



Msgt. T.J. Patton

June 24, 1943 - May 2, 2018

Msgt. T.J. Patton, Jr. (Ret), age 74, passed away Wednesday, May 2, 2018 and was preceded by Bill and Margaret Shelley.

Msgt. Patton was born in Jonesville, VA, on June 24, 1943. He graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor's from St. Leo University.

T.J. had a great love for fishing, baseball and the outdoors. He was a Vietnam veteran and purple heart recipient throughout his 23 years as a United States Marine. T.J. was also a 32nd degree Mason of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry.

His wife of 43 years, family, and friends will lovingly remember Msgt. T.J. Patton, Jr. with a private service which will be held at the Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL. A "Celebration of Life" will be held at the Rose Plantation in Fruitland Park. Call Beyers Funeral Home for more information. Memorial donations in T.J.'s name may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project at woundedwarriorproject.org

Tribute Wall

BG

“ When we met we were both Sargent's 1st. Division Comm radio. every morning he would be found at his desk going over the stock market he really like playing the stocks I left for overseas duty and lost contact with him until few years ago when looking thru a web sight found his name and was able to e mail each other but were never able to have a beer together before his passing You never know I wish we could have sat down and had a beer and talked about the old times and the Corps we both loved SEMPER FI old friend and I hope your new duty station is your best yet

Bill Grantham - April 28, 2019 at 01:10 AM

DW

“ I met T J at Parris Island boot camp Platoon 185 along with Dr. Goelet (ghou) in 1964. TJ and I continued on with infantry training at Camp Geiger, NC. I will always remember him for his great smile that not even the drill instructors could wipe off his face with numerous pushups in their gym and they always said when he left boot camp he would be in the best shape of all. He and I reconnected more recently about 20 years ago. He called out of the blue and we had a great talk. Since then, we exchanged emails and gifts at the USMC Birthday. It was a pleasure to see all the great pictures of his children, granddaughter, and home over the years. It had been my intention to visit him in Florida later this year but clearly one can't put things off and not regret the consequences. We will all miss him but rest assured that he will be in a good place. Semper Fi to a fine friend and brother in arms.

David Wray - May 09, 2018 at 03:34 PM

CO

“ T.J. is my cousin's husband and I have known him since his oldest son was born. T.J. was very friendly and was always smiling. All his relatives in Japan loved his personality and lovely smiles. When I studied at the University in Florida from 1991 to 1993, T.J. and his family welcomed me staying their home on vacations. I remember he cooked hamburgers at his garden on Sunday. His hamburger was delicious. I was alone in USA, T.J. and his family invited me their Christmas, so that I did not feel lonely away from my family in Japan. At the commencement in my university, T.J. and his family showed up and congratulated me. I was surprised and happy to see them, because I did not know I could invite somebody at the commencement. T.J. was pleased with my graduation proudly. He was a generous and had broad-minded person. May he rest in peace.
Chizuko Ogane, form Okinawa Japan

CHIZUKO OGANE - May 09, 2018 at 10:29 AM

“ T.J. and I met in San Diego in early 1965, when we were attending classes through C&E; Battalion and living in the same Quonset hut. Months later, we were sent separately to the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, not far away. We would meet again at Comm School. T.J. was taking the Radio Operator course and I had the time and opportunity to take Radio Operator and Message Centerman courses, plus a 3-week Crypto Operator course. After classes, I was reassigned from HQ 5th Marine Regiment to 1st Shore Party Battalion, and T.J. was already there in the Communications section! T.J. helped me reestablish in the new unit. Preparations were being made to ship out to Southeast Asia, and it all seemed a great adventure at the time. We left in January 1966 and eventually arrived in Chu Lai, South Viet Nam. We apparently missed the tourist season, but the year ahead was not boring. The Comm section worked well as a cohesive and mutually supportive team, and most of us had cross-trained to cover different needs as they developed. T.J. proved a versatile individual. Periods of boredom provided opportunities for mischief.

Time would pass and my tour of duty ended in February 1967. I wasn't ready to return to the continental United States (CONUS) and extended my time in WestPac with seven months on Okinawa. This was pre-internet and I lost track of T.J. as the 1st Marine Division's tactical area of responsibility extended to Da Nang and the U.S. Army took our previous position in Chu Lai. Okinawa provided me with a time to heal. I spent nine weeks in Camp Kue Army Hospital for a knee surgery and post-op infection, then was reassigned to another unit, but I had time to explore and visit sites on Okinawa that had historic significance and scenic merit. I returned to the U.S. on September 20th, 1967, and visited our previous Comm Chief, Myron A. Truesdell, who gave me an update on developments up to the time of his departure.

Years would pass and I wrote something on a military website about Christmas in Viet Nam in 1966. Those of us with a positive attitude celebrated Christmas in brotherhood and looked forward to the next year. T.J. read the piece and contacted me through the website, so we reconnected. I'd guess that had to be more than 14 years ago.

We remained in contact, sharing developments in our families, an interest in fishing and firearms, an appreciation of the peace we enjoyed and how we used our time. T.J. consistently expressed pride and love for his family in the cards, letters and phone calls we exchanged. I was delighted to learn he'd done so well in his classes and graduated from St. Leo's. When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and subsequently underwent surgery, T.J. encouraged me to contact the Veterans Administration and guided me through the process. We talked of getting together "someday", though I live in Northwest Oregon, and it appears our reunion will have to wait until I cross the river. Time passes too quickly between friends. Especially for the family he loved, I am saddened by T.J. passing. He will not be forgotten. As time passes, the circle of old friends is getting smaller, but the memories remain. No, he will not be forgotten.

Edward J. Palumbo - May 08, 2018 at 01:51 PM

OG

“ T.J. and I met at Parris Island in September 1964, so long ago I can hardly believe it. I had dropped out of college briefly and wanted to get my military obligation out of the way, so I enlisted in the Reserves. I was really, truly, absolutely out of my depth in Boot Camp, but T.J. helped me along (and I sometimes helped him). I caught on to the fact that T.J. actually had a lot going on upstairs and liked him instantly. After P.I., we met up again briefly at San Diego in 1965 when he was going through Radio School and I was learning to be a Ground Radio Repairman. That was the last time I actually saw him, but we were to run into each other "virtually" once more many years later. I went back to Harvard, eventually got a doctorate at Columbia, and taught for many years at NYU. The Corps taught me a lot of good things about people and T.J was probably the best example of that.

One day I was preparing for a class when I got an email out of the blue from T.J., asking me if I was the same guy he'd known in the Corps -- just about blew me away. We talked on the phone for a half hour, then for the last twenty years or more, I sent him books (T.J. loved books! -- a kindred spirit!). T.J. was always curious about so many things, and had a broad mind, more so than many of my students (alas!) At Christmas, Easter, and the Marine Corps Birthday, we exchanged gifts - he sent me fruit baskets, I sent him books, and we forwarded emails to each other. I could see that that tough old Marine had a heart as soft as melting butter when it came to his family.

One thing we can be certain about, is that he will pass his Final Inspection with flying colors. Farewell and Semper Fi. Ogden Goelet ("Ghoul")

Ogden Goelet - May 07, 2018 at 05:24 PM