

## ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

There have many families in Assumption who have had multiple members serve in the Armed Forces. This week we honor one of those families, Norm Bethard and his two sons, Matthew and Adam

Norm graduated from Assumption High School in 1964. In April of 1966, he started his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, as a member of the U. S. Army. After completion of basic training, he was assigned to the Aberdeen Proving Ground, MA, for training in Fuel and Electrical Systems Repair. He received orders to report to the 25th Division in Hawaii, but the 25th was actually in Vietnam. It took the Army some time to straighten out his orders. After spending Christmas at home, he was sent to Cu Chi, Vietnam, and was assigned to the 725th Maintenance Battalion. While at Cu Chi, he spent some of his time in the Hobo Woods keeping tanks running on contaminated fuel. For the last three months of his duty in Vietnam, Norm was located at Tay Ninh near the Cambodian border.

When Norm returned to the States he married "My one and only", Jerri Kiesecoms Bethard. He finished his tour of duty at Fort Bragg, NC, where he was assigned to a company as a training NCO because he could type. He was discharged in July, 1969.

Norm and Jerri have two sons Matthew and Adam. Norm states that Matt and Adam were making three times as much money when they enlisted as he was when discharged after three years of service.

Matt graduated from Assumption High School and joined the U.S. Marine Corps in May of 1989. After completing boot camp at San Diego, CA, he became an F/A 18 Mechanic. His duties included being a crew chief, engine mechanic, and fuel system and secondary power systems. He was stationed in Beaufort, SC; Lemoore, CA; Miramar, CA; and FT Worth, TX. Under the Unit Deployment Program, Matt was in Iwakuni, Japan, three times. He did two tours on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt supporting Operation Southern Watch in the Middle East and supporting NATO Peacekeepers in the Bosnia War. Matt was deployed to Kyrgyzstan for missions in Afghanistan. He went to Kuwait twice, once for Operation Southern Watch and then for the invasion of Iraq. He later served in Iraq as part of the continued operations and peace keeping missions. Matt states, "While in Iraq, I e-mailed my Dad to tell him, 'Well, it has finally happened, Hell has frozen over'. It has snowed in Iraq for the first time in 67 years."

Matt retired from the Marines in June, 2009, as a Gunnery Sergeant. He currently lives in Fort Worth, TX, where he works for Lockheed Martin building the JSF (F-35) next generation fighter. He is married to Karla, and they have two girls, Alysa and Nicole.

Norm and Jerri's second son, Adam, graduated from Assumption High School in May of 1991. Four days later, he departed for Marine Recruit Training. He completed Boot Camp at San Diego, Ca, and advanced training at Camp Pendleton CA. Adam has achieved several titles: Computer Programmer, Small Computer Specialist, and Data Chief and 0699 Communications Chief. His duties included: programming military

pay and manpower systems; repairing computers; installing data networks; and managing communication architectures including telephones, data networks, and radio systems.

Adam has been stationed in Okinawa, Japan; Kansas City, MO; Naples, Italy; Quantico, VA; Twenty-Nine Palms, CA; Iwakuni, Japan; and Fort Gordon, GA. He has conducted training exercises in Thailand, South Korea; Germany; France; and Malta. He was deployed to Albania in support of Operation Silver Wake and has also completed two combat tours, one in Iraq and the other in Afghanistan.

Adam completed his 8 months in Afghanistan on a British Base. He says, "They weren't prepared for Americans because within two days the whole base was out of ketchup, and they only offered malt vinegar as a condiment. Additionally, the only eggs for breakfast were hardboiled or sunny side up, either way hard yolks. In Afghanistan, we encountered several sand storms. The biggest grounded all air assets and came at us like a brown wall. As it got closer, the movement of the sand looked like a big rolling torrent of water. The sun was blocked out and everything turned into a dark brown mass. Our visibility was only 60 feet in front of us. The storm lasted for four hours."

Adam is currently on active duty as a Master Gunnery Sergeant, one of the highest enlisted ranks within the Marine Corps. He is living in Evans, GA, with his wife Rebecca and their three boys; Aaron, Alix, and Ceejay. He is Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Marine Detachment, U.S. Army Signal Schools.

Thank you, Specialist Fifth Class Norman Bethard, Gunnery Sergeant Matthew Bethard, and Master Gunnery Sergeant Adam Bethard for what you gave for us.

Date to remember:

May 26, 2013: VFW Ladies Auxiliary dinner and gun raffle. Gun raffle tickets may be purchased from any Veterans committee member.

Note cards with a picture of the proposed Memorial are available for purchase at Wash House Equipment.