

## Military Veterans share stories of glory days

by Nicole Lord

Paraglide

"To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

These were the words of tribute to Armistice Day by President Wilson in November 1919. World War I ended on June 28, 1919, but seven months prior to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the fighting had already ended when an armistice between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

After World War II, when many more Soldiers were deployed to battle, Congress amended the Act of 1938 to change Armistice Day to Veterans Day. Approved on June 1, 1954, Nov. 11 officially became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Veterans' Day is a day set aside for America to honor its war heroes young and old. It is a tribute to all those who risked their lives and fought for the freedom of this country and its people.

"I appreciate Veterans' Day, I really do, because it makes me feel like the time I spent away from my family wasn't all for nothing," said Clyde T. Lord III, a retired Army veteran. Lord served in the Army from 1977 until 1997. He fought in Desert

Storm and Bosnia.

"I served 20 years in the military and it proved to be one of the best things I've ever done," Lord said. "It has opened many doors of opportunity for me."

Lord has been married for 20 years and has four children. While overseas, Lord missed many of the childhood memories of his four girls. "I remember he missed a couple of birthdays and one or two Christmases'," said Megan Lord. "We have birthday pictures of us talking to him on the phone."

This is the same story for many military families, but they all seem to appreciate the communication that they have with loved ones, unlike earlier wars when the only communication was by mail.

"When I was in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 if my sister wrote me this week, I'd probably get it two weeks from now," said Samuel W. Jones, a medically retired Army veteran. "But if my girlfriend wrote me, it would probably take three weeks, they decide what mail is most important," Jones added with a laugh. Jones, 58, was only in the Army for eight years before he

was medically retired. He was a staff sergeant in the 82nd Airborne Division and a drill sergeant in the 2nd Training Brigade at Fort Jackson S.C. Jones also served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969.

"I love the military, I cried when I had to get out," Jones said. "I cried twice, once when I had to get out and another time because I didn't know what I was going to do once I got out," Jones said. Jones also said that the military has changed greatly since he was in.

"The discipline is more relaxed than when I was in. The young Soldiers go to PT and then go home and take a shower. We took PT and smelt all day long," Jones laughed. Even though he believes the military is not as disciplined, Jones still has respect for the young Soldiers.

"If I wore a hat," Jones said with a smile, "my hats off to all young Soldiers." Sergeant Aaron D. Thompson, 22, of the 100th Engineering Company said he gives a lot of respect to the old veterans because they didn't have the technology that the military has now.

"They were stronger individuals, more disciplined than us," Thompson added. Thompson has been in the military for four years. He was deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom for six months and was just deployed to Korea last month. "The whole concept of tech-

nology has changed," said Elvin E. Ward, a retired veteran.

"They have missiles and satellites and they utilize the heck out of that, that was really far out for us," Ward said.

Ward served in the Army as well as the Air Force for 21 years from 1948 to 1969.

He was a master sergeant in the 82nd Airborne Division while in the Army for 16 years, and a senior master sergeant in Tachikawa, Japan while in the Air Force for five years. "I like the young Soldiers. They're really dedicated people," Ward said.

While in the military, Ward was claimed essential to his unit and could not train for Special Forces.

"I tried three times, and couldn't get it because my unit needed me," Ward said. Both Ward and Jones also said that the military is not just a living, it's a way of life. They also had a few words of wisdom for the younger generation of Soldiers.

"Listen to what's going on and do your best to outshine the others and you will climb the ladder," Ward said. "Get all you can get from the military," Jones added. "I couldn't go to school because the infantry men were always needed. Take full advantage of your education so when you get

out, you have employment options."

Our fallen heroes, veterans' young and old, from wars as far back as World War I have been honored and immortalized in statues and memorials all across America.

The most popular memorial is known simply as "The Wall." The National Vietnam Veterans Memorial is located in Washington, D.C. It was built in Constitution Gardens and dedicated in 1982.

The National World War II Memorial was dedicated in 2004 and is surrounded by the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. The National World War II Memorial includes Freedom Wall, a field of 4,000 golden stars to honor all those lives lost in WWII.

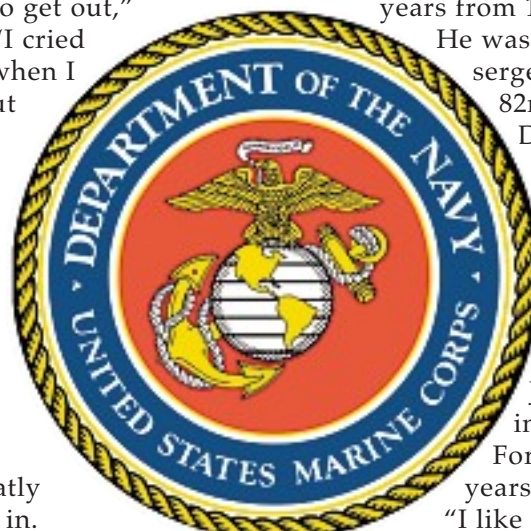
The U.S. Marine Corps Memorial was designed to honor those who served in the Marine Corp since 1775. It shows one of the most famous incidents of World War II, the capture of Mount Suribachi.

Also located in Washington, D.C. is the Korean War Veterans Memorial Park, dedicated in 1995, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington National Cemetery, and the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center.

American Veterans of all ages, we thank you for all you have done for this country. You are forever honored and never forgotten.

Happy Veterans' Day.

(Editor's note: Some information for this article came from The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Public and Intergovernmental Affairs.)



## Patriot recounts history of grandfather's sacrifice

by Deirdre Nunan

Special to the Paraglide

I don't believe in war, but I believe in my grandpa. So every Veterans' Day in the past



photo courtesy of Deirdre Nunan

Paul D. Nunan, during maneuvers at Ft. Bragg in 1943.

I tried to call and tell him thank you.

Grandpa, Capt. Paul D. Nunan, was 18 when he joined the National Guard. Three years later he enlisted in the Army. But he was legally blind in one eye, and therefore not eligible to be as a paratrooper. So grandpa just outsmarted the Army. When he took his vision test he kept his right eye covered after the doctor asked him to cover the left eye. He switched his hands instead, creating an illusion. This same evasion would happen every time he reenlisted and had a physical. The doctors never noticed he kept the same eye covered.

This didn't affect his aim. He sighted with his left eye leaned over the rifle. I once asked my grandpa how many people he had killed. I was a little scared when he told me that he really didn't know.

Grandpa was the first and only man my grandma loved. They met during high school and were engaged in December 1941 after graduation. Grandpa enlisted in March 1942. He served with Gen. James Gavin's 505th Regimental Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, and made four combat jumps during World War II — Sicily, Italy, Normandy and Holland.

During this time, in late 1943 and early 1944, his brother Tim was taken hostage by Germans. He was a

radio operator/gunner in the Army Air Corps and was shot down and imprisoned in West Germany. He was held in a stalag — a prison rumored to have fed moldy bread and turnip soup to the Prisoners of war — for 13 months. The Russians liberated him as they moved to take Berlin.

Grandpa's last jump was in Holland during September 1944. Later that winter, grandpa got 45 days of rest and relaxation. There were rumors that the 82nd was going to fight in Japan, but no one really knew. My grandparents married during that break in January 1945. Grandpa was not sent to Japan and came home in August.

My dad was born the next year. They had a second boy, Daniel, the year after that. This family lived everywhere. They were a typical Army family, and hopped base to base across the country and to Germany. While his children were growing up, grandpa was in Korea and then at home.

He was in Vietnam from January 1967 to February 1968. He wanted to jump again but his commanding officer told him no. Grandpa, who turned 47 in 1968, was pretty disappointed. My dad, a Marine first lieutenant, left for Vietnam the following year.

After 30 years in the service, grandpa retired, standing tall and proud under the weight of all his medals — a Silver Star, a Bronze Star with an oak-leaf cluster and three Purple Hearts. Grandpa needed to be strong. His brother died of lung cancer in 1975, and Daniel died of a drug overdose in 1977. But in between the death was birth. My eldest sister was born in 1976 and four siblings followed over the next 11 years. Grandpa was proud. He told war stories

with the greatest detail. It seemed that grandpa remembered everything about the war. When he saw a moon peaking through the clouds, dimly lighting the earth, he would call it a Normandy moon. He would watch Iraq coverage on the news and wish he could be there, fighting in the desert.

Hard military life took a toll on my grandpa. His body was worn out. I remember his Frankenstein shoes — big, black clunky things — custom fit for his mangled feet. His fingertips were calloused from the pin pricks he got when he checked his blood sugar. He was in and out of the hospitals for check-ups and medicine.

This year he had intense pain in his legs. He took codeine, but it was never enough to kill the pain. He stayed in bed some days, and dreaded going to the doctor.

Grandpa was too tough to be bound to a bed — the only thing he wanted to be attached to was a parachute.

Grandpa died a Caesar's death on March 15, betrayed by his own, once-brutish body. Like gliding through the dark sky over Normandy, grandpa again went silently into the night. Now he scopes landing zones from the best view — high up above.

I had so much to learn from him. But he's not done teaching. I'm still learning through stories my grandma and dad tell me. He is the strongest, most patriotic, proud, loving, bravest man I may ever know. He had his faults, but that didn't stop him from being the best grandpa ever. I have my wonderful life, full of opportunity and hope, because of my grandpa. Thank you, Grandpa. Happy Veterans' Day.

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