

## Our Veteran Builds a Legacy of Service

John Shoemaker

This is another in a continuing series to bring recognition to our hometown citizen heroes, those Military Veterans who live and serve our community. This, along with other must-read stories, are posted on our Town's website at this link: [Veteran Heroes of Highland Beach | Town of Highland Beach](#)

This story is about both a former US Marine and an Air Force Veteran who continues to serve our community as our Building Official, Jeff Remas. Many of you may have relied on him and his team's support for obtaining building permits, inspections, and overall management of our building codes to support continued improvements and growth in Highland Beach while protecting your safety and security.

At the ripe old age of 17, Jeff was excited about joining the Marines in July of 1983 right after graduating from Nanticoke High School in PA. After enduring the famous boot camp at Parris Island and taking a battery of tests, he was assessed to be smart enough to be sent to "avionics" school in Tennessee. Jeff was ready to take on any challenge. After completing that school, he went to Camp Pendleton, CA, for three more months of training on Huey and Cobra gunships. Transferred again, he went to the Marine Corps Air Station at New River, North Carolina, for duty. He would gain more experience as the Marines sent him to various stations from the West Coast to Arizona to the East Coast and back again.

Most exciting was his water survival training at the Air Station in Jacksonville, FL, which included being dumped upside down inside a simulated helicopter that is then dropped into a massive, deep pool to practice escape. Later, he was dropped in the ocean from a boat with full gear and had to tread water for 45 minutes before being rescued by helicopter.

While his avionics training included radar systems, fire control (weapon systems), communications, and navigation, that was not enough. He then qualified to be a "door gunner" with Gatling and machine guns.

While on duty for seven months in the Mediterranean Sea with the USS Guam, he served on an amphibious assault ship (a small aircraft carrier serving as a landing platform for Marine helicopters) which carried 20+ CH-46 Sea Knights, 10+ MH-53E Sea Stallions, 3+ AH-1 Cobras.

As a combat training exercise, they launched several Sea Knights (large helicopters) each loaded with a fully equipped marine squad to land in a drop zone in Turkey at night. At the target landing zone, in complete darkness, the hulking helicopter was maneuvering to land in the right spot when all hell broke loose. Unseen to the pilots, the rotor blades made contact with a lone Olive Tree in the middle of a desert-like landscape. Twisting and jerking violently, the helicopter broke in half and crashed. With 19 "souls" on board, including Jeff. Miraculously none were killed but 8 were injured, 2 critically.

After his four years of enlistment with the Marines ended, Jeff returned home to PA and started a construction business. But soon he really missed working on aircraft. So, he joined the U.S. Air Force in the early 1990s for another four years. With his strong background in avionics/electronics, he continued work on various aircraft. At the same time, he qualified as a "Flight Paramedic" by going to Luzerne

College in PA. After leaving the Air Force, Jeff continued to work for 16 years as an EMT and Life Flight Paramedic until 2008 in PA for numerous hospitals with Level 1 and Level 2 Trauma Centers.

All the while, Jeff continued his small business, REMAS Inspections, in the construction industry doing state-wide building inspections and code certifications. He continued with his education to earn 28 different certifications through the International Code Council (ICC) plus three licenses as a Building Official, Inspector & Plans Examiner. Fortunately for us, he moved to Boynton, FL, and was hired by “CAP Government”, headquartered in W. Palm Beach, FL, which is a company that provides clients with needs-based building department solutions including administration, plans review, inspection, and code compliance services.

As some of you know, Highland Beach used CAP services for years, and soon it came apparent that we needed someone with the incredible array of knowledge, training, and skills of Jeff Remas for a full-time role as the head of our Building Department.

Jeff loves working in a small-town environment with the kind of positive support he gets in realizing his goal to provide superior “concierge services” to the residents of Highland Beach.

As for his time in the Marines at a young age, he felt it was an invaluable learning experience. As a U.S. Marine, he recognized that he could make important contributions and his self-confidence soared higher than on the helicopters he worked on.

Jeff Remas is another talented resource who demonstrates the town’s commitment to excellence by keeping our home a safe harbor with harmony and beauty.

Again, if you like this story, go to our tab for other stories of our Heroes:

[Veteran Heroes of Highland Beach | Town of Highland Beach](#)



