



David P. Dilegge

MAY 9, 1956 - MAY 2, 2020



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David P. Dilegge

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David Philip Dilegge, age 63, passed away Saturday morning in the comfort of his home in Largo, Florida with his loving pets by his side. Known as Dave, he grew up in Ellicott City, Maryland, where he spent his childhood well-loved by his parents David and Edith and sister Michele. Mentored by his father, Dave became an accomplished athlete in his adolescence and developed a lifelong passion for basketball and baseball. During his youth, Dave established an incredible work ethic and grew into a gregarious man who used his sharp wit and captivating storytelling to entertain and bring laughter to everyone around him.

From 1974 to 1978, Dave attended Frostburg State University, where he was known for his fun-loving nature, humor and magnetic personality. Shortly after graduating Frostburg with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology, Dave joined the United States Marine Corps (USMC), marking the start of a prominent career that brought him much recognition, fulfillment and pride. During his time in the USMC, Dave served with the 1st Marine Division during Operation Desert Storm and earned the Combat Action Ribbon during an Iraqi counterattack in the Burgan Oil Field. Dave was a retired USMCR Intelligence and Counterintelligence / HUMINT officer, as well as a former USMC civilian intelligence analyst who worked several years in the private sector. In 1999 he was the recipient of the National Military Intelligence Association's Colonel Donald G. Cook Award for his work in supporting USMC and Department of Defense (DoD) urban operations analysis, wargaming and experimentation.

Inheriting his mother's encyclopedic memory, Dave was an intelligent and entrepreneurial man with a natural desire to build knowledge and share information with others. During the mid-to-late 90s, when he wasn't at the office, taking family trips to Maryland and coaching his kids' sport teams, Dave spent his spare time teaching himself the ins-and-outs of computers and website design. He established multiple websites that laid the foundation for today's Small Wars Journal, an online, military operations magazine that made the 2009 "Hot List" in the Rolling Stone



Obituary

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(alongside Lady Gaga, which Dave often laughed about). Up until his death, Dave was the Editor-in-Chief of Small Wars Journal and a Director at the Small Wars Foundation.

Dave was also a member of the Marine Corps Association, US Naval Institute, Military Writers Guild, Warlord Loop, Veterans of Foreign Wars, National Rifle Association, National Italian American Foundation, Order Sons of Italy in America, Nesbitt/Nisbet Society of North America, and Tau Kappa Epsilon. Across Dave's professional roles and contributions, he was respected and admired for his work ethic, thought leadership and advancement of knowledge in his field.

Beyond his career, Dave had a boundless amount of interests and sources of joy. He was an avid lover of animals, teaching his kids sports and board games, cooking, the Orioles baseball team, crossword puzzles, music from the 1960s, holiday traditions, his Italian and Scottish family heritage, the History Channel and so much more. Across his many hobbies, interests and projects, Dave approached every pursuit with immense enthusiasm, confidence and passion. Whether it was writing a blog article, starting a food truck or teaching his kids how to shoot a layup in the driveway, Dave always gave at least 100%. His loved ones will always remember Dave for his humor, passion, endless knowledge, ghost stories, athletic and professional mentorship, sentimental nature, compassion for animals, and the fun, happy memories we made with him. He is survived by his parents David and Edith Dilegge, sister Michele Dilegge, wife Marion Dilegge and children Elizabeth Bertholdt, Cristina Dilegge and David Dilegge, and grandchildren Katelyn Bertholdt, Gavin Bertholdt and Ty Beau Dilegge.

If Dave's loved ones and friends of his family desire to do so, they can make a memorial donation to the nonprofit Best Friends, a recognized leader in the no-kill movement committed to helping homeless pets through adoption, a spay/neuter program, and other community support programs. The nonprofit also offers long term sanctuary care for animals that cannot be rehomed.



Tribute Wall

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Jo Patti Munisteri lit a candle in honor of David.

May Dave's family and friends be comforted. I only knew him his last few years of his life. He was a rigorous taskmaster for Small Wars Journal, but I learned from him and he encouraged me. I still remember his words. America needed him. He rose to what was asked of him. May he Rest In Peace and be in our hearts and thoughts.



April 12 at 2:44 PM



Matt posted:

I am very sorry for your loss. The SWJ site was a place to read, think, reconsider and share thoughts on man's worst endeavor: war. But it was a place to grow, and for that I am forever thankful for Dave and his role in creating and maintaining the site. It is more than a website; it is an institution. You all have my thoughts and prayers for peace and wisdom. As does the SWJ community. Matt E

May 19 at 7:55 AM



Valerie Hyer June 1 at 6:14 PM

I am so sorry to hear of David's passing. We went to Frostburg together, where he was President of Tau Kappa Epsilon. I remember him as friendly, witty and personable. Sincere sympathy to the family. Valerie Hillman Hyer



Patricia Fuller posted:

The happy memories of good times shared with Dave and his family come flooding in. Beloved brother in law and uncle to our children, you will always be in our hearts. Lover of family, country, pets, nature (remember the tomato plants) baseball, life in general, you will be missed. But why boiled peanuts? We ate them because we loved you.

May 9 at 3:26 AM



Greg J. posted:

A great loss, and an inspiration of service and critical thinking.

May 8 at 5:45 AM



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AP

Alexander A. Poderys posted:

Just started reading Dave's highly informative Small Wars Journal blog. I am very sorry to hear of his passing. May many blessings and prayers be upon Dave's family and friends. RIP
DaveSincerely,Alexander A. Poderys

May 7 at 9:51 PM

EB

Elizabeth Bertholdt shared an album called **Memories Album**.



May 7 at 6:48 PM

AE

Andrew Exum posted:

Dave was a friend and a mentor. A wonderful man who made a tremendous contribution to our nation even after his retirement from active duty. I am so grateful for his friendship and the privilege of knowing him.

May 7 at 10:22 AM

TD

Thomas Doherty posted:

RIP Dave thanks for the help over the years.

May 7 at 8:46 AM

TG

The Delegge Sisters, Denise, Yvonne And Gerrie sent a Beautiful Heart Bouquet to the Dilegge family.



May 7 at 7:26 AM

JW

John Michael Walls shared an album called **Memories Album**.



May 7 at 5:21 AM



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GB

George Barbee posted:

Thanks for all you have done Dave, you will be missed. Although I never met you, I feel as if I know you from your work, The Small Wars Journal. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family Dave. May God Bless you and yours.

May 7 at 5:10 AM

FT

Frank Titus posted:

RIP brother Dave.

May 7 at 4:55 AM

FT

Frank Titus lit a candle in honor of David.

RIP brother Dave.

May 7 at 4:50 AM



MT

Mark Thompson posted:

Dave -- While I am sure that I am like many others when I say we never met, I appreciated your keen observations at SWJ. Thanks for a job well done. Semper Fi.

May 6 at 5:15 PM

MF

Mike Fuller posted:

Dave was a true patriot and an awesome uncle. Shared many great memories together such as Orioles games, inaugurations, and testing out that food truck. You will be missed. Thoughts and prayers to the family.

May 6 at 3:43 PM



Anonymous sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Dilegge family.

May 6 at 2:45 PM





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HM

H.R. McMaster posted:

I feel privileged to have known Dave and will miss him tremendously. Few have contributed more to our understanding of contemporary wars. Dave fostered the intellectual curiosity and critical thinking that is essential to military professionalism. We will miss his many contributions as well as his friendship, sense of humor, genuine concern for others.

May 6 at 12:16 PM

DP

Daniel D Pope posted:

My sincere and deep condolences to the Dilegge family. Dave and I served together in the 1st MarDiv. We shared some good times and we shared some scary times but Dave with his wit always made us laugh. He will be missed! Daniel Pope United States Marine Corps (ret)

May 6 at 8:14 AM

KN

Keith Nightingale posted:

He was both a good and great man. A true rara avis.

May 6 at 7:51 AM

JW

John Michael Walls shared an album called **Memories Album**.



May 6 at 5:06 AM

JW

John Michael Walls shared an album called **Memories Album**.



May 6 at 5:05 AM



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CL

Callum Lane posted:

We never met, but David's work on rather Small Wars Journal has a significant impact on me and those under my command in the bad old days of 2005 - 2012, including multiple deployments to sandy climes. He was inspirational and will be sadly missed.

May 6 at 4:42 AM

BZ

Ben Zweibelson posted:

In 2010, one of our school requirements at SAMS in Leavenworth was to "try" to get something published. I submitted an article to SWJ, and Dave accepted and published it. Then, the publishing bug bit me and I would submit 25-30 articles over the last decade to SWJ, with Dave encouraging and supporting me along the way. To this day, I hold the deepest regard and respect to Dave and SWJ for starting me off in academic military writing and education. His patriotism, hard work, and his desire to stimulate intellectual debate and transformation across the entire Department of Defense in profound ways is rare, special, and will be missed. We never did meet in person; I am sad that we never got to shake hands.

May 6 at 4:11 AM

MH

Michael Hauben posted:

Please accept my profound condolence. I share your sorrow, and, sad but true, know how you feel, having lost my wife only a few months ago, and before that, our first son, now resting under the shade of a tree at Arlington and in Heaven. I'll never forget how unreservedly gracious Dave was in telling me how much he looked forward to my articles---each of which he had to work hard at reformatting to compensate for my incompetence. We each had pleasant memories of Grande Island, Subic Bay Naval Station, where I acquired the lifelong hobby of diving with the reef sharks; our paths may well have crossed there, although we didn't know it at the time....Dave is with Our Lord now. In Deepest Sympathy, Michael Hauben aka (SWJ screen name) Mike in Hilo

May 5 at 7:35 PM

AC

Alex Calfee posted:

Semper Fidelis. I enjoyed your work. Deepest condolences to your family.

May 5 at 5:03 PM



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Joe Gregg posted:

I am so sorry to hear of David's passing. He was great friend to me years ago. Prayers to all of the family in this time of loss.

May 5 at 5:01 PM



Rich Grimm posted:

Though I served 25 years in the Marines I never met Dave until long after we were both retired. He helped me out in 2009-2010 at the Joint Irregular Warfare Center as I grappled with developing an unclassified reference publication as tasked by General Jim Mattis. Dave was the most knowledge Intel Officer I know on the topic of insurgencies and small wars. I am sad to hear of his passing. He was a fine Marine, a talented officer and a long-suffering Orioles fan. I will miss him. Rich Grimm

May 5 at 4:53 PM



Anonymous sent a Country Basket Blooms to the Dilegge family.



May 5 at 4:21 PM



Ed Regula posted:

Dave, thanks for the times we chatted and for all you gave for our community and the nation. Fair winds and following seas. Ed Regula

May 5 at 4:09 PM



Anonymous sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Dilegge family.



May 5 at 4:08 PM



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EW

Eric Walters posted:

For many of us in the U.S. Marine Corps, Dave made us change our way of thinking about war and warfare; several generations of Marines have his fingerprints all over our collective brains. He was a consummate creative thinker, networker, and never satiated student of history and armed conflict. We too mourn his passing, but celebrate the life he led which made a difference to so many of us! Semper Fidelis. -- Colonel Eric M. Walters, USMC (Retired)

May 5 at 3:56 PM

TR

Tom Ricks posted:

I am so sorry to hear of his passing. He was a lively, important voice.

May 5 at 3:28 PM

TO

Thomas Odom posted:

I was privileged to work with David in the early years of Small Wars Journal. He was a consummate professional and an educator. He will be missed and the world is less without him. I know that his efforts helped save US lives and preserve our freedoms. God Bless and care for this Marine. We'll meet on Fiddler's Green, Dave.

May 5 at 2:46 PM

JC

Joseph Collins posted:

Like many hundreds of soldiers, marines, and national security experts, I knew Dave through the Small Wars Journal, an important publication that sprang from his mind and his caring stewardship. He helped so many and developed an institution that produces great scholarship that helps to keep the nation safe. We will miss his friendship, his skill, and his humble ways. He loved his country and his family. May God hold them in the palm of his hand during this time of mourning, and may his memory be a blessing to all in the years to come. Joseph J. Collins Colonel, USA retired A friend of Dave's and the Small Wars Journal

May 5 at 2:28 PM



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PH

Patrick Marshall Hughes posted:

I send my sincere condolences to the family and friends of David. He was a great source of reason and insight. We in the US military -- active and retired -- will miss him. See you at the next rally point Dave. Montana 6 out! Lieutenant General Patrick M. Hughes, US Army (Retired)

May 5 at 2:28 PM

GS

Gerrie Delegge Shire lit a candle in honor of David.



May 5 at 2:26 PM

ED

Elizabeth Dilegge posted:

Oh Daddy, how many amazing memories I have of us together. I couldn't possibly count how many amazing, fun and loving times you and I shared. You know how much I love you, and you know how much you've molded me into the person I've become today. You were passionate, about everything, but most importantly passionate about the love you have given me, no matter what ever happened in life. To hear your voice again, to have one of those squeezing hugs again....just to hear you say again, "I love you, honey". You will always be with me, and I will always carry your memories proudly. I will always be your Daddy's girl.

May 5 at 2:15 PM

PW

Phil Walter posted:

My name is Phil Walter. Dave kindly published me on Small Wars Journal when I was a new writer. Later, when I started my own website called Divergent Options, Dave partnered with us on a writing contest and it was great fun. Dave, as an individual, advanced national security thinking through his own writings and the platform he supplied at Small Wars Journal more than ten people could. I will miss him. My condolences to the family. -Phil

May 5 at 1:49 PM



Media

David P. Dilegge

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Elizabeth Bertholdt shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

May 7 at 6:48 PM



My father and I



John Michael Walls shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

May 7 at 5:21 AM



Dave making sure even the Stuffed Animals were having fun-Oct 1996 at Chip Loos' house



John Michael Walls shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

May 6 at 5:06 AM

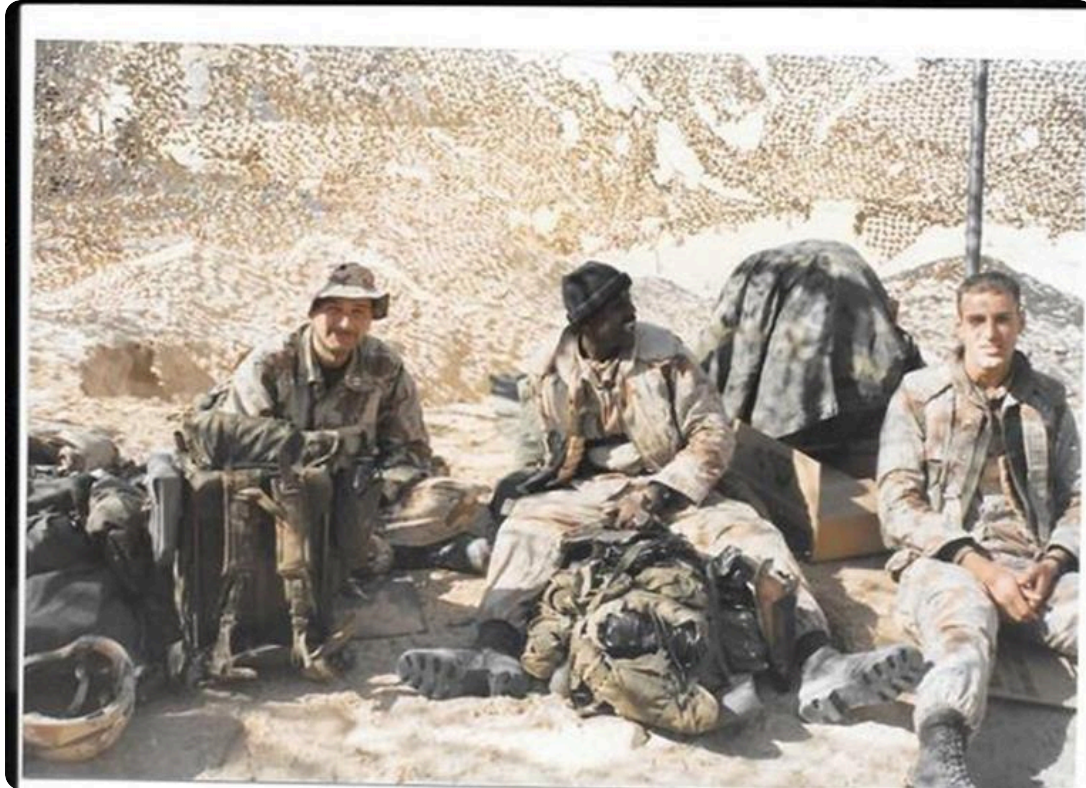


Marion- you might remember seeing us off on our train trip in April 2007-



John Michael Walls shared a photo to the **Memories Album** album.

May 6 at 5:05 AM



Dave on the left- Saudi Arabia, Feb 1991- Dave actually made Desert Storm fun! He will be missed.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring David by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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