At Outrigger and OHANA hotels, we have a long tradition of supporting the men and women who serve our country in the U.S. armed forces – Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard and National Guard – and, this past Wednesday, November 11, Veterans Day, we renewed that dedication. Many of us thought about how we, as a company and as individuals, owe so much to those who dedicate their lives to preserving the freedoms that so many of our countrymen and -women take almost for granted.

This year’s Veterans Day celebrations were particularly meaningful because it marks the 50th anniversary of the “official” start of the Vietnam War, an event that led to significant sacrifice by several generations of servicemen and -women. Two years later, as the action in Vietnam intensified, the Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort opened its doors and hosted thousands of servicemen and -women for their one-week Rest and Recreation (R&R) break from the battlefield.

Our personal and corporate loyalty to servicemen and -women actually dates back to before the “official” birth of our company in 1947, when the little Islander Hotel opened its doors on Seaside Avenue in Waikiki. Our founders, Roy and Estelle Kelley, were operating apartments near their Kūhiō Avenue home in Waikīkī and invited two of their tenants, Commander John Shultz and his wife, Martha, to join them for breakfast on Sunday, December 7, 1941.

Cmdr. Shultz arrived wearing his dress-white Navy uniform and, when the bombs began to fall, he rushed to his ship in Pearl Harbor, the cruiser USS Honolulu, which was damaged by a nearby explosion. Plunging into World War II in his gleaming whites made Shultz possibly the “Best Dressed” officer on duty that tragic day. (That may be amusing now, but at the time nobody was laughing.)

I remain in touch with John and Martha’s son, Jack, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The photo on Page 5 was taken in July 1964 when Jack assumed command of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry, at Schofield Barracks on the island of O‘ahu.

Jack remembers that day well and says, “It happened also to be Organization Day (i.e., the birthday for the regiment), and the trophy was a tribute to my predecessor, Lt. Col. Mark Brown, who departed Hawai‘i on the SS Lurline a day or two later.

“There were also competitive events all day long in which the 2nd Battalion prevailed over the 1st Battalion. The last event was a tug of war, which was won by a team from the 2nd Battalion. It was memorable because one of the team members was the Mess Sergeant for “A” Company. He was not your typical team member. He probably weighed in at about 250 lbs. - Jacoby

Cmdr. John Shultz and his wife, Martha, briefly joined Roy and Estelle Kelley for breakfast on December 7, 1941

Dr. Richard Kelley
pounds and added his heft to the tug of war team. On top of that he was a very good Mess Sergeant!"

Jack deployed with his battalion to Vietnam in April 1966. The battalion engaged in a variety of combat and pacification missions, operating out of the base camp of the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi. Jack received the Bronze Star for his service.

In the coming year, let’s recognize and support the men and women of our armed forces in the U.S. and in every other free country where our company does business.

As we go forward in a world filled with violence and terrorism, remember the words of Father Denis Edward O’Brien, USMC, who said:

“It is the soldier, not the reporter, Who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, Who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier, Who salutes the flag, Who serves beneath the flag, And whose coffin is draped by the flag, Who allows the protestor to burn the flag.”

Recent photo of Jack and Virginia Shultz who lead an active life in Austin, Texas

Lt. Col. Jack Shultz and his wife, Virginia, at Schofield Barracks, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i, July 1964