Merry Christmas, My Friend
James M. Schmidt, U.S. Marine 1986

“Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
In a one-bedroom house made of plaster and stone.
I had come down the chimney, with presents to give
And to see just who in this home did live.

As I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.
No stocking by the fire, just boots filled with sand.
On the wall hung pictures of a far distant land.

With medals and badges, awards of all kind,
A sobering thought soon came to my mind.
For this house was different, unlike any I’d seen.
This was the home of a U.S. Marine.

I’d heard stories about them, I had to see more,
So I walked down the hall and pushed open the door.
And there he lay sleeping, silent, alone,
Curling up on the floor in his one-bedroom home.

He seemed so gentle, his face so serene,
Not how I pictured a U.S. Marine.
Was this the hero, of whom I’d just read?
Curling up in his poncho, a floor for his bed?

His head was clean-shaven, his weathered face tan.
I soon understood, this was more than a man.
For I realized the families that I saw that night,
Owed their lives to these men, who were willing to fight.

Soon around the Nation, the children would play,
And grown-ups would celebrate on a bright Christmas day.

They all enjoyed freedom, each month and all year,
Because of Marines like this one lying here.

I couldn’t help wonder how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas Eve, in a land far from home.
Just the very thought brought a tear to my eye.
I dropped to my knees and I started to cry.

He must have awoken, for I heard a rough voice,
“Santa, don’t cry, this life is my choice
I fight for freedom, I don’t ask for more.
My life is my God, my country, my Corps.”

With that he rolled over, drifted off into sleep,
I couldn’t control it, I continued to weep.

I watched him for hours, so silent and still.
I noticed he shivered from the cold night’s chill.
So I took off my jacket, the one made of red,
And covered this Marine from his toes to his head.
Then I put on his T-shirt of scarlet and gold,
With an eagle, globe and anchor emblazoned so bold.
And although it barely fit me, I began to swell with pride,
And for one shining moment, I was Marine Corps deep inside.

I didn’t want to leave him so quiet in the night,
This guardian of honor so willing to fight.
But half asleep he rolled over, and in a voice clean and pure,
Said “Carry on, Santa, it’s Christmas Day, all

At this holiday season we remember and honor those
Who are no longer with us and cherish those who are.
VetNet wishes you and yours the best this holiday season and always!
**STUDENT VET RECIPE CORNER**

**Schnitzel Hunters Style**

4 schnitzel (veal or pork; approx 150 g) salt
2 tablespoons chopped onions
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
4 tablespoons butter
1 cup of bouillon
1/2 cup lemon juice
3 tablespoons sour cream or creme fraiche
1 small can of mushrooms

Take the schnitzel and cut 3 slices into each piece. Add salt and pepper and fill the cuts with chopped onions and parsley. Fry schnitzel in butter on one side until crispy brown. Flip it and pour butter over schnitzel several times. Slowly add bouillon, sour cream and lemon juice. Thicken the gravy with cornstarch and add the mushrooms.

*This recipe was from a German friend when we were stationed in Stuttgart, Germany in 80’s.

_Cindi Curtis, U.S. Army, retired_

---

**MASSACHUSETTS GOVERNOR’S STUDENT VETERAN ADVISORY BOARD**

On Wednesday, November 21, 2012 after the campus closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday break, GCC student veterans gathered together to participate in a ‘listening tour.’

Both, Erik DiGiorgi, the Executive Director and David Vacchi, Public School Chair of the Governor’s Student Veteran Advisory Board are traveling across the state of Massachusetts and collecting data through recorded interviews with groups of student veterans.

The listening tour which was only scheduled to last one hour extended to almost 3 hours and was considered a huge success.

There will be regular updates throughout the spring semester on the efforts of Advisory Board. The primary goal for the Board is to improve the quality of experience for student vets.

In the meantime, if you are a student veteran and would like to part of this statewide movement, please stop by the Channing & Marie Bete Veterans Center N215 and share your experience as a student vet.

The forms for feedback are available next to the daily sign in roster. If you are unable to make it to the VETS Center, email ohearn@gcc.mass.edu for a form.

Get involved! Be heard! Make a Difference!

---

**THE LOOP**

*Stay Connected*

every Wednesday

VetNet Club Meetings
12-12:50 p.m.
VETS Center N215
PIZZA SERVED

12.12
VETNET
LAST OFFICIAL CLUB MEETING
For Fall 2012
12-12:50 p.m.

12.3-12.12.9
VETNET
OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Accepting nominations for the following VETNET officer positions:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Historian

12.9-12.12
VETNET
OFFICER ELECTIONS

Ballots available in the VETS Center on 12.9

---

**PENNY DRIVE**

**GCC Makes a Difference!**

The VetNet Student Club had challenged itself to fill a 5-gallon water jug with pennies by the close of Veterans Appreciation Week.

With the generous help of the GCC community, a Veteran and her family enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving meal together.

The water jug contained:

- 9,795 Pennies
- 200 Nickles
- 288 Dimes
- 162 Quarters
- $43 paper money

---

**HOW I MET MY HUSBAND**

_By Cindi Curtis_

I have been asked by a few friends how my husband, John, and I met. It is an interesting story actually. I was stationed at Patch Barracks, in Stuttgart, Germany in 1982. I was a 72G, which meant I worked in a computer center. We would change the cipher decoding each day and also, send messages to various message sites through Europe.

I moved from the AMME (computer center) to the SSO (Special Security Office). Part of my new in-processing, I had to meet with the SSO’s Security NCO and show my clearance paperwork. I had to find the office of SFC John Curtis.

Upon finding SFC Curtis’s office I was shocked. He looked at me and got an angry look on his face. I looked around to see what I could have done to make him angry. My uniform was fine, my paperwork was also fine. I did not understand.

He went outside of his office and started yelling at the top of his lungs that this was not at all funny and he wanted the soldier responsible in his office ASAP! Again, I was confused. What was wrong?

He wanted to know who had put me up to coming to his office. “Mr. Tracy.” I told him. “Mr. Tracy, he works at the AMME. Who really sent you? “Mr. Tracy,” He became angrier. And I became more confused.

I came to find out that he thought I was someone’s child dressed up as a soldier, because of my size. I was 25 at the time. The rest is history. We became good friends and eventually husband and wife.