

A BRIEF HISTORY FIRST BATTALION SEVENTH MARINES

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Activated on April 1, 1921 the First Battalion, Seventh Marines went on to participate in numerous assignments during war and peace. Commanded by legendary Marine and five time Navy Cross recipient LtGen Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller who, as a LtCol during the Pacific Campaign in World War II earned a star in lieu of his third Navy Cross Medal during the battle for Henderson Field on Guadalcanal with his One Seven Marines. General Raymond G. Davis, now deceased, while a LtCol in command of the First Battalion received the Medal of Honor for the "break out" from the Chosin Reservoir in Korea as his men were instrumental for the First Marine Division reaching the coast and safety. The Marines and Navy Corpsmen of One Seven continued their proud tradition into the Vietnam War.

Following the 3d, and 2d Battalions, the Marines of One Seven landed on the white sandy beaches of Chu Lai in Quang Ngai Province Republic of Vietnam on August 14, 1965. Several days after disembarking the men were assigned to "mop up" the enemy marching overland to the area of ongoing Operation Starlite. The Marines and US Navy Corpsmen would participate in numerous operations, and thousands of patrols ranging as far south as Duc Pho in Binh Dinh Province to areas in Thua Tien Province north of Da Nang. From April 1967 until August 1969 the battalion protected the sprawling military complexes and civilian areas of Da Nang by patrolling the western portion of the "Rocket Belt" and at the same time engaged the enemy wherever the higher command directed the men to go.

The battalion finally stood down in late September 1970 from Que Son District in Quang Nam province where it had been operating. Most of the men were reassigned to other units in Vietnam while a small group boarded US Navy shipping and left for Camp Pendleton California in October 1970. The war had come to a close for One Seven.

During the 1865 days in combat, 530 Marines and 32 Navy Corpsmen were killed, including a battalion Commander, LtCol John Dowd who fell to enemy fire and was awarded the Navy Cross, Legion of Merit, Silver Star, and Purple Heart Medal during his service with the battalion. Two Marines and a Navy Corpsman were awarded the Medal of Honor; the latter was the only living recipient of the Nations highest Military award for Valor who served with the Seventh Marines

during the Vietnam War. Twelve Navy Crosses, six awarded posthumously, 102 Silver Star Medals of which 32 were awarded posthumously to the Marines and Navy Corpsmen of One Seven, and an untold number of Purple Heart Medals for wounds suffered went to the men, in many cases there were multiple awards.

With the ending of the war in Vietnam the men who followed filled the ranks of the departed and carried the battalion's proud tradition into combat. In 1990 and 1991 they participated in Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield during the Gulf War as an essential part of TASK FORCE RIPPER under the Command of then LtCol and now LtGen James M. Mattis, and since March 2003 have been deployed three times to the war in Iraq. The Marines and Navy Corpsmen will always be "Semper Fidelis", "Always Faithful" giving it their "ALL" to God, Country and their beloved Corps as in the past, in the present, and forever in the future.