

FALL OF SAIGON MARINES ASSOCIATION

<http://www.fallofusaigon.org>

February 15, 2011 – Greetings once again from California! The winter is blasting a lot of you while it plays peek-a-boo out here alternating between 4 – 5 day storms then sunny skies and 65 degrees. Wherever this finds you, spring is just around the corner.

The past few months have been quite busy and there are several things on the calendar for 2011. Here are the calendar items first:

- April 7 @ 7 p.m.: The 2011 Corporal Charles McMahon, Jr. Memorial Scholarship presentation at the Boys & Girls Club in Woburn, MA. The scholarship presentation is part of the club's annual Awards Reception. John Ghilain and Bill Newell have represented the association over the years – if you are in the area, please plan to attend.
- April 27 – May 1: Marine Embassy Guard Association 2011 Reunion in San Diego. Details for the reunion can be found online @ <http://www.embassymarine.org/reunion/Reunion.html> or send me a note and I'll mail or e-mail the specifics. Top Valdez and I will be attending the banquet on Saturday night, April 30, and hope to have a few of our members who live in the area with us as well. Events for the reunion also include a MCAS Miramar or San Diego Zoo tour on Friday plus an informal pool-side dinner on Friday night. If you are interested in attending, please note they are requesting that reservations be received by March 18th so they can plan appropriately. MEGA is an all-Embassy Duty / all-posts / all-eras organization.
- May 18 (Wednesday this year) – The 2011 Lance Corporal Darwin L. Judge Memorial Scholarship presentation at Marshalltown High School in Marshalltown, Iowa (approximately 45 minutes northeast of the Des Moines airport). We'll be staying at the Best Western Regency Inn · 3303 S Center Street · Marshalltown , Iowa 50158-4753 (641) 752-6321. This year the event has been moved to Wednesday evening to avoid conflicts with many of the sports programs at the school. This is a wonderful evening where we get to spend some time with members of the community and the Judge / DeSaulniers family. Lori & Greg DeSaulniers (Darwin's sister and brother-in-law) attended our reunion in Quantico this past year and are wonderful hosts for the dinner we'll have following the scholarship presentation. I always look forward to spending some time with Mrs. Judge as well – please plan to attend if you can. I'll be in on Tuesday mid-day and would welcome anyone else to come in a day early as well.
- Sept 14 – 17: American Embassy, Saigon Vietnam Marines and Civilians reunion in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Please see <http://www.albuquerqueunionsaigonmac.org/> for reunion information. This is the Marines and Civilians group for anyone who ever served at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon / all-eras. I've enjoyed meeting several former members of the detachment at previous events and the Marines who attended their most recent reunion in New Orleans enjoyed themselves as well.

Reflecting back: The scholarships the association presents and the historical website it maintains would not be possible without your generous donations. When we met in Marshalltown in April of 2000 and the idea of creating a non-profit corporation was first raised, I doubt anyone would have envisioned us now presenting these scholarships for the 10th year. Congratulations - and thank you - to all who have been able to contribute. As of the writing of this newsletter, the association has over \$25,000 in the portfolio which is being managed by Bill Newell. We're glad to provide our most recent quarterly statement available upon request. Here's a huge thanks and shout-out to Bill for his work on behalf of the association over the years.

Website: Speaking of our website - www.fallofusaigon.org – the association has retained Joe Corapi of Boston Web Solutions to redo / update the website and will also be taking over the website hosting we formerly contracted out to a firm in San Diego. We're hoping to roll out the new site later this year. Even now, you'll notice several changes in terms of the site's speed and other upgrades.

The association's website evolved over a number of years under the leadership of Colin Broussard. Colin started work on it in the mid-90's and following his passing in late 2005, the website has not had the attention it deserves. If you have some time and would like to be part of the editorial team on the website, please let me know – the main idea is to keep the site as clean as possible with easy access to the historical information we have.

New book: Get your orders in now – Several of our Marines are featured in Bob Drury and Tom Clavin's new book, *Last Men Out: The True Story of America's Heroic Final Hours in Vietnam* – its available to pre-order through Amazon.com and is scheduled for release in May. Mr. Drury and Mr. Clavin were awarded the 2010 General Wallace M. Greene, Jr. Award by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation for their recent publication *The Last Stand of Fox Company* and Mr. Clavin joined us for dinner during the Quantico reunion this past April. *The Last Stand of Fox Company* is about the Marines of F/2/7 and their stand at the Toktong Pass during the Korean War. A great read about warriors from an earlier time and place.

Personal Reflections: This past November I had the pleasure of spending a couple of days in Saigon, including Thanksgiving Dinner at the home of the Deputy Principal Officer along with many members of the U.S. community – about 50 people all together. Top Valdez was in Saigon briefly the month before and the consulate staff was still talking about his visit when I was there – I’m looking forward to hearing about Top’s visit, too. During this trip I was able to spend a significant amount of time one day walking around in the area of the DAO and MACV. Meeting me in Saigon was Kim Binh Kibler who was traveling from Tacoma to visit relatives in the Nha Trang area and we coordinated our schedules to spend a day together in Saigon. Kim was married to Paul Kibler, an employee who worked at the CRA. Kim worked at the 9th Med Lab in Long Binh from 1968 – 1972, then at the DAO until the time of the evacuation and evacuated from the roof of the embassy with her husband. She currently works at the V.A. Hospital in Tacoma as a medical data clerk. Kim’s familiarity of the area and ability to translate during our day together was invaluable. The former DAO/MACV complex is currently undergoing massive reconstruction / redevelopment. I was there a couple of years ago and the changes are quite striking. One of the best resources that document some of these changes is on YouTube.com and in the search box, enter “Déjà vu Vietnam” – look for a multiple part series by a gentleman who identifies himself as “borntowander.” Several parts of the series are in the airport / MACV area. The videographer, Frank Ford, served in Vietnam in the Army for a time until mid-1974 and returned last year producing the series based on photos he had from his period of service and what the locations look like currently. Very well done... Footnote on the Saigon trip, I was disappointed the roof-top bar / restaurant at the former Marine House has been converted into a Health Spa – the restaurant in the floor below didn’t have nearly the vibe as things on the roof a couple of years ago. Oh well...

As the year moves forward, please keep Don Nicholas in your thoughts and prayers. Don recently deployed to Iraq for a year with his Ohio based unit.

Lastly, each December, my wife and I travel to south Florida to visit her dad who lives in Delray Beach. We try to schedule the trip so it’s timed with a running event held west of Ft. Lauderdale in the community of Weston. This year Kevin Maloney drove over and we had a great opportunity to spend a couple of hours running together and catching up.

Semper Fi,

P.S. The picture below was taken on the Cat Lai ferry crossing of the Dong Nai River on our drive from Saigon to Vung Tao. Amazing skill by the ferry operator as the current is very swift through this area. The fare for our car, driver, translator and 2 passengers was 17,500 dong, about 84 cents.



Your continued support and donations are greatly appreciated and help continue the legacy we share by remembering our fallen Marines in their home towns each year. Please make checks payable to: Fall of Saigon Marines Association and mail to: Fall of Saigon Marines Association, c/o Ken Crouse, Secretary, 487 Slocum Drive, Folsom, CA 95630 (916) 220-0085.

Enclosed, please find _____ (\$100 annually is suggested) as a donation to the Fall of Saigon Marines Association.

A written receipt for tax purposes will be supplied for all monies received. The Fall of Saigon Marines Association is recognized by the I.R.S. as a veteran's organization pursuant to section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code. Copies of our Letter of Determination are available upon request.



Above – Ken Crouse (L) and Kevin Maloney (R) finishing the Rotary Club of Weston (Florida) Run for Tomorrow on December 12, 2010
Below Nov 23, 2010 in Saigon: L – R: Mark Quillici (a friend of mine who served with the Army's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in III Corps); Kim Binh Kibler (former U.S. employee who evacuated from the embassy – her husband, Paul, worked at CRA – Kim is now employed at the V.A. hospital in Tacoma, WA); Angela Dickey (current Deputy Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate General); Ken Crouse and Erik Page (Vice Consul, U.S. Consulate General).

