



Celebrating our heroes



Eric Otten



Otten
(1992)

RBC Wealth Management-U.S. (RBC WM-U.S.) recognizes the sacrifices made by those in uniform and the value that military training brings to the workplace. We support veterans through our sponsorship of select local programs that assist military service personnel and their families. At RBC WM-U.S., we appreciate the contributions of employees with military experience who continue to give back to their communities through their financial service careers.

Through the RBC Veterans' Initiative in the U.S., we uncover stories of everyday heroes in our firm.

A Naval officer's greatest honor

Omaha financial advisor Eric Otten served in the United States Navy from 1987 to 2011. As a naval aviator he flew the H-3 Sea King, the H-1 Huey and the C-12 King Air and was also responsible for various programs and personnel.

One memorable moment in Eric's military career involved a search-and-rescue mission in 2000 while stationed at the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi, Texas. Eric commanded the rescue helicopter crew.

"While it was a tragic day because four of the six crewmen died in the crash, it was very rewarding to see the unit and crew I had been training perform well and save the lives of the two that survived," said Eric.

During his service, Eric received honors including multiple awards of the Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Southwest Asia Service Medal. But his greatest honor is not something he can wear or put on a wall.

"The highest honor I received was being asked to be the speaker at three different retirement ceremonies for individuals with whom I served. The retiree chooses the speaker and it is an honor that is typically requested of individuals with a higher rank than mine."

After two decades, Eric settled down with his family in Omaha, Nebraska, and began his career in the financial industry.

"In the military, I defended people's inalienable rights — life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As a financial advisor, I am helping them take full advantage of those inalienable rights in a direct and personal way."

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**Wealth
Management**



Don Schwarz



Schwarz
(1969)



Mike Denton

Lessons in leadership

Don Schwarz served in the United States Army veterinary corps from 1967 to 1971 as a veterinarian technician, a medic to military dogs. From a questionable beginning — he passed out on the parade grounds during his graduation from basic training — he went on to achieve the Basic Rifle Marksmanship Award for qualifying highest in the company.

After college, Don joined the firm of Sutro and Company. He was called to active duty until 1969 then he returned to Sutro which was eventually acquired by RBC Wealth Management. Today, he is a financial advisor and leads the Tailored Portfolio Management Group, a wealth management team in Beverly Hills.

“Military service is an excellent teacher of accountability, responsibility and selflessness,” said Don.

Today, he continues to give back to his country. He launched and chairs the MVAT (Military and Veterans Appreciation Trust) Foundation that raises awareness and funds for military and veteran’s support groups. In addition, he serves on the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation’s Executive Council.

An American hero of the “silent generation” speaks volumes by blinking seven letters

It is something we do approximately once every five seconds, 12 to 15 times per minute. Blinking is the way we remove irritants from the surface of the eye. But, for one member of the United States Navy, it is the way he communicated to military and government leaders about the conditions he was experiencing as a prisoner of war (POW) during the Vietnam conflict.

T-O-R-T-U-R-E. Spelled out in Morse Code.

Pretending to be blinded by the camera lights, he blinked a message to government leaders providing the first confirmation that American POWs were being subjected to atrocities by the North Vietnamese.

Richmond financial advisor Mike Denton was only five when his father Jeremiah Denton was captured in Vietnam. It was July 1965 when Jeremiah’s plane was shot down and he was taken prisoner.

Admiral Denton was incarcerated for almost eight years, including four years in solitary confinement. Part of the time was spent in the infamous Hoa Lo complex, dubbed the “Hanoi Hilton,” as well as a facility for the most willful resisters known as “Alcatraz.” His fellow POWs included James B. Stockdale, future vice presidential running mate of Ross Perot, and Sam Johnson, a future Republican congressman from Texas.

For almost eight years, the family’s only communication with him was through a few precious but brief formatted index cards mailed every six months. His wife Jane raised seven children while he was in prison.

“Dad was shot down when I was five and came home when I was just short of 13,” said Mike. “It was worse for my older brothers. Since I was younger I was insulated by youth to some degree.”

The Dentons were watching when ABC News aired the tape of an undernourished Denton delivering his covert message during an interview with a Japanese reporter.

Despite being tortured prior to the interview as a warning to comply, Jeremiah went on tape saying he agreed with the United States government policies about Vietnam. For this act of bravery he earned the Navy’s highest medal of valor, the Navy Cross. And



Jeremiah Denton
(1999)
AP Photo



Jeremiah Denton
(1966)
National Archives,
Records of the CIA

[“Remembering Vietnam War Hero and U.S. Senator Jeremiah Denton”](#)

— ABC News

[“Jeremiah A. Denton Jr., Vietnam POW and former U.S. senator, dies at 89”](#)

— Washington Post

another torture session from his captors.

As one of the three senior officers, Jeremiah was a commanding officer within the prison at various times. He established himself as an exemplary prisoner of war gaining respect for his toughness. Two popular books chronicle Denton’s experience: “When Hell Was in Session” written by Jeremiah and the 2014 publication of “Defiant” by Alvin Townley.

“He asked a lot of his men but not anything he wasn’t willing to do himself,” said Mike. One example was leading the prisoners in a hunger strike when most were already nearly starving.

This mental and physical toughness helped him to survive seven years as a POW. But it was more than that.

“Dad credits his faith to literally saving his life,” said Mike. “He said he went from having faith in God to knowing God while in prison.”

Meanwhile, Jane supported her husband behind the scenes. She was instrumental in developing and leading the National League of Families, a critical support for the POW return effort.

In February 1973, Jeremiah was the first POW off the plane when they arrived at U.S. Air Force Clark Field in the Philippines and addressed the crowd with the following words: “We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country under difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our commander in chief and to our nation for this day. God bless America.”

“His remark was only three sentences long but it was exactly what the country needed to hear,” said Mike. “It caused a firestorm of attention and notoriety from that point forward.”

After returning from Vietnam, Jeremiah stayed in the military retiring as a Rear Admiral. He entered the U.S. Senate Republican primary in Alabama and eventually beat a well-known Democrat against all odds.

While a member of Congress, he passed the Denton Program, a program that allows the U.S. government to provide charitable aid to third world countries utilizing military aircraft as space allows. As a result, millions of pounds of school and hospital equipment, clothing and food among other items were distributed around the world.

Jeremiah continued his work after political life through the Admiral Denton Legacy Initiatives, a foundation that partners with IMEC America and provides vital equipment for health, education and nutrition throughout the world.

Jane was by his side every step of the way until her unexpected death in 2007.

On March 28, 2014, Jeremiah Denton passed away.

Raised in a Navy family, Mike graduated from the Virginia Military Institute before entering active duty. He served for 11 years active duty and reserves as a Surface Warfare Officer with specialties in weapons, engineering and military law. Mike resigned his commission as a Lieutenant Commander and began his investment career at a Virginia bank and two brokerage firms, the last which became an office of RBC Wealth Management in Richmond, Virginia.

Just as he followed in his father’s footsteps into the Navy, Mike continues his father’s foundation work.

When asked what his Dad would want his legacy to be, Mike said: “To demonstrate and motivate significant



Dawn I. Castro

service to God, country and mankind regardless of personal sacrifice and with deep Christian faith.”

Military families: the forgotten heroes

Senior Investment Associate Dawn I. Castro didn’t choose a career in the military. But when she married Carlos she played a role in serving our country that is often overlooked: a military wife.

“I don’t think people think about the family... What people forget is that we are serving as well,” said Dawn.

For 12 of her husband’s 22 years in the United States Marine Corps, Dawn supported him through multiple moves and several deployments. It was while they were stationed in California that she learned she was pregnant with their first child. He didn’t meet his daughter until she was three months old.

During this time, the camaraderie and support of military families made the difference.

“The women of the unit who were left behind made sure the families were very well taken care of.”

Dawn recounts a time when her daughter was playing T-ball and her husband was out of the country. Only half of the unit was deployed and, on this day, the other half were at the field cheering from the sidelines.

“We did almost everything together and supported one another.”

Working as an investment professional, Dawn was focused on her own career while also functioning as a single mother and maintaining a household. But, the day-to-day challenges she faced were often hidden from her husband.

According to Dawn, during the limited communication she had with Carlos she focused on providing encouragement and support; she didn’t want him to worry about what was happening back home.

“Sometimes the journey was tough but we did what we had to do to support spouses and keep families functioning until they came home.”

But, as difficult as it was while he was away, it was equally difficult when he returned.

“You are so accustomed to running the show and not asking their opinion,” she explains. “You have to learn how to have a husband again, how to integrate Dad back into the family.”

In 1997, Carlos retired from his role as a gunnery sergeant and returned to their home in New Jersey where he enjoys family time with their son and daughter. Another daughter and her husband are proud members of the U.S. Air Force stationed in North Carolina where they are raising Carlos and Dawn’s two grandchildren.

As for Dawn, she continues her career as a senior investment associate at RBC Wealth Management’s Paramus, NJ, branch helping people manage their wealth to realize their dreams. And, she is a proud supporter of the steps that RBC Wealth Management is taking to engage veterans. “I am very happy and proud of RBC that they are taking this initiative.”