

# Johnson serves In Space Force

By Jayson Knight

A Tuttle alumnus, Tanner G. Johnson was a two-time state champion wrestler and standout academic who is currently serving his country as a Lieutenant in the United States Space Force.

After graduating from the prestigious US Air Force Academy, Johnson was chosen to serve in the United States' newest branch. Johnson is stationed at Beale AFB near Sacramento, California, where he lives with his wife Brynn Johnson, a fellow Tuttle native. Johnson is a crew commander at the Beale Upgraded Early

Warning Radar (UEWR) station that covers all of the West Coast and Pacific Ocean.

The UEWR tracks objects in space, such as satellites, space debris, rocket launches, sub-launched ballistic missiles, and intercontinental ballistic missiles, just to name a few.

"I enjoy working every day to help stand up the newest service branch and to have an active role in shaping it into something we can all be proud of in years to come," Tanner said of serving in the Space Force.

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**Tulio Morales has served in the United States Army for 18 years**

## Carmen Caputo

Carmen Caputo was a U.S. Marine and Mid-Del school teacher. He shared his experiences serving his country in the Marine Corps.

Another day in paradise ... Parris Island- late September, 1963. Waiting outside the barber shop for our 3rd haircut since training began. Whenever we were in a position where we had to wait as a group, it was required that we be studying our "knowledge", rules, history and traditions of the Marine Corps. Drill Instructors would ask random questions at any time and in any area. If you did not respond correctly-verbatim- a recruit could expect punishment ranging from verbal harassment to endless physical exertions or even an "attitude adjustment"- a few well placed punches to your body- depending on the mood of the DI. It was supposed to be illegal to "thump" recruits, but no one escaped, given the right time and place. So, it was to a recruit's benefit to have complete command of the "knowledge" that was expected. ... If you screwed up in public, punishment was meted out in private so prying eyes could not see what was going on ...

Nov 22, 1963 on this day, our nation changed forever. President John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. I was at Parris Island, SC. We were rehearsing for our graduation ceremony from Boot Camp, when a Marine



spoke over the drill field loudspeakers saying, "Drill Instructors, we have received word the Commander in Chief is dead. Take your recruits back to their barracks, and await further instructions." Unbelievable.

June 1964. I was a stalwart Marine guarding a boat winch [during a 7 month cruise] in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

From May through November, 1965, I was deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with the 6th Marines. We were tasked with guarding the fence line around the base. Some of our posts were feet away from Cuban posts, some were hundreds of yards.

July 4th, 1965, those of us not on active sentry duty, were brought to the main side of the Base for a parade. As we were assembling, I saw wives and children of permanent personnel stationed there watching us. Castro's regime had erected huge loudspeakers

outside the fence and were broadcasting one of his long winded speeches. As the parade began, the combined Navy and Marine bands amped up their volume and drowned him out! So awesome.

Speaking of Marine Security detail at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba ... I had a buddy there named Walter K. Singleton that was from Memphis, Tennessee. In February of 1967 he would be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his action in Viet Nam. We were both recently promoted to Corporal ... He was 20 and I was 19. We had a rotating shift of 24 hours on duty- 24 hours off and 24 hours standby, guarding the various positions on the fence line separating the base from Castro's Cuba. As I recall, there was no concern, like today, as to if we were being treated correctly by being in Guantanamo. Wherever we had a bunker, ... the Cuban[s] had one directly opposite. Some as close as 50 yards, some further. They would try to instigate us by throwing cans of urine and feces at us so as to provoke an incident. ...

October 26th, in 1966, my enlistment in the Marine Corps came to an end. I was Honorably Discharged ... with the rank of Sergeant. One of the proudest accomplishments of my life to this day. I had joined in August of 1963, and, arrived at Parris Island in September of 1963. Over the next three years, one month and twenty six days, I went from a lowly Private E-1 to a Sergeant E-5. Became a trained M-60 machine gun-

ner, went on a 7 month Med[iterranean] Cruise, spent 7 months at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and served alongside of some of the best people I have ever known. I went from a smart-[mouthed] 17 year old to a responsible 21 year old man. It was my honor to serve with two Medal of Honor recipients, Sergeant Walter K. Singleton [previously mentioned], and Sergeant John J. McGinty ... who passed on January 17[, 2014]. Four days shy of his birthday. When I knew him, for a period of 14 weeks, in 1963, he was a Sergeant in the Marine Corps tasked with the job of turning young people into Marines at Parris Island, SC. He turned a 17 year old kid with no self confidence into a member of the world's best fighting force. He instilled in me the attitude of "never quit" and that you NEVER abandon your family and friends. He also taught me to be humble and to let my actions speak, not my mouth. ... I still find myself thinking if my appearance and behavior would meet with his approval, and if my shoes are shined according to Marine specs. This after more than 50 years of being in his company.

My last 11 months in the Corps were spent at Parris Island, teaching [new] recruits ... What I learned in the Corps set the standard for my personal Code of Conduct and Honor. Those of you who are my former students and now Facebook friends should know ... I tried to transfer that to you ... SEMPER FIDELIS