

VFW Departments Work Together to Help Wounded Marine

Daniel McMahon received the call from his brother while out for his morning bike ride that his nephew had been wounded in an accident at Camp Pendleton

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Jake McMahon was one of 14 Marines and one sailor from the 3rd Assault Amphibian Bn., injured when an amphibious assault vehicle caught fire in September.

Daniel, who served in Vietnam from 1969-70 with the 9th Inf. Div., said he didn't know how serious Jake's wounds were.

"I was really devastated," said Daniel, VFW Department of New York inspector. "I didn't know what was going on."

So Daniel contacted VFW's Department of California and connected with District 1 Commander Doug Scholl.

"I knew if I could get somebody from the VFW to go there and see what was going on, I would get some straight information," Daniel said.

Scholl said he went to the hospital and met Jake.

"He had suffered burns on his face and hands," said Scholl, who served in the Navy from 1988 to 2008, with tours during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Iraqi Freedom. "And his hands were wrapped up like mummies. So he had no use of his hands."

Scholl offered his cell phone so Jake could speak with his parents and other family members.

"That was very calming to them to know that he was talking in a normal voice," Scholl said. "There was no panic. There was no fear. I think that helped them a little bit."

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Scholl stayed with Jake until an uncle arrived later that evening.

“If I can make it easier for the next sailor, soldier, airman or Marine so they don’t have to go through some of the stuff I [had to] go through – if I can introduce them to an organization that does so much, like the VFW, that helps me deal with what I went through in my career,” Scholl said.

When receiving a call like he did from Daniel, Scholl said, “you can’t say no to that.”

“That’s how this organization is supposed to work,” Scholl said, “that [when] we have people in need, we get the phone call and we react. We don’t ask questions, we react.”

Scholl also reached out to his District to organize a home-cooked meal for the families of those wounded in the accident.

This article is featured in the January/February 2018 [Checkpoint](#), and was written by [Kari Williams](#), associate editor, VFW magazine. Photos courtesy of Dan McMahon.