

JULY 2024

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MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES



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From the Publisher & Editor-in-Chief



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A thirsty child found wandering alone in the woods reaches for a cup of water offered by Sgt Charles Monges on the front lines of Tinian.

Remembering Tinian

Eighty years ago, from July to August 1944, the Corps fought to capture the Northern Mariana island of Tinian. Most notably, this battle employed effective military deception in the form of an amphibious demonstration by 2nd Marine Division around the best landing beaches on the island, while the reinforced 4th Marine Division conducted the actual amphibious assault on small beaches to the north. This shrewd deception operation allowed V Amphibious Corps to hit the Japanese defenders from an unexpected direction. We have two articles covering very different firsthand accounts of the tactical actions on Tinian. “Night Battle on Tinian: Marines Engage with Enemy Tanks” by Steven D. McCloud on page 16 is a white-knuckle story of close combat with Japanese armor on the island. On page 23, frequent contributor Geoffrey W. Roecker has produced a photo essay titled “Caught in the Crossfire: Civilians on Saipan and Tinian,” which covers the gut-wrenching experiences of Marines and noncombatants in the Marianas who were terrorized by the Japanese into committing suicide to escape capture.

After the battle, Lieutenant General Holland M. “Howlin’ Mad” Smith declared the Tinian invasion “the most perfect amphibious operation in the Pacific War.” For more information on the significance of Tinian, MCA Premium Members

can visit the MCA’s website at <https://www.mca-marines.org/battle-study-packages/bsp-pacific/battle-of-tinian/>.

This month, as our cover highlights, we also present two articles on the Marines of Marine Barracks Washington. Popularly known as “8th and I,” the oldest post of the Corps includes the ceremonial Silent Drill Platoon, the subject of “Remember What You Represent: The Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon” by *Leatherneck* Staff Writer Kyle Watts on page 36. Kyle looks at the origins of the platoon in 1948 and the traditions these hand-selected and specially drilled Marines present to audiences across the globe. On page 30 in “From Bellhop to *Leatherneck*,” our Deputy Editor Kipp Hanley has assembled the personal accounts of Marines stationed at Marine Barracks Washington in the 1960s. This includes a feature on a Marine, who stood guard at the Commandant’s quarters through the tense days of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Enjoy this month’s edition and continue to send us your Sound Off letters and Sea Stories! Semper Fidelis.

Colonel Christopher Woodbridge,
USMC (Ret)

LEATHERNECK
MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

MARINE CORPS
Gazette



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COVER: Cpl Jack N. Conner and his Silent Drill Platoon squad execute their "bursting bomb" sequence during a performance at Fleet Week New York on May 25, 2023. Learn more about this select group of Marines and their mission on page 36. Photo by Cpl Mark A. Morales, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$3 (for mailing costs) to Leatherneck Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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MILITARY DISCOUNTS AND SAVINGS: YOUR SUMMER 2024 GUIDE

Looking forward to summer vacation? Military life is stressful and time consuming. All those who serve, both the military member and the family, deserve some time off. But don't trade work stress for financial stress by coming back from vacation burdened with debt.

So before stepping out on your first day of vacation, check out this summer guide to military discounts and savings that can help reduce the cost of your time off.

HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR A MILITARY DISCOUNT?

Typically, you'll need to show a valid active or retiree military ID or other proof of service to get a discount. For online deals, you may have to verify your eligibility by phone or email, or through a verification service like ID.me.

WHAT TYPES OF DISCOUNTS CAN I GET?

You can find military discounts in all areas of travel, even beyond the traditional restaurant ones. Think about free checked bags on airlines, discounts on rental cars, cruise and hotel discounts, as well as special prices at amusement parks.

WHERE CAN I FIND MILITARY DISCOUNTS?

A list of military discounts would be too long for this page. Often, the first place to visit is your local Information, Tickets, and Travel, or ITT, office. USAA members can take advantage of discounts and perks at over 900 shops alone.

Also keep in mind that not all businesses advertise their military discounts. If you're not sure whether a store or service provider offers a military discount, just ask. It can't hurt — and you might score a great deal. And don't forget that many establishments offer discounts to retirees as well, while some restrict them to those who are currently serving.

Scan this QR code or select this [link](#) to read the full article that contains a list of special deals and discounts that can help you get more for your money.



Letter of the Month

(Leatherneck will pay \$25 for a "Sound Off Letter of the Month" submitted by an MCA member or provide a one-year courtesy subscription to a non-member whose letter is selected.)

Outstanding story and reporting by writer Geoffrey W. Roecker in the May issue of *Leatherneck* in his article "Death in Square 2: A Marine Tank Crew's Fate on Okinawa," the account and the fate of a World War II 6th Marine Tank Bn crew on Okinawa. Good description of Marine Corps photographer Walter A. Spangler recording this tragic event and follow-up.

My late cousin and his Ontos crewmen also lost their lives in the service of our country in Vietnam on July 29, 1967. A Marine armor recon in force from elements of 3rd Tank Bn, 3rd Amtrac's and 3rd Plt, Co C, 3rd Anti-Tank Bn 3rd Marine Div, left Con Thien in support of 2nd Bn, 9th Marines on the advance into the DMZ, without close air support. NVA mortars and RPG rocket fire took out two armored vehicles. My cousin Sergeant James M. Lynch of Cheltenham, Pa., and fellow crewmen Corporal Dewey L. Beatty and Lance Corporal Allen C. Erickson, both of Seattle, Wash., were KIA during Operation Kingfisher.

Leatherneck has done good ground forces and aviation stories of Vietnam. If circumstances permit a story about Operation Kingfisher, you could talk about the Marine armor-infantry role in Quang Tri Province from 1965-1970.

John C. Lynch
Cheltenham, Pa.

More Praise for "Death in Square 2"

Excellent article on the fate of a tank crew on Okinawa. I was privileged to know Marine Chief Warrant Officer (CWO-2) Harold E. Johnson. He served in a M4A2 Sherman tank in the battle of Okinawa. He was a bow gunner, and his tank was hit by antitank fire. (He later learned it was a Japanese Type 1, 47mm gun that had hit his tank behind the turret where fuel and ammunition were stored). He got clear and saw flame pouring out of every joint in his tank. He was put in another tank the next day and said one of the hardest things he ever did in his life was getting down into it. He was the only one who came out of that tank.

Thomas Ring
Speedwell, Va.

Thank you both for the great feedback on Mr. Roecker's article. Semper Fidelis—Publisher

Reader is Intrigued by Vietnam-Era Chaplain's Story

I have been reading about Chaplain Vincent R. Capodanno, a Navy lieutenant and Medal of Honor recipient. He is also noted on the Wall of Honor at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. In his story, he comments on how the Marines aided in the disaster in Taiwan in 1959. Typhoon Louise struck Taiwan, where it left six people dead, 167 injured, and 6,100 homeless throughout the island. Hualien County suffered the brunt of it enduring great force from the storm. The eye then expanded to 100 miles upon reaching the Taiwan Strait. The storm eventually weakened. Chaplain Capodanno had been in Hong Kong at the time of the typhoon and returned as the recovery was in progress.

On Dec. 28, 1965, Capodanno received his commission as a lieutenant in the Navy Chaplain Corps. He then requested to serve with the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) in South Vietnam. After some training within the Marine Corps, he was assigned in April 1966 to 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division. In December, he was transferred to the 1st Medical Bn until his tour was completed. In June 1967, after a month of leave, he returned to Vietnam for a voluntary six-month extension and in July was assigned to 1st Bn, 5th Marines. In August, he was reassigned to H&S Company, 3rd Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv, where he befriended Lieutenant Frederick W. Smith. Capodanno was widely known for his willingness to share the hardships of suffering Marines on the frontlines "radiating Christ" to those around him.

We know that Father Capodanno was the recipient of the Medal of Honor for gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as chaplain of the 3rd Bn, in connection with operations against enemy forces. In response to reports that the 2nd Platoon of Co M was in danger of being overrun by enemy assaulting force, LT Capodanno left the relative safety of the company command post and ran through an open area raked with fire, directly to the beleaguered platoon. Disregarding the intense enemy small-arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire, he moved about the

battlefield administering last rites to the dying and giving medical aid to the wounded. When a mortar round wounded him, he refused all medical aid. Instead, he directed the corpsmen to help their wounded comrades, and with calm vigor, continued to move around the battlefield as he provided encouragement by voice and set the example to the valiant Marines. Upon encountering a wounded corpsman in the direct line of fire of an enemy machine gunner positioned approximately 15 yards away, LT Capodanno rushed in a daring attempt to aid the mortally wounded corpsman. At that instant, only inches away from his goal, he was struck down by a burst of machine-gun fire. By his heroic conduct on the battlefield, and his inspiring example, LT Capodanno upheld the finest traditions of service. He gallantly gave his life for the cause.

Raymond Fitzpatrick
Nazareth, Pa.

Father Capodanno continues to set the example for "ministry of presence" among all of our FMF Chaplains and RPs. As a veteran of 1st Bn 7th Marines I can report that his legacy lives on. Semper Fi. —Publisher

A Prayer for the Hollow Veteran

My name is Anah Fickett, I am a college writing major, and my grandfather is a Marine and an avid *Leatherneck* fan! He has written for the magazine at least once and has inspired me to reach out. I have been exploring the perspective of recovery for veterans and for a class assignment had to write a prayer for a certain group of people. I wrote a prayer for veterans and although I am not a Marine, my grandfather and two cousins are:

To the almighty God, maker of the mind, prince of peace, yielder of joy. Greet those whose minds and bodies have been toiled with war. Greet them in the corners of their minds where you are allowed occupation.

Grant them a joy that knows no bounds and carries them past their heaviest memories. Give them the gift of expression, help them to communicate the reality of their loss. Offer them grace to work through a life after battle.

Oh, El Roi, God who sees, meet with those who have no battalion to lean on. No one will ever understand the horrors they continue to face, but you choose to stand in the path of their bull horns,



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- ★ A sculpted battle map showcases actual sand from the Normandy beaches in France.
- ★ Fully sculpted back portrays Allied soldiers on D-Day, plus a quote from General Eisenhower.



Eighty years ago, on 6 June 1944, the heavily fortified beaches of Normandy in Occupied France became a site of heroism, heartbreak, and timeless courage. On D-Day, at H-Hour, some 160,000 Allied troops, aided by 5,000 ships and 11,000 aircraft, began the greatest amphibious assault in history. The courage of our "Greatest Generation" heroes made victory possible, ensuring our freedom for years to come. Now *The 80th Anniversary of D-Day Proof Coin* from The Bradford Exchange salutes this milestone anniversary.

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inviting them to wrestle as long as it is with you.

Blessed be your name forever and ever.
Amen.

Anah Fickett
Old Hickory, Tenn.

Thank you for sending in your prayer. It's heartening to know that you were inspired by your grandfather. Best of luck with school and let us know if you ever want to do more writing for Leatherneck.
—Executive Editor

Upcoming Burial for PFC Browning

I am very pleased to report that the Marine Corps Casualty Team visited us this past Wednesday. They gave my wife and I a full brief on how PFC Browning's funeral would be arranged and executed. They provided the DPAA record book that gave us the entire history of my uncle. It was decided that the funeral would occur at Brookside Cemetery in Englewood, N.J., on Aug. 18, 2024, which is also PFC Browning's birth date. I am extremely grateful to my Marine Corps team and the DPAA for this would not be going forward without them.

Peter M. Clay
Irvington, Va.

Thank you for keeping us updated about the positive identification of your uncle who died during the fighting on Iwo Jima. I know Leatherneck readers join me in expressing our appreciation to the DPAA for important work they do.—Executive Editor

Article's Impact Sticks with Reader Years Later

This letter is a follow up to the article "First to Fight: 1st Force Reconnaissance in Hue City" on Marine Reconnaissance in Vietnam, covering the battle for Hue City and the Recon dive mission that took place there, published in *Leatherneck* magazine in February 2018. In the years since its publication, I and others from 1st Force Reconnaissance Company have conducted additional research, including a review of original documents and firsthand interviews, into Sergeant Robert Hughes' experience as a combat diver. Our intent was to verify the accuracy of the underwater combat story, and to seek a belated recognition of Sgt Hughes if the story could be confirmed true. Our research has discovered that the account of Hughes' encounter with the enemy while underwater during a combat dive never happened. What was confirmed was Sgt Hughes service in 1st Force Recon Company was nothing short of honorable in all respects. Sgt Hughes was

a dive team member who did conduct combat underwater surveys of the bridges that crossed the Perfume River during the Tet Offensive in February 1968 fighting at Hue City. Additionally, Sgt Hughes also participated in combat dives in support of the 101st Airborne Division in I Corps during an operation that involved the 101st engaging a large NVA formation crossing a river. What is most important here is to honor the service of Marines in the most accurate manner, no matter how much time it takes to get it right. It will always be about our Marines, their honor and the truth.

Robert Buda
Litchfield, Ill.

Bob, thanks for calling to attention this article and the service of Sgt Hughes. When I interviewed you and all the others for this article, I decided to include the story of Sgt Hughes in underwater combat, in part, because it was sensational. The fact that a story like it existed at all, and endured for 50 years, fascinated me just as much as other details I learned, such as divers carrying privately purchased revolvers, or the thought of exploring an underwater tunnel entrance to surface in a hole full of NVA. I attempted to highlight the story about Sgt Hughes as precisely that, a story, referring to it as such multiple times before explaining the details. I believe these specifics, whether true or false, speak to the sense of mystery, awe, and apprehension that most others might feel when considering what Recon divers faced, or even could have faced, while performing a duty hazardous in every regard. I certainly appreciate the desire to preserve the historical integrity of 1st Force Recon Company and admire you for doing so. I am grateful to the Force Recon community for the opportunities I have had over the years to write about it, and hope that all of what I have written promotes the unit's integrity and renown. Thanks again for helping ensure that happens.—Kyle Watts, Staff Writer

Reader Shares His Thoughts On Memorial Day 2024

I have written past Memorial Day messages about the many lives lost during my 1965-1969 deployment to Vietnam. Over 100 Marines and corpsmen in "India" Co, 3rd Bn, 9th Marines, 3rdMarDiv, Fleet Marine Force were killed in battles throughout South Vietnam's I Corps provinces. Some Marine Corps combat actions were farther south, where some battalions served afloat to support Army operations before rejoining their parent regimental commands ashore.

I have attended so many funeral services for our Marines who have died, many as a direct or indirect result of their wartime experiences. There were also others whose long-term ailments were so debilitating it dramatically shortened their lives. For some, their post-traumatic stress disorder was so severe they cut themselves off from family, friends, and even Marines with whom they had served. I have spoken with the children of some of those veterans, just trying to convey some of what their dads endured in Vietnam. Many were just 18 years old when they experienced the horrors of war and, like the veterans of previous wars, were released back into a society that had no idea what they had experienced.

I had a close friend, Ray Rogers, who had been my company's first sergeant the previous year and at the Battle of Getlin's Corner. Ray had been shot through his thigh, shattering his femur bone. The next day after the battle, we were both in triage at Dong Ha's Delta Medical Battalion Hospital, where he told me they were transferring him to Japan to amputate his entire leg. In words, only a career Marine veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars could use; there was no way they were cutting his leg off! The doctors

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WHERE THINGS START TO GET BETTER.

finally learned how tough he was and agreed to reconnect the femur, making one leg shorter than the other. Given the relatively short time he had left before earning his military retirement and the fact he had been awarded the Navy Cross for Valor at Getlin's Corner, the Corps allowed him to reach his retirement by overseeing Camp LeJeune's special services, where he also coached both the Marine Corps and U.S. Olympic boxing teams.

Years later, after our reconnecting, he and his wife lived on the East Coast. Then, later, he told me he had been diagnosed with cancer. He thought he had beaten it, but it ultimately returned, and they decided to move to Round Rock, Texas, to be close to their son. Top and I talked weekly about many things, including the particulars of our Hill 70 battle. His memory in later years was declining, and he would always ask me to tell him again the names of the Marines and corpsmen on the hill with us. He would chew me out weekly for declining the decoration he wanted for me, but he understood why I had rejected it. Still, he didn't like it and always let me know! The cancer finally got the best of a great Marine, and he was buried with full Marine Corps honors at the San Antonio

National Cemetery. Doc Ray Nelson, serving as the VFW National Service Officer, helped Top's wife Vivian with benefits and arrangements and ensured I received one of the fired cartridges from the honor guard.

I am thankful I took so many slides while I was in Vietnam. I look at those photos and see men as they were when we were returning from operations. Laughing with brothers and being thankful for surviving another day, another hour, for the enemy artillery may once again strike with only the scream some shells make, cutting through the air. We found ourselves jammed into "Z" trenches, hoping the enemy shells fall short or long, missing everyone. Then, the familiar yell of "corpsman up," signaling that shrapnel had struck someone. Next, corpsmen exit the safety of the trench to save wounded Marines. Some would say they are just doing their job, but we Marines and soldiers know how brave our corpsmen and medics are when racing across an impact zone to aid our wounded and dying brothers.

Those of us who have held a dying Marine or soldier have experienced something we shall never forget. There isn't always a corpsman close enough to assist our wounded, so we are all trained in

basic first aid in combat. We do our duty, but some wounds are so severe they are not survivable. We never gave up hope, but recognizing how desperate the situation is where, all we can finally do is comfort the dying. They call their mother or their wife by name. They ask if they are going to die. Unlike the movies, we always encourage them to hold on and fight to live. Passing may be painful or easy, depending on the wounds.

We Marines held a reunion a few years ago in Gettysburg, Pa. We walked the battlefield and read the beautiful monuments erected by the individual member commands from the North and the South. The battle resulted in tremendous losses for both sides. We collectively discussed how arcane infantry tactics were back then and even continued through World War I. I just imagined how it must have felt as a Confederate soldier in Pickett's charge against such formidable natural protection as a hill and large boulders protecting the Union soldiers. My own great-great grandfather Riley died in that battle fighting with the North Carolina regulars. The carnage created by large-caliber rounds left many to suffer and die weeks to years later.

A previous reunion in Washington, D.C., allowed us to visit a Civil War med-

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icine museum. There, we saw photographs of the veterans of our nation and the painful reality of war's savagery for those wounded in battle. Yet, they persevered, working, raising families, and ultimately succumbing to open wounds that never healed.

So, on this Memorial Day, I remember and honor all who fell in our nation's wars. I also remember those whose lives were cut short because they chose to defend our country in wars, not of their choosing, but because they always did their duty. Remember them. Remember their families, for they, too, suffered significant loss.

If you have a relative who died in battle or later as a result of their military sacrifice, I urge you to research and discover how your ancestors have preserved and protected your freedoms.

Jack Riley
Boaz, Ala.

Thanks for sharing this great Memorial Day letter. Your sentiments are right on target. We must remember and honor the sacrifices of those who came before us, and educate those who come after, not just on the national holidays but every day. Semper Fidelis—Publisher



A photo taken of the control tower at MCAS Iwakuni in the 1950s.

COURTESY OF PETER M. WALKER

Reader Shares Photo Of MCAS Iwakuni Control Tower

The May 2024 issue of *Leatherneck* magazine has a photo of the control tower at MCAS Iwakuni in the article "Safeguarding the Airspace: Marine Air Traffic Controllers' Critical Role in Marine Aviation." I have included a photo taken at MCAF Iwakuni in the 1950s. It was originally a World War II Japanese tower. During the war, the base was a Zero base. The aircraft in the photo is an F-4D Douglas Skyraider belonging to VMF-531 the "Grey Ghosts."

Peter M. Walker
Welches, Ore.

Thanks for this great old photo. Semper Fi—Publisher

Question about Medals I Received In Boot Camp

Several years ago, I wrote to *Leatherneck* regarding awards I won in 1958 as a recruit at MCRD Parris Island. At that time no information was found. Again, I submit the following information:

Upon completion of training on qualification day, four members of each recruit training platoon with the highest scored remained at the rifle range. All other recruits were placed on mess duty.

[continued on page 66]

Photo © USMC



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LCPL RICHARD PEREZGARCIA, USMC

Marines with CLB-13, 1st MLG, 13th MEU, read rules to role players from around Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center during a noncombatant evacuation operation exercise as part of Weapons & Tactics Instructor Course (WTI) 2-24 at MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., on April 12.

Twentynine Palms, Calif.

MAWTS-1 Trains for Noncombatant Evacuation Operations

Students with Marine Aviation and Weapons Tactics Squadron One (MAWTS-1) conducted a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) exercise as part of Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course (WTI) 2-24 at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms, Calif., on April 12.

WTI is designed around the six functions of Marine aviation: offensive air support, control of aircraft and missiles, assault support, aerial reconnaissance, anti-air warfare and electronic warfare. Prospective students from a variety of aviation military occupational specialties in the Marine Corps participate in WTI along with Marines from the ground and logistic combat elements. The NEO exercise highlights the Marine Corps ability to de-escalate a situation and relocate personnel to a safe location in the event of an emergency.

The exercise utilized CH-53K King Stallions and CH-53E Super Stallions to land and extract civilian role players. The role players portrayed both non-hostile



LCPL RICHARD PEREZGARCIA, USMC

A CH-53K King Stallion assigned to MAWTS-1 prepares to take off during a noncombatant evacuation operation exercise as part of Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course (WTI) 2-24 on April 12. The NEO gives students the opportunity to execute scenario-based training as part of their certification and preparation for real-world incidents that require a quick reaction force to extract personnel from hostile situations.

and hostile civilians who applied pressure to the security of the landing zones for the aircrafts.

“We’re simulating that our students have to evacuate American citizens from a foreign country,” said Major Katrina Lamsa, an instructor pilot with MAWTS-1. “This is probably one of the biggest noncombatant evacuation operation exercises that the military does.”

MCAGCC teams up with MATWS-1 to conduct this training twice a year, each time with different scenarios in different locations, which allows for Marines to be able to train in various austere environments.

“The pilots don’t get a lot of opportunities to land in urban environments,” explained Lamsa. “It’s an opportunity for us to practice landing in an urban environment, which provides some different challenges to pilots without disturbing a city or civilian population.”

Skills learned in this training have been utilized in several real-world events, such as the humanitarian NEO which occurred at the U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in March of 2024. Recent international events not only show why it is beneficial for Marines and other service members to undergo training, but it also emphasizes the Marines’ capabilities beyond warfighting.

“The Marine Corps deploys all the time, and all over the world,” said Lamsa. “We’re always there and we’re ready to execute the mission when the nation needs us.”

LCpl Aidan Jones, USMC

Honduras U.S., Honduran Marines Integrate During CENTAM Guardian 24

Marines with Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division, based out of Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., traveled to Honduras this spring to participate in exercise CENTAM Guardian 24. Held April 2 to 15, CG24 is an annual, multinational exercise designed to strengthen interoperability, domain awareness, information sharing and counter-threat capabilities between the United States and participating Central American partner nations.

During CG24, Marines of Golf Company integrated with the Honduran Marines, who provided expert knowledge on jungle operations. The training improved bilateral cooperation and combined platoon level operations as U.S. and Honduran Marines navigated the jungle, fired various weapon systems and held a multitude of classes together.

CENTAM Guardian concluded with a two-day exercise where they combined



Above: Cpl Shane Wexler, a rifleman with Co G, 2nd Bn, 25th Marines, 4thMarDiv, moves through the jungle alongside Honduran Naval Infantry during exercise CENTAM Guardian 2024 near Puerto Castilla, Honduras, on April 8.

SGT GABRIEL GROSECLOSE-DURAND, USMC



U.S. Marines and Honduran Naval Infantry discuss their roles in a simulated assault during CENTAM Guardian 2024 at Puerto Castilla, Honduras, on April 8.

SGT GABRIEL GROSECLOSE-DURAND, USMC

the knowledge shared over the course of the training in order to shut down and seize a simulated illegal narcotics operation and apprehend a high-valued target protected by a simulated oppositional force. The Marines achieved success by moving and communicating through the jungle in bilateral squads.

Over the course of CG24, cyber servicemembers from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras participated in a cyberspace defense exercise at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras. Instruction was provided by Arkansas Air National Guard, 189th Communications Flight members and a servicemember from the U.S. Southern Command Joint Cyber Center. A cyber detachment from Company B, 6th

Communications Battalion, Force Headquarters Group, MARFORRES, participated in the exercise as the “Red Team” opposition force from its home training center in Ayer, Mass. This Marine cyber detachment helped to evaluate partner force defensive cyber capabilities.

This year, U.S. SOUTHCOM aligned CENTAM Guardian 24 with Large Scale Global Exercise 2024. LSGE 24 is a U.S. European Command-coordinated exercise framework, comprised of dozens of exercises across multiple commands designed to strengthen agility and interoperability with allies and partner nations.

Sgt Gabriel Groseclose-Durand, USMC

An AV-8B Harrier pilot assigned to VMA-223, MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., takes off for a mission during an exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., on Jan. 17. (Photo by William R. Lewis)



SSGT DAISHA RAMIREZ, USMC

Capt Joshua Corbett, one of the two final Marines to receive the 7509 military occupational specialty as an AV-8B Harrier II jet pilot, graduated from the AV-8B Fleet Replacement Detachment at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., on March 29.

MCAS Cherry Point, N.C. USMC Graduates Final Two AV-8B Harrier II Student Pilots

The USMC graduated its last two student pilots from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) AV-8B Harrier II Fleet Replacement Detachment (FRD) after completing the AV-8B Harrier II training syllabus at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, N.C., on March 29, marking another milestone

as the service transitions from legacy tactical-aircraft (TACAIR) platforms to the F-35 Lightning II.

Captain Joshua Corbett and Capt Sven Jorgensen completed their final training flight at the 2nd MAW AV-8B Harrier II FRD and became the last two Marines to receive the 7509 military occupational specialty, which is reserved for AV-8B Harrier II qualified pilots. In addition to marking a milestone for the Marine

Corps' transition to the F-35 Lightning II, the culmination of their training represents a significant event in the Harrier's legacy.

More than 40 years ago, the arrival of the first AV-8B Harrier II to 2nd MAW in January 1984 represented the peak of technical innovation. The platform's predecessor, the British-built AV-8A Harrier, entered the Marine Corps inventory in 1971. The aircraft's vertical

and short-takeoff and landing (VSTOL) capability created a new approach to operating tactical aircraft, allowing them to operate from not only smaller amphibious ships, but also from relatively unprepared and dispersed sites ashore in the battlespace. The second version of the platform, the McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II, afforded twice the range or payload of the AV-8A with the same VSTOL capability.

Until 2021, pilots that were to be trained on the AV-8B Harrier were sent to the Fleet Replacement Squadron, Marine Attack Training Squadron (VMAT) 203, aboard MCAS Cherry Point. VMAT-203 was deactivated Oct. 29, 2021, in accordance with Force Design initiatives and transitioned to an FRD under Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd MAW, with sourced aircraft from Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 223.

According to many of its pilots, the aircraft's VSTOL capabilities also mean that it is more difficult to learn to operate compared to other TACAIR platforms. The replacement pilot training syllabus remained one of the longest and more difficult fleet replacement syllabuses in the Marine Corps. Corbett's and Jorgensen's training at the FRD began with the familiarization syllabus. However, familiarization with the Harrier is different from familiarization with other platforms in the Marine Corps due to its VSTOL capability.

"The biggest difference for us is the familiarization syllabus that we start off with," said Jorgensen. "In the Harrier, we have to completely relearn how to fly because of its vertical takeoff-and-landing capabilities."

After that, according to Jorgensen, Harrier FRD students underwent the same phased approach to operating the aircraft as other TACAIR pilots. This approach has been used to train scores of Harrier pilots for over 40 years. Their final flight, which was a low-altitude close-air support training sortie, represented the culmination of their training at the FRD and the significance of close-air support to pilots in the Harrier community.

"As every Marine knows, the infantry is always the main effort," said Corbett when asked about close-air support's significance to Harrier pilots. "That 19-year old, that 20-year old with a rifle who's in harm's way... that's the whole reason that the rest of the Marine Corps exists, to support that Marine. Close-air support is the most direct way that we, as Harrier pilots, can influence that fight in favor of that Marine."

In their more than 40-year history, 2nd MAW Harriers have supported



LCPL ETHAN MILLER, USMC

SSgt Payton Garcia, with the Marine Corps Shooting Team, received the Lauchheimer Trophy during the 2024 Marine Corps Rifle and Pistol Championship Awards Ceremony at MCB Quantico, Va., on April 9. The Lauchheimer Trophy is presented to the Marine with the highest aggregate score of the individual rifle and individual pistol matches.

numerous operations across the globe, including Operation Desert Storm, Operation Allied Force in 1999 in the former Yugoslavia, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Harrier, and the pilots who fly them, will continue to call MCAS Cherry Point home until the platform fully transitions out of the Marine Corps in September 2026. Harrier squadrons will continue to execute deployed operations as part of Marine Expeditionary Units.

"The next step is to learn how to use the jet in combat," said Jorgensen. "It's been an honor to be here, and I'm looking forward to flying it for the next few years."

2ndLt John Graham, USMC

Quantico, Va. Top 10% of Marine Shooters Compete in Championship

Marines from around the Corps competed in the USMC Marksmanship Championship competition hosted by the Marine Corps Shooting team in Quantico, Va., on April 9.

"The importance of these competitions is for the Marines to test their mettle against their peers and increase overall lethality," said Master Sergeant Nick Capko, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the Marine Corps Shooting Team.

This competition is the culminating championship of the various regional marksmanship competitions that are

Sgt Thomas Aguilera, a combat instructor with School of Infantry West, participates in a shooting drill during the Marine Corps Marksmanship Competition at Weapons Training Battalion on MCB Quantico, Va., on April 5.

conducted all around the Marine Corps. Yearly, the shooting team hosts a variety of marksmanship competitions across each major installation to find each region's best shooter.

"Over the past year, we have had over 800 Marines compete to see if they can medal in their regional competitions," he said. "The top 10% of these Marines are then invited to the Marine Corps championships."

The competitors are assessed at the championships, where they are given a chance to join the Marine Corps Shooting Team.

"Marines that display the characteristics we look for and [and want to] further develop are those we ask to come for a summer season," said Staff Sergeant Christian Cachola, a first-place winner of this year's rifle match and a small arms weapons instructor with Weapons Training Battalion.

This championship consists of multiple tables of fire that can include pistols, rifles and shotguns. The Marines square off for



LCPL JOAQUIN DELA TORRE, USMC

eight days across various ranges to see who is the best marksman in the Marine Corps.

"Competition breeds excellence," said Chief Warrant Officer Joshua Martin, an ordnance officer with the 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment, and the Pacific Marine Shooting Team captain. "It's surreal—I started competing as a corporal, and I have been competing ever since. It forces the worst and best out of you while testing your on-demand skills."

At the awards ceremony, the command-

ing general of Training Command, Brigadier General Farrell J. Sullivan, highlighted the importance of the shooting team and the competitions it hosts.

"Weapons Training Battalion, thank you for everything that you do," said BGen Sullivan. "No one will understand the grasp and impact that this shooting team has had on the Marine Corps ... I'm certain we will always need a Marine Corps shooting team."

LCpl Sean LeClaire, USMC



LCPL ETHAN MILLER, USMC

BGen Farrell Sullivan, the commanding general of Training Command, presents the 2024 Infantry Trophy to the Far East Team during the 2024 Marine Corps Rifle and Pistol Championship Awards Ceremony on April 9.



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Inspecting engineers Cpl John D. McAfee and Cpl Howard T. Smith signal to each other while standing atop tanks “two” and “three,” July 25, 1944.

Night Battle on Tinian

Marines Engage with Enemy Tanks

By Steven D. McCloud

Executive Editor’s note: This article is based on interviews and research done for the author’s book “Black Dragon: The Experience of a Marine Rifle Company in the Central Pacific.”

Priate First Class Bob Funk struggled to clear his head as he lay in the roadside ditch, peering into the blackness of the night. His buddy, PFC George Michalet, was next in line behind him. They and four other Marines had already lain there for hours, soaked with rain and sweat, taking turns trying to stay awake.

They had only finished mopping up Saipan a week before. Only half of “Fox” Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines remained. The rest of those who had survived Saipan were in hospitals around

the Pacific, 59 of them in Naval Hospital No. 10 at Aiea Heights on Oahu. The 129 who remained were in poor shape. Even Easy Company’s commander, Major Lester Fought, was out of action with dengue, and it seemed that most had at least a touch of it. But for Funk and Michalet, this outpost job had sounded easy enough, even if they had been in the Marine Corps long enough to know better than to volunteer.

They had been sure that, after a month on Saipan and being saddled with the unsavory week-long job of mopping up

and clearing caves on the northern part of the island, they would be allowed to sit out the Tinian operation. They had taken some solace in being made the reserve. But there they lay on outpost the first night, waiting for the enemy response to the landing and awaiting the arrival of some 37mm guns to join them. So much for being in reserve.

The 4th Marine Division had made the unlikely landing that morning across two tiny beaches near the northern tip of Tinian while 2ndMarDiv held the main Japanese force in place with a feint landing 5 miles south at Tinian Town. As July 24 turned into July 25, 2nd Bn, 23rd Marines formed the far right section of the division beachhead.

Funk and Michalet lay astride a narrow coral road that ran back to the company

“But the little coral road from Tinian Town pierced Fox Co’s position from the left. That was the likely approach for enemy tanks...”

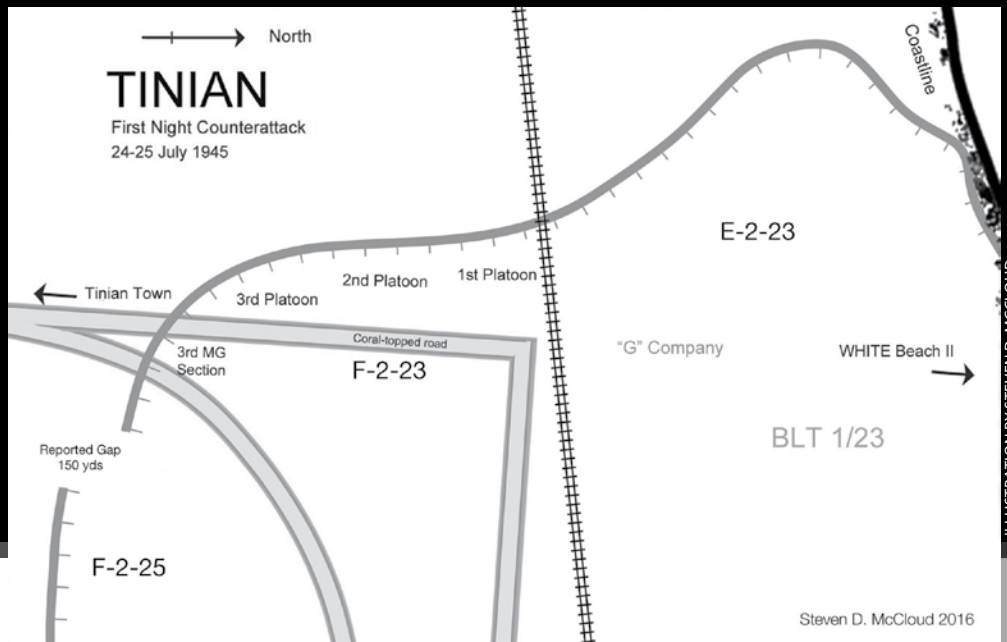
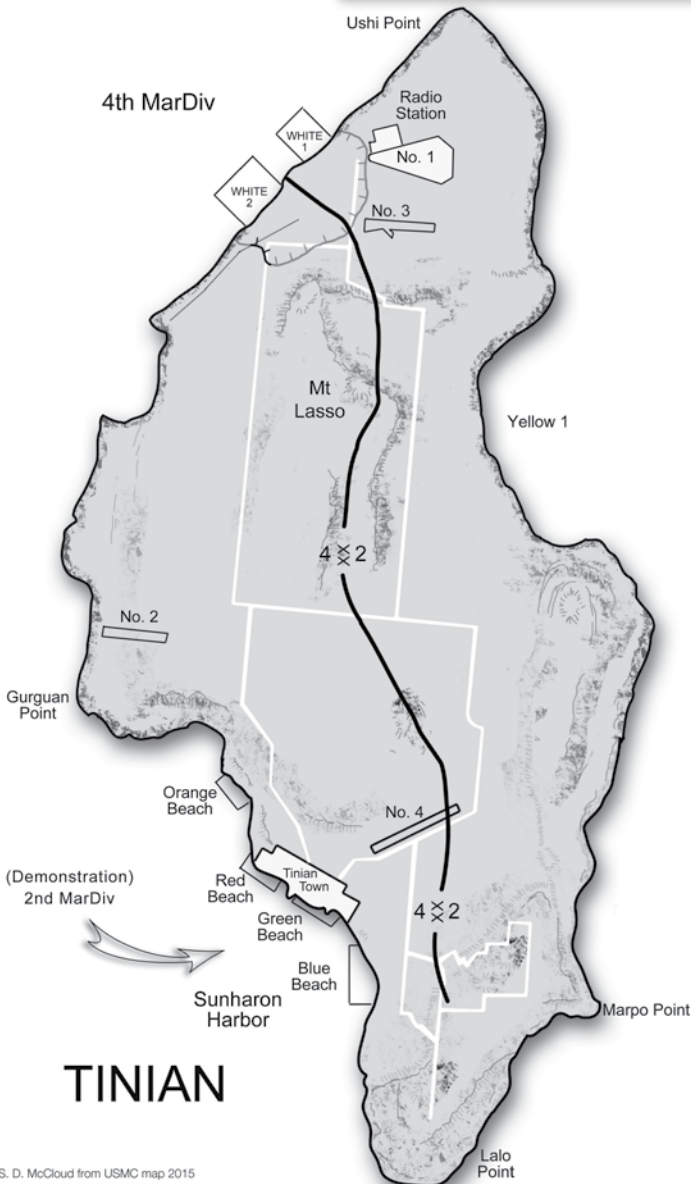


ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN D. MC CLOUD



line, some 200 yards behind them. It also led straight ahead, all the way south to Tinian Town, where the bulk of the 9,000 Japanese defenders were believed to be. They peered out into the darkness, knowing the enemy was out there. And still they waited for the 37s to arrive.

Three hundred yards back toward the beach, Eddie Davis settled into his hole near Fox Co’s command post. A 20-year-old field music, Davis had covered a lot of ground on Saipan as one of the company’s runners. It was after midnight when he got the call from company commander Captain Jack Padley.

“I’m in a nice comfy foxhole,” Davis recalled. “Padley said, ‘Davis come over here.’ And I knew exactly what he was asking me to do. He said, ‘Do you know where the regimental CP is? Well you go get the 37s and put them there up on the line.’”

The 2nd Bn, 23rd Marines had already placed its attached platoon of 37mm guns on the line, facing an open cane field to the southwest, the battalion’s front and the division’s far right flank. Ready with canister rounds, those four weapons stood ready to repulse the expected infantry attack. But the little coral road from Tinian Town pierced Fox Co’s position from the left. That was the likely approach for enemy tanks, and Colonel Ogata had a company of them. To cover the road, Padley borrowed the four guns normally attached to 3rd Bn, which was the division reserve.

Davis set off into the darkness and was challenged for the password three times along the way by his fellow Marines.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVEN D. MC CLOUD

An aerial view of BLT 2/23's position can be seen in relation to the beach. The long road extending from the beach continues south to Tinian Town.



Some 500 yards later, he was directed to 3rd Bn's reserve area and eventually led to platoon Sergeant James Tillis, commanding the 3rd antitank platoon in the absence of First Lieutenant Charles H. Taylor, who had been evacuated from Saipan. Davis led Tillis back to Capt Padley, who sent them forward to 1st Lt Charlie Ahern, who was on the line with 1st Plt, under Japanese infantry attack. Joined by corpsman Owen H. Bahnken, the trio set out across a field now illuminated by flares.

"I was informed by Lt C.J. Ahern," Tillis wrote later, "that I was to take up a position astride the main road running north and south almost the entire length of the island."

By the time Davis and Tillis reached the designated area, the enemy attack

hundreds of yards behind them had apparently dwindled and, with it, the light of flares. "The night was pitch black," Tillis explained, "making reconnaissance very difficult. Although after a time I was able to pick out positions for the four 37mms of my platoon."

Davis and Tillis returned to 3rd Bn for the order to move up the gun sections. Then, using two jeeps, the Marines pulled the four guns to the line, two at a time. "The platoon was in position and dug in at about 0220," Tillis reported.

Davis' mission accomplished, he left the guns to set up and headed back to his hole.

Tillis placed one gun to the left of the road and three to the right, one of them commanded by Gunnery Sergeant Charlie Kohler. "I was just right next to

the road, barely off to the right," Kohler explained later. "And from my position, I could fire almost straight down that road. We were all about 25 or 30 yards apart."

Kohler had no idea that, ahead of him, at the crest of the gradual slope, six Marines lay beside the coral-topped road. And 100 yards ahead, Funk, Michalet and the others lay in the ditches, trying to stay awake and still awaiting the arrival of a single 37mm. They had no idea Kohler was behind them.

Funk peered into the darkness ahead, listening to a bizarre mix of sounds. He kicked Michalet's helmet to wake him.

"Mitch, I hear enemy tanks," whispered Funk.

"Aw, you're nuts," Michalet replied. "Those are just some Marine trucks or something."



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

“Bullshit, those are Japanese tanks,” Funk said.

A hundred yards back, Kohler heard them too. “We heard ’em coming,” he recalled. “My god, you could hear ’em coming, 9 miles away.”

Funk and Michalet were stunned as a tank suddenly whizzed past them on the road, 3 feet from their heads. Worse yet, Michalet looked around and found that the other Marines had pulled back without them. The two of them were alone.

Back near the company CP, Eddie Davis was just settling into his hole when he heard the squeaking sounds of tanks. “Oh boy, we got ’em,” he said. “Those 37s are up there and they’ll knock ’em out.”

But evidence indicates that, in the darkness, the lead tank crested the hill and was past the gunners before they could react. It came to a halt just before reaching Fox Co’s line and sat idling in the quiet. Indications are that the infantry attack on the right had hit a lull at this time. Sergeant Bill Wyckoff was one of the Marines who had pulled back. “We were in a drainage ditch, right next to the road,” he recalled. “And they stopped right by us. And I think, ‘Oh God, don’t let a flare go up.’”

Fox Co Marines Leonard Ash and Don Milleson were horrified to see the tank in their midst. They huddled in their hole, wondering why the 37s had not fired. By all accounts, no flares were up and not a shot had yet been fired. Everyone was caught in a state of disbelief. Third Plt’s bazooka team, Walter Fritz and Bill Myers, was with Ash and Milleson. “Fritz was so close to the road,” recalled Ash, “that when the Japanese tank stopped by him, he couldn’t swing the bazooka around because it would hit the side of the tank.”

The Marines held silent. Finally, the little tank began to roll again, down into 3rd Plt, where it stopped once more. Sergeant Sam Haddad was nearby. “The tank was so close that we couldn’t depress the guns we had. The treads were right here.”

Just as a flare went up, the tank commander opened the hatch for a look. Immediately the silence was broken by the thunder of a Browning Automatic Rifle, killing the commander. The tank’s driver gunned the engine, racing farther into Fox Company’s position. “When the tank got past the end of the cane field and the railroad tracks,” recalled 3rd platoon’s Private First Class Don Swindle, “it ran

PFC Bob Funk, second from the right, celebrates his return stateside with other Fox Co Marines at the Italina Village in Los Angeles, Calif.



COURTESY OF BOB FUNK

A watercolor illustration by PFC Bob Funk depicts tank “three” driving up the path with its tread off the side of the road.



COURTESY OF STEVEN D. MCCLLOUD

through the Company F foxholes, but the guys were able to roll out and I don't think anyone was hurt." First platoon's bazooka man, Corporal Leroy Surface, chased it down and destroyed it with two shots.

Fire erupted all along the line as flares now illuminated the battlefield. Back up front, Funk and Michalet lay in the ditch ahead of Fox Company's line. "We did not dare breathe or move," recalled Funk. "We stayed put because we were in their line of fire."

The two Marines had no idea what was coming at them. Some 300 yards across the cane field to their left front was an old friend from the company's early days in North Carolina, Captain Henry Van Joslin, now commanding Fox Company of the 25th Marines. Joslin later recalled, "As the flares from the ships dropped over our position, we could see five tanks coming down the road unbuttoned and a group of foot soldiers following close behind all in a bunch."

"Just then," recalled Funk, "here comes tank number two and, of all the dumb things to do, he stops right next to us, inches away."

The tank was swarming with enemy troops holding tree branches for camouflage in the middle of a dark night.

"That's just stupid," thought Funk.

The two Marines kept their heads down. "The whole Marine Corps must have opened up on this tank," Funk recalled, "and the Japanese were jumping off over us and running for their lives. Something hit the tank and it started to burn."

The hit came from Charlie Kohler's 37mm, 100 yards back, now firing anti-tank and canister rounds, scattering the Japanese infantry. "I was able to shoot the first tank," he explained. "And he spun around, and we started knocking the hell out of them. They jumped off the tank, you know. We stopped it right there and blocked the road."

"It was stopped in the middle of my position," wrote Tillis, "where it exploded and began burning. This gave us sufficient illumination to sight in on the rest of the column."

"The first burning tank was right next to us," explained Funk, "the machine-gun and rifle fire had us pinned down in the ditch that wasn't deep enough to carry water, and about that time here comes number three, full speed down the road toward us. As I looked up, this driver was coming right at us with one track in the ditch. If we move, we're shot. If we roll out, a [Japanese soldier] might

get us. Just at the last he pulled back up onto the road and pulled up right behind the burning tank, and they began yelling at each other. They decided to back up, only to be hit and start burning."

Kohler was certain that his gun also scored this hit. "We could see pretty damn good with those big flares that the Navy was able to shoot up there in the sky. We could see all the [enemy troops] moving around—just black shadows, but we could see them. They made a real easy target. We blocked the road. So they had to spread out. And when they spread out, they were getting into the other Marines who were on the line."

Behind them, Fox Company's line had unleashed its firepower in the light of the burning tanks. "They burned brightly enough to illuminate the open field," recalled machine-gunner PFC Jules Hallum. "At least they gave silhouettes to the attackers. We opened up with everything we had."

"We had to lay there in the ditch next to those burning tanks while the line was trying to shoot everyone who was in front of them, including the two of us," recalled Funk.

Japanese troops leapt onto them from the tanks, some wounded, some ablaze, others decimated by canister and ma-



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Above: Cpl Leroy F. Surface was the recipient of the Silver Star for his actions during the night attack on Tinian.



COURTESY OF CHARLIE KOHLER

GySgt Charlie Kohler, now age 102, served with 3rd Anti-Tank Platoon, Regimental Weapons Co, 23rd Marines, 4thMarDiv, during World War II.

chine-gun fire. Funk and Michalet began to push forward over the crest of the hill to get out of the line of fire. “We crawled over bodies, gear, and anything that was in our way. Rifle and machine-gun fire continued over us like were on a training course. Another tank sped by without stopping, so not to worry about him.”

The fifth and sixth tanks broke off the attack momentarily, until the fifth returned and raced through at high speed. A 37mm gun crew managed to get off a single armor-piercing round that went completely through the tank with no apparent effect. It broke into Fox Co’s lines, where Cpl Surface and Sergeant Arthur Metras again chased it down and destroyed it. Both men were recipients of the Silver Star for their action.

The sixth tank apparently veered close enough to Fox 2/25, that PFC Bascom Jordan destroyed it with his bazooka. So dark was it that, according to their Gunny Sergeant Keith Renstrom, Jordan bumped into the tank with his bazooka before seeing it.

“And it stopped,” explained Renstrom. “Then he backed off and shot his bazooka into it and got wounded by his own shell. And then the Japanese officer came out of it, and I shot him. After I shot him, he stumbled and fell, then we rolled his body back up against the tank.”

Jordan and Renstrom were also original Fox 2/23 men back in North Carolina until the regiment split to form the 25th Marines.

For the next couple of hours, 2nd Bn’s position was attacked from front and left by infantry from the Japanese 50th Infantry Regiment and the attached 1st Battalion, 135th Regiment. Fox and Easy Company’s line fired as they never had before during the war, all under light of flares. “The sky was full of them,” recalled Swindle. “You could look right out there just like broad daylight, and you could see [the Japanese] all over. And all down the line there, machine guns were hammering the hell out of them.”

“The fight was over before dawn,” recalled Hallum. “I went to sleep to a background chorus of groans of dying [enemies]. Maybe some of our guys too.”

Funk and Michalet managed to survive by crawling forward, out of the line of fire. And there they remained until light, when they were confronted with the dilemma of how to return safely to the line.

Hallum was perplexed to see his old schoolmates marching down the hill from enemy territory, and he could see from the look on their faces that they were



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Tanks “two” and “three” were believed to be knocked out by GySgt Charlie Kohler’s 37mm gun crew.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES



USMC

not pleased. “Bob came back to our area cursing at us for leaving him up there. He came over the next morning and just chewed the shit out of us. Our gun was firing right across, and he was in that ditch. He says, ‘you were hitting 4 inches over us.’”

Post-action attempts to make sense of the action in the 2nd Bn zone that night concluded that the tanks had fought through an artillery barrage to break through the lines. But the Marines on the ground were very clear. Not a shot had been fired, nor a flare sent into the air when the barely discernible shape of the first tank appeared in their midst.

Fox Co men heard that the gunners initially had canister rounds loaded and could not fire. The gunners say that is not the case. But consideration of the conditions and an understanding of the ground on which the action occurred can offer clues.

Funk and Michalet had been positioned at the crest of the gradually sloping hill. The tank had overtaken them suddenly. With any light, it would have appeared suddenly over the crest to Kohler’s gun crew, just a short distance back, set up on the reverse slope looking uphill. But the “pitch black” darkness noted by Tillis prevailed at that time. “Not having any night firing attachments for the anti-tank weapons,” he wrote, “the crews held their fire until the tanks were at point blank range.”

In that darkness, the gunners never saw the tank until it was upon them as suddenly as it had been with Funk and Michalet just moments before. As soon as the flares went up, they were in business, and it seems clear that Kohler’s gun crew knocked out the next two tanks by Funk and Michalet. After that, hits came from all directions.

The 23rd Marines incurred 241 casualties on Tinian, wounded and evacuated, killed, or missing. Another 256 Marines were evacuated due to sickness. One of them was Funk, who was flown to Saipan for six days in the Army field hospital with dengue.

Author’s bio: Steven D. McCloud, is a leadership consultant, coach and speaker, founder of TridentLeadership.com, and author of “Black Dragon: The Experience of a Marine Rifle Company in the Central Pacific.” He conducts PMEs and battlefield staff rides for corporate and government agencies. He also leads small-group expeditions to battlefields in the Pacific and Normandy.



Caught in the Crossfire: Civilians on Saipan and Tinian

By Geoffrey W. Roecker

The American units invading the Mariana Islands in the summer of 1944 faced a new challenge: a large and well-established civilian population on the battlefield. Indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian people, previously subjects of Spanish and German colonial rule, had been under Imperial Japanese control since 1920.

By 1941, they were vastly outnumbered by Japanese, Korean and Okinawan settlers who arrived to work in the booming sugarcane trade. When Operation Forager began on June 15, 1944, the civilian population of Saipan,

Right: Civilians on Saipan are given peanuts taken from a local storehouse.

The man handing out food wears a black-and-white noncombatant patch indicating that he may be a “provisional Marine,” a local volunteer in temporary service as a liaison and interpreter.



CPL ALBERT R. MOREJOHN, USMC



As smoke from shell fire rises in the background, a group of Chamorro civilians hurry toward 4thMarDiv lines and away from Japanese opposition.

SSGT MAURICE GARBER, USMC



Marines help civilians over the side of an LVT-2. This group, still looking a bit bewildered at their new circumstances, will be sent to a nearby stockade for food, water and a wash.

USMC

Tinian and Rota was approximately 43,034 people. Thousands were indoctrinated to believe that American warriors—especially Marines—would torture or kill anyone in their path. This misguided belief culminated in the nightmarish events that have come to define the civilian experience in the Marianas: teeming masses hurling themselves to their deaths from edifices now called Banzai Cliff or Suicide Cliff.

Thousands more were the victims of war crimes, disease and malnutrition, accidental gunfire, or were sealed up in caves. Historian Alexander Astroth estimates that 13,046

GySgt Victor “Transport” Maghakian poses with a Japanese soldier and family. Chamorro guides helped convince the group to come out of hiding without a fight.



CPL CLAUDE L. WARNECKE, USMC



SSGT H. NEIL GILLESPIE, USMC

Above: HA2c Joseph Parisi, a corpsman with the 20th Marines, treats an injured child on Saipan. The patrol that brought in these civilians were engaged in a heavy firefight just 25 yards away.

Below: Offerings of food and water helped convince civilians that Marines meant them no harm. This little boy holds a C-ration can of meat and vegetable stew in his hands.



SSGT H. NEIL GILLESPIE, USMC



SSGT CARLOS STEELE, USMC

A regimental surgeon tends to a young boy wounded by shrapnel. The parents, with fresh bandages on their own wounds, put comforting hands on their child as the surgeon reaches for another instrument.



TSGT IRVING SCHLOSSBERG, USMC

Above: Interpreter PFC Harold H. Nebenzal leads a group of soldiers and civilians to the 2ndMarDiv stockade. Nebenzal would go on to have a career in Hollywood and later described his interactions with civilian families on Saipan and Tinian as some of the most influential of his life.

Right: A Marine interpreter talks with the father of a small family. The man explains that the Japanese told him the Americans would harm him and his family when they arrived on Tinian.



PFC CARL H. WALKER, USMC



SGT ROBERT S. GAMBLE, USMC

Above: The 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions used loudspeaker systems to broadcast surrender appeals. Civilians or captured soldiers were the most effective communicators.

Below: Filled with horror stories from the Japanese, Tinian natives hid in the caves and dugouts of the hills in fear of being captured by Marines. Members of a Marine patrol remove this tiny girl from a shelter that she and her father had been hiding in for weeks.



PFC CARL H. WALKER

noncombatants lost their lives as a result of combat operations. In his book “Mass Suicides on Saipan and Tinian, 1944: An Examination of the Civilian Deaths in Historical Context,” Astroth notes that “most civilians did not take up arms against the Americans or carry out murder-suicides. They cared first and foremost about their loved ones and did all they could to protect them.” And American troops, for the most part, went out of their way to help—sometimes risking or even giving their lives to secure safe passage for the civilians. These photographs show both sides at their most vulnerable: voluntarily trusting someone in the hope of making a human connection and staying alive.

Author’s bio: Geoffrey W. Roecker is a researcher and writer based in upstate New York. His extensive writings on the World War II history of 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, is available online at www.1-24thmarines.com. Roecker is the author of “Leaving Mac Behind: The Lost Marines of Guadalcanal” and advocates for the return of missing personnel at www.missingmarines.com. 🇺🇸

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Lifetime Achievement Award Presented to Marine Aviator

Family, friends and fellow Marines gathered to celebrate the 100th birthday of Robert D. "Woody" Woodbury in February. Woodbury was an instructor pilot during World War II and flew combat missions during the Korean War. In his civilian life, he had a decades-long career as an entertainer, playing at a number of top-tier comedy clubs in Los Angeles, Calif., Las Vegas, Nev., and Miami, Fla., before settling in Fort Lauderdale, where he made the Bahama Hotel's night club his home base. Woodbury released several comedy albums in the 1960s. In 1962, he was selected to host the NBC game show "Who Do You Trust," replacing Johnny Carson when he was tapped for the network's "Tonight Show."

During Woodbury's Korean War service, he was assigned to 1st Marine Air Wing, where he flew the F9F Panther alongside Ted Williams, John Glenn and Marine ace Jack Bolt, whom he considered a mentor. In Korea, Woodbury flew more than 100 combat missions. When he had free time, he played piano and told jokes at the officers' club to boost morale. He was featured in the September 1953 issue of *Leatherneck*.



NANCY S. LICHTMAN



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

To honor Woodbury on his birthday, Major General Mark A. "Droopy" Clark, USMC (Ret) presented him with the Marine Corps Aviation Association's Lifetime Achievement Award.

"I'm flabbergasted," Woodbury said after receiving the award. "I know people who did a lot more in the war than I did," he added.
Nancy S. Lichtman

Niagara Falls, N.Y.



COURTESY OF V. GREGORY MISH

Marine Veteran Completes the MCA Shores of Tripoli Virtual Challenge

V. Gregory Mish, a Marine who served from 1973 to 1977 recently completed the Marine Corps Association Foundation's Shores of Tripoli Challenge! Mish's determination and dedication were on full display as he conquered 14.62 miles on his bike in an impressive 1:21:52, paying homage to the historic Battle of Derna.

His journey from Marine duty to a distinguished career in federal law enforcement is a testament to his unwavering commitment and resilience. Mish, age 71, continues to embody the spirit of service and perseverance.

(Executive Editor's note: If you've also participated in our virtual challenges, we'd love to see your pictures and stats. Share your achievements with us and let's celebrate together!)

Leatherneck

San Jose, Calif.



USMC

23rd Marines Visit World War II Veteran for Her 99th Birthday

Marines with Headquarters Company, 23rd Marines, 4th Marine Division, celebrated Corporal Lou 'Mama Lou' Keller's 99th birthday at her home on March 30. According to an article written by James Brown for the *Wine Country Marines*, a nonprofit veteran's organization, Keller served at the Pentagon processing Purple Hearts for Marines fighting overseas during World War II.

When the Marines arrived at Keller's house to celebrate her birthday, she was filled with joy. The visiting Marines were inspired by Keller, and her story and the visit had a profound impact on them.

"We all gave her hugs and thanked her for her service and being a trailblazer for future women in the Marine Corps," said Gunnery Sergeant Kristina Perieff. "We had three generations of Marines present, and it was awesome for our organization to be there for her."

Keller was born March 31, 1925, in Gilroy, Calif. She enlisted in the Marine Corps in honor of her late father who was a Marine Corps veteran of World War I. She became the first woman from her hometown to enlist in the Marines. Keller is now in hospice care and, despite the situation, her spirit remains unbroken.

"I will see you on my 100th birthday, you all better be here," Keller told the Marines.

Cpl Trystan Taft, USMC



USMC

"Corps Connections" highlights the places and events through which active-duty and veteran Marines connect with one another, honor the traditions of the Corps and recognize the achievements of their fellow leathernecks. We welcome submissions of photos from events like the ones featured here. Send them to: *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to leatherneck@mca-marines.org. Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos.

Two years after working as a hotel bellhop in sleepy Marshalls Creek, Pa., Joel Huffman was a young Marine on duty outside the Capitol building when the body of President John F. Kennedy was lying in state.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

From Bellhop to Leatherneck

“8th and I” Marine Witness to Turbulent Time in U.S. History

By Kipp Hanley

In 1961, in the sleepy town of Marshalls Creek, Pa., everybody knew the Huffmans.

Unfortunately for Joel Huffman, the town was also familiar with his driving record. After wrecking two of his father’s vehicles and dropping out of college, the 19-year-old was figuring out his future while working at nearby Mountain Lake House — his family’s resort.

“The insurance company said to [my dad], ‘Harvey, we will continue to give you your insurance, but we will not cover you if Joel is driving,’” Huffman laughed. “I didn’t lose my driver’s license, but I lost my insurance, so therefore I didn’t drive.”

His days as a bellhop at the resort soon came to an end when he decided to heed the advice of a coworker and Marine veteran and enlist in the Corps. Unbeknownst to him at the time, Huffman’s three years serving his nation would provide him with a bird’s-eye view of some of the most significant events in U.S. presidential history.

After a brief stint at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Huffman was transferred to the Marine Corps Institute (MCI) in Washington, D.C. During his two years there, he

was assigned to security duty for the 22nd Commandant of the Marine Corps, David M. Shoup, during the Cuban Missile Crisis and made several trips with Gen Shoup to Camp David. He also was part of the security detail at Bethesda Naval Hospital during President John F. Kennedy’s autopsy and at the Capitol Rotunda with President Kennedy’s body lying in State.

“It wasn’t until years later I realized how close to different parts of history I was,” Huffman said. “I was standing right next to history. That was kind of stunning to me when I look back now.”

Notable Assignments

When Huffman arrived at Marine Barracks Washington, he was assigned mail duty, which ironically required him to drive to a Washington, D.C., post office to pick up letters for the base. During the summer silent drill team performances on Friday nights, he worked parking detail. In October of 1962, he was pressed into a more serious role during the standoff between the U.S. and the Soviet Union known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.



LCpl Joel Huffman

COURTESY OF JOEL HUFFMAN



COURTESY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM



ATC ELIJAH VAN ZANDT, USAF

President John F. Kennedy came to watch an Evening Parade at 8th and I on July 11, 1962, (left) just a few months before the Cuban Missile Crisis.



COURTESY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

“I remember walking around the Commandant’s place to see if anybody was going to attack,” Huffman said. “We had weapons, but we didn’t have any ammunition. It was an unusual event, patrolling and walking around the barracks.”

Huffman was also sent to Camp David on several occasions to work perimeter security. You never knew when you were going to have that assignment, said Huffman, so the goal was always to get out of town on Fridays as quickly as you could before you received your orders. When he was selected, his trips were memorable as much for what he didn’t see as what he saw.

“They used to put curtains over the bus windows so we couldn’t see out,” Huffman said of the trips to the presidential hideaway. “... They didn’t want you to get back in your car and go up there.”

On the evening of Nov. 22, 1963, Huffman was one of a handful of Marines at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Assigned to the waiting room next to where Kennedy’s autopsy was being conducted, Huffman recalls then First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy coming into the room briefly, blood from her husband still evident on her pink suit.

“... We didn’t have to do anything special other than just being alert,” Huffman said of that assignment.

Two days later, Huffman was standing on the Capitol steps as Kennedy’s coffin was being brought up to the rotunda. He still has his paperwork from MCI’s com-



LEATHERNECK ARCHIVES

Like these Marines, Joel Huffman worked as a mail clerk at Marine Corps Institute during his two-plus years at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. He was working in the mail room when he heard that President Kennedy had been shot.



COURTESY OF JOEL HUFFMAN



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Joel Huffman received this letter of commendation from his commanding officer, E.B. Wheeler, for the role that he played in the state funeral honors for President Kennedy.

manding officer, E.B. Wheeler, thanking him for representing the Corps honorably that day.

“Your individual response in conducting this difficult but distinguished duty was in keeping with the highest ideals and traditions of our Corps and our Barracks and will be a timeless reminder to your successors of exceptional service during a period of profound national grief,” read the letter dated Jan. 16, 1964.

Once a Marine...

While Lance Corporal Huffman was an expert shot [he was invited to be a member of the USMC rifle team] and a well-thought of Marine for his performance in the mail room, he decided to trade in his uniform for civilian clothes in 1964. Huffman worked at several banks before spending more than two decades as the treasurer for the Desert Southwest Annual Conference for the United Methodist Church.

While brief, Huffman said his time serving his country 60 years ago prepared him well for a life in the civilian world. In addition to learning discipline and teamwork, he also became a father while serving in the Corps.

“I grew up in the Marine Corps,” Huffman said. “That’s when I became a man. I realized I had to take care of myself ... for something larger than me. And if I didn’t learn anything, I learned that ... together you can do more.”

Keep reading for more tales from the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., during the early 1960s.

Author’s bio: Kipp Hanley is the deputy editor for Leatherneck magazine and resident of Woodbridge, Va. The award-winning journalist has covered a variety of topics in his writing career including the military, government, education, business and sports.

Tales from “8th & I”

Compiled by Kipp Hanley

Leatherneck presents the following stories from Marines who served at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., during President John F. Kennedy’s administration. While on duty, they served a variety of roles including Silent Drill Team (See page 36 for a comprehensive article about the team which is now called the Silent Drill Platoon), Camp David detail and assignments related to the Kennedy assassination and Cuban Missile Crisis.

Thomas P. Tallick

1961-1964

My first duty station out of boot camp at Parris Island was at Marine Barracks Washington. I arrived in October 1961 and did three parade seasons with the Silent Drill Team.

When in the Drill team I filled many roles. First squad leader, platoon guide

and training NCO. The Drill team was a platoon in Ceremonial Guard Company that was housed in building No. 58. Building No. 58 was located in the Naval Gun Factory [now known as the Washington Navy Yard]. The Naval Gun Factory was several blocks south of “8th and I.”

During my time at the Barracks, I



COURTESY OF THOMAS P. TALLICK

Marine Thomas P. Tallick, right, stood guard inside the Capitol Rotunda while President Kennedy lay in state.

did every type of detail that came along except body bearer. Guard Company participated in all arrivals and departures of dignitaries. If the military was involved, we were there. I did security at Camp David and Blair House and I carried Marine Corps colors when color guard was shorthanded. I participated in numerous firing parties at Arlington National Cemetery. I was training NCO for firing parties. This is why my hearing is shot (pun intended).

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, we were on standby with full field gear ready to go. Thankfully nothing happened.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, I was one of seven Marines assigned death watch. There was one officer and six enlisted men from each branch of the service on this assignment. We were with the President's body in the East Room of the White House Nov. 23, then in the Capitol Rotunda Nov. 24 to Nov. 25.

From what I can recall, we stood half an hour on then two and one half off for the three-day period. We slept in the theater while at the White House, then in the old Senate chambers while at the Capitol. We were with the President the entire time.

Lester Gillenwater

1958-1961

Following my advanced infantry training, my orders were to go to Japan. However, a delegation from Washington, D.C., arrived at Lejeune to select 24 young Marines to begin a new 3rd Ceremonial Guard Platoon. All the Marines in the Lejeune holding companies were lined up the next morning and the D.C. Marines drove in front of them with a loudspeaker and asked that anyone under the height of 6 feet fall out and return to their barracks. With my combat boots on, I, was almost 6 feet so I stayed. After several more passes of the jeep, where anyone with less than a high school education or anything on their record more than a speeding ticket, were sent back to their barracks, there were about 400 of us left. Then the D.C. Marines began marching us in platoons of about 70 troops each and going through the ranks, tapping those they did not think sharp enough or would not make a good "8th and I" Marine. I made the cut and my 8th and I experience soon began.

The third platoon, when I first joined, had a silent drill as did the other three platoons. Our duties were Camp David



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Presidents John F. Kennedy and Dwight D. Eisenhower exit Marine One at Camp David on April 22, 1961. Marine Stephen DeBock was at Camp David when Eisenhower bid farewell to the Marines on duty there.

guard duty, especially when the president was there. I spent many a day and night on the front gate as one of two guards that were always there. Also, White House and Blair House guard duty and honor details for arrival and departures of State. We would also go up there to receive field training in the woods where we played Marines in combat. We qualified with our M1 rifles at Quantico as well as the .45-caliber pistol.

Camp David was a favorite getaway place for Mrs. Eisenhower and her friends and, of course, Marines were there for their protection. A Navy friend took a picture of us on May 1,

1960, in front of Aspen Lodge with the Eisenhowers just a few hours before the U-2 spy plane flown by Gary Powers was shot down by a missile while in Soviet air space.

When Kennedy was inaugurated, I believe it was on Jan. 21, 1961; it was the coldest day that D.C. had experienced in 100 years. I was at that time assigned to the Marine Burial detail at the Barracks. Our slogan was, "we are the last to let you down." I was fortunate to have been one of those who was inside the Capitol building escorting the Kennedys and their guests to the entrance leading out to where the President would take the oath of office. I left the Marine Corps on July 11, 1961, with the rank of lance corporal.

Earl Suchomelly

1962-64

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, we got the word that we were shipping out and then a few days later we were told to stand down. If I remember, I heard we were supposed to hit the southern part of Cuba near Havana.

At the barracks during the winter, I would grade papers for communications courses at the Marine Corps Institute (MCI). If you were a lance corporal or lower, you were assigned to clean the Commandant's house and when he walked by, you would plaster yourself against the bulkhead.

In summer I would stand Friday night parades at 8th and I and Tuesday at the Marine Corps War Memorial just outside of Arlington National



USMC

Standing guard at the Home of the Commandants was not uncommon for Marines assigned to Marine Barracks Washington, D.C.

Cemetery. I was in 3rd platoon of MCI Co when President Kennedy was assassinated, and our captain came into the squad bay looking for some men to guard the President's body when it was brought in. I believe three men were selected to go.

MCI Co stood the cordon on the streets during the funeral. We were dressed in full combat gear when Martin Luther King Jr. gave his speech at Lincolns Memorial. We were out of sight and were there "just in case".

We had to stand duty at Camp David a few times, and all I remember it was cold and snowy. Of course, in our "spare" time we drilled and drilled and drilled some more.

I stood on Constitution Ave during President Kennedy's funeral. There were a lot of people behind me watching. My entire Company stood on Constitution Ave during the funeral. I guess my lasting impression was seeing the First Lady, Jaqueline, John Jr. and Caroline; and also the rear facing boots on the horse.

Captain Robert Neal

1962-1964

My service time at MB Washington, D.C. was June 20, 1962 through Nov. 1, 1964. There were three marching platoons, drill team, color guard and the body bearers. The Camp David responsibilities were for the three marching platoons. One platoon was there for a month, then rotated to the next in line. In the event of the President being in residence, the platoon was supplemented by the color guard, body bearers and the drill team members.

I was fairly new at the Barracks. I arrived on June 20, 1962, was assigned to the 1st Platoon and was awaiting my clearance. When the Missile Crisis event occurred, I was at Camp David



Called Shangri-La when it was used by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Camp David was guarded by Marines from 8th and I during the early 1960s.

COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Earl Suchomelly and the rest of his company at Marine Corps Institute stood on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C., during the funeral procession for President Kennedy (above).

with the 1st Platoon. My assigned guard post was post 13, walking around the main house normally occupied by the President when he was visiting. During the particular evening that comes to my mind about the Missile Crisis was the Corporal of the Guard came about midnight and advised me to get ready in the morning, to return to Marine Barracks Washington for further transfer to 2nd Marine Division because my clearance had not been approved. Needless to say, that sent my mind spinning and every terrible thing that could happen. By the time I was relieved from my guard post and arrived at the guard office, with great relief, I received notice that my clearance was approved, and I was to stay. I was subsequently assigned to the color guard and only served at Camp David to supplement the regular units when the President was in residence.

Stephen DeBock

1960-1962

I served in Third Platoon, Ceremonial Guard Company (CGC), February of 1960 to January of 1962. During the Cuban Missile Crisis when Joel Huffman was providing security for the Commandant's house, I was serving aboard the amphibious assault ship USS *Boxer*, (LPH-4.)

Our platoon voiced our heartfelt goodbyes to President Eisenhower at Camp David one week before the change in administration. On Inaugura-

tion Day, CGC marched in the Inaugural Parade and later that night formed a rope cordon, with other service honor guards, at the Inaugural Ball held in the National Armory. We formed two cordons, making an aisle through which all the Kennedy Cabinet members and their wives walked to the podium where President and Mrs. Kennedy received them. To introduce the event, a female vocalist sang a song heralding "The New Frontier." Many Hollywood celebrities were present, Frank Sinatra prominent among them. Count Basie's orchestra provided the music.

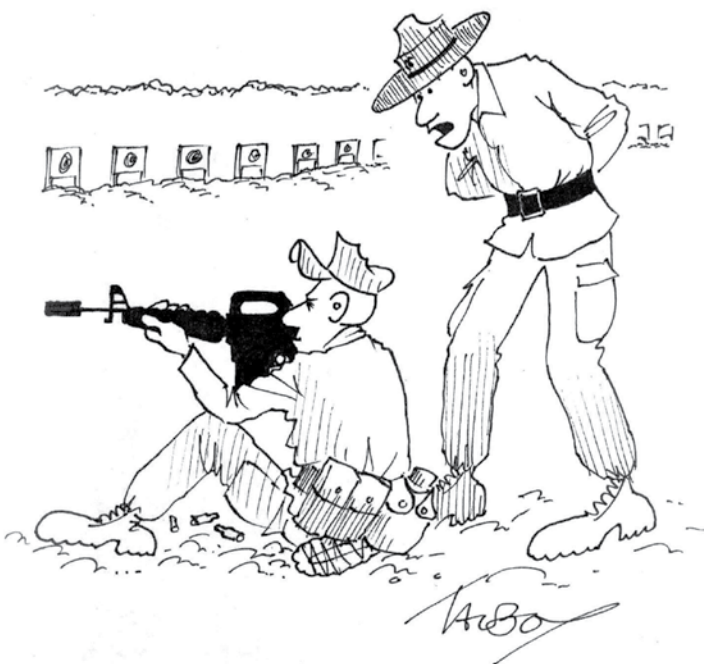
Our typical duty rotation during that time was as follows: four weeks in D.C. doing ceremonial duties: street parades, funerals, diplomatic arrivals and departures, wreath layings, Friday Moonlight Parades, etc. Then Third Platoon would report to Camp David for two weeks, relieving the 2nd Platoon for ceremonial duty back in D.C. Two weeks later, we would be relieved by the men of 1st Platoon.

It was an ideal setup. The rotation to David was a welcome break from the ceremonial routine, and by the end of each tour at David our batteries were recharged for a return to spit-and-polish and precision drill. Both equated to, in the vernacular of the day, "tuff duty." Today, I'm told Camp David is staffed by permanent Marine personnel, something I believe Marines of my era would characterize as, "If it ain't broke, fix it anyway." 🐻

Leatherneck Laffs



"Hacking is the new enemy-infiltration strategy."



"Recruit, adjusting your sights does not void your weapon's warranty!"



"Mess duty will be easy tonight."

— — — — —
While extremely demanding
and challenging,
Silent Drill Platoon Marines
take immense pride in
their role. Not only because of
the unique opportunity they
possess to be one of the very
few who have ever earned a
spot with the platoon,
but also because of what the
unit represents about the
Corps and our beloved history.



Remember What You Represent: The Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon

By Kyle Watts

A highly selective and unique niche fills the ranks of the Marine Corps' Silent Drill Platoon. Throughout the unit's history, the platoon has proven unparalleled among the services at their craft and represented the Marine Corps on the grandest scale. To earn a spot with this elite group, a young Marine must begin proving himself from the moment he steps on the yellow footprints.

When a new infantry Marine graduates from Infantry Training Battalion, a select few receive assignment to Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. Selections are based on multiple characteristics, but character and performance trump all. Once finished with Ceremonial Drill School, the basic training for all new marching Marines at "8th and I," fewer still receive the opportunity to compete for a spot with the Silent Drill Platoon.

Marines from the Silent Drill Platoon execute the bursting bomb formation in front of the Iwo Jima War Memorial at MCB Hawaii, on Sept. 10, 2021.



LCPL BRANDON AULTMAN, USMC

Silent Drill School commences every December. Prospective candidates volunteer to showcase their skills and attention to detail. Some years, more than half of the platoon's requirement of 39 Marines is vacated when some move into the fleet or civilian life. As the candidate pool is whittled down, instructors finalize the list of selectees. The platoon veterans then pack up and take off with the new selects for their culminating annual training event at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz.

Spring training in Yuma lasts one month. The Marines work 12 or more hours a day, seven days a week, memorizing every muscle movement in the routine.

"In Yuma we learn the new sequence for the year and work to get the new guys in the platoon up to par," said Corporal Alexander A. Rojas, 2nd Squad Leader in the platoon. "Training days are very long, every day."

"It's a grind, waking up at 0600 every morning and working until 10 o'clock at night," added Cpl Jack N. Conner, 3rd Squad Leader. "But it's a great way to get away from everything here at the barracks and just focus on ourselves, perfecting everything and preparing for the parade season."

The platoon's Drill Master, a senior corporal in his third or fourth year with the unit, creates the routine. He envisions the flow and tempo of each Marine and invents the paths they take, orchestrating their movements into a single, purposeful design. The platoon Rifle Inspector serves

as the subject matter expert in rifle manual and spins. He and the Assistant Rifle Inspector take the lead in polishing the reflexes and hand-eye-coordination of each Marine to ensure a flawless performance.

While the Drill Master and Rifle Inspector work together to create a unique performance, flavored with their personal brand of experience and style, several major portions of the routine endure as Silent Drill Platoon traditions. Anyone

Spring training in Yuma lasts one month. The Marines work 12 or more hours a day, seven days a week, memorizing every muscle movement in the routine.

familiar with the platoon recognizes the iconic "bursting bomb" formation, or "long line" rifle inspection sequence. Like all Marines, Silent Drill Platoon members idolize their forerunners, embrace their unit history, and pass their creed onto a new generation each year.

The legacy of the Silent Drill Platoon originated in 1948. Though intended as a one-time performance, the first version of the team received an overwhelming and enthusiastic response. The public demanded repeat performances. As a result, the platoon eventually became a permanent part of Marine Barracks

Washington. Throughout its history, newly minted infantrymen, prior to their first tour in the fleet, filled out the platoon. The Marines today celebrate one notable exception to this standard, memorializing a unique point in time on their barracks wall. A black and white photograph displayed in the passageway depicts the platoon during the Vietnam War, when even the Marines of the Silent Drill Platoon deployed to combat. The photo looks much like any other taken of the platoon in formation, except that each Marine wears sergeant or staff sergeant chevrons and a chest full of medals.

The Marines proudly differentiate themselves through numerous traditions passed down over the years. From tattoos to unique uniform details, some traditions are held sacred and recognized only by veterans of the platoon. The coveted silver buttons worn by the number one Rifle Inspector represent one of the more widely known rituals. Since the 1970s, the Rifle Inspector has removed the brass buttons from his dress blues and entrusted them to his successor. Over time and through constant polishing, the buttons turned silver and became a trademark feature. The original buttons are preserved today in a glass case, still handed down to each new Rifle Inspector for safe keeping, while he sews another set of silver buttons to his blouse to keep the tradition alive. As a far lesser known or visible tradition, when practicing drill out of uniform, the Marines adopt the style of their predecessors, drilling in Converse hightop shoes. A keen observer



LCPL CRISTIAN L. RICARDO, USMC

In preparation for Marine Week in downtown Nashville, Tenn., in September 2016, the Silent Drill Platoon practices its routine. In keeping with their tradition, they wear hightop Converse sneakers during practice.



LCPL CHLOE N. MCAFEE, USMC

In photos taken a decade apart, above in 2024 and below in 2014, Marines of the Silent Drill Platoon execute their drill sequence during a classic performance with the Blue Angels "Fat Albert" C-130J Super Hercules conducting a fly-over at MCAS, Yuma, Ariz. The performance in Yuma typically marks the end of the platoon's spring training and the beginning of the Battle Color Detachment Tour.



SSGT OSCAR L. OLIVE IV, USMC

In addition to performing, traveling, and remaining the best in the business at slide drill and rifle spinning, platoon members must maintain proficiency in the basic skills as an infantry Marine.



The Silent Drill Platoon rehearses at MCB Hawaii on Sept. 10, 2021 in preparation for a Patriots' Day ceremony on Sept. 11.

might notice the iconic shoes tied differently from Marine to Marine, laced one eyelet farther down to signify the number of years a Marine has served with the platoon.

The summer parade season is the platoon's primary tradition and premier event, and is the most widely anticipated engagement every year. Most spectators familiar with the Silent Drill Platoon recognize the unit from one of their classic performances at a Friday Evening Parade or Tuesday Sunset Parade. Running June through August, these two performances every week represent the minimum of

the platoon's time commitment. The Marines travel all over the country, and sometimes internationally, performing at a variety of venues. One day, the platoon might execute their routine in a local high school gymnasium for a group of students and their parents. The next night, the Marines could be standing on the 50-yard line during the halftime show of a National Football League game in front of thousands of cheering fans. Often, the Marines land back in Washington, D.C., within an hour or two of their next performance at an Evening Parade. They don their dress blues, proceed directly onto the parade field, then fly out once again the following morning for their next performance.

In addition to performing, traveling, and remaining the best in the business

at slide drill and rifle spinning, platoon members must maintain proficiency in the basic skills as an infantry Marine.

"It's a tight window, but we throw in infantry classes, land nav classes, and practical application on our annex field here in D.C. whenever we can," Corporal Christopher I. Houck stated, who serves as 1st Squad Leader. "Sometimes it's tough to get in training here in the city, but we use whatever resources we can."

Houck and the other squad leaders prepare the Professional Military Education to be covered during their days abroad. Several times a year, the platoon travels to Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., to practice infantry tactics in the field and complete their basic set of requirements. They spend time on the range for rifle qualification and complete their



LCPL BRANDON AULTMAN, USMC

annual Physical Fitness and Combat Fitness Tests.

While extremely demanding and challenging, Silent Drill Platoon Marines take immense pride in their role. Not only because of the unique opportunity they possess to be one of the very few who have ever earned a spot with the platoon, but also because of what the unit represents about the Corps and our beloved history. When the elevator door opens onto the Silent Drill Platoon's deck at 8th and I, a large wooden sign is immediately visible to anyone visiting, and to Marines returning home. "Remember what you represent." There's nothing ambiguous about the meaning behind those words for the Marines of the Silent Drill Platoon—they are part of something greater than themselves.



The Silent Drill Platoon performs during a Sunset Parade at the Marine Corps War Memorial, Arlington, Va., on June 29, 2015.

SGT MELISSA MARNELL, USMC



LCPL MARK MORALES, USMC

Cpl Albert A. Abillar, number two rifle inspector, inspects the platoon during a halftime show performance at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minn., on Sept. 26, 2021. The Silent Drill Platoon performed for more than 55,000 spectators at the Minnesota Vikings vs. Seattle Seahawks National Football League game.



Left: This sign greets anyone coming onto the Silent Drill Platoon's deck at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. (Photo by Kyle Watts)

Below: A photograph hanging in the passageway of the platoon's barracks depicts the Silent Drill Platoon during the Vietnam War. Most members of the platoon wear sergeant or staff sergeant stripes and a chest full of medals from combat deployment. (Photo by Kyle Watts)



Above: A memorial at the barracks to LCpl Davis Mosqueda, a Silent Drill Platoon member who was killed while home on holiday leave in December 2020. (Photo by Kyle Watts)



Below: Cpl Alexander A. Rojas, left, and Cpl Christopher I. Houck, right, explained plaques and memorials displayed on the walls during the author's tour of the Silent Drill Platoon barracks. (Photo by GySgt Donell Bryant, USMC)



Above: The blood-stained uniform blouse of LCpl Jamar Bailey stands alongside his photograph and award citation in the Silent Drill Platoon barracks, in recognition of his extraordinary bearing maintained during a performance in April 2004. (Photo by Kyle Watts)





SSGT SARAH RALPH, USMC

The Silent Drill Platoon performs during Family Day at the Alaska National Guard Armory in Anchorage, Alaska, on March 3, 2023. The visit was part of a joint effort between Marine Barracks Washington and Marine Corps Recruiting Command designed to increase awareness of the Marine Corps.

Plaques, memorials, and photographs evenly spaced down each passageway contrast against the black-painted walls in distinguished prominence. Each tells a proud story of platoon history, remembers an extraordinary example of bearing and fortitude, or recognizes individual Marines for their performance. One stunning memorial just beyond the elevator door remembers Lance Corporal Davis M. Mosqueda. While on holiday leave in his hometown of Boise, Idaho, Mosqueda joined a party on Dec. 30, 2020. When gunshots rang out from the apartment parking lot, Mosqueda realized one of his friends was outside and in danger. He ignored the threat and moved outside in order to protect his friend. In the process, the assailant shot and killed Mosqueda. To recognize his off-duty example of honor, courage, and commitment, a pencil sketch of Mosqueda performing with the platoon stands alongside his M1 Garand bayonet and several other items in his memory.

Other memorials along the wall pay tribute to Marines who displayed exemplary demeanor during a performance as a reminder that no matter what occurs, you must maintain your bearing.

Other memorials along the wall pay tribute to Marines who displayed exemplary demeanor during a performance as a reminder that no matter what occurs, you must maintain your bearing. On April 28, 2004, LCpl Jamar C. Bailey executed his part on the rifle inspection team during a performance at 8th and I. According to his Certificate of Com-

mendation, “At the moment when two rifles are exchanged between three Marines, the rifle that was thrown to Lance Corporal Bailey was not in the proper position ... and struck him in the face. The front sight post caught him in the cheek and opened a 2-inch long cut.”

A photograph next to Bailey’s certificate shows him standing at attention as he continued on to flawlessly finish out the remainder of the performance. Blood pours down his chin and covers his blouse. It took 14 stitches to sew his face back together. His bloodstained blouse hangs in the display case with his photo as a testament to his outstanding example of commitment to his profession.

Another plaque on display serves as a persistent reminder to all Marines in the platoon that their role is constantly under evaluation and up for grabs. Dedicated by the outgoing platoon leadership in 2022, the “Old Dogs and New Dogs” plaque recognizes both the top performing platoon veteran and rookie each year.



SSGT SARAH RALPH, USCM

The Silent Drill Platoon performs for the ceremonial opening of the annual Iditarod in Anchorage, Alaska, on March 4, 2023.

The Marines named here earn their spot in the marching 24. The remaining 22 spots are highly coveted and must be earned throughout the year. Character and discipline play a primary function in securing a role in the platoon. To achieve the highest honor of marching with the 24, each Marine must be constantly ready for Challenge Day.

The first Challenge Day of the year comes at the end of spring training when the initial marching 24 are finalized. Every Marine understands, however, that his spot in the 24 remains secure only through demonstrating the highest level of proficiency and character. The number of Challenge Days in a year varies at the discretion of the platoon leadership. They come as a surprise, unannounced until the morning of, forcing each Marine to remain constantly prepared. Every Marine in the platoon performs the routine from start to finish, individually and under close scrutiny of the Drill Master. They receive a composite score at the end, and the highest scores fill out the marching 24. The intense level of preparation required for competition against their peers enables those who achieve the marching 24 to perform under any circumstances, in front of any audience.

Silent Drill Platoon Marines consider their bearing as a leadership trait held in the highest regard. They revere examples such as Jamar Bailey and others who, under extraordinary circumstances, maintained their bearing, performed their drill routine, and demonstrated exactly the type of character the Marine Corps wants to embody. On rare occasions, mistakes are made. Hats cock to the side and fall off, or rifles are dropped. In cases such

Representing the heart and soul of what the public envisions about the Marine Corps drives the platoon to perform flawlessly, regardless of the circumstances.

as this, the Marines remain stoic on the outside while the Rifle Inspector corrects the problem as he moves down the line.

Performing on the grandest stage, at the highest level of visibility, appears not to unnerve the Marines. Representing the heart and soul of what the public envisions about the Marine Corps drives the platoon

to perform flawlessly, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the occasion. In March 2023, the Silent Drill Platoon travelled to Anchorage, Alaska, to perform at the opening ceremony of the 51st annual Iditarod sled dog race. Before dawn, with temperatures hovering below zero, the platoon donned hoodies and beanies to practice their routine a final time in the quiet, empty street near the starting line. Several hours later, they marched out once more in full uniform before the cheering crowd. The Marines executed the drill on a slippery and snow-covered street, while the temperature rose barely above zero. Their incredible discipline and professionalism marked an awesome first-time appearance for the platoon at the event.

Fleet Week in New York City arrived two months later. In front of an audience of civilians, allied nation military representatives, and members of each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, the Silent Drill Platoon shone. They performed their solemn and respectful routine in the center of Times Square with fluorescent flashing lights all around, traffic and car horns blaring, police whistles signaling, and people shouting. A nearly torrential downpour elevated the impact of the performance, as the Marines flowed together

Below: Capt Kelsey M. Hastings, former commander of the Silent Drill Platoon, stands at attention during a performance at Fleet Week New York in Times Square on May 24, 2023. Hastings served as the platoon commander for the 2023 parade season and was the first female Marine to command the platoon.



CPL MARK A. MORALES, USMC

Cpl Jackson A. Acree, a rifleman in the Silent Drill Platoon, executes his inspection sequence in the pouring rain during Fleet Week New York on May 24, 2023.



CPL MARK A. MORALES, USMC

Capt Gregory S. Jones, the current platoon commander of the Silent Drill Platoon, stands in front of his Marines at the 2024 Joint Service Drill Exhibition in Washington, D.C., on April 15.



SGT ETHAN SCOFIELD, USA



SGT ETHAN SCOFIELD, USA

Former Washington Commanders cornerback, Josh Wilson, presents the 2024 Joint Service Drill Exhibition trophy to the Silent Drill Platoon at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on April 15. The platoon was the winning service drill team for the third year in a row.

unfazed by the rain, spinning, flipping, and tossing their soaked rifles with soaked gloves.

One annual opportunity offers the Marines a chance to prove they truly are the masters of their craft. Drill teams from each branch of service compete head-to-head at the Joint Service Drill Exhibition every spring near the National Mall in Washington, D.C. On April 15, the Silent

Drill Platoon wowed the crowd once again, outperforming teams from the Navy, Coast Guard, Army, and Air Force to win the competition for the third year in a row.

The character traits Marines perfect during their time with the Silent Drill Platoon serve them well over the rest of their career.

“None of us have been to the fleet yet,

but a lot of friends who have gone on from here have become very successful,” said Cpl Conner. “They have a lot of unique skills; the attention to detail, the discipline, ability to teach, ability to learn quickly; and take them with them. We’ve had guys go to MARSOC, we’ve had guys go to Recon. Others lateral move and find success in a different MOS.”

“The intangibles these Marines take with them from being part of the platoon sets them up for success,” said Captain Gregory Jones, the Silent Drill Platoon Commander. “It pays dividends wherever they decide to go from here.”

Regardless of their next duty station, a Marine’s time with the Silent Drill Platoon remains a cherished time in their career. The pride they take reflects what other Marine veterans feel when we watch them perform. Throughout our lives, the title of “Marine” endures as the proudest we have earned. With each performance, the Silent Drill Platoon offers outsiders a glimpse of why.

Author’s bio: Kyle Watts is the staff writer for Leatherneck. He served on active duty in the Marine Corps as a communications officer from 2009-2013. He is the 2019 winner of the Colonel Robert Debs Heinl Jr. Award for Marine Corps History. He lives in Richmond, Va., with his wife and three children.

MCTIS: Changing the Way Marines Train

Marines with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, 2nd Marine Division, used a new “laser-tag-like” equipment system during a Marine Air-Ground Task Force Warfighting Exercise, as part of Service Level Training Exercise (SLTE) 2-24, conducted from January to March at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Four years after the release of Force Design, the Marine Corps continues to modernize and restructure to provide a technologically advanced training environment. This new system will be refined and integrated into training, ensuring ongoing advancements and enhancing effectiveness in future missions. The Marine Corps has taken the first step by implementing the Marine Corps Tactical Instrumentation System (MCTIS) during its first large-scale exercise, SLTE 2-24.

“[SLTE] 2-24 was the first time MCTIS was employed beyond the company level,” said Jonathon Boos of the Service Level Training Division. “Marine Air-Ground Task Force Training Command and the Program Manager for Training Systems instrumented 2,700 Marines and 220 vehicles throughout [SLTE] 2-24.”

The MCTIS is a four-piece battery powered system that fastens to each Marine’s weapon, wrists, flak and helmet to detect when the Marine is being targeted by other weapon systems and to determine the effects of the Marine firing his weapon. Lance Corporal Ian McLaughlin, an Infantry Marine with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, got first-hand experience with the MCTIS.

“It’s definitely a lot more realistic,” said McLaughlin. “With this system you can hear shots through the speakers if you’re getting shot at. It will down your weapon system if you get shot.”

When a blank round is fired, the MCTIS weapon attachment detects it and fires a laser. When a Marine is hit by a laser, sensors on the flak and helmet will alert the Marine as to where on the body they were hit and the fatality of the “impact.” Tapping the wristband of a casualty allows first aid to be rendered by a fellow Marine or Navy corpsman, allowing the injured Marine additional time to be treated by a higher echelon of care before expiring and being removed from the exercise entirely.



CPL JONATHAN WILLCOX, USMC

Above: A Marine Corps Tactical Instrumentation System (MCTIS), created by Saab, displays Marine Corps vehicles and Marine positions during a Marine Air-Ground Task Force Warfighting Exercise as part of SLTE 2-24 at Range 220, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., on Feb. 22.

Below: Sgt Jakob Henderson, an infantry Marine with 2nd Bn, 6th Marines, 2nd MarDiv, fires at his opponent with an M27 automatic rifle during SLTE 2-24 at Range 220, on Feb. 22.



CPL JONATHAN WILLCOX, USMC

The MCTIS is GPS capable, a feature which allows the command to see each unit moving in real time and paints a full picture of the battlefield. This capability also supports the development of briefing tools for the after-action process. The Marines will be able to request the playback of their exercise down to squad level for internal reviews and after actions.

“Just like you watch film after a football game, you see the overall bird’s-eye view that you don’t get to see when you’re on the ground,” said 2nd Lieutenant Nicholas Molineaux, Executive Officer, Headquarters Company, 6th Marines. “I believe we’re moving in the right direction with the MCTIS.”

MCTIS also has utility in the safety



LCPL ANAKIN SMITH, USMC

Above: Cpl Shavoci Jones, left, a LAAD gunner with “Bravo” Bttry, 2nd LAAD Bn, loads an M1014 shotgun during a live-fire counter-unmanned aircraft system range at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., on April 16.

structure of training exercises. The GPS is equipped with an SOS button that alerts the command of the user’s location in the event of an emergency situation. This would occur if a Marine separated from the unit was in need of immediate medical attention or unable to orient to a recovery point

LCpl Damian Oso, USMC

2nd LAAD Battalion Puts Counter-UAS Concepts to the Test

Marines with 2nd Low Altitude Air Defense (LAAD) Battalion, Marine Air Control Group 28, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), conducted a scenario-driven training for counter-unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. from April 15-17.

The purpose of the training was to assess, refine and validate counter-UAS (CUAS) tactics, techniques and procedures and to build confidence among 2nd LAAD Battalion Marines in conducting CUAS missions. These CUAS programs will be critical for 2nd MAW’s ability to identify and defeat adversary intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and target-



LCPL ANAKIN SMITH, USMC

Marines with 2nd LAAD Battalion conducted a dynamic, tactical counter-UAS aerial-gunnery range, in which Marines had to shoot, maneuver and communicate while directly engaging UAS aircraft on April 16.

ing platforms, contributing to counter-reconnaissance efforts and enabling stand-in forces to persist inside of an enemy's weapons-engagement zone. CUAS is a core mission essential task for 2nd LAAD Battalion.

"Today's training gives LAAD a way to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for us to conduct active air defense against small UAS when we are integrated with the infantry," said 2nd Lieutenant John Osment, the unit readiness coordinator for 2nd LAAD Battalion. "It also gives the infantry a chance to see standard operating procedures that we employ, so that when LAAD is not there to support them, they can conduct force protection on their own with weapons that are organic to the infantry battalion."

While conducting patrols and occupying defensive positions, Marines were tested on their ability to shoot, move and communicate while directly engaging single-person operated drones with direct-fire weapons, such as shotguns, machine guns and rifles. The Marines were presented with three different scenarios. After a drone was detected in the field of fire from an unknown location, the Marines were required to process reports for tracking the drone, take up their designated firing positions, and engage with the drone until it was destroyed or the course of fire was completed.

"The proliferation of UAS employment in modern conflict necessitates our Marines to shoot, move and communicate in a UAS-dominant environment," said Lieutenant Colonel Bradley Creedon, 2nd LAAD Battalion Commanding Officer. "Today's training gives us the opportunity to put our CUAS tactics, techniques and procedures to the test and build the confidence of our Marines in conducting CUAS gunnery."

2ndLt John Graham, USMC

1st MAW Marine Awarded For Lifesaving Actions

Lance Corporal Kayden Cardona, an aircraft maintenance support equipment technician with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS) 24, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, demonstrated remarkable courage when he witnessed a terrifying accident involving a motorcycle on Jan. 26. Cardona instinctively provided emergency medical care to the critically injured rider. For his life-saving actions, Cardona received the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal on March 1.

The incident unfolded as Cardona was driving through Kailua, Hawaii. A car traveling in the opposite direction abruptly made a left-hand turn, striking the



LCpl Kayden Cardona, aircraft maintenance support equipment electrician with MALS-24, MAG-24, 1st MAW, receives the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for lifesaving actions from Col William Heiken, the CO of MAG-24, at MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, on March 1. (Photo by LCpl Logan Beeney, USMC)

motorcycle rider from the side. The rider was ejected from his bike, resulting in significant trauma to his head and left leg.

Without hesitation, Cardona sprang into action to provide aid. He utilized his belt to fashion a tourniquet and stop the bleeding from the rider's injured leg. Drawing upon his training in Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), Cardona enlisted the assistance of a nearby Marine to monitor the rider's breathing while he continued to assess the victim for additional injuries. "Without TCCC training, I wouldn't have known what actions to take. It was a significant factor in my confidence and my ability to stay calm that night," said Cardona.

Emergency services arrived within minutes and relied on Cardona to provide crucial information about the victim's condition. He also provided important details to law enforcement, which ultimately allowed proper documentation of the incident. The rider was transported to a nearby hospital in critical condition. Pending rehabilitation, the motorcycle rider has the potential to regain functionality in the leg.

Sergeant Major Sara Pacheco, the sergeant major of MALS-24, commended Cardona for his actions. "Every day at MALS-24, I am surrounded by the high-emarked. "Our Marines are motivated, and they are ready. LCpl Cardona is no

exception; he is always eager to make a positive impact on those around him. His actions prove that this generation of Marines are ready to answer the nation's call."

Cardona's quick and decisive efforts were instrumental in preserving the victim's life and limb. Despite being hailed as a hero by some, Cardona humbly attributed his response to being in the right place at the right time.

Gunnery Sergeant Alexander Figueroa-Rincon, the MALS-24 ground support equipment chief, and one of Cardona's direct supervisors, also expressed pride in Cardona's actions and highlighted the importance of mental preparedness for unforeseen incidents, whether in combat or garrison.

"Cardona is one of my best maintainers. I knew he had the potential to handle tough situations. We are all immensely proud of Cardona and continue to draw inspiration from his bravery."

As Cardona continues his service, his remarkable actions stand as a shining example of a Marine's readiness to effectively respond to any crisis. His bravery and selflessness serve as a beacon of inspiration for his fellow Marines and the community at large.

LCpl Logan Beeney, USMC
and LCpl Tania Guerrero, USMC



OPERATION TOENAILS: The Invasion of New Georgia

By Kater Miller

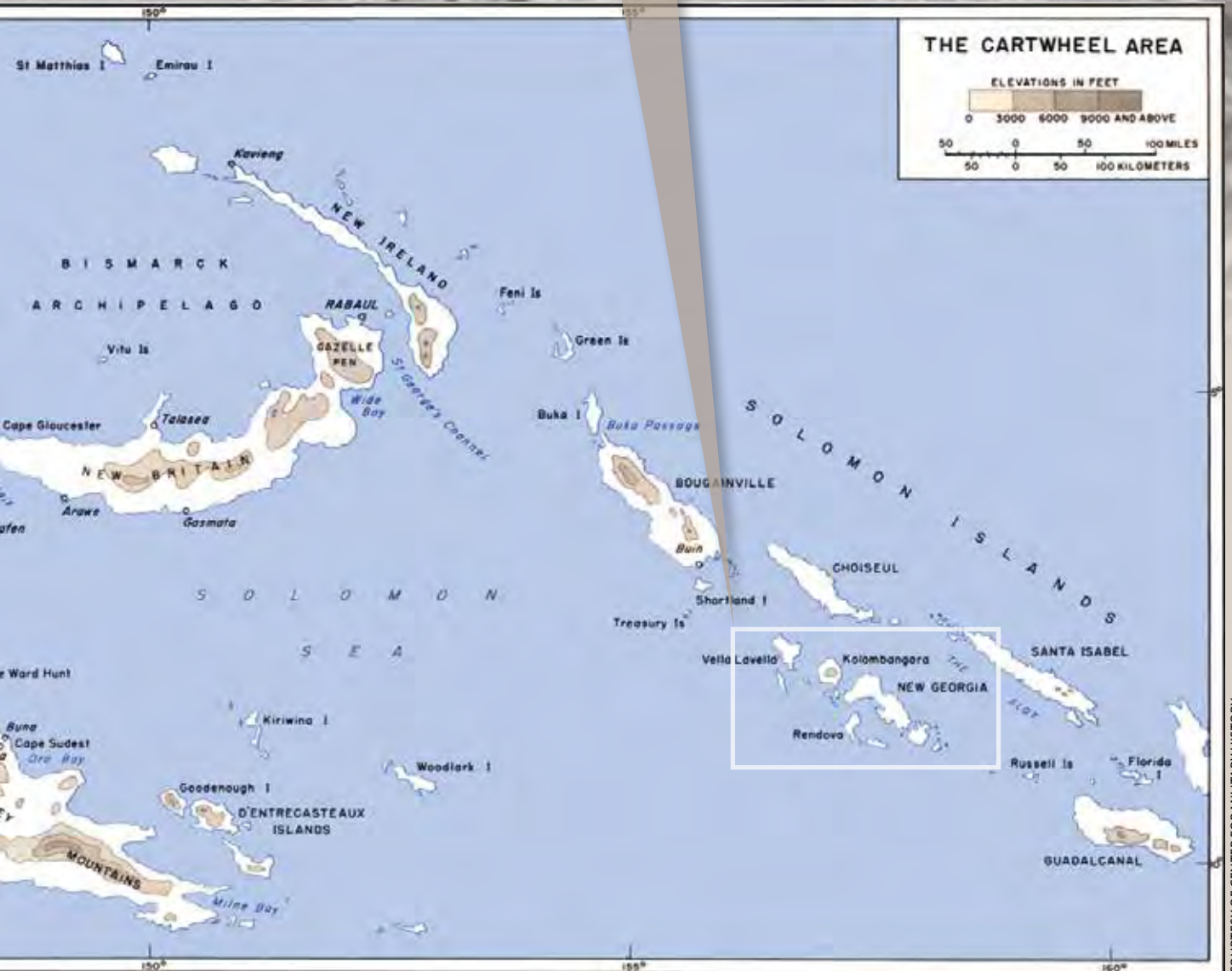
This is the story of a little-known operation in the South Pacific. It was a U.S. Army-led maneuver in the middle of 1943. The Marines, fresh off their victory at Guadalcanal, would not deploy again in division strength until November. But the Army was planning a large, complex operation that included several invasions and offensives in the Solomon Islands, Bismarck Islands and New Guinea. That summer, Operation Cartwheel began—with the objective of isolating and defeating the Japanese garrison on New Britain. Operation Toenails, the invasion of New Georgia, was a component of Cartwheel, and the Marines played a small role in it. Scheduled to begin on June 30, 1943, the mission was a confused and poorly organized affair and took nearly three months to conclude.

The Solomon Islands in the South Pacific was the site of the first land counteroffensive against the Japanese Empire in World War II. The Marines invaded the islands of Tulagi and Guadalcanal at the southeast tip of the chain to maintain communication lines between the United States and Australia. After a brutal six-month campaign, the Allies were victorious at Guadalcanal. However, in the waning days of the campaign, the Japanese remained resilient.

They continued to relocate their forces to different locations within the island chain, and they even built an airstrip that was used to facilitate attacks on American-held Guadalcanal. The small Japanese garrisons spread throughout the islands were a source of frustration for Allied planners hoping to continue



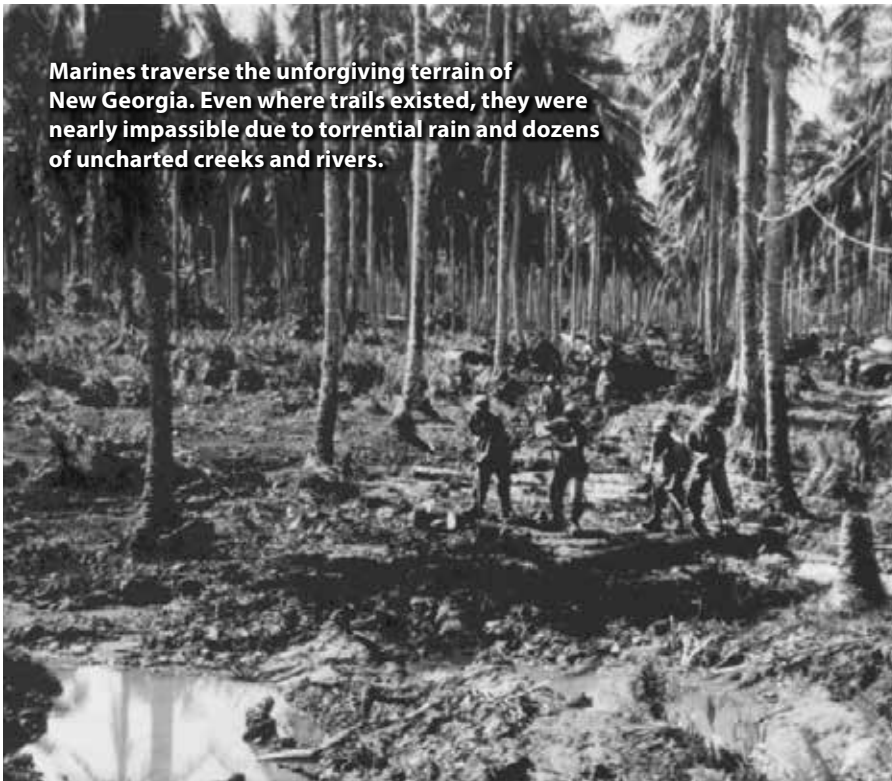
Marines cross a creek on the Dragons Peninsula, New Georgia, July 1943. (USMC photo)



COURTESY OF CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY

COURTESY OF CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY

Marines traverse the unforgiving terrain of New Georgia. Even where trails existed, they were nearly impassible due to torrential rain and dozens of uncharted creeks and rivers.



USMC



USMC

Marine Corps tractors used to pull artillery pieces across the island. These vehicles were also bogged down by New Georgia's harsh terrain.

their advance. In an effort to solidify that advance, U.S. forces looked to capture the New Georgia island group and the airfield located at Munda Point. The invasion was a complicated undertaking, with more than a dozen sizable islands made up of thick vegetation, swamps and poorly defined trails and roads. Further, the islands were poorly explored and nearly undocumented by non-native peoples, and many held Japanese defenders. Vice Admiral William Halsey, Commander of the South Pacific area, planned to take Munda Point airfield and use it against Japanese forces in the

northernmost Solomon Islands. He placed Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner in command of the assault. The Navy was in charge of all combat troops and amphibious ships until the land forces were firmly established ashore. The primary land force was the Army's 43rd Infantry Division, under the command of Major General John Hester, who was also charged with leading an additional, larger occupying force. This arrangement further complicated the landing operations.

Coined Operation Toenails, the primary objective of the assault on New Georgia was the capture of the Japanese

airfield. This began with a series of landings to build up troops and supplies with which to launch the assault. The commanders decided to capture several harbors and anchorages first to prepare for the final objective.

Although Operation Toenails was scheduled to begin on June 30, elements of the 4th Raider Battalion landed on Segi Point on June 21 to rescue a group of coastwatchers. These local volunteers kept watch on enemy movements and reported back to Allied leadership, playing a vital part in the early days of the Pacific War. They harassed Japanese outposts by conducting armed raids on their positions. So Japanese commanders sent patrols to eliminate them. Their leader, Captain Donald Kennedy, requested help from RADM Turner. Turner ordered the Marine Raiders to embark immediately to rescue Kennedy. The Raiders boarded transports at Guadalcanal and arrived at Segi Point the following day. Two Army infantry battalions and construction engineers soon followed.

VADM Halsey directed a mass buildup of supplies to ensure there would not be shortages; American Marines had faced severe privations on Guadalcanal. The landing force's goal the first day was to take the harbors and anchorages.

RADM Turner split the assault forces and designated them the Eastern Force and the Western Force. The Eastern Force was further split into two sections. The first section of the Eastern Force was tasked with taking Viru Harbor on the southern part of New Georgia, while the second force took Vangunu Island, which was situated next to Wickham Anchorage. He ordered the Western Force to land on Rendova Island to prepare for a cross-channel assault on Munda Point.

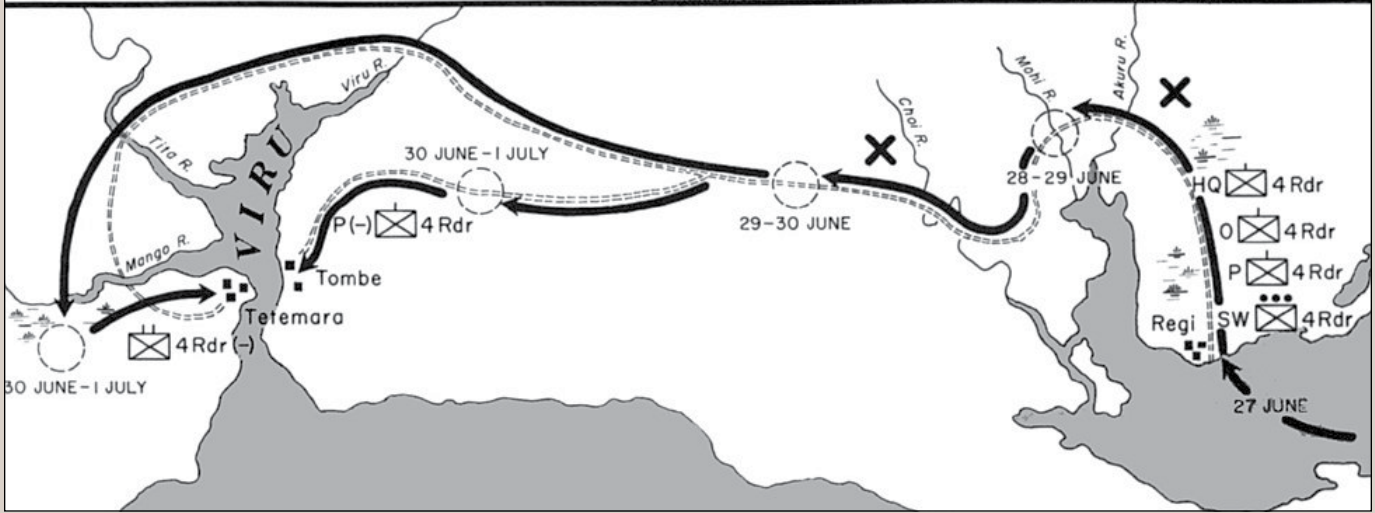
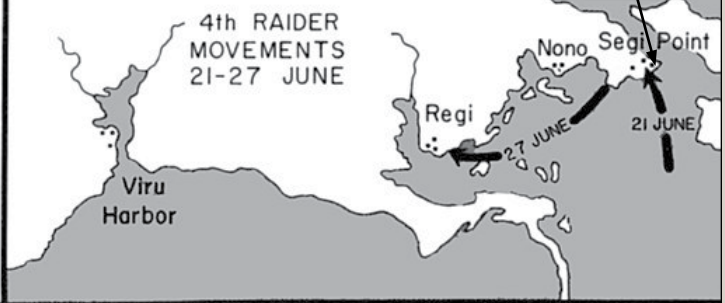
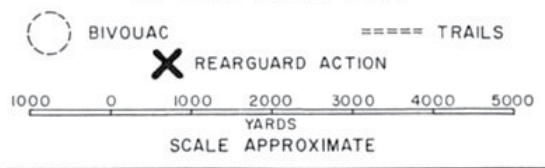
Seizure of Viru Harbor

Following their rescue mission, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Currin's troops of the Marine 4th Raider Battalion were close to Viru Harbor. Raider companies P and O conducted a shore-to-shore landing by rubber boat to Regi Point. From Regi, they marched over land to attack the beach defenses from the rear, but the lack of passible trails and the enemy patrols caused delays, and they did not make it to Viru Harbor in time. Early in the morning on June 30, Army landing boats entered the harbor. The Japanese defenders repulsed the landing, forcing the soldiers to move to Regi Point and disembark there. The following day, the Raiders arrived at Viru Harbor and destroyed the defenses there. They spent the next week conducting patrols and returned to Guadalcanal on July 9.

Segi Point

SEIZURE OF VIRU HARBOR

4th MARINE RAIDER BATTALION
(Less Companies N and Q)
28 JUNE - 1 JULY 1943



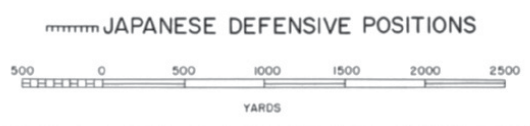
COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY

VANGUNU



SEIZURE OF WICKHAM ANCHORAGE

30 JUNE - 3 JULY 1943



COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY



Landings on Vangunu

Eastern Force troops landed on Vangunu Island the same morning. Turner ordered them to secure the Wickham Anchorage on the eastern edge of the island. The Vangunu force was composed of an Army battalion and two companies of Raiders. Japanese soldiers and Japanese Special Naval Landing Force troops were guarding the anchorage.

They landed at the south end of the small, round island. The landings were conducted under the cover of darkness and in bad weather. The Marines landed

several miles off course, then reloaded and tried again. Rough surf destroyed several landing craft, but there were no casualties. The Americans marched along the shore to find and dislodge the defenders at Kaeruka, located just south of Wickham. American dive bombers from Guadalcanal and 105mm howitzers supported the operation. It took four days of fighting to defeat the Japanese defenders, many of whom escaped via canoes. The Japanese withdrawal was representative of the way they would continue to defend the New Georgia Islands. Instead of

fighting to the death in a hopeless battle, they would fight, delay the attackers, then withdraw to fight again.

The Raiders investigated a couple of smaller islands for any Japanese presence. They left New Georgia for Guadalcanal on June 10. By June 11, all of the 4th Raider Battalion had left New Georgia.

The Main Assault

The Western Force conducted the third and largest landing on June 30 at Rendova Island, less than 6 miles from Munda Point. The first phase of their landing was



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Corsairs were able to land and operate on the Munda Point Airfield less than two weeks after it was captured. Marine aviators used the airfield to launch strikes on Japanese positions in the Solomon Islands.

to create a forward base. The landing went smoothly, despite the poor weather and mud. Superb air cover suppressed the Japanese defenders, and the troops began to build up supplies and plan a cross-channel landing. More than 6,000 troops were ashore by noon. However, building supply caches was difficult due to torrential rain.

On July 3, the Americans began the cross-channel invasion. Mud and rain created obstacles to building up the ground forces and needed supplies. The roads were nearly impassable. Marines of the 9th Defense Battalion used their TD-18 tractors to transport supplies to the front. New Georgia was so inhospitable that even the tractors got bogged down in the mire.

Worse, Japanese troops arrived at Kolombangara Island, not far from New Georgia. Once there, the Japanese forces used barges and canoes to ferry troops to Bairoko Harbor. From Bairoko, they traversed the Munda Trail to reinforce the airfield.

The Northern Landing Group

Turner directed Marine Colonel Harry Liversedge to stop the flow of Japanese reinforcements. Liversedge commanded the Northern Landing Group, including the 1st Raider Regiment Headquarters, 1st Raider Battalion, and two National Guard battalions. The force needed to capture Bairoko Harbor and block the Munda Trail.

The Northern Landing Group arrived ashore at the mouth of the Pundakona River at Rice Anchorage near Bairoko Harbor. Liversedge divided his force and split one of his two army battalions in half. One half defended the beachhead; the other acted as regimental reserve. The force did not bring many heavy weapons so that they could remain nimble—they needed to act quickly.

The troops worked their way to the southwest over swampy and inhospitable terrain. Liversedge dispatched 3rd Battalion, 148th Infantry to establish a roadblock on the Munda Trail. However, this was ineffective, as Japanese troops simply bypassed the roadblock. Their position was vulnerable and difficult to resupply. The remainder of the Raiders turned north to attack a Japanese stronghold at Enogai on the Dragon's Peninsula, which lies on the northwestern coast of New Georgia. They captured a small outpost at Triri and failed twice to take Enogai before they were ultimately successful. However, the Northern Landing Group was nearly a week behind schedule. Liversedge ordered the 3rd Battalion,

USMC



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

This painting by artist Frederick Greenbowe depicts Chaplain Paul Redmond delivering last rites to a Raider on New Georgia. Redmond braved enemy fire on the frontlines to care for wounded and dying Marines.

148th Infantry to abandon the roadblock and rejoin him.

The American forces fortified Triri and Enogai and used captured Japanese artillery in their attempt to take Bairoko. Liversedge also received reinforcements—the already-depleted 4th Raider Battalion. The transports that carried the Raiders also brought badly needed supplies.

The Japanese Kura 6th Special Naval Landing Force defended Bairoko. They

fortified the position against a land-based attack. On July 20, Liversedge ordered an assault on the well-defended position, but a lack of heavy weapons and inadequate close air support forced him to withdraw. After the failed attempt, the Northern Landing Group was badly depleted. They had to change plans: Instead of assaulting the harbor again, they would try to hold the troops there in place to keep them from reinforcing the airfield.

Munda Point

The attempt to capture the Munda Point airfield petered out. MajGen Hester asked for reinforcements. He worried that he would not be able to take the airfield without help. MajGen Oscar Griswold arrived with his XIV Corps, containing the 37th Infantry Division and the 25th Infantry Division. Griswold took command of the occupation forces, relieving the pressure from Hester, who remained in command of the 43rd Division.

Griswold noticed the poor shape of the 43rd. The soldiers were exhausted and suffered combat fatigue at unusually high rates. Griswold paused the assault to reorganize his forces. He ordered the construction of new facilities to help with morale. They constructed field hospitals to treat seriously wounded troops. Until then, casualties had to ride transports to Guadalcanal. He arranged for the construction of shower, laundry, and rest facilities to offer the battle-weary troops a place for respite as well.

Griswold placed the Marine tank platoons of the 9th Defense Battalion and 10th Defense Battalion under the Corps' control. He arranged a naval bombardment, artillery support and air support. On July 25, the XIV Corps began a two-division-wide assault. Griswold arranged seven destroyers, 300 aircraft, and ground-based artillery to support the effort—as well as Marine tankers from the 9th Defense Battalion.

Fighting raged on for nearly two weeks. The Americans succeeded in capturing the airfield at Munda Point on Aug. 5.



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Marine tankers of the 9th and 10th Defense Battalions worked with soldiers of the invasion force to take Munda Point's airfield and capture the smaller islands of New Georgia.

On Aug. 14, Marines landed airplanes on the repaired runways.

After the XIV Corps captured the airfield, the soldiers of the 43rd Infantry Division remained at the airfield to protect it from the Japanese troops who snuck into the hills in the center of the island. The 25th and 37th Divisions started to sweep the island to clear out any resistance. Japanese defenders evacuated the island so they could fight a delaying action on the outlying islands. They wanted to make the American force pay for every inch they took.

The Japanese Withdrawal Plan

The Japanese commander General Minoru Sasaki moved his artillery units to offshore islands. From there, he hoped they could attack the airfield and render it unusable. Japanese infantry units evacuated to Kolombangara to await the Americans there.

On Aug. 9, the Northern Landing Group joined soldiers from the Southern Landing Group. The 37th Division worked around the western coast of New Georgia to mop up opposition.

Artillery Marines of the 9th Defense Battalion moved to coastal defense positions. They ran low on ammunition. Instead of supporting mop-up efforts, they focused on preparing for an expected Japanese counterattack.

Japanese artillery positions on Baanga Island continued to shell the airfield. On Aug. 12, 3rd Battalion, 169th Infantry attempted a shore-to-shore landing to Baanga Island. Japanese defenders repelled their attempt. They tried a second time, landing in a different spot, and established a beachhead on the island. From there, they methodically worked their way through the island. It took another nine days to push the defenders out.

Sasaki ordered Baanga Island defenders to move to Arundel Island and continue their delaying attacks. Taking Baanga was costly. More than 50 Americans died. Additionally, there were 150 combat casualties and nearly 500 non-combat casualties.

Liversedge began another attempt to take Bairoko at the end of August. The Japanese defenders did not make a last stand. Instead, they extricated themselves to the nearby islands to continue fighting. Both Raider battalions were removed; they suffered so many casualties from the heat, disease, and enemy action that there were only a combined 400 effective troops left.

Japanese artillerymen continued to fire on New Georgia from Arundel Island. On Aug. 27, the 172nd Infantry landed on the southern tip of the island and



Pictured here on New Georgia in September 1943, reading a letter from his family back home, Col Harry Liversedge, commander of the 1st Raider Regiment on New Georgia, received the first of two Navy Crosses for his leadership during the campaign.

started sweeping north. The Japanese did not organize a resistance, instead taking potshots and withdrawing. On Sept. 15, the Japanese forces finally counterattacked, stalling the American regiment. The American commander asked for reinforcements. Griswold sent another regiment along with Marine light Stuart tanks (M3s, M3A1s, and M5s). The Marine tankers and soldiers worked as a team in the jungle. They quickly learned to work together when well-hidden 37 mm antitank guns hit two Marine tanks and knocked them out. The Army infantrymen rushed to the tanks to help the Marines escape.

Mop-Up Operations

American forces continued to capture outlying islands. Japanese forces kept pulling back to Kolombangara. With a sizable garrison of Japanese troops, the island would have been a difficult place to assault. Instead, the Americans bypassed it to occupy the lightly defended Vella Lavella Island. The I Marine Amphibious Corps put a forward element on the island in preparation for the planned invasion of Bougainville.

Taking the airfield at Munda Point was an important strategic step in the Allies' conquest of the Solomon Islands. With the airfield in American hands, engineers and Seabees immediately got to work

making it operational. Within nine days, American planes started filing in, and it became a key center for air operations in the isolation of Rabaul.

The New Georgia landings featured U.S. Marines working within an Army command. During the battle, a Marine colonel commanded a composite force of Marines and soldiers to achieve a tactical objective. Marine tankers supported Army infantry units. Liversedge was awarded his first Navy Cross for his leadership and bravery while commanding the Northern Landing Group and the 1st Raider Regiment. While the invasion of New Georgia is a lesser-known and confusing operation, it should be remembered as an important victory. The Allies moved closer to Rabaul. They wrested a strategic airfield from the Japanese and converted it to Allied use. The Army, Navy and Marine Corps worked together to capture an island with oppressive heat, malarial swamps, inhospitable terrain and a Japanese force that worked to make every inch captured costly.

Author's bio: Kater Miller is a curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and has been working at the museum for 13 years. He served in the Marine Corps from 2001-2005 as an aviation ordnanceman. 🇺🇸



COURTESY OF TUN TAVERN LEGACY FOUNDATION

A street-level rendering of The Tun. Land has been acquired in Philadelphia, Pa., to build this authentic reproduction of the original Tun Tavern.

Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation Secures Land for Historic Rebuild

The Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, announced recently land has been acquired to rebuild and reestablish an authentic reproduction of the original Tun Tavern building in Philadelphia, Pa. The Tun, constructed in 1693, is the founding place of the United States Marine Corps in 1775, and is purportedly the place where John Adams and the Naval Committee met and drafted documents that outlined the structure for what became the United States Navy. A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for this November in advance of the Navy and Marine Corps' 250th Homecoming Celebration in 2025.

The Tun will be located at 19 S. 2nd Street in Philadelphia's Old City neighborhood, known as "America's most historic square mile." The location is within 250 yards of the original Tun Tavern site at Water Street and Tun Alley on Philadelphia's waterfront, where the Tun stood until 1781.

"The land purchase is the first step in reconstructing Tun Tavern. With the land acquisition, we have a strong base

to move forward with the fundraising necessary to rebuild the historic Tun Tavern," said Rob Brink, Foundation Board Chair and Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania Free and Accepted Masons. "The Foundation will operate The Tun as a functioning mariner's tavern and restaurant reminiscent of colonial Philadelphia. By providing educational experiences through exhibits, historical documents and special events, we will educate visitors about the significance of Tun Tavern in American history."

Private donations, corporate partnerships, foundation support, and federal and state grants will fund the reconstruction and re-establishment of the building. The proposed development, when completed, is expected to result in \$16.1 million in upfront economic impact. The project is expected to generate an additional \$34.6 million annually in economic impact from operations and visitor spending.

"The Tun is revered and celebrated not only in U.S. Marine history but in five other organizations' histories that pre-date the Continental Marines connection, and we will honor it with a deep appreciation for its historical significance to

Philadelphia and America," said Patrick Dailey, the president and founder of the foundation, a Marine, and a member of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, and The Society of St. George. "Once we are operational, all profits will be donated in perpetuity to support the causes of the organizations founded at The Tun."

"With the Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation leading the way, Marines of past, present and future will have their rightful gathering spot in the very city where the Marine Corps was formed. The Marine Corps Association is a major supporter of bringing the Tun back for all to enjoy," said Lieutenant General Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC (Ret), President and CEO, Marine Corps Association.

To learn more, visit www.thetun.org.
Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation

SECNAV Names Future Amphibious Assault Ship USS *Helmand Province*

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that a future America-class amphibious assault ship will be named USS *Helmand Province* (LHA-10). Secretary Del Toro made the announcement during the final day of

Modern Day Marine 2024 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

The future USS *Helmand Province* commemorates the multiple Marine Corps operations that took place in Afghanistan's Helmand Province as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The name selection follows the tradition of naming amphibious assault ships after Marine Corps battles, early U.S. sailing ships or legacy names of earlier carriers from World War II. Secretary Del Toro named LHA-9, the future USS *Fallujah*, in 2022.

"In keeping with naval tradition of naming our Navy's amphibious assault ships after U.S. Marine Corps battles, I am honored to announce today that the future LHA-10 will be named USS *Helmand Province*," said Secretary Del Toro. "Recognizing the bravery and sacrifice of our Marines and Sailors who fought for almost 20 years in the mountains of Afghanistan."

"For Marines, Helmand Province is a place of bittersweet memories," said Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Eric M. Smith. "An entire generation of Marines wrote another chapter in the storied history of our Corps there, as warriors, but also as peace builders. Their legacy is defined by the spirit they embodied and the lives they touched. I look forward to the day when the USS *Helmand Province* will steam forward and carry Marines on their way to write new chapters—in peace, and if called, in war."

Along with the ship's name, Secretary Del Toro announced the sponsor for the future USS *Helmand Province* is Trish Smith, the spouse of Gen Smith. She is an active volunteer for Marine Corps programs, including the Cornerstone Program, and Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (LINKS) program. She is an advocate and mentor for military families. In her role as sponsor, Smith will represent a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew.

"Sponsoring the USS *Helmand Province* is an honor beyond words," said Smith. "I am looking forward to a lifelong relationship with the ship's leaders, but more importantly, with the generations of Marines, Sailors and their families that she will carry abroad. Together, we will forever carry the memories of those who served in Helmand."

During his remarks, Secretary Del Toro reiterated that Marines on naval vessels, such as the future USS *Helmand Province*, are building relationships with our allies and partners in support of integrated deterrence. The Marine Corps



MC3 WILLIAM BENNETT IV, USN

Above: On May 2, at Modern Day Marine 2024 in Washington, D.C., Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced that a future *America*-class amphibious assault ship will be named USS *Helmand Province* (LHA-10).

Below: Trish Smith, right, the spouse of 39th Commandant, Gen Eric M. Smith, will be the ship's sponsor.



OFFICIAL MODERN DAY MARINE PHOTO

remains focused on modernizing to fight and win against current and future threats in any clime and place.

"The work we ask our Marines and Sailors to do every day is anything but ordinary or routine, and in many cases extremely dangerous. It is incumbent upon all of us, including government and industry, to leverage every resource at our disposal to ensure our Marines have what they need to be successful in their assigned missions and return home safely to their loved ones," said Del Toro.

America-class amphibious assault ships are designed to support Marine Corps Operational Maneuver From the

Sea and Ship to Objective Maneuvers. The *America*-class ships replaced all of the decommissioned *Tarawa*-class LHAs and are now optimized for aviation ability, accommodating the Marine Corps' future Air Combat Element while adding additional aviation maintenance capabilities and increasing fuel capacities, and extra cargo storage. With the unique inherent powers of the amphibious assault ships, they are often called upon to also support humanitarian and other contingency missions upon short notice.

USN


Go Global With “Seven Years War” Game

By William J. Treuting

The Seven Years War—fought between 1756 and 1763—featured some of the most compelling campaigns in military history. With fighting occurring on Europe, India and North America, the war is considered to be one of the first truly global conflicts; however, the most significant of these campaigns were those of King Frederick II—known to history as Frederick the Great. Through a combination of tactical military acumen, British finances, and a level of luck only achievable through the politics of European monarchies, Frederick II elevated Prussia from a third-rate nation to an imposing European power—defeating the militaries of France, Austria-Hungary and Russia in the process. Wargame Design Studio’s “Seven Years War” offers a wide variety of scenarios, with battles ranging from colonial conflicts to full-fledged warfare.

For those interested in the global nature of the Seven Years War outside of Europe, there are a variety of battles: Calcutta and Plassey on the Indian subcontinent; Quebec and St. Foy in North America; and Manila in the Philippines. In these scenarios, players contend with numerically smaller European armies fighting either against or alongside ill-equipped indigenous forces who oftentimes fight without firearms. These battles occur on smaller maps and occur within a shorter time span, allowing games to be completed at a rapid pace. They will certainly be helpful to students interested in the greater global conflict of the Seven Years War.

However, the conflict in Europe takes center stage in this game, with the majority of scenarios allowing players the ability to fight in several of Frederick the Great’s battles such as Leuthen, Rossbach, Hochkirch, Freiberg and Kunersdorf. In the historic scenarios, the average balance places a numerically inferior but

qualitatively superior Prussian army against a numerically superior but qualitatively worse French, Russian, or Austrian army—although the troop quality for the Russians and Austrians does increase in the war’s later battles. Depending on the scenario, victory for the Prussians will be determined by a player’s ability to either throw the weight of their force against their enemy’s weak points or skillfully evade being outmaneuvered by a larger force. For the Austrian, French or Russian players, victory can be achieved by discovering and identifying their opponent’s main and supporting efforts to repel assaults or use their advantage in numbers to pin their opponents in place and maneuver along their flanks. Ultimately, like all Wargame Design Studio games, these historic scenarios

are great for understanding the historical contexts of these battles to better understand the decisions that commanders made based on their understanding of their own capabilities, their opponents and the terrain.

The most highly recommended scenarios from “Seven Years War” are the 10 hypothetical ones (aptly named Hypo No. 1, Hypo No. 2, etc). Unlike the other battles portrayed in the game, these hypothetical scenarios take place on the largest maps with armies numbering over 100,000 men. Lasting between 150 to 300 turns, these meeting engagements require careful scouting and planning to identify enemy intentions and devise ways to bring superior forces upon critical vulnerabilities. The size and scope of these scenarios is also conducive to multiplayer games, with multiple people working together to control the subunits of their respected armies.

Taking place on the Kunersdorf map, Hypo No. 1 pits 118,500 men of the Prussian alliance (Prussia and Britain) against the 137,600 men of the Austrian Alliance (Austria, Reichsarmee, and France). Of the five armies on the field, the Prussians rank qualitatively the best with most units in the A and B ranking; following next are the Austrian and British armies with generally average units; last is the French army which—despite a small group of elite units—general fields below-average troops. With five armies, this scenario is certainly optimal for multiplayer matches. The map is large with several miles between the Prussian alliance on the western end of the map and the Austrian alliance to the east. Although there are several villages connected by a web of road networks, the terrain is difficult and both sides must contend with many rivers, lakes, forests and marshlands. Lasting 200 turns, this scenario forces opponents to think long-term. Failure to follow up



WARGAME DESIGN STUDIO

“In addition to offering the opportunity to fight in a series of battles that constitutes one of the first true global conflicts, this game offers plenty of opportunities for those wishing to step outside of the confines of history ...”



4:00AM October 14 1758, Austrian Turn, Turn 1 of 28, Dawn (Visibility = 2 hexes) (Heavy Fog)

In this playthrough of the Battle of Hochkirch, Prussian troops near the town of Hochkirch risk being enveloped by the approaching Austrian Army.

an early victory could allow the enemy to slip away to either fight on the ground of their own choosing or regain the initiative.

For wargamers looking for a free-play scenario with more manageable armies, Hypo No. 4 pits 53,000 Allied forces against 68,600 French and Reichsarmee soldiers. Again, although outnumbered by more than 15,000 men, the Allies maintain the qualitative advantage. At 150 turns, this scenario is quite lengthy and takes place on a large map, requiring long-term thinking. Although the map is generally open in terms of terrain features, a series of rivers, streams and marshes separates the opponents roughly across the middle of the map—a feature that will mutually influence offensive strategies. The communications network on this map is superb, with most areas being accessible by roads—allowing for a multitude of strategies. With plenty of rolling hills and ridgelines throughout the map, players will be able to mask their movements and apply any manner of deception. However, once the armies become locked in battle, there will be nothing to hide behind. For those looking

for a blind force-on-force battle with manageable armies, this scenario exceeds expectations.

If you are interested in playing long scenarios, with large armies, on behemoth maps, Hypo No. 9 will fit the bill well. At 300 turns, this scenario pits 118,500 men of the Prussian Alliance against 137,600 soldiers of the Austrian Alliance on a massive map based in Bavaria in the vicinity of Regensburg to Lanshut. Every terrain feature, from large cities to small towns, sprawling forests and dense forest, is featured on the map, with many rivers and streams crisscrossing the uneven terrain. Luckily, the map is accompanied by a sprawling road network, allowing for easy army movements—but beware of bottlenecks. Considering that it may be dozens of turns before opponents even catch sight of their enemy, an aggressive scouting and a strong cavalry screen will be necessary to locate the enemy and discern their intentions; however, the broken terrain will make this incredibly difficult. Opponents will have to balance their aggression with their patience, as the large map and slow supply wagons mean that it will take time for supplies to

reach the frontlines. The size and scale of this scenario is another great option for multiplayer games—testing any team’s ability to coordinate largescale battles over vast distances. Ultimately, this scenario is the title’s premier battle for blind force-on-force meeting engagements.

Wargame Design Studio’s “Seven Years War” is a must-play for those studying the dynamic changes in modern warfare brought on largely by the military mastermind: Frederick the Great. In addition to offering the opportunity to fight in a series of battles that constitutes one of the first true global conflicts, this game offers plenty of opportunities for those wishing to step outside of the confines of history to fight in a series of large-scale, pre-Napoleonic battles. Any student of this critical era of military history would be greatly aided by “Seven Years War.”

Author’s bio: William J. Treuting is a historian, associate editor for the Marine Corps Gazette, cohost of the MCA Scuttlebutt podcast, and director for MCA Films.



COURTESY OF JOEL SEARLS

Author Joel Searls, center, at the National Museum of the Marine Corps with his grandparents after his OCS graduation and commissioning.



COURTESY OF JOEL SEARLS

The all-veteran production team at the screening of the film "Code Specter." From left to right: author Joel Searls, USMC; Simone Lara, writer and producer, USA; Sam Ameen, director, USAF; and Brenda Garcia, actress, USN.

A Super Life

Marine Reservist Making His Way in Hollywood

By Joel Searls

My initial passion and love for movies spawned from an early childhood afternoon, in Ohio, watching Richard Donner's "Superman." My older brother Mark picked me up and carried me around the room like I was flying. He even flew me to the bathroom sink and wet my hair with water, forming my hair into a curl like Christopher Reeve wore. This created a lasting impression on me. As the movie's tagline said, I really did believe a man could fly!

Through Reeve's performance as Kal-El, Krypton's only remaining son, a little boy from a broken home was destined to go to Hollywood—to write, produce and act in movies—and to become a United States Marine.

My current work in Hollywood is varied, which seems to be the order of business in today's entertainment landscape. As a manager/writer/producer/actor, I am a "Swiss Army Knife" in the industry. My company, Samurai Cowboy Entertainment Group (SCEG), gets its name from my love of Japanese culture, westerns and my Marine warrior ethos. I have been blessed with many strong

mentors and successes, which have kept me confident yet grounded. My work consists of managing a small list of collaborators and clients—to include writers and directors—acting, writing, producing and consulting on projects. In many ways my personal leadership experience as a Marine officer is reverse engineered into managing creatives and collaborating with them on projects. Being able to understand what they do and how to work effectively with them engenders our success.

Recognizing the roles people play in society influences my work as a writer and journalist as well; having an understanding of people's motivations, instincts and behaviors provides me with the ability to cast characters in my imagination and have their actions play out in a realistic manner. As an actor, my typical roles are Marine, first responder or older brother/father figure type. The characters usually rely upon truths that already exist in me, some of which come from my training. The lessons taught in the Corps apply on a movie or TV show set.

After completing my degree at OSU in Theater, where I acted in university

productions and produced my own play, a western social drama, I joined the Marine Corps to follow in my family's military service legacy, dating back to World War II. My family had served across all of the branches except for the Marine Corps. I became the first officer and Marine on either side of my family. I deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and my team coordinated close air support and medical evacuations for ground troops under fire.

During lighter moments in our command center, the senior officers would allow me to do standup routines to lighten the mood and get some laughs. My routines involved doing impressions of celebrities and politicians in films they would likely never have been cast in such as President George W. Bush in "Tombstone" as Doc Holiday, Arnold Schwarzenegger in a romantic comedy, or Christopher Walken in really anything, even "The Terminator."

I spent the next years on orders in New Orleans and Tampa, during which time I applied to master's programs and received guidance on the Marine Corps Reserve (and fulfilled my dream of living

Lifelong film lover Joel Searls stands next to his 1983 DeLorean, a vehicle that is well-known from the “Back to the Future” films.

on a sailboat!). My goal was to eventually work with veterans on their own creative projects, like producing films and TV. I was eventually accepted into UCLA Anderson’s MBA program, which had a specialty focus on entertainment and the location for me to get started. I accepted their offer and began my departure from the active-duty Corps. The road to Los Angeles took center stage.

My arrival in Los Angeles was met with the expected culture shock, having been raised in the Midwest and having spent seven years in the Corps. It was a rush, and I was learning things daily, usually minute by minute. It took a little while for the newness to wear off and to transition into the civilian world. My Uncle Barry opened his home to me, and I got to “couch surf” before finding my next dream place to stay—another boat! It was a late 1950s, 39-foot Chriscraft yacht that was like one owned by Dean Martin. It was less expensive than an apartment in Westwood and much more scenic living at the marina.

My schooling and my adventure were made possible by the post 9/11 GI Bill, of which for I am very grateful. Discipline, the hallmark of every Marine, was a



COURTESY OF JOEL SEARLS

defining factor in my success in such a challenging school. During this time, I talked my way into film courses at UCLA’s School of Theater, Film, and Television. My first internship was on behalf of Adam at Unique Features, which was a film company owned by Bob Shaye and Mike Lynne of New Line Cinema. I learned a lot about screenplays, writing and what a good script was. My second was for Mosaic, a management and production company, which I got because I saw *another* DeLorean in our parking garage. (Did I mention I used to own two? The “Back to the Future”

trilogy was also foundational to my childhood. The second one even had a flux capacitor and a hoverboard!) I went over to it, checked it out and left my card on the windshield. Lo and behold, the next morning I had an email in my inbox from Riley, who owned the car and worked upstairs at Mosaic.

He invited me to lunch, where we found out about our mutual Midwestern roots, connections to the military and passion for the same types of movies, and he asked me to intern at his desk. He was the head of film/TV development for movies with Will Ferrell and John C.



Joel Searls served at Camp Bastion during his 2011 deployment to Afghanistan.

COURTESY OF JOEL SEARLS

Reilly, as the company managed Ferrell. He taught me a lot about development, searching for intellectual property (by going through copious amounts of comics) and understanding the industry. They also had some great lunches, which were catered by an in-house chef. It sure beat the chow hall! Eventually I was offered a position as an assistant but chose to gracefully decline to take an opportunity working on an indie feature film being shot over the summer in Los Angeles and Santa Clarita.

I continued my service in the Marine Corps Reserve at Camp Talega, serving in their S-3 and supporting training. Camp Talega is where much of “Heartbreak Ridge,” was filmed. Working on “Time Toys” was an experience that showed me the lengths of time, effort and challenges faced on a feature film set. From managing the creative process to engaging with actors, crew and personalities, it was a better learning lesson than any book could provide. I found out how productions are run, what goes into the behind the scenes work and how the director handles talent. My work continued on indie short films both in front of and behind the camera. I eventually wrote, directed and produced my own short film “Lost Angeles,” which is about a father doing anything possible to make ends meet for his family, with the help of many friends and collaborators.

After graduating with my MBA, I ventured into the agency world in Hollywood at Paradigm. My first big break came in the form of working for managing partner and fellow Marine Andrew Ruf. He represents top talent and understands how to package feature films. A key quote from him comes from his own Marine Corps days: “Having knowledge is good, but how you apply it is more important.” During my early days on his desk, I received a firehose of information about the industry, clients and how to handle myself in the agency world. His phone roster had heavy hitters across the industry on it all the time, which was a little intimidating, even for a Marine. He made a point to take care of a fellow Marine and is still a mentor figure for me.

My first opportunity to bring business to the agency involved a feature film script that had financing and was in the process of attaching bankable talent. I shared the project, “Running with the Devil,” as it became known, originally titled “Rivers and Roads,” with my boss Andrew. He asked me for a few details and gave me a shot. He read the script based on my pitch, and he came in the next day and thought it was great! He said, “The guy

who wrote this is a SEAL?” I nodded, and his response was, “Bring him in here.” The meeting was arranged, and Jason and Andrew got along like peas and carrots. Our work at the agency continued, and Jason went to work attaching a high-level cast member to drive the financing of the film. He came back shortly thereafter with Nic Cage attached. That opened the doorway for Paradigm to cast key



COURTESY OF JOEL SEARLS

Joel Searls attended the premiere of “Running with the Devil” in Beverly Hills, Calif. Searls was the associate producer for the film.

members of the project which included Laurence Fishburne, Clifton Collins and Peter Facinelli. The movie began filming, and we were off!

Jason even included me in the film. I was given the role of a guard in a drug warehouse. When “Running with the Devil” completed filming, Jason became a client of Andrew’s. I received internal accolades from senior agents about my abilities to recognize talent and connect them with the right people. And one early winter morning, both Andrew and Jason, former enlisted servicemembers, pinned me to major at my promotion ceremony on the Janss Steps at UCLA.

My Reserve career progressed upon my acceptance into the Marine Corps Entertainment Media Liaison Office (EMLO) based on my industry experience and passion, and an MOS waiver. It was something I had dreamed of for many

years. My pursuit of being a reservist in the EMLO had involved four years of following up and networking, which finally paid off. I was able to support such shows as “SEAL Team” and “NCIS.”

My true calling rumbled beneath the surface at the agency, and I eventually found it best to move after nearly two years at the company. Before I left, Andrew secured a ticket for me to attend the “Ready, Player One” premiere at the TCL Chinese Theater, where Steven Spielberg spoke 100 feet from me about the film and I met a hero of mine, Christopher Lloyd, aka Doc Brown, at the afterparty. I saw him from across the room and immediately went over to ask for a photo with him. I told him of mine and my family’s joy brought through his work. He thanked me as I stood next to him and got the photo, and once he walked away, he turned, smiled, and raised his glass to me. I smiled and raised mine back. It was a movie moment. He very much seemed a real-life Doc.

After leaving the agency, I went to USC’s Marshall School of Business for a master’s degree solely focused on finance, in order to transition over to entertainment finance. The program was short, intense and taught me many new ways of operating. I wrote interviews with key figures of the industry which were published by USC Annenberg, which unbeknownst to me would lead to a career. During this time, we held our premiere for “Running with the Devil” at the Writer’s Guild of America theater in Beverly Hills, and I helped with operations and security. We had a red carpet and all.

Upon graduation, I had secured an investment banking job in entertainment at a boutique firm in Century City. But lo and behold, history was about to change for me. We were at the start of the pandemic. When I was ready to get started at my new job, my boss called me to inform me that he was no longer in business, as the pandemic had stopped his deal flow. It was a shock and I wished him well. My next call was to my boss at the EMLO to see if there was any opportunity with the unit. He informed me of the lack of projects because of the pandemic. However, he asked me, “What do you want to do?” After a few moments, I said, “How about interviewing successful Marines in Hollywood?” He said, “Yes, that’s a great idea, and it will help with recruiting!”

At nearly the same time I was hired to write for We Are The Mighty, a military focused news outlet run by fellow veterans to do similar work with articles



The cast and crew of the film "Antioch" at a talk back session.

and interviews. The opportunities were a blessing and the best way forward. My prayers and concerns had been answered. Now it was time to pay my bills with writing and creativity, which was a scary, yet fulfilling experience.

My interviewees included Donald P. Bellisario, Sergeant of Marines, creator of "NCIS," "JAG," "Magnum P.I.," "Quantum Leap," "Airwolf" and many more, William Broyles Jr., decorated Marine Vietnam veteran, creator of "China Beach," and writer of "Apollo 13" and "Castaway" and Frederick W. Smith, decorated Marine Vietnam veteran, founder of FedEx and film financier for such movies as "The Blindside," "The Sicario films," "12 Strong" and "Devotion." The interviewees taught me a lot about life, overcoming adversity and what it means to be a devil dog. An

interviewee who has been a continued positive influence in my life and as a mentor is Peter Cullen, who is the voice of Optimus Prime in "The Transformers" series and films. Cullen found inspiration for his characterization of the Autobot leader from his older brother Larry, a decorated Marine infantry officer, who served in Vietnam. His brother gave him sage advice on portraying a leader with, "...make him strong enough to be gentle."

I started taking acting classes again during this period with Meisner-focused acting coach Gale Hansen. You may know him from "Dead Poets Society" as Charlie Dalton. He spent time as a development executive for 60-plus feature films as well before he came back to being an acting coach. We worked over Zoom both privately and in a class with fellow actors. It was a time of much



Above: Actress Malin Ackerman, right, and author Joel Searls at the premiere for the 2014 film "Fort Bliss."

growth and fulfillment for creativity, connection and inspiration.

Since starting SCEG, I have written a TV pilot through the Veteran Writing Project offered through the Writer's Guild Foundation, continued interviews for We Are The Mighty, and written a Marine-focused screenplay, which is completed and is in a packaging stage. My Reserve career has grown and continued as a civil affairs officer with the 1st Civil Affairs Group at Camp Pendleton. I have been humbled to serve as a Team Leader and support our command's messaging platforms. My command staff has been supportive of my work at 1st CAG and in my civilian career. They have utilized my creative abilities and talents to help the Corps meet its mission. I look forward to the continued challenges at my unit, with my fellow Marines and in the Corps to better our country.

My acting classes have led to supporting roles in independent feature films, three lead roles in short films and a guest appearance in a Western. I am living a childhood dream, most importantly in playing Western roles, and finding fulfillment in doing it. My network of friends, especially those in creative capacities, has grown, which has further supported my transition from active duty into being a true creative. I have been truly blessed with wise mentors, strong friends and opportunities.

I owe a lot to the Marine Corps and the training provided to me. The life experiences, leadership opportunities and mentorship have given me much to go forward on. I would not be nearly as successful in life and my career without the Marines.

Author's bio: Joel Searls is a creative and business professional in the entertainment industry. He writes for We Are The Mighty. He serves in the Marine Corps Reserve and enjoys time with his family and friends. 🇺🇸



While at Comic Con in Long Beach, Calif., Joel Searls, second from the right, sat on a panel with other military veterans discussing "Running with the Devil."

SOUND OFF
[continued from page 9]

Then began the competition between the four selected recruits from each platoon to compete for awards sponsored by *Leatherneck*. Out of a total of 12 awards; High Rifle, High Pistol, Winning Rifle Team and Winning Pistol Team, our platoon won nine awards. I won three of the nine. In reviewing past records of service, there is no mention of me receiving these awards. Are these awards legitimate? If so, can I have them entered into my personal records?

Steve Cohen
Boynton Beach, Fla.

We'll try to investigate this. The awards were most likely legitimate recognition from Leatherneck, but not official Marine Corps awards. Today the Marine Corps Association recognizes every platoon honor graduate from boot camp, but again these are awards from the MCA, not the Marine Corps itself.—Publisher

Naval Aviation Historian Offers Insight about Corsair

A friend, noted my cites in Major Crawley's article "F4U Corsair: Naval Aviation's Premiere Carrier-based

Fighter in WW II" (*Leatherneck* May issue) about the F4U Corsair. Here's some insight that did not appear in my "1979 Naval Institute History of the F4U." Maj Crawley quotes Vought test pilot Boone Guyton, a pre-war naval aviator who had flown Vought SB2U scout-bombers. I got acquainted with Boone in the 1990s when his memoir was published. He was about 6 foot 5 inches, as I recall, and we spoke best when seated. He said that two generations of Corsair pilots blamed him for the cockpit size!

The Corsair had no floor—just two channels running to the rudder pedals. It was slightly disconcerting, looking down between one's feet into that dark void. And rolling a newly delivered "U-bird" could be semi-hazardous because of the deluge of nuts, bolts, washers, screwdrivers, and other items left over from the production line. I remember my father saying that comic books could be found in the mix.

Sidebar: the caption on page 55 cites an "F8-U" Crusader though the actual designation was F8U followed by a -1 or -2, etc., to distinguish the particular model. After the 1962 DOD standardization of aircraft designations, the Crusader became the F-8. Details in my 1990 Naval Institute Press volume "MiG Master: The

F-8 Crusader, 2nd Edition." In any case, congratulations on a fine magazine with its high production values.

Barrett Tillman
Mesa, Ariz.

We are glad to see that you liked our article about the F4U Corsair in the May issue. At the same time, we are a bit sheepish over the incorrect hyphen in the caption within the article "Plane to See: The Evolution of Marine Corps Aircraft Art and the Artist Keeping the Tradition Alive." Thank you for correcting that and doing so in such a professional manner.—Executive Editor

Tell Them About Us

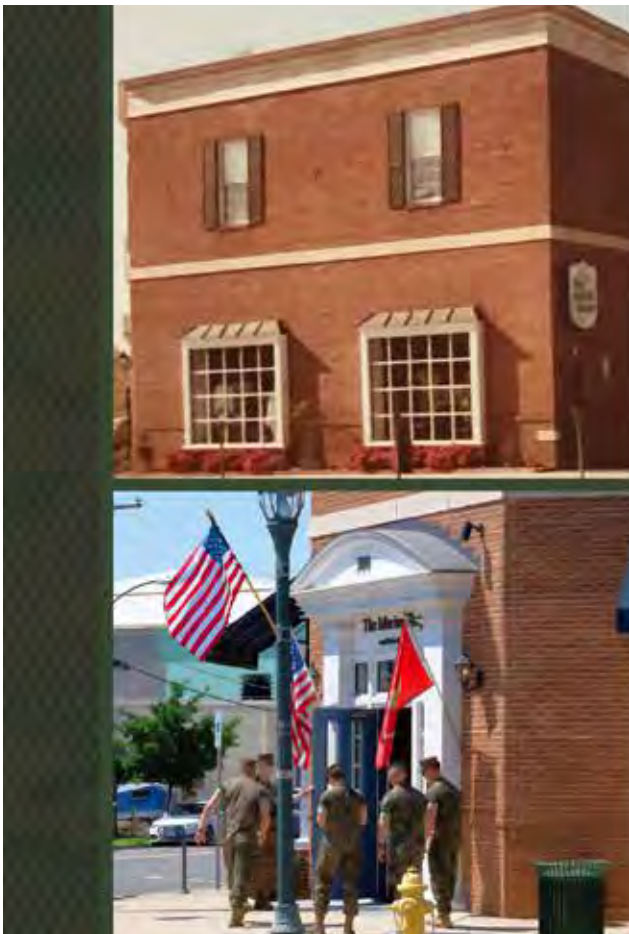
This is a poem I wrote in honor of Memorial Day:

When at last you get there, tell them about us. We who will never return.

Tell them we fought well, we fought with valor, we fought to the last man, so that those to whom you speak, understand how great our love was for them.

Richard Budig
Skiatook, Okla.

Well said! Thank you and amen.—Publisher



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Callouts For Outstanding Performance

The Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC) facilitates Marine Corps efficiency, integrity, and institutional readiness through objective and independent assistance, assessments, inspections, and investigations to enhance the Marine Corps' mission success and the welfare of its Marines, Sailors, and their families. However, IGMC cannot accomplish its mission alone; it requires the efforts of more than a 100 Marines and civilian personnel working in commands spread across the globe. The purpose of this brief article is to highlight outstanding achievements of enlisted personnel serving in billets across the Marine Corps' Inspector General enterprise. The efforts of these individuals have had a positive impact on the readiness of the Service.

Gunnery Sergeant Meghan L. Newman recently served as the acting Command Inspector General for 2nd Marine Division. While serving in a lieutenant colonel's billet, she provided expert coordination while preparing for an IGMC Comprehensive Command Inspection in December 2023. Using superior staff acumen, GySgt Newman synchronized efforts across the 2nd Marine Division staff to prepare for this inspection. In

addition to these actions, she ran both an effective Command Inspector General Program covering 16 subordinate units and the division's Assistance and Hotline Program that received an average of five complaints monthly. Overall, her skillful execution of duties directly and positively affected the daily operations of 2nd Marine Division and that command's performance during its IGMC inspection. In 2024, GySgt Newman conducted a permanent change of assignment to the Camp Lejeune Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Academy where she continues to excel.

Master Sergeant Neil B. Sablan currently serves as the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of Marine Corps Installation-Pacific's (MCI-PAC) Command Inspector General Office. In that capacity, he facilitates the execution of multiple inspector general functions, such as the MCI-PAC's assistance and hotline process and the coordination of its Command Inspection Program. His talents were essential to planning and executing the simultaneous inspection of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, to include that Base's Headquarters Battalion, and Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay from January to February 2024. His diligent orchestration of events supported an early comple-

tion to the inspection and a cost savings of more than \$50,000 in travel funds.

GySgt Newman and MSgt Sablan represent the positive impact that enlisted leaders have on the Marine Corps as a whole. The Marine Corps IG enterprise is more effective thanks to the personal efforts and contributions of these two outstanding Marines!

Leatherneck

Congratulations to these Marines for their superior performance! Semper Fidelis—Publisher

Feel like sounding off? Address your letter to: Sound Off, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or send an email to: leatherneck@mca-marines.org. Due to the heavy volume, we cannot answer every letter received. Do not send original photographs, as we cannot guarantee their return. All letters must be signed, and emails must contain complete names and postal mailing addresses. Anonymous letters will not be published.

— Executive Editor 🦖

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24th MEU Marine Dies in Training Accident

A Marine died during a training accident in the vicinity of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, April 18, 2024. The Marine was assigned to the Maritime Special Purpose Force (MSPF), 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The name of the deceased Marine is **Sergeant Colin Arslanbas**, 22, of O'Fallon, Mo.

"Words cannot convey our sorrow for the tragic loss of one of our MEU family members," say Colonel Todd Mahar, the 24th MEU commanding officer. "The 24th MEU family mourns the loss of an outstanding Marine and leader. We offer our deepest condolences and unwavering support to his family during this most difficult time."

Arslanbas enlisted in the Marine Corps on March 16, 2020, and was promoted to sergeant on April 1, 2024. He served as a Reconnaissance Marine with the MSPF, stationed on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. His decorations include the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. The incident is currently under investigation.

II MEF

Larry D. Anderson, 74, of Luxemburg, Wis. After graduating from West High School in Green Bay, Wis., he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve where he served from 1970 to 1976.

Lavern Bunnell, 72, of Seymour, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1969 to 1973. He later had a career as a mechanic.

Carl E. Cleereman, 89, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War. After his discharge, he worked in the welding industry.

Tommy J. "Tom" Crowe, 86, in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was a Marine who served in the Marine Corps Reserve while attending University of Cincinnati on a football scholarship. He later had a 33-year career at Armco Steel and retired in 1992.

William "Alden" Elliott, 46, in Newton, N.C. He was a U.S. Marshal who was shot in the line of duty while he and another Marshal were attempting to serve a warrant.

He was a Marine veteran who later served with the North Carolina Department of Adult Corrections for 14 years and was assigned to the Special Oper-

ations and Intelligence Unit and the U.S. Marshal's Regional Fugitive Task Force.

Col Peter J. Finley Sr., 92, of Sea Isle City, N.J. He was commissioned in December of 1955. He was assigned to the 2nd Marines and later completed two overseas tours, including a tour in Lebanon in response to the Lebanon Crisis in July 1958. In December 1958, he transitioned to the Marine Corps Reserve. He retired in 1987. During his career, he was involved in the development of the Marine correctional system, the development of 12 family support service centers, as well as the design of program evaluation and assignment of Marines at U.S. embassies around the world. He later worked for the Marine Corps as a civilian contractor for 12 more years.

LtCol Scott Flurry, 39, of Jacksonville, N.C. He was commissioned in 2008 after graduating from Peru State College with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. He was a graduate of Expeditionary Warfare School, Army Command and General Staff College, and the Army School of Advanced Military Studies. He deployed to Afghanistan in 2011 where he served as a counterinsurgency instructor. He then deployed to Spain in 2014 where he served as the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade Targeting Officer. Additionally, he completed two deployments to Iraq: once in 2016 as a fire support officer with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines and once in 2019 with Task Force Al Taqaddam. His awards include the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

PFC Richard T. "Dick" Hood, 100, in Murrysville, Pa. He was a Marine who served during World War II in the Pacific theater with 2ndMarDiv. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Robert M. "Bob" Jennings, 93, of Mechanicsville, Va. He was a Marine who served in the Korean War. He later served an additional seven years in the Marine Corps Reserve. He had a 20-year career in the trucking industry as a sales manager at Emerick Chevrolet. He was a member of VFW Post 9808 in Mechanicsville, Va. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Capt Jerome R. Kirby Jr., 93, of Newport, R.I. He was commissioned in 1953 and served as a platoon commander for 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv, and as the

executive officer of Co B, 2nd Tank Bn. He then transitioned to the Marine Corps Reserve. After returning to civilian life, he had a career in insurance.

Donald U. "Don" Kreppin Sr., 87, of Charlotte, N.C. He was a Marine helicopter pilot who attended the University of Rochester on an ROTC scholarship. He earned an MBA from Columbia Business School in New York. He later had a 32-year career as a pilot with American Airlines.

Donald N. LeCaptain, 92, of Carlton, Wis. After graduating from Kewaunee High School in 1949, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and served during the Korean War. He later was a dairy farmer.

Sgt William E. Morris, 92, of Hobart, Mich. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1952 and served as an aviation structural mechanic. He was also served in Atsugi, Japan, during the end of the Korean War.

Marvin A. Nottingham, 98, in Hemet, Calif. He was a Seabee during WW II was attached to 4thMarDiv. He received a Bronze Star with combat "V" as an operator of a heavy tractor-dozer on Iwo Jima.

According to the award citation, Nottingham "bulldozed a path along the beach to lead other vehicles coming from the landing ship. When hostile fire disabled one of the tractors and wounded the driver, he left his own tractor, mounted the crippled vehicle in the face of heavy enemy fire and drove it to safety." His actions saved the life of the wounded driver as well as a valuable piece of equipment. After his service, he would go on to write and publish three books titled "Once a Cowboy," "Victor and Connection to Pacific Spiny Lobster," and "Principles for Principals."

Stanley "OJ" Olenjack, 77, of Bradley, Ill. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1965 and served with the 1st Tank Bn during the Vietnam War. He was an active member of the Marine Corps League and served as commandant of the Kankakee County Detachment No. 1253. He was also former chairman of the Manteno Veterans Home Advisory Council, former chairman for the Illinois Veterans Advisory Council with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and the former chairman of the Kankakee County Veterans Assistance Commission. His awards include the Purple Heart. He was a member of the Vietnam Tankers Association.



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CWO-4 Dennis E. Pigg, USN, 75, in Covington, La. He was a Marine who served two tours in Vietnam. He later transitioned to the Navy Reserve and served for 21 years.

Capt James R. "Jim" Pippin, 95, of Grandview, Mo. During his 25-year career, he served in WW II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He was wounded in Vietnam in 1969. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Cpl Rob Recor, 57, in Los Angeles, Calif. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school and served in the "Commandant's Own," United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps. He later worked in the technology industry.

Charles "C.W." Robertson Sr., 90, of Wichita, Kan. He was an infantry Marine who served during the Korean War. After his service, he worked as a technical writer.

SSgt Thomas Santos, 96, of Ironwood, Mich. He was a Marine who was stationed in China from 1946 to 1947. He later transitioned to the Marine Corps Reserve.

Cpl Clifford E. Satterly, 98, in Newport, N.Y. He enlisted in 1943 and was wounded during the Battle of Iwo Jima. After the war, he continued his service in the Marine Corps Reserve


until his discharge in 1947. He was a member of the American Legion. His awards include the Purple Heart.

David L. Senechal, 89, in New Franken, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1954 to 1957. He later had a career as an electrician.

Gary R. Starr, 73, in Mountainair, N.M. He was a Marine who served during the Vietnam War.

Capt David J. Thompson, 81, of Granville, Ill. He was a Marine who served two tours in Vietnam with Bravo Co, 1st Tank Bn as a tank platoon leader during the Tet Offensive. After returning to civilian life, he worked as a pharmacist.

Richard R. Warmack, 99, of Oroville, Calif. He was a Marine who served during World War II in the Pacific theater as a JASCO radio operator assigned to the 4thMarDiv.

In Memoriam is run on a space-available basis. Those wishing to submit items should include full name, age, location at time of death (city and state), last grade held, dates of service, units served in, and, if possible, a published obituary. Allow at least four months for the notice to appear. Submissions may be sent to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, Va., 22134, or emailed to leatherneck@mca-marines.org. 

Leatherneck

REFLECTIONS

While Memorial Day and Veterans Day are poignant moments of remembrance, *Reflections* keeps the spirit of honoring veterans alive year-round.

REFLECTIONS provides a venue in which individuals can celebrate and recognize the lives of their loved ones by sharing their Marine Corps stories with other Marines, friends and loved ones for a small fee.

Leatherneck will continue to run obituaries at no charge, but for those who want to further memorialize their loved one or themselves, *Reflections* is here to share those memories. This paid feature will run only in *Leatherneck*.

For more information on **REFLECTIONS** rates, please email us at advertising@mca-marines.org



Reunions

• **Mike Co 3/7 (1965-1970)**, July 31-Aug. 4, Minneapolis, Minn. Contact David Ray, (612) 860-8932, davidrayray49@gmail.com.

• **Adak Marines**, Aug. 3-10, Adak, Alaska. Any Marines who served at Adak are welcome. Contact Barry Erdman, (920) 540-1585, beefoot2@aol.com.

• **1st Marine Division Association**, San Antonio, Texas, Aug. 18-25. Contact June Cormier, (760) 763-3268, June.oldbreed@fmda.us.

• **National Montford Point Marine Association**, Aug. 21-24, Jacksonville, N.C. Contact Ron Johnson, (504) 202-8552, vice_president@montfordpointmarines.org.

• **3rd Bn, 4th Marines Association**, Aug. 21-25, Herndon, Va. Contact Travis Fryzowicz, (732) 251-5518, travisjfy@gmail.com.

• **Marine Air Base Squadrons-49**, Sept. 7, Earlville, Md. Contact Col Chuck McGarigle, USMC (Ret), (609) 291-9617, (609) 284-2935, col_of_mar_ret@comcast.net.

• **1st Bn, 5th Marines, 1985-1992**, Sept. 5-8, Macomb, Ill. Contact Scott Hainline, (309) 351-2050, ptimfi@yahoo.com.

• **USMC Motor Transport Assn.**,

Sept. 15-19, Reno, Nev. Contact George Hanlin, (301) 514-1087.

• **“Battery Adjust” Marine Artillery Association**, Sept. 18-22, Savannah, Ga. Contact Ed Peterson, (732) 754-8755, ed66451@aol.com. All eras welcome.

• **Golf Co 2/7, 1965-1970**, Sept. 18-22, Tucson, Ariz. Contact Travis Skaggs, (775) 291-6813, tskaggs6@email.com.

• **Recruiting Station Baltimore, Md.**, Sept. 21-22, Dorsey, Md. Contact Ed Wakeley or Matt Cicchinelli, rsbaltreunion@outlook.com.

• **Marine Corps Engineer Association**, Sept. 26-28, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact LtCol George Carlson, USMC (Ret), (931) 307-9094, treasurer@marcorengasn.org or visit www.marcorengasn.org.

• **26th Marines Association**, Sept. 26-30, Saint Augustine, Fla. Contact Larry McCartney, chair.26thmarines@gmail.com.

• **USS *Saratoga* (CV/CVA-60)**, Oct. 2-6, Jacksonville, Fla. Former *Saratoga* shipmates (Ship’s company, air wing and MarDet) welcome. Contact Mark Kikta, (202) 262-1294, mdkikta@msn.com.

• **Kilo 3/7**, Oct 16-24, Rapid City, S.D. All eras welcome. Contact Bill Gerke (631) 433-8575, msggerke@aol.com.

• **USMC A-4 Skyhawkers**, Nov. 11-13, Pensacola Beach, Fla. All drivers, main-

tainers, and aficionados welcome. Contact Mark Williams, (702) 778-5010, rogerwilco14@gmail.com.

Mail Call

• Larry Williams, lonedealer1@aol.com, is looking to hear from **GySgt Curtis Grove, last stationed together at Camp Pendleton, Calif.**

Wanted

• Robert Mitchell, rmitchell7171@comcast.net, is looking for a **graduation book for Platoon 279, MCRD San Diego, 1966.**

• Edward Malloy, poppyboggs@gmail.com, is looking for a **graduation book for Platoon 1010, MCRD San Diego, 1959.**

Entries for “Reader Assistance,” which include “Reunions,” “Mail Call,” “Wanted” and “Sales, Trades and Giveaways,” are free and printed on a space-available basis. *Leatherneck* reserves the right to edit or reject any submission. Allow two to three months for publication. Send your email to leatherneck@mca-marines.org, or write to Reader Assistance Editor, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. 📧



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Saved Round

By Kipp Hanley



PFC W.C. SCHOBEL, USMC

A JUNGLE JACK OF ALL TRADES—Featured in the December 1968 issue of *Leatherneck*, the OV-10A Bronco, pictured above at Marble Mountain Air Facility with Marine Observation Squadron 2, was first operational in the Vietnam War and flew all the way through the Gulf War before the Marines stopped flying them in the mid-1990s.

Described in the 1968 article as a “bug with its tail stuck in the air,” this aircraft had quite a bite. It was armed with four 7.62 machine guns and was often equipped with rockets and missiles. It replaced the old “Bird Dog” observational

planes and provided “interdiction of enemy logistics and fire support for Marines, SEALs and river boats,” according to the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Captain Alfred L. Tripp, who flew the OV-10A in Vietnam, said the aircraft was “one of the simplest planes I have ever flown. Not only is it simple, but it’s fun to fly It only needs about 2,000 feet to get off the ground with a full load and only a thousand to land because of the full reverse props on it.” 🇺🇸



USMC

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Chapultepec Challenge WOD — Complete our Workout of the Day on September 12, 2024. 3 rounds for time, Sprint 200 meters, 18 Burpees, Spring 200 meters and 47 crunches.



The Run for Marines 10K — Help us celebrate the 249th Birthday of the Marine Corps by running, walking, biking or rowing 10 kilometers on Sunday, November 10, 2024.





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