



# GOLF COMPANY 2ND BATTALION 5TH MARINES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



*Dong Ha - Chu Lai - An Hoa - Phu Bai - Hué City*

Vol. 25, Issue 2

December 2008

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

### Editor Comments by Larry Ortiz

Greetings fellow Marines!

I first want to wish you all a very Merry and Blessed Christmas and good health and happiness in the New Year. It's hard to believe 2008 is almost at an end. The weeks and months seem to accelerate at warp speed the older I get.

We had two Golf 2/5 events scheduled this year with the Hué City Memorial scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup> and the biannual reunion on September 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> in Las Vegas. Unfortunately many of our brothers had to choose between attending the Hué City Memorial or the reunion so the turnout at the reunion wasn't as large as past reunions but a good turnout nonetheless of about 25 Marines and spouses and family. There was also a very unfortunate turn of events in that the Hué City Memorial was canceled the day before the memorial. There had been a couple of bad storms and hurricanes in the area and everyone associated with putting on the event, and especially those planning to attend, were hoping the hurricanes would bypass Jacksonville. It was not to be and on the day before the memorial was to take place, several of our G 2/5 Marines received calls and emails from the USS HUÉ CITY's Chaplin advising that due to the hurricane, the Hué City Memorial was canceled.

Many who planned to attend were able to cancel their flights and hotel reservations but several had already left for Jacksonville or had already arrived. Unfortunately it was too late for most that planned to attend the Hué City Memorial to make the reunion in Vegas.

As I advised in the August newsletter, my cousin Kathy McLendon made two T-Shirt quilts for raffle at this year's reunion. One was a Harley Davidson quilt made with 12 Harley T-Shirts donated by Arne Flores and the second quilt was a USMC T-Shirt quilt made with 12 USMC T-Shirts donated by several of our G 2/5 Marines. We had them laid out in the hospitality room at the Plaza Hotel for all to see as people came in and out of the room to visit and talk about the old times with their friends. The raffle was very successful and the Association took in about \$900 from the sale of the raffle tickets, collection of some dues and contributions made to the Association. So it was certainly a profitable reunion for replenishing the Association's coffers.

On behalf of our Association President, Barney Barnes and the other Association officers, and particularly from me, I wanted to thank Kathy for all her hard work and the enormous amount of time she devoted to making the two quilts. Both quilts turned out beautifully and the Association certainly benefited as well as the lucky winners. Kathy sold a few raffle tickets

in Albuquerque and the Harley quilt was won by an individual from there. The USMC quilt was won by our very own Mario Muñiz who was totally thrilled to have been the lucky winner.



**Mario Muñiz and his lovely granddaughter, Adriana  
With his USMC Quilt**

Hopefully all of you on Tony C's email distribution received an email from him about a month ago forwarding on a request from me for articles any of you or your wives or other family members wanted to send to me to include in this issue of the newsletter. Well, I didn't get an overwhelming response but was glad that four of our brother Marines responded to the call and those articles are included in the newsletter. Kenneth Buchanan sent me article about his remembrance and tribute to Donald "Doc" Kirkham. Mario Muñiz also contributes an article about Pedro "Pete" Garcia who was KIA on Sept. 18, 1968. I want to thank Kenneth and Mario for their nice tributes to their friends and our brother Marines.

Also, we have a very heartfelt tribute that the Skipper, Chuck Meadows, had prepared to give at the G 2/5 dinner at the Hué City Memorial. Since the Memorial was canceled and he wasn't able to give his talk, he has generously shared it with us which is also included in the newsletter. Colonel John R. Bates USMC (ret) also graciously shared the very poignant speech he deliv-

ered at the 4<sup>th</sup> Recon Ball in Hawaii on November 10<sup>th</sup>—thanks Col. Bates.

We also have an update on Jim Lewis' PeaceTrees Vietnam project to build a kindergarten in Vietnam in memory of Jesus "Jesse" Griego which will be dedicated in March 2009. A trip to Vietnam is being organized for the dedication and hopefully those on Tony C's email distribution received those details several weeks ago. The details of the upcoming trip are included in Jim's update and if any of you are interested in making the trip, perhaps it's not too late to sign up.

And last but certainly not least, for those of us who attended the reunion in Vegas in September, we all owe a debt of gratitude to Jack O'Rourke for all the work he did to get the reunion organized, the block of rooms at the Plaza he secured and arranging the group events for all of us that attended. **THANKS, CAPT. JACK!** More on the reunion later . . .

I know our Pres. Barney wanted to include his Pres. message but he's had quite a bit on his plate for the last several months. He's been going back and forth from Tulsa to Birmingham to help out his dad who is suffering from cancer. I know all of you join me in saying that our prayers are with Barney, his dad and his family.

Semper Fi,  
Larry S. Ortiz

#### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hué City a Message to my Brothers** *by Chuck Meadows*

##### **Preface remarks from Chuck Meadows**

*I really was sorry that our reunion in Mayport was "stormed" out this year. I had wanted to report to our guys about my trip back to Vietnam in February of this year to honor the 40th Anniversary of the 1968 Battle for Hué. I had prepared a little talk to be delivered at our G2/5 dinner. Since that also did not happen, I am sending along the text of that talk for your review and possible inclusion in the next Golf Newsletter.*

I want to take this opportunity to report to you on my trip back to Vietnam in February of this year with the Military Historical Tours group to honor the 40th anniversary of the 1968 Tet Battle for Hué. It was a two week trip and I spent some time in Hanoi, Da Nang, Hoi An, China Beach, Chu Lai, Liberty Bridge, Phu Loc, An Hoa, even viewed the Coal Mine from a distance, but the real purpose of my trip was the three and a half days in Hué.

I had wanted to be on the ground where we had soldiered together and to reflect on those times and events and on those whom we lost. I wanted to be there to represent you, and to honor those who had died and to represent those we now hold so dear as our brothers.

I came to remember and honor your service, to "follow in your footsteps," to have a presence there on the ground where many of our brothers fell and were wounded, to carry your thoughts and remembrances, to represent all of the brothers and sisters in Golf 2/5, to pause and reflect on your story—your sacrifice.

I think I did that.

During that time I walked the entire journey of Golf Company from when we entered the city at the An Cuu bridge to the MAC-V compound, over the bridge and to the Citadel, the old Hué University building, now a 5-star hotel, down Le Loi street past the Sports Club, the Hospital complex, the prison, down to the train station and the water tower, back up to the Catholic Church and to the many streets in-between. As I have in a number of my past visits to Hué, I stopped in at that Catholic Church for a few quiet minutes to bow my head, meditate and read out in remembrance, the names of those Golf Marines and Corpsmen who were killed.

On one rather cold and hazy early morning, when the dawn of a new day was just beginning to awaken, I took a walk down by the Perfume River.

Even from the distance of years, I remember exactly the desperate moments when our lives were in the balance and I remember the moments after—when the battle had tipped in our favor and we knew we were safe and turned to helping others.

I am sitting by the bridge that stretches across the river; across my memory. A bridge from the past to the present. The river beneath has the constant flow of life—of time—yet it is the same and it can't forget or wash away the pain, the hurt, the sadness, the memories that are Hué.

We had déjà vu weather, reminiscent of our time past—cold, overcast, drizzle, dark, limited visibility and low ceiling. As I looked around me, I now can see the misty figures I recognize of many young men, in their youth, coming from across that bridge and down the streets toward me; they too in search,. They gather around, some in pairs and others standing uncertainly to one side. And I tried to recognize each of them as they came closer: Clyde Carter, Glen Lucas, Donald Kirkham, Gerald Kinny, Alphonzo Holmon, Horace Howard, John Winter, John Wayne Rowden, Troy Threet, Eddie Harris, James Stewart, John Lewis, Kenneth Stetson, David Warner, Terry Sutton, Albert Dandridge, Ramon Jurado, Paul Stasko, William Adams, Allan McCall, Robert Murphy, Joseph Sinkewicz.

Then one of them, a handsome Marine of only 19 years dressed in his combat gear, with flack vest and helmet and M-16, moved forward toward where I am sitting, His inquisitive look seemed to ask, "why are you here?" I answered, not in spoken words but with a sensing that we understood each other.

I have come to remember and honor your service, to be a "presence" here on the ground where you fell, to represent all your brothers in Golf 2/5, to carry their thoughts and remembrances, to pause and reflect on your story—your sacrifice, to wrap memories in the presence of your spirit. And, to let you know that you are not forgotten, your brothers and sisters think of you each and every day of our lives. Your brothers and sisters remember. We are forever bound by your blood and memory.

Your crosses are quiet and a long way off from this place, and from this remove, their influence is quiet and seemingly distant. But gently they are present always in our mind.

At that point I could sense them all say, "Thanks for coming Skipper and being with us, and thanks to the guys, for remembering us", "We remember them too." And I simply nodded an understanding, "We hear you."

I then watched as the handsome young Marine and the others that had gathered around, now quietly drifted away from that

spot by the bridge by the river, and I was left alone once again to honor that moment.

Our gathering together this weekend and our recollection of that Tet 1968 battle some 40 years ago now, is a vivid reminder of our service together, of our walking the streets in Hué in Vietnam, and the memory of our brothers we lost during those difficult times. Seldom in a lifetime do circumstances present themselves where one can be part of history. The profession of arms as a Marine allowed each of you that opportunity. I am proud we had the good chance to share that moment in history together. I am even more proud to have your names, each of you, remembered as a major player in the crucible of Marine Corps history called Hué City.

I could not have been with any finer Brothers in Arms. You are each a tested warrior and proven hero. We won't forget, and we will always remember our brothers who fell, and those of us who came home. A simple refrain from an old song. "Why is it just we are here, and so soon we are gone" forever lingers in my mind. I want you to always hold on to each other and remember the men of Golf 2/5.

My respect for the courage and bravery you displayed those 40-years ago, oft times chokes me to tears. Many sacrificed their lives in death, but you also sacrificed so much because you lived! All of us carry the scars of that experience, and I know you carry the memory of all our brother Marines and Corpsmen with you always. We will forever share that sense of kinship.

You are each my brother, as I am to you. For you gave me your trust, and for that I am eternally grateful. Thank you for your service to your country, and to our Corps . . . and to each other.

I close with another refrain from a song "to love another person is to see the face of God "

*God Bless and Semper Fi my brothers and sisters,  
Chuck Meadows, Colonel USMC (Ret)  
Former CO, Golf 2/5 1967-1968*

### **Remembering Doc Kirkham** **by Kenneth Buchanan**

There has been something I have wanted to do for several years, and that was to pay my respects to the family of our Navy Corpsman, Donald Kirkham. On January 31st, 2000, I decided to make a telephone call to Brookfield, Wisconsin. I asked the operator for anyone named Kirkham. After I dialed the number, a man answered the phone and I started explaining why I was calling; telling him my name and asking if he knew anyone in the area that might be related to Navy Corpsman Kirkham who was KIA while serving with Golf Company, 2nd Bn., 5th Marines, 1st Marine Div. When he told me Donald Kirkham was his son, I was so surprised and caught off guard that I didn't know what to say. He asked me if he could get his wife on the phone with us as he was very pleased I had called. I tried to compose myself before she got on the phone then I started telling them reason for my call. I just wanted them to know I thought of their son very often and that he was a very good corpsman and would always be remembered by some very grateful Marines. I asked them if anyone had ever talked with them from our outfit and they said no, but that they really

wanted to know what happened on the day Donald was killed. As best as I could, I explained our story from the night before we went into Hué City until I was medevaced out of Hué City.

This one phone call started a relationship with Ed and Arline Kirkham which I believe has helped them, as well as myself. I was so grateful for the opportunity to talk with Donald's parents and to let them know what happened to their son, how brave he was, and how the help he gave to so many Marines would never be forgotten. I made a point to call them each year on January 31st just to let them know I was thinking of them and Donald. Each time we spoke, they would say they would love for me come visit with them.



**Ed & Arline Kirkham**

The last of March, I retired from the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department and planned a "cross-country retirement road trip" which included a visit with the Kirkham's. I live in Dover, Arkansas and planned to visit with a cousin in Iowa for a few days and then travel to the Kirkhams' in Brookfield, Wisconsin. On Sunday morning May 4th, I made the long awaited trip to the Kirkham home. As I went to the door to meet with them, I was immediately put at ease. Mr. and Mrs. Kirkham are the most pleasant, welcoming folks a person could ever hope to meet. As we visited about Donald, I told them in person about the day he was killed and about others who were killed or wounded. I told them about how our company commander, Capt. Meadows, helped us get out of the streets where we were pinned down and how Donald had helped other Marines on the way to the MACV compound. I wanted them to understand that their son served his country and his Marines in a very brave and honorable fashion which resulted in his supreme sacrifice. I expressed how sorry I was that their son didn't make it back, but let them know he would always be remembered by me and other Marines.

The Kirkham's asked me if I would like to go to Donald's gravesite. I told them yes; that I had a wreath made and wanted to put it on his grave. Those moments I spent at Donald's gravesite gave me a chance to reflect on Donald and his sacrifice for us. My thoughts took me back to January 31st, 1968 and everything I experienced on that day. As was so common during those difficult days, we didn't always get a chance to say goodbye to our fallen brothers. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to thank Donald and tell him goodbye. Standing at his gravesite, I felt like we had been united once again and had

come full circle from so long ago. Donald will always be a brother of mine, just as Glenn Lucas, Jesus Griego, Thomas Jimenez, Larry Walker and others from Golf Company, 2nd Bn., 5th Marines, 1st Marine Div. I would encourage you to make a call if you too remember Donald Kirkham, or if you know the parents or relatives of other Marines who did not return home. It means a lot for their relatives to know we still value their sacrifice and miss them to this day.



**“Doc” Kirkham Gravesite** Maryland. As we left Maryland, I had one other stop I really wanted to see and it was the Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, Virginia. That place was just awesome!! Everyone should to go see the museum; they even have a display of Hué City and a guy holding an M-79 by the Citadel wall. It brought back so many memories, because I carried the M-79. My trip was a great healing experience and I will always be grateful to the Kirkham’s for their kindness.

May God bless you, your family, the Marine Corps, corpsmen and all those who are serving our great country!

Kenneth W. Buchanan  
Dover, Arkansas

#### ***Our Hué City KIAs . . . Lest We Forget . . .!***

<b><i>PFC. Clyde Elmer Carter Jr.</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 1/31/68</i></b>
<b><i>Cpl. Glen Allen Lucas</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 1/31/68</i></b>
<b><i>HN Donald Alan Kirkham</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 1/31/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Gerald Carl Kinny</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 1/31/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Alphonzo Holmon Jr.</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 1/31/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC. Horace Howard</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 1/31/68</i></b>
<b><i>Cpl. John Wesley Winter</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 1/31/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC John Wayne Rowden</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/10/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Troy Tony Threet</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/10/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Eddie Clayton Harris</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/13/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC James Joseph Stewart</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/15/68</i></b>
<b><i>L/Cpl. John Frederick Lewis</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/17/68</i></b>
<b><i>L/Cpl. Kenneth Earl Stetson</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/17/68</i></b>
<b><i>Cpl. David Howard Warner</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/17/68</i></b>
<b><i>HN Terry James Sutton</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/18/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Albert Dandridge</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/19/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Ramon Jurado</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/21/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Paul Stasko Jr.</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/21/68</i></b>
<b><i>Sgt. William Earnest Adams</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/26/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Allan Lee McCall</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/26/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Robert D. Murphy</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/26/68</i></b>
<b><i>PFC Joseph Michael Sinkewicz</i></b>	<b><i>KIA 2/26/68</i></b>

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

#### **Remembering Pedro (Pete) Gallardo Garcia K.I.A. Sept.18, 1968 Near An Hoa, South Vietnam *by Mario Muñiz***

I arrived in country along with Steve Abeyta in June of 1968. Our company had just gone back to An Hoa after being in Phu Bai I’m sure since the Tet Offensive of 1968. We joined G2/5 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon at Hill 88 and O’Brien Bridge on our second day in country. Steve and I tried real hard to fit in with all the hard core guys that we knew had been in the Tet Offensive. I found out years later after leaving the Marine Corps what G2/5 had gone through in Hué City. That made me very proud to have known and served with such a great group of Marines that made history and is documented and written in our Marine Corps history books forever.

I first met Pedro at An Hoa when he ask me for a cigarette and asked me where I was from. I told him I was from California but was born in McAllen, Texas. He said, “man I’m from Harligen, Texas” which is just about twenty miles from McAllen which is located in the Rio Grande Valley in south Texas. I told Pedro that our family had migrated to California in the early 1960’s and that we had worked in Ohio, Utah, Montana, and Texas before settling in Bakersfield, Ca. He told me that his family had also done the same by migrating and following the crops from Texas to different states. We spoke the same Texas lingo and that's why we understood each other well. He had his guitar stashed back at An Hoa and would play it whenever we came back to resupply and rest. Pedro had told me that he had been busted to a P.F.C. from I don’t recall his previous rank and was detailed to Viet Nam as a 0311. He was, I think, four years older than most of us, but he sure didn't show it. I would bum a cigarette from him and he would give me two and would say “one for you and the other for your ear.”

We only knew each other for a short while but we had a lot of things in common; our background was much the same, our culture etc. I remember one day we exchanged addresses and I told him just in case I get it first to write to my family and give them the details of how I died. He said Ok you do the same in case I go before you. I was not with Pedro or our platoon the day he died Sept.18 1968 (*as Mario had been recently wounded on an Operation and sent to a hospital in Hawaii . . .the editor*), but after talking to Larry Ortiz, Barney Barnes, Dale Roberts and Louis “Cash” Cashwell just this past September at our G2/5 Las Vegas Reunion 2008, I now know how Pedro died.

I first wrote a letter to Pedro’s family December of 1968 while stationed at Camp H.M. Smith Hawaii not knowing if I would get an answer. I didn't know how Pedro had died; only that it was a booby trap. I told the family who I was and that I was originally from McAllen, Texas and that I only knew Pedro for a short while and how good he was as a person as well as a Marine. I think it was about two weeks or more, I got a letter from one of his sisters and she thanked me for sharing the good things that I had said about her brother. I wrote back to thank her and family for her letter, but what I got back has shocked me to this day. I got a short letter stating that her mother and father

had separated due to Pedro's death in Vietnam and they were very bitter and mad at the Marine Corps and blamed them for his death. I don't remember Pedro's sister's name but she said that I should have died not her brother and questioned why I had survived and Pedro hadn't. I didn't finish reading the letter and that was in 1968.

In August of 1985 my family and I went back to my birth place of McAllen, Texas on vacation. I also wanted to visit Pedro's grave and to find the cemetery where he was buried and to find his family if they were still around in Harligen. The weather was as hot there in August of 1985 as it was in Viet Nam, humid and in the hundreds. We found his grave, laid some flowers on it and took some pictures. We got lucky when the people that worked at the cemetery went into their old files and found Pedro's old address and the newspaper clips of his funeral and made copies for us to keep which I still have today. We found his old house and it looked vacant but I went and knocked on the door anyway, nobody was home. The neighbor came out and said that the family had all split up; some went to Mexico and some to California. He told me that only Pedro's youngest brother still lived at the house and worked down the street at a plumbing shop. I went in and found him working in the front part of the office. I knew who he was right away because he looked just like Pedro. I walked up to him and introduced myself to him and told him I had two pictures of his brother in 8x10 frames that were taken in Viet Nam in 1968 and I had come all the way from Bakersfield, Ca. to deliver them to his family. He shook my hand and I gave him a big hug and he started to cry as he told me that he hardly remembered his brother Pedro since he was only three years old when Pedro died. He told me that his mother lived in Palm Springs Ca. and his sister in Fresno, Ca. I said goodbye and told him we were headed back to Bakersfield.



I would say about three months later, I happened to be home at the time when the phone rang. When I answered it a woman's voice asked if this was Mario Muñiz. I said yes it is and she said this is Pedro Garcia's mother. I just wanted to thank you for the pictures of my son Pedro, it was very nice of you. I told her that

**Mario Muñiz at Pete Garcia's Gravesite** she was welcome and invited her to stop by my home anytime to visit us next time she came through Bakersfield. I think about Pedro almost everyday of my life and wish that Pedro's family and I might have had a good relationship but I never heard from his mother or family again. All I can say is that I kept my promise to Pedro and I'm sure he would have done the same for me.

Semper Fi!

Mario Muñiz

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Recon Ball, Hawaii, 10 November 2008**

##### **Colonel John R. Bates USMC (ret)**

Thank you, Lt Gaffney. And to you SNCO's, NCO's, Marines—and the Corpsmen that serve with the finest warriors on earth, HAPPY 233rd BIRTHDAY.

I'm honored that you have asked Stephanie and me to join you on this special evening. There is nothing that can compare to spending time with Marines.

Now if I start my remarks with: "Four score and seven years ago..." you probably think I'm going to repeat Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. You would be wrong. But, just by coincidence, it was four score and seven years ago (87 years ago) when MGen John Archer Lejeune mandated that all Marines would celebrate the birthday of our Corps and wrote the Birthday Message that is now a traditional part of our yearly celebration. Thank you, General Lejeune.

No other service has an event that rivals what Marines do to recognize their Corps, honor their past and reflect on what they have done and are doing for America. Marines, unlike any other service, know, remember and celebrate our Birthday.

Tradition is important to us. I submit that there is not a Marine on earth today that can't tell you without hesitation, the birth date of our Corps. If you ask and they can't tell you without hesitation—knock them on their can. They are lying to you by saying that they are a Marine.

Our Corps is a small one. No matter where on this earth your travels take you, you find yourself crossing paths with Marines you've known from the past.

I have a special interest in 4th Recon. Although I've never been assigned to your unit, I've had the opportunity to train with you a few years ago. That was when I commanded 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, just a click or so down the road. The MC-5 parachute was being fielded for tests and evaluation, and I was invited to take the MC-5 Transition Course. The I&I at that time was Major George Smith. George is now a colonel and commands the Officers Candidate School in Quantico. So, although I've never had the MOS of "Recon" Marine, I've come to have a great love and appreciation for who you are and what you do.

I've never been one to give advice, but I was thinking as I was preparing these remarks, just what is it that I can leave with you during this short time that will make you a stronger, better Marine. Some skills that all of you should know are Call for Artillery Fire, Call for Close Air Support, Combat Lifesaving, a nine line Medevac brief. And also, you should practice the leadership skills required to lead a squad, platoon or even a company. You simply don't know where you might end up and what you might have to do. Don't let an intense combat situation be your downfall. Your Marines are counting on you. You must be ready to lead them to victory.

You know what I like about Marines? The short answer is EVERYTHING. I like the way you walk. You walk with purpose and an air of confidence. The way you talk. You are comfortable in any setting and talking with anyone regardless of rank or position whether it is at an event like this - or out in the field. And I like the fact that you have a great disdain for "political correctness." You never say or do anything just because it happens to be politically correct—you simply just do what you do because you ARE correct.

I like the way you fight. Marines have never lost a battle. I like the fact that all Marines—regardless of MOS, rank or gender—are riflemen first. You have the heart of a warrior and the training to inflict your will, our Nation's will, on others. Just look what you've done in Al Anbar Province.

You would not have been drawn to our Corps if you weren't a special breed. And because of that, you are recognized and revered by your Countrymen. You will not fully appreciate your title of MARINE until some days after you have left our Corps. Once you are on the outside looking in, you will see that America loves her Marines and that she cannot/will not, live without you.

Many of you have combat experience under your belt and some now have returned from multiple tours in harms way. I can only imagine that those of you that have not been tested under fire, you probably feel a bit cheated. Let me assure you, there are many conflicts in this world in which you may soon play an active part and be able to use your MOS. As I heard our Commandant say recently, "There are only two kinds of Marines. Those that are returning from combat—and those that are preparing to go." Whichever group you find yourself in at present, please know that you are making a huge difference for our Country and our Corps.

Our lives are so much different now that they were when I enlisted in the Corps as a Private back in 1966. Of course there were Islamic terrorists back then, but for the most part, they had no dramatic way or means to affect us directly. We didn't pay much attention to them and were much more absorbed in the Cold War with the Soviet Union and a small third world country by the name of Vietnam that was seeking democracy and needed our help. Islamic Fundamental radicals were miles away and unable to muster an effective international threat. Then, on 23 October 1983 we had the first hint of troubles to come when a suicide Islamic terrorist drove a Mercedes Benz truck packed with explosives into the Marine compound in Beirut, Lebanon. We lost nearly 250 Marines, sailors and soldiers that day. It was a wakeup call that changed our world and our future.

There were many other attacks through the next couple of decades. Kobar Towers, Pan Am Flight 103, the attack on the USS COLE. And then, on 11 September 2001 they did the unthinkable. They hit us in our homeland. I'm sure that there is not an American over 20 years old that can't tell you exactly where they were on that fateful day. In fact, I'd venture to guess that many of you joined our Corps because of that attack.

Sadly, you are the exception rather than the rule. So few of your peer group have ever even considered joining our American fighting forces. You have chosen a self-less life of duty to God, Country and Corps. There are too many American citizens that feel what you do for them is their birthright. They expect to live in the land of the free because of young men and women like you. They have no interest in personally contributing to our Nation's best interest. But you, Marines – You are America's hope. You are America's best. And I salute you for who you are and for what you do.

You know, never a Marine Corps Birthday goes by without me reflecting on some of the finest Marines I've known. Many of you may have read about Platoon Sergeant Mitchell Paige, USMC, who on 26 October 1942 earned this Nation's highest

honor. The Medal of Honor. I challenge you to read his citation. When the sun came up that morning, there were over 900 Japanese soldiers laying dead on the side of the hill at Guadalcanal. PltSgt Paige and his platoon had killed them all. All of PltSgt Paige's Marines were either killed or critically wounded. Mitch was one of a very small group that although severely wounded, was still alive to fight another day.



**John & Stephanie Bates**

The club was only a couple of blocks from our home, so I suggested rather than go through the trouble of loading him in and out of the car, that I just push him in his wheel chair to the ball. He readily agreed so Stephanie and Marilyn drove on to prepare his place at the table. I'll never forget the conversation we had that evening. As he was rolling to the club, he began to recall all of his platoon by name. With a mind sharp as a well honed K-Bar, he begin to tell me of his Marine's family members, their education, their pets names and even the serial numbers of their rifles. This was a Marine that truly cared about his men. That was a very special night for him. He was at peace and surrounded by his Marines. Sadly, four days later he died. Yes, I remember him on many days, but ALWAYS on our birthday.

And there are other Marines; Kenneth Carl Johnson, ...John K. Johnson, ...Patrick Hoppe, ...Michael J. Trombly, ...Charles Minor Taylor III. These were my closest of friends. I would give anything if they could be here with us tonight. Unfortunately, they took their last breaths in Vietnam. You will find their names on the "Wall." They gave everything. Hardly a day goes by that I don't think of them in some way. I suppose the years have softened the wounds of the heart a bit, but I still miss them—and always will. And on this birthday, once again I'll toast them for what they have done for us all. They may have left this earth, but their memory will live on.

Marines, you are America's elite fighting force. I'm proud to share the title with you. I wish you the very best.

Happy Birthday, and Semper Fidelis.

Colonel John R. Bates USMC (ret)

### **Update on the Kindergarten for Jesse Griego**

*by Jim Lewis*

Dear friends and project partners:

Thank you for supporting the Jesse Griego Kindergarten! The project is moving ahead full steam and a dedication trip has been scheduled for March 12 through March 28, 2009. Plans for the trip are in this letter, along with three attachments—be sure to read all three carefully.

I hope you can join me and others on a journey back to Vietnam to honor Jesse and give a school to the children of two villages—the first and only school they have ever had. This journey is a humanitarian mission for the children of Vietnam. That purpose is best described by the PeaceTrees Vietnam motto: Peace, Friendship and Renewal.

The itinerary is tentative and subject to change. Being flexible is an important part of this trip. Any questions can be referred to PeaceTrees Vietnam; the contact information is at the end of this letter. Joselynn Plank is the project coordinator for the trip and for the Jesse School.

Finally, thank you for believing in me and trusting me in this mission. It means the world to me.

I hope to see you in Vietnam and together we can walk the path to healing.

Respectfully,  
Jim Lewis

### **Greetings from PeaceTrees Vietnam!**

Thank you for expressing interest in joining PeaceTrees Vietnam on one of our citizen diplomacy trips to Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. We are now in the initial planning stages for our next trip to Vietnam, and we hope you will be able to join us!

The main purpose of our trips is citizen diplomacy, ordinary citizens building relationships with the Vietnamese people. (Community service projects like tree planting, building and grounds maintenance and painting are vehicles for learning more about our Vietnamese friends). We find that working side-by-side and taking part in their lives is a path to understanding each other in a new light. As a participant you will be an ambassador of friendship to the Vietnamese people. This will offer you an opportunity to examine your own images of Vietnam, and we encourage you to have an open mind to learning Vietnamese working ways.

During the March 2009 trip we will have the unique opportunity of participating in the dedication of a new community kindergarten sponsored by a US Marine Corp Veteran in memory of his fallen comrade, Jesse Griego.

**Dates:** March 12 to March 28, 2008. The dates and travel schedule are tentative and based largely on flight availability; changes to the itinerary may occur at any time.

**Cost:** Tuition for the trip is \$3,850, which includes airfare (economy class seats) to Vietnam from Seattle or San Francisco (TBD by flights), all in-country transportation, lodging, most meals, administrative costs and project costs. Some personal expenses will be incurred during free time for meals and taxis, etc. Add-on flight fees to get to our departure point of Seattle or San Francisco are not included.

**Deadlines:** Applications and a non-refundable \$300 application fee are due by December 12, 2008. This fee goes towards total trip payment. The first payment of \$1,800 is due on or before January 11, 2009, when Visa permissions are prepared and airline tickets must be paid for. Passports, medical information forms and contracts are also due at this time. Final payment of \$1,750 is to be paid on or before January 26, 2009.

Please carefully read the attached information for details on the Itinerary, Cancellation Policy and Application Process.

We deeply appreciate your interest in making a hands-on contribution to our work of promoting peace, friendship and renewal in Vietnam. We hope you can join us on this special journey of the heart and hands. But if not, please consider joining us on future trips.

For those of you who have traveled with us before or if you are unable to participate and you know anyone who would be interested in participating in this trip or a future trip please pass this invitation onto them, or send us their contact information.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Warm regards,

Joselynn Plank, Program Coordinator, 206-441-6136

PeaceTrees Vietnam

[info@peacetreesvietnam.org](mailto:info@peacetreesvietnam.org)

[www.peacetreesvietnam.org](http://www.peacetreesvietnam.org)

### **G 2/5 Reunion Las Vegas – September 2008**

*by Larry Ortiz*

As I mentioned earlier, our biannual G 2/5 reunion was held in Las Vegas this year from Sept. 7 – 10<sup>th</sup>. Most of those who attended arrived on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> and we had a few more joining us throughout the reunion.

Our first “official gathering” was Sunday evening where we all gathered by the Plaza Hotel pool at 1800 hrs. so Capt. Jack could give us the final details on all the activities planned, starting times and travel arrangements. It was also a great meet-and-greet opportunity for all who had arrived on Sunday to see their friends.

On Monday, a golf outing was organized at the Nellis AFB golf course. Even though it was Sept., the temperatures were still in the mid-90s so only Ron Johnson and Bob Setlak were intrepid enough to brave the “hot” links. Both reported having had a good round after their return. For those not playing golf, it was a free day to sight see, shop and do a little gambling, or a lot of gambling as was the case for some.

Tuesday’s group activity was a bus trip to Hoover Dam and a stop at the Ethel M chocolate factory on the way back. The majority of those who attended the reunion went on the tour so we had a full bus with a very entertaining driver who pointed out points of interest along the drive and practiced his comedy routine over the bus’ PA system along the way. Some of his comedy was actually quite funny.

If you’re in the Vegas area and have a chance to take the Hoover Dam tour, I would certainly recommend it. The building of the dam is an engineering wonder. We were able to take the elevator ride down into the dam and actually see the turbines used to generate the electricity—really something.

Wednesday was the last official day of the reunion. A tour of Nellis AFB and visit to the Thunderbird’s hanger was arranged for 0900 hrs. with a mid-afternoon return to the hotel. This activity was attended by a smaller group than the Hoover dam group but all who attended had a good time.

The group dinner was held Wednesday evening and we bussed over from the hotel to the Las Vegas Marine Corps League. Since we were not able to fit in a business meeting ear-

lier, we took the opportunity to have our meeting after dinner. Barney made a motion for nominations for Association officers for next year. A motion from the floor was made to keep and reinstate the current officers which was unanimously accepted. Barney also talked about the next reunion and asked for suggestions on a location for the next one. Although no decision was made at that time, Barney had Tony C. send out an email a few days after the reunion to the membership asking for site nominations for the next reunion in 2010. One of the suggestions was also to hold the 2010 reunion in Jacksonville, FL in conjunction with the Hué City Memorial. There was an initial round of nominations for site locations and a subsequent email round of voting for a final location. The results as reported by Barney are as follows: "Just a quick note. Here are the final totals for our 2010 Reunion Site. Thanks to those (32) who took the time to vote and express their opinions.

**SEATTLE, WA — 15**

Jacksonville, FL — 12

Albuquerque, NM — 5

Seattle will be our Reunion location. Here's hoping that the Skipper and Sue Warner Bean will be willing to help us out. I know there will be concerns about cost, travel, etc but it's two years away and we have time to start saving up for it."

As you can see again, there was not a whole lot of participation from the membership with only 32 votes. As Barney said, it's two years away so hopefully that will be enough time to start saving for it since now and we'll have a good turnout.

We also had a few first timers like Franklin and Nola Greaves, Harry Kent, and George & Iris Love. Unfortunately George & Iris had to leave before the Wednesday night dinner so they are not included in the photos on the next page.

All-in-all, it was another great reunion and a time to visit with men we served with and reinforce those lasting bonds that were formed forty or more years ago.

Semper Fi, Larry Ortiz

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

- **Mike Copeland** — As reported in the last newsletter, Mike had an unfortunate and very serious accident with a skill saw on July 15<sup>th</sup> and almost severed his hand and underwent 8 hrs of surgery. He and Wanda attended the Vegas reunion with his hand bandaged and we were glad to see that he has movement in his fingers. *We wish him a continued recovery and hope he regains full use of his hand—the editor*
- **Mike Ervin** —Please let everyone know that the knee surgery (11/25/08) went off without a hitch. I'm in a splint from crotch to calf which I only have to wear for couple of days plus use crutches. Then, as I dictate, can continue with my Chester Good act of limping until the rest of the wrappings are removed. I should be up to normal walking speed within a couple of weeks. *We wish him a speedy recovery—the editor*

- **Marty Steinbach**—we learned of the passing of Marty's Mom in October. Please keep Marty & Dianna in your thoughts and prayers as well as their families as they go through this time of grief and sorrow.

**Golf 2/5 Website Address**

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

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**L to R Top Row: Franklin Greaves, Mike Averil, Vince Montoro, Jim Downer, Barney Barnes, Jack O'Rourke, Mike Copeland  
Middle Row: Harry Kent, Ted Armijo, George Haught, Marty Steinbach, Larry Ortiz, "Doc" Higgins, Steve Pietsmeyer, ? (our apologies)  
Front Row: Ron Johnson, Ed Benavidez, Joe Snead, Bob Setlak, Tony Cartlidge, Lou Kaslow, Mario Muñiz, "Cash" Cashwell, Dale Roberts**



**L to R Top Row: Nola Greaves & Ellie O'Rourke  
Middle Row: Leann Setlak, Lee Armijo, Fran Pace, Jan Montoro, Dianna Steinbach, Kathy Snead, Mona Barnes, Wanda Copeland  
Front Row: Mary ?, Kathy Kaslow, Pat Benavidez, Joy Higgins, Melba Ortiz, Sue Cashwell, Irma Muñiz, Sharon Roberts**

**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**