

THE PROUD WARRIOR



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

National Newsletter of the 1/9 Network, Inc.

December 2005

THE COMMANDING OFFICER
1st Battalion, 9th Marines
3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco 96602

10 Dec 1967

Dear Family of a Marine of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines:

My most sincere greeting to all of the loved ones at home from all of us of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines in Vietnam. It seems fitting and proper, as the Commanding Officer of this Battalion and with the concurrence of the officers and men, that I communicate with you and express our feelings as the holiday season approaches.

You have given us the finest men that this Battalion, and the Marine Corps, has ever had. That you are concerned about us is evident from the many letters we receive and the varied assorted packages that you send. That you have a lot invested in us is evident, as I take proud notice of the dedicated husbands and sons you have sent.

Please let me try to tell you how important you really are. Each and every man in the Marines has a very important two-fold job to accomplish while he is here. One part of that job is to win this war. Many times we are reminded of the importance of this job when we experience the personal dangers inherent in this war. Many times we thank God that we are able to fight this war so that you, our loved ones will be spared the frustrations, mental and physical anguish that war brings. Our "Native Land" has been spared this for many years. These Marines of yours are giving their best so that lasting peace, where you live, will continue.

Secondly, each man has another important job; coming back to you when his tour is finished. To this end, be assured that every bit of his energy, professional skill and talent are being put forth. In this light, your moral support by your encouraging letters and reports concerning his loved ones and his home, give him the peace of mind so necessary for him to

continue his winning ways. Please continue this very vital help with your letters of encouragement.

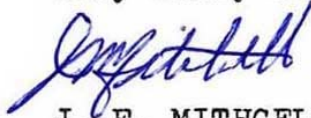
On Thanksgiving Day, we gathered in Church Services and we thanked God for many things. We thanked Him for life, safety and for those who have died so that we might live; we are indeed, humbly grateful. We also thanked Him for you who have given so much, as we prayed for your safety and health back home.

This Battalion has had an impressive share of the load in fighting this war. I thought you would like to know that in every instance it's members have accredited themselves to the highest degree. Their valor, dedication, devotion to duty and country, will be one of my most cherished memories. You can be justly proud of them.

This letter comes to you at a joyous time in the year. When we think about all of you, home and the holiday season, we wish we were with you. But by continuing to do our job we know that we are making it possible for us to be together in future holiday seasons. We want you to share these thoughts and to join in this hope for the future.

In the name of all of us in the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, I wish you every blessing of this season knowing that the New Year of 1968 will find us still free, still giving so much that others might have freedom, full of peace and Thanksgiving.

Very Truly Yours,



J. F. MITHCELL

Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Commanding

**The above is a copy of the original December 10, 1967
Christmas letter sent to families of Marines serving with 1/9.**

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Brothers,

I hope your holidays were fun and happy and that you got some time to spend with your families. Thank you all for sending Holiday Greetings. We have a great family here in the Network, and I'd like to thank some of them. To Roger Ligon, Frank Healy, Ted Vdorick, Ben Baldwin, Bob Selleck, Marco Polo, Dan Latham, Mike Tripp and Rick Roth, Thank you and your wives for coming to Connecticut and joining me at one of the country's largest Marine Corps Balls. Your presence there made it a complete success. The young Marines just returning from Iraq were honored to meet "The Walking Dead".

As most of you know, I've spent the past year meeting with and filling out forms with the IRS (Not something I'd recommend anyone doing). All the paperwork has been submitted and filed and we're just waiting to hear from them as to our status. **A major change has to take affect immediately; dues of \$20.00 a year will be mandatory. In 2005 only 129 members sent in**

dues. (129 out of 1300); come on guys get it in the mail. Many people have said in their letters that they have forgotten if they'd paid or not (which is a great reason for a lifetime membership fee alone). I have started sending out Dues Paid cards to all members who've sent in dues since Aug. It will take me a little time to mail them all out, but, they're on the way. In next summer's newsletter I'll have Dan insert a dues form for next year. Thanks to the people who sent in an extra donation, we can continue to carry the people who don't send in anything. At this time everyone can continue to receive the newsletter. One of the ways we can cut the costs of mailing it, is to have you sign up to receive it through e-mail.

Roger Ligon has accepted to head a committee of his choice and decide the qualifications to apply for a 1/9 scholarship. When he and his committee establish them, we'll publish them and hopefully award them at the reunion in September.

It was a shame that the Marine Corps cancelled the reactivation of 1/9 in October; we'll just have to wait till we hear from them. Roger Jacobs has volunteered to head up a committee including Doug Todd and Doc Gaspard, to coordinate hotels and information as soon as we get it.

The Branson Reunion planning is doing great. I spoke with the Reunion Planners yesterday and tied up a few loose ends. They assured me that you'll all start receiving your brochures at the beginning of February. We're going to try and have a Golf Tournament fundraiser on the Tuesday of reunion week; they tell me that there's a great little course near the Hotel. If anyone of you has ever run an event like this, we could use your help by volunteering to head up this thing. The funds received would help pay for scholarships and Relief Fund. Speaking of Relief fund, a big Thank You goes out to the following people. Glen Goff * Tom Mahady * Joe Green * Andy Alonso LtCol. Budinger * Tom Larimer * Lt. Col Clawson Sgt. Maj. Paradine * John Crew * Alfred James Franklin Waller Sr. * Stephen Welden * Ed Donegan Fred Lange * Brian Downey * Doug Everhart for their contributions to the "Katrina Relief Fund". We're still trying to find some of our brothers who've been displaced from this disaster.

Don't forget to go to our Official Web Site at:

www.1stbattalion9thmarinesfirebase.net to chat with brothers or get information. I know that Casey Piatt and Vice President Larry Gugle have a lot on their hands running the site, but, are doing a great job. Keep up the good work.

Semper Fi is forever,
Bill Hesse, National President

1/9 REACTIVATION NEWS

The reactivation scheduled for October 26, 2005 has been put on hold. Look for further news here or on the Firebase for updates.

2006 REUNION NEWS

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

Round trip airport shuttle, 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 (possibly Feb. 2006). Plan your vacation time now and start that special cookie jar.

Semper Fi is forever,
Bill Hesse, National President

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

The True Meaning of Christmas is.....

"I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11

God Bless and Semper Fi,

Blaine

Blaine E. Moyer PO Box 4391 Rio Rico, AZ 85648
Home Phone: 520-377-2535, Cell Phone: 520-841-2632
E-mail: magblaine@msn.com

Blaine's PSA readings are up again and he is taking a course of antibiotics with retesting scheduled in the middle of January. Our prayers are with you Blaine.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"It is hard for free people to comprehend the mix of extremism and hatred that leads terrorist to murder people sent to help." – General Michael W. Hagee, Commandant.

From remarks at the Memorial ceremony (October 23, 2005) for the Marines Sailors and Soldiers killed in Beirut Lebanon on October 23 1983. 220 Marines, 18 Sailors and 3 Soldiers died on that fateful day after a delivery truck packed with 12,000 pounds of explosives was rammed into the building where they slept. The Memorial is outside of Camp Johnson near Jacksonville, North Carolina on Highway 24.

FROM THE EDITOR

I hope every one of you and your families had a Happy Christmas, Hanukah, or Kwanzaa and hope the New Year is great! Looks like this will be another special year as we gear up for the National Reunion in Branson. I hope to make this one, as I have missed the last two and a couple of minis.

I am sitting here writing a check out for dues, I for one want to see the newsletter to continue. I do have options in mind to cut costs; go to 3rd & 4th class mailing and use the internet to Email the newsletter. First class has been used mainly to get the current address changes back, but this does not seem to work. With a newsletter going out every quarter, people are ignoring the little yellow sticker that says their mail is being forwarded. The forwarding stops at six months, so the member has to let us know of a change. Emailing is an option or a notice that it is available on a website for viewing.

Semper Fi! Dan o out!

REBEL DAVE'S WEB SITE

This is my web site I really hope you like it. I and Helen had a hard time putting it together. Please be kind and sign my guest book when you are done.

http://www.100megsfree4.com/ldyfairydust/America/Rebel_Dave.html

Semper Fi, Da Reb
Dave

THINGS THEY CARRIED

I have a comment on the September issue of the newsletter page 11 Things They Carried. You have author unknown at the bottom. It was actually written by Army Vet Tim O'Brien in his book, "Things They Carried." Thought you should know.

Semper Fi, Larry Foster

DURN GOOD

Member David Hochstrasser is offering members special prices on Durn Good seasonings. If you want more information see the website www.durngood.com or write David at djhoch@durngood.com or info@durngood.com Or call 919-554-9924

MINI ROLLING THUNDER

I was talking to Mac McKenzie the other day and he came up with the idea of a mini Rolling Thunder into Branson for the next National Reunion. Those of us who ride motorcycles could come from all directions and either meet at Mac's house or for those who are farther east, join up in Springfield and all ride down to Branson together. I thought that was a great idea. I posted it in the 1/9 website and it has already generated some interest. I also have been passing it around to some of my West Coast guys and they like the idea too and I already have some takers. I plan on riding over from California with any of the West Coast guys who want to join in and we will go into Mac's place in Cathyville, Kansas.

Phil Sutherland

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: bravodave1nine@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.

VETERANS BENEFITS

Survivor benefits from the VA are at this website:

<http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors/>

or

click on the "Survivors benefits" button on the left panel of www.vba.va.gov

This is a National Archives website that may help you find or get a copy of your military records

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/get-service-records.html>

Veteran's Organizations Lose Voice

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Steve Buyer (R-Ind) recently announced that veteran's service organizations will no longer have the opportunity to present testimony before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, a tradition of legislative presentations by veteran's service organizations that dates back to the 1950s. The joint hearings have been held each year to allow the elected leaders of veterans groups to discuss their organization's legislative agenda and foremost concerns with the lawmakers who have jurisdiction over federal veterans programs. Senators and Representatives who serve on those committees also get the opportunity to address the hundreds of constituent members from these organizations' who make the annual pilgrimage to Capitol Hill. How do you feel about this action? **Let your public officials know how you feel!**

BOOK REVIEWS

VOICES OF COURAGE

The Battle for Khe Sanh, Vietnam

Another book on Khe Sanh; it may not be in depth as others, but is good reading. The kicker is that it has 2 audio CD's with it that has a various Marines telling their stories, some by 1/9 Marines. On page 143 there is a picture of Jose Ruiz (photo by Tom Lynch), who was Killed-in Action on April 16, 1968.

VOICES OF COURAGE, *The Battle for Khe Sanh, Vietnam*, @2005, by Ronald J. Drez and Douglas Brinkley, Bulfinch Press, 186 pages, ISBN 0-8212-6196-7, Hardback edition.

A CHRISTMAS POEM

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.

My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.

The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.

My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.

In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But, I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.

Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,
Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.

My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.

Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!"

Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts.

To the window that danced with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."

"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
That separates you from the darkest of times.

No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December,"
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always
remembers."

My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam',
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,
The red, white, and blue... an American flag.

I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.

I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother.

Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."

"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?"

It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.

To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.

For when we come home, either standing or dead,
To know you remember we fought and we bled.

Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us.

Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to
our U.S. service men and women for our being able to
celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to
pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think
of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves
for us. .

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN
30th Naval Construction Regiment
OIC, Logistics Cell One
Al Taqqadum, Iraq

Thanks to George Einhorn for this contribution

IN MEMORIAM

Bertil "Doc" Olsen, passed away July 5, 2005 in Bristol, Rhode Island of Agent Orange related Cancer. He was born on November 15, 1940. Bertil served with Bravo 1/9 in Vietnam in 1965-1966 and served in the US Navy doing tours in Vietnam in 1968-1970. He retired at the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer. He was a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America Providence Chapter 273.

Timothy W. Moynihan, passed away on October 25, 2005. Timothy served with Charlie Company 1944-1945 (no other information available).

Our Condolences to the families of these Marines.

These Marines were recently found and are now included in our list of 1/9 casualties in Vietnam.

First Name	Last Name	Rank	Hometown	State	Date	Panel	Row	Company
John Mathew	Ainsworth Jr.	PFC	Stonington	CT	07/02/67	22E	94	Bravo
Richard Allan	Baker	PFC	Mansfield	OH	1/15/69	34W	4	Alpha
Daniel William	Brady	LCPL	Norristown	PA	7/2/67	22E	97	Bravo
Robert Anthony	Chapp	SGT	Santa Ana	CA	4/14/67	18E	25	Bravo
Brian Patrick	Collins	PFC	Walpole	MA	9/12/68	44W	34	Charlie
Gaylon Daryl	Davoult	LCPL	Oklahoma City	OK	7/29/67	22E	83	Delta
Steven William	Decker	PFC	Woodlawn	MD	9/18/68	43W	26	Alpha
Michael Gary	Dinkins	PFC	Titusville	FL	2/21/69	32W	70	Delta
John Robert	Dowling	PFC	Akron	IA	6/19/68	56W	33	Alpha
Fiapai	Fanua Jr	PVT	Wilmington	CA	12/6/68	37W	63	Charlie
Basilio	Gomez	PFC	San Antonio	TX	6/18/68	56W	21	H&S
Stephen Russell	Gross	HM3	Savannah	GA	6/6/69	23W	87	H&S
Leonard Z.	Gurwitz	LCPL	Costa Mesa	CA	8/12/68	49W	53	Alpha
Walter John	Howard Jr	CPL	Forsyth	MT	9/30/68	42W	46	Alpha
Jimmy Dale	Jordan	PFC	Riverbank	CA	5/17/66	7E	72	Alpha
Walter Aloysius	Joyce	LCPL	Scarsdale	NY	2/22/69	32W	79	Delta
Charles Brian	Keathley	LCPL	Brooksville	FL	7/14/68	52W	28	Bravo
Daniel Thomas	Kelley	LCPL	Fort Worth	TX	5/15/67	20E	1	Alpha
Larry Raymond	Lambert	PFC	Winston Salem	NC	9/11/66	10E	87	H&S
Johnnie Lee	McDaniel	PFC	Agency	MO	5/14/67	19E	120	Alpha
Henry	McDonald	LCPL	Flushing	NY	12/11/66	13E	35	Alpha
Larry Dee	McKinnon	LCPL	Sacramento	CA	6/30/67	22E	89	Delta
James Robert	Page	PFC	Genoa	IL	6/11/67	21E	85	Alpha
Wayne Richard	Pollard	LCPL	Darrington	WA	10/13/67	27E	102	Alpha
Rene Thomas	Pruden	PFC	New York	NY	7/19/68	51W	13	Bravo
Howard Taylor	Roberts	PFC	Houston	TX	5/31/68	52W	16	Charlie
Robert Lennon	Roebuck	PFC	Knoxville	TN	2/26/69	31W	72	Delta
Manual Aguiar	Soares	LCPL	Fall River	MA	10/8/68	41W	32	H&S
Frank	Tunstill Jr	LCPL	Los Angeles	CA	3/19/67	16E	116	Charlie
James Dennis	West	LCPL	West Milton	OH	5/15/67	20E	4	Alpha

Our thanks to those who continue to do this work.

Information Needed

In searching the various databases to find our brothers who were casualties in Vietnam, information found also resulted in discrepancies from our current list of casualties. Recently a database (the Coffelt Database) has been found that has some of the Marines listed with other units (see below). If you have any information that can verify that any of the Marines below were KIA with 1/9 and refutes the data below please let me know. There has been an exhaustive search of the rosters and other Vietnam Memorial pages to verify some of this information. In some cases service numbers were different from those that were listed on our rosters, in other cases fellow Marines that served with the individual indicated that they were from other units. Again, if you have any information confirming that any of these Marines died while serving with 1/9 please let me know.

Dan Beckham
dano@sssnet.com

First Name	Last Name	Information	Listed Unit
Terry	Adams	NOT ON ROSTER, KIA QUANG NAM PROV, 1/9 IN QUANG TRI PROV	E 1/2
Dean	Armstrong	KIA W/ 5TH MARINES QUANG TIN	3/5
Michael	Bailey	SERVICE NO MATCH, KIA IN QUANG NGAI PROV, 1/9 IN QUANG TRI	L 3/26
Michael	Barnes	SERVICE NO MATCH, KIA QUANG NAM , 1/9 IN QUANG TRI	B 1/5
Michael	Bell	DELETE NOT ON ANY ROSTERS	I 3/4
Michael	Brady	NOT ON ROSTER KIA IN QUANG NGAI PROV, 1/9 IN QUANG TRI PROV	1ST CAP
David	Cooper	FELLOW CORSPMANS ACCOUNT OF DEATH WITH 1/1 VRTUAL WALL	1/1
Jaime	Esquivel	KIA QUANG NAM, 1/9 IN QUANG TRI PROV	F 1/2
Timothy	Hall	KIA QUANG NGAI PROV IS COMBINED ACTION GROUP KIAS - WEBSITE	CAP 1-3
Max	Lisenby	NOT ON ROSTER KIA IN QUANG NAM 1/9 IN QUANG TRI PROV MAY 69	C 1/26
Richard	Pollard	DIED IN QUANG NAM PROV (note Wayne Richard Pollard (added))	
Charles D.	Smith	ROSTER NOTES TRANSFER TO L 3/4	L 3/4
Allen	Thomas	DIED QUANG NAM PROV, 1/9 IN QUANG TRI PROV ASHUA VALLEY	F 2/5
Edgar	Vallecillo	Not on Roster	HQ 1STMAR DIV
Ronald	Varney	D 1/9 SER NBR NOT MATCH, still on roster in may 69	H&S 3/9
James Ernest	Wardlow	NOT ON ROSTERS, KIA QUANG NAM PROV	G 2/5
Lamar	Wesley	WE HAVE ELMER L. SERVICE NO MATCH, OURS ON THRU NOV 68	A 1/26
Charles	White	KIA THUA THIEN PROV, 1/9 IN KHE SANH	1ST ENG BN
James	Wiley	KIA IN QUANG NAM PROVIENCE, 1/9 AT VANDEGRIFT	
O'Neal	Wright	DIED IN QUANG NAM PROV, 1/9 IN KHE SANH	I 3/5
Richard	Zimmerman	DIED IN QUANG NAM PROV, 1/9 IN QUANTRI PROV, ASHUA VALLEY	C 1/5

Fred's Beer Run – 1967 Camp JJ Carroll RVN

Has anyone heard of the famous "**Camp JJ Carroll Beer Run**"....? It involved Charlie Company 1/9 and a Fred V. Smith from North Carolina in September of 1967 at Camp JJ Carroll.

Fred is the most modest man you'll likely ever meet and to this day remains the same. We are life long friends and I'll consider myself very lucky to stand Guard Duty with him, if we're called to do so for The Lord. Anyway, Fred is a big boy from North Carolina who has done some hunting and knows how to smell out the rats.

In Vietnam, Fred always displayed a keen sense of where 'Charlie' was located...he saved many a good Marine with this ability. Also, he was able to make this famous run and even today, I'd vote for him for President of "These here United States." So here is the true story, but I got to tell you, Fred will say...well, I don't remember that, are you sure?

It was a late night, around 2230 hours and rockets started to rain in like, "rain" from Dong Ha Mountain across the valley. Charlie loved that mountain for he could see in every direction for miles and miles. Camp Carroll is on a plateau that stood out for him like a target that said..."Hit me, if you can".....and he did that night. I'm betting the rockets were not more than eighty feet apart upon impact and thirty seconds between launches. I've never seen or heard so many damn rockets, but none of that seemed to bother Fred as the entire 3rd squad of the 3rd platoon ran to the north perimeter of Camp JJ Carroll that night. We waited for Charlie to pay us a visit for surly this action was a 'prep' for a ground assault. We had trenches, but Fred stood up and at 6' 3" to 6'4", he made one heck of a target....I yelled to him to get down. I was his Squad Leader and I was always saying that to him...of course I'm just a 'stub' when compared to him. He got down for a few moments, and then rose again. This time he was sniffing the air just like a coon dog would. The very next thing I know, he's running to the rear area away from the trench on the northern perimeter. I was asked..."where's he going...what he is afraid of?" "Gentlemen, I don't know, but Fred is afraid of nothing...he'll be back." I prayed that this time for sure, I'd be right. Please remember that rockets are still raining in and we are ready for a ground assault at any moment. Rockets were impacting causing flashes of light and of course the famous whistle of shrapnel flying through the air. My God, here comes Fred carrying two cases of beer like a waiter with a tray of food being delivered. This is a sight that will remain with me forever; rockets raining in and Fred running with the beer for his fellow Marines. Sounds like a movie or at least a Medal of Honor move to me! He made it to our trench and we all proceeded to consume two beers each and sing the Marine Corps Hymn and of course, taunt "Charlie." It seems as though the Officers had a beer tent that was penetrated by rocket shrapnel and that caused the beer to foam up and Fred being 'alert' noticed it. He could have been elected President of the United States that night.....Love you, Fred!!

SEMPER FI TO FRED.....& ALL MARINES, EVERYWHERE !!
"Good Night Chesty.....wherever you are!! "
Chuck Sawyer "C" 1/9.....3/3 Actual 1967

A TEXAN LANDS IN SYDNEY

A Texan lands in Sydney, and is picked up by a taxi. After requesting a tour of the city, he starts into a tirade about the small town airport and how they have larger runways on their ranches in Texas.

They are soon crossing the Sydney Harbor bridge, and the man is further unimpressed - "I have a duck pond bigger than that harbor and an ornamental bridge to span it that makes this look like a toy."

The Sydney-Newcastle expressway also gets his scorn, "Is this a road, or a track?"

So when a kangaroo jumped out in front of the cab, causing the sudden and severe application of the brakes, the driver couldn't help himself - "Stupid grass hoppers!" from Danny McWain (he lives in Texas)

"Honor is earned, so honor is given"

By Bill Burke - October 10, 2005

"This is a reflection on life in the hospice unit of a Veterans Administration Medical Center where I work as a volunteer. I am often asked by friends and family about how the veterans who have found their way here to their final beds are treated by the nation they served and what the remaining days of their lives are like in the sadness of imminent passing.

Not all here were at the level of valor of a Medal of Honor winner, nor holders of the Combat Infantry Badge; nor did all here proudly serve with the Airborne or Navy Seals or Rangers or other elite units. But all do have one thing in common -- by call or by choice, they carried the colors.

Nary a one regarded himself or herself as "too educated to fight" or expressed a "loathing" for the military (recent contemporary political thought). And it was by that service, before they ever needed the helping hands and care they now know, that they earned this place of honor. In the final days, they come once again to be among their memories, with their band of military brothers, back with family.

It is a place where one is reminded often of a concept that once prevailed in America: the great melting pot. Neither rank nor race nor gender nor wealth nor celebrity status is determinative. The resident in each bed is special; each patient's daily needs are carefully monitored and addressed. Often those needs are physical, immediate care. At other times it is simply the touch of a human hand, or giving one's undivided attention at bedside, just to listen as memories of service time and post-service time seem determined to surface one last time and be heard.

In the hospice unit there are no wounded from Iraq or Afghanistan; those currently in the brotherhood of pain are being treated with equal honor in the post-surgery units of VA medical centers across the country. Those here, rather, are the warriors from wars and service past. The strong legs that once enabled them to climb a precipitous cliff under full pack at night, or endure a scorching trek through desert or jungle, or endure the terror of the unknown in combat or to supply those who were out on the point no longer respond. Being at bedside often is difficult, at other times tenderly rewarding, as they, or their families, speak about their lives:

Jim was a farmhand from Tennessee who served in an artillery unit in Germany. He has relatives across the state line in Oregon but he never gets visitors. He is among family here.

Ann Marie was a WAC. She has moments of lucidity, but much of the time her mind is taken with memories now. When I visit, she thinks I am her boyfriend, Joe: "Hello, Joe. Hold my hand, Joe. Where shall we go when I leave here, Joe?" I hold her hand and gently caress it and talk softly with her. While I am with her, I am Joe.

John is a survivor of the Bataan Death March of World War II, regarded by many as the icon for man's brutality on man in war. He has many visits from a large, loving family. At times I am privileged to sit beside to provide a respite to visiting family members. It is hard to see this once incredibly courageous, strong man now struggling for life as he struggled during his hard captivity so long ago. He and his fellow warriors were cut off from supplies of food, medicine and ammunition after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. They were, of necessity, abandoned by the severely crippled military because of the attack. Their valiant resistance gave the eagle the precious time to sharpen its claws and in just six months America went on the offensive and began to roll back the perimeter of the Japanese advance. They held the line while chanting their defiance: "No Mama... No Papa... No Uncle Sam!... We're the Battling Bastards of Bataan!"

Jim was a black enlisted man, Navy. He could no longer talk when I met him, but his ever-present warm smile made his talk unnecessary. I talked and Jim nodded. He apparently never received visitors, so it was especially devastating when I went to visit one day and learned that Jim had crossed over since my last visit. Had he died alone? In some fit of concern I raced for an answer. It was a relief to learn that somehow, inexplicably, two of Jim's friends had found him on Jim's final day; they were at his side at passage. Joy in the midst of sadness when angels come to visit. Now, if friends are not near, and staff is too busy with

others to ensure that someone is at bedside when the end is near, a volunteer has made himself available around the clock, on call, to ensure that none of the family dies alone -- ever.

When passage comes, a ceremony is in place. A red-white-blue "passage quilt" is placed over the deceased. A small flag is placed at the door to indicate a recent departure. The quilt remains in place until the deceased is escorted out of the unit according to family desires. The quilt then is returned to the bed where it was, and there remains, until the bed is needed for another American veteran.

Even those who will never be present in the hospice unit are recognized and honored. Just down the corridor from the hospice unit is the coffee shop. Those who are able gather each morning at 1000 hours to visit with each other. Just inside the door is a small round table, with dinner setting for one. This is the POW/MIA table. It is set for one to symbolize all who are missing from the ranks.

There is yet one final place of honor, just down the corridor from the coffee shop. I am moved to incredulity whenever I pass through what I call this "Hall of Heroes." On the wall are the photos and a brief write-up of kids who lived as adults, who volunteered to serve even though underage.

Betty was just 14 when she enlisted in the WACs in WWII; she was uncovered one day when she went for an alteration on her uniform, by her own aunt.

Calvin Graham, at 12, was the youngest combat veteran of World War II. He was on the USS DAKOTA at Guadalcanal, earning the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. Cal died in his bed at home, at age 62. Ricky Schroeder played the man/boy in "Too Young The Hero."

My mind often goes to a tender burial ceremony in Arlington Cemetery, where the first of the fallen in Afghanistan was laid to rest. Michael Spann always wanted to be a Marine. He served with great pride, and subsequently became an operative with the CIA. He was back in the field with the brothers when he died in a prison uprising. At the ceremony, his wife, with her two small children at her side, said some tender words about her fallen hero. Her final words, as the military honor guard lowered Michael Spann into his earned place of honor, were directly to him: "Semper Fi, my love." Or was she speaking for him to a grieving nation?

Honor to one is solace for all. As each of the hospice veterans personally moves toward the imminent front of the line to the inexorable passage that awaits us all, one thing is assured: Honor. Honor earned. Honor due. Honor given 24/7, by a grateful nation."

Bill Burke is a free-lance writer who has spent many years in hospice work. He also worked with the State Department and the CIA, and with an order of Catholic priests in an AIDS hospice in Thailand. Now retired, he is working as a volunteer in several Veterans Administration hospitals in Oregon and Washington to support the troops in war.

POINTS TO PONDER

NIGHT WATCH

A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside. "Your son is here," she said to the old man. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened. Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young uniformed Marine standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand.

The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement. The nurse brought a chair so that the Marine could sit beside the bed.

All through the night the young Marine sat there in the poorly lighted ward, holding the old man's hand and offering him words of love and strength.

Occasionally, the nurse suggested that the Marine move away and rest awhile. He refused. Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was oblivious of her and of the night noises of the hospital - the clanking of the oxygen tank, the laughter of the night staff members exchanging greetings, the cries and moans of the other patients. Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words. The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son all through the night.

Along towards dawn, the old man died. The Marine released the now lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he waited. Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy, but the Marine interrupted her. "Who was that man?" he asked.

The nurse was startled, "He was your father" she answered.

"No, he wasn't," the Marine replied. "I never saw him before in my life."

"Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?"

"I knew right away there had been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized that he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, knowing how much he needed me, I stayed."

The next time someone needs you...be there. Stay. You'll be glad you did.

For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, "Fear not, I will help you." - Isaiah 41:13

FROM DANNY MCWAIN

CHRISTMAS WITH LOUISE

I have seen this story several times since it first appeared in the 1999 Louisville Sentinel. It won first prize for the story about the wildest Christmas dinner. Danny McWain sent this to me a few weeks ago – Editor.

As a joke, my brother used to hang a pair of panty hose over his fireplace before Christmas. He said all he wanted was for Santa to fill them. What they say about Santa checking the list twice must be true because every Christmas morning, although Jay's kids' stockings were overflowed, his poor pantyhose hung sadly empty.

One year I decided to make his dream come true. I put on sunglasses and went in search of an inflatable love doll. They don't sell those things at Walmart. I had to go to an adult bookstore downtown.

If you've never been in an X-rated store, don't go. You'll only confuse yourself. I was there an hour saying things like, "What does this do?" "You're kidding me!" and "Who would buy that?" Finally, I made it to the inflatable doll section. I wanted to buy a standard, uncomplicated doll that could also substitute as a passenger in my truck so I could use the car pool lane during rush hour.

Finding what I wanted was difficult. Love dolls come in many different models. The top of the line, according to the side of the box, could do things I'd only seen in a book on animal husbandry. I settled for 'Lovable Louise.' She was at the bottom of the price scale. To call Louise a "doll" took a huge leap of imagination.

On Christmas Eve, with the help of an old bicycle pump, Louise came to life. My sister-in-law was in on the plan and let me in during the wee morning hours, long after Santa had come and gone, I filled the dangling pantyhose with Louise's pliant legs and bottom. I also ate some cookies and drank what remained of a glass of milk on a nearby tray. I went home, and giggled for a couple of hours.

The next morning my brother called to say that Santa had been to his house and left a present that had made him very happy, but had left the dog confused. She would bark, start to walk away, then come back and bark some more.

We all agreed that Louise should remain in her panty hose so the rest of the family could admire her when they came over for the traditional Christmas dinner.

My grandmother noticed Louise the moment she walked in the door. "What the hell is that?" she asked.

My brother quickly explained, "It's a doll."

"Who would play with something like that?" Granny snapped. I had several candidates in mind, but kept my mouth shut. "Where are her clothes?" Granny continued.

"Boy, that turkey sure smells nice, Granny," Jay said, trying to steer her into the dining room.

But Granny was relentless. "Why doesn't she have any teeth?"

Again, I could have answered, but why would I? It was Christmas and no one wanted to ride in the back of the ambulance saying, "Hang on Granny! Hang on!"

My grandfather, a delightful old man with poor eyesight, sidled up to me and said, "Hey, who's the naked gal by the fireplace?"

I told him she was Jay's friend.

A few minutes later I noticed Grandpa by the mantel, talking to Louise. Not just talking, but actually flirting. It was then that we realized this might be Grandpa's last Christmas at home.

The dinner went well. We made the usual small talk about who had died, who was dying, and who should be killed, when suddenly Louise made a noise that sounded a lot like my father in the bathroom in the morning. Then she lurched from the pantyhose, flew around the room twice, and fell in a heap in front of the sofa. The cat screamed. I passed cranberry sauce through my nose, and Grandpa ran across the room, fell to his knees, and began administering mouth to mouth resuscitation. My brother fell back over his chair and wet his pants and Granny threw down her napkin, stomped out of the room, and sat in the car.

It was indeed a Christmas to treasure and remember.

Later in my brother's garage, we conducted a thorough examination to decided the cause of Louise's collapse. We discovered that Louise had suffered from a hot ember to the back of her right thigh. Fortunately, thanks to a wonder drug called duct tape, we restored her to perfect health.

OTHER CHRISTMAS TIDBITS

In 1605, people in Strasbourg, France, were the first to bring a Christmas tree indoors and adorn it (with sweets), but the tradition didn't reach England until 1841, say Ralph del Pozzo and David High, authors of a new book Christmas Ornaments: Recollections (CollinsDesign).

They add that glass ornaments first replaced sweets in Germany in 1860, and the original silver icicles (in the 1950's) were made of lead. Santa showed up in the early 1800's, but he often looked "skinny, stooped, stern-faced and grim." The plump and jolly version became popular in U.S. print ads in the 1930's.

Believe it or not Jingle Bells, one of the most famous American Christmas songs, was originally written for Thanksgiving! The author and composer of Jingle Bells was a minister called James Pierpoint who composed the song in 1857 for children celebrating his Boston Sunday School Thanksgiving. The song was so popular that it was repeated at Christmas, and indeed Jingle Bells has been reprised ever since. The essence of a traditional Christmas is captured in the lyrics of Jingle Bells and the sound effects using the bells have become synonymous with the arrival of Father Christmas or Santa Claus to the delight of children of all ages!

WHERE WE WERE AT CHRISTMAS

- 12/25/65** The Command Post was located in the vicinity of Marble Mountain (Da Nang).
- 12/25/66** The Command Post was located at USNB Subic Bay Republic of Philippines, having left Vietnam about October 3rd for Camp Schwab Okinawa and then sailing to Subic Bay. 1/9 left the Philippines on December 29th to sail back to Vietnam as part of a SLF.
- 12/25/67** Command Post was located at Camp Evans (at YD652280) and provided for security of PK-17 (ARVN position), Hill 51, Hill 674 and the "Rock Crusher" at Nam Hoa (YD744133).
- 12/25/68** December 25th found 1/9 at Vandegrift Combat base. During December the Battalion was at the following locations.
 - 1-24 December Da Krong Valley (Operation Dawson River)
 - 24-27 December Vandegrift Combat base
 - 27-30 Cau Viet R&R center
 - 30-31 Vandegrift Combat Base and Ca Lu
- 12/28/69** 1/9 left Vietnam in July 1969, so the Battalion was most likely at Okinawa.

1/9 MARINE MAKES SERGEANT IN ONE DAY

Camp Lejeune, Marine Regiment Welcome Corps' Newest Member
Marine Corps News | Mike Escobar | December 14, 2005 3

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. - From privates first class to sergeants major to lieutenant colonels, all Marines who saw the newly promoted sergeant walking through their work areas were quick to render the appropriate military courtesies. After all, Brandon Rasnick had accomplished what no one else in the 2nd Marine Division had, made the rank of sergeant in one day.

It's a success the Lehigh Acres, Fla., native did not tout as he made his rounds throughout the base. Rather, the Marines and sailors smiled and waved as the shortest noncommissioned officer they had ever seen walked through their midst.

On Dec. 12, Marine Corps Community Services and 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment welcomed Brandon here as he commenced his trip, made possible by the Make-A-Wish Foundation. All that six-year-old Brandon, a boy afflicted with the genetic lung disease cystic fibrosis, asked for was that his dream of training alongside the nation's elite fighting forces be fulfilled. It was a request those he came in contact with were all too glad to make happen.

His father, Joseph; mother, Deanne; and half-sister, Marissa, first accompanied Brandon to the Main Exchange Annex, where he received a set of Marine digital utilities, suede combat boots and sergeant chevrons.

Now a fully-fledged "devil pup," Brandon and his family were next welcomed aboard by Lt. Col. Brad Vickers, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment's commander. "This was a great opportunity for us, and we were all very excited to support Brandon's wish coming true," said Vickers, whose battalion provided escort for Brandon as he toured several training grounds on base. "This was something any unit in the 2nd Marine Division could have done well, but we were fortunate enough to be chosen."

He added that this was a welcome break from the intense training his unit has been undergoing to prepare for the ever-present possibility of deployment.

Vickers then presented Brandon with a Marine Corps-theme Monopoly board game and a red baseball cap emblazoned with the Marine Corps' emblem

"All of my Marines were impressed by how smart six-year-old Brandon was; his obvious knowledge over the Corps and his love for the same," Vickers said. "He was a very spectacular young man and we were all very pleased to be able to take part in this."

The positive attitude carried over into the evening when a squad from the battalion's A Company met Brandon inside a local mess hall. There, Sgt. Steven Dattilo, several of his Marines and a Navy corpsman presented Brandon with military mementos.

These included uniform items, a commemorative Marine Corps ring and a deployment photo yearbook.

"As a former recruiter, it's really amazing for me to see someone who wants to be a Marine from that early on," said Dattilo, a 35-year-old native of Madison, Ind. "You have to give it up for a kid with that much desire. I feel like we (Marine Corps) are being cheated out of a good Marine."

"For all of us who have kids or nephews that age, it felt especially good to be able to make this day special for Brandon and the rest of his family," Dattilo said. "We're just doing our part to show them that we care."

After Brandon finished his chow, he marveled at his new souvenirs, thumbing the Marine Corps ring that now hung from a golden chain on his neck.

“I feel like a Marine already,” Brandon said. “I’ll bet it’s really fun being a Marine.”



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. – Six-year-old Brandon Rasnick stands beside Sgt. Maj. Robert Beith (right), 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment’s sergeant major, right, and Lt. Col. Bradley Vickers(left), the battalion’s commander, left, here Dec. 12. Brandon and his family visited numerous training grounds and units throughout the base while on a trip sponsored by the Make-A-Wish Foundation to grant his wish of training alongside United States Marines. Brandon is a boy from Lehigh Acres, Fla. who has cystic fibrosis, a genetic lung disorder. Photo by: Cpl. Mike Escobar

THE PROUD WARRIOR

% Daniel Beckham

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