

# WE LOST A WONDERFUL LEADER...

By Gerald F. Merna



February 16, 1932 – December 10, 2006

**Lieutenant General Lawrence F. Skibbie, U.S. Army (Retired)**

**President, National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA)**

(Photo credit U.S. Army: Atlanta XVII Conference, FORSCOM, Fort McPherson, GA 25Apr91)





**21 January 2007**

**Mrs. Nancy Skibbie  
2309 S. Queen Street  
Arlington, VA 22202-1550**

**Dear Nancy:**

**Once again, Dot and I want to extend our deepest sympathy to you and your wonderful family over the loss of your beloved Larry. You continue to be in our thoughts and prayers.**

**Larry's Mass and interment at Arlington National Cemetery was among the most inspiring funerals I have witnessed, and believe me, I have been to many (including my tour as a Casualty Notification Officer upon my return from Vietnam). While it was cold, the weather was otherwise crisp and bright, and in some small way contributed to the meaning and solemnity of that sad occasion.**

**When I spoke briefly with you at the Army-Navy Club reception you held to bring together family and friends who attended the funeral, I mentioned I had taken pictures and would be sending them to you.**

**Please accept the enclosed "booklet" summarizing that day. It is my hope that when you browse through it over the years you will be reminded of just how much respect so many of us had, and will always have, for this distinguished American, Soldier and Leader you and your family loved so much**

**Nancy, I use the term "Leader" meaningfully and intentionally. Some time ago someone sent me an (unknown persons) version of the difference between a "Manager" and a "Leader." When I read it, I immediately thought of Larry Skibbie and I put a copy of that in my "Larry Skibbie files," which I went through before writing this note. Rather than include it here, I will attach it. When you find time to read it, know that many of us, in and out of the Army, NDIA and elsewhere, fully believe this describes your husband, Lt.Gen. Larry Skibbie.**

**In the attached "booklet "are a few other items about Larry that are symbolic of just a few of the "interactions" we had that meant so much to me in my daily dealings with this wonderful man and leader. They show how he respected and responded to those around him on a daily basis, making each individual feel they were really special and important to him, and we felt that and knew that we were! He was just fantastic to be around, and I will forever be grateful for the time I was fortunate to share with him.**

The reason I was among the last to arrive at your well-attended and most generous reception at the Army and Navy Club was because after the services at Larry's gravesite I went to visit the gravesite of my oldest brother George in Arlington's "Memorial Section I." George was killed at age 19 in the South Pacific during WWII while serving in the Navy aboard the LST-577 which was torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine and his remains were never recovered. Because his Section looked so beautiful I took some pictures and have included a few at the end of Larry's booklet. When the landscaping is completed, and his Headstone installed, Larry's gravesite will be equally beautiful as you return to visit him.

Both Larry and George are in great company, together with all their Brothers and Sisters in Arms and their families, in this most hallowed cemetery. At the reception I told several people, including one of your Son's, that "I lost three younger brothers in 2006, and Larry Skibbie was one of them; Rich Merna died on July 4<sup>th</sup> and was buried at the Quantico National Cemetery on July 11<sup>th</sup>; Bob Merna died on Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> and we buried him in the San Joaquin National Cemetery in Gustine, CA on December 29<sup>th</sup>; and Larry Skibbie left us on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> and was buried on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007. (Since Bob and Rich never married, brother Jim and I and other family members made sure they had proper burials. Of six brothers, Jim, 74, and I, 76, are the only two remaining. If George had lived he would have been 80).

This is truly how I felt about this man who personally hired me at ADPA before it became NDIA and with whom I was privileged to work *with* (never *for*) for over eight years (including three as a Consultant) before fully retiring. Larry was one of the very few true "Leaders" I knew during three careers that spanned almost 55 years.

Both Carole (Pammer) Hamric—and her beautiful Emily—and Vin McDonald, were not only at Larry's funeral, but both (and Emily) came to the Maryland funeral home for brother Rich's service last July. While I love to see them, I hope our next meeting is not at another funeral!

We will never forget the grand retirement party you and Larry held for Dot and I at your home when I retired from NDIA in 1998. You also both attended our 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Celebration in 2001, and invited us to yours two short years later. These are wonderful memories we will treasure for the rest of our lives.

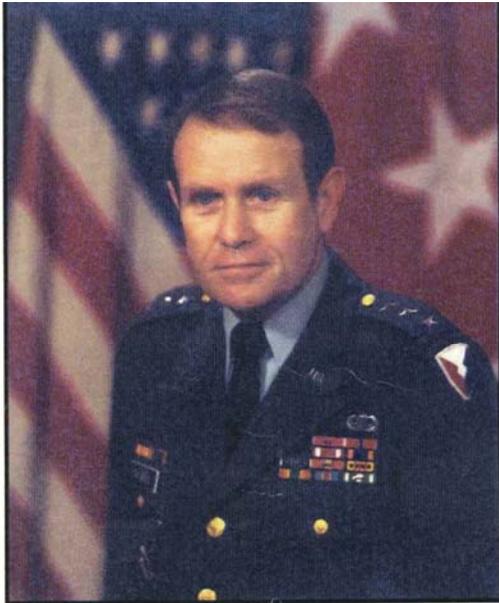
Dot and I send our love to you and your families with the wish that you find peace knowing that Larry is indeed in a much better place, among so many of our Nation's heroes, waiting for us to one day join him.

Sincerely,

Jerry Merna

PS I made the enclosed CD of the full size pictures I took, and included some of the items mentioned, in the event any member of your family would like to make a copy.

## Lieutenant General Lawrence Franklin Skibbie, United States Army (Retired) 1932 – 2006



**LAWRENCE FRANKLIN SKIBBIE**  
 LIEUTENANT GENERAL, U.S. ARMY, RETIRED  
 FEBRUARY 16, 1932 – DECEMBER 10, 2006



LAWRENCE FRANKLIN SKIBBIE, RETIRED ARMY LIEUTENANT GENERAL AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION, DIED AT HIS HOME IN ARLINGTON DUE TO COMPLICATIONS OF CANCER TREATMENT. A 33-YEAR ARMY VETERAN, RECOGNIZED DEFENSE INDUSTRY LEADER AND SUPPORTER OF MILITARY FAMILIES, GENERAL SKIBBIE WAS BORN IN BOWLING GREEN, OHIO.

HE GRADUATED IN 1954 FROM THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT WITH A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE AS A SECOND LIEUTENANT IN THE U.S. ARMY. HE HELD A MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING FROM THE NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY. HIS MILITARY EDUCATION INCLUDED COMPLETION OF THE ARTILLERY SCHOOL, THE ORDNANCE SCHOOL, THE COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE, AND THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES.

DURING HIS 33 YEARS OF ARMY SERVICE, SKIBBIE HELD A VARIETY OF COMMAND AND STAFF POSITIONS CULMINATING IN HIS FINAL ASSIGNMENT AS DEPUTY COMMANDER FOR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION OF THE ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND. HE WAS ALSO DEPUTY COMMANDER FOR READINESS OF THE SAME ORGANIZATION - THE ONLY OFFICER IN THE HISTORY OF THE ARMY MATERIEL COMMAND TO HOLD THESE TWO POSITIONS. OTHER KEY ASSIGNMENTS INCLUDED COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS COMMAND; APPROPRIATIONS DIRECTOR ON THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY STAFF; COMMANDER OF THE ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL; COMMANDER OF THE 63RD MAINTENANCE BATTALION IN VIETNAM; AS WELL AS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ORDNANCE ENGINEERING AT WEST POINT.

AFTER HIS RETIREMENT FROM ACTIVE DUTY, SKIBBIE WAS APPOINTED PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE AMERICAN DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS ASSOCIATION. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, GENERAL SKIBBIE RE-ORIENTED THE ASSOCIATION TO ITS HISTORIC ROOTS AS A PROponent OF A STRONG DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE. AS A RESULT OF A MERGER WITH ANOTHER DEFENSE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, ADPA BECAME THE NATIONAL DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION IN 1997. IN HIS CONTINUED ROLE AS PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SKIBBIE COMMITTED TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE DEFENSE ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY AND ESTABLISHING NDIA AS THE PREEMINENT DEFENSE ASSOCIATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

GENERAL SKIBBIE WAS A FREQUENT WITNESS BEFORE BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL BASE. HE SERVED ON THE BOARDS OF SERCO INC., CODAR TECHNOLOGY COMPANY, CONTRAVES USA, UNITED WAY, BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTER, AND THE EASTER SEAL SOCIETY. HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

GENERAL SKIBBIE'S MILITARY AWARDS AND DECORATIONS INCLUDE THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL, THE LEGION OF MERIT (WITH OAK LEAF CLUSTER), THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL, THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL (WITH THREE OAK LEAF CLUSTERS), THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ORDER OF NATIONAL SECURITY MERIT MEDAL, THE PARACHUTISTS BADGE AND THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF BADGE. HE WAS ELECTED TO THE UNITED STATES ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS HALL OF FAME IN 1992.

SKIBBIE WAS A PARISHIONER OF BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ALEXANDRIA. HE WAS AN AVID GARDENER AND TENNIS PLAYER. HE IS SURVIVED BY HIS WIFE OF 52 YEARS, THE FORMER NANCY JOAN MILLER. THEIR CHILDREN ARE DANA BEST OF WHEATON, MARYLAND; MICHAEL SKIBBIE AND HIS WIFE JUNE ADINAH, OF HOPKINTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE; DAVID SKIBBIE AND HIS WIFE KATHARINE MEADOWS, OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND; AND MARK SKIBBIE AND HIS WIFE KELLY SKIBBIE, OF BETHESDA, MARYLAND. HIS 6 GRANDCHILDREN ARE ANYA, ZÖE, KÖRE, LARA, ANDREW AND GRACE. SKIBBIE IS ALSO SURVIVED BY HIS BROTHER, E. KENT SKIBBIE, OF OREGON CITY, OREGON.

*“A Celebration of Life” Mass of the Resurrection Program from the Skibbie Family*



**Army Honor Escort Forms in front of Old Chapel**

**U.S. Army Color Guard follows Honor Guard**

(Photos and captions by Gerald F. Merna)



**Riderless Horse with 3 stars of a Lieutenant General**



**Caisson approaches entrance to Old Post Chapel**



**Hearse bringing Gen. Skibbie's remains to Chapel**



**Military Caisson**



**Military Escort and 3-star Flag at Old Post Chapel**



**Old Post Chapel, Fort Myer, Virginia**



**Honorary Pallbearers assume their positions in front of the Old Post Chapel at Fort Myer**

GENERAL JACK N. MERRITT, USA, RET.

GENERAL LOUIS C. WAGNER, USA, RET.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DONALD M. BABERS, USA, RET.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DALE A. VESSER, USA, RET.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JERRY MAX BUNYARD, USA, RET.

MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM E. EICHER, USA, RET.

MAJOR GENERAL JAMES L. MCINERNEY, USAF, RET.

BRIGADIER GENERAL PHILLIP H. MASON, USA, RET.

COLONEL LEONARD REED, USA, RET.

COLONEL BRON P. PROKUSKI, USAF, RET.



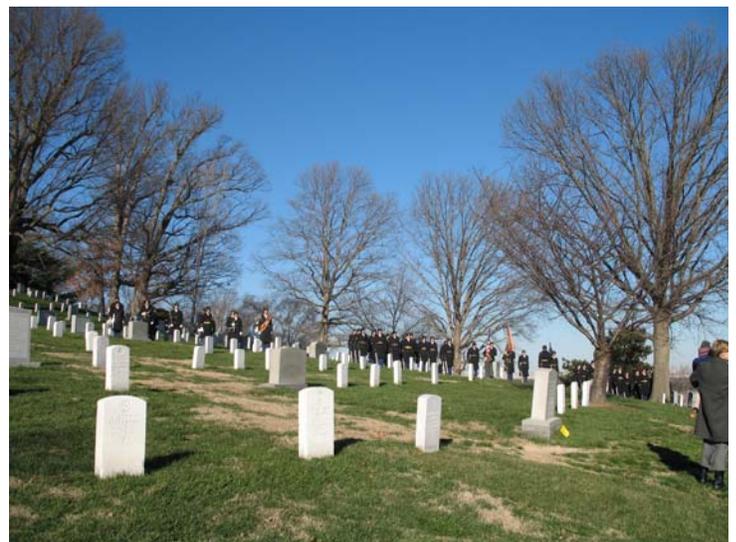
**United States Army Pallbearers carry casket from Old Post Chapel to place aboard the Caisson  
Mrs. Nancy Skibbie and Family observe the honors**



**Lt.Gen. Skibbie's casket on board the Caisson**



**U.S. Army Band leads Caisson, Honor Guard Platoon and Family and Friends Entering Cemetery**



**Riderless Horse behind three-star General Officer Flag**

**U.S. Army Band and Honor Guard on hill at gravesite**



**Hill overlooking Lt.Gen. Skibbie's Gravesite**



**Family and friends gather for final salute**



**C: Mrs. Skibbie (purple scarf); family members;  
R: (Standing) Rev. Fr. John C. Cregan**



**Honor Guard folds flag to present to Mrs. Skibbie**



**Honorary Pallbearers and friends pay respects to Mrs. Nancy Skibbie and family of Lt. Gen. Skibbie**





**Rev. Fr. John C. Cregan leads prayers on behalf of Lt.Gen. Skibbie, his family, friends and associates.**



## LEADERSHIP VERSUS MANAGEMENT

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
"MANAGING" AND "LEADING."

- MANAGERS *PUSH* THEIR PEOPLE. LEADERS *PULL* THEIRS' BY SHEER FORCE OF PERSONAL EXAMPLE.
- MANAGERS *ORDER* THEIR PERSONNEL TO GET THE JOB DONE. LEADERS *INSPIRE* THEIR PERSONNEL TO GET THE JOB DONE.
- MANAGERS BUILD A *FIRE UNDER YOUR BUTT*. LEADERS BUILD A *FIRE IN YOUR BELLY*.
- HANDS ON* MANAGERS CULTIVATE OBEDIENCE. *HANDS OFF* LEADERS CULTIVATE INDEPENDENCE AND RESOURCEFULNESS.
- MANAGERS CONSIDER THEMSELVES *PART OF AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB*. LEADERS *MAINTAIN THE RESPECT AND FELLOWSHIP* OF THE RANK AND FILE.
- MANAGERS *ACCEPT CREDIT* FOR THE SUCCESS OF THEIR SUBORDINATES. LEADERS *TURN AWAY FROM THE SPOTLIGHT*, LETTING IT SHINE UPON THOSE THEY HAVE THE HONOR TO LEAD.
- WHEN A PROJECT TURNS SOUR, THE MANAGER ASKS, "WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?" LEADERS SAY "I AM."
- YOU WORK *OVERTIME* FOR A MANAGER; YOU WORK *ALL THE TIME* FOR A LEADER.
- MANAGERS NEED TO CONSTANTLY MAKE THEIR PRESENCE KNOWN. LEADERS *INSPIRE FROM AFAR-EVEN FROM THE GRAVE*.

(THE SOURCE OF THIS WRITING IS UNKNOWN, BUT IT IS HEREWITH DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF A *LEADER* I WAS PRIVILEGED TO HAVE KNOWN, LT. GEN. LAWRENCE F. SKIBBIE, U.S. ARMY RETIRED, 1932 - 2006).

GERALD F. MERNA  
1STLT, U.S. MARINE CORPS (RETIRED)

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Lt. Gen. Lawrence F. Skibbie, USA (Ret.), president emeritus, National Defense Industrial Association**

**L**t. Gen. Lawrence F. Skibbie, U.S. Army ret., president emeritus of the National Defense Industrial Association, died December 10 following a long illness.

Gen. Skibbie was appointed president and chief executive officer of the National Defense Industrial Association at its founding March 1, 1997.

NDIA is the result of a merger between the American Defense Preparedness Association, which Gen. Skibbie headed, and the National Security Industrial Association. The amalgamation of these two defense industry associations was largely due to Gen. Skibbie's efforts.

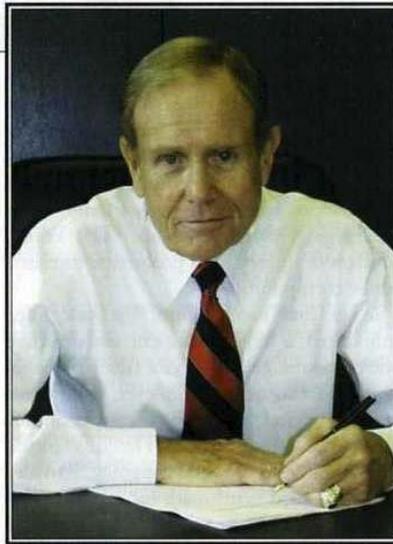
Since his retirement from NDIA in September 2001, he had served as volunteer vice president of the National Military Family Association, which advocates for military families.

In his capacity as ADPA president, Gen. Skibbie re-oriented the association to its historic roots as the proponent of a strong defense industrial base. Through his leadership, ADPA became known as the "Voice of the Industrial Base." As president of NDIA, he committed to consolidating the defense association community and establishing NDIA as the preeminent defense association.

At his retirement NDIA had three affiliated associations as its partners: the National Training Systems Association, the Association for Enterprise Integration and Women in Defense.

In his honor, the National Defense Industrial Association in 2001 created the Lawrence F. Skibbie Graduate Student Scholarship, which awards up to \$10,000 to one or more advanced graduate students in engineering, science or management. So far, at least 10 students have received scholarships.

Gen. Skibbie lectured at the Financial Post Conference of Canada, the Mitre Acquisi-



tion Conference, the Brookings Institution, the Defense Systems Management College, the Virginia Defense Conversion Commission and the U.S. Army War College. He also was a frequent witness before both houses of Congress on matters pertaining to the defense industrial base.

Gen. Skibbie served on the boards of Codar Technology Company, Contraves USA, United Way, Boy Scouts of America, National Science Center and the Easter Seal Society. He was an associate of the NSC Global Policy Council, The Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs, served on the board of SERCO Inc., and was a long-time member of the Army-Navy Club.

He was born in Bowling Green, Ohio, February 16, 1932, and graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. in 1954 as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He received a Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from New Mexico State University. His military education included the Artillery School, Ordnance School, Command and General Staff College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

During his 33 years of Army service, Gen. Skibbie held a variety of command and staff positions which culminated in his final assignment as deputy commander for research, development and acquisition of the Army Materiel Command. He was also deputy commander for readiness of the same organization — the only official in the history of the Army Materiel Command to hold these two disparate positions.

Other key assignments included commanding general of the Army Communications and Electronics Command, appropriations director on the Department of the Army staff, commander

of the Rock Island Arsenal — a manufacturing facility engaged in production of gun mounts and recoil mechanisms, commander of the 63rd Maintenance Battalion in Vietnam, as well as associate professor of ordnance engineering at West Point.

Among the awards and decorations bestowed on Gen. Skibbie were the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (with three Oak Leaf Clusters), Parachutist Badge, Republic of Korea Order of National Security Merit and the Army General Staff Identification Badge.

He was a 1992 selectee to the Ordnance Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his spouse, Nancy J. Miller, and their four children, Dr. Dana Best, Michael Skibbie, Esq., Dr. David Skibbie, and Mark Skibbie.

Gen. Skibbie will be buried on January 17, 2007, at Arlington National Cemetery.

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**From:** Larry Skibbie [ADPA/ADPA/LSKIBBIE]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 1996 6:00 PM  
**To:** Jerry Merna  
**Subject:** Thoughts

Jerry- Just returned from BCD and want to say how much I appreciate your interest and involvement in our Association!!! Your examples of synergism were really great; your suggestions on my briefing were equally good. Please understand that sometimes I can't accept all the changes or the suggestions, because of some other reason rather than the instant subject. Anyway, I KNOW I made the right decision when I chose you for our team. Thank you for all the heart you give to ADPA and everything else in which I've seen you involved.

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**From:** Larry Skibbie [ADPA/ADPA/LSKIBBIE]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 13, 1996 10:22 AM  
**To:** ALL ADPA  
**Subject:** ADPA Accolades

Yesterday I was at a meeting at which I was introduced to a representative of the Hazardous Waste Action Coalition (HWAC) --- another association. The person who introduced me expounded about how ADPA was run like a business, had an outstanding staff who were responsive, innovative and creative. Another of our corporate members who was listening then added that the ADPA staff was head and shoulders above other association staffs. They then proceeded to discuss how we don't depend on member dues to sustain ourselves, work hard for our members, and how we are driven by market forces, that is, responsive to our customer base.

I wanted you all to know about this compliment because it is typical of the type of comment I receive quite frequently. But these compliments are really meant for all of you because it is only that you all pull together as a team that we can have such a reputation.

One lesson from this incident should be that to the degree that any of us succeed, all of us succeed ..... of course the converse to that is also true.

Thank you for all your efforts that allow me to hear plaudits like this.

**From:** Jerry Merna  
**Sent:** Monday, March 10, 1997 12:09 PM  
**To:** Larry Skibbie  
**Subject:** Marine Corps University Foundation Semper Fidelis Award Dinner

Larry:

March 8th I attended the subject awards dinner at the Sheraton Premier in Tysons Corner. What a delightful evening.

The Quantico Marine Band was there as Gen. Krulak, after an emotional background introduction of the individual's military/naval background and the "unspeakable conditions, inhuman treatment, and unprecedented physical and mental torture" he experienced at the hands of his North Vietnamese captors for five and a half years, presented the Semper Fidelis award to Senator John McCain. Senator McCain made an outstanding acceptance speech, particularly on the subject of honor and integrity.



**Commandant Gen. Krulak**  
 (USMC Photo)



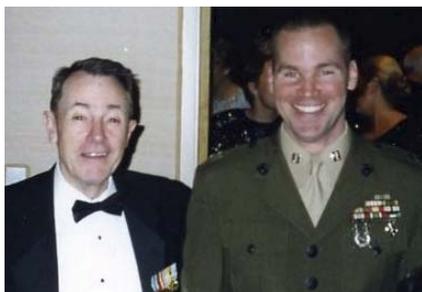
**Quantico Band and Presenters**  
 (G.F. Merna Photo)



**Sen John McCain 1997**  
 (Stock Photo)

Of particular interest to you was my chat with Tom Rabaut, CEO of United Defense (his company bought 3 tables). He wanted to know how the merger was going, etc., and I gave him an upbeat update of the off-site, how pleased we all are and the job you're doing making it all happen. He was pleased, and mentioned he was looking forward to continuing with us on the "new" ADPA/NSIA Board. Also, when chatting with Gen. Mundy, now the Chairman of the MCFUF Trustees, he mentioned he was recently with Gen. Richards, and I also mentioned to Mundy how the transition was going so well—he was pleased to hear that—and said he would pass it along to Richards.

A very pleasant surprise for Dot and me was when, as part of the evenings program, they presented a "Faces of the Marine Corps University" where about 10 individuals from Sgt. to LtCol came on stage as "individual Marines to tell their name, age, years of service and what they were learning at the "University" (what we use to call "Marine Corps Schools"). Then they formed together as the "teams" of Squad, Platoon, Company and Battalion where it all came together. Our surprise was hearing the Marine Captain introduce himself as "My name is Captain John Merna, age 30, and I've been a Marine for 6 years" and then going on to explain what he learned at Quantico for the past several months (he leaves in May to go back to the Fleet Marine Force). We had no idea we'd even see my brother Jim's son that evening, (Jim served with me in Korea), never mind his being part of the program! Mike Maloney, (LtCol USMC (Ret.), the Executive Director, who was at our table, as a further surprise, had also seated him and his young lady friend at our table!



**Jerry and Nephew Capt. John Merna**



**Linda Merna Figura & Parents w-MCUF SgtMaj and Wife**



**Dot and Jerry Merna**

Marine Corps University Foundation *Semper Fidelis* Award Dinner, 10 March 1997 (Photos by Gerald F. Merna)

So thanks, Larry, for the privilege of representing ADPA/NSIA at this great event. Last years was also fantastic, when Sen. Sam Nunn got their award.

P.S. Tom Rabaut told me after reading your letter he instructed his guy to take out an ad in our May/June issue! Told me to call Bill Hightower if I don't hear from him! So your letters are working—first Aerojet, now United Defense!

(Note: Gen. Skibbie asked Dot and Jerry to attend and officially represent ADPA/NSIA at this dinner. We were able to obtain an additional ticket for our daughter Linda).

**From:** Jerry Merna  
**Sent:** Friday, November 07, 1997 12:47 PM  
**To:** ALL NDIA  
**Subject:** 222nd USMC Birthday

Just a reminder about 2:00pm Monday in glass conf. rm.---great cake!

Thanks to those of you who have submitted background info so far on family/friends of USMC. Still open to receive more---want to recognize all possible. Thanks.

### NDIA Staff celebrate USMC Birthday



LtGen. Larry Skibbie cuts cake: BGen McKay, Maj Hylan and Lt Merna



McKay presents 1<sup>st</sup> slice to Merna, oldest Marine present



MajGen. Paul Greenberg gives remarks: BGen McKay, LtGen Skibbie listen



1stLt Merna makes remarks: BGen McKay, LtGen Skibbie



Maj. Fred Lash reads Commandants' birthday message: Zoila, MGen Jim McInerney, Alfie Orrego, and ND Mag Editor Sandra Erwin



Marine Fred Jones remarks: MGen. Paul Greenberg, BGen Jerry McKay stand-by

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**From:** Larry Skibbie  
**Sent:** Friday, November 07, 1997 1:07 PM  
**To:** Jerry Merna  
**Subject:** RE: 222nd USMC Birthday

Mr brother-in-law is Jim Miller. He entered the Marines in 1942 as a young 18 year old; he fought thru the Western Pacific island hopping campaigns and finally Okinawa. He was seriously wounded on Okinawa on the next to the last day of the battle. He lost part of his lung and, to this day, continues to find pieces of the wooden bullet that hit him in his skin.

**From:** Jerry Merna  
**Sent:** Friday, November 07, 1997 2:05 PM  
**To:** Larry Skibbie  
**Subject:** RE: 222nd USMC Birthday

Thanks, Larry. No wonder you tolerate all of Marines! You have every right to be very proud of Jim. I'm getting some interesting stories...stay tuned for Monday.

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Date: Tue, 21 Jul 1998 17:27:02 -0400  
From: Larry Skibbie <lskibbie@ndia.org>  
To: Jerry Merna <gmerna@erols.com>

Jerry: Sorry to be late in getting to you to extend my sincere congratulations for the job you did on July-August: \$135,000! Outstanding!!! Mega-Directory has gone up every year under your leadership and hard work. Thank you!!!

As you probably know, Dino was in here this afternoon re BPA audit results, and as you might expect with a letter from Jo. Good start: Jerry McKay is going to see why the membership numbers don't jibe with the magazine; Dino is going to sample a recent meeting to see if we're capturing member company employees as "nominees". If our policy on nominees is being executed then circulation should be going up rather than down. We'll see.

Cheers! Hello to Dot.

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**National Training Systems Association Executive Director John Disher, USN (Ret.),  
Retires from NDIA (NTSA is an affiliate of NDIA) November 30, 1995**



**L - R: Retiring NTSA Exec. Dir. VAdm. Disher, ND Magazine Editor Bob Williams, VP Finance Vin McDonald, NDIA President LtGen. Larry Skibbie, VP Technical Services MajGen Bill Eicher, VP Membership & Chapters MajGen Jim McInerney Jr., Incoming NTSA Exec. Dir. VAdm Fred Lewis, VP Legislative Affairs Pete Scrivner**

(Photo by VP Public Affairs/Associate Editor Gerald F. Merna)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Gerald F. Merna [SMTP:gmerna@erols.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 31, 1999 1:38 AM  
**To:** Flanagan, Molly NDIA  
**Cc:** McInerney Jr., James E. NDIA; Skibbie, Lawrence F. LtGen, USA (Ret.); McKay, G. BGen USMC (Ret.); Erwin, Sandra ND EDITOR; Lewis, Fred NTSA  
**Subject:** Adm. Blandy Award Report

Mission Accomplished! Again this year I had the privilege of presenting NDIA's prestigious Admiral W.H.P. Blandy Award to the most proficient midshipman of his graduating class in all aspects of systems engineering.

1999's awardee, Midshipman First Class (now Ensign, U. S. Navy) Andrew Clay Grubler of Tucson, AZ, is a "multi-winner." In addition to earning NDIA's Adm. W. H.P. Blandy Award, he was one of only 20 members of the graduating class to be selected a "Secretary of the Navy Distinguished Midshipmen Graduate." He also won the Draper Fellowship in Aeronautics and Astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In addition, he won the Mac Short Award, presented in memory of Mac Short, who was president of Lockheed Aircraft Company (one of NDIA's corporate sponsors) and designed aircraft used by the U.S. Navy during World War II, to that midshipman of the graduating class who stands highest in Order of Merit among those who have chosen Aviation as their duty selection. Our awardee is going to be a Navy Jet Pilot!

So as you can see, "our" winner is an all-round champion! We should be sure to note all this in National DEFENSE. A picture was taken of the NDIA presentation, and as soon as I receive it, I will send it to you so you can give it to Sandra Meadows. I'll also write a caption for it, along the lines of what I've said here.

I met Midshipman First Class Grubler's Mom and Dad at a small reception after the awards ceremony. Two very nice folks. Suzie Grubler is a Certified Dive Instructor in Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii. How about that!

Aside to Jerry McKay: At lunch at the USNA Officer's Club I met an old friend of yours, in fact, he bought my sandwich! Colonel USMC (Ret.) Jack Garcia, currently the President and CEO of Goodwill Industries in San Francisco. When I mentioned the Marines Memorial Club on Sutter Street, my favorite place in San Francisco, he told me he is Chairman of the Board of the Club! Jack's son, Midshipman First Class John Thomas Garcia also graduated, and was one of 45 graduates who received a Letter of Commendation from the Secretary of the Navy. Of course, he's going to be a MARINE!

Thought Larry Skibbie and Fred Lewis would enjoy this report also. Larry, of course there were some great ARMY graduates in this class too. Just as I'm certain West Point's Class of '99 gave the Corps "a few good men"!

Very best regards to all. Jerry Merna

---

Thanks for AdmBlandyPresent-6-1-99.txt

**Subject:** RE: Adm. Blandy Award Report  
**Date:** Tue, 1 Jun 1999 10:28:26 -0400  
**From:** Larry Skibbie <lskibbie@ndia.org>  
**To:** "'Gerald F. Merna'" <gmerna@erols.com>

Jerry: Thanks for representing us. Sorry its such a drag --- but, somebody has to do it.

As I read your report, I was again impressed with your enthusiasm and, what's the term, joie d vivre? Not even sure of the spelling, but you've got it! Thanks Jerry --- for a lot of things, but this time for just your message.



-----Original Message-----

From: Jerry Merna  
Sent: Tuesday, May 23, 2000 12:17 AM  
To: Larry Skibbie  
Subject: RE: Vietnam Veterans Stamp

Thanks, Larry. Like you and Nancy, Dot and I also have very good genes! Of course Dot's are much better than mine!

We are very proud of both youngsters. Linda, a great single Mom with two teen-age sons, has been with Bill Archer almost 25 years, and Jerry is Chief Photographer (and runs the photo lab at USPS HQ) for about 18 years. We've got to find a good man for her! Archer is retiring this year, and Linda will do alright. When GW Jr. calls Archer (who took GW SR.s seat), he asks for Linda! (How will Linda ever explain I'm a Democrat?). Incidentally, Chuck Hage1 made a great impression on me, and we have been sending notes back and forth. He also used that photo in his Nebraska Newsletter!

went to Annapolis today and presented the Blandy Award for the 3rd straight year. What an honor. And NDIA picked another winner this year, the youngster will be a Naval Jet Pilot and won FOUR awards. His Mom and Dad were really nice, Dad's a CPA over in Frederick County. I'm writing it up for ND and waiting on the photo from USNA. The escort they gave me was a Marine Major who was a USNA classmate of brother Jim's son, class of 1987. Saw Dino Sunday and took 20 copies of the last two Navy issues (New Carrier and New Virginia Class Sub) with me, including free subscription blanks, and distributed them in key places around the Academy.

Hope you are both well.

LS RE Linda Figura--5-23-00

/O=ADPANSIA/OU=ARLINGTON/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=GMERNA

From: ~~Larry Skibbie~~  
Sent: Tuesday, May 23, 2000 8:39 AM  
To: Jerry Merna  
Subject: RE: Vietnam Veterans Stamp

If you'd convert (to Republican) then Linda would not have any explaining to do. She sounds like a beautiful person and doing well with her life. Thanks for your usual stellar efforts at USNA. Regards, Larry

---

Skibbie Retirement Announcement 2-7-01

Subject: FW: Announcement  
Date: Sat, 28 Apr 2001 01:11:14 -0400  
From: Jerry Merna <gmerna@ndia.org>  
To: "'gmerna@erols.com'" <gmerna@erols.com>

L Skibbie's email of 2/7/01

-----Original Message-----

From: Larry Skibbie  
To: Jerry Merna; 'Jim Hainen'; 'Kent Skibbie'; 'Mike Evans'; 'Roger Ohlrich'; 'Frank Swofford'  
Sent: 2/7/01 1:18 PM  
Subject: FW: Announcement  
Importance: High

Thought you all would be interested in this message to the NDIA staff.

-----Original Message-----

From: Larry Skibbie  
Sent: Wednesday, February 07, 2001 1:06 PM  
To: ALL NDIA  
Subject: Announcement  
Importance: High

This is to ensure you receive this information directly and not second hand or by rumor. Today the NDIA Chairman is informing the Boards of Directors and Trustees that I intend to retire from NDIA this summer on or about the end of June. The exact date of my departure will be determined by the selection and availability of my successor.

The Chairman has appointed a search committee to identify and evaluate candidates for President/CEO. The Board of Directors will ultimately make the selection later in the spring.

We'll keep you informed as the process evolves.



Fr. Howard Renews Merna Vows



Nancy & Larry Skibbie Congratulate the Merna's



Lt. General Skibbie Remarks



Dot & Jerry Cut Wedding Cake with Marine Figurines



Brother Jim Remarks about Dot and Jerry



Toasts by Son Gerald T. and Daughter Linda C. Figura



Jerry reads letter from Sen. George Allen (R-VA), Linda's employer

Skibbie Thanks for 50th Party 3-26-01.txt

Subject: FW: Fifty and Counting  
 Date: Sat, 28 Apr 2001 01:08:43 -0400  
 From: Jerry Merna <gmerna@ndia.org>  
 To: "'gmerna@erols.com'" <gmerna@erols.com>

L Skibbie's email of 3/26/01

-----Original Message-----

From: Larry Skibbie  
 To: Jerry Merna  
 Sent: 3/26/01 3:28 PM  
 Subject: Fifty and Counting

Jerry and Dot: Many thanks for sharing the pictures, toasts and letter with us. And thanks for including us in your fiftieth "event". Of course greatest thanks go for Jerry opting for ADPA over AFCEA, and then sticking with NDIA. That was a turning point for the association.

The pictures, toasts, and Sen Allen letter renewed memories of a wonderful evening. Thanks and congratulation again!

Larry

Larry Skibbie, President and CEO  
 National Defense Industrial Association  
 and NDIA Affiliates: NTSA (National Training Systems Association);  
 AFEI (Association for Enterprise Integration); WID (Women in Defense)  
 2111 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 400  
 Arlington, VA 22201-3061  
 ph. 703-247-2550

GEORGE ALLEN  
VIRGINIA



United States Senate  
Washington, D.C.

February 10, 2001

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald F. Merna  
46386 Bluestem Court  
Potomac Falls, Virginia 20165

Dear Dot and Jerry:

Susan and I send you our best wishes on your 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Congratulations on reaching this wonderful milestone in your life together.

Your daughter, Linda, who now works in my office in the United States Senate, told me about your years of dedicated service to our country through the U.S. Marine Corps. Your successful children and wonderful grandchildren are a testament to your character and the strength of the love you share.

Please know that our thoughts are with you as you celebrate this joyous occasion with your family and friends. May you enjoy many more years of health and happiness.

With kind personal regards, I remain

Sincerely,

George Allen

*You sure have blessed us all with a wonderful daughter. Keep smiling!*

*Lieutenant General Larry Skibbie  
United States Army, Retired*



*President and CEO*

February 12, 2001

Dear Jerry and Dot,

Just a note to again congratulate you on your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; we also want to say how much we enjoyed your Saturday party.

First, your anniversary should serve as an example for all of us in that your marriage is a model for us all. As we both know, good and long marriages, such as yours, require perseverance through good times and bad, and responding to the many challenges that children bring us – and here Linda and Jerry should make you proud, they are fine people. Finally, you two responded to the unique demands the military places on marriages.

As I mentioned Saturday night, your party was simply superb. It reflected great planning and it was executed flawlessly. One mark of a good party is that it “flows” – and yours did.

Thank you again for including Nancy and me. It was a great event and we value you and your friendship as one of our great blessings.

Sincerely,

*Larry and Nancy*



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Today

Mail

Calendar

Contacts

gfmerna\_usmc@msn.com

Reply | Reply All | Forward | Delete | Junk | Put in Folder | Print View | Save Address

From : <Linda.Figura@do.treas.gov>  
Sent : Monday, December 11, 2006 12:37 PM  
To : gfmerna\_usmc@msn.com  
Subject : RE: Lawrence F. Skibbie, LT GEN, USA(Ret)

Inbox

So sorry to hear this, Dad. I know how much he meant to you and Mom. Very sad!

Hope you and Mom are well -- I'll call later. Love you both!

Linda xoxo

-----Original Message-----

From: GERALD F MERNA [mailto:gfmerna\_usmc@msn.com]  
Sent: Monday, December 11, 2006 12:22 PM  
To: TDickey@NDIA.ORG  
Cc: jmattingly@ndia.org  
Subject: RE: Lawrence F. Skibbie, LT GEN, USA(Ret)

Trina and Joanna:

Thank you both for sending this very sad, but expected news about Lt. Gen. Skibbie. We have all lost a wonderful man, outstanding leader and patriot.

He will be sorely missed.

I feel personally as if I have lost yet another Brother as I reflect what a pleasure it was working with him. And yet he treated us all equally--with understanding, kindness and humility. No one ever worked "for" him, but "with" him. And after working with him, he became my "friend," as I'm sure he did to many of us. We so enjoyed our quarterly "New Guard" luncheons with him at the Tivoli restaurant in Arlington.

Mrs. Merna is equally saddened at his death; we considered Nancy a friend as

well, and were honored to be at their recent 50th Wedding Anniversary, recalling their attending ours as well six years ago, at which Gen. Skibbie made some thoughtful and wonderful remarks.

Our hearts and prayers go out to the Skibbie Family.

Please do keep us informed as any arrangements are announced.

Sincerely,

Jerry Merna

Gerald F. (Jerry) Merna  
gfmerna-usmc@verizon.net

# A Spiritual Gift For Healing

LAWRENCE F. SKIBBIE

*has been enrolled by the*  
**PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART**  
*in the*  
**SPIRITUAL SOCIETY**  
**OF THE SACRED HEART**  
*and will share as long as the grace of God*  
*is needed, in the Masses, prayers,*  
*sacrifices and good works*  
*of the Priests of the Sacred Heart*  
*all over the world.*

Requested by Serald and Dorothy Merna

Fr. Paul, S.C.J.  
Spiritual Director

12-11-06

Dear Nancy and Family,

We join you in your sadness in the loss of dear Larry - a faithful, loving husband, devoted father and Brother. And a friend to so many!

We feel as if we too lost a brother. We so admired him - as you know. He is one of a kind, we are privileged to have known him and you these many years.

We know he is with God - as we pray for him now.

May He comfort you and your family during this sorrowful time.

If there is anything we can do now or later, please let us know.

With love,

Dot and Jerry Merna



Hotmail



Today

Mail

Calendar

Contacts

gfmerna\_usmc@msn.com

Reply | Reply All | Forward | Delete | Put in Folder | Print View | Save Address

From : GERALD F MERNA <gfmerna\_usmc@msn.com>

Inbox

Sent : Monday, December 18, 2006 3:21 AM

To : johnhq.bridges@usps.gov

Subject : RE: Fw: Death of LTG(R) Lawrence F. Skibbie (UNCLASSIFIED)

Hi John:

Thanks for thinking of me.

I am very much aware of Larry Skibbie's death and have had considerable correspondence with NDIA and Dot and I already sent Nancy a Mass Card.

He was more than my "boss" he was my friend. When he recruited me away from AFCEA he raised my pay by half, made me a VP and yet never gave me the first directive or guidance, saying, "Do your thing Jerry, that's why I hired you." Ironically, of all the 'bosses' I've had in three careers, the top three were two Army Generals (LtGen Skibbie and Gen. John Wickham, former Army C/S) and one Navy Vice Admiral (Jon Boyes); all from NDIA and AFCEA. The other message I left about Larry Skibbie was that he was every much a Marine as any I ever knew, and I'd proudly serve with him anywhere, any time. At one time I told him I considered him an "Honorary Marine," and he got a big kick out of that.

I retired several years before Larry and he kept me on a a Consultant for three more years. He and Nancy threw a retirement party for me at their home in Arlington. I told everyone I "lost another Brother."

A small group of us retired NDIA VP's met quarterly at the Tivoli Restaurant in Arlington; we called ourselves the "New Guard" (they already had an "Old Guard" of much older retirees) and every time another exec retired, he'd join our group. Larry was of course the magnet that drew us all together. The last several meetings he was going down hill rapidly. First he lost all his hair, and then came with a walker.

He and Nancy attended our 50th Wedding Anniversary in Feb01 and after our Son and Daughter made a beautiful and memorable "toast" to us, Larry got up and made some wonderful and thoughtful remarks, adding at the end that we "set the standard for holding 50th Anniversary celebrations."

Dot and I were the only two from NDIA invited to their 50th Anniversary about a year and a half ago. There were place cards at the table; one of the guests I met was Larry's brother who told me he said to Larry, "I see all these name tags at the tables for General so-and-so, Admiral Jones, Colonel Brown, CEO Smith and so on on. Who the he\* is 1stLt Jerry Merna?" Larry's brother, a former Army 1stLt himself, got this answer, "Jerry is no "ordinary 1stLt," as you'll see when you meet him; he kept me on the straight and narrow at NDIA; sometimes I felt I was working for HIM." I got a big kick out of that of course.

Hope all is well with Bridge's Family; I know how terribly busy you must be. Thanks again.

Happy Holidays, and Semper Fidelis,

Jerry Merna

## MEMORIAL SECTION I\*, ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, JANUARY 17, 2007

(Photos by Gerald F. Merna)



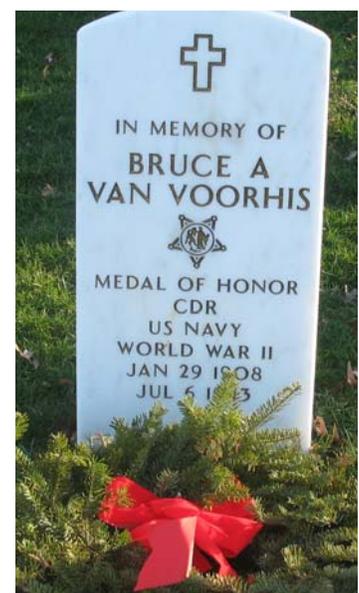
\*Established by an Act of Congress and under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Army whereby appropriate memorials or markers may be erected in Arlington National Cemetery to honor the memory of certain individuals or group of individuals. This includes those who are missing in action; whose remains have not been recovered or identified; whose remains were buried at sea, whether by the member's or veteran's own choice or otherwise; whose remains were donated to science; or whose remains were cremated and their ashes were scattered without interment of any portion of the ashes. Such Headstone inscriptions begin with, "In Memory Of."



Brother of a former Virginia Neighbor



George C. Merna, USN, WWII



Medal of Honor Recipient Van Voorhis



### *Wreaths Across America*

Every December for the past 15 years, Morrill Worcester, 56, owner of one of the world's largest holiday wreath companies, has taken time in the midst of his busiest season to haul a truckload of wreaths to Arlington from his small Maine town of Harrington. For years, he and a small band of volunteers laid the wreaths in virtual obscurity. But in the last 12 months that has changed, thanks to a dusting of snow last year at the cemetery, an evocative photograph, a sentimental poem and a chain e-mail. And this year, Worcester went national. A new program, *Wreaths Across America*, shipped a total of about 1,300 wreaths to more than 200 national cemeteries and veterans' memorials in all 50 states. Worcester says he wants to help Americans remember and honor deceased military veterans, particularly at Christmas, when they're missed most. On the *Wreaths Across America* website, he makes this comment: "When people hear about what we're doing, they want to know if I'm a veteran. I'm not. But I make it my business never to forget."



**Memorial Section I, Arlington National Cemetery**



**Brother of a former Virginia Neighbor, Missing In Action in Vietnam whose remains never recovered**



**Brother George C. Merna, KIA 11 February 1945 - WWII  
Signalman 2/C on LST-577 when it was sunk by Japanese Submarine  
Memorial Section I, Arlington National Cemetery**

Mrs. Lawrence Skibbie  
2309 South Queen Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22202



1 Lt (Ret) and Mrs Gerald F Norma  
46386 Bluestem Court  
Potomac Falls, VA  
20165



My dear Dot and Jerry.

There is really no note I can send  
to you - that is worthy of all  
you have done - To console and  
to help me and the children,  
since Larry's death. Your prayers  
and the Sacred Heart prayers and  
Masses are so appreciated. And

the photographs . . . . and the  
book you put together . . . and  
your wonderful notes. We can  
never thank you enough, dear  
friends. The children join  
me in sincere gratitude for  
your kindness.

Love.

Feb 22

Nancy