



# GOLF COMPANY 2ND BATTALION 5TH MARINES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



## Season's Greetings

Vol. 7, Issue 3

December, 2000

### A few words from the Editor

It's hard to believe we're almost at the end of the year 2000. It started off with a lot of "doom and gloom" with the predictions of all the Y2K problems which, fortunately, did not materialize.

It's been another year that seems to have flown by as they all seem to as I move from "middle age" to I guess what can only be called "old age". I've completed my first year as editor of the G 2/5 Newsletter and have enjoyed the challenge. Being the editor has afforded me the opportunity to stay in closer touch with many of the membership.

As the new editor I've tried to upgrade the look of the Newsletter a little by having the first edition printed in color, including more photos and using a higher grade of paper. Of course, all this has added to the cost of producing the newsletter. I've received a lot of positive feedback from the membership so I am gratified that it's been appreciated.

Shortly after the first of the year our Secretary/Treasurer, Lance Machamer, will be sending out the membership renewal notices. The renewal fee for the year is a modest \$10 and it is the goal of the G 2/5 Organization to include as many of the vets as possible. We do send out the newsletter to the entire G 2/5 roster once or twice a year as we want as much participation as possible—even from those vets who have not sent in their membership dues.

This edition of the newsletter is again being sent to the entire G 2/5 roster. Attached is a form for joining the G 2/5 organization and we would encourage and welcome as many vets as possible to join and to send in their membership dues. If the initial \$25 is prohibitive, just send in what you feel you can afford and we'll add you to our paid membership list and you'll be included in every mailing of the newsletter. If any of our membership is in a financial position where they can afford to send in more than the \$10 renewal fee, we would greatly appreciate the additional funding. The G 2/5 coffers have been depleted as a result of the added newsletter costs and the San Diego reunion.

And finally, I, and the officers of the Golf 2/5 Association, wish all our Marine brothers and their families a very joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*The editor*

### The Nam And Its Enduring Effects by Larry Ortiz

On Jan. 8th, 2001, Melba and I will celebrate our 30th anniversary—a long time by today's standards. Sometimes it seemed doubtful that we would reach this milestone in our married life as all marriages have their *difficulties*. And one of those difficulties has been the legacy of *the Nam* and how it has affected my life since I returned in Nov. '68 and how it has affected my relationships and my relationship with my wife.

While I believe that a marriage (or a committed relationship) is probably the most intense relationship two people can share, it's the caring, sharing and understanding by each spouse—of the other—that strengthens that relationship.

I never realized how *the Nam* actually became such a part of my life, and much of it in an adverse way. I had kept in touch with a few vets since my return from Nam in '68 and with the exception of those few people there was no one else who could really understand what I had gone through and the effect *the Nam* had on my life since then—not even my wife! I wanted that depth of understanding from her and at the same time knew it was not possible because only those of us who were actually in those circumstances can *actually* know what it was like.



**L to R: Terry Studenny, Dennis Studenny & Melba Ortiz**

The last night at the San Diego reunion in August a few of us grunts, George Haight, Barney Barnes, Danny Cholewa, Danny's friend, Donna, Dick Ducasse Steve Molnar, Melba and

I got together for a last nightcap. We talked till the wee hours of the morning about *the Nam*, its effects on our lives since we returned and how that experience has affected our relationships—and marriages. I had (mistakenly) come to a conclusion that I had the only marriage where I wasn't getting the understanding and support from my wife that I so desperately sought (as I was certain all other vets wives were thoroughly supportive and understanding). I was wrong! Some of the other vets shared how the Nam has affected their marriages and how that lack of understanding by their "significant other" has also affected their relationship(s). This was a real eye-opener for me and once again a Vietnam Vet reunion helped me better understand that I, or rather, Melba and I, are not alone in dealing with the residual effects of Vietnam.

I've gone to several Vietnam Vet reunions since 1987 and each one has been a very rewarding experience—however, this reunion was different. The last night's impromptu discussion opened my eyes to the desire and need by all the vets to have the support and understanding of our Nam experience by our significant others. And, I was also fortunate that my "significant other" was there to share this wonderful experience which gave her an insight into our Vietnam experience she was unable to grasp in our almost 30 years together. This was truly one of my life's unique experiences. . . .

Since our return from the San Diego reunion in August, Melba and I have discussed it a great deal and the new understandings we both came away with. Melba has written the following article and I want to thank her for her eloquence and wanting to share what the Vietnam experience has meant to her. (Also included in this edition of the newsletter are photos of some of the G 2/5 Vets wives that attended the reunion with their husbands).

### A Wife's Perspective

Dear Golf Company Vets,

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts about my experience as the spouse of a Marine attending the Vietnam Vet Reunions. I have wondered what my presence at a reunion would accomplish since the time I attended the first one with Larry (Ortiz) in 1987 in Washington, DC. Through our 29 years of marriage, I have also struggled with understanding his Vietnam experience, and how I could be supportive to him in a meaningful way. I don't have definite answers but in sharing my thoughts about the San Diego reunion in August 2000, I have found it helpful to express feelings I couldn't express before.

I'd like to preface my personal perspective by posing a more general, and possibly radical idea that as wives, significant others, daughters, mothers and friends of the brave young men that answered the call of duty to fight in Vietnam, we, too, are veterans of that war. I am not suggesting that we experienced the same pain or made the contribution that you (Marines) made. We did not. However, we are veterans of the helplessness, frustration, fear and loss that the Vietnam War produced.

I remember the agony of turning on the television news to catch only a glimpse of the terror of war—hoping against hope that I wouldn't see anyone I knew being shot, carrying other wounded men, or enduring the misery of battle in a faraway

land. I know it was agony to watch on TV and even worse agony for all of you (Marines) to experience. I lived with the knowledge that watching wasn't even close to being there. Even when I turned off the news, I couldn't turn off the images in my mind, nor the worry, fear, anger and the sense of outrage.

I remember so many of my male classmates enlisted or were drafted as soon as they graduated from high school and never came back. It seemed that every day brought news of one more casualty or death. It was a time for constant grief. For some, it was unbearable pain. I still remember the day when two uniformed officers requested to speak to an employee where I worked. It took only a few minutes before I heard her heart-wrenching scream as she learned her son had died in battle. I can still hear her mournful wailing that she "didn't want him to be a hero—[I] just wanted him back!" This is only one example of thousands of heart-breaking stories heard all over the country.

When you returned home, it was wonderful and it was painful! Painful because we saw the haunted look in your eyes and wondered how we could take that away, how we could help you heal. We didn't know how to help. As veterans of our own pain, many of us are still wondering if we are saying the right thing, asking the right questions, or being silent at the right time. We just don't know what you need—and we don't even know how to ask. And if we ask, we don't know if we will have the strength and ability to hear the answer.

Larry doesn't remember that after his return from Vietnam, he was very quiet and withdrawn. Larry rarely spoke about Vietnam, and when he did, it seemed to bring him so much pain that I was reluctant to be the reason to bring it to the surface. I thought my silence was my help to him. I also think that I was so scared to hear what he might say because I didn't think I could handle it. I thought I had to absorb his pain in order to help him and I thought I would crumble under such a heavy burden. I also dealt with my issues in a way that isn't always healthy, I chose to bury them deeply so I wouldn't have to look too closely — thinking that the pain of reflection might be unbearable. So, I was silent. And Larry needed to express his feelings and to be heard.

Over the last thirteen years, since the beginning of the reunions, I have seen Larry and many of you (that I have since met and admire) begin a healing process that I know will be a lifelong endeavor. I have seen how much it means to all of you to connect, and I felt like the "outsider" at the reunions. I don't begrudge your friendship and camaraderie—I'm in awe of it. It's truly inspiring to be in your presence. I just haven't understood how my presence was relevant in the midst of this impenetrable bond—until this last reunion. Something wonderful happened on the last evening in San Diego. It started at the dinner and the sharing that took place as each one of the vets spoke briefly about themselves. Hearing from each one of you about your Vietnam experience was so moving. I felt that I was at last getting a "peek" at your experience in a way that I had not heard before. I think I was able to really open my heart in that setting. I was ready to listen and hear you without fear of crumbling myself. That doesn't mean I wasn't feeling the intensity of the emotions in that room—my tears were flowing along with everyone else. We could all cry together, and it was a "good cry."

After dinner, a small group (Larry , George Haught, Barney Barnes, Danny Cholewa, Danny's friend, Donna, Dick Ducasse and Steve Molnar) got together for a last round of drinks at the hotel lounge. I was one of two women among the vets and we listened to stories of such difficult experiences, heartbreaking sorrow, anger, confusion, and love for each other. It wasn't easy to listen, but I found myself totally immersed in the stories. I felt honored to be included in this group. Then George Haught asked Donna and I a question: : "how do you feel about all this?" Thank you, George, for opening that door for me and for all the others wanting to go through it.

That question included me in a way I have not been included before. I found myself sharing my own pain and confusion about Vietnam from a wife's perspective. I realized that my comments opened up some insights for the "guys" about their own wife's, mother's, friend's, ability or inability to listen and understand the ever present Vietnam in their lives. We talked about some of the problems that couples experience because of Vietnam. We share the wish to communicate effectively and the frustration when the wife "just doesn't get it." And from the wife's side, the frustration and confusion about "his need to punish himself with war stories, memories, etc." It's perplexing and frustrating to us all but we want to "get it."

I admire every Marine for serving our country so faithfully, yet I curse the need for you to have to do so. To put a loved one in harm's way is not my way. No wife, no mother, no sister, no friend or lover wants "her" Marine to face the hell of war. Yet, I understand your patriotism and am so grateful that you chose to fight for your country and in doing so, for my personal freedoms. There is so much conflict in my mind about what Larry and all of you (Marines) experienced that I'm sure it confuses him. It confuses me!

I do understand that Vietnam was intense and that it will always be a part of your lives. I understand that I can't make it go away just by wishing it, or ignoring it. I understand I need to listen more, to watch those TV specials (on Vietnam) with Larry, to look at his photographs, to meet his brothers, to stand by his side, to understand when the memories bring him fresh pain all over again. I understand that you give each other strength to live with Vietnam, that you need to remember and acknowledge it in order to go on with your lives. I hope I'm beginning to understand just a little about a very complex subject.

The reunion was once again a great success—for me as well as for Larry. Thank you for including me in the circle of Love that surrounds your Band of Brothers. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Gratefully yours,

Melba Ortiz

[Melbaortiz@aol.com](mailto:Melbaortiz@aol.com)



**L to R: Larry & Melba Ortiz, Rudy & Rosie Bustamante, Dolly & Henry Perez**

*I invite all you vets to share this newsletter with your wives and/or significant others. This is not meant to be a newsletter strictly for the vets but a newsletter for our "vet family" that includes our wives, significant others and families.*

*If any of the wives would like to contact Melba, she welcomes hearing from you. She can be contacted at the above e-mail address or via mail at the editor's address.*

*I also invite any of the wives of our G 2/5 vets to share their thoughts and feelings of what the Nam has meant in their lives. Please send your articles to me at either the e-mail address listed or by mail to my home address—The editor. . .*

• **Upcoming Formations – USS HUÉ CITY Memorial**

*From Capt. C. R Knouse, CO—USS HUÉ CITY*

"In January 2001, USS HUÉ CITY (CG-66) will host our 9th memorial service marking the 33rd anniversary of Operation Hué City. We consider it a solemn privilege to remember the 142 U.S. Marines who gave their lives at Hué and to honor all the Marines who fought there. This letter is to invite you to attend the memorial service to be held on the USS HUÉ CITY at 1030 on Sunday, 28 January 2001.

Major Gen. Ray Smith, USMC (Ret.) has graciously agreed to speak at the memorial service. We enjoyed the privilege of hearing Gen. Downs last year. This January we look forward to listening to Alpha Company's Commanding Officer.

The officers and crew of our ship have benefited enormously from our association with the Marines who fought in Operation Hué City. Each year as we gather, stories of courage are told by men of valor to young Sailors not even born in 1968. They provide the perspective we need to sail our warship into harm's way.

This year we will be underway for the memorial service on Sunday morning. We will host a Golf Tournament Friday afternoon, a reception Friday evening and a picnic Saturday afternoon. If it is possible for you to attend, you are most welcome."

• **Next G 2/5 Reunion—Summer 2002!**

We are looking for suggestions from the membership for a location for the next reunion. Send in your suggestions to any of the officers of the organization.

*Lest We Forget...!*

<i>Cpl. Joe E. Arnold</i>	<i>KIA 10/9/68</i>
<i>PFC Robert T. McJunkin</i>	<i>KIA 7/16/68</i>
<i>PFC Raymond J. Stevens</i>	<i>KIA 10/9/68</i>

**A word from the Sec/Treas.:**

**For Sale:**

Full color Lithographic copies of the Battle of Hue City Painting, 12" x 24", signed by the artist Austin Deuel (see below). \$8.00 each, \$3.00 shipping for up to 3 prints. Send orders to Lance Machamer, 8550 E. Turney Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85251.

Lance Machamer – [FQBandG@aol.com](mailto:FQBandG@aol.com)



**Sit Reps**

Vet Newsbriefs:

• Chuck Meadows sends greetings from Bainbridge Island, WA. He and family are spending their second Christmas on the island in their new home. Chuck reports that he spent this past Veterans Day in Vietnam. He was on a ten-day trip in Vietnam as part of his work with *Peace Trees Vietnam*. He met with some Quang Tri Province officials and even met briefly (my apologies) with President Clinton during his recent trip to Hanoi. He had been a volunteer with Peace Trees for a year and has now taken on the role of Managing Director.

Since early 1996, Peace Trees Vietnam has been working in humanitarian efforts near the former DMZ in central Vietnam's Quang Tri Province. What began as a small, grassroots organization to sponsor removal of land mines and unexploded ordnance so trees could be planted and friendships could grow, has now blossomed into a full-fledged program of improving social and economic development opportunities in partnership with the people of Quang Tri Province.

Chuck invites any who may be interested in participating in this worthy cause to contact him for more information.

**Missing In Action**

We have lost touch with the following G 2/5 vets. Their last know city of residence is also provided below. If anyone knows their current address, please forward that information to me—the editor.

- Baker, Ferrall L.— Laguna Niguel, CA
- Dillenburg, Clyde – St. Joseph, MN
- Dima, G. E. – Spokane, WA
- Gruner, John M. – Ft. Collins, CO
- Heitz, Jack A. – Freeport, IL
- McColloch, James H. – Charleston, SC
- Moore, John H. – Payson, AZ
- Tant, William – Tuscaloosa, AL
- Zachary, Reid B. – Sultan, WA

**Golf 2/5 Website Address**

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

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**L to R: Joe Snead, Kathy Snead & Mona Barnes**

**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; \$10.00 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 Lance. We want everyone to be a part of the Association.

Mail New Membership Forms to: **G 2/5 Association, c/o Lance K. Machamer, 8550 E. Turney Ave., Scottsdale, AZ 85251**

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

**Address Correction Requested**

**First Class**