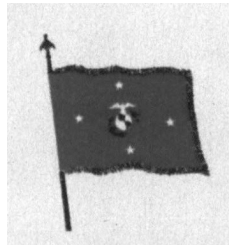



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT**GENERAL ROBERT H. BARROW**

The Marine Corps lost one of its icons with the passing on October 30, 2008, of Gen Robert H. Barrow, U.S. Marine Corps Retired, our 27th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Our heritage is built on combat valor. A three-war Marine, Gen Barrow led Chinese guerrillas behind enemy lines during World War II. As one of Col Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's rifle company commanders in the Korean War, he led his men over the seawall at Inchon and through the fight for the recapture of Seoul. In December 1950, he led Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines on a six-mile road march in the snow, followed by a two-day fight in subzero temperatures against Chinese Communist Forces. They secured Hill 1081 at Funchilin Pass and covered the fighting withdrawal of the 1st Marine Division. For this action, Gen Barrow was awarded the Navy Cross. As a colonel in the Vietnam War, he commanded 9th Marines, 3d Marine Division. From January to March 1969, the 9th Marines swept the A Shau Valley, attacking a series of enemy bases along the Laotian border in Operation DEWEY CANYON and denying the enemy sanctuary. For his combat leadership of the regiment, Gen Barrow received the U.S. Army's second highest award for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross.

The lasting contributions of Gen Barrow to the Marine Corps are many. As the Commanding General of Parris Island, then Chief of Staff of Manpower, and Assistant Commandant, he was a strong advocate and staunch supporter of reform in the way the institution enlisted and trained new recruits, while discharging those Marines who no longer measured up.

It is easy to take for granted the quality of Marines today and the reputation our magnificent organization enjoys in the eyes of the public. Such was not always the case. In the aftermath of Vietnam and the transition to an all-volunteer force, drug and alcohol abuse permeated our ranks, while the presence of racism had a corrosive effect on discipline. Gen Barrow would not tolerate such behavior, nor would he compromise on the quality of our Marines. He once said, "In any institution or undertaking, the importance of people transcends all else." Throughout his life, Gen Barrow maintained an abiding love and respect for his Marines. We, in turn, will miss him greatly.


James T. Conway
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps