

## E. Lee Dauster

By George Lawhon  
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On January 13, 2013, a good and decent man, known to God and his mother as Elmer Lee Dauster, but to the rest of us as just Lee, made the journey we will all take someday, passing over the bridge that separates the living from the dead. I'm sure he was welcomed upon his arrival there, but he is and will be just as surely missed here by all who knew him.

Lee was devoted to his family, and a good friend. He was a poet, a warrior, a Marine, a Life Member of the KWVA (1988), and one of the founding members of Santa Clara Chapter CID 6.

### THE MEMORIAL - February 2, 2013

The KWVA was notified by Lee's daughter, Debra Zink-Brody, that a February 2, 11 a.m. memorial service followed by a reception was scheduled in Sonora, CA. She asked if we could participate.

KWVA President Jim Ferris responded by directing that arrangements for floral displays at the memorial begin, and asked for attendance support. As a result, KWVA Vice President Roy Aldridge, KWVA California Department Commander Mike Glazzy, CID 6 Commander Walt Schrank, our Association Historian Jim Byrne, and National Director George Lawhon attended. Ed Dauster, Lee's brother, came to the Memorial from his home in Virginia.

The Military Memorial, with an Honor Guard, was held at the Dambacher Mountain Memorial Cemetery in Sonora. It included a Color Guard, a 21-gun salute, and the playing of Taps. Afterwards, the American flag was folded and given to Lee's wife, Marie.

### RECEPTION

An informal reception was held in downtown Sonora at the Veterans Memorial Hall and Military Museum. There was an excellent buffet. After the consumption of food and socializing ended, folks began to share experiences they had with Lee. My recollections of Lee center around our mutual love of poetry, especially the writing of it, and his sense of humor.

He had a really great laugh. We had planned

to write an audio book using that wonderful voice of his and poetry from both of us. Too bad.

By far the most interesting presentation was Ed Dauster recalling that fateful night in Korea that Lee lost his leg. I was a bit apprehensive about writing it up accurately, but I was given kind permission by Jim Byrne to use his formerly published G/3/1 (G Co., 3rd Bn., 1st Regt., 1st Marine Division) newsletter for credible source material. Bless his heart, that enabled me to give you the remarkable story below.

### SOMETIME AROUND MIDNIGHT

During April '51, G/3/1 went into reserve. Lee, a Scout Sergeant with a FO (Forward Observers) Team, was sent to support a South Korean Marine unit. On April 23 and 24, the Chinese first probed and then launched a full-scale attack on that part of the line. Lee's FO team was with a platoon of Korean Marines out in front of the main defensive line.

When the Chinese hit on the 24th, the platoon of Korean Marines withdrew from its position to join the rest of the company on a ridge line shortly to the rear of its former position, leaving the FO team by itself to face the Chinese advance.

Permission to withdraw with the Korean Marine platoon was denied by the artillery liaison officer, which left the FO team no choice but to hold on to its position as best it could. The only advice the team received from the 11th Marines liaison officer was to call in artillery air bursts on its position

Richard Matheney saw a light .30 cal machine gun abandoned by the Korean Marines. Dauster and Matheney moved to the gun. Matheney manned the gun, while Dauster used his carbine to hold off enemy soldiers trying to get around and behind the devastating fire of the light 30.

Sometime around midnight, Lee saw a Chinese soldier suddenly jump out

of a concealed position, firing an automatic weapon at Lee as he charged. The Chinese soldier got off three rounds before Lee was able to take him out with a shot to the chest. But in that first burst of fire, three rounds found their marks, ripping into Lee's ankle and shin bone, shattering the bones beyond repair.



## HELL ON AND OFF A HILL

Somehow, the FO team held all night and left thirty counted enemy dead in front of its position (for this action, Matheny was awarded the Navy Cross, while Dauster received a Silver Star). During the night, Lee lost consciousness from loss of blood. In the morning, he regained a certain degree of alertness, only to see what he thought was a Chinese soldier about to end his misery. Instead, it was one of the Korean Marines who, with his comrades, placed Lee in a

sleeping bag and later a blanket, and pulled him to an observation chopper that had to be jerry-rigged to handle the evacuation.

Just about the time that Lee was strapped into the chopper, and before the chopper had achieved full rotary speed, three rounds hit, almost taking Lee's head off. The pilot wasted no time and took off, but with insufficient rotary speed to ascend. All of a sudden, Lee was aware that the chopper was barely off the ground and was rapidly dropping into the valley below. The pilot knew what he was doing, and eventually gained altitude and headed home.

The three rounds that ripped into the chopper had done significant damage, and the pilot was forced to make a landing at the 1st

MarDiv CP. The chopper bounced around, breaking the straps on Lee's stretcher. As a result, Lee found himself on the ground next to a chopper that could have easily burst into flames.

From out of nowhere a Marine rushed to his side. This Marine had just finished delivering a report to the Division CP and was about to return to his unit. When the chopper came down hard and he saw a Marine on a stretcher, he rushed to give what aid he could.

When he looked at the Marine on the stretcher, his first cry was, "Lee! Lee?"

The wounded Marine looked up to see who it was that was taking a chance with a chopper that could suddenly explode—and stared into the face of his brother, Ed Dauster.



Neither had known the other was in the area! As soon as Lee was safely separated from the chopper, Ed was told to "get a letter to Pat (Lee's pregnant wife) and mom. Tell them that I am coming home, but don't mention the leg."

Ed got the letter home.

#### AT DAY'S END

While it was a sad day indeed, it had its sweet pleasures to compensate for our pain. One of them is the realization that our friend Lee no longer has to carry his burden of pain he did so well for more than 60 years. I say to my friend, "God bless you and goodbye."

Lee's daughter Debra took the flower wreath home and put it on her front door. Her final comment was later, in an email:

"...The memorial was wonderful. The VFW & KWVA really made it special. The 21-gun salute will be memorable. What an honor. Marie gave me the flag. I will cherish it.

Thanks for getting the word out.."

Lee Dauster's record of service to and for his country is extensive and honorable.

#### MILITARY AWARDS

Purple Heart (2)

Silver Star

Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal

President of G-3-1 USMC (Korea) Assoc.

#### OTHER SERVICE

Life member:

Disabled American Veterans

Member - American Legion

Member - G-3-1 USMC Korea

#### KWVA SERVICE

Commander CID 6 (Santa Clara County, CA)

Commander CID 7 (Sonora Tuolumne County, CA)

National Director 2004-2007

National Director 2007-2010

## Lee Dauster: An Indomitable Spirit

By Mike Glazzy

I received an email message the other day. Another Korean War veteran, E. Lee Dauster, had passed away. I sat there deep in thought about Lee's formative years...his birth in St. Louis, MO on Christmas Day 1928, during the "Great Depression" era...his military service to flag and country...and his many years of service to the KWVA.

Lee graduated from high school in June 1946, and enlisted immediately in the U.S. Marine Corps. In December 1950, this Parris Island Marine, now trained as an air wing squadron intelligence clerk, arrived in Hungnam, Korea with the third replacement draft to serve with a forward observation (FO) team assigned to G Co., 3rd Bn., 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. On March 2nd, 1951, Lee, during his first combat engagement, was among the wounded (four KIAs and 21 WIAs).

Lee Dauster was wounded twice in a six-week period, losing a leg to the automatic gun fire above. Lee's personal citations include two Purple Hearts and a Silver Star for uncommon valor. He "retired" with those wounds and 14 months of hospital time.

Years later, Lee Dauster, along with 28 Korean

War vets, answered the call to form a Korean War veterans chapter in San Jose, California. On the first day of December 1989, KWVA President Nicholas Pappas chartered the Santa Clara County Chapter CA 6. Lee volunteered as the chapter's first newsletter editor, and later served as the chapter's second President.

Later, Lee moved to the Sonora, California area and served as President of the Tuolumne County Chapter CA7. Lee also served as President of the Marine G-3-1 organization. On the National KWVA level, Lee Dauster was elected and served two terms, 2004-2007, and 2007-2010 as Director, taking on additional responsibilities as a member of the budget/finance committee and chairman of the resolution committee. He also served as an insurance advisor.

Most of us will remember Lee as the eternal optimist, living in concert with the lyrics of a song sung by Frank Sinatra titled "My Way": "I faced it all and I stood tall and did it my way."

"Semper Fidelis," Marine E. Lee Dauster

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## Colonel Roswell Freedman Honored



Hae Sook Choi, Barbara Freedman, LtCol Tim Stoy, Col Ross Freedman, Cpt C. Monika Stoy at medal presentation

By C. Monika Stoy

Retired Air Force Colonel Roswell Freedman, a veteran fighter pilot from both World War II and the Korean War, was recently presented the Ambassador of Peace Medal by Captain, retired, C. Monika Stoy on behalf of Minister Park, Sun Choon, the Republic of Korea Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs. Colonel Freedman is 98 years old and now resides at Falcon's Landing, a military retirement home in Potomac Falls, Virginia, with his wife Barbara.

Colonel Freedman flew more than 50 combat missions over Korea and later in the war served as Base Commander of Kunsan Air Base. Many of his missions involved interdiction of enemy supply lines in North Korea.

Colonel Freedman was unable to attend the MPVA sponsored banquet on 27 July 2012 when Minister Park personally thanked the veterans in attendance, but the Minister's office asked Captain Stoy, as a U.S. Advisor to the Ministry, to present the medal on his behalf. Colonel Freedman was also presented the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice medallion.

LTC Timothy R. Stoy, US Army, retired, son of an Army Korean War veteran, and Mrs. Hae Sook Choi, widow of a ROK Korean War veteran, also participated in the award presentation. To date Colonel Freedman is believed to be the oldest Korean War veteran to have been presented the Ambassador for Peace medal.

Colonel Freedman served as a researcher, writer, and professor at the Air War College after his retirement from the Air Force in 1961.