

FALL OF SAIGON MARINES ASSOCIATION

www.fallofusaigon.org

19 September 2011

Good morning from California! This note has been on my to-do list for most of the past month as there is a lot to share.

Sadly, I first must report that Mrs. Ida Judge went home to be with Darwin, her husband Henry and Darwin's older brother, Loren, early on Sunday morning, September 18th. Services are pending at this time. If you'd like to send a card to the family, please send to: Mr. & Mrs. Greg DeSaulniers · 2020 S. 5th Avenue · Marshalltown, Iowa 50158-5205. Over the past decade I've had the distinct pleasure of visiting Marshalltown several times and spending time with Mrs. Judge and the family – as have several of our members. We've sat down for lunch at small deli counters; closed pizza joints after the scholarship awards night and stuffed ourselves on Iowa raised pork ribs at a roadhouse several miles north of town – plus enjoyed several evenings that concluded with homemade desserts late into the evening. In all those visits, Mrs. Judge and the entire family have welcomed us with open arms. Mrs. Judge was an example of a life filled with grace and dignity. Even in quiet one-on-one occasions in her living room, she never had a cross word about their loss or the Marine Corps. She always stated that Darwin was doing exactly what he wanted to be doing; where we wanted to be and with the men he wanted to be with – and that was enough for her.

I trust this note finds every one treasuring each day and the seemingly simple things we take for granted. I heard an invocation once where the pastor was "grateful for the measure of health we all enjoy." It was just that – the *measure* of health we were enjoying, not perfect health or asking or complaining that things could be better, but being grateful for the measure of health we were enjoying in that moment, grateful for each day. In late July, Duane Gevers was in the Pittsburg area and suffered a stroke. Duane will face many challenges on his road to recovery as well – I'm sure having a stroke was the last thing on his mind starting that day. Duane was moved from the Pittsburg Stroke Center and now resides at the Indiana Veterans Home closer to his residence. I'm sure any cards and letters would be appreciated. His address is: Duane Gevers, c/o Indiana Veterans Home · 3851 N. River Rd., West Lafayette, IN. 47906-3762. I understand he can pick up voice messages left on his cell phone so that's another option and his cell phone is (251) 454-8543. A huge thanks to our Marines who have reached out in support of Duane during this period. If you are in the area, please feel free to stop by – I'm sure he'd enjoy a visit.

Recap on scholarships: This year the association awarded four (4) \$500 scholarships to Eagle Scouts in Marshalltown, IA. We were glad to do this as in some of the past years there had only been one applicant. A picture of the scouts with Mrs. Judge is included with this note. Also, a huge shout-out and thanks to John Ghilain for again representing the association when the Cpl. Charles McMahon, Jr. memorial scholarships were awarded in Woburn, MA.

Coming up: With the release of *Last Men Out* by Tom Clavin and Bob Drury featuring several of our Marines, the Marine Embassy Guard Association (MEGA) has dedicated a portion of next year's MEGA reunion as a fundraiser for the association. MEGA is an all Marines, all eras of Embassy Duty organization with over 600 current members. Their annual reunions usually have about 200+ in attendance. This is a great opportunity to re-connect with Marines you served with at other posts in addition to some of the Marines you served with in Vietnam. MEGA has asked that I highlight the reunion in our newsletter and be sure to extend an invitation to our members. The specifics for the event are: The 2012 MEGA Reunion will be headquartered at the Sheraton Hotel, Crystal City, VA. April 27 – 30, 2012. The numbers for hotel reservations are: 703 486-1111 or 1-888-627-8209. Reference: Marine Embassy Guard Association or MEGA. Hotel rate including breakfast is \$119.00 per night with the same rate for members who wish a two-day extension on either side of the official reunion dates. I'll likely get there a couple of days early as Washington, D.C. is one of my favorite places to visit and the location has easy Metro access (very close to Reagan airport). Several of the Marines I served with in Brussels are also planning on attending. And finally, the reunion agenda is being planned to include attending Quantico's Marine Corps Embassy Security Group graduation ceremonies for Class 3-12. This event will occur on 27 April, 2012. Membership in MEGA is not required.

Social Media opportunity: In addition to the association's website, you can also connect with several of us on Facebook. Just search under Fall of Saigon Marines. The Facebook site is very informal with several pictures and some updated information as things pop up. Currently we have about 28 people on the Facebook site including a couple of State Department folks who recently served in Saigon plus some of the family members of our deceased brothers. Please check it out! Although it's a private group, please just send a request via Facebook and one of us will add you to the roster.

Please keep Don Nicholas in your thoughts and prayers. As many of you know Don is now on his third combat deployment with a reserve unit out of Ohio. His unit is operating in the Camp Blessing area in northeastern Afghanistan with plans to be home after the 1st of the year.

Thank you for your continued support of the scholarships we provide in the hometowns of LCpl Darwin Judge and Cpl Charles McMahon – they serve as a living reminder that freedom isn't free and for the sacrifice made by these Marines, their families and communities.

This note is being kept intentionally short so that I could get the information about Mrs. Judge out to you as soon as possible.

Semper Fidelis, *KEN*



Above: May 18, 2011. Mrs. Ida Judge with the recipients of the 2011 Lance Corporal Darwin L. Judge Memorial Scholarships:
Philip Charles Kuhlman; Joel Michael Ingram; Austin Daniel Watts; and Brady Lawrence Lawler

Below: April 7, 2011. George Holland (left) and John Ghilain (right) with the recipients of the 2011 Corporal Charles McMahon, Jr. Memorial Scholarships:
John Ryan and Stephanie Ortiz

