

## “A New Season of Life” ... An Americal Vet is Elected to Congress

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“For all things there is a season, And for every affair under heaven its time”. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Americal Vietnam veteran Jim Marshall, like many of his fellow veterans, has seen many “seasons” of life. Recently, in November 2002, he was elected to the Congress of the United States to represent Georgia’s Third District.

Jim Marshall’s seasons of life were many, but he lived them guided by a love of God and country. The son and grandson of Army generals, he spent his formative years moving from one Army post to another. In 1966 he graduated from high school in Mobile, Alabama and received a National Merit Scholarship to attend Princeton University.

Compelled by a sense of duty and fairness, Marshall left Princeton in 1968 to enlist in the Army and volunteer for Vietnam duty. He enlisted in November 1968, attended Basic, and Advanced Individual Training (Infantry AIT), Airborne School, the Non-Commissioned Officers Instruction Course (NCOIC) and Ranger School.

Arriving in Vietnam on October 14, 1969, Marshall was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup>/52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 198<sup>th</sup> LIB, on LZ Stinson. He served as a Platoon Sergeant with C Company, then Platoon Sergeant for the Echo Company Recon Platoon.

Marshall has many memories of his time with the Americal, but the one most etched in his mind was during a firefight on February 15, 1970 in Quang Ngai Province. One of his men, PFC Michael Bosowski (“BZ”), saw a grenade at Marshall’s feet. “BZ could have run away from that grenade”, recalls Marshall. “That was the one I didn’t see. Instead, he screamed a warning, picked it up and tried to throw it away. It exploded in his hand. Because of that I only took some shrapnel. He died saving my life. I’m here today because BZ is not here today. I remind myself of that fact everyday as I live-out my life of marriage, raising children and performing public service.”

Marshall left Vietnam in August 1970. During his service with the Americal he was awarded two Bronze Stars (one for valor), the Purple Heart and the Army Commendation Medal.

Marshall returned to Princeton after Vietnam, graduating in 1972. During and after college, he worked jobs as a short order cook, laundry sorter, security guard, construction laborer, restaurant manager, welder, mechanic, and wilderness guide and high school teacher. He also owned and operated a small logging business in northern Idaho, a venture that ended abruptly when he fell a tree on himself, crushing his right leg.

Jim Marshall and his wife Camille settled in Macon, Georgia after both graduated from law school in 1977. He joined the Mercer University Law School faculty in 1979 and, by the mid-eighties was very involved in numerous civic and community organizations.



Jim Marshall, Vietnam - 1970

The opportunity to serve persuaded Marshall to run for Mayor of Macon, Georgia in 1995, which he won against an incumbent. Marshall’s work with ministers and children to address the moral poverty of youth drew national attention and was highlighted by General Colin Powell at the first anniversary meeting of America’s Promise. Marshall was elected a member of the Advisory Board of the United States Conference of Mayors.

After successfully completing his term as mayor, Jim Marshall set his sights on a seat in Congress in 2000. He did not unseat a popular incumbent but his experience prepared him well for the 2002 campaign for an open seat in the new Third District of Georgia.

As a combat veteran, civic leader, mayor and now congressman, Marshall feels very strong about “meeting our moral commitment to veterans”. He believes Congress should end the concurrent receipt inequity. This is an issue whereby a veteran who is receiving, both a retirement pay and disability compensation, can be penalized by one offsetting the other. Marshall, “These two payments are apples and oranges that cannot and should not be substituted or offset for one another”. He also believes “we should provide eligible veterans with access to private physicians and medical facilities of their choice if the Veterans

Administration cannot deliver prompt, quality services”. Marshall also supports the position of the American Legion that the Veterans Employment and Training Service program, designed to assist veterans in overcoming barriers to employment, should stay with the Department of Labor, and not be transferred to the Veterans Administration. “The American Legion and I believe this program should stay with the experts on labor matter, the Department of Labor, with increased funding”.



Congressman Jim Marshall, 2003

Finally, Americal vet Jim Marshall is strongly in favor of the proposed amendment to protect the American flag from desecration. “I believe the proposed amendment concerning flag protection is properly and narrowly targeted to accomplish a specific purpose. If enacted, it would not impose a significant limitation upon an individual’s right to engage in political speech, protest and communication. The amendment is a fitting tribute to those who paid the ultimate price to raise a flag on a battlefield or keep it flying. There were too many, and one is too many to forget”.

As Congressman Jim Marshall enters into this new challenge and “new season” of his life, his mind remains fixed on the sacrifices of veterans to secure our nation’s freedom. His outlook is seasoned by his very personal experience of war and combat; and grateful for the gift of life given to him by an Americal comrade. “I believe vets and the nation must respect those memories and emotions of war. They nourish a waning spirit in this country, the spirit of individual sacrifice in combat for the good of the nation. Vets must constantly remind our nation that freedom truly ... is not free.”