covered position where he reorganized the unit. Observing two wounded Marines, he assisted them to safety and obtained medical aid and evacuation.

Throughout the encounter, his daring and heroic leadership, sound tactical skill, and bold initiative were instrumental in defeating the numerically superior enemy force and in minimizing Marine casualties. By his aggressive fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty, Staff Sergeant Marengo upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

**STAFF SGT TONY MARENGO**

Tony served in Vietnam including both Fox and Hotel Companies in 2/5 between July 1966 — Dec 1972. In 1966, Tony was the Plt. Commander for the 3rd Plt. Fox Company 2/5. Sargent Major Marengo received the Silver Star, Bronze Star, three Purple Hearts, and two Meritorious Mast Certificates for commendable service.

After his first tour with Fox Company, he came back into country and assigned with 2/27 5th Marine Division. When 2/27 was sent back to the States, Tony stayed in Vietnam and was assigned to Hotel 2/5. While in H 2/5 he was promoted to 1st Sgt and transferred back into Fox Company 2/5.

With things winding up in Vietnam, Tony signed up and was assigned to the American Embassy, seeing action in Saigon in 1972.

While serving in Vietnam, Tony stated that he served with some real heroes like radio operator Mike Burton, Ted Woolens, Fox CO Capt George Burgett, Hotel CO Capt James Dorethy, Capt James Kirschke, Capt George Burgett, L.Cpl Melvin Long, and Hotel CO Capt Poolaw.

Thanks for your service.

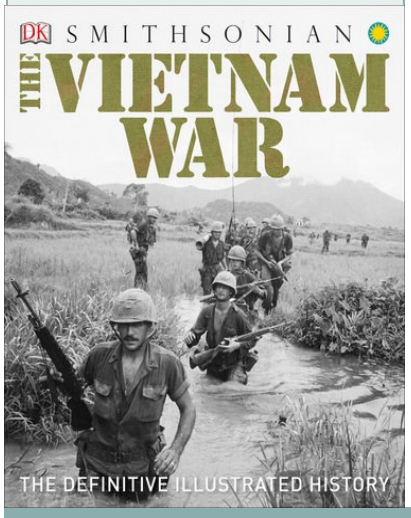
## IT'S OFFICIAL

## WE ARE IN THE HISTORY BOOKS

Yes, we are permanently documented in the history books about the Vietnam War. From the beginning of Hotel 2/5, formed in late 1965 by then 1st LT Jerome Doherty who led Hotel 2/5 from Long Beach to Chu Lai, Vietnam, through the years to Hotel CO Capt J. W. Moffett who after distributing radios, weapons, and supplies to the ARVNS, left Baldy Combat Base, Vietnam on March 2, 1971 and returned to Camp Pendleton, California via the ship USS Denver, arriving on 15 April 1971, we in Hotel 2/5 were documented and written about in the Vietnam history books.

Hear Ronald Drez's own words when he spoke at our Branson 2023 Reunion that we are in the Marine Corps history books. Click here: In the History Books!

Hotel 2/5 fought in some of the greatest Vietnam battles, including Khe Sanh, Hue City, and Tet Offensives 1968 & 1969. We were in 33 military combat operations during our stay in Vietnam. We will be highlighting many of these history books at our Seattle 2024 Reunion.



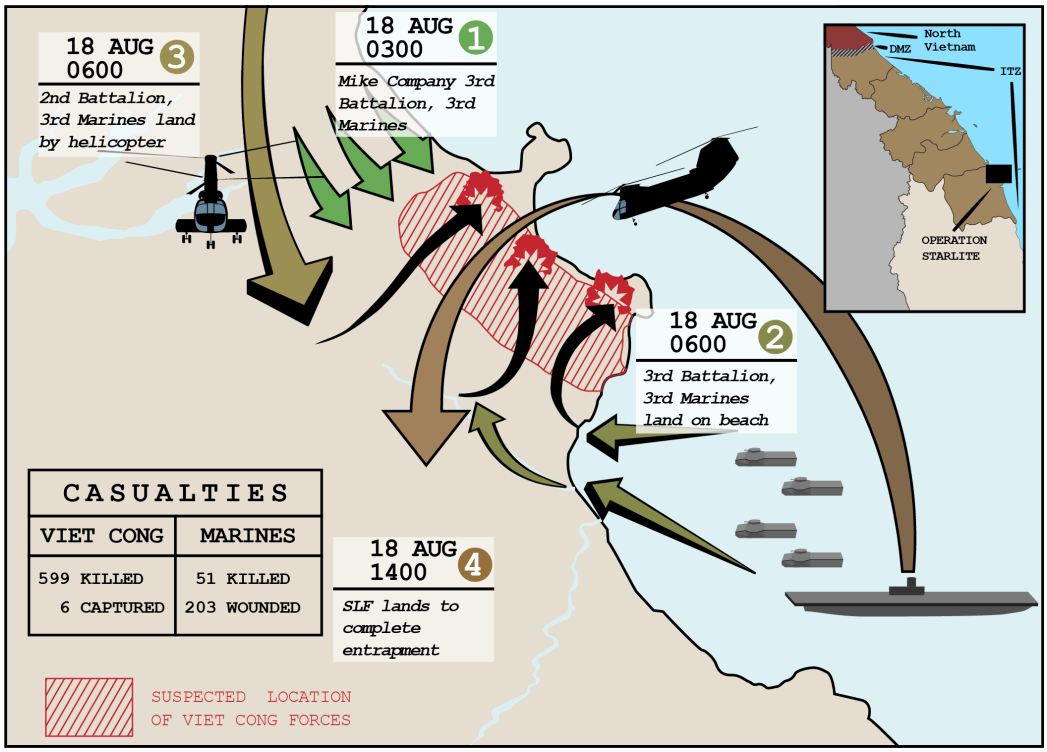

## OPERATION STARLITE (CONTINED FROM PAGE 2)

American military leaders and civilian journalists alike were appalled at the cost of the battle. This gave further testament to the tenacity, training and determination of our NVA foes. As we Marines know only too well, these numbers, and worse, would be a mainstay in our combat experience until we (2/5) left the country of Vietnam in 1971. Casualties remained high throughout our time in "Marineland". Hopefully, "Operation Starlite" brings back into focus, on those sandy beaches in Quang Ngai Province in 1965, these words from JFK's Inaugural Address in 1961 (which many of us saw as young boys):

"Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans, born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world."

Today, we remember President Kennedy's clarion call to a new generation. One, of which, we were a part. We remember this unnamed general and how he fully understood the formidable military challenge in Vietnam and the men who would face it. We remember the Marines who fought on "Operation Starlite" and their dedication to their duty and how well they performed it! When we remember them, we remember ourselves.

Dennis Casey, Editor



## *The Inside Story ~ Warrior Reunion Foundation*

We are pleased to announce that the *Warrior Reunion Foundation* (WRF) is helping us underwrite some of our expenses for our reunion in September 2024. WRF is all about reconnecting America's warriors. The Warrior Reunion Foundation brings combat veterans back together, orchestrating meaningful reunions that renew the bonds forged on the battlefield and throughout the years of continued reunions.

As you know, cost-of-living in Seattle is one of the highest cost locations in our nation. WRF is sponsoring our Seattle Harbor Cruise and our banquet dinner and providing other gifts for us so we can have a great and memorable reunion this year.

You can learn more about WRF by going to their website at:

https://www.warriorreunionfoundation.org/

## *A Prayer for Our Troops*

Lord God, Almighty Father, Ruler of Heaven and Earth, we pray,

That the Lord may preserve the members of all our armed forces from all harm, Be their power and protector, leading them from darkness to light.

That the families, relatives and friends of our military members may be strengthened in this time of concern and anxiety,

That our homeland will be preserved from violence and terrorism,

That we be grateful for and inspired by those veterans who have given their lives for our country as they bravely face the challenges ahead.

To you be all glory, honor, and praise, now and forever. Amen

## *Memorial Day*

It is that time of year again, the last Monday in May, when people everywhere gather to remember and honor military personnel who died in the service of our country.

While many well-meaning people wish a "Happy Memorial Day" to all who will listen, at the heart of this national holiday is a sense of immeasurable loss. The holiday is celebrated with cookouts, boat rides and beer-or a family camping trip to signify the beginning of Summer, but to those who *know*, Memorial Day is so much more.

As a civilian, it is impossible for me to understand the emotions that veterans experience as each Memorial Day rolls by. I can say that through my research and interviews with several of those who served in Vietnam, that the sense of immeasurable loss is felt by these men every day-not just on our recognized holiday. There are lingering questions, and the memories never fade, but what I have noticed in listening to your stories, is that the bond, friendship, and immense love for those who were lost never fade either.

In honor of those who gave their life in the service of our country and in the name of freedom, we recognize Memorial Day on May 27th, 2024.

*Submitted by: 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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## WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

One of our goals with this newsletter is to remind all of you that what we did back in Vietnam was valuable and worthwhile, not just as Marines but also as human beings. It's a big part of our legacy.

Please email us back and give us feedback as to what you'd like to see in our future newsletters.

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## Robert's Special Salsa



I attended my first Hotel 2/5 reunion in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2018. What an honor and blessing to finally meet these wonderful people that I had heard so much about! Among the names I regularly encountered was that of Mr. Robert Hardrick, who my parents informed me, was a "super guy" and I "just *had* to meet him".

Robert did not disappoint, as I found him to be a kind and friendly individual, and integral part of not only that reunion, but many that followed. I made a new friend in Robert, and after I saw him at the following reunion, in San Antonio, Texas, he promised to send me some of his special recipe salsa in the mail after we all returned home.

My first box came in the mail with my name on it- and I was excited to see if Robert's claims of making a flavorful salsa were all he promised. Well, let me just say that it was DELECTABLE, and I haven't stopped waiting by the mailbox in hopes of receiving more of his tasty salsa since!

Fortunately, Robert brings plenty of this savory deliciousness to the reunions, so if you have never tried any, then put this on your list of things to enjoy while in Seattle, Washington at our next reunion.

Robert is making a fresh batch when he arrives, and it will be available on Thursday. Yum! I can't wait!

Submitted by Stephanie Casey