Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

July 1, 2024
Volume 24, Issue 4





SEATTLE REUNION IS ALMOST HERE

The contracts have been signed, all materials have been ordered, assignments have been passed out, name tags have been printed! There is a lot of detail that went into this reunion. It surely is going to be the best reunion yet! There is still a few more weeks before registration is completed. For those of you that have not yet sent Larry a registration check, please do so now. Anyone who has not paid their registration fee by the registration deadline (see below) will need to pay an additional 10% late fee.

TIME WON'T LET US

When we think of our time in Vietnam (such a long time ago now), maybe the overriding theme of it all, is, "It's time for us to set the record straight!" This, of course, can mean different things to each of us. But then again, maybe it means much the same to us all.

Coincidentally, the Hotel 2/5 newsletter is in the process of reading, "Triumph Regained." This is a book (one of a trilogy) which includes the years 1965-1968. Much of the information in it comes from new founded insights, not just from American sources but also from North Vietnamese contributions. These "new" discoveries buttress and reinforce much of what we already knew, with us having been there. Many of the "revelations" in the book can make us very angry, when we learn how so many of our political and bureaucratic leaders made so many obvious errors in judgment concerning the execution of the military part of the war. By and large, the high-ranking Army and Marine officers are favorably portrayed in the book. William Westmorland, who has been scathingly attacked in history, is given considerable praise for his strategy. In some ways, he was ahead of our Marine generals in their assessment of the correct battle plan.

Currently, the book is covering the year 1966 (when 2/5 arrived in country). The marine leaders, after a year of warfare and increasing hostilities, were allowing the northern two provinces (Quang Tri and Thua Thien) in "Eye Corps", to be dominated by the enemy. Marine General Lewis Walt said, when he came to the realization for a change in approach to strategy: "We began increasingly to encounter regular soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army, coming out of the western mountains with warm sweaters in their packs for use on the mountain trails that led from their own country to Laos and South Vietnam. They were sturdy, well-fed men with good weapons and equipment, uniformed, disciplined, and organized into companies, battalions, and regiments-a contrast in respects to the guerrillas." In Walt's opinion, this transformed the war from a "low intensity conflict" to a conventional war of "sustained heavy combat." (Continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Time Won't Let Us 1
Back Then and Now 2
Featured Marine 3
Its Official 4
The Inside Story 5

Special Points of Interest

- Banquet Dinner Choice. . . . 2
- From One Uniform 4
- Family Time With H 2/5 . . . 6

Seattle Reunion 2024

Registration Deadline Is August 17th, 2024

Please register soon. Not many more hotel rooms available.



WHAT TO WEAR IN SEATTLE

Are you excited about seeing everyone in Seattle? Here are some considerations on how to dress for this year's activities. Our Meet and Greet will be held Wednesday night at Tun Tavern. This will be a night filled with food, fun, drinks, games, and friends. Please dress comfortably so that you can enjoy your evening.

It gets chilly in Seattle, so if you are cold-natured, bring a long-sleeved shirt or light jacket. Most of our reunion will be spent in casual clothing.

We are having a formal banquet this year and need to be looking our best. The guys will need a jacket and tie and the ladies will need a formal pantsuit or dress (any length). No shorts, t-shirts, tennis shoes, or anything too casual at the banquet. it gives the ladies an excuse to dress up (not that they need one).

BACK THEN AND NOW

Hospital Corpsman, 2nd Class, Joe Sonderman served in Vietnam with Hotel 2/5 in October 1968-May 1969. Most of you know him as "Doc 250". Joe retired in 2011 after a career in EMS and outpatient medical testing. Joe has six grandchildren and lives in Cantonment, Florida with his wife, Lynn. Joe loves meeting with his "Marine Brothers" every year.

Capt. Bernie Stafford served as 3rd Platoon Commander from Jan. -Nov. 1970. Bernie loves the beautiful state of California, where he met his wife Kris 37 years ago in Santa Monica. Today they live in Rancho Palos Verdes. Bernie's motto is "Live until you die".

Dennis "Doc" Noah served as a hospital corpsman with Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines from May 1967-December 1967. After that he was with BAS 2/5 in An Hoa and Phu Bai until May 1968. He is currently a vice president of Manufacturers and Traders Trust Company in Baltimore, MD, where he lives with his wife, Susan.

TIME WON'T LET US

(Cont. from page 1)

In spite of "Eye Corps" aka "Marineland" being closest to North Vietnam, Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces (area containing the A Shau Valley) had been spared many large battles which had occurred in the other military zones of South Vietnam during 1965-66. This would change in 1967 when these two provinces began to experience some of the biggest and bloodiest battles of the entire war. Time, once again, wouldn't let them remain quiet, in comparison to the other parts of South Vietnam. As stated in an earlier newsletter, "Marineland" (the five northernmost provinces) accounted for 53% of all the battle deaths.

There was a song from 1966 entitled, "Time Won't Let Me", by a group called "The Outsiders." Music was important to us while we were in Vietnam. After all, we were from the "Rock and Roll Generation." In 1965-1973, we (Vietnam Veterans) all became "outsiders", ironically, even though we were "up close" to the events of the day. We may have become "outsiders", but we refuse to become "victims." E. B. Sledge, a Marine from WWII once said, "Any country worth living in, is a country worth fighting for!" Maybe that's as simple of a definition of patriotism as anyone can utter. If so, it has a timeless truth to it, as well. We heed his words, all these years later, because we know that America is always worth the truth from those who suffer for it. And now, here we are, "time", indeed, "won't let us." It won't let us go, not until our story has been told in its entirety and for all eternity. It's immaterial who listens or who doesn't! Things have to be said! We owe it to our brothers who died beside us so long ago. We owe it to ourselves as we quietly ebb away. We owe it to those who follow us, military and civilian, alike. As terrible as war is, there are blessings in this life which are worth the fight. There is a story to be told here and we're the last ones to tell it! But this time it won't be spoken in hush tones in groups of two or three. This time, the men of Hotel Company 2/5, and all the Marines of 2/5 and all Vietnam Veterans, wherever they may be, will be remembering it from the mountaintops!

Dennis Casey, Sr Editor

BANQUET DINNER CHOICE

Attention all registered reunion guests for Seattle 2024:

It is important that you send Stephanie Casey your dinner preference for the Saturday Night Banquet Dinner. Your choices are:

Salmon
Beef Medallions
Chicken Marsala

If Stephanie does not receive your requested dinner preference by July 30th, 2024, she will default your dinner choice as Chicken Marsala.

Reach her at: stephcasey2018@gmail.com or (931) 580-3260.

FEATURED MARINE

BARRY M. BROMAN



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret) 1stLt Barry Broman, company executive officer.



Barry served as Camp Pendleton, CA Press Officer and lifetime photographer.

Barry Broman dropped out of college in 1962 to work for a year as a photographer for the Associated Press in Bangkok, Thailand, with assignments in South Vietnam and Cambodia. He received a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Washington, Seattle, in 1967 and at the same time was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps. He went on active duty in 1968 after receiving a Master of Arts in Southeast Asian studies at the University of Washington.

Broman served as a platoon commander and company executive officer with Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, in combat in Vietnam for seven months in 1969. He then served in 1st Marine Division's G-5 (civil affairs) and extended his Vietnam tour by six months. Part of his extension was spent as U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, liaison officer in Thailand.

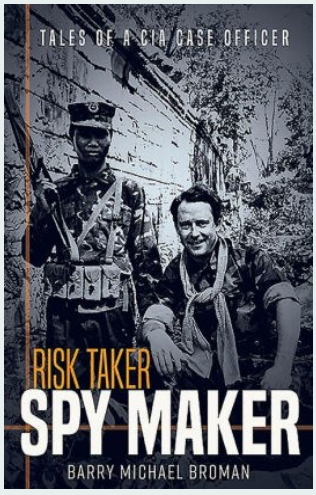
Promoted to Captain United States Marine Corps, 1968-1971, he served as Camp Pendleton, CA, press officer and then commanded Company H, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. He joined the Clandestine Service of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1971 and served for 25 years as a foreign service officer. He is retired and lives with his wife Betty Jane in Kirkland, WA.

Joining the CIA after fighting in Vietnam as a Marine, Broman's first posting was war-torn Cambodia. During his career, he was twice chief of station, once a deputy chief of station, and supervised an international paramilitary project in support of the Cambodian resistance to Vietnamese invaders. Barry was actively involved in several assignments in counternarcotics operations in Southeast Asia. His "favorite agent" against a variety of "hard targets" was a fellow whose only demand was that his assignments be "life threatening." He survived them all.

BROMAN CONTINUED

The characters Barry has encountered along the way and the little-known and rarely seen places he's visited on this earth have born amazing stories and actionable learnings he enjoys sharing with audiences around the world.

Barry is a sought-after speaker, an accomplished author and photographer, having written and photographed 15 books and produced nine documentary films. He's the author of Risk Taker, Spy Maker: Tales of a CIA Case Officer and a second novel "The Spy From Sukhumvit Road" will be published later this year. He's working on his third trilogy spy book now. Speaking of being in the history books, I am sure you are aware of Barry's article "With Hotel Company, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines in An Hoa" in the Summer 2020 issue of the Marine Corps History Journal. He will have copies on hand to sign and give out at our book signing at the reunion.



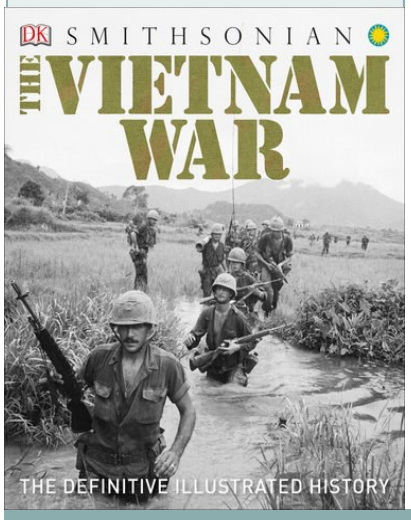
IT'S OFFICIAL

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.



FROM ONE UNIFORM TO THE NEXT:



Many of the great men and women who have served our country returned home wondering what to do next, since their time on active duty was complete. Some chose to start families, while others started businesses- (some did both), still others decided that their protection of their fellow man was not yet finished. These individuals became first-responders.

The Department of Homeland Security defines first-responders as those "who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment." First-Responders include police officers, EMT's, firefighters, park rangers, power line technicians, and Hazmat specialists, just to name a few. Approximately 25% of today's law enforcement community has a military background (www.cops.usdoj.gov) and 19% of firefighters are veterans (www.afba.com), along with 10% of EMT's. Statistics like these show the dedication of our veterans to continue their sense of duty to the rest of us. Retired Marine Sgt. Gordon Hallof who worked as a police officer in Ohio stated, "Service to my country is something I am proud of, and I wanted to continue those traditions through public service" (www.Mark43.com). That sentiment seems shared by many who worked in community service long after their tour was finished.

Our very own Sonny Heinonen is the former Captain at Conneaut Fire Department, Station 1, in Conneaut, Ohio. Joe Sonderman retired in 2011, after a career in EMS. Dan Smith worked as a firefighter in Belleville, Michigan, for 23 years. Did you work or volunteer as a first responder? If so, I would like to hear about it.

Contact me at: Stephanie Casey, 931-580-3260, stephcasey2018@gmail.com.

H 2/5 RADIO OPERATORS



If you carried a PRC-25 Radio in Vietnam, Larry would like to know. He is researching the subject for our reunion in Seattle. He can be contacted at: (661) 373-1949 or ltyler@apellestech.com.

The Inside Story ~ "In The History Books" by Ron Drez

Ron's Words: "You should know that we weren't just a company along for the ride, but we were the 'cutting edge'. Our actions in Mead River and Hue City placed us in the USMC history books. We are in the history books. The main thing for us here is that we are a band of brothers, but we should know that we distinguished ourselves more than you thought."

After being home from the Vietnam for a few years, I began to realize that the war wasn't just about me, my squad, or just about my combat platoon. It was so much bigger than that. As I began attending our reunions, I got to hear the stories, the deals, and even the bigger picture about the war in Vietnam. In my senior years, I enjoy reading about the Vietnam war. I am thankful for the men who wrote books about their experiences and documented forever in the history books, many of the details about the Vietnam War.

I am thankful for men from Hotel 2/5, James J. Kirschke, Jerome Doherty, Ron Drez, and Barry Broman, for example, that have documented us in that war. Author Mark Moyer has done an excellent job documenting the truths of the Vietnam War with the Vietnamese as central actors in the history story of Vietnam. It was a war between Communism and Capitalism, and we were in it. We are in the history books.

You can learn more about Ron's historical comments by going to our website at:

https://hotel25vv.com/in-the-history-books-by-ron-drez



Ron Drez

Captain Drez grabs the mic and begins to speak some profound words about some of the history of H 2/5 in the Vietnam War in 1968 during our reunion in Branson 2023. You will want to listen to his short talk about H 2/5 "In the History Books" of the Marine Corps.

SILENT AUCTION EXPLAINED



This year we decided to try something new with a "silent auction". Many of you have asked, "How do silent auctions work?", so I wanted to explain. Here are the basics of how silent auctions are generally held: First, items for auction are displayed for participants to inspect, usually with an item description. Then, you'll see that in front of each item there is a "bid sheet", where bidders can place their bid silently. Next, bidders place their bid using a bidder number (to keep things anonymous). Guests can return to the bid sheets throughout the week and raise their bid.

There will be a "minimum increase requirement", which means that the next bid has to be a certain dollar amount more than the previous one. (For example, if the current bid on an item is $80.00 and the item has minimum increase of $10.00, then the next bidder must bid at least $90.00). Bids will close Saturday night after the banquet and the winners with the highest bid will be announced Sunday morning.

When you bring me your auction items, please let me know an estimated starting bid or value.

I am excited to participate this year and am hoping that you all bring some really cool stuff for us to include in this auction. I am also hoping that Joe Sonderman is nearby to help me when we announce the winners, because you cannot have an auction without Joe!

P.S. There will also be a raffle held for a ship cruise giveaway!

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.

https:\\hotel25vv.com

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.

The Casey Family

Editor-in-Chief & Senior Writer: Dennis Casey, lcasey@benlomand.net
Assistant Editor: Stephanie Casey, stephcasey18@gmail.com
Copyeditor & Proofer: Lois Casey
Contributors: Stephanie Casey, Dennis Casey
Publisher: Larry Tyler

Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter
17242 Sierra Sunrise Ln
Santa Clarita, CA 91387

Phone: (661) 373-1949
E-mail: ltyler@apellestech.com

FAMILY TIME WITH HOTEL 2/5





In recent newsletters we have highlighted Robert Hardrick's delicious salsa, Ann Drez's Art and Design business, and the contributions of my sister, Katie (aka "Tada") aboard the showboat last year in Branson during the magic show. From now on, this section will be titled "Family Time"-where we share stories about those we know and what their contributions are to (not just) our reunions, but to our Hotel 2/5 community as a whole. Last year Dan and Brenda Smith came in from Belleville, Michigan and what a blessing it was to see them! Brenda presented us with some of the most amazing, sweet-smelling lavender you can imagine, and Dan brought us one of his handcrafted walking canes (similar to those pictured) for the auction. Thank you for your contributions to the Hotel 2/5 community, Brenda, and Dan!

Speaking of H 2/5 family, I recently came across a hilarious article written by our very own Dennis "Doc" Noah, entitled "Corpsmen Are Not Chefs". I would encourage you all to check it out on the Hotel 2/5 website: https://hotel25vv.com/

By Stephanie Casey