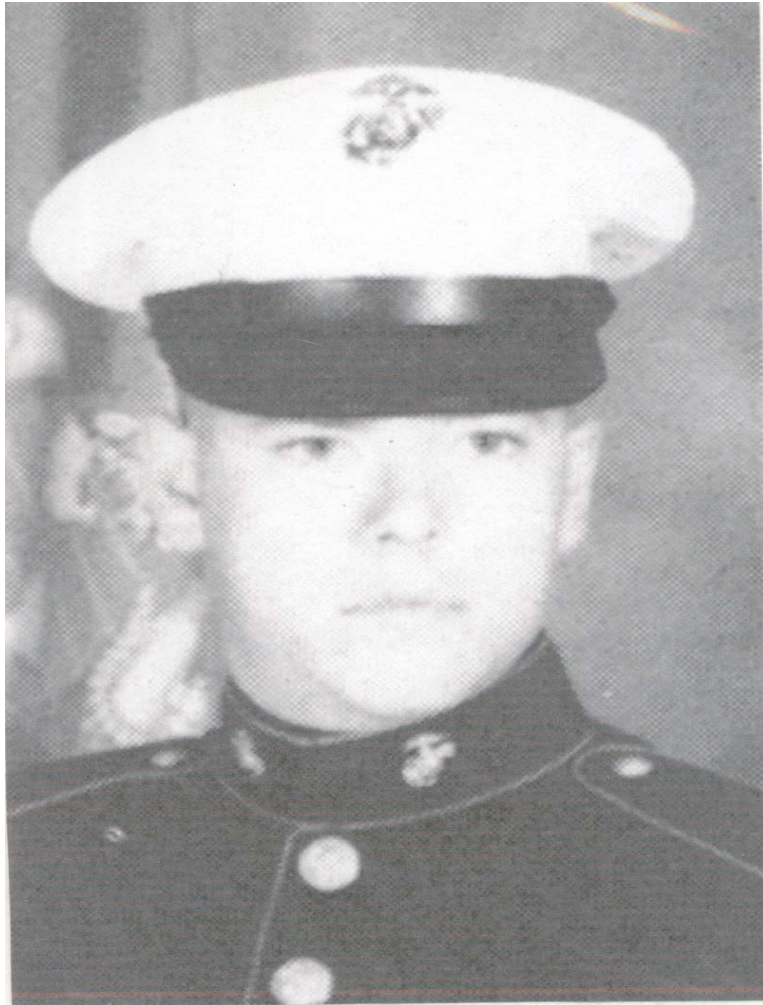


BOB BOEHME



Robert (Bob) Boehme enlisted in the United States Marine Corps on 3 August 1987. He was wanting to do something different in life and thought about either the Marine Corps or the Army Rangers. As he looked into the two options, he found that as a Marine he could do most all of the same stuff as the Rangers, and a little more. He was sent to San Diego California for Boot Camp.

For Bob, Boot Camp was tough. He notes that he wasn't in the best physical shape at the time he went in, and he lost more than 25 pounds in boot camp.

While at Boot Camp, they were encouraged to help weed out the ones that couldn't take it, too weak to finish. They pushed them harder, both physically and psychologically. The purpose was for them to understand the meaning of being able to trust the others in the unit. If someone was weak and couldn't make it, they couldn't trust them when they were needed. So as a unit they worked together to weed out the bad ones.

There were a lot of physical demands that Boehme had to endure, but he graduated from Boot Camp in the top 5 of his class. Boot camp lasted around three months, 12 weeks.



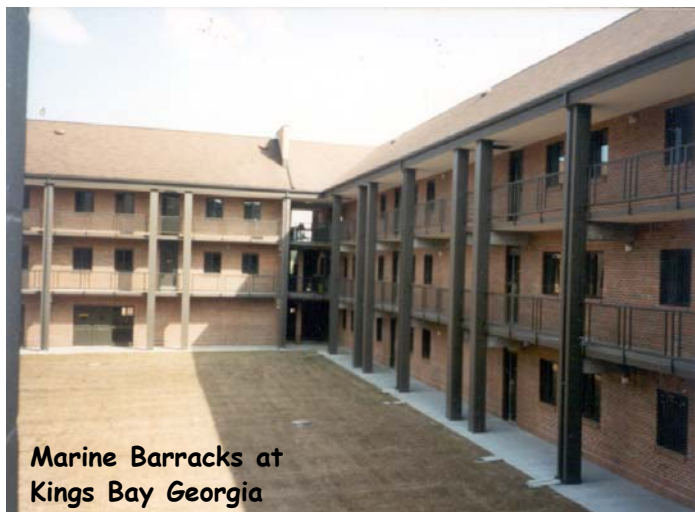
Bob Boehme at Boot Camp

For graduating as high as he did in Boot Camp, Bob was “awarded” his issue of Dress Blues. Bob held a lot of pride in the fact that he earned his blues, rather than the men that bought them. At that time Dress Blue uniforms were either earned from performance at training, issued for special details, or bought. Not all enlistees received them.

After completing Boot Camp, Boehme received a short leave for the Christmas exodus, during which he was sent home and helped out at the local recruiting station.

In January 1988, Boehme was sent back to San Diego for Advanced Infantry Training. This training lasted another 8 weeks, and upon graduation Bob was assigned to Security Forces.

He was sent to Kings Bay Georgia where he helped provide security for the Navy’s Nuclear Program. Their job was to guard the Trident Submarines there. He was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for this duty.



The Duty in Kings Bay was primarily like a Police Force or a Military Policeman. Bob didn’t really like the job. He signed up for the Marines to do something a little more active, and be involved in what was going on.



While stationed at Kings Bay, Boehme was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal.

One day at Kings Point, Bob and all of the other men completed a fifteen mile hike under full pack. When it was completed, Bob changed into his PT clothes and planned to go for a run. He really liked to run at the time, and although a little tired from the hike, wanted to take the time to go on a run. There were some high ranking officers and officials at the base that day that noticed Bob preparing and stretching before his run. They asked around if he had gone on the hike, to which they found out he had. They were impressed that even after the long hike he still wanted to run.

Bob was called aside by one of the Senior NCO’s and was “asked” to become a part of the Marine Corps Special Operations. Bob didn’t know anything about what it would be, but knew he didn’t really like doing the job he was doing now so he said yes. He was corrected by the NCO that it wasn’t a question, more or less telling him that he would be Special Operations. He had served a year at Kings Bay.

Bob was sent to Florida for Strategic Reactionary Teams Training (SRT) for two months. Here they trained in practices and tactics for ship take downs, warehouse assaults, and rappelling. It was an advanced form of like SWAT training, but with focus and emphasis on military related vessels and tactics. Bob liked this training, it was the type of thing that he signed up to do.

After graduating from SRT, he was sent to Springfield Virginia for weapons training and Anti Terrorism School. He spent about a month of training on pistols and sidearms. Then a month on Shotguns. He said that they shot so much that their wrists would hurt or their shoulders would be all black and blue. The final month of his training focused on the Anti Terrorism, which was almost a repeat of some of the items he went over in SRT.



After completion of training, Boehme was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 1/4 (1st Battalion, 4th Marines). During this time, their primary emphasis was the drug trafficking going on around the world. They were tasked with going into countries, and training the enforcement officials in those countries how to hunt down and destroy drug manufacturing facilities. They specialized in beach landings and Helicopter casting.



Shortly after being assigned to BLT 1/4, Bob was promoted to Corporal. They were sent to areas of Asia to help fight and control drug manufacturing.

They would be dropped into the jungles, usually at night, in remote areas to find and destroy drug areas, mainly poppy fields.

Some of the countries that Bob went to during his time overseas were: Malaysia, Cambodia, Korea, Philippines, and Japan.

Teams were dropped into the middle of the jungle, and rarely came to large cities or towns, unless they were R & R in the ports.

Bob describes his first impressions of these areas as extremely hot and humid. There was an overwhelming smell that was also prevalent. The foliage that fell off of the trees would just fall to the ground and get wet and rot, and Boehme could smell it. With all of the dead rotting foliage on the ground, Bob describes the ground as being very spongy when walking on it.



Many of the areas that they went to where they came into contact with native people were very poor. They lived in huts, and shanty towns like shown above.

Staying in jungle Boehme notes is kind of a freaky experience. At night, you can't see anything. It is pitch black. After being in the jungle for a couple of days, you start to smell like the jungle, so anything that doesn't belong, you can smell coming. He says that they could smell other people coming.

They were never engaged in combat while doing these missions. At times, they were very close, but usually right behind the perpetrators. Bob and the men of BLT 1/4 couldn't move through the jungle as fast as the natives. They would just fly through, and Bob says that the Marines were like a bull in a china shop trying to go through the jungles.

One hazard that they came into contact with was the rain. Bob says that you can hear the rain coming before it gets there in the jungle. He recalls multiple times that they were washed off the side of a mountain from the rain. The rain would gather at the top of the mountain, and wash down in waves, taking the US Marines with it.





There were times during their tour to Southeast Asia that they were able to get some time to relax. Bob was able to get out and see some of the sights. He saw Buddha's temple (left) on one of his tours of the area.

Boehme's experiences in the jungles somewhat prepared him for the next area that he and the others of BLT 1/4 were sent, the Persian Gulf.

Bob recalls that in both the hot humid jungle, and dry arid desert a person can go into hypothermia very easily. During the day in both areas, the temps are so hot and your body gets to taking the heat. But when the sun goes down, the temperatures change so drastically that your body can't handle the change, and a person goes into hypothermia.



Boehme and his unit were based off of the USS Ogden LPD-5. When they flew out for missions, they would fly off of the Ogden in helicopters.



Sleeping quarters on USS Ogden

After missions, when coming in from the jungles, dirty and filthy from being out there for days, Bob and the men would come onto the boat, many times through a "private" entrance, to clean up and prepare to go back out on missions.



**Beach Assault teams,
in "Zodiac Boats"**

When not on missions, they trained. Constantly practicing helicopter casting and beach assaults. These items were the specialty of Bob and the men of BLT 1/4, and Boehme enjoyed the training and practicing for the missions, being out and doing his job.

Many of the types of training that they did was the same as the training that the Navy SEALs would do, in fact they would train right along side. Bob noted that about the only thing they didn't do was the swimming with them, otherwise, and assault training was the same. In the end, Bob and his unit worked hand in hand with SEAL teams 4 & 7.





Boehme on ship



As tensions rose in the Middle East, it was determined that possible military force might be needed in the near future, so Bob and his unit were sent to Yemen & Oman in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The plan was for the men to become climatized, and to train and practice assaults on “enemy” installations.

Although the UAE was an ally, the prince there was not a very trusting person. When Bob was in the country, training, they were made to wear green camouflage uniforms, so the prince would always know where the Americans were. Against the Tan desert sand, the green uniformed figured stood out like a black spot on the landscape.

Boehme notes that the climate was a complete opposite from what he was used to when in the jungle. The climate in the desert was a dry heat, but just like in the jungle,

at night the temperature would drop to under 50 degrees.



Digging foxholes in the desert sand in Yemen. The desert sand was so hard, that breaking multiple entrenching tools while digging one hole was commonplace.



Shortly after Boehme arrived in UAE, Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq, invaded their small neighboring country of Kuwait on 2 August 1990.

Operation Desert Shield Began.

Due to Iraq's aggression, embargoes were placed on Iraq to try to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait. Bob and his unit were tasked with enforcing the embargo. Their job was to stop any ships trying to get into Iraq.

One of the main types of ships that they would try to stop was tanker ships. They would go onto the ships, fully armed, to take control and turn away any attempting to get through.

Although merchant vessels, much of the time some if not all of the crew members on the ships were armed. Bob and his unit, along with Navy SEALs would chopper into the ship, rappel down, and overtake the vessel.

It was on board a ship that Boehme had his first taste of real combat action. One of the crew members was armed and warned repeatedly to drop his weapon. Over and over, in English and Arabic he was told but didn't do it. When the man began to resist, and attempted to raise his weapon, SEALs let go. The man took multiple rounds in the chest and fell lifeless to the ground.

When taking the ships, the standard manifest cargo was not the only items found. Many times caches of weapons were found and confiscated in the raids.



Bob and his unit, along with Navy SEALs would chopper into the ship, rappel down, and overtake the vessel.



Boehme's unit with a number of captured enemy weapons.

Bob was involved in a number of raids on vessels trying to break the embargo on Iraq. Even with all of the activity going on, however, Boehme was allowed some breaks away from the action.

It was during one of those breaks, when he was on rest & relaxation (R&R) in Hong Kong, that Operation Desert Shield took to the next step, Desert Storm, and the war began.

Bob prepared for the armed assault on the Iraqi Army that invaded Kuwait. After UN Sanctions, and embargoes Iraq was determined to not leave Kuwait other than by force. The War began on 17 January 1991.

The first objective was to take the Kuwaiti island of Maradim. It was the first island in a line of three islands leading to the Kuwaiti mainland. This was to be a beach assault landing, as Bob had trained for.

The assault, named Operation Desert Sting, was a night operation. Boehme recalls that as they came up to the island in the boats, they began to receive enemy fire. Watching the muzzle flashes and tracer rounds coming at them looked like a bunch of fire flies. Bob carried the M203 grenade launcher for the assault, blowing bunkers in support of operations.

The Iraqis on the island were ill prepared for the battle that ensued. Although they put up resistance, they fell to the American assault. Boehme's unit took over 1,200 prisoners in the fighting for this island and the next two islands. They received and returned fire in the assaults on all three islands.



Helicopters blow up the desert sand in support of operations.

As Bob passed the enemy, he saw first hand how poorly prepared the Iraqis were. They were short on supplies, especially food rations. Many of the Iraqi soldiers were cooking rats and seagulls over an open flame to try to get some nourishment in the bellies.

The three islands on the way to mainland Kuwait, Maradim, Auhah, and Faylaka, were at one time resort islands, rich and beautiful. But in the short time that the Iraqi army had been there, they had ravaged them. Nothing of the original luster of what they once were.



Fully Dressed In MOPP 4 Chemical Protective Gear

Historically, Saddam had no problem with the used of chemical and biological weapons as a means to get what he wanted by force. For Boehme and the men of BLT 1/4, they needed to be totally prepared for anything that they may come up against. They carried with them MOPP (Mission Oriented Protective Posture) suits and gas masks for protection

against possible attacks from the Iraqis. The suits dropped the combat effectiveness of the soldiers and Marines that wore them, but it was a protection that allowed them the possibility to keep fighting even as the air filled with noxious gases.



As they pushed closer to the Kuwaiti mainland, and coalition forces pushed on Iraq from Saudi Arabia, Saddam ordered his army to light the Kuwaiti oil wells on fire as they were pushed back. The sludge from the wells on the ocean eventually caused the assault boat engines to tank out.

It wasn't long before the islands were taken, and the Iraqi Army was on the run. Besides the beach assault landings, Bob's unit also went in by air to Iraq and Kuwait to locate and mark to destroy enemy Surface to Air Missile (SAM) sites.

Occasionally the SAM sites they would find were fake, made of cardboard and placed in positions of strategic importance. From the air, the SAMs looked real, and Bob and his unit were sent out to destroy them.

On one occasion coming in from a SAM search, their helicopter crashed when they returned to the ship. The rear of the helicopter caught on the back end of the ship, but luckily no one was seriously hurt in the crash.

Prior to every mission that Bob went out on, he recalls that the Chaplain would come up to them and bless them. Passing through the Kuwaiti and Iraqi landscape, they came into contact with large amounts of unexploded ordinance. Two times while on the ground, Bob and his unit called in air strikes to knock out enemy positions. Boehme was a fire team leader, with 3 others during his time in the Gulf War. Although he carried a rifle, just for some added protection he also carried with him a Smith & Wesson .357 combat magnum pistol, a gift from a friend. Another part of their time on the ground they provided a lot of support for the forward observers for Artillery missions.

Bob's last experience of combat was near the end of the war, as Iraqis fled in masses out of Kuwait and back into Iraq along Highway 80, the "Highway of Death". He watched the battered, beaten, and destroyed

Army of Iraq, 4th largest Army in the world at the time, limp its way back into Iraq. Although visibly beaten, a few of the Iraqis tried to put up a fight, but up against the American forces around them, their fate was devastating. It was here, watching the death and



destruction on the Highway of Death, as the sun set on this war, that Boehme realized that he had seen enough death, enough war, enough destruction, and it was soon time to leave the military.

In April 1991, Corporal Robert Boehme returned to the United States at San Diego California.

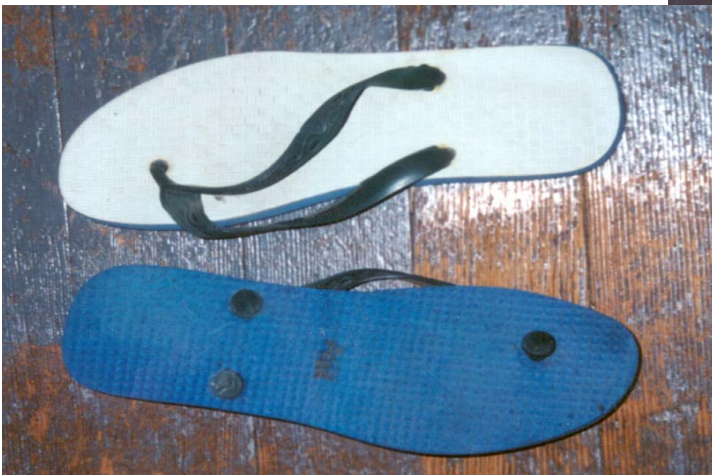
In San Diego he waited for his enlistment contract to be up. He served his time being "demilitarized" to be able to adjust to civilian life. Because of his military experience and training, Bob was heavily recruited by law enforcement to come work for them after his enlistment was up. He was contacted by the CIA, FBI, and the California Highway Patrol (CHP), but in the end, Boehme wasn't sure that he wanted to do those jobs either.

On 4 August 1991, Bob Boehme was discharged from the United States Marine Corps.

In the years following his time in the military, Bob has married and raises a family. He is a local business owner, and enjoys hunting and target shooting in some of his free time.



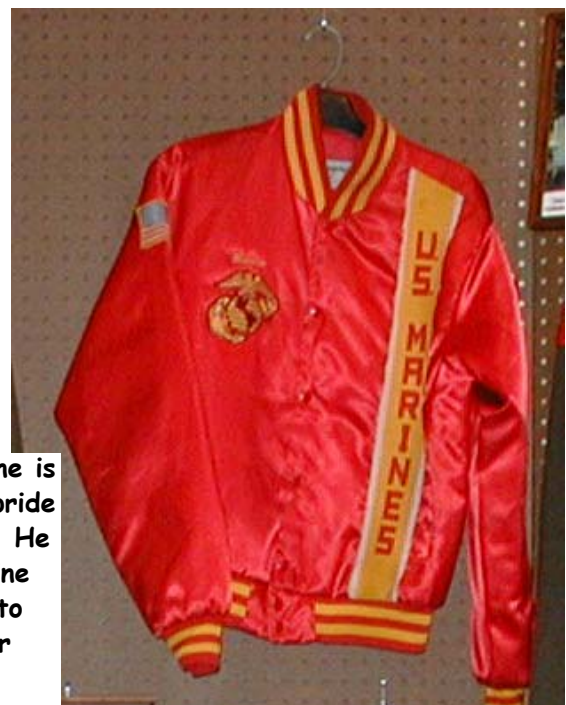
Bob's Dress Green Uniform - Donated 10 June 2002



Standard Marine Issue Shower shoes - Donated by Boehme 10 June 2002



**One of the 1 Quart canteens carried by Boehme
Donated 10 June 2002**



Being a Marine is a source of pride for Boehme. He got this Marine windbreaker to show his prior service.