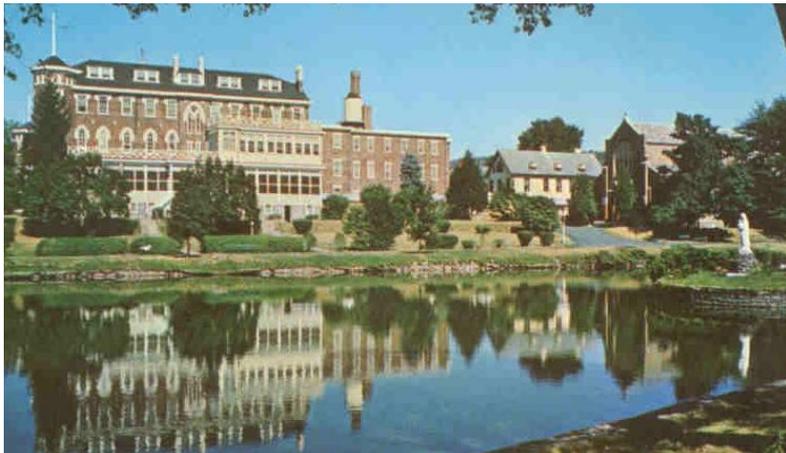




ST. DOMINIC'S HOME AND SCHOOL FOR BOYS, SPARKILL, NY



ST. AGNES CONVENT, SPARKILL, NY

THE SEVEN MERNA SIBLINGS: FROM DOMINICAN CONVENTS TO THE BEYOND: A PICTORIAL STORY

World War II (WWII) began with the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. That event was the first of several early life major alterations for the seven Bronx, NY Merna children (three predeceased them), then ranging in age from four to sixteen.

Only weeks after that attack, the children were literally abandoned by their parents, some on the streets of New York City. The oldest were “rounded up” by the *Catholic Charities Organization of NYC* and on Jan. 31, 1942, six were placed in *St Dominic's Convent*, Blauvelt, NY for grade school, and the only high school student, George, in *St. Agnes Home and School for Boys*, Sparkill, NY. These Catholic Convents were only a few miles from one another, both run by Dominican Nuns.

The cruelest blow however, would occur three years later, during WWII, when their then 19-year old Brother George, who ran away from St. Agnes to join the Navy, was killed-in-action when his ship was sunk by a Japanese submarine returning from the Leyte Invasion.

After varying years in both Homes, upon leaving St. Agnes, four of the five surviving Brothers also enlisted in the military---three in the Marines, one in the Navy. Each would also serve in Korea or Vietnam, or both. Their only Sister Vivian also later married a Marine.

Only three of the six would eventually marry, but all went on to various and successful careers. The three who married are the only survivors today, at ages of 79, 83, and 85, and each were blessed with beautiful families.

Gerald F. Merna
Arlington, VA,
August 31, 2015

The last page of this story has links to a variety of stories that provide additional editorial and pictorial insight into the lives of the Merna Siblings.

Note to the Merna and related Families:

This *Pictorial* was put together intended solely for the enjoyment of the Merna and related families and friends, and of course may be shared as desired. It has taken a long time to assemble and though every effort has been made to offer the most current and correct background and biographical information possible, I apologize in advance for any inadvertent identifications, dates, facts, and other information shown. I hope to post it on the St. Agnes Alumni web site so that each of you can access it, view it on-line, download or print it if you want to.

Some names, events, locales and identifying details from my files and memories may not be as accurate as I'd like, and I have tried to be as all-inclusive of family members as possible using what files, photos and data I have saved all these many years. Sue Merna helped me a great deal by providing a few photographs and background information on members of her family, for which I am most appreciative. I've also asked a few of you a couple of questions to amplify backgrounds, accomplishments, etc. Thanks to each of you also.

Not all the pictures were taken by me, though I tried to identify those that I could; some have been passed around over the years by different family members and friends, and added to my personal collection. I hope all who see this enjoy the pictures and the memories as much as I did assembling and identifying them.

As the originator/preparer, perhaps I took a bit more advantage of my *immediate* family's history, simply because that is obviously what I have collected the most. I have no doubt each member of our families have pictures they wish were in here, but I had to draw the line somewhere as both time and content was rapidly expanding as I was continually adding page after page concerned I may have overlooked someone or not adequately portrayed key events herein. If in fact some may feel I did that, I also express regret for that.

Sadly, too many family members are now deceased, some very recently, and each is greatly missed by all of us. Like me, some have lost their spouse, my loss of Dot, my wife of almost 60 years, is the highest burden I bear. Others have lost additional family members. Our losing four Brothers was no small burden either!

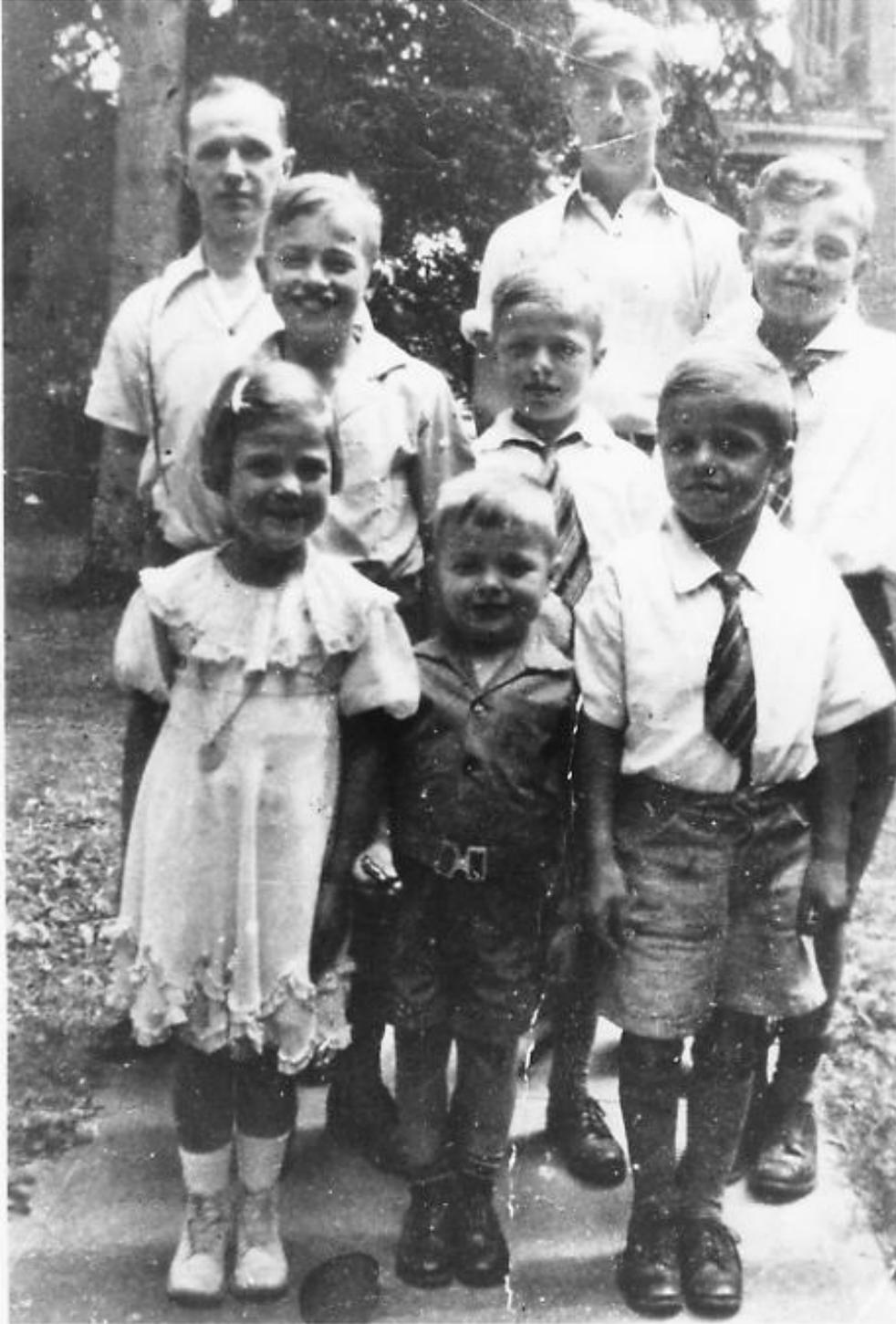
Someone seeing that 1942 picture of the seven Merna Siblings at St. Dominic's for the first time might be tempted to say, "*oh those poor kids.*" And while it's true it was not the easiest of times, and "convent life" was not something I recommend to everyone, in most if not all of our cases we overcame those obstacles pretty well, and more importantly, had remarkable lives and careers thereafter. For myself, I have this all-encompassing answer to hearing *any* sympathetic expression: "*I am the luckiest and happiest man in the world because I was placed in St. Dominic's, which led to St. Agnes, else I would never have met the beautiful Piermont young lady and Tappan Zee High School classmate who gave me not only her love and affection for more than sixty years, but also our Daughter Linda, Son Jerry, Grandsons John and Max, and their families.*" And that is exactly the purpose of this "Pictorial Story," to show the results that stemmed from those "*Convent Siblings*"--and that's with only *three* of us getting married!!! (Yes indeed, married folks live longer)!

So I hope each of you enjoy and reminisce in the pictures and the stories behind them, and share with all here now and those yet to come.

Love,

**Jerry Merna
Aug. 31, 2015**

FROM DOMINICAN CONVENTS: ¹



VISITING DAY AT ST. DOMINIC'S CONVENT, BLAUVELT, NY SUMMER 1942: Back: George Francis Merna (8-21-03); George Charles Merna (11-28-26); Middle: Gerald Francis Merna (4-1-30); James Edward Merna (11-1-32); Robert Paul Merna (4-28-31); Bottom: Vivian Merna (2-22-35); Thomas Merna (10-12-37) & Richard George Merna (8-7-34)

¹ In January 1942, abandoned by their parents, seven Merna siblings (three other siblings predeceased them) were placed in St. Dominic's Convent in Blauvelt, NY, a Catholic Home grade school for orphaned or abandoned children. Oldest Brother George, then in high school, was sent to St. Agnes Home and School for Boys, Sparkill, NY. As each sibling graduated from St. Dominic's, except for only Sister Vivian, all six boys were sent to St. Agnes where they attended Tappan Zee High School in Piermont, NY, remaining there until graduating HS, turning 18, or running away as George and Gerald did at age 16 and joined the Military. Gerald would later meet his TZHS classmate again while in the service and they were married 60 years. Vivian was sent from St. Dominic's to a private school in Goshen, NY after which she was sent to a variety of boarding homes before being finally released on her own.



TO THE BEYOND



**George Charles Merna, SN2 USN
KIA, WWII, 1945, Leyte Invasion**



**Robert Paul Merna, YN1 USN
Korea**



**James Faulk Merna, Ens., USN
Naval Academy 1987
Son of Jim & Sue Merna**



**John E. Merna, Col USMC (Ret).
Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom
Son of Jim & Sue Merna**



**Gerald Francis Merna, 1stLt USMC
(Retired) Korea, Vietnam**



**James Edward Merna
Sgt USMC, Korea**



**Edward Haiduk, Cpl USMC
WWII**



**George Francis Merna
Private, AAC WWII**



**Richard George Merna
Cpl USMC, Korea**

CONVENT REMEMBRANCES:

While the Merna Siblings did not have a lot of visitors at St. Dominic's, (they were told their Mom Geraldine had died but she had not), their Dad George came once by bus from Fort Dix, NJ as a new draftee into the Army Air Corps. His Sister (Aunt Betty) came twice, and Grandmother Byers (Mother of Geraldine) and a few of their many other Aunts/Uncles once or twice. Faithful visitors were loving friends from The Salvation Army in the Bronx where we lived before our family life as we knew it was shattered. There we would gather on Sunday's to sing songs, celebrate birthdays, etc., and enjoy summer camp in New Jersey as their guests. Brig. Gen. Alma Warth, her Sister Olga and Olga's daughter Dawn came three or four times. As the older Brothers graduated to St. Agnes they would visit those left behind, even after leaving St. Agnes, to visit their remaining siblings, attending their functions, bringing gifts, candy, and otherwise showing their love and support.



Alma Warth with Vivian, Richard, James & Thomas



Richard, Vivian, Alma Warth, Gerald and youngest, Thomas



Thomas, Vivian and Richard



Brothers Jerry and Jim returned to St. Dominic's for Richard's graduation



James, Vivian, Gerald and Thomas



Jerry at Vivian's Crowning of The Blessed Virgin



Tom goes to Palisades Park with Police Anchor Club of New York City



Thomas, (3rd from L first row), and fellow Choir members perform after a Mass



Corporal Jim visits Brother Tommy



Bob and Jerry Merna visit Vivian at St. Dominic's



St. Dominic's Boy's Cottage (white building)



Cottage Jerry Merna lived in



1946: St Dominic's-Jerry-Bob Merna



St. Dominic's: Vivian's Girls Dormitory



Coach Faulk with Dominican Nuns (see "A Tribute to Jim Faulk..." on last page).



1945: Jerry 15, St. Agnes



1946: Jerry 16, St. Agnes



1945: DeSantis-Jerry Merna



Jerry Merna



H. McAvinue-Frank Hennessy-Jerry Merna-All Became Marines



1846: St. Dominic's: Bob-Jerry-Vivian-Rich-Tom



1949-05-30-Jim in St. Agnes Band on Memorial Day



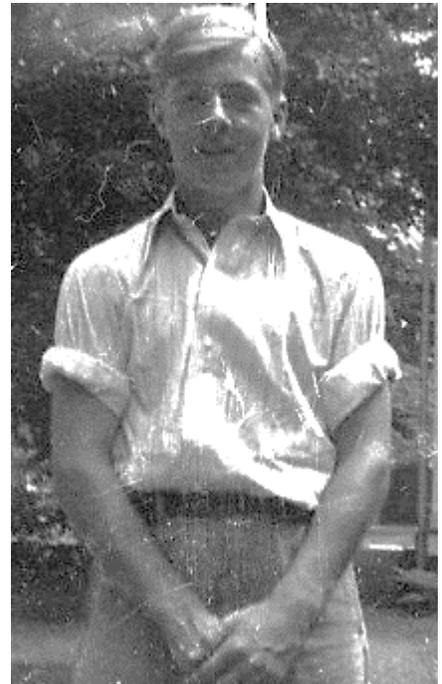
Mac Angelo F. Boyle- Jim Merna Up-On-The-Roof of St. Agnes "House"



Tappress	3.4
Commeial Club	4
Intramurals	3.4
Safety Patrol	4
Honor Society	4

To the great
financier who
helps to keep
the Sparkhill
Bank in business.
Jim

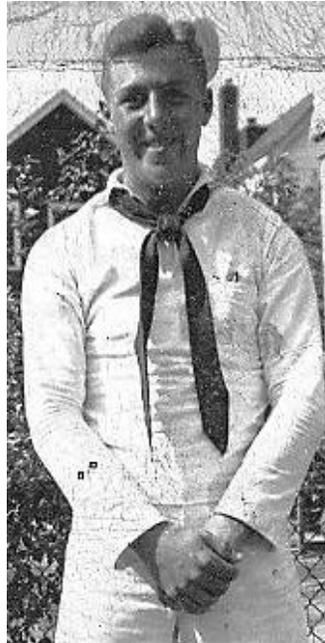
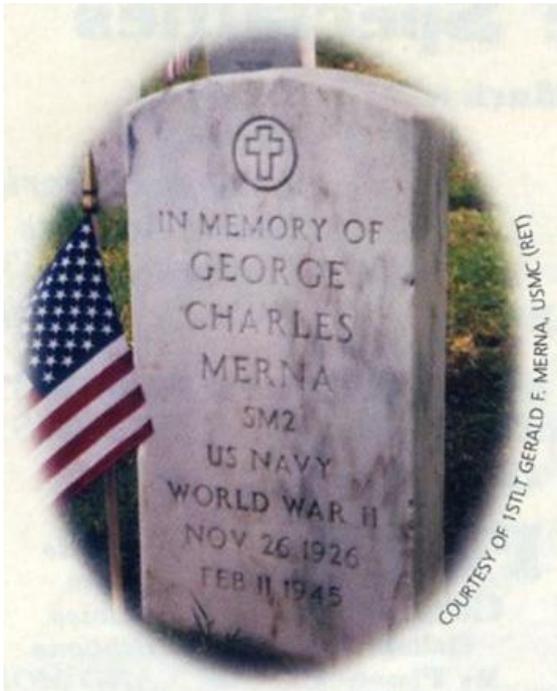
Annotation in Jim's Tappan Zee High School Yearbook



1942: George C. Merna-at St Agnes

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck



Time's Quiescence

Grassy fields of crosses, stars and crescents
Stand the staves in all of time's quiescence.
Gone the agony, the suffering, the pain
Of wounds that leave the warrior's stain.

Along the rows we search and wonder
If we shall find, after the battle's thunder,
The graves of those we're here to seek
So that the words we came to speak
Will signify our sorrow, the nation's loss,
Together the indications of freedom's cost.

Standing, kneeling, weeping, broken-hearted,
Feeling loneliness never charted, now imparted.

Their souls abiding in the hands of God,
Who surely gave them a smile and nod,
After leaving this world in desperate straits,
When they marched through the heavenly gates.
HMCM Herbert G. Renner Jr., USN (Ret)
In memory of SM2 Charles Merna, USN

**Picture dated May 1944: George C. Merna, Signalman Second Class. U. S. Navy, Killed-in-Action Feb.11, 1945
Poem (written by Jerry's E-2-5 Korea Assn. friend Herb Renner) and Headstone picture by Jerry, were
featured in Leatherneck Magazine's "Gyrene Gyngles" Section,
(Compiled by Leatherneck's Mary Karcher, Pg. 96, September 2002)**



1948: Cpl. Gerald F. Merna at Naval Training Center, San Diego, CA



Dec 26, 1949: Dot Sedlack & Jerry Merna become engaged during house party in Piermont



Jan. 20, 1949: Cpl Merna marches in Pres. Harry S. Truman's Inaugural Parade

Dorothy M. Sedlack becomes Bride of Sergeant Gerald F. Merna, U.S. Marine Corps

Merna - Sedlack Wedding

**The Journal News, Nyack, New York
Saturday, February 17, 1951**



Miss Dorothy Sedlack, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Sedlack, Sr., of Ferdon Avenue, Piermont, became the bride of Sgt. Gerald F. Merna, U. S. M. C., son of Mr. and Mrs. George Merna of New York City in a military wedding on Saturday.

The double ring ceremony was performed at St. John's Church, Piermont, Rev. John Fleming officiated.

The altar was banked with white snapdragons, carnations and gladioli. Mrs. Leo Lediger sang "Ave Maria" and other appropriate selections accompanied by Mrs. John Hickey at the organ. Mrs. Hickey also played the processional and recessional marches.

The bride was given in marriage by her father, who is a trustee of the Village of Piermont. Mrs. Alois Sisulak of Piermont was matron of honor. Other attendants were Miss Barbara Bohr, Miss Angie Renella, and Mrs. Frank Chambrovich of Nyack.

Alois Sisulak acted as best man. Ushers were Sgt. Kelly, S/Sgt. Benson and S/Sgt. Whitaker, who also acted as guard of honor with T/Sgt. Gross. All are attached to the New York Marine Recruiting Office.

As they left the church the bride and bridegroom passed under an archway of sabers held by the Marines.

The bride wore a gown of white slipper satin and imported rose-point lace. The gown had a high neckline with nylon yoke outlined in seed pearls, fitted bodice, long pointed sleeves of lace, and bouffant satin skirt with an apron of lace. The bride wore a fingertip tulle veil fastened to a tiara of

seed pearls and carried a cascade of white gardenias.

All of the attendants wore gowns styled alike. They were satin and tulle with fitted bodices, satin boleros, ballerina length tulle skirts and tulle stoles which also served as headpieces. The attendants carried cascades of gladioli with ice blue ribbon bows. The matron of honor's gown was flamingo color and the bridesmaids' ice-blue.

Mrs. Sedlack, the bride's mother, wore a black crepe and lace dress with matching accessories and an orchid corsage.

Mrs. Blanche Byers, grandmother of the bridegroom, wore a navy blue dress with matching accessories and an orchid corsage.

A reception for some one hundred and twenty-five guests followed at the Hotel St. George, Nyack. The three tier wedding cake was cut by the bride and bridegroom with a saber.

After a wedding trip to Niagara Falls and Canada the couple plan to live in Nyack.

Mrs. Merna was graduated from Tappan Zee High School, Sgt. Merna attended Tappan Zee High School, which he left to join the Marine Corp. He served three years with the Marines in World War II, was discharged, and then recalled to duty.



Feb. 10, 1951: In back seat of Pop's 1950 Buick



Tasting the cake at Nyack's St. George Hotel reception



TSgt Frank Gross, SSgt Whitaker, Dot-Jerry, SSgt Benson, Sgt Kelly (all Marines were Recruiters in New York City)



1958 Nov 10: TSgt & Mrs. Merna at Marine Corps Ball, Shively KY. Jerry served 4 yrs. as NCOinC of MCRSS, Owensboro, KY. Their Son, Gerald T. was born there 8Jul56.



LINDA AT 16



LINDA AND BROTHER JERRY²



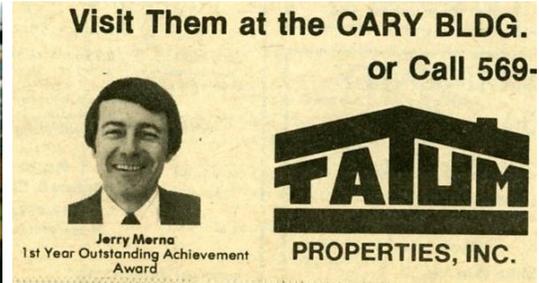
JERRY



DAD AND SON JERRY



Grandson Max Figura, Linda Merna Figura, Dot (Sedlack) Merna and Grandson John G. Figura



1977: Jerry as a Licensed Realtor in Northern Virginia³



Dot's Parents: Helen & Tom Alois and Gladys Sisolak



1955: Judy & Al Sisolak with Dot and Linda



Uncle Ed Haiduk, WWII Marine married Merna Siblings Aunt Lucille (Byers)

²² Daughter Linda and Son Jerry each retired after full careers with the U.S. Government: Linda from Capitol Hill and Jerry from the U. S. Postal Service. Linda works today for a former Secretary of Defense and Jerry is retired in his beach house in Bethany Beach, DE
³ Tatum Properties, in Springfield, VA, was owned by Frank Tatum, a retired Marine Major, then unknown to Jerry Merna when Frank met and hired Jerry. They later discovered that in 1947, when Frank was a Captain at Parris Island where Jerry was in school after Boot Camp, he promoted Jerry to Private First Class.



Linda with Son John Figura⁴



**John & Rita Figura,
Grandparents of Max and John Figura**



Gerald Thomas Merna



**2015: Jerry Merna with Daughter Linda and Grandsons
Max⁵ and John at Nat's Baseball Game**



2015: Linda & Pete near Marine Barracks, DC



Linda and Dad at "some crazy place"



Jerry, Linda, Cousin Al Sisolak



Linda, Jerry, Dad and Mom Merna

⁴ John Figura completed his undergraduate degree at the Univ. of Virginia and attained his Graduate Degree in English from The George Washington University, Wash., D.C. While working towards his Doctorate Degree in English he is working as a Supervisor for a Wash., DC based courier Service Company.

⁵ Max Figura attended Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and is currently employed as a Manager of a Retail Store in Wash., DC



(L): 1st Lt. Jerry Merna, Adjutant & Casualty Notification Officer, salutes BGen. Robert P. Keller, CG, 4th MAW, Glenview, IL (C) and LtCol. Edward J. Rutty (R) CO, Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment, Andrews Air Force Base, MD. (LtCol Rutty is a former member of the Blue Angels Flying Team) June 1968

CAPT R. G. ARMISTEAD
Commanding Officer
 CDR W. E. BEHRINGER
Executive Officer
 LCDR P. N. MULLANE
Public Affairs Officer

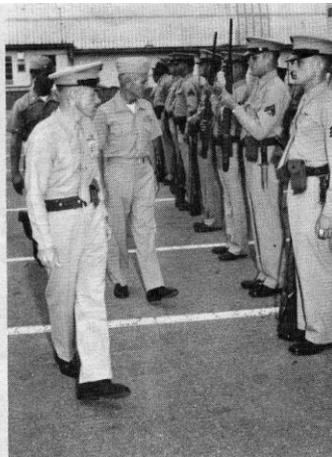
JOC LOUIS MAILLET
Editorial Advisor
 SN RICHARD J. LIOTTA
Editor
 PH1 WILBUR REDD
Head, Photo Lab

NARTOPIX
 JUNE 1968

Published monthly by the
 Public Affairs Office,
 Naval Air Reserve Training
 Unit, Naval Air Facility,
 Washington, D. C. 20390.

The NARTOPIX is published
 in accordance with NAVEXOS
 P-35 (Revised). NARTOPIX is
 printed with appropriated
 funds. Unless otherwise
 credited, all photos are
 official U. S. Navy. The
 NARTOPIX is a member of
 the Armed Forces News Bu-
 reau. Deadline is the 10th
 of each month.

EDITORIAL OFFICES
 981-6723/3161



TOP VISITOR -- General Robert P. Keller paid an in formal visit to the Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment here in mid-June. Gen. Keller, newly appointed Commanding General of the Fourth Marine Air Wing with headquarters at Glenview, was formerly with the First Marine Air Wing in Viet Nam. He is shown inspecting MARTD personnel with Lt. Col. Edward J. Rutty, C.O., MARTD, and 1st Lt. Gerald F. Merna, Adjutant, MARTD.



2013: Michelle and Col. John Merna at Birthday Ball

Bringing the Bad News Home

I just returned from a trip to California and, while catching up on back issues of *The Post*, my attention was caught by Phil McCombs's story "Getting Ready to Deliver the Saddest Tidings" [Style, Jan. 21].

Like Air Force Maj. Kathi Blevins, I was once a "Casualty Notification Officer." Having been assigned that duty upon my return from the Vietnam War in 1967, while stationed at the Marine Air Detachment at Andrews Air Force Base, I know well the anxiety facing her and others who may be assigned this highly emotional and distressing duty.

My best advice to Maj. Blevins is to read the pamphlet she was given and then forget it, and rely on good old common sense and human instinct. No training can prepare anyone for this duty. No two cases will be exactly alike. Forget the "no touching" rule because I can assure her she will be touched. I experienced everything from women collapsing in my arms to being slapped by a distant relative who blamed me for the death. I experienced the emotions of love and tenderness from the families to the other extreme, where a newly widowed wife greeted me with, "I guess you're here because he's dead. Do I get his insurance?"

In short the major should use her instincts, and go about it the same as she would if she were calling on a neighbor or friend who had lost a loved one or had one seriously injured. What helped me immensely was just being back from Vietnam and being able to answer their questions and identify areas where their loved ones served.

Maj. Blevins might ask a local clergy member to go with her, or someone the family knows and trusts who can stay behind to lend further comfort and assistance. She should avoid "canned" speeches such those mentioned in the article and speak from the heart. It's a tough job but it means everything to that family, and they will remember every word she said. God bless the military for using this personal notification system; it sure beats the old World War II telegrams that started: "We regret to inform you . . ."

These are the moms, dads, brothers, sisters, wives, relatives and friends of our fighting men and women, and they deserve nothing but caring, careful consideration. Unfortunately, it doesn't get any easier with experience. Each call is worse than the one before it.

GERALD F. MERNA
Alexandria

A20 FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1991

The Washington Post

EUROENE MEYER, 1976-1990
PHILIP L. GRAHAM, 1915-1963

DONALD E. GRAHAM
Publisher

BENJAMIN C. BRADLEE
Executive Editor

MEG GREENFIELD
Editorial Page Editor

LEONARD DOWNIE JR.
Managing Editor

STEPHEN S. ROSENFIELD
Deputy Editor/ Page Editor

ROBERT G. KAISER
Deputy Managing Editor

THOMAS H. FERGUSON
President and General Manager

Published by The Washington Post Company

KATHARINE GRAHAM
Chairman of the Board
RICHARD D. SIMMONS
President

1150 15th St. NW-Washington, D.C. 20071 • (202) 394-0000

Letters should be signed and must include the writer's home address and home and business telephone numbers. Because of space limitations, those published are subject to abridgment. Although we are unable to acknowledge those letters we cannot publish, we appreciate the interest and value the views of those who take the time to send us their comments. Letters intended for publication should be addressed to Letters to the Editor.



SAN DIEGO, CA., Fri., Jan. 8, 1993: L. to R.: Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., USN (Ret.), Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Mr. Gerald F. Merna, Director of Advertising, SIGNAL Magazine, AFCEA; Ms. Jennifer Miles, SIGNAL Advertising Representative, Mid-Atlantic Media Sales, Inc., Washington, D.C.; and Captain James Barber, USN (Ret.), Executive Director of the U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, MD.

Jerry assisted Jennifer Miles to get a job with one of his several (Wash. DC) SIGNAL advertising companies. Then a WVU classmate of Jerry's Nephew Matt Merna, she then went to work for the fourth largest agency network in the world, the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency headquartered in New York—AND--Matt's Fiancée, Wife, and Mother of their two children



President Lyndon B. Johnson



The White House



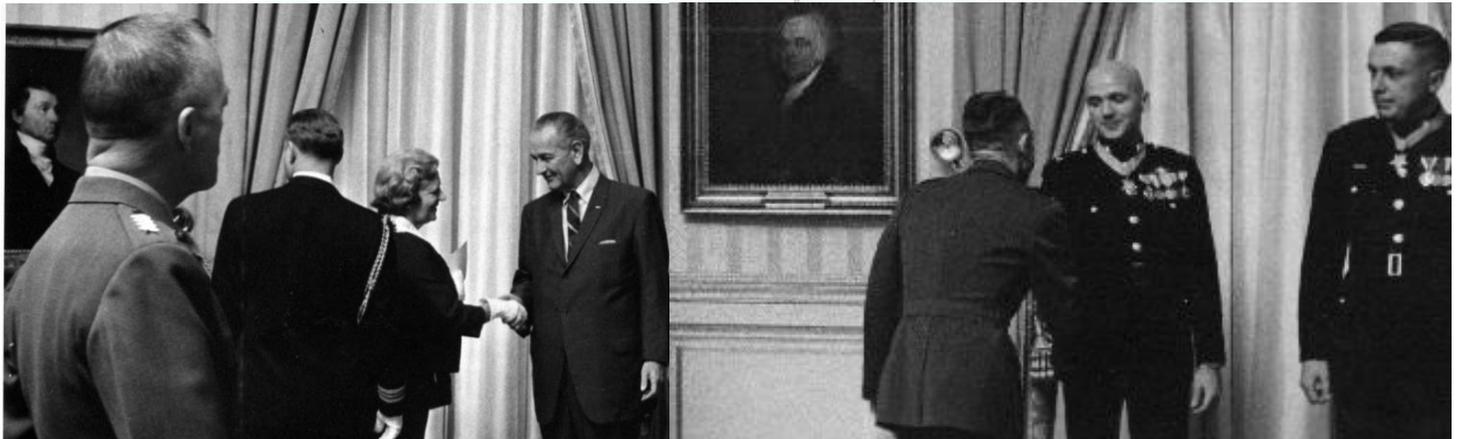
1stLt Merna Naval Aide Unk. Captain Pres. Johnson

The White House: 12 Mar 1968: Medal of Honor ceremony for Maj. Robert J. Modrzejewski and 2dL John J. McGinty III, earned while serving with the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, Third Marine Division in Vietnam. This was the first "dual award" of this Medal for the Marine Corps since the Korean War (1950 – 1953). Lt. Merna investigated and voted for these Medals of Honor while serving as the Adjutant and Division Awards Officer of the Third Marine Division in Vietnam.



L. to R. Mrs. Leonard F. Chapman (wife of Commandant Gen. Leonard F. Chapman); 1stLt Chapman, son of Gen and Mrs. Leonard F. Chapman; Naval Aide; 1stLt. Gerald F. Merna (shaking hands with President); President Lyndon Baines Johnson; Unknown Captain; Major Modrzejewski; not shown, 2dLt. John J. McGinty III

Lyndon Baines Johnson
President of the United States of America
*To Gerald F. Merna
with every good wish
Lyndon B. Johnson*
The White House
24 March 1968



CMC General Leonard F. Chapman Naval Aide Guest Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson 1stLt Gerald F. Merna Major R. J. Modrzejewski 2dLt. John J. McGinty III



Tom with his "Big Sister" Vivian



Bob visits Vivian, St. Dominic's, 1946



Brothers Rich, Jim and Jerry: Aug 13, 1966



Dec. 1952: Dot Merna with Sister-in-Law Vivian, the only female Merna Sibling⁶



2006-11-09-Linda with Dad. Opening night at Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, VA



Aug. 7, 1976: Brother Bob walks Sister Vivian down the aisle at her wedding to Al Rendes



June 1958: TSgt Jerry Merna, NCO in Charge, MC Recruiting Sub-Station, Owensboro, KY and Capt. Thomas Graney, Asst. Officer-in-Charge, MCRS, Louisville, KY⁷



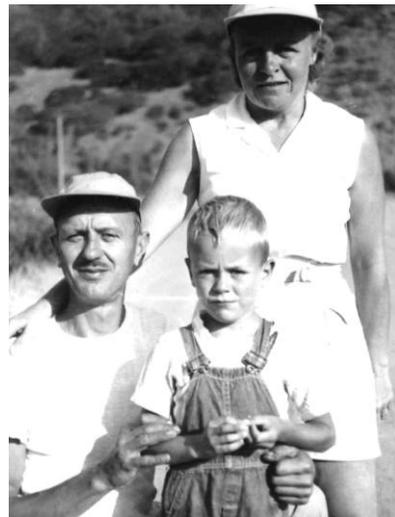
May 1952: TSgt Donald J. Lupo and TSgt Gerald F. Merna both were ATA Section Leaders, W-1-5, 1st Marine Division, Korea. Don was killed in-action in January 1953

⁶ Vivian, a Certified Nursing Assistant and resident of Sun City West, AZ, is the mother of Roberta (53), Frossene (54). Karen (56), and Deborah (60), all living in different States. Married almost 40 years, she lost her husband Al Rendes in February 2015.

⁷ Capt. Graney retired as an LtCol and was a future President of the *Marine Corps Mustang Assn.* (See: <http://www.marinecorpsmustang.org/>. He died on November 26, 1994. Our Son Gerald T, was born in Owensboro during this tour.

THE MERNA MILITARY FAMILY

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|---|---------------------|
| George Francis Merna | Private AAC |  | World War II |  |  | Died 08May65 |
| George C. Merna- | Signalman 2d Class USN |  | KIA WWII 1945 |  |  | Died 11Feb45 |
| Gerald F. Merna | -1stLt USMC (Ret.) |  | Korea & Vietnam |  |  | |
| Robert P. Merna | YN2 USN |  | Korean War |  |  | Died 22Dec06 |
| James E. Merna | Sgt USMC |  | Korean War |  |  | |
| Richard G. Merna | Cpl USMC |  | Korean War |  |  | Died 04Jul06 |



Mother: Geraldine Byers Merna Unk. Year: George, Geraldine, George with unknown Child: 1920-1930's Jr. Kraus, Coyote Lake-Gilroy, CA 1943-Uncle, Werner Frese, George Merna, Aunt Lucille Byers, Aunt Blanche Frese, Aunt Cecile Leed, Grandma Byers, Aunt Patricia Byers, Uncle Harry Leed, Cousin Joan Frese, Ozone Park, Long Island, NY

IN MEMORY OF OUR FATHER

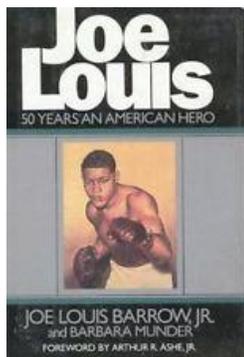
GEORGE FRANCIS MERNA, 1903 - 1965, PRIVATE, U. S. ARMY AIR CORPS, W.W. II



**U. S. NATIONAL CEMETERY, FARMINGDALE, LONG ISLAND
(Cemetery Photos by James E. Merna)**

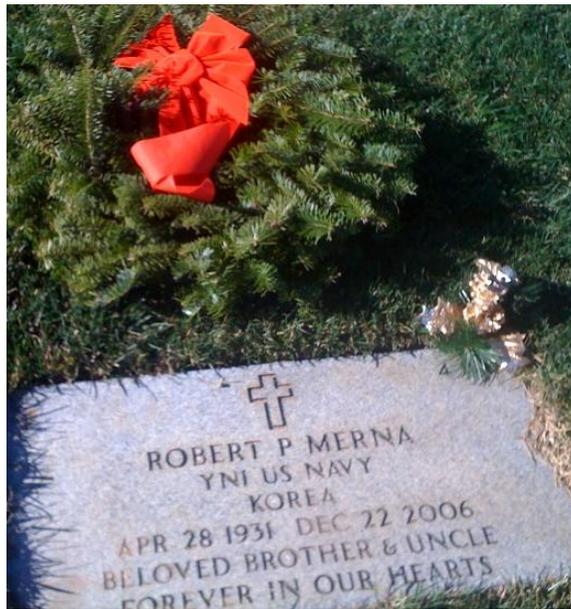


2007-08-17 Jerry visits his Dad



**Joe Louis Barrow 1946: Dad (2d from L) and crew from “Never Closed Garage” 1959: Dad in Hospital
Dad was also a part-time chauffeur for American Icon Heavyweight Boxing Champion Joe Louis⁸**

⁸ In 1991 I mentioned my Dad and Joe Louis to Nina Benton, one of my Advertising Managers for *SIGNAL Magazine*. I did not know at the time that she was also a friend of Joe Louis Barrow, Jr., son of the Heavyweight Champion. Shortly thereafter I received a Special Delivery Package of his book, “*Joe Louis, 50 Years an American Hero*” (with a foreword by Wimbledon Champion Arthur R. Ashe, Jr). He autographed it to me as follows: “*To Jerry Merna and the fond memories of our unique American Hero, My Dad, The Champ. I hope, as you read through these pages, the stories of my Dad & yours once again become a reality. Very Best Wishes, Joe Lois Barrow, 6/4/91.*”(I shook hands with Joe Louis in his Harlem Restaurant as a very young child).



Merna family records indicate our parents had 10 children. Nothing is known of the three born before George in 1926. Additionally, our Mother Geraldine (Byers) Merna, had an *eleventh* child, George E. Kraus Jr., after she separated from our Dad and married George Kraus, Sr., the man she left NY with to go to California. Of the Seven Merna Siblings that were admitted to St. Dominic's and St. Agnes, only three, Gerald, James and Vivian, are living as of this writing. George, Robert, Richard and Thomas are deceased. On Sept. 16, 2010 Gerald lost his wife Dorothy, (married 60 years). Both George and Geraldine Kraus are deceased.



IN MEMORY OF

GEORGE CHARLES MERNA



BACKGROUND:

Date of Birth: November 26, 1926; St. Agnes Home for Boys, Sparkill, NY: March 21, 1942 – Sept. 1, 1943; High School: Class of 1944, Tappan Zee High School, Piermont, NY. (Left before graduating to join US Navy in World War II).

MILITARY SERVICE:

U. S. Navy: September 23, 1943 – February 11, 1945; World War II Veteran:

23Sep43: Enlisted as Apprentice Seaman, U.S. Navy, U.S. Naval Recruiting Station, NY, NY.

25Sep43: Reported aboard U. S. Naval Training Station, Sampson, New York

12Nov43: Promoted to Seaman Second Class

24Nov43: Reported U. S. Naval Training Station, Bainbridge, MD for course of instruction in Signalman School

01Apr44: Promoted to Seaman First Class

03Apr44: Reported to Amphibious Training Base, Camp Bradford, Virginia

01Jun44: Promoted to Signalman Third Class

02Jul44: Reported on board the USS LST-577 (LST=Landing Ship Tank)

01Jan45: Promoted to Signalman Second Class

11Feb45: Killed in action while serving on board the LST-577 in the South Pacific.

LST 577 HISTORY:

George C. Merna was a “plank owner” on the LST-577 (meaning he was on board from the day of launching to the date it was sunk). The LST-577 was laid down on 3 May 1944 at Evansville, IN and commissioned on 10 July 1944. During WWII the LST-577 was assigned to the Asiatic-Pacific Theater and participated in the Leyte Landings in Nov. 1944 and the Lingayen Gulf landing in January 1945. She was sunk by a Japanese submarine launch of two torpedoes off the Philippines on 11 February 1945. The LST-577 earned two battle stars for World War II service.

DECORATIONS AND AWARDS:

In addition to the two Battle Stars earned by the LST-577, George was also awarded the following decorations:

**Purple Heart
Medal**

**American Campaign
Medal**

**Asiatic Pacific
Campaign Medal w/2***

**Philippine Defense
Medal**

**World War II
Victory Medal**

**Remembrance of Richard George Merna, (August 7, 1934-July 4, 2006)
Former Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps, (1953-1956, 1961-1962),
Quantico National Cemetery, Triangle, VA July 11, 2006**

(Photos by Gerald F. Merna)



Hearse bearing Richard arrives at ceremonial site, Quantico National Cemetery, greeted by Quantico Marines Honor Guard



Marine Honor Guard, Rev. Fr. Dixon (center), Angela from Quantico Cemetery Staff, Sgt-in-Charge, Honor Guard, Jim Merna)



8 SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2006

THE WASHINGTON POST

Obituaries



RICHARD GEORGE MERNA
(Age 71)

On Tuesday, July 4, 2006 of Clinton, MD. Beloved brother of Gerald F. (Dorothy) of Potomac Falls, VA, Robert P. of San Jose, CA, James E. (Suzanne) of Annapolis, MD and Locust Grove, VA, and Vivian Rencos (Al) of Sun City West, AZ, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his brother, George, killed in action in WWII, and a younger brother, Thomas.

In his youth, along with his five brothers and a sister, Richard was raised at two Catholic institutions, St. Dominic's Home for Boys and Girls, Blauvelt, NY, and at St. Agnes Home for Boys, Sparkill, NY; He graduated from Tappan Zee High School in Piermont, NY in 1953. He served two tours in the U.S. Marine Corps, from 1953-1958 and 1961-1962, including 15 months in Korea with the First Marine Division. Upon his discharge, he attended the University of Maryland for three years where he was a member of the Newman Club and the Economic Discussion Club. His part-time and subsequent full-time employment included the U.S. Post Office Dept., the Statler Hilton Hotel, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the Internal Revenue Service. He was a 100 percent disabled veteran.

Friends may visit with the family at LEE FUNERAL HOME, Branch Ave. and Coventry Way, Clinton, MD, on Monday, July 10, from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. Prayers will be offered at 7 p.m. Interment Tuesday, July 11 at 11 a.m. at Quantico National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Dominican Sisters, 175 Route 340, Sparkill, NY 10976, Attn: Sr. Peggy Scarano.



Sergeant in Charge, Quantico Marine Honor Guard and Rev. Fr. Dixon

IN MEMORY OF



ROBERT PAUL MERNA

April 28, 1931 - December 22, 2006



Robert Paul Merna, 75, a retired California court reporter and Korean War U.S. Navy veteran, died of cancer December 22 at his home in San Jose after a lengthy illness. A long time California resident, he previously lived in San Francisco, Moraga, and Walnut Creek.

He was born in New York City in 1931. Along with five brothers and one sister, he was raised in two Dominican-run Catholic Homes, St. Dominic's Home for Boys and Girls, Blauvelt, NY, and at St. Agnes Home for Boys, Sparkill, NY. He attended Tappan Zee High School in Piermont, NY.

After completing high school in New York City, Mr. Merna enlisted in the U.S. Navy in May 1951. He served five years on active duty, including 16 months in the Korean War. He served aboard the destroyer escort USS McGinty (DE-365) on blockade and patrol duty in Wonsan Harbor, conducting numerous shore bombardments of Communist-held positions. For his service, he was awarded the Korean Service Medal with two battle stars, the China Service Medal (extended), the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal. Upon his discharge from the navy, he moved to the Bay Area where he attended City College in San Francisco, then San Francisco State, until 1959, when he left to attend court reporting school at night, while he worked various jobs during the day.

He graduated and entered California state service in 1965 with the Division of Industrial Accidents, and was the leading reporter in Oakland for numerous years. Robert was twice elected President of the California Association of State Hearing Reporters and was a Delegate and held numerous offices including Vice President, with Chapter 39 of the California State Employees Association. Upon his retirement in 1985, California Senate Rules Committee Resolution No. 721 Adopted June 21, 1985, commended him for his over 20 years of exemplary service and outstanding display of civic leadership.

Survivors include his brothers Gerald F. Merna, of Potomac Falls, VA (1stLt, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)), James E. Merna, of Annapolis, MD (Marine Veteran of the Korean War), and a sister, Vivian Rendes, of Sun City West, AZ. He leaves behind numerous nieces and nephews, including Karen Hennessy and Roberta Moretti, both of San Jose. Preceding him in death were his brothers George C. Merna, of New York City (killed in action in WWII), Richard G. Merna, of Clinton, MD (Marine veteran of the Korean War), and Thomas G. Merna, of San Francisco.

A Memorial Mass was offered for Mr. Merna on December 28 at Saint Christopher Parish, 1576 Curtner Ave., San Jose. He is buried at San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery, 32053 West McCabe Road, Gustine, CA.

WHAT A FABULOUS MARINE CORPS CAREER:

**Colonel John E. Merna
Commanding Officer**



Col. John E. Merna graduated from Florida State University in 1989 and was commissioned an officer of Marines in 1990. After completing The Basic School and the Infantry Officer's Course, he was assigned to Combat Replacement Company 2 in Camp Lejeune, N.C., and deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Desert Storm. Upon return, Col. Merna was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines in 29 Palms, CA. While with 3/7 from 1991 to 1993, he completed a Unit Deployment Program rotation to Okinawa and participated in a counter-narcotics mission in support of Joint Task Force-6 in the southwestern United States while serving as a rifle platoon commander, weapons platoon commander, company executive officer, and commanding officer of India Company.

Col. Merna transferred to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego in 1993 where he served as a series commander and a company commander in the Third Recruit Training Battalion. Upon completion of this tour in 1996, he attended the Command and Control Systems School in Quantico, Va. He was then assigned duties as the battalion S-4 officer with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines in Kaneohe, HI. In this capacity as well as the commanding officer, Echo Company, he deployed to Okinawa as part of the Unit Deployment Program in 1997. He returned to Okinawa in 1999 on another Unit Deployment Program rotation and was selected to be the ground combat element commander for Landing Force Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training aboard the USS Frederick.

Following his selection to Major, Col. Merna was transferred to the Amphibious Warfare School in Quantico, Va. to serve on the staff as a faculty advisor. Upon completion of this 3 year tour, he was selected to attend the Marine Corps Command and Staff College from 2003-2004 earning a Master's Degree in Military Studies.

Col. Merna assumed duties in G-3 plans and G-3 current operations for 1st Marine Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004-2005. He was subsequently assigned duties as the operations officer for 1st Marine Regiment from 2005-2006. Colonel Merna was then selected as the commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, serving from February 2006 through June 2008. During this tour, the battalion twice formed into a Battalion Landing Team and deployed as an element of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (2006) and the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (2008). From 2008-2009, Col. Merna attended the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. where he received a Master's Degree in Strategic Studies. He then served in the J7/9 training division with U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Fla., from 2009-2011. From July 2011 through May 2012, Col. Merna was assigned as the G-4 assistant chief of staff, 2nd Marine Division in Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Col. Merna assumed command of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit on June 1, 2012.



Sgt. James E. Merna



2nd Class Petty Officer Bob Merna

**C16 THE PRINCE GEORGE'S JOURNAL
THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 1987**

IN THE MILITARY



Merna

Officer and a graduate

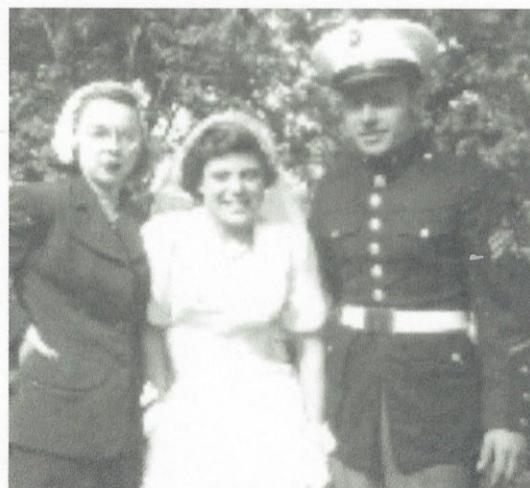
Ensign James Faulk Merna, U.S. Navy Journal, June 11, 1987

James F. Merna, son of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Merna of Lanham, graduated with merit from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis and was commissioned as an ensign.

Merna is a 1982 graduate of the science and technology program at Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Greenbelt. He was a member of the football and wrestling teams and was president of the sophomore class.

The former Eagle Scout finished among the top 10 percent of his class at the Naval Academy, from which received a bachelor's degree in ocean engineering. He is also a 1983 graduate of the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, R.I.

The ensign will undergo additional training in nuclear engineering before joining the fleet.



Dot. Vivian, Jerry, St. Dominic's May 1951

Bio of Colonel John E. Merna (Son of Jim & Sue)

John retired from the Corps on July 1, 2015

**It's your birthday.
Do something crazy.**

*Have a nice day and
many more.*

*April Fools Day
With Love,*

Mother and George

To Gerald,

April 1st

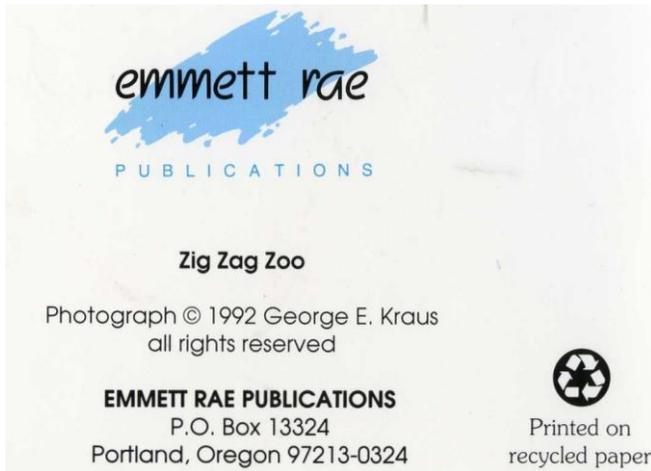
Dear Gerry and Dottie,
A few lines to say hello and
hope all's well. We two are
O.K.

I just want to say, that this
is one of Geo. Jr's Cards. He is in
the Card business.

About four yrs. ago, when he
went to Europe. He visited all
different countries. He was there
three months. And took slides

of things he thought was important
Then when he came back to U.S.A.
He had them made into Greeting
Cards. He and his wife Sarah work
together, and have agents all over
the world selling them. In N. of
L.A., Ca. and Oregon.

On the back of the Card, it tells
what it is. He does all the Photog-
raphy. They have the franchise on it.
His middle name is Emmett and here Rae
so they put them together and have Emmette Rae



This is one (unknown date) of maybe five letters Gerald received from his Mother before she died in Portland, OR in a Nursing Home in 1998 at age 91. After being told in 1941 that she had died, causing the seven Merna Siblings to be admitted to two Convents, Jerry learned she was living in California. Then a Marine, he visited her in 1952 on his way to Korea and again in 1967 upon his return from Vietnam. Both visits were uneventful.



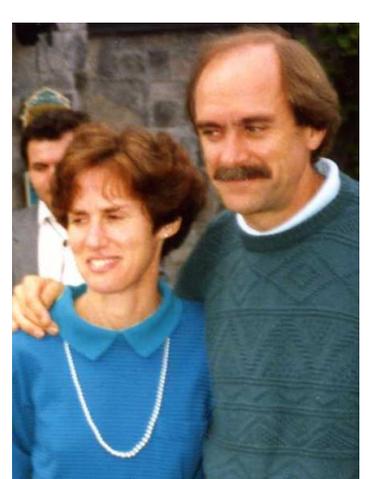
**.Unk date: Mom in
back yard**



**1961-12-25: George Jr-Karen-
Tommy Merna**



**1964: George Kraus, Jr.
with his Mom**



1993-11-00-George-Sarah

2005: MIKE MERNA & KRISTIN ZANGRILLI MARRIAGE



NEW YORK SKYLINE VIEW FROM NEW JERSEY RECEPTION SITE



HEAD TABLE AT RECEPTION



2005: L: Tyler & Dad (Matt Merna), Grandson & Son of Jim & Sue, toss rice at the wedding of Matts Brother Mike to Kristin Zangrilli. Mike & Kristin now have two beautiful young daughters. R: Bride and Groom kiss as Mike's Dad Jim (R) observes



BRIDE AND GROOM



MARINE BROTHERS JERRY AND JIM MERNA

MORE...OF MIKE & KRISTIN MERNA'S 2005 WEDDING PICTURES:



DOT MERNA LINDA MERNA FIGURA SUE AND JIM MERNA



MATT



JOHN



JIM

2
5

THREE MERNA BROTHERS, AN UNCLE AND A DAD, ENJOYING FOURTH BROTHER'S WEDDING



BROTHER JOHN UNCLE JERRY BROTHER MIKE BROTHER JIM DAD MERNA BROTHER MATT



04-21-2001-Matt Merna with Son & Jen's Aunt & Cousin at Tyler's Christening



Charlie Budoff with Sue Merna



Dot Merna with Matt & Tyler in Church, NYC



2005 Visit to Matt & Jenn Merna's NJ home. L. to R.: Linda Figura Merna, Dot Merna, Jenn And Jim Merna



Tyler Merna excels at Soccer and Acting, starring in Mary Poppins on Broadway



Tyler's Sister Reese cares for her own horse and competes in many shows



L to R: Matt Merna with his Mom Sue and 3 Dahlin's: David, Sue's Sister Jane, and Uncle David. Matt is President of ACE Financial Solutions & Chief Operating Officer of ACE Risk Management. He joined ACE USA in 2000, and has more than 15 years' experience in the insurance industry, holding various management positions in public accounting and insurance in NY and Europe



Tyler Merna, thirteen years old, is a young actor who can be heard in the hit Disney animated series “Sofia the First,” taking over the lead role of ‘Prince James.’ A dedicated young performer, Merna got his start on the stage in Community Theater and both off-Broadway and Broadway shows, shortly thereafter moving onto sketch comedy and television roles. Throughout the years, he can be seen going back to his roots, and the entertainment world is taking note, casting in him in roles where he gets to show off his singing chops. Merna caught the performance bug when he was six years old, doing local community theater in his hometown with a production of “Seussical the Musical.” He eventually convinced his parents to help him get an agent, and at the age of eight, he began to work professionally. He attracted attention from the New York theater community with performances in the off-Broadway productions of “Afterlight,” “Shine,” and “Displaced Wedding,” where he was featured in a moving performance of a family in the Holocaust. Merna caught the eye of the producer for “Mary Poppins” in which he won the title role of ‘Michael Banks.’ He joined the first national tour of the production for a year and soon after joined the Broadway production of “Mary Poppins.”

Merna made his television debut in the IFC series “Z Rock” with Joan Rivers in which he played her grandson. He continued on the hit NBC series “30 Rock” with Tina Fey and Alec Baldwin and Comedy Central’s “Inside Amy Schumer.” Most recently, Merna has embarked on his voice-over journey, taking over the role of ‘Prince James’ on the Disney animated series “Sofia the First.” Other voice-over work for Merna included independent animated films “Wrinkles” and “Savva” released in late 2014. Singing continues to be a passion for Merna as he can be heard belting out tunes throughout his young career. Most prominently, he can be heard singing in “Sofia the First” as well as “30 Rock,” showing off his singing chops in a duet with Jane Krakowski. Other stand out moments include singing the National Anthem at the Los Angeles Lakers basketball game as well as singing backup for Macy Gray at a benefit concert. Merna, a New York native, currently resides in Los Angeles while pursuing his craft full time. He is a huge fan of comedy and looks up to actors such as Jonah Hill, Seth Rogan, James Franco, and Will Ferrell for their impeccable comedic timing and breakthrough into mainstream films. He is a competitive lacrosse player, competitive soccer player, and black belt in Tae kwon do. Every year Merna donates his birthday to “Laces of Love,” a Florida based non-profit organization that provides shoes for kids who can’t afford the basic necessity, and encourages friends and family to give to the organization as a form of a birthday gift. <http://www.tylermerna.com/bio.html>



03-24-2013: Tyler Merna (C) with his only living Granduncle, Jerry Merna, (L). (Jerry is Uncle of his Dad Matt (R). The three accidentally met this day on the NJ Turnpike when Jerry was returning to VA from a visit to NYC and Matt was taking Tyler home after a soccer game



Tyler’s Sister, Reese, a 4th Grader, shares the same July 8th birthday as Jerry’s son (Gerald T.). She has won many Horseback trophies



Joe Merna, 2015 HS Graduate, will be attending Univ. of Georgia in the fall.



Parents Jim and Shannon celebrate Joe's high school graduation. Second Son, Jack is a high school junior and is taking flying lessons. Jim, a US Naval Academy (Class of 1987) graduate, is currently a Senior Attorney with United Parcel Service



Jim and Sue at Rehobeth Beach with four beautiful Granddaughters



Madelyn (6th grade) and Audrey Mae (4th grade) Daughters of John and Michelle Merna



Mike Merna Jim Faulk Merna Jim Edward Merna (Dad) Matt Merna
Four of the five "Merna Men." (Fourth Brother John was overseas as a USMC Colonel for this reunion)



“Why are they staring? I’m driving as fast as I can?”... Says Lorelei Merna (L), age 2, as her Parents Mike and Kristin (kneeling above) and Sister Annabelle, age 4, join all the other patient relatives



- ***“See, I made it, now they’re ALL laughing,” ‘they’ being 3 of the 4 Sons and family of Jim and Sue Merna!***
- ***(4th Son John, his wife Michelle and their children Madelyn and Audrey Mae did not make this reunion***



Dad Jim Merna with Son Mike and Grandsons Joe and Jack. (Mike is Head of Brand Strategy for the Oracle Data Cloud Company. Jim retired in 1989 from a successful 31-year career with a number of federal public affairs and media relations positions that included The Cost of Living Council, The Naval Supply Systems Command, Department of Energy and U.S. Patent Office. He also worked in the private sector as a contract administrator for Link Division, General Precision, Inc. in Binghamton, NY and as a government sales rep for the Ford Division, Ford Motor Co. in Washington, DC. He has a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Maryland. Sue Merna is also a graduate of the Univ. of Maryland and is a Registered Nurse.



June 1951: Dot, Aunt Jo Hickey, Tom, and Rich at Vivian's 8th Grade graduation from St. Dominic's Convent, Blauvelt, NY



Sep 15, 2007: Merna's-Hickey's at E-2-5 (Korea) Association Reunion, Charlotte, NC



Dot and Jerry Merna (R), Bridesmaid and Bridegroom for Jim & Jo Hickey Wedding, July 6, 1953⁹



Oct. 8, 1977: Dad walks Linda down the aisle at her wedding.



April 1953: Dot Merna ordered their first new car, a 1953 Bel Air Chevrolet, shortly before Jerry returned from Korea in May 1953

⁹ The Merna's and Hickey's are not only related, but are life-long friends. When Jerry was discharged from the Marine Corps in 1950 and was "courting" Dot (1950-1951) he lived briefly with Dot's parents, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Sedlack Sr., until he moved in with the Hickey Family. Aunt Jo Hickey, pictured top above, was Pop Sedlack's Sister. Her Son, Jim Hickey, above, is Dot's first Cousin, and his then fiancée Jo Triggiani were among the invited guests to Dot and Jerry's 1951 wedding. Two years later Dot and Jerry were a bridesmaid and bridegroom for the Hickey's wedding. Jo and Jim attended Dot and Jerry's 50th Anniversary in 2001 and Dot and Jerry participated in the Hickey's 50th Anniversary in 2003. (Note: Dot Merna died only a few months before her 60th Anniversary married to Jerry). As can be seen from above picture, both the Hickey and Sedlack families were also very kind and caring to Jerry's siblings, visiting them at the Convents and sharing dinners and gifts with them at their homes.



30 May 54, Dot (PG w-Linda-born Sept 30th) and Jerry at Quantico, VA Base Quarters with their pet Brandy



1956: Owensboro, KY: Pop Sedlack & daughter Dot Merna pose next to Dot & Jerry's 1953 Bel Air Chevrolet



Brothers Jerry and Jim Merna talk with 36th Marine Corps Commandant General Joseph F. Dunford, at MCA&F Awards Dinner, Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel, Crystal City, VA, May 14, 2015



(Mom) Sue Merna and (Daughter) Cathy Merna



Cathy's Gravesite, Quantico National Cemetery



James Faulk Merna¹⁰ James Edward Merna (Dad) Matthew Merna

¹⁰ James Faulk Merna, a Naval Academy Graduate and now a lawyer, was named after St. Agnes Convent's Coach James Faulk (see Faulk Tribute on last page). He and his wife Shannon have two Sons, Joe and Jack. Matt Merna is a very successful NYC businessman. Married to Jennifer, his West Virginia University classmate, they have a son, Tyler, and a daughter, Reese.



Tom with his "Big Sister" Vivian



1945: Bob visits Vivian at St. Dominic's



Aug. 13, 1966: Brothers Rich, Jim and Jerry



Dec. 1952: Dot Merna with Sister in-Law Vivian¹¹ only female Merna Sibling



Sep. 30, 1955: Dot, Jerry, Vivian's first child, Deborah Loesch, NYC



Sep. 30, 1955: Vivian & Bob Loesch with daughter Deborah



12-25-2008: Center: Sister Vivian's Daughter's Roberta Moretti and Karen Hennessy with Sons. Brothers Jerry and Jim Merna got close with Karen and Roberta when they learned they were taking care of their Brother Robert living in CA when he was very sick. Bob died in Dec. 2006, six months after Brother Richard passed away in June 2006. Jerry and Jim went to Bob's CA funeral arranged by these two Nieces. (Youngest Brother Tom, who resided in San Francisco and worked on Fisherman's Wharf, where Dot and Jerry visited him while at a Marine Reunion at the Marine's Memorial Club in San Francisco. Tom died in 2000 and his funeral was handled by Brother Bob who kept his remains. After returning from Bob's funeral we learned that Karen and Roberta placed Tom's Ashes (that had been in Bob's possession) in Bob's casket during his funeral, so the two Brothers are together again resting in a joint grave in California.

¹¹ Vivian, a Certified Nursing Assistant and resident of Sun City West, AZ, is the mother of Roberta (53), Frossene (54). Karen (56), and Deborah (60), all living in different States. Vivian competed in and won many mixed league bowling championships. Married almost 40 years, she lost her husband Al in February 2015.



2012: Sisters Karen Hennessy and Roberta Moretti



Karen



Dec. 2014: Karen with Son Johnny, San Jose



1972: Karen; Bob; Jim; Vivian; . Tom



August 1962: Vivian, Wally¹², Karen, Roberta



August 1976: Bob walks his Sister Vivian down the Aisle



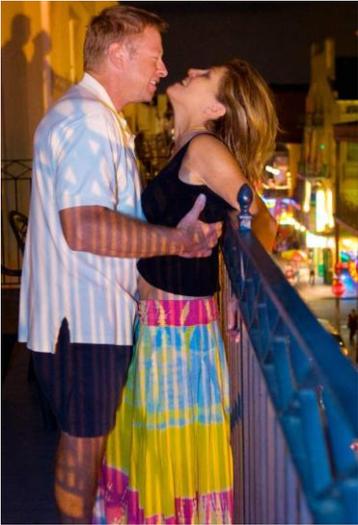
Aug. 7, 1976: Vivian & Al Rendes wedding day. Al died in 2015



2001-Vivian at Jerry's 50th Anniversary

¹² Wally Moretti, Dad of Karen and Roberta, is also a retired Marine Jerry met in 1967 on his way to Vietnam. Karen has worked in medical offices and for the Communication Power Industry, with a good amount of volunteer coordinator work in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Jerry and Lilly enjoy a glittering weekend in New Orleans



Then Jerry¹³ catches a Shark on a beach near their Bethany Beach home

¹³ Following his HS graduation and while earning an Associate College Degree in Photography, Gerald Thomas Merna joined the U.S. Postal Service as a Letter Carrier in the McLean, VA Post Office and worked himself up to Chief Photographer in charge of the USPS Photo Department in Washington and managed their photo lab. He attended and photographed many First Day of Issue stamp ceremonies, including the Korean and Vietnam War Stamps, Ronald Reagan stamp, and many other events, contributing photographs for Historical and Annual USPS Reports, Postal activities, and other publications, including photos of the damage done to the Pentagon Postal Facility after the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. He retired from the USPS with 25 years' service.

THE LATEST MERNA WEDDING ON A SUNNY DELAWARE BEACH: JULY 14, 2014



The Groom, Son Jerry Merna



...Lilly the Bride and Bridesmaid Betsy Massic



...Bride Lilly with floral piece



...Best Man Terry Poole, Groom, Officiator Charlene Beebee, Bride, Maid of Honor Betsy Massic



...And, with this Ring...I thee Wed



...and are now Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Thomas Merna of Bethany Beach, DE



Pete Shephard ¹⁴, Linda Merna Figura, Max Figura's girl friend Laura Hogler



Wedding Guests watch as Bride and Groom approach



Top: Father of the Groom (Jerry Merna), Officiator Charlene Beebe; Bottom: Peter Shephard, Boyfriend of Linda Merna Figura, (Sister of the Groom).



Mr. and Mrs. Edward & Elizabeth Burke lent their above-shown Beach home to the Bride and Groom for their exclusive use during their wedding ceremony. Ed is an attorney and a Marine Vietnam Veteran

¹⁴ Pete recently retired from a full Federal Career in Washington, D.C. and is currently employed as a Government Contractor

Serves As Policy Adviser

Postmaster Names City Man As Assistant

An Alexandria man, Gerald F. Merna, has been appointed executive assistant to U.S. Postmaster General William F. Bolger.

Merna joined the Postal Service in 1968 after serving in the United States Marines, and progressed from administrative officer in the organization's Research and Development Bureau to his present position as a top postal official and secretary to the Postal Service's Executive Committee.



GERALD F. MERNA
Former Marine Officer

MERNA ENLISTED in the Marine Corps at age 17, and over 22 years progressed through the enlisted grades to the highest rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant before becoming a commissioned officer.

At the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, Merna did marine recruitment in Rockland County until March, 1952, when he volunteered for duty in Korea, where he served 13 months with the First Marine Division.

In May, 1966, Merna was commissioned a Second Lieutenant under the Marine Corps' outstanding leadership program. He served in Vietnam with the Third Marine Division from August 1966 to September 1967, earning promotion to First Lieutenant. During this service he received his second Navy Commendation Medal with a Combat "V" and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star from the Vietnamese Government. During his military career he accumulated 18 additional decorations and awards.

Attending night classes while employed by the Postal Service, Merna earned B.S. and M.S. degrees from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

force coordinator for the Government Relations Department and a year later became national coordinator for the Postal Service's Revenue Protection Task Force.

Merna spent part of his youth at St. Dominic's Home in Blauvelt, and St. Agnes Homes in Sparkill, N.Y., and attended Tappan Zee High School in Piermont.

While living at the St. Agnes Home in Sparkill, and attending Tappan Zee High School, Merna met and later married, a classmate, Dorothy Sedlack.

FOR THE PAST year, Merna was Special Assistant to the Postmaster General. Since joining the Postal Service, he has served successively as an administrative officer, a program analyst, manager of the Compensation Records Branch, general manager of Budget and Planning, and general manager of Financial Management and Administration. In 1976, Merna was named a task

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE COMMISSION

Placing special trust and confidence in the integrity and ability of

Gerald F. Merna

I hereby appoint him

Executive Assistant to the Postmaster General
an officer of the United States Postal Service, to serve at the
pleasure of the Postmaster General, and authorize him
to execute and fulfill the duties of that office according to law.

Executed at Washington, D.C. effective December 2, 1978



W.F. Bolger
Postmaster General



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, JULY 1980: L to R, 1st Row: William F Bolger, Postmaster General; James V.P. Conway, Deputy Postmaster General; 2d Row Gerald F. Merna, Executive Assistant to Postmaster General; Francis X. Biglin SAPMG, Administration; Ken Fletcher, Chief Postal Inspector; Jim Finch, SAPMG Finance; Louis A. Cox, General Counsel; Carl C. Ulsaker, SAPMG, Employee & Labor Relations; C. Neil Benson, SAPMG, Operations; Edward E. Horgan, APMG, Government Relations; Frank M. Sommerkamp, SAPMG, Research and Technology.

(SAPMG = Senior Assistant, Postmaster General; APMG = Assistant Postmaster General)



Linda, Pete Shepherd and "Zoe"



May 10, 1999: Linda with her Mom on Mother's Day



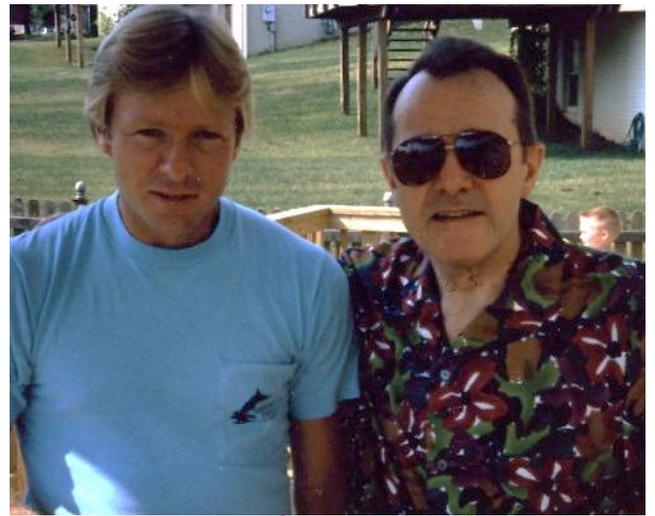
Jerry Merna received this touching, original and classic "Happy Veterans Day" greeting from his Daughter Linda Carol (Merna) Figura¹⁵ currently the Office Manager for Mr. Donald H. Rumsfeld,¹⁶ posing with his DC Office staff to extend best wishes to me and other Veteran's. (Left to Right in photo are: Remley Johnson, Melanie Passons, George Hartmann, Paige Haynes, Mr. Rumsfeld, Bianca Falcone, Linda Figura, and Sarah Conant).

¹⁵The Daughter of Gerald F. and Dorothy M. Merna, Linda graduated from George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, founded as a branch of the University of Virginia in 1957, and becoming an independent institution in 1972. Linda retired from a full government career working on Capitol Hill for William R. Archer, Jr., (R-TX) who was elected to the 92nd and to the 14 succeeding Congresses (Jan. 1971-Jan. 2001, and was chairman, Committee on Ways and Means (104th through 106th Congresses). When Archer retired Linda finished her career working for three Secretaries of Energy and for Senator George Allen, (R-VA) (the son of former NFL head coach George Allen), who had previously served as the 67th VA Governor from 1994 to 1998, and later won election to the United States Senate. Following her Federal career, Linda was hired as Office Manager for former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and is still working for him as of this writing. She is the Mother of John and Max Figura.

¹⁶Mr. Donald H. Rumsfeld served as the 13th Secretary of Defense from 1975 to 1977 under President Gerald Ford, and as the 21st Secretary of Defense from 2001 to 2006 under President George W. Bush. He is both the youngest and oldest person to have served as Secretary of Defense. In addition to other prominent positions, he was also a four-term U.S. Congressman from Illinois (1962–1969) and White House Chief of Staff (1974–1975).



Jerry Merna photographs a simulated “crime scene” for USPS Postal Inspection Service



Jul 91: Jerry on his 35th Birthday with his Dad Sterling, VA



Oct. 9, 1977-Alexandria, VA: Day after Daughter Linda Figura’s wedding. L to R: Aunt Cecile Leed, Brother Bob Merna (USN Korea), Dot and Jerry Merna, Aunt and Uncle Lucille & Edward (WWII USMC) Haiduk, Brother Jim Merna (USMC Korea), Uncle Dick Byers (USA WWII), Sister Vivian Merna Rendes, and Son Gerald Thomas Merna

Current Biography:

MERNA, GERALD FRANCIS, advertising executive, retired military officer, retired postal service officer, retired defense association executive; b. NYC, Apr. 1, 1930; s. George F. Merna and Geraldine (Byers) Kraus; m. Dorothy May Sedlack, Feb. 10, 1951 (dec. Sept. 16, 2010); children: Linda Merna Figura, Gerald Thomas. Grad., Tappan Zee HS, Piermont; BS, George Washington U., 1973, MS, 1977; postgrad., U. So. Calif., 1975, U. Va., 1983. With W-1-5, E-2-5 1st Marine divsn. USMC, Korea, 1952-53, enlisted, 1947, advanced through grades to master gunnery sgt., commd. 2d lt., 1966, promoted to 1st lt. in Vietnam, 3d marine divsn., 1966-67, ret., 1968; various positions U.S. Postal Svc., Washington, 1968-82, exec. asst. to Postmaster Gen., 1978-82; sectional ctr. mgr., postmaster US Postal Svc., Northern Va., 1982-87, ret., 1987; advt. dir. Signal mag.-Jour. Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Assn., Fairfax, Va., 1993-98; assoc. pub. Nat. Def. Mag., Arlington, Va v.p. Nat. Def. Indsl. Assn., Arlington, 1993-98; pres. Merna and Assocs., 1998-2002; mem., bd. dir. The Rep. Condos, 2013-. V.p. ops. Va. Hills Civic Assn., Alexandria, 1971-72; mem. covenants com. Cascades Comm. Assn., 1998-00, chmn., 2000-02. Mem. The Ret. Officers Assn. (life), Marine Corps League, Marine Corps Res. Officers Assn. (life), 1st Marine Divsn. Assn. (life), 3rd Marine Divsn. Assn. (life), Nat. Def. Indsl. Assn. (life), Am. Legion (life), USMC Mustang Assn., VFW, Armed Forces Comms. and Electronics Assn. (disting. life mem.), Nat. League Postmasters U.S. (v.p. 1989-92). Home: 1101 S Arlington Ridge Rd # 1007 Arlington VA 22202 Home Phone:



April 1947: Private, Boot Camp. Parris Island, SC

1950: Sgt. Quantico, VA

1952: TSgt, Korea

1967: 2nd Lt, Vietnam

Oct. 1968: 1stLt, Retired



2ndLt Second Lieutenant



1stLt First Lieutenant



Jerry served in all enlisted ranks from Private (E-1) to Master Gunnery Sergeant (E-9) before being commissioned a Mustang Second Lieutenant at Headquarters Marine Corps (1966) and promoted to First Lieutenant in Vietnam (1967) returning to Andrews Air Force Base as Adjutant and Casualty Notification Officer. He retired in October 1968. <http://www.marinecorpsmustang.org/>.

STORIES AND PICTORIALS THAT INCLUDE ADDITIONAL BACKGROIND INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SEVEN MERNA SIBLINGS AND THEIR HISTORY:

STAAA GOLDEN JUBILEE, PIERMONT, NY, AUG 21, 2004:

➡St. Agnes Alumni Association Golden Jubilee: Remarks by Gerald F. Merna at 50th Anniversary Reunion.

ST. AGNES ALUMNI ASSN. REUNION, PIERMONT, NY, AUG 21, 2004:

<http://www.stagnesalumni.org/PhotosStAgnesAlumni2004ReunionAug04GeraldFMerna.shtml>

FROM “N.Y. HOUSE’S KID” TO A “PRIEST IN THE HOUSE OF GOD” IN SAN PAOLO, BRAZIL: FR. RAY MASTERSON: MARCH 12, 2012:

<http://www.stagnesalumni.org/pdfs/FR%20RAY%20MASTERSON%20REMEMBRANCE%20BY%20GFM.pdf>

A “HOUSE’S KID” A CLASSMATE, AND A FELLOW MARINE: HUGH MC AVINUE, JANUARY 24, 2015:

<http://www.stagnesalumni.org/pdfs/McAvinueTrib-FINAL%20for%20STAA.pdf>

A TRIBUTE TO JIM FAULK (COLONEL USMCR RET) COACH OF ST. AGNES HOME AND SCHOOL FOR BOYS, AUGUST 31, 2013:

<http://www.stagnesalumni.org/pdfs/A%20TRIBUTE%20TO%20COACH%20JIM%20FAULK-V4Pictorial.pdf>

A “HOUSE’S KID,” A PATRIOT, AND a (NAVY) HERO: DONALD F. ANTONACCI: AUGUST 18, 2004:

<http://www.stagnesalumni.org/StoriesDonaldFAntonacci.shtml>

JERRY MERNA: MARINE CORPS RECRUITER IN NYACK, NY 1950-52: PAGE 2, JANUARY 2007:

<http://www.nyackhistory.org/HSNnewsletterJan07.pdf>

DISTINGUISHED MARINES STAMPS DEDICATION, MARINE BARRACKS, WASHINGTON, D.C., NOVEMBER 10, 2005:

<http://www.stagnesalumni.org/PhotosMarineStampsDedicationCeremony.shtml>

MILITARY AWARDS: EARNED OR NOT, WAS THE CRITERIA MET? FakeWarriors.com |February 05, 2004 | FEBRUARY 2, 2007: A Marine Division Awards Officer who regularly visited front-line units in combat in Vietnam, gives his views on whether or not personal awards criteria is being met.. An authoritative and respected article with examples, definitions and references that also drew comments and opinions about the 2004 presidential election.

<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1073633/posts>

A GREAT MARINE CORPS GENERAL DIED IN VIETNAM: MGEN BRUNO HOCHMUTH:

<http://www.stagnesalumni.org/photos/GenHochmuth/StoriesGenHochmuth.pdf>

NEWS FLASH: JUST BEFORE THIS PICTORIAL WAS COMPLETED, JERRY GOT AN EMAIL FROM DAUGHTER LINDA THE SUBJECT OF WHICH READ, “GUESS WHOSE FINGER THIS IS?” IT WAS HER NOVEL WAY TO ANNOUNCE SHE BECAME ENGAGED TO PETER SHEPHERD, HER DEAR AND CLOSE FRIEND OF SEVERAL YEARS. THE PICTURE ATTACHED REVEALED A BEAUTIFUL ENGAGEMENT RING ON HER FINGER, WHICH INCLUDES DIAMONDS FROM HER MOTHER’S AND GRANDMOTHER’S WEDDING RINGS. WOW!!! CAN’T WAIT FOR THAT WEDDING.

