



GOLF COMPANY 2ND BATTALION 5TH MARINES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Dong Ha - CHULAI — ANHOA — PHU BAI — HUE CITY

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REUNION—2002!

Greetings fellow Marines and **HAPPY HOLIDAYS** from your G 2/5 Association! Another Golf Co. 2/5 reunion is in the history books! As the reunion organizer this year, I was getting quite concerned that there would be a very low turnout and I would end up having to cancel the reunion. I had been keeping in contact with the hotel we booked in Branson, MO and up to about three weeks before the reunion, there were only about eight names of guys that had made reservations. After doing some additional checking with the hotel, I found out that there were several other reservations but the hotel hadn't listed them with the G 2/5 reunion group. I also received some calls from some of the guys who were going but were staying at different hotels in the Branson area—so things were looking up. In total we had 22 Marines attend the reunion (19 through 21 September 2002) and about 2/3 brought their wives or significant other. Additional details about the reunion are provided later in the newsletter.

We held an Association meeting on Saturday, Sept. 21st with the members in attendance at the reunion. The highlights of the meeting are that we held election of officers and decided on the next reunion location and dates. A nomination was made from the floor for association president. The nominee was Barney Barnes and he was elected by acclamation. Mike Ervin was nominated as association vice-president and also elected by acclamation. Lance Machamer, who couldn't make the reunion, was nominated in absentia to retain his office as Secretary/Treasurer and also elected by acclamation. We decided to do away with the office of "Ops. Chief" since we didn't know what the role was for this office. Larry Ortiz was nominated to continue the role of Editor and also elected by acclamation. Tom Hohmann, our former association president was nominated to continue the duties of webmaster for the Association website.



Golf Co. Marines at the Association Meeting

L to R: Dennis Studenny, Kevin English, Mike Ervin, Gerald Hall, "Doc" Larry Wright, Doc Higgins, Calvin Hill, Tom Javjack, Standing L to R: Larry Ortiz, Tony Cartlidge

Congratulations to all the new Association officers. We also want to thank Tom Hohmann for his work as the Association president, all the hard work he did organizing the 2000 reunion in San Diego and maintaining our website.

After much discussion during the meeting about the next reunion site, the assembled group decided on Washington DC. Holding the reunion toward the end of September turned out to be a great time of year. There aren't many of us who have to worry about children in school anymore. Also, the tourist season is winding down and the heat of earlier summer is past. One problem we did discover holding the reunion on the dates we did this year was that it conflicted with the vet reunion held each year in Kokomo, Indiana. Unfortunately, a few vets had commitments to attend the Kokomo event and couldn't make the Golf Co. reunion. We decided to hold the reunion on the last weekend of September, 2004 (24th through 26th) so start making your plans. More details will be provided in subsequent newsletters.

We also elected a 2004 Reunion Organizer, Mike Ervin. In addition to his duties as Association vice-president, Mike, who lives in the DC area, will take on the role of 2004 Reunion Organizer. It is a big job and I'm sure Mike will appreciate any assistance. If there are any Marines out there who would like to help with planning the next reunion, please contact me.

Larry S. Ortiz, *The editor*

President's Message – by Barney Barnes

"Greetings" or as we say in the South, "Hi Ya'll."

This being my first message as the President of our Golf 2/5 Association, it will be short. I hope to just carry on the work that both Stu (Dennis Studenny) and Tom (Hohmann) started as our past presidents. I will do my best.

It was a great thrill to have so many of our new members show up at Branson for our Reunion. I especially would at this time, thank Elmer "ALEX" Alexander for showing up, I've been after him for a while now. (OK NATE FRAZIER, LEE RILEY, FRED C, FRANKLIN GREAVES, JIM NEWBOLES etc we need ya'll to follow suit.) I have asked the majority of those new men to, in their own words, tell a little of what it was like attending their first Reunion.

Speaking of new men, we have just recently found about 15 of our lost / missing Brothers.(Thanks Rick Mack!!) And though we have not, as this is written, made contact with all of

them, this newsletter will be mailed to them. Also in a way of "WELCOMING" new members, I have tried and will continue to E-mail them and welcome them to our, if you may, "Band of Brothers," as they register on our website.

If you do register, please take a few minutes to tell us a little about yourself...when you were there (Nam), what Platoon, etc.

I've asked Lance to give us a Financial Report in this Newsletter, just so the membership knows where we stand and also to serve as a reminder that the only monies that we have coming in to our association are our yearly dues, plus other gifts of cash that our members donate. So for you guys out there that are not members yet, please give this some thought, serious thought. We want you, we need you to be a part of our Association.



2nd Platoon Marines at the Reunion
L to R: Elmer Alexander, Pres. Barney Barnes, Mike Ervin, Bob Setlak, Emmanuel "Pineapple" Credo, Les Tully
Kneeling: Rick Mack Photo from R. Mack

In closing, I'll just add that I hope each and every one of you have a most happy and joyous Holiday Season. Also, if that "rag head" ain't raisin' too much sand, hope to see you at the Hue City Memorial Weekend. Our own "4 Star Grunt," General Pete Pace has been asked to be the speaker this year. As we go to press, no dates yet, but our RSVP's should be arriving from the Navy any day now. I will keep you abreast.

Semper Fi,
 Barney

Hue City Memorial

OK all you Hue City Vets, the invitations have been mailed out announcing the details of this year's HUE CITY MEMORIAL. This year's memorial will be held beginning Friday, Jan. 31st through Sunday, February 2nd at the Naval Station Mayport, near Jacksonville, Florida. The schedule of events is as follows:

31 Jan. 2003	1200 to 1800	Golf Tournament Reception at Bogey's Golf Club
1 Feb 2003	1200 to 1500	Picnic at Kavanaugh Park
2 Feb	1030	Memorial Service onboard USS Roo-

2003		sevelt (DDG-80)
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This is the 35th anniversary of the Battle of Hue City—could it be that long ago? The guest speaker at this year's service will be none other than Golf Company's, 2nd Platoon commander, Gen. (Lt. back then) Peter Pace, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff! Melba and I went to the Christening and Commissioning but have not made it to the Memorial Services in Mayport. This year will be different and we're going to make every attempt to be there and would encourage all our Hue City Golf Co. vets to attend if at all possible.

The invitation was signed by the Capt. of the Hue City, O. W. Young. For more information, you can call the ship at (904)251-2759 or by e-mailing the Chaplain at dundassj@hue-city.navy.mil or through the ship's website at www.spear.navy.mil/ships/cg66. This year's service will be aboard the USS Roosevelt as the USS Hue City is in dry dock.

Sec./Treas. Report

Hey Marines, once again we are rapidly getting to the end of the year. In January you can look forward to your annual mailing from me for 2003 dues—just one of those necessary evils. I am including a breakdown of our Income Statement so everyone can see where the money goes.

Golf 2/5 Association- 2002

PROFIT AND LOSS Jan. 1, 2002 through Dec. 5, 2002

<u>Income</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Contributions and Donations	\$408.00
Dues	1,130.00
Miscellaneous	7.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,545.00
<u>Expense</u>	
Newsletter – 2002	\$143.30
Office Supplies	25.82
Postage	183.09
Reunion Expense	505.16
Reunion Gifts	387.88
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$1,245.25
NET INCOME*	\$299.75

Balance Sheet as 12/5/02

<u>Assets</u>	
Checking Account Balance	\$1,336.28
Accounts Receivable (a)	1,105.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,441.28

Liabilities and Equities

<u>Equity</u>	
Earnings (b)	\$2,195.41
Opening Balance (c)	-53.88
Net Income	299.75
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$2,441.28

*Note: These figures do not include the cost of this newsletter
 (a) Dues billed but not paid and individuals still on the books
 (b) Has the uncollected \$1,105 included in figure
 (c) Difference from members listed as paid and cash at opening of account

That's the good, the bad and the ugly of our financial picture. If anyone has any questions give me a call.

Happy Holidays to all.
Lance Machamer

Golf Co. Reunion, Branson, Missouri, by Larry Ortiz

As I wrote earlier, another Golf Co. 2/5 reunion is in the history books! My wife, Melba, and I flew in from Cal. on Wed., Sept. 18th. The nearest airport is in Springfield, MO which is about 40 miles north of Branson. After the short drive from Springfield, we found our way on to “the Strip” which is the major thoroughfare in Branson where most of the hotels and performance theaters are located. We found our hotel, the *Leisure Country Inn*. Sure looked different from that brochure. We checked in and found our room. We’re not talking a Marriott here or something like that but for \$50 a night, it was clean and comfortable enough.

Not too long after we arrived, Barney and Mona Barnes also arrived as well as a few other guys. I had had special G 2/5 reunion tee-shirts made up that I had taken and started passing them out to the guys as they arrived. Below the lobby of the hotel is a rather large room where the hotel provides a complimentary breakfast each morning. After the breakfast serving, the hotel gave us complete use of the room as our hospitality suite for our group. It turned out to be the perfect place as it was by the pool and secluded and we didn’t have to worry about disturbing the rest of the guests. I was still a little nervous and concerned about how many guys would actually show up.

A few weeks before the reunion, I got in touch with a Golf vet, Dale Roberts, a very good friend who I hadn’t seen since we got back from Nam over 33 years ago. He didn’t know about our Association or the reunions we’ve held over the years but planned on making it to Branson. Dale and his wife Sharon arrived Wed. evening and Melba and I met them for dinner and an evening of catching up after too many years. It was sure great to see him again after so many years.

In all, we had 22 Marines attend the reunion. They were:

- Emmanuel “Pineapple” Credo – Matteson, Illinois
- Dan Cholewa – St. Joseph, Michigan
- Kevin English – Amherst, Massachusetts
- John “Doc” & Joy Higgins – Lincoln, Nebraska
- Calvin & Jeanne Hill – Little Rock, Arkansas
- Gerald & Georgia Hall – Stuttgart, Arkansas
- Bill Rogers – Earle, Arkansas
- Dennis & Terry Studenny – Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
- Bob & Leanne Setlak – Round Lake, Illinois
- Les & Cheryl Tully – Woodville, Florida
- Kenneth & Karen Buchanan – Dover, Arkansas
- Barney & Mona Barnes – Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
- Dale & Sharon Roberts – Bethany, Oklahoma
- Larry & Melba Ortiz – Goleta, California
- Elmer and Jan Alexander – St. Louis, Missouri
- Rick Mack and Lisa Johnson – Seneca, Missouri
- Mike Averill – Celebration, Florida
- Vince Montoro – Allentown, Pennsylvania
- Tony “Limey” Cartlidge – Ochlockonee Bay, Florida
- Tom Jayjack – East Chicago, Indiana
- Mike Ervin – Annandale, Virginia
- Larry “Doc” Wright – Forestburg, Texas

We planned this reunion to be in the US “Heartland” as we hadn’t had one there previously and as you can see from the ‘tight-grouping’ of where most came from, it was well attended by Marines in the vicinity of Branson. We had hoped that there would be a larger attendance but I know distance is always a factor for many Marines. But, 3rd Herd, Lt. Bill Rogers did make it and we were glad to have some “officer” participation.

As a group, we’re starting to look a little “long-in-the-tooth.” For the most part, most of us have put on several pounds from the time we were in Nam and looked like concentration camp survivors. Hair is quite a bit sparser for most with a few notable exceptions like Mike Ervin, Bill Rogers, Vince Montoro, Tom Jayjack and a few others. We’re not looking nearly as *lean and mean* as we did way back then.

We had a variety of weather from a rather windy and warm day on the 18th which turned into cooler weather and one rainy day. All in all, the weather cooperated very nicely. Branson was a good choice because it offered plenty of entertainment and shopping “opportunities” for the wives. And the wives took advantage of those “opportunities.” Several of us as a group went to the *Andy Williams and Glen Campbell* show. Yeah, Andy’s got to be at least 75 but after the first song where he was limbering up his voice, his performance was really good. Of course, Glen Campbell is still a great entertainer and all who went to the show enjoyed it. On one of the other nights, a group of us went to see *Shoji Tabuchi*. His show is the “hottest ticket” in Branson. Shoji is a Japanese violinist and his reputation is well-deserved. He puts on a great show playing a wide spectrum of violin songs from Cajun music to classical. He had a great orchestra and dancers and it was a really great performance to see.

Friday morning, the hospitality room was reserved for the wives and significant others who accompanied the vets. This was our first reunion where we really tried to include the wives in ways they hadn’t felt included at probably all previous reunions. My wife, Melba, will share some of what that experience meant for her and some of the other wives in an article a little later in the newsletter.



**3rd Platoon Marines at the Reunion Dinner
L to R: John “Doc” Higgins, Larry Ortiz, Dale Roberts**

But the highlight of the reunion for most of us was our Friday night group dinner. We had it at “*Mesquite Charlie’s*” Res-

restaurant which is a popular tourist place in Branson. It's a very large restaurant with a large saloon area with a huge dance floor. The primary reason I booked that restaurant (sight unseen) was they had a separate room that could accommodate our group. The menu consisted of a choice of rib-eye, or a chicken or fish dish. Many in the group who ordered the steak were a little frustrated because it came only one way—the way the cook wanted to prepare it! Well, what can you say for a restaurant that serves the salad dressing in plastic squeeze bottles? Actually, the dinner was quite good and everyone who made it to the reunion attended our one group social event and I believe, enjoyed it very much. The private room afforded us a really great setting to socialize and visit as a collective group.

After the desert, I, as the "M C" said a few words and told the group about our last reunion dinner in San Diego where one of our first-timers at that reunion, suggested that all the Marines there get up and say a few words about themselves. That came off so well that I asked our group to introduce themselves, tell us when they were in Nam, which platoon, etc. and what they're doing now. WOW! Not in my wildest hopes could I have planned for this to have come off any better. Each vet got up, introduced themselves, and told us things about themselves, their time in Nam and how that experience has affected their lives. I can't even come close to describing in words what a wonderful experience it was to be a part of that evening.



Marines and Wives at the 2002 Reunion

Front to Rear, L to R: Emmanuel Credo, Georgia Hall, Kevin English, Joy Higgins, Dan Cholewa, Calvin and Jeanne Hill, Bill Rogers, Gerald Hall, Doc Higgins, Bob & Leanne Setlak, Cheryl & Les Tully, Dennis & Terry Studenny, Mona & Barney Barnes, Karen & Kenneth Buchanan, Jan & Elmer Alexander, Lisa Johnson & Rick Mack, Sharon & Dale Roberts, Melba & Larry Ortiz, Mike Averill, Vince Montoro, Mike Ervin and Tony Cartlidge Photo from R. Mack

You know, I think as we Marines have aged, we're no longer so concerned about impressing anyone else or worrying about how others may react to something we've said. I think this helped all who spoke as everything everyone talked about came straight from the heart. Some of the guys were obviously practiced speakers before a group and others were not comfortable at all speaking in front of a group. But, without exception, everyone was extremely eloquent in what they had to say. There was

so much camaraderie and, dare I say it, *love* amongst all of us in that room, you could have cut it with a knife! Everyone also spoke with such emotion; I don't think there was a dry eye in the room.

There were several references to our "angels" who protected us during our time in *the Nam*. A common theme through everyone's talk was wondering why they were there and so many of our friends didn't make it. That "survivor's guilt" reared its ugly head yet again. It still amazes me how we fortunate ones who did make it back from that hell still wonder why. During the course of the three days of the reunion as we discussed lots of our memories of events that occurred when we were in *the Nam*, some of the guys who were wounded seriously enough to be sent home before their tour was fully completed expressed feeling guilty about that. Others who served their entire tour and were never wounded felt guilty about that. What also came through that evening was that we're well on our way to making peace with those demons and I think this was a truly rewarding and cathartic experience for all of us.

Another common theme was the pride all felt in having been a United States Marine! We've all suffered either physical or emotional wounds (and probably both) as a result of our Vietnam service yet there was no bitterness. I think that's another mark of being a Marine—learning how to accept responsibility for our actions.

We had a couple of people filming the evening and the after dinner speeches. Vince Montoro will be glad to send a copy to anyone who may desire to have one. Although he kept telling us it would be \$19.95 a copy, he's told me he will only charge for the tape and the postage. Sharon Roberts (wife of Dale Roberts) also videotaped the after dinner speeches and sent me a copy. Melba and I had a chance to watch the video and it's as moving watching it again as it was experiencing it first-hand.

We had a number of "first-timers" attend this reunion and they were: Elmer Alexander, Rick Mack, Tom Jayjack, Mike Ervin, Dale Roberts, Bob Setlak, Kevin English and Gerald Hall. Here are some comments from our first-timers:

- By e-mail from Tom Jayjack — To Barney and Larry and to all the Golf 2/5 veterans I met at the Branson reunion, I left the Nam and missed the battle of Hue but the way you guys treated myself and my friend Len, (it was) one of the greatest times of my life. I hope myself and some of the older guys in a little way helped you guys in the battle of Hue being in Nam a little before you guys. I will make it a priority to make the future reunions from now on. Thank you and God bless. (Note: Tom was in Nam in '66 & '67.

Tom was with G 2/5 at Dong Ha, Chu Lai and finally at An Hoa. Please note the acknowledgement of G 2/5 at Dong Ha under the Association emblem. I also want to thank Tom for making a contribution to the Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church Brick Campaign (building fund) on behalf of Golf 2/5. Tom made a donation and purchased two bricks and they'll be inscribed as follows: 1- "Golf Co 2nd Bn Vietnam Vets, 2- Vietnam Vets-5th Marines. Our thanks to Tom for his generous donation and recognizing Golf 2/5 and also for making his first reunion. We all learned a lot from him about when 2/5 first arrived in-country. the editor)

- By e-mail from: Kevin English — In thinking about the Golf 2/5 reunion (Branson, MO, 2002), I have to say that I went there for selfish reasons; "for my Hue City experience to be confirmed" or that, "I be recognized for some feat. I may, too, have been looking for someone to tell my story to or to tell someone who I thought I was back then, or what it was that I saw.

It didn't turn out that way. Even my closest cohorts didn't remember me (although I know Barney does) and for a brief time that made me feel sad and alone. I took a brief break to regroup and when I returned I joined in the days events.

From there, as soon as the deal wasn't about me, it was a good time. I was now with old friends, chatting about who we are today, enjoying the reunion. We had great weather, enjoyed shows and meals (no ham and limas) and talked over coffee in the meeting room. I enjoyed the pool and sauna (shoulda' had them in Nam).

On the way home, I was reflecting about how unimportant my initial reasons for going to the reunion were. Instead, those selfish motives were replaced with a great feeling of acceptance and with new and happier memories of the people that meant so much to me so long ago. It's good to be home again.

- By e-mail from Bob "Setty" Setlak — Really I had a great time in Branson. It was a real emotional time for me. The guy's were all great and it was a day that I will not forget soon.
- By e-mail from Rick Mack — Lisa and I had not even yet reached the boundaries of the Branson, Missouri city limits when I looked in her direction and said "I miss them already".

Preceding this statement I had just spent the last three days amongst my Golf 2/5 Brothers and without a doubt it was an experience that will be treasured throughout the remainder of my life and it was both a pleasurable and rewarding experience to say the least. Kinda strange when I think about it but even though the group consisted of Brothers from different eras of tour times it was as if we were all by each others side back then as we were now and the camaraderie and brotherhood is very much alive. The only regret that I have is that through the years gone by that I have let so many other reunions slip by me with my absence and I will do my best not to let that happen again as we certainly are not getting any younger. For those of you who have never attended a reunion I highly recommend it if it is within your power to participate as you certainly will not be disappointed. I would like to take a moment here to personally thank Brother Larry Ortiz for his involvement in making this particular reunion happen for me.

At this particular time the first thing that comes to my mind is the fact that our units history has been kept alive all these years by various Brothers and I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all these individuals for their involvement and dedication in assuring that our light still shines brightly. On this same note I have pledged my support to our Associations Officers and to you as well that I will do whatever it takes to assist them and you in making sure that the Golf 2/5 flame never burns

out. I am proud to be a member of this organization and consider it both a privilege and an honor to have served with all of you Yesterday ... Today ... Always. I wish for each of you and your families the very best of health and happiness throughout life's journey and know that you are all in my heart and in my mind always. God Bless!

"Semper Fi" — Rick Mack

- By e-mail from Kenneth Buchanan — I really enjoyed the reunion and visiting with the guys of Golf 2/5. The meal and the talk everyone gave was heartwarming to me. Everyone has their memories of the good and rough times in Vietnam, but it helps to get together and remember the good times and the friends we made back then.
- By e-mail from Gerald Hall — I have though a lot about the reunion since we met. For me it brought back a lot of memories. Some were the good ones; we did have a lot of fun, also established life long friends. On the other hand it reminds me of the ones who didn't make it, and their families, especially during the holiday's. I am proud to be a marine, proud to serve my country, and would do it again if I could.
- By e-mail from Mike Ervin — Those of you who were there probably remember some blubbering idiot making some wildly hysterical claim, "There are angels among us". Can't say who let that guy out of the closet but, when he introduced himself, it was as much as a surprise to me as, I'm sure, everybody else! I can't say I'm usually that way and I've only met that other guy at that lonely place I've kept reserved unto myself. Somehow I think all of you understand what I mean: that special place where fear and reality come face to face and heroes emerge.

I've been to my 1st Hue City Reunion in Jan 02 and now my 1st G 2/5 Reunion in Oct 02. What is most apparent is the vast differences in our lives but that one thread that welds us together. Some 30 plus years ago, all of us encountered those same differences though time has changed their complexity. But, that familiar thread remains: US Marine. That thread has been my anchor. It was the one true thing in my life that has not changed. I have always been proud of my service to country but, most of all, to my service to the Corps: it did not abandon me. Although I personally still find it hard to sing "America, the Beautiful", it makes me cry, I still get excited when I see a young man dressed in Winter Greens. And, whether he only warrants a National Defense Ribbon or has personal citations, I know he like myself warrants the respect and admiration of those we serve(d).

As for my 1st G 2/5 reunion, I can't say, that other guy did all the talking. I was just along for the ride. As for attending a reunion, I highly recommend it. You'd be surprised how much we haven't changed. See y'all in 2004.

Lest We Forget...!

PFC Jerry B. Evans

KIA 9/11/68

PFC Alphonzo Holmon Jr.

KIA 2/1/68

L/Cpl. Michael R. Witt

KIA 8/18/68

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

- A few days before the Branson reunion, many of us got word from Tony Cartlidge of a terrible tragedy in that his son had been killed in a car accident. From Tony, “My Son Conrad (23), and his girlfriend Faith (22), (soon to be his fiancé) were killed instantly by a train while crossing the tracks at 1:08 a.m. last Friday (Aug. 23rd) morning in Titusville FL.” After hearing about this tragedy, many of us were concerned Tony wouldn’t be making the Branson reunion. In Tony’s words, “I still plan on attending the reunion, as I could use some brotherhood at this time, and I should be a little stronger then.”

Tony did make the reunion and was obviously still in shock from this terrible tragedy. All the Marines in attendance at the reunion expressed their sympathies and support and on behalf of the Golf 2/5 Association I want to add the condolences of the Association. As Tony described it, “I have never, ever experienced such a crushing blow. I can now understand how the Moms and Dads felt about their Sons being killed in Vietnam.” Tony, we hope time eases this terrible pain. *the editor*



**Conrad Cartlidge and his fiancé, Faith Burdine
Rest in Peace**

Better Understanding Our Warriors, by Melba Ortiz

Branson, MO was a happening place in September! It wasn’t just the small midwestern town with the big-city lights and big-name stars that made it the place to be—it was the Golf 2/5 Reunion that provided the excitement. As with past reunions, many of the wives (significant others are included in my use of this word) attended with the thinking that this reunion was for the “guys.” It was. But that’s not all it was. This reunion turned out a little differently for the wives because the “guys” made it a point to include us in a very meaningful way. They cleared out of their hospitality room on Friday morning so that we could have the place and time to chat. We thought we’d use the room for about an hour—but three hours later we were amazed at how fast the time flew by and how much we needed to come together and talk about some of our experiences as the “other half” of the combat veteran.

I wasn’t sure how many other wives felt as I did—wanting to be included in the reunion in a meaningful way. Besides being present in body, I wanted to be more present in spirit and understanding—both for Larry’s sake and for mine. I wondered if any

other wives felt some of the things I’ve felt over the years in trying to understand the Vietnam experience, especially for the combat veterans. Many people may think that every Vietnam vet had similar experiences, but not necessarily. I have come to learn that of the total US military that served in Vietnam, about 70% didn’t engage in actual combat. Therefore, the Golf Company, 2/5 vets are part of a select group of about 27-30% of the total US military that served in Vietnam that actually saw battle. So it follows that many of the reactions that we have witnessed over the years in the vets we live with may certainly be different than the majority of other Vietnam vets.

I have listened to some conversations among the vets at past reunions and it has always been enlightening to hear about the various operations—the activity, the losses, the hardships, and the friendships. It can be difficult to hear about the extreme sacrifices that our guys have made but it is also insightful in understanding them. Although sometimes I ventured to ask a question or make a comment, it seemed intrusive to contribute any more than that because I could see how important it is for the vets to share with each other. Only they were there and can talk to each other about places, events, and people in a way that does not have to be explained, it’s understood because of their common experience. It’s good to listen and yet, sharing my own feelings and experience with other wives and hearing about their experiences was becoming a necessity for me in understanding my own contribution to the dynamics of our relationship. I was beginning to understand that the Vietnam War and its after-effects was a family issue, not simply “Larry’s problem.”

I was very gratified that all the wives present in Branson on Friday morning chose to come together as a group to explore what (if anything) we could share with each other. Our group consisted of Jan Alexander, Mona Barnes, Georgia Hall, Joy Higgins, Jeanne Hill, Lisa Johnson, Sharon Roberts, Lianne Setlak, Terry Studenny, and Cheryl Tully. We were very fortunate to also have Stephanie Bruff, a VA counselor, join us as a facilitator for our group. Stephanie brought folders with handouts that included articles (i.e., *The Other Forgotten Warriors*) and other information on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as well as her many years of experience to help guide our discussion.

Stephanie was able to give us a brief introduction to the definition of PTSD, the symptoms, and what factors contribute to development of PTSD. Because the very mention of “PTSD” may have a negative connotation to those of us not familiar with what it means, I learned that it shouldn’t. It’s not a sign of insanity or personality deficiency but as Stephanie defined it, “it’s a normal reaction to an abnormal event.” This definition made a lot of sense to me in the context of Larry’s experience in Vietnam and the resulting effects in his return to *the World* and our married life. The term “PTSD” just didn’t enter into our minds in those years when we didn’t speak of Vietnam and Larry suffered silently with depression, flashbacks, and guilt. So, thirty-three years later, PTSD has meaning and significance to me in understanding better what Larry and the other vets have lived with all these years.



The Wives at the 2002 Reunion

Back Row L to R: Lisa Johnson, Georgia Hall, Cheryl Tully, Mona Barnes, Jeanne Hille, Terry Studenny, Sharon Roberts and Stephanie Bruff

Front Row L to R: Friend of S. Bruff, Jan Alexander, Joy Higgins, Melba Ortiz and Leanne Setlak

I also want to share with you what The Harvard Mental Health Letter says about post-traumatic stress: “the word *trauma*, from a Greek root meaning *wound*, is the medical term for any more-or-less sudden injury or damage to an organism. Just as physical trauma may overwhelm the body’s defenses and cause disability or chronic pain, psychological trauma may overwhelm the mind’s defenses and cause lasting emotional harm. Trauma is an event that is outside the range of usual human experience and would be seriously distressing for anyone.” The Golf 2/5 vets certainly experienced trauma as defined above, and of course, they would bring it home with them and we as wives are affected by it in some way. Maybe it’s in knowing of the nightmares, the sadness we see in their eyes, the grief we know they feel for the lives lost, the “shutdown,” and the anger we sense intuitively; or sometimes, for some wives, the anger expressed against them or others. How can this not affect us? It does, and most of us have not known how to deal with all those powerful emotions. Sometimes we didn’t even realize that PTSD was the culprit, assuming that Vietnam is “in the past” but then wondering what is wrong, and assuming our own guilt for pain we may or may not have caused.

A common thread in our group discussion was recognizing the responsibility our Marines felt (and still feel) for their fellow Marines’ safety and lives—how much they truly care about each other. In fact, they care so much that it causes them extreme anguish and pain. Many of us didn’t understand why this haunts our guys and Stephanie provided us some insight into this symptom of PTSD known as “survivor’s guilt.” This term may now be “old hat” to many of you, but it’s new to some of us who are just beginning to see this as a forceful effect and subconscious burden carried by these Marines who truly embody the most honorable spirit of the Marine Corps.

Our group learned a lot –about each other, about their beloved husbands and partners, and that we’re not alone in our experience. Just as the guys have experienced the battles and horrors of war, we ourselves have felt the aftermath of its effects and dealt with great difficulties in making our lives together

work after the war. We want to know how we can help the guys and ourselves in putting the war experience in its proper perspective. I know that Larry won’t ever forget Vietnam; it will always be a part of his life, so how can we both live with that in a way that doesn’t tear us apart? It’s a struggle, that’s for sure, but we’re learning, we’re trying, and we’re making progress. After each reunion, I see more healing for everyone, and I know it will be a lifelong process.

This was a first-time event for some of the wives so I heard from a few that they had brought along a good book to keep them occupied when the guys got together for hours and hours at a time. As it turned out, I don’t think many of us ever had time to read. Instead, we used the time to get better acquainted in a variety of ways, including shopping together, dining together, attending the terrific Branson shows, and just enjoying each other’s company. I think I can safely say that we “bonded” in such an important way and in bonding to each other, we also felt a bond to the guys, and the reunion felt like it belonged to all of us!

The highlight of the reunion for me was the truly remarkable experience of sharing feelings—the wives shared on Friday morning and our Marines shared on Friday evening after dinner at Mesquite Charlie’s.

After listening to each Marine express his thoughts about the Vietnam experience, Joy Higgins (Doc Higgins’ soul mate) expressed what we were all feeling on Friday evening: “there is so much Love in this room.” Joy said it so well; it was a wonderful feeling to be a part of such a sincere outpouring of feelings. I was struck once again by the total devotion and loyalty that our Marines felt for each other in Vietnam, and still feel for each other now. Being present in the company of these men who care so much about their fellow Marines and their country is truly inspiring. We are proud of our Marines!

Sit Reps

Vet Newsbriefs:

- **LAST CALL:** Bill Buchanan, former Plt Commander of 2nd Plt., G Company 2/5 from October 1966 until January 1967 has compiled about 50,000 words of a 100,000 word book about G Company with the working title “*Cassandra Golf: A Marine Rifle Company in Vietnam 1966-1967.*” Publication is planned for spring or early summer of next year. Six former G Company Marines have contributed over nine hours of taped interviews and photographs to the effort. It is shaping up to be one hell of a book. I still need to hear from Marines who served in the time frame with anecdotes, combat recollections, photographs and the like. Marines who are still AWOL (or at least UA) on the project are: SSgt. Donald McElhenny, machine gunner Hamm, J.A. Shipley (my radio man), Navy corpsmen, and Lt. Jones, the FO. Much to my regret, after numerous entreaties by mail and phone, we’ve written off Cpl. Vernon Horn and SSgt. Wallace Carter of Centerville, Iowa. A Marine from Echo Company who participated in the ill-fated Christmasville H-34 babysitting assignment December 20-25, 1966 has contributed some dynamite stuff and his Company commander, Terry Ebbert, is a moving target in my sights (he won the Navy Cross for that action, but is a shy sort and hard to pin down). For the blurbs

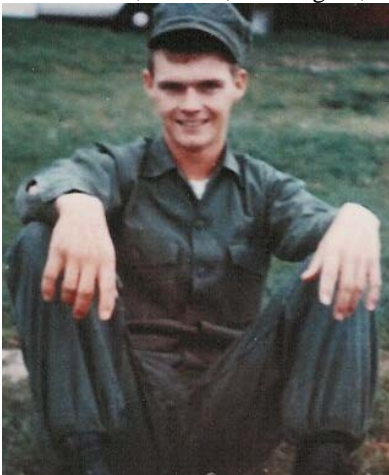


Lt. William Buchanan

on the back cover, I'll settle for no less than Mitchell Paige (Medal of Honor WWII), Gen. Ray Davis (Medal of Honor Korea), Gen. Peter Pace (platoon cmdr. G Co) and James Webb (no introduction necessary). What the hell. Shoot for the moon. My radio net is clear and the message pad is at hand.

Semper Fi, Bill Buchanan
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- Tony Carlidge received the following inquiry asking for information regarding PFC, Eddie Harris —“Hello, my name is Diana Sonntag. I am desperately searching for anyone that knew Pfc. Eddie Harris from Lufkin, TX. He served with Golf co. 2nd bn 5th Marines as a rifleman. His tour started 01-25-68 and KIA 02-13-68. You see he was in Vietnam for only 19 days and I realize memories fade but if you knew him or could point me in the right direction I would be ever grateful. Thank you for all you gave and God Bless.” Diana can be contacted at: RT 4, BOX 5, Huntington, TX. 75949.



PFC Eddie Harris—KIA Hue City 2-13-68

If anyone in our G 2/5 Association does remember Eddie, I would strongly urge you to contact Diana. I have been in contact with several families who have lost their loved one in Nam and I can't tell you what a rewarding experience it has been for me to contact these families and the peace and clo-

sure it can bring to these families longing to know someone who knew their son, brother or husband.

- Our new President, Barney Barnes has undertaken a couple of major tasks: 1) To compile a complete list of all Golf Co. KIAs in *the Nam*, and, 2) to connect with as many Golf Co. vets as possible. With respect to number 1), Barney has been working with Bruce Swander who's been a big help in trying to locate and update all our KIA's from Golf Co...And if others wanted to contact him, he is at: bruceswander@hotmail.com. For item 2), Rick Mack has been a big help working with a friend of his and helping us locate about 17 MIA Golf 2/5 vets since our Sept. reunion. We've located Richard Flores, Stockton, CA; Michael Faircloth, Deatsville, AL; Franklin Greaves, Miami, FL; Horace Sutton Jr., Lumberton, NC; Anthony Deaton, Indianapolis, IN; Dennis Parrish, Coeburn, VA; James Fell, Key Largo, FL; Mike Copeland, Mauriceville, TX; George Doucette Jr. Colorado Springs, CO; Luster Copus, Straford, OK; Vance Ellis, Rincon, GA; Keen “Dutch” Hermany, Schuykill Haven, PA; Forrest Burnett, Sutherlin, OR; James Cashwell, Spartanburg, SC; Teddy Harrison, Laurel DE; and Terry Regelin, Meridian, ID. Welcome Home, Brothers! And welcome to our Golf 2/5 family!
- We've also had some of our MIA brothers find us either through our website or other means. We'd also like to welcome Enriquez Garcia, Grants, NM (who called me [the editor] to let me know he was glad to find us. Enriquez retired from the Corps and now lives and works in New Mexico), Mike Stallings, Portsmouth, VA; Charles Price, Jr., Sierra Vista, AZ; Hector J. “the Mighty Quin” Quintana, Carlsbad, NM, and Joe Rowe, Charlestown, RI. Welcome Home, Brothers! And welcome to our Golf 2/5 family!
- Joe Rowe submitted the following: We were a band of brothers who overcame fear, transcended bigotry, and suffered great loss. Green clad boys who lived and bled for one another, we achieved a new standard for all men to live by and fight for. The memories never fade and the names are always there to remind us that we are entrusted with the responsibility that those who fell in the wet city streets or in the hills around An Hoa, did not die for nothing, they died so that we might live.

My nephew who is a First Lieutenant in the Corps, at a time when Marines are again in harms way, honored me by inviting me to his first Mess Night. Lieutenant, oops! I mean, General Peter Pace was the guest speaker. When I shook his hand after dinner, he told me about the web site. After reading through the names, looking at the pictures, and hearing about reunions I have missed, I contacted Tom and he led me to Bob Gross; Bob hasn't changed a bit in all these years. As a matter of fact none of us have changed much. Larry Ortiz sent me pictures of myself and some of the others. I lost the few pictures I had and it was great to see that I haven't changed either. Lance and Brown and I have discussed times in the bush and only you my brothers can know how bittersweet those conversations can be. I have heard from several of you and search for others so we might ease our hearts and make our voices count.

I write my Nephew and other Marines and urge you all to write the Marines who are in Golf Company. Tell them who you are and how much you appreciate what they are doing, give them advice and encourage them. We all remember mail call.

My Address is JosephRoweJ@aol.com I can find snail mail and Email addresses. I would love to hear from you all too. Semper Fi. Joe Rowe

- Vince Montoro sent me a copy of the video he took at the reunion, including the dinner. For copies of the video, contact Vince at 610-776-2873. The cost of the video is \$8 which is only for the cost of the video tape, mailer and postage. Or, you can send Vince 8 bucks at: 524 N15th Street, Allentown, PA, 18102-2104. Thanks, Vince, for making this available, *the editor*

Recall Update

In the January 2002 newsletter, I reported about an incident at a Board of Supervisors meeting here in Santa Barbara, CA. The meeting occurred shortly after Sept. 11 and one of the supervisors began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. The chairperson (a woman) reprimanded this man for doing this. She not only reprimanded the man, but fired him on the spot saying that he had no authority to do what he did and it was insensitive and divisive to recite the Pledge of Allegiance as it may be offensive to some members.

That action angered county residents to the point of calling for a recall election to oust this woman. Since I wrote about that incident, I've gotten a couple of inquiries from vets as to what has happened since then. To have a recall election, petitions were necessary and 8,000 signatures were required. Close to 14,000 signatures were collected and submitted for the recall. The petition was challenged in court due to the fact that some of the people who circulated the petition and collected the signatures were being paid and it was asserted the petition signatures were unallowable. The petition was upheld by the court so the recall election proceeded to be held with the November general election.

As it came close to the election, the recall seemed to have had more TV and radio ads than even the governor's race. Since Santa Barbara is the home of many Hollywood celebrities (Oprah just purchased a \$50M mansion in the area) and rock entertainers, many of them made promotional ads against the recall. Those "celebrities" coming out against the recall were Jeff Bridges, Doc Severensen (from the Tonight Show) and the lead signer of the group the *Foo Fighters*. David Crosby and Graham Nash (of Crosby, Stills & Nash), Jackson Browne and even Tom Petty put on (separate) benefit concerts to raise funds for the campaign against the recall. I think the recall election outspent all the other candidates and measures on the ballot in Santa Barbara.

This is California, after all, and the bleeding-heart liberals defeated the recall by a 53% to 47% margin. This supervisor will have two more years in office—unfortunately!—*the editor*.

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Marines at the 2002 Reunion

Front to Rear, L to R: Bill Robers, Tom Jayjack, Dan Cholewa, Calvin Hill, Pineapple Credo, Gerald Hall, Mike Ervin, Bob Setlak, Les Tully, Dennis Studenny, Kevin English, Barney Barnes, Kenneth Buchanan, Rick Mack, Doc Higgins, Dale Roberts, Larry Ortiz, Elmer Alexander, Mike Averill, Vince Montoro, Tony Cartledge

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, 4 Lighthouse Street, #10, Marina del Rey, CA 90292**

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Address Correction Requested

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