

For Carlos...

Carlos is gone... Somehow, it just doesn't seem possible! I think I had begun to think of him as indestructible! It seems like only yesterday that I was standing behind him in a line to get our triggers weighed prior to shooting the Division Matches at Camp Lejeune in the early 60s. I've shot with him, soldiered with him and been his OIC and Commanding Officer, and he never once failed to do his job brilliantly, or disappointed me in any way. For all of his expertise as a sniper, for all of his heroism, for all of his shooting ability, I think I will remember him most for his sense of humor and willingness to help others – his other accomplishments are a matter of history.

He was a man of great personal accomplishments, who never quite realized that he was a celebrity in his own right. Any attempt to heap praise on him resulted in his hanging his head and dragging his toe in the dirt. Not that he didn't realize that he knew his stuff with a rifle in his shoulder, he just was not comfortable in the spotlight. He was the original, All-American reluctant hero, who never quite saw anything heroic in his deeds... It took the rest of us to promote his brilliance, if left to his own devices, Carlos would have remained an unknown Marine who did his job and did it exceptionally well!

Everything in me makes me want to recount his amazing deeds and accomplishments, but that's been done before in many places, and this isn't meant to be a history, just a good by to an old friend...

Carlos is not really gone however. As long as there are those of us who keep him alive in our hearts and memories, he will never die. As long as there is a Marine Corps, Carlos' memory will always be alive. His legacy of self-sacrifice, and heroism will always serve to as an inspiration to those who follow in his footsteps. As long as there is a place in our hearts for decency and honor and bravery, Carlos will live. May it always be so...

In Norse mythology, fallen heroes were welcomed to Valhalla as a reward for valorous conduct. Those of us in the profession of arms often speak of this, the warriors' final resting-place, where no one grows old, and honor is held in high esteem. If there is an all-knowing and all-wise God, as there must surely be, we will someday meet Carlos at the gates of Valhalla... I only hope that we will be as worthy of entrance to those hallowed halls as the immortal "White Feather"...

So here's one last toast to Carlos... lift your glasses to heroism, self-sacrifice, and devotion to duty in the face of extreme adversity... to my old friend, until we meet again...

Semper Fi,

Dick Culver

End Note: This was written on the morning Carlos passed on to Valhalla. While we had all known that his end was inevitable, I suppose that somewhere down deep, he had become a symbol of a transition era within our sacred Corps of Marines, and that somehow Carlos would always be there when you needed him. Much like the legendary Captain Jimmy Bones who tended the gates of Hell, we have always suspected that when needed most, Carlos will take the necessary leave from his duties in Odin's Great Hall. The guides to Valhalla are known as the Valkyries who chose only the most valiant warriors and escort them to their place of honor. Certainly they could have made no better choice than Carlos. Those chosen are welcomed by Odin's son *Bragi*, the master of the spoken word, and noted for his poetic excellence. In Carlos' case, his lexicon may have been overwhelmed by a most unique individual who quite possibly may have caused *Bragi* to exceed his normal eloquence.



The Setting Sun on a Marine Corps Legend