

# Murry Greenwald

Publisher, *Government Food Service*



Murry Greenwald, publisher of *Government Food Service*, died Sunday afternoon, Feb. 19.

Though few of them have ever even heard his name, U.S. military service members and their families have lost one of their strongest champions.

Early in the summer of 1962, Murry and two partners — all three of them veterans of the World War II-era Army or Navy, as well as the Army Times Publishing Company — formed the company that is now Executive Business Media Inc. Their goal: to publish magazines primarily written for military business managers but focused on improving the lives of those serving in the armed forces and their families.

They began that autumn with *Exchange & Commissary News*, covering the military resale market, and a few years later launched *Club News*, the predecessor of *Military Club & Hospitality*, which reports on Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs throughout the military services. Later in the century, *Government Recreation & Fitness* and *Government Food Service* were added to the portfolio, along with a magazine in the higher-education market, *On-Campus Hospitality*.

In 1977, Murry became president of the corporation. He shouldered the mantle alone, leading the crusade the three partners had all begun together to improve the quality of life of military service members and families. It was a responsibility he relished, a task he never tired of, even in the last hours of his life.

If someone had ever asked him what was the greatest invention of all time, he would have had to say the telephone — even greater than the printing press, the magazine publisher's most formidable tool

— because it was his constant companion. Even before networking was invented, he was a master.

If the phone wasn't ringing, he was dialing; and his Rolodex (eventually, he did transfer it to his computer) was deep and far-reaching. Front office and back office both, the Pentagon ... Capitol Hill ... military brokers ... resale and service agency headquarters ... regions, districts, zones ... distributors ... prime vendors ... trade associations ... club managers, store managers ... the nation's leading manufacturers and marketers: they were all on the phone, day in, day out, well into the evening.

They wanted his opinion, because often as not, he could find the shortest distance to the best solution. They traded with each other the valuable currency of information, a small bit here, a small bit there, which he put together like mosaics to build an accurate picture of the complicated, massive military and government markets.

Murry preached return on investment, and was at a loss to understand the shortsightedness of those who would cut funding for a program like commissary operations, which return to service member families more than two dollars for every taxpayer dollar invested. He embraced such supply chain innovations as the subsistence prime vendor program, in which the few administrative dollars spent to oversee distributors return many times that amount in eliminated inventories and service member satisfaction — and that translates into military readiness.

During his lifetime, he saw the world of retailing evolve from mom-and-pop neighborhood stores to big-box chain retailers and fashionista boutiques. He saw food service change from lunch counters, local diners and cafeterias to malt shops and drive-ins, then change again to fast-food mega chains. He was from Brooklyn, N.Y.,

and the hot dog stand at Coney Island he liked as a child — Nathan's Famous — went national, then international, and now sells its products at 40,000 outlets.

The military kept up, with fast-food franchises and multi-unit food courts, with superstores and convenience outlets. Technology exploded, and the methods of doing business both in and out of the military changed drastically.

There was plenty for his editors to cover, as world events churned and troops were often called upon to quell the turmoil: The Cuban Missile Crisis. Vietnam. Destruction of the Berlin Wall. The end of the Cold War. Bosnia. Kosovo. 9/11. Afghanistan. Iraq.

Missions were accomplished, units were downsized and forces realigned, closing bases in France ... Libya ... Thailand ... Morocco ... mainland Greece ... Scotland ... the Philippines ... Australia ... Newfoundland ... Bermuda ... Wales ... New Zealand ... the Panama Canal Zone ... Iceland ... Sardinia ... and on and on.

The world had expanded, the troops had realigned and the mostly military markets he moved into and promoted for more than 50 years had grown and altered enough to be almost unrecognizable, but Murry kept his focus on preserving the hard-won rewards armed forces families had obtained by putting their lives on the line.

He was never deterred from de-

fending the rights and benefits earned by those who had taken it upon themselves to defend the rest of the nation ... simply because it was the right thing to do.

He often spoke and wrote of the dedication and passion of those who delivered these quality-of-life enhancements — the managers and operators of the dining facilities and mess halls; the exchanges; the commissaries; the clubs; the food, beverage and entertainment outlets; the recreation activities and lodges and child development centers — but in giving them the recognition they so well deserved, it was his own dedication and passion that remain in their hearts.

And ours. —Fred Schaen, COO



## Moving Forward

*When Murry Greenwald invited me to come to work at Executive Business Media 25 years ago, he warned me, "It's unlike anything you've ever done before." What an understatement!*

*It was quickly apparent that I had entered into a relationship with an icon in the markets he served: an icon who symbolized the importance of quality-of-life programs and preservation of benefits for soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen, Coast Guardsmen and their families for nearly 50 years.*

*Over those years, leadership in all branches of the government and the military changed many times, and the services worked to streamline and transform their organizational structure. The country went to war, and government agencies embraced commercial business practices and began to rely more and more on contractors.*

*Murry and his team kept their eyes and ears open, tracking the changes, understanding each move, charting the direction the services were heading. You could count on his support if the plan enhanced the service member family's quality of life, and his kudos for a job well done; however, he was always prepared to deliver a tongue-lashing in print or a verbal kick in the pants if things were heading down the wrong path.*

*Murry Greenwald was content to work quietly behind the scenes to ensure that the benefits and programs promised to service members and their families remained intact. But when you consider the body of work that he accomplished during his days as president and publisher of Government Food Service, Exchange and Commissary News, Military Club & Hospitality and Government Recreation & Fitness, "quiet" is not the word that comes to mind. He was the voice, as well as oftentimes the conscience, of an industry.*

*Moving forward, these titles remain as his legacy. They will continue to report the facts, dig out the details, analyze the consequences and fight the good fight: as there is still work to be done.*

*He wouldn't have wanted it any other way.*

—Jerry Thornton, Associate Publisher