

# Our Fallen Heroes

## CPL Charles McMahon Jr.



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He was always “Charlie” to those of us who knew him well. Somewhere along the line, he became Cpl Charles McMahon USMC... but the images are still just of “Charlie.”

On April 29, 1975, Cpl Charles McMahon, along with LCpl Darwin Judge of Marshalltown, Iowa, became the last casualties of the Vietnam War – a war that had its roots before they were even born.

Charlie McMahon was the personification of the hometown boy – loyal to his family, deep into the affairs of the Woburn Boys Club, the Woburn schools and his community, and with a bright future. He was the All-American boy: a bit mischievous at times, intensely loyal, committed to the task at hand, a prankster, a friend to everyone.

It all came crashing down, however, on the outskirts of Tan Son Nhut Air Field on April 29, 1975 when advancing North Vietnamese soldiers shelled a small building where the two Marines had pulled sentry duty.

Worse, in all the confusion, the remains of the two Marines were left behind and only later returned through diplomatic channels on March 3, 1976.

On April 29, 2001, Cpl McMahon was honored by his fellow Fall of Saigon Marines at the Boys & Girls Club of Woburn, Massachusetts. The Cpl Charles McMahon Jr. Memorial Wall, originally dedicated in 1985, was expanded to include a number of citations and medals that were earned by Cpl McMahon. These awards were presented to the McMahon family who in turn presented them to the Boys & Girls Club of Woburn for permanent display in the Memorial Wall.



On November 12, 2007, CPL Charles McMahon Jr. Square was dedicated at the corner of Main Street and Coolidge Road in Woburn in a small ceremony by city officials, honored military representatives, relatives, friends and youth members of the Boys & Girls Club of Woburn.

[www.fallofusaigon.org](http://www.fallofusaigon.org)

## **Eulogy for CPL Charles McMahon Jr. Delivered by Charles H. Gardner, Executive Director Boys Club of Woburn**

Today we are honoring a young man who gave his life so we may fulfill ours. Knowing Charlie as I did, I can assure you he did this not as a hero but only as a job that needed to be done.

The success of life is not measured in terms of years. It is not the length but the quality that is the measure of the man. Success is not measured in terms of wealth or prominence or notoriety. It is by the quality and the contributions we have made to create a better world that we are measured. By this measurement Charlie was a giant.

His big people were the underprivileged, the delinquent, kids in need. At his Boys Club, he gave of himself in helping other boys enjoy being young. He doesn't have a monument or a building in his memory but throughout our city, because of Charlie, a lot of people know that there was someone who cared and their lives have been enriched for having known him. He was blessed with a full life and he died "living."

Today, we can all question – Why? But the human mind staggers before the question. We simply don't know the why, but we can pray to accept that - in His own way – in His eternal time- He, the gentle Lord, reached out and called a loved one home.

In closing and in honor of Charlie I would like to say a few special words. To phrase it as another who laid down his life, John F. Kennedy, would phrase it: "Let the word go forth from this time and place—from this service and in love and memory for the young man, let it echo in this whole town, in the homes, in the schools, on the corners, to the old and young –

No more violence  
No more weapons  
No more hurts  
No more deaths  
No more wars

Let us all live in peace. Charlie- God Bless You and May You Rest in Peace.

### **Winners of the CPL Charles McMahon Jr. Scholarships Sponsored by the Fall of Saigon Marine Association**

- 2002 Kevin Briere, Cindy Gill
- 2003 Jonathan Boswell, Sandra Lawton
- 2004 Matthew Dineen, Kristen Padulsky
- 2005 Timothy Padulsky, Lauren Foley
- 2006 Michael Boswell, Allison Littleton
- 2007 Michael Maher, Leah Mulrenan
- 2008 Timothy Jones, Katelyn Marsden
- 2009 Douglas Slagmolen, Caitlin Walsh