

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

April 2024



John Schwent

United States Marine Corps

Sponsored by:
Gilead Rupe Chapter, NSDAR

Maj. John Schwent (Ret.) entered military service on January 28th of 1986, by taking the Oath of Enlistment for the United States Marine Corps (USMC) in Little Rock, Arkansas. During his 22 years of faithful service to this country, John excelled at various assignments and duty stations. But his love for marksmanship and mentoring were always what he held most dear. Long after retirement from the USMC, John has continued to share his fondness for shooting sports and building camaraderie within the veteran community. His dedication to veterans in need is a shining example of “once a Marine, always a Marine”.



John completed thirteen weeks of rigorous basic training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, California and upon graduation, was assigned to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. While there he deployed to the Mediterranean aboard the USS Saipan (a Tarawa-class amphibious assault ship). John was apprehensive about deploying on a ship due to stories he heard from his Grandfather. However, the deployment turned out to be one of his favorite experiences while enlisted.

The mission of the USS Saipan during this deployment was to provide humanitarian relief during the civil war in Monrovia, Liberia. What he enjoyed the most was witnessing how seamlessly the US and international militaries worked together to realize a common goal. He worked with service members from Spain, Italy, and France simultaneously and experienced how humanity can come together to help our fellow man.

John had many other accomplishments including working as a marksmanship instructor. After eleven years of mentorship and attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant, John completed USMC Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia. As a Marine Corps officer, he was the Deputy Director of the Marine Corps Total Force Systems and remained active in marksmanship as the Officer In Charge (OIC) of the KC Marine shooting team.

John’s proudest accomplishment in the Corps was being awarded the Distinguished Marksman Badge. Less than one percent of US Marines earn this badge and of that one percent, extremely few are

Officers. A career as a Marine shooter and being awarded such prestigious marksmanship accolades positioned John for one of the many programs he would direct after retirement.

John retired from the Marine Corps on December 1st of 2008, after almost 23 years of service and having attained the rank of Major (O-4). He held positions of CEO and Vice President at two civilian companies before making the move to found Camp Valor Outdoors (CVO) in Kingsville, MO. CVO is a nonprofit that reconnects ill, injured, and wounded veterans in the outdoors, as part of an alternative healing process.

Camp Valor Outdoors connects disabled veterans and stands in the gap that is too often left by traditional therapy offered by Veterans Affairs. To do this, CVO provides adaptive and competitive outdoor activities including guided hunting and fishing, shooting and archery, therapeutic honeybee work, and sporting events.

John added to his legacy of helping our most at-risk veterans by starting a veteran tiny home community in Holden, MO. The mission is to get homeless veterans into a stable living situation, get them the wrap-around help they need, and help them be self-sufficient. John personally helps make sure veteran residents have what they need for daily living and even helps them with transportation to appointments. John goes above and beyond to help veterans in need.

From 2010 to 2014 John served as the head coach of the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Shooting Team, which is a Para-Olympic style competition for all military services. Since 2016 he has been the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Wounded Warrior Shooting Team head coach. Even though this is enough to keep an individual busy, John still finds time to coach Camp Valor Outdoors Shooting Team at regional, state and national level competitions.

Everyone can appreciate the time and dedication that John has put into sharing his love for shooting sports and connecting with veterans. But what's most admirable is the reason why. Twenty veterans a day commit suicide and it is usually because they just can't be reached by the standard treatment options available. Sometimes prescription medications and therapy are not effective or are insufficient to treat complex mental injuries that veterans sustain during military service. To compound this problem, military men and women form special family-like bonds while serving. Deployments, combat, and injuries intensify that bond. When a Soldier, Sailor, Marine or Airman exits the military and seeks that camaraderie in the civilian world (or even with family), it does not exist. Veterans often feel alone and hopeless, especially if they sustained injuries while serving.

Programs that John has put together offer hope to veterans who need more than pills and canceled appointments at the VA. Many veterans who have encountered John have received a hand-up and camaraderie they thought was long gone. Considering everything that he does everyday, it's plain to see that John lives for everybody but himself.

John is an active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, and the USMC League. He is a family man and is active in the lives of his three children and six grandchildren. Being a grandpa is the greatest joy of his life. Everything that John does everyday for his friends, family and veteran community exemplifies the phrase "Once a Marine, always a Marine". He upholds the Corps' values and principles throughout every aspect of his life and seeks new ways to serve veterans and our country. I'm honored to call him my friend.