

# **Celebrating Jim L. Madden**

**A Remembrance by General P.F. Gorman, USA (Ret)**

**Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia**

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While this is a sad occasion for our coming together, we can each rejoice in that we were fortunate to have shared moments of our lives with Jim Madden, a truly exceptional man, an outstanding soldier, and a head of family, loving and beloved.

Jim Madden was younger than I: over a decade separates the date of our respective entries into the U.S. Military Academy, but each of us had one year of prior enlisted service. Upon graduation, we both became infantrymen: I left West Point to practice that trade first in Korea; Jim left with Viet Nam in his future. We both, however, were fortunate enough to have post-USMA leavening in training troops without the stresses of battle before these were thrust upon us.

When Jim and I first met in the summer of 1966, I was commanding 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, then operating north of Saigon in the Republic of Viet Nam. Jim reported to me as a prospective company commander, and I immediately accepted him not only because the unit desperately needed a good company commander, but also because I recognized in Jim's background much that I had myself experienced. I therefore expected much of Jim Madden, and he never disappointed me.

I gave Jim command of a disheartened group of draftees nearing the end of their time in South Asia, glumly going through the motions of soldiering prodded by disgruntled Regular Army sergeants. In a remarkably short time, Jim transformed his charges into a cohesive, airmobile rifle company that was willing and able to take on any mission assigned to it, a close-knit team with evident spirit and pride.

Much has been said and written about the centrality to combat effectiveness of an infantry company commander. Jim Madden was head and shoulders, literally and figuratively, above most of his contemporaries in his ability to teach hard-core infantry tactics, techniques, and procedures, and to build that bond between soldier and leader that inspires both to extraordinary performance. When I submitted an efficiency report on Jim, I stated that Jim Madden's company, in searching out and closing with an elusive foe in the jungle, was worth two or three other rifle companies.

I have among my papers a copy of a letter from one of Jim's soldiers, written from the jungle to a comrade recovering from wounds in a field hospital, lauding the measures that Jim put into practice, and used his NCOs to enforce: daily attention to cleaning of weapons, to optimizing each soldier's on-person load, and to guarding his personal appearance and hygiene. For Jim's soldiers, every day was a training day, even amid combat, and he told them often that they would learn how to improve day by day.

Jim Madden was a paragon of military professionalism. He spent his life trying to discover better ways for us to discharge our responsibilities to our soldiers and to the Army.

Allow me one war story. On 25 August 1966 Jim was seriously wounded in the chest leading his company to rescue an embattled force from another battalion. A few days later I was amazed to see Jim dismount from a resupply helicopter, and saunter up to request my permission to resume command of his company. Noting his pallor, his gaunt figure, and his bloody bandages, I denied his request, but assigned him instead as my S-3, my operations staff officer.

Within hours of Jim's return, a very portly and much agitated Colonel of the Medical Corps appeared, announcing that Madden was absent without leave from the Field Hospital, and demanding that I surrender the miscreant immediately. I patiently explained that it was a long standing tradition of the Big Red One to go AWOL from hospitals, and that no less an authority than Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., one of my predecessors in

command of 1-26 Inf, had himself fled the ministrations of doctors and nurses to resume the care of his soldiers, and that subsequently, Teddy, then a General and Assistant Division Commander, had established as division policy that any soldier so charged with AWOL was to be held blameless so long as he was traveling toward to battle. I suggested to the Colonel that he might want to discuss Madden's extradition with the division commander before pursuing the matter further with me. He left, and I never heard from him again.

Jim served the battalion well as my principal staff officer. He never stopped trying to discern what was right or wrong with our operations, seeking to capitalize on success and to redress wrongs. Jim Madden was no yes-man; when he thought our operations were flawed, he was unstintingly in his criticism, and would argue his point of view vigorously up until a decision was made.

I now understand in retrospect why he emphasized the importance to training soldiers to use the After Action Review, or AAR. He himself had a classic AAR, in that on his second tour in Viet Nam, he worked closely with a defector from the other side, none other than the company commander he had opposed on 25 August 1966, also severely wounded that day. Jim wrote to me extensively about what he learned from talking to that former adversary about the bad habits of American infantry.

My second tour in Viet Nam took place between Jim's second and third, but after Viet Nam, we again served together in the Army's newly formed Training and Doctrine Command. Jim became a key training developer, the prime mover in a number of momentous initiatives, not the least of which was fielding the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System, or MILES, ultimately a billion dollar program that helped produce new confidence and competence among American soldiers.

In 1978, when I was commanding the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Germany, I sought Jim Madden's assignment as my G-3 (Operations, Plans, and Training) and was once again delighted with his innovativeness, drive, and enthusiasm. He led the way, for example, in

setting up a wirelessly distributed Tactical Operations Center, rendering the division's command and control systems both more efficient and more survivable.

Jim Madden left the uniformed force in June of 1980, but he never left the Army. Over the past two decades he has toiled incessantly as a contractor to convey his professionalism to new generations of soldiers, His concepts of teaching and learning will shape Army training for decades into the future.

I am here to celebrate the life and accomplishments of a dedicated American. So long as this nation can produce from towns such as Ottumwa, Iowa, leaders for its military forces like Jim Madden, we need not fear Islamic Extremists or any another threat to our liberties.

Rest easy, Jim. I am here to attest that yours was a job well done.