



The two-star general who wasn't

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It was all a big lie. David Weber of Ramona has admitted that he was never a major general in the U.S. Marine Corps, and he has been ordered by the Corps' Office of the Inspector General to never again wear the general's uniform or medals.

In an e-mail to the *Ramona Sentinel*, Capt. Michael T. Dowling of the Separation and Retirement Branch at the Marine Corps headquarters in Quantico, Va., told the *Sentinel* that Weber was contacted Friday morning and "Mr. Weber agreed to cease and desist wearing the Marine Maj. Gen. officer uniform since he was never a general officer."

Speaking with the *Sentinel*, Weber said he wanted to apologize to his friends, the community and the Marine Corps, "which I love very much. I have often said that God gave us one mouth and two ears so that we would listen more than we talk. I did not follow that advice."

The case has been turned over to the Oceanside office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Weber said he was in the Marine Corps from February 1958 to May of 1967 and was discharged as a staff sergeant.

"I was always extremely proud to be a Marine. I guess I just wanted to be seen on a bigger stage," Weber said this week.

Weber admitted that the battlefield commission he spoke of in last week's feature article in the *Sentinel* never happened. But he insisted he was in Saigon when the last helicopter took off from the U.S. Embassy building, but he was there as a civilian, and that he was part of the team that went in to rescue the daughter of a Middle Eastern prince, who had been kidnapped. "I was included because I was a small guy and could fit into the torpedo tubes they used to put us ashore," he said.

One of the people most crushed by Weber's admission was Staff Sgt. Philip Krabbe of Camp Pendleton, who had been introducing Weber to all his friends and around the community as a retired major general for several years.

On Nov. 7, Weber was honored at the Ramona VFW Post 3783 and received the first piece of cake at the post's celebration of the Marine Corp's 234th birthday.

Krabbe had accompanied him to the party, where Weber was in full-dress blues with his medals as a major general, and he was to be the guest of Krabbe at the Marine Corps Ball at the Anaheim Marriott last Saturday, where he was to be honored as a senior officer there. That did not happen.

Friends said they had already spent considerable sums on hotel rooms and the admission to the ball, which starts at \$100, and one said he had given up his seats on the 50-yard line at last Sunday's Chargers game.

Krabbe said he had known Weber as a major general for four years and "was devastated" when he learned of the deception. "All that stuff he fed me all that time was pure bullshit," Krabbe said bitterly.

"I called him and he asked me how I was doing and I said, 'Not good.' He kinda beat about the bush and I had to flat out ask him, 'Sir, are you a major general?' and he said 'No.' I was crushed because I had shown that man a lot of respect. And that was about it," said Krabbe.

But doubts had begun to gnaw at Krabbe earlier.

At the VFW birthday party, "We went back to his home for a few pictures," Krabbe said, and he noticed that Weber's medals were not properly sequenced. It was too late to have it corrected professionally before the ball, so Krabbe offered to do it for him. "I am familiar with that. I do all my own medals," said Krabbe, who still has Weber's medals in his possession.

"I asked him for his Department of Defense letter that authorizes the medals and he told me he had misplaced it. I don't know why, but a very small doubt crept in. I gave him the benefit of the doubt, but when you (this reporter) called on Monday (Nov. 9) to ask if I, after four years of knowing him personally, would vouch for him as a major general, I said 'Yes,' but that doubt grew.

"When I called him, I was praying, 'David, please be who you say you are.' When he confirmed that he was not a major general, it was devastating," said Krabbe.

Weber insists that all his medals are legitimate, but others are wondering, including one who noticed that at the VFW party he was wearing an aircrewman's wings with Navy/Marine Corps parachute wings, and doubted that he would be awarded the Legion of Merit five times, but sported no bronze or silver stars, despite all the missions he spoke of being on.

Back at Quantico, Capt. Dowling said he had no idea what would happen next, that was up to the inspector

general's office, which might decide to notify the FBI. Sources tell the *Sentinel* that since passage of the 2005 Stolen Valor Act, prosecutions have been pursued more aggressively.

"This seems to be occurring more frequently recently," said Dowling, "And if (unauthorized medals) show added decoration for valor and such, it can lead to serious problems (for the person). And, by the way, thanks for getting this guy off the street."