

A LOSS RECOVERED

Soon after being discharged from the Marine Corps I experienced a significant feeling of loss.

I had spent three years living and working with a group of men who by virtue of volunteering for the Marine Corps had made a commitment to something larger than life. They also knew that the commitment would require some costs which they were willing to bear knowing that some of those costs might be severe.

Having made that commitment, they then had to prove their worthiness to wear a uniform with a globe and anchor on it. Surviving Boot Camp was their proof.

Every Marine knew that all the other Marines had made a commitment, accepted the costs, and proved that they belonged. This created a significant mutual respect that superseded any other feelings one might have about the individual regarding attributes or deficiencies of character. This created a bond between Marines that they would not share with any non-Marines.

Hence, I spent three years bonding with a group of men in a structured organization that enjoyed the highest respect around the world. I felt a sense of significant pride.

Then one day I was discharged. I no longer belonged to an organization. I did not bond with anyone in my new environment as I had done in the Corps. I felt I had lost a lot.

Then appears the Marine Corps League, a Nationwide 501 c4 organization of active, retired, and non-active Marines gathered together to help one another and serve their communities. Through the League I was offered the opportunity to relive a small part of my active duty experience. That small part, but in my view perhaps the most important part of that experience, was the opportunity to once again bond with fellow Marines. A Loss Recovered.

It could be that unique bond is the origin of the statement "Once a Marine, Always a Marine."

Eugene Stanaland Sgt. USMC

Billy Stelpflug Detachment # 1064