

1355

NARRATOR: "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE CEREMONY WILL BEGIN IN FIVE MINUTES. WE ASK YOU TO PLEASE SILENCE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES."

1400

NARRATOR: "GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ON BEHALF OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, THE BASIC SCHOOL, COL ROBERT G. MCCARTHY III, WELCOME TO TODAYS CLASS 1-68 COURAGE MONUMENT DEDICATION CEREMONY."

NARRATOR: "PLEASE RISE FOR THE INVOCATION GIVEN BY THE COMMAND CHAPLAIN, LCDR JOHN W. POTTER, CHAPLAIN, UNITED STATES NAVY." "AND REMAIN STANDING FOR HONORS TO GENERAL KELLY."

CHAPS: "LET US PRAY... AMEN."

BAND: PLAYS RUFFLES AND FLOURISHES (4 STAR)

NARRATOR: "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE BE SEATED."

NARRATOR: "WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED GUESTS WITH US TO CELEBRATE THIS EVENT. GEN MIKE WILLIAMS, FORMER ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS, GEN JOHN KELLY FORMER WHITE HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF, SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND COMMANDER OF SOUTHERN COMMAND, LTGEN BENJAMIN WATSON, CG TRAINING AND EDUCATION COMMAND, MGEN TOM WILKERSON, COL ROBERT G MCCARTHY III, COMMANDING OFFICER THE BASIC SCHOOL. YOUR PRESENCE IS INCREDIBLY MEANINGFUL TO US AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENDANCE."

NARRATOR: "IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO INTRODUCE OUR FIRST GUEST SPEAKER, BOB KOURY."

BOB: REMARKS

NARRATOR: "IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO INTRODUCE OUR SECOND GUEST SPEAKER, COL ROBERT G. MCCARTHY III."

CO: REMARKS

NARRATOR: "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE RISE FOR THE PLAYING OF ANCHORS AWEIGH AND THE MARINES HYMN."

BAND: PLAYS ANCHORS AWEIGH AND MARINES HYMN.

NARRATOR: "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS CONCLUDES TODAY'S CEREMONY, ON BEHALF OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER, THE MARINES, AND SAILORS OF THE BASIC SCHOOL, THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENDANCE.

Courage Monument Dedication

24 October 2024

Oh my goodness!!

It is indeed a grand and glorious day to be alive and in the Corps!!

My classmates: can I get an OOrrrraugh!!

I want to emphasize that we are so humbled to have these honored guests with us today to celebrate our gift. Their presence is incredibly meaningful for us and places their personal stamps of approval on our years' long Courage efforts. I am going to take a few extra moments to share with you a bit more about two of them in greater detail than protocol requires.

- Our classmate, Gen Mike Williams, has been my mentor and taskmaster for this entire endeavor. Honestly, his contributions have been enormous and have kept us on track in pursuit of the myriad approvals necessary for this gift.

The latest Gen Mike missive to me was: "Bob, do not insult President Abraham Lincoln!!" What in the heck!! Well, it turns out that The Gettysburg Address was 272 words long. Who knew? Mike emphasized: "Bob, you don't want to insult Lincoln's memory with a rambling speech!" Damn, Mike! My first draft had: 2,332! Not a great start.

Mike I simply can't thank you enough for all you have done behind the scenes to make today possible.

- Gen John Kelly. Sir, you have held so many critical positions while serving our nation, including being the White House Chief of Staff, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Commander of Southern Command.

Sir, I understand that you do not want any of this to be about you. But I need to tell you that you have been my personal hero for many years and for many reasons. Two of which are:

On being questioned if your forces would be able to fight their way into heavily defended Baghdad, you replied: "Hell these are Marines. Men like them held

Guadalcanal and took Iwo Jima. Baghdad ain't shit."

And your report of the Ramadi barracks bombing. Your detailed description of the courageous actions of the two young Marine compound entrance guards: Corporal Jonathan Yale and Lance Corporal Jordan Haerter, ages 22 and 20 years respectively. Their Courage and actions saved the lives of many of their fellow Marines, Corpsmen and others. You reported that when the explosives laden truck bore down on them at their entrance gate post, Yale and Haerter saw it coming, but never hesitated. They never stepped back. They never started to step aside. They never even shifted their weight to save themselves. With their feet spread shoulder width apart, they leaned into the danger, firing as fast as they could work their weapons. They had only one second left to live. The truck explodes. The camera goes blank. Two young Marines go to their God. But their courage saved many lives. Sir, your report and then your steadfast comforting of their families has kept these two young Marines alive for me and many others.

I shared this because we are gathered here today to talk about Courage and Marines. Your Marine Corps service and your subsequent service to our nation has said in action and deed pretty much all that can ever be said about Courage.

Sir, from the depths of my heart, and from all my classmates gathered here, thank you for your personal examples of the Courage that our monument hopes to honor and teach to all future Marine officers. We are incredibly honored with your presence.

Col McCarthy: It is hard to imagine a more important job in all of training command than preparing our young officers to be leaders of marines. Thanks to you and your TBS command for all you have done to make Courage possible. Without the support of the TBS command deck, your civilian staff, and a shout out to LtCol Kirk Johnson and Maj James Stanley who mentored Courage from inception, today never would have happened.

Also with us today in support and spirit, but unfortunately in different time zones, are:

- General Jim Mattis had hoped and planned to attend today. But at the last minute he was called to be in the Middle East for the month of October. Gen Mattis, thank you for your support of our efforts here today. And please know that you are welcome to use our Courage pull up bars on any of your many future visits to TBS.

- LtGen Charles Chairotti is the President and CEO of our Marine Corps Association. Chuck has shared our Courage progress closely with copious moral

support. His schedule changed at the last minute to have him in Europe today. But he has asked Leatherneck Editor Nancy Lichtman and two additional representatives from Leatherneck Magazine to chronicle today's events.

- And.... On Monday evening, whodda thought, I had a surprise phone call from the senior marine aide to the SECNAV, Carlos Del Toro. He said that the Secretary had asked him to speak with me, directly and personally, to apologize for being unable to attend today. And to affirm The Secretary's support of Courage. Remarkable! Can't make that up!!

Distinguished guests, from our hearts, my classmate brothers and I thank you for joining our Courage Team today. _____

We are gathered here today to properly dedicate a gift from our Basic School Class of 1-68 to The Basic School, to the United States Marine Corps and finally to the United States Department of the Navy. I mention all of these entities because each of them had their way with us during our multi year, formal review and acceptance process.

It turns out that the only thing more difficult than fighting a war is to get a no cost, no obligation, no strings attached gift accepted by the Department of the Navy.

Our gift is this interactive monument that you will soon see, that we have titled "Courage".

Why Courage?

Well..... we hoped you would ask.

The question every TBS Lieutenant wants answered more than any other is: "What will I need to accomplish my mission while keep my Marines alive in real deal combat?"

Well, it just so happens that the vast majority of our TBS 1-68 classmates are able to answer that question- in spades.

That because.... Our TBS class was shortened by a month or more due to the urgent need to replace the casualties of our brother lieutenants already in Vietnam combat before us. TBS 1-68 actually graduated in 11-67.

After graduation and 30 days leave, we on the infantry side went directly from

Basic School into real deal, life and death combat in Vietnam. This, during the maelstrom that was the infamous Tet Offensive in 1968. Some of our smarter (but not better looking) class mates were assigned to advanced schools like engineering, artillery, motor transport, tanks, tracks, air and anti-air. But they too ended up in the same Vietnam combat brawl, just a few months later.

Please look behind you at the monument honoring those who were in the TBS class immediately preceding ours. Displayed there are the names of those who perished at their posts in Vietnam. Please also note the casualty rates their class suffered. Close to 40% of them were awarded the honored, but never wanted, Purple Heart. And I will absolutely guarantee you that many more than that 40% suffered wounds and other injuries, during and after Vietnam, that were not formally recognized in the chaos that is combat and it's aftermath.

Without going into greater detail, our TBS 1-68 class incurred a comparable level of casualties. In fact, our classmate historian, LtCol Bill Tehan, tells me that, combined, our two TBS classes endured the highest casualty rates of any two TBS classes- Ever.

Bill should know, he wears three purple hearts. Now, at our age, I and almost all of my brothers are walking wounded, with a large portion of those wounds attributable directly to our Vietnam service.

Would we do it all again?

Absolutely!!

And proudly.

You will soon see that our TBS 1-68 class's "Who We Were" and the "What We Did" histories that are now recorded for generations to come in the magnificent granite memorial plaque behind me.

But it is the "What We Learned" history, inscribed in far right granite plaque, that is the crux of our reason for being here today. The "what we learned" message that we are duty bound to convey to every Lieutenant that passes these gates.

Our Corps does a fantastic job of cataloging "lessons learned" from all conflicts. And making them available to every marine. So, what could we 80 year old's possibly add to this thorough and professional effort?

For over half a century, can you believe it, 57 years, my TBS brothers and others who shared our experiences have met, shared a few beers, swapped sea stories and other lies, and tried to sort out what we learned from our Vietnam combat experience. And more important, what knowledge should we pass on. Always trying to answer that key question that every TBS lieutenant has: What will I need to accomplish my mission while keeping my Marines alive in real deal combat?

For decades, our old guy informal discussions provided no immediate or clear guidance for them. But then, things began to coalesce around a simple line drawing that had been sitting on my desk for a bunch of years. That drawing is in your program. With it, we began to focus on courage as the most important single ingredient we believed that young lieutenants needed.

The concept of courage has had so many thoughtful analyses over millennia. Among them:

- John Wayne said Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway
- Gen Schwarzkopf said that true courage is being afraid, and going ahead and doing your job anyhow
- And many more thoughtful interpretations are included in your program.

Of course, courage is also displayed in many arenas other than combat. Moral courage to accomplish what Gen Kelly and others have displayed in so many leadership arenas. The courage to fight cancer and crippling wounds. And, sadly, in many more .

In combat, from our experiences, we knew that courage was never the absence paralyzing fear. But it was pushing that fear, in the chaos and misery that is combat, into the background. And doing your job, anyhow.

For our efforts, we have chosen to describe Courage as “Enduring For One Moment More”. We thought that most appropriate to our combat experiences. When the world was going to hell in a handbag, when the heavens were coming down and your world was being blown apart. When bedlam, chaos, overwhelming noise, explosions and concussions were everywhere. With wounded and shattered men all around you, and with the promise of more to come. In those critical moments, you had to endure for one moment more, and push paralyzing fear behind you, to accomplish your mission and protect your marines. That was courage for us. Enduring for one

moment more.

We then had to fit what we had learned into a message to all new lieutenants. And then to find a way to convey that message. Pretty overwhelming!

But, that simple line drawing, depicting doing just one more pull up as enduring for one moment more, was the key to our moving forward.

We knew that reserves of courage can be grown- like strength. That by dedicating yourself to doing today what you could not possibly do yesterday- and then by doing so tomorrow, and the next day. Pull-ups were the perfect metaphor for our Courage message.

Yesterday you could do maybe 10 pull-ups with every ounce of your strength and determination. But, today you will push thru to do 11. That is courage. Doing today what you could not possibly do yesterday. Enduring for one moment more to do so. And committing yourself to repeating this for every tomorrow.

This “going beyond” applies to arenas other than getting physically stronger. Getting smarter while here at TBS is another key to building reserves of courage. Committing to learning even more than the already incredibly thorough and rigorous course here at TBS demands. Foregoing the comforts of relaxing in slack moments, but instead mastering more of the martial knowledge that combat demands.

And the lieutenant who has repeatedly accomplished more today than was possible yesterday, going beyond, mastering the martial studies and preparations TBS offers, is building reserves of courage. Enduring for one moment more. And by doing so again tomorrow.

Then, we set forth to transform that simple line drawing of enduring for one moment more on the bar, into the bronze Courage monument soon to be before you.

This process started with our classmate Mark Byrd, who is an accomplished sculptor and has done many, many Marine Corps works. Including the recent Chosen Few monument at the Heritage Museum. Mark flushed out how to make our concept become physical and in bronze. Unfortunately, family and life events overtook him, and he became unable to actually cast our bronze Marine.

So we were at a dead, dead end until, fortune entered in the strangest way.

I was at a high school reunion in Atlantic City, New Jersey on a rainy, crappy day and went for a walk on the boardwalk. There, I stumbled upon a collection of beautiful bronze monuments depicting Korean war scenes. One was a platoon leader, carrying a handful of dog tags from the men he had lost. Honestly, I stood there and cried like a baby for at least 10 minutes. It was that impressive.

It took a while, but we tracked down the sculptor, Jay Warren in Rogue River, Oregon.

This led to an absolutely fascinating adventure that began by heading to the recruiting station in Portland, Oregon. There we commandeering a young lieutenant who had not yet gotten his orders to TBS to be our model. Then we electronically scanning him at various angles on different pull-up bars for over six hours. My classmates had done a magnificent job of rounding up several sets of actual 1967 utilities, starched and pressed, for him to wear for the scanning process.

This scanning was all done with a handheld scanner the size of a hair dryer, linked to huge computers. Those digital scans were then converted into a ginormous program that drives a 3-D printer the size of a small car. Over weeks, the 3-D printer builds up tiny lines of sand and superglue, at 100 layers per inch, to make the dozens of molds into which the hot bronze will be poured.

When we reviewed the outcome, I asked Jay to make a couple of artistic changes to the digital scans. When you see our bronze marine, you will see that it has a incredibly realistic and determined look. That is Jay in full artist mode. And my final adjustment was to have our Courage bronze Marine wear a 1967 era high and tight haircut that our pre TBS model had not yet needed.

After months of preparation, and many harrowing episodes, our bronze Courage Marine was cast, patinated and finished. It arrived overland by truck from Portland just five days ago. And was stood in the magnificent masonry surround now before us last Friday. The manor was actually finished just this morning with me and our mason crawling around on our hands and knees. Talk about high and tight!!

So, here we are, at the moment of transition:

To all current and future TBS lieutenants, our Courage monument is now yours and no longer ours. It is our gift to you, the future of our Corps, along with our Courage message of enduring for one moment more.

Be aware that the bronze marine on our bar, dressed in actual 1967 utilities is me, it is my classmates living and perished, and it is all who have passed before you here at TBS . We are watching and challenging you to do “just one more” than required.

Sure, you can walk past us to and from chow and classes, just ignoring us if you wish. Turning your head to avoid our challenge.

But we hope that you will accept our challenge you to jump aboard, often. To do just one more for yourself and for our Corps. To build your strength and your reservoir of courage.

Do today what you could not do yesterday, and do that again tomorrow.

Finally, Lieutenants: You are in a serious business in a serious and unforgiving world. It is on you, and you alone, to become as good as you can possibly be here at TBS, in the fleet and in your lives to follow.

You carry the future of our beloved Corps on your shoulders.

We wish you fair winds, following seas and Godspeed.

Semper Fidelis

Can I get an ooragug!!

Capt Frisbee

Please all stand for the Marine Corps Hymn.