Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

September 1, 2024
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SEATTLE 2024—IT'S FINALLY HERE!

After you check into your hotel room, please go to the "H 2/5 Hospitality Room", follow the welcome signs to pick up your Meet & Greet Tun Tavern's Envelope and your name badge. Please wear your name tag at all times during the conference week. Your Bus Captain, Robert Hardrick will greet you at the bus around 5:15 PM. Please give him your bus ticket. It is important to note that if you miss the bus ride, you will not be able to attend the Tun Tavern fun, food, and drink we have planned for the evening. For those not staying at the hotel, go to the lobby and get your reunion parking pass (free) and pick up your name tag and envelope and hop on the bus. Dennis and Lois Casey will be greeting you in the hotel when you arrive in the hospitality room. See you soon at our Meet & Greet at Tun Tavern!

A SPEECH FOR THE AGES

When combat soldiers think of their offerings (sacrifice and suffering), before and after their service (if they survive), they/we are left with many questions. In our war (Vietnam), we may have more questions than most veterans because of how our war, and us, were perceived by those for whom we fought. A larger question might be, though, "For what did we fight?" And whose responsibility is it to safeguard those principles that we, and soldiers from wars, before ours and since, have defended?

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address gives us a clear picture of how to find this answer. When President Lincoln died, April 15, 1865, it was said of him, "Now he belongs to the ages!" He was murdered because he believed "in Liberty and Justice for all!"

This newsletter, however, harkens back to almost a year-and-a-half before his death, when he gave "The Gettysburg Address." We learned this speech as children in school (some years back, now). The speech is considered one of the greatest of all time. For those of us who have participated in war as combatants, it may have a special significance.
(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Seattle 2024—It's Finally Here!.....1
Speech for the Ages cont 2
Back Then and Now.....2
USMC Gunnery Sergeant 4
The Inside Story.....5
Family Time.....7

Special points of interest

- USMC Gunnery Sergeant. 4
- Featured Marine 3
- My Poem 6
- Cruse Giveaway 8



We Welcome First Time Reunion Attendees:

Mike & Pam Burton

Chester Kwasniewski & Sandy Taylor

Dale & Sally Pappas

John & Stephanie Bates

A SPEECH FOR THE AGES

Cont. from page 1)



President Abraham Lincoln

BACK THEN AND NOW

Dale Pappas served in Hotel 2/5 in 1966-67 as a radioman. Dale now lives in Reno, Nevada with his beautiful wife, Sally.

SSGT Paul Kellum, USMC served with Hotel 2/5 1st Marine Division and participated in six operations while in Vietnam, including Operation Prairie and Operation Hue City. He held several positions during his ten-year including those in Infantry, Recon, Military Police and Customs. Paul went on to work with physically and mentally disabled individuals and to teach children with emotional and educational problems during his 32 years in the education field.

Captain Dale Dye served 3 tours in Vietnam and fought in the Tet offensive. He received the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with the "V" designation for heroism. Dale has acted in movies, written books, and currently runs the military technical advisory group known as Warriors Global.

President Lincoln began his speech with, "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." That was important because he's going back to the Declaration of Independence. As we all know, Thomas Jefferson wrote "The Declaration of Independence." It wasn't just meant for the colonists of America (1776), but for the world-at-large. And so it is, as well, with "The Gettysburg Address." Although President Lincoln was directly speaking to an assembled crowd at the Gettysburg battlefield, he, too, meant for the world to take note. When he says, that, "all men are created equal", he means everyone on the face of this planet! He continues by adding, "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." This further shows that his words are meant for people anywhere and, therefore, everywhere, who love freedom and justice.

President Lincoln finishes the first part of his speech (it's basically three parts) by saying, "We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come here to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this."

But Mr. Lincoln isn't through. He's just beginning to complete his message (much like the one President Kennedy will utter almost a hundred years later). President Lincoln continues, "But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate- we can not consecrate-we can not hallow-this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

The correlation of this speech and our war in Vietnam seems to cross paths here. With one path heading up and one going down. What we did in Vietnam has been "little noted" and "long forgotten." In fact, it was never known or fully recognized as it occurred. The world has paid attention (for almost sixty years) to all the other voices while ours have been muted. In other words, Americans, and others, have forgotten the lesson of The Gettysburg Address. It clearly denotes and specifies the soldiers' contributions and the citizens' commitments to the cause of Liberty and Justice, and how each safeguards the continuance of these blessings for future generations.

President Lincoln isn't finished, yet, however. With his final point, he sends out his "clarion call", similar to President Kennedy's in 1961. President Lincoln reminds his audience, at Gettysburg, and beyond (this is a speech for the ages), of their responsibility as citizens in a free land. He concludes this monumental address as he speaks to future Americans, "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us-that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—

(Continued on Page 4)

FEATURED MARINE

RONALD J. DREZ





GOLD STAR ON BRONZE STAR MEDAL AWARD BY DATE OF ACTION:
September 14, 1968

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a gold star in lieu of the second BRONZE STAR MEDAL to Captain Ronald J. Drez, United States Marine Corps, for service as set forth in the following citation:

"For meritorious service in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam while serving in various capacities with the Third Marine Amphibious Force from 16 February 1968 to 5 March 1969. Throughout this period, Captain Drez performed his demanding duties in an exemplary and highly professional manner. Initially assigned as Intelligence Watch Officer and as Watch Supervisor in the Force Combat Operations Center, he displayed exceptional initiative and an extensive knowledge of intelligence matters as he worked tirelessly to collate and rapidly disseminate vital intelligence information, prepare accurate and timely briefings for all Force Staff Officers, and conduct comprehensive training programs which greatly enhanced the operational effectiveness and combat readiness of his command. Following his reassignment as Assistant Operations Officer of the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division on 14 September 1968, in which capacity his thorough knowledge of tactics and meticulous attention to detail in planning were significant factors in his battalion's success during Operation Maui Peak, Captain Drez was assigned as Commanding Officer of Company H on 31 October, and continued to distinguish himself in the superior performance of his duties. Exhibiting superb leadership and exceptional courage and composure under fire, he skillfully trained and molded his men into an effective fighting force and aggressively led his company against the enemy while participating in three major combat operations. During Operation Meade River, he coordinated and maneuvered his unit with such skill on the final assault against a well-entrenched, fanatical hostile force that his company accounted for fifty-five enemy soldiers killed while his unit suffered only minimal casualties. Captain Drez' leadership, superior professionalism and steadfast devotion to duty contributed significantly to the accomplishment of his command's mission and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United Stated Naval Service."

RON DREZ

Ron Drez is a decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam War and a former Captain of Hotel 2/5 Marines serving in 1968-1969. He has received two Bronze Stars for heroic achievement and meritorious service while serving in various capacities including being the Commanding Officer of Company H and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry w/ Silver Star for Heroism in combat and the Presidential Unit Citation.

He is an award-winning, best-selling author of many books. "Remember D-Day: The Plan, the Invasion, Survivor Stories"; "Twenty-Five Yards of War: The Extraordinary Courage of Ordinary Men in World War II"; "Voices of Valor: D-Day: June 6. 1944". "The War of 1812 Conflict and Deception"; "Voices of Courage" to name a few.

He is President of **Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours** having served both as friend and associate of the distinguished, late historian. He has written many articles for military history magazines and is a contributing author and editor to the Encyclopedia Britannica web site for its Normandy feature.

Over the years, he has been a great mentor and friend to those who attend the annual Hotel 2/5 reunions.

A SPEECH FOR THE AGES

-that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain-that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -and that government of the people, for the people, and by the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Abraham Lincoln "gets it!" He "got it" then and his words still resonate with truth to this very day. President Kennedy (1961) reminded us (in his own words) of what President Lincoln meant in 1863. Their commitment and understanding to the principles which we fought for (in Vietnam), are one and the same. Since 1776 to the wars of the 21st century, Americans have fought, here at home and across the seas, proving that we understand the meaning of being "dedicated to the concept of Liberty and to the proposition that all people are created equal." Thank you, Mr. Lincoln, for writing and speaking such straightforward and inspiring words. They serve, and have served, as a beacon of light to American warriors and, enlightened American citizens, who understand their responsibilities as a free people. No war in which American patriots serve, from 1776 to this present day, are "lost causes" with no meaning in them. It is always "up to the living" (as President Lincoln inferred) to make the prices paid in battle, worth it, by living up to the principles of the dead.

A FRIEND HOPING TO CONNECT

I recently received a call from a man named Fred Wylubski, who is looking for his high school friend whom he lost contact with in late 1967. Robert L. Sherman Jr. was from Buffalo, New York and served in 1967 with Hotel 2/5, 1st Platoon.

He was injured that year and returned home, where Fred saw him one final time at a party given by Robert's mother. The next time Fred tried to contact Robert the number was disconnected, and Robert's mother had moved.

If anybody has any information on Robert L. Sherman Jr., please let me know, as I will be happy to pass on the information or provide you with Mr. Wylubski's contact information.

- *Stephanie Casey*

A LOOK AT THE USMC GUNNERY SERGEANT



A United States Marine Corps gunnery sergeant is a non-commissioned officer (NCO) who holds the rank of E-7. This rank is a key position within the Marine Corps, typically responsible for supervising and training junior Marines, managing equipment, and ensuring that their unit is prepared for any mission. Known as "Gunny".

The following qualifications are required for appointment to the rank of gunnery sergeant:

A candidate for appointment as gunnery sergeant in the United States Marine Corps should be sufficiently proficient in the drill regulations to thoroughly drill recruits and to drill the squad and company. They should be thoroughly conversant with the nomenclature of the rapid-fire and machine guns used in the naval service and be sufficiently acquainted with their drill to be able to act as gun captains and to instruct the enlisted in their duties at such guns. They should have knowledge of the kinds and quantities of ammunition used in those guns. They should have a thorough knowledge of the instructions pertaining to target practice. They should have sufficient knowledge of the system of accountability of the United States Marine Corps to take charge of and properly render the accounts of a guard aboard ship, and should be competent in all respects to perform the duties of a first sergeant in charge of a guard on ship to which no marine officer is attached; also a knowledge of the duties involved in the subsistence of Marines ordered on detached duty, as well as the duties of an officer in command of a part of a landing party on shore.

(Continued on Page 5)

The inside story — Following in the Steps of Moses
"A Children's Book on Service Animals" Part 1

Many of you know that I lost my "Service Dog" Moses last May 2023. Having him through some of the toughest years of my life as a true companion and friend meant everything to me.

I decided to write a children's book about service dogs and the importance they are to our military men and women. I'm dedicating the book to those of us that have had the unique experience and blessings to have such animals help us in our time of need.

My plan is to give the book and all its rights to "The Tunnel 2 Towers Foundation" so that they will benefit from the proceeds. As with my first book, I will not make money off of anyone who gave their lives for our freedom.

I will send you a soft copy of the book along with a Challenge Coin in exchange for your donation of $25 or more. While I support T2T, I also give to Gary Sinise and St. Jude's Children's.

Make your checks out to Paul Kellum & any one of the three. I will endorse my part and send your check to one of the three you chose. The cost to print, mail, and Challenge Coin alone will easily cover your donation. As I said, I don't want to financially benefit from any of this. *Submitted by Paul Kellum*



Moses—12 Weeks Tai-Lai—8 Weeks

"This is a story about a Marine and his service dogs, Moses and Tai-Lai. I'm Tai-Lai and as I begin this story, I'm a pedigree Newfoundland 16 weeks old, already 40 pounds and learning about my predecessor "Moses". The reason I'm here with my Marine is because Moses passed away on May 19, 2023. He had been with my Marine for twelve and half years."

A Look at the USMC Gunnery Sergeant (Continued)

What Does A Gunnery Sergeant Do?

1. ****Leadership and Guidance**:** They provide strong leadership, setting clear expectations and standards for performance. By leading by example, gunnery sergeants inspire their Marines to strive for excellence.

2. **Mentorship:**

With their extensive experience, gunnery sergeants' mentor junior Marines, helping them develop their skills and navigate challenges.

3. **Communication:**

Effective communication is vital for unit cohesion. Gunnery sergeants facilitate open lines of communication between enlisted personnel and higher command and are adept at conflict resolution, often acting as a mediator.

4. **Recognition and Motivation:**

Gunnery sergeants recognize the achievements of their Marines. Acknowledging hard work fosters a culture of appreciation and encourages continued effort.

5. **Training and Readiness:**

They ensure that their unit is well-trained and prepared for missions. Confidence in their readiness contributes to a positive mindset among Marines, as they feel better equipped to face challenges.

Overall, the influence of a gunnery sergeant on morale can be profound, as they combine leadership, mentorship, and effective communication to cultivate a motivated and resilient unit.

Our Hotel 2/5 Roster includes the names of the following "Gunnys" (they may not have been gunnery sergeants for Hotel 2/5, but served as such during their Vietnam service) : Frank Armenta, Thomas Bukovac, Norman Estelle (who passed away recently), Al Gautschi, Bill Jackson, Tony Marengo, Gunny Napoleon, James Parker, Danny Rawlinson, Richard Tahan, Frank Thomas, and Loyde Yates.



MY POEM

For many years afterwards, I tried so hard to see,
But there was that wall always in front of me.
The sleepless nights, followed by brief moments of rest and despair,
Only to be awakened short of breath, scared, disoriented, and wondering,
about those who were left behind and died there.

The feelings, the emotions, the emptiness.
The staring through space and time, and the Question.
Always the Question, what about all those faces?
What is this thing called the human race?

The numerous dreams, so many dreams so late into the night
Was it necessary, was it fair, was it really our fight?
My life up and down often in despair,
Like a roller coaster that goes nowhere.

A war that wasn't a war, people I didn't know,
bodies shattered beyond belief and what the TV didn't show.
How could I know, I left a mere boy of eighteen, innocent and free,
Only to return as a hollow shell filled with memories and nightmares time and again to see.

We were told to hide our faces, blend in with the crowd.
Don't mention the war, don't look for any grace,
just look down and hide our face,
No glory, no parades, not even a party to welcome us home.
Just memories, nightmares and feeling all alone.

Trust, mistrust, a guiding light,
Internal turmoil, did we go there to fight?
So many souls there lying in plain sight.
Have we heard their cries yet?
Have we answered their pleas for justice?

Other wars have come and gone,
Heroes have seen parades but none for us.
We lay here in silence; our cries go unheard,
Sunsets in Orange unfold, and our babies disfigured or go unborn.

I went their once, to see that wall,
How awesome and powerful,
purely a statement of pain and sorrow,
Yet a strong message it sends into tomorrow.

That wall of memories, standing proud, standing tall
Why did we go there, why did so many have to fall ?
How ghastly, how grim that wall of despair
A wall to remember, a place for people to stare ?
A little girl asks, is that my daddy's name up there,
what was he like ?

My comrades are resting peacefully now.
Our country has built them a wall for all to see,
And yet that Question still haunts me.

Finally, the Question, that question that has followed me into the night.
Did I do the right things, was it really all right ?
Why still then after all these years I can't find the Answer, when will it be?
Why are they lying there - instead of me ?

- Paul Kellum

FAMILY TIME WITH HOTEL 2/5

Each year we come together at our Hotel 2/5 reunion, and it always seems impossible that another year has flown by! Many of us do not start thinking about the reunion until the summer, but there are those people behind-the-scenes who are always preparing for our next annual meeting. I thought I would sit down and interview two ladies that spend time every year planning for the *next* reunion.



First, I sat down with Lois Casey and asked how she got started crocheting the blankets that she brings to our auctions. This is what she had to say, "The first reunion Dennis and I attended was the one at Nashville in 2015. We were very impressed with the auction and talked about how we could participate. One day I saw a picture of a Marine Afghan and realized that was something I could do. I discovered that the technique was called "tapestry" crochet. YouTube was helpful in this learning process. I tore my first one apart at least a dozen times trying to figure it out! I try to do distinctive designs and assorted colors so that they are all unique. I feel honored to do this each year and show my respect for all of you."





Next, I enjoyed a conversation with Rita Tyler and got the scoop on what she has been working on for the last several months. The beautiful reunion streamers that we see at the reunions (with the name and year of the city we meet in) are made by Rita. Our Guidon Flag was made by Rita using USMC Guidon Specifications covering design and layout, lettering, specific materials and thicknesses, fonts, and regulation colors. She has knitted a blanket that we will see at our auction. Rita, who learned cross-stitch thirty years ago, has also put in 400+ hours of work into a special EGA cross-stitched project that we will (hopefully) see in Seattle if time allows her to complete it.



Ladies, your heartfelt, time-consuming contributions to the auction, the reunion, and the Hotel 2/5 family are so greatly appreciated, Rita and Lois. Thank you! ***- 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

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CRUISE GIVEAWAY

Are YOU ready for the excitement in Seattle? We have a lot to offer at this year's auction-including your chance to win a **FREE CRUISE FOR TWO TO THE BAHAMAS!** We will be accepting entries for this prize until 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 21st, at the close of our reunion banquet. This cruise is transferable, meaning you can win this cruise and send two friends or family members on this adventure if you do not wish to go. This is a four-day, three-night event on Carnival Cruise lines that will take place in February 2025. *It is the winner's responsibility to pay for their air fare to and from the cruise port* to their choice of either Orlando or Miami, Florida. Entries are $100.00 per entry. The winner will be announced on Sunday, September 22, 2024, during breakfast, when we announce the silent auction results.

By Stephanie Casey

