

The 2/4 Association



Sea Horse

Fourth Quarter, 2002

The Newsletter of the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines Association

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President's message

Dear Friends, Members, Marines and Corpsman,

Here we are at the beginning of another Holiday Season and as of this writing a much happier one than last year's. During this period I ask you as members of the Association to take the time to send a Holiday Greeting to "John Q. Member" of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines who will not be home for this year. 2/4 is part of the 31st MEU and they are scattered around the Pacific. Now is the time to make them feel good about the job they are doing protecting our freedoms with their service. Send them a card, a note or a box of cookies. I know one member who subscribes to "Books on tape" and he tells me that he is going to send his old tapes to them.

We've all been there and know how hard it is to be away from family and friends, especially during the Holidays.

Address your Greeting to:

Any Service Member (you can designate USMC or USN if you like)

Mail your holiday greeting to the different companies of 2/4; the US Postal Service mailing address for each Company is:

Any Service Member, H&S Company 2/4, UIC 39755, FPO AP 96609-9755

Any Service Member, Echo Company 2/4, UIC 39756, FPO AP 96609-9756

Any Service Member, Fox Company 2/4, UIC 39757, FPO AP 96609-9757

Any Service Member, Golf Company 2/4, UIC 39758, FPO AP 96609-9758

Any Service Member, Weapons Company 2/4, UIC 39759, FPO AP 96609-9759

Sorry...for you guys who do not know, Hotel Company is no longer around; it is now known as Weapons Company.

As for myself, Fran and I and our extended family want to wish each of you a very Merry Christmas...Happy Hanukkah...Happy and Blessed Ramadan...Happy Kwanzaa...and a very Healthy, Happy and Prosperous 2003.

Semper Fi...Jim Mazy

Second Battalion, 4th Marines—the Best in the Corps
"America should always remember—Vietnam was a War...Not a Movie"

In memoriam

Please notify the Association President or Newsletter Editor should you learn of the death of a member or their spouse. Include the date of death and other details, such as immediate survivors.

A message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps



10 November 2002, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps

We all know that a powerful combination of teamwork and individual achievement forms the strength of our Corps. We are Marines, first and foremost. Through innovation, trust, and mutual respect, we have evolved into an adaptive and flexible fighting force ideally suited for 21st Century challenges. Though the character of war continually changes, we understand that the nature of war is timeless: that the ultimate arbiter of battle is the human will. We recognize this, and we embrace the values that strengthen our will and define

our character. For two hundred and twenty-seven years, Marines and their families have dedicated themselves to the cause of the defense of freedom. Our accomplishments adorn the masthead of the Battle Color of the Marine Corps for all to admire, and they reflect the importance of the legacy we inherit and willingly accept.

Through shared experience and success in battle, we distinguish ourselves by selfless service—in a sense, we are a fraternity of sacrifice. As stewards of our rich heritage, we continually reflect upon the generations of Marines who, in their time, faithfully answered our country's call. In their example we will find the strength and inspiration necessary to meet the coming challenges. We celebrate this connection with our history, yet we remain focused on the challenges of our future. We have an important dual responsibility; to remain ready for today, while transforming our capabilities to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

We find profoundly gratifying, our life-long pride of association with fellow Marines—active, reserve, veteran, and civilian—and the knowledge that we contribute daily to securing our Nation's freedom.

I encourage all Marines to celebrate the camaraderie, enrichment, and fulfillment of service with men and women subordinated to a greater cause: preparing for an exciting future and extending the legacy of our great Corps.

Happy Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

JAMES L. JONES
General, U.S. Marine Corps

2000 - 2002 2/4 Association Officers

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| President | Jim Mazy, 6122 Shasta Street, Englewood, FL 34224-8161. Phone: 941 474-9431. E-mail: <President@2ndbn4thmarine.com>. |
| Vice President | Yahya A.A. Kariem, 7717 Reed Street, Jacksonville, FL 32208. Phone: 904 764-2241. E-mail: <ykariem50@aol.com>. |
| Secretary | Jack Petrowsky, P.O. Box 7214, Las Cruces, NM 88006-7214. Phone: 505 382-0759. E-mail: <jackny@webtv.net>. |
| Treasurer | Roger Pittman, 6166 South Coventry Lane West, Littleton, CO 80123. Phone: 303 281-8548. E-mail: <RogerPittman@Compuserve.com>. |
| Board of Directors | Logan Walton, P.O. Box 342, Unadilla, GA 31091. Phone: 912 627-3363. Tim Doble, 9395 Birch Lane, Lakeville, MN 55044. Phone: 952 461-2996. E-mail: <tjdoble@spacestar.com>. |
| Chaplain | Frank Valdez, 8221 East Birch Tree Lane, Anaheim Hills, CA 92808. Phone: 714 821-2846. E-mail: <valcone@hotmail.com>. |
| Historian | Col J.W. Hammond, Jr., USMC (Ret), 330 East Riverview Circle, Reno, NV 89509-1118. Phone: 702 322-3237. |
| Membership | Robert Bliss, 43 Meads Mountain Road, Woodstock, NY 12498. Phone: 845 679-5909. E-mail: <Membership@2ndbn4thmarine.com>. |
| Newsletter Editor | Ken Simpson, 303 Willowen Drive, Rochester, NY 14609-3235. Phone: 716 482-0717. E-Mail: <Editor@2ndbn4thmarine.com>. Web page: <http://home.rochester.rr.com/kensimpson/>. |
| PX Sales Manager | Jack Petrowsky, P.O. Box 7214, Las Cruces, NM 88006-7214. Phone: 505 382-0759. E-mail: <jackny@webtv.net>. |
| Roster Manager | Jim Mazy, 6122 Shasta Street, Englewood, FL 34224-8161. Phone: 941 474-9431. E-mail: <Marine-2-4@comcast.net>. |
| Webmaster | Jim Mazy, 6122 Shasta Street, Englewood, FL 34224-8161. Phone: 941 474-9431. E-mail: <Webmaster@2ndbn4thmarine.com>. |
| Health & Welfare Officer | Steven O'Shields, 3151 Lake Forest Drive, Apt #86, Augusta, GA 30909. Phone: 706 729-0043. E-mail: <chesty84@usmc.net>. Web page: <http://www.geocities.com.chesty84>. |

The 2/4 Association Sea Horse is published quarterly, and is the official newsletter of the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines Association, Inc.

What we are not

(Editor's note: The following text was prepared by Jim Mazy and appears on the 2/4 Association web. I think what Jim has stated here is important and suggested to him that we include it in this issue of the *Sea Horse*.)

Submitted by Jim Mazy, President 2000/2002 & 2002/2004

If you're a first time visitor to this website please keep in mind as you browse through the pages that the 2/4 Association is not

about a group of Marines from any one period of time of her history. Granted, the major parts of this website are Vietnam related but that's only because I do not have the other information to list—that information has to come from you, the readers and visitors to this website.

We are not about Vietnam. We are not about Desert Storm. We are not about any specific period of conflict nor are we about any particular period of peacetime service. We are about BROTHERHOOD, a brotherhood that can only be felt as a lump in the back of your throat or the pit of your belly every time you hear the National Anthem or The Marine's Hymn. It's about pride. It's about spirit. It's about our love and respect for anyone who has ever served with the Best in the Marine Corps—The Magnificent Bastards of the Second Battalion, 4th Marines. If you're a past or present member of 2/4, you're in the right place to renew old friendships, to form new ones, and to show support for the active-duty Marines and Corpsmen who make up the best unit in the Corps—hopefully the future members of this Association.

Association writing competition

Announcing the (for lack of a better term to describe it) "2d Battalion, 4th Marines Writing Competition." \$500 prize purse.

Submitted by Jim Mazy, President

This idea came about when the anonymous donor of the \$500 prize purse tried to figure out a way of recording some first hand history of 2/4 throughout the years. What better way to gather that history than by staging a competition?

The rules are very basic and simple:

1. The donor of the prize purse will remain anonymous; the identity will be known only to me.
2. 1,000 words or less (unless in the judges opinion more verbiage is needed to depict accurately the story). Your submission may be subject to editing.
3. Prefer typewritten, double-spaced but will accept any form as long as it is legible. Handwritten submissions must be printed—no cursive handwriting.

| 2/4 Association PX Merchandise | |
|---|----------------|
| General Items | Price |
| Polo shirt. Maroon with "2/4 Magnificent Bastards" embroidered on the front. | \$25.00 |
| Polo shirt. Red, white or blue with "2 nd Bn, 4 th Marines" embroidered on the front. | \$25.00 |
| T-shirt. Gray with 11" full-color 2/4 logo decal on the front. | \$12.50 |
| T-shirt. Honoring the 20 th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. (Available soon. Call or e-mail for price and availability.) | |
| Cap. White with black bill. Embroidered with "2 nd Bn, 4 th Marines, Magnificent Bastards." | \$12.00 |
| Cap. Navy blue or Marine Corps red. "USMC" embroidered on the front; "2 nd Bn, 4 th Marines" embroidered on the back. | \$17.00 |
| Golf towel. White with red 2/4 logo. | \$6.50 |
| Logo. Stitched patch, 3 1/2" x 4", multicolored. (Currently out of stock - on order. Call or e-mail for price and availability.) | |
| Logo pin. For lapel or cap. (Call or e-mail for price and availability.) | \$5.00 |
| Word pins. "Sniper," "Chu Lai," "Point Man," "Doc," "Life Member," "Marble Mountain," "Corpsman," "Da Nang," "Dong Ha," "I Corps," "Vietnam Veteran," "Quang Tri," "Rock Pile," "Chaplain," "Grunt," "Combat Vet," "Vietnam," and "Korea." (Call or e-mail for price and availability.) | \$3.50 Each |
| Mouse pads. Red and white 2/4 logo. | \$6.50 |
| Aprons. With pocket, for home and shop use - red and white 2/4 logo. | \$8.00 |
| Thermal travel mug. Champagne with black "USMC" emblem and 2/4 logo. | \$5.50 |
| Coffee mug. Black with white 2/4 logo and Marine Corps emblem. | \$5.00 |
| Videos | Price |
| Dai Do. Documentary. | \$25.00 |
| 2001 Reunion. Includes visits to The Wall, Iwo Jima Memorial, etc. | \$10.00 |
| Books | Price |
| The Magnificent Bastards. Keith Nolan (hard cover, only). | \$25.00 |
| The Proud Bastards. Mike Helms. | \$12.00 |
| One Last Mission. LtCol Oliver North, USMC (Ret) | \$5.00 |
| Ordering Instructions: Please add \$1.25 per item for shipping and handling. Make checks payable to "2/4 Association." Some items may be out of stock and, therefore, will not be shipped immediately. Call or e-mail Jack Petrowsky first for information. Send your order to: 2/4 Association PX c/o Jack Petrowsky PO Box 7214 Las Cruces, NM 88006-7214 | |

4. No vulgarity unless it is **very** pertinent to the story. Try changing the words to eliminate any cursing.
5. Must be factual—**no** fiction.
6. Author must be an Association member.
7. Writing may be serious or comedic in nature. It may cover wartime, peacetime or even liberty, as long as it involves an incident while serving with 2/4.
8. Submissions are being accepted from now through June 10, 2003. The judges' decisions are due by August 1, 2003.
9. The first prize is \$300, second prize is \$150, and third prize is \$50. Judges' decisions are final.

Each piece will be assigned an alphanumeric code; the identity of the writer will not be made known to the judges until after the selection process has been completed. Two of the judges were hand picked by the donor, and I am the only person (other than the judges) to know the identity of all three.

The stories will be published on the 2/4 website and also in the *Sea Horse* as space permits. All writings will be scanned to a CD-ROM and preserved by the Historian. Submissions will become the joint property of the Association and the writer, with the Association having sole discretion on future use.

All writings must be mailed to me:

Jim Mazy
6122 Shasta Street
Englewood FL 34224-8161

It is strongly suggested that you make and keep copies of your submission prior to mailing.

Electronic and website submissions will be accepted. E-mail me first at either:

<President@2ndbn4thmarine.com>
<Marine-2-4@2ndbn4thmarine.com>

If this bid to preserve the history of 2/4 is successful, it will be offered again the following year. If in the opinion of the judges there are insufficient winning entries for the year, the purse will be carried over to the following year.

Good luck!

Advertising space now available in the *Sea Horse* and on the 2/4 Association web

Submitted by Jim Mazy, President

The costs involved in publishing, printing, sorting, labeling, and mailing a newsletter and the costs involved with the 2/4 website are escalating every month.

The *Sea Horse* editor and I have been toying with the idea of selling space on both of these. An insertion about the size of a business card (actual size would be 3.125" wide by 2.25" high) in the *Sea Horse* would be \$15 per issue or \$50 per year (4 issues) with a maximum of 1.5 pages set aside for this purpose. It does not have to be a business—it could be a remembrance of someone, or a date, or anything you would like to insert in the space. The insertion could include a photograph or other graphic (for example, a business logo) as well as text. Contact the *Sea Horse* Editor to work out the details.

The other half-page would be used for a *Sea Horse* "booster" listing where individuals could subscribe for \$10 per year. Essentially, a booster listing would be a one line message (up to 72 characters) of your choosing. An example would be, "In memory of my friend Ken Stankiewicz, KIA 18 Aug 1965...Jim Mazy."

The website is the most expensive, yet the best, means of communications that we have. As webmaster, I am offering the opportunity to have anyone sponsor any page on our site. An example of the availability for message formats is like the one below as taken from our Message Board page:

This Message Board is being sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. James Mazy.

No matter how long I may live, I will forever love my fellow Marines, my fallen comrades and those of my former enemy that have not survived because of my actions...as a person is not truly dead until they are forgotten.

"America should always remember—Vietnam was a War...Not a Movie."

You can advertise a business, a service or, again, anything you would like to place in your allotted space. Just **no** profanity or pornography. See the "Sponsor a page on the 2/4 website" link:

<<http://www.2ndbn4thmarines.com/sponsor.htm>>
on the 2/4 website for more information on this.

2003 Reunion Cruise, July 31 - August 4, 2003

A four-day western Caribbean cruise aboard the Carnival Cruise Line's "Jubilee"

Plan now to sail off to a paradise where you don't have to think about anything more serious than which hat to buy or how long to sun before you turn over! Don't wait to make reservation—time is running out. The cruise line will pull our block so they can pre-sell the cabins available. If you are not sure, we recommend that you make a reservation with a small deposit of only \$25.00 per person. Any deposit is fully refundable up to 61 days prior to the ship leaving the port. Visit the 2/4 website <<http://www.2ndbn4thmarine.com>> for more information, or call one of the travel agents listed at the end of this article.

Itinerary

Day one (Thursday, July 31, 2003) finds you aboard Carnival's Jubilee that leaves the port of Galveston, Texas, at 4:00 PM. You spend your time doing all the fun things aboard the ship until she docks in Cozumel, Mexico, at 8:30 AM on Saturday. You can go ashore and spend the day wandering through the shops or touring the countryside until 5:00 PM. The Jubilee then sets sail back to Galveston, arriving in port at 8:00 AM Monday morning, August 4, 2003.

Category rates - all cabins are double occupancy (2 to a cabin)

If you're a single traveler and want to save the added expense of being the single occupant of a cabin, either pair up with someone who you know is also a single

occupant or ask the travel agency to pair you up with another 2/4 member when booking your cruise.

Payments and deposits

- First deposit: \$25.00 per person, due by **December 21, 2002. This is our final extension of the block on the cabins.** After this date, reservations will be on a space available basis. The deposit is fully refundable if you should have to cancel your reservation up to 61 days prior to departure.
- Second deposit: \$175.00 per person, due by March 21, 2003.
- Final Payment: due by May 23, 2003.

Carnival offers a Cruise Cancellation Protection Plan for \$49.00 per person (\$29.00 for 16 years and under). This insurance must be purchased before the final payment. It's well worth it, should almost anything unexpected cause you to cancel your cruise.

Additional Information

Cancellation insurance

If you must cancel your reservation due to an unforeseen illness or emergency involving yourself or a family member, traffic accident, quarantine, jury duty or subpoena, Cancellation Insurance assures that you will receive a refund.

Cancellation Penalties (without Cancellation Insurance coverage)

- From 60 to 30 days prior to sailing: loss of deposit (\$200.00) (May 31-July 1).
- From 29 to 8 days prior to sailing: 50% of total fare (July 2- July 23).
- 7 days or less: 100% of total fare.

| Reunion Cruise Per Person Pricing | Inside Cabin | | Outside Cabin | |
|---|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|
| Riviera Deck | 4A | \$400.00 | 6A | \$450.00 |
| Main Deck | 4B | \$430.00 | 6B | \$480.00 |
| Upper Deck | 4C | \$440.00 | 6C | \$510.00 |
| Empress Deck | 4D | \$450.00 | 6D | \$540.00 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plus port tax of \$99.00 and government taxes and fees of \$10.50. • Optional prepaid gratuities package (takes care of all tips during the cruise) is an additional \$39.00. • Third or fourth passenger in a inside cabin: \$330.00. Outside cabin: \$360.00. Plus port taxes and fees. | | | | |

Air transportation, transfers and parking

Any of the below travel agencies can book your air transportation along with your cruise.

Transfers from Houston Airports (IAH or Hou) are \$60.00 per person round-trip. If you are driving, the Jubilee leaves from Pier #25 at the Texas Cruise Ship Terminal, 2502 Harborside Dr., Galveston, TX 77550.

Beverage service

There are dispensing machines on the Lido Deck with juice, coffee, tea, and water; these are available at no charge. "Soda Cards" that allow unlimited sodas during the cruise may be purchased on board at the Casino Bar or the Pool Bar. Cost is \$12.00 for anyone 21 years or younger, \$18.95 for adults over 21. Beer and mixed drinks cost from \$3.00 to \$6.00, depending on brand. There is usually a "drink of the day" at around \$4.00.

Captain's welcome aboard party

Cocktails are served as the Captain introduces his crew and welcomes you aboard. The dress is coat and tie, or suit for gents; for ladies, cocktail dress or gown.

Dress code

Dress aboard ship is casual – shorts, tee shirts, swim suits (there are pools). Dress in Cozumel is casual. You may also dress casually for breakfast and lunch in the dining room and on the Lido Deck for buffet meals.

Shorts are not allowed in the dining room at dinner. Slacks and shirt (no tie required) for men and dress or pant suit for ladies.

Miscellaneous

Beauty shop appointments, photos, Espresso's Café, some spa amenities, gift shop purchases and personal services are additional expenses.

For reservations or more information

Silver Wings Travel
2670 McCall Road
Englewood FL 34224
941-475-7979
800-881-8828 <<http://www.swingstrav.com/>>

Becky Valdez (2/4 Member)
Home 714-281-2846
Fax 714-281-2308
fxala@hotmail.com

Becky works for:

American Pride Travel
Office 714-771-7730
800-842-4368
Fax 714-771-7738
Contact: Chris DeRose <<http://www.americanpride.com/>>

Meet the Commanding Officer of 2/4

(Editor's note: The 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, is currently the ground combat element of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. The 31st MEU web is located at <<http://www.31meu.usmc.mil/>>.)

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew H. Schlaepfer, a native of Ithaca, New York, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps in May 1983, following graduation from the United States Naval Academy, where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science. He later earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York in 1995.



After completing the Basic School and Infantry Officers Course in March 1984, he reported to 1st Battalion, 7th Marines at Camp Pendleton, where he served as a Rifle Platoon Commander, STA Platoon Commander and Rifle Company Executive Officer. While with 1st Battalion, 7th Marines he attended and graduated from U.S. Army Ranger School, and completed a 6 month deployment to Okinawa. In 1986, he served as the junior aide-de-camp to the Commanding General of I MEF/1stMarDiv. In January 1987, he was transferred to MCRD San Diego where he served as a Series and Company Commander.

Lieutenant Colonel Schlaepfer next attended Amphibious Warfare School in Quantico, Virginia, graduating with honors in May 1990. Following summer duty as a platoon commander at Officers Candidate School, he reported to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where he commanded a Rifle Company and Weapons Company. While assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, he participated in Operation DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, and deployed to the Mediterranean with 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).

From July 1992 to June 1995 Lieutenant Colonel Schlaepfer served as the Inspector-Instructor of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines, in Albany, New York. He then attended U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA. Upon graduation, he was transferred to United States Central Command at MacDill AFB, Florida where he served in the Exercise Division of the Operations Directorate. In June 1999, he reported to the Command Element, 13th MEU(SOC), where he served as the Operations Officer. While with 13th MEU(SOC) he completed a 6 month deployment to the Arabian Gulf, participating in Humanitarian Assistance Operations in East Timor and Operation DETERMINED RESPONSE in Yemen.

Lieutenant Colonel Schlaepfer's personal decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal with gold star, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

* * *

This article is reprinted from the MCB Camp Pendleton web <<http://www.cpp.usmc.mil/>>, November 11, 2002.

Meet the Sergeant Major of 2/4

(Editor's note: I apologize for the photo I had to use here for SgtMaj Howard. I could find none on the 2/4 web, but I did have a group shot from which I was able to crop this image.)

Sergeant Major Robert E. Howard Jr. was born 31 January 1961 in Louisville, Kentucky. He attended Marion C. Moore High School before enlisting in the United States Marine Corps on 24 August 1979.

Private Howard attended recruit training at Third Battalion, I Company, Parris Island, South Carolina. Upon graduation of recruit training, Private First Class Howard attended infantry training school at Camp Geiger, North Carolina. Upon graduation of infantry training school, Private First Class Howard was assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, 2nd Marine

Division, where he served as a rifleman and as a member of super squad.

Lance Corporal Howard was reassigned to 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division in September 1980, where he served as a rifleman, squad leader and platoon sergeant.



Corporal Howard was reassigned to Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division in September 1981, where he served as a chaser for division personnel.

Sergeant Howard departed the Corps in October 1982 only to reunite with his brothers in arms in October 1983.

Upon reentering the Marine Corps Sergeant Howard was assigned to 2d Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, in October 1983, where he served as a team leader for an antitank guided missile platoon. Sergeant Howard was reassigned to 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, I Company, Parris Island, South Carolina, in April 1985, where he served as a Drill Instructor and Senior Drill Instructor.

Staff Sergeant Howard was reassigned to Headquarters Service Battalion, Marine Corps Base, Camp Butler, Okinawa in May 1987, where he served with S-3 operations. Staff Sergeant Howard was reassigned to Headquarters, 9th Marine Corps District, Kansas, in June 1988, where he served as the Assistant Marine Officer Instructor at the University of Missouri. In the summer of 1989, Staff Sergeant Howard served as a Sergeant Instructor, Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia. In the summer of 1990, Staff Sergeant

Howard served as a platoon sergeant for naval midshipmen in Pensacola, Florida. Staff Sergeant Howard was reassigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines, 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, in August 1991, where he served as platoon sergeant for surveillance target acquisition platoon.

Gunnery Sergeant Howard was reassigned to Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines, 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade, in September 1992, where he served as operations chief. Gunnery Sergeant Howard was reassigned to Marine Security Guard Battalion in July 1994, where he served as detachment commander in Conakry, Guinea (West Africa) and Harare, Zimbabwe (South Africa).

First Sergeant Howard was reassigned to Inspector-Instructor, Marine Wing Support Squadron-471, Detachment Alfa, Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he served as the senior enlisted advisor for an active duty staff of 21 enlisted Marines and 180 enlisted Selected Marine Corps Reserve Marines. First Sergeant Howard was reassigned to 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division, in August 2000, where he served with Headquarters and Service Company.

Promoted to his present rank in April 2002, Sergeant Major Howard remained in 5th Marine regiment and assumed the duties of Battalion Sergeant Major for the 2nd Battalion 4th Marines, "The Magnificent Bastards."

Sergeant Major Howard's awards and decorations include the Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two gold stars in lieu of third award, Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation with one bronze star in lieu of second award, Good Conduct Medal with one silver star and one bronze star in lieu of seventh award, National Defense Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal with two bronze stars in lieu of third award, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with three bronze stars in lieu of fourth award, Overseas Ribbon with three bronze stars in lieu of fourth award, Drill Instructor Ribbon and Marine Security Guard Ribbon.

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This article is reprinted from the MCB Camp Pendleton web <<http://www.cpp.usmc.mil/>>, November 11, 2002.

3d Marine Division Association 2003 annual reunion

Submitted by Bill Krueger

The 3d Marine Division Association will hold its 2003 reunion in Nashville, Tennessee, from August 13-17, 2003. All Marines who served with or were attached to

the 3d Marine Division are encouraged to attend. This is a family affair, so bring the entire family. The January-February 2003 issue of the association newsletter, *CALTRAP*, will feature registration and hotel reservation forms, and the schedule of events. For more information, check the CALTRAP web site at <<http://www.caltrap.com>> or contact:

SgtMaj Bill Krueger USMC (ret.)
7622 Highland Street
Springfield, VA 22150-3931
(703) 451-3844

1st Battalion, 3d Marines annual reunion

Submitted by Bill Ervin

The 1st Battalion, 3d Marines will be holding its annual reunion in conjunction with the 3d Marine Division Association in Nashville, Tennessee. Exact date and more details should be available in the next issue of the *Sea Horse*. For information, check the 1/3 web at <<http://www.onethreemarines.com/>> or contact:

Bill Ervin
2855 Iliff
Boulder, CO 80305
(303) 494-7752
E-mail: <Hatch101@aol.com>

The Pearl of the Orient

A Vietnam veteran returns - Part 3

By Tom Kilduff

(Editor's note: Tom Kilduff served in Vietnam with Fox 2/4 in the late '60's. He first returned to Vietnam in 1977 and has returned each year with Military Historical Tours. In the "The Pearl of the Orient," Tom recounts that first trip for us. This is part three of his story; parts one and two were included in the second and third quarter issues, respectively, of the *Sea Horse*. The conclusion will be contained in the first quarter 2003 issue of the *Sea Horse*.)

A small farmer makes around 14 cents/day, or \$50/year and the average salary is \$1000/year. This was also a trip to heal wounds and forgive and forget, not just to visit sights or relive memories that no longer had a reference point. We came loaded with pens, pencils, paper and \$250 each for four schools near Dong Ha, (\$1000 total, which is 9,000,000 "Dong" in their money). We also passed out pens, pencils and paper all over Viet-

nam, as we met children, plus things we take for granted, such as: bubble making toys, chewing gum, candy, clothes, shoes, caps - anything we had at home and we didn't use anymore. Plans were made for future correspondence and possibly adopting a school in the area by the 2/4 Association.

One highlight of the trip, and one of my own favorite memories, will always be when General Weise returned a 10 inch, brightly painted wooden tortoise, he had taken 29 years ago as a souvenir, from an old blown apart temple in Mai Xa Chanh which was used as 2/4's rear command post during the battle of Dia Do. The villagers had rebuilt the temple using the old walls to build from, tying their place of worship to the past, while preparing for the future. It turned out the tortoise is a symbol of longevity, wedlock, and fertility and was esteemed by their ancestors, so this ceremony turned into far more than just handing it over. Although the village of Mai Xa Chanh turned out with most of its population when we requested, they did not know what we wanted. When it was explained to them what General Weise wanted to do, all the villagers, especially the village elders, were overcome with emotion. So, too, were most of us hard, crusty, old Marines. There was not a dry eye among us! I do not remember much of their language, but I understood the men, women and children's tears, smiles and the gentle nods of their heads as they expressed their appreciation, peace and friendliness toward our group of Marines. Once again we experienced the feeling of genuine peace the Vietnamese people want. It is a need they have as they endeavor to bring their country back from the brink of destruction. This is never more evident than in either of the two major cities. Hanoi with 819,913 people or Saigon with over 2,000,000 people, each in their own way, working to bring prosperity to themselves and Vietnam. From the air they look like any big city of the world; city centers of high-rise buildings, parks, residential areas. Once on the streets, though, a barrage of bicycles, motorbikes and industrious countrymen greets you. Nothing like this exists in hometown, USA. It would take more than 15 days to get used to the seeming chaos of the streets. Yet in that time, we never saw an accident, even though some of these tiny vehicles were loaded with baskets of baby ducks, live grown ducks, pigs, bundles of wood and sometimes four or five people! I was amazed to watch as everyone moved, in both directions, effortlessly around each other. It was obvious that they cared about their fellow man. They *knew* that the person in that big truck wasn't going to run over them! There were very few stop signs at the intersections, yet they just wove on through all the confusion, without so much as a worry!

As we drove through the streets, "Born To Be Wild," "Sugar-Sugar," "White Lightning," and "Under the Board Walk" blared from the shop windows and kids played soccer in cathedral courtyards, empty lots, or parks. The cities are a conglomerate of lean-to shanties, tall apartment complexes and dilapidated French homes still barricaded by high walls. French architecture is the main design of most of the homes in the cities, although you see a lot out in the "boonies," also. Some parts of the cities are swept clean by hand-held brooms, while other areas look much as they had only months before the Americans pulled out. There are houses that look like they could topple at any time; if so, they use every bit of the material, building a new one. They actually use hammers to beat all the concrete from what they call "rebar," so that they can use it again; even the concrete they knock off is used again and again. Nothing in Vietnam gets thrown away - absolutely nothing! You won't see huge shopping malls or department stores. Instead, streets are lined with narrow, crowded shops selling everything imaginable from, priceless, delicate hand embroidery, to used worn out mufflers. The main streets in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC or Saigon, as we knew it) are wide French designed avenues lined with trees. The major rivers are highways of commerce. Sampans, the native boats, glide by expertly and it looks like they are dangerously overloaded, hardly afloat with produce: rice, grain, fish, livestock, granite rock, gravel, and cobble stone from far and near farms and villages. Tons and tons of loamy, silty-sand that has wash out to the sea is constantly brought back, by thousands of sampans and unloaded into huge piles along the rivers, so the farmers can come and get it to mix with their worn-out paddy soil for rejuvenation. The granite, gravel and cobble rocks are used for road construction and all the work is done with hand labor; there is very little mechanization in Vietnam. Few people in Vietnam seemed to be idle, there is no welfare or disability, everyone has some way of making a living - our country could take lessons!

In Hue a visitor might begin to wonder why such small people in such a small land would build such vast temples, buildings, and fortifications in this most ancient city of theirs. Hue was the ancient capital of Vietnam and is home to the Citadel. This former home of the emperor is ringed by a 30 foot thick by 20 foot high wall, which measures 5 to 6 miles around. It was, and is, a city within a city. It is now filled with lovers walking hand in hand, weddings, parents showing children their ancient culture, tourists shopping and gazing at its size and beauty of its ornate carvings, and fierce granite lions and dragons. As with most things in Hue, bullets and shell holes riddle its ancient walls and buildings.

Although the cities seemed to be thriving with prosperity, the villages which dotted the countryside gave an entirely different view of Vietnam. During our group's long hours on the bus, riding over rough roads, we saw an ancient civilization still doing what they have done for centuries: Walking everywhere they go, growing crops, doing their laundry in rivers, coaxing stubborn water buffalo along, fields of pepper trees, with the harvested peppers drying on the roofs of houses, also huge fishing nets strung across rivers. We passed tribal villages of Montagnards, which brought back memories of the invaluable allegiance these ancient inhabitants of Vietnam had given to the Americans, and the realization of the subsequent punishment these brave warriors have received.

Vietnam has been at war, on and off, for 2,500 years. Their enemies have included the Chinese, Laotians, Cambodians, Japanese, French, and the Americans. Yet through all this they have maintained, developed and kept their own culture and traditions. Many of their ancient buildings still stand. In Hanoi I visited a monastery which was built in 1070 AD. For hundreds of years it was the site of education for their aristocracy. There is also a 50 foot high dike completely around Hanoi which is wide enough for a two-lane highway. Did the French with equipment build this? No, it was built by hand, hundreds of years ago to hold back the floods of the Red River. In Hanoi we passed the almost vibrant yellow Official Presidential and Parliament Building (Vietnam's White House and Congress). Although this building stands out like a sore thumb, it was never bombed by the United States, as were many other official buildings of their government. It makes me wonder, were we even trying to win the war at all?

We also visited the vast and sacred mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, where thousands of people a day pilgrimage to visit the glassed coffin of the man who had a vision for his country, and who the Vietnamese referred reverently to, as "Uncle Ho." There was great reverence shown in this building and we were reminded, not to take pictures and do no talking. I was not prepared for the very simple dwelling where this leader actually lived. Ho Chi Minh's people loved him, and he loved his people. Endeavoring always to live like they did and to be an example. In fact, I was very surprised to learn that early in his movement against the French colonization of his country, he was a strong advocate for freedom and democracy. Several places in the Ho Chi Minh Museum you see excerpts from our own Constitution and Bill of Rights. "By the people and for the people..."; it seems that all the past death and destruction could have been stopped, if only the *right two people* had gotten together!

On our drive up to Hue from Da Nang, the bus traversed the rough pavement road over the Hai Van Pass. (Twenty-nine years ago there were ambushes all along this same road.) Here we witnessed some of Vietnam's history. For here at the top of this pass are remains of the ancient 30 foot thick brick wall and gate passageway that the Vietnamese had built centuries ago to keep their Chinese enemies from conquering any further parts of their territory. The rest of the wall has long since been torn down and reused elsewhere. Here also, by contrast, was a French bunker from this century, which I crawled into and had a good vantage point of curious tourists, trinket sellers, chartered buses, small but elaborate shrines and in the distance, the coast line, nestling along the South China Sea. In Da Nang we climbed 187 steps to the top of Marble Mountain where the Vietnamese believe you can see heaven. At the top are colorful pagodas, Buddhas and a monk monastery. Once inside, it became apparent that the mountain is a network of deep caves and tunnels, which in fact, were used by the Viet Cong as a hospital during the war, much to the surprise of the Americans and South Vietnamese, quartered on the lowlands below. Now all signs of its medical years are gone and the caves are filled with steps, Buddha statues, and spirit gods of heaven and hell. These are not only statues of Buddhism, but also of Hindustani origin, which date back to over 1000 years.

Much of Vietnamese artwork is taken from the natural world around them; it is concentrated in their old historical, ancestral worshipping temples. The simplicity of Oriental design abounds with trees, flowers, rivers, and often times an ornate dragon. Although a pagoda may startle the eye with its wide variety of color, in every Official Building, deep red and gold are the prevalent colors. These are the colors of the Vietnamese flag. The Vietnamese display their flag openly and proudly, in fact, seeing that red flag and gold star, always gave me a start because of it being North Vietnam's colors, during the war! Unlike the ornate architecture of their historical buildings, Vietnamese homes are small and Unitarian. If there are any decorations, they are centered on the family's personal shrine.

* * *

This article is reprinted by permission from Tom Kilduff. The conclusion of the story of his trip to Vietnam will appear in the first quarter 2003 issue of the *Sea Horse*.

Welcome to all new members of the Association

Submitted by Jim Mazy, Roster Manager

- Andrews, Raymond P., Cpl, Fox, 7/66–8/67 (Bonnie)

- Bare, James E., HM3, Hotel & Golf, 5/65–6/66 (Joan)
- Beattie, David W., MSgt, Fox, 9/76–9/77 (Cynthia)
- Beccue, Robert W., Cpl, H&S, 4/66–5/67 (Karen)
- Boren, John R., Sgt, Fox, 12/65–7/66 (Roslyn)
- Burbach, Gerald S., LtCol, Fox & Golf, 4/64–10/65 (Gladys)
- Connerton, John F., Cpl, Fox 3rd Plt, 11/67–11/68
- Cron, Robert D., Sgt, H&S Comm, 1/56–1/58 (Tonya)
- Cully, Eugene, 1stSgt, Golf, 4/67–10/67 (Maribeth)
- Delmotte, Gerald J., LCpl, H&S, 10/57–10/59 (Joann)
- Dozier, William L., Cpl, Hotel, 11/66–11/67 (Sylvia)
- Everts, Mike L., Sgt, Hotel, 1/65–9/65 (Sharon)
- Foley, Larry H., Pfc, Golf, 2/67–12/67 (Vicky)
- Grimes, Victor, LCpl, HQ, 6/57–6/59 (Juanita)
- Hayes, David M., SSgt, Echo & Hotel, 2/69–1/70 (Joyce)
- Hedges, Roger B., HM3, Golf, 4/69–1/70 (Diane)
- Heflin, Duane C., Cpl, Echo, 7/66–8/67 (Barbara)
- Hilton, Joel R., Cpl, Golf 2d Plt, 8/66–4/69 (Barbara)
- Hughes, Jack F., Pfc, Echo, 12/54–9/55 (Peggy)
- Johnson, Kenneth G., Cpl, Echo, 1/67–2/68 (Helen)
- Johnson, William D., HM3, Fox, 8/65–5/66 (Ellen)
- Moore, Thomas G., Sgt, Golf, 10/67–4/68 (Elaine)
- Myers, Alan C., Fox, 7/68–6/69 (Mary)
- Neely, Larry J., LCpl, Hotel, 10/68–10/69 (Helen)
- Passarella, Nicholas, Sgt, Fox, 7/69–8/70 (Valerie)
- Price, Frederick S., Jr., Pfc, Echo, 3/65–3/66 (Pamela)
- Rowland, Gary (**Need information—please contact the Roster Manager**)
- Ruotolo, Robert, HM2, Golf, 8/66–9/67 (Mary)
- Schuler, Ronald F., Cpl, Hotel, 8/66–9/67 (Patricia)
- Skeels, Robert F., 1stLt, Echo, 10/68–10/69 (Darlene)
- Smith, John E., Assoc member June
- Tiger, Ernest R., Sgt, Golf, 12/66–3/67 (Leona)
- Troth, Larry
- Varena, Harry T., Cpl, Hotel, 8/65–12/66 (Ellen)
- White, Thomas F., Sgt, H&S, 1/64–1/66 (Marie)
- Woolston, Finley C., GySgt, Fox, 9/67–10/68 (Karen)

There may be other new members who are not listed here due to an error in the database. If you are a new member and are not listed above, please send an e-mail to <Marine-2-4@2ndbn4thmarine.com> or USPS to the Roster Manager listed in the *Sea Horse*.

Where are they?

From the Roster Manager (aka, Jim Mazy)

I cannot stress the importance of keeping your contact information up to date. Life is so short to miss the opportunity to reunite with old friends.

As of the last mailing of the *Sea Horse*, the following members have been reported AWOL by the US Post Office. If you know the whereabouts of any of these members, please contact the Association Roster Manager at <Marine-2-4@2ndbn4thmarine.com>. I have also included an easy access form on the 2/4 website to permit updating all records.

- Peter Acly: last address - Wisconsin
- Richard H Gainor: last address - Texas
- Daniel J McFarren: last address - Ohio
- Wilkins M Parks: last address - Pennsylvania
- John E Payne: last address - Ohio
- Richard Payne: last address - Colorado
- Allen L Savage: last address - California
- Marvin J Seyfer: last address - Maryland
- James H Stahl: last address - Arizona

The following members need to update their e-mail address of record that is on file with the Association Roster Manager.

- Michael G. Castle
- William S. Connor III
- Jesse A. Greer, Jr.
- Gustav E. Gyllenhoff
- Roger B. Hedges
- Leonard W. Hensley
- Rod L. Huddleston
- Leroy T. Hyatt
- Tom Kilduff
- Robert J. Mastrion
- Robert B. Mitchell
- Dominic F. Morello
- Robert E. Owens
- Richard D. Pippin
- Albert N. Rodgers
- Daniel H. Schremser
- Bayard Vic Taylor
- James A. Wainwright
- James L. Williams

Change of Address Form

Please fill in the following information and slip it into an envelope addressed to:

2/4 Association Roster Manager
6122 Shasta Street
Englewood, FL 34224-8161

Name: _____

New Address: _____

(Street)(Apt #)

(City)(State) (9-digit zip)

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

2/4 Association Roster Manager
6122 Shasta Street
Englewood, FL 34224-8161

New Address: _____

(City) (State) (9-digit zip)

E-mail Address: _____

Postage
here