

JOHN NICHOLS

U.S. MARINE CORPS
MARITIME REGIMENT GUARD
STATE GUARD (TX Military Dept)
Command Sergeant Major
Service Dates: 1973 – current
(33 years and still going)

Written by Holly... as told by John.

John's father fought in WWII, in Korea. John was born into the military life and is not finished with it yet.

John was with the U.S. Marine Corps for 12 years; working as a Drill Instructor, a member of the 31st MEU (Marine Expeditionary Unit), and as a HALO Jumper (paratrooper).

John was a Houston police officer for 30 years.

Then he was a Sergeant with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office for 10 years.

John continued in the Marine Corps Maritime Regiment Guard unit and switched over to the State Guard Unit of the Texas Military Department, where he still works today.

John has been deployed 11 times.

Essentially, John left Reagan High School, joined the military ranks and has never left.



John wearing USMC blues for the last official time. February 2020



Step 1: John jumps.

Step 2: John lands.



Step 3: John packs up his parachute and heads for home.

OK... now for a few more (some “Good,” some “Not good”) facts about John’s life:

John is a Command Sgt Major at Camp Mabry in Austin, TX. This is at the top of food chain for enlisted men. In a couple of years, John will reach the required military retirement age and HAVE to get out. We’ll see.

John rode a Harley to high school. He did this along with Todd Rothrock.

John was in the marines with our friends. Along with John in the U.S. Marine Corps were Todd Rothrock, Curtis Horn and Mike Wilson. They all eventually got out, unlike John.

John was a HALO jumper. A HALO jumper is a paratrooper who jumps from a high altitude (30K feet) and opens the parachute at a low altitude (High Altitude Low Opening). The jumper free-falls for quite awhile and some of them get up to a terminal velocity of 126MPH (ouch), and this allows for a very short jump time, often under two minutes. As a military paratrooper John did about 900 jumps while at Camp Pendleton. Today, John has taken over 6000 free-falls.

John got kicked in the face by a horse. ...or... John got his face kicked in by a horse. John was a Mounted Patrol Instructor for 10 years, and trained horses in his off time. An Andalusian stallion (interested in the ladies) was loose, and John was attempting to assist with getting him corralled. John turned to get his keys from the jeep, and some mares whinnied. John turned and apparently (he doesn’t remember all of this, but there were bystanders) was kicked in the face with BOTH horse hooves. Not good.

The “bad” news is that John needed a lot of bone reconstruction, plastic surgery and fake teeth attached. 16 surgeries later, and John has quite a bit of titanium in his face.

The “worse” news is that after waking up in the hospital, he couldn’t see, couldn’t understand English, couldn’t walk, eat or swallow (no food for a year).

The “NO WAY” news is that John actually DIED when that horse kicked him in the face – his heart stopped. His face was gone, blood and bone were down in his throat and chest. A trach was put in and he was revived in the helicopter on the way to Conroe Regional Hospital. He was in a coma and tied to the bed.

John got crushed by thousands of pounds of steel pipe. John was a Motorcycle Officer for 23 years with Montgomery County. He saw a truck sliding with 70,000 pounds of steel pipe on board. It couldn’t stop, so of course John got into the middle of it. There was a collision, fire, and falling pipes (on John). John had damaged legs and had to use crutches for quite some time, but he didn’t break a single bone. He was only out for 4-5 months. Not good.

John got hit by lightning. John was overseas (Okinawa) doing perimeter watch and trying to open a can of sea rations. The radioman was coming, and John tapped him on the shoulder. Lightning struck him, then John, then down to hit a row of 17 guys, with the last one getting his foot blown off. Not good.

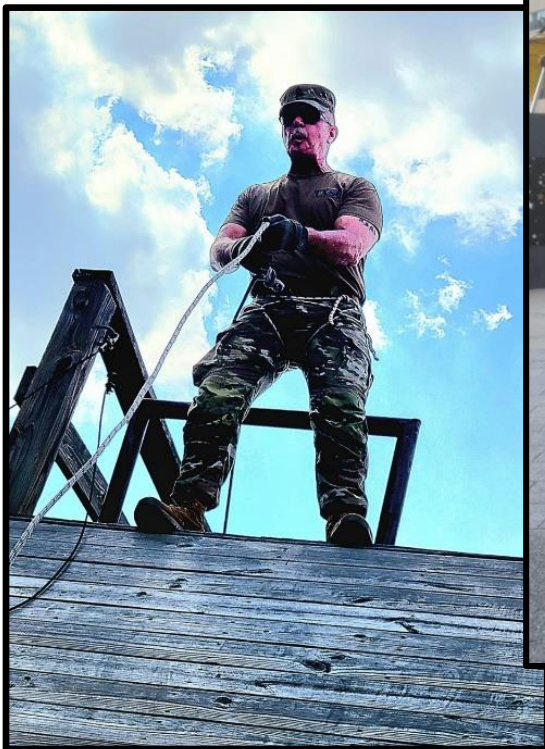
John ripped a bicep muscle in half during military duty. He hardly noticed it and worked through the day. But it needed surgery. Not good.

John (while parachuting) landed on a horse on A.J. Foyt’s property. Didn’t quite make the drop zone but broke a fence and hit a horse on the rear. Apparently Mr. Foyt was NOT pleased. This was in the 80s. Not good, but kind of funny.

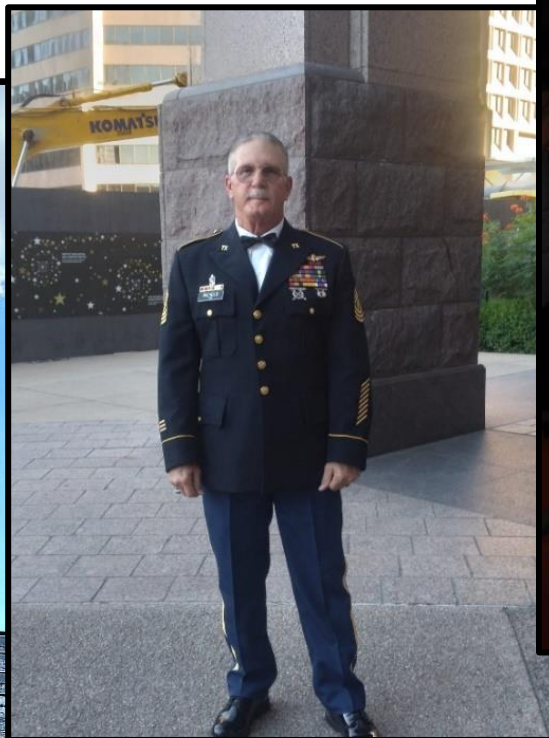
John (while parachuting) aimed for California but landed in Mexico. Whoops, landed across the river. John gathered up his chute and ran like hell. This was in the 70s. Not good.

John, Donuts and Ghosts. When John was a Houston police officer, he was called to the house of Mrs. Shipley (heir to the donut empire). She was complaining about Mr. Shipley, saying “He won’t leave me alone. He keeps bothering me.” John pointed out that Mr. Shipley had been dead for quite a few years. She said, “I know that! But he throws pots and pans, opens cupboard doors, and now he won’t let me turn the TV off so that I can get to sleep!” So, John checks the house first (as they always did), and then suggested that it was perhaps a power surge issue. He turned the TV off. Mrs. Shipley says, “Now let’s go to the kitchen,” and they did... and the TV came back on. Well, okay, perhaps it’s an electrical issue, so John unplugs the TV, and Mrs. Shipley says, “It won’t do any good.” They go to the kitchen, and the TV comes back on. It had managed to plug itself back in! So, John calls his Sergeant, who comes out and checks the house, then suggests it’s a power surge. Turns the TV off... John says, “It’s not going to do any good,” and they go into the kitchen and the TV comes back on. The Sergeant unplugs the TV... and guess what? Back to the kitchen... TV comes on... plugged back in. They finally had to admit defeat and suggest that perhaps an exorcism might be needed. Mrs. Shipley died a couple of months later (probably with the TV still on).

John is ENGAGED! John has been through a couple of wives, and was then single for 14-15 years, but now he is now happily engaged to Dawn, who he met when she worked at Walgreens while he was in the Sheriff’s Department in Montgomery, TX. John has 2 sons and 1 daughter. Dawn has 3 sons, and between them, they have 13 grandkids and 1 great-grandkid. Good.



John teaches rappelling to Officer Candidates



Reagan Reunion