Always A Marine…Bob's Story

James Robert Manis and his Marine Corps Story.

Written in 2022.

So many have asked about Bob's time in the Marines. Here is what I was able to piece together from what I was told and what is on his DD214 paperwork.

Bob enlisted in the Marines on April 29, 1954. Bob would have been **just 16** (his birthday is April 20, 1938). Not 15 as he always told the story. He would have left Grossmont High School where he attended. He was just a sophomore. I had asked him many times why he did this, and he just said he thought he could pull it off and wanted to be a Marine. I think he was brave and quite adventurous to attempt this at just 16!

He falsely listed his place of birth as Bartlesville, Oklahoma. This was to make tracking down his age harder. He also told them that he was born at home and didn't have a birth certificate. Both of those things were not true. He was trying to throw them off track. He needed to be 18 to join without parental permission. The page attached to his DD214 is a correction to his paperwork that shows his correct birthplace (Arrey, New Mexico).

He was a PFO (Private First Class) when his lie about his age caught up with him. He was HONORABLY discharged March 2, 1955. 10 months and 4 days served. Not the 2 years that had become his story over the years. He would have still been just 16 years old. Turning 17 the following month. Bob always said his mother wouldn't sign the papers for him to stay in because she didn't want to, but I think the truth of the matter is that he still wasn't old enough to stay in even with parental permission! He would have needed to be 17.

All his family, including his parents (his mom and stepdad

Terry Hendricks) knew Bob had lied about his age and joined the Marines. Younger sister Pam remembers it being talked about and the family even visited him at Camp Pendleton on family days. He had not run away from them or home and he wasn't hiding—they full on knew his whereabouts.

He was honorably discharged and returned to El Cajon with his family. El Cajon Valley High School had been newly built, and he started his junior year there in the Fall. He only missed a year of high school. He graduated as one of the oldest in his class (at 19) in 1957.

Bob always told me that his time in the Marines matured him. He was an average to poor student as a freshman and sophomore at Grossmont High School, but when he returned to High School after the Marines, he was well above average student. He had wonderful stories of his "glory days" at El Cajon Valley High School as a star in sports, an excellent student, and he enjoyed involvement with clubs and activities. His football coach had to carry a copy of Bob's birth certificate with him; to prove Bob wasn't too old to be playing high school sports. With his size and tattoos, he looked like he was much older!

He got his two tattoos during this short stint in the Marines. His USMC emblem on his lower right arm and his "Tiny" Tattoo (a black panther) on his upper left arm. He would encourage young people to get their tattoos in a place where they could be hidden or not get them at all!!

Bob's service in the Marines was something he was proud of. He played Marine Corps Football and did some boxing. He trained for Sea Duty and served as a guard on the brig of a Navy ship (the Shangri-La). He traveled up the coast on that ship and spent some time in Bremerton, Washington.

I felt it was fitting for Bob's remains to be placed in a military cemetery. Even though his time in the service was short, he was dedicated to his country and his service with

the SDPD exemplified that commitment. He worked hard to get to be in the Marines and his effort was rewarded by them providing a wonderful tribute at his memorial service.

So, Bob’s final earthly resting place is Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego and my cremains will join him there someday. If you ever visit his niche there be sure to tell him Semper Fi!

And now you know Bob’s Marine Corps Story!