



# GOLF COMPANY 2ND BATTALION 5TH MARINES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



*Dong Ha - Phu Lai - An Hoa - Phu Bai - Hue City*

Vol. 24, Issue 1

August 2008

## Editor Comments by Larry Ortiz

Greetings fellow Marines!

Hope this first newsletter of 2008 finds you and your families well. It's been a busy year so far for Melba and me. We returned to California from our 2 yr. 8 mos. assignment in Paris on March 1<sup>st</sup>. It was an exceptional experience to live in Europe for that period of time and to be able to take advantage of the opportunity to travel to many European countries and major cities. The history there is so visible everywhere you turn which made it all the more fascinating. It was a once in a lifetime experience but we're glad to be home!

I'm sure you received your personal invitation to this year's Hué City Memorial. As you are well aware, the Memorial is generally held as close to the anniversary of the start of the Tet Offensive of January 31<sup>st</sup> as possible but because of the deployment of the USS HUÉ CITY, the earliest possible date this year is this month and the Memorial will be held on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The schedule of events is included later in the newsletter.

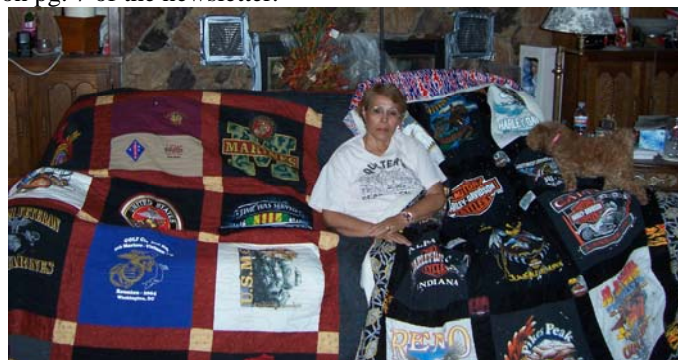
We also have our biannual reunion coming up on September 7<sup>th</sup> in Las Vegas. Unfortunately a number of our G 2/5 family will have to make the choice between attending the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Hué City Memorial or the G 2/5 reunion in Vegas since they are occurring within three weeks of each other. The city and timing of the reunion was set soon after the 2006 reunion in South Carolina. At that time we had no idea the Hué City Memorial would be held so late this year and as I said earlier, it's unfortunate it will force some of our Marines to choose between the two events. We hope as many as possible can make both events. The details for the reunion are provided later on in the newsletter as well.

Our Association coffers are dwindling due to the lack of paying members. This year we have only about 65 paid members. The paying membership has continued to decline over the last several years from a high of about 120 or so 3 or 4 years ago. This year we tried saving on postage for the dues renewal and the renewal notice was sent by Tony C. via email. I think he's got a very extensive list of email addresses but for some reason, the response has been very low. If you've been procrastinating, take this as a friendly reminder to send in your 20 bucks before you forget again. Mail your dues to the treasurer, Rick Mack, whose address is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last page of the newsletter.

Speaking of the Vegas reunion and our dwindling coffers, at the 2006 reunion, my cousin, Kathy McLendon volunteered to make a USMC tee shirt quilt that was raffled off at the reunion. It was the hit of the reunion as far as the items available in the silent auction and the raffle. The tee shirt quilt netted the Association about \$1,500 by itself. Kathy has again volunteered to make another USMC quilt for this year's reunion. We've been

asking the membership to send in some tee shirts to Kathy and this year our members really responded and she received 12 tee shirts unlike for the 2006 reunion when she received only 9 tee shirts which resulted in a smaller quilt than she originally planned. Thanks to all of you that sent the tee shirts. And, there's a special bonus this year as Arne Flores from California sent Kathy 12 Harley-Davidson tee shirts in 2006 to make into a quilt for raffle at this year's reunion. It's been a whole lot of work and Kathy will have both quilts completed.

We'd like to have as many of the Association members as possible have a chance to enter the raffle even if you can't make the reunion. So if you'd like to buy a raffle ticket(s) and enter the raffle for either the USMC or Harley quilt, please send me an email and let me know. The price of each raffle ticket is \$5.00 or 5 tickets for \$20.00. Email me at: [LSO.vngrunt@yahoo.com](mailto:LSO.vngrunt@yahoo.com) and let me know if you want to enter the raffle drawing, how many tickets you'd like to purchase and which quilt you'd like to buy a ticket(s) for or if you want to enter for either quilt. Please send your check to me at the address on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last page of the newsletter made out to the Golf 2/5 Association and don't miss out on this opportunity to win a great piece of art. Here's a photo of Kathy and the two quilts. Another photo of the USMC & Harley quilts is included on pg. 7 of the newsletter.



**Kathy McLendon and the USMC and Harley Quilts**

Barney's *President's Message* follows and he recalls the day of August 18, 1968 when Golf Co. lost 6 Marines while we were on an operation in the An Hoa / Phu Loc 6 area. Just another horrible day in *the Nam* . . . July 30, 1968 is another day that brings back sad memories for me. On that fateful morning, 3<sup>rd</sup> plt. left the wire of Phu Loc 6 for a platoon sized patrol. Shortly after leaving the perimeter, we spotted two Vietnamese men a couple hundred yards away in the paddies although neither man was carrying a weapon (at least that we could see). We shouted for them to stop and they took off running toward the

tree line past the rice paddies. We gave chase and got caught out in the middle of the paddies when the VC opened up on us from their concealed and well defended positions and we were caught in a daylight ambush. We had to take cover in the flooded paddies behind the paddy dikes which were flooded with about a foot of filthy stagnant water. I soon found out I had several leeches crawling on me finding good spots to affix themselves to my body and start sucking some blood. Our bodies were completely submerged in the paddy water yet we were able to keep our heads out of the paddy water and behind the paddy dikes. Every time any of us raised our heads above the paddy dikes to try and fire, you could hear the rounds whizzing by your head. We were sitting ducks!

The platoon commander and our radio man, Jim Kandel, called in for arty from An Hoa and after a few willy-peter rounds and adjustments, got the tree line zeroed in and the arty started hitting the tree line. I was only about 5 yds. away from Jim and on one of the times he raised his head above the paddy dike, he was shot in the head and killed instantly.

Many years ago while I was surfing some Vietnam vet websites, I posted a message on one asking for any family or friends of Jim Kandel to contact me. Probably 3 years passed and I hadn't heard anything and pretty much forgot and lost hope I would hear from Jim's family or friends. Shortly after we moved to Paris, I received a letter that had been forwarded to me there from Jim's mother. Her daughter in law (married to Jim's brother) had found my posting on the website. I tried calling Jim's mother several times but because of the time difference and my calling when she happened not to be home, I was not able to speak to her. I tried again after coming back from Paris and was finally able to speak to Jim's mother this past March. I've spoken to several different families of friends of Marines that didn't make it home. Jim's mother was very grateful to hear from someone who not only knew her son but was with him when he died as all the other families I've been fortunate to contact have been. It's been over 40 years ago that that happened but it still seems like it was only yesterday.



**L to R: Jerry Poling, Dale Roberts, Jim Kandel, Richard Flores, Jose Orozco and Mario Muñiz at Phu Ghia Pass, May or June 1968**  
*Jim, your family and friends miss you and you are not forgotten!*

I think most of us since we got back from *the Nam* have tried to reconnect with many of our brother Marines we served with.

Being in France for the period of time we were there offered an opportunity for Melba and me to find her uncle's final resting place there in France and reconnect with a relative and fallen soldier. He was killed in WWII in August 1944. We were able to find the cemetery where he was buried and visit his grave. Whether it was Nam, Korea, WWII, or Iraq, that connection with a fellow warrior is there. It was quite an emotional experience that I'd like to share in an article later on in the newsletter as I know you will fully understand and appreciate the connection.

Again, hope to see as many of you as possible at the Hué City Memorial and G 2/5 reunion!

Semper Fi,  
Larry S. Ortiz

### President's Message by Barney Barnes

Greetings Marines,

Hope this message finds all of you in great health and good spirits.

As I write this on Sunday afternoon, August 17, tomorrow, August 18 is weighing heavy on my mind. It was 40 years ago that Golf 2/5 had one of its worst days in Nam since Hué City. We lost 6 fine Marines: Chubby Hale, Whitey Travers, Mike Witt, James Spaw, Freddy Williams, and Doug Scroggins, that hot August day in the hamlet of La Thap 1 about 2 clicks SE of Phu Lac 6 and Liberty Bridge. Yep, 40 years ago and I can't let that day go . . . I'm sure most of you know what I'm talking about here. I will not forget them and will always honor their sacrifices, for they are with me and I with them always. They too, know why I can't let this day go.



**Chubby Hale**

This weekend, August 22 - 24 is also the annual Hué City Memorial Weekend hosted by the Navy at Mayport Naval Base in Jacksonville, FL. This being the 40th Anniversary of Hué, it ought to be Special.

Then, in a matter of a few weeks we will be in Vegas for our Reunion. Capt. O'Rourke has done a great job of being the lead person in arranging this for us. Thank you, Sir. Looking forward to seeing everybody and having a great time.

Hope your summer is going good. A few weeks ago Mike & Wanda Copeland along with Mona and I had the opportunity to travel to Fort Worth, Texas and surprise our favorite Lieutenant (General Pace) at a reception held in his honor at the home of Skip Quant, who was Pete's Platoon Sgt. when he came back from Nam. Pics of the event can be found at <http://picasaweb.google.com/skipquant>.

We also got to hear General Pace address the Ft Worth Chamber of Commerce at their annual luncheon . . . as always, a great speech was given by General Pace.

Take care and may God bless each and every one of you.

Love you, Brothers & Sisters...S/F Barney

### Upcoming Formations

#### Hué City Memorial

##### **2008 Battle of Hué Memorial**

For information or to RSVP, contact LTJG Schimpf at [pao@cg66.navy.mil](mailto:pao@cg66.navy.mil)

Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>

1300 to 1430 ~ Battle of Hué Symposium, USS HUÉ CITY  
1800 to 2100 ~ Reception at Bogey's Restaurant, Windy Harbor Golf Club

Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>

0730 ~ Golf Tournament at Windy Harbor Golf Course  
1030 to 1230 ~ Wives & Widows Brunch, Ocean Breeze Center

1200 to 1600 ~ Picnic at Sea Otter Pavilion  
1300 to 1800 ~ Tours of USS HUÉ CITY

Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup>

1030 ~ 1130 Memorial Ceremony, USS HUÉ CITY  
Guest Speaker Nicholas Warr, Author of *Phase Line Green*  
1130 ~ 1230 Reception, USS HUÉ CITY

#### G 2/5 Reunion – 2008 from Jack O'Rourke

Here is the info on the reunion for 2008 in Las Vegas, NV:

9/7--Sun—Arrive if you are playing golf at Nellis AFB.

9/8--Mon—golf – Free time

9/9--Tues—Depart at 830 on a bus trip to Hoover Dam, tour of the dam, cruise on Lake Meade aboard the Desert Princess with a box lunch, a stop at the chocolate factory in Henderson. Return to the hotel about 1630. Free time.

9/10--Wed—Depart hotel 0900 for tour of Nellis AFB and visit Thunderbird's hanger, lunch at either O Club or Staff NCO Club.

9/10--Wed—Business meeting in Hospitality Suite in the afternoon.

9/10--Wed—Shuttle bus to Marine Corps League for Happy Hour and dinner. Shuttle will start at 1800 and we should all be back to the hotel by 2200.

9/11--Thurs—Depart

5 rooms will be available on Sat, 10-15 rooms on Sunday, 40 rooms Mon to Wed, and 10 on Thurs for those who might want to come early and or stay later.

This is a break down of the costs:

Golf	\$45.00
Dam Tour	\$85.00
Tour to Nellis	\$10.00
Lunch at Nellis	\$15.00 to \$18.00
Shuttle bus to MCL	\$7.00
Dinner at MCL	\$25.00
Total	\$187.00 to \$190.00

If you don't play golf deduct \$45.00. The room rates are only \$30.00 a night. The Plaza is not a 5 Star but its right at the west end of the Fremont Experience. The rooms are as nice as the ones in Myrtle Beach. The 3rd Mar Div held its reunion there this last June.

SEMPER FI, Captjack

#### A Kindergarten for Jesse

by **Jim Lewis**

*This is Jim's project letter to PeaceTrees Vietnam (PTVN):*

My name is Jim Lewis. I served in Vietnam from Feb. of 1968 until Sept. of 1968. I served in the US Marine Corps. I achieved the rank of Corporal and was a squad leader with Golf Co. 2/5 1st Platoon.

I was wounded on Sept. 15, 1968 and after being evacuated from Vietnam, I spent almost 9 months in hospitals recovering from my wounds. I was honorably discharged in 1969.

While serving with Golf 2/5, I met a young Marine by the name of Jesus (Jesse) Griego. He was a New Years Eve baby, being born on Dec. 31, 1947 in Ribera, NM (born at home). He was a good son to Henry and Marie, a good brother (the eldest of 6), an outstanding athlete, friend and Marine, for all to be proud of.

The fact I was from Colorado and Jesse was from New Mexico, made us fast friends and while sharing childhood stories, we discovered that we had both fished the same lake in New Mexico, Eagle Nest Lake. His family and my family fishing the same lake, not knowing that one day we would serve together in Vietnam.

On July 16, 1968, Jesse was killed by an explosive device. I was with him when he died and saw the light leave his eyes. I still dream of his eyes staring at me from the darkness. His eyes are not angry, hostile or sad, just big brown eyes staring at me, as if waiting for me to do something. The same way he looked at me when he died. Waiting for me.....

Every morning when I awake, I wish Jesse a good morning and tell him I miss him. His death changed me and others forever. I saw death and lost other Marines, but the day Jesse died was different. He had a small wound, that didn't even bleed, but that wound was to his heart. The lion heart that he had, stopped beating forever, but his spirit continues to be a part of my everyday existence.





**Jesus "Jesse" Griego**

On Jan. 31, 2008, I had the honor of addressing the board of directors of PeaceTrees Vietnam, located in Seattle, WA. I presented a proposal, to build a Kindergarten in the A Xing area, Vietnam and dedicate this kindergarten to Jesse. My proposal was unanimously approved and the role I play, is project sponsor.

The cost to build a kindergarten and dedicate it to Jesse is \$25,000. Your help is greatly respected and appreciated.

PeaceTrees Vietnam is an IRS 501(C)(3) Tax Exempt Organization dedicated to working alongside the Vietnamese people to create a safe and healthy future for the children and families of Quang Tri Province. They sponsor the clearing of land mines and unexploded ordnance, provide life-saving Mine Risk Education for the children and families, Survivors' Assistance to families who suffer accidents and have built the PeaceTrees Friendship Village for 100 families on a safely cleared site of a former battle ground near Dong Ha Town. They have built 7 libraries and 3 kindergartens to serve families in remote areas.

PeaceTrees Vietnam was founded in 1995 as an international Non-Governmental Organization to build friendship and cooperation with the Vietnamese people. Their motto is: Peace, Friendship and Renewal. I am proud to be associated with PeaceTrees Vietnam in this honorable mission.

PeaceTrees Vietnam can be accessed at: [www.peacetreesvietnam.org](http://www.peacetreesvietnam.org). All donations are tax deductible. No donation is too small and be sure to designate any donations to the Jesse Griego Kindergarten.

40 years ago, I was sent on a mission to help the people of Vietnam. For a variety of reasons, I was not able to complete that mission.

This humanitarian mission has a different purpose — Healing. With our effort, we can complete our mission and leave a lasting legacy to a fine young man who didn't make it home. He would be proud. And this time I go to Vietnam better armed than I was, as a young 19 year old Marine 40 years ago. This

time in my backpack, I have the P.T.V.N. logo Peace, Friendship and Renewal. With a completed mission, we can feel better about Vietnam and ourselves and help the children and people of Vietnam.

I believe in nobility of purpose and this effort is certainly all of that and more. Jesse was a noble young man and I never want his sacrifice to be forgotten.

Thank you for your support, understanding and compassion.

Winston Churchill said; "you make a living by what you get . . . you make a life by what you give".

I have a mission and a purpose in my life and both are very clear. I am going back to Vietnam and honor my friend, who truly deserves it, and to help the children and people he and I set out to help so long ago.

Now I know what Jesse is waiting for.....me.

Thank you,

Jim Lewis

*Jim lives in Jupiter, FL and was interviewed about his PTVN project. The article appeared in the Palm Beach Post on July 25th. If you're on Tony C's email list, you probably received the email link to read the article. Jim's article has also been picked up by the Chicago Tribune and printed in the August 10th paper. I'm sure all this publicity can only help Jim reach his goal.*

#### ***Lest We Forget. . .!***

<i>L/Cpl. Jesus "Jesse" Griego</i>	<i>KIA 7/16/68</i>
<i>L/Cpl. James Edward Kandel</i>	<i>KIA 7/30/68</i>
<i>Cpl. Michael David Hale</i>	<i>KIA 8/18/68</i>
<i>PFC Wallace "Whitey" Travers</i>	<i>KIA 8/18/68</i>
<i>L/Cpl. Michael Robert Witt</i>	<i>KIA 8/18/68</i>
<i>SSgt. Freddy Roosevelt Williams</i>	<i>KIA 8/18/68</i>
<i>PFC Douglas Sidney Scroggins</i>	<i>KIA 8/18/68</i>
<i>Cpl. James Odis Spaw</i>	<i>KIA 8/18/68</i>

***Let us also not forget our brave Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and allies who have made the ultimate sacrifice on Operation Iraqi Freedom!***

#### **Roll Call**

*As I wrote earlier, Arne Flores provided 12 Harley tee shirts to be made into a quilt for raffle at this year's reunion. I asked Arne to send me some details of his time in Nam and here's some information from Arne—the editor:*

**Arne Flores** — Thanks for the info on the quilt.

I am listed on the G 2/5 members roster as Arnold Flores and go by Arne.

I was wondering about the quilt the other day and am glad Kathy completed it. I sure hope I can see a photo of the quilt.

I was a member of G 2/5 from 8/1965 until 2/1967 with the Weapons Platoon machine gun section as an ammo carrier, gunner, team leader and squad leader for machine guns attached to the 3rd and later the 1st platoon. I was with G 2/5 when we left Camp Pendleton in early January 1966 to Okinawa on the USS Bexar. Two days before departure 2/5 received a large number of young marines right out of ITR from Camp Lejune. As a result 2/5 had a two month "lock on" training exercise in Okinawa

which included the Northern Training Area (NTA) before going to Vietnam. 2/5 departed Okinawa in the USS George Climber (but not before 2/5 did numerous practice beach landings) in late March or early April 1966 for Vietnam. 2/5 made a beach landing on mike boats near the Chu Lai air strip and a couple of days later relieved 2/4 at hill 69 about ten miles from the Chu Lai air strip. The rest is history . . .

When I rotated back to CONUS, I ended in El Toro MCAS for a couple of months and finished my enlistment in San Diego MCRD as a drill instructor.

I am currently the president of the Choir Boys Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club for San Diego Region 6, an all Harley-Davidson club. Our web address is <http://www.choirboyslemc.org/>

Take care and Semper Fi!

Arne

**Gen. Peter Pace**—As I'm sure we all know, Gen. Pace retired last October after 40 years of active service. On June 11, 2008, President Bush announced the names of six recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civil award. Established by Executive Order 11085 in 1963, the Medal may be awarded by the President "to any person who has made an especially meritorious contribution to (1) the security or national interests of the United States, or (2) world peace, or (3) cultural or other significant public or private endeavors." President Bush honored these recipients at a White House ceremony on Thursday, June 19, 2008. The summary write-up for Gen. Pace's nomination is as follows: "General Peter Pace, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), is one of our Nation's most accomplished and respected military officers. His selfless service and visionary leadership have helped keep our Nation safe."

*On behalf of G 2/5, I'd like to express our sincere admiration and respect to "Lt. Pace" and thank him for his dedicated service to our country and also offer our congratulations on being a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the editor*

**Bill Rogers** — Dear Friends, I am sending this email to people who are either marine friends, college friends or just friends. Many of you have visited our little town of Earle with a population of 3300. We were hit with F-3 category tornado Friday (May 2, 2008) afternoon. Over a hundred homes were heavily damaged or destroyed. The Baptist church complex where I have attended for over fifty years was completely destroyed.

Both of the town's medical clinics were destroyed. My 88 year old father survived with little damage to his home. Reba and I live about two miles south of town so we were completely spared any damage. Many of you have either called or emailed. I hope that each of you are well. Take care and Semper Fi.

*We're sorry to hear about the damage to Bill's little town and hope rebuilding progresses quickly. Thankfully no lives were lost and Bill and his wife came through the ordeal all right—the editor.*

### ***In Our Thoughts and Prayers . . .***

**Richard Cobb** — Rich underwent an unexpected quadruple bypass in early July. *We wish him a speedy recovery—the editor*

**Mike Copeland** — Mike had an unfortunate and very serious accident with a skill saw on July 15<sup>th</sup> and almost severed his hand. He underwent 8 hrs of surgery. *We wish him a speedy recovery and hope he regains full use of his hand—the editor*

**Bill Gavin** — We learned that Bill died on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please keep Bill and his wife Fay in your thoughts and prayers—the editor

### **Honoring a Fallen Soldier by Larry Ortiz**

I know Melba must have told me, probably more than once, during our 37 + years of marriage about her uncle who was killed in the liberation of France during WWII but I certainly hadn't remembered that when we moved to Paris in the summer of 2005. During our time in France, we had the opportunity to visit the landing beaches at Normandy and several US cemeteries in the Normandy area which was a very sobering experience.

During the winter of 2006, Melba and I, with another couple, took a weekend trip northeast of Paris. We were in the vicinity of Belleau Wood and Chateau-Thierry on the River Marne about 35 miles northeast of Paris. If you recall your WWI history, some very major and bloody battles were fought there from May 31 - July 10, 1918 that included 2/5. We visited a US cemetery in the area and had the chance to talk to the caretaker of the cemetery who is American. We asked him if there was any way to find the cemetery where Melba's uncle was buried. Thanks to the wonders of the internet, a complete database exists with all the names of the soldiers killed and buried in France from WWI and WWII. Melba gave the caretaker the name of her uncle, Antonio Padilla, and within a few seconds and a few keyboard strokes and clicks of a mouse, he pulled up two Antonio Padilla's. One was from Texas and the other from New Mexico which was Melba's uncle. Not only was the caretaker able to provide the name of the cemetery where he was buried, but the grave plot number in the cemetery. It seemed like a sign from God that we had to visit his grave before we left France and that became one of my must-do's before we left there.

Knowing we would be leaving France in early 2008, we decided to stay in Paris for Christmas 2007. Having a few days off, we went to visit St. James Cemetery in Normandy which is the cemetery where Melba's uncle was buried. Our friends that had accompanied us to Chateau Thierry also went with us. My friend Ken is a retired Canadian Air Force officer who retired after 27 yrs. in the Air Force. He's also a very knowledgeable military historian which made all of our many trips with Ken and his wife fascinating because of his knowledge of the military events that took place in the area we may have been visiting.

The morning we met at the train station in Paris for our trip to Normandy, Ken presented Melba a folder of information he had researched that included information on the Army unit her uncle was with, and maps showing when and where her uncle's unit landed in France and the route it took fighting its way toward Paris. Her uncle's unit, the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, landed after D-Day on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1944 and he was killed on August 27, 1944 as his unit was on the outskirts of Paris.

After taking the train to Caen, we rented a car and drove to a chateau about an hour northwest of Caen which is kind of like a

B & B. The next morning we drove along the route that the 79<sup>th</sup> Division took after they captured Cherbourg and moved south to hold defensive lines along the Ollonde River until 2 Jul 44. The division then pushed down the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula in driving rain and took La Haye-du-Puits before moving toward Paris. The French erected a nice memorial to the 79<sup>th</sup> at La Haye-du-Puits honoring the 79<sup>th</sup> plus several more battalions and regiments participating in the breakout from Normandy.

We arrived at St. James cemetery in the early afternoon on a cold and gray late December day. We went in to the visitor center and were greeted by the two American caretakers of the cemetery. We explained why we were there and the head caretaker looked up the plot number of Melba's uncle's grave and led us to the gravesite. Before we walked down there, he picked up a small bucket of sand that he carried with him. As many US cemeteries we visited while we were in France, it was still a humbling and sobering experience to see row upon seemingly endless row of grave markers. As we walked to the gravesite, I wondered to myself if the French realized and fully appreciated the sacrifice that was made by the United States and the other allies on their behalf . . .

The two American caretakers were very helpful and went out of their way to help us in any way they possibly could, as did all the American caretakers we met at the several cemeteries we visited. We arrived at the gravesite which was almost at the end of the cemetery. It was quite an emotional experience for Melba and for me seeing that white marble cross with her uncle's name etched on it. We all stood there in silence for a couple of minutes just absorbing the overwhelming emotion of those moments.



The caretaker asked us if we had planned to take photos of the grave marker and we said that we did. Since the etching of the name is against the white marble, it is very difficult to see the name. The caretaker then offered to spread sand over the etching which makes the name visible for photographs. We readily agreed to his recommendation. Melba and I stood there for several more minutes. He then asked us if we would like to have *Taps* played and we said that

we would. He pulled out a remote control device from his coat pocket and pushed a button and within a couple of seconds, *Taps* was playing throughout the cemetery. The emotions then turned to tear filled eyes.

We lingered at the gravesite and the caretaker gave us a small American flag that he had placed on the gravesite for us to take and also a small Ziploc bag filled with "Normandy sand"

that he used to fill in the etching of the name. Then we walked to the chapel and we talked with the caretaker for quite a while. He explained that this cemetery is actually very far from where most of the soldiers had been killed during the war. Temporary cemeteries had been established close to the battlefields and after the war the bodies were disinterred and consolidated into larger cemeteries. Before that was done, letters were sent to the families of the dead soldiers and the families were asked if they wanted their loved one sent back home or if they wanted the soldier's remains to stay in France.

I had never known this and was surprised to learn that more than 50% of the families decided to leave their loved one's remains in France rather than have them sent home. We asked the caretaker if he knew why so many families had chosen to leave the bodies in France, assuming that all the families would have wanted their loved one sent home. He answered that for many families, they had already suffered the pain of knowing their son, brother or father had been killed, had held a funeral and had grieved. To have sent the body home would have meant that these families would have had to go through that ordeal yet another time so many families elected to leave the bodies in France where they had died.

After we returned to our B & B for the evening, our French host joined us for a drink and spoke with us. He asked what we had done during the day and we told him of our visit to the St. James Cemetery. He told us that the townspeople have an organization and many of them "adopt" an American soldier's grave. They visit it several times a year and bring flowers to place on the gravesite. I guess I got a partial answer to the question I posed to myself as to whether or not the French appreciated the American's sacrifice. We were pleased to learn that some French people still do.



**Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial  
St. James, France**

Even though I had never known Melba's uncle, I was very pleased that we made the effort to visit his grave. No one in Melba's family, as far as she knew, even knew where in France he was buried and we were the only family members to have ever visited his grave. I felt that he knew we were there to see him and to let him know he has not been forgotten and we un-



derstood the magnitude of his sacrifice for his country and the liberation of France and Europe. I felt greatly privileged to have had that opportunity to honor a fellow brother-in-arms.

Larry Ortiz



**Golf 2/5 Website Address**

**Log on at:** <http://www.2ndbn5thmarines.com>

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Ochlockonee Bay, FL 32346-2626  
H (850)984-5095  
E-Mail: [USMC-Vietnam-Grunt@att.net](mailto:USMC-Vietnam-Grunt@att.net)

**Golf 2/5 Association Membership Form: (New Members Only)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ AKA \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Years Served \_\_\_\_\_ Platoon/Squad \_\_\_\_\_ MOS \_\_\_\_\_

**Optional: Wounded / Date \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_**

Dues: \$25.00 first year; \$20.00 per year thereafter. If you are on 50% or more disability, just send \$10.00 first year and \$10.00 per year thereafter. If these amounts are a financial hardship, contact Rick. We want everyone to be a part of the Association.

Mail New Membership Forms to: **G 2/5 Association, c/o Rick Mack, P.O. Box 800, Seneca, MO 64865**

**Golf 2/5 Association  
c/o Larry S. Ortiz  
7064 Scripps Crescent  
Goleta, CA 93117**

**Address Correction Requested**

**First Class**