

SECOND GREATEST GENERATION?

Our fathers have been credited as “The Greatest Generation”, defeating Hitler and the Japanese in World War II.

Yes, here we were, Baby Boomers, sons of these patriotic fathers who fought bravely to provide us freedom and a wonderful life in peacetime America! We grew up in the fifties with Howdy Doody, 3 channel, 9inch TVs’, and Elvis Presley on our new transistor radio.

But, less than 20 years after our fathers won victory, their sons were confronted with an escalating war involvement in Vietnam. The situation was totally different in Vietnam. Our fighting men were primarily draftees and an estimated 70,000 US men fled to Canada to avoid going to this war. The war was not popular with most of our buddies and many of these people questioned the sanity and intelligence of us volunteering to serve our country in Vietnam!

Yet, a group of patriotic, college educated, young men volunteered for Officer Candidate School (OCS) when they enlisted in the Army. Despite anti-war demonstrations at our universities and draft card burning against the war, these men felt an obligation to serve their country. They chose to lead men in possible combat in Vietnam. Their survival rate, as an infantry platoon leader, was the lowest in the war! Yes, their Commanding Officer told them at OCS graduation, "Look to the man on your left and the one on your right, one of you will probably die in Vietnam!"

Well, after graduation, 32 received immediate orders to serve on Korea's DMZ, a dangerous place after the Pueblo crew was released by North Korea. The majority of the remaining 150 classmates went to Vietnam. Fortunately, the US was turning over more fighting responsibility to the south Vietnamese, and we lost only 7 of our brave classmates to hostile fire. Yes, we served with duty, honor, and country yet came home to fanatics at the Seattle airport who

called us “baby killers”! No welcome home and “thanks for your service” was heard by us!

Now, fast forward 53 years later to 2023. Our OCS class is planning our eighth reunion for 2024 in New Orleans. Always a popular city to visit, our reunion committee wanted it also because of the spectacular National WWII Museum.

We will visit the museum on Wednesday morning, 17 April 2024. It will be our opportunity to witness the sacrifices our fathers underwent in WWII to provide our country the freedom we enjoyed growing up. To show our pride in what we sacrificed during the Vietnam war, you will see us wearing this distinctive garrison cap...



Most of us will be 78 or older at this, possibly our final reunion! As General McArthur quoted, “Old soldiers never die—they just fade away”. For us, we hope to not be forgotten for what we did. I quote from General William Westmorland “I do not believe that the men who served in uniform in Vietnam have been given the credit they deserve. It was a difficult war against an unorthodox enemy.”

When you see us, welcome us home and let us hear “Thanks for your service!”

History just might see us as “The Second Greatest Generation”.



CPT (Dr) William Brehm 1942 and CPT Walter Brehm 1972



CPO Jim Shoemaker aboard USS Baker 1944
1LT John Shoemaker Howl Hill Republic of Vietnam 1970



Lieutenant Coleman Clark I
1918



PFC Salter Clark
1918



Ensign Coleman Clark II
1945



LT Douglas Clark
1969



PFC. William A. Derham 1944 INF.4th Inf. Div. Ardennes
OCS Inf Candidate Paul J. Derham 1969 66th CO. Ft. Benning

While in service our classmates were awarded at least two Silver Stars, four Legions of Merit, 46 Bronze stars and 14 purple hearts.

DUTY...

HONOR...

COUNTRY...

(OH, AND SOME OF OUR MANY SUCCESSES OF THE 175 VETERANS WHEN WE RETURNED AFTER VIETNAM:)

6 OCS HALL OF FAME MEMBERS

4 PUBLISHED BOOK WRITERS

AT LEAST 16 LAWYERS

1 MEDICAL DOCTOR, 1 DENTIST

1 US AMBASSADOR

1 STATE LEGISLATOR

5 HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

5 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

PLUS CEO'S, PSYCHOLOGISTS, ENGINEERS, ETC.

🎵 **"YOU LOOK AT US, YOU SEE THE BEST"** 🎵