



THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH: PENNING BOOK HELPS VET FIND ANSWERS

BY RACHEL MUSIIME '16
PHOTO BY KELLY SAUNDERS '12

While serving in Vietnam, Captain Doug Chamberlain '64 was given a direct order to 'bury' the remains of a fallen Marine he and his men discovered despite the corps motto of "no man left behind." They obeyed the order of the superior officer despite the conflict with their values, beliefs and training. Chamberlain and a couple of men later returned and ensured the fallen soldier was sent home for a proper burial, but the feeling of failure plagued Chamberlain for decades.

"Bury Him: A Memoir of the Viet Nam War," released in 2019, was part of the process of reconciling the truth for Chamberlain.

Chamberlain grew up in a small community in Wyoming and first visited JBU in 1960 when dropping off a friend on his way to Indiana. There was something profound about the experience and right after that trip, he came back and enrolled as a student. Chamberlain joined JBU on an athletic scholarship, which he says was a life-changing opportunity.

"I grew up poor, and I couldn't have gone to college if it hadn't been for that

athletic scholarship and I've been forever grateful for that," Chamberlain said.

Chamberlain was an active student who played on the basketball team and sang in the choir, which was unusual for an athlete back then. He was also elected as the president of the student government.

"The whole philosophy about head, heart and hand at John Brown has always been a profound influence on my life," he said. "Because I ended up in a combat situation, I'm sure that this helped me in my decision-making in ways I may never have had if it hadn't been for that sort of spiritual leadership exhibited to me and dedication of the staff and all the people at John Brown."

During Chamberlain's time at JBU, he got to know John Brown III, and the two have been friends since. When Chamberlain was at a crossroads with his book, Brown offered a helping hand.

"I got to a point where I couldn't go further, couldn't find answers, didn't know how to do the research," Chamberlain said. "John Brown III, who I had been in contact with on numerous occasions, knew I was writing a book. He suggested

that I contact a man named Paul Semones. Paul is a forensic investigator and a genius when it comes to research on the internet – and that revolutionized my effort."

With the help of Semones, a 1999 JBU graduate, Chamberlain was able to obtain copies of the documents he needed to compile the book in chronological order. Chamberlain also wanted to verify the accuracy of the information he had already written. The research performed by Semones proved Chamberlain's memories to be precise and exact.

Chamberlain's values of excellence, loyalty, faith, patriotism and a sanctified belief in the value of life were not only instilled in him as a child, but were also emphasized during his time at JBU.

"All these reinforcements at JBU led me to a decision of leadership and it gave me a will to live, it gave me a desire to do the best for America and it gave me a love and respect for other people," Chamberlain said. "I'll be eternally grateful for my experience at John Brown."

Learn more about Chamberlain and his book at marinedougchamberlain.com