

# Semper Fidelis

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General Robert H. Barrow, USMC (ret), the 27<sup>th</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps (1979-1983) and former Marine Officer Instructor at Tulane NROTC (1957-1960), died 30 October 2008 about 1 p.m. at his home in St. Francisville, Louisiana. He was buried there next to his wife Patty, who died in 2005.

Major Robert H. Barrow, tall, slim, broad-shouldered and completely, always correct came to our Tulane campus in 1957. Midshipmen approached him with the insatiable curiosity of undergraduates, and Marine Option Midshipmen, with a certain awe as contracted second lieutenants.

Later, during his lectures on Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign, those of us from the South looked at him and saw Douglas Southall Freeman's Robert E. Lee, the very model of military chivalry.

Those introduced to the Marine Corps under General Barrow's influence, "Barrow's Tulane Marines" (the general's phrase), revered him as teacher, friend, mentor and commander. After commissioning we all went separate ways, but all knew what he was doing. He remained the example for his students. When he became Commandant we were as proud as anyone.

Although scattered over the U.S., businessmen and professionals of various kinds, Barrow's Tulane Marines assembled with General Barrow several times in recent years since 1983. At the last meeting in 2006 at the NROTC Unit in New Orleans we dedicated a portrait of the 27<sup>th</sup> Commandant, and a plaque in honor of the General and his Mrs. "Patty" Barrow.

General Barrow wore a Navy Cross, a Silver Star, and two Bronze Stars among a thick field of other ribbons for combat as a guerilla in China in World War II, commander of Able Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Marines in the early days of Korea, and commander of Ninth Marines in the legendary Operation Dewey Canyon.

In his homily, the Reverend John Senette of Grace Episcopal Church likened the general to Geoffrey Chaucer's Christian Knight in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Canterbury Tales. "... a Christian knight, worthy of honor, who lived *Semper Fidelis*: always faithful." The priest knew the general late in his life, when "the famous knight ended his questing and came among us to end his days. But although General Barrow had put aside his sword, he had not put aside his chivalry." The homily perceptively reveals Bob Barrow at the end of his life as the same General Barrow we knew for a half century. For that matter Geoffrey Chaucer knew it too, 600 years ago. Chaucer's Prologue concludes, "He was a truly perfect, gentle knight." General Barrow was "*Semper Fidelis*" — faithful and honorable, to God, friends, family and the Corps.

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