



★ ★ ★ JIM JOY '57 ★ ★ ★

RETIRED BRIGADIER GENERAL, U.S. MARINE CORPS

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# JOY

Let's be clear about something: Jim Joy is a man of his word.

As a retired brigadier general from the United States Marines Corps, he's one of those true Americans who has put himself in harm's way to protect his country. He's an old-fashioned, Missouri-born, tell-it-like-it-is guy. But don't believe him when he says "Marines don't smile."

For one thing, he has many, many reasons to smile. He has a wonderful family. He's healthy, retired and plays golf three days a week. He survived two tours and two ferocious attacks in Vietnam. He was called upon by the President of the United States to take charge of a situation following one of the nation's darkest moments. He was the leader of a multimillion-dollar organization. He served nearly 20 years on the United States Olympic Committee.

Joy's life has been a series of challenges – from professional to personal – that brought him to a place where, really, he has plenty to smile about.

WRITTEN BY MITZI LUTZ  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DARREN WHITLEY

## MISSION: MARINES

Jim Joy loves sports, but as a kid growing up in the small town of Conception Junction, he never played on a football team. But his road to the Marines, where he would have a distinguished career, would begin on the gridiron.

During high school, Joy was such an athlete that he caught the attention of Bearcat football coach Ryland Milner who recruited him to play for Northwest. Joy, at 5-foot-7 and barely 150 pounds, accepted the offer and played for three years.

"I worked on the railroad in the summer and told the foreman I wanted to carry the jack and the handle all the time so I could get in shape," he said. "Everyone laughed because it was more than 100 pounds! They thought I'd last maybe three days. Well, I lasted all summer, and needless to say, I was in excellent shape."

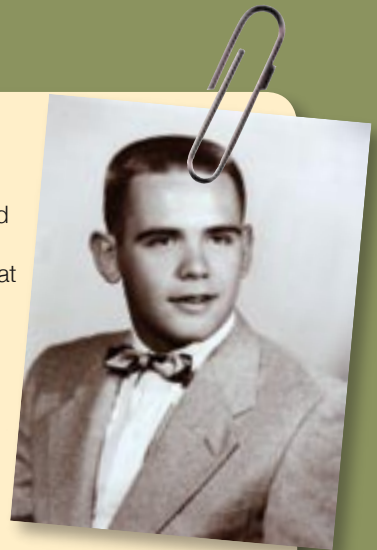
Joy didn't receive much playing time as a Bearcat, but it didn't stop him from receiving a little ribbing from his teammates.

"I guess it was a combination of my Indian ancestors and the sound I made every time I was hit on the football field, because they gave me the nickname Chief Ugh," he said.

The "chief" knew he wanted to become a high school coach, but first he was determined to become a Marine.

"Several of the Bearcat football players I watched before I came to Northwest were Marines, including Paul Tobin who was a co-captain, and about a dozen of the guys on the team when I was a freshman were in the Marine officer program," Joy said. "There was no draft going on at the time, but the Marines struck my fancy – their spirit, their determination."

After he graduated from Northwest in 1957, Joy, who later earned two master's degrees, intended on staying in the military for three years. He miscalculated by 28 years.



TOP RIGHT: JOY AS A HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR, 1953. ABOVE: JOY'S FINAL ASSIGNMENT AS AN ACTIVE MARINE WAS SPEARHEADING THE MARINE CORPS RECRUITING EFFORT FROM 1985 TO 1988.

## MISSION: FAMILY



**SINCE THEIR DAYS TOGETHER AT NORTHWEST, JIM AND PATTY JOY HAVE STOOD BY EACH OTHER DESPITE THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES THEY'VE BEEN DEALT. TODAY, THEY LIVE IN ROGERS, ARK., AND ENJOY SPENDING TIME WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.**

Following his college graduation, Joy headed to the First Marine Division in Camp Pendleton, Calif., and married his college sweetheart, Patty New '58. Patty taught elementary school until their first child was born in 1961. But during childbirth, Patty, at age 25, suffered a cerebral incident that left her unable to talk and the right side of her body paralyzed – a condition from which she would never fully recover.

“Patty needed the best medical attention in the country at the time. For her to receive that, I knew I needed to stay in the Marine Corps,” Joy said. “She could get great speech and physical therapy in Washington, D.C., so in 1963 the Marine Corps transferred us to that area.”

Because of her mother’s paralysis and loss of speech, Joy’s oldest daughter, Amy, became a speech therapist and lives in Virginia. Their youngest daughter, Abby, is an executive for Wal-Mart and lives just a few miles from her parents in Rogers, Ark.

Joy said the toughest part of his military career was being separated from family.

“I had two yearlong tours in Vietnam and another six months in Lebanon,” he said. “I had the reputation in the Marines of being cool under fire, and my men always knew I was in charge, but being away from your family is tough on anyone.”

## MISSION: VIETNAM

Joy’s first tour in Vietnam was in 1966-67 as a company commander. In 1971-72, he returned to Vietnam as an adviser with the Vietnamese Marines where he was involved in two heavy battles.

His involvement in the Easter Offensive (when the North Vietnamese Army launched a large-scale attack on the South) is chronicled in the book “The Easter Offensive, The Last American Advisors.”

“In a three-day period, all of the Vietnamese Army regiments were overrun, and then our Vietnamese Marine brigade had to evacuate our fire bases and make about a 25-kilometer march over very rugged terrain,” Joy said. “It was a very harrowing experience, and we lost half of the brigade – they were either killed or captured.”

After being reequipped and receiving new personnel, Joy and his comrades were thrown back into battle.

“Believe it or not, the same thing happened again just a few months later,” he said. “We had to start a counter attack and the next thing we know, there’s no one between us and the North Vietnamese and the DMZ. All of the Vietnamese Army units fell back and left our brigade facing the North.”

Joy and his troops had to evacuate again, and things went from bad to worse.

“We were under a tank and infantry attack,” he said. “There were only about five of us Americans left between North Vietnam and South Vietnam when we were finally extracted by helicopter under a very, very dire situation. We really thought we may be going to the ‘Hanoi Hilton’ and joining the other Americans whose planes we saw being shot down.”

Joy is confident one of the reasons he advanced through the military ranks to brigadier general is due to his heavy combat experience. This experience would be put to use when he received an assignment from the Commandant of the Marine Corps General P.X. Kelley and President Ronald Reagan in 1983.



**IN 1966, JOY, NOW A FATHER OF TWO YOUNG DAUGHTERS, GOT HIS ORDERS FOR HIS FIRST TOUR IN VIETNAM.**



## MISSION: LEBANON



JOY'S TROOPS IN LEBANON WERE VISITED BY MANY ENTERTAINERS IN 1983, INCLUDING BOB HOPE (LEFT, WITH JOY), CHARLTON HESTON AND BROOKE SHIELDS.

The intensity of the battles Joy faced in Vietnam would pale in comparison to his assignment in Lebanon.

"You have defining moments in your life," Joy said. "I've had several of these – Patty's bad illness, the big battles in Vietnam, and in 1983 when I was selected by President Reagan to go over and take charge in Lebanon following one of the darkest days in the history of our country when 241 Marines were killed."

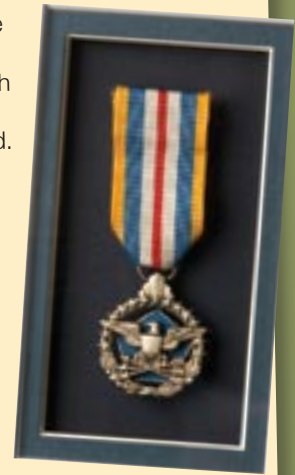
Before departing for Lebanon to secure the safety of the U.S. military and to complete his mission, Joy and his wife met with President Reagan.

"He gave me quite a pep talk," Joy said. "It was like talking to your grandfather. He said 'Jim, I'm very proud of you, and we don't want to lose any more Marines over there.'"

Joy had his orders, but he didn't know what the future held.

"The situation in Beirut was the most challenging thing I've ever had to undertake," he said. "If you look at some of the pictures from Beirut, you can see that I'm very tired. I was working 20 hours a day for six months solid. I later learned my men called me "Raccoon Eyes" because I had such dark circles under my eyes. When you're in combat, you may have a battle that lasts a couple of days, but you don't have battles that last six months where you're under excruciating pressure. It was hardball."

When Joy and his troops left six months later – although difficult for Joy to accept – 12 more Marines had been killed. Because of his stellar service, the president of Lebanon awarded him the Order of Cedar, the highest award the government gives to any foreign officer. He also received the U.S. Department of Defense Superior Service Medal.



## SPOTLIGHT: LEBANON, 1983



- U.S. Marines were in Lebanon to secure peace to the city of Beirut and to prevent the area from becoming a battlefield following a civil war among the Christians, Muslims and Palestinians. On Oct. 23, 1983, a truck packed with explosives blew up a Marine barracks at Beirut International Airport killing 241 Marines.
- In November 1983, Joy was appointed the first commanding general of the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit in Lebanon, and in February 1984 he became the commander of the Joint Task Force, Lebanon.

JOY WAS PRESENTED THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SUPERIOR SERVICE MEDAL (TOP, RIGHT) BY MAJ. GEN. STEVE OLMSTEAD (LEFT). THE DAY AFTER HE RETURNED FROM LEBANON, JOY FOUND HIS WAY TO THE NEAREST GOLF COURSE.

## MISSION: LIFE AS A CIVILIAN

- Director of the Marine Corps Morale Welfare and Recreation programs, 1988-1996

- MWR programs, now called Marine Corps Community Services, aim to improve the quality of life for Marines and their families by providing recreation programs and family services such as libraries, dry cleaners, convenience stores, bowling alleys, fitness centers and childcare facilities

- From 1988 to 2005, Joy was a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, serving in several capacities on the Olympic Foundation as well as the audit, budget, nominating and executive committees
- Currently lives in Rogers, Ark., and works part-time as a consultant

Joy's passion for his profession continued following his retirement from active duty in June 1988 where he had most recently been spearheading the Marine Corps recruiting effort. For the next eight years, he served as the director of the Marine Corps Morale Welfare and Recreation programs.

"I took off my uniform one day and put on a suit the very next day, but fortunately, I was able to work with the same people I had worked with for the previous 31 years," he said.

Joy, who now had to learn his way around Capitol Hill, had a big job ahead of him, constructing a new organization by putting four separate entities into one large \$750 million business, the MWR.

"Funds were available for things like libraries and fitness centers because they're tied into the mission of developing Marines," Joy said, "but 90 percent of my budget was from non-appropriated funds. Money for things like golf courses, marinas and stables had to be generated the old fashioned way – by earning it."

Also about the time Joy retired from active duty, the Olympic Committee was looking for volunteers with experience managing big organizations and big budgets, and Joy's leadership skills caught the committee's attention.

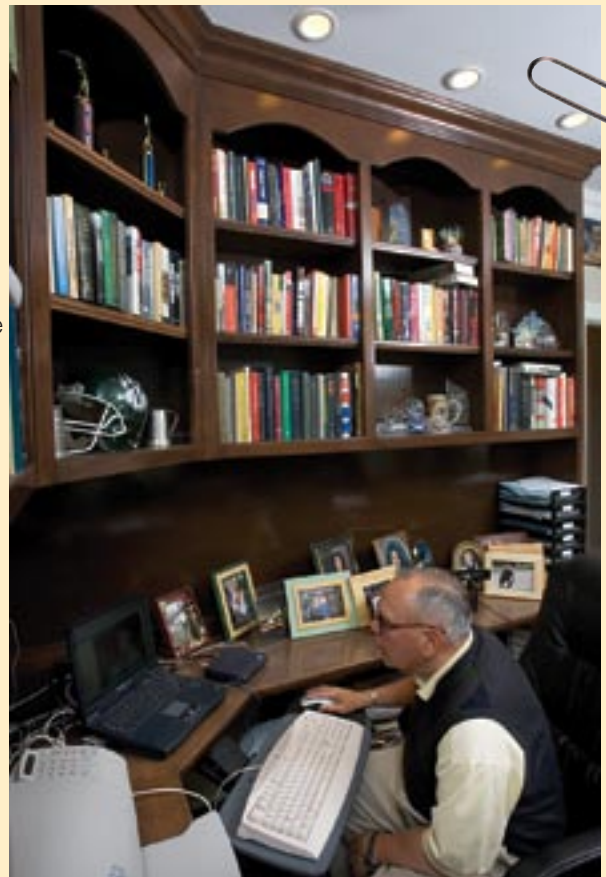
He also knew how to speak his mind.

"It all boils down to common sense and being able to articulate your position," Joy said. "With the Olympics, I kind of had the reputation of being a bulldog, but at the same time I'm an eternal optimist. I think it goes back to my days on the battlefield during Vietnam and Lebanon. Even though there were some very difficult situations, I never gave up or thought I wouldn't make it."

Likewise, Jim and Patty Joy have never given up on their devotion to each other and are looking forward to their retirement years.

"I'm going to phase down my consulting business and take care of 'grandma,'" Joy said. "When you've been as busy as I have, it's hard to just stop. I'll still be active and keep my fingers in the Olympics. Patty and I will do some traveling and enjoy the grandkids, and I'll continue to golf, hunt and fish."

After a lifetime of service, Joy, a true American and dedicated family man, has a lot to look forward to. And that's certainly something to smile about. ■



**TOP, LEFT: JOY WAS FEATURED ON THE COVER OF MILITARY MARKET MAGAZINE IN 1988 WHEN HE BECAME THE DIRECTOR OF THE MARINE CORPS MWR PROGRAMS. TOP, RIGHT: JOY WEARS HIS U.S. OLYMPIC COMMITTEE BLAZER AS A PROUD REMINDER OF NEARLY 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AMERICAN ATHLETES. ABOVE, LEFT: JOY'S MANY MEDALS ARE A TESTAMENT TO HIS DISTINGUISHED MILITARY CAREER. ABOVE, RIGHT: THOUGH RETIRED FROM TWO CAREERS, JOY, PICTURED IN HIS HOME OFFICE, REMAINS BUSY AS A PART-TIME CONSULTANT.**