

Tribute to LtCol H.D. "Bud" Fredericks USMC (Ret.)

We are honored to have with us for this reunion, LtCol Bud Fredericks and his wife, Dot. Before asking the two of them to come forward, I want to talk a bit about Col Fredericks' accomplishments. He actually has had two very, very distinguished careers. Many of us here tonight remember when he said his goodbye's to the 1st Bn 4th Marines in Chu Lai Vietnam. His next assignment was as an Assistant Professor for Naval Science at Oregon State University.

In 1968, he retired from the Corps, and he earned his PhD in 1969 from the University of Oregon. He then began a most distinguished second career as a professor in special education. If you type in Professor HD Fredericks in Google, you will find 5,300 articles that refer to his published articles, honors and achievements in special education.

He was a researcher at Western Oregon University's Teaching Research Division for 25 years before he took retirement. In 2001, for his contributions to the field of special education and to people with disabilities and their families, he was honored as the Outstanding Alumnus from the University of Oregon College of Education Alumni Society. I've extracted some comments from the write up for his award:

"...Bud Fredericks is a hero to me and numerous others in the field of special education and his work has profoundly impacted the lives of thousands of people with disabilities. When his youngest son, Tim, was born with Down Syndrome, Bud decided to enter the University of Oregon's special education doctoral program in 1967. He excelled in his doctoral studies... earning his Ed.D. degree with honors and began lines of work he would follow for the next quarter century. Over the course of his career in special education, all of which was spent at Teaching Research, Bud received more than \$30 million in external grants and contracts for federal and state agencies, and published more than 100 articles, chapters, books and papers. More important, however, was the fact that what Bud did made a difference to real people... and in real contexts. He once told me that his career in special education was guided by one unwavering belief---that he wanted to develop ways to serve people--- even people with severe disabilities or extreme behavior challenges--- in the least restrictive setting and manner possible that would allow them to lead as normal a life as possible. Coupled with this belief was the fact that his work followed the developmental path of his son's life"

...the write up continues:

“...A true measure of Col Frederick’s work, and Dot’s caring love, has been the success of their son, Tim, in growing into adulthood as a contributing member of society. Tim earned the Eagle Scout Award, becoming one of the few people, much less people with Down syndrome, ever to achieve this honor. Moreover, Tim and his wife, Heather, live independently in their own home, work in competitive jobs, and live lives that are remarkably similar to other young adults...thanks, in large part to Bud’s ground breaking work and advocacy”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are in the presence of greatness. Those of us who knew him in the Brigade, knew he was an extraordinary Marine. I first had an encounter with then-Major Fredericks when he was the 4th Marine Regimental S-3 during ¼’s TacTest in June 1964 at the Pohacaloa training area on the Big Island. We were on our final objective, it was dark, cold, and the Marines in my platoon were all anxiously awaiting the EndEx, after 3 grueling days of the tactical evaluation. Major Fredericks was inspecting our positions with the Regimental Commander, and approached my platoon in the dark, asking for the Platoon Commander to come forward. He asked me to show him the left flank of my platoon, which I did. Then he asked the Squad leader to tell him who was on our left flank. The Squad leader didn’t know...and we weren’t tied in with that unit to our left. Major Fredericks then took me aside and, very quietly said that our enemies will always search for the seams in our defenses, and that I needed to be more attentive to those seams. He quietly said: “Remember that your Marines will only be as good as you make them”. I’ve never forgotten that encounter.

I also felt some trepidation in the next month when newly promoted LtCol Fredericks took command of our Battalion, wondering if he might remember this lieutenant who had failed to tie in his left flank. We began an extensive pre-deployment training program expecting to sail to Southern California for an exercise. Instead, we sailed for Okinawa (the entire battalion on one ship), for a month stay in Okinawa before embarking for our landing at Chu Lai Vietnam.

Most of us really didn't know much about Col Fredericks when he commanded our battalion. I was to learn many years later, when reading the history of the Korean War, studying the battle at the Chosin Reservoir, that Bud Fredericks, a 1947 graduate of Holy Cross with a degree in History, was a 1st Lt in the 5th Marines, the Ground element of the now famous 1st Marine Brigade ... the "Fire Brigade", that was sent to reinforce the Pusan Perimeter in August 1950 to save the United Nations Command from being driven in to the sea after the North Koreans attacked in to South Korea. He had served a tour in China as a newly commissioned officer. In the Pusan Perimeter campaign, he was initially the S-1 in LtCol Don Taplett's 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. He was wounded during that phase. He fought as a rifle platoon commander in How Company of 3/5 at the landing at Inchon, up the Inchon-Seoul Corridor, and the fighting to liberate Seoul City. After the 1st Marine Division retook Seoul, he embarked with 3/5 on amphibious shipping at Inchon, and landed at Wonson Harbor in North Korea in October 1950.

In the horrific fighting against several Chinese Communist Divisions at Yudam-ni near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea, then First Lieutenant Bud Fredericks led his Marines heroically. An account of his actions is detailed in a couple of books. In particular, Eric Hammel wrote a book titled: "Chosin" He writes about Bud Fredericks in describing actions on 2 December 1950:

"...Fredericks and his men moved only a few feet up the slope before finding themselves pinned securely by heavy enemy fire from above. ...it was dusk and the troops were utterly exhausted. Bud Fredericks had less than twenty men left in his platoon, and had to pace up and down behind them---punching, kicking, jabbing, and cursing---to get them to wake up. Each time he completed the circuit, he had to go right back to wake everyone up again. And again. And again. And Again."....for this was an ideal time for the Chinese counterattack. After dark that night, the Marines once again attacked into unknown terrain to take the hill.

The next morning of 3 December, Fredericks woke up with 6 inches of newly fallen snow on him, to discover they still had not taken the crest of the hill. After calling in Marine Air Strikes, the Marines could do nothing but attack across a narrow ridge into the face of the Chinese guns. Darting towards the nearest machine gun nest, Fredericks turned to look at this platoon following him and saw six of the men immediately behind him drop after being hit. He continued throwing a few grenades and the guns in front of him were silenced.

When the hill was taken, which was the key hill to control the route to Hagaru-ri from Yudam-ni, Lt Fredericks was shocked to see that all he had left of his platoon was eight men....”

Lt Fredericks is mentioned many other times in those books. For his actions, he was awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry in Action; the Bronze Star for heroism, and the Purple Heart. After reading about his heroism, I reflected back to his counsel to me that final night of ¼’s Tac Test, and realized he was trying to pass on to me those lessons he learned as a young lieutenant.

Yes, LtCol Frederick’s had a profound influence on us all. There is one example of his leadership that I feel worth mentioning before asking him to come forward. When the battalion arrived in Okinawa, before our reembarkation to go to Vietnam, our battalion went to Camp Shwab. The 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines was still in Camp, with its Regimental Headquarters already in Vietnam. One thing we noticed in the Camp. Many of the 3/3 officers, including some married officers, had their Nasans...their Okinawan Girlfriends. Even the 3/3 Battalion Commander had his Nasson, and he would parade her in front of us all at evening meal at the O’Club.

When our Battalion arrived at Camp Schwab, we immediately commenced a heavy training, and physical fitness routine. Every afternoon and evening, there was some kind of athletic activity taking place in the parade ground and the ¼ officers were competing in various sports. The most aggressive participant was LtCol Bud Fredericks. He was relentless, and he continued this activity the entire time we were on Okinawa. It soon became obvious to many of us in the Battalion, that Col Fredericks was never going to have his Nasan...and he wasn’t about to encourage any of us who were married to have a Nasan, either. He never said anything...he just led by example....that being “Semper Fidelis”“always faithful” applied to both our professional and personal lives. I remembered that example the rest of my career...and would like to thank him personally by asking him to come forward with his bride of 59 years, Dot because, we have something to give them.