

Minister and Marine

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He commands a vehicle armed with a TOW Missile system and a machine gun. He carries an M16 and a 9mm pistol. But the most powerful thing Sgt. Joshua Haney carries in his pack is the truth--a worn Bible that is seeing the lands talked about in the Old Testament.

Reserve Marines tend to come from a wide variety of backgrounds and civilian occupations. Silver Platoon boasts an Engineer, a business owner, two law enforcement officers, a home builder, college students studying Anthropology to Accounting and one Nazarene Youth minister named Haney.

When home in suburban Kansas City, he ministers to teens and adolescents through a Nazarene youth ministry. In Iraq, Sergeant Haney is a vehicle commander.

"It's a pretty unusual occupation for a Reserve Marine. There are Nazarene Chaplains in the Navy, but there aren't too many people in the ministry who are also infantrymen," Haney said.

"I'm used to being in a church all the time. But here it is different, we are out on Missions for weeks at a time and the terrorists don't observe the Sabbath."

Tall and with an easy going southern drawl, a few Marines have taken to calling him "The Rev."

But the 'The Rev.' doesn't throw down the fire and brimstone. Instead he is always there for the Marines who have a question, offering a few verses to read, a lesson or just an open ear and heart for a young man pondering his life.

And when the action is hot, Haney is always there ready to take up the fight.

"It can be tough sometimes," Haney says, "I'm out there with them. And like them I miss my wife and family and home. But God has put me here for a good reason."

In the 'Screwtape Letters' by C.S. Lewis, the arch Devil, Screwtape, advised his young apprentice, Wormwood, not to revel in the human suffering caused by war, because war apprises men of their mortality:

"And how disastrous for us in the continual remembrance of death which war enforces. One of our best weapons, contented worldliness, is rendered useless. In wartime not even a human can believe he is going to live forever."

And I bet old Screwtape would be definitely hate a Platoon of men at war with a minister in their ranks.