



## The Bob Hope Show (Dec. 26, 1967)



# Walking Point

The newsletter for D Co. 2/8 Vietnam 1965—1972

This narrative was written by Michael Parmeley (Skull 6, 1968) Michael wrote: "I spent 6 months in 2/8th. The first three months I spent in 'C' company. I had three company commanders killed during that time. The fourth CO and I instantly disliked each other. He got rid of me by sending me to 'D'Company. I was only with 4th platoon a short time before Martucci (Skull 6, 67-68) was hurt and I went over to Skull. While I was with 'C' Company we got to see Bob Hope. In route, one of our choppers crashed. The CO died in the crash and I had to take over the company, lead them in to see Bob Hope, and then lead them back to the field. I've just finished a short story about that amazing afternoon."

Christmas Eve, 1967. It was raining and beginning to get dark. There was a rumor going around (there was always a rumor going around) that our Buddhist, Vietnamese enemy was offering us a truce, on this, our most sacred, Christian night.

"You can't trust those Gook bastards. Someone will have to be out there," said Charlie Company's Battalion Commander. He was holding forth in the middle of his canvas command tent, a cup of strong, black coffee in his left hand, his right hand emphatically punching the air around him. He was surrounded by radios, radio operators desperately trying to seem invisible, plywood table tops on which rested furled and unfurled terrain maps, chest high piles of dirt filled sand bags, and his four company commanders. Lt. Parmeley was in the tent too, standing next to the tent's open front door, ready to escape at any moment, and carefully positioned to be as far away from the commander as possible and at the same time able to clearly hear his words. As soon as he realized the 'someone will have to be out there' was going to be him, his platoon, and the rest of his company, he silently slipped out the tent's open front door and rejoined his men.

"We have to be out there tonight? Tonight is Christmas Eve, Sir," said Corporal Hendricks. Corporal Hendricks had a first name but Lt. Parmeley hadn't learned it yet. The lieutenant was new to his platoon, new to Vietnam itself. Hendricks on the other hand had been in Vietnam for a long time, never missed a chance to complain, and thought any news was bad news. To Hendricks, Lt. Parmeley was, quite possibly, bad news.

"That's right Hendricks. The colonel says somebody has to be out there. We lose," the lieutenant said. 'Out there' meant out beyond the wire, out in the jungle, out where bad things often happened.

"Go find Sergeant Willis. Tell him I need to talk with him," said Lt. Parmeley. Willis was the Lieutenant's best squad leader. He talked with him a lot. He didn't really need to talk with him now but he did need Hendricks and Hendricks's penetrating look to leave. He wasn't ready yet to begin thinking about everything he would have to do to make his platoon ready to spend the night "out there." He took a deep breath as he watched Hendricks slowly walk away.

When Lt. Parmeley's company commander returned from the battalion commander's tent, the commander called his company together, told them the bad news they already knew, formed them into a long line and led them through multiple, concentric rows of barbed wire, through the jungle, to a not too far away low hill. There they dug in for the night. It continued to rain. Everyone got wet and no one got enough sleep (no one ever did). Nothing bad happened. (Maybe the enemy had decided to call a truce that night)

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*The Bob Hope Show (from page 1)*

Back at the fire base the rest of the battalion tried to stay warm and dry, ate their hot Christmas meal, shared Christmas packages and letters from home, shared trying to remember home, and then tried, probably unsuccessfully, to get enough sleep.

As night fell, Lt Parmeley walked his platoon's portion of the company perimeter. When he finished, he found time to re-read one of his own letters from home and then he burned it. As he stared at the flames, the company first sergeant walked up to him and gruffly said, "What are you doing lieutenant? Put out that fire before someone sees us."

"Right," Lieutenant Parmeley said, pretending that he knew all along that he shouldn't be making a fire. Platoon Sergeant Black, who was also new to Vietnam, suggested that he and the lieutenant make a field-hooch together. He carefully strung out his poncho into a rain-repelling fly, dug out a sleeping area big enough for the two of them, and settled in. Later in the night the poncho-rain-fly failed, soaking Sgt. Black. He woke, cursed, assured all who could hear him that his failed sleeping hooch was obvious proof that he was not meant to be in Vietnam, dragged his gear away, and slept the rest of the night alone.

About a month later, one Charlie Company commander later (The captain who had led his men down through the concentric rows of barbed wire had been killed), four of Lt. Parmeley's platoon members later (all killed), one attached dog handler and his loyal German Sheppard dog later (killed – killed), Lt. Parmeley's new company commander received the word over the radio (does God speak in any other way) that Charlie Company, because it had spent a rainy, useless night outside the barbed wire on Christmas Eve, was to be lifted out of combat (hadn't God spoken through the radio) and flown back to some mythically safe rear area to see the equally mythical, All-American, Bob Hope Show.

"Bob Hope. No shit, Bob Hope," said Cpl. Hendricks.

Before Hendricks could finish his usual pattern of worrying and then complaining, Lt. Parmeley interrupted his thought process by saying, "That's right Hendricks, Bob Fucking Hope. Go find Sgt. Willis. Tell him I need to see him."

"Yes sir," Hendricks said and went off looking for Willis.

Lt. Parmeley did need to see Sgt. Willis this time but still he released a deep breath as he watched Hendricks walk away. Hendricks was the only soldier in Vietnam he ever lost patience with. "Hendricks, shut the fuck up," he had yelled, surprising everyone, including himself. It was not that Hendricks' pessimism was unfounded. It just got to be too much.

"Girls, white girls, round eyes," said Corporal Cummings. Cummings was 'short.' He'd been in Vietnam for longer than Hendricks, was due to go home soon, and hadn't seen a round-eyed, white girl in all that time. He wasn't going to make it home but no one knew that then.

"Yea." Lt. Parmeley said. "Bob Hope and white girls for sure."

Cummings complained a lot too but his being 'short' made him even more afraid and cautious than he usually was. He almost made it home. His fear and caution were certainly justified.

I guess life is like that. One moment you are walking through the jungle with your finger on the trigger, looking for someone to kill. The next moment three big Chinook helicopters appear in the sky, land, and whisk you away to see Bob Hope. Delta Company secured a landing zone for the helicopters while Charlie Company divided itself into three parts and began watching the sky.

Private Hardy, Lt. Parmeley's radioman, constant shadow, and sometime confidant, heard on his radio that the three Chinooks were on the way, 'in route.' Sergeant Smith saw them first, three black dots, high in the sky. Someone 'popped smoke,' threw out a smoke grenade to let the high-flying helicopters more easily find them. The three choppers landed, dropped their rear loading ramps, and Lt. Parmeley's third platoon scurried into the second chopper's belly. Away they went.

Chinook helicopters are big, cumbersome and noisy. They have two big propellers that spin crazily at opposite ends. Once you are inside, because the helicopter has no passenger windows, you have no way to see out. You feel like you are riding inside a big, empty Coke can. You look up and see, way too many, fast spinning, very vulnerable, universal joints and because there are no windows you watch the spinning universal joints instead. You worry a lot (you always worried a lot). You feel like the helicopter should not be able to fly at all but somehow it does.

After about an hour flying blind in the air, after holding on to one another when they could, after bouncing uncomfortably back and forth when they couldn't, after listening to the roar of jet engines and feeling each and every questionable vibration, they landed. They didn't know where they were (they rarely did). The helicopter dropped its heavy rear door with a metallic thump and the platoon gathered up its gear, stretched, and walked unsteadily, eyes blinking, down the lowered ramp and were astonished to find themselves in a bright, big, flat, dusty field. Nearby, towering amphitheater walls loomed over them. Waves of hot air, mixed with the cheers and stomps of thousands of excited soldiers rhythmically billowed over the top of the amphitheater, raced down its walls, raced across the flat, dusty field, and hit the unsteady platoon with blasts of energy that felt like blasts of hot furnace air. The hot energy blasts almost knocked them down, overwhelmed them on an already overheated day.

At first Lt. Parmeley felt oddly at home. He looked up at the amphitheater walls and imagined standing next to the San Diego High football stadium. He remembered his black, 1960, Ford Fairlane, remembered talking to blond haired, round eyed, Sharon Mars, remembered hearing the already seated crowd excitedly demanding the Morse High football team take the field. He remembered trying to impress Sharon Mars, trying to convince her that, leaning against his car, he was relaxed, unafraid, cool and in control.

Then he realized where he was. He counted to three and knew something was wrong. He, along with the rest of Charlie

Company, had been lifted out of combat late that morning in three enormous Chinook helicopters, had flown blind for an hour, had landed in a bare, dusty field next to a towering amphitheater in the early afternoon, and now (1-2-3) the company seemed to be missing one helicopter, the helicopter carrying the company captain, all of the captain's entourage, Lt. Johnson the company X.O., Lt. White, the company's senior lieutenant and all of his platoon, company non-combat hangers-on (ash and trash, as they were called), and anyone else who had attached themselves to the captain for a free ride to the rear and a chance to see the Bob Hope Show.

For a while the platoon focused its attention on stripping off its gear. Like other soldiers who had arrived at the dusty field earlier, the platoon chose an unclaimed spot, stacked their rifles, barrels pointing toward the sky, in long lines and began sculpting their gear around them. Big Sherman, big, bushy-mustachioed, uncomplaining Sherman, laid down his machine gun and his helpers, his ammo bearers, reverently wrapped linked machine gun ammo around it. The machine gun was heavy but lethal, worth its weight in gold and lovingly cared for. The platoon appreciated that Big Sherman was uncomplaining and willing to carry it.

Pvt. Hardy laid down his, almost as heavy, radio with an audible sigh of relief. Out in the field, carrying a radio was like wearing a bull's eye on your back with an attention grabbing 'shoot me first' antenna constantly waving above your head. But carrying the radio meant you might glean some useful bit of information; make some sense out of the chaos around you. It was a trade off. You might know a little more. You might die a little quicker.

But now, Hardy and the rest of the lieutenant's platoon was peeling off their gear, were stepping out the chaos of combat and into a different kind of chaos. If all around him, platoon members were laying down their rifles, he could lay down his own rifle and the radio too. His sigh of relief was genuine as was his sense of amazement and disbelief. (Is it possible to call 'time out,' to step away from war and then step back in?)

After setting down their rifles, the platoon layered their bullets, bayonets, hand grenades, and more ammo. They laid down their packs in which they kept 'C' rations, mosquito nets, salt tabs, and their personal things, like thick paperback novels, often mailed more than once from home, novels, that in spite of careful, plastic wrapping, quickly fell apart or soaked up the moisture of rice paddies and wet monsoon air and then quickly fell apart. Their packs held carefully preserved letters from home, letters that Lt. Parmeley sometimes had to read out loud because not all the men of his platoon knew how to read. Those men didn't carry thick novels but often carried Captain America or Spider Man comic books. Hendricks especially enjoyed receiving The Falcon from home. Their packs carried good luck charms or whatever else they had managed to find along the way that was light enough to be carried and reminded them that they were more than just government-issue killing machines.

Sgt. Black took his, very carefully plastic-wrapped stash of good, local-grown marijuana out of his pack and with a great show of government anti-drug-policy disdain stuffed it into his baggy, front trouser pocket before laying his pack on the ground next to his rifle, ammunition, and grenades.

"I'm going to feel good tonight." Sgt. Black dragged out word 'good.' Sgt. Black was black. Smitty, Sgt. Smith, a 'good ol' white country boy, who had first noticed the three Chinooks in the air and was drafted, like most of Lt. Parmeley's men, in the spring of 1967, looked at the lieutenant like he should do something about Sgt. Black's behavior. Lt. Parmeley pretended to not see Smitty or Black. The Beatle's 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' had already been released back home. Soon, both black and white draftees would be dope smokers and a new, political, more hard-edged, black-white divide would make commanding soldiers in Vietnam even more difficult. Lt. Parmeley didn't realize any of that. He'd tried marijuana a few times in college before he too had been drafted and knew better than to come between Sgt. Black and Sgt. Smith.

As the company's layered piles grew, they started to look like alters, like long lines of crosses or grave markers, that in another place, might easily have contoured over miles of gently rolling green, cemetery hills. Each soldier sensed the oddness of seeing his rifle sanding in the dusty field, all alone. In all their months of combat they had never let their rifles stray from their sides, had slept with them every night, nuzzled them close like a lover. Lt. Parmeley sensed the strangeness of seeing his rifle standing alone too and thought again of Sharon Mars, thought of how he had never been able to sleep with her, had never been able to nuzzle her close in the night. (Where was Sharon Mars now? What was she doing? With whom was she nuzzling?)

They all performed the same ritualistic act, stripping down to their essential, fat or skinny, dirty, sweaty, fatigue-clad, sleep-starved, selves and acted self-consciously as young men always do around other young men but, of course, they pretended not to. They looked at the altars they had built and at their almost naked, defenseless bodies. They listened to the roar of the crowd waiting impatiently inside the amphitheater, listened to the crowd's stomps and chants, and grew impatient themselves. "Where's the third chopper?" said Hendricks. He was imagining the worst and beginning to complain.

"Fuck if I know." Said Lt. Parmeley

"What do you think Lt. Should we go in?" said Hardy. Even though he had put down his radio, he stayed close to the lieutenant.

"I don't know Hardy. Let's wait a little longer." Like everyone else, the lieutenant was starting to get impatient too, was looking forward to sitting down and watching Bob Hope, was looking forward to taking his own 'time out,' was looking forward to yelling, cheering, and acting stupid, was looking forward to, for a short while, not being in charge.

The Lieutenant didn't know the name of the first soldier, from the missing third helicopter to walk up and find the rest of Charlie Company. No one realized he was there. Everyone was preoccupied, waiting beside his altar, thinking about Bob Hope. Everyone, in his own way, had stepped out of the war, had taken his own personal 'time out.' The noise billowing over the amphitheater walls had grown intense, was deafening, and seemed to block out all surrounding sensations. The first soldier from the missing helicopter arrived alone, had fresh blood smeared across the front of his fatigue shirt, and didn't announce his presence. No one saw him standing there.

The lieutenant rarely knew the names of men in the company's other platoons, hadn't yet learned all the names of all the men in his own platoon. Soldiers came and went, died quickly. Sometimes you didn't want to know their names. Sometimes Lt. Parmeley had to learn a soldier's name after he died so he could send an appropriate letter of condolence to the soldier's family back home, so he could pretend that he cared about Sam, Sgt. Virgil, or little Jose.

"Dear Mrs. ... We regret to inform ... " When Lt. Parmeley did notice the soldier standing there, the soldier said, "We heard the cheers and walked in their direction. I could see the amphitheater from where we ... tried ... to land. That's how I found you. Our landing site isn't very far away."

He looked dazed, wild, and confused, spoke softly and not always coherently. The platoon looked at his bloody fatigues. (Is it good luck to look at fresh blood?) The platoon helped him take off his gear and begin building his own personal altar.

He said, "Bad shit man. Bad shit. The captain's dead. Doc Barnes ... He went crazy man ... running around ... He tried to do what he could ... but ... too much to do ... too many hurt ... dead man ... a lot of men dead." The platoon surrounded him, slowly at first, and then rushed forward to barrage him with their own worried and confused questions. "What do you mean, dead? What do you mean, a lot of men dead? The captain's ... dead? Who else is dead? What ... I don't ... what do you mean, dead?"

More men from the missing helicopter, alone or in pairs, following the same amphitheater roar, began to stagger up to the waiting but now very confused Charlie Company platoons. The new arrivals had fresh blood on their fatigues too. Charlie Company was alone now on the flat, dusty field. Everyone else had gone inside to see Bob Hope. A few guards remained behind to watch the amphitheater entrances.

"Dead, who's dead? Is ... dead? What happened? Who's dead?"

Charlie Company forgot about the cheers, chants, whistles, and stomps, the overwhelming noise spilling over the walls of the amphitheater, forgot that unconsciously they had been building rows of alters, forgot that they were taking a 'time out' from their daily madness, forgot that they were about to see Bob Hope.

Lieutenant Parmeley stood off to one side. Charlie Company swarmed each new arrival. What the men of Charlie Company were feeling wasn't necessarily what he was feeling. What seemed like rumor (You could ignore rumor) was slowly becoming real to him. Individual bits of horrific, graphic detail were falling into place. The third helicopter had crashed trying to land. The Chinook, the flying empty Coke can with the giant spinning rotor blades at each end, rotor blades that developed enormous torque, had slipped off its landing moorings. The blades had scraped the ground. Imagine taking an empty Coke can and twisting it violently with both hands. Imagine what it would be like if there were 50 or 60 men inside the can.

Finally, a last group of blood-soaked soldiers from the missing third helicopter straggled toward the shell-shocked remains of Charlie Company. An unknown officer accompanied this last group. Charlie Company soldiers quickly surrounded them, overwhelmed them with rapid fire, machine gun like, barrages of questions and began helping them out of their gear. Pvt. Hardy, who had uncharacteristically separated himself from Lt. Parmeley, began talking with the unknown accompanying officer and began pointing at the lieutenant. Other soldiers did the same. The unknown officer turned his head, started to nod, and then began walking toward Lieutenant Parmeley.

Slowly, the space between the two officers disappeared and when the unknown officer was close enough, he said, "Your third helicopter crashed trying to land. Your captain is dead. Lt. Johnson (He was the company XO and probably standing next to the captain) is dead. Lt. White (He might have been standing near the captain or with his men) is dead. The unknown officer said more but Lt. Parmeley had stopped listening, if he had ever been listening. The unknown officer's voice must have seemed to Lt. Parmeley to be coming from some far away place, a place that had nothing to do with Charlie Company waiting outside a huge amphitheater in a strange place, nothing to do with waiting to see Bob Hope or taking a 'time out.' And then he realized why this unknown officer was talking to him.

The captain was dead. Lt. Johnson was dead. Lt. White was dead. That means ... Oh fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! That means I'm senior lieutenant now. I'm company commander. That means ... I'm in charge.) That's what Lt. Parmeley must have realized although I doubt his thought process was that clear. The unknown officer was also saying, although, again, its not clear if Lt. Parmeley heard or intuited his words, "Suck it up lieutenant. You are going to take what's left of your company inside that amphitheater as planned and see Bob Hope." He added, and this Lt. Parmeley definitely did hear, "When the show is over, three new Chinooks will be waiting to take you back to the field." He showed the lieutenant where he would find the new Chinooks. "Any questions, Lieutenant?" "No Sir," Lieutenant Parmeley said.

And then he left. Lt. Parmeley gathered up what was left of Charlie Company, formed them into a single line, and with himself at its head, marched across the deserted field toward the, now quivering, amphitheater. They were late. An MP at the amphitheater gate pointed toward unclaimed seats high up and far away from the stage.

"We're a combat company. We're supposed to get good seats. We had a helicopter crash getting here. We lost 30 men dead." And then Lt. Parmeley gave him that look, the look that says, "If you're not going to draw that pistol you have on your hip, get out of our way." The company found good seats down front. The seats were roped off, probably meant for VIP's. As the company was settling in, a band or maybe a tape began to play 'Thanks For The Memories' and 'OI Ski Nose' himself began to saunter from off wing toward the center of the stage. He was followed by Raquel Welch, dancing and prancing in a

tasseled short mini dress, Miss World, beautifully dressed and promenading, on display but untouchable, and a line of young, energetic, go-go girls, each round eyed but not all white. Hope told jokes, some funny, some racist, some sexist, some a mixture of all three. He repeatedly mentioned 'dinky dow,' our mangled English version of the Vietnamese phrase for sex. Charlie Company watched and listened to it all.

Dead. The captain was dead. No one knew what would happen when the show was over. Hendricks imagined the worst. Lt. Parmeley tried to focus on the stage. "The captain is dead. I'm in charge now," he thought. "I'll have to learn the medivac frequency and the artillery frequency and the battalion frequency. Dead. Lt. White is dead." Lt. White was 'almost' Lt. Parmeley's friend. Lt. White was the closest Lt. Parmeley would come to making a friend in Vietnam.

Raquel Welch danced across the stage. A soldier or someone dressed as a soldier got up from the first row and started dancing with Raquel Welch. The crowd went wild. "He's a really good dancer," thought Lt. Parmeley. "I wonder if he is part of the act? Dead, all those men, dead. Why aren't I feeling anything? I'll have to get new maps. Where will we be going? I'll have to get my maps laminated. How? Where? Lt. White ... dead. That joke is definitely racist. There goes Raquel Welch again. Why aren't I feeling anything?"

And then the show was over. The company stood up and walked out of the amphitheater, single file, the way it had walked in. They returned to their imaginary cemetery field, began disassembling their altars and loading their gear back onto their bodies. Lt. Parmeley located the three waiting helicopters, noted that the helicopter rear ramps were already dropped, that their jet engines were already roaring, and their propellers were already churning. He divided the company into three groups. Again the men ducked their heads and walked across the bare, dusty field. The helicopter propellers sent dirt and sand flying everywhere but once inside the helicopters, all was quiet, except for the roar of the Chinook's jet engines. The rear ramps lifted and closed with their usual metallic thuds. Away the company flew.

No one knew where he was going. Nor did Lt. Parmeley, who was now company commander, who was now in charge. When the helicopters landed, another helicopter was already there on the ground. It was small helicopter, a two-seater, with two protruding, fly-like, round, glass eyes. The battalion commander stepped out of the right seat, found Lt. Parmeley, handed him new maps, (not laminated) new frequencies and new call signs, showed the lieutenant on one of the lieutenant's new maps were the company was and gave him his orders for the next day.

He didn't ask how the show had been. (No one was ever going to ask, not even the men in his own company, nor was he ever going to bring the subject up, at least not for the next twenty years.) The lieutenant saluted. The battalion commander saluted back.

Saluting in the field wasn't a good idea. Enemy snipers liked to shoot soldiers caught saluting. But Lt. Parmeley wasn't really back in the field yet. Nor was he back at the amphitheater, enjoying his, well-deserved, 'time out.' The battalion commander dropped his arm, did a quick about face, ran back to his helicopter, flew away, and was gone.

Lt. Parmeley did his own about face and set about reorganizing his company. He told Pvt. Hardy to stick close, that he was now the company radioman. Hardy already knew how to stick close. He told Sgt. Black that he was now platoon leader for the lieutenant's old platoon. Sgt. Black seemed less than confident about his new assignment. He told Lt. Humphries, who was new, even newer than Lt. Parmeley, to take charge of setting up the company perimeter and to set out a listening post on a not far away low hill. It was starting to get dark. He showed Humphries where the company was on his new map and promised to get him his own map soon.

Back at the amphitheater, the grandstands were slowly emptying. Thousands of exhausted, hoarse soldiers were finding their own helicopters or walking on foot back to their unit assignments. Hope's roadies were breaking down the day's set. Hope's own helicopter crew and security guards were standing by, making small talk with the round eyed go-go girls, waiting to take Hope, Rachel Welch, Miss World, and Hope's entire entourage on to the next stage. Hope's helicopter propellers were already beginning to crank.

Lt. Parmeley made a mental note to wake himself at 3 a.m. (Oh dark hundred) and walk the company perimeter. Just before 3 a.m. he got himself up. He was already fully dressed. He'd even slept in his boots that night. He grabbed his rifle (He had slept with it nuzzled close but hadn't dreamed of Sharon Mars). The lieutenant found Cummings awake in his foxhole. They talked for a while but didn't mention the Bob Hope Show. In a few days Cummings would die. In a few days Charlie Company would receive a new Company commander and Lt. Parmeley would return to his platoon. Sgt. Black, who didn't always like the lieutenant, was glad to see him return. The new company commander would die soon too, cut in half by a booby trapped artillery round. Lt. Parmeley would once again be 'in charge.' In a sense the entire afternoon had been a 'taking charge' practice drill but Lt. Parmeley hadn't experienced it that way. He continued walking the company perimeter, talking with soldiers who were awake in their foxholes, assured them that everything was going to be OK. *By Michael Parmeley (Skull 6, 1968)*

"Angry Skipper secured the LZ for C Co. to depart the field for the Bob Hope show. The C Co. CP group had been ambushed and the new CO was on the way from Div. The temp CO had been the asst. S-3 at Bn and was 2 days or so from leaving country. All started during the Tam Quan battle as we caught 22nd NVA/VC Regt coming into Bong Son for TET. Cav wiped them out and Westmoreland sent us North to help out with TET there. There was a lot of tragedy for C Co. during those 3 weeks or so—tough on Troops and the First Shirt. LT Michael Bennett, formerly of AS was killed with C Co. also earlier that fall." *By MG Scholes (Skipper 6, 67-68)*

I was the XO of D Co from the time before the 11th Air Assault Div. was converted to the 1st Cavalry Div. at Benning. I was the Recon Plat Ldr from Jan to Jun '65. The Company Commander then was CPT Morrison. He was replaced by CPT Keefe who was the commander when I left Benning in July on the advanced party and flew to Vietnam. When the Division main body arrived in Nha Trang, the commander was CPT Linton. He was the first in-country commander of Co D. That was when we in the advanced party first learned that CPT Keefe and CPT Foreman (who had been my company commander in A Company before I was moved to the Recon Platoon in March '65) had been relieved for too much bar hopping in Hawaii when the troop ships stopped there. I served as XO until CPT Linton became battalion S-1 and then from when CPT Batts took over Co D in late Nov/early Dec '65 until Jan '66 when I was transferred to HHC to become battalion S-3 Air where I remained until Aug 1966. I and the 1-12 Cav Recon Plat Sgt were the last two of the original 1st Brigade (1-8, 2-8, 1-12) personnel that deployed to Vietnam in '65 to leave Vietnam. Shortly before we were due to leave in late July, the division was back in the Ia Drang Valley where the big fight had been in Oct-Nov '65. The division G-3 put out a call for anyone who had previously been in the Ia Drang or on the Chu Pong Massif in the Ia Drang. We had been in the valley in the fall of '65 and on the massif in early '66 and so spent the next week or so back out there before finally leaving mid August.

The D Company call sign was not Angry Skipper until some time after Aug '66. I recall that the battalion was Right Half and that D Company was Flanker Right and I believe that it was rarely if ever changed during the first year '65-'66. D Co was routinely the alternate battalion net control station. Sergeant Samuels, the Commo Sergeant was never out of touch. We called him Flanker Sam.

I note that you served in D Co in '71-'72. I was up in I Corps for 18 months then and recall hearing and reading occasionally about the Cav which was then closing out and located far from the original base camp, Camp Radcliff in An Khe along Highway 19 halfway from Nha Trang on the coast to Pleiku in the Central Highlands.

I will soon be digging in the basement looking for copies of the after action report I wrote for a 2-8 Cav fight in the Ia Drang on 4 Nov '65 which involved initially in the morning the Recon Platoon, then a relief force I took in comprised of a platoon from A Co and straphangers and later the remainder of A Co and finally C Co later in the afternoon. 2-8 did more fighting on 5-6 Nov involving, I believe, primarily B and C. I think any number of people will find the AAR interesting. It is typed, includes a diagram and IDs units using their call signs.

I last saw the AAR about 1986 when I sent a copy to J. D. Coleman while he was writing "Pleiku: The Dawn of Helicopter Warfare in Vietnam." At the time, JD was the Div PAO and would write the Div history of the Pleiku Campaign. He had been a rifleman in the Korean War and would later command B/2-8 in early '66 to include a pretty significant fight at LZ Hereford east of the Div base camp at An Khe during a "shake down cruise" right after he assumed command ordered by the then new Battalion Commander, LTC Hemphill.

The Battalion lost 37 US KIA and our Battalion Interpreter, ARVN Sgt Be, in these fights in the Ia Drang.. That is more KIA than any other infantry battalion in the Division except for 2-7 at Albany and 1-7 at LZ X-Ray later in mid November after the 1st Brigaded had returned to the Div base camp at An Khe. Charlie Black, an Ernie Pyle-like reporter from the Columbus, GA newspaper who had spent a lot of time with the 11th Air Assault Div at Benning '63-'65 was with 2-8 at Plei Me and in the Ia Drang Valley in Oct-Nov '65, then commanded by LTC Nix. Black wrote a number of pieces about the fights.

Col. Frank Trapnell has agreed to speak to us at our banquet in Salt Lake City in May, 2008.

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### THE VETERAN'S SURVIVAL GUIDE by John D. Roche

This book is an outstanding treatise of what the veteran should, and shouldn't, do when filing a claim for compensation against the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Maj. Roche tells the reader not only how to file, but what to file, when, and why. If every veteran in this country had a copy of this book, the VA wouldn't have the "claims inventory" (VA Speak for backlog) that they have. It is extremely factual and highly accurate. The book does point out in no uncertain terms, and with examples what he's been telling veterans for years. You do NOT file a claim with the VA, you file a claim AGAINST the VA. Buy and read this book!

# Freedom Team Salute

ASA was contacted by LTC Steven C. Kinnear, Deputy Director of Freedom Team Salute. <http://www.freedomteamsalute.com> Below is his message:

" Freedom Team Salute (FTS), a recognition program sponsored by the Secretary of the Army is an opportunity for a meaningful, solemn and exciting addition to your organization's upcoming reunion.

In conjunction with your planned reunion activities, you can easily include a Veterans Freedom Team Salute pinning ceremony. We supply everything including a ceremony script and posters, and will send these along with FTS packages directly to a single coordinator in your organization. A Freedom Team Salute package includes a letter and Certificate of Appreciation, both of which are personalized and signed by the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff; a U.S. Army lapel pin; and two U.S. Army decals.

You can conduct these ceremonies for individuals or groups. Some recent successful ceremonies have included local dignitaries as either presenters or recipients. A most notable of these was the pinning of Brigadier General Chuck Yeager in appreciation of his service in the Army Air Corps during World War II.

You can tailor your own ceremony to meet your specific needs and audience. All we need from you is a list of the veterans in your organization you wish to recognize, including name, rank when in the Army and mailing address. Since the Secretary of the Army sponsors this program, there is absolutely no cost to your organization."

After discussing the program with LTC Kinnear, the board has decided to salute all members of D 2-8CAV from 1965-1972. Accordingly, we have submitted our roster of members to them. All members (including survivors) will receive a certificate signed by the Secretary of the Army in the mail, at their home.

## Letter from CPT Mike Doyle, D Co. 2/8CAV in Iraq

09 MAY 07

Dear Demon FRG,

I am sorry to report that LT Wallace's usually humorous FRG letter will be replaced this month with my introduction to your great organization. LT Wallace is currently on some well deserved leave.

My name is CPT Mike Doyle and I assumed command of the Demons from CPT Barbour on April 25th in Tarmiyah. I could not be happier to come to the Demon Family. I have been in HHC/2-8 (S3 Shop) for about a year before taking command. I was also in 2-8 CAV when I was a 2LT Tank Platoon leader in Cobra Company in 2002-2003. I have been at Fort Hood, except for Army schools, since 2002.

My wife's name is Amanda Doyle and she is also an Army Captain. We dated in college and were married last year in her hometown in Oregon. She works at the First Brigade Headquarters here at Camp Taji, Iraq as the Brigade Provost Marshal (head Military Police Officer). This is the second deployment for each of us, the first as a married couple.

I could not have replaced a more professional and capable officer than CPT Jerome Barbour. Part of the reason I wanted to come to this company was the great reputation the entire Demon Company has established. Another reason was the tremendous support of your FRG and the brothers in arms in the Angry Skipper Association. My wife and I both look forward to continuing those great relationships here and when we return to Texas.

I would like to thank Nyhma Tramel and Nikki Wallace in advance for their help with the FRG. All of your hard work and support is greatly appreciated over here every day.

And finally, rest assured LT Wallace's humorous letters will continue when he returns from leave. Thanks.

CPT Mike Doyle

Demon 6



CPT Mike Doyle and 1SG William Tramel

## Services for our Fallen Hero's

D 2-8CAV in Iraq were "Task Organized Armor and Infantry." B Company (BANDOG) is the infantry company D (DEMONS) "Task Organized" with. Fallen soldiers were:



PFC Justin Paton, 24, from Alanson, Michigan was killed 17Feb07 by sniper. SGT Pedro J. Colon, 25, of Cicero, Illinois was killed 19Feb07 with SPC Montrel S. McArn, 21, of Raeford, North Carolina by suicide bomber in the attack on that same day. ASA had sent flowers to each of these soldiers, to the services in their home town or their home.

Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich has issued a proclamation that all state facilities fly the United States flag at half-staff from sunrise to sunset on the day of the funeral of every fallen Illinois resident serving in the U.S. Armed Forces who is killed in the line of duty. **Governor's Proclamations: Friday, March 2, 2007 for Army SSG Pedro J. Colon.** SSG Colon's services were held in the Bronx, NY, where he is originally from. The Patriot Guard Riders (<http://www.patriotguard.org>) gathered and attended SGT Colon's funeral services. 1SG Tramel wrote, "SSG Colon may have been assigned to B Company, but he fought DEMON."

LTC Robert Batts (Skipper 6, 1965-66) met Jerome "Jerry" Barbour at his house and attended the services for SPC Montrel S. McArn in Raeford, NC together. Jerry is CPT Barbour's (Company Commander of D 2-8CAV in Iraq) father. Jerry is also retired from the Army.

On April 12, 2007, 1LT Gwilym Newman of Rockwall, Texas was killed by sniper while on patrol in Tarmiyah. ASA members, who attended the funeral included; Lee Livingston (S-5, 1966), Henry Cruz (Skull, 70-71), Robin Woo (Skull, 71-72), Chuck Hustedt (Skull, 69) and Gene Willis (Cat, 69-70).

An Honor Roll is at the ASA website. [http://angriskykipperassociation.org/demon\\_company\\_honor\\_roll.htm](http://angriskykipperassociation.org/demon_company_honor_roll.htm). ASA has also kept the FRG (Family Readiness Group) Letters written by D Company XO, LT Wallace in the website, as well.

Again, the APO for D 2-8CAV in Iraq is as follows:

**CPT Mike Doyle  
D Co/2-8 Cav, 1BCT, 1CD  
Unit 5910  
APO AE 09378**

On April 25, 2007 CPT Mike Doyle took command of D 2-8 CAV. CPT Barbour will take command of HHC 2-8 CAV on June 1st.  
**D 2-8th CAV in Iraq has a dedicated section at the ASA, Inc. website. Updates frequently.**

## Message from LTC Scott Efflandt, Commanding 2/8CAV in Iraq

You all are great. Demon Company with pride and swagger talks about their association with you all. Thanks for serving and thanks for being engaged now. We are proud of our lineage and are humbled that we can actively engage with those that gave us so much of that lineage.

Because the Battalion has 2 infantry companies, 2 tank companies, and engineer company, HQ's company and a Support Company we routinely cross attach platoons. Almost every company here will fight most of the year with platoons attached from another company. Although on any given day it looks like one big infantry battalion as we spend a significant amount of time walking.

Reading the Associations news letters is very humbling. Most of us hope to be found worthy to continue the tradition.

Commanding the Soldiers we have today is very humbling. They just don't quit! Day in and day out they do what is asked, never questioning an order, keeping faith with their unit. I know that in times to come they will look back on these days with sorrow, pride and fondness; all mixed together in some bizarre emotional stew. These are special times and these are truly special men and women that serve in these times.

If I can be of service do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for supporting us.

Very respectfully,  
Scott L. Efflandt  
LTC, CAV  
Commanding  
2nd Battalioin, 8th (US) Cavalry



L-R: LTC Efflandt (2-8th Battalion Commander), CPT Barbour (HHC CO), COL Funk (Brigade Commander), CPT Doyle (D Co. CO)



Left to right, CPT Jerome Barbour, 1LT John Denney (HHC XO), 1SG Ernie Avalos and CPT Mark Weaver. CPT Weaver was Company Commander of D 2-8 when the company was stood up in 2005



Wives at Funeral for 1LT Newman in Texas. L-R: Ann Efflandt, Samantha Weaver, Suzann Schlichter, Leah Gerling, Lupe Carter, Nyhma Tramel, Nikki Wallace, Danyelle Hankal and Bonnie Barbour.



Group gathered for picture at the Hotel before leaving for the Funeral Services. L-R: Chuck Hustedt, Bonnie Barbour, Nikki Wallace, Robin Woo, Nyhma Tramel, Gene Willis, Leah Gerling and Henry Cruz.



## Letter from our new President, Chuck Kline, 1SG (Ret) (Recon/Weapons 65-66)

May 22, 2007

Robin,

First, let me start by saying thanks to you and the rest of the ASA board member committee for the great job you did with our reunion this year. What a fast, but very rewarding experience this year in Washington, D.C.

It seems that each year we all get to meet a few more troopers that we had served with so many years ago. It's wonderful to see a fellow trooper that you were with 40 years ago and try to catch up in just two days. You can see the healing on their faces and the "finally, I have a chance to talk to someone that really understands me". To go back 30 or 40 years just like it was yesterday is really amazing. Add to that the sharing of our lives and families, and the up-to-date goings on with each other after all of these years and you have a truly remarkable event.

We really do need to find more of our soldiers so they can also start to heal. I'm confident that once they attend one of our reunions they will have a different outlook on their lives. That's when the healing process starts. It's just been terrific to meet and discover so many wonderful new friends that really care about each other like we do.

It's really great to see just how close we really are and how damn difficult it is to say goodbye to each other at the end of the reunion for another year. We all have a very special bond which nothing can break, regardless of the years that pass.

The weather held for the ceremonies at the wall. The sun was out, a small breeze was blowing to make the flags stand out, we had a nice crowd in observance and our brothers' reflections on the wall stood out profoundly.

I can't close this email unless I sincerely thank all of the wives and significant others that attended the reunion this year as well. It has always been so very important to me that the wives must be recognized as the most important part in the support and strength of us old soldiers from the past. The wives keep us out of trouble, or try to; keep us walking tall, and most of all try to understand and comfort us when things get a bit out of control.

I believe the wives' are ready to start an ASA club of their own. They have the ability to get together, organize, plan, and execute, and still watch over us. I believe that they call this "Multi-Tasking." They are so damn good at this. It's a female thing!!! So we better look out guys. Again, thanks to all the wives for their support and understanding.

Again, thanks guys for all the hard work at the reunion this year.

I'm looking forward to a great year as your President. We indeed have a wonderful group of soldiers from the past and I am very proud to be part of an elite group of the finest combat infantrymen of Delta Company, 2ndBn (Abn), 8th Cav, 1st Cavalry Division, United States Armies of America. Again, it is such a wonderful privilege to be amongst a fine group of my brothers in arms.

Respectfully

1SG(Ret) Chuck Kline



L-R: George Mauldin, COL (Ret), Chuck Kline, 1SG (Ret) and Robert W. Batts, LTC (Ret) at Friday evening Reception, Crowne Plaza Dulles Hotel.

## Washington, D.C. “after action” report:

The reunion in D.C. was very successful. The Sale Manager, Food and Beverage Manager and overall hotel staff were very cooperative, flexible and made our stay pleasant and comfortable.

This year, our registration process was again handled by Stacey Smith, of the Orlando/Orange County Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, Inc. The Association is tax-exempt in the state of Florida, so the registration process in Florida meet all regulatory requirements from various Federal, State and Local authorities.

Our Business Meeting was held at 4:00 p.m. in the Hospitality Suite where we voted on new officers of the Board of Governors and voted on a reunion location for 2009; Puerto Rico.



Ed Regan and Stacey Smith at the Registration Table in the Lobby of the Crowne Plaza Dulles Hotel.



The Friday evening Reception, for the guys and their wives to “meet and greet” was held in a foyer in the back of the hotel with access

to the outside, where most of our smoker’s were sitting and talking. Cigars were quite popular this year! We enjoyed the smooth background music from a 5 piece band of professional musicians out of the D.C. area.

Saturday morning, we boarded and filled 2 buses which seat 55 persons each and headed to the Wall in D.C. Many of our members drove to the reunion and took their own cars. Members from the 2nd/32nd F.A. joined us for a ceremony at the Wall. They were on FSB Illingsworth on April 1, 1970 when it was over-run by NVA. They came to remember their brothers lost in that battle. The Military District of Washington provided Bugler after our flags made it to the Apex of the Wall. We marched down in 2 columns, lead by Col. Thomas Blagg (Stone Mountain, 71-72) and Dave Garceau (Recon, 65-66) whose motorized wheel chair kept a perfect pace. Garceau had the original Guidon, that went in-country in 1965, attached to his wheel chair. The weather was clear and sunny and



our flags waved in the wind as we slowly marched to the Apex. LTC Robert Batts (CO, 1966) commanded the group and after yelling “present arms,” the soldier on the



grassy hill played Taps. Our soldiers almost spanned the entire length of the Wall. Tourist were obviously emotional as they watched old soldiers gather to remember their brothers lost.

We returned to the Crowne Plaza Dulles Hotel and prepared for our Group Photo, followed by our Banquet. A 6 piece band provided background music during our meal and then stepped it up for some dancing and fun after our programs. They played music from the 60’s and 70’s and included a wide variety for all!

Washington, D.C. "after action" report, cont.

This year, our speaker was Col. (Ret) Thomas Blagg. Col. Blagg was Commander of a Special Forces Company in 1965 and also Battalion Commander of the 2/8th CAV from July, 1971 - June, 1972. So, he had a unique perspective to share with all soldiers who served during that span of years; 1965-1972. Col. Blagg was introduced by Col. (Ret) Wolf Kutter (Skipper 6, 1971-1972) and shared humorous narrative of the past. Col. Blagg was given a Challenge Coin from the current Battalion Commander of the 2/8th CAV in Iraq. Ann Efflandt,



Thomas E. Blagg, COL (Ret) during his speech to the members in D.C.

wife of LTC Scott Efflandt, sent that coin to the Association, thanking our members for at-



tending 1LT Newman's funeral in Texas. Color Guards were provided by the Joint Military District of Washington. The band played Taps when the Color's were presented. After the



programs, it was time to enjoy. The dance floor was quite busy!!

A DVD is in production and will be mailed to all members who

attended the reunion. It captures much that we do not have pictures for. It will be broken into chapters, as last year, with the entire Business Meeting included. Photographs of the reunion were posted at the ASA, Inc. website at

<http://www.angryskipperassociation.org>





This picture was taken after the ceremony at the Wall. At the center of the above picture stands LTC Robert Batts (Company Commander, 1966) holding the original Guidon that went in-country Nam back in 1965. LTC Batts commanded the group to the Wall.



At the opening of our program at the banquet Saturday evening, Color Guards were provided by the Joint Services of the Military District of Washington. The band played a version of Taps written by the band of Maynard Ferguson.



During the ceremony at the wall while the Army Bugler played Taps.

### New Members since the January, 2007 Newsletter:

Patrick J DiStefano, 1969  
 Thompson L. Armstrong; Recon/Weapons 67-68  
 William J Osheroff; Bn Surgeon, 71-72  
 Dan Farrar, Cat, 69-70  
 Joseph H. Louwagie, 69

Jerry Winnie; Skull, 72  
 CSM Robert E Wilson; Recon, 65  
 Ted Sirotko, Bn Chaplain, 71-72  
 Rob Armitage, Cat 6, 71-72

### Deceased Member/s:

Clarence Keith; Recon/Weapons (abn) 65-66 (22Jan07)  
 Samuel P. Linton, III; Skipper 6, 1965 (16Jan03)  
*(Maj. Linton was the 1st Skipper 6 of D Company in-country)*  
 Francis Oley, Jr; Recon/Weapons 67-68 (1April07)

ASA, Inc. Member Count:

Active : 703  
 Online : 241



## Angry Skipper Association, Inc. Treasurers Report

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.  
Profit & Loss (unaudited)  
January 1 through May 22, 2007

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.  
Balance Sheet (unaudited)  
May 22, 2007

### Ordinary Income & Expense

#### Income

Banquet	\$ 4,224.00
Donations	16,291.56
Membership Dues	4,195.00
Registration Fees	730.00
Fund raising, Auctions, Tickets	0
Tours	2,240.00
Shirts, Hats, Patches	<u>3,481.00</u>
Total Income	\$ 31,161.56

#### Expenses

ASA Website	\$ 159.50
Bank Service Charges	15.00
Banquet—Fri Event	4,387.30
Banquet—Saturday Event	4,440.40
Tours	2,118.00
Flowers/Funerals	520.92
Entertainment—Reunion	2,550.00
Insurance	343.00
License and Permits	25.00
Member Assistance	1,007.16
Merchant Account	519.87
Miscellaneous	1,547.64
Postage & Delivery	818.88
Printing & Reproduction	3,673.00
Professional Services—Reunion	3,000.00
Shirts, Hats & Patches	<u>2,289.48</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 27,415.15

Net Income (Loss) **\$ 3,746.41**

#### ASSETS

##### Current Assets:

Checking	\$ 6,820.97
Accounts Receivable	<u>115.80</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<b><u>\$ 6,936.77</u></b>

#### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

##### Liabilities

##### Current Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	<u>2,729.00</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<b><u>\$ 2,729.00</u></b>

##### Equity

Opening Bal Equity	3,316.97
Retained Earnings	(2,855.61)
Net Income	<u>3,746.41</u>

Total Equity \$ 4,207.77

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY **\$ 6,936.77**

Accounts Payable consist of estimated accrued costs:

All Star Printing	\$ 729.00
Orlando CVB	<u>2,000.00</u>
Total	\$ 2,729.00

Business Meeting held on May 18, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Dulles Hotel in Washington, D.C.

The membership approved the minutes from last year's business meeting, reviewed the current financial statements for ASA, Inc. (year to date operations ending May 11, 2007) and approved it before moving on to new business.

New officers were elected during the business meeting this year. The new officers are:

President:	Chuck Kline (Recon/Weapons 65-66)
Vice President:	Henry Cruz (Skull 70-71)
Treasurer (Life):	Ed Regan (Range 68-69)
Secretary:	Robin Woo (Skull, 71-72)

Rich O'Brien (Cat, 67) replace Stan Dillon (Range, 70-71) as Chairman of the Board of Directors. Stan Dillon will remain on the Board of Directors.

The membership unanimously voted to spend the postage and printing to notify our members of a "Welcome Home" gathering when the soldiers of D 2-8 CAV come home from Iraq. We expect this to happen sometime in January of 2008. We will coordinate the date with the FRG's and with CPT Weaver who will be the commander of the Rear Detachment at Ft. Hood.

The membership has voted for Puerto Rico as the site of our reunion in 2009. Miquel Nieves-Perez (Skull, 66-67), who lives in Puerto Rico, will assist the reunion committee in site selection and other reunion planning issues in Puerto Rico.

The business meeting was video taped in it's entirety and each of the attendee's will receive 2 DVD's that include all of the events at this years reunion.

Angry Skipper Association, Inc.™  
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Stockton, NJ 08559

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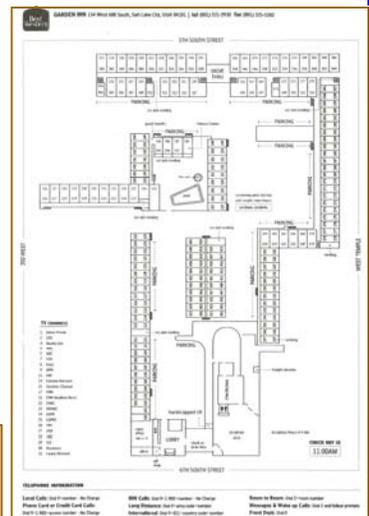
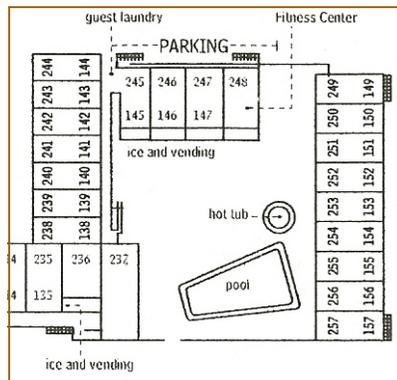


*“Remember the bad times once,  
Remember the good times forever”*

We're on the web:  
[www.angrystickipperassociation.org](http://www.angrystickipperassociation.org)

“ Just to refresh everyone’s memory, . . . This is the one thing that drives this organization and that we always keep in front of us, is . . . Our purpose is to give you guys a place to tell your story. Our purpose, we spend your money on this, now, is to find men who have held this crap inside of em for over 35 years and give them a place to tell their story. And the reason that swimming pool with the rooms around it, is so we could be together in private and tell our story, without having to apologize to anyone. And that’s our focus and that’s what we do here.” By Chuck Hustedt (Skull 69), at the Business Meeting in D.C.

The Best Western, located at 154 West 600 South, is located a block from the public transit system within downtown Salt Lake City. Suite 145 & 146, located on the ground floor fronting the pool, will be the Hospitality Suites. The grassy area off of the patio will have tables and chairs set up and access to the pool area. ASA members will be provided complimentary breakfast for each day they are there. The rate is \$90/night Single/Double, \$100 Triple and \$110 for Quads. The buildings around the pool consist of approximately 40 rooms, so first come, first served.



Above is the site plan for the Best Western in Salt Lake City. Left are the three buildings, around the pool, that we have blocked for our group. These buildings are 2-story. Each unit has a large patio or balcony overlooking the pool area. This will be D 2-8th AO.