

Sailors man the rails of USS *John Warner* (SSN-785) during the commissioning ceremony for the *Virginia* class attack submarine at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., Aug. 1, 2015.



“Anchor to Windward”

For Former Secretary of the Navy and U.S. Senator John W. Warner, Service in Both the Navy and Marine Corps Charted His Course For a Lifetime of Service in Public Office

By Sara W. Bock

In the library of his home in Alexandria, Va., former U.S. Senator John W. Warner often sits quietly and fixes his gaze on an old, weathered, green USMC “old Corps-style” field cap hanging on the wall. Next to it, on a shelf, rests a weathered white U.S. Navy Sailor’s cap, identical to the standard cover that recruits

receive today and have for more than a century.

“If only those hats could speak, you would hear memorable stories about the many accomplishments of the Navy-Marine team,” said Warner. He hasn’t worn either of those covers in decades, but time hasn’t erased the memories that go with them or the debt he feels he owes America for the privilege to have served.

“New bell bottom trousers and coats of Navy blue,” he recalled of the first day Navy Sailors receive their uniforms. “No Sailor worth his salt will ever forget that day, as fear gave way to pride, when you got your first order: ‘OK Sailor, it all fits, now you better damn well keep it that way!’”

At the age of 17, Warner was just one of many young Americans who, still in



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Then-Secretary of the Navy John W. Warner waits on the flight deck of the attack aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy (CVA-67) to observe air operations during the NATO Exercise Strong Express in September 1972.

At the age of 17, Warner was just one of many young Americans who, still in their teenage years, volunteered to the call of duty in late 1944 and early 1945 as the U.S. and its allies faced a series of heavy casualties.

their teenage years, volunteered to the call of duty in late 1944 and early 1945 as the U.S. and its Allies faced a series of heavy casualties, and there was no prediction of when war on either of the two fronts might end. As exciting as that first moment in uniform was, the gravity of the situation was not lost on them: they were replacements, but anxious to be trained and do their duty.

In 1946, Warner, then a Navy veteran attending Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., would listen intently as his classmates, a group largely composed of fellow World War II veterans, shared their harrowing stories of combat. From the beaches of Normandy to the far-off islands of the Pacific theater, they'd risked their lives and returned forever changed, carrying with them images their minds

SN CASEY HOPKINS, USN



COURTESY OF HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES

Jeanne Warner, left, wife of retired Senator John W. Warner, smashes a bottle of American sparkling wine across the bow of USS John Warner (SSN-785) during the submarine's christening ceremony in Newport News, Va., Sept. 6, 2014.

could never erase and memories of the friends they'd served alongside who never made it home. On the whole, they were grateful for the opportunity to serve, and greatly relieved that combat operations had ended earlier than projected.

As he listened to those tales of war, Warner heard a voice in the back of his mind—words that even now, at the age of 93, he recites as if no time has passed since his college days. “Did you really do your

elder statesman, known for reaching across the aisle and supporting bipartisanship. And he seems to be equal parts Virginia gentleman and quintessential Marine. With quick wit and a chuckle in his voice, he attributes the longevity of his career to “Marine Corps stamina!”

That unwavering sense of duty he felt as a 21-year-old undergraduate student—one that largely defined his entire generation of Americans—has been a steadfast

at war, was attending boot camp at Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill., in May 1945 when Germany surrendered to the Allies and was awaiting orders to participate in the invasion of Japan when the war in the Pacific came to a halt.

Those early years in the Navy had shaped and molded him, but Warner couldn't let go of the feeling that he had more to give.

One day, as he was walking up the hill on the Washington and Lee campus, he spotted a Marine captain in dress blues. As Warner approached the young officer and started a conversation, he learned that the Marine Corps Reserve was looking to recruit veterans who, like Warner, had received some military training during WW II and now were attending colleges and universities.

The Marine told him that if he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve while completing his undergraduate studies, he'd be required to attend a special boot camp.

“Well, I've been there!” Warner recalls saying, laughing at the blissful ignorance his younger self displayed in that moment, to which the captain replied, “that Navy boot camp doesn't count in the Marine Corps!”

Warner said he didn't get a wink of sleep that night as he pondered the decision,

He'd always had a particular respect for the Marine Corps and had considered enlisting in 1944.

“I wanted to go into the Marines in the worst way.”

duty, Warner? It all ended so quickly,” he remembers thinking to himself.

We're seated in a conference room in the Washington, D.C., law firm Hogan Lovells, Jan. 8, where Warner now works as a senior advisor, and has for more than a decade since his retirement from the United States Senate after he served five consecutive terms. In doing so, he established a record for Virginia as its second-longest-serving U.S. Senator. In a show of exceptional endurance for an individual of his age, Warner comes in to the office regularly. He's still highly regarded as an

beacon throughout his entire life, guiding him from young Sailor to Marine officer, and from Secretary of the Navy to U.S. Senator and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, serving his country in some capacity through every major war and conflict from WW II to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Like many of his classmates, Warner attended Washington and Lee thanks to funding from the original GI Bill, formally known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. The young Washington, D.C., native, who came of age in an America



While serving as a U.S. Senator, Warner, a former Secretary of the Navy, participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., in May 1984. From the left, ADM James D. Watkins, Chief of Naval Operations; Senator Warner; Secretary of the Navy John Lehman; former Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf; ADM William Crowe, Commander, Pacific Fleet; and William Leonard took part in the momentous occasion.



SGT MALLORY VANDERSCHANS, USMC

Warner visits with Gen James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, right, and LtCol Kyle Ellison prior to the groundbreaking ceremony for the John Warner Center for Advanced Military Studies at Marine Corps University, Quantico, Va., May 2, 2013. It was Gen Amos' idea to name the building after Warner, and it took a year of insistence for Warner to agree to the honor, for which he says he is humbled and grateful.

thinking to himself, "This will give me a chance to pay off my debt to America."

"And damn if I didn't go down the next day and enlist in the Marine Corps," he said.

He'd always had a particular respect for the Marine Corps and had considered enlisting in 1944. "I wanted to go into the Marines in the worst way. I had studied all kinds of books on the Marine Corps," he said.

But he settled on joining the Navy after his father, John W. Warner II, a doctor who had served as an Army surgeon during World War I and had treated countless wounded Marines, said, "I can't let my son put that uniform on. I'll never sleep a wink," Warner recounted. His mother, Martha, also had done her part during WW I as a Red Cross volunteer taking care of the wounded who were returning from France.

Consequently, his upbringing, like countless others of his generation, was "thoroughly rooted in the belief of service to country," he said, recalling with nostalgia his childhood in Northwest Washington, D.C., just a block from the Washington National Cathedral where his uncle was rector of the adjacent Episcopal chapel.

"I grew up riding my bicycle around, playing sandlot baseball—had the normal life of a kid," said Warner, who was born on Feb. 18, 1927. "And then suddenly World War II crept up on us. It was an extraordinary period of history."

He briefly closes his eyes as he re-

members the routine blackouts in Washington, the rationing of food and gasoline, and how the families put up a red, white and blue sticker, proudly displayed on their front doors indicating the military service of a beloved son, and the sobering gold stars that began to appear, sending a message that their son had given his life



COURTESY OF JOHN W. WARNER

A young Warner is pictured here in his Navy uniform after returning home to Washington, D.C., in June 1946, following his release from active duty. As a Sailor, he attained the rank of Electronic Technician Third Class, which he says was "the most important promotion I ever received in my life."

and would never return home. This was the context in which he began to recognize in himself a moral obligation to serve—and society's expectation of him to do so.

"That was the environment that I was raised in," said Warner of those formative years of his life. "The guys that came back on leave or wounded ... they'd look at the youngsters like myself and say, 'Man, you've got to get your ass in gear and join us in uniform.'"

With another full year of high school ahead of him and his parents' near insistence that he graduate before joining the fight, Warner and his father arrived at a compromise. If he attended St. Albans School, located adjacent to the cathedral, for one semester and achieved high marks—"I wasn't a particularly good student," he said—his father would sign off on the enlistment papers and he would join the Navy.

"I hit the ball out of the park," Warner said with a laugh. "He just shook his head and said, 'OK, son, you win. We'll pray for you and we're proud of you.'"

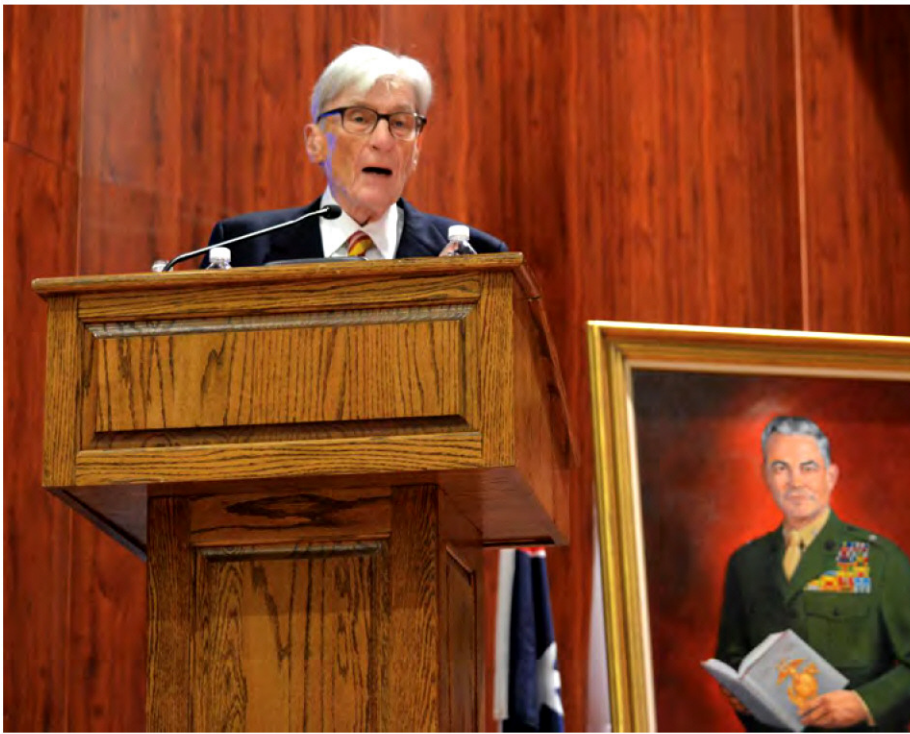
In December 1944, as the Battle of the Bulge reared its ugly head across the ocean in the Ardennes, Warner enlisted in the Navy during the week of Christmas, and after a slight delay in the training pipeline, boarded a train bound for Navy boot camp.

Warner and others who were selected for training in highly technical skills were pushed through the pipeline quickly, completing a slightly attenuated boot camp of three months rather than four so they could attend their follow-on schools and be sent to the fleet to meet the demand for those skills.

While still at boot camp in May 1945, Warner was one of 40 young Sailors selected for an extremely memorable assignment.

"This is going to be one of the most important moments of your life and you'll never forget it," a Navy captain briefed Warner and the other Sailors. He told them that in a radio broadcast, President Harry S. Truman would soon announce the surrender of Germany, and the excitement of Americans from coast to coast was almost sure to give way to the best sort of pandemonium. Warner and the other Sailors were assigned shore patrol duty in the city of Chicago. "Boys, draw on every bit of training and learning you've ever had in your life, but help make it happen and keep law and order as best you can," the captain instructed them. After being issued a whistle, a billy club and an armband that read "S.P.," the Sailors soon found themselves on a train to inner city Chicago.

"The magic of that day, it was just—



Warner speaks to an audience of Marine Corps University students and staff and distinguished guests next to a portrait of BGen Edwin Simmons during an August 2015 ceremony dedicating the new MCU building in his name. BGen Simmons, the namesake of the Marine Corps History Center, had served as one of Warner's aides when he was Secretary of the Navy, where they began a decades-long partnership to advance the interests of the Marine Corps. Simmons passed away in 2007, but "we were reunited again with our names on the building," Warner said.

it's been recorded better by others, but every bar was 'dry' by 8 p.m. I mean, there wasn't a drop of alcohol left in the whole city of Chicago," recalled Warner, fondly recalling streets filled with dancing, kissing and orderly celebrations. "It was just such an elation to have the European conflict lifted up off the families and the country."

Upon his return to Great Lakes, he said, "it took the officers about a day or two for them to pull boot camp discipline back together and down to reality."

As the war continued in the Pacific, Warner attended advanced radio technician school at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, and received what he describes as state-of-the-art training in electronics, which was an ever-rapidly emerging field in the Navy. He then was assigned to the U.S. Atlantic Fleet to await assignment to a ship headed for the Pacific when the

Japanese unexpectedly surrendered, and the Navy issued an ALNAV announcing the war was over and most ships would soon be returning to home ports.

"It was all over," said Warner. "And now America was faced with a real challenge. How do you take 16 million men and women in uniform and release them back into civilian life? And they went about it, I think, in a very responsible

and orderly way. There was no precedent for any challenge like this. It was basically a fair program: first to enlist, first to be released."

Warner was assigned to "decommission of ship" duty where he would dismantle their electronic equipment for storage.

When he finally returned home, Warner was faced with a loss that he says is the only thing in his life he's ever been cheated on. Just three months after his return, his father died at the age of 62. But days before he passed, he and his father made a phone call to the president of Washington and Lee University. The next thing Warner knew, he was on his way to Lexington to fulfill his father's final wish and the deal they made when he allowed him to quit school and enlist.

Like millions of other Americans who delayed their educational pursuits to perform military service during the war, Warner was grateful for America's investment in education in the form of the GI Bill.

"I doubt if a third of people who were eligible to go to college could have afforded it in those days," he said. "But everybody wanted to help veterans in those days."

At Washington and Lee, he sensed a common thread and a sense of mutual admiration among those who had served. "They came back a very serious and determined, but also a grateful and humble, group. They were so honored to have been a part of restoring freedom."

Warner also remarked on the distinct advantage those veterans had in the university setting because of the excellent educational programs many experienced in their military training. It's an observation that remained with him in the Senate as

Senator Warner, center, talks with Senator John McCain, left, and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, right, prior to a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in February 2006. Warner served on the committee throughout his 30 years in the Senate, and for more than 15 years was either the chairman or ranking member. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)





COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Senator Warner, left, stands with fellow members of Congress behind President Ronald Reagan during a traditional bill-signing ceremony in February 1984.

a co-sponsor and staunch advocate of the post-9/11 GI Bill, which greatly expanded the educational benefits for those who served on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001. Having personally benefitted from the GI Bill, with the clearest of conscience he supported the continuation and expansion of that program.

After graduating from Washington and Lee in 1949 with a degree in engineering, Warner volunteered to remain in the Marine Corps Active Reserve, accepting a commission as a second lieutenant. He attended a modified Basic School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., which he says was “a marvelous experience,” and subsequently was assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMA) 321, a reserve squadron based at Naval Air Station Anacostia in his hometown of Washington, D.C. “We were weekend warriors!” he said.

But Warner soon was forced to suspend his legal education when war broke out in Korea in 1950, and he was one of approximately 300 Marine Corps Reserve officers who, as a group, were ordered to active duty and trained as the First Special Basic Class before being ordered to the Fleet Marine Force or to their specialty schooling.

“As I look back, I believe this rapidly

structured officer program was one of the Corps’ most notable decisions,” said Warner.

Over the next two years, Warner’s varied experiences in the Marine Corps, on active duty as well as reserve duty, would shape him and prepare him for the leadership roles in his future, such as the Secretary of the Navy and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. As he shares his stories, some lighthearted and some somber, he pauses and says, “The Marine Corps really was a powerful building block of my whole life, professionally.”

He becomes animated as he shares his

course, was at the time assigned as an aide to Lieutenant General Franklin A. Hart, the commandant of Marine Corps schools at Quantico.

Thanks to his engineering degree, then-First Lieutenant Warner was summoned to the office of General Clifton B. Cates, the 19th Commandant of the Marine Corps. He laughs as he describes being personally directed by the Commandant to devise a way to transport the scale model, which weighed several tons, from Headquarters Marine Corps to Quantico.

“I hadn’t seen it—none of us had. It had been kept under wraps. But boy, it was

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account of his unlikely role in the placement of the scale model of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, depicting the flag raising on Iwo Jima, outside the main gate of Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. The sculptor Felix de Weldon had created the smaller model as he worked to craft the full-size memorial now adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery. Warner, waiting to attend the basic communications officer

very moving to look at it and stand next to it,” Warner said of the statue, adding that he could hear the reverence in his voice as Gen Cates, who had led the 4th Marine Division during the Battle of Iwo Jima, talked about how much it meant to the Corps and to him. But quickly the conversation between the young lieutenant and the Commandant turned back to business.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

On the deck of the decommissioned USS Wisconsin (BB-64), Senator Warner addresses a crowd during a 60th anniversary celebration at Hampton Roads Naval Museum in Norfolk, Va., in April 2004. Wisconsin was one of three battleships used in Korea that Warner saved from the scrap heap, and he was proud to transfer the deed from the Navy to the city of Norfolk.

And the differences between active-duty and reserve Marines, said Warner, were indistinguishable while forward-deployed. He wouldn't have been able to observe this firsthand had it not been for a chance encounter in 1951.

Assigned as a communications officer at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif., after completing his MOS school, Warner was coming to terms with the fact that, yet again, he wasn't going to make it to the fight.

"Here I am, my second time in military service, and again, I have little prospect of getting overseas," he remembers thinking to himself one evening as he sat in the dimly lit bar of the air station's officers' club. He began "shooting the breeze" with Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Gordon, the commanding officer of Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 121, which was scheduled to deploy to Korea on a carrier in two days' time. When Gordon learned that Warner was a communications officer, his eyes lit up. At the last minute, his "comm-o" was unable to deploy. Warner asked if he could take his place, and Gordon replied, "OK, I'll get you orders."

The next thing Warner knew, he was attached to VMA-121 as a ground officer serving the communication needs of the AD Skyraider squadron, and was aboard USS *Sitkoh Bay* (CVE-86), headed for Korea by way of Japan. As they crossed the Pacific, he picked up on the intense rivalry between the Sailors and Marines on board. "The Navy persecuted the Marines in every way," he said. "It was friction from day one!" It was another experience he would tuck away in the back of his mind, that he'd later be able to do something about.

Deployed to K-6 airfield at Pyontack, Republic of Korea, VMA-121 pilots flew the Skyraider, which could accommodate 9,000 pounds of ordnance, supporting the infantry on missions lasting up to 14 hours.

"The squadron dropped more bomb tonnage during the Korean War than any other Navy or Marine Corps squadron, devastating enemy airfields, supply dumps, bridges and railroad yards," reads the unit's history.

Warner describes sleeping in tents, the

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"If there's one crack in that thing while it's being transported, it's your ass!" Warner recalls Gen Cates telling him before snapping his swagger stick under his arm and marching off.

Warner succeeded in developing the plan to ensure that the statue, unveiled in 1951, arrived in one piece.

During that period of time, Warner observed what he describes as a pervasive bias against reserve Marines within the active duty component.

"The Corps really looked upon the reserves as second-class citizens," Warner said. It was an issue that, unbeknownst to him at the time, he'd one day be in a position to do something about.

Warner and other reservists who were called to active duty at the onset of the Korean War learned their trades and specialties quickly, he said, adding, "I'm proud of what America did, how they pulled their reserves in, what their reserves did."

air raid trenches, and serving alongside the squadron's Marines, who he called a "marvelous cadre of people."

In a conflict with no air-to-air fighting, the biggest dangers for the squadron's pilots were antiaircraft weapons and mechanical failures, said Warner solemnly.

On Nov. 18, 1951, a communication was received from LtCol Gordon, the squadron's commander and the same Marine who had pulled Warner into the squadron just before the deployment, during a bombing run. That communication resulted in a turn of events that he says will stay with him forever. "My plane's on fire, I'm going to jump," Gordon had said over the radio.

Using the coordinates from that last transmission, Warner was tasked with leading a retrieval team to find Gordon.

"We struggled up near the North Korean border and we found him," said Warner. Gordon's parachute had failed. "It was terrible. So I wrapped him up in his parachute and took him back. And it was just one of those things you'll never forget. In keeping with Marine doctrine, we Marines leave nobody behind."

"When I got to be Secretary of the Navy, I called his widow and told her that I wouldn't have gotten this job as Secretary had not her husband taken me aboard his squadron," Warner said.

Gordon's death wasn't the only loss in



COURTESY OF JOHN W. WARNER

Warner, left, reunited with an old friend, Capt George Cole, during a chance meeting at a forward airfield in Korea in May 1952. Cole was killed in an aircraft crash the following day, and this photo is displayed prominently in Warner's home library as a reminder of the sacrifices that so many ordinary Americans have made in service to their nation.

Korea that deeply impacted Warner. On May 18, 1952, Warner was flying around as an observer in an old torpedo bomber, which the squadron had stripped of torpedo gear to make room for a crew. Soon after they had stopped at a forward

airfield to refuel, Warner heard someone shout "Hey buddy!" from across the air strip. It was Captain George "Cozy" Cole, a pilot with VMF-321, the reserve squadron that Warner had been attached to in Washington. The two Marines, who he described as being "the best of friends," hugged and asked someone to take a photograph of them together. Cole, a teacher from Fairfax, Va., was headed home in a matter of days, with just one final flight ahead of him.

"One more to do, and then, John, it's your turn," Warner, with emotion in his voice, recalls Cole saying to him.

Several days later, as Warner scanned the casualty reports, he learned that Cole never returned from that last flight. The photograph they took together nearly 70 years ago became one of his prized possessions and takes a front-and-center place on the mantel in the library at Warner's home, next to a photo of the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee when he served as chairman. The sacrifice of Cole—and of so many other Americans like him—never was far from Warner's mind, even as he ascended into a high-profile life as a public figure.

He'd carry these stories with him as he sought to "repay the debt" he believed he owed to the Navy and Marine Corps for the leadership training he received during his service.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, center, leads Senator Warner, right, and Senator Carl Levin, left, to the crash scene at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., on Sept. 11, 2001. During his 30 years in the U.S. Senate, Warner was in a position of leadership during many pivotal moments in American history.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

While serving as Secretary of the Navy, Warner, second from the right, and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, far right, watch as President Richard Nixon, left, shakes hands with former Congressman Carl Vinson in front of a model of the nuclear-propelled aircraft carrier that would be named after Vinson at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., Nov. 1, 1974.

“I was just an average guy. Nothing heroic or anything,” Warner said. “I benefitted more from the Marines and what they did for me than I was ever able to do for them. So I had to make it up—I had a deficit to make up, and when I got to be Secretary of the Navy and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I doubled that debt.”

After returning home from Korea in 1952, Warner left active duty and returned to the University of Virginia School of Law, graduating in 1953 and remaining in the Marine Corps Reserve until 1961. After working in the legal field in a variety of capacities, including as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and as a partner at law firm Hogan & Hartson—now Hogan Lovells, where he continues to work today—he joined

the campaign staff for President Richard Nixon.

After the election, President Nixon’s Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, approached Warner and told him that the president wanted to nominate him to serve as undersecretary of the Navy working for fellow Marine veteran John H. Chaffee, who had served both in World War II at

Guadalcanal and Okinawa, and in the Korean War.

Warner chuckles as he says that as a young Sailor chipping paint, swabbing decks and learning to fix radios, he never could have imagined that one day he would be running the entire Department of the Navy.

With Chaffee as the Secretary and

Senator Warner, center, shares a laugh with Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman Jr., left, and ADM Carlisle A.H. Trost, right, upon ADM Trost’s assumption of command as the Chief of Naval Operations at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., in June 1986. Trost was one of several notable officers who served as an aide to Warner while he was SECNAV.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Senator Warner, right, then-Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Senator Carl Levin, left, ranking member, ask questions of Donald C. Winter, the Secretary of the Navy, during testimony concerning the National Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2007 and the Future Years Defense Program in March 2006.

Warner as his right-hand man, said Warner with a laugh, people “suddenly realized two Marines were going to run the Navy!”

“Chaffee and I bent over backwards not to show partiality, but no one tried to screw the Marine Corps once we were there,” Warner said.

As undersecretary from 1969 to 1972 and subsequently as Secretary of the Navy, Warner, the only secretary ever to have served in both the Navy and the Marine Corps, was in a position to advocate for the Corps during a crucial period in American history: the Vietnam War.

And though it wasn't without its challenges, he considers it the “most fun job” he's ever had, particularly during the three years he worked alongside Chaffee.

“We're a family, the Marines. We'll always be a family,” Warner said, referring to the friendship that grew between the two, who later served together in the U.S. Senate.

As undersecretary and later as secretary, Warner worked to reduce the animosity between the Navy and Marine Corps and ensure the longevity of the Marine Corps within the Department of Defense. “The adoration America now has for our Marine Corps, at one time was not shared by Presidents and powers that be,” said Warner.

During his tenure in the Department of the Navy, a number of remarkable Navy and Marine Corps officers worked as his aides. Among them were future editor of the *Marine Corps Gazette*, John Greenwood; William G. “Bill” Leftwich Jr., who was killed in a helicopter crash in Vietnam in 1970 and for whom the Marine Corps' Leftwich Trophy for outstanding leadership is named; and Edwin H. Simmons, future brigadier general and renowned historian of the Marine Corps.

Surrounded by what he describes as the highest caliber of individuals, Warner made an effort to support the Marines and Sailors engaged in combat in Vietnam—and their families back home—as best he could. He regularly met with the wives of prisoners of war and traveled to Vietnam to visit the troops on Christmas Day, visiting 22 ships in 48 hours.

“I was lowered by helicopter on each of the decks,” Warner recalled, adding



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that he wanted to shake hands with each and every Sailor.

It was one of a number of trips to Vietnam for Warner despite some resistance he encountered about putting himself in harm's way. “I pushed the envelope,” said Warner. “I wanted to go up on this

fire base so I could check and see what the situation was. They came back to me and said, ‘The fire base is hot!’ ” he recalled. “And I said ‘Let's go anyway!’ ”

At one particular fire base, wounded Marines and Sailors on stretchers awaited transport by helicopter. Warner walked



As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Warner, center, was photographed with the other members of the committee from the 109th Congress, Nov. 16, 2006. Front row, from the left: Jeff Sessions, Pat Roberts, James Inhofe, John McCain, John Warner, Carl Levin, Edward Kennedy, Robert Byrd, Joseph Lieberman. Second row, from the left: John Thune, John Cornyn, Elizabeth Dole, Lindsey Graham, James Talent, John Ensign, Susan Collins, Jack Reed, Daniel Akaka, Bill Nelson, Robert Menendez, Mark Pryor, Evan Bayh and Hillary Clinton. Pictured in the back row are two staff members. (Photo courtesy of John W. Warner)

around and visited with the injured and recalls peeking at one Marine's toe tag, an identification marker on his foot.

"Hey man, the tag says you're going to be all right," Warner said to the Marine, who he says was drowsy and full of morphine. "I saw a little bit of a smile go across his face. So I went about my business."

Decades later, when Warner was a U.S. Senator, he was at the Naval Hospital Bethesda, Md., for a tonsillectomy. A nurse came in to his room as he was recovering and told him that the Chief of Naval Operations was coming to visit and bringing a guest. The guest was the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles C. Krulak who, unbeknownst to Warner, was the injured Marine he had spoken to on the fire base in Vietnam. Gen Krulak finally had a chance to repay the courtesy. He walked over, placed a tag around Warner's toe, laughed and said, "You're going to be all right."

After his tenure as Secretary of the Navy came to an end in 1974, Warner served as the administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial. Later, his lifelong camaraderie with his fellow Marines continued when the people of Virginia elected him to the United States Senate in 1978. The newly minted Republican politician was one of nine Marines in the Senate at the time, serving alongside his friend and former Secretary of the Navy John H. Chaffee of Rhode Island; Henry R. Bellmon of Oklahoma; Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois; John Glenn of Ohio; John C. Culver of Iowa; Dale Bumpers

of Arkansas; James R. Sasser of Tennessee; and Howell T. Heflin of Alabama.

"Boy, we had a block of votes, and like Marines, we hung together," Warner said of the cadre of Marines, made up of Democrats and Republicans. They were always on watch to protect or augment the needs of the Corps.

The group of Marines in the Senate, of which Chaffee and Glenn were the two "senior officers," continued to observe Marine Corps rank structure amongst themselves.

"Believe me, we followed protocol!" Warner said. "We would have quiet meet-

"Boy, we had a block of votes, and like Marines, we hung together," Warner said of the cadre of Marines, made up of Democrats and Republicans. They were always on watch to protect or augment the needs of the Corps.

ings with just the Marines, boy, no staff, no nothing—and plot our course for the Corps.”

For 30 years, Warner represented the Commonwealth of Virginia through five consecutive terms in the Senate, serving on the Armed Services Committee for the entirety his tenure. During the last 15 years, he served as either the chairman or ranking member of the committee, relying on his service in the Navy and Marine Corps to guide his steps.

In addition to advocating for the expansion of the GI Bill, Warner also was a leader in instituting “TRICARE for Life” coverage and was involved in procuring the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and advocated for the awarding of the Purple Heart for servicemembers killed or wounded in terrorist attacks following the 1983 bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. Immediately after the bombing, at the direction of President Ronald Reagan, Warner traveled to Beirut accompanied by then-Major and future Commandant of the Marine Corps, James L. Jones Jr., to visit with survivors and deliver a clear message on the president’s behalf that America would not withdraw.

Throughout his time as Secretary of the Navy and as a Senator, Warner said he was fortunate to have had cordial relationships with all of the Marine Corps Commandants. “Many of them became good close friends,” he said.

In 2006, Congress passed the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2007, authorizing the appropriations for the Department of Defense under his name in recognition of his decades of service.

Although he made the decision not to run for re-election in 2008, Warner wouldn’t leave the Senate without securing funding for one final project, one that truly would bring his life’s work full circle: the much-needed refurbishment of the Iwo Jima statue outside the gate of MCB Quantico that a nervous young 1stLt Warner had helped install in 1951. He couldn’t think of a better way to bring that chapter to a close.

In an honor befitting his contributions to the special relationship between the militaries of the United States and the United Kingdom, Warner was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II during a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in 2009.

He’s remained an important figure to the Navy and Marine Corps, and considers himself undeserving of the recognition that both have given him. The Navy christened the nuclear-powered *Virginia*-class attack submarine USS *John Warner* (SSN-785) in 2014. In 2015, Marine Corps



NANCY S. LIGHTMAN

Warner, left, and LtCol Buzz Hefti, USMC (Ret), look at a copy of the Senate Armed Services Committee photograph pictured on the previous page while meeting with *Leatherneck* at Hogan Lovells in Washington, D.C., Jan. 8. After retiring from the Marine Corps, Hefti worked as the senator’s defense staffer from 1981 to 1982, and their friendship continues to this day.

University hosted a dedication ceremony on its campus in Quantico for the John Warner Center for Advanced Military Studies, home of Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the School of Advanced Warfighting and the Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons Marine Corps History Center, named for his former aide who became a close ally and friend.

As an individual whose life has been defined by the values of diligence, hard work and education—values that he said were his father’s, but that continued to be reinforced by his service—Warner, reflects back with humility, gratitude and the deepest admiration both for the Marines he worked alongside and the members of his duty-driven generation,

many of whom, though no longer with us, continue to serve as an inspiration for future generations of Americans.

Senator Warner still holds a special place in his heart for those with whom he served decades ago. “I’m honored to be interviewed by *Leatherneck* in honor of my generation of veterans, most of whom are long gone, in the hopes that some young Marines will say, ‘I can do better than that old grizzly rascal!’ ”

It’s fitting that he calls to mind a naval term to best describe the impact that the Corps and the Navy had on his life, setting him on a course to success: “The Navy and Marine Corps were always my anchor to windward in my adult life,” he said.

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