My name is Marie U'Ren

I remember growing up in a Marine Corps family and not wanting to marry a Marine - until I met Bill. We were married at Quantico in 1959 and I became a military wife – it was a job I loved.

A tour in Vietnam was an expected part of a Marine's career. I remember that we spent months planning for Bill's departure before finally deciding that the children and I would live in CA while he served in Vietnam.

In July of 1967, we packed our new Volkswagen Squareback with as much as it could hold, - and drove with our 2 small children from our home in Woodbridge, VA to San Bruno, CA. The children and I were returning to the town where Bill grew up and would be living in his former home, close by his parents. We arrived two weeks before our furniture did, so we spent the precious time before Bill left camping out in the house with a minimum of rented furniture – including a bed so small we almost fell out of it each night.

The first part of August 1967 was spent getting our new home ready. As with any move, there was so much to do, that there wasn't time to dwell on what the future would bring. The second week there we actually gave a party for a group of long-time friends who wanted a chance to see Bill before he went to war.

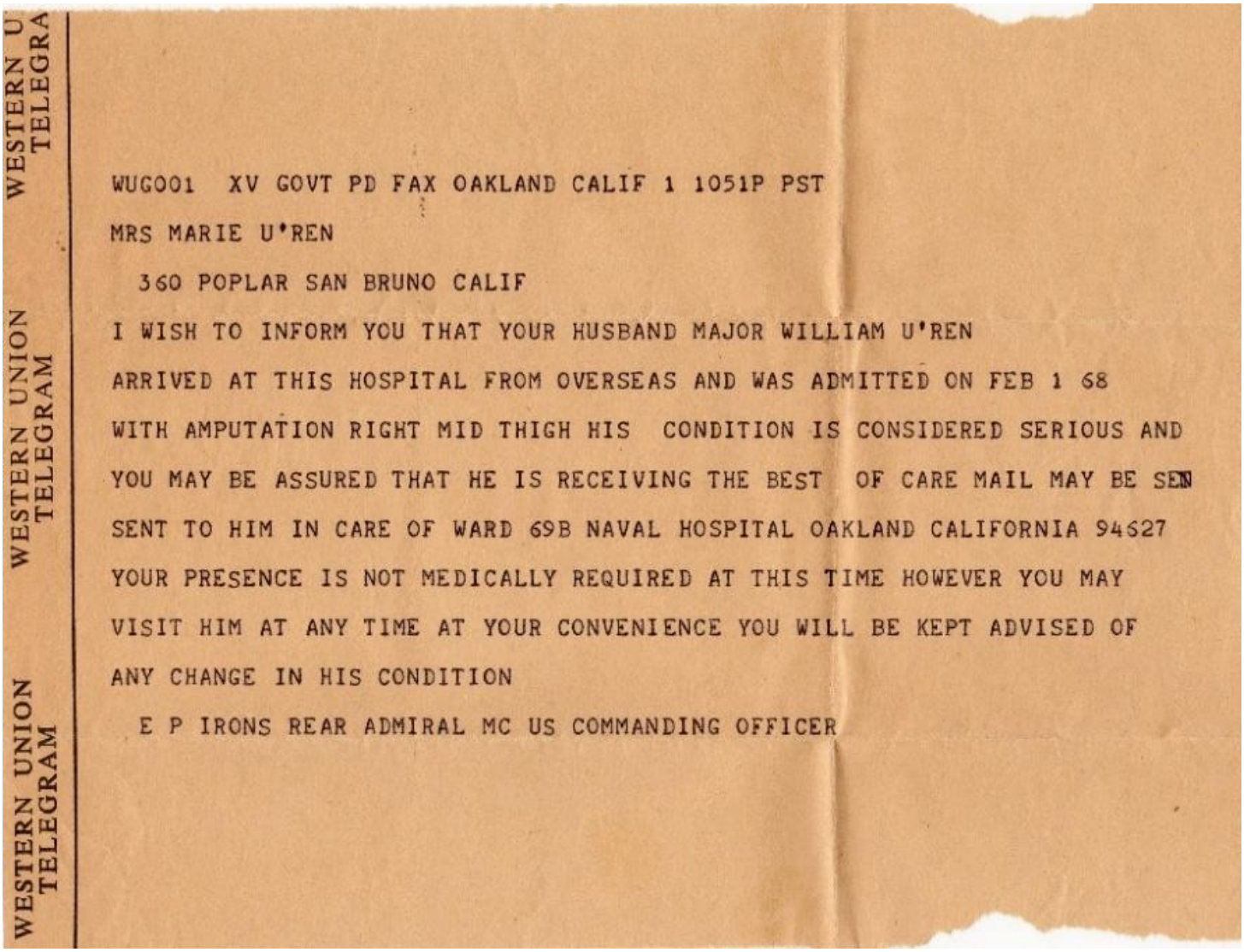
Then it was time for the trip to Travis Air Force Base and Bill's flight to Vietnam. I don't remember much about the drive home, but I do know that once his parents dropped me off at my home, I became completely responsible for the care and well-being of our 4 year old son and almost year old daughter. It wasn't long after Bill's departure that I also became the caretaker for his parents as his father had a heart attack, and his mother didn't drive. And now I was a military wife alone in a civilian town.

All of us waited for his return - waited for letters from Vietnam, waited for the 11 o'clock news each night and waited for our life to resume.

The first indication that our life was going to change completely came by phone January 13, 1968 when my father, who was stationed at Headquarters Marine Corps, called with the news that Bill had been wounded. Next, I received a letter dated January 14 that Bill had dictated to a Red Cross Worker at the hospital in Da Nang. By January 17, he had been medevacked to the Philippines and I received a letter actually written by him. A

series of letters dictated to Red Cross workers followed until January 31, our 9th wedding anniversary, when he was put on a medevac plane bound for Oakland, CA.

Only once during that time had we been able to talk by phone - and that took 10 days to set-up. This was the 60's, there were no cell phones, e-mails or inexpensive long distance calls available. The military did all they could to bring him home as soon as possible. On February 1, a taxi-driver, who was visibly shaking, delivered this telegram to me:



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WUG001 XV GOVT PD FAX OAKLAND CALIF 1 1051P PST
MRS MARIE U'REN
360 POPLAR SAN BRUNO CALIF
I WISH TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR HUSBAND MAJOR WILLIAM U'REN
ARRIVED AT THIS HOSPITAL FROM OVERSEAS AND WAS ADMITTED ON FEB 1 68
WITH AMPUTATION RIGHT MID THIGH HIS CONDITION IS CONSIDERED SERIOUS AND
YOU MAY BE ASSURED THAT HE IS RECEIVING THE BEST OF CARE MAIL MAY BE SEN
SENT TO HIM IN CARE OF WARD 69B NAVAL HOSPITAL OAKLAND CALIFORNIA 94627
YOUR PRESENCE IS NOT MEDICALLY REQUIRED AT THIS TIME HOWEVER YOU MAY
VISIT HIM AT ANY TIME AT YOUR CONVENIENCE YOU WILL BE KEPT ADVISED OF
ANY CHANGE IN HIS CONDITION
E P IRONS REAR ADMIRAL MC US COMMANDING OFFICER

The waiting was over and our new life had begun.