Hotel 2/5 Vietnam Veterans Newsletter

November 1, 2024
Volume 24, Issue 6



Seattle 2024 H 2/5 Group Picture—Pier 55

WE SERVED WITH AMERICA

Driving from Tennessee to Seattle was the trip of a lifetime, for a number of good reasons. It is always a memorable time when the members, families and friends of Hotel Company gather to rejoice once more in our good fortune of such long-lived fellowship. Naturally, on our trip, we got to see states that we had never seen before and may never see again.

The mountains, the valleys, the rivers, the cities, the small towns, were in many ways similar, and yet different, from "our part of the woods." But we still knew that we were in America even if the scenery looked unfamiliar. America is a special land of many places. Most of all, it's a special land of many people. Unlike the land, we (the people) can go "here and there" and, "everywhere" or "anywhere." But we take America with us wherever we go because it's part of us. Just like the mountains, the valleys, the rivers, the cities, and the small towns, America is in our blood. (Continued on page 2)

USMC 2/5 H

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Its official, our next reunion will be in Columbus, Ohio.

Oct 9 - 11, 2025



BACK THEN AND NOW

Please submit your name to Stephanie Casey at stephcasey18@gmail.com to provide your Back Then and Now job responsibilities. We need your input for this section of our newsletter.



Happy 249th Birthday to all you Marines!

Please hold down your control (Ctrl) key and click with your mouse on the USMC Birthday picture above to play the 9.5 minutes, 249th Marine Corps Birthday video. Enjoy!

WE SERVED WITH AMERICA

Cont. from page 1)

This truth was never more real than in Vietnam. We didn't just "serve America," "we served with America!" Each one of us (and our families, too) are part of this land. We bring our own unique qualities and attributes and personal history to this cause, to this experience. The men of Hotel Company, and indeed, all the men from the Second Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment are a special group of patriots.

Back at the reunion in San Antonio in 2019, Steve Russell said that someone had asked him, "Steve, if you could do it all over again, would you still serve in Vietnam?" Steve replied, "If I could still serve with the same people." It's safe to say that Steve spoke for us all when he gave that magnificent response! We were America, not just the representatives of it. It was in our blood, in every breath we inhaled, and in our hearts, where it still resides to this day.

November will bring us another Veterans Day. Unlike Memorial Day, where those who gave their lives for America are remembered, this day will honor all of us who have served. Being combat survivors, every military holiday (to us) is Memorial Day! Our fallen Marine friends and brothers were part of America, too. To us, they always will be. And we won't let that solemn bond be forgotten.

When we were kids, we learned about Arlington National Cemetery. It's a hallowed place. Some of us probably know men from Hotel 2/5 who are buried there. As we watch the Army guards stand watch over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, we are comforted, knowing that all who rest there are in good hands! It's a very humbling experience to know someone who is buried there. It's fitting to remember, too, that many veterans are resting in cemeteries all over America. Not all are in military graveyards, some are tucked away in family plots, far from the beaten path. It is another verification that "we are America."

If the men of Hotel Company, who died in Vietnam, could hear us now (we like to think that they do), it might be a good time to repeat to them the chorus of the song, "This Land is Your Land."

"This land is your land;

this land is my land,

From California

to the New York Island,

From the Redwood Forest

to the Gulf Stream Waters,

This land was made

for you and me."

Those of us who served with you and love you as brothers, think of you, not only as Americans, but as part of America itself. You are a part of this country and of who we are, as people. May your memory and your sacrifice be proclaimed forever. As long as we are here, they will be!

Have a Blessed Veterans Day everyone!

- The Newsletter Staff

FEATURED MARINE

LARRY D. TYLER





NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL AWARD BY DATE OF ACTION:
December 7, 1969

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL to Lance Corporal Larry Dana Tyler, United States Marine Corps, for service as set forth in the following citation:

"For heroism while serving with the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam. On the night of 7 December 1969, Lance Corporal TYLER was at his battalion's command post in Quang Nam Province when he observed a helicopter crash near the battalion landing zone. He ran to the sight of the crash where he was informed that a large amount of ammunition was aboard and due to the fire was endangering everyone in the area. With complete disregard for his own safety, Lance Corporal Tyler immediately informed all those in the area of the danger and urged them to take cover. He then quickly returned to the aircraft and assisted in removing the casualties, personally carrying one of the crew members to a safe area and administering first aid. Lance Corporal TYLER'S bold and courageous actions in the face of great personal danger were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

LARRY TYLER

Larry Tyler is a decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam War . He received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Heroism, Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Action Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal w/device, National Defense Service Medal, and Good Conduct Medal.

Larry served in Hotel 2/5 from January 19, 1969 to Aug 13, 1969 in Bravo squad, 2nd platoon as an 0311 rifleman. Within four weeks after arriving in Hotel Company, Larry picked up a field radio off of a dead radio operator and became the squad and later, a platoon radio operator. He volunteered and walked point for about five weeks.

In May, he came down with a heat stroke and was unconscious for four days. The Sgt Maj of 2/5 spotted him volunteering in the rear area in An Hoa helping get the mail, packages, and food supplies out to the troops. He was then transferred from Hotel to 2/5 Battalion's CO as driver, radio operator, and personal bodyguard.

As a result of his diligence and seemingly unlimited resourcefulness, he gained the respect and admiration of all who observed him and contributed significantly to the accomplishment of his unit's mission.

DID YOU KNOW?

Are you aware that Hotel 2/5 has its very own website? If you haven't visited it yet, you are missing out! The site includes information, personal stories, and pictures and its here for your use! You do not have to register to visit the website, but if you would like to comment or share stories you will need to register. The process is easy. It is also worth it. Here's the link: https://hotel25vv.com/.

The website is always being updated to capture the Vietnam War history, memories, and personal comments from those who served in H 2/5. This site is a work of art that is constantly being updated.

The website was constructed to honor those combat Marines and Navy Corpsmen that served in Vietnam in Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines Regiment, 1st Marine Division from 1966 – 1971. Here are their true stories and first-hand experiences of the Vietnam War.

- Stephanie Casey

NOTE: We need your current and past reunion pictures so we can place them on this website. Please send your pictures to Larry. Click here to see some pictures of Seattle 2024 reunion.

SEATTLE REUNION RECAP



Hello, Friends. Did anyone else have an amazing time in Seattle? I can honestly say that I had a truly wonderful experience! I appreciate you all so much for joining us and making this year extra special. Before going any further, I would like to thank **the Warrior Reunion Foundation (WRF), Gary Sinise Foundation,** and Mr. Bart Cole for their very generous donations to our reunion this year (see the following story to learn more about the WRF).

Our reunion opened with a "meet and greet" night filled with fun, food, and games at Seattle's Flight Path, which was decorated to look like Tun Tavern, the birthplace of the Marine Corps. It was nice to hangout in an environment that made us socialize more than we normally would, and I know that I made some new friends. We threw some darts, shot some pool and visited until late that night. The group decided to stay in on Thursday, considering all the traveling we had done to get to Seattle and the partying from the night before. Our hospitality room was open that day for several informative presentations from Larry Tyler, Barry Broman, and John McKay. Special thanks to Scott Davis at https://www.youtube.com/@Thevietnamexperience for documenting our reunion with his photos and videos.

Friday morning, thanks to our bus captain Robert Hardrick, we all loaded up and headed out to a very special event. We were exceptionally pleased with how our KIA memorial ceremony was conducted. The ceremony took place at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park at Museum of Flight and was led by Chaplain Fred Tittle. Seattle Honor Guard and the USMC were there to provide military honors. The names of the men who served in Hotel 2/5 were read aloud to honor their memory. (Note: if there was a name that you did not hear on our list that morning, please let me know. I will compare it with our KIA list). As our service closed, a bagpiper played "Amazing Grace", and we took time to find our way over to the museum for our guided tour.

Saturday was a gorgeous day that began with a cruise of Seattle harbor. "The Space Needle" and other popular attractions were visible as we relaxed with some coffee and enjoyed the waves. Upon our return and after some rest, our banquet was held Saturday night, and our special guest was U.S. Army Staff Sergeant and Miss Washington State 2023, Vanessa Munson. She was a joy to speak with and such a sweet addition to our plans this year. Banquet attendees were dressed to the nines and enjoyed a delicious dinner. Bart Cole with the WRF made an encouraging speech that resonated with the veterans and their families. Awards were presented at this time and our silent auction was held. Thank you to everyone who donated, bid, or helped in any way! Special thanks to those that helped with the auction -Rita, Todd, Lois, Brenda, Lynn, Kellie, and Dana.

- *Stephanie Casey*

The Inside Story — Thanksgiving Day 1968 in Vietnam



During the Vietnam War, many US Marines celebrated Thanksgiving Day by enjoying a full-course turkey dinner but without the security of having a Thanksgiving Day meal surrounded with our families. Logistics personnel would often transport hot food by helicopter to soldiers in remote locations that lacked cooking facilities. That wasn't always the case.

On Thanksgiving Day, 1968, 2/5 was involved in a battle on Operation Meade River. Many of our troops on this Thanksgiving Day in 1968 received a warm turkey and mash potato meal helicoptered into them while others did not and had their C-rations to eat for Thanksgiving Dinner.

In 1968, the government of Vietnam announced the start of an "Accelerated Pacification Program, " known as Le Loi. The 1st Marine Division planned Operation Meade River to support this campaign, essentially a large-scale cordon and search operation in the area around Dodge City, south of Da Nang. On the morning of 20 November, seven Marine battalions, including 2/5, began moving into position to form a ring around Dodge City. Once again, it was Thanksgiving Day in the Marine Corps. An operation report reads,

"Thanksgiving Day, BLT 2/26 and 2/5th Marines reached the Soui Co Ca. The 3/26th Marines, which had been heli-lifted earlier into the southern Dodge City area, relieved the 3/5th Marines along route 4. The latter battalion then attacked north toward a series of phase lines between the railroad berm and the Suoi Co Ca. The 3/26th Marines "enjoyed" a Thanksgiving dinner of turkey loaf and then followed after the 3/5th Marines attack. That night Marine artillery began a heavy barrage and there was six hours of intense PsyOps loudspeaker messages. The enemy troops were unimpressed and chose to fight."

(Continued on Page 6)

A Word About Our Donors

Very special thanks to Mr. Bart Cole, WRF Executive Director, for all of his help in making this year's reunion so memorable. The WRF, along with the Gary Sinise Foundation, were very kind to us this year in regard to our Hotel 2/5 Seattle reunion. The Seattle Cruise, and our banquet were made possible because of the generosity of these organizations in addition to the hats, coffee cups, and tee-shirts.

The **Warrior Reunion Foundation** (WRF) was founded in 2018 with the aim of "reconnecting America's warriors and Gold Star families." Since then, WRF has reunited over 4,000 combat veterans and Gold Star families. WRF not only reunites people but also encourages peer-support for veterans by "strengthening social connections with their military family." Read more about them here: https://www.warriorreunionfoundation.org/.

Gary Sinise has been dedicated to our nation's active-duty defenders, veterans, first responders and their families for years. In 2011, the actor founded the **Gary Sinise Foundation** to better serve, support, and show gratitude to these brave individuals that put their lives on the line for us every day. Gary writes, "Freedom and security are precious gifts that we, as Americans, should never take for granted. We must do all we can to extend our hand in times of need to those who willingly sacrifice each day to provide that freedom and security. While we can never do enough to show gratitude to our nation's defenders, we can always do a little more." Read more about them here: https://www.garysinisefoundation.org/founder/bio.

THANKSGIVING DAY 1968 IN VIETNAM (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

Ron Drez reports the following about this Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 1968: "It was turkey with all the trimmings and they even flew in ice cream. We were in a blocking position along the east side of the Suoi Co Ca (river) and had been there for just a day or so after relocating from our original blocking position along Route 4 coming out of Dien Ban. It had been a lazy operation for us and we had only been involved in two small enemy incidents from the beginning of the operation on November 20, 1968. The rest of the battalion had also been mostly without contact, while on the other side of the river, 3/26 and 3/5 slugged it out with elements of the 36th NVA Regiment between the river and the railroad berm as they frantically tried to escape the encircling Marine cordon.

As the action continued west of the river, we were spectators to a round the clock, day and night bombardment of the area with air, artillery and naval gunfire, and "Puff the Magic Dragon" flew every night hosing the area down. The rounds fell so close that we were ordered to pull our line back a hundred yards from the edge of the river, and still some shrapnel came whistling over us. We all were mighty glad that it was 3/5 and 3/26 that were inside the V-ring, and not us. Little did we ever expect that we would soon enter that battle line (Dec. 6 - 9) and attack as part of 3/26 to deliver the hammer-stroke that finally collapsed the defensive line in the Northern Bunker Complex. Our casualties were seven killed and twenty -one wounded and evacuated. We killed 55 and captured 39 individual weapons and 4 crew-served weapons. The 3rd Battalion of the 36th NVA Regiment, in front of us, died to the man. There were no prisoners."

On 28 November, Thanksgiving Day, BLT 2/26 and the 2nd Battalion 5th Marines reached the Suoi Co Ca. On the same day, the 3rd Battalion 26th Marines which had been helilifted earlier into the southern Dodge City area, relieved the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines along Route 4. The latter battalion was then to attack north toward a series of phase lines between the Railroad berm and Suoi Co Ca. Lieutenant Colonel John W.. P. Robertson, 3/26 commander, remembered that his unit "enjoyed" a Thanksgiving dinner of turkey loaf and then prepared to follow 3/5 in the attack.

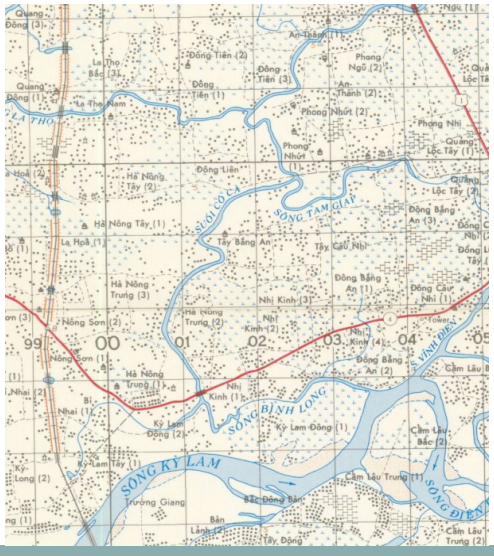
On 30 November, the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines continued its northward advance, reaching Phase Line Bravo, where the area between the railroad berm and the Suoi Co Ca becomes narrow, constricting maneuver and further compounding fire support coordination problems.

Still, the blocking forces on the eastern bank of the river, BLT 2/26 and 2/5 Battalion ambushed and took under fire enemy troops attempting to avoid the tightening cordon. The Marines called nightly upon Air Force AC-47 gunships to add their deadly gun fires with those of the Marines on the ground. Lieutenant Colonel Stemple, the 2/5 Battalion commander, remembered that enemy troops tried to swim the river at night to escape to the south.

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During this Thanksgiving period, let's pray for safety for all our troops in harms way. May we always stop on this day to give thanks for all our warriors. Please consider providing a Thanksgiving Turkey Dinner to a homeless veteran in your area this year.





FAMILY TIME WITH HOTEL 2/5

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on not just the Seattle Reunion, but on all of the reunions that I have had the joy of attending. Each reunion is special in its own way-not just because of the cities we visit or the activities we plan, but because every event is a chance to hear you, see you, learn about you, and love you! I don't mean to get sappy on you guys, but what an amazing blessing it is to gather together with you and your beautiful families.

If it weren't for the advancements in technology over the past two decades, we would never have had the chance to meet. This chance to come together again after all these years is one that I know each and every one of you treasure. When I see you smiling, patting each other on the back, laughing, and sometimes crying together, I realize that I am in some small way, a part of something very special. I know that many other members of your families feel it too.

I am sharing (with permission) a couple of the messages I received following the Seattle reunion.

> *"It was most certainly a great week which we continue to reflect upon and talk about with friends and family."*
>
> **-Shirley McCain, wife of H 2/5 veteran Roy McCain**
>
> *"The combination of old warfighters that wanted to meet up with their buddies from Vietnam some 50 years past and the superb efforts of a group of organizers that provided the hard work of making the details happen, capped off with the scenic Seattle views and rare, beautiful weather made this reunion very special. The attitude of the attendees and support staff made it happen. Many thanks to all involved. Never again will all of these vets gather together again. God bless them all."*
>
> **-Colonel John R. Bates, USMC (ret).**
> **Co G, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, 1st Mar Div**
> **Vietnam, 1966-1967.**

- 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

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WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

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THANK YOU, THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS

BY *THANH-DUONG NGUYEN*

How many Thanksgiving seasons would be enough for us
To thank the American soldiers from those old days?
Pictures of you carrying our children
On the battlefields, in perilous moments,
Were simple things that best defined humanity
When human lives were dangling in the line of fire.
We the Vietnamese people and you the American people
Have once shared the sufferings with one another.

Under your arms you carried two kids
While holding your gun in fast-paced motion.
Who knew if their parents were killed or injured?
Only their cries were heard amidst gun smoke.

You picked up a child along a deserted country road.
You wrapped his tiny body in a thin blanket.
And while you waded through muddy rice fields
He was kept warm on your shoulders.

You picked up a child from a collapsed house
You carried him through the ruins of war
And brought him to a safe refuge
While dangers were all around you.

You carried a child along the battlefield
Into the forest towards a medics unit.
For you found that child with a bullet wound.
And his blood was dripping on your jacket.

You were in a trench with a bunch of kids.
Your gun being held tight to safeguard them.
They listened to bullets ripping over their heads.
And looked up to the American soldier with trust.

You carried the old people, the young people.
You affectionately tended to their wounds.
They lost their loved ones in the war.
But got this strange American soldier to turn to.

Today you might have passed away,
Today you might have grown too old
To remember the war of those days
And the children you once carried in your arms.
But we the Vietnamese people – we remember you,
Whenever we look at these touching images.
One more Thanksgiving for us to say thank you
The American soldiers
Who once went to our country
At a time of fire and smoke.