

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



Proudly Honors
PATRIOT OF THE MONTH
JANUARY 2025



VIC ZILIANI
UNITED STATES MARINES
1989 – 2009
MASTER SERGEANT (E-8)

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Prairie Chapter, NSDAR



Coming from a military family, Vic enlisted in the United States Marines in the communication option during his junior-senior year of high school. He left Florida for boot camp in October 1989 and attended 13 weeks of training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island, South Carolina, graduating in January 1990. He then went to Camp Geiger, North Carolina, for Marine Corps Infantry Training and on to the Field Radio Operators course in Twentynine Palms, California.

In 1990, he deployed to the 3rd Marine Division at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, spending time working in the Philippines and Korea. During this time, he was on standby for Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm but was not deployed. In 1992, he then went to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, as part of the 2nd Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (2nd ANGLICO). This unit provided naval gunfire and close air support to the XVIII Airborne Corps and 75th Ranger Regiment in support of joint, allied, and coalition forces.

While at Camp Lejeune, he attended the Army Airborne course and became a Navy and Marine Corps parachutist supporting the II Marine Expeditionary Force operations and deploying with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), a forward-deployed, flexible sea-based Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response and limited contingency operations, to include enabling the introduction of follow-on forces and designated special operations. He then changed his military occupational specialty from communications to parachute rigger, training at Fort Lee, Virginia. He then returned to Camp Lejeune and transferred to the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2d Force Recon Company, doing numerous

deployments with Marine Expeditionary Units to the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Africa, and several ports of call in the Mediterranean.

In 2003, he was deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade Task Force Tarawa (TFT) attached to the I Marine Expeditionary Force during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. During the invasion, his most notable battle was in Nasiriyah, Iraq. His platoon was also part of the rescue of Jessica Lynch. After leaving Nasiriyah, the Task Force was tasked with securing the highways; they secured the town of Ad Diwaniyah. They finally ended the invasion outside of Baghdad after conducting security and stabilization operations in Al Kut, Iraq.

Upon his return to the United States, he returned to Virginia to become the Director of Parachute Rigger School at the Marine Corps Detachment Fort Lee, Virginia. He spent three years at Fort Lee as director of the course. Thinking he would then retire, he returned to the Air Delivery Platoon at Camp Lejeune. He spent 18 months working on the V-22 Osprey Tilt Helicopter working on a low-cost air delivery system standard operating procedure to support the combat operations in Afghanistan. He retired in 2009 with the rank of Master Sergeant.

Among his many medals and ribbons are the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, NATO Medal, United Nations Medal, as well as numerous service awards.



In his civilian life, Vic returned to school, earning his Bachelor of Science in Health Services from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He worked in corporate America for a time. He left there in 2020 and began doing public relations for the federal government, a position he currently holds.

In 2010, he began fundraising as a community athlete for the Marine Raider Foundation, a nonprofit organization supporting the Marine Special Operations Forces. These activities include Iron Man triathlons and cross-country mountain biking. He adds that the best advice he received was to “never volunteer,” but he ignored that advice and volunteered for everything he could.

Although a native New Yorker, he resides in Lee’s Summit, Missouri.