



Jacksonville Beach's Fallen Wartime Veterans



Vietnam War

PFC Dewayne Corbitt
US Marines (Top Left)



PFC Harold E. Owens
US Marines (Top Right)



Sgt. Gerard M. Reed

Operation Iraqi Freedom

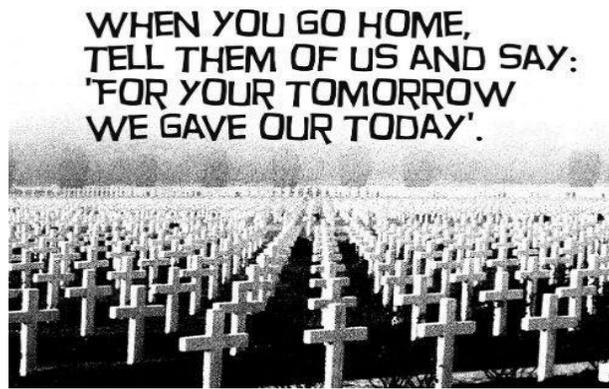
SFC Gerard M. Reed
US Army (Bottom Left)



Jacksonville Beach Fallen Heroes

We ask you to remember each of them because they all called Jacksonville Beach their home. They too, lived, worked, and played on the streets of Jacksonville Beach, they walked to school with their best friends and shared dreams of what they wanted to do for the summer and in life. Their dreams were endless but none of those dreams were ever fulfilled..... because the course of history altered them.

So, as we approach Veterans Day 2022, we salute, honor and vow to always remember our fallen Jacksonville Beach Heroes; Dewayne Corbitt, Harold Eugene Owens, and Gerard M. Reed as well as all the fallen Veterans who have died defending our country's freedom!



This information package is for Jacksonville Beach's three Fallen Wartime Veterans/Heroes who are nominated for Veterans Day 2022. This information packet includes a short summary of who they were and the sacrifices they made for our community and country.

~Lenny Jevic, BVMP Historian

Vietnam War

PFC. Harold Eugene Owens

Pfc. Harold Eugene Owens, 20, was the son of George D. Owens Sr. of 507 10th Place S., Jacksonville Beach, and Cora E. Bass of Atlantic Beach, and the grandson of Nellie Robinson of Jacksonville Beach., enlisted in the US Marine Corps on July 3, 1967, in Jacksonville FL. His military specialty was a Machine Gunner. He arrived in Vietnam and was assigned for duty with Company F, BLT 2/7, 9th MAB.

Vietnam War/Counteroffensive Phase IV Campaign (1968)/Operation Mameluke Thrust:

At first light on September 20, 1968 Company G and H began to sweep east through the Nong Son village complex and the tree line of the previous day's battleground with Company F and the NVA in DODGE CITY, this time the men met no resistance. After the aerial bombardment and artillery barrages during the night the NVA forces had displaced. Once inside the tree line the Marines found well developed fortifications that had given the enemy advantage of cover during the battle. Pushing forward toward the blocking positions, by 0800H Company G became engaged with a large enemy force on the eastern edge of the Nong Son village complex.

Once again, the Marines confronted the NVA in heavily fortified positions with clear fields of for their small arms and crew served weapons bearing down on the assaulting Marine units. Company G had to disengage from their assault, with five dead and twenty two men wounded, artillery and air support was requested. Company H attacked the enemy's right flank and was also stiffly resisted by the tenacious foe. By 1600H when coordinated ground and air attacks following sorties of 500 lb. bombs with napalm drops, the NVA troops were seen to flee in groups of twenty to thirty men from the fortifications. A perimeter was established by the Marines, and throughout the night mortar and artillery fire was directed into the surrounding area.

The day's battle resulted in seven Marines being killed in action and forty eight wounded, most being evacuated for treatment. PFC Harold Eugene Owens was one of the casualties; he was killed in action as a result of hostile rifle fire.

PFC Harold Eugene Owens commendations/awards include:

- ★ Purple Heart
- ★ Combat Action Ribbon
- ★ National Defense Service Medal
- ★ Vietnam Campaign Medal
- ★ Vietnam Service Medal
- ★ Marine Corps Presidential Unit Citation
- ★ Vietnam Gallantry Cross
- ★ Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal
- ★ Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal
- ★ Rifle Expert
- ★ Pistol Expert

Harold Eugene Owens is buried at H. Warren Smith Memorial Cemetery, Jacksonville Beach.

Harold is honored on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington DC. His name is inscribed at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, Panel 43w, Line 48.

Honor Sign location: 10th Place S/5th St.

Sign Sponsor: Jean Ribault Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution



Refs: <https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/39061/HAROLD-E-OWENS/page/2/>
<https://www.honorstates.org/index.php?id=291209>

~Johnny Woodhouse

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PFC. Dewayne Corbitt

Pfc. DeWayne Corbitt, a 1967 Fletcher High School graduate and the son of former Beaches Hospital dietitian Maxine M. Corbitt of 929 13th St. N., Jacksonville Beach, enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on Feb. 23, 1968, the same day the epic siege of the Marine Corps base at Khe Sanh began in Vietnam. His father died of cancer when was 14 years old. He had 3 brothers, Dennis (US Army medic), Donald (US Army), Dale (US Army) and 1 sister, Frances, who all attended Fletcher High School. His older brother, Dale, was a U.S. Army specialist in Vietnam.

Dewayne Corbitt completed basic training at Parris Island, S.C., and Advanced Infantry Training at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Before reporting for duty overseas in the summer of 1968, Pfc. Corbitt, who was assigned to Delta Company, 1st Battalion, Fifth Marines, spent a 20-day leave in Jacksonville Beach. His regiment took part in Operation Mameluke Thrust from June to October 1968. He died in combat on Sept. 17, 1968, in Quang Nam province. He was eight days shy of his 20th birthday. His remains were interned on Sept. 30, 1968, at Hancock Cemetery in Fort Meade, Fla.

“He was just a good guy that people liked to be around.” (Shared by his niece Kelly McFarland, a comment heard over and over again whenever anyone talked about Dewayne)

Dewayne’s awards/commendations include:

- ★ Purple Heart
- ★ Combat Action Ribbon
- ★ National Defense Service Medal
- ★ Vietnam Campaign Medal
- ★ Vietnam Service Medal
- ★ Marine Corps Presidential Unit Citation
- ★ Vietnam Gallantry Cross
- ★ Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal
- ★ Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal

Dewayne is honored on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington DC. Panel 43w, Line 13.

Honor Sign location: 13 St. N/9th Ave. N

Sign Sponsor: Cinotti's Bakery



Refs: <https://www.honorstates.org/index.php?id=267686>
<https://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/10475/DEWAYNE-CORBITT/page/2/>
~Johnny Woodhouse
~Kelly McFarland (Dewayne Corbitt's niece)

Operation Iraqi Freedom

SGT. Gerard Mantino Reed

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Reed, a 1985 Fletcher High School graduate, died of a non-combat-related incident in Baghdad, Iraq, on June 11, 2008, while serving with the 86th Combat Support Hospital. A Jacksonville Beach native who grew up in the 800 block of Lincoln Court and sang in the choir at First Missionary Baptist Church, Sgt. Reed was a 23-year veteran of the Army, having served three tours of duty in Iraq and previous overseas assignments in Germany and Korea. He was a member of the famed 101st Airborne Division and an ordained minister with a bachelor's degree in theology.

Gerard Reed is buried at Kentucky Veterans Cemetery West
Hopkinsville, Christian County, Kentucky

A highly decorated soldier: Gerard's awards/commendations include:

- ★ Army Commendation Medals (7 awards)
- ★ Army Achievement Medals (9 awards)
- ★ Combat Action Badge
- ★ Good Conduct Medals (5 awards)
- ★ Air Assault Badge
- ★ National Defense Service Medal (2 awards)
- ★ Korean Defense Medal
- ★ Iraq Campaign Medal w/Arrowhead
- ★ Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
- ★ Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- ★ Noncommissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon (2 awards)
- ★ Army Service Ribbon
- ★ Weapons Qualification
- ★ M4 expert

Honor Sign location: Lincoln Court/ 9th Street S.

Sign Sponsor: Jean Ribault Chapter, National Society Daughters of the
American Revolution

A few comments from SFC. Gerard Reed's legacy page:

"I knew and worked with SFC Reed in Fort Lewis and during the 05-06 Iraqi tour. He was a great guy that made everyone smile. I can't count the number of times he invited me to attend services with him. He will be truly missed. He was a true servant in every sense of the word."

~CPT John Steward

"How the family and friends of Gerard will miss that amazing smile. It simply beams out from his photo and gives those of us not privileged to know him in life an idea of the joyful man he undoubtedly was.

I can only hope that love and support will surround his family at this time and in the months ahead and that they will be able to share and enjoy the precious memories of someone so special to them.

Rest in Peace Sgt. Gerard M. Reed."

~Kim Straker



REFS: <https://iraqwarheroes.org/reedg.htm>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/27603112/gerard-mantino-reed>

~Debbie Ramsey (sister)

~Johnny Woodhouse

Special Thanks

~Many thanks to Johnny Woodhouse for sharing his amazing stories which he wrote for all of us in the Beaches Leader and for keeping the memories of our local veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice alive and never to be forgotten. Johnny's stories helped inspire me to undertake this project!

~Thanks for the strong support from the Beaches Veterans Memorial Park committee, American Legion Posts 316 & 129, American Legion Auxiliary Units 316 & 129, VFW 3270, Jean Ribault Chapter, NSDAR.

~Many thanks to the Gold Star Family Members who shared stories of their loved ones with me. We will never forget the sacrifices these families have made. A debt we can never repay! You all are forever in our hearts!

~Thanks to Operations Manager, John Graham and the creative team of professionals at Florida TransCor Inc for partnering with me to develop these beautiful honor street signs. They are truly a wonderful company!

~Thanks to the City Council's of Jacksonville Beach and Neptune Beach, as well as the City Commission of Atlantic Beach for their continued strong support of our local beach's veterans, past and present.