FROM EXTROVERT TO INTROVERT
MAJOR MILLER TELLS HIS STORY
From the Signal Bridge

As this issue of Legacy Newsletter® goes to print, here in our Nation's capital, we're welcoming the first signs of spring – daffodils, cherry blossoms, and baseball!

In January, your Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society celebrated 114 years of serving Sailors, Marines, and their families. Much has changed since 1904, but one constant remains: your Society stands ready to meet the needs of Sea Service personnel. Society volunteers and staff are well trained and motivated. Society donors and patriotic citizens respond with generous hearts.

As you read about Major Miller's struggles with combat-related injuries and survivor's guilt, you'll learn how one of the Society's visiting nurses stood ready to listen, connect, guide, and assist him through the darkest periods. Your support makes it possible for 44 Society visiting nurses to meet the needs of more than 1,700 combat-served Marines, Sailors, and their families and caregivers.

We're also honored to share the stories of two Sailors. One whose combat-related injuries made him one of the early pioneers of physical fitness and bodybuilding; and another who rose from Seaman Recruit to Vice Admiral. Their appreciation for Sailors, Marines, and their families continues – one through a generous gift from his estate and the other through a perpetual scholarship fund. Taking care of our own is a way of life for all who have worn the uniform of our Nation's military.

Thank you for your support – because of you, the Society stands ready.

Sincerely,

Admiral Steve Abbot, U.S. Navy (Retired)
President and Chief Executive Officer

From Extrovert to Introvert, Major Sean Miller tells his story

When Sean Miller joined the Marine Corps, he had three goals: to test himself, fight on the front lines, and be a role model and leader for Marines. Growing up, Sean lived in an abusive family and was abandoned and bullied. Those experiences hardened his resolve to be better and do better than the people who had hurt him. “I decided to toughen myself up,” he recalled. “I really wanted to take on the leadership role of helping younger men by being a caring individual who would look out for them—someone who's been there and done that.” Throughout an 18-year military career that included six deployments, Sean had plenty of opportunities to lead Marines.

During college, Sean interned for two years with the CIA. Initially, he thought about a career in intelligence, but realized he wanted something else, so he applied and was accepted to Marine Corps Officer Candidate School (OCS). “I decided the Marines were the ones who would test me the most and it would be the most rewarding achievement to earn the honor of being called a Marine. I just showed up at a recruiting station. I said, ‘I don't need you to sell me, I just need you to sign me.’”

A year-and-a-half into Sean's first tour, he was deployed to the Philippines. “I was in California when September 11 happened,” Sean explained. “But I was deploying to the Far East.

In 2003, when his unit returned to Camp Pendleton, Sean asked for an extension because he knew the unit was heading to Ramadi, Iraq. Instead, he was sent to the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot in San Diego, while everyone he had served with in the Philippines went to Ramadi, and where the unit
lost 35 men. “I had a number of friends who were wounded, maimed, or killed,” Sean said. As soon as he was eligible, he joined a USMC Reserve unit that was short of officers and bound for Fallujah, “because I felt bad about not being in Ramadi.” He became a platoon commander.

“That was the height of the bad times, in 2006,” Sean recalled. “During that tour, I was shot at often, and I would find rounds that had impacted my SAPI [body armor]. The body armor stopped all of the rounds from doing any damage, aside from generating contusions and bruising. I was blown up by RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades], and I drove on top of a massive IED, resulting in a traumatic brain injury, a broken sternum and collarbone, compressed vertebrae, a broken nose and ribs. I had shrapnel and other injuries from that incident as well. We lost another 11 Marines during that deployment. After that tour, I didn’t have to go back, but I did. I went back to Fallujah.”

“My injuries weren’t treated, mainly because of my pride. I was that gung-ho Marine who didn’t want anyone to know there was something going on or say that I was not deployable,” Sean said.

When Sean interned at the CIA he took a personality assessment that classified him as an extreme extrovert. Now, he is an extreme introvert. The transformation, he explained, started after his first tour in Fallujah. “During that tour, I began a slow, precipitous withdrawal from everybody and everything. I was unwilling to let anyone know about my problems, and my isolation, withdrawal, rage, and confusion regarding the meaning of life continued for the next twelve years – exacerbated by each deployment.”

He dealt with the pain and trauma by using alcohol to self-medicate and slow his mind down. Although he was away from the war zone in the Middle East, Sean still faced stressful active duty assignments. “I was assigned as a special advisor to a four-star officer in Korea for all affairs inside the DMZ. I was part of the negotiating team and I was a special investigator and team leader. We got shot at. You’d think, since we were in Korea, the conflict part of my job would end - but it didn’t,” he said.

Despite Sean’s continued struggles, he was assigned as the executive officer (XO) of an infantry battalion. “However, my struggles came to a high point in 2013. Alcohol wasn’t working. I was trying to hold on,” Sean said. “As the XO, the only person you can talk to is your commanding officer (CO), because you’re the only two field grade officers in the unit. I broke down and bawled in front of my CO, and he handed me a referral information card, meaning, ‘suck it up.’ The card entitled me to 12 free therapy sessions.”

At one point, Sean sought help from a psychiatrist embedded in his unit, but he didn’t tell him exactly what he was experiencing, “because I didn’t want to lose my job, or be declared not deployable.” The psychiatrist diagnosed Sean with anxiety disorder. After that, Sean deployed twice more to Afghanistan as a special advisor where, he said, “We were out there in the hinterlands, with little support, trying to teach and coach people who didn’t want to help themselves. We were in very bad and isolated positions and had hard firefights. Many more warriors were killed or wounded. When I came back from that tour, my PTSD completely spiraled out of control. Four months after I returned from Afghanistan in 2016, I hit the high-water mark for my PTSD. I experienced my most severe disassociated state, which lasted five days. I was a participant in my own life, but not in control.”

“Partly because of how my symptoms were treated during my earlier attempts to get help, as well as the strain my injury had placed on my relationships, and my worsening decision making capabilities, I decided that I had to escape,” he explained. “I planned my escape. I withdrew all my money from my bank account. I gathered all my survival gear, body armor, and weapons. I planned to go off the grid. I was going to chop my vehicle, make it unrecognizable, and go into hiding. I wanted someone to see I needed help, but no one was willing to take that step. I was married, but she’d finally had enough and we separated. My wife informed the police of my condition. My plea for help ended when a SWAT team found me in a hotel. Sixteen SWAT team members and 30 police officers came in to extract me because they didn’t know what I was going to do.”

“Since October 2016, I’ve been to 6 inpatient treatments and 11 months of partial hospitalization. Finally, the military decided to retire me. Since then, I’ve been getting treatment, but there

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A Bodybuilding Hero leaves a Legacy for Fellow Sailors and Marines

He was a Sailor, a veteran, an entrepreneur, and a legend in the world of bodybuilding. And now, a generous benefactor of the Society.

Joe Gold, the founder of the world-famous Gold's Gym and World Gym, is widely known as the father of bodybuilding. His connection with the military goes all the way back to World War II. "Joe was grievously injured in the war," says Mike Uretz, a long-time friend and business partner. The U.S. Navy ship Joe was serving on was the target of a torpedo attack. Luckily, it was a near miss, but the blast sent Joe flying off of a companionway, tossing him down several flights of metal stairs.

"His injuries were serious," Mike says. "His back was badly hurt, and he spent over nine months in the hospital." When he finally got out of the hospital, Joe began bodybuilding and weightlifting to rehabilitate himself and keep his back strong. And that's how he ultimately got involved in the business of opening and managing gyms.

Joe started Gold's Gym in 1965 in Venice, CA., and it soon became a landmark for bodybuilders. "Joe had a soft spot for anyone who was in the Service," Mike says. "If he could give them a job at the gym, he would. If they couldn't pay, he'd let them come in and train anyway."

More than a business owner, Joe even constructed the exercise machines that were used in his gyms, including the weights and barbells, from his home in Venice, CA. "He'd get two or three guys and move stuff around on the street," Mike says, "then he'd get the acetylene torch out and start building."

But, inevitably, Joe's restlessness returned. "He'd get bored," Mike says, "and sign up to sail with the merchant marines for a trip to Malaysia or someplace." Restless again, he decided to sell the first Gold's Gym, but as part of the sale, he agreed never to use his name and never to open another gym.

That's when Mike entered the picture. A lawyer, Mike represented Joe, and challenged the restrictions of that agreement. Then, together as business partners, they opened World Gym. They built it into a national chain with 300 locations.

Mike and Joe were friends and business partners for 30 years. After Joe passed away, Mike became the Trustee of his estate. Knowing that Joe cared deeply about veterans, Mike looked for a charity to donate stock from Joe's estate. After some research, he found the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. "I read about the Society, and it seemed like a very legit organization." And so the gift, a very substantial one, was made to the Society, in honor of Joe Gold.

"Because Joe was a Navy man in World War II, he would hope that this gift would help Sailors and Marines who were struggling to get back on their feet," Mike says. "Joe was just a great guy. He took care of everyone who was close to him." And now, from this point on, Joe's concern for Sea Service members and their families will be part of his legacy forever.
The Recent Tax Law Changes and Your Charitable Giving
Craig Anderson, Esq.

Recently Congress, in a whirlwind of activity, passed a tax reform bill that made many changes in the way most of us will file and pay Federal taxes starting in 2018. Here are a few of the main differences from last year to this year that you will want to be aware of:

a) **Tax Brackets.** Starting at 10% and topping out at 37%, there are still 7 tax brackets and all but two are lower than previously.

b) **The Standard Deduction** previously was $6,500 for single filers and $13,000 for joint filers. Both standard deduction amounts now have nearly doubled to $12,000 for single filers and $24,000 for joint filers.

c) **Personal Exemptions** are no longer allowed for anyone – taxpayer or dependent.

d) **Schedule A deductions** (6 types of expenses: property taxes, interest expenses, state and local taxes, medical expenses, charitable deductions and miscellaneous expenses). These deductions have been preserved for all taxpayers itemizing their deductions. However, there is a new $10,000 limitation on the aggregate total of state and local income, sales, and state and local property taxes.

e) **Mortgage Interest.** Under the new tax law, the deduction for mortgage interest for a primary and second home is limited to $750,000. The new law suspends deductibility of interest on home equity lines of credit.

**So what are tax wise ways to give under the new laws?**

**Stocks.** Donors can still avoid paying a 20% capital gains tax on appreciated securities they’ve held over one year by giving them to charity rather than converting to cash.

**IRA’s.** Donors over 70½ can make a direct transfer from a traditional IRA or Roth IRA of up to $100,000 to charity. The rollover to charity counts toward satisfying the donor’s required minimum distribution and the donor avoids all income tax on the withdrawal, even if the donor doesn’t itemize.

**Gift in a Will.** It costs nothing to include a provision for the Society in a will. This remains the easiest gift to make and the donor controls the asset until death.

**Make a big gift.** If a taxpayer’s income level is close to a lower tax bracket, consider making a large, one-time cash gift that will lower your adjusted gross income to a lower tax bracket, with potentially significant tax savings.

As always, check with your tax advisor when considering the amount and timing of your charitable gifts to determine what would be best for you.

Craig Anderson has practiced law for more than 35 years, 20 of which as an active duty Air Force JAG. He earned his JD from the Indiana University Mauer School of Law and has a Masters of Law degree from the George Washington University Law School. He now focuses his practice on trust and estate law and issues of concern to military veterans and their families.

**Support Team NMCRS at the 2018 Marine Corps Marathon**

Please go to action.nmcrs.org/page/outreach/splash/mcm-2018 to learn about 4 ways you can help.

If you would like to learn more about ways to support tomorrow’s Sailors, Marines, and their families through a gift in your will, please visit www.myimpactwithnmcrs.org
It was in the chaos of World War II when a young man from a tiny town – Mounds, Ill., population: 800 – enlisted in the Navy. Edward Travers was just 17. For the next 41 years, he served with honor, distinguishing himself as a man of integrity and eventually rising to the rank of Vice Admiral. “He was as proud of the white hat he got when he enlisted,” says his son, Ed, Jr. “as the white hat he got when he became an Admiral.”

Travers was proud of his status as a “mustang,” an enlisted man who becomes a commissioned officer. He served in World War II on a Pacific Fleet aircraft carrier, and was later assigned to submarine duty, serving on the USS Razorback, USS Argonaut, and USS Hawkbill, and he commanded the USS Spikefish in 1960.

“World War II, Vietnam, Korea, the Cuban Missile Crisis – he was there for all of it,” his son says. “During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Dad was commanding the USS Spikefish, and they got the order to stand down. But my Dad said, ‘This is a United States Navy submarine. We never stand down. We always stand ready.’”

After serving as Commander, Submarine Squadron 82, Travers attended the Industrial College for the Armed Forces, and earned a Master of Science degree in business administration from George Washington University. After that, he served in several budget and logistics assignments, and as Vice Chief of Navy Material, from 1980 - 1983 before retiring.

Ed Jr., his brothers, and his mom accompanied Travers to duty stations around the world where his father served. “It wasn’t just the Navy that my Dad valued. Family was important too. “I remember Dad coming home for 48 hours to be there for my wedding,” his son says, “then it was back to Vietnam.”

During his service, Travers always advocated for Sailors and their families, pushing for medical care, housing, day care, and more. “Coming up through the ranks,” his son says, “there were times when we called on the Society for help. My Dad was very aware of the challenges military families face.”

So, once he retired from the Navy, it was natural for Travers to become President of the Navy Relief Society, where he had the vision to add “Marine Corps” to the name.

In 1991, to recognize his hands-on leadership and commitment to service, the Society's Board of Directors honored Edward by creating the Vice Admiral E.P. Travers Scholarship and Loan Program. Because of this special program, Navy and Marine Corps children have the opportunity to learn, grow, and serve, just as Admiral Travers did. So far, more than 21,000 recipients have received $47 million in educational assistance through the Travers Scholarship and Loan Program.

This is the difference Admiral Travers made in people’s lives. With a gift in a will, trust, or from an insurance account, you can help sustain this program and other Society programs that will help Sailors, Marines, and their families for generations to come.

“That’s what my Dad was all about,” his son says. “Be prepared and always stand ready.” This is the legacy of service that you honor and uphold with your generous support for the Society. Admiral Travers would be proud.
are always too many cooks in the kitchen, which means no one's in charge. There were so many people involved in my care that I didn't know who to call or go to. I was assigned to the USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment, and had a recovery care coordinator, nurse care manager, PCN, and therapist. Finally, I talked to a buddy of mine who'd just been medically retired, and he said, ‘You should look up Sue [Waddingham, NMCRS Combat Casualty Assistance Visiting Nurse].’ So I called Sue.”

“Now, I don't trust anybody but Sue. She shows earnestness, compassion, and care. She provides tough love. She checks on me. She directs me when I need to be directed to reach out to other people. When I don't feel comfortable going to an appointment, because I’m not cool with unfamiliar circumstances or environments, she says, ‘So you want me to come?’ It's such a relief knowing she's there.”

She introduced me to another client of hers in a veterans group and recommended I join. She said, ‘He’s a good guy.’ I said, ‘Sue, if you think he’s a good guy, I know he’s a good guy. That’s all I need to know.’”

During transition from active duty to medical retirement over the past several months, Sue’s involvement in Sean’s life has been crucial. “I’m not being overly dramatic,” Sean said. “But if it hadn't been for Sue, I would’ve given up a long time ago. I wouldn’t be here.”

“Because of our constant interaction, Sue knows when I need to be talked to or reached out to,” Sean explained. “She knows when to come and be a comforting second set of ears. Because of my TBI, I don’t pick up information quickly. At appointments, Sue asks questions I miss. Sometimes I’m drowning them out because I’m not understanding what they’re saying to me. She holds the clinicians accountable.”

The work of a Society visiting nurse includes both patient-advocate and coordinator. Sue helps Sean manage the interactions between multiple therapists and how to discuss medications and whether or not they’re effective. “She understands my symptoms and what works for me and what doesn’t. She also helped me design an outpatient treatment plan that doesn’t require me to go to a medical facility. I realized that a healthier way to live is realigning what I do on a daily basis to mimic an outpatient structure. Every day I do yoga, go to AA meetings, therapy, and attend the veterans group meetings. I build structure throughout my day so there’s no idle time.”

“She has not only helped me stay stable on a daily basis, but also helped me build and reinforce a positive structure for my life. I’ve gained so much respect for her. She’ll never know what she’s done for me, even though I try to explain it to her. She’s a Godsend.”

“If I did not have Sue in my life, I would not be thinking there could be a positive outcome in my life. She’s given that to me. Just like she holds clinicians accountable, she does the same with me. Now, I don’t want to disappoint her because of the effort and time and emotional investment she’s put into me.”

“I actually market the Society’s Visiting Nurses program to fellow veterans who are going through the same things I’ve gone through. I use my experience with Sue to tell friends about different organizations and people who can help them. Because of my experience and the progress I’ve made, I’m able to provide sound advice for those who were like me two years ago and don’t see an end in sight. If there's anything I could do for NMCRS, I’m on board. I’m a believer. I support the NMCRS Visiting Nurses program—it saved my life.”

Your support makes it possible for the Society’s life-saving Combat Casualty Assistance Visiting Nurses program to provide post-combat assistance for Sea Service members like Sean Miller.
SAVE ON TAXES WHILE SUPPORTING SAILORS AND MARINES IN NEED

Here are two easy ways you may avoid some taxes and support the Society:

1) With a gift of stock or mutual funds you may avoid capital gains and investment taxes and enjoy a charitable income tax deduction.

2) Use all or a portion of your Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA to make a gift directly to the Society and you don’t pay income taxes on the amount you donate.

Visit www.myimpactwithnmcrs.org/avoid-taxes to learn more.

“I give gifts of appreciated stock because it benefits the Society, helps Sailors and Marines, and provides tax benefits – everyone wins. I’ve been fortunate to serve, and in the simplest terms, it just makes me feel good to give.”

Rear Admiral Steve Maas, SC, USN (Ret.)

For assistance in making a gift of stock, mutual funds, or a Charitable IRA Rollover gift, please contact Kate Hillas at 800-654-8364 or philanthropy@nmcrs.org, or visit www.myimpactwithnmcrs.org/avoid-taxes.