

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Proudly Honors



JACK EUGENE BARBER
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

as

PURPLE HEART PATRIOT
SEPTEMBER 2024



Honoring her Uncle's Service and Sacrifice
Written by Lisa Barber

Sponsored by: St. Joseph Chapter, NSDAR

Born June 24, 1929,
to Jerome and Christina Barber
Died September 12, 1951, in Korea



Jack Barber, always going by Jack E. Barber, holds a special place in my heart for many reasons. I and all my cousins did not have the chance to meet our uncle. Uncle Jack never had the opportunity to marry and have a family of his own. When my brother was born, he looked so much like our uncle that our parents named him Jackie Gene Barber. Two generations later our cousin's grandson is also named Jack.

I know that my grandmother received the dreaded death telegram dated September 20, 1951. I remember seeing and reading the telegram informing her of Jack's death in my younger years. A newspaper article announced his death in his hometown and listed a memorial service to be held on September 23, 1951. A few weeks later on October 15, 1951, my grandmother received a letter from the Chaplain of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. This letter informed her that her son was buried in the United Nations Cemetery at Tanggok, Korea on September 27, 1951, in Plot CCC, Row 8, Grave No. 7274. The letter continues from Chaplain Walter Vierling with his "*support in a difficult time for us all*".

Newspaper articles show that Uncle Jack's body arrived in San Francisco port on November 26, 1951, and on December 3, 1951, announced that he would arrive in St Joseph on Thursday, December 6. A service will be held on Saturday, December 8 at the Second Evangelical United Brethren Church, the church to which he and his parents were members.





As the story goes, and there are not many, Uncle Jack and his high school friends, Carl Yerganian, Samuel John Zebelean, and one other whose name is lost to time, used to go to the local park to play cards. Together, as friends sometimes do, they enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1950. The four friends took a dollar bill and tore it into four pieces. Three of those pieces returned to the United States after the war. One did not.

Growing up I always knew this story and thought that perhaps one of the three friends had Uncle Jack's piece with them. Looking at things now, I realize that our family literally has no belongings of my uncle. No footlocker or items that might have been with him. No wallet, no dog tags, no watch or rings of any kind. No piece of a dollar bill, just eleven very special and very cherished photographs. His five medals, the National Defense, the Korean Service, the Silver Star, the United Nations, and the Purple Heart were framed and displayed in our house until the death of my father. I have since sent the small frame and medals to Uncle Jack's last surviving sibling; my Aunt Charlotte.

My Aunt Charlotte, now 89 years old, was 16 years old when her brother wrote a letter to her requesting some soap and shaving items. She was young and busy and as she said, "I just didn't do it. All he wanted was toiletries and I was too busy". This haunts her to this day.

As for the dollar, my hope was that as each of the friends departed from life a family member would make sure that their portion of the dollar would work its way to one of the surviving members. When only John was left, I felt in my heart that he might have all four of the pieces.



I told this story to one of John's daughters who said that she had never heard of the story about the dollar bill. The next time I saw her, she had spoken to her mother about it. Seems that John carried his portion of the dollar bill in his wallet throughout his life. Possibly carrying too much pain from his loss to speak about it with his children.



In 2021, the last survivor of the four friends, Samuel John Zebelean died. On display during his celebration of life, there was a small picture frame with pieces of a dollar bill.

The emotions were somewhat overwhelming for me not only to see the dollar for the first time, but to see only three pieces. The missing piece, like Jack, did not return.