



Koh Tang Beach Club



Reunion Newsletter

May 11-13, 2006



KOH TANG BEACH CLUB
208 Grand Blvd. Evansdale, IA 50707

www.kohtang.com
www.kohtangbeachclub.com



YOU
ARE
NOT
FORGOTTEN





2007 & 2008 REUNIONS

The Jolly Green Association holds their annual reunion at the Ramada Plaza Beach Resort, Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

The Mayaguez Veterans are always welcome to join in.

May 4 & 5, 2007

This is not the official Koh Tang Beach Club Reunion, however all are invited and many will attend.

May 2 & 3, 2008

Official Koh Tang Beach Club Reunion



KOH TANG BEACH CLUB STORE

- * Embroidered Hat (pictured)
- * Commemorative Coin (pictured)
- * Back to Koh Tang 2000 DVD
- * Picture CD (all the pictures from web site and then some)

Contact Fred Morris

(319) 234-3147



EMBROIDERED HAT



COMMEMORATIVE COIN

Schedule of Events



Thursday, May 11, 2006

- ❖ Walked through many parts of the White House.
- ❖ Many ate lunch at the Old Post Office Building.
- ❖ Met at the US Capitol Building for a guided tour.
- ❖ Dined at the hotel. Gathered in the hospitality suite for an evening of great fellowship.

Friday, May 12, 2006

- ❖ Departed for Quantico Marine Base via buses. Toured H-53 and CH-46 helicopters and watched K-9 division show. Stopped at Marine Corps Association and PX. Lunched in Quantico.
- ❖ Made a special visit to the Vietnam Wall Memorial to remember and honor fallen Mayaguez comrades.
- ❖ Attended Marine Barracks Evening Parade, where Lt. Gen. James N. Mattis paid tribute to our group with a surprise visit to our section.
- ❖ Returned to hotel and gathered in the hospitality suite.

Saturday, May 13, 2006

- ❖ Business meeting held.
- ❖ Viewed documentary tapes and discussed operation. Many added new information.
- ❖ Gathered for evening banquet with guest speakers Randall Austin, BLT 2/9 Battalion Cmdr.; Col. James Davis, former Golf Company Commander; Brig. Gen. Joe McMenamin, former 81mm Mortar Plt. Cmdr. Representatives Don Miller and Don O'Hare from the SEALAND Company (the company that owned the Mayaguez) personally thanked the group.
- ❖ Marines, Navy, and Air Force were given an original signed letter of thanks from former President Gerald Ford.



Vietnam Wall Memorial

KNEELING L to R: Bob Blough, Larry Barnett, Dan Hoffman, Fred Morris, Glen Breniser, Leon Kuehl, Phil Hughes (brother to Ronnie Hughes)
STANDING L to R: Joe Guilmartin, Bob Dochniak, Stephen Poore, Jesse De Los Santos, Larry Funk, Al Bailey, Richard Tipton, Don Raatz, John Hendricks



GERALD R. FORD

May 13, 2006

To the Mayaguez and Koh Tang Island Veterans:

I was extremely pleased to hear that you are gathering this weekend in Washington, D.C., to remember the events surrounding the seizure of the U.S.-flag containership Mayaguez and the illegal detention of her crew in the Cambodian jungle.

Thirty-one years ago this week, you fought bravely to defend America's honor and protect American lives in a remote and dangerous part of the world. For those of you gathered tonight to commemorate that battle, I say, as I have many times before, "Thank you." The forty Americans who were freed as a result of your heroic actions have thanked you through the years as well. Captain Charles Miller, Master of the Mayaguez at the time, told me on several occasions that without the quick and determined action of U.S. military forces, he and his crew would likely have met a far different fate at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

To the families and friends of your comrades who gave their lives during this brief but critical conflict, we again express our deep sadness for their loss. You who returned and those who died sent a powerful message to the world at a critical time – that the United States will defend and protect its citizens under threat wherever they may be.

I wish you all well as you remember this short but important chapter in our country's military history.

With continuing gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald R. Ford".



Retired General Al Gray
Former Commandant of the Marine Corps



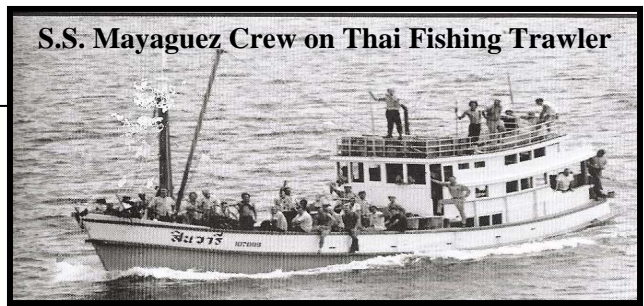
FOR COLONEL RANDY AUSTIN USMC (RET)

AS YOU AND THE MAGNIFICENT AIRMAN, SAILORS AND MARINES WHO FOUGHT OR SUPPORTED THE BATTLE OF KOH TANG DURING THE MAYAGUEZ RECOVERY OPERATIONS GATHER TOGETHER TODAY, IT IS HONOR FOR ME WRITE A FEW THOUGHTS ON THAT DRAMATIC EVENT.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE PLANNING EFFORTS TO THE END OF THE OPERATION, EXTREME RISK AND UNCERTAINTY WAS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS. ADDING TO ALL THE DIFFICULTIES WERE THE ENORMOUS DISTANCES INVOLVED, INHERENT COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES, THE WEATHER, THE OVERALL ENVIRONMENT AND LITTLE TO NO INTELLIGENCE OR COMBAT INFORMATION FOR TACTICAL PLANNING. DESPITE ALL OF THIS, CATASTROPHE WAS AVOIDED AND THE MISSION WAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED. THIS WAS BECAUSE OF SHEER COURAGE, DETERMINATION AND INITIATIVE OF PILOTS, AIRCREW MEMBERS, PARARESCUSMEN, FORWARD AIR CONTOLLERS, COMMUNICATORS, SAILORS, MARINES ON THE GROUND AND ALL WHO WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED. IN MY FORTY ONE YEARS OF SERVICE, I HAVE NEVER BEEN PROUDER OF OUR MILITARY TEAM. DURING THE SEVENTH INNING STRETCH AT A BALLGAME IN CINCINNATI, THEY ANNOUNCED THAT THE MAYAGUEZ HAD BEEN RECOVERED. THE ENTIRE STADIUM CAME TO THEIR FEET AND CHEERED YOU FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES --- THAT SAYS IT ALL!!!

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES, TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER, GOD BLESS AND, AS THEY SAY IN THE NATION'S CORPS OF MARINES --- SEMPER FIDELIS.

Al Gray, Marine



MAERSK SEALAND

Dear members of The Koh Tang Beach Club,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you on behalf of all the former Sea/Land Service employees who were in place at the time of the S.S. Mayaguez incident.

We owe you a debt that can never be repaid. Your bravery, heroism, and sacrifice in the mission to rescue the crew and vessel were phenomenal.

Many of us were involved one way or another on that day, all in different parts of the world. It is burned in our memories. There is no way we can thank all of the servicemen who were involved in that operation.

We'd like to wish you, your families and friends a wonderful reunion. Rest assured that you remain in our thoughts and prayers.

God bless all of you during this important time with your buddies.

Our warmest regards,

John P. Clancey
John P. Clancey

A TOAST AND COMMEMORATIVE COIN
LEFT AS A REMBERANCE TO OUR
FALLEN BROTHERS



Reflections L to R: Bob Blough, Joe Guilmartin, Sharon Barnett, Bob Dochniak, Fred Morris, Travis Bailey, Phil Hughes, Al Bailey

Mayaguez Recovery Mission Commemorative Coin



CAR Combat Action Medal



Awarded to all USMC/USN in combat action. Must have been directly fired upon or returned fire. This medal entitles the wearer to membership to VFW and possibly VA benefits. We were individually issued this by orders. Copy of which is in the archives.

National Defense Medal



This medal was issued to all in service after 90 days. Also known as the Fire Watch Ribbon. Issued to all branches of the service.

Navy Unit Commendation



Unit Commendation issued to all in 2/9, even those who stayed at Schwab or Utaopo. Issued to everyone in the unit for specific time frame.

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal



This medal was individually issued by name on orders. This medal entitles wearer to VFW membership and possibly VA benefits. Copy of which is in the archives.

Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon



This "I was there ribbon" was issued in the late 1970's "subsequent" to 1974. If in 2/9 in 1975 and went on the float, you are eligible, probably not on your DD214, but you are eligible to wear it.

MAYAGUEZ MEMORIAL VFW POST 11575

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Mayaguez Memorial VFW Post 11575 is dedicated to the men of the U.S. Armed Forces who supported or fought in "The Last Battle". The first and only VFW post in a former Communist country, our post is unique in its location, membership and mission. One of our top priorities is to ensure a full accounting and recovery of our comrades who are still listed as MIA.



Reunion Co-Chair

Dan Hoffman (803) 647-9034

Website Founder/Master & Reunion Co-Chair

Larry Barnett (937) 390-2495

(Contact Larry to join VFW Post 11575)

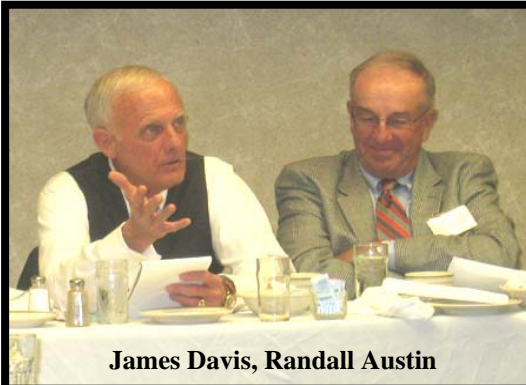
Beach Club Treasurer/Historian

Fred Morris (319) 234-3147

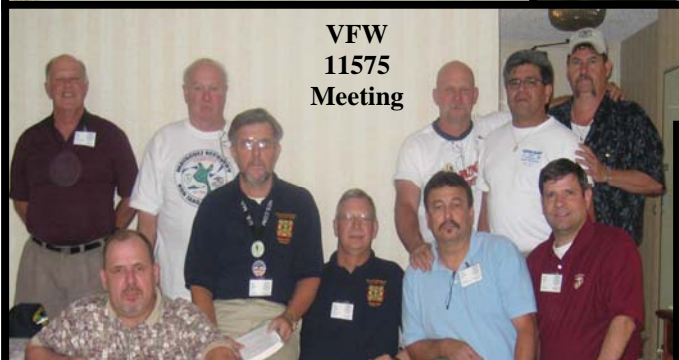




KNEELING L₁R: Pat Brown, Leon Kuehl, Larry Barnett, Dan Hoffman, Larry Funk, Fred Morris, Tom Noble
FRONTROW L₁R: Al Bailey, Mike Cicere, Joe McMenamin, Jim Davis, Walt Davis, Gabe Herrera
BACKROW L₁R: Dick Keith, Bob Dochniak, Bob Blough, Jesse De Los Santos,
 Randy Austin, John Hendricks, Richard Tipton, Don Raatz



James Davis, Randall Austin



**VFW
 11575
 Meeting**



Business Meeting



THE WOMEN



**Tom Noble
 Dick Keith**



COMMENT PAGE

What I took away from the reunion, a chance to see old friends and make new ones. I really enjoyed getting to know the guys who were just teenagers at the time and also those from the other services who supported us and shared our experience.

Sempi Fi
Dick Keith

We went to the first reunion because of the anniversary, and also with the prospect of my husband getting to reconnect with some of his old comrades in arms. Initially, there was a little disappointment because those that he was closest to were unable to make the trip. That was soon overcome when we realized what an opportunity we had to meet some other really incredible people. We left there with many good memories and a bunch of new friends. I'm not sure who enjoyed it more, me or my husband. We looked forward to this last reunion from the time it was decided it would take place. How fitting for us to get together in our nations capitol to reunite with our new friends, and also to honor those who did not make it home. We had a FABULOUS time from the minute we got there until we left for home again. To the planning committee [you know who you are] we cannot say Thank You enough for all that you did to make this an enjoyable experience for everyone. The trip to The Wall was very emotional. I was really struck by the respect we were afforded by all the other visitors when they realized what we were there for. It really felt like those that were lost were there with us for just a moment. The reverence that we witnessed at all the memorials, by everyone who was there, was just incredible. The White House and Capitol tours were very educational. I learned a lot of interesting things there. The parade, the base tour, especially the helicopters, the round table discussions the personal stories, all have given me a better understanding of what it meant to these men to serve their country during this brief but historically important conflict. I could listen to their stories all day long. It was so great to see the new faces in the group as well as the familiar ones. I hope they had a good time too and will continue to join us. I also hope they will tell their other friends and encourage them to attend as well. It would be so great to see the group continue to grow. Most of all I would like to thank everyone that attended. The fact that we had the pleasure of all your company made it that much sweeter. It is truly a privilege to be part of your family. We look forward to seeing you all again. Take care and God bless.

Sincerely,
Julie Kuehl

What a great reunion! I love all you guys. I didn't want it to end. Thanks to Dan, Fred and Larry for all your hard work making it come together. Hope to see some of you at next year's Jolly Green reunion -- and many more of you in 2008! For those of you who couldn't attend this year, you won't want to miss 2008. This is a great bunch of brothers (and sisters).

Fratres Aeterni,
Bob Blough
Jolly Green 44A

Thirty-one years have passed by like a *flash of a shooting star*. Meeting those involved in our mission after all these years is sometimes overwhelming, but I would not let a chance go by to hear another side of this great piece of history we all were involved in. Like those before us and those to follow, we have tasted the edge of death and are a true "Band of Brothers". I look forward to seeing all of my fellow brothers (and spouses) at future reunions.

Semper Fidelis,
Brother Al Bailey

These comments are from those that attended the reunion.

Thank you everyone, God Bless, Tina Bailey

As a spouse of a Marine attending my first reunion, I was amazed at the camaraderie between the guys that used to serve our country together. There didn't seem to be any social clicks or stigmas about where you were in life or how much money you did or didn't make. Just a sincere willingness to mesh together as a group, and share both past experiences, and make new memories as they and us all connected in a spirit of fellowship. I was so inspired by the events we all were able to share together. I wish that those who were unable to attend or unwilling to dig up old hurts and traumas, could have been there with us to experience it the way I did. It touched me deeply in a way I will never forget, and I pray we all helped each other heal a little more for having been together. Please pray for those we haven't yet reached, that they may be found and can find a way to heal if need be.

God Bless you all!!!
Ellen Morris

Leadership is like memories, it lasts forever. Take care.

Fondly,
Jim Davis

I was honored and privileged to be with my brothers again of the Koh Tang Beach Club, Golf 2/9 both East & West beaches. I was privileged to be the one to do the MIA-POW ceremony and read the names of our 41 fallen brothers. Air Force, Marines and Navy were recognized and remembered as their names were read. For as long as I am alive I will be honored and privileged to perform this special ceremony at both the Jolly Green Reunion and the Koh Tang Beach Club Reunion.

Your fellow Marine, Semper Fidelis & God Bless Us All,
Richard Tipton – call me anytime 24/7/365
(440) 358-0928 cell (440) 463-0479 work

I am not sure what it was that you wanted us to write to you about. Was it our reflections on the reunion? We appreciate your work in getting us to the White House. Bob's mom and stepfather really enjoyed the trip and the fact that everyone made them feel welcome. It was very good for Bob's mom to hear about the events that happened. She really had no idea what any of these guys went through. Last year was really the first time that I did either. Bob never really talked about it much. It has been hard for him to communicate by e mail as he lost much of his cognitive skills after his car accident. Because of that, he often doesn't feel the same bond that the others feel. He can't sit down and email everyone like the others can. He also can't drink because of all the medications he is on and I think he felt a little left out. Maybe that's just my perspective. I really enjoyed getting to know the wives a little better this year. I know that many of you have communicated amongst each other, so it was good for me to get better acquainted. We had a great time visiting the marine base. For me it gave me just a glimpse of what they did and how they traveled. I can't imagine being a young man and faced with the fear they must have felt. The reunion and seeing pictures made me realize how sheltered and safe I have been in my life.

Laurie Dochniak