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From: "GERALD F MERNA" <gfmerna_usmc@msn.com>
To: "MED-OurTown-Aldrich A. R." <news@OurTownNews.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2006 11:23 PM
Subject: Our Town, August 23, 2006

Mr. Arthur R. Aldrich
Founder, Editor and Publisher
Our Town
36 Ridge Street
PO Box 750
Pearl River, NY 10965

Dear Mr. Aldrich:

How pleasantly surprised I was upon receiving a copy of the 23 August 2006 issue of *Our Town* sent to me by a dear friend in Piermont.

What a busy man you are! Not only are you the Founder, Editor and Publisher of Our Town, but also the Reporter and Photographer. You not only *wrote* the excellent story but also *took* the picture of me and former Marine and St. Agnes Alumni friend David Kee, and on the *cover* of your Newspaper at that. Now that's what I call a *real* "jack of all trades!" Kudos to you for your endeavors in all of these positions.

The friend who sent me the copy also indicated a relative of hers called to ask if *I* had *died*, since there was a small typo in the story that "*Gerald* Merna (me) was 18 when he was killed," when obviously it was my Brother *George* who was killed in WWII, and he was *19*. It gave a lot of us a few chuckles anyway, and my bride Dot wants you to know that although I am now 76, I'm still very much alive and kicking!

An interesting fact that your readers might have enjoyed is that not only did David Kee and I not see one another in over 56 years, but that when we last did meet in 1950 it was at Camp Lejeune, NC where David, my Brother Jim, Francis Boyle and I, "House's Kids" all, where we were sent for Advanced Combat Training following our recall for the Korean War, in which we all served.



Jim Merna ----- David Kee----- Jerry Merna



Jerry Merna – David Kee – Francis Boyle – Jim Merna
 October 1950, Camp Lejeune, NC

Except for my Brother Jim, that was the last I ever saw of David Kee for 56 years, and I still haven't seen Boyle. Even more interesting, David served *30 years* in the Marines, his Brother Louis *20*, and I served *22*. (Brother Jim got out after *three* years to help build the Tappan Zee Bridge during the summers he was going to college, a job St. Agnes Coach Jim Faulk helped him obtain).

Before being recalled for Korea, after finishing my first enlistment my last job (after a brief stint at the Robert Gair Paper Company in Piermont), was working for Lederle Laboratories in Pearl River. While in Korea, I got a "care package" *every month* through the generosity of Lederle employees. I'll bet they're doing the same *today* for our Rockland County men and women serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. As the Marine Recruiter for Rockland County stationed at the Nyack Village Hall, I enlisted many youths into the Marine Corps.

So "thanks for the memories" and the kindness and courtesy of featuring two old Marines on the cover of your Newspaper. My Brother George and a younger brother, Richard (also a House's Kid and Marine who served in Korea and who died last month) were both smiling down on us as we honored the 39 Servicemen from St. Agnes who gave their lives in World War II and Korea. We are so very proud of all of them.

Semper Fidelis,

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