

At The Tip Of The Sword

As direct descendants of the Irish immigrant Captain Anthony Wayne who routed the deposed King James and his grandson the famous general Mad Anthony Wayne, our family has a long legacy of serving, “at the tip of the sword”.

An interesting bit of trivia is the actor Marion Morrison became “John” Wayne in 1931 because his studio producer at the time thought “Anthony” was too “mafia sounding”. But, the real John Wayne was born eight years before that in Chicago.

Had he lived, this past summer our dad would have turned 90. Platoon Sergeant and “Rakkasan” John E. Wayne was one of the first Americans to ever jump out of an airplane as a member of the 11th Airborne, 187th Glider Infantry during the Asiatic Pacific Campaign. The “Rakkasans” earned their long-enduring nickname from the Japanese themselves. The literal translation of Rakkasan is “falling down umbrella” which is how the people described the visual images of them as they looked up and saw them jumping out of the sky. The tour of duty of the 187th was not a particularly long one, but it was as kinetic as any unit experienced in World War II. From Purple Heart Hill to Tagaytay. Manila to Okinawa, and eventually their final jump to secure Atsugi Airstrip but 30 miles or so outside of Tokyo, this historically significant unit was a precursor to our special forces that are so essential to the asymmetrical campaign utilized in Operation Enduring Freedom.

A campaign that has so deeply touched our lives as well as our son, John Michael Wayne has so bravely served as a Staff Sergeant and NCO in the 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion of the Marine Special Operations Command for eight and ½ years until March of last year. As a Point Man and unit leader with M.S.O.T. 8111 (a.k.a., “Helmand Raiders”), his skillset can best be described as Jason Bourne in a uniform. Fluent in Arabic, world-class athletic skills, extraordinarily independent and self-sufficient, highly intelligent and resourceful, creative and icy cool under the most extremely stressful of circumstances, and a gift-like mastery of the most sophisticated technology, tactics and techniques ever-utilized in combat. So as our heads hit our pillows this evening and right before we drift off to our sound sleep, let us pause but a few minutes to keep these brave warriors in our prayers. The men who allow us to sleep so soundly and safely.

Especially that cat below wearing the shades and his grandfather before him. Shown here October, 1945 at Sendai, Japan where the 187th liberated the U.S. P.O.W.’s held in under-ground slave labor mining camps.



The successful middle market and small-business financial crisis turnaround is in many ways not too unlike an asymmetrical effort itself. Resources are constrained, time is of the essence. Emotional stress and fear must be channeled into action. Decisions must be made very quickly, absent the luxury of desired data and careful analysis. A multi-skilled, multi-faceted team effort is essential to the task. Local language and the particular vernacular of the specific challenge is a prerequisite to success. Traditional, large-force conventional strategies and tactics are ineffective. Moreover, multiple tours of duty and an empathetic appreciation and understanding of the unique context of the environment in which the family-owned business and their organization must operate gives the edge to a local, lean and resourceful turnaround leader and his team.

Not unlike the Helmand Raiders and SSGT John Michael Wayne. Or Platoon Sergeant John Edward Wayne and his team of Rakkasans.

When the stakes are never higher and time and money is a luxury, be sure to turn to the multi-skilled, multi-faceted Special Forces capability of the IronHorse LLC team. We relish serving “at the tip of the sword”.

Tony

Anthony John Wayne

8th Great Grandson to the Irish Immigrant Captain Anthony Wayne

Son of Platoon Sergeant and Rakkasan John E. Wayne

Father to Staff Sergeant and MARSOC Point Man John M. Wayne