

From the Corps to Capitol Hill:

Marine Veterans of the 117th U.S. Congress Continue Service To Country

By Sara W. Bock

For 15 members of the 117th United States Congress, which convened on Jan. 3, the title “Marine” was one they earned long before “Senator” or “Congressman.” Today, they sit in the venerated chambers of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, and though they no longer wear the uniform, their experiences in the Corps—and the values instilled in them during their service—remain deeply ingrained in their identities as elected officials.

They're among the smallest group of military veterans to serve in Congress since World War II. In total, 91 veterans currently hold office in the nation's legislative branch, a number that continues to trend downward from its all-time high in 1971, according to the Pew Research Center, when vet-

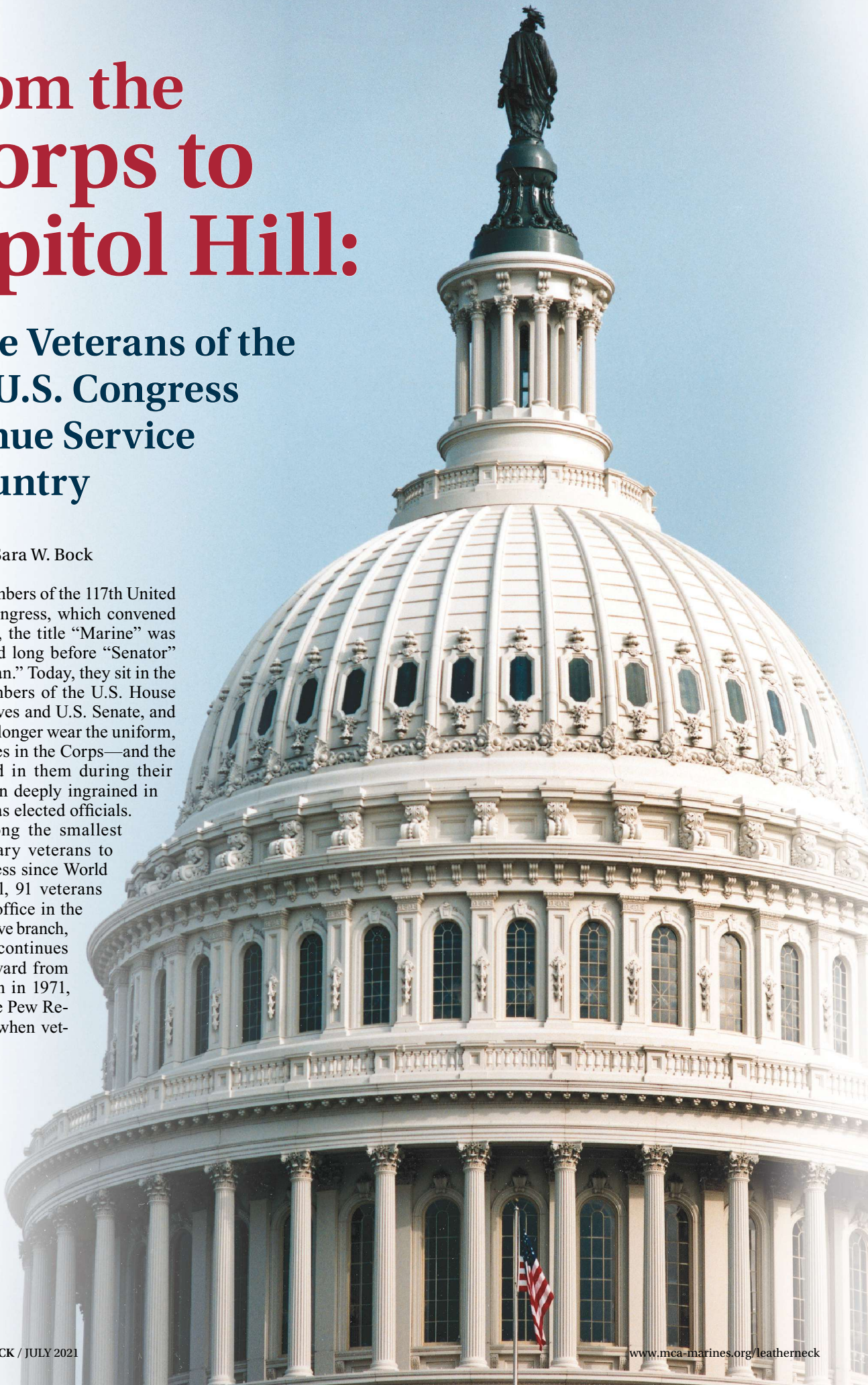


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OF THE CAPITOL

erans serving in Congress made up an impressive 72 percent of the House and 78 percent of the Senate.

Though they're small in number, the Marines—12 of whom serve in the House and three in the Senate—seem to be leading the charge among their veteran counterparts. From the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, on which Marine veteran and Republican congressman from Illinois, Mike Bost, serves as the ranking member, to the Marine-heavy For Country Caucus, a nonpartisan group of military veterans in the House of Representatives, co-chaired by Marines Jared Golden, a Democrat from Maine and Van Taylor, Republican from Texas, the Marines of the 117th Congress are working on behalf of not only their constituents, but also their fellow veterans, active-duty and reserve servicemembers and military families, drawing on their experiences as Marines and veterans themselves to help enact legislation that improves the lives of those who have served.

And they haven't forgotten their Marine Corps training. When a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, Marine veterans Sen. Todd Young, Rep. Ruben Gallego and Rep. Mike Gallagher were among those who made headlines for taking action and jumping into "Marine mode" as they assisted their colleagues in the evacuation of the House and Senate floors and prepared to defend their safety if necessary.

Leatherneck reached out to the offices of all 15 Marine veterans serving in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, and we were able to talk with seven of them prior to press time. They hail from all sides of the political spectrum and all corners of the nation: from California to Mississippi to Maine and everywhere in between. They're members of different generations with diverse backgrounds and vastly different life experiences. Their Marine Corps experiences are varied too. Some were enlisted, others commissioned officers; some served on active-duty, others in the Reserve; and some saw combat while others served during peacetime. But despite their differences, these Marines-turned-politicians all spoke about applying their experiences in the Marine Corps to their role as legislators, and how the values and principles they learned during their time in service shaped them into the people they are today. They may not see eye-to-eye on all the issues, but in an era marked by political divisiveness and partisan rhetoric, their stories of service and dedication to their country provide a glimmer of hope for the future.

Representative Jared Golden (D-ME)

After leaving active duty in 2006, with deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq in the rearview mirror, Jared Golden struggled to transition back to civilian life. The Marine infantryman, who enlisted in 2002 in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and first deployed in 2004 with 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, felt like he was part of something truly purposeful when his unit ran regular patrols out of a forward operating base in the Hindu Kush Mountains in Afghanistan's Kunar Province alongside Army special forces.

After a second deployment, this time along the border of Iraq and Syria near Husabayah, Golden left active duty and returned to his hometown of Lewiston, Maine.

"I would tell young Marines to maybe have a better plan than I did because I didn't have one," Golden recalls with a laugh. He briefly worked as an RV mechanic by day and at a pizza restaurant by night, "just trying to figure life out," he said. Thanks to the influence of some good role models, Golden later enrolled in Bates College in Lewiston and earned an undergraduate degree in U.S. history and political science. During his college years, he spent a summer teaching in Kabul, Afghanistan, and later worked in the Middle East in the



COURTESY OF REP. JARED GOLDEN

freight forwarding industry as a contractor for the U.S. State Department. This experience led him to Washington, D.C., where he worked in the office of Senator Susan Collins of Maine, advising on matters related to homeland security.

A few years later, Golden moved back to Maine and was urged to run for the state House of Representatives with many individuals suggesting to him that as a state representative, he might be able to help his fellow veterans.

"I had had some struggles with the transition—also things like access to health[care] and mental health as I went through that transition," said Golden,



Golden deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq before returning home to Maine, where he eventually served in the state House of Representatives prior to his election to Congress in 2018.

COURTESY OF REP. JARED GOLDEN

Representative Jared Golden (D-ME)

who knows firsthand what struggles today's post-9/11 veterans face. "I saw gaps in benefits or resources that were there to help young veterans, benefits that were largely invisible, and people had to kind of stumble upon them. So, I thought, 'Maybe I can lend my own personal experience and the experience of those I served with, who I was still in touch with, to improving how the government informs Marines or veterans about what can be helpful to them, and what's out there for them.' That's why I first ran for office."

After being elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 2014, Golden had an opportunity to take his passion for helping his fellow veterans to the national level and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018, representing Maine's second congressional district. He serves on the House Armed Services Committee and is a co-chair of the For Country Caucus for the 117th Congress, committed to working with his fellow veterans on both sides of the aisle to create a more productive government. During his first term in Congress, Golden was thrilled to help procure a 16-bed inpatient care unit for veterans

struggling with substance abuse in his home state of Maine—something they previously had to travel to neighboring states for—a mission of his he had been hoping to accomplish since he was first elected to his state legislature.

Golden says he's proud of his time in the Corps and even more proud of the Marines who are currently serving.

"I'm constantly re-evaluating what I learned in the Marines and applying it to my life today," said Golden. "One thing that I'm often sharing with people in Washington and within my own Democratic caucus is a different understanding about leadership than what many people have. I learned it in the Marines and inside the context of a squad with a platoon. I often tell people that the right person to lead a mission today may not be the right person to lead that team for a different mission. You've got all these different people in a team with different skillsets. They bring different assets to the table. And part of being a good leader is knowing how to get the most out of the team, and sometimes that means recognizing when to lead yourself and when to follow and push other people out into those leadership positions."



Golden, pictured on the right alongside a Marine buddy, credits his service in the Corps with giving him a greater understanding of leadership and a personal knowledge of the struggles many veterans face during their transition to civilian life and beyond. (Photo courtesy of Rep. Jared Golden)

Representative Van Taylor (R-TX)



Sept. 11, 2001, was Van Taylor's last day of drill at his Marine Reserve unit, 4th Civil Affairs Group, at the Anacostia Naval Annex in Washington, D.C. He had plans to eat lunch at the Pentagon, but instead watched it burn. The Texas native and Harvard graduate, who earned his commission through the Corps' Platoon Leaders Class, had joined the ranks of the Marine Corps Reserve after nearly four years as an active-duty intelligence officer, returning to the classroom to earn an MBA at Harvard Business School. The events of 9/11 changed the trajectory of his life.

"I made an oath to continue to serve my country and make a difference, and I actually drove back to Texas and that Friday I was at 4th Recon Battalion in San Antonio, Texas, and 18 months later was leading the first platoon into Iraq on D-day for my brigade, Task Force Tarawa—March 21, 2003," Taylor said. "Accomplished every mission, brought every man home to their families, and married the girl who sent me a letter every day I was there."

After his return home, the decorated Iraq War veteran, who had been interested in public service and active in Republican politics in his local Collin County, Texas, government, decided to run for an open seat in the Texas House of Representatives in 2010. He

was elected and four years later was elected to the Texas Senate. After four years in the state Senate, Taylor was elected by Texas' third congressional district to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I like to say political careers are always sequential in hindsight," Taylor said. "That was not a path I had envisioned but a path that the doors opened. I was in the right place at the right time and continued to serve."

Armed with the Marine Corps' core values of honor, courage and commitment, and a focus on teamwork and hard work that he learned as a Marine officer, Taylor says he strives to make a difference through his work in Congress. In the Corps, "if you worked hard, trained hard and sat down and respected other people and listened to them, regardless of their rank, you would learn from them," he said. It's a philosophy he still applies today.

As a co-chair of the For Country Caucus, alongside his Democratic counterpart Rep. Jared Golden, Taylor is proud of the work that he and his fellow veterans are accomplishing across party lines. The caucus has endorsed legislation such as the Gold Star Family Tax Relief Act, which was passed in the fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act; worked to help ensure the passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, which extended benefits to servicemembers who were exposed to Agent Orange when serving off the coast of Vietnam; and is currently working to pass legislation to build a Global War on Terrorism Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"I think that veterans tend to be statistically more bipartisan, and I think they're used to being in an environment where you don't ask what somebody believes, you just say, we're both on this plane together, or we're both in this foxhole together, or we're both in this tank together, and we're here to get a job done," said Taylor. "That mission focus really advantages veterans to do better—to reach across the aisle and work to get things done—and to seek common ground and then in turn to accomplish missions."



COURTESY OF REP. VAN TAYLOR

Taylor, who as a young Marine captain participated in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, is pictured here in Kuwait with the flag of his home state of Texas.



COURTESY OF REP. VAN TAYLOR

Upon his return home from Iraq, Taylor reunited with his soon-to-be wife, Anne, pictured on the left.



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What Your Senators, Representatives Can Do for You

As a Marine spouse and the military field representative for Congressman Scott Peters, I often hear from veterans, active-duty servicemembers and reservists who request assistance with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), their branch of service or other federal agencies. All members of Congress employ casework staff who assist with federal agency concerns, and military and veteran issues make up a significant portion of these casework requests. Rep. Peters represents California's 52nd District encompassing Poway, Coronado and northern San Diego, and his office has succeeded in returning more than \$5 million to constituents who contacted us seeking help. We are especially proud to help uphold the nation's commitment to those who have served, and assisting constituents in this way is one of the most important functions of Congress.

Veterans and military servicemembers deserve timely responses and full and fair consideration of their requests, and congressional offices can help to cut through red tape that may accompany federal agency communication. Caseworkers have lines of communication with federal agencies that can produce faster response times than standard public points of contact. While congressional offices cannot direct federal agencies to make specific decisions inconsistent with their policies, they serve as liaisons to ensure established policies are being followed and also help facilitate timely communication. We often hear from frustrated constituents who just need to speak with someone and have had trouble reaching the best contact to resolve their concerns.

Congressional caseworkers can initiate inquiries to request status reports on pending matters, obtain answers to constituent questions, provide policy clarifications from higher levels of leadership, determine appeal options and even request reconsideration of previous decisions in some cases. Inquiries note "congressional interest" in the matter,

and federal agencies are required to provide a written response. Debt waivers, expedited appeal decisions, benefit adjustments, disability percentage increases, resolution of policy disagreements, and approval of requested treatment plans are all outcomes that casework requests may be able to produce, depending on the circumstances of each case.

For example, veteran constituents often request congressional assistance when they have not received timely responses to benefit claims, have trouble obtaining medical referrals or personal records, or seek to submit a complaint about a disappointing experience. Military servicemembers often seek assistance with pay disparities, basic allowance for housing (BAH) corrections, policy disagreements or requests for assistance with orders. Often, congressional offices can point out extenuating circumstances such as advanced age, terminal illness or financial hardship to elevate urgency and expedite individual cases as needed.

Congressional inquiries do not always result in the outcomes constituents seek, and Congress is limited by stringent ethics rules, but inquiries can provide answers and explanations in line with federal agency policies. Inquiries also can alert both the agency and the congressional office to issues that may require corrections internally to improve processes for the future. Additionally, when constituents bring concerns to the attention of Congress, this can generate new legislative ideas for representatives to introduce to solve common problems.

To begin the casework process and reach a congressional office, constituents can visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov, input a home address, conduct a search for the representatives from their area and locate a Privacy Act Waiver form from the website to begin the inquiry process. Caseworkers provide assistance free of charge and can often help to facilitate meaningful results for deserving constituents.

Jessica B. Brown

Representative Salud Carbajal (D-CA)



COURTESY OF REP. SALUD CARBAJAL

Since his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2016, Congressman Salud Carbajal has often called to mind something he observed in the Marine Corps Reserve while serving alongside people from all walks of life: everyone was treated the same, regardless of socioeconomic background, race or ethnicity.

“You have people throughout the country that served and all with a common purpose,” said Carbajal of the Marine Corps. “You learn early on that it doesn’t matter if your father is a farm worker the way my father was, or your father is a United States senator. Everybody is treated the same and everybody is there for a common purpose.”

Carbajal’s experiences as a reservist—a mortarman who spent most of his time in Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment in Port Hueneme, Calif.—shaped his

view of what teamwork is all about: learning to set individual differences aside and work together toward a common goal.

“I think being a veteran and Marine reminds us and helps us, with the guiding principles of the Marine Corps, to strive to make decisions for country over party,” said Carbajal. “We’re all the same at the end of the day and we’re all rowing towards the same goals and mission, and that is the wellbeing of our country. To make it better. To work in the best interest of our nation, not the silliness of politics.”

Carbajal enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1984 while studying at the University of California, Santa Barbara. After graduating from boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, he returned to college, and spent the following summer at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., to train in his military occupational specialty as a mortarman. During the Gulf War, Carbajal was mobilized for Operation Desert Storm and was on standby at Marine Corps Base Camp

Carbajal, who enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1984, is pictured on the left in the photo below taken at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif.



COURTESY OF REP. SALUD CARBAJAL



COURTESY OF REP. SALUD CARBAJAL

Lejeune, N.C., to relieve the Marines who had deployed to the Middle East. When the war ended sooner than expected, he returned home to California, and in 1992, when his eight-year contract commitment came to an end, he separated from the Marine Corps Reserve as a sergeant.

Carbajal, who says he was an avid *Leatherneck* reader during his time in the Corps, first felt the pull to public service while acting as the chief of staff for a district supervisor in Santa Barbara County, Calif.—a position he later ran for and served in himself for 12 years. He credits his time spent serving in local government with helping him build on the lessons of teamwork and cooperation he learned in the Marine Corps as he worked with his colleagues to achieve things in a bipartisan manner.

“That ethos ... I think carries on now to my service in Congress, where I strive for bipartisanship,” said Carbajal, who serves on the House Armed Services Committee and is a vice chair of the For Country Caucus of military veterans.

Carbajal is working with his veteran colleagues to improve funding for nutrition programs for low-income children across the nation, which he cites as a national security issue. “We have found that many of our young people are not ready or able to serve in the military because of obesity issues,” he said.

Though decades have passed since his time in the Marine Corps, Carbajal says that the principles he learned in the Corps continue to guide him on a daily basis.

“Discipline and the rigor of the Marine Corps certainly give you the confidence to move to tackle big problems and challenges: not just get caught up on little things, but not to be intimidated by tackling some of the biggest challenges that our country faces, and really work to try to overcome and bring about solutions to those many challenges,” Carbajal said.

Representative Mike Bost (R-IL)



COURTESY OF REP. MIKE BOST

Marine Corps service runs in the family for Representative Mike Bost of Illinois, who remembers his grandfather, who served in the Corps during the Korean War, handing him a copy of *Leatherneck* magazine when he was just 10 years old. His uncle, also a Marine, served in Vietnam. Bost enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1979 and served as an electronics radio repairman, spending time at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., before he was honorably discharged as a corporal in 1982. But the family legacy doesn't stop there: his son, a judge advocate, is a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps Reserve, and his grandson is a newly minted Marine who graduated from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego last December.

Despite his family's history of service, Bost says he didn't intend to join the Marine Corps. That changed on Nov. 4, 1979, when he watched the news coverage pour in as a group of militant Iranian college students breached the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage—among them, a detachment of Marine Security Guards. Within days, Bost, who felt certain that the Iran Hostage Crisis would spur a military conflict, showed up at his local recruiter's office to enlist.

After leaving active duty, Bost returned home to Murphysboro, Ill., and took over his family's trucking business, meanwhile taking an interest in local politics. "My wife told me to either shut up or get involved," Bost said with a laugh. He ended up serving in several positions in

his local government and in 1992 ran for the Illinois State House of Representatives—an election he lost that year but won two years later when he tried again in 1994. After 20 years of representing his local constituents on the state level, Bost was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2014. And, in a perfect illustration of the common saying, "it's a small Marine Corps," he served in the House alongside retired Marine colonel and decorated Vietnam War veteran Paul Cook, congressman from California, who had been Bost's commanding officer at Communication-Electronics School at MCA GCC Twentynine Palms decades earlier.

Bost knows firsthand the struggles that veterans can face in obtaining benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for service-related disability claims. At the time of his discharge from the Marine Corps, his high frequency hearing loss was determined to be service-related; however, due to miscommunication and bureaucratic red tape, he never received his disability benefits and was unsuccessful in his multiple attempts to apply for them.

A young Mike Bost, pictured in the photo on the right, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1979 after the Iran Hostage Crisis evoked in him a sense of duty to his country. His family's connection to the Corps spans multiple generations, and his son, LtCol Steven Bost, pictured with Rep. Bost (below) at the Congressional Marine Mess Night in 2019, is currently serving in the Marine Corps Reserve.



COURTESY OF REP. MIKE BOST



COURTESY OF REP. MIKE BOST

"I helped carry and was the chief sponsor of the reform bill when we reformed the appeals process," Bost said of his work on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, of which he is now the ranking member. "My experience in the Corps not only gave me that drive, but what it also did was, the ability to work with others, and leadership capabilities, is something that only someone with a background in the military could understand."

Not only does Bost rely on his personal experiences as a veteran to inform his work in Congress, but he also calls to mind the leadership principles that were instilled in him as a young enlisted Marine.

"You've got to become a good follower before you become a good leader; you've got to respect those around you and understand that a difference of opinion is not anything that you fall out over, it's just a difference of opinion," said Bost of the lessons he learned in the Marine Corps. "You learn that conflict is inevitable, combat is optional."

Representative Jake Auchincloss (D-MA)



When freshman Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts Jake Auchincloss reflects on where life has taken him, he credits many of the opportunities he's had to his grandfather Melvin Glimcher, the son of Jewish refugees who left the Ukraine in the early 20th century to flee the Russian pogroms and settled in the state Auchincloss calls home today. In 1942, at the age of 17, Glimcher went to a Marine Corps recruiting office to enlist, but his mother caught wind of his plan, showed up and dragged him out by the ear while screaming at the recruiting sergeant. He persisted, and the following day, he showed up again and convinced the recruiter to let him join the Corps, where he eventually was sent to Purdue University to study science.

"The Marine Corps, at a time when ... Jews were under threat of extermination and the South Pacific was going badly, sent this poor, skinny, 17-year-old Jewish kid to Purdue to study engineering because they thought he was pretty smart," said Auchincloss of his grandfather. "He turned that engineering degree from Purdue into really a groundbreaking scientific career in the science of bone formation and orthopedic surgery and became the first Jewish chair of orthopedic surgery at Mass General and a world-renowned scientist, because the Marine Corps ultimately took a chance on him."

When Auchincloss graduated from Harvard College in 2010, with the troop surge in Afghanistan underway,

he too felt an undeniable pull to become a Marine.

"I felt like at a time when we were asking a very small fraction of our country to fight the whole war for us, that it was incumbent on me to serve as well," Auchincloss said.

Keeping in mind a lesson he learned from his grandfather—"Don't tell your mom if you're going to try to join the Marine Corps," he jokes—Auchincloss told his mother he had a "summer internship" at the Department of Defense as he prepared to attend Officer Candidates School in Quantico. He laughs as he describes the mix of pride and fury she displayed when he finally told her the truth.

Auchincloss commanded a platoon in Afghanistan in 2012 and a recon unit in Panama in 2014 before returning to Massachusetts, where he spent his days working in the public sector and his evenings working as a city councilor in his hometown of Newton. For the young politician, working in



Then-Capt Auchincloss is pictured here leading a combined special operations mission in Panama in 2014. As a newly elected member of Congress, Auchincloss—who remains a member of the Marine Corps Individual Ready Reserve—often calls to mind the motto of Officer Candidates' School: "Leadership by Example."

local government was rewarding in large part, he says, because it was "solution oriented," much like the Marine Corps.

When Rep. Joe Kennedy announced he was running for the U.S. Senate, leaving his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives open in 2020, Auchincloss felt like he had something to offer—that he could bring people together and get things done. He ran for the seat and won, and in January was sworn in as a first-term member of Congress.

"It doesn't always feel solution oriented at the national level, it feels performative—it can feel like politi-

cians are playing to their base," said Auchincloss. "But my training in business, my training in local government, my training in the Marine Corps has always been solution oriented. As they say in the Marines, you don't rise to the occasion, you fall to your level of training, so I feel like I've been trained for this moment in Congress."

As he serves his constituents in Washington, Auchincloss says he strives to live up to the motto of the Marine Corps' Officer Candidates School: "Leadership by Example."

"We have not seen that in the last number of years, that federal leaders have always led by example, and I think it's helped to contribute to the loss of trust in the federal government and to the people's increasing lack of confidence in the things they hear from representatives and executive leaders," said Auchincloss.

As part of the new generation of leaders in Congress, Auchincloss, who is a major in the Marine Corps

Individual Ready Reserve, hopes to see more of his fellow veterans run for office. His advice for them?

"Delete your Twitter and social media apps and go knock on doors. Go really meet voters where they're at," said Auchincloss. "When you go knock on doors ... what you meet are decent, moderate people who want good services, who want to be able to trust their elected officials, and who want to do right by their neighbors. I think if we spent more time talking to one another at our local level, in person, and less time yelling at each other behind keyboards, we'd be in better shape."

Representative Steven Palazzo (R-MS)



COURTESY OF REP. STEVEN PALAZZO

If there's one thing that Rep. Steven Palazzo credits his years in the Marine Corps Reserve with, it's pushing him out of his comfort zone. The Republican Congressman from Mississippi, who began serving in his state's House of Representatives in 2006 and served until he was elected to the U.S. House in 2010, is the grandson of a World War II Marine who served in the Pacific theater and saw action at Guadalcanal and Okinawa.

Palazzo, who attended boot camp

at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in 1989 while attending college, was activated in 1990 for Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm where his unit advanced to the border of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait border during the short-lived conflict.

"Joining the Marine Corps, getting out of your comfort zone, you meet people from every walk of life, and you have to work with them," said Palazzo, who left the Marine Corps when his reserve commitment ended and joined the Mississippi Army National Guard, in which he still serves today. But the mentality he learned in the Marine Corps—how to accomplish a mission alongside people with different backgrounds, experiences and opinions—is something he continues to rely on in his work in Congress.

Palazzo is proud to have worked on legislation that helped secure equal benefits for reservists and guardsmen deployed alongside their active-duty counterparts, an issue that his background equipped him to understand. He hopes to see more of his fellow

veterans run for office on the local, state, and federal level. "I think if you've got a mix of military experience and civilian experiences outside of politics then you're going to have more value than a career politician," said Palazzo, who previously worked as a certified public accountant in the private sector before entering the political sphere.

In January, on the 32nd anniversary of the day he first stood on the yellow footprints at MCRD Parris Island, Palazzo traveled back to the depot for a walk down memory lane. But his visit was more than just a nod to the past: it also gave him a renewed sense of hope for the future of the country he loves.

"Seeing those young men and women reassures me that as long as we have a strong Marine Corps, we're going to have a strong America," said Palazzo. "Semper Paratus is not just something that we say, it's something that we live."



As a young Marine, Palazzo, pictured in the left photo in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm, was pushed out of his comfort zone—an experience that he says prepared him for his work in the Mississippi state legislature and later the U.S. House of Representatives. He also continues to serve today as a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard.

COURTESY OF REP. STEVEN PALAZZO





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Other Marines in the 117th U.S. Congress:

House of Representatives

- Mike Gallagher (R-WI)
- Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
- Jack Bergman (R-MI)
- Conor Lamb (D-PA)
- Seth Moulton (D-MA)
- Greg Pence (R-IN)

Senate

- Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
- Dan Sullivan (R-AK)

Senator Todd Young (R-IN)

When Senator Todd Young first ran for public office in 2010 and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, he felt equipped to serve because of the leadership traits he had acquired during his five years as an active-duty Marine officer. He remained in that seat until 2017, when he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he continues to serve the people of his home state of Indiana today.

The 1995 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, who served as an intelligence officer with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 2 at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., before a tour on recruiting duty in the greater Chicago area, credits his service in the Corps with teaching him not only courage under fire and physical strength, but even more importantly, virtues like empathy, humility and forbearance.

“In the Marines, I got exposure to all different types of people from different places, from different socioeconomic backgrounds, races and ethnicities and different life experiences,” said

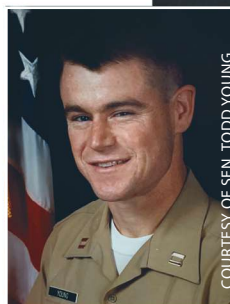
Young. “That’s one way and perhaps the best way to cultivate empathy, is by exposing oneself to people who are different from you, and working through differences, and identifying commonalities and then working on projects together.”

Serving during the unique post-Cold War but pre-9/11 timeframe, Young’s work in the burgeoning unmanned aerial vehicle community largely consisted of counter-narcotics missions and training alongside U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to monitor the Southern border of the United States. While he doesn’t believe one has to serve in the military in order to be an effective public servant, he says that his own experiences as a Marine have proven to be an asset in the Senate.

“It makes you especially sensitive to the sacrifices that our men and women



COURTESY OF SEN. TODD YOUNG



COURTESY OF SEN. TODD YOUNG

in uniform make on our behalf, and the responsibility that all of us have to ensure that our veterans are cared for,” said Young. “I think I’m more sensitized to the gravity of decisions associated with committing our men and women to military engagements and the importance of trying to avoid them at all costs.”