

STARS AND STRIPES®

A TRIBUTE TO OUR
VETERANS
2023



An Advertising Supplement to Stars and Stripes



MILITARY BOWL

DECEMBER 27, 2023 | ANNAPOLIS, MD
NAVY-MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL STADIUM



DMV'S COLLEGE FOOTBALL BOWL GAME BENEFITING RECOVERING SERVICE MEMBERS
ACC vs American



Get Your Seats Now at www.militarybowl.org



Saluting our Troops

Stars and Stripes is proud to serve those who currently serve and have served our country. "A Tribute to Our Veterans" was created to honor our nation's veterans. Read heartwarming, heartbreaking, motivational, and insightful experiences shared by veterans during their time in service. Resources for veteran benefits and hiring programs can also be found in this publication. Find more useful information for veterans at [stripes.com/news/veterans](https://www.stripes.com/news/veterans).



The photos above are courtesy of www.dvidshub.net.

Thank you to our partners, Together We Served (TWS), for supplying the incredible veteran reflections you will read in this publication. TWS is an online community connecting and honoring every American who has worn the uniform of the United States military. TWS provides service members and veterans the chance to reconnect with old friends and share their story as a lasting legacy for generations to come. To learn more about TWS, visit them online at www.togetherweserved.com.



TOGETHER WE SERVED
RECONNECTING VETERANS SINCE 2003

The content and photos in the veteran reflections section of this guide have been provided by Together We Served and the service members featured.

STARS AND STRIPES.

Stars and Stripes is the editorially independent daily newspaper serving the U.S. military community worldwide. Stars and Stripes is authorized by the Department of Defense; however, the content of the publication is unofficial, and is not to be considered the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. For more information, visit [stripes.com](https://www.stripes.com).

A Tribute to Our Veterans Staff

- Max D. Lederer Jr. Publisher
- Laura Law Chief Operating Officer
- Chris Verigan Engagement Director
- Marie Woods Publishing and Media Design Director
- Alyssa McBeth Content Designer
- Douglas Gillam Layout and Design
- Amy Webb Layout and Design
- Ellen Cheung Layout and Design

Stars and Stripes products include:

www.stripes.com



- japan.stripes.com
- korea.stripes.com
- okinawa.stripes.com
- guam.stripes.com
- europe.stripes.com
- militarychild.stripes.com

U.S. Marine Corps Veteran Reflections



SGT John Gerena, U.S. Marine Corps (1980-1987)

JOINING THE CORPS

I grew up in The Bronx, New York, in the 1960s and was always an impressionable young child. I was always drawn and looked up to men of service. When I started attending school in The Bronx in 1967, the teachers would always ask for a volunteer from the class to hold the American flag. Needless to say, I think no one in any of my classes held that American flag as much as I did. I just felt truly honored always holding that American flag.

We attended a christian church, and our priest was really squared-away, so when I told my mom I wanted to become a priest, she dropped down to her knees and praised God. Until 1970, when I was eight years old, attending the 4th grade and our school participated in a career day. We had a United States Marine Sergeant address our class standing tall in his dress blues. I was in complete awe, and after his presentation, we were allowed to shake his hand; I told him that I wanted to be just like him and his response to me was, "Son, you can become whoever you want to be if your heart and mind accept the challenge."

That day, when my mother picked me up from school, I told her that I didn't want to be a priest anymore, and she replied you don't, and I said no, that I wanted to be a United States Marine. She

replied "Son, you're too young to know what you want to do in life." My response was "I'm going to become a Marine." In January 1980, before graduating from high school, I, with thirty-plus senior classmates, entered the delayed entry program to become United States Marines. After graduating high school in June 1980, we all headed to MCRD Parris Island Boot Camp to become Marines.

FIRST OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT

After graduating from Combat Engineer School in December of 1980, I was transferred to my first Duty Station, 9th Engineer Support Battalion 3rd FSSG Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan. In 1981, while serving in my first overseas deployment on "The Rock," our battalion was tasked with a humanitarian mission on the Island of Tinian, which was part of the Northern Mariana Islands. Navy Seabees, Military E.O.D., and 9th Engineer Support Battalion were tasked with several missions. The two northern airstrips, Alpha and Bravo, were cleared of vegetation. The limestone coral that had been disturbed by roots was excavated and replaced, and the resurfacing of both airstrips.

The Island was also still riddled with un-explosive ordnance from the war. With the help of E.O.D. and our metal detectors, we could locate and eradicate the un-explosive ordnance so the Islanders would not encounter danger or loss of life. The Islanders were so grateful for the task we were all able to accomplish that at the end of our mission, they



threw a big cook-out for all the service personnel, and I feel it gave all of us a sense of great accomplishment.

LIFE AFTER SERVICE

When I first joined the Marine Corps, I thought I wanted to be a lifer and reach the rank of Sergeant Major before I retired. Once I got married, that all changed. We spent more time apart in our first year of marriage than together due to me going through Jump School and several military exercises that year. My wife Lisa, who immigrated from South America, was not adapting well to living in the Camp Lejeune area. I now understood when our Drill Instructor used to tell us that the Marine Corps will issue you a lot of gear but not a spouse.

Like many Marines looking to separate, I was still having a sense of still wanting to serve. Like so many Marines, I was looking at law-enforcement. I applied to the United States Secret Service Uniformed Division. The process was very intense, with a written test, initial interview, panel interview, medical exam,

polygraph exam, and background investigation for a top-secret clearance. I separated from the Marine Corps in September of 1987 and received my acceptance letters of condition of employment to the United States Secret Service Uniformed Division in January 1988.



I spent 24.2 years with the United States Secret Service; with my six-plus years in the United States Marines, I retired as a Sergeant with a total of 30 years of government service. I started as an Officer at the Foreign Mission Branch, protecting all Foreign Embassies assigned to the Washington D.C. area.

I transferred to the White House Branch, where I stood post on the White House residential floors. I moved to the West Wing Standing post at the Oval Office and transferred to the Vice-Presidential residential home as a Mountain Bike Patrol Officer. I was selected to serve as a Canine Handler in the United States Secret Service Special Operations Division. I was promoted to the rank of Sergeant while in the Canine Unit, becoming a supervisor in the unit. I also served as a Recruiter and a member of the Secret Service Ceremonial Honor Guard Unit.



COL Francis Milling, U.S. Marine Corps (1959-1991)

MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME

Well, nobody forgets boot camp (OCS). Everybody will have stories about their DI. I remember our first hike. We left the camp and started to cross a bridge over a creek. The DI put submarine guards out (like road guards). These two guys were standing on either side of the bridge, chest high in the water, rifle at port arms and shouting, "All clear on the starboard side, Sir, and All clear on the port side, Sir." I was

laughing (to myself) that I didn't have to get wet like those two guys when we took a column left right into a swamp. We were trying to keep up that 2.5 MPH pace, and the water was muddy and about knee-deep. Suddenly, the guy in front of me just disappeared; stepped into a deep hole. I reached down, felt a helmet, and pulled him up by his helmet. He looked up at me, and I remember to this day how sorrowful he looked as he said, "Let me go — I dropped my rifle." So, I just let him go back down to find his rifle — a Marine never loses his rifle. I don't know how he ever got out of that hole.

After commissioning, I went to Officer Basic School in Quantico, VA. Our Tactics



"Memories? You can never forget the people. Marines are the most incredible people in the world."



Instructor there was Major Henry "Hank" Commiskey, a Medal of Honor recipient and fellow Mississippian. We once had to make a night attack. The Major didn't like it, so we had to do it again. I tried to jump over a little creek, and one heel landed on a big rock, badly hurting my heel. After the attack, we marched 15-20 miles back to our barracks. After about 4-5 miles, I started lagging behind, and my Platoon Commander asked me the problem. He made me get in the ambulance following the column. About half a dozen Indonesian Marines were in there. At some point, Major Commiskey stuck his head in the ambulance and asked us what our problems were. He kicked the Indonesians out, and they resumed the march, but he left me in the ambulance. A few nights later, at a party, Mrs. Commiskey was talking small talk with me, and she mentioned that the Major got home after the night attack but had to pour the blood out of his boots before he could come into the house. "This was from Korean War wounds," she said. Talk about making me feel small! The Old Corps expected such

behavior in those days. Now, I'm not so sure.

PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

I was proud to have commanded an infantry rifle company on active duty (K/3/2) and an artillery battery in the Reserves (F/2/14). My last duty on active duty was as G-3 Plans Officer of 2nd MarDiv. This was a Lt.Col. billet, and I was a Captain. I remember arguing with a Navy Admiral one time over a joint plan, and my point of view and logic prevailed. I always felt that the Corps gave me responsibility that most civilians never experienced.





U.S. Army Veteran Reflections



**SSG Trey W. Franklin,
U.S. Army
(1988-2008)**

JOINING THE ARMY

My family has a long tradition of military service. My father most heavily influenced me, and most of my memories of him are of him going to or coming home from drill with the TXARNG on the weekends.

My grandfathers were also in the Army, as were some of my extended family. My mother's dad served during WWI and had to fight the system to go back on active duty in WWII. He won that fight, but they wouldn't let him deploy overseas because of his age, so he stayed in the states as a Counterintelligence Officer and was probably one of the oldest



Majors on active duty.

My father's dad was in Burma in WWII and was an engineer building the pipeline that ran along the Ledo Road. I think it profoundly affected him for the rest of his life. He never talked about it and would change the subject if it got brought up. One of my relatives participated in the original flag raising on Iwo Jima in WWII.

My goal since I can remember was to be in the Army, and I was an avid reader of military history and anything Army growing up. As a kid in school, a group of us wore military fatigue tops and had a little click of military brats going.

I tried to enlist at 17, but my mother and step-dad wouldn't sign for me, so I had to wait till I turned 18. When I finally enlisted, my original MOS was Psychological Operations with Airborne. I was told I had to take the DLAB test before I shipped out to basic. Unfortunately, nobody told me how difficult that

test was or what it was about, so, as a dumb 18-year-old, I got snort-slugging drunk at the MEPS hotel the night before the test. The DLAB is not the test you should take with a hangover. So, I didn't get a qualifying score to reserve my original MOS and had to pick another one or wait several months and try the DLAB again. Being 18 and impatient, I chose to select another and get going. My recruiter was a 13F and said I'd enjoy Artillery Survey, so I went with that. Funnily enough, almost 20 years later, when I was a recruiter myself, I would give kids a super heads up if they needed the DLAB. I gave them all kinds of info on that test, and I didn't want them to bomb it as I did!

ADVICE FOR NEW RANGERS

Do not get discouraged or upset with your current assignment. Everything in the Army flows in waves or cycles. If you don't like the unit you are in right now, you will like the next one - if that one is worse, then you'll wish you were back in the one you hated! Think big-picture. Your service will affect literally thousands of people, many of whom you will never meet. People you train will train someone else - hopefully with good results. You have a legacy, whether you realize it or not.





**SPC Reginald Furtick,
U.S. Army
(2006-2014)**

A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

I was directly involved in dozens of combat support, security, and logistical objectives during both of my tours in Iraq. My most memorable one was my unit's mission of enrolling hundreds, if not thousands, of Iraqi local-nationals into a biometric database using Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment.

After Saddam Hussein's regime had been entirely dismantled,



my unit's responsibility was to assist in the complete restructuring of the Iraqi Army and Police Forces. This definitely made the most significant impact and changed how I viewed the Iraqi people in general. It opened my eyes to the realization that not all Iraqi people were my enemy. I can't say I made friends with any of the English-speaking recruits, but I shared a few meals with some of them and learned a lot about Iraqi culture and customs.

For our tireless efforts over a several-month span, a few of us were awarded not only with yet another "medal for the stack," but we were also given the rare privilege of visiting the Hatra Ruins in the Nineveh Governorate.

This gigantic walled city is thousands of years old and dates back to ancient Mesopotamia, mentioned throughout the Old Testament of the Bible. I took many pictures of our visit there and even walked inside the barred prison cells to get a feel for what being jailed would've been like in 230 A.D. What remains of the place today is a memory I will never forget. I reenlisted for a second time at the site of the ruins, with Captain Joe Parker, my Company Commander, officiating the ceremony and administering my Oath of Reenlistment.

FIGHTING CANCER AND THE ROAD AHEAD

During my bout with cancer, I was able to graduate with honors from The Recording Conservatory of Austin, an audio engineering technical school in Central Texas.

After separation, I also got a



few good semesters of actual college under my belt at Miami International University but eventually had to drop out and move back to my hometown in rural Mississippi after discovering this strange illness I was experiencing was cancer. After going into remission, I

decided not to go back to MIU and instead got my commission to serve as a Notary Public for the State of Mississippi.

I am now being compensated for my service-connected disabilities and am a proud full-time stay-at-home dad to our four wonderful boys.

"I use my military background, code of ethics, and warrior ethos to teach my children the good morals and values they need to become successful and productive members of society in today's United States of America."



CAPT Frank Farr, U.S. Army Air Force (1943-1945)

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

There were several lasting memories, but the single one that was etched most deeply into my brain was bailing out of my burning airplane over Germany. Many Airmen have bailed out of crippled airplanes and that's scary enough. Most of the time, though, when they pulled the ripcord the parachute opened. Mine didn't. I can still see the red handle that I pulled away from the chute and held at arm's length and I was still falling. No chute.

I was able to insert a finger or two into the slit in the parachute pack from which the rip cord issued and finally pull out enough of the chute to catch the wind. Then it opened.

I know of one similar case from my group where a chute didn't open and the Airman was able to pull it from the pack. There were probably a few more and I think it's a safe bet that such incidents made stand-out



memories. I wonder how many terrified Airmen didn't think to dig into the parachute pack with their fingers when the rip cord didn't work?

PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT

The Purple Heart is the most meaningful [medal] to me, though my wound was relatively slight, I did shed a boot full of blood in the service of my country and I am proud of that. At the same time it doesn't seem right that I should receive the same award as a Soldier who suffered crippling injuries whose effects he would carry for a lifetime.



LIFE AFTER THE ARMY AIR FORCE

I had more than 50 years in education, if I count the summer sessions. Thirty of these years were in California, 25 in the little town of Gustine, and the last 20 in Crownpoint, New Mexico.

I have done nearly everything in the career line I ever wanted to do. I have been a teacher, counselor, vice principal, principal, and I worked for many years as a news reporting stringer for the Modesto Bee and the Merced Sun-Star. For a couple of years, I was editor of the Gustine Standard, a small weekly paper, and I subbed as editor for the Los Banos Enterprise and the Dos Palos Star. I taught the things I loved most - languages (Spanish, French, Russian and English), geography, history and journalism. And I was able

to serve as coach of the two sports I love most, tennis (for many years) and baseball (junior varsity for a couple of years).

Along with education and journalism, I was privileged to be involved in local Gustine City politics for six years. I served two years on the Council and was elected Mayor of the City of Gustine by my fellow councilmen at the beginning of my second term. My political career ended in 1986 when we moved to Crownpoint where my wife and I bought a modest home in a beautiful site on the slopes of the Zuni Mountains overlooking a breathtaking vista of bright red cliffs across a narrow valley. I continued to teach for another 19 years.



I retired at 80. That was in 2005. At present I am learning, unenthusiastically, to live alone after my wife of 48 years died of complications from Alzheimer's. The gods were smiling on me when I met my dearest wife, Irma King. We both loved roaming about North America in first one kind of camper and then the other. We shared a love of books and music, though we

did not always agree on what kind of music. She had three bright, loving children, two of whom I was lucky enough to help grow from their later childhood to adulthood.

I am the author of three books. My first book, "P.O.W. - A Kriegie's Story." My second, "B-17 Navigator," tells of my induction into the service and my training which led eventually to my graduation from Aviation Cadets as a 2nd Lieutenant and aerial navigator. My third book, "Flax Happy," fills the gap between those two and tells of my combat experiences flying out of England.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM SERVICE

When I was shot down and survived while many others didn't. I thought I should do something worthwhile, something of service with my life. In my family few people were held in higher regard than teachers, so I changed my major from journalism and prepared for a career teaching in secondary schools.

The discipline and control that my military career required were useful to me as a teacher. Officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, learned to give orders to others in a way that did not break non-compliance and this was helpful in working with teenagers.

***"Mine has been a wonderful life,
and I am grateful for it."***



U.S. Air Force Veteran Reflections



**MAJ Robert Haden,
U.S. Air Force
(1964-1985)**

DANGEROUS ENCOUNTERS

When a colonel comes up and says, "Capt. Hayden, here's where you'll go today," then it is normal operations. When a colonel comes up and says "Bob" to begin his sentence, it means he's looked at your record and found out your first name, and it's not going to be good. If he says, "I want you to understand I'm not giving you a direct order," it means yes, he is, and it's going to be an even worse day.

So we followed our orders. We took off nearing sundown, and we

flew to an airfield in the Parrot's Beak area next to the Vietnam border, landing after dark with some bean bag flares for lighting. We kept engines running, turned the airplane around, opened the back of the aircraft, and waited. A half-hour later, four Navy Seals came running to the aircraft, dived aboard, and said get the hell out. We did but not until receiving a bunch of machine-gun fire and holes in the plane from the North Vietnamese troops that were in hot pursuit.

When we landed late that night back at Cam Rahn Bay, the same Colonel met us and told us the whole thing was highly classified. And not to talk about it to anyone, not to list any personnel or flight time in any log and not to write up the holes in the airplane but to let the maintenance guys discover that the next morning. That time the Colonel didn't even bother to say it wasn't a direct order.

The other time was a routine passenger flight except that an engine let go, parts exploded into the adjoining engine with the accompanying fire. Hence, we landed on fire with two engines out and 64 passengers on board. We got everyone off the airplane before it burnt up. All in all, a

pretty good though eventful day until the fire trucks arrived, heavyweight, fully loaded with fire suppression stuff, couldn't get stopped, and ran over two of my Vietnamese passengers, killing them both.

FLYING CROSS RECIPIENT

Of all the medals, awards, formal presentations and qualification badges, the two Distinguished Flying Cross awards were the most memorable. One was for flying 218 Vietnamese out of a village expecting to be overrun within the hour. The other was for an operation that, as far as I know, is still classified at least as confidential.

As a side note as to how goofed up things can get to be in the military, I was told I had been put in for a Silver Star for a different classified operation. At any rate, the sergeant admin clerk who worked in the awards and decorations section at our headquarters, at that time didn't have a secret security clearance. So, according to my boss, since the clerk wasn't authorized to read the classified recommendations, it was returned, stamped "disapproved."

ADVICE FOR FUTURE AIRMEN

We all live in an age where the only constant to be experienced is that of change.

As such, take advantage of all the available training regardless of which career field you choose. The Air Force is competitive by its nature, and it is not sucking up to your supervisor to specifically ask what you can do to excel as an individual in your unit of assignment. Find out what is expected and then try to meet or exceed those expectations. What you think and what your boss thinks is excellent job performance may differ, so ask.

Off duty education is usually available and should be pursued. You aren't an old guy, if you are retiring from the Air Force in your early forties and joining the civilian world - you will have at least one more career to encounter and excel in. Try to be prepared for that happening.



**SMSGT Theodore Fafinski,
U.S. Air Force
(1958-1980)**

PATH TO THE AIR FORCE

I always wanted to join the Military. My high school friend joined the Naval Reserve while in school. I joined the local Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Composite Squadron while in high school.

In the summer of my junior year, I went to the NY Wing CAP Encampment at Plattsburgh AFB.

I enjoyed the military discipline and military training. While there, I participated in an actual search and rescue mission when a KC-97 crashed near Lake Champlain. The adventure happened because of the opportunity to travel without worrying about a place to stay, food, medical care, and a paycheck. I made up my mind to enlist after high school. The following year after graduating, as many of my classmates left for college in September, I left for Lackland AFB in mid-September for basic training.

EXPERIENCES THAT MADE AN IMPACT

While at McCoy AFB, SAC selected our base as one of the participating bases that hosted some of the Bomb Wing Participants in the Bombing,

Air Refueling, Navigation Competition. I was assigned to billeting for all the Air Crews competing. After the first couple of days, the Lt. Colonel in charge of billeting asked me if I would be interested in being the Charge of Quarters for the VIP billets. I thought that was interesting. So I found myself with a building full of SAC Wing Commanders responsible for getting them settled, wake up calls in the morning, etc. The first night at 2 a.m. got an emergency call from a Wing Commander from his home base that a B-52 on a training mission had crashed with no known survivors at the time. So I had to wake up the Commander and give him the message and the name and phone number of the Officer who called. That brought the reality into perspective for an 18-year-old Airman.

My next assignment brought me to Elmendorf AFB Alaska;

I ended up in the Wing Operations Directorate, one of three enlisted people with 12 Officers. Later, my duties were in Plans and Programs, maintaining classified plans and other documents. In addition, I maintained administrative functions of the Wing Command Post and worked there during exercises and other operations. I learned what the Cold War was all about because of Alaska's proximity to the USSR. Each week was different is all I can say, I was an Airman 1st Class.





U.S. Navy Veteran Reflections



**SP(Y)3C Margaret
(Peggy) Lutz,
U.S. Navy (1944-1946)**

A CALL TO SERVE

It was 1943, WWII was raging in the South Pacific. I was a senior sitting in the Chapel at Linfield College, heartbroken at watching fresh gold stars replace the white ones each day on the American Flag that draped the proscenium arch. Each gold star represented the death of one of my Class of '42 buddies who had sat in the Chapel with me less than a year before.

Graduating in May, I spent the next school year at Myrtle Point HS in southern Oregon as a language arts teacher. Increasingly, I felt myself a failure as a teacher of seniors because they were noticeably unresponsive to all my best efforts. Finally, some senior girls told me that the senior guys had checked out of learning because they saw their brothers, cousins, and even fathers being killed in the War, and they figured that would be their fate when drafted as soon as school was out. Now I got it.

When the Navy recruiter came to town, I signed up. He assured me that my college degree plus a year of teaching would send me directly into Officer Training School in Maryland. However, at the Portland induction site on May 24, after I had passed all the wrong tests with flying colors, I found myself signed up for enlisted Boot Camp at Hunter College in New York City. Ugh. I was told I could

return the next day and take all the officer tests, but the thought of another exhausting 12 hours canceled my reasoning. So I let things stand.

The check-in at Klamath Falls, Oregon, on December 25, 1944, was at an air base at 4500 ft with all aircraft glued to the ground by six inches of unyielding ice. A month later, when an opening came up for NAS Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River, I took it, unwittingly swapping ice for fog and total blackout.

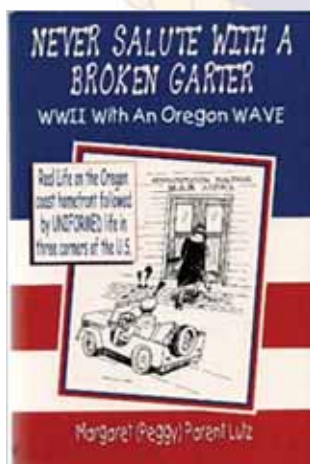
OVERCOMING A DIFFICULT TASK

It was there, at NAS Astoria, that my life-defining moment happened in 1946, on a moonless March midnight. In the Pacific Coastal Blackout, not even the lights of the tetrahedron one mile inland could be on. It was in inky blackness that I talked about a lost fighter pilot. With the Duty Officer standing outside on the catwalk, I talked the TBM Jig 13 (which was theoretically out of fuel a half hour earlier) down onto the runway. Two bounces of red wingtip running lights, then black? TBM was out of power—God was our co-pilot!

TELLING HER STORY

I'm enjoying the trip back in the time machine once again. I made this trip thoroughly in 2003 when I rifled through my Navy scrapbook for pictures and memorabilia and wrote/published my bio of the two years in uniform with the title of *Never Salute With A Broken Garter*.

I have sold around 800 on three runs and still have very few left. Most went to the Tillamook Air Museum to be sold as souvenirs; many went to Evergreen Air Museum (McMinnville) for their bookstore. At least one always comes up in a bookstore somewhere, with a five rating and at a less-than-the-new price of \$15 plus S&H. ...there are practically no female authors re WWII.



**CAPT James Garrett,
U.S. Navy (1966-2008)**

A MEMORABLE JOURNEY

I went to boot camp in San Diego in August 1966 and tested well for the ratings of Sonarman or Radioman. Upon completion of boot camp I was assigned to the USS Greenlet ASR-10 in Pearl Harbor, HI. Later I was told that I could be accepted for Sonar School on the STAR program which would have sent me to

Class "A" School, promotion to Petty Officer Third Class with a requirement to reenlist up to six years. I was already focusing on the rate requirements for Signalman so I declined the "A" School for Sonarman.

With my mother being very ill with Lou Gehrig's disease, I got out of the Navy and went home. When her illness became terminal I tried different things, went to college and subsequently applied for and was accepted by the Denver Police Department. A couple of my police buddies were in the Army National Guard and wanted me to join as well, particularly with the Military Police. I checked it out, was even offered an opportunity as a Warrant Officer, but declined and decided to re-affiliate with the Navy. A sharp recruiter obtained my Second Class Crow even with time served and I signed on the dotted line and stayed for the next 30 plus years.

ADVICE FOR NEW SAILORS

Duty, honor and commitment. Be the best you can be and always try to achieve your goals. I learned that if you do the best you can, volunteer for the hard jobs and commit 100%, promotions, recognition and job satisfaction will come two-fold. The Navy was good to me in that I got to do and see things that I would have not been able to do without those three ethical standards. Most of all, don't think of naval service as a chore, but as an adventure, a life experience others will never get to have in their lifetime. I went from Seaman Apprentice to Captain in my career, something the recruiter did not tell me could be possible, nor did I ever think while chipping paint in deck division on my first ship that I would accomplish all that I have. I learned to watch and listen to those around me, especially the great First Class and Chiefs that I worked for and later as a Commissioned Officer those Chiefs who made me look good and provided sage advice.



As a young Junior Officer I was seeking an assignment in a particular unit, I told the CO I would take whatever assignment he had. Without pause he selected me because as he said, I volunteered for a hard job, something not many were willing to do. You have to put yourself out there, accept the responsibility in order to gain more responsibility. During my retirement from the Navy and answering questions, I had young enlisted Sailors come up and look at my brag book and memorabilia and heard them remark about my career path and promotions. They asked if E2 to O6 was possible for them and I said, yes it is, work hard for it!



U.S. Coast Guard Veteran Reflections



**CAPT Dee Norton,
U.S. Coast Guard
(1980-2005)**

A MEMORABLE MILITARY CAREER

My first assignment out of Officer Candidate School was to a 378 foot Coast Guard Cutter - Mellon, based out of Seattle, Washington. Mellon primarily patrolled the waters off



Alaska for Fishery Patrols and enforced other laws of the ocean. Mellon was one of the first integrated ships, and at that time, the US Navy did not allow women to serve on their ships. I completed two years on the Mellon serving as Deck Watch Officer and Communications Officer. After that tour, I was assigned to the 13th District Office in Seattle, where I worked with the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Boating Standards. From there, I was assigned to Galveston, TX, as the Base Executive Officer (XO). This really started my career direction working in Operations Ashore. While I never went back to sea,



I served in positions where the Coast Guard Cutters worked for me.

I always said I would stay in the Coast Guard as long as I like it. I served 25 years and then did retire. I loved my time as an Officer in the USCG!

REPRESENTING FEMALE SERVICE MEMBERS

I loved representing all Women Officers in the military for the Women in Military Service to America Memorial. I still

feel very honored that I was chosen for this. I was able to provide the Coast Guard Academy chorus and band to play at it, and I feel that the Coast Guard was well represented.

As Gender Policy Advisor, I participated in the Nato Conference on Women in Brussels, Belgium. That was an awesome experience.



**BM1 Alvin O'Brien,
U.S. Coast Guard
(1996-2012)**

A SUCCESSFUL 16-YEAR CAREER

I proudly served for 16 years. As a BM, there is quite a bit you could do. I had a BM2 on the Dallas telling me about Small Boat Stations and what they do. I don't remember, but it came to transfer season, and I was sent to Sta. Oregon Inlet, NC. They had one of the 47MLB prototypes (47201, I think), and eventually, we got the 47258. I really wanted to drive the 44s, but they were all but gone by this time. From the time I spent on the 47, I knew I wanted to be a Surfman, and I knew that road would be tough to navigate. During my time at OI, I got my Coxswain certification on the 41' UTB.

Eventually, I was asked to go TAD to Sta. E-City to help the command, so off I went. It was supposed to be a 60-day ordeal (though I have my theory on why I was sent). After going through all my boards and getting certified, I was asked to stay after a few weeks. It was knowing that if I returned to OI as an E4, I would have to compete with several E5 & E6 BMs to get a Heavy Weather qual and eventually my Surfman Qual.

I also knew I would have to go to the West Coast to get the proper training, so I stayed. Little did I know that staying would not lead me to the West Coast but to the Gulf Coast. I made E5 and was again asked to help out the USCG. I was given the Bob Trainer (detailer) special and would volunteer to go to Grand Isle, LA (Another story for another time). The art of the deal was to go there and get my 47 Coxswain Qual, and when that was done, I was to call my detailer (Unfortunately, a toxic command had other ideas), and I was forced to stay. After spending five years there, I was finally set free and headed to Hawaii for a 110' WPB, finishing my career in Michigan City, IN.

MOST MEANINGFUL AWARD

Out of all the awards I have, I would say that qualifying as a Coxswain was the best. There was a lot of blood, sweat, and tears that went into earning that certification. I was sent to Coxswain "C" school in Yorktown, VA, for 30 days. It was there I met a great mentor and instructor, Mary. Watching and learning from her made me want to be just like her. Anyhow, after 30 days of this school, it was back to my unit (Oregon Inlet). From there, I had a few more sign-offs to get done, and then I could take my Oral and Practical boards for Coxswain. Eventually, I was certified on the 41'

UTB. During my career, I held qualifications as a Coxswain for the 41'UTB, 47'MLB, 25'RBS, and a handful of non-standard boats.

CHERISHED MEMORIES WITH PREVIOUS UNITS

I think all of the units I was at had some great memories. While in Charleston, SC, it was the nights that Bryan and I fished on the Santee Cooper River. At Oregon Inlet, NC, I learned how to surf. I met my now-wife while stationed at Elizabeth City, NC. I was stationed in Grand Isle, LA, during Katrina (even though I was hurt, it wasn't fun). After Louisiana, we were off to Hawaii, and well, we had some fun times there diving, surfing, tsunamis, and hiking the volcano when it started to flow. Lastly, we were off to Michigan City, IN, where I would eventually end my career and come back home to Texas.





Honoring a Veteran: Jim Mahoney's Journey from War to Hollywood

By Alyssa McBeth



Mahoney in Korea

In the chronicles of Hollywood history, certain names resonate as icons of the industry's golden era. Jim Mahoney, a Korean War Veteran and renowned Hollywood publicist, stands as a testament to the resilience and adaptability that defines the greatest of his generation. From the trenches of Korea to the glitz and glamor of Tinseltown, Mahoney's life story embodies the spirit of an American hero, whose service and subsequent success in the entertainment industry have left an unforgettable mark on both fields.



Mahoney in his Korean War Veteran

Mahoney's military journey began when he was 18. He enlisted in the National Guard Reserves and was assigned to the 40th Infantry Division. A curveball came for Mahoney in the spring of 1949, just as his career at MGM Studios was taking off. At the time he was working for Clark Gable and studio chief Louis B. Mayer. He saw a newspaper headline that the California National Guard was to be activated.

Mahoney recounts his reaction to the news: "I can't go to war, not

now, things are too good."

His official orders came just a few months later, in September. As he bid farewell to the comfort of his home, Mahoney embarked on a tumultuous journey.

In his memoir, "Get Mahoney! A Hollywood Insider's Memoir," Mahoney vividly recounts the hardships and trials of his military service. From the intense training at Fort Hunter Liggett and Camp Cooke to the harrowing voyage through the Great Northern Passage on the U.S.S. Nelson M. Walker, the contents of his memoir exemplify the strength of those who served in the Korean War.

Despite the trials he faced, Mahoney's spirit never wavered. His anecdotes, such as living in a tent city on the slopes of Mt. Fuji and sharing a hole with an old acquaintance, Daniel O'Shea, offer a glimpse into the unpredictability of life in the military. His experiences in Korea,

including the nerve-racking nights along the Imjin River and the heroic acts that earned him the Bronze Star, paint a picture of a man who never shied away from his duties, regardless of the circumstances.

Upon his return from the war, Mahoney seamlessly transitioned back to the world of Hollywood, where he established himself as a prominent publicist. With a career spanning decades, Mahoney's roster of clients reads like a who's who of Hollywood legends, from

Burt Lancaster to Johnny Carson.

In a recent interview with Mahoney, he shared anecdotes which provided a candid look into his life's journey. From revealing his gratification at having written his memoir to sharing amusing stories about managing some of the greatest talents like Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope, Mahoney's warmth and wit shine through. Despite the challenges he faced, Mahoney's passion for the entertainment world and his dedication to his craft remained unwavering.

"I had some special people I wish I would have spent more time with," said Mahoney. "I wish I'd have spent more time with Gable, I wish I'd have spent more time with Fred Astaire. I spent a lot of time with Jack Lemon and had a lot of fun. And then I had heartbreak with idiots like Steve McQueen. He was one of the few clients that I ever fired. Then I had Peggy Lee and she was a little crazy too, she had a drinking problem but she was a great talent. There were some of them that were really fun to be around but they were crazy, Lee Martin for instance or George C. Scott. The job was, as crazy as it sounds, fun. I had a good time."

As we honor the valiant service of Jim Mahoney and the countless veterans like him, it is imperative to recognize the multifaceted nature

Mahoney at the Veteran's Day honoring ceremony in 2022 at the Civic Center near his home in La Quinta, CA.



Cover of "Get Mahoney!". Mahoney stands behind Frank Sinatra.

of their contributions. Mahoney's life serves as a reminder of the resilience and adaptability of those who have served in the armed forces, transitioning into civilian life and making indelible marks in various fields.

To get your copy of "Get Mahoney!" and read more about his life and career, visit www.GetMahoney.com.

"The job was, as crazy as it sounds, fun," said Mahoney. "I had a good time."

RESOURCES



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Aaron S. Patterson

DISABILITY COMPENSATION: RECEIVE BENEFITS AT THE END OF YOUR SERVICE

Courtesy of the Veterans Benefits Administration

THE BENEFITS DELIVERY DISCHARGE (BDD) PROGRAM

Active-duty service members can now file a claim and apply for disability compensation before leaving service and separating from the military. To apply early for disability compensation, all service members must submit a claim through the BDD program. They can do so between 180 to 90 days before separation. Within this time frame, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will schedule an exam, review a service member's treatment records and evaluate their claim before approving the disability compensation.

THE INTEGRATED DISABILITY EVALUATION SYSTEM (IDES) PROGRAM

The Department of Defense (DoD) and VA also work together under the IDES program to determine if wounded, ill or injured service members are fit for continued military service. Disability

benefits are provided to eligible service members and veterans in this referral program. IDES participants do not need to apply or elect to participate in IDES. Once referred into IDES by their branch of service, each service member is assigned a dedicated military Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO) and a VA Military Services Coordinator (MSC) to assist and advise. Any service member who participates in IDES can file a VA claim for disability compensation through their MSC.

HOW TO APPLY FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION

To apply for the BDD program, visit VA.gov or work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representative. Disability claims filed online will be processed faster than those filed in person or sent in the mail.

In order to qualify for the BDD, service members must meet the following requirements:

- Know their separation date, **and**

- File their claim between 180 to 90 days before separation, **and**
- Provide a copy of their Service Treatment Records (STRs) for the period of service in which the service member filed their claim **and**
- Be available for 45 days from the date in which the claim is submitted to attend VA exams.

If a service member does not meet these requirements, they can file a claim through the Standard Claim Process. Veterans can also use the Fully Developed Claims program to receive a faster decision on a claim submitted after separation. To be eligible for this program, a veteran must either have an illness or injury caused by or worsened during active-duty service, or a condition that was caused or worsened by a disability VA already determined to be service-connected.

Beginning in 2021, the number of conditions considered to be service-connected as a result of environmental exposure was expanded. On August 5, 2021, three

chronic respiratory conditions asthma, sinusitis and rhinitis were added to the list of conditions thought to be connected to the exposure of fine particulate matter on military bases and in areas of conflict over the last several decades. Also, on April 26, 2022, nine rare respiratory cancers were added to this list. The conditions currently recognized include:

- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx;
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea;
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea;
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea;
- Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung;
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung;
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung;
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung and;
- Typical and atypical carcinoma of the lung.

VA's list of presumptives related to exposure recently grew by more than 20 conditions for eligible veterans due to the PACT Act. To learn more about eligibility visit VA.gov/PACT.

These conditions all qualify as either a chronic illness, an illness caused from contact with contaminated or hazardous materials and/or an illness caused by time spent as a prisoner of war (POW). To protect veterans, service members and their families from experiencing the hardships associated with these conditions, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is dedicated to ensuring compensation remains available to those who became disabled during or after their service. These benefits are available to eligible veterans, service members and qualifying dependents.

Filing for disability compensation is a necessary and important part of the transition to civilian life. Veterans, service members and their families should take advantage of the benefits and services offered to them by applying for one of the disability compensation programs available.

RESOURCES



Programs That Hire Veterans

Courtesy of Military OneSource

Many organizations in the civilian world value your experience, skills, work ethic and training as a servicemember. You'll find that a number of military-friendly employers are committed to hiring veterans.

Explore several online programs to help connect you with employers who are looking to hire veterans. Here are some top sites:

Veterans.gov

This site offers resources from the U.S. Department of Labor for job-seekers and employers who want to hire vets. You'll find:

- Job opportunities by category: agriculture, energy, transportation, homeland security, federal government hiring, and more.
- A tool for finding jobs by location
- Your nearest American Job Center
- Help from the Small Business Administration for starting your own business
- Plus one-on-one assistance, career exploration, finding training, skills translator, veteran employment center, resume builder, interest profiler, transition resources and more.

CareerOneStop Veteran and Military Transition Center

The Veteran and Military Transition Center website is a one-stop online shop for employment, training and financial help after military service. If you're transitioning out, it offers some serious tools:

- Military-to-Civilian Job Search by military job title and/or location
- How to request important papers that you

need

- Matching your skills to civilian careers
- Information about going back to school or getting training
- Also financial and unemployment assistance

The U.S. Department of Labor sponsors CareerOneStop. While the website is designed for the general public, there are plenty of tools and resources that can be useful for veterans. It partners with the American Job Center network. American Job Centers have a mandate to connect veterans to job openings.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring our Heroes

Hiring Our Heroes is a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. It's a nationwide initiative to help transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses find meaningful employment opportunities.

The program networks with businesses through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and it partners with public, private and nonprofit organizations across the country.

- Check out the Hiring Our Heroes calendar. You'll find upcoming hiring events, job fairs, expos, transition summits and more near you.
- Hiring Our Heroes also has a number of

digital resources:

- VirtualJobScout connects you with recruiters and attend virtual job fairs.
- Hiring Our Heroes dashboard allows you to access, customize and manage all your Hiring Our Hero resources.
- Resume Engine helps you build and post your resume for thousands of employers.
- Fast Track lists jobs by industry, with a map of locations and positions by date.

You've got skills, training and discipline. Employers are looking for you. For more ways you can connect with a great job, check the Employment Resources and Services page on <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>.



RESOURCES



photo courtesy of www.dvidshub.net

Military Funeral Honors Eligibility

Courtesy of Military OneSource

The Defense Department provides military funeral honors to recognize the sacrifice and contributions of our nation's veterans. The following individuals are eligible to receive military funeral honors:

- Military members who die while on active duty
- Veterans who served in the active military, naval or air service, and were discharged or released from that service by means of an "honorable" or "under honorable conditions" discharge
- Members or former members of the selected reserves who were discharged or released from service by means of an "honorable" or "under honorable conditions" discharge

Other eligible beneficiaries include:

- Members of the Commissioned

Officers Corps of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- Certain civilian or contractual groups who have been given active-duty determinations may also be eligible for funeral honors, as they may have been named active-duty designees for the military, Navy or the Department of the Air Force services

The following persons are not eligible for military funeral honors:

- Individuals separated from the armed forces under dishonorable conditions or those who have been barred from veteran's benefits
- Those who have been convicted of a federal or state capital crime
- A person who is found to have committed but who has not yet

been convicted of a federal or state capital crime by reason of their not being available for trial due to their death or flight to avoid prosecution

- A person convicted of a federal or state crime causing the person to be a Tier III sex offender
- Anyone who was ordered to report to an induction station but was not actually inducted into military service
- Any person who the secretaries of the military department deny military funeral honors

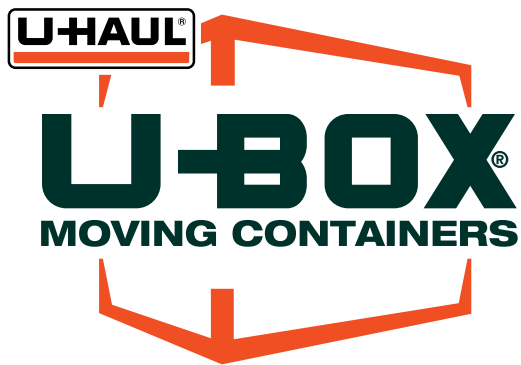
To establish a veteran's eligibility for military funeral honors, a DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty" or any discharge document showing honorable service is required. The DD Form 214 may be obtained by using the online order form or completing a Standard Form 180.

For all inquiries regarding military

funeral honors, please contact the appropriate military funeral honors coordinator listed in the Military Funeral Honors Directory at [MilitaryOneSource.com](https://www.militaryonesource.com).



photo courtesy of www.dvidshub.net



MOVING?

we provide weight tickets

www.militarymove/uhaul.com

