



Every Marine a Rifleman!

April 2011 – I have heard this statement many times in my life, but it was the most recent time that it made me think of ABATE of Florida, Inc. Let me first pay my undying respect to all the people who have served this Country in both times of war and peace. Allow me to give recognition to the US Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Merchant Marines, however, it is the USMC that I have always been most enamored. But I digress...

Every Marine a rifleman!

The saying emphasizes that every Marine, no matter what their MOS (military occupation specialty), is also trained infantry and with few exceptions they have to certify annually with their rifle and physical fitness. Consequently, a Marine no matter what they do, must be ready to defend this country at a moments notice.

Every ABATE member a legislative warrior!

ABATE of Florida, Inc. has many jobs that must be done in order for the Chapter and organization as a whole to be successful and move forward. Just as every Marine is a rifleman, it should also be said that every ABATE member is a legislative warrior. No matter what your role is with ABATE of Florida, Inc., every one of you must be ready to fight for your rights and safety when needed. That time, my friends, is now. We are all counting on your help.

My thanks go out to all of you that have taken the time to call and/or write our legislators. I have heard that a certain Representative has received hundreds of phone calls and many more e-mails. As of this writing, we are still fighting to get HB 403, our Stiffer Penalties Bill, on the House Transportation and Highway Safety Subcommittee. We will continue to fight until we emerge victorious or until the final bell tolls.

Now that we are coming up to the time of year when Chapter elections are being held, I encourage all of you to remember that despite the level of participation you choose in your Chapter or the State Board, you are all legislative warriors. With that in mind, I have dedicated the past year furthering your training on how best to fight for your rights, so when the time comes you will be ready.

I leave you with the immortal words of Shakespeare's Henry V before the battle of Agincourt:

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he to-day that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, this day shall gentle his condition: And gentlemen in England now a-bed shall think themselves accursed they were not here, and hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks that fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day."

I was not around eleven years ago when you won the right to choose how you ride, but I will be damned if I let this battle for stiffer penalties pass me by without doing my duty.

What do you say? Will you join me in this fight or will you be "accursed" because you choose to do nothing? Ultimately, this choice is once again, yours.

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