

Gunner Gilbert H. Bolton: A Marine Through and Through  
Marine Corps Installations West - Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton  
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(Photo by Lance Cpl. Haley McMenamain)

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## **GUNNER GILBERT H. BOLTON: A MARINE THROUGH AND THROUGH**

“The more you sweat in peace the less you bleed in war,” said Silver Star recipient Gilbert H. Bolton during a recent presentation to students of the School of Infantry-West (SOI-West) on Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Bolton was born in Portsmouth, Ohio and enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1959. He served as an infantry Marine and officer until he retired in 1991 at the age of 50. During his time in the Marine Corps, Bolton rose through the ranks from private to an infantry weapons officer, also known as a Marine Gunner. A Marine Corps Gunner is a technical expert of all Marine Corps weapons systems, and their employment.

Through his blood, sweat, and tears, Gunner Bolton was awarded the Silver Star Medal for his actions on Hill 25 in Vietnam, a battle in which Gunner Bolton and his men, highly outnumbered, drove back the Viet Cong.

As an enlisted Marine, Bolton was once asked, “What do you want on your identification card” and he stated, “Forever!” That theme has stayed with him ever since. After his active duty career, Bolton realized that he did not want to be without the Marine Corps, so he decided to come back to where he first started thirty-two years earlier. The School of Infantry.

Gunner Bolton now serves the Marine Corps as a volunteer at the School of Infantry-West. Out of a desire to continue to lead and mentor Marines, Gunner Bolton finds himself in a classroom frequently these days and not surprisingly in a classroom named in his honor where he tells his story once a week. “I enjoy coming [to SOI-West] it’s an honor and a privilege as I look forward to every presentation,” said the Ohio native.

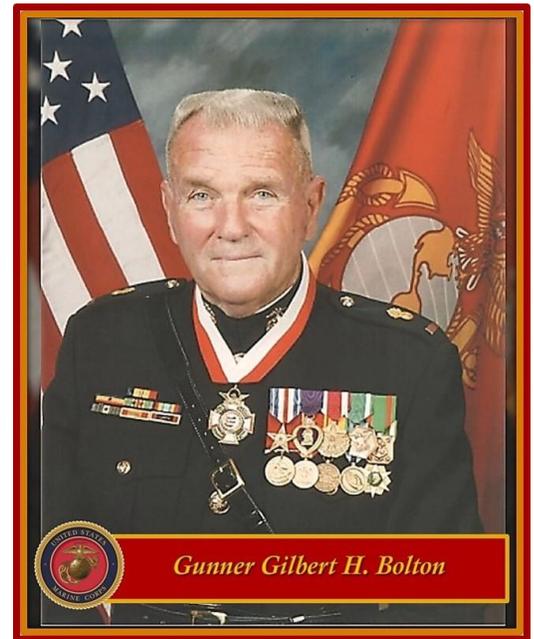
Since 2003, Bolton has given fifty-five combat leadership briefs, taught thirty-seven Marine Combat Training classes, and further instructed eighteen Infantry Training Battalion classes. The Silver Star recipient has attended ninety-five graduations and actively recruits sponsors for nine different courses that provide the ‘Honor Graduate Award’ to the top graduating Marines.

“I love this class,” said Col. Jeffrey C. Holt, commanding officer, School of Infantry-West. “I try to sit through as much as I can every time.”

During each class, the Marines are called to attention as they honor ten fallen Marines from the battle of Hill 25. A bell is rung following the reading of each Marine’s name.

Gunner Bolton uses his battlefield experience and leadership traits to mentor Marines that are going through training. By providing all the Marines that attend his classes with a dog tag, he is passing off his knowledge and experience to those that hope to follow in his footsteps and carrying on his ‘forever’ mantra.

“A Marine couldn’t ask for a better career and I will be here till my demise,” said Gunner Bolton.



(Photo courtesy of Gilbert H. Bolton)