

Chaplain John Craven's Memory Lives On



Chaplain John Craven served with the U.S. Marine Corps longer than any other Navy chaplain. Enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps at the age of 17, he was later discharged, after which he attended college and seminary, and returned to active duty. During his career, he served in a variety of Marine billets, retiring as Chaplain of the Marine Corps. He continued his ministry to veterans until his death in April 2001.

In a recent Professional Military Education (PME) session, Master Sergeant Darrell Jackson of MARFORLANT shared Chaplain Craven's story with his fellow Marines. Through research in the Chaplain Corps archives at the Chaplain Resource Branch and interviews with John Craven's brother, retired chaplain Allen Craven, MSgt Jackson discovered the story of a Chaplain Corps and Marine Corps hero. His presentation included a video of Chaplain Craven and other veterans discussing the Chosin campaign during the Korean War. An



Retired Chaplain Allen Craven, brother of Chaplain John Craven, receives a MARFORLANT plaque from MSgt Darrell Jackson.

added touch was the presence of Chaplain Allen Craven. The PME was well received and a week later was still being talked about by MSgt Jackson's colleagues.

From "Navy Chaplains on Duty With Marines" by Chaplain John Craven:

"The Navy Chaplain who is responsive to Marines and shows his concern for them will become an adopted "Marine" and, if assigned to a Marine infantry battalion, may quickly discover that he is "in" the Marines. The Chaplain gets an inkling of this feeling when he appears in his Navy apparel and his Marine buddies accuse him of being out of uniform...."

"The late Major General Homer Litzenberg, USMC, my Regimental Commander in Korea said, 'We are a peculiar breed of cat, and we like to have Navy Doctors, Dentists, and Chaplains with us who understand us and who like to be with us.' It is difficult to equal, and impossible to exceed the mutual admiration and respect that exists between Navy Chaplains who love the Marines and the Marines love for Chaplains who like to be with them.

"The two Corps celebrate their anniversaries in the same month. Several Marines have humorously remarked that after the Marines Corps was formed on 10 November 1775, it did not take long before the need for a Chaplain Corps was realized, and now we as Chaplains celebrate 28 November as the birthday of our Corps. Actually, I have always felt there is a deep spiritual kinship between the two Corps. This affinity is based upon the mutual concern of Marines and Chaplains for the worth and dignity of the individual. This, coupled with their common understanding that this worth is never greater than when the individual has committed himself to a cause greater than himself, helps them also to realize that no man can demonstrate a greater love than to lay down his life for his friends."