

FORMER PAGE ATHLETE PROUD TO BE FLAG-RAISER

With an uncle* and two first cousins who served in the Marine Corps, Clyde Dungee, Jr. couldn't wait until he became old enough to become a Marine. He says there was just one problem, "My mother wanted me to go to college and get a good job.

My mother had seven sons and one daughter. By necessity, she ran a tight ship. I followed her wishes and went to work for Best Products for seven years and attended NCA&T for six of those years on a part-time basis.

However, my clock was ticking. I knew the Marines would not take anyone over twenty-eight years of age. Six months after my twenty-seventh birthday, my dream of becoming a Marine came true. Happily, my mother did not object."

She had grounds for objecting – her husband had been an Army officer in Korea, one son would serve twenty-two years in the Air Force, two other sons would each serve twelve years in the Army. Clyde Dungee's father-in-law was a Korean War veteran.



Upon arrival at Parris Island in 1985, Dungee found himself almost ten years older than most of his boot camp peers, and almost the same age as his drill instructors. "They called me, 'The grand old man of Parris Island,'" he recalls.

You can safely assume he wasn't hazed because of his age. In addition to being the oldest in his platoon, he was the largest. Even though he lost a few pounds during boot camp, he still weighed well over 200 pounds.

After training in Meridian, MS and Camp Johnson, NC in aviation operations and supply administration, Dungee served in the Marine Corps Reserve unit in Cherry Point, NC and later transferred to the Raleigh USMCR unit. Meanwhile, his broken-service day job was with NCNB from 1984-1994.

In 1990, Dungee was deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of Desert Shield/Desert Storm. (As a reminder, it was Desert Shield from August, 1990 until January, 1991; Desert Storm from January, 1991 until February, 1992. Collectively, it was known as the Gulf War.)

"I was discharged after the Gulf War and went back to work with NCNB, which had become Nation's Bank," he recalls. "After a few years, I went into sales, then found my niche in working security. Seventeen years in security, coupled with the covid virus, told me it was time to hang it up."

Dungee may be the happiest Marine who no longer wears the uniform that I have met. "Those were my best days," he says. "The friends I made through camaraderie in the Marine Corps have been life-long. Recently, three of my Gulf War buddies and I got together in Greensboro. One of them had stayed in for thirty years and retired as a

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colonel. When he was commissioned as a second lieutenant many years ago, he invited me to Quantico to pin one of his bars on.”

Never suspecting him to write poetry, a line from his poem, Our Beloved Corps, perfectly defines Dungee’s persona, “And when our days on earth have ended, please let those whom we leave behind remember us as good sons, daughters, parents, spouses, siblings, and friends; but let them remember us first, foremost, and always as U.S. Marines.”



Even though the virus has crimped Dungee’s style as flag-raising squad leader for the Marine Corps League, he insists, “We will be back, and we will be better! Raising the flag at Friendly Center on patriotic holidays is the least we can do to honor those who serve -- or have served -- our country. We appreciate those who have joined us for these early morning ceremonies over the years.”

Dungee may be the most visible of the flag-raisers, but he isn’t the oldest – we have a 101-year old Marine. As a lance corporal, he doesn’t have seniority – we have several generals and several colonels. At six feet, two inches -- and north of 300 pounds -- he is still the largest.



He may be the most envied – seldom does a lance corporal have the opportunity to give close-order drill commands to generals, colonels, etc.

At sixty-two, he looks like the wrestler and football player he was at Page High School. He enjoys riding his bike several times each week. An avid reader, he enjoys military history most. He has a daughter and a grandson. He attends Laughlin United Methodist Church.

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* *Clyde Dungee's Uncle Joe Dungee has been written about in these pages:*
https://greensboro.com/life/community_news/montford-point-marine-honored/article_ed40d581-b093-5510-8f53-342d8f6166c0.html