

THE PROUD WARRIOR



WORLD WAR II * VIETNAM * GULF WAR * SOMALIA * PEACE TIME

National Newsletter of the 1/9 Network, Inc.

September 2005

Marines,

On 9/1/2005, I announced the creation of an emergency relief Fund for 1/9er's. The response has been GREAT! In the past two weeks we've received about \$1500 dollars to help our fellow brothers affected by the storm. Those sending in contributions to this date are; The Network, Bill Hesse, James McGrath, Roger Jacobs, Howard Christy, Louis Robesch, Dave Demick, David Zeller, David Anderson, Barbara Ducham, Roger Good and William McKenzie

Our current membership list shows 38 of our brothers and their families that live in the affected areas. The past two weeks have been really busy trying to contact all of them. I've spoken to many of them to find out they're needs and situations. I've also heard some horrific stories. Remaining brothers on the list that have not been contacted are:

Ben Ashcroft	Earl Davis	Robert Dean	
Donald Hanson	Howell Hempel	Jerry Johnson	
William Lanier	Nathaniel Loomis	Larry McMurry	
Larry Moon	National Miles	R. Paradine	
Roy Pasker	Tony Patin	Vinaris Scott	
Michael Seale	Richard Tullier	Fred Walters	Richard White

I've asked Regional Coordinators Dennis Lee (972) 495-1261, and Rob Fabian (757) 471-6216, to be information central for any contacts made with our brothers. If you have any information about anyone on this list please contact them.

This fund will be kept up for future emergencies so that we can give them a rapid response to them and their families needs. We will not leave anyone behind. If you would like to make a non tax deductible contribution to this fund, please make a check payable to "1/9 Katrina Fund" and mail it to:

1/9 Katrina Fund
1st Battalion 9th Marines Network
66 Clinton St.
Meriden CT 06450

We can only help them if you help the fund.

Semper Fi is forever,
Bill Hesse
National President

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www.1stbattalion9thmarinesfirebase.net

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Marines,

Well, summer is over, the pool is closed and fall clean up begins. It's been pretty hectic around headquarters for the past few months. My wife and I spent a wonderful weekend on the South Jersey shore with past president Frank Healey and his wife Barbara. With Frank's retirement and the move to a new community, along with his new boat, it looks like he's really going to enjoy it.

This month has been hectic because of Katrina (see Katrina Fund article). Our prayers and good wishes go out to all our brothers and families affected by that storm. Now they are threatened by another one called Rita and the season is only half over with. There's no shame in advancing to the rear and fighting another day, get out of the way and stay safe. We're all one family and we need to know if you're in trouble.

The reactivation of 1/9 has also kept us pretty busy. With all the date changes they've made it's been pretty hard to make plans. All I can get now is that it'll be sometime in the end of October, and that's not a guarantee. I remember "hurry up and wait" so well now.

When they do have the ceremony I hope that all of you that can make it will.

Next month is the "Beach Rally" in California. I've made my plans to be there and am looking forward to seeing you all there and tasting Gunny Burns famous chowder. (Gunny, I'm from New England and love chowder.) Phil would you like me to bring a couple of those new shirts with me? How many 2 and 3 X's?

My CPA tells me that we have to keep the by-laws intact as is until the IRS reviews them. The changes that were submitted are on hold until we can vote for any changes. I know that this has been a long process since the reunion, but what we have to do has to be done correctly. We have submitted our application and will be classified 501C (4) until we can finish getting financial records, review, and submit them. I hope to have this all taken care of by years end.

The people from Branson and I are compiling a flyer to be sent out announcing the Sept 2006 reunion. They are really great people to work with and they promise us that we're going to have a great time and want to return after we've been there. Branson is about the most Veteran friendly place I've ever seen. The reunion will be filled with activity, events, free time, food, and fun.

As fall approaches, there's another thing we start thinking about. The Marine Corps Birthday this year will be the 230th anniversary of our beloved Corps. I'll be helping to run one of the largest Balls in the country this year. With Harvey Barnum the guest speaker, Connecticut's governor, bag pipe band, 500 Marines and there guest's, open bar and great food, its promises to be a great time. I'll have a "Table of Honor" reserved there just for 1/9er's. The Birthday also reminds us of another thing we do at this time of year dues to 1/9 for 2006.

I thank all of you that have sent in your 2005 dues and have added that extra amount for those who can't afford to send any. As our founder, Roger Liggons, stated in the beginning, we will not deny your membership for lack of a voluntary contribution. Because of the generosity of many members, we can continue to keep you informed through the Proud Warrior. Which I'm sure you'll all agree that Dan Beckham does such a fantastic job at. If you were still in the Corps Dan, I'd give you a promotion. We'll talk more about sending the newsletter out via e-mail to help defray any new costs. So again I remind you that next years dues are due. (Maybe we should talk about Lifetime memberships?)

Anyway, make your check payable to:
1st Battalion 9th Marines Network, Inc.
Mail it to:
1st Battalion 9th Marines Network National Headquarters
66 Clinton St., Meriden CT 06450

So, I hope to see as many of you that can make it to Calif. in Oct and again at Camp Lejeune for the reactivation. It's your organization of brothers and every time we get together is like a family reunion.
Happy 230th Birthday Marines

Semper Fi is forever,
Bill Hesse, National President

2006 REUNION NEWS UPDATE !!!!!

Brothers, here's the latest news on next years reunion. Although not yet written in stone, it has been drawn in the sand and can be adjusted.

September 20 - 24 2006 Branson Missouri
4 nights lodging with continental breakfast

A manned reception desk, Welcome packets, Show planning. A Branson representative with us during day time hours for the length of our reunion. Round trip airport shuttle (see Walter we listened to you), Wild West Barbeque with TJ Steer, Trips to the Veterans Museum, Outlet Shopping and the Stone Hill Winery, Showboat Branson Bell Dinner Cruise

Memorial Service with Color Guard, Memorial Breakfast Buffet, Dinner Banquet with a cash Bar, Dinner Party with D J or Live Band, Hospitality Room available to us 24/7 with smoking outside the room.

All for the amazing price of only \$319 per person double Occupancy. Details on who to contact and the hotel will come at a future time. Plan your vacation time now and start that special cookie jar.

Semper Fi is forever,
Bill Hesse
National President

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Almighty Father, whose command is over all and whose love never fails, make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones, and Thee without shame or fear. Protect my family.

Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my Country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold.

If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth and grant me wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer.

God Bless and Semper Fi,

Blaine

E-mail: magblaine@msn.com

(Blaine's father is 85 and not doing well, for all our families, the Marine's Prayer - Editor).

FROM THE EDITOR

It seems only like yesterday that I was writing about Summer being upon us and now Fall is here with all its wondrous colors. I'm sitting here right now thinking about the reactivation, hope a lot of you can make it. I'll have more about the reactivation and some pictures in the next newsletter.

Last time I wrote about my new website and Roger Liggon's new website. I left out some of our brothers that have had websites for quite a while. Here are some of the others:

Casey Piatt
<http://www.home.earthlink.net/~tigr>

Doug Todd
<http://ironfeathersplace.homestead.com>

Mike Owens
<http://www.greenforce.net/>

Randall Widner
<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/4303/>

John Scott
<http://www.angelfire.com/in/marines/index.html>

Terry Presgrove
<http://www.pressie.org/storyline.html>

Roger Liggon
<http://www.thewalkingdead.org/pages/1/index.htm>

In Memory of Bruce Okeson
<http://www.geocities.com/okesonbruce/Tracer.html>

Semper Fi! Dano out!

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

If ye love wealth greater than liberty, the tranquility of servitude greater than the animating contest for freedom, go home from us in peace. We seek not your counsel, nor your arms. Crouch down and lick the hand that feeds you; May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen. - Samuel Adams

KIA ROSTER ADDITIONS

There are 15 to 17 new names that will be added to the KIA roster in the near future. There are also some names that appear on our roster that actually were KIA with other units. I am trying to verify all the information and double check names and the company rosters before and names are added or deleted. - Editor

From Doc Collison May 13, 2005

Dan:

Are you the editor of the battalion newsletter? If so, would like to offer a change of address: Bruce L. Collison, 542 Silk Oak Drive, Venice, FL 34293. Also, I believe you're out of Canton, OH? Don't know if you're aware but one of the last Marines and Corpsmen KIA in Southeast Asia was a brother of mine, a former 1/9er, TDY'd to 2/9 for the MAYAGUEZ/BATTLE of KOH TANG Island. And, he hailed from Toronto, Ohio, a short drive from you. His name is Ron Manning and he was killed during the insertion of marines on the east beach LZ of Koh Tang. The CH-53 took an RPG and 50 cal. hits to the port side of the aircraft which blew up the external fuel tank. As the pilot attempted to abort the insertion another RPG took off the majority of the cockpit bubble and the 53 pancaked into the surf just off the beach. Nine Marines and Corpsmen (and the USAF co-pilot) were thus KIA/BNR. I vowed to one day contact his parents to talk to them about Ron. It wasn't till I first visited the Wall in '96 that I got his hometown info. Long story short, I contacted his Mom and she said "I've been waiting 21 years for someone who knew Ron to call me!" Well, we both cried like babies and talked for 'bout three hours on the phone...that's when she told me Ron (and the others) had never been recovered (my enlistment ended right after KT and I processed out). We kept in touch over the years and on July 4, 2000 I got a card from her telling me Ron was coming home...his remains had been identified via maternal DNA...and he was going to be buried in Toronto on July 19. I flew in for the "homecoming"/funeral and while I'm sitting in their home in walks Tim Trebil, fire team leader, and a survivor of the crash...later, in walks Col. Al Corson, the pilot of the 53! None of us knew the others were coming for the funeral. Just wanted to pass this on to you about a fellow 1/9er being one of the last KIAs.

SEMPER FIDELIS....Bruce "Doc" Collison

H&S Co. '75 Operations Eagle Pull and Frequent Wind; C Battery. 1/11; C Med, 1st Med Bn; HQ Co 9th Mar '73-'75

1/9 REACTIVATION NEWS

Dan,

I just got off the phone with Sgt Major Bieth from 1/9 and he told me that the field and band are booked for the Reactivation to take place on Wed, 26 Oct. 1000 hours. I told him that I was going to pass the word and make my plans to be there. Could he confirm the date and he said that it's written in stone (but not granite).

Semper Fi,
Bill Hesse

NOTICES & REQUESTS

1/9 PINS, T-SHIRTS ETC.

Dave Demick has a whole catalog of 1/9 related items he is offering for sale. The catalog includes, 1/9 pins. T-shirts, hats, shadow boxes and a whole lot more. His catalog is posted on the 1/9 Website or you can contact Dave direct at:
Dave Demick 35240 Perret Plantation Road, Callahan FL 32011, Phone (904) 879-3907
Email: rebeldave1nine@alltel.net

1/9 T-SHIRTS

Frenchy Laverriere, has resurrected the "old style" 1/9 t-shirts with the original Grim Reaper look. The t-shirts are red or black, with the Grim Reaper inside a gold shield with a banner underneath that says "The Walking Dead".

Med, L, XL, \$16.25 plus \$3.25 shipping

XXL \$18.25 plus \$3.25 shipping

XXXL \$22.00 plus \$3.25 shipping

If you're ordering more than one shirt, add \$3.00 shipping for each additional shirt.

Thanks Billy "FRENCHY" Laverriere

Order from: Billy Laverriere, 5 Celia Circle, Methuen, MA 08144 His phone number is (978) 687-1992.



Got items for sale? Let the Editor know what you have.

IN MEMORIAM

Clarence Richard "Rick" Hyle

Services for Clarence Richard "Rick" Hyle, age 59 of Enid, Oklahoma will be at 10:00 AM Monday June 21, 2004 in the Ladusau-Evans Funeral Home. Interment with full military honors will follow in Memorial Park Cemetery.

Rick was born on September 27, 1944 and after graduating from Drummond High School in 1962, entered the United States Marine Corps at the age of 17, He did three tours in Vietnam and served his country and flag for 30 years. In January 1992 he retired as a Master Gunnery Sergeant. In addition to his many other medals and awards, Rick was awarded two bronze stars in Vietnam.

Rick is survived by his wife Barbara Jean and five children. He was preceded in death by his parents and his first wife, Cynthia L. Hyde, of 23 years.

In memory of Rick Hyle, he was one of my best friends. I met him while serving with Delta Company 1/9 in Vietnam; Rick was our Supply Sergeant.

From H.E. "Gene" Rhodes
Aka "Pig Pen"

Colonel John H. "Blackie" Cahill

John H. "Blackie" Cahill passed away on July 14, 2005. He commanded the 1st Battalion 9th Marines during the early part of 1968 (April 1 - May 12, 1968), while the Battalion was at Khe Sanh. His service record spanned WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

From a Internet posting

Dan Bozikis

Dan Bozikis of "A" Company 1/9 died from a massive heart attack on Saturday July 23, 2005, in his home in La Hacienda, California.

Funeral services will be held on July 25 at St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to a memorial fund at the church in Dan's memory. The church, St. Anthony Greek Orthodox is at 778 South Rosemead Blvd., Pasadena, California 91107-5613.

Dan Bozikis was one of the original cadres, when "A" Company was formed as a part of the 9th Marines in 1942. He was a member of 3rd platoon in "A" Company in campaigns on Bougainville and Guam and served in New Zealand and Guadalcanal for training operations.

His platoon, with the late Howell Heflin as platoon leader, was especially active at "Hand Grenade Hill." This well-publicized engagement on Bougainville was recently written up in Leatherneck Magazine.

Dan Received the Purple Heart award after being wounded in the Guam Campaign on August 5, 1944 and was transferred out of the 9th Marines for hospitalization

Our condolences to families of our 1/9 brothers who have passed.

REMEMBERING FRED BLETZ

Dear 1/9 Marines,

I feel compelled to write this letter after reading the "In Memoriam" column about Fred Beltz in the 6/05 edition of the "Proud Warrior". I am one of a very few who can write this about his experiences in Vietnam and testify to his character.

My first day in the field, 03-15-67, Fred, I and others went down in a CH-46 on 861. After five days in the field hospital in Dong Ha, I returned to Khe Sanh and came to know Fred.

He won the New York State wrestling Championship at 105 lbs. his senior year. He didn't weigh much more in Vietnam. Fred was 5'3" or 5'4" at the time. His utilities were way too large as mine were way too small. You know how that worked.

Fred had glasses and curly hair, but was always smiling. After I was back from Dong Ha for a few days, one of our squad came up with a transistor radio. Fred scrounged a 12' metal pole and hung a bunch of scrap metal off the pole, added some wire and mounted it on our bunker. Just like that, we could hear Hanoi Hannah loud and clear. In between talking about how we would die, she played American music.

April 23 I was sent to Phu Bai because my ears were so stuffed I couldn't hear on LP's and night ambushes. My platoon went on patrol and was attacked on 861 which started the Khe Sanh hill fights. My very best friend, Larry and I stood shoulder to shoulder in boot camp and by an act of God we wound up in the same fire team at Khe Sanh. Larry was killed and the other two members of my fire team were seriously wounded.

Fifteen years ago one of the survivors told me that they were out of water, while stuck in the fog for two days. Fred always carried a pack equal to his own weight. He had been saving all of his fruit cocktail for a month or so. He opened the cans and distributed the sugary syrup among the many wounded thereby saving the lives of fellow Marines.

After Khe Sanh he was assigned to weapons, more weight of course, but also more firepower against the enemy. He was wounded at Phu An, where the picture of the 1000 yard stare was taken in the church. He was badly wounded in the ankle. When he returned home he took up horseshoeing. Nice easy job eh? Nothing like going out to shoe a Morgan or a Clydesdale in the winter in upper Michigan.

You should be aware of the story about how he was carried from Michigan to D.C. in a bamboo cage. The trip took several months. He also made several trips to Angel Fire N.M. on his motorcycle. He wound up being the president or group leader of "rolling thunder" Michigan chapter.

On May 4, 2005 sheriff's deputies went to Fred's farm to serve a warrant for his sons arrest on failure to appear on a D.U.I. It was 11P.M. when they showed up at Fred's rural farm. Fred and Kathryn were asleep in their bedroom at the time. Fred's son met the deputies and was cooperating. He went into the house to get his shoes. Meanwhile the deputies entered the house. Fred's dogs were barking like crazy and woke him up. Fred got out his .45 and left the bedroom to see why the dogs were raising hell. When he came into view of the sheriff's deputies they dropped him. Kathryn said "she heard four pops". She walked out to the front and Fred was dead. He didn't even have a round in the chamber of the .45.

This fantastic individual and Marine, was taken from us and his family for no reason. Why serve a failure to appear warrant at 11 p.m.?

I've often told people that if you have two friends during your life you are extremely lucky; because a friend will send you 10K no questions asked or take a bullet for you. Fred was one of these people. I am grateful that I knew such a person and could call him my friend. People that say they have a bunch of friends are dreaming. When you are up against the wall, they would walk, and prove that they are merely acquaintances.

Fred Beltz was the most gnarly man I've ever known. If you struggled and bitched about carrying 60 lbs., you could look at Fred and he'd be carrying 80.

Semper Fi good buddy!
I'll see you at "the gates" because with your luck you'll be on guard duty.

Dave Hendry
B 1/9 2nd 1967
Khe Sanh - Con Thien

VIETNAM VET TO ATTEND BURIAL OF PILOT WHO SAVED HIS LIFE

By **BARBARA CARMEN** *The Columbus Dispatch*

Lt. Allen S. Shepherd III has waited 36 years to stand before a grave at Arlington National Cemetery and offer a final prayer for the missing pilot who saved his life over Laos.

On the early morning of Nov. 26, 1968, the two American pilots were sent on a reconnaissance mission over a rugged sector known as Oscar Eight. For an hour and 13 minutes, the pilot and his co-pilot, Shepherd, flew in a dark, cloudless sky near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A large jungle covered the valley and hid a fierce enemy.

Shepherd was 24 and considered himself "bulletproof." A mathematician, he'd joined the Air Force after college rather than wait to be drafted into another service. Shepherd had been in Vietnam four months and had seen thousands of empty caskets stacked at his air base at Da Nang. But they were for someone else. At 4:13 a.m., his surety would surrender to his faith.

Shepherd was searching for the enemy, his head stuck out the window, when he and Col. Gregg Hartness felt a huge thud. The airplane's tail was gone, blown away by the enemy below. "Bail out!" Hartness ordered. Hartness, 43, of Dallas, managed to steady the twin-engine airplane's wings. Then fire erupted. "Bail out!" Shepherd pushed at the plane's only door, but it wouldn't budge. Hartness reached across, shoved hard and pushed Shepherd into the sky.

On Friday, the Air Force announced that a search team had found and identified Hartness — one of the 1,815 Americans missing since the Vietnam War. All that remain are teeth, but for Shepherd, it is enough.

On Sept. 14, the U.S. pilot will be laid to rest in a grave on his home soil. His widow and grown children will have a place to visit. And Shepherd will have answers. Hartness, he now knows, never made it out of the plane.

Shepherd saw a glimpse of the plane as it crashed and burned during his 6,000-foot drop into a dense jungle. Between the campfires and stars, he saw pitch black. Then he went to work. "Pull the rip cord. The parachute opens. Secure your phone (a radio to signal for rescue). Cross your legs (to prevent injury). Land in the trees. Cut the cords, pull the 'chute down. Dig a hole. Bury it so they can't find you. Bury yourself in bushes." He forced himself not to throw up because, he was told, the enemy would smell him. All night, he prayed. He could hear the enemy moving. At dawn, as the big green rescue helicopters began to fly, he radioed for help. For two hours, Shepherd, who had hurt a knee while bailing out, waited in the jungle. He asked his rescuers to keep searching for Hartness. But there was no sign.

After two tours of Vietnam, Shepherd returned home in November 1972, carrying with him Gregg Hartness' memory. Shepherd is now 61, a Dublin businessman who owns Sports Ohio, is married and has two young children. He moved his parents nearby. He returned from Vietnam, as many did, different. Better, he said. "You've never really lived until you've almost died," he said. "I don't think it was fate. I think it was divine guidance. Faith will get you through anything."

He got a call a few months ago saying that the military might have found some remains. He asked to go to Vietnam to help search. He didn't hear anything until another call two weeks ago: Would he like to attend the funeral at Arlington? "My reaction was that I was proud that my country would keep looking," Shepherd said. "They did not leave Gregg behind."

Shepherd will attend the service, and maybe revisit the Vietnam Memorial.

It took years before he was ready to stand before the highly polished granite wall. The first time, he went alone. It is easier, he said, to cry by yourself. Back then, he placed his palm across all that was left to grieve: the name of Col. Gregg Hartness.

Reprinted with permission The Repository August 22, 2005

BURIAL AT SEA

In my 76th year, the events of my life appear to me, from time to time, as a series of vignettes. Some were significant; most were trivial.

War is the seminal event in the life of everyone that has endured it. Though I fought in Korea and the Dominican Republic and was wounded there Vietnam was my war. Now 37 years have passed and, thankfully, I rarely think of those days in Cambodia, Laos, and the panhandle of North Vietnam where small teams of Americans and Montangards fought much larger elements of the North Vietnamese Army. Instead I see vignettes: some exotic, some mundane:

The smell of Nuc Mam. The
heat, dust, and humidity.
The blue exhaust of cyclos clogging the streets.
Elephants moving silently through the tall grass.
Hard eyes behind the servile smiles of the villagers.
Standing on a mountain in Laos and hearing a tiger roar.
A young girl squeezing my hand as my medic delivered her baby.
The flowing Ao Dais of the young women biking down Tran Hung Dao.
My two years as Casualty Notification Officer in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland.

It was late 1967. I had just returned after 18 months in Vietnam. Casualties were increasing. I moved my family from Indianapolis to Norfolk, rented a house, enrolled my children in their fifth or sixth new school, and bought a second car.

A week later, I put on my uniform and drove 10 miles to Little Creek, Virginia. I hesitated before entering my new office. Appearance is important to career Marines. I was no longer, if ever, a poster Marine. I had returned from my third tour in Vietnam only 30 days before. At 5'9", I now weighed 128 pounds 37 pounds below my normal weight. My uniforms fit ludicrously, my skin was yellow from malaria medication, and I think I had a twitch or two.

I straightened my shoulders, walked into the office, looked at the nameplate on a Staff Sergeant's desk and said, "Sergeant Jolly, I'm Lieutenant Colonel Goodson. Here are my orders and my Qualification Jacket." Sergeant Jolly stood, looked carefully at me, took my orders, stuck out his hand we shook and said, "How long were you there, Colonel?" I replied "18 months this time." Jolly breathed, "Jesus, you must be a slow learner Colonel." I smiled. Jolly said, "Colonel, I'll show you to your office and bring in the Sergeant Major. I said, "No, let's just go straight to his office." Jolly nodded, hesitated, and lowered his voice, "Colonel, the Sergeant Major. He's been in this G*dd@mn job two years. He's packed pretty tight. I'm worried about him." I nodded. Jolly escorted me into the Sergeant Major's office. "Sergeant Major, this is Colonel Goodson, the new Commanding Office. The Sergeant Major stood, extended his hand and said, "Good to see you again, Colonel." I responded, "Hello Walt, how are you?" Jolly looked at me, raised an eyebrow, walked out, and closed the door.

I sat down with the Sergeant Major. We had the obligatory cup of coffee and talked about mutual acquaintances. Walt's stress was palpable. Finally, I said, "Walt, what's the h-ll's wrong?" He turned his chair, looked out the window and said, "George, you're going to wish you were back in Nam before you leave here. I've been in the Marine Corps since 1939. I was in the Pacific 36 months, Korea for 14 months, and Vietnam for 12 months. Now I come here to bury these kids. I'm putting my letter in. I can't take it anymore." I said, "OK Walt. If that's what you want, I'll endorse your request for retirement and do what I can to push it through Headquarters Marine Corps." Sergeant Major Walt Xxxxx retired 12 weeks later. He had been a good Marine for 28 years, but he had seen too much death and too much suffering. He was used up. Over the next 16 months, I made 28 death notifications, conducted 28 military funerals, and made 30 notifications to the families of Marines that were severely wounded or missing in action. Most of the details of those casualty notifications have now, thankfully, faded from memory. Four, however, remain.

MY FIRST NOTIFICATION

My third or fourth day in Norfolk, I was notified of the death of a 19 year old Marine. This notification came by telephone from Headquarters Marine Corps. The information detailed: Name, rank, and serial number. §Name, address, and phone number of next of kin, date of and limited details about the Marine's death. Approximate date the body would arrive at the Norfolk Naval Air Station. §A strong recommendation on whether the casket should be opened or closed.

The boy's family lived over the border in North Carolina, about 60 miles away. I drove there in a Marine Corps staff car. Crossing the state line into North Carolina, I stopped at a small country store / service station / Post Office. I went in to ask directions.

Three people were in the store. A man and woman approached the small Post Office window. The man held a package. The Storeowner walked up and addressed them by name, "Hello John. Good morning Mrs. Cooper." I was stunned. My casualty's next-of-kin's name was John Cooper! I hesitated, then stepped forward and said, "I beg your pardon. Are you Mr. and Mrs. John Copper of (address.)"

The father looked at me-I was in uniform-and then, shaking, bent at the waist, and vomited. His wife looked horrified at him and then at me. Understanding came into her eyes and she collapsed in slow motion. I think I caught her before she hit the floor. The owner took a bottle of whiskey out of a drawer and handed it to Mr. Cooper who drank. I answered their questions for a few minutes. Then I drove them home in my staff car. The storeowner locked the store and followed in their truck. We stayed an hour or so until the family began arriving.

I returned the storeowner to his business. He thanked me and said, "Mister, I wouldn't have your job for a million dollars." I shook his hand and said; "Neither would I." I vaguely remember the drive back to Norfolk. Violating about five Marine Corps regulations, I drove the staff car straight to my house. I sat with my family while they ate dinner, went into the den, closed the door, and sat there all night, alone.

My Marines steered clear of me for days. I had made my first death notification.

THE FUNERALS

Weeks passed with more notifications and more funerals. I borrowed Marines from the local Marine Corps Reserve and taught them to conduct a military funeral: how to carry a casket, how to fire the volleys and how to fold the flag. When I presented the flag to the mother, wife, or father, I always said, "All Marines share in your grief." I had been instructed to say, "On behalf of a grateful nation." I didn't think the nation was grateful, so I didn't say that. Sometimes, my emotions got the best of me and I couldn't speak. When that happened, I just handed them the flag and touched a shoulder. They would look at me and nod. Once a mother said to me, "I'm so sorry you have this terrible job." My eyes filled with tears and I leaned over and kissed her.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION

Six weeks after my first notification, I had another. This was a young PFC. I drove to his mother's house. As always, I was in uniform and driving a Marine Corps staff car. I parked in front of the house, took a deep breath, and walked towards the house. Suddenly the door flew open, a middle-aged woman rushed out. She looked at me and ran across the yard, screaming "NO! NO! NO! NO!"

I hesitated. Neighbors came out. I ran to her, grabbed her, and whispered stupid things to reassure her. She collapsed. I picked her up and carried her into the house. Eight or nine neighbors followed. Ten or fifteen later, the father came in followed by ambulance personnel. I have no recollection of leaving. The funeral took place about two weeks later. We went through the drill. The mother never looked at me. The father looked at me once and shook his head sadly.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION

One morning, as I walked in the office, the phone was ringing. Sergeant Jolly held the phone up and said, "You've got another one, Colonel." I nodded, walked into my office, picked up the phone, took notes, thanked the officer making the call I have no idea why and hung up. Jolly, who had listened, came in with a special Telephone Directory that translates telephone numbers into the person's address and place of employment.

The father of this casualty was a Longshoreman. He lived a mile from my office. I called the Longshoreman's Union Office and asked for the Business Manager. He answered the phone, I told him who I was, and asked for the father's schedule. The Business Manager asked, "Is it his son?" I said nothing. After a moment, he said, in a low voice, "Tom is at home today." I said, "Don't call him. I'll take care of that." The Business Manager said, "Aye, Aye Sir," and then explained, "Tom and I were Marines in WWII." I got in my staff car and drove to the house. I was in uniform. I knocked and a woman in her early forties answered the door. I saw instantly that she was clueless. I asked, "Is Mr. Smith home?" She smiled pleasantly and responded, "Yes, but he's eating breakfast now. Can you come back later?" I said, "I'm sorry. It's important, I need to see him now."

She nodded, stepped back into the beach house and said, "Tom, it's for you." A moment later, a ruddy man in his late forties, appeared at the door. He looked at me, turned absolutely pale, steadied himself, and said, "Jesus Christ man, he's only been there three weeks!"

BURIAL AT SEA

Months passed. More notifications and more funerals. Then one day while I was running, Sergeant Jolly stepped outside the building and gave a loud whistle, two fingers in his mouth I never could do that and held an imaginary phone to his ear. Another call from Headquarters Marine Corps. I took notes, said, "Got it." and hung up. I had stopped saying "Thank You" long ago. Jolly, "Where?" Me, "Eastern Shore of Maryland. The father is a retired Chief Petty Officer. His brother will accompany the body back from Vietnam." Jolly shook his head slowly, straightened, and then said, "This time of day, it'll take three hours to get there and back. I'll call the Naval Air Station and borrow a helicopter and I'll have Captain Tolliver get one of his men to meet you and drive you to the Chief's home."

He did, and 40 minutes later, I was knocking on the father's door. He opened the door, looked at me, then looked at the Marine standing at parade rest beside the car, and asked, "Which one of my boys was it, Colonel?" I stayed a couple of hours, gave him all the information, my office and home phone number and told him to call me, anytime.

He called me that evening about 2300 (11:00PM). "I've gone through my boy's papers and found his will. He asked to be buried at sea. Can you make that happen?" I said, "Yes I can, Chief. I can and I will."

My wife who had been listening said, "Can you do that?" I told her, "I have no idea. But I'm going to break my ass trying." I called Lieutenant General Alpha Bowser, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, at home about 2330, explained the situation, and asked, "General, can you get me a quick appointment with the Admiral at Atlantic Fleet Headquarters?" General Bowser said, "George, you be there tomorrow at 0900. He will see you."

I was and the Admiral did. He said coldly, "How can the Navy help the Marine Corps, Colonel." I told him the story. He turned to his Chief of Staff and said, "Which is the sharpest destroyer in port?" The Chief of Staff responded with a name. The Admiral called the ship, "Captain, you're going to do a burial at sea. You'll report to a Marine Lieutenant Colonel Goodson until this mission is completed." He hung up, looked at me, and said, "The next time you need a ship, Colonel, call me. You don't have to sic Al Bowser on my ass." I responded, "Aye Aye, Sir" and got the h-II out of his office.

I went to the ship and met with the Captain, Executive Officer, and the Senior Chief. Sergeant Jolly and I trained the ship's crew for four days. Then Jolly raised a question none of us had thought of. He said, "These government caskets are air tight. How do we keep it from floating?"

All the high priced help including mesa there looking dumb. Then the Senior Chief stood and said, "Come on Jolly. I know a bar where the retired guys from World War II hang out." They returned a couple of hours later, slightly the worst for wear, and said, "It's simple; we cut four 12" holes in the outer shell of the casket on each side and insert 300 lbs of lead in the foot end of the casket. We can handle that, no sweat."

The day arrived. The ship and the sailors looked razor sharp. General Bowser, the Admiral, a US Senator, and a Navy Band were on board. The sealed casket was brought aboard and taken below for modification. The ship got underway to the 12-fathom depth. The sun was hot. The ocean flat. The casket was brought aft and placed on a catafalque. The Chaplin spoke. The volleys were fired. The flag was removed, folded, and I gave it to the father. The band played "Eternal Father Strong to Save." The casket was raised slightly at the head and it slid into the sea.

The heavy casket plunged straight down about six feet. The incoming water collided with the air pockets in the outer shell. The casket stopped abruptly, rose straight out of the water about three feet, stopped, and slowly slipped back into the sea. The air bubbles rising from the sinking casket sparkled in the in the sunlight as the casket disappeared from sight forever.

The next morning I called a personal friend, Lieutenant General Oscar Peatross, at Headquarters Marine Corps and said, "General, get me the f*ck out of here. I can't take this sh!t anymore." I was transferred two weeks later. I was a good Marine but, after 17 years, I had seen too much death and too much suffering. I was used up.

Vacating the house, my family and I drove to the office in a two-car convoy. I said my goodbyes. Sergeant Jolly walked out with me. He waved at my family, looked at me with tears in his eyes, came to attention, saluted, and said, "Well Done, Colonel. Well Done."

I felt as if I had received the Medal of Honor!
LtCol George Goodson

Damn good story.....
From Clem (currie)
MSgt USMC Ret.

THINGS THEY CARRIED....

They carried P-38 can openers and heat tabs, watches and dog tags, insect repellent, gum, cigarettes, Zippo lighters, salt tablets, compress bandages, ponchos, Kool-Aid, two or three canteens of water, iodine tablets, sterno, LRRP- rations, and C-rations stuffed in socks. They carried standard fatigues, jungle boots, bush hats, flak jackets and steel pots.

They carried the M-16 assault rifle. They carried trip flares and Claymore mines, M-60 machine guns, the M-70 grenade launcher, M-14's, CAR-15's, Stoners, Swedish K's, 66mm Laws, shotguns, .45 caliber pistols, silencers, the sound of bullets, rockets, and choppers, and sometimes the sound of silence. They carried C-4 plastic explosives, an assortment of hand grenades, PRC-25 radios, knives and machetes, Not all at once.

Some carried napalm, CBU's and large bombs. Some risked their lives to >rescue others. Some escaped the fear, but dealt with the death and damage.

Some made very hard decisions, and some just tried to survive. They carried malaria, dysentery, ringworms and leaches. They carried the land itself as it hardened on their boots. They carried stationery, pencils, and pictures of their loved ones - real and imagined. They carried love for people in the real world and love for one another. And sometimes they disguised that love with phrases like, "Don't mean nothin'!"

They carried memories for the most part; they carried themselves with poise and a kind of dignity. Now and then, there were times when panic set in, and people squealed or wanted to, but couldn't; when they twitched and made moaning sounds and covered their heads and cried, "Dear God."

And they hugged the earth and fired their weapons blindly and cringed and begged for the noise to stop and went wild and made stupid promises to themselves and God and their parents, hoping not to die.

They carried the traditions of the United States military, and memories and images of those who served before them. They carried grief, terror, longing and their reputations.

They carried the soldier's greatest fear: the embarrassment of dishonor. They crawled into tunnels, walked point, and advanced under fire, so as not to die of embarrassment. They were afraid of dying, but too afraid to show it.

They carried the emotional baggage of men and women who might die at any moment.

They carried the weight of the world.

THEY CARRIED EACH OTHER

Author Unknown

Presidential Unit Citation World War II

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

Ninth Marines (Plus Detachment from 3rd Assault Signal Company)
3rd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force

For service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism in action with the enemy during the operation for Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, from 25 February to 16 March 1945. During the period 25 February to 16 March 1945, the 9th Marines operated continuously in the front lines in combat against the enemy. Attacking on the morning of 25 February, the 9th Marines in a furious three-day assault shattered the enemy's main line of resistance north of Motoyama Airfield No.2, decisively cut his communications, and rendered inevitable the final success of the campaign. That success was gained in spite of terrain which conferred every advantage on the defenders, and in the face of positions prepared by the enemy with every artifice, every installation, and every weapon available to provide a defense as nearly invulnerable to assault as enemy ingenuity could devise. The cost of that success in casualties was more severe than that in any other single action in which the Division participated. Every company commander and a crippling proportion of the other key personnel were killed or wounded. In the normal course of human experience, the Regiment could not have been expected soon again to wage a vigorous campaign, but resuming the attack on the following day, the 9th Marines continued a steady advance. Later in a bloody two-week operation, the Regiment also reduced a principal portion of the prepared positions occupied by the enemy's reserve. In spite of enormous losses, and although the exhausting strains of the previous fighting had brought the surviving officers and men to the limit of human endurance, the Regiment rose gallantly to the situation, successfully executed a night attack in terrain so difficult as to make maintenance of direction and control very nearly impossible, and by the evening of 16 March, the last important enemy stronghold on Iwo Jima was entered by the 9th Marines. Advancing continuously against the fiercest and most skillful enemy yet encountered in the Central Pacific, and accepting without hesitation losses totaling Two Thousand eighty-nine Officers and men, the 9th Marines very materially contributed to the successful culmination of an assault operation which is considered to have been the most difficult in the history of the U.S. Marine Corps. The gallantry and determination in action of the 9th Marines were extraordinary and reflected the highest credit upon this gallant regiment and the United States Naval Service.

THE PROUD WARRIOR

% Daniel Beckham

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