



Sue Sousa 1927 - 2023

Semper Fidelis Marine \*|FNAME|\* \*|LNAME|\*

“Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as you ever can.” - A poem by John Wesley and words that memorialize Theresa “Sue” Malone Sousa.

The August and Sept Monthly Minute is dedicated to Sue Sousa, her family and DC-1. Sue’s inurnment was conducted on 10 August in Arlington Cemetery and her memorial service, led by Mitzi Manning, was 12 August at the WIMSA Memorial, also in Arlington Cemetery. DC-1 (Leila Jackson, Vivian Price Butler lead the

It was cloudy humid day on 10 August. Those of us able to attend her inurnment were in a somber mood, but with the Marines present to provide a 3-volley rifle salute, taps and presentation of the flag, Sue was sent home in proudful Marine Corps fashion. I noted that when they placed Sue’s urn in the crematorium slot a soft breeze came up that seemed to wrap around all of us as her last hug and goodbye. I was not the only one who noticed.

I would like all to enjoy the photos. Eileen Scanlon was very present and has enough memories to last her lifetime! It was a sad, but joyous occasion as

effort) with a lovely memorial wreath and we, as Marines, were able to spend time together beautiful reception after. We had many in and remember Sue. attendance as you will see from the many photos Semper Fidelis! Ann that were taken!

### **Eulogy for the Mother of WMA by Mitzi Manning**

So here we are...on a day we hoped would not come...at least for a while longer. When you know and love a person like Sue...larger than life...full of joy...generous beyond measure... you just naturally want your time with her to go on and on. And then the day comes when that time comes to an end. And for me, it was not too long after, that I heard what Sue's last "marching orders" to her little sister Nancy were: "Cremation with ashes at Arlington. Memorial service at the Women's Memorial. And Mitzi does the service." Sue didn't even need the classic Marine Corps 5 paragraph order to pass on her wishes. Nancy said she wrote them on an envelope. Sue was always a woman who knew what she wanted!

So, at that point, I went into panic mode. Sue...at least to me...was an idol. What in the world can I say that will ever be enough? Then I remembered when I was in seminary locally, a well-respected professor

said one morning in a preaching class: [quote] 'None of us are great preachers...we just have great material.' Of course, he was referring to the Holy Scriptures...but today, after sitting with stories about Sue shared by Eileen, family members and friends, after recalling advice given to me personally by Sue, and after reflecting back on all the adventures shared with Sue, Eileen, and other of our Marine sisters, I have to tell you that while I'm still not a great preacher...I have some fantastic material to work with this afternoon.

Theresa "Sue" Malone Sousa...just saying her name will make me smile for the rest of my life. I met her for the very first time on a day in 1972, on an auditorium stage at Marine Corps Base, Quantico, Virginia. That day, she was representing the organization she helped found...the Women Marines Association (WMA as we all call it) ...she was representing them by presenting me with my first 2-year membership to WMA. Sue was charming, funny, obviously squared away, and immediately made this brand-new Marine feel like she belonged. I liked her from the first moment! It was a first impression that over the years I discovered fell way short of capturing who Sue was. Sue was REMARKABLE!

But what made her remarkable?

To begin with, she was born in Winchester, VA in 1927. She was the second youngest of six children, 3 boys and 3 girls. Sue's lifelong belief in total equality started at an early age in Winchester. Although women had been granted the right to vote, there was still unbelievable gender discrimination in just about anything else. Sue started early trying to do something about it. Sister Nancy tells me that at age 3 when the family was building a new house, Sue and 2 of her brothers accompanied their parents to check on the construction site. Her father and brothers started off to check on the natural spring on the property and Sue said, "I want to go, too!" She was told she couldn't...she was a girl! Sue, NEVER forgot that!

Later, when Sue was in high school and consumed by her favorite sport...softball...both boys and girls teams qualified to play in a tournament in another county. The boys were going by bus, but no provision was made for the girls' team. Sue went to the principal's office to complain, and as if by magic the girls were given a bus.

That instinctive belief in equality...was that what made Sue remarkable? Following her high school graduation, Sue moved to Washington DC, working first for a construction engineering firm while attending night school at both Strayers Business College and Columbia Technical Institute. Sue had that thirst for knowledge and training, as she continued to demonstrate throughout her life, later spending time at American University, and taking specialized training at Stanford and Yale Universities

as well as the completing the Federal Executive Institute. A continuing thirst for knowledge...was that what made Sue remarkable?

In 1949, Sue enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve and became a member of the Reserve 5 th Infantry Brigade. (Hear that, Marines? Our Sue was in 3 the infantry!) She was promoted to PFC in 1950. When the Korean War broke out, reserve units all over the country were “activated”, and women reservists like Sue were detached from their units to report to Parris Island for recruit training. Her first assignment out of boot camp was to the Base Motor Transport Battalion at Camp Pendleton, CA as a “guard mail” driver. (For you younger Marines, once upon a time there was no email, and drivers like Sue spent their entire working hours driving back and forth to units on Camp Pendleton delivering what was called “guard mail”). Sue was good at whatever she did and within 6 months was promoted to Corporal. She was reassigned 3 days later to the Commandant of the Marine Corps’ staff as a Topographic Draftsman, and within 6 months was again promoted to Sergeant. In the two years between November 1949 and November 1951, Sue had made Sergeant! Then Korea ended in an armistice, and reserve Marines reverted to the “weekend drills and 2 weeks in the summer” routine. For Sue, that meant back to Washington DC’s 13 th Infantry Battalion and jobs as platoon sergeant and training chief for a woman

Marine disbursing platoon. In 1957, Sue was Marine of the Quarter for 13 th Infantry Battalion, beating out all of the other male and female Marines! Shortly thereafter she received her promotion to SSgt. Sue continued to excel as a reserve Marine, while simultaneously starting her civilian career with the Department of the Interior-Geological Survey...a career that extended for 32 years, highlighted by her work in conjunction with NASA to launch the first satellite devoted exclusively to the study of Earth and its resources...or as we know it Landsat. She traveled the world for Geological Survey...places like Stockholm, Manila, Cairo, Paris, culminating in a senior executive job as Chief, Visual Information Officer for all of U.S. Geological Survey. Her secretary at U.S. Geological Survey, Gina, described Sue as being both good at her work and equally good at “standing her ground”. Excellence in every job she ever held...was that what made Sue remarkable?

All the above contributed to the remarkable woman we knew, but I must share several observations by those closest to Sue for what I believe is the real answer. Sister Nancy described Sue as the most fun and at the same time most caring person you could ever hope to meet. She was devoted to her family and friends and extremely generous to everyone. Nancy shared that it was Sue who took care of every older member of the family. I was Sue who took out a loan and made sure that Nancy was able to go to college. When Nancy had children, Sue became the best aunt ever to Sarah and Susannah and was pivotal in their lives.

A close family friend, John McClanahan...Marines may not know his name, but when I say that his Aunt Lou was our PNP Lou, you’ll get it...John described Sue as “a member of my family from before I was born as she was a dear friend of Aunt Lou’s” ...” she always watched over us”. John also says that after his own mother passed away it was Sue and Eileen who always checked in on him to make sure he was OK. He fondly remembers shared “lunches along the bay, eating crabs and enjoying a beverage.”

Jeannie Botwright goes back to the very beginnings of WMA, and was witness to the organization that Sue, Ruth, Nita Bob, Helen, and others created in part to preserve the history and tradition of women in the Corps. Sue had the leadership qualities, the dedication to a task, the sense of humor. She was a mentor. And in Jeannie’s words Sue understood that “the purpose should be to gather for sharing, for volunteering in local communities, and for providing educational opportunities for those in need.” Sure, it was fun to gather and tell sea stories, but WMA needed to be an organization that also served.

Past National President Rhonda Amtower talked of how Sue mentored her...and other PNPs...by passing on her motto: “Always do what is best for WMA” ...and what that meant to Sue was do whatever will keep us volunteering, helping veterans and active-duty military, and generally continuing to serve long after our uniforms are stored away in a trunk. As Rhonda said, “Continuing to build bridges between our Marine generations was in the forefront of Sue’s strategy for WMA’s future.”

What then DID make Sue so remarkable?

The words above that were shared with me to describe Sue are: devotion, loving care, generosity, mentoring, serving, volunteering, building bridges...those are the things that made Sue remarkable to me. Sue's innate intelligence, her work ethic, her belief in fair play were a given. But of much more importance were those qualities and actions that made Sue a living example of "love your neighbor as yourself". And during her very long and active life EVERYONE was Sue's neighbor. Sue's long life was made immeasurably easier and much more joyful by having Eileen by her side for so much of it. For most of us here today there was hardly a time that we heard one name without the other. Every out-of-town WMA convention I ever attended would start with me arriving at the hotel in Minneapolis or Louisville or Portland or wherever and immediately asking the registration desk the same question: "Are Sue and Eileen here yet?" (I see some of you nodding your heads...you asked the same thing, didn't you?) Such is the sense of loss that many of the rest of us, in no small way, are sharing with Eileen, Patti, Nancy and Woody, Sarah and Tom, Susannah and Lao, Ben...and each of the extended family that has cherished Sue all their lives.

But Sue would not wish us to mourn. Sue's was a "resurrection faith", based in her Presbyterian upbringing in a small church in Opequon, VA. She continued her spiritual practices throughout her life and believed the words of the Gospel of John:

**"Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places: if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ...Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not let them be afraid."**

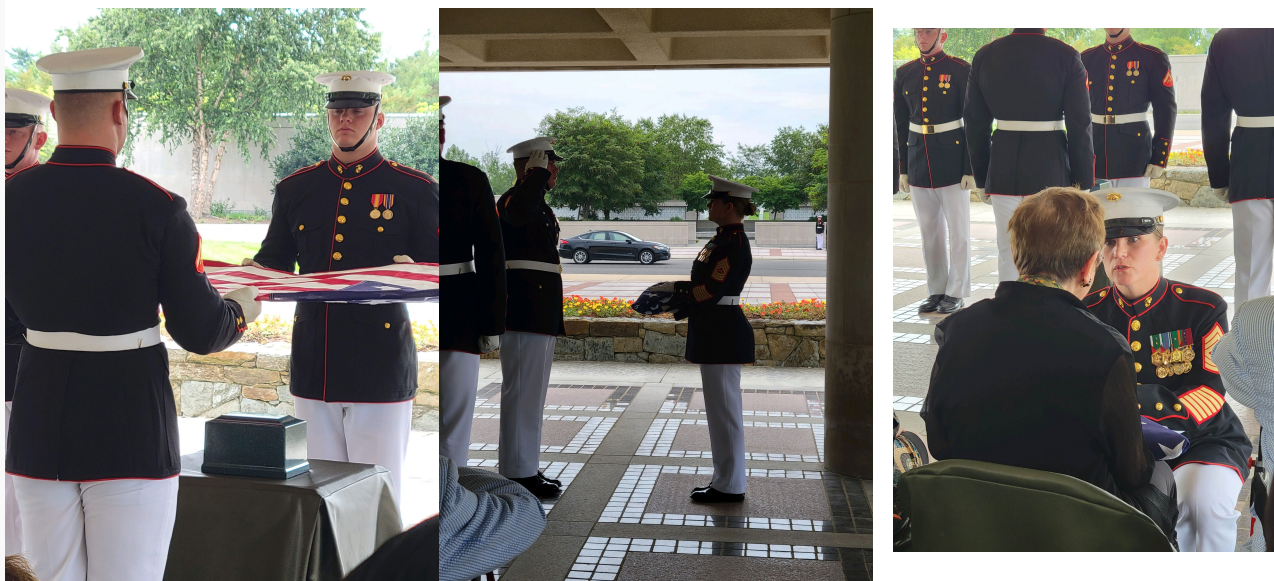
Sue was not afraid. Eileen told me that, and Eileen would know. Nancy told me that, and also said that Sue approached the end of her life with a rare satisfaction...peace of mind. She had worked hard, she had played hard, she had loved and helped others all her life, and she was unfailingly kind. What better way to start your eternity?

And for that, I say, "Thanks be to God" Amen

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## Our Sue

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