

A Salute to our Veterans

According to John T. Margie, US Marine Corp, Retired “It’s the training that makes the difference”. Clearly John has been following this rule for many, many years, and he does it well. When he spoke at his local Rotary Club this past spring, he notified us as to his commitment to make this opportunity a special one.

A Wilkes Barre, Pa. native, John went into the Marine Corp in 1948. After three months of training at [Parris Island, SC](#) he entered an infantry exercise on the USS Worcester in the Mediterranean Sea. In June, 1950, after the invasion of South Korea, John was shipped abroad to the Suez Canal, the South China Sea, Japan and Korea. He participated in the [Battle of the Chosin Reservoir](#) in what would become the decisive battle of the Korean War.



After serving overseas, Corporal Margie became a Marine Recruiter in Defiance, Ohio, receiving the title of “Outstanding Recruiter of the Year”. While transporting new recruits to Parris Island, he contracted polio. For two years, John was a patient at the US Naval Hospital where he was named “Polio Marine of the Year”. With support from the US Navy doctors, nurses and his family, John regained the ability to move.

There is very little written about polio and the military. We know that at the height of WW1 (1916), there were an est. 27,000 cases reported in the US. During WWII, there were an estimated 64,000 (the height of which occurred in 1944-1945*). The Korean War years, brought almost 100,000* cases. Fortunately, during the 20 years the Vietnam War dragged on, the vaccines were more effective and the numbers dwindled year by year.

From Dr. Richard Bruno’s article: Polio and the Military – A Little History:

“G.I.s having polio brings up an interesting point about who gets polio. In 1946, although there was an outbreak of polio among American Marines stationed in northern China, not one case was reported among the Chinese. Albert Sabin was told by a British physician in the region that he frequently saw paralytic polio in the foreigners but rarely saw the disease among natives.

Polio also occurred with unexpected frequency in American servicemen stationed in the Philippines and Korea despite the fact that there had been no prior polio epidemics and that even individual cases of polio among the local populations were rare”.

There is very little history available about polio in the military. What we *do* know is that our network of polio survivors has a significant number of you engaged with us (in the US and abroad). We would like to honor you with our Thanks. You fought mightily - not once but twice - as you fought for our freedom *and* fought to regain your life after polio.

As John loves to say - “Semper Fi” ! (Well done). We won’t forget.

Thank to the Woodbury, NJ Rotary Club for sharing John’s photo and story with us.

*<https://ourworldindata.org/polio>

