

June 2023

Recall a Military Memory \$250 Prize Competition
Jun 12, 2023 1:05 PM (7 days ago)

'Most Memorable Operation: Of all the military operations you participated in, including combat, humanitarian or peacekeeping operations, which of these made a lasting impact on you and why?'

The most memorable, lasting impact on me, was my qualification as Expert Rifleman with Platoon 1002, First Marine Battalion, MCRD, San Diego California. To understand why, you must first know the how this journey began.

Jimmy Styles was appointed to attend the AF Academy by John Crain, Illinois House, Adelle Stevenson, Illinois Senate and Gerald Ford, U.S. President (1974 – 1977), joining 19th Cadet Squadron class of 1978. Dooley year, jealous classmates, unfair advantage, Jimmy walked away from his dream, as All-American Gymnast and United States Astronaut. Before the year ends, he completes his associate degree in science and a pilot's license.

In December, 1975, 200 recruits were standing on the yellow footprints in San Diego California, Hollywood Marines denied the life as sand crabs! Every four hours of each day, there was another encounter, another obstacle to build our



Figure A – VFW Meet up at Post 3673 in 2023.

Confidence. After sixty days of intense fire and the death of one recruit, the Battalion arrived at Edson Range, Oceanside California for rifle qualification. The range coach introduced himself, inquiring if there were any recruit(s) with a desire to shoot a possible score? I was coachable, my expectations soared.

On the first day of shooting the Lord gave me the ability to shoot all three hundred bullets into the ten-ring. At the 200-yard line, off hand, standing no rush, mission complete. Tally one hundred points, after all the dog-targets were large, the distance was close. The 300-yard line: tight position sitting, slow fire. A stable sight alignment and picture; adjust for wind direction, speed, controll your breath - Kapow... Standing to sitting rapid fire, snape-on another tight position. Add two hundred more points. The 500-yard line's only deterrent is the wind. The last two bullets, my score is 298. Round 299 loaded, wind check, dope adjusted, alignment, picture, controlled breathing, squeeze, and hold. Puff, a breath of air peppers my face with sand, grit off the firing line... I look downwind to Private Stobinske and he breaks in the 4-ring as well; score is still an even 298 points. The next two rounds are chambered, the same ritual is conducted. A moment later the will picks up and blows my shot in the 4-ring. Realizing I am two privates upwind of Stobinske, the wind will not push his shot as long as mine. He remains in the black. To this day I have only my thoughts, why the Lord orchestrated this experience. Round 300 fades into the black, an experience, tomorrow another story worth reading. For now, good day and God bless!