

Tom Hubbard  
www.tomhub.com

### **SEMPER FIDELIS: How I Met My Father.**

September 21, 1966 — USMC — Republic of Vietnam — KIA

Until recently, this is how I knew my father. A few scattered facts, flowers on his headstone at the cemetery, and stories told by my mother that I couldn't or wouldn't hear. For over thirty years it was easier not to talk about it, not to confront it, and definitely not to feel it. In 1996, my father's body was disinterred in Indianapolis and he was given a full military funeral at Arlington National Cemetery. Unable to grant his final wish in 1966, my mother was able to do so thirty years later. This event marked an end and a beginning. For my mother and the rest of my family it was "closure", for me it was the beginning of a quest to come to know my father.

This body of work is the result of a personal journey I have taken to come to know my father, a US Marine who was killed in Vietnam when I was two years old. On September 21, 1966 my life became forever connected with Vietnam. The person I am today is in large part because of the loss of my father in Vietnam. Only after becoming a father myself did I realize the significance of my father's sacrifice and the importance of coming to know him for myself and my family. I have done extensive research on the war in Vietnam from both the US and Vietnamese perspectives and made contact with my father's childhood friends and veterans he served with. Using USMC field reports as a guide, I was able to re-construct my father's tour of duty and over a five week period in the summer of 2000, I visited the battlefields, the DMZ and the places my father served including the village of Kim Lien where he and three other Marines were killed. I have documented my journey in a series of sketch books which have become the foundation for this exhibition which combines my work in the disciplines of graphic design, ceramics and photography.

The lessons learned over thirty years ago in Vietnam should be applied today as military operations continue to expand in the war on terrorism. The deployment of US servicemen affects not just the men and women called to serve their country but the generations that follow. The war in Vietnam effected many people and several generations in ways we are just beginning to understand and accept. The war has been looked at from many perspectives including veterans and protesters, parents and politicians. Only recently has it been viewed from the perspective and experiences of the children who lost their father's to the war.

This installation is not a political statement about the war in Vietnam. It is a statement of personal loss and how the effects of war resonate through not just one but several generations. This is my story, the son of a marine who served in Vietnam and the father of two young sons, and how these events affected my life, and shaped who I am as a person, a husband, a father and an artist. This body of work does not merely represent my relationship with my father – it is my relationship with him.