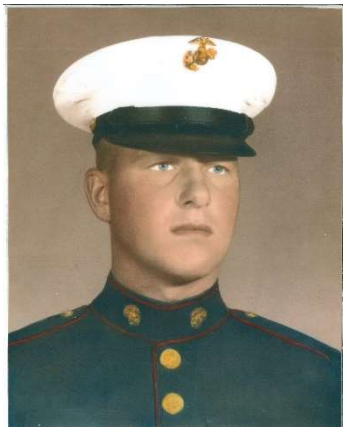
JAMES J. CLUB

USMC 1969-1970

JAMES J. CLUB
USMC 1969-1970

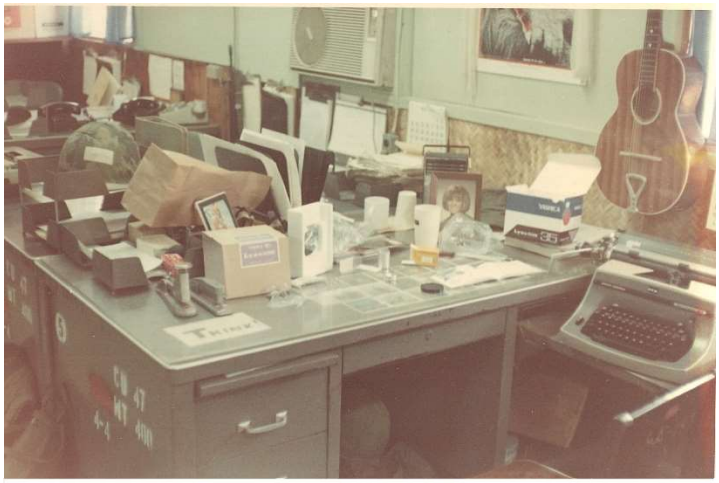


James J. Club was born 25-Aug 1948 in St. Louis Mo. His parents were Joseph Paul Club (1921-1971) and Leola Marie Husmann (1921-2002). According to the 1950 Federal Census, the family lived at 7038 Roslyn in St. Louis when James one year old. James had no siblings. He attended Mehlville High School in South County Mo. His 1964 yearbook says James participated in Chorus.

James joined the Marines and served from 1969-1970 in the 1st Marine Air Wing (MAW) in Vietnam in Da Nang. The 1st MAW's Headquarters was located at Da Nang Air Base, a major U.S. military base during the war. The 1st MAW provided combat air support to ground forces in I and II Corps tactical zones of the Republic of Vietnam, North Vietnam, and adjacent waters. Helicopters played an extensive role in air operations in Vietnam, as Marine pilots flew CH-34s and later CH-46s and CH-53s to transport Marines into landing zones near suspected enemy concentrations, and to evacuate the wounded following combat engagements. Helicopters, supplemented by C-130 transports where there were landing strips, were also used to re-supply Marines in the field at remote outposts.

Da Nang is located in central Vietnam on the South China Sea coast, between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. It is situated on the banks of the Han River, with the Annamite Range (also known as the Truong Son mountains) to the west and the South China Sea to the east. It's the largest city in central Vietnam.

Jim volunteered to fly in combat but was instead placed in an office. While he was not in combat, Da Nang was not safe in 1969-1970. The Vietnam War was in full swing, and Da Nang was a key location for US military operations. It was a target of attacks, and civilian life was severely impacted by the conflict. Civilians in Da Nang were caught in the crossfire and were at risk from both military operations and communist attacks.



"This is the desk of a neat, hardworking Marine!"

James was single while stationed in Vietnam. He once had the opportunity to go on leave. Hawaii was a popular destination for married soldiers, it was not exclusive to them. James went to Australia on his R & R (Rest and Relaxation). There was a family at the airport holding a sign saying they needed "Ranch Hands." This was a dream come true for James as he was able to be a "cowboy for five days." While stationed at Da Nang, James was able to swim in South China Sea. James also earned money ($10-20.00) doing sweeps.

James J. Club was eligible for the following medals and commendations:

- National Defense Service Medal
- Vietnam Service Medal
- Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
- Marine Corps Good Conduct
- Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Medal

While serving in Vietnam, James was likely exposed to Agent Orange. Agent Orange exposure during military service, particularly for Vietnam veterans, has been linked to a range of health problems, including certain cancers, neurological disorders, and other chronic conditions.

While in Vietnam, Jim wrote to his future wife, Judith Ann Hoette, over 500 letters. Judy saved every one of them. She indicated that most of the letters were very personal, but she shared a few with the Mid America Veterans museum. They were married in 1970. James and Judy had three children: Amy, Joseph, and Andrew.

23-Nov 1969

Dearest Judy,

I don't think this letter will get to you before Thanksgiving, but I hope it does. I should've put my greetings in yesterday's letter but like a dummy, I forgot. With Thanksgiving so close I have been doing a lot of thinking. I've been thinking about all the things I have to be grateful for. First and most, important I have, you my whole life, my only reason for living. Secondly, I have my parents for who I am very grateful for all they have given me and a lot they have not. I have no reason to say they have ever failed me. Next, they have all my good friends and relatives. I am thankful for my life up to now. God has surely blessed me. I am thankful that I am here in Da Nang rather than one of 100 other places

that I could've ended up in. Next Thanksgiving, I'll be home, and we can give our thanks together. Thank you for waiting Jud. I love you more and more with each passing day. I don't know what I would do without your mail conveying your love for me. I'd go crazy if I knew that you weren't home for me to come back too. I'd be like a fish out of water without you. Don't ever change just stay exactly like you are. We can spend this rest of our life growing old together if that's what you want. That's what I want more than anything.

Well all this time I have been waiting for the mail which gets picked up at 6:30 in the evenings and 8:30 in the morning by one of the guys in our office. I didn't get a letter, but I did get the 2 magazines you sent me. You're a doll. There <sic> both really good. Did you know the Western Horseman has an article on training roping horses. I'll have to read that one real good. After January gets here, please send me a copy of the Rodeo Sports News Annual from the rodeo shop. Well baby, I guess I shot my mouth off enough for one night besides this is my last sheet of pink paper. Whew, I hope you won't expect too much out of tomorrow's letter cause this one just about covers everything. Wish everyone in your family a happy Thanksgiving for me. And to you a very special happy Thanksgiving! I wish I could share it with, but I guess I'll just leave to have to share it in spirit. For now, here's love from your little cowboy.

Forever yours, James

Friday, 28 Nov 1969

Dearest Judy

I know I have already written you once today, but something very sad has happened tonight. One of the guys I work with just received word that his best friend, whom he came over with came over in the Corps with, is in the hospital in Da Nang critically wounded with a chest wound. My friend is just barely 19. He's only a kid, he blames himself for his buddy's misfortune. He feels it is his doing because he talked his buddy into joining the corps. The poor kid was crying his eyes out. I tried to console him, but what could I say. I think I did a little good anyway. My friend is feeling a little better now, he found out he will be able to see his friend tomorrow. He talked to the doctors and although his friend is in intensive care he will be doing better than at the tie his parents wrote the letter. Tonight, I am going to pray in his behalf.

Tonight, I feel very selfish because in my prayers I always pray that you and I will be together soon living a happy life together. I don't know why, but I never thought to say a prayer for all those other Marines who make it possible for me to go to sleep each night

A letter from Judy!

with a sense of security. I guess the reason is because the war seems so far away but yet all of a sudden it has sprung up and looms above me. I fear not for myself, but for all the other marines who are lying in the rain tonight ever vigilant, fighting someone who at many times is not seen. Marine, it is not until this very moment that I fully understand that word. It stands on tradition and has never failed its country yet. If I were out in the bush tonight, I know I would be scared beyond anything I have ever known yet. I don't think I would ever run no matter how bad things got. I pray that I will never have to find out one way or the other. Judy, I am so proud to be in the Corps no matter in what capacity I serve. I know what we are doing is right. I would gladly give my life if it meant that you would be safe from the evil that plagues this country. I have seen very little, but I have seen enough to grow to hate anything to do with communism.

I think I have wandered off the track from what I began with. Judy if you if your mother is still going to mass and communion every day like she said she was going to please ask her to pray not just for me, but for all the Marines for that matter all the American Fighting forces. I hope God will see fit to bring me home to you. I am sure he will. He has said if you believe in what you pray for it will come to you.

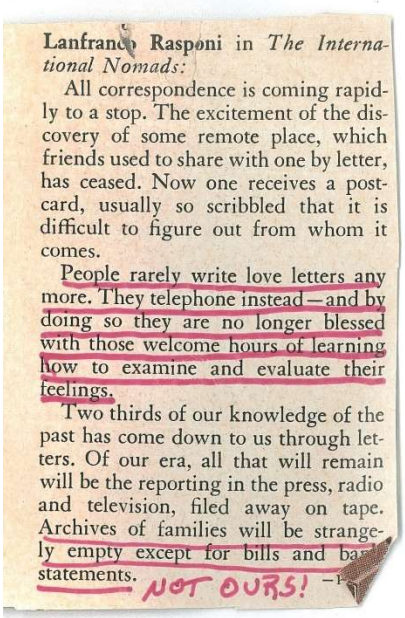
Baby I love you so very much. This experience I am going through now I will never forget it, but I wouldn't have passed it up for any amount of good times and pleasant memories. Please bear with me during the time this time. I need your strength to pull me through. Don't ever stop saying you love me. I love you more than words can describe. You're <sic> little cowboy.

Forever yours,

James XXX

James married Judith Ann Hoette (1948-2024) in 1970. James and Judy had three children: Amy, Joseph, and Andrew. The family lived in Florissant MO. After his service with the Marines, James worked at SBC, retiring after 34 years of service. James was a member of Degree, St. Angela Merici Council. Jim loved spending time at his property 'Club 54' in Shelbina, hunting, farming and relaxing on his porch.

James died 7-Jan 2011. He was 64 years old. He is buried at Sacred Heart Cemetery in Florissant, MO. His wife Judy joined James on 17-Sep 2024 and is buried alongside him. They were married for 40 years.



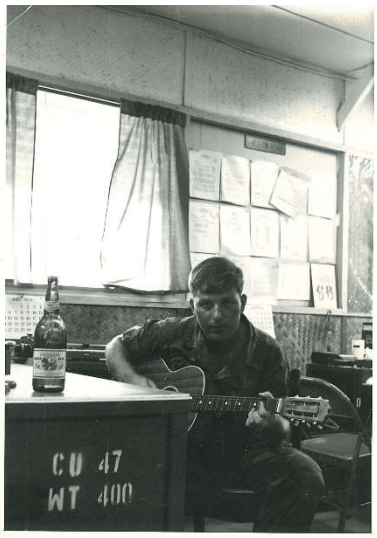
Lanfranco Rasponi in *The International Nomads:*

All correspondence is coming rapidly to a stop. The excitement of the discovery of some remote place, which friends used to share with one by letter, has ceased. Now one receives a postcard, usually so scribbled that it is difficult to figure out from whom it comes.

People rarely write love letters any more. They telephone instead—and by doing so they are no longer blessed with those welcome hours of learning how to examine and evaluate their feelings.

Two thirds of our knowledge of the past has come down to us through letters. Of our era, all that will remain will be the reporting in the press, radio and television, filed away on tape. Archives of families will be strangely empty except for bills and bank statements. NOT OURS! –P

This magazine clipping was included with the letters.



Home for Christmas

Christmas in Vietnam

ROW 1: Mike Schumacher, Allen Waddel, Greghory Hahn, Kenneth Hearst, William Cocos, David Johannes, Stanley Hoos, Lynn Wren, Sharon Holloway, Diane Daugherty, Carol Tharp, Mary Rose Evans, Judy Rubottom, Lynn Steinhouser, Dorothy DeMent, Mary Wingo, Karen Ritchey, Mr. Flanakin.
ROW 2: Steven Fischer, Ray Bauer, George Ross, David Reinheimer, Richard Gerleman, Mike Kalinowski, Barry Schoenwalder, Lynn Fisher, Betty DeMent, Senera Kiefer, Terry Liberman, Linda Bocek, Carol Winney, Kathy Lemon, Sandy Kapeller, Betty Niceley, Carol Budrovich, Linda Neun.
ROW 3: Richard Purcell, Jim West, Bill Solomon, Dan Willis, Bob Creel, Ron Muschany, Pat Clubb, Joan Crawford, Margaret Dillon, Carol Beilstein, Sandy Shullier, Elaine Harris, Betty Schierloh, Carol Landes, Kathy Mincer, Carla Dansreau, Phyllis Pillman, Linda Boys, Judy Rubottom.
ROW 4: Karl Voepel, Bob McArthy, Hank Wotli, Gary Ferbet, Jim Clubb, Walter Creel, Bill Fueller, Jewell Baker, Kathy Jenkins, Leslie Nations, Donna Oxton, Rea Woehr, Beverly Pewitt, Michelle LaFaye, Renee Heitz, Jean Hibbeler, Ornetta Landes, Thea Loehr, Amy Bradley, Shirly Bennett.