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Hard Knocks and Straight Talk: From the Jungles of Vietnam to the American Classroom

William C. Howey

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As the bumper sticker says, *If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you read it in English, thank a Marine.* I ve been privileged to be both.

This book details my life in the Marine Corps and in the teaching profession. I concluded my story with a call for a **REVOLUTION** in America. A revolution against the tyranny of government in which politicians are unresponsive to anything but getting re-elected. I contend we must **WAKE UP AMERICA** before it is too late. However, before we can get to the **WAKE UP** part I need to establish who I am, and that begins with heading out into a new world and commitment to a country that I love.

After graduating on June 7th 1955, I boarded a train in Philadelphia on June 8th and headed for Parris Island and a 31-year career in the regular Marine Corps. Beginning as a Private, I was advanced to Staff Sergeant, then, in Vietnam, to 2nd Lieutenant and finally completed my career as a Lieutenant Colonel, the highest rank an ex-enlisted man was allowed to go.

My career was anything but normal. My specialty included the counterintelligence and intelligence world. I served with the U.S. State Department on embassy duty, the Secret Service on protection details for Presidents Johnson and Nixon, the Central Intelligence Agency in Vietnam, and finally back with the State Department as the Defense and Naval Attache'© to Jamaica. My adventures are detailed in, I hope, a frank and honest manner. Some will be shocked. But all will be wiser.

I consider myself extremely lucky to have traveled the world, survived nearly three years in Vietnam, reached new professional highs as the G-2 Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade and the G-2 1st Marine Division. Upon retirement, I was offered high paying jobs in the Washington, D.C. area, but opted to return to Pennsylvania and enter the teaching profession, feeling that it was a way of giving something back.

I believe I was a successful teacher because of my Marine Corps training. Marines train until they get it right. And they do NOT fail. That is the attitude I took to the classroom. Whatever extra time was needed after class or before class, I made sure my students succeeded.

Parents, administrators and other teachers often sat in on my presentations. In my final year of teaching, 2004, my classes were moved to the auditorium to accommodate larger classes, which included parents as well as students. I was known best as the teacher that told the truth on what I referred to as the warts on the nose of America.

The kids and I fortunately loved each other. By their nomination, as well as from the parents, I received Educator of the Year for Berks and Montgomery Counties in 1999 and Who's Who Among America's Teachers for twelve straight years.

As indicated in the title there are two main thrusts to this book. My military career was a life style of hard-charging, results-oriented hard knocks which paved the way for a successful career in the classroom. In retirement I have reflected on all the battles past and lessons learned. This is the drop-dead serious straight talk that I want you to read.

It is my contention we have **LOST** Democracy in America. If we don't **WAKE UP AMERICA**, this country is going to hell in the proverbial hand basket. We have an unresponsive, corrupt government. We elect people on looks and sex and we let others think for us. We are in deep trouble!! It is my hope that this book will give you the knowledge and motivation to make a difference before it is truly too late.

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