

*The characters William Delaney, Lori Delaney, Thomas 'Tom' Hughes, John Wortham, Lisa Marie Delaney, Samantha 'Sam' Tuttle, John Parseghian, Daniel Castle, Lonny Edwards, Jeffrey Dodge, Roger Cook, James Daggett, Bernard Richmond, LTJG Ron Cox USCG. PO3 Ken Leese USCG, Fireman/EMT Bill Carapina, Tonya Smith, Kenji Suzuki, Dr. Patricia Gaines, Brian 'Bruno' Parks, John R 'Uncle Johnny' Edwards, Peter 'Pete' Kashnikov, Cathy Wirges, Detective Stan Osterman, Elgin Atwater, Nana Déby, Jose Delgado and Ross Monroe are the property of Ray C. Stankewitz.*

## The Trap

By R.C. Stankewitz

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### Chapter 18

“Postscript” (A word from the author)

Sometimes you never get to find out whether or not a character was based on an actual person. The lead character, William Delaney was loosely based on a friend of mine, who we will refer to as 'Bill' for literary purposes.

Bill is a Marine Corps veteran who served in an elite combat unit. I was his instructor at a vocational college when I first met him. He was 19 at the time and he was taking automotive repair training while he was waiting to go into the Marines.

He served his country well, seeing more combat duty than he cared to. His last tour of duty found him in Afghanistan, where he suffered a debilitating injury that ultimately cost him his right leg.

We were talking one time about how our wives considered us 'head cases' for doing such things as going to the firing range and shooting targets all day or watching war movies just to spot the errors. Bill made a point that nobody except another military man understood what went on in our heads. Between the two of us, we came up with the following.

It's not a poem or other story, but something that comes from our hearts. As you read it, maybe it will give you some insight to how we feel.

“Did You Serve?”

You say that you understand but you can't. You weren't there.

We left home as innocent young men and women. We returned...Changed.

Time heals...almost everything. We will never heal. We can never heal.

We have seen and done things that would make your stomach churn.

There were times we prayed for just a little quiet. Or for it to be over with, quickly.

You don't understand when we don't laugh as loud as you do.

You think that something is wrong when we won't get drunk with you.

Sometimes we have...trouble with just letting ourselves go...just that one time...for you.

Ghosts from the past will always haunt our dreams and memories. They will never die.

You will never know what we have been through to keep this country free.

Until you walk beside me in combat boots and battle gear, you can't understand.

There is no way on earth that I can make you understand the pain that I have went through so don't ask me to.

Be glad in the knowledge that you still live in a free country.

Know that I have put my life on the line to keep that freedom for you.

Understand that some of my friends didn't come home. I still remember them, all of them. I still see their faces.

Did You Serve?

Dedicated to all of those who are serving, those who have served,

And to those individuals that have given the supreme sacrifice for freedom.