

Wildlife Agents in Military Serve Their Country and Their Communities With a Smile

by Senior Agent (Gunnery Sgt.) Christopher G. Harp

This article is dedicated to my grandfather, *Victor Broom*, U.S. Navy, and his son, *Scotty Broom*, U.S. Navy.

I remember listening to my uncle and my grandfather talk about serving this country and their communities. I was very young and spellbound by stories of duty on the high seas and in the trenches abroad. The stories back then were too much for a young boy to truly understand, but they somehow sparked an interest in me to serve my country and fellow man.

I joined the U.S. Marine Corps in October 1988 and was fortunate enough to survive and learn from my boot camp experiences. The Corps provided me with the

opportunity to serve as a military policeman, a physical security inspector, crime prevention specialist and as a special agent with the criminal investigation division. Through the years, I was stationed in Korea, Japan, Canada, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

During this travel I always missed the great state of Louisiana. I would sometimes run into a Louisiana boy in the Corps and have a chance to talk about things that were familiar. We often shared stories about bayous, crawfish, humidity and Community Coffee. Though I had chances

to hunt and fish in many of the places I was stationed, I'd always talk about how it never held a candle to home.

The Corps has been, and always will be, a part of me, and the experience and training have made me who I am today. In 2000, I made the difficult decision to leave active duty after 12 years of service. This transition was not easy but I chose to come to my home state of Louisiana and make my way into the field of wildlife law enforcement. This career choice has given me the unique opportunity to combine my lifetime love of and respect for the outdoors with my 16 years of knowledge and experience in law enforcement.

My belief in service to my country is as strong as ever, so I chose to maintain my connection to the U.S. Marine Corps by participating in the drilling reserve. I cannot say enough about the support the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has

given me to allow my participation in the Marine Corps Reserve. In particular, Lt. Larry Breaux has provided unparalleled guidance, direction, motivation and support. His guidance in my desire to serve my department, community, Corps and country has proven beneficial in my professional and personal life beyond anything I could have imagined. I struggle to find the appropriate words to thank Lt. Breaux enough for his tireless efforts and dedication to department, community, duty and country. Lt. Breaux's retirement will leave a void not easily filled. His work ethic, years of experience and professional service were tremendous. He and I were able to share many war stories from our military service "back in the day." I will truly miss working for and with him. I wish him fair winds and good sailing in his retirement.

Lt. Breaux was especially supportive when I was called to active duty in support of Operation Iraq Freedom in May 2004. I am currently assigned to a support billet and stationed in Lafayette, La., for the next year. My accomplishments are small and my duties are easy compared to those of many of my brothers and sisters in arms.

As I write this on Sept. 1, we are approaching the anniversary of the Sept. 11th attack on our nation. It is important to remember that many of our brothers and sisters from across the U.S. have been called into service for their country and do so without complaint. They come from all walks of life and stand forward to protect what we take for granted

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every day. Our warrior men and women stand fast and say “no” to terrorism. They stand in the face of that which may be the greatest danger to our nation. They stand with pride, honor, courage and commitment to duty. I think we can all learn something from those who are truly dedicated to service, not only service to their community or state but at the highest level, in harm’s way.

By the time you read this, we will have moved into December and are preparing for the holiday season. Please take the time to remember the men and women warriors who stand on the line in the face of that which we fear, so that we at home can sleep easy at night. Remember these warriors who volunteered to put their lives on the line so we can enjoy our many freedoms. I am humbled by the actions, heroism, and dedication of my brothers and sisters in arms. I consider it a true honor to serve my community, my state, my country and my Corps. Know that I stand ready to take my place on the line should my country call.

As I see and hear the stories of the many that serve today, I believe that their dedication is best described in the song, “To Dream the Impossible Dream.”

“To fight for the right, without question or pause, to be willing to march into Hell for a heavenly cause.”

Most of us know someone

who has answered the call of the country. These men and women do that which we cannot or will not. The call they answer is not too far removed from the call we answer as game wardens across Louisiana. We answer the call to protect our environment and serve our communities. We answer the call that not everyone can answer because someone must stand up, go forward and do what must be done.

I hope that the memories I share with my son and daughter of our service as a family across the world spark the same desire to serve that my grandfather and uncle sparked in me. My son was born in North Carolina, and my daughter was born in Okinawa, Japan. They each have traveled the world following me from one duty station to another and have stories of their own to tell. As they grow into adults they may not remember many of them but I can only hope that I have done my duty as a father.

My hat is off to each of you who participate at any level of community, state or federal service. I would like to personally thank those of you who have stepped forward, stood on the line and put aside your own fears so that my wife, my children and I can sleep easy at night. Tonight, no American sleeps unguarded. Thank you, warriors, for all you have done!

Semper Fi, warrior. 🦋

A SALUTE TO WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT AGENTS IN MILITARY SERVICE

SERVING IN ACTIVE STATUS

Special Investigations Unit

Senior Agent Louis Burnett

U.S. Army, E-8 Master Sergeant

Afghanistan

Region 5

Senior Agent Chris Harp

U.S. Marine Corps, E-7 Gunnery Sergeant

TOW Platoon 23

4th Marine Division

Lafayette, La.

Region 7

Agent Hal Bridges

National Guard Army, Lieutenant

Iraq

RETURNED FROM TOUR OF DUTY

Region 6

Senior Agent Michael C. Duvall

U.S. Marine Corps, Corporal

Served January-September 2003

Senior Agent Thomas Risser

U.S. Army National Guard E-6

Served one year with 812 MediVac Unit

Fort Bragg, N.C.

SERVING IN GUARD OR RESERVE UNIT NOT CALLED UP

Region 6

Lt. Darryl Moore

U.S. Air Force, Rank E-5 Staff Sergeant

926th Security Forces Squadron

Region 7

Cadet Joseph Moreau

U.S. Army Reserve, Staff Sergeant