

David Wratlslaw

Comm 413

Dr. Maxwell

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### **General Glenn M. Walters**



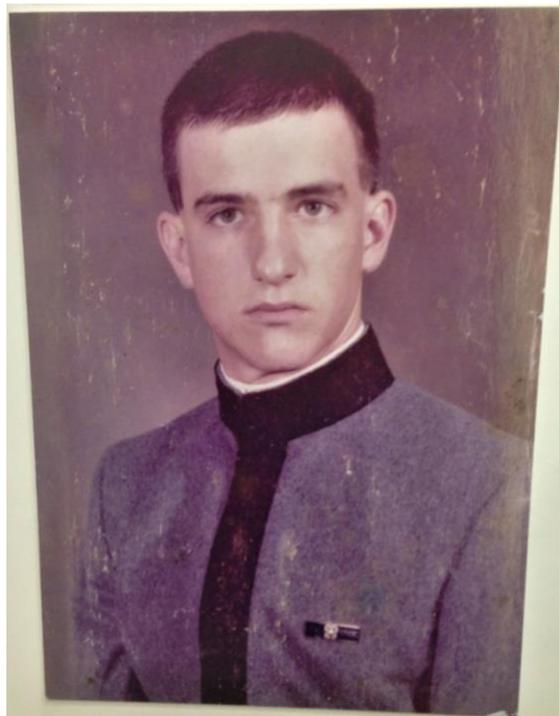
#### **From the Start, a World Traveler**

General Glenn M. Walters was born in Warrington, Virginia, in 1957 and traveled overseas throughout his early childhood. His family was stationed in Karachi, Pakistan; he moved there when he was two years old. His father was a Central Intelligence Agency officer there, and then he spent one year at grade school back in the United States before moving to Cyprus. What was supposed to be a three-year tour there was cut short, and his family was evacuated by the Marines when conflict broke out over control of the island in the 1960s. From Cyprus, they were moved to Beirut, where his father rejoined his family before going to Athens, Greece. He was later stationed with his family in New Delhi, India then Okinawa, Japan, before returning to the United States for High School. He can truly be called a world citizen.

General Walters recalled missing family and friends because he moved around so much but says, “When you are growing up you don’t know the difference.” He joked that one thing he always did when returning to the States was to fill a suitcase with candy from a 7/11 because, at that time, there was no global commerce like there is now.

### **Becoming a Bulldog**

General Walters’ decision to join the military stemmed from his love of history. He visited the Virginia Military Institute as well as The Citadel, Virginia Tech, and the Naval Academy. He chose The Citadel over the rest in part because of the City of Charleston around it.



General Walters connects his decision to join The Marine Corps to his Citadel education. He explained, “The system [at The Citadel] makes you want to be the best that you can be and to accept the biggest challenge.” He went on to say that he did not want his college life to be like going to a community college, and, at The Citadel, his wish was granted. He was influenced by two people in particular in his Navy ROTC unit. The first one was at the time a Gunnery Sargent,

Gunnery Sergeant Gary Lee, a Vietnam veteran. Lee arrived at The Citadel during General Walters' freshman year and stayed throughout General Walters' graduation. Gunnery Sergeant Lee eventually became the thirteenth Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

A second important influence on General Walters was Lieutenant Colonial Spivey. He was the Executive Officer of the unit stationed locally in Jenkins Hall on The Citadel campus. Of both Spivey and Lee, General Walters said, "I admired both of their professionalism, their esprit de corps, that's what I wanted to be like."



### **Applying Citadel Values in the Marine Corps**

General Walters described himself as "mission-oriented, task-oriented and leadership-oriented" during his time in the Marine Corps. "Those are the things I learned at The Citadel," he

said. He explained that at his position as second in command of the Marine Corps, the position of Assistant Commandant, there were certain responsibilities he had that were not seen by junior officers. He was responsible for manning, training, and equipping the force. He had to handle policy, as in the way people are treated, and monitor recruiting and training of both enlisted and officers. This included how to vote as a member of the military, what rights they had, and what their legal responsibilities were.

He also had to work with Congress and the Secretary of Defense to make sure that his people had the equipment they need to be successful in battle. From uniforms to gear, weapons and vehicles, it is all his responsibility. He said, “we want to man, train, and equip our force such that we would never be in a fair fight. We want to be the overwhelmingly superior force.” He went on to explain that, in his position, he had to know the capabilities of the enemy and make sure his troops’ capabilities were better. Honor, Courage, and Commitment were the Marine Corps core values when he was there. As the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, he needed to operate morally and ethically to make sure training was in line with these values.

### **Flying Cobras**

General Walters started as a Cobra attack helicopter pilot once he left the infantry to go to flight school. He chose to go to Camp Pendleton, California, to fly Cobras and was trained there by Vietnam veterans. He considered himself lucky to have combat veterans training him. “Flying a Cobra was a great experience. I deployed to the far East a few times during my first tour, I got lucky and went to first reconnaissance battalion.” He told me he got to jump out of airplanes and do recon work, which was very difficult. Then he went to the Persian Gulf, where he flew tankers, and later went to test pilot school, where he earned what is basically a PhD in Aviation.

He was taught to discover for himself the capabilities of the test craft “how high, how fast, what angle to make, how hard can it land.” General Walters got involved with the Osprey because he saw a problem with the testing strategy in place and spoke up about it; he was given the assignment to fix the problem. He later got to fly the Osprey into combat in Afganistan.



### **Leading the Next Generation of Cadets**

General Walters spent 39 years 6 months and 16 days in the Marine Corps in active service. He was called right before his planned retirement and asked to come back to Charleston to serve as The Citadel president. When asked about his decision to return to campus, he said, “At my age, you start thinking about the young people, that would be the biggest reward. Being able to come back to my alma mater and continue to serve. It was an easy decision.”

General Walters’ most rewarding memory during his time in the Marine Corps was being able to lead Marines. He said, “the icing on the cake is if you get to lead them in combat.” The reward of training paying off is the most rewarding thing to him. He compares The Citadel to

the Marine Corps by saying that both think of themselves as the toughest and most challenging in terms of training and how closely they adhere to their core values. He says the people who go to The Citadel or the Marine Corps are like minded, often times leading to life -long friendships that follow their members forever.

General Walters' final advice to young leaders is this: Know your job and the people under you, and be prepared for the world outside of school to be completely different—different from the world inside the Lesesne gates and different again from company to company, from service to service.