

INCOMING

ONE-SEVEN MARINES

Vietnam 1965-1970

JANUARY 2010

SECOND CALL FOR REUNION

A few words from our Commander, Al LaPointe.

Thanks to Terry Kirkland and his search for 1/7 Marines and Corpsman, we will have many new faces attending the 2010 Reunion. We have never before seen such a large response so early with well over a hundred rooms and 200 guests booked to date. A large portion of those already registered are "first timers", so to the rest of you "old timers" please get your registrations in. Thanks to all who have made their hotel reservations early, now we need your registrations as well. We have only received a handful of registration forms, so please

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help us out by getting yours mailed to us ASAP. We NEED a head count for busses, meals etc. One more note please...if you're planning on attending the reunion, but will not be staying at the Sheraton West, please make a note of it somewhere on your registration form.

Clothing orders have also been fast and furious, with some people ordering numerous times. At the moment we still have some of each size, but numbers are dwindling, so again... don't wait too long. Clothing will be on sale at the reunion, but sizes and quantities may be limited. Please read on for deadlines and other important information.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MAY 31, 1984

Dear General Kelley,

I regret that I must decline the attached invitation to enlist in the United States Marine Corps.

As proud as I am of the inference concerning my physical fitness, it might be better to continue as the Commander-in-Chief. Besides, at the present time it would be rather difficult to spend ten weeks at Parris Island.

The recruiter notes that "had (I) joined six months ago, I would have a whole new life now." There is no doubt about that. As much as the other political party would appreciate the notion, Nancy is happy with the house and I am totally satisfied with my job. As for the immediate future, I have the kind of tenacity the Corps is famous for in my resolve to stay here for the next four years. Would you consider a deferment until 1989?

On a more serious note, P. X., I'm sure my invitation came as the result of a lance corporal's overactive imagination. Nevertheless, please let him know that he honored me in believing that I have what it takes to become a United States Marine.

Semper Fidelis,

General Paul X. Kelley
Commandant
United States Marine Corps
Washington, D. C. 20380

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KEY DATES

March 15, 2010
Registration deadline

April 12, 2010
Hotel Room Reservation
Deadline

May 13-16, 2010
1/7 Marines Vietnam Reunion

PLANNED REUNION EVENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

On Thursday, 13 May 2010, a trip to the Vietnam Memorial, Washington DC. For those of you who have not been to the Vietnam Memorial, or would like to go again, bus transportation to and from the Sheraton West will be provided. This will not be a structured tour, but will allow you the freedom to explore the area at your own pace. **Alternate Tour:** Tour of selected Civil War sights hosted by Jim Nelson.

On Friday, 14 May 2010, a day trip to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, VA. has been scheduled. There you will be following the footsteps of Marines from the yellow footprints at boot camp that we all remember so well to the sands of the Pacific Islands, through the Chosin Reservoir, to the red dirt of Hill 881 in Vietnam. It is truly an awesome display of Marine Corps history, and well worth the trip.

On Saturday, 15 May 2010, the morning will be filled with fun and games at our All Hands Meeting and Company Competitions. The afternoon will be dedicated to our Memorial Service, and in the evening we will gather for our Reunion Banquet.

On Sunday, 16 May 2010, will be the Farewell Breakfast.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND MORE

Hotel: Sheraton Richmond West Hotel, 6624 West Broad St., Richmond, VA 23230. Website: sheraton.com/richmondwest. We are holding a block of rooms from Wednesday, May 12 through Saturday, May 15, with the largest number of rooms being held on Friday and Saturday nights. PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. The room block cut-off date is April 12, 2010. Room reservations cannot be booked at the group rate after the cut-off date, nor will there be any rooms held for our group. **Room requests after April 12 will be on a space available basis only and at prevailing rates. First come, first served!**

Group Room Rate: Rooms are \$109 per night, double or single, plus applicable tax (current tax rate is 13% and is subject to change). **Group rate applies from Sunday, May 9 through Tuesday, May 18, as available.**

Reservation Procedure: Please call Sheraton hotels at 800.325.3535 or the hotel direct at 804.285.2000. Inform

the agent that you are booking a room for the *1st Battalion 7th Marines Reunion at the group rate*. Reservations must be guaranteed by a credit card or one night's deposit. The hotel will advise you of their cancellation and early departure penalties when you make your reservation. Group affiliation must be mentioned at time of reservation in order to qualify for our discounted rate.

Check-in & Check-out Times: Check-in time is 3 p.m. Check-out is 12 noon

Hotel Parking: Free self-parking.

Transportation: The hotel, which is approximately 17 miles from Richmond International Airport (RIC), does not provide airport transfers; however, rental cars, shuttles, taxicabs and limousines are available. Groom Transportation, located downstairs next to baggage claim at RIC, provides a shuttle to the hotel. The first person cost is \$31.75 one way or \$49 round trip. Reduced rates apply for a second, third or 4th person. For example, the total roundtrip cost for 4 people is \$82. Call 800.552.7911 for complete pricing info. One way taxi is approximately \$25-\$35.

Reunion Registration and Clothing Orders: Registration fee for the reunion is \$20 per adult. This fee pays for our newsletter and all reunion expenses including banquet guests and food and beverage in the hospitality room. See enclosed *Reunion Registration Form* for details. Please fill out and return form with payment **ASAP and no later than March 15, 2010**. Late registrations will be accepted *if available*. Please call Al LaPointe to discuss availability. There is a separate form for ordering clothing. Clothing orders must be prepaid. For more information, contact Al LaPointe at 252-447-4854 or aslapointe@ec.rr.com.

Bus Tours: Please be on time for all bus tours. Departure point information will be available in Hospitality Room. Minimum and maximum numbers apply. Please sign up early in order to guarantee your reservation and help us in our planning.

Meals: Tour to Marine Corps Museum includes box lunch with your choice of sandwich as listed on the Registration Form, drink, chips and a cookie. Banquet choices are: Chicken stuffed with Crab and Shrimp Stuffing or 8oz. Prime Beef Strip Loin, Wild Mushroom Saute, and Light Peppercorn Sauce. Please indicate on Registration Form if you have dietary restrictions.

Name Tags: It is important that you wear your name tag, which will be found in your reunion packet, to all reunion events. This will facilitate check-in for bus trips, the banquet and breakfast.

NEWS AND NOTES...

(From R.J. Del Vecchio, 1stMarDiv combat photographer, 1968) Here's one shot maybe for the newsletter. That's the four of us (left to right — Keith Beaty, squad leader, Charley 1/7, John McCreless, squad leader, Charley 1/7, Bill Tuor, 1stMarDiv combat photographer, R. J. Del Vecchio, 1st MarDiv combat photographer) at the base of Hill 10 with the paddies and mountains behind us. You can see on my shirt sleeve the Charley 1/7 patch somebody gave me at one of the reunions. Incidentally, all four of us served in '68 and were wounded at one time or another during our tour. Gives us a lot in common!



VIETNAM REVISITED

(From James "Doc" Kirkpatrick, Bravo 1/7, 1968) "We were on an op from an HOA to Hill 55, mid-July 16-17, 1968 as I had my 20th birthday being pinned down by a gook sniper! We never found the hospital, but took too many WIA's and KIA's. There were 500 marines against a 1000 or more of the gooks! (NVA), 32nd NVA Reg. which we met on Hill 310, Aug. 09.

I was a doc, with B/1/7. B 1/7 was the lead element for the whole op. We passed the word about traps but some of the grunts did not listen. Especially when a Marine capt. tripped a 155 round and killed himself and 8 of his Marines and WIA, 35 grunts! I treated most of them, including a doc, from my field medical school. I can still see all of the grunts that were hit! I pray to this day that I did the right thing! I am glad! I went with the grunts! I have no regrets! Except I wish we could've brought more grunts home alive, but sometimes it was not possible. I cry, every day, that I could not help my grunts more!

I love the Marine Corps more than some Marines except Chesty? As a doc, we had a good working relationship. We took care of each other.

My oldest son, James Jr., is a Marine SSgt. He will retire in 2010 with 20. My youngest son, Tim, is a doc and will be going to Pendelton for school to be a grunt doc. This is what he wants to do. He takes after his ole man. He has had more training than we ever had. Hopefully, he can get more Marines home alive than we could!

I'll quit whining for now. Please contact me! Docusmcrvn@msn.com I like hearing from my Marines! SEMPER FI!

(Larry E. Smedley, MOH, Delta Co., 1968) News report: "High School Diplomas for Vietnam War Veterans" The 2009 Florida Legislature passed the Corporal Larry E. Smedley High School Diploma Act, which authorizes the Commissioner of Education to award a high school diploma to honorably discharged Vietnam War veterans which will increase the opportunity for some Florida veterans to receive a diploma. Interested veterans should contact Ed Ortiz by email ortize@fdva.state.fl.us or by calling 727-319-7400.

2010 REUNION ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Got questions about the upcoming reunion? Send an email to any of the following reunion organizing committee members:

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1/7 MARINES VIETNAM
2010 BRANDON CIRCLE
CHARLOTTE, NC 28211

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**JOIN US IN
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
MAY 13-16, 2010**

See inside for complete details.



ONE-SEVEN MARINES



TAPS

Recent reported deaths among 1/7 Marines.

Note: Our website, www.marzone.com, features an ongoing updated "Taps" page.

Charles C. Awkerman	1/7 Sgt Major	October 30, 2009
William F. Bethel	1/7 CO	November 3, 1995
Raymond W. Bobak	Charley Co.	July 13, 2009
Horace Jones	Charley Co.	August 22, 2009
John K. Kangas	1/7 Marines	April 2009
Douglas "Jack" McGrady	Delta Co.	October 27, 2009
Jack D. Rowley	1/7 CO	September 27, 2006
Jackson W. Sullivan	Delta Co.	February 16, 2002
Jerry D. Voyles	Charley Co.	November 27, 2009
Frederick S. Wood	1/7 CO	October 7, 2008

NOTE FROM TERRY KIRKLAND, OUR FOUNDER...

"Send me your email address at terrylk@charter.net for our future newsletter mailing list. Many of our members do not have e-mail at this time. If you have any difficulties receiving newsletters or with reunion reservations and need some assistance, call me at 334/365-0043. I look forward to seeing you in Richmond."