

Hotel 2/5 Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2015

RETREAT HELL

ISSUE EIGHT



Editor's Column

I will be leaving soon for the reunion. This is an event that I look forward to each year. In order to make it to the reunion I have to scramble for a couple of weeks or more to get all my cases stabilized. When I return I will have to scramble for a few more weeks to get caught up again. However, I love what I do and it is all worth it because I take away so

much from the time I spend with all of the Hotel Company Marines and Corpsmen. Read the article on page 4 to see why I love what I do.

One particularly enjoyable event at the reunion is remembrance of those we lost. I have been working on compiling a list of Hotel's KIA. In that regard see the article on page 2.

I have been bringing the Hotel Company wine to the reunions now for a couple of years. There will be plenty of wine to toast our fallen comrades.

However, I will not have the tequila that has been a staple for the past two years. Long story short, I am arriving early and will forage in the wilderness to obtain a bottle of Jack Daniel's "Gentlemen Jack" to make do.

If you can't make the reunion this year and have a desire to get your own wine see the article on page 3.

A quick note that Jim Hayden wants me to pass on to all attendees: You can't take your weapons on the General Jackson.

Semper Fi. Jay



Your Editor

If you need to contact me use either:

jayapeterson@hotmail.com

hotelcompanyreunion@gmail.com



I have been working on a list of KIA for Hotel Company. Not an easy task given the length of time that has past and the sketchy info available. One of the first steps was to obtain the Company Rosters for the period 1966 through 1971. I have had a lot of help in this regard. The quality of the available records makes reading them in many cases impossible. Another major hurdle encountered was the realization that attached personnel are not on the rosters. Corpsmen were attached so they are listed as a group on the H&S rosters without any designation as to which company they were assigned. Add to that, the fact that every Corpsman was known as "Doc". Attached Arty, Air and a few other designations are not even on the H&S rosters.

The first and last Hotel KIA's were both from Texas and lived about 200 miles from each other. My research leads me to the conclusion that the first Hotel KIA was James Garland Brown. James was killed on July 5, 1966. James was from Gatesville, Texas. He was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on April 21st just a few short months before he was killed. (<http://www.virtualwall.org/db/BrownJG01a.htm>)



James Garland Brown

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) to James G. Brown (2080108), Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving with Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on April 21, 1966. By his courage, aggressive fighting spirit and steadfast devotion to duty in the face of extreme personal danger, Corporal Brown upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

The last man lost, if my research is correct, was Thomas Anthony Sony, February 7, 1971. Thomas was from Houston, Texas.

(<http://www.virtualwall.org/ds/SonyTA01a.htm>)

Thomas arrived in Vietnam December 31, 1970. He wasn't there very long and he missed being pulled out with the Company by a few short months.

I don't have a picture for Thomas. If you do please let me know. I have located information that leads me to believe that I have been able to locate his brother and may be able to obtain one through him. However, I don't want to stir up any memories that the family may be trying to forget if I don't have to.

I will have a compiled list for the reunion. If all goes well it will get posted on the web page and we can update it as time for research and faded memories allow.

If you can't make the reunion, sit down and send me an email giving me as much info as you can about our fallen brothers so I can check it with the info on my list.

No Man left behind--No man left out.

Hotel Company Wine

When I previously introduced the Hotel Company Wine our contact at Windsor Vineyards was Earl Thompson. If you dealt with Earl you know how much fun he was and just how much pleasure he got out of telling jokes about the Marine Corps and Lawyers. I am sad to report that Earl has past away. He was a fellow Vietnam Vet and his humor will be sadly missed.

However, the good news is that our account has been taken over by Dave Johnson. Dave is doing a great job for us and has arranged for the reunion wine to be shipped and it has arrived safe



The source for the wine is Windsor Vineyards and Dave has a great offer for Hotel Company Marines and Corpsmen. What you get is a case of wine with FREE SHIPPING (for 1 penny) and 3 extra bottles free. That's 15 bottles for the price of 12 and shipping anywhere in the US (except for a few states*)

You can't find this special deal on line. You must call Dave Johnson at [707-921-2656](tel:707-921-2656) between 6:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. California time or send him an email

djohnson@vintagewineestates.com

Be sure and tell Dave that you want the Hotel 2/5 label.

If you live in one of those states where the wine can't be shipped, Utah, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Kentucky, Delaware, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Dakota, talk to Dave about alternative ideas for shipping.

This deal may not last for ever so if you want some great wine at a good price with the Hotel Company logo take advantage of it soon.

The red at the reunion was the "Fusion" and the white was a "Moscato". (Both \$12.00 per bottle)

I order those because I like them. Judging by the fact that there was very little left over, I assume that it was enjoyed by all.

Windsor has many great selections at various prices. If you did not like the two wines at the reunion or if you just want to try something different, go to the Windsor web site (windsorvineyards.com), review the various choices and prices, and then talk to Dave. However, to get the deal you need to call Dave at the above number or by email. The offer is not available on line.

Happy Birthday

Gen. Robert Neller and Sgt Major Ronald Green wish Marines a happy 240th birthday at Marine Barracks Washington.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/2015/10/26/new-commandant-wishes-marines-happy-240th-birthday/74638812/>



I am sure you all can handle the truth. Anyone who's met me knows that I am extremely proud of the fact that I am a Criminal Defense Attorney. Part of how I handle my cases stems from my time in the Marine Corps. If you have ever wondered why I get so much pleasure from representing defendant's in a criminal prosecution read this article.

No Regrets

BY CHRISTOPHER D. JOHNSON

S

ome of my fondest memories of growing up were watching TV shows and movies, where—more often than not—the “good guy” catches the “bad guy” and brings him to justice. From *Adam-12*, *Gunsmoke*, and *Perry Mason* to all the John Wayne movies, I learned about honor, duty, and justice. My father, a Marine colonel, also had something to do with instilling those virtues in me.

After I earned my JD from Tulane Law School in 1982, I became a U.S. Navy JAG and tried dozens of jury trials during my seven years of service. My cases covered everything from murder, rape, and kidnapping to the more sedate crimes of espionage and treason. The trials were in diverse places—from a courtroom on a sprawling naval base in Norfolk, Virginia, to a tiny cabin on an attack submarine off the coast of Israel.

My last big trial was also my most memorable one. I was in Guantanamo Bay defending one of ten Marines charged with conspiracy to commit murder and attempted murder that involved a notorious hazing incident, known as a “code red,” which I learned was a technique used to “rehabilitate” a so-called “bad Marine.”

During a private interview with the commanding officer of the Marine base, whom I'll call Colonel X, I enquired whether a “code red” was an “accepted practice at Gitmo.” He told me, “It was not officially sanctioned, but that sometimes ‘good’ Marines take matters into their own hands.” This revelation made clear that Colonel X had serious exposure

himself. His decision to allow hazing had encouraged this incident and, in the military, the commanding officer is ultimately responsible for the behavior of his subordinates.

The following day, with witnesses present, Colonel X denied our prior conversation, insisting that he had never heard of a code red. Shocked by this lie, I threatened to personally “write him up” if he didn't tell the truth.

“I won't allow your untruthful behavior to dishonor the uniform that my father, who fought in three wars, wore honorably for 32 years,” I informed him.

Colonel X threatened to have me arrested for insubordination. I walked out the door and proceeded to write up a criminal charge sheet, even though my superiors warned me that this would be career suicide. For me, though, there was only one choice. My client, a Marine who would give his life for his country, deserved someone who would truly stand up for him.

A week later three things occurred: Colonel X was relieved of his command; the ten Marines were offered administrative discharges, which is akin to being fired and losing military benefits, such as education grants and loan guarantees for housing (not a bad option when faced with a possible sentence of life imprisonment); and everyone was released from the brig.

My client was adamant about making the Marine Corps his career. He also maintained that he was only following his colonel's orders, so he wanted go to trial and fight the



Christopher D. Johnson

charges rather than resign in disgrace. At his preliminary hearing, the military judge heard all the facts and recommended a charge of aggravated assault. My client, one of three Marines who went to trial, was convicted by a military jury only of a misdemeanor, simple assault, and sentenced to “no punishment.” He eventually became a decorated drill sergeant at Parris Island, South Carolina, the famed Marine recruit-training depot.

This case may seem vaguely familiar, because it was the inspiration for *A Few Good Men*, the movie starring Jack Nicholson in the colonel's role. Although writing up the colonel resulted in my transfer to the “claims section,” where I used my significant trial experience to review claims for damage to household furniture, I did what I felt was right.

What's more, I learned a lesson from that Guantanamo trial that has stayed with me throughout my entire career: When you do the right thing for the right reason, you will never have any regrets. ☀

Christopher D. Johnson is a founding partner of Johnson & Pham, an intellectual property rights firm based in Woodland Hills that specializes in anti-piracy cases.