

# Golf 2/7 Vietnam Veterans Association

Newsletter 2014 Volume I

## Shilo Inn & Suites Portland Airport

2014 Portland, OR

August 6 – 10, 2014

11707 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220

503-252-7500

Room rates per night for single/double occupancy are **\$89.00 or \$102.00 including taxes**. When reserving a room please let the hotel you're a member of **Golf 2/7 Vietnam Veterans Group** to assure that you will get our special rate and benefits. **PLEASE RESERVE YOUR ROOM EARLY!**

The hotel has an indoor pool, sauna, steam and fitness room (whoever wants to shed some beer weight). Just kidding. All rooms are equipped with refrigerators; microwave; coffee maker; ironing board and hairdryer. The hotel is offering Golf 2/7 members comp Show Time; HBO; wireless internet; parking and airport shuttle. The hotel also offers complimentary Barista Breakfast Bar or a comp registered guest breakfast or a \$3.00 coupon towards the regular full breakfast menu. In the evening a complimentary glass of house wine is offered at the bar or dining room. Thank God, this is a sports bar with cigar room for our smokers. **SMOKING POT IS NOT ALLOWED.**

Golf 2/7 room rates will be guaranteed up to three (3) days before the reunion, and after that on a space available basis. Please give a word of thanks to the Reunion Committee for their work and our folks on location.

## ACTIVITIES

**WEDNESDAY:** Mingling and Portland activities. **NO REGISTRATION**

**THURSDAY:** *Registration 4:00 to 5:30*  
Mingling and Portland activities

**FRIDAY:** Registration 10:30 to 11:30 AM and 3:00 to 4:30 PM. Mingling and Portland activities

**FRIDAY NIGHT:** *Pool Party - \$25.00 (per person) 5:30 PM to 10:00 PM – CASH BAR with DJ & DANCING*  
**MENU:** burgers; hot dogs; baked beans; chips; Caesar salad; cookies; coffee; tea and ice tea

**SATURDAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING:** 9: AM  
(Golf 2/7 V V A members only)  
Mingling and Portland activities.

**SATURDAY NIGHT:** *Banquet - \$40.00 (per person) 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM CASH BAR with DJ & DANCING*  
**MENU:** Two (2) entrée choices: glazed ham; fried chicken or beef meatloaf; garlic mashed potatoes; mixed vegetables; garden salad; baked bread; desserts; coffee; tea or ice tea.

**SUNDAY:** *Golf 2/7 Memorial Service - 9:00 AM*

**AT 1:00 PM WE WILL BE HAVE A SPECIAL SERVICE FOR THREE (3) KIAS IN THE PORTLAND AREA. DRIVERS NEEDED**

## From the President Desk

Golf Marines and Corpsmen,

As your new President for this term, I want thank my predecessor, Ron Myers, for his service and for helping me with the transition into this role.

I am pleased to be able to work with such a fine team of officers. Larry Williams, Vice President, is arranging the Memorial Service at the upcoming reunion for our three KIA brothers who were from the Portland area. John Jones, "Jonesey", Secretary, is heavily involved with preparing and distributing notices to various military magazines and organizations about our upcoming

Reunion. Tom Finnigan, our Treasurer, monitoring our website, maintains our financial records and assists in the preparation and planning of each reunion. Last is Bob Strout. Bob is as needed as anyone else on this team because he is Sergeant of Arms, and he keeps us straight - thank you Bob!

I also want to express my appreciation for Don Gray who heads up the Reunion Committee. Don works with the facilities to draft the contracts, set up the actual structure of our events, not to mention numerous other behind the scene things he does to make it happen. At the end of the day, it takes a team to do all this and I just wanted to extend my sincere appreciation to each of them and also to let you know that this just doesn't happen - it takes planning and work on the part of several individuals.

This year we will be electing two new officers, Vice President and Secretary. If you are interested in joining our team please contact me or any of the company officers.

Ray Taylor  
Semper Fi

## ARTICLE OF INTEREST

### *DO YOU STILL THINK ABOUT VIETNAM?*

This story came to me via e-mail, from Bobby Donaldson Golf 2/7. The author, a fellow Vietnam Veteran (un-known). After reading his story, I felt like I was there with him. If you didn't participate in the Vietnam War, this will give you some insight into how our minds work. He writes:

A couple of years ago someone asked me if I still thought about Vietnam. I nearly laughed in their face. How do you stop thinking about it? Every day for the past forty years, I wake up with it- I go to bed with it. This was my response:

"Yeah, I think about it. I can't stop thinking about it. I never will. But, I've also learned to live with it. I'm comfortable with the memories. I've learned to stop trying to forget and learned to embrace it. It just doesn't scare me anymore."

A lot of my "brothers" haven't been so lucky. For them the memories are too painful, their sense of loss too great. My sister told me of a friend she has whose husband was in the Nam. She asks this guy when he was there.

Here's what he said, "Just last night." It took my sister a while to figure out what he was talking about. Just Last Night. Yeah, I was in the Nam. When? Just last night, before I went to sleep, on my way to work this morning, and over my lunch hour. Yeah, I was there

My sister says I'm not the same brother who went to Vietnam. My wife says I won't let people get close to me, not even her. They are probably both right. Ask a vet about making friends in Nam. It was risky. Why? Because we were in the business of death, and death was with us all the time. It wasn't the death of, "If I die before I wake." This was the real thing. The kind boys scream for their mothers. The kind that lingers in your mind and becomes more real each time you cheat it. You don't want to make a lot of friends when the possibility of dying is that real, that close. When you do, friends become a liability.

A guy named Bob Flanigan was my friend. Bob Flanigan is dead. I put him in a body bag one sunny day, April 29, 1969. We'd been talking, only a few minutes before he was shot, about what we were going to do when we got back to the world. Now, this was a guy who had come in country the same time as me. A guy who was loveable and generous. He had blue eyes and sandy blond hair.

When he talked, it was with a soft drawl. I loved this guy like the brother I never had. But, I screwed up. I got too close to him. I broke one of the unwritten rules of war. DON'T GET CLOSE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO DIE. You hear vets use the term "buddy" when they refer to a guy they spent the war with. "Me and this buddy of mine."

Friend sounds too intimate, doesn't it? "Friend" calls up images of being close. If he's a friend, then you are going to be hurt if he dies, and war hurts enough without adding to the pain. Get close; get hurt. It's as simple as that. In war you learn to keep people at that distance my wife talks about. You become good at it, that forty years after the war, you still do it without

thinking. You won't allow yourself to be vulnerable again.

My wife knows two people who can get into the soft spots inside me-my daughters. I know it bothers her that they can do this. It's not that I don't love my wife. I do. She's put up with a lot from me. She'll tell you that when she signed for better or worse, she had no idea there was going to be so much of the latter. But with my daughters it's different. My girls are mine. They'll always be my kids. Not marriage, not distance, not even death can change that. They are something on this earth that can never be taken away from me. I belong to them. Nothing can change that. I can have an ex-wife; but my girls can never have an ex-father. There's the difference. I can still see the faces, though they all seem to have the same eyes. When I think of us, I always see a line of "dirty grunts" sitting on a paddy dike. We're caught in the first gray sliver between darkness and light. That first moment when we know we've survived another night, and the business of staying alive for one more day is about to begin. There was so much hope in that brief space of time. It's what we used to pray for. "One more day, God. One more day." And I can hear our conversations as if they'd only just been spoken I still hear the way we sounded. The hard cynical jokes, our morbid senses of humor. We were scared to death of dying, and tried our best not to show it.

I recall the smells, too. Like the way cordite hangs on the air after a fire-fight. Or the pungent odor of rice paddy mud. So different from the black dirt of Iowa. The mud of Nam smells ancient, somehow. Like it's always been there. And I'll never forget the way blood smells, sticky and drying on my hands. I spent a long night that way once. The memory isn't going anywhere.

I remember how the night jungle appears almost dreamlike as a pilot of a Cessna buzzed overhead, dropping parachute flares until morning. That artificial sun would flicker and make shadows run through the jungle. It was worse than not being able to see what was out there sometimes. I remember once looking at the man next to me as a flare floated overhead. The shadows around his eyes were so deep that it looked like his eyes were gone. I reached over and touched him on the arm; without looking at me he touched my hand. "I know man. I know." That's what he

said. It was a human moment. Two guys a long way from home and scared to death.

God, I loved those guys. I hurt every time one of them died. We all did. Despite our posturing. Despite our desire to stay disconnected, we couldn't help ourselves. I know why Tim O' Brien writes his stories. I know what gives Bruce Weigle the words to create poems so honest I cry at their horrible beauty. It's love. Love for those guys we shared the experience with.

We did our jobs like good soldiers, and we tried our best not to become as hard as our surroundings. You want to know what is frightening. It's a nineteen-year-old-boy who's had a sip of that power over life and death that war gives you. It's a boy who, despite all the things he's been taught, knows that he likes it. It's a nineteen-year-old who's just lost a friend, and is angry and scared and, determined that, "some\*@#\*s going to pay". To this day, the thought of that boy can wake me from a sound sleep and leave me staring at the ceiling.

As I write this, I have a picture in front of me. It's of two young men. On their laps are tablets. One is smoking a cigarette. Both stare without expression at the camera. They're writing letters. Staying in touch with places they rather be. Places and people they hope to see again. The picture shares space in a frame with one of my wife. She doesn't mind. She knows she's been included in special company. She knows I'll always love those guys who shared that part of my life, a part she never can. And she understands how I feel about the ones I know are out there yet. The ones who still answer the question, "**When were you in Vietnam?**"

***"Hey, man. I was there just last night."  
So was I. How about the rest of you vets-hits  
home doesn't it!***

Share this article with others so they understand why many of today's veterans behave the way they do be, it Vietnam or other conflicts. This is a common thread shared by all. Thanks for sharing this letter, the best forward email I have gotten in a long time. ***Simper Fie***

**PLEASE SHARE YOUR STORY AS WE CONTINUE  
OUR QUEST TO COMPLETE OUR GOLF 2/7  
DOCUMENTARY "COMING HOME TO WAR"**

## ATTENTION MARINES!!!!

Golf 2/7 V V A is a reunion based association whose By-laws list several objectives and purposes:

### “ENCOURAGE; PROMOTE & AID THE MEMBERSHIP”

So if you are or know of a Golf Member who is need of assistance in order to join us at this year's annual reunion in Portland, OR please let one of the officers know, leave a message on the company website or email us directly at: [golf2.7vva@gmail.com](mailto:golf2.7vva@gmail.com)

Assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis and includes help with expenses to attend a company reunion such as: transportation expenses (gas or bus fare) activity fees; banquet and lodging costs.

## COMPANY MAILING ADDRESS

*Golf 2/7 Vietnam Veterans Association mailing address changed May 6, 2013 to:*

**GOLF 2/7 VVA ASSOCIATION  
3103 w Bay Villa Ave #2  
Tampa, FL 33611**

Please notify us of your address or phone changes so we can contact you.

## OUR FALLEN MEMBER 2014

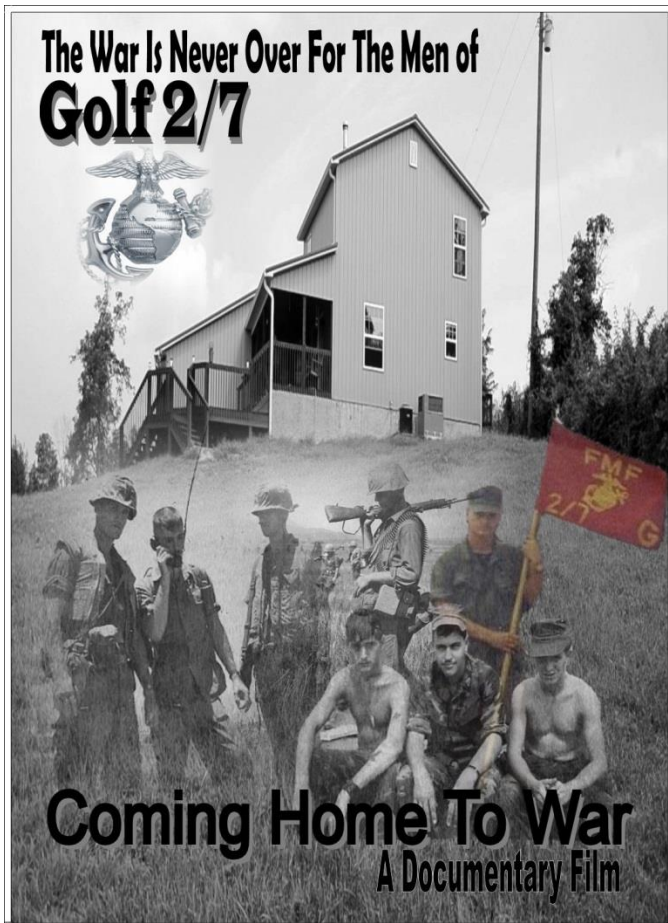
1/5/2014 **Norm DeFilippo** (1969)  
Beachwood, NJ 08722

1/26/2014 **John Banner** (1966)  
Soldotna, AK 99503

4/7/2014 **William Daniels Jr.** (1965)  
Mountain Home, TN 37684

4/15/2014 **Jim McMurtrey** (1968-69)  
Annapolis, MD 21403

## COMING HOME TO WAR, INC.



“FROM THE CROSSROADS OF WAR, EVERYONE SHALL MEET”. The story of the Men of Golf 2/7 combat Marine Corps Unit that served in Vietnam from 1965 – 1970. These Marine and Navy Corpsmen experienced the ravages and pain of battle in the jungles and rice paddies of Vietnam and came home to silence. “*Coming Home To War*”, takes a look at these men (us) in a way that no other Documentary examines its subjects. Many of these men have met before during their time or another. This (our) Documentary attempts to connect the interviews of these men with places and times that “Intersect” them all, or in essence, to find a bond that links every one of them together collectively before, during and after the War in Vietnam, forever.

**“A Powerful Story of Marines on  
a Journey back Home”**

For more information on this production please visit our website [www.cominghometowar.com](http://www.cominghometowar.com) or call David (PEEWEE) Kling (267) 718-0419 or email him at [davidkling@cominghometowar.gmail.com](mailto:davidkling@cominghometowar.gmail.com)

**PLEASE SEND DONATIONS DIRECTLY TO:**

*COMING HOME TO WAR, INC.  
230 MARSHALL STREET  
PERKASIE, PA 18944*

*Please make checks or money orders to:  
Coming Home To War, Inc.  
Or  
CHTW, Inc.*

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 we conducted a film shoot in Chicago, IL with members of Golf 2/7 and Ethel (Mom) Orszlak.



Mom is doing well as you all can see. We visited Ken’s grave site and had lunch with Mom.

***SEMPER FI!***