



## Dennis Steven Chapman

December 24, 1947 - June 30, 2020

Dear Reader,

Recordings of the service are here:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QDC4-LVjpN\\_K\\_W3Cg8Dbs6PDp-to39s9?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QDC4-LVjpN_K_W3Cg8Dbs6PDp-to39s9?usp=sharing)

Dennis Chapman leaves behind a wife and four adult children. Each has included some of their own words below. We briefly considered editing everything down to a single document, but that decision would rob each writer of their unique tone and tenor.

As such, we've noted text and authors below, and their words are included generally as originally penned. The long history of military service written newspaper-style was found on Dennis' home computer, after his passing, and was last edited by him on February 8, 2020. We've included it here in its entirety. He rarely spoke of his time in the service, so we'll allow his own words to paint the picture of that time in his life. We're not sure if he planned to write more about his time in Vietnam, but the working title of this next document is 'A Spook is Born.'

From Dennis himself:

Dennis served his country as a Marine. After graduation as the Platoon and Series Honor Man in Platoon 3083, MCRD San Diego in October, 1966, Dennis Chapman had been meritoriously promoted to the rank of Private First Class and anxiously awaited orders for his training assignment. With the other eighty-two recruits in his platoon Chapman had taken a series of tests to determine their ability to learn, areas in which they showed strengths or weakness, and overall aptitude.

Most members of his platoon received orders to Ground Forces WestPac (Western Pacific). Those souls learned they would be in the Republic of Vietnam in three months with an MOS (military occupation specialty) of 0311 making them the all-important riflemen

of the United States Marine Corps.

Their next stop would be Camp Pendleton, California just up the coast from San Diego where they would become very familiar with all of the organic weapons of the Infantry Marine.

Chapman learned his next duty station was to be at the NavComTraCen in Pensacola, Florida. Being relatively new in the military he had no idea what the acronym meant but learned he was to be trained as a 2571- Special Radio Operator, another unfamiliar term. He also learned Pensacola was where Navy and Marine aviators were trained.

His stop in Camp Pendleton was only two weeks since he was not going to Ground Forces WestPac. There he would fire weapons for familiarization including the 3.5-inch rocket launcher, M-60 machine gun, BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle), hand grenades, and M-1 rifle for night firing training with tracer ammunition.

Chapman packed away all his worldly possession in a sea bag and satchel including his Dress Blues, a uniform he had earned as the Platoon Honor Man. He had been the only Marine in his platoon to wear Dress Blues at the graduation ceremonies where he was also recognized as the high Platoon shooter and the high Series Shooter.

In Pensacola he was a member of Company K, Marine Support Battalion. That battalion is now called the Marine Cryptologic Support Battalion. Chapman was trained to intercept communications between Russian military units. While there he was promoted to Lance Corporal. Graduating first in his class of sailors and Marines he was then meritoriously promoted to Corporal. At that point Chapman had been a Marine for nine months.

From Pensacola Chapman moved to Company L, Marine Support Battalion, Hanza, and Okinawa, Japan where he focused on communications involving the Chinese Navy and Chinese shipping interests.

After eighteen months in the Orient, Sgt. Chapman was transferred to Second Radio Battalion, Second Marine Division in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Stateside duty was not what Chapman was interested in doing since it did not involve active operations against enemies of the United States. He extended his three-year enlistment by one year and was transferred to H & S Company, Second Radio Battalion, Republic of Vietnam.

While in Vietnam he analyzed communications between units of the North Vietnam Army (NVA) and the Viet Cong (VC). Analysis of those communications included the use of

airborne radio direction finding (ARDF) equipment to triangulate the locations of those units. Airstrikes, Naval gunfire, artillery, or mortar attacks would then be used to eliminate the enemy, unless it was more productive to continue to intercept those communications to determine the NVA and VC intent.

After Vietnam, Sgt. Chapman returned to Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City, Michigan. He completed post high school education at Brigham Young University earning Bachelors and Masters degrees. While at the university Chapman was promoted to Staff Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps Reserve.

He was an educator and administrator in public education for thirty years. In his last year of teaching Chapman attended the Peace Officers Training course and Utah Valley State College and subsequently became a deputy for the Utah County Sheriff's Office where he served for thirteen years, mostly as a Patrol Deputy.

Chapman penned the autobiographical novel, *The Autumn Marine*, so his children and grandchildren would know what life as a United States Marine was like. It was so effective, his youngest son became a Marine after graduation from MCRD, San Diego. At the time of writing the volume he was not able to discuss what he did while on deployment as a Marine. In the summer of 2018 Chapman learned his military mission had been declassified and he was able to explain what he had not told them for so many years.

From his son, John:

Service to others, he felt, was best performed continually, privately, and with neither fanfare nor recognition. A description of his accomplishments and contributions in this community would fill volumes, and, ironically, be precisely the opposite of his every intention. He seemed to consciously avoid the spotlight, while at the same time appearing in peoples' lives at precisely the times and circumstances they required.

As a young man, he traveled to Vietnam with the US Marine Corps. To our best knowledge, he could never express to his parents the reasons which compelled him to serve there. He once mentioned, shortly after 9/11, as the country was so briefly and tragically unified, that he would reenlist the next day if he were younger. He never spoke of his time as a Marine, except in very vague ways. Much of what we know of his service was learned from records he stored but never shared. They were found, neatly organized, shortly after his passing. The unit he served with was highly classified until very recently, and appears to have played critical roles in the ebb and flow of allied success in the region. More importantly, his time abroad either taught him to live with honor, or reinforced

an existing moral compass. Probably both.

While in Vietnam, he became acquainted with both his future wife, Marilyn Schuldt, and his future religion, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Those with whom he crossed paths know of his gentle nature and quiet dignity. He was a teacher, first and always.

From his son, Scott:

After serving his country for a time he continued his education partially in Law School and at Brigham Young University finishing education degrees at both the Bachelors and Masters level. For 30 years he was a teacher and administrator throughout Utah County, being a positive role model and influence in the lives of the thousands of children with whom he came in contact.

Other interests and activities that kept him busy included: working with Utah County Search and Rescue, training to climb Mount Everest with the Utah's on Everest group, and working as a State and County delegate for the Utah County Republican Party.

For 6 decades he was involved with the Boy Scouts of America. He started with Troop 35 in Traverse City, MI. He earned his Eagle Scout while in that troop with John A. Maxbauer as his Scoutmaster. He fell in love with the high mountain country of New Mexico as he worked on staff at Philmont Scout Ranch and later went through Walking Woodbadge. The love he had was passed to his children who all had opportunities to be involved with the ranch. After a season away he resumed activity with the Boy Scouts as he became involved with Troop 999 and then Troop 1250 with the Utah National Parks Council. Many grand adventures were had with his boys as they went around the world to different activities - National Jamborees - participants and on staff, International Jamborees, NOAC conferences, Summer Camps across the west. His time of service was remembered as he was presented the Silver Beaver award by the council in 1998.

He loved being outside at his home as the hummingbirds flittered and fluttered around. He may have had a monopoly on a 4 block radius for all the hummingbirds in the area due to the proliferation of feeders he had placed around the house. Great joy was had in making his gardens grow to provide beauty and food to the surrounding neighborhood. Somebody kept fertilizing his lawn and he relished the challenge of keeping the grass under control.

He never missed an important event in his children and grandchildren's lives. He was an excellent teacher and loved to tell stories, just ask any "Hero." He loved big or interesting words, and taught his kids and grandkids to play cribbage. He loved to ride his motorcycle and go fishing.

From his daughter Analee:

As I sit in the same chair that Dad spent countless hours in researching our family history, I can't help but wonder how in the world I am supposed to sum up the life of an amazing, incredible man in just a few sentences. Dad is the most Christlike person any of us knows. He spent his life teaching and serving those around him, all without fanfare or desire for recognition. He always, always put others' needs before his own, and he was always there for anyone who needed help.

Some of my fondest memories were of needing to talk to him and finding him in his favorite spot on the living room couch, reading a book. I would sit on the chair facing him and he'd put his book down and wait for me to tell him anything that I needed to, and we would talk as long as I wanted. That was Dad. Always there, always listening. And not just for me, but for our whole family and for so many others.

The lives that he has touched are innumerable and we are so very, very blessed to be able to call him husband, dad, grandpa, and friend. Semper fi, Dad. Until we meet again.

From his son, Todd:

'To Protect and Serve' are words he lived by. When he was getting ready to retire from his 30-year teaching career it was no surprise to anyone that he was not going to be content just sitting around the house. He made the decision to go through the Police Academy at Utah Valley University at the bouncy young age of 55. Not only did he complete the course, he was chosen as class leader and graduated as such.

Upon graduation he began a career with the Utah County Sheriff's Office in the patrol division. He kept a personal goal when he had someone pulled over, regardless of what the offending party had done, he did his very best to get the driver to say 'Thank You' before they parted ways. The vast majority of the time, he was successful. This was the type of example Dad was always set for those around him.

Regardless of his title, be it Boy Scout, Scout Leader, United States Marine, Teacher, Deputy, Grandpa or Dad, he always put others before himself. This was how he lived,

constantly striving to make the lives of those around him better.

A scout is: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent. This is the Scout's Law and this is the way he lived every day of his life.

From his wife, Lyn:

Dennis and I first met working Wilderness and Pioneer Youth Conferences for Brigham Young University. Our paths crossed again when we were in the same EMT class, and finally as teachers in the Provo School District. As teacher leaders in our respective schools we attended weekly meetings for the district. At the time his wife, Marilyn, was in the last stages of her battle with cancer. I was teaching at Edgemont School where John was in first grade. He was the one to bring us together after Marilyn's passing. We were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on June 11, 1985, and added Todd to our family in 1987. Dennis was so proud of all of his children and loved them dearly.

During the past 35 years, we have worked together to raise our family and have shared many happy and peaceful moments. Since our retirements seven years ago, we have traveled to our favorite places, worked in our yard and garden, and spent many, many hours doing genealogical work. Dennis alone has indexed over 500,000 records and added 81,006 people to our family tree. But, the biggest blessing for us has been the opportunity to serve together as ordinance workers in the Temple.

Dennis was a man of noble character with unselfish desires, and was fiercely loyal in all aspects of his life. I have never met anyone with more integrity and honesty, nor anyone who has read more books or has a larger vocabulary. He is the light of my life, my everything, and I will miss him dearly until we meet again.

In the words of my best friend, Denny, TTFN (Ta-ta for now)...

And for the genealogy researchers who may one day find this document:

Dennis Steven "Denny" Chapman, 72, passed away on Tuesday, June 30, 2020 in American Fork Canyon, Utah. He was born at home in Antrim County, Michigan on December 24, 1947.

He is survived by his wife Ruth Evelyn "Lyn" Christenson, son John (Shiloam Koenig) Chapman and their children Skyler, Casey, Courtney, and Saylor; son Scott (Tiffany

Lassetter) Chapman and their children, Ayden, Jacob and Adeline; daughter Analee "Ana" Chapman (Kyle) Ballif and their children, Boston, Kyler and Caden; son Todd Chapman;

Also survived by brother Vernon Edward (Kathy Kennedy) Chapman; sister Linda Rae (Roger) Yorde; brother Kenneth Roger (Cathleen Kirchofer) Chapman; brother David Paul Chapman; and sister Valerie Jean Chapman. Preceded in death by his first wife Marilyn Louise Schuldt, mother Ruth Mary Ball, and father Edward DeLoss Chapman.

A service for family and close friends will be held Wednesday, July 8 at Utah Valley Mortuary in Lindon, Utah. Interment at East Lawn Memorial Hills in Provo, Utah. Military honors rendered by the United States Marine Corps, with additional support from the Utah County Sheriff's Department.

Funeral Directors: Utah Valley Mortuary.

# Cemetery

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## East Lawn Memorial Hills

4800 North 650 East

Provo, UT, 84604

# Events

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**JUL** **Graveside Service** 12:00PM

**8**

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East Lawn Memorial Hills

4800 North 650 East, Provo, UT, US, 84604

# Comments

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“ I am greatly blessed to have known Dennis in my life. He has been my home teaching/ministering companion for the past four years and I've learned so much from him. I enjoyed our talks in the car, hearing about his past, reading his short and friendly emails - always positive and always looking to serve others in his quiet simple way. Just recently, I asked him when we were going fishing together and within the hour, he brought me over a huge salmon fillet. That's just the kind of guy he was. He will be greatly missed but I know he's continuing his legacy of service beyond the veil. With much appreciation and admiration, Steve Schill

**Steve Schill** - July 10, 2020 at 01:24 AM

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“ Lyn, John, Scott, Analee, Todd, and extended family: Kathy and I send our condolences to all of you. We love you and remember fondly the intersections of life that have occurred for us over the past years.

Although officially known as Dennis, he will always be ‘Denny’ to me. Denny helped me shortly after we moved into our new home as his neighbors in the Edgemont 2nd LDS Ward. He and I undertook a complete kitchen and home remodel project over a few summer months while my wife and daughter visited family in SoCal. We stripped kitchen walls back to stud, re-ran electrical wiring, and re-located plumbing, adopting a term that we continued back and forth between us over the next 40 years – “Ain’t nuthin’ easy!”

Sometimes, when working patrol duty on my shift as a Provo City police officer, I would be assigned to work the area taking in our neighborhood. Denny would allow me to back my patrol car into his driveway and he would sometimes sit with me as we waited for those ne'er-do-well drivers who ran the stop sign on 650 East (Timpview Drive) at 3230 North. Many times, after I made the traffic stop, the errant driver would ask “Where’d you come from? I never saw you!”

So tightly intertwined has been our mutual desire to serve the public that it is amazing we came from such different backgrounds: Michigander native from the land of snow, cold, and ice; Southern California boy from surf, sand, and sun.

The last words I received from Denny this past April:

“Thanks for being a good friend  
Semper Fi  
dsc”

Oorah! Denny. Until we meet again.  
Your friend,  
Art

**Art & Kathy Williams** - July 09, 2020 at 08:21 PM

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“ Lyn,

We love you and your family, and send our condolences. Dennis was one of our very favorite people. Our favorite memory was when he said, "Coming to the dentist is like fun, only different!" We laugh about that regularly. Our thoughts and prayers go out to your and your family.

Kyle Bowen and Staff

**Kyle Bowen** - July 09, 2020 at 12:38 PM



“ Dear Lyn,  
I just read about your sweet husband's passing. So very sad for your loss at this crazy time. I hope you know that I am thinking of you and your family.

With love,  
Julene Kendell

**Julene Kendell** - July 08, 2020 at 04:42 PM

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“ As we read the words of tribute in his obituary, we said to each other, "It's all true," He was the best neighbor anyone could have. Always looking for ways to serve others, quietly, with no fanfare. Just one example: When we returned from a mission, one of our neighbors told us that Dennis had raked and gathered the leaves from our big maple tree for two winters! He never said a word about it to us or anyone. He also added a feeling of strength and security to our neighborhood because we knew he could handle any emergency. He and Lyn were and are a great team. We will surely miss him. We express our love to the family.  
Lynn and Kaye Garner

**Lynn and Kaye Garner** - July 07, 2020 at 10:22 PM

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“ I never worked directly with Dennis but would cross paths with him on occasion.  
  
Dennis was always calm in the face of chaos and demonstrated unflinching bravery.  
  
Dennis was one of my favorite people to run into.

**Al Owens** - July 07, 2020 at 09:58 PM

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“ Deepest sympathies, Lyn, to you and your family on Uncle Denny's passing. It sounds like he lived a good life with a family he loved. Blessings. Kris Montoy (Linda Yorde's daughter)

**Kris Montoy** - July 07, 2020 at 08:52 PM

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“ Dennis was always smiling, optimistic, and fun to talk with. He was a patriot. I will miss him.

Fair winds and following seas.

Andrew Howard - July 07, 2020 at 04:24 PM

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“ Ron, Marge, Kip, Nikki, and Terri Smith  
Dear John and Shiloam,  
Our love to you and to your family. We will always be here for you. Thank you for sharing such a wonderful Dad with us throughout all these years. With love!

The Smith Family, especially Kip - July 06, 2020 at 09:51 PM

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“ Lyn and family,

In the 1970's between Christmas and the New Year, one of the activities for the older Boy Scouts (Young Men) and their leaders, was a three-day snowmobiling activity in Yellowstone National Park, which was sponsored by the Scout Council in Salt Lake City. Dennis and I were among the leaders who accompanied the Young Men of our ward. This activity was held in 1976, which was the same year that the Teton Dam ruptured in June and flooded much of the area. On the way to West Yellowstone, we drove through much of the area flooded by the breakage of the dam. In Rexburg, we could see on the buildings that the flood waters were about 4-5 feet above ground level. We arrived in West Yellowstone where we stayed in the Three Bears Motel. All roads in the city were snow-packed. It seemed snowmobiles were the principal mode of transportation on the city streets. The next morning we obtained snowmobiles for either one or for two men. Dennis and I were partners in a two-man snowmobile. I knew that that he loved motorcycles. I suggested that he be the operator and I the passenger. He gladly accepted the offer. The temperature was well below 0°F. the morning we began our snowmobile trip into the Park. A guide drove the lead snowmobile and the snowmobiles followed in single file. Everyone was dressed in special winter clothing, including facial covering, head gear, and goggles. While Dennis drove, I was protected from the bitter cold by his body and so I enjoyed watching the wild animals, the birds, the geysers, the hot pots, the rivers, the beautiful wintry scenery and so much more. I had never dreamed a winter activity in sub-freezing weather could be so much fun, but Dennis really made it so. My sincerest condolences and love to you,

Gene Gammon

Gene and Karla Gammon - July 06, 2020 at 09:49 PM



“ Lyn and family. We were not expecting that call. Denny has always been the "Fit" member of the Chapman family. Always hiking and very active. We had hoped to make the trip but Ken's doctor does not recommend traveling at this time. Maybe in the fall if you have a memorial service then we will see you. Love to all, Ken and Kathy Chapman

**Ken Chapman** - July 06, 2020 at 05:31 PM

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“ Lyn and family, What a great shock as it must have been for you. Never would have imagined Denny would be the first of the six of us to pass away. In one of the pictures of him, he's very young wearing a Davy Crockett hat. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. Linda and Roger Yorde

**Linda Yorde** - July 06, 2020 at 04:46 PM

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“ My heart goes out to you Lyn at this difficult time. Love to you.  
Dennis H Cobia

**Dennis Cobia** - July 06, 2020 at 03:47 PM

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“ What a wonderful legacy of service Dennis leaves to family, church, students, neighbors, and former members and leaders in his scout troop. I have always noted with awe his wisdom and accomplishments. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. We love each one of you.

**Will and Linda Winder** - July 06, 2020 at 12:13 PM

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“ I am so sad at the loss of this remarkable man. I taught with him for several years at Maeser Elementary School. The world has lost a great soul. Heaven's gain..

**Sharon Emero** - July 04, 2020 at 09:15 PM

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“ Dennis was one of the most honorable man I've ever met, my love to the entire Chapman family. Sincerely yours Andrew S. Watson

**Andrew Stephen Watson** - July 04, 2020 at 06:48 PM



“ Lyn and family, my sincere sympathy at the passing of Dennis. I am sure there are many that are shocked at his passing. He was one of the kindest and most generous men I have had the privilege of knowing personally and professionally. I had the opportunity to work with him at two schools where he both taught and was my facilitator. A man of integrity and honesty he never hesitated in giving me input and sharing his opinion. I Will always remember the time after my Dad passed away I thought having a puppy would be good for my mom and he helped facilitate that. When 3 little kids whom she did not know appeared at her door with puppy in tow I am positive the kids were absolutely shocked when she wouldn't even consider letting that dog in her house even when Dennis came around the corner and tried to talk her in to it. Even Dennis whom she really loved was shocked at her adamant response so he took the puppy and 3 kids, all wondering how that lady could be so mean and not keep the puppy, home Dennis was his own guy, he was loved and will be missed.

Rosemarie Smith

**RosemarieSmith** - July 07, 2020 at 02:19 PM