

# ESPRIT



## Gun Raffle

The annual gun raffle has been held over from 2020. Guns were purchased and tickets printed last year, however with pandemic restrictions in place, only a handful of tickets had been sold. The Board of Directors voted to continue the raffle. Once again, the High Desert Marines are selling raffle tickets at \$10 each for a chance to win a Mossberg 500 or a Glock 17. The proceeds from the raffle will go towards producing the Marine Corps Ball. The winning tickets are drawn at the ball each year.

**ESPRIT**

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## We're back...

After more than a year of inactivity (through no fault of our own), the High Desert Marines have hit the ground running. In 2020, just a week after our March breakfast meeting, our country was shocked into pandemic shutdown of business as usual. No one could have predicted that it would be 13 months before we would be together again. But here we are, ready to resume the programs, meetings and activities that we enjoyed before anyone ever heard of Covid-19.

Some things have changed. We are still wearing face masks and social distancing is the new normal. Sadly, some familiar faces are gone from our ranks.



We have lost a number of our HDM brothers. But our mission to honor and support veterans while providing a social setting for Marines and promoting Marine Corps values and traditions in the High Desert community continues. Glad to have you aboard again!

**Commander Floyd Foster**

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“Old breed? New breed? There’s not a damn bit of difference so

long as it's the Marine breed." Chesty Puller

***SAVE THE DATE!***  
**High Desert Marines**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**Car and Motorcycle Show**  
**Classic Cars, OHVs, & Motorcycles**  
**Saturday, June 19, 2021**  
**10am – 2 pm**  
**Midway Home Solutions Parking Lot**  
**14444 Atstar Drive**  
**Victorville**  
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***Chaplains Corner***

Jose Garcia, Chaplain, HDM

If humanity has lost the light, go within! There you will find recorded the precepts that will renew the light so that it may shine forth from you, the lost sheep, that are wandering without the light. With God, all that are wandering without the light (life) are sheep that have strayed from the fold. The fold is always there to behold and return to. The Christ, the shepherd, awaits with the lighted torch upheld for those that will enter therein. Although it has been hidden through the ages, it is always there for those that come seeking the light. When man accepts his true heritage, Christ, and the fact that Christ is his true self in full dominion, the crown or the capstone will be placed. Then will it stand as an everlasting witness to the fact that man will never again wander from the fold. "I AM the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life and have eternal life."

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

The High Desert Marines have a booth at the High Desert Farmers Market every Thursday. The Farmers market is located at the corner of Rock Springs and Deep Creek Roads in Apple Valley and hours are 0800-1200. Sales have been very good and the Marines in the booth are glad to be able to work close to home. The market is growing with new vendors every week and business has been

brisk. The HDM Board of Directors are hopeful that this will allow us to continue supporting the veterans and charitable organizations in the High Desert community.

***Let's stay connected...***

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Over the past year, although there has not been much High Desert Marine (HDM) activity. A number of letters and emails have been sent out in an effort to keep members informed by passing on news from time to time. If you are not getting email from [highdesertmarines09@gmail.com](mailto:highdesertmarines09@gmail.com) please let us know your current email address. Using email is a significant savings for HDM as it can be done without the expense of printing and postage. There is, however, a list of "lost" Marines. These are members whose mailing address is no longer valid and there is no email address on file. These "UA" Marines are not getting any of the commander's communications. If you have the contact information on any of the following folks, please email Pat Hagler, Secretary, at: [highdesertmarines09@gmail.com](mailto:highdesertmarines09@gmail.com) or call her at (909)238-3157.

**LOST MARINES**

Donaldson, Patrick  
Eggers, John  
Elders, John  
Estrada, Daniel  
Hughes, Larry  
Roebke, Leroy  
Rushin, Freddie  
Thompson, Lawrence  
Thomas, Shirley  
Turnquist, David  
Villarreal, Robert  
Winston, Donald

**As Marines, we leave no man behind.**



## *Spotlight on High Desert Marine Lee Kinney*

Marine grunt, infantry officer, scholar, university professor, world traveler, retiree: which title describes High Desert Marine Lee Kinney? All of them. Lee's past 60 years have been filled with the stuff bestselling novels and blockbuster movies are made of. What follows here may not do justice to a life well spent defending liberty, enhancing academia, and embracing the cultures of the more than 100 countries he's visited.



Lee is full of interesting and entertaining anecdotes. His story begins when he joined the Marine Corps in 1960 leaving his Illinois roots behind him and rarely looking back. He spent nearly seven years in the

enlisted ranks, including a tour in Vietnam, before being selected for Officer Candidate School (OCS). He admits his time at Quantico is most memorable because he was the only enlisted Marine among 750 candidates and he was older than most of them. When he compares the difference between Boot Camp and OCS, Lee admits that officer candidates are treated differently than recruits. He remembers that it was not as belittling as recruit training, however he is quick to tell you that OCS was a life-altering experience. Because of his Marine Corps history, he was often used as an example during training. He recalls that one of his instructors was a former roommate of his. That instructor was not as accepting of Candidate Kinney as he was of Sergeant Kinney.

Serving two Vietnam tours and being wounded three times is just a glimpse at Lee's combat record. Force Reconnaissance (FORECON) is one of the Corps Special Operations Capable forces (SOC). As a noncommissioned officer (NCO), he was a member of the 3<sup>rd</sup> FORECON, performing recovery dive operations in the rivers of Vietnam checking bridges for explosives, exemplifying FORECON's motto "Celer, Silens, Mortalis" (Swift, Silent, Deadly). After jumping out of planes more than 200 times, Lee nearly lost his life when his parachute malfunctioned.

He returned to Vietnam as a platoon commander with 5<sup>th</sup> FORECON at a time the war was at the height of combat action. Lee was wounded and spent a month in the Army hospital at Cam Ranh Bay. While infirmed, he grew weary of the tranquil, but dull, atmosphere and was anxious to return to his unit. "I couldn't get any answers as to when I would be released so I went UA" (unauthorized absence) Lee says with a gleam in his eye that all Marines recognize as doing "whatever it takes." He traveled three days hitching rides in planes, jeeps and assorted military vehicles to get back to his Marines. "What were they going to do - send me to Vietnam?" he smiles.

After rejoining his unit, Lee received his third purple heart when a grenade injured him so severely that he was not expected to survive. He recalls that he was given last rites (the prayers administered to one who is in grave danger of dying). He was sent to Fitzsimons Army Hospital near Denver where he underwent multiple surgeries to mend his broken back and mangled body.

Lee spent two years in the hospital receiving medical care and rehabilitation along with many fellow military casualties, many of whom had lost limbs. He envisioned the rest of his life with his legs encased in braces and made a profound decision to request that his badly damaged leg be amputated. Although medical personnel told him the procedure was not advised, he believed that he could walk better with a prosthesis than the braces. By his own choice, Lee lost his useless leg and received a new strong artificial limb. His rehabilitation was successful; he made a full



recovery. He enjoys sharing the story of making numerous parachute jumps as an amputee with an Army Special Forces unit while still hospitalized.

The Marine Corps policy at that time was mandatory retirement for amputees. However, Lee was not done with his military commitment and, with the same determination that got him back to his unit in Vietnam after being wounded and in the hospital, he requested mast and petitioned the Corps to allow him to remain on active duty. He successfully completed the physical fitness test (PFT) consisting of pull-ups, sit-ups and a 3-mile run. Lee is the first infantry officer to return to full duty with a prosthetic limb. He finished his Marine Corps career in 1971 as a company commander at Camp Pendleton, retiring as a Captain.

"The Marine Corps taught me discipline and how to maximize my time" says Lee, "And I believe there is life after the Marine Corps." He took advantage of the educational opportunities he earned for serving his country and enrolled, first in Victor Valley College, then California State University San Bernardino. Four years later, he graduated valedictorian of his class with two Bachelors degrees -- Anthropology and Geography -- and was selected for graduate studies at Harvard. While at Harvard, he did field work in Africa; an area of the world he fell in love with and has traveled to 18 times. After earning two Masters degrees, Lee began a long teaching career at Cal State University. He also was a professor at Central Texas College where he taught active-duty military personnel, deploying with his students six times to the Persian Gulf.

Lee and his wife, Alicia, whom he met at Cal State, are avid travelers and have journeyed to many countries. In fact, they were married in Kenya while standing on the Equator, on the continent of Africa. Lee totally retired 12 years ago and embraces the adage "Quit worrying about dying and put emphasis on living".



*Alicia and Lee Kinney enjoying one of their many trips to Africa*

Staying true to this pronouncement, Lee and Alicia are rarely home. They are either getting ready for a trip to some exotic and/or interesting place or just returning from their latest venture. As busy as they seem, they found time to build a new home in Apple Valley. In September, they moved into a beautiful Pueblo style house which has plenty of space for the many artifacts and furnishings they have discovered and brought back from around the world. They are surrounded by a collection of precious memories and their home is a testament to their adventurous lives.

A Marine grunt, infantry officer, scholar, university professor, world traveler and retiree? Yes, Lee Kinney is all that. And in his words "I am enjoying my life to the fullest." Aye, aye, Sir. Well earned!

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*Every Marine has a story to tell and every story is worth telling. What's yours? Maybe you had a humorous experience that you are willing to share or something that changed your life forever.*

*Contact me at [highdesertmarines09@gmail.com](mailto:highdesertmarines09@gmail.com) or (909)238-3157 and let me help you tell*

*your story. Pat Hagler*

